



South African dancers perform a traditional dance during the opening ceremony of the Champions Trophy at SuperSport Park in Centurion on Tuesday.

Robson agrees to become Thai coach

AFP, Bangkok

Former England captain Bryan Robson agreed Wednesday to become the coach of Thailand's national team, the Thai football association said.

The announcement came a day after Robson, who has previously coached at clubs including Middlesbrough and Sheffield United, arrived Thailand for talks on replacing Peter Reid as Thailand coach.

"He has agreed to become coach," Thai FA chairman Worawi Makudi told reporters.

He said Robson would sign the contract later Wednesday before flying back to Britain and that there would be a press conference when the ex-Manchester United skipper returns to Thailand in mid-October.

Robson was not at Wednesday's news conference but said when asked on Tuesday if he would take the job that it was "looking pretty good".

He said he had to discuss taking on the job while maintaining his commitment as a roving ambassador for Manchester United.

Former Sunderland and Manchester City boss Reid's contract as Thailand's national coach was terminated earlier this month after just a year. He has been appointed number two at Stoke City.

Worawi has previously rejected criticisms that Robson had had no major success during his time as manager at other clubs.

Eid rowing competition

UNB, Dhaka

A rowing competition will be held in Kalihati upazila of Tangail today on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr.

Some big and small country-made boats will be used for the NCC Bank-Singha Rowing Competition 2009 to be held at Qumribel at Singha village in the afternoon.

Singha Samajkalyan Jubo Sangha in cooperation with NCC Bank Limited and Bangladesh Rowing Federation will organise the event.

Kamal BCB's

FROM PAGE 17 hopeful that I will get all out support from elected board directors," he hoped.

He said that the board has to have the long-term and short-term strategy to improve the game in the country.

"I have some plans but let me start my job first," he added.

BCB's director and media committee chairman Jalal Yunus said that they were happy with the appointment. "We got a good leader ahead of the World Cup because he [AHM Mustafa Kamal] has a rich background. We also want to thank the outgoing president for successfully running the show and working with a positive frame of mind," said Yunus, who is also vice-president of Abahani's cricket committee.

Kirsten's mantra!

AFP, New Delhi



India's cricketers at the Champions Trophy in South Africa are being encouraged by their coach to have sex to boost their on-field performance, a newspaper reported on Wednesday.

The benefits of sex feature prominently in a secret document circulated among players by coach Gary Kirsten and mental conditioning expert Paddy Upton, the Hindustan Times said in a front-page report.

It came as India take on arch-rivals Pakistan in their first Champions Trophy match in Centurion on Saturday.

The large-selling broadsheet, which claimed to have a copy of the document, said the relevant chapter was headlined "Does sex increase performance?"

"Yes it does, so go ahead and indulge," the document said, before detailing the benefits of a good sex life and even suggesting "going solo" if no partners were available.

"From a physiological perspective, having sex increases testosterone levels, which cause an increase in strength, energy, aggression and competitiveness," the document said.

"Conversely, not having sex for a period of a few months causes a significant drop in testosterone levels in both males and females, with the corresponding passiveness and decrease in aggression."

The document quotes Tim Noakes, a professor and sports scientist at the University of Cape Town, Kirsten's home town, as saying that "sex was not a problem, but being up till 2:00 am, probably having a few drinks at a bar while trying to pick someone up, on the eve of a game, almost always was."

The document helpfully suggests a solution.

"If you want sex but do not have someone to share it with, one option is to go solo whilst imagining you have a partner, or a few partners, who are as beautiful as you wish to imagine," the document said.

"No pillow talk and no hugging required. Just roll over and go to sleep."

Enforced celibacy may also affect performance, the advice said.

"You may experience that your mind spends more time focusing on the fire in your groin than on good sport practice, preparation and sleep," the document said.

The document also stresses the importance of being aggressive on the field from the start, self-improvement and healthy eating.

Schumi bucks up Button

AFP, Singapore



Michael Schumacher is backing Britain's Jenson Button to win the Formula One world title this year, saying it is his to throw away.

Button goes into Sunday's Singapore Grand Prix with a 14-point cushion over Brawn GP veteran teammate Rubens Barrichello and is 26 points ahead of third placed Red Bull driver Sebastian Vettel.

Schumacher, the seven-time world champion who retired at the end of the 2006 season, said he was confident Button would do enough over the final four races.

"Looking at the situation, I would pretty much expect Jenson to win this title," the German told the Race of Champions website.

"It's very hard to take it away, particularly knowing the problems and the reliability issues they have had at Red Bull."

Despite Vettel's challenge fading after finishing eighth during the last Grand Prix at Monza, Schumacher said his fellow German had all the hallmarks of a future multiple world champion.

champion.

"He has all the ingredients to do so," said Schumacher, but downplayed comparisons with himself.

"I myself never wanted to be compared with anybody else because I wanted to be myself and so he wants to. I think everybody should respect that."

Schumacher, 40, had been primed to replace Felipe Massa in the Ferrari team for the Spanish Grand Prix in August following the Brazilian's high speed crash in July.

But he injured his neck in a motorcycle accident in February and medical examinations after test runs in a Ferrari showed he had not recovered enough to withstand the strains of F1 racing.

Schumacher though has signed up for the Race of Champions in Beijing in November, where the world's best circuit racers and off-road drivers compete head-to-head.

He will race alongside both Button and Vettel, as well as eight-time Le Mans 24 Hour winner Tom Kristensen, World Rally Championship leader Mikko Hirvonen and triple World Touring Car Champion Andy Priaulx.

Lankans drub Proteas

FROM PAGE 17 grand old man of Sri Lankan cricket, 40-year-old Sanath Jayasuriya, for 10 when trapped leg before by Steyn.

Mahela Jayawardene and Thilan Samaraweera proved a further thorn in South African flesh, adding 116 runs off 106 balls for the fourth wicket before they departed from consecutive Wayne Parnell deliveries.

Facing a mammoth total, the last thing the Proteas needed was the loss of an early wicket but Hashim Amla was walking back to the pavilion with just nine runs on the board after being bowled by Angelo Mathews.

The prize wicket of Smith came in the 15th over as he sought an off-break when looking good on 58 and Kallis (41) and Duminy (0) fell to consecutive Mendis balls.

South Africa were tottering at 122-4 and any chance of a miraculous recovery vanished as AB de Villiers (24) and wicketkeeper Mark Boucher (26) departed on a dismal day for a team considered title favourites with Australia.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the Champions Trophy opening match between South Africa and Sri Lanka at SuperSport Park in Centurion on Tuesday:

SRI LANKA	
Dilshan c Morkel b Steyn	106
Jayasuriya lbw b Steyn	50
Sangakkara c & b Duminy	14
Jayawardene c Duminy b Parnell	77
Samaraweera c Van der Merwe b Parnell	37
Mathews b Steyn	15

FROM PAGE 17 occurred, although Flintoff claims versions of the incident in which he had to be rescued as he drifted out to sea were inaccurate.

"Not long after I arrived at the club, I realised I'd had enough to drink and slipped out -- intending to walk back to the hotel," he writes.

"Instead of walking down the road, I decided it would be nicer down the beach and come into the hotel from the back. A row of kayaks caught my eye, but none of them had any oars.

"Next to them were some pedalos, and I remember dragging one to the edge of the water -- presumably because I fancied a ride. But for the life of me, I couldn't work out how to get on it -- or my legs into it -- so I let go of it, and it quickly drifted away from the shore.

"I think I slipped and fell over in a few inches of water, but nothing more."

Fletcher reacted furiously to the incident and Flintoff admitted he had never seen eye-to-eye with the coach. "As far as Duncan and I are concerned, it was a case of two people who didn't get on being thrown together for eight months of the year as part of the England cricket team," he writes. "We had completely different views on life; the relationship didn't work and it came to an abrupt end after the World Cup."

Romario to run for election

AFP, Rio De Janeiro

World Cup winner Romario is to run for election to the national parliament as he fights off debts and fraud charges.

The 43-year-old, who scored 70 goals in 80 games for Brazil and was part of the 1994 World Cup-winning squad, was to join the socialist party and stand in the 2010 federal elections, the daily O Globo reported Tuesday.

"Romario will have policies and can't just depend on the votes of his supporters," the party's Rio state chairman Alexandre Cardos told the paper.

In August, Romario, who also faces tax evasion allegations and is embroiled in an illegal betting probe, was forced to sell a luxury penthouse apartment here, which fetched 4.37 million dollars.

All profits from the sale were seized by the judicial authorities to help pay his debts.

Romario, whose full name is Romario de Souza Faria, played for a host of top clubs including PSV Eindhoven and Barcelona and finished his career at Brazilian side Vasco de Gama in 2008.

USA to ban high-tech swimsuits

AFP, Chicago

High-tech polyurethane swimsuits that have fuelled a tidal wave of world records will be banned in US racing from October, USA Swimming announced Saturday.

Delegates at USA Swimming's annual convention voted "overwhelmingly" to implement the ban in events sanctioned by the American governing body, three months before a similar ban is slated to go into effect worldwide.

"All swimsuits shall be made from textile materials," according to the rules voted on at the convention. "For men, the swimsuit shall not extend above the navel nor below the knees, and for women, shall not cover the neck, extend past the shoulder, nor extend below the knee."

Textile fabric is defined as material that is woven or knit.

FINA, world swimming's governing body, has vowed similar legislation will go into effect on January 1.

"With Saturday's vote, our membership has sent a clear message that it wanted this action taken sooner, rather than later," said USA Swimming Executive Director Chuck Weigus. "We hope that this action will put the emphasis back where it belongs -- on our athletes, their training and hard work."

Henin returns

FROM PAGE 17

with a fabulous one-handed backhand, a great all-round game and a tough mentality, she went on to win seven Grand Slam titles in the next seven years -- four French Opens, two US Opens and one Australian Open -- as well as two WTA Tour Championships.

She won a total of 41 WTA Tour titles and held the world No.1 spot for 117 non-consecutive weeks, a position she had when she retired on May 14, 2008 citing a succession of injuries and a desire to live a life away from tennis.

Tilla's transformation

AFP, Centurion



Sri Lanka hero Tillakaratne Dilshan says switching from the middle to top order has helped develop him into a fearsome run machine.

He scored 106 to set his country up for a surprise 55-run victory over hosts South Africa at SuperSport Park on Tuesday in the opening match of the 2009 ICC Champions Trophy.

Sri Lanka amassed 319-8 on a run-friendly pitch and spinner Ajantha Mendis snatched three key wickets as South Africa slumped to 206-7 before rain halted play with 74 balls left and the Duckworth-Lewis system came into play.

"I have been in good form for the past 12 months and believe moving from the middle order to the top has helped me a lot," revealed Dilshan after receiving the man-of-the-match award.

"As an opener I feel I have more chances to build an innings and Kumar [captain Sangakkara] and I have developed a wonderful partnership in which we know how to assist each other."

It was the third ODI century by the 2009 ICC Cricketer of the Year and Test Player of the Year

nominee and his career-best 137 came this year against Pakistan in Karachi.

Dilshan struck 16 fours and one six in a near-flawless knock before being caught at the boundary by Albie Morkel off the bowling of right-arm speedster Dale Steyn.

Sangakkara hailed the contributions of Dilshan and Ajantha Mendis, who overshadowed more famous fellow spinner Muttiah Muralidaran by taking the wickets of skipper Graeme Smith, Jacques Kallis and JP Duminy.

"Tilla and Ajantha were outstanding but this victory is history now and we must capitalise on it otherwise it will be worthless," warned the skipper-cum-batsman-cum-wicketkeeper.

"The big challenge with Ajantha was when to bring him on and against who," said Sangakkara.

Smith said the Proteas -- joint pre-tournament favourites with defending champions Australia for the two-million-dollar first prize -- had to improve quickly or face a humiliating early exit.

South Africa meet bogey team New Zealand at the same venue on Thursday and another loss would virtually spell the end of their chances to reach the semifinals.

"Although it was our first outing we have no excuses. We need to improve quickly and hopefully do a lot better. It is a question of executing the basics properly."

Renault banned

Life ban imposed on Briatore

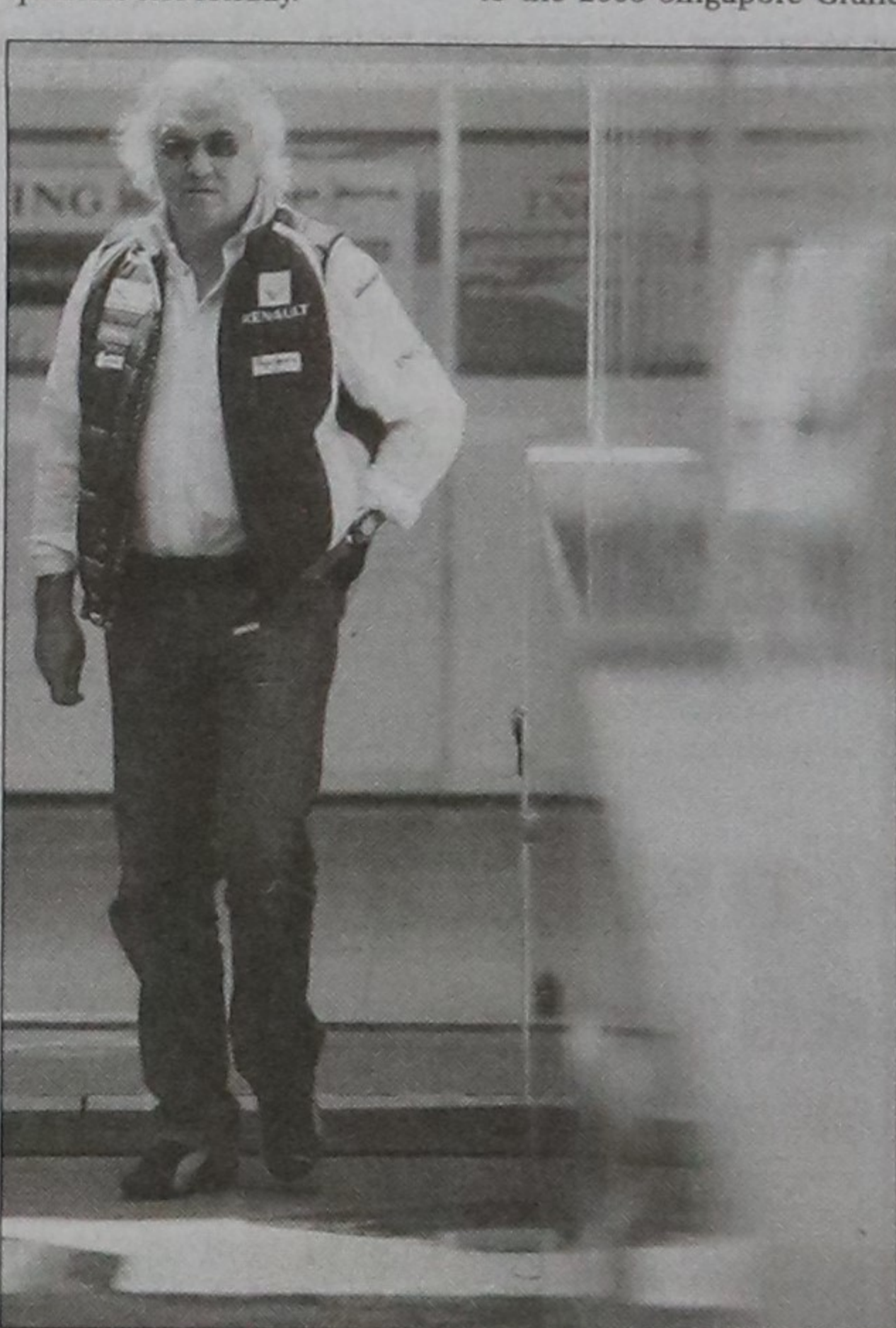
AFP, Paris



The Renault Formula One team were on Monday handed a suspended ban from the sport by the International Automobile Federation (FIA) for ordering Nelson Piquet junior to crash in the 2008 Singapore Grand Prix.

The FIA have told the French team that the threat of a permanent ban from the sport will hang over them until the end of the 2011 season and will only be activated during that time if they are found guilty of a similar charge.

The verdict was handed down by the sport's governing body the International Automobile Federation (FIA) after a one-and-a-half-hour hearing at their Paris headquarters on Monday.



FLAVIO BRIATORE

Renault were in the dock for conspiring with Piquet junior to cause a deliberate crash to help the Brazilian's teammate, Fernando Alonso, win the race.

The team which won two drivers' titles in the 1990s were facing permanent exclusion from the sport over 'crashgate' as the affair became known but escaped that ultimate sanction after owing up to the conspiracy and with the departure from the team of Piquet, team boss Flavio Briatore and chief engineer Pat Symonds.

Briatore himself was handed an "unlimited" ban from the sport while Symonds was suspended for five years. Explaining its decision not to kick Renault out of the sport for life the FIA said in a statement: "The council considers Renault F1's breaches relating to the 2008 Singapore Grand Prix to be of unparalleled severity."

"They not only compromised the integrity of the sport but also endangered the lives of spectators, officials, other competitors and Nelson Piquet Jr. himself."

"The WMSC considers that offences of this severity merit permanent disqualification from the FIA Formula One World Championship."

"However, in particular the steps taken by Renault F1 to identify and address the failings within its team and condemn the actions of the individuals involved, the WMSC has decided to suspend Renault F1's disqualification until the end of the 2011 season."

The affair dates back almost a year to the Singapore Grand Prix of September 28 when Piquet and Alonso were the two Renault drivers.

Alonso began the race in 15th position, but after making a very early pit stop to refuel, Piquet crashed into a wall, prompting the deployment of the safety car.

As Alonso's rivals then gradually disappeared into the pits to refuel, the Spaniard catapulted himself up into the virtual lead to go on and win his first race in a year.

Piquet subsequently fell out with Briatore and was dismissed from the team. It was after that he and his father, three-time world champion Nelson Piquet senior, claimed that Renault's Briatore and Symonds had conspired to fix the outcome of the race.

In response to the allegations Renault accused Piquet of blackmail and announced they were launching criminal proceedings against him and his father.

Briatore denied all the accusations against him -- notably conspiring with team management and Piquet to cause a deliberate accident -- saying they were "outrageous lies".

But last week Renault sensationally announced they would not be contesting the charges against them, and announced the departures of Briatore and Symonds.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	DOWN
1 Group of musicians	1 "Hum-bug!"
5 Great Lakes fish	2 Past
9 Dubya's brother	3 Gist
12 Chills and fever	4 Tempera-ture unit
13 Leak slowly	5 Corn eaters' throw-aways
14 Eggs	6 Golf target
15 Mischievous	7 Sub-machine gun
17 Sprite	8 British automobile
18 Stein or stiller	9 Mini-strike
19 Go up	10 Level
20 Express appreciation	11 Teller's place
21 Tag	16 Lubricate
24 A Baldwin brother	20 Coop occupant
25 Lotion additive	21 Chantilly, e.g.
26 Fixed firmly	22 Astrin-gent
30 Young lion	23 "Priceless Memories" writer
31 One over par	24 Congrega-tional call
32 Rage	26 Snug and warm
33 Inscribe, as in heraldry	27 Swelled head
	28 History chapters
	29 Opposite of "stet"
	31 Watched
	32 History
	33 Opposite of "stet"
	34 Ton
	35 Old Faithful, e.g.
	37 Lanka
	38 Weight
	39 Margarine
	40 Help a hood
	41 Doctrines
	42 Discoverer's cry
	43 Greek consonant
	46 Ar follower
	47 Reuben holder

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CRYPTOQUIP

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Yesterday's Cryptoquip: SINCE SINGER EYDIE IS AN AFICIONADO OF FINE FOOD, YOU MIGHT SAY SHE'S A GOURMET GORME.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: X equals S