



Indian cricket captain Saurav Ganguly and master batsman Sachin Tendulkar present an autographed bat to secretary of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, JVR Prasada Rao during the national polio eradication campaign in Bombay yesterday.

Rally round

FROM PAGE 13 He said if Sri Lanka won the title he was prepared to give the national team 25 per cent of the 6.4 million dollar guarantee money...

Kenya laughs

FROM PAGE 13 Kenya after a suicide bombing killed 16 people in an attack on an Israeli-owned hotel in the city of Mombasa. Another victim later died in hospital.

Injuries a blessing!



AFP, Brisbane

Australia's injury worries could actually help Ricky Ponting's team win successive cricket World Cups, coach John Buchanan said here on Tuesday.

"In some ways (the injuries) could eventually have a positive side for us."



JOHN BUCHANAN last few months.

England selectors were criticised for bringing injured players on tour and Australia will take the same risk with Michael Bevan (groin), McGrath (back) and Gillespie (elbow) recovering from injuries.

(back) was the only player ruled out of the World Cup, leaving much depending on the fitness of McGrath, Warne, Bevan and Gillespie.

"Apart from Michael Bevan, one of the principles we wanted to follow was not to take injured players to the World Cup and we've basically achieved that," Buchanan said.

"But there are some allowances for 'potential match-winners' and that is the likes of Glenn McGrath and Shane Warne. The medical staff believe Glenn is okay and I'll go with their advice and he'll be in great shape for the tournament."

ACB wants Zim tie



AFP, Melbourne

Australia plans to press on and play their scheduled World Cup cricket match in Zimbabwe, the Australian Cricket Board said on Tuesday.

England's cricket chiefs will argue that their tournament-opening match against Zimbabwe in Harare on February 13 is especially sensitive because of the "historical ties between the two countries."

It followed warnings received from Zimbabwean activists to the England team during their Australian tour and reports that opposition groups would use the England match to demonstrate against President Robert Mugabe's regime.

ACB chief executive James Sutherland said he had learned of no new security risk which would prevent the Australian team playing its match in Bulawayo.

security delegation there in late November," Sutherland told ABC radio on Tuesday.

"I was a part of that with (Australian Cricketers' Association chief) Tim May, but at the same time we continue to monitor that."

The Australian Cricketers' Association was in talks on Tuesday and was expected to comment further on the issue on Wednesday.

Two days before their departure for the World Cup, the Australian team were maintaining their position that they would play wherever the ACB directed.

"It's a very volatile situation at the moment in Zimbabwe but from our perspective, we have faith in the ACB to make that decision for us," batsman Matthew Hayden said on Tuesday.

Ricky, Murali bag top awards

AFP, Bombay

Australian captain Ricky Ponting and Sri Lankan spinner Muralitharan received a boost ahead of next month's World Cup by bagging Indian cricket awards here on Tuesday.

Ponting, hoping to lead Australia's successful defence of the World Cup in South Africa, was named the best fielder at the annual Ceat International awards.

Australia's combined Test and one-day squad was named the international team of the year for a third time, having won the awards in 1997 and 2000.

Muralitharan, named the best bowler in history by cricket's bible Wisden, was chosen the bowler of the year by an eminent panel that included former greats Sunil Gavaskar of India and Clive Lloyd of the West Indies.

India's Sachin Tendulkar was voted the best batsman of the year.

Former all-rounder Kapil Dev, who last year won a Wisden poll as India's player of the century, received a similar accolade as the Ceat International cricketer of the century.

Ex-Test spinner Bishan Bedi was honoured with a lifetime achievement award, Ceat head Harish Goenka said.

Disgraced

FROM PAGE 13

hensive probe between September 1998 and October 1999 and the one-man commission of Justice Malik Mohammad Qayyum recommended life bans on Malik and former pacer Ataur Rehman.

Six others including current captain Waqar Younis and Wasim Akram were fined.

The Pakistan Cricket Board implemented the recommendations in May 2000.

Malik's appeal against the ban was rejected by the Lahore high court in May last year.

"I am waiting for a date in the supreme court and have always maintained that I will fight till I am cleared," Malik said.

Malik said he still follows international cricket and thinks Australia will lift next month's World Cup.

"All the top teams look the same at international level but if you take into account performance of the last two years I think Australia will clinch the Cup," Malik predicted.

"Pakistan is also a good side and if they play up to their potential they can surprise other teams." Jadeja himself said he was delighted at being allowed to do what he did best -- playing cricket -- after two years.

"Cricket is my life and has given me a lot," said the flamboyant player who turns 32 on Saturday.

The BCCI, which has the option to appeal against the ruling in the Supreme Court, said it will study the High Court's verdict before taking any decision.

Jadeja's lawyer Vineet Malhotra said he hoped the BCCI accepted the court's verdict "gracefully".

Tense finish

FROM PAGE 13

Hossain and two off-spinner Abdur Razzak and Jamaluddin bagged two each.

SCOREBOARD Scoreboard on the second day of the Ispahani Mirzapore Fourth National League final between Dhaka and Khulna at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Table with columns: DHAKA: First innings 362 (Mazharul 119, Rashedul 50, Naimur 45, Hasanuzzaman 4-65, Manjarul 3-68); KHULNA: First innings (Overnight 271 for 7 in 83 overs); Bowler O M R W; Extras (b-10, lb-4); Fall of wickets: 1-4, 2-19, 3-33, 4-33, 5-54, 6-104, 7-122, 8-135, 9-154.

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Eng waiting to know



AFP, London

England hoped to be told Thursday whether their plea to move their World Cup match in Zimbabwe to South Africa has been accepted.

Nasser Hussain and his teammates could discover as soon as Thursday if they have been successful in their plea to move the controversy-hit World Cup clash with Zimbabwe to South Africa.

England believe they have made

Foreign Office advice," he said. "We will not send any player into an arena where they could be at risk. We will take the players' concerns on board, listening carefully to what the players have to say."

His comments came after a statement issued on behalf of the England team asked that the match against Zimbabwe be moved to South Africa, which is hosting the majority of the World Cup matches.

England players' spokesman Richard Bevan said: "The players urge all parties to move the fixture to South Africa and pay the Zimbabwe Cricket Union appropriate compensation."

a possible loss of life". And, after the conference finished, Lamb added that there were specific reasons for moving England's match in particular.

"Given the historical ties between the two countries, since the founding of the country and through the southern Rhodesia and independence periods, and in the light of the relationship between the two governments, as well as the fact that England players have been singled out to receive the propaganda leaflet, we might be able to argue that there is a special case and request having the fixture against Zimbabwe moved to South Africa."

Lamb added: "I am not going to say definitely that we will play that card, but I have already dropped a pebble into that pond."

On the same day, ICC's Australian chief executive Malcolm Speed rejected the England players' plea.

He said nothing had changed following a previous ICC executive board meeting Friday when there was unanimous agreement, including that of ECB chairman David Morgan, to go ahead with the Zimbabwe matches.

Speed insisted the ICC's independent security experts had said it was still safe to play in Zimbabwe.

"As it currently stands, based on this expert advice the ICC board continues to see no reason to move the games," Speed.

"Should the situation change there is in place the system to alert the ICC to this and a proper decision-making process to deal with any need to relocate games," added.

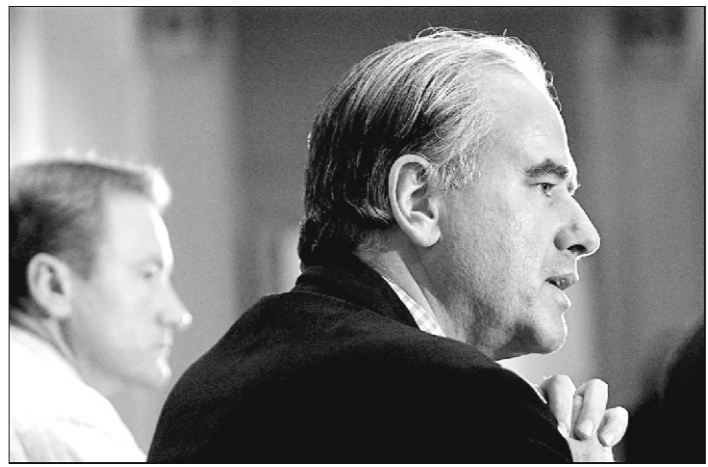
On Friday, Speed confirmed that the Zimbabwe matches could be moved to South Africa, where the bulk of the February 8 to March 23 World Cup's 54 fixtures are taking place, as late as four days in advance.

Novak shocked

AFP, Milan

Number one seed Jiri Novak suffered a shock first round exit at the hands of Czech compatriot Radek Stepanek at the 380,000-euro men's indoor ATP event here on Monday.

Stepanek, 24, passed safely through to the second round with a surprisingly comfortable 6-4, 6-3 victory over the tournament favourite who finished seventh in the Champions Race last year.



Tim Lamb (R), chief executive of the ECB and Richard Bevan, managing director of the Professional Cricketers Association face the media at the Marriott Hotel in northwest London on January 27.

a strong case for switching the February 13 fixture from Harare, citing the "moral, political and safety" issues surrounding a fixture played in a country ruled by President Robert Mugabe.

The International Cricket Council bosses, whose deadline to move the game is February 9, hold a teleconference Thursday to review the situation.

England and Wales Cricket Board chief executive Tim Lamb, who is furious with what he called the British government's 'misleading' tactics during the crisis, on Monday vowed to pull the England team out if the Foreign Office advised they would be at risk.

"There is a further independent review of security going on ... but, regardless of the ICC security report, if the ECB get advice from the Foreign Office saying players will be at risk, we'll say we don't expect our players to go against

sation." Bevan also said the England players were "greatly concerned by the moral, political and safety issues that the fixture in Zimbabwe has raised."

So far the ICC has insisted that, despite political pressure, it will not move matches from Zimbabwe in protest at the regime of President Robert Mugabe.

It is due to reconsider Zimbabwe's host status at an executive board meeting on Friday.

Last weekend it emerged that England players, on their recently concluded tour of Australia, had received anonymous letters at their Sydney hotel warning them of violence if they go ahead with their match in Zimbabwe.

Lamb, sitting alongside Bevan on Monday, said cricket could not afford a situation where the games in Zimbabwe were also the scenes for anti-Mugabe protests which could be "ruthlessly suppressed with



Tiny participants of the 'Chocolate Race' wait for the start with their hands tied from behind during the annual sports day 2003 of Siddiqui's International School at Dhanmondi yesterday. Chairman of the school Nadeem Siddiqui later distributed prizes among the students

Gilchrist best down under



AFP, Melbourne

Adam Gilchrist won the Allan Border Medal as Australia's cricketer-of-the-year on Tuesday.

The wicketkeeper-batsman was also named as Australia's best limited-overs player over the past 12 months, just two days before he heads off to South Africa with the defending world champions for the World Cup.

One-day captain Ricky Ponting was selected as the test player of the year after making five hundreds in the past 12 months and also finished second to Gilchrist for the major award, decided by votes from

players, umpires and media. Gilchrist joined Matthew Hayden (2002), Steve Waugh (2001) and Glenn McGrath (2000) as winners of Australia's most prestigious cricketing award after a brilliant year with bat and gloves.

Over the past 12 months, Gilchrist has scored 928 runs at an average of 77.33, including three centuries, and 872 one-day runs at an average of 34.88, with two centuries.

Last year's Wisden player of the year, Gilchrist's best performance with the bat was his unbeaten 204 against South Africa in Johannesburg in February, which briefly stood as a world record for the fastest double century in Test cricket.

Less than a week ago, playing

against England in Sydney, he equalled his own wicketkeeping world record of six dismissals in an innings of a one-day.

"It's been a great year for me but I really didn't expect to win this," Gilchrist told a packed reception in Melbourne.

Queensland batsman Martin Love was named state player of the year while 22-year-old off-spinner Nathan Hauritz was chosen as the young player-of-the-year.

Former Test captains Lindsay Hassett and Ian Chappell were inducted into Australian Cricket's Hall of Fame.

AL honours

FROM PAGE 13 hand for the development of sports in the country.

Bangladesh team leader Shawkat Ali Khan Jahangir, coach George Kottan, captain Rajani Kanta Barman and former Bangladesh national team captain Monem Munna also spoke on the occasion.

Waugh decision

FROM PAGE 13 He joined Border and Sunil Gavaskar as the only players to make 10,000 Test runs and equalled Border's world record of 156 appearances all in the same match, which Australia lost in a 4-1 series win over England.

Waugh was left out of the Australia squad for next month's World Cup but would be an automatic selection for the next test tour of West Indies starting in April if he decides to play on.



Indian batting great Sunil Gavaskar (2nd from R) points towards the main trophy as vice-chairman CEAT Limited Harsh Goenka (R), former cricketer Sanjay Manjrekar (3rd from L) and former West Indies captain Clive Lloyd (2nd from L) look on during the seventh annual CEAT International Rating Awards ceremony in Bombay yesterday.