



Coach Jamie Siddons (2nd from R) briefs the Tigers ahead of their morning practice session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

## Sree not afraid of Aus crowds

AFP, Sydney

India pace bowler Shanthakumar Sreesanth Tuesday said he would not be intimidated by Australian crowds during this summer's series down under and was confident of taking wickets.

Sreesanth, who was involved in an on-field verbal clashes with Australian allrounder Andrew Symonds during the ill-tempered India tour which ended in October, said he was undaunted by playing to local crowds.

"I am not scared," he told Inside Cricket magazine.

"In fact, I will take it as a challenge."

The Indian bowler, who was dropped for three of the seven one-day games against Australia in the last series, also said he was unfazed by the side which has dominated international cricket for years.

"I am Sreesanth and I'm not scared of any batsman in the world," he said.

"What's the worst that can happen -- six sixes? Well, I'm not really worried about that."

"Whatever I do on the field I do from the core of my heart; I don't act. This is the way I have played cricket all my life."

Sreesanth said while the verbal clashes between players during the India series were overplayed, Ricky Ponting's men were more than capable of defending themselves against taunts.

"I think all of that was overplayed because it was not the first time in the history of the game that it has happened," he said.

"I didn't do anything close to what the Australians did."

"I don't want to name any cricketer. But it is just not me, everyone knows who does what on the field."

Australia's tour of India was marred by crowds' racial taunts against Symonds, Australia's only black player, which included monkey gestures.

India will play a four-Test series against Australia starting December 26.

## Inter, Roma set

FROM PAGE 20  
starting line-up following three  
briefs substitute cameos.

"Either tomorrow or Sunday  
Marco will come back in, I'll decide  
tomorrow," added Mancini.

With Materazzi out of the side,  
Inter have been fielding a first 11  
made up entirely of foreign players.

Lazio will hardly want to do their  
bitter city rivals a favour by knocking  
Inter out of their stride, but the  
Romans are battling for their Serie A  
survival after a dismal season that  
also sees them on the brink of elimination  
from the Champions League at the group stage.

Lazio coach Delio Rossi knows  
his side will have to fight for their  
lives at the San Siro.

"We've got to fight for every  
scrap," he said. "We have to play  
with balance and take our chances  
when they come."

Rossi believes his team's  
Champions League participation  
has actually hurt their league form.

"We made it to the Champions  
League last year because we played  
the right way. Now we have to stop  
making the mistake of treating the  
Championship like training and the  
Champions League like the main  
event."

"The team did well energy-wise  
and buzzed around all day. The lads  
did put in the work, but they have  
got some more to do to save the  
Test."

Left-arm spinner Monty  
Panesar, who made the ball turn  
and jump on the wearing wicket,  
was England's best bowler with 3-  
132 from 45 overs.

The only time England got a  
breather was when they were

## 'WC win was more special'

Cricket

AFP, Kandy

Test cricket's leading wicket-taker  
Muttiah Muralidaran said on  
Tuesday he rated Sri Lanka's World  
Cup triumph in 1996 as more memorable  
than his own individual world record.

The 35-year-old became the  
most successful bowler in Test  
history on Monday when he surpassed  
fellow spin great Shane Warne's record tally of 708 wickets  
during the first Test against England.

As the entire nation celebrated  
his feat, Muralidaran said his  
feast did not rate as high as the  
win over Australia in the World Cup  
final in the Pakistani city of Lahore  
under former captain Arjuna Ranatunga.

"The record is nothing much  
compared to the World Cup win," the  
off-spinner told local reporters. "The  
win in 1996 is something unique and  
I will remember that forever."

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World Cup title as the ideal way to  
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## CHAMPIONS TROPHY

## Korea fancied for title

Hockey

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Asia's number-one side Korea have  
taken over from the Netherlands as  
favourites to win the Champions  
Trophy, as teams struggle to cope  
with hot and humid conditions  
midway through the tournament.

"They are playing so very well  
and it would be excellent to see an  
Asian team win this tournament  
again," said Pakistan coach  
Manzoor Ali-Hassan.

"But Pakistan ourselves have not  
lost any kind of hope of playing in the  
final and we must fight to the end."

Pakistan were the last Asian  
team to have won this tournament  
back in 1994 and after Korea's impressive  
6-2 drubbing against the  
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