

CHESS OLYMPIAD **BD** men start brightly, but women not

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh men's team made a flying start in the 37th Chess Olympiad with a 4-0 thrashing of Liechtenstein in the first round in Turin, Italy on Sunday.

Grand Master Ziaur Rahmar beat Mannhart Marcel. International Master Enamul Hossain defeated Ferster Fabian. International Master Abdullah Al Rakib beat Guller Andras while Interna-tiona Master Reefat Bin Sattar beat Schadler Martin.

But the women's team started on the wrong foot as they lost their opening round against USA 3-0 with WIM Rani Hamid, WFM Zakia Sultana and Nazrana Khan all losing their boards.

A total of 146 countries are taking part in the men's group while 110 countries in the women's group.

Narayanganj ride on Rony

SPORTS REPORTER

Ronv cracked a hundred as Narayanganj romped into the final round of the Dhaka Bank Under-19 Cricket Tournament with a massive 125-run victory over Madaripur at the Faridpur Stadium yesterday.

Tangail and Gaibandha also became zonal champions with comfortable wins against their respective rivals to confirm their places.

The final round line-up was yet to be completed as the zonal final match between Rajshahi and Thakurgaon was stopped due to rain after the former side scored 225-8 in their allotted 50 overs. Thakurgaon's chase will take place today.

Besides the three teams, Chittagong, Chandpur, Khulna, Bagerhat, Barisal, Sylhet and BKSP earlier confirmed their berths to join reigning champions Comilla to compete in the 12-team final round, which will kick off at four different city venues from May 25.

Coach Luis Aragones says it is time At the Faridpur Stadium, Rony for Spain to stop making excuses smashed nine fours and five sixes to for past disappointments at the score 130 from 121 balls as World Cup and produce the goods Narayanganj piled up 245 for 8 in 50 at next month's tournament in Germany

OC

thing.

REUTERS. Madrid

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1



overs



French players (from L-R) Zinedine Zidane, Willy Sagnol, Claude Makelele and Lilian Thuram attend a Fartlek session on the first day of their training camp on Monday in the French Alps city of Tignes.

Scandal overshadows **Italian dream**

"I was questioned as a witness,"

Lippi stressed in a statement

released by the Italian Football

Federation (FIGC), whose boss

Franco Carraro has already

resigned in connection with the

guestions. From this point on I will

think only of the national team,"

added Lippi, who earlier in the

week had shrugged off questions

investigations and I have never

"I have nothing to fear from the

Even so, pressure is mounting

about the various probes.

thought of resigning."

"I responded to the prosecutor's

Luciano.

scandal.



AFP, Rome

If a week is a long time in football, a couple of months has been an eternity for Italians fans who until recently had been looking forward to a summer of glory at the World Cup.

In March, Italy crowed confidently after Marcello Lippi's talented young Azzurri served notice of their emerging threat with a scintillating 4-1 rout of tournament hosts Germany in a friendly.

But the sudden eruption of a wide-ranging corruption scandal in the closing weeks of the Serie A season has rocked the Italian game to its foundations, turning the mood of burgeoning optimism into one of plunging pessimism.

The various probes into allegations of fraud, match-fixing and illegal betting have now reached the door of the Azzurri's dressing room, embroiling Lippi as well as goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon and

Lippi, who is not under investigation in connection with any of the three hours on May 19 as part of the thought to be. probe into GEA World, a sports management agency run by Alessandro Moggi, the son of disgraced former Juventus chief

The danger for Italy's World Cup hopes is that the scandal will rumble on throughout the tournament, leaving Lippi and his squad sagging under the weight of relentless questioning by the media.

ACRES

World Cup organiser Franz Beckenbauer said he hoped Italy's campaign would not suffer but worried that the scandal might take a toll on morale.

"It probably won't hit the Italian national team, who are one of the favourites most people would choose at this World Cup, Beckenbauer said.

"But the players will have the distraction of being asked about the scandal. It could put a dampener on team spirit, but I hope it doesn't," he added

A crumb of comfort for Italian fans could be a historical omen. The Azzurri ended up winning the 1982 World Cup in the wake of the last major corruption scandal to hit Serie A.

The difference between now and 1980 however is that the investigations had been completed and wrapped up by the time the World Cup rolled around, Paolo Rossi returning from a ban in time to lead SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

PHOTO: AFP

GERMANY

No more excuses for Spain

their enthusiasm."

The 67-year-old said he had complete faith in his players, but added that they would need to take a humble approach to the tournament if they were to achieve anything in Germany.

"I have 23 good reasons to believe in this team and in Spanish football," he said. "But we have to keep our feet on the ground and take things one step at a time. That is the only way we will be able to get close to the favourites.

Goalkeeper Iker Casillas, one of the most experienced members of the squad despite only recently turning 25, was optimistic Spain st aside their reputation as could

"Either the team doesn't play

"There has been a major gener-

against us or something else hap-

Asia hard-pressed for '02 heroics

chance, with Australia now part of the Asian family and in their first World Cup finals in 32 years.

As well as Japan and South Korea. Iran and Saudi Arabia are the Asian Football Confederation teams flying the flag.

South Korean coach Dick Matching their heroic achieve-Advocaat is a realist but believes ments in 2002 is going to be a his squad is capable of pulling off a tough ask for Asian teams in surprise or two in their group Germany, with making the second against Togo, Switzerland and 1998 champions France. Japan and South Korea joint-

"We have a very balanced squad and a squad that is capable of surprising a lot of people in the world." he said of a team that contains 10 veterans of 2002.

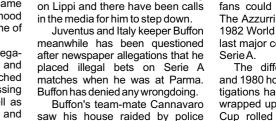
20, from Korean league team FC Seoul.

Triple Asian champions Japan, managed by Brazilian star Zico, are grouped with Australia. Brazil and Croatia, meaning only a major upset will see both qualify for the second round.

Japan have had trouble scoring in recent games but with a steller contingent of European-based stars, including Bolton's Hidetoshi Nakata and Celtic playmaker Shunsuke Nakamura, they will fancy their chances.

But Australia have a vastly experienced coach in Guus Hiddink -- who led South Korea to







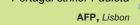
allegations, was questioned for

defender Fabio Cannavaro.

what the player's involvement was

'I want to be top scorer'

"Being the top scorer at the World Cup is a dream that I can't hide. People talk a lot about my performance at Euro 2004 but sometimes they forget the good things I have already achieved for the national squad." -- Portugal striker Pauleta





Brazil met Germany in the World Cup only once to date



Landon Donovan (US playmaker)

"I'm not going there to prove I can play and I'm good enough to be there. Germany, South Africa or Antarctica - I couldn't care less. It's about our team gaining respect. Then again, maybe things will change when I get there.

Who has a point to prove in be very comfortable for us. It gets Germany during the World Cup very slippery. It also moves a lot after a disappointing three-month in the air. stint at Bayer Leverkusen last year.



India v West Indies Third ODI Live at 7:35 pm

"We have to take go into every perennial underachievers. game convinced that we can win and if that doesn't happen, then off happen to us," he told sports daily we go home." Marca.

"We've got to banish the excuse

mentality," Aragones told sports

daily AS on Monday. "I've never

liked alibis that don't justify any-

GERMANY

2006

Spain have not got beyond the World Cup quarter-finals since 1950 and were disappointing in qualifying for Germany. However, Aragones believes that their emphatic 6-2 aggregate

win over Slovakia in the playoffs has served as a turning point. "That game helped us change

ational change since Euro 2004 and allowed us to start dreaming and with the young players we have about what we could achieve." he and the enthusiasm they have to do said. "After that game, the team, players and the fans rediscovered

reaching the semi-finals and Japan making the round of 16. "Something always seems to

round a more realistic target.

hosted the last World Cup and both

teams performed magnificently in

front of home fans, with South

Korea shocking everyone by

AFP, Singapore

The Korean performance was the best ever by an Asian team at the World Cup. The previous honour belonged to North Korea, well or the referees' decisions go who reached the last eight in 1966. But a repeat seems unlikely in pens. Spain has been unlucky on hostile territory despite Asian many occasions, but we've never football making progress over the known how to play these big past four years, with growing numbers of players gaining valauble experience by plying their trade in Europe.

> While ultimate glory may be elusive, at least the region has SEE PAGE 18 COL 8 more teams than ever in with a

Manchester United midfielder Park Ji-Sung, a 2002 star, is the kingpin and will link up with Premiership colleague Lee Young-Pyo of Tottenham Hotspur, another 2002 veteran.

He will anchor the defense with Choi Jin-Cheul, at 35 the oldest player in the squad. In attack Advocaat was forced to revise his plans after first choice center forward Lee Dong-Gook was forced out through a knee injury. He has turned to another vet-

eran, striker Ahn Jung-Hwan of Duisburg in the Bundesliga, and a rising new star, Park Chu-Young,

the semis in 2002 -- and can boast Liverpool's Harry Kewell and Middlesbrough striker Mark Viduka among their squad.

The opening match between the two teams on June 12 will be a crunch encounter.

Hiddink has no illusions about what is ahead of them.

"We have a tough group. Japan have played in the last few World Cups and they have experience with European-based players so they are a tough team to beat," he said.

> "Brazil, everyone knows that SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

PHOTO AFP

A classic Romiseta decorated with typical Swiss and Brazilian symbols is parked outside a gas station in the city of Weggis, Switzerland on Sunday. The city is preparing to welcome Brazil's World Cup team.

Lehmann doesn't like Teamgeist



because of the choice of ball.

the goalkeepers," Germany's

number one said at a news con-

"When it rains it's not going to

The World Cup ball is known

"The Nike ball feels more like

an old fashioned leather ball," he

said. "The Adidas one is more

as the Teamgeist and is made by

Adidas. Lehmann compared it to

the ball from rival manufacturer

REUTERS, Geneva

ference on Monday.

Nike

plastic

ers look bad.'

first half and then seeing his side lose 2-1. He was excused Germany's

matches.

first pre-World Cup training camp in Sardinia, as had always been Germany's Jens Lehmann is the plan. predicting hard times for goal-

for their second camp in keepers at the World Cup Switzerland on Sunday and said he was looking forward to getting "It's a ball for the outfield back into competition. players and the crowd -- not for

"Playing in the quarter-finals, semi-finals and final is fun and it's a great motivation," Lehmann said. "You want to play more games like that with big crowds."

Germany will be training in Switzerland until May 30. They play the opening match of the World Cup against Costa Rica in Munich on June 9.

"When it comes down to it, both of them make the goalkeep-Lehmann had a thoroughly on June 2. disappointing Champions

He hooked up with the team

League final with Arsenal last week, getting sent off early in the

The hosts have programmed a training match against Servette to be played behind closed doors on Tuesday. They play the Servette junior side on Thursday. Their official warm-up games

come against Luxembourg in Freiburg on May 27, Japan in Leverkusen on May 30 and Colombia in Moenchengladbach

