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It was the Hand of God (...2)



Diego Maradona tickles the ball over the head of England's Peter Shilton to give Argentina a 1-0 lead at the Azteca Stadium.



SA Rahim Coach.



T Balram.



PK Banerjee.

When they came to defend their title, but they lost three of the five matches. Maradona had gained the superstar image, but he was shown the yellow card in Argentina's match against Italy and in the next game against Italy, he was sent off the field five minutes before the final whistle.

Four years later in Mexico, Maradona single-handedly led his country to World Cup victory. He sparked his team again four years later when Argentina reached the final, losing to Germany in a late goal. And finally, in 1994, the idol of millions of soccer fan had to leave the United States that was staging the World Cup. Maradona, midway during the championship tested positive for five variants of ephedrine, a stimulant banned by FIFA, the international body. Maradona was 33 then and we journalists were surprised to see his fitness. In the US World Cup Maradona excelled with his defence-splitting passes against Greece. During this tournament he was subjected to dope test after Argentina defeated Nigeria 2-1. Prior to this ban from the World Cup, in 1991-92 he had been banned from playing for 15 months for using cocaine. Argentina without Maradona bowed out of the tournament.

still not groomed and so was Maradona. Maradona with his artistry as a player became a hero and he became the most admired player after Pele. It's difficult to compare the two players they were class of their own era.

Arbit: What about the "hand of god" goal scored by Maradona?
Ghosh: Oh my god (laughs). This incident is still etched in my memory. No one could believe that in a tension-packed World Cup match such a thing could happen. It was match between Argentina and England and there was a controversial goal. Maradona teared the opponent's defense and the goal was in the air and suddenly it was kissing the net. Everybody thought it was a beautiful header by Maradona that turned into a goal. We were all bemused in the Press Box as how it happened. We watched the sequence repeatedly on the TV as replays. There was a big confusion in the Press Box. I asked legendary Bobby Charlton, how it happened. Charlton replied "This was also my question".

Maradona scored a goal that till today is remembered as the goal of the century. It was this goal that put Maradona at par with Pele. But he was disgraced.

Interestingly, I said in my report in 'The Statesman', that Maradona scored the first goal with his hand. In my report I wrote that, if Pele was there in place of Maradona that day, Pele being the man, he would have definitely walked up to the referee and apologized for his act. But Maradona was different. Many report of this match brought letters to our editor. Some agreed with me, while others cited the popular saying "all is fair in love and war".

And in the extra time no goals were scored. The shootout was ordered and Italy squandered two spot kicks. The Argentine goalkeeper Sergio Goyechea stopped two penalty kicks and Argentina won the match and reached the final. I thought Italy was a better team that lost in the shootout. I had seen that a better team with the luck not on the right side lost often in the shootouts. In the 1986 World Cup in Mexico Brazil reached the quarter-finals without losing a match lost to France in the shootout. Surely, it was not Brazil's day.

Arbit: Tell us from your memories about how super stars failed?
Ghosh: In the 1986 World Cup was made memorable by Maradona's "Hand of God" goal in the match between England and Argentina. In the Mexico World Cup match in 1986 Brazil and France clashed. Brazil had players like Torinos Junior, charismatic midfielder Socrates, Falco and Flamengo



Indian Olympic team-1948 Olympics, London.



Prakash Bhandari
The writer is a senior journalist



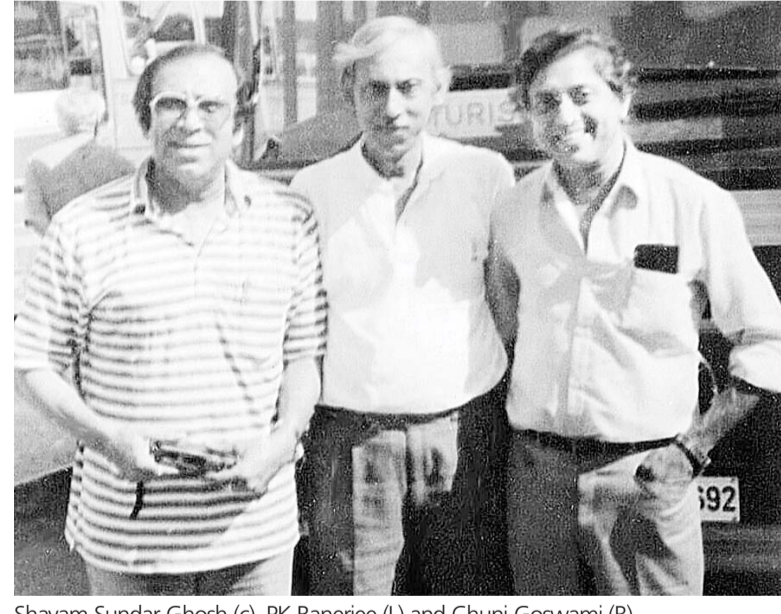
Shyam Sundar Ghosh.

#FOOTBALL

eteran journalist Shyam Sundar Ghosh, after his retirement from the Statesman did not rest his ears and spent his days in the football arena of Kolkata, either writing or commentating on radio on both football and cricket. The author of Kick Off: The Untold Stories of Indian Football also authored 'Superstars in World Football' and books on cricket. One book is on Saurav Ganguli, the Indian skipper who also served the Cricket Board as its President. This book on Saurav Ganguli was critically titled Saurav, a pawn in the hands of BCCI. He also wrote a book on the Bengali Test cricketers and a diary.

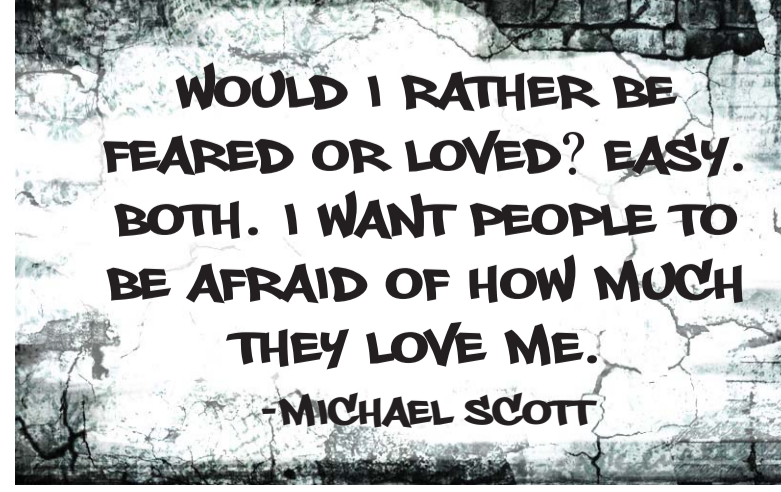
Shyam Da, as he is popularly known in not only Kolkata, but in the country's football fraternity, watches the World Cup matches currently on in Qatar at his home. As he watches the matches, it takes him to a nostalgic journey to the cities of Spain, Mexico, Italy, the USA, France, South Korea and Germany where he had gone to cover the World Cup.

Watching the TV, he thinks of the transformation that has taken place in the last four decades in not only in football but the way football as the world's most popular sport organizes the event.

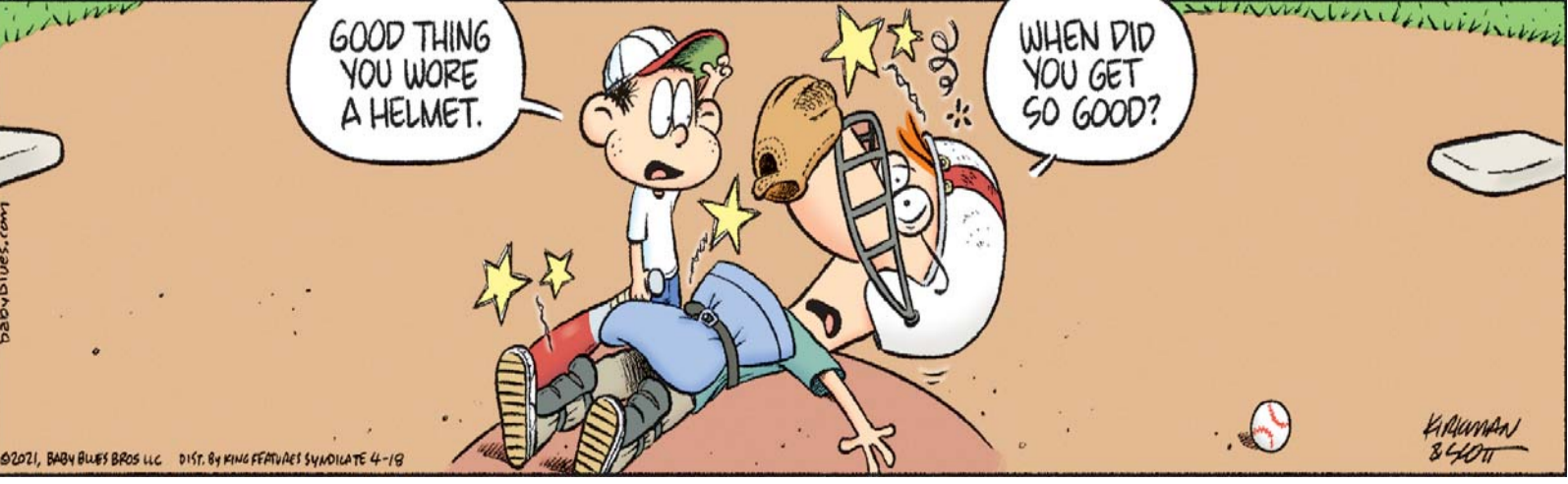


Shyam Sundar Ghosh (C), PK Banerjee (L) and Chuni Goswami (R).

THE WALL



BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

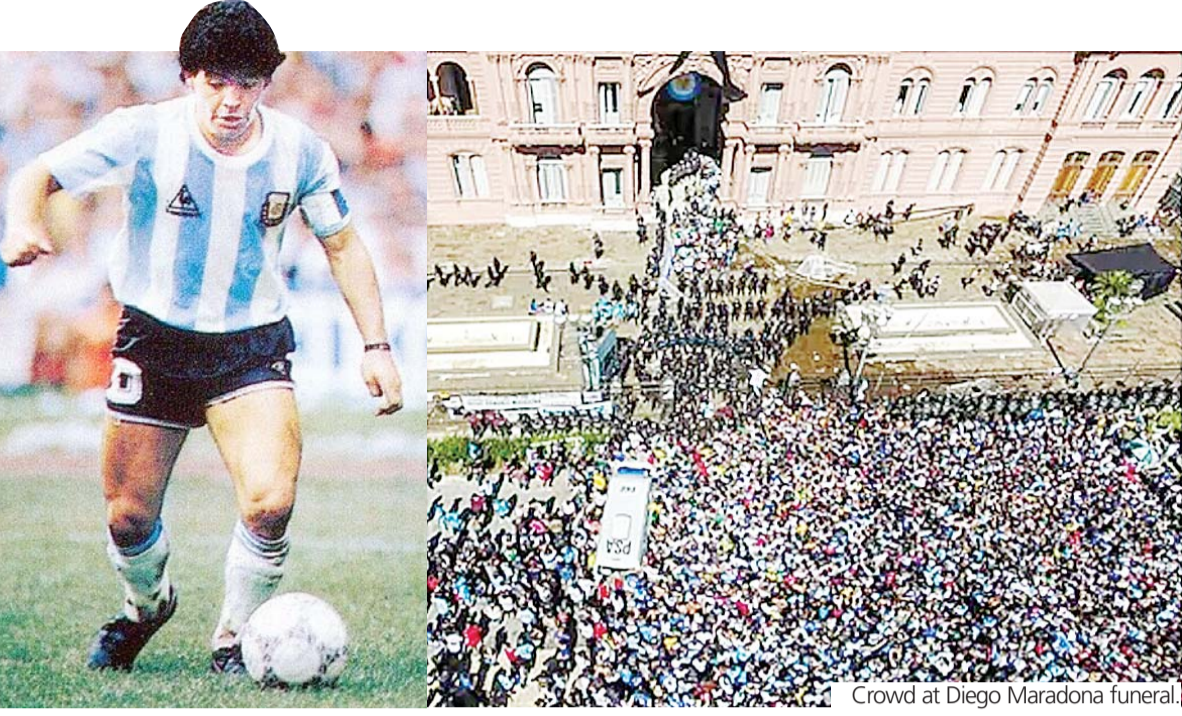
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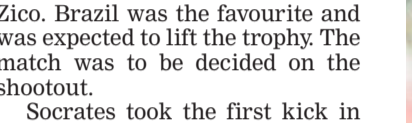
By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

Operation Santa Paws

Animals and pets serve an important part in the lives of human beings. They are those friends and companions that give people love unconditionally. They protect people's homes and are there whenever they are needed, asking for nothing but love and tenderness in exchange for all they give. Operation Santa Paws Day is a reminder that we need to return that love, and remember them at this most special time of year!



Crowd at Diego Maradona funeral.



Roger Milla.



Zico.

Zico. Brazil was the favourite and was expected to lift the trophy. The match was to be decided on the shootout.

Socrates took the first kick in the shootout, but the French goalkeeper stopped it. All three Brazil superstars failed that day in the shootout. France eventually won in the shootout, but their star player Platini also missed the target.

Argentina and England met again in the 1986 World Cup hosted by France and the fate of the match was decided by a shootout. In this match, David Beckham was shown a red card and England had to play with just 10 players. England though a better team on paper lost the match 4-3. There are more such examples when the better teams lost the match in the shootouts.

In the 2006 World Cup Italy won the World Cup beating France in the shootout. Italy won 5-3. In this tournament, Zinedine Zidane was France's hero who single-handedly helped France win the World Cup.

Arbit: Who is your Miracle man in football?
Ghosh: It should be African nation Cameroon's forward Roger Milla. When Cameroon reached the quarter-final of the World Cup in 1990.

In the quarter-final, Cameroon lost to England in the extra time. England's coach celebrated Bolly Charlton had adopted special strategy to contain and combat Milla, who was then 38-year-old. Milla was the second oldest player of the tournament and the oldest was

Arbit: Do you think that the Africans would become world beaters one day?
Ghosh: After Cameroon's outstanding show in the Italian World Cup, Pele had predicted that one day an African nation would win the World Cup. The African teams have reached the quarter-final, but not beyond. In the 2002 World Cup, Senegal, the lions of Teranga defeated the previous champions France and in the round of 16 reached the quarter-finals and on the way defeated Sweden with players like Papa Thiaw and Henry Camara proving like tornadoes. Nigeria is another strong team and now Ghana has beaten

South Korea.

Nigerians have won the under-17 World Cup and when Nigerians defeated Argentina in the Atlanta Olympic Games to win the gold medal it became the first African team to win a medal in football. In the semi-final in the Atlanta Olympics, I saw Nigeria beating Brazil who had Roberto Carlos, Babeto, Juninho, and Rivaldo. The Nigerians trailing by 1-3 went on to win by 4-4 to reach the final and eventually won the gold medal. Someday, they would be World Cup winners.

Arbit: Now talking about Indian football?
Ghosh: The less said the better. We are a nation of 130 crores, but we should be blamed for our failure to play an Olympics after 1980. India's golden years were from 1951 to 1962 under the tutelage of coach, Syed Abdul Rahim is supposed to be India's golden era when we won two Asian games title. India was the first Asian team to reach the Olympic semi-final. During Rahm's time, India played in three Olympics in 1952, 1956, and 1960.

Arbit: What happened to Indian Football by the decline?
Ghosh: It's a long story, can't be said in an interview. Thousands of reasons are there. Bad management of football, politics, politics entering football and many more reasons. One player, P K Bannerji, who later became a coach, is also largely responsible as the coach of the Indian team for the decline.

Arbit: Would India regain its lost glory?
Ghosh: Yes, with honest players, honest officials and a will to win can see India bounce back. But I am not very hopeful with the present state of affairs of Indian football. It needs an overhaul.

Arbit: Do you think India will ever play in the World Cup?
Ghosh: India will have to make its place in Asia first, the way it made it in the 50s and 60s, then it will have to qualify for the World Cup qualifier and for this it will have to beat established Asian teams. India is far behind even in Asia, thus playing in the World Cup looks a distant dream.

#CELEBRATION

Everybody! Parties At Maradona's Villa!!



Boria Majumdar from Qatar

Can you ever imagine the house of Sir Don Bradman at Holden Street in Adelaide opened to neighbours if Australia win a big cricket match. It may sound weird but the owner of Argentina soccer legend Diego Maradona's villa was opened to the neighbours after the Albiceleste won their FIFA World Cup 2022 match against Poland at Stadium 974 on Wednesday night.

Everyone is aware of the madness of the Argentine fans for their National Football Team. The festivities in the streets, in train stations and in bars prove it. But the celebrations caused by qualifying for the round of 16 of the ongoing World Cup in Qatar generated an unusual situation that has Diego Maradona as the protagonist. The new owners of the house where the star lived in Villa Devoto decided to open the doors to the neighbours so that they can watch the match and



celebrate the win against Poland.

The iconic villa in Devoto, belonged to late Maradona since the '80s, when he acquired it after his move from Argentinos to Boca. It was later sold and its owners preserved everything so as to pay respect to the legendary footballer.

The owners on Wednesday organized a full-fledged party for the neighbours in Devoto as they ordered eight kilos beef, pork, chorizo, blood sausage, gizzard, among other delicacies. Also, different drinks were part of the menu. In addition, they put chairs and a large TV screen to obviously watch the match.

The moment Mac Allister scored the opening goal, the villa erupted in joy as the people inside screamed, danced and cheered for their favourite team. Each vantage position in the house was taken over by the fans, some even enjoying the pool.

Just imagine what will happen at Villa Devoto if Lionel Messi and his team go on to lift the World Cup.

A Cup of Kadak Chai

It was the Germany versus Spain game that started local time 10 pm. We had travelled the night before from India and started work as soon as we got in. Sleep deprived and excited but feeling chilled as night set into the surrounding desert on the Al Bayt stadium, I nodded a yes when our colleague Abhijit Deshpande suggested a cup of tea. And then surprise surprise! What the menu offered at the stadium's food stall was a normal black tea and Kadak chai, which turned out to be



a regular and, oh so welcome Indian tea blend of milk, elaichi and sugar, a shot of glucose as I returned to the stand to watch the rest of the game.

This drink that celebrates Indianness here at the FIFA World Cup and is a testimony to the Indian presence here in the region, is now our must have at the games. So Kadak Chai it was with Ronaldo at Portugal versus Germany and Kadak again today at the night game where we will witness the great Messi in action.

"Five Percent For The Kids" - Salim

Following Mohammed Salim's death in 1989, in a brief obituary message the Amrita Bazar Patrika declared:

Mohammed Salim (Sr) a member of the legendary Mohammedan Sporting Club side that claimed five successive Calcutta senior football league titles in the thirties died in Calcutta on Wednesday morning. He was 76. A right winger in his playing days, he was intimately connected with many sports clubs and took active interest in training youngsters. He is survived by his wife, four sons and three daughters.

When his obituary ignores his feat of having played for Celtic FC with distinction, it is hardly surprising that he remains unmentioned in most works on Indian football. This treatment is unjust, more so in view of his extraordinary performances for Celtic. While Baichung played for a second division club side in the UK, Bury FC, and failed to win a permanent place in the clubs first XI, Salim, during his brief stint at Celtic, had established himself as a key member of the team and was pleased by the club authorities to stay for another season in 1937-38. Further, while Baichung was forced to



return to India, Salim returned to India to help his favourite club Mohammedan Sporting continue with their famous run in the Calcutta Football league in the 1930s.

Commenting on his extraordinary skill, the Scottish Daily Express had declared:

Ten twinkling toes of Salim, Celtic F C's player from India hypnotized the crowd at Parkhead last night in an alliance game with Galston. He balances the ball on his big toe, lets it run down the scale to his little toe, twirls it, hops on one foot around the defender, then flicks the ball to the centre who has only to send it into goal. Three of Celtic's seven goals last night came from his moves. Was asked to take a penalty, he refused. Said he was shy. Salim does not speak English, his brother translates for him. Brother Hasheem thinks Salim is wonderful! so did the crowd last night.

This comment, published on 29 August 1936, is now a yellowing, almost faded piece of history breaking down to pieces at the slightest of touches. Rashid Ahmed, Mohammed Salim's second son, handed it over to us with a request- he wanted readers to know the truth- that his father was one of the earliest Indian footballers to have played in Europe.

Asked whether Celtic had rewarded Salim monetarily, Rashid narrated a fascinating tale. When after a few months in Scotland, Salim began to feel homesick and was determined to return to India, the Celtic Football Club pleaded him to play for one more season. "Celtic tried to persuade my father to stay by offering to organise a charity match in his honour, giving him five per cent of the gate proceeds. My father did not realise what five per cent would amount to and said he would give his share to orphans who were to be special invitees for the match. Five per cent came to £1,800 (fossal money then) but although my father was astonished, he kept his word". In doing so, Mohammed Salim earned a unique recognition for himself and his country in the eyes of the westerners. Alongside, his performances for Celtic in the limited number of matches that he played demonstrated that bare footed Indians could match the British on an even keel. This belief may have inspired his colleagues in Mohammedan Sporting to win five straight Calcutta Football League titles (1934-38) defeating leading European teams in the process.

Many years later, Rashid wrote to Celtic stating that his father was in distress and that he needed money for his father's treatment. In his words:

I had no intention of asking for money. It was just a ploy to find out if Mohammed Salim was still alive in their memory. To my amazement, I received a letter from the club. Inside was a bank draft for £100. I was delighted, not because I received the money but because my father still holds a pride of place in Celtic. I have not even cashed the draft and will preserve it till I die.

In colonial India, trying to challenge British superiority was the most difficult task of all. Salim had achieved this seemingly impossible task through his football. In a nation plagued by religious violence, political and economic uncertainties, his football served a purpose that went beyond the boundary.