

## England's ODI in Karachi on

REUTERS, Lahore

England still plan to play a one-day international in Karachi next month although the security situation remains under review, the chairman of the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) said on Wednesday.

"I have reviewed the situation with the England team management and as things stand we will be going to Karachi to fulfil the commitment," David Morgan told a news conference.

However, he made it clear the first priority of the ECB was to ensure conditions were safe and secure for the team.

## Giles will have op next week

REUTERS, Lahore

England spinner Ashley Giles will have surgery for his chronic hip problem next week in England, a team spokesman said on Tuesday.

Giles will undergo surgery in a bid to make a complete recovery before England's tour of India early next year.

"It is confirmed he will have the surgery but we are still trying to organise the flight for him to return home," spokesman Andrew Walpole said.

Giles told a website he hoped to be available for the Indian tour by having the surgery next week.

"It's cutting it fine for India but by getting it done next week hopefully I'll be on that plane," he said.

The England selectors have already named Somerset all-rounder Ian Blackwell for the one-day series in Pakistan as a replacement for Giles.

England captain Michael Vaughan is also due to return home after the third Test for the birth of his second child and will consult specialists about the knee trouble which kept him out of the first Test in Multan.

## Australia will keep that divot

AFP, Sydney

Australia has moved to permanently preserve the penalty spot from which the Socceros earlier this month secured their first berth in the World Cup finals for 32 years.

Officials from Sydney's Telstra Stadium on Tuesday dug up the patch of turf where Socceros John Aloisi's spotkick sealed a dramatic 4-2 penalty shootout win over Uruguay after extra time on November 16.

They said the historic divot would be dry-frozen over a period of weeks to remove any moisture before being treated and encased in glass to go on display.

The victory over Uruguay to gain a spot at the tournament finals in Germany next year sent Australia into a football frenzy, sparking predictions the game could eventually topple rival sports such as cricket and rugby league as the nation's most popular game.

## Captaincy reward for Zoro?

AFP, Rome

Ivory Coast international Mark Zoro, who was the target of racist abuse at the weekend, will be made captain of Messina at Treviso on December 4, Gazzetta dello Sport reported on Wednesday.

Defender Zoro was reduced to tears after being subjected to abuse by visiting fans in Sunday's 2-1 home Italian league defeat against Inter Milan.

The president of the Sicilian club Pietro Franza said: "Zoro is a model player at our club which has been welcoming players of different nationalities for years and he will soon become the symbol of the fight against racism in our national sport."

"We admire him for what he has done. We are citizens of the world and we will continue to be."

## Murali relishing the challenge

PTI, Chennai

After a none-too-impressive performance in the one-dayers, Sri Lankan spin wizard Muttiah Muralitharan is keen to prove himself in the Test series against India beginning here on Friday.

The off-spinner said India were a "formidable" side and it would be a challenge to bowl to the Indian batsmen.

"It is a big challenge for me and I have to prove myself against a formidable side like India," said the bowler who has 563 wickets from 95 Tests at an average of 22.15.

Muralitharan said he was raring to have a go at the Chennai ground although he had never played at this venue.



PHOTO: STAR

Action from Wednesday's Nitol-Tata National Football League encounter between Brothers Union and Samabesh Club of Munshiganj at the Rangpur Stadium.

# Wenger scotches Real connection

Football

AFP, London

Arsene Wenger has scotched speculation that he could be in line to be the next Real Madrid manager by insisting that the "glue on my seat" will keep him at Arsenal until his current contract expires in 2008.

Wenger has been linked with the Real job before and the latest rumours have been sparked by comments from the Spanish club's president, Florentino Perez, describing the Frenchman as "a coach I like a lot."

But the Arsenal boss was quick to pour cold water on a frenzy of reports suggesting that Real could be about to make a move for him to replace Wanderley Luxemburgo.

"That's very nice of (Perez) to say that. But until 2008, I have glue on my seat here. My desire is to stay here," Wenger said after watching a youthful Arsenal side sweep Championship leaders Reading aside with a 3-0 win in the fourth round of the League Cup.

Wenger has repeatedly stressed that he wants to honour his commit-

ment to oversee Arsenal's move next year from their Highbury home to the new Emirates Stadium at nearby Ashburton Grove.

But his willingness to see out his contract could be undermined if he fails to hold on to Gunners skipper Thierry Henry, a target for both Real and the Liga rivals Barcelona.

Henry has refused, so far, to sign an extension to his contract and Arsenal could be forced to sell their most valuable asset next summer rather than see him walk away for nothing 12 months later, when his contract expires.

But Wenger remains hopeful of persuading Henry to stay in London. "For me, Thierry Henry is the best striker in the world so we would prefer to keep him here," he said.

Wenger's young Gunners equipped themselves well against Reading and the manager was particularly pleased to see Jose Antonio Reyes end a 12-game run without a goal by marking the opener.

"I kept Jose in the team as I felt he needed a goal to find his confidence again. He always likes to play but when you are a striker and have not scored for a long time like he did,

the next goal is welcome."

Reyes has cut a forlorn figure at times at Highbury since admitting last season, during a hoax radio interview, that he was unhappy in London and would be interested in a move back to his native Spain.

But Wenger has not given up hope on Reyes finding the kind of confidence that has characterised Robin van Persie's recent performances.

Arsenal's second goal on Tuesday night made it eight in as many games for the Dutch winger and Wenger said: "Every time he touches the ball, you feel he can score."

Substitute striker Arturo Lupoli was also on target as the Gunners ended a 23-game unbeaten run with a demonstration of the gulf that exists between the top of the Premiership and the top of the Championship.

Reading would have made more of a game of it if they had matched their opponents' touch in front of goal. "We created chances but our finishing was not at its best," admitted manager Steve Coppell.

## Smith will go Down Under

REUTERS, Durban

South Africa captain Graeme Smith will tour Australia although his injured finger will need protection, Cricket South Africa (CSA) said on Tuesday.

Smith injured a finger on his left hand attempting a catch during the fifth one-day international between India and South Africa in Mumbai on Monday.

He was examined by a specialist in Cape Town on Tuesday and X-rays revealed no fracture.

A CSA statement said Smith's finger would "need protection for the next 10 to 12 days".

The first of South Africa's three Tests against Australia will be played in Perth from December 16.

Smith could miss a three-day tour match against Western Australia in Perth that starts on Monday "as a precautionary measure", the statement said.

South Africa leave for Australia on Friday.

## Lara's one

FROM PAGE 12  
Shane Warne lies third, the two Australians separated by Sri Lanka's Muttiah Muralitharan in a tightly-packed top three.

Irfan Pathan is the only Indian bowler in the top ten, placed ninth ahead of South African paceman Andre Nel.

century by just four runs as he hooked fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar to Danish Kaneria at deep fine-leg. His career-best 96 contained 15 fours.

### SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on the second day of the third and final Test between Pakistan and England at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore on Wednesday:

ENGLAND: First innings (overnight 248-6)

Trescothick c Akmal b Malik 50  
Vaughan c Yousof b Malik 58  
Bell c Yousof b Malik 4  
Collingwood c Kaneria b Akhtar 96  
Pietersen c Akmal b Naved 34  
Flintoff c Akhtar b Naved 12  
Jones b Kaneria 4  
Udal c Kamal b Kaneria 10  
Plunkett b Sami 9  
Hoggard not out 1  
Hamison c Akmal b Sami 0  
Extras: (lb-5, nb-5) 10  
Total: (All out in 94 overs) 288

All-rounder Paul Collingwood, 71 overnight, missed his maiden Test

288  
**Bowler**  
Akhtar 22 6 45 1  
Naved 20 3 76 2  
Sami 18 2 57 2  
Malik 14 1 58 3  
Kaneria 20 2 47 2

**PAKISTAN:** First innings  
Malik c Plunkett b Hoggard 0  
Butt c Jones b Plunkett 28  
Kamal lbw b Hoggard 5  
Yousuf not out 84  
Inzamam retired hurt 35  
Raza c Flintoff b Hamison 21  
Akhtar not out 0  
Extras: (lb-1, lb-5, nb-5, w-1) 12  
Total: (For 4 wks in 52 overs) 185

Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-12, 3-68, 4-180  
To bat: Akmal, Naved, Sami, Kaneria

**Bowler**  
Hoggard 8 2 22 2  
Flintoff 14 5 34 0  
Hamison 17 2 56 1  
Plunkett 8 0 37 1  
Udal 3 0 19 0  
Collingwood 2 0 11 0

## Peace wins in Barcelona

REUTERS, Barcelona

Spanish champions Barcelona beat a joint Israeli-Palestinian soccer team 2-1 on Tuesday in a "match for peace" aimed at promoting reconciliation in the Middle East.

A large crowd of 31,820 turned out at Barcelona's famous Nou Camp stadium for the good-humoured and sporting match in which both sides' efforts were applauded equally.

Barcelona scored two goals within five minutes in the second half through Deco and Maxi Lopez while the Israeli-Palestinian side pulled one back through Israeli winger Abas Suan.

The match was backed by the Peres Centre for Peace, a foundation set up by veteran Israeli politician Shimon Peres.

It was aimed at building understanding and respect between Israelis and Palestinians and at contributing to the quest for Middle East peace.

The "Peace Team" included Israeli internationals and Palestinian players from the occupied West Bank.

Money raised from the game will be invested in projects that help children from Israel and Palestine.

### ITALIAN CUP

## Rui Costa guides AC Milan

REUTERS, Milan

Portuguese midfielder Rui Costa scored one goal and laid on another to steer AC Milan to a 3-1 win over Serie B club Brescia in their Italian Cup fourth round, first-leg match on Tuesday.

Milan, who rested a number of first-team regulars, went ahead in the 26th minute when Rui Costa fired home from the edge of the area after being set up by Georgian defender Kakha Kaladze.

Rui Costa also created the second goal, taking the corner which Italy striker Alberto Gilardino headed home five minutes before the break.

Lithuanian Marius Stankevicius brought Brescia back into the tie with a 48th-minute header from a cross by former Inter Milan midfielder Luigi Di Biagio.

Carlo Ancelotti's Milan restored their two-goal advantage in the 69th minute after a well-taken shot from inside the area by Christian Vieri.

On Wednesday, Parma host Inter Milan and Serie B side Atalanta are at home to Udinese.

The most attractive tie of the week is on Thursday when Fiorentina, third in Serie A, take on champions Juventus.

The remaining four ties take place next week with the return legs in the second week of January.

## Dhaka win

FROM PAGE 12  
anchor role as Sylhet dashed the home team's hopes of avenging their one-day defeat.

Nafees Iqbal declared their second innings twenty minutes before the lunch, leaving Sylhet to score 236 in 69 overs.

Opener Golam Rahman, who was the highest run-getter last season, occupied the crease for more than three hours to take Sylhet to the target with 20 balls to spare.

The left-hander played 204 balls to score 87 runs with only three fours.

Captain Rajin Saleh was the other notable scorer with a 74-ball 31 while man-of-the-match Alok Kapali, who hit 156 in the first innings, added 24.

"Our only target was to play the allotted overs and Rahman did that although it was not easy to bat on a worn out fourth-day wicket," said Rajin.

Earlier, Sylhet pacer Hasibul Hossain captured three more Chittagong wickets in the morning to finish with 5-48.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

**DHAKA-BARISAL**  
DHAKA: First innings 331 and second innings 295-8 dec.

**BARISAL:** First innings 131 and second innings 400 all out in 127.5 overs (overnight 215-3) (Imran 77, Nafees 76, Hannan 73, Shahin 5, Humayun 66, Arif 17, Anisur 11, extras 57; Rafique 4102, Ashraful 5-137).

**Result: Dhaka won by 95 runs.**

**CHITTAGONG-SYLHET**

CHITTAGONG: First innings 273 and second innings 284-9 in 91.2 overs dec (overnight 231-4) (Nazimuddin 20, Nafees 72, Aftab 8, Ehsanul 76, Waseluddin 47, Sadid 22, extras 13; Nazmul 2-38, Rezaul 2-53, Hasibul 5-48).

**SYLHET:** First innings 322 and second innings 236-6 in 65.4 overs (Golam Rahman 87 not out, Imtiaz 23, Moniruzzaman 13, Rajin 31, Kapali 24, Mabud 19, Hasibul 21 not out, extras 17; Gazi Alamgir 1-35, Yasin 2-81, Sunny 2-80).

**Result: Sylhet won by four wickets.**

# 'The last magician'

Football

AFP, Paris

As far as awards go, Ronaldinho didn't know which was better - winning the 50th European Player of the Year award or hearing some of football's greatest ever players gushing over his talents.

On Monday at a lavish ceremony near the Champs Elysees football royalty including Alfredo Di Stefano, Michel Platini and Johann Cruyff paid tribute to the silky smooth Brazilian who won the award with a whopping 225 points.

A third place finisher in the voting last year behind winner Andriy Shevchenko, the 25-year-old Barcelona forward won France Football magazine's prestigious prize with a 77-point lead over Chelsea forward Frank Lampard.

First won by Blackpool's Stanley Matthews nearly half a century ago, most of Europe's big names have won a Ballon D'Or, although it was only open to non-Europeans playing in UEFA affiliated leagues in 1995 when Liberian George Weah, of AC Milan, was the first African winner.

Ronaldinho is the third Brazilian to have won it in less than a decade, after Ronaldo's two victories in 1997 and 2002, and that of Rivaldo in 1999.

But only days after another former winner, Manchester United star George Best, died after a long illness it was perhaps fitting that another player with dazzling individual skills walked off with the prize.

Best, the 1968 winner in the year United won the European Cup, was remembered with particular emotion by the organisers who handed over a replacement trophy to former United greats Denis Law and Sir Bobby Charlton.

It came as no surprise to know that Best, long remembered for his exploits and adventures off the field of play, had lost his somewhere, some time ago.

"It was very touching," Law told

AFP.

"You just had a feeling that something would be done on this particular night, what with it being the 50th anniversary. It was a very nice gesture from the people at France Football."

Best and Ronaldinho may be worlds apart on human terms, but when it comes to the game the



RONALDINHO

Brazilian is looked upon with as much awe as the Northern Irishman.

"Ronaldinho just makes the game so beautiful. He makes everyone happy, and his smile when he's playing says it all," said France and Juventus legend Platini, one of three three-time winners of the Ballon D'Or.

Cruyff, one of the pioneers of the attacking, flowing game in the 1970's which came to be known as 'total' football said the Brazilian had the power to strike fear into any opponent.

"He deserves this Ballon d'Or. He animates the game and people love watching him when he's playing," said the former Ajax and Holland great, another three-time winner along with countryman Marco Van Basten.

"Every one of his gestures is potentially dangerous (to opposition teams) and that, obviously, is what the fans want to see."

The flamboyant long-haired

Ronaldinho, whose mazy turns, deft feints and superb goalscoring leave many defenders kicking out at thin air, appears to have struck a chord with many of the game's former greats.

Despite his own admission he is not exactly handsome, Ronaldinho is now in the process of becoming the marketing nemesis to Real Madrid beau David Beckham.

Ronaldinho's skills, honed from an early age when he followed his brother to training at top Brazilian club Gremio Porto Alegre, have long been compared to those of Pele.

Indeed six years ago a goal that Ronaldinho scored at the Copa America in Paraguay, in 1999, left commentators salivating. The next day, it was being likened to one the Brazil legend scored against Wales at the 1958 World Cup.

For France and Marseille great Jean-Pierre Papin, Ronaldinho's 'magic' comes accompanied with another crucial sporting ingredient.

"Ronaldinho is the last magician. He's a genius with the ball at his feet," said the 1991 winner, whose goalscoring feats have forever left their mark on fans in the country.

"But he is also humble. What he enjoys most is playing for himself, and for the fans in the stands. He's a joy to watch. I would have loved to have had him as a teammate just for his sense of being able to come up with that final pass."

Platini was of a similar opinion.

"Not only is he individually brilliant, he's an altruist. He knows how to give a good pass. It's not just about the dribbling. I've seen players who know how to dribble and juggle with the ball, and don't know how to give a good pass."

"They are only good for the circus. Ronaldinho is great for football."

## Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 12  
Fatullah Stadium has been rescheduled for tomorrow due to a countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

**ENGLAND:** 208 all out in 49.5 overs (Chopra 0, Brown 3, Thompson 24, Moeen 70, H Brown 24, James 3, Wright 26, Wood 21, Woodman 13, Miller 2, Shingler 11, extras 11; Dollar 2-33, Sirajullah 1-10, Nabil 1-25, Sakib 1-22, Rezaul 1-35, Shuvo 1-34, Mehrab 2-23)

**BANGLADESH:** 210-6 in 43.5 overs (Tammim 12, Mahdi 28, Rakib 0, Sakib 83, Mehrab 62 not out, Mushfiqur 7, Sirajullah 0, Shuvo 12 not out, extras 6; Woodman 1-38, Shingler 1-36, James 1-26, Moeen 3-23)

**Result: Bangladesh won by four wickets.**

## BU, Samabesh

FROM PAGE 12  
to Monwar, Paul and Chimaoku's near misses, Brothers led a relentless assault afterwards but without any avail.

The oranges created at least seven opportunities but Paul, Monwar, Liton and Chimaoku's substitute Tapu squandered all the chances to hand one point to the opposition.

Ainul Haque, manager of Samabesh Club, praised his inexperienced players for holding the big team.

Brothers captain Monwar showed his disappointment after the poor show from his forwards. "We lost our focus after missing one chance after another," he said.

Muktijoddha Sangsad of Dhaka will take on Soccer Club of Feni in today's match.

## CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

**ACROSS**  
1 Showy dispenser, parrot  
6 Kine  
12 Loose  
13 Worshipped  
14 Harm  
15 Scalawags  
16 Disarray  
17 Walk of Fame  
19 — out a living  
20 A Jackson  
22 Bird  
24 Payable  
27 "Hud" Oscar winner  
29 Mediocre  
32 Stipulations  
35 Candle  
36 Zeno's  
37 Cause  
38 Holm or Fleming  
40 Catch  
42 Cash  
43 dispenser, parrot  
44 "Abie was —"  
46 Pinnacle  
50 Talked into  
52 Cheesy  
54 Catch  
55 Numbing  
56 "Ocean's —"  
57 Reason  
58 One may  
59 send up smoke  
60 signals  
61 B&B  
62 Undergo  
63 recession  
64 Poorly ill

**DOWN**  
1 Marceau's  
2 Rock  
3 Go on  
4 Singer  
5 Napless  
6 Irene of  
7 Decorate  
8 Dress  
9 Loyal  
10 Welsh  
11 Gaelic  
12 Kipling lad  
13 White  
14 House  
15 mono-gram  
16 "Eureka!"  
17 50 Cent  
18 She  
19 may cry  
20 "Uncle!"  
21 America's Cup  
22 Dermatologist's case  
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