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# The Island Sports

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## ICC chief Morgan hints at 4-day Tests



David Morgan

**NEW DELHI (AP)** - The International Cricket Council is considering cutting Tests from five days to four.

ICC president David Morgan says the sport's governing body is considering the change to boost interest in cricket's traditional format, which is dropping in popularity relative to one-day games and particularly the recently introduced Twenty20 game.

"We are examining is whether Test match cricket can be played over four days rather than five," Morgan said in an interview to India Today magazine.

"The board of the ICC is determined to ensure that Test match cricket is seen as the pinnacle of our great game.

"I would be very surprised if within a year you haven't seen some significant changes in Test match cricket."

Morgan said Tests also needed better over rates, plus better pitches that provide an even contest between batsmen and bowlers. The ICC is also pushing ahead with plans toward introducing day-night tests.

"The issue is the colour of the ball and the quality of the ball," he said. "It would be a pity if day-night Test match cricket had to be played with a white ball and, therefore, coloured clothing."

While a traditional red ball can not be used at night, the ICC is hoping to develop a ball in a bright color like orange.

Cricket Australia (CA) spokesman Peter Young said chief executive James Sutherland was not keen on four-day Tests.

"James is more in favor of night Test cricket and we are in discussions on the colour of the ball and whether it would affect the dimensions of the ball," Young said.

David Gilbert, chief cricket administrator in New South Wales state, said four-day Tests would hurt venues and hosts while aiding telecasters.

"If there was a determination by the ICC to change it to four days, it wouldn't have a major impact on our bottom line," Gilbert was quoted to say by Australian Associated Press.

"I would imagine the broadcaster was very much to the fore with the suggestion.

"It would be sad to see it happen because a five-day game of Test cricket, it really sorts the men out from the boys."

## Former great reminisces of famous games against Pakistan

by Rex Clementine

As the T-20 World Cup was slipping away from Sri Lanka, fingers were pointed at the failure of the Lankan top order batsmen. The scenario brought to mind a man who seemed tailor-made for any 'big match,' a man who possessed the temperament to plain sail no matter how tough the situation was. While playing match winning knocks in big games was a hallmark of Aravinda de Silva's illustrious career, another feature that made him a unique batsman was his preference to do well against stronger opponents of his era, like Australia or Pakistan than, say Zimbabwe or Bangladesh.

If the West Indies possessed the best bowling attack in the 1980s, world's fast bowling power base gradually shifted towards Pakistan in the 1990s, the era that Aravinda dominated. His eight Test hundreds against Pakistan is a World Record with two Australians Alan Border and Greg Chappell coming as joint second with six hundreds each.

Of those eight hundreds he scored, the first came in Faisalabad. On his 20th birthday Aravinda had remained 93 not out and the following morning he reached three figures by hitting a six off none other than Imran Khan.

"I was young and had just come into the side. Didn't worry about all the big names and just went for it as it was there to be hit. It was a very pleasing experience, especially as my mother too had come to the ground to see me batting," Aravinda recalled.

Over the years, only four batsmen have scored more runs in Test cricket against Pakistan than Aravinda and that list includes some memorable names the cricket world has ever seen; Sunil Gavaskar, Greg Chappell and Alan Border.

What motivated him against the Pakistanis?

"Of all sides I played against, they had the best bowling side. They definitely had the best variation in world cricket. Unfortunately, at that time we didn't play the West Indies that often and missed out on playing against the likes of Michael Holding, the late Malcolm Marshall and Joel Garner. As a result whenever I played against Pakistan, I used to concentrate hard. It was that

much tougher facing them and you couldn't lose focus as they had a balanced bowling attack that kept on asking questions. I guess it was the reason for me to do better against Pakistan than any other team," de Silva felt.

One of the much talked about games that de Silva has involved in against Pakistan is the Faisalabad Test during the 1995 tour. He had missed the first Test, due to his commitments with the English county Kent and Sri Lanka were heavily beaten in that match by an innings. Turning up for the second game in Faisalabad, he was the biggest hope for the Lankans, but came a cropper when he was dismissed for a second ball duck by Saqlain Mustaq. Incidentally, that was his first duck in Test cricket having played over 70 Test innings without a duck.

But he rose to the occasion in the second innings with a match winning 105 that helped Sri Lanka win the Test by 42 runs and square the series.

"I remember landing a day or two before the match in Pakistan. The second ball I faced, I just tried to on-drive, probably I was overconfident and managed to flick it back to Saqlain and I was caught and bowled. It was very disappointing as the team was expecting much from me. But that made me determined to do well in the second innings and score some runs. It was tougher in the second innings. We lost early wickets and the wicket wasn't easy to bat on. It was very satisfying to score a hundred there. It was the first time I put into use all the experience I gathered in England."

With so much of playing experience behind him, who are the Pakistani cricketers whom he rates high?

"People like Imran, Javed, Wasim and Waqar were all superb players. But I feel that one player who doesn't get mentioned in the same breath is Abdul Qadir. He was a fantastic bowler. I feel, had he been playing in this era, he could have created a lot of problems for current players. Personally I rate him very high," de Silva said.

While speaking with *'The Island'* about his memories of playing against Pakistan, Aravinda fondly remembered one moment of courage by his colleague and former captain Arjuna Ranatunga, when he won a Test Match that was slipping away.

Aravinda had played his part in that



Aravinda de Silva

game in Rawalpindi with a century in the first innings and the Sri Lankans having dominated the game throughout, gave away the initiative chasing 220 runs when they lost five for 144. Soon Ranatunga was hit by a vicious Waqar Younis delivery and had to retire hurt and further examinations revealed that he had multiple fractures on his fingers.

Sri Lanka slipped to 177 for eight and requiring 43 to win with just Muttiah

Muralitharan in the pavilion, Ranatunga walked in to bat against medical advice and saw the team through.

"It was somewhat strange. We both had been left out of the series before that Pakistan tour. But when the moment came Arjuna showed what a tough character he was. It wasn't easy and the courage he showed was remarkable and most importantly won the game for us," de Silva recalled.

## Three-day warm up match ends in draw

The three day warm up game between Pakistan and Sri Lanka Cricket XI ended in a draw despite a bold declaration by the hosts captain Thilina Kandamby at the Colts Cricket Ground yesterday. Kandamby declared the Sri Lankan innings on 137 for two leaving Pakistan a target of 83 and in search of quick runs the Pakistanis lost early wickets and slumped to 47 for four. The surprise wicket taker for the Sri Lankans was Chamara Kapugedara, who picked up two of the three wickets to fall for the bowlers including that of Mohammad Yousuf.

With a hundred to his name in the first innings, Kapugedara is a strong contender to be in the opening line up of the first Test Match that gets underway at the Galle International Cricket Stadium on Saturday.

Resuming from the overnight score of 305 for five, the Pakistanis lost quick wickets and were placed



at 322 for eight at one stage in the morning, but an unbroken 78 run stand for the ninth wicket between Fawad Alam and Abdur Rauf enabled the tourists to take a first innings lead of 55 runs.

Alam faced 114 deliveries in his knock of 83 runs with the help of six boundaries while Rauf, who will take the new ball in the first Test, was the aggressive partner requiring just 31 balls for his 39 with four boundaries and three sixes.

Suraj Mohammad was the most impressive of the bowlers as he picked up four wickets while Muthumudalige Pushpakumara had three scalps to his name.

In the second innings, Upul Tharanga and Tharanga Paranavithana added 66 runs for the first wicket before Tharanga fell for 44 having faced 60 deliveries where he hit five boundaries and a six. Tharanga Paranavithana scored 48 in 102 balls and hit nine boundaries.

When the innings was declared, Kaushal Silva, who was promoted to number three, was unbeaten on 34 with Gihan Rupasinghe on nine.

**Brief Scores:**  
**Sri Lanka Cricket XI** 345/5 and 137/2  
(U. Tharanga 44, T. Paranavithana 48, K. Silva 34)  
**Pakistan** 400/8 and 54/4 (S. Butt 22)

## Badminton Asia Youth under-16 Championships

### Sri Lanka's hopes on Achini and Upuli

by Ravi Nagahawatte

Sri Lanka's female players will be the cynosure of all eyes when they take part in the Badminton Asia Youth under-16 Championships which the country will host from August 3-9 at the S. Thomas' College Mount Lavinia gymnasium.

The championships have been tagged as an event that will showcase the future champions by its organizer, the Sri Lanka Badminton Association (SLBA).

Sri Lanka will make the line up of teams along with Asia's powerhouses in badminton like China, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Korea. The other countries expected to vie for honours

are Thailand, Vietnam, India, Iran, Hong Kong, Japan, Pakistan, Bhutan, Cambodia, Brunei and Laos.

SLBA Interim Committee Chairman Professor Ranjith de Silva speaking to the media at a press briefing, held at Hilton Residencies yesterday in connection with the upcoming event, said that this was an ideal opportunity for budding shuttlers, especially from rural areas, to observe how the sport is played correctly.

This marks the first occasion in the 50-year-history of the SLBA that a continental championships has been awarded to Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka will have the opportunity of fielding six entries for the singles and

team events respectively in the boys and girls categories. All other countries are permitted to register a minimum of three and a maximum of four entries at the singles and team events at the championships.

As with the host nation, the focus is on the girls, because they did well at the championships last year by making it to the quarter-finals.

Sri Lanka's hopes will be on Achini Ranasinghe and Upuli Samanthika who have improved tremendously. SLBA officials are of the opinion that they have the potential to upset some of the top players in the tournament.

The championships are held in association with the Ministry of tourism. Mount Lavinia Hotel has come forward to house the participating teams and will receive recognition as the official hotel during the championships.

