

India lobby for Gibbs, Boje

BBC ONLINE, *Undated*

India's cricket board is to lobby the government to allow South Africa's Herschelle Gibbs and Nicky Boje to play in the ICC Champions Trophy.

The duo were implicated in the 2000 match-fixing controversy and have not visited India since for fear of arrest.

The BCCI hopes to use board president Sharad Pawar's position as minister for agriculture to influence government.

"We are keen to see Boje and Gibbs play. We want the best teams to play," said board secretary Niranjan Shah.

Shah said he received a letter from the International Cricket Council on the matter last week.

"They want to utilise our good officials but this is a police matter and involves legal issues," he added.

The Hansie Cronje affair, centering on match-fixing and illegal betting, rocked the cricketing world six years ago.

Gibbs was banned for six months after he admitted to accepting money, while Boje has always denied any involvement.

The players have twice kept away from tours of India, missing two Tests in 2004 and a five-match one-day series the following year.

South Africa are due to take on New Zealand in their first Champions Trophy match in Mumbai (Bombay) on October 16.

Sarwan unhurt after accident

AFP, Georgetown

West Indies batsman Ramnaresh Sarwan has passed himself available for this weekend's one-day international double-header against Zimbabwe in his homeland following a traffic accident.

The West Indies' website reports that the 25-year-old Sarwan escaped unhurt after being involved in the collision shortly before noon in the Guyana capital.

"I am fine, no scrapes, no scratches, no bruises or anything, and I'm fully available to play cricket this weekend at Bourda," Sarwan told the team's website.

Sarwan was driving along one of the major thoroughfares when the driver of another vehicle failed to yield to traffic on the major road, and his vehicle ended up in the path of Sarwan's SUV.

No one in the accident suffered any major injuries.

The news was not so good however, for international umpire Eddie Nicholls, whose son Dylan died in a separate traffic accident.

The younger Nicholls died when a truck collided with his mini-bus on a stretch of road that leads to the Guyana international airport.

The firsts

FROM PAGE 20
packing during a match against Romania (1-3) in front of the smallest ever World Cup attendance: 300 people.

Six and penalty: Argentina were the first nation to score six goals beating Mexico 6-3 in a match that also featured the first penalty. In fact the Bolivian referee Ulises Saucedo awarded five penalties during the match, although three were controversial.

The first player to miss a penalty was Argentina's Fernando Paternoster. Mexico's Manuel Roquetas Rosas became the first man to successfully convert a spot-kick.

Own-goal: Mexico's Manuel Rosas became the first unlucky culprit to score an own-goal in the match against Chile.

Referee: The first referee in a World Cup match was Domingo Lombardi of Uruguay who was assisted by Gilberto de Almeida Rego of Brazil and Henri Christophe of Belgium.

Ball: The first World Cup football was designed in 1880, and was made of leather lashed together with long straps. It was brown and had pronounced stitching.

Jones blow for England

Cricket

AFP, London

England suffered yet another injury setback ahead of next week's first Test against Sri Lanka when fast bowler Simon Jones was ruled out Friday for six weeks with a knee problem.

The reverse-swing specialist suffered a twinge in his left knee during Glamorgan's C&G Trophy match against Ireland on Monday and saw a specialist Thursday to get further information on the problem, which forced him home from the tour to India.

Jones has been advised to rest for six weeks, which rules him out of the Test and one-day series against Sri Lanka, and he could face further surgery at the end of it.

Dr Peter Gregory, the England and Wales Cricket Board's chief medical officer, said Friday: "Simon had an MRI scan, and his injury was

reviewed by his orthopaedic specialist yesterday.

"The view of this specialist is that Simon sustained a new injury to his knee, which has damaged the cartilage surface of the joint.

"Simon will be required to rest the knee for six weeks and will then be reassessed. If the knee does not respond to rest he may need to undergo further surgery."

It was desperate news for Jones, who endured a 10-month battle to play again after suffering torn cruciate ligaments in his right knee during the 2002-03 Ashes tour of Australia.

He recovered to become a key member of last year's Ashes triumph but has not played a Test for England since the thrilling victory at Trent Bridge in August.

Jones's latest setback saw him become the latest England player to be ruled out as the selectors prepare to announce their squad on Sunday.

Cooley boosts Aussies

Cricket

AFP, Sydney

Fast bowling guru Troy Cooley has returned home to begin shoring up Australia's pace attack ahead of the much-anticipated Ashes cricket series with England here later this year.

Cooley was recruited by Cricket Australia last December after he played a leading role in the development of England's fast bowlers -- Steve Harmison, Andrew Flintoff, Simon Jones, James Anderson and Matthew Hoggard -- who helped their country to their win over Australia in last year's Ashes series.

Cooley will begin work with Australia's younger fast bowlers at the Centre of Excellence in Brisbane during the domestic off-season, and will help train the A team throughout the July series against other A teams from New Zealand, India and Pakistan.

His work with Australia's quicks, coupled with the dossier on England's pacemen, will greatly boost Australia in their attempt to regain the Ashes urn, starting in

November.

"It was a real coup to get Troy back here," Australia's chairman of selectors Andrew Hilditch told The Sydney Morning Herald on Thursday.

"It was quite clear from last year's Ashes just how good a job he did with England's quicks.

"They were awesome. We are very happy with our batch of quicks coming through, and it's exciting to think the kind of impact he could have with them."

Tasmanian-born Cooley had served as England's fast bowling coach since May 2003 and he returned to Australia to take up his new job after the expiry of his contract with the England and Wales Cricket Board this month.

Along with former Australian wicketkeeper Rod Marsh, Cooley helped establish the fast bowling programme at England's National Cricket Academy.

Part of Cooley's task will be to develop young fast bowling talents Shaun Tait, Mitchell Johnson and Brett Dorey, who have all been selected for the Australia A team in the Top End series in Darwin and Cairns in July.

Zim officials rebuke ICC

BBC ONLINE, *Undated*

Zimbabwe's provincial cricket bosses are calling on International Cricket Council chief Malcolm Speed to resign.

They claim the ICC has failed to take a stand after Zimbabwe's government imposed an interim committee headed by two controversial figures.

The letter's signatory Richie Kaschula, recently sacked as full-time selector, said: "The ICC declined to intervene, which should have been their duty."

Many talented young players have deserted the sport in Zimbabwe.

An open letter sent to the ICC and the other Test-playing countries claims Speed was wrong to allow Chingoka to investigate himself and Bvute following widespread allegations of corruption.

It also alleges that he failed to ensure that he received the requested full audit of Zimbabwe Cricket's financial affairs.

"In the interests of cricket worldwide you should do the honourable thing and resign your position," the letter concluded.

The ICC has consistently said direct intervention would do little to resolve what it calls "a complex issue".

The interim board said in January Zimbabwe would not play Tests for at least 12 months.

Freddie back

FROM PAGE 17
But it seems impossible. I don't know how much I'm going to play this summer - it depends on the international calendar.

"There's a lot of talk about players being rested from various forms of cricket, but the sheer volume of cricket means it's getting harder and harder.

"As it is, it's just so hectic, so this is an important game for myself and for the team."

Windies look

FROM PAGE 17
Side approached the target, let alone the fact they achieved, would further deflate Terrence Duffin's young and inexperienced side.

The Zimbabweans however, showed great fight in the first two ODIs, with Justice Chibhabha distinguishing himself as a batsman with some promise, medium-fast bowler Edward Rainsford bowling with control, and Prosper Utseya offering plenty of guile with his off-spin.

They would need for the others around them - particularly Duffin, fellow opener Piet Rinke, wicketkeeper/batsman Brendon Taylor, and fast bowler Blessing Mahwire - to show similar or greater levels of effectiveness if the visitors are to burst Lara's bubble.

Squads:
West Indies (from): Brian Lara (c), Tino Best, Shivnarine Chandernpaul, Sewnarine Chattergoon, Corey Collimore, Fidel Edwards, Chris Gayle, Dave Mohammed, Runako Morton, Denesh Ramdin, Marlon Samuels, Ramnaresh Sarwan, Dwayne Smith, Jerome Taylor.

Zimbabwe (from): Terrence Duffin (c), Chamunorwa Chibhabha, Elton Chigumbura, Charles Coventry, Keith Dabengwa, Ryan Higgins, Anthony Ireland, Blessing Mahwire, Keegan Meth, Tawanda Mupariwa, Edward Rainsford, Piet Rinke, Vusumuzi Sibanda, Gregory Strydom, Brendon Taylor, Prosper Utseya.

ODIs in Dec-Jan.

2011
ICC World Cup in Feb-Mar.
Host Australia in two Tests and 3 ODIs in Apr-May.
Away at Zimbabwe to play two Tests and 5 ODIs in Jul-Aug.
Host West Indies in two Tests and 3 ODIs in Oct.
Host Pakistan in three Tests and 5 ODIs in Dec.
2012
Host England in two Tests and 3 ODIs in Jan-Feb.
Asia Cup in February.
Host Sri Lanka in five ODIs in March.

Now appeal

FROM PAGE 17
Stump microphones, something that would help them hear edges more easily.

It will also look at proposals to improve the consistency of decision-making about bad light, review laws governing bats and discuss the playing conditions for the Champions Trophy and World Cup.

Recommendations from the Cricket Committee need to be accepted by the ICC chief executives' committee and ratified by a July meeting of the ICC board before being put into practice.

BANGLADESH IN FTP

FROM PAGE 17
September.
2008
Host South Africa in two Tests and a tri-nation tournament also involving India in Feb-Mar.
Asia Cup in April.
Away at Australia to play two Tests and 3 ODIs in July-Aug.
Champions' Trophy in September.
Away at South Africa to play two Tests and 3 ODIs in Nov-Dec.
Host Sri Lanka in two Tests and a tri-nation tournament involving Zimbabwe in Dec-Jan.
2009
Away at West Indies to play two Tests and 3 ODIs in April.
Twenty20 Internationals in June.
Away at Zimbabwe to play two Tests and 5 ODIs in Aug.
Host Zimbabwe in two Tests and 5 ODIs in Oct-Nov.
Host India in two Tests and a tri-nation tournament also involving Sri Lanka in Dec-Jan.
2010
Away at New Zealand to play two Tests and 3 ODIs in Jan-Feb.
Asia Cup in April.
Champions' Trophy in April-May.
Away at England to play two Tests and 3 ODIs in May-June.
Away at Pakistan to play two Tests and 3 ODIs in Sept.
Host New Zealand in two Tests and 3 ODIs in Oct.
Host Zimbabwe in two Tests and 5

Counting on Messi, Riquelme

FROM PAGE 17
But it was criticised back home and several players in the squad called it a disaster, highlighting the lack of organisation or tactics.

Captain Perfumo said: "We had good defenders, good midfielders and good forwards but each pulled their own way."

However, it was a creditable showing in light of the problems that beset Argentina in the build-up to the tournament, the kind that had regularly undermined the national team previously.

Omar Sivori, the late Juventus great, had steered Argentina through the qualifiers after his talented, young side had beaten West Germany 3-2 in a friendly in Munich in February 1973.

But he walked out over differences with the Argentine Football Association (AFA) and was replaced by Vladislav Cap, who took charge of his first match less than two months before the World

Cup -- shades of 1966 when Juan Carlos Lorenzo was handed the job just before the tournament in England.

The appointment of Cesar Luis Menotti in late 1974 marked the beginning of the modern era for Argentina when coaches were given greater job security, saw their tenures through and won two World Cups.

Carlos Bilardo, however, came close to a premature chop in 1986 when he and his team, captained by Diego Maradona, were already on their way from Buenos Aires to Mexico City and playing badly in warm-up games.

Argentine government officials called for Bilardo's head but AFA president Julio Grondona stood by his man and Maradona led the team to glory.

Being favourites does not seem to sit well with Argentina.

Marcelo Bielsa took his team to Japan four years ago as outright

favourites after the country's best qualifying campaign only for Argentina to suffer their worst tournament in 40 years, going out at the group stage as they had in Chile in 1962.

This year, near identical 3-2 defeats by England and Croatia after they led until the final minutes in warm-up games have cast doubts over Argentina's chances in Germany.

Questions are being asked at home and abroad about coach Jose Pekerman's ability to end the hurt of 2002 but he feels safe in his job and is an inherent believer in the quality of Argentina's players.

Kempes, who emerged in Germany in 1974, delivered in 1978, Maradona inspired Argentina to victory in 1986 and Pekerman is now putting his faith in Juan Roman Riquelme and Lionel Messi.

Clijsters in last four

Tennis

AFP, Warsaw

Kim Clijsters claimed her 10th consecutive victory over Italy's Francesca Schiavone to reach the semifinals of the Warsaw Open on Friday.

The top-seeded Belgian won 6-4, 6-4 and was never seriously troubled by her fifth-seeded opponent despite dropping her serve early in both sets.

"I felt pretty good out there today," said Clijsters. "I did exactly what I had to do, which was to be aggressive and trying not to let her play the game she likes to play, which is moving her opponent around, mixing her game up and attacking with her forehand."

It was Clijsters who often held the edge in the rallies, using her

greater power either to put Schiavone on the defensive or force errors.

Although Clijsters started slowly, double-faulting twice and dropping her serve to love in the second game, she recovered the break at 1-3 when Schiavone netted a smash.

A second break at 3-3 followed, and although Clijsters failed to win a set point on Schiavone's serve at 5-3 she served out the set in the next game.

Schiavone then fought off three break points and broke to lead 2-0 in the second set.

But Clijsters forced a backhand error to break back in the third game, and then earned break point at 4-4 when her opponent put a simple smash wide.

Clijsters then broke when a forehand hit the netcord and fell

in her favour, and she dropped just one point as she served out the match. "When she missed that smash and then ending it with a let cord as well, you never know," said a grateful Clijsters.

"But that's the thing, that's tennis. That's why you always have to keep going for your point. It's never finished, and even if when there's a situation when you're completely out of it even, try to run back or move a little bit."

Schiavone admitted she was lacking the consistency she needed to beat Clijsters. "I was playing one point, two points, one game, two games, but if you want to beat Kim you have to play every point consistently and I think today I didn't do it," she said.

Moya, Nalbandian move on

Tennis

AFP, Estoril

Former French Open champion Carlos Moya and top seed David Nalbandian both had to fight off determined outsiders to advance into the quarterfinals of the Estoril Open Thursday.

Moya, the winner here in 2000, blunted a late charge from Argentine Gustavo Marcaccio 6-1, 7-5 while Argentine top seed David Nalbandian, the 2002 champion, saw off France's world ranked 522 Jeremy Chardy 6-1, 7-6 (7/0).

Nalbandian didn't help himself with a double-fault to lose the ninth game while serving for victory.

"He started pushing hard and hit a lot of winners," said the South American.

"He did a good job and played well to take it to the breaker. I knew that would be tough."

The sixth-seeded Moya, who lost the 2005 final to Guillermo Coria, had to battle against the 406 Marcaccio, also losing serve while aiming for victory leading 5-4 in the second.

But Moya, a former world number one and 1998 French

Open champion, broke straight back and wrapped up victory in the next game in just over 90 minutes.

The Spaniard, ranked 38th, will play a Friday quarter-final against compatriot Guillermo Garcia-Lopez, who survived a three-hour, 26-minute marathon to oust Argentine Carlos Berlocq.

"I lost to him at the Australian Open (first round 2005), so I have hopes of revenge," said Moya. "I played well today, I was very focussed."

Portugal's Frederico Gil rallied from the brink to surprise Russian fifth seed Dmitry Tursunov 4-6, 6-4, 6-1 for a place in the quarters.

He is the first from the host nation since Nuno Marques in 1995 to advance this far here.

The 21-year-old, playing in his first event at the ATP level after recent weeks spent in Nigeria, Brazil and Morocco in low-level Futures events, had the crowd at the Estadio Nacional on his side.

But Tursunov was less impressed with his slow pace of play and words were exchanged at the net.

With the California-based Russian looking in command in

the second set, the long-shot local suddenly came alive.

After pulling level at a set apiece, Gil, 21-years-old and ranked 247 ran away with the third set, reaching 5-0 before Tursunov could react.

After holding off the inevitable with one winning game, Tursunov, who dropped serve five times, followed doubles partner Marat Safin out in the singles competition.

In the women's draw, China's Zheng Jie and Li Na repeated their 2005 breakthrough performances.

Sixth seed Zheng beat Laura Pous Tio 6-2, 2-6, 6-3 while and number eight Li Na crushed Czech Katerina Bohmova 6-1, 6-0.

Li, losing finalist a year ago to Lucie Safarova, moved into a quarterfinal against second-seeded Argentine Gisela Duko.

Last year's quarter-finalist Zheng will play Czech Zuzana Ondrusaka.

Spanish third seed Lourdes Dominguez Lino booked her place in the last eight over Kaia Kanepi of Estonia 6-1, 6-4.

Emilie Loit of France, the 2004 champion, came through to oust Argentine Natalia Gussoni 6-2, 6-2.

BITS AND BOBS

FROM PAGE 20
was good news for England. "The positives are he's not injured and Ashley got better and better during the game. He had 90 minutes of high pace and came through well.

"Of course he is not at the top of his game yet as it was his first full match in a while. The good thing though is he is available and he can play. For England that is just right."

"We are at the beginning of May and the competition begins on June 10. In five weeks you should see a perfect Ashley Cole."

Wenger was also pleased by the performance of England defender Sol Campbell, who like Cole is returning to full fitness. "You can see Sol getting sharper from game to game," he said.

Arsenal clinched the three points thanks to two goals from Jose Antonio Reyes in the space of six second-half minutes. City had seen David Somell equalise for the home side after Arsenal midfielder Freddie Ljungberg opened the scoring.

"It was a spirited performance by City and they made it difficult for us," Wenger said. "At 1-1 it could have gone either way and City had one or two good chances. We needed some fresh faces and Reyes made a difference."

Spain to play Croats

AFP, Madrid

Spain will take on fellow finalists Croatia in a World Cup warm-up on June 8 in Switzerland, the Spanish Football Federation (RFEF) said on Thursday.

Spain will also play two home games, facing Russia on May 27 at Albacete and Egypt at Elche on June 3.

In the World Cup finals in Germany, Spain are in Group H with Ukraine, Tunisia and Saudi Arabia.

Croatia are in Group F with champions Brazil, Australia and Japan.

Numerous accreditations denied

AFP, Berlin

Security officials for next month's World Cup finals in Germany have rejected 400 accreditation requests, the head of the World Cup's police deployment working group in Berlin said Thursday.

Organisers expect to hand out 250,000 accreditations in total, but said they have reserved the right to

reject applications without explaining the reasons why.

From that number 18,000 are expected to go to media representatives. The rest will go to World Cup officials, employees and volunteers.

Germany has beefed up security for the June 9-July 9 finals but police deployment chief Jurgen Mathies said the country was well-equipped to cope with demands.

German police officers will work in tandem with the 500 officers expected to arrive from other countries.

And around 7000 military personnel will be present at the tournament - which will also be under surveillance from radar-equipped Awac airplanes from NATO.

Around 2.2 million Germans and one million foreigners are expected to attend matches at football's biggest showpiece, with many more watching matches in pubs and bars.

Portugal worried about Phil

INTERNET, *undated*

Portuguese Football Federation (FPF) president Gilberto Madail admits it might be difficult to find the package, which will persuade Luiz Felipe Scolari to stay on as coach after the World Cup.

The Brazilian, who led his homeland to the 2002 World Cup, last week turned down the chance to replace Sven-Goran Eriksson as England coach after the World Cup. Steve McClaren was today given the job instead.

That has led to suggestions Scolari could extend his three-year stay in the Portugal post and Madail confirmed he still hoped to keep Scolari on board.

"An agreement is dependent on the will of the FPF and of the coach," Madail said in remarks reported on www.ogogo.pt.

"Each party has its limits - we will try and bring the various factors together. We will try and renew the contract with the coach during the 2006 World Cup.

"There is no question about his (Scolari's) ability. But we are a small federation."

Totti eager to play again

INTERNET, *undated*

Roma playmaker Francesco Totti is excited at the prospect of playing again after a long absence through injury.

The Italian international broke his ankle in February, throwing his World Cup participation into jeopardy, but Totti should be back for Roma's game with Treviso on Sunday.

"I want to play, I'm looking forward to this," Totti told Gazzetta dello Sport.

"When? That is not up to me. "I will talk with coach Spalletti and we will evaluate whether against Treviso I should start or be a substitute."

The 29-year-old is expected to only be on the bench at the weekend.

"How I feel? Let's say between 40 and 50 percent of my best condition," he added.

No flag on USA bus

AP, Frankfurt

The official team bus to be used by the United States during the World Cup will not bear a flag for security reasons.

The 32 official buses were presented Thursday in Frankfurt, and the other 31 buses have large national flags of the their teams painted on rear sides.