

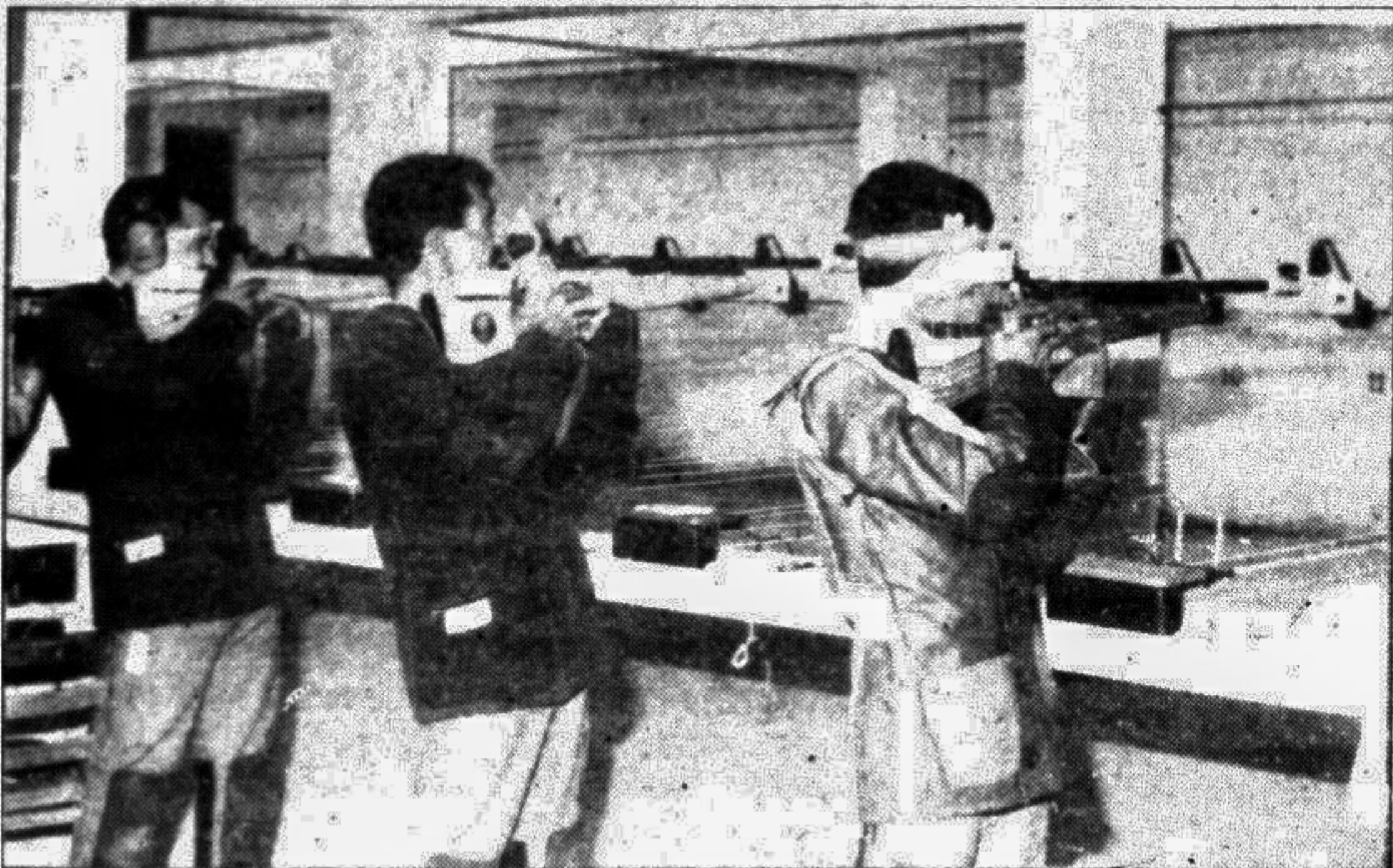
VISAF Games Special

Shri Lanka Zindabad!

Guest Writer Asoka Goonetilleke,
Deputy Editor and Sports Editor, Divaina
Upali Newspapers Ltd, Shri Lanka,
assesses the prospects of his country in
the Sixth SAF Games.



Shabana of Pakistan is expected to compete in five track events. Here she is seen training at the Mirpur National Stadium yesterday.



Three Pakistani shooters acquainting themselves with the facilities at the Gulshan range yesterday.

Five years ago, 20th December 1985 to be precise, I was a lonely journalist covering the 2nd SAF Games in Dhaka. It scared me to come over to Bangladesh then. Reasons forgotten, but for one.

Bangladesh is reportedly one of the poorest countries in the world. The Sri Lankan contingent shared the same vision with me. They hesitated to fly over to Bangladesh. No sooner the team arrived at the Dhaka airport, the squad, including the officials, were compelled to give in. Returning to Colombo, I filed my post mortem, thus...

"Irrespective of the social and cultural standings of the nation, one fine day they would make a mark in the world map. People are so kind and honest. They prefer to march ever onwards despite national setbacks, etc..."

Five years have passed by, and the visitor sees a marked improvement in the capital city. It seems, people have realised the trends in the chafing world.

Were there any car sales points in 1985? Slick motor cars criss-crossing streets and the petro-dollars being pumped in, Bangladesh now shows where they are in the world map and the 6th SAF Games, hopefully, would be some additional concrete to this notion.

So, here is Sri Lanka, back again in Bangladesh, to "not merely take part, but to win." May be, to retain the glory she had won at the Colombo Games in 1991.

Sri Lanka is tipped to open curtains with the soccer encounter with Pakistan tonight.

The Sri Lankan soccer team, tagged as the 'most expensive team' with systematic training under the Brazilian coach George Ferrera, does not boast



JULIAN BOLLING... bagged a handful of swimming golds at the last SAF Games in Colombo two years ago.

of the gold, but is optimistic. The team was exposed to the international circuit, including that of the World Cup preliminaries, the SAARC Gold Cup tournament and the visit of the Malaysian President's XI. The team is rearing to go with full confidence, as they did beat Pakistan 4-1 in the Gold Cup tournament, and a 2-0 series win against the visiting Malaysians. Back at home, the motto is: "No excuses, please."

Track and Field is a point to ponder. All athletes have got a shot of adrenalin after the re-

cent ATF Championships in Manila.

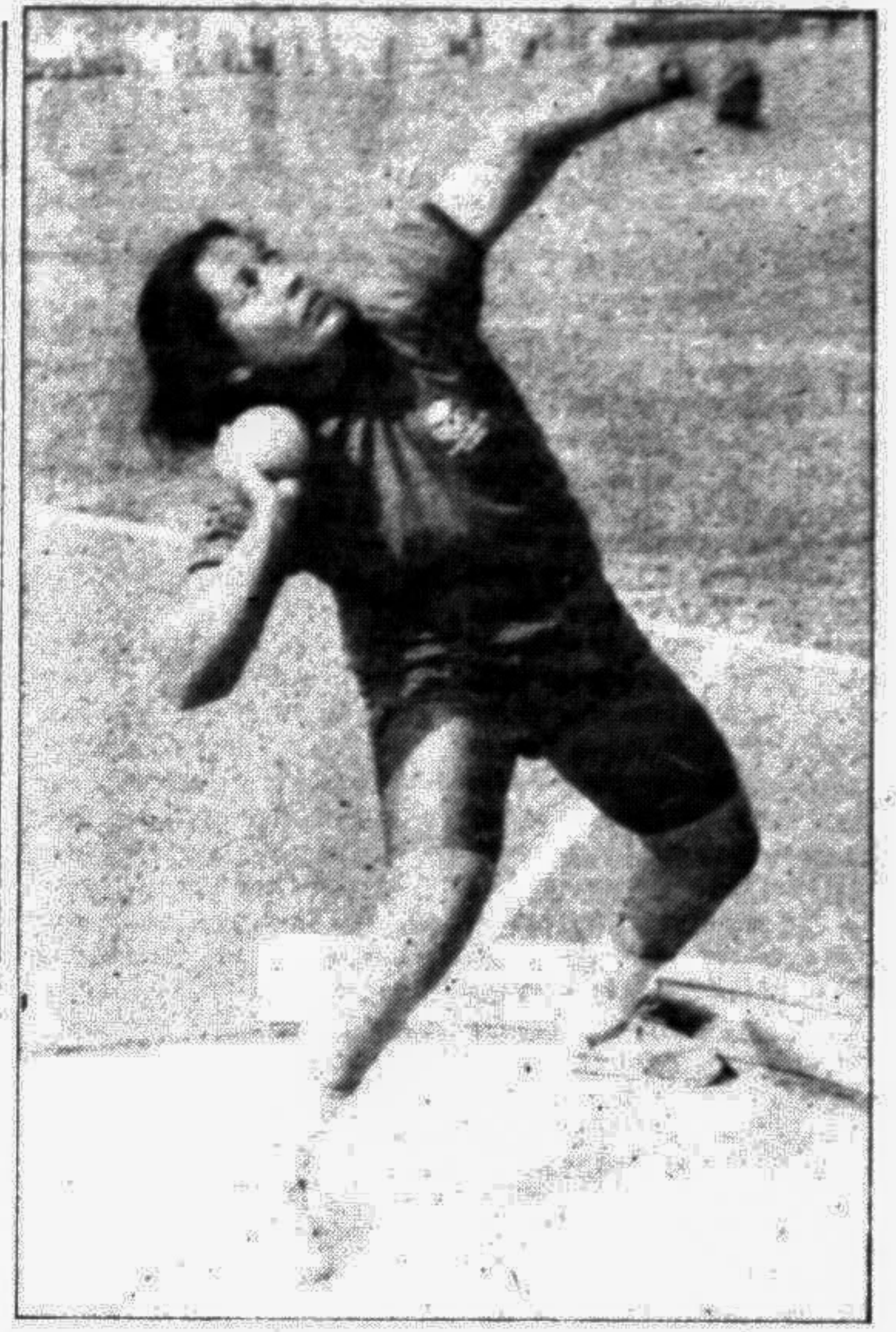
According to track and field experts, the team is trusted to sweep all golds between 100 meters and the marathon. However, that is the statistical point of view, but women like Damayanthi Dharsha in the 100 & 200m, Dharmika Marike in the 800m and 1500m, are more trusted for golds. It would also be a 'one-horse-race' in the 100m hurdles through Shriyanti Kulawansu, who is right now nursing a back ache.

In the men's competitions, sprinter Shriyantha Dissanayake has got the opportunity to come out of his hibernation. Dissanayake could not do any better at the ATF and returned home empty handed, being the bronze medalist at the Beijing Asiad in 1990.

Among the up-and-coming male athletes, the one to watch is schoolboy Sugath Tilakaratne who clocked a devastating 47.00 in his 400m pursuit at the ATF, his first international. In the men's 800m and 1500m, Police Officer Ranjith Subasinghe is billed to do the best, considering his growing standards.

Every competitor dreams of a gold. Sri Lankans are no exception. But with lesser golds, as the man who earned the most for Sri Lanka is no longer a competitor. That's Julian Bolling, the ace swimmer.

At the 5th SAF Games, people cheered, 'Bangladesh Zindabad'. May I say, Sri Lanka Zindabad!



Nelli Jesmin of Bangladesh is quite past her prime.

We'll do even better than in Colombo: Bhatia

Star Report

"Our team is definitely going to do better than in Colombo two years ago — I am optimistic of good performances by our players," said DV Bhatia, Chef de mission of the 248-member Indian team participating in the Sixth SAF Games beginning today.

Talking to The Daily Star last night Bhatia, a senior civil servant, expressed confidence that his country's players will win more medals this time and remain at the top of the tally.

India won a total of 164 medals in the Fifth SAF Games held in Colombo, including 64 golds, 59 silvers, and 41 bronzes.

"Our boys and girls will increase and surpass this number, I am sure," Bhatia predicted confidently.

When asked about the specific disciplines where the Indians expected to grab more medals, Bhatia said: "We will do well in all the events; anyway, we hope to do better particularly in athletics, tennis, kabaddi and wrestling."

He also expressed the hope that India would play in the finals of the football and volleyball competitions.

The Indian team leader, however, regretted that weight-lifting has not been included in the Sixth SAF Games which puts India at a slightly disadvantaged position. India had won 30 medals, including 18 golds in this event alone during the last Games.

"We had requested the organisers to keep weight-lifting and also to add gymnastics to the list of events, but it was ignored," said Bhatia. "We will have to make it up with performances in other events now."

The Chef de mission highly praised the arrangements made for the Games in Dhaka, saying: "They are good and excellent — better than my expectations."

Bhatia, who has already visited all the venues for the Games around the city, said, "Everything is satisfactory."

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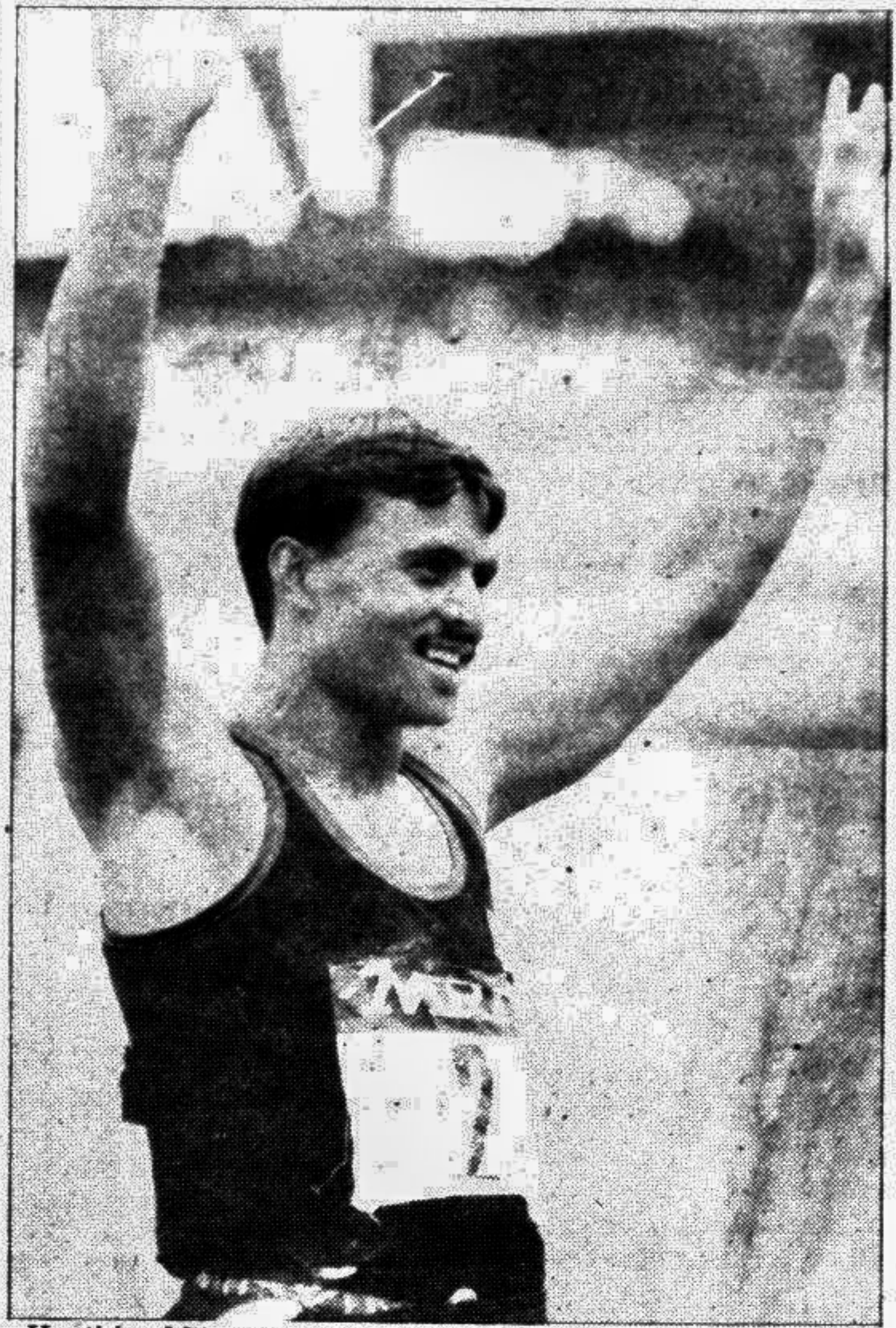


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Havildar M. Shah Alam, who proved himself the king of the men's sprints in '85 and '87, is no more. He died in a tragic road accident in 1990.

The tennis gold is ours, says Indian manager

Star Report

"We won the gold in Colombo, we hope to win it again in Dhaka," said Manik Goswami, the manager of the Indian Tennis team which is participating in the Sixth SAF Games.

Manik, the elder brother of the doyen of Indian soccer Chuni Goswami, is heading a 12-member tennis team.

"Though three prominent players — Ramesh Krishnan, Leander Paes and Zeehan Ali — are not in it, yet the team is good," said Manik while talking to The Daily Star last night at the lobby of Hotel Purbani.

The confident team manager proudly mentioned that this players beat the stronger teams of Great Britain, Switzerland and France in the Davis Cup tournament last year.

He said there are some up-and-coming players in his present squad, consisting six men and six women.

"Sri Lanka will be our main competitor. However, Bangladeshi players are also expected to do well," he added.

Manik Goswami, who was born in Kishoreganj district of Bangladesh, termed the arrangements for the Games as 'excellent' and highly appreciated the facilities at the Ramna Tennis Complex where the tennis competitions will be held.

Facilities are excellent, says Pak official

Star Report

"It is a goodwill Games — we are here to compete in the spirit of friendship," said Mohammed Afzal Khan, Deputy Chef de mission of the Pakistan team comprising 171 players and officials.

Talking to The Daily Star at his team hotel last night, Afzal Khan expressed the hope that his country's young players would try to perform well this time. "We are in a brotherly country to take part in a friendly Games," he repeated.

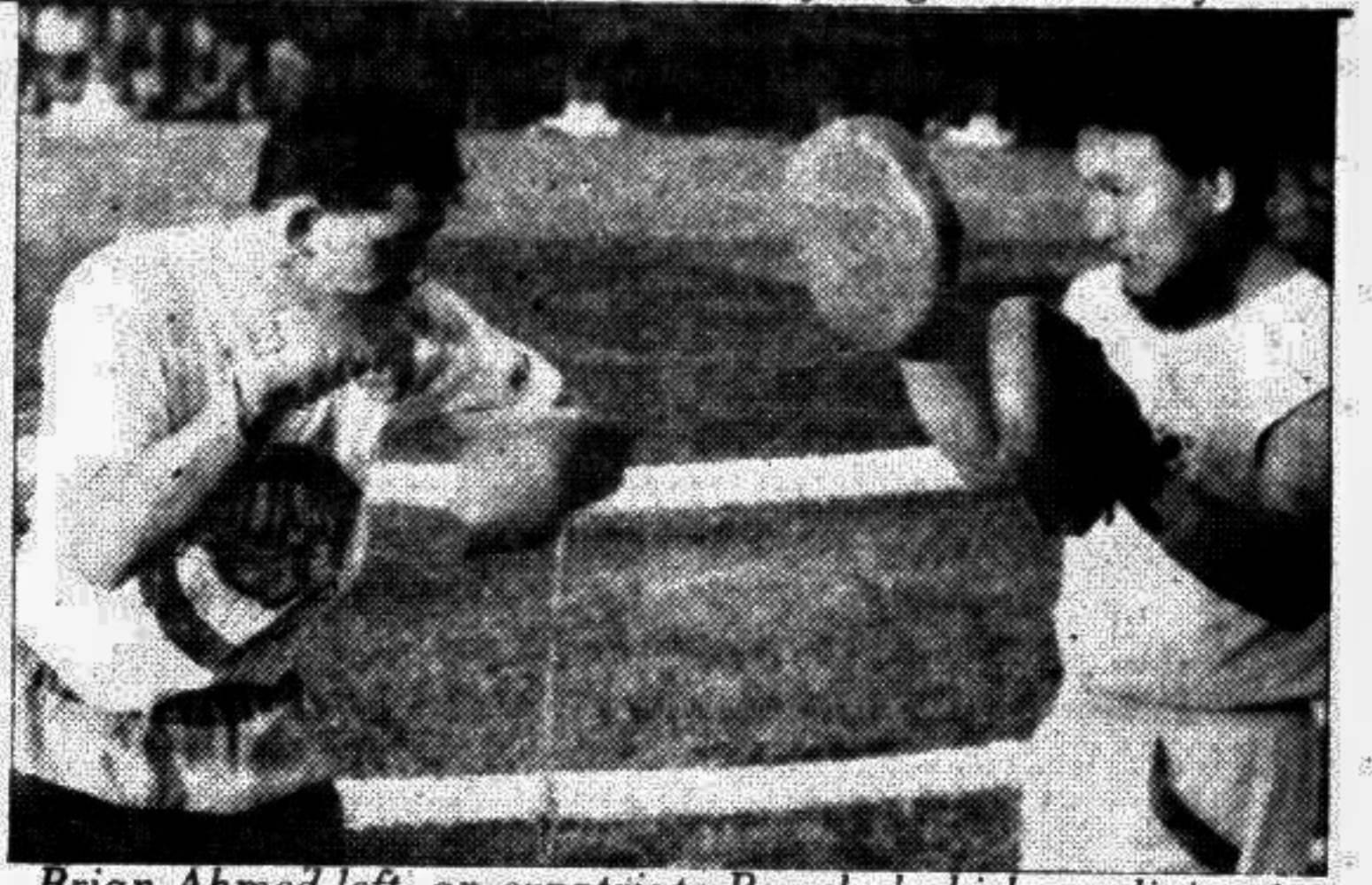
Pakistan finished third in the Fifth SAF Games held in Colombo, bagging 85 medals, of which 28 were gold and 33 silver.

When asked whether he had a minimum tally of medals in mind, the Pakistani deputy team leader smiled and said, "Well, the medals are here with you — we will only take home those which you will give us."

Replying a question, Afzal Khan said his team will participate in all the events except judo. "Our boys will do well in boxing and wrestling, I hope."

As regards arrangements for the SAF Games in Dhaka, he termed those as wonderful and said, "Very good facilities have been arranged by Bangladesh."

Lt Gen Moïn Haider is leading the Pakistani team as the Chef de mission but he was not available last night, being busy elsewhere.



Brian Ahmed, left, an expatriate Bangladeshi boxer living in England, is being coached for the SAF Games by South Korean trainer Young-Sun Lee.

জীবন বীমা কর্পোরেশন
এ পর্যন্ত ২১৭ কোটি টাকার
বীমা দাবী পরিশোধ করেছে

শুধুমাত্র ১৯৯৩ সনের প্রথম
দশ মাসে মেটানো হয়েছে
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