

No problem for Mark

AFP, New Delhi
India's Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Tuesday quashed speculation that batsman Mark Waugh will be questioned during Australia's upcoming tour over his alleged involvement with book-makers.

"There is no move to speak to Waugh," a CBI spokesman said. "We were looking only at the Indian players in our investigation."

The case of foreign players was handed to the International Cricket Council's (ICC) Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU).

Waugh told ICC investigators last weekend he had never met Gupta, but Australians were apprehensive the player may be hauled up before the CBI once he stepped on Indian soil on Wednesday.

Waugh departed with the Australian team on Tuesday aware of a report that foreign affairs officials are on alert to help if Indian police seek to interview him in connection with Gupta's allegations.

Australian captain Steve Waugh said his brother Mark would be "a little apprehensive" but he expected him to be well informed on what he could face before the tour.

Premiership Daily Coventry's saviour

Football

AFP, London
A last minute own goal from West Ham defender Christian Dailly helped English Premiership strugglers Coventry secure a 1-1 draw at Upton Park here Monday.

The ball was launched into the box and Dailly, aware of the nearby John Eustace, could only guide the ball past goalkeeper Craig Forrest.

The visitors then saw an injury time penalty appeal rejected by referee Dermot Gallagher when Sky Blues debutant and West Ham old boy John Harrison went down in the box.

Coventry are still second from bottom but the result could have been worse for Gordon Strachan's strugglers.

Seven minutes from time fine work from veteran full-back Nigel Winterburn down the left ended with a sharp low cross that evaded the Coventry defence before midfielder Joe Cole calmly slotted home from inside the six-yard box.

Harrison thought he had made a dream start to his Coventry career when he fired the ball into the back of the West Ham net after 12 minutes.

Unfortunately for Harrison and Coventry, there was only one player between him and the goal - and so his effort was ruled out for offside.

Harrison - wearing the number five shirt - was a West Ham hero four years ago.

His new club were nearly 1-0 down inside two minutes. Paolo Di Canio played a magical ball over the defence after just 90 seconds to set up Frederic Kanoute with a good scoring chance on the edge of the City box. But Magnus Hedman was smartly off his line and blocked the Frenchman's shot with his legs.

Influential Coventry captain Mustapha Hadji created a chance out of nothing after four minutes when he found space on the left and delivered a fierce drive which Forrest did well to push round his far post.

Then Cole - becoming the youngest player to make his 50th appearance for the club - had a shot just wide.

West Ham should have scored two minutes before the break when Frank Lampard pounced on a mistake by Richard Shaw -

making his 200th appearance for Coventry. But the young midfielder slotted his shot wide from eight yards.

Di Canio produced another magical moment three minutes into the second half when he went on a mazy run that took him inside the box. His skill deserved some reward, but he saw his shot crash against the bar.

West Ham struggled to clear two Coventry corners but then managed an attack of their own. Gary Breen hooked away Schemmel's cross, and from the corner Tihinen's header was cleared off the line by Lee Carsley.

Tihinen stayed up for another Schemmel cross and this time sent a header just over the bar after 66 minutes.

More good work from Schemmel saw him centre to Cole after 75 minutes but from 12 yards out the midfielder volleyed high, one of numerous wasted chances that cost both sides victory.

Coventry went on the attack and David Thompson showed good skill to lose Winterburn before shooting high and wide.

Harrison was enjoying his debut and proving to be a handful. When he made a good turn in the box after 62 minutes he was denied a shooting chance by Dailly's saving tackle.

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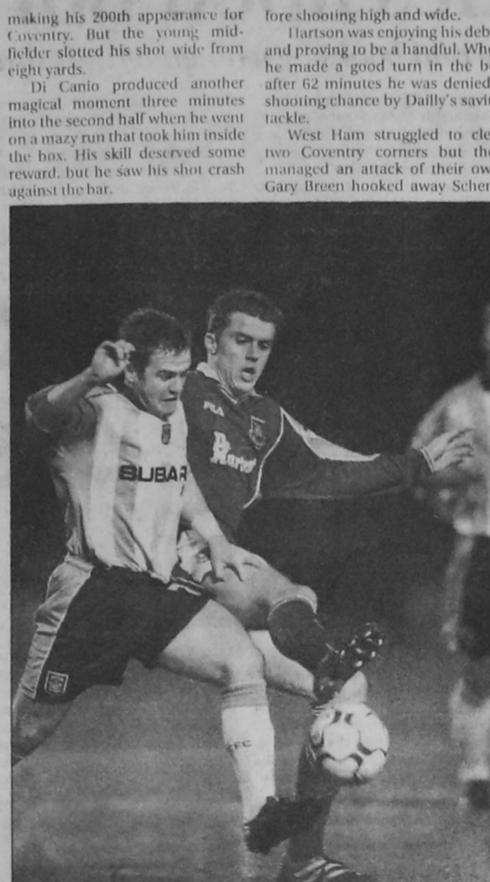
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West Ham's Michael Carrick (R) and David Thompson of Coventry City duelling for the ball during their Premiership fixture at Upton Park, London on February 12.

Beware of Kournikova!

AFP, Washington
A new computer virus that tricks users into thinking they have received a picture of tennis star Anna Kournikova is spreading rapidly by e-mail, security firms warned Monday.

"Early propagation reports indicate that this virus is spreading faster than many of the biggest viruses we saw last year," comments Mikko Hypponen of the Finnish-based software firm F-Secure.

"It seems to be spreading almost as fast as LoveLetter." LoveLetter is regarded as the biggest-ever virus case, with estimated 15 million infected computers.

"This is a destructive Internet worm that has the potential to create e-mail storms leading to network performance slowdowns," said the McAfee Anti-Virus Emergency Response Team, a division of Network Associates.

The virus "arrives pretending to be an image of professional tennis player Anna Kournikova," McAfee said. "The worm, originally discovered in August 2000, has been found in more than 50 enterprise companies, including Fortune 500s."

When users click on the e-mail attachment, the virus sends itself via e-mail to all addresses found in the Microsoft Outlook address book.

"Because of the big number of e-mails being generated by the virus, it can overload and crash e-mail servers," F-Secure said.

They won all 15 matches during the 2000-01 domestic season, including an historic 5-0 clean sweep of their Test series against West Indies and all 10 of their matches in the triangular Carlton limited-overs tournament with West Indies and Zimbabwe.

They extended their world record of consecutive Tests wins to 15 and are just four matches away from equalising the one-day record of 14 games without defeat they set this time last year.

But Waugh, who achieved a personal milestone on Monday when he was named as Australia's player-of-the-year, has made no secret that he views the Indian series as the ultimate challenge of his side's Test of greatness.

He said that the award and his team's record-breaking spell would count for little if they lost in India.

Australia in recent years have beaten every major cricket-playing nation in the world both home and away but have not won a series in India since 1969.

"The Indian series will be the big one and the one we'll be judged on," Waugh said.

"If we don't perform over there then possibly we're not as good as other sides that have won there in other eras."

Australia have not beaten India in a Test series there since 1969-70.

"India is where we are all going to be judged and we know that and we want to make sure that is a good tour," he said.

"The Australian season was fantastic but to me I have been looking forward to the Indian tour for a long time and, to be honest, if we don't win in India, much of what happened in Australia won't mean a lot to me and a lot of the guys."

"We are going full steam ahead for the Indian tour and I'm hoping that's where we are going to play our best cricket."

The Australians arrive in India on Wednesday and kick off their campaign with a three-day match against India 'A' in Nagpur.

The first Test gets underway in Bombay on February 27 with the second and third Tests to be played back to back in Calcutta and Madras.

The Test series will be followed by five limited-overs matches.

Australia suffered a major blow just before the tour when pacer Brett Lee was ruled out with an elbow injury but he was replaced in the 14-man squad with tireless swing bowler Michael

Their final frontier

Cricket

AGENCIUS, Melbourne
Steve Waugh's all-conquering cricketers flew out of Australia on Tuesday for a tour of India and a chance to cement their claim as one of the greatest teams in the sport's history.

Waugh's triumphant side have already climbed the twin peaks of Test and one-day cricket during their unbeaten Australian summer.

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Freeman is a two-time world champion in 1997 and 1998, said last week she will miss the Australian Grand Prix season because she was exhausted by her performances in 2000.

"If I hadn't won the gold medal, I probably wouldn't have taken any time off at all," admitted Freeman, who will take part in about a dozen meets this year with her focus on a hat-trick of world titles at the World Championships in Edmonton, Canada, this summer.

The Aboriginal icon revealed that she was also interested in moving up to the 800-meter distance in the future.

"Think myself, I have a tendency to think more about moving up to the 800-meter. Not this year, nor next year. But it could be within the next 8 years or so. We'll just see what happens."

Freeman 28 this month, will train most of the time in Melbourne, Australia, this year but did not rule out the possibility of working out at John Smith's "Handling Speed Intelligently" powerhouse of champions in Los Angeles.

"I don't rule it out entirely but at the same time I'm happy to stay in Australia as long as I can. My plans as they are at the moment aren't definite," she said.

"I have a good relationship with HIS. But there was never any formal or official agreement," she added. "I just have so much respect for that group and for John Smith. I certainly hope that the door is still open for me."

Qatar Open Tamarine advance

REUTERS, Doha
Fifth seed Tamarine Tanasugarn of Thailand moved into the second round of the Qatar Open on Monday beating Pavlina Nola of Bulgaria 6-2, 6-3.

In the only other singles match of the day Christie Boogert of the Netherlands beat Sandra Nacuk of Yugoslavia 6-2, 6-4.

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Magura cricket

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

Shaheed Mintu Sangha moved into the final of the Continental Courier cricket tournament beating Ajeyo Cricket Club by two wickets in the first semifinal match at the district stadium yesterday.

Batting first, Ajeyo scored 135 for all out in 38.2 overs.

In reply, Shaheed Mintu managed 139 losing eight wickets in 33.1 overs.

BRIEF SCORES
Ajeyo Cricket Club: 135 all out in 38.2 overs (Doris 42, Rubel 14, Masum 10, Pintu 3/19, Rakib 3/17, Palash 1/17)

Shaheed Mintu Sangha: 139 for eight in 33.1 overs (Sumon 40, Haradhon 13, Pintu 12, Rubel 2/14, Utpal 2/27, Pavel 1/5)

Result: Shaheed Mintu Sangha won by 2 wickets.

Schools cricket

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seven boundaries in his 88-ball knock.

Among others, middle-orders Roni and Masum scored 26 and 24 respectively.

In reply, Adarsha Shikha Niketan were bowled out for 154 in 31.4 overs with Rakibul notching highest 31.

At the Dhanmondi Club ground, New Model High School registered an exciting two-wicket win over Monipur High School.

Middle-order Ashique scored an unbeaten 60 off 75 balls as the winners, chasing a commanding Monipur total of 201 in 35 overs, rattled up 203 with seven balls and two wickets to spare.

Away at the Uttara Police Lines ground, Siddeshwari Boys High School registered an identical two-wicket win over Motijheel Government Boys High School.

Batting first, Motijheel High School scored 143 for eight in 30.1 overs. Famously though, they could not field the other two batsmen as they never turned up for the match.

In reply, Siddeshwari High School reached home in 29.2 overs with two wickets in hand.

At the nearby Friends Club ground, Sourav Smriti High School recorded a six-wicket win over Student's Computerised School.

Electing to bat first, Computerised School were shot out for only 87.

In reply, Sourav Smriti School scored 88 for four in 18.1 overs, opener Babu topscoring with 35.

SCORES IN BRIEF
Student's Computerised School: 87 all out in 22.2 overs (Extras 32, Alamgir 14, Sohel 5/15)

Sourav Smriti High School: 88 for four in 18.1 overs (Babu 35, Parag 29 no; Hanif 2/25)

Result: Sourav Smriti High School won by six wickets.

Motijheel Govt High School: 143 for eight in 30.1 overs (Kabir 43, Jim 21; Dipak 2/26, Tapash 2/26, Jewel 2/26)

Siddeshwari Boys High School: 147 for eight in 29.2 overs (Sumis 24, Tutul 23, Tapash 23 no; Kabir 3/27)

Result: Siddeshwari Boys High School won by two wickets.

He fears nobody

Tennis

REUTERS, California

Pete Sampras has not won a Grand Slam off grass since 1997 and no longer has the burning desire for the top ranking he once had, but at 29 he still believes he has the goods and mental fortitude to keep up with tennis' young guns.

"I'm not scared of anyone," Sampras told the news agency in a recent telephone interview from his Los Angeles home.

"It's a question of how much I want to compete. I'm not going to play 20 to 25 events like I used to. I need to play enough to stay sharp, but with my ability, I think I can still play with anyone," he insisted.

In his last three major events - the 2000 US Open, the 2000 Tennis Masters Cup and the 2001 Australian Open - Sampras failed to produce the firepower and willpower that brought him a record 13 Grand Slam titles and the number one ranking a record six years running.

He was streamrolled by young Russian Marat Safin in the US Open final, was left wide-eyed by the wizardry of Brazilian Gustavo Kuerten at the Masters Cup and fell to his longtime whipping boy Todd Martin last month in Australia.

But the aging former world number one bristles at suggestions that it is time for him to step aside and let the next generation battle for Grand Slam glory.

"There's a lot of good young players but no one who really scares me," he said. "Andre Agassi is the one guy who can beat me when I'm playing well, but with Safin and Kuerten, even though they've beaten me, I feel like the match is on my racket."

"The majority of guys now are baseliners. It's not like I'm a huge

guy with just a huge serve and nothing else. Week in and week out it does get tougher, but when I'm on, it's tough for guys to beat me," said Sampras, who will take a wild card entry into next week's Memphis tournament to keep sharp ahead of next month's bigger events at Indian Wells and Miami.

"I just need to stay inspired and motivated and that's my challenge," he added. "I still have the tools."

Sampras' coach, Paul Annacone, said that when his pupil is on, he still has no peers. "When Pete plays his best tennis, he's unequivocally the best player out there," Annacone said. "Will he produce that tennis 12 months out of the year? That's up to Pete."

feeling again and will keep trying to see if I can get it again."

There remains one glaring omission from Sampras' Grand Slam resume - the French Open, where he has failed to get past the third round since reaching the semifinals in 1996.

"Winning the French Open, that would be a perfect career ender," Sampras admitted. "It's the one place I'm not supposed to win."

"Of course I'd like to win more Wimbledon because that's always been my place. And I haven't won a US Open in a while," added Sampras, whose fourth and last US Open crown came in 1996, before the new stadium was opened.

Yevgeny's desire

Tennis

AFP, Moscow

Olympic tennis champion Yevgeny Kafelnikov has said he will retire from the sport if he can lead Russia to victory in the Davis Cup this year, local media reported Tuesday.

"I will do my best to win the Davis Cup this season," Kafelnikov was quoted as saying in press reports following Russia's Davis Cup win against Slovakia on Sunday.

"This is the only trophy I have failed to win during my career and I will probably quit in the event of our winning this season."

Kafelnikov said he was confident Russia's Davis Cup team - which also includes reigning US Open champion Marat Safin - was capable of going all the way this year.

But his retirement pledge was played down by team captain Shamil Tarpishev.

Tarpishev said Kafelnikov's statement was completely unexpected - and doubted the 2000 Sydney Olympics gold medalist was serious about quitting.

"I do not expect Yevgeny (Kafelnikov) will really quit if we win the Davis Cup," Tarpishev told Russian press.

"I hope he will bring us pride and joy with his tennis at least in the next two or three years. The Russian tennis federation has its own plans and we would hardly be able to release him in the near future."

When he reflects back on his most recent Wimbledon victory, Sampras still gets a little choked up.

"It was a storybook ending - my parents were there how well I played, the sun going down just as I won. It was the perfect way to break the record, a perfect match," recalled Sampras, who won despite playing with an injured shin that kept him off the practice courts.

"It's as good as it ever got and maybe as good as it will ever be. Even if I win it again, it will probably never approach that."

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guy with just a huge serve and nothing else. Week in and week out it does get tougher, but when I'm on, it's tough for guys to beat me," said Sampras, who will take a wild card entry into next week's Memphis tournament to keep sharp ahead of next month's bigger events at Indian Wells and Miami.

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Rajshahi cricket

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Alide Club recorded a eight-wicket victory over Town Club in a match of the Rajshahi Premier Division Cricket League at the local district stadium yesterday.

Sent in to bat, Town Club were all out for 82 runs in 34.5 overs.

In reply, Alide Club reached the target of 83 runs for two wickets in 11.2 overs.

NAT'L SCHOOL CRICKET

Bholanath BB Hindu Academy beat Agram High School and College by five wickets and Shah Makhdum High