

Kaiser slams play-actors

AP, Frankfurt

Franz Beckenbauer wants heavy fines imposed to stop players from cheating, play-acting and taking part in other foul play that has become common in the German league.

"The players are doing everything to make the life of referees difficult," Beckenbauer told Wednesday's edition of the mass-circulation newspaper Bild.

Beckenbauer, president of this year's World Cup organizing committee and the country's most influential soccer personality, said one television camera should only focus on such incidents.

"There should be drastic penalties, not 10,000 euros but 250,000 euros so that they really hurt," Beckenbauer said.

Unsportsmanlike behaviour has become commonplace in the Bundesliga, with such incidents recorded every week, often going unnoticed by referees.

Last weekend, Borussia Dortmund defender Christian Woerns elbowed a player from Nuremberg, and Werder Bremen's Johan Micoud grabbed the groin of a player from Schalke. Both incidents were not seen by referees.

"The image of the league is terrible. There is too much provocation and theatre," said Beckenbauer, who won the World Cup as a player in 1974 and as coach in 1990.

"It's unfortunately a reflection of the general trend in our football. It's no coincidence that our clubs make early exits from the Champions League. I just hope that we'll have clean matches at the World Cup."

The good-mannered

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eighty ODIs so he isn't that young! And it is always an experience to bat alongside him. We have had good partnerships in the recent past and as we are both in the middle order, we do get along well together."

The Ashes is something that every Australian cricketer is looking forward to and Simmo, as he is fondly called by his teammates, is no different.

"It will be a keenly contested series I reckon. Both teams are at pretty much a balance at the moment. So I think it will be hard work for us to bring back the Ashes."

During the last southern hemisphere summer, banners in the stands proved his popularity in his home country. But that actually seems not to have affected him at all. Fame is not as issue and that is totally evident in his introverted mannerism.

Nat'l athletics

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National Sports Council yesterday. BAF president Abdus Salam informed that the budget of the competition is Tk 4.87 lakh.

Salam added that the federation will give an annual sponsorship, provided by an ex-athlete, to the best male and female athletes of the championships.

A total of 26 events will be finalised on the opening day out of 52.



Did U Know?

Andrew Symonds of Australia scored 103 not out from 125 balls in the second ODI against Bangladesh on April 26. It was his fifth century, first against Bangladesh.



Zinedine Zidane (French football superstar)

"I didn't want to go on for another year. The past two years I haven't been on top form and that's no good when you play at a club like Real." While explaining his decision to retire after the World Cup finals.



Barcelona players celebrate as AC Milan's Andrea Pirlo sits dejected on the ground after drawing their Champions League semifinal second leg match at the Nou Camp on Wednesday.

Barca scale Milan peak



AGENCIES, undated

Barcelona booked a place in next month's Champions League final against Arsenal after drawing their semi-final second-leg 0-0 against AC Milan at the Nou Camp in a game that was nonetheless full of incident and passion.

Leading 1-0 on aggregate, Barca coach Frank Rijkaard promised his side would not sit back and defend and he was true to his word as they pounded the Milan defence from the off.

Milan goalkeeper Dida made two one-on-one saves to deny Samuel Eto'o in the first half, and another block on a header from substitute forward Henrik Larsson after halftime.

Milan striker Andriy Shevchenko had a goal disallowed in the 69th minute for a foul on Barcelona captain and defender Carles Puyol in front of a sellout crowd of 95,000 at Camp Nou Stadium.

"The Shevchenko goal was absolutely legal. He jumped and hardly touched Puyol," Milan coach Carlo Ancelotti said. "Barcelona played well, but the match was

always in the balance and we were close to the final."

There were no late surprises from the Barca side before kick-off with Deco back from suspension and Giuly preferred in attack to Henrik Larsson.

For Milan, Filippo Inzaghi was fit to play in attack and Jaap Stam was given the nod ahead of Cafu to fill the right-back slot.

The game hit a high tempo from the start when Kaka flashed a shot past the post for Milan and then Eto'o went past an aged Alessandro Costacurta with ease inside the area but his drive was saved by the body of Dida.

Roared on by a full Nou Camp there was no chance of Barca reducing the pace of the game despite their one goal lead.

With Deco supported by midfielder Andres Iniesta and the sublime Ronaldinho, Barcelona dominated the first half. Eto'o missed another chance in the 16th minute when Dida foiled him again.

Milan's best chance came when Shevchenko hit the side netting in the 23rd. Barcelona defender Juliano Belletti had an angled drive go just past the far post six minutes later.

Milan was periodically applying pressure, with defender Jaap Stam

in the 33rd and striker Filippo Inzaghi three minutes later failing to beat Barcelona keeper Victor Valdes.

Barca continued to press forward with Deco going close with a shot from the edge of the area before Eto'o was cynically brought down by Costacurta as he galloped goalwards in the run up to half-time.

Barcelona defender Belletti missed an open goal in the 53rd minute when he couldn't get a touch on a pass across goal from Giuly. Ronaldinho tried a powerful free kick from 25 yards in the 60th, but Dida caught the ball.

Two minutes later, the Brazil forward clipped a pass over the Milan defence -- but Giuly could only volley the ball into the side netting.

Chechenko headed the ball into the goal with 21 minutes left. However, referee Markus Merk ruled the Ukrainian fouled Puyol. Television replays showed Puyol appeared to slip.

"I didn't think anything about it other than that it was disallowed," Barcelona coach Frank Rijkaard said.

Dida then saved Larsson's try in the 75th, starting a final 15 minutes of pressure that Barcelona successfully withstood to book a place in the final at Paris.

BITS AND BOBS

force's World Cup preparations, told a meeting of security officials Thursday.

Federal police are responsible for security at the borders, railways and airports. The force also will have a mobile reserve unit for the June 9-July 9 tournament, ready to travel anywhere in the country on short notice.

Germany will reimpose passport checks at its borders during the World Cup to minimize possible hooligan violence and terrorism.

Allianz Arena lettering removed

AP, Munich

Workers have begun removing the giant letters spelling out the name of the stadium set to host the World Cup opener - a move costing about 150,000 euros (\$210,000 Cdn).

The Munich stadium is officially called the Allianz Arena after its main sponsor, a German insurance group. But FIFA regulations allow only World Cup sponsors to display their names at stadiums during the June 9-July 9 tournament.

The letters will be moved to the roof of a Munich museum hosting an exhibition by Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron - the two Swiss architects who designed the Allianz Arena - before being returned after

the tournament.

Germany opens the World Cup in Munich against Costa Rica.

Afridi to play

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decision was "sentimental".

International Cricket Council President Ehsan Mani criticised him for refusing to play Tests while at the same time being ready to play for Ireland in the CG trophy.

Afridi, an aggressive batsman and a handy leg-spinner, has done well in both forms of the game, scoring 1,634 runs with five centuries in 24 Tests besides taking 44 wickets.

He hit a career-best 156 and another century in the Test series against India in January this year.

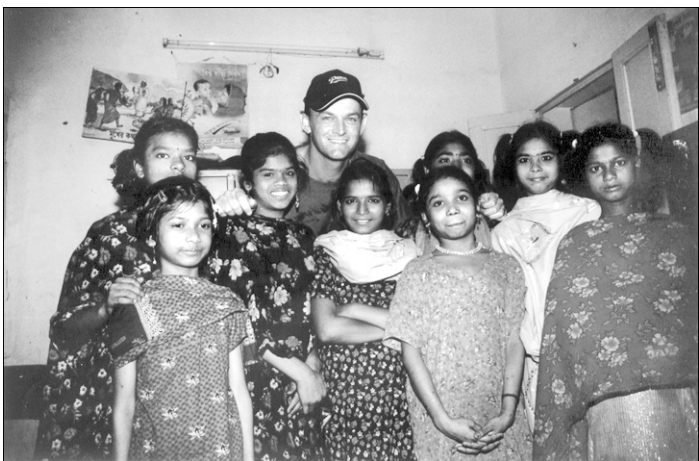
He holds the world record for the fastest one-day hundred, notched off just 37 balls against Sri Lanka in Nairobi in 1996. In a total of 222 limited-overs internationals, he has scored 4,824 runs and taken 184 wickets.

Ramu Khijari

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Srebrordi AP Pilot School 3-0 at the Myensing Stadium while Rajurbazar Collegiate School beat Shaheed Ramijuddin Cantonment School 2-0 at the same venue.

At Patuakhali, Nayan struck the all-important goal in Government Boys School's 1-0 win over Betagi High School.



Australian cricket vice-captain Adam Gilchrist is seen with the children of the World Vision-funded 'Bangladesh Street Children Project' at Maghbazar in Dhaka yesterday.

Messi suffers setback

REUTERS, Buenos Aires

Barcelona forward Lionel Messi, still recovering from an injury to his right thigh, pulled up during a training session in his native Argentina on Wednesday, media reports said.

Messi pulled up during a sprint and kicked a cone in frustration but Argentina national team sources said it was not serious, they said.

It was not immediately clear whether the problem was with the same leg or the same injury.

The 18-year-old has been out of action since early March when he tore a thigh muscle in his right leg during the second leg of Barcelona's 3-2 aggregate victory over Chelsea in the first knockout round of the Champions League.

Messi has been one of Barcelona's most exciting players this season and is expected to stand out for Argentina at the World Cup in Germany.

He was initially expected to be ready in time for the first leg of the Champions League semi-final against AC Milan last week but experienced problems with the injured leg while training.

He returned to Argentina last week to continue his recovery with the approval of Barcelona coach Frank Rijkaard, who said that Messi might benefit from a change of scenery.

'Big Phil' new England coach?

AFP, London

Luiz Felipe Scolari is to succeed Sven-Goran Eriksson as England manager, a series of reports said Thursday, sparking surprise -- and some protests -- that the job should go to a foreign coach for a second time.

The Brazilian popularly known as "Big Phil", who won the 2002 World Cup with his home nation, was offered the post by Football Association executives on Wednesday, newspapers and broadcasters reported.

FA chief executive Brian Barwick and lawyer Simon Johnson made a formal approach to Scolari, 57, at a meeting in Lisbon, where he is preparing the Portuguese team for the World Cup finals, beginning on June 9.

They met him with full permission from Portuguese football authorities, FA officials were quoted as saying anonymously.

Returning Thursday, Barwick confirmed he had met Scolari but refused to confirm the Brazilian was now the FA's first choice to replace Eriksson.

"I was in Lisbon yesterday talking to Luiz Felipe Scolari as part of our ongoing process to recruit the next senior England national coach. That process continues apace," Barwick told a crowd of reporters as he made his way into the FA headquarters in central London.

Champs Trophy

FROM PAGE 16

India has not hosted a major cricket tournament since the 1996 World Cup which it co-hosted with Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

The three South Asian nations, along with Bangladesh, have also bid for the 2011 World Cup where they face a stiff challenge from a joint bid by Australia and New Zealand.

The ICC will discuss the rival bids in Dubai on Sunday.

SCHEDULE

VENUES

Brabourne Stadium, Mumbai
Sardar Patel Stadium, Ahmedabad
Punjab Cricket Association Stadium, Mohali
Sawai Man Singh Stadium, Jaipur

QUALIFYING ROUND

Sri Lanka, West Indies, Bangladesh and Zimbabwe (top two teams from the round-robin league will qualify for the main tournament)

Oct 7: Sri Lanka v Bangladesh, Mohali

Oct 8: West Indies v Zimbabwe, Ahmedabad

Oct 10: Sri Lanka v Zimbabwe, Ahmedabad

Oct 11: West Indies v Bangladesh, Jaipur

Oct 13: Bangladesh v Zimbabwe, Jaipur

Oct 14: Sri Lanka v West Indies, Mumbai

MAIN TOURNAMENT

GROUP A (Australia, India, England, Qualifier 2)

Oct 15: India v England, Jaipur

Oct 18: Australia v Q2, Mumbai

Oct 21: Australia v England, Jaipur

Oct 26: India v Q2, Ahmedabad

Oct 28: England v Q2, Ahmedabad

Oct 29: India v Australia, Mohali

GROUP B (South Africa, Pakistan, New Zealand, Qualifier 1)

Oct 16: New Zealand v South Africa, Mumbai

Oct 17: Pakistan v Q1, Jaipur

Oct 20: New Zealand v Q1, Mumbai

Oct 24: South Africa v Q1, Ahmedabad

Oct 25: New Zealand v Pakistan, Mohali

Oct 27: Pakistan v South Africa, Mohali

SEMIFINALS

Nov 1: A1 v B2, Mohali

Nov 2: B1 v A2, Jaipur

FINAL

Nov 5: Mumbai

(All matches will be day-night games)

Fleming, Astle steady NZ



AFP, Cape Town

Stephen Fleming and Nathan Astle steered New Zealand towards a solid total after the tourists were sent in on the first day of the second Test against South Africa at Newlands Thursday.

New Zealand were 181 for three at tea. Skipper Fleming was on 54 not out after sharing an unbeaten fourth wicket stand of 99 with Astle (47 not out).

South African captain Graeme Smith's decision to send New Zealand in was surprising on a pitch which held no terrors for the batsmen.

After the start was delayed for 30 minutes by morning dew, South Africa were unable to make an early breakthrough, with Michael Pappas and Peter Fulton putting on 50 for the first wicket.

But three wickets fell for 32 runs to give the home side the advantage before Fleming and Astle came together.

Astle seemed fortunate when he

was on nine and the partnership was worth 17 when he appeared to edge a ball from Andre Nel to wicketkeeper Mark Boucher.

Nel and the slips cordon went up in a confident appeal but umpire Mark Benson gave Astle not out.

Fleming, meanwhile, batted with determination to back up his call for New Zealand to bat better than they did in the first Test at Centurion, where South Africa won by 128 runs.

He reached his half-century after batting for 161 minutes and facing 109 balls. He hit six fours.

Andre Nel claimed the only wicket of a shortened morning when he bowled Michael Pappas for 22.

Nel played in place of all-rounder Shaun Pollock, who was a late withdrawal from the South African team because of lower back pain.

Dale Steyn had Peter Fulton caught behind for 36 eight balls after lunch and Makhaya Ntini had Scott Styris caught at first slip for 11.

Ntini earlier felled Styris with a ball which struck the left earpiece of the batsman's helmet.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at tea on the first day of

the second Test between South Africa and New Zealand at Newlands on Thursday:

NEW ZEALAND: First innings				
Pappas b Nel				22
Fulton c Boucher b Steyn				36
Fleming not out				54
Styris c Dippenaar b Ntini				11
Astle not out				47
Extras: (b-1, lb-3, nb-6, w-1)				11
Total: (For 3 wkts in 53 overs)				181
Fall of wickets: 1-50, 2-62, 3-82.				

To bat: McCullum, Vettori, Franklin, Patel, Martin.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Ntini	13	2	44	1
Steyn	13	3	37	1
Nel	12	2	43	1
Kallis	8	2	26	0
Boje	7	1	27	0

SOUTH AFRICA: G Smith, H Dippenaar, H Amla, J Kallis, A Prince, A de Villiers, M Boucher, N Boje, A Nel, D Steyn, M Ntini.

Umpires: M Benson (ENG), A de Silva (SRI).

Hardtalk with Akram

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with the financial aspects but once you are in the field, you forget about the money. Playing cricket is what matters.

I know the board has a lot of money here. So where that money goes I don't know. If you want to improve you should put your money into cricket. That way you can get more money back. But as I said I am tired of saying all this because it all falls on deaf ears as nobody listens.

DSS: You think that there is a general lack of talent in Bangladesh?

WA: No, it can't be. Go to remote areas. Talent has to be there. Because everybody is playing cricket. In Chittagong I saw cricket is being played in the paddy fields. Soccer is gone. But this stadium (Bangabandhu National Stadium) has gone to soccer. This stadium with so much history. So many great cricketers played here in the fifties. And now they gave it to soccer. Tell me how many people go to watch the soccer? Three people? These things are more political than anything else.

DSS: So, what do you think are the main drawbacks of the Bangladesh team?

WA: Mentality. See, they are happy when there's a draw. You'll never win (with that mentality). It's a general life principle. If you lose, it doesn't matter as long as you go for a win. And every time your team says they are learning from mistakes. I've been here for five years. The same team is playing and the same mistakes are being repeated, that's because you don't have backup.

DSS: There was a lot of talk that Australia were going to walk over Bangladesh in this series. They have swept the Test series and are 2-0 up in the ODIs? So do you think it's justified?

fied?

WA: Even I thought that it would be a walkover for Australia but Bangladesh fought very well. They stunned everybody in the first Test but the second was just a matter of time. Seems they ran out of gas after the first Test.

But I still think they could have won the first Test match. Chasing 300 on that wicket is next to impossible. You see the records, it happened so few times especially on wickets like that.

DSS: As an all-time great bowler what do you think about the performance of the Bangladesh bowlers?

WA: You only have two bowlers. Shahadat (Hossain) has a big heart. Mashrafe (Bin Morizuza) is coming out well, but he's mostly injured. Mashrafe should be aiming to be the best in the world, and not just in Bangladesh. And for that he has to work hard and stay fit. Same goes for Shahadat. But if both gets injured you go back to slow medium-pacers. As for spinners, (Mohammad) Rafique, Enamul (Haque), (Abdur) Razzak are there. You don't have off-spinners or leg-spinners. Why not have a spinners' camp?

DSS: (Mohammad) Ashraful and Aftab (Ahmed) have been hailed as the future of Bangladesh cricket as regards batting. What are your views?

WA: The problem with the press over here is that a player scores only three hundreds and you call him great. The words like great, legend, best are being used after only a few good scores. Sorry, not on. He's a good player. But now look he's dropped. The problem stems from the fact that there is no backup. There is no pressure on a player for his position.

DSS: In general, many big stars of the last decade will retire from cricket after the World Cup next year. Is the

future of the game in good hands?

WA: When (IAN) Botham, Imran (Khan) left the game, people said they won't find players. But players will come. It happens automatically. Hopefully they will come from Bangladesh as well. Cricket has good regenerative capacity.

DSS: What are your views on specialist coaches? Like Jonty Rhodes in Pakistan?

WA: Role of coaches? To take holidays (laughs). As for Jonty he is going for only two weeks. What can you learn in two weeks? Inzamam (ul Haq) will not move from his chair. He will be sitting there for two weeks. What will Jonty do?

DSS: ... and Shahid Afridi's 'retirement'?

WA: At the age of 26, it's a stupid decision that he made and I don't know who advised him on it. I will have a go at him when I go back to Pakistan. This is not on. People die for Test cricket. He'll be remembered as an average player, if he only plays ODIs. Whoever has given him this advice, is very idiotic.

DSS: What about the criticism of Sachin Tendulkar?

WA: Not on. Since he's just going through a lean patch, just like everyone else. As long as the passion is there, he will be fine.

DSS: You are sporting the 'Amra Bangladesh' band?

WA: I've been wearing it for the last one year; people are wearing it now here.

DSS: Thank you, Wasim.

WA: Thank you all, too.

Lara third time captain

FROM PAGE 16

from myself," Lara said.

"The fact that a number of former great players took the time out to give me a call over the last couple of weeks to instill in me some interest to revisit my position about the captaincy of the West Indies team was a humbling experience.

"This was followed by a number of phone calls from present teammates who felt at this juncture of West Indies cricket, if there was one person that should accept the mantle of leadership especially leading up to the 2007 ICC World Cup in the West Indies, it should be me."

Lara paid tribute to Chander-paul and revealed that his predecessor had

also called to offer his support to him.

"I want to say that he did a wonderful job in the circumstances and I think he will reap the benefits of his efforts in his later life," Lara said.

"I am sure that I have his support and I also received a call from him before. He informed me that he would support whoever gets to the top, but he thinks that I should give it some sort of consideration."

Lara believes that he now has all the support necessary from within the team and the West Indies Cricket Board to help resurrect the Caribbean side from its waning fortunes.

West Indies are preparing for a seven-match limited-overs international series against Zimbabwe, also called to offer his support to him.

starting with a double-header on Saturday and Sunday at the Antigua Recreation Ground.

The squad for the first two limited-overs internationals was also named and there were no major surprises.

SQUAD

Brian Lara (captain), Ian Bradshaw, Dwayne Bravo, Shivnarine Chanderpaul, Corey Collymore, Chris Gayle, Runako Morton, Denesh Ramdin, Marlon Samuels, Ramnaresh Sarwan, Wayne Smith, Jerome Taylor.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS		41	Expen-	DOWN	25	Title
1	Illumi-	nated	42	Symbol	26	Singer
4	Complaint	43	Grand			
8	Impetu-	44	Legal			
12	Commio-	46	Gibson			
13	Sandwich	50	CNN			
14	Hodge-		inter-			
15	Kitten's	55	Kia model			
16	Celtics	56	Lotion			
18	Founda-	57	Writer			
20	Society	58	Office-			
21	Impale	59	Cry out			
24	Woman	60	"Blue's			
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Solution time: 21 m

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