

Column One SPORTS TALK



Yevgeny Kafelnikov (Russian tennis star) I don't know — maybe I will be a hero tomorrow when I step into the airport. Or maybe I will be the same person. After winning the French Open on June 9.

Sports WHIZZ KID COMPETITION FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN

Sports WHIZZ KID competition-41

Table with 5 questions and multiple choice options for a sports quiz.

Registration form fields for Name, Class, Roll No, School Address, and Phone.

Kamsky holds Karpov

MOSCOW, June 11: Veteran Russian Grand Master Anatoly Karpov and young challenger Gata Kamsky drew the third of their 20 games in the FIDE world Championship on Monday, making the overall score 1-1/2 points each, reports AFP.

The 45-year-old Karpov won the first match last week but Kamsky, 22, who defected from the Soviet Union to the United States in 1988, drew level at 1-1 on Saturday.

The world chess federation (FIDE) title match is being played in Elista, capital of the semi-autonomous Kalmyk Republic of Russia, between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea.

Knight keeps fingers crossed

LONDON, June 11: England opener Nick Knight remained silent about his prospects Monday after fracturing a finger for the second time in 12 days during the first Test victory over India at Edgbaston, reports AFP.

It was revealed on Monday that the little finger of Knight's right hand was cracked when he batted in England's second innings on Saturday against pacemen Javagal Srinath and Venkatesh Prasad. The index finger of his left hand was similarly injured against Glamorgan in the Benson and Hedges quarterfinal on May 28.

Solid start for France

NEWCASTLE, June 11: France cleared their path towards a place in the quarterfinals when they overcame a spirited Romania by the only goal of a close-fought Euro '96 Group B clash at St James' Park on Monday, reports Reuters.

Solitary headed goal after 24 minutes by Christophe Dugary divided the sides on a night when both teams struggled to produce the opening football they had promised in the build-up.

Scots defy Dutch storm

BIRMINGHAM, June 11: Underdogs Scotland put up a spirited battle to hold the fancied Dutch to a goalless draw in their opening match of the European Championship on Monday, reports Reuters.

With the Dutch starting as if they aimed to win at a canter, Scotland looked overawed by the orange armada facing them in their early part of the game.

But once Dennis Bergkamp and his teammates had squandered several early chances, Scotland seemed to realise that the Dutch were only human after all and forced their way into the match.

Island state in a league of its own

Singapore's soccer officials have worked hard to revive the local game after a damaging bribery and illegal-betting scandal. Now, reports Gemini News Service, they are considering funding a new league ... from the proceeds of gambling.

Singaporeans have again proved their prowess at efficient organisation by setting up their own soccer league in only nine months.

A year after quitting the Malaysian League under the cloud of a match-fixing scandal, the prosperous island state's S-League has just kicked off — lifting the gloom over the future of local soccer.

The trouble in the Malaysian League was that it was not a 'bit of a wager', but fixing of everything from the first corner-kick of a match to who scored the winning goal, and what time. More than 130 players and officials were punished in Malaysia last year — some banned for up to two years — for their part in rigging up to 80 per cent of

midfielder Gheorghe Hagi, particularly in the first half. Romania faded after a bright start. They rarely touched the levels they showed in the 1994 World Cup finals.

Dugary struck, against the run of play, when Yuri Djorkaeff collected a ball on the right and flighted a deep cross towards the penalty spot.

The long-haired Frenchman rose above Romania's on-rushing goalkeeper Bogdan Stelea and two defenders to send a looping header bouncing into the net.

Dugary's goal was his second in 12 appearances for France and settled them after Romania, inspired by Hagi and veteran winger Marius Lactus, had threatened in the first 20 minutes.

Hagi had five shots but was tired as France gradually took a stranglehold on midfield. Lactus, fast and skilful, was fouled twice in the opening minute and prompted the first caution of the game when he was chopped down by Eric Di Meco.

Referee Helmut Krug of Germany later showed his yellow card to two Romanians, Gheorghe Mihali and Tibor Selymes, for fouls on Dugary and Youri Djorkaeff respectively.

Nat'l Bank volleyball

Bangladesh Police AC posted victory in the ongoing National Bank Premier Division volleyball league with a straight set (3-0) win over Water Development Board at the volleyball court of Dhaka Stadium yesterday.

In the day's lone encounter, the policemen laced hardy any trouble to wrap the match up 15-2, 15-11, 15-6 against the WDB side.

However, many fingers were pointed at Singapore, which was seen as the fulcrum of the betting industry that brought the game in south-east Asia to its knees.

Malaysian police intelligence estimated that millions of dollars were bet on the island every time the state side, the Lions, played a Malaysian team in the 1994 season.

for France before Dugary's goal. His perfectly-struck volley, as he fell, was seized by the shaven-headed Stelea who looked less than secure at time in Romania's goal.

The celebrated new French attacking pairing of Djorkaeff and Zinedine Zidane were closely marked and had few opportunities to shine.

But a brilliant combination in the second half, when Zidane narrowly failed to reach a cross from Djorkaeff, hinted at their potential to inflict damage in future games.

It was a pity in the end that we didn't manage to score, but playing like that were making a mark for the level of football in the tournament.

The Dutch need to show better marksmanship in their next game against the Swiss in Birmingham on Thursday. Scotland meet England at Wembley on Saturday in what will be a crucial match for both.

Edwin van der Sar, Michael Reiziger, Johan de Kock, Winston Bogarde, Edgar Davids, Ronald de Boer (Aron Winter, 68 min), Clarence Seedorf, Richard Witschge (Philip Cocu, 78 min), Taston Taument (Patrick Kluivert, 63 min), Jordi Cruyif, Dennis Bergkamp.

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Reefat finishes runner-up

International Master Reefat-bin-Sattar of Bangladesh Biman finished second in the 22nd national championship after beating Saifuddin Lovlu of BTMC in the play off match at the NSC chess room yesterday.

In the two-round active chess playoff, Reefat, the defending champion who completed the 15-round meet day before yesterday jointly second with Lovlu having 11 points each, won the first engagement and drew the other against Lovlu to confirm the second spot.

On the other hand, Lovlu had to be satisfied with the third place, same where he was last year. It may be mentioned that IM Ziaur Rahman won the title this year with 12 points.

The day's other playoffs to decide the fourth, fifth and sixth position holders between Abdullah Al Rakib, Enamul Hossain Rajib and Kayes Hasan were going on till our filing of this report last night.

England's Kiwi tour itinerary

LONDON, June 11: England will play three Test matches and five one-day internationals on their 1997 tour of New Zealand, reports Reuters.

The schedule opens on January 10 with a one-day warm-up match followed by two four-day games before the opening Test in Auckland on January 24.

A four-day match against New Zealand A 15 followed by the remaining Tests in Wellington and Christchurch at the start of February. The one-day series rounds off the tour, with the last game on March 4.

The Dutch clearly missed their central defenders Danny Blind (suspended), and Frank de Boer (injury) Hiddink was satisfied.

"I must take upon it as two points lost as we had enough possession and chances to win. But I must also be happy with the way we performed as a team."

Kiwi eyes in trouble

LONDON, June 11: New Zealand's women cricketers are faced with the worry of two players 'quarantined' with chicken pox ahead of Thursday's first one-day international against England at Lord's, reports AFP.

Spin bowler Clare Nicholson and Katrina Withers were forced to stay in isolation away from the New Zealanders' base in the leafy north London suburb of Hampstead after they came down with the virus when the team arrived on June 2.

Nevertheless, with their one-day international on the horizon, they cannot afford any further infections in the team.

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French defender Christian Karembeu and Romanian forward Dorinel Munteanu tussle for the ball during their Euro '96 Group B engagement at St James Park, Newcastle on June 10. France won 1-0.

Hiddink riding higher

BIRMINGHAM, England, June 11: Despite the shock of failing to beat lowly Scotland, Dutch manager Guus Hiddink is still confident of going home with the European Championship trophy, reports AFP.

For although Holland failed to score they created enough chances to show that they are a threat to any team in the competition.

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"I must take upon it as two points lost as we had enough possession and chances to win. But I must also be happy with the way we performed as a team."

Russians hit the roof

LIVERPOOL, June 11: A small contingent of hardy Russian soccer fans arrived in Liverpool on Tuesday and immediately blasted British bureaucrats for ruining what should have been the occasion of a lifetime, reports Reuters.

The supporters raged about the British embassy in Moscow, which did not issue visas to hundreds of Russian supporters who had already bought expensive tickets for their team's three Euro '96 games in Group C.

"We have lost a fortune because of these bastards," shouted one red-faced fan who would only identify himself as Sergei.

Romario vying for Valencia

VALENCIA, Spain, June 11: Brazilian World Cup striker Romario is heading back to Spain following a year at home and has provisionally signed for First Division Valencia, club chairman Francisco Roig said, reports Reuters.

Romario, who left Barcelona in 1995 complaining of homesickness to play for Flamengo, was reportedly unhappy about sharing the limelight at the Rio club with striking partner Bebeto, who has just returned to Brazil from Spain.

"We have signed a contract and on January 1, come what may, he will come to Valencia," Roig said after returning from Brazil.

"He wants to be Brazil's striker at the 1998 World Cup in France and will take the next two seasons very seriously. He's very excited."

Spanish news agency EFE said Romario would be paid around 8 million dollars over the two years.

Because of a deal Romario agreed with Barcelona, Valencia will have to pay the Catalans 7 million dollars if he signs a full contract before December 31, 1996, when his obligations to Barcelona end.

But Roig said he would negotiate for the striker to play from as early as next month for Valencia, runners-up in the Spanish league last season.

Larry's final punch at glory

BAY ST LOUIS, Mississippi, June 11: Larry Holmes, who held the heavyweight title for more than seven years, is stepping back into the ring for what he says will be the final bout of his 23-year career when he faces Anthony Willis here Sunday, reports AFP.

The 46-year-old Holmes, who has a record of 64 wins against five defeats with 41 knockouts, captured the heavyweight title at age 28 by defeating Ken Norton.

He compiled a record 15 knockouts in title defences from 1978 until 1985.

Crossword puzzle by Eugene Sheffer with clues and a grid.