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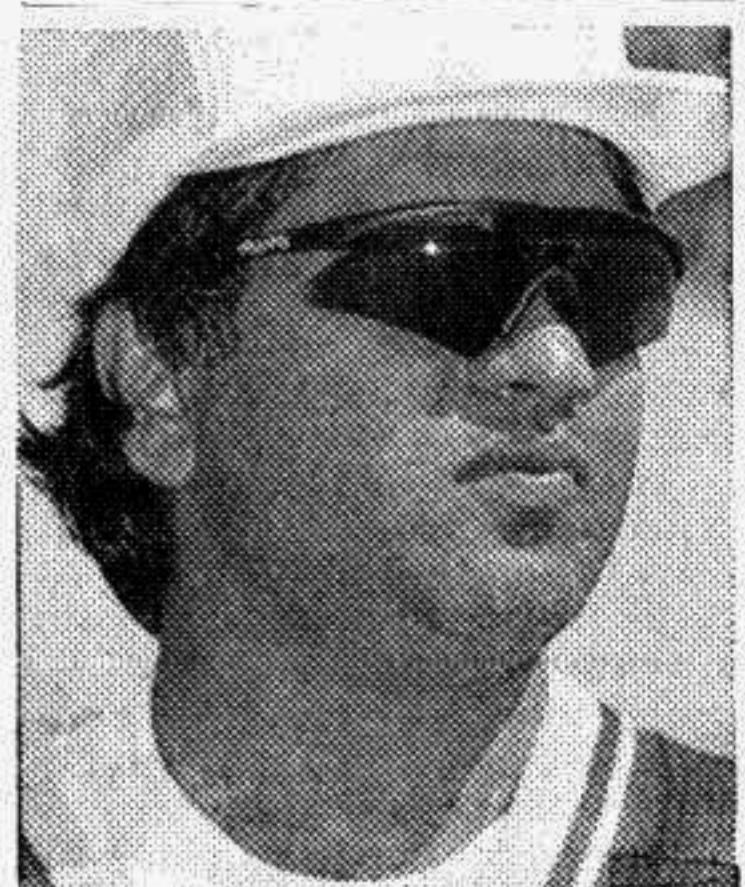
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Star Sport

DHAKA THURSDAY, MAY 13, 1999 Email: dssports@bdonline.com

Column One

SPORTS TALK



Arjuna Ranatunga

(Sri Lankan captain)
"I don't know how Alec Stewart can assess Sri Lankan cricket... he doesn't know anything about it."

On his English counterpart.

Boost sports WHIZZ KID

COMPETITION FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN

Competition-115

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

Competition closes at 8 pm
May 14 '99 and draw shortly afterwards

1	Who will replace Bob Woolmer as South African cricket coach?
2	When England last hosted cricket World Cup?
3	Umpire Steve Bucknor is a Guyanese, Jamaican, Trinidadian
4	The final match of the 1999 cricket World Cup will be held at Edgbaston, Lord's or Oval
5	The World Cup match between Bangladesh and Scotland will be played in Edinburgh, Belfast or Cardiff

Name
.....

Class Roll No.

School Address

Phone: (If any)

POWERED WITH
EN-VITS
ENERGY RELEASING VITAMINS

Sachin scare

LONDON, May 12 (Internet report): Sachin Tendulkar gave India another injury scare as they finally emerged from a damp start to their World Cup preparations with a comfortable victory over Nottinghamshire at Trent Bridge.

Tendulkar, who has been suffering from a back problem in the countdown to the World Cup, was unable to take the field because of a calf problem after making a dazzling 91 with the bat.

Even so India's coach Anshuman Gaekwad - who saw opener Shahid Afridi injured against Durham yesterday - is confident his star batsman will be fit to open the World Cup proper campaign later this week against South Africa.

"Sachin got struck on the calf when he was batting," said Gaekwad.

"It's very sore, and he's got an ice pack on it. But there is no real cause for alarm."

WC fever sweeps DU

Cricket fever gripped the Dhaka University campus ahead of the World Cup beginning in England on Saturday, reports UNB.

Cricket is the common subject of discussion among the students whether they understand it or not.

A group of students of Bengali, Islamic Studies and History Department yesterday brought out a procession on the campus wearing Bangladesh national flag on their back.

They paraded the campus beating bowls and plates and shouting slogans in an inexperienced tone in favour of Bangladesh team.

Residents of the university have already hung tournament fixture on the walls of their rooms and taking all out preparation to enjoy the World Cup.

Meanwhile, rumours of closure of the university classes before the tournament is now a talk of the campus, although the authorities have already declared that the summer vacation will begin from June 1.

Students, both male and female, are keeping sharp eyes on the TV rooms to avoid unwanted disturbances during the matches.

Local authorities are repairing the broken chairs of the TV rooms and trying to increase the number of seats for the cricket lovers.

Hair in the line of fire?

SYDNEY, May 12 (Reuters/AFP): Australian cricket umpire Darrell Hair has received a death threat, purportedly from a Tamil group for having no-balled Sri Lankan spin star Muttiah Muralitharan in 1995, Australian newspapers reported today.

They said Hair, who is officiating at the World Cup about to start in England, had received a letter from a person claiming to be a supporter of the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). The LTTE have been fighting since 1983 for a separate homeland for Tamils in Sri Lanka's north and east.

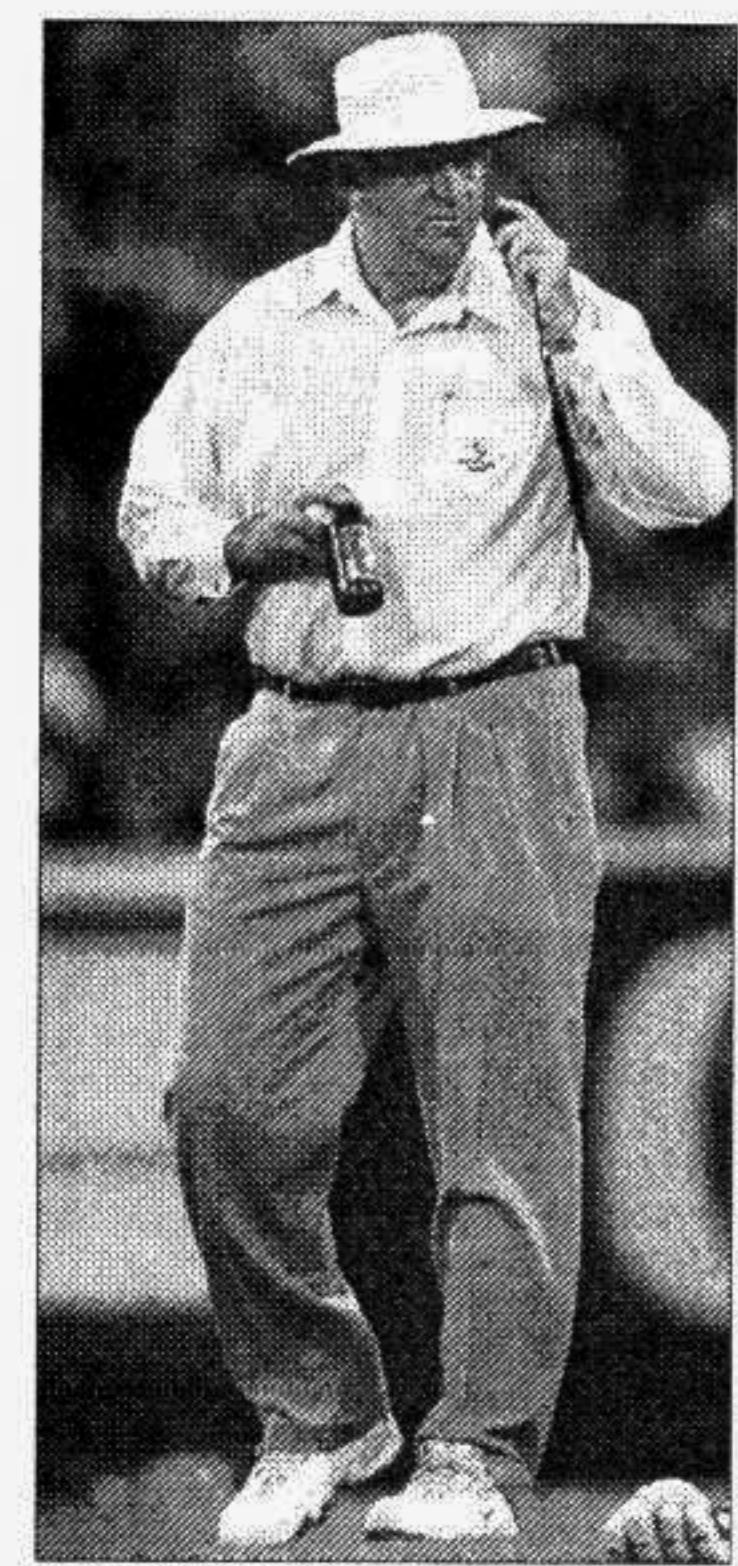
Part of the letter warned Hair that "we have representatives of our people throughout all major nations of the world and we will take action against you for what you have done," the Sydney Daily Telegraph reported from England.

However the Australasian Federation of Tamil Associations released a statement refuting the death threat.

The Federation is astonished that the reports should accuse the Tamils of targeting an umpire who was mercilessly slandered and demonstrated against by the Sri Lankans for doing his duty," the statement said.

"Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam is a liberation move-

ment waging a war for liberation ... (they) have never been known to target foreigners in



DARRELL HAIR

Sri Lanka or overseas.

Hair sensationally no-balled Muralitharan for "throwing" in the 1995 Boxing

Day test in Melbourne, setting off a storm of protests in Sri Lanka. Muralitharan is his country's most prominent Tamil cricketer.

The Telegraph said Hair received the letter, postmarked from the English town of Harrow but left unsigned, shortly before leaving Australia and reported it immediately to the Australian Cricket Board and the International Cricket Council.

The newspaper said the ICC had decided that Hair should not umpire any matches involving Sri Lanka.

Hair stood down from a triangular series involving the Sri Lankans in Australia earlier this year after writing in a book that he would have no hesitation no-balling Muralitharan again. He was found guilty of bringing the game into dispute for the book and escaped punishment.

Hair was unable to comment on the affair because of ICC regulations preventing umpires making public comments about anything other than rain delays, the newspaper said.

The LTTE is a guerrilla organisation which has been fighting since 1983 for a separate homeland for Tamils in Sri Lanka's north and east.

The ACB declined to discuss the threat when contacted but a spokesman said they were closely monitoring the situation.

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Dublin match to go ahead

DUBLIN, May 12: Irish organisers of next week's World Cup match between the West Indies and Bangladesh in Dublin today dismissed reports the fixture was under threat, reports Reuters.

"As far as we're concerned the match is going ahead," Irish Cricket Union under-secretary John Wright told Reuters.

Media reports this week claimed the match, scheduled for May 21, faced cancellation because a strike by Irish scaffolders would prevent construction of temporary seating at the venue.

"There are no foundations to these rumours," Wright said, adding the 3,500 seats being installed at Clontarf Cricket Club in north Dublin did not require scaffolding.

Tickets for the match — the biggest cricket event staged in Ireland — had sold out, he said, with the majority of spectators expected to fly from Britain.

Ireland failed to qualify for the Cup, losing to Scotland in Kuala Lumpur in March 1997.

William Hill odds

LONDON, May 12 (Reuters): South Africa remain London bookmakers' favourites at 5-2 to win the World Cup while Australians Mark Waugh and Glenn McGrath are tipped to be the tournament's top batsman and bowler.

William Hill gave the following odds on the World Cup that starts on Friday:

LATEST ODDS:

5-2 South Africa
100-30 Australia
4-1 Pakistan
5-1 England
9-1 West Indies
10-1 India, Sri Lanka
20-1 New Zealand
80-1 Zimbabwe
500-1 Bangladesh, Kenya
1,000-1 Scotland

TO WIN THEIR FIRST ROUND GROUP:

Group A
10-11 South Africa
11-4 England
11-2 India, Sri Lanka
25-1 Zimbabwe
150-1 Kenya

Group B

11-10 Australia
2-1 Pakistan
9-2 West Indies
7-1 New Zealand
100-1 Bangladesh
200-1 Scotland

Top batsman

11-1 Mark Waugh (Australia)
12-1 Brian Lara (West Indies)
14-1 Jacques Kallis (South Africa), Sachin Tendulkar (India)

Top bowler

25-1 Saeed Anwar (Pakistan), Michael Bevan (Australia), Hansie Cronje (South Africa), Aravinda de Silva (Sri Lanka), Nick Knight (England), Graham Thorpe (England)

Top wicket keeper

9-1 Glenn McGrath (Australia)
12-1 Shoaib Akhtar (Pakistan)
14-1 Shaun Pollock (South Africa), Shane Warne (Australia)

Best all-rounder

16-1 Wasim Akram (Pakistan), Allan Donald (South Africa), Darren Gough (England)
--

Best bowler

20-1 Damien Fleming (Australia), Shane Warne (Australia)
--

Best batsman

25-1 Adam Dale (Australia), Anil Kumble (India), Paul Reiffel (Australia)

The Daily Star Sport



Countdown Gallery



1 days to go

Shoaib is super fast.

—Star file photo

Shoaib the sheikh of speed

UNDATED (AFP): Pakistan's new pace ace Shoaib Akhtar has come of age this year. His devastating pace was a key factor when Pakistan beat India in the first Asian Test in Calcutta, taking eight wickets in the match.

His two wokers which remained Rahul Dravid and Sachin Tendulkar remained a talking point for some time, especially the one that dislodged Tendulkar first ball for the first time in his illustrious career.

"I was fired up and it was in my mind that if I get quick wickets Pakistan can defend a low total. Then in the second innings I was told to fire on all cylinders and that I did," Shoaib said of his stint in Calcutta.

The fiery paceman promises more of the same in the World Cup. "I relish bowling in English conditions and I am confident I will bowl well to contribute to Pakistan's World Cup win. I mean it," he said.

A negative report on Shoaib by the manager of the Pakistan "A" tour to England in 1996 temporarily put the brakes on his career. Shoaib was selected for the Pakistan team to play in the first Sahara Cup in 1996 but dropped on disciplinary grounds.

There were some people who wanted to destroy my career," claimed Shoaib. "I have never been a bad boy."

Shoaib took 25 wickets on that England tour and impressed many with his pace and movement. Two prolific do-

mestic seasons the paved the way for his entry into the Pakistani side, with his 69 wickets in the 1996-97 season and 85 in the following home season.

Shoaib, who hails from Rawalpindi, was never interested in cricket in his childhood and developed an interest in fast bowling only after watching Waqar Younis.

But Donald, who clocked 93mph in last summer's Test series in England, warned there was more to one-day bowling in this country than pure speed.

Donald said: "I played against Akhtar in Durban and he's the quickest thing I've seen. He went on to bowl very well in Sharjah. Pakistan have had a great era of fast bowlers."

Meanwhile, Pakistani cricket legend Imran Khan Wednesday snubbed reports that suggested paceman Shoaib Akhtar had suspect bowling action, calling it a campaign against Pakistan on the eve of the World Cup.

"It is ridiculous and generated by those who fear Shoaib. He has a clear and genuine action," the former Pakistani captain and renowned paceman told reporters.

Unsured media reports from India and Sri Lanka questioned Shoaib's bowling action and said it could be "illegal."

Shoaib caused havoc in India with his pace and bowled too well against Sri Lanka in the limited over games and that is why they are raising questions," Imran said.

Meanwhile, South African Allan Donald, known as White Lightning for his rearing pace, does not want to turn the World Cup into a pace race against Shoaib.

"I'm not bothered about who is the quickest bowler in the World Cup. I'm just here to do a

job and do it well," said Donald.

Shoaib, who recorded 96mph in Sharjah, is determined to bowl the first 100mph delivery.

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