



Australia captain Ricky Ponting (C), coach Tim Nielsen and media manager Anthony Patterson (R) speak to journalists during a press conference upon their arrival at the Norman Manley International Airport in Kingston on Monday.

## Quake will not affect Games & torch relay

PTI, Beijing

Organisers on Tuesday said that Olympics in the Chinese capital, including the ongoing torch relay within the country, would not be affected by the earthquake disaster that has killed thousands of people in Sichuan province.

"The earthquake will not affect (preparations) of the Games," an official of the Beijing Organising Committee of the Olympic Games (BOCOG) said.

Beijing Olympic Media Centre Director Li Zhanjun said the earthquake stricken area "is not on the route of the torch relay. So the relay will go on as scheduled. The relay route and schedule were a joint decision by the IOC (International Olympic Committee) and BOCOG. We have no right to change it alone," he was quoted as saying by official Xinhua news agency.

The Beijing Olympics torch would reach Sichuan on June 15 and pass through seven cities including its provincial capital Chengdu on June 18. "Until now, we have not received any instruction to stop the relay," he said.

The BOCOG, he said, grieves for the people who suffered in the earthquake. Asked about the torch relay, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Qin Gang said BOCOG was "following (the situation) and making assessment according to the disaster and will make a decision in due course." He however added, "As far as I know, at present, the arrangements remain unchanged."

## Samuels found guilty, faces long ban

REUTERS, Miami

West Indies batsman Marlon Samuels has been found guilty of breaching regulations after a probe into allegations of links with a bookmaker, the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB) said on Monday.

Samuels, 27, could now face a two-year ban from the game if the International Cricket Council (ICC) enforces a mandatory ban.

The WICB said their disciplinary committee had found that Samuels had breached ICC Rules of Conduct 4 in that he "received money, benefit or other reward which could bring him or the game of cricket into disrepute".

The committee looked into charges that Jamaican Samuels passed on team information to a bookmaker during a one-day series in India in January 2007.

A second charge that Samuels had "directly or indirectly... engaged in conduct prejudicial to the interests of the game," was dismissed.

The committee, which will now pass on its findings to the ICC, said they would prefer for Samuels not to face a ban but to be "bound over to a good behaviour for a period not exceeding two years".

## Sachin boosts

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and that's what Mumbai Indians have been doing and will continue to do."

Despite his minimal exposure to the Twenty20 format -- he has played only five games so far -- Tendulkar was looking ahead to the challenge ahead. "I always try hard and I've always given my best," Mumbai are currently placed sixth in the points table, just above the Hyderabad Deccan Chargers and the Bangalore Royal Challengers.

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"No we are not thinking like that," he assured.

BCB's marketing committee decided to call for a re-bid for two packages with the same companies and negotiate for title sponsorship in an effort to increase the amount as they were disappointed by the offers of the companies while opened the tenders on Sunday.

## Domestic stars

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players whose service is required for at least one year. And there is a chance to see some new faces. The most important thing is that board is considering to bring ten of the best domestic performers under the payroll," he added.

Thirteen players -- Khaled Mashud, Mohammad Rafique, Javed Omar, Shahriar Nafees, Rajin Saleh, Tushar Imran, Tamim Iqbal, Forhad Reza, Mehrab Hossain, Enamul Haque Jr, Nazmul Hossain, Mahmudullah Riyad and Zunaed Siddiqui -- are currently on a six-month contract with the board.

The meeting also discussed the different team selections ahead of the busy schedule as the Rafiqul Alam-led committee has to announce a team for next month's tri-series at home and Asia Cup to be held in Pakistan, Bangladesh A team for the June-July tour of England and Ireland and the Academy team.

"We will announce all the squads soon after the completions of the ongoing Premier Cricket Super League," informed Rafiq.

# KP tells Eng to lift game

Cricket

AFP, London

England must "move on to the next level" if they are going to compete with South Africa later this season, according to Kevin Pietersen.

The South Africa-born batsman, who controversially turned his back on the Proteas in order to pursue an international career with England, believes the team must start to improve this season if they are to have a chance of wrestling back the Ashes next year from Australia.

England won the 2005 Ashes series on home soil 2-1 but were then overwhelmed 5-0 in Australia in 2006-07.

"We are going to have to (move on to the next level), if we are going to beat South Africa," Pietersen told reporters at Lord's here on Monday.

"That's going to be the toughest series we have had for a long time, apart from Australia."

"I know how South Africa play their cricket. I play like South Africa play their cricket -- tough, in your face, will do anything to win and really knuckle down. It's going to be a hard series."

"That's the series we're looking at targeting to see where we are at because it's going to be a pretty important summer, next summer."

But before that four-Test series, England are up against New Zealand in a three-Test campaign, starting at Lord's on Thursday.

England had to come from behind to beat the Black Caps 2-1 in New Zealand in March, with Pietersen's painstaking 129 in the final Test in Napier providing the platform for a series-clinching 121-run victory.

And for all his comments about South Africa, Pietersen insisted neither he nor England were taking their eyes off the here and now.

"We're not talking about South Africa yet, we are talking about New Zealand and wanting to beat them and beat them well," the 27-year-old Hampshire batsman added.

New Zealand may be a side with few star names but they routinely punch above their weight and Pietersen said: "They are underrated, they've got real quality bowlers, real quality batters, they play as a unit and their fielding is electric."

"They are under-estimated and we are not going to under-estimate them. We pulled off a bit in the first Test match we played there and then we bucked down," Pietersen said.

In a comment that may not endear him to the New Zealand management, Pietersen added: "Teams like Bangladesh don't have any world stars but they pull out victories every now and then. That's what cricket can do."

Some pundits have suggested that if England don't beat New Zealand 3-0 they will have demonstrated a worrying lack of ruthlessness.

But Pietersen, who warmed up for the first Test by scoring a century for Hampshire against Somerset, said: "I haven't won a

Test match at Lord's since I started playing for England so 2-0 will be great."

Pietersen, who played the first of his 36 Tests against Australia at Lord's, a match that saw England beaten, in 2005, added: "A draw is what we normally get here because it's such a flat wicket, unless it's Australia."

Last year, Pietersen was rated the world's best batsman and was averaging over 50, a mark which if maintained over a long career signals a player as an outstanding batsman.

But Pietersen said it was playing more innings like the one he did in Napier where he was at the crease for nearly five hours -- in contrast to his attacking reputation that interested him, not statistical landmarks.

"I think I have learned to play the situation really, really well," said Pietersen, who has now scored over 3,000 Test runs at an average of 49.74 with 11 centuries.

"That's something I've been striving for. At times you can get caught up with playing how everybody thinks you should play and how you think you should be playing but what helps the team, that's the way you should be playing. That's where I've tried to get my game to."

"One of my career highlights was the hundred in New Zealand. When the team needed me to stand up and be counted. I stood up to be counted. That's the stuff that really interests me. When England need me, I like to perform."

# Colly feeling fine

Cricket

BBC ONLINE, undated

England all-rounder Paul Collingwood on Monday has declared himself fit for Thursday's first Test against New Zealand.

Collingwood, 31, had a painful injection last Friday to treat a right shoulder problem after Durham's County Championship defeat by Lancashire.

But he told BBC Sport: "I'm excited to play the shoulder's fine."

"I don't want to go into a Test match feeling 50 per cent, I want to go in 100 per cent -- that was the reason for the injection and hopefully it makes me 100 per cent."

Collingwood was due to take part in a net session at Lord's on Monday in a bid to prove his readiness for the first of three Tests against the Black Caps.

England's one-day captain had cortisone injections on the same shoulder prior to last winter's Test series in Sri Lanka and the one-day internationals in New Zealand.

"I've had these injections in the shoulder before and certainly two or three days later I could certainly do things at 100 per cent and there's no reason I can't do that on Thursday," he said.

Collingwood has played 33 Tests and been an ever present in the England side since the series in India

two years ago.

He was part of the team that claimed a 2-1 victory in New Zealand earlier this year and believes England head into the return series as justified favourites.

"We've played some good cricket, some exceptional cricket at times and we've been indifferent at other times," he said.

"But generally we are a very good unit that is getting better and better. We're on our home turf and that gives us an advantage and it's a series that we're desperate to win."

England's only other injury concern was over wicketkeeper Tim Ambrose, who injured his neck before the final day of Warwickshire's championship match against Derbyshire, but the 25-year-old is confident he will have recovered in time to make his first home Test appearance.

A muscle in Ambrose's neck went into spasm while playing volleyball in the warm-up and he did not keep wicket during Derbyshire's second innings.

"It's come on well the last few days and I hope to hit the training park 100 per cent tomorrow," he told BBC Radio 5 Live.

Ambrose hit 55 on his Test debut against New Zealand in March before contributing a priceless 102 in the second Test to help England level the series.

The Kiwis' visit is followed by a home series against South Africa and Ambrose, keen to hold down a posi-

tion England have struggled to fill since the retirement of Alec Stewart, feels he is capable of scoring a century every series.

"That's certainly a feasible goal," he said. "Barring in the top seven or eight you've got the chance to score those sort of runs and in five-day cricket you're probably going to get the chance to bat twice."

"It's important to contribute in every series and with hard work I'll be looking to that."

Kevin Pietersen scored a crucial ton -- his first in 11 innings -- to set up England's decisive third Test win in Napier and although he admits England start as favourites, the 27-year-old says Peter Moores's men will not be taking their opponents lightly.

"We are not favourites but New Zealand are not a team to be underestimated," he said.

## Prime Bank

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restore its glorious past. Chowdhury said if the money were spent in proper way, the bank would consider increasing the amount of sponsorship.

"We want to focus more on football."

Salahuddin, who looked satisfied after the meeting, said that they came to take the relationship between the federation and the bank ahead and the time will talk to about it.

"Football will not go back for lack of efforts on our part as we have assumed power with heavy responsibilities. In three to four years, football will reach a certain level," said Salahuddin. "We are committed to work."

BFF senior vice-president and chairman of B. League committee Abdus Salam Murshedi vowed to win the heart of the sponsors through performance and take any amount of sponsorship money happily.

BFF vice-presidents Manzoor Hossain Malu and Kazi Nabil Ahmed and member Anwarul Haq Helal were also present.

The 11-team B. League will kick-off after August while the transfers start tomorrow and will run till June 20.

# Hadlee encourages him

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county cricket so it's been a massive turnaround.

"But it's one I'm not getting carried away about and I'm relishing the opportunity to play again for England at Lord's."

"It's massive to win it (this award), but it's not just down to me -- the other guys who have been playing have made me feel very welcome in the team and it's just allowed me to do my job."

"The first I heard about it was when we got to Lord's earlier today (Monday) and it was on the big screen and one of the lads pointed

it out to me."

It seemed as if Sidebottom, like his father Arnie, was destined to be a 'one-Test wonder' and that, even when brought back, his return would not last that long.

"All the talk when I was called up was that it was going to be just for one game," said Sidebottom.

"They were all going on about the horses-for-courses thing. I sat down with my Dad and he said just get out there and do your best and don't look ahead. I suppose at Headingley I just played as if it was going to be my last game."

# Kiwi openers found?

Cricket

AFP, London

New Zealand head into their Test series with England hoping they have at last found an effective opening partnership.

During their 2-1 defeat at home by England earlier this year, New Zealand failed to record a single first-wicket partnership of fifty, putting pressure on their middle-order.

But in other areas they troubled England and Brendon McCullum, New Zealand's vice-captain, believes if they can find a steady opening combination the team could emulate their 1999 predecessors and win a Test series on English soil.

"We won that first Test match with a formula that worked against them and if it wasn't for our inability to score runs at the top of the order in the last two Test matches then I'm sure we'd have run them a lot closer than we did," said wicketkeeper McCullum.

"We've learned some huge les-

sons and taken a lot of confidence out of the performances recently and I'm sure if we can hit our straps and get the areas right that we're looking to maximise then we've got a real chance of coming out on top in this series, even if we are massive underdogs."

"Our bowling unit is pretty sound, but the times where they have struggled is when we haven't given them enough rest with the bat," said McCullum, himself a dynamic middle-order batsman whose greatest run-scoring feats have been in one-day, rather than Test, cricket.

"That is something we need to make sure we can do in this Test series, to maximise the time they are off the park so they've got time to recover. The onus for that is on the top six to carve out some big runs and spend some significant time out in the middle."

New Zealand dropped opener Matthew Bell and batsman Mathew Sinclair from their tour squad after disappointing displays against England.

Now they have put their faith in

Aaron Redmond and the uncapped Otago opener responded by scoring 146 and 64 against the England Lions, the national A team, at the Rose Bowl last week.

And McCullum is backing Redmond, likely to be opening alongside Jamie How, to carry on that form into the first Test at Lord's, which starts on Thursday.

"He's been fantastic, he's been brilliant," said McCullum. "He spent 360 overs on the bounce fielding and batting out in the middle and to be able to score 150 and then back it up with 12 overs with the ball and then to score 60-odd in the last innings is great."

"I'm sure he'll be a tired boy over the next couple of days but with a nice break leading in I'm sure his confidence will be high."

"It's certainly nice to have a top-order batsman like Aaron in such good form going into the Test match."

"He hasn't played a Test match but I'm sure if he plays the way he has done he will be very successful because the Lions attack was good and the confidence he will take out of this will stand him in good stead."

# Marauding Marsh

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couple of economical overs, and Chawla got his second wicket when he ran towards midwicket to complete a splendid catch off a top-edge from Cameron White.

David once again was unable to improvise as required in the Twenty20 format, and his 27-ball 29 will do little to silence the critics. As in the previous game against Chennai Super Kings, Punjab's bowlers were largely right on the mark at the end. VRV followed up his miserly first spell, in which he gave just eight, with an exceptional second, conceding one less than in his first. He mostly kept it straight, putting in the occasional short delivery, and towards the end he relied primarily on yorkers.

Bangalore needed to strike early to put pressure on Punjab, but the Australian duo of Marsh and James, who got the home side off to a confident start. Marsh gave the innings the early momentum, hitting three sixes, but another attempt at clearing long-off against Vinay Kumar was caught by a diving Dale Steyn.

Marsh, the in-form player, was

quiet during the powerplay overs, and he was lucky as substitute fielder Bharat Chipli grassed one at mid-off when he was on 12. He took on Anil Kumble in his first over, sending one over long-off, as Punjab motored to 70 for 1 after ten. Steyn was brought back to stem the flow, but leaked more runs: Marsh smashed the first delivery through extra cover for four, lifted the next over the square boundary, and then swatted one straight over mid-off's head. A frustrated Steyn then got one in the blockhole, but Marsh deftly sneaked it past the wicketkeeper.

Marsh's fifty came off a single in the same over, and a deflated Bangalore side could do nothing much to stop Punjab from then on. Luke Pomersbach, playing his first game, also took a liking for Kumble, carting him for two sixes and a four. Kumble, who is yet to take a wicket in the IPL, even resorted to seam-up, but Marsh late-cut it delightfully.

With victory in sight, Marsh and Pomersbach didn't relent, each hitting two boundaries as Zaheer Khan's final over, the penultimate of the game, went for 18. Marsh took a single to seal the deal with 4.2 overs remaining. With his unbeaten 74, Marsh now has a Bradmanesque average of 98.33 in the IPL, and if he continues in the same vein, a semi-final slot should not be a headache for Punjab, who are already sitting pretty at 12 points from nine games.

SCORES IN BRIEF  
BANGALORE ROYAL CHALLENGERS: 143 for 8 in 20 overs (Arun Kumar 1, Kohli 21, Misbahul 21, White 10, Dravid 29, Boucher 39, Kumar 5, Vinay 1, Zaheer 1 not out, Sreesanth 3-29, Pathan 1-23, Chawla 2-33, VRV Singh 1-15)

KINGS XI PUNJAB: 144 for 1 in 15.4 overs (Marsh 74 not out, Hopes 27, Pomersbach 34 not out, Vinay 1-11)

Result: Kings XI Punjab won by 9 wickets.  
Man-of-the-match: Shaun Marsh.  
Umpires: BR Doctrove (West Indies) and I Shivram  
Toss: Bangalore Royal Challengers.

# Davydenko moves on

Tennis

AP, Hamburg

Nikolay Davydenko cruised into the third round of the Hamburg Masters by defeating Ivan Ljubicic 6-4, 6-1 Tuesday, and two more players retired because of injuries.

Luis Horna dropped out with a calf injury while trailing Potito Starace 6-3, 4-2, and Kristof Vliegen pulled out with a back injury with Jose Acasuso leading 5-2. Filippo Volandri retired Monday with a knee injury.

Davydenko dominated Ljubicic after the two players traded five breaks of serve early in the match.

"The first match is always difficult," said Davydenko, who had a first-round bye.

The Russian, who is coming off a third-round loss to Tommy Robredo in Rome, won the Masters tournament in Miami last month.

"Losing to Robredo was difficult, but the win in Miami has made me mentally stronger," Davydenko said.

Withdrawals have become a common theme in European clay-court tournaments in the past month.

At the Rome Masters last week, five players withdrew. No semifinal match was completed.

The second-ranked Rafael Nadal, who lost in Rome in the second

round after getting treated for a major blister on his foot, has blamed the crowded schedule for the series of retirements.

In another second-round match, Fernando Verdasco defeated

Michael Llodra 6-2, 6-0.

In first-round action, 11th-seeded Carlos Moya rallied to defeat Julien Benneteau 3-6, 6-4, 7-6 (7), and Janko Tipsarevic rallied past Andreas Beck 3-6, 6-3, 6-1.



PHOTO: INTERNET

Russian Nikolay Davydenko makes a double-fisted return against Croatian Ivan Ljubicic at the Hamburg Masters Series tennis tournament yesterday.

## LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

The zonal phase of the 29th National Table Tennis championship will begin across the country on June 2.

After the zonal phase to be held in different districts, the final phase of the competition will take place from June 24 at the Mirpur Shaheed Suharwardi Indoor Stadium.

The zonal phase will be held in men's team event, women's team event and boys' team event, from where the three top teams from each event will qualify for the final phase.

The final phase includes men's, women's and boys' (Under-18) team events, men's singles, women's singles, boys' singles, men's doubles, women's doubles, boys' doubles and mixed doubles.

Ahead of the championship, the Table Tennis Federation has extended the last date for submitting entries by May 15, which was earlier fixed as May 10.

The budget of the entire tournament has been estimated at Tk 709,300, which will be borne by sponsors AB Bank Limited.

## PIONEER FOOTBALL

UNB adds: Mansoor Sporting Club made a good start in the Dhaka City Corporation Pioneer Football League outplaying East End Junior 4-0 in an East Zone match at the Jagannath University ground yesterday.

In the other match of the day, Bangladesh Sporting Club defeated Commissioner Shafuddin Smriti Sangsad 2-0 at the same venue.

In today's matches, Jatrabari Jhatika Sangsad face Mir Hazaribagh.

## DIVIII CRICKET

Matauli Cricket Academy registered an easy eight-wicket victory over GMCC in the super league of the Third Division League at the Jagannath Hall ground yesterday.

Opting to bat first, GMCC were all out for 156 in 46.4 overs. Opener Ashraful scored 51 runs with seven boundaries. In reply, Matauli coasted home scoring 157 in 26.2 overs for the loss of two wickets.

Izharul blasted an unbeaten 91 off 75 balls with 13 fours and two sixes to guide his team to the emphatic victory.

In the day's other matches, Talent Hunt Cricket Academy (211-5) beat Kamrangchir (209-6) by five wickets at the Dhaka University ground, Tongi (161 all out) crushed Orient (101 all out) by 60 runs at the City Club ground and Young Pegasus A (208-8) defeated Gulshan Youth (205 all out) by two wickets at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium.

## DIVII KABADDI

Freedom Fighters Rehabilitation Society crushed Muradnagar 53-12 in the Second Division League at the Outer Stadium kabaddi court yesterday.

They won with four creditable lonas.

In the day's other match, Institute of Kabaddi defeated Dholpur 82-46 at the same venue.

## ULAB makes fine start

SPORTS REPORTER

Mehdi picked up three wickets to free University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB) to a facile 96-run win over Brac University in the Fair Play Twenty20 tournament at the ULAB campus cricket ground in Ramchandrapur yesterday.

Batting first, ULAB banked on Asad's 43 to score 180-7 in 20 overs. Later, Mehdi, co demolisher of the Brac batting line-up, bowling out the Mohakali-based university for only 44 runs in 17.5 overs. Apart from Mehdi, Babu and Rupom took two wickets each.

Earlier, ULAB vice-chancellor Rafiqul Islam inaugurated the tournament that also includes State University of Bangladesh.

They play the hosts in the second match of the competition today at the picturesque venue.

## CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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