

Column One

Boost sports WHIZZ KID

COMPETITION FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN Competition-86

✓ Tick the Correct Answers

Competition closes at 8 pm on Jan 9, 1998

- 1 Who is the Australia cricket coach? Liller Marsh Simpson
- 2 Who is the Argentina soccer coach? Passarella Venables Cruyff
- 3 Which county will Lara lead next year? Essex Durham Warwickshire
- 4 Who hit the first century in this year's Premier Division cricket league? Nadim Saeed Kazmi
- 5 Who lifted the women's singles title of the national TT championships? Lulu Tumpa Zulekha

Name .....

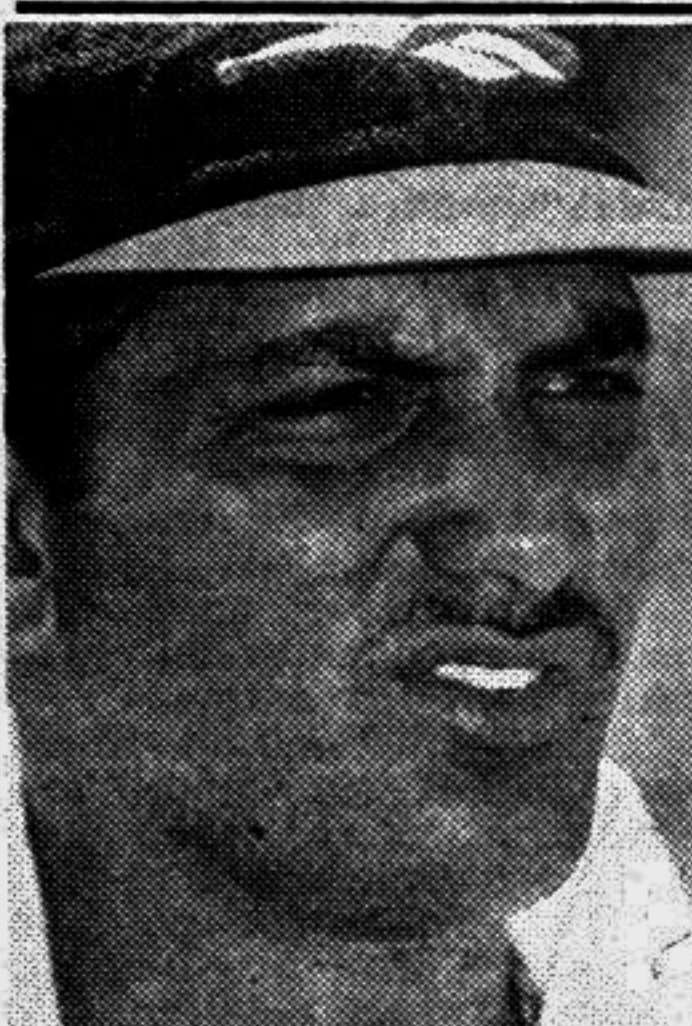
Class ..... Roll No. ....

School Address .....

Phone: (if any) .....

EN-VITS ENERGY RELEASING VITAMINS

SPORTS TALK



Mohammad Azharuddin (Indian cricket captain) "It gives me a fresh lease of life when everyone had written me off."

After being reappointed as the skipper.

Exhibition h'ball

Touring German SRS handball team outplayed Bangladesh Handball Federation President's Eleven by 20-8 goals to record their second successive win at the Mirpur Indoor Stadium yesterday, reports UNB.

Bjorkman advances

ADELAIDE, Jan 5: Top seed Jonas Bjorkman of Sweden cruised into the second round of the Australian men's hardcourt tennis championships Monday with a 6-4, 6-2 win over South African Grant Stafford, reports AP.

Bjorkman, who will play Australian Jason Stoltenberg in the next round following Stoltenberg's 6-4, 6-1 win over Spain's Juan Antonio Marin, said he was nervous in his first match of 1998.

In two upsets, American Vincent Spadea beat sixth-seeded German Nicolas Pietrangeli 6-3, 4-6, 6-4 and Jan Siemerink of the Netherlands defeated eighth seed Dominik Hrbaty of Slovakia 6-3, 6-7 (5-7), 6-3.

Stoltenberg is hoping this year will be a better for him than 1997.

Wrist surgery kept him off the Australian circuit last season and, fed up with a deteriorating knee injury and preoccupied by the birth of his first child, he packed the rackets away after the US Open.

"Tennis-wise I couldn't wait for the year to end," Stoltenberg said. "My mind wasn't on the job."

In other results seventh seed Thomas Johansson beat former hardcourt finalist Byron Black 7-5, 6-3. New Zealand's Brett Stevens beat Frenchman Lionel Rux 6-3, 6-3 and Czech Republic's Slava Dosedel defeated Italy's Andrea Gaudenzi 4-6, 6-2, 6-1.

TODAY'S MATCHES

Premier Division Football League: Agrani Bank SC vs Arambagh KS (Mirpur Stadium, 2:15 pm) Badda Jagarani vs Bangladesh Boys Club (Army Stadium, 2:15 pm) First Division Cricket League: Gulshan Youth vs Orient SC (City Club)



Groundsmen at the Dhaka Stadium taking the covers off in order to dry up the pitch after the sun shone for the first time in two days due to fog. —Star photo

Muktis remain on top

Sports Reporter

TEAMS MUHTIJODDHA SANGSAD KC: Arun, Hasan-Al-Mamun, Jewel Rana, Rajani, Tito, Masood Rana, Swapan, Rupu, (Paritosh), Gaus, Aliyu Rahman and Naki. RAHMATGANJ MFS: Pannu, Biplab, Ibrahim, Shakil, Shafique (Adil), Monir (Tipu), Asif (Javed), Nayan, Badal, Milan and Saiful. Referee: Ibrahim Nesar. CHALANTIKA'S EIGHTH: Away at the Army Stadium, Mirpur Chalantika recorded their eighth win in the First Division football league blanking East End Club 2-0.

Moin stars for Bima

Sports Reporter

SADHARAN BIMA KS: 203 for seven in 40 overs (Rajinder Singh 66, Moin 36, Tariqul 33, Gary 16; Rana 2/14) GMCC: 178 all out in 38 overs (Mitu 55, Bablu 38, Saifulah 18, Moin 3/25, Mintu 2/27, Ratan 2/26) Result: Sadharan Bima won by 25 runs. An all-round performance by Moinuzzaman Moin guided Sadharan Bima Krishna Sangstha to a 25-run victory over Greater Mymensingh Cricket Club (GMCC) in a First Division cricket league encounter at the City Club ground in Mirpur yesterday.

J-League staring at doom

TOKYO, Jan 5: Japan is still celebrating its success in qualifying for the World Cup finals for the first time, but the J-League championship faces its biggest crisis since it started in 1993, reports AFP. Several clubs are on the verge of collapse and the league's leaders are desperately hoping financial fallout from the World Cup qualification hits them soon.

The league is pressing ahead with plans to expand to a 19 team First Division and a Second Division from 1999, but average attendances fell this season to 10,131, down from 16,922 in 1995, and 19,598 at the peak in 1994.

Two-time champions Verdy Kawasaki, Yokohama Flügels and JEF United Ichihara have all indicated they may withdraw from the league, while Shimizu S-Pulse are on the verge of bankruptcy and Bellmare Hiratsuka, Sanfrecce Hiroshima and Avispa Fukuoka are struggling with financial problems.

Sanfrecce Hiroshima winners of the 1994 first stage, has cut wages by up to 49 per cent. All its best players, including South Korean international Noh Jung-Yoon, have left or are leaving.

Verdy Kawasaki, which has Kazuyoshi Miura, Tsuyoshi Kitazawa and Atlanta Olympic hero Masakiyo Maezono, said it would reduce staff and introduce a wage system based on wages and player performance. Another exodus is expected.

Despite the World Cup qualifying success and Japan's ranking of 20th in the world, domestic football's image is not good. Masatake Matsuda, president of East Japan Railway, which has threatened to sell its 50 per cent stake in Ichihara, said: "Japanese football is some 30 years behind advanced countries."

"We started to support the A fiery party!" LAGOS, Jan 5: Gunshots were fired to disperse thousands of fans at the wedding of Nigerian international footballer Austin "Jay Jay" Okocha, reports AFP.

Faruque doubtful

Selectors meet today

Sports Reporter

The return of former national skipper Faruque Ahmed in the top flight was thrown in doubt due to injury.

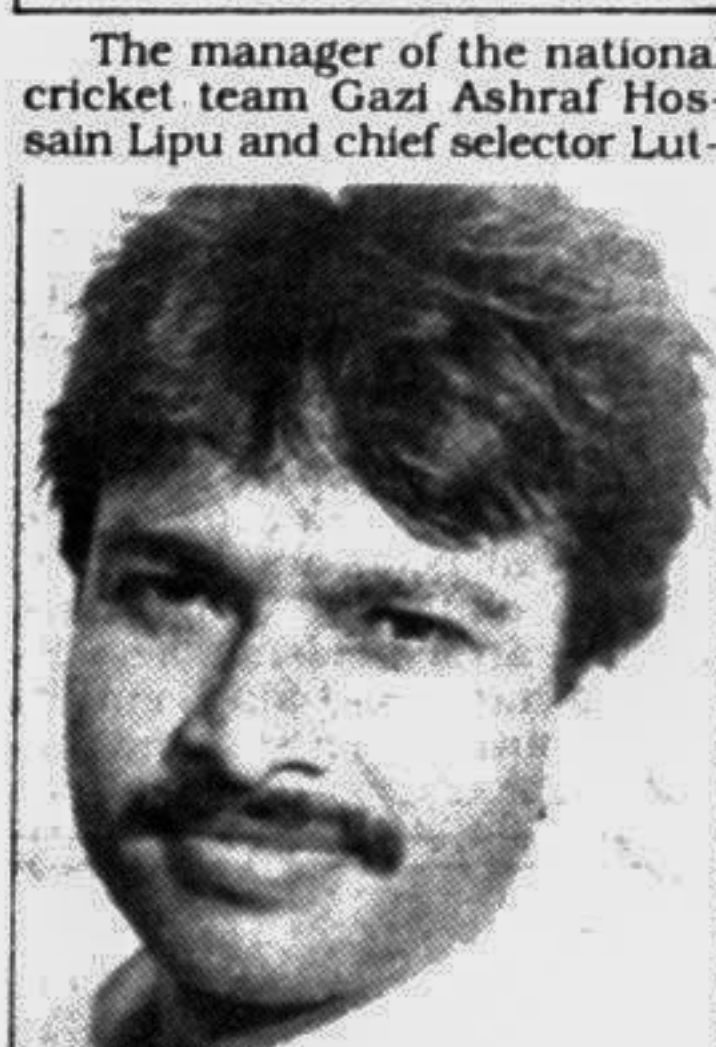
Although Faruque's fate is likely to be decided today when the selectors meet to pick the final Bangladesh squad for the Coca-Cola Independence Cup, the dependable middle-order batsman looked almost certain to miss the tri-nation tourney.

Faruque, who sustained a groin injury a month ago and aggravated it during an exhibition match between Bangladesh Eleven and the South Africa-bound youth team on Sunday, did not attend yesterday's practice session at the Dhaka Stadium.

"I have taken injections. But at this moment I'm not in a position to confirm whether I will be fit within the next few days," said a grim-faced Faruque yesterday.



The manager of the national cricket team Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipu and chief selector Lut-



FARUQUE AHMED

far Rahman Makhan, who were present during the practice session, also confirmed that Faruque's injury was serious.

"This is certainly a severe blow for us to miss the services of Faruque who seemed to be in fine fettle," quipped Gazi Ashraf.

MSC storm into semis

Sports Reporter

VICTORIA SC: 85 all out in 27.1 overs (Kala 33, Nafiz 11; Minhajul Abedin 4/10, Jahangir Talukder 3/17, Hasibul 2/28) MOHAMMEDAN SC: 86 for one in 18.2 overs (Mehrab Hossain 48 not out, Parvez 16, Selim Shahed 14 not out) Result: Mohammedan SC won by nine wickets.

Favourites Mohammedan Sporting Club got off to a sound start in the Bijo Dabsh cricket tournament with a thumping nine-wicket defeat on Victoria Sporting Club at the BKSP ground in Savar yesterday.

Discarded national all-rounder Minhajul Abedin captured four wickets for only 10 runs in his seven overs of misery as Victoria, sent into bat by Mohammedan skipper Aminul Islam, were shot out for a meagre 86 in 27.1 overs.

After former national left-arm seamer made early inroads by dismissing the three top-order Victoria batsmen, Minhajul made the most of bowling in the foggy weather to rip through the lower-middle order and set the stage for a resounding victory.

In reply, Mohammedans rattled up the required 86 for one in only 18.2 overs. Opener Mehrib Hossain scored an unbeaten 48 off 56 balls embellished with half a dozen fours and a sixer while one-down Selim Shahed, who came to the crease after Parvez was dismissed for 16, remained not out on 14.

Mohammedans will now play against Kalabagan in the semifinals of the eight-team knock-out tourney.

Meanwhile, the CCMD have suspended the remaining matches of the tournament yesterday. Although authorities did not attribute any reason for the break, the CCMD in a press release issued yesterday however said that the tournament will resume after the Coca Cola Independence Cup.

The tri-nation tourney involving India, Pakistan and hosts Bangladesh will be held at the Dhaka Stadium from December 10 to 18.

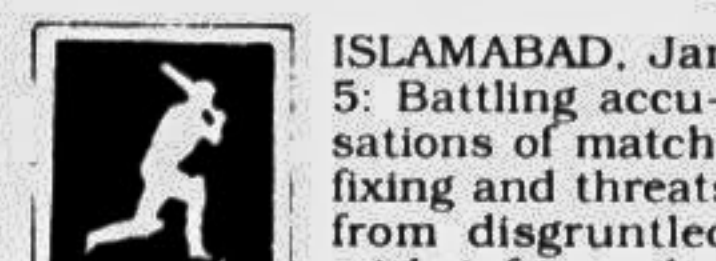
Div II cricket

Sports Reporter

Rupali Bank and Indira Road Krira Chakra won their respective Acme Second Division cricket encounters played at different city venues yesterday.

Rupali Bank recovered a five-wicket victory over Udayachal Club at the Mirpur Outer Stadium while Indira Road posted an identical win against DOHS at the Mahakhali T&T ground.

Akram gives up captaincy



ISLAMABAD, Jan 5: Battling accusations of match-fixing and threats from disgruntled cricket fans, the celebrated all-rounder Wasim Akram has stepped down as captain of Pakistan's cricket team saying the pressure was too much, reports AP.

The veteran of 77 Test matches and 238 one-day internationals, Akram on Monday said death threats and match-fixing allegations prompted his resignation as captain, although he will remain with the team.

"These allegations (match-fixing) have taken a toll on me," he told the news agency in an interview. "I am a human being too and there is a limit to everything. I can't sustain the pressure any more."

Akram, who led Pakistan in 17 Test matches, winning nine and losing four and drawing four, said when Pakistan loses he gets death threats from disgruntled fans.

"It's very sad that after serving the country with so much dedication and distinction, you get such a treatment," he said.

The 32-year-old Akram, after a meeting with the Chief Executive of the Pakistan Cricket Board Majid Khan in Lahore, said that he would like to remain on the team.

He is being replaced by Rashid Latif, wicketkeeper and former vice-captain.

"Whatever cricket is left in me, I would love to enjoy it as a player, but certainly not as a captain of Pakistan," said Akram, who is the solo member in a unique club of over 300 wickets in both Tests (334) and one-day internationals (341).

"I think I have no longer any motivation to lead Pakistan,"

he said in a telephone interview. "It's not an easy job as the captain is always blamed for poor performance of the team."

On Pakistan's agenda is a tour of South Africa and Zimbabwe following a triangular tournament in Bangladesh later this month.

"In my present state of mind,

United Arab Emirates last month. As well it seems that Akram won't play in Bangladesh in the Silver Jubilee Independence Cup which begins January 10, blaming a nagging shoulder injury.

Akram underwent surgery on his left shoulder in England last year.

Akram's previous term as captain began against West Indies in 1993-94 season. However there was a rebellion a year later and he was ousted only to regain the captaincy later against Australia in 1996.

Meanwhile, Pakistan's Dawn newspaper reported on Sunday, Akram said Pakistan teams have lost in the past but betting or match-fixing allegations were levelled. "To rub salt into the wounds, no investigations have been carried out to convict or acquit the guilty. Only once match-fixing probe was done (in 1995) in which the accused player was acquitted as the accusers failed to prove the charges," he said.

However, Akram promised that he would extend full support to whoever steps in his shoes. "My priority has always been to play and perform for country. Captaincy has been secondary to me. I would fully contribute as a player and would also help the captain in taking any ticklish decisions. Since I am in the twilight of my career, I would like to contribute by grooming up a couple of good pacers."

Haroon Rasheed, who served as coach in Akram's last three assignments as captain, said he was sad with the decision of the pacer. He, however, said Akram was a professional cricketer and if he had taken such decision, there must have been a good reason to it.

Inter cross Juve hurdle

MILAN, Italy, Jan 5 (Reuters/AP): Inter Milan handed Juventus their first defeat of the season on Sunday and opened a four-point lead in the Serie A, reports Reuters.

French forward Youri Djorkaeff grabbed the only goal two minutes into second half, sliding the ball home from close range after Ronaldo had set him up with a low cross from the right.

Juventus had dominated the first 45 minutes of an excellent match and Filippo Inzaghi had a second half goal disallowed for handball, but even though Inter ended the match with 10 men after French midfielder Benoit Cauet was sent off for stamping, the champions could not find the equaliser.

Inter head the table on 33 points to Juve's 29. Udinese, the last team to beat Juventus in the league 2-1 matches ago in April, were also on 29 after beating Roma 2-1 away.

This is a hugely important victory for thousands of reasons, Inter president Massimo Moratti said.

"We suffered a bit in the first half but Ronaldo soon changed that in the second. His pass for the goal was worthy of the Golden Ball."

Ronaldo had paraded the Golden Ball, his prize as European-footballer-of-the-year, shortly before kickoff.

Juventus, as Moratti acknowledged, had the better of the first half with Moreno Torcelli and Alessandro Del Piero causing constant problems for the home defence.

On 14 minutes, Del Piero created the first real opening, turning his marker and threading a pass across goal to an unmarked Edgar Davids.

The Dutchman, back at the San Siro for the first time since leaving AC Milan last month, hit his shot hard and low but straight at Inter keeper Gianluca Pagliuca.

Inter's best chance of the half came from Ronaldo, who scooped a shot just wide of Peruzzi's right hand post.

On 47 minutes the Brazilian inspired the breakthrough, beating Mark Iuliano on the right, bundling the ball past Paolo Montero and setting up Djorkaeff for his seventh league goal of the season.

Juventus coach Marcello Lippi immediately threw on three substitutes in a bid to unsettle the home side and Juventus looked to have equalised when Inzaghi waved his way into the box and beat Pagliuca.

But the referee adjudged him to have handled the ball and the goal was disallowed.

Inter's win makes amends for their 1-0 defeat at Udinese before Christmas and sets them up for an Italian Cup quarter-final against arch-rivals Milan on Thursday.

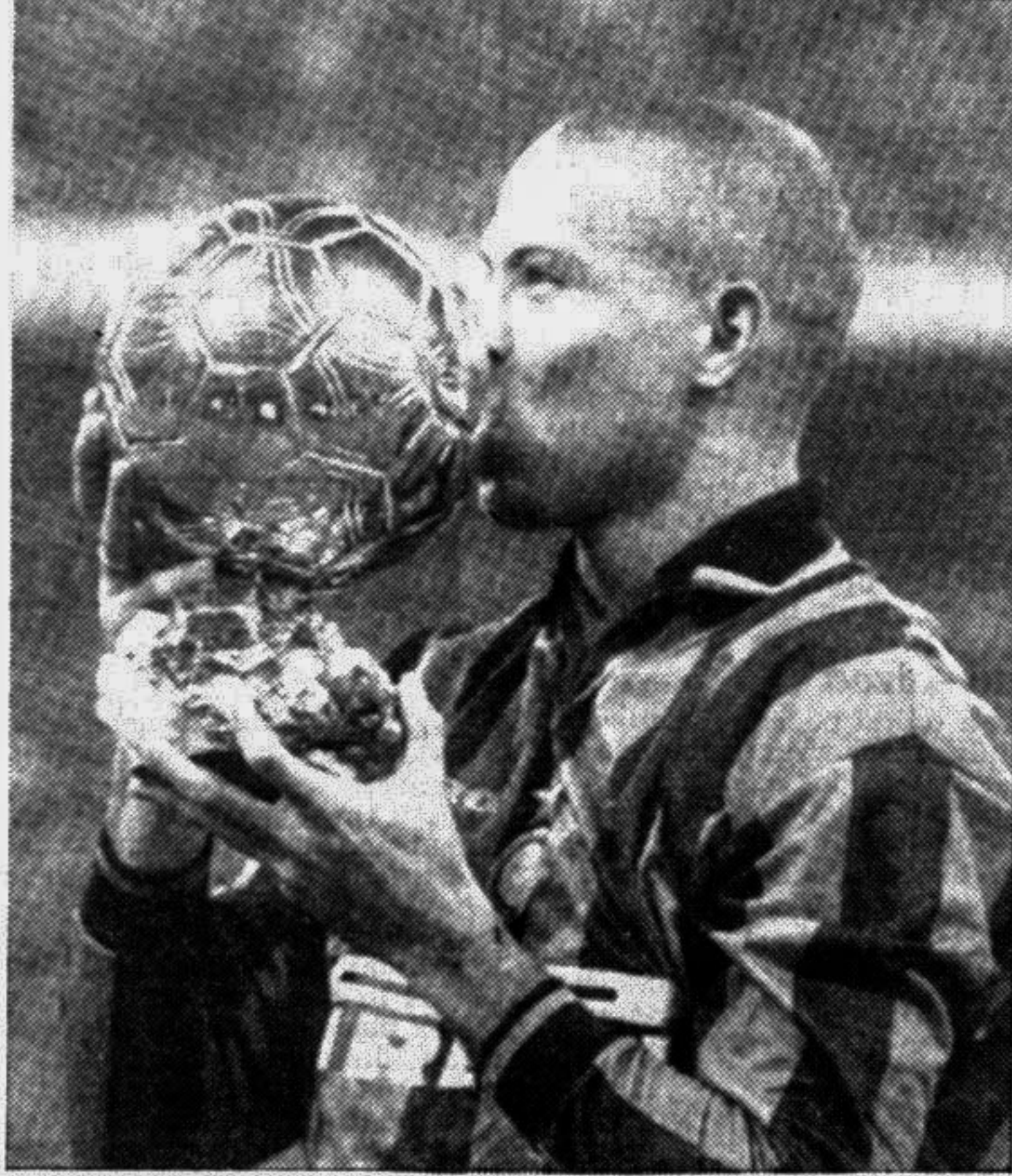
Juventus have to pick themselves for their cup match against Fiorentina on Wednesday.

Milan continued their recovery with a 2-1 victory at bottom club Napoli and moved sixth.

Gabriel Batistuta, the Argentine striker, scored his 100th career Italian League goal in Fiorentina's 1-1 draw with Sampdoria.

Batistuta, 28, headed home Portuguese midfielder Rui Costa's free kick in the seventh minute for his league-leading 13th goal in 14 games.

This is Batistuta's sixth season in the First Division, all with Fiorentina, and he's appeared in 168 games. He also played one campaign, 1993-94, in Serie B with the club.

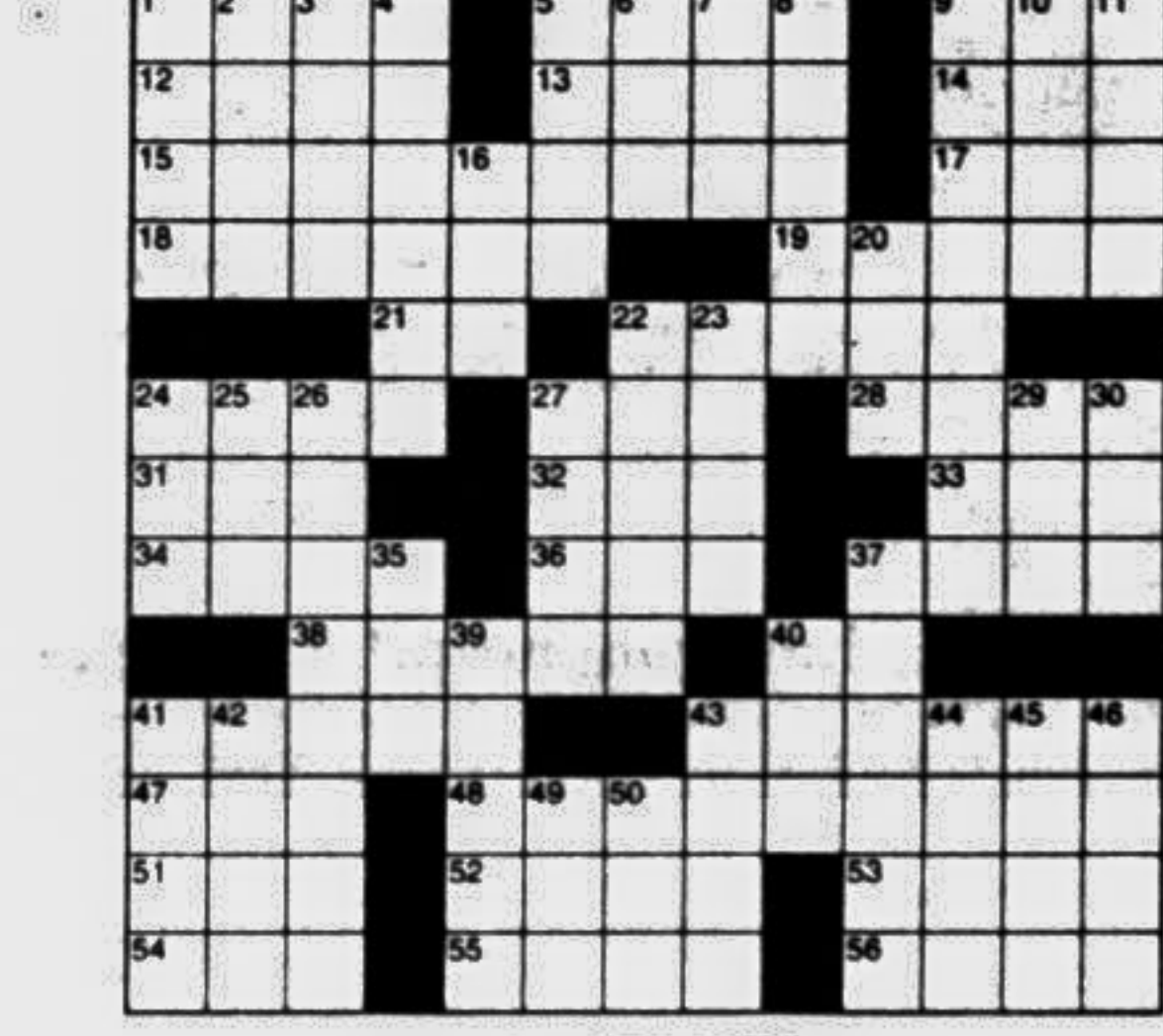


THAT SURE TASTES SWEET: Ronaldo, Inter Milan's Brazilian superstar plants a kiss on the 'Golden Ball' he received as best player of '97 before the start of Inter's Serie A match against Juventus at the San Siro on Jan 4.

—AP/UNB photo

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 1 Croquet arena 5 Farewell 9 Winter woe 12 Theater 13 Congregational cry 14 Took off 15 Silly song 17 "Do—say—" 18 Mono alternative 21 Clinton's home 22 Mentor 24 Lincoln or Ford 27 Discern 28 Run-down horse 31 "Had a Hammer" 32 Pussycat's partner 33 "Little Teapot" 34 1940 film, "Mi Vida" 36 Gibson or Brooks 37 Observation game 38 He had a bad hare day 40 U.K. car 41 Threescore 43 Om 47 Rock concert need 48 It follows 49 Mainlander's start 51 Memento 52 Arm of the Black Sea 53 Metronome 54 Greek H 55 Descartes 16 Fun 'n' or Magritte 56 B.P.O.E. 20 Mischief 22 Ed Norton's workplace 23 See 4 24 Have a bug 25 Venusian vessel? 26 It follows 27 To a degree 29 Ref 30 Festive 35 Model Carol 37 Set off 38 Strong polyester film 40 Raincoat 41 Garage event 42 "a man with seven wives" 43 Relocate 44 Work hard 45 Alan of "Spin City" 46 Poses queries 48 Noun-to-verb suffix 50 Oxford fellow



CRYPTOQUIP

M X Y F J K J K F I Q D Z X Y K A B C Z E Z K B W Q X B K O M W W B A M C F I D F C J B M E O B C Z O K Z F E. Yesterday's Cryptogram: THE COCKY HAIRSTYL-IST REFERS TO HIMSELF AS A LOCKSMITH. Today's Cryptogram clue: O equals C. The Cryptogram is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Since letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.