

MADRID, July 20: Left out of the defending champions squad, Romario suffered in silence as Brazil went down in the World Cup final to France a week ago. But instead of pleasing fans on the field he's instead set to star into a television series. Spanish media reports said Sunday, reports AFP.

The 32-year-old, mainstay of the 1994 World champions and now starring of Flamengo, will have the leading role in Globo television's "Pecado Capital" (capital sin) in which he will play a footballer who falls on hard times. He will earn around 35,000 dollars per appearance.



Commonwealth Games Bangladesh open against Barbados

Sports Reporter

Bangladesh has been placed in Group C along with South Africa, Northern Ireland and Barbados for the first round of the 16th Commonwealth Games cricket competition to be held in Malaysia next September, according to a fixture provided by the Bangladesh Cricket Board yesterday.

A total of 16 teams split into four groups will start off the competition from September 9, two days before the official inauguration of the Games. The top teams from each group will qualify for the semifinals billed for September 16 and 17. The final and the third-place decider will be held on September 19.

Bangladesh will play their opening group match against Barbados on September 10 followed by a September 13 meeting with South Africa — one of the seven Test playing nations taking part in the meet. The other six full ICC members

competing in the tourney are Sri Lanka, Australia, Zimbabwe, Pakistan, India and New Zealand. Three islands of the West Indies, Jamaica, Antigua and Barbados, have made independent entries while England, the remaining Test playing side are not sending a team.

Bangladesh will play their last group match against Northern Ireland on September 15.

GROUPINGS

Group A: Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Jamaica and Zimbabwe

Group B: Australia, Canada, Antigua and India.

Group C: South Africa, Northern Ireland, Bangladesh and Barbados

Group D: Pakistan, Scotland, Kenya and New Zealand.

FIXTURE

Sept 10: Bangladesh vs Barbados

Sept 13: Bangladesh vs South Africa

Sept 15: Bangladesh vs Northern Ireland



Yan Jiankui (No 5) of China speeding past compatriot Cui Danfeng (No 6) during the ladies 100 metres at the Asian Athletic Championships in Fukuoka, Japan yesterday. Jiankui won the gold clocking 11.39 sec. — AFP photo

Darsha strikes gold

FUKUOKA, Japan, July 20: Dama-yanthi Darsha of Sri Lanka broke China's domination in the women's events at the Asian Athletics Championships by winning the 400-metre race on Monday, reports AFP.

Darsha, who had to be satisfied with the 200m silver in the 1993 championships and bronze in the 1994 Asian Games, finally clinched top place with a championship record run of 51.23 seconds.

Svetlana Bodritskaya of Kazakhstan was second in 52.46 and P T Usha third in 52.55. "It was my personal best," said Darsha, who had been overshadowed by Sri Lanka's only Olympic hopeful, Susanthika Jayasinghe. Jayasinghe was suspended after testing positive for a banned drug.

"My previous best was 51.99 I set at the World Championships last year, so I'm very happy with my time," added Darsha.

Ten minutes later, Sugath Tillakaratne made it a Sri Lankan 400m double by winning the men's race in 44.61, also a championship record, to beat Japan's Masayoshi Kan and Kenji Tabata.

Miki Imai made another breakthrough by winning the women's high jump with a meet record of 1.94m to beat fellow Japanese Yoko Ota and East Asian Games champion Jin Ling of China.



But China continued to dominate four other women's events while its men's team won two more gold medals. Japan also added two golds. Qatar won two, and South Korea and Saudi Arabia one each.

Yan Jiankui defeated fellow Chinese defending champion Cui Danfeng to become the new sprint champion in the women's 100m in 11.39 while Zhou Wei wrestled the men's 100m title from Wei, winning it in 10.39.

All the four Chinese sprinters are to compete in the Chinese championships in September to earn places at the Asian Games in Thailand. Yan, Zhou and Cui appeared confident that they would qualify.

"I'm confident that I can go to Bangkok. Today's victory is a stepping stone for my next race. I'm going to work hard when I return to China," said Yap.

Zhou said: "I'm the fastest in China right now and I'm confident in my chances. I'm really want to compete in the Asian Games."

The biggest surprise came earlier in the day when Atlanta Olympic bronze medalist Wang Yan finished fifth in the women's 10 km walk, leaving her teammate Li Yuxin to take her

first international victory in 46.41. Wang said she was not physically fit for the race because she has been suffering from anaemia since she was in China, but she is confident of beating anybody when she is in top form.

Li Lei defended the women's javelin with a 60.12m throw, while Liu Jing timed 4:12.76 to make a Chinese one-two finish with Wang Chunmei in the women's 1,500m.

Other men's winners were: China's Li Zewin (20 km walk), Japan's Masaki Morinaga (long jump) and Toru Yasui (decathlon). Baek Seung-do of South Korea (10,000m), Saad Alasmari of Saudi Arabia (3,000m steeplechase) and Qatar's Bilal Saad Mubarak (shotput) and Mohd Ahmad Sulaiman (1,500m).

Jones, Boldon hog the headlines

UNIONDALE, New York, July 20: Not even a false start could keep Marion Jones from winning her ninth consecutive 100-metre race, reports AP.

On her second try, Jones burst out of the blocks and raced to a three-metre victory at the Goodwill Games Sunday night.

Although her time of 10.90 seconds was her second-slowest of the year, it was the eighth straight time she had broken 11 seconds. No other sprinter has done it more than six times.

Even more impressive was that Jones was running into a headwind of nearly 2 mph (3 kph) and facing a field in which all the runners had broken 11 seconds — the fastest ever assembled.

No one but Jones, the second-fastest woman ever in the 100 behind Florence Griffith Joyner, could break 11 this time.

Ukraine's Zhanna Pintusevich was second at 11.09, with Inger Miller third at 11.18, and Jamaica's Merlene Ottey fourth at 11.21. Dan O'Brien, the Olympic gold medalist and world record-holder in the decathlon, returned to the event for the first time since the Atlanta Games and had a respectable showing.

After the first five events, O'Brien was in second place with 4,575 points, 45 behind Chris Huffins, the US champion and world leader.

"I felt the two years off," O'Brien said. "I wanted to finish in style, but I just didn't get a good rhythm going in the 400. My overall fitness is good and my technique was solid."

O'Brien was ahead of his Olympic pace after four events and was leading the final event, the 400, into the stretch before finishing third. He also ran well early in the 100, again

El Guerrouj comes so close

GATESHEAD, England, July 20: Morocco's Hicham El Guerrouj missed out by less than half a second on setting a 2,000 metres world best in miserable conditions at an athletics meeting in northern England on Sunday, reports Reuters.

The 23-year-old 1,500 metres world champion completed the five-lap race at Gateshead in four minutes 48.36 seconds, just missing Nouredine Morcelli's world best of 4:47.88, set in Paris in July 1995.

With heavy rain and strong winds blowing in off the North Sea, El Guerrouj appeared on target to set a new world best going into the last lap, but he just failed in his third world record attempt in less than a week.

slowing in the closing metres.

"I had a great first four events," he said.

Huffins was pleased with his overall performance. "This was a very solid day, better than nationals," Huffins said after accumulating 4,620 points. "At the nationals, I didn't do anything outrageous during the second day, so hopefully I can do better tomorrow and get a higher score (than 8,694)."

The final five decathlon events will be Monday. John Godina, the world leader in the shot put and discus, won the shot at 70 feet, 4.5 inches (21.4503 metres) after finishing a disappointing third in the discus at 206-2 (62.8396 metres) behind Dmitri Shevchenko (212-8) (64.8208 metres) and Andy Bloom (209-11) (63.9318 metres).

Ato Boldon, the 200 metres world champion from Trinidad and Tobago, blazed around the curve and raced to a two-metre victory over Tyrre Washington in 20.15. The time matched the fifth-fastest of the year, even though the race was run into a

headwind.

Shana Williams took advantage of the absence of Jones, the world leader in the long jump, and became the first American to win the event at the Goodwill Games, leaping a wind-aided 22-9 (6.9342 metres) to beat Russia's Lyudmila Galkina, the 1997 world champion, and Greece's Niki Xanthou, the world championship silver medalist.

Deon Hemmings, the 1996 Olympic champion in the women's 400 hurdles, capitalized on world record-holder Kim Batten's mistake at the final hurdle and won in 54.20.

Mozambique's Maria Mutola led nearly all the way in winning her second Goodwill Games women's 800 in 1:58.83, her season's best. Mutola withstood a late charge from Jearl Miles-Clark, second in 1:59.08. Miles-Clark's sister-in-law, Joetta Clark, was third.

The competition began with basketball, and the US team of college players quickly found out there's a difference at the international level.

Puerto Rico, cheered on by a

clear majority of the 8,700 fans at Madison Square Garden, rallied from a 19-point deficit to beat the United States 84-76.

Eddie Casiano scored 31 points for the winners, while Elton Brand led the United States with 24.

Australia, behind 17 points from Andrew Gaze, beat Argentina 84-72 and Lithuania beat Russia 79-72.

In Gymnastics, Dominique Moceanu of the United States won the women's all-around title. She finished with a score of 38.662, well in front of Maria Olaru of Romania with 37.975. Another Romanian, Simona Amanar, was third with 37.850.

In synchronised swimming, a US athlete moved in on history.

Bill May and partner Kristina Lum were in second place behind Russia after the short programme of duet, and a medal when the event is completed Monday would be a rare one for a man in an international synchro meet.

The US team, with may as a reserve, also was in second place behind Russia.



JET SPEED JONES: Marion Jones (C) of the United States out-sprinting Jamaica's Merlene Ottey (L) and Zhanna Pintusevich during her gold medal winning effort in the 100 metres at the Goodwill Games in Uniondale, New York on July 19. Jones clocked 10.90 sec. — AFP photo

Holloioakes: Out in the cold

LONDON, July 20 (The Guardian/Internet): Less than a year ago they were presented as all-conquering England heroes, capable of exciting a new generation. One Trent Bridge Test later, the Holloioake brothers have fallen just as quickly out of favour.

On the same day that Adam Holloioake's experimental role as England's specialist one-day captain was abandoned, his younger brother Ben was dropped from the Test squad yesterday after a single match in which he did not even play. Even considering English cricket's fluctuating moods, the Holloioakes' shrinking esteem is considerable.

The clamour last summer to put the Holloioake brothers at the centre of an English cricket revival rarely maintained proportion. When their Test debuts coincided against Australia at Trent Bridge, they were even billed as England's answer to Australia's Waugh twins, a billing that relied as much on style as substance.

Nevertheless, Surrey's Anglo-Australians had - and still have - much to commend them. Adam, abrasively competitive, was a natural choice as England's one-day captain as long as the chairman of selectors David Graveney won support for the experiment of creating distinct sides at Test and limited-overs level. Ben, languidly talented, suggested a more mature outlook on a productive England A tour to Sri Lanka last winter which vague and unsubstantiated pot-smoking allegations were not about to undermine.

Adam Holloioake's appoint-

IOC award

Bangladesh Olympic Association will distribute the International Olympic Committee award "IOC Sports for All Trophy '97" to its member Kazi Anisur Rahman on Wednesday at 6 pm at the NSC conference room, reports UNB.

State Minister for Youth and Sports the chairman of NSC Obaidul Quader will be the chief guest at the function. BOA president M Mahbubur Rahman will preside.

Li's finest moment

FUKUOKA, Japan, July 20: Li Yuxin posted her first international win at her first attempt to make it a Chinese double with Li Zewin in the walk at the Asian Athletics Championships today, reports AFP.

The 24-year-old from Jilin, trailing front-running two Japanese runners by 10 metres at the eight-kilometre mark, surged ahead on the last lap to win the women's 10 km walk in 46 minutes 41 seconds.

Japan's Mitsumori sisters, Rie came in second in 46:52 and Yuka third in 47:01, while pre-race favourite Atlanta Olympic bronze medalist Wang Yan of China finished at a disappointing fifth in 47:12.

"It was the first time for me to take part in a big international race, but I'm not so happy although I won, because Wang is always a better runner and I cannot beat her when she is in good condition," said Li.

Wang said she was not physically fit for the race because she has been suffering from anaemia since she was in China, but she is confident of beating anybody when she is in top form.

The US team, with may as a reserve, also was in second place behind Russia.

ment as one-day captain held most appeal while Michael Atherton, his batting regarded as too stereotyped for the limited-overs format, remained in charge of the Test team. When Atherton resigned and was replaced this summer by Alec Stewart, an automatic pick in both forms of the game, the advantages of two captains were not as immediately evident.

That enabled Graveney's co-selectors Graham Gooch and Mike Gatting, unconvinced by Adam Holloioake's England pedigree from the outset, to insist upon a return to established thinking. They could argue that logic was on their side. It was, after all, in a smattering of one-day games on England's last tour of Australia that Stewart's up-and-at-'em captaincy style first drew praise.

Those who remain adamant that Adam Holloioake possesses potentially inspirational leadership qualities should draw little comfort from the fact that Stewart's one-day captaincy has been confirmed only for the triangular series against South Africa and Sri Lanka. Barring a humiliating end to the summer, he looks an automatic choice to lead England in both formats in Australia this winter.

Ben Holloioake's fall from favour is more straightforward. The county game might be an imperfect proving ground for England but his record for Surrey is simply second-rate. The selectors have yearned for an excuse to pick him; all he has given them is an excuse for a season.



HOLLOIOAKES — Adam (L) and Ben

Johnson has things to prove

UNIONDALE, New York, July 20 (AP): Michael Johnson is 1-for-3 in recent meets, a downturn slump for a runner used to winning.

Still, Johnson says he's in good shape as he prepares to run the 400 metres at the Goodwill Games and has his eyes on drastically lowering the world record.

"My injuries are behind me," Johnson said Sunday. "I feel confident that when I get caught up on condition-wise that can get back into the 43-second range. And in the next couple of years, I think I can run 42 seconds."

Johnson, who has chased Butch Reynolds' decades-old world mark of 43.29 for years, said he was confident of being ranked No 1 in the world at 400 metres for the sixth consecutive year and eighth overall.

He said injuries to his hamstrings and Achilles' tendons had contributed to losses in two of his three most recent outings. But, while Johnson said his hips had not given him any trouble, his coach said that was where the Olympic star's problem started.

Clyde Hart said improper alignment, the result of Johnson's left leg being shorter than his right, affected the hamstrings.

"When the hips are out of line, everything else is out," Hart said.

The injuries forced Johnson to miss about two weeks of training during a recent six-week period. Hart said the hip problem began at the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta.

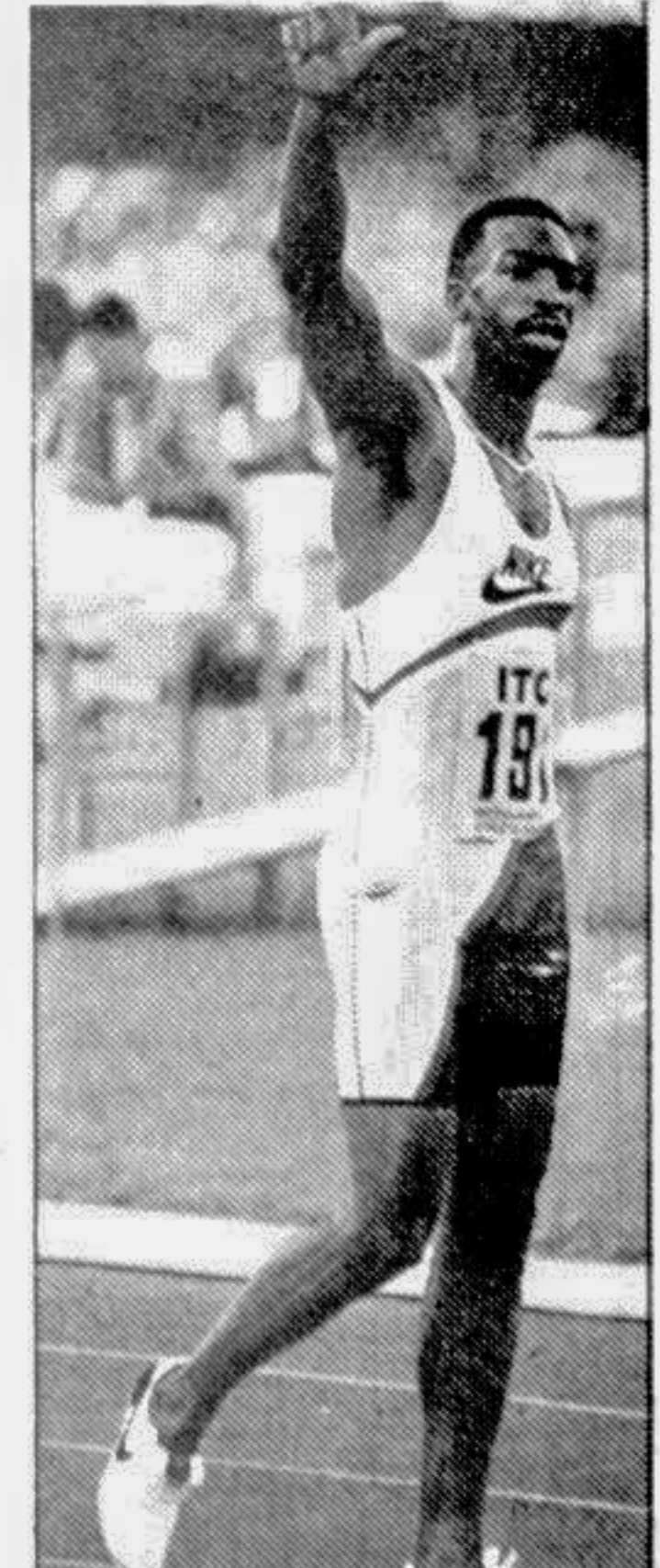
"Between the semifinals and the final (in the 200 metres), we had to get a hip adjustment," Hart said. "The last two or three meters of the final, they also got out of line."

Despite the pain, Johnson lowered the world record to 19.92, completing the first 200-400 gold-medal sweep by a man in Olympic history.

Last year, Johnson injured his right quadriceps in a 150-meter match race against Canada's Donovan Bailey. Two months later, he ran a gusty race in winning the 400 metres title at the World Championships in Athens, Greece.

"His (left) leg was swinging out," Hart said. "It was unbelievable. We found out when we came back to the States that the leg had about one-third less strength and one-third less reaction time. It was like running

on a flat tire. An ailing Johnson could not run faster than a wind-aided 20.28 in the 200, finishing third at the Prefontaine Classic at Eugene, Ore, on May 31. His next race wasn't until July 9 at Oslo, Norway, where he again



MICHAEL JOHNSON

finished third in the 400 in 44.58, far off his best of 43.39. It was only his second loss in the 400 during the 1990s.

"After the race, he was very sick, which was not usual for him, but I told him it would be like daylight and dark between here (Oslo) and Rome," Hart said.

Finally feeling better last Tuesday at Rome, Johnson won the 400 in 44.40, his fastest time of the year.

"At Rome, he controlled the race," Hart said. "He looked vintage Michael Johnson before the injury."

Johnson also realised his improvement. "I don't think I will be having any more problems this year," he said. "I feel better about my training than I did a couple of months ago."