

Sport

Lillehammer tickets sell like hot cakes

OSLO, Dec 13: Lillehammer has set a Winter Olympic record in ticket sales with two months still to go before the start...

Germans reign at Igls

IGLS, Austria, Dec 13: Germany showed its prowess in luge events Sunday, winning a men's doubles event...

Stefan Krausse and Jan Behrendt topped the field in the men's doubles race...

In the women's event, Austria's outstanding Neuner sisters, Angelika and Doris...

Gabi Kohlisch took the race in 1 minute 21.234 seconds, ahead of Jana Bode...

The finishing times showed the Germans as strong contenders for medals in the Lillehammer Olympics...

Italy's Gerda Weissenstener, who finished sixth, still tops the overall standings...

Santana not worth it

TOKYO, Dec 13: Japan gave up plans to sign former Brazil coach Tele Santana to train the national team...

A spokesman for the Japan Soccer Federation told Kyodo that Santana would be busy next year during the World Cup finals...

Santana, manager of Sao Paulo, was in Tokyo for Sunday's intercontinental Cup match...

Hans Ooft, the Dutch coach who recently stepped down from Japan narrowly failed to qualify for the 1994 World Cup finals...

Ooft, 46, took control of the national team in March 1992 and led them to victory in the Asia Cup and the Asia-Africa Championship.

Korda stuns Stich, himself

MUNICH, Germany, Dec 13: Petr Korda produced his second courageous five-set performance in 24 hours to pick up the biggest pay packet of his career...

Korda, who won a dramatic four-and-a-half hour semifinal against world number one Pete Sampras on Saturday...

winning the Grand Slam trophy after defeating Germany's Michael Stich in a marathon final 2-6, 6-4, 7-6 (7-5), 2-6, 11-9 in Munich on Dec 12.

But Korda showed remarkable nerve and stamina against the German world number two to pocket more money from one tournament than he has earned during the remainder of the year.

The final looked as if it was going to be a one-sided affair when Stich broke Korda's serve in the fourth game.

He hit a forehand passing shot to break again in the eighth game and take the opening set after just 26 minutes. But once the stiffness had gone from his legs, Korda was Stich's equal as the match progressed...

Stich had to save two match points when Korda was 5-4 up. But there was no escape for him when Korda held another match point in the 20th game of the set.

Both players had shown remarkable stamina in view of their recent heroics on court. Stich was bidding for his third successive triumph on home soil within a month after winning the ATP World Championship finals in Frankfurt...

"I played tennis the whole night against Sampras and I felt okay in the morning," said Korda. "This is certainly the best week of my tennis career."

"My father always told me to be a good fighter and never give up and that is what I did." Despite his defeat Stich, who for so long has been in the shadow of his more charismatic countryman Boris Becker...

Becker, who went out of the tournament in the first round, was among the 11,000 Munich crowd who enjoyed the gripping final.

Stich said Korda had won because he played the big points well.

But the German was not disappointed. He had gone into the tournament feeling no pressure because he felt nobody expected him to win after so much success.

To reach the final on a fast court so soon after his Davis Cup triumph on clay was an achievement in itself.

"It has been a fantastic end of the year for me," Stich said. "I did not expect to be in the final and I am more than satisfied."



Czech Petr Korda proudly holds up the Grand Slam trophy after defeating Germany's Michael Stich in a marathon final 2-6, 6-4, 7-6 (7-5), 2-6, 11-9 in Munich on Dec 12.

— AFP photo

Wright right on target

LONDON, Dec 13: Ian Wright scored with the very last kick of the game to give Arsenal a 1-0 win over Sheffield Wednesday in an uncompromising English Premier league match on Sunday, reports Reuter.

Wright scored 72 seconds into injury time with the referee blowing for full time before Wednesday had a chance to restart.

It was the England striker's 20th goal of the season, gave Arsenal their first win for four matches and ended Wednesday's 13-match unbeaten run which stretched back to October 2.

The goal came seconds after Wednesday's Mark Bright fluffed a chance at the other end which would have given his team victory.

Wright who formed a lethal striking partnership with Bright when they both played for Crystal Palace, showed his old teammate how to finish when he slotted the ball home on the run after a flick on by Alan Smith eluded two Wednesday defenders.

It was Arsenal's fourth win over Sheffield Wednesday this year, following victories in the League Cup final in April, the FA Cup final in May and the Premier league in August, and moved them up to fourth place in the table, 15 points behind leaders Manchester United.

Now women boxers

MANILA, Dec 13: The Amateur Boxing International Association will allow women to compete in the sport the organisation's president said Tuesday, reports AP.

Anwar Chowdhury of Pakistan did not say when the decision would take effect.

"We are happy to announce for the first time in public that women are now allowed to participate in Olympic-style boxing providing it will be under the strict patronage of the international boxing body," Chowdhury told reporters.

He said the decision was an offshoot of the opposite sex clamor for equal opportunity.

Chowdhury was in Manila to attend a local boxing tournament.

Accolade for Christie

LONDON, Dec 13: Linford Christie, Olympic and world athletics champion, won the British sports personality of the year award on Sunday, reports Reuter.

Christie, 1992 Barcelona Olympic gold medalist, won the 100 metres title at the World Championships in Stuttgart in August.

Teammate Sally Gunnell, who completed her own Olympic and World Championship double in the women's 400 metres hurdles, was second in the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) poll.

Last year's winner Nigel Mansell, Formula One motor-racing world champion in 1992 and IndyCar champion this year, was third.

England's Rugby Union XII were named team of the year for their victory over New Zealand at Twickenham last month.

BBC overseas sports personality winner was Australian golfer Greg Norman, winner of this year's British Open.



SAARC Chairperson and Chief Patron of the VI SAF Games Organising Committee Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia receiving the Games emblem from the Committee Chairman Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman at the International Conference Centre in the capital yesterday. (Story on page 1) —PID photo

Asprilla finally finds net

ROME, Dec 13: Colombian Faustino Asprilla scored his first goal since September to help Parma on the way to a 4-0 victory over Cagliari and a share of top spot with AC Milan in the Italian championship, reports Reuter.

Asprilla opened the scoring late in the first half following the first approach work by Giancarlo Zola.

The European Cup Winners' Cup holders underlined their supremacy in the second half with two opportunist goals from Alessandro Melli and a superbly-struck free kick by Zola.

The result left Parma tied on 21 points with champions Milan, who were beaten on Sunday by Brazil's Sao Paulo in the Inter Continental Cup final in Tokyo.

Earlier, Juventus and Sampdoria both squandered the chance to join Milan at the top of the table.

Juventus slipped to a 3-1 defeat against Lazio for whom England midfielder Paul Gascoigne made an inspired return to form.

Gascoigne, playing his first league match since mid-October, wrapped up Lazio's victory with a last-minute goal.

Juventus had fallen behind early in the second half to a Jürgen Kohler own goal and soon after equalising they trailed again when Croat Alen Boksic headed home.

Goals from Sergio Battistini and Dennis Bergkamp together with an own goal by Vladimir Jugovic earned Internazionale a 3-0 win over Sampdoria.

Lack of fitness and indifferent form have recently placed big doubts over the future of Gascoigne's Italian career.

However, Gascoigne went a long way towards silencing his critics with a stylish performance which outshone even his opposite number, Roberto Baggio.

The first half finished goalless but the match burst into life after the interval when a shot from Giuseppe Signori cannoned off the legs of Kohler and into the net for a lucky own goal.

Juventus sacrificed safety-first defensive tactics and won a free-kick on the edge of the Lazio penalty area.

Lazio goalkeeper Luca Marchegiani did well to push Baggio's effort on the crossbar but was helpless to prevent Andrea Fortunato pushing the rebound into an open goal.

Within four minutes Lazio regained the lead as Boksic out-jumped the Juventus defence to head a Diego Fuser cross powerfully into the roof of the net.

Gascoigne capped a fine afternoon's work when, with only the goalkeeper to beat, he shot at Angelo Peruzzi's legs but made no mistake with the rebound.

Dutchman Ruud Gullit made a poor start to his first match at the San Siro Stadium since leaving AC Milan for Sampdoria.

He completely miskicked the ball in the opening minute of the match against Internazionale — a portent of what was to follow in a miserable 90 minutes for his side.

Sampdoria fell behind to a fifth minute header from sweeper Battistini, following an accurate cross from Uruguayan Ruben Sosa, and Jugovic added to Sampdoria's woes in the 30th minute, knocking the ball into his own net as he challenged Sosa.

British Olympic 100 metres champion Linford Christie is all smiles after receiving the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) "Sports Personality of the Year for 1993" award in London on Dec 12.



with a last-minute goal. Juventus had fallen behind early in the second half to a Jürgen Kohler own goal and soon after equalising they trailed again when Croat Alen Boksic headed home.

Goals from Sergio Battistini and Dennis Bergkamp together with an own goal by Vladimir Jugovic earned Internazionale a 3-0 win over Sampdoria.

Lack of fitness and indifferent form have recently placed big doubts over the future of Gascoigne's Italian career.

However, Gascoigne went a long way towards silencing his critics with a stylish performance which outshone even his opposite number, Roberto Baggio.

The first half finished goalless but the match burst into life after the interval when a shot from Giuseppe Signori cannoned off the legs of Kohler and into the net for a lucky own goal.

Juventus sacrificed safety-first defensive tactics and won a free-kick on the edge of the Lazio penalty area.

Lazio goalkeeper Luca Marchegiani did well to push Baggio's effort on the crossbar but was helpless to prevent Andrea Fortunato pushing the rebound into an open goal.

Within four minutes Lazio regained the lead as Boksic out-jumped the Juventus defence to head a Diego Fuser cross powerfully into the roof of the net.

Gascoigne capped a fine afternoon's work when, with only the goalkeeper to beat, he shot at Angelo Peruzzi's legs but made no mistake with the rebound.

Dutchman Ruud Gullit made a poor start to his first match at the San Siro Stadium since leaving AC Milan for Sampdoria.

He completely miskicked the ball in the opening minute of the match against Internazionale — a portent of what was to follow in a miserable 90 minutes for his side.

Sampdoria fell behind to a fifth minute header from sweeper Battistini, following an accurate cross from Uruguayan Ruben Sosa, and Jugovic added to Sampdoria's woes in the 30th minute, knocking the ball into his own net as he challenged Sosa.

Barcelona honeymoon over

MADRID, Dec 13: Deportivo La Coruna beat Tenerife 1-0 on Sunday to end Barcelona's 24-hour tenure at the top of the Spanish League, reports Reuter.

Barcelona, the defending champions, moved to the head of the traffic jam of teams at the top of the first division on Saturday when they won 4-0 at Valencia, but La Coruna dislodged them out of the way again when they won 1-0 at Tenerife.

With 15 matches played, La Coruna lead with 22 points, followed by Barcelona on 21, Sporting Gijon on 20 and Real Madrid and Athletic Bilbao together on 19.

Gijon beat Real Sociedad 3-2 to move into third spot while Athletic Bilbao beat Atletico Madrid 3-2 with a stunning, last-minute goal from 19-year-old Julien Guerrero.

Real Madrid slipped back to fourth after being held to a goalless draw at home by Sevilla.

Athletic Bilbao beat Atletico Madrid 3-2 with a stunning, last-minute goal from 19-year-old Julien Guerrero.

La Coruna won their match with a 66th minute strike from defender Alfredo Santaelena but the home side almost saved a point when Cesar Gomez hit the post in the dying minutes.

Sporting Gijon, who have never won the championship, maintained their challenge with their 3-2 win over Sociedad, despite falling behind to a 25th minute goal by Bosnian Meho Kodro.

Croat striker Stanic equalised in the 44th minute. Juanele Castano made it 2-1 in the 62nd and two minutes later

Oscar Celada wrapped up the points. Kodro added his and Sociedad's second with a penalty eight minutes from time.

Athletic Bilbao were also involved in a five-goal thriller and, as in the Sporting Gijon-Real Sociedad clash, the team who scored first lost.

Athletic Madrid went ahead through Jose Caminero after a 19th minute corner but Bilbao's Josu Urrutia equalised a minute later with a copycat goal.

Madrid's Polish striker Roman Kosecki made the mark in the 51st minute and Ander Garitano gave his side their second equaliser in the 70th.

Bilbao clinched the match when Guerrero's 89th minute shot found the net via a post.

Britain's first Asian athlete

by Prasanna Probyn

Gowry Retchakan is Britain's top Asian athlete. Originally from Sri Lanka, the 400 metres hurdler has risen steadily to become the British champion, ranking the fourth best woman athlete in Britain in any track and field event.

time when the money was small and athletes competed for the thrill of it. She says: "When people like me, Sally Gunnell and Linford Christie came into the sport, there was no money in it."

"We came for the love of it. Now youngsters come into it for different reasons. There is financial gain to be made from the sport, and so it goes on into drugs and getting something whatever the cost."

She says that if sportsmen receive more money than women it is because the world is more familiar with the names of male sports personalities than women. The promoters are to blame for the imbalance.



GOWRY RETCHAKAN Media dictate who runs the sport, and so it goes on into drugs and getting something whatever the cost.

Sportsmen receive more media exposure than their women counterparts.

Retchakan says: "The media dictate who runs in the meetings as it puts up their viewing figures. The athletes federation makes money from the meeting, although it would like to see more equality."

The slim, five feet two athlete trains six days a week and eats a moderate diet. She is married and has a son of six.

Retchakan was born in Britain and brought up in Sri Lanka. Her interest in sports began in Jaffna at the age of 13 as a 100 metres hurdler. She switched to 400 metres hurdles in 1988. Her mother was a runner and her father enjoyed sport. She stresses the importance of parental support at a young age: "You need even more pieces when you are doing badly than when you are doing well."

Sports are a low priority for most Asian families. The tendency of Asian parents to direct children into academia and the arts has left much potential untapped. Not even the lucrative prospects in present day sport have lured many. Sporting successes in Asia are many, but its influence among the masses remains minimal.

Retchakan did not get enough encouragement from her home country and she returned to Britain when she was 19. In her first season at 400 metres hurdles, she won the bronze medal in the English Women's Amateur Athletic Association (WAAA) championship, and represented England internationally.

She went on to win the WAAA title in 1990, 1991 and 1992, and in the later two years she was British champion. She first ran for Sri Lanka in the Asian Games in 1982.

So far, success in the major international championships has eluded her. In the 1991 World Championship and at the Barcelona Olympics in 1992, she was knocked out in the semi-finals of the 400 metres hurdles. At the World Cup in Havana in 1992, representing Europe, she came a close second behind the world No 1, Sandra Farmer-Patriek of the United States.

Retchakan believes she is heading in the right direction. Her performance is becoming more and more focused.

She says: "I enjoy the races in retrospect. At the time of the race, it is stressful." — GEMINI NEWS

About the Author: PRASANNA PROBYN grew up south India. She worked for three years as a secretary at Kuwait University before pursuing a career in journalism, and now has a master's degree in international journalism from City University in London.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words. Includes a solution time of 27 mins and a Cryptoquip section.

Cryptoquip puzzle grid with a 10x10 grid of letters and numbers.

CRYPTOQUIP CMN HZFUHQFF BUUCNWQJ ZF YQNQHJ ACZWA UVNCAV UVQ YCUZCWF. Yesterday's Cryptoquip: CLOCKMAKER, ORDERING LUNCH, MIGHT SUDDENLY SAY, "I WANT THE WORKS." Today's Cryptoquip clue: Y equals M The Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.