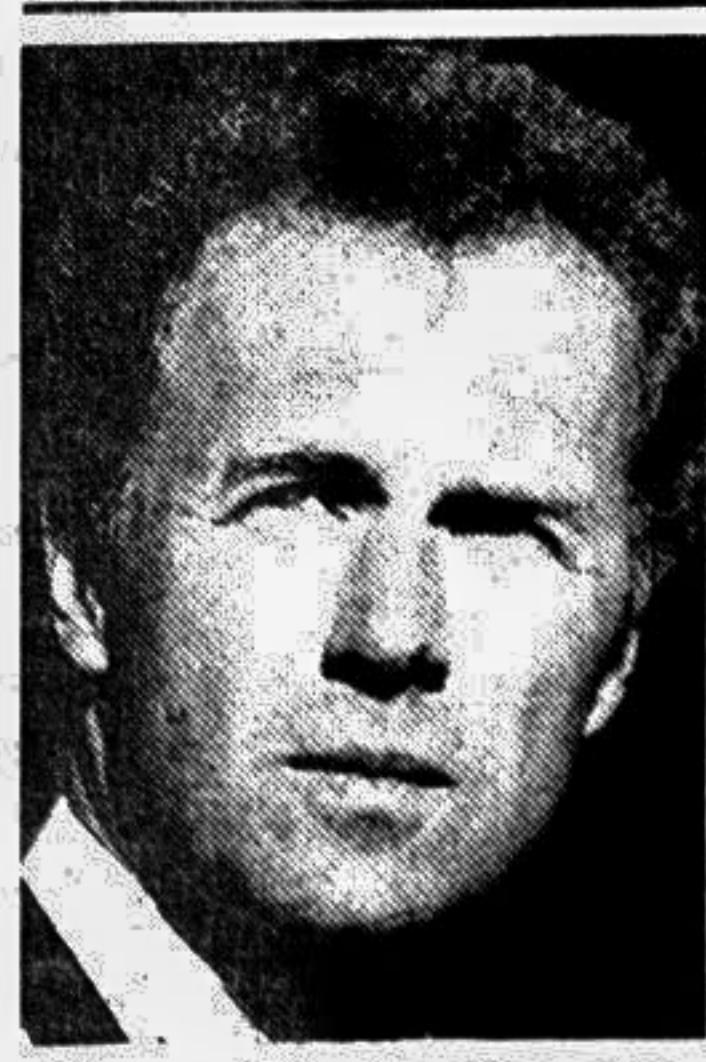


Column One

SPORTS TALK



Franz Beckenbauer

(German soccer great)
"What's money? It's nice because you can buy this or that, but for me, money doesn't mean anything. I don't need material things — life is about being alive, happy and satisfied. You can be happy and satisfied in a very simple way."

Nat'l cricket starts today

The first phase of the 24th national cricket championship begins today at different zonal venues across the country, reports UNB.

Four matches will be decided on the opening day.

Rajshahi DSA will take on Lalmirhat DSA at Thakurgaon, Thakurgaon DSA will face Chapainawabganj DSA at Bogra, Khulna DSA will meet Jhenidah DSA at Sathkhira and Narsingdi DSA will encounter Gopalganj at Patuakhali in today's fixtures.

In all, 44 teams, split into five groups, are taking part in the knock out based preliminary round of the competition.

Ten teams — five group champions, four semifinalists of the last meet, Chittagong DSA, Dhaka University, Bangladesh Biman and Dhaka DSA along with hosts of final Sylhet DSA — will play in the final round, beginning on May 19.

The zonal semifinal matches will be 80-over-a-side affairs billed for two days while the zonal final will be a three-day match.

Schools cricket

Rahamatullah Model High School, Ahmed Bawani School and Wari High School reached group finals winning their respective matches of the 16th national schools cricket championship yesterday, reports UNB.

Rahamatullah Model High School outplayed Mohammadpur High School by 8 wickets at the Dhanmondi Club ground.

Battling first, Mohammadpur High School were bundled out for a paltry 70 in 20.4 overs. In reply, Rahamatullah scored 73 in just 10.4 overs losing only two wickets. Ramzan contributed highest 35 runs for the winners.

At the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium, Ahmed Bawani Model School defeated Banani Model School by 3 wickets.

Banani Model School made 176 runs losing 9 wickets in the stipulated 35 overs. In reply, Ahmed Bawani scored 180 for 7 wickets in 31.5 overs with Sawkat hammering 55 runs.

Wari High School outplayed Sunnydale School by a huge margin of 131 runs at City Club ground.

Wari High School piled up a massive 291 runs in 35 overs. Senthil struck 72 runs for Wari. In reply, Sunnydale was all out for 160 in 30.1 overs.

In the day's other engagement, Nazrul Sikhyaloy and BCSR School won their respective matches and reached group semifinals.

Sachin puts stars in shade



NEW DELHI, Apr 30 (India Abroad News Service): Indian cricket fans adore him, opposing bowlers fear him, schoolboys strive to emulate him and transnational corporate giants make a beeline for him to get their products endorsed.

That name is Sachin Tendulkar and not since the glory days of Indian cricket in the early '70s has one player so captured the imagination of the nation. If in 1971 it was Sunil Gavaskar with 774 runs from four Tests in his debut series against the West Indies, today it is Sachin Tendulkar who is being called the "new Bradman."

The Australian immortal, now approaching 90, is the benchmark by which all batsmen are measured. With 29 centuries from 52 tests at an average of 99.94, "The Don's" figures can never be emulated.

However, such has been Tendulkar's domination since he was stripped of the captaincy late last year that many pundits are talking of the 25-year-old as the greatest since Bradman, who retired from Test cricket exactly 50 years ago.

Even Bradman himself in an interview two years ago spoke of how Tendulkar reminded him of himself. This after he saw the Indian reel off two masterly centuries in Australia in 1992. It should be remembered that Tendulkar was still in his teens at the time.

Tendulkar's Test average of 54.84 from 61 matches put him ahead of West Indian captain Brian Lara as the current player with the highest average.

Confirmation that Tendulkar is now the world's best batsman comes in the latest issue of Wisden Cricket Monthly. The authoritative magazine has been compiling for the last two years a table of the best current batsmen and bowlers in the world. Tendulkar, after scoring two centuries in three Tests against the visiting Australians, leapfrogs from his previous seventh spot to number one in the world, displacing Sri Lanka's Sanath Jayasuriya who held the position for the last nine months.

The rankings are based on cumulative performance of the last two years. In this period Tendulkar has played 26 tests whose bowlers have been slammed for 1,130 runs from 19 innings at an average of 113 in all forms of cricket. This includes a double century in the tour match for Mumbai, five centuries and two half-centuries.

No wonder then that the beleaguered Aussie bowlers are beginning to have nightmares about the Little Master and his broad bat. Master leg-spinner Shane Warne, whose battle with Tendulkar was supposed to be the highlight of the clash, admitted as much on his return home last week. Warne was

and scored 2,127 runs at an average of 57.49.

However, the average Indian cricket fan has eyes only for the one-day game and here Tendulkar's domination is, if anything, even more pronounced.

Tendulkar became the first Indian one-day captain Steve Waugh has joined the chorus of his countrymen, which includes ex-captains Ian and Greg Chappell and Richie Benaud, in hailing Tendulkar as the best since Bradman. Take out Bradman and he is the best, commented Waugh immediately after the final.

Waugh sought out Tendulkar after the Sharjah final and asked him to sign the shirt he wore during the final. In a matter of three months, the man with the most wickets in Test cricket for a spin bowler had gone from rival to spectator to fan.

The manner in which he dominates the Indian batting line-up is evident from the fact that nearly half the runs scored by India at Sharjah came from the bat of the opener — 435 at an average of 87. No wonder Waugh pointedly commented after the Sharjah final, "We were beaten by a great player."

Tendulkar's sense of timing could not have been better. The victory at Sharjah, which reversed the verdict of the Pepsi final just a couple of weeks earlier in New Delhi, came on his 25th birthday (April 24).

It seemed the whole nation was willing him on. In Delhi, cable operators who were not giving the "feed" and the local electricity board that were frequently cutting power to households found themselves facing the wrath of cricket fans. Many offices closed early as people rushed home to watch and for a couple of days all talk of political turmoil was pushed to the background.

His slump in form last year after being appointed captain of the national team saw some of the bigger contracts drying up. But today his face is not only seen on television on the field of play, it is increasingly in evidence during the commercial breaks between each over. The products he endorses cover a vast range — from colo to credit card — and read like a who's who of multinational companies in India. Every Indian, it seems, looks up to him for inspiration. And he is just 25!

SACHIN TENDULKAR

Jugovic and Pavel Nedved were inspired in midfield and, roared on by 60,000 home fans who had been mute throughout the first half, they pressed forward in search of a winner.

Pierluigi Casiraghi almost gave it to them when he struck the post with a close-range shot and then, just three minutes later, Italy defender Alessandro Nesta settled the tie with a close-range strike after Rossi had parried a shot from Nesta's fellow fullback Paolo Negro.

The north curve of the stadium greeted the victory with flares and smoke bombs as the Milan players sank to their knees in despair.

Marco Gottardi equalised eight minutes later, collecting an intelligent ball played across the face of goal by Roberto Mancini to beat goalkeeper Sebastiano Rossi with a simple tap-in which gave Lazio a glimmer of hope.

Three minutes late Milan captain Paolo Maldini was adjudged to have fouled Gottardi as the two men fought for a high bouncing ball on the edge of the box.

The referee awarded a penalty. Yugoslav Vladimir Jugovic buried his spot kick and Lazio were back in the tie.

Suddenly they rediscovered the superb football which propelled them to the brink of the league title in the first three months of the year before they succumbed to Juventus at the start of April.

Exultant Lazio players celebrate with the Italian Cup after knocking off fancied AC Milan 3-1 in the final second leg match at Rome's Olympic Stadium on April 29. Lazio won 3-2 on aggregate.

—AP/UNB photo

Top Ten Count-down Film Music 11:35 Serial: Pipiria 5:30 The Oprah Winfrey Show

STAR MOVIES

7:30 Classic: My Darling Clementine PG (Hindi Subtitles)
9:30 Comedy: Duma and Dumber 11:30 Film Club: Silas Marner 1:30 Horror: Ghost in the Machine 15:30 Family: Rigoletto PG 5:30 Comedy: My Cousin Vinny 15 (Arabic Subtitles) 7:30 Film Club: Now And Then (15) 9:30 UK Top Ten 10:00 Friday Fury: A Queen's Ransom 15 12:00 Thriller: Marrow (15) 2:00 Adventure: Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid PG (Arabic Subtitles) 4:00 Horror: Monkey Sines 15 12:00 A Queen's Ransom (15)

PTV

8:00 TILAWAT AUR TAR-JUMA/HAMDAAT 08:20 BOLTA YAAHT 08:35 E-KASHMIR 09:35 KARB (serial) 11:00 KHAIRABAD 11:15 English: 9:30 KARIB 10:30 BISMILLAH 02:15 FEHMUL-QURAN 02:40 NATAK RANG (SINDHI) 03:25 EK Raat, Ek Kahan (Drama) 04:40 Sehat Aur Siikoon (Drama) 05:25 Biology for 10th 05:55 Uftab (Serial) 06:25 AIQU COURSE 07:20 Full House (Comedy Eng. Film) 07:45 ENGLISH NEWS 08:10 Fun Time Poppet Show 08:45 Paal Do Paal (Serial) 09:00 Break for Headlines: News 10:00 Khabarna & Commerical News 10:35 Lollywood

STAR PLUS

6:30am Niaad 7:30 Good Morning India 9:15 Dress Circle 9:30 Ek Do Teet 10:30 Card From Pakistan 11:00 The Oprah Winfrey Show 12:00 Are You Being Served? 12:30 Murder She Wrote 1:30 Santa Barbara 2:30 The Bold & The Beautiful 3:00 Ek Lamhe Saath Tumhare 3:30 Kabhi Kabhi 4:00 Kudratnama 4:30 Kaleidoscope 5:00 The Wonder Years 5:30 Small Wonder 6:00 Philips — Meri Awas Suno 6:30 Kudratnama 7:00 City Lives 7:15 Dress Circle 7:30 Star News (Hindi) 8:00 So Let's Yahoo 9:00 MasterCard — Family Fortunes 9:30 Star News 10:00 Rendezvous with Simi Garewal 10:30 Due South 11:30 City Lines 12:00 The Bold & The Beautiful 12:30 Star News (Eng) 1:00 Newhart 1:30 Heartbeat 2:30 Covington Cross 3:30 Charles Angel's

DD 7

AM 10:25 Janmadrin (Birthday Greetings) 10:30 Daily Sopie

Sport

Pakistan clinch double-wicket cricket title

Star Sport Monitor

Pakistan clinched the Pepsi double-wicket cricket tournament title beating New Zealand by six runs in the final in Lahore on Wednesday.

The Kiwis, after winning the toss, scored 94 runs. In reply, the hosts rattled out 100. Pakistan's Shahid Afridi was adjudged player-of-the-match.

SL Independence Cup

Kiwis, Indians to take part

COLOMBO, Apr 30: India and New Zealand will participate in Sri Lanka's Independence Cup limited over cricket tournament beginning June 19, a cricket official said Thursday.

"We are pleased to inform that the negotiations with the New Zealand and Indian cricket boards have been successfully concluded," said Dammika Ranatunga, chief executive of the Board of Control for Cricket in Sri Lanka.

The New Zealand team will play a three-Test series against Sri Lanka in May ahead of the Independence Cup. The Indian team will arrive on June 17.

The Independence Cup final will be played on July 7.

World Youth Games

Bangladesh to participate

Bangladesh will take part in the World Youth Games to be held in Moscow from July 11 to 19 this year, reports BSS.

This was decided at the executive committee meeting of Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) at its office with president Lt General Mohammad Mahabubur Rahman in the chair.

BOA vice president Col (rtd) Faruq Khan, MP, was present.

Bangladesh is likely to participate in two or three events.

14th nat'l snooker

Narayan lifts title

Narayan Chandra Ghosh of Narayanganj Club became champion defeating Mofazzal Hossain of Gulshan Club 7-4 (39-49, 31-63, 48-47, 51-32, 55-51, 62-20, 49-26, 51-53, 17-68, 57-12 and 57-50) in the final of the 14th national snooker championship held at Dhaka Club billiards room on Wednesday, says a press release.

In the 3rd and 4th playoffs, S Majumder of Dhaka Club defeated Quamrul Huda (DC) 3-1 to take the 3rd position. Syed Mahboob of Dhaka Club won the Highest Break prize of the tournament.

Azimuddin Ahmed, president of the Bangladesh Billiards Snooker Federation distributed the prizes.

Peter's prison days over

BONN, Apr 30: Peter Graf, father of tennis star Steffi Graf, was quoted today as saying he was looking forward to celebrating his birthday in freedom after spending more than two years in prison on a tax evasion conviction, reports Reuters.

"I am finally a free man, thank God," Graf told Bild Daily. "I am so happy. Steffi was the first to know about it... we are going to celebrate."

The best part is that I can celebrate my birthday in freedom and I have the whole summer before me to enjoy."

Graf walked free from a German prison on Wednesday after serving just over half of his three-year-and-nine-month jail term for evading taxes on millions earned by his daughter.

In the shoot-out as nerves and tiredness took their toll before Ruud Hesp rounded off a fine debut season for Barcelona by saving from Xabier Eskurza on a penalty.

Mallorca had never won a major trophy and were playing in only their second final.

Barcelona's Rivaldo equalised an early goal from Juan Stankovic midway through the second half.

Stankovic hit wide a crucial penalty that would have won the cup for Mallorca after his keeper Carlos Roa saved from Luis Figo. "Penalties are always

luck," said Hesp. "I'm very happy, the cup is for everybody here."

Hesp had to kick the ball out of his net with the game just seven minutes old when Stankovic blasted home after a fine move down the right from Gabriel Amato.

But the second half was a different story.

The equaliser came when Giovanni found space down the left, and pulled the ball back from the deadball line. Fellow Brazilian Rivaldo connected with the cross, and his shot ricocheted past Roa.

Mallorca seemed to run out of steam when midfield general Vicente Engonga limped off shortly afterwards, and there were chances for Juan Pizzi, Albert Celades, Nadal and Luis Enrique in the closing minutes as Barcelona tightened their grip.

The game shifted decisively in the holders' favour six minutes from time. Oscar Mena hacked down Rivaldo from behind and was sent off for the challenge.

Eric Romero was booked for protesting against the post, but seemed to be unaware of the caution. With injury time looking, he held back Luis Figo and saw his second yellow card to leave his side with just nine men.

From that moment on, Mallorca's best chance was to hang on for penalties. The chances rained in on Roa's goal and substitute striker Juan Pizzi missed two clear chances, one of which hit the post.

Roa pushed an effort from Giovanni against the post with just two minutes left on the clock, and continued his heroic performance in the penalties.

With a record 24 Cups, Barcelona has drawn ahead of Athletic de Bilbao who had won 23 times before Wednesday's final.

Barcelona clinched the league title two weeks ago, although the season still has three games to go. Winning their fourth double, their first in 39 years, draws their first with rival Real Madrid's achievement.

Lopez baffles Brazilians

RIO DE JANEIRO, Apr 30 (AP, AP): Claudio Lopez gave Brazil a reality check as they head into the World Cup by scoring in the 84th minute to give Argentina a 1-0 victory in an exhibition game Wednesday night at Maracana Stadium.

"Going into France we'll have to play much better," said Brazilian national team coach Mario Zagallo. "Argentina had a much better rhythm and rhythm is very important. The

great exhibition, but they made fewer mistakes and counter-attacked effectively."

Lopez and Gabriel Batista, alternating position constantly, confused Brazilian defenders Junior Baiano and Al-dair.

In midfield, Juan Veron was a dynamo, deftly distributing the ball, circumventing Brazilian play and launching counter-attacks.

In contrast, Ze Elias, Cesar, Sampao, Rai and Denilson were too disorganized to construct the play that would have