

Metsu agrees in principle

AFP, Dubai

Frenchman Bruno Metsu, who guided Senegal to the quarter-finals of the World Cup, has struck a pre-contract agreement to coach Emirati club Al-Ain, the club's general secretary said on Thursday.

"We have struck an agreement in principle with Metsu for him to head the coaching staff of Al-Ain next season," Sulaim Suroor al-Shamsi told AFP.

"He gave a positive response to our offer," he added.

"Metsu is expected to come to the Emirates in the next two days. We will then complete the negotiations and we hope to sign the contract."

But he declined to give further details of the exact completion date or any financial details.

Al-Ain lies in the south of the Emirates on the border with Oman.

Shamsi said earlier this week that the supervisor of the club's senior team, Hamad bin Nikhairat al-Amri, had just returned from a week of talks with Metsu in Paris.

Since leading Senegal into the last eight on their maiden appearance in the World Cup finals in Japan and South Korea, Metsu has also been linked with the coaching job at Turkish club Gaziantep.

Croatia appoint Baric

INTERNET

Otto Baric has been appointed coach of Croatia, replacing Mirko Jozic who resigned after the World Cup.

"I am convinced that under Baric we will achieve our primary goal and secure a place at Euro 2004 in Portugal," said defeated candidate Marijan Vlak.

Baric, who coached Austria in the World Cup qualifiers, beat off competition from Vlak, Ivan Katalinic and Zlatko Kranjcar for the job.

Tendulkar

FROM PAGE 13					
Mongia b Samaraweera	48				
Tendulkar c Chandana b Vaas	113				
Dravid lbw b Chandana	13				
Yuvraj lbw b Samaraweera	8				
Kaif c Silva b Zoysa	41				
Harbhajan run out	0				
Zaheer b Fernando	0				
Nehra b Fernando	3				
Yohannan not out	5				
Extras: (lb-6, w-12, nb-7)	25				
Total: (All out in 50 overs)	304				
Fall of wickets: 1-32, 2-73, 3-172, 4-199, 5-210, 6-284, 7-286, 8-288, 9-296					
Bowler	O	M	R	W	
Vaas	10	0	64	1	
Zoysa	10	0	66	1	
Fernando	10	1	55	2	
Chandana	8	0	44	1	
Jayasuriya	2	0	14	0	
J'wardene	2	0	16	0	
S'weera	8	0	39	2	

SRI LANKA
Jayasuriya lbw b Zaheer 5
Atapattu run out 53
S'kara st Dravid b Harbhajan 66
J'wardene c Nehra b Yuvraj 31
Zoysa c Mongia b Ganguly 8
Arnold run out 8
Silva st Dravid b Harbhajan 30
Samaraweera b Harbhajan 15
Chandana c Nehra b Harbhajan 1
Vaas not out 4
Fernando run out 3
Extras: (b-1, lb-5, w-5, nb-6) 17
Total: (All out in 44.1 overs) 241
Fall of wickets: 1-11, 2-96, 3-160, 4-165, 5-171, 6-188, 7-210, 8-221, 9-233

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Nehra	7	0	28	0
Zaheer	8.1	0	52	1
Yohannan	5	0	39	0
Ganguly	10	0	40	1
Harbhajan	10	0	46	4
Yuvraj	2	0	12	1
Mongia	1	0	8	0
Sehwag	1	0	10	0

Result: India won by 63 runs.
Man-of-the-match: Sachin Tendulkar.



A combo picture shows England cricket captain Nasser Hussain (L) displaying his Officer of the British Empire (OBE) medal while world heavyweight champion Lennox Lewis showing off his Commander of the British Empire (CBE) medal at Buckingham Palace yesterday. Prince Charles, the Prince of Wales, awarded them with the medallions.

HK, Nepal flex muscles

Cricket

AFP, Singapore

Hong Kong and Nepal underlined the gulf in standards among second tier cricket nations Friday with gargantuan wins in the ACC Trophy tournament in Singapore.

Hong Kong demolished Thailand by 231 runs for their second win from two matches, while Nepal in their first match of the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) tournament routed Oman for a 105-run victory.

It was the second trouncing for both sides. Thailand lost to Malaysia by 194 runs in their opening match, while Oman in their first international tournament lost to United Arab Emirates (UAE) by 138 runs on debut.

Hong Kong, who lost the last

ACC Trophy final to UAE in Sharjah two years ago, scored at nearly seven an over as they raced to 326 for five in 48 overs in a rain interrupted match against Thailand.

Captain Rahul Sharma scored 105, his second century of the tournament, with David Mallinson contributing 88.

Thailand were never in the hunt, lasting 36 overs before being all out for 95, with Sharma again to the fore taking three for 13.

Nepal never looked dynamic when batting against Oman in the first non-rain affected match of the eight played since the tournament began on Wednesday.

After 50 overs they were 153 for nine, with a 37 from Shakti Gauchan the top score.

But when Oman went into bat the result was never in doubt as they crumbled to be 48 all out. Sanjam

Regmi took three wickets for just five runs, Gauchan took three for 10 and Mahaboob Alam three for 13.

The third match Friday, between Malaysia and Maldives, was a sharp contrast to the two high-scoring fixtures.

Malaysia were dismissed for 161 in the 40th over, and had the Maldives out for 119 in 35 overs to record a 42-run win.

The ACC Trophy involves the 10 non-Test playing countries from Asia and the Middle East and also includes Qatar, Kuwait and Singapore.

UAE, Hong Kong, Nepal, Singapore and Malaysia have been earmarked as "fast track" countries by the ACC with a view to preparing them for one-day international status.

Defence wary Fergie

Football

REUTERS, Manchester

Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson has confessed to becoming "a bit edgy" in his efforts to strengthen his side's defence ahead of the English premier league season.

Ferguson confirmed his interest in Leeds United defender Rio Ferdinand but has not tabled a bid as United await developments at Elland Road regarding the 23-year-old England international's immediate future.

"It has been disappointing that we haven't secured anyone yet and I am getting a bit edgy," Ferguson told Friday's Manchester Evening News.

"But it won't be the case that we will go into the season with less players in the squad - we will have new players in place."

"The Rio Ferdinand thing is an issue and we are waiting on things developing at the moment."

"It is not our job to antagonise people and there'll be no war of words, but Leeds have said themselves that we are the club that has talked to them about Rio so it is no secret."

"If he is available then we'd be interested - but it is not clear-cut. We will work away and we have alternatives and other thoughts."

Ferdinand's value has soared since his impressive displays for England in the World Cup finals last month, but new Leeds manager Terry Venables is keen to hold onto him.

Ferguson, who had already targeted the former West Ham United centre-back thanks to his growing impact in the premier league since joining Leeds for 18 million pounds, confessed that individual performances in the Far East had further complicated his off-season shopping list.

"The World Cup beat us because two or three players emerged over there that we had made enquiries for before the World Cup started,"

said Ferguson, who has also been linked with Blackburn Rovers' Ireland winger Damien Duff.

Veteran French defender Laurent Blanc has eased Ferguson's defensive worries somewhat by agreeing a new 12-month deal at Old Trafford.

But the Reds' manager says he still needs to replace Ronny Johnsen and Denis Irwin, who were both released at the end of last season.

"We are short in defence because when you lose the likes of Denis Irwin and Ronny Johnsen you are losing a lot of experience there," Ferguson said.

"We haven't drawn up a big list of potential targets. You don't do that when you are trying to achieve what we are trying to achieve."

"With the quality and type of player we want to bring to the club you only have a list of four or five players who are operating at the highest level who you feel would could come here and enhance the team."

Serena moves up to No 1

Tennis

INTERNET, London

Wimbledon champion Serena Williams officially moved up to No. 1 in the WTA Tour rankings Monday, the first time she's been ahead of older sister Venus.

The 20-year-old Serena is the 11th woman to lead the computer standings since they started in 1975. She replaces Venus, who's had three stints at No. 1 for a total of 11 weeks since February.

It's the eighth change at the top this year.

Serena has won the last two Grand Slam tournaments, beating her sister in the finals of Wimbledon on Saturday and the French Open last month. She's 36-3 with a tour-leading five titles in 2002, and is currently on a season-high 19-match winning streak.

In the men's rankings, Wimbledon winner Lleyton Hewitt strengthened his hold on No. 1, while Pete Sampras -- who lost in the second round at the All England Club -- dropped three spots to 16th.

A six-time year-end No. 1, Sampras hasn't finished a season out of the top 10 since 1989, his second as a pro.

The Williams sisters became the first siblings at 1-2 in the rankings after the French Open, where Serena reached a then-best of No. 2 and said: "She's No. 1 on paper. Hopefully, I can get there soon."

As long as they stay 1-2, regardless of the order, they will continue to be placed on opposite sides of tournament draws, meaning they could only face off in finals. The sisters have played for the title at three of the last four Grand Slam tournaments, and a Williams has won seven of the past 12 majors.

Pekerman firm favourite

INTERNET

Argentinian football federation (AFA) president Julio Grondona has revealed that Jose Pekerman is the only candidate for the national-team post.

"We have already had a meeting with Pekerman and he is the only person we talking to at the moment," he explained. "We spoke to him about what the job would entail and I hope that negotiations will be concluded shortly."

Grondona dismissed suggestions that the federation were stalling over the appointment of Pekerman, who is currently in charge of Argentina's youth set-up, in the hope that a more attractive candidate to replace Marcelo Bielsa would emerge.

"It is taking a while because there is a lot to sort out," insisted the AFA chief. "Firstly we need to discuss what work needs to be done with the national team and, only when we have agreed on that, can we talk about personal terms."

"The contract may only be for two years initially, then we could see where we are after the Copa America in Peru in 2004."

Many of the players expected to come into the national team in the next few years, such as Riquelme, Saviola, D'Alessandro, Maxi Rodriguez, Chori Dominguez, Romeo, Saja, Lux and Cetto, have already been coached by Pekerman at youth level.

He is also thought to have already chosen his assistant - Estidians de la Plata coach Nestor Craviotto.

Ottey cleared

AFP, Paris

Jamaican sprinter Merlene Ottey has been cleared to run for Slovenia in next month's European Championships in Munich, the International Association of Athletics Federations said on Thursday.

Ottey last competed for Jamaica at the 2000 Sydney Olympics but the 42-year-old has lived in the Slovenian capital Ljubljana since 1998 and was granted Slovenian citizenship in May.

She is guided by Slovenian coach Srdjan Djordjevic.

IAAF General Secretary Istvan Gyulai said in a statement: "I can confirm that the IAAF has just received the official letter of clearance from the Jamaican Amateur Athletics Association."

"Under IAAF rules, an athlete who changes nationality must wait three years before competing for a new country, or just one year if both parties agree."

"Merlene last competed for Jamaica at the 2000 Sydney Olympics but the JAAA have sportingly agreed to allow her to compete for her new country with immediate effect. We wish Merlene all the best in her new career."

The two-time world 200m champion earned the tag of bridesmaid as she amassed 14 World Championship and seven Olympic medals but rarely gold.

Ottey ran for Jamaica at the Sydney Olympics after the then International Amateur Athletics Federation lifted her year-long suspension for doping.

She duly won a bronze medal on the 4x100m sprint relay team.

The European Championships start in Munich's Olympic Stadium on August 6.

Windies A

FROM PAGE 13

Fairbrother made a determined 101 and Graham Lloyd 68 for Lancashire.

But the home side's progress was checked by three run-outs as they finished 90 behind on first innings.

Fairbrother, Lloyd and Ryan Driver were the men short of their ground, with Reon King, Suleiman Bann and Darren Powell taking two wickets apiece for the tourists.

West Indies A captain Daren Ganga will start Friday on 11 not out with Chris Gayle unbeaten on 23.

Murali the factor?

FROM PAGE 13

The touring side also failed as a batting unit in conditions that should have favoured them and despite the absence of England's leading bowler Darren Gough.

Coach Dav Whatmore conceded: "The wickets were pretty good. They could have been a lot more seaming."

Yet apart from Atapattu and Jayawardene's bright beginning, there was little to cheer from some of the world's most attractive batsmen.

To cap everything, skipper Sanath Jayasuriya, a man who favours committee captaincy rather than dictatorship, had a terrible tour, averaging just under 20 in the Tests and even relegating himself from opener to number six at Old Trafford.

"It doesn't help when you are not leading from the front. He has some thinking to do about where he bats in the side," Whatmore told Sky Television.

Jayasuriya's 112 off 87 against

Gilchrist overwhelmed

Cricket

AFP, Perth

Australian Test vice-captain Adam Gilchrist was still trying to come to grips Friday with being recognised by his international peers as the cricketer-of-the-year.

The New South Wales-born, Western Australia-based wicketkeeper-batsman rated it as his number one achievement in the game after beating off the best cricketers in the world, including master Indian batsman Sachin Tendulkar, for the award.

Gilchrist, 30, received the annual award from the Federation of International Cricketers Association (FICA) in London this week.

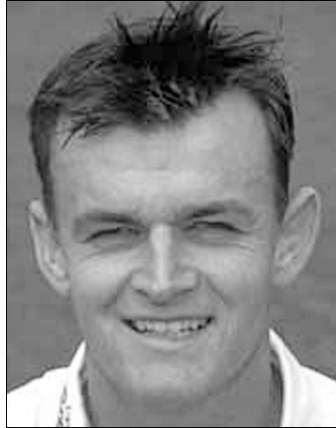
"You hear the names of the great legends of the game like the Sachin Tendulkars and Steve Waugh -- and you never classify yourself with those players," he said on his return to Perth, where he now lives with his family.

Gilchrist was rated ahead of a host of other super stars, including Australia's Matthew Hayden, Sri Lankan pair Muralitharan and Mahela Jaywardene and South

African Jacques Kallis.

The award was judged on Test performances over the past 12 months.

Gilchrist scored 1,166 runs in 14 Tests at an average of 77.73 during



ADAM GILCHRIST

that time, including four centuries and a swashbuckling 204 not out against South Africa off just 213 balls at Johannesburg in April.

Gilchrist said he would not be putting any extra pressure on himself despite his elevated stature.

"The only area of pressure is

from within myself and I won't get carried away," he said.

"It is decided on a ranking system and this is for the 12 months," he said.

"Obviously, at this time next year, if I haven't played well -- people won't be sitting around talking about me."

"There is incentive to go out there and do well, but I won't put myself under any extra pressure."

Past winners of the FICA award include Australian Test captain Steve Waugh, Australian fast bowler Glenn McGrath, West Indian batsman Brian Lara and Zimbabwean wicketkeeper-batsman Andy Flower.

Gilchrist has a phenomenal Test average of 60 from 31 matches, with 122 catches and 10 stumpings with the gloves.

Gilchrist has ridden a magic carpet to the top of his sport since he moved from New South Wales in the mid-1990s to Perth -- with only his pet dog Roy and a small case for company -- to seek better fortune after failing to gain a place in his home State side.

Ferrero fails, Corretja sails

Tennis

AFP, Gstaad

Spanish second seed Juan Carlos Ferrero failed to recover from a double break down in the final set against compatriot David Sanchez and was upset 5-7, 6-4, 6-3 in the second round of the Swiss Open Thursday.

The 22-year-old Ferrero played the final here last year, losing to Czech Jiri Novak, but he was struggling with an injury this year and his participation was ended by a player ranked number 63 in the world.

After Sanchez squared the match at a set each, Ferrero could not regain his lost momentum.

The Spaniard dropped serve in the third and fifth games, recovering slightly with a break-back for 3-5. The seed saved a match point a game later with a service winner, but

but I decided to try. I wasn't able to serve with any spin because it hurt. The doctors say I need a few days of rest."

The Spaniard said he would return home and play his next event in Kitzbuhel in a fortnight.

Number eight Alex Corretja found form on his preferred surface, joining fellow Spaniard Galo Blanco as the last of nine compatriots who began the week at an event where Iberians own eight of the last ten titles.

Corretja moved a step close to a third title, winning another all-Iberian battle 6-4, 6-4 against Felix Mantilla, the 1997 winner here and will now play David Sanchez for a place in the semi-finals.

"It's great to be back here," said Corretja, who has always done well at the high-altitude resort's fast-playing clay.

"I was moving well and playing aggressive. I've found my game since the French Open."



PHOTO: INTERNET

Spaniard Alex Corretja celebrates after beating compatriot Felix Mantilla at the Swiss Open on July 11.

netted a forehand to hand the victory to Sanchez.

"I suffered an abdominal injury in last week's Spanish championships," said Ferrero.

"I thought about not coming here

Corretja lost in the semis at Roland Garros to Costa, who went on to beat Ferrero for a first Grand Slam title.

Corretja also praised Argentine David Nalbandian for breaking the

Paradorn Asia's new 'Tiger'

Tennis

AFP, Bangkok

After his stunning victory against Andre Agassi at Wimbledon, Asia is looking to Thai ace Paradorn Srichaphan to hoist aloft its dreams of glory on the world tennis stage.

The big-serving baseliner, Asia's top-ranked male player and 59th in the world, has already defeated his long-time idol, former world number two Michael Chang, twice in consecutive tournaments in March.

"He was my idol because he's Asian," Paradorn says of Chang, the ethnic Chinese American who captured the hearts of many tennis fans in the region.

Few noticed that changing of the guard in Asian tennis. There are few Asians who score well on the ATP tour -- the only other in the top 100 is South Korea's Hyung-Taik Lee, and he just scrapes in at 99th place.

But last month 23-year-old Paradorn confirmed his status as Asia's brightest tennis prospect in dramatic fashion, when an appearance on England's hallowed centre-court grass led to the biggest victory of his career.

"It felt good," Paradorn said of the straight-sets thrashing of Agassi, the 1992 Wimbledon champion and third-ranked player. "It was a big win for me and a big win for Thailand."

The words may sound coated in the glossy vernacular of profes-

sional sport, but they ring true for a man who carries the expectations of his country, and in large measure an entire continent, on his shoulders.

Since he turned pro in 1997, Paradorn has relished playing the David versus Goliaths like Agassi.

He has claimed victories over Sweden's Thomas Johansson and Magnus Norman, Sebastian

"I'm still eyeing my first ATP victory. I'm not thinking about Grand Slams yet."

Instead his goal is to crack the top 50 by the end of the year, and move into the top 30 in 2003.

Inevitable comparisons are already being made to a more famous Thai sporting phenomenon, golfer Tiger Woods whose mother is Thai but who was raised in the United States.

While Paradorn's relatively modest ranking is a far cry from Woods' status as undisputed world number one, the Bangkok native shares a key similarity with the golfer: the ability to draw a generation of Thai youngsters into a sport long considered the preserve of rich white people.

Thousands of Thai boys and girls took up golf in the mid-1990s amid Tiger-mania.

"It would be great if lots of kids have a Thai tennis hero too," Paradorn told AFP in an interview in Bangkok, where he is enjoying a well-earned rest after two months on the road.

They do now, and not just in him. Thai women's number one Tamarine Tanasugarn is ranked 27th in the world and shares the spotlight with Paradorn.

"Both of them are largely responsible for a surge in the game's popularity here. They're seen as idols," says Colonel Yudthana Sirisuka of the Lawn Tennis Association of Thailand.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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