

Reefat goes level with Rakib

Sports Reporter
International Master Reefat-bin-Sattar joined fellow IM Abdullah Al-Rakib at the top of the Shaheed Nazmul Haque Memorial International Rating Chess tournament after defeating the latter at the Khilgaon Pallana Sangsad on Tuesday.

The outcome of the match left both Reefat and Rakib at 6.5 points on conclusion of the eighth round.

Four-players -- Enamul Hossain Rajib, Khander Annuul Islam, Almedul Haque and Syed Ejaz Hossain -- are sharing the crowded second spot with six points each. Saifuddin Lovlu and Showkat Hossain Pallab are in the third spot with 5.5 points each.

The final round will start at the same venue at 10 am today.

Sussex sign Goodwin

LONDON, Oct 3 (Internet report): English county Sussex have signed former Zimbabwe Test batsman Murray Goodwin as their overseas player for the 2001 season.

Goodwin replaces Australia batsman Michael Bevan, who could be a member of Australia's one-day squad touring England, even if he is not involved in the Ashes Test series here.

Born in Zimbabwe, the 27-year-old Goodwin has played most of his cricket in Australia since moving to Perth as a 13-year-old.

In five Sheffield Shield matches for Western Australia last winter, he averaged 61.14. He also made Test centuries against West Indies and England earlier this year.

In 19 Tests Goodwin made 1414 runs including three centuries at a respectable average of 42.84.

Goodwin, along with fellow Zimbabwe Test player Neil Johnson, announced his retirement from Test cricket during his country's recent tour of England.

Lanka heading for ICC clash

HARARE, Oct 3 (Internet report): Sri Lanka is heading for a clash with the ICC over the appointment of controversial umpire Darrell Hair for their potential semi-final clash with Pakistan in the ICC Trophy.

The Sri Lankan Daily News reports Sri Lankan president Thilanga Sumathipala as saying, "We are extremely disappointed with the stand taken by the ICC."

"We made a verbal complaint to the ICC with regard to Hair standing in one of our matches. However, Monday morning the ICC told us that they were unable to make any changes as the appointments had already been publicised."

"We are making a strong protest to the ICC and we are in the process of seeking legal advice on how best to get about the new development."

Hair called Sri Lankan off-spinner for throwing in 1995 and caused further controversy in his autobiography saying he would do the same again despite Muralitharan's action being cleared by the ICC.

Up until this point Hair has been kept away from officiating in Sri Lanka's matches by the ICC following protests from the BCCSL.

Bayern to discipline Effenberg

MUNICH, Germany, Oct 3: Bayern Munich midfielder Stefan Effenberg, accused of striking a woman in a Munich night-club on Saturday, will be hit with a fine, Bayern vice-president Karl-Heinz Rummenigge announced Tuesday, reports AFP.

The amount of the fine was not disclosed although the German press have reported it could be heavy.

A 32-year-old woman filed a complaint Monday accusing Effenberg of hitting her at the exclusive "PI" club in Munich after a dispute broke out.

"It was a mild incident," claimed Effenberg who admitted "touching the woman's head but said it was a defensive reflex."

The Bayern star told German sports daily Bild that there had been an argument over a reserved table, which led to the woman throwing a glass of champagne at Effenberg prompting him into a reflex gesture.

"In any case, there was no need to go to hospital," added Effenberg.

Romantsev stunned

MOSCOW, Oct 3: Russia's national coach Oleg Romantsev said Tuesday he was shocked by the decision of football's world governing body FIFA to cancel the 2002 World Cup qualifying match with Yugoslavia on Saturday, reports AFP.

"My players and myself were all shocked by the decision to postpone the match," Romantsev said at a press conference. "The decision spoiled all our preparations for the qualifier matches," he added.



GOOD TIMES: An AFP file photo showing Brazilian Football Federation (CBF) president Ricardo Teixeira (L) hugging Wanderley Luxemburgo after presenting him as the national coach in August 1998. Luxemburgo was sacked on October 2.

Scolari not interested Candinho Brazil's interim coach

RIO DE JANEIRO, Oct 3: Coaching assistant Candinho will take over as Brazil's caretaker manager after the sacking of Wanderley Luxemburgo, officials said yesterday, as Brazil struggled with their biggest "soccer crisis" in years, reports Reuters.

Candinho would take charge for the World Cup qualifier against Venezuela in San Cristobal on Sunday while Brazil's Football Confederation (CBF) looked for a permanent replacement, CBF president Ricardo Teixeira said.

"You don't just rush into a decision like this days before a crucial World Cup qualifying game," Teixeira told reporters.

Luxemburgo was fired after an appalling performance at the Sydney Olympics and World Cup qualifying defeats by Paraguay and Chile that made him one of the most reviled men in Brazil where soccer is almost a religion.

In Brazil, the national soccer coach gets more column inches in the soccer-mad media than the president.

Luxemburgo had coached Brazil for two years but his position became untenable after the Olympic side were beaten by a nine man Cameroon in the quarter finals of the Sydney Games — a deep embarrassment for the runner ups in the last World Cup.

"Soccer is a national symbol and seeing the team lose so shamefully is like losing part of our identity," said Luis Ribeiro a commentator for Rede TV and radio.

The CBF chief axed Luxemburgo when the two met at a Rio golf club on Saturday although no official announcement was made until Monday.

The CBF then offered the job to Cruzeiro boss Luiz Felipe Scolari, the favourite with fans, but he turned it down for family reasons.

"Luiz Felipe has officially refused an offer, he will not be going to the national team," said Valdir Barbosa, press spokesman at the club.

Speculation about Luxemburgo's successor has now focused on Carlos Alberto Pereira who coached Brazil to victory in the 1994 World Cup tournament. Dunga, who captained the 1994 team, has been tipped as his assistant.

Sao Paulo coach Leir Culp is also seen as a strong candidate for the top job.

Luxemburgo won the Copa America in 1999 but alienated fans with his selection policies. He used more than 70 players in 55 games and failed to create a settled team. His flashy suits were also seen as a sign of arrogance by soccer fanatics.

Many Brazilian sides have recently suffered an exodus of young players and many clubs are in financial difficulties.

Former Brazil player Socrates, along with a string of commentators, blame Teixeira for a "disease" afflicting the game.

"Ricardo Teixeira should be the first to go. There is no point just changing the coach, we need to address the deeper problems," he said in an interview with O Globo newspaper.

Luxemburgo, 45, faced problems off the soccer field as well. A month before the Olympic Games began, a former business associate accused him of tax fraud and charging commissions on the buying and selling of players.

Luxemburgo says he may have made mistakes in his tax returns but denies all other charges.

"I am not a crook. I do not have to hide in my house," he told reporters at the time.

Yesterday, Teixeira said: "Within the current context, (the charges) would affect his relationship with the team. It was better for us and for him."

Luxemburgo successfully coached Palmeiras, Corinthians and Flamengo before taking over the national job.



CANDINHO

Inter dismiss Lippi

MILAN, Oct 3 (Reuters/Internet): Inter Milan coach Marcello Lippi was sacked on Tuesday after a meeting with club president Massimo Moratti, Lippi had called his team "spoilt children" and suggested they no longer had faith in him after a 2-1 defeat by Reggina in the opening game of the Serie A season on Sunday.

A statement on Inter's Web site said the relationship between club and coach had been brought to an end but said Inter "recognised the total professional commitment" shown by Lippi.

Inter vice-president Peppino Prisco told ANSA news agency: "I'm sorry for Lippi."

But he added: "It was on the cards because of the lack of results and the team's lack of any system of play. And if you don't win and you don't give the team a system of play..."

The outcome was widely expected after the former Juventus coach's outburst on Sunday. Lippi even said that if he were president of Inter, he would sack the coach.

"They just played like spoilt children who think that they are great players and the victories will just arrive. That is not fair to those who pay them nor to those who go to watch them," he said.

"Today, if I was the president, I would dismiss the coach and line the players up against a wall and give them all a kick up the backside," Lippi added.

Before they met on Tuesday, Moratti had already said that Lippi's words had created a "mad situation" and had "poured fuel on the fire" at the troubled club.

Lippi joined Inter in July, 1999 after a successful spell at Juventus where he won three Serie A titles and the European Cup in 1996. He resigned from Juve in February 1999 after a run of poor results.

Inter last won the Italian title in 1989 and finished fourth in Serie A last term. The club's poor start follows their failure to qualify for the Champions League after they lost their qualifying match to Sweden's Helsingborg, widely considered to be the weakest side of the 32 teams in this season's league.

"I am ashamed to have presented a team which played like that, without heart and without desire against a team who showed exactly the opposite," said Lippi after the 2-1 defeat to Reggina.

"If the players don't believe in me, they should go and tell the president 'Sorry I don't want to work with that coach.' If that's not the problem, well then I simply can't explain why they played like that."

Inter captain Laurent Blanc dismissed Lippi's suggestion that the team no longer believed in him.

"If we didn't believe in Lippi then we wouldn't carry out the work like we do during the course of a week. We do not work like a team that has no motivation or desire. Sunday's performance was a disaster. We gave the ball away nine times out of 10 and we didn't construct anything."

"Our problem is above all in our heads and that is something that we players have to find a solution to," said the former France international.

Inter spent an estimated 85 million dollars on new players during the close season and their starting line up against Reggina featured six of the new faces.

The club's record signing, Italian international Christian Vieri, remains injured along with Ronaldo, who is unlikely to play this season following a knee operation.

Nigeria probes Olympic failure

LAGOS, Oct 3: Nigeria set up an eight-man committee Tuesday to investigate the country's failure to defend the Olympic soccer gold it won in Atlanta four years ago, reports AFP.

A spokesman for the Nigeria Football Association (NFA) Austin Mgbolu said in a statement that the panel to be headed by NFA board member Chieff Kaave will review the performance of the team at the Sydney Olympics and recommend measures to prevent a repeat.

Nigeria were thrashed 4-1 by Chile at the quarter-final stage in Sydney.

"The team's performance has been heavily criticised here by most Nigerians."

Nigeria won three silver medals - two in athletics and one in weightlifting during the Sydney competition.

FIFA postpones all internationals in Yugoslavia

GENEVA, Oct 3(Reuters/Internet): World soccer's governing body FIFA said on Tuesday that all international matches in Yugoslavia had been postponed until further notice. In a statement FIFA said: "In view of the current situation in Yugoslavia, FIFA took the initiative of assessing the feasibility of allowing matches to be played there."

"It reached the conclusion that it was not advisable to do so under the present circumstances."

The decision means qualifying matches for the 2002 World Cup in Belgrade against Russia on Saturday and against the Faroe Islands on October 11 - and the respective under-21 matches - have been postponed.

FIFA said it would decide "in due course" when the games would be played. In Yugoslavia the opposition is in a stand-off with President Slobodan Milosevic over the result of a September 24 presidential election.

Earlier a leading Russian soccer official said he did not believe the qualifying match against Yugoslavia would be played in Belgrade because of the political situation.

Russian Football Union general secretary Vladimir Radionov told Ekho Moskvy radio he had suggested April 25 next year for the match because the day set aside for possible postponements by FIFA (November 15) did not suit Russia as it was too near the November 12 end of the Russian championship.

Last week Red Star Belgrade's UEFA Cup first round match with Leicester City was played in Vienna rather than Belgrade.

Tuesday's decision by FIFA does not directly affect matches in European club competitions which come under UEFA's aegis.



England players (L-R) Steve McManaman, Kevin Phillips, Joe Cole, Gary Neville and Jamie Carragher practice during a training session at the squad's base in Bisham Abbey yesterday. England take on Germany in a World Cup 2002 qualifier on Saturday. --AFP photo

Totti year's best, Baresi player of the century

MILAN, Oct 3(Reuters/Internet): AS Roma forward Francesco Totti has been voted Player of the Year for the 1999/2000 season by members of the Italian Footballers Association (AIC) and former AC Milan defender Franco Baresi was named Player of the Century.

Totti also claimed the award for "best Italian player". AC Milan's Ukrainian striker Andriy Shevchenko, top league scorer last season, was selected as the best foreign player in Serie A.

Lazio midfielder Roberto Baroni, who played in Serie A for Reggina last season and was part of the Italian Olympic team, was voted "young player of the year."

Not surprisingly, Sven Goran Eriksson who led Lazio to the league and cup double last season won the award for best coach while Pierluigi Collina was voted referee of the year.

Baresi, capped 81 times by Italy and now head of youth development at AC Milan, won the vote for player of the century ahead of nine others.

The other candidates were Giuseppe Meazza, Valentino Mazzola, Roberto Baggio, Gianpiero Boniperti, Gigi Riva, Paolo Rossi, Dino Zoff, Gianni Rivera and Silvio Piola.

Wembley's farewell Saturday

LONDON, Oct 3(AFP): England's World Cup qualifier against Germany on Saturday carries more than the usual heavy historical baggage for it will be the last match played at Wembley Stadium.

Its twin towers, as familiar a London landmark as Big Ben or Buckingham Palace, will be spared as the bulldozers demolish the old stadium in preparation for a 475-million-pound (£65-million-dollar) "new" Wembley due to open in 2003.

The tributes to what is now frankly a decaying hulk in an otherwise unremarkable north London suburb, have shown that while the ferro-concrete towers may be crumbling, the English's love of nostalgia is as strong as it ever was.

Wembley was built as part of the British Empire Exhibition of 1923 and to have suggested then that the stadium would have outlasted the nation's imperial rule would have been laughable.

The Empire Stadium, as it was officially known, cost 750,000 pounds (1.05 million dollars) to build, an astronomical sum for the time.

Its first match, the 1923 FA Cup final, was arguably its most famous. Thousands upon thousands eager to cheer on Bolton and West Ham, as well as see the new stadium, broke in without going through the turnstiles.

Despite all the expanses of purpose built terracing, there was simply no room for all of them and a vast overflow spilt onto the pitch itself, causing a 40-minute delay.

Astonishingly, given modern methods of crowd control, spectators were cleared off the pitch by a solitary policeman on a white horse. Bolton beat West Ham 2-0 but the horse was the star.

The official attendance was 126,047 but contemporary reports suggested over 200,000 were present. From then on matches at Wembley wisely became all ticket affairs.

Other sports also took their turn. The cost of building Wembley had driven its developer to financial ruin so the money from greyhound racing, speedway, and rugby league's Challenge Cup final was welcome.

Another familiar sound, if not sight, was the high-pitched screaming of enthusiastic schoolgirls cheering on the England women's hockey team in their annual international.

Even more deafening was the sound of rock concerts notably the Live Aid event of 1985 that raised money for Ethiopian famine relief.

Wembley was also at the heart of the 1948 Olympics, and on its athletics track Fanny Blankers-Koen, the "Flying Dutchwoman" won her clutch of gold medals.

However, football was still Wembley's core business and 1953 alone saw two vintage contests.

That year's FA Cup final between Bolton and Blackpool was Sir Stanley Matthews third and some reckoned last chance to win a precious winner's medal.

However, at 3-1 down that was looking unlikely.

Then the legendary England wing, the "wizard of the dribble", produced some of the finest play of his career to provide the crosses that took Blackpool to a 4-3 victory.

Stan Mortensen scored a hat-trick for Blackpool but the match was hailed as "the Matthews final" and has remained so ever since.

An even more impressive footballing display came in November, England had never lost to non-British opposition at Wembley but that record fell in spectacular style when Hungary, inspired by brilliant striker Ferenc Puskas, inflicted a then record 6-3 defeat.

Among the England side that received this tactical masterclass was Alf Ramsey. Thirteen years later he was England's manager when they won the World Cup at Wembley in a 4-2 victory over West Germany.

A German equaliser seconds from the end took the game into extra-time. "You've won the World Cup once, go and do it again," Ramsey told his exhausted players.

They did, although Sir Geoff Hurst's second goal, England's third, which came off the underside of the crossbar remains controversial to this day.

What was not in doubt was Hurst's third that flew into the top corner to seal England's win. No player before or since has scored a hat-trick in a World Cup final.

This was English football's greatest day, hence the decision to play Germany in Wembley's last game. England will once again wear their change strip of red, the Germans their traditional white.

Whether any English player will be able to sell his shirt in years to come for 91,750 pounds (128,450 dollars) as Hurst did in September seems unlikely.

Currently, neither England nor Germany are what they once were in world football and nor is Wembley.

For the moment though that doesn't matter. As German coach Rudi Voller said: "This is not just about three points. This is a classic - the last game in this legendary stadium."

WORLD FOOTBALL BRIEFS

October 3(Reuters/Internet): International football briefs on Tuesday:

VIEIRA WONT BE SOBER
CLAIREFONTAINE, Arsenal's French midfielder Patrick Vieira says he won't smooth over his rough edges despite just finishing a five-game suspension in England.

Vieira was sent off in Arsenal's opening two games of the season but he says he won't be changing the no-nonsense style that makes him one of the game's most influential midfielders.

"Red cards and suspensions won't make me change," he said at the French training camp in Clairefontaine on Tuesday ahead of a friendly against Cameroon.

"I'm happy to play for Arsenal. I think I found the team I needed and I just want to stay there for the time being."

"I've never been rough on purpose, it was always bad reactions from me. Of course, I was wrong and I'm ready to take responsibility for what I did, but it's difficult not to react when someone is tough on you."

Vieira added: "I can't play without reacting, this is the way I am. I'm not going to change and I don't want to change. I'm a strong-willed player and it's what helped me get where I am now."

The 24-year-old was outstanding in Euro 2000 and looks certain to replace retired captain Didier Deschamps for the matches against Cameroon, and South Africa on Saturday.

But he admits he still has a great deal to learn. He (Deschamps) is a fantastic player."

REDONDO OUT FOR SIX MONTHS
MILAN-AC Milan's Argentine midfielder Fernando Redondo will be out for six months after a knee operation on Tuesday, the Serie A club said.

Redondo, who was signed from Real Madrid for \$11.4 million in August, suffered the injury during his first week of training with Milan.

He has not played in Milan's pre-season friendlies or Champions League games and missed the 2-0 win over Vicenza in Serie A on Sunday.

ALONSO NEW ATHLETICO COACH
MADRID: Relegated Spanish giants Atletico Madrid appointed former player Marcos Alonso Tuesday as their new coach at a press conference at the Vicente Calderon stadium, reports AFP.

Alonso takes over from Fernando Zambrano, who was fired Monday after a poor start to the season, and signed a deal that runs until the end of the current campaign.

As well as two stints as a player for Atletico during the eighties, he also played for Barcelona as well as picking up 22 caps for Spain.

An assistant coach under Jorge d'Alessandro at Atletico for the 1994-95 season, he has also been at the reins of Spanish clubs, Rayo Vallecano, Racing Santander and Seville.

Radebe pulls out of friendly
JOHANNESBURG, Oct 3: South African captain Lucas Radebe yesterday withdrew from his country's squad for Saturday's friendly international against France in Johannesburg after doctors told him to rest, reports Reuters.

South African Football Association (SAFA) officials said the defender had been told to rest for at least two weeks after suffering concussion for the second time in a month on Saturday.

Radebe was taken to hospital on Saturday after a clash of heads with Les Ferdinand in Leeds United's win over Tottenham Hotspur in the English Premier League.

Last month he was also taken to hospital after being injured during the Champions League loss at Barcelona.

"We have been told by doctors at the Royal Infirmary in Leeds that he will not be able to play on Saturday," said SAFA chief executive officer Danny Jordaan on Monday.

Coach Carlos Queiroz, who will be in charge of the South African side for the first time, said Radebe's withdrawal was a major blow to his preparations.