

# Welcome Delegates & Participants of the 6th SAF GAMES

## Unreal dream, real nightmare

Chandrashekhar Das

A man of mistaken identity has put a nation in a seance of haunting nightmares. Nepal's Basanta Gurung, rechristened, ephemerally though, as Milan Hadda courtesy, officials the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF), scored in the 52nd minute to make nonsense of Bangladesh's dream of the football gold in the Sixth SAF Games yesterday.

Dreaming of the first ever gold in football, only to be rewarded every time with nightmares, Bangladesh yesterday lost to former champions Nepal by a solitary goal in the second of the two matches at the Dhaka Stadium.

After a barren, pacy and exciting first half, Nepal's Basanta Gurung made the most of a rigid, uptight Bangladeshi defence to give his side an upset win.

It was an upset from a nostalgic angle. Because in the not-too-distant past, the Nepalese national team got soundly thrashed by the top clubs of Dhaka. It was, of course, an inflated and almost surreal portrayal of the basic strength of local football. Because Bangladeshi clubs on home soil are like the doped Jerry mouse of the Tom and Jerry animation show.

Huge flow of money, good foreign players and on top of it club officials' perverse will of going nap on all domestic championships, throwing aside all constructive and patriotic considerations, has given a tinge of unreality. And Nepal stripped that tinsel last night.

Records, on the other hand, would not brook any suggestion of an upset in the four encounters played so far since the first Games in Kathmandu in '84. With yesterday's win, Nepal have made the break up 3-1 in their own favour. History has a quiet way of leaving lessons on time's timeless tide. We just don't react in time to learn them.

Like the way Bangladeshi defenders failed to react as an incredibly unmarked Basanta Gu-

rung scored the match-winner 17 minutes into the second half.

He was on top of the box when a messy piece of play on the left side of the Bangladesh defence saw skipper Arif Hossain Moon unwittingly squaring it to Gurung, and the ideally built striker took a first-time grounder that gave a sitting-like-a-duck Bangladesh custo-

position. Really the hosts' defence was defenceless last night.

Not that the Bangladeshi midfield and attack lived up to it. Everyone seemed to be carrying butterflies in the stomach.

Swiss Coach Oldrich Svab made three changes from the team that played against the Maldives in that ill-fated drawn encounter on December 20. But

coach, had to play under tremendous psychological pressure, wrestled down the middle instead of widening the field with wing play. No one could muster enough courage to do that extra bit that could have averted the miscarriage of a national ambition. Barring a powerful shot from Monem Munna at the far end of the match, there was hardly any shot at the Nepalese goal. And when that attempt came out of Nepalese custodian Upendra Mansingh's grip, Mamun Joarder slammed the ball back straight to the displaced custodian.

Nepal, on the other hand, played safe with the accent on defence. Observed their coach Dhan Bahadur Basnet: "We knew Bangladesh was the better team, so we opted for a tight defence, relying on fast breaks for goal."

The footballers from the Himalayan kingdom, donned in all red, really absorbed all that the Bangladeshi players could throw up. Appearing tougher than their counterparts they, in fact, came close to three excellent scoring opportunities, with Basant Gurung in the thick of it all.

With 25000 or more partisan crowd giving vent to their patience, by throwing the flag poles as missiles on to the pitch, the Bangladesh footballers just lost their bearings at the far end.

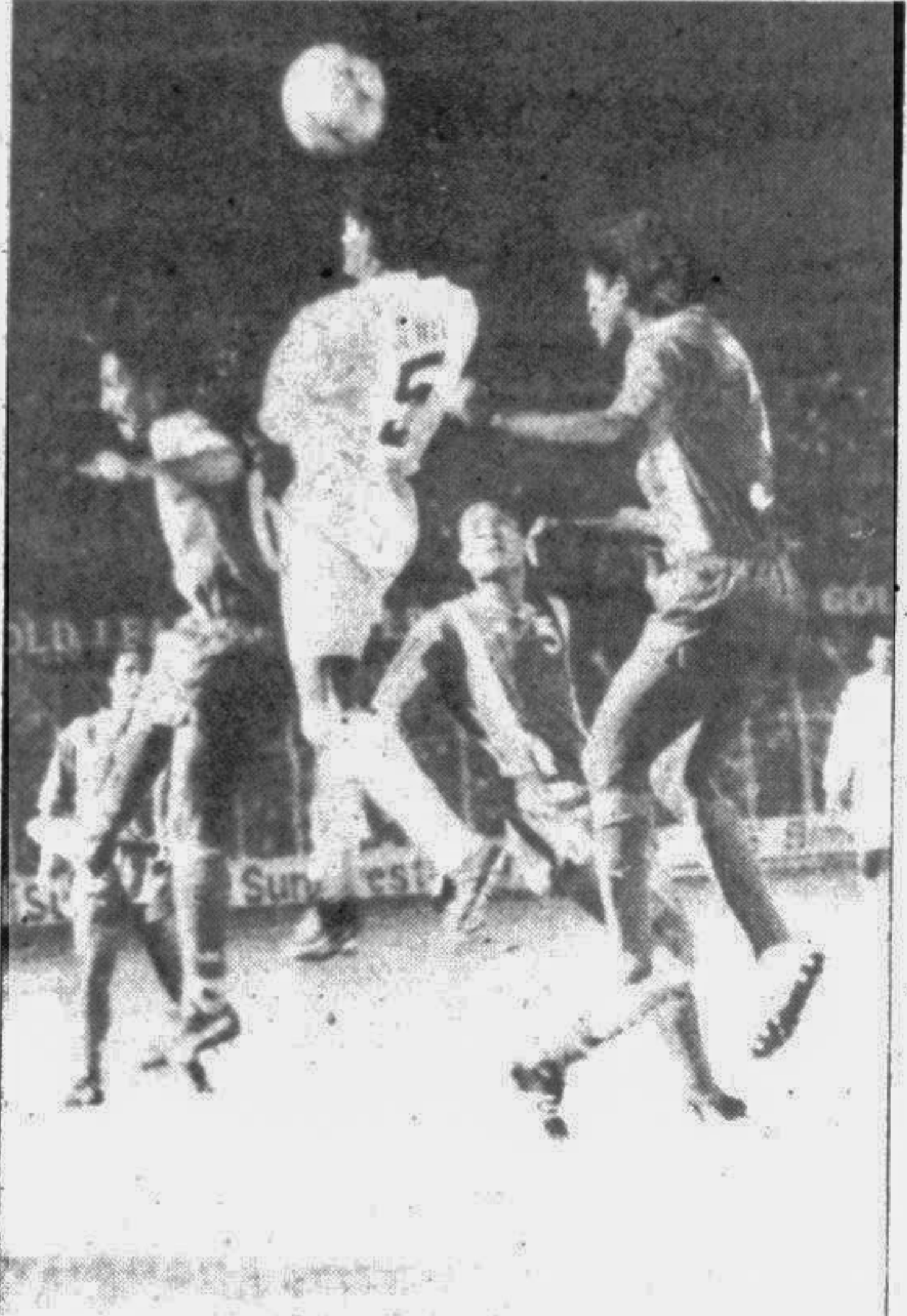
Pakistani referee Qazi Asif handled the match in his native brawny way and the Nepalese got away with some robust football, but fortunately no un-toward incident took place.

### TEAMS

**NEPAL:** Upendra Mansing, Raju Sakya, Devanarayan Chadhary, Rajesh Thapa, Rajesh Manandhar, Umesh Pradhan, Jivan Lama, Gyani Sherchan, Mani Shaha, Deepak Amatya and Milan Hada.

**BANGLADESH:** Saidur, Moon, Jewel Rana, Kaiser (Arman), Masud Rana, Rupu, Munna, Gaus, Rumi, Mamun and Jahangir (Rakib).

Referee: Qazi Mohammed Asif (Pakistan).



Jewel Rana of Bangladesh outleaps a couple of Nepalese booters to head the ball away during yesterday's match at the Dhaka Stadium. Bangladesh lost the match by a solitary goal. —Star photo

dian Saidur Rahman no chance. Both the central defenders remained glued to their

It turned out to be a castaway of experiment as the local footballers who, according to the

## India's trial of strength

Sports Reporter

Two-times champions India reassured, on their maiden appearance in the sixth SAF Games, that they have come here to relive the sensation of eight years ago by beating the 'expensive' Sri Lankan national team by two clear goals in the first of the two matches at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday.

Both the goals came in the second session of the match. On a hard and bouncy pitch, both teams ploughed in sands to find the target through concerted efforts during the first half.

Although the exchanges were more or less even, India created more openings but poor marksmanship kept them at bay.

However, Sri Lanka drew the first blood as early as in the seventh minute when Ranawera, the wily forward who caught the eye with his ball sense in his side's Games opener against reigning champions Pakistan on December 20, took a free-kick that drew Indian custodian Hemanta Dora out of his place, but DL Steinwall failed to tap the ball home.

India took their time to settle down and in the 14th minute Bhupinder Thakur sent in a cross but Vijayan, perhaps the most precious player of the pack, missed.

After Sabir Syed Pasha had goosed an Aquil Ansari cross, India had a real go at the Lankan goal when skipper Satyen fired a powerful shot but the Lankan goalie Weerasinghe, who later degenerated into a bundle of nerves, pulled off a good save.

Sri Lanka missed a golden chance to force ahead when Parera set CN Steinwall free with a neat pass and the latter duly centered the ball across India's goal mouth but Santha Kumar's goal-bound header was headed away from the goal line by Indian defender Ilyas Pasha, in the 52nd minute.

Referee Ahmed Hakeem Ibrahim from the United Arab Emirates seemingly robbed Sri Lanka of a penalty when Roshan Perera was felled inside the box by Indian defender Proloy Saha in the 63rd minute. Sri Lanka's game, which was showing signs of jitters at that time, went to pieces nine minutes later.

Vijayan swung a ball from the right flank, Bhupinder Thakur chested it down and an unmarked Tajinder Kumar volleyed the ball home with his

left foot past an out of place Weerasinghe (1-0).

Sri Lanka muffed up a chance of equalising five minutes later when Ananda Kumar's header went off the mark with DL Steinwall doing the spade-work.

India never looked back after that and sealed the fate of the match in the 87th minute. Gunabir Singh set Vijayan up on the left and the dark, crafty forward who did not really live up to his reputation yesterday, took a powerful shot with custodian Weerasinghe once again showing a barmy sense of space and time. But Vijayan was robbed of the credit of a sure goal as his bearded teammate Bhupinder toed the goal-bound shot at the last second, but India were two up (2-0).

Although India gave a fair

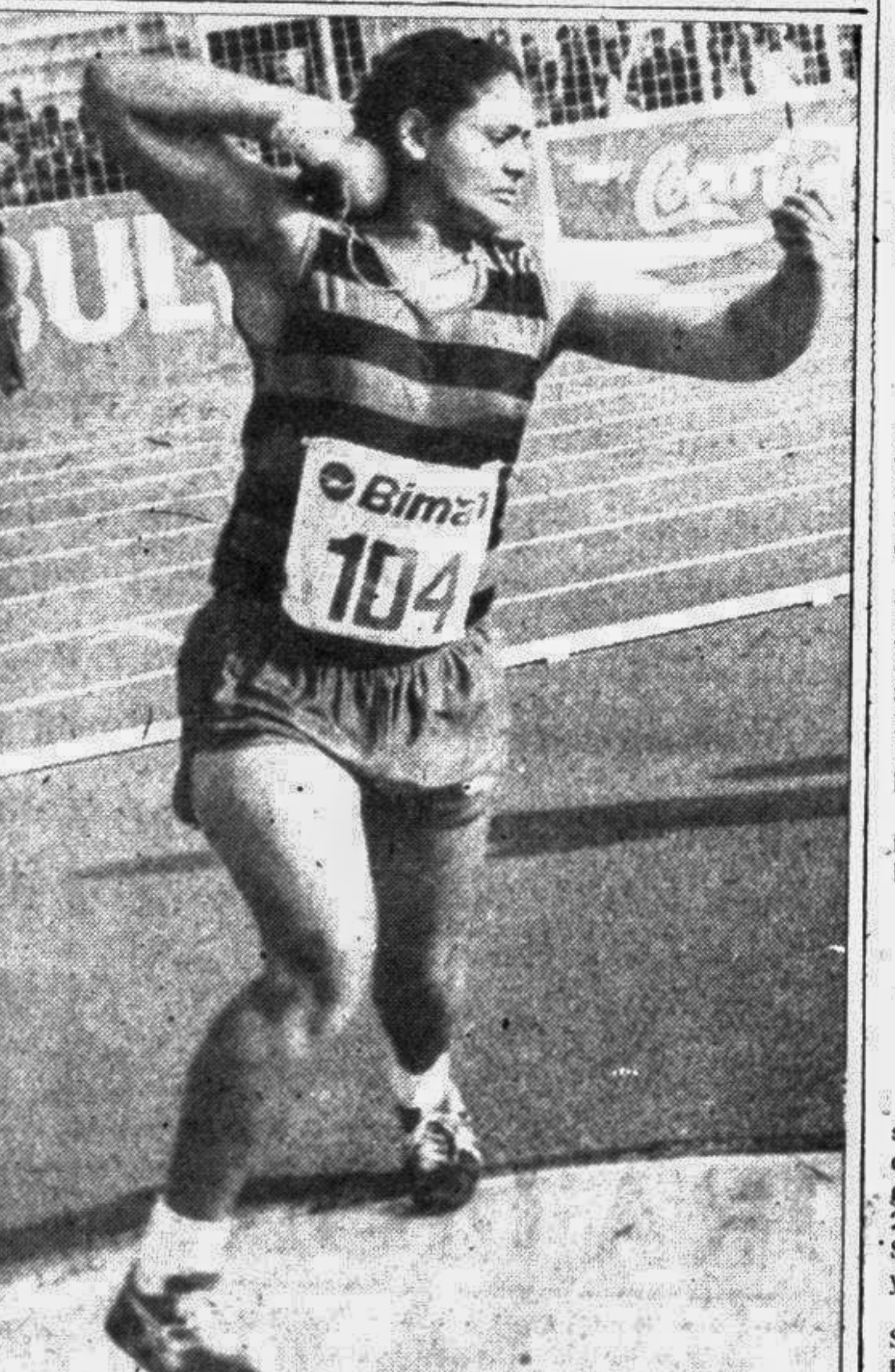
trial of strength, India's Czech coach Jiri Pacek was not happy.

"We did not play to our potential. We had Ranawera marked out well, which made our job easier, but on the whole we are yet to peak. We are likely to get better with time."

George Ferreirã, the Brazilian coach who has been central to Sri Lanka's extensive and expensive preparations upto this meet, was quite realistic while giving his post-match reaction.

"We did not play well. They were definitely more combined and aggressive. But the man in black seemed to be an Indian. He denied us a penalty."

India need only draw against Pakistan, the defending champions, in their remaining Group A engagement to book their berth in the final, scheduled for December 26.



Amandeep Kaur of India about to hurl the shot in the women's shot put of the Sixth SAF Games at the Mirpur Stadium yesterday. Kaur won the gold with a new mark of 14.57 metres. —Star photo

## Lankan shooters on target

Sri Lanka won two more golds in SAF Shooting both on individual and team events in the English Match 60 shots at the Gulshan shooting range yesterday, reports UNB.

Sri Lankan shooter Daya Rajasinghe securing highest 589 out of 600 points took the individual gold while his compatriot Chandrasiri (587) took silver and Hanuman Ram of India the bronze (585).

Sri Lankan shooters Daya Rajasinghe, Chandrasiri and Lakshman took the team gold scoring 1760 points while Bangladeshi GM Haider, Kamrul Islam Titu and Nasir Uddin Jhony securing 1742 points got the silver.

The bronze went to India with shooters Hanuman Ram, Bhagirath Samal and Kehar Singh Kundal scoring 1741 points.

The women's standard rifles prone: 60 shots event, was also held yesterday but the results of the competition have been kept withheld due to technical reasons.

Media Centre sources said that the results would be announced today.

## Hosts, Pakistan win in kabaddi

Bangladesh and Pakistan won their respective matches on the first day of the SAF Games kabaddi tournament, which began at the Hockey stadium yesterday, reports UNB.

Hosts Bangladesh, who won the silver medal in the Beijing Asian Games in 1990, had no trouble against the new-comers Sri Lanka and won 85-11. Bangladesh led the first half 45-1 and scored as many as eight lonas.

Asiad bronze medalist Pakistan defeated Nepal 43-13. Pakistan led the first half 20-6.

## Local women spikers go down again

The Bangladesh women spikers playing with a lack of confidence, lost to the Indian girls in all three sets (15-3, 15-2, 15-5) at the National Indoor Stadium at Mirpur here yesterday, reports BSS.

After being humiliated by Sri Lanka on Tuesday, Bangladesh girls appeared to be determined to improve their position. But their inaccurate services and lack of stamina and smashing power let them down again and they surrendered easily.



Shri Lankan Damayanthi Darsha in action during the women's 200-metre dash at the Mirpur Stadium yesterday. Darsha won the gold with a time of 23.84 seconds. —Star photo

## 4 new Games marks set

# Bahadur leads Indian charge

by N-K Bharati

On a day that saw India muscling into the gold tally everywhere at the SAF games, and winning four of the six athletics golds, Bahadur Prasad's feat on the tracks stood out for its distinct stamp of class.

The gold was his the moment he shot off in the 1,500m, the first event of the day. And Bahadur's confident strides showed he was well aware of it. In the groove after his celebrated victory at the Astip Track and Field meet at Manila, he posted 3:42.16' here. With somebody to push him, the time

would have been better but it was enough to erase the old record in the name of India's Ram Niwas.

Ram Niwas was also running in the race. After keeping up with the leaders for virtually half the race, he fell behind to come in sixth. Bahadur's presence helped Pakistan's Zafar Iqbal to improve upon his personal best. Zafar clocked 3:46.03 for the silver. Nepal got their first track medal through Gop Bahadur Adhikari, who claimed the bronze.

Bahadur ended the day the way he had begun it. In the 10,000m, he was competing only with himself and shaped

the race the way he wanted to. His strategy was clear. When the others tried to break away, he moved with them but conserved his energy and made no attempt to take the lead.

He timed his laps and ran to a plan. With seven laps to go, when the others had burnt themselves out, he moved to take a comprehensive lead. He crossed the finish in 29 minutes 30.23 seconds, again bettering the existing Games mark. Another Indian, Kailash Mane, was second in 29:51.19 and Sri Lanka's K A Karunaratne, the holder of the old mark, third with 30:11.83. All three did better than the Sri Lankan's old record.

India's burly Amandeep Kaur, from Jalandhar, heaved the shot to a distance of 14.57m for a new record in the women's event. Amandeep's first throw of 14.20 would have fetched her the gold but she improved upon it on her third attempt. She had three clear throws, all of them over 14 metres.

Team-mate Harbans Kaur joined her on the medal rostrum, with a 12.98m fourth throw that earned her the silver medal. Sri Lanka's Deepika Rodrigo claimed the bronze.

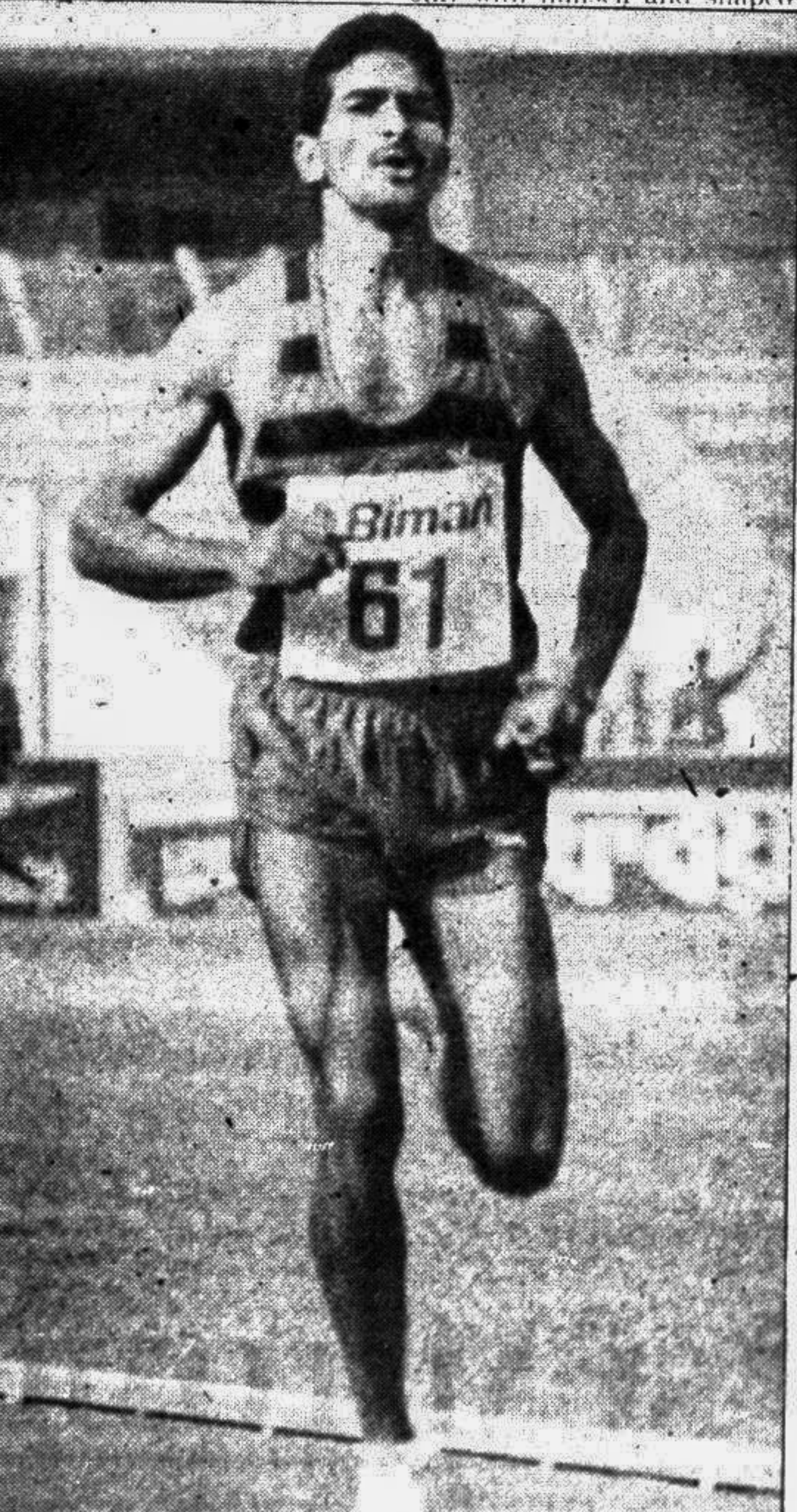
Chander Pal of the Indian Railways faced competition only from his own team-mate. But Vikas Sheoran, trained by the well-known Indian high jumper of yore, Bhim Singh, leaped well enough only for the silver. However, the Raj sports school student has age on his side and time enough to reach for the stars.

Chander Pal, who frains with Bahadur Prasad's coach Har Gobind Singh, cleared 2.06 metres on his last attempt for the goal. But the champion has much better to his credit. Only last year at the Indian national meet, he had cleared 2.17m for the gold.

Sri Lanka took the other two golds handed out yesterday, winning both the 200m sprints.

Long-legged Damiyanthi Darsha flew through the women's event and try as she might, India's K Saramma could not match her strides. Darsha shattered the old record with a time of 23.84s. Saramma won the silver with 24.19 and another Sri Lankan, Susanthika Jayasinghe, the bronze in 24.56.

S S A Dissanayake defied his detractors by willing himself to win the men's 200m. All those who had given up on him, saying he was getting on in age, were made to rethink. The two Indians in the event, Jayachandran and Selvaraj Robert finished fourth and fifth, respectively.



An action study of Indian Bahadur Prasad, who broke two SAF Games records in the men's 10,000m and 1500m. —Star photo

## Mainuddin in singles qtrs

Sports Reporter

S Mainuddin advanced into the quarterfinals of the SAF Games tennis tournament yesterday, taking the number of host representatives in the round of eight to two.

Mainuddin joins Faisal Syed Haq, who received a first round bye along with Indian Gaurav Natekar, Seneka Kumara of Sri Lanka, and Mushaf Zia of Pakistan.

In his first round match against Amir Mansoor of Maldives at the Ramna National Tennis Complex yesterday, Mainuddin struggled a bit in the second set before wrapping up the best-of-three encounter 6-2, 7-5.

Mainuddin plays Seneka Kumara in the quarterfinals today.

In the other first round engagements of the day, Vasudev Reddy of India, Mohammad Khaliq, the Pakistani national number one, and Jayendra Wijesekera of Sri Lanka all posted easy victories.

Reddy, who has a blistering first serve, needed one break in the first set and two in the second to get rid of Subra R Shahi of Nepal 6-4, 6-3. Reddy's next opponent is Faisal.

Shahi's compatriot Shatran Thapa managed only three games in his match against Pakistani national champion Mohammed Khaliq, losing 6-0, 6-3. Khaliq is expected to come across a tough challenge from Natekar in the quarterfinals.

Lankan Wijesekera blasted Shiau Ahmed of Maldives off the court when he won his singles without giving away a single game. Mushaf Zia of Pakistan stands in the Sri Lankan's way to the semifinal.

In the men's doubles, national number one Hira Lal and Mainuddin moved into the quarterfinals, eliminating the Nepalese Dou of R Ghaf and Subra R Shahi 6-1, 6-2.

Mushaf Zia and Hamidul Haq of Pakistan also won their first round match on their way to the round of last eight. The Pakistani pair got the better of Amir Mansoor and Hassan Shaam of Maldives 6-2, 6-3.

In the other first round tie, Sri Lankan Rohan de Silva and Previn Waas trounced Nepalese Mgar Thapa and Sharan Thapa 6-0, 6-2.

Bangladeshi players were routed in the women's doubles. The pair of Rina and Urmi was knocked out by Indian Aradhana and Arati 6-0, 6-0 while in another India-Bangladesh matchup, Aradhana and Arati romped past Lucky and Mithun by a similar margin.

## Indian judokas sweep the board

Sports Reporter

India bagged all the three golds at stake yesterday in the SAF Games judo competition at the Mirpur Indoor Stadium.

Jagadish Chander won the gold in the under 78 kilogram weight category beating Nepalese DG Bahadur in the final. Veerendra Nath Roy of Bangladesh got the bronze.

Shahidul improved the host record in the event when he managed a silver in the open weight division after losing to B Cavas in the final. T K Ram of Nepal finished third.

The third gold on the board went to Virender Singh when he outmanoeuvred T K Ram in the final. Manzur of the hosts collected the bronze.

## YESTERDAY'S TRACK & FIELD RESULTS

- MEN:**  
 —2000m: 1. S S A Dissanayake (Sri Lanka) 21.34; 2. J M A Dhanmika Jayasekera (Sri Lanka) 21:36; 3. Muhammad Arif Hussain (Pakistan) 21.41.  
 —1,500m: 1. Bahadur Prasad (India) 3:42:16 (NMR); 2. Zafar Iqbal (Pakistan) 3:46.03; 3. Gop Adhikari (Nepal) 3:46.63.  
 —10,000m: 1. Bahadur Prasad (India) 29:30.23 (NMR); 2. Kailash Mane (India) 29:51.19; 3. K A Karunaratne (Sri Lanka) 30:11.83.  
 —High jump: 1. Chander Pal (India) 2.06m; 2. Vikas Sheoran (India) 2.03; 3. Patrick Sapramadu (Sri Lanka) 2.00.  
**WOMEN:**  
 —200m: 1. Damiyanthi Darsha (Sri Lanka) 23.84 (NMR); 2. K Saramma (India) 24.19; 3. Susanthika Jayasinghe (Sri Lanka) 24.56; 4. E B Shyia (India) 24.62.  
 —Shot put: 1. Amandeep Kaur (India) 14.57 (NMR); 2. Harbans Kaur (India) 12.98; 3. A Deepika Rodrigo (Sri Lanka) 12.23.  
 Competition resumes at the Mirpur Stadium at 10:30 am. The afternoon session starts at 2 pm.