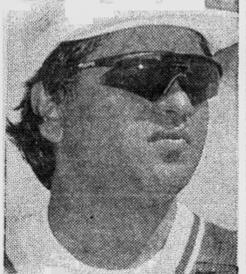


Column One

SPORTS TALK



Arjuna Ranatunga
(Former Sri Lanka cricket captain)

"What I do wish to say is that it is my firm belief that I do have a few more years of cricket left in me and if my services are wanted I am willing to represent my country in whatever capacity."

Boost sports WHIZZ KID

COMPETITION FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN
Competition-117

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

Competition closes at 8 pm
July 16, '99 and draw shortly afterwards

1	How many matches have been scheduled for the World Cup 99?	40	41	42
2	Pakistan beat New Zealand in the semifinal by	9 wickets	10 wickets	53 runs
3	How many wickets did NZ bowler Geoff Allott capture in the World Cup?	18	21	20
4	Saqain Mushtaq scored his hat-trick against which country?	Kenya	Zimbabwe	Bangladesh
5	How many runs did Minhazul Abedin score in the World Cup?	120	140	140

Name

Class Roll No.

School Address

Phone: (if any)

POWERED WITH
EN-VITS
ENERGY RELEASING VITAMINS

Due to unavoidable reasons draw of the WHIZZ KID Competition 117 could not be held last night. It will now take place on July 16.

- Sports Editor

Open Active Chess starts

Sports Reporter

Seventeen players were jointly leading the table after the second round of the Open Active Chess tournament which started at the Chess Room of the National Sports Council yesterday.

The players are: Rakib, Reefat, Rajib, Sumon, Rani, Shakil, Swapan, Lovlu, Ejaz, Amin, Pallab, Hanif, Sohel, Tipu, Kasem, Morshed and Parag.

Fourth round of the meet, which is being participated by 89 players, will begin at the same venue today at 3pm.

Police trounce Rayerbazar

Police AC crushed Rayerbazar SC 8-0 in the inaugural match of the Green Delta Insurance Second Division hockey league at the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium yesterday, reports UNB.

The winners dominated the first half 4-0.

Shishir's slammed five goals for Police, Asaduzzaman contributing two goals and Rafiqul one.

Earlier, general secretary of the Bangladesh Hockey Federation Shamsul Bari inaugurated the league.

Boys' h'ball

Bangladesh Rifles School, Shaheed Nabi High School and Ansar & VDP High School won their respective matches in the 10th Bata Schools Boys' handball tournament at the outer stadium ground yesterday, reports UNB.

Bangladesh rifles outplayed Wari High School 18-4 after leading the first half 7-4.

Shaheed Nabi trounced Kamalapur Sher-e-Bangla Railway High School 20-6 after dominating the first half 10-3.

Ansar and VDP High School defeated Blue Birds Academy 22-7 after leading the first half 9-4.

Abahani defeat F'ganj

Abahani returned to winning ways in the Keya Premier Division Football League with a hard-fought 1-0 victory over Farashganj SC at the floodlit Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday, reports UNB.

National medio Zakir Hossain scored the match-winning for the Federation Cup champions in the 21st minute forcing old-Dhaka based Farashganj to concede their first defeat after four league matches.

Despite the defeat, Farashganj remained ahead of Abahani in the league table with nine points from four matches while Abahani improved their position with second win in the league to secure eight points from four outings.

In the previous matches, Abahani drew one-all with Arambagh KS, beat Rahmatganj MFS 3-1 and drew goalless with Youngmen's Club Fakirerpool.

Farashganj previous had beaten Youngmen's Club 1-0, Mirpur Chalanika SC 3-2 and Brothers Union 2-1.

Abahani inspired of their Calcutta recruit Sabir Pasha, enjoyed a good first half.

But Farashganj dominated second half creating pressure over defensive Abahani.

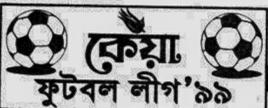
Zakir scored the goal thanks to a Sabir Pasha pass.

Zakir's shot found the Farashganj net on second attempt after his first attempt was blocked by custodian Shimul.

Zakir and Iqbal of Abahani, and Kanchan, Farhad and Apu of Farashganj managed good scoring chances, but failed to score.

Zakir failed to connect on a ball from handshake distance in the 59th minute off a Sabir Pasha centre while a close range goal mouth melee shot of medio Iqbal was brilliantly saved by Farashganj defender Arman from the goal line in the 84th minute.

The bald headed striker Kanchan of Farashganj came close to scoring twice in the 77th and 82nd minutes, but his first attempt returned to play



Yellow cards: Mintoo, Arman and Sentu (Abahani), and Farhad and Arman (Farashganj).

TODAY'S MATCHES
(Premier League)
Brothers Union vs Mirpur (Chalanika) (3:30 pm)
Arambagh KS vs Badda Jagorani (5:30 pm)
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium
(First Division)
BRIC vs East End (4:00 pm)
Venue: Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium



Abahani's Indian-recruit Sabir Pasha (R) fights for possession with a Farashganj player during their Premier Division soccer league match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

— Star photo

Asia's fresh ultimatum



LOS ANGELES, July 9: Angry Asian football officials stepped up the pressure on FIFA Friday by warning that unless they got an extra place in the 2002 World Cup finals they would boycott the tournament, reports AFP.

Asian Football Confederation general secretary Peter Velappan warned there could be a walk out by the 45 Asian members at the FIFA session on Friday to underline their anger.

The sudden toughening of their stance by the AFC has caught FIFA president Sepp Blatter by surprise.

When the AFC warned of a possible boycott of the 2002 qualifying tournament in December last year, they said they would accept an extra half place, giving them the opportunity to have five countries in the finals.

FIFA were convinced they would still be satisfied with this deal announced on Tuesday that Europe had agreed to create the half place. Minutes after his announcement however, South Korea's powerful FIFA vice-president Chung Moon-Jung said it was not acceptable.

On Thursday evening at a crisis meeting of Asian officials the half place deal was firmly

rejected.

Earlier a disappointed Chung said: "It would be a scandal if Asia were to be denied an extra spot. FIFA spends millions of dollars developing football. Asia has 45 teams. It would be wrong if they do not agree to our request."

Another Asian source said: "This is very serious, no one expected this."

In a further twist, the Hyundai conglomerate of Chung's family, the richest in Korea, is supplying cars to FIFA for the 2002 event. Chung is also keen that North Korea hosts some of the matches with the south.

Velappan meanwhile told CNN it was "shabby treatment" and hinted AFC members would walk out of the FIFA session on Friday.

The demand for a whole extra place was a dramatic upping of the Asian stance compared with Velappan's demand for just half a place at an AFC meeting in Bangkok on December 15. "We have a very reasonable request. All we are asking for is half a place. Now it is up to FIFA to do a deal," Velappan had said.

Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah, president of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA), had said at that meeting Asia must stand firm on their boycott threat.

Asia are now looking to South America to break the deadlock with Velappan telling CNN: "If Europe cannot give up a place, why not South America. They have 10 countries and we have 45."

The boycott threat only concerns the qualifying tournament and Japan and South Korea are certain to host the 2002 event.

Asia officials are due to have a full extraordinary meeting as soon as possible to ratify their boycott threat.

Two of the Asian slots are already promised to hosts

Japan and South Korea.

Japan and Korea, as co-hosts, each automatically qualify for a place but Asian football chiefs had been angry that only two more countries would win a slot under the original plans. The new deal gives them a chance to have a fifth representative via a play-off.

It is less good news for Europe, originally awarded 15 places in the finals (including world champions France who qualify automatically). Now only 14 will definitely make the finals with the 15th facing a play-off.

Football has been growing steadily across the length and breadth of Asia, helped by the introduction of the J-League in Japan.

Asian footballer of the year Hidetoshi Nakata's success with Perugia in Italy, the best league in the world, is a reflection of Japan's as well as Asia's progress.

Iranians and Chinese have also been making their mark with clubs in Europe during the last few seasons.

It is a different story in international football though Blatter cannot use this as an argument against a fifth Asian place. It is generally known he has repeatedly said the World Cup is not a meeting between the best football teams in the world but a festival of football.

In the 1998 World Cup, Japan lost all their matches, South Korea earned a draw in their final match having already been eliminated, as did Asian champions Saudi Arabia.

The only victory from 12 matches in France came from Iran's victory over USA in Lyon.

The 16-strong second round did not contain a single Asian side. It had four South American sides, 10 European teams, and one a piece from Africa and one from North and Central America and the Caribbean.

Bangladesh in final

Bangladesh moved into the final of the Asia Youth Cup Under-19 cricket tournament and qualified for the World Youth Championship scheduled for next January in Colombo.

Bangladesh confirmed their Colombo ticket because the two top finishers of the tournament only qualify.

In the first semifinal at the Kallang ground in Singapore yesterday, holders Bangladesh earned a huge 175-run victory over Papua New Guinea.

Bangladesh will play in tomorrow's final against the winners of today's other semifinal between Nepal and Malaysia.

A brilliant 73 by Mazharul Haq Mridul helped Bangladesh to score a respectable 248 for nine in the stipulated 50 overs after the skipper Fahim Muntasir decided to bat first winning the toss.

Middle order batsman Mridul's 73 came off 85 balls that featured four boundaries. With the ball he also did a good job claiming two wickets for only one run in 3 overs. He was adjudged man-of-the-match.

One down Hannan Sarker played another vital innings of 51 facing 58 deliveries with six hits across the rope and the two successful batsman contributed 66-run in the third wicket stand.

Tushar made 18 off 45 balls while Rajan Saleh Alam 15 runs off 25 deliveries.

Opening bowler Miria captured three wickets for 58 runs while K Dai took two for 40 runs.

In reply, Papua New Guinea were bundled out for 73 runs in 34.4 overs.

Medium pacer Tariqul Hasan was the most successful bowler with four for 24 runs in 8 overs. Besides Mridul, captain Sumit took one wicket for 15 runs in 7 overs.

Boge Dikana was the top scorer for the Papua New Guinea with 21 off 47 balls.

Juve not after Anelka

MILAN, July 9: Juventus on Thursday denied reports that they are about to snatch Arsenal's Nicolas Anelka from under the noses of Serie A rivals Lazio in a mega-deal worth around 50 million dollars, reports AFP.

Anelka, a 20-year-old striker rated as one of the brightest prospects in the European game, is determined to leave Highbury and has insisted that he will only join Lazio.

Italian press reports on Thursday claimed that Juventus have trumped the Rome club's best offer in style, offering the Gunners 60 billion lira (32.5 million dollars) plus their French international winger Thierry Henry, rated by the club at 30 billion lira (16 million dollars).

But Juventus director general Luciano Moggi later dismissed the claims, saying: "Anelka doesn't interest us. We're fine as we are, and we're happy that Anelka is going to Lazio."

The club's reported bid would have dwarfed the first offer from Lazio of 63 billion lira in cash (34 million dollars), and even beaten an improved one made on Wednesday by club Sergio Cragnotti of 57 billion lira (30.8 million dollars), plus Croatian striker Alen Boksic, valued at 18 billion lira (9.7 million dollars).

The Major League Soccer outfit announced late Tuesday that it has also acquired Yugoslav international attacking midfielder Sasa Curcic, formerly of Crystal Palace, Aston Villa and Bolton.

Curcic will link up with fellow Serb Bora Milutinovic, the much-travelled MetroStars coach who steered the US national side to the second phase of the 1994 World Cup.

Khakpour, 30, was a regular at France 98 for Iran, and starred in their win over the United States. He recently trained with the Los Angeles Galaxy and has won more than 20 caps for his country.

"It's a pleasure to welcome a pair of hard-working professionals like Curcic and Khakpour to our club," MetroStars general manager Charlie Stillitano told CNN.

Despite the draw, Victoria kept their top slot in the league table with 10 points from four matches. Wari collected five points from same number of outings.

Div I soccer

Victoria Sporting Club and Wari Club shared points in a goalless draw in the Metropolitan First Division Football League at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday, reports UNB.

Victoria kept their top slot in the league table with 10 points from four matches. Wari collected five points from same number of outings.

Sanath aware of his task

COLOMBO, July 9 (Reuters/AFP): Sri Lanka's new captain Sanath Jayasuriya said it was a 'big challenge' to lift the cricketing fortunes of his country and was looking forward to the return of former Australian cricketer Dav Whatmore as coach.

"To captain Sri Lanka is a great honour, but at the moment we are down and we have a job ahead of us. It's a big challenge, the state-owned Daily News today quoted Jayasuriya as saying.

They are coming here as the world one-day and Test champions with a lot of confidence. Our confidence is a bit low, but if we focus ourselves on what we have to do and play very hard the results will come," Jayasuriya said.

The 30-year-old hard-hitting left hand batsman who hails from a fishing village in southern Sri Lanka replaced Arjuna Ranatunga, the country's longest-serving and most

Selectors have come under increasing pressure to replace Ranatunga after Sri Lanka's failure to reach the second round of the World Cup in England. Sri Lanka have lost 18 of 25 one-day matches played since October.

Meanwhile, Sri Lankan cricket is set for a complete make over with the introduction of young players and the re-entry of former coach Dav Whatmore to prepare for the next World Cup, officials said today.

"The Board of Control for Cricket in Sri Lanka (BCCSL) said they were gearing up for major changes as the country's cricket team aimed to nurture better spin bowlers and fielders to regain the World Cup lost to Australia in May.

"We need to encourage new spinners and must have the patience to pursue with them," the head of the new selection panel, Sidath Wettimuni said, adding that the Lankans needed to improve their fielding too.

"Players felt there were too many coaches," said board official S Skandakumar, who conducted negotiations with Whatmore in England recently, referring to Sri Lanka getting two local coaches - Roy Dias and DS de Silva and an Australian, Trevor Chappell.

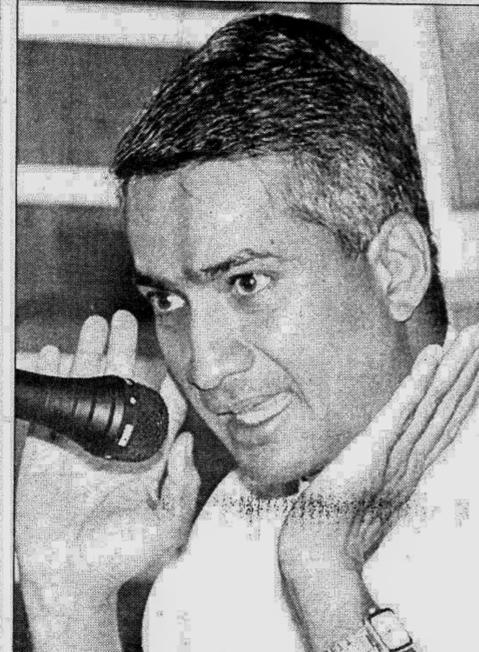
Wettimuni said the changes began to the team with the removal of skipper Arjuna Ranatunga and his deputy Aravinda de Silva who have been included in a 30-member squad for the triangular.

However, neither Ranatunga nor De Silva are guaranteed places in the team. Wettimuni said Ranatunga was training hard for selection.

"There has been no immediate reaction from Ranatunga to his dismissal, although the former skipper is reported to be training hard to secure his place in the side.

Even before Sri Lanka went to England for the World Cup in May, the former head of the Cricket Board Thilanga Sumathipala had called for changes to the squad and urged new blood be brought into the national team.

Many believe that coach Whatmore's re-entry was instrumental in bringing about Ranatunga's dismissal. The two men were known to have serious differences of opinion over bringing in youngsters to the team.



Board of Control for Cricket in Sri Lanka (BCCSL) chief of selectors Sidath Wettimuni talking to pressmen at Colombo on July 8.

He said it was not going to be easy against the World Cup champions Australia who are due in Sri Lanka next month to successful skipper.

Mahela Jayawardene also replaced Aravinda de Silva as vice-captain.

Warne keeps himself open

MELBOURNE, Australia, July 9: Spin wizard Shane Warne has shelved plans to retire, telling the Australian Cricket Board Friday he is available for international selection, reports AFP.

That means he will head for Sri Lanka in August and Zimbabwe in October if the selectors continue with their policy of fielding two leg-spinners.

Australia dropped that plan for the final Test against the West Indies in April when only Stuart MacGill played.

Warne revealed last month he was considering quitting the game after he recovered from his axeing from the Test team to spearhead Australia's remarkable win against Pakistan in the World Cup final at Lord's.

However, Warne, on the advice of those closest to him, has decided against a premature end to an already remarkable career.

"Over the past two weeks my wife Simone has been fantastic, as have all my family and close friends," he said in an Australian Cricket Board release.

"In the end, I'm sure I would have missed the game too much if I had retired. I'm only 29 and I think I have plenty to give cricket as a senior player before retiring."

Warne is an enthusiastic team man and admitted the joy surrounding the World Cup triumph had helped reignite his enthusiasm.

"I don't usually set myself goals but I have now, particularly in Test cricket, and I am determined to achieve them," he

said.

"Being a part of our great win in the World Cup was just the tonic to get me thinking positively again."

"I love the camaraderie of the team, both in Test and one day arenas, and I'm looking forward to playing against Sri Lanka."

There's a very convincing argument that Warne and MacGill at the top of their form should play every time no matter what the conditions," Healy said.

Test selectors Trevor Hohns, Allan Border and Andrew Hilditch will finalise the squad for Sri Lanka, which will be announced next Monday.

Special Olympians return

The Bangladesh Olympic squad of intellectually handicapped returned home Thursday night after taking part in the Special Olympic games held in North California, reports BSS.

State Minister for Youth, Sports and Cultural Affairs Obaidul Quader, State Minister for Social Welfare Dr Mozammel Hossain, Deputy Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives and president of Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) Sabir Hossain Chowdhury received the players at the Zia International Airport.

The squad comprising 31 players earned 21 gold, 8 silver and 6 bronze medals. More than 7000 athletes from 150 countries took part in the Games.

"He now knows how much



Members of the Bangladesh Special Olympic team with State Minister for Youth and Sports Obaidul Quader and Deputy Minister for LGRD and president of Bangladesh Cricket Board Sabir Hossain Chowdhury at the ZIA yesterday.



FULL OF CONFIDENCE: The US Women's World Cup squad enjoying themselves at Claremont on July 8.

— AFP photo