

BCCI contract renewals later

PTI, Kolkata

The renewal of contracts for Team India cricketers is set to be delayed at least till early next month, a top Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) source said Tuesday.

With many of the top players unavailable for the October 19-21 preparatory camp ahead of the one-day home series against Sri Lanka, the committee formed to review last year's contracts has shelved plans to talk to the cricketers' representatives at the camp.

As per earlier plans, BCCI joint secretary Goutam Dasgupta and executive secretary-in-charge Ratnakar Shetty were scheduled to hold meetings with players' representatives on October 19 before submitting a report to the Board on the contracts for the 2005-06 season.

Dasgupta and Shetty, along with BCCI treasurer Jyoti Bajpai, figure in the review committee formed to go into the effectiveness of last season's contracts and suggest changes.

However, the plans went haywire after the committee realised that captain Rahul Dravid, who is yet to return from Australia, the injured Anil Kumble, Sourav Ganguly and VVS Laxman -- who has been dropped -- would not be in the camp.

"So, we have decided not to rush things. We will hold discussions with the cricketers midway into the series, that is early next month," the source said.

Buchanan

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of expectations and, quite simply, didn't meet the expectations," he was quoted as saying.

"We didn't win, but it was a tight series. The result, though, came as a golden opportunity. It has made me, the players, the support staff and Cricket Australia look at where we are and where we desire to be."

"It also made us look at England, made us look at other countries."

"We came up against an England team which was very well prepared. We should have looked at the little things which happen in and around our team. Perhaps, the team disciplines also ought to have been looked at."

Asked if he had been out-thought by his English counterpart Duncan Fletcher, Buchanan said: "Not out-thought, but outplayed."

"We understood what we had to do, but didn't put that into practice. England were well-tuned and delivered better than us."

"I accept England forced us to play catch-up-cricket. The good thing is that we fought back in every game, but that wasn't good enough."

Buchanan said the ability of English bowlers to swing both the new and old balls told on the Australian batsmen.

"The England bowlers swung the ball, old and new, and at good pace," he said. "You don't come across very many bowlers who do that in today's cricket. Outside England, I can't think of anybody other than (Sri Lanka's) Chaminda Vaas."

Australia bounced back from the Ashes loss to sweep the Super Series against the world teams this month, winning the one-dayers 3-0 and the six-day Test match by 210 runs inside four days.

Tendulkar

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the ball anymore. You just can't please everybody."

Tendulkar has scored 10,134 runs in 123 Tests and needs just one more century to break compatriot Sunil Gavaskar's world record of 34 hundreds.

He is also one-day cricket's leading batsman with world record tallies of 13,642 runs and 38 hundreds.

Having the veteran back is good news for an Indian team lacking in confidence in one-day cricket after losing two successive finals this season to hosts Sri Lanka in August and to New Zealand in Zimbabwe last month.

India are due to play seven one-dayers at home against Sri Lanka, followed by five more against South Africa before the end of November. This will be followed by Test series against Sri Lanka, Pakistan, England and the West Indies until July.

The key to Tendulkar's -- and India's -- success is how the team management handles it's most experienced, but still physically fragile, batsman.

"It is important to give the elbow adequate rest during the season, I can't afford to overwork it," he said. "I will take it one match at a time before I am confident the elbow can take the strain."

Tendulkar believes India, whose one-day form has slumped since making the World Cup final in 2003, are capable of reversing the tide.

"Winning matches is the only way to lift your confidence," he said. "When you win, you think positively and know you can get out of any situation. When you lose constantly, the positive vibes just vanish."

"But one good victory can change everything. Hopefully we can make that happen this season. Winning is the best medicine for any sports team."



PHOTO: AFP

SHOULD I BECOME A COACH-CUM PLAYER? Barcelona's coach Frank Rijkaard plays with the ball during a training session at the Athens' Olympic stadium on Monday.

PREVIEW

English duo can win and relax



AFP, Paris

England international striker Peter Crouch received the backing of Liverpool manager Rafael Benitez before Wednesday night's Champions League tie when Group G rivals Chelsea are also in action.

Crouch, set to lead the attack at Anderlecht on Wednesday, has endured much public criticism but Benitez said he would score freely once he got the required service.

Chelsea boss Jose Mourinho, whose side hosts Real Betis led by Mourinho's former colleague Lorenzo Serra Ferrer on Wednesday, will know Liverpool know three points would set them well on course for the knockout stages.

Should Liverpool win in Brussels, along with Chelsea beating Real Betis at Stamford Bridge, the two English clubs in the group would be virtually through.

Certainly if Liverpool are able to win one of their final three matches -- two being at home to Betis and Anderlecht -- the route to the next stage will be assured.

Benitez has made it clear he fully supports seven-million-pound (10.2 million-euro) signing Crouch in the face of continued criticism, and the return of Harry Kewell to the squad in Europe will be one major step in the right direction of getting the best out of the England hitman.

Benitez said: "Our problem is that we need to work better for Peter, with more crosses and the same applies to Fernando Morientes. We must get players to the by-line to provide crosses for them."

"At the moment we do not have such players fit, but when Harry Kewell is

back then that is a possibility for us. We are trying to improve this situation, because the style that is better for him." Mourinho, meanwhile, no longer believes Champions League success comes more easily to those who finish top of their group.

He has continually repeated that nine points would guarantee a place in the knockout stages and while he set his sights on finishing top of the group in last year's competition, the reward was a controversial tie with Spanish giants Barcelona.

Chelsea are level on four points after two games with Liverpool and victory over Real Betis would put them within two points of his target.

"First of all it is important to qualify -- being first or second in the group, last season proved that means nothing," said Mourinho.

"We were champions in our group and got Barcelona, maybe the best team in Europe at that time. Unless you are very lucky to get an easy team because you are first in the group, normally it means nothing."

"We have to qualify, and to qualify sooner is better than later, but is soon one game before the end of the group? I don't know. The important thing is that we have what is good -- a victory at home and a draw away. We are in a good way. But we cannot allow ourselves to sleep."

But Mourinho's task of getting a positive result may well be affected by the loss of winger Damien Duff following cartilage surgery which will sideline him for up to five weeks.

AC Milan, who heartbreakingly threw away a three-goal lead in last year's final, host PSV Eindhoven in Group E in confident mood. Their 2-0 victory over Cagliari at the weekend put them within five points of leaders Juventus after an early season slump.

Real Madrid's Brazilian striker Ronaldo, who has a twisted left ankle, has been ruled out of the Spanish giants' home match against Rosenborg of Norway.

The Spanish first division club, kings of Europe on nine occasions, said on Monday that Ronaldo would need a month for a complete recovery but might return for the league clash against Barcelona on November 20.

The three-times World Player of the Year was hurt, and stretchered from the field, during injury time at the end of Real's 3-0 win over local rivals Atletico Madrid on Saturday.

And Real Madrid defender Michel Salgado hurt his left thigh in the same match and will be out of action for 10 days meaning he misses the Rosenborg match and the next two league games.

Lyon coach Gerard Houllier must do without striker Pierre-Alain Frau at home to Greeks Olympiakos in the other Group F game. Frau missed the French league match against Ajaccio on Sunday and his calf problem has not yet cleared up.

FIXTURES

Group E
Fenerbahce (TUR) v Schalke 04 (GER)
AC Milan (ITA) v PSV Eindhoven (NED)

Group F
Real Madrid (ESP) v Rosenborg (NOR)
Lyon (FRA) v Olympiakos (GRE)

Group G
Anderlecht (BEL) v Liverpool (ENG)
Chelsea (ENG) v Real Betis (ESP)

Group H
FC Porto (POR) v Inter Milan (ITA)
Rangers (SCO) v Armedia Bratislava (SVK)

Beckhams acting brave?



AFP, London

The defamation lawsuit by English football star David Beckham and his pop star wife Victoria against the British tabloid News of the World will begin on December 5, the High Court said here Monday.

The Real Madrid and England captain and "Posh" of the 1990's band "Spice Girls" decided to take legal action after an article published in September 2004 accused them of lying about the state of their marriage, to keep up the image of an ideal couple for financial gain.

Richard Spearman, representing News Group Newspapers, the tabloid's publisher owned by Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation, told the judge during preliminary hearings the defence would argue that the article was an accurate account of their marriage. "Because their substantial fortunes depend upon their public perception, the claimants have been cynically and hypocritically trying -- for financial reasons -- to convince the public that they continue to enjoy a happy marriage..." he said.

Spearman argued that the marriage had in fact been seriously rocked by Beckham's "infidelity" and "betrayal" of his wife.

Speaking for the couple, their lawyer Hugh Tomlinson said: "The case being put against us is that we are promoting a false image of ourselves as a happily married couple."

"We do not deny that we promote ourselves as a happily married couple. We say that's because it is true."

The case, to be heard before a jury, is expected to run for two weeks.

Beckham moved from northern England to Madrid in July 2003 while

his family remained behind, which allegedly caused friction between the two of them.

Victoria then moved almost a year later with their two sons Brooklyn and Romeo to live with

him in the Spanish capital, where she gave birth to a third boy in February.

The marriage hit a rocky patch in April last year after reports the football star had an affair with his former personal assistant, Rebecca Loos, who



PHOTO: AFP

Former Spice Girl Victoria Beckham, wife of England football captain and superstar David Beckham, arrives at the Grimaldi Forum centre in Monaco on Monday to attend the "Swarovski Fashion rocks" for "The Prince's Trust". The Prince's Trust helps young people through training, business loans, personal development and study support outside school.

Brazilian referee banned for life

AFP, Rio de Janeiro

Brazilian referee Edilson Pereira de Carvalho has been banned for life for match-fixing by Brazilian sports' highest court.

He spent five days in police custody two weeks ago accused of accepting money from an illegal gambling ring to fix results.

The court had already annulled the 11 matches he admitted to have helped fix.

He was said to have picked up around 5,000 dollars a match and faces criminal charges of fraud, conspiracy and crimes against the economy.

First British booter to earn 100 pounds a week dies

REUTERS, London

Johnny Haynes, one of England's most gifted midfielders, died on Tuesday the day after his 71st birthday, his former club Fulham said.

Haynes, who spent his entire career with the west London club, won 56 caps for England, scoring 18 goals.

He was famous for becoming the first British footballer to earn 100 pounds a week.

Trial of refs in match-fixing scandal starts

AFP, Berlin

Two referees went on trial here Tuesday in the biggest soccer corruption scandal in Germany in more than 30 years which has overshadowed the country's preparations to hold next year's World Cup.

Match officials Robert Hoyzer and Dominik Marks, along with former player Steffen Karl and three Croatian brothers who ran a Berlin cafe alleged to have been the centre of an illegal betting ring, face 10 years in jail if found guilty.

The German Football Federation has already banned the 25-year-old Hoyzer for life.

The prosecution says that 23 matches between April 10 and December 3 last year were fixed.

They were mainly games in the German second and third division, but also a German Cup match between first division Hamburg and third division Paderborn and a first division match in Turkey between Ankaragucu and Galatasaray.

Prosecutors say an investigation established that the Croats -- Ante, Milan and Filip Sapina -- had organised an illegal sports betting network which generated around two million euros (2.4 million dollars).

Hoyzer admitted to investigators that he received 70,000 euros for fixing the results of at least four matches.

Mourinho's sweatsuit fetches 240 dollars

AFP, Lisbon

A used sweatsuit jacket belonging to Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho fetched 200 euros (240 dollars) at a weekend charity auction in his native Portugal, but a pair of matching shorts and pants went unsold, organizers said Monday. Bidding for each of the three items, which went under the hammer separately on Sunday in Mourinho's former home Oporto, started at 150 euros.

The Portuguese coach donated the blue sweatpants, jacket and shorts, which all have his initials monogrammed in white, to the Espaco T charity last week to help it raise funds to cover the cost of building a permanent residence.

"A young woman took home the jacket after making the highest bid," said Jorge Oliveira, the director of the institution which works to integrate people with physical or psychological problems into society.

The auction of over 200 items donated by Portuguese celebrities raised over 30,000 euros, he told AFP.

A pair of football boots donated by Inter Milan's Portuguese star Luis Figo fetched 200 euros.

The unsold items, which also include an autographed T-shirt donated by Manchester United star Cristiano Ronaldo, will now be put up for auction on the charity's Internet site on October 20.

Mourinho joined London-based Chelsea in June 2004 less than one month after leading Portuguese side FC Porto, which is based in Oporto, to the Champions League title.

In May a fan paid 22,000 pounds (32,300 euros or 38,800 dollars) at a charity auction in London for a grey Armani coat which Mourinho repeatedly wore on the touchlines last season.

Maldini's son joins him at Milan



REUTERS, Milan

Paolo Maldini's son Christian has signed up as an AC Milan player, becoming the third generation of the footballing family to be on the books of the Italian club.

Christian Maldini, the nine-year old son of the current AC Milan captain and grandson of former player and coach Cesare Maldini,

was formally registered at a ceremony at the club's headquarters.

The youngest Maldini is expected to make his debut for one of the club's junior teams in a derby game against Inter Milan on Saturday.

Paolo Maldini, 37, recently set a new record number of appearances in Serie A and is also Italy's most capped player while his father was captain of the first Milan team to win the European Cup in 1963 and still works for the club as a scout.



PHOTO: STAR FILE

AC Milan captain Paolo Maldini and his son Christian carry the Champions League trophy at the end of the second leg of the final match of the Italian Cup against AS Roma at Milan's Meazza stadium on May 31, 2003.

Kirtley vows to be back



BBC ONLINE, undated

Sussex seamer James Kirtley has vowed to correct his action and return to competitive cricket next summer.

The 30-year-old was suspended by the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) after tests showed his elbow bends more than the 15 degrees allowed.

"I'm frustrated to find myself in this position again. We just have to go about the right processes and be confident of clearing my name."

"I know what's involved and that'll put me in good stead," he told BBC Sport.

"The last time I did it I had a very successful summer so I can hopefully look forward to a successful 2006."

Kirtley was reported previously in October 2001 when he broke into the England team for a one-day series in

Zimbabwe.

He underwent remedial action to modify the problem but he has hyper-extensive elbows, which means they bend backwards slightly and give off the appearance of throwing.

Last season Warwickshire raised questions about his action in a County Championship game and presented footage of him bowling to the match umpires.

In another game against Hampshire, the umpires reported his action for the second time and the ECB asked him to undergo tests conducted by Loughborough University biomechanics expert Mark King.

Despite this latest crisis, Kirtley is not worried about the effect it will have on his career.

"It's a huge taboo in cricket but I've been there before. Providing I don't get reported again within the next year I start with a clean slate so there's always an opportunity," he insisted.

Ballack speculations

AFP, Munich

Germany's finest player Michael Ballack could become one of the best free transfers around this summer should he decide to turn down a contract extension at Bayern Munich.

German international captain Ballack has confirmed that he will sit down with Bayern on Wednesday to discuss their four-year extension to his current deal, which expires at the end of the season, but no-one seems to know what will happen.

"I want to keep my options open and I think Bayern understand that," explained Ballack. "I have not made a decision yet. I will meet with Bayern on Wednesday and hold talks."

Babu, who else!

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respectively as part of bringing professionalism to the federation.

The annual general meeting of the BFF is expected to be shifted to January 2006, as the federation will have to fulfil some FIFA statutes.

"We can't hold the AGM in November. There will be discussions on this area during the December 20-21 seminar in Kuala Lumpur and we will set a date after that," Helal said adding that the BFF will run a residential women's football camp in Ranganati with 30 footballers. A Tk 1.50 lakh budget has been approved to continue training women footballers.

Lanka arrive

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at Mohali (Oct 28), Jaipur (Oct 31), Pune (Nov 3), Ahmedabad (Nov 6), Rajkot (Nov 9) and Vadodra (Nov 12).

The matches at Mohali and Ahmedabad would be day-night affairs.

SQUAD

Marvan Atapattu (captain), Mahela Jayawardene (vice-captain), Sanath Jayasuriya, Kumar Sangakkara, Tillakaratne Dilshan, Upul Tharanga, Thilan Samara-weera, Chaminda Vaas, Upul Chandana, Farveez Maharoof, Russel Arnold, Dilhara Fernando, Muttiah Muralitharan, Dilhara Lokuhettige and Nuwan Zoysa.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

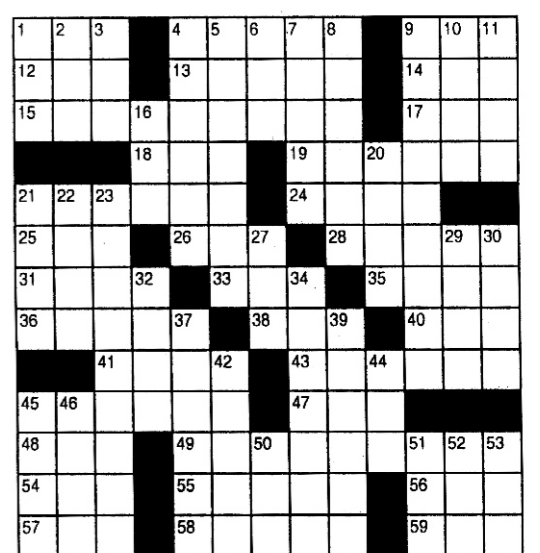
ACROSS
1 Vagrant
4 Erudites
9 Occupation
12 Ms.
13 Thurman
14 Cole Porter
15 Gum
17 Falsehood
18 Wade opponent
19 Hot
21 Load to carry
24 Count-out start
25 Greek X
26 Upper portion
28 Lule's cousin
31 Landlord's due
33 Actor
35 Cruise
36 Clinton Cabinet member
38 Hall's singing partner
"What's up, --?"

DOWN
1 Clear the tables
2 Diamond arbiter
3 West of Holly-wood
4 Jolly
5 Green Giant's protégé
6 JFK administration metaphor
7 "Exodus" character
8 On edge
9 Type of bird dog
10 Last few notes
11 Abound
12 "Ghost-busters" actor
13 Tor wobbly
14 Pure
15 Villainous look
16 Chic no more
17 Fairy-tale trio
18 Jejunia's neighbors
19 Khan title
20 Billboards
21 Back talk
22 Crucial

10 "Grapes of Wrath" persona
11 Existed
16 Sandy's comment
20 Lollapalooza
21 Height (Prel.)
22 Comic
23 Lamb enhancement
27 Space-craft compartment
29 Oklahoma city
30 Last few notes
32 Abound
34 "Ghost-busters" actor
37 Tor wobbly
39 Pure
42 Villainous look
44 Chic no more
45 Fairy-tale trio
46 Jejunia's neighbors
50 Khan title
51 Billboards
52 Back talk
53 Crucial

Solution time: 24 mins.

ACROSS
1 VAG
4 ERU
9 OCC
12 MS
13 THU
14 COLE
15 GUM
17 FALS
18 WAD
19 HOT
21 LOA
24 COU
25 GRE
26 UPP
28 LUL
31 LAN
33 ACT
35 CRU
36 CLIN
38 HAL
"WHAT'S UP, --?"



CRYPTOQUIP

V F S M U E Z R S Z U R N R
Z R A G O I R E I S W O Q R
W A O L L U O R V M C V ? O N R U O R Q R

O C I F R A O W F I I S D A G N R D A V .
Saturday's Cryptoquip: IF ANY HUNTING DOG WERE TO RULE A COUNTRY, I WOULD CALL THAT A REIGN OF TERRIER.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Z equals P

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.