

Victoria baffle Sadharan Bima

Sports Reporter
Victoria Sporting Club recorded a comprehensive 96-run win over Sadharan Bima Kira Sangtha in a Premier Division Relegation League match at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium yesterday.

Put into bat, Victoria scored 243 for eight in their satipulated 50 overs.

Middle-order batsman Iqbal Sheikh hammered highest 60 of 66 balls while opener Sajjad Ahmed added 54 off 74 balls. Middle-order batsman Rashed Hanif (40 off 54 balls) was the other notable run-getter for Victoria.

In reply, Sadharan Bima were bundled out for 147 in 36.3 overs with one-down Shafiqul Islam scoring highest 58.

Victoria bowlers Shahnewaz Kabir, Sabir Khan and Towhid Hossain shared six wickets.

It was Victoria's seventh win in 15 matches which raised their tally to 14 points. On the other hand, it was the ninth defeat for Bima in 15 matches which kept them on 12 points.

BRIEF SCORES

Victoria SC v Sadharan Bima KS
(Venue: Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium)

Victoria SC: 243 for 8 in 50 overs (Iqbal 60, Sajjad 57, R Hanif 40, Shahnewaz 20 n.o., Nakib 2/29).

Sadharan Bima KS: 147 all out in 36.3 overs (Shafiq 58, K Chopra 17, Towhid 2/18, Sabir 2/24, Shahnewaz 2/34).

Result: Victoria SC won by 96 runs.

TODAY'S MATCHES

City Club v Gopibagh FA
(Venue: Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium)

Cronje inquiry to sit in Cape

CAPE TOWN, May 11 (Reuters): The South African inquiry into the Hansie Cronje affair will be conducted in Cape Town, a government spokesman said on Wednesday.

Department of Sport spokesman Graham Abrahams confirmed the location after a meeting with retired judge Edwin King, who will head the investigation. The venue is still to be decided.

Pretoria was originally named as the location by Sports Minister Ngonde Balfour, but King requested it be held in Cape Town where he is based.

The inquiry follows Cronje's sacking as South Africa's cricket captain last month after he admitted taking money from a bookmaker for providing information. He has denied involvement in match-fixing.

Abrahams said more information on the inquiry was expected on Thursday.

Anelka's maiden headed goal!

MADRID, May 11: Nicolas Anelka said Wednesday his header for Real Madrid which put the Spaniards into the European Cup final at the expense of Bayern Munich was the first ever goal he had scored with his head, reports AFP.

"I can tell you it's not just my first header of the year but the first one I've ever scored since turning pro. That's why I was super happy," the media-shy Anelka wrote on his personal Internet site.

"Against Bayern we played a great match. Last Saturday after our league defeat by Alaves I was very worried but we responded superbly," said the former Arsenal striker.

"I wanted to dedicate this goal to Julio Senn, Real's director general. It's thanks to him I feel good today. To everybody - see you in Paris," said Anelka, referring to the May 24 final at the Stade de France.

Euro 2000

Savicevic rules himself out

BELGRADE, May 11: Yugoslav's veteran playmaking midfielder Dejan Savicevic informed the national coach Vujadin Boskov on Wednesday that he would not be able to join the team for the Euro 2000 finals because of injury, reports AFP.

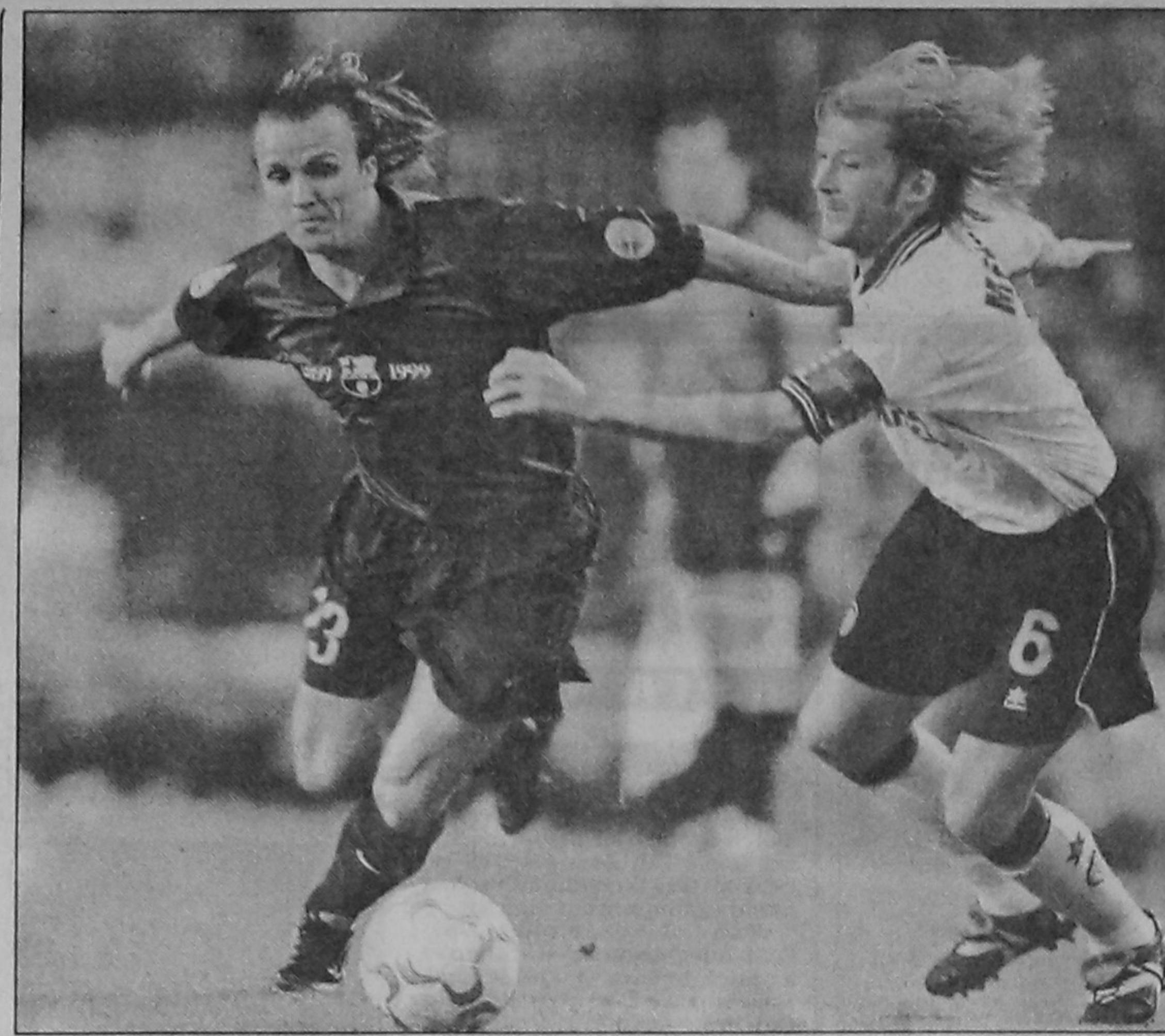
The 33-year-old Rapid Vienna striker, who inspired the Italian giants AC Milan to their 4-0 destruction of Barcelona in the 1994 European Cup and was a member of the 1998 Yugoslav World Cup finals squad, said his muscle injury would keep him out of action for at least three weeks. Branko Bulatovic, head of the Yugoslav Football Association, told reporters.

"Savicevic thinks it would not be fair to keep the place for a younger player," Bulatovic said.

He added that three other veterans - Florentina's Predrag Mijatovic, Lazio's Sinisa Mihajlovic and Inter's Vladimir Jugovic - were all making good progress from various injuries.

Foe leaving for Lyon

LONDON, May 11: Premier ship club West Ham said on Thursday they are preparing to sell Cameroon international midfielder Marc-Vivien Foe to French First Division side Lyon for 6 million pounds (9.6 million dollars), reports AFP.



Barcelona's Dutch international Boudewijn Zenden (L), trying to stave off the challenge of Valencia captain Mendieta at the Nou Camp on May 10. —AFP photo

Barca just not up to it

Valencia fix date with Real

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

BARCELONA, May 11: Valencia, who had garnered just one point after their first five Spanish league matches this season, qualified for the European Champions League final here on Wednesday winning 5-2 on aggregate despite being beaten by Barcelona 2-1 in their semi-final second leg match, reports AFP.

The fanatical Barcelona fans, who waved white handkerchiefs long before the end signalling their desire for automatic Dutch coach Louis van Gaal to leave, went berserk with club president Josep Nunez having to be escorted from the director's box while vice-president Joan Gaspart was screamed at and pushed.

Valencia, who came through the Champions League qualifying round last August, wrapped up the tie when playmaking captain Gaizka Mendieta shot home brilliantly in the 70th minute to ensure a second successive European final for their Argentine coach Hector Cuper following Real Mallorca's Cup Winners Cup final appearance last season.

However, the ultra-serious 43-year-old Cuper failed to raise much of a smile in the immediate aftermath of his side's outstanding achievement.

"We deserved this because we suffered a lot earlier in the season and we will enjoy this moment as it's not often you reach a Champions League final," said Cuper, whose great grandfather was an English soldier.

"We could probably have won tonight as well but once we scored we missed several real chances and allowed Barcelona

to take the match.

Barca, whose coach Louis van Gaal will not have been encouraged by the white handkerchiefs dangled by the club's fans well before the end, grabbed two consolation efforts through Frank de Boer and Philip Cocu.

Cuper, whose automatic style brought a young impressionable Ajax team the 1995 European Cup but has gone down less well with the more experienced Barcelona players, refused to accept that he should step down despite Barca looking likely to end up with nothing this season.

They trail Deportivo La Coruna by three points with two matches to go in the Liga while they forfeited their Spanish Cup semi-final match with Atletico Madrid under farcical circumstances a fortnight ago.

"I won't step down until I have to and that is not when the press tell me to but when the board and the players call time on me," he said.

"Ever since I've come here three years ago the fans have been on my back but they should look at the statistics and see that we reached the semi-finals of the Champions League and are still in with a chance of the title.

"It's not as bad as a lot of people would like to say they are," he added defiantly.

Valencia will meet Real Madrid in the final in Paris on May 24 - should they prevail they will complete a clean sweep of European trophies having won the Fairs Cup (now the UEFA Cup) in 1962 and 1963 and the 1980 Cup Winners Cup.

Mendieta, who scored the only goal in the first leg, rattled home the ball from Claudio Lopez's pass inside to him on the 21 metres line with the 35-year-old dis-

claimed already this season.

Hector Cuper's side have come through against some of the biggest names in European football, including Manchester United and Bayern Munich in the group stages and now Lazio and Barcelona in the last two rounds.

Their victory over the competition favourites Barcelona was the product of their stunning display of attacking football in the first leg in Mestalla last week, when they embarrassed the Catalans in a 4-1 victory.

They then held their nerve in front of 90,000 Barcelona fans at the Nou Camp -- something Chelsea had failed to do in the previous round -- to limit the damage to a 2-1 defeat on the night and set up an all-Spanish final against Real -- the first time in the 45-year history of the competition that the final will be contested by two teams from the same country.

A 5-3 scoreline over the two legs in no way flattered a team that have been the revelation of this season's competition with their winning blend of resolute defence and lightning counter-attacks.

Real Madrid may start the final as favourites given their greater European pedigree -- they will be chasing an eighth European Cup win. Valencia their first -- but Vicente del Bosque's side cannot afford to under estimate a Valencia team that is running in to such fantastic form.

The whole team were absolutely perfect," said defensive stalwart Miroslav Djukic, who was a mighty presence in the Valencia backline in Tuesday's game.

"We stopped Barcelona playing their game and that was

the key to winning through.

"This is a dream come true for us."

The dream for Valencia has been founded on the no-nonsense approach of their coach Hector Cuper, who has instilled in his players a tremendous work ethic, plus the belief that they are the equal of any side in Europe.

"We've suffered to get here," said Cuper, whose job was under threat earlier in the season after a poor start to the domestic season.

"But the players have worked so hard to achieve this. We lost the second leg because we didn't take our chances but I have to congratulate the whole team for

what they've done."

The one sour note for Valencia was the yellow card given to defender Amadeo Carboni, who will be suspended for the final.

"It's a real shame," said his midfield colleague Francisco Farinos. "He's been fantastic for us and I'd give everything to see him play the final."

For Cuper he has the chance to boost his reputation even further. Last season he guided unfashionable Real Mallorca to the European Cup winners Cup final where they were far from disgraced in losing to Lazio.

On May 24, he could make up for that disappointment by guiding his team to the most prestigious prize in club soccer.

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Sport

Van Gaal puts up a bold face

BARCELONA, May 11: Under-pressure Barcelona coach Louis van Gaal received the white-handkerchief treatment from fans again on Wednesday during his side's Champions League semi-final exit to Valencia on a 5-3 aggregate, reports Reuters.

The traditional show of dis-

pleasure from the Nou Camp

supporters was followed by

chants of "Van Gaal out!" and

calls for the return of former

coach Johan Cruyff as

Barcelona's 2-1 win in the sec-

ond leg fell well short of taking

them through to a final after

their 4-1 defeat at Mestalla last

week.

but van Gaal insisted he

would not consider quitting and

defended his record in his three

years in charge at the club.

"It's a tough blow for the

fans, the players and the

coaches," van Gaal admitted.

"But our achievement in

reaching the semi-finals is a

positive one."

"If you look at the statistics

of the club in a hundred years,

and my record over three sea-

sons, you can see that we've

done well."

"We won three titles in the

first year, the league champion-

ship last year and the

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