

Sport



A goal mouth action from yesterday's Green Delta First Division Hockey league encounter between Bangladesh Railway and Cantonian Sporting at the Maulana Bhashani Stadium yesterday. —Star photo

Lama to stand in for Barthez

PARIS, Oct 6 (Reuters/Internet): Goalkeeper Bernard Lama will deputise for the injured Fabien Barthez when France play Russia in a European championship group four qualifier in Moscow on Saturday.

MU clears the air

LONDON, Oct 6: English soccer giants Manchester United PLC on Monday moved to reassure fans and shareholders about the impact of a planned billion dollar takeover of the club by Rupert Murdoch-controlled pay TV firm BSkyB PLC.

Sir Roland Smith, chairman of the United PLC board said BSkyB would not interfere in team affairs and transfer policy if the deal goes through.

Smith added that ticket prices for matches at United's Old Trafford home would not be affected by the bid.

United management team of chief executive Martin Edwards, his deputy Peter Kenyon and finance director David Gill would continue to oversee the day-to-day running of the club.

The announcement last month that the United board was recommending acceptance of a bid worth more than 620 million pounds (1.05 billion dollars) from satellite broadcaster BSkyB, 40 per cent owned by Murdoch's News Corp, initially sparked protest from fans' groups in the northern English city.

SIX NO TRUMPS

A K Sayeedul Huq

EAST MADE A GOOD BID (Hand # 113)

Table showing card distribution for North, South, East, and West hands in a Six No Trumps game.

Bidding: North-South were vulnerable.

Table showing the play of cards for South, West, North, and East during the game.

It was a very competitive bidding and West, in a non-vulnerable position raised partner's 4 Hearts to five when North overcalled 4 Spades.

THE PLAY

South led the Ace of Spades and continued with the suit when North encouraged. East ruffed. Then, missing K and J of Hearts he decided to play the Ace for the drop of the King.

Bachelors edge past Bank

Bachelors' Club registered their fifth win in the Green Delta Insurance First Division Hockey League when they defeated Sonali Bank by two goals to one in one of the two return leg clashes played at the Maulana Bhashani Stadium yesterday.

Defender Sabauddin put the old-timers ahead through a field goal in the very sixth minute while Lauf doubled the margin with another field goal after seven minutes.

On the other hand, Tito pulled one back for the bankers at the stroke of the final whistle.

Bachelors, with the win, raised their tally to 16 points from nine matches and joined the bankers at the joint third position being one point behind second-placed Wari Club.

The outcome of the match left leaders Bangladesh Sporting Club (BSC) who are heading the table with 28 points, 11 points ahead of Wari Club. If BSC can win tomorrow against

Victoria Sporting Club, they will confirm the league title with three matches in hand.

Top two teams from the league will be promoted to the prestigious Premier League next year while the bottom side will be demoted to second division.

RAILWAY WIN

Singer rewards excellence

The 17-member Bangladesh youth cricket team, which won the plate in the World Youth Cup earlier this year in South Africa, was felicitated by Singer Bangladesh Limited yesterday at a simple ceremony at the Bangladesh Cricket Board, says a press release.

Each of the 14 cricketers and three officials, were presented with a Singer washing machine as token of appreciation of their excellent performance.

Inter boss on Ronaldo

MILAN, Oct 6 (Reuters/Internet): Ronaldo should not have been asked to play in the World Cup final against France when he was clearly unwell, Inter Milan owner Massimo Moratti said on Tuesday.

"It was very, very serious that Brazil made Ronaldo play in the World Cup Final, given the condition he was in," Moratti told a group of 250 Milan schoolchildren visiting the San Siro stadium.

Ronaldo's presence in the Brazilian side for the July final was in doubt up to the last minute after the player apparently suffered a convulsive fit in his hotel room before the match.

Ronaldo's name did not appear on the original team sheet given to the media at the Stade de France and the circumstances surrounding his eventual inclusion in the side continue to generate more comment than France's 3-0 win in the match itself.

Moratti said he believed the Inter Milan striker's sudden illness before the final had been brought on by stress.

"Ronaldo's problem at the World Cup final was stress because if you are weighed down with huge pressure and expectations there always comes a moment when it all blows up."

That's what happened in France but there's nothing to worry about because Ronaldo is just itching to prove that it's all behind him now.

A recurring knee injury has limited Ronaldo to just three competitive games this season for Inter -- against Piacenza in serie A, against Real Madrid in the European Champions' League and against Cesena in the Italian Cup.

Ronaldo is considered doubtful for Inter's next match, against Lazio on October 18, but Moratti said he was confident the Brazilian would soon be back to his best.

Last year after my first US Open I had trouble adjusting my game to indoor conditions," said Rafer.

Goran Ivanisevic of Croatia in action during a doubles match of the China Open against the Chang brothers--Michael and Carl--at Shanghai on October 5. —AFP photo

England to stay away from Champs' Trophy

LONDON, Oct 6: England pulled out of the 1998 Champions' Trophy hockey tournament in Pakistan on Monday after government advice discouraging non-essential visits to the region, reports AFP.

England international performance director Chris Spice said, "The position we have found ourselves in is extremely frustrating both for the support staff and the players."

The opportunity to compete with the world's leading sides in Lahore would have been extremely beneficial to our programme of continual improvement.

"But no matter how small the risk we have to put our players, support staff and supporters first. In that respect this decision has been simple."

The foreign and Commonwealth office had also advised any visitors to the area to adopt a low profile.

Penev thinks it's time to leave

SOFIA, Oct 6 (Reuters/Internet): Bulgaria's veteran striker Lyuboslav Penev is quitting the national team because he believes it is time to make way for younger players.

Penev, 32, who plays for Spain's Celta Vigo, returned to Sofia on Monday to inform coach Dimitar Dimitrov of his "categorical decision".

"I think that our generation gave all it could to Bulgarian football and now we have gifted players to replace us, such as Georgi Ivanov and Martin Hristov," Penev was quoted as saying at Sofia airport.

Penev, named in the squad to play England this weekend, said his decision had not been provoked by any personal feelings but a conviction that Bulgaria needed a "fresh" national side.

"I think that the new national team should be preparing for the future... We have to make way for the new players who should work towards building up a name and prestige," he added.

Bulgaria were fourth in the 1994 World Cup but performed disastrously in France this year. They face England at Wembley in a European championship qualifier on October 10 and host Sweden four days later.

Midfielder Kostadin Vidolov from Turkey's Bursaspor has also said he will not join the squad's training session at the Black Sea port of Bourgas.

Striker Hristo Stoichkov, who joined Japanese club Kashwa Reysol after being sacked by Barcelona in March, took part in the first training session on Monday.

TOMORROW'S MATCHES

(Moulana Bhasani Stadium) Wari Club v Dhaka Ansars (2 pm) Bangladesh SC v Victoria SC (4 pm)

Italian booters pondering over protest

MILAN, Oct 6: Italian footballers are ready to go on strike in protest at the current drugs controversy, according to players' union boss Sergio Campana on Monday, reports AFP.

Players at Juventus, Parma and Udinese have all faced press allegations of drug use in recent weeks amid a growing scandal over Italy's ramshackle anti doping campaign.

Asked if the Serie A should be stopped by strike action, as it was in March 1996 for just one day Campana said: "In the current climate, stopping the championship for at least six months would be an adequate response."

Sleepy Goran manages to win

SHANGHAI, Oct 6 (Reuters/Internet): Goran Ivanisevic admitted to "almost falling asleep" during his first round win over New Zealander Brett Steven in the Shanghai Open on Tuesday.

The jet-lagged Croatian took the second set tiebreak 10-8 for a 6-4, 7-6 victory.

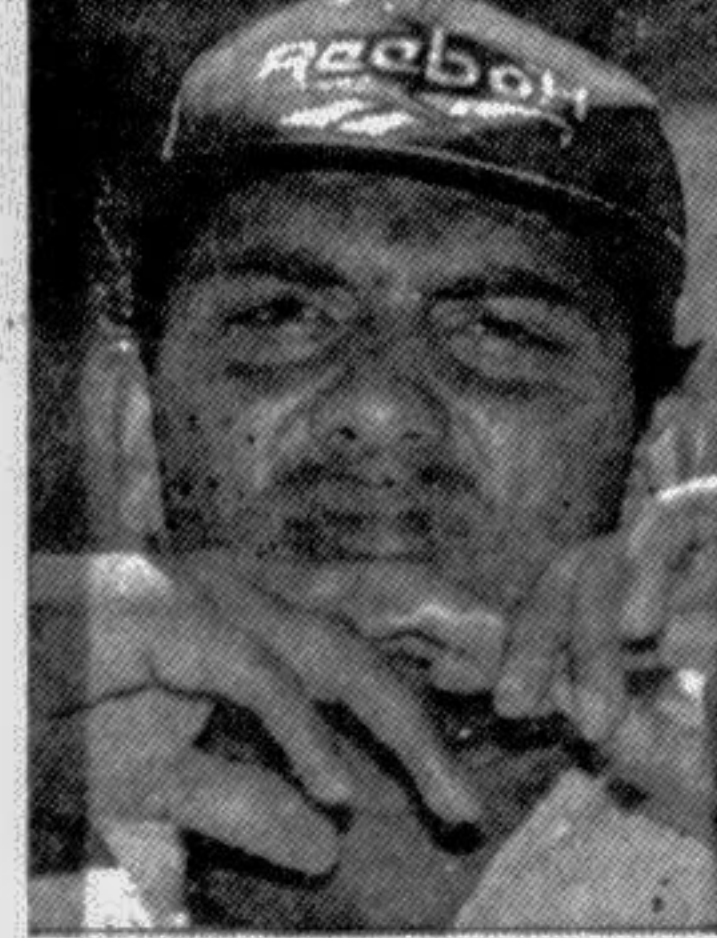
"I was almost falling asleep," said Ivanisevic. "I hadn't slept for three days."

"I don't think I would have won if it had gone to a third set," Ivanisevic faces Justin Gimelstob, a newcomer to the U.S. Davis Cup squad, in the second round.

Fourth seed Mikael Tillstrom of Sweden lost 6-3, 6-3 in the first round to Armenian Sargis Sargsian.

Zimbabwe lying in ambush

HARARE, Oct 6 (Reuters/Internet): Zimbabwe are plotting to ambush India with a green, bouncing pitch in their one-off Test match on Wednesday.



AZHARUDDIN

"Their batsmen just bully our bowlers on flat tracks," wicketkeeper-batsman Andy Flower said, referring to the docile Bulawayo surfaces on which India cruised to eight-wicket victories in the first two of three one-day internationals.

"If we can get a pitch that does a bit it will make things

more even for us and we could find the edge of Sachin Tendulkar's bat."

However, much depends on winning the toss and inserting the touring team on a pitch which last felt a mower blade on Monday and is unlikely to be cut again before the start of the match.

Zimbabwe consider their new-ball attack of Heath Streak and Henry Olonga more dangerous than India's Javagal Srinath and Debasis Mohanty.

Grant Flower is in Zimbabwe's 15-man squad despite breaking a finger in a club match three weeks ago. But coach Dave Houghton said he had only an outside chance of playing on Wednesday.

India, buoyed by their victory in the one-day series, are likely to give wily seamer Ajit Agarkar his first taste of Test cricket after his promising performances in limited overs games.

"He can be quick, there is no doubt about it," said Indian wicketkeeper Nayan Mongia.

India's main dilemma is how to squeeze tour vice-captain Ajay Jadeja into the team. They are likely to go into the match at Harare Sports Club with four bowlers and six batsmen and the dashing limited-over all-rounder could miss out.

SQUAD

Zimbabwe (from): Alistair

Campbell (captain), Gavin Renne, Craig Wishart, Murray Goodwin, Neil Johnson, Andy Flower, Craig Evans, Andrew Whittall, Heath Streak, Paul Strang, Adam Huckle, Mpmumolele Mbangwa, Grant Flower, Henry Olonga, Gary



ALISTAIR CAMPBELL

Brent. India (from): Mohammad Azharuddin (captain), Ajay Jadeja, Sourav Ganguly, Sachin Tendulkar, Navjot Sidhu, Rahul Dravid, Nayan Mongia, Rahul Sanghvi, Anil Kumble, Harbhajan Singh, Javagal Srinath, Debasis Mohanty, Ajit Agarkar, Robin Singh.

MacGill heralds the arrival of new spin force

By Mark Ray

"Yeah, it just keeps popping up in my head that we haven't won here for 40 years," he said. "I haven't really been thinking about the fact that I've got wickets, just the fact that I'm in the team and we've won after so long. I'm really excited. And yeah, it's fantastic."

Warne seemed almost as pleased. "There's no mixed emotions for me - that's fantastic, the first time they've won for 39 years," he told AAP.

"Obviously it's disappointing not being there, not being part of it, but good luck to them."

MacGill received a congratulatory fax from Warne after his first-innings performance. Warne reminded him it was important to follow that with another good effort in the second innings.

Although MacGill said he did not think he had established himself in the Test team with this performance, there was no doubt he had at least proved he could perform well at Test level and, more widely, that Australia did not have just one Test leg-spinner.

"No, I just sort of look to go game-to-game and do well enough to get picked in the next one," MacGill said. "I guess I'm going to play three Tests now."

MacGill denied he played under the broad shadow of Warne's huge talent.

"No, I think he's opened a door for me," he said. "There's no doubt that unless he'd done so well Australia might not even have looked for another leg-spinner to replace him when he got injured."

"But because he had so much success, if there was another leg-spinner around they were going to give him a go. Fortunately, that was me."

Referring to the fax from Warne, MacGill smiled and said: "He's guiding me. He's the puppeteer."

On the recent tour of India, Warne was unsettled by the idea of bowling with another leg-spinner, yet MacGill's success here now means the chances of that occurring again this summer in the Ashes series, as it did in MacGill's debut match against South Africa last season, have suddenly jumped.

Even the names O'Reilly and Grimmer, the great leg-spin pairing of the pre-war years, did nothing to erase that smile from MacGill's face.

"Well, I've thought about bowling with Warne a whole lot," he said because "I've always thought that if he's bowling like he can and I bowl as well as I can."

"I'd just be fantastic. I think any batsman finds a wrist-spinner difficult when he's on song and if there are two of us going, maybe I'd get the wickets."

"Grimmer and O'Reilly were one of Australia's most successful bowling combinations and Warne and I are different bowlers with different lines of attack. Hopefully, we can have a successful pairing in the future."

Warne no longer seems so unsettled by the idea. "Stuart MacGill in his second Test did a fantastic job," he said.

"The more leggies the better, the more wickets the better for our leggies' fraternity."

Courtesy: Sydney Morning Herald

RAWALPINDI, Oct 6: Stuart MacGill describes himself as a very excitable character. He could hardly have done otherwise as he stood on Monday morning, in creams and baggy green cap, outside the Australian dressing-room half an hour after one of the most significant Test wins in 39 years. That flashing smile could not be contained.

In only his second Test, and this one as a replacement for the injured Shane Warne, MacGill took nine wickets, including 5-66 in Pakistan's first innings.

He did so against a team from a nation renowned for producing great spinners, as well as batsmen who learn how to counter the wiles of spin bowlers from the time they can lift and swing a lump of wood.

In this game, MacGill not only out-bowled Pakistan's leggie, Mushtaq Ahmed, but also tested their senior batsmen. Perhaps this will serve as a reminder that

Australia's long tradition of leg-spin will survive well into the next century. MacGill was delighted to be a part of history.

STUART MACGILL

Praises down under

SYDNEY, Oct 6 (AP): Australia face another Ashes cricket series against old enemy England this year.

but for now they have achieved something much more than that contest can hope to deliver. "Hallelujah! At last, an unconditionally professional Australian cricket team," wrote Mike Coward in The Australian newspaper after Monday's first Test victory in Pakistan for 39 years.

Australia's last success came under Richie Benaud when he claimed the 1959-60 series 2-1. There have been five subsequent tours until this one, with Pakistan winning six matches, Australia none and six drawn.

Captain Mark Taylor, who made several selection gambles before the match, was widely praised for the innings and 99-run victory which put his team 1-0 up in the three-match series.

"Australia has achieved some outstanding results under the inspired leadership of Taylor in recent years but none has been more memorable or satisfying than this," wrote Coward.

The victory was a sign that Australian players had matured and improved their attitude to make success on the sub-continent possible.

"There is clear evidence that the paranoia which has beset Australian teams to the region has been expunged — the rate,

riot and rot mentality is finally something of the past," Coward wrote.

Australia's press agreed the win means the country stands atop the world cricket ladder.

For the first time in four decades Australia can stand proudly and claim with substance that they can beat anyone anywhere," wrote Malcolm Conn in The Australian.

"For all the misty-eyed fuss made about a string of Ashes triumphs, they have been against soft English sides in relatively soft conditions."

"Australia won without their No. 1 bowler Shane Warne, who is sidelined with a shoulder injury and is trying to regain fitness in time to play England in the coming five-Test series."

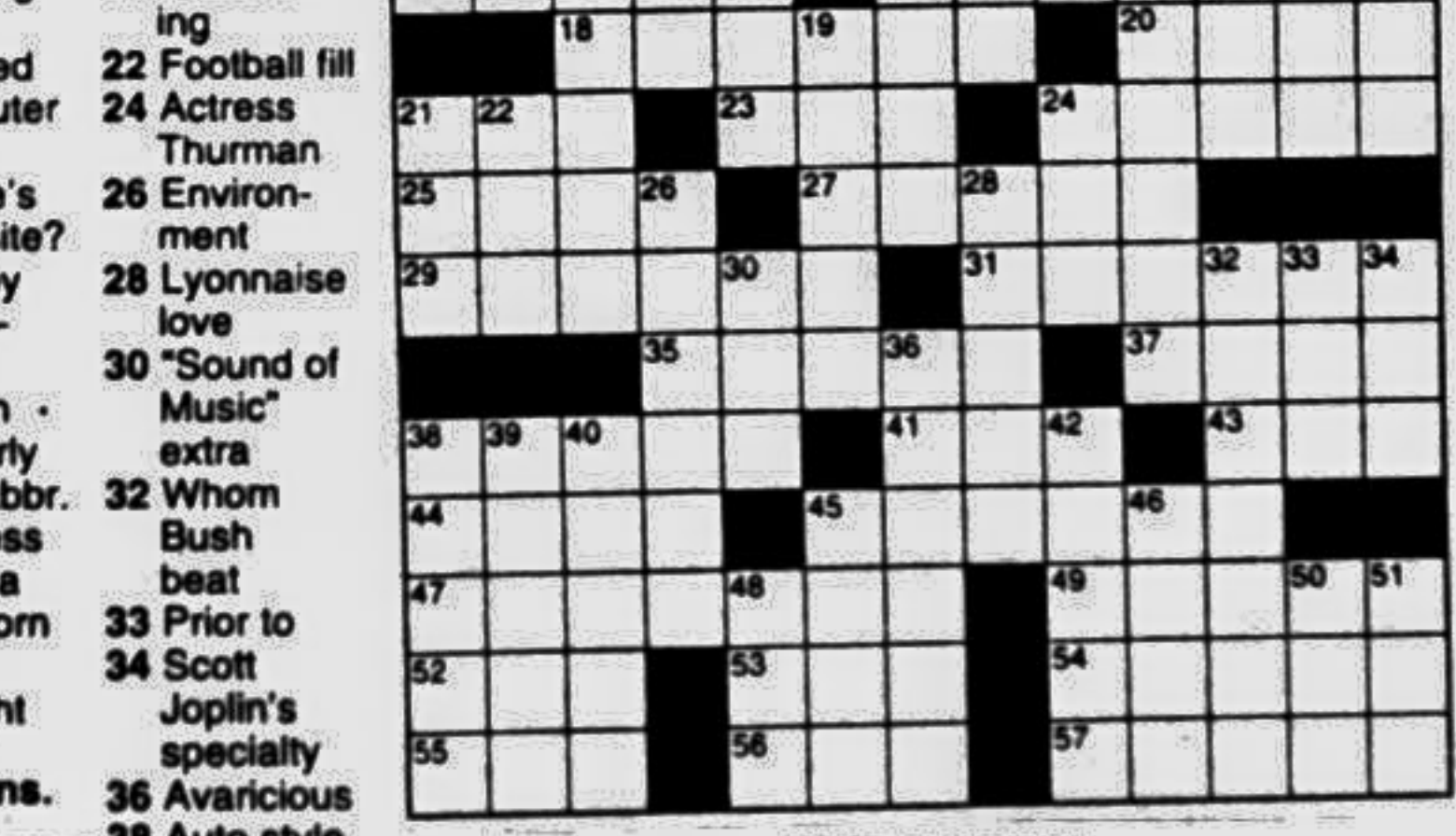
"There's no mixed emotions for me — that's fantastic, the first time they've won for 39 years," Warne said. "Obviously it's disappointing not being there, not being part of it, but good luck to them."

While Australia's victory was so convincing there were also words of warning from The Age newspaper's cricket writer Greg Baum.

"Still, and Taylor will know this, they must beware, for Pakistan remain the most contrary team in cricket, never more likely to win when all is seemingly lost," he wrote. The next two Tests will be played at Peshawar and Karachi.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS 45 Actress Wright 17 Elbow 21 Vacationing man 22 Football fill 24 Actress Thurman 26 Environment 28 Lyonnaise love 30 "Sound of Music" extra 32 Whom Bush beat 33 Prior to 34 Scott Joplin's specialty 36 Avaricious 38 Auto style 39 Develop 40 Lama land 42 Irish playwright ingredient 45 Salad 46 Missile shelter 48 Proof abbr 50 4 Down's mate 51 Roulette bet



CRYSTAL BALL GLOBE... THE ANSWER: GLOBE

CRYPTOQUIP E S X B V W F B W H I D S H B X F E X J Z I A B A D V Q R J W E L B E Z H I L S E W E L R S A B L Q X. Yesterday's Cryptquip: YOU CAN BE SURE THAT THE GROUCHY MISER AMASSED NOTHING BUT SOURDOUGH. Today's Cryptquip clue: A equals B. The Cryptquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.