

## UEFA Cup semifinal

Turkish fans  
may attend  
second leg

STRASBOURG, France, April 13: European football chief Lennart Johansson on Wednesday hinted that Galatasaray's fans will be allowed to attend the controversial UEFA Cup semi-final second-leg tie against Leeds at Elland Road next Thursday, reports AFP.

UEFA decided to postpone their decision on the subject until Friday afternoon to fully evaluate written submissions from both sides.

Reports were received on Tuesday from Leeds, the Football Association (FA) and the relevant local and national security authorities, with Galatasaray believed to have responded Wednesday afternoon.

The FA appeared to have made clear the tie will be staged at Elland Road, with any suggestion the game is switched to a neutral venue now seemingly a non-starter.

The only aspect on the agenda is whether the 1,700 Galatasaray supporters, with the Turkish club's full allocation having already been sold - mainly to the business community - will travel.

UEFA president Johansson and FIFA chief Sepp Blatter, discussed a range of footballing issues here with European Members of Parliament.

The talks included the repercussions of last week's events when two Leeds fans - Christopher Loftus and Kevin Speight - were murdered following violent clashes in Istanbul on the eve of the first leg, which Leeds lost 2-0.

"There are Turks all over the place in Europe and they will, one way or the other, get to the game," Johansson told BBC Radio.

"I predict there will be no problems in Leeds when Galatasaray go and that we can keep things well under control inside the stadium."

"Although what happened in Istanbul is significant for us, we will do our utmost to do everything we can and not give in."

Leeds chairman Peter Ridsdale is determined the Turkish club's fans should not travel because he believes it is his club that will suffer the consequences.

"We would get the blame if anything happened," said Ridsdale. "Let's not forget that two people were murdered in Istanbul last week. Tensions are running very high."

"I'm not trying to do this to get back at Galatasaray. We're genuinely trying to take a responsible attitude and provide a safe environment for a football match to take place."

Should UEFA perform a dramatic about turn and decide the game will go ahead at a neutral venue, then Ridsdale will think twice about his team playing in the return.

Lewis loses  
WBA belt

NEW YORK, April 13: A US federal judge stripped heavyweight champion Lennox Lewis of his World Boxing Association (WBA) title on Wednesday for agreeing to fight Michael Grant instead of the higher-ranked John Ruiz, reports Reuters.

Judge Lewis Kaplan's ruling in New York is not likely to affect the April 29 Lewis-Grant fight at New York's Madison Square Garden.

Lewis, who won the undisputed heavyweight titles from Evander Holyfield last November, still holds the World Boxing Council and International Boxing Federation titles.

The court ruling means that the June 10 fight between Holyfield and Ruiz will be for the vacant WBA title. It also means that promoter Don King is back in the heavyweight picture because he promotes both Holyfield and Ruiz.

Cup Winners' Cup  
Shimizu S-Pulse book final berth

CHIANG MAI, Thailand, April 13: Japan's Shimizu S-Pulse notched a 4-2 victory over Bangkok Bank on Thursday in a penalty shootout after playing to a scoreless tie in the first semifinal match of the 10th Asian Cup Winners' Cup Tournament, reports AP.

Bangkok Bank failed to take advantage of their greater number of scoring opportunities in the first half, while Shimizu gained momentum in the second half but also failed to notch a goal.

A 30-minute extra-time period also went scoreless, setting up a penalty shootout.

Alternating shots from teams, with Shimizu going first, four of the Japanese - Masao Sawanobori, Ryozo Morio, Teruyoshi Ito and Alessandro Dos Santos, a Brazilian native - hit the mark.

For Bangkok Bank only two players - Apichad Thevechalermit and Amarit Eakvong - were on target, leaving Shimizu with the win.

Shimizu will play for the championship on Saturday against the winner of the other semifinal match, between Novbakhor of Uzbekistan and Al-Zawra of Iraq, who were tied 1-1 after the first half.

Novbakhor was a late replacement for Al-Ahli of Saudi Arabia, which dropped out of the tournament at the final stage.

## Bindra drops a bombshell



NEW DELHI, April 13: The Indian cricket board hushed up information that three Indian Test players were betting against their own team, a senior official revealed here on Thursday, reports AFP.

Inderjit Bindra, former president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), said three players were reported to the board over the last few years but no action was taken.

Between 1996 and 2000, the BCCI was told repeatedly that three players were indulging in betting, but the matter was glossed over," Bindra said in a television programme to be telecast on Saturday.

"Two tour managers and one coach had also mentioned in their reports that some players were taking part in unlawful activities."

"Every Indian board member knows about the identity of the players, it's no secret."

Bindra, who was president of the BCCI from 1993-96, however declined to name the players.

"It's better if the current administration speaks on the subject," Bindra said.

"In 1996, I came to know that some players were betting on matches."

"I immediately hauled them up and warned them to desist from such activities. But it went on."

Bindra's revelations come as



INDERJIT BINDRA

another former BCCI president, N.K.P. Salve, in asking the current regime to conduct an independent probe by the government's investigating agency.

"The board should ask the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to probe the whole gamut of allegations about match-fixing in some of the off-shore tournaments India is participating in," Bindra told the Times of India newspaper.

the cricketing world was still reeling from the sacking of South African skipper Hansie Cronje after he admitted providing information to Indian bookmakers.

Bindra, meanwhile, joined

Till an independent inquiry clears these venues of all the charges, India must stop playing there," he said.

The Times of India also reported Thursday that BCCI president A.C. Muttiah had told former all-rounder Manoj Prabhakar to "desist from casting aspersions against anyone unless he is prepared to name him and substantiate the charge."

Prabhakar alleged in a magazine article three years ago that an unnamed teammate offered him 25,000 dollars to play poorly in a one-day match in 1994.

The BCCI conducted its own inquiry under former Supreme Court chief justice Yashwant Chandrachud, who absolved Indian players of the charge in the absence of any evidence.

International Cricket Council president Jagmohan Dalmiya, a former BCCI secretary himself, summoned Muttiah and other officials to Calcutta on Tuesday to discuss the issue.

Federal sports minister Sukhbir Bhindra has also called for a separate meeting with Indian cricket officials on April 27.

Meanwhile, South African cricket chief Ali Bacher and ICC chief executive David Richards will attend a special meeting convened by Dalmiya in Calcutta on Monday to take stock of the match-fixing scandal the Times of India reported.

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## Indian govt gets involved



NEW DELHI, April 13: New Delhi police insisted Wednesday they had a strong case against disgraced South African cricket captain Hansie Cronje as the government formally backed detectives investigating the match-fixing scandal, reports AFP.

"Our investigations are continuing and we have built up a very strong case," said police spokesman Ravi Pawar, as a third suspect, Kishan Kumar, denied any betting links with two Indian bookies who were allegedly in contact with Cronje.

Home Minister Lal Krishna Advani on Wednesday for the first time extended his government's formal support to Crime Branch detectives, who had initially courted international outrage for pointing a finger at Cronje.

The United Cricket Board of South Africa sacked Cronje on Tuesday, saying he had admitted to accepting 10,000 to 15,000 dollars in cash but only for providing information and forecasts on matches.

Cronje later said he had held talks with contacts but not received any financial reward, and he refused all charges relating to actual match-fixing.

Board chief Ali Bacher said the board did not know whether the money handed to Cronje related to the January-February series here between South Africa, England and Zimbabwe.

"We would get the blame if anything happened," said Ridsdale. "Let's not forget that two people were murdered in Istanbul last week. Tensions are running very high."

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great admirers of this game, are worried over the issue. The game has suffered because of this."

A top police source, meanwhile, said a crime branch team in Bombay was investigating possible links between the Cronje case and Dubai-based Bombay underworld don Daud Ibrahim - wanted in India for more than a 100 crimes.

"We are still waiting to hear what our Indian friends suggest," said Mashabane, who had gone to the foreign ministry on Monday to request access to tapes of alleged telephone conversations between Cronje and the bookmakers here and in London.

"Of course we are willing to cooperate. That's why we have asked for this information, because we think it's vital," she said.

The Indian sports ministry on Wednesday also offered all help to the police and called cricket skipper Saurav Ganguly and coach Kapil Dev for a meeting later this week.

The Sowetan newspaper in South Africa quoted foreign ministry sources Wednesday as saying any decision on Cronje's extradition to face the charges in India would be up to President Thabo Mbeki.

Cricket's world governing body, the International Cricket Council, said Wednesday it had ordered a full inquiry into the scandal.

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Earlier, Mbeki's spokesman, Parks Mankahana, told AFP that Sports Minister Ngconde Balfour would meet officials of the United Cricket Board of South Africa (UCB) in Cape Town on Thursday to discuss terms of reference for the probe.

"It's very disappointing. The President shares that disapp-

ointment with everyone," Mankahana said.

Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Pahad told reporters that the cabinet was keen to set up a judicial commission of inquiry into the scandal as soon as possible.

"It's the government's intention that we don't delay this matter longer than is necessary," Pahad said. "It is impacting on very many aspects of South Africa's image abroad."

Pahad said the probe would investigate all aspects of the scandal, including the possibility that international gaming syndicates may be operating in South Africa.

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