

Div III soccer

SPORTS REPORTER

Little Friends Club and Eskaton Sabuj Sangha won their respective Third Division Football League matches played at the Shere-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

A 79th minute goal from Aziz guided Little Friends to a solitary goal win over Mirpur Ekadash while Eskaton posted an identical win over Sunrise Sporting Club. Mukul scored the all-important goal on the stroke of the breather.

The day's other match between Spandan Krira Chakra and Kadamtala sangsad ended in a goalless draw.

Eastern face UCB wrath

REUTERS, Johannesburg

The United Cricket Board (UCB) is considering withdrawing financial support from the Eastern Cricket Union for failing to integrate black South Africans, the Sunday Independent reported.

The newspaper said a report compiled by UCB chief executive Gerald Majola had raised concerns about the lack of success in transforming the game in several of the 11 provincial unions affiliated to the national body.

The most damaging criticism was reserved for Mpumalanga province, home to the Eastern Cricket Union.

"Transforming conservative mindsets among so-called white teachers and administrators remains one of the most challenging transformation issues facing Easterns," the paper quoted the report as saying.

"The situation has become so serious that the board is considering withdrawing financial support until they change."

The report was tabled at a seminar last weekend, the same meeting at which the UCB decided to abolish selection race quotas at international and senior provincial level.

Affiliates were also given the guideline that teams below those levels should be at least 50 percent black.

The newspaper also quoted the report as saying there was poor integration at club level in Gauteng, and that the Natal administration was not representative of the province.

Warne sheds the pounds

BBC, London

Australian star Shane Warne has launched into a new diet, in which butter and beer are banned, in a bid to ensure he stays at his cricketing peak.

The 32-year-old leg-spinner, still the best in the business, has already lost nearly 12 kilos.

Warne, in England to promote the paperback version of his autobiography, is slimming down to ensure he stays at the peak of his powers for the upcoming double bill of the Ashes followed by the World Cup in South Africa.

In an interview to English newspaper The Independent on Sunday, Warne said: "I looked at the international programme and what lay ahead and it's an unbelievable schedule.

"I've been training really hard, dieting, cutting out butter, minimal cheese and pizzas.

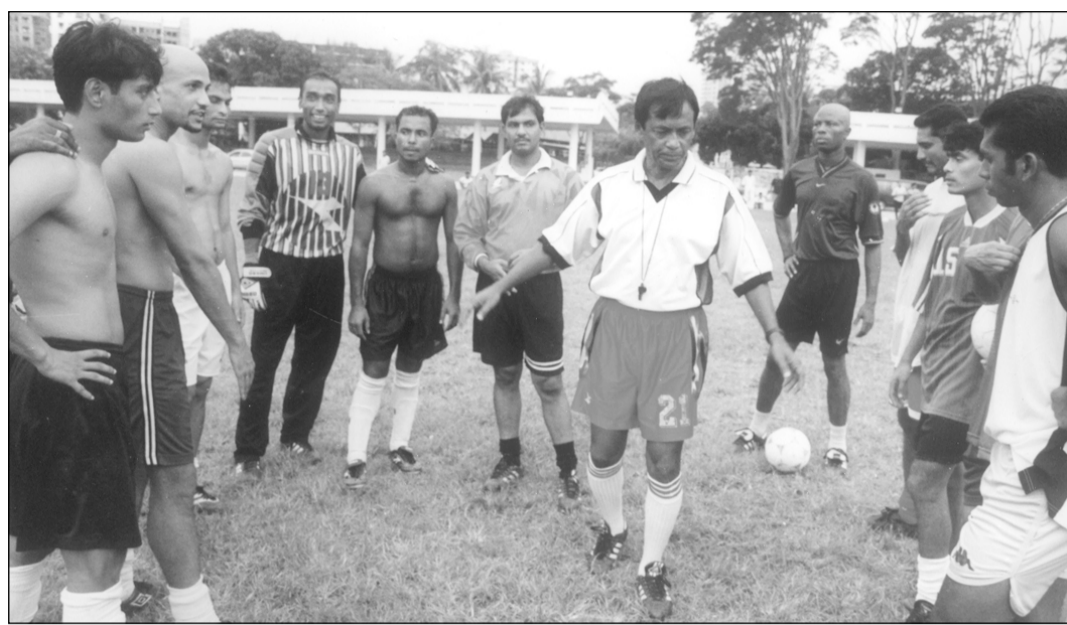
"I still have chips occasionally, but not with every meal - no beer, I'm only drinking wine.

"I'm into fruit, three litres of water a day, soups and salads. I'm actually getting some muscles which I'm starting to enjoy."

Worryingly for England and any World Cup opponents, he is also keen to talk up his form.

"I think I'm finally back now to the way I used to bowl, which is very, very pleasing," he said.

"I'm finally beginning to understand my bowling a lot more, how to get batsmen out rather than just bowl big, turning leg-breaks.



Mohammedan coach Abul (C) explaining something to his charges during a training session at the Police Lines ground yesterday.

ECB's neutral plan



BBC, London

The prospect of England acting as a neutral venue for one-day games involving India and Pakistan appears to have increased following the success of the NatWest Series.

The three games between India and Sri Lanka at Edgbaston, the Oval and Bristol all attracted big crowds and England and Wales Cricket Board chief executive Tim Lamb told the BBC: "The atmosphere at the matches has been really colourful and vibrant."

He confirmed that the ECB had given "serious thought" to staging neutral games in England.

"We nearly persuaded India and Pakistan to play some neutral one-day internationals a couple of years ago and we did offer to stage some one-day games between Pakistan and Australia a few weeks ago, bearing in mind the cancellation of that tour," said Lamb.

"We think we could certainly

make a success of staging neutral one-day internationals in this country, not least because of the sort of cosmopolitan cricket audience we've got."

Cricket World Cup games in 1999 were well supported by Asian supporters living in England.

And the following year, The Oval attracted a crowd of 18,500 for a one-off match between an Asian XI and the Rest of the World.

It prompted Pakistani all-rounder Wasim Akram to suggest the idea of unofficial 'Test' matches between the two teams.

"We really mixed in well. You would see the Pakistani and Indians waving flags next to each other, and joking with each other.

"These games will definitely get the relationships going," he said at the time.

Neutral 'Tests' are not on the ECB's agenda, but officials at Lord's are well aware that one-day games could be a source of extra revenue.

Almost 200,000 tickets were sold for the NatWest Series, and the crowds have been treated to some

excellent cricket.

"Ticket surplus - the revenue from that comes a poor third in comparison to broadcasting and sponsorship revenue, but nonetheless we have exceeded budget.

"The sponsors are pretty happy with what they've seen because we're very close now to renewing the sponsorship for a further three years, so that's all very encouraging as well," said Lamb.

Next year's triangular series featuring South Africa and Zimbabwe will be harder to sell, although England also has three early season one-dayers against Pakistan.

The neutral idea has the support of England's chairman of selectors, David Graveney, who said the passion and noise generated by the crowds for the Sri Lanka v India matches had been a "great advert" for cricket.

"It may be the way to go forward. It's a competitive sporting market - if we can keep cricket on the back pages of the papers, that would be great," he added.

Rally round Hussain



INTERNET, London

England have rallied round in support of captain Nasser Hussain after he marked his maiden one-day international century with a mouthed obscenity towards his critics.

Hussain's 115 in Saturday's dramatic two-wicket defeat by India in the NatWest Series final at Lord's was his first hundred in 72 appearances at that level.

His angry gesture on reaching three figures, when he held up three fingers and pointed to the number three on his back, came in response to calls for him to bat further down the order.

In recent weeks several former England players now working in the media, including Ian Botham, Bob Willis and Jonathan Agnew, had suggested other more aggressive players should be used at the fall of the first wicket.

Hussain's uncharacteristic antics could have earned a rebuke from the International Cricket Council under their code of conduct, which states that: "Players shall at no time engage in conduct unbecoming to their status which could bring them or the game of cricket into disrepute."

Fortunately for Hussain, match referee Mike Procter saw the incident and decided against taking any action while England have also defended his response as being nothing more than defiance.

Tim Lamb, the chief executive of the England and Wales Cricket Board, admitted to being taken aback by the incident, but stressed: "I would describe it more as a gesture of defiance rather than insulting."

"If he had waved two fingers then that would have been a different matter, but he was just being defi-



NASSER HUSSAIN

ant. "We need a bit of passion in the game and he's a passionate person and it's his passion that is one of his great strengths and as far as I'm concerned it was nothing more than that."

Lamb's support was echoed by veteran wicketkeeper Alec Stewart, who has built an international career around a public image of avoiding controversy.

"He's been under a lot of pressure," stressed Stewart. "There's been a lot of criticism of Nasser's

one-day play and a lot of it has been very harsh.

"It was a bit of relief for him to score his first one-day hundred and he reacted in that way. It was only aimed at two or three people in the media, all of which are former England cricketers who have been on his case and it was a bit of a release of emotions.

"He's the man for the job at number three. He's played exceptionally well for Essex at a lower standard in county cricket, he's shown good form in this series and the way he played yesterday just showed what a quality player he is."

Coach Duncan Fletcher was equally supportive, claiming: "We're always looking at the balance to the side and we believe Nasser's vital to that side as captain - we believe that number three is the best place for him to bat.

"He's been hearing and reading the criticism for a while and it was just a reaction. He went out to prove he could bat at number three and played a great innings."

Hussain added: "It wasn't aimed at the media in general, who've been very fair to me. I'm sure most people don't give a monkeys but there have been one or two gentlemen who've been permanently on my case about this batting position, putting me under pressure.

"I suppose I'm old enough and ugly enough to take it, but they have laboured it. I was gesturing with my body that I bat at number three and I felt I'd proved a point on the biggest of stages."

NatWest final scoreboard

ENGLAND: 325 for five in 50 overs.

INDIA	
Sehwag b Giles	45
Ganguly b Tudor	60
Mongia c Stewart b Irani	9
Tendulkar b Giles	14
Dravid c Knight b Irani	5
Y Singh c Tudor b Collingwood	69
Kaif not out	87
H Singh b Flintoff	15
Kumble c Stewart b Flintoff	0
Z. Khan not out	4
Extras: (b-3, lb-8, w-6, nb-1)	18
Total: (For 8 wkts in 49.3 overs)	326
Fall of wickets: 1-106, 2-114, 3-126, 4-132, 5-146, 6-267, 7-314, 8-314	
Did not bat: A. Nehra	

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Gough	10	1	63	0
Tudor	9	0	62	1
Flintoff	7.3	0	55	2
Irani	10	0	64	2
Giles	10	0	47	2
Collingwood	3	0	24	1

Result: India won by 2 wkts.

Man-of-the-match: Mohammad Kaif

Man-of-series: Marcus Trescothick.

Toss: England

Umpires: Steve Bucknor (WIs), David Shepherd (Eng)

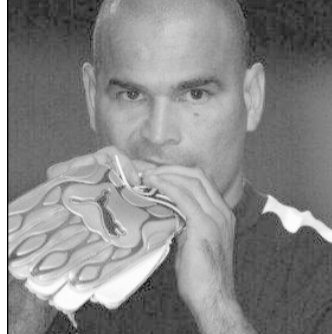
Third umpire: Peter Willey (Eng)

Match referee: Mike Procter (Rsa)

Chilavert at diet farm!

AFP, Strasbourg

Charismatic Paraguayan goalkeeper Jose Luis Chilavert has been sent to a health farm by his French club Strasbourg and told to shed "a few kilograms" before the new season.



JOSE LUIS CHILAVERT

The First Division club's goalkeeping coach Pascal Janin said 36-year-old Chilavert had returned from the World Cup finals overweight and had accepted the club's proposal to spend a week at the centre in Merano, Italy.

"There are a few kilos to lose," said Janin. "Rather than trying to lose it in training over a long period he is going to try to do it quicker.

"So he accepted the club's offer to go to Merano, where experts will help him change his dietary habits.

French midfielder star Zinedine Zidane and Laurent Blanc have attended the same centre in the past.

Chilavert returned to Strasbourg on July 5 having been permitted extra holiday following his participation in the World Cup. He helped Paraguay reach the second round where they were beaten by eventual finalists Germany.

His place in the Strasbourg team is under threat as the club are on the verge of signing former Sochaux keeper Vincent Fernandez.

With Chilavert between the posts, Strasbourg were promoted to the First Division at the end of the 2001-2002 season.

A chess of

FROM PAGE 13
the widest participation possible. A number of deaf players were allocated places in the Class 6-10 Group.

And despite their handicap this unfortunate group numbering 7-10 did not forget the joy of victory.

The organisers Bangladesh Chess Federation and especially the Standard Chartered Bank deserve a lot of credit for arranging such a noble annual event that brings together so many players from various strata of society.

One parent hoped that the BCF and sponsors could now explore ways to further develop the potential of the chess children.

"Maybe the sponsors can start an initiative to fund the setting up of training schools in and outside the capital.

"Perhaps the country's top players can be invited to offer their expertise as salaried teachers," he said.

The media will wholeheartedly lend its total support to any venture, which raises the profile of chess and is waiting to see the next move.

No Shoab

FROM PAGE 13
three occasions.

He was cleared once by the International Cricket Council (ICC) and twice by the Pakistan Cricket Board.

Akhtar's elder brother, Shahid Akhtar, said that his brother needed a rest.

"He (Akhtar) felt tiredness so he is resting in England."

A final squad of 15, from an original group of 19 selected, is likely to be announced by next week.

Merry media



AFP, New Delhi

India's media on Sunday lavished praise on young Indian cricketers Mohammad Kaif, Yuvraj Singh and Zaheer Khan, whose batting steered the team to a remarkable two-wicket win over England at Lord's.

India's win on Saturday followed defeats in nine consecutive one-day finals.

Photographs of man of the match Kaif and reports detailing the nail-biting finish were splashed across the front pages of the main newspapers, with The Times of India titling its piece "India stun England; Hero Kaif scripts historic win, breaks jinx."

"An incredible win" said the Hindustan Times, while the Asian Age headlined its article: "India win Operation Overlord."

India's total on Saturday was the second highest score to win a one-day international following Australia's 330 against South Africa earlier this year.

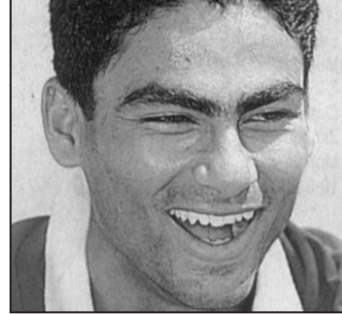
Chasing England's 325 for five, India finished on 326 for eight with 20-year-old Yuvraj Singh on three when 21-year-old Kaif came to the wicket.

India were almost out of the game at 146 for five in the 24th over with 20-year-old Yuvraj Singh on three when 21-year-old Kaif came to the wicket.

Kaif's career-best one-day score, an unbeaten 87, came from 75 balls including two sixes and six

fours. "The victory will always have a special favour because it was not achieved by the success of the seniors," the Hindustan Times said, noting that India's master batsman Sachin Tendulkar had "failed again when it mattered the most."

"What was refreshing was the temperament and the strokeplay Kaif and Yuvraj displayed," the report added.



MOHAMMAD KAIF

The Indian Express in its report noted that "miracles" did happen, adding that "Just when everything seemed lost Yuvraj and Kaif, the young Indian brigade of the team pulled it up with a remarkable performance not seen for a long, long time."

"Full marks to Yuvraj and Kaif for believing in themselves," the Indian Express said in a piece written by former cricketer Dilip Vengsarakar.

Thorpe quits ODIs



AFP, London

Leading England batsman Graham Thorpe announced his retirement from one day international cricket here Saturday.

The 32-year-old left-handed batsman said he wanted to spend more time with his two children and his body could not take playing test cricket as well as one day internationals.

His announcement means he will not be a member of England's squad at next year's World Cup in South Africa.

"I have made this decision for two reasons," he said in a statement.

"Firstly, in terms of keeping my body fit, it is becoming harder to do so playing both Tests and one-day internationals for England, so I have decided to concentrate on just playing Test matches.

"Secondly I want to have more time to build a relationship with my two children, given my new personal circumstances at home" (Thorpe and his wife are in the process of a divorce).

Thorpe added: "It is an exciting time for the England one-day team with our performances steadily improving over the past 18 months."

"I wish them the best of luck in the Champions Trophy, in Australia and of course especially in the World Cup next year."

England captain Nasser Hussain, a longstanding international team-mate of Thorpe's said: "It's a massive blow. He's the first casualty of the amount of cricket we've been playing."

Meanwhile England coach Duncan Fletcher said: "Graham got an ankle injury halfway through the series which allowed us to play Michael Vaughan.

"Given that he let us know of his decision to retire from the one-day team at the time, we decided it was a good opportunity to continue with Michael in the side and let him gain further valuable experience in one-day cricket."

Former Zimbabwe star Fletcher added: "Graham has been a fantastic one-day player for England and we will miss him, but we look forward to him continuing as a key player in our Test match side."

Thorpe played the first of his 82

one day internationals against Australia in 1993 and averaged

FACTLINE

1969: Born August 1, Farnham, Surrey.

1984: Achieved first of many schoolboy representative honours when playing for England Under-15s. He was also later to play in the England Under-19s and England Schools football under-18 side.

1988: County debut for Surrey, 1989-90: Toured with England A for first time, in Zimbabwe and

picked for fifth consecutive England tour and second in the Caribbean.

1998: Made 103 in a sixth-wicket stand of 205 with Mark Ramprakash at Bridgetown in fifth Test against West Indies.

1999: Played in England's unsuccessful World Cup campaign and also helped Surrey win their first county championship since 1971, after hitting best individual score of 223 not out against South Australia in Adelaide.

After a moderate series for England against New Zealand, during which he stood in as captain for the second half of the nine-wicket defeat at Lord's, he announced he would be unavailable to tour South Africa.

2000: Battled his way back into the Test reckoning and secured a central contract after a summer which saw England beat Zimbabwe and the West Indies.

Helped Surrey win their second consecutive county championship title.

2000-01: Became an integral part of England's winter of success in Pakistan and Sri Lanka, where Hussain's tourists came out on top in both Test tours to make it four consecutive series wins.

Hit the winning runs against Pakistan in Karachi where he made 64 not out and capped his winter with a man-of-the-match performance against Sri Lanka in the deciding Test in Colombo where he hit an unbeaten 113 in the first innings of a low-scoring game.

March 19: Chosen as captain for the one-day series in Sri Lanka to replace the injured Hussain.

2001: Calf injury and broken hand ruled him out of all but one matches of the Ashes series, although awarded a central contract and shared in a record partnership for any wicket for England in Tests against Pakistan (267) with Michael Vaughan at Old Trafford. Voted man of the series against Pakistan.

Called up for England one-day tour to Zimbabwe but came home early from Test tour of India for personal reasons, although he went returned for one-day clashes.

2002: Shared in record sixth-wicket stand against New Zealand with Andrew Flintoff in first Test - 281 - at Christchurch. His score of 200 not out beat his previous highest Test score, scored against Australia in 1997.

July 13: Announced retirement from one-day international cricket.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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