

## King may turn to President

JOHANNESBURG, June 24: South Africa's King Commission will ask President Thabo Mbeki to help it obtain from Indian police transcripts of tape recordings of a telephone conversation between former captain Hansie Cronje and a bookmaker, a spokesman said in a report Saturday, reports AFP.

"We have been working through the Department of Justice but, as a last resort, we will request the president to try to obtain the tapes for us," commission spokesman John Bacon told daily paper The Star.

Commission officials have also reportedly asked the foreign ministry to help them obtain the tapes, but with no success.

Excerpts from the transcripts have been published in newspapers around the world and Interpol has access to the transcripts.

Lawyers at the commission have had difficulty questioning Cronje about the conversation because of doubt about the authenticity of the transcript in their possession.

Cronje was sacked after he admitted in April to taking money from gamblers.

His confession shocked the cricket world and led to the establishment of the commission, which has to present a preliminary report to Mbeki at the end of June.

## Ali Bacher's admission

JOHANNESBURG, June 24: United Cricket Board of South Africa (UCBSA) boss Ali Bacher has admitted that former captain Hansie Cronje had told him about an offer to throw a match in India in 1996, a report said Saturday, according to AFP.

Bacher said in his testimony last week to the King Commission into corruption that he only became aware of the offer, which was rejected, in April this year.

Cronje, sacked in April after admitting to taking money from gamblers, told the commission Friday that he had told Bacher several times about the offer to throw a one-day match against India.

Bacher, the managing director of the UCBSA, has now admitted to the Citizen newspaper that Cronje had told him about the offer, but said he had not done anything about it.

"I did engage in a fleeting conversation with Hansie which probably lasted no more than five to 10 seconds," Bacher told the newspaper from London, where he is attending the International Cricket Council meeting.

"There was, however no mention of countries or amounts involved at any stage," he said.

I acknowledged, in hindsight, that I should have pursued the matter, but at the time, that was totally unthinkable.

## Doctor O' dead

BELGRADE, June 24: Top Yugoslav football expert Aleksandar Obradovic died in Belgrade Friday, state agency Tanjug reported, reports AFP.

Obradovic, 78, nicknamed "Doctor O" for his medical background, was considered the "mastermind" behind numerous successes of Yugoslav star players, clubs and national team, thanks to his wide knowledge of the game.

A legend behind the most-trophied Yugoslav team, Red Star Belgrade, Obradovic devoted his entire life to soccer, being consulted by dozens of coaches and managers over the tactics and work with young players.

For years the only Yugoslav manager with FIFA and UEFA licences, Obradovic "discovered" dozens of players who often won international glory after his promotion.

In the mid 1960s, Obradovic went to the United States as one of the few European experts involved in the creation of the professional football league in the country.

## AMs vote

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day, Bacher renewed his personal as well as his Board's support for Bangladesh's application for Test tag.

As part of the last round campaign, Sabar maintained a busy schedule to have meetings with the chiefs of nine Full Members since his arrival in England.

"The Test status is now a matter of time and formality," Sabar said to BSS, pointing to the fact that all but England promised to vote for Bangladesh.

Bangladesh, who became Associate Member in 1997, got the one-day status in 1997 after winning the ICC Trophy in Malaysia.

Sabar left for Paris to attend the two-day Executive Board meeting, which is expected to approve Bangladesh's case and send it for June 26 meeting at Lord's.

The Executive Board meeting will also approve all commercial negotiations of ICC, including the TV rights for the next two World Cups. ICC is tipped to earn 600 million US dollars from the TV rights of 2003 and 2007 World Cups in South Africa and West Indies respectively.

Zee TV of India in conjunction with TWI are the bidders along with their rival World Sports Group, backed by the media magnet Rupert Murdoch.

# France v Spain: Who will

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build cautiously from the back and hope that either Raul or strike partner Alfonso, who scored twice against the Yugoslavs, can exploit a rare lapse in concentration by the world's best defence.

Given the strength in depth of the French squad - their reserves were leading Holland's first XI 2-1 at half-time on Wednesday - Lemerre can have few worries about his team line-up on Sunday.

Arsenal midfielder Emmanuel Petit is carrying a knee injury picked up in the victory over the Czech Republic and missed the game against the Dutch in Amsterdam, which finished up 3-2 to the hosts.

However, in Patrick Vieira and Robert Pires, Lemerre can choose between two first-rate replacements - depending on whether he wants to add more muscle or more creative spark to his midfield.

Henry is certain to start, while Christophe Dugarry's fine performance against the Dutch will make him a rival for Anelka's place up front - if only for the second half.

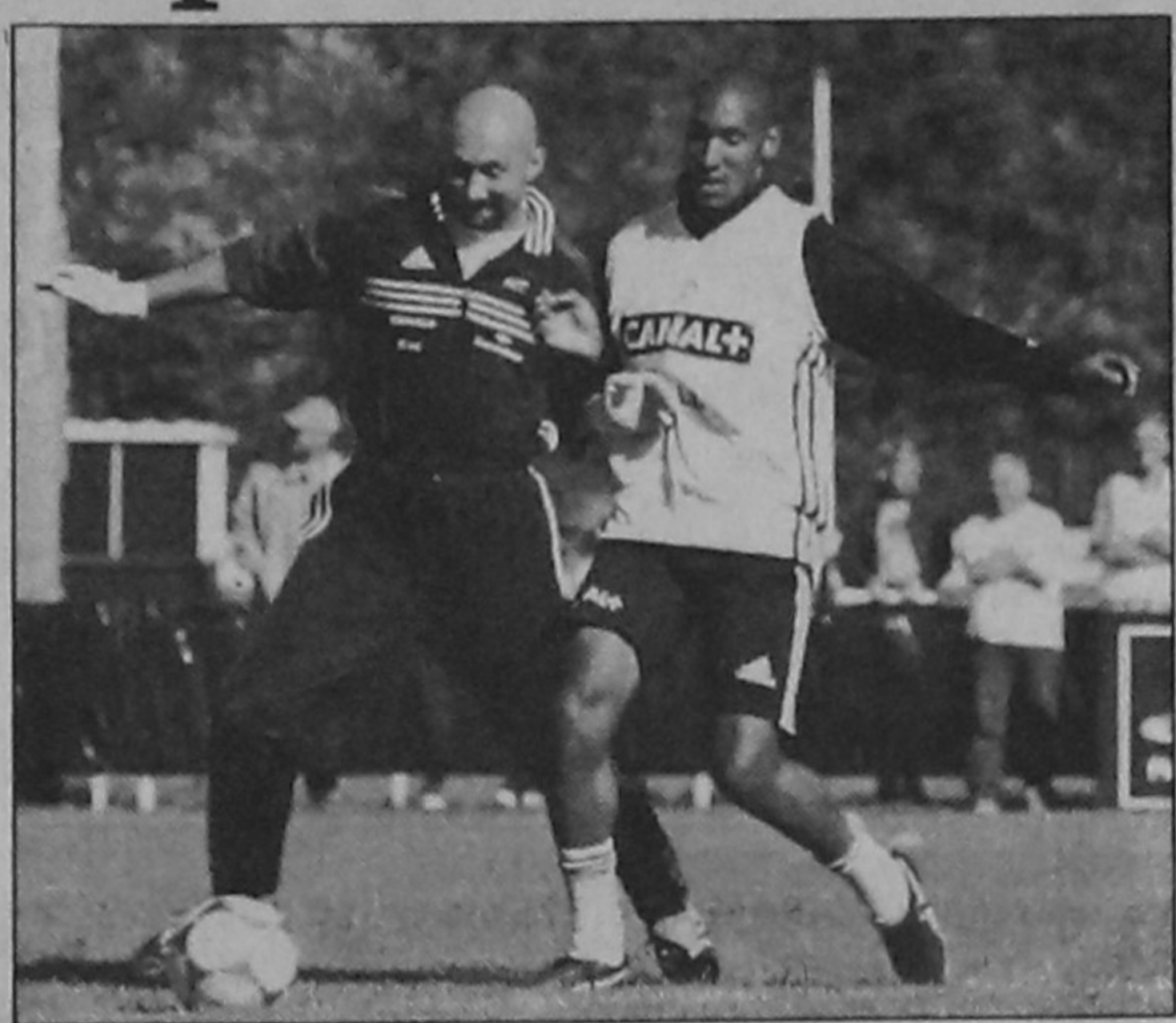
France's attack is probably the hardest to control at Euro 2000 and provided Zidane continues his sparkling form at Euro 2000, there should be no upset for the forerunner.

Lemerre is preparing for a tight match, despite the huge reserves of energy which Spain burned up in their nerve-jangling win over Yugoslavia.

"The euphoria is with them," said the France coach. "They're re-living all the feelings they've already experienced at club level (last season) - and that will help them combat the fatigue."

Euphoria or not, a desire for revenge is bound to accompany Spain coach Jose Antonio Camacho, a defender in the Spanish team which lost to Michel Platini's France in the final of the 1984 European championships.

Achieving that will rest not only on the shoulders of Raul and Alfonso, but also on the attacking form of wingback Bar-



Nicolas Anelka (R), the French striker battles for the ball with goalkeeper Fabien Barthez during a practice session at Ijmuiden on June 22. —AFP photo

Juan Sergi, who wrought havoc with Yugoslavia, and midfielders Gaizka Mendietia and Joseba Etxeberria.

Ivan Helguera and Josep Guardiola will meanwhile have to try and muzzle Zidane.

France may have lost an 14-match unbeaten run against the Dutch, but their first-team will be giving little or nothing away and Camacho is already philosophical about his team's likely fate.

Given the choice, "I would rather be eliminated by the world champions," he said.

On Sunday, France should satisfy that demand.

## THEIR STATE

**BRUGES, Belgium (AP):** Lookahead at Sunday's Euro 2000 quarterfinal between Spain and France:

**SPAIN:** Veteran defender Fernando Hierro is suffering from a right thigh injury and is uncertain for the match. He al-

ready missed Wednesday's 4-3 win over Yugoslavia.

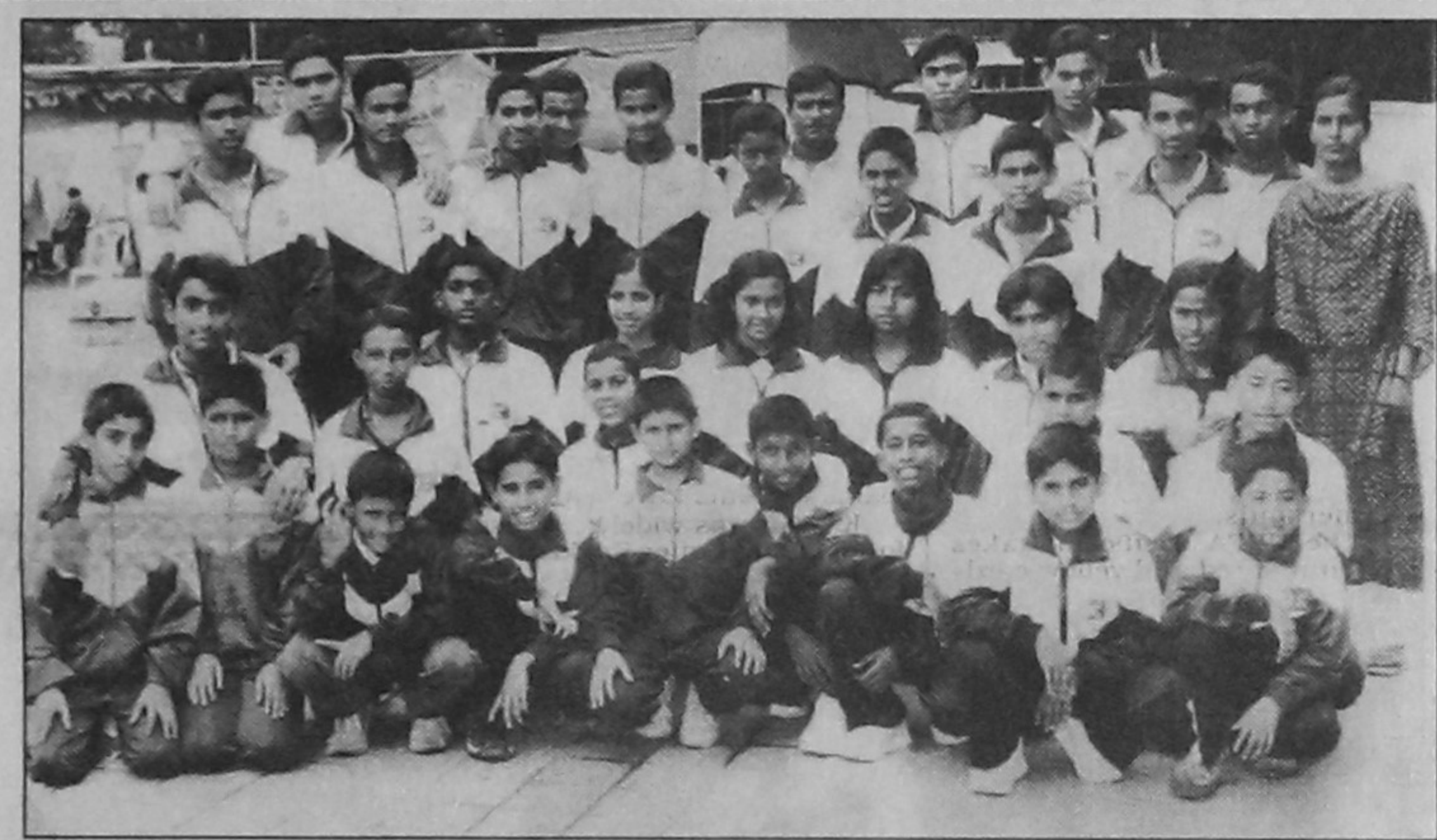
**Suspensions:** None.  
**Worries:** The Spanish defence often looked shaky against Yugoslavia without Hierro.

**Expectations:** Momentum is going Spain's way. After a defeated start with a loss against Norway, its incredible qualification thanks to two injury-time goals against Yugoslavia in a 4-3 victory has buoyed the mood.

**FRANCE:** Emmanuel Petit has a strained ligament in his right knee.

**Suspensions:** None.  
**Worries:** Even though it played its backup squad in a 3-2 loss to the Netherlands, coming off a loss is never a joy.

**Expectations:** France's first team is fully rested after it left the game against the Netherlands to the reserves. Zinedine Zidane, the star of the two games, should be at his sharpest again.



Members of the BKSP team which finished on top of the medals table of the Keya Cosmetics 19th National Age-Group Swimming Championships at the Bangladesh Navy Swimming Pool at Banani yesterday. —Star photo

# Fiore on English plight



GEEL, Belgium, June 24: Italy's new creative star Stefano Fiore said on Friday that England have paid the price at Euro 2000 for failing to develop a more modern, skilful approach to football, reports AFP.

England have been in the dock since their 3-2 exit to Romania - Italy's opponents in the quarter-finals on Saturday - being widely accused of a lack of technique and an inability to play a technical passing game.

Fiore has meanwhile been the revelation of the Italian side, winning a first-team place since a highly promising debut in late April - barely a month before Zoff picked his squad for these championships.

Asked if Euro 2000 had been a victory for technique over toughness, he said: "I think so. I think that nearly all the teams who are in the quarter-finals love playing with the ball on the ground."

"And I think that's a good thing for football in general, because it means we're turning back a bit to the way things used to be."

Asked why he thought England and Germany had been knocked out of the tournament, he said: "These are teams who haven't really changed their way of playing during the years, they've never renewed their approach."

"And they've paid a very high price for that."

As for his own performances, Fiorano said: "I'm really delighted that so far I've repaid the faith that Zoff has shown in me. I hope that I can do even better."

Looking ahead to Saturday's match, he added: "It will be difficult, even though we'll be starting out as favourites. If we play like we know that we can, we ought to get through to the next round."

A place in the semi-finals will depend on Italy keeping up their promising performances in attack - with two goals scored in each match so far.

Alessandro Del Piero, who is likely to watch fellow striker Francesco Totti in action from the subs' bench, was determined not to cause any ripples.

"Everybody is committed ... and nobody sees being on the bench as a rejection," he said.

"Anyone who's sent on later can be decisive - even in the space of just a few minutes... 15 minutes

is enough for someone to dream of turning a match."

And toeing the team line, Del Piero stressed: "The primary objective is a victory for Italy, and not anyone's individual situation."

Filippo Inzaghi, who hasn't scored a goal in open play since Italy beat Wales 4-0 last June, echoed that view.



TRYING SOME GOLF! German legendary tennis player Steffi Graf about to putt during a charity tournament in Karlsruhe, Germany yesterday. The meet has been organised to raise funds for an orphanage 'Children for Tomorrow'. —AFP photo

## Mariner in Super 4

Sports Reporter

Dhaka Mariner Youngs completed the Super Four line-up of the Ragib Ali Gold Cup Hockey Tournament with 6-0 thrashing of Victoria Sporting Club at the Moulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

The winners led the first half 4-0.

Yousuf, who opened the floodgates in the very fourth minute, ended the Victoria rout stalling in the sixth goal seventeen minutes from the final whistle of a lop-sided affair.

Earlier, three giants in Dhaka hockey Usha Krira Chakra, Mohammedan SC and Abahani Krira Chakra made it to the Super Four, the date of which is yet to be announced.

## Both Adams and Lara fail

CHELMSFORD, June 24: Brian Lara and skipper Jimmy Adams failed to make substantial scores for the second time in West Indies' last first-class fixture against New Zealand A before next week's second cricket test against England at Lord's, reports AP.

West Indies were 381 for seven at stumps on the third day of the four-day fixture and an overall lead of 420 runs at Chelmsford on Friday.

While Lara scored 16 to add to his first innings' 33, Adams made just eight.

Lara, top edged a pull against medium pacerman Daryl Tuffey and gave wicketkeeper Martyn Croft with an easy catch. Lara's dismissal was a bitter disappointment for the sparse crowd but they were to be entertained by Wavell Hinds, who struck 74 from 87 deliveries, including ten fours and two sixes.

All those runs came during a second-wicket partnership of 110 with Adrian Griffith.

Griffith, dropped for the first Test, scored his first century of the tour and went on to score 130 with the help of 16 fours. He was eventually stumped to give Glen Sulzberger the figures of 4-102 from 34 overs.

Griffith had early shared in an opening stand of 132 with Chris Gayle, who scored 65 before he was bowled by left-arm spinner Bruce Martin.

Also among the runs was Ramnaresh Sarwan hitting an entertaining 53.

## Hansie could be fined heavily

JOHANNESBURG, June 24: South Africa's disgraced former cricket captain Hansie Cronje could face a bill for more than 284,000 rands (41,000 dollars) from the South African Revenue Service in outstanding taxes and penalties, a local newspaper said on Saturday, reports Reuters.

The Johannesburg Saturday Star reported that this was the amount Cronje could be asked to pay if he co-operated with tax authorities, "pending investigation to determine his total earnings from bribes".

The newspaper said the immunity from criminal prosecution offered to Cronje for "full disclosure" during the inquiry would not cover his tax liability nor an alleged offence against the Exchange Control Act for failing to declare foreign currency he has admitted was kept at his home.

A contravention of this act carries a possible fine of 250,000 rands (36,420 dollars) or five years in prison. Foreign currency brought into South Africa is required to be declared and sold within 30 days.

The report also said the South African Police Services' Asset Forfeiture Unit was taking an interest in Cronje's assets, and that if a crime were proved it might be possible for the unit to seize Cronje's luxury house on the Fancourt Golf Estate at George in the Western Cape, as well as cash deposits.

According to the report, knowingly buying property with illegally acquired money carries a maximum penalty of a fine of 100 million rands (14.57 million dollars) or 30 years in prison.

## Spaniards angry at Wimbledon seedings

BARCELONA, Spain, June 24: The Spanish trio of Alex Corretja, Albert Costa and Juan Carlos Ferrero threatened to pull out of Wimbledon Friday in a row over their seedings, reports AFP.

The Iberian players want the championship organisers to respect their world rankings when compiling the seedings.

Corretja explained: "We're asking the organisers to respect the ATP world classification as it's because of the ATP that we're obliged to play at Wimbledon."

Corretja, Ferrero and Costa are ranked 6th, 7th and 18th respectively in the current classification but are unseeded at the world's top grass court tournament.

They've sent a joint letter of protest to the ATP and to the International Tennis Federation to demand a revision of the seedings.

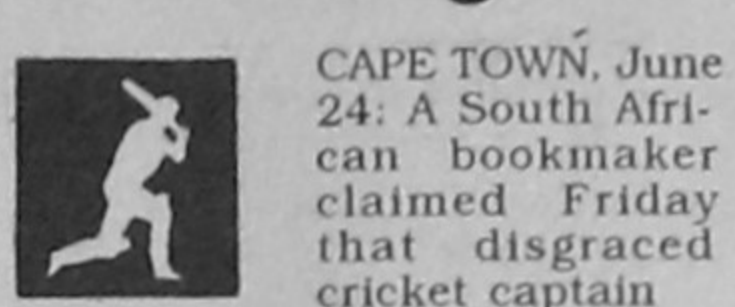
"We respect the rankings, but the English don't take them into account when compiling their seedings," complained Corretja.

Wimbledon is the only major tournament which doesn't use the ATP rankings - for example, Andre Agassi is seeded 8th compared to his world ranking of 14 - whereas new rules introduced by the ATP force players to take part in the grand slam circuit.



A goal-mouth action during yesterday's Ragib Ali Gold Cup hockey tournament encounter between Meril and Victoria at the Moulana Bhasani Stadium. —Star photo

# Cronje offered to fix one?



CAPE TOWN, June 24: A South African bookmaker claimed Friday that disgraced cricket captain Hansie Cronje offered to "throw" a cricket match during the first meeting between the two men in January, reports AFP.

The allegation came after an exhausted Cronje had been helped from the witness stand in tears after almost three days of testimony to the King Commission of inquiry into cricket match-fixing.

Marlon Aronstam, a bookmaker and gambler from Johannesburg, said he was so shocked by Cronje's offer that he immediately contacted his friends from his car telephone to tell them about it as he drove away from the meeting.

Aronstam, who broke down before giving evidence and briefly when he described how he had "respected Hansie as a champion," did not withdraw the allegation despite extensive cross-examination by Cronje's advocate.

The claim of an offer to fix a match was not in Aronstam's written affidavit but he had made it in a consultation with state prosecutor Shamila Batohi earlier in the week.

"She also asked me why it was not in my statement. I told her it was because no-one would believe me, that the national captain would tell me, someone he has just met, that he can throw a game," said Aronstam.

Relating the circumstances of Cronje's alleged offer, Aronstam said he had been invited to the player's room after a telephone conversation in which he offered to make a donation to charity if Cronje was able to contrive a result in the rain-hit fifth Test against England at Centurion in January.

Aronstam said he withdrew

the offer of a donation to charity before meeting Cronje after a call to London had established there was no betting open on the match. He had, however, offered Cronje money to provide pitch information during the one-day series.

As he was leaving the room, Cronje had asked how he could make money from cricket. Aronstam replied, "the ball's in your court".

Cronje then shocked Aronstam by saying he could arrange for South Africa to lose a match in the upcoming triangular series.

He was helped out of the room by a minder and by his brother Frans after being warned that he might be called to the inquiry.

Cronje was described earlier this week by his psychiatrist as being clinically depressed.

Before he left the inquiry, Cronje said he wanted the money he had accepted in bribes to be used to correct some of the damage he had caused.

"I hope that I can use this money in some way to repay and redress the hurt that I've caused to the game and my country in particular," Cronje said.

In his statement to the commission last week, Cronje admitted to accepting four bribes, worth about 140,000 dollars, from gamblers since 1996.

On Friday he admitted for the first time that he had been offered 100,000 dollars by Sanjay "Sanjay" Chawla to "throw" a match during a one-day series in India in March.

The offer had been made when he was given money in a mobile telephone box as a deposit when the pair met for the first time in Durban before the tour.

Cronje admitted he had conversations about money with Chawla in India.

ries involving England and Zimbabwe, provided South Africa had qualified for the final.

Aronstam said Cronje told him that he had three players, Herschelle Gibbs, Nicky Boje and Pieter Strydom "in his pocket", although he agreed with a lawyer for the players that he had no proof other than Cronje's word in that conversation.

Later that week Aronstam gave Cronje 50,000 rands (7,215 dollars) in cash in two instalments. He also provided an ex-

clusive to the tour.

Van Roost has been riding a competitive high after knocking out seed Lindsay Davenport out 24 hours earlier. The Belgian recovered smoothly from a set and 4-2 down to construct the win.

Halard-Decugis followed up on her quarterfinal upset of compatriot and last year's finalist Nathalie Tauziat with her win over Rubin.

After the pair squared the match, Halard-Decugis reached 4-1, but had to fight through her back victory as Rubin bounded back.

The European broke the American in the final game for victory.

The European, playing for the first time here since 1991, broke the American in the final game for victory in the windy and wintry conditions which pass for summer in Britain at this time of year.

tra 3,000 rands (450 dollars) and a leather jacket for a particularly accurate forecast.

A weary Cronje earlier finished his testimony to the King Commission after a gruelling session in which he said he wanted to use money he took in bribes to redress the damage he had done to cricket.

The sacked 30-year-old skipper broke down as the panel of lawyers at the commission wrapped up their cross-examination and thanked the former captain for his cooperation.

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# Family affair at Eastbourne



EASTBOURNE, England, June 24: It will be a family affair Saturday as a pair of married women clash in the final of the \$35,000-dollar Eastbourne tournament - with both competitors coached by their doting husbands, reports AFP.

Belgian Dominique Van Roost will take on number six Julie Halard-Decugis of France for the title at Devonshire Park as the Wimbledon tune-up period reaches its climax with the grass-court Grand Slam starting Monday.

The fifth seeded Van Roost triumphed in a tennis tussle of the Low Countries, defeating Luxembourg's Anne Kremer 4-6, 7-5, 6-1.

Halard-Decugis also needed three sets to overcome American Chanda Rubin 6-2, 3-6, 6-4.

Their showdown will be the first "married ladies" final of

the season on the Tour.

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The European, playing for the first time here since 1991, broke the American in the final game for victory in the windy and wintry conditions which pass for summer in Britain at this time of year.

The tournament, which featured the Wimbledon champion Davenport and Russian drawcard Anna Kournikova, instantly lost lustre Thursday when all four leading seeds were eliminated.

This week has been the career-best for world number 16 Van Roost, who has won four minor titles. "Anne played very well for a set-and-a-half," said the winner.

Van Roost powered back smoothly from her difficult predicament in the second set.

"At 2-4 in the second, I was going for my shots," she said. "I thought that her level dropped a bit, and she seemed to get tired in the third."

The deciding set proved to be a watershed for Van Roost, who broke Kremer three times and wrapped up victory on the first of two match points with a cross-court passing winner.

## CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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