

After thoughts

REUTERS, Madrid

Barcelona coach Frank Rijkaard said lack of concentration and poor finishing were responsible for his side's 4-2 defeat against Spanish title rivals Real Madrid on Sunday.

"Their first two goals came far too easy," the Dutchman told a news conference at the Bernabeu.

"The difference between the two sides was that we struggled to convert our chances, while they found it very easy to score."

Barcelona top the Primera Liga with 69 points from 31 matches. Real are second on 63 points, 11 clear of third-placed Sevilla.

The win left Real six points behind Barca with seven games left to play, but the Catalans would win the league if the two teams ended on the same number of points thanks to their superior scoring record in head-to-head matches.

"Real started with a great deal of spirit," said Rijkaard. "They worked hard and looked for the direct route to our goal. We knew they had a lot of quality but we made too many mistakes and with more concentration we could have avoided them."

"We have to do all we can to get a good result in our next match because the league is far from over."

Real coach Vanderlei Luxemburgo said that although he was delighted with the win, his side could not afford to relax as they still depended on the Catalans slipping up again if they were to deprive their rivals of the league title.

"Barcelona continue to have the upper hand and still depend on themselves to win the league," said the Brazilian. "We have to keep playing like this so that we can be close to them. If they had won today the league would have been over."

Supreme Court clears Delhi

AFP, New Delhi

India's Supreme Court gave the final green light for Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf to engage in cricket diplomacy when it approved Monday the staging of a one-day match at an unfinished stadium.

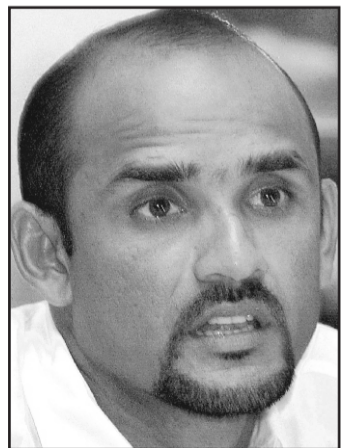
The court rejected an appeal by the Society for Safe Structures, a non-governmental agency, to cancel the sixth one-dayer between India and Pakistan on April 17 because the incomplete Ferozshah Kotla Stadium in the Indian capital was unsafe for spectators.

New Delhi's municipal agencies and the host Delhi and District Cricket Association told the court they would take responsibility for the safety of the match, which Musharraf is due to attend, the Press Trust of India reported.



Did U Know?

India have now lost both their ODIs to Pakistan at Jamshedpur. Overall, this was India's sixth defeat in 8 ODIs at this venue.



Marvan Atapattu

(Sri Lanka cricket captain)
"It was one ambition that I had to score a century against every Test playing nation."
After he became the fourth player to score hundreds against all nine Test opponents on Wednesday.

DAV'S EVENT

Islahani Nat'l Cricket League
(One-dayer)
Dhaka vs Chittagong
Venue: FCS
Sylhet vs Khulna
Venue: Sylhet Stadium
Barisal vs Rajshahi



PHOTO: STAR

WHEN AFC CAME TO THEM: Asian Football Confederation (AFC) president Mohammed Bin Hamman (front C) poses with orphans of the SOS Shishu Pally in the city on Monday. The AFC boss along with his vice-president Manilal Fernando and general secretary Peter Velappan visited the Pally during the course of his two-day trip to Bangladesh and distributed footballs among the children there.

Hamman to show the way



SPORTS REPORTER

Asian Football Confederation (AFC) president Mohammed Bin Hamman has assured Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) of every assistance in the coming days.

BFF general secretary Anwarul Hoque Helal said the AFC boss, who left Dhaka last night at the end of a two-day visit, was willing to provide plans and advice to the BFF.

"Once the Vision Bangladesh (the development programme prepared by the AFC for Bangladesh) gets underway, an AFC team will be here to help us raise funds. He (Hamman) has told us to create our own funds and not to depend on foreign aid as the AFC was not that affluent to provide money to all its 45 members," said Helal.

"They will show us ways to attract sponsors and once we manage to involve them in the game, the programme will automati-

cally gain momentum," added Helal.

Hamman was reportedly not convinced about Bangladesh's intention of recruiting coaches and trainers from Argentina.

"He does not want Asian money to go outside the continent. Our (BFF) president is expected to have further discussions with him about the matter," said Helal.

The AFC president, who inaugurated the BFF Bhaban, the country's new football headquarters, on Sunday, had a more relaxing schedule yesterday.

In the morning he went on a river cruise over the Buriganga accompanied by AFC general secretary Peter Velappan, vice-president Manilal Fernando, guests and BFF officials including president SA Sultan. Bangladesh Sports Journalists Association presented crests to all the AFC officials and the BFF chief during the river trip.

Hamman also visited the SOS Shishu Pally in Dhaka in the afternoon and distributed footballs among the orphans there.

Rangamati tribal football champs

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Rangamati clinched the first-ever Adivashi (tribal) Football Tournament title when they defeated Mymensingh 3-1 in the final at local stadium here yesterday.

Mong Wai Ching Marma struck twice and Chand Tripura added the other for the winners much to the delight of a capacity home crowd. Sailash Chandra Burman was the lone scorer for Mymensingh.

The CHT regional unit of Bangladesh Adivashi Forum organised the first of its kind football competition involving the indigenous people of country's Northern region. Mymensingh, Sylhet and Rangamati to mark Boishabi, a traditional festival welcoming the New Year.

Rangamati also won a cash award of Tk.15,000 apart from the glittering trophy while runners-up Mymensingh received Tk.10,000 as prize-money.

CHT affairs deputy minister Moniswapon Dewan distributed prizes among the winners. Santu Lama, the chairman of the CHT Regional Council, was the chief guest in the final.

Mayor wants street named after Munna



SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka Mayor Sadek Hossain Khoka announced yesterday that he would take up the initiative to name a street in Dhaka after former national football captain Monem Munna.

Responding to a proposal from veteran organiser and politician Saifuddin Ahmed Manik, Khoka said during a condolence meeting at the Abahani club that he will talk with the club's officials to find a suitable street to name after the mercurial footballer who died at the age of 39 last February following kidney related complications.

Footballers, organisers, fans and officials were present at the condolence meeting arranged in memory of the club's former players Munna and Zahidur Rahman Pushkin. Pushkin, who was also

the joint-secretary of Bangladesh Hockey Federation, passed away last month after suffering from a stroke. Both men were close friends.

Abahani chairman Salman Rahman, who presided over the meeting, said that the club would take responsibility of the education Munna's two children and Pushkin's only son.

Muktijoddha coach and former national footballer Shaiful Islam Manik said that his club would dedicate its Independence Day Gold Cup's championships or runners-up trophy for Munna.

"Abahani wanted to dedicate it for him. But as we have beaten the club in the tournament and now playing in the final, we want to perform the same duty whether we win or lose."

Munna also played for Muktijoddha and Manik appealed to the authorities to name a gate or a gallery after Munna.

Similar appeals also came from hockey players who proposed that the VIP gallery of the Maulana Bhashani National Hockey Stadium be named after Pushkin.

Kalyan Majumder, secretary of Indian giants East Bengal, where Munna is still a legend, and All India Football Federation vice-president Subrata Dutta also paid their respect to the player.

Abahani's director-in-charge Kazi Shahed Ahmed, organiser Monirul Haque Chowdhury, Athletics Federation president Abdus Salam, former national footballers Golam Sarwar Tipu, Pratap Shankar Hazra, Badal Roy, Sheikh Mohammed Islam, Dewan Shafiu Arefin Tutul, Hasanuzzaman Baboo, Khorsheed Babul, Kaiser Hamid, Satyajit Das Rupu, ex-national hockey player Khwaja Rahmatullah and former national cricket captain Gazi Ashraf Lipu also recalled their memories with Munna and Pushkin.

That's called a classic

FROM PAGE 12
That was a sign for the game to go into top gear. Both sides dedicated themselves to all-out attack as defensive midfield play went out of the window.

On the quarter-hour Owen, Roberto Carlos and Ronaldo combined only for Roberto Carlos to look for the pass when normally he would have shot.

It did not matter because four minutes later, Real doubled their lead.

England captain David Beckham's diagonal free-kick fooled everybody and Ronaldo stole in once again unmarked at the far post to head home from close range. Finally he could hold his hand up, the number nine had returned when he was most hoped for, an assistance and a goal. For the record, it was Real's top scorer's 13th strike of the season but only the second since Christmas.

Barcelona was excellent in the game, possibly the best player on the pitch over the 90 minutes. Barcelona were reeling, but Samuel Eto'o showed all his poaching ability in the 28th minute to storm into the Real area and poke the ball home to make it 2-1.

That was a sign for the game to swing Barca's way and the league leaders attacked in waves.

Ludovic Giuly forced a save from Iker Casillas in the 32nd minute and fired wide again on 40, while the Real goalkeeper denied Giovanni van Bronckhorst just before the break.

It seemed as if Barca must equalise but with virtually the last tick of the half, Real, who had left the game early after picking up a nasty cut just above his right eye, made it 3-1 when sliding the ball home at the near post.

Real had scored three goals with just three shots on target.

The second half began with the same tonic as the brilliant Casillas denied Giuly from 10 yards.

The way Casillas played, it is difficult to understand how Juventus goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon could have been linked with a move to Real in recent weeks.

Barca looked to drag themselves back into the game but it looked to be over in the 75 minute following a typical move that England fans will all recognise.

Eto'o was robbed in the Real half, Beckham picked the ball up and his through ball picked up Michael Owen, who was one who tore down on the Barca goal and beat Valdes with a neat finish. It was a goal "made in England".

Real looked as if they were about to run away with the victory, but the genius of Ronaldinho brought everyone in the Bernabeu back down to earth.

Just outside the area, he curled a free-kick over the wall and into the right corner.

Casillas, whose vision was blocked by his teammates in the wall jumping, never moved.

The free kick gave some emotion to

the closing minutes, but that was lost when Eto'o fell to the ground in agony, holding his knee.

He was stretched off, hands over face, leaving Barcelona to play on without their prolific scorer.

Even so, both sides had chances to add to the score in the closing minutes but there were no goals.

Real visit Levante next weekend while Barca entertain Getafe, and the league is very much alive.

In other games, Sevilla are up to third after an impressive 3-1 win at Espanyol.

Jordi Lopez and Julio Baptista gave the Andalusians a commanding 2-0 lead and although Jonathan pulled one back, Daniel Alves sealed Sevilla's sixth away win of the season in injury-time.

Villarreal started the day in third but slipped a place after being held to a 1-1 draw at Deportivo La Coruna.

TOP SIX

Spanish football league table after Sunday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Barcelona	31	21	6	4	59	25	69
Real	31	20	3	8	55	28	63
Sevilla	31	15	7	9	37	34	52
Villarreal	30	14	9	7	52	28	51
Betis	31	13	11	7	52	42	50
Espanyol	31	14	7	10	41	39	49

2007 SAF Games in Dhaka

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka will host the 11th SAF Games at the end of 2007 or in early 2008, a Bangladesh Olympic Association official said yesterday.

This will be the third time Dhaka will host the biennial event of South Asian nations after previously holding the Games in 1985 and 1993.

The BOA vice-president Kutubuddin Ahmed also informed that a meeting of the South Asian Olympic Committee on June 23 will finalise the schedule of the 10th Games to be held in Colombo in April next year.

Also like the Olympic Games, the first time in the SAF Games' history, the Mayor of the next host city will receive the Games flag when it ends in Colombo.

C'WEALTH GAMES

Queen's Baton arrives Sept 17

SPORTS REPORTER

The Queen's Baton Relay, one of the great traditions of the Commonwealth Games, will arrive in Dhaka on September 17 and stay in the country for three days on its way to Melbourne.

Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) vice-president Kutubuddin Ahmed confirmed this yesterday after returning from the Commonwealth Games Federation meeting in Melbourne on April 7 and 8.

The 18th Commonwealth Games will be held in the Australian city from March 15-26 next year.

The Baton, which began its one-year and one-day journey from Buckingham Palace in London on March 14 this year, will run 1,80,000 kms across the globe, travelling through all 171 Commonwealth nations.

The epic relay - having visited one third of the world's population - concludes as the final relay runner enters the Melbourne Cricket Ground during the opening ceremony with the Baton containing Queen Elizabeth's message to the athletes.

"The Commonwealth Games Federation will give us 5,000 Australian dollars to arrange programmes during the Baton's stay here," the BOA official said.

StanChart cricket roundup

SPORTS REPORTER

A sparkling 75 by Joy helped Moti-jheel Government Boys High School register a 162-run victory over Adarsha Biddapith in the Standard Chartered U-13 Young Tigers National School Cricket Championship at the Iqbal Road ground yesterday.

Moti-jheel Govt amassed 279 before wrapping up Adarsha Biddapith's essay for 117.

Willes Little Flower High (323) also recorded a massive victory when they handed a 173-run defeat on Sourav Smriti High (150) at the Orient Club ground.

In the day's other matches, Rayer Bazar (246) overwhelmed Westmatullah Model (91) by 155 runs, West End (105-2) outplayed Shaheed Nabi (101) by eight wickets, National Bangla (183-3) defeated Mirpur Adarsha Vidya Niketan (182) by seven wickets, Islamic Adarsha (171-4) beat BLS High (168) by six wickets, Sunnydale (157-4) thumped Loreto (156) by six wickets, Manik Nagar Model (168) thrashed Khilgaon Government (95) by 73 runs, Udayan School (103) registered a hard-fought 21-run victory over National Bank Public (82) and Natun Jurain KM Mainuddin (102) recorded an exciting 17-run victory over Rashid Adarsha School (85).

Under-19 open Australia tour today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Under-19 cricket team will launch their campaign today when they take on their Australian counterparts in a limited-overs match at Allan Border Field in Brisbane.

The visiting side will play their second and final one-day match against the same opponents the next day at the same venue.

They will play eight more limited-over games against different regional teams.

Nat'l badminton from today

SPORTS REPORTER

The GrameenPhone 26th National Badminton Championships begin at the woodenfloor gymnasium today.

A total of 130 players including 20 females girls from 45 teams are taking part in the championship.

Kutubuddin Ahmed, president of the Bangladesh Badminton Federation (BBF), said at a press conference yesterday that the GrameenPhone will provide Tk two lakh out of the estimated budget of Taka 3.43 lakh.

PREVIEW (QTRS. LEG TWO): BAYERN V CHELSEA

An ambitious German dream



REUTERS, Frankfurt

A Bayern Munich side boasting key reinforcements threaten to make Chelsea's two-goal lead feel far from comfortable in Tuesday's Champions League quarter-final second leg at the Olympic Stadium.

First-choice strikers Roy Makaay and Claudio Pizarro are in line to return from injury as Bayern attempt to overturn their 4-2 defeat from the first leg, while Martin Demichelis will be back after suspension to anchor the midfield.

Bayern were hustled out of the final half-hour of last week's meeting in London, as a Chelsea side bristling with confidence and aggression took a deserved 4-1 lead.

Michael Ballack's penalty seconds from the end gave Bayern hope, as a 2-0 or 3-1 win would be enough to send them through on away goals.

The expected return of three such important players only increases the self-belief among the four-times European champions, especially with the 3-1 home victory over Arsenal in the last round still fresh in their minds.

"We've shown before that we're capable of beating anyone by two goals at home," said Ballack. "Knowing that, we're going to go for it in the return leg."

Makaay, who has scored seven Champions League goals this season, returned from a hamstring injury to play in Saturday's 2-1 win over Borussia Moenchengladbach, a result that put Bayern three points clear at the top of the Bundesliga.

Pizarro, who scored two of the goals in that stirring win over Arsenal, declared himself fully recovered after training on Sunday.

Bayern coach Felix Magath was in charge of the VfB Stuttgart side that are lost out to Chelsea in the first knock-out round of last season's competition.

Magath has more quality and experience at Bayern but Chelsea are also a different proposition after further heavy investment in players and the arrival of Jose Mourinho, even if the coach will be serving the remainder of his two-match ban.

Even without Mourinho physically on the bench last week, Chelsea still did enough in the second half at least to win by a comfortable margin - although Ballack's late penalty made the scoreline less secure for Chelsea than it might have been.

Chelsea also dropped some rare points in the league on Saturday when they were held to a 1-1 draw at home by Birmingham City, but Mourinho opted to rest Claude Makelele, Didier Drogba and Eidur Gudjohnsen from his starting line-up.

All should return on Tuesday, with Drogba, who replaced Mateja Kezman at halftime and scored Chelsea's equaliser eight minutes from time, expected to start.

Chelsea's self-belief is so great at the moment, summed up best by Gudjohnsen after last week's first leg.

"We know that Bayern are one of the biggest clubs in Europe, but we played very well against them and are disappointed not to have won by a bigger score. It will be tough in Munich - but there is no reason why we cannot win there and go all the way."

Bayern will have other ideas of course and the tie is still an open one.

Bayern are unlikely to defend as badly again as they did at Stamford Bridge, and even if he is not in the dugout Mourinho will be loathe to release his grip on the European Cup which he won with Porto last season. It could be a classic.

PREVIEW (QTRS. LEG TWO): INTER MILAN V AC MILAN

Form favours Milan



REUTERS, Milan

Every form guide available suggests that AC Milan's 2-0 lead from the first leg of their Champions League quarter-final with city rivals Inter should be enough to see the Italian champions through to the last four.

But Inter Milan, who hope to have their Brazilian striker Adriano fit enough to play from the start, insist they are capable of producing an upset at the San Siro on Tuesday.

Inter have not won any of the last nine meetings between the two teams in Serie A and the Champions League and in the three games this season have yet to score a single goal against Carlo Ancelotti's side.

They will have to score three times against Milan to progress yet Milan haven't conceded more than one goal in a Serie A or European game since their 5-2 victory over Lecce on January 6.

Indeed Milan have conceded just three goals in their entire Champions League campaign so far this season.

Inter Milan coach Robert Mancini though, has taken heart from last

season's quarter-finals when Milan crushed Spain's Deportivo Coruna 4-1 in the first leg but were then eliminated after a shock 4-0 reverse away from home.

"Football is a strange game which is full of unthinkable things, including incredible comebacks," said Mancini.

"If you believe in yourself then sometimes these things can happen for you. There are teams that come back from 3-0 down. We lost 2-0. There are weaker teams that beat stronger sides sometimes but there is little to choose between us and Milan."

"The important thing in this situation is to have the pride and the desire to turn around this deficit. We have nothing to lose and all that remains is for us to get out there and do it. There is no room for any defeatism," he added.

Adriano's knee ligament injury kept him out of the first leg but he has been back in training in recent days and there is confidence among the club's staff that he could be ready to start against Milan.

The Brazilian's hat-trick in the last round of the Champions League against Porto made the difference for Inter and Mancini knows he needs a similar display if there is to be any hope on Tuesday.

Inter beat Bologna 1-0 in Serie A on

WI limp to lunch



SPORTS REPORTER

West Indies lost opener Chris Gayle cheaply before lunch on Day Four of the second Test against South Africa in Trinidad yesterday. The opener was out for one.

By the interval the home side had reached 26-1 with one-down Sarwan on 9 and Hinds batting on eight respectively.

Earlier, agencies reported Gayle took four quick wickets to limit South Africa to 398 all out, giving them a first innings lead of just 51.

The tourists, who began the morning with Mark Boucher and Ashwell Prince at the wicket with the score on 370 for six, would have been hoping to build a substantial lead to establish a match-winning position.

But off-spinner Gayle ruined their plans, claiming the wickets of Boucher (28), Prince (45) and Ntini (4) in just 12 balls before picking up the final wicket of Andre Nel (6).

Gayle finished with figures of four for 50, with the Proteas managing to add just 28 runs to their overnight total.

On Saturday, West Indies had

been bowled out for 347. And on Sunday, the first hour of play was lost to rain.

When the players did come out, Smith looked keen to reach three figures.

Nightwatchman Monde Zondeki also played an important hand and, once Smith had reached his century, the game settled down into a war of attrition.

Shiv Chanderpaul finally elected to take the second new ball and his decision was paid off when Collins swung a delivery to hit Zondeki's off-stump.

The wicket ended a partnership worth 41 in all, with Zondeki contributing 14.

Gibbs then took up the supporting role to Smith before Smith was trapped low by Wavell Hinds.

Gibbs was the only other man to lose his wicket on day three when he was bowled by Collins.

After his departure, Prince and Boucher continued to eke out run after run before stumps.

BRIEF SCORES

WEST INDIES: 1st innings 347 (Lara 196, Ntini 6-95) and 2nd innings 26-1 at lunch on Day 4