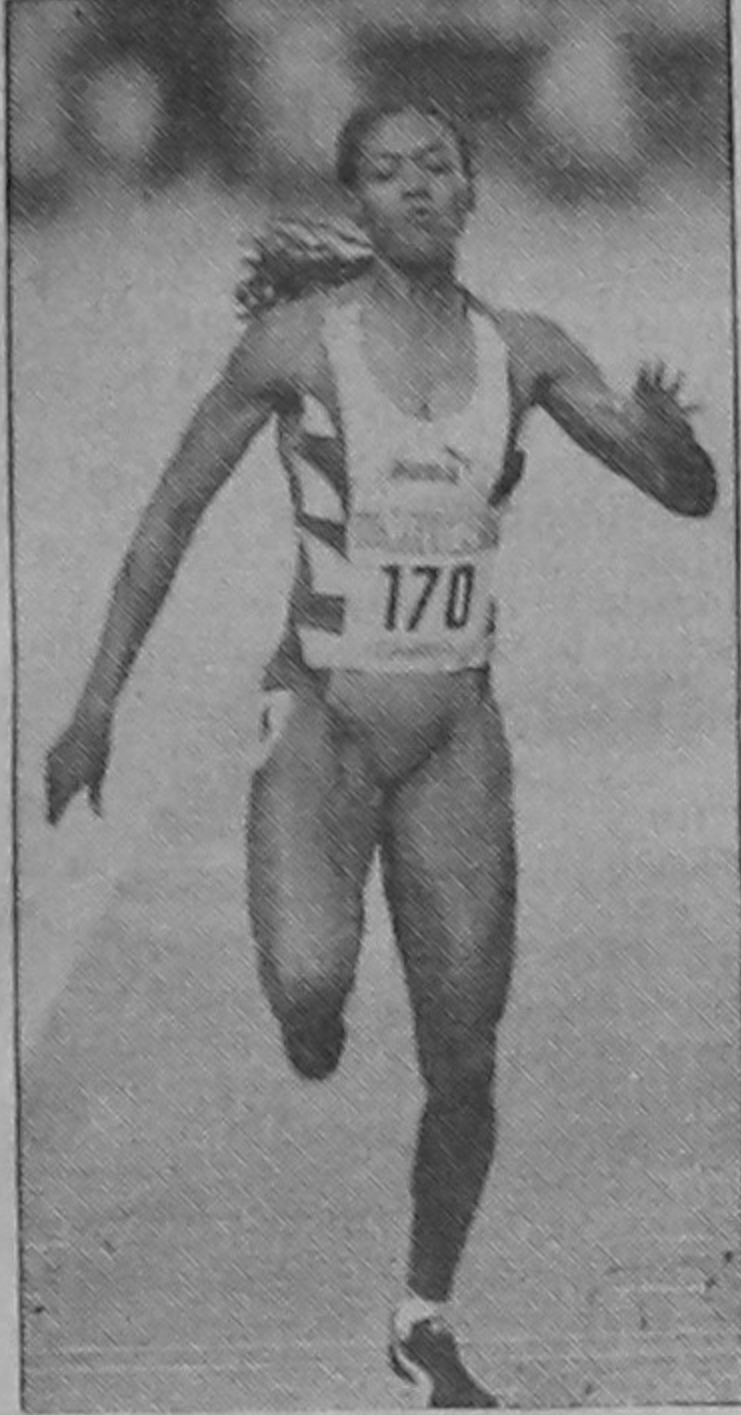


Star Sport

DHAKA, FRIDAY MAY 26, 2000 Email: dssports@bdonline.com

Column One SPORTS TALK



Merlene Ottey
(Jamaican ace sprinter)
"I have decided that this will be my last year and hopefully I will get the chance to have this dream-come-true run in Sydney and then retire."
Said recently.

Boost sports WHIZZ KID Competition-130

✓ Tick the Correct Answers
Post to *The Daily Star*
Win attractive prizes
Competition closes at 8 pm
May 26, 2000 and draw
shortly afterwards

1. Who replaced David Lloyd as England cricket coach?	Pitcher	Woolmer	Richardson
2. Which country will host the Euro 2004 Championship?	Portugal	Germany	Spain
3. Which Kiwi batsman hit 214 on his Test debut against West Indies?	Stclair	Fleming	Crowe
4. Which country won the four-nation football tourney in Maldives?	Sri Lanka	Bangladesh	India
5. Who won the national chess title this year?	Rehbar	Zia	Tipu

Name

Class Roll No.

School Address

Phone: (if any)

Akram to play in Asia Cup

KARACHI, May 25: Former Pakistan captain Wasim Akram, censured in an inquiry into match-fixing allegations, will play in the forthcoming Asia Cup, a Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) official said today, reports Reuters.

Akram, who is on tour with Pakistan in West Indies, had initially said he would not be available for the Asia Cup, which begins in Dhaka on Sunday, because of a television commitment in England.

Inter-varsity basketball

From JU Correspondent
Hosts Jahangirnagar recorded a 126-36 victory over Chittagong in the inaugural match of the inter-university basketball competition at the JU Gymnasium yesterday.

Rajshahi v'ball

From Our Correspondent
RAJSHAH, May 25: Bright Star Club and Nabaran Sangha moved into the final in the Hasani Imam and Ali Imam Pintu Smriti First Division volleyball league.

Lanka vow to keep the Cup

Hasan Masood



Holder Sri Lanka came to Dhaka with the only mission to win all the matches here and take the Pepsi Asia Cup back home.

"We will try to win every match here and reach the final... and hopefully we would return home with the trophy," said Lanka captain Sanath Jayasuriya, at a press conference at the Sheraton Hotel last evening. Coach Dave Whatmore and manager TB Kabelgamuwa accompanied the explosive opener at the briefing.

The 18-member Sri Lanka team including 4 officials arrived from Bangkok in the afternoon. The Islanders, who will take on hosts Bangladesh in the opening match of the four-nation tournament on Sunday, are the first among the three Asian heavyweights to reach the capital. Saurav Ganguly's India will fly in on May 28 while Pakistan, who are expected to reach Dhaka on June 1.

Speaking to a host of reporters, Jayasuriya said that his team was a combination of experienced and young talents, who always prefer to play positive cricket.

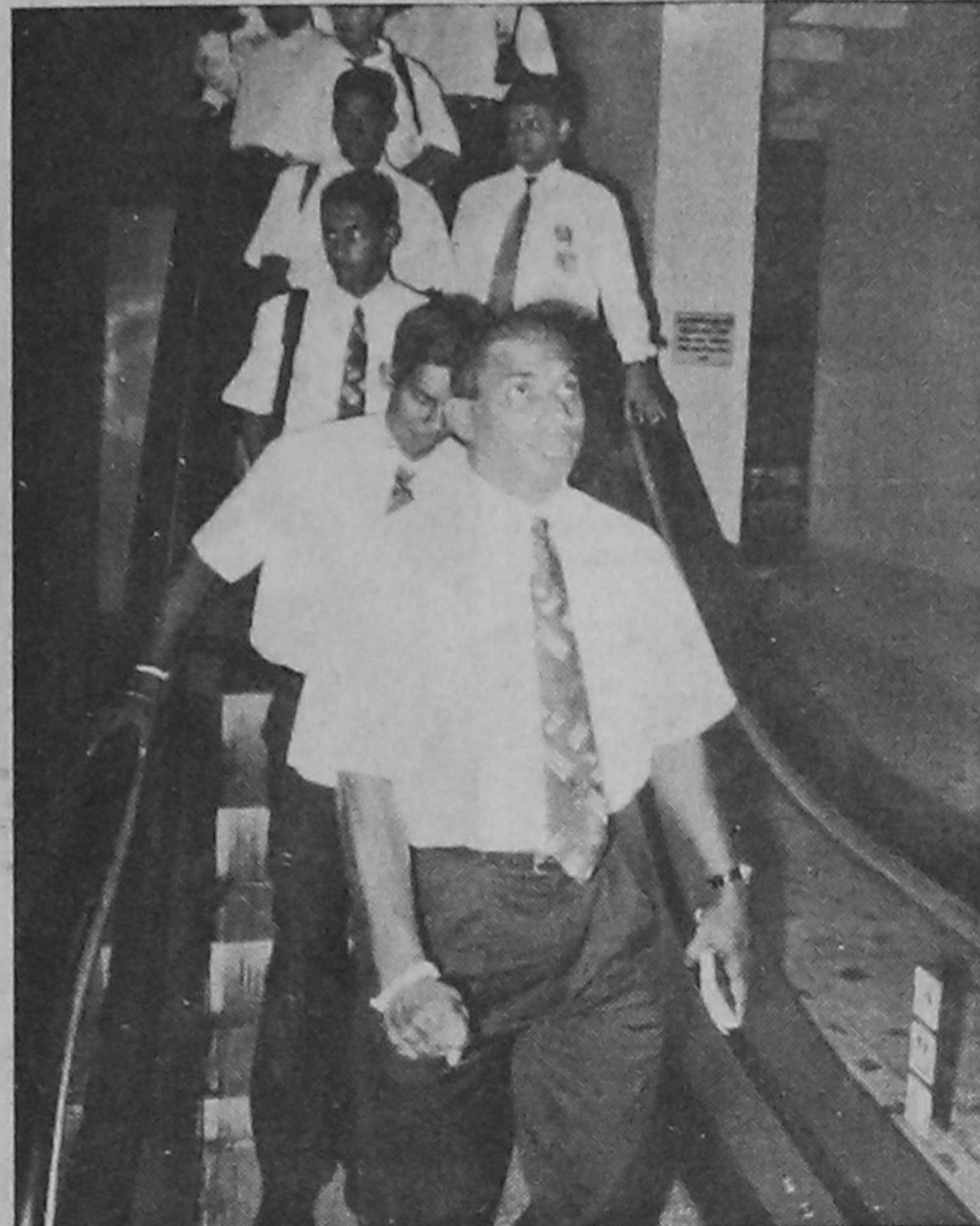
"We are trying our best to reach where we were in 1996, and the way we played in last ten months it is very encouraging for us," said Jayasuriya, adding that all the other three teams including hosts Bangladesh are equal opponents to them.

"We can not take Bangladesh lightly because it is their home ground," said the left-handed ball-basher, whose own performance in Dhaka is not worth telling. Jayasuriya played few matches for Mohammed Sporting Club here but could not live up to his reputation.

"I am not worried about my individual performance. I want the team to perform collectively," he said.

About the ongoing match-fixing issue, Jayasuriya declined to make any comment saying that they have come here only to play cricket.

Dave Whatmore, who inspired Lanka to their famous World Cup win in 1996, said most of his players were young and they were still in the process of learning.



Skipper Sanath Jayasuriya leads the Sri Lankan team on arrival at the Zia International Airport yesterday. The defending Asia Cup champions are scheduled to take on hosts Bangladesh in the opening match of the seventh edition of the tournament on May 28.

"We have gone through an enormous change in the Sri Lankan side for our future and it proved positive. We are still gaining experience," said the balding Australian, who stepped down from the post following a discord with the senior players. He was persuaded to take over again after Sri Lanka performed miserably in the England World Cup.

"We have seven well experienced batsmen in 1996. Any one

Can you take Bangladesh lightly because it is their home ground," said the left-handed ball-basher, whose own performance in Dhaka is not worth telling. Jayasuriya played few matches for Mohammed Sporting Club here but could not live up to his reputation.

Asia Cup chips

Al-Amin

Organisers are living on their nerves as the rain has continued to dictate terms in the country, making the fate of the Pepsi Asia Cup uncertain.

The persistent inclement weather was the only talk of the town. Saber Hossain Chowdhury, the president of the Bangladesh Cricket Board, looked bewildered at the forecast of more rain in the ensuing days. The grounds committee sent a SOS to Calcutta for two Super-Soppers.

Cricketers, who thronged every branch of the Al Baraka Bank to obtain the elusive tickets only the other day, turned less in numbers yesterday, clearly apprehensive of the prospect.

TICKETS REFUNDABLE?

Although ticket, as it has always been, is considered non-refundable, the BCB is contemplating to pay the money back for a rained-out match of the four-nation meet.

"It is too early to say that the weather, which is certainly not inspiring at the moment, will continue like this. But if we can not hold even a curtailed match then we are seriously thinking of refunding the money," said Saber while talking to the Daily Star at his BCB office yesterday.

The BCB boss however added that it would not be wise to make decision at the moment because "it might lead to confusion" among the cricket fans.

BAN ON CELL PHONE

The Bangladesh team is going to set up an example for others by not using cellular phone on match days. This was disclosed by Saber Hossain, who wants to throw watertight security net around the team to keep the match-fixing menace at bay.

"We want to revive the image of the game that suffered a blow in recent times through the growing controversy of match-fixing scandals. I have talked with the team and they have

Windies make early inroads

ST. JOHN'S, May 25: Greeted by another helpful pitch, West Indies fast bowlers claimed three Pakistan wickets prior to lunch on the opening day of the third and decisive cricket Test on Thursday here, reports AFP.

Sent in to bat on a bouncy Antigua Recreation Ground pitch, Pakistan reached 60 for three at the interval.

Yousuf Youhana was unbeaten on 16 and Inzamam-ul-Haq was not out on 12.

Batsmen out were Imran Nazir (10), Younis Khan (4) and Mohammad Wasim (13).

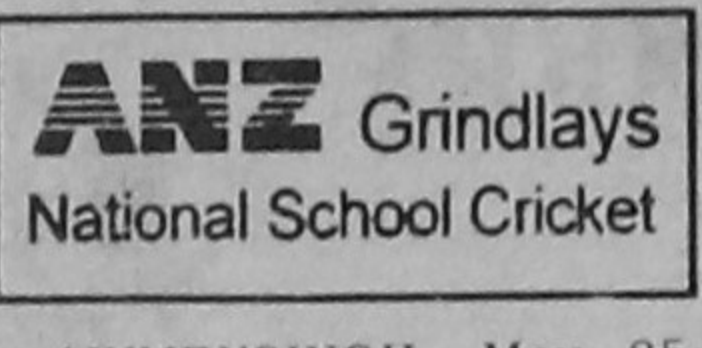
Manikganj and Shariatpur also won their respective matches yesterday.

At Narsingdi, Manikganj outplayed Brahmanbaria 5-0. Tutul made a hat-trick scoring four goals in the 10th, 39th, 62nd and 67th minutes respectively while Sentu netted the other goal in the 73rd minute.

In another match at Gopalganj, Shariatpur defeated Madaripur 5-2. Yasin and Wahid netted two each and Shuvankar one for the winners while Nabin and Arif scored for Madaripur.

Latifur Rahman, the Managing Director of Transcom Beverages Ltd (2nd from L), handing over a cheque of Taka ten thousand yesterday to Prochod Chowdhury, the winner of the Bangladesh Cricket Team Jersey Design Contest. Aly Zaker, the Managing Director and CEO of the Asiatic MCL (R) and Aloke Malik (L), the Country Manager of the Pepsi Bangladesh, were also present at the prize-giving ceremony held at the Transcom Beverages office yesterday. Prochod was also given two tickets of the International Enclosure for every match of the Pepsi Asia Cup.

M'singh Zilla clinch title



MYMENSINGH, May 25: Mymensingh Zilla School emerged champions in the ANZ Grindlays Bank 18th National schools cricket tournament beating Rajshahi Collegiate School by four wickets in the final at the local stadium here today, reports UNB.

Winning the toss, the home-side sent the Rajshahi boys into bat and dismissed them for 139 in 39.1 overs with Sohan scoring 28, Bulbul 21 and Sohel 16. Dipu captured three wickets giving away 18 runs.

In reply, the hosts reached the winning target making 141 runs for the loss of six wickets in 37.4 overs with Lipon contributing highest 29 runs.

Riyad made unbeaten 22, Arman 25 and Babu not out 26. Tamal of Rajshahi claimed two wickets conceding 13 runs while Bulbul took one for 12.

Riyad of Mymensingh was adjudged man-of-the-match.

Imran Ahmed and Anis Ahmed Khan of the tournament sponsor ANZ Grindlays Bank distributed prizes among the players.

Sher-e-Bangla Cup Bhola, Khulna emerge zonal champs

Bhola and Khulna emerged zonal champions to reach the final round of the 21st Sher-e-Bangla Cup National Football Championships yesterday, reports UNB.

In Barguna, Bhola beat Barisal by a solitary goal in the zonal final, which was earlier abandoned twice on Tuesday and Wednesday due to rain.

Moinul scored the all-important goal in the 65th minute. In Bagerhat, Khulna clinched the zonal crown eliminating Chuadanga also by a solitary goal. Former national boater Prasanta netted the match-winner in the 85th minute.

Besides, Narsingdi, Jessore, Tangail and Comilla moved into the zonal finals beating their opponents at different venues across the country yesterday.

In Narsingdi, the hosts defeated Narayanganj 1-0 to book a seat in zonal final. Shoeb netted the match-decider in the 39th minute for a penalty.

In Gopalganj, Jessore blanked Faridpur 2-0 to play the zonal final with Jhenidah on Saturday.

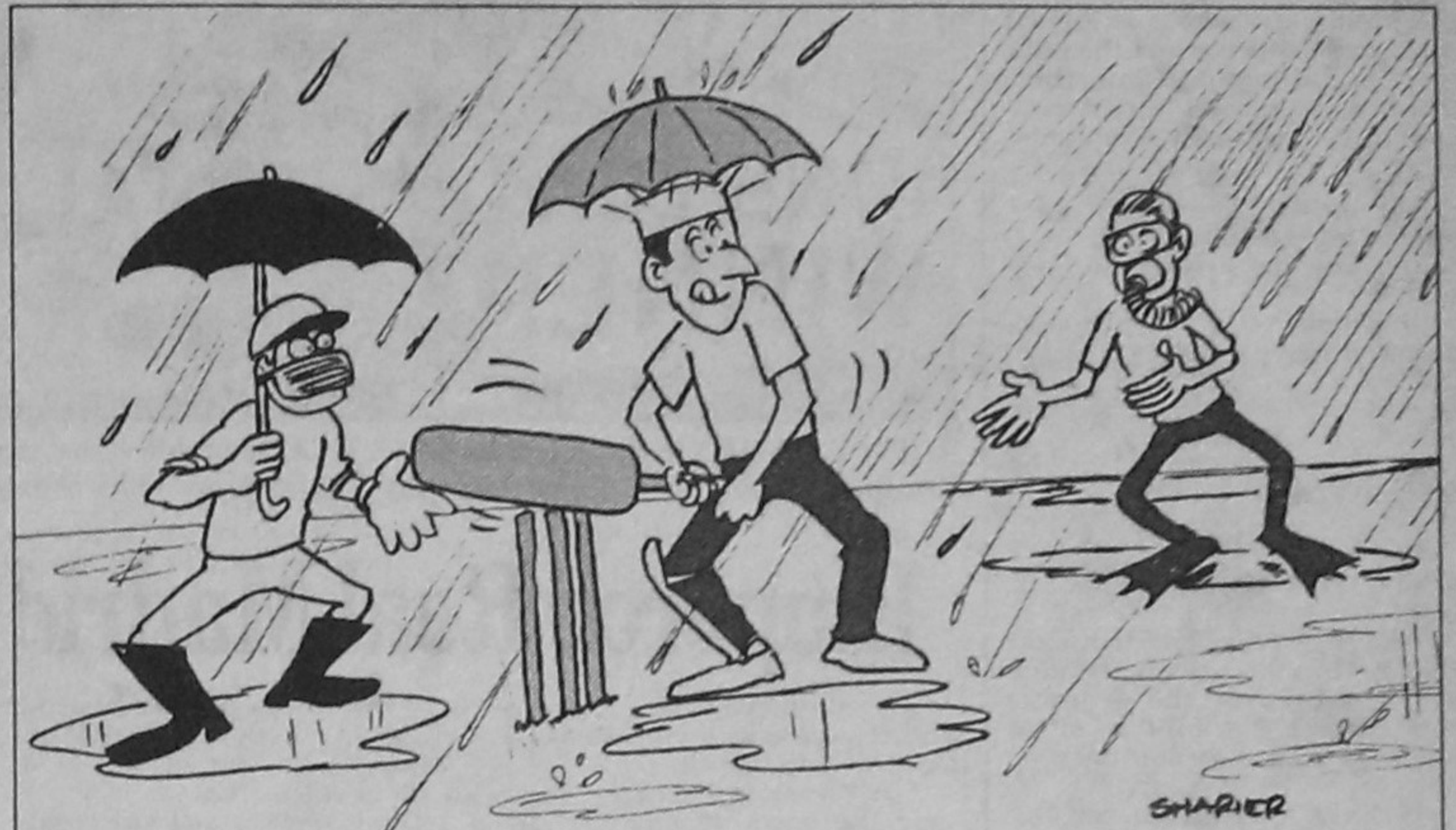
Parinul put Tangail ahead in the 68th minute. Mamun doubled the margin in the 70th minute while Ranjan scored the third goal in the 84th minute.

In Moulvibazar, Comilla advanced to the zonal final after making a goalless draw with hosts Moulvibazar.

Manikganj and Shariatpur also won their respective matches yesterday.

At Narsingdi, Manikganj outplayed Brahmanbaria 5-0. Tutul made a hat-trick scoring four goals in the 10th, 39th, 62nd and 67th minutes respectively while Sentu netted the other goal in the 73rd minute.

In another match at Gopalganj, Shariatpur defeated Madaripur 5-2. Yasin and Wahid netted two each and Shuvankar one for the winners while Nabin and Arif scored for Madaripur.



Tournament set to suffer Weather looks ominous

Syed Ashfaqu Haque

A series of heavy monsoon rain splashed all over the country yesterday to put a big question mark over the fate of the Pepsi Asia Cup, scheduled to start in Dhaka from May 28.

Yesterday's downpour has left the outfield of the Bangabandhu National Stadium, the venue for the prime Asian event, completely immersed in water with numbers of workers engaged in an uphill task of draining the wet land.

To compound the woes of organisers, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), meteorologists have forecast heavy downpour all over the country up to May 31.

The met office in its estimation has said that the sky would remain cloudy with the possibilities of drizzles during the daytime, and there might be rain along with thunderstorm in the night for the next six days.

The frustrating prediction poured cold water on the enthusiasm of the Board officials as it further enhanced the possibility of rain "almost every evening" during the tournament. Quite ironically, the or-

ganisers planned to hold all the seven matches of the four-nation meet as day-night engagements probably in a bid to avoid the scorching mid-summer sun.

"We are indeed facing a very grave situation as the rain has shown no signs of resigning," said Alam Chowdhury, secretary of the grounds committee.

"We cannot think of anything else unless and until it stops raining."

Alam, a veteran of quite a few international tournaments as the chief of ground management, is however confident to get the field ready for play within the shortest possible time.

"Drainage system wouldn't help much unless the rain stops. But we're capable of getting the field ready if it is given

five hours once the rain has ceased."

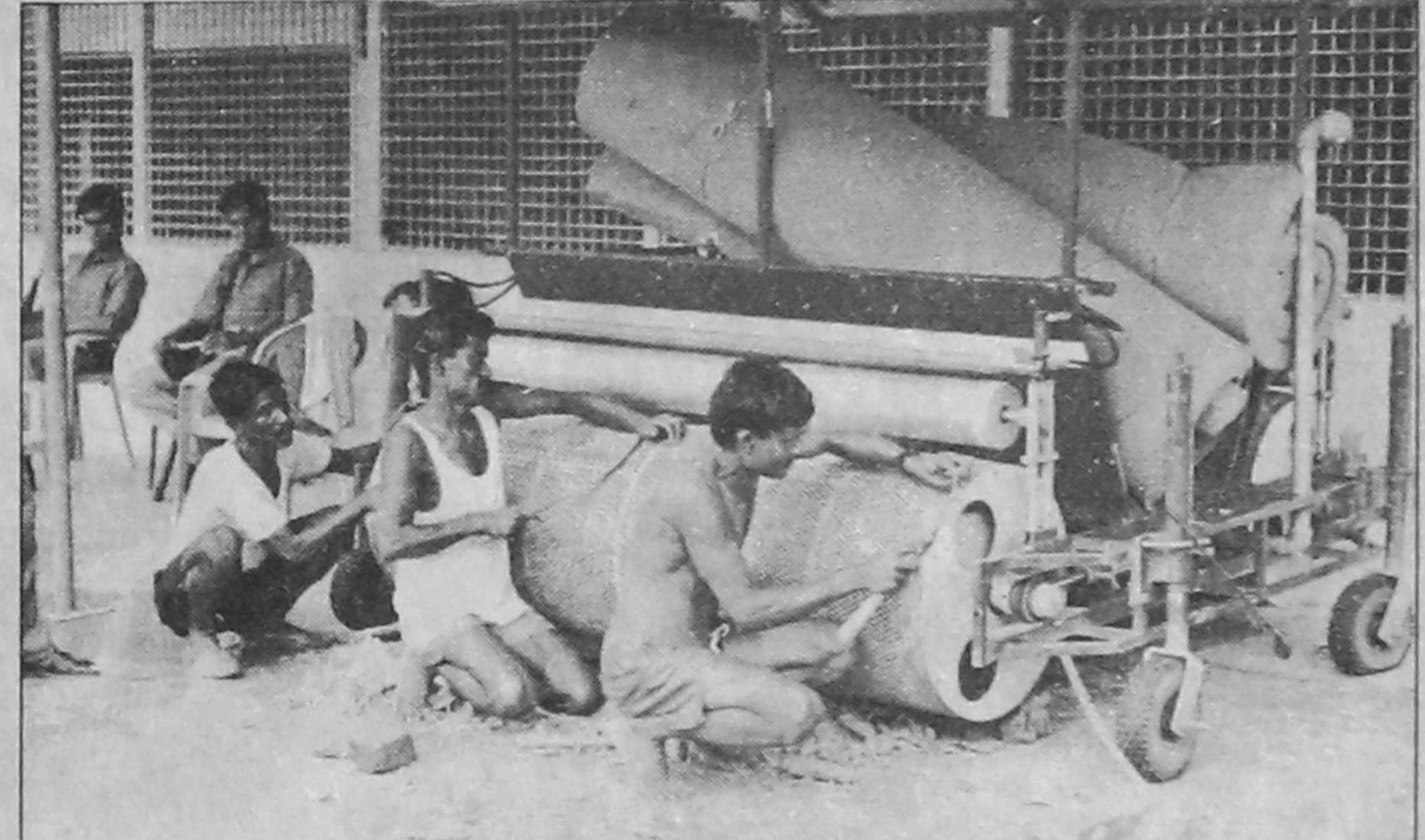
It is however the outfield that bothers Alam most. "The pitch has been well covered and it is in perfect condition. But we don't have enough pitch-covers to protect the outfield," said Alam helplessly.

Efforts had been made to collect pitch-covers from other DSAs (District Sports Association). But that bid has more or less failed as most of the DSA authorities have informed that their covers are in pretty bad shape.

"What we've heard is that most of them are in unusable condition," admitted Alam, who is left with a single Super-Sopper and a few torn pitch-covers to battle it out.

In a desperate attempt, the Board however contacted the Cricket Association of Bengal, seeking two of its Super-Soppers on urgent basis. But the CAB declined to oblige saying that their ones are 'out of order'.

If rain permits, Bangladesh will take on defending champions Sri Lanka in the opening match of the carnival, the final of which is planned for June 7.



THE LAST OBJECT OF HOPE: Attendants removing the out-of-order sponge of the only 'super-sopper' at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday to replace it with a new one. The machine is absolutely vital for soaking out the rain-water from the outfield of the ground.

Manoj goes on record

Controversial Kapil coming to Dhaka

NEW DELHI, May 25 (AFP/AP): Indian cricket faced a major crisis today after Manoj Prabhakar financially went public with a claim that national icon Kapil Dev offered him a bribe to throw a match in 1994.

Prabhakar, a former Test all-rounder, broke his silence on Wednesday night to tell a website that it was Kapil who had asked him to play badly in a one-dayer against arch-rivals Pakistan in Sri Lanka.

"He knows it, I know it and God knows it. He is Kapil Dev," Prabhakar told the website www.thehka.com soon after testifying before the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), which is probing the match-fixing scandal.

Asked why it took him six years to reveal the name, Prabhakar said none of the authorities had asked him to come out with it. "And I was waiting for him (Kapil Dev) to come forward."

The match in question against Pakistan in the Singer Cup failed to take off because of rains. "Had the match been played, proof would have been there for everybody to see..."

The admission is in line with Indian cricket chief Inderjit Bindra's revelation to CNN earlier this month that Prabhakar had told him that it was Kapil who had attempted to bribe him.

Kapil, one of the world's greatest all-rounders and current coach of the national team, has vehemently denied the allegations.

He has sued Bindra and was today meeting his lawyers to launch legal action against Prabhakar.

Kapil refused to comment on whether he will still accompany the Indian team as coach for the four-nation Asia Cup, starting in Bangladesh on Sunday.

Kapil had earlier demanded that India pull out of the Asia Cup till the scandal was resolved, but the Indian board overruled him by saying that international commitments had to be met.

A terse one-line statement last night from the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) secretary Jayawant Lele said: "At the moment India is playing in the tournament. Further decisions will be taken later on."

Lele said he was in constant touch with BCCI president AC Muthiah, who was on a business trip to Paris, but refused to divulge what his reaction was to the latest development.

Muthiah is already in the eye of the storm by suggesting that the Indian board was being used by International Cricket Council (ICC) president Jagmohan Dalmiya and Bindra to settle personal scores.

The Indian team is due to leave for Dhaka on Sunday for the Asia Cup against Pakistan.