



Did U Know?

Gary Brent of Zimbabwe took 4 for 30 in the second one-day international against Bangladesh at the Harare Sports Ground on February 6. It was the third time he has taken four wickets in a match, second against Bangladesh.

Empty stands

FROM PAGE 20
Michel Platini will meet Italian footballing officials Friday to discuss what venues Italian clubs can use in European competition, a UEFA spokesman said.

AC Milan said meanwhile that they might play their next home Champions League match in Geneva or Newcastle.

The club owned by Silvio Berlusconi, Italy's former prime minister and now opposition leader, are set to host Scottish giants Celtic in the Champions League last 16, second leg, on March 7.

Authorities spent overnight Wednesday examining video footage of the clashes, dealing with images that were clouded by tear gas and smoke bombs.

Before Thursday's arrest, 34 other people, including 11 minors, were picked up, but none were thought to be directly linked to Raciti's death.

Raciti, married with two sons, died after a home-made bomb was thrown into his car.

According to the Italian press, the 17-year-old arrested Thursday was already known by the police as a troublemaker.

In Brussels, meanwhile, Platini accepted an invitation from EU Justice and Security Commissioner Franco Frattini, himself an Italian, to discuss football hooliganism and racism with EU officials.

Given the urgency of the meeting, it will be held "in the days and weeks to come," said Commission spokesman Friso Ascan Abbing, although no time or place has yet been agreed.

Among the likely points on the agenda will be "whether or not football hooligans can travel freely to football grounds in the EU," he added.

Racism both inside and outside grounds will also be discussed along with the possibility of "fan coaching for developing a new positive and non-violent attitude."

The talks will also discuss the possibility of an EU-level approach to the problem "with of course the cooperation of UEFA and, if possible, fan associations," Ascan Abbing said.

Fergie hails

FROM PAGE 20
West Ham have won just once in the league since Alan Curbishley took over in December and the Hammers boss admits his side now face a decisive run of fixtures.

Curbishley said: "There are now some defining matches coming up, starting with Saturday's against Watford, followed by the trip to Charlton, and the players know that they are must-win games. They realise the seriousness of the situation."

Watford are 10 points from safety and even their relentlessly up-beat manager Adrian Boothroyd is beginning to fear the worst.

"We have got ourselves in a hole and we have got to get out of it," he said. "But if we carry on playing like we did against Bolton we will only make it deeper."

Barca target

FROM PAGE 20
could also be without Fredi Kanoute, the Spanish first division's leading scorer with 16 goals, for the second successive game as the Malian striker is still struggling to overcome a slight groin strain.

Valencia are the team in form at the moment and are third, only three points away from Barca, after winning seven out of their last eight games.

They will be looking to keep up the pressure on the leading pair with a win at Getafe on Sunday.

The current form of the 2002 and 2004 Spanish champions was demonstrated with five of their squad starting for Spain in their 1-0 defeat of England on Wednesday, which was a record for the club.

"Getafe are having a great season and they have got great players like (striker) Daniel Guiza but we are planning to get our revenge after they beat us in the Cup," said Valencia winger Joaquin Sanchez.

By contrast, fourth-placed Real Madrid are in the doldrums, not helped by the controversy about whether coach Fabio Capello should have shamed his pride and recall David Beckham.

"It is very hard for me because I would like to help the team," the former England captain said.

"I'm desperate to play again. I don't know if I will but I've got to keep on training. I want to leave this club on a high."

Bookie to 'help out'

Cricket

AFP, New Delhi

The alleged bookmaker with links to West Indian cricketer Marlon Samuels said on Friday he was ready to be investigated because he had done nothing wrong.

Mukesh Kochar, speaking by phone to several Indian television stations, denied he was a cricket bookie but admitted to knowing Samuels who was "like a son" to him.

"I am not a bookie," said Kochar, adding he was an Indian businessman based in Dubai where he was taking calls from reporters.

"I know Marlon for some years now. He is like a son to me. I spoke to him after all this started. Like me, he is also shocked."

Kochar also dismissed police claims he had links with underworld figure Dawood Ibrahim, India's most wanted man accused to masterminding the 1993 Mumbai blasts that left 257 dead and many injured.

"That is not correct," he said. "Who doesn't know him by his name? Every day on TV and newspapers you see his name."

Police said they had no evidence that money had changed

hands, but Samuels faces a life ban from cricket if the allegations of any wrongdoing are proved.

Indian cricket officials have passed on the police report to the Dubai-based International Cricket Council (ICC) whose anti-corruption unit is investigating.

Kochar said he will co-operate with any inquiry conducted by the ICC.

"If they contact me, I will be the first person to help them out," he told the news channels. "I am willing to visit them whenever. My heart is clear."

Asked if he bet on cricket, Kochar retorted: "Who doesn't bet on cricket? It's a different matter whether I am into punting or not."

When confronted on why he wanted team information from Samuels, Kochar said: "I was only wanting to encourage Samuels to do better. As I have explained I have advised Samuels as a friend and as a father (figure)."

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outskirts of New Delhi which they claimed was owned by Kochar.

Jamaican Samuels, 26, who has played 23 Tests and 83 one-dayers for the West Indies, has also denied any wrongdoing while admitting he knew Kochar.

PTI adds: The Nagpur police on Friday failed to throw more light on the mysterious name of 'Robin Singh' which had figured in the taped conversations between West Indian all-rounder Marlon Samuels and alleged bookie Mukesh Kochar.

As speculation continued on who could be the person referred to during the conversation, the city Police Commissioner SPS Yadav declined to comment on it.

"I can't comment on it," city Commissioner of Police, SPS Yadav told PTI.

Yadav said police were not sure whether Samuels and Kochar in their conversation was referring to "Robin Singh or Robinson".

"Although the name figured, it was difficult to identify the right player or person (Robin Singh or Robinson)," he said.

Yadav had on Wednesday written a letter to Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) informing them the violation of ICC's code of conduct by Samuels by disclosing his team's composition ahead of the West Indies' one-day match against India here on January 21.

Police said they were keeping a watch on a house in Gurgaon on the



PHOTO: AFP

Pakistan's prolific batsman Mohammad Yousuf pulls towards midwicket during his 79-run knock against South Africa in the third one-day international at St. George's Park in Port Elizabeth on Friday.

Samuels-Kochar in talks

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Below is the transcript of the conversation the Nagpur police say took place between Marlon Samuels and Mukesh Kochar, an alleged bookie, before the India-West Indies match at Nagpur on January 21.

Samuels was staying in Room 206 of the Pride Hotel in the city. The transcript is verbatim from the police records:

Bookie (Mukesh Kochar): Connect to 206

Receptionist: 206, sir?

Bookie: Yes

Receptionist: Hello, room no 206, Marlon

Bookie: Hello, how are you Marlon?

206 (Marlon Samuels): (not clear)

Bookie: Just relax

Bookie: Hello my son, that's way I am here, came for my some work and am held up

206: OK

Bookie: Tomorrow (January 21) night I am going back

206: OK

Bookie: So how are things with you and how is the preparation?

206: Preparation is good enough

Bookie: Well, wish you all the best

206: Thanks

Bookie: You play well

206: (Not clear) Talking to Robinson

Bookie: Robinson...Yes

206: Yes, our fielding well

Bookie: Ya, good that's a high-scoring game

206: Early in the morning... Batting

move around the pitch...

Bookie: an in the evening lower down

206: Slow down...

Bookie: What you think that, who will bat...

206: Well...

Bookie: Who, who?

206: Dwayne (not clear) He's is making a debut tomorrow (Jan 21)...

Bookie: New batsman, bowlers...

206: All-rounder...

Bookie: He is a good player...

206: Making debut

Bookie: Ya, I can understand that Chris is in form...

206: (Not clear)...

Bookie: And how is your batting going on?

206: My batting is good...

Bookie: Big... a... tall score tomorrow (Jan 21)

206: (Not clear)

Bookie: Which over you will be bowling

206: One down

Bookie: Normally after 17th or 18th over

206: By tomorrow (Jan 21) (not clear) than I can bowl... (not clear)

Bookie: He is a seamer or spinner

206: Seamer

Bookie: He is a seamer, who will start bowling tomorrow (Jan 21)

206: Dwayne

Bookie: Dwayne

206: Dwayne, tail and Bradshaw

Bookie: Tail and Bradshaw, they will open. You will be as the third bowler

206: Jerome Taylor, Chris Gayle will be 4th and 5th bowling

206: (not clear)

Bookie: Ok good.

Colly creates magic

Cricket

FROM PAGE 17

Watson c Bell b Mahmood 9

Hogg c Bell Flintoff 10

Lee run out 0

Bracken not out 3

McGrath b Flintoff 0

Extras: (lb-4, w-9) 13

Total: (All out in 48.3 overs) 252

Fall of wickets: 1-32, 2-170, 3-180, 4-196, 5-229, 6-229, 7-248, 8-248, 9-250, 10-252.

Bowler O M R W

Plunkett 10 0 56 0

Mahmood 8 0 45 2

Flintoff 9.3 1 41 3

Panesar 10 0 44 2

Collingwood 4 0 21 0

Dalrymple 7 0 41 1

ENGLAND

Joyce c McGrath b Lee 6

Loye lbw Lee 0

Bell b Lee 65

Strauss lbw Bracken 0

Collingwood not out 120

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