

LONG TIME NO SEE: Recalled India batsman Mohammad Kaif (C) exercises with teammates during a training session in Ahmedabad yesterday. Kaif is returning to India's Test team after 21 months for the second match against South Africa which starts today.

DU cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Tajul Islam struck 54 as Marketing defeated Public Administration by six wickets to become champions in the Dhaka University north zone inter-department cricket competition yesterday.

Bangladesh opener Shahrian Nafees was the other notable scorer with an unbeaten 27 as the winners reached the target of 127 losing four wickets in 19.3 overs in reply to public administration's 126 in the final at the Jagannath Hall ground yesterday.

Tajul was adjudged man-of-the-

Earlier, public administration managed 126 for seven in stipulated 20 overs with Golam Hossain making 48 runs. Ahad and Faisal claimed three wickets each for the winners.

DU Pro-Vice Chancellor Di AFM Yousuf Haider distributed the prizes as the chief guest.

Moulvibazar wants cricket

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Members of the Moulvibazar Cricket Unnayan Parishad and cricket players have submitted a memorandum to local administration yesterday to press home their demand to immediately start the local cricket league.

In the memorandum to the deputy commissioner (DC) and president of the district sports association (DSA) Md. Alkama Siddiquee, they blamed DSA for their failure to arrange local league for the last five years in the district.

They urged the local authority to declare the schedule of the league immediately and realise their demands before April 10.

Siddiquee assured them that he would do everything for development of the game in the district.

'Verdict as expected'

PTI, Karachi

Former Pakistan captain Rameez Raja has supported the decision to impose five-year ban on Shoaib Akhtar, saying the temperamental fast bowler had become a "problem child" and the verdict was just and expected.

Rameez, who worked as chief executive of the Board between 2003 and 2005, said the speedster had brought the problem upon himself.

"He has been a problem child for some time now. This is not the first time he has had problems with discipline. I think the five-year ban is justified and was coming for a while now. The authorities had no otherchoice," Rameez said

"It was time the authorities took a hard decision because indiscipline should not be tolerated at any costs," he told 'Geo News'.

Former captains like Imran Khan, Javed Miandad, Zaheer Abbas and Rashid Latif have all condemned the ban, saying it would effectively end Shoaib's career and also prove to be detrimental to Pakistan cricket.

Shoaib was banned on six counts of speaking out against the policies of the Board and defying orders from the manager and coach of the Federal Areas team for whom he played in the recent Pentangular Cup.

India in Kumble

FROM PAGE 17 "I think India have a few more things to think about than us after the last game. If he (Kumble) does not play, they will lose a very competitive cricketer. He is an experienced campaigner and a fierce competitor," he said.

Smith's hopes on pitch

Cricket

REUTERS, Ahmedabad

South Africa skipper Graeme Smith is hoping the pitch for the second Test against India this week will be far more responsive than the benign strip provided in the series opener in Chennai.

Last week, India opener Smithsaid. Virender Sehwag smashed the fastest triple century in Test history on a flat track that left the paceoriented attack of the visitors frustrated in the high-scoring draw.

South Africa's top order also shone with opener Neil McKenzie and Hashim Amla scoring centumatch looked set for a draw as early as the third morning.

news conference on Wednesday.

between bat and ball," he added. Ahmedabad ground, the pitch is

match starts on Thursday, raising South Africa's hopes of executing their plan to restrict the aggressive batting of Sehwag.

On Tuesday, South Africa coach Micky Arthur said the tourists may resort to fast, short-pitched bowling directed into the body of the India opener.

"We are obviously looking for a little more help (from the pitch)," "The wicket does look good...

looks different from the Chennai

wicket," he added. When quizzed about the plan designed to curb Sehwag, Smith said: "I think you always assess

things as a team. "Certainly we have the attack to ries and Smith cracking 73, but the be able to use that. The pitch will last too we hope," he added.

Smith said his team would look "All cricketers want to see a to build on the newfound configood cricket wicket." Smith told a dence in tackling India's experienced spin bowlers after rallying to "One with a good balance drawthefirstTest.

"Out of the last game, India According to the curator of the probably have a few more things to think about than what we do in likely to be responsive when the terms of combination, in terms of right, we can win, "he said.

the selections of bowlers," Smith

"So their answer is to answer our challenges, to make sure we come back down to neutral."

Injury-hit India are sweating over the fitness of captain Anil Kumble for the crucial match.

Talismanic batsman Sachin Tendulkar is ruled out of the game with a groin injury and there are injury concerns over fast bowlers Ishant Sharma and Rudra Pratap Singh.

Smith said Kumble's unavailability would be a big loss for India.

"You lose a real competitor, someone who can really change a game... make a difference to the game," he said of the experienced leg-spinner. The visitors are chasing an Asian

treble after winning a Test series in Pakistan last year and in Bangladesh in March.

Smith said in all likelihood he would go into the middle leg of the three-Test series with the same combination that played in the first Test.

"As long as we get our execution

amir to carry torch name to carry torch

AFP, New Delhi



Bollywood superstar Aamir in the Olympic torch relay in, India, spurning calls for a boy-

cott but carrying "a prayer" for the Tibetan people.

Khan's announcement came a day after India's football captain Bhaichung Bhutia refused to carry the flame when it comes to New Delhi in just over two weeks to protest China's crackdown in Tibet ahead of the Olympics.

Khan, 38, said he had "the highest regard and respect for the struggle the people of Tibet are going through. At the same time, "I feel the

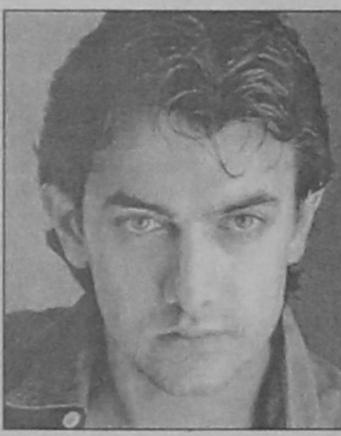
Olympic Games do not belong to China," Khan said in an open letter his website (www.aamirkhan.com/blog).

Friends, family and people associated with "the Tibetan struggle" had asked Khan not to participate, he said.

this planet a place to hold the Olympic Games where the government of that place has not been responsible for human rights violations (in one way or the other), then I suspect we would be left with very few options, if any at all.'

The torch is slated to arrive here on April 17, presenting India with a tough security challenge.

Tibetan rights activists in India have threatened to disrupt the relay to highlight abuses in China ahead of the August Games, and Wednesday he late last month a number of them would take part stormed the Chinese embassy



AAMIR KHAN

complex in the Indian capital. India is seeking to promote

good ties with its powerful neighbour China at the same time as hosting Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, his exile government "If we were to try and find on and an ethnic Tibetan population of more than 100,000. The Dalai Lama, who fled to

India in 1959 after a failed uprising,

has repeatedly said he backs China's right to host the Games and has rejected Beijing's charges he is seeking to sabotage the event. Khan, likened by Indian movie

critics to Hollywood's Tom Hanks for

his fresh-faced looks, asked people to understand that in carrying the torch "it is not in support of China."

"In fact it will be with a prayer in my heart for the people of Tibet, and indeed for all people across the world who are victims of human rights violations," said Khan, who recently made his directorial debut with the box office hit "Taare Zameen Par" (Stars on Earth), a film about childhood dyslexia.

The Games "represent for me the coming together of different people across the world despite their differences and difficulties," Khan said, calling the Olympics an opportunity for sportsmen and women to "showcase their talent" and for others to "marvel at the achievements of the human body.

Bhutia, India's 31-year-old football captain, a Buddhist from northeastern Sikkim state which is wedged between India, China and Nepal, said Monday that he would boycott the torch relay to "show my solidarity" with Tibetans.

However, three other Indian athletes invited to join the relay Milkha Singh, G.S. Randhawa and P.T. Usha -- said they would participate.

"I feel sports and politics should not be mixed, said Singh, nicknamed the flying Sikh for his running talents, who represented India in the 1960 Rome Olympics.

The torch relay, launched last Monday, is the longest ever, lasting 130 days and covering 137,000 kilometres (85,000 miles). It will pass through 19 countries in April before returning to China on May 4.

after Rio Ferdinand had slipped. United then suffered a blow as

"We think it's a nerve, at least we hope it is, but it is in his knee so we are not sure of the seriousness of it

yet," said Ferguson. Chances were few and far der Sarintomaking a save. between but on 39 minutes United produced a move of majestic quality, switching the ball around the edge of the Roma box and transfer-

Just three minutes later Roma keep the scores level. had their best chance of the opening stanza after a mistake from scored a crucial second as Park

shot from the left just beyond the

Roma came out after the break looking like a team that knew they needed to get something from this game to stand any chance of progressing to the semifinals.

he lashed his shot wide of the near post, failing even to force Edwin van From a quick throw Panucci had

a great chance but skied his volley from six yards. Substitute Ludovic Giuly then got behind the United defence but Van der Sar cut out his at Old Trafford. And the big Dutch keeper made

a stunning one-handed save on 62 minutes from a Vucinic header to shot deflected onto the outside of the post as United threatened to run riot. They started to open up a des-

perate Roma at will and Michael

entertaining themselves by chanting 'we want seven' in reference to last season's 7-1 thrashing of Roma

Rooney had two glorious | heldupthe league. chances to heap more misery on Roma late on but had one shot blocked and sent the other wide.

banned him for five years for disciplinary problems. Akhtar also urged fans to remain calm and not to damage public property after several dozen supporters gathered in the capital to protest on Wednesday, a day after

Pakistani fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar said Wednesday that he had been

"victimised" by the country's

cricket authorities after they

Akhtar feels

'victimised'

AFP, Islamabad

the ban was announced. "I have been victimised, I have been pinpoint targeted. I should be told what I did and when I violated discipline," the maverick paceman told a news conference in Islamabad.

"I did not commit any crime. This is a great injustice with me. But I assure people that everything will be alright," said the 32-year-old, who has vowed to fight the ban in

Akhtar was hauled before a Pakistan Cricket Board disciplinary panel after publicly slamming the board for refusing to award him a central contract in January.

The board said it took the harsh step of a five-year ban, effectively ending his international career, because he was on two years' probation for hitting teammate Mohammad Asif with a bat in

October. Akhtar, who has twice hit the coveted 100 mile-per-hour (161 kilometres) mark, has had a controversial career plagued by injuries, discipline problems and a doping scandal in 2007.

He addressed his fans in this cricket-obsessed nation, adding: "I appeal to people not to damage public property and to remain calm. I will appeal to higher authorities, I will contest the ban."

Geoff regrets Shoaib ban

CRICINFO, undated

Pakistan coach Geoff Lawson expressed regret at the five-year ban imposed on Shoaib Akhtar by a PCB disciplinary committee, adding that the fast bowler would remain an unfulfilled talent.

"Whether he got banned today or not, there was always going to be some problem with Shoaib, Lawson told the Daily Telegraph. "He has so much ability but he lacks the responsibility that's needed to become a great fast bowler.

"At times he tried really hard for us, but you just never knew what to expect when you turned up to the ground. Personally, I wouldn't have banned him; I'd have made him earn his international place back by playing domestic cricket. It's always sad when you see a guy who doesn't fulfill his talent."

Lawson, in his recent tour report on the away series against India, had advised against Shoaib's selection for Tests, indicating that he had lost confidence in his abilities in the longer version of the game. But Lawson thought Shoaib would perform well in the Indian Premier League, to which the ban does not extend. "I reckon he'll go pretty well. We timed him in the nets last week and he was bowling over 93mph."

Meanwhile, Shoaib's ban brought out contrasting reactions in Pakistan, with Shafqat Rana, a national selector, saying that Shoaib deserved the ban. "Akhtar has been involved in a number of controversies, and in my view the ban is justified. The decision will set an example for other cricketers as well. And they will concentrate on their game," he told the Daily Times. "It is true that a person learns from his mistakes, but unfortunately the fast bowler made it a habit of repeating his mistakes. I think the board's zero tolerance policy should be commended."

But former captain Imran Khan criticised the PCB for its decision. "The ban on Shoaib and even on the players who have gone to play in the Indian Cricket League are unacceptable and will shake the foundations of our cricket system. We are losing good players to bad policies of the board.

Stars by name

interesting to see the same player if he was in the Pakistan-bound tour

It reminds this reporter of days when the national footballers were said to have 'saved their legs' for the clubs whenever they appeared for Bangladesh. The trend is similar in cricket, only difference being the players have most of their efforts for lucrative international cricket.

United's fans then started | no guarantee of club cricket taking place. Clubs had little money and when the board came forward with enhanced financial help, there was the Brothers Union court case that

Now that everything seems Premier League is usually ridiculed as boring and unappealing but tute Carlos Tevez's cross but the | what of a league with nonperforming stars?

SL eye clean sweep

Final Test against WI from today

Cricket

AFP, Port of Spain

Sri Lanka can kill the proverbial two birds with one stone when they face West Indies in the second and final Test, starting on Thursday at that his side outplayed West Indies Queen's Park Oval.

region a fortnight ago, they had a up on his opponents. single objective on their mind -- to win a Test series on Caribbean soil to all areas of our game, and see for the first time.

They gained a welcomed boost to their chances when they clinched the opening Test at the Guyana National Stadium by 121 runs to will be totally different. take a 1-0 lead in the brief series. But there is an extra special is well aware that his side faces an

reason that Sri Lanka will pursue enormous challenge to win and victory vigorously in the second sweep a Test series of any length.

win in the second Test," Sri Lanka captain Mahela Jayawardene said. "This is the way we play cricket.

We want to win every match in which we play. This is the attitude with which we play whether we are playing at home or away.

helped us in the last few years, and this is why we have been winning Test matches away from home, and we will not move away from this Indies line-up, but the selectors attitude.

make sure we do all the hard work and challenge West Indies, and see because of a hamstring strain which if we can win this Test series 2-0." In the 80 years that West Indies about two or three weeks. have been a Test-playing nation, no side has ever come into their back-

Australia came close five years for the second Test. ago, when they won the first three Tests in a series of four before the West Indies embarked successfully on a World record 418 to win the final Test at St. John's.

in every department in the opening When Sri Lanka flew into the Test, but he does not intend to ease

> "We are going to pay attention where we can tighten-up," he said.

"This is how we work. The first Test is finished, and the next venue is totally different, and conditions West Indies captain Chris Gayle

level the series -- but he would settle Test -- and that is to become the for a draw at this stage to spare the first side visiting the Caribbean to flak from another failed mission. "I believe that if we can remain

"It is important that we go for a positive and focus, we can win the Test," Gayle said. It's a must win situation for us to square the series. "We'll try and see what Sri Lanka

has to offer a second time around both in the batting and bowling, so it is just for us to return to the drawing board, and come up with a "This is the attitude that has plan, and come prepared to play a tough Test."

Gayle would love to make a couple of changes to fortify the West have tied his hands, since they have "We want to get accustomed to retained the same squad from the the conditions in Trinidad. We'll first Test, except for left-hander Ryan Hinds, who will miss the Test should rule him out of cricket for

the opening slot alongside Gayle -yard and embarrassed them with a although the West Indies captain series sweep, although West Indies dropped down the order in the have achieved this several times on second innings of the opening Test,

he said he would return to the top

With scores of 14 and 10 in the opening Test, Devon Smith failed to cement his place in the side, and left-handed opener Sewnarine Chattergoon should make his Test Jayawardene acknowledged debut, after illness prevented him from receiving this distinction in his native Guyana.

The only other selection dilemma facing West Indies would be the composition of their attack -Jerome Taylor and Daren Powell should reclaim their places, but the selectors are mulling over whether to boost the attack with another fast bowler, or add a second spin bowler.

Beanpole left-arm spin bowler Sulieman Benn did reasonably well on his Test debut and both Gayle and Head Coach John Dyson favour his retention, but hometown boy Amit Jaggernauth has made strong claims for his first Test cap, following a 10-wicket match haul in a West Indies domestic firstclass match against Barbados over the weekend.

SQUADS

WEST INDIES (from): Chris Gayle (captain), Ramnaresh Sarwan, Sulieman Benn, Dwayne Bravo, Shivnarine Chanderpaul, Sewnarine Chattergoon, Fidel Edwards, Amit Jaggernauth, Daren Powell, Denesh Ramdin, Marlon Samuels, Devon Smith, Jerome

SRI LANKA (from): Mahela Jayawardene (captain), Kumar Sangakkara, Ishara Amerasinghe, Tillakeratne Dilshan, Rangana Herath, Prasanna Jayawardene, Nuwan Kulasekera, Muttiah One of the places up for grabs is Muralidaran, Thilan Samaraweera, Chamara Silva, Thilan Thushara, Chaminda Vaas, Michael Vandort, Malinda Warnapura, Chanaka

BOA polls today

FROM PAGE 17 voters. Councillors who have failed to gain places in the so-called 'acceptable to all' panel led by Kutub could eventually vote for Babu.

There had been complaints against Kutub that as acting secretary, the successful businessman gave little time to BOA, paving way for a paid official of the organisation to become a dominating force

in recent years. It was also learned that Kutub threw a dinner party last night to calm the councillors.

"I admit that I have given little time to BOA but I vow that if elected, I will be regular," Kutub promised. "My aim will be to take BOA ahead. I want BOA to be the play-

ers' organisation where sports will be in the field all through the year," he added. Babu, on the other hand, has FROM PAGE 17

gone to the councillors asking for their consideration. "BOA has many things to offer to coach Bob Woolmer didn't help his sports. My dream is to spread sports into different corners of the country. The BOA chief also wants that. I also want to bring back transparency in financial matters of the organisation. I also feel that all BOA activities should have

acceptability to all," told Babu on the eve of the polls. Although the 'acceptable to all' panel was presented after a lot of thoughts, some miscalculation could not be avoided and four names were nominated for the three posts of members as divi-

sional representatives. Four candidates --Asaduzzaman Khasru (Barisal), Begum Lily Aziz (Chittagong), Qutubuddin Aksir (Dhaka) and Mahmud Jamal (Rajshahi) -- will compete for the posts of three executive members from the divi-

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Two nominations have been cancelled as Abdus Sattar Nini, a Commonwealth Games gold medallist shooter, was made a councillor as an Olympian, which he is not. His councillorship has also been cancelled by the Election Commission headed Brig Gen Shawkat Hossain. Also, Rafia Akhter Dolly submit-

bers' post but as a nominee of the Patron, the councillor is ineligible to compete for this post. Election can later be held to fill these gaps but the new committee will be of maximum 35 members as

there is no representative of the

ted her nomination for the mem-

IOC while a place for the Women's Sports Federation has fell vacant.

A spoiled scandal and fall-outs with his excaptain Inzamamul Haq and late

cause either. He and fellow paceman Mohammad Asif were banned for two and one years respectively after the duo tested positive for banned drug nandrolone in

October 2006. The bans were controversially lifted on appeals. However, the pair were pulled out of the World Cup held in the West Indies in 2007.

Not playing in that World Cup was the most regrettable moment in Akhtar's career. "If you ask me, that was the worst moment of my career. West Indies is known for fast bowling

and I have not played there. Maybe

my wish is granted some day," said

It appears now that wish may never be granted.

Akhtar last year.

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After me, its Akhtar

their international careers.

PTI, Karachi

Discarded all-rounder Abdul Razzaq yesterday accused the Pakistan Cricket Board of targeting senior players, the latest being Shoaib Akhtar, and trying to end

"I think after me now the Board has targeted Shoaib Akhtar. Their next targets are Mohammad Yousuf and Shahid Afridi," Razzaq claimed. Razzaq, who was reacting to the five-year ban imposed on Akhtar

yesterday, told Pakistani reporters in Hyderabad to cover the Indian Cricket League that he was saddened by the way senior players were being treated by the present set-up. "I had started realising after the 2007 World Cup that the senior

Soon these fears started coming true and we were all gradually shunted out," Razzaq said. Razzaq joined the ICL after he was not considered for the Twenty20 World Cup last year in

September and is now banned

players were in for a hard time.

from playing in Pakistan.

Ban will last

FROM PAGE 17 "Banning Akhtar will harm Pakistan cricket," said Latif, adding he thought the team would be significantly weaker as a result.

"PCB should have supported

Akhtar more because there have been characters like Akhtar -- there was John McEnroe in tennis and our own Aamir Sohail -- who were temperamental yet talented and gave sports a lot to cheer."

Latif said he believed the ban will be lifted in two months.

By Eugene Sheffer 20 Camping enthusi-21 Porter's "Let's --22 Domini preceder 23 Denominational-49 Unrefined 6 Architect 27 Tavern podrida Abraham 30 Scream 32 Angelic 51 52 53 34 Render ineffecrelated 11 DVD, e.g. 39 Widen 42 Gettys-CRYPTOQUIP

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NVIKLVTDH: SRHO JK HMVIRD. 50 Operate Saturday's Cryptoquip: BASIC SONG ABOUT A SHEPHERDESS AND HER SMALL, TRUSTY LIGHT SOURCE: "MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMP."

LRDUVDQ SRWTOJUTCCP JK

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: K equals N

FROM PAGE 17

Nemanja Vidic was stretchered off with a leg injury, to be replaced by John O'Shea.

ring it from left to right before Paul Scholes crossed for Ronaldo to cross. come steaming in like a train to out jump Marco Cassetti and thump

far upright.

Vucinic played in Max Tonetto but

Four minutes later, United stunning late volley from substi-Ferdinand but Vucinic dragged his headed a deep cross from Wes ball flew over the bar.

Rooney mopped up the loose ball after goalkeeper Doni and Panucci impeded each other. Moments later Ronaldo had a

Brown back across goal and

Carrick fired inches wide 18 minutes from time.

Ronaldo almost scored with a

FROM PAGE 17 leadership. It would have been

Even four months ago, there was

rosier, better cricket could have been hoped for. A 'star-less'