

BANEX Open begins today

A window of opportunity

by Sohel Kasem

The curtain rises today on the first ever BANEX Open squash tournament at 4 pm at the Dhaka Club Squash Complex. Sponsored by Bangladesh Express Co Ltd the local agent of the international courier agency, Federal Express, the tournament will carry a total prize money of Tk 20,000.

Eighty players will participate in the week-long competition. National champion, Bhola Lal Chauhan of Sonargaon hotel, who has been dominating the local squash scene for the last eight years, is the favourite to clinch the title, while Sohail Hamid, younger brother of former national football captain Kaiser Hamid, will be hoping to reverse his earlier setbacks and upset Bhola Lal.

The holding of such a tournament will help to focus attention on the plight of squash in the country which has remained fairly stagnant over the last decade or so. Earlier, I spoke to Tanveer Madar, Managing Director of the sponsoring company and himself a keen squash enthusiast and former general secretary of the Squash Federation. I asked him what his company's objectives were in sponsoring the event.

"Basically, our prime objective is to promote the development of squash on the local scene. Unfortunately because of fund constraints it is very difficult for the federation to hold tournaments on their own and they need to turn to sponsors. We have decided to hold this tournament on an annual basis for the next five years and we will be looking for youngsters to participate and gain big-time exposure. Squash needs new blood and as sponsors, we will be delighted if it generates a lot of enthusiasm."

The development of squash is also hindered by the lack of enough playing spots in the city and in the country. Dhaka Club remains the only suitable venue. As a matter of fact Dhaka Club has recently converted its second court to a wooden floor court and now needs a see-through fibre glass back wall to bring it up to international standards.

Mahboobur Rahman Joinal, convenor, outdoor sports (squash) sub-committee of Dhaka Club, commented on the lack of adequate squash playing facilities in the city. "You see, being a private club, we are unable to allow non-members to use our courts. What the Squash Federation needs is its own complex and 8-10 squash courts to allow free access to anyone interested in playing squash."

According to Rashed Chowdhury, joint secretary of the Squash Federation, lack of squash courts and lack of training facilities are contributory factors to the slow progress of the game. "We would like to hold a training camp conducted by a foreign and/or a local coach for a month for promising players. But the absence of our own complex and resource constraints make our task very difficult. The government has allotted some land for us near the Mirpur Stadium and we are in the process of drawing up engineering plans and arranging for funds. However, we are definitely the 'poor cousins' compared to tennis, cricket or football and we need more support to achieve our objectives."

The BANEX Open squash tournament will bring together the best talents in the country and although it is unlikely that they will be able to match the feats of the leading players like in the recently concluded World Open in Karachi, it still promises to be a week-long feast not to be missed.

Sohel Kasem is an Executive Committee member and Treasurer of the Bangladesh Squash Rackets Federation.

AITA chief hits back

NEW DELHI, Nov 30: President of the All India Tennis Association (AITA) Raj Kumar Khanna last night described as "unfortunate" Ramesh Krishnan's decision to retire from Davis Cup, reports PTI.

"It was rather unfortunate," Khanna told PTI when asked to comment on the Krishnan's decision.

"But he has only one more year of tennis left (for Davis Cup) even according to him," the AITA president said.

"I think instead of taking this decision, he should have replied to our letter. But he has not so far," Khanna said.

About Krishnan's charges against AITA officials and asking Khanna to quit, the AITA president said "I have nothing to say now."

"If there anything for me to say," Khanna countered when asked about Krishnan's charges against AITA.

He said he has nothing more to say than what he had done through a press statement issued in Bombay last week after the AITA meeting.

IBF rankings

LONDON, Nov 30: Leading World Grand Prix rankings issued by the International Badminton Federation (IBF) on Monday:

- Men:**
1. Thomas Stuer-Lauridsen (Denmark) 1,935 points
 2. Heryanto Arbi (Indonesia) 1,770
 3. Poul Erik Hoyer-Larsen (Denmark) 1,625
 4. Joko Suprianto (Indonesia) 1,540
 5. Ardy B Wiranata (Indonesia) 1,435
 6. Allan Budi Kusuma (Indonesia) 1,045
 7. Hermawan Susanto (Indonesia) 1,020
 8. Sompol Kukakemkij (Thailand) 770
 9. Kim Hak-Kyun (South Korea) 760
 10. Fung Permadi (Indonesia) 755

- Women:**
1. Susi Susanti (Indonesia) 2,080
 2. Ye Zhaoying (China) 1,930
 3. Lim Xiaoqing (Sweden) 1,405
 4. Christine Magnusson (Sweden) 1,010
 5. Camilla Martin (Denmark) 990
 6. Yuliani Santoso (Indonesia) 960
 7. Bang Soo-Hyun (South Korea) 860
 8. Minarti Timur (Indonesia) 860
 9. Somharuthai Jaroensiri (Thailand) 845
 10. Zarinah Abdullah (Singapore) 765

Tomba knows all about it

PARK CITY, Utah, Nov 30: Alberto Tomba nodded his head and allowed that, yes, he understood the pressures that drove Michael Jordan to retirement, reports AP.

The crowds, the media and the crush of business outside of the athletic arena are familiar to Tomba.

"He's a big star, probably the biggest in America the last five years," Tomba said of the Chicago Bulls star who shocked pro-basketball by retiring before the start of the season. It is the same for me in Italy."

Then the charismatic Italian skiing star had an idea. "Maybe he should come to Italy to play basketball and I should come to America to ski," he said with a wink.

America, at least that part of it which welcomes snow in winter would love to have Tomba around. He was the central figure of a weekend called America's Opening, during which men's World Cup giant slalom and slalom races were contested.

Tomba was a headliner in each race, although he won neither. He finished a mere 0.02 seconds behind Austria's Guenther Mader in Saturday's giant slalom, and his spill in the first run of Sunday's slalom opened the way for Austria's Thomas Stangassinger to win that event.

Tomba wasn't the only star on display, although the others were somewhat relegated to the shadows by the three-time Olympic champion.

Mader, for instance, showed that his experiment with skiing in all events for a team replete with specialists could pay off with the first overall championship for an Austrian man since Karl Schranz in 1970. Mader added a fifth in Sunday's slalom to his GS victory and moved into the lead in the overall standings with 190 points.

Kjetil Andre Aamodt of Norway, who chased Luxembourg's Marc Girardelli to the overall title a year ago, showed that he will again be a force by placing third in the GS and sixth in the slalom. He moved into second overall, 30 points behind Mader.

"I like the chance to ski all the disciplines," Mader said. "Frankly, I find it a little boring to do the same thing all the time."



British Prime Minister John Major toasts Salhy Gunnell MBE, 400m hurdles Olympic gold medalist and world record holder, who was named the overall winner of the Sportswomen-of-the-year awards 1993 at 10 Downing Street on Nov 29. — AFP photo

Cuba not at all worried

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico, Nov 30: A vice president of Cuba dismissed speculation that many of his athletes and officials at regional championships here would defect, reports AP.

"We don't have any fear whatsoever, we have confidence in our people, confidence in the honour of our athletes, confidence in their sense of responsibility, in their patriotic spirit," Jose Ramon Fernandez told reporters here last week. Fernandez added, however, that a few might go.

He was a bit off: 34 of his people have defected as of late Sunday.

Some of the 34 are scheduled to formally seek US political asylum Monday at the US Immigration and Naturalisation Service office in San Juan. Cuban exiles here say more will leave before the Central American and Caribbean Games conclude on Tuesday.

Two medal-winners ditched

Cuban security agents at a cycling track. Another skipped out after pitching Cuba to a softball victory. Two champion weightlifters disappeared from athletic housing hours before an official Cuban jetliner was to take them back home.

Two of the later departures, gymnasts Jose Tejada Cortina, 25, and Roberto Aldazabal, 18, favoured "The Sound of Music" exit, defecting hours after medal-winning final performances Saturday for the father land.

Cubans have left sports teams at other international competitions before, but never in such large numbers as during these games in this Spanish-speaking US commonwealth.

Those interviewed have given poor economic conditions and lack of political freedom in their Communist homeland as their motivations. Tejada told The Associated Press on Sunday that he felt "terrible" about leaving his family behind.

The rush to flee now may also reflect the ease in which Cubans can gain US residency.

Under a 1966 congressional act, nearly all Cubans who make it to American shores can stay, an immigration status not given to any other nationality. Cubans have been encouraged aged by exiles living in Puerto Rico to flee, and one exile group even hired a plane trailing a banner with a phone number for Cuban delegation members interested in defecting.

There had been some 900 Cubans, athletes and officials in the delegation.

No defections have been reported among the baseball squad, which has been trailed by major league scouts during the competitions. Cuba's baseballers have won the last 13 international championships, including gold at the 1992 Olympics, and compete against Mexico Monday for the gold medal here.

Chapman proves his worth

LONDON, Nov 30: Lee Chapman, a bargain buy from Portsmouth in September, scored his seventh goal of the season to help West Ham continue their march up the Premier League table with a 2-0 victory at Southampton on Monday, reports Reuter.

The much-travelled striker laid on the first goal for Trevor Morley in the 31st minute. He nodded a cross from Matt Holmes back into the goal-mouth and Morley swept the ball home.

Seven minutes later Holmes again crossed from the left and Chapman's left-foot volley was deflected off Southampton full back Francis Benali into the net.

West Ham's organisation and neat passing always looked likely to win the day against a Southampton side who relied too heavily on skilful striker Matthew Le Tissier.

His frustration at being closely marked earned him his first booking of the season.

Mixed luck for German duo

BONN, Nov 30: A second test has supported a doping accusation against Sylvia Gerasch of Germany, a gold medalist at the recent European sprint swimming championships, the sports agency SID said on Monday, reports Reuter.

But the German Swimming Federation (DSV) said it was exonerating another disgraced ex-world champion, Astrid Strauss, after tests showed her own positive dope test could have been wrong.

Gerasch's A-test last week revealed excessively high levels of the stimulant Caffeine in a urine sample taken at this month's championships in Gateshead, England.

The second, B-test confirmed the result and ensured that Gerasch, a former world champion, would be barred from this week's world short-course championships in Palma, Majorca.

DSV president Klaus Henter said he expected the case to be dealt with by the federation's disciplinary commissioner before the end of the week.

"It means a ban of between three months and two years for a first-time offender," he said.

Only hours before, Henter had delightedly told reporters that the DSV was preparing to honour the now-retired Strauss at a ceremony next March after supervised tests showed that a dope test she had failed in

March 1992 could have been wrong.

"It seems Astrid Strauss was innocent and we believe her," Henter told a news conference.

After her positive test Strauss was forced out of the German Championships and an 18-month ban kept her out of the Barcelona Olympics.

But Henter assisted Strauss, who retired in June, in taking supervised tests to help prove her contention that a heavy drinking session had produced the high levels of the hormone testosterone in her body which normally point to steroid use.

The results from a laboratory in Utrecht suggested Strauss could have been telling the truth.

"I believe that Astrid Strauss

Almsick skips out

BONN, Nov 30: German Swimming star Franziska van Almsick pulled out of next month's World short-course championships here on Monday, reports AFP.

The 15-year-old, who won four gold medals at the Barcelona Olympics and six European titles this year, said she would not ready to compete at the event in Palma, Majorca on December 2-5 after missing three weeks training following a cold.

Van Almsick holds the freestyle short-course world records over 50m, 100m and 200m.

did not take any banned substances," said Hans Kuno Kley, the doctor who kept Strauss in guaranteed drug-free quarantine to provide the samples.

Like Strauss, Gerasch and another Gateshead gold medalist, Steffen Smollich, who is awaiting the result of a B-test for high caffeine levels, say they are victims of deficient testing techniques.

Gerasch won the 100 metres breaststroke gold at the European long-course championships in Sheffield last August in addition to her 50 metres title in Gateshead. She won a world title in 1986 when swimming for East Germany.

The test result means she will be expelled from the German team for next month's inaugural world short-course championships in Palma where she planned to swim the 100 and 200 metres.

SID said Gerasch's B-test, conducted in London, showed a caffeine level of 16 micrograms per millilitre against the permitted 12. The reading coincided with that of the A-test, which had originally been given as 12.5.

Both Gerasch and Smollich deny taking banned drugs, although Gerasch admits taking medication for a cold and Smollich says he took the permitted drug aspirin.

Henter said Strauss had been a unique case and he was not planning to help Gerasch and Smollich take tests to prove their innocence.

আমাদের এই হোক অঙ্গীকার গড়তে হবে ছোট পরিবার

পরিবার পরিকল্পনা অধিদপ্তর
আই. ই. এম. ইউনিট

এইডস নামক মারাত্মক ব্যাধি বিস্তার লাভ করার আগেই সতর্ক হোন

বিশ্ব এইডস দিবস উপলক্ষ্যে প্রচারিতব্য এইডস বিষয়ক স্বাস্থ্য বার্তা

এইডস কি?
একটি ভয়ঙ্কর সংক্রামক ব্যাধি

- বিশ্ব জুড়ে এইডস রোগ মহামারী আকার ধারণ করেছে।
- এইডস যক্ষা এবং ক্যান্সারের চেয়েও মারাত্মক রোগ।
- এইডস একটি মারাত্মক, সংক্রামক ব্যাধি।
- এ রোগের কোন চিকিৎসা বা টিকা নেই, পরিনাম নিশ্চিত মৃত্যু।
- এইডস আক্রান্ত ব্যক্তির রক্ত শরীরে সঞ্চালনের মাধ্যমে কিংবা আক্রান্ত ব্যক্তির ব্যবহৃত সিরিঞ্জ ও সূচ ব্যবহার করলেও এইডস ছড়াতে পারে।

এইডস মুক্ত থাকতে হলে আপনি কি করবেন?

- ধর্মীয় অনুশাসন মেনে চলুন।
- রক্তদান কারীর রক্ত অবশ্যই এইডস জীবানুমুক্ত হতে হবে।
- রক্ত গ্রহণের প্রয়োজন হলে তা নিশ্চিত হউন।
- এক বার ব্যবহার যোগ্য সিরিঞ্জ ও সূচ দিয়ে ইনজেকশন দিন।

মনে রাখবেন

- ধর্মীয় অনুশাসন পালনই এইডস থেকে বেঁচে থাকার সবচেয়ে সহজ পথ।

স্বাস্থ্য শিক্ষা বুরো, স্বাস্থ্য অধিদপ্তর