

Dravid, Laxman leave for NZ

PTI, Mumbai

Middle-order mainstays Rahul Dravid and VVS Laxman, along with four other members of India's Test squad, left for New Zealand from here early Monday for the three-match Test series starting March 18.

The duo, along with Amit Mishra, Lakshmi Prasad, Dhawal Kulkarni and M Vijay, would be reaching Auckland today morning.

The players are reaching well ahead of the commencement of the series to acclimatize with the conditions by turning out for domestic teams of New Zealand in the state championship.

The inclusion of these players into New Zealand's domestic teams has been approved by New Zealand Cricket, the New Zealand Players Association and the six Major Associations.

Dravid will play for Canterbury Wizards against the Central Stags at Mainpower Oval, Rangiora, from March 6 to 9, while leg spinner Mishra will turn out for the Stags in the same game.

ICC's advice to PCB

PTI, Karachi

The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Monday advised the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) to invite the chief executive of New Zealand Cricket (NZC), Justin Vaughan to have a ground zero assessment on the security situation prevalent in the country before the Kiwi's planned Test tour later this year.

Pakistan cricket has been hit hard by security problems with many international teams refusing to tour the country and the ICC also relocating the Champions Trophy from Pakistan on similar ground.

But International Cricket Council General Manager, Cricket, Dave Richardson said to avoid the repetition of such incident during the New Zealand series slated for December, the PCB needs to invite Vaughan well in advance so that he can assess the security scenario and arrangements for the tour.

Indira ride

FROM PAGE 17 At the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium, Mahfuzur returned with a figure of five for 49 after Tasamul's blazing hundred as Brother Union secured a 23-run win over Dhanmondi Club.

Riding on Mahfuzur's 125-ball 122 that contained 14 fours, Brothers piled up 273-9. In reply, Dhanmondi Club were all out for 250 runs in 48.5 overs.

In the day's other matches, Baridhara Dazzlers (138-5) registered a five-wicket win over Eskaton Sabuj Sangha (132-10) at the Dhaka University ground and Lalmatia Club (177-9) defeated Rupali Bank (138-10) by 39 runs at the City Club ground.

Football power

FROM PAGE 17 due to arrive in Dhaka this month with a 12-member team, also to discuss development of the game.

Bin Hammam has been credited with a number of reforms, including the AFC's "Vision Asia" grassroots development programmes and helping in FIFA's Goal Project, which has helped provide facilities for cash-strapped countries including Bangladesh.

But after Salman's visit, there would definitely be talks about votes and more promises for the May 8 polls.

Sunny shines

FROM PAGE 17 1-45, Mominul 4-25, Asif 3-35) BKSP: 207-8 in 49 overs (Saikat 18, Sarker 56, Asif 26, Zabid 10, Tanveer 37, Anamul 10, Imamul 14 not out, extras 15; Shanto 2-47, Bishwanath 1-30, Nizamuddin 1-41, Shakil 2-29, Elias 2-27) RESULT: BKSP won by two wickets.

PEGASUS: 211-7 in 50 overs (Faisal 10, Jupiter 69, Bashar 48, Jubair 42 not out, Iftakhar 17, extras 16; Dipazzal 1-27, Ariful 1-13, Iqbal 1-38, Rezaul 3-36)

PARTEX: 212-5 in 47.4 overs (Shafiq 13, Mehrib 27, Tarique 59, Mushfiqur 13, Rashed 50 not out, extras 14; Zakaria 2-38, Faisal 2-34, Bashir 1-34) RESULT: Partex won by five wickets.

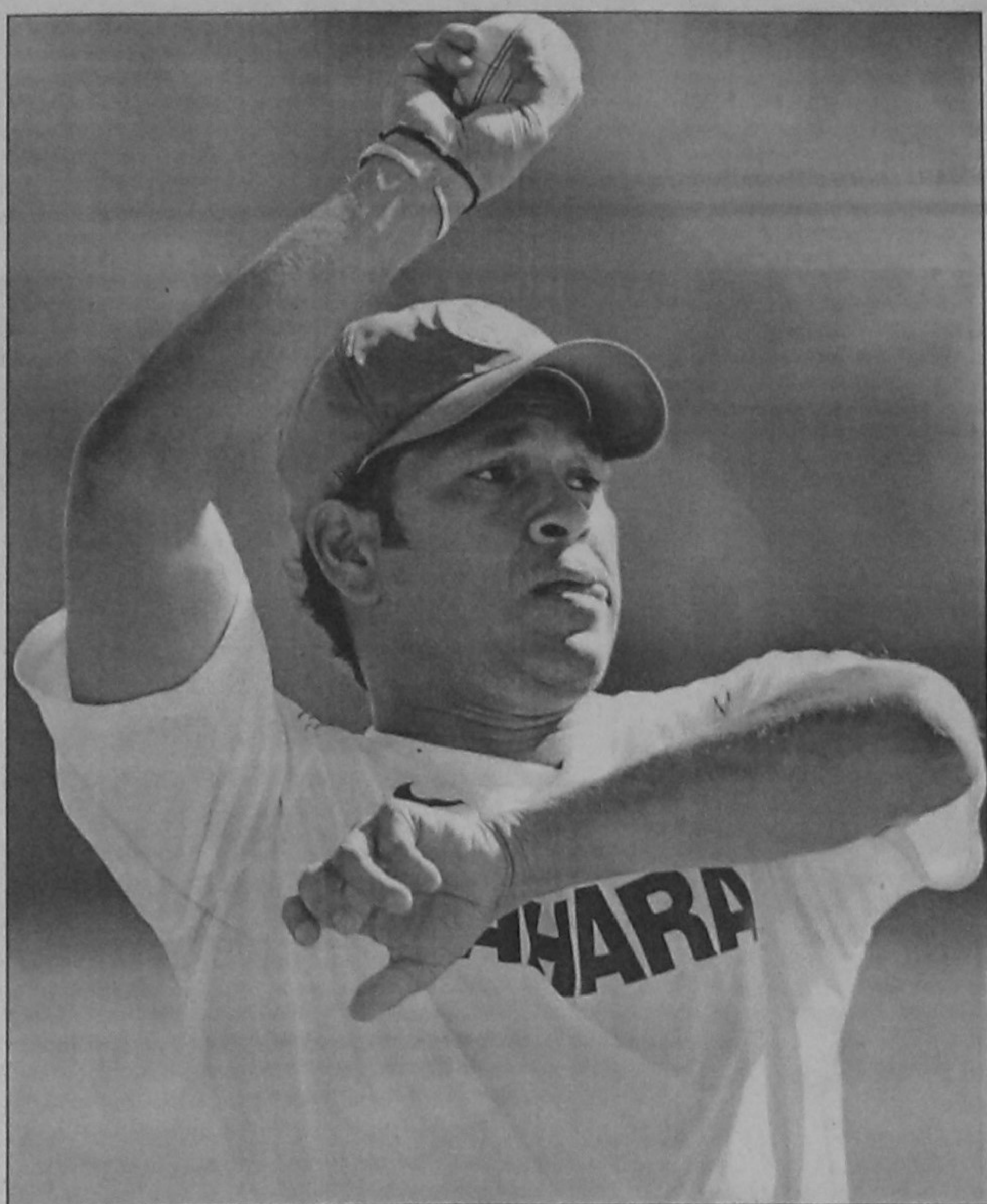


PHOTO: AFP

Indian cricket great Sachin Tendulkar sends down a delivery during training in Napier on Monday, ahead of their first one-day international against New Zealand today.

India look to Tendulkar First ODI against New Zealand today

Cricket

AFP, Napier

India are set to recall record-breaking batsman Sachin Tendulkar as they head into a one-day series against New Zealand that starts here today looking to bounce back from two Twenty20 defeats.

Tendulkar, who sat out the Twenty20 games, was brought on the tour specifically for the one-day internationals and Tests and Indian skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni is confident he will boost the tourists.

"When you're playing against him, it plays on your mind," he said of Tendulkar, who has amassed a record 16,440 runs in 422 ODIs.

"It's not just his batting and bowling, you see the amount of contributions he makes with his experience," he added.

But the home side will be hoping they can repeat their successes against the master batsman during India's 2002-03 tour of New Zealand, when Tendulkar had a dismal run with innings of a duck, one and one.

Skipper Daniel Vettori said New Zealand had strategies in place to deal with Tendulkar but they would have to be precise.

"You can have plans for him but it has to be inch-perfect," he said.

Dhoni played down the opening losses, saying the games had given his side valuable time in the middle.

"We know everyone is in good nick and each and every one is playing his shots that he normally plays," Dhoni said.

"I feel we are batting in the right areas and hopefully the mistakes are quite easy to avoid."

And Vettori is not getting carried away with his side's two victories in the 20-over version of the game.

"I think our team will be feeling good, but in saying that, India have played some great

cricket over the last year or so, so they will still be confident," Vettori said.

"They know they can bounce back from these performances (in the Twenty20s). We knew right from the start we had to play some very, very good cricket if we want to compete and beat India and that's the same mantra we will have throughout the one-day series."

New Zealand will be at full strength for the first ODI on Tuesday, with the injury-prone Jacob Oram returning to bowling duties after playing as a batsman in the Twenty20s.

"I'll look to bowl him a few overs. It definitely won't be a full spell, but even a little bit of him makes a big difference so we'll probably choose between Ian Butler and Tim Southee in terms of the final seamer," Vettori said.

Kyle Mills also returns after recovering from an Achilles problem and will be a valuable addition to an attack that was battered in the opening overs of the Twenty20s by Virender Sehwag, Gautam Gambhir and Suresh Raina.

The right-arter, and world's third-ranked ODI bowler, has enjoyed success against India, taking 16 wickets at 27.87 in 13 matches.

Vettori said New Zealand are likely to bat first if they win the toss because the lights at McLean Park are less bright than others around the country.

India have one injury concern, with fast bowler Ishant Sharma a doubt after injuring his shoulder in the second Twenty20.

TEAMS

NEW ZEALAND: Jesse Ryder, Brendon McCullum, Martin Guppitt, Ross Taylor, Jacob Oram, Neil Broom, Grant Elliott, Daniel Vettori (captain), Kyle Mills, Ian Bulter or Tim Southee, Jain O'Brien.

INDIA: Virender Sehwag, Sachin Tendulkar, Gautam Gambhir, Yuvraj Singh, Suresh Raina, Mahendra Singh Dhoni, Yusuf Pathan, Irfan Pathan, Harbhajan Singh, Praveen Kumar or Munaf Patel, Zaheer Khan.

Sarwan thwarts

FROM PAGE 17

Sidebottom finally dismissing Sarwan just before the break with the sixth over of the third new ball.

The little right-hander drove lazily at a full-length delivery and was bowled off the inside edge.

Sarwan spent 11 hours, 39 minutes at the crease, and struck 30 fours and two sixes from 452 balls.

West Indies wicket keeper/batsman Ramdin glanced his 194th ball from Sidebottom to deep fine leg for a single to reach triple figures in Tests for the first time.

After tea, England spirits were broken when Jerome Taylor continued to assault their bowling and Ramdin inched his way to 150.

Swann paid the price for fighting outside the off-stump, when Ramdin lofted him inside-out to the long-off boundary for the 19th of his 20 boundaries to reach the landmark.

Taylor reached his 50 from 60 balls, when he cut Swann to third man for the last of his six fours, but two balls later, the off-spinner bowled him for 53.

Anderson had Sulieman Benn caught behind for 13 top-edging a hook before Swann bowled Ramdin, when he played down the wrong line to prompt the West Indies' declaration.

Ramdin occupied the crease for a little more than seven hours and faced 268 deliveries.

England's Test at Sabina Park in Jamaica, the abandonment of the second Test at the Vivian Richards Cricket Ground in Antigua, and a draw in the third Test at the Antigua Recreation Ground.

The fifth and final Test of the series starts next Friday at Queen's Park Oval in the Trinidad capital of Port of Spain.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on the fourth day of the fourth Test between West Indies and England at Kensington Oval in Barbados on Sunday:

ENGLAND: First innings 600-6 declared (Strauss 142, Bopara 104)

WEST INDIES: First innings (overnight 398 for five)

Table with columns: Player, O, M, R, W. Includes names like Swann, Gayle, Hinds, Chanderngopal, Nash, Ramdin, Taylor, Benn, Powell, Extras, Total, Did not bat, Fall of wickets, Bowler, Anderson, Sidebottom, Broad, Swann, Pietersen, Bopara, Collingwood, Shah.

ENGLAND: Second innings Strauss not out 5 Cook not out 0 Extras: (nb-1) 1 Total: (For no loss in 2 overs) 6

To bat: Shah, Pietersen, Collingwood, Bopara, Ambrose, Broad, Anderson, Swann, Sidebottom.

Bowler O M R W Edwards 0 0 4 0 Powell 1 0 2 0

Inter's super

FROM PAGE 20

The former Real Madrid forward directed his header on target and although Abbiati parried it, the ball somehow managed to squirm over the line.

Within six minutes of the restart the hosts had doubled their lead as Cassano played a sumptuous pass to Giampaolo Pazzini, who cut inside and slotted home from a tight angle.

Milan had plenty of the ball but created little in terms of clear cut chances until Pato planted a firm header into the bottom corner from substitute Favalli's cross 10 minutes from time.

In other games Giuseppe Mascara scored the goal of the day with a volley from the halfway line in Catania's 4-0 Sicilian derby victory over Palermo, for whom Australia midfielder Mark Bresciano was sent off after a quarter of an hour.

Rani, Masuda join Shirin on top

SPORTS REPORTER

WFM Zakia Sultana put an end to Sharmila Sultana Shirin's all-win run in the 30th Parachute National Chess Championship yesterday when the competition resumed after a day's break.

Zakia defeated Shirin after 64 moves in the seventh round at the federation chess-room as Shirin lost her solo lead after straight six wins.

Defending champion IWM Rani Hamid and Masuda Begum, who won their respective games, joined Shirin atop the table with six points.

Rani beat Farjana Hossain Anne after 21 moves while Masuda defeated Ahely Sarkar after 60 moves.

In other matches, Shamima Akhter Liza beat Protiva Talukder, Nazrana Khan Eva beat Amena Khatun and Jahanara Haque Runu drew with Rokhsana Tili.

Tongi ride on Sohel strikes

SPORTS REPORTER

A brace by Sohel Rana helped Tongi Krira Chakra win a five-goal thriller against Muslim Institute in the Citycell 3rd Division Football League at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

The match came alive in the last half hour with Sohel netting twice but Muslim came back through Riaz Uddin. Shafiq put the winners further ahead soon but lowly placed Muslim made it 3-2 through Saiful in the dying minutes.

Tongi, who earned 13 points from seven games, held on to the slim lead to confirm full three points.

Five cities for Champions Trophy

AFP, Lahore

Five venues in Australia, South Africa and the United Arab Emirates are under consideration for the biennial Champions Trophy this year, a top official said Monday.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) last month moved the elite eight-nation event out of Pakistan after three countries refused to tour the Muslim country over security fears.

The event is scheduled for September 24 to October 5 with a final decision on the host country to be made by the ICC executive board in Dubai next month.

ICC general manager Dave Richardson said some had questioned the idea of holding the event in Sri Lanka, announced as the alternative venue in case the event was scrapped in Pakistan.

The ill-fated event was first postponed in September last year when South Africa refused to tour Pakistan, while Australia, England and New Zealand also voiced concerns over touring the troubled country.

Richardson said the event will be shortened to 12 days.

"What the board has decided is that we want to hold the tournament over 12 days which means that we have to have two venues in virtually the same city, with no international travel being involved," said Richardson.

Australia will defend the title they won in India in 2006. England, India, New Zealand, Pakistan, South Africa, Sri Lanka and the West Indies are the other competing teams.

Lampard

FROM PAGE 20 sapping 120 minutes of action in Sunday's League Cup final win over Tottenham at Wembley.

The Scot is likely to bring back Michael Carrick, Dimitar Berbatov and Nemanja Vidic, while Wayne Rooney could recover from a virus.

Stoke stun

FROM PAGE 20 just one of their last 18 league games.

Bolton boss Gary Megson saw Ricardo Gardner score the only goal of the game at home to Newcastle, having earlier agreed a new contract at the Reebok.

Newcastle are just two points above the relegation zone.

Ramdin thanks his makers

Cricket

CRICINFO, Barbados

This has been a game for celebrating centuries in an unusual manner. Ravi Bopara and Ramnaresh Sarwan both brought out their Usain Bolt impressions, but Denesh Ramdin did something even more individual. On picking up his maiden hundred he reached into his pocket and pulled out a hand-written note which he held to the dressing room.

On the scrap of paper were three names -- Ian Bishop, David Williams (West Indies' assistant coach) and Sarwan -- the people Ramdin felt he owed for his milestone. He'd actually been so confident of reaching three figures that he scribbled his note on the fourth morning. His father was also in the crowd having flown in from Trinidad so Ramdin couldn't have timed it better.

"They are the three guys who have played an important part for me," Ramdin said. "They've been looking at the way I play and telling me I have the ability to bat long periods of time. It's about choosing the right balls to go after and I'll go in with a batter [I] try and learn from him. Try and pick up certain things like which bowler to attack and how to get off strike."

Ramdin fed off Sarwan during their stand of 261, leaning on his more experienced partner for advice. Whenever there was a loose shot they would meet in the middle and say a few words. "Getting ready for that big knock I believed I could do it and was guided by Ronnie Sarwan," he said. "I knew once I spent some time out there, and Sars was there guiding me through, I would be successful in the end."

It hasn't always been an easy time for Ramdin, but that makes the success even sweeter. While some of his teammates were making themselves rich in the Stanford 20/20 for 20 he was captaining Trinidad and Tobago in the less glamorous domestic challenge against Middlesex. He played a key role in their victory

and given recent events may not be too unhappy to not have worn the Stanford uniform.

His Test place, though, has been under scrutiny after a barren run as he failed to reach double figures in the series in New Zealand and also fell short against Australia last year. He hadn't reached a Test fifty since May 2007 at Lord's and that he has come good in such emphatic style is another tick in the box for this improving West Indies line-up.

"Everything takes time and this was meant to be," Ramdin said. "As I go along things will get better, and in the years I have played I've learnt a lot from guys from our team and guys I've played against about building an innings."

John Dyson, the coach, has been consistent in backing the players he believes in and Ramdin was one of them. He too probably deserved a place on the piece of paper. When people have called for Ramdin's head, Dyson has spoken up for him saying that his main role is as a wicketkeeper and that he is the best man for the job. Dyson's support has extended to him being installed as vice-captain which was a real show of faith.

That sort of backing from coach and team can breed confidence and during this innings it translated into runs. When he came down the pitch and was bowled by Graeme Swann he was three runs away from setting a new record-score by a West Indies keeper. That is currently held by Sir Clyde Walcott, so even in second place he belongs in fine company. Sarwan also missed out on a milestone of his own, finally being bowled by Ryan Sidebottom nine short of a triple century. There have only been four West Indians before him to reach that mark -- Lawrence Rowe, Garry Sobers, Brian Lara and Chris Gayle -- and being so close to joining them frustrated Sarwan.

His disappointment should be eased knowing that he has played a major role in putting West Indies on top in this series. He has also helped nurture one of the team's young talents and that is an equally valuable contribution.

BFF appoints

FROM PAGE 17

"People from all aspect of life used to watch football with a great passion in Bangladesh. It is the game of mass people and I believe the BFF and we both have the teams to make this tournament a success."

Admitting that the firm has little experience in sports, the Masthead chief executive said it was a challenge for them. "Working in sports is not easy, it's different than others. But we are fully prepared and there would be guidance from the BFF officials, who are experienced," he said while promising to deliver something new during the tournament.

He also hinted at a grand launching ceremony on March 5.

There were questions about the appointment though and Salahuddin explained why the BFF needed specialists.

"There is a simple logic behind this. We have experience but our organisers pro-

vide free service to the federation. But they are professionals. They can't say no when we call them to do something. To avoid these type of hazards, we needed professionals to do this job," said the BFF chief.

"Maybe they will come out with modern ideas and new concepts. They are specialists in these types of works and its better to give responsibility to them."

It can be mentioned that repetitive appearances of same old faces during BFF programmes in the last decade bored fans and spectators. And BFF's poor handling of the reception to the Swadhin Bangla Football Dal, perhaps, finally forced the BFF think-tank to look elsewhere for support.

The BFF-Masthead contract will be only for the Super Cup but both parties would look beyond that if it really makes an impact in domestic football.

Another Thilan

FROM PAGE 17

bowling Muralidaran. Pakistan's experienced leg-spinner Danish Kaneria was once again a major disappointment, conceding 183 runs without taking a wicket in his 47 overs.

Sri Lanka resumed on Monday at 317-4 and were 452 at lunch without further loss.

Samaraweera, 133 not out overnight, took a single off Shoaib Malik to complete his double hundred soon after lunch. It took him 306 balls to reach the second double hundred of his career.

Dilshan matched his partner shot for shot and hit Kaneria for his 14th boundary to reach his eighth Test hundred off just 109 balls.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at close on the second day of the second Test between Pakistan and Sri Lanka at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore on Monday:

SRI LANKA: First innings (overnight 317-4) Warnapura c Misbahul b Gul 8 Paranavitana c Malik b Gul 21 Sangakkara c Akmal b Ararat 104

Table with columns: Player, O, M, R, W. Includes names like M Jayawardene, Samaraweera, Dilshan, P Jayawardene, Thushara, Muralidaran, Mendis, Fernando, Extras, Total, Fall of wickets.

Bowler O M R W Gul 37 2 135 6 Talha 17 0 88 1 Ararat 20 2 106 1 Kaneria 47 5 183 0 Malik 28 3 80 0 Younis 2 0 9 0

PAKISTAN: First innings Manzoor not out 59 Butt run out 48 Extras: (nb-3) 3

Total: (For one wkt in 23.4 overs) 110 To bat: Younis, Malik, Misbahul, Iqbal, Akmal, Ararat, Talha, Gul, Kaneria.

Bowler O M R W Thushara 8 0 46 0 Fernando 2 0 20 0 Mendis 8 2 21 0 Muralidaran 4.4 0 23 0 Dilshan 1 1 0 0

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down. Includes clues like 'Group of actors', 'Where Goldilocks was found', 'Peruse', '17 Pursue', '18 Birthday card', '19 Palin', '20 Goes nowhere', '21 Toward', '22 Purchase', '23 Popeye's burger-entree', '25 Small car', '30 State', '31 Candle', '32 Smell', '33 Dweller', '35 Harelson of "Cheers"', '22 Carbon', '23 Bankroll', '24 "Got a Secret"', '25 Chops', '26 Drop', '27 Big', '28 Massachusetts', '29 Take a whack at', '30 Cheating', '31 Notion', '32 Sculpture', '33 Sneakers', '34 Garden favorite', '35 Sandwich', '36 Regretted', '37 Jason's ship', '38 Appear ominously', '39 Quaker's address', '40 Carina', '41 Probability', '42 Afternoon get-together', '43 That woman'.

Cryptoquip puzzle grid with letters and numbers. Includes the clue: 'Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN YOU WATCH AN ATHLETE WHO'S REALLY IN TERRIFIC SHAPE, I SUPPOSE YOU WITNESS FITNESS.' and the answer: 'Today's Cryptoquip Clue: S equals T'.