SPÖRT

Shiv Sena acts hurt Imra

Cricket

AFP, Islamabad

Former cricket great Imran Khan Tuesday deplored attempts by a group of Hindu hardliners to spoil a Test pitch in a bid to disrupt Pakistan's forthcoming tour of India.

"Attempts to dig pitches by the extremists to disrupt Pakistan's tour of India and statements calling for cancellation of the tour are disheartening and uncalled for, fans in Pakistan and India are really hurt over such reports," he told this news

agency.
"Cricket can further the peace process. Indian team and spectators were received so warmly last year and people here expect the same in India," Imran said referring to India's 2004 tour of Pakistan, their first for 15 years.

Pakistan are due to pay a reply visit, their first tour to India since 1999 to play three Tests and five one-day games but the tour faces an imbroglio over Pakistan's refusal to play a Test match in Ahmedabad. Ahmedabad is the main city in

the western state of Guiarat where at least 2,000 people, mostly Muslims. were killed in communal riots in 2002.

The dispute has delayed the announcement of the schedule even though only 10 days remain before Pakistan land in India around February 25.

Pakistan's refusal has sparked calls for the tour to be cancelled and some suspected activists of the Hindu fundamentalist Shiv Sena party were arrested attempting to dig up the pitch at Mohali, proposed venue of the first Test.

India's main opposition party, the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP), has urged the government and the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) to cancel the tour if Pakistan insist on avoiding Ahmedabad.

"If Pakistan refuse to play in Ahmedabad it will be better to call off the tour," said BJP spokesman Vijay Kumar Malhotra.

The fundamentalist Shiv Sena party also wants the tour cancelled, saying India should not play cricket against Pakistan in protest at what it said was Islamabad's alleged support for militancy in the disputed

But Imran said the majority of Indians want the tour to go ahead.

"It's not a major threat, the vast majority of Indian public is looking forward to this tour, I was in India recently and everyone said they look forward to the tour," said Imran. Imran, who is now an MP, played

82 Tests for Pakistan between 1971 to 1992 before taking up politics as head of his own party, Movement for Justice (Tehrik-e-insaaf).

Imran, who led Pakistan to their first series win in India in 1987, backed the Pakistan Cricket Board's stance of not playing in Ahmedabad.

"I think Pakistan's stand is understandable, in 1987 I had to ask the players to wear helmets on the boundary line, we didn't want the team to come out of the ground but it was threatening the safety of the

We were ambassadors of peace at that time, so we did not want to mar the tour because General Ziaul Haq, then Pakistan president, had done cricket diplomacy by visiting India during a match," said Imran.

Chittagong wicketkeeper Mohammad Rabbi (C) is being congratulate by his teammates after the fall of a Sylhet wicket on the opening day of their four-day Ispahani Sixth National Cricket League match at the Chittagong

Annual sports Sylhet double

SPORTS REPORTER

Sylhet enjoyed double delight on the third day of the Cricket Carnival at BKSP yesterday.

They defeated Rajshahi by 22 runs in the first match and then beat Barisal by 32 runs in the second match of the Super 8s competition.

In the other matches, Khulna managed a five-wicket victory over Chittagong, Rajshahi handed Dhaka a 29-run defeat, Barisal edged Chittagong by 10 runs and Dhaka recorded a 19-run win against Khulna

BCB XI's training begins

SPORTS REPORTER

The short training camp of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) XI. that will take part in the Duleep Trophy competition, began yesterday at the Bangladesh Army Stadium.

All 14 selected players turned up at the venue to report to coach Dav Whatmore and had a light warm up session.

The team would train at the Army Stadium again today and would practice at the Bangabandhu National Stadium tomorrow before they fly off to Mumbai on February 19.

The BCB XI, led by Mohammad Ashraful, will play East Zone (March 22-25 at Nagpur) and Central Zone (April 1-4 at Jaipur) in the group matches of the first-class tournament.

England will

FROM PAGE 13

In South Africa, at the end of a long tour, England lost the one-day series 4-1 with the top order in particular struggling.

Left-hander Trescothick could only manage an average of fractionally more than 14 in the limited overs internationals and he added: "It's always going to be tough at the end of the tour. It was a long trip and some of the guys have been out there longer than others. We've all put in a lot of effort so we're all very tired."

However, he said nothing could take the shine off England's first Test series win in South Africa for 40

"The Test matches were the main event. Beating a team as good as South Africa was a major achievement. It was a hard-fought series.

'The one-dayers were very disappointing because we didn't do what we wanted to do. But overall we're pretty pleased.'

SPORTS REPORTER

Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam House and Dr Muhammad Shahidullah House finished joint champions in the annual sports competition of the BAF Shaheen College on Tuesday.

Sher-e-Bangla House became runners-up in the meet.

Sizzling

Enamul 7-47, Shahadat 2-60) BANGLADESH A: Second innings 232 all out in 70.3 overs (Tushar 52, Waseluddin 46, Dhiman 28, Raqibul 25; Cremer 4-75, Mahwire 3-53, Macmillan 2-14)

ZIMBABWE A: Second innings (overnight 229-6 in 86 overs) Duffin c Sharif b Tushar Sibanda st Dhiman b Enamul Ebrahim c Nafees b Shahadat 63

Samunderu Ibw b Shahadat Strydom c Waseluddin b Shahadat Ervine b Russell Mufambisi b Enamul Mahwire c Nafees b Shahadat Cremer Ibw b Enamul

Macmillan c Raqibul b Shahadat 9

Nicolson not out Extras: (b-7, lb-7, w-1, nb-17) 32 Total: (All out in 96 overs) Fall of wickets: 1-77, 2-120, 3-156 4-156, 5-168, 6-203, 7-232, 8-232

Bowler Sved Russell 18 9 42 1 63 Shahadat Hossain 25 Mohammad Sharif 11 2 36 0 Enamul Haque 69 3 17 Result: Bangladesh A won by 50

Gaibandha cricket

OUR CORRESPONDENT.

Gaibandha Abahani Krira Chakra defeated GKSP by 84 runs in the First Division Cricket League at the local stadium yesterday.

Abahani were bowled out for 196 in the stipulated 50 overs after deciding to bat.

In reply, GKSP were shot out for 114 in 34.5 overs.

A 3-page Venus

AFP, New York

Sports Illustrated's annual swimsuit issue hit the American newsstands Tuesday with Olympians such as Australian basketball hero Lauren Jackson being pictured along with American tennis star Venus Jackson, who posed nude in an

Australian art magazine before the Athens Games, was pictured in a bikini and quoted in a caption as saying, "It felt better to have some clothes on. Jennie Finch, a United States softball pitcher, was pictured showing off her Athens gold medal clad in

a gold bikini while US swimmer

Amanda Beard, who has won seven

Olympic medals, was pictured in a

large fold out. Williams, whose sister Serena Williams has been a prior SI photo subject, received a three-page layout of her own.

Clijsters back with bang Tennis

Divisional Stadium yesterday. The young stumper took four catches.

REUTERS, Brussels

Former world number one Kim Clijsters has celebrated her longawaited return from a serious wrist injury with a demolition job against Croatia's Jelena Kostanic in the Antwerp Open first round. Belgian Clijsters, sidelined since

Dechy of France and Croatian Karolina Sprem suffered surprise early Clijsters, who last played when she retired in the second set of a match in Belgium against Russia's Elena

last October, needed only an hour to

beat the Croatian 6-2. 6-3 but Nathalie

Bovina, looked as if she had never Moving freely and dominating her 35th-ranked opponent from the baseline, she broke Kostanic in the first and fifth games before taking the opening

She broke the Croatian's serve again in the third game of the second set before wrapping up the match with another break when Kostanic sent a forehand long on the first match point. "I wanted to play again so badly

and I am really surprised everything went so well." Cliisters told reporters. "Physically, I was 100 per cent and I

did not have to hold back at all out Clijsters, 21, reached last year's Australian Open final before suffering wrist injuries which led to her pulling

out midway through a tournament in Berlin in May 2004. She had surgery to remove a cyst on her left wrist -- she is right-handed but has a two-handed backhand -- in June before making an abortive

comeback in Belgium in early October, her first tournament for five months. Dechy, world number 13 and semifinalist in last month's Australian Open, lost 7-6, 6-4 to Czech Klara Koukalova while world-ranked 17 Sprem was beaten 7-5, 6-3 by

Russian qualifier Anna Chakvetadze "I never found the proper tempo," said Dechy. "I was not feeling a 100 per cent mainly because I have a little flu and also because I haven't been able

to practise a lot indoors this winter."

Two other qualifiers advanced to the second round, Camille Pin of France beating Spain's Marta Marrero 6-1, 6-2 and Katarina Srebotnik of Slovenia defeating Italian Maria Elena Camerin 3-6, 6-2, 6-4.

In the day's late match, Mary Pierce of France eased past Czech Iveta Benesova 6-2, 6-1.

Pierce, who won the Australian Open in 1995 and the French Open in 2000, will meet compatriot and top seed Amelie Mauresmo in the second

It will be their second meeting in successive weeks, Mauresmo having beaten Pierce 6-4, 6-3 in the last 16 of

A vintage Mehrab

FROM PAGE 13 of the country, laid the foundation there were only one half-century stand between Jamaluddin Babu and Asadullah Khan, who added 70 runs for the fifth wicket after their skipper was dismissed by Sohrawardi Shuvo, the pick of the Raishahi bowlers with 4-83.

Bashar, who missed the first round, cracked nine fours and one six before being caught behind by Shamimul Haque

Paceman Alamgir Kabir chipped in with three wickets for 39 from his tidy 17 overs to put Rajshahi on top at one stage as the hosts lost four wickets in addition of 11 runs. But a 46-run last wicket stand between Monirul Islam and Manjurul Islam rescued the hosts from a wobbling 227-9.

CHITTAGONG-SYLHET

Chittagong correspondent adds: Fresh from an exciting win in the one-day fixture on the previous day, Sylhet failed to repeat the same magic when they were restricted to 216 in their first innings at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium.

The hosts were 37-1 at close with Gazi Salahuddin being the lone casualty. Tamim Iqbal (18) and Nazimuddin were at the crease on 18 and 12 respectively.
It was Yasin Arafat who plotted

the Sylhet destruction, the left-arm spinner capturing four wickets for 45 from 20.1 overs. Chittagong's new ball pair Gazi Alamgir (3-52) and Wayskarani Palash (2-69) also bowled well.

Most of the Sylhet batters got a start but failed to carry on. Moniruzzaman, a gust player from Dhaka, top-scored with 37 from 90 studded with half a dozen boundaries while experienced national paceman Hasibul Hossain made a guickfire 30 with three fours and one

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboards of the second round matches of the National Cricket League at the end of first-day's play vesterdav:

DHAKA-BARISAL DHAKA: 1st innings Javed c Shahin b Ănis

Rashedul c Shahin b Sonnet Mehrab c & b Anis 98 Mehrab Jr run out Halim Shah batting Mahmud batting Extras: (b3, lb3, nb1) Total (For 4 wkts in 90 overs) Fall of wickets: 1-6, 2-157, 3-162, 4-

167.					
Bowlers	0	M	R	1	
Anis	19	6	27		
Sonnet	8	3	13		
Salahuddin	9	3	23		
Mosharraf	22	7	31		
Tariqul	10	2	28		
Nadif	12	2	35		
Humayun	10	1	23		
KHULNA-RAJSHAHI					
KHULNA: 1st innings					

Sadat c Rezwanul b Shuvo

Shafiul b Alamgir

Salim Ibw b Alamgir Monirul run out Zia c & b Shuvo Dollar b Sumon 24 Maniurul not out Extras: (b3, lb10, nb1, w6) 20 Total: (All out in 88.1 overs) Fall of wickets: 1-22, 2-62, 3-98, 4-121 5-191 6-191 7-202 8-202 9-

Sazzad c Shamimul b Forhad

Asadullah c sub (Naeem) b Alamgir

Jamaluddin c Shamimul b Shuvo42

_ 1, 0-101, 0-	101, 1-2	.02, (J-202	-, J			
27, 10-273.							
owlers	0	M	R	W			
amgir	17	4	3	39			
orhad	11	0	36	1			
umon	19	2	58	1			
huvo	29	7	83	4			
aifullah	7.1	0	40	C			
ezwanul	5	1	4	(
HITTAGONG-SYLHET							
YLHET: 1st innings							
				40			

Himel c Nazim b Alamqii Mabud c Rabbi b Wayskarani Sadikur c rabbi b Ehsanul Parvez c rabbi b Alamgir Moniruzzaman c Rabbi b Alamgir Nasirul c Ehsanul b Wayskarani 18 Nayeem Ibw b Arafat Hasibul c faisal b Arafat Sirajullah b Arafat Nabil not out Extras: (b3, lb2, nb3, w1) Total: (All out in 75.1 overs) Fall of wickets: 1-13, 2-41, 3-43, 4-

209. 10-216. R W **Bowlers** 20 5 52 Alamgir 69 Wayskarani 18 3 Ehsanul 15 Arafat 20.1 45 Sunny 2 22 0 **CHITTAGONG:** 1st innings Tamim batting Salahuddin c Mabud b Hasibul

Nazimuddin batting

85, 5-130, 6-149, 7-149, 8-168, 9-

Extras: (b4, lb1, nb1, w1) Total (For 1 wkt in 14 overs) Fall of wicket: 1-11. **Bowlers** 12 1 16 0 6 2 3 0

Hasibul Sirajullah Nayeem

Kiwi appetiser

"As a team, we're under no illusions about how tough it will be or how good they are; but it's simply a matter

of playing consistently well against them, and grabbing all our chances.' Meanwhile Bracewell said he

was receiving positive reports on players who had been rested recently to recover from injuries and niggling complaints and would reassess his squad after the second one-day match.

few are threatening to disrupt

"Wish there was an Alladin's lamp to sweep the problems away," said an official of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI). "We have to manage in 10 days

Shaharyar blamed the BCCI for suggesting Ahmedabad, where at least 2.000 people, mostly Muslims. were killed in communal riots in "Had the BCCI not proposed

what usually takes months.'

Ahmedabad as a venue the matter would not have gone this far. Now through newspapers we read that some political parties have raised this issue and with each passing day they will put more pressure," he

"The vast majority in Pakistan and India want the series to be held in a peaceful manner.

When asked if Pakistan would review their decision not to play in Ahmedabad, Shaharyar refused to comment saying: "I have conveyed what I wanted to say on the matter."

The PCB has cited security concerns in Ahmedabad based on the report of a security team which visited India last month

to 12 points and Kathalbagan remained on 14 after 16 rounds. In reply to Kathalbagan's 146 all out in 45.2 overs, Eskaton made

Nabin Sangha

earned a relegation-saving sevenwicket victory over Kathalbagan

GCC. Eskaton increased their tally

147-3 in 28.4 overs.

Nobody from

FROM PAGE 13

FROM PAGE 13

everybody was the absence of any current Bangladesh Footbal Federation members.

Meanwhile, Abahani will also organise a special munajat and milad mahfil at the club premises in Dhanmondi today after the Asr

prayers. Munna, the last recognised super star of Bangladesh football played for Abahani for 11 years and was the football manager of the popular club till death.

Indian tour in danger?

by the BCCI.

Worse, Hindu fundamentalists have voiced their anger at the visit and a

> follow India's first Test series in Pakistan in 15 years in early 2004. Once the dates and venues are finalised, the BCCI will discuss awarding television rights for the

But Pakistan has no objections

The seven-week tour would

on playing in Mohali and Bangalore.

the other two Test venues proposed

No one is absolutely certain yet as to which channel the series will be broadcast on, if at all, as a court is hearing a petition from one of the channels seeking the rights to telecast the India-Pakistan matches

Last September, the BCCI

backed out of a four-year, 308-

million dollar deal with Zee

Telefilms, India's largest listed media company, after it was challenged in court by rival ESPN-Star Sports, jointly owned by Disney and Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. The Madras High Court, which is hearing a counter petition by Zee, last week advised the BCCI not to

finalise any deal for the Pakistan

series till the case was heard on

Thursday. The series against Australia and South Africa earlier in the season were telecast by public broadcaster Doordarshan.