SPÖRT

Flintoff's belief

Cricket

Andrew Flintoff claims England's batsmen can handle the challenge of Glenn McGrath and Shane Warne despite their crushing opening Ashes defeat by Australia.

"There's no panic in the England team -- we still have good players," Flintoff told The Sun.

"The rest of the series now is about our mental ability and strength of character as much as our technical skills.

"But the brilliant spirit in the squad has been built up over several years and one poor result has

not changed anything "There are four Tests to go, that is a lot of cricket to be played over the next six weeks.

"We must come back strongly at Edgbaston next week."

McGrath and Warne picked up 15 wickets at Lord's and Flintoff said: "There's no doubt Warne is hard to deal with when you're batting against him. That goes without

"He's a fine bowler so it's up to us to raise our game. We do have plans when facing him -- we just don't walk to the crease without thinking about what we're going to do.

to adapt, depending on how much the ball is spinning and things like that. It's good to have a game-plan but you must be flexible and reactive

spell after tea on the first day was a fine piece of bowling. The way he used the slope was superb.

challenge and make sure we play better at Edgbaston.

'Kevin Pietersen was able to deal with both Warne and McGrath by using good footwork and playing in a positive way."

Pietersen was one of England's

Dhoni shines as India win again

REUTERS, Kurunegala

Wicketkeeper Mahendra Dhoni scored a stylish 88 to guide India to a 93-run victory over a Kurunegala District Invitation XI on Wednesday.

India, playing their last warm-up game before a triangular series with Sri Lanka and West Indies starts on Saturday, scored 250 in 42.2 overs and then bowled out the young Sri Lankan side for 157 in 36.2 overs.

Dhoni, opening the innings with Virender Sehwag, cracked his 88 from 97 balls, hitting two sixes and six fours.

The 24-year-old right-hander, who scored 86 not out in India's first practice game on Monday, is the one India batsman to have clicked into top form after the team's threemonth break from international cricket.

The next highest scorer was Suresh Raina with 29 but Sehwag (16), Yuvraj Singh (20), Rahul Dravid (15), Mohammad Kaif (three) and Venugopal Rao (13) failed to capitalise on their last match prac-

Pace bowler Irfan Pathan, though, warmed up well for India's opener with Sri Lanka on Saturday, taking 3-20 during his new-ball burst on a slow pitch

Former Sri Lanka internationals Jehan Mubarak (46) and Lanka de Silva (51) made India's other bowlers work hard during a 90-run stand from 94 balls for the fourth wicket.

But after Mubarak pulled a short ball from Ashish Nehra (2-36) straight to midwicket, the Kurunegala District XI folded, losing their last seven wickets for 47 runs.

BRIEF SCORES

INDIA: 250 all out in 42.2 overs (Dhoni 88, Raina 29; Karunaratne 3-

KURUNEGALA DISTRICT INVITA-TION XI: 157 all out in 36.2 overs (De Silva 51, Mubarak 46; Pathan 3-20, Nehra 2-36, Sehwag 2-18) Result: India won by 93 runs.

Pakistan reject Multan switch?

BBC ONLINE, undated

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has rejected a request from its English counterpart to move the first winter Test from Multan to Rawalpindi, sav

Saleem Altaf, the PCB's director of operations, claimed the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) had objected on security and accommodation grounds.

"We have rejected this proposition since Multan has a beautiful Test stadium and is one of our best venues," Altaf told Pakistan paper the

An ECB spokesman refused to confirm whether Multan had been discussed.

The ECB tabled a number of proposals regarding venues in a

meeting in Lahore earlier this month. The ECB has already refused to play a Test in Karachi and said

England will only play one limitedovers international in the city. According to The News, the ECB

objected to the distance between the hotel and the stadium in Multan, the security risks associated with a long daily journey and the limited number of quality hotels in the city.

An ECB spokesman told BBC Sport: "We had discussions with them about many issues. Karachi was the most contentious but the rest are private. We still haven't received the final proposed sched-

Issa Khan Navy's

FROM PAGE 12 eight teams took part in the five-day

Meanwhile, BNS Haji Mohsin team clinched the waterpolo title beating BNS Issa Khan 13-6 in the

"But it's also important to be able

He added: "McGrath's opening

"He got me out, though I think I was a little bit unlucky because the ball kept low.

"Again it is up to us to rise to the

few stars the 239-run defeat, scoring a half-century in both innings on his debut, even though he did drop

School kabaddi semis today

SPORTS REPORTER

The semifinals of the school kabaddi tournament will be held today at the Outer Stadium kabaddi court.

Ansar and VDP School will take on Haider Ali School in the first semi while Doalirpar meet Nawabpur Government School in the second

In yesterday's matches, Haider Ali School defeated Segunbagicha High School 52-26 while Alhaj Jafar Bapari School trounced Tamijuddin High School 53-5.

In the mini kabaddi tournament for primary schools, Kalyanpur School edged Ibrahimpur School 47-42, Nidhu Smriti School beat Madartek School 35-19 and Pirerbagh School beat Upa-Shahar School 37-32.

Barca securing Rijkaard, Ronaldinho

SPORTINGLIFE

Barcelona president Joan Laporta claims the club are close to agreeing a new deal with coach Frank Rijkaard but admits that negotiations are still ongoing with Ronaldinho.

Rijkaard is set to commit himself to Barca until 2009 after guiding the club to the Primera Liga title last

The agreement is already there in terms of the basic details but there are still some small areas which Txiki (Bequiristain, Barcelona sports director) is taking care of," Laporta told the press on Barca's pre-season tour in Aarhus, Denmark

However, talks over a new deal with Ronaldinho are not moving as

"We will look for a formula which will see us continuing to work together but we cannot jump the gun at the moment," Laporta added.

"Ronaldinho is under contract and we are looking to extend it."1

Phelps back FROM PAGE 12

South African Ryk Neethling was third in 1:46.63.

But all eves were on Phelps to see how the superstar of the Athens Olympics would rebound from his rare 400m freestyle flop.

"I've never really been in that condition to tell you the truth," Phelps said. "I don't even remember a time when I didn't make the final. It was a big

learning experience for me "I've just been fortunate enough to have the team that I have to support

Phelps said he hoped the victory, in an event in which he won bronze in Athens behind Montreal absentees Ian Thorpe and Pieter van den Hoogenband, had put him back on track for good with the 100m butterfly, 200m individual medley, two likely relay swims and another unfamiliar freestyle event - the 100m - still await-

Rain spoils

FROM PAGE 12 Glamorgan at Pen-y-Pound, Abergavenny on Wednesday: GLAMORGAN: First innings 380 all out (Wallace 51, Powell 111, Wharf 77, Croft 40; Russel 4-89, Shahadat 2-65, Talha 2-76, Enamul 2-85).

BANGLADESH A: First innings Shahriar not out Nafees c Wharf b Davies 10 Tushar Ibw b Davies Kapali not out

Extras: (lb-1, w-1, nb-3) Total: (For two wkts in 10.1 overs) 54 To bat: Nazimuddin, Shahin Hossain, Mehrab Hossain Jr, Syed Russel, Shahadat Hossain, Jubair, Enamul Haque Jr. Fall of wkts: 1-26, 2-44.

0 M Bowler 5.1 2 17 2 Wharf 0 36



LET'S SEE HOW GOOD YOU ARE! Brazilian idol Ronaldinho plays with a kid at the skip soccer clinic in Madrid on

'Jones needs to improve'

Russell stands by the England keeper

Cricket

AFP/BBC ONLINE, undated

England wicketkeeper Geraint Jones needs to improve to make sure of his place in the side, former Australia captain Allan Border said.

Jones, 29, looked out of sorts in the first Test against Australia at Lord's, dropping two straightforward catches

and exhibiting shoddy glovework. In addition, the Kent player was guilty of playing a dreadful shot which cost him his wicket when England were trying to save the game on

Sunday. Former Australian skipper Border said: "There is clearly a worry about Geraint Jones' performance behind the stumps. He will need to improve or I would be looking closely at his posi-

tion within the team. Border also feels that England would be better served drafting in Durham all-rounder Paul Collingwood at the expense of a bowler in the second Test at Edgbaston which starts on August 4.

He said: "I'd look to leave out a bowler for the second Test and bring in a batsmen who can bowl a reasonable

Collingwood could fulfil this role."

Despite England's crushing 239run defeat. Border insisted it is not all doom and gloom for England and he was impressed with the performance of paceman Steve Harmison and debutant Kevin Pietersen.

Pietersen scored two halfcenturies but dropped three catches, and Border added: "I was very impressed with England's bowling force especially big Steve Harmison who led from the front on the first day.

"From England's perspective, was also impressed with Kevin Pietersen. He came through with flying colours and the Aussies don't seem to have a plan as to how to deal "But England still copped a bit of a

thumping with Australia proving they're definitely a hard nut to crack. Whilst England's bowling looked good, they must address some key

"Dropped catches and a very ordinary display with the bat cost England dearly. However, wicketkeeping coach

Jack Russell has rushed to the aid of under-fire Jones. Russell, the former England a keeper you're in the firing line most of the time and you don't get them all.

caught everything this summer. There's no wicketkeeper in the

history of the game that hasn't dropped a catch here or there. He's still in good form and has been work-Jones dropped tail-enders Jason Gillespie and Glenn McGrath off the

bowling of Simon Jones when

England desperately needed to finish off Australia's lower order on the third When Jones replaced Nottinghamshire's Chris Read last year the selectors made it clear they were

opting for a keeper-batsman as opposed to a specialist gloveman. And he did better than most of the batsmen in the first innings, hitting a gutsy 30, before he was caught pulling

in the second innings for just six. Former 54-Test Russell added: "I dropped two catches on my first day in

Test cricket. "But I would think Jones has had about 20-25 dismissals for England

this summer and he's dropped two. So he's catching at least nine out of 10 which is a very good rate."



38 Lovey Star Bangladesh cricketer Mohammad Rafique, who has joined NSDP as a spokesperson, is flanked by NSDP chief of party Robert J. Timmons (R) and deputy chief of party Tamara Smith after the signing ceremony on Wednesday. 39 Standard

Ronaldo sinks Jubilo

Football

Ronaldo struck twice to help Real Madrid to a 3-1 win over J-League side Jubilo Iwata in Tokvo in the penultimate match of their preseason tour on Wednesday.

Captain Raul opened the scoring early on at Ajinomoto Stadium before a 28th-minute penalty and a late third from Brazil striker helped the Spanish powerhouse recover from a shock 3-0 defeat to Tokyo Verdy 48 hours earlier. Real took the lead after just three

minutes after when Takayuki Chano attempted to challenge Michael

for Raul to slot home.

Owen thought he had doubled Real's lead six minutes later, putting

a David Beckham pass through the legs of Yoshikatsu Kawaguchi but the goal was ruled out for offside. Iwata leveled through a sweetly struck effort from Sho Naruoka in the

24th minute but Ronaldo restored the visitors' advantage from the penalty spot. Ronaldo went down in the box under a challenge from Chano but dusted himself off to drive the spot

kick just beyond Kawaguchi and in

off the right-hand post. Raul should have made it 3-1 after the break but he screwed wide 10 minutes into the second half while Iwata's Japan Under 20 striker

Bobby Cullen missed a decen

chance to pull Iwata level at the other end. Man of the Match Ronaldo wrapped up the victory when he collected a clever pass from Luis

Figo and outpaced Kentaro Oi defender before stabbing past Kawaguchi. Real kicked off tour with a 3-1 win over Mexico's Chivas Guadalajara n Chicago and a 2-0 victory against

the Los Angeles Galaxy in The Spaniards edged China's Beijing Guo'an 3-2 before their

embarrassing defeat to Verdy. After leaving Tokyo, Real wrap up the lucrative trip with a friendly in

Liverpool survive a scare

CHAMPS LEAGUE

Champions League holders Liverpool came from behind to beat Lithuanian champions Kaunas 3-1 in their Champions League second preliminary round first leg clash.

Goals by Djibril Cisse, Jamie Carragher - his first goal in six years and a second-half penalty by captain Steven Gerrard saw them home though the margin of victory should have been greater but for some woeful finishing by Cisse.

The gallant Lithuanians had taken a shock lead through Giedrius Barevicius in the 21st minute to give the English giants a wake up call. Arturas Rimkevicius got round

Sammi Hyppia - who was playing in his 46th successive European club match for Liverpool dating back to 2001 - in the 21st minute and despite Barevicius not getting clean

Jose Reina and into the back of the net to have the home fans on their Kaunas - 15 points off the pace in

their championship - only held their lead for six minutes as the persistently effective Liverpool left winger Bolo Zenden put in a cross and fellow new signing Peter Crouch headed it down for Cisse to rifle home the ball past Eduardas Kurskis.

Liverpool had now rediscovered their poise and three minutes later they were ahead as Carragher rose at the near post to head home Gerrard's corner for only the third goal of his career. Crouch released Jon-Arne Riise

minute but the Norwegian international's first touch was poor and his cross even worse as it floated over the heads of Crouch and Cisse. The hosts went desperately close to levelling the match in the

into the penalty area in the 38th

Poderis which scraped past Reina's Cisse then looked to have extended Liverpool's lead as his shot was heading for the net - the

goalkeeper having been left

backheeled flick by Eimantas

stranded on the edge of the area but Irmantas Zelmikas got back to clear it off the line. Gerrard made it 3-1 from the penalty spot in the 54th minute after he had been tripped in the area by Mindaugas Baguzis and his shot

had too much power despite Kurskis

getting a hand to it. Zenden should have made it 4-1 in the 72nd minute but with the goal at his mercy he shot across goal from the edge of the area. Cisse was equally guilty of

wasting an opportunity as released beautifully by Luis Garcia in the 83rd minute he only had the keeper to beat but instead lofted it over the 41st minute as a beautifully whipped

Santos boss tempted

Football

RIO DE JANEIRO Santos President Marcelo Teixeira admitted Tuesday that the 30 million dollars offered by Real Madrid "are luring me," but are not sufficient to negotiate the transfer of striker Robson de Souza "Robinho," the jewel of the team.

"It is tempting," said Teixeira to television program "Esporteporte." "We do not deny that the amount offered is attractive," said he, but added "Santos will not back down

from its position." He made reference to the 50million-dollar payment in order to cancel the contract of the player, which was signed last year and

expires in 2008. Teixeira said he expects Robinho back to train, after a month absence from training sessions. Robinho concentrated with the national team for the South

American heat for the 2006 World Cup and Confederations Cup 2005 in Germany, and upon his return in Brazil, on July 1, he refused to go back to his team to press for his transfer to Real Madrid. "Here in Santos he has total conditions to be in the lineup of the

Brazilian national team for the

coming World Cup. There also is a number of firms who want to sponsor him, which would make him earn important financial resources," said Teixeira. The president of the champions of the Brazilian league in 2004 said the 21-year-old player is being

finalised the 16 million euro sale of Argentina defender Walter Samuel to Inter Milan but were waiting to hear from FIFA if their bid for Robinho would go through. Real have offered 30 million

dollars while the player and his

agent have waived rights to 40-

percent of the fee to facilitate the

move. As a result, Real have agreed to pay 60 percent of the Santos demand. But the Brazilian Confederation was backing Santos and had asked

FIFA to arbitrate, reports said Wednesday. Inter were understood to have agreed to pay 3 million euros up front for Samuel with the rest in

installments over three years

Baptista not interested!

poorly advised by his agent Wagner

Ribeiro. Finally he said the latter

would suffer from the conse-

Football

ACROSS

1 Roam

about

4 Difficulty

dust?

12 Bullring

bravo

14 Hepburn

co-star

15 The whole

shootin'

match

ranking

for Seural

18 Minutia

19 Mirror

20 Booty

fogger

22 Freddy's

street

23 Relaxa-

tion

27 Listenina

device

29 Famous

31 Trade

mark

35 Hallux

37 Insepa-

rable

dovey

sounds

34 Mountain

nymph

16 High-

13 — fix

7 Turned to

REUTERS, Madrid Sevilla's Brazilian forward Julio Baptista has restated his refusal to accept a move to English club Arsenal because he wants to

become a Spanish citizen. Sevilla said on Tuesday they were close to accepting a bid of 24 million euros (\$28.96 million) from Arsenal but Baptista has said once again that he does not want to go to

"It isn't the best thing for me to do

41 Traverse

runway

weapons

48 Expensive

53 Foreigner

54 Swelled

head

55 Nursery

denizen

56 Secluded

valleys

cousin

fighter's

1 Stimulates

2 Sav it's

57 Crow's

58 Fire-

DOWN

alternative

the

45 Ring

47 Teut.

52 401(k)

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

3 Missis

4 Cage

compo-

nents

divider

6 Roll with

a hole

7 Branch

8 Coach

9 Wit

10 Old

Parsegh

French

coin

red?

entree

17 Easter

21 Blokes

23 Heron's

24 Rushmore

face

Solution time: 25 mins

kin

11 Turn

5 Not a

sippi area

at this time," the 23-year-old forward told Radio Marca. "It's very important for me for me to become Spanish."

Baptista explained that his number one priority was to be no longer classified as a non-European Union Under the rules of the Spanish

Football Federation (RFEF) each

Primera Liga side is allowed up to three non-European Union players in their squad. Under existing law. Baptista can apply for dual citizenship in August

when he has completed two years

as a resident in Spain but he will not

be granted the status until well into

25 Bounding

main

26 Remnant

28 Big fuss

30 Charged

31 English

32 Carnival

33 Past

36 Grand-

37 1980s

venue

çhannel?

scale tale

Nicara-

guan

leader

ed, on

"Jeop-

ardy!"

machine

name

44 Ticked off

some

45 Change

for a

awav

48 Satchel

49 Under the

weather

46 Pack

and then

sawbuck

42 Anxiety

43 Office-

40 Answer-

Spanish media have reported that both Barcelona and Real Madrid are interested in signing Baptista once he earns European Union status and the player admitted he was flattered by the reports

linking him to both teams.

interest in me," he said. "But I've got until next year to think about

"It makes me very happy that

teams of that calibre are taking an

Baptista, who has scored 38 league goals in the last two seasons. is under contract to Sevilla until

CRYPTOQUIP

QNHQ

NΑ RAVKRAR

QY IAFHIIL VNHPFA NKJ

QY NHXXL Yesterday's Cryptoquip: FOR THE SAFETY OF NOAH DURING THE FLOOD, DO YOU THINK

THAT GOD SENT AN ARKANGEL? Today's Cryptoquip Clue: I equals L

The Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for

50 Bestow, to another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.