

Under-19 camp begins Friday

SPORTS REPORTER

The Under-19 preparation camp will start at the BKSP from Friday.

Cricketers selected for the camp will have to report to JI Taposh, BCB school programme officer at the BKSP at 5:00 pm.

The camp will continue up to August 7 under coach Nazmul Abedeen Fahim.

BCB High Performance (HP) senior coaches Nurul Abedin Nobel, Waheedul Ghani and HP coach Mizanur Rahman will assist Fahim.

SQUAD

Saikat Ali, Tasamul Haq, Atiqur Rahman, Al Amin, Noor Hossain, Imamul Muttakim, Anjum Ahmed Jessy, Mehadiat Amin, Mominul Haque, Naim Md Asif, Md Sabbir Ahmed, Tajul Islam, Shohag Reza, Mobassir Khan, Alauddin Babu, Saddam Hossain, Islamul Ahsan, Kamrul Islam, Chowdhury Labbyek, Muhamin M Shahid, Shaker Ahmed, Abul Hasan Raju, Irfan Sukur, Md. Polash, Md Sukran, Sadaf Sarkar Hasib, Tybur Rahman Parvez, Md. Samir, Ariful Zaman, Mayedul Islam.

Elite EPL finds no friends

CRICINFO, undated

Although no official statement has been made to the media, it is reported that the England and Wales Cricket Board executive has rejected proposals for a nine-team elite Twenty20 competition. It had been thought the real debate would be between the counties, who had already expressed very differing opinions, but it appears that the scheme has already been scuppered by the ECB.

Rather than a streamlined competition, the proposal that is believed to have found favour is one that includes all 18 first-class counties as well as two overseas sides, one of which is almost certain to be fielded by Allen Stanford. Critics will be quick to point out that rather than being an elite tournament, what will be offered is an even more bloated event with talent spread even more thinly.

The original plans, which were leaked last week, caused a schism among the first-class counties and yesterday Jim Cumbes, the chief executive of Lancashire, resigned as chairman of the chief executives of the first-class counties after he was accused by four fellow chief executives of not being honest with them over his county's involvement in the scheme.

"There has been a lot of panic and paranoia over this and I can understand the nervousness," Cumbes told the Times.

Air will be

FROM PAGE 17
vehicles would be removed from the roads over three months from July 20 to September 20.

"So I think we are confident that we can provide clean air for the athletes during the Games. I think there is no need for them to worry about the quality of air during the Games," he said.

A tough

FROM PAGE 17
not figured in a Test this year due to injuries.

"We have Zaheer back with his experience of bowling in sub-continental conditions. Ishant Sharma has really progressed well as a seamer, and Harbhajan Singh is back as well," said Kumble.

"The last time we played Sri Lanka in India (in 2005) we beat them, so we are confident."

The skipper said his team had quality batsmen to succeed against Sri Lanka's latest spin sensation Ajantha Mendis, who could make his Test debut against the tourists.

Mendis outwitted Indian batsmen with clever variations in the recent Asia Cup final in Karachi, where he bagged six wickets for 13 runs to lead his team to victory.

"Our middle order has more than 30,000 Test runs and four of them have played more than 100 Tests," said Kumble.

"It will be challenging and I am sure our batsmen will definitely cope with that. It is something we need to be on the lookout for."

India open their tour with a three-day practice match in Colombo on Friday. They will also play five one-day internationals after the Test series.

Tyson getting

FROM PAGE 17
heats in the 200.

"That's the part I'm trying to get out there: It didn't matter if he'd fallen or not. He was going to get 10 days of active recovery anyway," Drummond said. "So we've just extended the 10 days to 14."

"The muscle is 100 percent by then, and everything else is back to business. We're taking every necessary precaution, treating it like it is something serious, because the body needs that. You've got to pamper it sometimes. I've told him to go home and get your feet up, get the rubdowns."

Drummond laughed, adding his only concern is Gay might be pampering himself with too many visits to fast-food restaurants.

"You can go once, maybe twice," Drummond said. "But not every day."



PHOTO: INTERNET

Australia speedster Brett Lee (L) and batsman Brad Hodge unveil the Sheffield Shield during a ceremony in Sydney yesterday.

'Hype cut into pace'

CRICINFO, undated

AFP, London

South Africa's highly-rated pace attack flopped in the first Test against England because they allowed pre-match hype to make them complacent, according to their assistant coach Vinnie Barnes.

Barnes wasn't happy with what he saw from strike bowlers Dale Steyn, Morne Morkel and Makhaya Ntini as England piled up 593-8 declared in the first innings at Lord's.

He insisted pundits' claims that South Africa had the fastest bowling attack in international cricket had a negative effect, but he is convinced they can bounce back in the second Test, which starts at Headingley on Friday.

"We have a young attack and it was a huge occasion for them playing their first Test at Lord's,"

Barnes said. "There's no doubt that they were overawed."

"There was also a lot of hype in the media about the South Africans having the fastest attack since the West Indies in the 1980s - and the guys started to believe it all."

"We were also unable to get onto the field because of the bad weather preceding the Test and couldn't get a feel of the ground, and in particular the slope."

"They all have a strong feeling that they've let the team down - and they're desperate to make sure that it doesn't happen again."

Barnes has been working to restore morale among his bowlers after the drawn match.

He feels it is only a matter of time before they hit their stride and has been showing them videos of their best moments to underline the point.

"We've reminded them that they lost their game plan," Barnes said.

"Bowling is all about patience, pressure and operating in partnerships. The guys just didn't apply their skills."

"I've done technical work with the guys and a lot of video analysis. I've sat down with the bowlers individually, for two hours each, and shown them examples of what they can do when they were bowling well."

"I showed Dale Steyn his bowling at Newlands in the New Year Test against the West Indies when he was bowling at 150kph and swinging it big, and one of his best spells at Chennai against India when he took four for 10 in eight overs with the old ball."

The switch to a commercial sponsor in 1999 was not popularly received by cricket lovers around Australia.

Return of the Shield

AFP, Sydney

Australia's 116-year interstate cricket competition will revert to being called the Sheffield Shield, ending a nine-year period named after a commercial sponsor, Cricket Australia said Wednesday.

The traditional first-class competition, contested by six states, is considered the essential foundation for Australia's sustained run of success in Test and one-day cricket.

Cricket Australia announced the Sheffield Shield, which has its origins in 1891-1892 when Lord Sheffield was in Australia as the promoter of the English team led by W.G. Grace, would not have a naming sponsor from next season.

The switch to a commercial sponsor in 1999 was not popularly received by cricket lovers around Australia.

BKSP, Josephites clash in today's Fed Cup final

SPORTS REPORTER

BKSP snatched a thrilling 58-57 victory against Bangladesh Police yesterday to set a final clash against Josephites Club in the Federation Cup basketball tournament.

BKSP, who led the first semifinal at the Dhanmondi basketball Gymnasium 36-30, survived second-half pressure from rival cagers Rustam and Nitai, who scored 16 points each.

For BKSP, Sohag shot 14 points while Setu and Shueb 12 and 11 respectively.

In another keenly contested semifinal, Josephites ousted Flame Boys 66-58 after leading 35-31 at halftime.

Allen led Josephites' charge with 15 points while Ibrahim added 13. Irfan was in top form for the losers with 19 points.

The final will be held at the same venue today.

Arjuna's words of wisdom

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's legendary former captain Arjuna Ranatunga on Wednesday urged players to preserve Test cricket in the face of the challenge posed by the lucrative Twenty20 format.

Ranatunga, who led his country to their only World Cup title in 1996, also said the players needed to focus more on Tests.

"You need Twenty20 to get more money, but ultimately you have to realise that Test cricket is the major thing," said Ranatunga, who is also the chairman of Sri Lanka Cricket.

"It's very important to preserve Test cricket. When it comes to Twenty20, it's more like a business as far as I am concerned."

His comments came a few days after his country's cricketers asked for next year's hastily-arranged Test tour of England to be rescheduled as the dates clashed with the Indian Premier League (IPL).

The tour, arranged earlier this month after England suspended bilateral cricket relations with Zimbabwe, includes two Tests, three one-dayers and four warm-up games, running from April 21 to May 30.

Bangladesh play

FROM PAGE 17

ended in a goalless draw. Bangladesh, who finished third in their group to enter the lower half of the play-offs, will meet a difficult opposition in Malaysia today in the 5th-6th place classification match.

Bangladesh lost 8-0 to South Korea and 8-2 to Pakistan before winning their lone group match against Oman 7-1.

Razzaq has no regrets

CRICINFO, undated

CRICINFO, undated

Former Pakistan all-rounder Abdul Razzaq has said he has no regrets over joining the rebel Indian Cricket League (ICL) and risking his future with Pakistan. Razzaq said he was optimistic the Pakistan Cricket Board would eventually lift the ban on ICL players, much like their English counterparts have softened their stance on its ICL players.

Razzaq, 28, announced his retirement from international cricket last year after being refused a central contract and omitted from selection for the ICC World Twenty20 in September. He said the ICL was the only available option for him and that the Indian Premier League wouldn't have been an option in the first place because of his status as a non-contracted player.

"By my making an announcement saying that I've retired, it doesn't mean that it's a permanent thing," Razzaq told the website. "I've got no regrets about signing for the ICL because I probably couldn't have played in the IPL even if I had wanted to. The IPL only selects those players who have been recommended by the domes-

tic cricket boards. I hadn't signed a central contract and I had been dropped from the team so there's no guarantee I'd have been able to play in the IPL anyway."

ICL players worldwide have been banned from playing international cricket but Razzaq was confident it would be lifted in due course. Since the ECB has allowed all its ICL players to honour their county commitments, he felt a change of guard within the PCB could result in something similar in Pakistan as well. Given India's powerful influence in the ICC, Razzaq said a change of heart from the BCCI would also help a great deal.

"The ban on ICL players could be lifted worldwide or the PCB officials could be replaced and the new set of officials may decide to lift the ban," he said. "Just look at county cricket. Initially we were banned but now that it has been lifted, I'm playing for Surrey. So it's not impossible to think that I could be playing for the ICL and the PCB by this time next year."

"The Asian Cricket Council and the ICC both know that currently India produces a lot of revenue for them, so whatever India decides they will do. I very much doubt that this ban will be lifted without either the BCCI's say or a change of officials in the PCB."

"The ICL contract doesn't mean

that I definitely can't play in the 2009 Twenty20 World Cup. It could still happen."

However, he cautioned that taking the PCB to court over the bans isn't the solution as it's impossible to challenge government bodies in Pakistan and hope for a fair hearing.

"In England, everyone is equal in the eyes of the law but in Pakistan that's not the case. You can't challenge the government or government bodies like the PCB. The courts belong to the government and so does the PCB, why would one overrule the other? This sort of thing can't be successful in Pakistan."

Commenting on the current Pakistan team, Razzaq felt Shoaib Malik was the wrong choice as captain. Malik succeeded Inzamam-ul-Haq after Pakistan's first-round exit from the 2007 World Cup. Pakistan have had mixed results in the period since, reaching the finals of the World Twenty20 but losing Test series to India and South Africa.

"I think he (Malik) was given the captaincy too early. He may have made a good captain in the future but not right now. Or they could have made Malik the captain and kept more experienced players around like India have done. They would be there to advise, support, and help him settle into the role."

Welcome back Freddie: Lee

CRICINFO, undated

AFP, London

Australia pace bowler Brett Lee has saluted England all-rounder Andrew Flintoff's long-awaited return to Test cricket.

Flintoff is due to play for England in the second Test against South Africa at Headingley on Friday after finally recovering from a series of ankle problems and a side strain.

Lee knows it has been a long and painful journey through rehabilitation for Flintoff and was quick to express his admiration for a rival who became a close friend during the 2005 Ashes series.

"Flintoff is a once-in-a-generation player," Lee said. "I liken him to the great Ian Botham. They are guys who can change a game at the drop of a hat with bat and ball and also field."

"He was the standout in the '05 Ashes over there, he's also a very close friend of mine but a magnificent player on and off the field."

"He's a great guy and the type of guy who can change the game. I am looking forward to having him back definitely."

Lee, 31, has been keeping a close

eye on the series between England and South Africa as he prepares for a forthcoming series against the Springboks and next year's Ashes clash in England.

"I'd be lying if I say I haven't been doing a bit of homework on the series that is happening now because we have got South Africa and England coming up shortly," he said.

"I have been doing a bit of homework and watching their players. They have got a lot of young guys coming through who have been very impressive so I am looking forward to playing against both of those sides."

After helping Australia to a 2-0 Test series win over West Indies, Lee has taken some time off with his family but the Ashes are never far from his thoughts.

"I have actually tried to get away from cricket for a short period of time," he said.

"It's really good to refresh the batteries and get ready to go for what is going to be a massive summer and even a big 18 months."

"We've got the Ashes coming up as well which we are not directly looking forward to right now because we have a few things in place that we have to take care of first."

"I would be lying if I didn't say I was looking forward to the Ashes next year."

CHAMPIONS TROPHY ICC meets to talk security

PTI, Mumbai

Concerned about the security situation in Pakistan for the upcoming Champions Trophy there, the International Cricket Council has convened a meeting in Dubai this weekend to discuss the matter.

"The ICC has convened a meeting in Dubai on July 19 and 20 to discuss security-related matters for the Champions Trophy," informed BCCI sources here.

"The recent bomb blast in Karachi (during the Asia Cup that ended on July 6) seems to have made things a bit more different than what the case was earlier," they said.

Players from England, Australia and New Zealand have already raised concerns over visiting Pakistan due to security concerns.

"Meanwhile, reports in the Australian media said England is now the front-runner to host the event, earlier known as the ICC Knock-out Cup, if it is shifted out of Pakistan."

The reason given was that centres in South Africa, earlier touted as the substitute host country, would not be ready to host the matches at such a short notice while venues in England can do so as the tournament is to be held from September 11, the flag end of the domestic season there.

Hughes undeterred

CRICINFO, undated

AFP, Manchester

Mark Hughes insisted on Wednesday Manchester City's failed attempt to sign Ronaldinho won't stop him targeting the world's best players.

City's ambitious bid to lure former World Player of the Year Ronaldinho to Eastlands ended in disappointment when AC Milan announced the Barcelona star will move to the San Siro.

But Hughes was encouraged by City's Thai owner Thaksin Shinawatra decision to sanction a

massive financial package for Ronaldinho, which would have paid the player 200,000 pounds (251,000 euros) a week.

"We have presented our case as well as we possibly could and the fact that we are in there trying to get one of the top players in the world shows our ambition and where we want to go," Hughes told the Manchester Evening News.

"I don't know the finer details of the negotiations, but the way the Ronaldinho deal was constructed was a little bit different by all accounts to an ordinary deal, so my budget would not have been affected as much as people think."

Hughes is already turning his

attention to other transfer options, with reports suggesting he will move for Blackburn duo Roque Santa Cruz and David Bentley, who were both signed by the Welshman during his time at Ewood Park.

"Obviously, I am being linked with players that I know and possibly have worked with before and then there are others that agents are trying to move on and place," he said.

"There is a lot of that going on at the moment. It is not my way to divulge who were are going after."

"I will keep them under wraps in case someone jumps in at the last moment, but there is a lot of work going on behind the scenes."

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan skipper Shoaib Malik on Wednesday urged the

International Cricket Council (ICC) not to move the Champions Trophy out of his country in September, saying it was perfectly safe for international teams.

Malik's plea came amid renewed fears about security here, following a suicide blast in the capital Islamabad earlier this month that killed 19 people and a series of small bombings in the port city of Karachi a day later.

Players from Australia, New Zealand and England have expressed concerns over playing in Pakistan. The Champions Trophy tournament is to be held in Karachi, Rawalpindi -- which

adjoins Islamabad -- and Lahore from September 11-28.

"Pakistan is the safest country for cricket and all teams must come here without any fears of security," said Malik, one day after Pakistan announced its 30-man provisional



SHOAIB MALIK

squad for the Trophy.

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said all participating countries would be briefed on security arrangements at a meeting of the International Cricket Council (ICC) in Dubai on Sunday.

The ICC said last week it could pull the Champions Trophy out of Pakistan if there were any threat of violence.

Pakistan hosted the six-nation Asia Cup without incident from June 24 until July 6 -- evidence, according to Malik, that the Champions Trophy also would go off without a hitch.

Sri Lanka is the designated alternative venue for the Champions Trophy but is also facing renewed violence between Tamil Tiger rebels and government troops.

South Africa has been mentioned as a possible replacement.

Kumble plays down Dhoni absence

PTI, Colombo

Indian Test captain Anil Kumble is in no mood to lament cricket-weary Mahendra Singh Dhoni's absence from the squad and believes it is a gilt-edged opportunity for stumps Dinesh Karthick and Parthiv Patel to prove their mettle.

Addressing a press conference soon after the team landed here for the three-match Test series, Kumble sounded upbeat about the team's prospect and was not unduly worried about Dhoni's absence.

"This would give an opportunity to both Dinesh Karthick and Parthiv Patel to prove themselves after their good showing in the domestic cricket," Kumble said. Dhoni had earlier cited fatigue and opted out of the Test squad. Kumble refused to delve into the pros and cons of Dhoni's decision and said the ODI captain had already explained reasons behind his decision.

Though Kumble opined confidence that his side would live up to the expectation in the series, the seasoned campaigner admitted it would not be a cakewalk for the visitors.

"It will be a tough series and will require a lot of hard work," Kumble said.

the team and his experience bowling in subcontinent conditions will be useful," said Kumble.

"There is also Ishant Sharma who has really progressed well as a seamer and we have Harbhajan Singh backs as well."

"We have had a good combination and in the last one year or so we have been really consistent with our performances, that's something which we will take forward."

"Whenever we tour Sri Lanka it's always been tough. It will be a lot of hard work and we are ready for that."

India begin their tour with a three-day practice match against a Sri Lanka Board XI starting July 18.

The first Test starts on July 23 at the Sinhalese Sports Club in Colombo.

Perfect ten

FROM PAGE 17

Tendulkar will have a fitting audience and a conducive environment for the big high.

Under the circumstances, the absence of the ODI captain and vice-captain from this series suddenly seems apt. Dhoni and Yuvraj, with their unbridled aggression, might just have sullied the serenity of watching these great men in whites clash for one last time.

CRICINFO, undated

REUTERS, Colombo

India Test captain Anil Kumble was confident his experienced top order would cope with new Sri Lanka spin bowler Ajantha Mendis.

Mendis, 23, destroyed India's top order in the Asia Cup final earlier this month, claiming 6-13, but Kumble backed his strong Test line-up to cope better than the one-day team.

"He is something we need to watch out for, although we respect every bowler we face," Kumble said at a media briefing after the team's arrival in Colombo for a three-Test series.

"Test cricket is different and we have the quality."

"Our middle order has more than 30,000 Test runs and four of them have played more than 100 Tests."

"In Tests you get more time to figure out the bowler. It will be challenging, but I am sure our batsmen will cope."

A confident Kumble was also pleased to have a full-strength bowling line-up for what he expected to be a tough series.

"We have Zaheer Khan back in

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	DOWN
1 Height	14 Invalid
28 Garlic	15 Caustic
of mayon-	16 solution
fashion?	19 Retainer
4 Wild a	20 Gist
needle	21 Talons
7 Anitloxins	22 Getting
33 Bit of	23 dressed
8 Melodies	24 (in)
10 Slip-on	25 He got
36 Caught	26 the point
37 Land	27 across
11 "Sleepy	28 to his
of	29 Found-
Hollow"	30 deder-
storyteller	31 Rising
13 Defini-	32 Sun
tively	33 Covered
16 - out	34 In dirt
a	35 Tarzan's
living	36 clique
17 Resem-	40 "O!
bling	37 course"
18 Stipend	41 Homer
19 Unable	42 Simp-
to hold	43 son's
any	44 neighbor
more	45 forest
20 Un-	46 Solution time: 21 mins.
dressed	47 JEEF APT BROW
21 Fisher-	48 GUSE LAW AUNA
man's	49 SHAN GROUNDER
basket	50 SOUNDER RAGON
23 Hosleri	51 OUR PDA
shade	52 ZAYNE POUNDER
25 Lotion	53