

Play-off meet begins today

Sports Reporter

The play-off meet for the qualifying round of the world chess championship for Zone Eleven begins this afternoon at the chess room of the National Sports Council.

Grand Master (GM) Niaz Mursheed of Bangladesh and the two Indians — GM Dibyendu Barooah and International Master (IM) Varugese Koshy will fight it off in the six-match meet.

Earlier, the trio jointly shared the second spot of the points table in the eleven-round original meet held in the Iranian city of Isfahan with eight points.

H'ball course on

The 12-day long Olympic solidarity course for handball coaches, began at the conference room of the National Sports Council yesterday, reports BSS.

President of the Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) Gias Kamal Chowdhury inaugurated the workshop.

Dutch handball expert Tom van Linder, who arrived in the city yesterday, will conduct the programme.

Handball coaches from all over the country are taking part in the course, organised by the Bangladesh Olympic Association with International Olympic Committee, providing the financial assistance.

BOA vice president Capt (ret'd) Siddique Ahmed, Secretary General Bashir Ahmed and president of the Handball Federation Lt Col (Ret'd) M A Hamid spoke on the occasion.

Khoka condoles Anwar's death

State Minister for Youth and Sports Sadek Hossain Khoka today condoled the death of Anwar Hossain, an eminent sports organiser and founder of Usha Krira Chakra, reports BSS.

The State Minister, condemning the brutal killing, hoped that concerned authorities would find out the culprits and punish them.

He prayed for the departed soul and expressed sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.

French Premier assures FIFA president

PARIS, June 8: FIFA president Joao Havelange was reassured by French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur on Monday that France would build an 80,000 capacity stadium in Paris for the 1998 World Cup finals, reports AFP.

The Prime Minister told me the Sports Minister would announce the choice of the site in six weeks, the International Football Federation president said.

The last socialist government chose Melun-Senart, 45km (30miles) from Paris for the stadium. But this has been put in doubt by the new conservative administration which has questioned the site and cost.

Havelange also said there was no question of reducing the capacity of the stadium. "The agreement which sets out an 80,000-seater stadium and provincial venues of 40,000 to 60,000 was signed by the organising committee," he said.

Havelange will spend this week in France seeing government leaders and going to the French Cup final in Paris on Saturday.

Division One resumes today

Sports Reporter



Abahani Krira Chakra take on Bachelors Sporting Club in the lone match of Green Delta First Division hockey league which resumes today after a gap of ten days on account of the holy Eid-ul-Azha.

The match begins at 4 pm at the Hockey Stadium.

Mohammedan Sporting Club, the reigning champions, are leading the points table with 12 points having won all the six

engagements held before the Eid closure.

Their arch rivals Abahani and Usha Krira Chakra, who hit the headlines by winning the Independence hockey tournament with creditable victories against all the fancied claimants, are also yet to lose any points. Both Usha and Abahani have so far collected ten points from five matches apiece.

This year's league still in a very inchoate stage has marked delightful scoring spree in almost all the 42 matches.

Abahani lead the statistics having scored 34 goals in their five matches. Mohammedans are in second position with 26 goals.

But the black and whites have the satisfaction of having the top scorer of the league from their ranks. National star Sadek tops the scorers' list with eight goals including a hat-trick. Zahid Biswas of Mohammedans shares the second slot with Harun of Abahani, Kismat of Usha and Blaka of Mariners.

Six hat-tricks have been registered so far including the one Sadek scored against Bachelors Sporting Club.

The other treble targeters are Nakib of Sadharan Bima, Blaka Lusat of Mariners, Akhtar and Jumman Lussal of Abahani.

Seven teams — Mohammedans, Abahani, Usha, Sadharan Bima, Mariners, Ansars and Ajax who scored a 13-0 victory against Police, the biggest victory margin recorded so far — are yet to concede a goal.

Sonali Bank, Police, Wanderers, Bachelors, Azad, Bangladesh Sporting, Railway and PWD are still in search of a win. PWD have the dubious distinction of having conceded 37 goals so far.

POINTS TABLE

Following is the points table of the league:

	M	W	D	L	F	A	P
Mohammedans	6	6	0	0	26	0	12
Abahani KC	5	5	0	0	34	0	10
Usha KC	5	5	0	0	15	0	10
S.Bima	5	4	1	0	12	4	9
Mariners	5	3	2	0	8	0	8
Dhaka Ansars	5	3	2	0	3	0	8
Ajax	4	3	1	0	19	0	7
Wari Club	5	2	3	0	3	1	7
Wanderers	5	0	3	2	2	4	3
Sonali Bank	5	0	3	2	0	4	3
Police	6	0	3	3	1	15	3
Bachelors	6	0	2	4	2	10	2
Bangladesh SC	6	0	1	5	2	14	1
Azad SC	5	0	1	4	2	20	1
PWD SC	5	0	0	5	0	37	0
BD Railway	6	0	0	6	0	20	0

Ichihara deem Gullit costly

TOKYO, June 8: AC Milan striker Raul Gullit's offer to play for Japan's JEF United Ichihara has been turned down due to the high price tag carried by the injury-hit former Dutch international, reports AFP.

"We have been approached by Gullit's agent through certain channels," Ichihara spokesman Kazitomo Asafune said Tuesday. "We have declined it after all. Simply put, it would have been too expensive."

The 30-year-old AC Milan striker declared last week he would not play in the World Cup finals in the United States next year as his injury-prone right knee was likely to keep him out of shape.

He is widely estimated here to fetch 4.5 million dollars if he joins the region of some 46 foreign players in Japan's newborn professional league, including Brazil's legendary Zico, former England captain Garry Lineker and former German international Pierre Littbarski.

But Asafune said, "I think the price was higher when we talked."

Lineker, 32, has been playing for Nagoya Grampus Eight for a two-year contract estimated at five million dollar since J-League kicked off on May 15.

But the Sports Nippon newspaper reported that Gullit was still sounding out other J-League teams on a possible contact, joined by his two Dutch teammates in the Italian club, Frank Rijkaard and Marco van Basten.

J-League spokesman Kazuki Sasaki denied the league headquarters had been helping deals between Japanese clubs and the Dutch players.

He added, however, "We have been passing on inquiries from several foreign players to clubs," including those from Russia and Britain. Sasaki said South American clubs had their own channels of negotiations with Japanese club.

"There were many inquiries in March and April but fewer in recent weeks."

Meanwhile, the tight J-League programme with two matches for each of the teams every week, has taken toll of the expensive foreign imports.

Zico was sidelined with a torn muscle in the left thigh for five straight matches Saturday while fellow Brazilians and teammates Santos and Aleindo scored apiece for the Kashima Antlers 2-1 win over the Yokohama Mariners.

Lineker pulled out in the 67th minute with recurring pain in his injured right instep as Grampus Eight went down to Gamba Osaka 1-3. He was to be unavailable for at least the two upcoming matches this week.



GULLIT... too expensive

Egil Olsen confident

ROTTERDAM, June 8: Norwegian coach Egil Olsen, boosted by his side's 2-0 defeat of England last week, believes his side has an even chance of beating the Netherlands in Wednesday's World Cup qualifier, reports Reuter.

"We have a 50-50 per cent chance of winning and a far bigger chance of taking one point," Olsen told the Norwegian national daily Verdens Gang. "I'm aware that we meet a good team, but I am not that impressed by the Netherlands."

"I hope the Dutch will roll the ball to each other as much as they normally do. We will create our chances through counter-attacks, free-kicks and corners."

Norway, two points clear of England in Group Two, can afford to lose and would be happy with a draw.

Olsen is unlikely to make substantial changes to the team who beat England, but will have to replace defender Gunnar Halle, suspended after two yellow cards.

Geirmund Brendesaether, who would earn his first cap, and Ronny Johnsen are candidates to replace Halle.

The Dutch need a win against Norway to capitalise on England's poor recent showing. Before losing to Norway, England drew 1-1 with Poland.

The home side will have to do without AC Milan's Marco van Basten, who has an injured ankle and Ruud Gullit who chose not to play.

To cope with the Norwegians' speed, coach Dick Advocaat has dropped defender Berry van Aerle and called on Feyenoord defender Ulrich van Gobbel for his debut.

Van Gobbel, a tall, strong defender, is one of the swiftest movers in Dutch soccer.

TEAMS

NETHERLANDS (probable): Ed de Goey, Ulrich van Gobbel, Ronald Koeman, John de Wolf, Frank de Boer, Jan Wouters, Wim Jonk, Rob Witschge, Marc Overmars, Dennis Bergkamp, Peter van Vossen.

NORWAY (from): Erik Thorstvedt, Stig Inge Bjoernebye, Lars Bohinen, Rune Bratseth, Geirmund Brendesaether, Jan Aage Fjortoft, Jostein Flo, Kaare Ingebrigtsen, Jahn Ivar Jakobsen, Ronny Johnsen, Oyvind Leonhardsen, Erik Mykland, Roger Nilsen, Jan Ove Pedersen, Tore Pedersen, Kjetil Rekdal, Einar Rossbach, Goeran Soerloth.

Coach must carry the can

BUCHAREST, June 8: The Romanian Soccer Federation (RSF) has dismissed team trainer Cornel Dinu for poor results in the World Cup qualifying matches, the RSF president, Mircea Sandu, said on Monday, reports Reuter.

"He (Dinu) failed to meet our expectations and Romania's qualification for the final tournament in the United States is now threatened," Sandu told a news conference.

His successor has not been named.

Czechoslovakia crushed Romania 5-2 last week in Kocice in a crucial European Group Four match.

Belgium leading the group standings with 14 points from eight games and are sure of qualifying for next year's finals.

Wales and Romania are five points behind but with a game in hand. Czechoslovakia are fourth with seven points and two games in hand.

In the Autumn, Romania will play Belgium at home and the Faroes in Tofir and Wales in Cardiff.

Two teams will qualify.

Many Romanian newspapers called for Dinu's resignation after the match in Kocice.

"The Kocice match is nothing but a lost game and I think this is not a tragedy," Dinu told Reuters.

"Apparently, everyone seems to forget that I have some merits in building up Romania's team. I'm confident that we still have chances to qualify, because we have the best record of goals."

Golden boot for Ally McCoist

GLASGOW, Scotland, June 8: Scotland striker Ally McCoist has won the Adidas golden boot — awarded to European football's leading goalscorer — for the second season in a row, reports AFP.

The Glasgow Rangers forward netted 34 goals in the Scottish Premier Division last term to pip AEK Athens front-runner Vasilis Dimitriadis, who scored one less.

Akram too hot to handle

LONDON, June 8: Pakistan pace bowler Wasim Akram grabbed six wickets as Lancashire surged to a 96-run victory over Surrey at the Oval in the County Cricket Championship on Monday, reports Reuter.

Surrey, needing 399 to win, crashed from 296 for four to 302 all out on the fourth and final day, recalling their Benson and Hedges Cup collapse last month when they lost nine wickets for 18 runs to the same opponents.

Pakistan captain Akram ended with six for 49, which included a spell of four for four in 15 balls.

Lancashire skipper Neil Fairbrother said: "Surrey will know, having (Pakistan fast bowler) Waqar Younis, that the game is never over with him or, in our case, Wasim Akram bowling. That was a world class performance by him today."

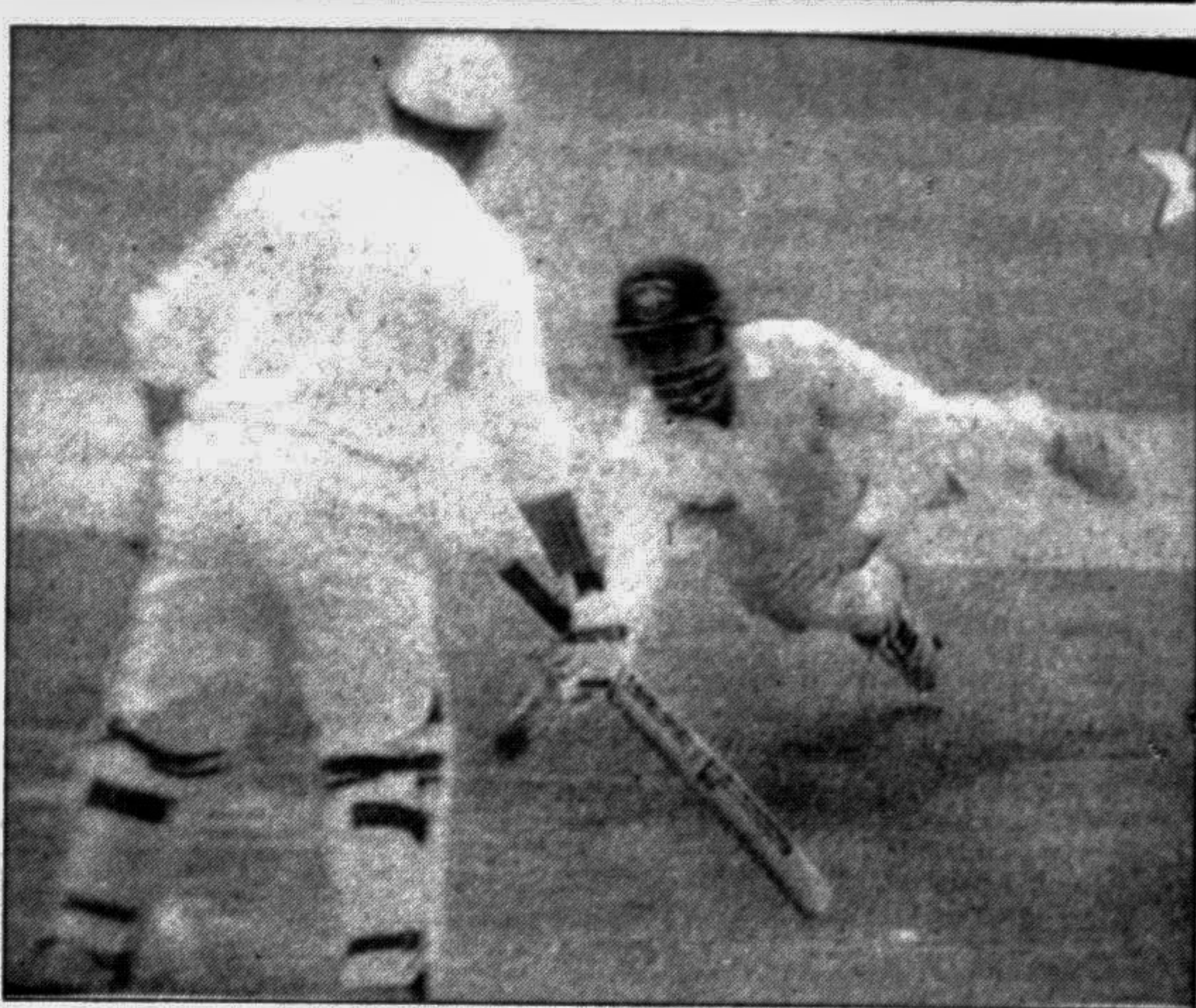
Pace pair Matthew Fleming and Martin McCague bowled Kent to their second successive championship victory, beating Gloucestershire by an innings and 69 runs at Tunbridge Wells.

Fleming took a career-best four for 31 as the visitors slumped from 104 for three to 162 all out. McCague, who was suffering with a hamstring strain, finished with three for 15.

Shaun Udal ended one of the leanest spells in Hampshire's championship history by spinning them to a 169-run victory over Nottinghamshire at Trent Bridge.

Off spinner Udal snapped up five for 74, and match figures of 10 for 171 as Notts were skittled for 154 after facing a target of 324.

That gave Hampshire their first championship win since they beat Sussex at Arundel nearly 11 months and 17 games ago.



Australian David Boon makes a full length dive in a vain effort to pull off a catch to dismiss England skipper Graham Gooch during the home side's second innings on the fifth and final day of the first Ashes Test at Old Trafford on Monday. Australia won by 179 runs. —Star TV photo

Barcelona in a Real crisis

MADRID, June 8: Time is running out for Barcelona to capture a third successive Spanish league title as Real Madrid power on, unbeaten in 21 games, reports Reuter.

With only two matches to go, Madrid are top of the table on 55 points — one point ahead of Barcelona. Third placed Deportivo Coruna have 52 points.

Madrid kept up their title chase with a midnight triumph on Saturday in driving rain against a dogged Real Sociedad.

"Calm I'm not, but satisfied I am," club president Ramon Mendoza said after the 2-0 win.

"That was a mighty tough game. We had to struggle against injuries, the rain, the pitch, everything," he said.

Barcelona had a difficult time beating Sevilla but their lacklustre first-half performance was eclipsed by a two-goal burst at the start of the second which propelled them to a 2-1 win.

His successor has not been named.

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"The Kocice match is nothing but a lost game and I think this is not a tragedy," Dinu told Reuters.

"Apparently, everyone seems to forget that I have some merits in building up Romania's team. I'm confident that we still have chances to qualify, because we have the best record of goals."

"At no moment did I see the league running away from us," said Barcelona's Dutch coach Johan Cruyff.

But he admitted he was not happy with the way his team were playing.

The team didn't play as it should have done. They have to play their own game but as we've just seen when it doesn't come off they're in trouble," he said.

Cruyff came under fire from Spanish national coach Javier Clemente last week for criticising his players too much.

Madrid know the league title is within their grasp but are anxious to avoid complacency.

"We've just to carry on doing the same things we've done all season," said Chilean striker Ivan Zamorano.

Madrid take on local rivals Atletico Madrid next weekend before playing their last match of the season, away to Tenerife, in a replica of last year's final.

On that occasion Madrid took a one-point lead down to the Canary Islands only to have

the title snatched from them after crumpling to a shock 3-2 defeat.

"If Real go to Tenerife needing to win again, they are going to be like jelly when they enter that stadium," said Barcelona's Danish striker Michael Laudrup.

Before next weekend's league matches, Barcelona and Madrid play each other in the first leg of the Spanish Cup on Wednesday.

Valencia, fourth in the league table with 44 points, guaranteed themselves a place in Europe next season with a 2-0 victory over Catalonia's other First Division side, Espanol.

The northern Mediterranean region will have a third team in the First Division next season, with Lerida winning promotion after an absence of 43 years.

They will take the place of Cadix, who escaped relegation by the narrowest of margins in the past two seasons but could not perform another Iudini act on Saturday as they went down 3-0 to Deportivo.

From yellow to red in 16 mins

RIO DE JANEIRO, June 8: Vasco da Gama striker Valdir was sent off during his teams game against Fluminense at the weekend—but only 16 minutes after receiving his second yellow card, reports Reuter.

The match ended in a 1-1 draw and means Vasco will now meet Fluminense in the final of the Rio de Janeiro Championship.

In an ill-tempered and at times violent match, Valdir, the championships top goal scorer with 17 goals, opened the scoring for Vasco in the 11th minute. Ezio equalised for Fluminense 11 minutes later.

The confusion over Valdir's sending off began in the 55th minute when he was shown his second yellow card for dissent. Referee Aloisio Viug allowed the Vasco player to remain on the field despite protests from the Fluminense players and advice from the linesmen.

It was only in the 71st minute that the reserve referee finally convinced Viug of his error and Valdir was shown the red card.

The result left Vasco as winners of the second stage of the championship, one point ahead of Flamengo. They now meet Fluminense, winners of the first stage, in the final.

The final will be played over either two or three games with the team first to reach four points winning the championship. Vasco start with a one-point advantage through having amassed the most points over the two stages.

Corinthians surprised Palmeiras and most commentators by winning 1-0 in the first leg of the Sao Paulo championship final.

Pre-match favourites Palmeiras must now win the second leg to take the tie to an extra period of 30 minutes. A draw in this period would give them the championship as they have an extra point for winning the first stage.

Palmeiras have bought heavily this season in an effort to win the title that has eluded them for 16 years.

In a hotly contested match in

front of more than 90,000 spectators, Corinthians striker Viola scored the only goal of the game with his 20th strike of the competition.

Amaral of Palmeiras and Moacir of Corinthians were sent off in the second-half.

Lineker laid low by a broken toe

TOKYO, June 8: Former England striker Gary Lineker, the highest paid player in Japan's new soccer league, will be out of action for at least six weeks with a broken toe, his club said on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

A spokesman for Nagoya Grampus Eight said doctors had confirmed Lineker sustained a stress fracture of the second toe on his left foot during a match last Saturday.

"It will take him six weeks to recover so we expect him to be out of action for longer than that," the spokesman added.

It was the latest blow in what has proved an unhappy first season so far for Lineker and Grampus in the new J-League, a 10-club championship launched on May 15.

Before he limped off during Saturday's 2-0 defeat by lowly Osaka Gamba, the former England and Tottenham Hotspur forward had scored just one goal in six matches.

Deprived of top-class service by an inexperienced midfield, Lineker has often appeared a lonely, frustrated figure in the midst of the opposing defence.

But in an interview published last week in the English-language daily Yomiuri, he expressed confidence that the goal drought would soon end.

"Frustration is part of a soccer player's life — in Japan, England or anywhere else," Lineker said. "I know the goals will come."

What was worrying him more, he said, was the language barrier which prevented him from linking up with his Japanese teammates.

"Communication is difficult but I can sort of make myself understood in some ways. But there's always going to be a problem until I learn the language."

Another of the J-League's veterans, 40-year-old Brazilian Zico, has also been out for several matches with a leg muscle strain but his club, Kashima Antlers, have overcome the handicap and now top the table.



England skipper Graham Gooch begins his long walk back to the dressing room after being given out handled the ball during the fifth and final day of the first Ashes Test on June 7. Gooch, who parried the ball away when an inside edge headed for the stumps, made 133. —Star TV photo



Thai forward Piyapong Pue-On (L) tries to dribble past Burmese Soe Naing during the 17th South East Games (SEA) Games soccer in Singapore on June 7. Piyapong scored the first goal in his country's 2-0 victory over lowly Burma. — AFP photo