

Maradona to fly to Barcelona

BUENOS AIRES, Aug 5: Soccer star Diego Maradona said Tuesday he has accepted an invitation from the International Federation of Football Association (FIFA) to watch the closing soccer match of the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona, reports AP.

In a local broadcast interview, Maradona said he will fly to Barcelona on Friday and will watch the Olympic soccer final on Saturday at Nou Camp Stadium.

Maradona, 31, said he would travel with trainer Javier Valdecantos because "I don't want to miss a single day of training" in an effort to get back in shape for an eventual return to the playing field.

Maradona, who ended a 15-month suspension for cocaine use on July 1, refuses to fulfill the final year of his contract with Napoli of the Italian League.

FIFA secretary Joseph Blatter said his organisation could intervene to resolve the contract dispute by arranging an acceptable price for Maradona's separation from the club.

The French club Olympique and the Spanish club Sevilla reportedly are interested in obtaining Maradona, but he has said his departure from Napoli must be arranged first.

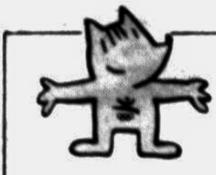
Maradona's manager, Marcos Franchi, is currently in Europe attempting to reach a settlement with Napoli. Club officials have so far refused to discuss Maradona's departure and club president Conrado Ferlaino has insisted that any meeting with Franchi or Maradona must take place in Naples.

Blatter said Franchi could travel to Naples, and if an economic solution could not be reached with club officials, FIFA "should consider the possibility of an international transfer."

The player wants to go to another club and to handle such matters we have a special committee, the player's Statute Committee, that could deal with the issue," he said.

Maradona, who returned to Argentina following his suspension, was arrested in April 1991 in Buenos Aires on charges of cocaine use. The charges were suspended following his enrollment in a drug treatment programme.

The federal judge in charge of Maradona's case has authorised his departure from the country.



OLYMPIC SPECIAL



Lifters fail to set world mark

BARCELONA, Aug 5: Defending champion Alexandre Kourlovitch cruised to another Olympic weightlifting gold in the super-heavyweight class Tuesday as world record holder Leonid Taranenko never seriously challenged him, reports AP.

Kourlovitch, from Belarus and competing for the Unified Team, hoisted 450 kilograms (992 pounds) after judges ruled out a final lift because he started it too late. Had he made it his score would have been 455 kilograms (1,003 pounds).

Taranenko, also from Belarus, gained the silver medal with a total of 425 kilograms (936 1-4 pounds) and Germany's Manfred Nerlinger, who won a silver four years ago, this time collected bronze with 412.5 kilograms (909 1-4 pounds).

Cuban Ernesto Aguero also scored 412.5 (909 1-4) but placed fourth because he was heavier than the German.

The super-heavyweight event was the last of the 10 classes at the Games.

The Unified Team round up with five gold medals while the others went to Bulgaria, South Korea, Greece, Turkey and Germany.

Bulgarian Ivan Ivanov, the three-time world champion, won the lightest class at 52 kilograms (115 pounds) and South Korea's Chun Byung-Kwan won the 56-kilograms (124-pound) category.

Defending champion Naim Sulymanoglu of Turkey kept his title at 60 kilograms (132 pounds) and Armenian Israel Miltosian gained the Unified Team's first gold at 67.5 kilograms (148.75 pounds).

He was followed by Moldovan Fedor Kassapu in the 75 kilograms (165 pound) group but Pyros Dimas of Greece triumphed at 82.5 kilograms (181 pounds).

Kakhi Kakhiachvili of Georgia won the 90 kilograms (198 pound) division and Russian Victor Tregubov earned gold at 100 kilograms (220 pounds).

Ronny Weller, a bronze medalist four years ago, triumphed in the 110-kilogram (242 pound) category.

No world records were set at the championships although Kakhiachvili equalled the clean and jerk mark of 235 kilograms (518 pounds). There were only two Olympic records.

Chun improved the 56-kilogram (124-pound) snatch record to 132.5 kilograms (292 pounds) and Sergei Syrtsov, silver medalist at 90 kilograms (198 pounds) increased the snatch mark to 190 kilograms (418 3-4 pounds).

Fifteen world marks were set at the Seoul Olympics four years ago and those Games ended with 24 ne-Olympic records.

COACH CRITICISED

Kourlovitch later criticised coach Vassili Alexeyev for leaving competitors off the team and dropping others who disagreed with him.

"Alexey always tried to get his own way. That is the attitude of a dictator," said Kourlovitch, from Belarus.

"He excluded two of the most talented weightlifters from the team and, when he was named as the team coach, I felt like giving up competing altogether."

He said Alexeyev "committed a crime" when he dropped Altymourad Orazoudiev of Turkmenistan, the world's top-rated middleweight (82-kg, 181 pound) lifter.

As a lifter, Alexeyev commanded respect with Olympic titles in 1972 and '76. During the 1970s, he set 80 world records as a super heavy-weight.

The Unified Team weightlifters now go their separate ways and will be rivals the next time they meet.



Members of the Italian women's fencing team pose with their gold medals after winning the team foil event in Barcelona Tuesday.

Graf meets Capriati in final

BARCELONA, Aug 5: Top seed Steffi Graf closed to within one victory of her second Olympic gold medal in singles by beating American Mary Joe Fernandez 6-4, 6-2 in Wednesday's semifinals, reports AP.

Fernandez, seeded fourth, earned a bronze medal.

Graf was the singles champion at Seoul in 1988, when tennis became a medal sport. The German star will go for another gold Friday against American Jennifer Capriati who beat Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario of Spain 6-3, 3-6, 6-1 in the second semifinal.

Fernandez and Graf were on serve through nine games, but the American double-faulted twice and made two unforced errors in the next game to lose the set.

Graf began to pull away when she broke serve for a 4-2 lead in the second set, closing out the game by scrambling to hit a deep lob while in full retreat, then pounding a cross-court forehand winner.

"I was more aggressive in and Spaniard Jordi Arrese will meet Russian Andrei Cherkasov.

In the first of the men's semifinals, South African Wayne Ferreira and Piet Norval advanced to the gold medal match by beating Ivanisevic

and Croatian teammate Goran Prpic 7-6 (7-5), 3-6, 6-3, 2-6, 6-2, Wednesday. The Croatians will receive a bronze medal.

Mary Joe Fernandez will join with Gigi Fernandez, no relations, in a women's doubles semifinal Thursday against Leila Meskhi and Natalia Zvereva of the Unified Team.

The US women's team clinched its third medal Tuesday when Fernandez-Fernandez advanced to the semifinals in doubles.

Boris Becker and Michael Stich of Germany clinched a medal in doubles when they advanced to the semifinals by beating Spaniards Emilio Sanchez and Sergio Casal 6-3, 4-6, 7-6 (11-9), 5-7, 6-3 Tuesday.

But Spain has women's doubles semifinalists in Sanchez Vicario and Conchita Martinez, who beat Isabelle Demongeot and Nathalie Tauziat of France 6-2, 6-4.

In the semifinals of men's singles Thursday, Goran Ivanisevic of Croatia will take on Marc Rosset of Switzerland.

BCCB announces players' pool

Sports Reporter The Bangladesh Cricket Control Board announced the members of players pool yesterday.

Twenty-two top cricketers playing in different clubs have been included in the pool.

The players are: Minhazul Abedin Nannu, Aminul Islam Bulbul, Azhar Hossain Shantu, Rafiqul Alam, Jahangir Talukdar Dulu, Jahangir Alam and Golam Faruq Suru from Mohammedans; Golam Nawsher Prince, Akram Khan, Zahid Razzak Masum, Mahbubur Rahman Selim, Faruq Ahmed from Abahani; Nasir Ahmed Nasu, Harun-ur-Rashid Liton, Saiful Islam and Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipu from Greater Mymensingh Cricket Club; Selim Shahed, Enamul Huq Monf and Shahinawaz Shaheed Shanu from Bangladesh Biman; Athar Ali Khan and Nurul Abedin Nobel from Brothers Union and Jahangir Shah Badshah from Public Works Department.

These players, who played for the national side in the past three cricket seasons — 1989-90, 1990-91 and 1991-92, have been selected for the 1992-93 pool. The pool for 1993-94 cricket season will be announced in July, next year.

One club will be allowed to play maximum three players from this pool from next season.

Meanwhile, the cricket players will have to complete their transfer formalities with September 1 to 7.

CIS fencers to get bonuses

BARCELONA, Aug 5: Five angry CIS fencers who threatened to boycott the Olympic team epee event because they are still owed cash bonuses for a victory last year have been told they will get the money next week, reports Reuter.

Asian kabaddi in city next Feb

Sports Reporter The third Asian kabaddi championship will be held in Dhaka next February.

This was decided at a meeting of the Bangladesh Kabaddi Federation (BKF) at its office last evening.

Pakistan, India, Nepal, Japan, China, Republic of Korea and hosts Bangladesh will participate in the meet.

An estimated amount of Taka six lakh has been budgeted for the meet.

Achintya Kumar Shaha, general secretary of the Asian Kabaddi Federation offered the Bangladesh Olympic delegation during its visit to Calcutta last month the opportunity to hold the meet in Dhaka.

India staged the first and second versions of the championship.

BFF calls up 4

Sports Reporter Bangladesh Football Federation has picked four more players for the national youth under-16 team which has qualified for the fifth Asian youth championship finals to be held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, from September 5 to 16.

The following players have been asked to report to the manager S M Shahe ALI tomorrow at 10 am at the Mirpur Stadium:

Ripon of Brothers Union, Tushar of Arambagh Krira Sangstha, Mintu of Sadharan Bima Krira Sangstha and Zahid of Muktioddha Sangsad.

The inclusion of these four makes it a 27-member camp.

Bangladesh, placed in Group B with Bahrain, DPR Korea and hosts Saudi Arabia, is likely to leave Dhaka on September 2.

The other participating nations, placed in the Group B, are the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Thailand and China.

Oval promises a white-hot finale

LONDON, Aug 5: England's first Test victory over Pakistan for ten years has set the scene for some spectacular cricketing fireworks when the fifth and deciding Test gets underway at the Oval on Thursday, reports AFP.

The six-wicket win at Headingley a fortnight ago guaranteed the south London ground will be packed to overflow for a white-hot finale to an often bad-tempered series, currently tied at one win apiece.

Umpire Dickie Bird is certainly bracing himself for a tense encounter that could be difficult to control. "It's going to be a hard Test, but I've had hard Tests before," he said.

"I've packed my blood pressure tablets, but I'm sure there will be no problems."

The ease with which the easy paced England attack twice ripped through the best batting line up in the world at Leeds has left Graham Gooch's side brimming with confidence, but they know this clash will be a completely different affair.

Surrey's groundstaff usually produce a fast, bouncy pitch that, on paper, is ideally suited to Pakistan's world class pacer duo of Wasim Akram and

Waqar Younus and flamboyant, attacking batsmen in the mould of captain Javed Miandad.

England, in contrast, have a serious shortage of quality pacemen at their disposal and have been obliged to turn again to the fiery-but-erratic Devon Malcolm to spice up their attack. Leicestershire's David Millns currently the most dangerous bowler on the county circuit, had been tipped to make his Test debut but injury ruled him out while the selectors were not prepared to take a risk on Philip De Freitas, who has just got over a groin problem, lasting the five days.

Malcolm's return means either Derek Pringle or Tim Munton from the 11 that played at Headingley will be favourites for drinks-carrying duty out of the 12 England named on Sunday.

The axing of Zimbabwe-born batsman Graeme Hick after yet another Test failure has made way for the return on Middlesex's inspirational spinner Phil Tufnell, ruled out of the first four Tests after appendicitis at the beginning of the season. Although his relationship with the gruff Gooch is somewhat akin to that between a disciplinarian schoolmaster and an unruly but

gifted pupil, nobody can argue with Tufnell's match winning pedigree.

In his last five Tests, the tall left-armed has played a match winning role in three and on his last appearance at the Oval he wrecked the West Indies with a devastating six for 25 in their first innings to lay the basis for an England win which squared last summer's series.

Tufnell was quick to play down predictions of a repeat performance when he joined his England teammates for a pre-Test net. "I'm not even thinking about what happened here last summer," he said.

"The Pakistan batsmen are very wisty players and probably better players of spin than the West Indies."

But he warned: "Batsmen are there to be dislodged. We just have to winkle them out."

Ted Dexter says the inclusion of Malcolm and Tufnell has increased England's "attacking options", but the selectors declined the bold step of twinning Tufnell with leg-spinner Ian Salisbury.

That decision will have relieved some of the Pakistan batsmen who found Salisbury's leg breaks difficult to cope with earlier in the series and it could look short-sighted if the Test runs on to a final day and cracks begin to appear on the Oval pitch.

Since the disappointment at Headingley, Pakistan have also suffered the ignominy of a defeat by the part timers of the Minor Counties but they bounced back to form over the weekend with a sparkling display to defeat county champions Essex.

That win earned the tourists a 50,000 pounds sponsors' bonus for winning eight of their 11 matches against county opposition but it was the form of Salim Malik and Wasim Akram that will have delighted manager Intikhab Alam.

The Pakistan vice-captain stroked the ball to all corners of the Chelmsford ground as he made his way to a century between lunch and tea and an unbeaten first innings total of 153.

Wasim, who took eight wickets in the match, then turned in a blistering spell of polish for seven in 13 balls to polish off Essex in their second innings and set up the victory.

If Wasim, crowned the world's best all-rounder after his match-winning display in the thrilling second Test at Lords, reproduces that kind of form then Pakistan will be odds on favourites to claim their fourth consecutive series against England.

There is a danger, however, that with Wasim and Waqar firing on all cylinders on a lively pitch, the tense encounter could bubble over into the kind of ill-natured clashes that have marred the series so far.

Pakistan have already had one bowler, Aqib Javed, fined for intimidatory bowling this summer and Intikhab Alam has made no secret of his dislike for the controversial ICC ruling limiting pacemen to one bounce per batsman in each over.

The tourists' manager, reprimanded for public criticism of Old Trafford umpire Roy Palmer has, however, attempted to diffuse tension by welcoming the appointment of Dickie Bird and David Shephard as the Oval umpires.

"We have no complaints with them, they are good umpires" he says of the hugely experienced pair.

Bird, England's top umpire, revealed he will speak to both sides before Thursday's match to try and nip any potential trouble in the bud.

"I hope that this Test is played in a tremendous spirit. Cricket is the greatest game in the world as far as I am concerned, and I shall be mentioning my views when we meet the team managers before the match," he said.

Test cricket returns to Sri Lanka

COLOMBO, Aug 5: Test cricket returns to Sri Lanka for the first time in five years this Friday when Allan Border's Australians arrive for a six-week tour, reports Reuter.

International cricket has not been played in Sri Lanka since April 1987 when New Zealand abandoned their tour after one Test following a bomb blast near the hotel where they were staying.

The bomb, planted at a bus station in central Colombo by Tamil separatists, killed 113 people.

More than 22,000 people have died since 1983 when Tamil rebels stepped up their campaign for a separate state for Sri Lanka's 2.5 million minority Tamils.

The fighting goes on, but the conflict is now largely confined to the north and east.

In recent years Colombo has been spared most of the violence, and the relative calm in the capital has prompted an increase in foreign investment

and tourism.

The eight-match tour by the Australians will take in three Tests, three one-day internationals and two three-day games. The opening game is in Kandy on August 11. Tyrone Fernando, president of Sri Lanka's Cricket Board, said they were looking forward to an exciting tour.

He said the board had covered the entire cost of the tour — estimated to be at least 16 million rupees (dollars 363,000) through local sponsors.

Ticket prices are being kept low to encourage large crowds.

Sri Lanka have not had much success since gaining Test status in 1982, winning just two of 37 Tests.

In the past five years they have played 12 Tests, drawing six and losing six.

The Sri Lankans have a better record on one-day internationals, winning 14 of 64 matches.

Sri Lankan captain Arjuna Ranatunga is only too aware that a Test win for his country

is long overdue. "We badly need a Test win," he said. "It is not easy beating the Aussies, but our chances are better at home than abroad."

The chunky left-hander was dropped from the Sri Lanka team on disciplinary grounds after the tour of New Zealand last year, but he regained the captaincy after a successful World Cup tournament in Australia and New Zealand in February this year.

Sri Lanka preparations for the series against Australia have been enhanced by the presence of former England fast bowler Frank Tyson, who is here on a short coaching stint.

Tyson who has lived in Australia for the past 30 years, rates Sri Lanka chances against Australia as good.

"Australians are hardened cricketers and beating them is not going to be easy," said Tyson.

"But I am confident that Sri Lanka will do well. I am looking forward to a very good contest and to Sri Lanka's first victory over Australia,"

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS 1 Corrida cheer 4 Cougar 8 Fortified wine 12 Dog or cat 13 At a distance 14 La Scala bonus 15 Actress Gardner 16 Easy way to an objective 18 Fragrant blossom 20 Imperfection 21 Alpha's follower 24 Wheel on a spur 28 Adherence to a monarchy 32 Story 33 Actress Merkel 34 Of a bristle 36 OSS successor 37 Microscopic organism 39 Suburb of Detroit 41 Warmth 43 — avis 44 Marshy meadow 46 Nimble 50 Tree seen in Florida 55 High, craggy hill 56 Jewish month 57 Philippine termite 58 Custard ingredient 59 Margins 60 Ready to eat 61 Legal matter 1 Gem stone 2 Son of Jacob 3 Catchall phrase 4 Bundles 5 Alien's craft 6 Fair or flower lead-in 7 Ancient Syria 8 Imitate without understanding 9 Spanish gold 10 Narrow inlet 11 Young boy 17 Malay gibbon garment 22 Row 23 American financier 25 City in Texas 26 Essayist 27 Allow to become known 28 Wrinkle 29 Unique person 30 Ship or lumber follower 31 Yucatan Indian 35 City in Wyoming 38 Grinding teeth 40 Fall behind 42 Electrical unit 45 On — (equal to) 47 Road to Rome 48 Theater section 49 Work units 50 College cheer 51 — to a "Nightin' gale" 52 Sweet potato 53 Cuckoo 54 Once around the track

Solution time: 28 mins.
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Cryptogram grid with numbers 1-61 and letters E, G, W, Z, P, S, E, G, H, H, G, M, G, D, F, V, T, A, P, S, R, P, M, L, G, C, O, F, J, L, G, H, H, R, H, G, Z, U, W, T, D, P, W, O, C, G, J, G, H, H, P, A, V, F, A, ?

CRYPTOQUIP
EGW ZPS EGH H G MGD FV
TAPSR PM LGCOFJLGH H
RHGZUWT DPWOC G
JGHH PAVFA ?
Today's Cryptoquip clue: H equals L
The Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.