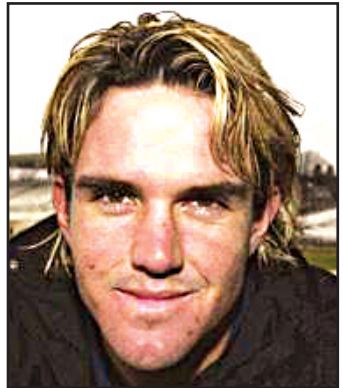




Did U Know?

The first woman to win an Olympic event was England's Charlotte Cooper, who won the tennis singles at the 1900 Games.



Kevin Pietersen
(South African-born England batsman)
"I am delighted. I said I would be the happiest man in the UK and when I got the call it was a special feeling." After he was picked for the first Ashes Test.

Ganguly's chances

FROM PAGE 12
While Castle exonerated Ganguly, Beloff upheld Broad's decision.

The finality of Appeals Commissioner's verdict was another matter raised by the BCCI. Sachs said that his verdict could have a bearing on the past decisions when captains were banned for teams' slow over rates and the ICC rules providing for it.

"It is a question of the legality of the process in terms of relevant rules. If it is not in the rules (to ban a captain for his team's slow over-rate), penalties in the past might have to be reconsidered.

"It depends on the reason for my decision. If it (the reason) is substantial, it will have an effect. But I can't go into that really at this stage." Sachs, however, discouraged the BCCI's efforts to seek a personal hearing.

Rahul Dravid is likely to lead the team if Ganguly cannot make it to Sri Lanka.

The Indian captain missed the last two one-day internationals against Pakistan to start his ban and would sit out the first four games of the upcoming one-day series which starts on July 30.

Meanwhile, Ganguly said that Greg Chappell, the new coach of the Indian team, would get the full support of all the players. Ganguly, who arrived in Bangalore to partake in the camp for Indian probabilities while still contracted to play county cricket for Glamorgan, said: "He will get help from everybody. There is Rahul (Dravid), Sachin (Tendulkar), Anil (Kumble), (VVS) Laxman and a whole lot of young boys... (Virender) Sehwag. So, I am sure that they are going to make his way easier."

Speaking to reporters, Ganguly said that it was unfair to compare Chappell with his predecessor, John Wright, who had shared a fruitful partnership with the captain. "I don't think you can compare anybody," said Ganguly.

"John (Wright) had a good time with Indian cricket for five years. Greg (Chappell) has just started. We have got to give him time to settle down."

Ganguly said that he had only interacted briefly with Chappell, but was satisfied with what he had seen. "I met him for the last two days. He has been with the team. He is trying to sort the team out. I hope he enjoys (working) with the boys."

Chappell has introduced a number of new ideas into the Indian team's preparation, among which is the de Bono method of enhancing creativity and thinking skills that the probables were initiated into during the recent Bangalore camp. When asked about it, Ganguly said: "We have to slowly find ways to implement it in our game."

Rahmatganj Div I soccer champs

SPORTS REPORTER

Rahmatganj Muslim Friends Society emerged First Division Football League champions with a match in hand when they drew goalless with Badda Jagarani at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

After 13 rounds, Rahmatganj pushed their collection to 30 points with nine wins and three draws.

Both Rahmatganj and Badda, second with 25 points, have confirmed their promotion to the Premier League.

Victoria, who are third with 21 points, need three points from their remaining matches to become the third team to be promoted.



PHOTO: AFP

Sao Paulo's former Brazilian international goalkeeper Rogerio Ceni saves a penalty taken by Atletico Paranaense's Fabrizio during the shootout in the Libertadores Cup final on Thursday at the Morumbi Stadium in Sao Paulo.

Wenger pleads patience as Vieira goes

Football

AFP, London

Arsene Wenger urged Arsenal fans to understand the club's decision to allow captain Patrick Vieira to leave the club in a 13.7-million pound (20-million euro) deal.

Wenger and vice-chairman David Dein will stand accused of selling the Gunners' best chance of challenging Chelsea for next season's Premiership title and the keys to European glory in exchange for the money they have accepted from Juventus for the France skipper.

The World Cup and Euro 2000 winner, who has agreed a five-year deal with the Italian champions, is finally on his way after nine seasons at Highbury. He will undergo a medical in Turin and is expected to be presented as a Juventus player shortly.

Having at least twice turned his back, over the years, on mouth-watering offers to join other clubs, Vieira has delighted Arsenal fans with his loyalty and genuine commitment to the club.

They had grown used to treating transfer rumours around him as all talk. But now he has gone, Arsenal will even have to collect the money for him in instalments.

Reports from Italy suggest Juve will pay only 6.9 million of the fee immediately with the rest due in 3.4 million packages over the next two years in the deal directors Roberto Bettega and Luciano Moggi secured with Dein in London.

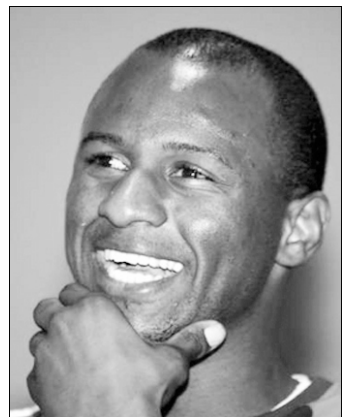
At 29, Wenger and Arsenal vice-

chairman Dein have clearly decided that Senegal-born Vieira's best days are behind him.

Even so, Wenger has begged for understanding from the fans for allowing the team's most consistent player to leave.

"I share the sadness with our supporters that Patrick has left us," he said. "But on the other hand I would say to them trust us and support us. We will be strong next season and we need you behind us like you have always been. We will not disappoint you."

Vieira is doubtless stunned that he is surplus to requirements with two years still to run on his contract



PATRICK VIEIRA

and his exit will be far more difficult to take for fans than Wenger's shock sales of Marc Overmars, Emmanuel Petit and Paul Merson.

And despite mutual words of admiration from both manager and

player, Wenger dare not get this one wrong - or even he, a huge Highbury hero, could face a huge backlash from the supporters.

He is now being tipped to make moves for Newcastle's England international Jermaine Jenas or Lyon's Mahamadou Diarra even though he has already secured the services of Belarus midfielder Aleksander Hleb for seven million pounds.

Sevilla's Brazilian striker Julio Baptista is still on his wish-list despite the player emphasising how important it is for him to remain in Spain if he does switch clubs.

But with the start of the new season so near and Arsenal also likely to lose another French midfielder in Robert Pires, potential sellers will know how desperate Wenger is to bring in a younger replacement for Vieira - and could jack up the price accordingly.

Newcastle manager Graeme Souness has made it known he would only consider selling Jenas - who has been thoroughly checked out by Arsenal staff - if Gunners centre-half Sol Campbell was made part of the deal.

For now, though, losing Vieira - who started out as French club Cannes' captain at 20 before his unsuccessful first spell in Italy at AC Milan - will be enough to bring a cloud of gloom over Highbury in its final season before the club switch to a new stadium at nearby Ashburton Grove next August.

Referee: Mansoor Azad.

Mohammedan

FROM PAGE 12
Wanderers were awarded a penalty when Kamal tripped Shakil and Milton put the ball into the roof of the net from the spot.

The Mohammedan backline allowed another chance to their opponents but once again, Biplab made amends for the mistakes of his teammates when he punched out Henry's sidevolley for a corner.

Manju finally completed the third hat-trick of the Premiership on the hour when the unmarked striker rushed from the right to pounce the ball into the net after Indrajit made no attempt to grip Mintu's lob across from the pitch.

With this goal, Manju joined teammate Alfaz, Liton (Brothers), Farhad (Abahani), Paul (Mukti-jodha) and Robin (Youngmen's) in the top scorers' list with five goals.

Liton and Sheikh Russel's Yusuf are the other players to score hat-tricks in the league.

There was no respite and Zahid, who replaced Manju, made it 5-1 with his first touch on the ball, placing a through by Nakib past substitute goalie Sohel nine minutes from time. Asad completed the rout on the stroke of the final whistle when the midfielder fired a left-footer into the back of the net after a quickly taken corner by Kaiser.

Yellow cards: Hassan (Mohammedan) and Yakub, Ashraf (Wanderers)

TEAMS
MOHAMMEDAN: Biplab, Nazrul, Peter, Hassan, Kamal (Kaiser), Arman Aziz, Munna, Asad, Mintu, Alfaz (Nakib) and Manju (Zahid).
WANDERERS: Indrajit (Sohel), Govinda, Jamal, Yakub, Jhontu, Jahangir (Shakil), Nurul Islam, Patrick, Jalaluddin, Henry (Ashraf) and Milton.

SLC awards 11

FROM PAGE 12
endorsements.

CONTRACTED PLAYERS
Marvan Atapattu, Sanath Jayasuriya, Mahela Jayawardene, Kumar Sangakkara, Chaminda Vaas, Muttiah Muralitharan, Thilan Samaraweera, Tillakaratne Dilshan, Ranga Herath, Lasith Malinga, Upul Chandana

INDIA VISIT TO BE SPLIT
Meanwhile, Sri Lanka's cricket tour of India later this year may be divided into two parts to accommodate the inaugural Super Series in Australia, an official said here on Friday.

Sri Lanka were originally scheduled to play three Tests and seven one-day internationals in October-November on their first full tour of India since 1997.

But the International Cricket Council's (ICC) Super Series between Australia and the World teams in October and South Africa's five one-dayers in India in mid-November have forced the Indian board to propose a split tour by Sri Lanka.

According to the proposal, Sri Lanka will now arrive in India in the last week of October after the ICC Super Series to play seven one-day internationals and come again in December for the three Test matches.

"The split tour proposal by the Indian board is being considered by us," said Sri Lanka Cricket official Tryphon Miranda.

BCCI seek

FROM PAGE 12
meet top Indian officials to discuss how to salvage the tour.

India's new international season begins with the tri-nation ODI series in Sri Lanka from July 30 followed by a three-match series between an Asian and African Eleven in which some Indian players are likely to play.

After that, India will go to Zimbabwe for a month's tour before South Africa travel to India for a five-match ODI series in November. Nair said South Africa have already confirmed the tour.

Sao Paulo best in South America

Football

AFP, Sao Paulo

Sao Paulo won the Libertadores Cup, the South American championship for clubs, for the third time following a 4-0 victory over fellow Brazilian club Atletico Paranaense here on Thursday.

Goals from Amoroso, Fabao, Luizao and Diego Tardelli earned the victory at their Morumbi stadium in front of 65,000 spectators. Sao Paulo drew the first leg 1-1 and therefore won 5-1 on aggregate.

Amoroso opening the scoring with a header in the 16th minute after Luizao crossed for Danilo and

his shot was parried by Paranaense keeper Diego into the goal scorer's path.

However it was not until the second half that the home side doubled their score. A completely unmarked Fabao scored another headed goal from a corner in the 52nd minute and Luizao also nodded home with 19 minutes to go.

Tardelli sealed victory with a powerful shot in the 89th minute, with the help of the post.

Supporters celebrated the win on the streets of Sao Paulo till day break but unfortunately clashes with police broke out. The 350 military police responded to objects thrown at them with tear gas and rubber bullets.

Robinho's fines mount

Football

AP, Sao Paulo

Santos fined Robinho for a 14th consecutive day on Thursday as the striker again refused to train because of dispute with the Brazilian club over its negotiations with Spain's Real Madrid.

Santos said Robinho is being fined an undisclosed amount for every day he fails to appear. "He still is Santos' employee," club spokesman Aldo Neto said. "We will keep fining him for missing work until he decides to show up again."

Robinho has not trained since his return from the Confederations Cup in late June, saying he wants to be released from the club to finalize his

transfer to Real Madrid. He already has missed two Brazilian championship matches.

Santos president Marcelo Teixeira has said that Robinho will stay until next year's World Cup unless a club pays the \$50-million (US million) buyout clause that is stipulated in Robinho's contract, which runs until 2008.

Robinho said recently that Teixeira last year agreed to release him for \$25 million which is the amount Real Madrid has reportedly offered to Santos.

Led by Robinho, Santos won national titles in 2002 and 2004 - the team's only significant championships since the late 1960s.

Santos is in fourth place in the 22-team Brazilian championship with 21 points from 11 matches.

DAVIS CUP Gasquet inspires France

AFP, Moscow

Frenchman Richard Gasquet put France into the lead in the Davis Cup World Group quarterfinal tie against hosts Russia here on Friday, beating Igor Andreev in straight sets.

Gasquet won 6-4, 6-3, 7-6 (7/1), in two hours 17 minutes on the clay courts of Moscow's Olympic indoor stadium to earn a 1-0 lead in the teams' third meeting in post-Soviet times.

"I was very nervous playing my first Davis Cup match. I just had to win it," Gasquet said immediately after the match. "But after I went 1-0 over everything was almost perfect. I'm happy to take the winning start."

The 19-year-old Gasquet was mentally ready for the match, while Andreev, who won their only previous clash with Gasquet last year at London's Queen club, started nervously, allowing his rival to break early to a 2-0 lead.

Windies

FROM PAGE 12
49, Muralitharan 36; Lawson 4-59)
WEST INDIES: Second innings (overnight 17-3)

Joseph c Jayawardena	2			
b Muralitharan	2			
Marshall lbw b Vaas	0			
Morton lbw b Vaas	0			
Deonarine lbw b Vaas	7			
Chanderpaul not out	29			
Smith lbw b Vaas	0			
Ramdin lbw b Muralitharan	11			
Banks not out	0			
Extras: (b-8)	8			
Total: (For six wkts in 35.3 overs)	59			
Fall of wkts: 1-3, 2-3, 3-15, 4-21, 5-21, 6-48				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Vaas	12	4	12	4
Malinga	6	4	2	0
Muralitharan	11.3	6	17	2
Jayasuriya	6	1	20	0

Just play Warne

Cricket

AFP, London

Former England captain Nasser Hussain has told his former teammates to forget about Shane Warne's reputation when they face the legendary leg-spinner in the upcoming Ashes Test series.

Warne, the world's leading Test wicket-taker with 583 wickets has been a thorn in England's side ever since he bowled Mike Gatting with the ball of the century courtesy of his first delivery, a vicious leg-break, in an Ashes Test at Old Trafford in 1993.

Now 35 and captaining English county Hampshire, Warne - who is gearing up for his final tour of England in the midst of a very public separation from wife Simone - has been a key figure in Australia's run of eight successive Ashes wins.

But Hussain, who retired from all cricket last year, insisted the master bowler was no longer at his peak.

"I reckon Warne was at his best about 10 years ago. Now his bowling doesn't have the same fizz, and he hasn't got the flipper after his shoulder operations," Hussain told the August edition of the Wisden Cricketer magazine.

"But he's still a pretty good bowler because he has more guile and can out-think people."

"He has developed this straight-on delivery that comes out from the front of the hand and drifts in, to get batsmen lbw as they play what they think is a perfect forward-defensive."

"We must be wary that we don't end

up playing Shane Warne the myth rather than Shane Warne the leg-spinner," the former Essex batsman added.

Looking to England's attack, Hussain said pacemen Stephen Harmison and Andrew Flintoff held the key.

"We need Harmison to fire out one of the Australian batsmen and do it consistently."

"The Australians have always said to me that if Harmison gets it right he'll be a real handful. So I think they'll have respect for him. And bounce always gets players out whereas (Matthew) Hoggard might struggle if it doesn't swing."

"Flintoff is important even though there are now performers throughout the side because he is the talisman who can lift the crowd."

Meanwhile Hussain said England had to match Australia's mental strength.

"If Australia are 400 for five who is the last person you want coming out? Adam Gilchrist. If they are 150 for five, who is the last person you want coming out? Adam Gilchrist."

"He'll hit a hundred off 120 balls when the opposition have them five down and think they are through. It deflates you."

"He seizes that moment when Australia are on the rack, the moment when you switch off, and no other side are like that. He scores at such a quick rate that he puts pressure on you to save the game and gets captains flustered."

"He's a classic one where you have to hold your nerve."



PHOTO: STAR

Players and officials of Rahmatganj team, who clinched the First Division Football League title, pose for photograph before their match against Badda Jagarani at the Kamalapur Stadium yesterday.