

## Henry available for tri-series

LONDON, June 17: Seamer Henry Olonga has been passed fit and takes his place in Zimbabwe's 16-man squad to play in the triangular one-day tournament against England and West Indies next month, reports AFP.

The 23-year-old missed both Tests of the recent series against England after sustaining an ankle injury in the final warm-up match at Chelmsford prior to the start of the first Test at Lord's.

He was again ruled out of the drawn Test at Trent Bridge and returned home for treatment and has now proved his fitness to the selectors and will return to England on June 26 for the opening match of the tournament against West Indies at Bristol on July 6.

Leg-spinner Paul Strang has also been included having failed to prove his fitness for the Tests, but he has been playing regularly in the Lancashire League with Haslingden since.

Opener Trevor Gripper and leg-spinner Brian Murphy have been overlooked after playing in the Tests, while all-rounder Dirk Viljoen and batsman Craig Wishart complete the party.

### SQUAD

Andy Flower (captain/wicketkeeper), Grant Flower, Heath Streak, Murray Goodwin, Guy Whittall, Stuart Carlisle, Mpumelo Mbanga, Muleki Nkala, Dirk Viljoen, Bryan Strang, Paul Strang, Craig Wishart, Henry Olonga, Gary Brent, Neil Johnson, Alastair Campbell.

### CBI looks for Gupta

NEW DELHI, June 17: Indian bookmaker Mukesh Gupta, named by disgraced former South African skipper Hansie Cronje, had gone underground, the CBI said, adding, attempts to locate him had not yielded any positive result so far, reports PTI.

The agency said a team of its special crime branch had visited Gupta's shop as well as residence but did not find him. However, his father K L Gupta alleged that he had been picked up by the investigating agency.

Gupta is alleged to be a key figure in the match-fixing scandal in which Cronje had admitted having received 80,000 dollars in two installments.

Meanwhile, Delhi police have ruled out any action by them against Azharuddin and alleged bookie Gupta saying the two persons had no links with the case under its investigation.

Terming Cronje's submission as 'a good development for our case', joint commissioner of police (crime) K K Paul told yesterday. 'The allegations against Azharuddin and Gupta referred to 1996 Kanpur Test which did not come under the purview of the match-fixing case being probed by the city police.'

### Arambagh's new committee

Sports Reporter  
Arambagh Krira Sangha formed a 56-strong committee with Syed Bazul Karim retaining his position as president of the mediocre Premier Division football league outfit.

The new committee was formed yesterday after the bi-annual general meeting at the club tent of the Motijheel outfit. Zahidul Islam Khokon has been made the general secretary and Dr. Nazrul Islam treasurer for the next two years. The committee includes twelve vice-presidents.

### 2 bookies caught in Calcutta

CALCUTTA, June 17: Two bookies, allegedly involved in cricket betting, have been arrested from the city, police said today, reports PTI.

The two, JRE brothers, were arrested while conducting cricket betting from their Mohammad Ali Park residence in central Calcutta yesterday in the crime branch and detectives department personnel, police said.

Some documents, a huge amount of cash and computer diskettes containing reports of cricket matches were recovered from their possession, the police added.

### Behind Lara

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International Cricket Council (ICC) Code of Conduct outlawing such behaviour did not come into force until July 1 that year.

But as Lara prepared for the third day of the opening Test against England at Edgbaston Saturday, manager Ricky Skerritt issued a statement refuting all the allegations and insisting they would not expand on the issue.

'We're assured by Brian Lara that the allegations are without any foundation,' said Skerritt.

The West Indies team is in the UK to play cricket and we will not be participating in any further discussion on this matter.'

But if it is proved Lara received money for providing information to bookmakers, he could be liable for a five-year ban following new measures agreed at the ICC emergency meeting into corruption last month.

At that Lord's summit, the world's governing body agreed that 'anyone receiving money or rewards for information on weather, teams, state of ground, status or match outcome' would receive a five-year ban.



State Minister for Youth and Sports Obaidul Quader (C) handing over the Sher-e-Bangla Cup national football championship trophy to players and officials of Noakhali at the Noakhali Stadium on June 16.

## Wanting a piece of Figo



ARNHEM, Netherlands, June 17: Feverish speculation over the future of Portuguese soccer sorcerer Luis Figo intensified Saturday after FC Barcelona said any foreign club interested in snapping up the midfield marvel would have to pay a world-record smashing fee of 20 billion pesetas (116 million dollars), reports AP.

Barcelona announced the huge sum in an apparent attempt to calm the whirlwind of rumors of a possible move from the Catalan club after Figo's standout performance Monday in Portugal's 3-2 victory over England.

Transfer talk has speculated on Italian champions Lazio who were reportedly prepared to offer 10 billion pesetas (58 million dollars) for 27-year-old Figo, itself a world record. Reports have also suggested Lazio could also offer Argentine star Juan Sebastian Veron in a part-exchange deal to get Figo.

However, in a statement Friday, the Barcelona management insisted it wants Figo to fulfill the contract signed just a year ago.

That contract binds Figo to Barca until 2004, and the team said their terms stipulate any Spanish club wanting to acquire his services would have to pay 10 billion pesetas (58 million dollars), but foreign teams must double that.

Such a fee would demolish the current 50 million dollars

world record paid by Inter Milan to Lazio last year for the transfer of Italian striker Christian Vieri. It's doubtful any club would be prepared to pay it even for a player many ranks as the world's most creative.

Figo has another chance to show off his skills Saturday against Romania in a match that would guarantee a place in the Euro 2000 quarterfinals for



LUIS FIGO

the talented Portuguese. He and the rest of the Portuguese team insist the transfer mania is not distracting them from the task in hand.

Meanwhile Figo was quoted in Spanish and Portuguese newspapers Saturday insisting he wants to stay at Barcelona, even if Lazio is offering more cash. Just two days earlier his agent Jose Viega was quoted by Spain's Europa Press news agency announcing negotiations with Lazio were in final stages and it was '80 per cent certain' the player would leave

Barca.

"War over Figo," headlined the Lisbon sports daily O Jogo on its front page Saturday as Europe's top clubs maneuvered to around the Portuguese star. English Champions Manchester United and Italy's AC Milan are also reported to be interested in adding Figo to their rosters.

The issue is complicated by the shake up at Barcelona after the Catalans failed to win a major trophy last season. Dutch coach Louis van Gaal and long-serving president Josep Luis Nunez were both forced out. In the campaign to elect a new president, hanging on to Figo has become a major vote winner among Barca fans.

"We must all unite to keep Figo at Barcelona, for both his human and his sporting qualities. His departure would be dramatic for all of us," candidate Joan Castells was quoted as saying the Lisbon sports paper Record.

"No way are we going to let him leave Barcelona," another leading candidate Joan Gaspart was cited telling Portugal's Publico daily.

Figo is not the only Portuguese player attracting attention.

Since winning the thriller with England, media reports in Italy, Spain and Portugal have linked almost every member of the team with a possible club move.

Latest stories Saturday had Lazio and Roma chasing Everton defender Abel Xavier; Napoli after Paulo Bento and Jose Luis Vidigal; Chelsea, Sporting Lisbon and Fiorentina intensifying the hunt for Joao Pinto, and Rui Costa denying reports he wants to leave Fiorentina.

## Sport

### Ragib Ali Cup hockey starts today

The Ragib Ali Club Cup hockey tournament, a preparatory meet for the Metropolis League, begins today at the Moulana Bhasani National Stadium, reports UNB.

Victoria Sporting Club will take on Ajax SC in the inaugural match at 3:30 pm. Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) vice president Ragib Ali will open the third version of the meet.

Out of sixteen metropolis Premier and First Division league teams, 14 teams, divided into four groups, will initially take part on knock out basis matches.

Four group champions will play in the four-team super league, beginning June 25. Two top teams will play the final on July 3.

#### The participating teams are:

Group 1 — Mohammedan SC, Sardar Bima and Bachelors Club.

Group 2 — Abahani Limited, Sonali Bank and Bangladesh Railways.

Group 3 — Usha KC, Farashgan SC, Wari Club and Mukta Bilanga Tarun Sangha.

Group 4 — Dhaka Mariner Youngs Club, Ajax SC, Victoria SC and Dhaka Wanderers Club.

Kapil Dev has denied comments by former Indian cricket chief Inderjit Singh Bindra and former Test cricketer Manoj Prabhakar that he had offered Prabhakar a bribe to play badly in a one-day international in Sri Lanka in 1994.

According to Bindra, Prabhakar said Kapil had offered him 25,000 dollars to underperform.

Sports Minister Dhindsa on

Friday said Azharuddin should

quit the game until proven in-

nocent after Hansie Cronje al-

leged that Azharuddin had in-

duced him to a bookmaker

to show "moral courage".

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