

# Soft tennis, a BOA scam?

Soft ball, the hitherto unheard of sport suddenly assuming monstrous importance in the consideration of the officials of the Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA), is contrary to the public imagination, no nine day wonder.

Although kept secret by the BOA officials for disturbingly long time, covert activities to make the discipline a surety on Bangladesh's plate in the forthcoming Hiroshima Asia have been going on for a long time.

A five-member interim body with BOA secretary general Bashir Ahmed as the convener has already been formed. The other members are BOA treasurer Akhter Hossain, Saidur Rahman Don and NSC official Faruqul Islam and Nazma Shamim. However, the BOA officials are maintaining a classified-information sort of secrecy over the matter.

This 'unofficial body' has already set the list of a seven-member contingent for approval in connection with the Asia beginning in the Japanese city of Hiroshima from

Sports Reporter

October 2. The five women players are Hosne Ara Begum Rina, Rehana Begum Seema, Nazia Akhtar Juthi, Sohana Siraj and Rumana Zafar. The two officials are: Japanese coach Satsuki Hara and Tahmina Khanam Dolly, president of Bangladesh Women's Sports Association (BWSA). The sudden emergence of soft ball as a top priority sport owes a lot to the unusually energetic role played by the elderly Capt. Siddiq, one of the BOA vice-presidents.

The veteran official attended the international extra ordinary congress of soft tennis held from July 9 to 12 in the South Korean capital of Seoul. He was accompanied by Nazma Shamim, general secretary of Women's Sports Association.

Though not representing a recognised sports body of the country, Shamim according to her own admission, she voted to elect the new president of the International Soft Tennis Association following the death of its former president. Talking to The Daily Star

Shamim said that Capt. Siddiq failed to attend the congress for due delay in reaching Seoul.

The game itself which is more or less like lawn tennis with the main differences being the uses of a softer ball and little wider net, however, does not augur well for Bangladesh's rarified medal prospect. None epitomised it more than the coach herself who when asked out about the measurement of the court came up with an unaffected "I don't know."

The scenario from the players point of view is even more intriguing. Nazia Akhtar Juthi, a current badminton player, is trying her hand in soft ball simply because there have been no national championships for badminton in the last three years.

# Media, Lineker's new target

LONDON, Sept 22: Gary Lineker, top scorer in the 1986 World Cup finals, said on Wednesday he

will retire from soccer at the end of the Japanese season in November after struggling with injury problems, reports Reuter.

The former England striker and captain, announcing his retirement from his home in Nagoya, Japan, said: "It's been frustrating not being able to perform like I used to and that made the decision far easier."

Lineker, who will be 34 when he plays his last game for Nagoya Grampus Eight on November 19, told BBC radio: "I've suffered badly through injury over the last two years, resulting in a couple of operations."

"I've managed to play a few games and score a few goals which is very pleasing but I'm certainly not what I was," added Lineker, who in his 80 international goals, one less than Bobby Charlton's England record.

"What I've found at my age, having returned, is that the speed isn't quite what it was. Things don't quite feel the same — little injuries have arrived, and things I've never had before, like a little pulled hamstring."

Alongside veteran Brazilian Zico, who ended his long professional career in Japan in June, Lineker was one of the big names imported for the inaugural season of the professional J-League in May last year.

He joined Grampus Eight on a two-year deal reportedly

worth more than two million pounds (3.15 million dollars). The move came shortly after his first son George had been

with the Spanish side.

At both Barcelona and Tottenham, Lineker played under present England coach Terry Venables.

He had an unhappy relationship with Venables' predecessor Graham Taylor, who substituted Lineker in the striker's last game for his country, a European Championship match against hosts Sweden in June 1992.

He played in two World Cup tournaments, 1986 in Mexico where he was the top scorer with six goals, and Italy in 1990.

Lineker chose his first goal of a hat-trick against Poland, his first strike of the 1986 World Cup finals, as his most important. "It changed my career," he said.

His decision to retire will disappoint several managers hoping to lure him back to the game in England, including Premier league Southampton's Lawrie McMeney and his former England teammate Bryan Robson at First Division middlesbrough.

"There were two other managers who made contact but I'm not prepared to make their names public," Lineker said.

"The truth is they wouldn't be getting the player they saw when I was in England."

Lineker ruled out a coaching or managing career, but said he hoped to stay involved in the game in media capacity.

"I think my ambitions are certainly, in the near future, towards the media side of the game — TV or possibly the radio or perhaps writing a little bit, something I've started to do recently."

Lineker, who has 10 more games in the J-League, began his career at Leicester City, then played for Everton, Barcelona and Tottenham Hotspur, winning the domestic cups with both teams and the European Cup Winners' Cup

second game, and play was suspended for one hour, 24 minutes while the roof was closed and the court dried.

"I definitely like playing outdoors," Sanchez Vicario said. "The ball bounces faster indoors and at the beginning it was really hard."

But although Graham was leading 30-15 on her own serve when play resumed, Sanchez Vicario eventually broke for a 2-0 lead.

In the quarterfinals, she will meet Werdel.

Gabriela Sabatini of Argentina plays a forehand against Dominique Morani of Belgium during her second round match of the Nichirei women's tennis tournament in Tokyo yesterday. Sabatini coasted to 6-1, 6-2 victory. — AFP photo

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# Dull draws at Dhaka Stadium

Sports Reporter

Draw was the order of the day as both the Star First Division football league matches billed for the Dhaka Stadium yesterday ended in a truly sterile manner.

In the first match of the day Sadharan Bima and Farashganj shared points after lack-lustre 90-minute encounter.

The draw left Sadharan Bima at the third position with 15 points from 12 matches while Farashganj raised their collection to 13 on completion of 12 engagements.

The pattern was followed in the second match as Dhaka Wanderers, who are yet to win a match in the league, continued their dubious distinction when they shared honour with East End Club.

With this draw East End earned 12 points from as many matches while Wanderers collected 8 from 12 engagements.

STAR PREMIER RESUMES TODAY

Meanwhile, the Star Premier Division football league resumes today after a seven-day recess with defending champions Mohammedan Sporting Club and promotes Fakirpool Youngmen's Club in day's solitary encounter at the Dhaka Stadium at 6:30 pm.

Mohammedans, who had their sports secretary Abdus Salam Mursheed made persona non grata by the Dhaka Metropolitan Football Association (DMFA) in addition to a fine of Taka 50,000 slapped on the club for causing trouble in a first leg match against Brothers Union have decided to defy what they called a unilateral and biased decision by the authorities.

Qatar, Oman in final

BAHRAIN, Sept 22: India's defensive lapses cost them their semifinal tie against Oman 1-4 in the 100,000 dollars Qatar Independence Cup soccer tournament last night in Doha, reports PTI.

The winners led 4-0 at half-time while India's consolation goal came in the dying minutes of the match.

In the other semifinal, also played last night, hosts Qatar blanked Yemen 2-0.

India started off badly conceding two early goals. Sair Al Habshi opened the scoring for Oman firing home past the Indian custodian Bibhash Saha. Mohammed Khamis followed it up as he headed in a free kick by Tayib Abdul Noor in the 11th minute.

The third goal came seven minutes later when Tayib Abdul Noor headed home. Once again Saha could do nothing to pull off a save.

Making the most of India's brittle defence Oman scored once more through Said Shaban five minutes before the interval to earn a comfortable 4-0 lead.

India tried hard to make a breakthrough with Tajinder and Vijayan coming up with a couple of good moves in the first half but could not do anything till the last minute of the game when Joe Jaul Anchery scored.

Ctg soccer

CHITTAGONG, Sept 22: Chittagong Mohammedan Sporting Club beat Customs and Excise Club 2-0 in the CJKP-Elite First Division football league at the Chittagong Stadium here today, reports BSS.

Avijit scored the first goal for the Mohammedans in the 9th minute dodging past three Customs defenders.

In the 39th minute Mozammel doubled the margin. Customs and Sports Club beat Shatadal 2-0 in the other match of the day.

Kamsky beats Short

LINARES, Spain, Sept 22: United States Grandmaster Gata Kamsky beat Britain's Nigel Short in the first game of the World Championship Semifinal eliminators which began in Linares, Spain, on Wednesday, reports Reuter.

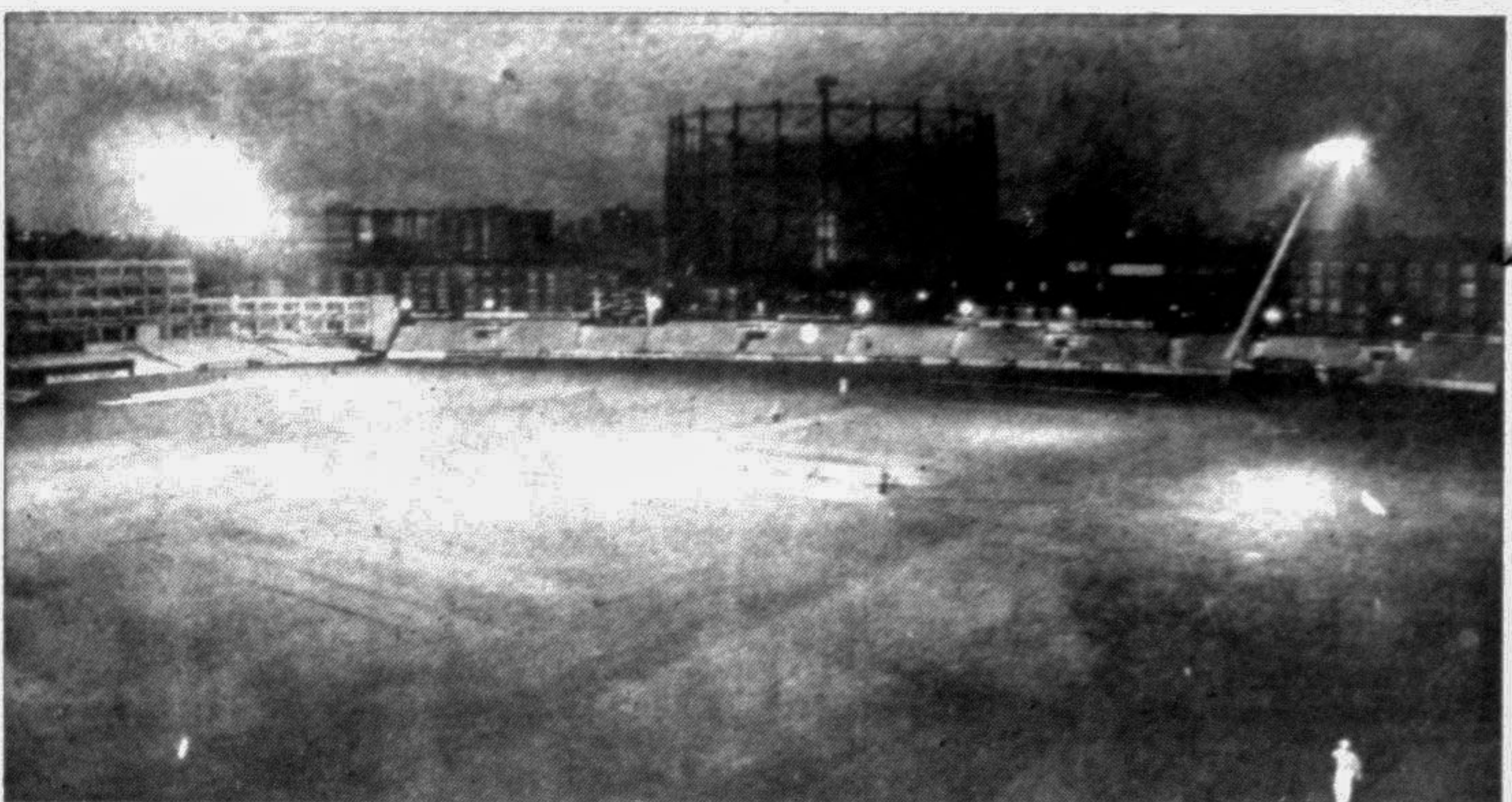
In the second semifinal, India's Viswanathan Anand easily beat Britain's Michael Adams. Both winners were playing whites.

The 10-game tournament is organised by the Professional Chess Association and has a prize fund of 200,000 dollars.

AB Bank TT

Defending champions Bangladesh Biman, Armanitola JS, Wari Club and Inter Sports maintained their winning spree in the AB Bank Metropolitan table tennis league beating their rivals yesterday, all by straight 3-0 sets, reports UNB.

Biman trounced Dhaka Mariner Youngs Club, Armanitola Jubo Sangha defeated Cynthia sporting, Wari Club outplayed Bangladesh Bank and Inter Sports beat Purbachal Parishad at the Dhanmendi wooden floor gymnasium.



A view of the Oval in London on Sept 21 during the first-ever floodlit one day match on an English Test ground between Pakistan and Australia. — AFP photo

# Taylor shuts out old rancour

ISLAMABAD, Sept 22: Post-Allan Border Australians say they are ready to put behind bitter memories of their last visit to Pakistan and are looking forward to an eight-week tour here that begins Friday with a three-day, reports AP.

Australia will play three Tests against Pakistan. The first Test from Sept 28 to Oct 2 in Karachi; the second Test from Oct 5 to 9 in Rawalpindi; and the third and final Test from Nov 1 to 5 in Lahore.

Between the second and third Tests there will be a one-day triangular involving South Africa.

Australia's last visit here under Border in 1988 was riddled with controversy after the Australian team accused the local umpires of cheating and the hosts of pitch doctoring.

After losing the first Test by an innings and 188 runs, the Australians threatened to call off the tour. Australia lost the series one nil.

Their cricketing relationship further nosedived the following year when Pakistan were beaten by 92 runs in Melbourne in a game where eight Pakistan batsmen were ruled out leg before wicket, six of them in the second innings.

This will be the first series between the two countries under the supervision of the International Cricket Council's independent umpires and

Ambrose to miss India tour

BRIDGETOWN, Sept 22: West Indies fast bowler Curtly Ambrose will miss the forthcoming tour of India because of a shoulder injury which needs surgery, reports Reuter.

Ambrose suffered the injury while playing for Northamptonshire and missed the last two county championship fixtures.

"He has been examined by a leading shoulder specialist in England and has been diagnosed as suffering from rotator cuff tendonitis," the West Indies Cricket Board of Control said in a statement on Wednesday.

The statement said Ambrose would be unfit for two or three months and would have an operation to correct the problem.

Selectors named 27-year-old right-arm fast-medium bowler Barrington Browne as Ambrose's replacement on the tour which runs from October 5 to December 14.

# Anne joins drug debate

LONDON, Sept 22: Princess Anne, president of the British Olympic Association (BOA), stepped into the drugs-in-sport controversy on Wednesday as shot putter Paul Edwards again protested his innocence, reports Reuter.

She spoke up for ordinary athletes "tarred and demoralised" after positive drug test revelations.

Princess Anne, daughter of Britain's Queen Elizabeth, was giving her presidential address at the BOA's annual meeting.

She said: "Coverage has highlighted just one or two areas of concern, but it seems to tar all competitors with the same brush."

"It is demoralising for competitors in those sports which have been unaffected and those in the sports concerned who have never been involved with drugs."

"It is a destructive form of reporting and reflects badly on those who have contributed more than is obvious in many of their sports."

Edwards, who was sent home from the Commonwealth Games in Canada after positive tests, said: "There have been many allegations about me in

match referee. Skipper Mark Taylor leading the Australians for the first time since Border retired in June dismissed suggestions that bitter memories of the past would effect his young but experienced side.

The visitors start their tour with a three-day opener against a Board President's XI, led by Test opener Rameez Raja in Rawalpindi, the venue for the second Test.

Coach Bob Simpson and manager Colin Eager were officials on the controversial 1988 tour as were five current players: batsman — David Boon, all-rounder — Steve Waugh, wicketkeeper — Ian Healy, off spinner — Tim May and fast bowler — Craig McDermott.

Simpson said the Pakistan tour is an ideal beginning to a busy seven-month schedule that will include 11 Tests against Pakistan, England and the West Indies as well as several one-dayers.

In 34 Tests between the two countries Australia have won 12 to Pakistan's nine. Thirteen have ended in draws.

Procter furious

DURBAN, Sept 22: South Africa's sacked cricket coach Mike Procter, in remarks published on Wednesday, criticised team captain Kepler Wessels for driving his players too hard, reports Reuter.

Procter, in hospital in Durban where he is recovering from a heart infection, told the Daily News it had "sometimes been a nightmare"

been captain there were only a couple of days he gave the players off. If you speak to all the sports psychologists they all say that rest is a huge priority.

"It was all too intense with him in charge."

Procter said he had backed Wessels to captain the side to Pakistan for a one-day tournament next month because he felt that his deputy Hansie Cronje was not ready for the job.

Procter and Wessels have been at the helm of South African cricket since the 1992 World Cup in Australia and New Zealand and, although their methods have often seemed at odds, they have only clashed publicly once.

That was in Sri Lanka last year when they disagreed over South Africa's tactics in one-day cricket.

Of the decision last weekend to end his contract, Procter said United Cricket Board of South Africa managing director Ali Bacher told him on Saturday that things looked bleak.

"Then he told me I had been fired while I was lying in intensive care on Sunday morning. Why is there such a mystery? Why wasn't I told I was a failure?"

Procter came out of intensive care on Tuesday and his condition is now described as stable.

"In all the years Kepler has

working with Wessels.

"At the end of the day I always thought that when Kepler had gone things would be 10 times easier for me," he said, adding that Wessels' "work-horse" approach to cricket was wrong.

"I have provided urine samples for doping tests throughout my career. I think I have provided about 15 samples this year alone. All of them have been negative."

Edwards attacked the

# Cash squabble spoils a special night

LONDON, Sept 22: A cash row involving top players contributed to a two-hour delay at the start of the first-ever floodlit cricket on an English ground on Wednesday, reports AFP.

Players had looked at the sparse attendance for the international sixes tournament at the Oval and demanded appearance fees in advance.

Weather had already delayed the start of the first floodlit cricket on an English Test ground, and the crowd were puzzled when a further hour went by without play.

The two-day, six-a-side showcase features stars past and present, including India's Sunil Gavaskar, Australia's Jeff Thomson and West Indian Desmond Haynes.

Simon Jacob, marketing director of the organising company, Cricket Legends, said: "We had drawn-up contracts with every participant stating that they will be paid after play today, with the balance following tomorrow."

In sport it is customary to pay players after they have finished the competition.

"Fortunately, the majority of the 50 Test starts here prevailed when the players sorted it out among themselves."

The day-and-night contest allocates five overs to each team: batsmen must retire at 31 runs; and bowlers are restricted to one over per match.

# Harold Larwood collapses

SYDNEY, Sept 22: Former England cricket star Harold

Larwood collapsed briefly at Government House on Thursday after receiving his Member of the British Empire (MBE) medal from the New South Wales Governor, Rear Admiral Peter Sinclair, reports AP.

Larwood, 89, the fast bowler at the centre of controversy during the 'Bodyline' series against Australia in the 1932-33 season, collapsed after standing in the sun talking to the press and wellwishers.

He was given immediate medical treatment and quickly recovered. He later chatted with medical staff and played with the governor's dog.

Larwood has lived in Australia since 1946. He and his wife Lois celebrated their 67th wedding anniversary last weekend.

McRae's second

Colin McRae won his second consecutive rally, taking victory in Australia following on from his success in New Zealand.

The Scotsman was fastest on 13 special stages during the four-day event and led throughout apart from the second stage.

The 555 Subaru World Rally team have won the Asia-Pacific Manufacturers' championship for second year running following McRae's victory.

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