

Full of hope Bevan to play on

REUTERS, Sydney

Australia's most successful one-day batsman Michael Bevan will continue playing first-class cricket after being dropped as a contracted player by Cricket Australia earlier this month.

Bevan said he planned to play at first-class level, both in Australia and England, in the hope of a recall to the international arena.

"I am still enjoying my cricket and having averaged 46 for Australia and nearly 100 for New South Wales last season, I believe I still have a lot to offer the game," Bevan said in a statement on Wednesday.

Bevan also hoped to change selectors' minds about his involvement in the 2007 World Cup in the West Indies.

"I still think that I have room for improvement and my body is feeling great.

"My role has been to win matches when Australia is under pressure and the selectors have told me this role has been diminished in recent times. If this changes I will always be available."

Bevan, who turns 34 next month, was a member of Australia's World Cup-winning sides in 1999 and 2003.

The left hander has not added to his 18 Test caps for six years but averaged 53.58 in 232 one-dayers. He has the highest average of any player who has batted more than 20 times in one-day international history.

Collingwood breaks nose

BBC ONLINE, undated

England all-rounder Paul Collingwood has suffered a broken nose while playing basketball in Grenada on Tuesday.

But the 27-year-old has been given the all-clear to play in Wednesday's rain-threatened fourth one-day international against West Indies.

Collingwood was attempting to dunk the ball into the basket when his momentum caused him to collide with the post.

The Durham player immediately received ice treatment from England physiotherapist Dean Conway.

Azhar

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In 2000, Azharuddin and batsman Ajay Sharma were banned for life, while all-rounder Manoj Prabhakar and Jadeja were suspended for five years, after a board inquiry into a federal report on corruption in cricket.

All the players denied any wrongdoing. Azharuddin had an appeal against his ban dismissed last year. Azharuddin was India's most successful captain with 14 Test victories before being surpassed by current skipper Sourav Ganguly, who led India to the 15th win in the third and final Test against Pakistan at Rawalpindi this month.

The stylish right-handed batsman scored 6,215 Test runs and 9,378 in 334 one-day internationals.

Bajpai said the board had finalised a list of 174, including 12 umpires, for the scheme.

Team effort

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innings. Sri Lanka bowled well and got wickets in the middle period of the innings.

Zimbabwe selected an inexperienced squad for the series after 15 players refused to play in a dispute with the Zimbabwe Cricket Union.

Eng boss quits in protest?

Cricket

AFP, London

England were expected to confirm they would go ahead with their controversial tour of Zimbabwe in October after one of the Management Board directors resigned.

Des Wilson, the former vice-chairman of the Liberal Party who was appointed chairman of the ECB's Corporate Affairs and Marketing Advisory Committee last year, revealed the Board had given in to pressure from the International Cricket Council (ICC).

The ECB appeared to be preparing the ground for a withdrawal in January when a paper written by Wilson argued for the first time that moral reasons could form the basis of a refusal to tour.

But Wilson said Wednesday: "The fact is the ECB has been placed in an intolerable position by the ICC's inflexible and, in my view, malevolent enforcement of its

international tours programme with draconian and disproportionate penalties that would devastate the English game, forcing the ECB itself into insolvency and bankrupting up to a third of the first-class counties.



DES WILSON "In the short term, I believe the ECB should make such a tour only under protest.

Under new sanctions agreed at an ICC board meeting in Auckland last month, England were told they risked a two million dollar fine if they fail to tour Zimbabwe.

They could also lose their lucrative status as hosts of September's ICC Champions Trophy one-day tournament.

And, worst of all, they could even be suspended from international cricket. That would prove disastrous for English cricket at all levels as international cricket has provided some 85 percent of the ECB's annual turnover of 55 million pounds (101 million dollars).

England agreed in March last year to tour Zimbabwe in return for Zimbabwe touring England in 2003, having controversially withdrawn from a World Cup match in Harare on security grounds a month earlier.

Australia tour Zimbabwe next month and Sri Lanka are currently touring the southern African country.

Rigid rebels

Cricket

AFP, Harare

Zimbabwe's 15 rebel white cricketers will not as thought practice on Wednesday or make themselves available for future matches on the present Sri Lanka tour after hearing the arbitration process over their concerns could take another month to be arranged.

They are continuing their rebellion - over the sacking of captain Heath Streak and other selectorial policies - because the Zimbabwe Cricket Union (ZCU), which agreed to independent arbitration, did not set it up for Tuesday as the players expected.

The move will cause a shock when it becomes known, because the agreement for mediation in return for an end to the players' rebellion was seen as the first step to reconciliation.

Instead of attending arbitration, the senior Zimbabwe professionals in dispute were addressed by a former national captain, former union president and lawyer David Lewis, who explained that it takes at least a month to prepare for an

arbitration process.

Senior player Grant Flower, who with captain Heath Streak is the main spokesman for the group of 15, confirmed they would not practice on Wednesday in preparation for the fifth and final one-day match with Sri Lanka which an inexperienced Zimbabwean side are trailing 4-0.

"It is a mess. They cannot get anything right. You can take it from me we will not be at practice," said Flower after finishing a fitness session at a gymnasium.

"We want to resolve this, we really do. But the ZCU has cocked it up. The chairman of the arbitration panel is out of the country. Our lawyer is also out of the country. What are they thinking about?"

"In any case everybody should understand we want Heath Streak as our captain. If they continue to refuse, it could be a deal breaker. We are quite determined about it."

Flower added that their boycott now continues for as long as necessary.

"Even into the Australian tour (which runs from mid-May to mid-June)," he said.

The ZCU chief executive Vincent Hogg said Flower was being disin-

genuous as it had been agreed the players would return to training while the arbitration process was underway.

"It was agreed in good faith that we will set up an arbitration mechanism and we are working on that.

"We are abiding by that. David Lewis made it clear to them (the players) that it can take a month or even six weeks.

"It was also agreed that in the meantime the players would turn out for practice and be available for selection.

"If they don't do that, certainly by May 8, our ultimatum to them to return to duties by that date or face disciplinary action will come into effect."

This could mean suspension or dismissal, probably the former as the ZCU appears to be trying to keep the door open.

Because of the setback, Sri Lanka will once more have to play against a weak and very young Zimbabwe side, the best available, on Thursday in the last match of a series of five one-day internationals.

Mauresmo eyeing Athens

Tennis

AFP, Warsaw

Amelie Mauresmo, defending her JS Cup title here this week, is looking forward to taking part in the Athens Olympics after a row about her clothing contract was resolved.

Like fellow player Kim Clijsters in Belgium, Mauresmo was asked to wear the clothing designated by a sponsorship deal brokered by the French Olympic Committee, even though she is sponsored by another company.

Clijsters has refused to break her contract and will not play in Athens, and Mauresmo was also in danger of missing the Games.

"We've found a way to agree, and I'll play in white," Mauresmo announced in Warsaw Tuesday.

"I'm very pleased. I was a little worried about it but I was sure they would find some way to solve the problem."

Mauresmo awaits the winner of Wednesday's match between Eleni Daniilidou and Gisela Dulko, eighth seed Anna Smashnova-Pistolesi of

Israel eased into the second round with a 6-3, 6-2 win over Switzerland's Marie-Gayanay Mikaelian.

But several players had to stage fightbacks to reach the second round.

Russian Elena Bovina fought back after losing the first set and going down 3-1 in the second to beat Slovenia's Katarina Srebotnik 4-6, 6-3, 6-1, and another Russian, Vera Douchevina, overcame Czech qualifier Kveta Peschke 7-5, 6-3 by winning the last four games of the opening set and the first three games of the second.

In another match in which fortunes swung wildly, Polish wild card Marta Domachowska won the first four games against American qualifier Kristen Schlukebir, lost the next four, and then swept the next eight to claim a 6-4, 6-0 victory.

Slovak Daniela Hantuchova was also stretched by Spanish opponent Maria Sanchez Lorenzo, losing the first five games before winning 6-7 (3/7), 6-3, 6-3.

India given WC

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Global Cricket Corporation. However, the ICC has retained enough funds to cover for any potential damages it may have to pay.

New Zealand, England and South Africa were the other countries who had their share of the profits withheld for violation of the contract. New Zealand had refused to play in Zimbabwe, while England's cricketers didn't travel to Zimbabwe for their Group A encounter.

Thank you

FROM PAGE 13

Maradona is still in intensive care, after several days on life support, to the enormous concern of his family and fans.

In support of their idol, Maradona fans have organized a demonstration of support for Saturday at 3:00 pm in front of an obelisk landmark in the capital.

Maradona's two teenage daughters, Dalma, 17 and Giannina, 14, asked fans to suspend last Saturday's proposed demonstration outside the hospital, thanking them for their concern, but saying both Maradona and other patients needed quiet for their recovery.

Doctors have declined to say whether the former player's current state is related to drug addiction, which he has fought for more than a decade.

Maradona is Argentina's most famous player and led the country to its second World Cup victory in 1986.

Himel shines in Sylhet victory

SPORTS REPORTER

Himel scored an unbeaten half-century to guide Sylhet to a comfortable six-wicket victory against Chittagong in the second phase of the Under-17 Development Cricket Tournament at the BKSP yesterday.

Himel hammered 66 as Sylhet raced to 170 for 4 in 29.3 overs. Safi, with 30, was the second highest scorer for the winners.

Earlier, Chittagong were bundled out for 168 in 45.1 overs despite a fine 85 by Swapan.

Mehedi Hasan was the most successful Sylhet bowler with three for 21 while Jumma Khan took two for 26.

Wimbledon raises prize money

AFP, London

Wimbledon tennis chiefs have announced a 4.8 per cent increase in singles prize money for this year's All England Championships which start on June 21.

It means the 575,000 pounds that Switzerland's Roger Federer won as men's champion last year will increase to 602,500 pounds (907,000 euros/1.08 million US) for whoever lifts the famous Gold Cup this time.

The women's prize goes up from the 535,000 Serena Williams received following her win over sister Venus to 565,500 pounds (850,000 euros/1.02 million US).

Tim Phillips, chairman of the championships, defended the decision to continue awarding more money to the men.

"We are trying to be fair to the men and women," he said.

"The women's prize pot is more than 4 million pounds and the ladies' champion at the current exchange rate gets more than a million dollars."

Total prize money, including the qualifying competition, will now be 9,707,280 pounds (14,618,000 euros/17,385,000 US).

Partex rattle

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off 83 balls) were the other major contributors in Aktel's innings which folded in 48.5 overs.

Sajjad spearheaded BEXIMCO's reply with his second consecutive half century but the 27-year-old was unfortunate to miss out on a deserved hundred when he was run out just seven runs short.

The free-stroking right-hander faced 110 deliveries that featured ten fours and two sixes.

After his departure, Neeyamur Rashid Rahul (24 off 26 balls) and Nadif (18 off 13 balls) entertained the crowd in an undefeated 31-run stand as BEXIMCO reached their target with 11 deliveries remaining.

SCORES IN BRIEF

Partex v ARAF Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium ARAF: 217-8 in 50 overs (Rafiqul 13, Ehsanul Haque 32, Jamaluddin 20, Mashud 24, Salim 63, Anisur 12, Arafat Sunny 10, Nuruzzaman 22 not out, Rezwanul 1-27, Pratik 1-36, Shamsul 1-51, Mehrab 1-31, Tariq 3-52).

Partex v Aktel Venue: Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium Aktel: 221-10 in 48.5 overs (Uttam 57, Manjarul 25, Nafez 45, Anwar 49, Zia 15, Al Amin 1-24, Neeyamur 1-31, Masud 3-32, Nadif 3-48, Azam 1-28).

BEXIMCO: 222-6 in 48.1 overs (Sajjad 93, Ashraf 18, Azam Iqbal 18, Adil 19, Neeyamur 24 not out, Nadif 18 not out, Saikat 2-37, Rafique 1-33).

Result: BEXIMCO won by four wickets.

Early exit for Paradorn

Football

AFP, Munich

Thailand tennis star Paradorn Srichapan was the major casualty here on the second day of the 375,750 euro (444,450 dollars) BMW Open as the second seed was beaten 6-3, 6-2 by Belgium's Olivier Rochus.

It was the second successive first round loss for the 24-year-old, who never looked like justifying his seeding.

Earlier rejuvenated German tennis star Tommy Haas set up a tantalising second round clash with compatriot and top seed Rainer Schuettler after both won their opening matches.

Wildcard Haas, 26, built on his victory in the ATP tournament in

Houston to dispose of Czech Bohdan Ulihrach 6-3, 6-2 and the former World No.2 believes he is nearing the form that took him to the final in Munich back in 2000.

"I had doubts about whether I could play at this level again," admitted Haas. "But I am on my way back to my best form again."

Monte Carlo finalist Schuettler needed all his resolve to defeat 19-year-old Swede Robin Soderling 6-4, 7-6 and set up the all-German showdown.

"It is a shame that we are meeting so soon," admitted 28-year-old Schuettler.

"But at least there will be a German player in the quarter-final."

Schuettler had tasted defeat against Soderling in the first round of the Australian Open but exacted revenge for that loss - although it was far from easy.

After taking the first set 6-4 Schuettler had four match points when 5-4 up in the second set but Soderling broke back and went to a tie-break.

A tightly-contested tiebreak eventually went Schuettler's way as he showed his greater experience to triumph 7-5 over his teenage opponent.

Former Wimbledon champion Goran Ivanesevic, 32, exited the tournament at the first hurdle with German qualifier Alexander Waske winning 6-4, 7-6.

Waske, 29, used the home support to take the first set 6-4 but Ivanesevic found his booming serve in the second set to take the match into a tie-break.

However, wild card Ivanesevic fell to pieces as Waske white-washed him 7-0 in the tie-break to move into the second round.

The fiery Croat thumped his racket off the ground and let out some trademark outbursts as his shots continued to find the middle of the net.



Thailand's Paradorn Srichapan slices backhand against Belgium's Olivier Rochus at the BMW Open in Munich on April 27.

Moya thru'

Tennis

REUTERS, Barcelona

Defending champion and number two seed Carlos Moya sailed through to the last 16 of the Barcelona Open with a 6-4 6-2 win over German qualifier Daniel Elsner on Wednesday.

In-form French qualifier Olivier Patience knocked out Argentine ninth seed Juan Ignacio Chela, warming up after a slow start to claim a 1-6 6-4 6-4 victory over the Estoril Open champion.

Number 15 seed Felix Mantilla lost 6-4 7-6 to Spanish wild card Marc Lopez, and 17th-seeded Brazilian Flavio Saretta fell to Belgian Kristof Vliegen 6-2 1-6 6-3.

Spanish 10th seed Feliciano Lopez survived his second tough match in two days to secure a third-

round place with a 6-3 2-6 6-4 defeat of compatriot David Sanchez.

The 22-year-old Dubai finalist lost momentum when Sanchez broke his serve in the second set, then handed the set to his increasingly confident opponent with a string of mistakes.

Lopez regained concentration at the start of the final set and a frustrated Sanchez was unable to consolidate a brief lead.

Argentine number three seed David Nalbandian, who had a first-round bye, cruised through to the last 16 with a 6-2 6-4 defeat of experienced American Todd Martin.

Fellow Argentine and 16th seed Mariano Zabaleta faced even less opposition for a third-round slot in the 990,000 euro (\$1.17 million) claycourt tournament, claiming a 6-0 6-3 win over Spain's Fernando Vicente.

American promoter Cedric Kushner said Tua would fight in the United States in August but the opponent had not been chosen.

Tua returns to the ring

AFP, Auckland

Heavyweight boxer David Tua, currently fighting an acrimonious legal battle with his former handlers, said Wednesday that he is getting back into the ring to resume his pursuit of a world heavyweight title.

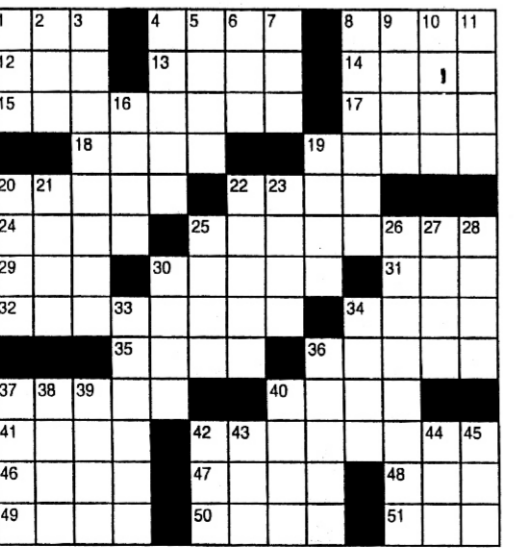
The Samoan-born Tua, who has not fought for a year and is embroiled in court action against his former manager and trainer, is expected to fight again in August.

"I can't wait. I believe my destiny is to be world champion and no court case is going to stop me," said Tua, 31, who had originally wanted to put off fighting until the legal action was resolved.

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CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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CRYPTOQUIP XFESD F'O EQK OMIFDZ MK KNFX KFOD, F UFAD KQ KNFEA F'O YQQKUQQXD MEZ YFMESD-YIDD. Yesterday's Cryptogram: IF A DOG WANTS TO START LIVING A FRESH NEW LIFE, WOULD HE TURN OVER A NEW LEASH? Today's Cryptogram Clue: Y equals F

PCB body quizzes 'em

FROM PAGE 13

old pacer, known as the Rawalpindi Express, fell down in his follow through and hurt his wrist and back during the Test.

Captain Inzamamul Haq lashed out at Shoaib after Pakistan's innings defeat, saying the paceman let the team down and that his attitude was not up to the mark.

The controversy was triggered when Shoaib, who did not bowl on Day Three of the Test, batted on the fourth day without showing any signs of discomfort.

Shaharyar last week said the PCB was forced to set up a medical commission after an MRI scan on Shoaib's wrist did not reveal an injury.

Former cricket legend Imran Khan this week blasted the PCB decision and termed the inquiry as a "mockery of Pakistan cricket".

PCB chief executive Rameez Raja denied that the commission was set up to find a scapegoat and punish him following criticism over the defeat.

Rameez added: "It has been constituted to find why so many players got injured and what can be done in future to prevent so many injuries."

"The other objective is to help the players get their names cleared from the general perception that they faked their injuries, if they were genuinely injured.

"But while saying this, I must make myself very clear that if it was proved some players did fake their injuries, they will be taken to task."

Shoaib reacted strongly to accusations his back injury in Rawalpindi was not genuine, despite the fact he clubbed 28 runs off 14 balls after hurting himself.

"You need the whole body to be perfect when you bowl - it is different when you are batting. I am surprised how someone can think I was not badly injured," he said.

Shoaib is due to fly to England next week to play for Durham county but he would be available whenever needed by Pakistan team, Shahid said.