

Biman Cup final today

Joypurhat and Chittagong will clash for the title of the Biman Cup under-14 national football tournament in the final today, reports APB.

The match will be played at the Joypurhat Stadium at 4.00 pm.

Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism, Engineer Mosharraf Hossain will witness the final and distribute prizes.

M'singh hockey

MYMENSINGH, May 7: Rupantar Sangha and Avonis AC won their respective matches in the Mymensingh First Division hockey league at the local stadium today, reports UNB.

Rupantar Club earned a massive 8-0 victory over Siraj Boys Club while Avonis AC managed a 1-0 win over Probhati Sena Club in the afternoon.

Moni and Biddut scored three each and Shakil netted two for the Rupantar Sangha in the day's first match while Mosabber scored the match winning goal for Avonis AC in the other match.

Inter chief resigns

MILAN, May 7: Inter Milan were rocked by a fresh crisis on Thursday night when president and owner Massimo Moratti announced he was quitting the Serie A club although he maintained he would remain as owner, reports AFP.

Moratti's resignation as president took immediate effect, the club said in a statement, and he was followed by several other board members quitting as well -- a new president will be elected at a shareholders meeting.

The 54-year-old, a multimillionaire whose fortune is based on oil refineries, bought the club in February 1995. 27 years after his father Angelo had stepped down as president -- but he had been bitterly disappointed with his team's performances and results in recent weeks.

However, he revealed that the main reason behind his decision to resign was over the scathing criticism he had received for reappointing Roy Hodgson as coach, the club's fourth this season, less than two weeks ago.

"I am leaving because I am bitter and because there have been things that have upset me," he said.

Asked if he had decided to go because of the Italian press criticising him over bringing back Hodgson he said "Yes, it's for that very reason."

Real retaliate

MADRID, May 7: Real Madrid hit back in the war of words between coach John Toshack and Croatian striker Davor Suker here on Thursday when they suspended the player without pay, reports AFP.

The club took the action after the 31-year-old, who won the Golden Boot award for finishing leading scorer in the World Cup finals last year, accused Toshack of wrecking the image of the seven-time European Cup winners.

"We have taken these steps because his conduct reflects badly on the image of the club, he has committed a grave offence," a club spokesman said.

Toshack, who is a stickler for discipline that has earned him the nickname of the "Iron fist," had also been accused by Suker of trying to make him sign for either Portuguese outfit Porto or Turkish side Fenerbahce and in return he would play in the remaining six league matches.

But the 31-year-old Croat would prefer a move to England.

"Toshack is a difficult coach and he loves to be the protagonist. He is doing his best to ruin the image of the club," Suker said.

The 50-year-old Welshman, who coached Real Madrid to the 1990 title when they scored a league record 107 goals but was sacked in November 1990, has barely used Suker since he took over at the club earlier in the year.

Their relationship had worsened in recent weeks with Toshack, who started the season as coach of Turkey's Besiktas, accusing the striker of missing training.

Crazy!

RIO DE JANEIRO, May 7: The president of struggling Brazilian club Itaperuna wants to play for his team on Sunday when they face a Flamengo side spearheaded by Romario, reports Reuters.

Rogerio Riquetti, a 36-year-old businessman who has never appeared in top level football, said he wanted to go on as a central defender and Marti Romario, top scorer in the Carioca (Rio de Janeiro state) championship with 12 goals.

"I'm well prepared, I train every day," said Riquetti, who openly admits that he has taken on the club presidency to make a name for himself and help his political career. He intends to run for mayor of Itaperuna in the next local elections.

"I won't tremble, I've always been a sportsman," he said.

The team's top player Carlos Andre, who answers the club telephone in his spare time, said Riquetti was simply trying to promote the game.

Itaperuna, who are so short of money that players had to travel to games by public bus last year, have only one point to show from 11 games and have conceded 34 goals.

The modest provincial team last made headlines two years ago when the then coach Paulo Mata ran on to the pitch during a game and dropped his trousers in protest at a refereeing decision.



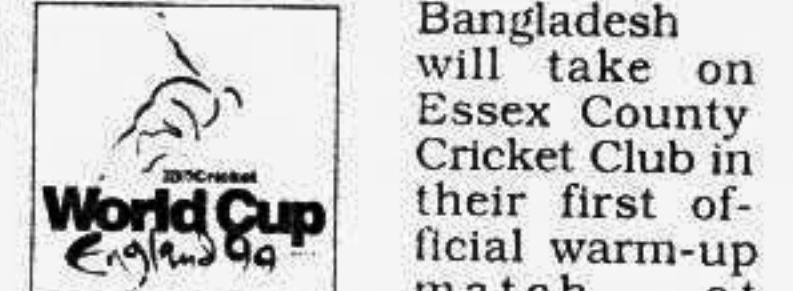
A super-soaker releasing water from the rain-soaked pitch at Hove yesterday where South Africa were playing Sussex in a rain interrupted warm-up match.

—AFP photo

Match against Essex at Chelmsford

Bangladesh's first test today

Sports Reporter



Bangladesh will take on Essex County Cricket Club in their first official warm-up match at Chelmsford on May 10.

The other group comprises of hosts England, holders Sri Lanka, South Africa, former World champions India, Zimbabwe and ICC runners-up Kenya.

Although the official tour of the 15-member Bangladesh team, led by Aminul Islam, started from May 3, the team along with the management reached London on April 14 to get accustomed with the chilly English weather.

During their stay in England

before their official tour began, Bangladesh had intense training under coach Gordon Greenidge and his two assistant coaches for bowling -- Mushtaq Mohammad of Pakistan and former England fast bowler Alan Ward. They also played three 'unofficial' practice matches against three minor local teams and won all three quite comprehensively.

The squad: Aminul Islam (captain), Mehrab Hossain, Shahriar Hossain, Faruque Ahmed, Md. Minanul Abedin, Akram Khan, Khaled Mahmud, Khaled Mashud, Hasibul Hossain, Shafuddin Ahmed, Enamul Hoque, Manjurul Islam, Neeyamur Rashid, Mohammad Rafique and Naimur Rahman.

The team is currently based in Essex today. This is the ground where Bangladesh will make their maiden World Cup appearance against New Zealand on May 17. Prior to that they will play two more warm-up matches against Middlesex and Northamptonshire on May 10 and 12.

Bangladesh, the ICC champions, have been drafted in group B for the first round of the 12-team World Cup, the last this millennium.

Keegan quitting Fulham?



LONDON, May 7: Stand-in coach Kevin Keegan has revealed for the first time that he is ready to sever his ties with Fulham in order to continue full-time with England.

Keegan declared last week in Hungary that he wanted to continue beyond his original contract and to lead England beyond Euro 2000.

However, Fulham were hoping that he would also see out the remainder of his contract at Craven Cottage after steering the club into the First Division.

But the former Newcastle manager admitted on ITV's The Sports Show on Thursday night that combining the two roles was not feasible.

"I think the way it's going, it possibly will be a clean break," said Keegan. "I think what we've got to get back to is that you can't do the two jobs, that's what I've found, otherwise you jeopardise both parties and that includes Fulham Football Club."

Keegan went there to be chief operating officer and I took a manager in and then because that didn't work, I've gone in for a year and I've really enjoyed

that year, I think the fans, and I know the players have.

"If there's no role there for me to fulfil -- in other words if someone says to me, there's a certain amount of money, just come and be a figurehead -- I don't want that."

"I had wanted that, I'd be at Newcastle United."

"I've thought about it long and hard -- I haven't just come out."

"If I had gone straight away and taken the England job with 12 games left for Fulham and Fulham hadn't got promoted, that would have been the biggest disservice that I could have done to the people who work at Fulham and the players and the fans."

"I think it would be far worse if I said nothing tonight, didn't come on the show and just disappeared on Monday and then you would say that's not right either."

"I've been up front, I've been honest as I always hope to be, everyone's got a right to change their mind."

His decision to make a clean break from the club is a double blow for owner Mohamed Al Fayed, who had his UK passport request rejected by the Home Secretary.

"I stuck with it, I said I didn't want to go, I wanted to take it part-time."

"But having had it for two games, my heart tells me to take it and if the Fulham fans do not understand that, and I'm sure there will be plenty who don't then I have to say to them well I'm sorry, that is the way I feel. I can't be more honest than that."

On the night Fulham clinched promotion by beating Gillingham last month, Keegan

insisted that he would lead the club's first bid for a Premiership place, but he now admits that that was said in the heat of the joyous celebrations at Craven Cottage.

"That's before I took my second game with England and got the bug I suppose," Keegan told The Sports Show.

"I'm not going to make any apologies for that because I think football is an emotional game, and sometimes you can say things."

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