

## Anelka looking forward

MADRID, Aug 6: Controversial French international Nicolas Anelka took a final swipe at the English Premiership here on Thursday as he was introduced to the Spanish public following his transfer to Real Madrid.

"Real is a bigger club than Arsenal," said Anelka, whose 37.5 million transfer deal, the second biggest in football history, with the Spanish side was signed on Wednesday.

Wearing a long electric blue jacket and accompanied by his brothers and agents Claude and Didier, Anelka also lashed out at English journalists.

"After what happened to me in England, it couldn't get worse. I had problems with the English press," said the 20-year-old striker.

Anelka, whose planned transfer to Italian side Lazio fell down because of his personal demands, insisted money did not interest him.

"I'm not concerned with the millions. I'll do my best during my time with Real Madrid so that people don't think only of the 37.5 million dollars that I cost."

"For a long time I have wanted to play in Spain. Being at Real is even better," he said.

Anelka makes his debut performance Saturday during a friendly match against Red Star of Belgrade. Real Madrid meet Mallorca for their first league game of the season on August 22.

## SEA Games

### Malaysia sent packing

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, Aug 6: Indonesia and Singapore ground out a 1-1 draw here Friday to go through to the Southeast Asian Games football semi-finals, killing Malaysia's hopes, reports AFP.

Malaysia beat hosts Brunei 2-0 but it was not enough to get one of the two qualifying places from Group, which were taken by the Indonesians and Singapore.

The Malaysians scored a goal in each half through Bakir Asmawi and Kamaluddin Azizul. But the side, vilified as "traitors" by their press after two earlier defeats, finished the tournament on six points.

Malaysian defender Baharul Khairul Anuar, who earlier issued a formal apology for having made an obscene gesture at the Malaysian press, finished a wretched tournament by earning a yellow card.

Group rivals Indonesia and Singapore both went through on seven points each after their draw.

Singapore substitute Indra Sadiah Daud, who came on in the hour, controlled Tan Kim Leng's pinpoint pass on the edge of the box with one touch and lashed a magnificent rising shot after being allowed to turn by three defenders on the 89th minute.

Indonesian captain Bima Sakti put his side in front against the run of play when he crashed a penalty on off the underside of the crossbar after forward Rochi Melkiano Edfen Putiray was pulled down in the first half.

Undefeated Thailand, who lead Group A on goal difference from Vietnam with seven points each, play their last group match against Myanmar on Sunday.

Vietnam, who face the winless Philippines, should need only show up to gain at least a point against the tournament whipping boys who have conceded 16 goals in three games. Vietnam have yet to concede a goal while scoring 11 in three games.

Thailand's English coach Peter Withe warned his champions against over-confidence.

Myanmar, on four points, are still in with a mathematical chance -- provided they defeat the Thais and the Filipinos score 11 goals without a Vietnamese reply.

### Booster says sorry

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, Aug 6: Malaysian international Khairul Anuar Baharom escaped sanctions Friday after he apologized for a moment of madness in the Southeast Asian (SEA) Games football, reports AFP.

The 25-year-old defender was reported to have made a rude gesture at the Malaysian section of the press after his side earned their first win in a SEA Games group B match against Cambodia on Wednesday.

Khairul made formal apology released through the Malaysian delegation here.

"My action was instigated as a result of our team's win over Cambodia," he said.

"It was done unintentionally and I acted as such after being overwhelmed by the said win. I hope that my apologies will be accepted and any misunderstanding which resulted could be settled amicably."

Malaysia have been vilified by their country's press as a "disgrace" and "traitors" after losing 6-0 to Indonesia and 3-1 to Singapore in earlier group matches.

Despite the win over Cambodia, they are still close to an early return. They are three points adrift of joint group leaders Indonesia and Singapore.

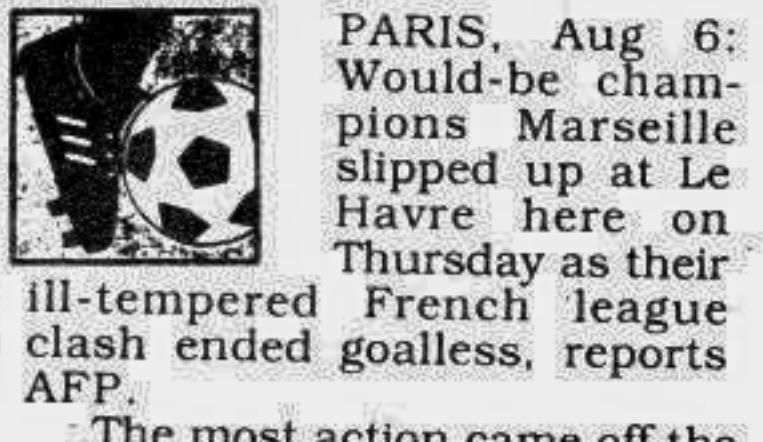
They need a big win in their last group game against hosts Brunei later Friday and for Indonesia or Singapore to suffer a big defeat. If their two rivals draw in Friday's other match, both would qualify.

The Olympic Council of Malaysia said no disrepute charges will be laid against Khairul.



Marseille's Christophe Brando (No 8) and Thierry de Neef (2nd from R) of Le Havre fight for possession during their French First Division soccer clash at Le Havre on August 5. — AFP photo

## Marseille falter at Le Havre



PARIS, Aug 6: Would-be champions Marseille slipped up at Le Havre here on Thursday as their ill-tempered French league clash ended goalless, reports AFP.

The most action came off the ball, with both sides ending with 10 men after two mass confrontations.

Six bookings were also handed out.

The result leaves Marseille, last year's runners-up and who expected to win on Thursday, at the top of the table with four points from two matches.

Champions Bordeaux, in second on three points after one match, play at Montpellier on Saturday.

All Marseille had to show for their efforts was a first-half shot from midfielder Robert Pires which hit the post and a second-half shot from Fabrizio

Ravanelli that tested Le Havre goalkeeper Sébastien Hamel. The final brawl, with a minute to go, saw Cyrille Pouget of Le Havre and Eduardo Berizzo of Marseille shown red cards after Pouget had lashed out at his opponent with a wild kick.

Earlier, Marseille striker Christophe Dugarry sparked another row between the teams after elbowing a defender and was swiftly substituted by manager Rolland Courbis after the incident.

Meanwhile Tony Vairelles showed why ambitious Lyon swooped for him in the close season as he engineered their 2-1 win at newly-promoted Troyes.

The former Lens striker scored with two headers, the first in the 15th minute and the second, a fine diving effort, in the 52nd. He now has three goals in his first two games.

Brazilian Sonny Anderson,

another of Lyon's expensive new recruits, was left with little to do but applaud his strike partner.

The rest of France's teams go into action on Friday and Saturday.

### French league table on Thursday

	P	W	D	L	G	F	GA	P
Marseille	2	1	1	0	3	0	4	5
Bordeaux	1	1	0	0	3	2	3	5
Auxerre	1	1	0	0	2	1	3	5
Montpellier	1	1	0	0	2	1	3	5
Nantes	1	1	0	0	1	0	3	5
Paris SG	1	1	0	0	1	0	3	5
Strasbourg	1	1	0	0	1	0	3	5
Lyon	2	1	0	1	3	3	3	5
Saint-Étienne	1	0	1	0	2	2	1	4
Monaco	1	0	1	0	2	2	1	4
Metz	1	0	1	0	2	2	1	4
Rennes	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	3
Le Havre	2	0	1	1	0	1	1	3
Bastia	1	0	0	1	2	3	0	3
Nancy	1	0	0	1	2	3	0	3
Lens	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	3
Troyes	2	0	0	2	1	3	0	3
Sedan	1	0	0	1	0	3	0	3

## Hearts plan to cash in



GLASGOW, Aug 6: Hearts, fresh from a thumping 4-1 win at St Johnstone in their opening game of the season, will be hoping to take advantage of Rangers' Champions' League distractions when they host Dick Advocaat's side in the Scottish Premier League on Saturday.

Rangers are preparing for a two-legged shoot-out with crack Italian outfit Parma, which could make or break their season, even if it is still only August.

Parma visit Ibrox for the first leg of the third qualifying round clash on Wednesday and Finnish striker Jonatan Johansson believes Rangers' hopes of being bracketed among Europe's elite hinges on the tie.

The main thing is that we do something at Ibrox so we have a chance in the second leg," said Johansson, who

scored in both legs of Rangers' comfortable 7-1 second qualifying round aggregate win over FC Haka.

They are clearly one of the best sides in Europe having won the UEFA Cup, but we'll relish the challenge of playing them again. They're a massive name and the whole place will be buzzing.

A place in the Champions League is a huge prize for both teams and we know it will be tough, but we have to be positive."

Parma held Rangers to a 1-1 draw in last season's UEFA Cup third round first leg before the Serie A club clinched a less-than-convincing 3-1 success on home soil.

Advocaat, whose team were unconvincing in winning their first league match against Kilmarnock 2-1 last week, will therefore be keen to avoid a morale-sapping defeat at Tynecastle against Hearts.

### FIXTURES

#### Saturday (kick-offs 1400GMT): Celtic v St Johnstone, Hearts v Rangers, Kilmarnock v Aberdeen, Motherwell v Dundee Utd.

Sunday (1705 GMT): Dundee v Hibernian

## Gunners want 'Good boy' Suker



LONDON, Aug 6 (AFP): With the memories of troubled French striker Nicolas Anelka fresh in memory, Arsenal have given Davor Suker, their new 5 million dollar Croatian striker a year to prove that his "problem-boy" tag is unfounded.

The 31-year-old hitman signed a two-year deal and accepted a substantial cut in wages when he signed for the Gunners from Real Madrid earlier this week.

But he arrives in London with the reputation of a temperamental star who is difficult to handle, and Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger, having suffered the infamous Anelka episode, is clearly taking no chances this time.

He has ordered that his new signing's situation at Highbury will be reviewed next summer.

A clause to that effect has been inserted in Suker's contract and Wenger said: "It is clear after a year that it has not worked out between Davor and the club then he can leave."

Wenger added: "We have put that clause in his contract and he didn't argue about it at all. That was a big factor in my decision to sign him."

The fact that he has accepted it shows he has the character to take on a big challenge. I admire him for that and there is no doubt he is a very good performer."

The 31-year-old Suker grabbed six goals and the Golden Boot for finishing top scorer at World Cup 98 where he spearheaded Croatia's surprise march into the semi-finals and third place.

He is his country's top scorer with 39 goals in 47 internationals and after winning the Primera Liga with Real Madrid in 1997, he was part of their squad which won the European Cup a year later, coming on as a substitute in the final against

Juventus in Amsterdam. But he fell out with Real's new coach John Toshack last season and the former Liverpool and Wales star banned him from the first-team squad after alleging that Suker often failed to turn up for training and invariably showed a bad attitude when he did.

Suker said: "I have no comment to make about Toshack but there were other players who didn't enjoy their time at

Fulham, West Ham and Tottenham all turned down the chance to sign him earlier this year and Spurs boss George Graham revealed Suker was also offered to him at Leeds. Graham said: "We didn't take him but it wasn't because of his age."

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Brazilian superstar Ronaldo obliges a young autograph seeker during a press conference at a Tokyo hotel yesterday. It was held to launch Montega Geneva's limited edition 'R9 Chronograph' watch. Ronaldo has endorsed it with the initial of his name and shirt number.

— AFP photo

## Sport

### British Open chess

#### Gormally alone atop

SCARBOROUGH, England, Aug 6: Indian Grand Master Pravin Thipsay played a powerful attacking game to outwit International Master (IM) Nicholas Port of England to share the second spot after the fourth round of the British Open Chess Championships here, reports PTI.

England IM D Gormally stunned third-seeded compatriot GM I Emms yesterday to jump into solo lead with 4 points while other overnight leaders GM B Lalic and P Wells drew their game and were sharing the second spot with Thipsay, J Rowson, C Ward and I Hodgson with 3.5 points.

Thipsay adopted his pet advance variation with white pieces against the French defence of port (below rating 2425). The Englishman was slowly put on the defensive as Thipsay methodically improved his space advantage.

Thipsay's major pieces crashed through on the F and C files to checkmate black's king, which was caught in the centre. It was a well played game by the Indian GM.

Among the other Indians in fray, former national champion Abhijit Kunte suffered a reverse in his quest for the final norm for the Grandmaster title, when he went down fighting to top seed GM Julian Bodson of England while IM V Saravanan held another English GM Stuart conquest in a game of fluctuating fortunes.

Youngster Sundararajan Kidambi and IWM Anupama Gokhale could not keep up with their pace from the initial rounds and went down fighting to Swiss GM Callagher and FM C Duncan of England respectively.

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