

AFC CHALLENGE CUP Final in Nepal

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Bangladesh beat Nepal for the right to host the opening ceremony of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Challenge Cup, but the final will be played in the Himalayan nation.

The tournament between 16 "emerging" footballing countries is being co-hosted by the two nations between March 25 and April 9 next year.

The AFC decided at its annual meeting here that Nepal would host the final unless Bangladesh makes it into the last two, in which case it would be held in Dhaka.

Groups A and B will be played in Nepal while the matches of Groups C and D will be hosted by Bangladesh.

Group A: India, Taiwan, Philippines, Afghanistan

Group B: Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, Brunei

Group C: Palestinian territories, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Guam

Group D: Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Macau

'I'd love Henry to have it'

REUTERS, Barcelona

Newly crowned European Footballer of the Year Ronaldinho believes Thierry Henry deserves to win the award one day and would love the Arsenal striker to join him at Barcelona.

"Thierry Henry would deserve to have it one day because he finished among the best in the vote several times," Ronaldinho told Tuesday's issue of French magazine France Football.

"He's one of the best strikers in the world and he should be able to win it (the award) over the next few years," the Brazilian forward added. Henry, who came fourth in the vote by European soccer journalists organised by France Football, the results of which were announced on Monday, has been linked with a move to Barcelona next season. "That would be perfect," Ronaldinho said of the prospect of Henry joining him at Barca.

"He's an extraordinary striker. All the great players are welcome. We would be stronger with him."

Ronaldinho piped Henry last December to the FIFA World Player of the Year award.

The 25-year-old Ronaldinho said he envisaged his own future at Barcelona.

"Why would I leave?" he asked. "We have everything to become one of the best sides in the world, if not the best. I can win titles here."

Hosts wrest

FROM PAGE 12
chance early on when Kamran Akmal failed to catch an edge which hit his score.

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard at stumps on the first day of the third and final Test between Pakistan and England at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore on Tuesday:

ENGLAND: First innings

Trescothick c Akmal b Malik	50
Vaughan c Yousof b Malik	58
Bell c Yousof b Malik	4
Collingwood not out	71
Pietersen c Akmal b Naved	34
Flintoff c Akhtar b Naved	12
Jones b Kaneria	4
Udal not out	10
Extras: (lb-2, nb-3)	5
Total: (For 6 wickets in 77 overs)	248
Fall of wickets: 1-101, 2-114, 3-115, 4-183, 5-201, 6-225	

To bat: Plunkett, Hoggard, Harmison
Bowler O M R W
Akhtar 14 4 29 0
Naved 17 3 62 2
Sami 14 2 53 0
Malik 14 1 58 3
Kaneria 18 2 44 1

PAKISTAN: Inzamam, Butt, Malik, Kamal, Yousof, Raza, Akmal, Akhtar, Kaneria, Naved, Sami
Toss: England

U-19 tri-series

FROM PAGE 12
Mushfiq told reporters yesterday during their training session at the Sher-e-Bangla Mirpur Stadium indoors.

"But our main target is to prepare the team for the next U-19 World Cup. Spinners would be our main weapon," added Mushfiq, who has played one Test.

The wicketkeeper-batsman also thought the HP Squad's all-win record in the warm-up games against England would give them an edge in the opener.

The national selectors, inspired by the HP Squad's success, included five cricketers to the U-19s for this meet.

England face Sri Lanka tomorrow in their second match at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium (FCS), the other venue to be used in the series.

FIXTURES
NOV 30: England v Bangladesh at BKSP
DEC 1: England v Sri Lanka at FCS
DEC 3: Bangladesh v England at FCS
DEC 4: Bangladesh v Sri Lanka at BSKP
DEC 6: Sri Lanka v England at FCS
DEC 7: Sri Lanka v Bangladesh at BKSP
DEC 9: England v Bangladesh at FCS
DEC 10: England v Sri Lanka at BKSP
DEC 12: Bangladesh v Sri Lanka at FCS
DEC 14: Final at BKSP

'The lesser tech the better'

Cricket

AFP, Adelaide

Umpiring decisions blighted the final Australia-West Indies Test here, but Ricky Ponting said Tuesday the current systems should stay in place in cricket.

As far as the Australian skipper is concerned the less technology the better.

The West Indies received three much-debated umpiring decisions in the second innings dismissals of Ramnaresh Sarwan (64), Dwayne Smith (0) and Denesh Ramdin (28) at Adelaide Oval on Monday's fourth day.

The Caribbean tourists did not publicly complain about the calls they got from New Zealander Billy Bowden and Pakistan's Aleem Dar, but both the umpires' decision-making cost the West Indies a chance of making the match far more competitive than a seven-wicket loss.

Ponting said umpiring decisions are part of cricket and he was no advocate of greater use of technology to increase the accuracy of their decision-making through a video umpire sitting next to a television monitor in the stands.

"I have never been a big fan of technology just for the simple fact that the technology that has been used and trialled (by the International Cricket Council) over last few years hasn't been accurate enough anyway to give you

conclusive evidence on dismissal," Pontingsaid.

"It's just part of the game as far as I am concerned. I can't comment on umpires' decisions anyway, but you take the good with the bad. The human element in the game is vital to cricket."

Ponting believed the heavy workload on the elite umpiring panel for Tests and one-day internationals needed to be eased.

"One of the major problems might be



RICKY PONTING

just the amount of umpiring these guys are doing," he said.

"There's only seven umpires on the international panel. We're always talking about the amount of cricket we are playing, well, someone has to be umpir-

ing those games and if there's only seven there then I'm sure it will be long, hard hours and tours on each of the umpires as well. That's something that can be looked at.

"Even speaking to the umpires who officiated in the Super Test in Sydney where the technology was used they didn't approve of it either.

"I think the people we can't leave out of this are the umpires. It's good to get the umpires' views as well. I know they weren't big on the idea.

"The less technology for me, the better."

Former Australian Test batsman Mark Waugh is in line with Ponting's views on technology in cricket.

"To my way of thinking we can only use the third umpire for line decisions, stumpings, run-outs and to see if the ball has pitched in line with leg-stump for lbws," he said on commercial radio Tuesday.

"I don't think it can be used for anything else. I think there's still too much doubt. A lot of the time you can't see inside edges. I just think it's still too much of a grey area even using the third umpire."

West Indies skipper Shivnarine Chanderpaul, who had more cause to complain than Ponting, agreed with his Australian counterpart on limiting the use of technology, saying umpiring should be left the way it is.

What Lara wants from the Aussies

Cricket

AFP, Adelaide

Brian Lara told the victorious Australian team they had a responsibility to play their cricket in the best spirit after what is seen as his final Test match in Australia here Tuesday.

The 36-year-old West Indian batting great became Test cricket's all-time leading run-scorer during his first innings 226 of the third Test at the Adelaide Oval and was named man-of-the-match despite Australia's seven-wicket victory to complete a three-Test series whitewash.

Lara received honorary life membership of the South Australian Cricket Association and was invited to speak to the crowd, who have showered him with several standing ovations during the Test match.

There has been criticism of Australia's excessive appealing during this series, where the West Indies have been on the receiving end of some harsh umpiring decisions, although they didn't publicly complain.

Australian leg-spinner Shane Warne was found not guilty on a dissent charge after being reported by the match umpires when an appeal for a catch was turned down.

Lara raised the spirit of cricket in his 'farewell' speech to Australian

cricket.

"To the Australian cricket team my battles with you over the years have been the fiercest, it's been good



BRIAN LARA

competition.

"Today you stand as the best playing team in the world and you have the respect of all the countries that play cricket in the world.

"I hope that you will see it as your responsibility to ensure that the game is played and is continued to be played in the best spirit as it has been at the moment."

Lara now has a Test aggregate of 11,204 runs at an average of 53.86 in his 121st Test match.

French defender

Di Tommaso passes away

REUTERS, Amsterdam

Utrecht defender David di Tommaso died in his sleep on Monday aged 26, the Dutch first division club said on Tuesday.

According to media reports, the French defender suffered a heart attack at home.

Di Tommaso started his career at Monaco and later played for French second division Sedan.

Warne found not guilty

AFP, Adelaide

Australian leg-spinner Shane Warne was Tuesday found not guilty of dissent after being reported by the match umpires in the third cricket Test against the West Indies at the Adelaide Oval.

Warne was Monday reported to the International Cricket Council (ICC) match referee Mike Procter for dissent under Law 1.3 of the ICC Code of Conduct.

A hearing attended by Warne, Procter, umpires Aleem Dar and Billy Bowden, Australian team manager Steve Bernard and Australian captain Ricky Ponting found Test cricket's leading wicket-taker not guilty of dissent.

Warne received the report for his reaction to a turned-down appeal for a close-in catch on West Indian batsman Darren Powell in the last over of Sunday's third day of play.

Weight: 71kg.

Position: Midfielder.

Clubs: Gremio Porto Alegre (BRA) 1998-2001, Paris St Germain (FRA) 2001-2003, Barcelona (ESP) 2003-present.

International debut: June 26, 1999 against Estonia (3-0).

Caps: 62 (27 goals).

Sporting achievements: World under-17 championship winner 1997, Copa America winner 1999, World Cup winner 2002, Confede-rations Cup winner 2005, Spanish league title 2005, Spanish Super Cup 2005 (both Barcelona).

Awards: Voted best player at 1997 world youth championships, top scorer in 2000 Confederations Cup (6 goals), top scorer in qualifying tournament for the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games (nine goals), FIFA's world player of the year 2004, Ballon d'Or 2005 (European player of the year).

It's Ronaldinho

FROM PAGE 12

Premiership last season. Gerrard's role in Liverpool's Champions League win over AC Milan last summer will also have been recognised.

Having conceded three goals in the final the England man scored Liverpool's first goal to relaunch a fightback which ended with victory for the Reds after a series of spot kicks.

The Ballon d'Or has been open to players of any nationality playing in a UEFA affiliated team since the mid 1990's. Previously, only players of European origin were eligible.

"Ronaldinho just makes the game so beautiful. And he makes everyone happy, and his smile when he's playing says it all," Platini, one of three three-time winners, said.

Ronaldinho said however that his superb ball skills hadn't just emerged by chance.

"I work hard at everything I do. I train a lot with the ball, at free kicks and dribbling especially," said the Brazilian, who in 62 appearances for his country has scored 27 times.

Lampard meanwhile will be happy with his second place in the voting.

The England midfielder was one of the main reasons Chelsea ended 50 years without the league championship trophy to win the English

FACTBOX
(Ronaldinho).
Date of birth: March 21, 1980.
Place of birth: Porto Alegre (Brazil).
Height: 1.78m.

Biman, Leonine narrow gap

SPORTS REPORTER

Defending champions Leonine Chess Club and title contenders Bangladesh Biman both closed in the gap with leaders Muktijoddha Sangsad after the fourth round of the Dutch-Bangla First Division Chess League yesterday.

Muktijoddha stayed atop with 14 points but saw their lead narrowed to half-a-point after Biman and Leonine both collected full points.

Indian Grand Master Avijit Kunte was held to a draw by Saifuddin Lavlu in Muktijoddha's 3.5-0.5 win over Titas Club at the BCF hall room but GMs Edvins Kengis and Aloyzas Kveinys and local International Master Enamul Hossain Rajib won their respective boards.

Leonine, featuring GMs Niaz Murshed, RB Ramesh and Uldachev Saidali and IM S Kiadambi, blanked Friends Chess Power 4-0 while Biman, who have GM Ziaur Rahman, GM Dibyendu Barua, IM Abdullah Al Rakib and Mehdi Hasan Parag in their lineup, trounced Sonali Bank by the same margin.

In other fourth round games, Destiny 2000 outplayed Faith CC 4-0, BJMC blanked Dolphin CC 4-0, Narayanganj CCC beat Shaheed Mufi Kashed DD 3.5-0.5, Anusulin shared points with Mohakhali Pradeep Sangha and Farashganj drew with Dhaka University.

Australia sweep

FROM PAGE 12

this part of the world again in February for a Test and one-day series in New Zealand.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard on the fifth and final day of the third and final Test between Australia and the West Indies at the Adelaide Oval on Tuesday:

WEST INDIES: First innings 405 (Lara 226, D Bravo 34; McGrath 3-106, Lee 3-111)

AUSTRALIA: First innings 428 (Hussey 133 not out, Langer 99, Ponting 56; D Bravo 6-84)

WEST INDIES: Second innings 204 (D Bravo 64, Sarwan 62; Warne 6-80, Lee 4-46)

AUSTRALIA: Second innings (over-night 76-2)
Langer c Dwayne Smith b Collymore 20
Hayden not out 87

Ponting c Sarwan b Collymore 3
Hodge c Dwayne Smith b Powell 23
Hussey not out 30

Extras: (lb-3, w-1, nb-15) 19
Total: (For 3 wks in 58 overs) 182
Fall of wickets: 1-51, 2-55, 3-110

Bowler O M R W
Edwards 11 1 52 0
Powell 14 2 40 1
Collymore 20 6 51 2
Sarwan 12 2 35 0
Dwayne Smith 1 0 1 0

Result: Australia won by 7 wickets and clinch the three-Test series 3-0.
Man-of-the-match: Brian Lara.
Man-of-the-series: Matthew Hayden.

Man-of-the-series: Matthew Hayden.

Man-of-the-series: Matthew Hayden.

Man-of-the-series: Matthew Hayden.

Man-of-the-series: Matthew Hayden.

Man-of-the-series: Matthew Hayden.

Man-of-the-series: Matthew Hayden.

Man-of-the-series: Matthew Hayden.

Man-of-the-series: Matthew Hayden.

Man-of-the-series: Matthew Hayden.

Man-of-the-series: Matthew Hayden.

Man-of-the-series: Matthew Hayden.

Man-of-the-series: Matthew Hayden.

Man-of-the-series: Matthew Hayden.

Man-of-the-series: Matthew Hayden.

Man-of-the-series: Matthew Hayden.

Man-of-the-series: Matthew Hayden.

Man-of-the-series: Matthew Hayden.

Man-of-the-series: Matthew Hayden.

Man-of-the-series: Matthew Hayden.

Man-of-the-series: Matthew Hayden.

Man-of-the-series: Matthew Hayden.

Man-of-the-series: Matthew Hayden.

Man-of-the-series: Matthew Hayden.



Turkey custodian Volkan Demirel arrives for his hearing at the FIFA headquarters in Zurich on Tuesday. Demirel faces a disciplinary investigation by the game's world governing body.

Dravid hails mates

Cricket

AFP, Mumbai

India's captain Rahul David on Tuesday hailed his team's resurgence in limited-overs cricket, but warned there was a long way to go before it could be counted among the best.

The Indian captain led from the front with an unbeaten 78 as the hosts scored a series-levelling victory here on Monday night to deny South Africa their first series win on Indian soil.

India, who restricted South Africa to 221-6 after electing to field on the slow wicket, surpassed the modest target for the loss of five wickets with 15 deliveries to spare.

Graeme Smith's South Africans, ranked second in the world behind Australia, return home still unable to win a bilateral one-day series or multi-national tournament on Indian soil in five visits.

India bounced back after the 10-wicket humiliation in the previous

game in Kolkata on Friday to win after overcoming a spirited display by the tourists under lights.

Jacques Kallis hit a watchful 91 to hold the South African innings together before all-rounder Shaun Pollock boosted the total with an unbeaten 30 off 17 balls at the end.

In reply, India were reduced to 83-3 before Yuvraj Singh (49) put on a match-winning stand of 79 for the fourth wicket with Dravid.

The usually unflappable Dravid took a swipe at the hostile crowds in Kolkata, the home of deposed captain Sourav Ganguly, who had jeered the home team on Friday.

The Indians will have little time to recover as they head into a three-Test series against Sri Lanka starting in Chennai on Friday.

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard of the fifth and final one-day international between India and South Africa at the Wankhede Stadium on Monday:

SOUTH AFRICA: 221 for 6 (Kallis 91, Boucher 35, Pollock 30 not out, Smith

24; Pathan 3-20, Harbhajan 2-32)

INDIA
Gambhir c Kemp b Ntini 0
Tendulkar c Prince b Nel 30
Sehwag lbw b Pollock 27
Dravid not out 78
Yuvraj c Boucher b Nel 49
Dhoni c Boucher b Langeveldt 12
Kaif not out 16

Extras: (lb-6, w-5, nb-1) 12
Total: (For 5 wks in 47.3 overs) 224
Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-46, 3-83, 4-162, 5-201

Did not bat: Pathan, Agarkar, Harbhajan, Kartik
Super-sub: Gambhir for Rudra

Bowler O M R W
Pollock 9 1 49 1
Ntini 10 0 51 1
Nel 10 2 36 2
Langeveldt 8.3 1 39 1
Botha 6 0 24 0
Hall 4 0 19 0

Result: India won by five wickets to square the five-match series 2-2.
Man-of-the-match: Rahul Dravid.
Players-of-the-series: Graeme Smith and Yuvraj Singh.

Visitors now coming good

FROM PAGE 12

batting at the other end.
RAJSHAHI-KHULNA
Resuming the day on 6 for no loss, Khulna took 28 balls to score the remaining 13 runs on the day to finish the match little bit more than in two days.

Monirul Islam (7) and Sagir Hossain (8) completed the job as Khulna raced to 21-0 in 6.2 overs.

Spinner Jamaluddin Babu, who plotted Rajshahi's second innings downfall picking up 5-45, was adjudged man of the match.

CHITTAGONG-SYLHET
Kapali extended his overnight score (121) to 156 as Sylhet secured a significant 49-run first-innings lead to confirm at least four points if the match ends in draw on the final day as expected.

Resuming the day on 267-8, Sylhet

were all out for 322 in 100.5 overs in reply to Chittagong's 273. Kapali smashed 23 fours during his 215-balls vigil at the wicket.

Chittagong also responded gallantly with Nafees and Ehsanul giving them a 182-run lead.

Captain Nafees scored 72 off 155 balls while Ehsanul contributed 76 off 105 balls. Waseluddin was batting on 47 with Rezaul Karim (2) accompanying him.

SCORES IN BRIEF
DHAKA-BARISAL
DHAKA: First innings 331 and second innings 295-8 dec in 73 overs (overnight 188-4) (Javed 151, Anwar 19, Al Shahriar 28, Ashraf 5, Mehrab 19, Sanwar 34, Rafique 17, extras 11: Anisur 3-56, Salahuddin 2-64, Arif 1-44)

BARISAL: First innings 131 and second innings 215-3 in 68 overs (Imran 77,

Nafees 76