



Shanghai Cavalier's cricket ground, Pudong 2002

CRICKET

articles

JCC's cricket ground, Botkyrka 2004



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AFP - 20 January 2000

Afghan Taliban want to join international cricket body

By Owais Tohid

KARACHI, Jan 20 (AFP) - Afghanistan's ruling Taliban militia want to promote cricket in the war-ravaged country and are trying to join the International Cricket Council, Pakistani cricket officials said Thursday. "They have written to us and want us to help recommend them for associate membership of the ICC," said Yawar Saeed, a member of the Pakistan Cricket Board's advisory council. Pakistan officials will visit Afghanistan to see what cricket facilities the country has. "We have decided to send a PCB representative to Afghanistan. We would like to help them, there is no doubt about it. But we want to see what they have on ground," Saeed said. Pakistani along with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are the only countries which recognize the Taliban, an Islamic fundamentalist militia, as the legitimate rulers of Afghanistan. Mirza Iqbal, a spokesman for the Pakistan Cricket Board, said two cricket officials had visited from Afghanistan, including Allahdad Nuri, head of the Afghan Cricket Federation. The men met with Naseem-ul Ghani, a former Pakistan cricketer and now the ICC's development officer for Asia.

"Two officials from Afghanistan visited Pakistan and held a meeting and requested help for the promotion of the game in their country," Mirza said. The Afghans also asked for cricket coaches and funding and said cricket was becoming popular in Afghanistan. "I cannot say anything about the future of cricket there or about Taliban as we have no idea of the existing facilities in Afghanistan," said Saeed. With Afghanistan still locked in bitter fighting and with much of the country covered with deadly landmines, few people in the country play cricket.

Since seizing Kabul in 1996 the Taliban have brought most of Afghanistan under their ultra-orthodox interpretation of Islamic Sharia law, banning women from outside jobs and education and ordering men to grow untrimmed beards. In 1998, Afghani boxers were banned from participating in an international boxing tournament held in Karachi because they refused to trim their beards.

"We all pray that Afghans adopt not only the technical aspects of the game but the charisma that surrounds the cricketing field," said legendary batsman Hanif Mohammad said. "But it is good news as the more children are involved in cricket, the further they will be from the fighting. The atmosphere will change as mothers and fathers come to watch their children play," he said. "It is good for Afghanistan itself."

CricInf
Ralph Dellor - 31 December 2001

Nasser Hussain awarded OBE in New Year Honours List

England captain Nasser Hussain has been awarded an OBE in the New Year Honours List, announced today.

Hussain took over the captaincy at one of the low points of English cricket, after the 1999 World Cup. He was unable to turn things around immediately but, with the not to be underrated assistance of coach Duncan Fletcher, Hussain has been responsible for a definite resurgence in England's Test performances.

He was in charge when England achieved four consecutive series wins, against Zimbabwe and West Indies at home and then Pakistan and Sri Lanka away. The Ashes campaign against Australia last summer was a huge disappointment but then, with a seriously depleted team, Hussain's England gave a good account of themselves in narrowly losing to India in the recently completed series.

The OBE announcement comes at a time when reports suggest that Hussain might be considering standing down from the captaincy after the 2003 World Cup in South Africa. Should he lead England to success in that competition, or in the Ashes series in Australia that precedes it, he might reasonably expect another visit to Buckingham Palace.

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From: aryanviking (aryanviking@europe.com)
Subject: Taleban Promoting Cricket!!
Newsgroups: soc.culture.indian, rec.sport.cricket
View: (This is the only article in this thread) | Original Format
Date: 2001-09-01 14:07:43 PST

A man from Kabul

A FRIEND, sent by his newspaper to cover events in Afghanistan, returned with a startling piece of news. The regime that had put yellow stars on the infidels and ordered the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas was sympathetically inclined towards the game of cricket. After due deliberation, the Taliban's Mullah Omar had decreed that, unlike athletics, football or swimming, playing cricket did not require any part of the body to be revealed to the public. It was thus deemed safe for men as well as women. My friend's host even offered to take him to see the Afghan national team practice, but unfortunately the trip had to be cancelled when the Taliban's enemies launched a fresh attack on Kabul. He thus did not actually see the Afghan cricketers but, returning through Pakistan, he was told that they had been in Peshawar not long before, playing a match against the North-West Frontier Province.

I was recently provided further confirmation of this novel Taliban initiative by that very knowledgeable person, Raj Singh Dungarpur. Mr. Dungarpur told me that the Afghans had formally applied for membership of the International Cricket Council (ICC). The ICC had passed on the application to the appropriate regional body, the Asian Cricket Council (ACC). Therethe matter rested - to be decided in the ACC's next meeting.

I hope the application is granted, for the Afghans do have something of a cricketing history. I recall reading of an Afridi Pathan named Ahsan-ul-Haq who, at the turn of the century, went to the United Kingdom to study and ended up playing cricket for W.G. Grace's own team, London County. I suppose the Afridi who now belts sixes and bowls brisk leg-breaks for Pakistan must be of Afghan stock. So, perhaps, are the sundry Khans who have turned out for Pakistan, including the greatest of them all, Imran Khan Niazi.

From: samarth harish shah (shshah@students.uiuc.edu)
Subject: Match-fixing, sex scandals... and now, nude cricket
Newsgroups: rec.sport.cricket
View: Complete Thread (3 articles) | Original Format
Date: 2000-09-30 13:39:49 PST

From the Deccan Chronicle dated October 1st, 2000.

Match-fixing, sex scandals... and now, nude cricket

-Samarth.

London, Sept. 30: After all those cricket scandals about match-fixing and girls following players to their rooms, here comes another they've started playing cricket in the nude. Last week the police came to break up a match being played by naked cricketers at the Ben Rhydding Cricket Club at Ilkley, Yorkshire, the county that produced Geoff Boycott. A neighbour, who watched the game being played at night on a wicket lit up by car headlamps, called in the police. We got a call that a game of naked cricket was in progress, the police spokeswoman for the West Yorkshire police said, adding the cricketers were packing up to leave when the police arrived.

They were suitably advised but no further action was taken. The police said that 18 players joined in, four of the players were in retiring clothes. The cricketers defied the cold as much as the other side. Given the cold, the umpire was allowed to wear a coat.

The nude game went on more than an hour before the neighbour reached for the phone. Club captain Andrew Jennings told the local press he was proud of the way the match was played. The match lasted an hour in the nude much to the amazement of passing traffic, he added.

The club management declined to comment on the match. Nude cricket has come to be something of a tradition in Yorkshire. Two months ago, another match brought the police in. This time the cricketers were caught out by the moonlight, not by headlights.

The police ordered the cricketers to put their clothes on. That nude match was played at the Scholes Cricket Club in the Huddersfield area of Yorkshire. Some loud appeals woke up a neighbour who called the police.

The police spokesman said, a member of the public reported naked men playing cricket. An officer spoke to the men, who were suitably advised regarding their conduct.

From www.mg.co.za

From: Bob Dubery (megapode@hotmail.com)
Subject: Zimbabwean pressure group to counter discrimination in cricket.
Newsgroups: rec.sport.cricket
View: (This is the only article in this thread) | Original Format
Date: 2001-08-31 08:14:26 PST

Zimbabwean pressure group to counter discrimination in cricket

A group of black cricketers has announced the formation of a pressure group, the Zimbabwe Cricket Development Association, to protect blacks from discrimination and exploitation by whites in the sport.

Wellington Marowa, its interim secretary general, accused the Zimbabwe Cricket Union (ZCU) of avoiding cricket development among blacks and said the sport would not grow “because unsuitable, unprogressive administrators are meant to choose the same dubious characters”.

The group would also avoid Uncle Toms as “we have many of them”, Marowa claimed. And ZCU president Peter Chingoka “must leave cricket because his racism has destroyed black cricketers ... So he is the wrong person to advocate for change.”

Then Marowa exposed his true colours by adding: “I also think that Indians should stay away from cricket and instead concentrate on running their corner shops quietly.”

Tendulkar on terrorists' hit-list

Report by Abhiram Sheth

Terrorism and cricket have had nothing to do with each other right from the start. But today, a shocking bit of information leaked out from the Indian intelligence sources that terrorists had plans to kidnap the Indian demi-god Sachin Tendulkar, along with the Indian captain Saurav Ganguly, in an act of terrorism.

Reports reveal that noted gangster and terrorist Aftab Ansari's plans for Tendulkar's kidnapping were simple. He planned to kidnap the Indian legend for ransom. But he had different plans for the skipper Saurav Ganguly. He wanted to kidnap him so that he could negotiate for the release of Mohammad Amir Khan, a Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorist who is in Delhi's Tihar jail. It is quite similar to the infamous hijacking of the IC-814 flight which resulted in India releasing the most notorious Pakistani criminals, in exchange for all passengers on the hijacked flight.

The only thing that hindered the plan to abduct Tendulkar and Ganguly was the delay in supply of ammunition and weapons to the terrorists. Thankfully that has done a whole lot of good to the cricketing world!

Monday, 13 May, 2002, 23:20 GMT 00:20 UK

Hussain named player of the year

Hussain received his award at The Criterion in London.

England captain Nasser Hussain has been named Vodafone Cricketer of the Year. He will receive a cheque for £15,000 and an engraved bowl as reward for his displays in leading England over the last 12 months.

"I am proud to be selected as the Vodafone Cricketer of Year," said Hussain.
"I would like to take this opportunity to thank my team and the management for all their hard work over the past 12 months and I look forward to building on the progress made in the winter over the coming season."

England women's captain Clare Connor took the women's award.

Sunday, 12 May, 2002, 09:08 GMT 10:08 UK

Shocked from safety

The blast brought a feeling of total vulnerability

By Mark Richardson

New Zealand opening batsman

Following the first Test one reporter said that if we weren't shell-shocked from the heat we definitely would be shell-shocked by the pace of Shoaib Akhtar. Little did he know that a day later we would be shell-shocked for real.

I was having a post-breakfast sit-down on the toilet, a place I am quite familiar with on the morning of a Test and a place where I like to do some thinking about the coming challenge. Playing Pakistan, in Pakistan is one of cricket's great challenges.

Then all of a sudden I found myself lying on the floor, covering my head and with my pants round my ankles. Whether it was the force of the blast or just a natural inclination to head for cover I'm not sure. The force of the blast had completely destroyed my room. The front window and ranch slider were shattered and strewn around the room, furniture was broken and my room door was blown off its hinges.

I am very glad none of us were near our windows when the bomb went off. Once clear of the building and everyone having been accounted for it quickly became an eerie feeling. Up until then, even with the constant armed security day and night, we had felt quite safe. We had even begun to make daily trips to the shopping mall and had a feeling that we pretty much had Pakistan wired.

However the bomb blast brought it quickly home to roost that this was not "the west". What could we expect next? Was the bomb directed at us? It was a feeling of total vulnerability and one I am not keen to experience again ever.

Missed challenge

After an occurrence like that there is no way a cricket Test can be played. For me it was not so much for safety fears for myself but rather the thoughts for family back home. You know that they are going to be as worried as hell about you and also in a helpless situation. Pakistan's players don't deserve to be deserted.

Sending a message home to my Mum saying that I was okay was the first time my voice got a little shaky.

It is a real shame. Playing Pakistan, in Pakistan, with Shoaib Akhtar charging in is one of cricket's great challenges. Test cricket is all about challenge and to make the grade you must be someone who relishes a challenge. This challenge has been taken from us, and maybe the rest of the cricketing world for quite some time, by the evil and self-absorbed act of madness. Looking at the faces of the Pakistan cricketers sharing the pool enclosure with us following the blast I really feel for them.

They are great players, and could have hoped to topple Test champions Australia when Steve Waugh's guys were supposed to tour in October. They are good fellas and don't deserve for their country to be ostracised as a cricket destination.

Nasser Hussain

Nasser Hussain

Born: 28 March 1968, Madras, India

Major Teams: Essex, England.

Known As: Nasser Hussain

Batting Style: Right Hand Bat

Bowling Style: Leg Break

Test Debut: England v West Indies at Kingston, 1st Test, 1989/90

Latest Test: England v New Zealand at Auckland, 3rd Test, 2001/02

ODI Debut: England v Pakistan at Nagpur, Nehru Cup, 1989/90

Latest ODI: England v New Zealand at Dunedin, 5th ODI, 2001/02

Awarded the OBE on 31st December 2001

Profile:

Born in Chennai (then Madras) in India in March 1968, Nasser Hussain was brought up in England after his family moved when he was five years old. One of his brothers, Mel, played for Worcestershire (1985) and the England Amateur side; the other, Abbas, played for Essex Second XI, and their father, Joe, played for Madras in 1966-67. Originally a leg-spinner, Nasser became the youngest-ever player to represent Essex Schools Under-11s (aged eight), and Under-15s (aged twelve). Hussain's batting took precedence in his late teens. He made 170 for Young England in Sri Lanka in the second Test of the 1986-87 series, and was England top scorer in the Youth World Cup in Australia the following winter. He also benefitted from several winters abroad, playing club cricket in Madras in 1986-87 and Australia and South Africa during several subsequent winters. He debuted for Essex in 1987, winning his cap in 1989, the season he won the Cricket Writers' Club Award for Young Cricketer of the Year. A student of Durham University (he gained a degree in Natural Sciences) he captained the Combined Universities to the quarter-final of the Benson and Hedges Cup that year, when his century against Somerset almost won his team an historic victory.

After 990 runs in the summer of 1989 (in 15 matches) Hussain was put on standby for the Sixth Test against Australia before winning a place in the team to tour the West Indies in 1989, in what turned out to be a baptism of fire. He performed modestly on debut at Kingston, where England won, and after making 35 and 34 in the final game after breaking a wrist playing tennis, he was discarded for four years, plagued by poor form and a reputation as a difficult character; he had disputed an umpire's decision in a warm-up game in the Caribbean.

Hussain was a partner in Essex record stands for the third, fourth and fifth wickets during 1991 and 1992 as his batting at county level became more accomplished. He won a Test recall, against Australia in 1993, following seven centuries in the summer, and seemed to have secured his place with innings of 71 and 47* at Trent Bridge. But failures at Edgbaston and The Oval saw him jettisoned back to county cricket, though the Essex Player of the Year Award was some consolation. Hussain was appointed Essex vice-captain in 1996, having impressed everyone with his performance as Captain of the successful A team in Pakistan in 1995-96. His maturity and improved technique elevated him back to the Test team, and finally he found fortune. His first innings back was a stylish century against India (Edgbaston 1996), although replays suggested that he was fortunate to survive an appeal for caught behind early on. Another century, two Tests later, secured him the number three spot that England had for so long struggled to fill.

A wonderful double century against Australia at Edgbaston in 1997 helped England to take an early lead against the strongest Test team in the world, and although Australia fought back to take the series 3-2, Hussain's stature as a senior player was assured. He has a wide range of strokes, excelling in the drive and cut, to which is added a sound defence. His natural instinct is to attack, but he has great powers of concentration and makes few errors of judgement. He is also a superb fielder in any position. Appointed England vice-captain in 1998, he succeeded Alec Stewart as captain after the debacle of the 1999 World Cup.

Although his tenure began with two series defeats, at home to New Zealand and then in South Africa (where he topped the batting averages with 370 Test runs at 61.66), Hussain is credited with playing a major role in the subsequent revival in England's fortunes. He also impressed with his honest and frank speaking off the field and his determination and aggression on it.

After securing a 1-0 win in the two-match series against Zimbabwe, Hussain then led England to their first home series victory over the West Indies since 1969, and the NatWest Series title. His excellent working relationship with coach Duncan Fletcher helped create a strong team spirit, and the pair were able to bring the best out of players that had previously been regarded as enigmatic, such as Caddick and White. Undoubtedly the team benefited from the new system of central contracts too, allowing the England manager to rest contracted players from county cricket at his discretion.

A still greater triumph followed in Karachi in December, when England became the first team ever to beat Pakistan at the National Stadium, winning a series there for the first time since Ted Dexter's side in 1961/2. Hussain won plaudits not just for the result, but for the dignity with which he took some controversial umpiring decisions and his handling of the side on what had had the potential to be a difficult tour; it was the Test team's first visit since the Gatting-Rana series of 1987. His own batting form had deteriorated to the extent that questions about his position became inevitable, but while England continued to improve as a unit his place was secure. His form finally returned in Sri Lanka where a century in Kandy was instrumental in England winning the Test and levelling the series. They lost the First Test, in Galle, by an innings amid myriad umpiring disputes. A victory in the final Test of the series in Colombo completed a remarkable series win; the first time England had come back from 0-1 down in a three match series since 1888.

But the summer of 2001 was a gruesome one for the England captain, both for injuries and results. Having won four series in a row, England could only draw the series against Pakistan 1-1 and were then crushed by a rampant Australia 4-1. Hussain himself was left sitting in the dressing room for much of the summer. In the First Test against Pakistan, a delivery from Shoaib Akhtar broke the skipper's thumb, leaving Alec Stewart to lead England to victory but then to defeat in the Second Test at Old Trafford. Hussain missed the whole of the triangular one-day series with Australia and Pakistan.

He returned for the First Test against Australia at Edgbaston but in the second innings the little finger of his left hand was broken by a Jason Gillespie delivery. He did not return until the Fourth Test, by which time the Ashes had been lost. Despite having very little batting practice, Hussain showed great fight as he compiled innings of 46 and 55 as England won at Leeds. He also hit a half-century in the final Test at The Oval where Australia won by an innings.

Despite his continuing diabolical luck with the toss on the ensuing one-day trip to Zimbabwe (by the end of the tour he had lost 13 consecutive international tosses) England completed a 5-0 whitewash there, thanks not least to the consistency of Hussain's batting, which he maintained throughout an arduous winter. He began the Test series in India with 85 before England went down by ten wickets at Chandigarh, and he continued to lead the side imaginatively as England drew the next two Tests. Although he was criticised by some for so-called "negative tactics" at Bangalore when he instructed Ashley Giles to bowl into the footmarks outside Sachin Tendulkar's leg stump, the policy met with ultimate success, although not without cost. Tendulkar was first restrained and then stumped for the first time in his Test career, for 90.

Hussain contributed usefully to both one-day series in India and New Zealand, before playing one of his finest innings in the first Test at Christchurch. On a seaming portable pitch he made 106 to hold England's first innings together, paving the way for ultimate victory. He then made 66 in the drawn Wellington game, but his second innings 82 at Auckland was not enough to stave off the defeat which squared the series. The last stages of England's tour were overshadowed by the tragic death of Ben Hollioake in a car accident, and Hussain flew to Perth shortly before the Auckland Test to represent his team at the memorial service. It was a desperately sad end to a gruelling winter, but Hussain won widespread praise for his leadership throughout, not least from the ECB Chairman Lord MacLaurin, who expressed the hope that Hussain and Duncan Fletcher would continue in post beyond the 2003 World Cup.

(Copyright CricInfo April 2002)

Cronje's body airlifted from crash site

Reuters - 2 June 2002

The bodies of former South African cricket captain Hansie Cronje and two pilots have been airlifted from the site of the plane crash that killed them, a civil aviation official has said.

"The three bodies have been airlifted off the mountain and taken to a mortuary," Civil Aviation Authority spokesman Trevor Davids told Reuters.

An autopsy is expected to be conducted on Monday. No date has been set for Cronje's funeral. Cronje, 32, and the two pilots of a Hawker Siddeley 748 cargo plane were killed on Saturday when the aircraft slammed into a mountain near the picturesque town of George in the Western Cape province.

The cause of the crash has not yet been determined but civil aviation officials have said that the weather was bad in the area when the plane went down. Local media reports have said Cronje caught a ride on the ill-fated flight after missing a scheduled one.

Cronje shocked the world of cricket two years ago when he admitted he had accepted around \$130,000 from bookmakers to influence the course of matches. He was banned from professional cricket for life. But praise has poured in from all quarters for the driven young cricketer who displayed dazzling skills on the pitch.

Former South African President Nelson Mandela was magnanimous in his tribute, saying Cronje was a model of how someone can rebuild his life after hitting rock bottom.

South Africa's Sunday newspapers were full of praise for the "hero-to-zero" sportsman. "Nation Mourns Hansie" said a front-page headline in the City Press newspaper, while the Sunday Times obituary said he "was arguably South Africa's greatest cricket captain before his career ended in disgrace". "Never before in this country had a 'hero-to-zero' tale of such mammoth proportions gripped most of our communities," said the Sunday Independent newspaper. The paper described Cronje as "a handsome young man with wonderful talent on the cricket field" and a captain who could "crush or squeeze the life out of opponents".

© Reuters

Indian police tighten security for Tendulkar

31 January 2002

Indian police have increased security for star batsman Sachin Tendulkar following media reports that a crime boss accused of masterminding an attack on a U.S. cultural centre plans to kidnap the cricketer.

Media reports said this week that Farhan Malik, also known as Aftab Malik and Aftab Ansari, planned a wave of "terror strikes," including the killing of India's top missile scientist, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, and the kidnapping of cricket captain Sourav Ganguly and Tendulkar.

"We have increased the security around his house. We have put more guards," a senior police official told Reuters on Thursday.

Under the alleged plot, Tendulkar was to be ransomed and Ganguly held in a bid to force the release of a jailed guerrilla belonging to the Lashkar-e-Taiba, one of two militant groups blamed by New Delhi for a December 13 attack on its parliament.

"Sachin Tendulkar is an important person of our country. He is our country's wealth and we will protect him," said M.N. Singh, Mumbai's commissioner of police.

Singh said that he did not want to discuss the threat to the ace batsman, who played in the fifth one-day match against England in New Delhi on Thursday.

Eyewitnesses said that armed policemen had been deployed round-the-clock at Tendulkar's residence in an upmarket suburb in Mumbai.

Officials say that Farhan's group and Lashkar staged last week's attack on the U.S. cultural centre in the eastern Indian city of Kolkata.

Lashkar, outlawed with four other militant groups by Islamabad, is said to have trained some of Farhan's men in Pakistan.

Police said they would provide security cover for the English and Indian cricket teams when they arrived in Mumbai for their final one-day match on February 3.

"We will certainly make elaborate security arrangements for both the teams in Mumbai," Singh added.

© Reuters

Meet Marcus Trescothick at McDonald's in Taunton on Wednesday

Richard Walsh - 8 January 2002

England and Somerset star batsman Marcus Trescothick was at the County Ground this morning to collect his mail and make the final arrangements before jetting off to India on Thursday afternoon. Asked what had he been doing since returning to Taunton just before Christmas, he said: "There hasn't been much time really. I've just been relaxing and sorting out one or two things before I leave for India on Thursday afternoon. "I'm very much looking forward to going back to India and then on to New Zealand."

Before Marcus does pack his bags and leave for India there is a chance for everybody to catch a final glimpse of Somerset's local hero. On Wednesday at 12 noon he will be at McDonald's Restaurant in East Street, Taunton, to receive a cheque for well over £1,000 from Colin Barrell.

The cheque is the latest installment of an arrangement that McDonald's have with the Junior Sabres section of Somerset County Cricket Club to sponsor Marcus £1 for each run that he scores. As an added bonus, any youngster up to the age of 14 who is present tomorrow will be given a FREE Junior Sabres tee shirt. If you are in Taunton on Wednesday, why not go along and wish Marcus well for the forthcoming trip?

© SOMERSET

Aravinda robbed

Saadi Thawfeeq - 17 June 2002

Sri Lanka batsman Aravinda de Silva lost 3000 pounds sterling sponsorship money at the team hotel during their tour match against MCC at Chesterfield last week. De Silva earned the money for displaying the logo 'Sam's Chicken' during the current tour of England.

Team manager Chandra Schaffter said that he had informed the hotel management and the local police about the robbery. A spokesman for the hotel which is part of the Renaissance group said there was a complaint made by the team management after the team left the hotel and, that they had promised full co-operation with the local police.

De Silva, the country's leading run-getter in Tests and One-day Internationals is returning home at the end of the on-going Test series in England, as he is not part of the one-day team that will play in the NatWest triangular which starts on June 27. England and India are the other participating countries.

© Daily News

Pakistan players happy to concentrate on cricket

Reuters - 7 June 2002

Pakistan's players are trying to put their country's military stand-off with India out of their minds as they prepare for the one-day series against Australia next week, captain Waqar Younis has said.

"We're not really worried at all," Waqar told reporters in Brisbane. "We're here to play cricket and we're just focused on cricket."

Fears of a war between Pakistan and India have grown in recent weeks with both country's massing troops across a tense frontier in Kashmir.

New Zealand cut short their tour of Pakistan in May after a suicide bombing outside the team's hotel in Karachi killed 14 people and Australia are still to decide whether to go ahead with a similar tour later in the year.

Australia officials are pursuing the possibility of shifting the series in Pakistan to a neutral venue such as Morocco or Sharjah in September and October.

The one-day series next week will be a head-to-head between fast bowlers Shoaib Akhtar and Brett Lee.

Unofficial timings showed Akhtar broke the 100-mph speed barrier against New Zealand in the recent one-day series. Lee has said he wants to do the same against Pakistan.

"I think both are bowling very well," Waqar said.

"I'm not really worried about pace, I'm more worried about how well he (Akhtar) is bowling."

The first two games of the three-match series will be played indoors at the Docklands Stadium in Melbourne on June 12 and 15, with the third game in Brisbane on June 19.

© Reuters

Black Caps' tour abandoned after bomb blast

Some two hours after a suicide bomb attack outside the Pearl Continental Hotel where the Pakistan and New Zealand teams were staying, and on the morning of the second Test between the two sides, the Black Caps' tour of Pakistan was abandoned. The New Zealand team will leave for home on the first available flight, later tonight.

The terrorist attack has left Pakistan cricket in a state of chaos. There are now doubts about the forthcoming Australian tour, and the Pakistan Cricket Board may again be forced to organise their cricket offshore, as they did against the West Indies three months ago.

The Australian Cricket Board's chief executive, James Sutherland, said in Melbourne that plans to tour in August for a one-day series would be reviewed. But he thought that it was "inappropriate to lock into a position today". The Aussies are due to tour Pakistan between late August and October, either side of the ICC one-day tournament in Sri Lanka, for a one-day and Test rubber as part of the PCB Golden Jubilee celebrations.

The target of the terrorist blast was not the cricket teams, but French naval technicians working on a submarine project in Karachi. Latest reports say at least 10 French nationals are dead. The French and Pakistan Presidents have condemned the attack. The French technicians' minibus had pulled up across the road from the cricket teams' hotel.

The New Zealand and Pakistani players were about to leave their hotel for the stadium. When the blast occurred they were mostly in their rooms or at breakfast, while their transport was in a secured car park. None of the players was injured though Dayle Shackel, the Black Caps physio, received a minor cut to his forearm from flying glass.

Surrounded by security personnel, and flanked by the PCB Director, Brig Munawar Rana and New Zealand manager Jeff Crowe, Mike Procter, the former Proteas all-rounder who is the ICC Match Referee for the tour, announced the decision in a press briefing. "Due to the security situation, the tour has been called off after mutual consultation between the PCB, NZC and the Black Caps team manager Jeff Crowe", he said.

Procter added that despite this incident, security during the series had been 'very good', except for an isolated stone-pelting incident during the Karachi ODI. The Black Caps management, said Procter, would concur that this incident was not related to cricket. The PCB Director Munawar Rana looked grim, obviously dismayed at the turn of events with just one Test match to go. "This indeed is unfortunate for our country and our cricket," Rana said. "We are disgusted, as it leaves us in an embarrassing position. We made the best possible security arrangements all over the country, but this incident really was beyond our control."

Rana confirmed that he had had discussions with his counterpart in Auckland, and said he understood their position. "While the PCB and cricket lovers in this country are let down by this shocking incident, we understand that the circumstances were such that they were forced to take this decision, and we endorse it. Things were not as bad here as people abroad may perceive."

Brigadier Rana refused to be drawn on whether the blast would have any implications for Australia's visit to Pakistan in October. "It is too early to talk about that," was his answer, but he was quick to add that the PCB would make all efforts to convince the teams to come over, although he knew it was going to be tough. Meanwhile Jeff Crowe said that his players felt uneasy, and while he felt sorry for Pakistan, to him it was time to return home.

The tour has not been a happy one for the Black Caps, comprehensively beaten in all three one-day Internationals and suffering their worst-ever defeat in the first Test at Lahore.

This is the third time that New Zealand have abandoned a tour in South Asia for security reasons. In 1987 they called off their tour of Sri Lanka after a blast killed 100 people in Colombo. In 1992, another bomb went off outside their hotel in Sri Lanka and that too elicited the same reaction.

Published on Thursday, October 11, 2001 by Agence France Presse <http://www.afp.com>

Pakistan Cricket Hero Imran Says bin Laden is Hooking Bush for Six ISLAMABAD

- Imran Khan sits inside his luxurious double-storey house in Islamabad's finest suburb with Henry Kissinger's latest book on the coffee table, CNN on television and anger over the US bombing of Afghanistan on his mind.

Recognized as one of cricket's finest tacticians and a national icon, the former Pakistan captain turned politician believes the US decision to attack Afghanistan will backfire. "With each bomb that falls on Afghanistan, anti-Americanism is growing in Afghanistan, in Pakistan and across the Muslim world," Khan said in an interview with Agence France-Presse. When it comes to the troubled relationship between the West and the Islamic world, Khan is well placed to comment. The scion of a prominent family of Pashtuns -- the fiercely independent tribe that dominates Afghanistan -- Khan was educated at Britain's prestigious Oxford University, where he took a degree in politics, philosophy and economics.

When he announced that he was to marry his wife Jemima, the daughter of British Jewish financier Sir James Goldsmith, many expected him to settle permanently in one of London's swankier neighborhoods. Instead he has based himself in Pakistan's cultural capital Lahore, from where he leads his own political Justice Movement and runs a cancer hospital he established in memory of his late mother, Shaukat Khanum. Khan's beautiful blonde wife, his globe-trotting sporting career, and his devotion to Islam are all part of a complex mix from which his views on events following the September 11 terrorist strikes on the United States have been distilled.

"The moment I saw those scenes on television I knew the world was never going to be the same again," the 48-year-old says. "The immediate response we all feared was this clash of civilization theory would become a self-fulfilling prophecy. "We all worried what the United States was going to do because there was this raging bull out for revenge but there was no clear target. "So we waited for what they were going to do and they zeroed in on this part of the world."

Khan says he does not object to Osama bin Laden, the accused mastermind of the attacks on the United States who is hiding in Afghanistan, being brought to justice. It is President George W. Bush's "wanted dead or alive" form of justice and the military action that is killing innocent civilians in Afghanistan that Khan says is wrong for moral and political reasons. "The longer and bloodier the attacks become, the greater the sense of injustice in this part of the world and the more the hatred will grow against America," he says. "This is what bin Laden wants. He wants the sympathies of the Muslim world with him. He will play on the double standards of the Western world."

Khan says Americans do not understand the reasons for the terrorist attacks on them and accuses the nation's media and political institutions of keeping the population in the dark. "Unfortunately in the United States there is still this denial going on. "I keep watching American television programs and I am shocked that they are referring to this hatred which has caused these terrorist attacks and they attribute it to (Muslim martyrs getting) virgins in heaven.

"They don't want to look deeper into the causes. "Unfortunately the reason is a very a sad thing -- the Israeli lobby is so powerful in the United States in the media and Congress, it just does not allow the debate to take place." Khan says issues such as Washington's support for Israel and "denying Palestinians all their rights" are not discussed in the United States for fear of being labeled anti-Semitic. "But they don't understand they are endangering their security in the long run by doing this and they are endangering the whole globe."

Khan describes bin Laden as a product of the CIA, in reference to the United States' intelligence agency support for the Saudi-born dissident when he fought in Afghanistan against the Soviet invasion between 1979 and 1989. "Now he's become a symbol of anti-Americanism not only in the Muslim world, but all over the world as a resistance to the great power."

Kahn says killing bin Laden, as the United States is aiming to do, will make him a martyr. "Then there will be more Osama bin Ladens and that is playing directly into his hands -- that's what he wants.

"In my opinion the way to deal with him was how a civilized world should have dealt with him and that is to have a powerful international court where evidence was presented."

Kahn says one of his biggest fears is that the US bombing of Afghanistan will lead to a massive rise in fundamentalism in Pakistan, leading to a radical Islamic government and making centralist parties like his Movement for Justice organization irrelevant. "I see a worst case scenario that Pakistan, by supporting the United States, ends up being destabilized, a radical government comes in and then we get bombed by the United States for supporting terrorism. I can picture that worst case scenario." As for the Henry Kissinger novel "Does America Need a Foreign Policy" on his coffee table, Khan gives the impression it is about as authoritative as a medium pacer trundling in to the crease with an old ball.

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ICC to fund cricket academy in Pokhara

A central cricket academy will be constructed in Pokhara from a 19.5 million dollars fund set aside by the International Cricket Council (ICC) Saturday for the Asian Cricket Council (ACC), AFP reported from Islamabad.

The ACC will receive 19.5 million dollars in two instalments from the ICC. "A central academy will be established in Nepal along with regional academies in Malaysia and United Arab Emirates.

"The central academy will be state-of-art with professional staffing for future needs," said ACC secretary Zakir Hussein Syeda. The investment will help popularize cricket in Nepal and Asia.

nepalnews.com br April 8

Cricket's TV rights sold for Rs 28 crore

World Sport Nimbus (WSN) has signed an agreement with Prasar Bharti for the television production of all international cricket matches played in India till the year '02. World Sport was the lowest bidder and has been awarded production rights for Rs 28.4 crore (\$5.8 million).

The contract for the production of the television signal was earlier with Kerry Packer's Nine Network. It is significant that Nine did not figure as a bidder in the current round, signalling the virtual exit of the Australian media group from India. Other bidders for the cricket production rights included TWI with a Rs 32.9 crore offer, and World Tel which was the most expensive with a Rs 39.5 crore bid. WSN won the contract after a pre-qualification process followed by a financial tender.

The contract with Prasar Bharti provides that World Sport Nimbus will produce the television signal for five international series' over two years, starting with the current India-Zimbabwe series and ending with the Australian tour of India in '04. The contract also provides that the company train 14 Doordarshan personnel in technical and production functions.

All five series will be aired in India exclusively over Doordarshan channels, DD-National and DD-Sports. Prasar Bharti, which owns the world rights of all international cricket in India, has also licenced broadcasts over several international networks across the world. WSN is a joint venture between UK-based World Sport Group and the Indian company Nimbus Communications. WSN recently produced the ICC under-19 cricket World Cup in New Zealand and provides TV production services to GCC for all ICC cricket.

The Economic Times, February 15, 2002

Sri Lanka

- Two unidentified men threw two hand grenades at the deputy minister of plan implementation and parliamentary affairs, Shantha Premaratne, in Mihintale, where he was contesting a local cricket council election. He was slightly injured. Premaratne blamed the attack on his opponents in the cricket council election.

[Source: BBC, 26 Feb. 2000]

Sachin Ramesh Tendulkar

Born: 24 April 1973, Bombay

Major Teams: Mumbai, Yorkshire, India.

Known As: Sachin Tendulkar

Pronounced: Sachin Tendulkar <TENDULKAR_SR.au>

Batting Style: Right Hand Bat

Bowling Style: Right Arm Off Break, Leg Break, Right Arm Medium

Test Debut: India v Pakistan at Karachi, 1st Test, 1989/90

Latest Test: India v England at Lord's, 1st Test, 2002

ODI Debut: India v Pakistan at Gujranwala, 2nd ODI, 1989/90

Latest ODI: India v England at Lord's, NatWest Series, 2002

More about Sachin Tendulkar [tendulkar.cricinfo.com]

Wisden Cricketer of the Year 1997

Profile:

By popular opinion the greatest batsman in the world today, Sachin Tendulkar has the cricketing world at his feet - a fact reinforced by the reaction that greeted his suspended ban for ball-tampering during the second Test at Port Elizabeth. The adulation he commands the world over is unsurpassed, and has been perhaps since the days of Don Bradman, to whom of course he has been compared by no less than the great man himself.

But while he may not end with a career Test average of 99.94, there is little doubt that, based on his vigorous style of batmanship and his insatiable appetite for runs and big scores, he is the most complete batsman since Sir Vivian Richards. In many ways, though, he has surpassed even that outstanding West Indian batsman.

When Tendulkar is on song, there is no more majestic sight in the cricketing world. The spectators at the stadium are on their feet cheering, while all over the world TV audiences are glued to the screen. He has scored heavily on all kinds of wickets the world over, in conditions that lesser mortals have not been able to master and against bowlers whom other batsmen have found it difficult to score off. Immensely gifted and blessed with impeccable technique, Tendulkar's batting is a dream, combining timing, elegance and power. Mentally very strong, Tendulkar is best when confronted by a challenge, as he showed when mowing down Shane Warne in India in 1998. Captain for two short stints, Tendulkar has made it clear that he would prefer to concentrate on his batting. Indeed, he seems to be getting better with every passing year. Scoring two double centuries in successive seasons and being the first to cross the 10,000-run barrier in one-dayers is clear proof of this.

After a remarkable run of 84 Tests uninterrupted, a toe injury forced Tendulkar to miss the tour of Sri Lanka. The tour of South Africa surely will not rate among his fondest; despite having maintained a stainless reputation on and off the field, he found himself dragged into a mighty controversy. Batting-wise, his runs in the one-dayers and the first innings of the first Test would have given him immense pleasure. but being a perfectionist, his relative failure in the remainder of the series as a whole would have rankled him.

In home series against Zimbabwe and then England, Tendulkar, displaying a hugely tightened game and considerable patience, milked runs off hapless attacks. He even forced the opposition to play negative hands, as can be seen from Ashley Giles' leg-stump attack towards the latter part of the home series against England. The runs did not flow so freely during India's tour of the West Indies, though; despite notching up a century, he also made three ducks and ended up on the losing side. Tendulkar has made public his desire to return triumphant from the tour of England in 2002, however, and that can only mean bad news for England's bowlers. (Partab Ramchand)

Foreign Minister, Alexander Downer

David Hicks: upcoming tour of Zimbabwe by the Australian cricket team

.....

QUESTION: Minister, on Zimbabwe and the cricket tour, have you formally said anything to the ACB or recommended to them that the team not go?

ALEXANDER DOWNER: I've spoken with the ACB on several occasions and I've said to the ACB that it's my view that whilst this cricket tour was planned quite some time ago - I think years ago actually - as it turns out the timing of the tour is unfortunate. It's my view that if the tour does go ahead in Zimbabwe, then it will - it does run the risk of being interpreted by people in Zimbabwe as some form of approval of the Zimbabwe regime.

The second thing I'd say about it is that we do have consular advice now, which my department has issued, saying that Australians should avoid visiting Zimbabwe. There are risks of increasing violence in Zimbabwe, and there is already violence taking place there.

Given the role that Mr Howard, and Australia more generally, has played in the suspension of Zimbabwe from the Commonwealth, there is the risk of substantial protests against Australia in Zimbabwe.

And the third thing I would say is that ultimately this isn't a decision for the government. This is a decision for the Australian Cricket Board. I am not bullying the Australian Cricket Board. I'm not trying to force any decision on them. They must make their own decision themselves. And they will do. They're still reflecting on the matter and giving it consideration and seeking advice from me and from my department and from our High Commission in Harare. And when they've absorbed that information and made their assessments they'll make a final decision.

I mean there obviously is the option for them to go and play in a third country such as South Africa. And of course that would be a good deal less controversial if they were to do that.

QUESTION: Is there real fears that pro-Mugabe supporters could actually target the team while it's there?

ALEXANDER DOWNER: There are risks. I wouldn't say that I have any information that they're planning to do that. We don't have that information. But once the team - you see they're not due to arrive there for a couple of weeks yet. So, once the team arrives, that is always a possibility. I mean first and foremost we have a consular responsibility to ensure that the team is properly protected and that we give the Australian Cricket Board every information available to us, not only on the security situation in Zimbabwe at the moment but on the risks to the team. And, secondly, we would make the point that the timing coming so soon after the so-called presidential election, which was clearly an illegitimate election, and the suspension of Zimbabwe from the Commonwealth that timing is unfortunate.

QUESTION: ...when you spoke to the Australian Cricket Board, is it true that you only raised the security aspects rather than the critical moral and diplomatic dimensions? And have you actually evolved your position in the last couple of days, including post Peter Slipper's comments yesterday?

ALEXANDER DOWNER: No, no I haven't been influenced by anybody but my own judgment on this issue. My own judgment - I've been a bit more conscious of this issue emerging than, I don't mean Peter Slipper here, than a lot of people. I mean I've known this tour was imminent and I've been thinking about it for quite a while in the context of the Zimbabwe election. But, of course, I didn't know in advance of the election what the Commonwealth observers were going to say and I didn't know what the - absolutely didn't know what the troika was going to decide. But taking all of those things into account, I don't want to give the impression I'm putting political pressure on the Australian Cricket Board. They must make up their own minds.

But as the Foreign Minister, I'd have to say I think that I do think that it transmits the wrong message that our cricket team is, so soon after all these events, going to Zimbabwe. But our cricket team is not a political team. They are not politicians. And I don't think they themselves feel comfortable with, in any way, getting involved in politics.

QUESTION: That that sends the wrong messages. That's something you put to the ACB in your telephone conversation on the Wednesday...

ALEXANDER DOWNER: Well, I've had several telephone conversations that...

QUESTION: But on Wednesday did you put the wider message or did you only put the security aspects?

ALEXANDER DOWNER: Well, I can't remember exactly the details of the conversation I had. I've had several conversations with them, Wednesday, Tuesday, Thursday, whichever. I'm not sure.

QUESTION: Is it your preference, your recommendation, that the ACB cancel the Zimbabwe tour and look to playing a third country such as South Africa?

ALEXANDER DOWNER: They have to make up their own minds about that. They really do. I don't want to put political pressure on them. The ACB is an apolitical organisation. They manage the Australian cricket team, and Australian cricket more generally, and it's not their job to be politicians and to play politics and they don't. And I know the team doesn't want to get involved in politics either. But it is, in terms of the optics of a tour of Zimbabwe at this time, it is obviously going to be controversial. But for them the overwhelming issue is going to be the security of the team and the security of the players. And we do have some concerns about that.

QUESTION: Would the ACB be foolish to go ahead with this tour?

ALEXANDER DOWNER: It's a judgment - foolish is a very strong word. I mean foolish isn't the word that I would use, no. But I mean they'd have to make, in the end, their own judgments about this. The government can't stop them going. We don't have some sort of legislative power where we can, you know, stop them.

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Police link fixing with suspected terror boss

By CHRISTOPHER KREMMER, Herald Correspondent in New Delhi

Alleged terrorist, drug-runner, arms dealer, and now cricket match-fixer, India's Public Enemy No. 1 Dawood Ibrahim is a villain for all seasons.

Indian police investigating the Hansie Cronje affair have gone to Mumbai searching for associates of Ibrahim, who in the past decade has been linked to assassination attempts, bomb blasts and extortion rackets. The telephone taps which netted the South African cricket captain were initially ordered to trace threats to a New Delhi businessman made by mafia dons based in Dubai and Mumbai, home to India's "Bollywood" film industry. Police say the evidence confirms long-held suspicions of links between "Bollywood", the underworld, and the once-fair game of cricket. Black money is what drew the criminals, movie stars, politicians, and now, police believe, the cricketers together.

Ibrahim is a key figure linking the groups together. By the early 1990s, he had emerged from the Mumbai slums as a major player in a wide range of criminal activities. The bullet reigned as he mercilessly gunned down all rivals. But economic liberalisation in 1991 turned many black businesses white, leaving cashed-up dons seeking new avenues for investment, including cricket. In July 1997, Mumbai police claimed at least four Indian crickets were paid two million rupees each by bookies connected to the Ibrahim gang to throw a one-day match against New Zealand at Napier in February of that year. The claims were never substantiated, and charges were never laid.

A Muslim, Ibrahim has lived in exile following the demolition of a Muslim shrine in the northern town of Ayodhya by Hindu fanatics in December, 1992, which unleashed a nationwide wave of communal violence. In early 1993, Mumbai was shattered by a series of bomb blasts. India accused Pakistan of exploiting the situation to destabilise its neighbour, and suspected Ibrahim's "D-company" of carrying out orders from Islamabad. Since then, the whereabouts of Ibrahim, aged in his thirties and believed by Indian police to hold up to six different passports, has remained unknown.

Indian intelligence agencies believe he is now based in the Pakistani port city of Karachi, but travels frequently to Dubai, where his multifarious business interests are based. They claim he is a major source of weapons to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, fighting a guerilla war against the Sri Lankan government, and makes 20 billion rupees a year exporting heroin from Afghanistan.

Indian companies are also suspected of engaging his services to terrorise clients into paying bad debts. He is also alleged to have been involved with contracts for the assassination of senior Indian politicians, including Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Congress President Sonia Gandhi, during the 1999 election campaign.

Intelligence officers searching for him in Dubai have received welcoming phone calls from him, personally informing them of the difficulties they will face in their investigations. If caught, Ibrahim faces at least 38 cases in India for crimes ranging from foreign exchange irregularities to murder. A former Bollywood actor, Krishen Kumar, is also among suspects police want to question in the Hansie Cronje case. Kumar has been avoiding questioning by police, checking himself into a New Delhi hospital complaining of chest pains, but he has denied any wrong-doing.

October 30, 2004

Imran Khan robbed at gunpoint

Wisden Cricinfo staff

Imran Khan, Pakistan's iconic former captain-turned-politician, has been robbed at gunpoint while driving through the outskirts of the capital, Islamabad, according to officials of his opposition Justice Movement party.

Imran, 51, who won the World Cup with Pakistan in 1992, was driving with his maid and two sons, when he was forced to stop abruptly by an overtaking car. Two men with semi-automatic weapons emerged from nearby bushes and the group was forced to hand over their mobile phones, credit cards, a camera and a purse.

No-one was hurt, although the incident "symbolises the complete breakdown of law and order in the country," said Akbar S. Babar, a party spokesman. Aftab Ahmed Khan Sherpao, the interior minister, described the incident as "unfortunate" and told the APP news agency that the culprits would be tracked down. The head of the local police station has been suspended as a result.

Imran has rarely left the headlines since retiring from cricket after the World Cup triumph. He married Jemima Goldsmith, the daughter of the late Anglo-French billionaire Sir James Goldsmith, in 1995, although the marriage ended in divorce in June this year. His political party, meanwhile, managed a solitary seat in the national elections in 2002.

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Flower, Olonga criticise Mugabe government

Telford Vice - 10 February 2003

HARARE, Feb 10 (Reuters) - Leading Zimbabwe batsman Andy Flower and black team mate Henry Olonga launched an unprecedented attack on the running of the strife-torn country as they opened their World Cup campaign on Monday.

Former skipper Flower and pace bowler Olonga, in a joint statement released just before Zimbabwe's Group A game against Namibia, said they would wear black armbands during the event. "In doing so we are mourning the death of democracy in our beloved Zimbabwe," the statement said.

"We are making a silent plea to those responsible to stop the abuse of human rights in Zimbabwe. We pray that our small action may help to restore sanity and dignity to our nation." Flower, arguably Zimbabwe's greatest player ever and among the top batsmen in the world, is not expected to play a major event for Zimbabwe again. He played county cricket in England last year and is expected to return next season. Olonga was the first black player to play for Zimbabwe. The match began with the Harare Sports Club barely a fifth full, with most of those spectators schoolchildren.

President Robert Mugabe, a great cricket fan and the patron of the Zimbabwe Cricket Union, was not at the start of the match. England are threatening to boycott their game in Harare on Thursday because of concerns over the social and political unrest in the country while Australia are also monitoring the situation. The champions are due to play in Bulawayo on February 24. "We cannot in good conscience take to the field and ignore the fact that millions of our compatriots are starving, unemployed and oppressed," the statement went on. "We are aware that hundreds of thousands of Zimbabweans may even die in the coming months through a combination of starvation and poverty and Aids. "We have heard a torrent of racist hate speech directed at minority groups."

Zimbabwe fielded three black players on Sunday - Olonga, Douglas Hondo and Tatenda Taibu. Australian and Britain have led calls for Commonwealth sanctions against Mugabe, accusing him of rigging his re-election in 2002 and compounding Africa's food crisis by seizing white-owned farms to give to blacks.

With half of Zimbabwe's 14 million people facing food shortages and the main opposition leader facing a possible death sentence if convicted of trying to kill Mugabe, some critics say playing cricket there would imply approval of Mugabe's rule.

© Reuters

Full Statement of Andrew Flower and Henry Olonga

'It is a great honour for us to take the field today to play for Zimbabwe in the World Cup. We feel privileged and proud to have been able to represent our country. We are, however, deeply distressed about what is taking place in Zimbabwe in the midst of the World Cup and do not feel that we can take the field without indicating our feelings in a dignified manner and in keeping with the spirit of cricket.

We cannot in good conscience take to the field and ignore the fact that millions of our compatriots are starving, unemployed and oppressed. We are aware that hundreds of thousands of Zimbabweans may even die in the coming months through a combination of starvation, poverty and Aids. We are aware that many people have been unjustly imprisoned and tortured simply for expressing their opinions about what is happening in the country. We have heard a torrent of racist hate speech directed at minority groups. We are aware that thousands of Zimbabweans are routinely denied their right to freedom of expression. We are aware that people have been murdered, raped, beaten and had their homes destroyed because of their beliefs and that many of those responsible have not been prosecuted.

We are also aware that many patriotic Zimbabweans oppose us even playing in the World Cup because of what is happening.

It is impossible to ignore what is happening in Zimbabwe. Although we are just professional cricketers, we do have a conscience and feelings. We believe that if we remain silent that will be taken as a sign that either we do not care or we condone what is happening in Zimbabwe. We believe that it is important to stand up for what is right.

We have struggled to think of an action that would be appropriate and that would not demean the game we love so much. We have decided that we should act alone without other members of the team being involved because our decision is deeply personal and we did not want to use our senior status to unfairly influence more junior members of the squad. We would like to stress that we greatly respect the ICC and are grateful for all the hard work it has done in bringing the World Cup to Zimbabwe.

In all the circumstances, we have decided that we will each wear a black armband for the duration of the World Cup. In doing so we are mourning the death of democracy in our beloved Zimbabwe. In doing so we are making a silent plea to those responsible to stop the abuse of human rights in Zimbabwe. In doing so, we pray that our small action may help to restore sanity and dignity to our Nation.'

Harare 10th February 2003

England in safe hands

On guard: Security to protect England

© ALLSPORT - Monday, November 12, 2001 18:55 (GMT)

A tight security ring will be thrown around the England cricket squad that lands early on Wednesday for a Test tour of India where its safety will be as much in focus as its performances.

The 16-member squad, due in Bombay for its first full tour of India in eight years, will be escorted from the airport to the team hotel, an Indian cricket official said. The measures were put in place after the tour was thrown into doubt after several players raised safety concerns because of the current situation on the subcontinent due to the US-led strikes on Afghanistan.

England are scheduled to play three Tests in December and a five-match one-day international series in the New Year after a Christmas break at home. Nasser Hussain's side agreed to travel after being assured by government and cricket officials from both countries, though fast bowler Andrew Caddick and off-spinner Robert Croft chose to stay home.

Officials on Friday reviewed security in Bombay, where England will stay for the first six days and play their first warm-up game, a two-day fixture against Bombay from 18 November.

Officials from the British Deputy High Commission, Bombay police and the Bombay Cricket Association (MCA) held discussions and British officials visited the Wankhede Stadium, where the side will train and play the opener.

"Security will be tighter than usual for the England team because of the scenario the world over," MCA joint secretary Mayank Khandwala told Reuters.

Visiting teams always receive elaborate security in India, mainly to stop overzealous cricket fans from mobbing them.

"We are very happy with the arrangements and the cooperation we have been getting from Indian officials at every level," a British Deputy High Commission spokesman said.

That will include guards outside hotel rooms and players will be required to inform security officers before going out of the hotel, and to get a security escort if they want, Khandwala said. At the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai, mobile phones, bottles, handbags, transistors, cigarettes and lighters will not be permitted and fans can carry food inside only in transparent packets, he said.

The ECB has said it is happy with the security planning and has also arranged for a security officer to travel with the players throughout the tour. England will play two more warm-up games in the southern Hyderabad city and in Jaipur in northern India before arriving in Mohali, in the northern Punjab state bordering Pakistan, for the First Test starting on 3 December.

A Punjab Cricket Association (PCA) official said security would be tight at Mohali, where a dry moat runs around the ground as an additional barrier besides fencing.

"The First Secretary from the consulate in New Delhi, (Peter) Holland, came and saw everything last week and he was fully satisfied. The police have made elaborate arrangements," PCA secretary MP Pandove said.

A similar drill has been put in place for the Second Test starting on 11 December in the western city of Ahmedabad. The city has in the past witnessed communal trouble involving Muslims and Hindus. There have been no major problems of late, but Muslims have taken to the streets, burnt the British flag and called for a boycott of US-made goods to protest against the strikes in Afghanistan.

- Reuters

Olonga 'suffering consequences'

Brendan Gallagher - 21 March 2003

Zimbabwe's rugby captain, Victor Olonga, has pledged to give refuge to his younger brother Henry, who he says is frightened and in hiding in South Africa following his controversial protest at the Cricket World Cup.

However, Victor says he will return to Bulawayo, where his father still lives, in May to continue developing rugby in his troubled country, regardless of the consequences. He does not wholly support his brother's black-armband protest against the Mugabe regime at the start of the World Cup and the statement Henry and Andy Flower issued before their game against Namibia bemoaning the "death of democracy" in the country.

Olonga senior also confirmed yesterday that his younger brother was not seeking political asylum, as has been widely reported, but was making a straightforward application for a work visa so he can seek employment in Britain. Olonga, who has captained the Zimbabwe XV for three years, was speaking in Penzance where, for the last four seasons, he has played professionally for Penzance and Newlyn RFC, helping them to secure promotion to National League One. He believes the Cornish fishing port would be an ideal base for his brother to rebuild his life in the aftermath of his protest and the bungled attempt by Zimbabwean security forces to abduct him in South Africa.

"Henry is my brother, I love him, my home is his home," said Victor. "I am here for him. I admire his courage, strength and honesty, but I worry for him. I hope it is truly his stance and that others have not brought influence to bear. Henry is the one who is now suffering, frightened and suffering the consequences.

"Frankly, I don't actually agree with the wording of the statement that Henry and Andrew Flower issued talking about the death of democracy, but that is my personal view. "What is democracy and who judges? I am grateful for everything that people have done for me here but Britain is also a country that allows the killers of Stephen Lawrence to run free. Everybody knows who killed that poor man yet the system mocks black people in this country. Britain is a country where millions of people say 'No' to war with Iraq, yet war is still waged. It is wrong to argue that democracy has died only in Zimbabwe.

"I have spoken with Henry recently and he sounded pretty stressed. He's a professional cricketer and though he has been forced to quit the international scene, he is still eligible for employment - in Britain or other cricket-playing countries. He is also a talented musician and could qualify on that count as well. Henry is not, and never will be, a charity case.

"I will return to Zimbabwe on May 1, like I do every year, without fail. I'm captain of the Zimbabwe rugby team and I feel a responsibility. If the leader of Zimbabwe rugby, on the field, gives up, what message does that send?

"There comes a point when you must be judged by your actions. It's a difficult time - but I haven't given up on Zimbabwe. I don't care if I suffer the consequences of Henry's actions when I return, big brothers are there to take the rap and sort out the mess. I will take my chance. To me there is no difference between life and death anyway, you simply do what you must."

Olonga's efforts to be judged by his actions are impressive. When the Zimbabwean union sacked their two development officers he re-employed one of them at his own cost, while he sponsors the Western Panthers, who are top of the Zimbabwean League. Single and without children, he also sponsors three youngsters in a Children's SOS village in Zimbabwe.

"I don't earn a fortune in Britain, but I'm very rich by the standards of the majority back home and there are very good people at the Penzance club who help me. As Winston Churchill, who I read a lot, used to say, 'If you are going through hell, don't stop, just keep going.' I certainly don't intend stopping now."

Last Update: Wednesday, June 4, 2003. 1:43pm AEST

Female scorer to make history at Lord's

A woman will keep official score of an international cricket match in England for the first time next month.

Cathy Rawson, 55, has been appointed the official scorer for the final of the one-day triangular tournament involving England, South Africa and Zimbabwe at Lord's on June 12.

The decision had to be endorsed by the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC), which only admitted its first women members in 1999.

"It is a wonderful privilege," Mrs Rawson was quoted as saying.

"It all had to go before the MCC board first but I am absolutely delighted."

Mrs Rawson, a nurse, taught herself scoring 33 years ago when she became bored watching her husband play local cricket, the Times reported.

Statisticians can find only two previous occasions when women have kept score during first-class games at Lord's, according to The Times.

The MCC, still responsible for the laws of the game, broke with 212 years of tradition in 1999 when it announced its first women members.

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Tuesday October 31, 2000

Cricket club found woman ‘unacceptable’ in senior job

Angelique Chrisafis

The Guardian

A woman cricket executive was turned down for a job at Lancashire Cricket Club because her gender was seen as unacceptable to traditionalists, an employment tribunal was told yesterday. Maria Grant, 45, a former executive director of the Women's Cricket Association, is claiming sexual discrimination by the Lancashire board after she failed to make the shortlist for assistant secretary and development coordinator at the club.

The tribunal in Manchester was told one reason given by the board was “a lack of knowledge of men's cricket”, despite her having played, managed and coached cricket for more than 15 years. She responded: “There is no significant difference in how men and women play cricket, nor in the way it is administered. In requiring such knowledge I was bound to be treated less favourably by the selection committee than the eight candidates who were shortlisted, because they were all men.”

The tribunal heard that Ms Grant had been a force behind developing women's cricket in the north-west, sitting as regional officer of the north west sports council. She applied for the £24,000 Lancashire job in July 1999, thinking she was perhaps overqualified having run a national organisation, but feeling it was a step to her goal of being the first female chief executive of a county club. Astonished not to be on the shortlist, she wrote to the board secretary, David Edmundson. He replied that the grounds were, among others, a lack of budget and coaching experience and “a perception that [she] would not be personally fully acceptable to the leagues [local teams associated with the county club]”. Ms Grant told the tribunal the first could not fairly be applied to her; she had the same or a better coaching qualification as some shortlisted, but that criterion had not been mentioned in the job application; and the view she would not be acceptable was a “coded expression” of the reaction the selection committee felt her appointment would provoke among conservative thinkers who run the leagues and clubs.

“I can only infer that this perceived non-acceptability is on the ground of sex – changing attitudes takes a long time, and there remains a large and powerful group who maintain ‘traditional conservative values’ and who still regard cricket as a ‘man's game’ despite the fact that women have been playing since at least 1745.”

The hearing continues.

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Monday, August 16, 2004

After 2 centuries, it's cricket for ladies to run the wickets
Exclusive London club to allow first woman on its governing board
BY REBECCA GOLDSMITH
For the Star-Ledger

LONDON -- The hallowed grounds of one of the world's most popular sports sit behind a high brick wall in a posh part of the city. Lord's Cricket Ground, built in 1814, gave the nobility a private playground shielded from the curious masses. The grounds' owner for 217 years is the exclusive Marylebone Cricket Club. The club has 18,000 members and an 18-year waiting list for qualified applicants. Entrance is one of the most coveted status symbols in London for the tweedy "blazer brigade."

But as cricket goes global, the club is moving -- if slowly -- to broaden its base. In 1999, it admitted its first 10 women. Five years later, there are 23, or about one-tenth of 1 percent of the total. And soon, the club will welcome a woman into its inner sanctum. On Oct. 1, cricket great Rachael Heyhoe Flint will become the first woman to merit a regular seat on the 25-member governing committee. The cricket club's embrace of female members has been hesitant, awkward and glacially slow. And while cricket fans and players worldwide are a diverse bunch, the vast majority of club members are white. The pace of change has been true to the character of England's upper crust, which worships tradition and loathes change. A public display like the one that accompanied efforts to pressure the Augusta National Golf Club in Georgia -- site of the Masters tournament -- to add women members would mortify the members of Marylebone, born in the 18th century.

When the club received a mysterious application in 1991, signed "R. Flint," the then-president told Rachael Heyhoe Flint, "We never had an application from a woman before. I think we'll have to do something about it," she recalled. Still, her application received repeated rejections over the next seven years. "It was really a very slow, almost frustrating thing," she said. "I couldn't do anything to speed up the process, and I had to rely on friends in the club" to push her cause.

The proposal that won the necessary two-thirds majority ensured the admission of women would occur so incrementally that many of the feet-draggers would be dead by the time it mattered. The average member is a 58-year-old white man, and 2,538 of the 18,000 are over 65. "It will take some time to have an appreciable number of women as members," said Iain Wilton, spokesman for the club. The club replaces 500 members a year who die or drop out, and gives women no special preference. "It is progress, albeit slow," Flint said recently while watching a women's cricket match on the grounds of Cambridge University. "We must do it in the manner that the men do it. We don't want to be criticized for imposing or asking for favors." Cricket players, who are still predominantly male, play their team sport with a flat bat, a hard ball and no protective mitts. Batsmen stand at one of two bases (wickets), 66 feet apart, and hit the ball in any direction. Batsmen run back and forth between the wickets. Instead of rotating batting for nine innings, as in baseball, the teams do all their batting in a single (very long) inning. Cricket remains England's most popular sport during the summer.

A trim, quick-footed athlete with eyes the color of a dewy field and skin gently lined from years outdoors, Flint, 65, spent much of her career promoting women's cricket. She served as captain of England's women's team for more than 12 years, and her team won the 1973 World Cup. "Rachel is sort of the ladies' cricket Babe Ruth," said Charles Fry, 64, president of the club, which is pronounced MAR-lee-bone. Five years after her admittance, the contingent who voted against women are more resigned than reformed, said Jonathan Fry, 66, who is the president's brother.

"I am a little bit old-fashioned, and I suppose elitist. I think it's nice to have things that are special in one way or another, so that not everybody on Earth can get into them," said Fry, who noted his wife and two of his four daughters have since applied to become members. There are few institutions in England that have inspired as much lore, art and imitation as Lord's Cricket Ground. The club occupies a place in the collective imagination akin to Yankee Stadium or Wrigley Field. Lord's is a kind of living museum where fans of cricket can soak up the sport's rich history. Most of its 28,000 seats are scattered in stands surrounding the field. While about 8,000 seats go to members and their guests, the rest go to ticket-paying members of the public for as much as \$95. On the first floor, the pavilion's "long room" provides the best seats for cricket spectators in the world. Gilded frames holding idealized oil paintings of cricket games of yore fill the walls. "When you see Lord's full on a test

match day, there's no finer sight," Flint said. "It's a perfect existence when you can just drift through a whole day watching a sport that you love." Like soccer, English cricket long ago lost market share to far-flung parts of the former empire, such as India, Pakistan, Zimbabwe and the West Indies. In India, for instance, cricket is less a sport than a religion. Almost 80 percent of India's 1 billion people watch cricket's World Cup on TV.

Cricket in the United States is still mostly an organized club sport. For the first time, an American team qualified to compete later this summer in the annual International Cricket Council's Champions Trophy, the top contest besides the World Cup, which is held every four years. In their quest to preserve Lord's for future generations --including a \$15 million renovation of the pavilion this year -- members of the Marylebone Cricket Club have decided to break with tradition in a few areas.

This season, for the first time, Lord's hosted a controversial Twenty20 Match, which reduces a days-long competition to just a few hours. The club's marketing department recently re-branded Lord's with a new logo and slogan, "Home of Cricket." Flint said she favors tinkering with the game's format to make it more appealing to children and a broader cross-section of adults. "You've got to move with the times," she said. "If it makes more money for the game, if it brings in more people who are interested in the game, I don't see what's the harm."

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Lord's - The Home of Cricket

Milestones

Year/Event

2004 Lord's attracts record Twenty20 crowd - 27,509 - for its first match in the competition (Middlesex Crusaders v Surrey Lions)

Rachael Heyhoe Flint becomes the first woman to be elected to the MCC Committee
See-through sightscreen installed in front of the Pavilion

2003 MCC's Young Cricketers programme includes female players for the first time

2002 Re-laying of the outfield at Lord's
MCC becomes the first cricket club in Britain to develop portable pitches.
Last Benson & Hedges Cup Final; Warwickshire beat Essex.

2001 Women's Varsity Match played at Lord's, on the Nursery Ground, for the first time.
England's 100th Test at Lord's; Pakistan beaten by an innings.

2000 100th Test at Lord's; England beat West Indies in three thrilling days.

1999 Lord's stages the cricket World Cup final; Australia beat Pakistan.
NatWest Media Centre opened at Nursery End. (Architects: Future Systems.)

1998 MCC votes to admit women as Members of the Club.
150th anniversary of birth of WG Grace celebrated by MCC v Rest of World match, with proceeds in aid of the Princess of Wales Memorial Fund.
Brian Johnston Film Theatre opened in MCC Museum.
Third Grand Stand opened. (Architect: Nicholas Grimshaw & Partners.)

1997 MCC and ECB launch first Lord's website.
Cricket's governing bodies combine to form the England and Wales Cricket Board.

1996 - 1997 Second Grand Stand demolished. Building of the third Grand Stand commenced.
1995 New Indoor Cricket School opened. (Architect: David Morley.)

1993 The England women's cricket team wins the World Cup at Lord's
Re-opening of refurbished MCC Museum.

1991 Opening of Compton and Edrich Stands. (Architect: Michael Hopkins & Partners.)

1990 Launch of Tours of Lord's.
Centenary of the Pavilion.

1989 'Q' Stand renamed the Allen Stand in memory of Sir George Allen.

1988 The Ashes leave Lord's for the Australian bicentenary celebrations.
Electronic scoreboard installed between the Tavern and the Mound Stands.

1987 Bicentenary Gates presented by the Duke of Westminster in memory of Viscount Cobham.
New Mound Stand opened by HRH The Duke of Edinburgh. (Architect: Michael Hopkins and Partners.)
Bicentenary of MCC celebrated by MCC v Rest of World match.

1985 Opening of new MCC Library.

1980 Centenary Test Match, England v Australia.

1977 MCC Indoor School opened by Sir George Allen.

1976 First women's match at Lord's: England vs Australia in a one-day international.

- 1975 First Prudential World Cup Final; West Indies beat Australia.
- 1972 First Benson & Hedges Cup Final; Leicestershire beat Yorkshire.
- 1969 First meeting of the Cricket Council which comprised of MCC and the newly-formed TCCB and NCA.
- 1968 New Stand opened on site of the old Tavern. (Architect: Kenneth Peacock.)
- 1967 New Tavern opened. (Architect: David Hodges.)
- 1963 First Gillette Cup Final; Sussex beat Worcestershire.
- 1962 Last Gentlemen vs Players match.
- 1958 Warner Stand opened on the site of the old 'A' Enclosure. (Architect: Kenneth Peacock.)
- 1953 Coronation Garden made.
HRH The Duke of Edinburgh opened the Memorial Gallery to the memory of cricketers of all lands who lost their lives in the two World Wars. (Architect: J.H. Markham.)
- 1949 HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, MCC President. Twenty-six retired professional cricketers who played for England made Honorary Cricket Members of MCC.
- 1938 Introduction of TV cameras at Lord's Test.
- 1937 MCC's 150th anniversary.
- 1934 Harris Memorial Garden made and 'Q' Enclosure built. (Architect: Sir Herbert Baker.)
- 1925 - 1926 Second Grand Stand built and the Father Time weather-vane presented by the architect, Sir Herbert Baker.
- 1923 WG Grace Memorial Gates erected in St John's Wood Road (Architect: Sir Herbert Baker).
- 1914 Centenary of the Ground on its present site.
- 1912 Australia beat South Africa in the Triangular Tournament, in the only Lord's Test not to feature England.
- 1909 Imperial Cricket Conference inaugurated by England, Australia and South Africa.
- 1906 Press Box built.
- 1904 Advisory County Cricket Committee first met at Lord's.
- 1903 - 1904 First MCC tour of Australia.
- 1902 Easter Coaching Classes began.
- 1899 Albert Trott hits a six clean over the Pavilion - a feat never since repeated.
- 1898 - 1899 Mound Stand built on the site of the old tennis court; new tennis court built behind the Pavilion.
Board of Control for Test Matches at home first met at Lord's.
- 1889 - 1890 Present Pavilion built. (Architect: Thomas Verity.)
- 1888 Bill to take over the Ground for extensive railway development rejected.
- 1887 Centenary of MCC.
Three and a half acres of Henderson's Nursery purchased (hence 'Nursery End').
- 1884 First Test Match at Lord's; England beat Australia by an innings.

1877 Middlesex County Cricket Club first played at Lord's.

1875 MCC Tennis & Racquets Sub-Committee drafted first laws of Lawn Tennis.

1868 Aboriginal cricketers play at Lord's - the first Australian team to visit England.

1867 - 1868 Second Tavern built. (Architect: Edward Paraire.)

1866 - 1867 First Grand Stand erected. (Architect: Arthur Allom.)
Freehold of the Ground purchased for £18,333 6s 8d. with money advanced by William Nicholson.

1865 Pavilion enlarged.

1864 First groundsman engaged.

1860 Freehold of the Ground sold by the Eyre Estate to Mr Moses for £7,000. MCC did not bid.

1848 A printing tent was first erected on the Ground and match cards sold.

1846 First telegraph scoreboard installed.

1838 Tennis court built on the site of the present Mound Stand.
Pavilion lit by gas.

1837 Jubilee of MCC celebrated by a grand North v South match.

1835 Lord's Ground lease transferred to JH Dark, who remained proprietor until 1864.

1832 Thomas Lord died at West Meon.

1827 First Oxford vs Cambridge match at Lord's.
Pavilion destroyed by fire, with the loss of all records.

1814 Lord's Ground was moved to its third and present site.

1811 MCC moved to North Bank, Regent's Park.

1806 First Gentlemen v Players match.

1805 First Eton v Harrow match. (Lord Byron was in the Harrow team.)

1787 Thomas Lord opened his first ground in Dorset Fields and the MCC was formed.

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Jun 12, 2004 - 01:43

Clare Connor awarded MBE

Posted by: Rick Eyre

England captain Clare Connor has been awarded an MBE in the 2004 Queen's Birthday Honours List.

The official citation in the honours list, announced on Saturday June 12, states that Ms Clare Joanne Connor has been named a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) "for services to women's cricket".

Connor, aged 27, has been captain of the England team since 2000 and led Sussex to their inaugural women's county championship title last year. She has appeared in thirteen Tests and 74 one-day internationals since making her England debut in 1995, and will lead her country against New Zealand in July and August.

March 24, 2004

The humanising factor

Amit Varma

The piece below first appeared in the March 2004 issue of Wisden Asia Cricket.

Is it sport or is it war? Whenever India and Pakistan play each other in cricket, the media talks of the game as a metaphor for war – and perversely, with a sense of glee and anticipation. (A random example: MJ Akbar, writing in Time magazine, described this India-Pakistan series as “a war guaranteed to drive millions of people delirious”. War and delirious?) Leave aside the moralistic angle of how we trivialise something as serious as war by comparing it with a mere sport; the fact is, the feelings that India-Pakistan cricket inspires are extreme, and sentiments like pride and honour are affected by victory or defeat, much as they would be in a war.

Sport between these two countries has always been played with nationalistic fervour – and even fear. Many of the early Tests between India and Pakistan were drawn, with both teams showing an excess of caution, petrified of losing to their neighbour. A loss against any other team didn’t matter – both teams were habitual losers until the seventies – but a defeat to their neighbour rankled deeply. Abbas Ali Baig’s promising career is said to have been derailed because of an average run of scores against Pakistan, when a similar streak against any other side would not have mattered. Javed Miandad’s last-ball six off Chetan Sharma still rankles in the Indian psyche as a low point for the nation. World Cup after World Cup, Indians treated their game against Pakistan with as much importance as the tournament itself, not caring if they lost the Cup, as long as they beat Pakistan. When Pakistan lost the 1996 World Cup match in Bangalore, the house of their great hero, Wasim Akram, was stoned.

Sport has always been described in terms of war. Games are often described as “battles”, and teams are often said to have been “routed”, “slaughtered”, “demolished”, in a vocabulary of alpha-male aggression. “Sport is an unfailing cause of ill-will,” George Orwell once said. In an essay written in 1945, at the tail end of a real war, he elaborated:

I am always amazed when I hear people saying that sport creates goodwill between the nations, and that if only the common peoples of the world could meet one another at football or cricket, they would have no inclination to meet on the battlefield. Even if one didn’t know from concrete examples (the 1936 Olympic Games, for instance) that international sporting contests lead to orgies of hatred, one could deduce it from general principles.

The point Orwell went on to make was that all sport was competitive, and involved winning or losing, and thus pride. A sport between nations, thus, took on bigger proportions, as it involved national pride – much as war would. He called it “mimic warfare”. But having said that, while many other bi-national rivalries exist in sport – the Ashes in cricket, Brazil-Argentina in soccer et al – none are quite so fierce and filled with “ill-will” as that between India and Pakistan.

So should India play Pakistan in cricket as long as emotions in the countries run so high? Much of the recent impasses between the two countries have been due to political posturing. If we leave politics aside for a moment, and I accept that we can never entirely do that, there are still good reasons for and against India-Pakistan cricket. I am agnostic on that issue: I have an argument on each side of the subject, and I am undecided which has more merit. Let me lay them both out here.

Zero-sum game in a non-zero-sum world

Orwell’s case that sport between nations is like war has backing in terms of both evolutionary psychology and game theory, fields which had yet to take off in his lifetime. Sport and war are both, as the terminology goes, zero-sum games. If two parties are involved, then for one to gain something, the other must lose. Both cannot gain from the encounter, just as both India and Pakistan cannot win the same match. To gain something, one must defeat – and thus, humiliate, as national pride is involved – the other.

But the military and sporting paradigms do not reflect how civilisation, and societies, evolve. Economic and social progress, to use the phrase popularised by Robert Wright, are a “non-zero-sum game”. If two parties interact, both stand to benefit if they co-operate with each other, and it is, in fact, for our own benefit that we should help the other. (As Adam Smith famously put it, “It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard

to their self-interest.”) The basis of modern capitalism – and its success, compared to socialist and communitarian systems – lies in recognising the non-zero-sumness of progress.

Sport and war, thus, function on a different paradigm than society does. India and Pakistan, in virtually every sphere – economic, social, cultural – stand to gain from interaction and co-operation with each other. But sport emphasises zero-sumness – that one can gain only at the expense of the other, which is a regressive notion.

More than just mimic warfare if the twentieth century was one in which international sport flourished, it was also one in which, sadly, war took on new proportions. Warfare has been a recurring feature in human history, but in the twentieth century it was played out on an astonishingly large scale. Vast amounts of cruelty – from the gulags to the Final Solution to the atrocities in China and Cambodia and Yugoslavia and Rwanda, among countless others, including what continues today in West Africa – were accompanied by vast amounts of indifference, as masses of people stood by and did nothing to protest against the most inhuman behaviour. Why were they so silent?

Jonathan Glover, a philosopher, raised just this question in his book, *Humanity: A Moral History of the 20th Century*. Glover postulated that the cause of the indifference was the “degradation” of the victims: their status or cleanliness, or both, was taken away, and they were thus stripped of their personhood. In Nazi Germany, herding the Jews into ghettos, and making them wear the Star of David for identification, was just such a method of dehumanising them. Making racial jokes, dressing up a group of people in humiliating outfits – like prison garb – serves the same purpose. And so did ancient India’s caste system, where the Sudra caste was effectively reduced to the status of non-human by virtue of being treated as dirty and untouchable.

For Indians and Pakistanis, the people of the other nationality have been dehumanised thus, through decades of mutual distrust and nationalistic propaganda. (Some of it has come from popular cinema; witness the mindless stereotyping of Pakistanis done in the monster hit, *Gadar*, and a legion of similar films.) But the switch from “person” to “non-person” can be thrown both ways, as in that famous example of a soldier who sees a fleeing opponent holding up his trousers while running, a sign of humanity that flips the mental switch from “fascist” to “person”. This is why intellectuals in both India and Pakistan stress the importance of people-to-people contact, so that the other can be seen as human again, and one can feel empathy with them.

Sport can play a part in this process. The more we see of our opponents, the more we are exposed to their humanness, and the less the mythic differences seem. The cricketing skills on display, the emotions on the field, all draw us towards the other side – and the appreciation can sometimes go beyond national pride. The spontaneous applause that the Pakistan team got from the Chennai crowds after they won the enthralling Test there in 1999 is a great example of that.

Exposure to cricketers and ex-cricketers from the other country also helps us feel warmer towards them. Witness Sunil Gavaskar’s popularity in Pakistan, which goes beyond his 1992 prediction that Pakistan would win the World Cup that year. Imran Khan and Zaheer Abbas have enjoyed similar popularity in India, and Wasim Akram and Ravi Shastri, in ‘The Shaz and Waz Show’, the popular TV program that ran during the India-Australia series, are a perfect example of a Pakistani and an Indian working together to mutual benefit, in a non-zero-sum interaction. If cricket can be played between the two countries regularly, then perhaps it can move from being a metaphor for war to a vehicle of peace.

Amit Varma is managing editor of Wisden Cricinfo in India, and a writer at large for Wisden Asia Cricket. This article was first published in the March issue of Wisden Asia Cricket.

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Friday August 27, 2004

It's more than my job's worth to let you in with those crisps

Vivek Chaudhary, chief sports correspondent

The organisers of the Athens Olympics were so worried about terrorist attack that £700m was spent on security. But organisers of next month's Champions Trophy cricket tournament in England have identified a new menace: the wrong type of crisps.

Cricket fans who have purchased tickets have been issued with a precise list of snacks and soft drinks they will be allowed to take into stadiums.

They have been warned that any food and drink brands not appearing on the official list will be confiscated outside the stadiums by security guards, and anyone caught with them once inside could be ejected.

Those who might find it thirsty work watching matches at the the second most important tournament in world cricket had better be careful what they drink.

Mineral water is allowed so long as it is Abbey Well, while only drinks manufactured by Pepsi will be acceptable. Similar restrictions have been placed on the types of fruit juices, iced teas and energy drinks allowed into grounds.

Munching on crisps or other snacks as you watch the world's leading cricketers is fine, as long as they are made by Walkers - the International Cricket Council insists that any other brands will be confiscated by security guards.

Similar restrictions were imposed at last year's cricket world cup in South Africa.

The ICC says the restrictions are part of its wider sponsorship deals and are primarily designed to prevent ambush marketing.

A spokesman said: "If somebody comes along to the stadium next month with a bottle of Coke in their bag they will not be turned away. But if they show up with six bottles and a Coke T-shirt that's a different matter ... We have to protect our commercial partners who are involved in the sponsorship of our sport."

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November 3, 2004

Murali bats for Sri Lankan peace process

Charlie Austin

Muttiah Muralitharan has embarked upon a short tour of the war-torn areas of Sri Lanka's northern areas on behalf of the United Nations World Food Programme to raise awareness of the suffering caused by a two-decade-long war.

Muralitharan visited the northern Tamil city of Jaffna on Monday and then Kilinochchi – the political and administrative base of the Tamil Tigers (LTTE), the separatist group that has been fighting the civil war with the government – on Tuesday, followed by Vavuniya on Wednesday. Having met with a senior Tamil Tiger political leader for over an hour, Muralitharan called on the Sri Lanka government to take the initiative in the stalled peace talks to get both sides talking once more and find a permanent solution to a bloody civil war that has left thousands dead and millions in poverty.

"As a sportsmen, all I can say is that Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims come together to play cricket side by side," Muralitharan told Reuters. "Likewise, the politicians and the LTTE must come together and make peace for the good of this country's people. The LTTE is willing to come to the peace table and the people of the south want peace. The government should fulfil their wishes and come for negotiations."

Muralitharan, Sri Lanka's most famous Tamil, was given a heroes reception when he visited a school being rebuilt after war damage. He has concentrated on charity work since a shoulder operation sidelined him from international cricket in August. He had only just returned from a global tour to drum up funds for his own charity, the Gunasekera-Muralidaran Foundation, which he set-up with his close friend and agent, Kushil Gunasekera, a former cricket board official.

Next week, Muralitharan's jet-setting lifestyle will continue as he travels to London for two days on the invitation of the government to help promote Sri Lanka at the World Travel Mart. This will be followed by a quick stop in Seoul to pick-up an award having been judged an "Asian Hero" by Time magazine.

Muralitharan will then fly to Australia to meet his surgeon, Dr David Young, to get an update on his shoulder's recovery, which has so far progressed smoothly. He remains confident of returning for Sri Lanka's next tour to New Zealand and is targeting the second Test against New Zealand at Wellington starting on January 22.

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May 11, 2004 07:56 IST

Zimbabwe union fires 15 rebel players

The Zimbabwe Cricket Union (ZCU) has fired former captain Heath Streak and 14 other rebel players who went into dispute with the board last month. A ZCU statement on Monday said the players had violated a 21-day breach clause in their contracts by not returning to work by May 7.

The decision was taken at a ZCU board meeting earlier in the day. The dispute started on April 2 when Streak's tenure as Zimbabwe captain ended after he questioned the composition of the selection panel.

Fourteen other white players allied themselves with Streak, and the group demanded arbitration on his removal from the captaincy, the composition of the selection panel and alleged poor conduct of ZCU officials.

The ZCU's decision to fire the players reached them while they were meeting with their lawyer to draft their agreement to the board's offer of mediation to resolve the dispute.

"We were talking about officially accepting mediation and we were going to make ourselves available for practice," Stuart Carlisle, one of the rebels, told Reuters.

"Then we got a phone call to say our contracts have been terminated." Carlisle said the ZCU did not appear to have acknowledged that the players suspended their boycott last week and made themselves available, albeit temporarily.

"They did not accept that we remedied our original breach of contract when we went back to practice last week," he said.

Carlisle said the ZCU had demanded that the players return their sponsored vehicles by Wednesday and would pay them until Friday.

Carlisle said the dispute could end up in the civil courts. "If they sue us, we will definitely counter-sue," Carlisle said. "We feel we have a very strong case, and we're going to get an advocate involved."

The dispute led to Zimbabwe selecting an inexperienced squad for the one-day series against Sri Lanka, which the visitors won 5-0. A team drawn from a similar squad lost the first Test by an innings and 240 runs on Saturday.

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Sun 3 Oct 2004

Flower laments possible death of Zimbabwean cricket

IAIN FLETCHER

ON OCTOBER 16-17, the ICC executive board, the international governing body's real power, will convene in Pakistan and discuss the ongoing problem with Zimbabwean cricket. If, at this meeting they decide that the Zimbabwe Cricket Union (ZCU) has actually pursued a policy of active racism or systematic racism, as is claimed by the 15 rebel players led by former captain Heath Streak, then the ICC will have little option but to strip the country of both one-day and Test match status. This will, of course allow England to abandon their own tour their next month. It would be a brave and bold decision by the Executive Board but there is a growing groundswell of opinion that the pitiful performances of some of the lesser nations are starting to adversely affect the image of the game and Zimbabwe have been one of the most inept since the departure of the 15 players.

The recent Champions Trophy highlighted the problem and the current one-day triangular tournament in Pakistan involving Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe has already proved a tournament between two countries with the other providing nothing more than net practice.

"What is happening at the moment is actually going to be the death of cricket in Zimbabwe," said Grant Flower, one of the 15 rebels and brother of Andy who famously wore a black armband during Zimbabwe's first world cup match last year to protest against the "death of democracy in our country".

"The side are not good enough as it is and a lot of hard work over many years is being wasted," he continued. "If the ICC force the ZCU to act then something can be done but if they decide that the racism has been personal and isolated to a few instances, then Zimbabwean cricket will really struggle."

Not that it will involve Flower himself.

"I don't think I'll play international cricket again," he said. "I've already been told by one of the board that even if it is resolved, they didn't want me back. That is why I've signed a two-year contract to play county cricket in England for Essex. I'm a professional cricketer and I have to be employed and if it is not for my country then I have to find someone to play for."

However, the chances of an amicable resolution are slim. Earlier this week, ICC president Ehsan Mani described himself as "disappointed" after the initial hearing in Harare between the ZCU and the players "did not go the distance".

The two-man panel, India's solicitor-general, Goolam Vahanvati, and South African high court judge Steven Majiedt, failed to hear oral submissions after both parties failed to agree on whether the ZCU could have three board members present during the submission of evidence by the players. The process has now moved to written submissions but with neither party wishing to concede ground on even the smallest issue, it looks set for an ICC adjudication.

The situation, however, does give those England players reluctant to tour some hope and would save the ECB further embarrassment after having confirmed that Andrew Flintoff was missing the tour for reasons of rest, to have him publicly state that he had informed them a week before of his intention not to tour Zimbabwe for personal reasons. Ever since the debacle in last year's World Cup, the issue of touring Zimbabwe has haunted the ECB and such mistrust has developed between the players and administrators that players are now less inclined to "toe the party line". Flintoff has clearly stated that he was not touring, as did his friend, Stephen Harmison. Marcus Trescothick however will be absent, resting.

Flower will also be in England despite still owning a house in Zimbabwe.

"I still have interest in Zimbabwe but tend to be careful what I say," he added. "What is good though is that next year I will be playing with my brother again. When we left the field in Port Elizabeth after our final group match in last year's World Cup, I was emotional because I thought it was the last time I'd play with Andy, but now we are both at Essex."

Andy joined after the World Cup as an overseas player but Grant has taken advantage of the Kolpak ruling and is playing under European Union regulations.

Up to 30 "Kolpak" players are expected to play county cricket next season presenting the ECB with another contentious issue.

"The Kolpak arrangement clearly benefits me," explained Flower. "Since I was 18 I've travelled every winter to play cricket, league or international, and as a professional player I need to earn. If that is in England as a county pro then that suits me but I can see that it does cause problems. If lots of spaces are being taken by Kolpak players then the young English players may struggle. I can see the anti-Kolpak viewpoint but from a personal angle I have to accept that it has been fought in the courts and allows me to work. As a Zimbabwean, I have to make a new start, a lot of the players do because of what is happening to Zimbabwean cricket, and this has allowed me to do that."

If the dispute between the Zimbabwean players and the ZCU is not resolved, many more may follow Flower and take advantage of the Kolpak ruling. Streak himself is an overseas player for Warwickshire but if his international career is over, the club may seek to strengthen their team by playing him and signing another overseas star.

A lot hinges on the executive board meeting in Pakistan in two weeks.

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