

ICC worry over costly WC

PTI, Dubai

International Cricket Council's Chief Executive Malcolm Speed has expressed concerns about the spiralling costs involved in travelling to see the World Cup in the Caribbean next March.

"The five-star hotels are very expensive. I hope when I go back there in August to the quarterly board meeting of the Cricket World Cup organising committee, then we'll have some good news," Speed said.

Speed said the cost for media personnel was of particular concern -- they would have to spend about 50 nights in the Caribbean to cover the whole event.

"At my first ICC meeting in 1997, the ICC members granted the World Cup to West Indies. I remember thinking at the time, that's a very brave decision, I'll watch with interest the World Cup in 2007, without realising I would be Chief Executive at that time," the Australian said.

"There are nine islands involved, so nine grounds and 20 practice venues are being built for major matches. They are all being funded by the various governments of the West Indies so they're all right behind it.

"I think it will have a particularly West Indian flavour and I think it will be great fun." But he said there remained other areas of concern.

"We have to get through another hurricane season over the next three or four months -- some of the grounds have had problems with hurricanes." Speed said that choosing to schedule the event in March and April coincided with peak holiday season - thereby adding to the prices. "(But) it's the safest time for us to play because later on we run into the rainy season."

Greenidge replaces Carew

BBC ONLINE, undated

Former Test batsman Gordon Greenidge has been appointed as the new convenor of selectors by the West Indies.

Greenidge replaces Joey Carew, who decided not to stand for re-election for another two-year term.

Clyde Butts also retains his place on the panel and another West Indies Test great, Andy Roberts, will join him and Greenidge.

Current captain Brian Lara and coach Bennett King will also be given a full role at selection meetings.

Lara recently threatened to resign after a difference of opinion with the selectors during a home series against India.

He was made a selector for the series in May, but claimed he was only told about the decision on the eve of the final Test.

"It's so important everyone involved - the selectors, the public, the administrators, the cricketers - have all got to be moving in the same direction and not fighting each other if we want to move forward," Lara told BBC Sport earlier this week.

The changes to the selection panel are likely to mean that he will stay on in the job, with the main task of moulding the team into a competitive unit before next year's World Cup in the Caribbean.

Yousuf leads

FROM PAGE 17

Sam's exit meant Pakistan, also without crooked batsmen Shoaib Malik (elbow) and vice-captain Younis Khan (knee), now had senior strokeplayers Yousuf and Inzamam in together on a good pitch.

Inzamam got the mark with an off-driven four against Hoggard before Yousuf treated a packed crowd, enjoying blues skies on a hot day, to a flourishing, wristy, cover-driven boundary off Harmison.

Plunkett, who'd removed opener Imran Farhat late on Friday, almost dismissed Inzamam for 17. But leaping first slip Marcus Trescothick was unable to hold the difficult one-handed chance.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at tea on the third day of the first Test between England and Pakistan at Lord's on Saturday: ENGLAND: First innings 528-9 dec (Collingwood 186, Cook 105, Bell 100; Kaneria 3-119)

PAKISTAN: First innings (over-night 66-3)

Butt c Strauss b Harmison 10

Farhat b Plunkett 33

Iqbal c Collingwood b Harmison 0

Yousuf not out 132

Sam c Jones b Hoggard 0

Inzamam b Plunkett 69

Razzaq not out 21

Extras: (b-3, lb-1, w-7, nb-5) 26

Total: (For 5 wkt in 79 overs) 291

Fall of wickets: 1-28, 2-28, 3-65, 4-68, 5-241.

To bat: Shahid Afridi, Kamran Akmal, Umar Gul, Danish Kaneria.

Bowler O M R W

Hoggard 20 1 65 1

Harmison 18 3 63 2

Panesar 22 2 76 0

Plunkett 14 3 50 2

Collingwood 5 1 23 0



PHOTO: AFP

Powell in top form

Athletics

BBC ONLINE, undated

Asafa Powell's fine form continued at the Golden Gala in Rome as he stormed to victory in the 100m and matched Maurice Greene's meet record time.

The Jamaican, who has won his event in the first two Golden League meetings this term, eased home in 9.85 seconds.

Marion Jones clocked her best time in the 100m for four years in finishing second in a time of 10.91sec.

Jeremy Wariner posted a per-

sonal-best time of 43.62sec in winning the 400m, while Kenenisa Bekele won the 5000m.

Olympic and world champion Wariner overcame up-and-coming American Xavier Carter, who finished second in 44.76sec, while Bekele edged out three challengers in a close finish to his race.

Powell's victory in the 100m

means he remains on course for the \$1m (£544,000) Golden League jackpot, awarded to any athlete that wins their event in all six meets in the series.

And the 23-year-old Commonwealth champion brushed off the disappointment of not coming closer to beating the 9.77sec world record time he holds with rival Justin

Gatlin. "I feel pretty good. I am happy with the win even without the record," he said.

"I had a bad start. It was very slow for me. My first 30 meters were slow. But I am satisfied."

Wariner, Ethiopia's Tirunesh Dibaba (in the women's 5,000) and Sanya Richards of the United States (women's 400) are also still in the running for the jackpot.

Wariner, meanwhile, was delighted with her run despite finishing behind Jamaican Sherone Simpson in the 100m.

Simpson won in 10.87, but Jones said: "I ran my seasonal best. I am getting motivation I did not have before."

Aussie blow for Germany

Hockey

AFP, Amsterdam

Australia may have denied Germany a place in the finals by defeating them 2-1 in the women's Champions Trophy field hockey tournament here Saturday.

China defeated New Zealand 4-0 in the earlier game to go to 10 points and an assured berth in the finals.

If Argentina wins over the Netherlands in the last match of the round robin later on Saturday, Germany plays China in the finals and if Netherlands wins over Argentina, Netherlands earns a finals berth.

Germany went into its match against Australia with nine points and by failing to secure the win they have left their fate in the hands of Argentina beating Netherlands.

Australia's first win of the tournament came with goals in each half.

Karen Smith defected in the first goal from a Melanie Twitt free hit taken in the middle of Germany's defensive quarter line and they took the one goal advantage into the break.

Both teams failed to lift until the last 10 minutes of the second half.

Madonna Blyth slotted Australia's second goal when she was left unattended in the circle and Nadine Ernstine-Krienke scored a similar goal seconds later to get Germany on the scoreboard.

"It was a little bit better today but we still have to make a large improvement between now and the World Cup in Madrid in September," said Frank Murray, Australia's coach.

"Germany did not get on top of us as China did in the first 10 minutes and Argentina did in the last 10 minutes of those games," Murray said.

"We used a higher rotation of players so they were fresher when they came on and were able to run harder," Murray said.

China scored from three of its four penalty corners to defeat New Zealand 4-0.

The Chinese scored two early goals inside the first eight minutes as they did against Australia, Argentina and Germany.

Ma Yi Bo converted a first penalty corner with a flick high inside the right post and on the second penalty corner, pushed wide of the left post for Li Hong Xia to slap in from a sharp angle.

China scored twice again in the second half, Ren Re getting her second of the tournament at the right post from a pass by Li Hong Xia and Fu Ba Rong converting China's third penalty corner with a drive which crashed into the backboards inside the right post.

"Asif and Malik have both flown home to Pakistan," Zaheer told AFP at Lord's on Saturday.

"There is very little chance of Malik playing in the Test series. But he might return for the one-day series.

"Asif wants to go back for some rest and if he gets fit he could be back for the third or fourth Test," Pakistan batting great Zaheer added.

Uncapped paceman Samiullah Niazi has already been summoned as cover and Zaheer said further replacements were on the way to bolster both Pakistan's batting and bowling.

"Taufiq Umer (opening batsman) and Rao Iftikhar (medium-pacer) are flying to England in the next couple of days," explained Zaheer, who was philosophical about Pakistan's injury crisis.

"Injuries are part and parcel of the game. It's disappointing to lose a bowler like Asif but we can do nothing about it," insisted Zaheer, one of Gloucestershire's overseas stars in the 1970s.

USA sack

FROM PAGE 20

Jurgen Klinsmann, who led hosts Germany to third place at the World Cup, has been mentioned as a possible successor.

He resigned from the Germany post on Wednesday and lives in Southern California with his American wife.

In 2002, Arena sprung a surprise by guiding the US squad to the World Cup quarter-finals, but they were unable to get past the first round in Germany this summer.

Cole hits

FROM PAGE 20

that last season was the worst yet under the Frenchman.

"After Patrick Vieira's departure the decline from invincibility to near-crisis continues," he said.

Cole, who had a good World Cup in Germany, is believed to be a target of Chelsea, Real Madrid and Barcelona.

Hearing went

FROM PAGE 20

meeting," the player's agent, Claudio Vigorelli, told PA Sport. "Everything went fine. He gave his version of what happened.

"He will not have to return to Zurich at a later stage."

Materazzi brought the meeting forward from July 20 due to his impending vacation.

"Marco will fly on Sunday to the Maldives," Vigorelli said.

He then joked, "Do you know where Zidane will spend his holidays? It's just that the Maldives are small islands."

Bell tolls in vain

Cricket

AFP, London

England batsman Ian Bell admitted he expects to lose his place in the team despite scoring a chanceless hundred in the first Test against Pakistan here at Lord's.

The Warwickshire strokemaker was 100 not out when England declared on 528 for nine on the second day Friday, but was realistic about his role, having only been called in to replace injured all-rounder Andrew Flintoff - who England hope will captain them in their Ashes defence in Australia later this year.

"I saw myself coming in just for this Test match because when Freddie (Flintoff) is fit he plays," said the 24-year-old Bell.

"I've filled his position and I'm very happy that I've shown people I can play at this level."

The compact right-hander explained he expects to be dropped for the second Test, due to start at Flintoff's Old Trafford home ground in Manchester on July 27, despite his impressive knock.

"It will be unusual but I don't see it as a particularly difficult decision," Bell explained as he contemplated the prospect of becoming the first England batsman since Graeme Hick in 1998 to be axed one match after scoring a Test hundred.

Bell brought up his third Test century with a neatly punched drive through mid-wicket, a shot that was typical of his measured 168-ball innings, which included nine fours and lasted 254 minutes.

"I want to succeed at this level and play hard but I have to learn not to put too much pressure on myself to score runs and just go out there and enjoy it."

Bell added he felt he had enhanced his chances of getting into the England squad for the Ashes series.

"It's quite a distance away and I didn't go into this match thinking about it," he explained.

"But I've not done myself any harm by going out and getting a hundred."

Bangladesh at Chester-le-Street in June 2005, ending on 162 not out, while his second hundred (115) came against Pakistan in Faisalabad late last year.

"I really enjoyed going out there and getting a hundred at Lord's and I would love to do it again," said Bell.

"I want to succeed at this level and play hard but I have to learn not to put too much pressure on myself to score runs and just go out there and enjoy it."

Bell added he felt he had enhanced his chances of getting into the England squad for the Ashes series.

"It's quite a distance away and I didn't go into this match thinking about it," he explained.

"But I've not done myself any harm by going out and getting a hundred."

FED CUP

Li, Zheng star for China

Tennis

AFP, Beijing

China took a big step towards joining the elite Fed Cup World Group for the first time on Saturday when Wimbledon heroines Li Na and Zheng Jie established a 2-0 play-off lead over Germany.

Li, 24, who became the first Chinese player to reach a Grand Slam quarter-final this month, eased past Kristina Barrois 6-3, 6-4 in 74 minutes.

Zheng, who claimed China's first

Wimbledon title with doubles partner Yan Zi, beat Kathrin Woerle 6-4,

7-5.

Li said her confidence had been boosted by her performance in London, where Kim Clijsters eventually ousted her.

"I was playing at home and after Wimbledon my confidence increased a lot. Every match I try my best to win," said Li.

She added that the Fed Cup play-off was more important than the WTA tour, because she was "playing for her nation, not for herself".

Barrois, ranked 129 to Li's 22, questioned the quality of