

Judge named for Hansie hearing

JOHANNESBURG, May 4: South African judge, Justice Edwin King, is to head the inquiry into the Hansie Cronje affair which will start hearing evidence on Monday, reports Reuters.

Ngeonde Balfour, the Minister of Sport and Recreation, said at a news conference today: "The commission will have a lifespan of one month and will publish a report on June 30 detailing its investigation into this matter."

Cronje was sacked as South Africa's captain last month after admitting he had accepted money from an Indian bookmaker during a one-day series with Zimbabwe and England in South Africa last January.

The inquiry commission will be based at the Ministry of Justice offices in Pretoria. Penuell Maduna, the Minister of Justice, confirmed that the commission would have no powers to hand out any punishment and that its findings would be presented to President Thabo Mbeki and the International Cricket Council (ICC).

Maduna confirmed that any subsequent decisions will "flow from the findings of the report." He added it was his wish for the hearings, which will be under oath, to be made public. "But Judge King will have the discretion as to what should be in camera."

Judge King will be assisted by Shamila Batohi.

Noor Ali new Bagan boss

Sports Reporter



Noor Ali was recently elected the new president of Kalabagan Krira Chakra. The election was held on April 23 during an executive meeting of the club at its premises.

A pioneer promoter of Kalabagan for the last couple of years, Noor Ali is a leading businessman of the country. He is the managing director of Unique Group of Companies and president of BAIRA (Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies).

Elahi

From page 13

Harun at long-off. Tarun suffered yet another severe blow when Sarfraz, on 48, limped off the ground after suffering a cramp. He however returned after suffering a cramp. He however returned after suffering a cramp. He however returned after suffering a cramp.

The match finally swung Kalabagan's way when Khaled Masood was spectacularly caught by off-spinner Fahim Muntasir, who dived full length to his left to pluck the ball inches off the ground. Fahim also mopped up the Tarun tail to finish with two for 43 in his 10 overs.

It was Kalabagan's tenth victory from 13 games. The are now trailing title-bound Abahani Krira Chakra by six points. On the other hand, it was Surjo Tarun's fifth defeat and second in a row in the six-team Super League.

SCOREBOARD

Table with columns for Bowler, O, M, R, W. Lists bowlers like Anisur Rahman, Khatiruzzaman, Saifur Rahman, etc.

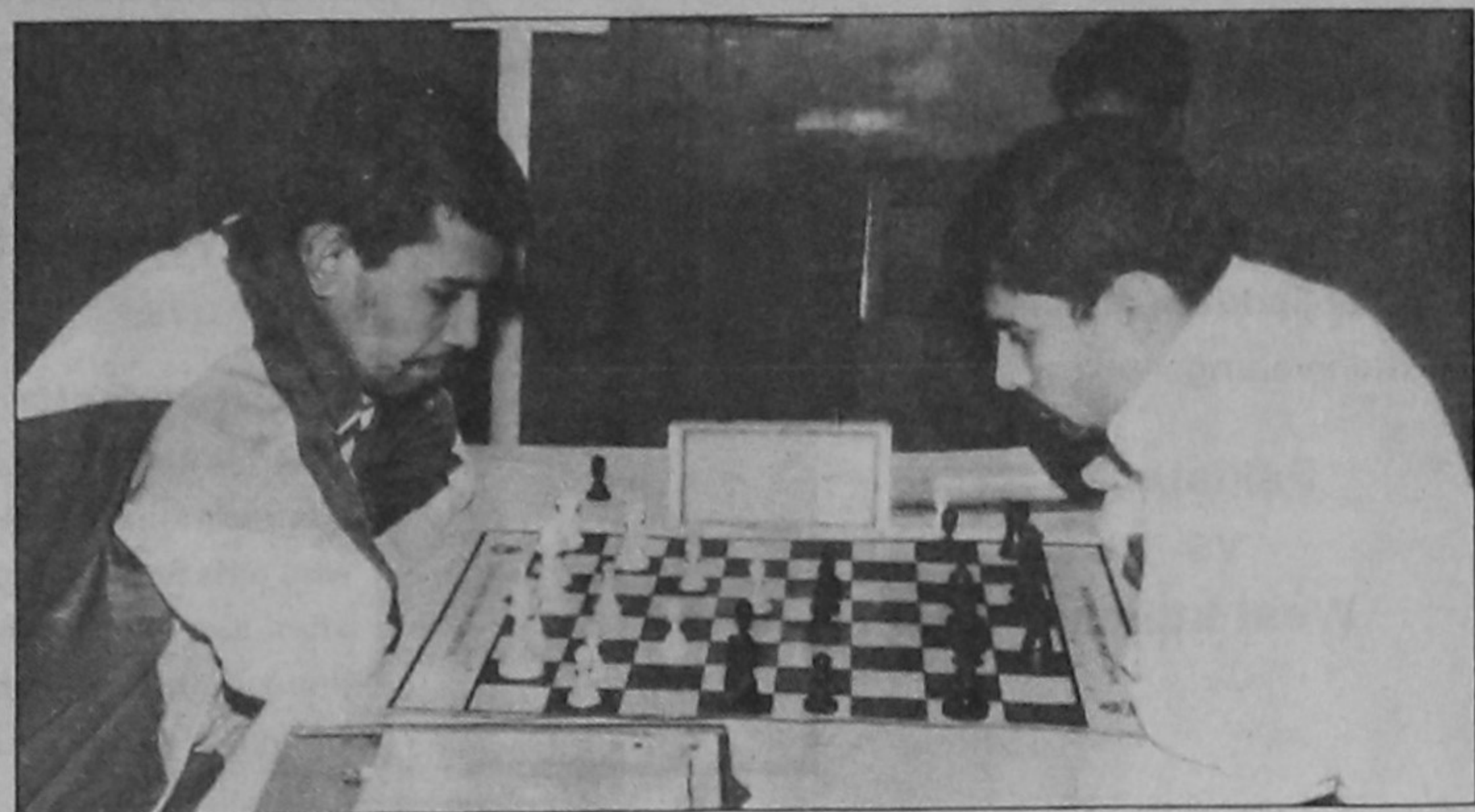
KALABAGAN KC

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SURJO TARUN

Table with columns for Bowler, O, M, R, W. Lists bowlers like Anisur Rahman, Khatiruzzaman, Saifur Rahman, etc.

Result: Kalabagan won by 56 runs.



Reefat-bin-Sattar (R) and Khandkar Aminul Islam during their 26th Professor Abdur Razzak National Chess Championship engagement at the NSC yesterday. —Star photo

Van Gaal, Barca cornered

VALENCIA, Spain, May 4: With the benefit of hindsight the gambit backed - unfortunately - for Barcelona even more spectacularly than they could ever have feared, reports AFP.

sports daily said simply: "This was a win for Van Gaal." Van Gaal must now fear for his future after two previous first-phase exits and what must surely now prove one defeat too many at the top level, even if Barca can still reach the final by repeating their 3-0 league success at the Nou Camp over their rivals earlier this season.

Tuesday's 4-1 hiding by neighbours Valencia in their Champions Cup semi-final first leg has left Barca's Dutch coach Louis Van Gaal with plenty of food for thought after his team choked on an extravagant helping of "paella valenciana".



LOUIS VAN GAAL

Van Gaal, desperate to go down alongside compatriot Johan Cruyff in the annals of his famous club's glorious history, waded that his side's traditional attacking potency would be enough to book a place in the final on May 24 at the Stade de France.

But the Catalan giants' cavalier attitude to defensive duties, playing just three men at the back for the away leg, coupled with an over reliance on youth, proved their undoing.

It was not a mistake to play three at the back. But when a team loses a coach loses. Van Gaal admitted after what the El Periodico daily termed his club's "crucifixion" at the Mestalla stadium as Valencia overwhelmed them with two goals from Miguel Angel Angulo, a Gaizka Mendietia penalty and a Claudio Lopez special.

With Parma running the rule over Francisco Farinos to replace Chelsea target Dino Baggio and AC Milan said ready to pounce for Gerard Lopez Segu, who followed up a hat-trick against Lazio in the quarters by switching roles brilliantly to mark Dani out of the game Tuesday, the Italian phrasebooks are already out.

Had we scored early on it could have been a completely different game," he added forlornly. The sound beating was Barca's worst mauling since a 4-0 home reverse against Dynamo Kyiv three seasons ago and Wednesday's headlines will have made miserable reading for Van Gaal and his cohorts.

Spain may be dominating this season's Champions League but the lure of the lira remains as strong as ever. And should Valencia complete the job by lifting the trophy in three weeks time Cuper himself could end up Serie A bound.

Valencia have a foot in the final. They vaporised Barca in an epic match, trumpeted ABC, while Barca was equally hyperbolic, saying: "Valencia stuck the knife into Barca." Valencia-based daily Levante summed up by observing: "Paris swims into view" for their local favourites while AS

guarantee even a medium-term tenure. Van Gaal's legions of critics in Catalunya will point, not just to defensive shortcomings, but also to a decision to field youngsters such as forward Gabri and Carlos Puyol, insisting the team structure is more important than individual contributions. In theory he is right, but as Barca's Finnish striker Jari Litmanen shrewdly observed: "Football always throws up surprises. The favourites don't always win."

And in an astonishing twist, the UK's international has admitted George Graham has beaten rival Arsene Wenger to his signature due to Arsenal's transfer policy. Rebrov is understood to have agreed a 25,000-pound-per-week (40,000-dollar-a-week) contract with Spurs, with only the fee to be finalised between the clubs.

Rebrov, in commenting on negotiations with Spurs, said: "They managed to find a common language with me. It's just a matter of whether the two clubs can agree a fee, but I am confident that within two weeks the deal should be signed and sealed. I am looking forward to playing in England. I like it better than Italian football, although I can't explain why."

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know that all too well as they were architects of the 1995 final success over Juventus, achieved by a young, untried Ajax side. Now they are experiencing the other side of the coin. For Valencia, they have succeeded in making a mockery of the Champions League format as they now stand on the verge of the final having beaten the reigning domestic champions without having landed the Primera Liga themselves in three decades.

They also failed to score in two games against Manchester United in the group stages but with the sudden death format not applying to the first dozen matches of the tournament Hector Cuper's men must feel like the cat with nine lives. Only such a format can permit a side to lose three "cup" matches and still live to tell the tale.

Yet Cuper will not dwell on that thought for long with next week's second leg already up-ripped in his mind. "We have to put a stop to the euphoria. I've not given Paris or the final a thought yet," he insisted. Despite their fine run, the future may not be so rosy for Valencia.

Even though two-goal hero Angulo insisted that "the win proves we have one of the best squads in Europe" the glue holding the group together may lose its adhesiveness come season's end. With Parma running the rule over Francisco Farinos to replace Chelsea target Dino Baggio and AC Milan said ready to pounce for Gerard Lopez Segu, who followed up a hat-trick against Lazio in the quarters by switching roles brilliantly to mark Dani out of the game Tuesday, the Italian phrasebooks are already out.

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McGrath the costliest

SYDNEY, May 4: Glenn McGrath was Thursday ranked Australian cricketer's most precious commodity, ahead of record-breaking captain Steve Waugh and the nation's most successful Test bowler Shane Warne, reports AFP.

The Australian Cricket Board (ACB) refused to divulge the rankings this week when they released their 25 contracted players for the next year. But skipper Waugh responded to reports he was the highest ranked, and subsequently the beneficiary of a 95,000-dollar (55,000 US) pay rise, by revealing McGrath would hold the top ranking for the second consecutive year.

McGrath stands to earn more than 600,000 dollars (348,000 US) in the next year from the ACB in the form of a 315,000-dollar retainer, up by 95,000 dollars from last year, plus match payments. McGrath's number one ranking came despite Waugh's shrewd and aggressive captaincy placing Australian cricket on a pedestal as the world's best team.

In the past 12 months, Waugh guided Australia to a world record 14 one-day matches without defeat that included a World Cup triumph. Waugh's ruthless Test team have won their past 10 matches -- the greatest winning streak in Australian history and one short of equalling the world record of the West Indies teams of the mid-1980s.

Waugh has played in every one of Australia's 17 Tests since March last year, making 1160 runs and five centuries. In the same period, McGrath claimed 60 Test wickets at an average of 21.97.

Dismal batting by Zimbabwe

LONDON, May 4: Zimbabwe shivered under the grey skies at Canterbury on Wednesday, leaving cold-victim Andy Flower under the weather with the tourists' poor batting display, reports AFP.

With eight days of cricket left before the first Test against England at Lord's, Zimbabwe captain Flower is concerned about the form of key batsmen Neil Johnson and brother Grant after an under-strength Kent attack bowled them out for 159.

Johnson was dismissed without scoring while Grant Flower managed just 10 runs, both falling to four-wicket seamer David Masters on his first-class debut. Zimbabwe would have fared even worse had tailenders Heath Streak and Muleki Nkala not contributed 47 between them.

It was Johnson's fourth duck in six innings, stretching back to the recent West Indies tour, and he has still to score a run so far in England, while Grant Flower recorded a zero in the opening match against Hampshire.

Hingis sails into last eight

HAMBURG, May 4: Martina Hingis eased into the quarterfinals of the Betty Barclay Cup here Wednesday with a 6-4, 6-1 victory over Austria's Sylvia Plischke, and Anna Kournikova put her three defeats in last weekend's Fed Cup behind her as she beat Israel's Anna Smashnova 6-3, 6-2, reports AFP.

Hingis, who is expected to regain the number one ranking from Lindsay Davenport this week, overcame some stiff resistance from Plischke to claim the opening set, but then swept to a commanding 4-0 lead in the second with a-od of some strong baseline play.

"I tried to play too much of a hardcourt match in the beginning, and I was excited and a little bit nervous," said Hingis. "In the second set I was looser and had more control."

Kournikova, making her debut in Hamburg, used a powerful forehand and a succession of dropshots and winning returns to compensate for her lack of numerous errors from the baseline. In the end, Smashnova was simply overpowered by a stronger and more versatile opponent.

"She brings every ball back, so I had to be very patient," said Kournikova. "I had to go for my shots because I knew she wasn't going to make a mistake or a winner."

"She was just going to keep going, so I had to do everything myself. Even though I missed I tried to go after the shots, and I thought that for a first (European) clay court match it wasn't bad."

The sixth seeded Russian also insisted that she was not discouraged by her lack of success in Moscow, where she lost three matches in four days. "Those matches were very, very tough and very competitive and it was actually great tennis," she insisted.

"The matches could have gone either way. After each match there I said I played great tennis, and I think everybody there saw that it was pretty tennis to watch."

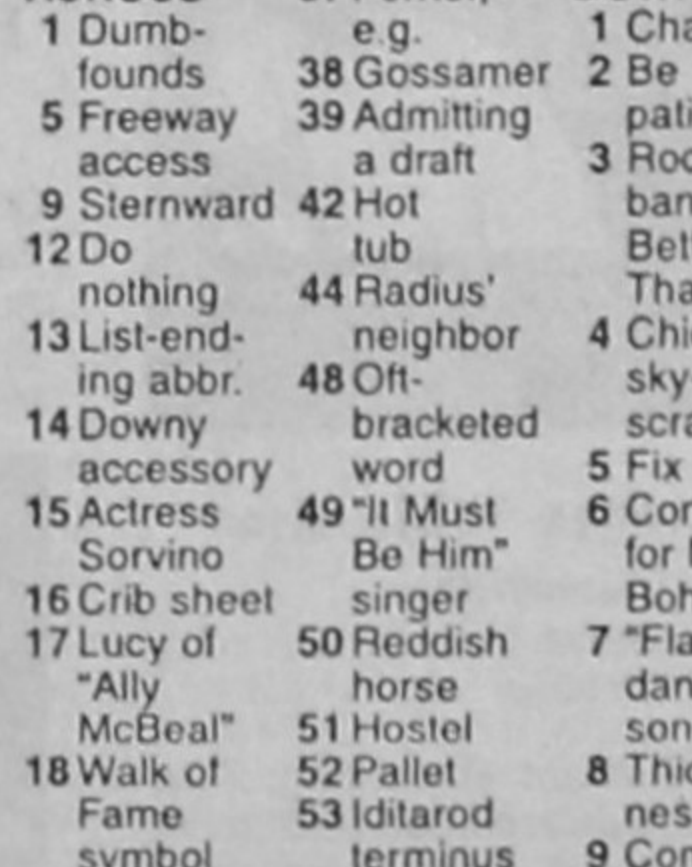
Fifth seed Barbara Schett, who has struggled this year after enjoying a highly successful 1999, received another setback when she was forced to retire against Russia's Tatiana Panova.

Feeling dizzy and suffering from the flu, she retired with Panova leading 6-3, 1-0. The Austrian has now lost five opening round matches in eight tournaments this year, and lost eight of 16 matches.

In other matches, seventh seeded German Anke Huber rallied to beat Denisa Chladkova of the Czech Republic 6-3, 4-6, 6-0, and Magui Serna of Spain outlasted Switzerland's Patty Schnyder 6-4, 1-6, 7-6.

Sabrina Appelman of Belgium defeated Argentina's Mariana Diaz Oliva 6-3, 7-6. Sarah Pitkowski of France overcame Amanda Hopmans of the Netherlands 6-0, 7-5. Andrea Glass of Germany beat Luxembourg's Anne Kremer 6-2, 1-6, 6-4 and Lubomira Bacheva emerged from a clash between two Bulgarian qualifiers with a 6-3, 6-3 win over Pavlina Nola.

Spaniard Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario is about to make a return against compatriot Magui Serna in the Betty Barclay Cup in Hamburg yesterday. —AFP photo



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County C'ship scores

LONDON, May 4: Surrey struggled as Simon Katich helped Durham build up a commanding position against the County Champions at Chester-le-Street on Wednesday, reports AFP.

The Western Australia left-hander battered 187 minutes for 43 not out when bad light ended play on Day Two with Durham on 121 for seven in their second innings and leading by 251.

Against excellent bowling from Simon Brown and Neil Killeen, Surrey were all out for 104. Martin Bicknell bowled superbly for Surrey, but the home side recovered from 14 for four with first-innings hero Nicky Peng putting on 47 with Katich before Bicknell had him caught at the wicket for 23.

Leicestershire fought back with a defiant unbroken last wicket stand between James Ormond and Anil Kumble to spoil one of Lancashire seamer Peter Martin's best displays on Day One at Old Trafford. Martin bowled superbly to earn figures of 31-9-65-6, including a spell of 12-3-18-4 after tea.

Result: Kalabagan won by 56 runs.

Spurs close in on Rebrov

LONDON, May 4: Dynamo Kyiv striker Serhii Rebrov has revealed his multi-million pound move to Tottenham "should be signed and sealed" within the next two weeks, the Press Association reported Wednesday, reports AFP.

Rebrov has already held talks over what would be a club record-breaking deal for Spurs and is confident of completing the transfer by the end of the Premier League season.

And in an astonishing twist, the UK's international has admitted George Graham has beaten rival Arsene Wenger to his signature due to Arsenal's transfer policy. Rebrov is understood to have agreed a 25,000-pound-per-week (40,000-dollar-a-week) contract with Spurs, with only the fee to be finalised between the clubs.

The 26-year-old has become one of the hottest properties in Europe having scored 100 League goals for Kyiv, along with a further 24 in UEFA competitions.

Italian giants Inter Milan were believed to be favourites to sign Rebrov as a replacement for injury-plagued Brazilian ace Ronaldo, which would have seen him at the San Siro along with fellow Ukraine star Andriy Shevchenko, who joined AC Milan from Kyiv last summer.

Kyiv reportedly want around 11 million pounds (17.6 million dollars) for Rebrov, which would smash the north London club's previous record of 6 million pounds (9.5 million dollars) they paid Newcastle for Les Ferdinand in 1997.

Rebrov, in commenting on negotiations with Spurs, said: "They managed to find a common language with me. It's just a matter of whether the two clubs can agree a fee, but I am confident that within two weeks the deal should be signed and sealed. I am looking forward to playing in England. I like it better than Italian football, although I can't explain why."

"Arsenal didn't do a deal because they are playing in the UEFA Cup and all their transfer policies will be decided after the Cup final (with Galatasaray) later this month."

Tottenham, meanwhile, maintained their stance that nothing had yet been finalised.

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CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 37 Perrier, 1 Dumb-founds, 5 Freeway access, 9 Sternward, 12 Do nothing, 13 List-ending abbr., 14 Downy accessory, 15 Actress Sorvino, 16 Crib sheet, 17 Lucy of "Ally McBeal", 18 Walk of Fame, 19 Parisian symbol, 20 Pedal pushers?, 21 Runner in, 23 Spring-time abbr., 25 Demos-thenes was one, 28 Refuse to talk, 32 Henry VIII's house, 33 Ouzo flavor, 34 Gardening implement, 36 Short tack.

DOWN 1 Charity, 2 Be patient, 3 Rock band, 4 Chicago sky-scraper, 5 Fix concern for Niels Bohr, 7 "Flashdance" song, 8 Thick-skinned, 9 Competent, 10 Pate de gras, 11 Lacking, 20 By-the-book "M.A.'S'H" character, 22 ... and his venue, 24 Flat surface, 25 Coopers'-turner's Mel, 26 Play about robots, 27 Communion, 29 Wire measure, 30 Exploit, 31 Favorite, 35 Capital of Zambia, 36 Oscar and Emmy, 39 Largest of the seven, 40 Hoodoo, 41 Dermatologist's case, 43 Self-righteous one, 45 Take a driver's license, 46 From square one, 47 From square one, 49 Hrs. in St. Paul.

Cryptogram puzzle grid with letters and numbers. Includes text: K HCBU K'W KC ZXRGLL, IDE QTDZR IRVDFQR, K NRG UKCERE UTRC, WL QGBVHKCN XFCQ. Yesterday's Cryptogram: YOU COULD SAY THAT THE MANIACAL WATERMELON FARMER WAS OUT OF HIS MIND. Today's Cryptogram Clue: Q equals S.

Australian Richard Fromberg playing against Moroccan Younes El Aynaoui in the BMW Open in Munich on May 3. —AFP photo