

## Del Piero returns

ROME, Oct 4: Alessandro Del Piero's long-awaited return to Italy's national team became official Monday when coach Dino Zoff put the star on the roster for the country's final Euro 2000 qualifying match, reports AP.

Del Piero hasn't played for the Azzurri since October 10, 1998, a month before suffering knee ligament damage that kept him out of action until the beginning of the current Serie A season.

### THE ROSTER

**Goalkeepers:** Gianluigi Buffon (Parma), Francesco Toldo (Fiorentina).

**Defenders:** Fabio Cannavaro (Parma), Ciro Ferrara (Juventus), Paolo Maldini (Milan), Alessandro Nesta (Lazio), Christian Panucci (Inter), Christian Vieri (Inter), Gianluca Pessotto (Juventus), Paolo Vanoli (Parma).

**Midfielders:** Demetrio Albertini (Milan), Massimo Ambrosini (Milan), Dino Baggio (Parma), Antonio Conte (Juventus), Luigi Di Biagio (Inter), Eusebio Di Francesco (Roma), Francesco Moriero (Inter), Gianluca Zambrotta (Juventus).

**Forwards:** Alessandro Del Piero (Juventus), Vincenzo Montella (Roma), Filippo Inzaghi (Juventus), Francesco Totti (Roma), Christian Vieri (Inter).

## The nation

From page 13  
players are laying for England at Lords tomorrow.

Only when a Dhaka football league match between glorious rivals Mohammedan and Abahani will be played with each missing three-four-more players on national duty in some other part of the world will we be able to say, 'Yes! The SAF gold is not the end of our journey. We are looking forward.'

Only when the same teams will be locked in a cricket league match at Dhaka when half their players are playing for Bangladesh in Australia or South Africa will we be certain that cricket is heading somewhere. Who knows? Maybe the India, the Pakistan, the Sri Lanka way!

So why do we lay more emphasis on our clubs? In one word, money. The clubs simply pay much more than what the nation does. Who said socialism was not dead?

The government has one single role to play if they want our footballers to one day embarrass Ronaldo and our cricketers to do the lap of honour after a World Cup. It simply has to put in more money for national players. Let them feel secure, wanted, cajoled.

No one can remember when on the same evening we rejoiced as a nation in cricket and in football. Perhaps because there was no such evening before tonight. Let us make full use of it and think 'national' from tonight. Let clubs continue to be the breeding ground for our talents. But let their ambitions soar beyond.

## Party time

From page 13  
Championship held India. Meanwhile, custodian Biplob Bhattacharjee, who made some brilliant saves to keep the desperate Nepalese at bay, said, "Firstly, I will remember my guru (mentor) and former Bangladeshi keeper Motaleb. With his guidance I would not have had such a success," said Biplob.

When other members of the victorious team singing and dancing at the players' dressing room, striker Alfaaz Ahmed, the scorer of the lone goal, appeared pretty calm.

"I would like to thank the Almighty for making me able to score today and win the first ever gold for my country," he said.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Olympic Association secretary general Zafar Imam announced a 5000 US dollar cash award for the national football team.

## Bangladesh walk

From page 13  
the penalty for showing a little less respect for the opposition bowlers and eventually holed out in the deep for frequently taking liberty. He was caught at long off Perry with 10 runs short of what could have been a well deserved half-century.

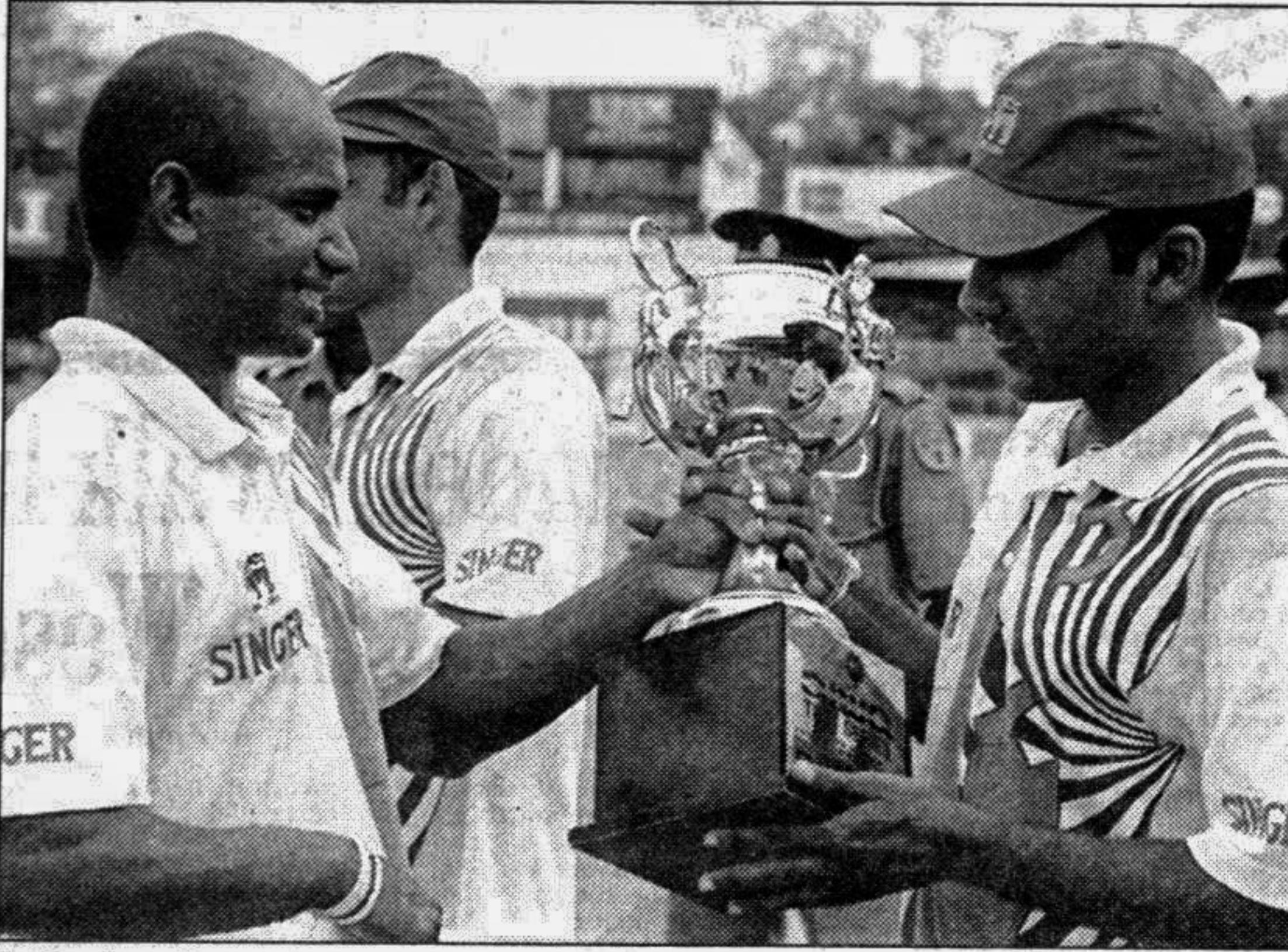
Javed completed his half-century off 109 balls and with the help of a quartet of fours, including a delectable back-foot square drive against Collins. The dapper right-hander however did not last long after completing his fifty. He was cleaned bowled by Reon King for 53.

Javed's departure however paved the way for the most enterprising partnership in the Bangladesh innings, that between Khaled Masood and Enamul Haq. Together they put on 87 runs for the seventh wicket to make sure Bangladesh crossed the 200-mark.

Although Masood got off to a nervous start, he exploited a couple of dropped catches by Wavel Hinds in the early stages of his innings to score a welcome half-century with the help of five decisive hits across the rope. While Masood made the West Indies spin attack look generous, Enamul played the perfect foil at the other end. Enamul scored a defiant 32 before becoming the third victim of Perry.

The West Indies off-spinner then mopped up the Bangladesh tail, claiming the last two wickets in successive deliveries to finish with five for 85 in his 25.3 overs. It was a cherished return for the Jamaican, who had been out of the team due to injury since the Singapore Challenge tournament.

The second day of the match resumes this morning at ten.



Sri Lankan skipper Sanath Jayasuriya (L) lets his deputy Mahela Jayawardene hold the trophy of the Aiwa Test series in Colombo yesterday. —AFP photo

## Lankans floating on air



COLOMBO, Oct 4 (AFP): Sri Lanka were left singing in the rain here Monday when a heavy downpour handed them their first ever test series victory over Australia on the fifth day of the third and final Test.

The cloudburst left sections of the outfield completely unplayable, and after light rain began to fall at the Sinhalese Sports Club, umpires were left with no option but to abandon the Test -- giving Sri Lanka a 1-0 series victory.

Sri Lanka finished on 61 for 4 wickets in reply to Australia's 342. Only nine hours play took place out of a possible 30 in the Test.

Sri Lanka won the first Test played at Kandy inside three days by six wickets, and then drew the rain-affected second Test at Galle with Australia on

the brink of defeat.

Monday's result also gave new skipper Sanath Jayasuriya a dream start to his captaincy career, following the decision to sack Arjuna Ranatunga after the islanders' World Cup debacle.

The Test series win gave Sri Lanka a clean sweep against the tourists. They beat the Australians in the Aiwa Cup tri-nations one-day tournament earlier in the tour.

Australian skipper Steven Waugh tried to make the best out of the one-day world champions' humiliating defeats both in the one-day series and the three-Test series.

"It is good for the game when all cricket playing countries become strong," Waugh said of Sri Lanka's victory in the Test series. "At the top level Sri Lanka has become a very good side."

Sri Lanka's decision to bring in fresh faces at all levels of the

national team have paid dividends.

A new captain, a new coach and a new management laid the foundations for the win.

"It was a new strategy to play youngsters in the one-day series and get experienced players like Ranatunga and De Silva for the test series," Jayasuriya said.

Both Ranatunga and De Silva were out of the one-day matches but brought back for the Tests.

The series win was Sri Lanka's fifth over a Test-playing country. They have now beaten Australia, India, New Zealand, Pakistan and Zimbabwe.

They have also scored one-off Test victories against England.

Ricky Ponting won the man-of-the-match award for his unbeaten century and he also took the man-of-the-series award.



Australian captain Steve Waugh (L) shakes Ricky Ponting's hand after the latter was named both man-of-the-match and series yesterday. —AFP photo

## Lippi, Ronaldo staying calm



MILAN, Oct 4: Inter Milan may have moved two points clear at the top of the Serie A but coach Marcello Lippi and Brazilian star Ronaldinho are both keeping their feet firmly on the ground, reports AFP.

Lippi is more interested in building the fighting spirit he saw as an armchair spectator of Lazio's spelling-bane 4-4 draw with AC Milan, while Ronaldinho is determined to keep his head down until the derby.

"It would be absurd to make a judgement after five matches," said Lippi. "Being top isn't going to change anything and it's not that important to see who's in front or who's behind."

"What is important is that we've put all these points on the board and above all, that we keep it going. That we work hard to become as tough as the two teams I've just seen on television."

"I really enjoyed the match and it was clear that both teams had a great desire to win. There were so many chances to score that it's hard to say who deserved to be the winners."

Ronaldo also put Inter's current lead into perspective, saying: "It's always nice to be top, but we mustn't be too concerned about what the other teams are doing. We have to follow our own road."

The Brazilian got a much-needed confidence boost at the weekend by scoring Inter's winner in a 2-1 victory here over Piacenza.

Ronaldo has spent weeks improving his fitness, and a long period of injury and frustration, including a few poor performances for the team, looks to be coming to an end.

"I'm taking things calmly in my head now," he said. "Psychologically, I'm a different person now."

The criticism has been hard to take. It's always negative and it's no use to anyone. But there's

only one way to deal with it, and that's to keep working hard and to ignore it. And that's what I've done."

Ronaldo also accepted Lippi's decision to keep him on the subs' bench or even in the stands for a few weeks as he struggled to regain his fitness.

"Someone who loves football like I do always wants to play," he said.

"But the conditions were ideal for taking a decision like

that one: the team were winning matches and I was able to train quietly, with no pressure."

Inter fans want to see the Ronaldo of their UEFA Cup winning season in 1997-98; preferably in time for the first derby of the season against champions AC Milan on October 24.

And the Brazilian responded by promising: "Let's say it now. Ronaldo is ready to be the real Ronaldo for the derby."

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