

BCB Eleven announced

Sports Reporter



An 18-member Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) Eleven will leave for India tomorrow to take part in a sub-junior cricket tournament, scheduled to begin in Shillong from December 9.

The BCB XI, who have been pencilled in to Group X along with three other local sides, will play their first match against UAC (Alipurduar) on December 11. They will play their second group league match against BJA CCC 'B' on the following day.

The juvenile selection, the lone foreign participant in the eight-team meet, will play their last group league match on December 13 against Agragame CCC, the host of the invitational tourney.

All the matches will be held at the Dadabhai ground.

The members of the BCB XI: Dipu Roy Chowdhury (manager), Sarwar Imran (coach), Rayan Islam (cap), Anwar Hossain (vice-captain), Mohtuiddin Siddiqi, Bishwajit Roy, Nasiruddin, Mohammed Kalim, Nasir Iqbal, Arafat Jahan Khan, Shariful Islam, Mirza Shams Mahmud, Towhidur Rahman, Ali Shah, Ahmed Habib, Ali Irteza, Imrahim Sabar and Golam Mostafa.

Navy tennis

CHITTAGONG, Dec 7: The annual tennis and squash championships of the Bangladesh Navy will begin at BNS Issa Khan from tomorrow, reports BSS.

Colts' perfect riposte

Sports Reporter

When the seniors continued their dismal showings in New Zealand, the colts of the country's cricket lived up to their true potential when the national under-20 team lifted the Youth Asia Cup with an astounding 256-run win over Papua New Guinea (PNG) in Hong Kong yesterday.

BRIEF SCORES

BAHAGADESH: 347 all out in 50 overs (Rashedul 105, Sabbir 72, Hannan 54, Mushfiqur 40; Was 5/56)
PAPUA NEW GUINEA: 91 all out in 34.4 overs (W Vela 19; Tawkir 4/6, Ahsanullah 2/25, Sajal Chowdhury 2/32)
Result: Bangladesh won by 256 runs.

The final, which offered a repeat clash after Bangladesh's stinging 21-run defeat at the hands of PNG in their last second round match on Friday, saw the kamikaze kids of coach Jalal Ahmed Chowdhury exacting a sweet revenge at the KCC ground.

One-down Rashedul scored a repeat 105 and skipper Sabbir Khan blasted a hurricane 28-ball knock of 72 to guide Bangladesh to a mammoth total of 347 in their share of 50 overs.

The gangling Bangladesh captain, who is better known for his off-spinning prowess,

then led his side from the front to shot the besieged PNG out for a meagre 91 in 34.4 overs to mark their qualification into the final round of the World Youth Cup cricket championship, as a worthy champions.

Although Bangladesh, by virtue of their national team's triumph in the ICC Trophy, have been ensured of a berth in the World Youth Cup, scheduled to kick-off in South Africa from next January, even before playing a single match in the Asian zone qualifying round, the success of the youth team established their supremacy over other associate member nations of Asia. PNG meanwhile grabbed the other Asian slot in the World Cup by making it to the HK final.

The desire of the determined colts was however crystal clear when Sabbir, after calling the coin correctly in the morning, opted to use the wicket first.

His decision soon turned out to be a nightmarish experience for the toothless PNG bowlers as Bangladesh batsmen launched a terrific assault on the vanquished.

Opener Hannan Sharker started the onslaught with a breezy 54 off 45 balls inclusive of five fours and three sixes before Rashedul came up with that brilliant 68-ball century. It was the only hundred scored in the meet.

The lithe right-hander clouted ten fours and a quartet of sixes in his whirlwind innings before becoming one of

the five victims of Dicana, who finished with five for 56 in his eight expensive overs.

But the Bangladesh innings gained momentum when Sabbir came in to bat at number six. The young stroke-maker, who virtually set the tiny KCC ground afire with a flurry of shots, clubbed half a dozen sixes and five fours in his 28-ball pyrotechnics.

The office then, opening the Bangladesh attack along with right-arm seamer Sajal Chowdhury, pinned down PNG batsmen with his accurate spin bowling. Sabbir conceded only nine runs in his seven economic overs. Although he captured only one wicket, he made PNG, who were left with a mind-boggling task of scoring a little less than 6.5 runs per over, sweat to score against his niggling off-spinners.

They lost their wickets at regular intervals. Whenever their batsman tried to broke the shackles put around by leg-spinner Towkir Hossain, who finished with four for only six runs in his 4.4 overs, they got themselves out.

The national youth team are scheduled to return home today. They will, however, enjoy a month's recess before their trip to South Africa, where they will play alongside the selections of nine Test-playing nations. The World Youth Cup, which was introduced by the ICC for the first time, will begin from January 10.

ICC meet in India today

Sports Reporter

The Taj Bengal Hotel of Calcutta arrests the attention of cricketers world when the supreme of the International Cricket Council (ICC) Jagmohan Dalmiya along with his fifteen executive committee members sits there today to finalise the venue for the proposed special World Cup.

Saber Hossain Chowdhury, the president of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) who is now in Calcutta to attend the two-day meeting, will certainly keep his fingers crossed for a decision in favour of Dhaka, one of the four contenders to host the gala event involving nine Test-playing nations.

But Bangladesh's bid to hold a meet of such magnitude is likely to face a tough challenge from other prospective bidders like Disneyworld of the United States, Toronto of Canada and a proven desert venue of Sharjah.

Bangladesh's hopes however revolve around the assurance of Dalmiya, who in his brief visit to Dhaka on November 18, termed the infrastructure here "as reasonably well and absolutely as required".

The ICC has decided to organise an special World Cup in October next year in a bid to raise funds for the over-all development of the game. The tournament will be played on knock-out basis.

C'bury crush Bangladesh

Sports Reporter

BRIEF SCORES

CANTERBURY: 266 for nine in 50 overs (Howell 58, Cumming 58, Stead 36; Saifuddin 4/37, Hasibul 3/51)
BAHAGADESH: 154 all out in 42.4 overs (Akram 51 not out, Matruh 30; Owens 3/19, Stead 3/23)

The touring Bangladesh cricketers maintained their amazing consistency in losing when they conceded a massive 112 runs defeat against a strong Canterbury side in a limited-overs exhibition match at Hagley Park, Canterbury yesterday.

Bangladesh skipper Akram Khan asked his Canterbury counterpart and formula New Zealand captain Lee Germon to bat first under overcast conditions. The Canterbury select boasting as many as three New Zealand caps piled up a huge 266 for nine in the stipulated 50 overs with Howell and Cumming chipping with identical scores of 58 while Stead made a quickfire 36. Howell was particularly severe on the Bangladesh bowlers clobbering his runs off only 43 deliveries.

Among the Bangladesh bowlers, Saifuddin Ahmed had superb figures of four for 37 in his ten overs. He was well supported by his new-ball partner Hasibul who took three for 51.

The target turned out to be an uphill task for Akram's boys. And true to their reputation they caved in for 154 without ever seriously trying to give the Kiwis a scare. Only the portly skipper stood tall among the ruins with an unbeaten 51 as the innings ended in 42.4 overs.

Stead and Owens grabbed three wickets apiece for Canterbury.

The national cricketers who have lost all their previous tour matches (apart from the ones in which weather intervened) will play their last Shell Conference engagement against Bill Academy at Lincoln. The four-day affair will begin from Dec 9.

BJMC sports

The two-day long annual athletic competition of Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) ended at Karipon Mills premises at Demra yesterday, says a press release.

In all 236 athletes including 72 women from Adamjee, Khulna, Dhaka, Chittagong zones and BJMC head office participated.

Lovely Begum of Khulna zone became the fastest woman and Farid Khan Chowdhury of Adamjee fastest man of the meet.

Khulna zone became champion securing 11 gold and 123 points. Adamjee finished runners-up with 10 gold and 88 points while Dhaka zone took third place with 9 gold and 75 points.

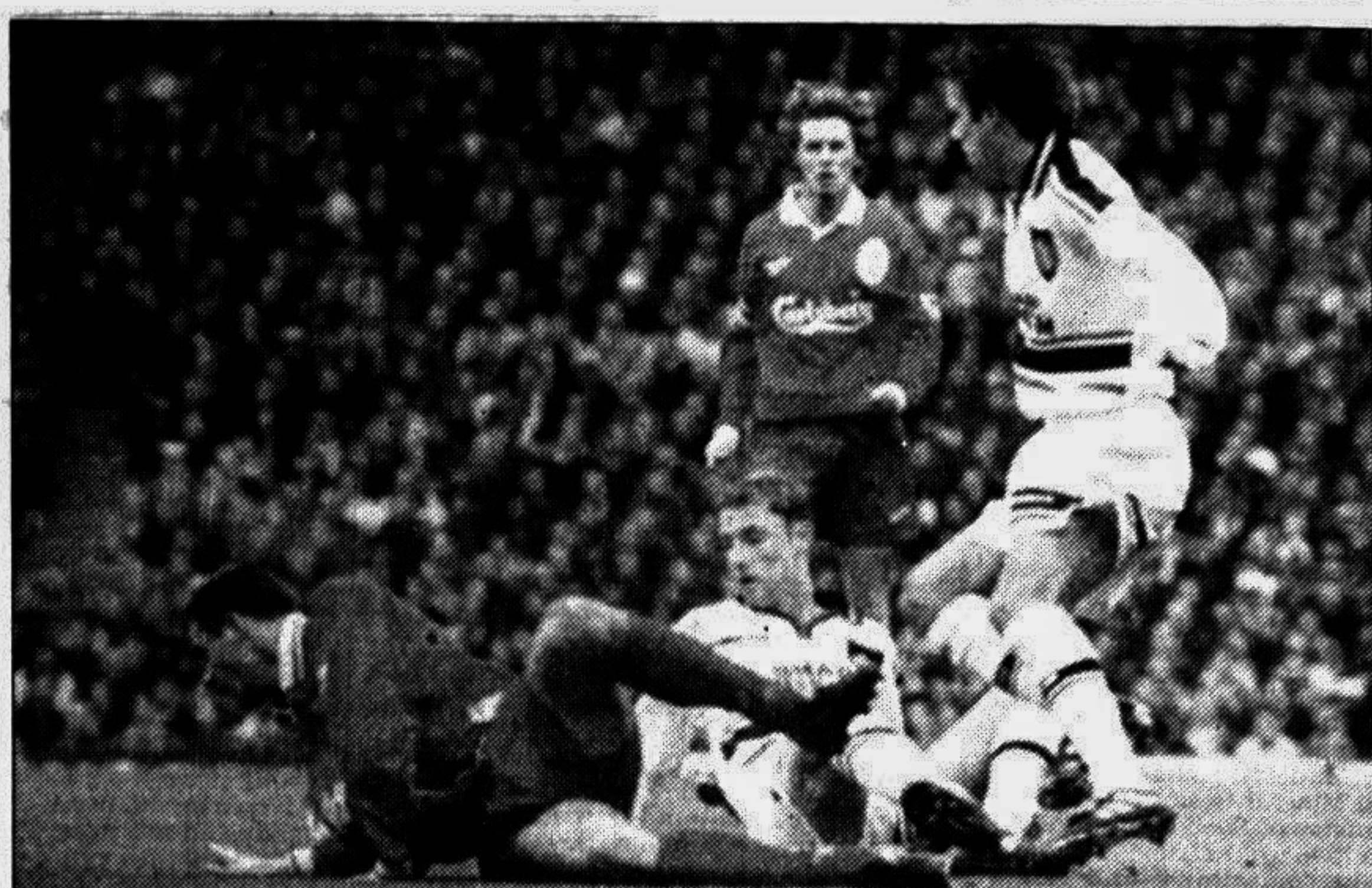
Nicol, the new king

BOMBAY, Dec 7: Scotland's Peter Nicol may be the new world number one after beating Jansher Khan 9-15, 15-9, 9-15, 15-12, 15-5 on Saturday and retaining the title in the last major tournament of the year, the Mahindra International, reports Reuters.

Although the official calculations will not be made until later in the month, the second seed was claiming the top spot after an exhausting 96-minute final.

TODAY'S MATCHES

Jamshankha Premier Division Cricket League: Kalabagan KC vs Azad SC (Dharmadip Cricket Stadium) Biman vs Ajax SC (BKSP)
First Division Cricket League: GMCC vs City Club (City Club ground)
Premier Division Football League: Fakirpur vs Rahmatganj MFS (Mirpur Stadium, 2 pm)
Brothers Union vs Parashganj SC (Mirpur Stadium, 4 pm)
First Division Football League: BRTC SC vs Dhaka Wanderers Club (Army Stadium, 2:30 pm)



A midfield scramble between players of Liverpool and Manchester United during their Premiership clash at Anfield, Liverpool on Dec 6. Leaders United won 3-1. — AP/UNB photo

'No match-fixing by Indian cricketers'

G Viswanath

One of the terms of reference from the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) to former Chief Justice of India Y V Chandrachud was to investigate into whether any Indian cricketer was in a manner involved in betting or match-fixing as alleged in The Outlook. Chandrachud spoke recently to the following present cricketers and also team physio for ten years, Dr Ali Irani.

Justice Chandrachud concluded after examining the following statements that, "This then is the state of evidence before me. Taking all relevant circumstances and the broad probabilities of the case into account, particularly the Indian conditions of which I may be assumed to be intimately aware, I accept without hesitation the statements of the cricketers."

"Accordingly, my answer is that the data before me does not show that any Indian player has ever taken part in match-fixing or that any of them lay bets on cricket for the purpose of match fixing so as to lose a match."

There is undoubtedly large scale betting on cricket, but that is a law and order problem. Betting, like drinking is a common human weakness since the beginning of the world. There are copious references to those infirmities of human nature in all classics of the world.

"One cannot, therefore, rule out the possibility that some Indian players may be laying the flutter of a bet. But it is insufficient to conclude that they lay bets for losing a match. Such a charge lacks substance and is unjustified."

Manoj Prabhakar: "My story is true. I did not speak out for three years because I wanted to play cricket. It is not correct that I have made up the story because I was put out of the team. I was thrown out of the team because I was not treated well."

In England and Australia betting is legalised. Even players can bet but they cannot bet to lose. When the bookies lose, they blame the cricketers for deliberately playing badly.

"I cannot disclose the names of teammates or of any other person involved in offering the bribe to me for losing the game because if I do so, my life will be in danger. I was threatened to that effect by person who offered me a bribe. I am also afraid that I will be sued or prosecuted for defamation if I disclose the names."

"I have no evidence to prove my statements. There will be my word against their word. The prosecution or the suit will ruin me totally. These are the reasons why, initially, I did not speak out for three years and why, now, I cannot disclose the names of the culprits."

Sachin Tendulkar: "I do not believe that matches are fixed or can be fixed. While playing the game of cricket, you never know what is in store for you as you know in an examination when you read your books and

answer the questions. There is no prescribed syllabus in a report. There are surprises galore. Within my knowledge, no match has ever been fixed. I never got the feeling that any of my team-mates deliberately played a bad shot to get out."

"Speaking for myself, I am so made that I decide to take an occasional risk which works most of the times, but fails occasionally. A batsman who can deliberately get out, would indeed be a super technician. He will use his expertise for playing well rather than getting out."

"We now make such handsome money merely by playing for the country, that it would be suicidal for any player to play badly deliberately. For example, between May 1996 and May 1997 we played 15 international matches for which, each of us received a sum of about Rs 40 lakhs from the BCCI. I feel it is impossible to believe that any player would risk being dropped out of the team for deliberate bad play and lose not only the honour of playing for his country, but the opportunity to earn so much money by lawful means."

The statements made by Manoj Prabhakar have no foundation. He has made a specific allegation that in the Indo-Pak match which was played in Sri Lanka in the Singer Cup series in 1994, a teammate had offered him Rs 25 lakhs to play badly. If Manoj had the courage to say this, he should have had the courage to name the player."

Mohammad Azharuddin: "I do not think that any match can be fixed. It has taken me 14 long years to build up some reputation as a player. I cannot think of destroying it by playing badly with deliberate motive."

"It is true that I dress well. I also like to live in good style. I have a house in Hyderabad and a flat in Bombay. My accounts are quite clear. The Tax Authorities are the best judges of that. I do not know if there is betting in cricket. But I know this for certain that none of my teammates bet."

Nayan Mongia: "Matches are not fixed at all. I have been playing Test cricket since November-December 1993. I came to know about the expression 'Fixing of matches' from newspapers only. As a member of the Indian team I have never experienced it. The truth is that we are playing so much cricket these days that there are more ups and downs in individual performance now than before. In 1996-97 we played 30-35 one dayers and 11-12 Test matches. We were away from home for about five months."

"I think it is crazy that any player will bet to lose. I have never heard even a whisper of it from any teammate. We spend years and years to train ourselves and are lucky to be selected in the national team. Then to think that we will bet to lose makes no sense. Thereby, we will ruin and sacrifice all that we have achieved."

"We earn about Rs 40 lakhs a year officially from the BCCI. In addition, we make quite some money in other lawful ways as in advertisements. There is no need to look beyond it. The team meets very often. We are together for long hours, we discuss our strategy, but never, never is there even a whisper of fixing a match or of betting."

Ajay Jadeja: "Fixing a match requires great amount of homogeneity which is not to be found in a pronounced manner in our team. The team is composed of players from different parts of India and they have not much in common between them. It is not as if we are not friendly to each other. But we do not know each other so intimately that any one or two of us can take other players into confidence and fix a match."

"People watch the game for the thrill of its uncertainty. It is ironical that whoever does not do well is presumed to be bought over and it is as if the match played by the bookies and not by us. When you are included in the Test team, you think only of your performance and not of money. Cricket is a religion in India and if the numerous spectators even suspect that a player takes a bribe to play badly, they will boycott him and destroy his family socially."

A match can be fixed by getting at the star players in the team. But even tail enders have turned the fortune of a game as it happened in the match we played on 10th October 1997 between Pakistan and South Africa."

Some figures are interesting. A great player like Gavaskar who scored 130 centuries in first class matches was out for a duck on 20 occasions. In his last match, Gavaskar needed only four runs to bid farewell with a century, but he was out for 96. That is exactly what happened to Sir Don Bradman, the greatest of us all."

Dr Ali Irani (team physio): "I have been working as a physiotherapist of the Indian team since 1987 when the Reliance World Cup was played. The only occasion when I did not go with the team as a physiotherapist was to the West Indies and Pakistan in 1989 and to New Zealand at about the same time."

"It is impossible that any of the Indian players can be fixed or any of our players can be got at. There is just no possibility of one player in the Indian team influencing another player or other players. When the Indian team won the series against England, West Indies and Sri Lanka between 1993-94 people started saying that West Indies took money and lost matches."

"People are generally prone to forming opinions after hearing the TV commentary. That is why they talk the same way. If TV were made mute, very few people will be able to say or write anything original. Cricket is not a sport, but a religion."

Source: The Hindu newspaper of India

Coaches dwell on the WC draw

The thirty-two team draw for the 1998 World Cup in France gave the top countries the easiest group matches they could have wished for. But the fixture promises a rugged future for a few aspirants in the second round of the month-long footballing fiesta. The coaches of thirty-one countries expressed mixed reactions soon after the draw was held in Marseille on December 4. Source: InterNet archives.



GROUP A

1. Brazil
Coach: Mario Zagalo: "We have already lost against Norway after 48 matches under-

round. We will be making careful preparations to achieve this goal."

3. Cameroon
Player: Jacques Song'o: "I think this group is quite playable, and obviously, with teams like this, there can only be difficult matches. You can't choose your opponents. Italy is a major hurdle, but we have to play well against every team. We have to do as well as in Spain or Italy and erase the image we left in 1994."

4. Austria
Coach: Herbert Prohaska: "I think that Italy is the big favourite but the second qualifying slot is still very open with teams like Cameroon and Chile. But we have a great opportunity to qualify and we are going to do our utmost to seize it."

GROUP C
1. France
Coach: Aime Jacquet: "It has been an excellent final draw for us, because we know our opponents well. But the only verdict will be that of the pitch. We

must remember that Denmark beat us and we suffered before beating South Africa. Saudi Arabia is a difficult opponent, but it is Denmark that we must be very careful with."

2. South Africa
Danny Jordaan: "It could have been worse. We are happy to play against France. It's wonderful. We hope to pass the first round at least in second place."

3. Saudi Arabia
Assistant Coach: "We are very happy with the final draw. We are going to prepare our team to be competitive. Of the 32 groups, none are bigger or smaller than the others."

4. Denmark
Coach: Bo Johansson: "It's been a good draw. France is favourite and Denmark can take second place. The only objective is to win the World Cup, taking each game as it comes. I hope we will play good football, this is important."

GROUP D
1. Spain
Coach: Javier Clemente: "It will be difficult for Spain. These teams have experience and a high level. Despite everything, I am confident and calm. My objective is the same as that of all the other teams: to make it to the Final. In any case, we will be playing with high hopes. We are here to win."

2. Nigeria
Mr Nwobodo Jim (former minister of youth and sports): "Spain is a very good team. The other two are as well, but we have a good chance of making it through the first round. It's not really to our advantage to play against Bulgaria again."

"We can go very far and we hope to play the Final against France. The goal is to get past the quarter finals, a feat never accomplished by an African country."

3. Paraguay
Coach: Paulo Cesar Carpegiani: "Group D is a difficult one, very strong but balanced. In any case, it will be difficult for us. We will proceed step by step. We have a good chance of making it through the first round. Bulgaria is a team with a lot of tactical experience. Spain is stable in every category of the game. Nigeria is a fast and physically strong team."

4. Bulgaria
Coach: Hristo Bonev: "We were a little worried before the draw. The three teams are all

pretty strong. We know Spain and Nigeria well as we have already confronted them in the past. We have a revenge to take on Nigeria, who beat us in the last World Cup. As for Paraguay, we will get to know them better during the qualifying round."

"We will try to give our best possible performance. All our players are internationally known and most of them play in well-known foreign clubs. We will try to defend the reputation we have acquired these last years. Our first ambition is to come out on top. Afterwards, we will take the matches as they come."

GROUP E
1. Netherlands
Coach: Guus Hiddink: "I am not unhappy with the results, compared with those of some other groups. I wouldn't say that it will be easy either. We already know Belgium well and the other two countries have quality teams. Our primary objective is to get past the first round, but the most important is obviously to be there on the 12th of July."

2. Belgium
Coach: Georges Leekens: "The draw could have been better as we always find ourselves against the Netherlands. But I accept it. It's going to come down to Mexico and Belgium. The most important is to beat Korea and Mexico. We can go to the round of 16. The match schedule both sides because it favours Korea and Mexico. We play early in the afternoon, in June, and it will be hot. Our objective is second place, but we must be careful with the Mexicans. We'll have to play a perfect match."

3. South Korea
Coach: Cha Bum-Kun: "I think that all the teams in our group are stronger than we are. But I am satisfied with the draw. We have played in the Cup 4 times already and each time, we never made it through to the final stages. This time, we hope to go further."

4. Mexico
Coach: Manuel Lapuente: "We knew that all the groups are difficult, but we are taking it philosophically. The ceremony was a great success. We'll have to work a lot and play many matches in Europe. We have the time to train."

GROUP F
1. Germany
Coach: Hans-Hubert Vogts: "We're not going to complain about the draw. We know all our

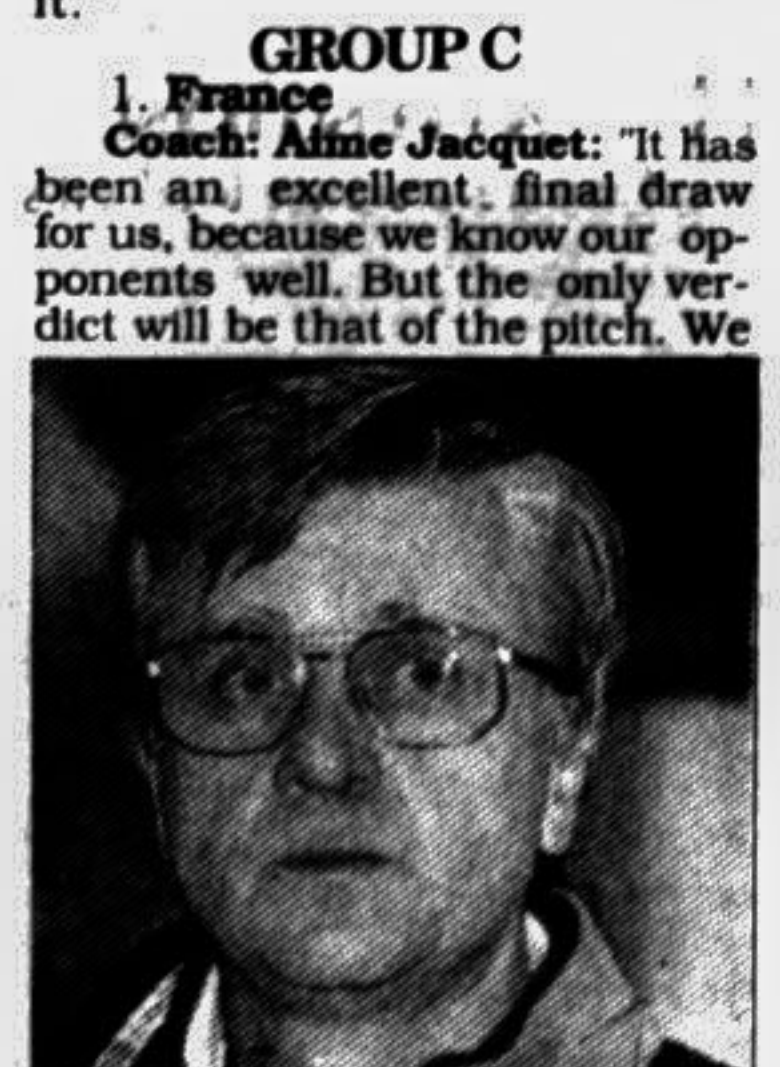
opponents and we won't be underestimating any of them. We can only be delighted with this draw."

2. United States
Coach: Steve Sampson: "It's a difficult group, playing against Germany and Yugoslavia will be tough. As for Iran, we know less about them. Two of our players have already had experience with German sides, and that might be useful to us. We have a good chance of making it through the first round. Our 1994 experience will be important for us. Perhaps we can pull off a surprise?"

3. Yugoslavia
Coach: Slobodan Santrac: "We're delighted with our opponents. They're good competitors. It's up to us to prove what we can do and come up with the

goods. All in all, we are very optimistic."

4. Iran
President: Dariussh Mostafavi: "We've worked very hard for this moment for 20 years. Ours is not a difficult group but we will have to work hard to pull off a great World Cup."



MARIO ZAGALO

feated, but my players were jet-lagged. The World Cup will give us a chance to take our revenge. Brazil will be playing better than ever at this World Cup."

2. Scotland
Coach: Craig Brown: "It's a great honour to play the opening game. We played against Brazil three times during previous World Cups and we lost. We are also delighted about the cities we'll be playing in (St-Denis, St-Etienne, Bordeaux). Our opponents are all ranked higher than us in the FIFA table, but we have no inferiority complex whatsoever. Our aim is to finish second in our group. Logically Brazil should be first."

3. Morocco
Coach: Henri Michel: "A difficult draw, with Brazil the Cup holders, as well as Norway which has had a series of good results since the World Cup in 1994. Scotland seems to be making a come-back to the top flight and their sense of commitment scares me as we're not used to that. Perhaps we'll have to modify our training methods. Our aim is to qualify for the second round. This Gala match was an excellent idea; there was a really warm atmosphere."

4. Norway
Coach: Egil Olsen: "This draw is better than the one in 1994 with Ireland, Italy and Mexico. This time, we have a chance of getting through the first round. If we play Brazil which might have six points by the last game, that might give us a chance. The Brazilians' style is completely different from ours. That might give us a chance. As soon as I saw the group, I thought that Brazil would come out on top. Yet we've already beaten them once this year, 4-2. Everyone realizes that it will be a tough job beating them twice, particularly in the space of one year."

GROUP B
1. Italy
Coach: Cesare Maldini: "The draw has been fairly kind to us, although nothing is ever sure. For the moment, I think that we won't have too many problems getting through the first round, but we mustn't underestimate Austria which had a good run in the qualifying rounds."

2. Chile
Coach: Nelson Acosta: "All the groups, especially ours, are difficult, but I remain optimistic. To begin with, we hope to get through to the second

round. We will be making careful preparations to achieve this goal."

3. Cameroon
Player: Jacques Song'o: "I think this group is quite playable, and obviously, with teams like this, there can only be difficult matches. You can't choose your opponents. Italy is a major hurdle, but we have to play well against every team. We have to do as well as in Spain or Italy and erase the image we left in 1994."

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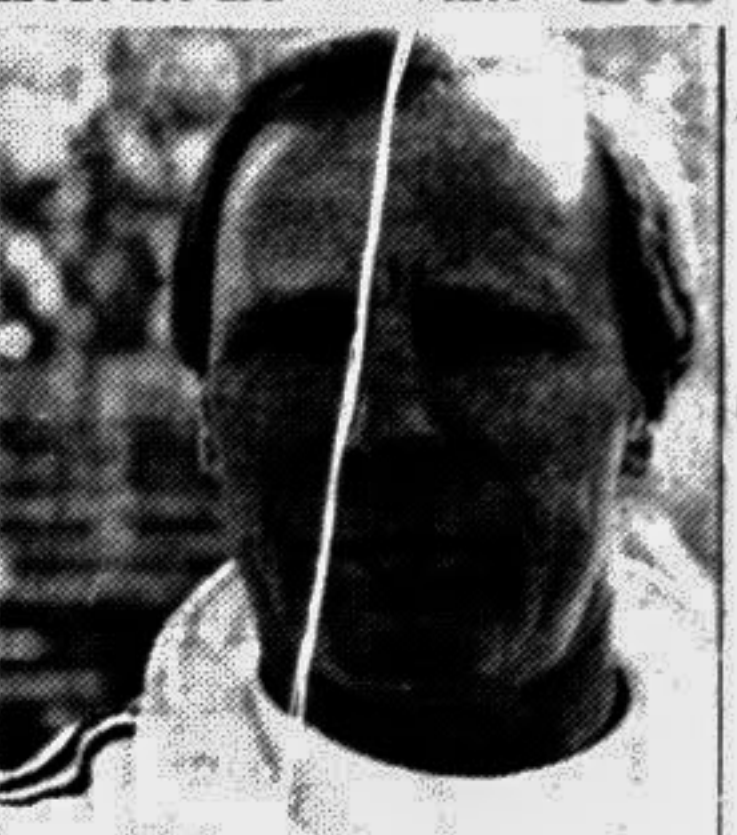
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BERNDT VOGTS

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