



CENTRE OF CONTROVERSY: construction work in progress on the site of a new stand at the Motera Cricket Stadium in Ahmedabad on February 7 ahead of the Pakistani cricket team's tour of India..

'We'll bounce back'

Cricket

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq and coach Bob Woolmer Tuesday said their battle-hardened cricket team could do well in the forthcoming tour of India after learning from their Australia defeats.

"For me it was an interesting tour which gave us a chance to pick the men out from the boys," Woolmer said on the team's return from Australia

Pakistan were whitewashed 3-0 in the Test series but beat Australia once and the West Indies twice to progress to the tri-series one-day finals, where they lost after two

close encounters "We have got very strong team spirit and can make rapid progress from here because we have identified some strong players," said Woolmer, who played for England

Parag needs

and also coached South Africa.

"We were a better side than some of the sides who lost 3-0 in Australia and gave the hosts tough fights in the Tests." Woolmer said.

"Overall it was a tough tour and we can capitalise on the lessons to do well in India." the coach said.

Pakistan will play three Tests and five one-day games on their first tour of India for six years starting later this month. 'India will be a different tour, but

as they (India) benefited from their tour of Australia in 2003 to beat Pakistan the following year, we can also make the best use of the Australian tour," said Woolmer.

Woolmer reiterated his belief that world champions Australia are

"There is no denying the fact that they are the premier side but they are beatable and if we keep perseverance and patience this team can beat Australia when they tour us in the next couple of years.

Inzamam who has been criticised for his allegedly passive captaincy and for sitting out the last two Tests with an injury, said defeat was always difficult to deal with.

"Everyone hates losing and so do I." said Inzamam.

"But overall I am not disanpointed. The tour has taught us some valuable lessons, and in the process of building the team brick by brick this can help a lot," he said.

"I have never been worried about my captaincy. Criticism comes when you lose but I am proud of this team, which did very well in the oneday tournament despite missing key bowlers Shoaib Akhtar and Mohammad Sami," Inzamam said.

He said the India tour would be "The pitches in India will suit us more, as they are more helpful than

in Australia and we are ready to put up our best, even if India plays a spinners-dominated team," he said.

SPORTS REPORTER

a draw

Mehdi Hassan Parag will need a draw in the ninth and final round of the BASIC Bank 26th National Junior Chess Championship today to retain his title.

The Bangladesh junior champion maintained his winning streak in the competition beating Mahtabuddin Ahmed Robin at the BCF hall-room in the eighth round vesterday.

On maximum eight points, Parag can only be toppled by Golam Mostafa Bhuiyan who is one point adrift at second place.

In other eighth round games, Mostafa defeated Liza, Ali beat Bashir, Nahid beat Saima, Nazir beat Salahuddin, Saif beat Sharif, Mahfuz beat Moni and Masum beat

Nilphamari cricket

OUR CORRESPONDENT

The Third Division Cricket League began here on Monday at the Nilphamari High School ground. On the opening day, Nilphamari

Milon Club defeated Nilphamari Young Progoti Cricket Club by 81 runs. Nilphamari Milon Club scored 236-7 in the stipulated 25 overs. They then booked their opponents

to 155 for eight. Twenty-four teams are taking part in the league that was inaugurated by the deputy commissioner.

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India being flexible

Cricket

AFP, New Delhi

India is not averse to dropping Ahmedabad as a Test venue for Pakistan's upcoming tour, a top cricket official said here on Tuesday.

"We have to find a solution that is acceptable to everyone," cricket board secretary Karunakaran Nair said after Pakistan rejected Ahmedabad as the venue for the second Test on their tour commencing February 25.

open in an effort to thrash out the issue at the earliest," said Nair.

"Pakistan have objected to Ahmedabad due to security concerns but we don't have any alternatives in mind vet." he added.

The southern Indian city of Madras was being tipped as a likely replacement for the match but Nair said this was pure speculation. "It is too early to talk about other

options as the board's programmes and fixtures committee has to first agree on an alternate venue and then forward it to the Pakistan board," he said. Nair was confident things would

be sorted out in plenty of time for Pakistan's first full tour of India in six years during which they will play three Tests and five one-dayers apart from two other tour games.

"We are in touch with Pakistan cricket officials in an effort to sort things out at the earliest and will then seek a final approval from the

By Eugene Sheffer

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India last month proposed the western city of Ahmedabad, where at least 2,000 people died in bloody Hindu-Muslim sectarian riots in 2002, as a Test venue.

Sobers to help **Scotland**

CRICINFO, undated

West Indies all-rounde Sir Garfield Sobers intends to assist the Scotland team for the 2007 World Cup, and help them make an impact on the tournament to be held in the Caribbean. Scotland participated in the 1999 World Cup in England and lost all five encounters against some of the best teams in the world.

Sobers has invited Craig White's side to participate in a newly launched tournament, the Sir Garry Sobers Barbados League Championship, to take place in September. And the Scots will be invited again the following year if they manage to qualify for the World

Don Gooding, Sobers's agent, said, "Gary really wants Scotland to come out to Barbados for his new tournament. He feels it would give the Scottish lads good exposure The Scottish lads need to get used to the conditions in the Caribbean if they are to compete in the World

CRYPTOQUIP

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OXFKERP OXFXED, RM

PWKFRKRJP

KJKED FXOEDD? Yesterday's Cryptoquip: I AM NOT TELLING ANOTHER SOUL THAT I STUPIDLY ATE SOME GLUE. MY LIPS ARE SEALED!

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: K equals T

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 locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Saglain's comback chance over

BBC ONLINE, undated

Spin bowler Saglain Mushtag's hopes of being included in the Pakistan squad for the tour of India have been dashed by injury.

Saqlain, who has taken 208 wickets in 49 Tests, had hoped to return to action this month after surgery on both knees.

But he is still on crutches and is unlikely to play again before the tour squad is announced.

Pakistan will also be without fast bowler Umar Gul, who is recovering from three stress fractures in his back

The 20-year-old was named man-of-the-match after last year's Test in Lahore against India, when his 5-31 in the first innings helped pave the way to a nine-wicket win. Gul's condition is being moni-

tored by specialists in South Africa and they plan to carry out a further examination in June. Pakistan are hopeful that pacemen Shoaib Akhtar and

Mohammad Sami will be fit for the

But Saglain's absence means they must find another specialist spinner to support Danish Kaneria in the Tests, or rely on all-rounders like Shoaib Malik and Shahid Afridi

Bad news for Chelsea

Chelsea winger Arjen Robben will be out of action for six weeks with two broken bone in his foot which will rule him out of both the Champions League matches against Spanish league leaders Barcelona.

Chelsea confirmed Robben had broken two bones in his foot and will be out of action until March.

"It is a massive blow just as I was in top shape and very fit," Robben said. "But now it is worthless and I have to fight back for the second time this season. I hate it because I am out for weeks.'

However, Chelsea physio Mike Banks was more optimistic.

"One is a chip on the side of his foot, the other is a small break on the third metatarsal. The fractures are tiny and he could be plaving next month." he said. The 21-year-old Holland interna-

tional limped out of last week's win at Blackburn minutes after scoring the only goal of the game after being caught by a mistimed tackle from South Africa captain Aaron Mokoena. Robben suffered a similar injury in

pre-season after being fouled by Romas Olivier Dacourt and breaking a bone in his other foot. He missed the first part of this

campaign, but has impressed since his return. The 12 million pound summer

signing from Dutch side PSV Eindhoven has been the driving force behind Chelsea's title bid this season, with his side nine points clear at the top of the Premiership and still involved in three cup competitions.

Ziaur Rahman

FROM PAGE 13

and white balls. Besides, all games would be officiated by first-class

DU Vice-Chancellor Professor SMA Faiz will be present during the opening ceremony as the chie

The JCD leaders said they have also organised a badminton and volleyball tournament for the female students at the DU central playground on February 12.

JCD president Azizul Baree Helal said they also organised two cricket matches -- one with the Dhaka University Journalists Association and another with the former JCD leaders -- before the

Gazi Tank take **FROM PAGE 13**

sixth win when they beat Bangladesh Boys by five wickets.

Bangladesh Boys were bundled out for 152 in 35.2 overs after deciding to bat. Ishtiag Ahmed hit an unbeaten 60 off 90 balls. Ashig Ahmed picked up three wickets for 24 and Saiful Alam captured three for 38.

Wanderers thrived on Tasrigul Islam's half-century to reach the target (156-5) in 33.1 overs.

Symonds fit

problem is only minor," said team doctor Trefor James.

FROM PAGE 13

"He is expected to be available for selection, but not before we review him again next week."

It was good news for Australia a day after fellow all-rounder Shane Watson was ruled out of at least the one-day component of the New Zealand tour because of a muscle tear in his side.

Watson suffered the injury during

his fourth over in Sunday's seriesclinching victory over Pakistan. Symonds said the news was a "huge weight off my shoulders". The naming of the Australian

limited overs squad for New

Zealand has been delayed by a day

until Thursday. Australia begins its tour of New Zealand on February 17 with a Twenty/20 match in Auckland. The two sides will then play five one-day internationals and three Tests.

BRAZIL-HONG KONG FRIENDLY TODAY

Ronaldo no-show dampens interest

Football

AFP, Hong Kong

World champions Brazil take on Asian minnows Hong Kong here on Wednesday in a lopsided international friendly overshadowed by the no-show of star striker Ronaldo

Coach Carlos Alberto Parreira confirmed the three-time world player of the year had not been released by his club Real Madrid for what would have been his 100th appearance for Brazil.

"There's no FIFA regulation that players have to join their national teams if they don't want to play outside of Europe." he said.

"We tried our best but from the beginning Real Madrid said they wouldn't release him.'

Organisers had delayed confirming the absence of Ronaldo, who has recently returned to Spain after a trip to Brazil and is due to marry model Daniella Ciccarelli on Valentine's Day.

Ticket sales have been slow for the Lunar New Year's day event, blasted by FIFA president Sepp Blatter as a mere "money-making" exercise, with 15,000 still unsold a day before kick-off.

But the Hong Kong Football Association said it had no intention of cutting the price and was confident that most of the tickets, at 800 Hong Kong dollars (102.6 US dollars) or more, would be snapped up.

Captain Cafu, who has represented Brazil at a record three World Cups and led them to their 2002 success, also said he was unconcerned at the lack of fans on hand to greet the team at the airport late on Monday.

"It doesn't matter that not many fans were there last night," he said. 'Tomorrow the stadium will have a lot of fans to support us, that's the important thing.

Even without Ronaldo and injured Inter Milan striker Adriano, Brazil boast a star-studded line-up including FIFA world player of the year Ronaldinho, Real Madrid galactico Roberto Carlos and Santos forward Robinho.

Parreira, who guided Brazil to World Cup glory in 1994, said the five-time world champions would use the match as preparation for next month's qualifiers for Germany 2006.

"For us it's a friendly game, it's preparation for our games against Uruguay and Peru next month," he

"The team is in good shape. If we do have a little problem it's understanding, because of the new faces and the travelling, but we hope tomorrow to overcome all these problems and play a beautiful game."

For Hong Kong it's all about damage-limitation, although they will be hoping to improve on their 144th FIFA world ranking and restore some pride after their 7-0 hammering by China in their last outing in November



World player of the year Ronaldinho (L) listens to coach Carlos Alberto Parreira (C) during a training session at the Hong Kong stadium yesterday.

Match of the day

AFP, Tokyo



A Japan boosted by two wins achieved without their foreign legion of overseas stars are confident of defeating North

Korea as they begin final qualifiers for the 2006 World Cup here Wednesday.

The Asian champions have beaten lower-ranked Kazakhstan and Syria 4-0 and 3-0 in the past fortnight, an encouraging sequence of results with an awkward Group B encounter with the Koreans loom-

North Korea are chasing their first place at the World Cup finals since 1966, when they famously upset Italy and led Portugal 3-0 before losing in the quarter-finals.

On paper it should be no contest: the most sophisticated football nation in Asia, both financially and technically, against probably one of the most impoverished.

But Japan coach Zico's preparations have been troubled by three injury-hit midfield dynamos --Fiorentina's Hidetoshi Nakata, Junichi Inamoto of Cardiff and Feyenoord playmaker Shinji Ono. Zico has told the three to stay

with their clubs and concentrate on

regaining fitness, although Reggina playmaker Shunsuke Nakamura and Hamburg striker Naohiro Takahara have been drafted into the squad. Zico has shifted from his dependence on the injury-hit expatriate contingent, which caused Japan to

qualifiers last year, leading to calls for his dismissal. But, adjusting the team balance, Japan went on to win the qualifying group with a 100 percent record, retaining the Asian Cup along the

struggle initially in preliminary

In the last two friendlies, Brazilian-born Alessandro Santos scored a goal himself with strikers Takayuki Suzuki and Keiji Tamada refuting the theory that Japan lacked firepower up front.

crosses that have led to goals," North Korea midfielder An Yong-Hak told reporters after his team arrived here Monday. An of the Nagoya Grampus is one of two ethnic Korean J-League players selected for North Korea's

national side. The other, Sanfrecce

Hiroshima midfielder Ri Han-Jae.

also warned of Japan's side assaults. Coached by former ace striker Yun Jong-Su since last year. North Korea are under great pressure to conquer their former colonial mas-

ters as a gift for "Great Leader" Kim Jong-II's 63rd birthday next week. Yun has lifted North Korea out of the wilderness since he became coach last year, leading his squad to

the top of the preliminary group

losing to Japan and South Korea in qualifiers for the 1994 World Cup. The failure angered supreme

Sung, so much that he banned the team from travelling abroad for 10 years, according to a former North Korean coach. They returned to international

soccer at the Bangkok Asian Games in late 1999. But they did not compete in qualifying for the 1998 World Cup in France and the 2002 edition. Yun recently admitted South

Korea's success in 2002 had fired up his proud nation, for whom football is the king of sport. "Now I must guide my team to the finals. That is my obligation.'

FRIENDLY: ENGLAND V HOLLAND

The Wright time?

Football

AFP, Birmingham

Shaun Wright-Phillips knows that his performance for England in Wednesday's friendly against Holland could make or break his bid to establish himself as a key figure in Sven-Goran Eriksson's plans for

next year's World Cup finals.

not the only England player who will run out at Villa Park on Wednesday evening with a feeling that he is on trial lurking in the back of his mind.

But the Manchester City flier is

David Beckham's position as captain of Eriksson's squad is, for the moment, not under threat.

But the Real Madrid midfielder, nursing a slight shoulder injury, is inevitably conscious of the growing body of opinion that England's chances of winning in Germany would be better served by the introduction of Wright-Phillips's dyna-

mism on the right flank. Beckham will have turned 31 by

the time the tournament kicks off and, after a lacklustre Euro 2004, has yet to prove he can recapture the kind of form - physical and footballing - that helped make him the global icon he is.

For the moment however, Eriksson wants to see if he can accomodate both men in the same team and the younger man is expected to be given his first start on the left, with Beckham deployed in the right-sided berth in which he has won all but a handful of his 77 caps.

Understandably, Wright-Phillips is unwilling to spend too much time dwelling on whether he feels he has earned the right to take Beckham's place in the side "Whether I become the long-

is not my decision," the 23-year-old said at England's training camp this "I am just happy to be in the squad and what will be will be.

term successor to David Beckham

Everyone knows what a great player 'Becks' is and he is somebody that I just love being around in the squad because I can learn so much from

"People like to say that I am an obvious replacement for him on the right hand side, but I don't find that discomforting. It's something I just get on with and I'm not bothered one bit about where I play at the moment for England. I just like causing problems for defenders and it doesn't matter what side of the pitch I'm

Eriksson has indicated that he will either use Wright-Phillips on the left or as an extra forward alongside Michael Owen and Wayne Rooney.

Wright-Phillips made an instant impact in an England shirt, scoring a superb solo goal after coming on for his debut as a substitute in a 3-0 defeat of Ukraine in August. Two more appearances from the bench have followed, the last of

them, against Spain in November,

marred by the abuse he and

England's other black players suffered in Madrid. On Wednesday, England will wear shirts bearing an anti-racism

Shahin c & b Razzak

Salahuddin b Jamal

27

48

45

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17

Nasiruddin c Mashrafee b Manzarul

20

message while the Dutch will sport a

special black and white strip. "I've tried to forget about the racist chanting," the son of former Arsenal and England striker Ian Wright said. "It happened and it's over and done with. liust have to concentrate on playing

my football now. "My dream is to play in a World Cup with England and that is what I am aiming for now. My dad never made it to a World Cup and I don't want the same thing to happen to me.

Gaibandha

cricket **OUR CORRESPONDENT**

Brave Heart Sporting Club defeated Nabarun Krira Chakra by 96 runs in the First Division Cricket League at

the Gaibandha Stadium yesterday. Brave Heart batted first and scored 176 all out in 43 over. In reply, Nabarun Krira Chakra were

dismissed for 80 in 37 over.

Home teams start well

Javed b Nabil

Halim b Hasibul

Mahmud batting

169, 5-185, 6-231

Bowler

Tapash

Nazmul

Hasibul

Anwar batting

Mehrab Jr Ibw b Hasibul

Al Shahriar Ibw b Nazmul

Ashraful c Mabud b Nabil

Rafique c Nazmul b Nabil

Extras: (b17, lb8, nb6)

Total: (For six wickets in 90 overs)

Fall of wickets: 1-42, 2-49, 3-111, 4-

0

14 3 39

15 8 25

11

FROM PAGE 13

36-3 after new-ball bowlers Tareq Aziz Khan (3-35) Gazi Alamgir (2-55) made early inroads for Chittagong, who had put Rajshahi in. But opener Jahurul (51 off 94 balls) and Forhad (99 off 170 balls) shared 89 for the fourth wicket to put the home team back on track. Forhad added further 94 runs

with Rosel (55 not out off 154 balls)

for the sixth wicket before part-time

seamer Aftab Ahmed had him caught by Sabbir Khan. Number five Forhad cracked 15 fours and one six in his entertaining knock. Rosel was batting with Mohammed Shahzada (24) at stumps. Skipper Khaled Mashud

made just five. **SCOREBOARD** Scoreboards of the three matches

on the opening day of the 6th Ispahani Mirzapore Tea National Cricket League yesterday: DHAKA-SYLHET Dhaka 1st innings

Nabil 23 46 10 39 Sadigur 26 Rezaul 9 15 6 Kapali Mawla 0 KHULNA-BARISAL Barisal 1st innings Imran b Mashrafee Hannan b Mashrafee

Humayun c Salim b Manzarul

Mosharraf c Salim b Maniurul Nadif b Maniurul 23 Sonnet not out Arman c salim b Manzarul Anisur b Mashrafee Extras: (b5, lb12, nb5, w1) Total: (all out in 83.1 overs) Fall of wickets: 1-28, 2-33, 3-67, 4-122, 5-131, 6-147, 7-153, 8-176, 9-193, 10-194. **Bowler** М 16.1 6 31 15 34

Mashrafee Maniurul 41 Manzarul 22 0 Dollar 10 31 Razzak 30 Jamal Khulna 1st innings Sadat batting Shafiul batting 0 Extras: (lb2) Total: (For no loss in 7 overs) 0 M R W **Bowle** 9 0

Sonnet Mosharraf Arman **RAJSHAHI-CHITTAGONG** Rajshahi 1st innings Naeem c Sabbir b Tareq Jahurul Ibw b Tareq Rafiqul c Masum b Alamgir Nuruzzaman Ibw b Alamgir Forhad c sabbir b Aftab Mashud c Kuntal b Tareq Rosel batting Anisur c Ehsanul b Masum Shahzada batting Extras: (b12, lb12, nb10, w2) 125, 5-132, 6-226, 7-229. O M Bowler Alamair 15 2 55 3 35 Tareq 11 40 Rashed 11 Sabbir

Faisal

Aftab

4 0 32

> 26 6 59

> 16 3 28

2

Total: (For 7 wickets in 90 overs) 286 Fall of wickets: 1-13, 2-19, 3-36, 4-

set up goals with crosses and which included Thailand, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen. North Korea all but vanished from the international scene after "We have to watch out for leader Kim, the eldest son of the country's late founding father Kim II-