

TV drama drags on

AFP, New Delhi

Barely a week before the start of the Test series between India and Australia, there was still no indication Tuesday if the matches will be televised – or even if the series will be played at all.

India's Supreme Court on Tuesday heard arguments on the petition filed by Zee Telefilms against the decision of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) to cancel telecast rights which the network insists were awarded to it for the next four years.

The Court, which heard lawyers from both the network and the cricket board, adjourned till Wednesday for further arguments.

The BCCI is hoping for an early resolution to the case so that the highly-anticipated Test series can go ahead as scheduled with the first Test at Bangalore from October 6.

Neither the BCCI nor Cricket Australia favour the series being played without live television coverage.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has said it is mandatory to provide video footage to assist the third umpire in all international matches.

"It is an understatement to say that we are running short of time," a BCCI official said. "Lots of arrangements need to be made to have television coverage."

Tres, Freddie not going to Zimbabwe

REUTERS, London

England have left out Marcus Trescothick and Andy Flintoff from their squad for the one-day tour of Zimbabwe.

The pair will join Steve Harmison on the sidelines after the pace bowler asked not to be considered for the five-match trip starting in November and which leads into England's tour of South Africa.

Several of England players have expressed reservations about playing in Zimbabwe, including Andrew Strauss, although he has been picked.

South African-born Kevin Pietersen, however, was included for the first time. The attacking right-handed batsman from Natal, has just become eligible for England after moving to Nottinghamshire in 2001.

SQUAD FOR ZIMBABWE

Michael Vaughan (captain), James Anderson, Gareth Batty, Ian Bell, Paul Collingwood, Ashley Giles, Darren Gough, Geraint Jones, Simon Jones, Kevin Pietersen, Matthew Prior, Vikram Solanki, Andrew Strauss, Alex Wharf.

SQUAD FOR AFRICA

Michael Vaughan (captain), Kabir Ali, James Anderson, Gareth Batty, Ian Bell, Paul Collingwood, Andrew Flintoff, Ashley Giles, Darren Gough, Stephen Harmison, Geraint Jones, Vikram Solanki, Andrew Strauss, Marcus Trescothick, Alex Wharf.

Nat'l swimming from Oct 5

BSS, Dhaka

The 20th National Swimming Championship will be held from October 5 to 8 at the Army Swimming Pool.

Twenty events for men's and 20 for women's will commence in the 4-day meet. Men's water polo and diving will also be included.

Keya Cosmetics (Pvt) Limited will sponsor the championship.

No Sachin relief for the Aussies



AFP, Mumbai

Australia will not encounter Sachin Tendulkar on the field when they open their Indian tour with a three-day match here from Thursday, but there will be no respite from the master batsman off it.

Tendulkar, sidelined from active cricket for almost two months with a tennis elbow, has agreed to speak to his Mumbai teammates on Wednesday to pep them up for the clash with the world champions at the Brabourne Stadium.

"Sachin has agreed to my request to have a word with the boys and he has promised to meet them on Wednesday," said former Test wicketkeeper Chandrakant Pandit, who coaches the national champion state team.

"He is the right man to plan our strategy against the best team in the world."

Tendulkar, one of the most prolific batsmen in world cricket with 33 Test and a record 37 one-day centuries, has closely followed the fortunes of his home team even when away on international duty.

When Mark Taylor's Australians played Mumbai at the start of the 1998 tour, Tendulkar hit his maiden first-class double century to power his team to a stunning 10-wicket victory by tea on the third day.

Three years later, Steve Waugh's tourists again played Mumbai before the Test series and even though Tendulkar was unavailable, the hosts dominated the three-day game before it ended in a draw.

On both occasions, India went on to win the Test series 2-1 and current Mumbai captain Sairaj Bahutule was looking for an encore.

"We have twice undermined the Australians which has helped the national team do well when the Tests come," the leg-spinner said.

"We want to continue the same good work in this game too. It will benefit India if Mumbai does well."

Tendulkar, who was forced to miss

three successive limited-overs tournaments over the last two months due to the injury, is almost certain to be ruled out of the first Test which begins in Bangalore on October 6.

Cricket board doctor Anant Joshi declined to confirm if Tendulkar will be available for the remaining three Tests.

"All I can say for now is that he is recovering well," Joshi said. "We are monitoring him closely but I would not want to put a time frame on his return."

The Mumbai team includes Tendulkar's childhood friend Vinod Kambli, a former Test batsman, and current international Ajit Agarkar. Australia, meanwhile, are expected to field their likely Test eleven in the tour opener, the only warm-up match before the Bangalore Test.

The remaining Tests will be played at Madras (October 14-18), Nagpur (October 26-31) and Mumbai (November 3-7).



PHOTO: AFP
India A batsman Sridharan Sriram sweeps while India Seniors wicketkeeper Parthiv Patel (C) and Rahul Dravid look on during their four-day practice match at Bangalore yesterday.

Pakistanis can't wait



AFP, Karachi

Pakistan's cricketers are eagerly awaiting their tour to India early next year to settle scores against their sporting arch-rivals, captain Inzamamul Haq said Tuesday.

"I look forward to the tour and every player in the team anxiously waits for the tour," Inzamam told this news agency.

"Since we are playing better than we did against India at home I think we will be in a better position to settle the score."

Pakistan Monday announced it will tour India in February for three Test matches and five one-day internationals, following India's tour of Pakistan earlier this year.

India's tour, their first since 1989, followed a thaw in relations between the nuclear neighbours who came close to a fourth war in 2002.

India won both the one-day and Test series during the March-April tour, their first-ever victory in Pakistan.

"Cricket between Pakistan and India is the most sought after and is watched by billions and with it the quality of cricket improves. The competitive level is very high when we play India," said the Pakistani captain.

Pakistan last toured India in 1999 despite death threats and the digging-up of a pitch in New Delhi by Hindu fundamentalists.

"It's fantastic to play against India

and cricket is followed like a religion there so it doubles the rivalry," said Inzamam, one of four surviving members from Pakistan's last tour.

"We looked after them well and we are also welcomed like heroes in India so it's a reciprocal feeling on both sides which is very heartening," he said.

Inzamam's side take on Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe in a home tri-series from Thursday.

Experienced wicketkeeper Moin Khan, Shahid Afridi and Shoaib Akhtar were also on the 1999 tour in which Pakistan drew a two-match Test series 1-1 but beat India in the Asian Test Championship match in Calcutta.

Pakistan also won a tri-series on that tour which also featured Sri Lanka.

"India came to Pakistan after their tour of Australia so they were well prepared. In the same way we will also be going to India after the Australia tour, which will help us a lot on the India tour," Inzamam said.

The tour programme is still being worked out. But Pakistan are likely to play the Tests first, probably starting on February 25, two weeks after their return from Australia.

Pakistan, who won the last three one-day matches against India at neutral venues, have also agreed to play a one-day international in India on November 13 this year to mark the 75th anniversary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India.

Sharapova on a roll

REUTERS, Seoul

Wimbledon champion Maria Sharapova crushed Switzerland's Emmanuelle Gagliardi 6-1, 6-3 in the first round of the Hansol Korea Open WTA event on Tuesday.

Mourinho took little-fancied Porto to the title last season using a combination of rigid defensive discipline, careful organisation and team spirit.

His new Russian master Roman Abramovich expects nothing less this season after spending more than 200 million pounds (\$362.7 million) since he bought Chelsea 15 months ago to create a team packed with international talent and flair.

Mourinho's attention to detail and tactical acumen has rubbed off on Chelsea. Second in the Premier League, they have conceded only one goal in eight games this season, including a 3-0 drubbing of Paris St Germain away in the their first Champions League match.

Porto, sixth in the Portuguese league, have fared less well after a close season disrupted by two changes of coach. They were held 0-0 by CSKA Moscow two weeks ago and earned their first league win on Saturday, beating Vitoria Guimaraes. Like Chelsea they are unbeaten, however.

"We are going to London for a good result," Diego said. "We have

"There have been no talks with the coach in question," the club said in a statement. "Our coach Vincente Del Bosque is at the helm of the team and is working day and night to lead Besiktas to the next stage of the UEFA Cup."

Denoueix, however, confirmed that he had been offered the job.

"They approached me but I'm not interested at this time," he told AFP from Nantes, western France.

On Monday, a Besiktas spokesman said Del Bosque, the former Real Madrid coach, had been given a reprieve until after the Bodo game -- the away game ended 1-1.

Reha Muhtar said after the team management had a long session with Del Bosque that "our first priority is to win against Bodo Glimt ... (Del Bosque) will be at the head of the team on Thursday.

Del Bosque, who was sacked from Real last year despite winning two Spanish and two European titles in three years, replaced Romanian Mircea Lucescu.

He has come under ceaseless fire from critics for everything from his insistence on a 4-4-2 formation, which has not worked, to leaving stars such as Romanian Daniel Pancu and Norwegian John Carew on the bench during crucial matches.

Bowden doesn't like tech also

CRICINFO, undated

Billy Bowden has joined the growing list of umpires who have called into question the increasing use of technology in making umpiring decisions.

The New Zealander, a member of the International Cricket Council's elite umpiring panel, stood in several of the games at this year's Champions Trophy, where the ICC trialled some new technical aids for the officials.

The innovations included the wiring-up of umpires, via an earpiece, to the stump microphone, and the responsibility of calling no-balls being moved to the third umpire.

The use of Hawk-Eye technology in television coverage has increased the pressure on umpires when making lbw decisions. Many observers have called for the technology to play a further role in decision-making, but the idea doesn't appeal to Bowden.

"For lbws, for example, what good is technology?" he asked. "Are we going to use the Hawk-Eye? If we do there won't be any more four- or five-day Test matches, they'd be one- or two-day Test matches."

"At the moment the statistics are saying that we get about 92 per cent (of decisions) correct," he told the Associated Press. "I can say that players make mistakes, umpires make mistakes. Let's just get on and move on."

'Wall' in Aussies' way

AFP, New Delhi

If Australia have prepared a hit-list for the Test series in India, Rahul Dravid's name is bound to figure at the top because of his ability to win matches from hopeless situations.

No Indian batsman, including Sachin Tendulkar, has troubled Australia in recent years as much as Dravid who has been on a roll since making a century against Steve Waugh's team at Calcutta in 2001.

Even Dravid's rivals did not begrudge him being named 'Player of the Year' and 'Test Player of the Year' by a panel of experts in London earlier this month.

Dravid was in awesome form last season upstaging even Tendulkar with his consistency and ability to deliver under pressure. He earned the nickname 'The Wall' for his impregnable defence and impeccable temperament.

He began the previous season on a whirlwind note, hammering a double-century against New Zealand in the opening Test at Ahmedabad before blooming in Waugh's farewell series in Australia.

Dravid was unstoppable Down Under, smashing a double-century in Adelaide to set up his team's rare away Test victory. His 303-run stand with Venkatsai Laxman revived nightmarish memories for Australia.

The same pair had put on 376 in the second Test at Calcutta in 2001 to script their team's victory after being forced to follow on.

To Australia's misfortune, Dravid was again among runs against them last season when he amassed 619 in four matches.

India drew the four-Test series 1-1, thanks to Dravid's sparkling performance.

Dravid continued in the same vein when India toured Pakistan for a historic three-Test series in March-April.

With the series tied at 1-1, India rode on Dravid's double-century in the third and final match at Rawalpindi to post an innings victory for their maiden Test series triumph in Pakistan.

Dravid was now no longer 'one of the stars' in the strong batting line-up, but 'the superstar'.

He has changed as a batsman of late, playing strokes with more freedom but without forgetting the virtues of patience. He is more domineering and lapses in concentration remain few and far between.

Del Bosque living on the edge

AFP, Istanbul

Turkish side Besiktas denied Tuesday a newspaper report that it had sacked embattled Spanish coach Vicente Del Bosque and would replace him with former Real Sociedad coach Raynald Denoueix.

The mass-circulation Hurriyet said the Frenchman would take over from Del Bosque right after Besiktas's UEFA first leg return match here Thursday with Norway's Bodo Glimt.

"There have been no talks with the coach in question," the club said in a statement. "Our coach Vincente Del Bosque is at the helm of the team and is working day and night to lead Besiktas to the next stage of the UEFA Cup."

Denoueix, however, confirmed that he had been offered the job.

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Johansson survives Lopez scare

REUTERS, Bangkok

Thomas Johansson survived two match points before upsetting sixth seeded Feliciano Lopez in the opening round of the Thailand Open on Monday.

The Swede, who won the 2002 Australian Open but missed the entire 2003 season with a knee injury, took one hour 49 minutes to edge through 6-1, 2-6, 7-6 against the tall Spaniard.

Lopez earned his first match point at 5-4 with a fiercely-struck backhand pass only for Johansson to serve the 11th of his 13 aces.

A day for the heroes



BARBADOS NATION/BBC, undated

Hugs, high-fives and kisses were directed at every turn, and work at the Grantley Adams International Airport crawled to snail's pace as the men with the courage under fire returned to a memorable heroes' welcome on Sunday afternoon.

Airport personnel, cricket officials, family, friends and most of all Caribbean people of all walks of life, seemed to line almost every vantage point from as early as 2:30 p.m. just to get a glimpse of the British Airways flight bringing in the triumphant West Indies team from England.

The International Cricket Council Champions Trophy is the second biggest prize in world limited-overs cricket and, as expected, there was an outpouring of emotion when St Lucian Darren Sammy made his way down the steps at 3:16 p.m. with the coveted golden award clutched in his hand.

Cricket legend Sir Garfield Sobers, Minister of Sport Reginald Farley and West Indies Cricket Board president Teddy Griffith, all snazzily attired and beaming, spearheaded a delegation waiting on the tarmac to greet captain Brian Lara and his cricket warriors.

Sammy, the first St Lucian to play international cricket, was followed by team manager Tony Howard, coach Gus Logie, Lara, Ryan Hinds and Merv Dillon.

Each was cheered loudly, but the biggest applause was reserved for Barbadians Ian David Russell Bradshaw and Courtney Oswald Browne, who turned the final against England on its head for the last time with their match-winning

ninth-wicket stand of 71 that sealed the deal for the West Indies.

Browne, who has seemingly revived his international career with some tidy glove work and the batting heroics in the final, got his first greeting, a kiss from his girlfriend, Tricia, shook a few hands, and then had a hug from his mum, Erla, and 12-year-old son, Alex.

When Lara finally got hold of the trophy, he fittingly gave both Sir Garfield, a former West Indies captain, and ex-West Indies vice-captain Desmond Haynes, a touch of it.

Many airport staff sought autographs from Lara, Browne, Bradshaw, and new find 20-year-old Dwayne Bravo, while one man, sports fan Charles "Disco" Ifill brought a stormy poster that let everyone know how he felt.

"Like Ivan you have blown England away and stunned the cricketing world. Alas, you have silenced the critics. Welcome Home, Champs!" the poster proclaimed.

At a Press conference called in honour of the conquering heroes, Teddy Griffith hailed the captain and his supporting cast for "a splendid victory" while Minister Farley thanked Lara and his men "for breathing a new breath of life into Caribbean people".

"If people were walking Friday, they are running today. If people were sitting Friday, they are jumping today," Farley added.

Team manager Tony Howard said he never gave up.

"At 147 for eight, we were just toying with England. I always knew we would do it," he said.

Howard revealed how a woman from Grenada, where 37 people died as Ivan tore across the island, had telephoned him on the eve of the final.

"She said 'my house has been blown down but if you guys win for me tomorrow, it really doesn't matter. I'd be the happiest woman



REUTERS, London

The Stamford Bridge crowd can expect a tight, tactical battle charged with emotion when Jose Mourinho's old team Porto meet his new charges Chelsea in the Champions League on Wednesday.

Mourinho took little-fancied Porto to the title last season using a combination of rigid defensive discipline, careful organisation and team spirit.

His new Russian master Roman Abramovich expects nothing less this season after spending more than 200 million pounds (\$362.7 million) since he bought Chelsea 15 months ago to create a team packed with international talent and flair.

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Phenomenal Paralympics

AFP, Athens

Paralympics head Phil Craven hailed the Athens Games as a success as competition ended Tuesday, but foresaw a major review of the classification system for disabilities, suggesting it may be too complicated. "I am very upbeat about the Games," International Paralympics Committee (IPC) president Craven told a press conference, just before the closing ceremony.

He praised the Greek organising committee and said Athens had provided "without doubt the best group of sporting facilities in the world."

The Paralympics is the premier sporting event for elite disabled athletes, and covers 19 sports including swimming, athletics and wheelchair basketball.

In the Athens Games, nearly 4,000 athletes from 136 countries competed over 12 days.

But Craven pledged a "there will be a major review" of the Paralympics complicated classification system, especially in athletics, in which athletes are categorised according to their level of disability.

"We can't have things that are too complicated," Craven said.

Due to a lack of competitors within certain disability groups, athletes with different classifications often competed in the same event.

But that led to some anomalies when athletes set world records within their category but wound up without a medal, which they said was frustrating for them and difficult for spectators to understand.

"We are preparing to meet one of the best team's in Europe," Spanish coach Vitor Fernandez said. "But it is not easy to beat Porto."

Mourinho has said that, with clever close season acquisitions such as winger Ricardo Quaresma and Greek European champion defender Giourkas Seitaridis, Porto are potentially a better side than last year. Seitarides will not play on Wednesday because of a thigh injury, however

"The quality is there. The confidence is there," Mourinho said. "I know the opposition, I know these players," he said, adding that he had been excused his usual detailed pre-match homework, poring over videos and closely studying each player and movement.

Defenders Paul Ferreira and Ricardo Carvalho followed Mourinho to Chelsea and, with their inside knowledge, they are likely to play at the expense of Glen Johnson and France international William Gallas. Chelsea's third Portuguese buy Tiago should get the nod in midfield.

Full back Wayne Bridge, rested at the weekend, should return and may link with winger Damien Duff down the left.

Claude Makelele in central midfield will have to watch Brazilian Diego, who took over the role of playmaker after Deco's departure to Barcelona.

"We are going to London for a good result," Diego said. "We have

in the world".

"I expressed that to the team and with one voice they indicated it would not be a problem," said Howard.

The championship could secure Lara's position as skipper, which had been in doubt.

"I want to leave a legacy. I want to leave a team that's going to take us where we belong," he said.

"We all lay in our beds very comfortably while our people in the Caribbean were fighting for their lives."

"It was the catalyst for this very young team, for what they achieved in England over the past three weeks," said Lara.

He also spoke in glowing terms about the contribution of the two who featured in a record 71-run ninth-cket partnership to seal victory over England in Saturday's final.

"Ian Bradshaw is someone who has brought so much to this team. He has brought energy, experience, together with knowledge of cricket," Lara said. "His performance since his arrival in West Indies cricket is tremendous."

Of his longtime friend Browne, Lara noted he had a 100 per cent record of being ready to train every morning at seven.

"When he walked out to bat, it was divine intervention. I said this guy can't train every possible day and something can't happen for him," said Lara.

Another player, whom Lara said possessed the right attributes and had "a bright future" was dynamic 20-year-old all-rounder Dwayne Bravo.

Looking at Bravo he said: "Your work ethic is one that everybody should follow. You play the game the way in which it is supposed to be played and I hope you continue."

the sort of team that can win there."

Mourinho said it was fitting that UEFA were planning to present him with a trophy as Champions League winning coach before the match "Because all the Porto players will be there".

The ambitious and serious-minded coach is quick to insist, however, that once the game starts he will be focused, not emotional.

"I am a professional ... They are not friends in the 90 minutes of the game."

WEDNESDAY'S FIXTURES

Champions League fixtures on Wednesday (kick-off 1845 GMT):

Group E
PSV Eindhoven (NED) v Panathinaikos (GRE)
Rosenborg (NOR) v Arsenal (ENG)

Group F
Barcelona (SPA) v Shakhtar Donetsk (UKR)
AC Milan (ITA) v Celtic (SCO)

Group G
Anderlecht (BEL) v Inter Milan (ITA)
Werder Bremen (GER) v Valencia (SPA)

Group H
Chelsea (ENG) v FC Porto (POR)
CSKA Moscow (RUS) v Paris Saint Germain (FRA)

men's basketball at the Sydney Games had faked their disabilities.

Keane home attacked

AFP, London

Manchester United captain Roy Keane's home was attacked by youths armed with fireworks three days after Keane appeared before magistrates accused of assaulting a 16-year-old boy.

Republic of Ireland player Keane denied three charges of assault, criminal damage of a 20 pound chain and threatening behaviour. The case was adjourned.

"Fireworks were set off outside Roy Keane's home and language of a racist and abusive nature was daubed on the crate," Greater Manchester Police told The Sun.

"The disturbing message was directed at the footballer and our inquiries are continuing."

Keane's house has vast grounds and can only be entered through electronic gates. It lies in a tree-lined road in the Cheshire stockbroker belt outside Manchester.

Team mates Ruud van Nistelrooy and Alan Smith live nearby and the area is also popular with Coronation Street TV stars.

A source at Manchester United told The Sun: "Its one thing getting a bit of abuse from fans on the pitch. But its bloody sinister when morons do this sort of thing on your doorstep."

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS</