

Column One

Boost sports WHIZZ KID

COMPETITION FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN
Competition-111

✓ Tick the Correct Answers
Post to The Daily Star
Win attractive prizes

Competition closes at 8 pm
Feb 19 '99 and draw shortly
afterwards

1 Who was the man-of-the
match in the first Indo-Pak
Test?

Afridi Tendulkar Saqlain

2 How many Tests has Mark
Taylor played?

102 103 104

3 South Africa won the Test
series against West Indies

4-1 3-1 5-0

4 How many centuries have
so far been scored in the
Janakantha League?

29 30 31

5 Who clinched the sub-junior
chess title?

Rakib Rajib Tuhin

Name

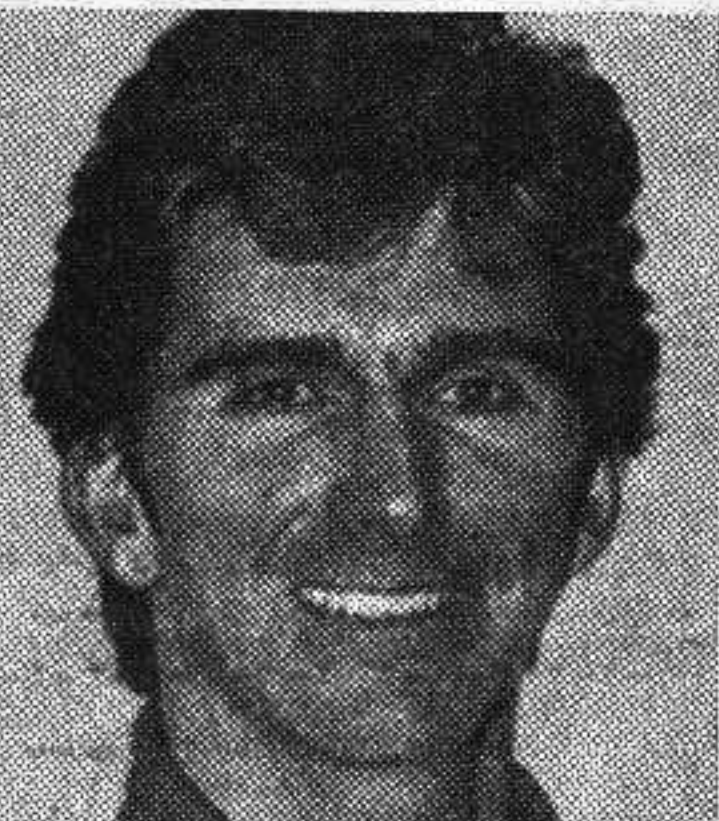
Class Roll No.

School Address

Phone: (If any)

POWERED WITH
EN-VITS
ENERGY RELEASING VITAMINS

SPORTS TALK



Damon Hill

(Former Formula One world
champion)

"I want to win more than one
race this season. I want to be
challenging and harassing for
places..."

Int'l jr tennis starts today

RAJSHAHI, Feb 15: The
third International Junior
Tennis tournament begins to-
morrow at the local tennis
complex, reports UNB.

Some 90 players, including
25 girls, from 15 countries re-
presenting Asia, Africa and Eu-
rope are expected to participate
in the weeklong meet.

Defending champions
Vishal (boys) and Sheetal
(girls), both from India, will be
in the fray.

The countries are: India,
Pakistan, China, Chinese
Taipei, Sweden, Kazakhstan,
United Arab Emirates,
Malaysia, Thailand, Slovak,
Oman, United Kingdom, Sri
Lanka, Egypt and Bangladesh.

Eight boys and three girls
will represent the hosts in the
ITF-approved event.

3-nation cricket tourney in March

Bangladesh Cricket Board
president Saber Hossain
Chowdhury has sought coopera-
tion from all quarters for a suc-
cessful holding of the tri-nation
one-day tournament to be held
in the capital in March, reports
UNB.

Saber was speaking at a
press conference yesterday af-
ternoon at the BCB office, where
he disclosed the schedule of the
triangular tourney involving
Zimbabwe, Kenya and the
hosts. The double-leg tourna-
ment will be held from March
19-20 at the Bangabandhu Na-
tional Stadium.

The BCB boss was quite op-
timistic about the tournament
in which all the matches will be
day-night-like the Wills Inter-
national Cup held successfully
last October at the same venue.

He said: "I'll help our boys
who are now training at the
BKSP under coach Gordon
Greenidge to prepare for the
World Cup... the state of their
preparation."

FIXTURE

Mar 19: Zimbabwe Vs Kenya

Mar 20: Kenya Vs Bangladesh

Mar 21: Zimbabwe Vs Bangladesh

Mar 22: Rest Day

Mar 23: Zimbabwe Vs Kenya

Mar 24: Kenya Vs Bangladesh

Mar 25: Zimbabwe Vs Bangladesh

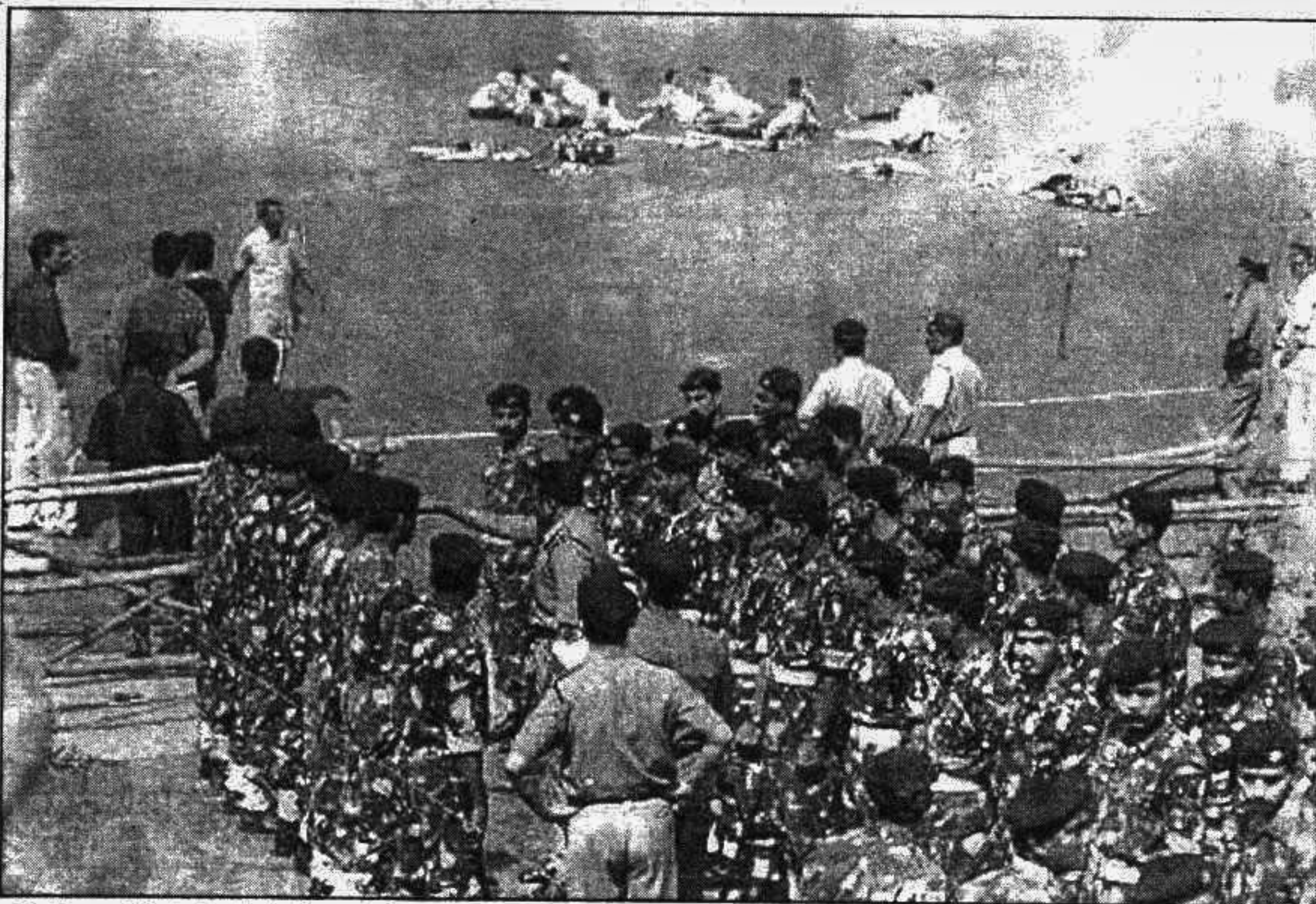
Mar 26: Rest Day

Mar 27: Final.

Hours of Play (BST): 1400

Hrs to 1730 Hrs 1815 Hrs to

2145 Hrs.



Police officials brief members of India's Rapid Action Force (RAF)—a specialised force to control riots—during a practice session on the eve of the first Asian Test Championships match in Calcutta

Asian Test Championship begins today

Pakistan plagued by injuries

From Hasan Masood in Calcutta



The first match of the Asian Test Championship, a world first, between arch rivals India and Pakistan will get underway here at the Eden Gardens this morning.

Both the India and Pakistan teams had more than three-hour long practice sessions simultaneously yesterday morning under tight security arrangements.

The Pakistan team, which arrived here late Sunday night, are going through injury prob-

lems. Leg-spinner Mushtaq Ahmed has already returned home with a back injury. His replacement off-spinner Arshad Khan, who played in the recently-concluded Dhaka Premier League for Surja

Tarun, has already arrived here but his chance of playing in the first eleven looks very slim. Middle-order Salim Malik is also doubtful because of his fitness problem and to add more salt to the wound, middle-order batsman

Inzamamul Haq suffered a severe neck injury last night when the bus, carrying the team from airport to their hotel, fell into a small ditch.

Inzamam, the tallest member of the team, was taken to a local clinic last night and did not appear in practice.

However, Pakistan skipper Wasim Akram said he expected Inzamam to be fit before the match.

"If Inzi does not play, mid-

dle-order Wajahatullah Wasti would make his debut," said

Wasim after the nets.

About Malik, Wasim said he was fully fit for the game. But Malik said his chances of playing was fifty-fifty.

About the pitch, Wasim looked quite happy. "This is for the first time I have seen grass on a wicket in India and I hope things remain the same tomorrow (Tuesday) morning," he said yesterday.

"This wicket looks pretty good. We might include a third seamer. We have two choices in Azhar Mahmood and Shoaib Akhtar. Any one of them might be included in the team," Wasim said, adding that the team would be finalised before the match.

"We are here to win the match. So we are not thinking for the bonus points. I have played county cricket so I am aware of what is going to happen," said Wasim while replying to a query about the format.

He added that the morale of the team was quite high.

"I am very happy to come here. Eden is one of the greatest venues for Test cricket and I believe it will be a good match," said Wasim.

When the skipper was praising India, Pakistan manager Shahryar Khan was blasting the Indian press yesterday for publishing cooked stories.

"Some of the newspapers are writing negative reports about the unity of Pakistan team and these are all rubbish. What I can tell you is we have excellent team spirit in the squad and none can break that," he said.

In his introductory speech at the press conference, Shahryar claimed that these reports were made only to demoralise his team.

Meanwhile, hosts India declared their squad for the Test. Rishikesh Kanitkar and Sunil Joshi have been excluded from the Indian squad.

A total of 1,10,000 spectators are expected to see the match as all the tickets for the first day have been sold out.

SQUADS

INDIA (from): Mohammad Azharuddin (capt), Sadagopan Ramesh, Vankat Laxman, Rahul Dravid, Sachin Tendulkar, Saurav Ganguly, Nayan Mongia, Javagal Srinath, Vankatesh Prasad, Anil Kumble, Harbhajan Singh, Sunil Joshi, Laxmi Ratan Shukla, Hrishikesh Kanitkar.

PAKISTAN (from): Wasim Akram (capt), Saeed Anwar, Shahid Afridi, Ijaz Ahmed, Inzamamul Haq, Yousuf Youhana, Salim Malik, Moin Khan, Saqlain Mushtaq, Waqar Younis, Shoaib Akhtar, Azhar Mahmood, Wajahatullah Wasti.

Umpires: Steve Bucknor (West Indies), David Orchard (South Africa).

DC Cup cricket Chandpur in semis

CHANDPUR, Feb 15 (UNB): Chandpur moved into the semi-finals of first Chittagong Divisional Cup Cricket tournament beating Noakhali by four wickets at the local stadium today, reports UNB.

Noakhali were all out for a paltry 128 in 39.3 overs. Fakhrul scored the highest 38 runs.

Sanjoy claimed five wickets conceding 23 runs while Nitul took three wickets for 24 runs for the hosts.

Chasing 129 runs for victory, Chandpur easily reached their target in 37.5 overs losing six wickets. Moktar made 38 runs.

Debashish bagged 3 wickets giving away 21 runs for the losers.

Sanjoy of Chandpur was adjudged man-of-the-match.

The second quarterfinal between Laxmipur and Comilla will be held tomorrow.

Chittagong in semis

RANGPUR, Feb 15: Chittagong are the first team to reach the semi-finals of the Keya Cosmetics Suhrawardy Cup Under-19 National Football championship beating Nilphamari 4-2 today, reports UNB.



Chittagong finished Group B with unbeaten record securing ten points from four group outings while Nilphamari finished bottom with three consecutive defeats.

Chittagong beat Chapinawabganj 3-1, Rangpur 2-1 and drew 2-2 with BKSP.

Asadur struck twice in the 42nd and 85th minutes while Uttam and Anisur netted one each in the 12th and 50th minutes for Chittagong.

Shahid netted the both goals for Nilphamari in the 72nd and 73rd minutes respectively.

Sirajganj DSA brightened their chance to reach the last four in Group A eliminating Rangamati 4-0.

Sirajganj topped the group jointly with Jessore and holders Tangail collecting six points each from three matches while Rangamati were eliminated having four points from four encounters.

For Sirajganj, Ratan scored two goals in the 44th and 83rd minutes while Quader and Selim netted one each in the 50th and 54th minutes.

TOMORROW'S MATCHES

BKSP vs Chapinawabganj (1.15 pm)

Jessore vs Barisal (3.15 pm).

Jafar guides Gopibagh

A brilliant 96 by Pakistani Jafar Ali guided Gopibagh Friends Club to a 26-run victory against Dhanmondi Club in the Metropolitan First Division Cricket League at the Mirpur City Club ground yesterday, reports UNB.

This was the fourth win for Gopibagh from five matches while Dhanmondi suffered their third defeat, also from five outings.

Opting to bat first, Gopibagh FA scored 227 for six in stipulated 50 overs.

In reply, Dhanmondi were all out for 201 in 48.5 overs.

Opener Sajjadul Hasan Setu hit 54 off 78 balls with six fours while one down Sheikh Tuskar Imran contributed 50 off 87 balls with five boundaries.

Mahbub sinks Navy

Four goals by Mahbub Harun enabled Abahani to trounce Bangladesh Navy 5-0 in the inaugural match of the Cotton Group Shaheed Smriti Hockey tournament at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday, reports UNB.

Defending champions Abahani led the first half 1-0 with a Khokon goal in the 34th minute from a penalty corner.

After an otherwise unimpressive first half, the Dhanmondi-based outfit mounted pressure on the opponents with an avalanche of attacks in the second session.

Harun opened his account with a goal in the 53rd minute with a powerful hit from skipper Alamgir's pass.

He netted his second goal in the 62nd minute from a Miraj pass and completed his hat-trick after two minutes from a penalty stroke.

Harun scored his fourth goal in the 68th minute from a Rubel cross.

Earlier, president of Bangladesh Hockey Federation and chief of Air Force Air Vice Marshall Jamaluddin Ahmed formally opened the meet.

TODAY'S MATCH

Mohammedan SC vs Ajax SC (3.30 pm).

PICK OF THE MONTH

Linu: Lass turned lady

For her tenacity to stay at the top of her sport for more than two decades, The Daily Star picks Ms. Zobera Rahman Linu, champion table tennis player as the sports personality of the month. Here the lady talks to **Al-Amin**

In was the year 1977 when a lithe lass walked into the top spot of Bangladesh table tennis. After 21 years, she still reigns as the undisputed queen. Although she lost some of her gloss and mirth over the years, Zobera Rahman is still unbeatable at what many would consider the wrong end of someone's sporting age.

Better known as Linu, the attacking paddler does not move any faster nowadays, but there is none to match the unbeatable style of the shake-hander. She is still unparalleled with her top spinners and smashes. And, at 34, (most prefer to call it quits much earlier) she is still aiming higher, eyeing more ac-

took part in the national championships. The outcome was the same.

Linu played second fiddle to her sister for another year. But, once Helen departed the table tennis scene, Linu captured the top spot defeating Kazi Zebunnahar Dila in 1977. Since then she had few occasions to look behind.

In mid-seventies, the fight for honour was confined between Linu and Kazi Zebunnahar Dila. When Dila departed, there were a few challengers in the likes of Navid Haider, Nurunnahar Bithi and Julekha. But none lasted very long. Although Julekha is still playing the second fiddle, she is no match for the perennial

hard feeling when people say I should quit table tennis. Why should I? I'm still working hard and perhaps harder than any other player," said Linu in a cordial cogitation with the Daily Star.

"I know I'm not getting any younger. But the love for the game still drives me wild and helps me to take any amount of stress even at this juncture of my career," she confided.

"It is tough to play table tennis at a competitive level. It is tougher to be at the top for a long time. To be a good player you must be supremely physically fit. There is no short cut to extensive practice to be a good player," said Linu.

Replying to a query, Linu said: "The Indians are the undisputed champions in this region. Our fight essentially concentrates on Pakistan and Sri Lanka. And we cannot possibly think beyond that mainly because of the existing struc-

"In our country we play only a few tournaments each year. But in India table tennis is played round the year. While an Indian player plays 40 tournaments a year, we play only two or three here," said Linu.

"It's true that you can not take table tennis profession-ally. But unlike other countries, the social security here is almost nil. Besides, when I started playing table tennis, I got the support from my father. Actually that was altogether a different socio-economic condition. During that time struggle for survival was not that hard that people are facing now-days."

"We played table tennis for sheer amusement. I can remember the sweet memories of my early years. Although we were mostly confined at home, but whenever we got some time we just sat all our books on the dining table to play in our tiny little abode. It's now history."

"I can still remember the amount of table tennis played at the red Press Club building. Table tennis was played round the clock during that time. Things have changed over the years. A nice building replaces the old one. But you do not see many paddlers over there now."

A nostalgic Linu continued: "During that time you did not have to think about a partner for practice. But nowadays I will have to sweat to find someone to continue my practice. I have somehow managed a young fellow for one-and-a-half hour of practice at the wooden floor gymnasium. Unfortunately, you will not find another pair in that barren indoor."

"I do not want to solely blame the federation for the dwindling condition of our table tennis. They can not think of a better way to run it with the little financial support they are getting from the NSC," said Linu.

One can plan many things. But to implement those one needs money. In a competitive world, if you are to improve, you will have to fly on the twin wings of the electronic media and sponsors.

Future game and Marriage plans? Conclusion ??



colades.

Cynics could suggest that Linu should have withdrawn from the game to make room for younger players, but the champion paddler chose the hard way to disprove her critics that she is not hanging around for the lure of lucre or for the lust of glory. With a record 19 national titles under her belt, she finished runner-up in both doubles and singles in a pentagonal tournament in Hyderabad in 1982. Besides, in her three appearances in the SAF Games, her best performance is fourth place at Dhaka.

This year Linu celebrated her silver jubilee as the top TT player of the country. Sadly though, her feat was not acknowledged by the sport fraternity of the country. But she appeared unabashed by the indifferent attitude.

In that meet, organised by the Juvva Press Club, Linu finished runner-up to her sister Munira Rahman, also known as Helen. In the same year, they

favoured Linu.

Our champ's international account is, however, far from inspiring. Linu's best performance in an international meet came at the twilight of her luminous career when she won the Independence Cup table tennis last year. Her best record at Asian Games was fifth in the 1980 Calcutta Asian.

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SL may slash salary



COLOMBO, Feb 15: Sri Lanka is planning hefty reductions on salaries paid to the country's national cricket team following their poor performance in Australia, a state-run newspaper said today, reports AFP.

The pay cuts, as much as 30 per cent, will come before the World Cup which opens in England within three months, the Daily News said adding that in-

centives in future will be tied to good performances.

Sri Lanka's cricket board president Thilang Sumathipala was out of the country and not immediately available for comment but he said four days ago there would be a thorough review of the team performance.

"We plan to get more new people involved," Sumathipala said. The latest pay cut move comes following a post-mortem of the controversial Australian

tour in which Sri Lanka was knocked out of the tri-nation series and involved in a series of controversies.

Cricknet board chief executive officer Dhammika Ranatunga confirmed the players will be out on fresh contracts before the World Cup and that they were yet to negotiate terms with the players.

He said a firm decision to slash wages had yet to be taken. The Daily News said the players had been put on a contract by the board two years ago and the monthly salary of many exceeded 100,000 rupees (1,470 dollars), or about 20 times more than a junior office worker.

Senior players were paid three times the salary of juniors.

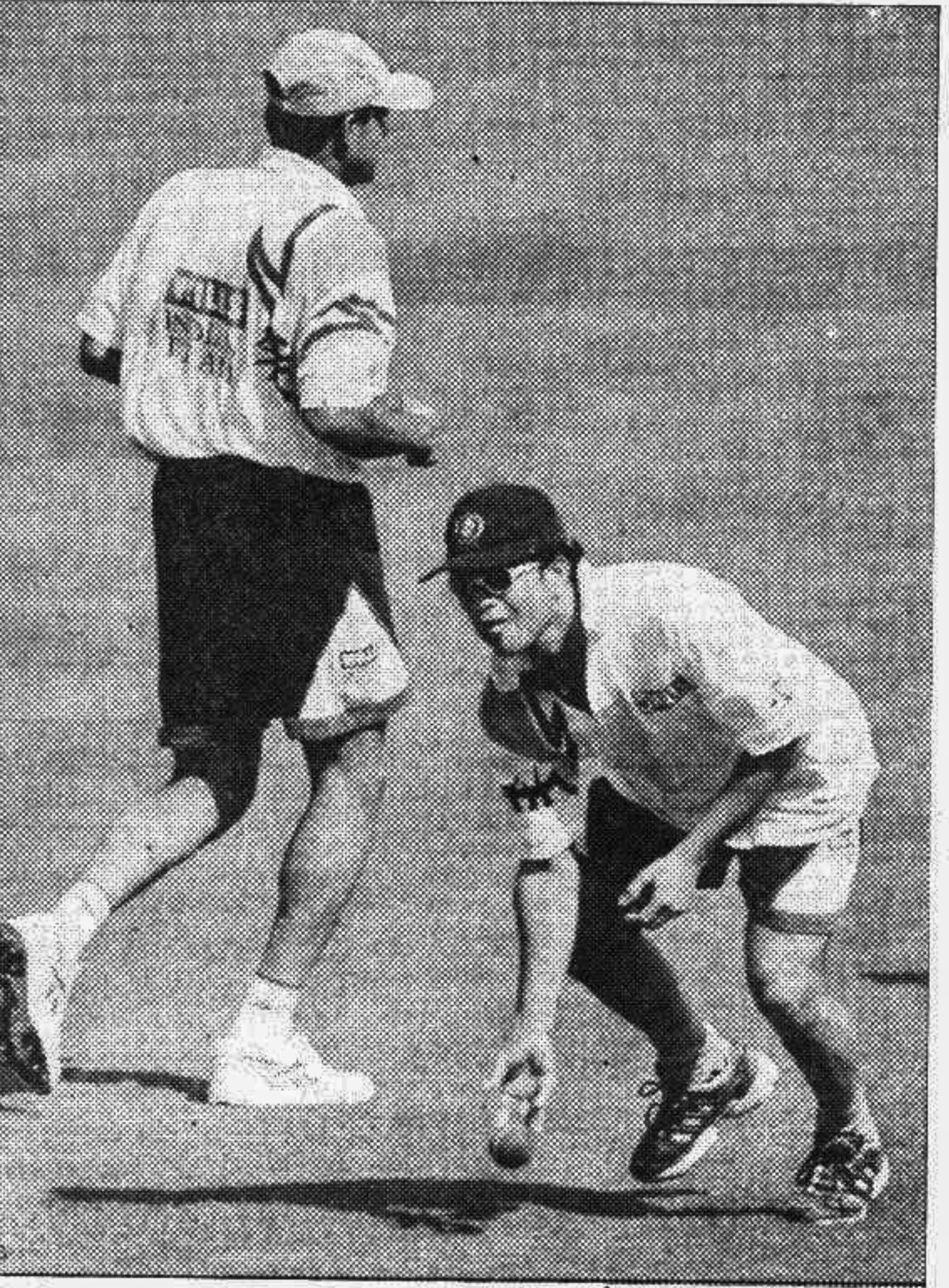
"It needed a lacklustre performance by the Sri Lankan cricketers in Australia to get the Board of Control for Cricket in Sri Lanka (BCCSL) thinking again," the Daily News said.

"For far too long the BCCSL has been mollycoddling our cricketers with handsome wages which has softened them up so much they have lost the incentive to work hard and perform."

Sri Lanka's poor performance in Australia were attributed mainly to injuries and Sumathipala said the hostile crowds had galvanised the team.

Sumathipala also hinted captain Arjuna Ranatunga may retire, possibly after the World Cup. Ranatunga led Sri Lanka to victory at the last World Cup by beating Australia in the final in March 1996.

He said Ranatunga, 35, may have retired from the game by the time Sri Lanka re-visit Australia.



Sachin Tendulkar practising under-arm pick up and throw during a practice session at the Eden Gardens yesterday. — AFP photo



Action from the Cotton Group Shaheed Smriti hockey encounter between Abahani and Bangladesh Navy. —Star photo