

Usha storm into semifinal

Usha KC moved into the semifinal of the Cotton Group Shahid Smriti hockey tournament yesterday, reports APB. Dhaka Club Cup champions Usha defeated Bangladesh Air Force 3-0 after leading the first session 1-0 at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium. Centre-half Khurshid and strikers Sadek and Kamal scored one goal each for the winners. Khurshid put Usha ahead in the sixth minute from a penalty corner while Sadek doubled the margin in the 55th minute from a nice field goal. Sadek, after receiving a through pass from Kamal, entered the box dribbling past two defenders and sounded the board with a powerful hit. Five minutes later, Sadek set up the third goal for Kamal who easily beat the helpless Air Force goalie with a reverse hit after receiving the pass from the left.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Army beat Azad SC 3-2 in the day's first encounter to keep their hopes alive for a semifinal berth. Sanjit Das scored twice and Rahazuddin struck the other for Army who recorded the win coming from behind. Shishu and Moksed scored one each to put Azad in the lead twice but they failed to cash in on it. Army collected three points from two outings.

Div I cricket

Leaders Jatrabari KC suffered their first defeat to Bangladesh Boys Club by two runs while Wanderers Club beat Eskaton SS by seven runs in the First Division cricket league at different city venues yesterday, reports APB.

Jatrabari managed 212 runs in 49.5 overs chasing a total of 214 of Bangladesh Boys at the City Club ground. Opener Titu topscored 36 followed by tailender Liton who made 32, Himel 24, Saymon 13 while Anjad and Babu were the other scorers with 13 and 11 runs respectively. A total of 53 runs came from extras.

Spinner Apollo took 4 wickets for 36 runs in 8 overs while Sayeed and Jony claimed one wicket each for the Boys.

Earlier, Sawon made 56 and Mazed contributed 49 runs that enabled Boys to post 214 for 8 wickets after electing to bat first.

Sumon made 23, tailender Sayeed remained not out at 16 while Rana was the other double-digit scorer with 13 runs. Twenty-four runs came as extras.

Bipul of Jatrabari captured four wickets for 42 while Liton took 2 wickets.

At the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium, Wanderers defended their modest total of 165 by bowling out Eskaton SS at 158 runs.

For Wanderers, tailender Tapu scored highest 22, Pakistani opener Jafar, middle order Nehal and Mashed scored 21 runs each, Aniruddha made 14, Javed 12, Badsha 11. Extras contributed 19 runs.

Sajid was the most successful Eskaton bowler having three wickets for 22 while Milton, Shafiqul and Shawkat took two wickets each.

Tota made not out 34 and Turkey was the other notable contributor for Eskaton. Jafar took five wickets for 21 and Mahfuzur took two wickets for Wanderers.

WI not on Bishop's mind

TRINIDAD, Feb 19 (The Trinidad Express/Internet): It's not something that I'm focussed on.

Ian Bishop, Trinidad and Tobago cricket captain, says he is focussed on leading T&T and nothing else.

"People say it," Bishop added. "But I haven't sat down and thought about it. My only aim right now is to captain Trinidad and Tobago and to do the best for Trinidad and Tobago. Whatever happens after that, I'm not thinking too far ahead."

Bishop was saying his bit yesterday on the simmering debate over the future of Brian Lara's captaincy of the West Indies team prompted by the recent 5-0 whitewash by South Africa.

On Sunday, respected Barbadian commentator Tony Cozier added his piece in his Sunday Sun column, saying in part that, "Lara has neglected his own immense talent for so long that it has lost its edge, so that he could not give the lead where he was best equipped to do so, with his bat and was unable to unite his players behind him, a prime requirement in restoring the spirit needed against the Australians."

For the T&T captain, however, it is the chemistry of his unit and their fitness for this weekend's clash with defending champions Guyana that is of immediate concern.

The team is very focussed on that, so our main objective is to play this weekend and hopefully win," Bishop said.

But there are a few fitness concerns. While the recently injured Lara will practise with the squad, Daren Ganga, Suruj Ragoonath and Marlon Black are nursing niggling injuries.

Opener Ragoonath, who missed the first two matches of the season because of a finger injury, now has a slight groin strain. Ganga is suffering from a stiff back while fast bowler Black is feeling pain in one of his knees.

For this reason the squad of 14 will train together until Friday before it is trimmed to 13 for Saturday's crucial match.



An Usha Krira Chakra attempt at the Bangladesh Airforce goal during the Cotton Group Shahid Smriti hockey tournament match at the Moulana Bhasani Stadium yesterday. — Star photo

Who's to rule Rome, Totti or Edmundo?



ROME, Feb 19 (Reuters/Internet): Roma's Francesco Totti has only recently inherited the title of "Villain King of Rome", so the rise and fall of Edmundo, his opponent when Roma meet Fiorentina on Sunday, offers a reminder that no player has a Divine Right to rule.

Historically, the Eternal City only had seven monarchs but Roma fans still crown their own soccer kings: Totti is the latest in Roma's Royal soccer lineage, from Amedeo Amadei to the great Brazilian Paolo Falcao.

The 23-year-old has earned the right to rule the sacred turf of the Olympic stadium with his divine talent and loyalty to his subjects in the Curva Sud — the same south bank terraces, where he used to stand as a young Roma fan.

When Edmundo let his talented feet do the talking in the early part of the season, he too ruled the hearts and minds of Fiorentina's fans, as his goals and assists took the Florentine side to the top of Serie A.

Then, the temperamental Brazilian broke the advice of Florence's most famous son, Machiavelli, to ruling monarchs. "One who becomes King with the support of the common people must keep them as his friends," he wrote.

Two weeks ago, Edmundo abandoned his subjects in their hour of need, taking a flight to the Rio carnival on the same day his Argentine team-mate Gabriel Batistuta sustained an injury that will keep him out until April.

As Fiorentina were losing the league lead with a 1-0 defeat at Udinese last Sunday, televi-

sion showed Edmundo winning the Rio carnival's annual football volley competition on the smooth sands of the Copacabana.

Described by veteran journalist Giorgio Tosatti as "the single most selfish act I have seen in 40 years", Edmundo's gesture has broken the spell which his number 10 jersey had cast over Florence.

When he returned to Italian's cultural capital on Thursday, the player after whom Florentine restaurants had named a pizza found a placard posted outside his luxury apartment: "Enough! Silence and start winning!" it read.

It will take more than silence to heal Edmundo's divides with his team-mates: Edmundo is at odds with Batistuta, who enjoys the status of a demi-God in Florence with his own statue at the Artemio Franchi stadium.

In the Brazilian's last match, the captain yelled at the bench to take the Brazilian off. Others have not forgotten the player's comments as he left for Brazil two weeks ago. "No-one's asked me to stay and, if they had, I would have left just the same," Edmundo told Gazzetta dello Sport.

"(Fiorentina manager Giovanni) Trapattoni would do well to send me home. That way, I'm in the sun, on the beach, in the heat."

Totti was given a first-hand view of Edmundo's petulance earlier this season when the Florentine striker reacted angrily to substitution during Fiorentina's 2-1 defeat at the Olympic stadium.

From the days his mother used to drive her promising young son to Roma's Trigoria

training centre in a rusty Fiat 500, Totti has never let success go to his head.

"Being a footballer is a privilege," said Totti recently.

As a teenager, Totti tended to put other players on a pedestal — such as former Italy international Giuseppe Giannini, the so-called "Prince of Rome", whose poster adorned his bedroom.

Then, an inspired performance for Roma in the Italian Youth Cup final — a hat-trick at the San Siro — transformed his dreams into reality.

At the age of 16, on 4 September 1996, Roma's then manager Vujadin Boskov blooded the young talent at Sampdoria and, suddenly, Totti was rooming with the Prince of Rome.

Under current coach Zdenek Zeman, Totti has added passing skills to his natural technique and eye for goal.

Last October, he won his first full international cap against Switzerland with Dino Zoff suggesting that he could become Italy's Zinedine Zidane — a key playmaker positioned between midfield and two strikers.

By January of last year, Totti had already played 100 times for his club, and, when Zeman handed him the captain's armband, fans made him Giannini's natural heir.

"The Roma shirt has become a second skin for Francesco," said youth team trainer and another Villain King of Rome, Bruno Conti.

At the end of the season, Edmundo will officially leave Fiorentina for his native kingdom of Vasco Da Gama in Brazil; Totti already looks a wiser king and his reign is set to last longer.

Chelsea aim to end lean Forest spell



LONDON, Feb 19 (Reuters/Internet): Chelsea visit lowly Nottingham Forest on Saturday anxious to make up ground on English premier league leaders Manchester United.

The clash looks very one-sided in theory as Chelsea sit just four points off the top with a game in hand and Forest are four points adrift of Southampton at the bottom.

But Nottingham Forest has not proved a happy hunting ground for the London side who have won only one of eight league visits, back in 1994.

Chelsea's chase for the title is not being helped by their worsening disciplinary record.

Gianluca Vialli marred his anniversary as Chelsea player-manager when he was sent off against Blackburn Rovers in midweek.

He now faces a three-match ban, leaving Gianfranco Zola as the only established striker because Tore Andre Flo and Pierluigi Casiraghi are out injured.

"Now the season gets really tough," Vialloia admitted. "We have so many players out... it does not help at all."

Manchester United travel to 17th-placed Coventry who are

still licking their wounds after a 4-1 midweek thumping by Newcastle United.

United have won five of their six premier league visits to Highfield Road and the Andy Cole-Dwight Yorke golden partnership suggests more misery is in store.

The United strikers continue to prosper. Cole's goal against Arsenal on Wednesday brought their combined total for the season to 40.

United manager Alex Ferguson is confident his side can hold off all challengers.

"We are stronger than we were at this stage last year," he said. "We have more quality in depth in our squad which not only provides cover for injuries but introduces competition for places which keeps everyone on their toes."

Champions Arsenal host Leicester City, with the visitors on a high after securing a League Cup final spot on Wednesday.

They are unlikely to take much away from Highbury, though — it has been 26 years since Leicester have won a league game there.

Fourth-placed Aston Villa, faltering on a run of three consecutive defeats, must wait until Sunday for their visit to Wimbledon.

Leeds United, fifth, welcome Everton who have not won at Elland Road since 1951.

They have tried in vain 32 times since and with Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink back on scoring form, it looks like the sequence will increase.



A scene from the Italian Cup clash between Fiorentina and Bologna in Bologna on February 18. — AFP photo

GM chess on Disappointing day for locals

Bangladeshi International Master Abdullah Al Rakib outplayed Nilotpal Das of India, in the inaugural match of the fourth United Insurance Grand Masters Chess tournament at the NSC chess room yesterday, reports UNB.

On the other hand, Grand Master Niaz Mursheed lost his board against GM Yuri Sulman of Belarus.

In the day's other matches, GM Nigel Short of UK overpowered IM Ziaur Rahman, GM Alexander Wojtowicz of Poland eliminated IM Rezaul Bin Sattar and Fide Master Enamul Hossain Rajib suffered defeat to IM Avijit Kunte of India.

The second round matches will be held today at the same venue.

England A win series

HARARE, Feb 19: Captain Mike Vaughan and pace bowler Paul Franks combined as England A defeated Zimbabwe A in the second limited over international here Thursday to take a winning 2-0 lead in the three match series, reports AFP.

Nottinghamshire fast bowler Franks took four Zimbabwe wickets for 34 as the home side slumped to an uninspired 154 all out.

Newcomer Raymond Price was top scorer with 35 but no other Zimbabwe batsman made it to 20.

Because of a rain shower England A were set a reduced target of 151 in 47 overs at only a little more than three runs an over.

It was a simple task in the end although England A were 33 for three on one point after losing Mal Loye, Daren Maddy and Andrew Flintoff.

Vaughan steadied the innings to score 43 not out and steer England A to victory with a boundary that took them to 154 for six with 7.5 overs to spare.

He was supported by Vikram Solanki who had scored 70 to make the main contribution to the England A victory in Bulawayo on Tuesday. Solanki hit a sound 29 before he was clear bowled.

England A also won the unofficial Test series 1-0 with match one drawn.

Scores: Zimbabwe A 154 (R Price 35, P Franks 4-34) England A 154-6.

England won by four wickets.

ICC disagrees with Graveney

LONDON, Feb 19: England chairman of selectors David Graveney on Thursday led the call for the International Cricket Council (ICC) to introduce drug testing, reports AFP.

But the sport's world governing body has no plans to introduce testing in time for the World Cup this summer.

Michele Verokken, director of UK Sports Council Anti Doping Programme, has warned ICC chiefs they are being naive if they think the sport does not have a drug problem.

Graveney speaking in his role as chief executive of the Professional Cricketers' Association, told BBC Radio Five, "There are other sports where you have World Championships and where all the competitors are tested to ensure that fair play exists."

Sponsors are not exactly queuing up to pump money into cricket domestically or internationally so it's crucial the image is as you would want it to be."

Verokken believes international cricket will not fully comprehend the extent of drugs in sport unless the ICC bring in standard testing worldwide.

Independent national bodies such as the England and Wales Cricket Board and the Australian Cricket Board operate their own schemes.

But Verokken warned the ICC it is unfair for any sport to be naive in saying we don't have a drugs problem. You don't know you have a problem until you actually try and assess whether the problems exist."

Carlos volleys Valencia to victory

MADRID, Feb 19: A stunning volley from Carlos Mendieta earned Valencia a 3-2 victory over Barcelona in an enthralling Spanish Cup quarter final first leg at the Nou Camp on Thursday, reports Reuters.

After a goalless first-half, the tie exploded into life three minutes into the second half, with four goals in 11 minutes.

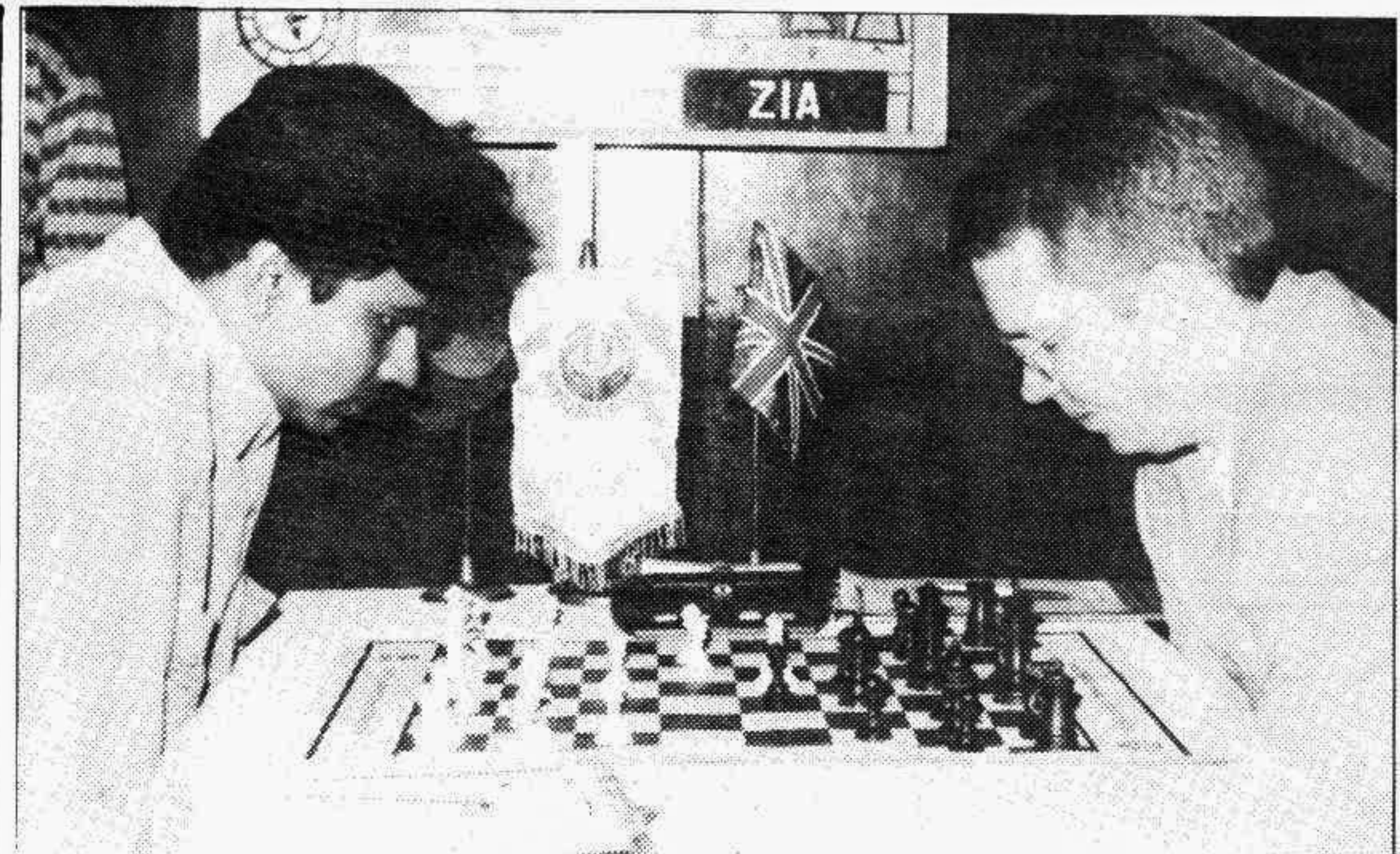
Despite a host of chances for either side the score remained level at 2-2 until Mendieta struck emphatically with 10 minutes to go, volleying in from fully 20 metres direct from an outswinging corner from the left.

Valencia, despite losing defender Juanfran Garcia to a second yellow card a minute later, failed on what was an important advantage into their home leg next week.

Dutch striker Patrick Kluyvert opened the floodgates after 47 minutes, turning in at the near post after Sergi Barjuan had whipped the ball in.

Two goals in five minutes from Argentine international Claudio Lopez both long-range strikes that wrong-footed Barca keeper Ruud Hesp — then put the visitors in command.

But Louis van Gaal's side came back immediately. Brazilian striker Rivaldo chipping in direct from a free kick after he himself had been brought down.



British Grand Master Nigel Short (R) ponders his next move against International Master Ziaur Rahman of Bangladesh during their United Insurance GM chess tournament first round engagement at the NSC yesterday. — Star photo

A look around Europe



PARIS, Feb 19: Celta Vigo, hoping to maintain form in what has been a hugely-successful season, host runaway Spanish League leaders Barcelona in a match Sunday that could have a crucial bearing on the championship race, reports AFP.

Defending champions Barca, boosted by a brilliant 3-0 win over arch-rivals Real Madrid last month, will be aiming to end third-placed Celta's unbeaten home record this season as they seek to maintain their own remarkable recent form.

The Catalans' cause, however, will not have been helped by the fact they had to play Valencia in a Spanish Cup match on Thursday night.

Real Madrid, who bounced back from their humiliation against Barca with a 6-2 Cup triumph over racing Santander on Wednesday night, are at home to Athletic Bilbao on Saturday.

Bilbao struggled to a 1-1 draw with lowly Extremadura last week.

Real Sociedad host Atletico Madrid in a game that has been ruled high-risk by security forces.

The alert follows the stabbing death of a Real Sociedad supporter by an Atletico Madrid fan when the clubs met in December.

Second-placed Mallorca, five points behind Barcelona, travel to play seventh-placed Real Oviedo.

GERMANY

The Bundesliga coaches have little doubt about who will win the league which resumes this weekend after a winter break.

Bayern Munich are unbeatable favourites to take the title with 15 of the 18 coaches tipping them to succeed.

Only Werner Lorant, from rivals 1860 Munich, bucked the trend and selected his own side, while Hansa Rostock's Ewald Lienen and Wolfsburg's Wolfgang Wolf both declined to give their tips.

Bayern have an eight-point lead on nearest rivals Bayer Leverkusen and have undisputed

edly the strongest squad in the competition.

"Having played very good football at times during the first half of the season it would be a big disappointment if we didn't win the title," said Bayern coach Ottmar Hitzfeld.

The trip to MSV Duisburg on Saturday will make a welcome change for Bayern's internationals after they received a pasting in the press following Germany's 3-0 loss against the United States.

"We play a different tactical system at Bayern," midfielder Stefan Effenberg said. "I don't know why, but somehow it seems to work."

Behind Bayern are a cluster of teams — led by Leverkusen, Kaiserslautern and 1860 Munich — all of whom are looking to snag places in the European Champions' League.

Leverkusen host Freiburg on Saturday with Kaiserslautern away to Borussia Moenchengladbach on Sunday. 1860 Munich are at home to Eintracht Frankfurt on Saturday.

FRANCE

The last 32 of the French Cup sees several non-league teams aiming to extend their moment of glory, but the main focus will be on two all-First Division matches on Saturday night.

League champions Lens are at home to second-placed Marseille, while Paris St Germain will be seeking to rescue their season with a cup run as they host Nantes.

The big-spending Parisians have slumped to the bottom half of the French League and have no chance of qualifying for Europe next season via that route.

The news for PSG was grim this week, with star Nigerian midfielder Jay Jay Okocha still ruled out of action with a stomach muscle injury.

PSG will also be without defender Gregory Paisley, who has undergone a knee operation and skipper Francis Lacer, who is suffering from a perforated lung.

Lens will welcome back ace striker Tony Vairelles, who had a stomach muscle injury, and Barcelona-bound midfielder

Frederic Dehu but will be without suspended duo Valerien Ismael and Stephane Dalmat for the visit of Marseille.

The clubs will be hoping to avoid controversy this time around.

When they met in the League Cup in January, Marseille midfielder Eric Roy had a penalty ruled out by the referee and Lens went through 6-5 in a shootout.

Video replays later showed that Roy's shot had crossed the line after hitting the underside of the crossbar.

Marseille, who went down 1-0 at struggling Toulouse in the League last Sunday, need a good result to lift their confidence after a series of below-par performances.

Among the potential giant-killers are Second Division Wasquehal, who host Metz on Friday night, Le Mans, who are at home to Rennes, and amateurs Saint-Georges-Les-Ancizes, who play struggling Sochaux at Clermont-Ferrand.

ITALY

Championship rivals Lazio and Inter Milan clash in Rome on Sunday, while Fiorentina are at home to AS Roma.

Juventus, who host Vicenza, may have chalked up a rare victory last weekend. But French star Zinedine Zidane claimed on Thursday that the ailing champion's troubles aren't over yet.

Juventus struggled to an important 2-0 away win over Piacenza in their first match under new coach Carlo Ancelotti following the shock resignation of Marcello Lippi.

The champions have plummeted from top slot to mid-table since November, and the Turin faithful hope that Juventus are now back to top form.

Zidane, however, tonned down the optimism, saying: "At Piacenza we got the defence sorted out. We didn't concede any goals — like we had been doing all the time until then."

"But there's still a lot more to do: The attack has to create more scoring chances and convert them. Once we've strung together three or four consecutive results, then we can talk about a revival."



Barcelona's Luis Figo loses his balance while challenging Amadeo Carboni of Valencia (white jersey) during their Spanish Cup first round fixture at Nou Camp in Barcelona on February 18. Valencia won 3-2. — AFP photo

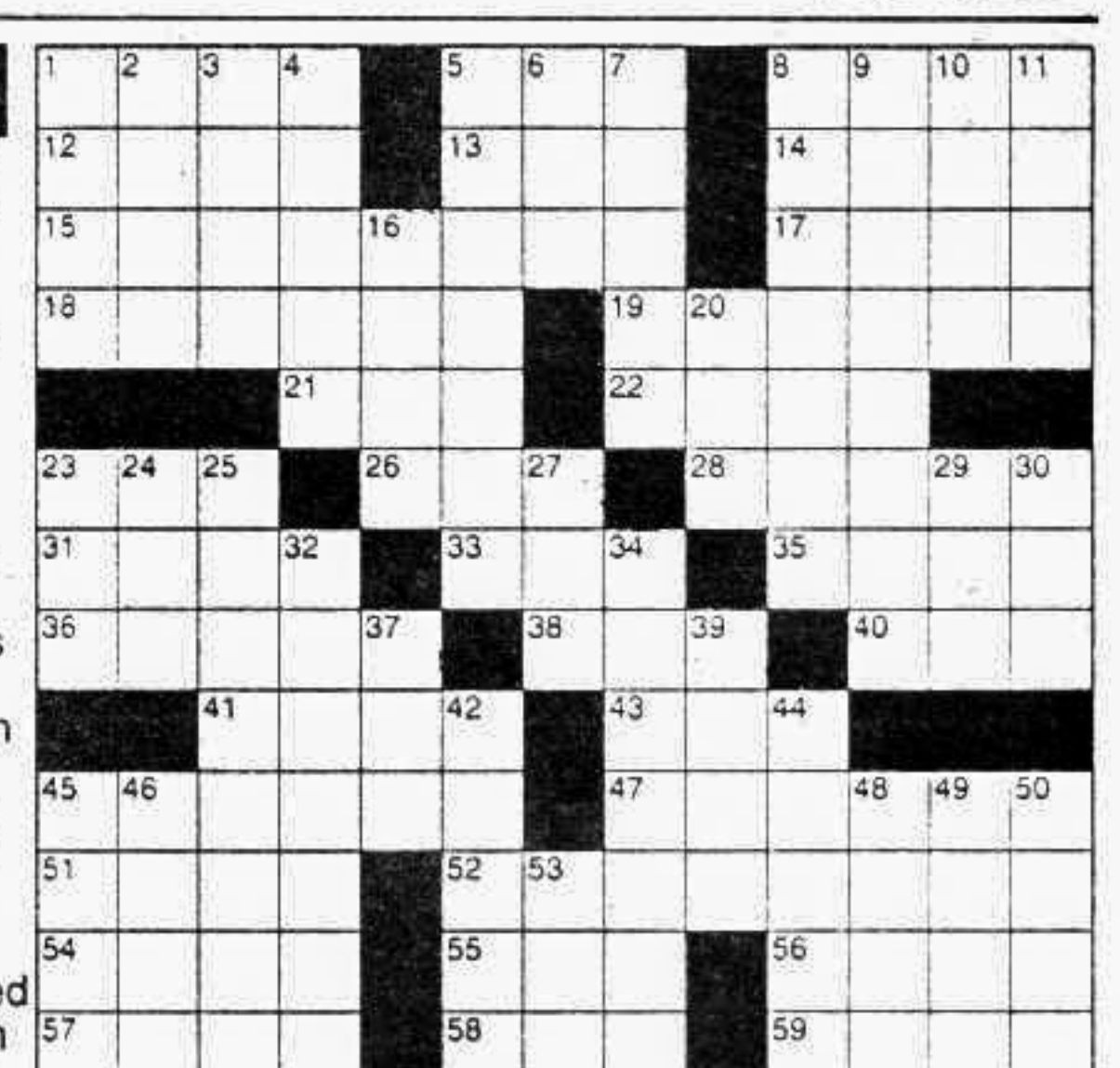
CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS**
- 1 Improvised sphere?
 - 5 Shape-shifter?
 - 8 Jack and Jill's vessel
 - 12 Sacred
 - 13 Pillage
 - 14 Ticklish one?
 - 15 Pimiento berry
 - 17 Good derivative
 - 18 Burgeoning
 - 19 Purpose of some forks
 - 21 Natalie's dad
 - 22 Media bias
 - 23 Keglers
 - 26 Diamond sport abbr.
 - 28 Chars
 - 31 Art medium
 - 33 Corn serving
 - 35 Cheong-sam feature
 - 36 Northern
- DOWN**
- 1 Counterfeit
 - 2 Soft-drink flavor
 - 3 Role for Calista
 - 4 Holyfield foe
 - 5 React with irritation
 - 6 Erstwhile Fox sitcom
 - 7 Helps hoods
 - 8 Large, showy flowers
 - 9 Generally
 - 10 Somalian super-model
 - 11 Louisiana politico
 - 16 Stroller
 - 20 Peak
 - 23 Roast-pig side dish
 - 24 Enormous
 - 25 Fine
 - 27 Prohibition
 - 29 Brazilian resort city
 - 30 Pigs' digs
 - 32 Evening affairs
 - 34 Entertained
 - 37 Kyoto sash
 - 39 Refuse to
 - 42 Hired hands?
 - 44 "Nonsense!"
 - 45 Did something fishy?
 - 46 Gaps
 - 48 "The Way We..."
 - 49 Cupid's counterpart
 - 50 Hit Broadway musical
 - 53 Peggy or Pinky

Solution time: 21 mins.

R	I	M	A	T	I	N	P	A	W	N
A	D	A	M	E	C	O	A	L	O	E
F	L	Y	P	A	P	E	R	E	R	
T	E	A	B	E	D	H	E	X	I	E
B	E	E	F	A	R					
M	A	H	A	L	T	U	M	A	B	I
E	P	T	I	C						
D	E	S	K	T	O	P	A	C	T	O
S	O	V	E	L	K					
S	H	A	P	E	A	X	A	M	A	P
N	O	V	A		S	P	A	C	E	
O	P	E	C		A	I	M	E	X	I
W	E	R	E		A	I	M	E	X	I

Yesterday's answer



CRYPTOQUIP

C K T T J V C V P V G O R V V
L A V N V M S G O M W O N N
O S R N O I V N A S K H O P V
L V F G V N W O H R J K M L

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: ARE YOU IMPLYING THAT THE GROUCHY ORGAN GRINDER HAD A CHIMP ON HIS SHOULDER?

Today's Cryptoquip clue: M equals C

The Cryptoquip 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.