

Sport

Column One SPORTS TALK

Baggio: The talk of Italy

MILAN, May 18: Italy is in the grip of Baggio fever this week, as the nation speculates over a move to Inter Milan alongside Ronaldo, an exile in England or Japan, and a place in the World Cup finals, reports AFP.

Baggio, who many thought was a spent force last summer after two unhappy years at AC Milan, has had one of the best seasons of his illustrious career - rounded off with a personal record of 22 goals.

Suddenly his services are very much in demand at club level, with the most tantalising interest coming from Inter Milan president Massimo Moratti, who wants a dream team attack of Baggio and Ronaldo.

Inter face a protracted campaign in the Champions' League next season, along with their stated aim of winning the Italian title, and Moratti is determined to strengthen the squad.

One of the few complaints made about Inter this season is that their 25-goals Baggio was often poorly served by his teammates and Baggio would be ideal for that goalkeeping role.

However, the same argument is also making sense to Arsenal.

Deportivo La Coruna, who have yet to eat into the 30-million-dollar cash mountain they were given by Barcelona for Brazilian ace Rivaldo, are waiting in the wings.

The memories of Baggio's performances at USA '94 are meanwhile fresh in the minds of senior executives at MLS club MetroStars, and Baggio is known to be interested by a spell in the United States.

The 31-year-old has until July 15 to discuss his future with Bologna, who would like him to exercise his contract option to stay for another year.

However, the biggest question mark regarding Baggio's future will be resolved for better or worse on Thursday, when national coach Cesare Maldini unveils his list of 22 players for France '98.

Baggio scored more league goals in the season just ended than any other Italian footballer, and no-one still playing has a higher career total (151, five more than Roberto Mancini).

But despite the statistics and the unswerving public support, along with a sustained campaign by the Italian press, it still may not be enough to convince Maldini.



Asif Iqbal (Star TV's sports commentator)

He has given a new dimension to betting. Such dominance can break the heart of the best of bowlers. I was never tired of watching this wonderful batsman.

He had these words for Sachin Tendulkar after India had lifted the Sharjah Cup beating Australia recently.

Boost sports WHIZZ KID COMPETITION FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN

Competition-95 Tick the correct answers Post to The Daily Star Win attractive prizes Competition closes at 8 pm on May 29, 1998

Table with 10 questions about sports events and teams.

Name, Class, Roll No., School Address, Phone fields.

DID U' KNOW? (The Professor does)

HAT India, where the All India Football Federation was founded in 1937 and which received FIFA membership in 1948, were Asian Games football champions in 1951 and 1962.

Then some ambitious Indian perhaps decided to make footballs and export them to the Southeast and the Middle East.

Little did he know that he was sowing the seeds of World Cup teams in Japan, South Korea, Saudi Arabia and Iran at the cost of India?

C'wealth Games No change in venue

KUALA LUMPUR, May 18: Commonwealth Games organisers have again said there are no plans to shift the 1998 Games from Kuala Lumpur due to problems from smog, Malaysian newspapers reported today, reports Reuters.

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STAR MOVIES 7:30 Family: Rigolietto PG 9:30 Comedy: Some Girls Do 15 11:30 Action: Excessive Force II Force On Force 15 1:30 Thriller: Bad Company 15 3:30 Comedy: Dunston Checks In 12 5:30 Action: The Killer 15 7:30 Action: Guns Of Honor 15 9:30 Film 98 10:00 Action: Red Heat 15 12:00 Thriller: The Colony 15 2:00 Comedy: High Crusade 15 3:30 Film 96 4:00 Action: Barb Wire 15 5:30 Film Club: Butch Cassidy And The Sundance Kid PG

STAR MOVIES 7:30 Jagran 7:30 Zee News-Hindi 8:00 Zed It Pro 8:30 Zee News-Hindi 9:00 Zee World 9:30 Zee News-Eng 10:00 India Deeds 10:30 Jagri 11:00 Hum Zamen 11:30 Zee News Update 11:50 Zee Business

Saudis hope lightning can strike twice for Parreira

UNDATED, May 18 (AFP/Internet): Saudi Arabia are counting on a touch of Brazilian magic to rub off when they compete in France this summer.

The country's football authorities knew what they were doing in December when they approached Carlos Alberto Parreira to oversee their World Cup campaign.

For Parreira who was in charge in 1988 when Saudi Arabia won the Asian Cup has been there, done that. He was in charge of Kuwait in 1982, the United Arab Emirates in 1990 and his steady hands guided the hitherto brilliant but wayward Brazilian team to the summit at

Italy's expense in the 1994 final at the Rose Bowl, Pasadena, four years ago. No doubt impressed by the way he had

transformed a team celebrated the world over for its exuberance and flair into the disciplined, hard-working world beaters seen in the United States the call went out get Parreira.

Parreira's halo slipped after Brazil's finest hour. The 55-year-old, who is not a man to let the grass grow under his feet for very long, joined Valencia, but the move ended in tears with the Spanish side experiencing a wretched league campaign.

Appointed in December, he made his presence felt right from the start when bringing Saed Al-Owairan in from the cold, selecting the so-called 'Desert Maradona' for the Confederations Cup in Riyadh after he served an 18-month suspension for immoral acts under Islamic law.

The Saudis sprang a surprise in 1994 when making it through to the second round before their adventure was cut short when they went down 3-1 to Sweden. "We have a big challenge ahead of us which will need plenty of hard work," said Parreira.

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Akram's men Madras-bound

Sports Reporter National cricketers, basking in the glory of their maiden triumph in limited-over cricket, left Hyderabad for the south Indian city of Madras last night.

Bangladesh pulled off an historic six-wicket win over Kenya in their second match of the Coca-Cola triangular cricket tournament at the Lal Bahadur Stadium on Sunday.

Bangladesh, who with this win brightened their hopes for a maiden passage into the final in any over-limit international tournament, will enjoy a five-day rest before appearing against their Kenyan rivals at Chipauk on May 23. And a repeat act by the boys of Akram Khan will ensure Bangladesh for a probable clash in the final against India at Calcutta on May 31.

On the other hand Kenya, smarting under their heart-breaking defeat, will take on India in Bangalore on May 21. The hosts had earlier defeated Bangladesh by five wickets in the inaugural match at Mohali on Thursday.

Next ICC Trophy in Canada

Sports Reporter The 2001 International Cricket Council (ICC) Trophy competition will be held in Canada. This was disclosed by the secretary of Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) Ashraf Haq yesterday.

Ashraf, who is also a member on the five-man ICC associate member nations committee, said the decision was taken in a meeting over telephone on Sunday. The BCB secretary however said that the draft proposal will be tabled at the next meeting of the game's ruling body at Lord's on June 8 for final approval.

Canada, who never hosted the unofficial championship among the associate member nations, won the three-way heady battle against the United States and Ireland.

Ashraf disclosed that unlike the previous six editions, this time the championship, involving 23 associate members, will be played in the different format. Twelve top teams of the last ICC Trophy in Malaysia will compete in the Division I from where top three finishers will earn the ticket for the World Cup. While the rest will vie in the less significant Division 2 from where top two teams will earn promotion to Div I.

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Conchita claims German Open

BERLIN, May 18: Conchita Martinez ended the run of French qualifier Amelie Mauresmo to end an 18-month title drought and claim the German Open championship with a 6-4, 6-4 victory, reports AFP.

The win earned Martinez 150,000 dollars, with 50,000 going to 18-year-old Mauresmo. The French girl, who this week became the lowest-ranked player to beat two of the top three players, Lindsay Davenport and Jana Novotna, was unable to maintain the standard with which she began the match, and it was her numerous unforced errors that led to her eventual downfall.

"It's a great feeling to win again," said Martinez, who had reached the final of the Australian Open and Amelia Island this year but had not claimed a title since winning Moscow in November 1996.

ATP's top 20

Table with columns: Player, Points. Lists top 20 ATP players.

SUN RISES ON STOICHKOV

Bulgarian veteran striker Hristo Stoichkov, who quit Barcelona in mid-season, is to play for Japanese outfit Yokohama Flügels after the World Cup after signing a two-year contract, it emerged here. The J-league side are paying 4 million dollars for the 32-year-old, who only arrived back in Bulgaria to play for CSKA Sofia earlier this year before almost immediately going off to Saudi Arabia for two months to guest for Al-Ansar.

BRAZIL STARS HAVE A HEART

Brazil's stars have had a whip-round to help stricken residents of northeastern areas of their country hit by severe drought.

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FRANCE '98 SIDELINES

UNDATED, May 18 (AFP/Internet): Brazil's World Cup squad are to take singing lessons to enable them to sing the national anthem properly before matches.

Brazilian Federation officials claim it looks "ridiculous" if players either try to mime the words or, worse still, keep their mouths tightly shut during the hymn's rendition. But if Ronaldo and company think they'll be singing for their supporter they could be in for a disappointment, because their favourite dish has been summarily banned.

"Feijoada," a tasty but heavy mixture of black beans, rice, chorizos and peppers, is not what today's World Cup star should be eating, according to dietary advisor and cardiologist Joaquim da Matta. "It's just too heavy. Athletes need energy-giving food which is easily digested," insists Da Matta.

SKIPPER KLENSMANN

Spurs striker Juergen Klinsmann will skipper the German squad at the World Cup even if he is not assured of a place in the starting line-up, coach Eerti Vogts said Sunday.

Vogts told German television: "Every player must accept that sometimes he will be left on the bench."

Klinsmann, 33, has won 101 caps and was in the 1990 World Cup-winning side as well as the team that lifted the 1996 European Championship. But Vogts is set to prefer 30-year-old Oliver Bierhoff, who finished the Italian season as top scorer with 27 goals and who scored the Golden Goal winner for Germany at Euro 96. Bierhoff, off to AC Milan next season and who has scored 13 goals in 22 games for Germany, is likely to start alongside 32-year-old Ulf Kirsten, who has just finished Bundesliga top-scorer at Bayer Leverkusen.

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Director of Purchase

Director of Purchase PDB, Dhaka.

FRANCE '98 SIDELINES

After watching a report on how some people had resorted to looting supermarkets to avoid going hungry, the players, led by skipper Dunga and goalkeeper Taffarel decided to collect cash to help them.

"It's an initiative from the heart," said Dunga. Defender Goncalves added: "We saw these reports and we were really touched by the situation of these people. They are suffering and we can't just sit there and do nothing. We have to help."

FIORENTINA WON'T LET BATISTUTA GO

Gabriel Batistuta's not going anywhere. In an escalating dispute that may affect the Argentina striker's concentration in the World Cup, Fiorentina president Vittorio Cecchi Gori said he won't meet his transfer demands.

Batistuta, who is expected to lead Argentina's attack at France '98, said last week he wanted to leave the Fiorentina team after seven years and join another Italian club. He is hoping a change in scenery will give him new motivation.

Scorer of 21 goals in the just concluded Serie A season, he has been reportedly offered rich transfer fees by Parma, Lazio and Roma.

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FRANCE '98 SIDELINES

"Contracts must be honoured, and Batistuta's contract with Fiorentina lasts two more years," said Cecchi Gori, a movie tycoon and politician.

"I want to preserve a powerful team for the next season, to possibly win the Italian title. Batistuta is one of our top stars."

BALAKOV TO BE SUEED

A German journalist says he's taking Bulgarian star Krasimir Balakov to court for allegedly hitting him before last week's Cup Winners' Cup final.

Hoger Gayer of the Stuttgarter Zeitung claims the talented VfB Stuttgart midfielder, angry over his reporting, verbally abused the reporter and hit him on the head. Balakov denied the incident, which reportedly took place while both were on a plane flight to be match held at Stockholm. Gayer did not say what charges would be filed.

Stuttgart lost the final 1-0 to Chelsea of London.

SHEARER SAYS, SORRY

I'm sorry, Tony. England captain Alan Shearer has apologised to World Cup colleague Tony Adams after an ugly tackle that earned him a yellow card at Saturday's FA Cup final at Wembley.

Shearer, who did little right in the game which his Newcastle team lost 2-0 to Adams' Arsenal, made the Challenge just before half time, needlessly clattering into the tall Gunners defender and sending him tumbling to the turf.

"I told Tony Adams after the game that I was sorry," Shearer said. "I found him to tell him this, but there were five or six moments like that during the game."

"I don't feel I made contact but wanted to make certain that everything was okay with him."

EKOKU IN LIMBO

Wimbledon's Nigerian international Efan Ekoku said today his dream of playing in the World Cup was in tatters.

Ekoku, who underwent an operation on a serious ankle injury in February, said national coach Bora Milutinovic had informed him he would not be in Nigeria's final 22.

"I've been in contact with the coach and I'm on standby, but it doesn't look like I'll be going unless one or two players get injured," Ekoku told Wimbledon Clubcal today.

Ekoku has barely played for Wimbledon since his operation and said his lack of match practice had cost him his place.

Milutinovic has until June 2 to name his squad for the finals in France, where Nigeria will face Spain, Paraguay and Bulgaria in their opening group.

BPDB's International Tender Notice. International sealed tender is hereby invited by the Bangladesh Power Development Board for procurement of 1 (one) set 132/33/11 KV Power Transformer and 4 (Four) nos 132 KV Lightning Arrester for 132/33KV Sub-Station at Ghorasal Power Station against Tender Enquiry No. Pur-336/97 dated 05-5-98 as under.

The Daily Star TV Guide

Tuesday 19th May (All programmes are in local time but subject to last minute change)

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