

# Navana title bout today

Sports Reporter

**B**angladesh Biman and Brothers Union will be meeting today in a play-off match to decide the Navana Premier Division cricket league title at the Dhaka Stadium.

The one-day game will be of 45-overs-a-side. Both Brothers and Biman finished on 16 points with one defeat after nine league fixtures each. Biman lost to last year's champions Abahani Krira Chakra while Brothers Union went down to Biman in a tail-scoring tie.

Brothers Union have a very strong batting line-up and perhaps one of the best and balanced bowling attacks. Skipper Atahar Ali Khan leads the Brothers batting potential followed by Zahed Razzak Masoom, Farooq Ahmed and Akram Khan. They have three talented all-rounders in Sri Lankan T.L. Fernando, West

Bengal Ranji player Arup Bhatnagar and Golam Farooq Suru. Left-arm pacesman Golam Nausher Prince, Salauddin, and young spinner Shamsul lead the bowling attack a lot of variety. Atahar Ali and Fernando are potential match-winners.

Bangladesh Biman, on the other hand, very much depend upon their solid batting line-up. Jahangir (Jr), the only player in this year's league to chalk-up three delightful centuries, forms the backbone of the Biman batting.

Amimul Islam Bulbul, Ahmed Iqbal Baccchu, Sumon, Munir and Skipper Shanu are the other star Biman batsmen. Southpaws; Enamul Haque Mont, a dangerous all-rounder, Jahangir Alam Dulu and right-arm off-spinner Anwarul Amin Azhar will spearhead the Biman bowling attack.

Biman enjoy psychological advantage over Brothers, having overhauled their 290-odd

total despite the much-vaunted Gopibagh attack in their league encounter.

If Brothers should win today's play-off, it would give them their first-ever senior division league championship in any sport. The Gopibagh side has never managed to win either the cricket or football league honours despite several close challenges over the years. On the other hand, a victory for Biman today would add another bright feather to their cricketing cap, having won the league as well as the national championships on several occasions.

A win for Biman would be doubly sweet for the national airlines team who started the 1990-91 Navana campaign as the under-dogs, much behind the traditional title aspirants Mohammedans and Abahani K.C. and even the star-studded Brothers Union and the Greater Mymensingh Cricket Club.

# Rifles clinch kabaddi title

Sports Reporter

**B**angladesh Rifles emerged champions in the Independence Day kabaddi tournament when they outplayed Bangladesh Ansars 19-9 points in the final match yesterday at the Outer Stadium kabaddi court.

The winners led 8-5 at the breather. State Minister for Youth and Sports watched the final and gave away the prized to the players.

National Sports Council (NSC) Chairman Major General Mahbubur Rahman and Dhaka Divisional Commissioner Walul Islam were also present on the occasion.

Bangladesh Rifles: Amjad, Shah Alam, Seraj, Kajal, Mozammel, Kashem, Hakim, Nowsher, Rouf and Nur-e-Alam.

Bangladesh Ansar: Motahar, Hassan, Salam, Nazir, Amir Hamza, Mokbul, Alim, Shamsul Hoque, Meher and Ariful.



Action from the Independence Day kabaddi final at the Outer Stadium yesterday. BDR beat Bangladesh Ansars to lift the title. —Star photo

# Army in semifinals

Sports Reporter

**N**ational champions Bangladesh Army reserved a semi-final berth when they eliminated Bangladesh PWD 4-3 in a nerve-wracking tie breaker in the quarter-finals of the Independence Day football tournament yesterday at the Mirpur Stadium.

The match ended at 2-2 draw after the end of 90 minutes regulation period.

Bangladesh Army will now meet the winners of the Dhaka Mohammedan and Mukhtijoddha Sangshad on April 6th.

Army shot into the lead before the PWD players could settle down. Barely two minutes into the game, Army's Mujibur took a curling corner kick which was smartly headed in by Rashid at the far corner of the net (1-0).

Mustaq of PWD made an unpardonable mistake when he missed a sitter from a hand-shaking distance in the 29th

minute of the match. The national champion went further ahead when PWD's Tapan, with a sudden rush of blood fouled Army's Rashid well inside the danger zone and referee Nazir Hossain without any hesitation pointed his finger to the dreaded spot. Mujibur stepped forward to neatly place the penalty shot past the diving PWD's custodian Tayeb (2-0).

PWD came back in the second half in an attacking mood. They started to press hard and in the process, resisting them, Army's Asgar brought down PWD's Reza inside the box which prompted the referee to award a penalty in PWD's favour.

Defender Jamrul rocketed the ball in the top of the net with the penalty shot (1-2) in the 14th minute of the second half.

PWD's Gaus and Rakib spoiled two easy scoring chances in the first ten minutes of the second half.

PWD levelled the score in

the 83rd minute of the game, when Jamrul netted the ball with a fierce grounder off a free kick just outside the box (2-2).

In the tie-breaker Shahab Ali and Ali Asgar scored for Army while Mujibur and Muktar missed theirs.

PWD's tie-breaker kicks were a story of misses. Gaus, Jamrul, Reza and Sujit failed to convert their penalty kicks while Kamal scored a consolation goal with his penalty shot.

Army's Asgar and PWD's Tapan were shown yellow cards.

Bangladesh Army: Bibas (captain), Shafig, Shahab Ali, Jahangir (Muktar), Mujibur, Mubarak, Jabber, Ershad, Azhar, Babul and Rashid.

PWD SC: Tayeb, Jamrul, Tapan, Shamim, Peter, Sujit, Shawpan, (Zahid), Kamal, Gaus(captain), Raquib (Reza) and Mustaque.

## TODAY'S MATCH

Eskaton Sabuj vs BRTC (3:15)

# Record viewers for Italia '90

**ZURICH, Apr 2:** Last summer's World Cup attracted a record-breaking average of 513 million television viewers per game, FIFA said Tuesday, reports AP.

The worldwide television audience was nearly double the viewership of the 1986 World Cup, mainly because of a sharp increase in the number of sets in China and Africa, soccer's international governing body said.

FIFA's newsletter said 26.7 billion people in 167 countries watched the 1990 tournament in Italy according to spectator research commissioned by the federation.

The viewer total, more than five times the world population, includes people who watched several of the 52 games.

The final, in which Germany beat Argentina, was the largest single television draw with slightly more than a billion viewers, FIFA said. That included 28 million in West Germany, nearly half the population.

# Maradona goes home to reflect



**ROME, Apr 2:** Argentine soccer star Diego Maradona, embroiled in a doping scandal, left Italy for Buenos Aires today, reports Reuter.

The Napoli captain faces a ban of up to two years since the Italian Soccer Federation confirmed last Friday he had tested positive for cocaine after a league match on March 17.

"I don't want to talk to any reporter," Maradona said before boarding the flight, which left Rome at 2 a. m. (midnight GMT).

His manager, Marcos Franchi, denied the player was fleeing Italian sporting justice.

An Italian soccer disciplinary board was expected to make a preliminary decision later today.

"This is not an escape. As far as the sporting sentence is concerned we are confident and this is why in Italy we need only our lawyers now," Franchi said at the airport.

In a message to his fans given to the Italian News Agency ANSA, Maradona suggested he was the victim of an "obscure plan" and that he had never betrayed "correct sporting principles."

He said he wanted to go home to Argentina "to rediscover the necessary tranquility in a more serene atmosphere and far from the centre of so many tensions."

He added: "I am profoundly shaken by recent events which have often brought me to the limelight (but) not the light of sport, which I have always loved and will continue to love for my whole life."

The Italian press has seen the doping scandal as the last chapter in a disastrous season in which the Argentine has been at loggerheads with Napoli and the Italian Football Federation.

He has missed matches and training, running up more than 50,000 dollars in fines.

Maradona is also being investigated for alleged links with a drugs and prostitution ring and Napoli are suing him for damaging the club's image.

"If I am leaving now, it is because in the agitation of this period, I cannot manage to understand the reasons why all this is happening so suddenly, almost as if it were part of an obscure plan," Maradona said.

"As a sportsman I want to reaffirm that I never betrayed the principles which inspire loyal and correct sporting activity, in which I have invested my energies and my passion," he said.

In his message, Maradona said he wanted a "pause for reflection" among his own people but would make himself available to Italian authorities whenever necessary.

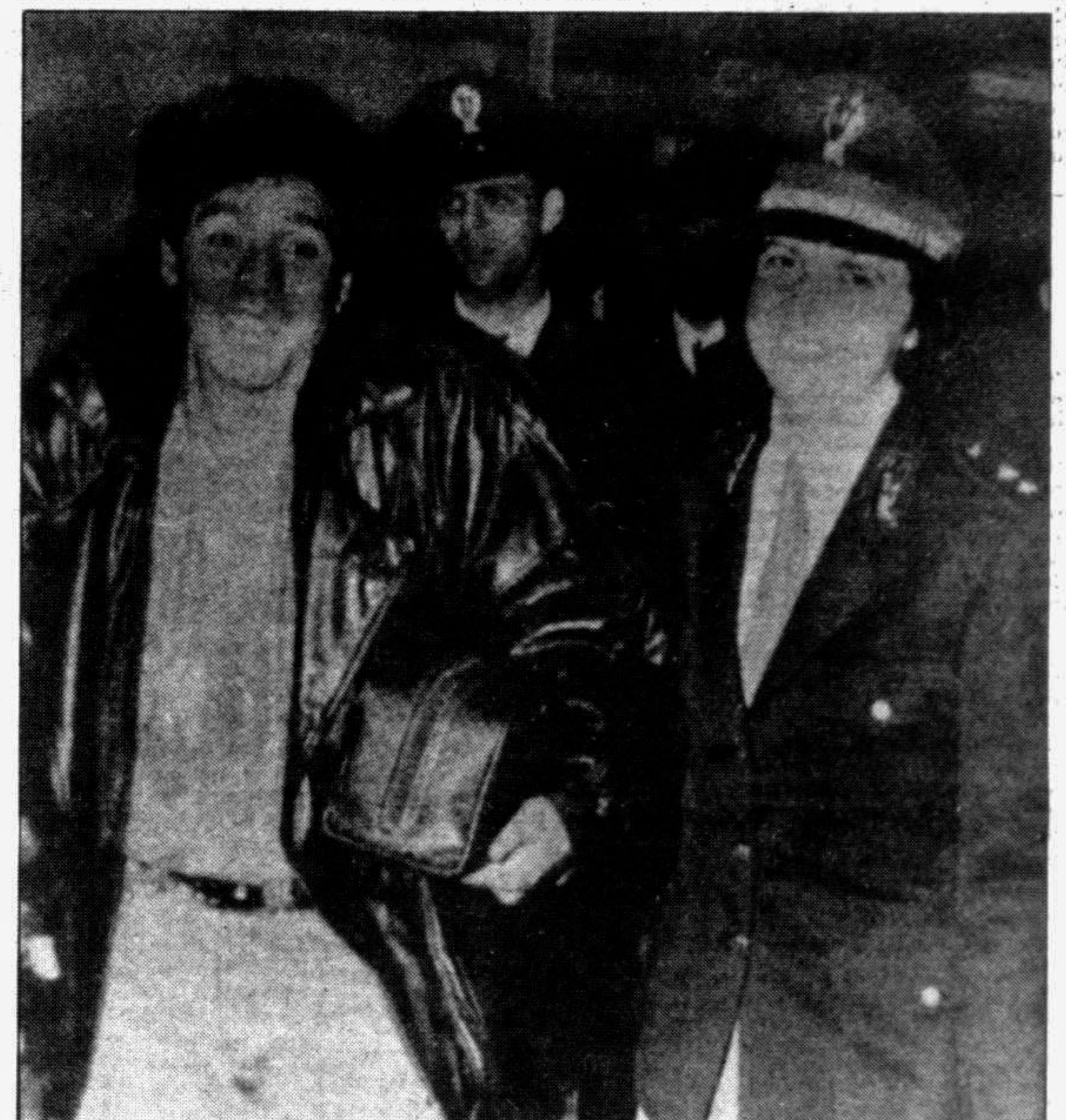
"Certain that every cloud will be cleared up, I ardently and sincerely desire to return to soccer with my image, which there has been a vain attempt to alter," he said.

Maradona's last appearance on an Italian soccer field was March 24, when Napoli was trounced 4-1 by league leader Sampdoria.

The officials also indicated that the Italian club will have to reconsider terms of Maradona's contract, which is due to expire in 1993. Maradona was paid about 2 million dollars a year from Napoli and earned more than that from commercial sponsors. Federation experts said Napoli could ask for a cut of up

Italian Club Napoli, after he tested positive for cocaine last month.

Maradona, 30 rose from a Buenos Aires shantytown to become one of the world's highest paid athletes. He led his country to its second World Cup championship in 1986 and to the World Cup final in 1990.



Disgraced soccer superstar Diego Maradona is escorted by security officials as he boards a plane to Buenos Aires yesterday. — AFP photo

He did not play last Saturday's league game against Internazionale of Milan because of a one-game suspension for arguing with referees.

He was scheduled to return to action in a second-leg semi-final of the Italian Cup on Wednesday night. His hurried departure saved the Italian league and Napoli the bother of a protective suspension of the Argentine star from Wednesday's game in Genoa against La Samp.

Napoli, toward the bottom of league standings, hopes to get a berth in the Cup final.

Officials of the Naples Club, who spoke under condition of anonymity, said Maradona's lawyer had advised him against leaving Italy before the disciplinary commission rules.

to 60 per cent of Maradona's salary.

The commission meets in Milan on Friday. Punishment could range from six months to two years.

Suspension is mandatory under Italian soccer regulations in cases of positive drug tests. The player can be represented by his lawyers before the commission.

Meanwhile Reuter from Buenos Aires said: Diego Maradona has fallen from grace among fans back home in Argentina who once idolised him as the world's greatest soccer player, according to an opinion poll.

A survey conducted over past two days said only eight per cent of those questioned had a favourable opinion of Maradona, captain of the

Pollster Miguel Angel Nudelman bass said Maradona's popularity had already slumped after he threw an extravagant party for his wedding at Buenos Aires largest boxing stadium in 1989.

Even an official of President Carlos Menem's administration, which had made Maradona a sporting ambassador, criticised the player.

"If he did take drugs, it would be a disgrace for the country... I am worried about a bad example being set for Argentine children, National Sports Board President Fernando Galmartín told the leading daily La Nacion.

The local private news agency NA quoted Maradona's father as saying: "These are the saddest moments of my life."

# Swiss hope for repeat

**NEUCHÂTEL, Switzerland, Apr 2:** Switzerland, flushed with success after three recent wins, will be hoping to repeat a little piece of soccer history when they host Romania in a European championship qualifier tomorrow, reports Reuter.

The last time they met in a European qualifying tie, in Zurich in 1967, the Swiss thrashed the visitors 7-1.

That was a long time ago and a similar result now would be near-impossible, but Swiss coach Uli Stielike is in buoyant mood after recent victories in friendlies with the United States, Colombia and Liechtenstein.

Stielike, a former German World Cup player, said he was not particularly impressed when he saw the Romanians struggle to beat international newcomers San Marino 3-1

away last week. "Strikers Marius Lacatus and Florin Raduciotu were largely ineffective and winger Michael Klein made little use of the space he was allowed," Stielike said.

"They seemed to lack the motivation and zest they showed in the World Cup."

The Swiss coach added that the vaunted midfield trio of George Hagl, Dorin Mateut and Ovidiu Sabau often lost out in man-to-man exchanges against mainly amateur San Marino.

All in all, Romania and the Swiss are square with three wins each in eight previous meetings.

Stielike has dropped grasshopper Zurich's talented but out-of-form striker Alain Sutter and is expected to give Christophe Orel his first full cap. The 23-year-old Lausanne defender was last called to the national squad two years ago,

Romanian team manager Mircea Radulescu, lacking five top players from last year's World Cup squad has been forced to turn to youth to revive hopes of Romania reaching the championship finals in Sweden next year.

He has called up nine young Romanian-based players to the national squad alongside an equal number of big names now playing abroad.

After defeats by Scotland and Bulgaria he said: "This is a critical moment for us. We stand with our backs to the wall. This is a match we cannot afford to lose."

Bulgaria and Romania have four points each from four matches in Group Two, Switzerland have four points with a game in hand.

Scotland lead the group with six points from four matches while San Marino have still to open their account.

# Taylor, Jones get among the runs

**KINGSTOWN, St Vincent, Apr 2:** Australians Mark Taylor and Dean Jones, who have failed more often than they have succeeded in recent cricket Tests, both scored some much-needed runs on Monday, reports Reuter.

Opener Taylor hit 122 while Jones scored 60 as Australia scored 390 for six in reply to West Indies under-23 first innings 307 on the third day of their four-day cricket match.

David Boon (53) and Steve Waugh (85) were also among the runs as the Australians, one down in the five-Test series, prepared for the third Test against West Indies starting in Port-of-Spain on Friday.

Resuming at 92 for one, Taylor was involved in successive century partnerships with Boon and Jones as Australia took the lead with just four wickets down.

Taking advantage of two dropped chances, Taylor reached his century after four and half hours off 207 balls before being bowled by the persistent Hameesh Anthony.

It was Taylor's second century and the highest individual total by an Australian on tour.

# Kiwi board picks 25 cricketers

**WELLINGTON, New Zealand, Apr 2:** Opening batsman Kyle Wealleans was the only novice named Wednesday in a 22-man New Zealand cricket squad to prepare for the 1991-92 season, reports AP.

Uncapped Wealleans, 21, plays for the Northern Districts team in the Shell Cup competition and is regarded as one of his country's most promising batsmen.

The selectors included 21 of the 25 players who represented New Zealand in the 1990-91 season, omitting opening batsman David White, spinner Mark Priest and pace bowler Stu Roberts. Phil Horne has retired from international cricket.

New Zealand will play a three-Test series against England before playing in the 1992 World Cup, for which it is joint host with Australia.

The squad is: Martin Crowe (captain), Ian Smith (vice captain), Trevor Franklin, Richard Reid, Kyle Wealleans, John Wright, Mark Greatbatch, Chris Harris, Andrew Jones, Rod Latham, Ken Rutherford, Shane Thomson, Adam Parore, Bryan Young, Grant Bradburn, Dipak Patel, Chris Cairns, Gavin Larsen, Danny Morrison, Richard Pietrie, Morris Pringle, Willie Watson.

# Pretoria looks certain to make Atlanta Olympics

**ATLANTA, Apr 2:** Former Atlanta Mayor Andrew Young said he believes the South African government is dismantling apartheid rapidly enough, that its participation in the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta is almost assured, reports AP.

"It's questionable whether they will be ready for Barcelona," Young said, referring to the 1992 Summer Games. "But 1996 will almost be definite."

South Africa has not competed in the Olympics since 1960 because of its policies of racial segregation. It was suspended from the International Olympic Committee in 1970. Young, who recently toured southern Africa, is co-chairman of the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games.

He and other Olympic organisers have taken special note of the symbolism that would mark the arrival of a South African team at the

birthplace of slain US civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr.

"It would be special, very special, if the civil rights capital of the States would play host to a unified, non-segregated South African team," said Billy Payne, president of the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games.

The Rev. Joseph E. Lowery, president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, a civil rights group, cautioned against hastily lifting sanctions against South Africa, including those concerning the Olympics. But Lowery said he was hopeful that apartheid would end by 1996.

"If they meet the conditions, it would be significant if they did rejoin the world community in the city of Martin Luther King Jr.," he said. "It would be a tribute to the spirit of the movement for justice throughout the world."

Last week, the IOC's Commission on Apartheid and Olympism met with the nation's black, sports and government leaders including President F.W. de Klerk to assess the progress of recent reforms toward ending apartheid.

The commission set five conditions for South Africa to meet within six months to re-enter the Olympics.

These include abolition of apartheid, unification of sports bodies into non-racial groups, and that an umbrella sports

# Noakhali sports

**MAJDEE COURT (Noakhali), Apr 2:** The annual district sports competition was held at the Shahid Bhuiyan Stadium here recently amid much enthusiasm.

About 120 competitors from 10 different upazilas and sports clubs of the district took part in 38 events of the meet which was organised by the Noakhali District Sports Association.

# Germans blank Argentina

**BERLIN, Apr 2:** Boris Becker and Michael Stich sealed a 5-0 win for Germany in their Davis Cup tennis World Group quarter-final against Argentina on Monday with wins in the reverse singles, reports Reuter.

Germany, Davis Cup champions in 1988 and 1989, clinched the rubber on Sunday when Stich and Eric Jelen combined to win the doubles in a tough five-set battle.

On Monday, Becker gave a crisp display on the fast carpeted court to beat Martin Jaitte 6-1, 7-6 while Stich fought back after dropping the first set to defeat Javier Frana 6-7, 6-1, 6-1.

"The tie could not have gone better," Becker, the world number two, said.

In September's semifinals, Germany, who have not lost at home for six years, meet the winners of the quarter-final between the United States and Spain.

# Sabatini-Capriati — a hot pairing

**HILTON HEAD ISLAND, South Carolina, Apr 2:** Singles play in the opening round of the 500,000 dollar Family Circle Magazine Cup was overshadowed Monday by a doubles

match that teamed Gabriela Sabatini and Jennifer Capriati on the same side of the net, reports AP.

The Argentine and American, both ranked in the top 10 in the world and playing as a doubles team for only the second time, eliminated Canadian Helen Kelesi and Bulgarian Katerina Maleeva 6-4, 6-4. The winners were unseeded while Kelesi and Maleeva were seeded No. 6.

The match on stadium court at the Sea Pines Racquet Club drew about 4,000 fans — by far the largest for any match on the opening day of the tournament.

In singles play, Lella Meskhi of the Soviet Union, at No. 9 the top singles seed in action, advanced to the second round with a 6-4, 7-5 victory over Germany's Veronika Martinek. No. 11 Sandra Cecchini of Italy beat American Katrina Adams in straight sets 6-1, 6-0.

Other seeded players advancing included No. 12 Isabel Cueto of Germany, who defeated American Louise Allen 6-0, 6-2, and No. 16 Sabine Hack, also of Germany, who eliminated American Tami Whittinger 6-2, 6-1.

But No. 13 Regina Rajchrtova of Czechoslovakia couldn't win a game against Argentina's Florencia Labat, who advanced with a 6-0, 6-0 victory. Czechoslovak Petra Langrova fared better, defeating 15th-seeded Kattia Picolini of Italy 6-2, 6-2.

The tournament's top seed and defending champion, Martina Navratilova, ranked No. 3 in the world, had a first-round bye. Yugoslav Monica Seles, the world's top-ranked player, and No. 2 Steffi Graf of Germany also had byes.

The top-seeded Navratilova will begin defence of her title here against South African Amanda Coetzer, a 6-1, 7-6 winner over Silke Frankl of Germany.

Sabatini, the second-seeded Argentine, plays her first match against American Linda Harvey-Wild, who reached the second round by defeating Samantha Smith of Britain 6-3, 6-2.

Sixth-seeded Jennifer Capriati, who lost to Navratilova in last year's final, opens her campaign for the 100,000-dollar first prize against fellow-American Audra Keller. Keller beat compatriot

Mary Lou Daniels 7-6, 3-6, 6-2 in the first round.

Witt upsets Mayotte

**ORLANDO, Florida, Apr 2:** David Witt, ranked 465th in the world, upset time Mayotte, 7-6 (8-6), 6-2 Monday night in the first round of the 225,000-dollar Prudential Securities Tennis Classic, reports AP.

Witt, 17, an amateur playing in only his third professional tournament as a wild card entry, took control of the match late in the first set tiebreaker.

Facing two set points at 4-6, Witt ripped off four straight spectacular winners to grab the set, then broke a faltering Mayotte's serve in the fifth and seventh games to take the match.

Mayotte, currently ranked 95th, was ranked as high as seventh in October 1988.