



PHOTO: AFP

Barcelona forward Ronaldinho (R) surges past the tackle of Hearts defender Juho Makela during their friendly match at Hampden Park on Saturday.

ECB weighing security in SL

AFP, Colombo

A top English cricket official has arrived in Sri Lanka to assess the security of potential venues before a planned tour in the war-torn nation in October.

John Carr, from the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB), arrived on Friday to visit all the venues for the matches on a truncated tour.

"John Carr and another official travelled to Galle on Saturday, they will visit Kandy and Colombo venues later in the week", a top Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) official said.

England will play five one-day internationals in the first leg of the visit from October 1 in the central town of Dambulla and in Colombo before returning home. They will come back in early December for the three-match Test series.

The English officials said they would closely assess the security situation in Sri Lanka as the island's long drawn out separatist armed conflict with the Tamil Tiger rebels continues.

More than 5,000 people have been killed in the new cycle of violence which began at the end of 2005.

The Bangladesh cricket team concluded a three-match Test and one-day international series early this week free of any incident despite initial security fears.

The South African team abandoned a triangular series with hosts and India in Colombo and returned home in August last year due to a bomb explosion blamed on the Tamil Tiger rebels not very far from the team hotel.

India keep

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Opens Dinesh Karthik (77) and Wasim Jaffer (62), consolidated the advantage India's bowlers had created on Saturday by dismissing England for 198 with a first-wicket stand of 147.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at tea on the third day of the second Test between England and India at Trent Bridge on Sunday:

ENGLAND: First innings 198 (Zaheer Khan 4-59, Kumble 3-32)
INDIA: First innings (overnight 254-3)

Karthik c Cook b Panesar	77			
Jaffer c Prior b Tremlett	62			
Dravid c Bell b Panesar	37			
Tendulkar lbw b Collingwood	91			
Ganguly c Prior b Anderson	79			
Laxman not out	37			
Dhoni c Prior b Sidebottom	5			
Kumble not out	1			
Extras: (b-15, lb-14, w-1)	30			
Total: (For 6 wkts in 136 overs)	419			
Fall of wickets: 1-147, 2-149, 3-246, 4-342, 5-409, 6-414.				
To bat: Zaheer Khan, RP Singh, Sreesanth.				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Sidebottom	32	9	67	1
Anderson	30	4	123	1
Tremlett	32	12	56	1
Collingwood	16	3	59	1
Panesar	26	6	85	2
Toss: India				

Kaiser boost

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World Cup - in the case of 2018, Africa and South America - from bidding again.

It means that as well as competition from the likes of Russia and Italy, England could also expect to encounter strong rivalries from the likes of Australia and China.

Inzy could play in ICL



CRICINFO, undated

Inzamamul Haq, the former Pakistan captain, is the latest international star to have been approached by the Indian Cricket League (ICL).

Inzamam, who announced his retirement from one-day cricket after Pakistan's failed World Cup campaign, confirmed that ICL officials had contacted him.

"They have been in touch with me and I am considering their offer," Inzamam told Cricinfo. "If the terms are right, I will play."

The parallel league has stirred the cricket world, evoking visions of a Kerry Packer-style circuit. The players it has targeted so far, however, are those who have retired from international cricket in one form or another. Brian Lara has already signed on, while Shane Warne, Glenn McGrath and Stephen Fleming have also expressed an interest.

The Pakistan Cricket Board announced recently that centrally contracted players would be unable to join the league but kept the door open for ex-internationals or players not contracted.

Inzamam said he believed the league would ultimately benefit Indian cricket itself.

"What harm is there if it means that more people will watch cricket, come to the grounds and watch stars in action? It furthers the profile of cricket."

Inzamam did acknowledge that ultimately the choice would come down to financial benefits to the player. "Players who are out of favour, or not international cricketers, or who are nearing the end of their careers will rightly see this as an opportunity to benefit financially and I don't see anything wrong with that."

"For younger players too, there are rewards. Playing alongside players such as Lara or McGrath can only be a good thing for your development as a young player."

Inzamam's own international future is currently uncertain. Though he has left one-day cricket, he wants to carry on playing Test cricket "for as long as I feel I am performing."

Noises coming from the board in recent months suggest Inzamam may not be a part of Pakistan's next Test squad against South Africa but the selectors have publicly said he will be called to the probables camp for the series in September and October.

Inzamam is currently Pakistan's second-highest run-scorer in Tests, just 19 runs behind Javed Miandad and he plans to fight for his place. "I want to pass 10,000 Test runs and I believe I am capable of doing that, given the opportunity."

He has limited opportunities to prove his form and fitness to selectors, however. Pakistan's domestic season is not due to start till December. Reports linked him to some county sides earlier in the season but those plans have fallen through. Until the season starts, Inzamam will play club cricket for Lahore Gymkhana.

Roddick, Blake ousted



AFP, Indianapolis

Canadian Frank Dancevic topped number one seed Andy Roddick 6-4, 7-6 (7/1) Saturday to reach the final of the Indianapolis tennis championships, where the two top seeds crashed out.

Roddick, bidding for a third title in five years at the Midwest venue, went down in a hail of 15 aces from the 109th-ranked player in the world, who had never played even a quarterfinal on the ATP before this breakthrough week.

James Blake, the second-seeded defending champion who beat Roddick in the 2006 final, was bundled out by another big hitter in a rain-delayed quarterfinal.

Teenaged Californian Sam Querrey fired 34 aces in a 7-6 (10/8), 6-7 (4/7), 7-6 (7/4) over Blake.

Dancevic, travelling without a coach but with the moral support of his girlfriend, will face off Sunday

against Russian third seed Dmitry Tursunov.

Tursunov beat Japanese amateur Kei Nishikori 6-1, 6-4 in another rain-delayed quarterfinal then came back to beat Querrey 7-6 (7/5), 6-2.

The Russian converted his fourth match point to book his final berth.

Tursunov defeated Dancevic two months ago in the second round of the grasscourt Queen's Club tournament in London.

Dancevic bombed four aces midway through the first set against Roddick to level at 4-all, then broke the American after saving a pair of break points himself.

The 22-year-old underdog took the set and then broke to start the second, giving the break back in the fourth game.

But Dancevic kept his composure on the big occasion against the former world number one, the Canadian ending his last three service games with aces to force a tiebreaker.

He dominated in the decider to

earn the upset in just over 90 minutes.

Roddick was disgusted with another easy loss just a month after going out in a Wimbledon semi-final from a position of strength against Richard Gasquet.

"I didn't have much to give out there today, I don't know why. I wasn't feeling that well," Roddick said. "I served badly, but I've been doing that all week. I don't know what happened."

Dancevic, the last man into the draw by ranking, didn't have a clear idea either of how he had achieved his miracle.

"I haven't thought about being in the final, I'm just enjoying the moment," he said. "My only game plan was not to get broken, I didn't want to get behind against him."

"It seemed that when I got stressed out, I would hit a few good shots and win the game. That happened two or three times."

Dancevic added: "I'm happy that I got through today; this is one of the best matches of my career."

Maria makes return



AFP, Carlsbad

Defending champion Maria Sharapova makes her first appearance since Wimbledon at the San Diego Classic this week as she once again tests her long-standing shoulder injury.

The world number two, who beat Kim Clijsters in the 2006 final to capture the hardcourt title here, has been dogged by the injury problem since the spring.

But a pain-killing injection has helped her to the French Open semi-finals and a Wimbledon fourth-round loss to Venus Williams.

Following the wet fortnight at the All England Club, the 20-year-old Russian underwent a precautionary scan and controversially pulled out of Russia's Fed Cup semi-final win over the United States.

Despite failing to win a trophy so far this season, and with her US Open title defence approaching, Sharapova is unworried.

"I'm 20 years old, I've won two Grand Slams. I've been number one in the world," she said.

"I've got plenty more years to either win matches or find confidence."

Serb Jelena Jankovic, who won a surprise Wimbledon mixed doubles title with Jamie Murray, has played just one Fed Cup rubber indoors since the All England Club.

She will get back on cement for the first time since March in Miami.

Along with the other eight leading seeds, she has a first-round bye at what will be the last edition of an event which has fallen victim to the WTA calendar shake-up.

Russians hold half of the top eight seedings, with Anna Chakvetadze at three, Nadia Petrova fourth and Dinara Safina eighth.

Wimbledon finalist Marion Bartoli of France will try to put behind last week's opening-match disappointment at Stanford when she lost to Lilia Osterloh.

The Frenchwoman has admitted to still being tired and overwhelmed by her surprise Grand Slam perfor-

mance this month.

Slovak Daniela Hantuchova takes the sixth seeding with Martina Hingis at seven and playing for the first time since a back injury which hampered her Wimbledon.

Wimbledon champion Venus Williams, who will represent her family after sister Serena withdrew with her thumb injury, last played the event in 2002 when she lifted the title with a win over Jelena Dokic.

Brothers finish

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Yellow cards: Rony, Junior (Brothers) and Dhiman, Khokon (Chittagong Abahani)

TEAMS

BROTHERS: Ali (Nizam), Rony, Shuvra, Jewel Rana, Masud Rana, Mamun, Liton (Faisal), Rintu, Junior, Jalaluddin, Manju (Mahbub).

CHITTAGONG ABAHANI: Surendra, Monir, Narayan, Sohel, Dhiman, Khokon, Abraham, Othello, Towhid, Jitu, and Santosh.

Monty sport personality of the year

PTI, London

England's only Sikh cricketer Monty Panesar has been chosen as Sport Personality of the Year at the Asian Achievers Award 2007.

At a glittering ceremony held at the Hilton Hotel, Park Lane, in Sunday night, Lord Karan Billimoria, leading NRI entrepreneur presented the award to Panesar.

Lord Navnit Dholakia, Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrats bagged the Editor's Award while Prof Nathuram Puri, NRI industrialist received Business Community Award.

Other recipients were Naynesh Desai (Professional of the Year), Ratilal Devchand Shah (Achievement in Community Service), Renu Patel (Achievement in media/Art and Culture), Firoz Kassam (Lifetime Achievement award), Dalip Kumar (Young Entrepreneur of the year and Shriti Vadera (woman of the year).

Prominent among those present on the occasion were Keith Vaz, leading NRI Labour MP and former minister, S. Jagadeesan, Minister, Economics in the Indian High Commission, Lord Bhiku Parikh and Yoga Guru Swami Ramdev.

New challenge

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under the leadership of Maj Gen Sina Ibn Jamali, will come under scrutiny about how they run the show to uplift the standard of the country's most popular game.

Cricket in Bangladesh is going through a transition period and anything other than creative thinking would seriously hamper its progress.

The new committee's first challenge would be to find a quality coach for the national team as they desperately felt the absence of Dav Whatmore in the just concluded disastrous tour in Sri Lanka.

There are also a number of issues pending, like forming a new selection committee as the contract of chief selector Faruque Ahmed expires by this month.

"We are eagerly waiting to see the new committee members at office because there are number of issues we have to settle quickly," said BCB chief executive officer Mahmudur Rahman yesterday.

"I feel good because I got the opportunity again to be involved in activities of the game. It is always nice for me as a cricketer to be part of the game development. I can't say more right now but I will try my best to take our cricketers one step forward from this stage," said former Bangladesh skipper Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipu.

Everybody will be waiting to see what kind of reform the ad-hoc committee is does.

Bonus for Iraqis

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nation with 40,000 US dollars as travel expenses from their home to the venue but the Iraqis, of course, are not based in Iraq and they have to travel through so many airports," said AFC president Mohamed bin Hammam.

"They applied for an additional subsidy and we approved it and it will be paid directly to the national association to help with their travel expenses."

Bin Hammam suggested that at the next 2011 Asian Cup in Qatar prize money would be offered for the first time.

"We don't compensate our football federations for playing in the Asian Cup. There is no prize money for this competition," he said.

"But we believe that for 2011 something will be changed."

Reyes set

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plans for the coming season, but wants to recoup the majority of the initial £10.5 million the Gunners paid Sevilla for the winger in 2004.

Marca claims that Wenger had given Reyes until Tuesday to find another club, or else he would stay in London for the season.

Lyon were rumours to be interested in buying Reyes, but it now appears that Atletico are the front-runners for his signature.

If the deal does go through, it would take Atletico's summer spending to around 80 million Euros (£50 million), joining Diego Forlan, Simao Sabrosa and Luis Garcia at the Vicente Calderon stadium, having sold Fernando Torres to Liverpool.

Missed chance

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hosts on Day Two at Trent Bridge.

Karthik, who got out on his individual score of 77, underlined the amount of difficulty the openers faced in the first session.

"The new ball was definitely doing a bit, probably not as much as yesterday, but they had two good swing bowlers as well. (Ryan) Sidebottom bowled well to me. He hit me on the box a couple of times, got me on the hand."

"But we needed to be positive and it later became like any other pitch," he said.

'Sachin should do it'



AFP, Nottingham

Allan Donald backed Sachin Tendulkar to become Test cricket's leading run-scorer after the India star became only the third player in history to score 11,000 Test runs at Trent Bridge here Saturday.

Tendulkar, who only needed 25 runs to reach the landmark at the start of his innings, was 57 not out at stumps on the second day of the second Test against England with India, at 254 for three, 56 runs ahead on first innings.

Former South Africa quick Donald, now England's bowling coach, said of Tendulkar: "He's the best player I've ever had the pleasure of playing against. He's something special, very freakish."

"I think not only what he's done for the game but what he's done for his country has been absolutely phenomenal. He's just a credit to cricket."

Tendulkar did have an uncomfortable moment early in his innings

when, on five, he was hit on the helmet as he tried to sway out of the way of a short ball from James Anderson.

"I know he's been through a bad trot with injuries over the last couple of years but he looked quite his old self out there apart from being 'grilled' today. It's not many times you see him getting 'sconned'," added Donald.

"He's definitely the best I've ever seen."

Now only the retired duo of world record holder Brian Lara, with 11,953 runs from 131 matches and former Australia captain Allan Border (11,174 from 156) are ahead of Tendulkar in the list of Test cricket's all-time leading run-makers.

Donald, asked if the 34-year-old Tendulkar, appearing in his 139th Test, could break Lara's record replied: "I hope so. There's still a lot more cricket in Sachin Tendulkar. He still looks so boyish, it's just unbelievable how many years he's stuck it out and has achieved what he's achieved."

Tendulkar, who made his Test

debut as a teenager in 1989 against Pakistan, was the first batsman to score 50 hundreds in all international cricket.

He is also the leading century maker in Test history, with 37, and recently became the first man to score 15,000 one-day international runs.

"It's scary to see how many hundreds he's clocked up in Test matches, not to mention one-day internationals," said Donald. "I hope he goes past it because I think he deserves it simply because he's such a humble, wonderful guy."

India opener Dinesh Karthik, who made 77 on Saturday and put on a valuable 147 for the first wicket with Wasim Jaffer, showed that even Tendulkar's team-mates were just as admiring of the 'Little Master' as outsiders.

"For me he's the greatest player I've ever seen," said the 22-year-old, appearing in his 15th Test. "I'm humbled to part of the same team and I'm honoured that a person like Sachin even knows my name."

"I'm 100 per cent sure he will break the record. It's just a matter of time."

ICL set to hit Lanka



AFP, Colombo

A multi-million-dollar rebel league in India seems set to take Sri Lankan cricket by storm with several top players approached to join the lucrative series, sources said on Sunday.

The Indian Cricket League (ICL), promoted by the country's largest listed media group Zee Telefilms, features six teams playing Twenty20 matches across India.

Each team in the league, which has not been recognised by the International Cricket Council or the Board of Control for Cricket in India, will have four international players, two Indian stars and eight up-and-coming players.

Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) sources said several players were privately approached by agents during the recent series here with Bangladesh but that the SLC

would not allow any contracted players to join the rebel league.

"If they go ahead and join the league the result would be similar to the 1982 rebel tour to South Africa," an SLC source said.

Fourteen Sri Lankan cricketers led by Bandula Warnapura were banned for 25 years in 1982 for taking part in the South African series.

But press reports here said that the recently retired Russel Arnold has accepted the offer and is negotiating with the ICL.

Arnold, currently overseas, was not available for comment.

At least two other Sri Lankan star players have been offered contracts ranging from 500,000 to 600,000 dollars for each of the three years in the playing contract, a huge jump from their Sri Lankan contracts.

West Indies batting legend Brian Lara has already declared that he would play in the league, the dates and venue of which are yet to be announced.

Jose plots revenge



AFP, London

Jose Mourinho has found himself in the unusual position of being out-gunned in the transfer market, but he believes his decision to go back to basics will prove decisive in the race for the Premiership.

While Manchester United and Liverpool spent big money to upgrade their squads during the close season, Mourinho's only major outlay was the 13 million pounds paid to Lyon for Florent Malouda.

The France winger is a significant arrival though because he has a key role to play as Mourinho returns to the 4-3-3 formation that served him so well in his first two seasons at Stamford Bridge.

The formation, which calls for two wingers to play either side of a central striker, was ditched last year to accommodate Andriy Shevchenko and Michael Ballack.

But both players failed to live up to their illustrious reputations, forcing Mourinho into a rethink. He has opted to return to his old game plan and will use Malouda and Joe Cole to compliment Didier Drogba.

It was Drogba's herculean efforts that dragged Chelsea almost single-handedly to within touching distance of an unprecedented quadruple.

The Ivory Coast striker scored 33 times, including winners in the FA and League Cup finals, but Mourinho knows he needs more help if Chelsea are to wrestle the title back from United.

"Our rivals have strengthened but so have we," Mourinho said. "I don't think it's going to be who spends the most money who wins the league. That has never been the case."

"It's always been who has the fighting spirit, togetherness and which of the big players had the better season."

"Cristiano Ronaldo had a good season last year and was the main reason United won the league."

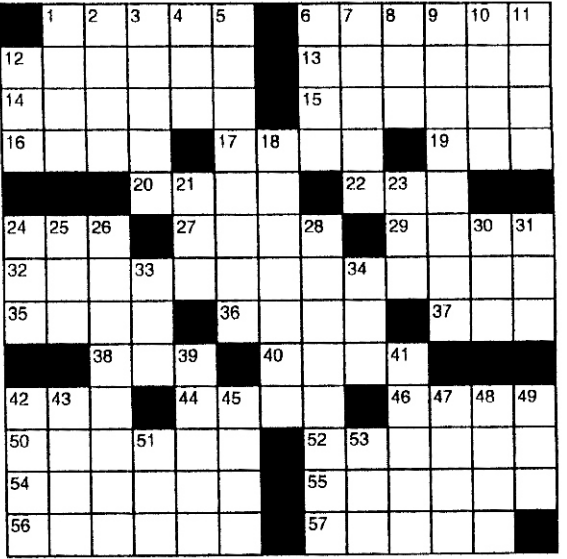
"This year we need two or three important players in attack to come up with the goods and that's what we'll be trying to do."

With wingers back in vogue in west London, Real Madrid's attempts to lure Arjen Robben to the Bernabeu are unwanted. But, despite clearly trying to unsettle the Dutchman, the Spanish champions have yet to feel the newly mellow Mourinho's wrath.

He is determined to be more loveable this season after a combustible campaign that included rows with owner Roman Abramovich, Rafa Benitez and even the Reading Ambulance service.

Not even the presence of Avram Grant, the club's newly installed director of football, has managed to ruffle Mourinho. Grant has arrived from Portsmouth at the behest of Abramovich, who believes the Israeli can get the best out of Shevchenko.

When his appointment was first mooted last season, Mourinho made it clear he was unhappy with the perceived attempt to interfere with his staff.



CRYPTOQUIP

F D H R Q B F C L Q K V Q T B
B Q A H U B C I H L C C I M C L V D Q F
D Q U G H Z C I H D J B M Q A C L J F H
U H B B H L F R L H Q Z D I H K G Q
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: A BRAINSTORMING SESSION HELD IN A COOKING AREA MIGHT BE CALLED THE KITCHEN THINK.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: F equals T