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Romance of an odd couple on hunt



MADRID, June 8: Bebeto may be a crybaby and Romario an egotistic loudmouth. But those who have witnessed their standout performances and rivalry in the Spanish league this season would predict them to be among the stars of the World Cup, reports AP.

Romario leading the league in scoring and recording his 30th in a final-day 5-2 victory over Sevilla as Barcelona won their fourth straight league title.

Bebeto, Spain's leading scorer last season, paced Deportivo La Coruna to the league lead for most of the season, only to be overtaken by his countryman and Barcelona on the final day.

"I don't think there'll be a better frontline in the World Cup this summer than Brazil with Romario and Bebeto," said Barcelona-based European soccer journalist Graham Turner. "The Dutch side may have a top forward line, but there's something different about the skill of the Brazilians."

"They're brought up playing soccer and when they're placed in the right team they're unbeatable."

While Bebeto and Romario recognise each other's merits and know they synthesise perfectly on the Brazilian national team, the two appear to be virtual opposites in personality and play.

In a typical rags-to-riches story, Romario de Souza Faria was born and learned to play ball in the slums of Rio de Janeiro.

At 19, the short but light-

ning-footed player turned professional for Vasco da Gama and began a career that would bring him to Dutch club PSV Eindhoven in 1988 for a reported \$16 million.



ROMARIO

habit of telling Brazilian coaches what they should do and how wonderful he is resulted in him being left off the 1990 World Cup team.



BEBETO

In 1993, he transferred for another \$4 million to Barcelona, where he has consistently left fans and opposing goalkeepers gaping in awe at his flashes of brilliance.

"He's absolutely an exceptional player. He does things people just don't expect and in a one-to-one situation he is easily the best in the world," Turner said.

Romario's defect as a player is that he's lazy and is unlikely to react until he gets the ball at his feet. Then, however, there's often no stopping him.

Off the field he has also made a name for himself. Long known as a loudmouth—one journalist described him as having a "chronically swollen ego"—his

when Brazil, who performed miserably in Italy, bowed to popular demand and called him back for their crucial World Cup qualifying game against Uruguay last September. He scored both goals in a 2-0 victory that put Brazil into the World Cup.

Recently he made headlines when his father was kidnapped for four days. The bandits were not all bad, however: they brought in a TV so his father could watch him play for Barcelona in the vital league game against Real Madrid. His father was eventually freed in a police raid.

But while Romario is rarely out of the limelight, Roberto 'Bebeto' Gama de Oliveira appears to be almost painfully shy.

Born in 1964, he also has had a highly successful though less flamboyant career as a member of Brazil's world champion junior side in 1983. He helped both Flamengo and Vasco da Gama to national titles.

"He's so unassuming, you feel like shaking him sometimes," said Alberto Martinez, who covers Deportivo for the regional El Correo Gallego paper.

Bebeto got the name of being something of a crybaby because he was regularly injured when he played in Brazil. Experts thought he was too fragile to play in the competitive European leagues.

Deportivo, however, have been permanently among the top three teams since he joined, no small feat for a side that only earned promotion to the First Division in 1991.

And his slender physique has not stopped him penetrating opposing defences and finishing sixth in league scoring with 16 goals. Last season he scored 29.

"Bebeto doesn't sleep if he doesn't score and you can almost see the suffering on his face," Martinez said. "In many ways he's just like a child."

For Turner, Bebeto and Romario complement each other perfectly. "Bebeto is always alert and on the lookout for goalscoring chances and Romario always seems to appear from nowhere to put them in," he said.

And while Romario makes the sign of the cross for every goal he slams home, Bebeto readily tells reporters: "God gave me this talent. I only wish all youngsters were addicted to scoring goals like me."

Asprilla, best striker since Pele?

BOGOTA, Colombia, June 8: He's considered one of the best forwards in the game.



FAUSTINO ASPRILLA

Many have compared him to Pele, and he may be Colombia's best hope in the 1994 World Cup.

Faustino Asprilla, 25, has developed a reputation in Europe, where he plays for Italian First Division club Parma, reports AP.

He scored the winning goal for Parma last year that ended Milan's 58-game winning streak. Milan was obviously impressed — it is reportedly prepared to offer the Colombian-born star a \$18-million-dollar three-year contract.

In a two-week period last year, he scored seven goals, which he remembers as the "14 Magic Days."

Parma eventually went on to win the European Super Cup, and now Asprilla is ready to tackle the World Cup.

"I have a lot of expectations for the World Cup because I know what the team is capable of doing," Asprilla said.

Although last year was remarkable for Asprilla, he had some low points.

His mother died. Days later, he injured his leg kicking it through a window. He lost 6 pounds (3 kilograms) and became sick with stomach and respiratory problems.

The injury and health problems prevented him from starting in an important game in London.

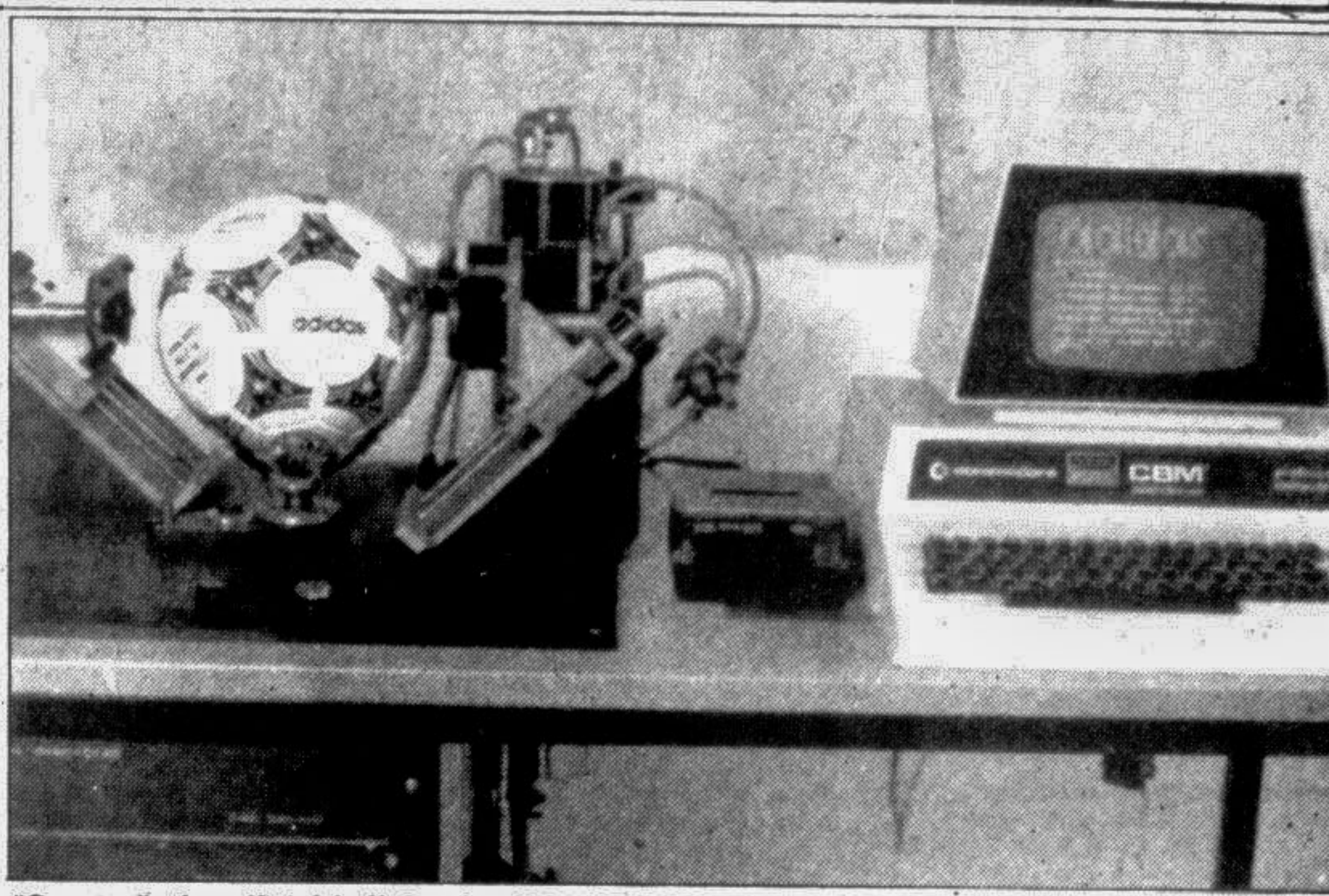
Many Colombia sports writers say Asprilla must overcome an ego problem.

"If he comes down from the clouds, he'll be one of the stars in the World Cup," said Sports Daily, a Bogota paper. "He has ability, intelligence, quickness and he knows how to score."

Says the El Espectador, another Bogota daily: "He's a born athlete, the type of player that emerges very rarely on the world soccer scene."

But according to Asprilla's physician, Hector Fabio Cruz, Asprilla isn't in the best of condition to play in the World Cup and needs to gain weight.

Coach Francisco Maturana plans to fatten up his star forward, and add muscle tone, before Colombia's first World Cup game, against Romania on June 18.



"Questra", the official ball for the 1994 World Cup finals in the United States, undergoes a sample test for sphericity in a French laboratory in Paris yesterday.

— AFP photo

Giving TV an American touch



WASHINGTON, June 8: Television executives hope to blend European football expertise with American style to create a distinctive look for broadcasts of the 1994 World Cup, reports AP.

Basic coverage of the 52 matches from nine venues will be the responsibility of the European Broadcast Union, which joined a global group of broadcasters in paying 223.7 million dollars to FIFA for the non-US television rights to the 1990, 1994 and 1998 World Cups.

Manolo Romero, chief executive officer of European broadcasting company Sports International (ESI), will direct the coverage.

Romero, a veteran of every World Cup since 1966, wants to give the broadcasts an American flavour, without sac-

rificing coverage of the flow of action.

"We want to make this look as American as possible," Romero says. "Graphics will be American. The replays will be like what you see on American Sports TV."

"We want to produce it the way we think it would be produced in the States."

Romero will be counting on experienced production teams from European networks, but he said 90 per cent of the 1,200-strong ESI staff will be American.

"One amazing thing is that we have been able to locate people who know soccer and have followed it," Romero says. "Getting it right for non-US viewers is crucial. The cumulative worldwide audience is expected to reach 31.2 billion, most of them outside the United States."

ESI will provide 13 cameras from each match, includ-

ing one in goal, while US broadcasters ABC and ESPN will also use some of their own. ABC vice president David Downs welcomed the overseas input.

"I think it is a blessing having EBU," Downs says. "It allows us to take the basic coverage and add one or two twists."

ABC and ESPN paid 23 million dollars for the US rights, and between them they will show every match, even so, no one expects American couch potatoes to make a wholesale switch to soccer.

"It is a truly unique event that should transcend rating of soccer in prior years," Downs says. "But I don't think FIFA expects to gain the popularity of any of the major (American) sports from this one event."

"Soccer players in college, and I was one too, grow up to be Boston Red Sox or Orlando Magic fans. That's life in America."

FACTS AND FIGURES OF PAST SOCCER WORLD CUPS

1938 FRANCE

Played in: Paris (6 matches), Bordeaux (3), Marseilles (2), Toulouse (2), Antibes (1), Le Havre (1), Lille (1), Reims (1), Strasbourg (1)	1/8 Finals Italy v Norway 2:1 France v Belgium 3:1 Brazil v Poland 6:5 Czechoslovakia v Netherlands 3:0 Germany v Switzerland 1:1 Switzerland v Germany (repetition) 4:2 Hungary v Dutch East Indies 6:0 Sweden v Austria (Austria withdrawal) 3:3 Cuba v Romania (repetition) 2:1 *after extra time	Goals: 1,0,1,1,2,1,3,1,3,2,4,2 Goalscorers: Colaussi 2, Piola 2 for Italy; Titkos, Sarosi for Hungary
Official Name of the Competition III FIFA WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP	1/4 Finals Italy v France 3:1 Brazil v Czechoslovakia 1:1 *after extra time Brazil v Czechoslovakia (repetition) 2:1 Hungary v Switzerland 2:0 Sweden v Cuba 6:0	The World Champion Team: Olivier: Foni, Rava, Seranton, Andreolo, Locatelli, Biavati, Meazza (captain), Piola, Ferrari, Colaussi
The Trophy called FIFA WORLD CUP later called (as from 1948): JULES RIMET CUP	1/2 Finals Italy v Brazil 2:1 Hungary v Sweden 5:1	The Runner-up Team: Szabo, Polgar, Biro, Szalay, Szucs, Lazar: Sas, Vincze, Saros (captain), Szengeller, Titkos
At that time, FIFA had 57 MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS	3rd Place Match Brazil v Sweden 4:2	Referee of the Final Match: GEORGES CAPEVILLE (France)
FIFA President was JULES RIMET (France)	Final Italy v Hungary 4:2	Best Goalscorer: LEONIDAS (Brazil) 8 goals
Number of entries for the Preliminary Competition: 36		Total Number of Spectators: 483,000 in 18 matches
The 15 Participants of the Final Competition AUSTRIA, NETHERLANDS, BELGIUM, NORWAY, BRAZIL, POLAND, CUBA, ROMANIA, CZECHOSLOVAKIA, SWEDEN, FRANCE, SWITZERLAND, GERMANY, DUTCH E. INDIES, ITALY		The World Champions so far 1930—URUGUAY 1934—ITALY 1938—ITALY

1950 BRAZIL

Played in: Rio de Janeiro (6 matches), Sao Paulo (6), Belo Horizonte (3), Curitiba (2), Porto Alegre (2), Recife (1)	Spain v USA 3:1 USA v England 1:0 Brazil v Spain 2:0 Spain v England 1:0 Chile v USA 5:2	Brazil v Sweden 7:1 Uruguay v Spain 2:2 Brazil v Spain 6:1 Uruguay v Sweden 3:2 Sweden v Spain 3:1
Official Name of the Competition IV FIFA WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP	Group 3 Sweden v Italy 3:2 Sweden v Paraguay 2:2 Italy v Paraguay 2:0	Brazil v Uruguay 1:2
The Trophy, called (since 1948): JULES RIMET CUP	Group 4 Uruguay v Bolivia 8:0	Goals: 1,0,1,1,1,2 Goalscorers: Schiaffino, Ghiggia for Uruguay; Friaca for Brazil
At that time, FIFA had 70 MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS	Standings after Group Matches:	Final Standings:
FA President was JULES RIMET (France)	Group 1 1 Brazil 3 2 1 0 8:2 5 2 Yugoslavia 3 2 0 1 7:3 4 3 Switzerland 3 1 1 1 4:4 3 4 Mexico 3 0 0 3 2:10 0	1 Uruguay 3 2 1 0 7:5 5 2 Brazil 3 2 0 1 14:4 4 3 Sweden 3 1 0 2 6:11 2 4 Spain 3 0 1 2 4:11 1
Number of entries for the Preliminary Competition: 33	Group 2 1 Spain 3 3 0 0 6:1 6 2 England 3 1 0 2 2:2 2 3 Chile 3 1 0 2 5:6 2 4 USA 3 1 0 2 4:8 2	The World Champion Team: Maspoli, Gonzales, M. Tejera, Gambetta, Varela (captain), Andrade, Ghiggia, Perez, Miguez, Schiaffino, Moran
The 13 Participants of the Final Competition BOLIVIA, SPAIN, BRAZIL, SWEDEN, CHILE, SWITZERLAND, ENGLAND, URUGUAY, ITALY, USA, MEXICO, YUGOSLAVIA, PARAGUAY	Group 3 1 Sweden 2 1 1 0 5:4 3 2 Italy 2 1 0 1 4:3 2 3 Paraguay 2 0 1 1 2:4 1	The Runners-up: Barbosa, Augusto (captain), Juvenal, Bauer, Danilo, Bigode, Friaca, Zizinho, Ademir, Jair, Chico
FINAL COMPETITION—24.6-16.7.1950	Group 4 1 Uruguay 1 1 0 0 8:0 2 2 Bolivia 1 0 0 1 0:8 0	Referee of the Final Match: GEORGE READER (England)
Group 1 Brazil v Mexico 4:0 Yugoslavia v Switzerland 3:0 Yugoslavia v Mexico 4:1 Brazil v Switzerland 2:2 Brazil v Yugoslavia 2:0 Switzerland v Mexico 2:1	Best Goalscorer: ADEMIR (Brazil) 9 goals	Total Number of Spectators: 1,337,000 in 22 matches
Group 2 England v Chile 2:0	The World Champions so far 1930—URUGUAY 1934—ITALY 1938—ITALY 1950—URUGUAY	

Boisterous Bulgarians

AUSTIN, Texas, June 8: After weeks of hype by the local chamber of commerce about the arrival of the Bulgarian World Cup soccer stars, their first public appearance in Texas ended in a shouting match between team officials and media on Tuesday, reports Reuters.

Team administrator Alexander Dinev refused to let the team take the field for their first practice until the media, including local and international television crews, left the stadium.

"Out: Out: Dinev demanded in English when the cameras zoomed in on the players as they stepped off the bus."

Dinev, speaking through World Cup liaison Emil Verboski, demanded all cameras be shut down, and angrily demanded one local television cameraman stop taking his pictures.

"No press," Verboski translated. "If these guys are here, he is saying we are not having practice." Austin Chamber of Commerce officials had urged the team to set up its training camp in the city, which is the summer home of the Dallas Cowboys football team.

Lara slows down a bit

LONDON, June 8: Run-machine Brian Lara, batting down the order after feeling faint, guided Warwickshire into the final of the Benson and Hedges Cup on Tuesday, reports agencies.

A day after hitting 501 not out in a county match at Edgbaston—the highest-ever first-class score—Lara stroked a classy 70 from 73 balls as Warwickshire beat Surrey by four wickets with five balls to spare at the Oval.

Trinidadian Lara entered the fray with Warwickshire in some trouble at 120 for four in reply to Surrey's 55-over total of 267 for seven.

When he departed — bowled middle stump by medium pacer Adam Hoolioake — after a sixth-wicket stand of 93 in 20 overs with captain Dermot Reeve, Warwickshire needed just 17 runs from 21 balls.

Lara had trudged wearily from the field after 45 overs of the Surrey innings. Warwickshire physio Stuart Nottingham said that he was simply exhausted after fielding again

following his record-shattering innings on Monday.

Earlier, Lara trudged off the field and was replaced by a substitute for the last 46 minutes of Surrey's innings, still exhausted from Monday's climb to the Everest of cricketing records when he surpassed Hanif Mohammad's 499 as the highest individual score in first-class cricket.

Warwickshire team doctor Stuart Nottingham said Lara was simply exhausted from having to field again after his epic innings and the hectic evening of adulation which followed.

The rules state that a player who leaves the field during the opposition's innings must sit out an equal amount of time in his own team's innings before being allowed to bat, so the crowd of 7,000 at the Oval had to sit through the efforts of Lara's teammates before the West Indian emerged to a standing ovation at the fall of Warwickshire's third wicket with the score at 117 in the 24th over.

Vicenary nat'l gymnastics on

Sports Reporter

Bangladesh Ansars dominated the opening day of the Biman 20th national gymnastics championship at the gymnasia of the National Sports Council (NSC) yesterday.

Having swept the men's parallel bars they also took the gold in men's long horse event.

Delwar Hossain, who scored highest 17.45 points in the parallel bars, took the gold while the silver and the bronze went to Saiful Islam and Akhtaruzzaman of the same team.

Saiful pocketed his second medal when he took the gold in the long horse event. Sharif Munira Hossain of BTMC captured the first gold in women's event when she scored 17.5 points in the uneven bars.

Earlier, managing director of the sponsors Biman Bangladesh Airlines, Ahab Ahmad inaugurated the two-day meet.

BUT THE CONDITIONS ARE TO PLAY A PART. THE AUSTRIANS DELICATE SHORT PASSING GAME GETS BOGGED DOWN IN THE MUD.



AND ITALY'S ARGENTINIAN-BORN WINGER GIANFRANCESCO SORIANO HOME THE SEMI-FINALS ONLY GOAL.



CZECHOSLOVAKIA, PLAYING ATTRACTIVE FOOTBALL ARE ALSO THROUGH TO THE FINAL AFTER DISPOSING OF GERMANY IN THE SEMI. BEFORE THE MATCH THEY PROBABLY CARRY THEIR FLAG WHILE THE ITALIANS GIVE A FASCIST SALUTE.



UNUSUALLY, BOTH SIDES ARE CAPTAINED BY THEIR GOALKEEPERS: COMBI OF ITALY AND PABRICKA OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA.



THE CZECHS REFUSE TO BE INTIMIDATED BY THE PARTISAN ROMAN CROWD AND WHEN PUC SCORES FOLLOWING A 70TH-MINUTE CORNER THEY LOOK TO BE HEADING FOR VICTORY.



AS LEGS BECOME WEARY, ITALY'S CENTRE FORWARD ANGELO SCHIAVINO SUMMONES UP HIS LAST RESERVE OF STRENGTH TO HIT A DRAMATIC WINNER.



BUT THEY MISS TWO GREAT CHANCES TO IT UP AND ORBI RESCUES ITALY WITH A BEARING SWEEPING SHOT. THE MATCH GOES INTO EXTRA TIME.



THE ITALIANS HAVE THE WORLD CUP AND A DELIGHTED MUSSOLINI HAS THE PROPAGANDA BOOST HE SO DESPERATELY WANTED.

