

## Seedorf heads for Newcastle?

LONDON, May 2: Dutch international midfielder Clarence Seedorf is set to join English Premiership club Newcastle after a bust-up with Real Madrid coach John Toshack, reports AFP.

The 23-year-old midfielder said Sunday that he has agreed to link-up with fellow Dutchman Ruud Gullit, who is the coach at St James' Park.

"I felt a lack of respect in Madrid for me," Seedorf said. "I need respect and I'll work hard for a man who will give that to me."

"I think Gullit will certainly give it. He and I developed a good relationship on a trip to South Africa last year. I have a lot of respect for him," he told the News of the World tabloid.

Gullit has been busy in recent weeks as he continues his rebuilding work.

Seedorf would cost around 5 million pounds while other likely targets include 3.5 million pound-rated Paris St Germain defender Alain Goma, Lazio's Croatian striker Alen Boksic, Blackburn goalkeeper Tim Flowers and Real Mallorca defender Elena Marcelina.

Newcastle are also confident they can fight off interest from other clubs to seal the signing of experienced Dynamo Kiev defender Oleg Luzhny.

## Thorpe's timely ton

LONDON, May 2: Graham Thorpe, sent home from England's tour of Australia with back trouble, proved his fitness in the run-up to the World Cup with a match-winning century for Surrey against Northamptonshire yesterday, reports Reuters.

"I have been confident of my fitness for a while but I felt I needed a big innings to prove to myself that I was back in the mood for international cricket," Thorpe said after hitting 138 not out in an eight-wicket win at Northampton's County Ground.

"I could not have had a better boost to my belief that England will win the World Cup."

Thorpe, 52 not out overnight, resumed his partnership with Ian Ward with the total on 112 for one as Surrey set off in search of the 301 they needed for victory.

Ward was out for 63 with the score at 177 but Thorpe and Alastair Brown (66 not out) added the 124 needed.

"My only concern was that under the cloud the pitch might green up and aid the pace bowlers but the pitch played well throughout," Thorpe said.

He faced 211 balls and hit 20 sixes and 20 fours in his 31st first-class hundred.

Leicestershire, champions twice in the last three years, forced their second win of the season at home to Lancashire when their Australian pace bowler Michael Kasprowicz took the wickets of Andrew Flintoff, top scorer Nathan Wood (82) and former captain Michael Watkinson.

Wood, son of former England test opener Barry Wood, batted 4-1/2 hours and hit 12 boundaries before he was sixth out at 176. Flintoff was bowled by a ball which kept low, Leicestershire won by 107 runs.

Opening batsman Steve James hit 153 off 215 balls as Glamorgan made 341 for six to beat Sussex by four wickets. His 32nd first-class century included 24 boundaries and came off 215 balls.

Middlesex beat Gloucestershire by two wickets with only five overs left to bowl. Promising batsman Owais Shah, who had taken three second innings wickets, led the run race by 60.

Somerset have dominated Yorkshire for three days but still require five runs on the fourth day after losing two wickets at 20 chasing 25 for victory in their second innings.

## Raul ruled out

MADRID, May 2: Real Madrid striker Raul as today forced to withdraw from the Spanish team to face Croatia in a friendly international in Seville on Wednesday night, reports AFP.

Raul suffered a pulled muscle in his right ankle in a Spanish league match against Espanyol on Saturday and will be out of action for two weeks.

## M'singh cricket

MYMENSINGH, May 2: County Nabin Club earned a dramatic one-run win against Mohammedan Sporting Club in the final of the Circuit House ground today, reports UNB.

Battling first, County were all out for 100 runs with Rubel making 21. Munna picked up four wickets for 20 and Zakir three for 12 runs.

In reply, Mohammedan were dismissed for 99 with Munna contributing 29 runs. Sadi claimed the wickets for 12 runs while Babul and Raju took two wickets each for 12 and 17 runs respectively.

Meanwhile, Siraj Memorial Club earned a 5-0 victory over Al Helal Club in the First Division hockey league at the local stadium.

## Halard-Decugis coasts

ZAGREB, May 2: Top-seeded Julie Halard-Decugis of France cruised into the final of the Bol Ladies Open Saturday, overcoming compatriot Sarah Pitkowski 6-3, 6-4, reports AFP.

In the other semifinal, American Corina Morariu secured her third consecutive final with a convincing performance against Spain's Conchita Martinez Granados, 6-2, 6-0.

# Sir Alf passes away



LONDON, May 2: Hundreds of thousands of football fans paid tribute to the late England manager Sir Alf Ramsey on Saturday by holding a minute's silence before the kick-off of every Premiership and Football League match, reports AFP.

The tributes to Sir Alf, who steered England to World Cup success in 1966, came as it was learned that the Football Association (FA) will discuss installing a permanent memorial to him at the new National Stadium.

Sir Alf died on Wednesday after a long illness. He was 79. During the World Cup finals in France last year he suffered a stroke and on Friday his former secretary at Ipswich, the club where he made his name as a manager, confirmed he had died.

Pat Godbold, who worked for Sir Alf for eight years, said he passed away at a nursing home near his home in Ipswich.

"I am still very shocked, though I had known he had been in hospital and a nursing home since he had a stroke last June," Godbold said.

Members of Sir Alf's 1966 side, including Sir Bobby Charlton and Alan Ball, have led the calls for England's greatest manager to be recognised for all time when Wembley is renovated.

The most likely possibility is a statue, although instead there could be a room named in his honour at the new stadium.

FA spokesman Steve Double said: "We will be discussing in the coming week or so what can be done to provide a fitting

memorial for him."

Ball believes the new Wembley would be the perfect venue to commemorate a manager he felt was never given the proper recognition for his unparalleled achievements.

The former England international said: "I was so disappointed that he was allowed to fade away. There is no way that he should be forgotten, and it would be a fitting tribute if they did something at the stadium."

Players who played under



SIR ALF RAMSEY

him described Sir Alf as a quiet, determined and brilliant manager.

George Cohen, England's right-back in 1966, said: "I am shocked and saddened. It is a very sad day for British sport."

ribly sad.

Although we knew he was ill it is always going to be a shock when it comes around."

Alan Mullery, a midfielder in the 1970 World Cup campaign, said: "He was the best manager England have ever had."

"He was such a nice man and I don't think we will see another like him. When he said something he said it quietly but you listened — otherwise you didn't play in the next game."

"Once when England were playing Brazil in the great Maracana stadium, I was meant to be marking Pele."

"Alf saw me looking nervous and said to me 'if you were not good enough to play against this fella you would be back home watching it on the telly'. It helped me, and I went out and played one of the best games I have ever played."

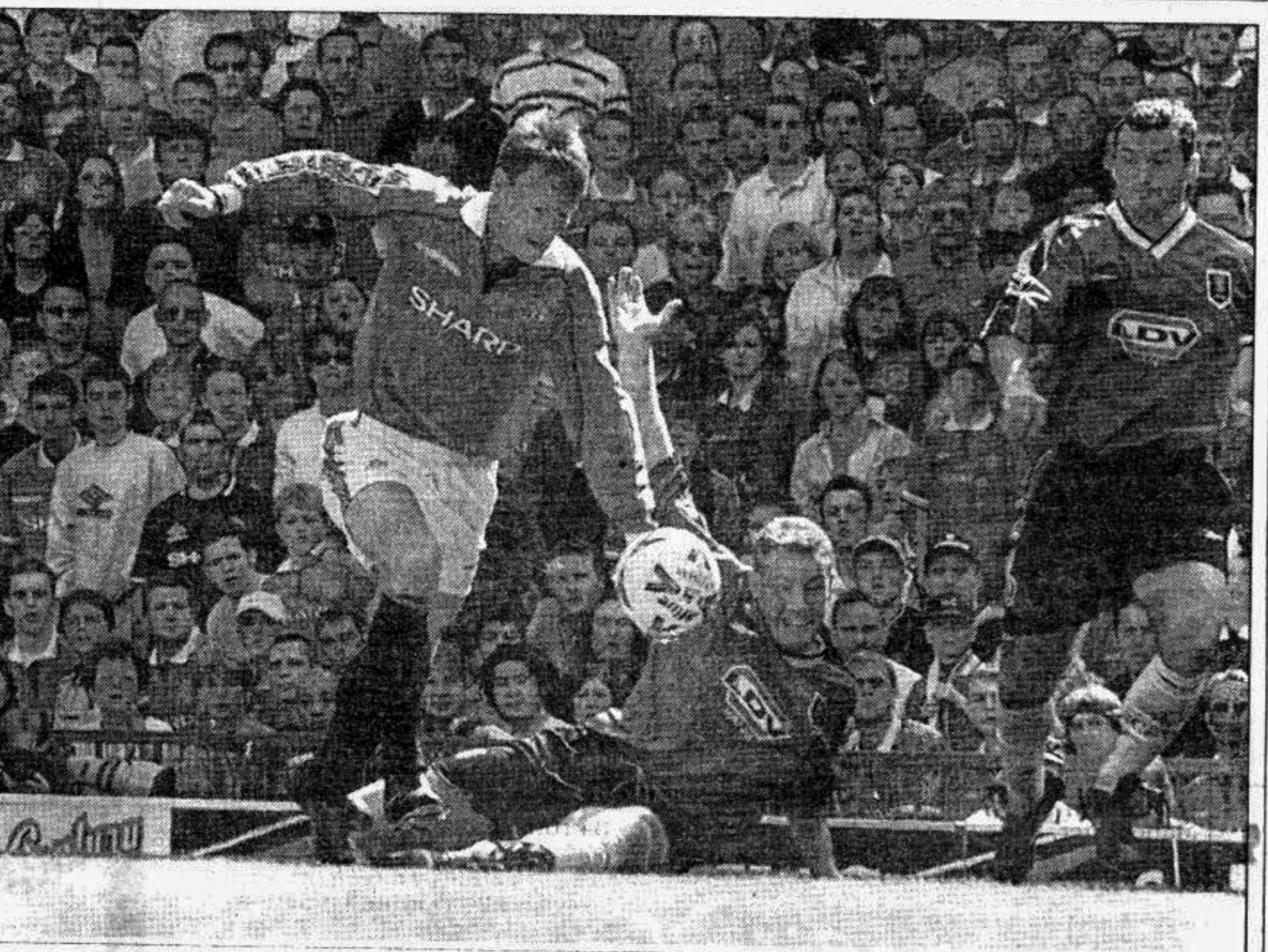
Sir Alf also won 32 England caps as a full-back, playing alongside Sir Stanley Matthews, who said: "He will be missed — we played together for England and he was a man who followed the game really well."

Politicians joined the tributes.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair said in a statement: "Sir Alf Ramsey gave England the greatest moment in its sporting history."

"Anyone who takes an interest in football will be saddened by the news and will never forget him or the wonderful moments he brought in 1966."

Opposition leader William Hague added: "Alf Ramsey was one of the biggest names in sporting history. He was quite simply a legend and this is a very sad day for British sport."



Manchester United's England international Teddy Sheringham (L) evades the tackle of a Everton booter during a English Premiership Fixture at Old Trafford on May 1. — AFP photo

## MU struggle past Villa



LONDON, May 2: Manchester United kept up their assault on the treble when they beat Aston Villa 2-1 at Old Trafford yesterday to move back to the top of the English Premier League, reports Reuters.

The top of the table when an own goal from Steve Watson after 20 minutes and a blistering free-kick from David Beckham a minute into the second half secured the points.

United could even afford a Denis Irwin penalty miss as they moved on to 71 points from 34 matches, two more points than Arsenal who have also played 34 matches.

Defending champions Arsenal, though, have the chance of going top again when they play Derby County at Highbury today.

United manager Alex Ferguson conceded it was not a vintage performance by his team, who are chasing a treble of league, FA Cup and European Cup victories this month.

"We started well and had a very good half-hour until they scored," he said. "And although we had a great second half, we were a bit edgy. It was a nervous finish. But all credit to Aston Villa. They have returned to form and made us work very hard for the points."

United took the lead when the ball came off Watson's chest and bounced across his own goal line after 20 minutes but Julian Joachim equalised for Villa 13 minutes later with a well-taken close-range goal.

United then won the game with Beckham's brilliantly-struck 25-metre free-kick a

minute into the second half. He curled the ball away from goalkeeper Michael Oakes, who never got close to saving it.

"He hit it so well," Ferguson said. "He has that fabulous talent to do that."

Chelsea kept themselves in the title race by moving on to 68 points from 35 matches with a 3-1 home win over Everton, with two goals from Gianfranco Zola and one from Dan Petrescu.

Player-coach Gialluca Vialli has dismissed his team's chances of the title but Chelsea are only three points behind United, although they have played one match more.

Leeds United, the only other team who still retain a mathematical chance of winning the title, won 5-1 at West Ham who finished with only eight men after striker Ian Wright, goalkeeper Shaka Hislop and midfielder Steve Lomas were all sent off.

Leeds took the lead through Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink after only 19 seconds with Alan Smith, Ian Harte (penalty), Lee Bowyer and Alf-Inge Haaland adding the others. They have now qualified for next season's UEFA Cup.

"It was a bizarre match," said Leeds manager David O'Leary. "One of the most bizarre I have been involved in. But it is a great tribute to my team that we have qualified for Europe next season. Although we did not play particularly well today, we scored the goals that mattered."

Wright was sent off after 14 minutes when a wiff off-the-ball challenge on Harry Kewell earned him a second yellow card, seven minutes after he

had been booked for elbowing Haaland.

Hislop was sent off after bringing down Hasselbaink and conceding a penalty. His replacement Craig Forrest could not stop Harte's shot which put Leeds 3-1 up. Paolo Di Canio having earlier pulled one back for the home side.

Playing against nine men, Leeds scored two more through Bowyer and Haaland before Lomas was sent off in the closing minutes.

Liverpool made a tremendous comeback in their home game against Tottenham Hotspur.

After being down 0-2 in the first half, Liverpool scored three after the breather. Real Madrid bound Steve McManaman netting the winner.

The relegation battle between Charlton Athletic and Blackburn Rovers ended 0-0 at The Valley, while Southampton, also battling against the drop, beat Leicester 2-1 at The Dell.

Those results meant that Southampton moved out of the relegation zone on 35 points with two matches to play. They have two more points than Blackburn, who have three matches to play, and Charlton, who — like Southampton — have two matches remaining.

Already relegated Nottingham Forest beat Sheffield Wednesday 2-0.

One minute's silence was held around the country before yesterday's matches kicked off as a mark of respect following the death of Sir Alf Ramsey, who coached England to victory in the 1966 World Cup final.

## Stylish win for Real



Madrid took back second place in the Spanish Primera Liga yesterday as they recovered from a dispiriting seven days to beat Espanyol 2-0, reports Reuters.

Fernando Morientes scored both goals in the first half as John Toshack's inconsistent side, held to a dismal 1-1 draw at Salamanca last weekend and further unsettled by a string of stories of player unrest, rediscovered a little peace.

Victory takes them within seven points of leaders Barcelona, who are in action today at home to Deportivo Coruna.

Valencia also reasserted

their claims to a Champion's League place as a hat-trick from Claudio Lopez helped them to a 5-0 win over Alaves and third place in the table, a point back from Madrid.

Lopez, the Argentine striker tipped for a move to Italy next year, took his tally for the season to 17, while Gaizka Mendizola weighed in with two.

Both Real and Valencia will slip back down the standings, though, if any of three sides that came into the latest round of matches in second place — Deportivo, Mallorca and Celta Vigo — can manage victory in their Sunday games.

Real's win against Espanyol looked likely from the start as the visitors turned in a nervous

display. Raul Gonzalez had strong claims for a penalty turned down inside the first two minutes before a Fernando Hierro header forced a smart save from Toni Jimenez.

And a wonderful pass from Hierro led to the first goal in the 10th minute. The stylish defender picked out Morientes with a long through ball which the young striker controlled on his knee before flicking past Jimenez.

Clearance Seedorf, left out of the starting line-up after a public row with Toshack, then came on for the injured Raul and almost immediately set up Real's second.

## Bosnich in limbo

BIRMINGHAM, England, May 2: Australia goalkeeper Mark Bosnich looks to have played his last game for Aston Villa after being dramatically axed from the squad that played Manchester United, the side reported to be ready to bid for him in the summer, reports AFP.

Villa manager John Gregory even refused to let Bosnich, who can leave Villa on a free transfer under the Bosman ruling, this summer travel on the team coach which left on Friday for the Old Trafford clash.

Gregory is seething at Bosnich's refusal to follow the example of Liverpool's Steve McManaman — who is bound for Real Madrid — in making up his mind over where his future lies before the end of the season.

With only a fortnight left of the current campaign, the Villa chief is in limbo over his plans for next season.

He does not know whether he has to move into the transfer market for another goalkeeper.

But his patience finally snapped and he axed Bosnich and played former England under 21 keeper Michael Oakes against Alex Ferguson's side.

Bosnich was missing from last Saturday's win over Nottingham Forest with a foot injury.

Gregory said: "I only want to pick players who are totally committed to Aston Villa."

## Grosjean, Koubek in final

ATLANTA, May 2: Fifth-seeded Frenchman Sebastien Grosjean and Austrian qualifier Stefan Koubek each earned a chance to play for his first ATP Tour title with semifinal victories at the AT&T Challenge on Saturday, reports Reuters.

Grosjean, who reached his first career final earlier this year at the Lipton Championships on a hard court, defeated former world number one Jim Courier 7-6, 6-3 on Atlanta clay.

Koubek continued his unlikely run, rallying for a 5-7, 6-4, 6-1 upset of eighth-seeded Swede Magnus Larsson.

Grosjean, ranked a career-high 40th this week, had an answer for everything Courier came up with while keeping his own errors to a minimum.

The former world junior champion committed just three unforced errors in the second set and 12 in the match.

Courier, unable to transfer his Davis Cup intensity to the regular tour, came undone in the tiebreaker with sloppy misses on an overhead and swinging volley.

"I'm very pleased with how I played, the best match of the week for me," Grosjean said. "Maybe he was upset after the tiebreaker."

Courier was impressed with the 20-year-old rising star. "He counter-punches very well, and that's what he did tonight," Courier said. "He got everything I threw at him, and there are not many players who are able to do that."

The 94th-ranked Koubek, lowest-ranked player and the first qualifier to reach the final in this event, thoroughly dominated the Swede in the latter stages of their match.

Koubek surrendered just nine points over the final eight games of the match with the Swede, who was playing just his third tournament since coming back from a wrist injury that sidelined him for six months.

"I figured out that he has trouble with lefties and doesn't like it that someone can put pressure on his backhand," said Koubek, sporting orange and white hair in a ponytail.

## Hrbaty, Dosedel to face-off

PRAGUE, Czech Republic, May 2: Fifth-seeded Dominik Hrbaty of Slovakia beat Czech qualifier Michal Tabara 6-1, 7-5 Saturday, to reach the final of the 475,000 dollars Czech Open, reports AFP.

Hrbaty will play for the title Sunday against Slava Dosedel who overpowered German Puentes of Spain in straight sets 7-5, 6-2.

## Rajshahi cricket

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAH, May 2: Upashahar Sporting Club and Willow Krira Chakra won their respective super league matches of Rajshahi First Division cricket league today.

In the first match at Rajshahi Stadium, Upashahar beat Mahabagan Club by 34 runs.

Battling first, Upashahar scored 190 for eight wickets in 40 overs.

Mushique Babu made a glorious 69 followed by 24 of Nayan, 19 of Tito and 17 of Saeed.

Swapn, Arshad and Imran captured two wickets each.

In reply, Mahabagan made 156 for all in 35.1 overs.

Shahnewaj scored the highest 34 followed by 23 of Imran and 21 of Zitu.

Nayan captured three wickets and Zafu, Mushique Babu and Saeed two wickets each.

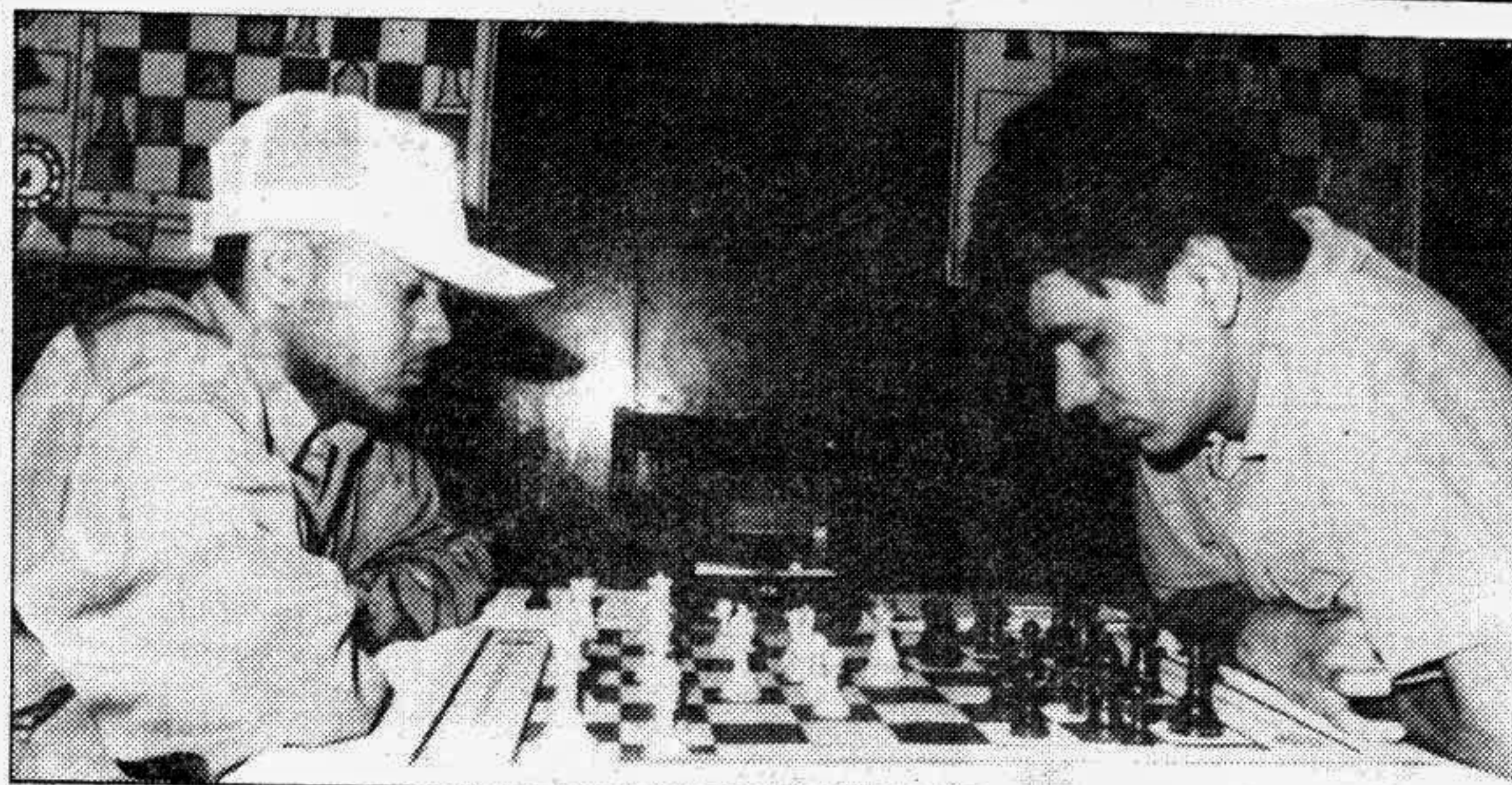
In the other match at Rajshahi Divisional Stadium, Willow Krira Chakra defeated Bright Star Club by 22 runs.

Battling first, Willow made 103 for all in 26.3 overs. Mitu scored the highest 32 followed by 21 of Najmul.

In reply, Bright Star Club went all out scoring 81 runs in 27.0 overs.

Murad and Deepu made the highest 15 runs each followed by 10 of Liton and Titas. Milton, Ili and Ripon captured two wickets each.

Meanwhile, in the First Division basketball league matches held at Rajshahi Gymnasium today, Metropolitan Club beat Five Star Club by 36-30 points and Tarun Sangha beat Cosmos Sportime Club 54-15.



Scene from yesterday's tenth round engagement of the national chess championship at NSC. — Star photo

## National Championship

## Zia keeps cool under fire

Sports Reporter



International Master (IM) Ziaur Rahman of Biman maintained his solo lead in the 25th National Chess Championship with a win over Narayanang's Feroz Ahmed in the 11th round played at the NSC conference room yesterday.

Playing with black pieces, Zia, the defending champion, who adopted Sicilian defence, checkmated his unheralded counterpart after a marathon 55 moves.

With yesterday's win, Zia, remained atop the 16-player meet, having raised his tally to nine points, half a point more than IM Reefat-bin-Sattar, who has 8.5 points after defeating Ali Amjad of Ansars in the 11th round.

Reefat also played with black pieces and adopted Sicilian defence to win the board after 38 moves.

National junior champion Enamul Hossain of Titas Club, who has 7.5 points from ten matches, was playing his 11th round tie with Rezaul Haque when last news came in last night. If Enamul can manage a win against Rezaul, he is also set to join Reefat in the second spot.

Last year's runner-up IM Abdullah-Al-Rakib won his 11th round tie against Mohammad Javed. Playing with black pieces, Rakib followed Korocan defence against Javed and clinched the board after 27 moves.

In the day's other matches, BUET's Taibur Rahman defeated Khorsheed Alam, while Jamilur Rahman earned a walk-over against Monir Hossain.

Two matches—Ansars' Sheikh Nasir Ahmed against Titas Club's Saifuddin Ahmed, and Ansars' Shawkat Hossain

against Sonali Bank's Khandker Aminul Islam—were going on till our filing of this report last night.

The 12th round will start today at 3 pm at the same venue.

**Points table:** 9 points—Zia, 8.5 points—Reefat, 7.5 points—Enamul (10 matches), 7 points—Taibur, 6.5 points—Rakib, 6 points—Rezaul (10 matches), 5.5 points—Jamilur, 5 points—Nasir, Shawkat and Saifuddin (10 matches), 4.5 points—Ali Amjad and Javed, 4 points—Feroz, 3 points—Aminul (10 matches), 2.5 points—Khorsheed and 1.5 points—Monir.

## Round 12 fixture

Zia vs Rakib  
Enamul vs Javed  
Shawkat vs Rezaul  
Monir vs Aminul  
Nasir vs Jamilur  
Reefat vs Saifuddin  
Taibur vs Ali Amjad  
Feroz vs Khorsheed

## Barbados police chief takes legal action against Steve



SYDNEY, Mar 2 (AFP/Internet): Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) said today the Australian cricket team received diplomatic assistance to leave Barbados after captain Steve Waugh was sued by the local police chief.

Waugh on Friday was handed a defamation writ filed by the Barbados' police commissioner following comments he made in the wake of an incident in last Sunday's crowd-troubled one-day international against the West Indies in Bridgetown.

Police commissioner Grantley Watson is suing Waugh over his comments following spectator unrest during the game, including bottles being hurled onto the field, one just missing Waugh's head.

The Australians, who were due to arrive in London Sunday

for this month's World Cup tournament, were accompanied to Bridgetown Airport by Australia's High Commissioner to Barbados Paul Smith, a department spokesman said.

DFAT said Sunday Smith was with the team to ensure they had no problems leaving due to the legal action pending against Waugh.

Smith had been in close contact with the team since the lawsuit was filed, providing advice

on legal representatives available, the spokeswoman said. "Nonetheless we hope the case can be resolved amicably and that the good cricket relations between Australia and Barbados continue," she said.

Australian team manager Steve Bernard said in Bridgetown that a lawyer provided by the high commissioner would review the case before deciding whether to contest the complaint against Waugh.

Watson filed a writ in the Supreme Court claiming damages from Waugh for remarks he allegedly made following bottle-throwing by fans who interrupted the seventh and final one-day international of the

Australian tour. Spectators threw bottles and other projectiles on to the field after West Indian opening batsman, Barbadian Sherwin Campbell, was given a controversial run out.

Play was interrupted for 45 minutes before the Australians agreed to Campbell's reinstatement and continued a match the West Indies eventually won by eight wickets to square the series.

Waugh was quoted afterwards as saying the players had no guarantees for their safety if the game was called off.

The police said it would be a much worse situation if we didn't go back out to play, so we had no choice in the matter," Australian Associated Press reported him as saying.

The Advertiser newspaper said yesterday that Watson had alleged Waugh's remarks were damaging and degrading.



STEVE WAUGH

## Bayern too good for M'gladbach

BONN, May 2: Striker Alexander Zickler scored twice in two minutes as treble-chasing Bayern Munich beat bottom club Borussia Moenchengladbach 4-2 yesterday to stretch their lead in the German Bundesliga to 10 points, reports Reuters.

Both teams had a player sent off in a tense match in Munich's Olympic stadium between two clubs who fought classic battles for supremacy in the 1970