

Nat'l youth cricket Easy win for Chittagong

UNB, Dhaka Chittagong earned a four-wicket victory over Nilphamari in a low-scoring final round match of the 20th National Youth Cricket Championship at Thakurgaon yesterday.

BRIEF SCORES NILPHAMARI: 89/10 in 37.1 overs (Jewel 14, Kalim 21, Nadim 15, Jony 12, extras 14; Minhaz 2/23, Altaz 2/13, Adnan 1/11, Mithu 1/13, Momtaz 2/19, Arafat 1/7).

Rajshahi cricket

Bright Star Club recorded an eight-wicket win over Upashahar Cricket Club in a Premier Division Cricket League match at the local district stadium today.

Pakistani court summonses Ali

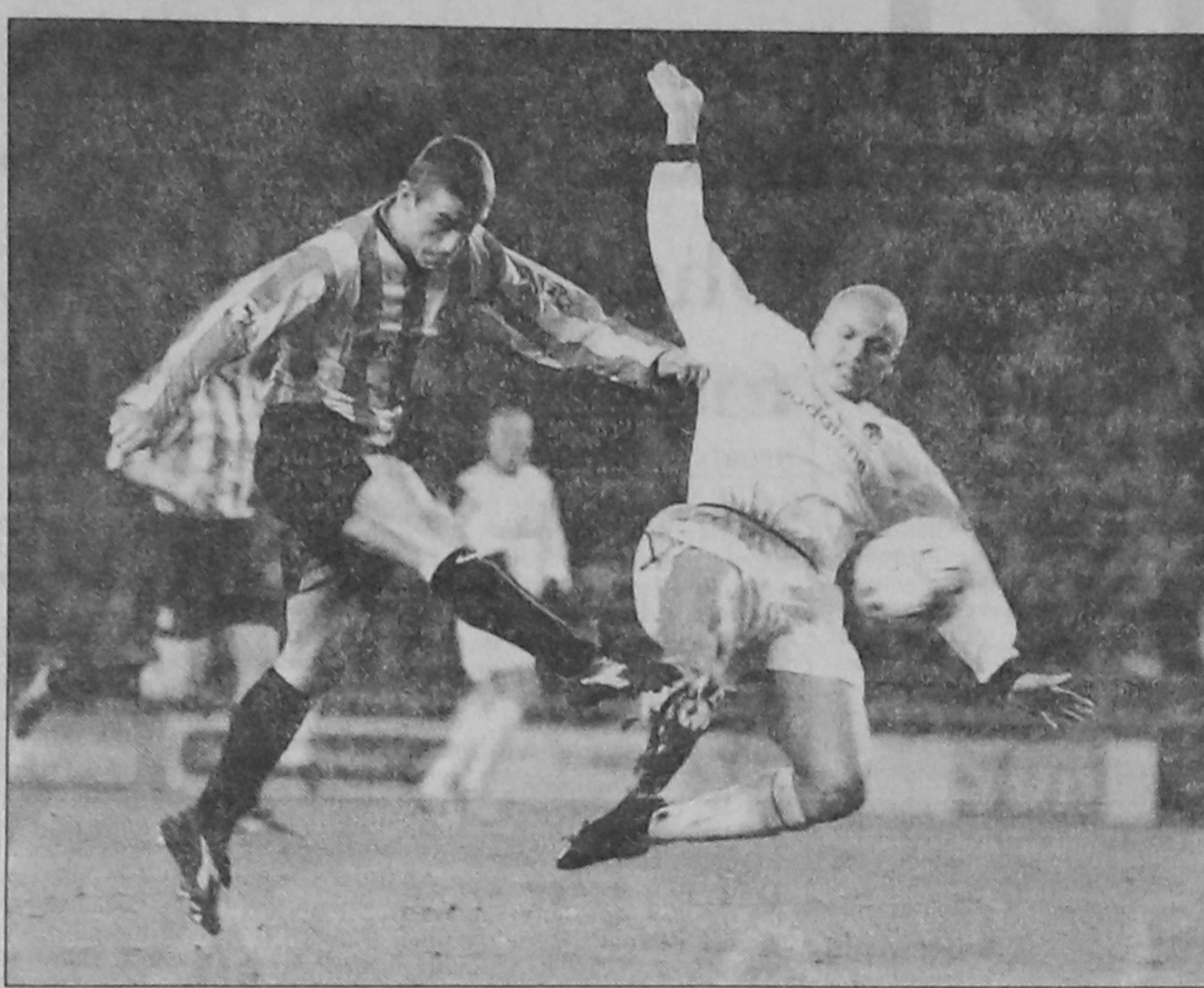
A Pakistani civil court has summoned former South African cricket chief Ali Bacher to appear next month in a 1.7-million-dollar libel suit filed by former umpire Javed Akhtar, court sources said Thursday.

Friendly cricket

A friendly cricket match between Dhaka Club and BIXIMCO Cricketers will be held at the City Club ground in Mirpur today, says a press release.

Harun made BOA chief

The government has appointed Chief of Army Staff Lieutenant General M Harun-Ar-Rashid the president of Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) yesterday for raising the standard of the country's sports.



Manchester United's Wes Brown (R) makes a futile attempt to tackle Kevin Phillips of Sunderland during their Premiership clash at the Stadium of Light in Sunderland on January 31.

Premiership Cole MU's show-stopper

Manchester United stretched their Premiership lead to a staggering 15 points on Wednesday after edging Sunderland 1-0 in a stormy encounter at the Stadium of Light which saw three players sent-off.

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French League Cup Bordeaux sent packing

Ailing French champions Monaco left it late but breathed a huge sigh of relief after two goals in the last seven minutes gave them a much-needed 2-1 French League Cup win over league rivals Bastia.

Unfashionable Troyes joined Monaco in the quarter finals after a 2-0 win over Second Division side Nancy, while Lyon romped to a 3-1 win over the out of form Lens.

Elsewhere, in a high-scoring encounter Second Division Amiens grabbed an extra-time goal to dump league rivals Wasquehal out 3-2, while league neighbours Niort scored the only goal of the game in extra time to oust rivals Le Havre.

Baiano denies taking drugs

Brazilian international Junior Baiano, who has been suspended for a month by the national football federation (CBF) for failing a drugs test, on Wednesday professed his innocence.

The CBF said Vasco Da Gama's Baiano tested positive for benzocaine, a substance derived from cocaine, at the Brazilian championship final against Sao Caetano on January 18.

Valencia unveil Aimar

Spanish high-flyers Valencia unveiled their new Argentinian signing Pablo Cesar Aimar, whom they hope will reinvigorate their rapidly waning title challenge, here on Wednesday.

The 21-year-old playmaker, whose contract with Argentine side River Plate was on the verge of expiring, will join Hector Cuper's 2000 European Cup finalists for around 20 million dollars.

Aimar, who joins Valencia at a time when they trail leaders Real Madrid by 10 points and with their supporters complaining of Cuper's ultra-conservative tactics, has a 72.5 million-dollar buy-out clause written into his contract.

Lindsay content with form

American Lindsay Davenport in action against compatriot Meghann Shaughnessy during their Pan Pacific Open second round engagement yesterday.

Lindsay Davenport shrugged off the disappointment of her Australian Open campaign Thursday and said she was happy with her form on the fast indoor courts here at the Pan Pacific Open tournament.

"It is a tough weekend after losing, and I really wanted to do well in Melbourne, but I think once I came here I actually felt

really good and happy that I did choose to come," said the American second seed.

Davenport failed to defend her Australian Open last week, losing to eventual champion Jennifer Capriati in the semifinals.

For Capriati, 24, one of sport's most high-profile cases of teenage disillusionment and burn-out, it was her first Grand Slam title after recovering from her dark years of drugs and behavioural problems.

The 24-year old Davenport

breezed past her compatriot Meghann Shaughnessy 6-3, 6-2 in her second round match Thursday in 67 minutes.

"No, I definitely did not take her (Capriati) too lightly," Davenport said of her 3-6, 4-6 defeat in Melbourne. "I knew she was obviously playing very well after beating Seles and some other players."

"I think the part that is disappointing is that when you get that far in a tournament, and you are at the stages where the big matches are, and you don't play at your best... I think that was the hardest part."

"I can handle losing, I would rather lose and play well though, but I thought I could have played better on that day."

"But, it was just an incredible story that she won, she is good friend of mine and I was very happy for her when I saw that she won the final. I think everybody deep down felt really happy for her," she added.

Davenport defeated world number one Martina Hingis of Switzerland to win the Tokyo title in 1998, and she is probably the only player here who can stop the "Swiss Miss" from winning her third straight and fourth overall crown.

But before that, she has to beat in-form Iva Majoli of Croatia, the 1997 French Open champion and 1996 winner here, who stormed back from match point down to beat American seventh seed Lisa Raymond 6-7 (3/7), 6-2, 7-6 (7/1).

"My favourite conditions are indoors and on a fast court, so I couldn't ask for anything better here. The main key is to serve well," Davenport said.

"I haven't played Iva in a number of years, so it should be interesting. We always had really tough matches a couple of years ago."

"She is a consistent baseliner, she returns very well, so I have to be ready for some serves to come back and just try and outthrust her from the baseline," she added.



American Lindsay Davenport in action against compatriot Meghann Shaughnessy during their Pan Pacific Open second round engagement yesterday.

Sugiyama, Asagoe advance

Japanese Fed Cup teammates Ai Sugiyama and Shinobu Asagoe pulled off stunning solo victories against seeded players in the second round of the Pan Pacific Open tennis tournament here Thursday.

Asagoe shocked fourth seed Amanda Coetzer of South Africa 6-4, 5-7, 7-6 (7/5) in the opening match of the day, and then Sugiyama followed her with a 6-4, 6-4 victory over fifth seed Sandrine Testud of France.

American seventh seed Lisa Raymond also joined the departing Coetzer and Testud losing to 1996 French Open champion Iva Majoli 7-6 (7/3), 2-6, 6-7 (1/7).

Elsewhere normal service was resumed with second seed Lindsay Davenport and eighth seed Magdalena Maleeva of Bulgaria cruising through to the third round.

Davenport brushed aside fellow American Meghann Shaughnessy 6-3, 6-2, while Maleeva outclassed Tatiana Panova of Russia 7-6 (7/5), 6-2.

"I'm tired," said Asagoe after her 159 minute battle. "I was under pressure towards the end of the match, because I was nervous and I was tired physically."

"All those things put pressure on me. My opponent was Amanda, but everything seemed to me against me. I'm really tired."

"Whenever I have played a top player before, I think too much of trying to play aggressively. But today I was able to concentrate and be aggressive," added Asagoe.

ranked 77th against Coetzer's 10th.

Sugiyama put her win over Testud, the world number 15, down to the example of her compatriot's hard fought encounter.

"Asagoe showed a great fighting spirit, her victory inspired me very much," said Sugiyama, ranked 49th.

"I have played Sandrine many times and I had never beaten her before, but it was close when I lost in Auckland in January, so I thought I would have a chance today. I was able to play my tennis today."

Coetzer, before a partisan home crowd, showed plenty of aggression charging the net but she was unable to capitalise on her breaks in the third set allowing

Asagoe to break back each time.

"I think both of us had opportunities throughout the match and probably didn't take them," said the veteran South African, who was a finalist here in 1999.

"I just made a lot of errors when I was ahead and when I should have been looking to close out the match... That was probably the most disappointing part," she added.

"When I play my best tennis, I have a very good sense of where exactly to hit the ball at the right moment, to keep them just a little off balance, to keep it out of the hitting reach," said Coetzer.

"Today, she was playing so well and I didn't have a chance to think and play like that."



Lutfur Rahman, project director of Samannita Jonokalyan Samity, handing over prize to a winner of the sports competition of the centre at Paikpara Staff Quarters ground in Mirpur on January 30.

WORLD FOOTBALL BRIEFS

VAN NISTELROOY DEAL ON STILL!

CANNES: PSV Eindhoven are resigned to the fact that Dutch striker Ruud van Nistelrooy will join Manchester United at some point - but are refusing to put a time scale on the deal.



of being completed last season before van Nistelrooy, 24, picked up a serious knee injury. He has not played since, but PSV director Peter Fossen insisted Wednesday his rehabilitation was proceeding well.

COPOLLA BLASTS DUBAI

DUBAI: Diego Maradona's manager on Wednesday dubbed as shameful the treatment of the Argentine football legend over an aborted visit to the Gulf emirate of Dubai to play in a lucrative testimonial match.

"Diego is not responsible for any of the mistakes and cancellations and wants to make it very clear that he was always willing and ready to come to Dubai," said Guillermo Coppola, Maradona's manager for the past 16 years.

"This is a shameful way to treat somebody as famous as Diego," Coppola told Gulf News. Maradona, 40, has failed to fly into Dubai to seal the contract to play in the testimonial on four different dates, leading to the cancellation of VIP airline seats for him, his wife and manager, as well as VIP limousines and luxury hotel suites.

Argentine forward Pablo Aimar shows his mastery over the soccer ball during his presentation as Valencia's new recruit at the Mestalla Stadium on January 31.



Argentine forward Pablo Aimar shows his mastery over the soccer ball during his presentation as Valencia's new recruit at the Mestalla Stadium on January 31. Aimar joined the Spanish club from River Plate.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer. Includes crossword grid and clues for Across, Down, and Cryptic sections.