

Pak plea to Aussie stars

Cricket

REUTERS, Karachi

Pakistan cricket officials have pleaded with leading Australian players to consider their positions carefully before pulling out of a scheduled tour there later this year because of security fears.

"I don't want to respond to what the Australian players are saying," PCB director Brigadier Munawwar Rana told the news agency on Tuesday after several voiced their disquiet over the trip following a bomb attack last week in Karachi.

"We would just like to repeat that we feel the other boards should allow time for the situation to be evaluated in its proper perspective," he said.

Media reports on Tuesday quoted leading Australian players as saying they would not tour Pakistan later this year even if the Australian Cricket Board (ACB) approved the tour in September and October.

Shane Warne, Steve Waugh, Glenn McGrath, Adam Gilchrist were named as the players who were not keen to tour Pakistan for security reasons following the suicide bombing outside the New Zealand team's hotel in Karachi last week which killed 14.

"We had requested the International Cricket Council (ICC) and member boards earlier that they

should put their statements on hold and wait for things to settle down," said Rana.

"In the present context we can understand the immediate reaction from different quarters given the impact the incident has had through the world media," Rana said.

"But we maintain that they should let the dust settle and then the scenario should be evaluated," he added.

Warne said he put safety and family ahead of cricket, while McGrath was reported as saying that "at the end of the day, we play cricket and we love what we do but to put your life on the line for a sport, is not what it's all about".

ACB chief executive James Sutherland has said the situation would be carefully monitored and it was too early to make any decision on the Pakistan tour.

The Pakistan board itself regrets the incident and the loss of the valuable lives or the trauma caused to players from both teams. But it is something beyond our control," Rana said.

Rana was among a group of top PCB officials who met in Islamabad on Monday with PCB chairman Tausif Zia to take stock of things in the wake of the New Zealanders aborting their tour.

Rana said so far the PCB had not contacted the ACB on this matter or on the coming series and would do so after allowing things to settle down.

Sourav hopes to solve Shiv puzzle

AFP, St John's

India's star spinner Anil Kumble will undergo immediate surgery on a fractured jaw to enable him to make the tour of England starting next month, his doctors said on Wednesday.

The leg-spinner, who had his jaw broken by a rising ball from West Indian fast bowler Mervyn Dillon during the fourth Test in Antigua, consulted specialists immediately on his return on Tuesday night.

Surgery has been planned for Thursday and doctors were confident that Kumble will be fit to return to competitive cricket in four weeks time.

Kumble to be fit in time for England tour

AFP, Bangalore

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Biman

FROM PAGE 13

Total: (All out in 27.3 overs) 66
Fall of wickets: 1-29, 2-30, 3-43, 4-43, 5-43, 6-49, 7-61, 8-63, 9-66.

Bowler O M R W
Al-Amin 9 1 15 3
Anis 9 2 32 2
Razzak 2 1 2 0
K Mahmud 4 1 13 2
Imran 3.3 2 4 2
Result: Biman won the match by 102 runs.

What to watch

FROM PAGE 13

Live at 11:30 pm
STAR Sports

Trans World Sport
Int'l Sports News

Taped Version at 8:30 am

Harsha Online

Cricket Talk Show

Repeat at 12:00 pm

Soccer World Cup Heroes

Charlton

Repeat at 3:00 pm

World Cup Soccer Mix

Taped Version at 8:30 pm

Gillette World Cup Preview

Taped Version at 10:00 pm

Sportsline Tonight

Sport News

Live at 10:30 pm

Giles released

REUTERS, London

England have released left-arm spinner Ashley Giles on the eve of the first Test against Sri Lanka at Lord's reducing the squad to 12, the England Cricket Board said on Wednesday.

Squad: Nasser Hussain (captain), Marcus Trescothick, Michael Vaughan, Mark Butcher, Graham Thorpe, John Crawley, Alec Stewart, Andrew Flintoff, Dominic Cork, Andy Caddick, Matthew Hoggard, Alex Tudor.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

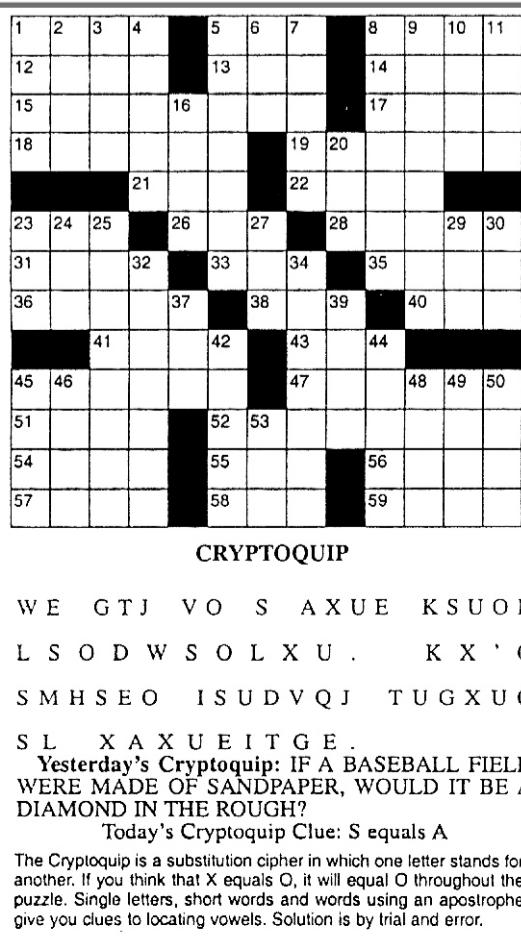


PHOTO: AFP
Teammates applaud Vijay Ratra of India as he walks up to receive the man-of-the-match's award after the end of the fourth Test against West Indies in Antigua on May 14.

Dreary draw in Antigua

FROM PAGE 13
clean hitting as he scored 59 of the 89 runs scored by his team in the morning session after resuming at 405-5.

Chanderpaul batted extremely slow and reached his hundred just before lunch when he flicked a low full-toss from Zaheer to mid-wicket for his 15th four.

He then removed his helmet, hugged Jacobs and kissed the pitch to mark the occasion.

Chanderpaul also completed 400 runs in this series, having scored 140, one, 67 not out and an unbeaten 101 in the previous three Tests.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard on the fifth and final day of the fourth Test between the West Indies and India at the Antigua Recreation Ground here on Tuesday:

INDIA: First innings 513-9 dec (Laxman 130, Ratra 115 not out, Dravid 91, Jaffer 86; Cuffy 3-87, Dillon 3-116, Collins 3-125)

WEST INDIES: First innings (over-night 405-5)

Gayle & Ratra b Zaheer

32 Hinds b Tendulkar

65

Sarwan lbw b Zaheer 51
Lara lbw b Kumble 4
Hooper c Nehra b Tendulkar 136
Chanderpaul not out 136
Jacobs c Laxman b Dravid 118
Dillon b Jaffer 43
Collins sub (Harbhajan) b Jaffer 11
Sanford c Zaheer b Laxman 2
Cuffy not out 0
Extras: (nb-6, w-6, lb-9, b-10) 31
Total (for 9 wkt dec) 629
Fall of wickets: 1-65, 2-121, 3-135, 4-196, 5-382, 6-548, 7-697, 8-625, 9-628

BOWLING

O M R W
Srinath 45 19 82 0
Nehra 49 16 122 0
Zaheer 48 14 92 2
Ganguly 12 0 44 0
Tendulkar 34 4 107 2
Kumble 14 5 29 1
Laxman 17 6 32 1
Dravid 9 3 18 1
Jaffer 11 3 18 2
Das 8 2 28 0
Ratra 1 0 1 0

Result: Match drawn

Man of the match: Ajay Ratra (Ind)

Fifth Test: Jamaica (May 18-22)

Sehwag in, Srinath out

Cricket

AFP, Bombay

India's cricket selectors on Wednesday recalled dashing batsman Virender Sehwag for the one-day series against the West Indies later this month.

Sehwag, sidelined from the ongoing Test series in the Caribbean due to a dislocated shoulder, was named in a 15-man squad that omitted pace spearhead Javagal Srinath, who was rested.

Sehwag will fly out with batsmen Yuvraj Singh and Mohammad Kaif, seamer Ajit Agarkar and left-arm spinner Murali Kartik later this week to join the Indian team in the West Indies.

The first of five one-day internationals will be played at Sabina

Park, Kingston on May 25, three days after the fifth and final Test ends at the same venue.

Srinath, who has preferred to skip one-day matches in recent times to concentrate on his Test career, will return home with Wasim Jaffer, Sanjay Bangar, Shiv Das, Deep Dasgupta and Sarandeep Singh after the deciding Test.

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Obviously, we need little bit of help from the wicket to make that happen. We'll try again in the next Test. He's in good form, but anything can happen," he said of Chanderpaul, who also hit 137 not out against India in 1997 at Bridgetown.

Four of his five Test hundreds have been against India," said Ganguly. "We're trying to do something to stop him. We tried in this game, but the pitch didn't have enough bounce.

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Ajay Ratra was retained as wicket-keeper after scoring a century in the drawn fourth Test at Antigua, while the return of Agarkar bolsters the seam attack in Srinath's absence.

Kartik, who forced his selection after rich hauls in domestic cricket, will be the second spinner in the squad alongside Harbhajan Singh.

Kartik, who has played four

Tests, has just one limited-overs international to his credit.

Leg-spinner Anil Kumble was ruled out of the one-dayers with a fractured jaw, caused by a rising ball from Mervyn Dillon during the Antigua Test.

According to new cricket board guidelines, chief selector Chandu Borde is barred from discussing the selection with the media.

The five one-dayers will be played in Jamaica (May 25 and 26), Barbados (May 29) and Trinidad (June 1 and 2).

SQUAD

Sourav Ganguly (capt), Sachin Tendulkar, Rahul Dravid, Virender Sehwag, Venkatsai Laxman, Dinesh Mongia, Yuvraj Singh, Mohammad Kaif, Ajay Ratra, Murali Kartik, Harbhajan Singh, Zaheer Khan, Ajit Agarkar, Ashish Nehra, Tino Yohanam.

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CUP CORNER

FROM PAGE 13
Lineker dated back to his experience with female fans dominating crowds in the stadiums, The Sun reported.

"The Japanese supporters are enthusiastic but they are extremely high-pitched. The players might need protection for their ears.

"The games sounded like a schoolboy international with all the shrill voices," he said.

The climate will not help because humidity can be crippling. I'm just glad they have scheduled most of the matches for the evening.

"The other worry is that the monsoon season is approaching," Lineker added.

CHIRAC SENDS SUPPORT

Clairefontaine

French president Jacques Chirac sent a message of support to the country's national football team which was preparing for its World Cup defence at their training headquarters here on Tuesday.

Chirac sent a message of solidarity to the 21 players and staff before their Far East adventure.

The two players missing were Real Madrid's Zinedine Zidane and Claude Makelele who are set to play in the Champions League final against Bayer Leverkusen in Glasgow on Wednesday.

Sports minister Jean-Francois Lamour said: "I have come here in the name of the government and the French president to say that the whole of France is supporting the team of Marcel Desailly and Roger Lemerre before Saturday's match against Belgium and their departure to Asia."

Chirac himself wrote: "It's a new challenge for the team which encapsulates, in the eyes of the French and of the entire world, a French generation of players which wins."

"You will put into this competition all the courage, talent and panache to which we have been accustomed."

Marcel Desailly replied that the best wishes of Chirac could be a good omen as they try to retain the title: "The president has always supported us and he was there when we won in 1998. We are really happy to receive this message from a superstitious point of view."

It hasn't been an easy week for Chirac regarding football however. He stormed out of the VIP tribune when fans booted the Marseillaise national anthem at the French Cup final at the Stade de France on Saturday night.

He was then seen in the stands, looking on as the match continued.

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