

Dalmiya denies 'dubious deals'

NEW DELHI, Apr 28: World cricket chief Jagmohan Dalmiya Thursday denied allegations he had been party to 'dubious deals' over television rights in the latest scandal to shake the sport, reports said.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) president called a late-night press conference to refute accusations that he had taken kickbacks related to tele-cast rights for a 1998 ICC tournament in Bangladesh, the Press Trust of India reported.

The allegations emerged earlier Thursday when a man claiming to be a former financial expert at the Indian state-run broadcaster Doordashan said Dalmiya had defrauded the station of four million dollars.

Arun Aggarwal told reporters at a press conference that Dalmiya had abused his powers as sole negotiator for the ICC during talks with Doordashan about television coverage rights for the Dhaka tournament.

Dalmiya said the allegations were 'man-fixing and motivated' and threatened legal action.

'There cannot be a bigger lie than that. It is nothing but a concerted vilification campaign against me,' he told journalists in Calcutta.

'It is a vilification against the ICC also. I will consult my solicitors and discuss with ICC officials before taking a decision (about legal action).'

'I thought that man-fixing is generally done by the underworld, but now it is being done by the world above.'

Asked about Aggarwal, Dalmiya said: 'I have neither heard of Arun Aggarwal nor his report. I am waiting to hear from Doordashan who this Aggarwal is.'

The Indian ICC chief was speaking after a flight from New Delhi where he had attended an unprecedented meeting with top Indian players and officials to discuss the match-fixing allegations swirling through the sport.

ECB clears the three

LONDON, Apr 28: Three England cricketers were cleared of allegations of match-fixing by an England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) inquiry on Thursday, reports AFP.

This follows a newspaper article by former England all-rounder Chris Lewis, making public allegations by an Indian businessman that three England players had received money for fixing the outcome of matches.

Gerard Elias, QC, chairman of the ECB's discipline standing committee, issued the following statement relating to the allegations of betting and match-fixing.

'Having been given information by Chris Lewis at a meeting on April 18, following an article under his name in a Sunday newspaper, I have investigated the matter and met with police officers of New Scotland Yard.

'As a result, I conclude that there is no evidence whatsoever to justify the bringing of disciplinary charges in relation to betting and/or match fixing against any member of the England international squad, past or present.'

All the information to which I have been privy is in the hands of the police and I understand that their investigation continues into wider aspects of allegations of match fixing, including the possible involvement of third parties who may have attempted to 'recruit' players or officials in England or elsewhere.

'The discipline committee of the board will remain vigilant to consider any evidence which may become available at any time in the future in relation to the allegations of this nature, and the board will continue to provide whatever assistance it can to the police and the ICC in its efforts to root out any wrongdoer and eradicate the stain of corruption from the game of cricket.'

City inter-schools cricket

CHITTAGONG, Apr 28: Police Lines High beat Government Muslim High by seven wickets in the inaugural match of Seraj Memorial inter-schools cricket competition at Dampara Police Lines ground here today, reports BSS.

Muslim High batted first and were all out for 121 for seven in the stipulated 30 overs.

In reply, Police Lines scored 122 for three wickets in 23.3 overs.

Twelve schools of Chittagong city are participating in the competition, organised by Chittagong Mohanagar Kriya Sangstha.

Shahidullah Khan, Acting Commissioner of Chittagong Metropolitan Police, inaugurated the meet as the chief guest.

Rajshahi cricket

From Our Correspondent RAJSHAH, Apr 28: Naohata Pilla Club entered into the semifinal of the Gold Cup cricket tournament beating Nagsha Club by 46 runs in the first quarterfinal played at the Naohata College ground today.

The winners made 155 for four wickets in the stipulated 25 overs.

In reply, they booked Nagsha for 109 in 24.3 overs.

Asian Cup, Lebanon 2000



Asian Football Confederation general secretary Peter Velappan (2nd from R) makes a point during the draw of the Asian Cup in Lebanon on April 27. —AFP photo

THE SCHEDULE

Thursday, Oct 12

Group 1

At Saïda

Iraq v Thailand

At Sports City, Beirut

Lebanon v Iran

Friday, Oct 13

Group 2

At Tripoli

South Korea v China

At Tripoli

Kuwait v Indonesia

Saturday, Oct 14

Group 3

At Saïda

Saudi Arabia v Japan

At Saïda

Qatar v Uzbekistan

Sunday, Oct 15

Group 1

At Sports City

Iran v Thailand

At Sports City

Lebanon v Iraq

Monday, Oct 16

Group 2

At Tripoli

China v Indonesia

At Tripoli

South Korea v Kuwait

Tuesday, Oct 17

Group 3

At Saïda

Japan v Uzbekistan

At Saïda

Saudi Arabia v Qatar

Wednesday, Oct 18

Group 1

At Sports City

Iran v Iraq

At Sports City Thailand

Thursday, Oct 19

Group 2

At Tripoli

China v Kuwait

At Tripoli

South Korea v Indonesia

Friday, Oct 20

Group 3

At Saïda

Saudi Arabia v Uzbekistan

At Saïda

Japan v Qatar

Monday, Oct 23

Quarterfinals

At Tripoli

Winner Group 1 v 3rd Group 2 or 3

At Saïda

Winner Group 2 v 3rd Group 1 or 3

Tuesday, Oct 24

Quarterfinals

At Sports City

Winner Group 3 v 2nd Group 1

At Sports City

2nd Group 2 v 2nd Group 3

Thursday, Oct 26

Semifinals

At Sports City

Winner 1st quarter-final v Winner 4th quarter-final

At Sports City

Winner 2nd quarter-final v Winner 3rd quarter-final

Sunday, Oct 29

At Sports City

Third-place play-off

At Sports City

Final

Mihajlovic's warning

MILAN, Apr 28: Yugoslavia's Sinisa Mihajlovic says he will not play at Euro 2000 unless reports he has joined President Slobodan Milosevic's political party are officially denied, reports Reuters.

Serbian television carried a report this week that the defender, who plays for Lazio, had joined Milosevic's Serbian Socialist Party and showed pictures of him signing a document.

Pro-government newspapers also reported Mihajlovic had joined Milosevic's party. Mihajlovic says he signed documents to act as a 'sporting ambassador' for Yugoslavia and denied he had joined the party or was a Milosevic supporter.

The defender, a key part of Vujadin Boskov's squad for the finals in June and July, said that if the sports ministry did not clear up the matter he would quit the Yugoslav team.

'If it does not happen before Saturday, if it does not emerge that I adhere to no parties and merely act for sport and the love of my country, then I will rip up my passport as 'sporting ambassador' and I will quit the national team forever,' Mihajlovic told the Italian news agency ANSA.

Bacher begs PCB's pardon

NEW DELHI, Apr 28: South African cricket chief Ali Bacher has said he never blamed Pakistan for fixing World Cup matches, a senior Pakistani official claimed on Friday, reports AFP.

Bacher has clarified to the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) he did not mention the name of any country or umpire while telling Australian newspapers on April 19 that a few World Cup matches were fixed.

The PCB official told this news agency by phone from Lahore that Bacher had written a letter to the board apologising for the misunderstanding.

'Somebody has played mischief in the whole affair,' Bacher was quoted as saying in the letter.

'In my interview I never mentioned the name of any country or individual umpire as mentioned by the papers. I am sorry if the misquoted news has harmed the feelings of any individual,' Bacher states in the letter.

Bacher was quoted by Australian newspapers as saying that two matches in the 1999 World Cup in England, one in which minnows Bangladesh upset eventual runners-up Pakistan, were fixed.

Bacher was also reported to have expressed suspicions about Pakistani umpire Javed Akhtar over his nine leg-before verdicts against South Africa during the Headingley Test against England in 1998.

Pakistan and Akhtar reacted angrily to the charges, saying Bacher should substantiate his claims before the emergency meeting of the International Cricket Council's executive board in London on May 2-3.

ICC president Jagmohan Dalmiya also wanted a retraction from Bacher, saying he 'will otherwise have to explain why he went public with his allegation'.

The Pandora's box of match-fixing and betting in cricket reopened on April 7 when South African captain Hansie Cronje and three fellow players were charged by Indian police for their involvement with bookies during the one-day series against India last month.

Cronje was subsequently sacked as captain after he admitted to taking some 10,000 to 15,000 dollars for providing match information and forecasting results during an earlier tri-series in South Africa.

Barisal cricket

From Staff Correspondent BARISAL, Apr 28: Fakirbari Club defeated Arunoday Shishu-Kishore Kriya Sangha by 4 wickets while Nabajagaran Sangha beat BCC Club by 25 wickets in the second round of the First Division Cricket League here played at the Abdur Raheem Stadium today.

Winning the toss, Arunoday collected 125 runs losing all wickets in 40.4 overs.

In reply, Fakirbari made 131 runs losing 6 wickets in 29 overs.

In the second match of the day, BCC Club batted first and scored 121 runs losing all wickets in 33.1 overs.

In reply, Nabajagaran made 122 losing 5 wickets in 31.3 overs.

Troussier's days numbered?

TOKYO, Apr 28: Japan's under-fire French coach Philippe Troussier will be replaced by compatriot Arsene Wenger when his contract expires later this year, a report said Friday, reports AFP.

Troussier -- whose contract runs out in June -- will be axed in favour of Arsenal manager Wenger after failing to impress the Japan Football Association (JFA) during his 19-month reign, the Asahi Shimbun said.

The association is currently considering whether to renew a contract with coach Troussier but we have yet to reach any conclusion," it said in a statement.

'It is extremely regrettable that the Asahi Shimbun reported we would not renew our contract," with him, the statement said, arguing the report was "completely false."

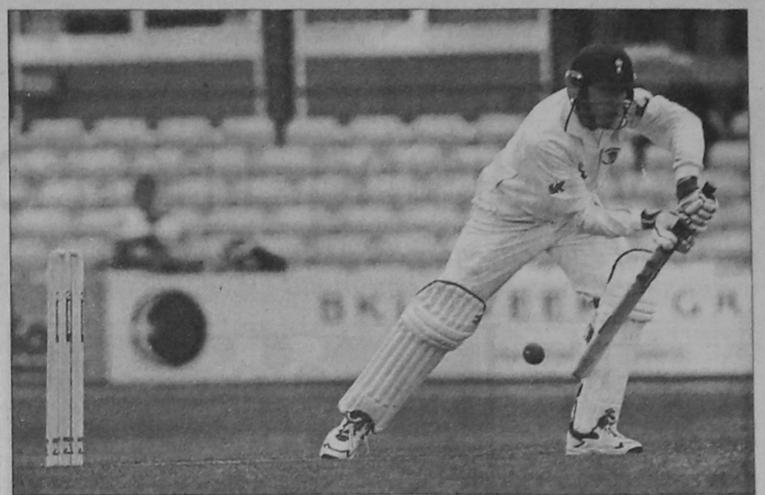
The association will officially decide at its next council meeting slated on May 25, it said.

JFA chief Shunichiro Okano, in Zurich for a conference of world football governing body FIFA, also dismissed the Asahi story as "unfounded," Kyodo News reported.

Asked whether the JFA was currently in talks with the Arsenal boss, Okano was quoted as replying, "No, we're not."

Nevertheless, criticism has mounted within the JFA against Troussier's failure to produce a stronger attacking force since Japan's scoreless draw with China in March.

The final blow to the 45-year-old Frenchman's tenure may have been dealt when Japan went down 0-1 Thursday in a friendly against arch-rivals South Korea in Seoul, Japanese sports dailies said.



Hampshire captain Robin Smith plays forward defensive during the first day of the four-day match against Zimbabwe on April 27. —AFP photo

Zimbabwe open tour

SOUTHAMPTON, England, Apr 28 (AFP/Reuters): Zimbabwe's opening match of their English tour finally got under way on Thursday as the squad, which has admitted to being preoccupied with the violence back at home, finally began a match against Hampshire.

The start was delayed after falling victim to the English weather and no play was possible before lunch.

The tourists finally took the field in the early afternoon and took three quick Hampshire wickets before the home side steadied the ship.

Mpumelelo Mbangwa and Neil Johnson made the most of seamer-friendly conditions to give Zimbabwe an encouraging start.

Paceman Mbangwa captured four for 19 and all-rounder Johnson took four for 28 as Hampshire were bowled out for 131 on the opening day of the four-day match.

The touring team lost Grant Flower without scoring and were 19 for one at the close.

Mbangwa made the inroads after Hampshire were put in to bat, removing openers Giles

White (10) and Jason Lancy (4) as they were reduced to 26 for three. Will Kendall (27) and Derek Kenway (48) checked the slump by adding 46 for the fourth wicket but once the stand was broken, Johnson and Mbangwa cut down the rest of the innings, the last seven wickets falling for 59.

Hampshire, who did not include Shane Warne nor England left-arm pace bowler Alan Mullally, quickly struck back when the uncapped medium-fast Simon Francis had Flower caught behind with the total one.

However, Trevor Gripper and Murray Goodwin saw the touring side safely through final phase of the day.

The Zimbabwe squad has three weeks to prepare for the international stage of their tour -- two Tests against England and a triangular one-day series that will also include the West Indies.

The tour has been overshadowed by events back in Zimbabwe, where growing rural anarchy has seen black mobs violently seize land belonging to white farmers.

Zimbabwe captain Andy Flower said of the violence which has erupted at home dur-

ing their recent West Indies tour: "It's frustrating to watch from thousands of miles away."

"But I don't think it's an excuse or a reason for any under-performance."

"I think you should refocus or compartmentalise sufficiently well so that it doesn't affect you."

Four of the 16-strong squad on the three-month tour are black, and relatives of four white players are farmers in Zimbabwe.

Tour manager Dan Stannard, whose son is a farm manager in the area most badly affected by attacks on white farms, was reluctant to draw attention to the players' relatives in case they became targets for black 'war veteran' mobs.

Details of events in Zimbabwe were not being kept from squad members, said Stannard, adding that it was important to be "completely transparent" with them.

He said there were no contingency plans if the violence escalates.

"We feel quite optimistic about it. If anything happens it is not far away you can just jump on a plane," he said.

SCOREBOARD Scoreboard on the first day of the four-day match between Hampshire and Zimbabwe on Thursday.

HAMPSHIRE: First innings White c Taibu b Mbangwa 10 Lancy c Johnson b Mbangwa 4 Kendall c Carlisle b Johnson 27 Smith b Strang 6 Kenway b Whittall 48 Stephenson c Taibu b Johnson 0 Svident c Taibu b Mbangwa 7 Morris c Flower b Mbangwa 1 Renshaw c Campbell b Johnson 12 Francis c Flower b Johnson 0 Van Der Gucht not out 15 Extras: (b 8 lb 1; nb 9) 131 Total: (All out in 53.4 overs) 131

Fall of wickets: 1-14: 2-15: 3-26: 4-72: 5-187: 6-108: 7-109: 8-110: 9-124.

Bowler: O M R W Olunga 13 3 31 0 Strang 9 2 19 1 Mbangwa 16 9 19 4 Johnson 8 4 3 28 4 Whittall 7 1 25 1

ZIMBABWE: First innings G Flower c Kenway b Francis 0 Gripper not out 5 Goodwin not out 13 Extras: (lb 1; nb 1) 19 Total: (For one in 12 overs) 19

Fall of wickets: 1-1 To bat: Alistair Campbell (captain), Stuart Carlisle, Neil Johnson, Guy Whittall, Tatenda Taibu, Bryan Strang, Henry Olunga, Mpumelelo Mbangwa.

Bowler: O M R W Morris 6 4 6 0 Francis 6 1 12 1

Bielefeld keep hopes alive

BERLIN, Apr 28: Arminia Bielefeld kept alive their slim hopes of escaping relegation with a 3-0 win at bottom-placed MSV Duisburg in the German First Division on Thursday, reports Reuters.

Yousuf, Mushtaq rescue Pakistan

GEORGETOWN, Guyana, Apr 28: Yousuf Youhana and Mushtaq Ahmed hammered 68 in 78 minutes to give Pakistan the upper hand on the opening day of their four-day match against the West Indies Under-23s on Thursday.

Pakistan had slipped from 102 for one to 193 for six when Youhana, who hit an unbeaten 73, and acting captain Mushtaq, with 38 not out, joined forces to till the balance.

Their unfinished seventh wicket stand had lifted the touring team to 261 for six when rain ended play five minutes before the scheduled close.

Youhana has batted 249 minutes, faced 181 deliveries and hit eight fours while Mushtaq has faced 52 balls and struck four fours and one six.

They came together after 18-year-old Grenadian leg-spinner Camrus Alexander struck twice in two overs, trapping both Imran Nazir (26) and Saqlain Mushtaq (0) lbw with his googly.

Pakistan had batted unevenly after winning the toss, losing opener Younis Khan lbw to paceman Kerry Jeremy with the total six but recovering through a second wicket partnership of 96 by Wajahatullah Wasti (26) and Mohammad Wasim.

Wasim stroked 10 fours as he made 59 from 116 balls but the Pakistanis lost their way during the second session when three wickets went for 34, mak-

ing them 136 for four.

However, Youhana held firm and, first in a stand of 51 with Imran Nazir and subsequently in his unbroken partnership with Mushtaq, gave his side the initiative.

SCOREBOARD Scoreboard on the first day of the four-day match between West Indies Under-23s and Pakistan at the Uitvlugt Community Centre ground on Thursday.

PAKISTAN: First innings Wasti c Phillip b Cunningham 26 Younis lbw b Jeremy 35 Wasim c Joseph b Jeremy 59 Youhana not out 73 Afridi c Hinds b Samuels 10 Nazir lbw b Alexander 28 Saqlain lbw b Alexander 38 Mushtaq not out 38 Extras: (b 14 lb 2; w 1; nb 9) 261 Total: (For 6 wks in 92.2 overs) 261

Fall of wickets: 1-6: 2-102: 3-112: 4-136: 5-187: 6-193.

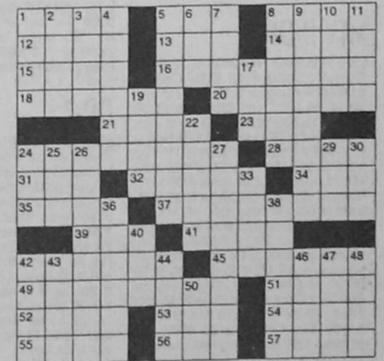
To bat: Mohammad Akram, Arshad Khan, Shabbir Ahmed

Bowler: O M R W Collins 14.2 0 47 0 Jeremy 18 2 46 2 Joseph 8 1 27 0 Alexander 16 1 48 2 Cunningham 20 7 36 1 Samuels 14 3 28 1 Hinds 2 0 13 0

WEST INDIES UNDER-23s: Darren Ganga (captain), Azeemul Haniif, Sylvester Joseph, Ryan Hinds, Marlon Samuels, Runako Morton, Wayne Phillip, Pedro Collins, Kerry Jeremy, Camilus Alexander, Ryan Cunningham.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 1 Spotted 42 Burst 3 Come-dienne 19 Circle segments 5 Hint 43 "Jeopardy!" 22 Across: Rudner 4 Card 24 A mean Amin 8 Dogfight 49 Toach 4 game for two 25 Tandori bread 12 Grand- 51 Life of Riley 5 African country 26 I long a story short 13 One of 52 Ballot bond 6 Charged bit 27 Overjoyed 14 Marilyn's 53 Over or above: 7 Total disarray 29 - tai (cocktail) 15 VHS 54 Occupation 8 Mohair source 30 Man-mouse link 16 Badge of honor 56 Middle X or O? from tree 33 Zen paradox 18 Beatie 57 Fishbowl/ Baldwin 10 Author Wiesel 36 Sins or Dwarfs 20 Teatime 58 Movie 11 The Red 38 Yours truly 23 Historic period 1 Symbols and the Black 40 Aachen article 24 Lacking confidence 2 Oil 17 Lemieux milieu 42 Knight's backup group 28 Bullets 55 Method: Abbr. 9 Spice derived 44 Air for a hair 31 Rotation duration 56 Middle X or O? from tree 46 Banshee's cry 32 Pancake house order 57 Fishbowl/ Baldwin 10 Author Wiesel 47 A slave to cross-words? 34 Cancer's need 58 Movie 11 The Red 48 Obolists' silver 35 B&B 59 Fishbowl/ Baldwin 10 Author Wiesel 50 IRS employee: Abbr. 37 Sleeplessness 60 U.K. ref. bk. 61 Command to Fido



CRYPTOQUIP R CVIDQP LZZZGL FGSP ID RQL-TXYPQVQXYGP ZRYEC, VFQYEQYM FG'P MGV TXSP YRCF. Saturday's Cryptoquip: DON'T YOU THINK THAT ALL BRAIN SURGEONS ARE LIKELY TO BE HIGHLY SKULLED? Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Q equals I The Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.



Participants of the President Cup golf tournament assemble during the opening ceremony at the Kurmitola Golf Club yesterday morning.