

## Sport

## Dhaka fill last slot in nat'l b'ball semis

Sports Reporter

Dhaka completed the glory of the last four of the Pepsi 17th national basketball championship when they made a late rally in the second half to edge past Bangladesh Air Force 88-67 in the last robin league encounter at the NSC wooden floor gymnasium yesterday.

The win left Dhaka as Group B runners-up and they will take on Group A champions Bangladesh Rifles in the second semifinal today.

Holders Bangladesh Navy will meet Bangladesh Army in the first semifinal earlier on the same day.

The Dhaka spikers displayed remarkable speed and accuracy in the second half scoring 53 points against Air Force's 32 to win one of the toughest game so far in this week-long meet.

After an evenly contested first half that saw both teams tied at 35-35, national player Dulal spearheaded the Dhaka attack with spree of basket, the lanky player, toast of Dhaka yesterday, caged highest 39 points in the match followed by teammate Siddique who scored 21 points.

In the other two matches of the day, Barisal prevailed over Bangladesh Police by 114-99 points while Rajshahi beat Chandpur 64-58, their fourth successive loss.

## Nat'l TT results

Sports Reporter

The all too familiar Linu and Zulekha pair clinched the women's doubles title while Shaon and Mona took the boys' double crown of the Meril 19th national table tennis championship at the Pabna district gymnasium yesterday.

Linu and Zulekha, the two national paddlers of Ansars thrashed the Shamima-Rinu pair 21-10, 21-11, 21-17 in the final for their second successive title.

Earlier, Linu and Zulekha played a pivotal role in Ansars' triumph in women's team event.

In the boys' doubles final the duo of Madaripur's Shaon and Ansars' Mona beat the Narail pair of Gautam and Pappu in straight sets.

Meanwhile, in the mixed doubles, the Rinu-Rochi and the Nilu-Kislu Pair moved into the final of the six-day meet.

Besides, Rochi, Manash, Kamel, Happy, Sadi, Akhlak, Khami and Mostofa moved into the second round of the men's singles winning their respective group finals.

## Tuhin finishes sixth in Dubai chess meet

Ziaul Quader, Tuhin of Bangladesh was placed sixth in the international chess festival held in Abu Dhabi securing seven points, reports UNB.

Twenty players from 11 countries participated in the ten-round competition.

Omar Katarajine of the Philippines emerged champion with nine and a half points while Khaled Mohammad of Egypt finished runners-up with nine points in the meet held from July 10-20, according to a delayed message received here yesterday.

## Walsh wrecks Yorkshire

LONDON, July 26: Gloucestershire's West Indies pace bowler Courtney Walsh took four wickets in seven overs on Monday to send Yorkshire tumbling to an embarrassing 324-run county championship defeat at Cheltenham, reports Reuters.

It was their biggest defeat in run terms. The previous worst was the 305 runs they lost by to Cambridge University 88 years ago.

Walsh wasted little time in mopping up the innings after Yorkshire had resumed at 154 for five.

They were all out for 204, Walsh finishing with six for 85. He took 10 wickets in the match — the third time he has achieved the feat this season.

## Kent fan's crusade

CANTERBURY, England, July 26: A Kent supporter plans to force a special general meeting of the county to propose a motion of no confidence against the Test and County Cricket Board, reports AFP.

Roy Edey says Kent fans are still seething about the way they went out of the Benson and Hedges Cup on May 25, when their quarter-final tie against eventual winners Warwickshire was decided by a bowl-out.

Edey is angry the TCCB took no punitive action against Warwickshire but his initiative is prompted by the TCCB's weekend decision to dock Lancashire 25 points for an unfit pitch.

## Star Senior Division league

## 1st phase to be over by Aug

Sports Reporter

The two-tier Senior Division — the Star Premier and the Star First Division leagues — will be halfway through by the end of the next month.

According to the fixtures released by the organisers Dhaka Metropolitan Football Association (DMFA), three matches of the Star First Division football league will be held on August 30, the last day of the first phase engagements.

Reigning Premier champions Mohammedans, who have been sharing the monopoly of supremacy in local football along with Abahani, will take on their arch-rivals in the second match of the penultimate day i.e. August 29.

The new look Muktiyoddha Sangsad Krira Chakra, raring to go with their rich collection of national footballers take the field on August 3 against Public Works Department (PWD).

The freedom fighters, who are being considered as a serious bidder for this year's league title following their recent Federation Cup triumph, couldn't have asked for a better opener. The men in red blanked PWD 9-0 in a group match of the Federation Cup.

Abahani Krira Chakra, the other most popular team besides Mohammedans, initiate their campaign on July 29 against promotees Fakirpool Youngmen's Club. Although the

sky blues are better off than their avowed foes in a sense they have collected one trophy (the DMFA Cup, not to count the Churns Cup in India) is against Mohammedans' none this season, they will be no less keen to regain the Premier title.

Brothers Union, the hitherto third force and still in search of their maiden league title will meet giant killers

Wari Club in their inaugural match on July 30.

At a press conference held at the conference room of the organisers DMFA, the authorities revealed that there will be no tickets for the engagements billed at the Mirpur Stadium.

However, the authorities are in no mood for charity over the Dhaka Stadium and the rate of the gallery tickets there has been fixed at Taka-15.

## FIXTURES (PARTIAL)

July 28:	Rahmatganj MFS vs Muslim Institute Stadium (MS)	6 pm	Mirpur
	Mohammedan SC vs Bangladesh Boys Stadium (DS)	5 pm	Dhaka
July 29:	Agrani Bank vs Arambagh East End Club vs Eskaton Sabuj Sangha	7 pm (DS) 6 pm (MS)	
	Victoria SC vs Shantinagar Club	4:30 pm (DS)	
	Abahani KC vs Fakirpool Youngmen's	6:30 pm (DS)	
July 30:	Parashganj SC vs Dhanmondi Club	6:00 pm (MS)	
	Muktiyoddha Sangsad vs PWD SC	4:30 pm (DS)	
	Brothers Union vs Wari Club	6:30 pm (DS)	
July 31:	Sadharan Bima vs Dhaka Wanderers	5:30 pm (DS)	
Aug 1:	Victoria SC vs Eskaton Sabuj Sangha	6:00 pm (MS)	
	Rahmatganj MFS vs Shantinagar Club	4:30 pm (DS)	
	Mohammedan Sporting Club vs Fakirpool	6:30 pm (DS)	
Aug 2:	Eastern End vs Dhanmondi Club	6:00 pm (MS)	
	Agrani Bank vs PWD SC	4:30 pm (DS)	
	Abahani KC vs Wari Club	6:30 pm (DS)	
Aug 3:	Parashganj vs Wanderers Club	6:00 pm (MS)	
	Muktiyoddha Sangsad vs Bangladesh Boys	4:30 pm (DS)	
	Brothers Union vs Arambagh KS	6:30 pm (DS)	
Aug 4:	Sadharan Bima vs Muslim Institute	4:30 pm (DS)	
	Rahmatganj MFS vs Eskaton Sabuj Sangha	6:30 pm (DS)	
Aug 5:	Victoria SC vs Dhanmondi Club	4:30 pm (DS)	
	Mohammedan SC vs Wari Club	6:30 pm (DS)	
Aug 6:	East End Club vs Wanderers Club	6:00 pm (MS)	
	Fakirpool vs Bangladesh Boys	4:30 pm (DS)	
	Abahani KC vs Arambagh KS	6:30 pm (DS)	



M. Azizul Haq, (Second from L) president of the Dhaka Metropolitan Football Association (DMFA) addresses a press conference in connection with the imminent start of the Star Senior Division football leagues at the DMFA office yesterday.

## Pakistan in the line of fire

RIYALUMPER, July 26: FIFA is likely to suspend Pakistan from world soccer after rival footballing factions, sent national teams to an Asian youth qualifying tournament, reports AFP.

"We are not amused by this at all," said Peter Velappan, general secretary of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) who has recommended suspension to FIFA.

"Pakistan have a formidable history of squabbling and this is not the first time that we have had to intervene," said Velappan, who is leading Asia's push to improve the administration of the 44 countries in the AFC.

An ongoing battle within Pakistan football has pitted president Mian Mohammed Azhar against his general secretary Hafiz Salman Butt in the national federation. The two officials picked their own teams for an Asian under-19 championship qualifying tournament in the United Arab Emirates.

The tournament features USE, Pakistan and Kuwait with the winners playing in September's Asian Championships in Indonesia.

Velappan said the Pakistan football's executive committee voted to suspend Butt for six months but Butt replied by suspending the Azhar, saying his removal was unconstitutional.

"We have accepted (Azhar's) team for the tournament as representing Pakistan. I believe Butt's team has flown back to Karachi," said Velappan.

Hosts UAE though they were seeing double when two Pakistan teams arrived on the same flight from Karachi, according to Velappan.

The AFC is pressing for Pakistan's suspension. "Until they can resolve all of their internal problems and hold proper elections for officers," said Velappan.

FIFA's concern is likely to be heightened because both officials have started court action in Pakistan challenging one another. Neither FIFA nor the AFC recognise such legal moves.

VELAPPAN ENDORSES Meanwhile, Peter Velappan on Tuesday defended Saudi Arabia's decision not to send

their World Cup side to the Asian Games in October.

The Saudi Federation is to send an under-23 side to the October event in Japan. But Velappan commented: "You have to understand how tired the World Cup squad is. They have basically been training for the World Cup since last October."

Velappan also said he preferred seeing under-23 rather than national sides compete for the Asian Games. This is more in keeping with the age requirements for the Olympics football competition.

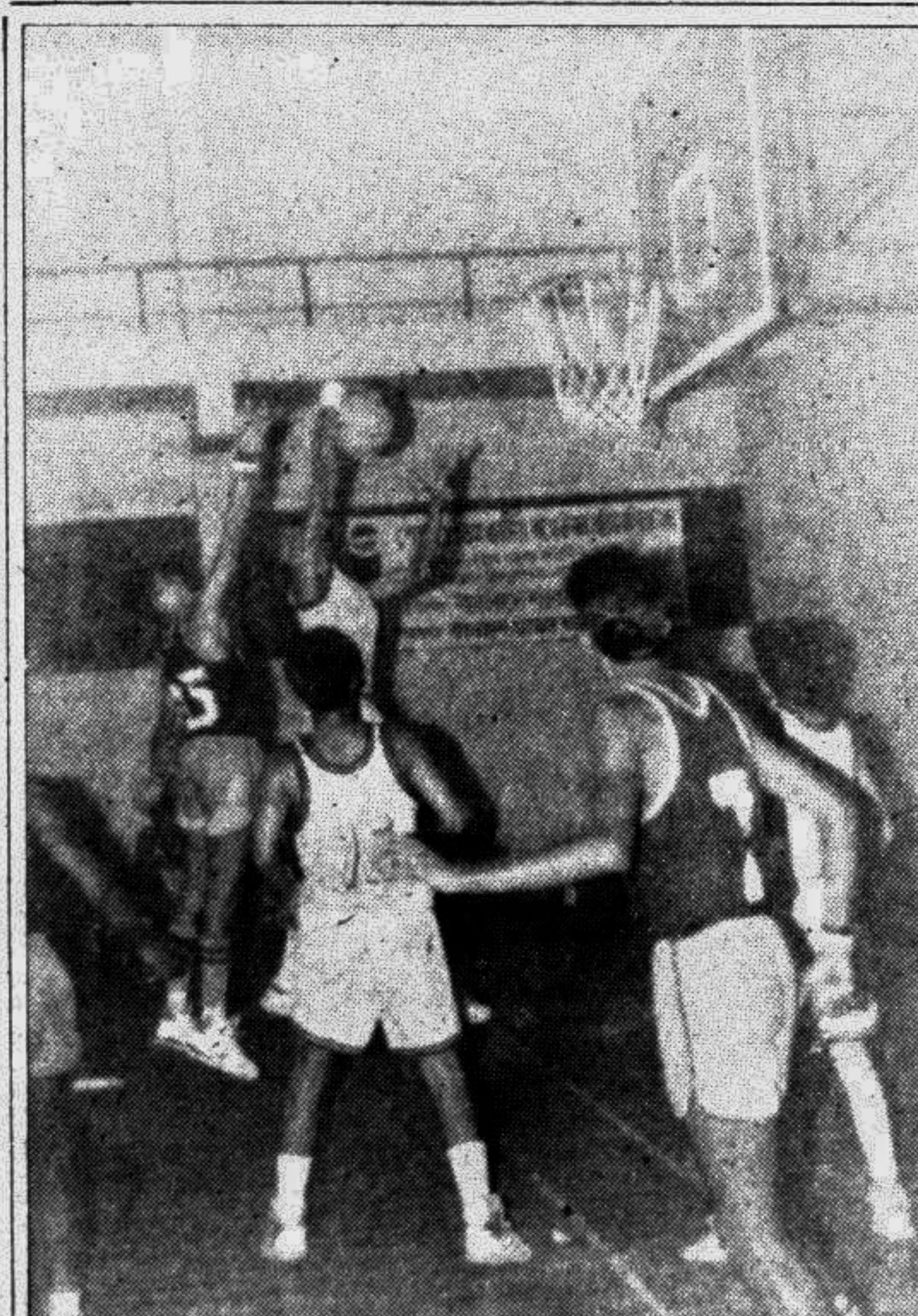
A Saudi football official was quoted in Hong Kong's South China Morning Post Tuesday as saying the side which defeated Belgium and Morocco on their way to the second round of the World Cup finals, was "having a long rest."

The report was headlined "Saudi devalue Games" and said, "The Saudi squad switch had 'cheapened' the Asian Games."

Saudi Arabia's strong World Cup performance, in which they became only the second Asian side to reach the second round where they lost 3-1 to third placed Sweden, made them early favourites for the Games football gold.

Velappan said the Saudi decision also conformed with the AFC's determination to convince the OCA to switch the Asian Games from a national to under-23 level, in line with the Olympics football competition.

"The AFC is very much in favour of under-23 football for the Asian Games but we leave the choice to individual national associations."



Action from yesterday's Pepsi 17th national basketball championship match between Dhaka and Bangladesh Air Force at the NSC wooden floor gymnasium yesterday. Dhaka won the match by 88-67 points.

## Press blitz rages on

LONDON, July 26: The British press continued their attack on England cricket captain Mike Atherton on Tuesday, calling for him to quit over a ball-tampering scandal, reports Reuters.

Michael Atherton should quit as England captain right now," said former England opener Geoff Boycott in the tabloid Sun newspaper.

Another former England player, Jonathan Agnew, joined the debate over the affair, which resulted in Atherton being fined 2,000 pounds sterling (3,000 dollars) for having dirt in his pocket to dry his hands during the Test against South Africa and for misleading the match referee.

Under the headline "Why Atherton has got to go" Agnew wrote in the Daily Mail. "An example has to be made of Atherton."

"He can go quietly... or the authorities can be strong and give him a push. But sadly, he has to go," Agnew wrote.

The Daily Mirror conducted a readers' poll on the affair, which, overshadowed South Africa's victory at Lord's at the weekend, and reported that 100 per cent of those who responded wanted Atherton to quit.

Television pictures captured Atherton on Saturday putting his hand into his trouser pocket, then taking it out and rubbing the ball before wiping his hand on his trousers.

An investigation that evening by match referee Peter Burge found that Atherton had done "nothing untoward."

But 24 hours later Atherton revealed that he had had dirt in his trouser pocket, an action which Burge then described as "foolish in the extreme."

The Times newspaper echoed Burge's words and added: "Atherton was dishonest in his account of the affair to the official charged with its investigation."

"If the captain of England's cricket team fails to uphold the values of his society — or the values to which his society aspires — he is unworthy of that uncommon honour which the captaincy represents. He should be replaced."

Among all the solemnity, the Sun added a note of levity. It offered readers a competition with 20 prizes of packets of "mike's super soil" designed, the newspaper said, "To keep your hands dry in the sizzling heatwave."

But, tongue-in-cheek, the sun warned prize winners: "Please remember this soil should not be brought into close contact with any cricket ball. The results can be very costly."

## Leeds give up signing Skuhravy

LONDON, July 26: English Premier league club Leeds have almost given up hope of signing Genoa's Czech international striker Tomas Skuhravy, reports Reuters.

Leeds managing director Bill Fotherby on Monday extended the deadline for a deal until 1600 GMT today but admitted: "I will be surprised if the transfer goes ahead."

After eight hours of negotiations with the Italian club's president Aldo Spinelli, Fotherby revealed a last-minute hitch had left the three million pound sterling (£4.5 million dollars) transfer in jeopardy.

"We have agreed everything with Skuhravy and Genoa but there is a financial complication between the player and his club," he said. "If it is not resolved the transfer cannot go ahead."

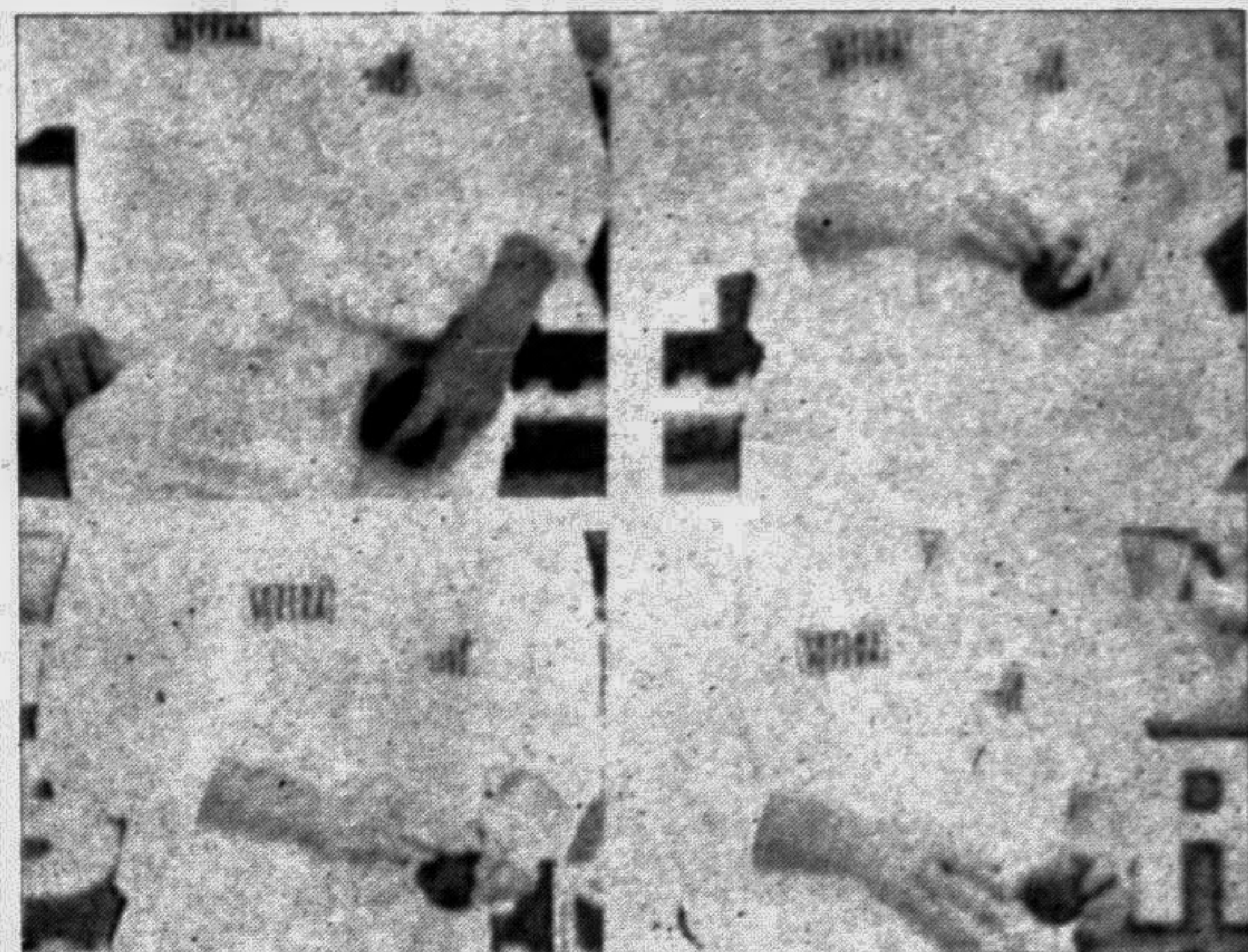
## Private Housing Inc gets the job

ATLANTA, July 26: A local property coalition on Monday was given the job of assembling a network of thousands of private homes and apartments for lease to visitors during the 1996 Olympic Games, reports Reuters.

The Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games (ACOG), the private nonprofit group charged with organising the Olympics, named Private Housing 1996 Inc as the official private housing coordinator.

Private Housing 1996, a corporation formed by leading Atlanta real estate brokers and property developers, will put together an initial housing inventory offering 6,000 beds to the so-called extended Olympic family, including journalists and business sponsors.

"Meeting the needs of the Olympic family is our first priority. Beyond that, however, the door is wide open to assemble an even larger inventory of homes and apartment for lease to the general public when tickets go on sale next spring," Private Housing 96 president Jerry Warshaw said.



An AFP file photo shows controversial TV footage of England captain Mike Atherton handing the ball during the first Test against South Africa at Lord's. The footage led to allegations that Atherton altered the condition of the ball.

## ICC makes light of furore

## Atherton gets reprieve



LONDON, July 26: The International Cricket Council said Monday it would not take any further action against England captain Mike Atherton over the ball tampering incident in South Africa's 356-run first Test win at Lord's, reports AP.

Match referee Peter Burge said he considered the 2,000 pound (£3,000) fine imposed on Atherton by the Test and County Cricket Board and resultant publicity and public scrutiny "was sufficient penalty," but called Atherton's actions "foolish in the extreme."

Atherton was captured by television cameras on Saturday reaching into his right pocket, pulling it out with what looked like a substance on his fingers then rubbing his fingers on the ball before polishing it on his trousers.

He initially told Burge on Saturday night he just put his hand in his pocket to dry it as it was very sweaty in oppressive heat and humidity at Lord's. But at a news conference on Sunday, he told journalists he had dirt in his pocket to dry his fingers.

Atherton conceded the television images looked "suspicious" and that was why he wanted the issue out in the open and did not want accusations of cheating hanging over him.

The TCCB fined him 1,000

pounds (£1,500) for not telling Burge the full truth and another 1,000 pounds for using the dirt.

The incident has overshadowed South Africa's glorious return to Test cricket in England, with their first win at Lord's since 1949 in their first match at the home of cricket since 1965.

It has taken the match report off most back pages and even featured in editorials ranging from the highbrow Times to the tabloid Sun.

The media marvelled at Atherton's good fortune at retaining his place as England's captain, and gasped at the fall from grace of the captain with the previous pristine image and choir boy looks and charm.

The widely held belief was that the incident would not go away quickly and quietly and that if Atherton treads a line so close to transgression again, his job would definitely be at risk for the tour to Australia later this year.

Burge, a former Australian Test batsman, issued a statement Monday.

"On Saturday my attention was drawn to action taken by the England captain when handling the ball during the afternoon session," it said.

"At tea, I consulted the umpires, Dickie Bird and Steve Randell, and they assured me that the condition of the ball had not been altered in any way."

Nonetheless, after viewing television replays, I again in-

spected the ball after play and discussed the matter further with the umpires. Although no report was lodged, I held an investigation with Michael Atherton and the England manager, Keith Fletcher, with the umpires present.

"At the investigation, Atherton did not state that he had dirt in his pocket to dry his fingers."

"On the basis of his remarks and that there was no evidence of the ball's condition being changed, no action could be taken by me."

"Prior to last night's media conference, copies of statements by Atherton and chairman of selectors, Ray Illingworth, were given to me by the TCCB."

"I have now carefully considered Atherton's statement. The action of having dirt in his pocket in order to dry his hands, was foolish in the extreme and cannot be condoned, particularly when done by a Test captain."

"The fact that Atherton has misled an ICC referee by not giving a full and frank disclosure when given the opportunity to do so, concerns me more than anything else because of the effect on the image of cricket."

"He has also apologised to me for withholding information and I have accepted that apology. I do not propose to take any further action."

## Saga of star smugglers



RIO DE JANEIRO, July 26: They left the United States as World Cup champions, saints or cheats, symbols of hope in a country bled by official waste and corruption.

A day after coming home, they were tax cheats, shameless smugglers, symbols of selfishness and greed.

Brazil's national soccer team went from idols to scoundrels last Wednesday by refusing to pay one million dollars in customs duties on personal items bought in the United States during the World Cup, reports AP.

It dampened the euphoria that swept across this soccer-crazed country and triggered a scandal that muddled the President, the finance minister and the head of the Brazilian Soccer Confederation.

The nation's tax chief quit in disgust the day after President Itamar Franco overruled his order and told customs officials at Rio's international airport to wave through all excess luggage on the team plane.

All 17.4 tons of it.

"Nobody can be above the law," said Osires Lopes Filho, who resigned as federal revenue secretary. "Everyone, not only the middle class and the poor, must pay taxes."

The debacle touched off a nationwide debate on ethics in Brazil, a country where authoritarianism, nepotism and paternalism form a recipe for sharp social and economic inequalities.

"What a sad spectacle," said the newsweekly Veja, in a cover story titled "The Star Smugglers."

The team missed a great chance to show us that even heroes must comply with obligations and laws every Brazilian must follow, the magazine said in an editorial.

Signs of trouble began to appear the day after the World Cup final when the Vang DC-10 carrying the 97-member delegation was delayed for four hours in Los Angeles because of excess weight.

After marathon parades in Recife and Brasilia, the delega-

tion arrived in Rio close to midnight Tuesday for a four-hour ticker-tape parade for an estimated one million fans.

Brazilian law permits citizens to bring up to 500 dollars worth of items purchased abroad into the country duty free.

That's why customs officials got suspicious when five, 30-foot (10-metre) moving trucks rolled up to drive the team's luggage to the hotel.

The unloading took time. Among other things were 18 television sets, computers, refrigerators, fax machines, laser printers, microwave ovens, gymnastics equipment, a barbecue grill, dishwashers and even a leather horse saddle.

Customs officials estimated that defenders Jorginho and Branco brought back a combined total of 8,800 dollars in electronics and housewares. Coach Carlos Alberto Parreira had dined 5,000 worth of computer and TV equipment.

All in all, about one million dollars in duties had to be paid.

Lopes Filho ordered the baggage held and inspected.

Ricardo Teixeira, the confederation president, called the stars down from the fire truck that would escort them through Rio. They removed the merit medals awarded at the presidential palace and threatened to boycott the parade.

"We didn't smuggle anything," said striker Romario. "We represented Brazil before two billion people around the world. If they don't release my luggage, I'm giving back my medal."

It was midnight. In any other country the victory parade might have been postponed until morning. But in the land where soccer is almost a religion, a call came from the presidential palace.

The order from Finance Minister Rubens Ricuperlo: Let the baggage through, unsupervised. Let the party go on.

That goal scored by Branco to break the 2-2 tie against the Netherlands was worth a hell of a lot more than a lousy refrigerator or a TV. Teixeira told the newsweekly Veja.

Rio customs chiefs said they

would sue the soccer confederation for non-payment of the duties. A host of top government officials pointed fingers and denied they gave the order to wave through the baggage.

Only one player, midfielder Mauro Silva, offered to pay his share.

Nationwide polls showed 79 per cent of Brazilians thought their heroes should have paid up.

But few — not even Attorney General Aristides Junqueira — actually think the team will be beaten in court.

"No one has a list of what was actually brought in," he said. "It's foolish to think you can win an action like this without any proof."

Amen, say the saints of soccer.

"It was such a little thing," Romario said. "Why is everybody making such a big deal about this?"

## Lalas plays hard to get

BONN, July 26: Confusion surrounded the future of colourful US World Cup star defender Alexi Lalas on Monday, reports Reuters.

Germany's Bochum cast doubt on reports that Lalas had signed to join newly promoted Italian First Division club Padova.

Bochum manager Klaus Hilpert told Reuters he had talks on Sunday and Monday with Lalas and still hoped the American might join them.

"It is total nonsense that Lalas and Padova have reached an agreement," Hilpert said. "He was here today and we met yesterday in Luxemburg."

He added, "I do not want to spread any euphoria, but we have done all we could. I see a slight chance."

Bochum bought US striker Erik Wynalda from Saarbrücken recently and hope his presence might tempt Lalas.

But in Rome, Italy's media has already started hailing the American's arrival. Welcome buffalo Lalas, the first Yankee to play in Italy, ran a front page headline in Corriere dello Sport newspaper.