

Take it easy

Football

Asian football chiefs have issued a warning to clubs thinking of bolstering their squads ahead of next month's AFC Champions League quarter-finals.



order the players would be barred from competing in the last 16. AFC general-secretary Peter Velappan said players must have signed for their new clubs by February 9, and that their contracts must be for a minimum duration of six months.



- BTU Cricket World Cup 2003 Preliminary Round Sri Lanka vs West Indies Live at 6:15 pm

Star Whizz Kid Competition 19

Competition closes at 8 pm March 7, 2003 and draw shortly afterwards. Tick the correct answers, post to The Daily Star Win attractive prizes.

AFC Champions League quarter-finalists of the regulations in a statement released in Kuala Lumpur.

"Teams can sign on players. But all players not registered for the AFC Champions League as per the tournament regulations will be barred from competing," Velappan said.

"Therefore, to avoid any undue complications, it is best that they comply fully with the regulations. All documents will be closely scrutinized at the team managers meeting before the start of the competition."

"It is necessary for all clubs to produce a copy of the original contract for any new players to be eligible to play in the Champions League."

"We will not bend the rules for anyone and clubs are forewarned to ensure that all documentation pertaining to their registered players is in order," he added.

The AFC Champions League, which was launched last August, replaced the Asian Club Championship, Asian Cup Winners' Cup and Asian Super Cup.

The 16-team group stage takes place from March 9-15 followed by semi-finals in April and the final in May, with the winners taking home a first prize of 500,000 dollars.

It's beyond

FROM PAGE 16 Cup in the last over. Frayed tempers unmask the stifling pressure on the players. Miandad was so irritated with Indian wicket-keeper Kiran More's incessant jumping and appealing in the 1992 World Cup match in Australia that he instantly produced a carbon copy, more eye-catching than the original.

The picture of the Pakistani batsman jumping like a frog and yelling back at the Indian wicketkeeper still bemuses viewers.

During the 1996 World Cup in Bangalore, Pakistani opener Aamir Sohail struck Indian pacesman Venkatesh Prasad for a boundary and asked the bowler to go fetch the ball. His concentration lost, Sohail was bowled next ball.

India won that match and maintained their World Cup stanglehold over their arch-rivals with a victory four years later in England even as soldiers from both sides fought the Kargil war over the disputed Kashmir region.

Burly Pakistani batsman Inzamamul Haq was once so incensed at an Indian fan in Toronto for calling him a potato that he leapt at him with bat in hand before security stepped in to cool tempers.

Inzamam has since lost weight, but the pressure to score will be no less on Saturday. In four matches so far at the World Cup, Pakistan's premier batsman has scored just 10 runs.

Bring on Pakistan

FROM PAGE 16 having sprained an ankle after bowling just one ball in the 181 run thrashing of Namibia on Sunday.

"That was one of the best performances in a one-day international since I started playing for India," Ganguly said. "He bowled a good line and length and moved the ball."

But the Delhi-born quick almost missed the match of his life.

"Nehra had to go for a fitness test in the morning. But hats off to him, he was more determined than anyone to play."

First-change Nehra, despite attending the post-match press conference with his left ankle strapped, said he was in good shape.

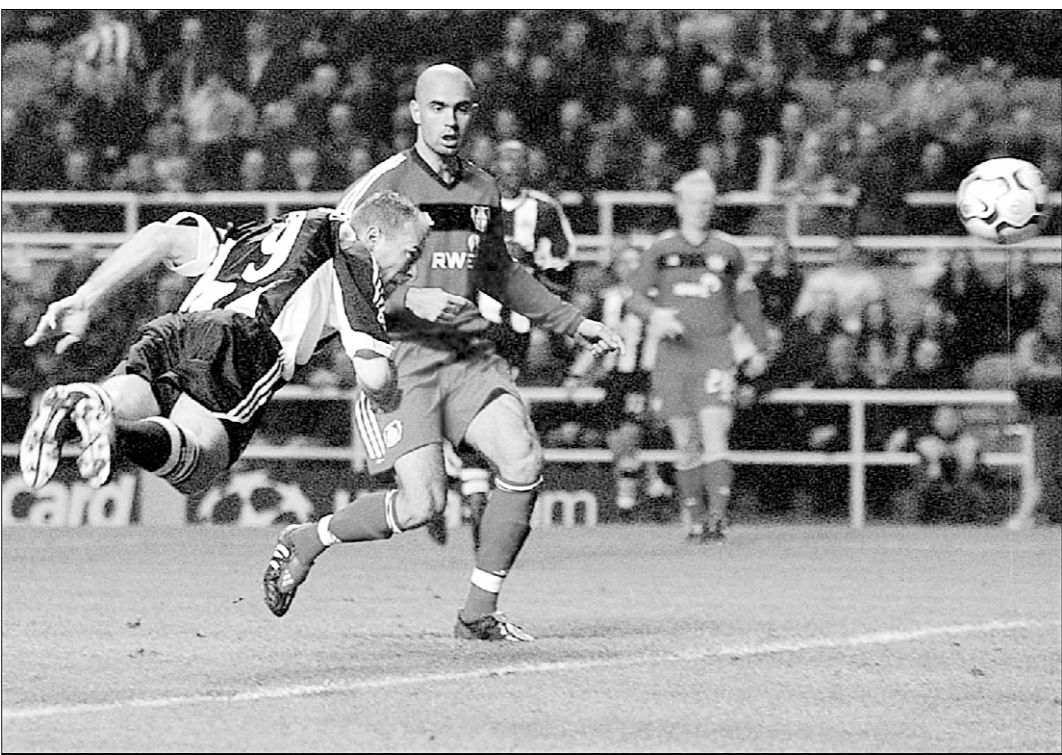
"It's a great feeling. I'm really excited. There was no pain in me." His figures were way in excess of his previous best at this level three for 30 against New Zealand in Colombo in 2001 but Nehra, who said he was a "great fan" of Pakistani left-arm speedster Wasim Akram played down his achievement.

"Zaheer (Khan) and (Javagal) Srinath bowled really well in the first 10 overs.

"I think it was a good wicket to bowl on. I just concentrated on line and length." x

For love's sake!

A possible deal. Inter president Massimo Moratti has made no secret of his desire to bring Giggs to the San Siro. But the 29-year-old claims he does not want to go anywhere. "I am happy at United and I want to stay at this club, I've always said that," he told the Sun newspaper Thursday.



VINTAGE WINE: Newcastle United's hat-trick hero Alan Shearer (L) scoring with a diving header against Leverkusen at St. James' Park on February 26.

Magpies' Shear delight

UEFA CHAMPS LEAGUE

AFP, Paris Alan Shearer's first hat-trick for Newcastle in over three years fired them to a 3-1 win over last season's bedraggled Champions League finalists Bayer Leverkusen on Wednesday and gave the Magpies a real chance of making the last eight.

One of Newcastle manager Bobby Robson's former clubs, Barcelona, are virtually assured of a place in the last eight after a 0-0 draw away at Inter Milan left them needing just one point from their last two matches.

The draw meant Barca failed to break Ajax's all-time winning streak in European competition of 11 set in the Cup Winners Cup campaigns of 1986/87 and 87/88.

In what could turn out to be a delicious twist Barcelona's match in Newcastle could decide whether it is the English side or Inter who progress with them from Group A.

Group B is a far tighter affair after AS Roma roused themselves from their slumber and stunned Valencia 3-0 in Spain - captain Francesco Totti getting two - to inflict their hosts first ever Champions League home defeat.

Ajax's 0-0 draw at home to Arsenal meant both of them moved up to six points with two matches to play while Valencia - finalists in two of the last three seasons - have five and Roma three.

It was Shearer's night though as he struck three times in the opening 36 minutes at St James' Park, two of them headers thanks largely to the terrible defending of Brazilian Cris, who looks a long shot to add to his 11 caps for his country given his last two performances for Leverkusen. Shearer's third came from the penalty spot.

While his 15th career hat-trick was pleasing, the former England captain was even more delighted to have at last scored a Champions League goal from open play.

"It was a record I wanted to end and it's great to do it in style even if their defence helped a bit!" said Shearer.

Robson was delighted with the way his side carried out his instructions to try and exploit their opponents' lack of confidence from the outset, as they had done in Germany last week but he admitted to being worried at certain moments.

"We became a bit complacent at 2-0 and I was worried that we were going to let it slip," he admitted.

"However we got our rhythm back with the third goal and then missing a penalty was a relief."

"I wanted to take Alan (Shearer)

and Gary (Speed) off with 25 minutes to go but at 3-1 didn't know whether we could hold on without their experience," the 70-year-old added.

Bayer coach Thomas Horster admitted he was at a loss to explain how his defence could have performed so badly.

"We had no defence, all we had was nerves," he said. "It is hard to take anything positive from a 90-minute game that is over after ten minutes."

Despite Barcelona's near certain qualification, their coach Radomir Antic was not a happy man.

RESULTS AT A GLANCE

Collated Champions League second group phase results on Wednesday:

Group A At Milan Inter Milan (Ita) 0 Barcelona (Spa) 0 At Newcastle, England Newcastle United (Eng) 3 (Shearer 5, 11, 36-pen) Bayer Leverkusen (Ger) 1 (Babic 73)

Group B At Amsterdam Ajax (Ned) 0 Arsenal (Eng) 0 At Valencia, Spain Valencia (Spa) 0 AS Roma (Ita) 3 (Totti 24, 30, Emerson 36)

"I am not satisfied with the result," the Serb handler said. "What was missing? Taking our chances, though I was happy with the way we handled their attack," added Antic, who has restored Barca's fortunes in the Spanish league since he replaced Louis van Gaal last month.

His Inter counterpart Hector Cuper, responsible for guiding previous club Valencia to their two Champions League finals, was happy with the result despite the

STANDINGS

European Champions League tables after Wednesday's second group phase matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, against, points): Barcelona 4 3 1 0 8 2 10 Inter Milan 4 2 1 1 7 6 7 Newcastle 4 2 0 2 8 9 6 Leverkusen 4 0 0 4 5 11 0

Note: Top two teams in each group qualify for quarter-finals.

increasing danger of Newcastle in the group.

"We gave everything and showed character in the light of several injuries during the match," the Argentinian said.

"It still leaves us in charge of our destiny," he added.

Ajax had the best chance of a disappointing match to take the three points when Cristian Chivu's freekick was headed off the line by Ashley Cole in the 38th minute - but it left both managers happy, particularly Arsenal's manager Arsene Wenger.

"We hold all the cards as regards our progress in the competition," said the Frenchman, whose side host Roma in a fortnight.

Koeman gleaned a far more positive message from the performance of his youthful and hugely talented Ajax side.

"We are the leaders of this group at the moment. If people had said Ajax would be at the top of the group, everybody would have laughed," said Koeman, whose free kick in 1992 handed his then club Barcelona their only ever European Cup title.

Totti's goals and one from Brazilian Emerson in a 12-minute period in the first half was enough to hand Roma their first points of the second phase.

Totti, who had missed the 1-0 defeat last week by Valencia, struck in the 24th minute as he headed home - for his first goal in three appearances this campaign - and added a second six minutes later with a right-footed shot from Brazilian World Cup captain Cafu's cross.

Emerson, who would have been Brazil skipper but for injuring himself prior to the finals, added a third in the 36th minute to leave last week's goalscorer John Carew regretting his promise to the Valencia fans that the Spaniards would give them 'something to remember'.

In the end it was Shearer who delivered on that promise.

Pak pride

FROM PAGE 16 year insurgency against Indian rule in Kashmir.

The scenic Himalayan state with Muslim majority region is divided between Pakistan and India and claimed by both.

"I think both teams should bet on Kashmir and decide this issue once for all," said Javed Ahmed, 35, shopping at a local bazaar.

He was confident of a Pakistani victory, but nervous at the implications. "I am a bit concerned about Muslims in India, because if India loses the match, extremist Hindus will kill hundreds of Muslims in fury."

Watching Pakistan play the Netherlands on a mini-TV in his Islamabad grocery store Tuesday, shopkeeper Ahmed Zainab said he was ready to forgive the team's losses as long as they beat India.

"It's okay to lose against Australia and even England, but we can't lose to India," he said.

Pakistan needs to beat India as well as Zimbabwe in Bulawayo next Tuesday to ensure a place in the Super Sixes.

"What is important to cricket fans here is national pride. This match is important just for the reason: because it is with India," said Muhammad Usman, an 11th grade student playing cricket with a tennis ball outside Islamabad's College for Boys.

"Whenever the two teams plays against each other it's always a play for pride and there is always tremendous public interest and I'm sure that everything will stop on Saturday in India and Pakistan," said Khan, who led Pakistan to a breathtaking recovery in the 1992 tournament to clinch the title.

The Islamabad Cricket Association believed a reshuffle of the batting lineup will boost Pakistan's hopes.

"Our team is better than India," secretary Irfan Manzoor said.

"We have some problems on the batting side, but in 1992 World Cup we had a similar situation. If the players are shuffled around then we can hope to win this match."

Computer programmer Arshed Mehmood, lazing on the lawn at the capital's F-7 cricket ground, said chances were even, although he considered India's batting and bowling lineup superior.

"I think it depends on who wins the toss," Mehmood said, adding that he would not be watching the match because the tensions surrounding it were too much.

"This match is important to me because India is after our lives," said Naseer, 27, a groundsman at Islamabad's Shalimar Cricket Club at the foot of the Margalla hills.

He watched the team close up when they played at his ground in an exhibition match with film and television celebrities on June 18.

"I know they can win." Fans were low key about plans for watching the clash of the shoes, choosing tea stalls, their own shops or cricket clubs for the big day.

"God willing, Pakistan will win," said Naseer.

Mission Impossible

FROM PAGE 16 very] well, hit the deck well there were no drive balls. But conditions did alter, the ball did start to zip off. That's not an excuse. We were lucky at Cape Town and unlucky today.

"But it's how you use it (the conditions) that's important."

"Nehra was pretty good, he hit the deck hard. He nibbled the ball both ways a little and was a bit quicker than you think."

One good thing to emerge from the match as far as England were concerned was the all-round performance of Andrew Flintoff.

The all-rounder's unchanged spell of two for 15 in 10 overs put the brakes on India and included the dismissal of Sachin Tendulkar whose run-a-ball-fifty threatened to propel his side towards the 300 mark.

That India finished on 250 for nine was mainly down to some expensive overs as the finish which left Hussain once again lamenting England's lack of a "death" bowler.

But Flintoff, a hard-hitting batsman, then gave the India attack something to think about, posting the best score of the game, a 73-ball 64 although by that stage the game was up.

"Flintoff's had one good game. But let's not build him up, he has to do it again," cautioned the skipper.

"But he can do things other people can't do."

Orange disorder plotted

FROM PAGE 16 of a surprise despite suffering heavy defeats to India, England, Australia and Pakistan.

"The team has been very competitive and was not rolled over or thrashed by the big teams," he said.

"It is a big plus that we could take 19 wickets in the big matches against India and Pakistan. The lack of pace bowling in the league back home and the high quality of spin in this World Cup have found us wanting a bit."

LINE-UPS NETHERLANDS (from): Roland Lefebvre (captain), Luuk van Troost, Daan van Bunge, Jacob Esmeyjer, Victor Grandia, Felko Kloppenburg, Tim de Leede, Henk Mol, Klaus van Noordwijk, Adeel Raja, Edgar Schiferli, Reinhout Scholte, Jeroen Smits, Nick Statham, Bas Zuiderent

ZIMBABWE (from): Heath Streak (captain), Andy Blygnaut, Dion Ebrahim, Sean Ervine, Andy Flower, Grant Flower, Travis Friend, Douglas Hondo, Douglas Marillier, Brian Murphy, Henry Olonga, Tatenda Taibu, Mark Vermeulen, Guy Whittall, Craig Wishart

Umpires: Steve Bucknor (Wls) and Tyon Wijewardene (Sri) TV Umpire: Nadeen Ghouri (Pak) Match referee: Clive Lloyd (Wls)

FORM GUIDE

FROM PAGE 16 Netherlands (won 0 lost 6) Feb 25 2003 lost to Pakistan by 97 runs Paarl Feb 20 2003 lost to Australia by 75 runs Potchefstroom Feb 16 2003 lost to England by 6 wickets East London Feb 12 2003 lost to India 68 runs Paarl Sept 16 2002 lost to Sri Lanka by 206 runs Colombo Sept 21 2002 lost to Pakistan by 9 wickets Colombo

Note: There are no other recent matches for the Netherlands as they are associate members and there are no head-to-heads

BEST AND WORST

FROM PAGE 16 Drifting in off the rope at long on, Drakes jack-knifed backwards and caught the ball one-handed. The television commentators had announced a six before Drakes got up with the ball in his hand. Drakes then took five for 44 to set up the West Indies win.

Brett Lee's dismissal of Andy Blygnaut after the Zimbabwean had smashed a 25-ball half-century in Bulawayo came close. Blygnaut cross-batted a lightning full toss straight back at the bowler who somehow reacted fast enough to catch the ball. Lee himself could not believe it. Lip-readers would have had no problems identifying his expletive.

THE BEST CELEBRATION Kenya's players jived away in a team huddle at the fall of each late wicket as they pulled off the biggest upset of the World Cup against the Sri Lankans in Nairobi.

THE BEST QUOTE Namibian bowler Rudi van Vuuren, who has also represented his country at rugby union: "Knowing my capabilities as a batsman, I'd rather take on Jonah Lomu one-on-one than Brett Lee."

THE WORST INNINGS Inzamamul Haq, one of the world's leading batsman, dismissed for a golden duck against England, went in to bat against the Netherlands needing a confidence boost. Instead he barely moved from his crease to be trapped for a second-ball duck by Tim de Leede's medium-paced floater. He averaged 2.25 in his first four innings.

THE WORST DROP Nathan Shamyurita, information secretary for the governing ZANU-PF party in Zimbabwe, reacting to a protest by players Andy Flower and Henry Olonga over the state of democracy in the country: "Olonga is not a Zimbabwean, he is a Zambian, but he has been allowed to play here. Flower is also not a Zimbabwean. He is British."

FORM GUIDE

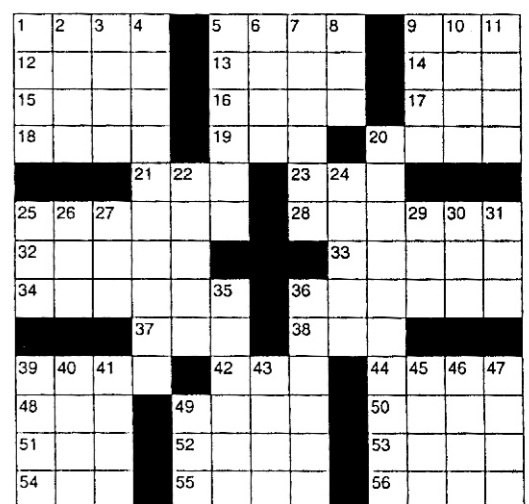
AFP, Harare Form guide for Zimbabwe and India ahead of their World Cup Group A match at the Harare Sports Club here on Wednesday: Zimbabwe (won 4 lost 5 NR 1)

Feb 13 2003 beat England (match forfeited) Harare Feb 10 2003 beat Namibia by 86 runs (D/L) Harare Dec 15, 2002 beat Kenya by 9 wickets Bulawayo Dec 11, 2002 beat Kenya by 47 runs Kwekwe Dec 8, 2002 v Kenya NR Harare Dec 1, 2002 lost to Pakistan by 70 runs Harare Nov 30, 2002 lost to Pakistan by 8 wickets Harare Nov 27, 2002 lost to Pakistan by 48 runs Harare Nov 24, 2002 lost to Pakistan by 104 runs Bulawayo Nov 23, 2002 lost to Pakistan by 7 runs Bulawayo

India (won 3 lost 7) Feb 15 2003 lost to Australia by 9 wickets Centurion Feb 12 2003 beat Netherlands by 68 runs Paarl Jan 14 2003 lost to New Zealand by 6 wickets Hamilton Jan 11 2003 beat New Zealand by 1 wicket Auckland Jan 8 2003 beat New Zealand by 2 wickets Wellington Jan 4 2003 lost to New Zealand by 7 wickets Queenstown Jan 1 2003 lost to New Zealand by 5 wickets Christchurch Dec 29 2002 lost to New Zealand by 35 runs Napier Dec 1 2002 lost to New Zealand by 3 wickets Auckland Nov 24 2002 lost to West Indies by 135 runs Vjajayawada

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 1 Funny remark 5 Sense 9 David James Elliott series 12 Bruins' home 13 Between assignments 14 Timetable abbr. 15 Counterfeit 16 Oklahoma city 17 Compete 18 Frat party 19 Clinton blew it 20 Indolent 21 Roscoe 23 Equal (Pref.) 25 Asian temple 28 Gorge 32 Cheer up 33 Greek physician 34 Crop ring 36 Legendary 37 Whammy 38 Every last crumb 39 Film brand 42 Vanna's cohort 44 Biblical kingdom 48 'A Chorus Line' song 49 'Non-sense!' 50 Green land 51 Pindaric piece 52 Cheese choice 53 Comprehends 54 Outdo 55 Luminary 56 Jet forth Solution time: 28 mins.



CRYPTOQUIP O L M L K R B V B C O R X H K H F V K C X R O R F C M Y H K K E I I F V H K I T J D F E O I V F Y H L K M R B - O R - T F H O R . Yesterday's Cryptogram: WRITTEN NOTE HANGING ON DNA RESEARCHER'S OFFICE DOOR: "CLONES ARE PEOPLE TOO!" Today's Cryptogram Clue: It equals E



DAVINIA TAYLO