

Biggest-ever contingent leaves for Colombo SAF Games today

A 196-member Bangladesh contingent leaves today for Colombo to participate in the fifth South Asian Federation (SAF) Games there Dec 22-31, report agencies.

The contingent, which is the largest since the emergence of Bangladesh, includes 135 competitors, 36 teams of officials and 24 officials from the different sports organisations. Besides the athletes, the squad also includes representatives from the Government, the National Sports Council (NSC), Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA), journalists and doctors.

Major (Retd) Qamrul Islam, a Parliament Member from the Gulshan-Cantonment constituency of the capital will lead the contingent as chief de mission while former general secretary of the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) M Zillur Rahman will be the deputy chief de mission.

Hosts Sri Lanka will field the largest team in the Games including 240 sportsmen while India follow with 230 members. Bhutan will send the smallest contingent, only an eight-member table tennis team.

Bangladesh expects to win several gold medals in the Games this year.

Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa will inaugurate the biggest South Asian sporting extravaganza at the Sugathadasa Stadium on December 22 morning.

Heads of state and government of the seven SAARC countries, who will be in Colombo to attend the sixth SAARC summit to be held on December 21, are expected to witness the opening ceremony.

Bangladesh will take part in all the ten disciplines of the 10-day Games. The disciplines are: athletics, basketball, boxing, football, shooting, swimming, table tennis, tennis, volleyball and weightlifting. Bangladesh will also participate in the women's events of the athletics, swimming, table tennis, tennis, volleyball and shooting competitions.

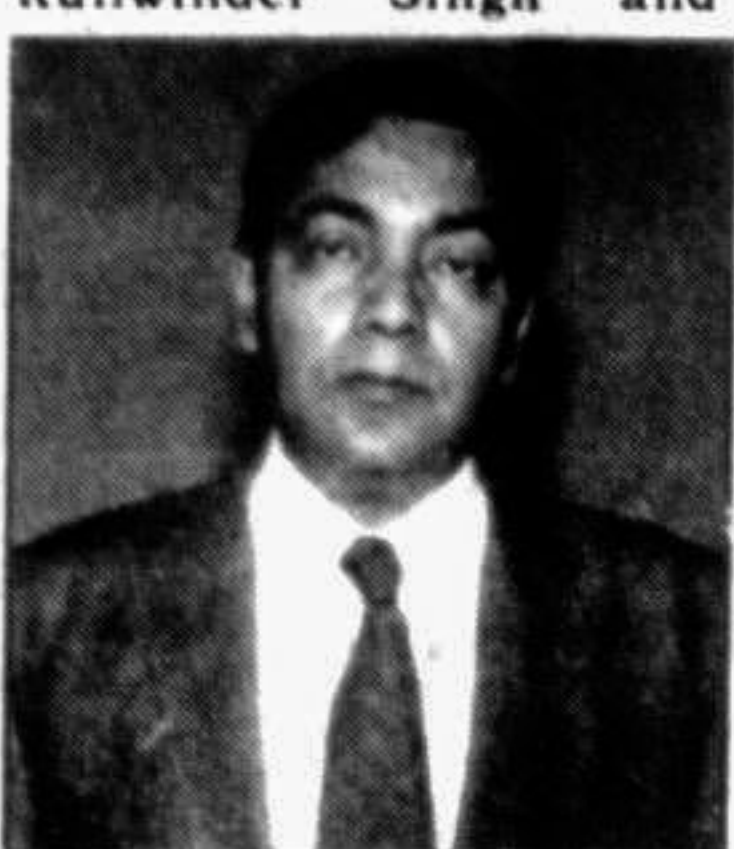
Nearly 1800 competitors and officials from the seven SAARC countries — Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, the Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka — are expected to take part in the Games — the brain-child of Sharad Chandra Shaha, former president of the national Olympic committee on Nepal.

ATHLETICS
Bangladesh may earn three athletics golds, in the men's 100 and 200m sprints and the 4 x 100m relay, team officials said.

Bangladesh's main hope Lance Naik Golam Ambia of Bangladesh Army, who clocked a personal best of 10.3 seconds in the 100m sprint in the annual Inter-Services athletics competition earlier this month, is expected to regain the country's glory of possessing the "fastest man of

South Asia." Sprinter Shah Alam, who died in a road-accident last year had become the fastest man of South Asia in two consecutive SAF Games, in Dhaka in 1985 and in Calcutta in 1987.

Armyman Ambia will face stiff competition from Sri Lanka's S Dissanayake, India's S Roberts and Kullwinder Singh and



QAMRUL ISLAM — chief de mission

Pakistan's Shabbir Hussain and Muhammad Miraj. Shahabuddin Chowdhury will be other Bangladesh sprinter in the 100m race.

Golam Ambia and Shahabuddin Chowdhury will

GAMES SCHEDULE

The schedule of events for the 5th SAF Games has been finalised as follows:

Opening and closing ceremonies will be held on December 22 and 31 respectively at the Sugathadasa Stadium.

No competitions will be held on December 25 in view of Christmas.

The football matches will be played at the Sugathadasa Stadium from December 22 to 29 with rest days on December 23 and 27.

Athletics events will also be held at the Sugathadasa Stadium from December 23 to 28 without any break.

Swimming competitions will take place at the Sugathadasa Complex Swimming pool from December 23 to 28.

Shooting contests will take place between December 24 and 27 at the Wisara Range and Panagda Range.

Volleyball matches will be played at the Sugathadasa Indoor Stadium from December 22 to 30 with a rest day on December 29.

Boxing bouts will be at the Colombo University Gymnasium from December 23 to 28 with a rest day on December 27.

Tennis will be played at the SLTA courts from December 22 to 29 while the table tennis matches will be held at the St. Thomas College from December 23 to 29.

The venue for basketball will be the Sugathadasa Indoor Stadium, from December 22 to 28.

Weightlifting will be held between December 26 to 29 at the Kelaniya University Gymnasium.

also take part in the men's 200m sprint and the 4 x 100m relay, in which Bangladesh has a bright chance for the top honours.

Navyman Abdur Rahim Nayem may also earn laurels for the nation in the 400m hurdles.

Besides, Bangladesh is expected to get some other medals in athletics, officials said.

The athletics team is: Men: Golam Ambia, Shahabuddin Chowdhury, Milzar Hossain, M Giasuddin, Mehdi Hasan, Emdadul Haq Ranju, Wazir Rahman, Abdur Rahim Nayem, Solaiman Majumder, Bani Amin and Alzal Hossain. Y Shuigen of China is the coach and Altaf Hossain the manager. Women: Firoza Khatun, Rafiza Begum, Nilfar Yasmin, Sunita Goswami and Josna Afroze; Arun Chandra Chanika is Coach and Farukul Islam the manager.

SHOOTING

The shooting team officials are expecting some medals including two golds in the men's air pistol and air rifle 60 shots events.

They said the Commonwealth Games gold medal winner Atcequr Rahman, who has been under training through out the year, could provide some surprises in his favourite air pistol event.

They said, "All our shooters are in peak form. They will vie for the honours in their respective events."

Bangladesh will take part in the men's 60 shot prone free rifle, the 3 x 40 free rifle, air rifle 60 shot and the air pistol and the women's 3 x 20 standard rifle and air rifle 40 shots.

The shooting team is: Men: Atcequr Rahman, Haider Ali, Asif Hossain, Fariduddin Ahmed, G M Haider, Saiful Alam Rinki, Fazole Rabbi, Shafiguzzaman Emran Chowdhury, Nasrudin and Qamrul Islam. Women — Qazi Shahana Parveen, Khaleda Mansoor, Qazi Ferdous Parveen and Sabera Khatun.

Joint secretary of the National Shooting Federation M Azdul Huq has been made manager of the team. General secretary Qazi Selim and Chinese expert Zhu Le Meing will both accompany the team as coaches and Mir Doulat Hossain as armorer.

SWIMMING

Bangladesh's women swimmers are going abroad for the first time to take part in an international or regional event. The women swimmers are: Monira Rahman Dahlia, Mahfuza Tania, Mahmuda Sharif, Laila Noor Mlu, Rehana Zaman, Reshma Parveen Dipu and Sufia Akhtar. The team will be accompanied by A K M Kamaluddin and Mahbubur Rahman as manager and coach respectively.

The manager of the men's swimming team said the men swimmers may improve their times in their respective events. The only gold medal winner of the fourth SAF Games, Mukhesur Rahman, is likely to retain his medal in

the 100m breast-stroke. Bazlur Rahman is also expected to do well in the meet.

The other members of the swimming team are: Shamsul Islam, Mahbubur Rahman, Qazi Abdul Mannan, M Abdus Salam, Shamsul Islam, Harunur Rashid, Yasin Ali, Salam Mian, Takbir Hossain, Nazmul Kabir and Ilias Hossain.

Chief-de-mission Qamrul Islam, has announced a cash incentive Taka one lakh for the gold medal winners in the SAF Games.

Bangladesh placed a poor fifth in the first SAF Games in Gathmandu in 1984 with 23 medals including two golds, third in the second Games in Dhaka in 1985 with 34 medals including nine golds, fourth in the Calcutta SAF Games in 1987 with 55 medals including three golds and earned 37 medals, but including only one gold, in the fourth SAF Games in Islamabad in 1989 to finish fifth.

India has always topped the regional meet with Pakistan finishing second and Nepal third, except in the second Games in Dhaka. Sri Lanka also placed third on a couple of occasions.

"Pancha", a baby elephant, is the mascot of the Games.

The organising committee of the Games has invited State Minister for Youth and Sports Sadeq Hossain, Additional Secretary in-charge of the Ministry of Youth and Sports M A Rouf and National Sports Council (NSC) Chairman Major General Mahbubur Rahman as their guests.

In Kathmandu-Bangladesh was placed 5th securing 2 gold, 8 silver and 13 bronzes. In Dhaka the host country ranked 3rd with 9 gold, 17 silver, 38 bronzes, in Calcutta they finished 4th with 3 gold, 21 silver, 31 bronze and in Islamabad again 5th with one gold, 12 silver and 24 bronzes.

Bangladesh got all the gold medals in the swimming and athletics events and one in boxing at Dhaka in 1985.

This time Bangladesh expects more than ten golds, especially in swimming, athletics, shooting and football.

In the other six disciplines — boxing, weightlifting, volleyball, basketball, table tennis and tennis — Bangladesh will virtually fight for the silver or bronze medals.

Bangladesh's competitors in the different disciplines are: athletics-16 including five women; swimming-19 including seven women; shooting-15 including four women; football-18; basketball and men's volleyball-12 each; women's volleyball-10; weightlifting-9; boxing-10; table tennis and tennis-6 each including 2 women each.

More than one crore Taka will be spent for the Bangladesh contingent, including the team's training expenses of Tk 34 lakh.

State Minister for Youth and Sports Sadeq Hossain met the competitors and officials of the Bangladesh contingent on Wednesday and wished them success in the Games.

BTv to telecast SAF Games opening ceremony

Bangladesh Television will telecast the opening ceremony of the fifth SAF Games live from Colombo on December 22 morning, a BTv official said yesterday, reports BSS.

The official said, BTv will also telecast daily half an hour of highlights of each day's events the following evening.

It is still uncertain if the closing ceremony of the Games would be telecast live since the satellite booking for the ceremony have not yet been made by BTv.

Ctg soccer

CHITTAGONG, Dec 19 : Land Customs Club beat Steel Mills Club 3-1 in the CJKP Elite First Division football league at the Chittagong Stadium here this afternoon, reports BSS.

Ehsan and Mobarak scored for Azad while Jewel and Chunnur scored for Bima in regulation time.



Bangladesh's fastest woman Firoza Khatun exercising at the Army Stadium gym on the eve of the team's departure for the fifth SAF Games in Colombo yesterday.—Star photo

Salim Shahed to play in South Africa

Sports Reporter

Salim Shahed, the promising young cricketer of Bangladesh Biman, will go to South Africa next year to play domestic cricket in Transvaal under a scholarship from the United Cricket Board of South Africa (UCBSA).

The scholarship is a gesture



SALIM SHAHED

of goodwill made by Managing Director of the South African cricket board Ali Bacher following South Africa's readmission to the cricketing fraternity after being ostracized for 21 years due to its apartheid policy.

Shahed's name was recommended by the Bangladesh Cricket Control Board.

Shahed, a stylish right-handed upper order batsman and offspin bowler, is the son of A M A Ali.

He started his cricket career with Dhanmondi Club in 1986 at a very young age.

After spending three seasons with the parent club he switched over to Sadharan Bima in 1988.

He then joined Dhaka Mohammedan Sporting Club in the 1989 local cricket season.

Currently he is playing for last year's league runners-up Bangladesh Biman whom he joined this season.

Shahed went to England in 1989 as the vice-captain of the Bangladesh youth cricket team.

In the Bextmoo Asian youth cricket tournament held in Dhaka in 1989, Shahed scored the first official century, hitting an unbeaten 121 against Malaysia.

He played against the visiting Denmark and the Hyderabad Blues in 1990.

He also toured India with the Bangladesh national cricket team to participate in the Asia Cup in 1990-91.

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UCBSA's choice of blacks for W Cup slated



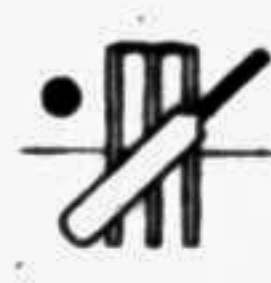
JOHANNESBURG, Dec 19 : More voices have been raised against the decision by the United Cricket Board of South Africa (UCBSA) to include two black players in the squad for next year's World Cup, reports AFP.

Haasan Howa, former president of the South African Cricket Board — the black body which united with the white South African Cricket Union to form the UCBSA, said Wednesday that the decision was "tokenism" and "laughable."

UCBSA managing director Ali Bacher said at the weekend two black players would play in the side in order to "Narrow the gap between cricketers of different backgrounds."

The decision has provoked angry words from former Springbok cricketers Roy McLean and Johnny Waite, who on Tuesday accused the UCBSA of "window dressing" and of insulting better quality white players who had worked hard for selection.

Hick may open innings with Gooch in NZ



LONDON, Dec 19 : Graeme Hick, despite a baptism of fire which saw him dropped from England's Test lineup, is preparing to partner skipper Graham Gooch in opening the innings against New Zealand, reports AFP.

Hick slipped down the order from number three and then out of the side altogether after managing only 75 runs in seven Test innings last summer, but the 25-year-old from Zimbabwe says he has got his confidence back.

The selectors have refused to replace injured regular Mike Atherton and that leaves Gooch as the only recognised opener this winter. Big-hitting all-rounder Ian Botham can be expected to go in all guns blazing from the start during the World Cup.

But the three Tests against New Zealand after Christmas will demand a more patient approach.

Hick, along with Alec Stewart and Mark Ramprakash, have been identified as the main contenders to fill the vacant slot.

India seek morale boost



BRISBANE, Australia, Dec 19 : The Indian cricket team will be looking to rebuild its morale when it faces the Queensland state team in a four-day match beginning Friday at the Brisbane Cricket Ground, reports AP.

Australia scored a 10-wicket victory over the Indians at the same venue earlier this month and the Indians have performed only moderately in limited-overs World Series Cup matches against both the Australians and the West Indies.

Indian vice-captain Ravi Shastri said Thursday that a victory over Queensland, the leader of the domestic Sheffield Shield competition, could prove a turning point for his team.

Shastri said the Indian batsmen would be looking to improve their scoring rates.

"It is of prime importance someone builds a big innings here before the test match," Shastri said.

Howa, who campaigned vigorously against Mike Gatting's rebel English tour in 1989, said the UCBSA move was "An insult to people like myself who have fought for 40 years to get black and white sport together."

Also critical of the inclusion of two black players in the 16-strong squad was Johannesburg daily newspaper Business Day which in an editorial Wednesday said the UCBSA had a "duty to send the best team — irrespective of race."

The newspaper called the UCBSA decision "An insult to players who are not white, suggesting as it does that they cannot be expected to earn selection."

But the UCBSA is sticking to its guns and sending two black players to Australia and New Zealand as part of its development programme.

UCBSA president Geoff Dakin told AFP Wednesday that it was a "final decision" and the mounting criticism "Doesn't bother me"

"If I'm asked about opening I'll certainly talk about it," Hick said. "I'm used to going in at number three when you can find yourself facing the second ball of the innings anyway."

"I've always had a thing about making sure success is my number one ambition," he said during a break in training at Lilles Hall, 10 days before setting off on tour.

"What happened last summer has gone now and I'm looking forward, not back. I've listened to all the advice and taken note of that which I think is useful. But there have been no major technical changes — it's been more a question of getting back to feeling confident about the way I'm batting."

As well as sorting out the opening position this week, Gooch must also decide who will serve as vice-captain.

An announcement is expected today with the favourites Derek Pringle, Stewart and Botham — even though Botham is not due in New Zealand until halfway through the first Test because of his pantomime performances.

The second Test between Australia and India begins Dec 26 at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

"One big score (here) and it could be an entirely different story in the Test series," Shastri said.

Opener Shastri has been criticised for his lack of aggression on tour, but team manager Abbas Ali Bacher said he was fulfilling a sheet-anchor role.

"He has made his 30s and 40s and has stuck it out for a while, so to that extent he has not failed as such," Baig said.

"He is good in the role of an anchor, so as long as he plays that role from the beginning it will hopefully put us in good stead."

"As long as the batsman at the other end keeps getting the scoring going, and the other end is blocked up, it serves the purpose."

Indian all-rounder Kapil Dev has a neck injury and wicket-keeper Kiran More a foot injury. Both could miss the match along with batsman Kris Srikkanth, who is likely to be rested.

Bangladesh football team announced

Sports Reporter
An 18-member national football squad was announced by the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday for the forthcoming SAF Games.

The team is: Goal-keepers: Md Mohsin (Captain), Md Ponir; backs: Pjush Nandy, Md Kaiser Hamed, Md Ataur Rahman Khan, Jewel Rana, Rezaul Karim Rehan, Md Masud Rana; mid — field: Rumman-Bin-Wali Shabbir, A K M Saiful Bari Tilo, Satyajit Das Rupu, Md Sadequul Islam Uttam, Md Nurul Haq Manik; forwards: Md Rumi Rizvi Karim, Md Mamon Hossain Joarder, Sheikh Mohammad Aslam, Intiaz Ahmed Naquib and Mohammad Golam Ghouse.

Selim of Brothers Union is the coach of the side and Ghaffar is his assistant. Nabi Chowdhury is the manager.

Bangladesh will play their first match against Pakistan on December 24.

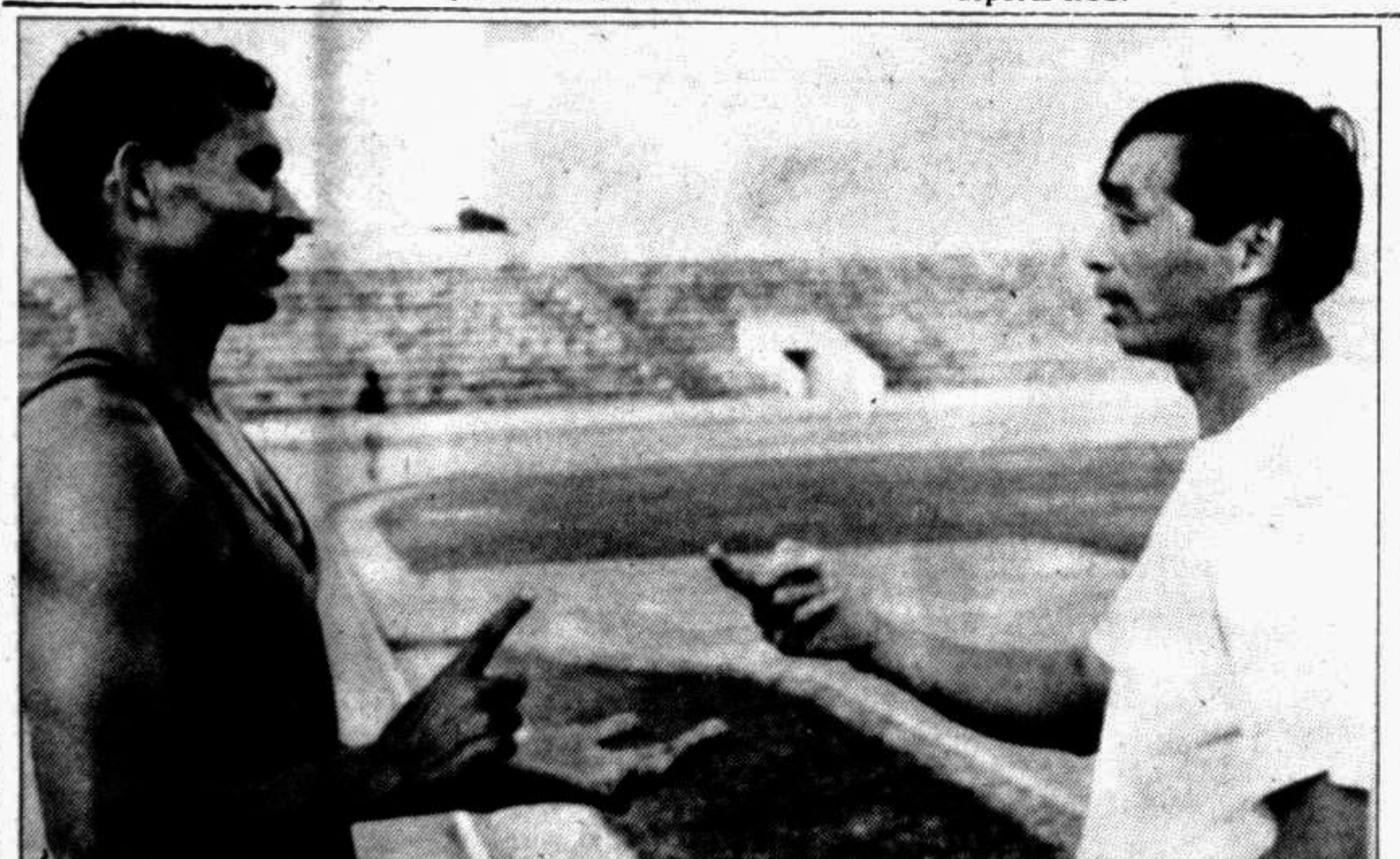
Their second outing will be against India on December 26.

The grouping has sparked off criticism in the sporting circles because contrary to the standard international practice regarding seedings, the gold and silver medalists of the last SAF Games in Islamabad — Pakistan and Bangladesh respectively — should have been placed in separate groups.

Although sports lovers in this country are intrigued by this manipulation of the host

Ctg karate meet

CHITTAGONG, Dec 19 : A two-day Chittagong district karate competition began at the CJKP gymnasium hall here this morning, reports BSS.



Chinese coach Y. Shuigen explaining a point to Bangladesh Army's Ghiyasuddin at the Army Stadium. Ghiyasuddin will run the 400m and 800m races in Colombo in addition to the 4x400m relay for Bangladesh.—Star photo