Afghans greet their heroes

AFP, Kabul

President Hamid Karzai added his voice to those of exuberant cricket fans welcoming Afghanistan's young team home Monday after they stayed on course for possible qualification for the 2011 World

The team was met at the airport in Kabul by sporting officials and a small throng of supporters who presented them with garlands before leading them through the city in a noisy, flag-waving cavalcade.

More fans waited at the stadium, famous for its Taliban-era executions, but the numbers were limited for security reasons, one cricketing official said, with the threat of extremist attacks everpresent in Afghanistan.

In a statement, Karzai described the team and their achievement in winning the final of the International Cricket Council World Cricket League division five in the British crown dependency of Jersey at the weekend as "a source of pride and honour for Afghanistan.

"With this victory, the national cricket team of Afghanistan showed that despite years-long war and financial problems, Afghans can achieve many glories," he said.

Karzai's government is battling to rebuild Afghanistan after decades of war but faces a growing Taliban-led insurgency, booming narcotics trade and corruption undermining morale.

Success at the tournament means Afghanistan, along with Jersey, will compete in the ICC World Cricket League division four in October, taking them one step further along the road to possible World Cup qualification.

Johnson to return Sydney relay gold

AFP, London

Five-time Olympic champion Michael Johnson is to return the 4x400m relay gold he won at the Sydney Games in 2000 in the wake of former teammate Antonio Pettigrew's admission he had been taking drugs.

Pettigrew's doping admission came in the perjury trial of athletics coach Trevor Graham, who oversaw disgraced sprint trio Justin Gatlin, Marion Jones and Tim Montgomery.

The confession also followed drugs bans of four and two years respectively for Alvin and Calvin Harrison as well as a failed drugs test for Jerome Young, who were all also members of the victorious US team in Sydney.

Johnson, an outspoken critic of doping in athletics, announced on Tuesday that he will voluntarily return his gold to the International Olympic Committee.

"I know that the medal was not fairly won and that it is dirty," Johnson told the Daily Telegraph newspaperhere.

"I will be returning it because I don't want it. I feel cheated and betrayed," said Johnson, who holds nine world World Championship golds and also the world records for the 200m and 400m.

Brawl led

FROM PAGE 17

"I really don't know because neither Asif nor the local authorities have mentioned about this to me," Akram said.

"Right now he is in detention at the airport and the case will go before the public prosecutor this evening. If it is proved he had a banned illegal contraband item on him, he will be charge-sheeted. But we don't want to jump to conclusions right now," he said.

Asif arrested

FROM PAGE 17 "The UAE (United Arab Emirates)

 has strict procedures -- they want to probe the matter to determine what the substance is. We are hopeful the entire issue is due to some misunderstanding."

The arrest is just the latest controversy to hit Pakistan's troubled cricket team over the past two | runs in the space of 18 balls. years.

Asif was banned for one year after he tested positive for the steroid nandrolone in October 2006. Fellow paceman Shoaib Akhtar was banned for two years on the same charge.

appeal two months later. Akhtar | pad. meanwhile is appealing a lifetime ban imposed in April for repeated disciplinary problems.

one of five pacemen in a 16-man squad to take part in next week's one-day tri-series in Bangladesh.

He has had recent problems with injury, undergoing an operation in Australia in December after an elbow problem recurred during the one-day series against South

Africa two months earlier. He missed Pakistan's tour of India late last year before being ruled out of the five-match home series against Zimbabwe.



PHOTO: COURTESY

Officials of Brac Bank hand over a cheque of Tk. 5,00,000 to Bangladesh Tennis Federation officials at a function in the city yesterday. The bank is providing the money as sponsor of the Junior Tennis Initiative, which is a development programme of the International Tennis Federation.

Jimmy takes guard

Cricket

BBC ONLINE, undated

England seamer James Anderson expects to face an onslaught from the New Zealand pace attack when the Third Test begins at Trent performances in the series." Bridge on Thursday.

On Day One of the second Test to take a lot from that win at Old Northants. at Old Trafford, one Anderson ball knocked out two of Daniel Flynn's teeth and another struck Jacob Oram on the helmet.

shorts balls from the New Zealand bowlers," said Anderson. "Certainly it's something I'll be working on in the nets with the

"I expect I'll probably get a few

Taking a 1-0 lead into the final Test following their six-wicket win in Manchester, England only need to avoid defeat at Trent Bridge to wrap up a series victory.

seam-friendly pitch to produce an aggressive post-lunch spell on the opening day at Old Trafford, is preparing to be on the receiving end when England bat in Northants.

Cricket

AFP, Johannesburg

Monday.

Premier League.

South African skipper Graeme

Smith should have recovered in

time from a hamstring injury to

play in the first Test against

England next month, Proteas

coach Mickey Arthur said on

that he would be "struggling" to be

fit in time for the start of the four-

Test series which begins at Lord's

on July 10 after tearing his ham-

string while playing in the Indian

although the injury usually takes

four weeks to recover he was hop-

the final warm-up game.

the SAPA news agency.

ing Smith would be available for

"It's a grade two injury, which

normally means about four weeks

out of action but I am confident

(physiotherapist) Shane Jabaar will

get him ready in time," Arthur told

Arthur however said that

Smith told reporters on Sunday

shots -- if they decide to bounce Wantage Road. me, "he said.

Test won't stop me using the bouncer again at Trent Bridge on Thursday and overall I am reasonably pleased with my bowling

Trafford and build on that during the week at nets and in the time we've got together to prepare us in the right way.

do well we'll be able to wrap up the series at Trent Bridge with a win and finish 2-0 up." England have named an for us," said the wicketkeeperunchanged side for a fifth succes- batsman.

sive match but New Zealand could make changes, especially to their batting line-up, in a bid to draw the James Marshall has endured a have whole-heartedly believed.

But Anderson, who exploited a hugely disappointing series at number three and followed low go to Northampton and put on a scores at Lord's and Old Trafford with knocks of two and 11 in the drawn tour match against

"I'll be ready to take evasive been undergoing dental work,

"Graeme will probably miss the

first warm-up match against

Somerset and we will be looking at

the warm-up against Middlesex,

starting on July 4, as Graeme's

comeback game. I'm not even

considering Graeme not playing at

playing at Lord's, scoring a match-

winning 259 on his last appearance

in north London in 2003, shortly

confident that star batsman

Jacques Kallis, who has also been

playing in India, would be fit for the

a niggle towards the back end of the

IPL, but he's also doing fine. I firmly

believe that by the time we leave for

the United Kingdom, we will have a

hold a training camp in

Johannesburg before flying to

England for a tour which will also

see them play five one-dayers and a

The South Africans are due to

"Jacques Kallis picked up a bit of

Arthur meanwhile said he was

after becoming captain.

fully fit side," he said.

Twenty20 international.

Smith has fond memories of

'Smith will be ready' My best old

action or maybe even play some made scores of two and six at Peter Fulton or reserve

"What happened in the second wicketkeeper Gareth Hopkins might be in line for call-ups. "He looked, for the first time in a

long time, in pretty good nick,' New Zealand coach John Bracewell said of Fulton, who made a first-"Confidence-wise, we are going innings half-century against "We were really pleased with the

way he went, and he certainly comes into contention." Despite the Old Trafford defeat, "Hopefully if we stick to what we vice-captain Brendon McCullum is

remaining positive. "In a strange sort of way, Old Trafford was a confidence-builder

"We put ourselves in a position where we should have won the Test match. That was something that, heading into the Test, we may not

"To be able to do that and then performance like we have -- batting so clinically -- was pretty good. "It's a step forward. It certainly

hasn't rectified all our issues, but in Number six Flynn, who has my mind it is a step in the right

Australia refused to take the

new ball and Lee started his final

spell in the 94th over. "The condi-

tions were perfect (for reverse-

swing), when I looked at the ball it

was spot-on," he said, "scuffed-up

to bat as Australia reached 244 for 6.

He made an eventful 4 in an

innings that included being struck

in the helmet by Fidel Edwards

before he was ruled caught-behind

to the last delivery before stumps.

The ball struck his arm, but it could

always a bonus, but for me it is

always about trying to get that

breakthrough and hopefully try

and get into a position where we

can win the Test," he said. "Hope-

fully we have done a pretty good

job there." Australia have an over-

night buffer of 371 and Lee will

need to contribute heavily again

on the final day if his side is to take

a 2-0 lead in the three-match

"To pick up five wickets is

not ruin his memorable day.

Lee was called on late in the day

perfectly.

on one side."

by phone from Paris, where he is taking part in the French Open. The duo, who sorted out their

reunite for

Olympics

AFP, New Delhi

differences in a late night meeting on Monday, will also turn out in a couple of tournaments on the ATP circuit ahead of the August Games.

India's estranged doubles pairing

of Mahesh Bhupathi and Leander

Paes on Tuesday decided to put

aside their differences and play

the Olympics," Bhupathi told AFP

"Yes, I will play with Leander in

together in the Beijing Olympics.

The unexpected turnaround came less than a month after Bhupathi publicly said he would prepare to partner Davis Cup colleague Rohan Bopanna at the Olympics instead of Paes.

"I'd like to play the Olympics for two reasons, winning for India and enjoying the experience," Bhupathi had told local media. "I don't think either will happen playing with Leander without preparation.

"We are not magicians. A medal will not happen just because we step on court."

Paes and Bhupathi won three Grand Slam doubles titles in 1999 before parting ways a year later. The pair have since come together for the Davis Cup and the Asian

Bhupathi had last month written to the All India Tennis Association (AITA) that he did not believe a tie-up with Paes was possible.

"There has been absolutely no communication between Leander and myself since the 2006 Doha Asian Games, even though I have reached out at various times through different avenues," he wrote in the letter to the AITA.

"The field is stronger than four years ago and just going to the Olympics for the sake of it, and not making the most of it by putting all that is required to win does not interest me at this stage of my career.'

AITA secretary Anil Khanna had said he would do everything to ensure the pair played together in Beijing. "Let us not forget that this is the

Olympics, not just any Davis Cup tie," Khanna said.

Abahani stay

FROM PAGE 17

Abahani were leading 3-1 after 19 minutes while Shuva's angled pass from the left beat Mohammedan keeper Kiran on way to the far corner where an unmarked Modasser tapped in the ball in the 26th minute.

Abahani lost their composure in the second half once Rana was forced to leave the field due to an injury and his replacement Rony did his best to shadow Sabbir and restrict Pakistani's darting runs.

The submissive Sabbir, however, got his first goal from the spot in the 43rd minute but Shuvo increased the margin ten minutes later after hard work by Modasser.

Mohammedan wasted halfdozen penalty corners but Manik's spectacular back-flick on a long pass by Irfan ran through a forest of legs to find the board in the 65th minute.

Chayan's accuracy from the skyblues' lone second half penalty corner two minutes later virtually put the match beyond Mohammedan, who returned two goals in the 69 and 70 minutes through Sabbir and Manik.

Warne rules out

FROM PAGE 17 Warne, who retired from international cricket in January 2007 with a then world record 708 Test wickets, raised the prospect himself last month when he said he would consider an Ashes return if MacGill was injured.

But his manager James Erskine on Tuesday said the 38-year-old was happily retired. "Warnie's position is he's not

going back, he's not playing Test cricket again," Erskine told Australian Associated Press. "He went out on a fairytale and

him coming back would be advantageous to no one. He's got no plans to play Test cricket." Erskine said Warne had a full

calendar and had no time to pursue a Test return. "This year alone he has commit-

ments on 198 days," the manager

Bangladesh face FROM PAGE 17

a family here. We are determined to give our 100 percent to make this tournament a success.

"We are not taking Bhutan lightly but we will be there to win," added the Bangladesh goalkeeper. Bangladesh have won both their previous meetings with Bhutan, in 2003 and 2005 SAFF

Championships, by identical

margins of 3-0. Meanwhile, defending champions India got off to a flying start when they routed Nepal 4-0 in the tournament opener in Maldives capital Male yesterday with goals from Pradeep, Baichung Bhutia,

Paes, Bhupathi Kiwis to go for changes

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

New Zealand's line-up for the third Test against England at Trent Bridge on Thursday could feature as many as three changes from the side that lost at Old Trafford last week as the Kiwis attempt to battle back into a series that they looked to have in their control at the midway point of the second Test.

After missing the Manchester match with an upset stomach, the teenaged seamer, Tim Southee, seems a sure bet to reclaim his place at the expense of Iain O'Brien, but it is the form and fortunes of two of New Zealand's middle-order batsmen, James Marshall and Daniel Flynn, that will come in for the most scrutiny in the coming days.

facial injury on the second day at Old Trafford, when he ducked into a James Anderson bouncer and was forced to retire hurt with two missing front teeth. He did not reappear to hit the ball, and he certainly in the second innings, and though comes into contention." he played during the warm-up match against Northamptonshire at the weekend, he was a notable failure, lasting just 12 balls in two

innings, but his coach, John

resume his two-Test international at Northants. career sooner rather than later. Even so, there is so much at stake in the in trying conditions against Essex third Test, and Flynn's confidence took such a battering, that the steady presence of Peter Fulton could yet be called upon in his place.

"I would have liked to see Daniel spend more time at the crease getting his confidence," Bracewell told the Press Association. "There's nothing like being in the middle, and the hustle and bustle of it, to get yourself back on the bike. He's a tough rooster and he will recover very quickly, it's just whether we match up Peter Fulton's form against him and James Marshall."

Fulton was dropped ahead of England's recent tour of New Zealand after failing in the onedayers, but Bracewell had some encouraging words after watching him return to form with a confident Flynn, 21, suffered an horrific 57 against Northants. "He looked, for the first time in a long time, in pretty good nick," said Bracewell. "He looked to be hitting the ball crisper in the areas we wanted him All of which heaps extra pressure

on Marshall, who started the tour well with a century against Essex to cement his place at No. 3 for the first Test, but since then his form has Flynn has been enduring several been on the wane. He managed just bouts of dental surgery between 52 runs in his first four Test innings - step forward. It certainly hasn't - a tally that included ducks at both rectified all our issues, but in my Bracewell, described him as a Lord's and Old Trafford -- and he mind it is a step in the right direc-"tough rooster" and backed him to managed only 13 runs for twice out tion."

"James scored a brilliant hundred earlier in the tour, and I don't think you can discount those sorts of innings," said New Zealand's vicecaptain, Brendon McCullum. "The selectors will just have to come up with the best team that can go out and level this series for us."

Even so, McCullum's own success as a No. 5 batsman means that New Zealand could be tempted to call up their specialist wicketkeeper, Gareth Hopkins, who furthered his own cause with a fighting 63 at the weekend. That route, however, would require a promotion for both Jacob Oram and Daniel Vettori, who have played important roles at No. 7 and 8 respectively.

Whatever line-up New Zealand settle on, they will not be dwelling on their missed opportunity in the second Test. "In a strange sort of way, Old Trafford was a confidencebuilder for us," said McCullum. "We put ourselves in a position where we should have won the Test match, and that was something that heading into the Test, we may not have whole-heartedly believed:

"To be able to do that and then go to Northampton and put on a performance like we have -- batting so clinically -- was pretty good. It's a

Glitz and glamour

RAHUL BHATTACHARYA



A stunning last-ball finish delivered to the inaugural DLF Indian League a finale it deserved, with Shane Warne at

the crease when Rajasthan Royals, the least fancied, least expensive franchise, chased down 163 to take the trophy.

With the scores level and a ball to go, Warne, at the non-striker's end ran in from about as far as the bowler, Lakshmipathy Balaji of Chennai Super Kings. The run-up proved quite unnecessary as Sohail Tanvir pierced the infield, and the sight then of an Australian legend and a young Pakistani rejoicing together in victory before a packed house in Mumbai about summed up the contagious novelty of a tournament that has changed forever the scale at which cricket will be played.

The man-of-the-match as well as the man-of-the-series were both from Rajasthan -- all-rounders Yusuf Pathan of India and Shane Watson of Australia -- but it was Warne who as captain singlehandedly exposed the fancy obsessions of modern cricket. Never a believer in the coach, he solved the problem by himself taking on the job, and thereafter announcing that his team would do away with all this computer stuff, thank you.

To say the IPL was a wild success is an understatement. Success of this kind can also be disquieting. Indian television consumers have run cricket for more than a decade now, but they were still a limited audience. People may find it hard to believe but there are Indians who could not care to watch cricket. Well, at least there were until a couple of months ago.

The IPL spectacularly cracked open the demographic. Top-rating soaps, reality shows, game shows, all took a pummelling as entire households, mothers-in-law and pets and small children, stopped to stare every evening at this montage of sixes, Bollywood stars, imported cheerleaders with the triumph that Indian rupees had created all of this. A match ran for about the same duration as a Hindi movie.

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Instructive was the choice of player-trading begin from the next studio anchors for the telecast: tournament rather than the one yuppie males, the kind more tuned after, that five rather than four into EPL and Formula One, who international players be allowed in now declared without a shred of starting XIs, and that salary-caps for embarrassment that this cricket players be abolished. thing was quite fab. An Indian engineer in Afghanistan who was help captive for a month returned home Cricket had never seen such a PR

blitz. Journalists, commentators, the English Premier League with an players, coaching staff were all first exciting mix of international and IPL spokespersons. In newspapers national players. And then you have the IPL was covered every day on the the grand Champions League, like front page, the city pages, the celeb the, UEFA model which has taken pages, the business pages, apart football to such heights." from monopolising the sports

profile, it also brought with it a gratcatch came branded as a 'Citi tripped over each other to make these plugs. A future where a bats-Drive against an Intel Faster One may franchise Twenty20 offers perfectly not be the stuff of satire.

The cricket itself was both dazzling and monotonous, a bit like video-game cricket, which works as condemnation as well as, in the Play Station era, high praise. The best games had a kind of compressed intensity where each delivery held the weight of an entire match. The vigour with which players of all ages and colours roused themselves was a revelation to those who thought only the national flag could stir such

Too much about the IPL is still tournament has bred long-term know if some new television sensation will upstage it the next time round. We do not know, crucially, whether franchises have recovered more or less money than projected. We do not know in either event whether their response then will be where. to cut cost or push for more

The traditionalist's fear of a franchise hegemony is not entirely baseless. Already Lalit Modi, the commissioner of the IPL, has spoken of the possibility of two editions annually, a league and a knockout. Already it has been suggested that the Guardian website)

By Eugene Sheffer

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"The grand vision," IS Bindra, an

influential member of the IPL governing council and principal adviand found solace watching IPL in sor to the ICC said, "is to move cricket to the next level, and get each league in each country to resemble

It is hard to envisage international Test cricket retaining primacy If the corporate money pumped in such a scenario. Think of the into the tournament gave it the move, later this year, to squash inthe Twenty20 Champions League in ing intrusiveness. A six in the IPL, the nine days between the fifty-over every 622 of them, was no longer a Champions Trophy in England and six, it was a 'DLF Maximum.' A sharp a major Test tour of India by Australia. Ricky Ponting and others Moment Of Success'. Commentators have sounded a warning for premature international retirements; more worrisome is the thought of man executes a Toyota Front-Foot young cricketers working out that

> wonderful career prospects. No ambitious franchise league in any sport lives on a mere six weeks a year. Here lies cricket's hope. It is not any other sport. It is able to exist so satisfactorily across a range of formats, each highlighting what is special about the other. Norman Mailer's advice to 9/11

novelists was to not attempt it until 10 years had passed. Even an event so minor as the IPL ought to be given five. 2012 is the right time because that is when the current Test-match Future Tours Programme runs out; unknown. We do not know if the when the Indian board chief Sharad Pawar's tenure as the president of fans or passing oglers, and we do not the ICC will have come to an end; when franchise Twenty20 leagues will have established everywhere; and when it may be realised of 50overs cricket after another bloated World Cup in 2011 that it is neither here nor there yet simply every-

> And, who knows, maybe by then the Test cricket will flourish as a daynight enterprise, four days, 100overs per day. It will be played in whites jerseys but with a pink ball. And perhaps Warnie will be around to bowlit.

(Rahul Bhattacharya wrote this for

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CRYPTOQUIP

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Yesterday's Cryptoquip: CLASSIC NOVEL ABOUT A BUDDING ACTRESS AND HER INCRIMINATING MISSIVE: "THE STARLET LETTER."

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: M equals Y

Lee blitzes WI

for 28 runs from 7.5 overs, and Jerome Taylor snared two for 33 from 12 overs.

Earlier, Australia had been kept at bay for close to an hour-and-ahalf by Chanderpaul and Dwayne Bravo in a stand of 132 for the fifth wicket before Lee made his presence felt with five wickets for five The Aussie fast bowler started

the rout, when he had Bravo dubiously caught down the leg-side for 45, although television replays suggested umpire Russell Tiffin may have erred with his verdict as the ball appeared to have rico-The bans were however lifted on | cheted from the batsman's thigh

This dismissal seemed to have energised Lee getting a ball more than 90 overs old to reverse swing Asif was named on Monday as on a hard, docile pitch in hot, sunny conditions.

> Next delivery, Lee gained another dubious decision from Tiffin to have Denesh Ramdin adjudged lbw for a first-ball duck to a delivery which moved back from outside the off-stump, but which TV replays suggested its flight path was hardly threatening.

In his next over, Lee also gained Chanderpaul not out another marginal lbw decision from Tiffin to send Darren Sammy backforasecond-ball duck.

Lee then shutdown a late flourish of 20 from Taylor which included two fours and a six from 26 balls, when he bowled the West Extras: (b-17, lb-13, w-2, nb-12) 44 Indies fast bowler, and completed Total: (Allout in 107 overs) his landmark, when he gained a Fall of wickets: 1-55, 2-103, 3-105, third, but palpable lbw verdict to dismiss Daren Powell for a two-ball

Mitchell Johnson swiftly ended Lee the West Indies' innings, when he had Edwards caught behind for a 10-ball duck in the next over.

Australia lead the three-Test series 1-0, after they completed a 95-run victory in the opening Test last Monday at Sabina Park in Kingston, Jamaica.

SCOREBOARD

night 255 for four)

day of the second Test between West Indies and Australia at the Sir Vivian Richards Cricket Ground in Antigua on Monday: AUSTRALIA: First innings 479 for 7

declared (Katich 113, Clarke 110)

WEST INDIES: First innings (over-

Scoreboard at stumps on the fourth

Smith c Symonds b Johnson Marshall Ibw b Clarke Sarwan c Clarke b MacGill Morton c Katich b Clarke 107 Bravo c Haddin b Lee Ramdin lbw b Lee SammylbwbLee

Powell lbw b Lee Edwards c Haddin b Johnson 4-182, 5-314, 6-314, 7-318, 8-341, 9-O M R W Bowler 21 7 59 5

MacGill Clarke Symonds AUSTRALIA: Second innings Jaques c Ramdin b Taylor Hussey c Ramdin b Bravo Ponting lbw b Taylor Clarkerunout

Haddin lbw b Edwards Lee c Ramdin b Edwards Extras: (b-8, lb-6, w-3, nb-9) Total: (For 6 wkts in 61.5 overs) 244 To bat: Katich, Johnson, Clark, MacGill. Fall of wickets: 1-74, 2-163, 3-178,

4-186, 5-222, 6-244. OMRW Bowler 13 3 47 0 Powell 7.5 1 28 Edwards 12 0 33 2 Taylor 12 1 45 0 45 Sammy 0 Bravo 3 0 18 0 0 Sarwan

Taylor b Lee

72 Johnson 14 0 39 0 Clark 1 107 1 7 20 12 3 25 0

Symonds not out

Sunil Chetri and Sushil Kumar.