



Philips Lighting — Official Sponsor of WorldCupUSA94



Argentine soccer star Diego Maradona and teammate Oscar Ruggeri enjoy a good practice session together for the national team in Buenos Aires on Wednesday. — AFP photo

## M United's 48-hr nightmare



LONDON, Apr 8: It could be the worst 48 hours of Manchester United's season.

On Sunday, Alex Ferguson's team could go out of the Football Association Cup, eliminated by modest Oldham at the semifinal stage, reports AP.

And on Monday, Blackburn can draw level on points with United in the Premier League standings by beating Aston Villa, ironically the Reds' conqueror in the League Cup final two weeks ago. At one stage, Ferguson's team had a 16-point lead.

Before that League Cup final at Wembley, star-studded United were favoured to achieve an unprecedented triple triumph in both cups and the league.

At that time, the odds on United winning none of the three titles were 25-1. Now last season's league champions are down to 9-2 to end up with nothing.

On Sunday, United meet the team they downed 3-2 last Saturday in league action.

Although Roy Keane, Eric Cantona and Andrei Kan-

chelski will be missing from United's line-up through suspension, Oldham will be without Sean McCarthy because he has already played for another team in the competition and is ineligible.

Former England captain Bryan Robson is set for a recall to United's line-up at Wembley while Oldham hope to recall Nick Henry and Paul Bernard.

Despite the league loss at Old Trafford, Oldham manager Joe Royle is upbeat about his team's chances in the semifinal.

"We will go into Sunday's game against United at Wembley with our self-respect intact and full of confidence," Royle said.

"When United beat us at our place in December I called them awesome. They are not quite that at the moment."

Ferguson, however, knows his team has the firepower to overcome Oldham again, even without Cantona, Keane and Kanchelski. He appears more worried about Blackburn in the league.

"The way Blackburn are playing we may have to go for six straight wins," he said. "We just have to try and be perfect

## Gullit going back to AC?



MILAN, Italy, Apr 8: Dutch forward Ruud Gullit will rejoin AC Milan next season following a one-year stint at Sampdoria, Italy's largest sports daily reported Thursday, reports AP.

According to Gazzetta dello Sport the 31-year-old Gullit and the Milan club, owned by media tycoon and would-be premier Silvio Berlusconi, reached a general agreement earlier this week.

Gazzetta reported that the one-year contract, worth about 2 billion lire (dlrs 1.2 million) tax-free to Gullit, would be signed at the end of the season on May 1.

Italian clubs are forbidden to negotiate transfers before the end of the season. AC Milan did not confirm the report.

Gullit, who transferred to Sampdoria season after the

arrival of several new foreign players during the off-season put his starting job in question, is enjoying one of his best Italian seasons in Genoa.

He has 15 goals in league matches and has led Sampdoria into the Italian Cup finals.

Gullit's transfer to AC Milan, if confirmed, would mean that the Milan club has given up plans to sign expensive Uruguayan forward Daniel Fonseca from Napoli.

Fonseca also is being sought by Juventus of Turin and Real Madrid. The Uruguayan said Thursday that his personal manager, Paco Casal, will be in Italy next week to negotiate his transfer from the Neapolitan team, which is on the brink of bankruptcy and plan to sell its best players to raise cash.

AC Milan, who can clinch their third consecutive league title this weekend, have been

actively seeking a new forward following the decision to transfer French striker Jean Pierre Papin.

That decision came despite the still questionable status of Dutch central-forward Marco van Basten, who has missed most of the last two seasons with a chronic ankle injury.

Berlusconi, who scored a stunning electoral victory as leader of Forza Italia party, said recently he regretted Gullit's departure and that he hoped to lure the Dutchman back to AC Milan.

Gullit transferred to Italy in 1987 from PSV Eindhoven. In six seasons Gullit helped the Milan team to three Italian titles, two European Champions Cups and one Intercontinental Cup.

He's expected to play with the Netherlands in the 1994 World Cup in the United States.

Gullit, who transferred to Sampdoria season after the

## Tangail in Biman Cup final

### Sports Reporter

Defending champions Tangail moved into the final of the Biman Cup Under-14 football championship, eliminating Dhaka 2-0 in the first semifinal at the Mirpur Stadium yesterday.

After the barren first half Sohagh and Ratan scored once each in the second.

Sohagh put Tangail ahead in the 53rd minute while Ratan converted a penalty five minutes from the long whistle to seal the fate of the match.

The second semifinal between Khulna and Sylhet will be held at 7 pm today. Tangail will take on the winners on Sunday at the Dhaka Stadium.

### IFIC win well

### Sports Reporter

Raimur Rashid hit a swash-buckling 98 not out to lead IFIC Bank to a facile five-wicket victory over Grindlays Bank in the office cricket league at the Jagannath Hall ground yesterday.

Raimur's quickfire 78-ball knock plus a breezy 83-ball 71 enabled IFIC Bank, needing 222 for an outright win, to post the required runs in 39.5 overs. When Raimur, who cracked twelve shots across and one over the rope in his blazing innings, walked back to the pavilion with Akther, the other unbeaten bat on 11, the score read 223 for five.

This duo apart, only Selim could produce a double-digit score.

Earlier, put in to bat, Grindlays Bank made 221 for seven in the possible 43 overs with Atiq contributing the highest individual score of 54. Atiq, whose 64-ball stay at the crease was interspersed with only three fours, was followed by Taufiq, who made 46 in 69 balls with the help of five boundaries.

Sarwar, who later on the day had a wonderful time with the willow, was the most successful IFIC bowler, taking four wickets for 38 in the regulation quota of nine overs.

### BSWA awards

### Sports Reporter

The Bangladesh Sports Writers' Association (BSWA) announced the names for its best sports personalities award for the year 1993 for their outstanding performance in their respective arena, said a press release, issued yesterday.

Swimmer Mokhlesur Rahman of Bangladesh Navy, who clinched the gold in the 200 metre breaststroke in the sixth SAF Games, was adjudged sportsman of the year.

The other awardees are: Bimal Chandra Tarafder (athletics) and Karar Mizanur Rahman (swimming), of BKSP, Jahangir Alam of Bangladesh Birman (cricket), Rahmatullah Asif of Abahani KC (hockey), Saiful Alam Chowdhury of Gulshan Shooting Club (shooting), Mozzamel Haque of Bangladesh Police (boxing).

Golam Rasul Mollah of Tangail DSA was adjudged the best organiser while National Bank Limited was named the sponsor of the year.

Fonseca also is being sought by Juventus of Turin and Real Madrid. The Uruguayan said Thursday that his personal manager, Paco Casal, will be in Italy next week to negotiate his transfer from the Neapolitan team, which is on the brink of bankruptcy and plan to sell its best players to raise cash.

He's expected to play with the Netherlands in the 1994 World Cup in the United States.

Gullit, who transferred to Sampdoria season after the

actively seeking a new forward following the decision to transfer French striker Jean Pierre Papin.

That decision came despite the still questionable status of Dutch central-forward Marco van Basten, who has missed most of the last two seasons with a chronic ankle injury.

Berlusconi, who scored a stunning electoral victory as leader of Forza Italia party, said recently he regretted Gullit's departure and that he hoped to lure the Dutchman back to AC Milan.

Gullit transferred to Italy in 1987 from PSV Eindhoven. In six seasons Gullit helped the Milan team to three Italian titles, two European Champions Cups and one Intercontinental Cup.

He's expected to play with the Netherlands in the 1994 World Cup in the United States.

Gullit, who transferred to Sampdoria season after the

is human — and that tennis without winning isn't as much fun as she keeps insisting.

"I didn't want to lose that set, that's why I screamed," Sabatini, said after the one-hour 41-minute match. I thought I played good tennis in that first set. I maintained my mind in the match."

After losing the first set, Sabatini won the next 10 games before the 15th-ranked Coetzer held her serve in the fifth game of the third set.

"As the match went on the score got worse and worse," said Coetzer, who has beaten Sabatini once in six meetings.

"After a while, I lost my cool a bit. It just couldn't get it back."

When Coetzer double faulted twice at 30-30 to lose the first game of the third set, the match was all but over.

The second-ranked Sanchez expended little energy in her 41-minute drubbing of the 88th-ranked Coetzer.

Courtous held serve once in the entire match — in the second game of the second set. She broke Sanchez's serve at 30-40 in the seventh game of the second set.

"I feel very comfortable on court," Sanchez said. "I'm moving really well."

Opponents should include compatriot Andre Agassi and Sweden's Stefan Edberg.

Bausch and Lomb Championships title and end a 32-tournament title drought. She has not won a tournament since taking the Italian Open in May 1992.

When Sabatini netted an easy forehand volley at 30-40 in the tenth game to yield the opening set she let out an anguished grunt that showed she seemed destined to lose and beat ninth-seeded Amanda Coetzer of South Africa 4-6, 6-0, 6-1 in the third round of the 400,000 dollars Bausch and Lomb Championships on Thursday, reports Reuter.

Top-seeded Spanishian Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario, who defeated two-time defending champion Sabatini to win last year's title, moved into the quarter-finals with a quick 6-0, 6-2 victory over Laurence Courtois of Belgium.

Second-seeded Conchita Martinez of Spain, who won last week's event at Hilton Head, posted a 6-2, 6-3 win over 13th-seeded Leila Meskhi of Georgia.

The quarter-final pairings pit Sanchez against 10th-seeded Sabine Hack, Martinez against sixth-seeded Lindsay Davenport, third-seeded Martina Navratilova against 12th-seeded Chanda Rubin and Sabatini against seventh-seeded Mary Pierce.

The sixth-ranked Sabatini is hoping to win her fourth.

Bausch and Lomb Championships title and end a 32-tournament title drought. She has not won a tournament since taking the Italian Open in May 1992.

When Sabatini netted an easy forehand volley at 30-40 in the tenth game to yield the opening set she let out an anguished grunt that showed she seemed destined to lose and beat ninth-seeded Amanda Coetzer of South Africa 4-6, 6-0, 6-1 in the third round of the 400,000 dollars Bausch and Lomb Championships on Thursday, reports Reuter.

Top-seeded Spanishian Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario, who defeated two-time defending champion Sabatini to win last year's title, moved into the quarter-finals with a quick 6-0, 6-2 victory over Laurence Courtois of Belgium.

Second-seeded Conchita Martinez of Spain, who won last week's event at Hilton Head, posted a 6-2, 6-3 win over 13th-seeded Leila Meskhi of Georgia.

The quarter-final pairings pit Sanchez against 10th-seeded Sabine Hack, Martinez against sixth-seeded Lindsay Davenport, third-seeded Martina Navratilova against 12th-seeded Chanda Rubin and Sabatini against seventh-seeded Mary Pierce.

The sixth-ranked Sabatini is hoping to win her fourth.

Bausch and Lomb Championships title and end a 32-tournament title drought. She has not won a tournament since taking the Italian Open in May 1992.

When Sabatini netted an easy forehand volley at 30-40 in the tenth game to yield the opening set she let out an anguished grunt that showed she seemed destined to lose and beat ninth-seeded Amanda Coetzer of South Africa 4-6, 6-0, 6-1 in the third round of the 400,000 dollars Bausch and Lomb Championships on Thursday, reports Reuter.

Top-seeded Spanishian Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario, who defeated two-time defending champion Sabatini to win last year's title, moved into the quarter-finals with a quick 6-0, 6-2 victory over Laurence Courtois of Belgium.

Second-seeded Conchita Martinez of Spain, who won last week's event at Hilton Head, posted a 6-2, 6-3 win over 13th-seeded Leila Meskhi of Georgia.

The quarter-final pairings pit Sanchez against 10th-seeded Sabine Hack, Martinez against sixth-seeded Lindsay Davenport, third-seeded Martina Navratilova against 12th-seeded Chanda Rubin and Sabatini against seventh-seeded Mary Pierce.

The sixth-ranked Sabatini is hoping to win her fourth.

## Spoilers they'd be if need be

BUENOS AIRES, Apr 8: Argentina were widely held to be the bad boys of the 1990 World Cup and they will not be worried if they preserve their reputation as world-class spoilers in the United States, reports Reuter.

Coach Alfio Basile says the only thing that concerns him is to placate the 30 million Argentines back home who will be baying for his blood if his team fail to win the World Cup for the third time.

He also knows they will hero-worship him if he brings the Cup home and when he was asked recently if he preferred Argentina to be successful or win fans over by playing attractive football, Basile, 52, gave a blunt reply.

"What you have to realise is that both Brazil and Argentina are under enormous pressure, we have the whole weight of our soccer history on our shoulders.

"When we win a match, everybody back home rushes on to the streets to celebrate. It's the result that counts."

Basile predicted that other teams would take the same attitude, especially in the first round when only eight of the 24 teams will be eliminated.

Argentina have been bracketed with Greece, Nigeria and Bulgaria in Group D. "Everyone's priority is going to be to qualify and I don't think you're going to see anyone opening up and attacking in the first round," the coach said in his distinctive hoarse voice.

Former Brazil coach Tele Santana became the latest to criticise the Argentine style recently when he slammed them for playing what he described as "football of results."

Despite their image, and despite problems with tactics and players, Argentina go into

the finals as one of the favourites after reaching the final in three of the last four tournaments.

Winners at home in 1978 and in Mexico in 1986, they reached the final again in Italy four years ago — but left behind a disgraceful legacy with just two wins and five goals in their seven matches.

They also became the first team to have players dismissed in World Cup final with both Pedro Monzon and Gustavo Dezotti shown the red card in the closing stages of their 1-0 defeat to West Germany.

Argentina also became the first team failing to score a goal in the final and many season's observers were delighted they went home empty-handed.

They had already begun the final with five players absent through suspension and they finished the tournament with more yellow cards than any other team. They also had three players sent off — and three opponents sent of playing against them.

They won both their quarter-final and semifinal matches on penalties and owed much of their progress to the goalkeeping heroics of Sergio Goycochea in the shoot-outs.

Argentina have been bracketed with Greece, Nigeria and Bulgaria in Group D. "Everyone's priority is going to be to qualify and I don't think you're going to see anyone opening up and attacking in the first round," the coach said in his distinctive hoarse voice.

They won both their quarter-final and semifinal matches on penalties and owed much of their progress to the goalkeeping heroics of Sergio Goycochea in the shoot-outs.

Argentina have been bracketed with Greece, Nigeria and Bulgaria in Group D. "Everyone's priority is going to be to qualify and I don't think you're going to see anyone opening up and attacking in the first round," the coach said in his distinctive hoarse voice.

They won both their quarter-final and semifinal matches on penalties and owed much of their progress to the goalkeeping heroics of Sergio Goycochea in the shoot-outs.

They won both their quarter-final and semifinal matches on penalties and owed much of their progress to the goalkeeping heroics of Sergio Goycochea in the shoot-outs.

They won both their quarter-final and semifinal matches on penalties and owed much of their progress to the goalkeeping heroics of Sergio Goycochea in the shoot-outs.

They won both their quarter-final and semifinal matches on penalties and owed much of their progress to the goalkeeping heroics of Sergio Goycochea in the shoot-outs.

They won both their quarter-final and semifinal matches on penalties and owed much of their progress to the goalkeeping heroics of Sergio Goycochea in the shoot-outs.

They won both their quarter-final and semifinal matches on penalties and owed much of their progress to the goalkeeping heroics of Sergio Goycochea in the shoot-outs.

They won both their quarter-final and semifinal matches on penalties and owed much of their progress to the goalkeeping heroics of Sergio Goycochea in the shoot-outs.

They won both their quarter-final and semifinal matches on penalties and owed much of their progress to the goalkeeping heroics of Sergio Goycochea in the shoot-outs.

They won both their quarter