

Rain the spoiler

WELLINGTON, Mar 4: Play was abandoned Thursday due to persistent rain on the opening day of the second cricket Test between Australia and New Zealand, reports AP.

Only 12.1 overs of play was possible before rain forced the players from the field. Umpires abandoned play for the day three hours later.

Australian captain Allan Border sent New Zealand in to bat and the home side reached 28 without loss of a wicket. Mark Greatbatch, who has scored 15, and John Wright, on 10, will resume batting on Friday.

The Australians were unchanged from the side that won the first Test so convincingly by an innings and 60 runs in Christchurch, retaining medium-pace Paul Reiffel ahead of off-spinner Tim May.

New Zealand had to replace the injured Adam Parore with Tony Blair while left-arm paceman Murphy Su'a was passed over to allow medium-pace Willie Watson to come into the side.

Border had said before the game he was considering giving Merv Hughes first use of the new ball but the skipper opted to again use Craig McDermott downwind for the first over.

McDermott worked up an excellent pace and should have had the wicket of Wright in his second over before he had scored.

The former New Zealand skipper edged a knee-high catch to the left of Mark Waugh at second slip in McDermott's second over but the Australian did not get a hand to the sharp chance.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at the end of the first day of the second cricket Test between New Zealand and Australia at the Basin Reserve on Thursday:

NEW ZEALAND: First innings

M Greatbatch not out	13
J Wright not out	10
Extras: (b-2, lb-2, w-1)	5
Total: (for no wicket)	28

To bat: A Jones, M Crowe, K Rutherford, T Blair, C Cairns, D Patel, D Morrison, M Owens, W Watson.

Bowling	O	M	R	W
Hughes	6	2	17	0
McDermott	6	4	7	0

Women's soccer

CHICAGO, Mar 4: The world champion US women's national soccer team will host a pair of matches against Germany next month, US soccer announced on Wednesday, reports Reuter.

Biman double MSC's trouble

Sports Reporter



Reigning champions Mohammedian Sporting Club got off to a nightmarish start in the Navana Premier Division super league as they went down fighting to their first phase conquerors Bangladesh Biman by three wickets at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday.

Smarting under the shocking eight-wicket defeat to arch-rivals Abahani Krira Chakra in the finale of the first phase, Mohammedians who were without skipper Minhazul Abedin Nannu, started from where they had left off on February 26.

A fine fifth-wicket partnership of 54 runs between Shah Nawaz Saheed Shanu and Pakistani all-rounder Wasim Haider shaped Biman's second consecutive win over Mohammedians this year after the airline team had lost four batsmen for 84 runs in their pursuit of 184 runs for victory in 45 overs.

Unlike the first phase match there was little display of aggressive batsmanship from either side although Wasim

played themselves out of contention when, sent in to bat, they were restricted to 183 for nine from their quota of 45 overs.

Aminul Islam Bulbul, the mainstay of Mohammedians batting in Nannu's absence, failed and rearguard action from blokes like the Indian Sanjeev Sharma and Zakir was not enough.

What little scope was left there for Mohammedians to exact a revenge evaporated in the afternoon because the infusion of athleticism on the field and penetration in the bowling needed to defend a low score like 183 was beyond Mohammedians reach.

Rafiqul Alam was the top-scorer in the Mohammedian innings with 38 made off 75 balls with the help of three fours. The slouching all-rounder was one of the four run out victims that plagued the Mohammedian innings yesterday.

Sanjeev Sharma made 30 before returning the ball to Azhar to return to the pavilion after having played 52 balls.

Without Piyal's fighting 20 and a very timely 28 off just 24

wicket tournament in Sri Lanka, was the bowler to add to the self-inflicted miseries of the Mohammedian batsmen. He took three wickets for 40 runs. Azhar, the ageing off-spinner, and left-arm paceman Rafiq took one wicket apiece.

The cake Mohammedian batsmen prepared for Biman was not, however, devoured without a few hiccups, and the Mohammedian seamers at long last succeeded in giving them break thoughts that have been eluding them for quite some time now. Gamagee, the tall Sri Lankan, struck quick blows and with Sharma joining him, Biman were reduced to 84 for four midway through the innings.

In-form Mont, whose all-round performance was the salient feature of Mohammedians quiet five-wicket surrender to Biman in the first phase, left for ten with Sharma trapping the left-hander in front of the wicket.

Shanu and Wasim then weathered the flaw with mature batting. Fifty-four runs were accumulated with deft probing of the ragged Mohammedian fielding with the stand-in skipper Wahidul Ghani having very little at his disposal to change the writing on the wall.

Although Shanu left for a well-made 50 that featured just one hit to the fence in the course of a 99-ball vigil, Wasim outstayed him at the wicket to remove any suspicion of doubt about the outcome.

Wasim, who souped up the Biman middle order with some straight clean hitting, left eventually for a 52-ball knock of 47 studded with five fours.

Biman reached their target in 44 overs, posting 186 for seven wickets.

Rafiqul Alam tried his best with the ball for Mohammedians, snaring three Biman batsmen for 24 runs, two of them — Shanu and Rafiq — stumped.

Gamagee bowled well to take two for 21 and Sharma had a haul of two for 25.

The defeat, Mohammedans third this season, dents their title hopes considerably as they now slide down to the third position in the points table with 16 points from eleven matches.

Biman, who must be ruing their indifferent form earlier this season in view of their recent renaissance, have 14 points from eleven outings.

TODAY'S MATCH

GMCC vs Gulshan Youth (Dhaka Stadium)



DELIVERING DUO: Shah Nawaz Shaheed Shanu (L) and Wasim Haider, the Pakistani all-rounder, snapped together after yesterday's Navana Premier Division cricket super league match at the Dhaka Stadium. The pair put on 54 for the fifth wicket to conjure a three-wicket win against the defending league champions Mohammedian Sporting. Shanu hit 50 and Wasim 47.

Haider stroked the ball around freely, to enable Biman to open their super league campaign on a winning note.

Earlier, in the morning, Mohammedans somewhat

balls by the unfancied paceman Zakir Mohammedans would have been hard pressed to cross the 150 mark.

Biman skipper Enamul Haque Moni, fresh from a double-

Sidhu, Azharuddin star for India

GWALIOR, Mar 4: Indian opener Navjot Sidhu compiled a brilliant unbeaten 134 Thursday to snatch a close three-wicket victory in the fifth one-day international against England here, reports AP.

The 29-year-old stood firm amidst a topsy-turvy display at the other end to help India surpass England's massive 256 from 50 overs with 12 balls remaining in a thrill-a-minute encounter.

The win narrowed England's lead in the six-match series to 3-2 and left the home team with a chance to square the rubber in the final game at the same venue Friday.

Some 23,000 boisterous fans at the overflowing Roop Singh Stadium watched a magnificent one-day match where fortunes swung like a pendulum in a titanic struggle for supremacy.

Fired by Robin Smith's strokeful 129, England were headed for a major score when they reached 246 for three in the 47th over after being sent to bat.

But India stopped the tourists in their tracks by claiming the last seven wickets in the remaining four overs for the addition of only 10 runs.

An asking rate of more than five runs an over appeared an impossible task when India lost opener Manoj Prabhakar second ball and Vinod Kamble 10 deliveries later to slide to 4-2 in two overs.

But Sidhu and skipper Mohammad Azharuddin (74) shared a brilliant third-wicket stand of 175 off just 170 deliveries to put the home team in reach of victory at 179 for two in the 31st over.

Azharuddin's dismissal at Sidhu dedicates ton to Dad

NEW DELHI, Mar 4: Navjot Singh Sidhu today dedicated to his late father, Bhagwant Singh Sidhu, the marvellous century which paved the way for India's win over England in the one-day international at Gwalior, reports PTL.

"It is his blessings," Sidhu said with great emotion after recalling that his father had encouraged him in his game.

The opener told STAR TV after the Indian win that he had decided to try to play for the full 50 overs to ensure a victory for India.

that stage, however, signalled a dramatic collapse as five wickets fell for just 26 runs to make India 205 for seven in the 37th over, still 52 away from victory.

But India's eight-wicket pair of Sidhu and bespectacled Anil Kumble (19 not out) defied the charged-up English bowlers for 11 overs to inch their way to the victory target amidst mounting tension.

The pair hugged in glee when the winning run came off a bye in the last ball of Dermot Reeve's 48th over as specta-

The remarkable effort from Sidhu, later named man-of-the-match, overshadowed an equally impressive century from Smith in England's innings.

Opening the innings after the off-form skipper Graham Gooch opted to drop down in the order, the Hampshire star batted till the 47th over, hitting 12 boundaries and four sixes in his third one-day century.

Three of those sixes came off left-arm Maninder Singh who gave away 46 runs in eight

off 38 balls in a 73-run stand for the third wicket with Smith.

At 227 for two in the 45th over, England were headed towards a major score but India fought back to take the last eight wickets for the addition of only 29 runs.

Prabhakar returned India's most successful bowler with four for 54 while fellow-seamer Jagavall Srinath took three for 41. But India still need to score over five runs an over to win the match.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the fifth one-day international between England and India at the Roop Singh Stadium here today.

ENGLAND:

RA Smith lbw b Srinath	129
A J Stewart b Kumble	33
GA Hick c More	18
N H Fairbrother	18
c Maninder b Srinath	37
CC Lewis lbw b Prabhakar	4
G A Gooch run out	2
D A Reeve run out	3
R J Blakey lbw b Srinath	0
PAJ DeFreitas not out	2
PW Jarvis b Prabhakar	0
DE Malcolm b Prabhakar	0
Extras: (b1, lb16, w8, nb3)	28
Total: (all out, 50 overs)	256

Fall of wickets: 1-101; 2-154; 3-227; 4-246; 5-246; 6-252; 7-252; 8-256; 9-256.

Bowling

O	M	R	W	
Kapil	9	0	39	0
Prabhakar	10	0	54	4
Srinath	10	0	41	3
Kumble	10	0	41	1
Maninder	8	0	46	0
Sharma	3	0	18	0

INDIA: Sidhu not out 134; Prabhakar lbw b DeFreitas 0; Kamble c Gooch b Malcolm 2; Azharuddin c Stewart b Malcolm 74; Tendulkar b Jarvis 5; Sharma run out 0; Kapil Dev c Hick b Jarvis 2; More c Hick b Malcolm 19; Kumble not out 1; Extras: (b2, lb9, nb1, w8) 20; Total: (for seven wickets, 48 overs) 257

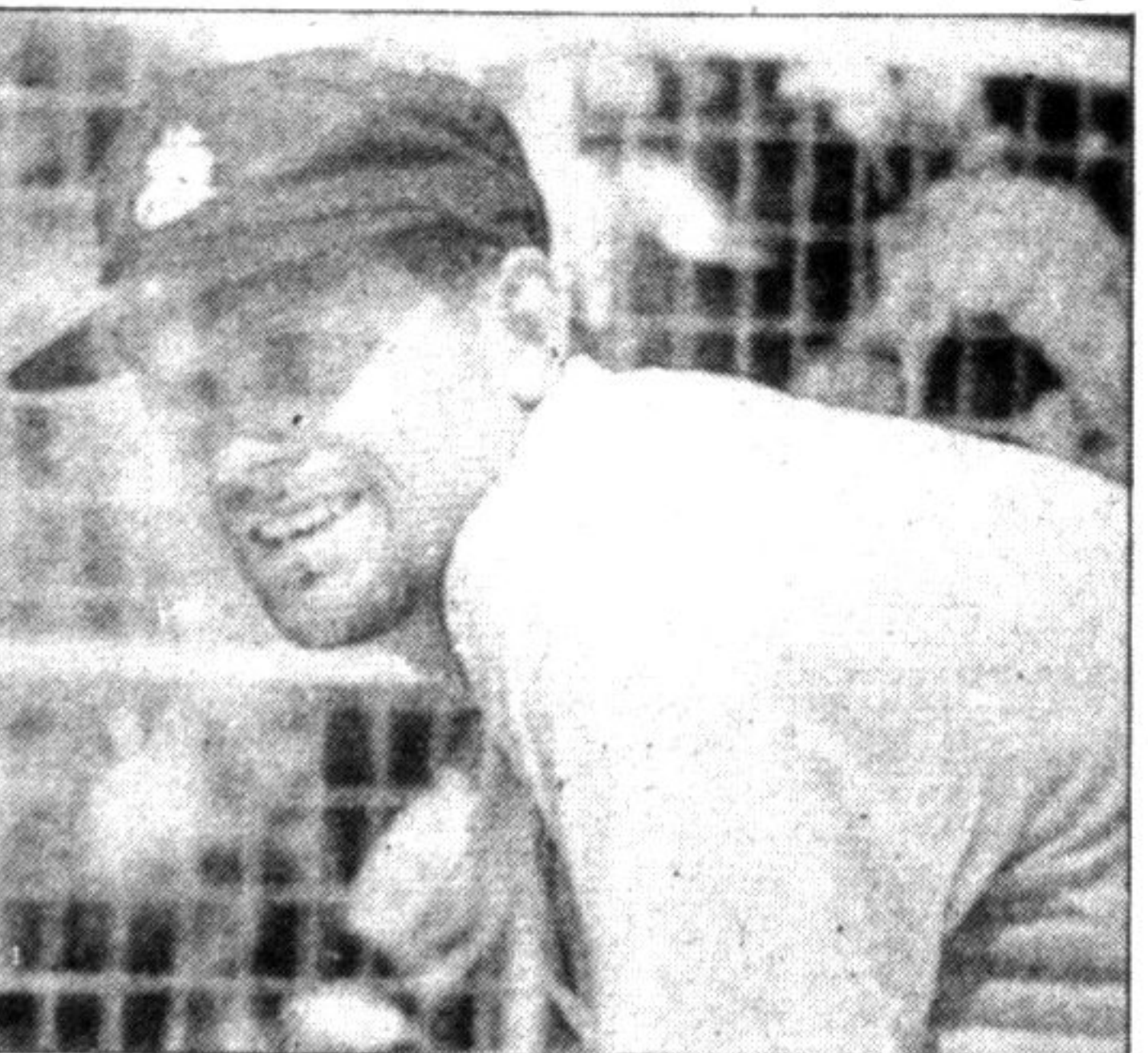
Did not bat: M Singh, J Srinath

Fall of wickets: 1-1; 2-4; 3-179; 4-189; 5-190; 6-202; 7-205

Bowling

O	M	R	W	
DeFreitas	10	0	52	1
Malcolm	10	0	40	3
Lewis	10	0	56	0
Jarvis	10	3	43	2
Reeve	6	0	37	0
Hick	2	0	18	0

Result: India won by three wickets. Man-of-the-match: Navjot Sidhu.



Robin Smith, the hard-hitting English batsman who scored a career best 129 in the fifth Charns Cup one-day international between India and England at Gwalior, waits for another delivery. Smith ploughed in the sands as India won the match by three wickets to make the score 3-2. The two teams meet today at the same venue for the last match.



N SIDHU... man-of-the-match burst crackers and lit bonfires to celebrate the well-deserved victory.

Div II super league from today

Sports Reporter

The Second Division cricket super league begins today with Amarjyoti Club taking on Shantinagar Club B at the Dhanmondi Club ground and Ajax Sports Club playing Dhaka Wanderers Club at the Mirpur Pallabi ground.

Ten teams in two groups will participate in the super league with the group champions earning promotion to the Milaris First Division league next season.

The teams are Amarjyoti, Shantinagar B, Wari Krira Chakra, Kathalbagan Three Star Club and Nirman XI in Group A and Gandaria Cricketers, Bangladesh Boys, Ajax Wanderers and Young Pegasus Club A in Group B.

Pioneer soccer

Sports Reporter

K R Boys Sporting Club defeated Azampur Kishore Sangha by three goals to nil in the Janata Bank Pioneer Division football league at the Outer Stadium yesterday.

Saiful netted twice and Rajanikant one for the winners.

Swadesh Samaj Kallyan Sangha defeated Dhaka Dynamo Club by two goals to nil at the Dhanmondi Club ground.

Bidyut and Zakir were the scorers.

Following are the brief results of the other matches of the day:

East zone: Maniknagar Unnyan Samity drew with Pardogar Krira Sangha 1-1 and Swarup KC edged past Abakash Tarun Sangha 1-0.

North zone: National Football Training Club beat Chattah Club 2-0.

South zone: Agrani Krira Sangha beat Mohammad Ali SC 4-0; MSPCC edged past Nabodoy Sangha 1-0 and Islampur Uttar KC shared points with Kalabagan KC in a scoreless draw.

Central zone: Gulbagh KC drew with Khilgaon JS 1-1 and Kamalapur Krira Sangha shared points with Titus Sporting Club in a scoreless draw.

U-19 team back

Sports Reporter

The Bangladesh Cricket Control Board (BCCB) youth under-19 team returned home from Nepal late Wednesday night after participating in the silver jubilee tournament in Birganj.

BCCB XI, placed directly in the quarterfinals, lost to the Patna Cricket Association by a solitary run on February 26.

Talking to The Daily Star former national skipper Raquibul Hassan, who accompanied the team as manager, said yesterday that the team had lost for the lack of experience.

"At one stage we needed only five runs from five overs with four wickets in hand. Yet we couldn't make it," Raquibul Hassan lamented.

Sabatini is Mona Lisa

DELRAY BEACH, Florida, March 4: Two masters on the tennis court have been recreated on the canvases of the Old Masters.

The Virginia Slims of Florida has honoured international tennis stars Steffi Graf and Gabriela Sabatini with the re-creation of two masterpiece paintings, commissioned with an unprecedented artistic twist, reports AP.

The work of French painter Edouard Manet "The Bar at the Folies-Bergere" is being recreated with Graf as the woman in the painting. Manet painted "The Bar at the Folies-Bergere" in oil on canvas in 1881-82. It is now at the Courtauld Institute Galleries in London.

In honour of Sabatini and in the style of the High Renaissance, Italian artist Leonardo da Vinci's "Mona Lisa" has been reproduced with Sabatini's face in place of the one with the original painting. The "Mona Lisa" painted in oil on wood in the early 1500s is now at the Musee de Louvre in Paris.

"We wanted to do something extraordinary to recognise Steffi and Gabriela for each winning three Virginia Slims of Florida titles," said tournament director Sharon O'Connor. "This artistic endeavour is a visually exciting way to honour them for their achievements."

Sabatini's Mona Lisa will be sold at auction Saturday with proceeds going to the Arthur Ashe foundation for the Defeat of AIDS Inc. Graf's painting will stay at the centre for now.

The reproductions are painted in oil on canvas in the same dimensions as the originals. The recreations are produced by Heritage House Galleries of Fort Lauderdale, which specialises in masterpiece recreations.

The paintings are on display at the Virginia Slims tournament this week at the new Delray Beach Tennis Centre.



GM Julian Hodgson, the highest rated player in the first United Insurance Grandmasters' chess tournament, makes a move against Bangladeshi IM Zillur Rahman Champak yesterday, the last day of the eleven-round meet. The win gave Hodgson the title and a cash award of 1250 dollars.

Hodgson pips Lodhi at post

Sports Reporter

British Grandmaster Julian Hodgson successfully completed his vigil to fortify the reputation of

being the highest rated player of the first United Insurance Grandmasters' chess tournament and the promise of a cash award of 1250 dollars when he won his last match against Bangladeshi IM Zillur Rahman Champak at the Jalsaghar of Purbani hotel to emerge as the champion of the eleven-round meet yesterday.

The seasoned campaigner from Britain, accompanied by his Indian wife on this tour, should look forward to receiving the cheque this morning at the Jalsaghar from President Abdur Rahman Biswas.

Hodgson, who was upstages with Pakistani IM Mahmud Ahmed Lodhi last night, had a relatively easier task of checkmating an off-colour Champak. The Briton made the most of his fortune to raise his collection to nine from eight while Lodhi, up against a brilliant but erratic Ziaur Rahman, managed a draw to forsake the hopes of a rather upset win for an IM in a pageant of five Grandmasters from three countries. The Pathan from Pakistan, who showed a remarkable run of form based on his adventurism, will now have to look for consolation in the runners-up award of 875 dollars for his collection of eight and a half points.

David Norwood and Daniel King, the members of the trio of English Grandmasters taking part in this meet, finished with seven points each but King clinched the third position ahead of his compatriot who came fourth in the tie-break.

British chess champion in 1992, Hodgson needed 55 moves in a game of the Queen pawn opening to outwit his lowly Bangladeshi opponent Champak.

Hodgson played with the white pieces and succeeded in keeping his opponent under pressure throughout the contest.

Giving his reactions after

winning the title Hodgson, a professional chess player, said that he was very happy and thanked the organisers Bangladesh Chess Federation for holding the tournament.

Hodgson, who has so far

pieces, beat the Indian IM Varugese Koshy in 19 moves in a game of the Sicilian system while Norwood, also playing with white, outwitted the Indian IM Arun Vaidya in 34 moves in a game of the modern defence system.

Niaz and Rifat, who have collected 6.5 points each, secured the fifth and sixth positions respectively.

Niaz had to remain content with 6.5 points when he suffered a rather shock defeat at the hands of IM Neeraj Kumar Mishra of India yesterday.

Mishra outwitted his more illustrious rival in 52 moves in a game of the Dutch defence system.

Rifat, who had completed his IM norm beating compatriot Zillur Rahman a couple of days ago, lost to the Indian GM Dibyendu Barua yesterday.

Dibyendu, playing with white pieces, beat Rifat in 48 moves in a game of the French defence of the Tarash variation.

Dibyendu Barua, Neeraj Mishra and Ziaur Rahman collected five points each and got the seventh, eighth and ninth places respectively.

V Koshy with four points finished tenth. Arun Vaidya with two points secured the eleventh position while Champak, who remained stuck on half a point over a week, naturally finished last in the table.

Four thousand US dollars will be distributed among the top eight finishers today at 10 am at Hotel Purbani with President Abdur Rahman Biswas attending the closing ceremony as the chief guest.

King and Norwood will be richer by 437.5 dollars each.

Niaz and Rifat will get 250 dollars each while those in the positions ranging from seventh to ninth will get 166.66 dollars each.

President of the Bangladesh Chess Federation and Finance Secretary Nasimuddin Ahmed will attend today's concluding ceremony as a special guest.

Twelve players including five GMs participated in the fortnight-long meet which began on February 19.

Striving to become one of the world's top 20 players Hodgson said that he would try his best to take part in the Bangladeshi tournament in future.

Runner-up Lodhi, who drew with FIDE Master Ziaur Rahman in his last round match yesterday after 54 moves, also seemed very happy.

"I've earned my first GM norm in this tournament and I'm delighted the way things developed here," Lodhi told The Daily Star yesterday.

King, playing with white

Ben Johnson pleads not guilty

TORONTO, Mar 4: Ben Johnson, the sprinter stripped of his Olympic gold medal over steroid

use charges, says he's innocent of any second offense, reports AP.

"Mr Johnson denies taking any prohibited substance or engaging in any improper practice since his return to competition," stated a news release issued on the sprinter's behalf by the law firm of McMillan Binch.

It was reported in Wednesday editions of the Toronto Star that a January doping test on a Johnson urine sample was positive. The newspaper says the result was confirmed by four independent sources, all of whom requested anonymity.

Athletes and coaches were upset there would even be a report of a new scandal.

The doping commission of world track and field govern-

ing body, the International Amateur Athletics Federation (IAAF), meets Friday in Paris to review the case. Johnson could be suspended from international competition if found to have used illegal substances.

Johnson was banned for four years after steroid use at the Seoul Olympics in 1988.

Gascoigne banned for one match

ROME, Mar 4: Lazio and England midfielder Paul Gascoigne has been banned for one match after being sent off in an Italian league game at the weekend, reports Reuter.

"The punishment has been decided. He has been given a one-match ban," Lazio spokesman Mario Pennacchia said on Wednesday.

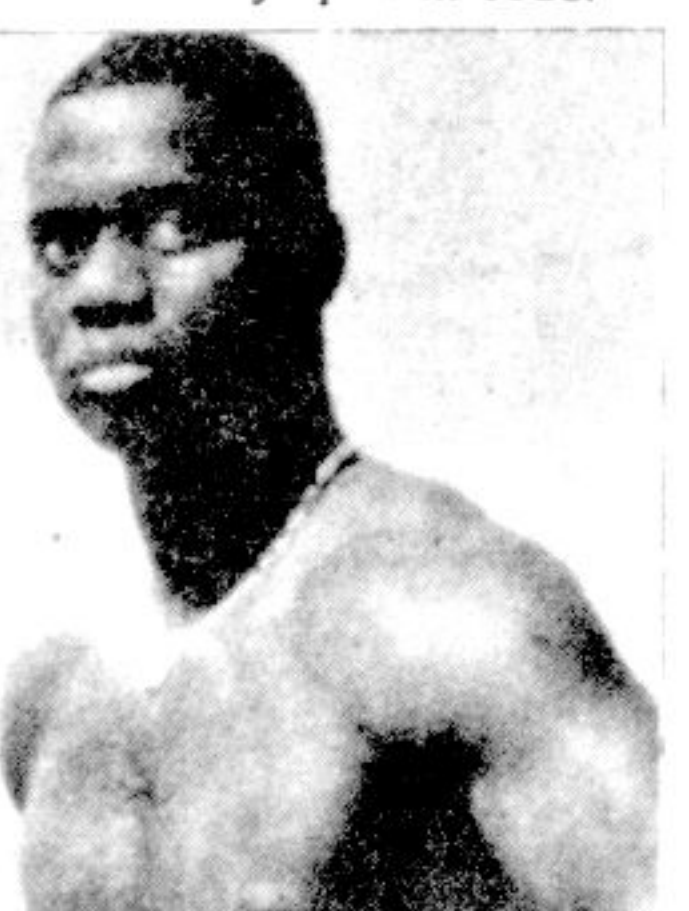
The decision would rule Gascoigne out of the league match at Parma on Sunday but leave him available for the glamour home fixture with runaway league leaders AC Milan on March 14.

There was no immediate confirmation of the ban from the Italian league disciplinary committee.

The temperamental Gascoigne, in his first season in Italy, was sent off last Sunday after bringing down Genoa midfielder Mario Bortolazzi in an off-the-ball incident.

Pennacchia confirmed that Gascoigne would miss three Lazio home matches later this season because of World Cup commitments with England.

He will be unavailable for matches on March 28, April 25 and May 30 — against Udinese, Pescara and Napoli respectively.



BEN JOHNSON

"The sport is still struggling from Johnson's first positive drug test at the 1988 Olympics.

"Another positive test would rattle the sport again."

"If it is true, and he is positive, I just can't comprehend how he can lead the public down the garden path again," said York track coach Sue Wise.

Johnson's manager, Kemeel Azan, said he was sickened by the news.

"I'm very disturbed, very distressed," said Azan, who said he had not yet spoken to Johnson. "It's a very sad day as far as I'm concerned. I'm very troubled. I am wanting to hear a confirmation from the IAAF