PCB launches 1st women's tournament

AFP, Lahore

Pakistan launched its first national women's cricket championship Tuesday with organisers hoping the event will inspire up-and-coming female cricketers in the conservative Muslim country.

"It's a historic occasion," said Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) spokesman Abbas Zaidi ahead of the weeklong tournament in the eastern city of Lahore.

"With the unprecedented patronage of the PCB we hope the event will create huge interest in the new generation," he

Teams from Lahore, Karachi, Rawalpindi, Multan, Quetta, Hyderabad, Peshawar and Faisalabad are taking part. Four teams will qualify for a so-called super league, with the top two teams contesting the final on March

Particularly significant is the presence of the team from Peshawar, where an Islamic fundamentalist provincial government discourages women's sports and last year banned male coaches for female players.

"We are here with the permission of our parents and have no fear of anyone," said a Peshawar player, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The PCB created a separate women's wing last year, after the International Cricket Council took control of the International Women's Cricket Council.

"We have begun a new chapter in women's cricket with over 100 women players in attendance for the eight regional teams," said Shamsa Hashmi, secretary of the board's female division.

Officials hope that handing control of the tournament to the PCB's women's section will also end a decade-long feud between three rival female cricket associations, which all claimed to be the game's true representative in Pakistan.

The feud ended up in the courts and also saw two Pakistan teams reaching India for the 1997 women's

Gaibandha cricket

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Ghagot Krira Chakra defeated Munshipara Krira Sangtha by 120 runs in the First Division Cricket Super League at the Gaibandha Stadium yesterday.

Batting first Ghagot scored 221 all out in the stipulated 50 overs. Munshipara were all out for 101 in 28.5 overs.

Hosts hold

FROM PAGE 13

tourists clinch the Kolkata Test. Then there was off-spinner Saglain Mushtaq, who grabbed four successive hauls of five wickets to keep unrelenting pressure on the Indian

Inzaman has conceded that his team will miss the services of

"He's our strike bowler. He can be dangerous for the opposition and an asset for us only if he is fit, but unfortunately he is not," he said.

Fortunately, India captain Sourav Ganguly is not in the same boat as he has the luxury of leading a full-strength side.

Fast bowlers Zaheer Khan, Irfan Pathan, Ashish Nehra and Laxmipathy Balaji, who were plagued with injuries in recent series, have regained fitness and presented their captain with an embarrassment of riches.

All of them may not figure in the plaving eleven as spinners Anil Kumble and Harbhajan Singh are proven match-winners on home pitches.

India appear to have an edge in both batting and bowling departments and it is only a dramatic reversal in form that can prevent them from asserting their supremacy in the Test series starting at Mohali on March 8.

It'll be 'awesome'

Cricket

Indian captain Sourav Ganguly has predicted an "awesome" series against arch-rivals Pakistan, saying the team which handled the pres-

"I don't think there is much to choose between the two sides,' Ganguly said in an interview as his team prepared to clash with Inzamamul Hag's tourists in three Tests and six one-day internation-

"The key to winning is to keep your cool amidst the pressure that goes with an India-Pakistan encounter. Fans expect you to win against Pakistan more than any

"But I will try to ensure my team is not burdened by unnecessary pressure. I want them to remain calm all the time and just concentrate on the task at hand.'

Ganguly, India's most successful captain with 18 Test wins, scoffed at suggestions that Pakistan's less experienced team without injured fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar would be easy fodder for the hosts.

"I don't think anybody is a favourite." he said. "Pakistan are a very good side. Batsmen like Inzamam and Yousuf Youhana are not to be taken lightly.

"And just because Shoaib has njury problems does not mean Pakistan's attack is weak. People

Venus Williams will be off the WTA

Tour for at least three weeks with a

recurrence of an old stomach injury

which worsened during a dismal 7-5

7-6 loss to Italy's Silvia Farina Elia in

the first round of the Dubai Open on

with both wrists strapped, acquired a

further conspicuous bandage half-

way through the match, on her right

hand where she had a troublesome

display it was hard to know whether

However during an error-ridden

Venus, who had also been playing

Tennis

Monday.

like Mohammad Sami and Danish Kaneria can be quite devastating on

"We will have to play very well to beat them even though we are playing at home. It is going to be an awesome series

Home advantage counts for little. The last two Test series between the old foes have been won by the

Pakistan won two of the three Tests they played in India in 1999, including the Asian Test championship match in Kolkata. Ganguly's men inflicted a 2-1 defeat in their first series on Pakistan soil in 15 vears last year.

Ganguly admitted that four consecutive one-day losses to Pakistan since August -- in Sri Lanka, the Netherlands, England and India -- still rankled, but he was not unduly worried.

'Yes, those defeats are very much on our minds," he said. "I confess we did not play well and that's why we lost not only to Pakistan but also to other teams. "But that was at the start of the

season and we have gradually improved since then "We may have lost the home series to Australia, but we did win

the last Test against them, then beat both South Africa and Bangladesh. "I know we start afresh against Pakistan, but it is important to make winning a habit."

Ganguly brushed aside suggestions that the upcoming series,

Venus falls, Sania advances

elder Williams sister, or even whether

she was in the right frame of mind to

there was a marked improvement

she might miss the Nasdaq-100

Open in Miami, starting on March 23.

pointment to the Dubai tournament.

which had managed a rare coup --

All this was a significant disap-

match." she said.

I'm sorry I wasn't well.'

which starts with the first Test at Mohali from March 8, was going to be the biggest of his career.

"Not at all," he said. "The World Cup is a huge tournament for any captain and we reached the final last time in South Africa.

"Then we went to Australia and held the world champions to a 1-1 draw. Not many captains have returned from Australia and sur-

"We toured Pakistan last vear and won both the Test and one-day series. That was the first time an Indian team had done that in "I am sure I would have been

removed as captain if we had lost in Pakistan. Those were bigger series

Ganguly was convinced cricket played a big role in promoting peace etween the two warring neighbours.

"We don't have to look beyond the last series in Pakistan to realise how much cricket builds bridges," "Thousands of Indians crossed

the border to watch the matches.

The hospitality in Pakistan was

unbelievable and this is something I will always cherish. "There was not a single unsavoury incident on that tour. Cricket is a passion in both countries. But more importantly, people on both

sides have realised it is just a sport and not war. "I hope Pakistan enjoy the same hospitality in India.

TIBET FED CUP

Victori, Agrani in group finals

SPORTS REPORTER

Victoria Sporting Club and Agrani Bank moved into the group finals of the Tibet 20th Federation Cup football tournament beating their respective rivals at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

Agrani Bank managed a solitary goal victory over Dipali Jubo Sangha through a 13th minute strike from Swapan to reach the final in Group A.

The bankers will face Youngmen's Club Fakirerpool in the final tomorrow at the same venue. In the day's second match

Victoria defeated Farashgan Sporting Club 5-4 in tiebreaker to book their seat in Group B.

The match was locked 1-1 during the stipulated 90 minutes.

They will meet today's winners of the match between Bangladesh Navy and Dhaka Wanderers Club in

Three lead nat'l chess

SPORTS REPORTER

Grand Masters Niaz Murshed and Ziaur Rahman and International Master Abdullah Al Rakib won their fifth round boards in the Mercantile Bank 31st National Chess Championship yesterday to jointly

With the outcome, they raised their collections to 4.5 points each. In the round, Zia beat Enamul Hossain Rajib, Niaz defeated

Aminul Islam Palash while Rakib beat FM Rezaul Haque at the federation hall room. IM Reefat Bin Sattar and Syed

Mahfuzur Rahman Emon followed the leaders with three points after beating Hasan Imam and FM Khondakar Aminul Islam respec-In the other fifth round matches,

Uten defeated Mainuddin Ahmed national junior champion Mehdi Hasan Parag drew with FM Abu

Bari bucks up Sami

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan's chief cricket selector said Tuesday he hoped the absence of paceman Shoaib Akhtar could inspire fellow bowler Mohammad Sami to spring a surprise on the team's first tour of India for six years. "Because Akhtar is the fastest

bowler in the world he will be missed and every player needs to give 25 percent extra to overcome his loss," Wasim Bari told AFP. Akhtar pulled out of the Test

series due to a hamstring injury but is aiming to make a possible return for the one-day seri "One hopes that with the respon-

sibility, the best in Sami will come out," Bari added.

Bari, a renowned wicketkeeper who played 81 Tests and 51 oneday games between 1967-1984, said Pakistan could still come away from the tour with a result.

"They can spring a surprise in India," he said. "I think we have a talented side. Obviously they made some mistakes on their last tour of Australia, but they must capitalise on the lessons they learnt.' Pakistan lost all three Tests and a

tri-nation one-day tournament on their tour of Australia which ended early February. Bari described the Indian tour as

a turning point for Pakistan. "Good results will pave the way for the young team to get on the right path and attain more maturity," he said.

Pakistan arrived in India on Monday to play three Tests and six one-day internationals. The tour opens with a three-day side game at the Indian hill resort of Dharamsala from Thursday.

Ramiz Raja, a former Pakistan captain and ex-chief executive of the Pakistan Cricket Board, said the side could upset India if they come out with all guns blazing.

Rallying around Mourinho Football

Colourful Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho received the full support of the League Managers Association (LMA) on Monday following his sending-off during his side's 3-2 victory over Liverpool in the League Cup final.

The Portuguese coach put his finger to his lips when a Steven Gerrard own-goal levelled the match and took it into extra-time the fourth official ordered him from the bench for inciting the Liverpool fans, though Mourinho has claimed it was aimed at the media. Mourinho said afterwards the

clude that after successive defeats to Newcastle in the FA Cup and Barcelona in the Champions League first leg clash that Chelsea were choking. The Football Association were awaiting the official match report on Monday from referee Steve

Bennett, who has already confirmed

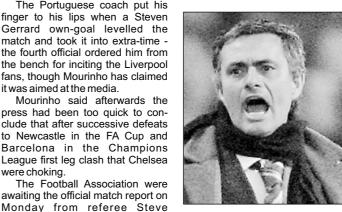
details of the incident would be

included, before deciding on whether to take further action. However Frank Clark, LMA vicechairman, gave his unequivocal

support to the former FC Porto handler, who guided them to the UEFA Cup and Champions League trophies in successive seasons before decamping to Chelsea last

"Was that gesticulation? All I saw was Jose put his fingers to his lips, I thought it was fairly innocuous," said Clark, who has managed Nottingham Forest and Newcastle.

"Obviously someone in a posi-



JOSE MOURINHO

tion of authority thought differently but it didn't seem very provocative to me. I have to say.

"We regularly talk to our members about their responsibility for

we accept they must act in a sensible fashion within that area.

"We are all conscious of crowd safety at football matches but this

was mild. However despite the LMA's support the people responsible for security at the Millennium Stadium were sufficiently anxious the gesture caused offence to have

Should the FA judge Mourinho was provoking the crowd it could potentially lead to a second charge, following his first for claiming Manchester United players were cheating in the League Cup

Mourinho sent down the tunnel.

Clark, though, said if Mourinho called on his body to support him in any hearing they would do so.

"If a manager contacts us we would get involved," said the former Nottingham Forest centreback.

"If he is charged in any way we would provide the legal assistance if we thought he was being harshly "Obviously if someone swears

at an official in an aggressive manner we would not defend that. That would be different. You cannot defend the indefensible.'

Inter are ready to hand Adriano a

The Spanish giants are known

new contract as reports of a possi-

ble move to Real Madrid continue.

Adriano in

demand

INTERNET SOURCE

Evidence day for Keane

Football

AFP, Manchester

Manchester United captain Roy Keane was due to give evidence in court Tuesday after allegedly grabbing a 16-year-old then throwing a punch at his face.

The Ireland international will appear on the second day of his trial at a Manchester magistrates' court. Keane. 33. has been accused of

grabbing his alleged victim by the neck while shouting in his face after the boy had insulted him. The teenager has also claimed Keane swung a punch at him, stopping inches from his face. The teenager, who gave evi-

dence via a video link on the first day of the trial, denied making the story up so he could go to the press or sue the multi-millionaire footballer.

The two clashed after the student rode his moped with a friend, aged

house in Hale, Cheshire, last September, the court heard. Keane was walking his dogs

when the youngster beeped his horn at the star, but as he passed Keane swung out with a stick he used while walking his dogs, the court heard.

The 6ft 2in teenager drove past. turned round and made an obscene gesture with his hand towards Weeks later the youngsters, who

cannot be named for legal reasons. were on their mopeds again near Keane's home and the footballer confronted the voungster. He alleged Keane confronted him after overhearing an obscene

Keane was later was later

Keane denies the charge of criminal damage for snapping the youngster's 2.99 pound silver neck chain. He also denies common

assault and a public order offence. 17, near Keane's 1.4 million pound

Football

AFP. London

A Robbie Fowler double inspired Manchester City to a come from behind 3-2 win at struggling Norwich on Monday.

Leon McKenzie before Antoine Sibierski reduced the deficit with a close-range header. Then Fowler became only the third player to notch up 150 Premiership goals seven minutes before half-time

and after Norwich midfielder Mattias Jonson was sent off for two bookings Fowler bundled home the winner in The result pushed City ahead of Newcastle and Aston Villa into 10th on

36 points while Norwich remained stuck one off the foot of the table. Kevin Keegan's City got off to a

them a 12th minute lead.

The Canaries' record three million

per Sylvain Distin to roll the ball into the Sibierski gave City hope when he Norwich were fully in control after pounced on a failed clearance by the

scrambling back but to no avail.

Norwich doubled their advantage

four minutes later when Ashton fed

McKenzie when the ex Peterborough

player lured James off his line and

fended off a late challenge from skip-

Norwich defence to nod home from

Kiki Musampa's deep right-wing cross after 24 minutes. It was all square approaching the break when Fowler shot home off a slide-rule pass from Sibiersi which

foxed the home defence. After the hour mark Norwich were down a man after a clumsy tackle by Jonson on Joey Barton resulted in his

James produced a great save to keep out Ashton's shot in the 71st minute and maintain the parity but City nicked the three points with Fowler's

striker stabbed the ball home after picking up the rebound from Shaun Wright-Phillips' close range strike.

Wanderers FROM PAGE 13 Wanderers bounced back through two field goals from Sheikh Sumon Ali and Imran Haider.

were only acting at the request of the cricket authorities. "We wanted to take some more

Hard work

Extras: (b-1, lb-5, nb-4) Total: (For 3 wkts in 90 overs) 248 To bat: Doru, Ojha, Kartik, Harvinder Singh, Srivastava, Parida. Fall of wkts: 1-16, 2-24, 3-238. **Bowlers** 0 M 3 25 Nazmul 15 6 40 Anwar

23 3 74 Jubair Razzak 17 6 39 Manjarul 16 50 10 5 14 Kapali Toss: Central Zone Umpires: AV Jayaprakash and SK

Manjarul Islam Rana, Abdur Razzak. Talha Jubair, Nazmul Hossain, Anwar Hossain Monir.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer **ACROSS** 36 Sacred 1 Sound of composi maider square laughte 4 Cantan-5 Founda-37 Frolic 23 Engine kerous 40 Have a 5 Nonsense knocks 8 - rush 6 Work unit 25 Kitchen bug Aussies too strong

of Croatia at the Dubai Open on Monday.

Indian tennis sensation Sania Mirza plays backhand against Jelena Kostanic

(forced 41 Medley 7 Drops flooring dismissal) 42 Salary 8 Chocolate often 12 Musical 47 Grant's is treat 26 Capricorn intro famous 9 Caspian 27 Wise one 14 Exam 48 More Sea 29 Promformat of a feede night 15 Admonimess 10 Jerry transport 49 Palette 31 Snitch tions Herman selections show 33 Business 50 Wrong tion 11 Coaster bigwigs 13 Cash 34 Cube. (Pref.) 51 Snead drawer cone, 19 Largest of sphere wire and Spade the seven et al. 20 Colle-36 Skirt DOWN money gian's length stat 37 Music 1 Explana 21 Asta's for one subcul tion 2 Eggs mistress ture 38 Felipe of materials

OBNOZGB

UNKVCMMW GMMCO WZJVK "UFMRO" NSG

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: O 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 locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

the presence of both Williams sisters the bandage helped or hindered the in a tournament outside a Grand

Farina Elia next plays Jelena "I was smiling because my stom-Jankovic of Serbia, with every possiach hurts, and my hand's going crazy bility of going on to a quarterfinal with and still somehow I was in the Svetlana Kuznetsova, the US Open champion from Russia. "I thought why am I out here. To

against Sania Mirza, the 18-year-old Indian wild card entry, who recently Jelena Kostanic, the world number 36 from Croatia. Top-seeded world number one

Lindsay Davenport also starts on

Wednesday, against Zheng Jie, the

world number 65 from China who

won 3-6, 6-4, 7-5 against Virginia

See Streak play again

BBC ONLINE, undated

Ruano Pascal of Spain.

Former Zimbabwe captain Heath Streak has arrived in South Africa and is set to play his first international match for 12 months.

He has ioined the squad for Wednesday's one-day match in Port A team spokesman told the BBC Streak had flown in on Monday

evening and was due to take part in Zimbabwe's final practice session. Streak, who has ended his dispute with Zimbabwe Cricket officials. said: "I'm looking forward to getting

"Obviously there's an element of concern at not having played at this level for a while, but it's not like haven't been playing cricket. "I had a good season at

Warwickshire [last summer] and

Streak, 30, was sacked as skipper in April 2004 after criticising Zimbabwe Cricket's selection poli-Now, he says he will be happy to

have been playing club cricket.

Tatenda Taibu as captain. He said: "I'll be there for him to help and to lend the experience that I've gained." Streak is 7imbabwe's leading

wicket-taker in both one-day and Test

cricket, with a combined total of 436

be part of the new regime, with

He also has six first-class centuries to his credit, including an innings of 127 not out in a Test against West Indies in November 2003, and he will add valuable depth to their batting.

there was little other sign of resis-

Scoreboard in the fourth one-day

international between New Zealand

and Australia at the Basin Reserve

23

35

9

36

17

2

SCOREBOARD

NEW ZEALAND

Fleming c Lee b Gillespie

Marshall c and b Clarke

McMillan Ibw b Hopes

Cairns c Martin b Lee

Wilson Ibw b McGrath

Mills run out

226

Lee

Bowler

McGrath

Hamilton not out

McCullum c Katich b Lee

Astle c Gilchrist b Kasprowicz

Cumming c Clarke b McGrath

Marshall c Gilchrist b Gillespie

Extras: (b-1, lb-12, w-5, nb-4) 22

Fall of wickets: 1-84, 2-90, 3-104, 4-

145, 5-163, 6-173, 7-214, 8-220, 9-

9.5 1 48

Total: (All out in 49.5 overs)

2 34 Kasprowicz 8 1 38 Hopes 10 0 **AUSTRALIA** Gilchrist c McMillan b Wilson Katich c McCullum b Cairns 43

Martyn not out Symonds c Wilson b McMillan Clarke not out Extras: (lb-3, w-8, nb-5) Total: (For 3 wkts in 34.2 overs)236 Fall of Wickets: 1-78, 2-113, 3-212 Did not bat: Hussey, Hopes, Lee, Gillespie, Kasprowicz, McGrath **Bowler** 0 37 Mills 1 67 Hamilton 8 0 9 0 68 Wilson

Toss: Australia. Umpires: Aleem Dar (Pakistan) and Tony Hill (New Zealand).

M R W

0 31 McMillan 4.2 Result: Australia won by 7 wickets and lead 5-ODI series 4-0. Man of-the-match:

0 30

remark, grabbing the teenager's

arrested and charged.

PREMIERSHIP

Vintage Fowler

racing to a 2-0 lead inside the opening 16 minutes through Dean Ashton and

desperate start after Ashton gave

pound signing sent Adam Dury's high ball curling into the far corner of David

Pennant facing jail term



Arsenal's Jermaine Pennant faced

jail on Tuesday for drink driving while banned from the road. The 22-year-old, currently on Ioan at Birmingham City, was

warned last month he could be

given a jail sentence after he admitted the charges following an incident in Aylesbury. He was due to be sentenced on Tuesday. Pennant was arrested in January

after he was spotted in a car park in

the town driving a Mercedes with a

lamp post dragging beneath it. and his speech slurred.

A breath test found he was almost two-and-a-half times over the legal alcohol limit, the court

second yellow card.

second in time added on. The former Liverpool and England

Aylesbury Magistrates' Court heard last month that when Pennant was stopped his eyes were glazed

star had been banned from driving for 16 months in February last year

after being seen travelling in the wrong lane in London. Pennant pleaded guilty at last month's hearing to charges of drink driving, driving while disqualified and using a vehicle without insurance.

Arsenal bought Pennant for two

The former England Under-21

million pounds from Notts County in 1999, one of the highest amounts paid for a teenager at the time. When Pennant made his Arsenal debut against Middlesbrough in a League Cup tie on 30 November

1999 he became Arsenal's youngest ever first team player at 16 years and 319 days. He scored a hat-trick on his full Premiership debut for Arsenal against Southampton in May 2003 but failed to live up to his early promise and was loaned out to

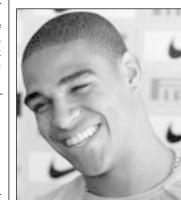
Leeds last season

admirers of the striker and they are expected to make a summer bid. Various reports insist that Real are keen on landing the Brazilian to replace his Selecao teammate Ronaldo The latter may be sold at the end

of the season with Chelsea, who are also keen on Adriano, his most likely destination. Whispers suggest that the Stamford Bridge outfit are ready to pay £28m for the former Inter player,

handing him a contract worth a staggering £6m a season. Adriano could be tempted to move to La Liga considering the

events of the last month at the San



ADRIANO The 23-year-old firstly admitted that he "dreamed" of a Real switch before hitting a dry patch in front of

since December 12 and was even dropped to the bench for Sunday's derby defeat to Milan. But the Nerazzurri are reportedly ready to renew their faith in the

Adriano hasn't scored for Inter

individual by offering him a new contract. Adriano's current agreement expires in 2008, but the club are

prepared to extend that by a year

and also increase his wages.

Cricket dug FROM PAGE 13

time but the cricket board had asked for the soil of the pitches so that it could be used at Mirpur and that's why we are uprooting it to avoid further damag," said BFF deputy secretary Monjur Hossain Malu.

FROM PAGE 13 Bundela not out

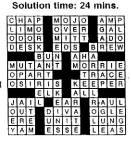
Abbas c Razzak b Kapali

Yadav not out

BCB XI: Mohammad Ashraful, Al-Shahriar, Sagir Hossain, Nafees Igbal, Aftab Ahmed, Alok Kapali,

Ellerbee 30 Rowboat 32 Storefron canopies 34 Long story 35 Biblical 46 Grads-to prophet

16 Appella 17 Wapiti 18 Sent a 20 Tangle 23 Mexican 24 Shetland, 25 Inner 28 Exist 29 Evans



specialty 40 Crafts' partner 44 Actress



— State

be (Abbr.)

CBOKNFCNSKO Saturday's Cryptoquip: TWO LAUNDERERS WERE IN A HOT DEBATE, BUT THEY FINALLY IRONED OUT THEIR DIFFERENCES

Kuznetsova starts Tuesday the people who came to support me --Venus admitted that it was similar won her first WTA Tour title and who to the injury she had during the 2003 came through 6-7, 6-4, 6-1 against Wimbledon final, and that unless