

Mini h'ball ends today

UNB, Dhaka

Scholastica, BIS, Play Pen and Banani Bidya Niketan moved into the semifinals of the Sunnydale 5th Mini Handball (boys') tournament eliminating their rivals at the Dhanmondi Women's Sports Complex yesterday.

In today's semis, Scholastica will play BIS while Play Pen meet Banani Bidya Niketan in the morning. The final and the third place-play-off will be held in the afternoon.

In the day's matches, Scholastica beat Loreto 10-2, Play Pen defeated East Khilgaon Primary 9-3, BIS beat Siddique's International School 4-0, Banani Bidya Niketan outplayed Canadian International School 17-1, Play Pen beat South Breeze 9-7, Scholastica defeated South Point, Sunnydale beat Siddique's International School 9-4 and Loreto beat Mary Curie by 10-2 goals.

Sagar, Saif share lead

SPORTS REPORTER

Holder Minhazuddin Ahmed Sagar shared the lead with national sub-junior champion Abdullah Al Saif after the sixth round of the 29th National Junior (Under-20) Chess Championships yesterday.

FIDE Master Sagar and Saif, who defeated Shamima Akhter Liza and Shahan respectively at the federation hall-room, were level on six points. They will face each other in today's seventh round.

PCB can scrap Aussie series, won't shift it

PTI, Karachi

Pakistan Cricket Board chairman Nasim Ashraf is ready to scrap the home series against Australia but would not shift the matches to a neutral venue or Down Under, sources said yesterday.

A senior PCB official told PTI that Ashraf is slated to meet Creagh O'Connor in Dubai at an ICC meeting which will scrutinise the candidates for the chief executive's post.

"On the sidelines, the meeting with O'Connor is very significant for us and we have made up our minds that Australia must fulfil its obligation of touring Pakistan in March-April to play the Test and one-day series," the official said.

"Under no circumstances are we going to play the series at a neutral venue or have it shifted to Australia," he added.

The Australian's tour is under doubt after Cricket Australia and some players have expressed apprehensions over the security situation in Pakistan.

The official said O'Connor is expected to give details and dates of the delegation that will be sent by CA to inspect the security facilities and conditions in Pakistan soon after general elections on February 18.

CA has said it would rely on feedback from the delegation to decide if it is safe to play in Pakistan.

Day Two

FROM PAGE 17 impossible for me to take the pressure in this season," said Shakib.

The familiar environment in BKSP however forced wicketkeeper Mushfiqur Rahim to play for the sports institution although many believe it is the proper time for the young stumper to play domestic cricket under pressure.

A total of 39 players appeared in the second day for signing with Premier Division clubs while 84 players took part in the First Division bourse.

Hamilton

FROM PAGE 20 "This is a clear breach of FIA principles and any repetition will result in serious sanctions."

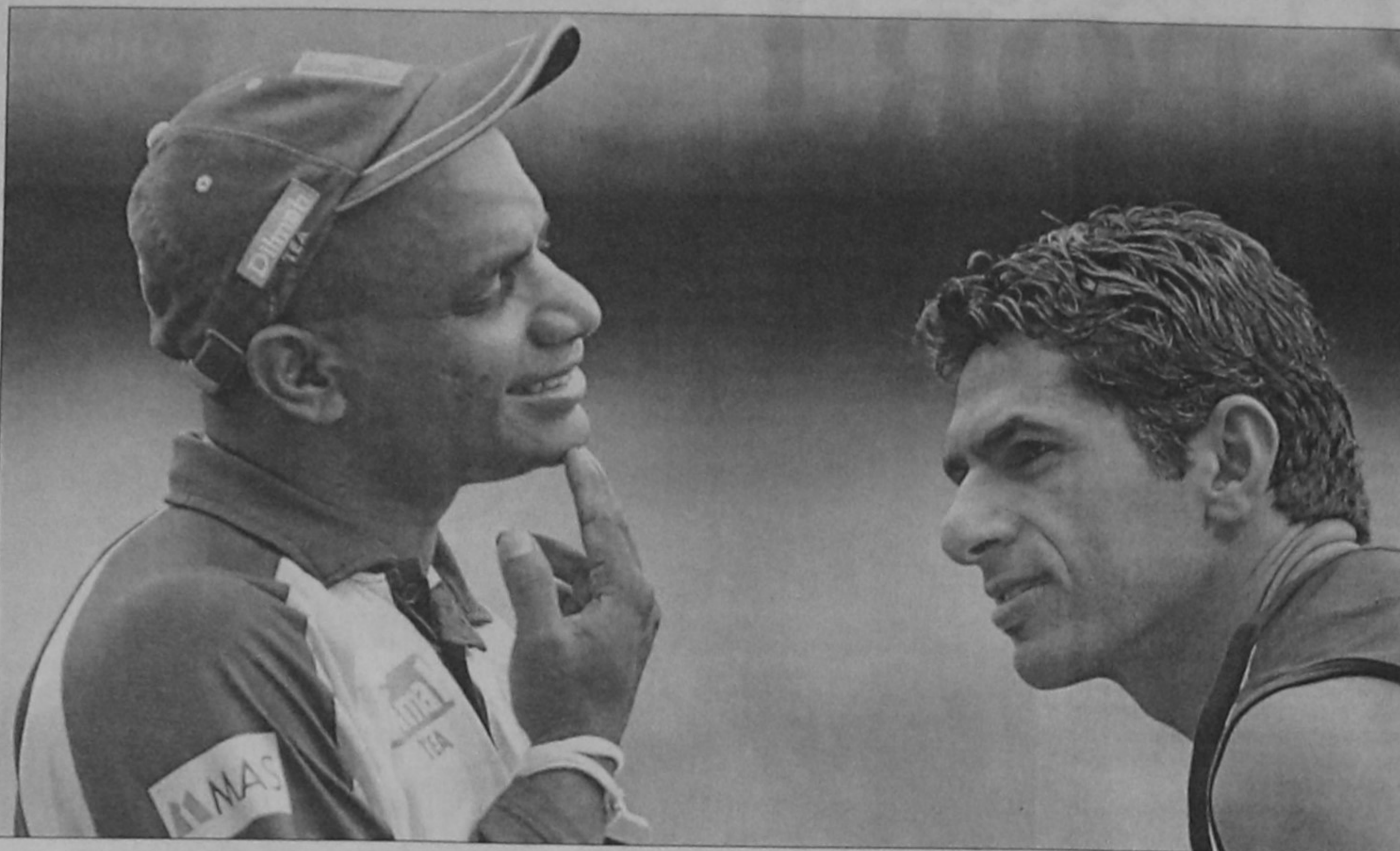
Reports in a number of Spanish papers said Hamilton was booed and insulted whenever he made his way from the team motor home and into the pits on Saturday for pre-season testing at the Barcelona circuit.

"It is not right the way he is being treated," McLaren test team manager Indy Lall was quoted as saying.



Did U Know?

The record for the world's longest badminton match is 124 minutes, between Peter Rasmussen of Denmark and Sun Jun of China.



Sri Lanka batsman Sanath Jayasuriya displays a protective band over a cut on his jaw during a training session at the Gabba in Brisbane on Monday.

PHOTO: AFP

Lanka to follow Aussies

Cricket

AFP, Brisbane

Sri Lanka captain Mahela Jayawardene said his team were looking to copy India and take the attack to Australia on their own turf during the triangular one-day Commonwealth Bank cricket series.

Sri Lanka play their first game in the tournament when they take on India at the Gabba here Tuesday, weather permitting.

If Australia fail to make the finals, the Sri Lankans will overtake them at the top of the one-day rankings.

"We are heading into the right direction," Jayawardene said.

The skipper said his side had looked at how India had taken the

game to the Australians in recent clashes.

"India showed after all the mishaps they got together and performed really well -- that's the way forward for other teams (against Australia)," he said.

"You just block everything out -- that's our attitude.

"That's the way you can actually challenge these guys (Australia) on the field."

Sri Lanka were given a boost Monday when scans cleared veteran opener Sanath Jayasuriya of a jaw injury after he was hit in the face while batting against them, Tasmania in a tour match.

Jayawardene laughed off an incident in Hobart in which spinner Muttiah Muralidaran and team officials had eggs and abuse thrown at them by a group of drunks.

"It was near traffic lights and he (Muralidaran) said 'lucky for them it was green because I would have chased them down,'" Jayawardene said.

"If he had a stone thrown at him he would have thrown it back at the car."

"But by the time he realised it was an egg, the car had gone.

"He laughed it off. That's Murali. The guy has gone through tougher things than eggs being thrown -- it's not a big deal."

Australia, India and Sri Lanka will each play eight preliminary matches before the best-of-three finals in Sydney (March 2), Brisbane (March 4) and Adelaide (March 7, if required).

The first match in the triangular series, between the hosts and India, at the Gabba, was abandoned Sunday.

Glamorgan won't sign Lara

BBC ONLINE, undated

Glamorgan insist they will not be signing batting legend Brian Lara.

The West Indian great has been linked with a move to the Welsh county but team manager Matthew Maynard says there is "no truth" in the rumour.

But Maynard did reveal Glamorgan have failed in a bid to sign Australian batting star Adam Gilchrist for their Twenty20 Cup campaign.

"There is no truth in the suggestion that we are trying to sign Brian Lara," said Maynard. "None whatsoever."

Former Sophia Gardens skipper Maynard, appointed Glamorgan's cricket manager in September, is desperately trying to rebuild the Welsh county following a season to forget.

Glamorgan suffered their worst ever campaign in 2007, winning just twice in all competitions as they finished bottom of both the County Championship and NatWest Pro40 league.

Fencing camp begins in city

SPORTS REPORTER

The first-ever fencing camp, jointly organised by Bangladesh Fencing Association (BFA) and Fencing Association of India, began at the Suhrawardi Indoor Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

President of BFA Lt Gen ATM Jahurul Alam inaugurated the camp where near hundred fencers are taking part.

Indian trainers Gurmohan Singh and Amitav Kumar will conduct the training camp from today.

Bangladesh U-19s

FROM PAGE 17 Opener Kieron Powell's 40-ball 44 was the best effort by the tourists, who play their last match tomorrow at the same venue.

SCORES IN BRIEF

WEST INDIES: 154 all out in 42 overs (Powell 44, Barath 26, Bannar 10, Jacobs 18, Brooks 22*, extras 27, Dollar 1-41, Rubel 2-34, Nasir 3-30, Shuva 3-4, Mahmudul 1-11).

BAHGLADESH: 155-6 in 38.2 overs (Mithun 20, Nadimuddin 53, Nasir 33, Mahmudul 20, extras 24, Grant 1-17, Bannar 1-30, Brooks 3-30).

Young India

FROM PAGE 17 Indian bowlers credit for having "put a lot of pressure on the Australians during the Test series".

As for his own line-up for tomorrow's game, Jayawardene didn't give any hints. "It's too early to say if we would go with a 6-5 or 7-4 combination," he said. But he confirmed that Sanath Jayasuriya, who had his chin stitched up after being hit in the Tasmania tour game, would play.

India, who didn't have any practice after Sunday evening's rain-interrupted encounter against Australia, are most likely to stick to the same combination unless Yuvraj Singh is completely confident about taking field.

Mahendra Singh Dhoni, the captain, said Yuvraj was fit but was non-committal about his chances of actually making the final line-up.

In the decider, China fielded 2006 Wimbledon champions Yan and Zheng Jie, back from a 2007 season disrupted by injury.

The pair won 7-5, 7-6 (7/5) against Dechy and Razzano.

"I was focussed in the first set but from then on I was losing it mentally. In the third I came back but she played just great," said Li as she reflected on her singles defeat.

"But I have six months to prepare for the Olympics so I am not worried about today."

China will face Spain in the last four after Anabel Medina Garrigues stunned Francesca Schiavone 6-4, 6-1 to complete a 3-0 clean sweep for the visitors in Naples.

Clean sweep for Proteas

Cricket

AFP, Johannesburg

Herschelle Gibbs made a dazzling century and ensured a winning end to teammate Shaun Pollock's "wonderful journey" as South Africa chased down a rain-reduced target in the fifth and final one-day international against the West Indies at the Wanderers Stadium Sunday.

Gibbs (102) and Jacques Kallis (74 not out) shared a 175-run second wicket partnership as South Africa achieved a target of 211 in 31 overs with eight wickets and 13 balls to spare.

It completed a 5-0 series sweep for South Africa.

Pollock was promoted to number four in the batting order and hit the winning runs, finishing with 10 not out.

Two lengthy rain interruptions threatened to put a damper on Pollock's final match before retiring from international cricket.

"It's been a wonderful journey," said Pollock of a 13-year international career during which he played in 108 Test matches and 303 one-day internationals.

He said he felt emotionally drained after being acclaimed at every ground during his farewell series.

"Every crowd has really carried me," he said.

The West Indies made a challenging total of 295 for seven after being sent in to bat, with Devon Smith hitting 91.

South Africa were 34 for one after eight overs at the second rain break and came back needing another 177 off 23 overs.

Gibbs and Kallis immediately went on the attack, however, adding 91 off the first eight overs after the resumption.

Gibbs had faced 23 balls for 10 runs before the second rain delay but needed only another 57 deliveries to reach his 20th one-day

international century. He was caught at cover off Daren Powell after facing 84 balls. He hit 13 fours and three sixes.

While Gibbs produced the pyrotechnics, Kallis played some fine strokes of his own although he was content to feed most of the strike to Gibbs. He made his 74 off 70 balls with seven boundaries.

Earlier Smith set up a good West Indian total.

The opening batsman had played a minimal role on tour, appearing in two warm-up matches, two Twenty20 internationals and the first one-day international, making just 50 runs in six innings with a highest score of 12.

But the left-hander from Grenada, who played because Sewnarine Chattergoon was injured, took advantage of excellent batting conditions. He struck 10 fours and three sixes off 76 balls before being caught behind off Charl Langeveldt.

Smith and fellow left-hander Shivnarine Chanderpaul (51) put on 137 off 134 balls for the second wicket.

South African captain Graeme Smith was forced to delay the third powerplay after 98 runs were scored off the first 15 overs.

When he did call for it, in the 27th over, Langeveldt dismissed Smith and followed up with the wicket of Chanderpaul in the next over.

Bravo said injuries had hampered the West Indies during the tour.

Captain Chris Gayle had to return home before the one-day series because of a broken thumb and no fewer than four players, including fast bowlers Jerome Taylor and Fidel Edwards, as well as batsmen Marlon Samuels and Chattergoon, were ruled out of the final match.

But Bravo paid tribute to South Africa and to Pollock in particular. "Congratulations to them," he said. "Our guys learnt a lot. They're a real professional team."

It could have been worse

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

A Tasmanian car containing a batch of egg throwers was fortunate to escape after pelting a small group of Sri Lankans in Hobart last week. Muttiah Muralidaran would have been in hot pursuit of the drive-by yolkers if he and his fellow tourists were not so shocked by the flying object, which hit a selector in the back, but they laughed it off as a random act.

While the Sri Lankans reported the incident on Friday, Mahela Jayawardene, their captain, said a green light saved the car's passengers, who were "probably drunk", from being chased by the men in the group.

"If Murali had a stone or something near him he would've thrown it back," Jayawardene said in Brisbane. "By the time they had realised what had happened the car had raced down the road. It was lucky for the guys in the car that the traffic light was green, otherwise Murali said he would have chased them."

Jayawardene joked it would have been funny if the egg had hit Murali instead of a selector. "It was a just a random thing and not a big deal," he said. "We all had a good laugh about it. We didn't want the matter to escalate so we lodged the complaint and left it at that. Murali was part of the group and the only recognisable person, but we all are fine with the matter."

Muralidaran has received a lot of poor treatment in Australia and

even though it was unlikely the occupants of the car recognised him, the fact that a group of Sri Lankan tourists was singled out is a poor reflection on the host country.

Another spinner, India's Harbhajan Singh, has also been targeted following his part in the race controversy involving Andrew Symonds at the Sydney Cricket Ground, and Symonds's home crowd chanted "Harbhajan's a..." during the opening ODI of the Commonwealth Bank Series.

Jayawardene said it was important to "block everything" out during tours of Australia. "When you come here it's not just the players who are aggressive, it's also the crowd who are as aggressive as their team," he said. "Everyone wants to win here in any sport, so teams need to prepare for that."

"We should block everything else apart from what needs to be done in the middle. The Indians showed that with the way they bounced back in the Test series recently after what all happened in Sydney."

Asia's road begins here

FROM PAGE 20

Zheng Zhi, read an oath to the country, highlighting their determination.

"I pledge to advance to the World Cup, which is the professional goal that we strive for," the players recited, according to state media.

"We swear by death to kill along the bloody road of defending the honour of the motherland and realise our youthful dreams."

Traditional Asian powerhouse Japan take on Thailand in Group B at Saitama.

Thai coach Chanvit Phalajivin is under no illusions that Japan will qualify for their fourth consecutive World Cup, but remains optimistic that his team can take second spot in the group.

"It's a tough group, with Japan being the unquestionable favourites," he told FIFA.com. "However, I think we can take the group's second qualifying place by beating

Bahrain and Oman."

Verbeek's old team South Korea, Asia's most successful on the world stage having qualified for the past six World Cups, open their account at home against minnows Turkmenistan.

Jordan and North Korea are the other teams in Group C.

Singapore have a tough task against triple Asian champions Saudi Arabia in Riyadh, but their Serbian coach Radjok Avramovic has turned The Lions into a competitive team and a Saudi victory is by no means guaranteed.

"It will be a hard match but we are not looking at Saudi Arabia as the end point. We plan on going well beyond that," said the determined Avramovic, a former Yugoslav international.

Uzbekistan take on Lebanon in Beirut in the other Group D match.

Elsewhere, Iran play Syria and United Arab Emirates are against Kuwait.

Milan see off Fiorentina

FROM PAGE 20

It was an almost carbon copy of a penalty awarded against Parma's Fernando Couto, which Ibrahimovic again converted as Inter overtook a 2-1 deficit into a 3-2 victory.

That penalty decision caused such a stir in the press, with Inter accused of being favoured by referees, that the club boycotted the press for two weeks, refusing to grant interviews to anyone other than their own television channel and internet site.

Inter's returning France captain Patrick Vieira, making his first start since October, was dismissed five minutes after the goal for picking up two yellow cards in quick succession.

Empoli had a chance to salvage something when they were awarded a second-half penalty for a foul by Marco Materazzi on Luca Saudati but the substitute striker's resulting spot-kick was saved by Brazilian goalkeeper Julio Cesar.

Roma suffered a nightmare in Siena where they fell behind after only 11 minutes when Simone Vergassola fired home a rebound off Roma's Brazilian goalkeeper Doni.

Siena went two in front just before the break when Doni parried Paolo De Ceglie's fire shot from the left only to see it ricochet off defenders Philippe Mexes and then Max Tonetto and into the net.

Liechtenstein striker Mario Frick added a late third.

In Turin, third-placed Juventus were held to a 1-1 draw by rock-bottom Cagliari. The visitors took the lead on 55 minutes when Paolo Bianco headed home a Daniele Conti corner.

But right from the re-start Czech veteran Pavel Nedved fired home from long range to earn Juve a third straight draw in the league that once again has hit their faint title hopes as they slip to 12 points off Inter.

South African captain Smith said Pollock's farewell series had been an emotional time.

"They're big shoes to fill. There are some talented young guys here who are hoping one day to fill his shoes."

Pollock, playing in his last international match, took one for 33 and was given a standing ovation when he finished his final spell.

Bowling with the new ball, Pollock had a first spell of 7-1-14-1 in dramatic contrast to his fellow pace bowlers, who were all punished by Smith.

Pollock finished his one-day international career with 393 wickets, fourth on the world all-time list, at an average of 24.50 to go along with 421 wickets in Tests. He made 3519 runs in one-day internationals and 3781 in Tests.

SCOREBOARD

Final scoreboard in the fifth and final one-day international between South Africa and the West Indies at the Wanderers Stadium on Sunday:

WEST INDIES: 295

SOUTH AFRICA

Gibbs c Chanderpaul b Powell 102
Smith b Powell 5

Kallis not out 74
Pollock not out 10

Extras: (lb-3, w-17) 20
Total: (For 2 wickets in 28.5 overs) 211

Did not bat: De Villiers, Duminy, Boucher, Morkel, Nel, Steyn, Langeveldt.

Fall of wickets: 1-10, 2-185.

Bowler O M R W

Powell 7 0 39 2

Rampaul 5.5 0 39 0

Sammy 4 0 41 0

Bravo 5 0 52 0

Lewis 3 0 18 0

Chanderpaul 4 0 19 0

Result: South Africa won by eight wickets (D/L method) and clinched the series 5-0.

Man-of-the-match: Herschelle Gibbs.

Man-of-the-series: J Duminy and Shaun Pollock.

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