

Windies, Lankans not coming

Sports Reporter

Plans for a one-day international cricket tournament in Dhaka involving the mighty West Indies and Sri Lanka — as also Bangladesh — in the last week of October have been abandoned.

The executive committee meeting of the newly-reconstituted Bangladesh Cricket Control Board (BCCB), at its Dhaka Stadium office yesterday afternoon under the chairmanship of its president Foreign Minister Col (Retd) Mustafizur Rahman, decided unanimously to scrap the idea. Several rather plausible reasons have been proffered by the BCCB committee for this decision which will no doubt break the hearts of the country's innumerable cricket fans.

Col Mustafiz, for whom it was the maiden visit to the BCCB offices yesterday, agreed with the majority members of the committee that the time allowed for completion of such basic preparations such as the pitch, is far too short. No one was willing to risk the prospects of a disaster that could occur with the fearsome West Indian pace battery bowling at Sri Lankan batsmen on an underprepared wicket. The delay in the formation of the new BCCB committee provided very little time for pitch and ground preparations to start.

Moreover, the economics of the original plan — a brainchild of a now defunct committee — also looked unconvincing. The Taka 70 lakh budget suggested by the previous committee appeared far too high. Besides, there just wasn't enough time to find sponsors to underwrite such a huge sum. Gate money alone would not be sufficient to pay for the air passage and guarantee money for the Caribbeans and the Lankans.

The executive committee meeting, which was attended among others by Health Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf, who was earlier made the head of the organising committee, also did not want to take any risks with the weather which is most unpredictable at that time of the year. The late monsoon can, really wreak havoc with even the best of plans.

Instead, holding out a glimmer of hope for the cricket fans, the committee felt that it might perhaps be a better idea to hold a tournament with more countries such as India and Pakistan taking part sometime soon after next year's World Cup in Australia and New Zealand.

The BCCB's cancellation of the West Indies-Sri Lanka programme, scheduled for Oct 27 and 28, means that Dhaka fans may never get another chance to see the great Viv Richards in action. The West Indian

master batsman is likely to retire from international cricket after the World Cup next February.

Among other issues that featured in yesterday's meeting were the calendar for the local cricket programme of the coming 1991-92 season and the formation of various sub-committees.

The Damal Summer tournament, curtain raiser of the domestic cricket season, will begin in Dhaka from the third week of October. The Navana Premier Division league is scheduled for a late November start with 12 teams taking part. Lalmita and Kalabagan K.C., who had finished at the bottom of the league table last season, will not be relegated in view of their unresolved dispute over the eligibility of Ashish Malik, the Indian all-rounder, who played for Lalmita.

Three foreign players will be allowed to play for each club for this season. The committee had also abandoned the 1991 national cricket championship which could not be held on schedule because of the devastating cyclone in the month of April.

Calcutta MSC Bordoloi champs

GUWAHATI, Sept 18: Mohammedan Sporting Club, Calcutta, lifted the 39th Lokopriya Bordoloi Trophy football tournament edging past East Bengal by a solitary goal in the final played in the Nehru Stadium here today, reports PTI.

After a barren 90 minutes of play, Mohammedan Sporting scored the match winner in the first minute of extra time through a header by Christopher following a flag kick. Although Aquel Ansari made the flag kick which was effortlessly headed in by Christopher. It was Chibuzor who was the architect of Mohammedan's victory.

Chibuzor attempted a kick at the goal after a solo run which was diverted by a defender. The flag kick that resulted sealed the match for East Bengal.

Kabaddi zonals begin today

The final rounds of the Uttara Motors national kabaddi championship begin today at four divisional venues.

As many as 22 teams from all over the country will play in the four zonal finals. Matches of the Dhaka Division will be held in Dhaka at Outer Stadium kabaddi court. Five teams—Tangail, Narayanganj, Munshiganj, Sherpur and Dhaka are taking part in the three-day competition.

The Chittagong divisional matches will be held at Comilla. Six teams—Rangamat, Feni, Chittagong, Moulvibazar, Chandpur and hosts Comilla — are taking part in the competition. Matches of the Khulna Division are beginning at Satkhira with Khulna, Pirojpur, Narail, Bagerhat, Jessore and hosts Satkhira taking part. Bogra, Serajganj, Kurigram, Gaibandha and Rajshahi are playing in the Rajshahi Division in Rajshahi.

Eight teams from the four divisions will qualify for the finals scheduled to be held in Dhaka from September 26 to 28 at the Outer Stadium kabaddi court. Scamers Neil Foster (four for 18), Derek Pringle (three for 25) and Steve Andrew (two for eight) did most of the damage on an evenly-grassed pitch. The only Middlesex players to reach double figures



Graham Gooch, the Essex captain, drives former England pacesman Norman Cowans boundary on his way to an unbeaten 202 by the close of the first day of the four-day Britannic Assurance county championship match against Middlesex at Chelmsford on Sept 17.

Gooch ensures Essex title

LONDON, Sept 18: Graham Gooch thrashed a brilliant double century as Essex made virtually certain of the English county cricket championship title by overwhelming Middlesex on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

Having sent Middlesex crashing to 51 all out, the lowest first-class score of the season, Gooch and his men heaped further humiliation on the defending champions by amassing 385 for three before the close on the first day. Gooch smashed an undebated 202, including two sixes and 29 fours and with a further three days to play, only bad weather seems remotely capable of halting Essex's victory march.

The Chelmsford pitch was blameless as the visitors capitulated limply in just 24.3 overs before lunch.

Scamers Neil Foster (four for 18), Derek Pringle (three for 25) and Steve Andrew (two for eight) did most of the damage on an evenly-grassed pitch. The only Middlesex players to reach double figures

were tail-enders Neil Williams (23) and Paul Farbrace (12 not out).

When Essex's turn came, it was a completely different story. Gooch, who had won the toss earlier in the day, batted serenely for 293 balls, helped by a useful 80 from Pakistani Salim Malik.

Nasser Hussain was 50 not out at stumps, with Gooch reaching 200 in the day's final over with a six over mid-wicket off Mike Gatting.

Zimbabweans face follow-on

BULAWAYO, Sept 18: A burst of three wickets in four overs by pacesman Dennis Hickey put Australia 13 in a commanding position halfway through their four-day cricket match against Zimbabwe on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

At the close on the second day, Zimbabwe were tottering on 171 for seven in their first innings in reply to the visitors' 483.

A resolute 74 by opener Grant Flower in an innings lasting almost 300 minutes had provided the backbone of the Zimbabwe reply and enabled them to reach respectable 164 for four shortly before the close.

It was all gloomy news for second-placed Warwickshire, 12 points behind going into the final round of matches.

They made 316 for seven against Somerset at Taunton with half centuries from Dominic Ostler, Andy Lloyd and Jason Ratcliffe.

But events at Chelmsford overshadowed everything else, leaving Warwickshire praying for an unlikely miracle over the remaining three days.

Hickey finished with three for 37 while seamer Steve Waugh had the remarkable figures of two wickets for two runs off eight overs, six of them maidens.

Earlier, Paul Reffel hammered a rapid 54 not out from only 66 balls after Australia 13 resumed on 409 for seven.

Hard blow for Aussies

LONDON, Sept 18: Australia's chances of a third straight men's hockey Champions' Trophy took a heavy blow after they were held 0-0 in an exciting match against Great Britain here Tuesday, reports AFP.

The result leaves the title-holders one point behind hosts Germany who have a game in hand. But it was an excellent result for Olympic champions Great Britain who had three short corners to Australia's one.

Australia reverted to their five forward system after dropping one for the first two games as an experiment that produced a draw and a win.

This time the Australian attackers made little headway against a tightly controlled British defence in which goalkeeper Sean Rowlands had an outstanding game.

The Australian defence had its fair share of work as Great Britain launched regular piercing raids. Hesitation by Robert Thompson and bad shooting by John Shaw proved costly.

Australia's first chance came only in the 18th minute. Paul Lewis went through on his own but spooned his shot into the pads of Rowlands, who made some confident charges from his goal to smother scoring attempts.

Australia had a much better second half but found Rowland blocking them each time. He saved tough shots from Mark

Hager and Stephen Davies. As the defending champions hurried themselves into a desperate late assault, David Wansborough just missed with a reverse flick.

STANDINGS

Team	Standings after yesterday's match between Australia and Great Britain in the men's Champions' Trophy competition here.
Germany	2 2 0 0 7 3 4
Australia	3 1 0 2 4 3 3
Great Britain	3 1 0 2 3 4 3
Pakistan	2 1 0 1 5 5 2
Netherlands	2 1 0 1 3 4 2
Soviet Union	1 0 2 2 5 0

German girls shock holders

BERLIN, Sept 18: Germany beat titleholders South Korea for the first time ever to move clear of their five rivals in the Champions' Trophy women's competition on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

Trailing twice in a game full of attractive hockey and goal-mouth incidents, the Germans scored three times in the last 22 minutes to snatch a 4-2 victory.

It was the Germans' third win in the women's competition and puts them two points ahead of the Netherlands, who do not play their third game until Wednesday.

Germany remain at the head of the round-Robin table

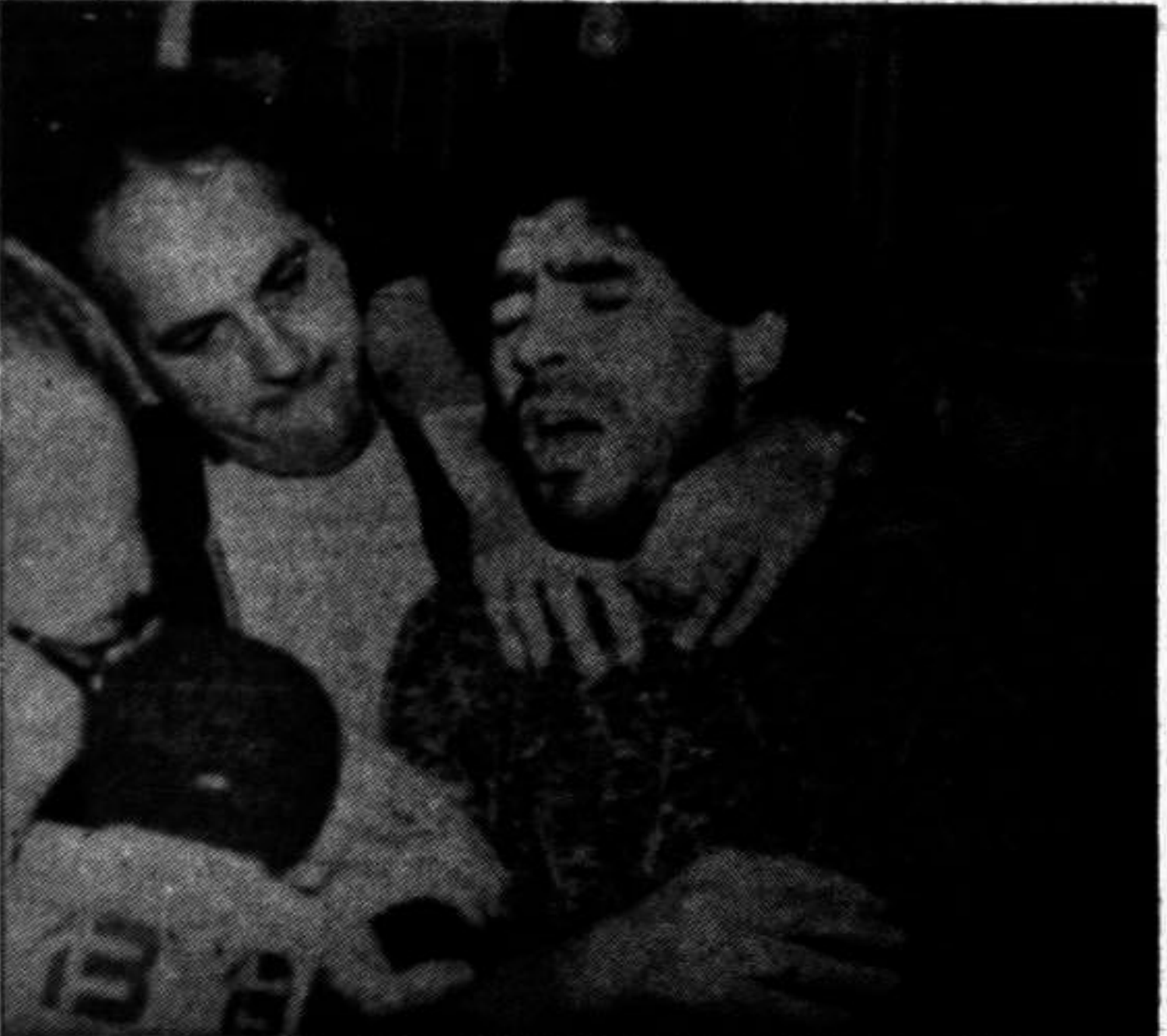
Maradona convicted by Naples court

NAPLES, Sept 18: A Naples court today convicted Argentine soccer star Diego Maradona on charges of possession of cocaine and gave him a 14 month suspended prison sentence, reports Reuter.

It's more fact-finding than negotiations, but, yes, we have had negotiations," Latta said. Maradona led Argentina to the 1986 World Cup title in Mexico and was named the tournament's most valuable player. He also starred at the 1990 World Cup in Italy, where Argentina finished runner-up to Germany.

The ban is recognized by FIFA, the international soccer federation, thus making Maradona ineligible to play in FIFA-affiliated countries and leagues, such as the United States.

FIFA press officer Guido Tognoni confirmed Tuesday that since the United States Soccer Federation is a member of FIFA, and the MSL is a member of the USSF, Maradona could not play for the Sockers.



A Star file photo shows Diego Maradona being whisked away by Argentine police last May after he was found in possession of cocaine at his Buenos Aires apartment.

Maradona has been in discussions to play for the San Diego Sockers of the Major Soccer League in the United States, the Club's spokesman said Tuesday.

Maradona still has a contract with Napoli and his transfer rights belong to the Italian team, Tognoni said.

"We have been in discussions with Maradona's people. He works with a camp of 12-15 advisers. He's aware of the Major Soccer League and aware of the San Diego Sockers' interest in Maradona," Sockers public relations director Tim Latta said in a telephone interview from San Diego.

CAF likely to re-admit SA

PARIS, Sept 18: The 15-year isolation of South Africa from international football could end this week, reports AFP.

With statutory apartheid scrapped and football unity achieved, the South African Football Association (SAFA) has applied for associate membership of the Confederation of African Football (CAF).

The executive committee of CAF will decide whether to admit South Africa at its two-day meeting in Cairo beginning Thursday.

Provisional membership would entitle South Africa to compete in national and club competitions organised by CAF, including the 1992 champions and Cup Winners' Cups and the qualifying rounds for the 1994 Nations' Cup finals.

South Africa are desperate to flex their muscles against giants like Cameroon and have sent a seven-man delegation. It is led by SAFA Secretary-General Solomon Morewa and includes Steve Tshwete.

Baltics likely to get provisional recognition of the IOC

BERLIN, Sept 18: The Baltic republics of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia seem set to gain provisional rather than full Olympic recognition, senior Games officials indicated on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

But if the Soviet National Olympic Committee (NOC) gets its way, the Baltic countries will still be guaranteed a place in next February's Winter Olympics in Albertville and the Summer Games in Barcelona in July.

As the Executive Board of the International Olympic

Committee (IOC) began a three-day meeting it became clear that the newly-independent Baltic countries had not yet met all the technical requirements for full membership.

Under the Olympic Charter, a country must be affiliated to international federations in at least five games on sports before full recognition can be granted.

Since the Baltic nations became independent on September 6 only the International Swimming Federation has granted membership to Estonia and Latvia, with Lithuania's application still in

the pipeline. Senior Olympic officials indicated that the IOC Executive Board would decide on Wednesday to restrict the Baltics to provisional recognition for the time being.

That would leave more than four months for the Baltic states to obtain all the credentials needed for the IOC to grant full recognition at its session in Albertville in February.

Soviet NOC president Vitaly Smirnov said some international federations were ready to offer the Baltic affiliation as quickly as possible, while others were obliged to wait un-

til their next full assembly. The next congress of the International Amateur Athletic Federation, for example, is not due until 1993.

"So to ensure that the athletes do not miss the Olympic Games it could be possible to give them provisional recognition with full rights to participate with their own flags and anthems at the Winter and Summer Olympic Games," Smirnov said.

He added that it might be necessary to restrict such a guarantee to participation in individual sports because of the technical difficulties surrounding most team sports.

Canadian Dick Pound, a former IOC vice-president and a member of the IOC's Baltic liaison commission, said he did not believe the Baltic countries would have any problem obtaining the necessary affiliations in time for the IOC session in Albertville.

I think a lot of the international federations are ready to go. Don't think it will be any problem at all.

The remaining Soviet republics have pledged to compete in next year's Olympics as a single team, although the Baltic nations are clearly determined to take part in their own right.

Smirnov pointed to some sports, such as rowing, in which Baltic athletes continued to train with their Soviet counterparts.

In other sports individual athletes might have a better chance of obtaining a medal as part of a Soviet squad than as a representative of a particular republic, he added.

Pound noted that "under the Olympics Charter, where there is either a political separation or an integration, an athlete has the right to choose (which country to represent)."

With nine other republics seeking independence amid

the political turmoil of the Soviet Union, Olympic leaders are deeply worried that size of future Games could get out of control.

Pound said the return of the Baltic NOCs, which were disbanded when the three states were incorporated into the Soviet Union in 1940, would not be a problem because they were small countries.

"But if you ended up with 15 new republics all showing up at the Olympics with teams of 400, that would be 6,000 extra bodies and there might not be any room at the in," he said.

Despite all the odds Iraqi soccer continues to flourish

BAGHDAD, Sept 18: Iraq's national side may be missing from the World soccer stage, but passion for football still runs high at home, reports Reuter.

Long the powerhouse of Arab footballing nations, Iraq's 1980-88 war with Iran and 1990 invasion of Kuwait have left the country for lengthy spells on the international sidelines.

Forced to seek international competition outside the country due to a four-year ban by

the International Football Federation (FIFA) on home matches, Iraq still won the Gulf Cup soccer tournament three times in the 1980s.

It was favoured to win the 1990 tournament, staged four months before its annexation of Kuwait, but withdrew at the last minute and its tiny neighbour emerged victorious.

In 1986, Iraq reached the World Cup finals in Mexico only to lose all three first-round matches — leading to the dismissal of Brazilian coach Evaristo De Macedo, in charge of the squad for just two

months. To make up for the lack of international competition, last season's top six sides in the 20-team First Division organised a pre-season tournament at Baghdad's National Sha's Stadium this month.

Called the Mother of All Battles Championship, Iraq's name for its confrontation with the US — led Allies in the Gulf War, President Saddam Hussein lavished 3,200,000 dinars (about a million dollars at the official exchange rate) on the cup.

The winner's prize of 150,000 dinars (465,000 dollars at the official rate) was the largest ever won by an Iraqi sports team.

It went to the country's top club side, Zawra of Baghdad, who stretched an unbeaten run starting last November to 28 games.

In a hard-fought before 50,000 impassioned fans at the Sha's Stadium, Zawra defeated the Air Force team Jawwitya 3-1 after extra time.

It was a robust, hard-fought game with both trainers kept busy throughout and played to an incessant barrage of noise.

But there was plenty of skill to suggest Iraqi soccer is still a force to be reckoned with.

Lath Hussein, named player of the tournament to put Zawra 2-1 up early in extra time.

One minute later fellow international striker Ahmed Radhi, Asian footballer-of-the-year in 1989, drilled home the third goal to seal victory.

A bid to buy a programme as a souvenir was fruitless as no such thing existed.

In a radical departure from soccer matches elsewhere in the world, entrance was free for all.

But security was intense. Troops with machine guns mounted on the back of pickup trucks guarded all gates into the ground — no Wembley or San Siro Stadium but on a par with Gothenburg's Ullevi where the final of next June's European Championship will be held.

Republican Guard troops, in their distinctive red berets and regular army soldiers carrying an assortment of rifles and automatic weapons formed a circle around the perimeter of the running track surrounding the pitch.

Plain-clothes bodyguards carrying sub-machine guns guarded the VIP box, where Saddam's eldest son Uday — chairman of the Iraqi Olympic and Football Associations — watched the match before awarding the prizes.

It was Zawra's third trophy of the year following a League and Cup double last season. Jawwitya had the consolation of the runners-up prize 100,000 dinars (310,000 dollars at the official rate).