

Soggy start for 4-nation cricket

COLOMBO, Sept 4: The four-nation World Series limited-overs tournament made a slippery start here Sunday when the opening match between India and Sri Lanka was dashed by rain, reports AFP.

The match, the first of the round-robin league in the two-week event also featuring Pakistan and Australia, will be replayed on Monday - weather permitting.

Just 25 deliveries were



bowled in the day-night international at the Premadasa Stadium before heavy rain drove the players back to the pavilion for the day.

India, sent to bat in overcast conditions, made 16 for no loss with Sachin Tendulkar on 11 and Manoj Prabhakar on three.

The start itself was delayed by two-and-a-half hours due to slushy ground conditions within the 30-yard circle, following overnight rain.

Umpires Brian Aldridge of New Zealand and T. Francis of Sri Lanka ordered a truncated 40-overs-a-side match, but the action lasted only 17 minutes.

The watery end came after Sri Lanka's biggest-ever cricket event was launched with a colourful, hour-long opening ceremony earlier in the afternoon, watched by all the four participating teams and some 7,000 spectators.

The two teams will be awarded a point each if the match is washed out again on Monday.

Australia and Pakistan play their first match on Wednesday.

SCOREBOARD

INDIA				
M Prabhakar not out	3			
S R Tendulkar not out	11			
Extras (lb 1, w 1)	2			
Total (no loss)	16			
Bowling				
Wickramasinghe	2	0	5	0
Vaas	2	0	6	0
Overs: 4				

IOC caves in to FIFA power

PARIS, Sept 4: The International Olympic Committee (IOC) caved in to the power of the world's number one sport and agreed that soccer would be in the 1996 Atlanta Summer Games even though FIFA has refused to sign an Olympic doping accord, reports Reuters.

FIFA, soccer's governing body, is the only Olympic federation not to have signed the agreement, aimed at intensifying the fight against doping in sport through a single list of banned drugs and common sanctions against offenders.

The accord specifically stipulates that only federations which comply can take part in the Games.

But IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch told a news conference on Saturday soccer would definitely be in the Olympic programme for Atlanta.

"I can assure you that there will be football in the Atlanta Games," he said.

Samaranch said he had held talks with FIFA president Joao Havelange, an IOC member, and general secretary Sepp Blatter in Paris on Friday.

"FIFA wants to reach an agreement with the IOC and the other federations," he said. "We will reach an agreement. What sort of agreement, I do not know."

But Samaranch conceded that FIFA had successfully argued that soccer should be treated as a special case. "Not all federations are the same. They are all different," he said.

FIFA has refused to accept the idea of hour-of-competition testing, arguing it is unnecessary in soccer and has so far not adopted IOC norms of a two-year minimum ban for performance-enhancing drugs such as anabolic steroids.

Samaranch's talks of a compromise with FIFA plainly undermined the purpose of the IOC's much-vaunted doping accord, signed by the other federations this year after long negotiations.

Cycling, which has not yet accepted the two-year minimum ban, signed the agreement but added reservations.

The IOC has claimed it is leading the fight against doping in sport and has always maintained that it can only win if all sports adopt a common approach.

FIFA is fully aware it is on safe ground in its conflict with the IOC because Atlanta Games organisers are adamant that the sport must be in the programme following the huge popular success of soccer at the 1984 Los Angeles Games and at this year's World Cup finals in the United States.

Mohammedans' last chance?

Sports Reporter



Their last victory over Abahani Krira Chakra in the league was recorded way back in 1987 in front of the vast unmanured terraces of a locked Army Stadium. Seven years later, Mohammedan Sporting Club need to put an end to that trend as earnestly as never before as they take on their arch-rivals this evening in the concluding match of the first phase of this year's Star Premier Division football league, scheduled for a 6:30 start at the Dhaka Stadium.

The reigning champions trail league leaders Abahani by three points and the future of their title defence largely rests on the outcome of today's derby. If the black and whites lose, their gap with the sky blues will shoot to five, dumping them almost at a point of no-return as far as this year's championship is concerned.

A win will, of course, be a source of twin pleasure for Mohammedans. Not only will that break a prolonged jinx, their title-retaining hopes will also have a new lease of life with the gap being closed to the extent of a solitary point. That will be quite a rosy prospect for the beleaguered giants given the highly competitive and unpredictable pattern observed so far in the ten-team fray.

No club has paid the price of the topsy-turvy turn of events more than Mohammedans, who have run up to this prestige tie with two successive defeats.

First they went down to an unfancied Agrani Bank 1-2 on

August 29 to register their maiden loss to the bankers. In a rare exhibition of bad luck the star-crossed Mohammedans then allowed Brothers Union to clinch their first victory against them since 1981. A sixteenth minute penalty goal was enough to realise the second defeat in a week for an immensely adored team still in search of its first title this year.

Severely handicapped by the unfortunate injury to its mercurial schemer and skipper Ruman bin Wali Shabbir, who is now receiving treatment for his badly affected right leg in Singapore, and a spate of disciplinary measures against their Russian players, Mohammedans showed remarkable resilience in beating star-studded Muktiyoddha Krira Chakra before letting things fall apart.

Mohammedans played superbly against Brothers Union but were undone by their goal blind strikers and to some extent harsh supervision by the man in black.

Abahani Krira Chakra, who finished runners-up last year, have suddenly been smiled upon by the lady luck to embolden their feeble campaign to regain the Premier title.

In a wide open league, marked by an unprecedented four-way race for the title since Muktiyoddha enrolled themselves in contention with their dazzling collection of almost all the national booters and the Federation Cup, Abahani have so far been the only team to have escaped the smudge of defeat. Not only

Mohammedans, Brothers and Muktiyoddha have also had their share of losses.

The Dhanmondi team will also enjoy a psychological edge over their traditional foes in today's match having won this year's only meeting of the titans - away in Calcutta in the Charms Cup final.

Abahani, who go into today's match with refreshing memories of an emphatic 6-2 win over babes Bangladesh Boys, are likely to play their all three foreigners in the first eleven.

Mohammedans can only field two of their three Russians since Vitaly is serving a six-match ban for his assault on referee Rafiqul Islam during the trouble-torn match against PWD on August 17 which Mohammedans drew one-all.

Meanwhile, the authorities have brought three referees from Malaysia to avoid the re-verberating allegations of biased supervision by the local whistlers.

Radio Bangladesh will give running commentary of the vital match from 6:30 pm onwards. However, Bangladesh Television, which considerably improved its image to the sports lovers by providing live coverage of some of the important domestic soccer engagements recently, reportedly shelved its plans of covering it for fear of vandalism by the soccer hooligans, a chronic evil that has appeared with renewed monstrosity this year.

The rate of tickets has been fixed at Taka 20. Ticket counters and the gates will be opened simultaneously at 2:30 pm.

Jansher wins HK Open

HONG KONG, Sept 4: World number one Jansher Khan saw off the latest pretender to his throne with a decisive 15-7, 15-10, 15-6 defeat of Scotland's Peter Nicol to win the Hong Kong Open Sunday, reports AFP.

Nicol had said earlier that he had his eye on Khan's number one title after he defeated the Pakistani at the Welsh Classic in February.

The Hong Kong final gave five-time World Open winner Khan the perfect opportunity to exact vengeance for that defeat and Nicol's claim to his throne.

"You can't be the king after just one tournament," Khan said.

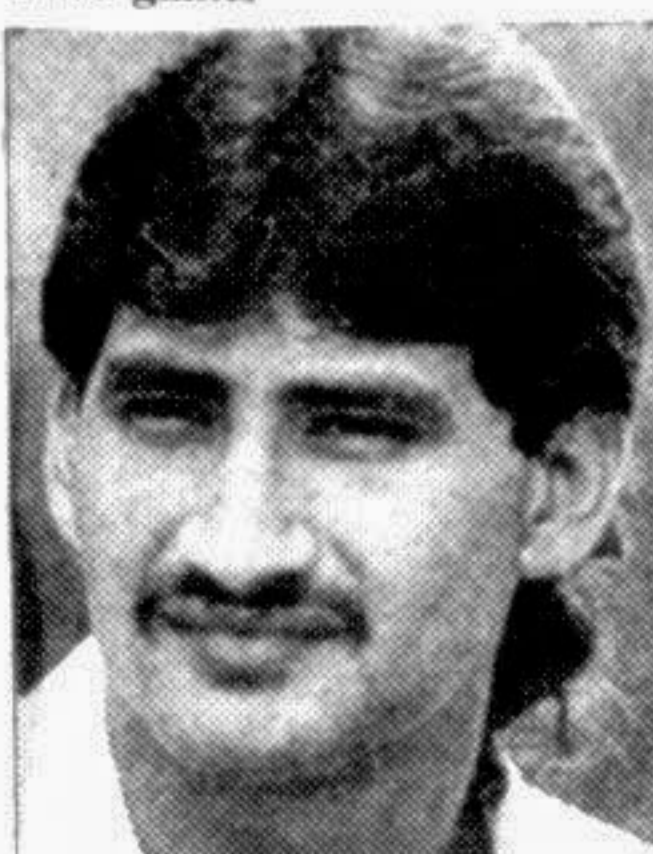
"To be the king you have to be there for seven years like Jahangir Khan or myself."

"Even if he had eaten me today I still would not say he was the king."

"So now you know who is the king."

World number seven Nicol found himself in immediate trouble at the start of his first appearance in a major final, with Khan racing to a 6-1 lead in the first game.

That pattern was repeated in the second and Nicol only once headed Khan in the match, when he led 4-3 in the third game.



JANSHER KHAN

Khan's response was swift and decisive as he won the next seven points to kill off the 21-year-old Scot's challenge.

"I didn't give him any chances. I was able to get in front and control the court and that gave me confidence," Khan said.

Nicol has risen from 36 to seven in the world rankings last year and Khan believes he could rise further with more hard work.

Klinsmann named German booter-of-the-year

BONN, Sept 4: Tottenham striker Juergen Klinsmann was named German-footballer-of-the-year on Saturday, reports Reuters.

Klinsmann, who had a superb World Cup despite Germany's largely disappointing performances, took 211 of the 772 votes cast by German sports journalists to take the most prestigious soccer award in his homeland.

Klinsmann, who has made an impressive start to his career in England since he joined Tottenham from French side Monaco at the start of the season, has now won the award twice after picking it up in 1988 while he was at VfB Stuttgart.

German's most capped player, Lothar Matthaus of Bayern Munich, took second place with 117 votes ahead of national team midfielder Matthias Sammer in third with 99.



Juergen Klinsmann, the only outstanding player during Germany's disastrous World Cup campaign in the USA this summer and who is making an impact in the English Premier league, poses with his trophy after being voted footballer-of-the-year by readers of Kicker sports magazine in Germany on Sept 3.



Players of Wari Club and Agrani Bank vie for the ball during a Star Premier Division football league match at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday. The game ended in a goalless draw. — Star photo

Brothers survive a scare

Sports Reporter



Brothers Union's euphoria following their solitary goal victory over defending champions Mohammedan Sporting Club last Thursday was almost dispelled as Fakirerpool Youngmen's Club rallied from a hopeless four-goal deficit before finally bowing down 3-4 in the second of the two Star Premier Division league matches billed for the Dhaka Stadium yesterday.

The Gopibagh side, who pumped in all the four goals in the space of the first 33 minutes of the match, found themselves at their wit's end in the face of spirited Fakirerpool sorties that rocked their defence time and again for the rest of the match.

The win in their last engagement of the first phase left Brothers trailing Abahani and Muktiyoddha in the points table with 12 from nine matches, two points clear from the reigning champions, who play their last match against their traditional rivals Abahani in a crucial tie today.

In a thrilling encounter with a foreign referee officiating, Brothers Union, who survived two close calls in the first fifteen minutes, took the

lead against the run of the play when a left flank lob from defender Ruhul Amin sailed into the net after hitting the far post, much to the amazement of a few hundred spectators.

Winger Ranjan then struck twice in the space of two minutes to give his side a solid 3-0 lead, 24 minutes into the match.

These two goals take Ranjan's tally to six and place him at the top of the individual scorers' list along with Mohammedans' Russian striker Andrey Kazakov.

Striker Biplob pushed Brothers Union further ahead nine minutes later when he slotted the ball home past a helpless Fakirerpool custodian Kawsar to make it four goals to nil.

Brothers custodian Ponir made some brilliant saves to keep his record clean for the first 45 minutes.

But the inexperienced substitute goalkeeper, Humayun, who came after the breather conceded three goals as the Brothers defence collapsed under constant pressure from the mettlesome Fakirerpool booters.

Striker Arif scored the first goal with a neat placing shot in the 57th minute before Askar Khan Babu made it 2-4 by a

spectacular header in the 62nd minute.

Promising left-back Hassan al Mamun then struck the third goal for the losers with a rainbow shot in the dying moments of the match.

This defeat left Fakirerpool glued to their previous collection of seven points on completion of their nine round robin league matches.

In the first match of the day, Wari Club and Agrani Bank played out a lack-lustre goalless draw.

The draw left traditional giant-slayers Wari at the fifth position with nine points from as many matches while Agrani Bank raised their collection to seven also from nine encounters.

Away at the Mirpur Stadium, East End Club beat high-flying Shantinagar by the odd goal in three in the only Star First Division football league tie.

Selim and Saurav notched one goal apiece for the winners while Masud Karim pulled one back for Shantinagar.

TODAY'S MATCHES

Farashganj vs Eskaton SS 4:30 pm (Dhaka Stadium)
Mohammedan SC vs Abahani KC 6:30 pm (Dhaka Stadium)

China's second diving gold



ROME, Sept 4: Chen Lixia produced a masterful series of dives to lead a Chinese 1-2 in the women's 1 metre springboard event at the World Swimming Championships Sunday, report agencies.

It was China's second diving gold after Fu Mingxia's victory on Saturday in the women's highboard. It was also China's second 1-2 in a row.

Leading from the second of the five rounds of dives, Chen totalled 279.30 points, ahead of countrywoman Tan Shuping with Canada's Annie Pelletier collecting the bronze.

Cheril Santini of the United States placed last of the four divers throughout the final and finished out of the medals. Tan had 276.00 points, Pelletier 273.84 and Santini 261.72.

Pelletier, who won the Commonwealth Games 3-metre competition at Victoria, British Columbia, two weeks ago, threatened the Chinese early and led after the opening round with a forward 2 1/2 somersault that earned two 8.00s and 57.72 points.

Chen took over in round two, however, when her reverse 1 1/2 somersault collected an 8.5 and five 8.00s for score of 57.60.

Diving under total control and in a position to take no

risks, Chen increased her lead round by round although Pelletier threatened again with her fourth dive, an inward 1 1/2 somersault, that earned two 8.5s and four 8.00s.

In the fifth round, Tan produced her best dive, an inward 2 1/2 somersault, to collect the highest score of the competition, 63.90.

Pelletier responded with a backward 1 1/2 somersault with 1 1/2 twists but it scored only 57.00 and dropped her back to the bronze medal.

On Saturday, Fu Mingxia, the Chinese girl who won her first world title at the age of 12, retained her 10m platform title and then called on the sport's authorities to scrap all age restrictions on entry into the World Championships.

After an elf-like Fu won her first title in Perth in 1991, the International Swimming Federation (FIFA) imposed a minimum age of 14 for entrants.

Fu, now 16 and also the Olympic champion, commented: "I think they should allow boys and girls of any age to take part. In diving you need to be young to achieve good results."

Despite her clear commitment to a life entirely dominated by the sport, Fu's description of her daily routine will only have increased concern about the consequences

of allowing even 14-year-olds into international competitions.

Fu and Bin Chi, the 15-year-old who took the silver medal, spend an astonishing six hours a day diving. Their mornings are spent studying. The rest of their lives are taken up by diving, eating and sleeping.

For Fu, life has been like that ever since she left her family as an eight-year-old to train full time with China's diving coach Yu Fen.

All those years of honing her diving clearly paid off as Fu kept her composure to earn victory on Saturday with her last dive.

Trailing throughout, she entered the water with barely a splash after spinning through 3.5 inward somersaults to snatch the title from Bin Chi.

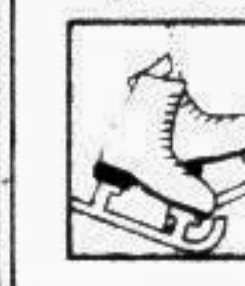
Fu had been 22 points adrift of the lead at the half-way stage of the eight-dive final.

Bin Chi went into the final round with a two points advantage but could not produce a good enough execution of her backwards 2.5 somersaults to put herself beyond reach.

Medals table after the fourth day of the World Swimming Championships yesterday:

	G	S	B
China	2	3	1
Zimbabwe	1	-	-
Mexico	-	-	1
United States	-	-	1
Canada	-	2	1

Witt critical of media



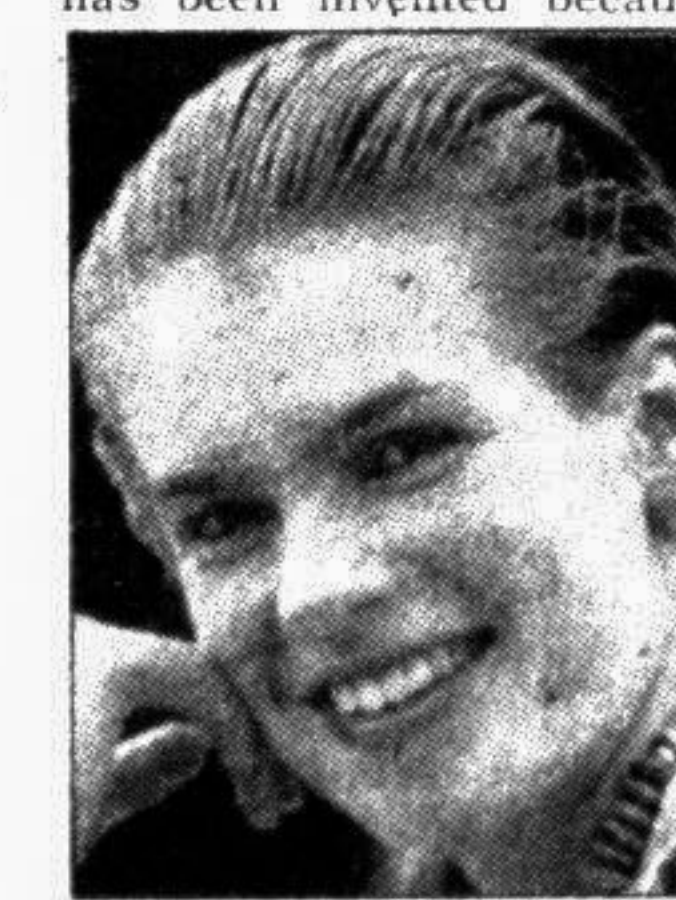
PARIS, Sept 4: Katarina Witt says she doesn't like some of the Olympic media coverage she's seen, especially when it portrays athletes such as fellow figure skaters Nancy Kerrigan and Tonya Harding as "cult stars or demonic figures," reports AP.

"There are a lot of great aspects to the Olympics," Witt said at a seminar on sports and the media at a congress of the International Olympic Committee. "They stand for something important, what we're fighting for, but they get ignored with something like Nancy Kerrigan and Tonya Harding. The Olympics are about more than that."

Kerrigan and Harding dominated the spotlight at this year's Winter Olympics in Lillehammer, Norway, following the January clubbing attack on Kerrigan that kept her out of the US figure skating nationals. Harding's ex-husband admitted planning the attack

on Kerrigan, who went on to win the silver medal at Lillehammer.

"It becomes evident that the depiction of our personality is far removed from reality and that an imaginary persona has been invented because



KATARINA WITT

certain media need to create cult stars or demonic figures," she said.

Witt was a figure skating

gold medalist at the 1984 and 1988 Winter Olympics and herself a widely adored idol in the wake of fawning news coverage of her. She also, experienced working on the other side of the camera, as a commentator for the US television network CBS at the 1992 Games in Albertville.

Some of the criticism levelled at the media was less harsh. "Naturally I would sometimes wish for more expansive details concerning the type of sport during Olympic reports, because the quantity of spaghetti that Alberto Tomba eats every day, for example, is not to me a rivetingly fascinating topic," said German speed-skater Franziska Schenk.

Witt's comments on the Kerrigan and Harding coverage drew critical replies from journalists who served as panelists here.

James Easton, president of the International Archery Federation, also assailed the media for giving "overexposure" to the Harding-Kerrigan affair.