

SL's sigh of TV relief

REUTERS, Colombo

Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) settled a television rights dispute on Tuesday that had threatened coverage of next month's England tour of Sri Lanka.

SLC signed an agreement for exclusive television broadcasting rights in Asia and Europe for an undisclosed fee to Taj Television, a Dubai-based television company that manages an Asia-focused sports channel called TEN Sports.

"We signed an agreement with Taj Television to cover the England tour today," Mohan de Silva, the cricket board secretary, told reporters.

SLC did not sell the television rights outside Asia and Europe or the radio and sponsorship rights.

The agreement ended confusion over the ownership of rights caused by the SLC's refusal to recognise a broadcasting and sponsorship deal signed between Taj Television and a government-appointed cricket committee in October 2001.

Taj Television has telecast tours by West Indies, Zimbabwe, Bangladesh, New Zealand and Pakistan over the last two years, but the current SLC leadership described their agreement as "null and void" when elected into office in June.

The SLC had tried to sell the England tour rights to Singapore-based WSG Nimbus in an attempt to negotiate down an 11-million-dollar damages claim.

A Singapore tribunal ruled in June, however, that the cricket board had wrongfully terminated a 27.1-million-dollar contract and that WSG Nimbus were entitled to damages.

But an agreement was not possible, despite several high-profile meetings, and the cricket board offered the rights instead to Taj Television.

After the England tour, SLC will start the bidding process for broadcasting and television rights for a fresh three-year period.

Happy 27th

INTERNET, Madrid

Real Madrid's Brazilian superstar Ronaldo celebrated his 27th birthday on Monday and vowed to give his fans a fabulous year.

As he no longer needs to prove that he is the one and only 'Phenomenon' in world football, Ronaldo is simply



enjoying his time on the football field.: "I am living a very special moment. Thanks to my fabulous team-mates, I am doing what I like most, the way I most prefer: good performance, score, win and, above all, have fun.

"If we keep on like this, I am pretty sure that this year our supporters will have great satisfactions from us," said Ronaldo in his birthday message on his website.

In his second year with the Spanish aristocrats, the three-time world player of the year has started the season in terrific fashion. His goal over the weekend against Malaga meant he has netted seven goals in eight competitive matches for Real and Brazil (three in the Primera División, two in the Champions League, one in the Super Cup and one in the 2006 World Cup qualifying match).



PHOTO AFP

FATAL FOOTBALL! This photo taken on September 20 showing Sergio Ercolano lying unconscious after a heavy fall from the upper tier of the away supporters' enclosure shortly before kick-off of Saturday's second division evening match between southern rivals Avellino and Napoli at Avellino. Ercolano died in hospital on September 22.

Tragedy sparks govt action

Football

AFP, Rome

The Italian government has vowed to introduce tough new measures to combat football violence following the riot at a second division match which left one fan dead and scores of police injured.

They include stadium closures for teams whose fans misbehave, a ban on ticket sales for away fans on match days, an increased number of security cameras inside the stadiums and improved stewarding.

Interior minister Giuseppe Pisanu has even threatened to scrap matches which present a high security risk, like the one at Avellino on Saturday where 19-year-old Napoli fan Sergio Ercolano lost his life.

"Starting from now, we are working briskly to eliminate any loopholes that make our stadiums unsafe and allow violent fans to misbehave," Pisanu said.

Pisanu wants clubs to take more responsibility for security at matches to alleviate some of the burden on the country's overstretched police force.

"At this point everyone must assume their responsibilities and I will take mine," he said.

"I know that economic problems exist for the clubs, but we have to face these problems every Sunday to guarantee the security of the public, who want to enjoy themselves at a football match."

Pisanu said he wanted Italy to follow the example of the English authorities of giving the courts more power to punish offenders, including banning orders for known hooligans.

Ercolano, 19, died in hospital on Monday from injuries he suffered after falling from the upper tier of the away supporters' enclosure as trouble broke out before the start of the southern derby between Avellino and Napoli.

The teenager fell through a sheet of plexiglass before hitting the ground as scores of ticketless fans forced their way into the stadium.

The police's failure to get aid to the stricken supporter quickly provoked an angry response from around 100 Napoli fans, who ran on to the pitch and attacked officers at random with bars and belts.

Several officers and ambulancemen claimed they would have got to Ercolano

sooner had they not been assaulted by visiting fans.

The match had to be abandoned before a ball was even kicked and is likely to result in a stadium closure for Napoli, whose fans have been in trouble before.

Up to 200 fans have been identified by closed circuit television cameras although only one arrest has so far been made.

The ugly scenes at Avellino have sparked fears of further violence on Tuesday night when Napoli travel to Verona, a fixture which has a history of corowid violence.

Many matches in Italy were overshadowed by violent incidents last season with the worst scenes at Torino's home match against AC Milan.

Hundreds of home supporters went on the rampage inside the stadium, attacking police with masonry, sticks and flares and forcing the game to be abandoned.

Torino were hit with a five-match stadium ban and had to play their home matches at a neutral ground. Despite calls for tough action, very few Torino fans were charged despite being identified by television pictures.

Kicking Kenyan style!

REUTERS, Nairobi

Kenya's troubled football federation (KFF) has expelled 10 teams from its premier league after they demanded greater KFF transparency and threatened to form a parallel competition, soccer officials said on Tuesday.

The cash-strapped federation promoted clubs from a lower division to replace those expelled, they said.

The KFF has been locked in a protracted row with the Kenyan government which has demanded it holds fresh elections to streamline the game in the east African country.

Its bank account was frozen last month after it failed to pay some \$10,000 in taxes.

Kenya's performance on the field had been in decline in the last decade but showed signs of recovery this year after the country qualified for next year's African Nations Cup finals.

On Saturday, the leading teams accused to KFF of "gross mismanagement" of funds, failure to provide annual audited reports for the last three years and a lethargic performance in improving football in the country.

They said they would start their own league from October.

Among the clubs kicked out by the KFF are champions Nzoia Sugar, who have also been stripped of the opportunity to represent Kenya in next year's African Champions League.

Others are Gor Mahia, who won the African Cup Winners Cup in 1987, Mathare United, Mumias Sugar and Tusker FC, who have all represented Kenya in continental championships.

A representative of the expelled clubs, Bob Munro termed the KFF's move as inconsequential.

"We are no longer members of the federation and whatever action they take does not affect us," said Munro.

Bigger

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They take on pool leaders Japan tomorrow (Wednesday) and only need one point to make the last four at the expense of Malaysia.

Though Korea opened scoring as early as the 2nd minute through Lee Gye Sung, the avalanche of goals never did come as expected.

In fact, Hong Kong drew level in the 19th minute when Ali Asghar was first to the ball after a penalty corner attempt by Ali Akhbar and slotted it past Korean goalkeeper Lim Jong Chun.

But Korea hit back the very next minute through Lim Jung Woo whose attempt from an acute angle crashed into the roof of the net giving Hong Kong keeper Man Chi Yan no chance at all.

You Hyo Sik made it 3-1 in the 27th minute but the Hong Kong defence stood firm to deny the Koreans any goals until halftime.

South Korea missed an opportunity to extend the lead when Kim Kyung Seok muffed a penalty stroke in the 41st minute.

But the Koreans turned their domination of proceedings into goals by scoring at two minute intervals through Seo Jong Ho (54th minute), Kim Jung Chul (56th minute) and Lee Jung Seon (58th minute) to make it 6-1.

Faruque

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many youngsters at the moment.

"Definitely we felt the absence of a couple of good middle-order batsmen in the Test matches. Besides, the opening slot looked dicey in the one-dayers. But I am against hurrying with things," said Faruque.

But he did not rule out the possibility of a couple of changes in the team that toured Pakistan.

"We must be careful before giving a break to a young player. Saleh survived at the top level because he showed good quality and more importantly, the urge to make his presence felt on the ground. I will definitely consider a quality young player who loves to fight like Rajin."

Terry's 3rd

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competitiveness throughout the Test-playing nations.

"People are going to throw up all sorts of things to rejuvenate the lower teams," he said.

"It is almost accepted that Zimbabwe, like Bangladesh, are not going to win a game, but it is seen as an ambassadorial role for Australia to help them along.

"Weaker nations would probably need two or three players to be drafted into their teams.

"Instead of having just foreign coaches, you actually need players for the on-field experience, to encourage the bloke who has the potential. If the guy up the other end himself has never made a hundred or been successful at Test level, they are never going to improve," he said.

Alderman, who is currently employed as a radio summariser in Australia, believes that Zimbabwe will be less competitive than the Bangladeshis were earlier in the year, and the absence of both Flower brothers Andy has retired while Grant has broken his thumb would hit them extremely hard.

"They have just got to try and get something out of it."

Rivaldo breaks silence

Football

REUTERS, Rio de Janeiro

Brazilian World Cup winner Rivaldo said on Monday he was being humiliated at Italian club AC Milan, where he was left on the substitutes' bench once again at the weekend.

Rivaldo said he knew why he was being repeatedly overlooked by coach Carlo Ancelotti and said he would reveal the truth at an appropriate moment.

"It's not because I'm out of form or out of shape, you can be certain about that," he said in an interview with the Sao Paulo-based newspaper Jornal da Tarde.

"I know the real reason why I'm not playing and everybody else will also know at the right moment.

"Everyone here at Milan knows that my physical fitness is among the best in the squad, I always stand out in the tests. And that story about my not being well psychologically isn't true, either.

"I'm going through a humiliation." Rivaldo joined Milan from Barcelona at the start of last season but has strug-

gled to make an impact and played little more than a bit part in his side's victorious Champions League campaign.

He said: "I know when I'm going to play because he [Ancelotti] says good morning. When he's not going to pick me, he doesn't talk to me for the whole week.

"I'm sad about the situation but I've



RIVALDO

got another two years of my contract to go and I intend to see it through.

"I've heard people say that if I leave,

I'll go to Qatar. But you can take note: if I leave Milan, I'll continue in Europe for another three years or so."

Milan's vice-president Adriano Galliani said last week that Rivaldo would be allowed to leave if he asked for a move, adding that there was no problem between the forward and the club.

Rivaldo was picked for Brazil's opening two World Cup qualifiers earlier this month, although his lack of match fitness appeared to hold him back.

But he said he still intended to be in the team when the 2006 World Cup comes around.

"I'm proud to have played 14 matches at the World Cup with the number ten shirt and to have scored eight goals. The problem is that in Brazil people forget very quickly about what I've done," he said.

"I think it's ridiculous to carry out polls to see if I should carry on. [Midfielders] Kaka, Alex and Diego will probably go to the World Cup in 2006, in Germany.

"But I'm Rivaldo and I intend to go as well."

Roddick fined

BBC ONLINE

US Open champion Andy Roddick was fined \$40,000 by the ATP after withdrawing from the Thailand Open on Monday with a hamstring injury.

The world number two picked up the injury during his surprise Davis Cup defeat by Slovakia's Dominik Hrbaty on Friday, and aggravated it during his decisive victory over Karol Beck on Sunday.

Thai organisers feared Roddick might not play when they were unable to obtain details of the American's expected arrival.

A fax announcing his withdrawal was not received until Monday morning.

China finish atop

AFP, Manila

Qatari world champion Saif Saeed Shaheen was humiliated twice as China went on a final day gold rush to emerge top overall at the Asian Athletics Championships here Tuesday.

Abdulrahman Amri Abdelaziz ambushed his Qatari compatriot Shaheen, the world 3,000-metre steeplechase champion, on the last straight to flash home in 13mins 58.89secs in the men's 5,000m final, beating his Kenyan-born countryman by three hundredths of a second.

It was the second time that suspect tactics proved Shaheen's undoing. The 20-year-old previously known as Stephen Cherono also failed in the men's 1,500m Sunday, placing second to Bahraini Rashid Ramzi after sprinting too early.

"I was still tired having run 1,500 and 3,000 in Paris and Monaco (grand prix in early September)," Shaheen told reporters.

Latif told to be careful

Cricket

REUTERS, Karachi

Pakistan skipper Rashid Latif, who ended a five-match ban at the weekend, has been warned by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) to act more responsibly if he wants to retain the captaincy.

Latif was banned for five one-day internationals by International Cricket Council (ICC) match referee Mike Procter after Bangladesh lodged a complaint about a disputed catch during the third day of the third test in Multan on September 5.

"He (Latif) is holding a responsible position and fair play from him is necessary," PCB chief Tahir Zia told reporters on Tuesday. "He has to show more responsible behaviour."

"He has been giving statements to the media. He wrote directly to the ICC,

all of which violate our code of conduct. And he keeps on doing it."

The 34-year-old Latif, whose five-match suspension ended when Pakistan completed a 5-0 whitewash of their one-day series against Bangladesh in Karachi on Sunday, has been at odds with the PCB since August.

The Pakistan board let him off with a reprimand after he wrote a letter, which he later released to the public, to the ICC warning of the menaces of match-fixing.

Local media have also reported that Latif and chief selector Aamer Sohail had disagreements during the test series against Bangladesh.

The PCB's criticism of Latif comes amidst speculation that it might retain Inzamam-ul-Haq as captain for the home series against South Africa. Inzamam was appointed as stand-in skipper against Bangladesh in place of the banned Latif.

"We have taken no decision on the

captaincy and no one has talked to me about it," Zia said.

"But let the selectors first decide if Rashid commands a place in the team, and then we will decide on the captaincy. But I would like to talk to him first."

Latif captained Pakistan for the 1997-98 tours to South Africa and Zimbabwe before temporarily retiring at his prime, saying he was suffering from burn-out but amid reports he had made match-fixing allegations against teammates.

He was recalled after a three-year exile in 2001 and was reappointed captain in place of Waqar Younis after Pakistan failed to qualify for the Super Sixes of the World Cup.

Zia said Latif was still regarded as the best wicketkeeper in Pakistan and that he had led the team well.

"But he has to show more maturity," Zia added.

Alec for change

Cricket

BBC ONLINE, London

Alec Stewart has urged cricket administrators to put the needs of the national team first.

He said that although the talent pool available to the selectors needed to be larger, the number of professionals in the county game should be reduced.

"If that means reducing the number of counties, so be it," said Stewart.

The former England captain also called for the number of County Championship games and the number of overseas players to be reduced.

Stewart was speaking at the Professional Cricketers' Associa-tion

dinner in London, where he received a special award for his contribution to the game.

The 40-year-old recently confirmed his retirement from the first-class game after Surrey decided not to offer him a new contract for 2004.

But he remains passionately committed to the success of the England team, having played his 133rd and final Test against South Africa last month.

"To me, the most important thing is that we produce the right number of international class cricketers. Instead of having a bare 12, 13, 14, we've got to be producing 20.

"To do that, a lot of things need to be changed.

"We need to reduce the number of playing days and have more days when the players are able to practice and

improve their skills," he said.

"At the same time, I'd knock on the head the number of overseas players and EU passports that come into the game.

"I'd make sure that English cricketers, and English-qualified cricketers, are the ones who are looked after properly."

Stewart is the latest senior figure to enter the debate on the way forward for English cricket.

Any proposal to reduce the number of county sides is likely to be resisted strongly by the clubs themselves.

But others such as Mike Atherton, Bob Willis and former England and Wales Cricket Board chairman Lord MacLaurin believe radical changes must be made to ensure the game's future well-being.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	37 Yuletide refrain	57 Spread seeds	19 Carpenter or Valentine
1 — Hopkins University	38 Cordage fibers	DOWN	21 Prohibition
6 Exist	41 Run-down steed	1 Triangular sail	22 "Caught ya!"
9 Albanian money	43 Reason to say "Alas"	2 Harem room	24 Legislation
12 Dostoevsky's Prince Myshkin	44 Lotion additive	3 Snobbish	26 Hit
13 Newsmen Rather	45 It was launched in May 1973	4 Malfunct-ioning	28 Check ore
14 "Hall, Caesar!"	47 Latest info	5 "Gypsy" composer	30 Thing, in law
15 Loose-fitting	49 Hearing-related	6 Slick	32 Uncultured one
16 Tail chest of drawers	52 Gorilla	7 Foray	33 Writer
18 Hit the horn	53 Kia model	8 U.K. lang.	34 Stout relative
20 Oxen's joiner	54 "Uncle Tom's Cabin"	9 Work	36 Tend a stubborn shoelace
21 Scrooge-expelive	55 Sun, author	10 Bring forth	38 NFL Hall of Fame
23 Something to lend or bend	56 Rop.	11 Y2K candidate	40 Lawn machine
24 Following (Fr.)		17 It's useful if you have to break your word	42 Tumbler
25 Moby's pursuer			45 Drink heartily
27 Get to			46 Ford or Lincoln
29 Character			48 Man-mouse link
31 "Street-car" role			50 Idolater's emotion
35 Maitre d's stack			51 Started

Solution time: 25 mins.

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SPRING WADERS
JAWS HALYARDS
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STOLES TRIVIVE
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CRYPTOQUIP

O V J M ' D A Z N O Z C Z D P U D

T X Y U N Z M V U F Y U M N U L D

C Z F X T K Y P N J M R Z F O D L

V U X L U F Z M K T A Z F Z V

Yesterday's Cryptquip: FUN NEW COMEDY ABOUT A LARGE POND COMPLETELY FILLED WITH BEER: "THE BREW LAGOON."

Today's Cryptquip Clue: M equals N

The Cryptquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals Q, it will equal Q throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Anderson

FROM PAGE 13

himself.

"Now there is a niggles in his knee and it's a matter of whether he is allowed to get it right before he starts all over again."

Anderson's fitness was assessed last week in a routine pre-tour medical, and the reports will be studied by England's selectors before the weekend. Should he be withdrawn for the Bangladesh leg of the winter, Sussex's James Kirtley is the favourite to take his place.