

### Fine start for Feyenoord

AMSTERDAM, Aug 22: Feyenoord opened their Dutch league championship campaign with a 3-0 win at newcomers MVV Maastricht on Thursday, reports Reuters.

Three goals from dead-ball situations gave the Rotterdam club the perfect start of the season.

The opening effort came in the eighth minute when Giovanni van Bronckhorst curled a free kick over the MVV well into the top left-hand corner.

The away team went 2-0 up in the 58th minute when Dane Mark Nygaard deflected a shot from Uruguayan defender Fernando Picun into his own net.

After 80 minutes Picun headed home at a corner to seal the victory which provided Feyenoord with a good warm up for next Wednesday's European Cup preliminary round second leg tie against Jazz Pori of Finland.

Feyenoord won the first leg at home 6-2 and should enter the lucrative European Champions' League without any problems.

### Benfica's refusal

LISBON, Aug 22: Former European champions Benfica said on Thursday that they had rejected a 18.5-million dollar bid for Portuguese international striker and club captain Joao Vieira Pinto, reports Reuters.

The club refused to say who had made the offer but local press reports spoke of Spain's Deportivo la Coruna, English champions Manchester United or Glasgow Rangers of Scotland.

Benfica's director of football Antonio Figueiredo confirmed that an offer had been made but he said the amount was not sufficient to tempt the Lisbon side, twice winners of the European Cup, to give up their charismatic striker.

"It is not enough," he told a news conference.

Benfica have long said that Pinto is not for sale, club president Manuel Damasio event made his leaving Benfica conditional on the approval of a special meeting of shareholders. However, Figueiredo did not rule out the player being sold eventually if the price were right.

### Ex-Russian hockey official arrested

MOSCOW, Aug 22: Police have arrested a former Russian hockey official in connection with the murder of Ice Hockey Federation president Valentin Sych in April, officials said Thursday, reports AP.

The apparent contract killing of the prominent executive shocked the Russian sports world.

Robert Cherenkov, president of the now-defunct International Ice Hockey League, has been arrested and charged in connection with the murder, said Irina Reschikova, a spokeswoman for Russia's Prosecutor General.

She declined to provide more details, including the date of the arrest or the charges filed against him.

The inter-nation Ice Hockey League was formed to organise commercial hockey competition but disbanded a year ago.

Sych had opposed the establishment of the commercial league. The Ice Hockey Federation remains Russia's central hockey association, organising amateur competition and forming the country's national team.

Russia's ITAR-Tass news agency, citing unidentified sources in the prosecutor's office, said nine other suspects have also been arrested in the case, but investigators believe Cherenkov was the central figure.

Sych was gunned down outside his country home on April 22 as he and his wife were getting into their car.

Many businessmen and public officials have been killed since the collapse of the Soviet Union, but few contract murders have been solved.

### Bortolami wins Bernocchi Cup

MILAN, Aug 22: Former World Cup winner Gianluca Bortolami won the 79th edition of the Bernocchi Cup cycle race at nearby Legnano on Thursday, reports AFP.

Bortolami, who is from Milan, came home 42 seconds clear of fellow Italians Stefano Zanini and Marco Lietti.

Thursday's victory follows a recent upturn for Bortolami, who was fifth at San Sebastian and third at Rochester. His career had been dogged by injuries and accidents in the wake of his World Cup success in 1994.

### FIFA directive to Jamaica

KINGSTON, Jamaica, Aug 22: FIFA has directed Jamaican soccer officials to improve the pitch at the National Stadium at Kingston ahead of next month's games against Canada and Costa Rica. But Jamaican officials said Wednesday there's no time, reports AP.

The directive from soccer's governing body was "a polite reminder for us to get our act together," said Horace Reid, general secretary of the Jamaica Football Federation.

Reid said the local federation had attempted to upgrade the pitch, but it is unlikely that will happen in time for CONCACAF matches in September — the final round of eliminatories to reach the tournament in France.



Action from yesterday's Shamsuddin Spinning Mahanagari Cup football match between Fakirerpool and Dhanmondi at the Mirpur Stadium. — Star photo

### B Boys shut Wanderers off

## Dhanmondi hold Fakirerpool

Sports Reporter



Youngmen's Club Fakirerpool's bid for a berth in the second round of the Shamsuddin Spinning Mahanagari Cup suffered yet another setback when Dhanmondi Club held them to a goalless draw in one of the two first round Group A matches played at the Mirpur Stadium yesterday.

In an eye-sore and dull encounter with the ball being kicked around aimlessly in the midfield region for most of the time, the Fakirerpool boys, who clinched the fourth place in the Premier League last year, failed to live up to their former selves and eventually left the ground with their second successive draw in the four-team Group A. They drew with Bangladesh Boys Club in their previous match on August 17.

Although Fakirerpool had the easiest opportunity of the match to take the lead when

they earned a penalty in the 37th minute but forward Arifur Rahman Mamun promptly blew it off sending the ball straight over the cross piece much to the horror of his teammates.

Yesterday's draw left Fakirerpool on the verge of a possible drop-out as they were able to collect only two points so far from as many matches. On the other hand, Dhanmondi, who earlier beat Dhaka Wanderers Club 2-0 in their previous match, kept their second round hopes alive as they joined group leaders Bangladesh Boys Club at the top, raising the collection to four points from two matches. However, the group championship will be decided when the two leaders face each other in their final group match on August 28.

Earlier in the day's first match, a second half rally enabled Bangladesh Boys Club to register a 2-1 victory over Dhaka Wanderers Club. Trailing the first half by one

goal, the Gopibagh boys displayed a brilliant comeback in the second half and scored two goals in eighteen minutes to register their first win in two outings.

Forward Lachchu headed home the equaliser off a corner in the 68th minute while Masud Rana tapped in the decisive goal cashing in on a deflection from a goal mouth melee in the dying minutes.

Earlier, Iko put Dhaka Wanderers ahead with a powerful-packed grounder from a Zakir cross in the 43rd minute. It was the second defeat for Wanderers which virtually signalled their demise in the competition.

The tournament will take one-day's off to pave the way of holding the first round Asian Cup Winners' Cup encounter between Abahani Krira Chakra and Old Benedictines of Sri Lanka at the same venue this evening.

### Abahani's Asian affair today

Sports Reporter

Federation Cup champions Abahani Krira Chakra take on Old Benedictines Sports Club of Sri Lanka in their first match of the two-leg first round of the 8th Asian Cup Winners' Cup at the Mirpur Stadium today.

The match is scheduled to begin at 6 pm. Bangladesh Betar will provide running commentary of the match.

The second match between the two sides will be held at the same venue tomorrow.

The 20-member Old Benedictines football team, which arrived in the city on Thursday, took its final preparation at the Mirpur Stadium yesterday. The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) nominated five officials also arrived in the city last night.

Ibrahim Ismail, the general secretary of Maldives Football Federation, will act as the match commissioner while four Indian referees — Michael Andrews, Kamaleswar Shankar, Krishna Avtar Chouhan and Abdul Hakim — will don the black vests.

The rate of gallery tickets for today's match has been fixed at Tk 20 while for VIP it will be Tk 50 each.

### Glory beckons Glenn

LONDON, Aug 22 (AFP): Glenn McGrath's seven for 76 to destroy England at The Oval on Thursday puts him in sight of Terry Alderman's Australian record of 42 wickets in an Ashes series.

And in the second innings McGrath, who now has 38 wickets, can also become only the fourth bowler in Ashes history to cross 40-wicket mark.

### TOP ASHES WKT-TAKERS

JC Laker (Eng): 46 wickets; 1956 TM Alderman (Aus): 42 wickets; 1981 RM Hogg (Aus): 41 wickets; 1978-79 TM Alderman (Aus): 41 wickets; 1989 AV Bedser (Eng): 39 wickets; 1953 DK Lillee (Aus): 39 wickets; 1981 MW Tate (Eng): 38 wickets; 1924-25 AA Mailey (Aus): 36 wickets; 1920-21 GD McGrath (Aus): 36 wickets; 1997

### Natore h'ball

From Our Correspondent

NATORE, Aug 22: Banalata Sen Club recorded a 11-8 victory over Natore Club in the inaugural match of the Natore District handball league at the local Kachari court here today.

Shamim scored highest seven goals for the winners.

A total of eight teams are participating in the league organised by the District Handball Association in cooperation with the Bangladesh Handball Federation.

### Troussier blasted

LAGOS, Aug 22: Frenchman Philippe Troussier is weathering heavy criticism less than three months after coaching Nigeria into the World Cup finals, reports Reuters.

"This team certainly should be overhauled," said Sports Minister Jim Nwobodo after Nigeria lost their final qualifying match to Guinea at the weekend.

The players were not match-fit and they lacked commitment and concentration.

Troussier has already crossed swords with officials since signing from Ivory Coast club ASEC Mimosas, where he was dubbed the White Wizard.

He has subsequently accused by Nigerian soccer authorities of failing to respect his contract.

"I signed a 17-month contract in March with a clause to re-negotiate after qualifying for the World Cup," said Troussier, who claims to have been offered the coaching post with Burkina Faso.

"If they can't respect their own side of the deal, no problem."

"I'm ready to quit if the NFA (Nigerian Football Association) don't cooperate with me. I will not go on my knees to beg for the position of Nigeria's trainer at France '98."

Local newspaper reports have suggested that the Frenchman first planned to move on last month when the NFA accused him of going to Morocco on holiday without permission.

### Boro not Platt's cup of tea

LONDON, Aug 22: Former England captain David Platt on Tuesday turned down a move to First Division Middlesbrough but has not ruled out leaving Arsenal, reports AFP.

England midfielder Platt, 31, had been tempted by a move to the Riverside to join up with former teammate Paul Merson, but decided against it.

Platt said: "I have decided that it would not be the right career move for me at this point in time."

"I am grateful to Arsenal for their understanding — Arsene Wenger has told me that he wants me to stay at the club and that will have the same chance as everyone else to be in the first team on a regular basis."

"Heaving said that Arsenal are courteous enough to allow me to talk to other clubs."

"It is no secret that I see my future career in coaching and management and, in due course, I will be looking for an opportunity to move steadily in that direction."

## Tufnell's fitting riposte



LONDON, Aug 22: Left-arm spinner Phil Tufnell lifted England back into contention today, the second day of the sixth and final Ashes Test against Australia at The Oval, reports agencies.

Tufnell, nicknamed "the cat" because of his tendency to cat-nap, pulled England back into the Test with figures of seven for 64 from 34.3 overs, a superbly penetrative and economical piece of bowling.

Using flight, change of pace and biting deliveries out of the bowlers' foot marks, Tufnell claimed his first five-wicket haul for 21 Tests, after posting four in his first seven appearances.

Australia were dismissed for 218 in their first innings after the Tufnell-inspired fightback, a lead of just 38.

Making his first appearance of the series, Tufnell bowled unchanged through the rain-

curtailed morning session and the full afternoon session, always commanding respect on a pitch that was slower than the traditional Oval surface and offering a degree of turn.

Tufnell had figures of 31-16-

50-6 at tea, recalling his triumph on the same ground in 1991 when he took six for 25 in the final Test against West Indies. His Test best is seven for 47 against New Zealand at Christchurch in the 1991-92 series.

Light rain cut the morning session by 50 minutes and spread play in the remaining 70 minutes over three spells, during the last of which Tufnell snapped up his third wicket of the innings.

The Middlesex slow bowler continued Mark Waugh's lean sequence of scores when he pushed forward and was caught off his glove by Mark Butcher at silly mid-off for 19. The elegant New South Wales batsman has now made just 208 runs in his nine innings in the series.

Greg Blewett and Steve Waugh took the score to 125 for three at lunch but Australia were jolted when they both fell in the space of 10 runs shortly after the interval.

Waugh, playing back to Andy Caddick, was given lbw for 22 and Blewett's 159 minutes of resistance for 45 ended when he tried to sweep Tufnell and wicketkeeper Alec Stewart took a brilliant one-handed catch diving to his left.

Tufnell next removed Ian Healy and Shaun Young without addition to the total to put Australia on 162 for seven, four wickets having tumbled for 24.

Healy (2) got an edge and the ball lodged between Stewart's knees, then the wicketkeeper secured his third victim of the innings when he caught debutant Young as he tried to cut his third delivery in Test cricket.

Ricky Ponting, 26 not out, and Shane Warne, 16 not out, edged Australia ahead with a rare flurry of attacking strokes just before the tea interval.

### SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard on the second day of the sixth and final Test between England and Australia at The Oval on Friday.

ENGLAND: First innings (G McGrath 7-76)

AUSTRALIA: First innings (overnight 77-2)

Elliott b Tufnell 12

Taylor c Hollislock b Tufnell 38

Blewett c Stewart b Tufnell 45

M Waugh c Butcher b Tufnell 19

S Waugh lbw b Caddick 22

Ponting c Hussain b Tufnell 40

Healy c Stewart b Tufnell 2

Young c Stewart b Tufnell 0

Warne b Caddick 30

Kasprowicz lbw b Caddick 0

McGrath not out 1

Extras (lb-3, w-1, nb-5) 9

Total (all out) 218

Fall of wickets: 1-49, 2-54; 3-94; 4-138; 5-148; 6-162; 7-162; 8-203; 9-203.

Bowling: O M R W

Malcolm Marshall 2 37 0

Martin 15 5 38 0

Caddick 16 4 76 3

Tufnell 34.3 16 64 7

## Cycling comes to crunch

SYDNEY, Aug 22: Sydney's Olympic Games drug squad will keep a close watch on the world cycling championships starting Aug 27 as they prepare for the possible introduction of blood testing at the 2000 Olympics, reports AP.

Cycling authorities will use blood samples to test competitors for the killer drug erythropoietin (EPO).

The International Olympic Committee has raised the possibility of blood testing at board level, but is yet to rule on its future, while SOCOG's chief doping officer Nicki Vance said she would be prepared for its introduction.

The Perth world championships will be the first time blood testing has been undertaken in Australia and the first time on track cyclists. It is a continuing initiative of cycling's world governing body, UCI, started this year with dawn tests on road riders on the European circuit.

Vance described the issue of blood testing as one requiring a moral rather than scientific decision by the IOC because of the possibility that some may object to it on religious grounds.

"There's been some research done and it appears from my reading that Jehovah's Witnesses may be the only group that have a problem with blood testing," Vance said recently.

But Peter Price, a director at the Australian headquarters of

Jehovah's Witnesses said Friday that Vance had got it wrong.

"We don't believe in accepting blood for transfusions but when it comes to having a blood test we have no objections. We have no problem with blood tests for medical purposes," Price said.

He said he would write to SOCOG telling Vance that Jehovah's Witnesses would not object to blood testing.

UCI is leading the way because of the differential problem of EPO, a drug which provides increased endurance by increasing the levels of red blood cells in the body and is applicable to other endurance sports.

The downside of the drug is the blood becomes too thick for the heart to pump around the body, arteries clog and heart attacks occur. The deaths of an estimated 20 riders have been linked to the drug.

While medical experts have praised UCI's commitment, the body's approach has concerned some in the sport.

Tests measure the amount of EPO in the blood stream — a haematocrit level — but are unable to differentiate between amounts of EPO occurring naturally and those added through drug taking.

UCI set the haematocrit level at 50 but Australian sports scientists believe it should be raised to 52 for men and lowered for women.

Tests are taken before racing and if the cyclists have a count above 50 it is considered dangerous and they are withdrawn. Because levels above 50 are possible without drug taking, a withdrawal is not an accusation of wrongdoing.

Australian track team doctor Peter Barnes praised UCI but said the possibility of legal action against a withdrawal should be considered.

"Let's say someone is prevented from winning a medal because he isn't allowed to compete after taking this test," Barnes said.

A rider could well have a natural level above what they have set for this test."

Barnes said the average range of haematocrit in men was 42-52 and 37-47 in women.

"They're saying it's unsafe for your health to be above 50 and that's where they lose credibility in the medical community," Barnes said.

"We've had three or four riders in the Australian squad who have gone above 50 at various stages."

"Your haematocrit is not consistent, there can be great variations."

Cyclists able to show evidence of consistent racing above the 50 level would be allowed to compete, Barnes said.

He said the fact the level of 50 applied to both men and women "basically shows they haven't done the research on females."

### CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS  
1 Ring tactic  
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12 Portrait  
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14 Meat-stamp letters  
15 Prude  
17 Catch red-handed  
18 Future phalarope  
19 Audrey Hepburn movie  
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