

Nat'l b'ball
on

Sports Reporter

The Pepsi 17th national basketball championship under the auspices of Bangladesh Amateur Basketball Federation (BABF) began at the wooden floor gymnasium of the National Sports Council (NSC) yesterday.

Foreign Minister Mostafizur Rahman, who was the chief guest on the opening ceremony, declared the 11-team meet open in the morning.

Three matches were held on the opening day with Bangladesh Rifles thrashing the other service team Bangladesh Police 133-49 while Bangladesh Navy got off to a fine start with a 117-64 point win over Bangladesh Air Force.

In the first match of the day, Chandpur edged past Brahmanbaria 73-55.

Eleven teams split into two groups are taking part in the meet.

Cricket clinic concludes

Sports Reporter

A 20-day cricket coaching clinic for school boys, organised by the ACME Laboratories Ltd concluded yesterday at the Dharmondi Indoor Stadium yesterday with the distribution of certificates among the participants.

Three former national cricketers — Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipu, Jahangir Shah Badshah and G S Hassan Tamim conducted the coaching which started on June 24.

India to host 17 matches of WC cricket

CALCUTTA, July 21: India will host 17 matches, including the two semifinals, while Pakistan will host the final of the 1996 World Cup cricket to be jointly organised by India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, reports PTI.

Announcing the complete programme of the 1996 World Cup here today, Jagmohan Dalmiya, secretary and convenor of the Pak-Indo-Lanka Committee, told newsmen that the programme was finalised in the committee meeting and was later approved by the International Cricket Council on July 8 in London.

As per the programme, the World Cup gets underway at a "grand opening ceremony" to be held in India on February 11, 1996, Dalmiya announced. The final of the 1987 World Cup, which was jointly hosted by India and Pakistan, was held in Calcutta.

The tournament proper starts with the preliminary phase match between England and New Zealand in India on February 14. Of the four quarter-final matches, India and Pakistan will host two each and they would be played on March 9 and 11. The semifinals will be held in India on March 13 and 14.

Sri Lanka will be hosting four matches in the preliminary phases but their group match against India, Dalmiya said.

Although the host country for each match of the 1996 World Cup has been announced the specific venues of each of the matches would be finalised later, Dalmiya said.

Richards backs out

CAPE TOWN, July 21: West Indies ex-captain Viv Richards has decided not to take up a six-month contract with Western Province "for family reasons," according to Percy Sonn, the club's vice president, reports Reuter.

"It was never a question of money," Sonn told Reuters. "We had been negotiating via Richards' agent and had reached a mutually acceptable deal. The contract was due to be signed in London on Friday."

"Sonn categorically denied press reports that Richards had been offered between 360,000 Rand (98,225 dollars) and 500,000 Rand (136,425 dollars) for a six-month contract.

According to Sonn, the Western Province's chief executive officer, Arthur Turner, was contacted by Richards' agent on Tuesday to say his client had decided not to come for family reasons.

"Who knows," said Sonn. "Maybe he wants to spend some time on the beach in Antigua. What is confusing is that the original approach came from Richards' agent via Ali Bacher. We never knew Richards was available until Ali contacted us."

Now that Richards has decided not to come, Province are again in the market for an overseas professional. They have been looking for several seasons for "someone suitable" according to Sonn. But time is running out ahead of the new domestic season.

MSC suffer second setback

Muktijoddha in big time

Sports Reporter

Mizanur Rahman powered Muktijoddha Sangsad to their first major victory when he scored the lone goal in Muktijoddha's 1-0 win over popular Mohammedan Sporting Club in the second semifinal of the BEXIMCO 12th Federation Cup football tournament at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday.

The winners will now take on Abahani Krira Chakra in the final tomorrow from 5 pm onwards.

With this win Muktijoddha took a sweet revenge of their 1-3 defeat to Mohammedans in the DMFA Cup earlier this year.

The freedom fighters, who caused a commotion in this years players' transfer roping in ten national players, deservingly won the match as the better side in an eye-soring encounter.

Mizan, Abahani's hero of the Charms Cup headed the ball home in the 30th minute utilizing a right side cross from winger Mamun Joarder to earn his side a berth in the final of any domestic tournament for the first time in the club's history.

But Mohammedans, the six time Federation Cup champions who fielded their two new Russian recruits — Inataev and Vitali in the match failed to break the jinx of elimination in the semifinal stage dating back to a 1-0 defeat against Abahani in the Charms Cup in Calcutta earlier this year.

The two-time DMFA Cup champions also lost to Brothers Union at the same stage in a penalty shoot out couple of months back.

Muktijoddha, who started the semifinal encounter with their new coach, former ace striker Kazi Salahuddin in the field, took charge of the midfield from the word go.

In the seventh minute Mizan fired a low right footer that was brilliantly saved by Mohammedan custodian Lahul.

Barun Bikash Dewan, who was switched to the midfield from his regular left back position, split the Mohammedan defence with a nice through pass in the 20th minute. But the resultant fierce shot from Mamun Joarder slightly missed the mark.

Ten minutes later Mizan found the net with a timely header from inside the box to seal the fate of the match, rather prematurely.

Mohammedans, who were sans any middle rarely, found creating any positive move in

the opponent citadel: They got the only scoring chance in the 38th minute of the first half originated from a freekick in the Muktijoddha box.

Vitali, who played in the midfield pushed the ball to his compatriot Inataev, but the unmarked striker missed a sitter shooting wide merely from six yards.

The Mohammedans supporters, who were apparently disappointed by their new Russian recruits, pelted stones at the players after the match and damaged the car which carried the players to the club

breaking an offside trap, went to a difficult angle before shooting straight to the custodian.

Mohammedan's hopes of an equaliser were gone when Mohsin parried a header from substitute Zahid two minutes before the long whistle.

Rehan, Vitali and Enataev of Mohammedans and Mamun Joarder and Imtiaz Ahmed Nakib of Muktijoddha were cautioned with the yellow card for rough play.

TEAMS

MUKTIJODDHA SANGSAD: Mohsin, Titu, Jewel Rana.



POINTLESS TUSSLE: Jewel Rana, a former Mohammedan defender now playing for Muktijoddha leaps to cut short the ambition of Mohammedans' Asaduzzaman while teammate Titu watches on. The lanky defender of the national team had a satisfactory day on the field as his side exacted a sweet revenge beating the black and whites 1-0 for a passage to the final of the BEXIMCO 12th Federation Cup football tournament. The second semifinal at the Dhaka Stadium was a fine farce after the sumptuous course of serious soccer in the recently concluded World Cup. — Star photo sent.

The second session was little exciting with Mohammedans penetrating down flanks creating a couple of scoring opportunities and almost got the equaliser minutes after the breather.

Roxy, who found the Muktijoddha goalkeeper Mohsin at his mercy after successfully Ataur Rahman, Masud Rana,

Barun, Mamun Joarder, Rumi Rizvi Karim (Mizanur Rahman jr), Rakib, Imtiaz Ahmed Nakib and Mizanur Rahman.

MOHAMMEDAN-SC: Lahul, Kaisar Hamid, Rehan, Alamgir, Shamim, Manik (Zahid), Shabbir, Roxy, Vitali, Asaduzzaman, (Munna) and Inataev.

Referee: R Alam. Attendance: 10,529.

Cronje's promise

LONDON, July 21: South African vice-captain Hansie Cronje has not forgotten a promise he made as a young boy to the schoolmaster who first taught him the rudiments of cricket, reports Reuter.

As a result, John Volsteedt, headmaster of Grey College in Bloemfontein, will be at Lord's today to watch Cronje and two others of his proteges, captain Kepler Wessels and fast bowler Allan Donald, in the opening Test against England.

Having first strapped batting pads onto Kepler Wessels at the age of five, Volsteedt later guided his career at Grey College. Gradually creating a cricket culture in a part of the country normally noted for its rugby.

Then came Cronje, another naturally gifted youngster, to continue the run of cricketing success at the college and Volsteedt remembers well the day the 10-year-old made his promise.

"He said to me 'Mr Volsteedt, if I ever play for South Africa and get the chance to play at Lords, then you will be there. I promise you'."

Cronje did not forget that promise. Two air-tickets, for Volsteedt and his wife, and a week's accommodation in London were delivered to Bloemfontein last week.

Hansie still talks to me about his batting and I'm proud to be able to help. But I never expected him to remember this ... he has been as good as his word. I'm very proud of him," Volsteedt said.

Pakistan arrive in Lanka

COLOMBO, July 21: Pakistan arrived in Sri Lanka on Thursday without star batsman Javed Miandad and predicting a tough Test battle with their hosts, reports AFP.

"I have always said I have great regard for Sri Lankan cricket. They are a difficult side to beat in Sri Lanka," manager Intikhab Alam told reporters after arriving with a 15-man squad for the gruelling tour.

Pakistan, led by Salim Malik, will play three Tests and three one-day internationals against Sri Lanka before a four-nation limited overs contest here with Sri Lanka, India and Australia.

Alam said that the tour was "very serious and important" for Pakistan because they would be returning home to a busy schedule including a tour by Australia.

Alam, however, said that Pakistan were well prepared after undergoing a rigid 18-day training period.

He said it was unfortunate star batsman Miandad could not arrive with the side but no decision had been yet taken whether to replace him.

Miandad had to withdraw from the tour party because of injury.

Alam said the tourists had a fine captain in Salim Malik, who have a side that was fully equipped in both batting and bowling.

"We have a well-balanced side. So far Salim has done a very good job as captain," Alam said.

Alam said tipped right-hander Basit Ali as the batsman to watch together with the world's finest fast bowling pair of Wasim Akram and Waqar Younis.

The tourists open with a three-day match against a Board President XI in southern Matara on Saturday.

Squad: Salim Malik (Captain), Asif Mujtaba (vice captain), Rashid Latif, Anur Sohail, Saeed Anwar, Basit Ali, Inzamam ul Haq, Zahid Fazal, Mushtaq Ahmed, Akram Raza, Waqar Younis, Wasim Akram, Ashfaq Ahmed, Kabir Khan, Rameez Raja. Manager, Intikhab Alam.

D'Oliveira keeps it close to his chest

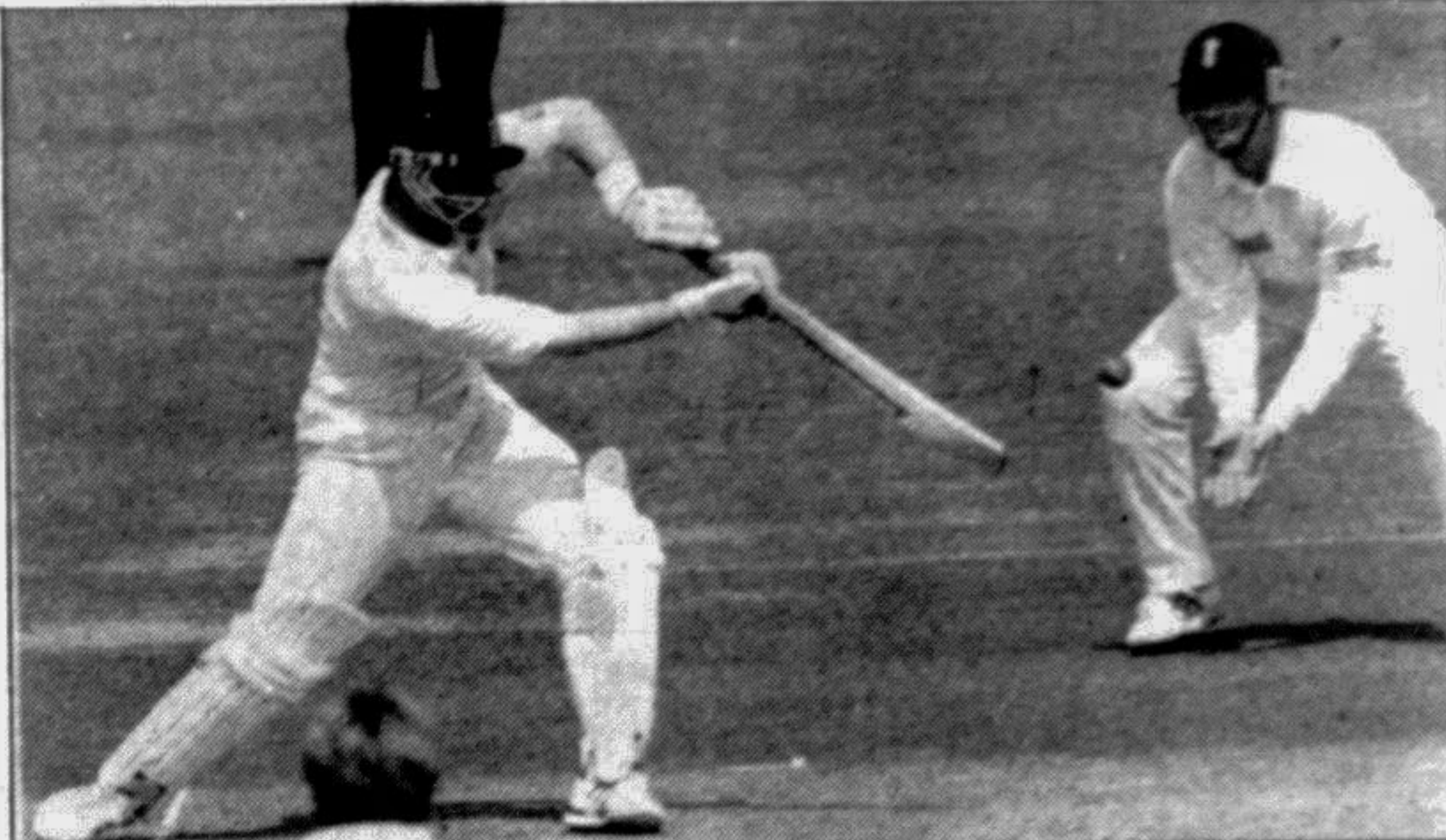
LONDON, July 21: Basil D'Oliveira on Wednesday denied snubbing an invitation to today's historic Lord's Test match between England and South Africa, reports AFP.

The former England Test player, whose shameful treatment by South Africa in 1968 put it on the road to its long sporting exile, says he hasn't yet decided whether to attend the match.

D'Oliveira, a Cape coloured who came to Britain to escape apartheid, has so far failed to reply to an invitation by the MCC to be a guest at the Test.

But he said at his home in Worcester on Wednesday: "The statement that I have snubbed the MCC, snubbed Lord's and snubbed South Africa is a blatant lie."

D'Oliveira, now 63, added that as an honorary life member of the MCC he could go along to Lords to watch a Test whenever he wished.



South African opener Andrew Hudson pats back a delivery in copybook fashion at the outset of the first Test between South Africa and England at Lord's yesterday. — AFP photo

S Africa off to a jumpy start

LONDON, July 21: A capacity house, brilliant sunshine, dignitaries from both countries and high emotion welcomed South Africa back to the home of cricket on the first day of the first Test against England at Lord's Thursday, reports AP.

But the homecoming was not as successful as the South Africans would have like, struggling their way to lunch at 76 for two with Gary Kirsten not out on 39 and captain Kepler Wessels undetaten on 22.

An end to South Africa's apartheid regime saw the Republic back in international sport in 1991, a return which would not have been complete until Thursday — a Test match against England for the first time since it toured here in 1965.

Despite Wessels exhorting his players to put the occasion out of their minds, openers Andrew Hudson and Kirsten got off to an understandably nervous and scaly start after walking out to a two minute standing ovation from the crowd here for the history as much as the cricket.

Hudson scored the first run between the two countries in

29 years with a turn off his hip for a single to fine leg off Phil DeFreitas' first over of the day.

He rarely looked comfortable though, apart from one gloriously elegant off drive for four off Darren Gough.

Gough and DeFreitas bowled fast and found movement both in the air and off the pitch which looked true and flat, offering Wessels no choice but to bat after winning the toss.

Having taken the score to

Incorrect

LONDON, July 21: A leading British merchant bank denied on Wednesday that Brian Lara had signed a 500,000 pounds (780,000 dollars) sponsorship deal with an investment company they control and said the correct figure was 100,000 pounds (156,000 dollars), reports Reuter.

Reuters and most British papers reported on Tuesday the West Indian batting phenomenon, who has set the Test and English county cricket run records of 375 and 501 respectively this year, had signed for the higher figure.

But the merchant bank, SG Warburg, said on Wednesday the correct figure was 100,000 pounds.

an unconvincing 18 from eight overs, Hudson, on six did not get behind a pull shot off Gough, took a top edge and Graham Gooch took an excellent catch running to his right on the deep fine leg boundary.

Kirsten had some luck, a couple of boundaries coming from edges through slips, but once the nerves were eased he moved into the form which brought him a double century against Durham and a century against Northamptonshire last week.

England captain Mike Atherton brought on leg spinner Ian Salisbury and Angus Fraser after drinks with an immediate result.

Off Fraser's third ball, Cronje left a large gap between bat and pad as he pushed at a forward defensive shot, and round an edge which caught his pad on the way to debutant John Crawley at short leg.

Kirsten and Wessels got on top of the bowling in the last 40 minutes of the session and scored freely. Fraser beat the bat occasionally, but was also hit for several boundaries both sides of the wicket.

South Africa left out spinner Pat Symcox and included fast bowler Craig Matthews, Shaun Udal, in his first Test, was named England's 12th man.

Italy awaits a starry stir

ROME, July 21: A galaxy of foreign stars who shone at the World Cup have joined Italian First Division clubs to test their talent in what is widely regarded as the world's best soccer league, reports Reuter.

The league, won by European champions AC Milan for three successive seasons, had a face-lift during USA '94 as rosters were shuffled and foreign stars were signed in a busy transfer campaign which officially ended last week.

Nearly a dozen newcomers have either signed for First Division clubs or are close to doing so.

They include German Jurgen Klinsmann, the only star to have already played in Italy, and Colombian Freddy Rincón, whose country crashed out of the World Cup finals after the first round.

Rincón will guide a revamped attack at Napoli, who acquired the sleek midfielder from Brazil's Palmeiras after dealing away expensive Uruguayan forward Daniel Fonseca and Sweden captain Jonas Thern to AS Roma.

Roma, who risked relegation last year, will field one of the league's most restructured squads with Fonseca and mainstay Abel Balbo of Argentina up front with Thern in midfield.

Napoli, who signed Rincón on a three-year contract, have also picked up Brazilian defender Andre Cruz from Belgium's Standard Liege and French midfielder Alain Boghossian from Olympique Marseille.

Klinsmann, who scored four

goals in the United States and was in Germany's triumphant 1990 team, will return to Italy with Genoa if a deal to send Czech striker Tomas Skuhravy to Leeds of England goes through, according to sources at Genoa.

The German, who played for Monaco last season, left Internazionale in 1992 after three less than brilliant seasons.

Newly-promoted Brescia are expected to transfer Romanian forward Gheorge Hagi to Barcelona. Hagi's pin-point passing at the World Cup drew comparisons with Argentine Diego Maradona in his heyday.

A Brescia spokesman said the club were reluctant to release Hagi but were negotiating with Barcelona to satisfy the Romanian, who has received a lucrative three-year offer from the Spanish side.

He said Brescia would sign another Romanian, probably Steaua Bucharest's Ili Dumitrescu, whose double strike against favourites Argentina powered Romania to their first World Cup quarter-finals.

Goalkeeper Claudio Taffarel, whose save from Italy's Daniele Massaro helped Brazil win the World Cup in a penalty shoot-out that decided the final, is looking for a new club after being released by Reggiana.

African newcomers include Sunday Oliseh, the powerful yet agile midfielder who helped make Nigeria World Cup contenders, and Abedi Ayew, a quick-footed Ghanaian forward who should add some zip to Torino's attack.

Oliseh, 20, has joined Reggiana, who barely avoided relegation, from Belgium's Stan-

dard Liege for 2.5 billion lire (1.6 million dollars).

Juventus, runners-up last season and home of Italy's star striker Roberto Baggio, signed Sporting Lisbon midfielder Paolo Sousa last April to a three-year deal worth some 5 million dollars.

The Turin team have also acquired French midfielder Didier Deschamps from Marseille.

Benfica midfielder Rui Costa has joined promoted Fiorentina, while a third Portuguese player, Fernando Couto, should shore up the back three at Parma, who picked up the defender from Porto in a three-year deal worth an estimated 3.6 million dollars.

Dutch striker Ruud Gullit, who mysteriously dropped out of his country's World Cup squad days before the finals, has returned to AC Milan after a year at Sampdoria. Gullit, 31, is expected to pilot the Milan attack alongside Montenegrin Dejan Savicevic.

Milan, who have a surplus of foreigners in a league where only three can play at one time, have transferred Romanian striker Florin Raducioiu, who stood out at the World Cup, to Spain's Espanol.

Italian media say newly promoted Padova are trying to line up US defender Alexi Lalas if they fail to sign Sweden's Joachim Bjorklund. Padova have declined to comment.

The guitar-playing Lalas, 24, has never belonged to a club and was virtually unknown before his performance and personality at the World Cup thrust him into the international spotlight.

Rowland proves docs wrong

GATESHEAD, England, July 21: Battling steeple-chaser Mark Rowland, who was once told by doctors he would never run again at international level after four Achilles tendon operations, put himself in line on Wednesday for a place in Britain's team for next month's European Championships, reports Reuter.

Rowland, silver medalist at the last championships, achieved the qualifying time in Edinburgh a fortnight ago and followed that up with victory here in a Britain v United States international.

In a British 1-2, Rowland won in eight minutes 41.45 seconds, nearly three seconds ahead of Colin Walker and four seconds clear of American Dan Reese.

Britain's selectors finalise their squad for Helsinki today

and there will be a place for him if he wants it.

Rowland, who won an Olympic bronze in 1988 and is still the British record-holder, said: "It's tremendous to be back. There were plenty of times when I thought I wouldn't make it."

"I know that if I'm as fit as I was in the championships four years ago, I can be a challenger."

But I don't want to go and not be competitive. I wouldn't want to let anyone down."

The 31-year-old, who qualified as a massage therapist during his time away from the track, added: "The rest of the guys are six weeks ahead of me. This is just the start of the season for me."

While Rowland celebrated his comeback, Matthew Yates feared he might be ruled out of a 1,500 metres spot after missing the match.

world final in Stuttgart, was grounded when the mid-afternoon plane he planned to catch was taken out of service with technical problems.

He said: "I'm worried I may have put my chances at risk. I just hope the selectors view what happened sympathetically."

World and Olympic champion Sally Gunnell bounced back from her first 400 metres hurdles defeat of the season in Nice to record a career best for the 400 flat of 51.04.

But despite British successes, the US won both the men's and women's team titles, the men winning 206-180 and the women 168-152.

With Olympic and world champion Linford Christie absent through injury, American runners made a clean sweep of the first three places in the 100 metres, with Kevin Braun-skill winning in 10.43 seconds.

Pierce puts France into qtrs

FRANKFURT, July 21: France, with French Open finalist Mary Pierce leading the way, was among four countries to advance Wednesday to the quarterfinals of the Federation Cup, reports AP.

Japan, like France, swept its way through the second round of the annual 32-country women's tennis event, while Germany and South Africa advanced with 2-1 victories.

Thursday's second-round matches have Spain, the defending champion and top seed, against Argentina, the

second-seeded United States meeting No 13 Canada, Austria against Australia and Bulgaria facing Indonesia.

Spain, led by French Open champion Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario and Wimbledon champion Conchita Martinez, has the edge over Argentina, whose top player Gabriela Sabatini, withdrew due to a shoulder injury.

The United States has a strong team with world No 6 Lindsay Davenport, No 11 Mary-Joe Fernandez of Miami, No 12 Zina Garrison-Jackson and doubles specialist Gigi Fernandez.

Wednesday's results pro-

duced few surprises. Pierce thrashed Sandra Cecchini 6-0, 6-3 to lead third-seeded France to the 3-0 victory over Italy.

Julie Halard beat Farina 6-2, 2-6, 6-4 in the other singles match and combined with Nathalie Tauziat to beat Rita Grande and Marzia Grossi 6-4, 6-1 in doubles.

Fifth-seeded Japan swept Sweden as Naoko Swamatsu beat Maria Strandlund 6-4, 6-3 and Kimiko Date defeated Asa Carlsson 6-2, 7-5 before Date and Mana Endo beat Strandlund and Maria Lindstrom 7-6 (7-2), 1-6, 6-2.