

Abahani-Fakirerpool quarter-final today

Sports Reporter

Muktijoddha Sanghad clinched their quarter-final berth edging the Dhaka Division XI 4-2 in a nerve wracking tie-breaker in the Independence Day soccer tournament match yesterday at the Mirpur Stadium.

Both Muktijoddha and Dhaka Division fought doggedly under the scorching sun, failing to break the stalemate after 90 minutes of the regulation time.

Despite fighting hard, both the teams failed to impress the sparse crowd.

Muktijoddha's Barun and Mizan's powerful attempts were well blocked by Dhaka's custodian Bijon in the second half. Dhaka also survived three close calls when the Muktijod-

dha forwards failed to capitalise on the opportunities.

Mosaraf of Dhaka and Rana of Muktijoddha spoiled easy scoring chances in the first half.

Jewel, Shamim, Rana and Riaz converted the penalties for Muktijoddha in the tie-breaker while Shipar's shot was brilliantly stopped by Bijon.

Seraj and Akram converted for Dhaka Division while Aman and Pervaz missed their shots.

Pervaz, Javed and Akram of Dhaka Division received yellow cards for boisterous play.

Reigning champions Abahani Krira Chakra will take on Fakirerpool Young Men's Club in the first quarter final match today at 3:15 pm at Mirpur

Comilla, Pabna in zonal finals

Sports Reporter

Comilla DSA, Kushtia DSA, Rajshahi DSA and Pabna DSA moved into the zonal finals after recording victories in their respective semi-final matches of the Seraj memorial national junior cricket championship yesterday at the different zonal venues.

Comilla DSA qualified for the Zone 'B' final at Barisal beating Khulna DSA by 14 runs in a keen semifinal.

Comilla, electing to bat, were all out for 122 runs in 32.1 overs. Shipon, 29, Munna, 18, and Anis, 17, were the notable Comilla batsmen. Khulna's Mithun was the most successful bowler with his haul of four wickets for 24 runs.

In reply, Khulna were bowled out for 108 runs in 36.5 overs. Tushar, 33, and Akram, 16, were the two Khulna batsmen to reach double figures.

Anis and Hasan of Comilla collected two wickets each for 15 and 22 runs respectively.

Comilla will play the winners of the Magera versus Jhalokhati DSA semifinal in the Zonal final on April 3.

In Zone 'D' semifinal at Pabna, Kushtia DSA thrashed Rajbari DSA by 122 runs.

Kushtia, taking strike first, managed 180 for the loss of six wickets in their allotted 30 overs. Shahidul, 31, Shimiul, 22 not out, Riju, 22, Sumon 18 and Ashraf 17, were the leading Kushtia batsmen.

Enamul with three for 29

and Ashim with two for 32 were the most successful Rajbari bowlers.

Rajbari, in reply, went crashing to be 58 all out in only 19 overs.

None of the Rajbari batsmen could reach double figures. Riju took two wickets for eight runs.

Kushtia will face the winners of the BKSP versus Chapal Nawabganj semifinal in the zonal final on April 3.

Rajshahi DSA made the zonal final from Zone 'C' at Mymensingh defeating Tangail DSA by six wickets.

Tangail, put into bat, were skittled out for a paltry 54 runs in 24.5 overs. Fourteen runs came from sundries while none of the Tangail batsmen could reach double figures.

Lito with three for 12 and Ashraf with two for eight were the main wicket takers for Tangail.

In reply, Rajshahi coasted to victory scoring 57 runs for the loss of four wickets in 15.5 overs.

Toure, 13, and Lito, 10 not out, were the main scorers for Rajshahi.

Russel claimed two wickets for 19 runs.

In the Zone 'E' semifinal at Rajshahi, Pabna qualified for the zonal final defeating Satkhira by 45 runs. They will face Mymensingh DSA in tomorrow's final.

Pabna scored 174 all out in 40 overs and in reply Satkhira DSA were all out for 129 runs in 36.4 overs.

Australians toil

KINGSTOWN, ST Vincent, Mar 31: The West Indies under-23 side hammered the Australian bowling in an impressive display of aggressive batting on the first day of their four-day cricket match on Saturday, reports Reuter.

At the close of a rain-interrupted day, West Indies under-23 were 179 for one.

Both openers made half centuries, with Philo Wallace hitting a quick 52 while opening partner Stuart Williams was unbeaten on 75 when rain ended play an hour early.

For Australian the only bright spot was an impressive second spell after lunch by left-arm paceman Bruce Reid, who took one for 11 in seven testing overs.

Spinner Peter Taylor bowled capably but both Terry Alderman and Merv Hughes were disappointing.

Hughes conceded 53 runs from 12.2 over, with Wallace hitting him for two huge sixes.

Reid made the only breakthrough when he had Wallace

caught behind and should have had another wicket when John Eugene edged a ball to Alderman at second slip before he had scored. Alderman dropped the simple chance and Eugene reached 52 not out.

Australis apparently was still reeling from its 10-wicket loss to the West Indies earlier in the week when rain halted play after tea Saturday with 37 overs remaining.

Williams, the 21-year-old Leeward Islands opener, was unbeaten on 75 with seven fours and his 20-year-old Windward Island partner Eugene had 52 not out.

Barbadian opener Philo Wallace scored his 52 with six fours and a six.

Reid, the best of the bowlers, eventually had him caught behind by second string wicket-keeper Mike Veletta.

A large crowd watched the proceedings and were treated to some enterprising stroke-play from the future West Indies players.

Australian captain Allan Border had won the toss. The match continues Sunday.

Tewksbury's feat

SHEFFIELD, England, Mar 31: Mark Tewksbury shaved 13-hundredths of a second off his own short-course world record in the 100-meter backstroke Saturday on the closing day of a World Cup swimming meet.

Tewksbury, 23, finished the backstroke event in 52.58 seconds, breaking the record of 52.71 he had set in a World Cup event earlier this month in Bonn, Germany.

The Canadian swimmer dominated the race from start to finish, completing the first 50 meters in 25.71 seconds. He finished five meters ahead of Frenchman Franck Schott, whose time was 55.21.

Two world bests also were set Saturday in the new Ponds Forge pool, a 50-meter facility shortened to 25-meters for the World Cup event. The pool will be used in this summer's World Student Games.

Tewksbury had arrived in Sheffield on Thursday after an

18-hour journey from a World Cup meet in Leningrad.

"I've just come from competing in a really old pool in Leningrad and it's just a treat to race in such an exciting new pool," he said. "It was certainly a factor in my performance today."

Nils Rudolph of Germany set a world best of 24.05 seconds in the men's 50-meter butterfly. His compatriot, Marion Zoller, had a world best of 1 minute, 02.75 seconds in the women's 100-meter medley.

Both are events in which world records are not officially recognised.

India beats Indonesia 4-1

India and Indonesia split the final singles matches Sunday, giving India a 4-1 victory in the Davis Cup qualifying round, reports AP.

Barrios bests world mark

LA FLECHE, France, Mar 31: Arturo Barrios of Mexico set a world best by covering 21.101 kilometers (13.114 miles) Saturday in a one-hour run, reports AP.

Barrios broke the mark of 20,944 kilometers (13,017 miles) by Jos Hermens of the Netherlands in 1976. Hermens is now Barrios.

Last year, Dionisio Castro of Portugal fell one yard short in his attempt for the record.

Barrios holds the world record for 10,000 meters with 27 minutes, 8.23 seconds, set in Berlin, Germany, in 1989.

Tanui triumphs

VIGEVANO, Italy, Mar 31: Kenyan Moses Tanui on Saturday won the "Golden Shoe" 8.1-kilometer race through the cobbled streets of this medieval town in northern Italy beating defending champ Gennaro di Napoli of Italy by 27 seconds, reports AP.

Tanui, who placed second in last week's recent World Cross Country Championships, broke the race record by finishing in 22 minutes, 56 seconds.

Jahangir, Dittmar clash in final

GLASSOW, Mar 31: Six times world champion Jahangir Khan eased past Scotland's Mark Maclean on Saturday to set up a final against Australian Chris Dittmar in the Scottish Open squash championship, reports Reuter.

The 28-year-old Pakistani, who attempts his 10th consecutive British Open next month, needed only 41 minutes to beat Maclean 15-7, 15-10, 15-10.

Top seed Dittmar, looking for his first major title since the Canadian Open Last October, took 51 minutes to defeat England's world junior champion Simon Parke 15-12, 17-16, 15-10.

Jahangir, who missed five months of the season due to mental and physical exhaustion, returned to his winning ways last week when he beat world champion Jansher Khan in the final of the German Open.

"Tomorrow will be another good test of how well my preparation is going for the British Open," Jahangir said.

Dittmar was tested to the full in the early stages of his semifinal against Parke, who scored the best win of his career when he beat world number six Brett Martin of Australia in the Quarter-finals.

The left-handed Australian just held off Parke in the opening game and trailed 8-12 before recovering to win a tight second game.

The English teenager's challenge was only finally extinguished in the latter rallies of the third game.

Youth kabaddi

Sports Reporter

Bangladesh Rifles High School and Maniknagar Primary School clinched the semifinals berth of the Independence Day youth Kabaddi tournament yesterday at the Outer Stadium Kabaddi ground.

BDR school crushed Mitali Shishu Biddiyapit 40-15 in the inaugural match while Maniknagar tamed Tokai Sporting 63-36 in the other match of the afternoon.

Eight teams are taking part in the knock-out basis tournament organised by the Kabaddi Federation.

Barcelona stay top

BARCELONA, Mar 31: Atletico Madrid failed to gain ground on Spanish league leaders Barcelona in a 1-1 draw on Saturday, reports Reuter.

Second-placed visitors Atletico suffered a major setback midway through the first half when Portuguese captain Paulo Futre was fouled by Nando Munoz and limped off with an injured knee ligament. Juan Sabas substituted.

With midfielder Bernd Schuster marked ruthlessly by Alberto Ferrer, Atletico's attacks in the first half were limited to a few set-pieces.

Barcelona went ahead after 57 minutes when Julio Salinas, who came on for Eusebio Sacristan a minute earlier, forced goalkeeper Able Resino to fumble the ball and let it slip through his legs.

Juan Vizcaino levelled eight minutes later when he hooked home a left-foot short from a splendid pass by Juan Sabas.

Schuster missed two late opportunities to break the deadlock and Atletico remained four points adrift.

Philippines advance

KAGOSHIMA, Mar 31: The Philippines tennis team swept the final two singles matches Sunday, scoring a 4-1 victory over Japan and advancing into the second round of the Davis Cup Asia-Oceania zone competition, reports AP.

Diego denies drugs charge



ROME, Mar 31: Diego Maradona said on Saturday he had not taken performance enhancing drugs.

Maradona, tested positive for cocaine in a urine test after an Italian league match, said: "I've never taken anything to improve my performance."

"I've never gone on the field under the effects of a stimulant. I don't want to get a suspension." Neapolitan journalists close to the Argentine star quoted him as saying.

The Napoli captain faces a ban of up to two years after Italian Soccer Federation said on Friday a routine test taken after a match against Bari on March 17 showed traces of the banned substance.

Personal manager Marcos Franchi, who broke the news to the star on Friday night, said Maradona's wife Claudia broke down in tears and the player had a sleepless night.

"Diego could not take such news well, even if he was resigned (to it) for some time because every day a new story about him comes out," Franchi said.

"For three years Maradona's name has been linked with drugs and particularly cocaine. Now that Diego has screamed from the roof-tops his intention to leave (Napoli) at the end of the season, this other story comes out," Franchi said.

"It seems very strange to me."

The Italian Football Federation (FIGC) is referring the case to the football league's



disciplinary commission which is expected to meet next week to deal with it.

In the meantime, Maradona, who is also under investigation for alleged links

with an international drugs and prostitution ring in Naples, is automatically suspended.

Meanwhile Maradona's Napoli team mates offered

sympathy and support for their captain on Saturday.

After the 1-1 draw with Internazionale which Maradona missed because of a suspension unrelated to his cocaine offence, Italian international Fernando de Napoli said: "We played for him (Maradona) today. Alberto Bigon (Napoli coach) told us to do so before we took the field but we had already decided that among ourselves."

"We haven't seen Diego for a week and we don't know whether he is about to leave or stay in Italy, but we're sure that if he decides to leave, he'll come to say goodbye to us before he goes."

Fellow Italian international Ciro Ferrara said: "For seven years I've been with Diego, through thick and thin. When he arrived, I was little more than a boy and I grew up with him."

"It makes me very sad that his departure should come about in this manner."

Gianfranco Zola, who on Saturday wore Maradona's Number Ten shirt, added: "This business has caused great sadness. It upsets everyone to see a friend involved in a business like this."

"I haven't been in contact with him but I want to visit him, to bring him some comfort."

Napoli's Brazilian striker Careca, a long time friend of Maradona, said: "We dedicate this game to Diego. We wish him well and I say to him to be brave and overcome even this difficult episode."

Maradona's mounting miseries



NAPLES, Mar 30 (UNH/AP): Diego Maradona stayed out of the public's eye and his Napoli club

refused to comment on its star player Saturday, one day after the Italian soccer federation announced the Argentine national team captain had tested positive for cocaine, reports AP.

"We have nothing to say right now. We must concentrate on our league duties," said Napoli's sports director, Giorgio Perinetti, before driving to the San Paolo stadium for Saturday's Napoli-Inter league match.

Napoli, the defending league champions who along with Maradona's several well publicised problems this season have fallen to 11th in the Italian league standings, achieved a surprising 1-1 draw with the second-place Inter.

The whereabouts of Maradona, who has not been seen in public since Thursday when a Rome newspaper first reported that he had tested positive for a banned substance following the March 17 Napoli-Bari game, were unknown to the club.

However, Maradona's manager Marco Franchi was quoted by the Italian news agency ANSA as saying that the player was secluded at his Naples home.

Franchi said he informed the player of the results of the drug test Friday night. He did not elaborate on Maradona's reaction, but said his wife Claudia broke into tears.

The captain of Napoli was suspended from Saturday's game by league officials earlier this week for arguing with a referee in a March 24 game.

The 30-year-old Maradona

could be suspended under Italian soccer regulations from six months to two years for testing positive for drugs.

Results of tests were announced by the federation Friday after a second and final check of Maradona's urine samples.

The disciplinary commission of the Italian league is expected to decide next week on the length of Maradona's suspension.

Several Neapolitan fans, interviewed by Italian radio and television, said they were stunned by the report.

"A myth has collapsed. Diego has been a great player and a little man," Antonio Cas-

lieve he took drugs. All Napoli players are upset as a friend is in deep trouble," Zola said before Saturday's match at San Paolo stadium.

Maradona, who has battled with officials throughout his career, has had several well-publicised bouts since last summer's World Cup.

Immediately after Argentina lost the World Cup championship game 1-0 to Germany in Rome, Maradona accused the Mafia of influencing its outcome.

He also refused to report for games and practices earlier this season, the most publicised, when he initially said he was not in shape to accompany

he played very sparingly and Napoli lost on penalty kicks, eliminating it from the tournament.

He also has been sued by his own club, Napoli, which said his behaviour impugned its reputation. He has been questioned by police this season, in connection with an investigation concerning a drug trafficking and prostitution ring and been named in a paternity suit.

And he also said earlier this season that, despite his multi-million-dollar contract with Napoli that runs through the

1992-93 season, he had grown tired of constantly being in the public eye - particularly in Italy - and would leave the Italian league and possibly retire.

In an interview with Italian television, Paolo Zoppelli, a professor at the sports medicine division of the Italian federation, said cocaine can be considered a performance-enhancing drug if taken before a match.

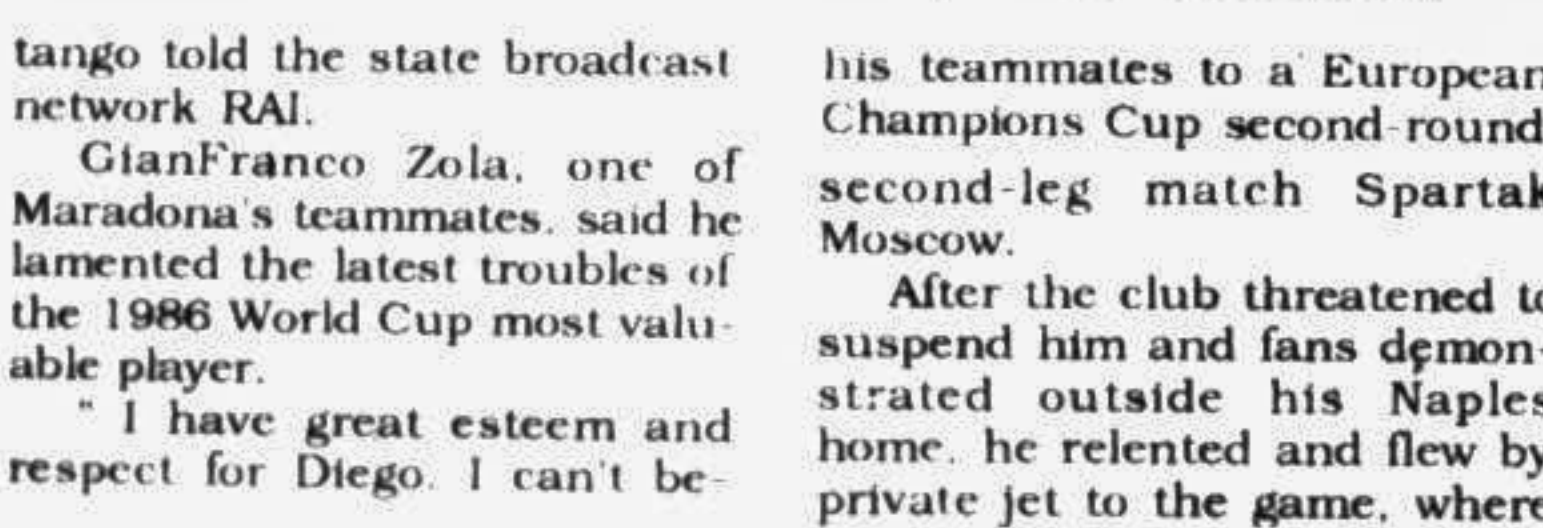
"It can improve a player's performance because it reduces tiredness. For this reason it can be also very dangerous because an athlete can go beyond his limits, and there are risks of collapses and coronary problems," he said.

He said there were no signs of an increasing use of cocaine in the Italian sport.

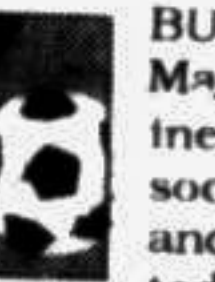
"We only have some statistics from the United States about an increasing number of athletes using cocaine," he said.

Maradona, who joined Napoli in 1984 on a record 12-million-dollar transfer fee, has been in and out of play this season following recurrent back pains and disciplinary tangles with his club.

THE OTHER SIDE : Family man Maradona.



Argentines express shock, disbelief



BUENOS AIRES, Mar 30: Argentine newspapers, soccer officials and players reacted with shock and disbelief Saturday to Diego Maradona's positive drug test for cocaine, reports AP.

Friday's announcement of the drug test by the Italian Soccer Federation that the captain of Italian league champion Napoli and Argentina's World Cup national team made frontpage headlines in Buenos Aires daily newspapers.

"Cocaine Found in Maradona Analysis," said the mass-circulation daily Clarin. "Maradona Involved in a Shocking Case of doping," reported the influential morning paper La Nacion, which published a lengthy sports section article titled "Maradona in His Worst Moment."

"Confirm that Diego Used Cocaine," said the tabloid Diario Popular, asking "Is This The End of His Career?" "Maradona dope test confirms cocaine use," said the English-language Buenos Aires Herald.

Soccer officials were reluctant to comment on the report that the 30-year-old Maradona, who led Argentina to the 1986 World Cup title and second place in 1990, had tested positive in two separate tests from a ring sample taken following a

March 17 Napoli-Bari Italian league match.

Raul Madero, a physician for the national team who worked with Maradona at the last two World Cups, described the report as "a very delicate issue... and one has to be very

prudent and not get ahead of the facts."

Carlos Bilardo, Argentina's coach at the 1986 and 1990 World Cups, said he was trying to obtain more information regarding Maradona's alleged drug use.

"I can only say that I'm very surprised and I hope that in the next few hours the matter can be clarified enough so that I can give a better opinion."

Oscar Ruggeri, current captain of the national team, also expressed shock.

"There's not much to say," Ruggeri said. "In the first place, I'm very surprised and I hope to be able to talk to Diego soon to get an explanation from him."

"I can't believe it," commented Luis Islas, a member of the 1986 World Cup team. "I only hope that he can get out of this in the best way possible. I believe that the solution would be for him to return to Argentina. He is under a lot of pressure in Italy."

In a lengthy sports section article, La Nacion commented that Maradona's path through soccer now "seems like a old dirt road without lights. Once upon a time, at the World Cup in Mexico, he was on a luxurious expressway and the fans, his colleagues and the experts agreed that he was the best player in the world."

March 17 Napoli-Bari Italian league match.

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Seles-Graf final

SAN ANTONIO, Mar 31: Monica Seles and Steffi Graf advanced Saturday to the finals of the US Women's Hardcourt Championships, setting up the first encounter of the year between the world's top women players, reports AP.

Top-ranked Seles held off a semifinal challenge from Manuela Maleeva-Fragniere 6-2, 2-6, 6-2.

Second-ranked Graf, exhibiting near-flawless form, had an easier time, dispatching Julie Halard 6-0, 6-1 in only 41 minutes.

The victories set the stage for Seles, 17, and Graf, 21, to meet for the first time since Seles defeated Graf for the 1990 French Open title.

It will also be the first meeting between the two since Seles ascended to the top ranking March 11 after Graf's record 186-week reign at the top.

Both Graf and Seles, who will retain her No. 1 ranking even if she falls to Graf, downplayed the importance of Sunday's match.

"It will just mean that she or I were better that day," Seles said. "I will have to serve and return better and be more aggressive than I was today."

"It's not winning a tournament or winning against someone special," Graf said. "It's me I'm concerned about. I just want to do well."

Fernandez, Sukova in final

TARPON SPRINGS, Florida, Mar 31: Gigi Fernandez and Helena Sukova rallied from a 5-0 first-set deficit to beat Kathy Jordan and Lsz Smyldk 4-6, 6-4, 6-1 in the semifinals of the 200,000-dollar Light n' Lively Doubles on Saturday, reports AP.

In the other semifinal, the Soviet duo of Natalia Zvereva and Larisa Savchenko polished off Robin White and Arantxa Sanchez Vicario 6-1, 6-3.

Fernandez of Puerto Rico and Sukova of Czechoslovakia take on Zvereva and Savchenko in Sunday's final at Innisbrook Resort. The winners earn 75,000 dollars.

Americans lead Mexico

MEXICO CITY, Mar 31: Rich Leach and Lim Pugh struggled to beat Leonardo Lavalle and Jorge Lozano 6-4, 4-6, 7-6, (7-2), 6-7 (3-7), 6-4 in doubles on Saturday to give the United States a 2-1 lead over Mexico in their Davis Cup tie, reports Reuter.

A win by either Brad Gilbert over Luis Herrera, or Jim Courier over Lavalle in today's reverse singles would put the defending champions into a quarter-finals match at home against Spain on June 14-16.

"It was very satisfying to come back against the crowd and to win when we were not playing our best," said Pugh after the Wimbledon champions raised their Davis Cup doubles mark to 5-0.

The thin air once again frustrated the Americans in this first-round World Group match that had been originally set for February but was delayed because of the Gulf war.

"The conditions were real bad and it was not an easy thing to play well," Leach said about the rash of errors that marred the match. "It was kind of ugly out there."

Extended to five sets for the first time in their Cup careers, Leach and Pugh showed cool nerve and produced their championship for m in the final set of the nearly four-hour battle before a sun-drenched, boisterous crowd.

The American pair were handed a 1-0 fifth-set lead when Lavalle, after leading 4-0, faltered and the double-faulted away the game.

Y'slavs lead Czechs

PRAGUE, Mar 31: Goran Ivanisevic and Slobodan Zivojnovic set Yugoslavia up for their first Davis Cup success over Czechoslovakia in 45 years on Saturday, winning the doubles to take a 2-1 lead in their world group quarter final, reports Reuter.

The Yugoslav pair had to battle for an hour to secure the first set, taking it on a tiebreak. But then they dominated Czechoslovakia's Petr Korda and Milan Srejber and won 7-6, 6-4, 6-4.

Ivanisevic, seeking to repeat his three wins in three matches from the first round when Yugoslavians knocked out former champions Sweden, is due to meet Karel Novacek in the first of today's reverse singles.

If the Yugoslav world number seven does not win, the tie between the two countries will be decided in the final singles between Korda and Zivojnovic.

Rally to save Bordeaux

BORDEAUX, France, Mar 31: More than 500 Bordeaux Soccer club fans, including team trainer Gerard Gill, demonstrated on Saturday in support of a public appeal to save the city's First Division club from extinction, reports Reuter.

The club has been placed in receivership with debts of around 300 million francs (60 million dollars).