



The Bangladesh Army quartet—Asaduzzaman, Md Shamsul Islam, Abdus Salam and Md Ilyas Hossain—flashes the victory sign after sitting a new 200-metre freestyle relay record on August 22, the concluding day of the fourteenth national swimming championships at the Dhaka Stadium swimming pool. —Star photo

Capriati's chances bloom

NEW YORK, Aug 24: The time and circumstances, if not the stars and biorhythms, are perfect for Jennifer Capriati to make the leap from teen-age curiosity to youngest US Open champion in history, reports AP.

"She has a pretty good shot, better than anyone for the next four or five years," Shriver said adding that Capriati could go a step farther than she did by winning the titles proved it by beating Seles and Martina. But semis and finals back-to-back? It might be a year early for that, but nothing she does at this point is too much of a surprise.

"I would think the odds on a 15-year-old aren't good, but if ever there was one that could win, it's Jennifer."



JENNIFER CAPRIATI

Tracy Austin won the Open in 1979 at 16 years, 9 months and knows what it takes for young players to make a major jump to a championship. "Beating Martina was a huge breakthrough for Jennifer, and beating Martina at Wimbledon made it even bigger," Austin said. "She's rounding out her game, serving better, moving better. She's faster now than last year. She's adding to her game all the time. She always hit hard, but now her shots have a purpose."

No 1 so young and they're more hesitant to add to their games," she said.

That's understandable, she added, because players tend to stay with the styles and strokes that got them to the top. But the reluctance to change has hurt Graf, who hasn't been able to develop an effective backhand topspin shot, allowing opponents to attack her backhand and pin her in a corner. Graf won that way at Wimbledon this year, playing almost exclusively with a forehand and a slice backhand, but her weakness has been exploited by several rivals over the past two years.

Seles has never developed an effective net game, and she has been beaten on faster courts like the grass at Wimbledon and the hard courts of the US Open because of the weakness of her serves and volleys. She lost in the third round here last year and the fourth round in 1989.

Sabatini transformed herself into a serve-and-volleyer last year after working with a new coach, and surprised everyone by winning the Open with a net-attacking game against Graf.

"I swear, she did it right before our eyes at the US Open," said Austin, who is now a television commentator. Sabatini, whose only loss in seven matches with Capriati came three weeks ago when a blister forced her to quit in the second set of the Canadian Open, could be her biggest challenge with a likely meeting in the quarterfinals.

"It'll be interesting to see how Sabatini handles the pressure of defending," said Shriver. "She hasn't played great this summer, maybe because that's on her mind a little. She may have peaked during the clay court tournaments before Paris in the spring."

The men's draw is at least as wide open as the women's. No 1 Boris Becker has hardly dominated since his collapse in the final at Wimbledon. Stefan Edberg, No 2, stumbled in the first round here last year and got to only the fourth

round the two years before that.

Michael Stich, the third seed and Wimbledon champion, is capable of winning a second straight Grand Slam title, and French Open champion Jim Courier, the fourth seed, may have enough athletic ability to transfer his success on clay to the faster hard courts.

Ivan Lendl, No 5, won the Open three straight years starting in 1985, but at 31 he's been drifting without much success this season. Pete Sampras, the sixth seed and defending men's champion, surprised many people by becoming the youngest men's winner last year at 19 years, 28 days. He then went through 10 months of shin splints and other injuries, and has only recently come back to form with two victories.

Andre Agassi, No 8, who lost in the final last year to Sampras, has a tough draw, beginning with a match against former roommate Aaron Krickstein. Agassi and Becker could meet in the quarters, with the winner possibly meeting Sampras in the semis.

"There are about a dozen guys who could win this year," said a former player and television commentator. "Agassi's game is very well suited to these courts and he's certainly overdue. Of all the guys, he's got the edge."



Petty Officer Mukhlesur Rahman of Bangladesh Navy who won the 100m breaststroke gold on Friday — the concluding day of the 14th national swimming championships. —Star photo

Maleeva dispatches Mary Joe Fernandez

WASHINGTON, Aug 24: Sixth-seeded Katerina Maleeva of Bulgaria dispatched third-seeded Mary Joe Fernandez of the US 6-3, 6-4 to move to the finals against second-seeded Arantxa Sanchez Vicario of Spain at the 350,000-dollar Virginia Slims of Washington on Friday, reports Reuter.

Sanchez Vicario of Spain blitzed seventh-seeded Lilia Meskhi of the Soviet Union 6-0, 6-1 in 43 minutes in the other semifinal.

Top-seeded Monica Seles of Yugoslavia withdrew after being mistakenly placed in the draw. Maleeva, ranked 11th in the world, took advantage of the fifth-ranked Fernandez's lack of a definite strategy, slamming her groundstrokes to the corners of the court.

"I think I made too many errors and I wasn't totally sure

Racism of the other kind

JOHANNESBURG, Aug 24: Namibia said on Friday it had withdrawn from next month's African Games in Cairo following a government decision not to finance the team because too many of its members were white, reports Reuter.

A committee made up of members of the Namibian National Olympic Committee and the Namibian National Sports Council described the move as an "international embarrassment."

"Although this is a sad day for Namibian sport and an international embarrassment, it is to be hoped that cabinet will now seriously consider making the necessary funds available to our Ministry (of Sport) for the development of sport throughout the country," it said in a statement. There are 40 whites in the 65-member team announced two weeks ago.

Huang clinches Asia's first gold

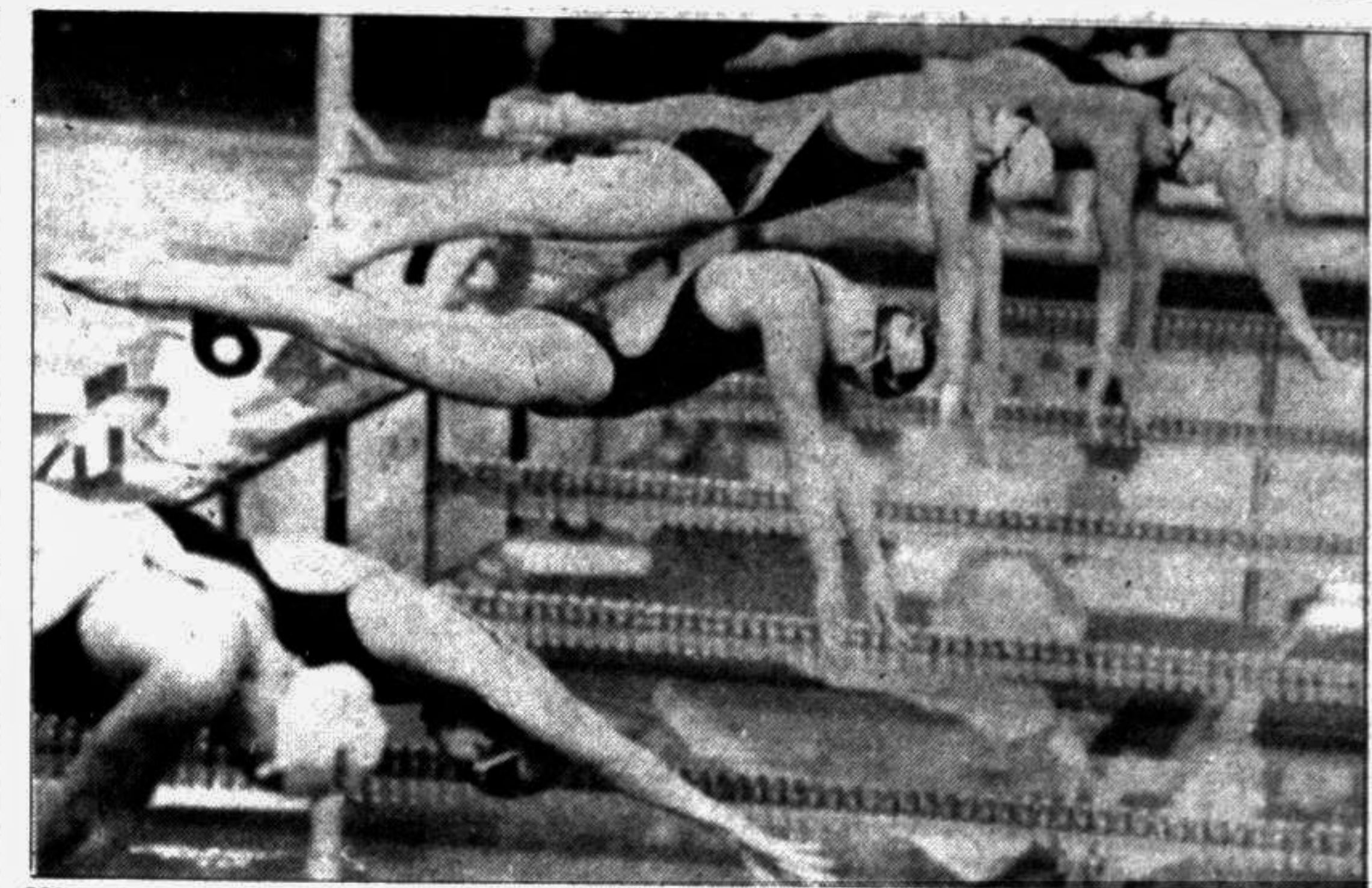
TOKYO, Aug 24: China's battle-tested shot putter Huang Zhihong, who wanted to retire last year but was ordered by officials to continue, won Asia's first-ever World Athletic Championship gold here today, reports AFP.



HUANG ZHIHONG

The 26-year-old threw 20.83 metres, topping defending champion and world-record holder Natalya Lisovskaya of the Soviet Union who had to settle for the silver with a throw of 20.29 metres.

Another Soviet, Svetlana Krivelyova, was third with 20.16 metres.



US swimmer Nicole Haislett (C) dives off the starting blocks during the women's 200m freestyle finals on August 22 at the Pan-Pacific Swimming Championships. Haislett won the gold medal with a time of 2:00.31. —AFP photo

Gillingham turns table on Rozsa

ATHENS, Aug 24: Britain's Nick Gillingham overcame mighty Hungarian Norbert Rozsa to retain his European 200 metres breaststroke title in a gripping race on Friday, reports Reuter.

Gillingham proved that the man who destroyed the 100 breaststroke world record on Tuesday was not invincible after all and clung on to his title by just three hundredths of a second.

Catherine Plewinski of France completed a golden double with the successful defence of her 100 butterfly crown after winning the 100 freestyle on Tuesday.

But the Soviet Union again grabbed the lion's share of the medals, breaking a European relay record and winning three of the evening's five swimming titles and their third diving crown of the nine-day championships.

Gillingham, however, performed the most notable single coup by beating Rozsa, who had ended the long European Championship reign of British teammate Adrian Moorhouse in the 100 event.

Gillingham, beaten to the Olympic gold by Jozsef Szabo and the World Championship silver by Rozsa, avenged himself on the Hungarians on a windy evening at the Olympic Centre.

Fifth at 50 metres, with Rozsa seventh, Gillingham hit the front on the second length

as the Hungarian moved up to third. Gillingham, who had gained a psychological advantage with the fastest time in morning heats, held his lead into the final length and thwarted Rozsa's late charge to win in two minutes 12.55 seconds — inside the Championship mark of 2:12.90 which, for 36 hours, made him co-world record holder in 1989.

The Soviet Union broke the



NICK GILLINGHAM

Sadovy won the men's 400 freestyle, Elena Rudkovskaya European men's 4X100 metres freestyle relay record, clocking 3:17.11 to beat the 3:18.33 mark set by another Soviet quartet at the 1988 Seoul Olympics.

Eighteen-year-old Evgeny completed a women's breaststroke double in the 100 event, and Vladimir Timoshinin plunged to the highboard diving gold.

Kerkins fails by a whisker

EDMONTON, Alberta, Aug 24: Australian swimmer Kieren Kerkins fell just four-hundredths short of a world record in the 800-metre freestyle at the Pan Pacific swimming championships on Friday, blistering the distance in seven minutes 50.68 seconds, reports Reuter.

The performance had the crowd in the pool hall screaming and gave Australia one of two gold medals on the day.

Australian swimmer Linley Frame narrowly beat out teammate Samantha Riley to win the women's 100 metre breaststroke in one minute 9.98 seconds.

The United States team finished the day with seven golds.

Summer Sanders of the US won her second gold of the meet, taking the 400 metre individual medley with a time of four minutes 43.66 seconds on Thursday she won gold in the 200 metre butterfly.

Matt Biondi of the US won the men's 100 metre freestyle with a time of 49.72 seconds, while teammate Mike Barrowman won the men's 100 metre breaststroke in one minute 2.02 seconds.

Jansher's 6th Singapore title

SINGAPORE, Aug 24: Pakistan's Jansher Khan overcame a tough hurdle to capture his sixth Singapore Squash Open title with a five-set victory over Australian Chris Robertson here Saturday, reports AFP.

Jansher won at 17-15, 15-11, 14-15, 12-15, 15-6 in a match which lasted just over two hours.

The Pakistani admitted that it was a very tough game but

added that he was still confident of winning when the match went into the fifth set. "I have been playing better after every round and I was confident of taking the title," he said.

Robertson gave no excuses for the defeat and said the game could have gone either way.

England's Martine Le Moignan as expected took the Women's title with a straight sets win over Michelle Martin of Australia at 15-11, 15-13, 15-8.

An earlier report said, Top seeds Jansher Khan of Pakistan and Australian Chris Robertson headed for showdown today after convincing victories in the semifinals of the Singapore Open Squash championship on Friday, reports Reuter.

World number one Jansher and world number three Robertson took 50 minutes each to beat their opponents.

Australian Tristan Nancarrow raced to a 6-0 first game lead against top seed Jansher and took the game 15-11 but then he ran out of steam.

In the first game I wanted to wear him out and keep him on the court as long as possible," said Jansher.

The Pakistani dominated the court in the second game to win 15-7 and then countered Nancarrow's attempts to slow play down with long winning squashes to take the last two games 15-3, 15-6.

Soviets lead in modern pentathlon

SAN ANTONIO, Aug 24: Christopher Ruer won the 300-meter freestyle swimming event in 3 minutes, 15.49 seconds Thursday to become the second Frenchman in as many days to take top individual honours at the 1991 Modern Pentathlon World Championships, reports AP.

"I feel the 12 hours of fencing created a backlash of three or four seconds for the good swimmers and more on the not-so-good swimmers," Ruer said.

With France's Olivier Clergeau winning the fencing on Wednesday, the French were 10th after three events.

With two pentathletes in the top 10 all three in the top 25, the Soviet Union took over the team lead with 9,640 points. Italy is second with 9,566 and Hungary third with 9,444.

Edberg struggles to beat Connors

COMMACK, N.Y., Aug 24: Stefan Edberg held off Jimmy Connors in three sets and Ivan Lendl rallied past Omar Camporese as the top two seeds advanced to the semifinals of the Hamlet Challenge Cup on Friday, reports AP.

Connors, now 38 and ranked No. 195 in the world, made Edberg, ranked No. 2, work for every point before losing 6-3, 4-6, 6-4. Lendl rallied after losing the first two games for a 7-6 (7-5), 6-3 victory.

In another quarterfinal at the Hamlet Golf and Country Club, qualifier Olivier Delatire of Luxembourg beat Thierry champion of France, 6-4, 6-4.

Fourth-seeded John McEnroe used pinpoint accuracy and a commanding serve to overpower Luiz Mattar of Brazil, 6-3, 6-1 in the last quarterfinal match Friday night. With Edberg, Connors,

Lendl and McEnroe all playing, it was the first time four former No. 1-ranked players took part in the quarterfinals of the same tournament.

Connors took a 4-3 lead in the final set by breaking Edberg in the seventh game, but Edberg broke back, held serve at love, then broke Connors again to win the match.

Edberg, now 6-6 in his 12 career meetings with Connors after losing five of the first six, broke Connors' service three times in winning the opening set.

Connors lifted his game after falling behind 0-2 in the second set. He broke Edberg in the ninth game for a 5-4 lead and rallied from 30-40 to win the 10th game and even the match.

"I should have won in two sets," Edberg said. "I had him 4-2 and had a chance to make it 5-2. But Jimmy found a way and I had to fight for it."

There were a total of 30

break points as neither player served well. Edberg broke Connors' serve seven times and was broken five times.

"This match was good for me," Edberg said. "I got into trouble and I got out of it."

Lendl started slowly, wasting two break points in the first game and being broken in the second. Camporese then held serve for a 3-0 lead, but Lendl — who had complained about television workmen erecting cameras in his line of vision early in the match — broke back as Camporese was serving for the set in the ninth game.

Camporese took a 5-2 lead in the tiebreaker, but Lendl won the last five points and was in control through the second set.

"He has good strokes and if you don't hit deep he can hurt you," Lendl said. "He was slowing down at the end of the first set. He seemed to be tiring. My advantage is I play at the same pace all the way."

Italy crash out of U-17 soccer

MONTECATINI, Italy, Aug 24: Hosts Italy crashed out of the World Under-17 Soccer Championship on Thursday when they were held to a goalless draw by Argentina, reports Reuter.

The Italians needed a win to reach the quarter-finals, the two berths from Group A going instead to Argentina and Group winners the United States.

Being knocked out is no surprise, both the United States and Argentina showed they were better, said Raffaele Ranucci.

Williams leads in German Open

DUESSELDORF, Germany, Aug 24: Chris Williams of England shot a 66 to take the lead Thursday in the German Open, reports AP.

Williams, 32, was followed at 67 by former British Open champion Sandy Lyle of Scotland, who hasn't won a tournament in three years. Also carding a 67 was Vijay Singh of the Fiji Islands, and Andrew Murray, also of Scotland.

Winner of the 1,575,000 mark (dfls 926,000) tournament that ends Sunday takes home 265,000 marks



The start of the 100m backstroke event on Friday — the concluding day of the four-day national swimming championships at Dhaka Stadium pool. —Star photo



The BTMC team which finished runners-up in the recently concluded 16th national table tennis championships, seen with the State Minister for Textile Maj. (Retd) Abdul Mannan.