

Petrescu eying Vialli's job!

LONDON, Feb 25: Chelsea defender Dan Petrescu, who Friday signed a two-year contract extension, warned club manager Gianluca Vialli that he was after his job, reports AFP.

The popular Romanian defender told the Press Association: "I want to play in the 2002 World Cup with Romania if we qualify, then stop playing. Then I would like to coach in England - and my ideal job would be to manage Chelsea and take over from Luca."

"I have played for a lot of good managers in my career and I would take the best things I have learned from them all and put them into my own style."

Petrescu was wanted by a host of top European clubs who were alerted by the fact his contract was up in the summer, but he refused to listen to offers, preferring to play out his days at Stamford Bridge.

"My agent told me there was interest from other clubs but I told him I wasn't interested in speaking to them."

"I am very happy here and my family are settled in London - my youngest daughter's middle name is Chelsea - and I think there is more success to come at the club."

"All players think the Premiership is the place to be. Just look at a player like Gabriel Batistuta who realises it is the best league in Europe and now wants to come here to play."

Petrescu is confident Chelsea can go on to greater things, but he ruled them out of this season's title race.

"When I came to Chelsea they were not such a big club, but we have had a lot of success," he said.

The main aim is to qualify for the Champions' League again. We still have a good chance of going further in this year's tournament, as we need six points from four games to qualify for the next stage and we are looking forward to the competition resuming next week."

Lara renounces

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South Africa and an early exit from the last World Cup of the century held England.

Lara's announcement comes as West Indies prepare to name a training squad of 20 players for the series against Zimbabwe and Pakistan, and ultimately their summer tour of England.

Pat Rousseau, the Jamaican president of the WICB, thanked Lara for his service as captain during a very difficult period in West Indies cricket.

"I know he has made a very hard decision and I appeal to the public to give him the total support that the WICB will be giving him as he continues his career," Rousseau said.

Pakistan, SL

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Khan, Wasim Akram, Abdur Razzak, Shahid Afridi, Saqlain Mushtaq, Irfan Fazil, Mohammad Akram, Bazid Khan and Waqar Younis.

SRI LANKA (from): Sanath Jayasuriya (captain), Mahela Jayawardene, Russell Arnold, Marvan Atapattu, Tilkeratne Dilshan, Romesh Kaluwitharana, Arjuna Ranatunga, Aravinda de Silva, Rangana Herath, Muttiah Muralitharan, Chaminda Vaas, Pramodya Wickremasinghe, Upul Chandana, Nuwan Zoysa and Ravindra Pushpakumara.

Umpires: Dave O'Gird South Africa and Athar Zaidi Pakistan.

ICC Match Referee: Brian Hastings (New Zealand)

Tarun sail

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After his brave knock of 63, Akhter Sarfraz also shone with the cherry. The occasional off-break bowler finished with two for 23 from his 6 overs.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the Premier Division cricket league match between Surjo Tarun Club and Nari Club played at the Gangabandhu National Stadium yesterday:

SURJO TARUN

Surjib b Ataur 1

Ataur b Ataur 4

Zaman c Lovel b Zakir 1

Khtar c Ataur b Carman 63

M Shahrir c Hasnain 28

Shafuddowla 28

Masood c Carman b Masud 74

Diniaz not out 36

Enamul b Ataur 1

Unis b Ataur 0

Isha not out 4

Extras: (lb-8, nb-10, w-14) 35

Total: (For 8 wkt in 50 overs) 247

Did not bat: Sharifuddowla 247

Did not bat: Sharifuddowla and Lovel Rahman 1

Fall of wickets: 1-8; 2-11; 3-

10; 4-10; 5-15; 6-234; 7-

142; 8-242.

WICKLER

O M R W

Ataur 10 2 44 4

Zakir 10 0 34 1

Isha 9 0 36 0

Shafuddowla 9 0 49 1

Enamul 9 0 51 1

Unis 3 0 22 1

WARI CLUB

Ifees run out 9

Shafud run out 64

Arman b Lovel b Suja 4

Isha Shah b Akhter 24

Isha Shah b Akhter 9

Isha Shah b Ramzan 17

Ataur c Ramzan b Enamul 8

Isha not out 41

Khtar not out 0

Extras: (lb-8, nb-4, w-8) 20

Total: (For 7 wkt in 50 overs) 196

Did not bat: Sharifuddowla and Lovel Rahman 1

Fall of wickets: 1-29; 2-44;

-100; 4-125; 5-132; 6-147; 7-

80.

WICKLER

O M R W

Ataur 7 1 17 0

Shafuddowla 6 0 22 0

Isha 9 1 28 1

Isha 10 0 36 0

Khtar 6 1 23 2

Amran 1 0 6 1

Arman 1 0 16 0

Result: Surjo Tarun Club by 51 runs.

Primera Liga preview

All roads lead to Madrid



MADRID, Feb 25: The fixture is enough to bring Spain to a halt at the best of times but with both outfits hell-bent on winning the league title, Real Madrid's home encounter with Barcelona on Saturday assumes even greater importance than usual, reports AFP.

Real's Argentine international Fernando Redondo, meanwhile, told Marca magazine: "The fact there is just one point separating the teams makes the match even more exciting. The winners will be up for the title."

Star Sports television will show the **Barcelona-Real Madrid** match live at 1:30 am BST (Sunday).

Several question marks can be placed against the line-ups of both clubs.

Real coach Vicente Del Bosque may risk throwing former Arsenal man Nicolas Anelka into the fray despite the fact he has not played since January 10 after suffering a knee injury at the World Club Championships in Brazil.

Anelka said in midweek that he would love to make a return and score his first league goal for the 'merengues'.

Real are also sweating on the availability of Spanish international forward Raul, who is nursing an adductor muscle injury.

The probable absence of both means Real will again lean on new discovery Rolando Zola, who has proved an able deputy in recent weeks with several important goals.

Real also hope to have Brazilian wingback Roberto Carlos in action, while Barca are relying on Rivaldo being in their starting eleven. Both men have been on international duty this week in Thailand.

Elsewhere, La Coruna will carry on their quest to win the title for the first time with a home match against Real Madrid.

Manaman was moved to say as he looked forward to the game which will attract a crowd of some 100,000 to the Bernabeu stadium.

Deportivo coach Javier Irureta said no matter how great the pressure at the top his they just had to keep on clocking up the wins.

"If we take three points we will be even further ahead of either Real or Barca - or even both," he said.

Real Zaragoza, third and level on points with Real, host a Celta Vigo side who made a good start in the league before falling away and are now sixth.

Real Betis, meanwhile, host neighbours Sevilla as both fight

for the top five finish and who are currently seventh.

Juventus face a stiff test in the shape of Roma on Sunday as the Zebras bid to move further

ahead of the field in the Serie A.

It is a match neither team dare lose, reports AFP.

He also tasted Wembley defeat in the 1994 FA Cup semi-final when Manchester United's Mark Hughes netted a late extra-time equaliser which took the tie to a replay - a match Oldham eventually lost 4-1.

Henry speaks from bitter experience when he explains Wembley is the worst ground on which to lose a football match.

"We did well with Oldham but Tranmere have got to go and try to win it now. We have to go there and perform well and if we do that we will have the bonus of winning the Cup because Wembley is not a place for losers," he said.

"It is great if you win but it is one of the worst places to be if you lose. It has never been a lucky ground for me but hopefully that will all change this weekend."

"I don't think the fans will ever forget this weekend. We are going there knowing we can do it and we want to give those supporters something to shout about."

Leicester, meanwhile, are without veteran defender Steve Walsh through suspension while striker Ian Marshall misses out because of a hamstring injury.

Martin O'Neill's side otherwise report a clean bill of health with Tony Cottee and Steve Guppy in contention for places in the starting line-up after recent injury lay-offs.

Leicester striker Emile Heskey, who was voted man-of-the-match for England in an international friendly against Argentina on Wednesday, now has Tranmere in his sights.

Heskey said: "I really enjoyed myself against Argentina, and now I want to go back there (to Wembley) with Leicester and win the League Cup."

"It's a busy time for me and it's ironic that two of the biggest games of my career should come within the space of five days of each other at Wembley."

"I took a bit of a knock to my head but I feel okay and I'm really looking forward to my third League Cup final."

"For the first time we start as favourites but we all know how difficult this game is going to be. Certainly, none of us will be underestimating Tranmere."

Having lost to Bradford and Liverpool in consecutive weeks, the Gunners are now 12 points behind Manchester United and perhaps too far off the pace to make a late title bid.

Former England boss Glenn Hoddle has won both of his games since taking over at Southampton but this game represents the toughest challenge so far to the new Saints boss.

Urgently in need of defensive cover, Hoddle was linked with Celtic centre-back Alan Stubbs this week with the south coast club eager to maintain their five-point cushion above the relegation zone.

Chelsea, in fifth, entertain bottom club Watford, who surely are destined for the drop.

Graham Taylor's side are rooted to the basement on 15 points, nine adrift of safety, and with games running out the Premiership newcomers' stay in the top flight looks to be a one-season affair.

Both players are now back in England.

Chelsea are unlikely to be in charitable mood as they desperately need the points to qualify for the Champions League next season.

But Watford can take heart from the fact that they defeated Gianluca Vialli's team of international stars 1-0 back in September, one of just four wins they have recorded this season.

ENGLISH PREMIERSHIP matches on Saturday (kick-off 1500GMT unless stated):

Arsenal v Southampton, Bradford City v Aston Villa, Chelsea v Watford, Coventry City v Tottenham Hotspur, Middlesbrough v Leeds, Sheffield Wednesday v Newcastle United, Sunderland v Derby, West Ham United v Everton, Wimbledon v Manchester United.

Watford v Birmingham City, Nottingham Forest v Liverpool, Newcastle United v Birmingham City, Portsmouth v West Ham United, Queens Park Rangers v West Bromwich Albion, Sheffield Wednesday v West Ham United, Southampton v Middlesbrough, Stoke City v Birmingham City, Sunderland v Newcastle United, West Ham United v Birmingham City.

CONCACAF Gold Cup

Watson takes Canada to final

DAVID BECKHAM

take on Bryan Robson's Mid

dlsbrough.

Boro are seventh from bottom on 31 points, but will be buoyant after their 2-0 home victory over Coventry last Monday, which was only their second win in 15 matches.

The win relieved some of the pressure on Robson, but with Boro having won less than half of their home games this season, Leeds could prove too strong for the Weariders and will start firm favourites.

Boro striker Brian Deane is unlikely to be in time to face his former club while Leeds have Irishman Gary Kelly, Norwegian Eirik Bakke and Welshman Matthew Jones suspended.

Former Chelsea defender Michael Duberry could return after serving a one-match ban.

Third-placed Liverpool do not play this weekend as they were due to play League Cup fi

Sport

English League Cup

Tranmere's test of character

LONDON, Feb 25: Tranmere Rovers' midfield general Nick Henry knows what it feels like to experience the heartache of losing a Wembley final - and does not want those feelings in Sunday's League Cup final against Leicester City.