

'Another Packer show in offing'

AFP, Lahore

Former South African batsman Barry Richards warned Sunday that one-sided cricket matches and rows over player salaries could see the game's best players drawn away from Test cricket.

"Test status should carry the responsibility of being competitive, if it doesn't there is every chance that another Kerry Packer scenario could evolve," Richards told a cricket seminar arranged by the Asian Cricket Council (ACC).

Australian media tycoon Packer organised World Series Cricket in late 1970s to pay players more than they used to get from their home country boards.

"Continually serving up one-sided international games does no good for the credibility of the game for television, sponsors and spectators want top games," said Richards, who played four Tests in 1969-70 before South Africa was banned over its policy of apartheid.

Zimbabwe, who became the ninth Test nation, were whitewashed 5-0 in one-dayers and thrashed by an innings by Sri Lanka in the first of two Tests in their home series.

Bangladesh, who became the tenth Test nation in 2000, has not won a Test in 28 attempts.

"I believe ICC must be vigilant in ensuring that Test cricket remains the best it can be, and Test cricket should not be compromised and the gulf between the teams is ever widening."

Richards said players and administrators have had different views. "Players felt administrators were there for the kudos and the administrators felt players were greedy for wanting to be professionals and be paid for what they are good at."

Richards, a dashing opener who also played for Packer, said professionalism isn't harmful.

"No, on the contrary there is probably not enough professionalism," he said.

Bond stakes

FROM PAGE 13 Andrew Hall who was clean bowled for seven.

**BRIEF SCORES** Worcestershire 270-9 declared (Ben Smith 92, Nadeem Malik 39 not out, Graeme Hick 36; Daryl Tuffey 4-57) against New Zealand.

Inquiry a big

FROM PAGE 13 told AFP: "I will have a rest and scans on my injuries before I regain full fitness to play for Durham. No player can imagine faking an injury and I always take pride in playing for Pakistan."

Akhtar made his Test debut under Wasim Akram against the West Indies in 1997-98.

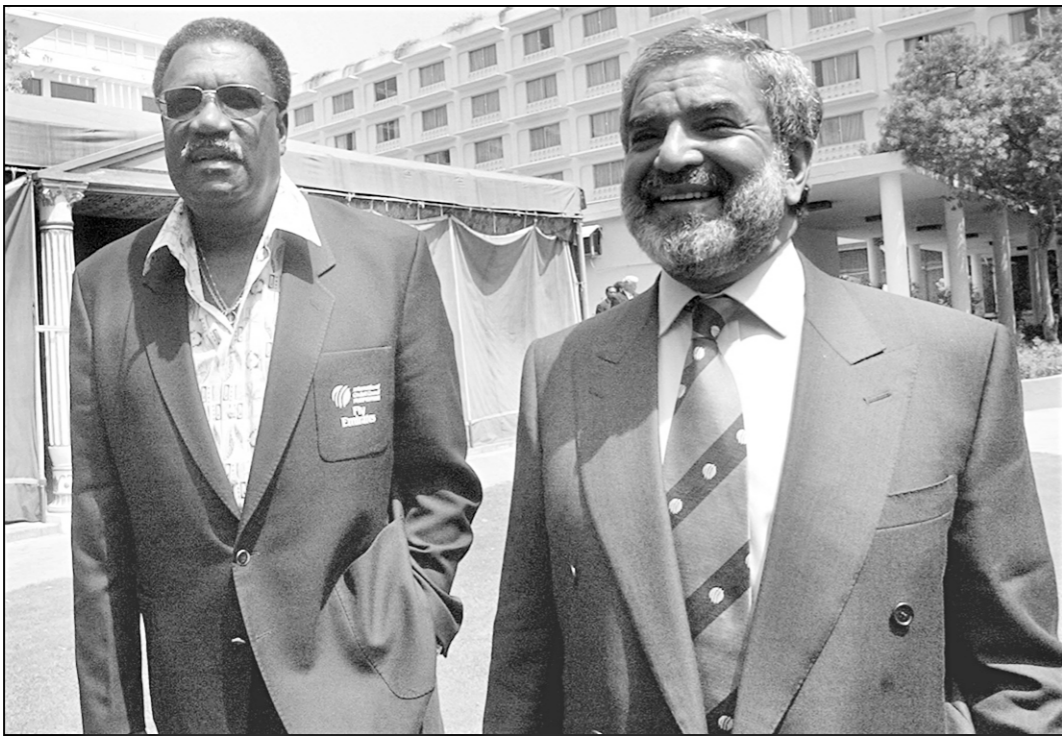
Earlier, Akhtar escaped with a caution from the PCB after suggestions he feigned the injury.

"We have decided not to impose any penalty on him. But the board has taken serious note of Akhtar's conduct after he left the field, which according to the doctors, management and captain, demoralised the spirit in the dressing room," PCB chairman Shaharyar Khan told a press conference in the eastern city of Lahore on Saturday.

"He has been warned that he will not in future be given special treatment on the basis of reputation and that he will have to demonstrate his discipline, his fitness and to prove his playing ability in domestic cricket to earn selection."

The medical commission found a stress injury to one of Akhtar's ribs but could not judge if was new or old. Shaharyar said other players had received similar warnings.

"The manner in which the team surrendered in the final Test was disgusting. Other offending members of the team must also share the blame for not showing grit and fighting spirit," he added.



International Cricket Council president Ehsan Mani (R) and ICC match referee Clive Lloyd arrive at a two-day Asian Cricket Council seminar in Lahore yesterday.

ACC seminar on German Open Mauresmo's

AFP, Lahore

A two-day Cricket Council (ACC) seminar will discuss Asia's big strides in the sport and how to develop them further in the wake of improved ties between India and Pakistan, an official said Saturday.

"The revival of cricketing ties between Pakistan and India is a big boost and top experts from around the world will gather at the May 9-10 seminar to further discuss the development of the sport," ACC chief executive Ashrafuq Huq said at the launching of the event.

India last month completed a historic deadlock-breaking cricket tour of Pakistan, their first across the border for 15 years.

"Cricket was poorer without matches between Pakistan and India and now we hope that the sport will attain new heights in the near future," said Huq, who hails from Bangladesh.

International Cricket Council (ICC) president Ehsan Mani and chief executive Malcolm Speed will also join discussions during the ACC seminar.

Former West Indies cricket great Clive Lloyd will speak on the rise and fall of West Indies cricket and ex-Australian star Greg Chappell will speak on the "secret of the best batsmen and how to train them".

Former South African batsman Barry Richards will also give his views on "professionalism in cricket".

Huq said July's Asia Cup in Sri Lanka will further help strengthen India-Pakistan ties and give a boost to cricket in Hong Kong and the United Arab Emirates.

"UAE has improved by leaps and bounds but Hong Kong has not improved the way we would have liked but we have special programmes for upcoming Asian countries which will lift their standards," he said.

Nepal's win over a professional South Africa in the Under-19 World Cup this year speaks volume of the progress of the game in Asia, said Huq.

"The discussion will take cricket much more ahead as we will have opinions from former greats and other technocrats," ACC president Mohammad Ali Asghar said.

AFP, Berlin

Amelie Mauresmo was awarded her second German Open title on Sunday when Venus Williams defaulted the final because a left ankle sprain left her on crutches.

The injury is another setback for the former world number one, who in the same period last year suffered a stomach muscle injury during the Warsaw final - ironically against Mauresmo.

Although she then struggled until Wimbledon, where she fought through obvious pain before losing the final to sister Serena, she played no more events for the rest of the year.

After her return at the Australian Open in January, a leg muscle injury forced her to default her quarter-final match in Tokyo, and she then withdrew from Antwerp.

Upon her second comeback, Williams won Charleston, and then added two victories in the United States' Fed Cup victory over Slovenia, and followed up by winning the Warsaw event last week with a win over Svetlana Kuznetsova. Her default brought to an end to a 15-match winning streak.

Moya-Nalbandian showdown

AFP, Rome

Spanish sixth seed Carlos Moya beat Mariano Zabaleta in straight sets to reach the final of the clay court Rome Masters on Saturday.

Moya, the French Open champion in 1998, won 6-3, 6-4 to prevent an all-Argentine final after fifth seed David Nalbandian had booked his place earlier in the day with victory over Albert Costa.

Moya, who had only lost once to Zabaleta in seven meetings, served supremely and his ferocious forehand rarely let him down as he wrapped up the match in 77 minutes at the Foro Italo.

The 27-year-old Spaniard made the breakthrough in the sixth game, breaking the unseeded Zabaleta before closing out the set without breaking sweat.

And Moya continued his dominance in the second, breaking in the seventh game before punishing Zabaleta's weak serve once more to complete the job.

Moya, who had never gone beyond the quarterfinal before in his previous eight appearances in Rome, was at a loss to explain why he hadn't done better in the Italian capital.

"I don't know why I have struggled here, but I knew that it was only a matter of time before my luck changed," he said.

"I like it here. I like the court, I like the tournament and I like the people."

"It's been a great week for me and my confidence has grown with every match."

"I'm looking forward to the final and I will try to go out there and enjoy myself."

Zabaleta, whose victims this week included last year's champion Felix Mantilla and fourth seed Tim Henman, was disappointed not to add Moya to his list of scalps.

"I just didn't play today. I don't know why, I just froze," he said.

Nalbandian, the highest seed left in the tournament, claimed his place in the final after fighting back from a set down to beat unseeded Spaniard Costa.

The 22-year-old Argentinian, a quarter-finalist at this year's Australian Open, recovered from a poor start to defeat the 2002 French Open winner 6-7, 6-1, 6-4 in two hours and 36 minutes.

A thrilling semi-final victory for Nalbandian, that might have been wrapped up a lot sooner had he not committed 51 unforced errors, means he is the first Argentinian to reach the final here since Alberto Mancini in 1991.

Costa, who defeated world number one Roger Federer in the second round, was looking to reach the final for a second time having done so in 1998 only to hand Chilean Marcelo Rios a walkover due to a wrist injury.

Greene wins Japan GP

AFP, Osaka

Sydney Olympic Games champion Maurice Greene was just two hundredths of a second off his fastest time of the season in winning the men's 100 metres at the IAAF Japan Grand Prix on Saturday.

The triple world sprint champion clocked 10.04 seconds, beating fellow Americans J.J. Johnson by seven tenths of a second and Mickey Grimes by eight tenths.

Greene, the winner here in 2000 and 2001, said after his win: "As far as my race, it was OK. I planned to run faster than I did, but I have to take the win as I did it."

Earlier in the day, world bronze medalist Liu Xiang of China set a new Asian record in the men's 110m hurdles to avenge his loss at the world championships to American Allen Johnson.

The 20-year-old Chinese athlete clocked 13.06 to beat Johnson into second place by seven hundredths of a second and Maurice Wignall of Jamaica into third. World silver medalist Terrence Trammell, from the US, was fourth in 13.31.

Liu's time meant he beat his own previous Asian record of 13.12 set in 2002 when he was 18.

"I'm not in good shape, I feel pain in my leg, but I'm satisfied with the result very much," said a jubilant Liu, the Asian Games gold medalist. He had hurt his knee during practice shortly before the race.

"It was the first time I took part in an international competition this season. Maybe the other two (Johnson and Wignall) had already run, but I was able to beat them today."

Murali-mania

FROM PAGE 13 wicket mark if he continued to play.

"If he continues for a few more years, I am sure that he will go on to pick up 1,000 wickets in Test cricket," Muttiah said adding that he was "disappointed" over the controversy surrounding his son's bowling action.

Dinajpur, Dhaka

FROM PAGE 13 the regulation period ended 1-1. Loves put Sylhet ahead three minutes after the kickoff while Bimal equalised in the 38th minute to take the match into penalty shootout.

Sylhet will take on hosts Comilla in the zonal final.

Flemo doesn't buy it

Cricket

AFP, London

New Zealand captain Stephen Fleming said on Sunday he did not accept the common judgement in the sport that he was the best international skipper.

However it didn't stop the 31-year-old from telling the Sunday Times that his squad - which are set to begin their three Test series at Lord's on Thursday week - were better than the one that toured and beat England in the Test series in 1999.

While cricket stars of the past and present such as England's John Emburey and Aussie spin master Shane Warne have given him the tag of the best skipper, Fleming is refreshingly modest about it.

"I like hearing about it, but I don't buy into it," he said.

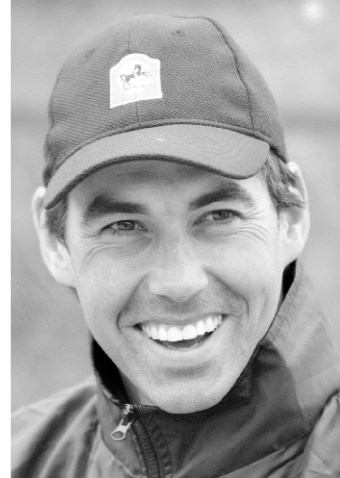
"I've been lucky to have seven years in the job."

"Put a lot of players in the job for seven years, and they'd get good."

"Psychology is a big part, but so is identifying your strengths and weaknesses."

"Until you realise those, you can't plan," said the 82-test veteran, who has an average of 38 and six centu-

ries to his name. Fleming admits the atmosphere has changed markedly since he first arrived on the scene in 1994 and was soon embroiled in controversy



STEPHEN FLEMING

when he and two other players were punished for smoking cannabis.

"I've got a settled group of senior players who understand what I am thinking and I am confident enough to tap into them," said Fleming, who has led the Kiwis to a record 20 wins

in 58 tests including recent drawn series away in India and at home to the South Africans.

"We're never going to be outwardly confident, that's not our nature, but this is the most talented side I've been involved in."

"We don't know how good we can be, which is exciting."

However Fleming acknowledges that while they may not express their confidence outwardly he and the team have developed a harder edge as they demonstrated against South Africa when he sledged their captain Graeme Smith.

"He (Smith) is an emotional guy. That's one thing we thought we would explore and he took the bait."

"I like the guy, but I remember Steve Waugh doing the it to me, and I enjoyed the experience. I learnt a lot," said Fleming, who admits he learnt most about captaincy from Waugh's stewardship of Australia.

However Fleming concedes that similar tactics won't work against his phlegmatic English opposite number Michael Vaughan.

"He's not emotional; he's pretty relaxed."

"There's not much he gives away."



Young BKSP shooter Sharmin Akhter, who won a gold medal in the 9th SAF Games in Islamabad, was accorded a reception by Grameen Bank on Saturday. Managing director of Grameen Bank Muhammad Yunus and Sharmin's family members attended the function.

'WC win was bigger'

Cricket

AFP, Harare

Spin king Muttiah Muralitharan believes Sri Lanka's World Cup triumph in 1996 is a bigger achievement than him setting a new world record for Test match wickets.

The controversial off-spinner smashed affectionately known as Murali through Courtney Walsh's old record of 519 victims here on Saturday as Sri Lanka crushed Zimbabwe in the first Test by an innings and 240 runs.

The controversial spinner affectionately known as Murali smashed through Courtney Walsh's old record of 519 victims in Harare Saturday as Sri Lanka crushed Zimbabwe in the first Test by an innings and 240 runs.

He finished the game with match figures of 8-92 to take his career tally to 521.

"The World Cup was something different," said the 32-year-old. "You can't forget that. It was tremendous. It is bigger than my individual performance here."

"The world record still means a lot to me and for Sri Lanka. We are a small country unlike Australia or India and performances like this help to give the country a good image," he said.

"It will also encourage a lot of youngsters to take to the game and one day perform at this level. They will want to be like me or some of the other cricketers, to become world champions for the country."

Murali's moment of history came when Mahela Jayawardene caught Muleki Nkala at silly point but the spinner was keen to praise the efforts of



MUTTIAH MURALITHARAN

his teammates.

"I was thankful it was over," he admitted. "I said to myself it's gone now I can relax. Then off the next ball I got another wicket. I was so anxious that I wasn't putting the ball in the right place."

My teammates said to put the ball in the right place and it will come. Eventually it came in the eighth over."

Muralitharan revealed that he owed a great debt to pace bowlers Chaminda Vaas and Nuwan Zoysa who had reduced the home side to 18-5 at one stage before pleading with skipper Marvan Atapattu to give him the ball.

"It was wonderful getting the record," said Muralitharan who had pulled level with Walsh's 519 after the first innings here.

"I was a bit nervous when I was on 519 because wickets were falling. I have to thank Chaminda and Marvan for helping me get to the record. Vaas was bowling brilliantly at one end and had he continued the game would have been over."

"But he told the captain to stop him and give me the bowling to get to that one wicket. It was all a team game."

He said his best Test performance came in 1998 when he took 16 for 221 against England at The Oval and that former skipper Arjuna Ranatunga had been a pivotal influence.

"Arjuna guided me throughout my career for an eight-year period till 1999. He stood by me when I was in trouble with my bowling action twice, which got him into trouble," said Muralitharan.

"He is the most meaningful person in my career. Others have also helped me, but Ranatunga deserves a special place."

His record-breaking achievement was witnessed by just 400 spectators at the Harare Sports Club but Muralitharan refused to be drawn into the controversy over the make-up of the Zimbabwe team which contained five new caps after former skipper Heath Streak and his fellow white rebels refused to play.

"Zimbabwe has played the best available team they could have put out," said Muralitharan who will be looking to add to the tally when the second and final Test starts in Bulawayo on Friday.

He also knows his record may not stand for long.

Australia tour here later this month with leg-spin legend Shane Warne, already with 517 wickets, set to surpass the Sri Lankan.

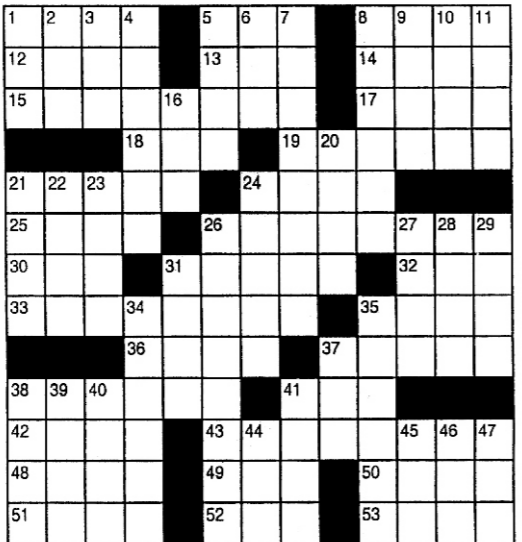
Zia, Saptarshi

FROM PAGE 13 Sayantan Dutta of India, Gurpreet Pal Singh of India beat FM Khandker Aminul Islam, IM Dinesh Kumar Sharma of India beat Saif Uddin Lavlu, Arghadeep Das beat Chanchal Kumar Gosh, Suvrajit Saha of India beat Abdul Maleq, K Visweswaran of India beat FM Rezaul Haque, FM Sheikh Nasir Ahmed beat Mehdi Hasan Parag, Shawkat Hossain Pollab beat Shankaj Modwal of India, Monir Hossain beat Amran Monir Krishna Thapa of Nepal beat Sahaj Grover.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 36 Rudimentary 2 William Tell's stage 21 Object on 1 Inane learning 5 Play with robots 37 Attack 3 Hr. maker 8 Marshy area 38 Rough division 22 Jeans- 41 Shelter 4 "Reds" 23 Chester — Arthur 42 Jessica star 24 Appor- 5 Risque 6 Put to 26 Ideas 43 Wages work 26 Ideas 48 Stead 7 Impish 27 Help a 49 Seesaw 8 City on hood 28 Sans staff 50 Malaria Lawrence 29 Song of 9 E pluribus 31 Wozniak 51 Crease 52 D.C. 34 Pillage 53 Frayed 11 Hoodlum 37 Fraction 16 Japanese of 3-Down 1 Fine, theater 20 Crooner 38 A little 1 in rap 20 Crooner 38 A little 25 Depend (on) 39 Medley 40 First victim 41 French city 44 Shock and — 45 Swelled head 46 Mongrel 47 Under- standing

Solution time: 21 mins. JOE CHAIR SAT ORN HENCE AMI YOUSALDIT YAK ERILIT NEWAGE YEAH UGH EST DRESS DOOM SAM EELY ESSSES BAR SON PAMPY DELETE PAYOLA ICE HIS OLDSAVING LIDS SLOOP SEE LEO HYMNS MEIT



CRYPTOQUIP S G M P F M B Q Q B I M P W G E Z V V W , M Z B I S G V V I Q F V J J B Q V R M S E V R W Q I ' M Z P I Q W B M Z B M V V M Z . Yesterday's Cryptiquip: IF YOU GO TO AEROBICS CLASS, I GUESS THAT COULD BE THOUGHT OF AS DROOP THERAPY. Today's Cryptiquip Clue: G equals S The Cryptiquip 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 locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.