

Hiddink gets Russian job

AFP, Moscow

Russian Football Union (RFU) boss Vitaly Mutko has officially confirmed Wednesday that Dutch manager Guus Hiddink will take over Russia's national squad after the end of the World Cup in Germany.

Mutko added that the RFU and the 59-year-old Dutch guru would sign Friday a two-year contract, which later may be prolonged for another two-year term.

The Russian football chief also said that the financial details of the deal would be disclosed at a news conference after the signing of the contract.

Hiddink, who guided the Netherlands to the 1998 World Cup semifinals before repeating the feat with South Korea in 2002, had been earlier tipped as a possible successor to England coach Sven-Goran Eriksson.

Hiddink will also guide Australia at this summer's World Cup after leading the Socceroos to their first finals for 32 years.

Eto'o calls to curb racism

AFP, Madrid

Barcelona's Cameroon striker Samuel Eto'o has called on the Spanish game to show "responsibility" in cutting out racism after twice being a victim of racist chanting in recent weeks.

"Everyone has to take responsibility," league top scorer Eto'o told Marca sports daily in an interview published Tuesday.

Spanish club Racing Santander were later facing disciplinary action after some of the top flight strugglers' fans subjected Eto'o to racist abuse in Sunday's 2-2 draw.

In response, Eto'o kicked the corner flag as he went to celebrate a goal.

Earlier this season, he had threatened to walk off the pitch after some fans at Real Zaragoza directed monkey noises at him.

"I just can't understand why the fans often behave this way," said Eto'o.

"I had to put up with racist chanting right from the start and celebrating a goal that way was better than making an ugly gesture to the crowd as it let out all the anger."

Bashar's worst

FROM PAGE 12

He however said that his charges had not had enough experience to handle this kind of situation.

"This kind of situation doesn't happen too often. We have only had this against Zimbabwe and West Indies earlier," he said.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at close on the fourth day of the first Test between Bangladesh and Australia at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium on Wednesday:

BANGLADESH: First innings 427 (Nafees 138, Bashar 76, Saleh 67, MacGill 8-108).

AUSTRALIA: First innings 269 (Gilchrist 144; Rafique 5-62).

BANGLADESH: Second innings (overnight 124-5)

Omar c Gilchrist b Gillespie 18

Nafees b Lee 33

Bashar run out 7

Saleh c Hayden b Gillespie 33

Ashraful b b Clark 4

Aftab lbw b MacGill 17

Mashud b Gillespie 0

Rafique lbw b Warne 14

Mortuza b Warne 0

Shahadat not out 1

Enamul lbw b Warne 0

Extras: (b-10, lb-7, nb-4) 21

Total: (All out in 50 overs) 148

Fall of wickets: 1-48, 2-58, 3-66, 4-77, 5-124, 6-128, 7-147, 8-147, 9-147.

Bowler O M R W

Lee 8 0 47 1

Gillespie 11 4 18 3

MacGill 13 4 30 1

Clark 4 2 8 1

Warne 13 4 28 3

Clarke 1 1 0 0

AUSTRALIA: Second innings

Hayden run out 72

Mushud b Enamul 37

Ponting not out 72

Martyn b Rafique 7

Clarke c Mashud b Rafique 9

Gilchrist not out 6

Extras: (b-4, lb-4, nb-1) 9

Total: (For 4 wks) 212

Fall of wickets: 1-64, 2-173, 3-183, 4-205.

Bowler O M R W

Mortuza 13 4 27 0

Shahadat 15 5 48 0

Rafique 25 3 68 2

Enamul 21 4 61 1

Toss: Bangladesh

Umpires: Aileem Dar (PAK) and Nadeem Ghauri (PAK)

England win at last

AFP, Jamshedpur

England's stand-in captain Andrew Strauss limped his way to 74 as the tourists finally tasted victory in the sixth one-day match against India at the Keenan Stadium in Jamshedpur on Wednesday.

Leading England for the first time in place of the rested Andrew Flintoff, Strauss retired hurt with leg cramps in the 31st over before the tourists surpassed India's modest 223 with 44 deliveries to spare.

The five-wicket victory was England's first win in the seven-match series following four consecutive defeats. The fifth game in Guwahati was washed out on Sunday.

It ended an eight-match winning streak for the hosts, who rested captain Rahul Dravid, leading all-rounder Irfan Pathan and seamer Ajit Agarkar.

Strauss, averaging less than 19 in the previous four matches, put on 107 for the first wicket with Ian Bell, who hit 46 in his maiden appearance in the series.

Ian Blackwell sealed the impressive win with a six off Ramesh Powar.

"The heat got to a lot of us, including me," said man of the match Strauss. "But this is India and it was a good experience for us."

Earlier, James Anderson and Sajid Mahmood grabbed three wickets each as England bowled out India with two overs to spare despite a blazing 96 from local boy Mahendra Dhoni.

India, electing to take first strike, were reduced to 79-5 before Dhoni combined with Powar (54) to add 107 for the sixth wicket.

Dhoni, the aggressive wicket-keeper, smashed 10 boundaries and three sixes, boosting the Indian total after stand-in captain Virender Sehwag (four) and Mohammad Kaif (15) continued their poor form with the bat.

A tired Dhoni, wrapped in an ice vest to beat the heat, missed his third one-day century by four runs when he lobbed a harmless delivery from Mahmood to Vikram Solanki at short mid-wicket.

Dhoni has been rested for the

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the sixth one-day international between India and England on Wednesday:

INDIA

Sehwag c Solanki b Anderson 4

Dhoni c Solanki b Mahmood 96

Kaif lbw b Mahmood 15

Yuvraj b Plunkett 4

Raina c Prior b Plunkett 2

Rao c Prior b Anderson 10

Powar c Hoggard b Collingwood 54

Harbhajan b Pietersen 4

Rudra c Blackwell b Mahmood 7

Vikram c Blackwell b Anderson 8

Patel not out 1

Extras: (lb-4, w-14) 18

Total: (All out in 48 overs) 223

Fall of wickets: 1-4, 2-46, 3-58, 4-63, 5-79, 6-186, 7-196, 8-209, 9-216.

Bowler O M R W

Anderson 9 2 28 3

Hoggard 8 0 59 0

Mahmood 8 0 37 3

Plunkett 5 0 22 2

Blackwell 10 0 33 0

Solanki 4 0 25 0

Pietersen 1 0 4 1

Collingwood 3 0 11 1

ENGLAND

Strauss retired hurt 74

Bell c Dhoni b Harbhajan 46

Solanki b Powar 7

Pietersen c and b Harbhajan 33

Collingwood not out 23

Prior c Vikram Singh b Harbhajan 3

Plunkett c Sehwag b Powar 0

Blackwell not out 14

Extras: (lb-10, w-7, nb-10) 27

Total: (For five wks in 42.4 overs) 227

Fall of wickets: 1-107, 2-120, 3-198, 4-207, 5-209.

Bowler O M R W

FROM PAGE 12

they were looking at building a team for the future.

Ganguly, however, still nurses hopes of playing in the World Cup in the West Indies and wants to prove his form in domestic cricket.

India's 4-0 scoreline over England gives them eight wins in a row and 16 victories in their last 20 one-day matches.

Inter reach Cup final

Football

REUTERS, Milan

Holdings Inter Milan reached the Italian Cup final on Tuesday after a 2-2 draw at Udinese in the second leg of the semifinal.

The draw earned Inter a 3-2 aggregate victory. Inter will face the winner of Wednesday's tie between AS Roma and Palermo in the two-legged final. Palermo lead 2-1 from the first leg.

Argentine Santiago Solari, who scored in Inter's 1-0 first leg win, put Roberto Mancini's side ahead in the eighth minute. The former Real Madrid winger made no mistake after a low cross from Pierre Wome was cleverly dummied by Julio Ricardo Cruz.

Inter had the best chances of a low key game, played in front of a sparse crowd on a workday afternoon.

Cruz fired over the bar from close range just after the break and Udinese keeper Morgan De Sanctis pulled off a fine double save to foil Walter Samuel.

Udinese brought the game alive in the 83rd minute when Christian Obodo burst into the penalty area and held off two Inter defenders before scoring.

Former Udinese favourite David Pizarro restored Inter's advantage by slotting home a low left-foot shot.

Udinese, struggling for Serie A survival, drew level in the 89th minute with a Vincenzo Iaquinta penalty after the striker had been impeded by Inter defender Marco Materazzi.

Brazilian keeper Julio Cesar Morosini saved the tie for Inter with a block in the final seconds from Piermarco



Inter Milan winger Santiago Solari celebrates his goal against Udinese.

Heinze set for United return

AFP, Manchester

Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson is considering a recall for defender Gabriel Heinze as his side bid to overhaul Chelsea in the race for the English Premiership title.

The Argentina full-back has not played for the Old Trafford club since rupturing cruciate ligaments in a Champions League tie against Villarreal in September.

But with United now seven points behind Chelsea with five games left, the visit of basement club Sunderland on Friday, four days before his 28th birthday, could be the ideal match for Heinze's comeback.

"Gaby has been training for three weeks now and he is looking fantastic," said Ferguson.

"He has been tackling like a tiger, has shown great energy in training and his enthusiasm is infectious. He is very close and I might just give him a go against Sunderland on Friday."

INTERNET, undated

Internazionale coach Roberto Mancini has admitted his disappointment at a group of fans for attacking his team following their return to Milan after defeat to Ascoli.

A number of Nerazzurri hooligans shouted abuse towards the Inter players as well as assaulting others.

Cristiano Zanetti was wounded in the incident that has led Mancini to confirm his intentions to leave Italian football.

"Should I leave at the end of the season, one thing is for sure, I'll go abroad," said Mancini.

"I have been at the top end of Italian football for 27 years and I must say it has worsened."

"You can't lose a match without having absurd reactions. You can no longer enjoy the game."

Mancini is adamant he wants to remain coaching and will not be put off by the problems in Italian football over the past few years.

"I do the job of coaching because I love football a lot. I like being on the pitch, seeing my players playing and scoring and having training during the week," he added.

"In Italy it has become difficult but I'll continue doing this job because it is my passion."

Mancini tired of Italy

Football

Chelsea striker Didier Drogba on Tuesday blasted manager Jose Mourinho's latest signings for lacking the mental strength for the Premiership battle.

Chelsea crashed out of the Champions League to Barcelona and have seen a 17-point lead in the Premiership cut to seven by a charging Manchester United.

And Drogba believes the reason the defending champions have stumbled is that their newest signings are not up to the task.

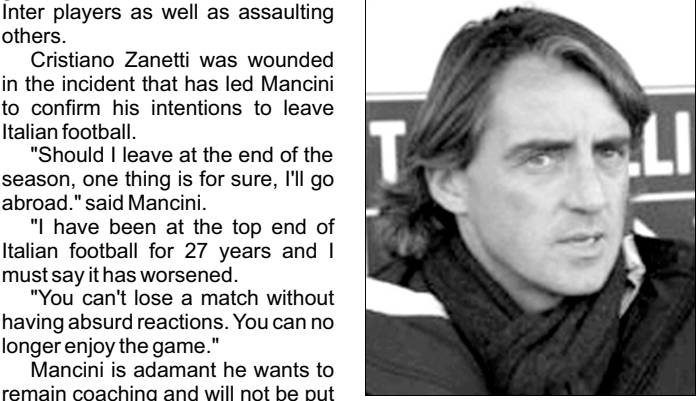
The five additions to the Chelsea squad since last season are Asier del Horno, Lassana Diarra, Shaun Wright-Phillips, Michael Essien and Maniche, with Scott Parker, Mateja Kezman and Tiago among the eight departures.

"Our squad last season was mentally tougher. We let go of nothing and were like fished players," the Ivory Coast international told The Sun.

"That is no longer the case this year. Certain players have left us who had this quality of winners. Others have arrived with different qualities which are not enough to see things through."

Drogba added that his rivals no longer fear the richest team in the world.

"They had one last year. They all think they can beat us these days."



ROBERTO MANCINI

Parreira relieved by Ronaldo injury!

AFP, Rio de Janeiro

Brazil coach Carlos Alberto Parreira admitted Wednesday that he was more relieved than worried by the injury suffered by star striker Ronaldo ahead of their World Cup campaign.

Ronaldo will be sidelined for up to three weeks after tearing a muscle in his right leg after scoring his 100th goal for his Spanish side Real Madrid in their 1-1 draw at the weekend to Real Sociedad.

But Parreira said that the rest could be just what Ronaldo needs to be at his best ahead of their World Cup title defence.

"He can recover and line out in his best physical form for Brazil," Parreira told the Brazil sports agency Placar.

Parreira said that he was more worried about Brazilian stars such as AC Milan midfielder Kaka and Barcelona striker Ronaldinho whose clubs are relying on them increasingly.

The Brazil coach added that he was certain that Ronaldo, who has scored 14 goals in 23 games for Real Madrid this season, will be fit in time to join the national side on May 22 ahead of the World Cup kick-off on June 9.

There are no kit bags or towels at the edges of a makeshift beachside pitch, just a couple of prostheses and a large plastic bottle of drinking water, but Sierra Leone's national amputees football team is in play.

A group of single-legged young men, all victims of the west African nation's brutal civil war in which thousands lost limbs and other body parts not only to landmines or bullets, but also to hacking by rebel groups, has come together to seek encouragement and hope.

As with any other sportsmen, they first of all warm up, laying their crutches on the sand of Freetown's popular Lumley beach so they can stretch and jump around before taking to the pitch.

When ready they pick up their crutches, the whistle is blown and the game begins.

Prosthesis are not allowed on the pitch so they play with just one foot each while balancing only on the crutches. But their skills at dribbling, passing and scoring are breathtakingly all the same.

Now they have turned professional and last year came third, after England and Brazil, at the World

Cup single-leg soccer tournament in Brazil.

"I plan to continue playing and pray that one day I will play in the Paralympic Games," said team captain Maxwell Fornah, who was shot in the leg in 1998 as he fled home from school after his village in Kambia, northeast of the capital, came under attack during Sierra Leone's decade-long civil war.

Midfielder Mohamed Jalloh, 20, said: "I want to become an international star like Thierry Henry, or Samuel Eto'o."

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"We are happy that we can get together and encourage each other," said Mohamed Lappia, who stepped on a mine that shattered his leg.

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Drogba blasts soft signings

AFP, London

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It is the latest award for Flintoff, who received an MBE (Member of the Order of the British Empire medal) in Britain's New Year's Honours List and was last year's BBC Sports Personality of the Year.

Flintoff played a pivotal role with both bat and ball in England's 2-1 Ashes series win over Australia, their first Test campaign triumph against their oldest foes since 1986/87.

The all-rounder was the third winner of an award created in 2003, with Warne and Australia captain Ricky Ponting the previous holders of a title.

Wisden editor Matthew Engel explained Flintoff and world record-breaking leg-spinner Warne were the only candidates to be named as the best cricketer in the world for 2005.

Our cover picture sums up the year as we saw it," said Engel. "Flintoff and Warne are shown embracing after the Ashes series - but the one is just a fraction above the other. We felt in the end that 2005 was the year when 'Freddie' (Flintoff) touched greatness."

Meanwhile, England coach Duncan Fletcher has hinted top players like Flintoff could miss the Champions Trophy in India to prepare for the Ashes series later this year.

Fletcher, who wants a fresh squad for the first of five Ashes Tests against Australia starting in Brisbane on November 23, is worried his players may be tired when the Champions Trophy ends on November 5.

"We will look to see who will need a rest before going to Australia and we will make plans accordingly," Fletcher said ahead of Wednesday's fifth one-day game against India here.

When England return home after the final one-day in Indore on Saturday, they will have less than a month off before the first Test against Sri Lanka starts at Lord's on May 11.

Marcus has no regrets

AFP, London

Marcus Trescothick insisted Wednesday that he has no regrets about his early exit from England's tour of India. The opening batsman left before the first Test at the beginning of March after contracting a debilitating virus, a problem he partially blamed on the team's heavy workload. But the 30-year-old said that he was happy he had made the right choice despite his experience being badly missed on a tour blighted by injuries.

Asked if he thought he had let England down, Trescothick told Sky Sports: "I don't think so, to be honest. I think people will realise."

"I've had a lot of support, players and management, and I think that says a lot for me."

His departure was explained as a "family reason" at the time by England, which conflicts with the player's own explanation.

The left-hander is currently preparing for the start of the new season with his county Somerset, who have tried to shield him from the spotlight.

Somerset CEO Richard Gould told the Daily Telegraph: "I'm sure the press have found it frustrating, but the most important thing is that we get Marcus in the best frame of mind for the new season."

"The fact he was forced to return home was a combination of things - stress, the virus and being away from his family for long periods of time."

Professional Cricketers Association chief executive Richard Bevan has also offered sympathy for players like Trescothick who are so stretched physically and mentally by a punishing international schedule. "We have to find a balance and a bit more common sense," said Bevan.

Result: England won by five wickets.

Man-of-the-match: Andrew Strauss.

Toss: India

Umpires: Rudi Koertzen (RSA) and Krishna Hariharan (IND)

Final match in Indore on Saturday.

BCCI suspends Dalmiya

AFP, New Delhi

Former world cricket chief Jagmohan Dalmiya was on Tuesday suspended from the Indian board which he once ruled, on charges of misappropriation of funds.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) said in a statement that Dalmiya, 65, would not take part in its activities till a probe into his alleged financial deals was completed.

"BCCI president Sharad Pawar wrote to Dalmiya informing him that he was being suspended from participating in the affairs of the board until adjudication of the charges," BCCI treasurer N. Srinivasan said.

Srinivasan said Dalmiya had been accused of mishandling funds of around US\$990,000 relating to the 1996 World Cup, which India hosted jointly with Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Dalmiya, who was organising secretary of that event, later served as the president of the International Cricket Council (ICC) for three years from 1997 to 2000.

Dalmiya, who has denied the allegations, declined to comment on his suspension.

But the Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB), Dalmiya's home body of which he is president, said it was seeking legal opinion on the suspension.

Gaibandha cricket

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Gaibandha Cricket Coaching Centre (GCC) handed a crushing nine-wicket defeat to Ghagot Krira Chakra in a super league match of the Naheed Cotton First Division Cricket League at the local stadium yesterday.

GCCC overhauled a target of 76 runs in only six overs, losing a single wicket.

Hope springs eternal

Football

AFP, Freetown

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Flintoff wins top honour

Cricket

AFP, amshedpur

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Education Minister Dr. Osman Faruq (R) inaugurates the Standard Chartered Young Tigers School Cricket Competition at the Residential Model High School on Tuesday.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Options list

5 Boom times

8 Unaccompanied

12 It takes the cake

13 Alternative to "believe it"

14 Gunk

15 Baffle

17 Peruse

18 Excessively

19 Hateful

21 House-paint ingredient

24 Spill the beans

25 "Sad to say..."

26 One with real faith

30 Calendar abbr.

31 Groups of eco-communities

32 Sapporo sash

33 Tyro

35 Online journal

Solution time: 21 mins.

DOWN

1 Unruly bunch

2 Prior night

3 Fresh

4 Comes together

5 Loosen

6 "The Raven" writer

7 Pram

8 Journalist

9 Hydrox

10 Waikiki

11 Probability

16 Bagel

20 Speaker's platform

21 Easter weeds

22 Lotion additive

23 Piquancy

24 Jaunty chapeau

26 Rendered senseless

27 Lerming's cousin

28 Black, in verse

29 Predetermines the outcome

31 Child's play

34 Sudden incursion

35 Rifle part

37 Existed

38 Collapse

39 Hedge-podge

40 Cold War faction (Abbr.)

41 Second-hand

44 Historic time

45 Long March leader

46 — out a living

47 Roulette bet

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		
12					13				14			
15					16				17			
			18				19	20				
21	22	23				24						
25					26				27	28	29	
30					31				32			
33					34				35			
38	39	40					41					
42							43	44		45	46	47
48							49			50		
51							52			53		

CRYPTOQUIP

K H W U C ' M P K W U X P N

MIKOONR QX IJN AQRON

UH IJN WUKR. Q QAKCQXN

JN JKR IU CNI QI IUKR.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF A POTATO FARMER PLAYS AN INSTRUMENT, I'D SAY HIS FIRST CHOICE SHOULD BE THE TUBER.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: I equals T

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 equal an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.