

Bangladesh 126th!

Sports Reporter
Bangladesh have been ranked 126th in FIFA's latest ranking of the football playing countries, released from the headquarters of the world soccer governing body in Zurich on Thursday.
Among the other South Asian countries, India preceded Bangladesh with the 105th position.
Interestingly enough, the reigning SAF football champions Nepal have been ranked 129th, Sri Lanka and Pakistan, both former SAF champions, were slotted at 128 and 147 respectively. Brazil, the newly crowned World Cup champions topped the list while St. Kitts and Nevis form the bottom.

Thorpe, Benjamin soup Surrey up

LONDON, July 22: In form paceman Joey Benjamin and overlooked England batsman Graham Thorpe helped county championship leaders Surrey into a commanding position against Nottinghamshire at Trent Bridge on Thursday, reports Reuter.
Benjamin took six for 27 to send Nottinghamshire tumbling to 125 all out.
Then Thorpe — ignored by the England selectors since the winter tour of the West Indies — stroked an impressive 70 as Surrey reached 157 for two by the close of the first day.
Another six-wicket haul was claimed by Sussex's Eddie Hemmings as Somerset laboured to 277 for seven at home.
Mark Lathwell held the Somerset innings together with 124 but off spinner Hemmings, the oldest player on the county circuit at 45, took six for 61 from 44 overs as Sussex fought back in the final session.
Richard Montgomerie struck a rich vein of form to claim his maiden championship century as Derbyshire's decision to bowl first at Northampton backfired badly.
The 23-year-old opener, making only his third appearance in the competition, hammered 151, with 24 fours in a 310-ball stay. Northamptonshire were 409 for four at the close.
Another opener in good touch was Trevor Ward who hit 110 for Kent who ran up 373 for five against Glamorgan at Abergavenny.

New format goes well with Fed Cup

FRANKFURT, Germany, July 22: The Federation Cup, originally launched with 16 nations playing off in London in 1963, has attracted a record entry of 83 nations for 1995, reports AFP.
The competition has been renamed Fed Cup and in the new format the top eight nations in the World Group and another eight in Group One will play off on a home and away basis with matches decided over two days after four singles and a doubles.
Until now ties have been decided in a single day after two singles and a doubles.
All other nations outside the two top groups will play in regional qualifying events.
The four first round losers in the World Group will face the four First Round winners in Group One to decide the composition of the 1996 World Group.
Similarly the four first round losers in group one will play the four winners of the regional qualifying to decide who plays in Group One the following year.
Matches for the regional qualifying events for Europe, Africa, the Americas and Asia-Oceania, will continue to be run on a round-robin basis.
"We are tremendously excited about this new format," said the International Tennis Federation's Fed Cup executive director Debbie Jevans.

English cagers in good nick

KUALA LUMPUR, July 22: Defending champions England continued their unbeaten run in the Commonwealth Basketball when they thrashed Malaysia 81-49, on the third day of the championships Thursday, reports AFP.
Canada whipped Hong Kong 110-60 and Nigeria thrashed Singapore 80-48 in two other matches.
Peter Scantlebury was the toast of England as he single-handedly delivered 21 points to down the Malaysians for their second victory in the tournament.
England, who beat mighty Nigeria 59-49 Tuesday started aggressively with Scantlebury finding the basket seconds after the start. The English scorer led the salvo until his team led 41-16 at half-time.
The Malaysians, hopeful for a third triumph after their earlier 108-63 victory against Singapore and 88-72 win over Hong Kong, returned after the breather with Chen Huat Keong engineering some brilliant manoeuvres.

Federation Cup final today

Break beckons Muktijoddha

Sports Reporter
Four-time champions Abahani Krira Chakra and the emerging force in the local football, Muktijoddha Sangsad meet in the finale of the BEXIMCO 12th Federation Cup football tournament at the Dhaka Stadium today.
The match kicks-off at 5 pm. Bangladesh Television and Radio Bangladesh will cover the match live.
Although it will be Abahani

Nat'l b'ball
Bangladesh Air Force, Bangladesh Rifles, Bangladesh Army and Dhaka DSA won their matches in the Pepsi 17th national basketball tournament held at the NSC women floor gymnasium in Dhaka yesterday, reports AP.
Bangladesh Air Force trounced Rajshahi Sports Association by 112-38 points. Gossami caged 27 points for the winners. They led the first half 66-21.
Dhaka Zila beat Brahmanbaria by a massive 147-58 points. Dhaka led the first half 78-26.
Bangladesh Army edged past Barisal Sports Association by 137-32 points. The winners led the first half 78-20.

Nat'l TT on
Sports Reporter
The Meril 19th national table tennis championship got underway at the Pabna district gymnasium yesterday with four boys matches being decided on the opening day.
According to a faxed message received here last night, Dhaka, Kustia, Khulna and Madaripur won their respective matches in straight sets.
Earlier, M Aminul Islam, Commissioner of Rajshahi Division declared the six-day meet open.
A total of 229 participants including 100 men, 432 women, 69 boys from 28 different teams will fight it out for ten events.

World Cup fixtures announced
Holders to open against UAE

FIXTURES
Feb 14: England v New Zealand Group B in India
Feb 15: South Africa v UAE Group B in Pakistan
Feb 16: West Indies v Zimbabwe Group A in India
Feb 17: Netherlands v New Zealand Group B in India
Feb 18: England v Australia Group A in Sri Lanka
Feb 19: Rest day
Feb 20: South Africa v New Zealand Group B in Pakistan
Feb 21: India v West Indies Group A in India
Feb 22: Australia v Zimbabwe Group A in Sri Lanka
Feb 23: England v Netherlands Group B in Pakistan
Feb 24: Pakistan v UAE Group B in Pakistan
Feb 25: South Africa v England Group B in Pakistan
Feb 26: West Indies v Sri Lanka Group A in Sri Lanka
Feb 27: Pakistan v Netherlands Group B in Pakistan
Feb 28: Rest day
Feb 29: South Africa v Pakistan Group B in Pakistan West Indies v Kenya Group A in India
Mar 1: Netherlands v UAE Group B in Pakistan
Mar 2: India v Sri Lanka Group A in India
Mar 3: Pakistan v England Group B in Pakistan
Mar 4: West Indies v Australia Group A in India
Mar 5: South Africa v Netherlands Group B in Pakistan
Mar 6: Pakistan v New Zealand Group B in Pakistan
India v Zimbabwe Group A in India
Sri Lanka v Kenya Group A in Sri Lanka
Quarter-finals
Mar 9: A-1 v B-4 in Pakistan; A-3 v B-2 in India; Mar 11: A-4 v B-1 in Pakistan; A-2 v B-3 in India
SEMIFINALS
Mar 13: Between winners of Mar 9 quarter-finals
Mar 14: Between winners of Mar 11 quarter-finals (both to be played in India)
FINAL
Mar 17: Lahore, Mar 18 is the reserve day.

A downer for Goodwill Games

ST PETERSBURG, Russia, July 22: Swimming, the showcase event of Saturday's opening day of the Goodwill Games, might be postponed because of renovation delays at the SKA indoor swimming pool, reports AP.
Goodwill Games president Jack Kelly said an inspection of the pool early Friday showed a troublesome filtration system was still pumping out murky brown water as it has done for several days. Kelly said the system was improving, but slowly.
Kelly said scheduling would allow for pushing the two-day event back one day to Sunday and Monday rather than hold it on Saturday and Sunday as planned. He said a decision would be made late Friday.
"It's not something that would mean changing the quality of the swim competition," Kelly said. "We have a very big programme and that [change] in the swim-schedule could be accommodated."
A delay in having the pool ready would be a major embarrassment to Goodwill officials. Critics have suggested the Games, the first major sports event in post-Soviet Russia, would be an organisational disaster. They have also questioned large spending on the event in a city swamped with economic problems.
Though many of the venues for the Games have undergone extensive rehabs, the SKA pool has probably been the biggest rebuilding project in the city.
Kelly said water tests showed the pool was safe, but he said holding competition in a pool with brown water would look bad on television.
"We want to make sure the aesthetics are what we want," Kelly said. "They [St Petersburg organisers] want to portray this is a place where standards are like everywhere else."
"This one problem is a shame because the pool was a wreck and now it looks great," Kelly added. He said other Games venues were "virtually ready" with only last-minute problems to be solved.
"Deputy Mayor Vitaly Mutko asked the news media to be fair. "Please don't exaggerate the seriousness of the problem, normal work is going on."

Wessels proud

LONDON, July 22: South African captain Kepler Wessels said Thursday's century against England at Lord's was the undoubted highlight of his career, reports Reuter.
Wessels lapped up the emotion of South Africa's long-awaited return to cricket's most famous ground before start of play and then went out to rescue his side from early trouble with a superbly disciplined innings of 105.
"It was everything I could have hoped for on a personal level," said Wessels. "Getting a century at Lord's has to be the highlight of my career."
Wessels has now scored Test hundreds for two countries against England — the only batsman to have achieved such a feat.
His first was in 1982 on his debut for his adopted Australia in Brisbane.
"When I went home to South Africa in 1985 I had no doubt my Test career was finished," said Wessels, who fell out with Australia over money after winning 24 caps.
"I didn't entertain any idea of playing Test cricket again. It's been an amazing turnaround for me."
Wessels was chosen to captain South Africa in the 1992 World Cup soon after their return to the international fold.
He described his country's first Test at Lord's for 29 years as "a tremendous feeling, a great thrill."
"The atmosphere was excellent we couldn't have asked for a better day from that point of view."

Botham to sue Imran

LONDON, July 22: Former England cricket captain Ian Botham is to sue his Pakistan counterpart Imran Khan for libel in the latest twist to the long-running ball tampering saga, reports AP.
Imran admitted in his autobiography earlier this year that he used a bottle top to gouge the ball during his country career in England.
The fast bowler also accused all English bowlers of the practice and attacked Botham's reputation.
According to Friday's Daily Mirror newspaper, Botham's solicitor has issued a writ, claiming his client was "extremely angry at the aspersions being made about his cricket, integrity and upbringing. He didn't want to do it, but he feels very insulted."
Botham last winter was prepared to act as a key witness for Test teammate Alan Lamb in the libel action brought against him by another former Pakistan bowler Sarfraz Nawaz, who Lamb accused of ball tampering. Sarfraz later withdrew his action.
In the Asian publication, India Today, Imran referred to Botham, Lamb and Fred Trueman as lacking class and upbringing.
Botham and Imran were two of the world's greatest all-rounders. In 102 Tests from 1977 to 1992, Botham took 383 wickets at an average of 28.40 and scored 5,200 runs, including 14 centuries at 33.54.
Imran took 362 wickets at 22.81 each and scored 3,807 runs including six centuries at an average of 37.69 in 88 Tests until his retirement in 1992.

US needs ATP's attention

WASHINGTON, July 22: Top ATP players must spend more time with fans to achieve peak US popularity, chief executive officer Mark Miles said, reports AFP.
"In Europe it's in the stratosphere compared to the situation in the US. We're going to do what we have to catch up. It's a competitive environment."
Miles said the ATP must enlist the aid of top players to challenge basketball, baseball and American football for US sports attention.
"Players have to understand it's their job to grow and promote the sport," Miles said. "They have got to demand it from each other. It's peer pressure."
Another concern is making tournaments special instead of similar.
"We have to do a better job of making the sport important and not generic," Miles said. "The most important factor is to get competitive in marketing. Other US sports have had a modern marketing plan longer than we have."
Appearance guarantees to top players amount to much more than prize money at most events. Early losses by top seeds make US fans unhappy at tennis players for not giving their best. But Miles said four events need to be regarded like national Basketball Association regular season games.
"NBA fans don't think they are tanking," he said.
"Everyone understands you step it up for the finals. It's impossible for an athlete to focus on every event the way they do the most important events of a season."
More television cameras

Agassi joins casualty list

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Agassi, the No. 5 seed, was ousted, along with No. 4 Marc Rosset of Switzerland, No. 6 Jaime Yzaga of Peru, No. 7 Ivan Lendl, No. 13 Henrik Holm of Sweden, No. 14 Jason Stoltenberg of Australia and No. 15 Jonathan Stark.
No. 2 Stefan Edberg has a much easier time of things. Playing crisp tennis despite a long rain delay, the Swede defeated Stark 6-4, 6-4 to advance to the quarters.
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Medvedev won the Stuttgart event in 1992 but his game this week was severely restricted by strained tendons between the fingers on his right hand — the legacy of a tournament fall at Gstaad,

from Craig White for 41 out of a partnership of 54.
White showed deceptive pace and after Matthews had been offered a procession of short wide balls, he whipped one in fast and straight and got the wicket which was proving very frustrating for England captain Mike Atherton.
McMillan was on 29 when he was out to an excellent catch by wicketkeeper Stephen Rhodes diving low to his left after Angus Fraser nipped one back to take the inside edge.
Fanie de Villiers was the last batsman out for eight, also caught Rhodes bowled Fraser, 10 minutes after coming back from lunch. Alan Donald remained five not out.
Fraser's two wickets gave him figures of three for 72, while Gough finished with four for 76.
South African captain Kepler Wessels had said overnight he wanted to reach at least 350, and after his own superb 105 on he should be content, so far, with the homecoming he and his countrymen have waited nearly three decades for.
SCORE BOARD
South Africa
First innings (overnight 244-6)
A Hudson c Gough b Wessels 6
G Kirsten c DeFreitas b Hick 72
H Cronje c Crawley b Fraser 7
K Wessels c Rhodes b Gough 105
P Krieken b Rhodes b Gough 8
J Rhodes b White 32
B McMillan c Rhodes b Fraser 29
D Richardson lbw b Gough 26
C Matthews b White 41
F de Villiers c Rhodes b Fraser 8
A Donald not out 5
Extras (lb-9, nb-9) 18
Total 357
Fall of wickets: 1-18; 2-35; 3-141; 4-164; 5-239; 6-241; 7-281; 8-334; 9-348.
Bowling
DeFreitas 18 5 67 0
Gough 28 6 76 4
Salisbury 25 2 68 0
Fraser 24.5 7 72 3
Hick 10 5 22 1
White 13 2 43 2
England first innings
M Atherton c Wessels b Donald 20
A Stewart b Donald 12
J Crawley c Hudson b De Villiers 9
G Hick c Richardson b De Villiers 38
G Gooch lbw b De Villiers 20
C White c Richardson b Donald 10
S Rhodes b McMillan 15
I Salisbury not out 3
Extras (b-2, nb-7) 14
Total (for seven wickets) 141
Fall of wickets: 1-19; 2-41; 3-68; 4-107; 5-119; 6-136; 7-141.
To bat: P DeFreitas, D Gough, A Fraser.
Bowling (to date): O M R W
Donald 15.2 4 54 3
De Villiers 16 5 28 3
Matthews 12 6 27 0
McMillan 10 1 25 1

England in dire straits

LONDON, July 22: England were 141 for 7 at the close in reply to South Africa's first innings total of 357 on the second day of the first Test at Lord's today, reports Reuter.
Earlier, South Africa's competent late order batsmen frustrated England and scored freely on the second morning of the first Test at Lord's to be all out for 357.
Resuming at 244 for six, David Richardson, Brian McMillan and especially Craig Matthews played their strokes

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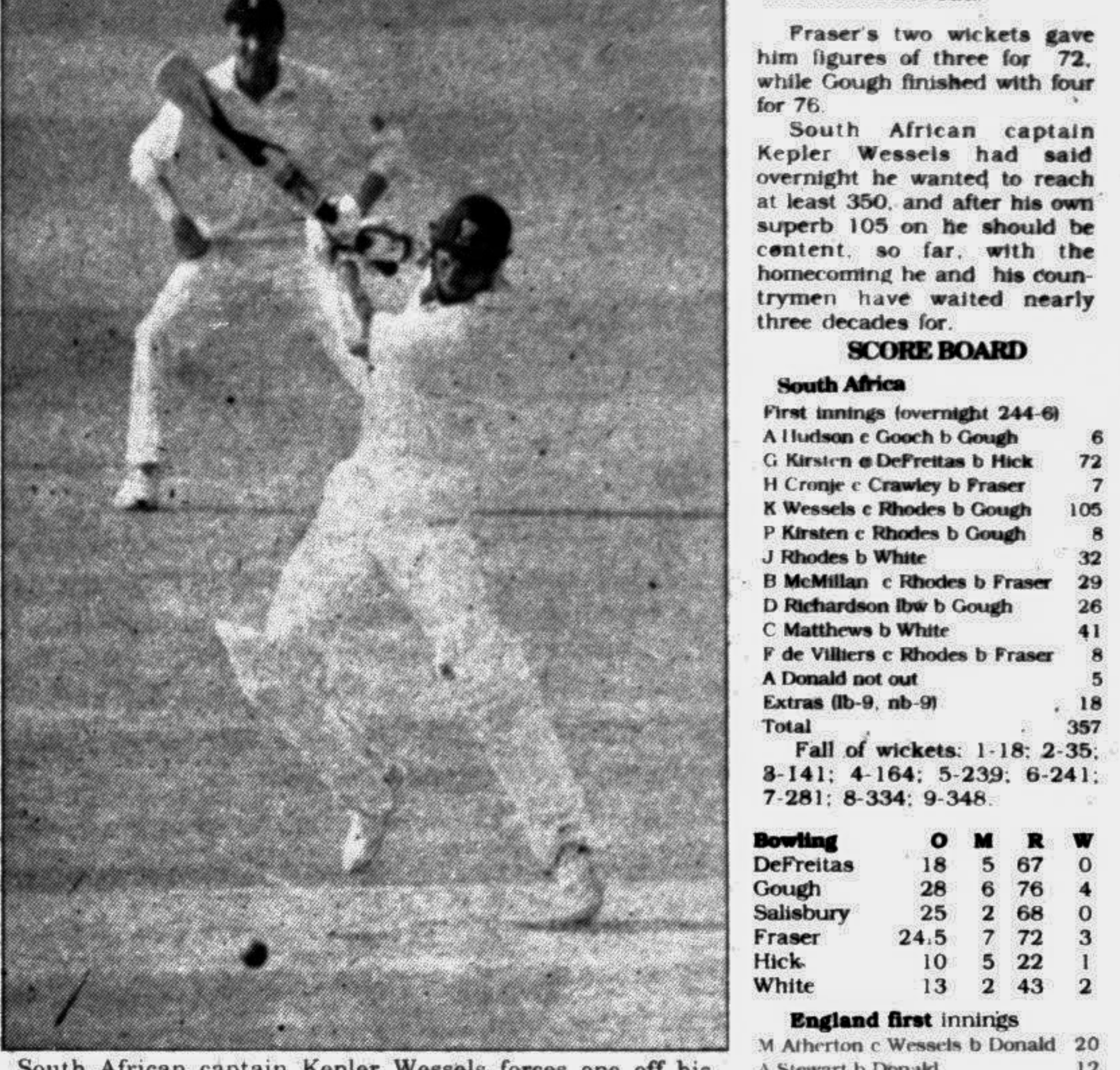
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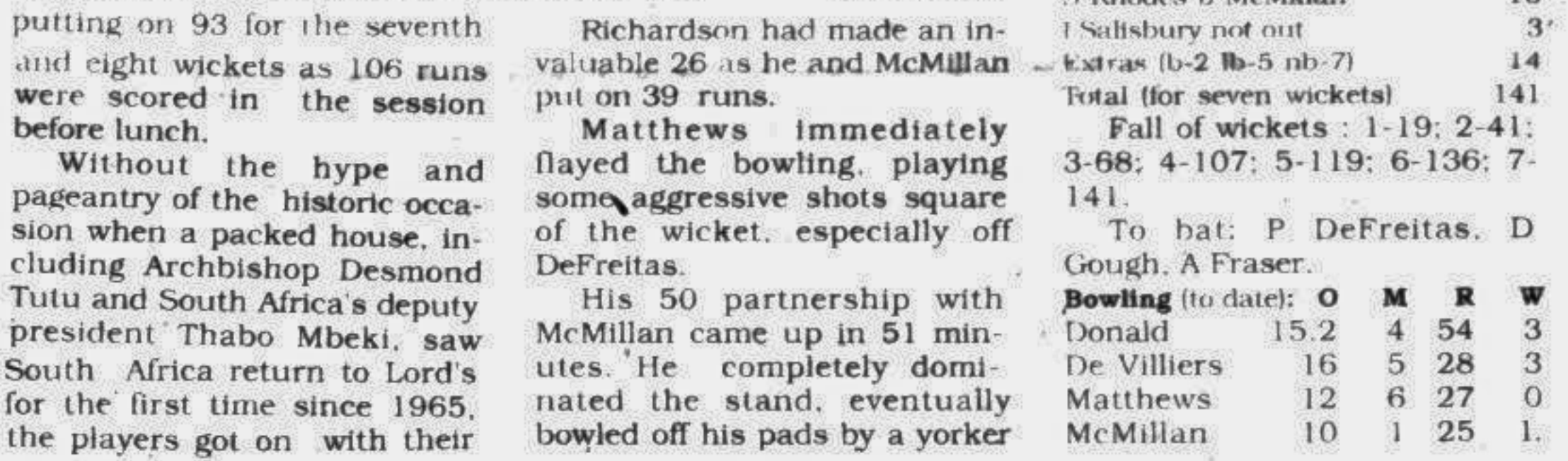
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South African captain Kepler Wessels forces one off his backfoot on the first day of the first Test between South Africa and England at Lord's on July 21 while his counterpart Atherton watches on anxiously. The workmanlike southpaw went on to hit 105. — AFP photo



Richardson had made an invaluable 26 as he and McMillan put on 39 runs. Matthews immediately played the bowling, playing some aggressive shots square of the wicket, especially off DeFreitas.
His 50 partnership with McMillan came up in 51 minutes. He completely dominated the stand, eventually bowled off his pads by a yorker



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Dave Richardson, the South African stumper who conjured up some resolute rearguard action with the bat adds to the growing frustration of the English fielders hemming around him yesterday, the second day of the first Test at Lord's. — AFP photo