

Egypt forward Hossam Hassan (C) is congratulated by his teammates after he scored against Congo in their African Nations Cup quarterfinal match in

Zim cricketers refuse deals

AFP, Harare

Zimbabwe cricketers have turneddown fresh offers of new contracts' by the sport's ruling body here in the latest twist to the chaos wracking the country's cricket set-up.

The cricketers decided late Friday to refuse fresh deals for salaries the equivalent of 1,200 US dollars down to 450 dollars within three grades of senior, intermediate and junior.

The 25 players are also refusing to play in two sponsored interprovincial matches scheduled for

- 15 of the players were believed by colleagues to be inclined to take the contract offers because after six months without pay plus overdue Test match and ODI fees they were very short of money.

But after getting together formally under their association banner these 15 players changed their minds after persuasion. They all also took the oportunity to reaffirm their decision not to play for Zimbabwe in any representative cricket while chairman Peter Chingoka remains in place.

Details were given to AFP by two of the players Saturday, but they asked not to be named "because we are nervous about possible repri-

Their decision also probably means the cancellation of a scheduled tour to Zimbabwe by Kenya later this month.

And it almost certainly means that Zimbabwe will not be able to persuade West Indies to go through

with a One-Day International series there in April and May. The players' decision was

passed to Zimbabwe Cricket coach Kevin Curren early Saturday.

The contract saga began Thursday when 14 players were called individually into the Zimbabwe Cricket office to be told

what they were being offered. One said afterwards: "They gave us the figures they came up with and said if we thought we were worth more we should argue why. They said their offers were based on attitude and performance."

Dion Ebrahim, former vice captain and with 22 Tests experience, was not made an offer at all. He was told: "You haven't per-formed for two years."

Their strike of more than six months is now reinforced. The players will soon be meeting their lawyer Beatrice Mtetwa who has withheld a summons against Zimbabwe Cricket to appear in the High Court and answer claims for uhpaid salaries and match fees amounting to about one million US

Mtetwa was not available to say whether that would now be re-

Murali in the clear FROM PAGE 12

Muralitharan's feelings became evident in Perth last week when he was photographed making a onefinger gesture to a supporter who had no ball" written across his chest.

He has drawn an unofficial reprimandfortheaction.

"I've been to every country, England, South Africa, everywhere. People respect me and enjoy my bowling and enjoy the cricket,"

"Here I don't know what's hap-

pening."
-Muralitharan, 33, has a glowing record as one of the world's best bowlers with 584 Test wickets and 406 limited-overs scalps to his credit.

Egypt cruise into semis



A double from Ahmed Hasan inspired hosts Egypt to a 4-1 victory over Democratic Republic of Congo here on Friday and a EGYPT 2006 place in the semifi-

nals of the African

Nations Cup where they will meet 2002 finalists Senegal, who edged previously unbeaten Guinea 3-2 earlier on the day.

Egypt's other goals came from 39-year-old veteran Hossan Hassan -- his 79th in 175 internationals - and Imad Motaeb, his third in two games, while the DRC's was an own goal by Ahmed El Saka.

In truth the margin flattered Egypt, who now play Senegal for a place in the final, as the DRC paid for having both their first choice central defenders suspended.

"I think the score was a little bit harsh," said DRC coach Claude Le Roy who also announced he was having a contract to June.

"With our suspensions we had However I believe that the team played a wonderful last 30 minutes. "Hats off to Egypt. Our adven-

ture is over but theirs continues. Egypt assistant coach Shawky Gharib praised his side.

"This was their best performance of the tournament so far," said Gharib.

"We stepped up a gear and the players should be proud. We do not have an easy route to the final and we will not underestimate

DRC's captain Lomana LuaLua gave the hosts an early alert when within 30 seconds of the start he twisted and turned and fired in a

shot from outside the area, which just curled round the left hand

Egypt replied in kind as Mohammed Barakat fired in low from a tight angle which went the wrong side of the post. The Congolese, though, then let

their minds wander as within two minutes both their fullbacks were badly caught out. First Amr Zaki, alone on the

right, had his shot blocked by keeper Pascal Kalemba and then Tarek El Sayed got free on the left but his superb cross evaded the onrushing Motaeb. It was beginning to look ominous for the DRC as in the 10th.

minute their makeshift defence was again exposed and a scramble in the six yard box ended with 39year-old Hassan firing tamely into the hands of Kalemba. Hassan, scorer of seven goals in the 1998 edition which Egypt won,

was linking well with Motaeb and twice the younger striker laid it back to his evergreen partner but probably going to quit despite the veteran was unable to add to his

to put together a new defence and and found Biscotte Mbala but the the chance arose to clear it they they made several basic errors. diminutive midfielder spooned the instead passed it to Motaeb -ball over the top.

That miss proved costly as five minutes later Egypt were awarded a penalty when Ndandu Kasongo's late tackle on Elsayed saw referee Modou Sowe point directly to the spot

Although Kalemba went the right way former skipper Ahmed Hasan's spot kick was too powerful and Egypt were in front.

Eight minutes later Kasongo committed another howler letting Ahmed Hasan's long pass drop over him to Hossam Hassan and the captain slotted it home gleefully with a powerful drive.

people been silenced so abruptly as El Saka deflected a shot from Cyrille Mubiala into his own net in injury-time to give the DRC some

They were nearly caught cold within two minutes of the restart as the defence failed to clear the ball and Hossan Hassan pounced but his shot from close range was brilliantly saved by Kalemba with

His opposite number Essam El Hadary also had to be at his best four minutes later as he recovered from making a poor clearance to beat out a fierce effort from Zola

Le Roy had seen enough, of Kasongo by this stage and substituted the unfortunate defensive novice, but it was to be Kalemba again who saved his team as he pulled off a breathtaking onehanded save from Amr Zaki and then bravely blocked Motaeb's

However an appalling mix-up in his central defence resulted in Motaebis goal.

DR Congo failed to deal with LuaLua then got to the by-line Zaki's run into the area and when their pleas of handball against Zaki fell on deaf ears.

There was still fight left in the DRC, though, and Mbala went devilishly close to reducing the deficit in the 65th minute as his curling freekick from the left dropped just onto the top of the

Mbala was playing some of the best football and a quite mesmerising solo run took him into the box. He left the Egyptians flatfooted but his shot rattled off

Two minutes from time, Hasan added his second and his team's However seldom have 74,000 fourth from a direct freekick.

Ronaldo set for return

AP, Madrid

Ronaldo was to play his first match for almost a month when Real Madrid hosted Espanyol in the Spanish league on Saturday.

The Brazil striker, who suffered a recurrence of a right calfinjury on Jan. 8, was included in an 18-man squad for Madrid's attempt to cut FC Barcelona's lead in the standings to 10 points.

Today Ronie is back, Simply, the best center forward in the world is back," Madrid president Florentino Perez was quoted as saying by sports daily As on

Madrid has won all its six league and Copa del Rey games since Ronaldo was absent, rising from sixth to third place in the league and reaching the semifinals of the knockout competition.

Injuries have sidelined Ronaldo for eight of Madrid's 21 league games this season. Injury and suspension have also combined to keep him out of all six of his team's Champions League group

No movie on me: Mourinho

AFP, Lisbon

Chelsea's Portuguese coach Jose Mourinho said Friday his life story s not worth immortalising on the big screen as film executives are reportedly planning to do.

'What is there about my life that would be worth making a movie about? The only thing they could do about me is a DVD of about one hour with the titles I have won, the best images, the biggest controversies," he said in an interview with state radio RDP.

Mourinho joined Chelsea in June 2004 less than one month after leading Portuguese side FC Porto to the Champions League

He guided the London-based club to their first domestic championship title in 50 during his first year with the team.

It is our darkest hour, says Cafu

INTERNET, undated

Milan defender Marcos Cafu has referred to his side's current slump as theworstinhistime at the club.

Cafu is in his final season in Serie A before returning to Brazilian footballin the summer in all likelihood to the club where he first made his name, Sao Paulo but the international has had a glittering career in the peninsula.

After winning the title with Roma and the Rossoneri, he was hoping to go out in style with a third Scudetto, but injury and his side's subsequent loss of form appear to have ended his hopes of winning another champi-

Cafu returned to action for his first full appearance since November 20 against Palermo on Wednesday night and was one of Milan's few plus points on a disappointing evening, but he is determined to restore his side to their former glories.

"It's the worst period I've known since coming to Milan," he said, "But we have enough quality to resolve the situation and go back to playing the beautiful game that we know how to

Cafu will be hoping to feature against Lazio on Sunday night and help cast aside the bad memories of his teammates' last visit to the Stadio Olimpico a 1-0 loss to Roma,

Bangladesh take

to cope up with the conditions. Bangladesh will meet Pakistan

and Uganda on February 8 and 9 respectively. The top two teams from each of the four groups will qualify for the

Rahim (captain), Mehrab Hossain (vice-captain), Nabil Samad, Sakib Al Hasan, Raqibul Hassan, Kazi Kamrul Islam, Rezaul Islam, Sirajullah Khadem, Tamim Iqbal, Dollar Mahmud, Shamsur Rahman, Sohrawardi Shuvo, Mehdi Hasan and Ishrag Sonnet. Manager: Golam Mohamed

Nawsher, coach: Allister de Winter.

TEAMS

GROUP-B: West Indies, South Africa, Australia, USA. GROUP-C: India, Sri Lanka,

Scotland, Namibia. GROUP-D: England, Zimbabwe, Ireland, Nepal.

Money the menace to African football

the promised payments.

the cemetery' but the 58-year-old

Frenchman would not have

minded a bit if the DRC authorities

African Nations Cup -- which

ended with a 4-1 defeat by hosts

Egypt on Friday -- was bedevilled

by arguments over when and if the

players were going to be paid which

he believes cost them dearly in the

While they managed to over-

come a few hours' sleep -- because

they had sat up arguing over when

the money was arriving -- to beat a

demoralised Togo 2-0 in their first

match, by the time they came to

taking on Cameroon the issue had

side's poor disciplinary record --

they had two players sent off in the

group stage and had three key

players suspended for the

quarterfinal -- could be laid at the

tion undoubtedly had something

to do with the lack of discipline.

They understandably had other

things on their minds," said Le Roy,

who himself has been paid just 30

percent of his salary dating back to

"I think that the financial situa-

Indeed Le Roy said that his

reached boiling point.

door of the money issue.

group stage.

Instead his campaign here at the

had paid his players on time.

AFP, undated



Depending on one's tastes money may either be the root of all evil or make the world go round -- for African footballers it is fortunate if they EGYPT 2006 ever see it and is a

blight that threatens to restrict their progress on the world stage despite a deep reservoir of natural talent.

The national sides' coaches as Guinea's Patrice Neveu said are judged on results, but it would help them immensely if the players were paid, not to mention themselves -however it has ever been thus in African football.

One could argue that many of the countries find it hard to feed themselves so paying their footballers would seem like a misplaced priority. However, as several players and

coaches have said, the one thing that raises the spirits and morale of the blighted people of their countries is success for the football team.

"This is the only time we can put a smile on people's faces," said Democratic Republic of Congo's inspirational captain Lomana LuaLua about his team performing at the African Nations Cup. However, there were not too

many smiles to be had on his and

his fellow teammates' faces during

the tournament -- though they

played some of the most vibrant

Though it may seem as if they

and entertaining football -were behaving like spoilt rich because they were kept waiting for footballers when they threatened to boycott the quarterfinal, it is a DRC's soon to be former coach rather different scenario to that if Claude Le Roy may not want to as the English national side delivered similar menaces given the wages they are paid by their Premiership he told AFP 'be the richest man in

"A lot of the players in the squad earn 30 dollars a week," said Le Roy.

LuaLua is one of the few DRC players who earns money unimaginable to either his teammates or most of the citizens of his country -- he plays for Premiership strugglers Portsmouth -- but he put into perspective the anger felt within

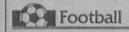
"People may think it is being selfish at arguing over money when we are here to represent our country.

"However while I am fine as I play in the Premiership, the others all have to put food on the table for their families and without money that is rather difficult," said the 25year-old.

Desperate situations require desperate measures and in the end the matter appeared to be resolved when the president of the DRC, Joseph Kabila, came through with promises that the money would be forthcoming.

However while it may sound optimistic perhaps next time the teams competing in the African Nations Cup should have as their mantra before they start their campaigns fictional sports agent Jerry Maguire's catchphrase --'show us the money!

Arsenal's Sol missing



REUTERS, London

Troubled England defender Sol Campbell has gone missing after storming out of Arsenal's Highbury stadium when he was substituted on Wednesday. "I don't know when Sol will

return. I have not spoken to him since Wednesday night and I don't know where he is at the moment," Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger told a news conference. "I think he just needs a few days

to clear his head but I don't know if he will be coming in on Monday. I am not worried. The centre back is on compassionate leave after his shock

West Ham. Wenger said then that Campbell felt guilty at being responsible for West Ham's two first half goals and was not mentally up to playing the second half.

halftime substitution during

Wednesday's 3-2 home defeat by

Arsenal team mate Robert Pires was quoted in British newspapers on Friday as saying Campbell had an unspecified personal problem.

Momentum with

FROM PAGE 12 But Pakistan hardly missed these

letter

4 Trade

8 Script

writer

James

12 Sapporo

sash

tion

14 "Long

live .

15 Hidden

some-

what

flock

19 European

country

Hold 'Em

17 Black

18 Lids

20 Texas

22 Verdi

need

master

work

25 Spectator

24 Vicinity

29 — de

deux

pendant

31 Eventual

aves

longer

useful

30 Palatal

13 Inaugura-

recitation

two players as they took on the might of the star-studded Indian line-up with confidence personified, rallied from a hopeless situation of 39 for six and turned the tables on the visitors in stunning fashion. The fact that Pakistan won with

plenty to spare even when two of its regular players were missing from the fray tells its own tale.

34 Crew's

35 Hostels

36 Refuse

37 Country

home

40 Nest com-

panent

statuette

made of

41 Stage

42 Glass

lava

46 Subdiv

ofa

48 FDR's

47 Wheedle

"Blue

Eagle'

49 Erstwhile

50 Grounds

for a

51 Hiatus

partners

assents

DOWN

1 Menag-

2 "Chicago"

3 Woe

4 First-

course

5 "Star -

6 Put

7 Third

degree?

8 PC-game

figure

9 Actress

10 Malefi-

11 Uncom-

16 Last

few

19 Notion

Solution time: 25 mins

notes

Gershon

cence

plicated

options

Wenger says he has no clue what lies at the root of his defender's "I have no news - frankly and

But it is not a big concern for me, he just needs a break. "He is just in a difficult period but you can only help people if they are in touch

sincerely I do not know what it is.

"He is a guy I rate highly as a human being. Every human being has the right to privacy and you try to respect that.

"The only you can do is accept that every human being reacts differently to problems. The only thing we can do as a club is support people when they need our

When the players come out with their private life you try to support them, but you have to respect that some don't like it."

Karate meets held in city

SPORTS REPORTER

20 Mafia

bigwig

21 Speedy

steed

22 Touches

25 It takes

27 Prior

the cake

nights

28 Derma-

case

33 Former

team

middle of

responsi-

37 November

38 Mountain

39 Old Italian

the bad

Parse-

ghian 45 Siesta

guy 44 Coach

36 In the

The 11th All-Bangladesh Milk Vita Dragon Karate Championship and the First Bangladesh-Nepal Karate Championship concluded in Dhaka last week. More than 350 contestants took

part in the country's championship while 22 karatekas preparing for the SA Games to be held in Sri Lanka competed in the international meet with six gold medals going to Nepal and five golds to the Akhlas Uddin Molla, president

of Bangladesh Dragon Karate Association who organised the events, distributed prizes as chief

Cascarino repeats Marseille doping accusations

AFP, Paris

Former Republic of Ireland striker Tony Cascarino on Saturday repeated accusations that he and Marseille teammates regularly received injections with unknown substances during his time at the French club in the early 1990s.

"I don't know what it was but I'm 99 percent sure it wasn't legal. There was something not cleanabout it," Cascarino told the French sports daily L'Equipe. Cascarino, who won 88 Irish

caps, was a member of the

Republic's 1990 and 1994 World

Cup squads and scored 61 goals in

his two seasons for Marseille after joining the club in 1994. He made his initial accusations of receiving injections at the behest of former club president Bernard

Tapie in a column for The Times in December 2003. Tapie strenuously denied the accusations.

Standstill over

is only because the authority is corrupt. For the first time Dhaka people are going to miss international matches, "said Dastagir,

"I believe that the board is also to be blamed for not pressing hard," he added.

SL coming here

FROM PAGE 12

Sangakkara and Mahela Jayawardene, the former vicecaptain until Vaas' appointment midway through the India tour last year, are the clear frontrunners, although there is also a possibility that Sanath Jayasuriya, the former captain, could take up the job in an interim capacity.

McGrath may return Then the two-times World Cup winner's mind will focus on capturfor today's SA clash ing the most prised honour in the European game that has one major CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer piece of silverware still to elude him the Champions League 'It was an irresponsible shot, "I have just spoken with Pigeon er's

Cricket

AFP, Melbourne

Veteran paceman Glenn McGrath may return to the Australian team for Sunday's triangular series clash with South Africa, despite his wife

suffering a recurrence of cancer.

Australia's vice-captain Adam

Gilchrist said here Saturday that he

had spoken to McGrath who told

him he was keen to play in the match at the Sydney Cricket But Gilchrist said he did not know what McGrath's longer-term plans were. The Australians begin a

tour of South Africa in just over two

"I know he is quite keen to play, so that's what they (the family) will havetoworkout," Gilchrist said.

"Longer term, I don't know. We just have to let the dust settle a little bit and really give them a chance to work out what's best for them and then secondary to that is what's best for the team. McGrath raced home to Sydney

from Melbourne on Friday, missing Australia's 80-run win over the Proteas at the Telstra Dome after learning his wife Jane had new health problems. Jane McGrath has previously

tion and we've had a chat about it," been treated successfully for breast Arthur said.

(McGrath) this morning (and he is) very optimistic and very positive," "If anyone knows how to deal with it, thoseguys do.

South Africa need to beat

Australia in the match or face a

live" final qualifying match against Sri Lanka in Hobarton Tuesday. The Australians, on 22 points, 10 ahead of South Africa, are already placed in the best-of-three finals

which start next Friday.

The South Africans meanwhile will be relying on out-of-form skipper Graeme Smith to give the team a strong start alongside fellow opener Boeta Dippenaar. Smith was dismissed by Brett Lee

for a duck on Friday and has not

made a half century during the South African coach Mickey Arthur said Johan Botha had been brought in at number five on Friday to try and move the run rate along. But his partner, Herschelle Gibbs, had played a rash shot on 33

and his dismissal left the South

Botha went on to make 46 from 61 balls but his effectiveness had been lost. Arthur said. "He (Gibbs) mis-read the situa-

Africans struggling at 69-4.

bearing in mind that we had got Botha in to take the pressure off Arthur said he hoped Botha

could play a more free-flowing

innings at the SCG to lay the plat-

form for lower-order hitters Shaun

Pollock, Justin Kemp and Mark Gibbs has also been promoted from number three to number four, Arthur said.

"We don't want Herschelle getting frustrated and having to come in (in the middle-order) when the asking rate is high," Arthur said. "Dippenaar, Gibbs and Smith,

they've got to lead us and set up the

TEAMS

AUSTRALIA (from): Ricky Ponting (captain), Adam Gilchrist, Simon Katich, Damien Martyn, Andrew Symonds, Michael Clarke, Mike Hussey, Brad Hogg, Brett Lee, Brett Dorey, Stuart Clark, James Hopes, Glenn McGrath, Brett Dorey.

Jacques Rudolph, Herschelle

Gibbs, Ashwell Prince, Justin

Kemp, Mark Boucher, Shaun

Pollock, Andrew Hall, Johan van

der Wath, Charl Langeveldt, Johan

Botha, Monde Zondeki, Dale Stevn.

SOUTH AFRICA (from) Graeme Smith (captain), Boeta Dippenaar,

FROM PAGE 12

been long and the selectors relied on experience, picking up 11 cricketers with first-class experience. Also, most of the cricketers' visit to Sri Lanka last year would become handy

Super League for the Cup. The bottom two teams from each group will compete in the Plate Championship. Bangladesh squad: Mushfiqur

GROUP-A: Pakistan, New Zealand, Bangladesh, Uganda.

32 No

23 Gilligan's 26 On a trip tologist's 30 Radius's neighbor Houston 34 Saharan

SKO YJQJ KTQKCI

C'I YKOM MH

bread 42 Halloween XKGG UCS OHJG XHYKQI. Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN YOU'RE SIPPING SOUP, I SUPPOSE SOMEBODY MIGHT 43 Greet

SAY "DON'T WASTE YOUR BROTH!"

VJKVHO,

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: J equals E

The Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.