

Sport

Sheikh Kamal's dream

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"Many people have been trying to spread scandalous stories about my brother in the past. I can say he was never hungry for wealth and wasn't ambitious. He had not left any property in the earth. His only creation was Abahani which is still there," added the Prime Minister.

She also stressed that the present government is paying extra attention to the sports arena in order to bring back misguided youths to the correct path.

"Last year we had a budget of Taka 52.45 crore for sports. The amount is now 72.25 crore for the current fiscal year. Besides, we have also provided extra funds for cricket and football in the last couple of years. This effort will continue."

Earlier, the function began with a group dance by school children donning Abahani's famous sky-blue. The dance was composed in memory of Sheikh Kamal. Afterwards, Lt Col (retired) Kazi Shahid Ahmed, the director in charge of Abahani, read out the key note paper while club director Harunur Rashid MP, the founder general secretary of Abahani, recalled the memory of Sheikh Kamal.

Sheikh Rehana urged the people to keep up their support for Abahani and make it the biggest sporting house of the nation.

In his speech of thanks, Salma F Rahman said that the sports complex was a long time dream of Sheikh Kamal and he was happy to begin the work at last.

The Prime Minister awarded the Sheikh Kamal Sports Award 1999 to five personalities. They are national football captain Jewel Rana, former national cricket captain Minhasul Abedin and former national hockey skipper Mahboob Harun. Abahani directors-Saber Hossain Chowdhury and Kazi Shahid Ahmed also got the award as sponsor and organizer of the year.

I'll be back

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that Azharuddin would have to prove his form in domestic cricket before being considered for international duty later in the season with the home Test series against New Zealand and South Africa and a tour of Australia.

But with the domestic season not due to begin till October, Azharuddin is also likely to miss a four-nation tournament in Kenya in September-end.

His comeback will depend a great deal on how the top heavy batting line-up which includes Tendulkar, Saurav Ganguly and the West Indies in Singapore from September 2 to 7.

The four-nation tournament in Nairobi from September 24 to October 3 features South Africa, India, Zimbabwe and hosts Kenya.

Azharuddin has been an India regular since he burst into world cricket in 1984 with centuries in each of his first three Tests against David Gower's Englishmen.

He is two matches away from the landmark of 100 Tests and has played more one-dayers (323) and scored more one-day runs (9,110) than any other player in the world.

Azharuddin led India through the 1990s except for a 17-month period from August, 1996 when Tendulkar was handed the reins. He remains India's most successful captain with 14 Test and 89 one-day wins.

That record was, however, marred by the team's poor record overseas where it has won only one Test since 1986.

Aussies against lbw changes

SYDNEY, Aug 5 (AFP): Australian cricketers have attacked proposed changes to the lbw law saying the could have a negative impact on the game.

A working party of the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) has spent a year revising the laws for the first time in 20 years.

One of the proposals is for batsmen to be given out to deliveries which pitch outside of stump regardless of a shot is played.

Australian Cricketers Association president Tim May said 85 per cent of Australian first-class cricketers were against any revision of the lbw rule.

"It could lead to a massive negative impact on the whole game," he said. "You could have Tests constantly ending in three days."

"Imagine the effect that would have on revenue from gate takings, plus it makes an umpire's job even more difficult. It's arguably the most subjective dismissal of them all."

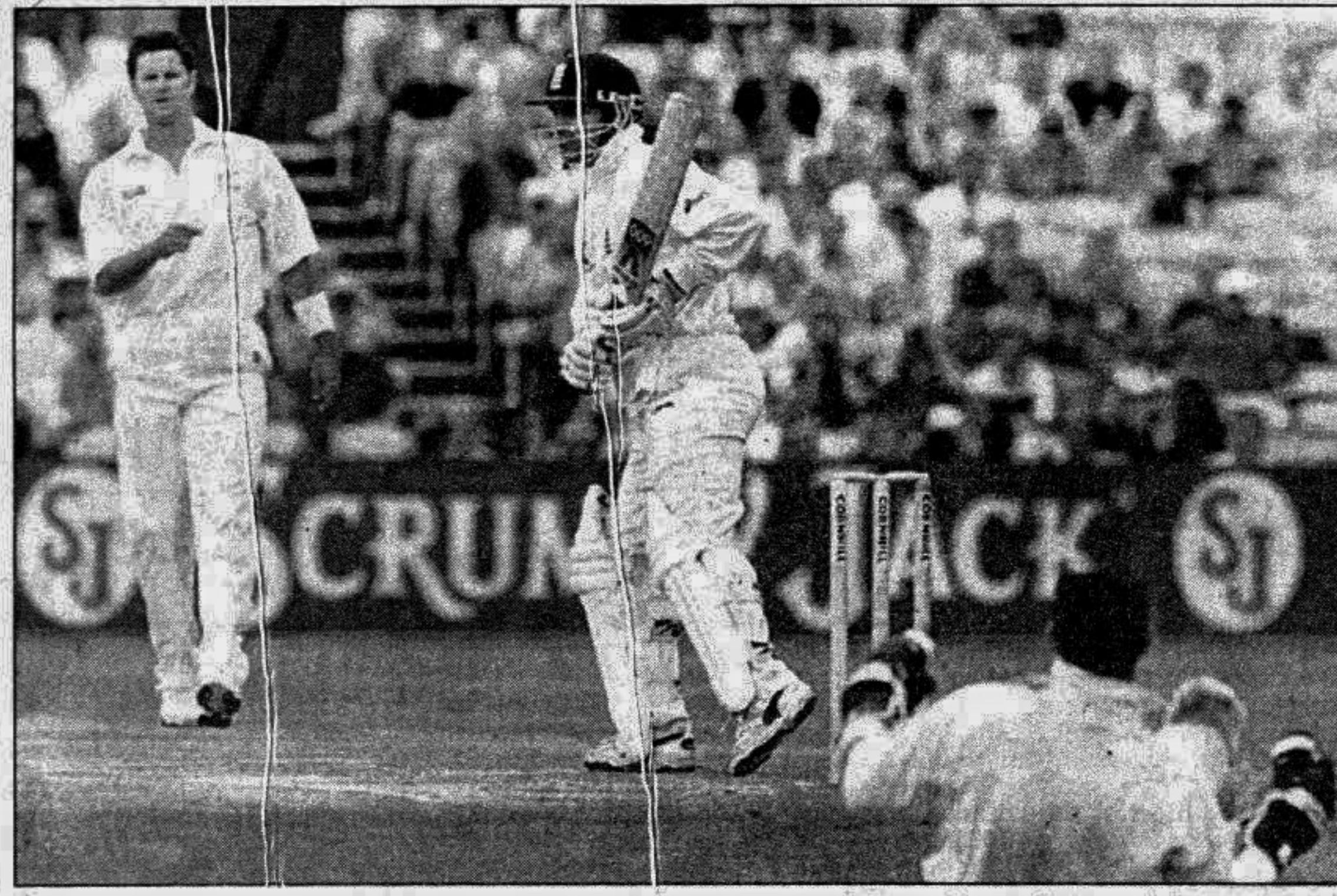
May said those in favour of the change should go over footage of Tests in the past few years and work out how many batsmen previously given out would be dismissed under the proposed new law.

"I know it's to remove doubt about whether a batsman is playing a shot or not but we feel it would be better to further educate the umpires on that point."

The Lord's-based MCC is also believed to be considering changing the rules so that a fieldsman who takes a catch and steps over the boundary rope be allowed to claim the catch.

Currently the batsmen is awarded six runs.

Other changes include a penalty of five runs for each instance of unfair play.



England opener and make-shift captain Mark Butcher lets a Chris Cairns delivery go on the opening day of the third Test against New Zealand at Old Trafford yesterday.

—AFP photo

Rain interruption at Old Trafford

Bad debut for Butcher



MANCHESTER, England, Aug 5 (AFP):

Recalled Mike Atherton produced three scoring strokes in an hour as England battled through to lunch at 33 for one in the delayed third Test against New Zealand at Old Trafford on Thursday.

The home side were happy to be just one wicket down at the break because from the last ball of the session, Alec Stewart escaped off Chris Cairns.

Stewart's false stroke went low and just about carried to Nathan Astle at second slip, but the chance went begging and the former captain trooped off to the dining room a relieved man.

Stewart was on 8 not out and Atherton 6 at the interval which came an hour after the noon start of play, delayed by 60 minutes due to rain.

England had included both spinners, Phil Tufnell and Peter Such, and omitted pace pair Alan Mullally and Chris Silvertown in their line-up.

New Zealand made one change from the side which won by nine wickets at Lord's, replacing left-armers Geoff Allott with all-rounder Chris Harris.

The sides are level 1-1 in the four-Test series. Teams

Test thrashing, scored two singles and an edged boundary as Cairns and new ball partner Dion Nash exploited the help in the pitch and overcast conditions.

After winning the toss, it was unlucky 13 for the stand-in England skipper at Manchester as he failed to negotiate a rising delivery from Chris Cairns and New Zealand skipper Stephen Fleming clutched a fine catch low to his right at first slip.

Butcher had made five from 16 balls - striking a wide half volley from Cairns wide of cover for his only boundary - after deciding to bat first once the morning rain had cleared.

He might have been dismissed earlier in the same over had Craig McMillan made a clean pick-up.

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England: Mark Butcher (capt), Mike Atherton, Alec Stewart, Graham Thorpe, Graeme Hick, Mark Ramprakash, Chris Read (wicketkeeper), Andy Caddick, Dean Headley, Peter Such, Phil Tufnell.

New Zealand: Matthew Horne, Matthew Bell, Stephen Fleming (capt), Nathan Astle, Roger Twose, Craig McMillan, Adam Parore (wicketkeeper), Chris Cairns, Daniel Vettori, Dion Nash, Chris Harris.

SCOREBOARD

Score at lunch on the first day of the third Test between England and New Zealand at Old Trafford on Thursday.

ENGLAND: First innings

M Butcher c Fleming b Cairns 5
M Atherton not out 6
A Stewart not out 8
Extras: (b-4, lb-5, w-5) 14
Total: (1 wkt) 33

Fall of wkt: 1-13

To bat: G Thorpe, M Ramprakash, G Hick, C Read, A Caddick, D Headley, P Such, P Tufnell.

Bowler: O M R W

Cairns 7 4 19 1
Nash 6 4 5 0

Umpires: David Shepherd (Eng) and Russell Tiffin (Zim).

Toss: England.

Hasselbank signs for Atletico

MADRID, Aug 5: Leeds United's star striker Jimmy Floyd Hasselbank signed for Atletico Madrid for 19.5 million dollars on Wednesday, the Spanish club announced, reports AFP.

It said the Dutchman had signed a four-year contract and would be presented to the fans on August 11 before a friendly with Portuguese side Sporting Lisbon.

Leeds, desperate to keep Hasselbank after he scored 20 goals last season, offered the 27-year-old 40,000 dollars a week, doubling his wages.

But Atletico trumped that by reportedly offering him 64,000 dollars.

Hasselbank was bought by Leeds for 3.2 million dollars from Portuguese side Boavista two years ago.

More Old Trafford capacity

MANCHESTER, England, Aug 5: The capacity of English Premiership club Manchester United's Old Trafford stadium will rise to 60,000 by next March because redevelopment work is due to be completed nine months ahead of schedule, reports AFP.

Builders began work on creating a new tier for the East Stand at the end of last season and they expect to finish by the spring.

Work will then begin on the West Stand and when the redevelopment is complete at the end of next year, the capacity of the Manchester United ground will have increased from its present level of 56,024 to 67,000.

Soccer's curse

LONDON, Aug 5 (AFP): Professional footballers can literally go weak at the knees if they have too much unprotected sex, doctors have discovered.

Research carried out among 10 sportsmen, six of whom were footballers, showed that persistent knee injuries were often a form of arthritis caused by a sexually-transmitted bacteria, the New Scientist magazine reported.

Sexually-acquired reactive arthritis, or Sara, was found to be responsible for typical symptoms such as swollen or sore knees in eight of the 10 cases examined.

Five of the sportsmen said they had had more than 11 sexual partners, a level of promiscuity only reached by one in four British males in their 20s on average.

"The level of promiscuity among these sportsmen calls for concern. Footballers appear to be the greatest culprits," wrote Dr Paul Oyodo, the author of the research carried out at the Queen Mary and Westfield College in London.

"They are very rich and have a lot of spare time."

Five of the six footballers involved in the research were Premiership players, though they were not identified.

John King, a consultant orthopaedic surgeon at the London Independent Hospital, said: "Doctors should be aware this can happen. The treatment is very different. If it is an injury it may need surgery but if it is Sara it just needs aspiration and an antibiotic treatment."

English Football Association spokesman Steve Double was non-plussed by the claims.

"Some things we can and can't control, and I think this comes into the latter category," he said.

Tragic

HANOI, Aug 5: Four people died and nearly 150 others were injured in traffic accidents in Ho Chi Minh City as people poured into the streets to celebrate a big victory by the national soccer team, local press reported Thursday.

Butcher will become England's 73rd Test captain - and their 14th in the last 20 years - and has already been made aware of the responsibilities of the position by match referee Peter Van der Merwe following the unseemly verbiage and sledging which marred New Zealand's victory at Lord's.

Van der Merwe has warned both sides of the "thin line between disappointment and dissent" and England manager David Graveney revealed: "We've spoken to the referee and he spoke to New Zealand after the last Test."

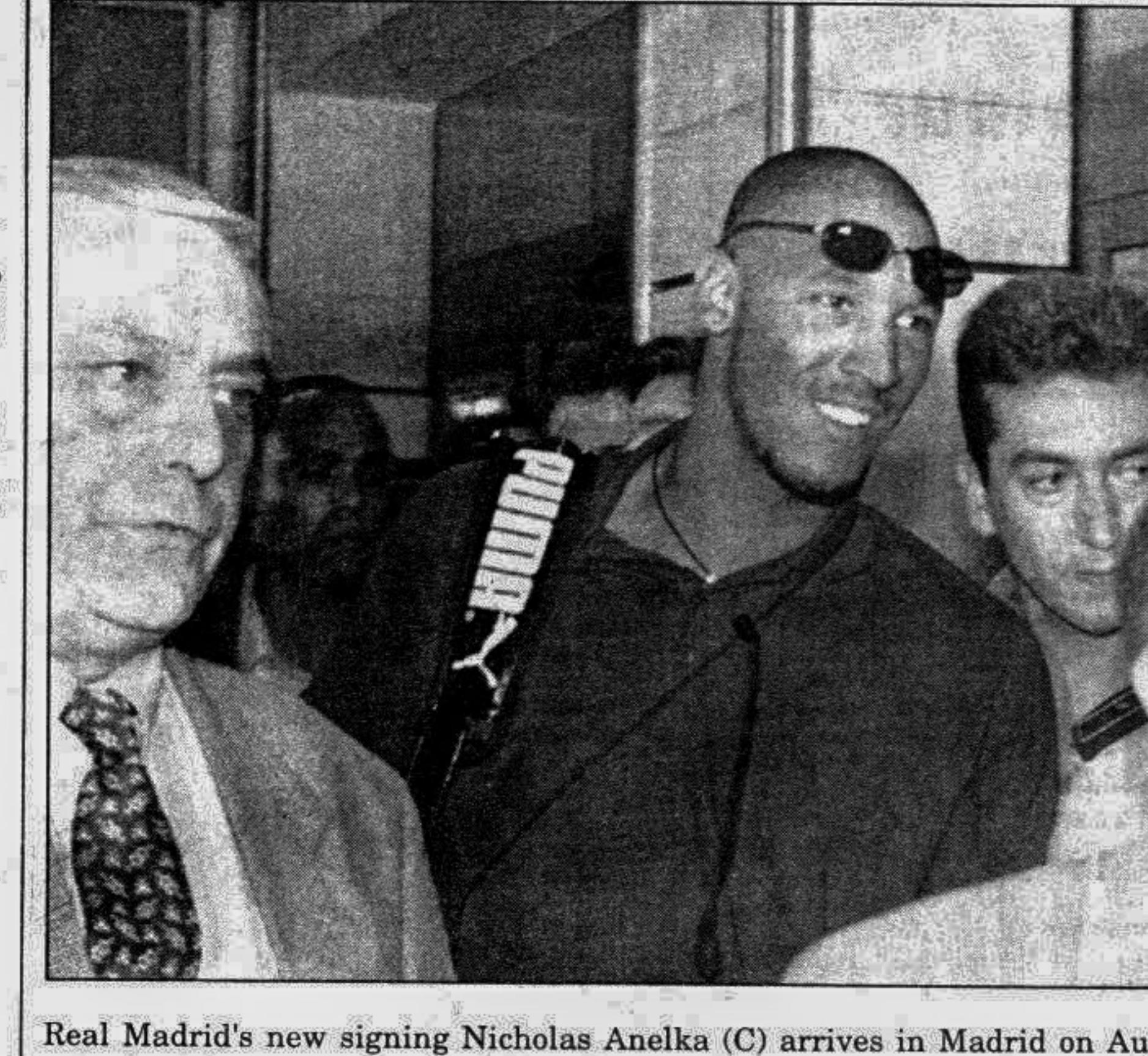
Fletcher's tenure as England coach does not begin until October 1, just three weeks before the senior squad depart for this winter's tour to South Africa and Zimbabwe, although he will have a major say in the make up of the tour party.

The content of the conversation was similar, which was controlling behaviour between what is acceptable and isn't acceptable.

"I made the point, which was

replaced as captain by Surrey opener Mark Butcher, that there is not a place in the game of cricket that once you have dismissed a batsman, then you give him a volley as he leaves the pitch."

Butcher added: "I don't advocate running down the wicket and sending a batsman off, but I don't have a problem with people if they want to have a quiet word when nobody's looking."



Real Madrid's new signing Nicholas Anelka (C) arrives in Madrid on August 4.

—AFP photo

Bigger, brighter Premiership

LONDON, Aug 5 (AFP): They say success breeds success but in English football it breeds one thing above all - fixture congestion.

Never will that be more true than during this Millennium Premiership season, which opens on Saturday bigger, brighter and busier than ever.

Builders began work on creating a new tier for the East Stand at the end of last season and they expect to finish by the spring.

Work will then begin on the West Stand and when the redevelopment is complete at the end of next year, the capacity of the Manchester United ground will have increased from its present level of 56,024 to 67,000.

That means the usual spring quarter-finals will be preempted by an additional group stage, amounting to six extra fixtures compared to last season.

But in the Premiership they will be the team to beat, their imposing Old Trafford stadium, which is set to rise to 62,000 capacity next year, providing a sumptuous stage for the likes of Dwight Yorke and Andy Cole to terrorise opposition defences once again.

Australian goalkeeper Mark Bosnich apart, manager Sir Alex Ferguson has seemed more interested in signing copies of his new autobiography than any new players, leaving the big spending English Premiership?

For boozing it is, awash with cash, foreign stars and more popular than ever.

Tickets are like gold dust, and nearly as expensive in some cases, and 11 of the 20 teams have sold out their entire season ticket allocation. That's 35,000 in the case of last season's Treble Winners, Manchester United.

Billed as the most exciting

league in the world, the big three, United, Arsenal and Chelsea, look set to dominate again.

David O'Leary's young Leeds United side, a seemingly resurgent Liverpool and maybe even Ruud Gullit's Newcastle United may have a say in the destiny of the three.

Liverpool are the only leading club not involved in Europe. Embarrassing that may be for the most successful English club in history, but it could also be their trump card as they revel in the occasional weekend off.

Manager Gerard Houllier has bought well, despite a public spat with now-departed Paul Ince, and the arrivals of German Dietmar Hamann and Dutch goalkeeper Sander Westerveld could just provide the solid platform the Merseysiders have been lacking in recent seasons.

At the time of writing, Manchester United have opted out of the FA Cup to play in FIFA's all-singing, all-dancing new world club championship in Brazil.

The other promoted side, Sunderland, at least have cash, a fine stadium and support to paper over the ordinariness of their squad.

The paupers at the party are undoubtedly Watford and Bradford, arguably the two weakest teams to have achieved promotion since the Premier League began in 1992.

A few decent days out for their fans and some bumper home crowds are the best response managers Graham Taylor and Paul Jewell can look forward to before readying themselves for another division one campaign in 2001.

The other promoted side, Coventry, at least have cash, a fine stadium and support to paper over the ordinariness of their squad.

Manager Peter Reid, who is being groomed as the next England coach after taking charge of the under-21 side, will have his hands full just keeping his side afloat.

Should he manage to do so, nothing has happened over the summer to suggest anyone but the usual suspects - Coventry, Everton, Southampton, Wimborne and Sheffield Wednesday - will be scrambling to avoid getting sucked down the relegation plughole come May.

Big guns renew rivalry

Bordeaux and Marseille, fresh from spending last season constantly exchanging the lead in the race for the French title, find themselves in familiar territory after their opening matches of the new championship, reports AFP.