

Japan new Asian champions

TOKYO, Nov 8: Japan beat Saudi Arabia 1-0 in the Asian soccer championship final on Sunday, dashing the visitors' hopes of a third consecutive title, reports Reuter.

Forward Takuya Takagi scored the winner with a fine left-footed shot in the 37th minute after calmly trapping a cross on the edge of the penalty area.

Reserve goalkeeper Kazuya Meakawa, standing in for Shigetatsu Matsunaga who was expelled from the tournament after kicking an opponent during Thursday's semifinal with China, had a game as the Saudis pressed forward.

Saudi Arabia's Yousef al Thunyan crashed a shot over the bar from a direct free kick just before half time.

Dutchman Hans Ooft, Japan's manager, said the victory was an important step towards the 1994 World Cup.

CHINA FINISH THIRD

Goalkeeper Fu Yubin starred as China beat the United Arab Emirates 4-3 in a penalty shoot-out to take third place.

After ending regulation time tied 1-1, the teams went straight into the penalty shootout with no extra time allowed.

Both sides failed on their opening shots. Then Cai Sheng, Wu Qunli and Peng Weiguo gave China three while Khamis Sa'ad Mubarak, Husain Ghalkoum Abbas and Abdul Razzaq Ibrahim al Baloooshi replied for the Emirates.

Then the 28-year-old keeper put China one goal up when he scored from the spot, before ensuring victory by punching away the Emirates

final penalty chance from Khalid Ismail Mubarak.

China's coach Klaus Schlappner of Germany said an Emirates win would have been "no surprise because they are a very strong team. I'm very, very glad that we could finally win the match."

Emirates coach Valeri Lobanovskii of Russia congratulated Schlappner for winning the game and said, "Both teams played at a very high level today. The Chinese were very quick and passed the ball well. I think they have a good future."

Earlier, Khalid Ismail Mubarak opened the scoring for the Emirates when he fired home a free kick from, Eisa Meer Abdelnour from the right in the 10th minute. Only five minutes later Hao Haidong headed China back on level terms.

The Chinese were one man down from the 76th minute after Li Ming was sent off for a brutal tackle on Awadh Ghareeb Mubarak.

China trounce Bangladesh

NEW DELHI, Nov 8: Chinese men got off to a flying start posting a 3-0 victory over Bangladesh at the start of the 22-country Asian table tennis championship here Saturday, reports AFP.

Matching China's fluency over Bangladesh, runners-up North Korea warmed up with a similar 3-0 victory over Macau in the men's event while Pakistan survived a scare from Nepal before emerging 3-1 winners.

South Korea and Thailand got walkovers as Yemen and Mongolia did not turn up for unspecified reasons at the giant Indira Gandhi Indoor stadium while Japan, Iran and Chinese Taipei got their full points with 3-0 wins in the group league matches.

In the women's event, India downed Pakistan 3-0, while women's title holders South Korea waited in vain for the Yemense who did not turn up at the stadium.

North Korea and Chinese Taipei took their matches in the women's event with a 3-0 scoreline.

powerfully headed home following a cross by Customs stopper Kamal Pasha (4-2).

Nilphamari right-back Hannan Khan had to be taken off the field following a serious injury. Fakhru Islam Kamal, another former Abahani player and Sujit of Customs were shown the yellow cards along with Faidul of Nilphamari for rough play.

Customs will take on hosts Mymensingh DSA in one of the quarterfinal matches on November 12.

Meanwhile, the quarter final stage of the national championship gets underway tomorrow (Monday) with Netrokona DSA facing Chandpur DSA.

The eight teams will play in the four-team round-robin competition and the top two teams will move into knock-out semi-finals.

Stage set for a Maradona-Gazza showdown

ROME, Nov 8: Former Argentine captain Diego Maradona is set to face England midfielder Paul Gascoigne as his club Sevilla take on Lazio in a friendly next Tuesday, reports Reuter.

A spokesman for the Italian club on Friday confirmed that the game would be staged in the Spanish city of Seville on November 10. It will be Maradona's first match against an Italian team since his transfer from Napoli in September.

However, influenza victim Gascoigne faces a struggle to be fit for the friendly.

The Lazio spokesman said he was running a fever and was unlikely to play in Sunday's league game with Torino.

It was originally suggested that the Sevilla-Lazio game would be played in Rome but a newspaper report on Maradona's tax status might have helped scupper that idea.

According to an unconfirmed report in the Daily Corriere Dello Sport, Maradona owes the Italian authorities five billion lire (3.7 million dollar) in back taxes on earnings from his Diarma commercial company.

The same report also alleged he is 360 million lire (265,000 dollar) in arrears on maintenance payments due to former girlfriend Cristiana Sinagra.

Asian club soccer from January 12

HIROSHIMA, Japan, Nov 8: Eight teams were divided into two groups for preliminary competition at the Asian Club Championships to be held in Bahrain on January 12-22 following a draw here Saturday, reports AFP.

Al-Shabab of Saudi Arabia will spearhead Group A, which will also include Muharraq of Bahrain, Arseto of Indonesia, and the winner of a forthcoming match between Liaoning of China and Yomurti of Japan.

In Group B are Wohaib of Pakistan, Amnagong of North Korea, P A S S of Iran and Al-Wasl of the United Arab Emirates.

Becker outaces Forget to win Paris Open

PARIS, Nov 8: Boris Becker, won a battle of aces as he defeated defending champion Guy Forget, 7-6 (7-3), 6-3, 3-6, 6-3 Sunday to win his third Paris Open title, reports AP.

Becker finished off three days of superb tennis that reminded observers of the form that helped him become No 1 in the world in 1991. In the quarterfinals Becker beat the No 1 player in the world, Jim Courier. Then the German downed Goran Ivanisevic, the hottest player on the circuit before Becker, in the semifinals.

Ivanisevic had won two of the last three tournaments and 15 of his last 16 matches before losing to Becker in the dlr 2.1 Paris tournament.

"I have had to struggle the last 12 months," Becker said. "But now I am playing the kind of tennis I did in the past."

Becker has previously won three tournaments this year, but his ranking has fallen to No 9. He was seeded ninth at the

Paris Open while the top three players in the world — Courier, Pete Sampras and Edberg — went out before the semifinals.

Becker won dlr 297,000 for the title. Forget collected dlr 159,700. It was the Becker's eighth win in ten meetings over Forget.

Forget and Becker both ended with 21 aces. But Becker had the baseline shots to add to his game.

Becker and Forget fought on almost even terms in the first set, holding service through the first 12 games. Forget had eight aces to help stay even. However, Becker started finding the range of Forget's serve late and was able to turn the match in his favour.

In the tiebreak, Forget had two aces on his serves. But when Forget had to go to a second serve, he was in trouble. Becker had a winning service return that came in behind a service return to go up 4-1. He held that advantage until 6-3 then won on an ace.

In the second set, Becker turned up the pressure, sweeping through the first

Becker outaces Forget to win Paris Open

three games at love. He was firing aces, even on second services. He was returning serve well and then rifling deep approach shots handcuffed Forget or else set up volley winners.

Forget held service after that, upping his ace count to 19.

Becker found the range again in the fourth set. After a double fault set up a break point against Forget in the second game, Becker concluded the break with a backhand passing shot down the line.

The pair held serve the rest of the way. Becker fought off a break point in the final game with a service winner, punctuated by a shout, a serve and a volley then a final service winner that Forget barely got his racket on.

It was Becker's 35th career title. He also made the Paris final in 1990 but had to quit because of a leg injury against Stefan Edberg after six games. In 1986, as a 16-year-old, he took three titles in three weeks on three continents by winning Sydney, Tokyo and Paris.



BORIS BECKER

Becker jumped to a 3-0 lead then held serve the rest of the way, winning the set on yet another ace.

Forget came back in the third set and took advantage of

Customs in Sher-e-Bangla Cup qtrs

MYMENSINGH, Nov 8: Two spectacular goals by Salahuddin earned Service zone champions Customs a comfy passage into the last berth of the quarterfinals of the 17th Sher-e-Bangla national football championship at the cost of Nilphamari DSA at the Mymensingh Stadium here today.

Fancied Customs, who eventually pulled off a 4-2 victory, were held 2-2 at the breather by the spirited Nilphamari.

Khairul Alam Milon, the Nilphamari left-winger, had Customs dazed as early as the fifth minute of the match when he put the ball into the net from the box with Moshleuddin, the Customs custodian, caught napping on the wrong foot (1-0).

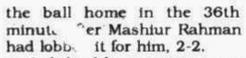
Mominul Islam Khasru, who put on both Abahani and Brothers Jerseys a few years back, drew level for Customs when he headed the ball past Nilphamari custodian Aziz after the goalie had parried away an Aslam attempt in the 11th minute (1-1).

Salahuddin of Customs

Our Correspondent

scored a lovely goal eight minutes later when he dodged past a few rival players to finish the ball into the Nilphamari net with a powerful drive (2-1).

The ding-dong affair of the day gathered interest when Nilphamari's Abul Hashem Ripon spectacularly nodded



the ball home in the 36th minute. For Mashur Rahman had lobbed it for him, 2-2.

Salahuddin again put Customs ahead with a rasping volley from close from a melee three minutes into the second half, 3-1.

Abahani and national striker Sheikh Mohammed Aslam sealed the fate of the match in the 68th minute when he

TEAMS

CUSTOMS SC: Moshleuddin, Latu, Kamal Pasha, Sujit, FI Kamal, Khasru, Afsan, Tushar, Monju (Ata Babu), Salahuddin and Aslam.

NILPHAMARI DSA: Aziz, Hannan (Wahab), Kamal, Babul, Shawkat, Subal, Tajuddin, Moshur, Fakul, Ripon and Milon (Jahangir).

Referee: Mukhlesur Rahman Mukul (Mymensingh).

Calcutta MSC in Durand final

NEW DELHI, Nov 8: Keeper Atanu Bhattacharya brought off three spectacular saves in the tie breaker to carry Mohammedan Sporting Club, Calcutta into the Durand Cup final with a 4-3 win over BSF Jalandhar after the two teams were locked goalless in a marathon tussle here today, reports PTI.

The veteran keeper, a member of the all star Asian outfit in the 80's, saved the kicks of Jagmohan, Jaswinder and Abhay Mahato to carry the day for Mohammedan Sporting, who play their fourth Durand final against JCT Mills, Phagwara Tuesday.

Aloke Saha, Prasanta Saha, Ashfaq Ahmed and Shanta Kumar found the target for the winners, while Radheshyam, Avtarn Singh and Narinder Gurung scored for the losers.

The tie-break was ordered after a ding dong 120 minutes

(including 30 minutes of extra time) with numerous spills and near misses by both sides, mainly the winners.

The Calcutta league runner-up, touted as the underdogs for the match, went on the offensive in the very 5th minute, as flashy Abdul Khalique back-volleyed a reverse pass but forward Sanjay Majhi failed to volley in from close.

Sanjay Majhi, guilty of squandering many chances for the winners, sent a good cross the flight flank but Sheikh Sikander, soaring above defender Sura Bhan, failed to get his header right.

Abdul Khalique, the livewire in Sporting's frontline throughout the tournament, was in his elements in the 19th minute centering brilliantly from the right but winger Abid Hussain was pound wanting.

Abid, who retired later in the first half injured, could not capitalise after media Shanta Kumar had fed him with a

through pass in the 26th minute.

On the defensive for most of the first half, BSF attempted a comeback of sorts in the second.

Hardworking Gouranga Pal who was shown the yellow card later, sent a reverse pass to former international Darbara Singh. But the latter, harassed by Swapal Pal shot wide.

Substitute Abhay Mahato gave a good pass to Gouranga Pal in the 71st minute but his first timer was took weak at oppose any problems for keeper Bibhas Saha.

Mohammedan's nearly scored in the next minute, as substitute Avijit Roy Choudhury sent an incisive through pass to Sanjay Majhi, whose grounder was well saved by the BSF keeper.

Minutes later, Abdul Khalique was foiled again before he could take a proper shot by an alert Bibhas for the deadlock to prevail.

Wu's title as Indonesians fail

HONG KONG, Nov 8: China's Wu Wenkai easily defeated Indonesian upstart Heryanto Arbie to win the men's singles title in the 60,000 US dollar Hong Kong Open here Sunday, reports AFP.

The left-handed Wu, winner here in 1989, stormed to a 15-4, 15-13 victory over surprise finalist Arbie in a one-sided encounter.

"It was easy for me because the top seeds had all been knocked out," said Wu after receiving his winner's purse of 3,900 dollars.

It was a black day for Indonesia, with their Olympic champion Susi Susanti also beaten. She lost the women's singles final to Bang Soo-Hyun of South Korea.

Bang, defeated in the Olympic final by Susanti, gained sweet revenge with a 5-

11, 11-6, 11-7 victory in an absorbing duel.

The 23-year-old Wu, seeded fifth, won all his matches in straight games, as he waltzed to his second major title this year without having to meet any of the seeded players in the tournament.

The Chinese star, who had also won the South Korean Open, was fortunate that second seed Indonesian Allan Budi Kusuma was ousted in the second round.

Unheralded Arbie, who had dumped seeded players Rashid Sidek of Malaysia, South Korean Ahn Jae-Chang and defending champion Liu Jun of China, was a shadow of his former self.

Carrying his country's hopes — with the loss of favourites Ardy Wiranata and Kusuma — Arbie went into the final hoping to clinch his first Grand Prix title.

But he did not even come close to realising his dreams.

Wu, realising that he was up against a player possessing a strong smash, played intelligently and hardly gave Arbie the opportunity to use his potent weapon.

Instead the Chinese star, runner-up at last week's China Open, kept the rallies long and dominated the net to overcome Arbie.

Wu won the first game in just under 15 minutes as a mistake-prone Arbie struggled nervously across the net.

In the second game, Arbie recovered momentarily to lead

Borg bankrupt

STOCKHOLM, Nov 8: Bjorn Borg, the five-time Wimbledon champion, cannot afford to make the 25 million lire (20,000 dollar) a month payments to his ex-wife ordered by an Italian judge, his lawyer Lars O Mattsson said here Friday, reports AFP.

Mattsson said the Italian rock singer Loredana Berté will have to get in queue with the former tennis star's other creditors. He said Borg owed 15 million krona (2.54 million dollars) in all.

Navratilova faces Seles in final

OAKLAND, Calif, Nov 8: Martina Navratilova, the No. 2 seed, beat No. 4 Katerina Maleeva of Bulgaria 6-1, 6-2 Saturday night to earn a spot opposite top-seeded Monica Seles in the final of the Bank of the West Classic tournament, reports AP.

Seles advanced to Sunday's final by beating German teenager sensation Anke Huber 6-2, 6-3.

Navratilova, 36, upset the 18-year-old Seles in a three-set final last year after losing to her in straight sets the year before. They have split two matches this year, Seles winning the Wimbledon semifinals and Navratilova winning three months later at Los Angeles.

Navratilova, a four-time winner of this tournament, was sharp, served well and attacked at every opportunity. Maleeva, ranked 13th in the world, had beaten Navratilova two years ago, but lost their last meeting, a quarterfinal at Wimbledon.

"I played better tennis this time," Navratilova said. "I'm more match tough and I played the deuce games better."

"She felt the pressure, too. It happens when I rush her as much as I did. She has played better against me. She made some uncharacteristic errors. I'll have to get to the net against Monica as much as possible."

Navratilova broke twice in each set and was always ahead. She is now 8-1 in career

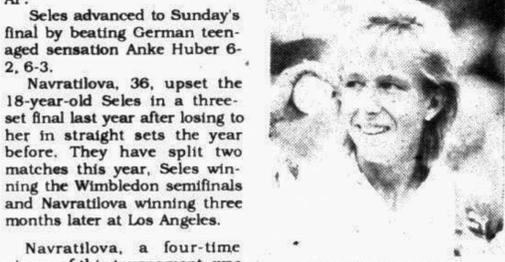
"She is one of the best baseline players in the world," Seles said of the 17-year-old, third-seeded Huber.

Huber, a powerful player with a two-handed backhand, ranks 11th in the world.

"My ground strokes have been a little off all week ... and I had a lot of unforced errors," Seles said. "But a little experience helped and a few great shots. One, I didn't believe myself."

It could have been the one that tipped the second set in the 17-minute eighth game and caused Huber to shut her eyes in disbelief.

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M NAVRATILOVA

MONICA SELES

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loudly and the audience gasping, Seles finally hit an un-touchable angle that caught Huber flat-footed and left her deflated. It gave Seles double break point and she capitalized on it, then held serve for the set and match.

In the first set, Huber had simply been outgunned by a quieter, methodical Seles.

Huber had a chance to break at 1-3 but let it and the set slip away. The slippage was worse in the second set. At 1-1, Huber saw Seles fight off six break points with guile and a powerful serve that Huber said, "was better than the last time I played her in Australia." Huber had lost that match, too.

Huber looked as if she could take control of the match using drop shots and harder ground strokes until the turning point in the eighth game.

Seles got 68 per cent of her first serves in and won 70 per cent of the points, a far better average than Huber. She made 22 unforced errors compared with Huber's 26.

"I didn't take the important points," Huber said. "I make them against other players but it's different against No. 1 or No. 2. They make no easy mistakes."

Berger benefits from a Mansell-Senna mix-up

ADELAIDE, Nov 8: Austria's Gerhard Berger narrowly won the Australian Grand Prix on Sunday as a crash with nemesis Ayrton Senna ended Nigel Mansell's hopes for leaving Formula One on a winning note, reports AP.

Berger, who started fourth and ran there most of the early stages of the race, edged hard-charging Michael Schumacher of Germany by less than three-quarters of a second.

The winning time for the 81-lap event on the 3.78-kilometre (2.349-mile) street circuit near downtown Adelaide was 1 hour, 46 minutes and 54.786 seconds.

Berger made a pit stop after 34 laps to change tires. He quickly made up the lost time, lowering the race lap record twice. He inherited the lead when Riccardo Patrese, who took the lead after the Mansell-Senna crash, stopped on the track on lap 50 with a gearbox seizure.

Schumacher also made a tire change that left him nearly a half-minute behind Berger. He steadily cut the gap, pulling within 10 seconds with 10 laps left and raising Berger's lap record. He cut 4.5 seconds off during the last lap but ran out of time while bearing down on Berger.

Schumacher started the race fourth in the driver's standings and needed a victory to finish second. The rookie ended up third, behind Mansell and Patrese.

It was the eighth career victory for the 33-year-old Berger and second of the season after

second places in the last two races. He was making his last appearance for McLaren Honda before moving back to Ferrari in 1993.

Third-place Martin Brundle of England was the only other driver on the same lap as Berger and Schumacher but finished 54 seconds behind. He was followed by Jean Alesi of France and Thierry Boutsen of Belgium.

Mansell, the new world champion who has announced plans to jump to IndyCar racing for Newman Haas next year, was trying to add to his record of nine trips to the winner's circle this season.

Starting from the pole, Mansell took the lead on the first turn. Senna passed on a first-lap turn, but Mansell retook first place immediately. The pair then steadily pulled away from the field, with Mansell stretching out a slight lead in his technically superior Williams.

By lap 16, they had opened up a 10-second advantage and were lapping slower cars. Senna took advantage to pull in

Future of smaller nations in Olympics

Europe, Africa agree on a fragile truce

ACAPULCO, Mexico, Nov 8: Europe and Africa hammered out a face-saving formula on Friday in their efforts to prevent weaker nations being squeezed out of the Olympics, reports Reuter.

Olympic leaders from 183 countries agreed that the priority was to permit all nations to compete in the Games despite tough new qualifying rules which threatened to eliminate the smaller teams.

However, they disagreed on how this could be achieved, with the Europeans proposing a system of wild card entries and the Africans seeking a fixed guarantee of 10 athletes per country.

A two-day debate ended with the general assembly of the Association of National Olympic Committees (ANOC) authorizing ANOC president Mario Vazquez Rana to negotiate the issue with IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch.

But the truce could still prove fragile.

The wild card option, which would offer participation in selected sports to those countries which failed to qualify, was still on the table, Jacques Rogge of Belgium, leader of the European NOCs, told reporters.

But the head of the African NOC's Jean-Claude Ganga of Congo, said: "To participate in the Games is the right of all NOCs. Wild cards are a favour and we don't want any favours."

Nevertheless, Ganga agreed to withdraw Africa's proposal in the face of European opposition and said: "I told my people that it is better to have unanimity. We must behave as citizens of the world."

"For that reason, we agreed to give the matter to Mario Vazquez Rana to negotiate with the president of the International Olympic Committee."

Rogge said the African proposal would have endangered the principle of universal participation.

"We must first get the IOC to agree to the principles. If you seek to establish a principle and put in irrelevant figures, then the likelihood is that it will be refused," he said.

Rogge said Vazquez Rana would propose to Samaranch that wild card entries should be distributed by a tripartite commission comprising the IOC, the NOCs and the international federations.

Nelson retains WBC title

NEVADA, Nov 8: Arumah Nelson of Ghana retained his World Boxing Council super featherweight title on Saturday, but challenger Calvin Grove confounded the experts by lasting the full 12 rounds yesterday, reports Reuter.

Grove, a 15-1 longshot, was dropped to the canvas in the first round by a crunching left hook but got up, and danced and jabbed his way to the distance against the hard-hitting Nelson.

Nelson was the choice on all three judges' scorecards as he raised his record to 36-2-1.

Grove, a former International Boxing Federation featherweight champion, won enough respect from Nelson that the champion immediately offered him a rematch.

"Nobody gave me a chance," said Grove. "It was a great fight. Number two will be even better."

Grove was not hurt by the left hook that knocked him down in round one and didn't let Nelson catch up to him again through the early rounds.

Nelson tried to draw Grove in to land a big counter punch and narrowly missed with wild rights and left hooks numerous times.

After 20 years...

PARIS, Nov 8: Former International Tennis Federation (ITF) president Philippe Chatrier announced on Friday that he would stand down after 20 years as president of the French federation, reports Reuter.

Citing personal reasons, Chatrier, who quit the ITF presidency last year, said he would not seek re-election as head of the national federation when his mandate expired next February.

A soccer coaches' clinic, run by German coaching expert Holgar Obermann (standing, in tie) under the aegis of the Bangladesh Football Federation, concluded at the NSC Saturday morning. Seated among senior BFF officials are State Minister for Youth and Sports Sadeq Hossain Khoka (fifth from right) and the German Charge de Affaires Rolan Graf, to the minister's right.



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