

Life ban awaits Indian culprits

MADRAS, May 17 (AP): Any Indian cricket player found guilty in a federal match fixing investigation will be banned for life and his name erased from record books, India's cricket board chief warned Wednesday. A.C. Muthiah also said Board officials could be expelled if they made rash allegations against their colleagues or players in the match-fixing scandal that has shaken up world cricket. The Central Bureau of Investigation is probing charges of betting and match-fixing by Indian cricketers.

"Too many of our members are making all sorts of allegations. It is nothing but a slander campaign," Muthiah told a news conference. "They are trying to settle personal scores. As a result, they do not realise how it is hurting the Board."

He said he would back the players until the charges were proven.

"The Board pledges its full support to all past and present players until they are proven guilty," he told reporters.

Indrajit Bindra, who heads the cricket board in the northern Punjab state, has quoted retired Indian cricketer Manoj Prabhakar as saying that Kapil Dev, former Indian captain, offered him 25,000 dollars to underperform in a 1994 match against Sri Lanka.

Kapil has denied the charge, and Prabhakar has not commented on the statement. Bindra has also accused the cricket board of corruption.

On Tuesday, he submitted documents to the Central Bureau of Investigation that, he said, included evidence related to the case.

"Bindra is carrying on a tirade against the Board... It is becoming a joke," Muthiah said.

Indian police have accused former South African captain Hansie Cronje and four other team members of match-fixing. Cronje admitted receiving 8,200 dollars from a bookmaker in connection with a betting scam, and the confession led to reports that many matches, including some at last year's World Cup, were fixed.

Ctg cricket

From Our Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, May 17: Chittagong Govt. High defeated Municipal Model High by 4 wickets in the second semifinal of the Siraj Memorial Mohanagar schools cricket league today.

Municipal elected to bat first and scored 150 runs losing all wickets with 5 balls remaining.

In reply, Chittagong Govt. High reached the target of 151 runs for the loss of 6 wickets in 31.0 overs.

Chittagong Govt. High will take on Nasirabad Govt. High in the final to be held on May 20.

BRIEF SCORES

Ctg. Govt. School : 151 for 6 in 31.3 overs (Rabby *41, Arman 25, Rakib 21, Shabib 19, Mohibulla 13; Sunayon 2/23)

Municipal Model School : 150 for 10 in 34.1 overs (Aapu 40, Prothom 26, Imon 19, Sumon 15; Kaiser 6/20, Rony 2/19)

'Fixing' inquiry asking for Cronje tapes

JOHANNESBURG, May 17 (AFP): The South African inquiry into corruption in cricket has asked the Indian police to hand over tapes apparently of conversations between former captain Hansie Cronje and a bookmaker, a sports ministry official said Tuesday.

The commission, headed by retired judge Edwin King, has made the request through the foreign ministry, sports ministry Graham Abrahams said.

The recordings apparently implicate Cronje in match-fixing for payment from a bookmaker.

Abrahams said that a response to a request by Indian Interlope officials for a sample of Cronje's voice would be formulated once the tapes are handed over.

"A decision on providing a voice sample will only be taken once the tapes are made available to us. We are expecting the Indians to respond to the request," he said.

The commission, appointed two weeks ago, has to present a preliminary report to the government by June 30. It is preparing to hold public hearings.

The commission was announced after Cronje admitted on April 11 that he had taken money from an Indian bookmaker to provide "information and forecasts" during a one-day series involving South Africa, England and Zimbabwe last year. He was immediately sacked.

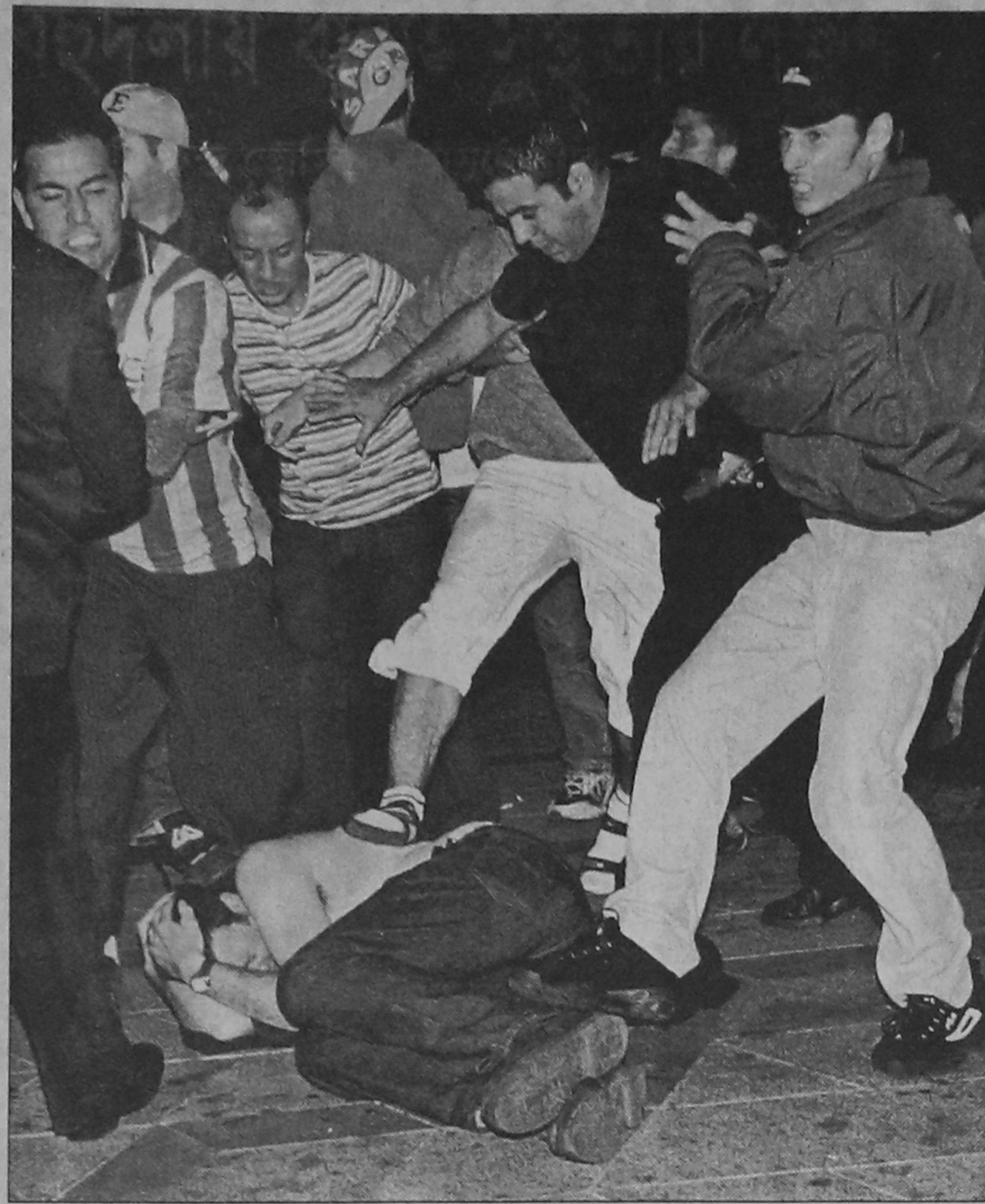
It will also look into the allegation that the South African team was offered 250,000 dollars to throw a match in Mumbai, India, in December 1996.

Thomas Cup badminton

Danes end Malaysia's chances

KUALA LUMPUR, May 17: Denmark ended Malaysia's hopes of a home Thomas Cup win when they beat the hosts 3-2 in the closing preliminary round Group A match on Tuesday, reports Reuters.

The victory took Denmark into the semifinals of the world men's team badminton championship where they will play holders and top seeds Indonesia on Thursday.

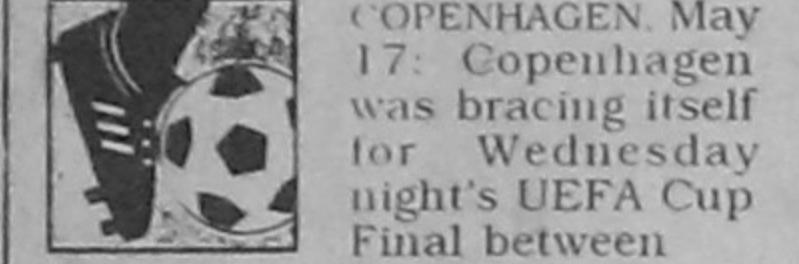


BRUTAL! An Arsenal fan (on the ground) feels the wrath of violent Galatasaray supporters during clashes at Copenhagen yesterday ahead of the UEFA Cup final.

— AFP photo

English fan stabbed

Pandemonium ahead of UEFA final



COPENHAGEN, May 17: Copenhagen was bracing itself for Wednesday night's UEFA Cup Final between

Turkey's Galatasaray and English Premiership outfit Arsenal after serious incidents including a stabbing on the eve of the clash, reports AFP.

Police were out in force to prevent further violence between the two sets of supporters after running battles in the early hours of Tuesday morning.

An English fan was being treated for a punctured lung in a Copenhagen hospital and several other people were injured including a policeman.

The officer was apparently struck by a missile, during the early hours of the morning of a match that was always a high-risk encounter because of the murder of two fans of another English team, Leeds United in Istanbul on the eve of the semi-final first leg with Galatasaray.

The Danish capital was on red alert with the possibility of more trouble before and after the match which kicks off at 20:45 local time.

Police in uniform and plain clothes were policing the high-risk areas notably the Radhuspladsen (Town Hall Square) where much of the trouble occurred and in areas leading to the stadium.

Police officer Finn Bach said that the life of the English fan, stabbed outside the Rosie McGee pub, was not in danger but tension was high Wednesday on the day of the final.

Seven other people, Turks and English, were taken to hospital suffering either from slight injuries or shock after

the attack of the stabbed man was not among those arrested, police said.

That incident came after the first outbreak of fighting in the same area where shopping street Frederiksbergade runs into the Town Hall Square.

The trouble began here shortly after midnight (2300 GMT) in a pedestrian area of central Copenhagen after police had apparently tried to barrow a small group of around 20 English fans into a bar - the Absalon - as far as a larger number of Galatasaray fans, many clad in their team's red and yellow colours, left off steam outside, driving up and down in cars sounding their horns and waving Turkish flags.

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Riot police, with dogs, arrived on the scene and were met by bottles and stones thrown from both sets of fans.

Three ambulances attended the scene of the original inci-

dent. The larger mainly Turkish crowd in the square itself frequently scattered in panic as the violence threatened to spill into the main square itself.

Calm was eventually restored by around 2:00 a.m.

By 3:00 a.m. a large number of people were still gathered around the square by the Town Hall, closely watched by a heavy police presence.

Before midnight the atmosphere had been a good-natured one with large numbers of Galatasaray fans and a smaller number of Arsenal supporters sipping the restaurants and bars in the trendy port area of Nyhavn.

The authorities, who had mobilised a record number of police for a football match here, feared further outbreaks of violence Wednesday by violent elements among the 25,000-odd English and Turkish supporters expected to attend the game.

This match had always been a high-risk affair since the fatal stabbing of two Leeds fans on the eve of the semi-final first leg match with Galatasaray in Istanbul.

Leeds supporters Kevin Speight, 40 and Christopher Loftus, 36, were stabbed to death on April 5 in a brawl. Several Turks have been arrested and charged in connection with the murder.

Six other Leeds fans were also injured in the clash in Istanbul's commercial Taksim district.

Turkish police maintained then that the fight broke out after British supporters broke car and shop windows and acted in a provocative manner against the Turkish flag and citizens.

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wanted to come away from playing with him and maybe being in the shadow of him.

"We persuaded him there is some beautiful countryside near our training ground in Chigwell and we were fortunate that for the couple of days he was in England the weather was good and that people were smiling at Tottenham after we won on Sunday (against Sunderland).

"There was a marvellous atmosphere at Tottenham on Sunday, so we caught him at the right time and he caught us at the right time," he told SkySports.com TV.

The arrival of one of the hottest properties in Europe could spark a transfer merry-go-round at White Hart Lane, with Pleat admitting "maybe two, maybe three" new faces could follow Rebrov into the club.

But as to whether his arrival will spell the end of the Tottenham careers of strikers Les Ferdinand and Chris Armstrong, Pleat replied curiously: "I haven't got a crystal ball."

"Les is a super professional, and so is Chris - and they will continue to work and play and train to play for the first team."

Rebrov, who scored around 100 League goals for Dynamo, made his name playing alongside Shevchenko before his countryman's 18 million pound (29 million dollars) move to AC Milan last summer.

He has scored a further 24 in UEFA competitions. But his move to Spurs, after another unspectacular season at White Hart Lane, is sure to raise eyebrows across Europe.

— AFP photo

Anelka won't be sold

MADRID, May 17: Real Madrid's French striker Nicolas Anelka is no longer for sale, the Spanish press reported Tuesday, reports AFP.

Spurs director of football David Pleat revealed that the north London club faced stiff competition from Italy to sign the 25-year-old Ukrainian international.

But it is the player's determination to succeed in a league he has admired from afar that will see him join a club he cannot even offer him the prospect of European football next season.

They said that his recent form -- he scored the opener in the Champions League semi-final first leg against Bayern Munich and scored again in the return -- had convinced management at the club to stick with the young talent despite recent problems with him.

Anelka spent the best part of this season as football's anti-hero with poor form at Real Madrid, who then demanded he pay a huge fine and suspended him after he skipped three days

of training two months ago.

"He is trying to find his feet, but he is already a very important part of the team," club president Lorenzo Sanz said.

French club Paris St Germain offered 24.5 million dollars and the Nigerian Jay-Jay

Okocha for Anelka, according to two Spanish papers, and Italian giants Juventus are also reported to have spoken to Real about the formidable striker.

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— AFP photo

Sport

Chilean int'l fails drugs test

SANTIAGO, May 17: Chile's Clarence Acuna has been suspended by football's world governing body FIFA following a drugs test the day of their international against Peru last month, the Chile football federation (ANFP) said on Tuesday, reports AFP.

Acuna is not allowed to have any activity within football in or outside Chile from May 16 until after FIFA have finished an investigation.

Chile and Peru played in Santiago on April 26 and drew 1-1. According to the analysis of a routine urine sample, there were traces of isopropenol, frequently used in the past but mainly discontinued because of side effects.

Hernandez signs for LA Galaxy

NEW YORK, May 17: Luis Hernandez, the leading goalscorer in the history of the Mexican National team, signed a Major League Soccer contract Tuesday and was assigned to the unbeaten Los Angeles Galaxy, reports AFP.

Financial terms of the multi-year deal were not disclosed.

Hernandez, who scored four goals in the 1998 World Cup, is expected to make his MLS debut here Saturday against D.C. United.

The 31-year-old forward spent the last three years with Monterrey Tigers of the Mexican First Division, where he was second in the league with 13 goals this past season.

A two-time Mexican First Division Player of the Year, he has 35 goals in 73 appearances with the national team.

"It's a personal challenge for me to be successful in Major League Soccer," Hernandez said. "I'm happy to be going to a city I am very familiar with. I love Los Angeles and look forward to scoring many goals for the great fans of Southern California."

Bates buys a piece of history

LONDON, May 17: Chelsea chairman Ken Bates on Wednesday splashed out 20,000 pounds (32,000 dollars) to buy the most famous piece of turf at Wembley, reports AFP.

It was auctioned off at the stadium and the money will go to the Bobby Moore Fund for Imperial Cancer Research.

The turf is fondly remembered by all England fans as it is the spot where the ball landed for England's controversial third goal in the 1966 World Cup final.

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