

Dutch tourney kicks off with Indo-Pak tie

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan and India will open a one-day tri-series which will bring big-time cricket to the Netherlands on August 21, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) announced Wednesday.

World champions Australia will also play in the series.

"The final Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is to be signed shortly and involved boards of Pakistan, India and Australia besides the involvement of the Netherlands board," PCB general manager cricket operations Zakir Khan told AFP.

The Netherlands' Amstelveen stadium hosted one match in the 1999 World Cup held in England.

Australia will take on India on August 23 and two days later square off with Pakistan. The final will be played on August 28.

Until March last year, Pakistan and India had played only one one-day match in three years. India broke the deadlock over political tension between the two countries by touring Pakistan earlier this year after a gap of 15 years.

The traditional rivals are also due to lock horns in the six-nation Asia Cup in Sri Lanka next month and will play before an already sold out crowd at Edgbaston, England when they meet in the 12-nation ICC (International Cricket Council) Champions Trophy on September 19 this year.

Pakistan is due to tour India to play three Tests and five one-day matches early next year.

BKSP becoming

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"The Kazakhstan youth (under-19) football team 3-0 but the same team went down 5-0 when they played the BKSP boys. Our Under-19 cricket team lost to New Zealand in the Youth World Cup. But our boys convincingly defeated the Kiwis a few days earlier. It proves that when the boys get out of there, they miss something."

"I think that at this stage, they miss the proper training and environment we provide here. We need to build up a player till 24 or 25 years of age because it needs at least 10-11 years to groom someone properly. But actually, most students leave us even before being 19. We have introduced degree courses to stop that but still, students with very poor educational background only stay back.

"If we could offer them honours or masters degrees, we could keep our students for the benefit of the whole country's sports. I know it's difficult but at least we can start with some easy subjects."

Arthritis stops Slater

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went away and thought about moving forward it wasn't the money at all, it was purely to do with my health and getting back on track and getting back to 100 per cent fitness," Slater said.

Cricket Australia Chief Executive James Sutherland paid tribute to Slater, one of the most dashing openers in Australian Test cricket.

"Michael is one of those rare players whose contribution to the game was even greater than his impressive statistics imply," Sutherland said in a statement.

"Fourteen Test tons is pretty impressive, and so was his role helping Australia back to the top."

"But it was his approach and obvious pride representing his country which inspired countless Australian kids and left fans with our most lasting memories of him as an international player."

"His practice of kissing the Australian coat-of-arms on his helmet upon reaching a century emphasised the passion and pride with which he represented our country."

Slater made his Test debut on

'Change rules ICC!



AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka Wednesday asked the International Cricket Council (ICC) to change laws in a bid to end controversy over the 'doosra' delivery of the world's highest Test wicket-taker Muttiah Muralitharan.

Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) president Mohan de Silva said he had asked the ICC to increase the tolerance limit to possibly 15 degrees.

The tolerance limits set by the ICC are five degrees for spinners, 7.5 for medium-pacers and 10 for pacemen.

"We have written to the ICC today asking them to review the tolerance limits based on a scientific study of bowling action of all bowlers," de Silva told reporters.

"We are not sure there should be one limit for a pace bowler and another for a spinner. A pace bowler can deliver a slow bowl and a spinner can deliver a fast bowl."

Japan crush India

AFP, Tokyo



2006 World Cup on Wednesday.

India, footballing novices who have never come close to qualifying for the World Cup, found a rampant Japan too hot to handle in Group 3 as they slumped to a 7-0 defeat at the Saitama Stadium.

South Korea, meanwhile, bidding for a sixth consecutive appearance in the World Cup finals, defeated Vietnam 2-0 while China trounced Malaysia 4-0.

Japan's victory saw the Asian champions maintain their 100 per cent start to preliminary qualifying after earlier wins over Oman and Singapore, who play in Muscat later Wednesday.

Tatsuhiko Kubo, Takashi Fukunishi, Shunsuke Nakamura, Takayuki Suzuki, Mitsuo Ogasawara and Yuki Nakazawa (2) all got on the scoresheet for Japan to the delight of Brazilian coach Zico.

The scoreline might not have been as emphatic but South Korea

"What are the limits to be applied in this case is not very clear to us. We want a thorough review of all this."

De Silva said he had the backing of at least six other Test playing countries in seeking a change of the bowling rules. He, however, declined to name them, only saying that they were mainly "Asian".

He said Sri Lanka Cricket had assembled a team of lawyers to prepare a document for the ICC and the use of a large contingent of legal experts was to show the ICC "that we mean business".

De Silva said Sri Lanka's Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse dropped the idea of suing the ICC after being advised of the proper procedure to follow by the local governing body of the sport.

He said the premier's backing was crucial to defend Muralitharan, whose bowling action was proved to be beyond the limits imposed by the ICC.

Rajapakse had said that Muralitharan, the most successful bowler in Test history with 527 wickets, was a national asset and he

would do everything within his power and that of the government to defend the bowler.

Muralitharan, whose unorthodox action has seen him being no-balled for 'throwing' in the past, came under fresh scrutiny because of the 'doosra'.

The bowler was told in April that if he persisted with it he could face a year-long ban.

Muralitharan was sent to Australia to work on his action after he was reported by English match-referee Chris Broad following the third and final Test against Australia at Colombo in March.

ICC chief executive Malcolm Speed had already said that a report forwarded to him by Sri Lanka Cricket but compiled by the University of Western Australia, meant Muralitharan's 'doosra' could no longer be tolerated.

The report showed an initial straightening of the arm by 14 degrees which after remedial work was reduced to 10 degrees, still five degrees more than the level of tolerance for spinners.

BCB picks 11

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has picked up eleven pace bowlers to join the Under-17 fast bowling camp.

The players are: Nazmul Hossain Milon, Shakib Al Shams, Jashim Uddin, Aslam Khan, Iqbal Hossain, Saif Mahmood, Ariful Islam, Imtiaz Kabir, Shirajullah Khadem, Ariful Islam Sabuj and Saifi Moazzem.

They are asked to report to BCB's development coach Richard McInnes before 4:30pm on Friday at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Rating chess

SPORTS REPORTER

International Master Abdullah Al Rakib won his third board against Dinayet in the Open FIDE Rating Chess competition to maintain his lead along with 14 other players at the federation hall-room yesterday.

The other leaders are: FIDE Master Abu Sufian Shakil, FIDE Master Sheikh Nasir Ahmed, Saifuddin Lavlu, Abdul Maleq, Mah-fuzur Rahman Emon, Mohammed Javed, Debraj Chatarjee, Kazi Taherul Islam, Mahtabuddin Tabir, ASM Naser, Uten, Sohail Chowdhury, Imran Ali and Nazrana Khan Iva.

NFL from June 25

SPORTS REPORTER

The qualifying rounds of the Nitol-Tat 4th National Football League (NFL) will start from June 25 at six different venues across the country.

The league committee in its yesterday's meeting deferred the kick-off date by four days on request of the district organisers.

A total of 42 teams will take part in the qualifiers as representatives from Feni and Madaripur were included at the last moment yesterday. Sirajganj Mohammedan, who played in the final rounds last year, failed to make it to the qualifiers this time as their entry was cancelled.

The NFL committee in their first meeting also finalised six venues for the qualifiers.

The venues are: Narsinghdi, Bagerhat, Natore, Jhenidah, Chandpur and Kamalapur Stadium for services zone.

CJKS school TT

CU CORRESPONDENT

Municipal Model High School retained the team title in the CJKS-Aniruddha Barua Ani Memorial School Table Tennis competition beating Government Muslim High School by 3-0 at the CJKS gymnasium yesterday.

In the boys (Under-13) singles semifinals, Asif of Muslim High School defeated Anik of Municipal Model High School 3-2 while Reagan of Municipal Model High School defeated Shoaib Muslim High School 3-1.

Tigers return

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meet the day after the team arrives here. We will announce a very short preliminary list because we will get only fifteen days at home for preparation," he informed.

The Bangladesh team is expected to leave for Sri Lanka two weeks before the regional tournament kicks off on July 16. They will play three practice matches in Sri Lanka.

The Tigers are pitted against reigning champions Pakistan and Hong Kong in Group A in the six-team meet. Group B comprises India, Sri Lanka and United Arab Emirates.

Meanwhile, no date for Dav Whatmore's return was confirmed. He left the squad in the West Indies to attend the funeral of his brother-in-law in Australia.

Cairns' Test swansong

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Shane Bond, New Zealand's quickest bowler, left England without sending down a solitary Test match delivery, the former policeman still not recovered from a stress fracture of the back.

That left the tourists without a spearhead and Cairns, who once led the Black Caps' attack, made no secret of his frustration.

"The last two years have been particularly tough for me because the mind is willing but the body at times is not."

"I've always been somebody who has played aggressively wanted to lead from the front and really take the game on and I found myself for the first time ever in my career wondering if I could do it."

"It dawned on me during the last game my body is not in the same state as the mind is and that's tough," explained Cairns, whose three wickets in the series to date have cost an expensive 64 runs each.

"I was watching (Stephen) Harmison and (Matthew) Hoggard on Sunday evening when they ran

in and won the game for England in that four-wicket burst and that's when it really dawned on me that it was time to call it a day... I just physically cannot run in like I used to."

But Cairns, who was doubtful about touring, said he was happy to be bowing out at Trent Bridge.

"This is my home-away-from-home. When I saw the itinerary it seemed fitting."

In his early career Cairns, who admitted he "didn't really buckle down" until his late 20s, was accused of wasting his talent while at the same time trying to cope with being 'Lance's son'.

Cairns added: "I think New Zealand cricket is in better hands than when I began. If you can leave the game better than when you began, that's the most important thing."

Asked how he would like to finish in Tests, Cairns said: "Individual performance is shallow without a victory."

"If I don't do anything in the game and we win I'll be happy."

Spain relying on Raul

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and it could work in their favour after their repeated failure to live up to expectations.

Time and again the Spanish have set off with hopes high that this will finally be their year only to troop home disappointed, more often than not after a quarter-final exit.

Portugal have also been struggling for form and if they were not been hosting the tournament their results going into it would have seen them listed among the outsiders.

While it is never easy to gauge championship readiness from non-competitive matches, Portugal's efforts in major friendlies over the last 18 months have been dire.

They have failed to beat any of the Euro 2004 finalists in seven attempts since Brazil's World Cup-winning coach Luiz Felipe Scolari took over early in 2003 and most of their wins have come against the likes of Kazakhstan, Albania and Kuwait.

However, the worries should all be forgotten in the excitement of the tournament's opening game on Saturday when Portugal play Greece in Porto, followed just under three hours later by Spain against Russia in Faro.

The bulk of the players who took Portugal so agonisingly and controversially close to the final in 2000 are still in place.

Real Madrid forward Luis Figo and Lazio centre-back Fernando Couto each have more than 100

caps while Rui Costa is not far off his century. All three are playing in their third European championship -- a record for Portugal.

Prolific Paris St Germain striker Pauleta, now 31, brings a wealth of experience while promising Manchester United winger Cristiano Ronaldo adds the verve of youth.

Portugal also have history on their side having never lost a group phase match at any European championship after six wins and three draws.

Greece, who qualified ahead of Spain after beating them 1-0 in Zaragoza a year ago, also drew 1-1 with Portugal in a friendly last November and the country's experienced squad will not be deterred by their underdog status.

They have the individual quality and team spirit to make a mark but their lack of tournament experience -- this is only their third major finals after appearances in the 1994 World Cup and 1980 European Championship-ships -- could be their Achilles heel.

Russia, despite having to qualify via a playoff victory over Wales, are a vastly experienced tournament nation although they have failed to punch their weight in recent years.

They will equal the competition record of eight matches without a win if they fail to beat Spain in their opening match.

They remain something of an unknown quantity for the local sides having last played Spain in 1998 and Portugal way back in 1983 when they were still the Soviet Union.

The Arsenal factor



AFP, Lisbon

English Premiership champions Arsenal will make the case for the defence when England take on European champions France in their Euro 2004 opener on Sunday in Lisbon with centre half Sol Campbell and left back Ashley Cole lynchpins of the national side.

The trouble for "les rosbifs," as the holders fondly refer to their cross-Channel neighbours, is that Arsenal will also provide the sharp end of the French attack in the shape of Footballer of the Year Thierry Henry.

With Henry backed up by Gunners teammates Robert Pires and Patrick Vieira and with Euro 2000 hero Sylvain Wiltord also

England's answer to Henry when it comes to fleetness of foot and eye for goal, Liverpool's Michael Owen, sees the Arsenal whippet as the key dangerman, even though France have Pires and triple world player of the year Zinedine Zidane close behind him.

"I've got the utmost respect for Thierry Henry. He's taken striking to a new level, with his all-round game," Owen said on Tuesday as he contemplated the task ahead with England keen to get off to a flier in Group B before further encounters with Switzerland and Croatia.

England may have to turn to some unlikely heroes if Chelsea defender John Terry does not recover from a hamstring strain which forced him to miss England's final warm-up match against Iceland.

Terry missed Tuesday training at England's headquarters just outside Lisbon and appeared at the

this evening and the good news is that it revealed no muscle damage," an England spokesman said.

"He will continue aggressive rehabilitation work but he remains in the balance for the France match."

With Rio Ferdinand of Manchester United suspended and Jonathan Woodgate and Gareth Southgate unfit, Terry had expected to slot alongside Campbell, but in his likely absence Liverpool's Jamie Carragher, who has spent most of his career a fullback, is likely to step in.

The task facing him could hardly be greater with Henry and Juventus hitman David Trezeguet -- who resumed training on Tuesday after sitting out three days because of a sprained ankle -- bearing down on the England rearguard and Pires and Zidane right behind them.

Owen says Carragher will be equal to the task.

"Jamie is one of the most intelligent players you can have. If you said to him to go and play in midfield or up front, it would take him two seconds to settle in."

Zidane's Real Madrid clubmate David Beckham is set to start for England after having an injection to remove an inflamed cyst from his back in Manchester on Saturday.

The French squad jetted into the northern city of Porto on Tuesday and headed for their base at Santo Tirso, some 15 miles to the north of the city in a hotel where the French party have made a block reservation to have the building to themselves.

With their last major tournament, the 2002 World Cup, having constituted a flop the French are doubly keen to score their first win over England at a major event in four attempts after a Euro 92 draw and English World Cup pool successes in 1966 and 1982.

In addition, coach Jacques Santini will be out to lift silverware in this his only finals with the national side as he last week sprung a surprise in announcing he is to take the reins at Tottenham next season.

Lilian Thuram, France hero in the 1998 World Cup semi-final with his two goals against Croatia, is set to win his 100th cap but veteran Marcel Desailly, the French record holder with 114 caps, will likely cede his place to Mikael Silvestre of Manchester United.

Santini, a former France international midfielder who led Lyon to their first league title in 2001, will from August look to give compatriot Arsene Wenger and the latter's Arsenal a run for their Premiership money.

But before moving to lift the spirits of one side of north London Santini is set to sink those of the whole of England at the Stadium of Light on Sunday.

The young guards



REUTERS, Lisbon

With few chances of promotion in the ranks of champions France and Italy -- the defensive doyens of Europe -- the brightest young defenders at Euro 2004 are likely to emerge from the continent's less fashionable leagues.

When Portugal take on Greece in the tournament's opening match on Saturday, two increasingly influential fullbacks will line up on opposite sides.

Greek right-back Yourkas Seitaridis faces a huge task in keeping Simao Sabrosa and Luis Figo at bay as they switch wings, but the 23-year-old will be unfazed.

Seitaridis came to prominence with a spectacular goal for Panathinaikos against Manchester United in the Champions League in 2001 and has been improving ever since.

His opposite number will be 25-year-old attacking right-back Paulo Ferreira, who showed true class in helping Porto to victory in the Champions League this season.

He is set to follow Jose Mourinho to Chelsea where he will play alongside John Terry, one of two 23-year-olds in the England backline along with left back Ashley Cole.

Russian defensive pair Alexander Anyukov, 21, and Alexei Bugayev, 22, may have more of an impact on the tournament than anyone could have expected.

Russia, who play Spain in their first game in Group A, have had a terrible run of injuries and the two youngsters could be pitched straight in at Faro.

Germany's Andreas Hinkel, 22, and his 20-year-old Stuttgart colleague Philipp Lahm have strong claims for places in the side for the opening game against the Netherlands in Group D.

John Heitinga is unlikely to start for the Dutch in that game but the time will surely come for the 20-year-old Ajax Amsterdam centre-back, tipped as the next Frank de Boer.

Tomas Hueschman, the 22-year-old Czech centre-back, should have a better chance to make a breakthrough.

Hueschman captained his country at the 2001 World Youth Championship, helped his side to

Voeller undaunted

REUTERS, AFP, Berlin

Germany headed for Euro 2004 on Wednesday, promising their fans that there would be no repeat of two recent embarrassing losses.

"We would love to have left for Portugal on the back of a win. But we shouldn't over-dramatise the loss to Hungary -- it served as a warning but -- it must not upset our plans," coach Rudi Voeller told a news conference in Frankfurt.

Germany, to be based near Faro, were jeered off the pitch on Sunday after the 2-0 loss at home to Hungary. They also lost 5-1 to Romania in April.

Voeller stressed that only "Day X" counted, namely next Tuesday when Germany play Holland in their opening Group D match. The Czech Republic and Latvia are also in the group.

"I know the team has another side to it. In Bucharest it was a one-off slip-up. Against Hungary, I think a few of the players already had their thoughts in Portugal," said Voeller who has yet to finalise his team for the crunch clash with Holland.

"Lots of positions are filled," he said.

But he admitted that the defeat to Hungary had left him guessing.

"We've still got almost a week and I want to see players going so well in training I have to play them," he added.

He said the debacle against a Hungary side containing eight players with less than 10 caps to their name was due to a lack of concentration in defence.

But he added: "We didn't score either and you can't win matches like that."

However, he said he was not afraid of the Dutch.

"We're not going to hide."

Captain Oliver Kahn also said the defeat against Hungary should not be exaggerated.

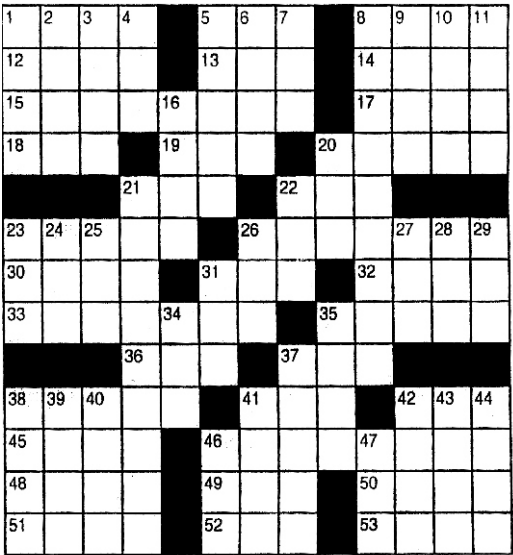
CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS  
1 Overconfident  
5 Monokini's lack  
8 First four of a series  
12 Actress Turner  
13 Old Olds  
14 Cordelia's dad  
15 Voting-site survey  
17 Mt. St. Helens' output  
18 Humor  
19 Do  
20 Heron's kin  
21 Despondent  
22 Piourette pivot  
23 Steek fabric  
26 Fairness  
30 Grand-scale tale  
31 "Doc" Holly-wood" star  
32 By word of mouth  
33 Calendar box

35 Airs for pairs  
36 Bagel  
37 Favorite  
38 Up  
41 Hobe  
42 Tackle  
45 — St. Vincent  
46 Deteriorate  
48 Belarussian, e.g.  
49 Pismire  
50 Wan  
51 Category  
52 "Mayday"  
53 Heidi's range

2 Long skirt  
3 Monad  
4 Hood's weapon  
5 All-encompassing  
6 Depend (on)  
7 "You've got mail"  
8 As — (to the extreme)  
9 Forest creature  
10 ... and its  
11 "Consummation"  
16 Blueprint  
20 Dawn goddess  
21 Absence  
27 Anger  
28 Feline  
29 Goller  
30 Ernie  
31 Send quickly  
34 Adams or Johnson  
35 Show-room sample  
37 Green shots  
38 Everything else  
39 Without doing anything  
40 Break suddenly  
41 U2  
42 "Kiss From a Rose"  
43 Iodine source  
44 Mid-month date  
46 Hindenburg fill  
47 Hot tub

22 Monkey suit  
23 Wild a needle  
24 Mimic  
25 Dead heat  
26 Raplure  
27 Anger  
28 Feline  
29 Goller  
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CRYPTOQUIP

D N V H V Y ' R C G Y R R L

W G S R H K H W G R N H Y R D N

S L V N L, E T R V H V E N K G T J N

D N C G J S L W N V H Y R L H R.

Yesterday's Cryptquip: DO YOU SUPPOSE A DOG POUND FULL OF YAPPING STRAYS IS ACTUALLY A USED CUR LOT?

Today's Cryptquip Clue: V equals D

The Cryptquip 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.