AFP, Birmingham

on Saturday.

Olympic pole vault gold med-

allist Yelena Isinbayeva will

bid for her 27th world record

at the Birmingham Grand Prix

has already set seven world

records in the UK and is hop-

ing to improve upon the five

metres indoor record she set

in the UK, in Gateshead, and

my most important world

record was in London (when

she first cleared 5m) - every-

thing seems to happen here

in Birmingham and then I'll

try for a new world record. I

would love to do that for the

setting world records. Each

time I break one I get the same

strange feelings, that I have

done something that nobody

has ever done before. I enjoy

the discipline is such that she

is expected to win every event

she enters, and she concedes

that the lack of serious chal-

lengers can make for a pre-

dictable spectacle for sup-

closer rival," she said. "It

would be good for the crowd

as at the moment they are

maybe skeptical and say, 'oh,

we know that Isinbayeva is

ent as I always try and do my

best - even if I am alone there.

I'll always try and do a world

record so that I can put on a

"But for me it is no differ-

"It would be good to have a

Isinbayeva's dominance of

"My first aim will be to win

"I will never get bored of

forme," she said.

British crowd.

that."

porters.

going to win'.

"My first world record was

in Donetsk last weekend.

### Fabregas to return in April

AFP, London

he expects to play again for he continues his rehabilitation from a serious knee injury.

The Spanish midfielder has been sidelined since December 12 when he partially ruptured ligaments in his right knee during the English Premier League game with Liverpool.

Fabregas, 22, did not require surgery but was immediately ruled out for four months by his manager Arsene Wenger.

The Gunners captain duly flew to his home city of Barcelona to begin his convalescence before returning to north London last weekend to resume light training exer-

cises. Doctors expect him to be able to begin ball work within the next 10 days and Fabregas hopes to make his return in the meeting with Manchester City at Emirates stadium on April 4.

"I have been working hard on the training ground,"

Fabregas said. "The most important thing is working on my legs to build them up, which will take another three weeks or so, and hopefully in five or six weeks I will be back playing. I am looking at the Manchester City game as a realistic comeback

date. "I have to make sure it's 100 per cent cured before I come back. Especially because I am a midfielder - I play with the inside of my leg all the time and I'm trying to be involved in the game. But it's been great to be back at the club."

### WICB checked

FROM PAGE 17

WICB's Chance to Shine development programme, scheduled to get going later this year.

Peters insisted Stanford's legal problems and frozen assets were not something the WICB could see coming. "They [the Stanford Financial Group) are a legitimately registered business in the Caribbean. There was no reason to believe there was anything fraudulent about the company. We're not forensic accountants here."

However, even the ICC had decided against doing business with Stanford after a meeting in 2007 before the ICC World Twenty20 final between India and Pakistan. Stanford had proposed an annual triangular tournament involving two full member teams and his All-Star side. But when he suddenly changed the proposal at the last minute to include just the winners of that final, the ICC backed off.

"Any thought we might have had of doing business with him was placed on the back burner when he moved the goalposts immediately," ICC president David Morgan had told the Telegraph.

Stanford had also previously approached cricket authorities in India and South Africa with big money proposals without success.

### Anelka gifts

FROM PAGE 20 introduced in favour of

defender Curtis Davies. But there was a determination about Chelsea that had been so absent under Scolari. Even Didier Drogba was spot-

ted on more than one occasion tackling back inside his own half as Hiddink, arms folded and a study in serenity in the technical area, nodded his approval.

Only when the Ivory Coast striker shot over the bar from the corner of the six-yard box did the Dutch coach throw up his arms in a rare show of emotion.

Chelsea would have won more convincingly if Jose Boswinga had converted from close range after exchanging passes with Drogba but it was a miss Hiddink could afford.

### Heavy fine

FROM PAGE 20 played a role in the fact that on Thursday Israel's Andy Ram | a drive off Kaneria and was was granted a visa to play in a men's tournament in Dubai

next week. Scott praised Peer's poise

throughout the week. "Thanks to the courage of Shahar, and all those individuals and organizations - including her fellow players - that supported her, the UAE has changed their policy and another barrier of discrimination has fallen," he said.

# 'Money the ruination' Yelena to bid for 27th WR

Cricket

AFP, London

Cesc Fabregas has confirmed | Money has been the "ruination" of cricket, former Test umpire Dickie Bird said Saturday, Arsenal at the start of April as | after the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) terminated all contracts with alleged fraudster Allen Stanford.

Bird called for a return to "old traditions and principles" in a comment piece in the Sun tabloid and said he felt "saddened" when he saw large sums of money pour into cricket.

Cricket Board to terminate all contractual links with Allen Stanford," Bird, a county batsman for his native Yorkshire and Leicestershire before becoming an umpire, wrote.

"But it is too late because the damage has already been done. It depresses me what has happened to the game I knew and was brought up on as aboy. Money has been the ruination of cricket."

He said that authorities should have questioned Stanford's interests in financing multimillion-dollar cricket tournaments, but instead "saw the dollar signs and dived in head-

first, without thinking. Bird continued: "There was nothing wrong with the game throughout my era as a player and an umpire. But it has all changed. Why can't we leave things alone? We need to return to some of the old traditions and principles.'

The ECB will not be taking part in any further Stanford Twenty20 matches in Antigua or the proposed Stanford-sponsored international quadrangular Twenty20 events in England, the first of which was due to be played at Lord's in May.

Negotiations between the ECB and Stanford were suspended on Tuesday when it was revealed that the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) had charged the Texan tycoon with an alleged nine billion dollar fraud.

Under the deal struck between the ECB and Stanford last year, England were due to play four further 20 million dollar matches in the Caribbean, while the proposed quadrangular events were scheduled to take place annually from 2009 to 2011, with each worth around nine million dollars.

The Stanford Financial Group claims to serve 50,000 clients in 140 countries with more than 50 billion dollars of assets under management or advisement.

It was particularly successful in Latin America and the Caribbean, where authorities sought to quell fears among depositors who "It was right for the England and Wales formed long queues outside local branches.

Five Latin American countries have already taken action against companies owned by the 58-year-old Stanford.

Bird achieved global cricket celebrity while standing in a then world record 66 Tests from 1973-1996 and he was also in the middle for the first three World Cup finals.



DICKIE BIRD

# ECB draws Allen stumps

Cricket

AFP, London

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) on Friday terminated all contracts with controversial billionaire financier, and alleged fraudster,

Allen Stanford. The ECB will not be taking part in any further Stanford Twenty20 matches in Antigua or the proposed Stanford-sponsored international quadrangular Twenty20 events in England, the first of which was due to be played at Lord's in May.

Negotiations between the ECB and Stanford were suspended on Tuesday when it was revealed that the Texan tycoon had been charged with an alleged nine billion dollar fraud by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) in America.

statement: "The ECB was shocked by the charges filed against the Stanford organisation and personnel earlier this week by the SEC. "Within minutes of the announcement, the ECB determined to suspend any further discus-

ECB chief executive David Collier said in a

Stanford."

Under the deal struck between the ECB and Stanford last year, England were due to play four further 20 million dollar matches in the Caribbean, while the proposed quadrangular events were scheduled to take place annually from 2009 to 2011, with each worth around nine million dollars.

In the aftermath of the charges, ECB chairman Giles Clarke faced calls to resign for getting involved with Stanford, but Collier was quick to point out that the ECB were unaffected finan-

"Given the uncertainty of the financial markets and the sponsorship dispute between Digicel and the West Indies Cricket Board over the matches in Antigua in 2008, the executive committee and board when setting the 2009 budgets took a prudent position in creating a contingency in case the Antigua matches did not proceed," Collier said.

"For that reason, ECB was able to confirm immediately to counties... that there would be no impact on fee payments in 2009.

Stanford, accused by securities regulators of perpetrating "a fraud of shocking magnitude that has spread its tentacles throughout the world, was found Thursday in the US state of Virginia, and while he was served court orders he was not arrested or taken into custody, the FBI said.

The Stanford Financial Group claims to serve 50,000 clients in 140 countries with more than 50 billion dollars of assets under management or advisement.

It was particularly successful in Latin sions with Stanford and the Board has now America and the Caribbean, where authorities agreed to terminate the ECB's agreements with sought to quell fears among depositors who formed long queues outside local branches.

Five Latin American countries have already taken action against companies owned by the 58-year-old Stanford.

In London, British investigators are monitoring a possible link to the tycoon's fraud after reports that a small accountancy firm here audited his books.

### Rifts led to Keane exit

AFP, Dublin



Former Sunderland manager Roy Keane has revealed that relationship

rifts with American investor Ellis Short and chairman Niall Quinn played a major role in his decision to leave the Premier League club.

Keane resigned in December after two years in charge at the Stadium of Light and the Manchester United legend has now spoken for the first time about the reasons behind his departure.

The former Republic of Ireland midfielder, who lifted Sunderland from the foot of the Championship to Premier League respectability, insists Short's attitude towards him was uncomfortable from the start.

"We had sat down with him ers' faces. a couple of times, Niall and I, Keane told the Irish Times. "I

went down to London to meet him twice. I thought, hmm, the dynamics are changing here. "He said he had read my book. I felt he was thinking

from the start that I wasn't for him. He sort of knew this wasn't going to be a long-term relationship. "It started with a demand to know where I had been the

previous day, that he wanted me available at all times. It was a disappointment. Then there were accusations about how often I came in, about moving my family up. And it was the them training well.

Keane also revealed a change in attitude from Quinn concerned him deeply after the club's supremo revealed his desire for the manager to put a smile back on the play-

"He was talking to me about the players needing to come into work with a smile on their face. That really concerned me," Keane said.

"The day I walked into Sunderland, putting a smile on the faces of well-paid players was the last thing anybody wanted me to do.

"Players had been taking the piss out of the club for years.

"My question to Niall was, who are you listening to here? It wasn't Niall. It was the undercurrent. Where it was coming from. Smiles on players' faces? It's my job to get

"There was good spirit. That's what had kept us in the Premiership last year. Our spirit. That got the alarm bells ringing. Without a shadow of a doubt. The American fella would have been on Niall's case."

#### FROM PAGE 20 Chelsea is a family - and a

Timor Leste.

"When Scolari started blaming individuals, then that was bad. To name one player as to blame for what happened in a squad of 24 is wrong.'

to his eventual demise. But Drogba hit back and said: "I was shocked he said that."

as a man and a coach but I was not involved in any discussions with the owner." "And if I had as much

power with the owner as has

been said, then (Jose) Mourinho would still be here, no? If I had that power!" Hiddink to re-unite Chelsea and get them back on the

striker insisted.

# Andy eyes fixed role

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Andy Flower has said he will consider applying for the England head coach role when it is The 26-year-old Russian officially advertised in the next few days. He is currently in an interim position after the sudden departure of Peter Moores in January, but despite difficulties for the team on the tour of West Indies it has given him the hunger to try for the top job.

"I have really enjoyed doing it so far," Flower said. "I am sure there are many experienced, fine coaches out there but I haven't quite made my decision yet."

Shortly before departing on the tour Flower said he would see how the trip developed before deciding whether to aim for the full-time position, which could become a team director position instead of the old-style coach.

If he helped England turn around the 1-0 deficit and claim the series over the next two Tests that would strengthen his credentials, although he faces tough competition with the ECB likely to want leading world figures to apply. In the aftermath of Moores's departure, the current Kent director of cricket Graham Ford became one of the frontrunners, but Flower said he has plenty to offer.

"[There's] my experience as a Test cricketer and the fact that I've been involved with these guys for almost two years. I know the personnel involved and I believe I can help gel a unit together," he said.

however, is his closeness to Moores. When Kevin Pietersen made his demands for the team assess their options.

structure, which ultimately cost him the captaincy, Flower was also on the list of people he wanted out. "Peter Moores is a good friend of mine and I really enjoyed working with him," Flower said. "If I am too closely associated with him that is for someone else to decide."

Flower's first priority though is to ensure England don't dwell on the disappointment of the near-miss in Antigua when West Indies saved the Test with nine wickets down. "It was very disappointing," he said. "We dominated the whole Test and didn't win in the end, so it did feel a bit like a loss."

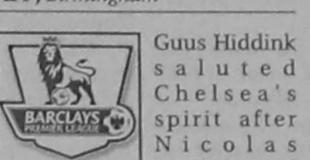
He supported Andrew Strauss's tactics in batting on to leave a target of 503 although England's continued struggle to take 20 wickets remains a concern. Since the back-to-back series against New Zealand last year England have only bowled a side out twice on one occasion -- against South Africa at The Oval.

"Declaration-wise it allowed the captain to set attacking fields throughout the day and I suppose the proof is in the pudding," Flower said. "We didn't get 10 wickets, we only got nine of them. There have been a few cases, so we have to examine why. Are we doing the right things with reverse swing? Are we bowling reverse swing in the right way? Are our spinners having the right effect in the last innings? Questions have to be asked."

England have a two-day game starting on Sunday to give their squad players and outing and the match may include Ravi Bopara and Amjad Khan, who have been called in as cover for Andrew Flintoff. They are only due to arrive One key factor that may count against him, from the Lions tour of New Zealand shortly before the game, but England will want to

## Hiddink salutes spirit

AFP, Birmingham



Anelka's goal gave the new Blues manager a 1-0 victory at Aston Villa on Saturday.

great show for the spectators.' The reigning IAAF Female Anelka's superb first half Athlete of the Year will not strike was enough to hand defend her European indoor Hiddink a winning start to his crown at next's month chamreign after the Dutchman pionships in order to concenreplaced Luiz Felipe Scolari last week.

trate on the outdoor season. It means she will lose her Following stories of dresscurrent haul of all the indoor ing room divisions and player and outdoor titles at Olympic, power ruining morale at world and European level, but Chelsea, Hiddink insisted the the blow has been softened by way the players dug in for the the fact she recently signed a win, as well as the sight of the reported 1.5million-dollar entire team hugging at full-(1.17million-euro) deal with time proved there was no lack Chinese sportswear firm Li of spirit. Ning. "If you see the record of

#### U-19s in tough

FROM PAGE 17

began with 45 participating teams being drawn into eight

The qualification campaign is scheduled to run from October 3 to 18, with the group venues to be confirmed at a later date.

The winners and runnerup of each of the seven sixteam groups as well as the best third-placed side overall will advance to the finals along with the country that emerge victorious from the trio contesting Group H, namely Australia, Laos and Malaysia.

**U-16 GROUPINGS** Group A: Saudi Arabia,

Uzbekistan, Kuwait, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Afghanistan. Group B: Iran, Bahrain, Lebanon, Nepal, Tajikistan, Maldives.

Group C: Syria, Yemen, Qatar, Palestine, Iraq, Bhutan. Group D: UAE, India,

Turkmenistan, Oman, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan. Group E: Japan, Indonesia,

Mongolia, Chinese Taipei, Bangladesh, Philippines. Group F: China, Singapore, Guam, Hong Kong, Macau,

Group G: Korea Republic Thailand, Vietnam, DPR Korea, Cambodia, Myanmar. Group H: Australia, Malaysia, Laos.

### Drogba slams

family needs to be together," DrogbatoldThe Sun.

Scolari also claimed that Drogba was one of three players who betrayed him and led

"I have respect for Scolari

Drogba is backing Guus

"Hiddink is just what Chelsea need right now," the which I respected," Hiddink "Lets not exaggerate. I did

not see what sometimes is suggested about this big division. I have analysed it rather well. The hug was not for the cameras. I think it is real."

Hiddink was also delighted with the football produced by his side in the first half.

"It was a very good start with the new circumstances. What pleased me most was in the first half we played very good football," he said. "We had good possession, good triangles, were dangerous and got in the box.

"The only thing we didn't do was make the second goal to kill the game. Of course the second half we sat back a little bit too much because they have this power in the air. But we could have scored one or two more so I was pleased."

Anelka believes Chelsea's win, which lifted them above

### groups for the qualification tournament. Sun shines for India

FROM PAGE 17

turned up to watch them at a ground half of Christchurch hasn't heard of.

The Lions, including Luke

Wright, Samit Patel and Sajid

Aston Villa at home it is good

that we can break that. We had

a good spirit. Everyone was

doing a job for himself but also

Mahmood, went on about their business like university students on a routine day. Not a single journalist to watch, a fan was a far cry. The ground staff golf-carted their way around the ground as they would on any other day. But around 2.30pm, cars started pulling up in front of the ground. From nowhere a crowd of about 35 gathered, one of them a courier driver and a school mate of Irfan Pathan's. John Wright was surprised to see the crowd and realised what they were there for only after the Indian team arrived. "Sachin, Sachin," he chanted, though not too loud lest the man himself heard.

This was no routine practice session. The groundstaff had to get to work immediately to keep people out of the nets area. The word spread, and in no time the crowd almost doubled. A few Indian domestic Twenty20s.

CROSSWORD

university students, along with their New Zealand friends, were among those who stayed the longest. Out came the bean bags, sofa, an easy chair, from what looked like a hostel building near the Oval. And the beer. The rest made good use of the grass banks around the ground. Every good shot at the nets, every good extraordinary delivery bowled, every special catch taken in the fielding practice, was cheered.

crowd entertained with banter loud enough to be heard across the nets. But despite the fun and games, it was an intense first session, focusing on all three disciplines, after which all the players took time to sign autographs -- on bats, papers, and bodies -- and take photographs. A quaint university had come to life for three hours. The locals acknowledged not many would turn up if New Zealand were training. That will be put to test on Monday, when the hosts assemble after finishing their

The players also kept the

helping out the other players Villa into third, has kept their slender title hopes alive. "It is good for all the play-

> ers, and for the new coach as well, if we continue in this winning way. We hope we will win more games with him," Anelka said. "We hope we are back in

the race. It is going to be difficult but everything is possible in football. "Once again we showed a

lot of character because it was a hard game. "I'm pleased to score but

it's even more important because we won in the end."

### ICC eyeing

FROM PAGE 17 recognised by the BCCI or the ICC, unlike the Indian Premier League (IPL) which has paid fantastic sums to lure players

to its tournament. "I hope we might be successful in coming to a mutually acceptable conclusion. I can't be certain that will be the case but I hope we can at least make a start in bringing about

a settlement," added Morgan. Earlier this week, a Pakistani court lifted domestic bans on the country's last six active players who had joined

#### Flintoff

FROM PAGE 17

England squad. He made a return to national colours following a long-term ankle injury for the second Test of four against South Africa last year in

England. Flintoff is due to play for three weeks in the Indian Premier League Twenty20 tournament after the Caribbean tour for the Chennai Super Kings. Together with England teammate Kevin Pietersen, he was the most expensive buy in the recent IPL auction when he

went for 1.55 million dollars. But, with the Twenty20 World Cup and an Ashes series due to take place in England later this year, ECB chiefs may order him to rest in what will be a rare break in a crowded fixture schedule.

The final Test in Trinidad is due to start on March 6.

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CRYPTOQUIP

39 Needing JSQL MJV EOFKGFYNR GOLN

MVHQMSQY JSFKQ JVYIFLH 41 Russian VL O MORI, UVTKN AVT ROA

MSQA OYQ UVL-EVFLON?

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WELL-KNOWN FAIRY TALE FEATURING A GROUP OF WRINKLY-

SKINNED TOY DOGS: "THE THREE LITTLE PUGS." Today's Cryptoquip Clue: J equals W

#### Mahela, Thilan put Pakistan's last Test was Vaas, Fernando, Mendis, **FROM PAGE 17**

Tharanga Paranavitana, dis-

Yasir Arafat to Haq who held a away from Pakistan in 2008. low catch in the slip. Sri Lanka, who reached played in Lahore from March 1. 120-2 at lunch, lost well-set Sangakkara when he miscued

mid-wicket. Sangakkara hit nine on Saturday: boundaries and added 84 for the third wicket with Jayawardene.

well caught by Haq at short

months failed to attract a big Jayawardene not out crowd as just a handful of Samaraweera not out schoolchildren watched the Extras: (lb-3, nb-7, w-1) first day's play at the National Total: (For three wkts in 90 overs) 406 ICC match referee: Chris Stadium.

loss of debutant opener against India at Bangalore in Muralidaran. December 2007 and the team Fall of wickets: 1-3, 2-93, 3missed for a first-ball duck by had not played a home Test since facing South Africa in Bowler Warnapura, who hit nine October that year, with security boundaries, edged paceman concerns keeping foreign teams

> SCOREBOARD Scoreboard at close on the first day of the first Test between Pakistan and Sri Lanka at the National Stadium in Karachi

SRILANKA: First innings Warnapura c Misbahul b Arafat Paranavitana c Misbahul b Gul Pakistan's first Test in 14 Sangakkara c Misbahul b Kaneria 70 11 O M R W

16 82 1 105 Sohail 17 0 57 Arafat The second Test will be Malik 16 24 2 93 Kaneria Younis 1 0 PAKISTAN: Salman Butt, Khurram Manzoor, Younis Khan, Faisal Iqbal, Shoaib

(PAK) To bat: Dilshan, Jayawardene, Broad (ENG)

60 0 6 0 Malik, Misbahul Haq, Kamran Akmal, Sohail Khan, Yasir

Toss: Sri Lanka Umpires: Simon Taufel (AUS), Steve Davis (AUS) TV umpire: Zamir Haider

Arafat, Umar Gul, Danish

Kaneria

trophy trail.