

Column One DID U' KNOW? (The Professor does)

HAT the shortest one-day international was between India and Sri Lanka in the 1992 World Cup. Heavy overnight rain made ground conditions unplayable.

SPORTS TALK



Ma Junren (Illustrious Chinese athlete's coach)

"How can I rest when the Ma family army has won almost every major world honour except an Olympic gold medal?"

Sports WHIZZ KID COMPETITION FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN

Sports Whizz Kid competition-32 Tick the Correct Answer (Competition closes: 8 p.m. April 5, 1996)

Name: Roll No: School Address: Phone: (if any)

Jansher moves into Round Two

CARDIFF, Apr 3: Jansher Khan launched his fifth successive defence of the British Open squash championship with a slightly jaded win over Irish champion Derek Ryan on Tuesday after flying in from Pakistan just a few hours earlier, reports Reuter.

India tame the indomitable



SINGAPORE, Apr 3: Sri Lanka's firebrand batsmen were tamed by Javagal Srinath as India claimed a 12-run victory over the world champions in the Singer Cup match here today, reports AFP.

Srinath took the top three batsmen and Sri Lanka ran out of steam as they went for a modest 199 on a hot and humid day at the Padang ground. Sri Lanka were all out for 187 with 11 balls left.

"It was a bowler's day," said Sri Lankan skipper Arjuna Ranatunga as a thunderstorm loomed. "We played a couple of bad shots — that is where we went wrong."

Srinath — who finished with four for 35 and also hit an unbeaten 28 which brought him the man-of-the-match award — and his new-ball partner Venkatesh Prasad sent back four batsmen with just 23 runs scored.

"Srinath dismissed Romesh Kaluwitharana with his fifth delivery after being struck for a four when the opener pulled a full-toss into the hands of Indian skipper Mohammad Azharuddin.

He then had the better of Sanath Jayasuriya, who Tuesday scored the fastest one-day century against Pakistan. Jayasuriya was caught at short-leg by Sanjay Manjrekar after making just seven.

Aravinda de Silva flicked Prasad into Rahul Dravid's hands at square leg and Srinath caught Marvan Atapattu plumb in front.

Skipper Ranatunga made 13 before falling to left-arm spinner Venkatapathy Raju, caught at short mid-wicket by Azharuddin to reduce his side to 53 for five.

Roshan Mahanama and Hashan Tillekeratne put on 92 for the sixth wicket before the game again turned India's way. After grafting 66 balls for 42, Tillekeratne tried to clear the boundary off Raju and was caught by Prasad.

When Mahanama fell for a gritty 66, which included three boundaries off 124 balls, to a catch by Ajay Jadhav off Raju the Indians sensed victory.

Srinath yanked Chaminda Vaas and a brilliant direct hit by Sachin Tendulkar sent Upul Chandana packing. It was all over when Pramodaya Wickremasinghe was run out in a horrible mix-up with Muttiah Muralitharan.

India's win, after two successive defeats to Sri Lanka in the World Cup, was built around an invaluable 94 by opener Navjot Sidhu, who was taken to hospital for treatment of heat exhaustion afterwards.

The result did not look possible after India lasted only 45.4 overs on a small ground on which Sri Lanka had trounced Pakistan by 34 runs on Tuesday.

"It was a small total but difficult to chase," Azharuddin said. "You can really put pressure on the other side."

Singapore fans a glimpse of his awesome talent, scoring 28 in a 33-run partnership with Sidhu before becoming the first batsman to fall.



Indian saviour Navjot Sidhu drives the ball in yesterday's Singer Cup match against Sri Lanka at the Padang, Singapore. Sidhu scored an invaluable 94.

Table with 4 columns: O, M, R, W. Lists bowling stats for Srinath, Prasad, Kumble, Raju, Tendulkar, and Jadhav.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard table showing runs and wickets for India and Sri Lanka. Includes batting order and bowling figures.

Gazzetta turns hundred

ROME, Apr 3: The Gazzetta Dello Sport, the pink-paged newspaper that no sports-crazy Italian would be seen without, celebrated its 100th birthday today with a bumper 124-page centenary edition, reports Reuter.

The Gazzetta, the oldest sports daily in the world and popularly nicknamed "La Rosa" (the pink one), is an institution in Italy where it is the best selling and most profitable of three sports papers.

As frequent a sight in the nation's bars as a foaming cappuccino and pungent tobacco smoke, the paper makes Europe's other major sports newspaper L'Equipe of France seem a youngster. That paper turned 50 last February.

Today's Gazzetta, with a good-will message from Pope John Paul and the headline "Gazzettissima 100," hit the news stands at the usual price of 1,400 lire (90 cents). A commemorative Italian postage stamp was also issued.

"The Gazzetta of our grandfathers and fathers has today become not just a part of Italy's heritage but the world's," declared editor Candido Cannavo on the front page.

"If I should have to choose the symbol of these celebratory days, I would single out a letter received from Canada saying: 'I am more than 90 and have been reading your paper for 75 years. I can't do without it,' he said.

Elections in sports arena demanded

A general meeting organised by leading sports organisers and personalities to restore democracy in local sports was held at the tent of Young Men's Club, Fakirerpool yesterday with noted sports organiser Zafar Imam in the chair.

According to a source, various points were discussed in the meeting in order to find out the problems prevailing in the sports arena and to establish a permanent democratic system.

After a long discussion, the meeting concluded with four unanimous decisions. These are:

a. A proposal to hold immediate elections in the sports arena will be submitted to the caretaker government soon.

b. Since all the initial works to hold elections in different federations have already been completed, therefore, it is possible to arrange the elections during the tenure of the present government.

c. If the present government does not take any positive step or give any assurance of elections within seven days after submission of the proposal, the present officials of different federations who were in the meeting yesterday will resign from their posts and encourage others to resign with them.

d. A three-member coordinating committee was formed with Zafar Imam, Harunur Rashid and Tanveer Haider which on behalf of the meeting will put forward the demands to the interim government.

A total of 33 persons from different clubs and federations joined the meeting among which the leading personalities other than those mentioned were: Monirul Haque Chowdhury, Shah Abul Kashem, Shamsul Alam Anu, Anwarul Haque Helal, Yusuf Ali, Professor Shah Alam, Mozam Hossain, Shahiduzzaman, Abul Kashem, Nazma Shamim, Karununnahar Dana, Manzur Hossain, Kazi Mishu, Mohammad Selim, Mosharrar Hossain, Mozammel Haque, Mukta, Nabi Chowdhury and Sirajul Islam.

Nat'l women's chess qualifiers from today

The qualifying rounds of the 17th national women's chess championship will begin at the NSC chess room this afternoon at 3 pm.

A total of 13 participants have so far registered their names till last night who will fight for six final round berths.

Defending champion Syeda Shabana Parveen Nipa, runner up Afroza Khanum Baby and two international rated women IWM Rani Hamid and Tanima Farveen will play straight in the final round.

Gazza firm favourite

GLASGOW, Apr 3: Continental England star Paul Gascoigne could cap a typically colourful season by landing Scotland's top player-of-the-year award, reports AFP.

Scotland's 1,000 professionals were issued with voting forms on Monday to decide who wins, the accolade of their peers and the Rangers midfielder — in his first season in Scottish football — is favourite to collect the title.

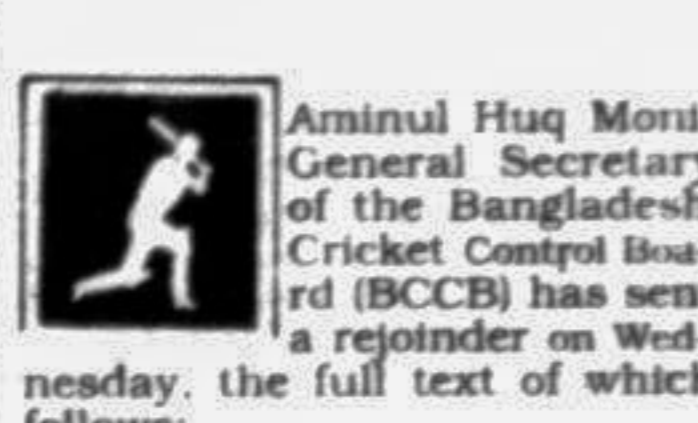
His Rangers colleague Brian Laudrup was a runaway winner of the Professional Footballers Association award last season and will be strongly considered again.

But Gascoigne, who has scored 15 goals and collected 13 domestic yellow cards since his 4.3 million pound move from Italian side Lazio, may just receive the highest number of votes.

The Celtic pair, Dutchman Pierre van Hooydonk and German Andreas Thom, are among those threatening the English midfielder's hopes of winning the players' selection.

Players cannot vote for a player for their own club and forms must be submitted by April 5 before the winner is announced at dinner on April 28.

BCCB tries to clarify



Aminul Haq Monil, General Secretary of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCCB) has sent a rejoinder on Wednesday, the full text of which follows:

Our attention has been drawn to the news item published in the Sports Page of your issue dated March 29 1996 under the caption "Singer Cup in Dhaka" has also the leader on the front page of the same issue entitled "Singer Cup was proposed to be held in Dhaka."

The said items create an impression that the Singer Cup tournament scheduled to be held in Singapore between March 1-7, 1996 was proposed to be staged in Dhaka. We want to make it clear that this contention is erroneous.

As explained to your correspondent by the undersigned BCCB did indeed in 1994 receive a proposal from a commercial organisation regarding holding of a tournament involving leading cricket nations of the sub-continent. The proposal was sketchy since the organisers did not have an exact spot in the busy international cricketing calendar. Moreover, no specific name of a sponsor was mentioned. As such it is a fallacy to conclude that this very same Singer Cup

was slated for Dhaka. It is not correct as contended in the report that BCCB did not put its heart and soul into materialising this offer. What that offer was the severely restricted role of BCCB as proposed. Why even the Singapore Cricket Association is holding the Singer Cup under its own banner.

But we wish to assure cricket lovers that we are alive to the necessity of holding an International Tournament in Dhaka and we plan to organise one during next winter to celebrate the silver jubilee of our independence. Saber Hossain Chowdhury, Vice President, BCCB and promoter of the on-going Singer Cup has been authorised to make all necessary arrangements on behalf of BCCB.

Therefore, I request your goodself to take all necessary steps to publish the content of this letter to dispel the confusion.

OUR RESPONSE

With reference to the BCCB statement in para two and three above that our contention is "erroneous" we would like to quote Saber Hossain Chowdhury, a BCCB Vice President and an organiser of the Singer Cup, as published in our original story.

"I don't see there is any problem working with Ily — it's good to have different views. The whole idea of having four or five guys on the selection committee is to hear different views."

Two selectors will be chosen by the 18 first-class counties. Illingworth said: "It's out of my hands. I shall be stalling the two nominations I would prefer but I did that last time and it didn't mean I got them."



RAY ILLINGWORTH

Ily's uneasy alliance

LONDON, Apr 3: Ian Botham and David Graveney have both been nominated to stand as England selectors in a double move sure to embarrass chairman of selectors Ray Illingworth, it was confirmed on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

No dates have been set for a ballot which could restart the recent anti-Illingworth campaign which has followed England's lack of success.

Former England captain Botham, who has been highly critical of Illingworth, has been put up by both Derbyshire and Northamptonshire.

Graveney, whose challenge for Illingworth's chairman of selectors' job ended in farce when he was forced to withdraw two weeks ago, has been nominated by Gloucestershire.

Derbyshire are also backing Kim Barnett, their captain from 1983 until last year, while Illingworth men Fred Titmus and Brian Bolus are also understood to have been nominated.

Other names, including

Alan Knott, John Edrich and Mike Gatting, have also been mentioned.

But it is Botham and Graveney's confirmed presence in the ballot which shows, dramatically, that the anti-Illingworth feeling of recent weeks is rising again.

Reg Taylor, Derbyshire's secretary said: "I have spoken to Ian and he is delighted to be asked to stand."

"I haven't presumed to tell Ian what the job entails — he's been around long enough to know that. If he's accepted the invitation to stand then I would have thought he is very serious about it."

Botham himself, speaking on television, said he would have no problems working with Illingworth despite previous clashes of opinion.

"We have quite a lot in common, particularly in the way the domestic game is run," Botham said. "I certainly believe we need changes there."

Shaky start for Pierce

HILTON HEAD, South Carolina, Apr 3: Mary Pierce, playing her first tournament in more than a month, edged Gigi Fernandez 6:7 (4-7), 6:3, 6:1 in the first round of the \$26,250 dollars Family Circle Cup tennis tournament on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

Other players who won in the first clay court event of the year included Amanda Coetzer of South Africa who struggled past Kristie Boogert of the Netherlands 4-6, 6-1, 6-3, and Irina Spirlea of Romania who defeated countrywoman Ruxandra Dragomir in yet another clay court marathon 3-6, 6-4, 6-1.

Pierce, whose ranking has slipped from No 5 to 13 due to a 1-2 record in the two tournaments she played last year, appeared wildly inconsistent at the start of her match against Fernandez, ranked 67.

Whether spraying hard-hit groundstrokes or barely covering Fernandez's frequent dropshots, the eighth-seeded Frenchwoman struggled to keep her game and emotions in check.

Fernandez, relying on strong serving and her barely less shaky backcourt play, gained a quick 5-0 lead in the first set tiebreaker. Pierce shaved this lead to 6-3 thanks to two nervous Fernandez double faults, but lost the set

on the next point when Fernandez nailed a forehand winner.

A calmer Pierce bounced back strongly in the second set, however, as her potent groundstrokes began hitting their mark. And as Pierce's game became more confident, Fernandez's eroded into a jumble of double faults and unforced errors.

Pierce broke in the first game of the second set and again, in the ninth game of the 6-3 set, on Fernandez's double faults both times. Continuing her focused play in the third set, the Frenchwoman broke twice more, in the second and sixth games to notch her first victory in two months.

"In the first set I was tentative, and losing made me wake up and realise what I had to do," Pierce said. "I said to myself, just play your game, and I also realised that her backhand was her better shot today, so I started hitting to her forehand more."

"I feel very motivated. I'm hitting the ball well, though I'm not moving great. It will take a tournament or two to get back," she said.

Becker's Davis Cup plans in doubt

MUNICH, Apr 3: Former Wimbledon champion Boris Becker is in danger of having to pull out of Germany's Davis Cup quarterfinal against France in Limoges at the end of this week because of illness, reports Reuter.

Becker, Germany's number one player, flew back to Munich on Tuesday to see a doctor about his bronchitis. German tennis federation (DFB) officials said he was due to return to France today.

But German Davis Cup captain Niki Pilić said: "He is 99 per cent certain of not being able to play any of the singles rubbers. There is still a chance he could play doubles."

With fellow Wimbledon winner Michael Stich unfit to play, Becker's withdrawal would be a major blow to the Germans' chances.

St Petersburg's estimation

ST PETERSBURG, Apr 3: St Petersburg will need at least 2.5 billion dollars to become the host of the 2004 Olympic Games, according to city mayor Anatoly Sobchak, reports AFP.

To get the necessary funds, Sobchak and the state Duma Deputies representing St Petersburg set up the so-called Neva Initiative Group, Interfax reported.

"If St Petersburg is chosen to be the venue for the Olympic Games, 900 million dollars will arrive in the form of an interest-free loan in accordance with rules of the International Olympic Committee," said Sobchak. "Private investments and foreign banks' credits will also be attracted."

"St Petersburg ranks third in the world's tourist chart, which gives our city an additional chance," he said.

Bruno in a dilemma

LONDON, Apr 3: More than two weeks after losing his WBC heavyweight title to Mike Tyson, Frank Bruno is still undecided about his future, reports AP.

"I'm still not sure what I'm going to do," he told BBC Radio on Tuesday. "I don't want to make a hasty decision, which I will regret later on... I've got to decide whether I'm going to carry on boxing or if I'm going to stop boxing — and if I stop boxing, what I am going to do."

Bruno, 34, outpointed Oliver McCall for the WBC title last September. In his first defense, he was stopped by Tyson in the third round of their March 16 bout in Las Vegas.

The British media and many of Bruno's fans have since urged him to retire.

"I'm not disregarding their opinions," Bruno said. "But this is one of the toughest decisions I have had to face. There are so many different things going through my mind at the moment. If I was going to make any commitment now I might only embarrass myself later on. There are a lot of offers coming in. I'm not going to rush myself."

Bruno in a dilemma

me a pile of old Gazzettas," he said. "It has been a part of my family life."

Monday's edition, the biggest of the week after Sunday's soccer, had a print run of 825,301 copies.

The morning after Italy beat Germany 3-1 in the gripping 1982 World Cup soccer final in Spain, some 1,409,403 copies were sold with a one-word headline: "Fantastico."

That figure was beaten in 1989 when AC Milan won the European Cup and 1,486,110 copies were sold.

Founded three days before the first modern Olympics in Athens, the Gazzetta started out on green-coloured paper as the fusion of "the cyclist" and "the tricycle."

By 1900 it had turned pink and soon became active in organising some of the nation's leading events.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words.

Cryptogram puzzle with grid and key: TRZBZE XYSCRMWLZE DL D R M J U Z E M Z X L S E Z L E M Z X U B M J U C S R M T Z S W W M T Z E L Y Z X R M C. Yesterday's Cryptogram: IT'S FRIGHTENING OF ALL CAREERS, POLITICS IS THE MOST PROMISING.