

### Baggio not leaving Inter for now

MILAN, Jan 4: Former Italy captain Roberto Baggio, who has been at odds with coach Marcello Lippi, said on Monday he would stay at Inter Milan at least until the end of the season, reports Reuters.

"I'm flattered that a lot of clubs have expressed an interest in me but I'll finish the season here at Inter," Baggio told reporters as the Italian soccer winter transfer window opened.

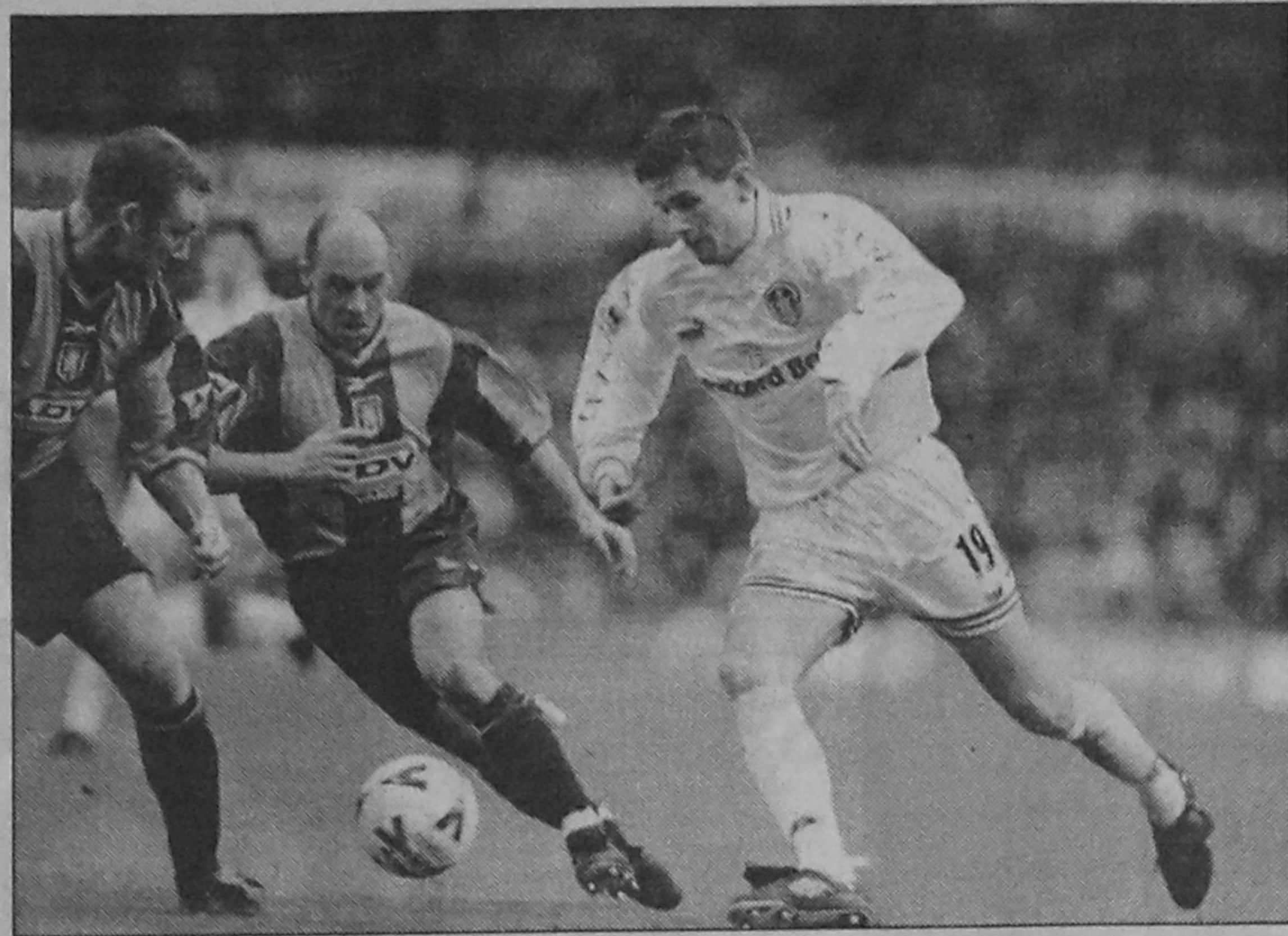
"I hope I'll have the opportunity to play soon and then at the end of the season we'll see."

Baggio accused Lippi last month of going back on his word by leaving him on the bench for most of this season.

The 1993 world-player-of-the-year has made only six appearances for Inter since the summer and has played less than three hours of first team football.

Lippi responded angrily to the accusation and said Baggio was free to leave if he wished.

Baggio, who has been linked with several clubs in Italy and France, was widely expected to take Lippi at his word this month when the transfer market reopened.



Aston Villa's Steve Stone (C) trying to take the ball away from Eirik Bakke (R) of Leeds United during their Premiership clash at Elland Road on January 3. -AFP photo

### WTA's top 20

ST PETERSBURG, Florida, Jan 4 (Reuters): Top 20 women's tennis players, according to the WTA Tour rankings:

Player	Points
Hings	5,920
Davenport	4,813
V Williams	4,377
S Williams	3,021
Pierce	2,585
Seles	2,310
Tauziat	2,145
Schett	2,093
Halard-Decugis	1,915
Mauresmo	1,906
Cocetzer	1,772
Kournikova	1,639
Testud	1,600
Van Roost	1,585
Martinez	1,515
Huber	1,500
Sanchez-Vicario	1,433
Likhovtseva	1,335
Frazier	1,297
Dragomir	1,272

### Kournikova advances

GOLD COAST, Australia, Jan 4: Russian drawcard and second seed Anna Kournikova won her second-round match Tuesday but nearly lost her jacket at the Australian women's hardcourt tennis championships, reports AP.

Tournament organisers played down security fears for the 18-year-old who was signing autographs after a walkover not be prosecuted.

Seles needed a two-year break at the peak of her career after being stabbed in the back by a spectator at a tournament in Germany in 1994.

Kournikova, ranked 12th in the world, had an easy time Tuesday when her opponent, German qualifier Jana Kandarr, pulled with a thigh strain after losing 6-1, 30 minutes into their second-round match.

Third seed Conchita Martinez also advanced to the third round through injury.

German opponent Barbara Rittner pulled out with a strain in her left Achilles tendon after losing the first game of the second set. She lost the opening set 6-1.

Earlier, Croatia's No 1 player, Silvnikova. In another match, Russian Tatiana Panova beat Australian Rachel McQuillan 2-6, 6-7, 6-3.

### Premiership

## Villa baffle leaders

LONDON, Jan 4: Manchester United will probably be wearing broad smiles in the Rio sunshine as their championship rivals failed to cash in on their absence on Monday as Sir Alex Ferguson's side prepare for the World Club Championship in Brazil, reports AFP.

The biggest shock was at Elland Road where Leeds, having won their last seven home league games, crashed 2-1 to Aston Villa thanks to a double from Gareth Southgate.

Southgate, scoring his first goals since December 1998, was in inspirational form as Leeds fell to their second successive defeat although they retained their one point lead because Manchester United are away in Brazil playing in the World Club Championship in Brazil.

Leeds manager David O'Leary said United were the real winners on a day in which four of the top five lost: "All the other results went for us, but I think the team that are laughing the most are Manchester United in Brazil.

"They are the ones who have been the yardstick all along."

But O'Leary claimed his side were not helped by injuries and suspension which robbed him of his whole midfield unit.

O'Leary said: "If you lose your complete four in midfield then I don't think anybody can cope with that. It's as simple as that."

"Before we had the injuries, it was a complete midfield. But even for a club like Man United when you lose your complete midfield - David Hopkin, David Batty, Lee Bowyer and Stephen McPhail - it would be very hard."

"Man United are the best team in the league, that's a fact. We have got others in it but we are trying to do our best as a young side."

"The side today was really young, and that's where you need some experience."

"But we lost a whole midfield, and that is very hard to cope with - particularly at home when we need to bounce back. It

is unfortunate we lost them, but that's life."

Villa boss John Gregory admitted not even he had expected Southgate to be the source of his side's victory. "Gareth is known as the 'ornament' because he just goes up there and becomes an ornament normally."

"He goes up for every corner and every free-kick and he never even touches the ball."

"But he scored two today and he has persevered, I'll give him his due."

"He was an unexpected match winner but he deserved that for the way he performed at the back."

Arsenal also failed to cash in on Leeds' misfortune and had to be content with a 1-1 draw away at struggling Sheffield Wednesday leaving Arsenal Wenger's side third on 40 points.

Emmanuel Petit gave the visitors the lead five minutes before the break but Gerald Sibon levelled for Danny Wilson's men after 62 minutes.

Wednesday boss Wilson had to give his side a roasting at half time in order to get the best out of his team and take something from the game.

"Things had to be said because we couldn't carry on in the same vein," he said.

"In that first half we were a shadow of the side I know we are. We didn't get about Arsenal, and there were too many pass-sengers."

"The way we played in that first period was perplexing. We just strolled around for 45 minutes."

"But in the second half that was possibly our best 45 minutes for a long time. We are going to have to maintain that standard if we are going to have any hope of getting out of our situation."

"If there's one thing I won't let my players now do then it's rest."

"I won't let them have a minute's peace because they played to a standard in the second half which I know they are capable of."

Sunderland stay fourth despite crashing 1-0 away at Wimbledon because Liverpool also went down 1-0 at Tottenham.

In two relegation battles Southampton got their first win in seven games with a 1-0 win over Bradford City while Derby's recent signing Branko Strupar struck twice to beat Watford 2-0.

Manager Jim Smith hailed the Belgian international as the man Derby need to pull them out of the relegation zone.

"The difference was having Strupar. He scored two goals and finished well, and that's what we've been missing," Smith said.

"Strupar had a little bit of flu but he's a quality player and an intelligent player, and he showed that today," he added.

West Ham fought back with two late goals to draw 2-2 with Newcastle as midfielder Frank Lampard and then a first goal from their Croatian international defender Igor Stimac

gained an improbable point.

Magpies Greek midfielder Nico Dabizas had given Newcastle an early lead with his fourth goal of the season against a Hammers side, who had won on their last two visits.

Welsh international midfielder Gary Speed looked to have sealed the three points when he volleyed Newcastle two up midway through the second-half till West Ham's late late show.

Everton remained alongside Manchester United as the only two sides unbeaten at home in the Premiership with a 2-2 draw with Leicester.

Premiership action continues on Tuesday night with Coventry against Chelsea.

### Tough time for Henman

ADELAIDE, Jan 4: Tim Henman, who wants the Australian hardcourt championship, to be the springboard for an overdue lift in ranking and performance, was given a tough first round battle by Spaniard Juan Balcells today, reports Reuters.

The Briton, currently 12th in the world, was involved in a thrilling battle at both baseline and net before he triumphed 6-4, 7-6 with the help of two key passing shots in the tie-break.

"When you talk about the regular Spaniard, he's going to spend most of the time on the baseline, and hopefully shake your hand at the end of the match at the net," said Henman.

"But Balcells is a rare species, serving, volleying both balls (on serve and return)."

Henman has been preparing hard in a bid to resurrect his career. He was world number five last year but slumped after Wimbledon where he was eliminated in the semifinals by Pete Sampras.

The second seed hopes that Adelaide will at least help him acclimatise for the Australian Open in Melbourne later this month. His goal is a top eight ranking by the end of the season.

"Although I was disappointed with the year, I was still very keen and still very motivated to start working on my game because, to tell you the truth, I hadn't really had an opportunity to practice and try to improve for a long, long time," he said. "I'm sure that hard work will pay off."

Eighth seed Nicolas Escude of France also struggled against a motivated Paul Bacanello before winning 6-7, 7-5, 6-3. But inexperience, sloppy serving and rushed shots robbed the Australian qualifier of momentum in his first major tournament after a 12-month absence because of a back injury.

Escude sealed his first career victory in Toulouse in October then beat Carlos Moya and Marcelo Rios in subsequent tournaments to finish 1999 ranked at 27.



British Tim Henman in action against Spaniard Juan Balcells at the Hopman Cup yesterday. -AFP photo

### Singapore braces for TV feast

SINGAPORE, Jan 4: Singapore sports fans are in for a television feast as the city state's top two broadcasters jostle for screening rights to world class events ahead of planned expansions this month, reports AFP.

The Television Corp. of Singapore (TCS) will launch a new channel, SportsCity, on January 30 while cable TV provider, Singapore Cable Vision (SCV), unveils its fourth sports channel on January 15.

TCS, whose channels are free, has captured exclusive rights to the European soccer championships to be hosted jointly by Belgium and Holland in June, much to the chagrin of SCV whose football channel cannot screen a single game live, the Straits Times reported Tuesday.

An industry source said TCS "paid a bomb" for Euro 2000 "to show that it wants to be a big player in the market and ensure that SportsCity becomes a regional competitor to SCV's four sports channels," according to the daily.

But SCV's vice-president Sandie Lee was quoted as saying the cable channel, whose programmes are for subscribers only, was negotiating with TCS to show some live games.

SCV has meanwhile won exclusive rights to the English FA Cup and Worthington Cup soccer and also the FIFA World Club championships which kicks off in Brazil on Wednesday as well as the European Professional Golf Association (PGA) Tour.

TCS has secured exclusive rights for September's Olympic Games in Sydney.

"At the end of the day, the Singapore sports fan wins simply because there will be more live sport on TV," said SportsCity's manager for sports programming Riduwan Matni.

### Wenger's advice for rookie striker

PARIS, Jan 4: Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger warned Arsenal's young centre forward Jeremie Aladiere not to allow early success to scupper his career, according to Tuesday's edition of France Football magazine, reports AFP.

The Frenchman, who signed Aladiere on his first professional contract in March, has watched him score about 15 goals in the under-17 side but warned there was still a long way to go.

"The danger is that young players have the feeling of success without actually having succeeded," said Wenger.

"They are headhunted and can think they are exceptional although they haven't proved anything."

Wenger's warning to Aladiere comes after his bitter experience with French striker Nicolas Anelka.

Wenger lured the then teenager to Arsenal from Paris Saint Germain in the 1996-97 season and turned him into a French international before their relationship soured and the striker left for Real Madrid last summer in a marathon 37.6million dollars deal.

Wenger, however, had no doubts about Aladiere's talent, indeed describing it as exceptional, meaning the player's ambitions himself are hardly far-fetched.

"My dream for the year 2000 is to play for the Arsenal first team on a permanent basis," said Aladiere, formerly of FC Rambouillet Yvelines and Paris club Racing.

Wenger added that both parties had taken a risk.

"Jeremie took a risk coming to Arsenal at such a young age. We also took one too, financially (...). Our common aim is that he becomes an Arsenal player."

### PCB seeks Lilee's help

## Akhtar returns home today



UNDATED, Jan 4 (AP/Reuters/Internet): Shoab Akhtar is set to return to Pakistan on Wednesday to await the outcome of an appeal against his International Cricket Council-imposed ban.

Akhtar was last week banned temporarily after a nine-member ICC committee ruled that his bowling action could contravene the rules of cricket.

Pakistan team manager Brigadier Khawaja Mohammad Nasir said in Adelaide today that he had decided to send Akhtar home because the affair was affecting the team's preparation for the upcoming one-day series.

"It's not good for the team," Nasir said. "If you have uncertainty in your mind then it creates pressure and it's certainly a problem in concentration if you're mentally troubled."

Nasir said Akhtar had remained with the squad despite being informed of the ICC's ruling a week ago in the hope that the decision might be overturned.

The Pakistan Cricket Board on Monday lodged an appeal against the ban and decided to keep the fast bowler with the squad as it prepared for Tuesday's match against Australia A at Adelaide.

Nasir, however, said he did not know when the ICC would reply to the PCB about the appeal but added that he hoped Akhtar would be cleared to take some part in the one-day series between India, Australia and Pakistan starting January 9.

Meanwhile, reports from Karachi suggest PCB has sought the help of Australian fast bowling legend Dennis Lillee to help overcome the problems being faced by Akhtar.

The young fast bowler has been asked to report to a University in Perth, Western Australia, where he would be attending a four-day course in which efforts would be made by experts to correct the problems spotted by the ICC advisory panel.

### 'Racism behind the ban'

SYDNEY, Jan 4: A leading Pakistan cricket official says racism could have motivated the International Cricket Council's decision to place a temporary international ban on Shoab Akhtar because of his bowling action, reports AP.

Pakistan Cricket Board secretary Shafiqat Rana said recent allegations of illegal bowling actions only seemed to target bowlers from Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka.

"It's only against the Asian cricketers... why not against others?" he told Australian Broadcasting Corporation radio.

"Why not go against [Australian fast bowler] Brett Lee when he bowls the faster one?"

"Why [Indian bowler] Manoj Prabhakar, why [Sri Lankan off-spinner] Muralitharan?"

A nine-member ICC panel last week banned Akhtar after studying video footage of his bowling action during the third Test between Pakistan and Australia in Perth earlier in the summer and concluding that his action could contravene the rules of cricket.

with his action."

Asked as to why PCB was not taking steps to get the ICC advisory panel to clear Shabbir Ahmed to play at the international level again, he explained that he had watched Shabbir bowling in a domestic game recently and while his action was corrected, but he was struggling with his line and length during his modified action.

"He needs time to adjust to his corrected action, but he remains an asset for the future," General Tauqir who earlier in the day met former Test pacer Sarfaraz Nawaz, said his advice is being sought also to work on Shoab and Shabbir.

Doubts over Akhtar's action were first raised by umpires during Pakistan's recent three-Test tour of Australia won by the home side 3-0.

His case was referred to the ICC's bowling panel who ordered him to stand down from international cricket for a month until his action was reviewed.

### Gold Flake Open on

MADRAS, Jan 4: Indian teen-age star Sunil Kumar lost in straight sets Monday to seventh seed Ronald Agenor, as the tournament's oldest player knocked out its youngest in the first round of the Gold Flake Open tennis tournament in Madras, reports AP.

At 35, Agenor had to call upon his experience to overcome the 16-year-old by a score of 6-4, 6-4. Kumar showed potential, but his inexperience proved his undoing.

The first set was marked by long rallies, and Kumar had the home crowd behind him. He broke the Haitian's serve in the third game to go up 2-1, but Agenor broke back in the next game to level 2-2.

After keeping it close, Kumar lost the first set when he hit a ball into the net. The second set also turned out to be evenly balanced, and both held their serves.



Liverpool's Vegard Heggem (R) holds back David Ginola of Tottenham Hotspur during their Premiership fixture at White Hart Lane on January 3. -AFP photo

### Government of Bangladesh Office of the Executive Engineer PWD Division, Meherpur Notice Inviting Tender No 3 (three) E/M-1999-2000

- Sealed tenders in Bangladesh Form No 2911 are hereby invited from the Special Class-I, Class-I (Combined) & valid enlisted E/M contractor/firm under PWD according to their financial limit for the undermentioned work & will be received by the undersigned as well as by the Executive Engineer, PWD Division, Jessore/Magura/Jhenidah/Kushtia/Narail/Chudanga/Rajbari/Faridpur up to 12.00 Noon on 19-01-2000 and will be opened on the same day at 12.15 PM in presence of the intending tenderers who may like to remain present. Each tender shall be in a sealed cover with the name of work superscribed on it. The tender form will be sold up to 5.00 PM till 18-01-2000.
- Name of work : Construction of Mujibnagar Complex in the dist of Meherpur (SH: Electrification arrangement of Bangabandhu Toron)
- Estimated cost : Tk 1,46,903/- only.
- Earnest money : Tk 2,940/- only.
- The intending tenderer/firm shall have to enclose the following documents duly attested by the Class-I officers of this Deptt with the tender failing which the tender will be summarily rejected:
  - VAT Registration Certificate (10 digit)
  - Copy of upto renewed of enlistment.
  - TIN Certificate.
- Tender documents consisting of BD Form No 2911, schedule of items, additional terms & conditions etc can be seen & obtained from the office of the Executive Engineer under PWD Circle, Jessore during the office hours.
- In case of quoting same lowest rates by more than one tenderer/firm the lowest tenderer will be selected through lottery to be held on 31-01-2000 at 11.30 AM in the office of the undersigned.

Md Abdul Mannan  
Executive Engineer  
PWD Division, Meherpur.

### Thakurgaon Road Division

- Sealed tender in Bangladesh Form No 2911 are invited.
- Tender Notice No : 03, EE/T of 1999-2000.
  - Name of work : Construction of surface drain at 2nd, 3rd & 5th KM of Thakurgaon Station Road & Re-Construction of boundary wall (P) at 58th KM of Dinajpur-Panchagarh Road to the 'RHD' stackyard under Thakurgaon Road Division during the year 1999-2000. In 2 (Two) groups.
  - Head of Accounts
  - Estimated cost
  - Earnest money
  - Time allowed
  - Eligibility of contractor
  - Name of offices where tender documents will be sold : 1. Executive Engineer, (RHD), Road Division, Thakurgaon/Dinajpur/Nilphamari/Panchagarh.  
2. Sub-Divisional Engineer, (RHD), Road Sub-Division, Thakurgaon/1st Line Workshop, Sub-Division, Thakurgaon.
  - Name of offices where tender documents will be received : 1. Superintending Engineer, (RHD), Road Circle, Dinajpur.  
2. Executive Engineer, (RHD), Road Thakurgaon/Dinajpur/Nilphamari/Panchagarh.
  - Last date of selling tender documents (within office hours)
  - Last date & time for receiving tender : At 12-30 PM on 20/01/2000.
  - Date and time of opening tender : At 12-45 PM on 20/01/2000.
  - Date and time of opening tender : At 11.00 AM on 25/01/2000.
  - Date and time of lottery (If necessary)

#### Group list

Group no	Name of Road	Name of work with location	Chargeable head	Estimated cost	Earnest money	Time allowed for completion of work	Eligibility of contractor	Remarks
1 (One)	Thakurgaon-Station Road	Construction of surface drain at 2nd, 3rd & 5th KM.	168 RBP	Tk. 2,01,886/-	Tk. 4,038/-	30 (Thirty) days	'A' to 'E' general category of 'RHD' contractor	Separate tender with separate earnest money to be submitted for each group
2 (Two)	Dinajpur-Panchagarh Road	Re-Construction boundary wall (P) at 58th KM to the 'RHD' stackyard.	168 RBE	Tk. 1,56,940/-	Tk. 3139/-	25 (Twenty five) days	-Do-	

DFF-29504-30/12 G-25

S A Mannan  
Executive Engineer, (RHD)  
Road Division, Thakurgaon.