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■ Ivory Coast striker Didier Drogba – who recently led Chelsea to their first Champions League title – confirmed that he will leave the London club next month BETTY IMAGES

Drogba to leave Chelsea; visit India in June

Agencies

LONDON/NEW DELHI: Ivory Coast striker Didier Drogba confirmed on Tuesday he will leave newly-crowned European champions Chelsea when his contract expires at the end of June.

Drogba has been at the Premier League club since 2004, joining from French side Marseille, and has scored 157 goals in 341 appearances helping the Blues win ten trophies.

The 34-year-old leaves the London club on a high after scoring a late equaliser against Bayern Munich in the Champions League final on Saturday and then converting the decisive penalty in a dramatic shoot-out after extra-time.

"I wanted to put an end to the speculation and confirm that I am leaving Chelsea," he told Chelsea's website.

"It has been a very difficult decision for me to make and I am very proud of what we have achieved, but the time is right for a new challenge for me."

Drogba is the club's fourth all-time highest scorer and his 34 goals in European competition is a Chelsea record by 10 goals.

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DIDIER DROGBA, Chelsea striker

DROGBA TO VISIT INDIA

Chelsea striker Didier Drogba will make his first visit to India next month. Drogba is coming to India for the grand finale of Pepsi T20 Football scheduled for June 17. The Ivory Coast striker will share his knowledge with the winners of the competition. The final winning team will get coached by him before facing the Indian cricketing stars in a fast paced game of Pepsi T20 Football, a the organisers said.

"To take the excitement around our grassroots initiative, Pepsi T20 Football to the next level, we are proud to bring one of the world's most exciting footballers Didier Drogba to India. His visit is a further testimony to our ultimate objective of popularising football in the country," said Homi Bhattiwala from PepsiCo India.