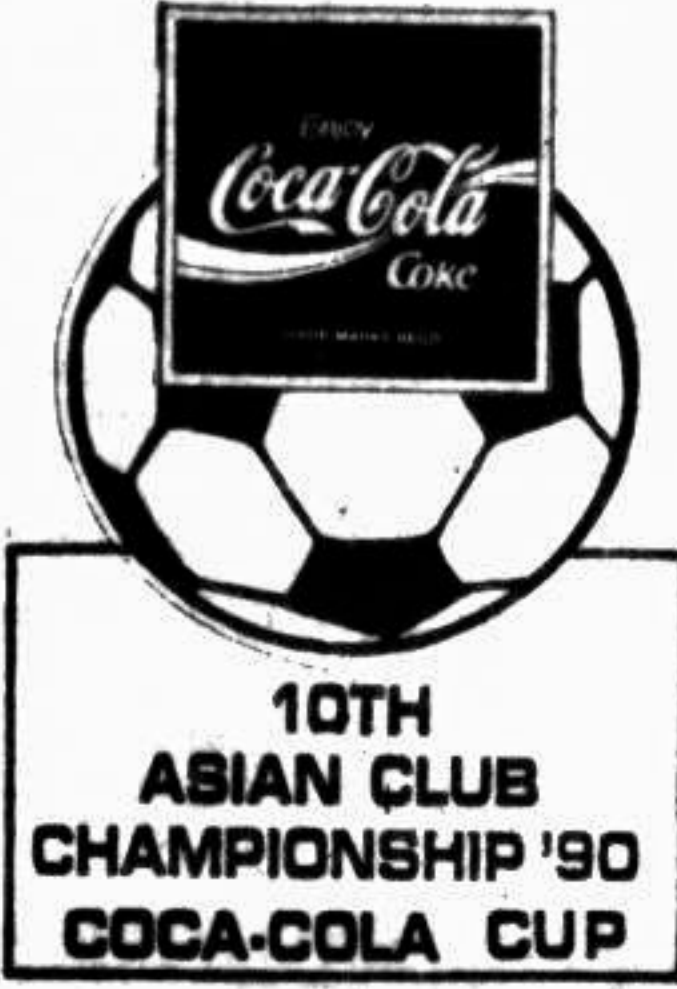


Liaoning face April 25 in today's semi



the other semifinal spot from Group A defeating Omani champions Al-Nasr Club 3-0. The Omanis managed only one point from their 1-1 draw against Liaoning.

Today's other semifinalist, North Korean champions April 25 finished runners-up in the stronger four-team Group B, behind Iranian champions and hot favourites Esteghal Club.

The Koreans collected three points from their three robin league engagements, the same as local champions Dhaka Mohammedan Sporting Club, but a better goal-scoring ratio gave the Koreans passage into the semifinals over Mohammedans. The Koreans, who drew goalless with Mohammedans and lost 2-1 to Esteghal, beat Bangkok Bank Sports Club of Thailand 4-3 in their last league match Monday. Mohammedans drew all their three games, and the other two being 1-1 ties with Esteghal and Bangkok Bank.

In the second semifinal tomorrow, Saturday, Group B champions Esteghal will meet Group A runners-up Pelita Jaya at the same time at the same venue.

Sunday, July 28 will be a rest day, ahead of the final and third-place deciding matches scheduled for Monday, July 29.

The winners will lift the Coca Cola Cup trophy, named after the sponsors of the meet.

The 11-day tourney was originally planned with eight teams split into two equal groups but the last-minute withdrawal by Jordanian champions Al-Ramatha not only upset the original playing schedule, thus affecting the gates, but also reduced the level of competition, especially in Group A where a solitary victory by a club, for example, Pelita Jaya over Al-Nasr, was enough to confirm a semifinal berth.

From the action seen during the league competition, it became increasingly clear that Esteghal of Iran will be the team to beat in the final. Their brand of football has stood out from the displays given by the other semifinalists. On the other hand, the reigning champions Liaoning, despite finishing top of their group, may find in April 25 a difficult semifinal opponent. The North Koreans, with their speed and proven goal-scoring potential, may upset the Chinese whose game has failed to charm the keen Dhaka soccer fans.

Tickets for the semifinals will cost Taka 20 each for the galleries.

Sports Reporter

Defending champions Liaoning Provincial Football Club of China take on April 25 of North Korea in the first semifinal of the 10th Asian Club Cup football championship at the Dhaka Stadium this afternoon. The match kicks off at 5:00 pm.

Liaoning, who won the ninth Asian Club Cup beating Japanese champions Nissan FC in the two-leg final in 1989, topped the three-team Group A here, after beating Pelita Jaya by a solitary goal in their robin league encounter Tuesday last. Pelita Jaya took

Falcao gets key support

RIO DE JANEIRO, July 25: Brazilian soccer confederation president Ricardo Teixeira defended embattled national team coach Paulo Falcao on Wednesday, saying Falcao did a "good job" in the America Cup and vowing to keep him as manager, reports AP.

Argentina won the prestigious three-week tournament in Chile on Sunday. Brazil finished second with a 4-1-2 record, but the team's sloppy and confused play displeased fans and media, who have demanded Falcao's removal.

be replaced no matter how the team did.

Administrator America Faria told reporters Tuesday his report on the Brazilian campaign said Falcao's inexperience hurt the team. Falcao had never coached a team before he was named national team trainer last August.

Faria endorsed the criticism voiced by Oliveira.

"Fred erred only in not talking with Falcao first," Faria said. "Otherwise, he acted correctly in criticizing him."

Falcao's contract with the confederation runs through 1992.

Brazil's next scheduled exhibition game is Aug 28 in Europe against an as yet unnamed opponent.

National junior wrestling today

The eighth National Junior Wrestling Championship, organised by Bangladesh Amateur Wrestling Federation, begins today at the National Coaching Centre, reports UNB.

Secretary, Ministry of Youth and Sports, M A Rouf, will inaugurate the three-day competition in the afternoon.

Mayor, Dhaka City Corporation, Mirza Abbas will be the chief guest in the closing function and will distribute prizes on July 28 (Sunday) at 7:00 pm.

Ban on DAMFA withdrawn

National Sports Council yesterday withdrew the ban on formation and operation of the Dhaka Metropolitan Football Association (DAMFA), reports BSS.

Shipping Secretary M. Azizul Haq has been made the convenor of the DAMFA, an affiliated unit of Bangladesh Football Federation. He has been advised to form a new ad-hoc committee of DAMFA.

Mr. Haq was the president of DAMFA at the time of its dissolution on March 27, 1985.



PAULO FALCAO
Fred de Oliveira, head of the Brazilian delegation at the America Cup, said during the tournament that Falcao would

SOCCER SCENARIO

Maradona may be gaoled

BUENOS AIRES, July 25: Argentinian football star Diego Maradona could be jailed for up to six years for taking cocaine, a newspaper report claimed here on Wednesday, quoting a judge, reports AP. Maradona was officially placed in preventive detention on Monday but released so that he could follow a course to kick the drug habit.

But the daily Clarin said that the former Argentina and Napoli captain, who has been out on 20,000 dollars bail since April, could still serve between one and six years in jail. Judge Amelia Berraz de Vidal told the paper that the five grammes of cocaine found in Maradona's possession could not be considered for personal use as several people were arrested taking the drug with him.

Under Argentinian law the cocaine would be classified as for group consumption, which carries a far stiffer penalty than personal consumption. Clarin said Maradona had confessed "to taking drugs occasionally, in small quantities and in private, sometimes without paying, sometime after buying it."

Witschge joins Barcelona

AMSTERDAM, July 25: Dutch international midfielder Richard Witschge has joined Spanish soccer league champions Barcelona from Ajax Amsterdam, the ANP news agency reported on Wednesday, reports Reuter.

Ajax's finance manager Arie Van Os told ANP that World Cup player Witschge, 21, had signed a seven-year contract with the Spanish club.

Van Os would neither confirm nor deny a Dutch newspaper report that Barcelona, coached by former Dutch soccer star Johan Cruyff, paid around eight million guilders (four million dollars) for Witschge.

Sharp drop in hooliganism

LONDON, July 25: Violence at English soccer games dropped sharply last season, according to government figures released Wednesday, reports AP.

The number of arrests fell by 31 per cent and ejection from the crowd went down by 27 per cent at the 92 league clubs compared with the season before.

Even in the first division, where crowd figures increased by nine per cent, there was a six per cent drop in arrests. The figures underline that soccer violence at English games has continued a downward trend since the Heysel Stadium tragedy six years ago.

The Brussels, Belgium stadium was the site of the 1985 European Champion Cup final between Liverpool and Italy's Juventus, where 39 people — mostly Italians — died in riots blamed on fans of England's Liverpool.

The government ordered a crackdown on soccer violence and an improvement in stadium comfort and safety. Additionally, the fans are closely monitored by police using television and video cameras.

Brothers, Ansars in handball semis

Brothers Union Club and Bangladesh Ansar moved into the semi-final of the seventh monsoon handball tournament at Outer Stadium's handball court yesterday.

Brothers Union qualified for the semis eliminating Bangladesh Air Force by 16-14 goals in the first quarter-final played in the afternoon.

They led the first half by 9-6. Helal scored six and Palash five for the winners while Chand Mia netted four. Ferdous and Nabuat three each for the losers.

Ansars reached the semis outplaying Victoria SC by 40-12 goals in the second quarter-final of the day. The winners dominated the first half by a wide margin of 16-6 of the day.

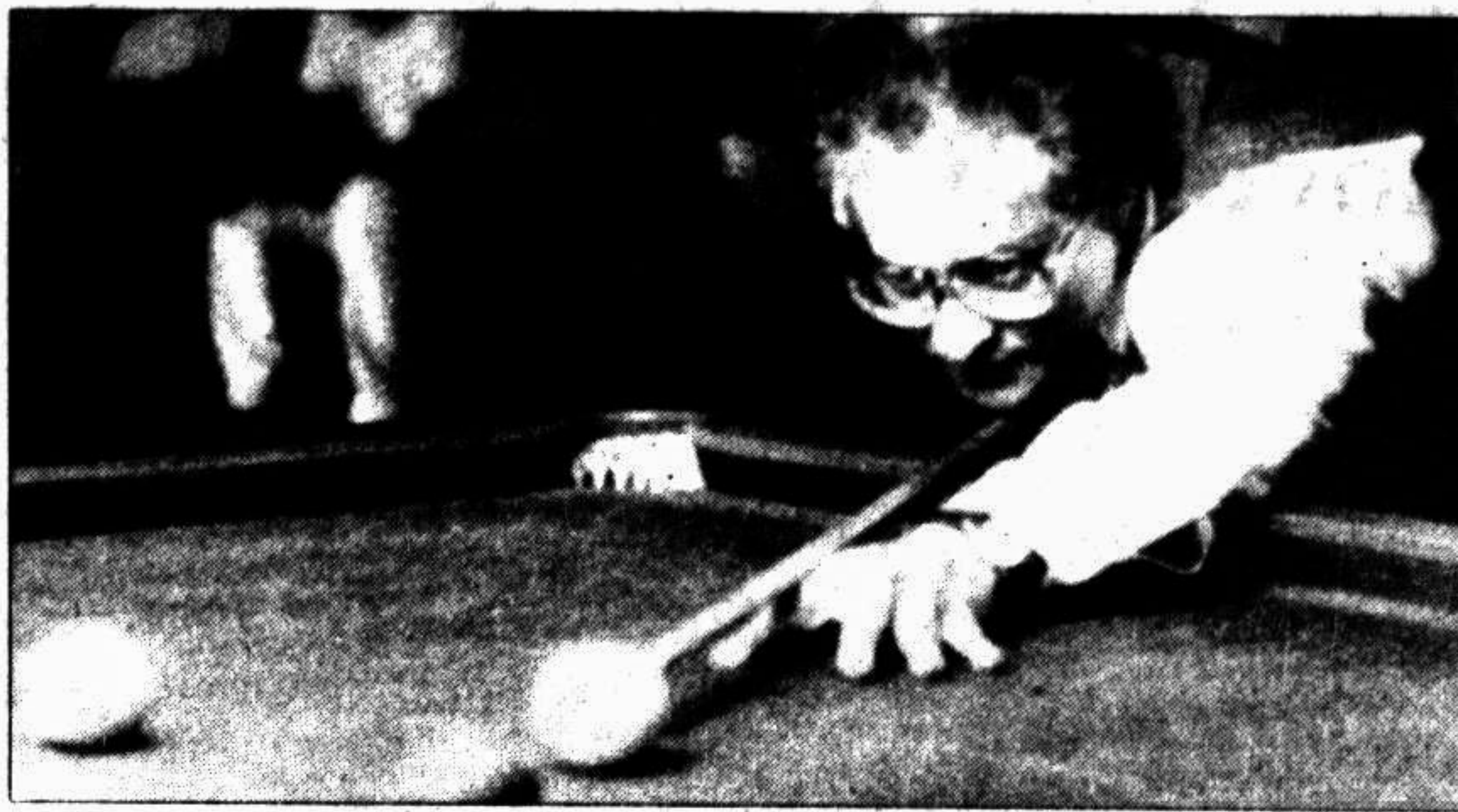
Akram scored 11, Badsha and Bahar six each for the winners while Abu and Rahat netted four each for the losers.

Seles resents Graf's comments

CARLSBAD, Calif., July 25: Top-ranked Monica Seles, contending she shouldn't have been criticized for skipping this week's Federation Cup, said No 2 Steffi Graf should keep her opinions to herself, reports AP.

"Steffi has her own opinions, and I have my own opinions also but I don't think they are supposed to be public," Seles Wednesday. "Women's tennis is a small group, and I think the top players should stick together, not make accusations."

Seles, who commented in a conference call in advance of her appearance in next week's Mazda Classic, also cited improvement in her sore left leg that caused her to miss Wimbledon. Seles played in an exhibition tournament last week Mahwah, NJ — her first action after five weeks off.



N.A.T. Rouf of Dhaka Club on way to his 5/1 frames victory over A. Bari Chowdhury in 8th National Snooker Championship yesterday at Dhaka Club. — Star photo

Umpire bans Akram

LONDON, July 25: Lancashire's Pakistani all-rounder Wasim Akram was banned from bowling by Test match umpire Nigel Plews on Wednesday following his third warning form delivering too many bouncers, reports Reuter.

Wasim was halted in the middle of his 25th over against county championship leaders Warwickshire. Paul Allott had to complete the over.

Wasim, who had been no-balled 29 times was rebuked by umpire Roy Palmer before lunch for intimidating acting Warwickshire captain Dermot Reeve.

Wasim then ignored Plews's second warning as he bowled short to tailender Tim Munton. Warwickshire recovered from 35 for three to reach 296 for nine declared with Asif Din

hitting his first century in 63 matches. Lancashire replied with 56 for no wicket by the close of the second day.



WASIM AKRAM
Hampshire's Chris Smith and Kevan James scored centuries against Derbyshire, but the remaining nine batsmen mustered only 24 runs between them.

Hampshire's score of 258 was the lowest first-class total containing two hundreds.

The previous record was held by Lancashire who were bowled out for 271 against Northamptonshire in 1947 when Winston Place and Barry Howers were the century makers.

After Smith had made 114 — his sixth hundred of the season — and James 101, Hampshire fell apart. They lost their last nine wickets for only 39 runs in 21 overs.

Somerset's South African opener Jimmy Cook, 173 not out overnight, went on to an unbeaten 210, his highest score of the season, against Northamptonshire.

Cook's 343-ball innings, studded with 27 fours and a five, was the county's best individual score against Northants. Somerset declared at 348 for two.

Viv criticises ICC decisions

LONDON, July 25: West Indies Test captain Viv Richards angrily attacked the International Cricket Conference (ICC) in a newspaper interview today for what he called its "ridiculous" decisions to bring in laws to restrict bouncers and readmit South Africa, reports Reuter.

Richards told the Daily Telegraph, "I don't know whether the ICC have done their homework. I find it ridiculous but quite typical of the people in charge of international cricket."

The ICC was "ganging up" to cripple his side's fast bowling strength, the 39-year-old Antiguan, leading his side in the fourth Test against England at Edgbaston, said.

"What has happened is that other countries, jealous of our success, have ganged up to defeat us, not fairly on the field of play, but behind closed doors in the safety of their armchairs."

"And it won't stop until they have achieved their goal of ending our dominance."

The West Indies, Richards added, would look for a way of getting around a law limiting bouncers to one an over. "Certain rules are made to be broken, history teaches us that."

His remarks came after Lancashire fast bowler Wasim Akram of Pakistan was banned from the field by the umpire after his attack against Warwickshire featured too many bouncers.

Richards, playing in his 120th Test match on Thursday, was equally incensed by the ICC's recent decision to readmit South Africa after 20 years in the cold and said he found the timing "totally ridiculous."

"One man one vote seems to me the appropriate moment to lift the sporting sanctions. If pressure was still applied that would bring them into line," he said.

"It would be wonderful to have them back, but I have a feeling something isn't right."

"Cricket should look into this further and ensure that human rights are not still being eroded. I hope they deal with those sensitive areas rather than the pettiness of bumpers."

Tendinitis trouble for Graf

NOTTINGHAM, July 25: Two days after she condemned Monica Seles for a late withdrawal, Steffi Graf may be forced to pull out of the Federation Cup, reports AP.

But while Seles played in an exhibition and then skipped the Federation Cup to rest her aching shins, Graf pulled out a victory for Germany on Wednesday despite tendinitis in her shoulder.

Graf was scheduled to fly home Thursday for treatment and team officials said they did not know if she would return. Graf required on-court treatment Wednesday as she defeated Patricia Hy to lead Germany past Canada in the Federation Cup's second round.

The Germans have a quarter-final match against Italy scheduled for Friday in the 32-nation women's tournament. If Graf can't play, she would be replaced by teammate Barbara Rittner.

"Steffi could hardly lift her arm above her shoulder," said German team doctor Hartmut Krahl. "She played the match

at half pace. She was obviously in a lot of pain."

Graf won the first set 6-3 in her match against Hy, but be-



STEFFI GRAF
gan having pain in her right shoulder in the second set. It was the same problem that forced her to pull out of a German exhibition in May.

Graf, who won Wimbledon earlier this month, lost the second set 6-3 to Hy but rallied to win the last set 6-2 to clinch the victory for Germany.

"It's the same thing that she had in Frankfurt when she defaulted," said Graf's personal

coach, Pavel Slozil. "But she was playing for her country this time and didn't want to stop. She was very brave; she was in a lot of pain."

On Tuesday, Graf had criticized Seles' decision to play in an exhibition in Mahwah, N.J., and then pull out of the Federation Cup because of injury. She said Seles' decision "is just not excusable."

Anke Huber had won Germany's opening singles match 6-4, 6-3 against Canada's Rene Altier. The Canadians won the doubles.

The United States and top-seeded Spain also reached the quarterfinals with victories Wednesday, along with Italy, Switzerland, Austria, Indonesia and Czechoslovakia.

Jennifer Capriati and Mary Joe Fernandez won singles matches in straight sets as the US team swept past Bulgaria, while Spain got Conchita Martinez to defeat Australia.

Capriati and Fernandez defeated the Maleeva sisters, Magdalena and Katerina, in singles to ensure a US victory in the best-of-3 contest. Gigi Fernandez and Zina Garrison then defeated the Maleevas in doubles to complete the

England 184 for nine at Edgbaston

Sports Reporter

England were 184 for nine when bad light stopped play for the second time shortly before the close on the first day of the fourth cricket Test against the West Indies at Edgbaston yesterday, according to BBC running commentary monitored in Dhaka late last night.

Malcolm Marshall had taken three for 39 while Curtley Ambrose claimed three for 64.

An AP earlier report says, England were 117 for four at tea on the first day of the fourth cricket Test against West Indies at Edgbaston today.

Welshman Hugh Morris was dismissed for only three on his recall to the England cricket team for the fourth Test on Thursday.

Replacing finger-injury victim Robin Smith, the Glamorgan lefthander edged a ball from Patrick Patterson into the hands of wicket-keeper Jeffrey Dujon with the England score on six.

His only scoring shot had been a pull for three off Curly Ambrose in the previous over.

Rain delayed the start of the match for 75 minutes and England almost lost captain Graham Gooch off the very first ball.

Sri Lankans win

WOLVERHAMPTON, England, July 25: The Sri Lankan cricketers beat England amateurs by five wickets in their rain-affected one-day match on Wednesday, reports Reuter.

England amateur XI 191 in 51.4 overs (S Dean 86, Sanath Jayasuriya four for 39), Sri Lanka 153 for five in 37.3 overs (Jayasuriya 57 not out).

Rain reduced Sri Lanka's target to 151 from 41 overs.



The twelfth National Junior Chess championship in progress yesterday at the Chess Room of the National Sports Council. — Star photo.

National snooker

Sports Reporter

Mohammad Amrullah and Reshadul Ameen yesterday moved into the semifinals of the eight national snooker championship now being held at Dhaka Club.

Amr Ullah beat Ziauddin Aslam 5-2 and Reshadul Ameen defeated Syed Mahboob by same margin in the quarterfinals on Thursday.

In the pre-quarterfinals, Ismail Hossain beat Narayan Chandra Ghosh 5-4, N.A.T. Rouf outplayed A. Bari Chowdhury 5-1 and Rafiqul Islam defeated Mir Shahidullah 5-4.

Rono skips Universiade

SHEFFIELD, July 25: Olympic champion Peter Rono is not running in the World Student Games 1,500 metres today, the last day of the Universiade, reports Reuter.

His name did not appear on the final start list issued this morning, confirming suspicions that the Kenyan would not after all be coming to England.

Officials believe he may be taking part in championships in Kenya this weekend.

Lendl, Courier advance

MONTREAL, July 25: Comebacks were the order of the day Wednesday as top-seeded Ivan Lendl beat Israel's Gilad Bloom 4-6, 6-4, 6-4 and No 2-seed Jim Courier defeated fellow American Malvay Washington in the Canadian Open, reports AP.

Australian Simon Youl staged a similar feat, fighting back from a first-set loss to beat Chris Pridham of Canada 1-6, 6-3, 7-5, and No 12-seeded Soviet Andrei Chesnokov defeated Canadian Sebastien Lareau 4-6, 6-1, 6-3.

Lendl and Courier led eight seeded players who advanced to the third round of the durs 1.2 million event.

Courier beat Washington in straight sets, 7-5, 6-3, while Brad Gilbert of the United States defeated Alexander Mronz of Germany 6-3, 7-5. American Jim Grabb upset

countryman Richey Reneberg 6-7 (7-3), 6-2, 7-5.

The defeat of Pridham and Lareau leaves only one Canadian in the singles portion of their country's premier tournament — Martin Laurendeau, who was drawn against Guillaume Raoux of France.

Lareau, an 18-year-old ranked No 366 in the world, stunned Chesnokov by taking the first set from the 30th-ranked Soviet.

After Chesnokov easily took the second set, Lareau blew three break points in the final set. Chesnokov broke him in the next game.

Pridham, ranked 182, hardly took the first set before Youl bounced back. The 168th-ranked Australian did not lose another service game.

"I reached almost all of my objectives except one — I didn't win the match," said Pridham.

Christiansen leads

BIENNE, Switzerland, July 26: Larry Christiansen of the United States upset Evgeny Bureev of the Soviet Union to take the lead in the Bienne Grandmasters chess tournament, reports AP.