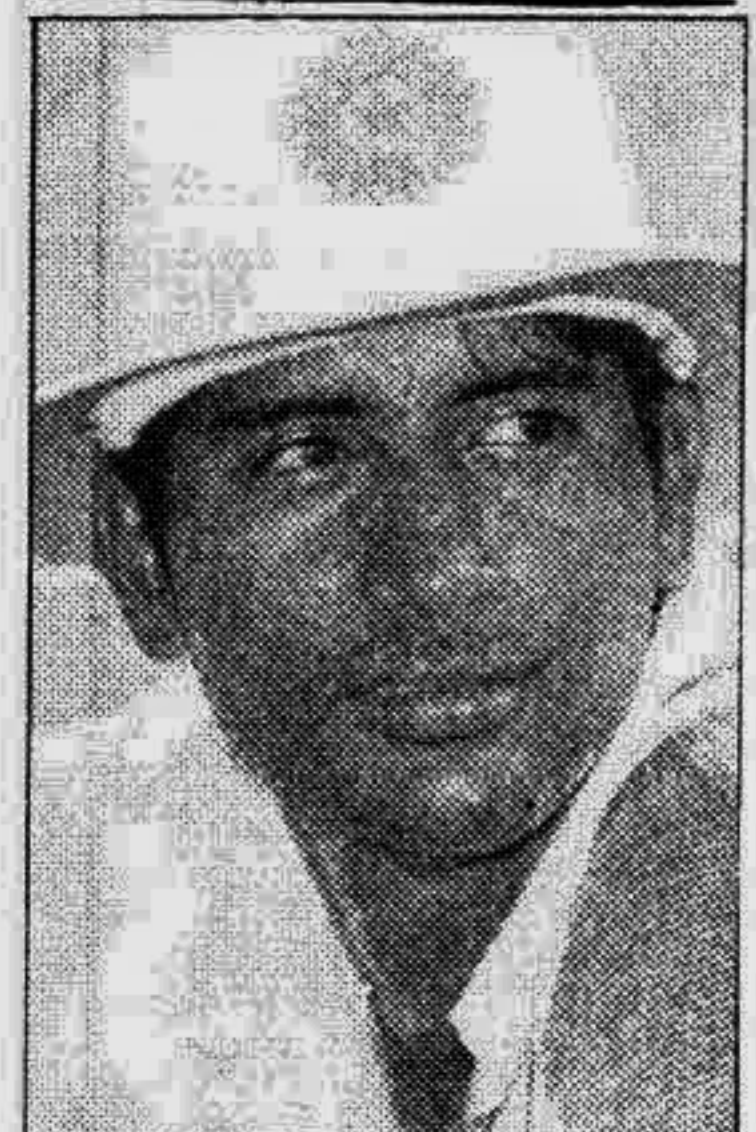


Column One

SPORTS TALK



Sadagoppan Ramesh
(Indian cricketer)
"I knew international cricket was all about the mind, how you handle the pressure. And my debut series being against Pakistan there was a lot more of it."

DID U' KNOW?

(The Professor does)

THAT catches cost matches. Of course you do! In the 1951-52 series West Indies lost 1-4 to Australia. More importantly, the calypso boys dropped more catches than they could handle. In one period they dropped as many as five catches in 20 minutes off Alf Valentine alone.

Not that was not how Valentine's Day began down under.

BOOST sports WHIZZ KID

COMPETITION FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN

Competition-113
Tick the Correct Answers
Post to The Daily Star
Win attractive prizes
Competition closes at 6 pm
April 9, '99 and draw shortly afterwards

- Who won the Asian Test Championship title?
India Sri Lanka Pakistan
- Kevin Keegan is the manager of
England Scotland Wales
- Warne is a
leg-spinner off-spinner medium-pacer
- Who is the first Bangladesh batsman to score an ODI century?
Mehrab Shahriar Hasibul
- How many half-centuries has Akram Khan scored?
4 5 6

Name

Class Roll No.

School Address

Phone: (if any)

POWERED WITH EN-VITS ENERGY RELEASING VITAMINS

ICC turns down Wisden opinion

LONDON, Apr 2 (AFP/Internet): International Cricket Council chief executive David Richards on Thursday rejected criticism of the functioning of ICC and of Jagmohan Dalmiya's leadership of the world body.

"One of Dalmiya's main achievements has been persuading the countries of the need for a united International response to the allegations of match fixing."

"In January countries established the ICC Code of Conduct Commission. Its role is to oversee and co-ordinate the investigation by member countries. The ACB recently conducted a thorough investigation arising from the Mark Waugh-Shane Warne allegations, while the Pakistan government judicial enquiry is nearing completion. Both enquiries will be reviewed by the Commission. The terms of reference for the ICC Code of Conduct Commission were announced in January and the composition of the panel will be finalised by the end of April."

"During Dalmiya's term of office a new corporate structure of ICC has seen countries directly involved in the decision-making process of international cricket."

"Mr Dalmiya masterminded the commercial success of the 1998 Wills International Cup, which has generated significant funds for the ambitious ICC development programme to globalise the game," Richards concluded.

Faruque on trial

BCB XI Karachi bound

Sports Reporter



A 17-member Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) team, led by Habibul Bashar, leaves for Karachi today to take part in the President's Cup one-day tournament. The prestigious competition begins tomorrow. The second-string Bangladesh side, placed in Group A, open their campaign against the Karachi Cricket Association (KCA) on the inaugural day at Karachi's National Stadium (KNS).

Although the tour is basically for gaining experience rather than posing any serious threat to the title, manager of the team, former national captain Roquibul Hasan, was in an upbeat mood regarding his team's chances.

Roquibul, however, said that

it would have been a more balanced side had there been a good left-arm spinner. But Faruque's inclusion in the team at the eleventh hour has certainly bolstered the batting line-up.

The experienced right-hander, a member of the England World Cup squad, will play a couple of matches in Pakistan before joining the national team now training at the BKSP in Savar.

Team: Habibul Bashar (captain), Javed Omar, Belim, Ehsanul Haq, Imran Ahmed, Al-Shahriar, Nasirul Alam, Faruque Ahmed, Hasanuzzaman, Golam Mortuza, Aminul Islam Jr., Mahabubur Rahman, Morshed Ali Khan, Mofizur Rahman, Mushfiqur Rahman, Fahim Muntasir, Roquibul Hasan (manager) and Abdul Hadi (coach).

BCB XI'S FIXTURE		
Date	Opponents	Venue
April 4	KCA(W)	KNS
April 6	Customs	KNS
April 8	National Shipping	KNS
April 10	Quetta	KNS
April 12	Hyderabad	Makil Stadium



Players and officials of the BCB Eleven pose at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday.

— Star photo by Anisur Rahman

Axe may fall on Warne

Final Test from today



ST JOHN'S, Antigua, Apr 2 (Reuters/AFP/Internet): Australian Shane Warne, the most successful spin bowler in Test match history, may be dropped for the fourth and final Test against West Indies starting on Saturday.

"There's a possibility that Shane might not play and I'm sure he'll accept that," said Australian captain Steve Waugh on Thursday.

Australia trail 2-1 in the se-

coach Geoff Marsh. The team must be sanctioned by chairman of selectors Trevor Hohns in Australia but he rarely intervenes in decisions on tour.

Warne has struggled with his form since a shoulder operation in May last year.

"He's bowling tight without bowling dangerously," Waugh said.

"His flipper isn't coming out and he's never had a great wrong-un anyway. He's always had a great leg-spinner with a few changes in pace. Lack of variation is probably killing him at the moment."

Waugh supported his extended use of Warne late on the final day of the last Test by claiming that his overall record, 317 wickets at an average of 25, justified using him at crucial times.

"He's a great bowler. He's got more than 300 wickets. I had faith in him to do the job," he said.

Seamer Adam Dale, who had innings hauls of seven for 24 and six for 67 in two matches at the Antigua Recreation Ground earlier in the tour, could step into Warne's spot.

Waugh said wicketkeeper Ian Healy would retain his place despite a poor series with gloves and bat, provided his injured calf muscles stood up to the strain.

"It goes hand in hand. If you're struggling with your body and you're keeping it makes it more difficult," he said.

"He's done the business for years under pressure and you notice when he's not scoring runs the team seems to be collapsing in the second innings. That shows what he's done over the years. Only fitness will keep him out but his legs have got to be right or he won't play."

Australia's one-day wicket-keeper Adam Gilchrist has flown in a week earlier than the remainder of the limited overs squad as cover for Healy.

The greatest fitness concern for Australia is fast bowler Jason Gillespie. He is still suffering from a back problem and was too stiff to bowl at training

on Thursday.

"It seems serious," manager Steve Bernard said. "He is very doubtful."

Opening batsman Matthew Elliott also has a back problem but his Test form has been so poor that he was likely to be dropped anyway.

Greg Blewett, who missed the last Test with a thumb injury, is expected to play ahead of Elliott at the top of the order.

Meanwhile, West Indies have added uncapped batsman Wavell Hinds to their squad for



STEVE WAUGH

the fourth and final Test. Shivnarine Chanderpaul was again left out because of his persistent shoulder injury.

SQUADS

WEST INDIES (from): Sherwin Campbell, Adrian Griffith, Dave Joseph, Brian Lara (captain), Carl Hooper, Jimmy Adams, Ridley Jacobs, Nehemiah Perry, Pedro Collins, Curtly Ambrose, Courtney Walsh, Corey Collymore, Wavell Hinds.

AUSTRALIA (from): Matthew Elliott, Greg Blewett, Michael Slater, Justin Langer, Mark Waugh, Steve Waugh (captain), Ricky Ponting, Ian Healy, Shane Warne, Stuart MacGill, Glenn McGrath, Jason Gillespie, Adam Dale.

Nat'l cricket semis start tomorrow

The three-day final round semifinal matches of the 25th national cricket championship will begin on Sunday at different city venues, reports UNB.

Jessore will take on Sylhet at the Bangabandhu National Stadium while Bangladesh Biman play against Chittagong at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium.

The four-day final match will begin on April 8 at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Zia Open Active chess champ

International Master Ziaur Rahman of Bangladesh Biman emerged unbeaten champion of the Open Active Chess competition with six and half points, reports UNB.

In the day long tournament, Zia beat Quasem, Amir, Sohel, Monir, Annuul and Lavlu while he drew with Hanif.

Monir Hossain of Narayanganj became runner-up securing six points. He beat Masud, Parag, Fahim, Aminul, Sujon and Quasem.

Khandaker Kayes Hasan of Leonine Chess Club was placed third and Ali Amzad Mintu fourth, both securing five and half points.

A total of 52 players participated in the Swiss League basis competition. The first twelve finishers got Tk 2,500 each.

Nat'l youth cricket Final round begins today

The final round of the 19th national youth cricket championship involving 12 teams begins today in two venues - Kushtia and Satkhira, reports UNB.

On the opening day, Khulna DSA will take on Nilphamari DSA in the two-day match at the Kushtia Stadium while Satkhira DSA meet Pirojpur DSA at Satkhira Stadium.

The two-day group final matches will begin on April 11 at Satkhira Stadium and on April 12 at Kushtia Stadium.

Bengal storm into final

CHENNAI, Apr 2: Defending champions Bengal earned the right to play Goa in the final of the Santosh Trophy national football championship on April 4 when they defeated a fighting Kerala 3-1 in the semifinal here today, reports PTI.

Azhar out of the final

Akram seeks to settle scores



BANGALORE, Apr 2 (AFP/Internet): The prospect of erasing a World Cup nightmare will inspire Wasim Akram when he leads Pakistan into battle against arch-rivals India in the tri-nation Pepsi Cup cricket tournament final here on Sunday.

"Unfortunately our fans remember only the defeats, not how much we have won," he said. "You just cannot afford to lose, especially against India."

The wheel appears to have turned a full circle as it is now Pakistan also won the inaugural Asian Test Championship and three of the four tri-series matches.

But Akram knows those achievements will pale if Pakistan fail to defeat India in the day-night final at the Chinnaswamy Stadium on Sunday.

"It was at the same venue three years ago that Akram was vilified by his countrymen for opting out at the last minute of

the World Cup selection on Monday. The selectors are awaiting word from Tendulkar about his availability for next week's Champions' Cup in Sharjah featuring England, India and Pakistan.

Tendulkar, who suffered back spasms during the first Test against Pakistan in February, has begun light training with his Bombay teammates, but remained uncertain about playing in Sharjah.

"I will have to see how I feel

after practicing for a few days," Tendulkar said. "I intend to inform the board about Sharjah in a few days."

Azharuddin, however, said he will be fit to play in the Sharjah event starting on Tuesday.

SQUADS

INDIA (from): Ajay Jadeja (capt), Saurav Ganguly, Sadagoppan Ramesh, Rahul Dravid, Amay Khurasia, Robin Singh, Ajit Agarkar, Nayan Mongia, Javagal Srinath, Anil Kumble, Venkatesh Prasad, Nikhil Chopra, Gyanendra Pandey, Hrishikesh Kanitkar.

PAKISTAN (from): Wasim Akram (capt), Saad Anwar, Shahid Afridi, Ijaz Ahmed, Inzamamul Haq, Imran Khan, Yousef Youhana, Moin Khan, Azhar Mahmood, Saqlain Mushtaq, Shahid Nazir, Shoaib Akhtar, Abdul Razzak, Arshad Khan.



WASIM AKRAM

the World Cup quarterfinal against India, which the hosts won.

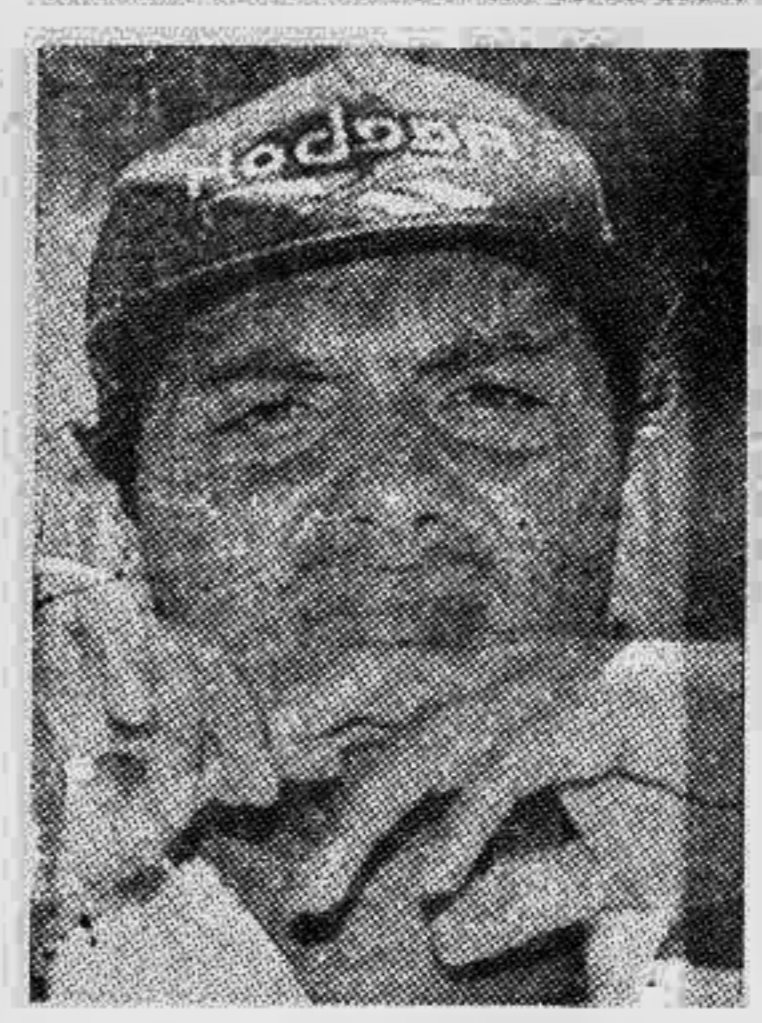
Akram's home in Lahore was stoned and angry MPs demanded his head, accusing the allrounder of selling his country's interests to bookmakers.

Akram, whose plea that a groin injury would have prevented him from giving his best was ignored, is determined to wipe the slate clean as he returns to this southern Indian city to redeem his honour.

"Being unfairly accused by my own people was just horrible," Akram said. "I will not wish such fate to befall even my enemies."

"I have tried very hard to forget those days, but it's not easy. People forget it's a sport. We get too emotional about it."

The 32-year-old is riding a wave of success, leading Pakistan to victories in two of the three Test matches on the current Indian tour. Under him



AZHARUDDIN

Indian captain Mohammad Azharuddin's turn now to overcome injury worries.

Meanwhile, India suffered a major setback ahead of the final when captain Mohammad Azharuddin withdrew from the side with a shoulder injury.

Azharuddin, who did not play in the last two league matches of the series, informed the Indian board he still needed three more days to recover.

Ajay Jadeja will continue to lead the side in Azharuddin's absence and Pune all-rounder Hrishikesh Kanitkar was drafted into the 14-man squad for the final.

With master batsman Sachin Tendulkar still nursing a back injury, Azharuddin's presence was vital for the Indians, who lost both their league matches against Pakistan.

India have recalled all their top stars, barring Tendulkar, for the final after experimenting with fringe players ahead of



AJAY JADEJA

after practicing for a few days," Tendulkar said. "I intend to inform the board about Sharjah in a few days."

Azharuddin, however, said he will be fit to play in the Sharjah event starting on Tuesday.

FIFA cautions Poland



LONDON, Apr 2 (Reuters/Internet): Polish football, beset by internal wrangling, has been given a one-week deadline to comply with FIFA regulations or risk being thrown out of the European Championship.

The Poles, who lost 1-0 at home to group rivals Sweden on Wednesday four days after losing 3-1 to England, have been given until April 8 to solve their problems.

Their internal crisis has dragged on for months but it now threatens to explode.

Twice in the past week, FIFA have sent letters to the Polish F.A., reminding them of their pledge to hold new elections following months of alleged mismanagement.

At one point, Poland's top clubs were on the verge of a wholesale strike.

So far, the Polish F.A.'s autocratic president Marian Dzielorzewicz has refused either to bring elections forward from next year or to step down himself.

"We have reiterated that fresh elections must be held as soon as possible. A final decision must be reached by April 8 at the latest, otherwise the matter will be discussed by our emergency committee," a FIFA spokesman said in a telephone interview on Thursday.

Asked whether Poland could be thrown out of the European competition, the spokesman said: "I don't want to speculate but expulsion would be the ultimate sanction."

"The problems are serious but I can't comment on whether we will be allowed to continue in the competition. We'll just have to see what happens," said

Dariusz Adamczuk, who plays for Dundee in the Scottish League and who was on the Poland bench against England at Wembley.

If Poland were excluded from the competition, their entire qualifying group could be thrown into turmoil with all matches so far played declared null and void.



England cricketer Adam Holoioake sits in front of the Badshahi Mosque in Lahore yesterday. The England team will play a warm-up match before proceeding to Sharjah where they will take part in a tri-nation competition starting on April 7.

— Internet photo

Still anybody's game in England



LONDON, Apr 2 (Reuters/Internet): The traditionally important Easter fixtures are unlikely to have a major bearing on the outcome of the English premier league title race this year as European commitments have curtailed the involvement of Manchester United and Chelsea.

United, four points clear at the top, visit Wimbledon on Saturday while third-placed Chelsea are at Charlton Athletic.

Only second-placed Arsenal of the top four have two matches - away to relegation-haunted Southampton on Saturday and at home similarly struggling Blackburn Rovers Tuesday night.

Leeds, who have won their last six successive matches to move to within two points of Chelsea in fourth, should extend that run at home to bottom side Nottingham Forest on Saturday.

United are spared a second match because of their European Cup semifinal first leg against Juventus on Wednesday

but they can expect no further assistance from Wimbledon, themselves still hopeful of a UEFA Cup spot.

However, while few teams look forward playing the uncompromising Londoners, United have an enviable record against them.

They have lost only once in their last 10 league visits to Wimbledon - 1-0 in 1984 - and won last season's corresponding fixture 5-2.

United also hit five when the teams met at Old Trafford in October and so will be confident of victory even in the likely absence of the injured trio of Ryan Giggis, Jaap Stam and Roy Keane.

This time last season Arsenal were in the middle of their incredible surge to the title and they will need a repeat - plus a slip or two by the leaders - if they are to retain their crown.

Coach Arsene Wenger is again without suspended midfielder Emmanuel Petit and could well miss his combative contribution against a battling Southampton team adept at pulling off unlikely April victories.

But while Petit's season has

been sorely hit by injuries and suspensions - he has been sent off three times - fellow midfielder Ray Parlour is having the time of his life.

Hot on the heels of last Saturday's England debut, the 26-year-old was named the league's player of the month on Friday.

Arsenal's 25-game unbeaten home record should survive the visit of Blackburn on Tuesday but Brian Kidd's side are only a point above the drop zone and will also be fighting for their lives.

The champions must pick up six points from the two games to prevent United opening an unbridgeable gap with just six games remaining.

Chelsea were spared a mouth-watering home game with Leeds on Monday because of their Cup Winners' Cup semifinal against Real Mallorca on Thursday but cannot afford to relax against fellow-Londoners Charlton.

Gianluca Vialli publicly conceded the title after his team wavered in recent weeks but with Leeds breathing down their necks they must keep winning to ensure at least a top three finish.