

Bigger King Commission

JOHANNESBURG, July 22: South Africa's King Commission of Inquiry into match-fixing has broadened its investigation to include the financial affairs of players involved in all the matches covered by its terms of reference, reports Reuters.

Commission secretary John Bacon confirmed on Saturday that the commission was serving subpoenas on members of the party that toured India in 1996, the players who turned out against England during their recent tour to South Africa and those who subsequently toured India.

He said the subpoenas, requesting details of their financial affairs in South Africa and abroad during the periods in question, extended to team management as well and covered a period up to April 19 this year.

The 1996 tour formed part of the commission's initial frame of reference because the last match of the tour, a benefit game for Indian Test star M. M. Amarnath which was upgraded to the status of a one-day international at the last minute, was a match which the team was offered money to throw.

Bicknell

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But Lancashire look like seeing off Durham after a late rally gave them control at Old Trafford.

The hosts earned a 75-run first-innings advantage as they totalled 445 in their first innings, having resumed on 299 for four. Graham Lloyd (86) and Warren Hegg (38) added the earlier good work of John Crawley, Saurav Ganguly and Mike Atherton.

Michael Gough and John Wood both picked up four wickets for Durham, who were in good shape at 86 for one but closed on 123 for six — three wickets apiece from Gary Keedy and Gary Yates restricting the visitors to a narrow lead of 48 to take into tomorrow's fourth and final day.

At Portsmouth, Giles White carried his bat for an unbeaten 80 as rock-bottom Hampshire made 136 in their second innings, leaving Kent needing 208 to win.

Kent, for whom former England slow left-arm Min Patel took five for 46, look good value for the victory, closing on 117 for one, with Robert Key (41 not out) and Rahul Dravid (25 not out) sharing in an unbroken second-wicket stand of 50. They need another 91 runs to win on Saturday.

Raids testify

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dian cities on Thursday and Friday.

Those raiding included former captains Kapil Dev and Mohammad Azharuddin and players Ajay Jadeja, Manoj Prabhakar, Nikhil Chopra, Navjot Singh Sidhu and Ajay Sharma.

The former chief of the International Cricket Council, Jagmohan Dalmiya, was also targeted.

Whatever we have seen so far proves that there is a connection to match-fixing. As far as our department is concerned we are interested in collecting the tax due which will be 69 per cent of the unaccounted money, the minister said.

He said the income tax department also got hold of "certain other information" which would be useful for other agencies to establish the allegation of match-fixing.

The Indian cricket board has welcomed the raids, the biggest such clean-up exercise against cricketers so far, and called for stern steps against those found guilty.

Indian Sports Minister Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa said players implicated in match-fixing should be banned for life from the game.

I will support a code of conduct which imposes a life ban on players found guilty of match-fixing charges, Dhindsa said in New Delhi.

This is an apt punishment on a guilty player as he has taken the whole nation for a ride by fixing a match when the public thinks that it was watching a honest game."

Luxembourg under pressure

All is not well in Brazil

RIO DE JANEIRO, July 22 (Reuters/AFP): Brazil are in disarray after Tuesday's shock 2-1 World Cup qualifying defeat in Paraguay.

Furious Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) president Ricardo Teixeira has backed coach Wanderley Luxemburgo, who is involved in a spat with captain Cafu, and lambasted the players for lack of fighting spirit.

Central defender Antonio Carlos, who missed the game through suspension, has stirred the pot of discontent by criticising his teammates' performance.

Brazil were expected to qualify easily for the 2002 tournament after being losing finalists in 1998, but they have slumped to fifth in the South American group with two wins, two draws and one defeat from five games.

They are seven points behind leaders and arch-rivals Argentina, who will be firm favourites when the two sides meet in Sao Paulo on Wednesday.

The Brazilian public has been angered by the lacklustre performances, particularly from players such as Roberto Carlos and Rivaldo who are accused of failing to live up to the form they show for their Spanish clubs.

Luxemburgo is under fire for chopping and changing the team.

Opinion polls show that Brazilians are divided on whether their football federation should keep faith with Luxemburgo.

Luxemburgo admitted that "something is missing from this team" but with Argentina coming to Sao Paulo next week he might be missing himself by

the end of the campaign.

An opinion poll showed 43.1 per cent wanted Luxemburgo to be jettisoned but 44.3 per cent continue to back the man who took over from Mario Zagallo after the 1998 World Cup final thumping by France.

However, 63.5 per cent agreed that Luxemburgo was failing to get the best out of his players and 68.7 per cent said

they were unhappy with team selection.

Some 46 per cent of respondents cited Luiz Felipe Scolari, who has just left Palmeiras to take over at Cruzeiro, as their favourite for a new face at the helm.

Zagallo was next favourite at 16.9 per cent.

Fans said the players looked lost and uncertain during the first half of their first defeat against Paraguay in 21 years and only their second ever in a World Cup qualifier.

"Wanderley is capable of qualifying the team and has my backing."

Anelka confirms PSG deal



PARIS, July 22: Real Madrid striker Nicolas Anelka will sign for Paris St Germain tonight, the French club said in a statement.

PSG said agreement had been reached with the French international's Spanish club and he would officially sign a six-year contract before a friendly against Brazil's Corinthians at the Parc des Princes.

No financial details were given but French newspapers have put the figure at around 220 million francs (31.25 million dollars) — a French record but slightly less than Real Madrid paid Arsenal for Anelka last year.

The confirmation on Friday ended a long-running saga over the deal and brought to an end Anelka's rollercoaster year

with the European champions.

The deal will see him return to his first professional club.

Anelka confirmed the deal on his website saying: "I will return to PSG. Things went on little, but discussions finally finished late on Friday."

The deal, which has been several weeks in the making, had looked likely to fall through on Thursday, when Anelka's brother and agent, Didier Anelka, said the 21-year-old was planning to stay in Spain.

That proved to be false.

Anelka returned to Paris from holiday in Martinique on Friday but did not comment on the deal.

He grew up in the Paris suburb of Trappes and played for PSG before joining Arsenal as a 17-year-old in 1997.

The striker was transferred from the English Premiership club to Real Madrid for 35 million

dollars but his stay was dotted with controversy.

Anelka became embroiled in a number of rows with Real officials and coach Vicente del Bosque, who said the player needed to grow up.

At one stage Anelka was suspended after refusing to train but he bounced back from that incident to play a key role as Real beat first Bayern Munich and then Valencia to become European Champions.

He was a member of the French squad that won Euro 2000 earlier this summer but was not a regular starter.

Anelka will join two former French youth international teammates — Peter Luccin and Stephane Dalmat — at a new-look PSG team for the season which starts next Friday.

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Matthaeus to stay with MetroStars



NEW YORK, July 22: German star defender Lothar Matthaeus has agreed to return to the New York

New Jersey MetroStars next week after meeting for three hours with Major League Soccer and club officials on Friday, reports Reuters.

Matthaeus, who had been in a war of words with MetroStars coach Octavio Zambrano, has been sidelined with a back injury and is expected to return to training with the club on Monday or Wednesday.

Matthaeus, 39, looked tired after the meeting but appeared to be happy with outcome. "I think we can go a good way together for the next three months," he said. "This coach waits for me. I hope I can give him my best effort."

Matthaeus, captain of Germany's 1990 World Cup championship team and the all-time leader in international appearances (150), has been at odds with the MetroStars for two weeks since injuring his back.

He will be examined by MetroStars team doctors in consultation with his German physician.

"We have yet to play very important matches," MetroStars coach Octavio Zambrano said. "It would be beneficial to us to have the players that have the kind of experience and maturity Lothar Matthaeus has. We look at the big picture and the big picture calls for a possible championship game down the line."

Matthaeus left the MetroStars for the European Championship in mid-May. While he was gone, the MetroStars added several players and went from the worst team in the 12-team league to the best. They are in first place in the Eastern Division with a league-best 12-7-2 record and 38 points.

Matthaeus, however, will have to earn back a starting position.

"We don't guarantee a player a starting position," Zambrano said. "When you are dealing with this type of injury, you can't gauge anything until you see him on the field and see his fitness. It is important that he is 100 per cent fit."

Asked if the team considered releasing Matthaeus, MetroStars general manager Nick Sakiewicz said: "The decision about his future was really up to him. When it concerns a player with his skill and talent, we don't do stupid things."

"We think Lothar is the type of player who can help us win a championship."

Matthaeus had criticised Zambrano, saying he could not play for the coach in several interviews this past. But he backed down from that stance.

"We have an understanding with Lothar," Zambrano said. "We are pretty clear about that... Nothing is irreparable. Our relationship is as good as it ever was."

It's a lot of misunderstanding and a lot of fabrication and a lot of things taken out of context. Lothar understood I was not the kind of coach to get into a tit-for-tat."

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