

ACB v BCCI 'quake' tie

REUTERS, New Delhi
Indian and Australian cricketers are to play a one-day game to raise funds for survivors of last month's earthquake in western India...

The statement said the match would be between the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and Australian Cricket Board (ACB)...

The proceeds from the match would be utilised for relief and rehabilitation in the areas affected by the earthquake in Gujarat on January 26...

Earlier this month, the Asian Cricket Foundation cancelled a proposed three-nation one-day series in Sharjah...

The cancellation came after local media reported that Sports Minister Uma Bharti was opposed to the national team's participation in the tournament...

Earlier reports say, the Australian cricket team management in India ruled out playing an additional game on the tour for the purpose...

Waugh said he would ask his players to get out of their rooms and get a feel of India, it's people and conditions...

On previous tours we stayed too much in our hotel and did not experience what life was like in India, he said...

But I will talk to the boys and get them to go out a bit. You never really get used to the amount of the people...

FIFA man appeals for calm

AFP, Seoul
The FIFA coordinator for the 2002 World Cup appealed Thursday for co-hosts Japan and South Korea to be left to end their differences in peace to make sure the event is a success...

Speaking at the launch of international ticket sales in Seoul, Peter Velappan, who is also general secretary of the Asian Football Confederation, said a dispute between South Korea and Japan over whose name comes first on tickets was "a little problem..."

"I don't think this little problem should be given so much attention," said Velappan, who is in charge of efforts by the international governing body, FIFA, to make the two rivals work together...

"We are working very hard to try to solve this with Korea and Japan. We should concentrate on the organisation of the World Cup as there are only 470 days left to the start," said Velappan...

"We should be thinking about ticket sales and stadium preparations," said the FIFA official. The World Cup finals will start on May 31, 2002 with South Korea and Japan each hosting 32 matches...

Under a deal which saw Japan get the final, the official title of the event is the 2002 FIFA World Cup Korea/Japan. But the Japanese organising committee has insisted on using Japan's name first on tickets to be sold in Japan...

Japan has said it will wait to get a final decision in the dispute from a FIFA executive committee meeting in March. South Korea has countered that it might seek to get the final taken away from Japan...

But Velappan predicted the 2002 tournament, the first in Asia, would be "the best football festival ever..."

He added: "We expect the stadiums to be full and Korea and Japan are working very hard to make this the most memorable World Cup..."

BD-Nepal score

Table with columns: Player, O, M, R, W. Includes Bangladesh players like Nafeez c Kutuwal b Manjeet and Nepal players like Sharif, Talha, Shafiqul.

Result: Bangladesh U-17 won by 7 wickets. Man-of-the-match: Shafiqul Alam. Umpires: Hassan Javed Saqibi and Sawkatul Rahman.

ACU ahead of time

Cricket

AGENCIES, Auckland

International Cricket Council's (ICC) Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU) head Sir Paul Condon said here Thursday he was confident he is on track to clean up the game well inside his target date of the 2003 World Cup...

Condon told reporters he and his hand-picked unit of six had already seen a reduction in the suspicious activities which had tarnished the game in the past year...

Investigations have led to the banning of Test captains Hansie Cronje and Mohammad Azharuddin for accepting money to forecast matches...

"The sort of things that were going on six months ago have stopped, the funny calls to cricket grounds, trying to get into the groundsman, trying to get into umpires," Condon said...

"We're on track. Certainly before the next World Cup, I would hope we'll have in place new recommendations that will help avoid this..."

The former London Metropolitan Police chief was in New Zealand after the International Cricket Council's (ICC) executive meeting in Melbourne to meet with New Zealand Cricket's anti-corruption pair of retired judge Sir Ian Barker and lawyer Nick Davidson...

They were still to talk to former New Zealand captain Martin Crowe, accused of accepting money for providing match information...

Crowe said he believed the money was for a newspaper column. Condon wouldn't be speaking with Crowe, saying it was up to conduct commission head Lord Griffith in London in April...

Condon, whose team has been in action three months and has spoken to players, umpires and groundsman around the world, believed suspicious activities had been taking place in cricket for the past 20 years...

"At some stage we bring all this to a conclusion, we draw a line under the past and we restore hopefully the credibility and reputation of cricket worldwide," he said...

"I genuinely believe there is a resolve within world cricket to face up to this problem..."

Barker and Davidson to conduct the New Zealand inquiries. Condon has assembled a high-profile team including three former detectives whose jobs had taken them around the world to investigate crime...

"It's a small unit but I think we can punch way above our weight. It's a good group, they're well networked around the world," he said...

Condon will report his team's findings to independent code of conduct commission head Lord Griffith in London in April...



SIR PAUL CONDON

Condon met with eight of the 10 Test captains in Melbourne on Monday and also sat in on the interview with Australian batsman Mark Waugh, who allegedly accepted money from a bookmaker...

Separate investigations in each country were continuing at varying rates, including criminal inquiries in India and England. Approaches made to former England Test player Chris Lewis were being looked at...

There was also a judicial inquiry in Pakistan into the 1999 World Cup, particularly the match where Bangladesh beat Pakistan. South Africa's King Commission, which heard the allegations against Cronje, was soon to resume...

He was confident the upcoming New Zealand-Pakistan series would be free of any controversy. "I have nothing to suggest that anything untoward is going to happen in New Zealand but we'll be watching," he said...

"The vast majority of cricketers are sick and tired of the general smear on the game, and what it does for their reputations..."

Condon said it would be naive to think corruption would be eliminated completely...

One of his top priorities was for the ICC to produce a video for young players warning them of the dangers...

"Corruption in anything is about opportunity and human weakness. Neither of those things will ever disappear," he said...

"The challenge is to keep it to an irreducible minimum and I think we're well on the way to that..."

"Sadly there are still things to come out. Our message is: We will protect the good guys, but if anyone is still out there, they're taking one hell of a risk. We're serious..."

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Schools cricket Rubayet goes on rampage

SPORTS REPORTER

A blazing hundred from Rubayet Haque guided Bangladesh Krira Shikha Protisthan (BKSP) to a huge 151-run win over AK High School in a Dhaka Metropolis qualifying match of the Standard Chartered Grindlays Bank 19th National Schools Cricket Championship at the Police Lines ground in Uttara yesterday...

He scored an unbeaten 106 off just 29 balls as BKSP piled up a mammoth 297 for five in the stipulated 35 overs after electing to bat first...

Along the way the middle-order batsman hammered 14 sixes and three boundaries. Dhiman Ghosh chipped in with 69 off 56 balls while Ashique added 42...

In reply, AK High were all out for 146 in 35 overs with one-down Jewel scoring highest 30. BKSP's Tanvir captured three for 19. In another match, Sourav Smriti High School whitewashed Siddeshwari High School by 141 runs at the Dhanmondi Club ground...

Batting first, Sourav Smriti High piled up 285 for six in 35 overs with middle-order Kabir hitting 90 not out. Siddeshwari High could muster only 144 runs before being dismissed in 27 overs...

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AK HIGH SCHOOL: 146 all out in 35 overs (Jewel 30, Tanvir 3/19). Result: BKSP won by 151 runs. Sourav Smriti High School v Siddeshwari High School: SOURAV SMRITI HIGH SCHOOL: 285 for 6 in 35 overs (Kabir 90 n.o., Rubel 45, Babu 42)...

SIDDESHWARI HIGH SCHOOL: 144 all out in 27 overs (Sohag 52, Rubel 3/16). Result: Sourav Smriti High School won by 141 runs.

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Pepsi won't bid for Premiership

REUTERS, London

U.S. soft drinks giant Pepsi has pulled out of the bidding to sponsor the Premier League next season...

"While the Premier League is a great property, we are not involved in bidding," a company spokesman said on Wednesday. "We are already well covered in that sector by our partnership with Manchester United and our association with global stars like David Beckham..."

Last month brewing giants Budweiser also ended negotiations with the league, whose current sponsorship deal with Carling, the lager brand owned by British brewers Bass, runs out at the end of this season...

The Premier League has refused to reveal the identity of other companies involved in the bidding process. Czech Adriana Gersi, the world number 77, stunned world number eight and second seed Mary Pierce of France 6-4, 5-7, 6-0 in the second round of the Qatar Open yesterday...

"I am at a loss to explain my defeat. I really don't know what happened," Pierce said. "Gersi played well and that helped her to win the important points..."

Pierce, a former French and Australian Open winner who has lost in the third round of this year's Australian Open and was knocked out of the second round of the Paris Open earlier this month, said that she lacked match practice...

"I haven't been playing well in recent months. I feel I am short of match practice." Pierce, who entered the main draw on a wild card, stormed to an early 3-0 lead, but was then broken three times to lose the set in 33 minutes...

Pierce fought back in the second set, despite being down 5-3 after Gersi again broke her three times, to win the next four games and take the set 7-5...

However in the deciding set Pierce was again broken three times by Gersi who won the set 6-0. Gersi, 24, was surprised at her victory. "I have surprised myself. This is my first victory over a player in the top 10," she said...

"There was no pressure at all on me. It is a good win and it is certainly a confidence booster." In other matches third-seeded Frenchwoman Sandrine Testud defeated Miriam Oremans of the Netherlands 7-5, 6-1 to set up a match with Tunisian wild card entrant Selima Sfar who knocked out Bulgaria's Lubomira Bacheva 6-4, 6-4...

Pitch doesn't worry 'em

Cricket

AFP, Bombay

Australian captain Steve Waugh on Thursday predicted victory over India in the upcoming series, saying his world-beating team could play quality cricket on any wicket...

"It does not matter what type of wickets the Indians prepare, we are capable of winning on any matches, are looking for their first series win on Indian soil in 31 years..."

They will play three Test matches, five one-day internationals and three warm-up matches during the gruelling tour which ends on April 6. Waugh said he considered the Indian series as the "final frontier" for his immensely successful team...

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Australian attack led by seasoned fast bowler Glenn McGrath and spin king Shane Warne. But Waugh said he did not expect wickets to play much different from what he had experienced on earlier tours...

"They will help the batters and keep low as the game progresses. That's usually the case in the sub-continent," he said. The experienced Waugh said the key to success lay in how quickly his team adjusts to Indian conditions during the two warm-up matches ahead of the first Test at Bombay from February 27...

There are 14 players in contention for the first Test and these two matches will help them push forward their claims," he said. Striking his trademark psychological blow at the Indians, Waugh said the absence of injured spin spearhead Anil Kumble could cost the hosts dearly...

"He (Kumble) is a vital link in the Indian bowling, a quality bowler. I am sure someone else will step in for him. But the Indians will probably miss Kumble a lot. We also don't have (fast bowler) Brett Lee, so it even things out a bit..."

The Australians fly later on Thursday to the central city of Nagpur, where they clash with India A in the three-day tour opener from Saturday...

The Indians, meanwhile, continue their camp in Madras ahead of the selection of the first Test squad in Nagpur on Monday. Earlier, a 14-member Australian cricket team arrived in Bombay on Wednesday night to begin a seven-week tour which captain Steve Waugh regards as the ultimate test for his world-beaters...

The tourists, who flew in via Hong Kong, were whisked away to an airport hotel where they stayed overnight before departing for the central Indian city of Nagpur. SQUAD: Steve Waugh (captain), Adam Gilchrist (vice-captain), Damien Fleming, Jason Gillespie, Matthew Hayden, Michael Kasprovic, Justin Langer, Damien Martyn, Glenn McGrath, Colin Miller, Ricky Ponting, Michael Slater, Shane Warne, Mark Waugh...

Coach: John Buchanan; Manager: Steve Bernard. Australia cricket team captain Steve Waugh (L) being given a traditional Indian welcome on his team's arrival in Bombay on February 14.

SCHEDULE

Table with columns: Date, Match, Location. Includes Feb 17-19: 3-dayer vs India A Nagpur; Feb 22-24: 3-dayer vs Bombay Bombay; Feb 27-Mar 3: First Test Bombay; Mar 6-8: 3-dayer vs President's XI Delhi; Mar 11-15: Second Test Calcutta; Mar 18-22: Third Test Chennai; Mar 25: First ODI Bangalore; Mar 28: Second ODI Pune; Mar 31: Third ODI Indore; Apr 3: Fourth ODI Visakhapatnam; Apr 6: Fifth ODI Goa; Apr 7: Departure

Waugh said the Australians began the long-awaited seven-week tour. "We have the batters and bowlers to exploit any wicket the Indians may have for us. If we stick to our plans we can do it..."

The Australians, who have won a record 15 consecutive Test matches, are looking for their first series win on Indian soil in 31 years...

They will play three Test matches, five one-day internationals and three warm-up matches during the gruelling tour which ends on April 6. Waugh said he considered the Indian series as the "final frontier" for his immensely successful team...

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England suffered an injury scare to Ashley Giles as they let a Sri Lanka Cricket Board President's XI off the hook on Thursday. The President's side slumped to 24 for four, and were later 84 for five, but recovered to 253 all out on the first day of the four-day tour match. SCOREBOARD: Scoreboard at the end of opening day's play of the four-day tour match between England and the Sri Lanka Board President's XI on Thursday: SL BOARD PRESIDENT'S XI: First innings: Peiris b Hoggard 6; Gunawardene c Thorpe b Caddick 1

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