

Ivy hits fifth
NZ-SA ODI

BBC ONLINE, undated

The fifth one-day international between New Zealand and South Africa in Auckland has been postponed because of rain brought by a tropical cyclone Ivy.

The match could yet be played on Sunday the reserve day although the forecast is for more poor weather.

If the rescheduled match is unable to go ahead, the Black Caps will earn their first ever series win over the touring South Africans.

They hold an unassailable 3-1 lead in the six-game series.

The series has been dogged by bad weather, with the fourth game in Dunedin postponed for 24 hours.

And the final game is due to be played in Napier on Tuesday, in which South Africa captain Graeme Smith insisted his team could bounce back.

He said: "New Zealand have played excellent cricket."

"But we know we can perform a lot better and maybe that's the biggest difference at this stage."

The series has been hit by poor ticket sales, which New Zealand Cricket chief executive Martin Snedden admitted had been due to the weather.

Mobil-CAS
Cup
golf held

ISPR, Comilla

Brigadier General Md Ashhab Uddin became men's champion while Luna Sarker picked up the ladies' title of the Mobil-CAS Cup Golf Tournament that was held at the Maynamati Golf and Country Club in Comilla Cantonment on Friday.

A total of 145 golfers, including nine lady players and 12 juniors from the Kurmitola, Army Golf Club, Bhatiary, Savar and Maynamati took part in the competition.

Later president of Bangladesh Golf Federation and Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury gave away trophies among the winners.

Managing director of Mobil Bangladesh Limited Azam J Chowdhury was present on the occasion.

OTHER RESULTS

Men's first runner-up: Brig Gen Lodi, Ladies' runner-up: Yusuf, Men's second runner-up: Lt Col Nasim, Nearest to the Pin: Akteruzzaman and Longest drive: Maj Iqbal.

Sachin then, Sachin now

REUTERS, New Delhi



When India last travelled to Pakistan 14 years ago, for four drawn Tests, they discovered the enduring talent of Sachin Tendulkar.

Then a curly-haired 16-year-old, who made his debut as a lower middle-order batsman and scored 215 runs in six innings, Tendulkar is now widely regarded as the best batsman of this generation.

He is the only player still active from that Pakistan tour of 1989-90 while the Indian team has finally evolved around him into a force to be reckoned with.

Rahul Dravid has hit a good spell, captain Sourav Ganguly's gutsy doggedness has energised the side, Vangipurappu Laxman's silken touch is at its best and leg-spinner Anil Kumble has discovered what it takes to grab wickets overseas.

But none of them know first-hand what an Indian tour of Pakistan entails. They have only heard about the fierce pressure created when a tense away Test series is blended with volatile fans, lurking security fears and strong political overtones.

Tendulkar has been there, has felt it.

He is the man India will rely on, more than ever, to guide them to victory in their historic three-Test series starting on March 10.

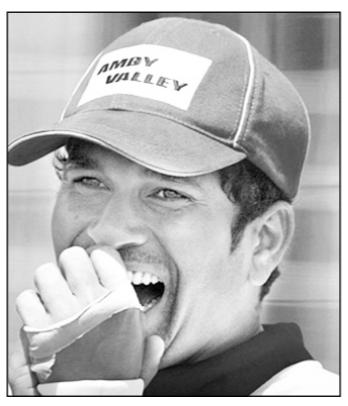
But the 30-year-old from Bombay will have to exorcise his own demons against Pakistan.

In 1999, the last time the two teams played a Test series, India

were chasing 271 for victory in the first Test at Madras. Tendulkar slammed a masterly 136 but his dismissal 17 runs short of the target led to India crumbling to an ignominious defeat.

Two Tests later in Calcutta, he was bowled by Shoaib Akhtar for a first-ball duck with an unplayable yorker that set the tone for another Pakistan victory.

Tendulkar redeemed himself somewhat with a blistering match.



SACHIN TENDULKAR

winning 98 at the 2003 World Cup in South Africa, including a six over third-man off Akhtar that is regarded as one of the most memorable shots of the tournament.

But a defining match-winning Test innings still eludes him.

"I have been disappointed with myself... I have to learn to finish Tests," he admitted two years ago.

Tendulkar is conscious of his place in cricket history and would not like to end his career with doubts lingering over his ability to win matches.

For the first time in his career, he has the support cast needed to guide India to an overseas Test series win, which would be their first since they beat Sri Lanka 10 years ago.

They came close in Australia earlier this year, with Tendulkar leading the charge in the final Sydney Test with a career-best 241, but could not put the finishing touches to what would have been a remarkable triumph.

Tendulkar is not alone any more because India have discovered a batting line-up that can match any in the world.

Opener Virender Sehwag is relentless in attack, not only scoring runs quickly but also crushing the morale of the bowling side with his audacity.

Partner Aakash Chopra was worth his weight in gold in Australia, bravely holding off quick bowlers on pacy wickets even if his series average of 23 was a tad low.

The foursome who follow Dravid, Tendulkar, Ganguly and Laxman have reached a level of consistency that has forced even their fiercest critics to marvel at them.

But Pakistan have the explosive Akhtar, regarded as the world's fastest bowler and at the peak of his powers now.

India suffer in the bowling department with Kumble and left-arm paceman Zaheer Khan still recovering from injuries. Their batsmen will have to bear the burden.

Once the tensions and pressures of the Pakistan series start taking their toll, all eyes will be on Tendulkar as Indian fans wait with bated breath for him to take control.

BCCI names
tour
officials, but no
bowling coach

AFP, New Delhi

India on Saturday named Ratnakar Shetty as the national cricket team's manager and Amit Mathur as its media officer for next month's tour of Pakistan, but declined to send a bowling coach.

Indian captain Sourav Ganguly had told reporters on Thursday that a bowling coach would definitely accompany the team, leading to speculation that retired Indian pace spearhead Javagal Srinath would be given the job.

But Jagmohan Dalmiya, president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), said on Saturday he had not received any request from either Ganguly or chief coach John Wright about hiring a bowling specialist.

Former Australian left-lander Bruce Reid had served as the Indian team's bowling coach on the recent tour of Australia, and Srinath was expected to take over for Pakistan.

Shetty, who is the BCCI's joint secretary, and Mathur were part of the three-man Indian delegation that visited Pakistan earlier this month to study security and players' arrangements at various venues.

It was on the recommendation of the third member of the delegation, government security expert Yashovardhan Azad, that India declined to play Test matches in Karachi and Peshawar during the 40-day tour.

India will play five one-day internationals, followed by three Tests, from March 10 to April 17 on their first full tour of Pakistan since 1989.

The Indian team, which will be selected on Monday, will undergo a three-day conditioning camp in the eastern metropolis of Calcutta from March 7 to 9, Dalmiya said.

The team will depart for Lahore from New Delhi by a special Indian Airlines flight on March 10.

Dalmiya dismissed media reports that the Indian board would abandon the tour at the first sign of trouble in Pakistan.

Hasselbank
wants straight
answers

AFP, London

Jimmy Floyd Hasselbank does not want to leave Chelsea and has called on club owner Roman Abramovich to tell the players just what he plans to do with manager Claudio Ranieri.

The former Atletico Madrid and Leeds United striker has been in and out of Ranieri's team this season, and was omitted from their recent games against Arsenal and Stuttgart.

But Hasselbank, brought to Leeds in 1997 by then boss George Graham, is not looking to depart Stamford Bridge.

"It would be a pity if I have to leave because this is a magnificent club and I love it here," said Hasselbank to the Sun.

"I adore English football and I am not looking to get a move. But if the club want me to go, I will have no say in it and hopefully another door would open for me."

But the Dutch striker has asked the club to end the rumours Ranieri will be axed at the end of the season.

The Italian's job has been reportedly insecure since Abramovich assumed control of Chelsea and Hasselbank feels the players will benefit from knowing the club's long-term plans.

"There has been a lot of talk about everything at Chelsea, the boss and the players. It has been like this the whole season," he added.

"Maybe it would be helpful if the club told us what is going on. That would make it easier for the manager - not that he looks under pressure when he talks to us."

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