

Cricket was poorer, ICC

AFP, Karachi International Cricket Council (ICC) president Ehsan Mani on Saturday hailed the revival of cricket ties between India and Pakistan, saying it has given the sport a boost.

"It is great they are playing again, because cricket was poorer without an India-Pakistan contest," Mani told reporters during the one-day international between the two nations at the National Stadium here.

"It was long overdue and I hope the ties remain forever, since they benefit not only India and Pakistan, but the whole of Asia, in fact the entire world."

India are currently on their first full Test tour of Pakistan since 1989 following the Indian government's decision to lift a three-year ban on bilateral cricket ties with Pakistan.

Mani, who hails from Pakistan, said the revival of Indo-Pak cricket will make the ICC stronger.

"Asia represent 40 per cent of the ICC membership and a strong Asia means a strong ICC. I have no qualms about that," he said.

Indian cricket chief Jagmohan Dalmiya, who flew with Mani from New Zealand after an ICC meeting to attend Saturday's match, said there was more India-Pakistan cricket in the offing.

"We will play the Asia Cup in Sri Lanka in July and a proposal to revive the Asian Test championship is also on the cards," Dalmiya said.

The Asian Test Championship, held in 1999 and 2000, was discontinued due to India's refusal to play against Pakistan.

Pakistan defeat India in hockey

AFP, Madrid Pakistan avenged the five-run loss conceded by its cricketers to India Saturday by defeating India 4-2 at the men's Olympic qualifying field hockey tournament here.

Roelant Oltmans, Pakistan's coach, acknowledged his team was aware of the outcome of the cricket match in Pakistan.

Champs Trophy dilemma

AFP, Karachi India is ready to host this year's Champions Trophy tournament in case the England team cancels its tour of Zimbabwe and is barred from hosting the event, Indian cricket chief Jagmohan Dalmiya said on Saturday.

"We have not been offered it yet, but if we are, we will be more than happy to host it," Dalmiya said on the sidelines of the one-day international against Pakistan at the National Stadium here.

"It will be an honour to host the tournament in September this year at a time when we are celebrating 75 years of Indian cricket."

The 12-nation tournament, regarded as a mini World Cup, is due to be held in England from September 10-25, but speculation is rife the ICC may shift the event elsewhere if England decline to tour Zimbabwe in October.

England have delayed confirming the tour, facing strong British government pressure to scrap the tour in protest at the policies of Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe.

BBC says, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) will meet players next month before deciding whether the autumn tour will take place.

A decision has been put off as the ECB test both the legal position and the depth of feeling at home.

They hope to justify pulling out on moral grounds and feel they have the full backing of the government.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down. Includes a solution time of 21 mins.

Kallis forces SA ahead

Cricket REUTERS/APP, Hamilton Jacob Oram hit his maiden Test century as New Zealand scored 509, a first innings lead of 50, before South Africa checked their progress on the fourth day of the first Test on Saturday.

South Africa arrested the slide with a partnership of 92 between Herschelle Gibbs and Jacques Kallis and at close of play, with Gibbs out, they were 134 for three, a lead of 84. Kallis was unbeaten on 56 and Neil McKenzie on 11.

Oram finished unbeaten on 119 when New Zealand were all out early in the afternoon session in reply to South Africa's first innings total of 459.

He reached his first Test hundred off 191 balls in 276 minutes and hit 16 fours on a pitch that had an awkward crumbling patch at one end.

"It's the toughest I've ever had to play spinners," Oram said.

"That area of the pitch cuts down the number of shots you'd like to play against someone like Paul Adams, and you had to be very watchful."

Oram said he thought New Zealand could still win the Test. "If we get a couple of wickets in the morning anything can happen. If it comes down to a chase then I would back us to do it."

South Africa were quickly in trouble in their second innings when they lost captain Graeme Smith, who waved at a ball from Daryl Tuffey and got a faint edge to wicketkeeper Brendon McCullum for five.

One run later, left-hander Jacques Rudolph was bowled by Chris Cairns

and Gibbs and Kallis came together with South Africa reeling at 16 for two.

The pair batted commendably as they attempted to wrest the initiative away from New Zealand.

Gibbs finally succumbed for 47 to the off-spin of Paul Wiseman, getting an edge through to McCullum, who juggled twice before securing the catch.

Kallis reached his second half-century of the match and soon after survived a caught-behind off Craig McMillan's bowling when on 52 in the penultimate over of the day.

A number of records fell during the day with New Zealand's total of 509 their biggest against South Africa, beating the 505 scored at Cape Town in 1953-54.

Shaun Pollock's two wickets in two balls to end the innings equalled Alan Donald's record for South Africa of 330.

Resuming at 361 for seven over-night, Oram and his partner Daniel Vettori completed a 113-run partnership for the seventh wicket, easily eclipsing the 74-run record for the same wicket against South Africa, posted in Johannesburg in 1994-95 by Shane Thomson and Dion Nash.

"We didn't bowl well enough, South Africa captain Smith said.

"They came out and they played a few shots, but this wicket is not really one where you bowl to try and take wickets.

"It's really a wicket where you sit and sit and eventually one will come down and keep low," he added.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at close of play on the fourth day of the first Test between New Zealand and South Africa on Saturday:

Table with columns: Bowler, O, M, R, W. Includes entries for Tuffey, Oram, Cairns, Vettori, Wiseman, Styris, McMillan.

claimed the important wicket of Vaughan for 15 with a delivery that moved off the seam and found the edge, with Lara taking the catch at second slip.

Edwards almost got a third wicket in the morning session when Butcher edged to short leg but Ramnareesh Sarwan failed to take the sharp chance.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at close of play on the second day of the first Test between West Indies and England at Sabina Park on Friday:

Table with columns: Bowler, O, M, R, W. Includes entries for Hoggard, Harmison, Flintoff, Jones, Giles, Vaughan.

England: First Innings. Trescothick b Edwards 7. Vaughan c Lara b Edwards 15. Butcher c Jacobs b Edwards 58. Hussain not out 41. Thorpe not out 1. Extras: (b-4, lb-16, w-3, nb-9) 32. Total: (For 3 wickets in 48.1 overs) 154.

Fall of wickets: 1-28, 2-33, 3-152. To bat: Flintoff, Read, Giles, Jones, Harmison, Hoggard.

Table with columns: Bowler, O, M, R, W. Includes entries for Collymore, Edwards, Best, Sanford, Hinds, Gayle.

Cricket wins

FROM PAGE 13 "Our bowlers were off the mark and if Shoib Akhtar had got those early breakthroughs it might have been a different story," he said, referring to Virender Sehwag's dropped catch and Sachin Tendulkar's dismissal off a no-ball.

Inzamam said he would have termed his innings of 122 as the best of his side had won the match.

"We have four matches to go and I am confident we will win," he said.

The second one-dayer will be played in Rawalpindi on Tuesday.

CRYPTOQUIP

R'QH JHUWM FUYHP EL U QHWA IRX PFEOR RNUXH EL U IECHW RO HXAVF. OUNHM YHEO PJJROC. Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN CHUBBY CHECKER WENT TO BARS, DO YOU THINK HE ORDERED HIS DRINKS WITH A TWIST? Today's Cryptoquip Clue: P equals S

The Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to localizing vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Bayern feel for Madrid bomb victims

AFP, Munich German champions Bayern Munich have offered Real Madrid a benefit match for the estimated 200 victims who were killed by bomb attacks in the Spanish capital on Thursday.

The attacks, thought to have been instigated by Basque separatists or Islamic extremists, targeted commuter trains heading into Madrid just 24 hours after Real Madrid and Bayern Munich met in the Champions League duel at the Santiago Bernabeu.

"We are horrified by this terror and our support goes out to the victims and their families," explained Bayern vice-president Karl-Heinz Rummenigge.

"We did not discover how many victims and injured parties there were until we got back to Munich."

Bayern, who lost 1-0 to Real and were eliminated from the Champions League 2-1 on aggregate, are now prepared to play Madrid again in respect for the people who lost their lives and the suffering families.

DC Cup soccer Gaibandha in final

OUR CORRESPONDENT Gaibandha Pourashava Dal moved into the DC Gold Cup football tournament final defeating Dinajpur Zila Dal 3-1 in the first semifinal at Gaibandha Stadium on Thursday.

Nigerian recruit Alex netted two goals while Atrair scored the other for Gaibandha.

Mominul of Dinajpur Zila Dal netted a consolation goal.

Tigers' last shot

FROM PAGE 13 Bangladesh are expected to make one change to the team that narrowly lost the fourth one-dayer with all-rounder Manjural Islam being named in the 12-member squad.

"Manjural has been included in the 12-member squad and there is a possibility of another player coming in," Bangladesh team manager MA Latif told The Daily Star Sport over telephone last night.

But he declined to elaborate whom they would likely replace.

Latif said that the players had their last practice session under sunshine and they worked hard on their fielding. Bangladesh conceded 29 extras in the previous match to help Zimbabwe score a fighting 242.

When asked what was weather going to be like for the game he said forecast was for a partly cloudy sky with a slight chance of rain.

Dav Whatmore's charges will leave Zimbabwe on March 15 and they are expected to arrive home on March 17 after a rain-hit series.

Int'l Rating chess

SPORTS REPORTER Khandkar Aminul Islam and Mohammad Javed earned 4 points each after the end of the fifth round games of the second Parsvath International Rating Chess tournament in New Delhi on Friday.

International Masters Abdullah Al-Rakib, Emanuel Hossain Rajib and Abdul Maleq secured 3.5 points each. FM Abu Sufian Shakil, FM Sheikh Nasir Ahmed, Shawkat Hossain Pallab, Mehdi Hasan Parag, IWM Rani Hamid and Monjur Alam earned 3 points each.

In this round Amin beat International Master (IM) Rahul Shethy, Javed beat Somak Palit, Maleq drew with IM Saravanan. Rajib lost to IM Atanu Lahiri, Rakib lost to Women Grand Master Aarthie Ramaswamy, Shakil lost to Grand Master Koneru Humpy, Pallab lost to Abhijit, Monjur lost to Harika and Parag lost to Gurpi.

SCOREBOARD

FROM PAGE 13 Naveed not out 3. Extras: (b-10, nb-2, w-7) 19. Total: (For 8 wickets in 50 overs) 344. Fall of wickets: 1-32, 2-34, 3-169, 4-278, 5-305, 6-322, 7-340, 8-344. Did not bat: Akhtar, Sami.

Table with columns: Bowler, O, M, R, W. Includes entries for Balaji, Zaheer, Nehra, Ganguly, Tendulkar, Sehwag.

Result: India won by five runs and take 1-0 lead in the 5-match series. Man-of-the-match: Inzamamul Haq. Toss: Pakistan. Next match: March 16, Rawalpindi.

Thai PM in Pool talks

REUTERS, Bangkok Billionaire Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra is talking to Liverpool about taking a stake in the Premier League club after Fulham turned down his advances last year, an adviser says.

"We are still in talks and the prime minister is serious about this," Thawatchai Satchakul, manager of the Thai national soccer team who advised Thaksin during his pursuit of Fulham, told Reuters on Saturday.

"But there is no decision yet. Everything will depend on negotiations."

Last month, Thaksin, who made his money in telecommunications, revealed his interest in Liverpool after his bid for fellow Premier League club Fulham failed last year.

"His intention is similar to that five or six months ago when Fulham was the picture but his

Premiership preview MU change gears

Football something that would take years to get over.

"We have to look to the things we can control -- our character, attitude and performance. All that was there on Tuesday night and I couldn't have asked any more of the players."

"We will play a lot worse and win so we should not be feeling sorry for ourselves."

The temptation to do just that can be explained by a quick glance at the United injury list ahead of Sunday's first derby at the City of Manchester stadium.

With only three first team defenders available to him, Ferguson is expected to hand the 21-year-old Danny Pugh his first Premiership start in one of the fullback slots. A hamstring injury means captain Roy Keane is also absent while Eric Djemba Djemba is away on international duty with Cameroon.

With Portuguese teenager Cristiano Ronaldo also set to miss out with a thigh injury, Ferguson has little option but to give Ruud van Nistelrooy and Louis Saha another opportunity to forge an effective striking partnership.

If those two are firing on all cylinders City goalkeeper David James could be in for a baptism of

fire in his first Manchester derby. James missed out on United's FA Cup win at Old Trafford last month because he had played earlier in the tournament for West Ham.

But having played in derbies in London, Liverpool and Birmingham, the England keeper is confident he knows what to expect -- and insists he has a hunch about the outcome.

"It is the first derby at our new stadium and I feel instinctively it can be ours," he said, while acknowledging that City could feel the force of the backlash from United's bitterly disappointing experience against Porto.

"Good, bad or indifferent form prior to this game, they are still capable of being the best team in Europe on any given day," James said.

"We have to anticipate a tremendous performance from them but we gave Chelsea a really hard time when they played here a fortnight ago and they are equal to United just now, so there is no reason to be scared."

City will have Paulo Wanchope as part of their squad following the Costa Rican manager's return from injury in a reserve match earlier this week.

Under-23s suffer

FROM PAGE 13 Earlier the tourists added nine more runs to the overnight score of 319-9.

SCORE SUMMARY

ZIMBABWE A: First Innings 328 all out in 98.1 overs (Gripper 81, Sibanda 68, Coventry 30, Maregewede 32, Gavin Ewine 57, Panayanga 24, Razzak 3-103, Arafat Sunny 6-79, Faisal 1-13). BD UNDER-23: First Innings 157 all out in 47.4 overs (Imran 15, Naeem 28, Faisal 11, Arafat Sunny 23, Dhiman Gosh 35, Mwayenga 2-14, Panayanga 2-39, Ewine 2-40, Gripper 2-12). ZIMBABWE A: Second Innings 93 for 3 in 34 overs (Gripper 59 not out, Elton Chigumbura 17 not out; Syed Russell 2-6).

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focus is on Liverpool now," Thawatchai said.

Liverpool Chairman David Moores has a 51 per cent share in the club, estimated to be worth around 40 million pounds. His family built up the successful

Thawatchai said if there was an agreement with Liverpool, Thaksin may not carry it out alone.

"I'm sure we would ask others to join and it's reasonable for Charoen to take part as he already supports sport activities here," he said in reference to Thai tycoon Charoen Sirivadhanabhakdi.

Thaksin, estimated to be worth one billion dollars (550 million pounds) by Forbes magazine in 2002, watched the value of his family's holdings soar along with a surging Thai stock market last year.

The family controls Thailand's largest telecommunications group, Shin Corp, with interests in wireless ranging from satellite to the Internet and media.

It also indirectly controls ITV, the country's third most popular television channel.

Charoen is a major shareholder in top Thai beer maker Thai Beverages, which produces top selling Chang Beer and several brands of whisky such as Mekong and Saeng Som and makes a profit of more than 250 million dollars a year.

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THAKSIN SHINAWATRA

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All of it makes Warne

Cricket bowled between the wars.

He soon became his captain's first choice because of his extraordinary talent to win matches from hopeless situations. Allan Border, Mark Taylor and Steve Waugh all were indebted to

him for many of their successes. Leg-break, flipper, top-spinner and googly returned in vogue with Warne's each Test series, giving the batsmen many a sleepless night. The more they tried to solve the Warne puzzle, they more they failed.

One of his most memorable moments came in 1994-95 when he claimed his only Test hat-trick against England.

Warne buried many myths during his illustrious career, the prominent being that spinners are redundant in one-dayers.

The West Indies were strongly placed at 165-2 chasing a modest Australian total of 207 in the 1996 World Cup semifinal at Mohali in India when Warne turned the match upside-down with three quick wickets.

Australia eventually won the match by five runs, and there is no prize for guessing the man-of-the-match.

Warne was again the match-winner with four crucial wickets in the famous tied World Cup semifinal against South Africa in England in 1999. The result helped his team to qualify for the final.

Australia went on to win the final against Pakistan, with Warne grabbing four wickets to claim the second successive man-of-the-match award.

India remains the only place where the Warne magic has failed. The leg-spinner has visited the country twice, only to return as a shattered man with plenty of doubts

TOP WKT-TAKERS

Table with columns: Bowler, Country, Wkts. Includes entries for CWalsh, SWarner, MMitharan, KDev, RHadlee, G McGrath, WAKram, CAmrose, JBThomas, AKumble.

CPC sports

Cu CORRESPONDENT The month long annual sports competition of Chittagong Press Club (CPC) began at the club premises on Friday.

President of CPC Abu Sufian inaugurated the meet.

Magura soccer

OUR CORRESPONDENT Dariapur Jubo Sangha defeated Mayer Doa Sporting Club 2-1 in the Econo First Division Football League at the Magura Stadium yesterday.

Kartik and Tushar netted one goal each for the winners while Monwar reduced the margin scoring the lone goal for the losers.

Shafiq Smriti Sangad will take on Satyapur Jubo Sangha today at the same venue.



American International University-Bangladesh (AIUB) Vice Chancellor Dr Carmen Z Lamagna is speaking at a press conference at the NACB auditorium yesterday on the occasion of the third inter-private university AIUB Cup cricket tournament which will be held on March 15.