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Column One

DID U' KNOW?

(The Professor does)

THAT A Mrs. Park, despite being present in the Melbourne ground in the 1920-21 Ashes series, missed her husband Roy's entire international career as a batsman. He was bowled by the only ball he faced in Test cricket. Fortunately or unfortunately for Lady Park, she had bent to pick up her dropped knitting at precisely that moment.

As she saw (?) everything, Roy never had a yarn to tell.

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 8 pm
April 9, '99 and draw shortly
afterwards

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

Name

Class Roll No.

School Address

Phone: (if any)

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SPORTS TALK



Brian Lara

(West Indies captain)
"I've had the whole of the Caribbean behind me since I was a teenager and there is no reason to let up. I've always been a big trier."

Speaking after the crushing defeat in the first Test against Australia at Queen's Park Oval in Trinidad.

3-day national cricket semis

Sylhet will take on Jessore at the Bangabandhu National Stadium while Biman will meet Chittagong in the other semifinal at the Dhamondi Cricket Stadium. Each team will play a maximum of 100 overs in the first innings.

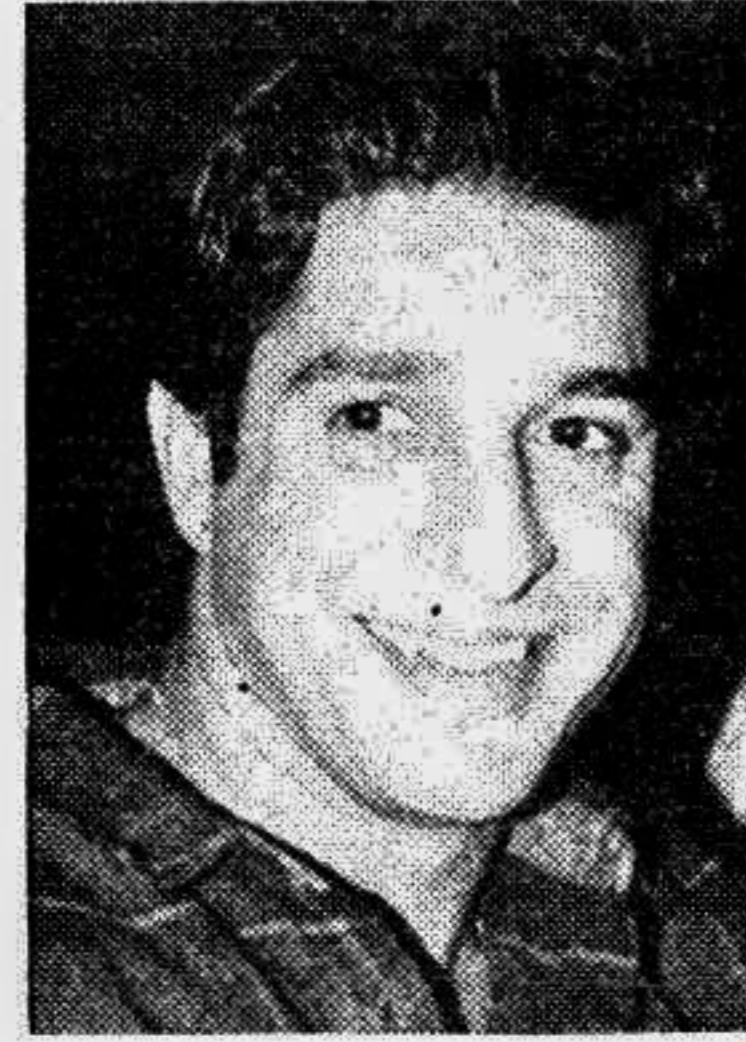
Barisal cricket

From Staff Correspondent BARISAL, Apr 3: Four-Hi Club defeated Fakirbari Club by 130 runs in the First Division cricket league at the Barisal Stadium today. Winning the toss Fakirbari scored 103 losing all the wickets in 24.4 overs. Ashis made highest 28 while Masum took 3 wickets for 42. In reply, Four-Hi Club scored 233 runs losing 9 wickets in 40 overs. Babu scored highest 78. He was also adjudged man-of-the-match. Rubel took 3 wickets for 12 runs. Tomorrow South Alekanda Boys Club will face Brothers Union Club at the same venue.

Tri-series final today



BANGALORE, Apr 3: India return to the same setting but face a tough task to re-enact the script of three years ago at the Chinnaswamy Stadium when they take on buoyant Pakistan in a high-voltage final of the Pepsi Cup triangular limited-over series final here tomorrow, reports PTI.



WASIM AKRAM

The time for experiments for the home team is over and they are faced with a daunting task, especially in the absence of injured skipper Mohammad Azharuddin and master batsman Sachin Tendulkar, of stopping the marauding Pakistani team in its tracks in the vital day-night match.

In the 1996 World Cup quarterfinal, India scored an emotionally draining 39-run win over their arch-rivals to spark off nationwide celebrations while the Pakistanis returned

home to brickbats and abuses from their cricket-crazy fans.

Ajay Jadeja, stand-in captain in Azharuddin's absence, has very happy memories of that super charged contest as his swashbuckling 46 helped India post and imposing 287 for eight this time he will be eager to lead from the front in what is certain to be a most morale-boosting in the final run-up to the World Cup campaign in England.

But Pakistan skipper Wasim Akram, who controversially sat out in 1996 citing a shoulder injury, is growing from strength to strength after regaining his crown and is at the helm of a formidable side seeking to avenge that loss.

Saurav Ganguly still experiencing some stiffness from the blow he received to the rib cage facing paceman Shoaib Akhtar at Mohali, will open the innings with fellow left-hander S Ramesh who has recovered from the back strain he suffered in Pune, coach Anshuman Gaekwad said.

Jadeja will be hoping his batsmen show some determination facing up to the Pakistani pace attack after being shot out for 135 and 196 in crashing to defeats in both their league matches in the current series against Pakistan.

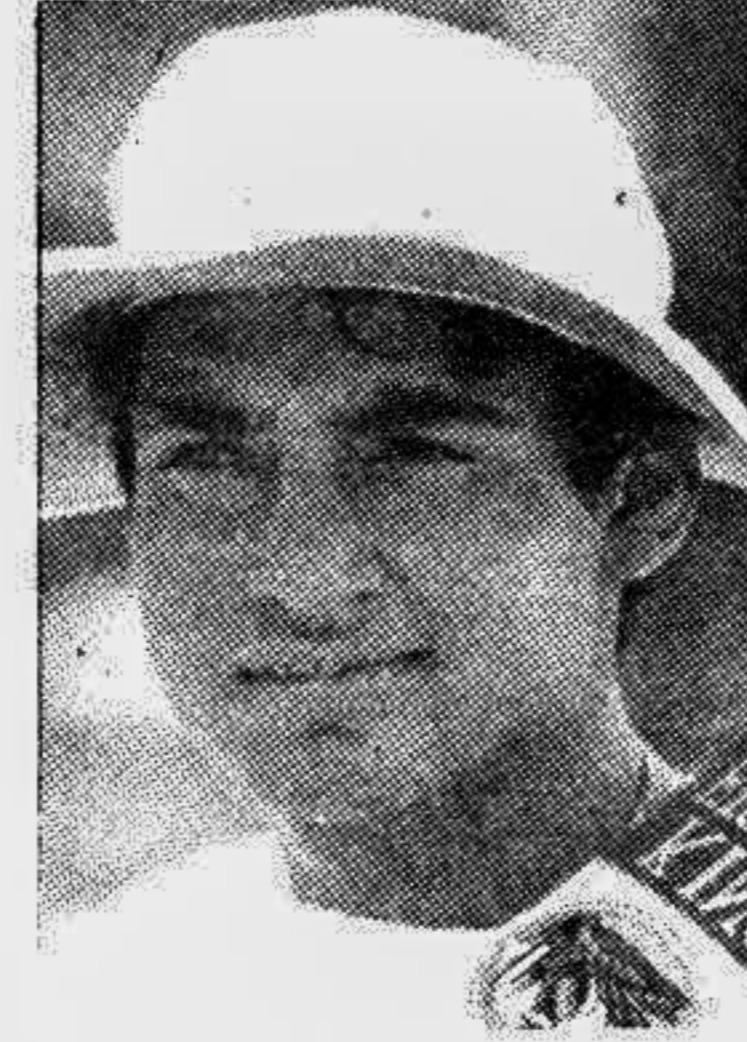
Indian batting, which looked full of aggression and Chutpah against the Sri Lankan attack to post 280-plus runs fell apart against Pakistan's superior firepower and the host batsmen must lift themselves up by the bootstraps for India to have a good chance of lifting the crown.

For the first league, they were in full strength barring Tendulkar's absence, but were

dismissed in only 36.1 overs chasing Pakistan's 278.

An under strength side without Azharuddin and key bowlers Jagajal Srinath, Anil Kumble and Ajit Agarkar who were rested, succumbed by seven wickets two days ago in Mohali in the inconsequential final league tie.

The much-vaunted batting failed miserably despite Gan-



AJAY JADEJA

guly weathering the painful blow from Akhtar to top-score with a sedate 57.

But the frontline bowlers are back, and the Karnataka trio of Srinath, Prasad and Kumble are in a fine position to play an influential role in familiar conditions.

The pitch is expected to provide even bounce and help strokeplay, according to curator Kasturirangan, while the lush green outfield should encourage the fielders.

BCB XI stranded, first match today

Sports Reporter

The second-string Bangladesh cricket team, in the guise of Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) XI, left the capital yesterday to take part in a limited-over cricket tournament at Karachi, Pakistan.

But the 17-member team for the President's Cup One-day tournament had to experience a delayed departure after Emirates cancelled their 10 A.M. flight due to some technical reasons.

The team was stranded at the Zia International Airport for about nine hours before being squeezed into Biman, the national flag carrier, which is likely to fly into Karachi via Dubai in the early hours of today.

The team, led by Habibul Bashar, will hardly get any rest following its gruelling journey before appearing in the inaugural match against Karachi Cricket Association at the National Stadium today.

The visitors, placed in Group A in the most colourful national cricketing event in Pakistan, will play their second match against Customs on April 6. They will take on National Shipping Corporation on April 8 before appearing against Quetta in their group league match on April 10.

The BCB XI will play their last match against Hyderabad on April 12 at the Maki Stadium in Tahtia.

Nat'l Youth Cricket Tangail's Uttam tangles foes

Sports Reporter

Tangail and Sathkira took command at the end of the first day's play as the final round of the 19th National Youth Cricket Championship got underway at two bordering hamlets of the country yesterday.

At Kushiya, Tangail, aided by a five-wicket haul from Uttam, nilphamari reeling to 60 for six at stumps. Earlier, electing to bat, Tangail scored a fighting 177 before being all out in 67 overs. But the moderate Tangail total looked more than enough when Uttam ripped through the Nilphamari top-order to finish the day with five for only 15 runs.

At Sathkira, the hosts piled up a huge total of 255 before being all out in 61.2 overs. Sharif and Babu scored highest 42 runs apiece while Anu hammered an unbeaten 23. In reply, Popur could manage only 58 runs for the loss of four wickets when stumps were drawn after 28 overs.

Salim Malik returning?

ISLAMABAD, Apr 3: Selection committee of the Pakistan Cricket Board has finalised Pakistan's team for the World Cup, which begins in England on May 14 this year, reports PPI.

Member of the committee Salahuddin told Radio Pakistan that the committee has submitted names of the team members to the board which would be announced after approval by its council.

He said Wasim Akram would be the captain while other members of the team include openers Saad Anwar, Wajidullah Wasti and Shahid Afridi, middle-order batsmen Salim Malik, Ijaz Ahmad, Yousuf Youhana and Inzamam-ul-Haq besides wicket-keeper Moiz Khan, spinners Mushtaq Ahmad and Saqlain Mushtaq, Waqar Younis, Shoaib Akhtar, Azhar Mahmood and Abdul Razaq.

Salahuddin said, "It is a well balanced team and selection committee thinks that it is a good combination. He expressed the confidence that the team would demonstrate excellently in the World Cup."

He said Salim Malik's selection in place of Imran Nazir has been made in view of his vast experience.

Sachin still uncertain

MUMBAI, Apr 3: Ace Indian batsman Sachin Tendulkar, who opted out of the on-going tri-nation one-day series due to back spasms, today said he was ninety per cent fit but still not sure about his availability for the April 7-16 Sharjah tournament, reports PTI.

Tendulkar told reporters after the practice session at Wankhede Stadium here that he was feeling much better than before.

"However, as I am under contract with the board I can reveal information about my fitness only to the board president Raj Singh Dungarpur and he in turn will address the media," he added.

The master batsman, who batted for twenty minutes at the nets, said, "I have lost about six kilos and am feeling very well." Tendulkar was also seen holding his back gingerly after playing a couple of pull shots. Tendulkar, who looked "fit as a fiddle", said, "I have been doing some free hand exercises for the past two days and have lost some weight as well."



Jenny Thompson of USA, the world record holder in the women's 100 metres butterfly, in action during the heats at the world championships yesterday. — AFP photo

De Bruijn halts Thompson



HONG KONG, Apr 3: Dutch swimmer De Bruijn ended American Jenny Thompson's winning streak at the World Short-Course Championships Saturday night, edging her by .22 second in the 50-metre freestyle, reports AP.

Thompson had won the 100-metre freestyle and 50-metre butterfly and broken her own world record in the 100-metre individual medley before De Bruijn overtook her in the second half of the race and won the 50 freestyle in 24.35 seconds.

Thompson was second in 24.57, with Britain's Alison Sheppard third in 24.97. World record holder Sandra Voelker of Germany spoiled Japanese swimmer Mai Nakamura's attempt for a second gold medal here, overtaking her in the final few meters of the 50-metre backstroke.

Voelker's 27.63 was slower than her world mark of 27.27. Nakamura, winner of the 100 backstroke Friday, finished in 27.73, with Australia's Kellie McMillan third in 28.29.

Other world record holders who won were Britain's James Hickman in the men's 200-metre butterfly and Finland's Jani Sievinen in the men's 100-metre individual medley.

But record holder Claudia Poll of Costa Rica could manage only sixteenth in the women's 400-metre freestyle.

Russia's Nadejda Chemezova overtook 600-metre winner Chen Hua of China after a tight duel over the first 250 metres and won in 4 minutes, 52.33 seconds. Chen finished second, but later was disqualified for a false start, leaving China's Qin Canai second in 4:06.34 and Canada's Joanne Malar third in 4:06.34. Poll finished in 4:10.40, well off her world mark of 4:00.03, set in 1997.

Popov gives way to Foster



HONG KONG, Apr 3: Alexander Popov, easing his way back into competition after surgery, failed to win a medal but still proved crowd favorite at the World Short-Course Swimming Championships, reports Reuters.

Double Olympic champion Popov was, for once, not the focus of media attention as reporters thronged past him and headed for Mark Foster after the Briton had regained the 50 freestyle title and the Russian had been relegated to joint fifth in Friday's final.

Foster, winner of the event at the inaugural World Short-Course Championships in 1993, reclaimed the 50 freestyle world record from Popov last December lowering the mark to 21.31 seconds.

Foster was fully half a second slower in winning Friday's final but Popov, who underwent surgery in his left knee in January, was still not in contention and finished way back in 22.10.

On Thursday, the first day of these four-day championships, the Russian finished seventh in the 50 metres backstroke and on Saturday he failed even to make the semifinals of the 100 metres backstroke.

Those results were no great surprise, Popov is not a backstroke specialist and he is feeling his way back after his operation and used these championships as part of his build-up to the 2000 Sydney Olympics.

Popov, winner of the 50 and 100 freestyle at the 1992 and 1996 Olympics, did not even enter his 100 freestyle speciality in which he has not been beaten at a major championships since winning his first

Thompson dropped out of further competition in the 100-metre individual medley after breaking her own world record with a time of 59.30 in the heats Friday.

Slovakia's Martina Moravcova, who held the world mark briefly at 1:00.35 before Thompson reclaimed it minutes later, won that event's final Saturday in 1:00.20. Australia's Lori Munz was second in 1:01.40, followed by Russia's Oxana Verevka in 1:01.55.

Thompson still has a chance for another gold Sunday in the 100-metre butterfly, one of three events in which she holds the short-course world record.

In Saturday's semifinals, she was fourth fastest in 59.08, behind Sweden's Johanna Sjoberg (57.78), Japan's Ayumi Aoyama (58.57) and Australia's Petria Thomas (58.83). Her world mark is 56.90.

"I felt pretty good about my swim," Thompson said despite her silver medal in the 50 freestyle. "Inge deserved that. She's really good in the 50."

Thompson, who swam five races Friday and another five Saturday, set her world record — worth 15,000 dollars — in Friday's second race.

"The money had something to do with it," the 26-year-old pre-medical student said. "I wanted to try and break the world record. It's pretty hard with all the semifinals to be fresh. It wears me down."

"The money does change it a bit," she said of the world record rewards being offered for the first time at these championships by FINA, swimming's governing body.

Patrik Isaksson gave Sweden its third gold of the meet when he won the men's 100-metre breaststroke, but Sweden's women missed a sweep of the freestyle relay races when they were disqualified for an early

takeoff in the 4x100. The Swedes were fastest in 3:36.05, but the gold went to Britain with a time of 3:36.88. The Netherlands was second in 3:39.40 and Australia third in 3:39.82.

Isaksson won his race in 59.69, ahead of the 59.88 of Domenico Fioravanti of Italy and 59.93 of Canada's Morgan Knabe.

Hickman was unchallenged in winning the 200 butterfly in 1:52.71, behind his world mark of 1:51.76.

Japan's Takashi Yamamoto was second in 1:54.68, and Ukraine's Denys Sylantsev third in 1:55.41.

Hickman, who managed only third Friday in the 100 butterfly, where he also holds the world mark, said, "In the past couple of days, I've been very up and down. The whole of Thursday night, I was up sick."

By Saturday, he added, "I was rested and I kept my head down, I'm quite pleased about that right now."

Sievinen beat Australia's Matthew Dunn, the 400-metre champion, 54.18 to 54.77 in the 100 medley, with Denmark's Jakob Andersen third in 55.05.

On Sunday, Sweden's Lars Frolander, already the 100 butterfly champion, will try to hold off Australia's Michael Klim in the 100 freestyle finals. Frolander was fastest in Saturday's semifinals in 47.49, with Klim second in 47.90.

Japan's Masami Tanaka tries Sunday for her third gold medal, in the women's 100-breaststroke. She already has won the 50 and 200 — where she broke the world record — but she trailed Olympic Champion Penny Heyns of South Africa 1:06.95 to 1:07.24 in Saturday's 100-metre semifinals, with world record holder Samantha Riley of Australia third in 1:07.25.

Pak cricket fans back home

CHANDIGARH, Apr 3: The historic trip by Pakistan cricket fans to India came to an end today as 1023 persons, including 65 women and 32 children, returned to Pakistan today after their three-day stay in the city, reports PTI.

The fans had arrived here on Wednesday night and watched the India-Pakistan tri-series tie 'day-night clash at Mohali on April 1 after special arrangements were made to sell tickets at Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium and visa procedures were speeded up by Indian authorities.

During their stay the fans were honoured by the Chandigarh administration which hosted a dinner and cultural programme at the famous Rock Garden here last night.

World Youth Cup starts



LAGOS, Apr 3 (Reuters/Internet) Champions Argentina will be going for a hat-trick of titles in the World Youth Cup starting on Saturday when large numbers of agents, hoping to snap up young talent at bargain prices, will be among the most interested spectators.

The South Americans, who beat their biggest rivals Brazil in the 1995 final in Qatar and their second-biggest rivals Uruguay in 1997 in Malaysia, begin the defence of their crown against Kazakhstan in Kaduna on Sunday.

The Argentines arrive in Africa in fine fettle, having won eight of their nine matches in winning the South American qualifying tournament in January when 19-year-old striker Luciano Galletti from Estudiantes scored nine of their goals.

Coach Jose Peckerman, who led Argentina to their previous two victories, is once again in charge.

Hosts Nigeria, whose handling of the competition is likely to attract much attention, open the tournament when they face Costa Rica in Lagos on Saturday.

They aim to become the first African nation to win the title.

Although England's team in Lagos contains a few players with top-flight domestic experience, the English Football Association did not force their premier league clubs to send anyone to Nigeria who was a regular first team player.

Up-and-coming players such as Harry Smith from Leeds United will, therefore, not be on show in Nigeria.

Some of the other European nations have followed England's example in sending second-string outfits because of domestic league commitments and this leaves South America with an excellent chance of securing another youth title.

Brazil, who scored 10 goals a game twice in Malaysia before a quarter-final defeat by Argentina, are always a threat. But this year their preparations have been somewhat tumultu-

ous.

Coach Tominho Barroso resigned shortly after he had picked the squad for the tournament and the team will be one of the most health-conscious at the finals.

Despite the tropical heat, malaria-fearing Brazil will train in tracksuit trousers to avoid mosquito bites and may even play their matches in long-sleeved shirts.

But the Brazilians will want to follow the example of midfielder Dunga, who won the title in 1983 and then went on to lead his country at two World Cups.

They have plenty of talent at their disposal, with an attack spearheaded by 19-year-old

Fernando Baiano, who scored five goals in a single Libertadores Cup match this month.

Europe, with only six teams present, could find that their best hopes lie with Portugal, champions in 1989 and 1991.

Hugo Leal, 18, the youngest player in their squad, has already attracted the interest of several Italian clubs with his excellent tactical vision.

Portugal's free-kick specialists Simao Sabrosa is valued at \$15 million and he has attracted interest from Barcelona.

Germany have invested less than many other countries in youth football over the past few years and their side is not that strong.

Germany's appearance in the Cyprus final of the under-18 European championship last July therefore came as a surprise.

Gifted teenagers such as Sebastian Deisler (Borussia Moechengladbach), Fabian Ernst (Hamburg SV) and Sebastian Schindzielorz (VfL Bochum) play regularly in their club's first teams and have not travelled to Nigeria.

Star of the squad is playmaker Patrick Falk of Bayer Leverkusen who was concerned about the weather in Nigeria.

"To play under such temperatures is crazy," he said.

Germany, who lost 2-1 to Mexico in their last warm-up match on Monday, play their first game against Paraguay on Sunday.

With 24 countries taking part, the teams will be divided into six groups of four. The top two in each group, plus the four third-placed teams with the best records, then progress to the knockout stage.

The allocation system for the tournament has allowed lesser soccer nations such as Mali, Zambia, Kazakhstan and Honduras to take part while France, the Netherlands and Italy are among those missing out.

But, with major European clubs happy to buy talent from the most obscure nations, there will still be plenty to keep the agents happy.



An artist writing down the names of the participating nations on placards on April 2 in Lagos prior to the opening ceremony of the World Youth Football Championships. — Internet photo