

Pakistan to miss Inzy:
Harbhajan

AFP, New Delhi

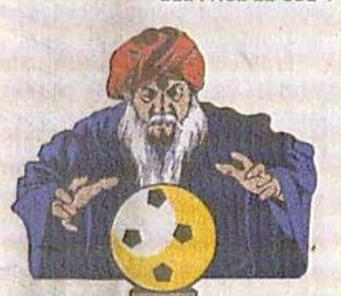
Pakistan will miss retired captain and free-scoring batsman Inzamamul Haq in upcoming clashes with India, Indian off-spinner Harbhajan Singh said on Thursday.

"Inzamam is the Sachin Tendulkar of Pakistan and his decision to retire from international cricket recently will definitely be an advantage for India," Harbhajan told the Hindustan Times.

Inzamam, 37, who scored 8,830 Test runs and 11,739 one-day runs in a glorious 15-year career, retired earlier this month after the two-Test series against South Africa.

Harbhajan said he looked forward to renewing battle with Pakistan, who tour India from

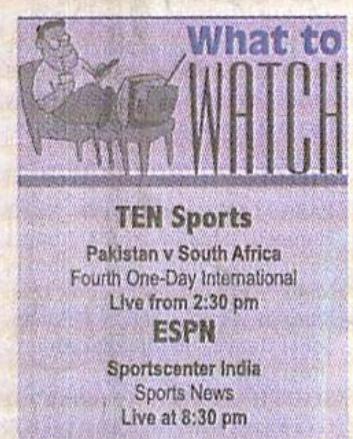
SEE PAGE 22 COL 4



The Major League Baseball teams use about 850,000 balls per season.



Mark Taylor
(Former Australia cricket captain)
"He's one of those guys who can be 80 not out at lunch. Back in my day I dreamed about being 80 not out at lunch. If I could be 80 at about tea I thought this is good!"
Noticing how opening the batting has changed as he supports Phil Jaques's case for a Test call-up.



Tokai kabaddi final today

UNB, Dhaka

Tokai Stadium and Tokai Mirpur reached the final of the Orient Bread Tokai kabaddi tournament beating their respective opponents at the Outer Stadium kabaddi court yesterday.

The final will be held today at 3:30 pm at the same venue. In the afternoon, Tokai Stadium outplayed Tokai Khilgaon team 60-35 with five lolas while Tokai Mirpur defeated Tokai Gulistan 45-30 with three lolas.

Earlier in the morning, Tokai Gulistan beat Tokai Khilgaon Terminal 55-24 and Tokai Khilgaon crushed Tokai Paltan 63-30.

"In my opinion, Woolmer died from asphyxia due to manual

NCL sans stars

SPORTS REPORTER



Dhaka will sorely miss their inspirational and inform captain Mohammad Ashraful when they take on Sylhet in the second round of the 9th National Cricket League at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium today.

Rajshahi face a resurgent Barisal side while Khulna open their home account as they host Chittagong at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Flight Lieutenant Matiur Rahman Stadium.

Ashraful, who scored a match-saving 84 in the opening home game against Khulna, left the capital yesterday afternoon to play in the Hong Kong Sixes along with six others -- Aftab Ahmed, Abdur Razzak, Dollar Mahmud, Mahmudullah Riyad, Nazmul Milon and Zunaed Siddiqui.

Dhaka are the worst hit among the divisional sides as they are also going to miss all-rounders Riyad and Milon. Khulna will have to do without the services of bowlers Abdur Razzak and Dollar Mahmud while Aftab and Zunaed will have to be replaced in the Chittagong and Rajshahi line-ups respectively.

Quite surprisingly, Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) decided to send a strong side to the 10-team exhibition tournament when other Test-playing nations did not even bother sending international names. In order to add lustre, the organisers added an All Star team.

From weakening divisional sides, BCB failed maintaining their position of making sure that the likes of Ashraful and Aftab play maximum number of NCL matches, ahead of this winter's tour of New Zealand.

In the first round, Dhaka salvaged four points from their opening round encounter against Khulna, thanks mainly to two gutsy performances from Ashraful and Riyad. While Ashraful's stability helped the defending champions draw on the final day, it was Riyad's crucial 28 in the first innings that got Dhaka past the follow-on mark.



ON HOLIDAY! Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraful (L) jokes with hard-hitting batsman Aftab Ahmed (R) at the Zia International Airport prior to their departure for Hong Kong yesterday. The board in a surprise move has decided to send Ashraful along with four national cricketers to represent Bangladesh in the two-day Hong Kong Sixes tournament when the other seven Test nations opted for lesser lights.

Fourth SA-Pak ODI today

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

A pattern has begun to emerge in this engaging joust. Wickets look as if they'll leak runs except they don't. South Africa, setting or chasing targets, start well only to get bogged down in the face of Pakistan's twin spin stranglers and in that middle period, the game is effectively decided. Pakistan have reduced it to this simple equation and if it comes off tomorrow, then considerable hope will have been salvaged from a series, and era, that started at the start.

There are other themes floating around this pattern of course, which may or may not have a role to play; Shahid Afridi will have a role, in success or failure; South Africa's middle order, including Jacques Kallis, can't surely misfire in another match; Pakistan's fielding, on which so much hinges, has been clownish one day, supreme the next and who knows what

tomorrow; a lonesome Johan Botha's failure to take a wicket or indeed exert any real pressure.

Mickey Arthur believes there is no great mystery why his side are trailing. Forget pitches, forget security distractions: "No excuses, Pakistan have played better than we have over the last two games."

Granted security concerns mightn't have been a distraction -- though people have been quick to note that their losses have come after the Karachi bombings -- but surely the pitches have played their part? Why shouldn't they, asked Arthur? Home advantage is there to be utilised.

"It's the same when we are home and we play on bouncy pitches because that plays into our hands. Pakistan are playing with slow pitches which have turned so they've used home conditions. We have to come up with a plan to counter it."

Central to any counter-attack must be Jacques Kallis who has scored 400 runs less than he did in the Test series: 21 from three

SEE PAGE 22 COL 6

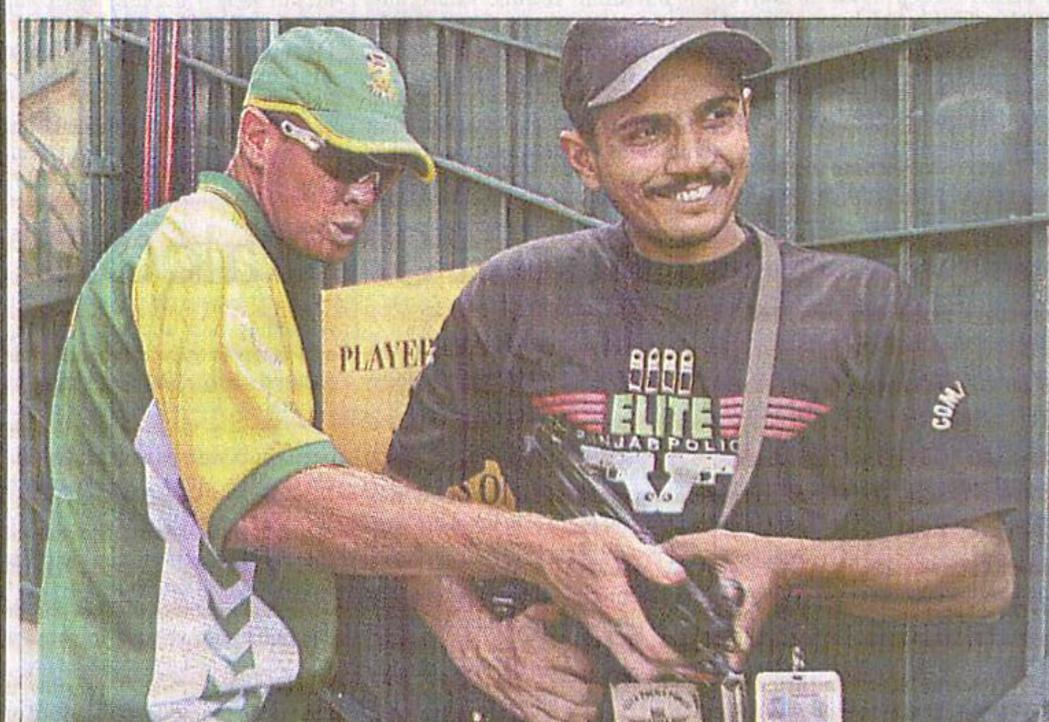


PHOTO: AFP

IT'S NOT A TOY GUN: South African allrounder Shaun Pollock (L) shares a light moment with a commando during a practice session in Multan yesterday.

BOB WOOLMER DEATH INQUEST

Pathologist sticks to poison theory

Cricket

AFP, Kingston

The pathologist who conducted the autopsy of Pakistan cricket coach Bob Woolmer on Thursday told the inquest into Woolmer's death that Woolmer died as the result of poisoning and strangulation.

Ere Sheshiah, whose original finding in March that Woolmer was strangled launched a far-reaching murder inquiry and sparked feverish speculation that it was related to corruption in international cricket, said he stuck by his findings.

"In my opinion, Woolmer died from asphyxia due to manual

strangulation associated with cypermethrin poisoning," said Sheshiah, who said the chemical is used widely in many countries where cotton is grown such as Sri Lanka, India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan.

Woolmer died on March 18, when he was found unconscious in his Jamaican hotel room the day after Pakistan were embarrassed by Ireland in a cricket World Cup upset.

Sheshiah said that cypermethrin can cause symptoms including "salivation, vomiting, diarrhoea and muscular incoordination," which may have accounted for the scene of disarray that medical personnel found at Woolmer's room.

Sheshiah, whose procedures in

the post mortem have been criticized by three other pathologists asked to review the case, said police pressed him to offer conclusion in the case before he received the results of the toxicology report.

The three other pathologists, South African Lorna Martin, Britain's Nathaniel Cary and Canadian Michael Pollanen, have all testified that Woolmer appeared to have died of natural causes, probably related to heart disease.

In June, Jamaican authorities said they were no longer treating Woolmer's death as homicide.

Sheshiah, 65, was expected to testify further on Thursday in the inquest presided over by coroner Patrick Murphy and 11 jurors. The proceedings are expected to continue until early November.

The prestigious tournament in India will start on November 15.

SEE PAGE 22 COL 1

Abahani start training

SPORTS REPORTER

B. League champions Abahani began their preparation yesterday for taking part in the Bardoli Trophy in Assam next month.

However, less than ten footballers were present on opening day's training at the inaugural professional league winners' club ground in Dhamondi.

With five players with the national team and no foreign players left in the squad, it is expected that the practice sessions will take some time to get momentum.

The prestigious tournament in

ICL excites Lara

Cricket

AFP, Hong Kong

"It is the Twenty20 version of the game, which of course is more condensed, spectator-friendly cricket and the crowd finds it very exciting."

"I loved the Test matches, but I'm looking forward to playing Twenty20 cricket as well. Internationally, that is all I have on the cards right now."

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) is trying to squash the rebel ICL series by setting up its own multi-million-dollar league, backed by the International Cricket Council and supported by boards around the world.

Bangladesh, who won 9-1 against Palestine but lost 9-1 and 3-1 to hosts UAE and Turkmenistan respectively in their previous matches, dominated the show but failed to convert chances in the first half which ended scoreless at the Al Wehda Stadium.

Prolific scorer Sohel finally broke the deadlock when the Bangladeshi striker scored his sixth goal in the Group D qualifiers after taking a pass from Jamal in the 68th minute.

"I'm signed onto the ICL, which will hopefully get going at the end of November or December," he said ahead of this weekend's Hong Kong Sixes.

Left-hander Lara, 38, announced his West Indies retirement following his country's failure to qualify for the semi-finals at the World Cup in the Caribbean.

"I'm really enjoying my retirement and the last five months have been good, so I have no plans to play for the West Indies again," he said.



PHOTO: AFP
BACK FOR FUN: West Indies great Brian Lara signs autographs for young fans at the Hong Kong Cricket Club on Thursday. The retired West Indies captain will feature in the Hong Kong Cricket Sixes tournament on October 27-28.