

India willing play Test in Karachi?

PTI, Karachi

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has expressed willingness to play Test and one-day international in Karachi during the Indian team's tour to Pakistan next year.

A top Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) official said the BCCI has also asked for an additional three-day practice match in Karachi after the proposed itinerary sent last week, included only a Test and one-day.

Since 2000, when England beat Pakistan in near darkness, only Bangladesh and Sri Lanka have played Tests in Karachi while South Africa, India and England have stayed away from the turbulent and at times violent Port City.

West Indies and Australia refused to visit Pakistan and preferred to play off-shore in the aftermath of terrorist attacks in United States on September 11.

The PCB official added that the BCCI has forwarded the itinerary to its Foreign Office for formal approval.

British bookie puts money on hosts

AFP, Manchester

One of Britain's leading bookmakers declared England favourites to win the Ashes after they finished the second day of the third Test against Australia at Old Trafford in a strong position.

William Hill had England 5/4 and Australia 6/4 for the five-Test series.

"This is the first time in 20 years since England last won the Ashes in the mid-80s we've done this," said Hills spokesman Graham Sharpe, whose firm are offering odds of 11/4 on a drawn series.

Hills make England 4/7 favourites to win the third Test, with Australia 13/2 and the draw 15/8.

England are now 10/1 to win the match by an innings with Australia 9/4 to fail to reach the 245 total they need to avoid the follow-on.

Fed Cup h'ball starts today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Orient Bread eighth Federation Cup Handball Tournament begins today with holders Bangladesh Rifles taking on newcomers Rajshahi City Corporation in the inaugural match at the outer stadium handball court.

Six teams, split into two group, will take part in the meet and top two finishers from each group will play in the semifinals scheduled for August 18.

The final is billed for the next Saturday.

Bangladesh Handball Federation (BHF) general secretary Asa-duzzaman Kohinor revealed this at a press conference yesterday.

He said that eight teams were supposed to take part in the meet, but two teams -- Dinajpur and Chapainawabganj withdrew at the last moment.

A fighter

FROM PAGE 12

Tigers' practice at the Mirpur Sher-e-Bangla Stadium that any good performances from his two young guns would enhance the confidence of the national team ahead of the Sri Lanka tour.

"They (Ashrafal and Mashrafe) are real assets in our team and that's why it's important they do well in South Africa. I believe that they have the ability to lift our image," said Bashar.

Isinbayeva scales

FROM PAGE 12

Gatlin was powerless to do anything about it.

He was not running in the heat and Greene, winner of three titles in the 1999 championships, also saw his hopes of winning a medal in his only event here come crashing to the ground.

While Isinbayeva said she had achieved her target of winning the title she remained modest about her achievements.

The praises were led instead by Ukrainian pole vault legend Sergei Bubka.

"She proved she is a great athlete in the way she performed today and in the way she keeps breaking records," said Bubka, whose 35 world records is being chased by the Russian phenomenon.

"She's still young and will grow and gain in experience. She already has great confidence and great motivation."

Doucoure was as modest as Isinbayeva.

"I am not the best. I was just the best tonight," said the 22-year-old.

Johnson insisted that for him the battle was not over yet despite the advent of Liu, also 22, and Doucoure.

"I'll be back in 2007, 2008, maybe 2009," said the 34-year-old.

While Isinbayeva chases Bubka's standard, Wariner wants to better Johnson.

"I'll try to get some more strength in me to go for the world record," said Wariner.

Ronaldo's 35-goal target

Football

REUTERS, Madrid

Real Madrid striker Ronaldo has set himself an ambitious target of 35 goals for this season.

"I hope to win my bet because I've lost it for the last two years," the 28-year-old Brazilian told the club's webpage.

"It isn't going to be an easy target to reach, but it will motivate me."

The three-times winner of the World Player of the Year award scored 30 goals in all competitions in his first campaign at Real, 31 in his second and 24 last term.

The best season in his career came at Barcelona in the 1996-97 season when he scored a total of 45 goals for the Catalans.

Ronaldo said that the addition of Brazilian duo Robinho and Julio

Baptista and Uruguayan internationals Pablo Garcia and Carlos Diogo to the Real squad would allow



RONALDO

the team to mount a much stronger challenge for the honours that have eluded them over the past two

seasons.

"I think that the club has come to understand the importance of having more players because there are a lot of games and a lot of competitions in the season," he said.

"All sides now have squads of over 25 players so that they can rest people."

"I'd like to win both the league title and the Champions League this season, but above all the league because that's what I think the fans who come to see us every Sunday would like."

"Having said that I've never won the Champions League and I'm not going to give up football without winning it."

Real leave their pre-season training camp in Austria on Saturday to head for Budapest where they will play a testimonial match in honour of former player Ferenc Puskas.

PREVIEW: PREMIERSHIP

Wigan aiming to be nobody's friends

Football

AFP, Wigan

Newcomers Wigan are out to make enemies in the Premiership this season starting with champions Chelsea on Sunday.

While not quite a case of the prince against the pauper -- Wigan have just splashed out a club record three million pounds for Henri Camara -- the northern club's successes does have something of the fairytale about it.

Wigan weren't even in the Football League 28 years ago and as recently as 1997 were swimming in the backwaters of the basement division.

Paul Jewell, with the help of the financial backing of wealthy club owner Dave Whelan, has masterminded Wigan's meteoric rise.

And ahead of Sunday's mouthwatering opener the manager identified one key ambition for the campaign ahead -- to stem the current tide of goodwill coming Wigan's way from their new neigh-

bours by bruising some Premiership egos.

Chelsea begin the defence of their title with a virtually full squad to choose from with coach Jose Mourinho likely to select the same players who started the Community Shield victory against Arsenal.

New signing Asier del Horno is set for his Premiership debut but Shaun Wright-Phillips may have to start his Chelsea career on the bench with Arjen Robben and Damien Duff playing alongside Didier Drogba in attack.

Jewell goes into Sunday's game with his eyes wide open but he urged his players not to be overawed by the presence of the millionaires from London at the JJB Stadium.

"The excitement in the town will be feverpitch come Sunday," said Jewell.

ARSENAL V NEWCASTLE

Under-fire Newcastle boss Graeme Souness has warned that last season's Premiership strugglers are ready to hit hard in Sunday's opener against league runners-up Arsenal at Highbury.

Souness is confident that the

Magpies can bounce back from their lowly 14th place finish, their worst finish since winning promotion in 1993.

And despite being the underdogs against the mighty Gunners Souness believes that Sunday's match will be the ideal opportunity to show their worth.

Captain Alan Shearer has been given the all clear following a calf injury and the striker's presence comes as a huge relief with Shola Ameobi (suspended) and Michael Chopra (knee ligaments) both out.

Jermaine Jenas is included despite speculation over his future, as are new signings Scott Parker, Emre and Craig Moore, although defender Titus Bramble is still out after having plaster removed from his fractured elbow.

Arsenal boss Arsene Wenger insists that their title-winning potential is unchanged despite the departure of talismanic skipper Patrick Vieira and Edu, with only Alexander Hleb and 17-year-old Alexander Song added to the squad.

Yemen expelled from FIFA

AFP, Zurich

Yemen have been expelled from international football by FIFA because of meddling by the state in the running of the national football association.

"The flagrant intervention by government authorities in local football's affairs violating FIFA principles is unacceptable," FIFA announced on Friday.

The expulsion leaves Yemen banned from the international scene and deprived of any funding from world football's governing body.

Yemen have also had their FIFA vote withdrawn.

FIFA said they had repeatedly warned Yemen's sports minister to "respect FIFA's principle of independence and democracy".

A FIFA delegation visited Yemen in June to present the authorities there with a road map to "normalise the situation," the statement added.

"The government has chosen to violate...these principles and given the Emergency Committee no option but to expel the YFA," it concluded.

Ferdinand pens new deal

AGENCIES, London

Rio Ferdinand has signed a new four-year contract with Manchester United.

News emerged on Monday that the 26-year-old England defender had agreed the terms for the contract, which runs until 2009 and he has now put pen to paper.

United boss Sir Alex Ferguson told the club's official website www.manutd.com: "We're delighted, it's absolutely brilliant news."

ESS 8-ball pool

SPORTS REPORTER

The third 8-ball pool tournament, organised by the European Standard School (ESS), begins Tuesday at the A-Level branch of the school at Dhanomdi.

Sixty-four students are expected to take part in the knockout basis first round of the meet.

Martyn's is a Giles

FROM PAGE 12

little bit today by putting the ball in that area. He bowled a very good delivery to get Damien Martyn. He did a job for England.

"Jones seems to have a knack of coming on and picking up a wicket almost every time he bowls a first over. He has picked up vital wickets. He has done a fantastic job, no two ways about it."

India shake

FROM PAGE 12

For the Test matches, star batsman Sachin Tendulkar was included subject to fitness after undergoing an operation on his elbow in London this May.

"Sachin's fitness will be ascertained towards the end of the tri-series. If he is not found fit, a replacement will be named," said Karunakaran Nair, secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India.

The first Test starts on September 13.

Tendulkar, 32, has been troubled by a 'tennis elbow' over the past year, forcing him to skip many one-dayers.

Laxman was plagued by back trouble in Sri Lanka while Kumble, India's most successful bowler who has struggled for a regular ODI spot in the last two years, conceded 64 runs in 10 wicketless overs in the final against Sri Lanka.

But the exclusion of Balaji, who played only one game in the Sri Lankan tri-series, came as a surprise.

Premier League

FROM PAGE 12

"It's a small victory for us. The suspension justifies our demand. But we are determined to continue to boycott the League if those particular matches are not declared illegal," said Lokman.

Meanwhile, general secretary of MFLC Mozammel Haque Mukta said that the ball was now in BFF's court.

"I agree that the bylaws don't give us this right, but the BFF can take this kind of decision in emergency situation."

The seasoned organiser believes that the BFF will broker a truce this time like the way it did during the players' transfers earlier this year.

On the other hand, Brothers Union, the team in the eye of the storm, termed the suspension of the League unfortunate.

"This is nothing new. We have seen it in the past where the establishment bowed to the undue pressure from the two crowd-pulling teams. The allegation of Mohammedan, Abahani and Skeikh Russel against us is baseless. They are doing it just to save their skin from their loyal supporters," said Brothers Union general secretary Mizan-uddin Ahmed.



PHOTO: AFP

Manchester United's South Korean midfielder Park Ji-sung leaps over Everton's Alessandro Pistone during their Premiership clash at Goodison Park on Saturday. The Red Devils won 2-0.

PREMIERSHIP

Man U spoil Neville debut

Football

BBC ONLINE, London

Manchester United launched the new Premiership season with a stylish away win against Everton at Goodison Park on Saturday.

The visitors dominated for long spells and Ruud van Nistelrooy went close twice before slotting in John O'Shea's cross two minutes before half-time.

Wayne Rooney doubled the lead 27 seconds after the restart after Joseph Yobo had ludicrously rolled the ball across the penalty area into his path.

Marcus Bent's deflected volley struck the bar but Everton were disappointing.

The hosts continued with the five-man midfield which served them so well last season, though James Beattie only lasted 20 minutes before injury forced him off and Bent on.

United also persisted with their favoured 4-3-3 formation, the lively Van Nistelrooy supported by Rooney and debutant Park Ji-sung.

The Dutch hitman had the first chance, whipping a 25-yard free-

kick just inches over the bar with only 75 seconds on the clock.

United were dominant, with Rooney ignoring the boos to torment former teammate Phil Neville, and they nearly went ahead again when Van Nistelrooy lashed wide from 20 yards after a slick move.

Everton were subdued but they sprang to life when Bent came on, first Tim Cahill's header forcing Manchester United's veteran Dutch keeper Edwin van der Sar to tip over before Leon Osman glanced wide from six yards.

Bent's movement was in stark contrast to Beattie's lethargy and he went agonisingly close with a volley that struck Mikael Silvestre's thigh and cannoned off the bar to safety.

But United got their just rewards before the break, Van Nistelrooy converting O'Shea's slide-rule pass to put the visitors in front.

If Everton were up against it at 1-0, 27 seconds into the second half it was game over.

Yobo's inexplicable pass across his own 18-yard box fell into Rooney's path and the 19-year-old gratefully slotted home.

Goodison Park was stunned into silence and it took 20 minutes for Everton to recover, Cahill attempting

to shake the home side out of their slumber by forcing another parry from Van der Sar.

By then Duncan Ferguson had replaced Osman and he was a fraction away from latching onto yet another Cahill header as the hosts pressed.

Normal service soon resumed and United would not have been flattered by more goals. Park had two chances to notch on his debut, mis-kicking once and crashing the second just wide of Nigel Martyn's left-hand post.

But United had done more than enough to secure their first three points of the season and send an early warning to their title rivals.

Parma getting a new owner

REUTERS, Milan

Former Real Madrid president Lorenzo Sanz is to buy Italian club Parma, returning to the game after a five-year absence.

Crisis-hit Parma, who are in administration, said in a statement they had accepted a proposal from Sanz's company to take 100 per cent ownership of the Serie A club.

The statement said they expected the exchange of property ownership to be fully completed by September 20.

Sanz was president of Real from 1995 to 2000 and was at the helm when Real won the European Cup in 1998 and 2000. His arrival will bring hope that Parma could return to the Serie A elite.

The club have been in search of new owners since a financial scandal hit their former backers, dairy company Parmalat.

Last season the twice UEFA Cup winners only ensured top flight survival via a relegation play-off win over Bologna.

The close season saw further uncertainty as Parma's top player, Italy striker Alberto Gilardino, was sold to AC Milan while a takeover bid from a Swiss businessman fell through.

This week, Parma brought in former Lazio striker Bernardo Corradi on loan from Spanish club Valencia and, after Sanz's takeover, more arrivals from Spain could be likely.

Gilchrist's distinction

Cricket

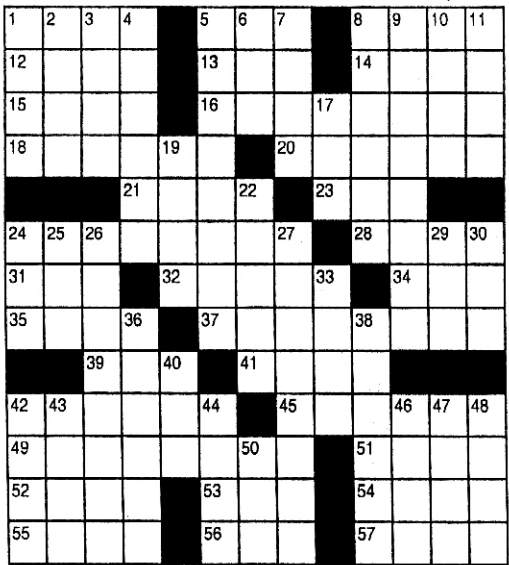
AFP, Manchester

Australia's Adam Gilchrist became the highest scoring wicketkeeper in Test history when he made 30 against England on the second day of the third Ashes Test at Old Trafford here Friday.

MOST RUNS BY KEEPER									
(Player, country, Tests as wicketkeeper, total Tests, runs as keeper, average as keeper, 100s as keeper, 50s as keeper):									
A Gilchrist	AUS	71		4568	54.38	6	23		
A Stewart	ENG	82	133	4540	34.92	6	23		
A Flower	ZIM	55	61	4404	53.70	12	23		
A Knott	ENG	95		4389	32.75	5	30		
I Healy	AUS	119		4356	27.39	4	22		
R Marsh	AUS	96		3633	26.51	3	16		
J Dujon	WIS	79	81	3146	31.46	5	16		
M Boucher	RSA	84		3007	30.68	4	18		
S Kirmani	IND	88		2759	27.04	2	12		
F Engineer	IND	46		2611	31.08	2	16		
(Note: Gilchrist's figures as at his first innings dismissal)									

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	37 It's eaten with a pair of sticks	55 Adolescent Relatives	17 Entertainer's engagement
1 Pile	41 Oodles	57 Resorts	19 Beehive State
5 Up to, for short	42 Jackson or Johnson	1 Difficult	22 Word of mouth
8 "The — Love"	45 Endured	2 Writer	24 Spade or diamond
12 Chorus member	49 TV studio prop	3 On	25 Man-mouse link
13 Commotion	51 Language of Pakistan	4 K compound	26 Steak-house stipulation
14 Summer-time desserts	52 Kournikova of tennis	5 Dining surface	27 Oblong pastry
15 Laugh-a-minute type	53 Bill's partner	6 Cretan mountain	29 Lubricant
16 Race-horse	54 "— Kleine Nacht-musik"	7 Protracted	30 Bestow, to Burns
18 Chicago university		8 Abbots' headgear	33 "Cómo — usted?"
20 Constricting garment		9 Moot	36 Noted Broadway belter
21 Flight component		10 Astronaut	38 Problems
23 "Golly!"		11 "Survivor" site	40 Jewel
24 Father of Poca-hontas			42 Blind as
28 Urban pall			
31 Anger			
32 Seasonal god-desses			
34 Mid-afternoon, on a sundial			
35 — Beach, Fla.			



CRYPTOQUIP

S U H B Y X L Y Q V J T K H B L H V

R B Z B R U X S H - T W K K B V

T V X C X L B K , X L N B C W P Z

N W V C W L H J K B P L Q H V X L Y .
Saturday's Cryptoquip: IF A FISH COMPULSIVELY BURROWS INTO THE SEABED, WOULD THAT BE CARP'LL TUNNEL SYNDROME?

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: X equals I

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.



PHOTO: STAR

Shah Nurul Kabir Shaheen, MP, (L sitting), who desires to run for the post of Bangladesh Cricket Board general secretary, collects his nomination form from a returning officer at the National Sports Council on Saturday.