

Safety still

FROM PAGE 13
Ganguly however said he expected to lead a first-choice Indian team for the tour.

He said: "There are serious security concerns among players, but now that the tour is on officially, I expect to lead a full-strength team."

Ganguly will start planning for the tour next week after attending the wedding of the team's batting star VVS Laxman in the southern city of Hyderabad.

"It's just four days since we've come back, I'm yet to get over the fatigue," he said.

"In Team India, sound of silence," an Indian Express headline screamed, noting that no player said he was looking forward to the biggest event in Indian cricket after the World Cup.

"That is none of my business," said paceman Ashish Nehra. "About playing in Pakistan, I think you should ask the captain, coach and the board president."

Political analyst Prem Shankar Jha wrote in Outlook that the Indian team would be at risk in Pakistan as Islamic extremists' "desperation has grown" after failed attempts on President Pervez Musharraf's life.

He said militants are "likely to regard the arrival of the Indian team as a gift from heaven - a sacrificial lamb tethered in the open for their express hunting pleasure."

Abdul J'bari hero

FROM PAGE 13
Kalachandpur High School: 54/10 in 19.4 overs (Islandar 4-16, Noor 4-14)

Badda Alatunnesa High School: 55/1 in 10.2 (Hasan 18, Tareq 15)
Result: Badda Alatunnesa High School won by nine wickets.

Nababpur Government High School: 244/9 in 35 overs (Ashfaq 68, Hakim 35, Maruf 3-17, Rezwana 3-31)

Maple Leaf International School: 191/10 in 30.3 overs (Asif 60, Shimul 2-23)
Result: Nababpur Government High School won by 53 runs.

Knowledge King Child School: 150/10 in 30 overs (Majid 23, Nabil 10, Mehedi 4-27, Saifur 2-28)
Rahmatullah Model School: 154/6 in 32.4 overs (Rajib 56, Kamal 2-29)
Result: Rahmatullah Model won by four wickets.

Sher-e-Bangla Ideal School: 172/10 in 30.1 overs (Kawser 26, Iqbal 3-43, Asif 2-28)
Bangladesh International School: 155/10 in 33.5 overs (Nafis 26 Asadur 4-28, Shahin 3-31)
Result: Sher-e-Bangla Ideal won by 17 runs.



PHOTO: AFP

Australia cricket team members play rugby during a practice session at Colombo yesterday.

Warne seen with punter!



SMH, undated

Shane Warne was seen during the 1999 World Cup in the company of an Indian gambler who remains the subject of investigations into match-fixing, according to an explosive new report.

India's Outlook magazine has published the claim that Warne and West Indian batsman Brian Lara were seen emerging from a London pizza restaurant with Delhi-based punter Ratan Mehta.

The allegation is reportedly contained in a statement tendered to the International Cricket Council's Anti-Corruption and Security Unit by an unidentified Indian businessman, which details startling claims of match-fixing involving Mehta at the 1999 tournament.

On Sunday night, Warne's brother and manager, Jason, told that the champion cricketer was unavailable for comment, but he was confident his brother would not have been involved in any wrongdoing.

"I'm sure there wouldn't have

been anything untoward going on," Jason Warne said.

"If he was in the company of someone who was involved in match-fixing, I'm sure Shane wouldn't have known that guy was involved in any of that. It would have been fairly innocent."

The Indian businessman's statement makes no suggestion that Warne or Lara were in any way connected with match-fixing, which is said to have involved Indian and Pakistani cricketers.

The link made between Warne and Mehta, however, will be the last thing the leg-spinner wants as he begins his comeback from a year-long drugs ban. It will also revive Warne's infamous past accepting 5,000 dollars in 1994-95 from an Indian bookmaker known only as "John" to provide information about pitch and weather conditions. The then Australian Cricket Board fined Warne 8,000 dollars for accepting the money.

Outlook reported that in confidential correspondence with the Pakistan Cricket Board, the International Cricket Council's Anti-Corruption Unit suggested Mehta fixed the result of a Super Six match

at the tournament between Pakistan and India, which was won comfortably by India after they had scored only 227.

The unit's chief, Paul Condon, had referred to a statement given by a high-flying Delhi businessman to the unit when it visited India in September, 2002. The explosive three-page statement carries allegations that he witnessed Mehta making phone calls to cricketers to fix the India-Pakistan match.

"Two or three days after the India-Pakistan match," the statement says, "I bumped into Mehta again. This time he was coming out of the Pizza Pomodoro restaurant in Beauchamp Place, Knightsbridge. He was with Shane Warne, Brian Lara and another cricketer, whose name I cannot be sure of."

Jason Warne noted this alleged meeting came years after Warne rejected an approach from Pakistan cricketer Salim Malik.

"When Shane was offered money [from Malik] he reported it to officials. I'm sure he was not going to have any thoughts about getting involved a few years after that."

No upsets

FROM PAGE 13
wicket stand of 80 runs as Nepal made their second highest total against England in the history of Under-19 cricket.

Incidentally their best score is 196 in 46.3 overs during the Sri Lanka edition in 2000.

Both Nepalese coach Roy Dias and captain Shakti Prasad Gauchan were disappointed with their team's performance.

"We didn't bat well. Also we dropped vital catches. We will need to improve in these departments," they said.

English skipper Cook, however, praised the Nepalese bowlers.

"They frustrated our attempts of an early victory with good line and length."

PAKISTAN V PNG

Pakistan breezed past Papua New Guinea in their opening Group D match at the newly-built Khulna Divisional Stadium.

Pakistan captain Khaled Latif invited PNG to bat and they were soon out for 60 runs in just 17.5 overs.

Only one-down Asad Vala managed to trouble the statisticians with 10.

Four PNG batsmen including skipper Chris Amini were sent back without opening their accounts. The ICC associate member team never came to terms with Riaz Afridi.

The Peshawar pacer grabbed four for 15 in a hostile seven-over spell. He deservedly earned the player-of-the-match award.

Leg-break bowler Mansoor Amzad from Sialkot claimed three wickets for just five runs and Lahore left-arm medium pacer Wahab Riaz took two wickets.

Pakistan lost both openers before getting home in 14.5 overs.

Memorial cricket begins Feb 23

CU CORRESPONDENT

The Sheikh Aminur Rahman Memorial Gold Cup Cricket Tournament begins at the Mozu Bhandar shrine ground at Boalkhazi upazila in the district on February 23.

Khitapachar Mozu Bhandar Sports Organisation has arranged the tournament for the first time and offers attractive prizes for the participating teams.

'Be attacking'



REUTERS, Colombo

Sri Lanka's one-day skipper Marvan Atapattu has urged his team to play positive cricket in the forthcoming series against Australia and display the natural flair that helped them to win the 1996 World Cup.

Sri Lanka changed the face of one-day internationals by employing an attacking strategy during the first 15 overs of a match when fielding restrictions are still in place.

The ploy helped them to beat overwhelming favourites Australia in the 1996 Cup final and Atapattu believes his side should stick to that winning formula.

"We have a style of play that we developed from 1994-95 and it has been very successful for us," Atapattu wrote in a column in the official tournament brochure.

"Our batting is aggressive, innovative and unorthodox and our bowling centres around the spinners.

"Against the very best, it's even more important to be true to your own style. We must go out there and play our natural game."

World champions Australia start their five-match one-day series in Dambulla on Friday before playing three Tests during the six-week tour of the island.

Atapattu said his experienced one-day side, buoyed by wins over West Indies and England in their last two series, will be difficult to beat in home conditions.



MARVAN ATAPATTU

"Sri Lanka team cannot wait to get stuck in," said Atapattu.

"Australia have earned the right to be called world champions but we will

not be cowed by their reputation.

"They are not invincible. We have nothing to lose and everything to gain. I feel we can push them really hard."

Sri Lanka have named six specialist spinners in a 25-man training squad and a minimum of three frontline slow bowlers are expected to play in the final lineup.

"If you look at our recent wins against them, in Sydney last year and in Colombo during the ICC Champions Trophy, it tells you a story," he added.

"Their awesome batting line-up is not as comfortable against quality spinners on the kind of slow tracks that are the norm in Sri Lanka."

Ricky Ponting has urged his team to continue playing the aggressive brand of cricket overseas that has made virtually unbeatable at home, but Atapattu believes that T positive style will be harder to pull off in Sri Lanka.

"Their aggressive style of batting, which looks amazing when it clicks, is harder to carry off in our conditions," he said.

"I believe that they are the ones under pressure as they come here with world champs with heavy expectations upon their shoulders. They are expected to win and have much to prove."

It's Clijsters v Pierce



AFP, Paris

World No 2 Kim Clijsters of Belgium powered into the final of the WTA Paris Open here Saturday to book a final place against a rejuvenated Mary Pierce of France.

Clijsters had no difficulty in disposing of Dinara Safina of Russia, the younger sister of Marat, winning 6-1, 6-1 despite still having her right ankle bandaged from an injury she sustained prior to the Australian Open.

Back in Europe after a three-month stay in Australia, Clijsters was always on top against a player who battled through the qualifiers and who had spent nearly 10 hours on court in the last few days.

Pierce, who won this tournament six years ago, was unseeded after a lengthy lay-off to recover from injuries which saw her world ranking

slip to 37th. But she says she has come back refreshed.

After a tough first set she proved too strong for France's latest tennis find, 16-year old Tatiana Golovin, winning 6-4, 6-0.

Golovin made her mark at the Australian Open and reached the last four by defeating Russian second seed and world number 10 Elena Dementieva.

She said she had suffered back pains before the match and had been uncertain until the last moment that she would play.

"I got some treatment and tried to do my best but Mary played a lot better than I did," said Golovin.

"I am going to take a fortnight off to get some rest and sleep."

Pierce said she had rarely served as well, hitting 83 percent of her first serves.

"I think I am on the right track, but there are still areas in which I can improve. I am proud of what I have achieved," said Pierce.

Manikganj cricket

OUR CORRESPONDENT

The Language Martyr Rafique Memorial Cricket Tournament began at the Shaheed Miraj-Tapan Stadium in Manikganj yesterday.

Nizam Shamsul Smriti Sangha defeated Manikganj Cricket Centre by 65 runs in the inaugural match.

Nizam SSS batted first and made 129 before being all out in 29 overs. Sorhab top-scored with 43 while Arif and Suman shared six wickets.

Manikganj CC were bundled out for 64 in 29.1 overs with Khorsheed making the only double-digit contribution with 12. Chamak and Roki did the damage bagging three wickets each.

Eight teams are taking part in the tournament. They are Manikganj CC, Nizam SS, Sewta Uday Sena, Bittu Club, Victoria Club, Provast Sangha, Dashara Palli Mangal Samiti and Jovat Sangha.

Young Black Caps seize the day

FROM PAGE 13
Despite the loss, coach McKinnis said that it was good education for his boys.

"We learned a lot today. We learned from the New Zealanders how to bat under trying conditions."

McKinnis also believed that all was not yet over.

"We can still make the Super League if we win our next matches against Scotland and India. So we should keep our heads high."

His New Zealand counterpart Dayle Hadlee said that it was anybody's game. "I thought we got a bit lucky. They (Bangladesh) are a very strong side and we expected that. The loss in the first match against the Academy (BKSP) was quite an eye-opener for us and we were better prepared for this game," said Hadlee.

Man-of-the-match Mckay revealed that staying relaxed was the key to pulling off the victory.

"When Anton came in we just smiled at each other and enjoyed the proceedings from there on. Playing in front of such a huge crowd was another incentive to do well. We've never seen anything like this before. The highest number of fans I've experienced in the past should be around 500."

The Bangladesh Under-19s will play their next match against minnows Scotland tomorrow at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium. Their last group game is against India at the BNS on February 20.

SCOREBOARD

Scorecards of the four preliminary ICC U-19 Cricket World Cup matches at different venues yesterday:

Bangladesh vs New Zealand

Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium	
BANGLADESH	
Nafees c and b Davis	67
Naem c Watling b Davis	0
Aftab run out	8
Nazimuddin lbw b Findlay	26
Ashiqur c Watling b Smith	42
Dhiman c Devcich b Smith	17
Bashar lbw b Davis	17
Nadif run out	6
Nazmul lbw b Smith	1
Enamul c Carey b Smith	0
Shahadat not out	0
Extras: (lb-4, nb-4, w-10)	18
Total: (All out in 46.3 overs)	202
Fall of wks: 1-18, 2-36, 3-75, 4-132, 5-170, 6-179, 7-194, 8-196, 9-196, 10-202	
Bowler	O M R W

Davis	8.3	2	34	3
Smith	10	0	43	4
Carl	7	0	32	0
Findlay	9	1	37	1
Mckay	10	0	36	0
Devcich	2	0	16	0
NEW ZEALAND				
Carey b Naem	36			
Watling c Naem b Shahadat	12			
Chrisp run out (Naem)	0			
Wilson lbw b Enamul Jr	6			
Flynn c Naem b Nadif	29			
Mckay not out	40			
Findlay run out	8			
Anton c Nadif b Shahdat	36			
Carl b Enamul Jr	2			
Davis not out	2			
Extras: (b-1, lb-14, nb-1, w-17)	33			
Total: (For 8 wks in 49.2 overs)	204			
Fall of wks: 1-38, 2-39, 3-46, 4-95, 5-98, 6-118, 7-188, 8-196				
Bowler	O M R W			
Nazmul	8	0	41	0
Shahadat	8	1	28	2
Enamul	9.2	0	36	2
Bashar	6	0	32	0
Nadif	8	0	29	1
Naem	10	0	23	1
Result: New Zealand won by two wickets.				
Man-of-the-match: Sam McKay (NZ)				
Toss: New Zealand				

Venue: Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra

ZIMBABWE

Taylor b Maharoof	5
Cameron b Chanka	1
Williams c Silva b Mathews	47
Mawoy run out	0
Ervine c Mahroof b Kulasekara	13
Mufambisi b Mahroof	1
Chigumbura b Suraj	6
Homme b Mahroof	41
Marisa c Silva b Mathews	2
Ranyangara b Mahroof	23
Edward not out	1
Extras: (lb-5, w-16)	21
Total: (All out in 49.3 overs)	161
Fall of wks: 1-9, 2-10, 3-10, 4-40, 5-41, 6-105, 7-105, 8-115, 9-160, 10-161	

Bowler	O M R W
Mahroof	9.3 2 28 4
Chanaka	10 3 43 1
Suraj	8 1 30 1
Kulasekara	10 0 27 1
Mathews	10 2 27 2
Ratnayake	2 0 6 0

SRI LANKA

Tharanga c Homme b Ford	11
Channa b Ngara	0
Vithank c Mawoyo b Ford	4
Ratnayake c Ervine b Chigumbura	22
Kaushal c Taylor b Chigumbura	9
Mahroof c Taylor b Ranyangara	32
Silva c Panayangara b Chigumbura	3
Kulasekara not out	37
Mathews lbw b Cameron	0
Suraj not out	9
Extras: (b-4, lb-12, w-19)	35
Total: (For 8 wks in 38.2 overs)	162
Fall of wks: 1-11, 2-24, 3-35, 4-61, 5-64, 6-65, 7-148, 8-148	

Bowler	O M R W
Ford	10 0 37 2
Ranyangara	10 1 41 2
Chigumbura	9.2 1 32 3
Ratnayake	1 0 6 0
Williams	4 0 14 0
Cameron	4 0 12 1

Result: Sri Lanka won by two wickets.

Man-of-the-match: Kosala Kulasekara

Toss: Sri Lanka

Pakistan vs Papua New Guinea

Venue: Khulna Divisional Stadium	
PAPUA NEW GUINEA	
Kila c Haider b Riaz	9
KAmini c Haider b Afridi	3
Vala c Mirza b Afridi	10
Dai lbw b Riaz	4
CAmini b Afridi	0
Pala b Afridi	5
Harry c Qadir b Amjad	0
Tamasi c & b Mahmood	0
Boto not out	9
Vali b Amjad	0
Davai b Amjad	1
Extras: (lb-6, nb-3, w-10)	19
Total: (All out in 17.5 overs)	60
Fall of wks: 1-6, 2-20, 3-20, 4-25, 5-33, 6-46, 7-48, 8-48, 9-48, 10-60	
Bowler	O M R W

Afridi	7	2	15	4
Riaz	7	0	27	2
Mahmood	2	1	7	1
Amjad	1.5	1	5	3

PAKISTAN

Latif c Harry b Boto	17
Zaheer c Amini b Boto	6
Mirza not out	24
Saeed not out	9
Extras: (b-1, w-6)	7
Total: (For 2 wks in 14.5 overs)	63
Fall of wks: 1-25, 2-28	

Bowler	O M R W
Boto	7 2 15 2
Davai	1 0 11 0
Vali	4 0 14 0
Tamasi	2 0 12 0
Kala	0.5 0 10 0

Result: Pakistan won by eight wickets.

Man-of-the-match: Riaz Afridi (Pak)

Toss: Pakistan.

England vs Nepal

Venue: M A Aziz Stadium	
NEPAL	
Chaugai c New b Plunkett	17
Shrestha c New b Plunkett	12
Subedi b Stiff	1
Vesawkar b Harrison	82
Gauchan lbw b Patel	9
Khadka c New b Harrison	9
M Shrestha c Stiff b Broadbent	0
Katual not out	30
Kesari c New b Bresnan	0
R Shrestha not out	2
Extras: (b-1, lb-3, nb-3, w-22)	29
Total: (For 8 wks in 50 overs)	191
Fall of wks: 1-3, 2-21, 3-55, 4-76, 5-101, 6-102, 7-182, 8-184	

Bowler	O M R W
Bresnan	10 0 55 1
Plunkett	9 2 42 2
Patel	10 4 15 1
Stiff	5 0 16 1
Harrison	8 0 31 2
Broadbent	8 0 28 1

ENGLAND

Cook c Katuwal b M Shrestha	9
Bopara c & b Khadka	59
Davies not out	78
Patel not out	35
Extras: (lb-4, nb-1, w-6)	11
Total: (For 2 wks in 43 overs)	192
Fall of wks: 1-13, 2-137	

Bowler	O	M	R	W
M Shrestha	8	0	43	1
Khadka	9	1	26	1
Gauchan	8	0	33	0
Lama	7	0	34	0
Kesari	7	0	29	0
R Shrestha	3	0	14	0
Subedi	1	0	9	0