

# Niemann's dream fulfilled

**ALBERTVILLE, Feb 10**: World record holder Gunda Kleeman Niemann of Germany skinned the sticky surface of the speed skating track Sunday fast enough to win an Olympic gold medal, but far from the pace she's known for, reports AP.

Niemann covered the 3,000-meter outdoor course in 4 minutes, 19.90 seconds, well off her record of 4:10.80, set on the high-tech indoor track in Calgary on Dec 9, 1990.



Gunda Kleeman Niemann of Germany. —INP photo

Fellow German Heike Warnicke took the silver medal in 4:22.88. The bronze went to Emese Hunyady of Austria in 4:24.64.

The track, which had worried skaters and coaches prior to the first race, was half in sun and half in shadow through the first seven pairs. It was resurfaced after the fourth race. Niemann skated in the second pair after that.

"This is outmost happiness for me. Tears just well up into my eyes," Niemann said. "This is already a dream fulfilled."

In the 1988 Olympics in Calgary, Niemann was seventh in the 1,500 and 5,000.

"Calgary was a big disappointment. Now I'm just so happy I can skate, I can still do the sport I love," said Niemann, who is expected to win three gold medals here.

On her way to her fourth straight European title, she won the 1,500-3,000 and

5,000-meter races. Warnicke, like Niemann, is 25 and from Erfurt, in the former East Germany.

Yvonne Van Gennip of the Netherlands, the defending Olympic champion in the 3,000, skated just before Niemann and posted a dismal 4:28.08 — almost 17 seconds off her Calgary mark of 4:11.94.

Although coaches and skaters had speculated before the race that later starts would be favoured by better ice conditions, Warnicke and Hunyady were the first pair of skaters to race US speed skating coach Peter Mueller said the track was in excellent condition for competition.

The outdoor track, built to be quickly dismantled after the Games, had sparked complaints and controversy before competition began. Workers labored all night and most of the morning Sunday to ensure that the ice would be in good shape.

## PM to give cash prizes to SAF gold-winners today

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia will formally distribute cash awards to the gold winning Bangladesh athletes of the 5th SAF Games today, reports UNB.

Bangladeshi athletes won four gold medals — three in individual and team shooting events and the other in swimming — the country's second highest tally in the SAF Games since their start in 1984.

Kazi Shahana Parveen and Atiqur Rahman won individual golds while Atiq shared another gold in the team event along with two shooters, Haider Ali and Asif Hossain. Shahana bagged the first gold in the women's free-rifle event while Atiq won the men's air pistol event. Atiq won another gold in the team event of the air pistol shooting along with Asif Hussain and Haider Ali.

Muklesur Rahman won the only swimming gold, in the 200-metre breast-stroke. All the individual gold winners will receive Tk one lakh in cash while the prize-money for team events will be equally distributed among the three shooters as per an earlier government decision.

# Winter Olympics in Albertville Favourites take a beating

**ALBERTVILLE, Feb 10**: Favourites tumbled by the wayside as the frantic race for Olympic gold began at the Albertville Games on Sunday with surprise



Unified team pair skater Natalia Michouteniok is spun by partner Artour Dmitriev during the original programme portion of the Winter Olympics pair competition in Albertville on Feb 9.

Austrian victories in downhill skiing and ski-jumping, reports AP.

The first full day of medal competition at the 16th Winter Games also saw Russian Women demonstrate their continued strength in cross-country skiing and German women dominate the 3,000-meter speed skating event.

The day's biggest surprise was produced by Austria's under-heralded Patrick Ortlieb, who kept his concentration and footing on Val d'Isere's treacherous "La Face de Bellevard" downhill course while the favourites were losing theirs.

The big 24-year-old Austrian, who has never won a World Cup race, was the first skier down the course and set an unbeatable pace over the bumps, turns and jumps to finish in 1:50.37.

But afterwards, Ortlieb

joined the chorus of criticism of the twisting "La Face," saying, "I hope this is the last downhill we ever run on this course."

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points, missing the chance to become the youngest male champion in the history of winter Olympics.

Vettori, who garnered 14 World Cup victories but missed medals in two previous Olympics, gave Austria its first gold medal in the ski jumping since Austria's current coach Toni Innauer won the short hill at Lake Placid in 1980.

The change of names — from the Soviet to the United Team — proved to have no effect on the prowess of its women's cross-country skiers as Lyubov Egorova won the first gold medal of these Winter Games.

The 26-year-old world 30 km freestyle champion captured Sunday's 15-kilometer cross-country race at Les Saisies in 42 minutes, 20.8 seconds.

## Jahangir faces Dittmar in final

**KUWAIT CITY, Feb 10**: World number one Jahangir Khan will be out to avenge a defeat three months ago by Chris Dittmar when he faces the Australian in Tuesday's Liberation Cup squash final, reports Reuter.

Dittmar, ranked three in the world, beat Jahangir in the semifinals of the Dutch Open in November and the Pakistani has been absent from the world circuit since with a recurring ankle injury.

Jahangir returned to international action for the Liberation Cup — held on the anniversary of the Gulf war victory — and in Sunday's semifinals beat Germany's Simon Frenz 9-3, 9-5, 9-7.

## Khoka takes over as NSC chairman

Minister of State for Youth and Sports Sadek Hossain Khoka yesterday took over the charge of the Chairman of the National Sports Council from Major General Mahbubur Rahman at a simple function, reports BSS.

Secretary, Ministry of Youth and Sports Nurul Momen Khan was present on the occasion. Sadek Hossain Khoka is the 12th chairman of the National Sports Council, which was previously the National Sports Control Board.

## Magic's emotional farewell

**ORLANDO, Fla., Feb 10**: Magic Johnson's farewell to the National Basketball Association was an emotional powerhouse that overwhelmed the fans and to over the All-Star game on Sunday, reports Reuter.

After he scored the final basket of the game, a dramatic 30-foot, off-balance shot for his third successive three-pointer, there was still time on the clock, but they didn't bother using it.

Everyone knew a perfect ending when they saw it. Making his return just to say goodbye to the league he left in November after learning he had the AIDS virus, Johnson was declared the most valuable player among all the All-Stars after scoring 25 points and handing out nine assists as the west crushed the east 153-113, a record margin.

"It was his show, his day, and it turned into a tribute for him," the east's Michael Jordan of the Chicago Bulls said. "He had the west so emotionally fired up that we couldn't do a thing. It was an emotional day for everyone."

# Krabbe claims she's innocent

**KARLSRUHE, Germany, Feb 10**: German sprint queen Katrin Krabbe declared her innocence Sunday amid an investigation into her alleged involvement in the tampering of a urine sample used for a drug test, reports AFP.

"We are innocent and we didn't manipulate anything," the world champion athlete said, referring to herself and colleagues Silke Moller and Grit Breuer, also implicated in the scandal.

Earlier Sunday, Dr. Manfred Donke who was

charged with analysing another sample taken from the three women, said that tampering probably took place.

He told the SID news agency that the samples "came from the same person, I cannot at the moment say who."

Donke returned to Cologne from the Winter Olympic Games in Albertville Saturday to supervise the analysis of the samples taken during a random check at a training stopover in South Africa on January 24.

The trio were suspended with effect from January 30 when the affair came to light on Friday, but the German Federation relented Saturday and allowed them to run in the national indoor championships in Karlsruhe this weekend.

After a meeting the city Sunday, which was addressed by lawyers for the three athletes, the federation said that "on the basis of information known at the moment, it is necessary to continue the investigation (into the three athletes)."

"Only after the results of this inquiry will the federation

make a definitive decision," the statement said.

In the meantime, the three athletes are free to fulfil commitments to take part in athletics events in Genoa, Italy, on February 18 and in Paris on February 22.

Thomas Springstein, the trio's trainer, blamed South African officials of making a mistake in analysing the samples.

The samples coming from one person could mean either the athletes or their entourage were involved in an attempted cover-up.

They could have provided the sample from just one athlete or a chemical cleansing agent could have been added to each sample.

No proscribed substances were discovered in the first samples, but the fact that they proved to be identical adds fuel to the hypothesis that an attempt at disguising the samples was made.

Tampering with a urine sample carries the same penalty as failing a test and an athlete found guilty can be banned for up to four years.

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## Nat'l junior badminton on Sports Reporter

The 1992 national junior and sub-junior badminton championships began yesterday afternoon at the Outer Stadium wooden-floor gymnasium.

On the inaugural day, three matches of the first round of the boys' singles under-18 group were decided.

## Jabbar tennis Sports Reporter

Tafazzal will meet Johnny in today's final of the boys' under-14 singles of the Jabbar memorial tennis tournament. The match starts at 2:30 this afternoon at the Engineers' Club court.

In yesterday's semifinals, played at the Ramna Tennis Complex Tafazzal beat Omar 6-4, 4-6, 7-5 in a keen three-setter while Johnny also needed three sets to overcome Faisal 6-4, 4-6, 6-2.

In the women's semifinals decided yesterday at the Engineers Club courts, Rina beat Champa 6-2, 6-2 but her younger sister, the top seeded former national champion Shima, was surprisingly beaten by Saathi 4-6, 3-6 in the biggest upset of the tournament.

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# Morceli misses world mark

**FAIRFAX, Virginia, Feb 10**: Algeria's Noureddine Morceli won the men's mile at the Mobil Invitational track and field meet here Sunday but failed in his latest bid to break the world indoor record, reports AFP.

Morceli, who has not lost in the mile since September 1990, was on record pace at the halfway mark, running a 1:55 split behind Paul Vandegrift, who dropped out on the next lap.

With the small but boisterous crowd cheering him on, Morceli made a last ditch effort on the final lap but came up a little short, winning in 3:54.41 — a new meet record but well off his personal best of 3:50.81.

Ireland's Eamonn Coghlan set the world mark of 3:49.78 in 1983 and still is the only man to get under 3:50 indoors.

"I was just trying to make the spectators happy," Morceli said. "But I knew it would be very hard because of the track, it's not good for world records."

The 200m indoor track at George Mason University

does not have banked curves and Morceli said it was difficult just to stay in the inside lane while negotiating the counter-clockwise turns.

"It's a little bit harder, especially on the turns," he said. "When you try to break the world record you have to plan for everything different conditions, different track. Still, it was a good time for this track."

In the men's 60m, Andre Cason won for the second time in three days, once again defeating rival and fellow-American Leroy Burrell, whose world record he shattered last month in Belgium.

"The last three days I've kind of made a statement," said Cason, whose winning time of 6:53 sec was a new meet record.

"I've set the tone for the year. I'm feeling really good for this weekend. I realize now that Andre Cason can only beat himself."

Burrell, who holds the world outdoor record in the 100-metres, had trouble with the start but was gaining on Cason when the two men crossed the finish line. He was second in 6:61.

"When you've won a hundred races, losing one isn't a big deal, especially at this time of year," he said. "I'm training for the Olympic trials and the Olympic Games and whatever happens up until then is, for the most part, insignificant."

Russian Maxim Tarasov also set a new meet record in the pole vault, but he failed on three tries to better the US indoor mark.

He cleared 5.82 (19ft 11in) on his first attempt, but was unsuccessful at 5.92m, which would have shattered the record of 5.89 set in 1989 by Billy Olson.

Other men's winners included Kenya's Paul Ereng in the 800m (1:48.95) and Tony Dees in the 60m hurdles (7.53).

Diane Dixon's unbeaten streak in the 400 m here came to an end when she was beaten by fellow American Natasha Kaiser, who won in 52.63. Dixon redeemed herself in the 200m, winning in 24.02.

Hepathlete Jackie Joyner-Kersey easily won the 60m hurdles in 7.84, while Romania's Doina Melnicu easily won the women's mile in 4:33.26.

# Chang spoils Courier's party

**SAN FRANCISCO, Feb 10**: Second-seeded Michael Chang upset top seed Jim Courier 6-3, 6-3 in the final of the 260,000 dollar Volvo of San Francisco tennis tournament on Sunday, just one day after Courier assured himself of the world's top ranking by reaching the final here, reports Reuter.

Courier played sluggishly from the baseline throughout the 98-minute match, missing repeatedly on his powerful groundstrokes. Chang, meanwhile, stepped up the pace on his serve, scoring seven aces, and played more aggressively than usual from the back court.

Courier will replace Stefan Edberg of Sweden at number one when the weekly ATP tour computer ranking are released on Monday. He will become the first American ranked number one since John McEnroe in August 1985.

The 21-year-old Courier becomes just the third American player to be top-ranked since the ATP began the computer rankings in 1973. McEnroe and Jimmy Connors being the

others.

Courier, who won his second career Grand Slam title at the Australian Open last month, said that the loss in the final did not detract from his taking over number one.



JIM COURIER

"It's been a very important week for me. I don't know if I played my best tennis, but I came through in a lot of matches. That's the sign of a champion, and even though I couldn't do it today I feel happy with what I accomplished," Courier said.

Chang, who lost just 26 games in five matches on the indoor hard court this week, said that playing more aggressively on both his serve and his opponent's serve helped him become a better player on faster surfaces.

"Guys like Jim are hitting the ball so hard that I've started to play more aggressively myself. Today, I wanted to pressure him and not give him anything to tee off on. Overall, I think I played some of the best tennis of my career this week, and I'm obviously pleased to beat the new number one player," Chang said.

## Seles wins title

**ESSEN, Germany, Feb 10**: Monica Seles repeated her Australian Open final victory over second-seeded Mary Joe Fernandez on Sunday, beating the American 6-0, 6-3 to win the \$1.35 million NOKIA Women's, reports AP.

The top-ranked Seles, who beat the 20-year-old Fernandez 6-2, 6-3 to win the Australian Open two weeks ago, used long two-handed volleys and passing shots to win the first set in 21 minutes.

# Platt's injury blow for England

**LONDON, Feb 10**: England will be without influential midfielder star David Platt and versatile defender Paul Parker for the friendly against France at Wembley on February 19, reports AFP.

## Monaco close in on Marseille

**PARIS, Feb 10**: Monaco closed the gap on French league leaders Olympique Marseille to three points after Marseille surprisingly faltered again this weekend, reports AFP.

Monaco cut the deficit on Saturday night to two points with a 2-0 home win over St Etienne, but on Sunday, a last-minute goal from Michael Madar gave second-from-bottom Sochaux and unexpected point in a 2-2 draw at Marseille.

Platt is the greater cause for concern for manager Graham Taylor as he could be a long-term casualty after limping out of Bari's Italian League draw at Sampdoria with a suspected fractured shin.

And that could cast a shadow over England's European Championship finals campaign this summer.

"It is a blow as we build up towards Sweden because I had hoped to develop a squad system over these next six friendlies," said Taylor.

"But that understanding cannot take place if players are missing. As well as losing John Barnes and Paul Gascoigne, Paul Parker is out with a hamstring injury and now Platt. We don't want to be losing any more, that's for sure."

"I can't say anything more until I know the full extent of Platt's injury but let's keep our fingers crossed."

fourth minute goal for Antonio Soda.

He was carried off on a stretcher, only to make a dramatic return within two minutes. But it was clearly a mistake and he limped off for good after 19 minutes.

His injury guarantees Neil Webb promotion to the senior squad after an impressive performance in England's win in Spain just before Christmas.

The Manchester United midfielder has not featured since withdrawing from the friendly against Cameroon a year ago.

David Batty, who missed the 1-1 draw against Poland in November, is also set to return while David Rocastle will continue the comeback he began in Poznan.

# Juventus hold mighty Milan

**ROME, Feb 10**: Runaway leaders AC Milan were held 1-1 at home by nearest rivals Juventus, retaining their five-point lead at the top of the Italian First Division on Sunday, reports Reuter.

Milan, who are unbeaten and have dropped just six points in 20 matches, have 34 points to Juventus's 29.

Playing in front of a capacity home crowd of 85,000, Milan got off to a perfect start when Dutch striker Marco Van Basten scored in the fifth minute.

Van Basten appeared to catch the Juventus defence off guard, slipping in to knock home a cross from winger Alberto Evani for his 17th goal of the season.

The Turin side survived a subsequent period of Milan dominance to comeback with a well taken 27th minute equaliser by Italian international striker Pier Luigi

Casiraghi from a cross by Roberto Galia.

England midfielder David Platt was substituted during the first half of Bari's match at champions Sampdoria with a badly bruised shin and is expected to be out for two weeks. The match ended in a 1-1 draw.

The gap between Milan and third-placed Napoli widened to eight points when the southern club crashed 2-1 at Parma.

An injury-time goal from fourth-placed Parma's Belgian defender Georges Grun settled a close game which seemed set for a draw following first half penalties by Napoli's Brazilian Careca and Alessandro Mellini.

Argentine striker Gabriel Batistuta scored a hat-trick as Fiorentina came from two goals down at halftime to draw 3-3 at promoted Foggia.

Batistuta, top scorer when Argentina won the South American Championship last

year before his transfer to Fiorentina, took his personal tally this season to nine goals.

Foggia's Russian midfielder Igor Shalimov was the man-of-the-match, scoring his side's third goal after a brilliant run in which he swept past three defenders.

Shalimov also set UPA potential match-winner five minutes from time when he again ran through the Fiorentina defence to lay on an easy chance which striker Giuseppe Signori shot over the bar.

Sampdoria came from behind against Bari to extend their unbeaten run into an 11th week.

## CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

- |                                      |                                |                             |                               |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>ACROSS</b>                        | <b>35 Cavorts</b>              | <b>54 Hotel</b>             | <b>13 The 400</b>             |
| <b>1 Rather</b>                      | <b>39 Take five</b>            | <b>accommodation</b>        | <b>18 Almost empty</b>        |
| <b>6 Sajak's sidekick</b>            | <b>40 Margery of rhyme</b>     | <b>DOWN</b>                 | <b>21 Laughing</b>            |
| <b>11 "Never on"</b>                 | <b>42 Appear</b>               | <b>1 Trembled</b>           | <b>23 Office writings</b>     |
| <b>12 Oregon city</b>                | <b>43 Equi-</b>                | <b>3 Illiterate</b>         | <b>25 Work unit</b>           |
| <b>14 Conditional release</b>        | <b>44 Band-leader Jones</b>    | <b>"What'll —?"</b>         | <b>27 Ring setting?</b>       |
| <b>15 Not making value judgments</b> | <b>46 King (Fr.)</b>           | <b>4 Lofty</b>              | <b>29 Ulcer of a sort</b>     |
| <b>16 Mamie's man</b>                | <b>47 West Indies island</b>   | <b>5 Keep an — (watch)</b>  | <b>31 Emulate Shakespeare</b> |
| <b>17 Lounges</b>                    | <b>49 Mental image</b>         | <b>8 "But — on forever"</b> | <b>32 Spa</b>                 |
| <b>19 Roman 2001</b>                 | <b>51 It gets the lead out</b> | <b>9 Called</b>             | <b>33 Weather-map line</b>    |
| <b>20 Rip</b>                        | <b>52 Isolate</b>              | <b>10 Canine coat?</b>      | <b>34 "Bravo!"</b>            |
| <b>22 Negative word</b>              | <b>53 Hackneyed</b>            | <b>11 Malice</b>            | <b>36 Least embellished</b>   |
| <b>23 Run into</b>                   | <b>Solution time: 28 mins.</b> |                             | <b>37 Streisand hit</b>       |
| <b>24 Jockey Arcaro</b>              |                                |                             |                               |