

## Rajshahi cricket

From Our Correspondent  
RAJSHAHI, Dec 22: Sepoy Para Sporting Club defeated Young Boys Club by nine runs in the Bishreshtha Captain Mohiuddin Jahangir Smriti cricket tournament played today at local Railway ground.

Winning the toss, Sepoy Para batted first and collected 98 in allotted 22 overs losing all wickets. Sumon was the top scorer (27) for the winners. Rused followed him with 25. Johnny and Saiful claimed three wickets each giving away 13 and 16 while Saiful also took two for 23.

In reply Young Boys managed 89 for all out in 20.4 overs.

Bisomnoy Ekdosh beat Sadhur Mor Friends Club by 18 runs in the other match of the day.

Bisomnoy collected 91 for all in 20 overs after winning the toss.

Masu was the highest score 27 for the winners.

In reply, Friends Club were out for 73 in 17.2 overs.

## Diego Argentina's player of century

Buenos Aires, Dec 22: Former Argentine footballing star Diego Maradona got the vote from the country's sports journalists Tuesday as Argentina's sportsman-of-the-century, reports AFP.

Diego star Gonzalo Quesada was voted sports personality for 1999 but there was no question of anyone other than Maradona getting the overall vote, largely for lifting the 1986 World Cup almost single-handed - his slam dunk goal against England in the quarter-finals followed by a brilliant second which will live in the memory.

Maradona, who courted controversy throughout a tempestuous career with Boca Juniors, before European stardom with Barcelona and Napoli, was present at a special ceremony on Monday night at Quilmes near Buenos Aires to honour his achievements.

"Long live Argentine sport, which is a healthy sport," said Maradona, who said the award was "the best prize of my life and which makes me feel very proud."

Maradona, who was accompanied to the ceremony by wife Claudia and daughters Dalma and Yanina, saw off competition from Formula One driver Juan Manuel Vilas, boxer Carlos Monzon and golfer Roberto De Vicenzo.

## FIFA rankings

PARIS, Dec 22 (AFP): Latest FIFA world standings released Wednesday:

Country	Points
1. Brazil	839
2. Czech Rep	774
3. France	765
4. Spain	753
5. Germany	739
6. Argentina	721
7. Norway	718
8. Romania	715
9. Croatia	713
10. Mexico	706
11. Denmark	697
12. England	695
13. Yugoslavia	694
14. Italy	685
15. Portugal	672
16. Sweden	663
17. Paraguay	648
18. Russia	643
19. Netherlands	641
20. Scotland	639

## Miandad advises

From page 13

series in Australia. No official action was taken against him. "Why do such things crop up only in Australia and why does the same umpire Darrell Hair hatch such a controversy? How much cricket has he played?" said Miandad, a former Pakistani captain who had a famous scuffle with Aussie great Dennis Lillee in 1981.

The 43-year-old Miandad blamed Australian officials for the controversy. "They leak such things and pass it on to their aggressive media," he said. "I have found nothing illegal in his bowling action. The finishing point of his delivery is perfect. If Shoaib's action is suspect, then every other bowler chucks be it Courtney Walsh or Shaun Pollock," Miandad said.

"I have seen his action from three or four angles and it is fair," he said. He suggested the ICC should compare bowling actions of all the contemporary fast bowlers. "In our days people raised suspicions over West Indian pacer Andy Roberts' action just because his bowler was ferocious. A fast bowler puts all his oomph into his bouncer or short ball," he said.

Shoaib, aged 24 and dubbed the "Rawalpindi Express," hit the limelight during the 1999 World Cup in England.

"He remained under me before we went to Canada last year and India earlier this year and I guided him to control his line and length and run up. It is all rubbish aimed at disturbing a talented player," Miandad said.

## India turn to hi-tech



MELBOURNE, Australia, Dec 22 (AFP): The touring Indians are making a belated foray into modern technology to ward off Australia's fast bowlers in the remaining two Tests.

Coach Kapil Dev said on Wednesday he had asked for a digital video camera to record the performance of his players, both at the nets and during the second Test starting here on Sunday.

"We will study the recordings in the evenings and see how we can improve," said Kapil, a day after Australia selected their latest pace sensation Brett Lee for the Boxing Day Test.

Similar gadgets have been employed by other nations, but the Indians were wary of using them. Former coach Madan Lal refused one such offer, saying computers could not help teams win matches.

But Kapil, Test cricket's most successful bowler, believes technological devices will aid the players in correcting their faults.

"It's good to look at your mistakes after play and see where you can improve," he said.

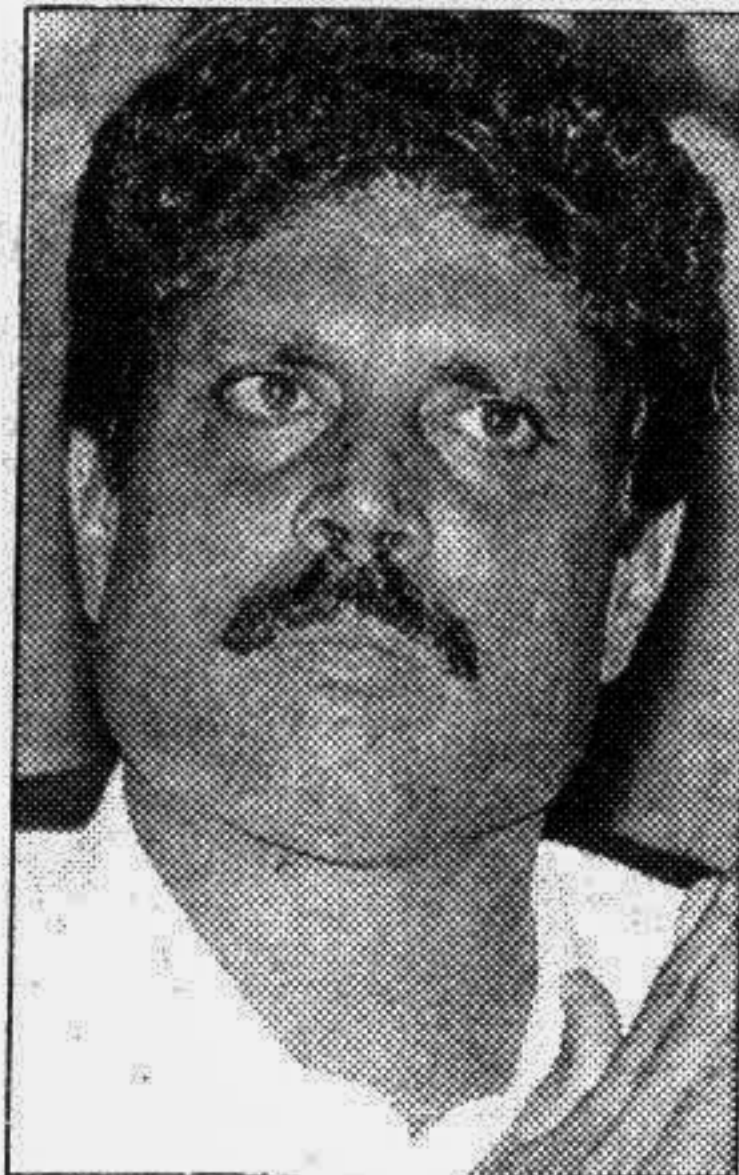
"We discussed having our own camera at a team meeting. It was a great idea."

"Anil Kumble is into computers, and I have left it to him to work out the modalities," Kapil said, adding the camera will cost up to 10,000 US dollars.

Kapil left the team's practice session on Wednesday to have orthoscopic surgery on a

swollen left knee, which was operated upon three times during his 16-year international career.

"The old knee is playing up again," he said. "There are a few days off before the Test match, this was the ideal time to get it done."



KAPIL DEV

Captain Sachin Tendulkar, who took over the net session in Kapil's absence, hinted at the likely Test line-up by keeping a close watch on batsmen Venkat Laxman and Hrisikesh Kanitkar.

Laxman is expected to open the batting with Sadagopan Ramesh, while left-hander Kanitkar takes the number six spot. Lee, meanwhile, celebrated

his call up for national duty by insisting the Indians had not seen his fearsome best yet.

The 23-year-old, described by Australian captain Steve Waugh as the world's fastest bowler, said he was looking forward to having a go at the Indians.

"If I get the chance, I'll be sending them down as fast as I can," Lee said.

"I've been chosen to bowl fast. I'm certainly not going out there to work on my out-swinger or bowl off-cutters."

"I'm an attacking bowler, I'm not one to sit back and wait for something to happen. I go out and try and make things happen," he said.

Among Lee's growing list of admirers is former Australian great Dennis Lillee, who said the New South Wales youngster was ready to play at the top level.

"I've watched Brett closely for the last four years and he is improving all the time," Lillee said. "He will be the fastest ever, if he is not already there."

The Indians got a taste of Lee's pace twice on the tour, and succumbed both times.

Lee grabbed 3-57 and 4-77 playing for New South Wales on the slow wicket at Sydney earlier this month and devastated the tourists later with 4-25 in a one-day festival match against the Australian Prime Minister's team at Canberra.

The Indians were thrashed by 285 runs in the first Test at Adelaide, where the wicket was slower than the one being prepared at the Melbourne cricket ground.

## Tourists play down Lee bit



MELBOURNE, Dec 22 (AFP): The touring Indians did not bat an eyelid at the news Tuesday that fast bowler Brett Lee was included in the Australian team for the Boxing Day Test here.

"I think Lee's inclusion was expected," said Indian coach Kapil Dev of the 23-year-old, rated by Australian captain Steve Waugh as the fastest bowler in the world.

"I don't know if he will play the Test, but if he does, we are ready for him," Kapil said.

"My batsmen are not afraid of fast bowling. I think it's wrong to think that Indians don't play them well."

Lee's inclusion for Sunday's Test at the Melbourne cricket ground comes on the back of an eight-wicket haul for New South Wales against Western Australia on the bouncy wicket at Perth.

A similar wicket is expected here, giving Lee a good chance to earn his Test cap in place of seamer Michael Kasprizic, who played in the first Test.

Waugh said Lee bowled faster than the highly-rated Pakistani Shoaib Akhtar, who quickest delivery in the recent Test series was timed at around 155 kilometres an hour.

"Lee was outstanding," Waugh said. "He gave us a lot of firepower and as a captain it is always great to have someone who is bowling real quick and

making it hard for the opposition."

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Lee grabbed 3-57 and 4-77



BRETT LEE

playing for New South Wales on the slow wicket at Sydney earlier this month and devastated the tourists later with 4-25 in a one-day festival match against the Australian Prime Minister's team at Canberra.

At Canberra, Lee's victims included master batsman and captain Sachin Tendulkar for two, besides Venkat Laxman and Sadagopan Ramesh, the tourists' likely opening pair for

the second Test.

Mark Waugh, who was retained in the Australian team despite his poor form, told team-mate Adam Gilchrist that Lee's bowling at Perth was the quickest he had seen.

"It's not just about being quick, he is bowling with maturity beyond his years," Gilchrist said.

Kapil Dev refused to dwell on reports that the Indians believed Lee chucked his faster ball.

"I have said time and again that we have no problems with anyone," Kapil, the world's most successful Test bowler with 434 wickets, said.

"He is young, let's not ruin him by creating a controversy even before he has played his first Test match."

Lee, who was 12th man for the third and final Test against Pakistan in Perth last month, comes into the squad in place of Tasmanian Colin Miller.

The Australian selectors, meanwhile, kept their faith in Mark Waugh despite the elegant middle-order batsman passing 13 runs just three times in his past 15 Test innings.

He has been openly supported by brother Steve and former captains Mark Taylor and Greg Chappell, and will take the field for his 99th Test.

Australia, who beat India by 285 runs in the first Test in Adelaide last week, will be gunning for a sixth straight Test victory.

## Boucher aiming higher



EAST LONDON, Dec 22 (Internet report): Most wicketkeepers in the world would be satisfied to have 100 dismissals from 23 Tests and a batting average of 30.66. But Mark Boucher does not fall in that category. South Africa's 23-year-old gloveman wants to do better, particularly on the batting front.

"I've been working hard on both," he said in East London this week. "But I would really like to get my batting up to 40 or at least 35," he added.

Knowing Boucher, his sights will be firmly set on the former rather than the latter. A tough call considering he bats at a lowly nine in the SA order, but as he has shown ever since taking over the gloves from Dave Richardson there is nothing he relishes more than a challenge.

Regarded by many in the north as having been lucky to have been selected ahead of their own Nic Pothas, Boucher has since proved that surely turned the harshest of his critics around to his way of keeping.

Never the tidiest of performers behind the stumps he has basically won even the experts over by snaffling up the catches that count... 42 of them off one of the fastest pacemen in the world, Allan Donald.

And while comparisons may be odious it is worth noting that in 37 Tests with Donald, his predecessor Richardson claimed 47 wickets. The Don-



MARK BOUCHER

ald-Boucher relationship is now just 22 Tests old.

"I've been a bit fortunate," says Boucher, "in that I've played most of Tests in countries where the wickets have had bounce and that's manna from heaven when AD is around. Allan gets you plenty of inside and outside snicks."

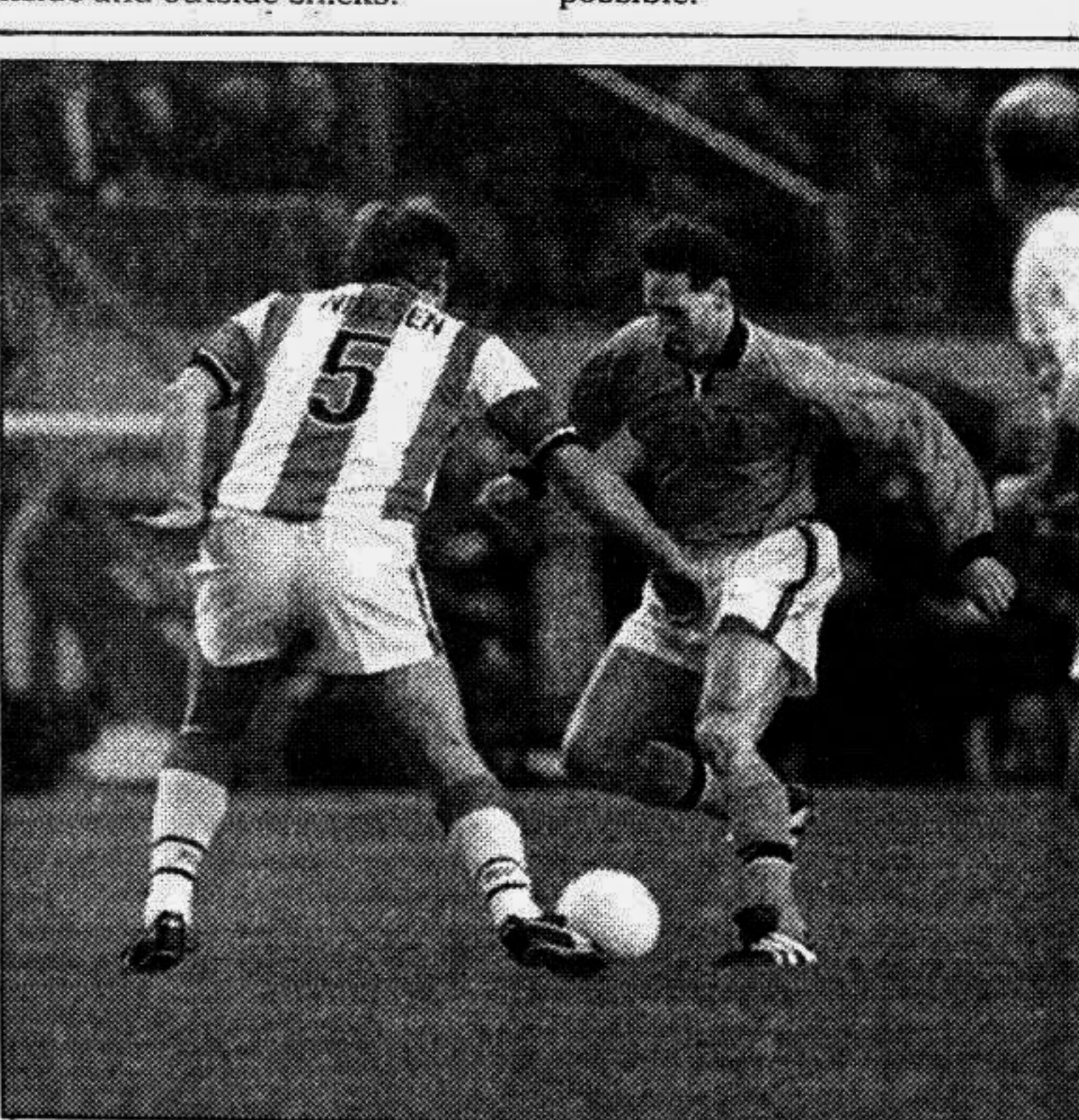
What he does find surprising is that he and Shaun Pollock have shared in 26 victims while together with "outswinger" Jacques Kallis he has only taken 11.

He does however firmly believe that with Kallis back up and bowling against their partnership is going to become a lot more fruitful in the very near future. "I'm looking forward to Jacques bowling again," he smiled.

While his various duets with South Africa's top class bowler have earned him world-wide acknowledgement however Boucher would also like to be recognised as a soloist.

"In the past I was often guilty of throwing my wicket away," he admits. "I guess that was partly due to the fact that when you are batting at nine you feel you are running out of time."

"But I've learnt that in a South African side there is no such thing as a ten or Jack. Everybody can bat and when you've got the likes of a Pollock or Lance Klusener with you, you know that a hundred is not impossible."



Dutch All Stars' Marco van Basten (2nd from L) tries to evade Ivan Nielsen (L) of a selection of foreigners who have played in Netherlands during the Dutch 'Orange of the Century' game Amsterdam on December 21. The match ended 1-1.

## Youth cricketers' camp begins at BKSP

Sports Reporter

The residential camp of the national youth cricket team started at the BKSP yesterday. Although five out of the finally selected 18 players failed to join the camp due to their involvement in the ongoing National League, coach Dipu Ras Choudhury said that the quintet would join the camp shortly.

The players will go through uninterrupted training at BKSP before leaving for Sri Lanka capital of Colombo on January 5.

The World Youth Championship will begin in Colombo on January 10.

Placed in Group B along with India, New Zealand and Holland, Bangladesh will play their first match against India on January 12. They will take on the Kiwis on January 14 before featuring against Holland two days later.

## Real abase Alaves

MADRID, Dec 22: Real Madrid's mini-revival in the Spanish league continued on Tuesday as they beat Alaves 3-1 away from home with goals from Fernando Hierro, Jose Maria Gutierrez and Raul Gonzalez, reports Reuters.

Real's second successive victory takes them up to eight in the table, 13 points behind leaders Deportivo Coruna, who take on Real Zaragoza in one of nine matches taking place today.

Alaves had much the better of the opening half-hour, with Javi Moreno and Meho Kodro both going close early on.

But Real, who came into the game on the back of a 2-1 win at home to Espanyol, gradually fought their way back and took the lead on 38 minutes as Hierro blasted in a free kick from 25 metres.

Alaves started the second half as well as they had the first but the sending-off of Cosmin Contra after 72 minutes effectively put an end to their hopes and Real pulled clear in the final quarter of an hour.

Guti made it 2-0 with a well struck half-volley on 78 minutes and, eight minutes later, his long range shot was deflected in by Raul.

Angel Morales scored a consolation goal for Alaves three minutes into injury-time.

The Spanish league takes a short break after the remaining matches are played on Wednesday, with league action resuming on January 5.

## Brazil's sixth in a row

ZURICH, Dec 22 (Reuters): Brazil have won FIFA's team-of-the-year award for the sixth successive time.

The award goes to the team which tops FIFA's rankings in December. Brazil's Copa America triumph helped them to hold off second-placed Czech Republic who lost just once this year. World champions France were third.

The award will be presented to Brazil at a FIFA gala on January 24 in Brussels.

## Barmby saves Everton

LONDON, Dec 22: Nick Barmby spared Everton's blushes by scoring with five minutes to go as the Premier-ship side narrowly beat Third Division Exeter City 1-0 in the FA Cup third round replay at Goodison on Tuesday, reports AFP.

Exeter, 75 places below their Premiership hosts, dug in for a siege and with extra time looming Everton finally got their break.

John Collins' shot from the edge of the box was blocked and broke into the penalty area where Barmby was first to react, drilling the ball into the far corner.

Everton will now play at home to First Division Birmingham in the next round.

Non-league Rushden and Diamonds took First Division Sheffield United to penalties but were eventually edged out 6-5 in the shoot-out.

Ray Warburton levelled for the home side after Shaun Derry had put the visitors ahead with both goals scored in the extra time period after playing out a 0-0 draw after 90 minutes.



Deportivo Alaves' Torres Mestre (L) outpaces Perica Ognjenovic of Real Madrid while in pursuit of the ball during their Primera Liga fixture on December 21. — AFP photo

## Kevin gets FA support



LONDON, Dec 22: England manager Kevin Keegan on Tuesday was given the backing of Football Association chairman Geoff Thompson to carry on in his job - even if the national side struggle at next summer's European Championship finals, reports AFP.

Keegan has reportedly admitted that he would have quit if his side had lost in the Euro 2000 play-offs against Scotland and would be unlikely to keep his job unless England did "fantastically well" in the tournament itself.

However, the FA chairman has sought to relieve any pressure on Keegan by insisting that qualifying from the group stages would represent a "major achievement" in itself.

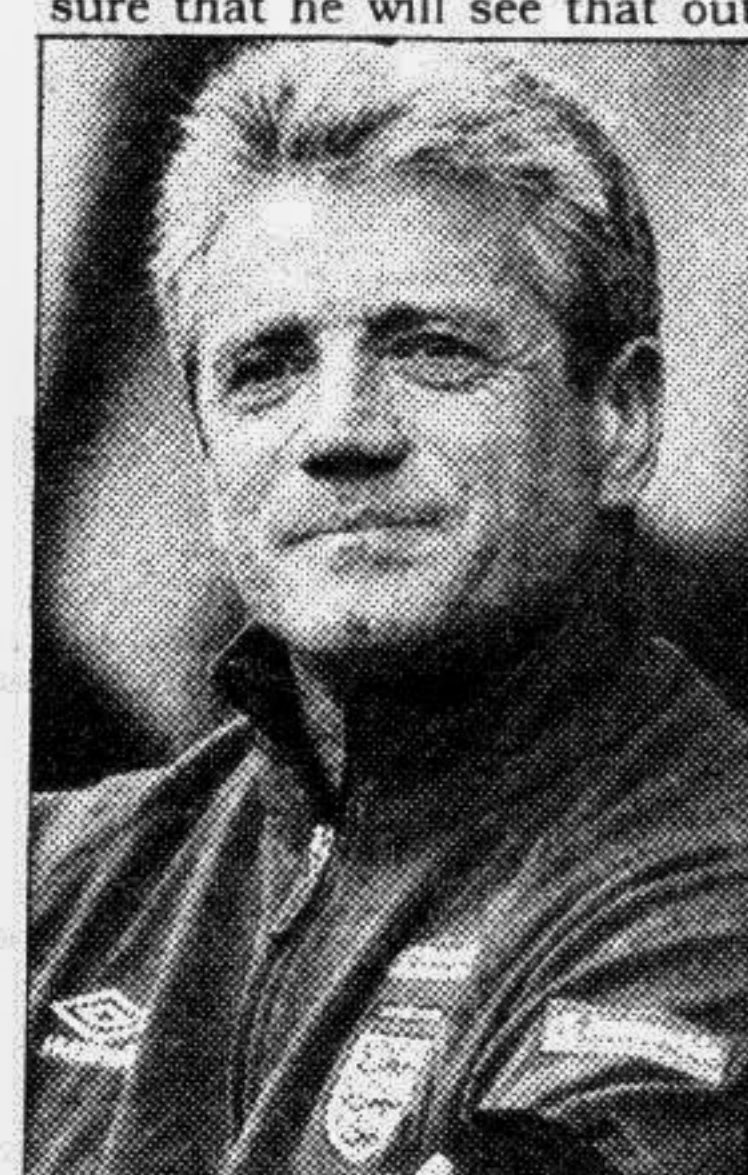
Thompson insisted Keegan remains the right man for the job, saying: "If we hadn't qualified, there would have been no pressure on Kevin Keegan."

The main aim has always been the 2002 World Cup.

"There's no pressure on him,

none at all. There's no point giving somebody the job if you give him a gun with a bullet in it."

"I have the utmost confidence in him. He's got a contract until the 2002 World Cup. I'm sure that he will see that out



KEVIN KEEGAN

and that is the end of the issue as far as I'm concerned.

"I'm more than happy with Kevin and there is a unity at the FA behind that point of view."

"We picked the right man and I'm sure that he'll prove to be a very good England manager."

"Everybody wanted us to appoint him, we believed he was the right man anyway - we wouldn't have appointed anyone on a newspaper poll - and clearly we needed somebody to lift the nation."

Thompson added: "We'd like to win the European Championships and we've perhaps got the players to do so."

"But to be realistic, if you're in the fourth pot of seeds then your first aim is to get through that first stage and then you can use that as a springboard for further success."

"Kevin was starting with one arm tied behind his back. It was an uphill struggle and it would be totally wrong to have expected him to come in and qualify us for the European Championships and be considered a failure."

## How it became 'beautiful'



LONDON, Dec 22 (Reuters): England and the embryonic world governing body FIFA gave shape and form to soccer, destined to become the world's global game by the turn of the century.

Proof that association football was part of the social fabric of England came in 1901 when a world record 110,820 people watched the English Cup final.

On the reverse side of the ledger in the following year 25 people died during the Scotland-England international in Glasgow, the game's first major disaster.

The game soon captured the popular imagination in Europe and South America and in 1904 representatives from France, Belgium, Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden, Spain and the Netherlands met in Paris to form FIFA.

Although the game evolved in Europe, the first great international team of the century came from South America.

Uruguay won the Olympic Games titles of 1924 and 1928 before hosting and winning the first World Cup in 1930. Only 13 teams took part in the competition, but soccer had taken another major step forward.

Hugo Meisl's Austrian "Wunderteam" and Vittorio Pozzo's Italy were the dominant forces of the 1930s, with Italy winning the next two World Cups in 1934 and 1938.

That competition, played in the shadow of World War Two was the last World Cup for 12 years and although Hungary and Brazil were to dominate the 1950s, it was Uruguay who won the first World Cup after the war.

Their shock 2-1 win over Brazil on July 16, 1950 at the Maracana Stadium in Rio de Janeiro was watched by a world record crowd of 203,500, an attendance unlikely ever to be bettered.

## HUNGARY DOMINATE EARLY 1950S

Hungary dominated the early 1950s and were defeated just once in 50 internationals between June 1950 and November 1955.

They were the first team to beat England on home soil, a famous 6-3 rout at Wembley in 1953 inspired by Ferenc Puskas, followed by a 7-1 victory in Budapest six months later.

Unfortunately their only loss in this period was the 1954 World Cup final which they lost 3-2 to West Germany after leading 2-0.

The 1950s were a golden decade, the last years when the game still retained something of its early sporting innocence, a time when fair play was still widespread, a time before spiralling wages and commercialism took a grip unlikely now to be loosened.

It was also the decade when Brazil won the World Cup for the first time, and the greatest player of all time made his presence known.

Edson Arantes do Nascimento, henceforth known as Pele, introduced himself to the world in the 1958 World Cup finals as a 17-year-old and scored twice in the final as Brazil beat hosts Sweden 5-2.

He would go on to score more than 1,200 goals in a 21-year professional career and also lead Brazil to victory in the 1970 World Cup in Mexico.

Brazil's performances in 1970, including their 4-1 destruction of Italy in the final, confirmed a team containing Pele, Jairzinho, Carlos Alberto, Rivelino and Tostao as the greatest international side ever.

While Brazil were the dominant international team of the time, no club side in the world could match Real Madrid who won the first five European Cup finals from 1956, culminating in their 7-3 victory over Eintracht Frankfurt in the 1960 final.

Two other teams could have laid claim to Real's title as Europe's greatest ever club side, but the fates decreed otherwise.

Torino won five successive Italian titles in the 1940s before their all-conquering team were killed when their aircraft crashed on the Superga mountain above Turin in 1949.

Manchester United's "Busby Babes" side also looked destined for long-term success after winning the English title in 1956 and 1957 but the team was destroyed with the deaths of eight players in the Munich air crash of 1958.

It says much for the remarkable powers of Matt Busby, the legendary United manager, that within 10 years he built a new team who won the European Cup in 1968.

At the heart of that side was the long-haired Northern Irish genius George Best, who more than anyone symbolised the fusion of soccer and the show-business worlds of the 1960s.

Best was soccer's first modern-day pin-up, the first modern superstar.

## CRYUFF AND BECKENBAUER PRACTISE TOTAL FOOTBALL

In the following decade Johan Cryuff was at the heart of the total football philosophy of

the Netherlands side who lost the 1974 World Cup final to West Germany. Cryuff also inspired Ajax to three European Cups and took Barcelona to the Spanish title.

He was matched by West Germany's Franz Beckenbauer, another pioneer of total football. Beckenbauer played a major role in West Germany's 1972 championship win, the successful 1974 World Cup campaign and captained Bayern Munich to three consecutive European Cups. While great players such as Cryuff and Beckenbauer and Argentina's flawed genius Diego Maradona captured the imagination of millions of fans with their deeds, one man off the pitch helped catch millions more fans for the sport itself.