

More trouble in SL cricket

AFP/BBC, Colombo
Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) chief executive Duleep Mendis has handed in his resignation amid a bitter row for control of the country's richest sporting body, officials said on Tuesday.

However, the former Test captain's resignation letter, handed in last week, has not been accepted, SLC spokesman Ray Illangakoon said.

Meanwhile, police forced their way into SLC offices hours after Mendis resigned.

Accompanied by CID officers, the police closed the front gate and did not allow anyone to enter the building, while about 80 staff were stuck inside.

Illangakoon said: "So far, no one has been charged with specific crimes. The staff members, including about 20 women are very frightened."

Cricket administration in the country has been mired by allegations of financial mismanagement.

The island nation's cricket administration was plunged into crisis in March when Sports Minister Jeevan Kumaratunga suspended SLC's recognition as the official governing body.

An interim committee was appointed to run the game.

StanChart cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Enam Children International managed an exciting one-wicket victory over Udayan School in the Standard Chartered Under-15 Young Tigers School Cricket Tournament at the Dhanmondi Club ground yesterday.

Opting to bat first Udayan were all out for 185 and Enam Children, in reply, posted 188 with one wicket in hand.

In the day's other matches, Green Leaf (151) handed a 50-run defeat to Mirpur Adarsha (101), Motiheel Government High (207) beat Willes Little Flower (178) by 29 runs, National Bangla (186-3) defeated BLS High (185) by seven wickets, Rashid Adarsha High (77-3) scored a seven-wicket victory over Lalmita Housing (76) while Rayer Bazar (133-5) thumped Maple Leaf (131) by five wickets.

PREMIERSHIP

Chelsea planning Robinho coup?

LONDON

Chelsea could rumble Real Madrid's hopes of landing Santos winger Robinho at the end of the season.

Blues owner Roman Abramovich could use his association with PSV Eindhoven to lure the Brazil international away from the clutches of Real Madrid, says the Guardian.

PSV Eindhoven president Harry van Raaij has acknowledged unspecified arrangements with Chelsea. These may lead to Robinho playing in the Netherlands for two years while gaining the qualifications that would let him take up employment in England.

DAVIS CUP

Federer may play against Britain

REUTERS, London

World number one Roger Federer is expected to return to Davis Cup action for Switzerland after his country was drawn to play Britain in a World Group playoff in September.

Federer skipped Switzerland's defeat by the Netherlands in March but is likely to feature in the home tie against a British side that will have to make do without leading player Tim Henman, who has retired from Davis Cup duty.

Federer said he would keep his options open for later matches in the men's team competition as long as they fit in with his schedule and a home tie against the British after all four 2005 grand slam tournaments have been completed is likely to suit him.

Britain, who squeezed past Israel 3-2 in a Euro/Africa zonal match in March, will be underdogs for the trip to Switzerland.

We don't lack

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Even though South Africa hold an unassailable 2-0 series lead, Sarwan believes that his partnership with Gayle can be the catalyst to lift the confidence of the side.

They have a series of five One-day Internationals against the Proteas, before a series of three ODIs and two Tests against Pakistan.

"The key for us is to play like a team, something which we have not done a lot in the recent times," he said.

Just looking at the series, except for that partnership between Wavell Hinds and Shivnarine Chandernepaul at Georgetown, there have been flashes of individual brilliance.

"So it is good to see that we can have a partnership like this. We need to see more of it in our batting, and even in our bowling, so that we can be more competitive."



PHOTO: AFP
Arsenal's Robin van Persie's (R) powerful left-footer is goal-bound during his side's Premiership clash at West Bromwich on Monday.

Gunners on course to finish second best

Football

AFP, West Bromwich

Arsenal maintained their grip on second place and a direct entry into the Champions League proper with a 2-0 win away to West Brom that left Bryan Robson's relegation-threatened team second-from-bottom in the Premiership.

In a hard fought match, second-half goals from Robin van Persie and an extra-time strike from Edu wrapped up a win for Arsenal that ensured they stayed four points clear of FA Cup final opponents Manchester United with three games remaining.

West Brom, who like the rest of the bottom four have got two matches left, stayed on 30 points the same as basement side Norwich and one behind drop rivals Crystal Palace and Southampton.

With three teams going down, the Baggies desperately need a

result away to United this weekend where Robson was a hero as a player in the 1980s after moving to Old Trafford from West Brom.

After a goalless first half, where West Brom looked happy enough to settle for a point against one of the best attacks in the division, Arsenal - without Thierry Henry - went ahead in the 66th minute when van Persie, played in by strike partner Jose Reyes, shot low and past Russell Hoult's right hand.

Five minutes later Reyes should have wrapped up the points after rounding a sprawling Hoult but only found a tame shot that Neil Clement cleared off the line.

Robson eventually brought on three strikers - Geoff Horsfield, Robert Earnshaw and former Arsenal favourite Nwankwo Kanu - for the final 10 minutes.

But he was frustrated in his ambition to get them on the field minutes earlier by an Arsenal move that saw them keep the ball for 43 straight passes.

And as the Baggies pressed

forward for an equaliser, Arsenal scored again in the second minute of stoppage time when Edu, released by Dennis Bergkamp, beat Hoult one-on-one, the keeper getting a touch on the ball but unable to keep it out.

The result meant the Gunners had kept their 10th clean sheet in 11 games.

Another victory for Arsenal, over Liverpool on Saturday, will assure them of second place with one match of the season left.

TOP SIX

English Premiership table after Monday's match (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Table with 10 columns: Team, P, W, D, L, GF, GA, Pts. Rows include Chelsea, Arsenal, Man Utd, Everton, Liverpool, Bolton.

Ronaldo fancies catching Eto'o

MADRID

Real Madrid's two-goal hero Ronaldo says he can catch Barcelona rival Samuel Eto'o to claim this season's top scorers trophy.

Ronaldo has 18 goals to Eto'o's 22 with four games in the championship remaining for both teams.

The Brazilian's brace against Real Sociedad kept Madrid within touching distance of leaders Barca and he said: "I feel good. The truth is that the only thing we can do is win our games, so we left San Sebastian happy after working so hard for the win."

"I believe that it's still possible to catch Eto'o in the goalscoring table. I hope not to experience any bad form from here to end of the season, since I had a time like that awhile ago," said the superstar who has netted six times in his last four games.

"Sociedad was a very complicated game for us. We have been patient, since the trainer told us to be. Real were very strong in the first-half, but their defence allowed us to have options in the second half."

"My work has been limited to just take advantage of the good chances that Guti has given me, but evidently the victory has been the fruit of the work of all the players," said Ronaldo. (Internet Source)

It's Rahim's

FROM PAGE 12

Meanwhile, Mashud welcomed the inclusion of the young wicketkeeper and said that it will reduce his workload.

"It is always nice to see someone as a contender because it helps to improve your own performance. I think it was a timely decision to add an additional wicketkeeper in the squad. I am relishing the prospect of a challenge from him," he said.

A sweet Orange

FROM PAGE 12

As soon as the match ended Wajed Gazi kissed the ground to celebrate his happiest moment of a 25-year coaching career.

The 66-year-old, who led Sheikh Russel Krira Chakra to finish runners-up in the Dhaka Premier League last year on the club's debut, has had never won a domestic trophy at club level.

"Yes, this is the best moment in my long career as a coach. I am also happy because we have taken revenge of our defeat in the Independence Cup," said Gazi whose only previous trophy came in 1992 when he led Bangladesh Ansar to the Bangladesh Games football gold.

"Adil missed two open chances, otherwise, we could have won by a bigger margin," told the Brothers coach who also praised Tareq's performance under pressure in the last ten minutes.

When asked what really gave Brothers the edge, the former national winger admitted that his ploy to mark Arman with Khokon and stop the Muktijoddha midfielder's flowing passes was the key.

"My plan was not to let Arman play his natural game and I succeeded even though I had to sacrifice Khokon's striking ability doing that."

"His counterpart Manik, whose boys even did not play attacking football after going down early, blamed poor refereeing."

"We have better referees in the country who can handle pressure. But the best referee was not on the field today," said Manik.

"The luck was not also with us today and we missed key players like Arman in the second half and injured Moni for the game."

Health and Family Welfare Minister Khondokar Mosharrif Hossain distributed trophies after the final. Brothers received Tk one lakh as prize money and Muktijoddha Tk 75,000.

Yellow cards: Jewel, Adil, Abul (Brothers) and Harry, Iqbal, Paul (Muktijoddha).

TEAMS

BROTHERS: Tareq, Siraji (67th minute), Sujon, Jewel, Masud Rana, Parvez, Babu, Monwar (Shuvra, 89th), Khokon, Abul, Victor and Adil (Liton, 55th).

MUKTIJODHA: Aminul, Harry, Rajani, Belal, Titu, Iqbal, Hassan Al Mamun, Kanchan, Arman (Saiful, 46th), Enamul (Bidduty, 67th minute) and Paul.

Referee: Ramkrishna Ghosh.

ROLL OF HONOUR

Table with 3 columns: Year, Champions, Runners-up. Lists winners and runners-up from 1980 to 2005.

Becks the richest booter

Football

REUTERS, Paris

Real Madrid's David Beckham is the best paid soccer player in the world, according to a survey published in France Football magazine on Tuesday.

With 25 million euros (\$32.17 million) a year, England captain Beckham tops the table ahead of Real Madrid team mates Ronaldo, who earns 19.6 million euros a year, and Zinedine Zidane, on 13 million.

The three each have salaries of 6.4 million euros and collect 200,000 euros a year in bonuses.

But the 30-year-old Beckham earns an additional 18.4 million euros in advertising contracts, with Ronaldo receiving 13 million for his commercial deals and Zidane earning 6.4 million for his.

Inter Milan striker Christian Vieri is fourth in the standings, earning 12 million euros a year, followed by Juventus striker Alessandro Del Piero on 9.5 million and Chelsea midfielder Frank Lampard on 9.4 million.

Jose Mourinho, manager of English Premier League champions Chelsea, clearly benefits from owner Roman Abramovich's big spending policy, earning 7.5 million euros a year.

Five managers working in England are in the top 10 with Manchester United's Alex Ferguson coming second with six million euros a year, ahead of England manager Sven-Goran Eriksson (5.8 million) and Arsenal's Arsene Wenger (4.4 million).

Liverpool manager Rafael Benitez is ninth with 2.6 million a

year. However, Beckham is far behind golfs world number one Tiger Woods, who earns 66 million euros a year. Seven-times Formula One world champion Michael Schumacher is the second highest paid sportsman with 63.5 million euros. Beckham is sixth behind Woods, Schumacher, NFL's Archie Manning and NBA's Shaquille O'Neal and Michael Jordan.



DAVID BECKHAM

PREVIEW: PSV v AC MILAN (SEMIFINAL SECOND LEG)

Sheva has final in sight

UEFA CHAMPS LEAGUE

REUTERS, Eindhoven

Milan striker Andriy Shevchenko has returned to form at just the right time to finish off PSV Eindhoven when the teams meet at the Philips Stadium in their Champions League semi-final on Wednesday.

The European Footballer of the Year drew first blood in the first leg before Jon Dahl Tomasson wrapped up a 2-0 win with a last minute goal that has put Milan in the driving seat.

The six-time European Cup winners travel to Eindhoven after a 2-1 Serie A victory at Fiorentina confirmed that European Footballer of the Year Shevchenko is back to full fitness.

With Milan trailing 1-0 at the break the Ukrainian, who has had a lengthy layoff with a broken cheekbone, struck twice to keep Milan level with Juventus at the top of Serie A.

They are fighting on two fronts as they seek to become only the third team to win a Serie A and Champions League double.

On the horizon is Sunday's showdown with Juve at the San Siro but before that they must dispose of a PSV side who can consider themselves very unfortunate to trail by two goals.

PSV, who won the European Cup for the only time in 1988, had much of the play at the San Siro last week and created a number of openings as South Korean Ji-Sung Park and captain Mark van Bommel went close but they just could not find the net.

"We're expecting it to be a battle in Eindhoven but we're used to those sort of games," said Shevchenko. "There is no alternative and we are happy to have

games like this because we want to win everything."

Milan may be chasing a double but the Dutch champions are battling on three fronts with the domestic cup final to come later this month when they meet neighbours Willem II Tilburg.

Any hope of a treble relies on overturning the 2-0 deficit but PSV have twice recovered from a similar setback in Europe, albeit against lesser opponents than the Serie A leaders.

In 1976 PSV beat Hajduk Split 3-2 on aggregate in the European Cup quarter-finals before losing to Saint Etienne, while they beat East German side Vorwarts Odra by the same scoreline in the UEFA Cup first round in 1984.

However, Milan are the only Serie A team to have beaten PSV in Eindhoven in European competition, having won a Champions League group stage match 2-1 in the 1992/93 season before eventually losing 1-0 in the final to Olympique Marseille.

Milan coach Carlo Ancelotti has a full squad to choose from including central defender Alessandro Nesta who is back after the suspension that saw him miss the first leg.

Nesta's absence was noticeable as Milan's defence struggled to cope with the pace of PSV's darting attacks and the Italian will likely partner Jaap Stam in central defence.

That would mean Paolo Maldini moving to left-back at the expense of Georgian Kakha Kaladze.

The other selection choice facing Ancelotti is whether to stick with two forwards or revert to a five-man midfield featuring Rui Costa.

Argentine striker Hernan Crespo has looked below par in recent weeks, although

Tomasson would be a valid option if Ancelotti wants to play with two strikers.

PSV's American international winger DaMarcus Beasley is out with a shin injury picked up on Friday's 2-2 draw against Twente Enschede after a clash with Swede Daniel Majstorovic.

Fullback Andre Ooijer is suspended after a first-leg booking while central defender Wilfried Bouma, who came off at halftime in Milan with a back injury, is doubtful along with strikers Robert and Jefferson Farfan who have ankle problems.

The winners will play Chelsea or Liverpool in the final in Istanbul on May 25.

Beware of ticket virus

REUTERS, Frankfurt

World Cup organisers have warned prospective fans that a computer virus disguised as a ticketing confirmation message should be ignored.

They said fans receiving e-mails from the addresses Ticket@fifa.de and Gewinn@fifa.de should not open attachments supposedly confirming ticketing arrangements for next year's tournament in Germany.

The first phase of ticket sales was over-subscribed by 10 times and those fans who were successful in the lottery have already been informed.

The second phase, selling only Team Specific Tickets on a first come first served basis, began on Monday. Fans buying those tickets receive immediate confirmation at the end of their booking.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words. Includes a solution time of 25 mins.

Cryptoquip puzzle grid with a key at the bottom: L' E BLYO VF NJFNIO VCVX X SLUYOE SLVUC'I AFVOMFFY MO UXBBOE X INOBBMLAEOJ.

CRYPTOQUIP
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF TWO PEOPLE WERE MARRIED FOR SIXTY YEARS, THAT'S A GOOD EXAMPLE OF HIGH FIDELITY.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: B equals L
The Cryptoquip 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.



PHOTO: COURTESY
GrameenPhone-Prothom Alo award winners pose with the guests at Sheraton Hotel on Monday.