

King may turn to President

JOHANNESBURG, June 24: South Africa's King Commission into cricket corruption will ask President Thabo Mbeki to help it obtain from Indian police transcripts of tape recordings of a telephone conversation between former captain Hansie Cronje and a bookmaker, a spokesman said in a report Saturday, reports AFP.

"We have been working through the Department of Justice but, as a last resort, we will request the president to try to obtain the tapes for us," commission spokesman John Bacon told daily paper The Star.

Commission officials have also reportedly asked the foreign ministry to help them obtain the tapes, but with no success.

Excerpts from the transcripts have been published in newspapers around the world and Interpol has access to the transcripts.

Lawyers at the commission have had difficulty questioning Cronje about the conversation because of doubt about the authenticity of the transcript in their possession.

Cronje was sacked after he admitted in April to taking money from gamblers.

His confession shocked the cricket world and led to the establishment of the commission, which has to present a preliminary report to Mbeki at the end of June.

Ali Bacher's admission

JOHANNESBURG, June 24: United Cricket Board of South Africa (UCBSA) boss Ali Bacher has admitted that former captain Hansie Cronje had told him about an offer to throw a match in India in 1996, a report said Saturday, according to AFP.

Bacher said in his testimony last week to the King Commission into corruption that he only became aware of the offer, which was rejected, in April.

Cronje, sacked in April after admitting to taking money from gamblers, told the commission Friday that he had told Bacher several times about the offer to throw a one-day match against India.

Bacher, the managing director of the UCBSA, has now admitted to the Citizen newspaper that Cronje had told him about the offer, but said he had not done anything about it.

"I did engage in a fleeting conversation with Hansie which probably last no more than five to 10 seconds," Bacher told the newspaper from London, where he is attending the International Cricket Council meeting.

There was, however, no mention of countries or amounts involved at any stage," he said.

"I acknowledged, in hindsight, that I should maybe have pursued the matter, but at the time, that was totally unthinkable."

'Doctor O' dead

BELGRADE, June 24: Top Yugoslav football expert Aleksandar Obrovic died in Belgrade Friday, state agency Tanjug reported, reports AFP.

Obrovic, 78, nicknamed "Doctor O" for his medical background, was considered the "mastermind" behind numerous successes of Yugoslav star players, clubs and national team, thanks to his wide knowledge of the game.

A legend behind the most-trophied Yugoslav team, Red Star Belgrade, Obrovic devoted his entire life to soccer, being consulted by dozens of coaches and managers over the tactics and work with young players.

For years the only Yugoslav manager with FIFA and UEFA licences, Obrovic "discovered" dozens of players who often won international glory after his promotion.

In the mid 1960s, Obrovic went to the United States as one of the few European experts involved in the creation of the professional football league in the country.

AMs vote

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day, Bacher renewed his personal as well as his Board's support for Bangladesh's application for Test tag.

As part of the last round campaign, Bacher maintained a busy schedule to have meetings with the chiefs of nine Full Members since his arrival in England.

The Test status is now a matter of time and formality," Bacher said to BSS, pointing to the fact that all but England promised to vote for Bangladesh.

Bangladesh, who became Associate Member in 1997, got the one-day status in 1997 after winning the ICC Trophy in Malaysia.

Bacher left for Paris to attend the two-day Executive Board meeting, which is expected to approve Bangladesh's case and send it for June 26 meeting at Lord's.

The Executive Board meeting will also approve all commercial negotiations of ICC, including the TV rights for the next two World Cups. ICC is tipped to earn 600 million US dollars from the TV rights of 2003 and 2007 World Cups in South Africa and West Indies respectively.

Zee TV of India in conjunction with TWI are the bidders along with their rival World Sports Group, backed by the media magnet Rupert Murdoch.

France v Spain: Who will

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build cautiously from the back and hope that either Raul or strike partner Alfonso, who scored twice against the Yugoslavs, can exploit a rare lapse in concentration by the world's best defence.

Given the strength in depth of the French squad - their reserves were leading Holland's first XI 2-1 at half-time on Wednesday - Lemmerre can have few worries about his team line-up on Sunday.

Arsenal midfielder Emmanuel Petit is carrying a knee injury picked up in the victory over the Czech Republic and missed the game against the Dutch in Amsterdam, which finished up 3-2 to the hosts.

However, in Patrick Vieira and Robert Pires, Lemmerre can choose between two first-rate replacements - depending on whether he wants to add more muscle or more creative spark to his midfield.

Henry is certain to start, while Christophe Dugarry's fine performance against the Dutch will make him a rival for Anelka's place up front - if only for the second half.

France's attack is probably the hardest to control at Euro 2000 and provided Zidane continues his sparkling form at Euro 2000, there should be no upset for the form-holders.

Lemmerre is preparing for a tight match, despite the huge reserves of energy which Spain burned up in their nerve-jangling win over Yugoslavia.

"The euphoria is with them," said the France coach. "They'll be re-living all the feelings they've already experienced at club level (last season) - and that will help them combat the fatigue."

Euphoria or not, a desire for revenge is bound to accompany Spain coach Jose Antonio Camacho, a defender in the Spanish team which lost to Michel Platini's France in the final of the 1984 European championships.

Achieving that will rest not only on the shoulders of Raul and Alfonso, but also on the attacking form of wingback Bar-



Nicolas Anelka (R), the French striker battles for the ball with goalkeeper Fabien Barthez during a practice session at IJmuiden on June 22. —AFP photo

juan Sergi, who wrought havoc with Yugoslavia, and midfielders Gaizka Mendieta and Joseba Etxeberria.

Ivan Helguera and Josep Guardiola will meanwhile have to try and muzzle Zidane.

France may have lost an 14-match unbeaten run against the Dutch, but their first-team will be giving little or nothing away and Camacho is already philosophical about his team's likely mood.

FRANCE

Injuries: Emmanuel Petit has a strained ligament in his right knee.

Suspensions:

Worries: The Spanish defense often looked shaky against Yugoslavia without Hierro.

Expectations: Momentum is going Spain's way. After a defeated start with a loss against Norway, its incredible qualification thanks to two injury-time goals against Yugoslavia at Lord's, reports AP.

While Lara scored 16 to add to his first innings' 33, Adams made just eight.

Lara, top edged a pull against medium paceman Daryl Tuffey and gave wicketkeeper Martyn Crox an easy catch. Lara's dismissal was a bitter disappointment for the sparse crowd but they were to be entertained by Wavell Hinds, who struck 74 from 87 deliveries, including ten fours and two sixes.

All those runs came during a second-wicket partnership of 110 with Adrian Griffith.

Griffith, dropped for the first Test, scored his first century of the tour and went on to score 130 with the help of 16 fours. He was eventually stumped to give Glen Sulzberger the figures of 4-102 from 34 overs.

Griffith had early shared in an opening stand of 132 with Chris Gayle, who scored 65 before he was bowled by left-arm spinner Bruce Martin.

Also among the runs was Ramnaresh Sarwan hitting an entertaining 53.

Mariner in Super 4

Sports Reporter

Dhaka Mariner Young completed the Super Four line-up of the Rabig Ali Gold Cup Hockey Tournament with 6-0 thrashing of Victoria Sporting Club at the Moulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

The winners led the first half 4-0.

Yousuf, who opened the floodgates in the very fourth minute, ended the Victoria rout stabbing the sixth goal seventeen minutes from the final whistle of a lop-sided affair.

Earlier, three giants in Dhaka hockey Usha Krira Chakra, Mohammad SC and Abahani Krira Chakra made it to the Super Four, the date of which is yet to be announced.

Both Adams and Lara fail

CHELMSFORD, June 24: Brian Lara and skipper Jimmy Adams failed to make substantial scores for the second time in West Indies' last first-class fixture against New Zealand A before next week's second cricket test against England at Lord's, reports AP.

West Indies were 381 for seven at stumps on the third day of the four-day fixture and an overall lead of 420 runs at Chelmsford on Friday.

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Hansie could be fined heavily

JOHANNESBURG, June 24: South Africa's disgraced former cricket captain Hansie Cronje could face a bill for more than 284,000 rands (41,000 dollars) from the South African Revenue Service in outstanding taxes and penalties, a local newspaper said on Saturday, reports Reuters.

The claim of an offer to fix a match was not in Aronstam's written affidavit but he had made it in a consultation with state prosecutor Shamila Batohi earlier in the week.

"She also asked me why it was not in my statement. I told her it was because no-one would believe me, that the national captain would tell me someone he has just met, that he can throw a game," said Aronstam.

Relating the circumstances of Cronje's alleged offer, Aronstam said he had been invited to the player's room after a telephone conversation in which he offered to make a donation to charity if Cronje was able to contrive a result in the rain-hit fifth Test against England at Centurion in January.

Aronstam said he withdrew



A goal-mouth action during yesterday's Rabig Ali Gold Cup hockey tournament encounter between Meril and Victoria at the Moulana Bhasani Stadium. —Star photo

Cronje offered to fix one?



CAPE TOWN, June 24: A South African bookmaker claimed Friday that disgraced cricket captain Hansie Cronje offered to "throw" a cricket match during the first meeting between the two men in January, reports AFP.

As he was leaving the room, Cronje had asked him that he could make money from cricket. Aronstam replied, "the ball's in your court".

Cronje then shocked Aronstam by saying he could arrange for South Africa to lose a match in the upcoming triangular se-

ries 3,000 rands (450 dollars) and a leather jacket for a particularly accurate forecast.

A weary Cronje earlier finished his testimony to the King Commission after a gruelling session in which he said he wanted to use money he took in bribes to redress the damage he had done to cricket.

The sacked 30-year-old skipper broke down as the panel of lawyers at the commission wrapped up their cross-examination and thanked the former captain for his cooperation.

He was helped out of the room by a minder and by his brother Frans after he was warned that he might be called to the inquiry.

Cronje was described earlier as being clinically depressed.

Before he left the inquiry, Cronje said he wanted the money he had accepted in bribes to be used to correct some of the damage he had caused.

"I hope that I can use this money in some way to repay and redress the hurt that I've caused to the game and my country in particular," Cronje said.

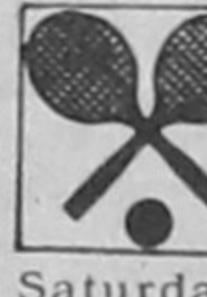
In his statement to the commission last week, Cronje admitted to accepting four bribes, worth about 140,000 rands, from gamblers since 1996.

On Friday he admitted for the first time that he had been offered 100,000 dollars by Sanjay "Sanjay" Chawla to "throw" a match during a one-day series in India in March.

The offer had been made when he was given money in a mobile telephone box as a deposit when the pair met for the first time in Durban before the match.

Cronje admitted he had conversations about money with Chawla in India.

Family affair at Eastbourne



EASTBOURNE, England, June 24: It will be a pair of married women clash in the 535,000-dollar Eastbourne tournament -- with both competitors coached by their doting husbands, reports AFP.

Belgian Dominique Van Roost will take on number six Julie Halard-Decugis of France for the title at Devonshire Park as the Wimbledom tune-up period reaches its climax with the grass-court Grand Slam starting Monday.

The fifth seeded Van Roost triumphed in a tennis tussle of the Low Countries, defeating Luxembourg's Anne Kremer 4-6, 7-5, 6-4.

Halard-Decugis also needed three sets to overcome American Chanda Rubin 6-2, 3-6, 6-4.

Their showdown will be the first "married ladies" final of

the tournament, which featured the Wimbledon champion Davenport and Russian drawcard Anna Kournikova, instantly lost lustre Thursday when all four leading seeds were eliminated.

This week has been the career-best for world number 16 Van Roost, who has won four minor titles. "Anne played very well for a set-and-a-half," said the winner.

Van Roost powered back smoothly from her difficult predicament in the second set.

"At 2-4 in the second, I was going for my shots," she said. "I thought that her level dropped a bit, and she seemed to get tired in the third."

The deciding set proved to be a watershed for Van Roost, who broke Kremer three times and wrapped up victory on the first of two match points with a cross-court passing winner.

Solution time: 26 mins.

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