PTI, London

Miffed at being ignored for the Test series against England, South African opener Herschelle Gibbs has hinted that he may retire from international cricket.

The 34-year-old was left out of the Test side and he says he does not harbour hopes of making the cut for the ODI team either, leaving him with little choice but to think about quitting the game.

"I've got some decisions to make in the next few weeks whether to carry on at international level. I'm not in the squad and I'm not sure if I'll get back into the one-day team either," Gibbs

told the BBC. Gibbs' last Test appearance was in January against West Indies and he was subsequently omitted for the Test series against Bangladesh

and India. Being ignored for England is the latest blow to his career and Gibbs says he is making last ditch efforts to save it by playing county cricket

to prove his worth. "I've spoken to the coach and he said I'm first reserve for South Africa in case anyone gets injured. So we'll have to wait and see. But I've been dying for a proper go at an English cricket county for the last few years so maybe me coming to Glamorgan has happened at a good time," he said.

"Maybe my appearance for Glamorgan in the Twenty20 Cup could be a sign of things to come,"

he added. South Africa will kick off their tour of England with a match against county side Somerset on June 29. Their four-Test series against England starts July 10 to be followed by a five-match ODI series.

Akhtar appeal hearing put back a week

AFP, Lahore A tribunal hearing Pakistan fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar's appeal against a five-year ban has been put off for a week, an official said Sunday

"The tribunal heard arguments from the lawyer of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) and lawyers of Akhtar, and the next hearing will be held on June 14," tribunal head Justice (retired) Farrukh Aftab told

One of the three members of the tribunal, Salman Taseer, had withdrawn after he took over as the governor of Punjab province, while another member, former Test cricketer Haseeb Ahsan, could not attend due to illness.

Lawyer Naveed Chaudhry was last week named as Taseer's replacement.

Aftab said the proceeding would be put off while Chaudhry was briefed on the case.

The 32-year-old Akhtar was banned in April following a series of disciplinary violations, including his public criticism of the PCB in January after he did not make a short-list of 15 players who were offered a central contract.

The ban was suspended for a month to allow Akhtar to feature in a domestic event in India.

Akhtar was already on two years' probation for hitting teammate Mohammad Asif with a bat days before the Twenty20 World Championship in South Africa last September.

No decision

FROM PAGE 12

particular case also we have to follow their regulations," Ashraf said. "We are hopeful he will be

released and allowed to return home but since it is an incident involving drugs no matter how small the quantity is, he could be suspended from playing cricket until the inquiry is conducted against him," he added.

The PCB chairman said the board has used all legal and diplomatic channels to get Asif back

"I don't know if they decide to deport him or just send him back home. But at the moment our first priority is he is cleared of this case which is bad for Pakistan cricket, Ashraf was quoted as saying in the local media.

"Our lawyer and official met with Asif in detention and he is keeping his spirits high but obviously this matter cannot end immediately," he added.



The first own goal in a FIFA World Cup game was shot by Manuel Rosas of Mexico



National Sports Council chairman and Army Chief General Moeen U Ahmed handing over the Deed of Agreement of the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium to BCB president Maj Gen Sina Ibn Jamali (fourth from right) at the NSC

yesterday. BCB got the right to use the exclusive venue at Mirpur for 15 years. Gen Moeen assures help to BFF

Football

SPORTS REPORTER National Sports Council (NSC) chairman and Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) president Gen Moeen U Ahmed has offered his helping hands to the Bangladesh Football Federation

BFF president Kazi Salahuddin, who led a 15-member delegation that met with Army Chief Gen

Moeen at the BOA office yesterday, termed the meeting as fruitful. "It was a very good meeting and we are very pleased to meet with Gen Moeen, whose love for football is really encouraging. I thank him from my whole committee for his knowledge and concern about the condition of football in the coun-

the meeting. "We briefed him about our plans for the future. We also told him what we need and what we should do but we found out that he had already done his homework. He not only listened to us but also pointed out some areas of development where we should focus.

try," Salahuddin told reporter after

"We wanted his help about

tricts. He has promised to assign sports-related persons at the dis-

trict sports associations who will

also look after football in the districts and co-ordinate with the BFF. "Gen Moeen advised us to concentrate on school football and also suggested us to prepare a summary of where we are standing now and make the plan where we want to go from here in four years," said the former national footballer adding that the NSC chief was frustrated about Bangladesh's

performance in the SAFF Championship. "He has assured us to go to him

for any kind of help in the future." When Salahuddin's attention was drawn to the national team's premature exit from the SAFF Championship, he was visibly embarrassed.

"I am very unhappy like everyone. A draw or a loss to Bhutan is same to me. Everyone saw our vesterday's match against Sri Lanka and knows where we stand now," said Salahuddin without blaming anyone in particular but virtually agreeing that the national team have hit their lowest ebb in

"I have my own plan's about the team but I want to sit with the getting sponsors as well as reviving National Team Management the game in Dhaka and the dis- Committee before finalising it.

Nat'l shooting from today

SPORTS REPORTER The 22nd National Shooting Championships gets underway at the BKSP in Savar today with 179

shooters participating in the fiveday meet. Sponsors IFIC Bank will provide Tk 12 lakh, the complete budget for the event, informed organisers at a

press briefing at the DRU conference room yesterday. National Shooting Federation vice-president Ansar Ali spoke on the

occasion. Senior vice-president Kashem Humayun was also present. Federation president Maj Gen Ashraf Uddin Chowdhury will inaugurate the meet as chief guest

Jubo Sangha clinch h'ball title

in the morning.

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Jubo Sangha became champions in the men's section of the Cute Handball League at the local stadium yesterday.

They beat Gobindaganj BP Ed College 32-17 while in the women's final, Samannay Sangha clinched the title beating Sagatha.

Abu Mohammad Yousuf, deputy commissioner of Gaibandha, gave

Vettori looks to ODIs

Cricket

AFP, Nottingham

New Zealand captain Daniel Vettori believes his side can still salvage something from their tour of England following their Test series defeat if they triumph in the upcoming one-dayers.

The Black Caps were thrashed by an innings and nine runs in the third Test at Trent Bridge here Sunday as they went down 2-0 in a three-match series. It was the second match in a row

where England had won with more than a day to spare and followed their 2-1 Test series win in New Zealand in March. But the one-off Twenty20 clash

at Old Trafford on June 13 and the five match limited overs series which starts two days later at the Riverside could well go New Zealand's way.

The semifinalists at last year's World Cup, where they beat Michael Vaughan's men in their opening match, New Zealand defeated England 3-1 in a one-day series on home soil before the Test campaign got underway.

In hard-hitting wicketkeeper Brendon McCullum and allrounder Scott Styris they have players who can turn a game and Vettori believes his largely inexpe-

rienced side are more suited to the 50-over format.

"We're a lot more confident in that form, maybe because it's shorter and we don't have to perform for very longperiods,"Vettorisaid. But the left-arm spinner warned

past performance was no guide to future success in the limited overs "We know we have to pick it up

though, because England do have the momentum, and their squad doesn't change much and neither does ours. We have to be convincing if we're to get anything out of this tour at all." However, it wasn't as if New

Zealand didn't have their chances in the Test campaign. At Old Trafford, where England won by six wickets, they were on top until leftarm spinner Monty Panesar sparked a second innings collapse. And at Trent Bridge, they

reduced England to 86 for five only to find themselves following on after being unable to cope in swinging conditions which manof-the-match James Anderson exploited on his way to career-best figures of seven for 43.

"It sums up the state we are in," said Vettori. "We are able to compete for a period of time but unable to compete for a whole five days. "If you look back at the six Tests,

the only time we did that was in Hamilton and we won.

"Unfortunately every other time we haven't been able to keep up with the pace of England. I suppose it is a lack of ability on our part and a lack of fortitude as well." New Zealand played just four

Tests in 10 months before they faced England in March and two of those were against a struggling Bangladesh team.

Their next Test series isn't until October when they face Bangladesh again and Vettori admitted it was tough for the likes of young batsmen Ross Taylor, Jamie How and Daniel Flynn, all of whom had their moments against England, to adjust to conditions in the five-day game.

"The only way you can improve is by playing more and giving young guys like Daniel Flynn, Jamie How and Ross Taylor the chance to play day after day of Test cricket.

"But that's not going to happen. We don't have too much say in our scheduling. If Tests are going to be few and far between, we've got to perform when we do turn up.'

Meanwhile coach John Bracewell said there was no alternative but to be patient with the current crop of players.

"We can't afford to panic," said the former Test off-spinner. "Our cupboard isn't that full but I think we've picked the right guys. We've just got to keep exposing them to international cricket."

Pabna zonal champions

SPORTS REPORTER

Pabna emerged zonal champi ons defeating Rangpur in the final of the 29th National Table Tennis Championships qualify-

Both Pabna and Rangpur had confirmed their berths in the finals for the men's competition while Manikganj qualified after beating Jahangirnagar University in the third-place play-off at the Woodenfloor Gymnasium.

Dhaka, Rangpur and

distributed prizes as chief guest at the concluding ceremony of the two-day qualifiers. AB Bank president and managing director Kaiser A Chowdhury was present as special guest.

Dhaka Bank new partner of hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka Bank yesterday confirmed its association with development of hockey in the country for one year.

The bank's chairman Altaf Hossain Sarkar handed over a cheque of gave Tk 25 lakh to Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) president Air Chief Air Marshall SM Ziaur Rahman at a

local hotel. "This is a partnership in progress of Bangladesh hockey," said BHF vice-president Khondokar Jamil Hossain at a press conference.

Out of Tk 25 lakh, Tk 20 lakh has been given for the national team's trip to Singapore for the Asian Cup qualifiers, informed Jamil.

In addition, the bank will continue its financial support for the development of the game and try to find more

sponsors for the federation. The hockey team will leave Dhaka on Thursday for the June 14-22 meet 3rd Men's AHF Cup, where nine teams will compete for four

qualifying spots for the finals. "Our team will go for the championship," hoped BHF president

Ziaur Rahman. The new jersey of the national hockey team was also unveiled at the press conference.

Div II cricket

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Shahadat Hossain MA Club and SABIS won their respective matches in the Sunlife Insurance Second Division Cricket League at Shahid Miraj-Tapan Stadium in Manikganj yesterday.

In the first match, Shahadat Club defeated Biltu Club by 13 runs after batting first and being bowled out for 97 runs in 20.2 overs. Tapu took three wickets for Biltu Club while Titu and Sumon took two wickets each.

In reply, Biltu were bundled out for just 84 runs in 21.5 overs. Mitanur took four wickets.

In the second match, SABIS defeated Purba Dashara Cricket Ekadash (PDCE) by nine wickets.

Romania hold

FROM PAGE 12 up, the game lacked urgency.

Romania did press forward when they could but often displayed spoiling tactics -- picking up three cynical yellow cards.

Anelka -- badly out of form for club and country -- headed over from a bouncing Ribery corner on 32 minutes but the eastern Europeans finished the first period

cut opening when he cut a ball back for the lurking Benzema, who cushioned a shot into Lobont's arms from 18 yards.

And with Romania largely unthreatened, France coach Raymond Domenech brought on promising St Etienne striker Bafetimbi Gomis for the morose Anelka on 73 minutes, and then withdrew the frustrated Benzema

Romania's talisman Mutu, who in the past 19 games in which he scored has always been on the winning side, was bizarrely dragged off with just over 10 minutes remaining for Inverness striker Marius Nikulae.

little effect. Romania defender Cristian

Chivu floated a poor free-kick miles behind the goal and Eric Abidal's long-range effort flew wide.

Banel Nicolita's cross was headed on by Daniel Nicolae.

But France survived, though questions will now be asked about their credentials to win the tournament after their lack of leadership and composure going forward.

Romania -- and Group C rivals Italy and Netherlands -- will be hugely content with the result.

Indian style FROM PAGE 12

of wristbands. And all these hairstyles and fash-

ion statements are a true reflection of the boost that their individual images received during the Twenty20 tournament. Not only did it beef up their wallets, it put a lot of emphasis on looking good on and off the field. Some critics believe that the importance of what happens on-field has taken a back seat during and after the IPL. Truth be told, hairstyles are nothing new but these are ominous signs of a changing face of cricket in the sub-continent.

Ever since India's sudden triumph in the Twenty20 World Championships, their affluence has gone up and up. But one cannot forget what happened after the World Cup proper in the West Indies last year when India crashed out in the first round after suffering defeats at the hands of Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Then, e-mails circulated with their pictures fitted into vendors and roadside chefs, a practical joke on what could be their next job after the World Cup.

next season or two, don't be surprised for another backlash and a few sobered up haircuts.

England want to improve

Cricket

AFP, Nottingham

England captain Michael Vaughan admitted there was room for improvement from his side ahead of the "ultimate test" against South Africa despite a decisive win over New Zealand here Sunday.

Victory by an innings and nine runs with a day to spare at Trent Bridge gave England the threematch series 2-0 after their sixwicket win at Old Trafford followed the drawn opener at Lord's. But in both of these wins over

the Black Caps, whom they defeated 2-1 in a three-match series in New Zealand in March, England had to come from behind after their middle-order faltered. At Trent Bridge, they were 86 for

five with the out-of-form Ian Bell and Paul Collingwood out for nought before Kevin Pietersen (115) and Tim Ambrose (67) rescued the innings with a stand of 161.

Test-best scores from tailenders Stuart Broad (64) and James Anderson (28) boosted England's total to 364.

Then swing bowler Anderson overwhelmed the Kiwi top order with seven for 43, his best first-class figures as England made their opponents follow-on.

against South Africa -- whom England lead in the world rankings by just a point and who beat New Zealand 2-0 in October -- starting on July 10 at Lord's, Vaughan knows England must end a run of 12 Tests without a first innings total of 400 if they are to remain competitive.

"A sign of a good team is getting out of these positions but the sign of a really good team is not getting in those positions in the first place," said Vaughan.

"There are ways to improve and the South Africa series will be the ultimate test to see where we're at as a Test team."

He said he hoped the upcoming limited overs series against New Zealand would boost the confidence of both England one-day captain Collingwood and Bell. "Sometimes it's a good thing to

just get into another form of the

game and free yourselves up," said Vaughan. One quick fifty could get them into form. "But we've won four out of five now and I think in every one of

better in each game." Vaughan admitted the sometimes diffident Anderson could his place at No3 and was dropped build on this man-of-the-match

winning performance.

not many better around than him. The key to Jimmy is being confi-But with a four-Test series dent in himself. He has lots of one else."

ability, it's just allowing that to come out."

England could have Andrew Flintoff, who hasn't played a Test since appearing against Australia in Sydney in January last year, in their side for the opener against South Africa if the star all-rounder recovers from a side problem.

Vaughan was keen to add the Lancashire fast bowler to his attack, saying: "I'd love to have him in the team."

For New Zealand captain Daniel Vettori, whose side were polished off on Sunday by left-arm quick Ryan Sidebottom's spell of four wickets for five runs in 19 balls, this was another example of the team's inability to last the distance.

"We were able to compete for some of the time but unable to compete for a whole five days," Vettori said. "If you look back to the last six

Tests, the only time we did that was at Hamilton, which we won. It's somethingwe've got to find a away to do." This was New Zealand's first

those wins, we've got better and Test series since the retirement of former captain Stephen Fleming. James Marshall struggled to fill

for the Trent Bridge match. Fleming averaged 40 in Tests "When he's swinging it, there's and Vettori said: "The hardest thing in missing Stephen is his runs and we need to find them from some-



France emerged more focused (L-R) Dania, daughter of late footballer Monem Munna, Dhaka City Mayor Sadeq Hossain Khoka, former national and Ribery created the first clear- footballer Dewan Shafiul Arefin Tutul and Abahani director col (retd) Kazi Shahed offer prayers with others yesterday after the Dhanmondi Road No 8 (old) bridge was officially named Monem Munna Bridge. Sadeq Hossain unveiled the

plaque in the afternoon. Vaughan awaits Flintoff

Cricket

AFP, Nottingham

England captain Michael Vaughan cannot wait to have star allrounder Andrew Flintoff back for the Test series with South Africa even if it creates a headache over

who to drop. Flintoff hasn't played a Test since January 2007, against Australia in Sydney, after being sidelined with ankle and, more recently, side injuries.

But even though England wrapped up a 2-0 series victory over New Zealand with a crushing innings and nine run win in the third and Test at Trent Bridge here Sunday, their fourth success in five Tests against the Black Caps, Vaughan would love to have the 30year-old fast bowler back against the Proteas.

However, while his bowling form at county level has been encouraging, Flintoff has struggled

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England's pace trio of Ryan Sidebottom, Stuart Broad and

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Solution time: 24 mins. 47 Castle

in the spotlight against New Zealand with Anderson, a Lancashire teammate of 'Freddie' starring with a career-best seven for 43 at Trent Bridge. Any of those three would have a

James Anderson all took their turn

right to feel hard done by if dropped for the first Test against South Africa at Lord's on July 10. But Flintoff could return in

batsmen, both struggling for runs, were each dismissed for nought in Nottingham. Flintoff was the fulcrum of England's five-man attack during their victorious 2005 Ashes campaign and getting him back in the

Australia has an obvious appeal. "I hope he will get his side right in the next few weeks, get enough cricket and be confident in himself and in his form that he can take on South Africa," Vaughan said.

"You would love five (bowlers).

But I am also happy with four. The

balance of the team is very impor-

tant when you play a good team like

South Africa.

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plays against South Africa. Everyone knows that, if he is fit, I would love to have him in the place of either Paul Collingwood or Ian Bell after the middle-order England's series success over New Zealand saw them leapfrog

Flintoff will have only one four-

day championship match for

Lancashire in which to prove his

fitness for Test cricket and Vaughan

said: "It will probably be Freddie

own form and his body whether he

"If he is confident enough in his

who will have to make the call.

South Africa into third place in the International Cricket Council (ICC) Test rankings by just a point. And Flintoff's return would make what already looks like being a close, four-match contest all the

more intriguing according to New side ahead of next year's clash with Zealand captain Daniel Vettori. "I suppose there is always that dangling of Flintoff in the corner and if you throw him in the mix

> team," he said. "Once he comes back they are going to be a very tough side to beat for anyone. The England-South Africa series will be a very good one to watch."

then you have got a very complete

By Eugene Sheffer sign abbr. 2 Oil cartel 23 Encoun-25 Formerly. 25 | 26 | 27 formerly 28 | 29 | 30 windstorm 5 Unopened 27 Mimicked 28 Dissolve 29 Hexag-7 Electrical 30 Put one over on 47 48 49 31 Witness 50 51 52 hatchet king link 38 Consume 40 Biblical

CRYPTOQUIP

JZDDWM PZFX FSS ZNWL IBP GZKR, TFP MZT F LWFSSR LBMPFGSW XLBMHBXFS Saturday's Cryptoquip: THIS PERSON TOLD ME ABOUT HOW HE BREATHED IN AIR. I MUST SAY.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: S equals L

against Chile in 1930.



they are not involved in the emo-

parts could be able to drawing the favour the local fans to watch a

strategy with cool heads because complete match?

FROM PAGE 12 that the young guys selected for the tions. series are very much in consideration in the long-term for the India team.

In their last meeting, Pakistan secured a 31-run victory at Jaipur last year although they lost the series 3-2 but Lawson said that a big and tough task awaits his charge against in-form India to continue the winning run. "It is a big match because they

(India) are in form after winning the series in Australia. In India-Pakistan matches, the pressure is always a big issue and I hope my boys can cope with the pressure in the nerve-breaking encounter to continue the winning spree," said the Australian. He also dismissed the notion

that the Asif controversy dented the spirit of his side as they won the first match against hosts Bangladesh quite convincingly. The smiling Pakistan coach also things that revolved in everyone's said that he and his Indian counter-

"It is an advantage for us as we can give our best because we don't feel the pressure as much an Indian or Pakistani felt," he said. Interestingly the craze with the

two traditional opponents clash was hardly among the local fans before the match and it may have happened because the two teams have played for quite sometimes in the last seven years since the diplomaticice melted in 2003. Since then the scenario has also changed in the outcome although

Pakistan still are far ahead from their opponents with 66 wins to their credit against India's 43 in 113 matches since 1978. India however are enjoying a good record in Bangladesh as they won four games out of six against Pakistan.

It was not the comments or the

records but the most important

mind was: Would the rain gods

ing zone D yesterday.

Jamalpur qualified for the boys' DC of Dhaka Kamal Uddin

on the attack.

On 65 minutes Benzema then showed great feet on the edge of the box to leave Gabriel Tamas and Cosmin Contra bamboozled -- but he dragged his low 15-yard shot wide.

for Marseille's Samir Nasri.

But the raft of substitutions had

The unfancied Romanians did cause panic in added time when

an injury, is famous for the number

20 Physicist Niels 22 Jewel 24 Nicara guan leader Daniel 28 Makes a mess of 32 Ort 33 Needle case 34 Earl Grey, If anything goes wrong in the for one 36 Capri or

48 Desire 49 Calendar information 50 Recede 51 Will Smith biopic 52 Scepter 54 Dynamite F PHIZZS SWFKWL, IFNBMJ

IT WAS AN INSPIRATIONAL STORY.