

BCCI decides to get tougher

CALCUTTA, India, Apr 19: Indian cricket chiefs responded to the match-fixing controversy which has rocked the sport by deciding to draw up a strict code of conduct for their players on Tuesday, reports Reuters.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has assured it will formulate a code of conduct for its players and implement the same as soon as possible, said a statement from International Cricket Council (ICC) president Jagmohan Dalmiya on Tuesday.

Dalmiya's statement came after a meeting between the ICC and the BCCI on the match-fixing crisis.

It said the BCCI would direct all its present and former office bearers, members, players, officials, coaches and managers to subject themselves to a Delhi police enquiry.

The BCCI is to ask the government to provide proper security for those wishing to disclose facts relating to match-fixing, the statement said.

It said the ICC welcomed the BCCI's suggestion to draw up a code of conduct.

The statement added that in the meantime the ICC suggested guidelines under which "it will be an obligation on the part of the players to report to the team managers any approach made to them by bookmakers, or knowledge of reports relating to other players."

The ICC also suggested that failure to make such a report would be a punishable offence, and any player found guilty of accepting money from a bookmaker would be punished.

"...the penalty will be exemplary including a sizeable suspension and that the season will be made public," the statement added.

It also said the findings of a probe into allegations of match-fixing two years ago would be tabled in parliament, put on the Internet and a copy of the report provided to Delhi police.

Hansie Cronje and South African team mates Herschelle Gibbs, Pieter Strydom and Nicky Boje have been charged by Indian police with match-fixing during a one-day series between India and South Africa last month. They have denied the accusations.

Cronje was subsequently sacked as South Africa captain after admitting taking between \$10,000 and \$15,000 from a bookmaker for information and forecasting during a triangular one-day series against Zimbabwe and England in South Africa last January.

Bindra's appeal

NEW DELHI, Apr 19: Cricket players around the world are involved in match-fixing, a former chief of India's cricket board said Wednesday, urging honesty from the sports officials in dealing with a widening scandal, reports AP.

"Cricketers from all parts of the world are involved in (match fixing) in one way or the other," Inderjeet Singh Bindra told reporters. But he didn't name any players.

Indian police have produced purposed phone conversations and charged former South African captain Cronje and his teammates Herschelle Gibbs, Nicky Boje and Pieter Strydom with fraud, conspiracy and deceiving and defrauding spectators. Cronje admitted receiving about 10,000 dars and said he had "forecast" some matches, but denied fixing them.

The scandal has shaken up India's cricket establishment, provoking widespread demands that Indian players and officials also be investigated. An Indian film actor and a businessman have been arrested in the scandal involving Cronje and are lodged in the high-security Tihar prison.

Police also are investigating the role of other bookies.

"I hope and pray that the officials of the Indian board act with fortitude, courage and honesty, keeping in mind the practical problems and difficulties they are presently facing," Bindra said in a statement.

"Total transparency and willingness to expose oneself for accountability is the need of the hour for the board and board officials. The same also applies to the International Cricket Council and its officials," he said.

No Davenport for a month

NEW YORK, Apr 19: Top-ranked Lindsay Davenport will be sidelined for another month due to a foot injury, thus delaying the start of her clay court season leading to the French Open, the only Grand Slam she has not won, reports AFP.

"It's pretty tough," Davenport said. "I hurt the top of my foot in the semi-finals in Miami. I still can't put weight on it. Hopefully, it will be ready to go in another month or so but I don't know what to expect."

The 23-year-old American expects to be ready to play on the red clay at Roland Garros, but likely will only have one tune-up, in Madrid or Strasbourg, in the week before the French Open begins in Paris May 29.

Davenport, who replaced Swiss teen Martina Hingis atop the rankings earlier this month, has made considerable adjustments to her game in the past few weeks.

"I have been trying to hit more topspin to cut down on my errors," she said. "You have to be more patient on clay and be much more consistent with your shots."



A Leeds United fan removing flowers, which were put up by club supporters in memory of the two killed in Turkey on April 5, from outside the Elland Road Stadium yesterday ahead of today's UEFA Cup semifinal second leg match between Leeds and Galatasaray.

— AFP photo

UEFA Cup semi-final second legs

Battle takes a back seat



PARIS, April 19: Thursday night's UEFA Cup semi-final second leg matches have paled into insignificance since the deaths of two English supporters in Turkey two weeks ago, reports AFP.

Leeds trail 2-0 to Galatasaray with the Elland Road leg in England to come and Arsenal have a slender 1-0 lead to protect at the Felix-Bollaert stadium in Lens.

The deaths of two English supporters and the diplomatic repercussions between British and Turkish governments and their respective football officials have made the on-pitch events of little relevance.

British and Turkish authorities are crossing their fingers that there are no more incidents like the ones in Istanbul on April 5 when 40-year-old Kevin Speight and Christopher Loftus, 36, were stabbed to death in a brawl.

Galatasaray coach Fatih Terim said he expected no trouble during the match will go ahead amid heavy security measures. "I believe the return game will be played in a secure atmosphere. I have no doubts over it," Terim told a news conference.

The game will be played without any Turkish spectators under a UEFA ruling over security fears.

The Istanbul-based club had previously demanded the game to be moved to a neutral ground on the grounds that Elland Road offered players very little protection from possible reprisal attacks from Leeds fans.

But the Galatasaray coach

appeared to have shed his fears over the proximity of British supporters to the pitch at the Leeds' home ground.

"I wish Ali Sami Yen (Galatasaray's home stadium) was like that. It changes the atmosphere of the game. Anyway, football games in Britain are generally played without incidents," Terim said.

West Yorkshire Police have also advised Galatasaray supporters to stay away from Leeds as the Turkish club announced they would be travelling with 11 members of an anti-terrorist squad.

Interior Minister Sadettin Tantan confirmed the special force would travel after a request from Galatasaray.

Assistant Chief Constable Paul Garvin said: "Our advice to Turkish fans is not to attend the match. We hope people will heed our advice."

Turkish supporters have no ability to buy legitimate tickets, so they have no reason to go to the ground other than for potential trouble and to risk injury to themselves. We would encourage Galatasaray fans not to travel.

"We are working closely with Leeds United. We want to see the match on Thursday go ahead safely."

Meanwhile UEFA have entrusted one of their youngest referees to officiate at this high-security match.

Slovakian schoolteacher Lubos Michel, 31, is the man who must keep order as Leeds bid to recover their deficit.

Although he has never refereed either side before, Michel is a well-known face to British supporters.

He was criticised by Arsenal for failing to dismiss Gabriel Batistuta for a nasty challenge on Lee Dixon when Fiorentina

defeated the Gunners at Wembley in the Champions League earlier this season.

Most recently he took charge of Manchester United's 0-0 draw in Valencia last month and was also the man in the middle when the Spanish side beat Rangers in the first group phase of the competition last week, reports AFP.

Meanwhile Leeds played Arsenal on Sunday in a controversial Premiership clash.

Leeds, reduced to 10 men when Ian Harte was sent off in the 44th minute, suffered their sixth successive defeat - and at 4-0 their worst for three years.

Arsenal, in such stark contrast, made it seven straight wins to leapfrog above United into the third and last Champions League place.

Lee Dixon could consider himself lucky to have stayed on the pitch however after clearly striking Harry Kewell on the face just before half-time.

"I don't have anything further to say," Gibbs told the Cape Argus newspaper Tuesday. "I was at the nightclub and it has got nothing to do with anybody else."

Gibbs made just five runs in the match, which Australia, the current world one-day champions, won by five wickets, leaving the series tied one-all.

The tournament was finally clinched by South Africa with a four-wicket win.

South African cricket's convenor of selectors Rushdie Magjet declined to comment beyond saying that management never imposed curfews before a match.

Gibbs has vehemently denied being involved in match-fixing during South Africa's tour of India earlier this year.

South African captain Hansie Cronje was sacked a week ago after he confessed to having taken what turned out to be 8,200 dollars for providing information and forecasts.

He denied ever being involved in match-fixing.

Champs sent packing



MONTE CARLO, Apr 19: Gustavo Kuerten and Marcelo Rios -- both recent winners of the tournament -- crashed out of the opening round of the 2.95-million-dollar Monte Carlo Masters Series event on Tuesday, reports AFP.

Karol Kucera of Slovakia stunned Brazilian defending champion Kuerten 3-6, 6-0, 6-2 to record his first victory since February, while Spaniard Felix Mantilla downed fifth-seeded Chilean Rios, who was the champion in 1997, 6-0, 4-6, 6-2.

Kucera, who had never previously won a match at the Monte Carlo Country Club, reeled off eight straight games after losing the first set and Kuerten -- a former French Open champion -- was never able to re-establish himself as he made a succession of unforced errors.

Kucera gained revenge for a recent Davis Cup loss to Kuerten, taking the match in 1hr 35min. It was only Kucera's second win in five meetings with Kuerten.

"I tried to play slower in the second set -- and that worked well," said Kucera. "It's an important win for me and I just hope I can keep up this level of form."

Kuerten said he was suffering from a long-standing back injury that could hamper his French Open preparations, but admitted: "He started to play really well and I couldn't find the same level."

The erratic Rios made last year's final here -- but he had no answer to a more consistent Mantilla, who won in 1hr 33min.

Fourth-seeded Nicolas Lapentti of Ecuador joined fellow South American seeds Kuerten and Rios in making an early exit -- going down 6-2, 7-6, 1994 winner Andrei Medvedev of Ukraine rallied to beat Frenchman Sebastien Grosjean 6-2, 6-0, 6-3.

Davenport, who replaced Swiss teen Martina Hingis atop the rankings earlier this month, has made considerable adjustments to her game in the past few weeks.

and avoided joining the carnage that saw eight of the 16 seeds ousted in the first round.

Kafelnikov, who lost in the first round in Estoril, next plays Dominik Hrbaty of Slovakia, who beat Arnaud Di Pasquale of France 6-2, 7-5.

"I'm not at 100 per cent yet, but I feel I'm on the right track for the French Open," Kafelnikov said.

Magnus Norman of Sweden, seeded third, Sweden Thomas Enqvist, seeded sixth, and Tim Henman of Britain, the seventh seed, also won their first-round matches on the second day of the clay court event.

Norman recovered from a sluggish start to beat Spanish qualifier Albert Portas 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 while Henman, who often struggles on clay, beat Switzerland's power-serving former Olympic champion Marc Rosset 6-3, 6-2 in 1hr 16min.

"Some years here I have to have some luck," Kafelnikov said. "It's nice to get through the first round fairly comfortably this time."

Kafelnikov, who lost in the first round in Estoril, next plays Dominik Hrbaty of Slovakia, who beat Arnaud Di Pasquale of France 6-2, 7-5.

"I'm not at 100 per cent yet, but I feel I'm on the right track for the French Open," Kafelnikov said.

Magnus Norman of Sweden, seeded third, Sweden Thomas Enqvist, seeded sixth, and Tim Henman of Britain, the seventh seed, also won their first-round matches on the second day of the clay court event.

Norman recovered from a sluggish start to beat Spanish qualifier Albert Portas 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 while Henman, who often

struggles on clay, beat Switzerland's power-serving former Olympic champion Marc Rosset 6-3, 6-2 in 1hr 16min.

"Some years here I have to have some luck," Kafelnikov said. "It's nice to get through the first round fairly comfortably this time."

Kafelnikov, who lost in the first round in Estoril, next plays Dominik Hrbaty of Slovakia, who beat Arnaud Di Pasquale of France 6-2, 7-5.

"I'm not at 100 per cent yet, but I feel I'm on the right track for the French Open," Kafelnikov said.

Magnus Norman of Sweden, seeded third, Sweden Thomas Enqvist, seeded sixth, and Tim Henman of Britain, the seventh seed, also won their first-round matches on the second day of the clay court event.

Norman recovered from a sluggish start to beat Spanish qualifier Albert Portas 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 while Henman, who often

struggles on clay, beat Switzerland's power-serving former Olympic champion Marc Rosset 6-3, 6-2 in 1hr 16min.

"Some years here I have to have some luck," Kafelnikov said. "It's nice to get through the first round fairly comfortably this time."

Kafelnikov, who lost in the first round in Estoril, next plays Dominik Hrbaty of Slovakia, who beat Arnaud Di Pasquale of France 6-2, 7-5.

"I'm not at 100 per cent yet, but I feel I'm on the right track for the French Open," Kafelnikov said.

Magnus Norman of Sweden, seeded third, Sweden Thomas Enqvist, seeded sixth, and Tim Henman of Britain, the seventh seed, also won their first-round matches on the second day of the clay court event.

Norman recovered from a sluggish start to beat Spanish qualifier Albert Portas 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 while Henman, who often

struggles on clay, beat Switzerland's power-serving former Olympic champion Marc Rosset 6-3, 6-2 in 1hr 16min.

"Some years here I have to have some luck," Kafelnikov said. "It's nice to get through the first round fairly comfortably this time."

Kafelnikov, who lost in the first round in Estoril, next plays Dominik Hrbaty of Slovakia, who beat Arnaud Di Pasquale of France 6-2, 7-5.

"I'm not at 100 per cent yet, but I feel I'm on the right track for the French Open," Kafelnikov said.

Magnus Norman of Sweden, seeded third, Sweden Thomas Enqvist, seeded sixth, and Tim Henman of Britain, the seventh seed, also won their first-round matches on the second day of the clay court event.

Norman recovered from a sluggish start to beat Spanish qualifier Albert Portas 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 while Henman, who often

struggles on clay, beat Switzerland's power-serving former Olympic champion Marc Rosset 6-3, 6-2 in 1hr 16min.

"Some years here I have to have some luck," Kafelnikov said. "It's nice to get through the first round fairly comfortably this time."

Kafelnikov, who lost in the first round in Estoril, next plays Dominik Hrbaty of Slovakia, who beat Arnaud Di Pasquale of France 6-2, 7-5.

"I'm not at 100 per cent yet, but I feel I'm on the right track for the French Open," Kafelnikov said.

Magnus Norman of Sweden, seeded third, Sweden Thomas Enqvist, seeded sixth, and Tim Henman of Britain, the seventh seed, also won their first-round matches on the second day of the clay court event.

Norman recovered from a sluggish start to beat Spanish qualifier Albert Portas 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 while Henman, who often

struggles on clay, beat Switzerland's power-serving former Olympic champion Marc Rosset 6-3, 6-2 in 1hr 16min.

"Some years here I have to have some luck," Kafelnikov said. "It's nice to get through the first round fairly comfortably this time."

Kafelnikov, who lost in the first round in Estoril, next plays Dominik Hrbaty of Slovakia, who beat Arnaud Di Pasquale of France 6-2,