

India, Pakistan resume field hockey tie

REUTERS/AFP, New Delhi

India and Pakistan will play eight home-and-away hockey Tests later this year after a five-year freeze following political tensions between the neighbouring nations.

The series will commence in Karachi on September 25 and will be followed by matches in Quetta on September 27, Peshawar on September 29 and Lahore on October 1.

The series will follow a similar tour by Pakistan to India, where they will play in New Delhi on October 4, in the northern city of Chandigarh on October 6 and the southern cities of Hyderabad and Bangalore on October 8 and October 10 respectively.

India and Pakistan have met each other in a number of tournaments but have not played a series since 1999.

Hockey is the second most popular game after cricket in both countries. India have won eight Olympic titles and Pakistan three.

Ctg Abahani

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the 70th minute and completed the treble three minutes from time.

Abahani, who drew their league opener against BCIC, dominated the show with as many as five national booters for their first win.

In the earlier encounter, City Corporation Ekadash beat BCIC 1-0 at the same venue. Tipu netted the game's only goal in the 73rd minute.

McEnroe for 'superset'

REUTERS, London

Some of the biggest names in tennis will clash in a one-set challenge for 250,000 pounds (\$452,700) later this year in a razzamatazz makeover for the sport.

The Superset Tennis event will pit one of the biggest names from the 1980s, John McEnroe, against fellow former Wimbledon champion Goran Ivanisevic and current top-10 player Tim Henman.

McEnroe, three times a Wimbledon champion and four-times U.S. Open winner, believes the format will put him on a level playing field with the sport's current crop.

"I can give anyone on the men's tour a run for his money for a set or two", he said.

The contest -- on October 3 at Wembley Arena -- will be played over two sessions, an afternoon session "Superset Eliminator" and a night session "Superset Final 4".

Agassi may skip Wimbledon

AFP, Los Angeles

Andre Agassi has reportedly decided to miss Wimbledon which starts next week for the first time since 1997 because of a lingering hip problem.

His management agency told The Los Angeles Times his next tournament would be the Mercedes-Benz Cup in Los Angeles which starts July 12.

A Wimbledon spokesman said the organisers had not been notified of his decision.

Wimbledon, which starts Monday, has already lost the top two women players, Belgians Justine Henin-Hardenne because of a virus and Kim Clijsters with a left wrist injury.

Gustavo Kuerten of Brazil and French Open champion Gaston Gaudio of Argentina pulled out last week because of injuries, although neither had been expected to make a big impact on grass.



THE STAR CAST: A combo photo shows recent pictures of Greek forward Demis Nikolaidis (L) and Spanish forward and captain Raul. Spain play Greece in their second Euro 2004 Group A match in Porto today.

PREVIEW SPAIN v GREECE

Spain bank on style



REUTERS, Oporto

Speed, skill and the benefit of experience should take Spain to the brink of a quarter-final place when they play fellow Group A pacesetters Greece at Euro 2004 on Wednesday.

No one in the Spanish camp is about to underestimate the Greeks, though, after Otto Rehhagel's fearless side beat them in qualifying and then spoiled Portugal's opening-day party with a shock 2-1 win over the hosts.

"Greece defend very well and hit on the counter with great speed," Spanish winger Joseba Etxeberria said.

"We'll have to play quick passes in midfield and play to our own game, keeping the ball. That way I'm sure we'll create chances."

Spain and Greece are free from injury and will be determined to play to their strengths at the Bessa stadium in Porto.

That will see Spain continue in the same attacking style that earned them a 1-0 win over Russia in their opening match, while Greece concentrate on staunch defence and look to hit on the

break.

The fine form of Vicente and Etxeberria on the wings will give Spain real hope of making it maximum points from two games but after losing to Greece in qualifying for the finals they are determined to pay their opponents plenty of respect.

"It's going to be important for us to remain patient because you don't unlock a defence in five minutes," Etxeberria said.

The key to the match will be how well the Greek defence, so solid against Portugal, deal with the swift

running of the Spanish wingers, as well as the height of striker Fernando Morientes and the trickery of his partner Raul.

Inaki Saez has promised changes from the side that won against Russia and that is likely to see Xabi Alonso introduced to the midfield to speed up the side's passing still further.

Rehhagel will nevertheless have few fears after seeing his defence neutralise the Portuguese attack with such skill.

Full-backs Yourkas Seitaridis and Takis Fyssas dealt with Portugal's Luis Figo, Simao Sabrosa and later Cristiano Ronaldo with few problems, while centre-backs Traianos Dellas and Michalis Kapsis were in towering form in the middle.

Greece will need to be impeccable at the back once again and the players are confident enough that they can succeed.

"Our strongest point is the defence," striker Demis Nikolaidis said.

"We didn't have much chance of winning against Portugal but in football anything can happen."

Nikolaidis was left out of the side that beat Portugal and Rehhagel has given few clues about his attack for this game.

Butt-less England



AFP, Lisbon

England midfielder Nicky Butt has been ruled out of the rest of Euro 2004 after a scan confirmed he had suffered ligament damage to his right knee.

The Manchester United player incurred the injury in training on Monday and an England spokesman said he was facing a three to four week lay-off.

"Nicky Butt has medial collateral ligament damage which he picked up in training yesterday," the spokesman said.

"It is usually a three to four week

injury and he is not expected to take any further part in the tournament."

The spokesman added that England officials were talking to UEFA about whether it would be possible to fly out a replacement for Butt.

"After the first match UEFA say it can only be in exceptional circumstances and we are trying to clarify what exceptional circumstances are."

Butt has not yet decided whether he will fly home but the spokesman said he had indicated that he was keen to stay with the England party in Portugal.

Although Butt had lost his place in England's starting line-up after a season on the sidelines at his club, his loss is still a big blow.

Head coach Sven-Goran Eriksson

has admitted there is a 50-50 chance that Paul Scholes, who has an ankle injury, will not be fit to face Switzerland in Coimbra on Thursday and bringing Butt back into the team was one of his replacement options.

With Butt ruled out, Owen Hargreaves will be the favourite to come into the team should Scholes fail to recover in time for Thursday's match, which England need to win following a 2-1 defeat in their group B opener against France.

Mostovoi kicked out

AFP, Lisbon

Veteran Russian midfielder Alexander Mostovoi has been sent home from the Euro 2004 finals, sources at the Russian camp at Vilamoura told AFP.

It was not immediately known why Mostovoi had been sent packing, but he gave interviews to the Spanish press after the 0-1 loss to Spain in which he was critical of his side's coaches.

The 35-year-old Mostovoi, one



ALEXANDER MOSTOVOI

of Russia's key men, has played for Celta Vigo in Spain since 1996.

Mostovoi was told to pack his bags on Tuesday, the Russian sources said, as the rest of the squad headed for Lisbon where they will play Portugal on Wednesday in a must-win game.

Following the loss to Spain, the Russians need at least one point against the hosts to keep their hopes alive.

Towhidul

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fortable 6-1 defeat of Chittagong with three goals from Iqbal and one each from Nannu, Moshir and Sheikh Mohammad.

Joyraj reduced the margin for the port city side.

In the day's other match, Munshiganj routed Jessore Education Board 4-0 with Imran netting twice. Sohan and Monir scored the other goals.

Winning

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Miguel did not want to contemplate another first round exit after their early trip home from the 2002 World Cup.

Portugal are unlikely to produce the same sort of stifled display they opened with but their morale might have been damaged beyond repair.

One thing in their favour is that Russia must be feeling almost as bad after they appeared second rate against Spain.

Coach Georgi Yartsev is likely to make two changes, one enforced. Central defender Roman Sharonov is suspended after his red card against Spain and his place is expected to go to Alexei Bugayev, who has little experience at this level.

Murali chucks

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Muralitharan to go to Australia.

De Silva said it would advise Muralitharan not to bowl his controversial "doosra" in Australia as he ran the risk of being called for "throwing," a fear cricket sources said weighed heavily when Muralitharan decided to pull out.

Sri Lanka has urged the International Cricket Council to change the rules in order to end the row over the "doosra", a delivery which spins away from right-handers instead of coming into them like a normal off-break.

Muralitharan said in a statement earlier that he had been defamed, pilloried and severely criticised by the world's cricket media.

"Even the prime minister of Australia has called me a chucker and then in the next sentence says I will be welcome to tour his country," he said.

Larsson

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out of international retirement for this tournament, summed up his star striker's contribution with a joke.

"You could say it is easy to be a coach when you have a player like Henrik Larsson," he said.

His opposite number Plamen Markov agreed. "I think it is a great thing for Sweden and football as a whole that he came out of retirement but I can also say if he didn't participate today the match would have been different."

Lagerback admitted he was surprised that Larsson was still without a club - but not by his decision to allow Ibrahimovic to take the penalty.

With Italy up next, Larsson knows that goals will be harder to come by from now on. But that has not stopped the bookmakers from installing him as the favourite to head the tournament's scoring charts.

Scintillating

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Both sides had chances to score before Ljungberg made the breakthrough after a well-timed run by Ibrahimovic through the inside right channel.

The Ajax striker advanced into the box and drew goalkeeper Zdravko Zdravkov off his line before squaring the ball for the Arsenal midfielder to sweep the ball into an empty net from six yards out.

Sweden had a let-off two minutes after the restart when an excellent cross from Martin Petrov found Zoran Jankovic, who directed his header wide of the target.

Ljungberg was equally profligate when he broke into the Bulgarian box only to shoot straight at the outgoing Zdravkov.

It was a miss that could have cost Sweden dear had the Martin Petrov shot which followed been inside rather than fractionally outside Isaksson's post.

That was to prove Bulgaria's last chance before Larsson applied his deadly touch.

Shoaib

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"We have told Shoaib clearly that if he claims he is fit he has to come down and undergo a stringent fitness test; only then will he be considered."

Akhtar, who has a history of disciplinary problems, and the board have clashed before over his fitness.

The 28-year-old, reputed to be the fastest bowler in the world, faced a medical commission inquiry after the home series defeat to India in April.

Akhtar had hurt his rib cage and was unable to bowl during the decisive third and final Test in Rawalpindi but team captain Inzamam-ul-Haq and some senior board officials questioned his commitment.

"I don't know why they don't trust me. I have always been committed to Pakistan cricket," Akhtar added.

Pires pats 'em



AFP, Lisbon

Robert Pires believes England have what it takes to make it to the final of Euro 2004 despite coming off second best in their epic battle against France.

Pires and company scraped past Sven-Goran Eriksson's side in their Group B opener in Lisbon on Sunday thanks to two impossibly late goals from Zinedine Zidane, and the way the draw is arranged England could have a chance for revenge in under three weeks' time.

Pires certainly thinks so.

"If England play like they did yesterday they can make it through to the final," the Arsenal forward said on Monday at the reigning champion's headquarters north of Oporto.

"They played really well. If Beckham had converted that penalty it would have been finished for us.

"They caused us problems. We were taken by surprise, we didn't expect them to play the way they did.

"It's not easy to come from one

goal down against England."

Fabien Barthez spoke about what precisely was going through his shaved head as he dived to the right to save

his former Manchester United teammate's spot kick.

"At a moment like that the concentration is maximum. You try to dive as explosively as you can - and the right way."

The Marseille stopper added: "I was also thinking of the training sessions and images of David when he used to practise penalties.

"Even if he looked to the left just before shooting I'd already decided to dive to the right."

Coach Jacques Santini had sat Barthez down in front of the video recorder to study recordings of spot kicks taken by Beckham and Michael Owen.

"I got the team to watch countless cassettes of Beckham and Owen taking penalties.

"Beckham always hit them to the left, normally lower than Sunday's but always to the left," said Santini who joins English side Tottenham after the party in Portugal is over.

Pires revealed that Spurs' new manager, who described England's performance as "remarkable", had given his players a key pep talk at half-time.

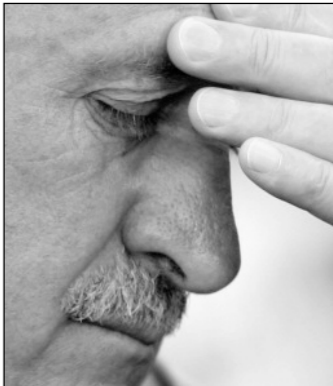
Becoming 'Little' Phil!



REUTERS, Alcochete

"I'll wait for you outside, mate," shouted Scolari, his eyes wild with rage, in front of millions of television viewers.

Big Phil was famous for intimidating match officials and for ordering ball boys to throw spare



LUIZ FELIPE SCOLARI

balls on to the field to disrupt the opposition's attacks and was once accused by rival coach Vanderlei Luxemburgo of punching him on the touchline.

During the 1998 Brazilian championship final, when his Palmeiras team committed 40 fouls in their first leg against Vasco da Gama, Scolari was sent off for getting involved in a pushing match with a rival player on the touchline.

But since taking charge of Portugal he has come to be regarded as a perfect gentleman by the public and rival coaches.

The need to adapt to his new

surroundings appears to have created the new-look Scolari.

Although Brazil and Portugal share the same language and heritage, their footballing culture is vastly different.

Brazilian soccer is a ruthless world where rules can be bent and sometimes need to be to achieve success. Scolari often said he was merely doing exactly the same as his rivals.

"I'm stupid because I tell the truth while the others lie," he once said.

The Brazilian national side is followed by an army of extremely boisterous radio reporters and, after every training session, the entire squad are available for questions with nothing more than a flimsy rope separating them from the media.

Internationally-known figures such as Roberto Carlos and Kaka spend at least half an hour answering questions on anything ranging from their haircuts to social issues.

Portugal's daily press briefings at Euro 2004 consist of two players, often reserves, who provide apparently pre-rehearsed answers to a media corps about a tenth the size of that in Brazil.

On the rare occasions Portugal open their training sessions to the public, only a handful of fans turn up.

When Brazil trained at the Mineirao stadium on the eve of their World Cup qualifier against Argentina two weeks ago, a 35,000 crowd watched the players go through the motions.

Thumbs down!

AFP, Rome

Italy's 0-0 draw against Denmark came in for a pasting from the Italian press Tuesday who described their performance as "humiliating", "disappointing" and "flat".

Leading the tirade was the daily Gazzetta dello Sport which wrote: "No game plan, no leader," while the other major sporting newspaper Corriere dello Sport warned: "Italy, play like that and you won't go far".

The main targets of the post-match criticism were the strike force of Alessandro Del Piero, Francesco Totti and Christian Vieri, who are carrying the lion's share of the Italian public's high expectations for Euro 2004.

Coach Giovanni Trapattoni was also accused of employing the wrong tactics for the Italians' opening match and his strategy for the tournament was questioned.

The Italian press didn't hesitate to give Trapattoni their advice on how to improve the team's performance with Gazzetta dello Sport recommending that AC Milan midfielder Andrea Pirlo be brought into side.

"Trapattoni knows he has got to make changes," insisted Corriere della Sera.

However the Italian press reserved praise for the performance of goalkeeper, Gianluigi Buffon, who made two crucial saves against Denmark.

"Thanks Buffon, but that was scary", said Repubblica, judging that "the team made a mess of its first match".

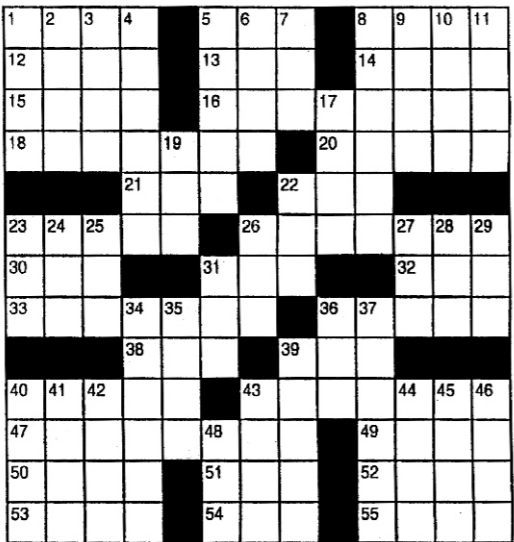
All the newspapers noted the irony of star attacker Francesco Totti's problems with his sponsors' boots.

During half-time Totti had to cite an emergency clause in his contract to enable him to change the boots, which had made his feet sore during the first half.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 1 Unes-corged 3 "Swedish Nightingale" 5 Omeda 7 Queen 9 Donahue or Collins 12 Heroic tale 13 Performance 14 Santa —, CA 15 Monthly payment 16 Seder time 18 Massachusettis city 20 Poked with the patella 21 Part of MPH 22 Suitable 23 Custom 26 Hollow quick bread 30 Fuss 31 TV network 32 In olden days 33 Stop during a journey 36 Non-sense 38 Plead

DOWN 1 Anti-toxins 2 Admitting 3 "2001" clients 4 Victoria's house 5 Document 6 "The Lion King" 7 "Monty Python" intro 8 Without delay 9 Threw 10 "— dead people" 11 Fat 12 Leave out 13 Pet healer 14 Mexico's president 15 Vincente 16 "2001" computer 17 Fumed 18 Pecos 19 Elsie 20 Laurel 21 Violeta 22 Sita 23 Agave 24 Poir 25 Poes 26 Dens



CRYPTOQUIP

J W P B G D Q X Z P B P M Z S O B W C O P X Z Q Z B O R D V R C Q D Y O . B G O L ' Q O Y O Q L X M I A S L J I P Z A Z D V P Yesterday's Cryptquip: OUR FAMILY'S OLD ECCENTRIC MILLIONAIRE WAS FONDLY KNOWN AS "FORTUNE KOOKIE." Today's Cryptquip Clue: P equals S

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