

Absurd!

Sports Reporter

State Minister for Youth and Sports Obaidul Quader yesterday expressed his utter dismay regarding the selection of the 'sports-writer-of-the-year' announced by Krirajagat, a Bengali sports fortnightly published by the National Sports Council (NSC).

The minister gave a piece of his mind while addressing as the chief guest at the 24th anniversary of NSC and 21st anniversary of the journal which were jointly celebrated at the NSC auditorium.

Two awards — sportsperson-of-the-year and sports-writer-of-the-year for 1997, were presented to national cricket captain Akram Khan and Mahmudul Hasan Shamim respectively by Krirajagat during the programme.

But the minister was particularly unhappy with the magazine for selecting Shamim, who is an employee of Krirajagat, as the best sports writer of the year. The minister said that it was totally absurd.

NSC & Krirajagat's anniversaries

State Minister for Youth and Sports Obaidul Quader yesterday said the past sportsmen, organisers and officials had played a pioneering role in achieving present success in the field of sports, reports BSS.

He was speaking at a function, organised to mark the 24th founding anniversary of the National Sports Council (NSC) and 21st anniversary of its publication — Krirajagat, in the NSC conference room.

Secretary of the Ministry of Youth and Sports ASM Shahjahan, former NSC chairman Sadiqur Rahman Chowdhury, first secretary of the Bangladesh Sports Control Association and veteran sports organiser Quazi Anisur Rahman and NSC secretary ASM Ali Kabir spoke on the occasion.

Premier kabadi

Rifles Senior team assured their berth in the fifth KM Mainuddin Smriti Premier Kabadi League final beating Fire Services "A" team 19-8 at the Outer Stadium Kabadi ground on Wednesday, reports UNB.

The Rifles team led the first half 13-5.

Earlier, in the day's first match, Ansar and VDP outplayed Fire Services "B" 28-6 after leading the first half 3-1.

Rifles Seniors, who secured full 10 points from five matches, will play their remaining match with lowly Ansar and VDP on Friday.

Police "A" team are also conveniently poised to take the other final berth collecting eight points from five matches.

Tokyo ticket scam Company in hot water

TOKYO, Aug 4 (AFP): Japanese soccer fans are to file suit against a travel agency in Tokyo for failing to deliver promised tickets for Japan's matches in the World Cup in France, reports today.

It would be the first legal case in Japan arising from a match ticket debacle in the World Cup.

Japanese travel agencies came under fierce attack when 23,000 out of a total 33,810 tickets paid for were undelivered for the Japanese national team's World Cup debut.

A lawyer representing nine people on a tour organised by Tokyo Tourist Corp was to file the suit at the Tokyo district court next week to seek compensation and return of travel charges, Jiji press said.

The plaintiffs were seeking 487,000 yen (3,400 dollars) each, blaming the agent for "not fulfilling the contract," Jiji and Japan Broadcasting Corp said.

The company has told its staff to clearly explain to clients that flying to France does not guarantee a ticket," a spokesman for Tokyo, one of Japan's top five travel agencies, said.

"But it is possible that the instruction was not thoroughly conveyed to our staff during the ticket shortage-confusion," he said, declining to comment directly on the suit until the complaint had been received.

Greek shot putter faces 2-year ban

ATHENS, Aug 5: The Greek national record-holder in the women's shot put, Eleni Tsentemidou, has tested positive for steroids and will miss the European Championships in Budapest, it was reported Tuesday, says AP.

Athens newspapers said Tsentemidou, 29, tested positive for nandrolone during mandatory doping controls at the Greek national athletics championships July 17-19.

Local media reports quoted the Greek athletics federation as saying Tsentemidou's first sample was positive. The athlete, who faces a mandatory two-year ban, will be asked if she wants her second sample to be tested.



Scene from the 2nd Jiban Bima Club Cup hockey tournament opener between Mohammedan and Bangladesh Sporting Club at the National Hockey Stadium yesterday afternoon. — Star photo

Mohammedans earn full points

Sports Reporter



Mohammedan Sporting Club got off to a winning start in the Jiban Bima second Club Cup hockey tournament when they overcame Bangladesh Sporting Club 2-0 in the inaugural match at the National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Although the reigning league champions who also finished runners-up in the first edition of such tournament last year, enjoyed most of the possession against the minnows, they were found wanting in front of the opponent's goal. Their forward line of Ramij, Siam-E-Noor, Ashique and Raju, clearly lacked understanding much to the frustration of a few hundred fans present at the stadium.

However Ramij, who was

playing his first match for the black and whites, created the easiest chance of the match halfway through the first session when he broke through the Bangladesh Sporting defence from the right flank and sent a neat minus to Sharafat who failed to make contact from point blank range.

The deadlock was broken in the 20th minute when defender Ishiaque Ahmed Shipu, who joined Mohammedans from Abahani along with Ramij this season, converted a penalty corner.

Mohammedans maintained their dominance in the second half and doubled the margin when Hasan Rony smashed yet another short corner in the 43rd minute.

The winners will face Azad Sporting Club in their last first

round group A match on August 12.

Yellow card: Ramij (Mohammedan SC)

TEAMS

MOHAMMEDAN SC: Mohammad Javed, Mitul, Shahidullah Khokon, Hasan Rony, Sharafat, Raju, Ashique, Zahid Biswas, Siam-E-Noor, Ramij, Ahmedul Haque, Shariful Alam and Jamilur Rahman.

BANGLADESH SC: Sohel Rana, Khaleel Khan, Jahed Reza, Nazmul, Farid, Obayed, Mahmud, Habib, Fazul, Proshanto, Taleb Reza, Loobraj, Fazal, Rubel, mamun and Nayan.

TODAY'S MATCHES

Farashganj SC v Wari Club (2:45 pm)
Usha KC v Bachelor SC (4:30 pm)

Super Eagles add Gullit too



Lagos, Aug 5: Former Chelsea manager Ruud Gullit is on a list of 16 possible successors to Bora Milutinovic as coach of the Nigeria national team, the Nigerian Football Association said Tuesday, reports AFP.

A three man team from the federation has just returned to Nigeria, after a tour of Europe in search of a new coach for the side that sparked early on at France '98 but flopped against Denmark in the second round.

Dutch coaches dominate those in the running for the job. Others on the list include former Celtic manager Win Janse, Thijs Libregts, Aad de Mos, Frank Rijkaard, Wim Rijsbergen, Ronald Sepibus and Rudi Krol, as well as Germany's former Real Madrid coach Jupp Heynckes.

Nigeria is widely considered Africa's strongest footballing nation, but has in the past been hampered by the poor organisation of the domestic league, most of its top players play abroad, many in Europe.

Cesare yet to get over it

CARNAGO, Italy, Aug 5: Paolo Maldini admitted on Tuesday that his father, Cesare, has still not over come his disappointment at being sacked as Italy's national soccer coach, reports AFP.

Maldini senior was axed in the wake of Italy's World Cup quarter final defeat on penalties to the hosts and eventual tournament winners, France. But the 66-year-old remains disappointed with Italian federation president Luciano Nizola, who initially said Maldini would be in charge when Italy face Wales in next month's first qualifier for Euro 2000.

Maldini's son Paolo, captain of the national side and AC Milan, said that he personally felt bitter and disappointed about the way Italy's campaign finished early at France '98.

But referring to his father he added: "It was especially disappointing for him. His future was called into question after a World Cup in which we were unbeaten and were knocked out by the team who went on to win it. And that's his real regret."

As for the decision to sack him, Maldini junior said: "I

wasn't expecting it and neither was he, mainly because he had spoken to the president (after the match) and they had left each other on good terms."

"And he feels bad about that."



CESARE MALDINI

Speaking at AC Milan's training base here, Maldini said his father had yet to decide his next move, despite the offer of a desk job with Milan, the club he served as a player, captain and coach for 20 years.

Gazza told not to despair

LONDON, Aug 5: England manager Glenn Hoddle said on Tuesday that Paul Gascoigne could still have an international future despite the fact he did not include him in a 29-man pre-European Championship qualifying training squad, reports Reuters.

The gathering will take place immediately after the Premier

league season kicks off on August 15.

Arsenal and Liverpool players were omitted because of club engagements. Liverpool play Southampton on the August 16 and Arsenal are at home to Nottingham Forest the following day.

Newcastle midfielder David Batty is injured. Hoddle wanted to get the squad together ahead of Eng-

land's opening Euro 2000 qualifying match against Sweden in September.

SQUAD

GOALKEEPERS: Tim Flowers (Blackburn Rovers), Nigel Martyn (Leeds United), Ian Walker (Tottenham Hotspur), Richard Wright (Ipswich).

DEFENDERS: Sol Campbell (Tottenham), Wayne Quinn (Sheffield United), Carl Serrant (Newcastle United), Kieron Dyer (Ipswich), Rio Ferdinand (West Ham), Gareth Southgate (Aston Villa), Gary Neville (Manchester United), Phil Neville (Manchester United).

MIDFIELDERS: Darren Anderson (Tottenham), David Beckham (Manchester United), Graeme Le Saux (Chelsea), Andy Hinchecliffe (Sheffield Wednesday), Nicky Butt (Manchester United), Rob Lee (Newcastle).

FORWARDS: Darren Huckerby (Coventry), Darren Eadie (Norwich), Emile Heskey (Leicester), Paul Merson (Middlesbrough), Paul Scholes (Manchester United), Les Ferdinand (Tottenham), Alan Shearer (Newcastle), Teddy Sheringham (Manchester United), Dion Dublin (Coventry), Ian Wright (West Ham), Andy Cole (Manchester United).

Final Test begins today



LEEDS, England, Aug 5 (AP): The battleground and the combatants are predetermined but the result is no foregone conclusion.

For the England and South Africa cricket teams, a much-needed series victory is at stake as they battle for the honours in the fifth and final cricket Test at Headingley starting Thursday.

England, on a high after their series levelling eight-wicket win, are eyeing their first five-test series win since 1986-87.

For South Africa, a series win in England would be their most prized accomplishment since returning to international cricket.

"It will be important for us to go away from England with a series win. It's a very big series for us. The first prize is to win the Tests," South Africa captain Hansie Cronje said Wednesday.

South Africa are yet to win a major series since being readmitted to Test fold in 1992. The Proteas did look the dominant team in this series before surrendering a 1-0 upper hand after losing the fourth Test by eight wickets at Trent Bridge.

The visitors won the second Test at Lord's by 10 wickets, and narrowly missed out on another win at Old Trafford when England's last pair thwarted them.

"Every Test is massive even if you are 3-0 up," Cronje said. "It's all to play for in this one. And we don't mind that situation at all."

South Africa, are considering their options for the crucial match whether to play five seamers. It might end up being a toss up between two veterans, off-spinner Pat Symcox or all-rounder Brian McMillan.

Another possible change could be McMillan for Gerhardus Liebenberg to open the batting with Gary Kirsten, which would enable the Proteas to play Symcox at the expense of medium pacer Steve Elworthy.

Headingley, traditionally is a seamer-friendly surface, hasn't been a happy hunting ground for England. They have only won two Tests at the ground in the last 10 years, while losing six times in the same period. The last decade has not been a good win for English cricket in terms of winning.

England has failed to win a series over a major Test nation since Mike Gatting's team won the Ashes 2-1 in Australia in 1986-87.

Since that Ashes victory, England have played both Australia and the West Indies in four series and Pakistan and South Africa twice each.

England have not won a five-Test series on home soil since beating Allan Border's Australia 3-1 in 1985.

If Alec Stewart's side can pull off a win at Headingley, it will be the first time an England side has come from behind to win a series since David Gower's side won 2-1 in India in 1984-85.

England have retained an unchanged 12 and they are most likely that left-arm seamer Alan Mullaly will form part of a four-pronged pace attack.

The last time England fielded an all-pace attack, they were trounced by an innings and 148 runs by Australia in 1993.

So, if the home side decides to go ahead with leg-spinner Ian Salisbury, the bowler to miss

out could be Dominic Cork, who has played in the first four Tests.

Mark Ramprakash calmed England's fitness fears, as he came out unscathed after two net sessions.

The right hander, who missed Middlesex's tour match against Sri Lanka, has suffered from tonsillitis since just before the last Test at Trent Bridge.

But he shrugged off his discomfort to top score in England's first innings with an unbeaten 67.

TEAMS

ENGLAND (from): Michael Atherton, Mark Butcher, Nasser Hussain, Alec Stewart (captain), Mark Ramprakash, Graeme Hick, Andrew Flintoff, Dominic Cork, Ian Salisbury, Darren Gough, Angus Fraser, Alan Mullaly.

SOUTH AFRICA (from): Gary Kirsten, Gerhardus Liebenberg, Jacques Kallis, Daryll Cullinan, Hansie Cronje (captain), Jonty Rhodes, Mark Boucher, Shaun Pollock, Allan Donald, Paul Adams, Pat Symcox and Makhaya Ntini.

Umpires: Peter Willey (England) and Javed Akhtar (Pakistan).

TV umpire: Ken Palmer
Match Referee: Ahmed Ibrahim (Zimbabwe).

RECORD BOOK

LONDON, Aug 5: Results of

the last 10 Tests at Headingley, Leeds:

1997: Australia beat England by an innings and 61 runs.
England 172 and 268, Australia 501-9 declared.

1996: England drew with Pakistan.
Pakistan 448 and 242-7 dec, England 501.

1995: West Indies beat England by 9 wickets.
England 199 and 208, West Indies 282 and 129-1.

1994: England drew with South Africa.
England 477-9 dec and 267-5 dec, South Africa 447 and 116-3.

1993: Australia beat England by an innings and 148 runs.
Australia 653-4 dec, England 200 and 305.

1992: England beat Pakistan by 6 wickets.
Pakistan 197 and 221, England 320 and 99-4.

1991: England beat West Indies by 115 runs.
England 198 and 252, West Indies 173 and 162.

1990: No Test at Headingley.
1989: Australia beat England by 210 runs.
Australia 601-7 dec and 230-3 dec, England 430 and 191.

1988: West Indies beat England by 10 wickets.
England 201 and 138, West Indies 275 and 67-0.

1987: Pakistan beat England by an innings and 18 runs.
England 136 and 199, Pakistan 353.

Soccer security at Headingley



LEEDS, England, Aug 5 (AFP/AP): Police intend to use football-style anti-hooligan intelligence methods as they bid to ensure that troublemakers do not wreck the fifth Test between England and South Africa at Headingley.

Trouble has occurred in previous years on the Yorkshire ground's infamous Western Terrace, which houses 6,000 spectators and traditionally attracts the rowdier element of the Headingley crowd.

And after unruly behaviour during the first Test at Edgbaston earlier this year, West Yorkshire police have adopted similar methods to those used by their colleagues at the National Football Intelligence Unit.

They will employ plain-clothed "spotters" with knowledge of known local hooligans and video surveillance equipment, the first time such tactics have been used at a Test match ground in this country.

Inspector David Boyle, the match commander for police operations at Headingley, explained: "There is increasing evidence that people are attending in order to extend their football xenophobia within cricket."

"We have seen this in the wearing of football strips, the football banners in the crowd and the organised chanting which has been seen at cricket."

"(There is) the possibility that people involved in football violence are coming to cricket."

The drive to prevent football-type hooliganism creeping into cricket follows a number of

serious incidents during Headingley Tests.

These have included a pig's head being paraded on the Eastern Terrace during the visit of Pakistan in 1992 while reserve wicketkeeper Tim Zoehrer was punched as he got onto the Australian coach during the 1993 Ashes series.

The measures are to be used in conjunction with an alcohol ban on the terrace while spectators sat in other areas will be limited to one bottle or four cans each.

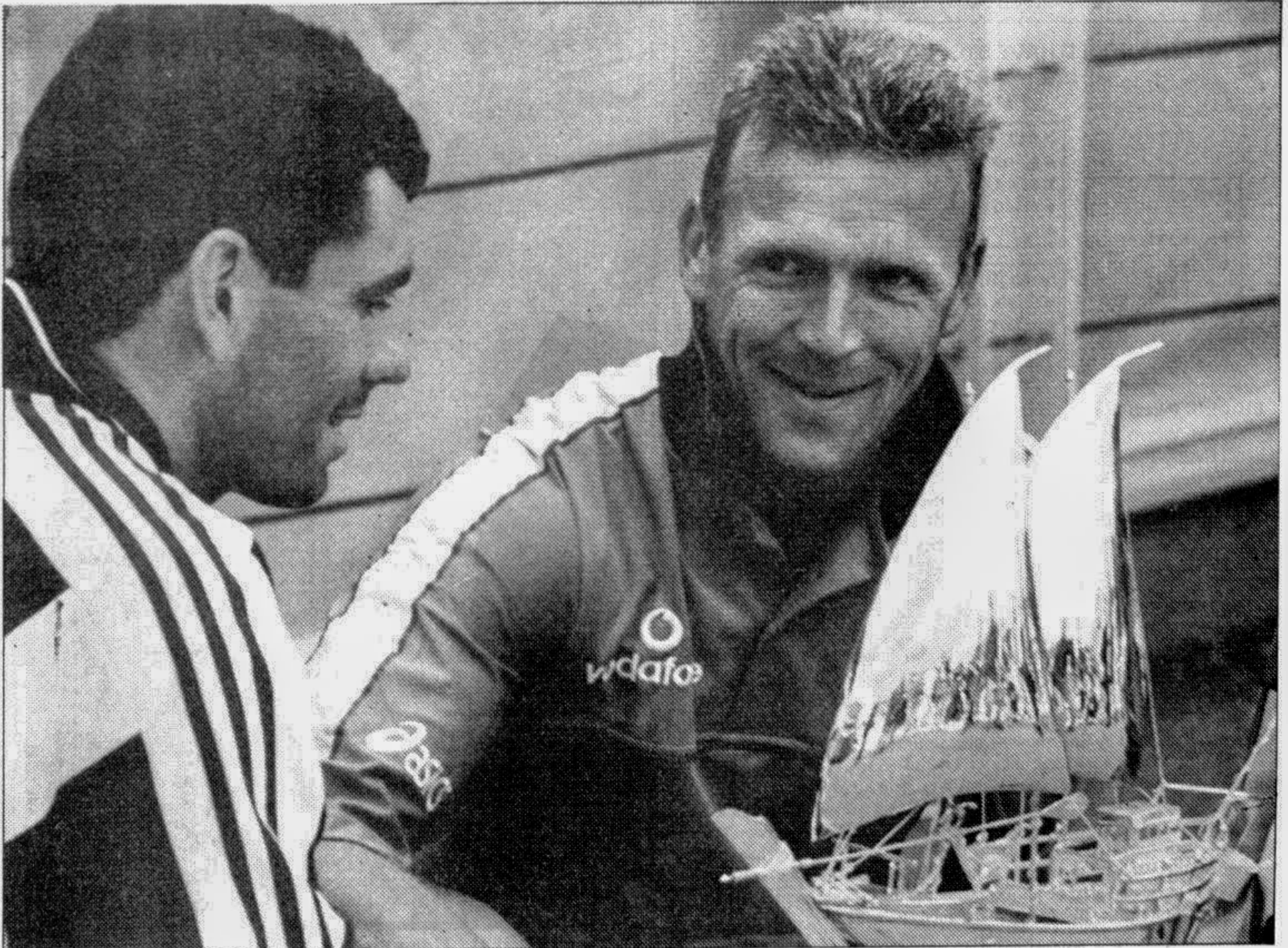
The restrictions on fancy dress, first implemented during the one-day match at Headingley and also adopted at Old Trafford for the third Test, have again been adopted.

Donald fined

LEEDS, England, Aug 5: South African fast bowler Allan Donald was fined 600 pounds and given a one-match ban suspended for a year for his criticism of umpire Mervyn Kitchen's handling of the fourth Test at Trent Bridge today, reports AFP.

Donald was summoned to a meeting with Ahmed Ebrahim, the International Cricket Council's match referee for the fifth Test here at Headingley, and given his punishment after a 15-minute hearing.

Donald claimed Kitchen had made some shocking decisions and was playing with players' careers during the Nottingham Test, which England won by eight wickets to level the series in clear breach of Clause Eight of the ICC's Code of Conduct.



ENEMIES! Captains of South Africa and England, Hansie Cronje (L) and Alec Stewart sit in front of the Emirates Trophy at Headingley on Aug 4. The two teams meet in the final Test at this ground today. — AFP photo