No 6-day Tests against India

PCB wants to play fewer matches with arch-rivals

Cricket

REUTERS. Lahore

Pakistan has ruled out the possibility of six-day Tests against India next year to overcome the problem of bad light reducing the number of overs in matches.

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Director of Cricket Operations, Saleem Altaf said India would play five-day Tests despite the International Cricket Council (ICC) saying it was ready to consider sixday games in Pakistan during the

The current Test series against England has been badly hit by poor light conditions at the end of the day resulting in loss of overs.

"We can talk to the Indian board and have a mutual agreement to have six-day Tests. But it is not practical now since the itinerary has already been finalised," Altaf told

"Secondly the tour schedule is already very tight and we are not in a position to have extra days and we

Inzy's injury

not serious

Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq

will be fit to resume his innings after

being struck on the wrist during the

second day of the third and final Test

against England, an official said

X-ray showed no fracture," said

Pakistan Cricket Board spokesman

needs only 10 more runs to become

the second Pakistani batsman after

Javed Miandad to complete 8.000

The third Test between Sri Lanka

and India has been switched from

Kanpur after local cricket officials

said they would not be able to host it an Indian cricket board official said

"The state association expressed their inability to stage the

match and we will decide on the new

venue in our meeting over the

weekend," board secretary Niranjan

Yorkshire buy

Headingley

The third Test starts on

3rd SL-India

Test not in

Kanpur

REUTERS, Chennai

Shah said.

December 18.

AFP, London

million dollars).

Company.

of the ground by 2006.

Yorkshire plan to increase the

ground's capacity from 17,000 to

20,000 with significant develop-

ments of the Grandstand and

December 24.

Kirkstall Lane ends

DIGITAL WC BALL

in March

AFP, Berlin

FIFA decides

FIFA will wait until March next year

2006 World Cup finals in Germany.

Siegler confirmed there would be a

meeting in March to discuss the tests

of the chipped ball and decide whether

it is ready for the 2006 finals, running

the Under-17 World Champion-

ships in Peru back in September

and is expected to be tried out again

at the World Club Champion-ship in

FIFA have shown interest in

technology advances in football and

believe the chipped ball can help

referees make crucial goal-line calls.

The chipped ball was tested at

from June 9 until July 9.

December.

FIFA media spokesman Markus

"The injury is not serious as the

Inzamam, unbeaten on 35, now

AFP, Lahore

Wednesday

Abbas Zaidi

don't think even the Indians would agree to such a proposal at this stage," he said.

Altaf said, however, that Pakistan would definitely be taking up the issue with the ICC to find a solution to the problem of matches being affected.

Zimbabwe and West Indies are due to tour next November and December, the time of the year when the winter season sets in

Meanwhile, PCB chief Shahriyar Khan wants his team to play fewer matches against India because he fears interest in one of cricket's greatest spectacles is being diluted.

Since Pakistan hosted India for the first time in 14 years in March 2004, the teams have played each other on 21 occasions.

"We are playing too much against India," Shahriyar told

"Last year we played India 12 times so the sparkle has gone out of the series but one has to contend with the requests of fellow boards. We are killing the goose that laid the

Shahriyar has expressed his concerns to Jagmohan Dalmiya, former president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India and still an influential figure.

The PCB neared bankruptcy in the years when countries were reluctant to tour Pakistan after the Sept. 11 attacks on the U.S. but has since generated about 22 million dollars through television rights and sponsorship. The five one-day matches raised 1.5 million dollars in ticket sales alone.

Shahriyar revealed that several offers to pitch the two arch-rivals together had been rejected, even though large sums of money are involved. "We keep getting requests to

play India at all sorts of venues. like

Toronto and Houston and they say half the money will go to some players association or charity," Shahriyar said "Quite frankly we are reluctant to play these matches because we have been playing India too much

and it will take the charm away from

the India-Pakistan rivalry if we go on

playing each other 15 times a year.

"I kept trying to persuade Jaggu (Dalmiya) that we should not schedule so many matches but he is a man who likes to have the matches on and keep the pennies rolling in, but we do have a very good relationship with the Indian board."

The coming series, when India are set to play three Tests and five one-day internationals, will even things up in terms of visits stretching back to Pakistan's tour of India in

"Although we don't know what's going to happen with the ICC's tour cycle yet -- whether it will stay at five years or become six years -- I would like to see us play each other every two years like with the Ashes, Shahriyar said.

"That is almost certainly what will happen. We need to treat our series in the same way as England and Australia treat theirs. If we do that there will then be no danger of overkill and it will maintain the fervour that we associate with these

Bond back to disband 'em

Cricket

REUTERS, Wellington

New Zealand fast bowler Shane Bond is expected to be fit for the opening one-day match against Australia in the Chappell-Hadlee Trophy series on Saturday.

Bond was confined to his hotel with a stomach bug on Thursday, though coach John Bracewell said his primary strike bowler would be fit to continue his international comeback against a side he has tormented in the past.

"He's got a tummy bug ... and we left him at home," Bracewell told reporters in Auckland. "He could have practised if he wanted to.

"Saturday I'm more than confident he'll be right.'

Bond, who has taken 22 of his 68 one-day wickets against Australia at an average of 10.45, last played against the world champions during the 2003 World Cup when he took six for 23 off 10 overs.

He has since struggled with two

stress fractures in his back and returned to international cricket on New Zealand's recent successful tour of Zimbabwe and the one-day tour of South Africa, which they lost

Australia captain Ricky Ponting said Bond would be one of the players his side needed to by wary "He's got me out about the last

seven one-day games that we've played, so he's a bit of a threat to me," Ponting said. "The last game he might have

played against us might have been the World Cup game actually he got six for 20 or something so he's got a great record against Australia. "I watched a bit of him bowling in the South African series -- he was

bowling very quick and he's a bit of a Last year's inaugural series was tied, New Zealand won the first match by four wickets, Australia the

second by 17 runs and the third was New Zealand will be without captain Stephen Fleming for at least

two of the three games after he had a tumour removed from his face, while Australia have been dogged by injuries

Shane Watson, James Hopes, Shaun Tait and Damien Martyn, who played against the World XI in October, all miss out through injury.

Glenn McGrath has also been rested with Brett Lee expected to spearhead the attack, which includes the uncapped Michael

Batsman Brad Hodge, who mpressed in Australia's Test series against West Indies, is also uncapped in one-day internationals.

All-rounder Brad Hogg returns after missing the World XI series with a knee injury while all rounder Cameron White and pace bowler Stuart Clark have retained their The first match is in Auckland on

Saturday, followed by Wellington (December 7) and Christchurch (December 10).

COMPATRIOTS YET RIVALS: Brazil football Carlos Alberto Parreira (R) shares a light moment with another famous Brazilian coach Luis Felipe Scolari, who will be in charge of Portugal during next year's World Cup, during the Second International Football Forum in Rio de Janeiro on Wednesday. Scolari desired to face Brazil in the qualifying round rather than in the knockout stages.

Yousuf & Akmal's day

"I could not play a long knock in the

last few Tests. I needed to score big in this innings and I am happy that I did that," said Akmal.

"Batting with Yousuf was great. He guided me and told me to stay at the pitch until we take a good lead." Vaughan used seven bowlers to

Football's world governing body break the stand but none could perturb the Pakistani pair. Pakistan, resuming at 185-4, before deciding whether to use an saw off the first hour without losing electronically chipped ball at the

any wickets as Akhtar and Yousuf frustrated England. Akhtar hit off-spinner Udal out of the attack as he smashed two towering sixes, while Yousuf reached his

well-deserved hundred with a lofted six off the same bowler. Yousuf, 84 overnight, took 183

balls to reach his 14th century in 62 Akhtar was finally caught at cover

by Udal off Plunkett after making a same venue three years ago.

career-best 38. His previous best of 37 came against New Zealand at the **SCOREBOARD**

Scoreboard at stumps on the third

day of the third and final Test between Pakistan and England at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore on Thursday:

ENGLAND: First innings 288 Trescothick 50; Malik 3-58)

(Collingwood 96, Vaughan 58, PAKISTAN: First innings (overnight

Malik c Plunkett b Hoggard Butt c Jones b Plunkett 28 Kamal Ibw b Hoggard 183 Yousuf not out Inzamam retired hurt Raza c Flintoff b Harmison 21 Akhtar c Udal b Plunkett 38 Akmal not out Extras: (b-1, lb-9, nb-7, w-4) 21 Total: (For 5 wkts in 127.4 overs)446 Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-12, 3-68, 4-

To bat: Naved, Sami, Kaneria 0 M R W Bowler Hoggard

180.5-247

58 29 66 Harmison 33.4 115 Plunkett 24 95 71 Udal 0 Collingwood 22

Collymore will have knee op

REUTERS, Melbourne

West Indies pace bowler Corey Collymore is to have knee surgery and is expected to miss their tour of New Zealand early next year. Collymore, who took eight wickets

is to have surgery to remove a bone spur on the patella tendon of his right knee, a report on Cricket Australia's official Web site said on Thursday. He is expected to need at least

in the 3-0 Test series loss to Australia.

four months to recover, ruling him out of West Indies' five one-day international, three-Test tour of New Zealand that starts in February.

The 27-year-old is likely to be fit for West Indies home series against India, starting in April.

'Zim crisis an internal issue'

AFP, Lahore The International Cricket Council

(ICC) said Wednesday it had no power to resolve Zimbabwe's cricketing crisis following the resignation of captain Tatenda Taibu.

"We watched what happened in Zimbabwe," said ICC chief executive Malcolm Speed, who is in Pakistan to watch the ongoing third and final Test with England.

"There is a daily report on the Zimbabwe issue, but the ICC policy, which is made by its member countries and applicable to all, leave the internal matters to the respective

"At the ICC we think basically all internal matters should be dealt by the country concerned.'

Lara's last 'hurrah'?

REUTERS, Melbourne

World record holder Brian Lara is likely to make his final appearance in Australia on Friday in West Indies' match against the Prime Minister's XI in Canberra.

The 36-year-old, who surpassed Allan Border's record of 11,174 career Test runs when he scored 226 in the first innings of the third Test against Australia, was named on Thursday in the tourists' side for the one-day match. Australian Test opener Justin

Langer will captain the PM's XI.

West Indies are not scheduled to tour Australia again until December 2008, when Lara will be 39.

Eight countries choose bases

With the 2006 World Cup in Germany six months away the 32 finalists are weighing up where to have their base for the finals, running from June 9 until July 9.

So far eight countries Germany, the United States, Argentina, Japan, Togo, Sweden, the Netherlands and Iran -- have made their decision with some opting for a giant metropolis while others preferring a tranquil village.

Hosts Germany will be based in the capital Berlin -- where the final will be played on July 9 -- with manager Juergen Klinsmann feeling his predecessor Rudi Voller's choice of Leverkusen was unsuitable.

The United States have also gone for a big city in the form of Hamburg, Germany's second largest city with 1.7 million inhabitants, as the airport is located close to the city's downtown area.

Sweden have chosen the northern city of Bremen taking advantage of the top facilities at leading Bundesliga club Werder Bremen while Japan have gone for the former administrative capital Bonn.

The Netherlands have opted for Hinterzarten in the south west near the picturesque black forest.

African World Cup debutants Togo and Iran have also taken the scenic option with Togo based at Wangen im Allgau near Lake Constance and Iran at the southern coastal town of Friedrichshafen.

Two-time winners Argentina have made the small village of Herzogenaurach, the headquarters of sports manufacturing giant Adidas, their base after being impressed during the 2005 Confederations Cup.

The remaining 24 nations, such as five-time winners Brazil, 1966 victors England and 1998 champions France, are set to wait until after the World Cup draw, to be held in Leipzig on December 9, before deciding on their base.

FIFA cuts down the list to three

REUTERS, London

Barcelona's Ronaldinho, teammate Samuel Eto'o and Chelsea's Frank Lampard were shortlisted for FIFA's World Player of the Year award on Wednesday. Brazilian playmaker Ronaldinho,

who took the honour in 2004, was named European Footballer of the Year on Monday after guiding Barcelona to last season's Primera Liga title. Cameroon striker Eto'o scored

24 goals for the Catalans last sea son, while England's Lampard, second to Ronaldinho in the European vote, was ever-present in Chelsea's Premier League-winning FIFA will announce the winner

a gala in Zurich on December 19.

Ganguly

FROM PAGE 16 "How quickly we adapt will be our biggest challenge.'

Personal milestones beckon the Indians, with Sachin Tendulkar just one century away from a world record 35th Test hundred and spinner Anil Kumble 35 scalps away from becoming the fifth bowler to join the 500-wicket club Tendulkar, however, played

down the bid for records. "I still maintain it is more important to help the team win," he said. "Records are secondary. Sri Lanka, meanwhile, are confi-

dent the 6-1 one-day drubbing by India will not stand in the way of making their first Test series on Indian soil in eight years a memora-"That defeat and the fact that we

have never won a Test match in India has made us even more determined," said captain Marvan "We are mentally prepared for

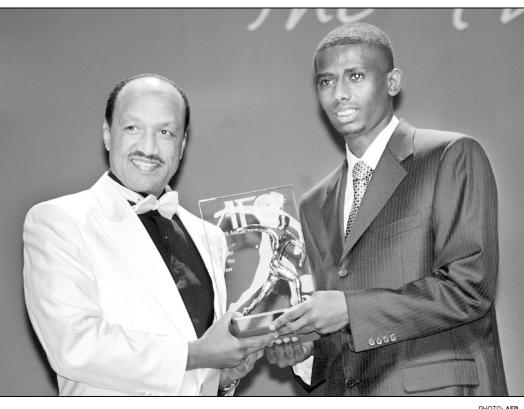
the task. We will go into the Test series with a lot of confidence and belief. What is important is that we execute our game plan well.' Sri Lanka, who axed veteran

Sanath Jayasuriya because of his poor one-day form, will reply heavily on prolific spinner Muttiah Muralitharan, the second most successful Test bowler behind Australian Shane Warne with 568 wickets

TEAMS INDIA (from): Rahul Dravid (cap-

tain), Virender Sehwag, Gautam Gambhir, Sachin Tendulkar, Venkatsai Laxman, Sourav Ganguly, Yuvraj Singh, Mohammad Kaif, Mahendra Dhoni, Anil Kumble, Harbhajan Singh, Murali Kartik, Irfan Pathan, Ajit Agarkar, Rudra Pratap Singh SRI LANKA (from): Marvan

Atapattu (captain), Chaminda Vaas, Mahela Jayawardene, Kumar Sangakkara, Tillakeratne Dilshan, Upul Tharanga, Thilan Samaraweera, Farveez Maharoof. Dilhara Fernando, Muttiah Muralitharan, Avishka Gunawardene, Lasith Malinga Malinga Bandara, Sajeeva Weerakoon, Jehan Mubarak.



ASIA'S BEST: Saudi Arabia defender Hamad Al Montashari (R) receives the Asian Player of the Year award from AFC president Mohammed bin Hammam during the Award Gala 2005 in Kuala Lumpur on Wednesday.

Perez Real-ly upbeat

Football

REUTERS, Madrid

Real Madrid president Florentino Perez is confident his team will recover from their poor start to the season and challenge Barcelona for the league title.

"We have all been surprised by what has happened so far this year, Perez told television programme Formula Marca. "We have probably got a better team than ever before certainly the most well balanced

(105.9 million dollars) on new recruits in the close season, including Brazilian striker Robinho and Spain defender Sergio Ramos, but they lie in sixth in the table, six points behind leaders and arch-rivals The Catalans, who crushed Real

Real spent 90 million euros

3-0 at the Bernabeu last month, have also dominated the year's major individual awards.

Barca forward Ronaldinho was named European Footballer of the

Year and has been shortlisted along

with team mate Samuel Eto'o for FIFA's world player award. Perez insists, however, that Real are the bigger club and that his

side's disappointing showing can be explained by a lack of continuity. "What with the late arrival of the new signings, injuries to 12 players and international call-ups, we've had too many disruptions," he said.

"If we don't have any more injury problems we can make this into a winning team. Leading players such as Ronaldo, Zinedine Zidane, Raul and David Beckham have suffered njuries, but Perez dismissed suggestions part of the problem was his

"The coach has complete freedom to do what he thinks fit," he

as often as possible

nsistence that the big signings play

"What is clear, though, is that it doesn't make sense to sign the best players in the world and then leave them out, unless they are injured or have lost form. But I have never told

heavy pressure, with fans and the

a coach which players should play.' The side's poor run has put Real boss Vanderlei Luxemburgo under

Spanish media calling for his head. Perez, however, believes coach-

ing Real Madrid needs specialist skills making it different from any other job. "There is no other team that has

so much talent, and administering that talent and magic and bringing it together is not an easy task," he "There are lots of people who are capable of coaching Valencia,

Barcelona or Atletico (Madrid) and maybe not so many who are capable of coaching Real. When asked if Luxemburgo would still be in charge of the club next season, Perez replied: "At the moment no one is questioning

Luxemburgo. If I answered differently it would mean we didn't have any faith in him." Perez said the coach had not asked him to sign any new players

during the January transfer window, but added that if Raul's knee injury proved serious then they would recruit a new striker.

Liverpool's

ITALIAN CUP

Inter's narrow win

Football

A late goal by Obafemi Martins gave Inter Milan a 1-0 win over Parma in tne first leg of their Italian Cup fourtr round tie on Wednesday. The contest had been short on

incident until the 21-year-old striker headed the champions ahead from a corner in the 74th minute. Inter waited more than an hour

before spluttering into life. Martins' strike partner Julio Cruz came close to breaking the deadlock, firing a shot through a defender's legs that almost caught Parma keeper Alfonso De Lucia by surprise.

İnter midfielder Santiago Solari was next to threaten the home team's goal when he hooked a Martins cross over the bar from close range. Once Martins had scored, Parma

never looked like getting an equaliser. Martins nearly grabbed a second when he broke through a gaggle of defenders before firing straight at De Lucia.

CROSSWORD

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season, but we did what we had to. It was a positive result," Inter coach Roberto Mancini said.

In an earlier last 16 match. Serie B side Atalanta produced a strong second-half display to grab a 1-0 win over Champions League con-

Udinese dominated possession in the first period, hitting the woodwork twice and forcing the home team to spend long spells in their own half. It seemed only a matter of time

before the visitors scored but they went behind in the 53rd minute when Brazilian defender Felipe's weak clearance found Antonino D'Agostino and the Atalanta striker tucked the ball in at the near post. Atalanta began to play with more

confidence and six minutes later Udinese keeper Gabriele Paoletti had to pull off a close-range save to prevent defender Daniele Capelli making it 2-0. Striker David Di Michele wasted

Udinese's best chance when he

fired wide after going through one-

on-one against keeper Andrea Ivan.

By Eugene Sheffer

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5th

Liverpool climbed to fourth place after a 2-0 victory at bottom club Sunderland on Wednesday gave them five wins in a row in the Premier

Luis Garcia put Liverpool ahead after half an hour when he latched on to a long, hopeful pass from fellow Spaniard Xabi Alonso and scored

from close range. Alonso was again the provider at the end of the first half when cantain Steven Gerrard, who had earlier hit the post, drove home the second

Liverpool were able to cruise through the second half against a toothless Sunderland team despite having Mali striker Momo Sissoko sent off for a second booking in the 65th minute

Even with 10 men Liverpool looked the more dangerous and John Arne Riise hit the bar in the 74th minute.

Champions Chelsea lead the Premier League with 37 points, Manchester United have 27, Arsenal 26 and Liverpool 25.

Sunderland's seventh successive defeat left them rooted to the bottom with five points from 15 games.

CRYPTOQUIP

MQ T RYMPPKN YKNK FX

RCXASMQF QNXP RDAKNPTNZKF, M RDAAXRK

Y X D S B F T Z K Saturday's Cryptoquip: IF KING ARTHUR'S WARRIORS MADE MOONSHINE, WOULD THEY

DO IT IN THE STILL OF THE KNIGHT? Today's Cryptoquip Clue: K equals E

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 future of Test cricket at one of the sport's most famous venues, Headingley in Leeds, looks assured after Yorkshire agreed to buy the ground for 12 million pounds (20.8 The move has been made possible by a loan for 75 percent of the cost from Leeds City Council which was confirmed on Wednesday. The cash will allow Yorkshire to buy out their current landlords, the Leeds Cricket, Football and Athletic Earlier this year, Yorkshire were assured Headingley could host England matches for the next 15 years, provided they took ownership The purchase of the ground is subject to the approval of Yorkshire CCC members, who will discuss it on December 6 and vote on