

Green Delta hockey

Bima beat Ajax

Sports Reporter

Sadharan Bima Krira Sanstha recorded their seventh victory in the Green Delta First Division league with a marginal 2-1 win over Ajax Sporting Club in one of the two matches played at the National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

In a see-saw affair, Ghulam Ghaus, one of Bima's two Pakistani recruits, struck both the goals while Shuvo pulled one back for Ajax.

The match was locked at 1-1 in the first half.

Ghaus, the tall Lahore-based former national junior team member, put the insurance corner ahead in the 23rd minute through a penalty corner.

But the lead sustained only for five minutes as Shuvo levelled the match flicking the ball home from a Mukti pass in the 28th minute. It was Shuvo's 16th goal in the league so far.

After the breather, Ghaus brought Bima the victory with another strike in the 68th minute.

With yesterday's win, Bima raised their tally to 22 points from 13 matches. On the other hand, it was the second defeat for Ajax in same number of outings so far which kept them content to their previous collection of 23 points.

In the day's other match, Farashganj Sporting Club and Azad Sporting Club shared points with a 1-1 draw.

After a barren first half, Moksed put Azad ahead in the 59th minute while Davinder Singh, one of Farashganj's four Indians, equalised after eight minutes.

Le Tissier still Southampton's

LONDON, June 27: England midfielder Matthew Le Tissier has signed a new four-year contract with Premier League club Southampton, reports Xinhua.

The 28-year-old English international said on Thursday that he had reached a deal to stay at the club until the end of the 2000-2001 season.

There had been much speculation on Le Tissier's transfer to a more glamorous English club before his Thursday's announcement.

Jordan, CBS strike deal

CHICAGO, June 27: Chicago Bulls superstar Michael Jordan has signed a 10-year exclusive deal with CBS Sports line that could bring him an estimated 10 million dollars, the sports multimedia company said Wednesday, reports AFP.

As a member of the CBS Sportsline team, Jordan will answer E-Mails from his fans around the world, conduct interviews on a monthly basis, appear in radio and television advertisements, and provide exclusive content for CBS Sportsline and for his official online fan club.

Company spokesman Paul Duffy said Jordan, the richest commercial spokesman in sports for the sixth consecutive year last year with 38 million dollars in product endorsement money, would not receive up-front money under the deal.

Instead Jordan, who earlier this month led his team to a fifth National Basketball Association title in seven years, will receive CBS Sportsline stocks and a percentage of advertising revenues and merchandise sales, he added.

USA-Ecuador friendly Aug 7

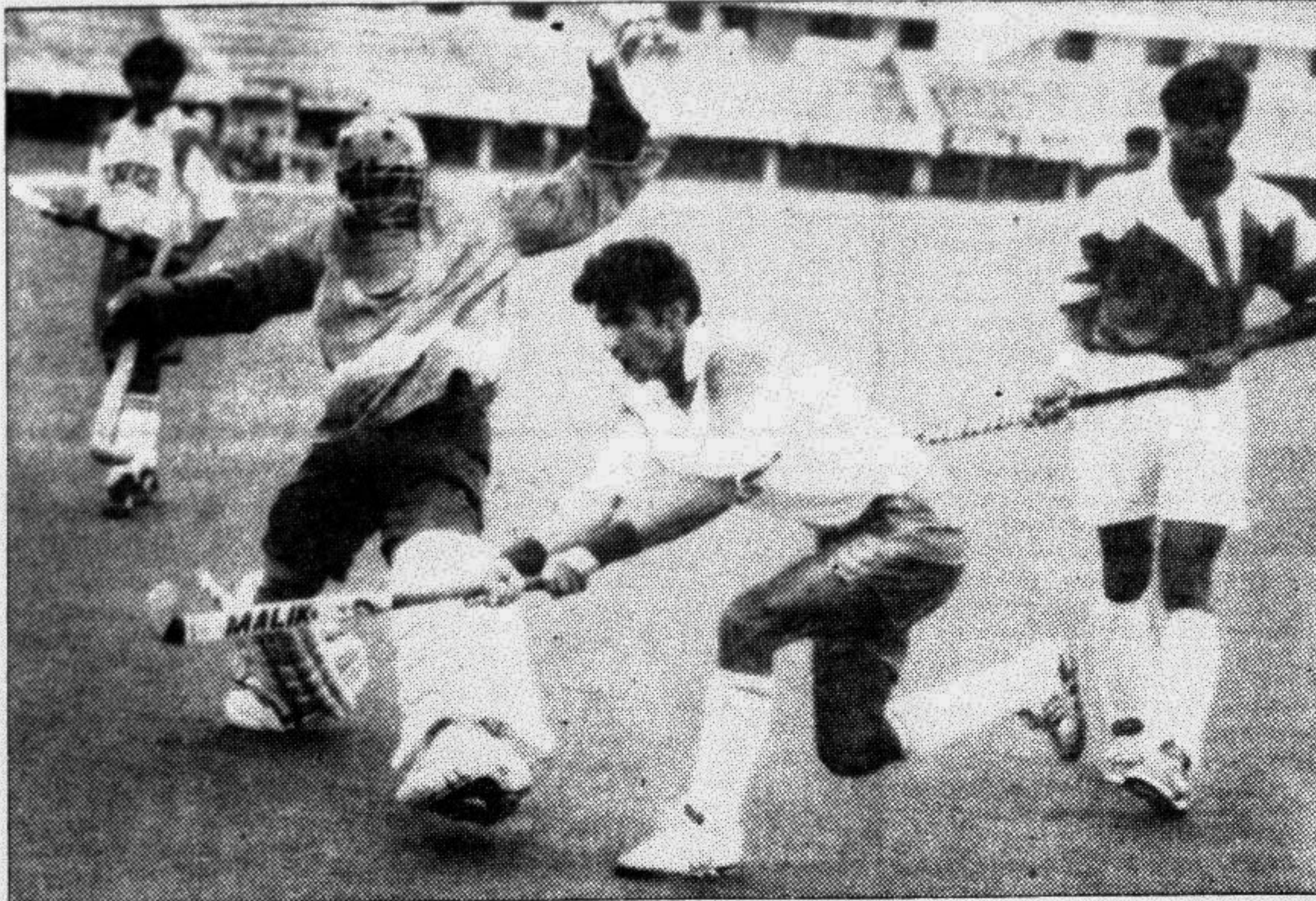
BALTIMORE, Maryland, June 27: The United States will face Ecuador in a friendly here August 7 in hopes of staying in top form during a six-week break in 1998 World Cup qualifying, reports AFP.

The US team, which visits El Salvador on Sunday, stands third in the CONCACAF (Confederation of North and Central American and Caribbean Football) qualifying final round.

The US team is at risk of missing the 32-nation final next year in France. After Sunday it does not play another qualifier until hosting Costa Rica on September 7 in Portland, Oregon.

REGRETS

Due to space constraint our regular item CROSSWORD could not be accommodated. — Sports Editor



Action from yesterday's Green Delta First Division hockey league match between Sadharan Bima and Ajax. Bima won 2-1. — Star photo

Of Taylor's complaints

OXFORD, England, June 27: Mark Taylor believes that Australia's international cricketers are on the edge and some are struggling to cope with current workload, reports AP.

Taylor, captain Australia for the first time in England, said burnout was a serious concern and sooner the problem was addressed, the game and the players would have long term benefit from it.

"Players are not interested most of the time," Taylor said. "They seem fed lethargic and have been complaining of not having time enough time between tours."

Taylor was talking to the touring media here after Australia's three-day game against the British Universities was washed out without a ball bowled at the Parks Friday.

He will raise the issue at the first meeting of the world's nine Test playing captains on July 11, instead of travelling to Scotland with the team for a one-day match.

Taylor conceded that he was one of the two Test captains who recently expressed concern to International Cricket Council's chief executive officer David Richardson about the amount of cricket some countries were playing.

"I think a lot of countries are playing very close to their maximum number of games at the moment," Taylor said.

"We've shown over the last number of years that people will watch Test cricket if it is played the right way."

good examples of teams playing 10-15 Tests matches a year and the best part of 30 one-dayers. "This is our fourth tour in a 12-month period. That's a lot of cricket."

"That's why it is something that has to be monitored and discussed all the time."

"Like any job, it's very hard to do your best every day. The more and more you play, the harder it gets."

"It doesn't matter if the supposed best team plays the supposed worst team. If the cricket's good people will come and watch."

"I don't think there is a huge necessity for it," Taylor added.

Taylor has had discussions with West Indies skipper Courtney Walsh and Pakistan's Wasim Akram with a view to forming an Association of International Cricket Players (AICP).

Players of Australia and the West Indies have formed their respective Players' Association to make representation concerning the increase in the number of one-day internationals played year round.

Australia made three tours to subcontinent in a eight-month period, including a meaningless one-day series in Sri Lanka.

"I hope this and other player-related issues can be addressed at the captain's meeting," Taylor said.

Australia have virtually played non-stop cricket following the three series in the subcontinent, followed by a five-Test home series against the West Indies and eight one-dayers, as part of the one-day triangular.

It was immediately followed by a three Test and seven match one-day tour of South Africa. This was followed by a three-week break and arriving in England for a 14-week Ashes tour.

The players, have privately grieved and complained of the heavy schedule.

The fight was only minutes old, but Holyfield had set the tone. He would not be intimidated by the fearsome Tyson, before or after the bell.

"Your the bully in there," trainer Don Turner told Holyfield in the corner after the round ended. "He ain't the bully."

Saturday night, Holyfield must be the bully again if he is to do for a second time what most thought would be impossible when he stopped Tyson in the 11th round last November to win the WBA heavyweight title.

"I have to force my will upon him. I have to make him fight my fight," Holyfield said. "He knows he can't fight going backwards. So the main thing is to press forward."

In a fight that offers staggering riches to both boxers, Holyfield might be right in that it comes down to one surprisingly simple equation: The fighter who can impose his will on the other man in the ring will walk out with the victory and the title.

Holyfield is guaranteed 35 million dollars and Tyson expected to make some 30 million dollars in a fight that could take in 130 million dollars in ticket and pay-per-view sales.

The oddsmakers still aren't convinced, making Holyfield a 2-1 underdog, though the odds were narrowing as bettors flocked to put money on the champion.

Neither is Tyson, whose career and place in boxing history could ride on whether he can figure out a way to get inside the counter-punching Holyfield and land enough big punches to win.

"I'm going to do pretty good Saturday night," Tyson said. "He's not going to have the championship Saturday night."

MARK TAYLOR

This is the significant reason why Taylor has his reservations backing the idea of a World Championship of Test cricket, currently studied by the ICC's cricket committee.

"I wouldn't be against the idea," Taylor said. "But I'm not sure it's an absolute necessity."

"We've shown over the last number of years that people will watch Test cricket if it is played the right way."

Leading the group is 1994 Wimbledon champion Conchita Martinez and the runner-up the last two years, Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario. The list also includes Maria Antonia Sanchez Lorenzo, Gala Leon Garcia and Cristian Torrens-Valero. Two others, Magul Serna and Virginia Ruano-Pascual, had first-round matches still to complete.

Spaniards grow up on clay and excel on the surface. Of the six Spanish men ranked in the world top 20, only Carlos Moya showed up for Wimbledon.

Mark Woodforde, Wimbledon doubles winner the last three years with fellow Australian Todd Woodbridge, was asked on a Wimbledon web site about the Woodies' chances of winning a fourth straight.

"The first three years we won, a bird pooped on me one year, then the next year it was on Todd, and the third year we were in the quarterfinals and waiting for the bird poop to drop on one of us... it fell on me. So if it happens again, you know, we'll win."

Sixteen-year-old Anna Kournikova was walking on the Wimbledon grounds with her boyfriend, 27-year-old Detroit Red Wings star Sergei Federov, when some youngboys began whistling. She smiled and said, "You couldn't afford me boys." Former British player Buster Mottram wants Wimbledon paved over.

"I believe it will happen within the next 20 years... I am sure Wimbledon will switch to another surface." He made the same prediction 10 years ago.

By contrast, their opponents Real Betis are looking to win the cup for only the second time — 20 years after their previous win, an 11-9 penalty shootout victory over Athletic Bilbao after the teams fought to a 2-2 draw.

If they are to defy the pundits, Betis will have to overcome a Catalan team that looks stronger on paper in almost every department and one that has already lifted the European Cup Winners' Cup and the Spanish Super Cup this season, as well as finishing second to Real in the league.

The one consolation for Betis is that they are assured of a place in the European Cup Winners' Cup themselves next season. Barcelona won't be defending their trophy as they are joining champions Real Madrid in the expanded European Cup.

MSC-Usha duel today

Sports Reporter

Defending Champions Mohammedan Sporting Club take on fellow contenders Usha Krishna Chakra in a crucial Green Delta First Division league encounter at the National Hockey Stadium this afternoon.

The match, which has virtually become the title decider, will start at 4 pm. It will be a 'do or die' affair for both teams as the winners will almost ensure the prestigious title.

Mohammedans, who have not lost a single point in their 13 matches so far, are leading the 16-team standings with 39 points and a win will ensure them the championship even before they face their arch rivals Abahani Krira Chakra in their last match on July 5.

On the other hand, Usha, who are trailing the leaders by two points, have no choice but to win to remain in the race.

Four Pakistani players — Shahbaz Ahmed, Kamran Ashraf, Tahir Zaman and Waheed Shahid, are expected to don the black and white vests while four Indian internationals — Anil Aldrin, Shakeel Ahmed, Rahul Singh and goalkeeper Ashish Ballal will feature for Usha.

Nat'l youth v'ball on

Sports Reporter

Rajbari were off to a flying start as the Multidrive 16th national youth volleyball began at the National Indoor Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

In the inaugural match of the week-long meet, Rajbari recorded an upset straight sets (3-0) victory over defending champions Naogaon in a Group A encounter.

In the other opening day matches, Chittagong beat Pabna 3-1 while Rangpur tamed Jessore 3-0.

Early State Minister for Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives Syed Abul Hossain declared the championship open. Bangladesh Volleyball Federation president Maj Gen Azizur Rahman, Bir Uttam, and Sadeq Hossain Chowdhury, chairman of the sponsors Multidrive Limited, were also present.

A total of 13 district teams are participating in the championship scheduled to end of July 2.

Martina's call

Sports Reporter

LONDON, June 27: Nine-time Wimbledon champion Martina Navratilova has called for a return to wooden rackets in order to revive spectator interest in tennis, reports Reuters.

"We are not going to get finese with these big rackets," the former world number one American said in a television interview.

"Go back to wooden rackets. Baseball is not played with aluminum bats."

"If they played with all this space-age material in Major League baseball we would have home run derby."

The fight was only minutes old, but Holyfield had set the tone. He would not be intimidated by the fearsome Tyson, before or after the bell.

"Your the bully in there," trainer Don Turner told Holyfield in the corner after the round ended. "He ain't the bully."

Saturday night, Holyfield must be the bully again if he is to do for a second time what most thought would be impossible when he stopped Tyson in the 11th round last November to win the WBA heavyweight title.

"I have to force my will upon him. I have to make him fight my fight," Holyfield said. "He knows he can't fight going backwards. So the main thing is to press forward."

In a fight that offers staggering riches to both boxers, Holyfield might be right in that it comes down to one surprisingly simple equation: The fighter who can impose his will on the other man in the ring will walk out with the victory and the title.

Holyfield is guaranteed 35 million dollars and Tyson expected to make some 30 million dollars in a fight that could take in 130 million dollars in ticket and pay-per-view sales.

The oddsmakers still aren't convinced, making Holyfield a 2-1 underdog, though the odds were narrowing as bettors flocked to put money on the champion.

Neither is Tyson, whose career and place in boxing history could ride on whether he can figure out a way to get inside the counter-punching Holyfield and land enough big punches to win.

"I'm going to do pretty good Saturday night," Tyson said. "He's not going to have the championship Saturday night."

Williams' dream

Sports Reporter

From Tawfiq Aziz Khan

LONDON, June 27: It might sound a bit cynical but the American teenager Venus Williams told a press conference today that she had no favourite players on the tour. Replying to a question by a question Williams said, "I don't have a favourite player on the women's tour. I don't think you can actually play on a tour like a basketball player could play on the NBA" and said, "Oh, no, I'm not my favourite player, someone else is my favourite player," you know, "I don't think you can actually say that."

The 17-year-old Louisiana girl much in prominence these days attended the press conference with her younger sister Serena Williams who is also a tennis player but not playing at Wimbledon. For a girl of 17 she handled the press quite competently but made her opinions very very clear. She sounded atrocious when she said in reply to a question about admiring any of the players in the circuit. "No, I don't. I think a lot of players are doing well and playing good, but I don't actually look up to them. I don't see why

I would do that. Do you guys actually want to ask that question, you know, who is your favourite player on the women's tour?"

Replying to a question from

VENUS WILLIAMS

The Daily Star she thought for a moment and replied in muffled voice that she would like to win the Wimbledon Championships as her first Grand Slam tournament.

Traditionally, the first Sunday of the fortnight is observed as holiday but priorities may get better of tradition this year. Not a ball was served yesterday.

Britain had a draught back in the mid-sixties (it could be 1966 as far as I can remember). It was so severe that there was not a drop of rain in months. People cried for rain but in vain. Precisely at that time the annual convention of the umbrella manufacturers was held. In the absence of rain the business of umbrella manufacturers was devastating. The president of the convention was said to have told his audience, "In this severe drought only water around us is our tears." I do not know if the gentleman is still alive. I am sure he would have been extremely pleased the way the umbrella manufacturers are doing business in this wet summer.

A small background to the famous All England Lawn Tennis & Croquet Club membership.

There are 375 full members of the Club, plus a number of honorary members, including past singles champions, of various nationalities, who have rendered distinguished service to the game. In addition, there are about 100 temporary members, who were elected from year to year; they are active players who are in a position to

make regular use of the club and to play in club matches during their period of membership. One reason for the restriction in members is that membership carries with it the right to purchase two tickets for each day of the championships and if the membership were increased it would cut down the allocation to the public.

INCENCE wants to leave Inter?

MILAN, June 27: Inter Milan midfielder Paul Ince's future remained in limbo on Thursday after he failed to turn up for a scheduled meeting with club president Massimo Moratti, reports AFP.

Ince, who is reported to be torn between signing a new contract with Inter and a return to the English Premiership, was said to be in England.

Moratti has become increasingly frustrated in his attempts to hang on to the combative England international, whom he believes is being encouraged by his wife to return to England.

Merseyside clubs Liverpool and Everton are interested in signing the 29-year-old, who is available for six million pounds (9 million dollars).

Rain, rain and more rain

WIMBLEDON, England, June 27 (AP): Guess what? It's still raining at Wimbledon.

With heavy showers continuing Friday and no letup in sight, Wimbledon appeared headed to only the second consecutive washout in its 121-year history.

The only time two straight days were rained out completely was in 1909, also on the Thursday and Friday of the first week.

Already facing a backlog of 120-130 matches after the first four days, Wimbledon officials were considering scheduling play on the middle Sunday for only the second time in history.

But the forecast called for more rain through the weekend, and officials said they would wait until Saturday before deciding on Sunday play.

It will be a tough call whether we will play on this cloudy Sunday. All-England Club chief executive Christopher Goringe said, "We have got to look at all the options and that's what we are doing at the moment, with certainly no decision being made for another 24 hours at least."

The tournament can also be extended into a third week, as it was last year when the women's doubles semifinals and final were played on the third Monday.

Referee Alan Mills said it would be possible to finish the tournament on the third Tuesday if necessary.

Mills has already decided to reduce men's doubles matches from best-of-five to best-of-three sets until the quarterfinals.

nals. Mills said he could even do the same for men's singles matches.

After Thursday's washout, only 94 matches had been completed. Twenty-six women, including Mary Joe Fernandez and Venus Williams, hadn't even hit a ball yet.

Thursday's rainout was the first since 1992, the fourth in 10 years and the 28th in Wimbledon history.

The only time there has been play on the middle Sunday was in 1991, when only 52 matches were finished in the first four days.

The sacrosanct day off turned into the most festive in Wimbledon's 127-year history. "People's Sunday" became a huge hit with fans, who transformed the usually staid All-England Club into a combination of Woodstock and Wimbledon.

"I personally thought the middle Sunday '91 was probably the most inspiring day that I have spent at Wimbledon," Mills said. "The people and the atmosphere were just electric and I thought it was a great success."

But Mills noted that the weather forecast was good on that day in 1991, while the forecast for this Sunday is not.

"It would be a little silly of us if we, knowing the weather forecast, open up everything and we spend a day like today," he said.

Mills said playing on Sunday posed various logistical problems and the club would need authorization from the local council, police and others.

If the rain lets up Friday, Pete Sampras, Goran Ivanisevic, Richard Krajicek and Boris

Devon injured

Sports Reporter

LONDON, June 27: England fast bowler Devon Malcolm was taken to hospital on Thursday when he was struck on the foot when batting in a county match, jeopardising his chances of playing in the next Test against Australia, reports Reuters.

Essex fast bowler Mark Ilett, who ripped through the Derbyshire innings with seven wickets at Southend, delivered the yorker which injured Malcolm's left foot.

Malcolm was taken to Southend Hospital where an X-ray revealed bad bruising but no break. He had packs of ice put around his foot.

The third Test at Old Trafford, Manchester begins on July 3.

Reception for cricketers

Sports Reporter

Acme Laboratories will arrange a reception to honour the national cricket team which won the ICC Trophy and qualified for the 1999 World Cup.

The reception followed by a dinner will be held at the Dhaka Club swimming pool side at 8 pm tonight.

Entertainment Guide: DD 7, ZEE CINEMA, SONY ET, PTV, EL TV, Channel V, STAR PLUS, STAR MOVIES, STAR SPORTS, ZEE TV, EL TV. Includes program listings for various channels and times.

Entertainment Guide: BBC, Channel V, STAR PLUS, STAR MOVIES, STAR SPORTS, ZEE TV, EL TV. Includes program listings for various channels and times.