

Steyn out of World Cup opener

AFP, London

Dale Steyn has been ruled out of South Africa's World Cup opener against England on Thursday.

The 35-year-old pacer injured his shoulder during the recent Indian Premier League and will not be risked at The Oval.

"He's not quite ready yet, not far away but not ready," said head coach Ottis Gibson.

"We think with a six-week tournament there's no real need to force the issue just now. He won't be available for the first game. We've still got 14 others so we'll choose from them."

Steyn has not bowled competitively since pulling out of Royal Challengers Bangalore's IPL campaign in late April, having played only two games there.



South Africa batsman Hashim Amla (L) and bowler Dale Steyn run some drills during a training session at The Oval yesterday. South Africa will face England in the ICC Cricket World Cup opener at the same venue tomorrow.

PHOTO: AFP

Booters draw with Air Force United

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh surrendered a lead to play out a 1-1 draw against Air Force United FC in their first practice match ahead of the joint qualifiers for Asian Cup and World

Cup (Round-1) against Laos at the Air Force ground in Bangkok yesterday.

Winger Biplu Ahmed gave Bangladesh the lead in the fourth minute after snatching the ball away from an opponent, driving a curling shot from 35 yards. Air Force, however, hit back in the 16th minute, with Chuiideh firing a rebound from inside the box after a free-kick came off the post.

English coach Jamie Day sent two different sets of players in two halves in a bid to test all the players as well as give them match time ahead of the second practice match against Thai League 2 side BG Pathum FC on June 1.

The 39-year-old coach started the game with goalkeeper Ashraf Islam Rana, Mohammad Ibrahim, fit-again Tutul Hossain Badsha, Nasir Chowdhury, Rahmat Mia, Emon Mahmud, Sohel Rana, Biplu,

Rabiul Hasan, Matin Mia and Towhidul Alam Sabuz before bringing on goalkeeper Anisur Rahman Zico, Riyadul Hasan, Yeasin Khan, Sushanta Tripura, Bishwonath Gosh, Mamunul Islam, Jamal Bhuiyan, Masuk Mia Zony, Mahbur Rahman Sufil, Arifur Rahman and Nabib Newaj Jibon in the second half.

"It was a good preparatory match for the boys, who all got an opportunity to show their worth. The coach brought changes in formation in the second half as the opponents are a good side, who played possessive football with crisp passing," said manager Satyajit Das Rupu over phone from Thailand.

Rupu informed that the team found some good chances in the second half but forwards like Sufil, Jibon and Arifur squandered those opportunities while Matin missed a chance in the first half.

"The opponents could hardly expose our defence but there were some mistakes and the coach will work on those mistakes and on set-pieces," Rupu said, adding that the coach would decide whether to start the second match with a different set of players or a possible starting eleven eyeing the June 6 match against Laos.

Marseille appoint Villas-Boas

AFP, Marseille

French club Marseille appointed former Chelsea and Tottenham boss Andre Villas-Boas as the club's new coach on Tuesday on a two-year deal to replace Rudi Garcia.

"We are delighted to hire a coach whose success is recognised at the highest level in Europe and in the world," Marseille owner Frank McCourt said in a statement.

Villas-Boas, 41, served as an assistant to Jose Mourinho before making his name at Porto, where he won three titles in 2010/11 and became the youngest coach to win a UEFA competition.

His success in his native Portugal earned him a move to Chelsea, although he lasted just seven months at Stamford Bridge before he took over at Tottenham as the successor to Harry Redknapp.

Baki fails too

SPORTS REPORTER

Abdullah Hel Baki followed the footsteps of Shakil Ahmed in the ISSF World Cup as the two-time Commonwealth Games silver medallist put a below-par performance to finish 85th out of 144 participants in 10m air rifle event in Munich yesterday.

Baki even failed to replicate his performance from February's Delhi ISSF World Cup after scoring 621.7 points, 7.8 points less than the eighth qualifier for the final round.

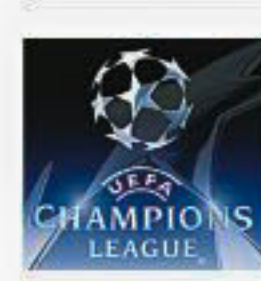
Baki had scored 624.7 points in Delhi. The 29-year-old shooter had, however, registered his personal best of 624.8 points in Munich World Cup in 2016.

Though Baki failed to improve his performance, his teammate Rabbi Hasan Munna produced his best at senior level by scoring 623.1 points which helped him finish in 72nd position. Munna, however, had scored 624.6 points at junior level during Asian Shooting Competition in 2016.

Robiul Hasan, however, produced his worst-ever performance by scoring 610.5 points to finish 128th in the competition.

Reward awaits L'pool or Spurs

AFP, London



The transformation of Liverpool and Tottenham's fortunes under Jurgen Klopp and Mauricio Pochettino has so far been measured in progress rather than trophies.

That will all change for the winner of Saturday's Champions League final with one of the two claiming the biggest prize in Europe.

Klopp has not won any silverware since arriving at Anfield in October 2015, while Pochettino is yet to claim any trophy in his coaching career.

However, the fact that Klopp and Pochettino are two of the highest rated coaches in world football is evidence if any was needed that there is more to good management than lifting trophies.

Klopp has come close on several occasions. The German has lost three finals as Liverpool boss, on penalties to Manchester City in the League Cup and Sevilla in the Europa League during his first season in 2015/16 before fortune favoured Real Madrid in last season's Champions League final.

Falling at the final hurdle once more would be even more heartbreaking for the Reds after missing out on the Premier League title by the finest of margins to City despite posting a club record 97 points.

"If I sit here in four years, I am pretty confident we will have one title," said Klopp on his first day at Anfield.

Klopp's impression was that if he

had not delivered silverware in that time then he would not last more than four years in the job.

Saturday's meeting in Madrid is his last chance to deliver on that confidence. But even if he loses, Klopp will still be revered rather than relieved of his duties for putting Liverpool back among the European elite.



Tottenham Hotspur striker Harry Kane (L) practises a volley during a training session at Enfield Training Centre in London on Monday ahead of their Champions League Final against Liverpool on Saturday.

PHOTO: AFP

The five-time European champions have by definition had many great nights in continental competition. But beating Barcelona 4-0 in their Champions League semi-final, second leg to overturn a 3-0 first leg deficit may be the best of all.

"A moment like Barcelona is worth more than silverware. Wow! That's exactly the picture we want to draw for the outside world, this is Liverpool," said Klopp.

If Klopp has put Liverpool back on their perch, Pochettino has lifted Tottenham to heights they have never seen before.

Spurs had only played in the European Cup twice in their history prior to the Argentine's arrival in 2014. Now they are in their first ever Champions League final and next season will be their fourth consecutive year in the competition.

Real want Hazard

AFP, Madrid



Real Madrid president Florentino Perez confirmed on Monday the club are keen to sign Eden Hazard this summer and claimed Sergio Ramos has an offer to move to China.

Hazard could play his last match for Chelsea in the Europa League final against Arsenal on Wednesday, with the Belgian's contract expiring next year.

"I have a lot of interest in him coming to Madrid, I'm not going to lie, and I hope this year he can play here," Perez told Spanish radio station Onda Cero on Monday night.

"We have wanted to sign Hazard for several years and I hope he will come this year. Until now we have not achieved it, but this time his contract ends next year."

After a disappointing season, Madrid are expected to overhaul their squad this summer and Perez suggested the club's captain Ramos is considering a move.

Ramos and Perez argued after Madrid's Champions League defeat to Ajax in March, with Ramos reportedly telling Perez the team's failings were down to a failure to replace Cristiano Ronaldo.

Perez claimed on Tuesday that Ramos had been offered a move to China but said he had blocked the defender's departure.

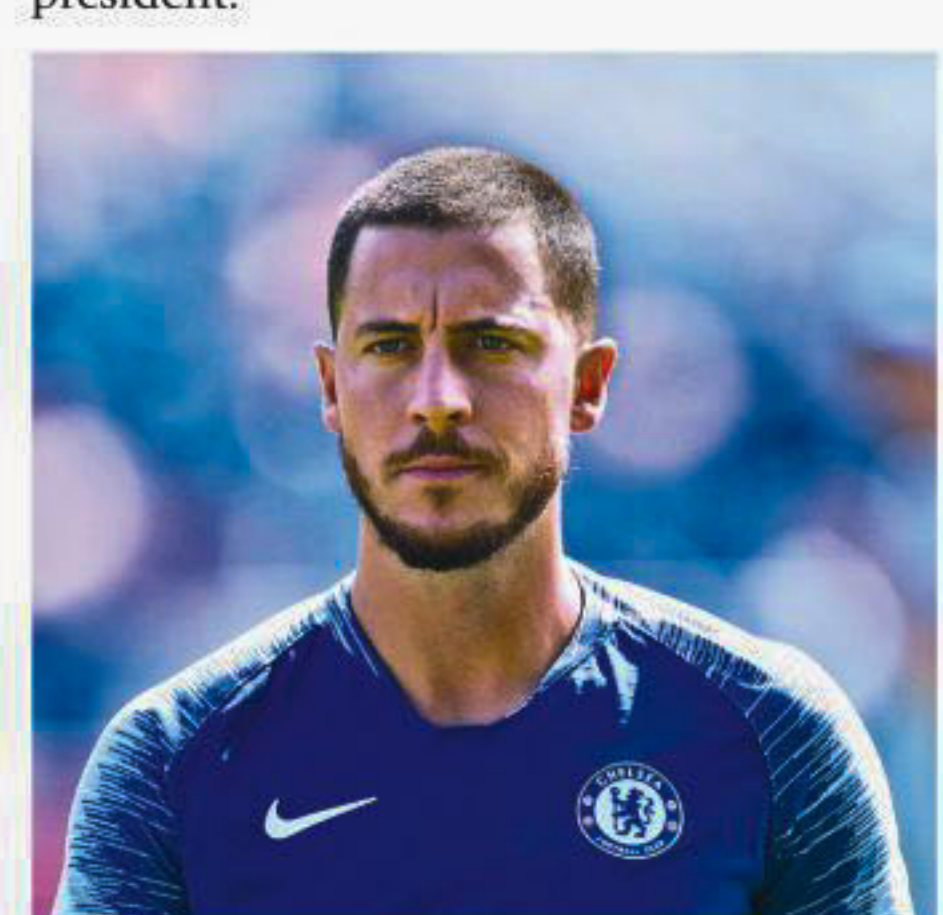
"We met in my office and he told me he had a very good offer from a Chinese team but a rule there means they cannot pay for the transfer," Perez said.

"It was no more than that, it was a conversation that has no interest. It is impossible for Real Madrid to let their captain go for free. I told him it's impossible,

nothing more."

Perez was also asked about the possibility of Madrid signing Kylian Mbappe or Neymar from Paris Saint-Germain.

"I have not spoken with Zinedine Zidane about either Mbappe or Neymar," said Perez, insisting he wants to maintain a good relationship with PSG. "If we want a player of PSG, we will call the club's president."



Gareth Bale's future remains uncertain but Perez said "we have not received any offers for any players of Real Madrid".

He also condemned the recent criticism of players like Bale that has come from Madrid's fans and sections of the Spanish press.

"We have made it seem like winning the Champions League is normal and it isn't. We have deceived people," said Perez.

"Some of these players have been insulted, they have been whistled, players who are going to go into the history of the club. It's not right."

SHORT CORNER

Gattuso to quit Milan over austerity

AC Milan coach Gennaro Gattuso is to announce his resignation on Tuesday in response to spending cuts imposed by the club for the summer transfer window, Italian media reports said.

Sporting director Leonardo is also reportedly set to quit because of differences with Ivan Gazidis, the administrator brought in by US hedge fund Elliot Management which bought the club last year.

Faced with mounting debts and threatened with FIFA sanctions for breaking financial regulations, AC Milan are adopting spending cuts and seeking to boost their coffers by buying young, unproven, talents who they hope to sell later for a profit, according to several media reports. --AFP

Atletico sign Brazilian defender Felipe

Atletico Madrid have agreed to buy 30-year-old central defender Felipe, the Brazilian's current club Porto announced.

In a statement released to the Lisbon stock exchange late Monday, Porto said that Atletico had agreed to pay 20 million euros (\$22.4 million) for Felipe Augusto de Almeida Monteiro who joined Porto from Corinthians of Sao Paulo in June 2016, just after winning his solitary Brazil cap.

This summer, Atletico Madrid have lost their captain, the 33-year-old Uruguayan centre back Diego Godin, who said he was quitting the club after nine seasons.

Porto announced in mid-March that they had agreed to sell another Brazilian central defender, Eder Militao, a 21-year-old with

two international caps, to Real Madrid for 50 million euros. --AFP

Spanish footballers detained for alleged match-fixing

Several Spanish footballers, suspected of being part of a gang that fixed matches in the first and second divisions, were detained on Tuesday, Spanish media reported.

Contacted by AFP, police confirmed an operation was underway but refused to give any more details.

According to several local media, those detained include a former Real Madrid player, suspected of leading the organisation, other footballers or ex-footballers in the first division as well as the president of Huesca, 19th in the last La Liga.

Suspected of fixing matches, they are accused of belonging to a criminal gang, corruption and money laundering, Spanish media reported. --AFP

Alves to replace Neymar as captain at Copa

Dani Alves will replace Neymar as the captain of the Brazilian national team in the Copa America, the country's football federation (CBF) announced Monday.

"The decision was communicated to Neymar by (coach) Tite on Saturday," CBF said in a statement about the striker, who was handed a three-match suspension for lashing out at a spectator following Paris Saint-Germain's shock defeat by Rennes in the French Cup final earlier this month.

Eight-time winners Brazil face Bolivia, Venezuela and Peru in the group stage, which starts on June 14, after two friendlies against Qatar and Honduras. --AFP

WI thrash New Zealand

PTI, Bristol

Talented youngster Shai Hope smashed his way to a blistering 101 while Andre Russell scored a quickfire 54 down the order to set up a 91-run win for World Cup dark horses West Indies in their warm-up game against New Zealand in Bristol on Tuesday.

Sent into bat, West Indies posted a massive 421 all out with wicketkeeper-batsman Hope toying with the Kiwi bowlers in his 86-ball innings which had nine fours and four sixes. Opener Evin Lewis contributed a 54-ball 50 but it was Russell who accelerated the West Indies innings towards the end with a 25-ball 54 to take his side past 400.

Chasing 422 for an improbable win, New Zealand suffered a top-order collapse and, despite a hundred from wicketkeeper Tom Blunde (106) and a 64-ball 85 from captain Kane Williamson, they were bundled out for 330 in 47.2 overs.

It was West Indies' only win from their two warm-up matches, the first one against South Africa being washed out due to rain.

New Zealand lost opener Martin Gupthill (5), Henry Nicholls (15) and Ross Taylor (2) cheaply as they were reduced to 33 for 3 in the 10th over.

Zverev survives marathon

Azarenka see off Ostapenko

AFP, Paris



Alexander Zverev survived a bruising four-hour battle to reach the French Open second round on Tuesday while dangerous Juan Martin del Potro also progressed.

German fifth seed Zverev, a quarter-finalist in Paris in 2018, battled past Australia's John Millman 7-6 (7/4), 6-3, 2-6, 6-7 (5/7), 6-3.

The champion in Geneva last weekend fired 57 winners past world number 56 Millman who stunned Roger Federer at the US Open last year.

However, he also committed 73 unforced errors on a blustery day in the French capital.

"John is a tough player who beat Federer so I knew it would be difficult today," said Zverev, bidding to become the first German man to win the Roland Garros title since Henner Henkel in 1937.

"It was very windy today so that made the conditions very difficult. It was a first match against a great opponent.

"I got through and that's all that matters."

Next up for Zverev is Swedish qualifier Mikael Ymer, the world number 148 of Ethiopian origin, who marked his Grand Slam debut with a 6-0, 6-3, 7-6 (7/5) win over Slovenia's Blaz Rola.

Argentine eighth seed Del Potro, a semifinalist in 2009 and 2018, made the second round with a 3-6, 6-2, 6-1, 6-4 win over Chilean world number 58 Nicolas Jarry.

Next up for the giant Argentine is a clash against Japan's Yoshihito Nishioka.

Jarry lived and died by the sword on Court Suzanne Lenglen, his 47 winners almost cancelled out by his 41 unforced errors.

Two-time Grand Slam winner and former world number one Victoria Azarenka defeated 2017 champion Jelena Ostapenko 6-4, 7-6 (7/4) in a match which featured 13 breaks of serve.

Ostapenko has now lost in the first

round in her last two visits to Paris with her wretched performance highlighted by an ugly 60 unforced errors.

Azarenka, ranked 43 in the world, will face top seed Naomi Osaka if the Japanese star gets past Slovakia's Anna Karolina Schmiedlova in her tournament opener.

Canada's Bianca Andreescu, the surprise champion at Indian Wells, marked her Roland Garros debut by beating Marie Bouzkova of the Czech Republic 5-7, 6-4, 6-4.



Victoria Azarenka hits a forehand return against Jelena Ostapenko during their women's singles first round match of the French Open in Paris on Tuesday.

PHOTO: AFP