

SAF Games schedule

Sports Reporter

The organising committee of the fifth South Asian Federation (SAF) Games, scheduled to be held in the Sri Lankan capital Colombo from Dec 22 to Dec 31, has finalised the schedule for the regional Games to be participated by all seven members of the South Asian Federation.

The ten-day event will feature competitions in ten disciplines, namely, soccer, athletics, swimming, shooting, boxing, basketball, volleyball, weight-lifting, tennis and table tennis.

According to the schedule, the opening ceremony of the Games will be held on Dec 22 and the closing ceremony on Dec 31.

There will be no competition on two days — Dec 25 for Christmas and Dec 30, the penultimate day of the meet.

The athletics, volleyball, shooting and swimming competitions will be held between Dec 23 and 28 while the tennis and table tennis programmes are scheduled between Dec 23 and 27.

The soccer programme, from Dec 23 to 29 provides for a rest day on Dec 28 before the final billed for Dec 29.

Basketball and weight-lifting events are to be held between Dec 26 and Dec 29. The boxing bouts are scheduled between Dec 23 and 29 with Dec 27 being a rest day.

Bangladesh, which hosted the second SAF Games in Dhaka in December 1985, will be competing in all ten disciplines. But our shooters, weightlifters, boxers and swimmers will not be taking part in each and every event of those sports for want of talented prospects in some individual events.

Meanwhile, five national federations have finalised their



Pancha,
the Games mascot

respective squads for the Games, while five others were yet to do so as of yesterday.

Those federations which have announced their squads include swimming, shooting, weight-lifting, table tennis and tennis. Another, the basketball federation, has picked a provisional squad which left Sunday night for a series of warm-up matches against sides in West Bengal.

Those federations yet to pick their squads are football, athletics, boxing and volleyball. These squads are likely to be announced within the next couple of days, it is reliably learnt.

SHOOTING SQUAD

The National Shooting Federation, hopeful of our medal prospects in the SAF Games, recently sent a number of shooters on an experience-gathering tour of the United States. A Chinese coach has been imparting intensive training to our boys and girls at the national range in Gulshan over the past few weeks. There was also a Swedish coach here last month.

Meanwhile, the federation yesterday picked a 19-member contingent for the Games which comprises 15 shooters — including four girls — and four officials.

Following is the team:
Manager: Azizul Hoque,
Coaches: Zhu Lee Ming (China), Kazi Selim; Technical officer — Eng Mir Daulat Ilossain.

Shooters: Kazi Shahana Parveen, Khaleda Mansoor, Kazi Ferdousi Parveen, Shabena Khatoun; Atiqur Rahman, Haider Ali, Asif Ilossain, Fariduddin Ahmed, G M Haider, M Shafiguzzaman, Emran Chowdhury, M Nasir Uddin, Kamrul Islam, Saiful Alam Rinku and Fazle Rabbi Elahi.

Bangladesh shooters will take part in six out of the eight events in the Games.

Grapplers for Pak meet

A 13-member Bangladesh wrestling team will leave here for Pakistan Saturday to participate in the Quaid-e-Azam International freestyle wrestling championship, reports UNB.

The competition will be held on December 3-5 in Lahore. Members of the team are Team Manager— Lt Col (Retd) Harun-ur-Rashid; Asstt Manager— M Shamsuzzaman; Coach— Masudur Rahman; Referee— M A Jalil; Wrestlers: M Ansur Rahman, Benazir Ahmed, Harun-ur-Rashid, Wazir Ali, M Azim, Jamal Uddin, Masud Ahmed, Ashraf Ali and Masud Reza.

Nat'l clay pigeon shooting in Pabna from today

PABNA, Nov 26: The 4th national clay pigeon shooting competition begins at the Monsurabad shooting range here tomorrow (Wednesday), reports UNB.

State Ministers for Communications Fazlur Rahman Patal will inaugurate the three-day meet.

Eighty shooters, two each from of the country's 40 shooting clubs, will take part in the competition to be held for the first time in the district.

President Abdur Rahman Biswas is expected to distribute prizes among the winners on November 29, the closing day of the championship.



US Davis Cup teammates Andre Agassi (R) and Pete Sampras before their warm up at the Palaise des Sports, at Lyon in France on Nov 26. They will play against France in the Davis Cup finals starting Nov 29 in Lyon. —AFP photo

Noah plays coy about his choice

LYON, France, Nov 26: With Davis Cup fever invading France it was appropriate that captain Yannick Noah should choose the calm, picture-postcard setting of Montreux in Switzerland to make one of the most difficult decisions of his career, reports AFP.

Noah, who next week hopes to lead France to their first Davis Cup victory in sixty years, ended a week of supervising intensive training, special diets and gruelling cross-country runs for his squad by naming France's second singles player for the final against the United States.

Guy Forget, the 26-year-old world number-seven and recent Paris Open winner, was an automatic choice for both singles and doubles as the French prepare to avenge the defeat inflicted on them by the Americans in the 1982 final in Grenoble.

But the other singles berth posed Noah a delicate dilemma.

Having relegated the out-of-form Fabrice Santoro to the role of hitting partner during the training, and hinted that the talented Arnaud Boetsch was not yet ready to step into full-blooded Davis Cup competition — Noah was left with choice of gambling either on the fitness and strokeplay of the flashy but erratic Ilerly Leconte — or on the baseline power and accuracy of outspoken Olivier Delaitre.

Although Noah told the players on Sunday what the

Americans would be, it was immediately made a state secret. His decision, he insisted, would not become public knowledge until next Thursday's draw.

But whoever he has posted into the vacant spot, France will still start as the underdogs, some say "no hoppers" against the defending champions.

Despite home advantage, notoriously enthusiastic fans and Supreme Court surface at Lyon's Gerland Stadium built especially to take the sting out of the Americans aggressive style of play — Andre Agassi, a semi-finalist at the Masters, and the in form Pete Sampras, who went on to win the event, will be formidable opponents.

France's only crumb of comfort is that the left-handed Forget managed to beat Sampras in an exciting five-set final at the Paris Open earlier this month. But it was a match Sampras threw away after leaving decisively in the fourth set — rather than one in which Forget was the dominant force.

Noah, a teammate of the then-teenage Leconte at the Grenoble final, admits the 28-year-old has the style and experience which could upset Sampras.

But he also says the 24-year-old Delaitre could shine against Agassi if it comes to a baseline slog.

Noah proved he is not a man to hold grudges by picking Delaitre. He had given him a dressing-down earlier in the year for accusing the French federation of neglecting its

younger hopes and fawning to the established stars.

Leconte, who has had three major back operations — the last coming after he was forced to retire from this year's Wimbledon — admits: "I feel it's about time I got a

depleted Yugoslavia in September — an easier-than-expected win after Croatians Goran Ivanisevic and Goran Prpic both withdrew because of the civil strife back home.

Delaitre, who has reached two finals this year, had a close look at just how devastating an in-form Sampras can be when he was completely outplayed by the American in the Lyon Grand Prix final.

But the Frenchman remains confident he can lift his game for the big occasion.

For Noah's American counterpart Tom Gorman, the American team all but picked itself.

Agassi remains the anchor singles player who has served his country well — winning both his singles against "Beckerless" Germany. Sampras — winner at Lyon, finalist at the Paris Open and winner of the masters — has been in the sort of form which overshadows the fact he has never played in a Davis Cup tie before.

As far as the doubles is concerned, Ken Flach and Robert Seguso remain one of the world's top pairings — as they proved this weekend by reaching the final of the ATP Championship in Johannesburg.

The United States, winners of the competition 29 times since it was launched in 1900, reached this year's final by beating Mexico, Spain and Germany.

France, bidding for a seventh triumph in the event, defeated Israel, Australia and Yugoslavia.

YANNICK NOAH - break. Just about everything bad that can happen to me has happened to me in recent years."

On his day he can beat any player in the world with his exciting, swash buckling style of tennis. The problem is that those days are getting too far and few between.

He has lost around 15 kilos (nearly two stone) since France's semi-final victory over

especially for him and was not very happy about the results, shaking his head occasionally after missing the flying targets.

"Today is not my day, I think, may be tomorrow," the Prince, who underwent an operation in 1972 to remove a tumor in his throat, said in a raspy whisper.

Clad in expensive Gucci rubber shoes and trendy sporting attire, the Prince said he was also involved in golf and badminton, but said shooting has been his passion since childhood days.

A collector of fancy cars and

pricy cameras, as well as gold and diamond-studded watches, Prince Sufri has his own shooting range back home, where he has won several gold and silver medals in national shooting events.

He has few competitors there: Oil-rich Brunei has only 300,000 people, in contrast, Games powerhouse Indonesia has 190 million people, even the second smallest participant, Singapore, has 2.7 million.

Guarded by courteous security men, Prince Sufri shakes hands with fellow shooters, many of whom he has met at various competitions abroad.

He seemed unmindful of the scorching noontime heat, and did not seek cover when a light drizzle fell on the shooting range later.

"He is a very down-to-earth man. And a big spender too," said a Filipino military officer who has known the Prince for years.

The Prince invited him and several fellow shooters last year to Brunei, where they spent two weeks with all of their expenses paid by the royal household.

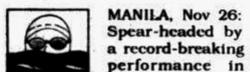
Prince Sufri said it was still too early to tell whether he could win a medal in the Games, participated in by nine countries.

"I can't say," he said, "May be yes, may be no."

A undergraduate student of London's Stanford College, Prince Sufri is married to a Malaysian with whom he has four daughters and a son.

Unlike the Sultan and other brothers who hold cabinet portfolios, Prince Sufri holds no cabinet position, being content to serve as head of Brunei's National Olympic Council and shoot his way to a gold medal in international competition.

Filipino swimmers rule pool



MANILA, Nov 26: Spear-headed by a record-breaking performance in the pool, the Philippine hosts on Monday grabbed an early lead from rivals Indonesia and Thailand on the opening day of the 16th Southeast Asian Games in Manila, reports Reuter.

Seventeen-year-old US-trained swimmer Akiko Thomson shaved more than a second off her own Games record to clinch gold in the women's 100 metre backstroke in one minute five seconds.

"I was nervous, but I went out there tonight and did my best," said the Filipino swimmer who improved on her previous record by 1.47 seconds.

The Philippines amassed nine golds, against six for Indonesia and four for Thailand, with the Indonesians

Men's top money earners

MONACO, Nov 26: Leading prize money winners issued by the Association of Tennis Professionals on Monday:

1. Stefan Edberg (Sweden) 2,363,575 dollars
2. Pete Sampras (US) 1,908,413
3. Jim Courier (US) 1,748,171
4. Ivan Lendl (Czechoslovakia) 1,438,983
5. Michael Stich (Germany) 1,217,636
6. Boris Becker (Germany) 1,216,568
7. Guy Forget (France) 1,072,252
8. Andre Agassi (US) 980,611
9. Anders Jarryd (Sweden) 752,514
10. Emilio Sanchez (Spain) 672,071
11. Karel Novacek (Czechoslovakia) 647,540
12. John Fitzgerald (Australia) 616,493
13. Petr Korda (Czechoslovakia) 573,970
14. Jakob Hlasek (Switzerland) 573,642
15. Goran Ivanisevic (Yugoslavia) 562,795
16. Magnus Gustafsson (Sweden) 538,792
17. Sergi Bruguera (Spain) 527,320

dominating the judo and the Taish hitting gold in the gymnastics and shooting.

"I think we did very well. As the hosts put our best events on for the first day. But I think it's going to get tougher," said Horacio Paredes, spokesman for the Games organising committee.

Singapore was deprived of its first gold, when its team was disqualified from the four by 200 metres men's relay because of a false start by one swimmer.

Disappointed Singapore officials were resigned to the loss of what would have been their first gold in the nine-nation Games, which also include Burma, Malaysia, Brunei, Laos and Vietnam.

"It's bad luck for us but that's what the electronic watch says so we can't do anything about it," said Won Sui Kut, secretary general of the Singapore Swimming Association.

Philippine officials were pleased that the Games, plagued by teething troubles in the run-up to Sunday's opening by President Corason Aquino, had gone relatively smoothly, with only a dispute over the shooting to dampen the upbeat mood.

"It went off without a hitch

despite the protest in the shooting event," Paredes said.

"There were some people who were contending there should have been a shoot-off. I suppose that would have been more dramatic. But the rules were to use a count-back. Eventually it was ironed out," he told reporters referring to the dispute over how the shooting should be scored.

Backstage problems in swimming and billiards also caused difficulties for some countries.

A nasty row among sports officials and swimmers derailed the defending champion Malaysian swimming team, leaving the squad with just three swimmers in the Games, officials said.

Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand also planned to pull out of two events in billiards, forcing organisers to consider scratching the event for lack of participants, officials said.

Malaysian swim star Nurul Huda Abdullah, winner of eight gold medals in 1989, pulled out from the Games because of a leg injury she sustained in a car accident last February.

But Malaysian team sources said disputes with her mother over personal matters and disagreements with sports officials regarding her training

forced her to withdraw and concentrate of her studies in the University of Brisbane in Australia.

Other missing Malaysian swimmers are Magdaline Goh, May Tan Sook Khoun and Lee Chee Keen, who helped people their team as the top medal winner in swimming in 1989.

"The Malaysians don't even have enough swimmers to form a relay team," an official said.

Twenty golds were at stake on the first day from more than 300 up for grabs in the 12-day competition.

MEDALS TABLE

Medals standings on the first day of competitions in the nine-nation Southeast Asian Games in Manila on Monday (tabulate under Gold, Silver, Bronze):

Philippines	6	3	4
Indonesia	6	3	5
Thailand	4	6	9
Singapore	0	5	1
Burma	1	1	1
Malaysia	0	1	1
Vietnam	0	1	0
Brunei	0	0	0
Laos	0	0	0

Note: Medal table does not tally because extra bronzes were awarded in two fencing events, and none in the snooker nine-ball team finals.

Vietnam join gold club

MANILA, Nov 26: Vietnam joined the gold medal club and Indonesia chased the Philippines for first-place in the overall standings as three Games records were broken midway through the second day of the 16th South East Asian Games here today, reports AFP.

The Vietnamese shooting team scored 1,714 points in the rapid fire pistol event to break their own two-year-old Games record of 1,702 points, which they set in Kuala Lumpur in 1989.

Vietnam's Trinh Quoc Viet went on to upset favourite Nathaniel Padilla of the Philippines to win the individual event.

Another two Games records also fell in weightlifting as Indonesia's strongmen asserted their superiority,

capturing two golds and one silver. This brought to nine the total number of golds won so far by the defending champions, pushing them to within two golds of drawing level with the host nation.

The young Indonesian powerlifters Sodikin and Enoch Depthsios made light work of winning in their respective 56- and 52-kilogram (123 and 114-pound) classes.

Sodikin lifted 255 kilograms (561 pounds) to eclipse the four-year-old 252.5-kilogram (555.5-pound) Games mark of Filipino Samuel Alegada, who settled for the silver this time.

Indonesian Wahyudi hefted the same 222.5-kilogram (489.5-pound) total as Depthsios but lost the gold because he was heavier. He was consoled by posting a new

record of 130 kilograms (286 pounds) in the clean and jerk, 2.5 kilograms (5.5 pounds) better than the 1987 record set in Jakarta by his compatriot Entong Lili.

Another Indonesian cyclist Nurhayati, won the women's one-kilometer (half-mile) individual item trial.

The Philippines boosted their gold medal haul to 11 with cyclist Josecito Santos winning the one-kilometer (half-mile) individual item trial and Bartolome Tcyab getting top individual honours in the free rifle English match.

Thailand stayed in third place with five golds. They won the team event in the free rifle English match.

Malaysia, Burma, Singapore, Laos and Brunei make up the nine-nation line-up for the Games.

Malnutrition retards athletic talent

MANILA, Nov 26: Poverty and poor nutrition are holding back the development of athletes in southeast Asia, sports officials at the 16th South East Asian Games (SEAG) in Manila said today, reports Reuter.

"Poverty and nutrition is a problem because by the time we get these athletes, it is a difficult job just trying to catch up in standards with the rest of Asia," said Arturo Ilagan, former head of the National Athletics Programme in Manila.

"You can't expect a hungry or a poorly-fed athlete to run well. It just won't work," added a coach from one South East Asian country attending the Games which began on Monday.

Of more than 3,000 athletes taking part in the two-week long competition, it is only in badminton and archery that the region can offer top-rated players to match the best the

world has to offer.

Indonesia has Ardi Wiranata, 21, and Susi Sasanti, 20, both of whom are both all-England champions in 1991. Malaysia has World Cup doubles champions in brothers Razif and Jalani Sidek.

Indonesia also won a team silver medal in archery in the 1988 Olympic Games in Seoul, relegating the United States to the bronze medal.

The only other world-rated athletes the region can boast are boxers from Thailand and the Philippines, both of which won a pair of bronze medals in the 1988 Games in South Korea.

Athletes from South East Asia are among the world's best in the non-Olympic sports of bowling and billiards.

Officials say athletes in the region suffer from having a smaller physical build than the great African middle distance runners, for example. They are

also held back by the sporadic nature of government assistance and inadequate sports facilities.

"The gap is really growing, said Philippine sports journalist Ding Marcelo.

Our athletes are still in the third world and the standards between this region and the rest of Asia, let alone the world, are still far apart.

In events like track and field, the gap between those taking part in the SEAG and existing world records in huge.

The winning effort set by T. Sangvorn of Thailand in the long jump in 1989 at 7.44 metres is more than 1.5 metres behind the world mark of 8.95 set by American Mike Powell in the world track and field championship in Tokyo in August.

The SEAG record in the 100 metres for men is held by

Thailand's Sumet Promna, who clocked 10.36 seconds in 1987 in Jakarta. But the mark is a long way behind the 9.86 seconds of Carl Lewis in the world championship in Japan.

Sports officials in the region have hired foreign coaches in an attempt to boost the performances of their athletes and have begun training camps to supervise their development.

But progress has been slow in coming.

"Most of the time, politics is the problem," said Philippine Senator Jose Lina, who heads the Senate Committee on youth and Sports development.

In-fighting among sports officials and athletes has often frustrated the benefits of hiring foreign coaches even those celebrated experts who have found jobs in South East Asia after being recently thrown out of work in Eastern Europe.

Prince Sufri — the richest competitor

MANILA, Nov 26: Prince Haji Sufri Bolkiyah of Brunei may be the richest player in the South East Asian Games, but like all trapshooters, he has to endure the heat and drizzle for a piece of gold he could very easily afford to buy, reports AFP.

The younger brother of Sultan Hassanall Bolkiyah, reputedly the world's richest man, Prince Sufri is an amiable 40-year-old who might not be

recognized as royalty were it not for the ramrod-straight bodyguards hovering around him wherever he goes.

"I want to gain more experience in shooting, and I also want to meet more friends," the Prince told AFP after firing at 50 target clays in the first two sets of the eight-round trapshooting competition at an army base here.

He missed 11 birds using an Italian made Beretta crafted



Wahidul Alam (L) and Capt. Munir won the doubles title in the annual tennis competition of Gulshan Club held at the club courts on Sunday. — Star Photo

New golf plant in Malaysia

TOKYO, Nov 26: Japanese tyre maker Bridgestone Corp said today it had started work on a 24 million Malaysian dollar (8.9 million US) plant near Kuala Lumpur to make golf balls, tennis balls and other sporting goods, reports AFP.

The new plant, located at Shah Alam, is expected to start producing golf balls for the international market by the middle of next year following the establishment of similar plants in Taiwan and the United States last year.

The factory is being built by a joint venture between Bridgestone and its sporting goods subsidiary capitalised at four million dollars (1.5 million US). Bridgestone already makes polyurethane foam at another Malaysian unit.

Moulvibazar soccer

MOULVIBAZAR, Nov 26: The final match of Moulvibazar Zila Prashasak Gold Cup tournament-91 was held today, reports BSS.

Pourashava football team defeated Sadar upazila football team 5-4 in a tie-breaker.

Finance Minister M Sufur Rahman distributed prizes among the champions and runners-up.

All seven teams participated in the competition.