



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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Openers 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
David c Bell b Panesar 37
Tendulkar b/w 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 wkt 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

Inzy could play in ICL

Cricket

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."

Roddick, Blake ousted

Tennis

AFP, Indianapolis

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

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

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."

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 semifinal 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."

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Maria makes return

Tennis

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 semifinals 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.

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 seed 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.

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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), Ratnal 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.

The new committee's first challenge will 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.

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

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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 doing.

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 AFP correspondent Mohammed 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.

Lyons were rumoured 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.

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