

## Sport

Clemente not happy about absent Ayala

MADRID, Jan 3 (Reuters/Internet): Real Betis coach Javier Clemente has no idea when his Paraguayan World Cup defender Celso Ayala might return to the club.

Ayala, who played in all four of Paraguay's matches at France '98 and who is rated as one of the best central defenders in South America, went to his native country for the Christmas break on December 21 and has yet to return to the Seville club.

The player, in a brief message to Betis, said that he had extended his stay at home because of the health of his father.

"This is the first time something like this has happened to me in over 20 years as a coach," a puzzled Clemente said on Saturday. "But if he's not coming, he's not coming."

Clemente suggested that there was a distinct possibility he might never see Ayala again.

"He has said to the club president several times that he has never liked being in Seville but he wants to be transferred for free and that would mean we would not get back the money we paid for him," Clemente added.

Ayala was signed from the Argentine club River Plate at the start of the season.

## Russia reach last four

WINNIPEG, Jan 3: Denis Arkhipov scored 7-33 into overtime and Russia beat Finland 3-2 to advance to the semi-finals of the World Junior Ice Hockey Championship and eliminate the defending champions, reports AP.

Arkhipov slumped in Iouri Dobryskikine's pass to avenge last year's 2-1 overtime loss in the final in Helsinki.

Finnish minder Mika Lehto, who had no chance on the winner, put in a solid performance before 6,960 fans at Winnipeg Arena.

Lehto was brilliant, particularly late in the second period and throughout the third as the Russians trailing 2-1, pressed for the equalizer.

Dmitri Kirilenko finally beat Lehto at 13:47 of the final period, converting a rebound off a shot from the point by Vitali Vichnevski to force overtime. Roman Liachenko also scored for Russia.

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Russia, which finished 3-0-1 during the round-robin play in Group B, meets Slovakia on Monday in the semifinal round. The Slovaks finished first in Pool A with a 3-1-0 record to earn a bye into the semifinals.

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Their only goal, however, was an even-strength marker from Liachenko who finished off a 2-on-1 rush with Petr Stachiyev at 10:10.

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## Capello replacing Van Gaal?

BARCELONA, Spain, Jan 3 (Reuters/Internet): Barcelona have signed a pre-contract with

Fabio Capello to take over at the Catalan club next season, Spanish newspapers reported on Thursday.

According to the reports, Capello, who was replaced as coach of AC Milan in May this year but is still employed by the Italian club, will sign a three-year contract worth 1,500 million pesetas (10.64 million dollars) beginning on July 31, 1999.

No-one at Barcelona was available for comment.

Speculation over the future of current coach Louis van Gaal has been rife since the club was knocked out of the European Cup in the Champions' League stage for the second successive season.

With Barcelona's domestic form also patchy -- two successive defeats have seen them slip to fifth place in the Spanish first division -- van Gaal has come under heavy criticism from the Catalan press and public. The Dutch coach has maintained that he will not resign, insisting that the time to judge his success or failure will be at the end of the season.

Van Gaal came through a similar ordeal last season after the side finished bottom of their Champions' League group but then went on to lift the Spanish league and cup double.

But Real Madrid's European Cup success last season put further pressure on van Gaal to bring success in Europe this term. With progress in the European Cup now out of the question for another year, Barcelona are almost certain to turn to a new coach next season.

Capello is held in high regard in Spain for winning the league title with Real Madrid in 1996, when Barcelona -- then coached by Bobby Robson -- were led by star striker Ronaldo.

Robson's failure to land the title that year led to him being replaced by van Gaal, who joined Barcelona at the start of the 1997-98 season.

## Bad luck for Tendulkar



HAMILTON, New Zealand, Jan 3: A contentious leg before decision against an ominous Sachin Tendulkar underlined a spirited Indian fight back on the second day of the third cricket Test Sunday, reports AP.

After medium paceman Javagal Srinath had taken five for 95 to dismiss the home side for 366, New Zealand held India to 196 for five wickets.

From 126 for two India lost their way as Saurav Ganguly and skipper Mohammed Azharuddin fell to injudicious shots outside off stump.

But Rahul Dravid moved towards a third Test century with an unbeaten 93 and Nayan Mongia was yet to score at stumps.

Indian coach Aunshuman Gaekwad said his batsmen will have to score quickly and post a substantial lead to have any hopes of squaring the series. India trail the three-match series 1-0 following their four-wicket defeat in the second Test in Wellington.

"We have to get the runs on the board quickly," Gaekwad said. "It is a very good pitch and the only way we can win from here is by getting our nose in front and then applying the pressure."

Gaekwad was critical of the batting when he said it was "disappointing."

"Our batsmen got good starts but didn't apply themselves long enough to get big scores," he said. "It is a type of surface that needs a fair amount of discipline. The New Zealand batsmen showed that when they batted."

Tendulkar, who followed up his innings of 47 and 113 in the second Test with a breezy 67 off just 93 balls, was adjudged lbw by New Zealand umpire Doug Cowie.

Cowie, who had turned down numerous appeals in the New Zealand innings, had rejected a confident shout for lbw off the previous ball.

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Television replays clearly showed the ball which was missed Tendulkar, a full length delivery from medium paceman Dion Nash, was drifting down leg side.

Nash and his fellow bowlers were at the receiving end as the batting brilliance of Tendulkar and Dravid dominated the afternoon session after New Zealand had been dismissed 11 minutes after lunch.

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