

Molly caps Indian triumph

By N K Baisakhi

Coach Hargobind Singh's "bullet", little Molly Chacko, tilted the scales for India as the track and field events of the sixth SAF Games came to an end at the Mirpur Stadium yesterday.

Molly's unchallenged victory in the women's 1,500m, the final event of the competition, gave India their fourth gold of the day, one more than both Sri Lanka and Pakistan. The bronze medallist of the Manila Asian meet shaved 18 seconds off the old SAF record, created by India's Suman Rawat in the third Games at Calcutta in 1987.

Molly's winning time of four minutes 21.20 seconds was all the more remarkable because it was clocked without much strain. Shri Lanka's Sriyani Dhammika Menke was no match for the Indian, easily falling back once Molly's spurt began.

The other Indian in the race, Jyotirmoy Sikdar, latched on to the champion. But Molly's finishing kick was too strong for her and she settled for the silver.

Earlier, the Indian women's sprint relay team pulled off a near-miracle when they upended favourites Sri Lanka. The win began to look possible when second-runner K Saramma whizzed past the others to hand Rachita Panda a small lead. Panda hurtled down and anchor E B Shyla, who posted her personal best in the 100m Friday, gave Shri Lankan champion Damiyanthi Darsha no chance at all.

The Indian foursome were in their element yesterday. They worked in perfect harmony and all the three baton exchanges went off like a dream. Their time of 45.10 seconds was also a new meet record.

The team of H G Apsara, K M Beename, Saramma and Shiny Wilson had already pocketed the gold in the 4x400m relay.

The Indians are among the best at the event even at the Asian level. Yesterday's race was child's play for them, with the Shri Lankans being no threat at all. By the time anchor Shiny Wilson took off, the Indians already had a lead of about a 100 metres. The quartet finished in 3:37.03, yet another addition to the records.

The Indian men's foursome of Narsi Ram, P K Malaviya, P I

Sebastian and Jatashankar, however, let the 4x400m relay gold slip through their fingers. Jatashankar was done in by the final kick of Sugath Tilekeratne, who set a record on Thursday. The Indian, who had started well ahead, saw the challenger closing in but had no strength to fight him off.

The men's sprint relay team suffered due to an untidy baton



M Chacko ... 1500m gold

exchange between second runner Amit Khanna and Gurwinder Singh. Lead-off Vikram Singh had given them a flying start but that exchange left national record-holder Selvaraj Robert no choice but to follow Shri Lanka's SSA Dissanayake.

All of India's four golds on the day were earned by the women. The girls had a 1-2 in the discus, Harjeet Kaur putting all her weight behind it for a gold-winning throw of 46.58 m.

The gold medal-winner in the shot put, policewoman Amandeep Kaur, added a silver to her kitty with a heave of 44.68m.

The Pakistanis made up for Friday's disappointment with a sizeable share in yesterday's loot. Upcoming Muhammad Amin beat his more famous team-mate, Asian gold-medallist Ghulam Abbas, to the gold in the 400m hurdles. Abbas was also overtaken by Bangladesh's Abdur Rahim Naim, who set a new national record of 51.87 on his way to a silver.

The Indian entry, Rajender

Singh, finished seventh in 54.14.

Roly-poly Ghufuran Hussain was easily the best in the shot put field. The Pakistani champion has done duty for his country in many international championships, including the last two Asian meets. Yesterday, he was only four centimeters short of his personal best of 17.50m, clocked at the trials before the Beijing Asian Games in 1990.

He was too strong for the two Indians. Asian junior champion Manjit Singh who threw the shot to a distance of 16.37, and Satkaran Singh, who was third with 16.34.

But perhaps the greatest of Pakistan's triumphs was by a bit of a girl called Shabana Akhtar whose feat represented the emerging of the shadows of the Pakistani woman athlete.

With a gold in the long jump, Shabana became the first Pakistani girl to win a track and field event for her country here. Competing in slacks, and not shorts like the other girls, she thudded down the runway to land at 5.95m. Shabana, of whom the Pakistani team is very protective, has represented Pakistan at this year's World Championships at Stuttgart.

Shri Lanka's only individual gold medal of the day came in the men's 800m where Rajit Subasinghe clocked 1:47.56 for a new SAF record. India's Jaswant Singh finished sixth in a time of 1:53.05.

Indian athletes finished the competition with the maximum number of medals. They had 16 golds, 16 silvers and 10 bronzes, an improvement over the 10 gold they had at Colombo. Shri Lanka ended up with 12 golds, Pakistan with three and Bangladesh with one.

FINAL ATHLETICS MEDAL TABLE

Following is the final medals table of the four-day Sixth SAF Games athletics competition which concluded yesterday at the Mirpur Stadium:

(Tabulate under gold, silver, bronze and total):

	G	S	B	T
India	16	16	10	42
S Lanka	12	9	9	30
Pakistan	3	6	5	14
Bangladesh	1	1	5	7
Nepal	0	0	3	3
Bhutan	0	0	0	0
Maldives	0	0	0	0
Total medals	32	32	32	96

No stopping Indian paddlers

By Mir Ashfaq Zaman

Raman Subramaniam and Arul Selvi earned themselves a Christmas gift when they won the mixed doubles gold in the Sixth SAF Games table tennis tournament at the Dhanmondi gymnasium yesterday, beating crowd favourites Sujay Ghorpade and Ambika Radhika 21-8, 10-21, 21-18 and 21-14 in an all-Indian final.

C C Arnold and Namia M Gunasekera of Sri Lanka collected the bronze medal beating Nepal's Rajan Subba and Jyotsna Shrestha, the other losing semifinalists, 21-10, 21-10 and 21-9 in the third and fourth place deciding play-off.

With the near-capacity crowd at the wooden-floor gym crying and clapping all the way for them, Ghorpade and Radhika, after losing the first set, fought back strongly in the sec-

ond, dominating throughout to level.

However, that seemed to be the only glittering streak in an otherwise subdued performance by the two Indians as their compatriots Subramaniam and Selvi virtually blew them off the court on their way to the gold.

When asked later about the noisy crowd, the unassuming Subramaniam said, "That didn't bother us at all, you see, it's a part of the game. We had hardly enough time to worry about it."

"We are going to win the men's and women's singles gold also," said Subramaniam, predicting an all-Indian affair in the women's event between Kanchan Dhawan and Ambika Radhika, the joint number one players of their country.

Subramaniam also said that he felt the men's title would go to Chetan Baboor, the best male paddler of the Indian contingent who lives and plays professional

league in Sweden.

Indian coach, Manjeet Dua, in charge of the national team for the past seven years, also put his bet on Baboor, a regular in the Swedish professional league where such top champions like Jan-Ove Waldner and Michael Appelgren also compete.

Dua, himself a renowned paddler of his time, predicted a clean Indian sweep. Earlier, in the semifinals, Subramaniam and Selvi made light work of the Nepalese pairing of Subba and Shrestha on way to becoming the first pair to reach the final, the eventual scoreline read 21-13, 21-13 and 21-14.

Ghorpade and Radhika, on the contrary, conceded the first set to the Lankans Arnold and Gunasekera en route to a 22-24, 21-15, 21-15 and 21-13 triumph.

Yesterday's outcome takes the Indian gold haul to five in as many events settled so far. The Indians earlier clinched the two team golds, along with the two in the men's and women's doubles.

In the morning, Nasimul Hassan Kochi and Zobera Rahman Linu gave the local fans something to cheer about when they beat Mohammed Yasin Ali and Naazy Ibrahim of the Maldives 21-8, 21-16 in their first round engagement.

But their hopes of a medal evaporated soon when Silva and Gunasekera, the eventual bronze medalists, knocked them out of the race with a 21-18, 21-13 quarterfinal victory.

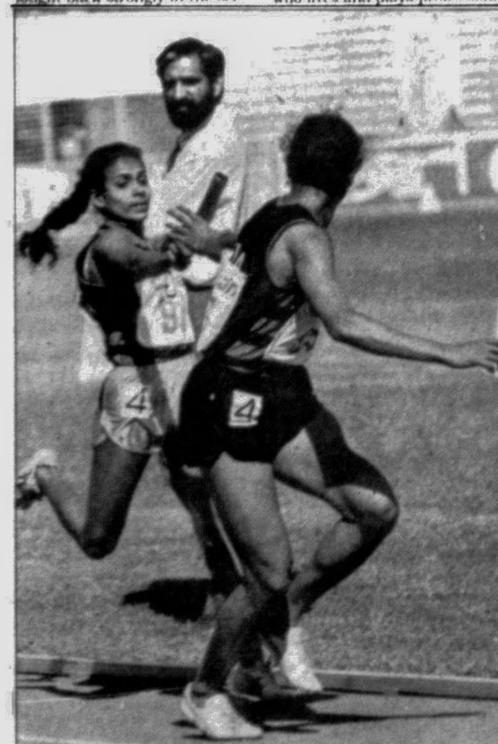
Mosaddeque Haq Rochi and Tania Tarmin fared even worse, capitulating to Subramaniam and Selvi in a 21-17, 21-11 affair.

Asim Qureshi and Ghazala Roohi of Pakistan also had their trip cut short by the gold-winning pair, giving in 21-10, 21-9.

The other Pakistani entry in the event, Shahzad Wasim and Nasla Anjum, went through a similar schedule. After sailing past their first round opponents, Sandhya Shakya and Shankar Gautam of Nepal, Wasim and Anjum came across Ghorpade and Radhika and were shown the way out.

The other pairing to have finished with a one-win and a loss record was that of the Maldivians — Ahmed Ibrahim and Juwairya Saeed.

The women's singles final is scheduled for four this afternoon while the men's singles title clash is billed for five pm before the curtain comes down on the Games TT competition.



Saramma Kutty is passing the baton on to her teammate Shiny Wilson during the women's 4x400 metre relay at the Mirpur Stadium yesterday. — Star photo



WHAT WENT WRONG?: US-based Lankan runner NM Imoka Cooray ponders as to the outcome of the women's 4x100 metre relay in which Sri Lanka finished second behind India in the Sixth SAF Games at the Mirpur Stadium yesterday. — Star photo

Pakistan wrap up one-dayers 2-0 as Mujtaba mauls Zimbabwe

RAWALPINDI, Dec 25: Pakistan clinched the one-day cricket series against Zimbabwe 2-0 with a six-wicket win against the tourists today, although they clinched the game with just two balls to spare, reports AFP.

Pakistan, chasing Zimbabwe's 195 for five scored in the allotted 40 overs, had a splendid 61 by Asif Mujtaba to thank for their victory.

Half-centuries by Alistair Campbell and David Houghton set up Zimbabwe's total in the Rawalpindi Stadium, packed with a holiday crowd.

Wasim Akram and Waqar Younis bagged two wickets apiece with Asif Mujtaba picking up the only other wicket to fall after Pakistan had won the toss and put Zimbabwe in to bat.

Pakistan made a good start in response, with an opening partnership of 88 runs between Saeed Anwar and Asif Mujtaba.

Anwar was out for 45 and was replaced at the crease by Javed Miandad who hit a breezy 19 runs off 13 deliveries before being brilliantly caught by John Rennie off Eddo Brandes.

Man-of-the-match Mujtaba held on to score 61 before falling to Guy Whittall off Heath Streak.

Inzamamul Haq scored 45 not out and Akram contributed six runs to see the Pakistanis safely home.

Zimbabwe captain Andy Flower tried eight bowlers in the crucial second match in an attempt to level the series after losing the first match at Karachi.

Tight fielding prevented Pakistan from scoring freely and the World Cup holders had to wait until the last over for the winning runs, achieved with

M Dekker b Nazir 23
A Campbell b Akram 74
D Houghton c Basit Ali b Younis 58
D Brain c Mujtaba b Younis 0
G Whittall not out 23
Extras: (b-12, w-9, nb-2) 23
Total: (for five wickets, 40 overs) 195
Fall of wickets: 1-30; 2-87; 3-189; 4-190; 5-195

Bowling: O M R W
Wasim Akram 8 0 32 2
Waqar Younis 8 0 46 2
Asif Mujtaba 8 0 30 1
Aaqub Javed 8 0 31 0
Salim Malik 7 0 37 0
Asif Mujtaba 1 0 7 0

PAKISTAN:
Saeed Anwar b Dekker 45
Asif Mujtaba c Whittall b Streak 61
Basit Ali b Dekker 5
Javed Miandad c Rennie b Brandes 19
Inzamamul Haq not out 44
Wasim Akram not out 16
Extras: (b-1, b-7, w-8) 6
Total: (for four wickets, 39.4 overs) 196
Fall of wickets: 1-88; 2-98; 3-121; 4-188

Bowling: O M R W
Brandes 8 1 40 1
Brain 7 1 30 0
Rennie 7 4 38 0
Streak 7 0 31 1
G. Flower 3 0 15 0
Dekker 4 0 16 2
Campbell 2 0 9 0
A. Flower 1 0 9 0

ZIMBABWE:
A. Flower lbw b Akram 14
Result: Pakistan won by six wickets.



MUJTABA... man-of-match... just two balls to spare. Mark Dekker was the most successful bowler taking two for 16.

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard in the second one-day cricket international between Pakistan and Zimbabwe today:
ZIMBABWE:
A. Flower lbw b Akram 14



GOULDEN TRIO: (From right) India's Sebastian Xavier, Rajeev Nagpal and Suresh Kumar, who won the 50m free-style, 200m free-style and 100m butterfly respectively, at the Mirpur pool yesterday. — Star photo

Indian grapplers rule the mat

Sports Reporter

beat Robin Masih to clinch the gold. Shivadari Yadav of Nepal finished third.

Two other Kumars — Anil in the under-52kg and Ashok in the under-57 kg — also finished first in their respective categories. In both the cases, their vanquished opponents were from Pakistan.

Apart from the three Kumars, the Indian contingent boasted four Veers in Dharamveer, Karamveer, Tejveer Singh and Jagveer Singh. While Dharamveer, Tejveer and Jagveer found their way to the top of the winners' podium, Karamveer had to be content as the second best.

Dharamveer finished first in the under-62 kg. Tejveer Singh in the under-74 kg and Jagveer in the under-100 kg with Karamveer capitulating to Pak-

istan's Muhammed Omar in the under-68 kg category final.

Muhammed Bashir Bhola-Bhala, Liaquat Ali and Abdul Majeed made it four golds for Pakistan by winning their respective finals.

Bhola-Bhala outwrestled Md Zamirul Haq of Bangladesh, Liaquat defeated Khan Mizanur Rahman, another host grappler, while Abdul Majeed triumphed over Jasram of India.

Final medals table of the Sixth SAF Games: (Tabulate under gold, silver, bronze and total)

	G	S	B	T
India	6	2	2	10
Pakistan	4	6	10	20
Bangladesh	2	6	8	16
Nepal	1	2	2	5

SA-Aussie first Test today

MELBOURNE, Dec 25: For both Australia and South Africa, Sunday's first cricket Test at the Melbourne Cricket Ground will be an emotional occasion, reports AP.

Of all the 1,241 Test matches played in the international arena, few have attracted as much attention as the 54th between the long-standing rivals.

It has been almost 24 years since Australia and South Africa last played a Test — the South Africans sweeping to 4-0 series win in 1969-70.

In the two years since being readmitted to world cricket, South Africa have played Tests against the West Indies, India and Sri Lanka but none against Australia, New Zealand or England.

The opening Test of the three-match series will be the first between the old foes on Australian soil since Trevor Goddard's South Africans drew a series 1-1 30 years ago.

For both Australia's Allan Border and South Africa's Kepler Wessels, the first of the three Tests will be memorable.

"It's a dream come true for me," said Australian captain Border. "I really wanted it to happen, but I never thought it would."

"Knowing it was coming in the last 12 months has managed to motivate me and put off my retirement plans. It's just traditional. It's a very special

day."

Wessels, the former Australian opener who now captains South Africa, has a old score to settle.

"I have the right to feel proud and have looked forward to this occasion," he said. "It is an opportunity of a lifetime, playing against a country you once represented."

The South Africans are confident the sense of the occasion will not overwhelm their performance in front of a what is expected to be a capacity holiday crowd.

South Africa have played only eight Tests since their return to Test cricket in Barbados against the West Indies in April last year.

Since losing that Test after an unexpected second innings collapse, South Africa have beaten India 1-0 in a four-match series at home and then had the better of a series against Sri Lanka in Colombo, also winning 1-0.

TEAMS

AUSTRALIA: Mark Taylor, Michael Slater, David Boon, Mark Waugh, Allan Border (captain), Damien Martyn, Ian Healy, Paul Reffel, Shane Warne, Tim May, Craig McDermott, Glenn McGrath.

SOUTH AFRICA (possible 12): Andrew Hudson, Peter Kirsten, Kepler Wessels (captain), Hanse Cronje, Daryl Cullinan, Dave Callaghan, Dave Richardson, Pat Symcox, Richard Snell, Craig Matthews, Fanie de Villiers, Allan Donald.

24 Chinese athletes caught doping in 93

BEIJING, Dec 25: Champion woman weightlifter Xing Fen, who took China's first gold medal of the 1990 Asian Games, was among 24 Chinese athletes testing positive for banned drugs this year, Xinhua news agency said on Saturday, reports Reuters.

World-class shotputter Zhou Tinahua was another Chinese woman identified as a drug-taker, according to a list issued by the Chinese Olympic Anti-Drug Committee. Zhou had placed fifth at the August World Championships in Stuttgart.

The list did not include the country's new athletic sensations — the "Ma family army" of record-smashing women's distance runners from Liaoning province.

The whole team, including its brightest lights — world record holders Wang Junxia and Qu Yunxia — last week underwent unannounced spot checks administered in Liaoning by an official of the International Amateur Athletic Federation, Xinhua said.

The results of those tests were not announced. In all, 24 Chinese tested positive for banned substances during the year but apart from Xing and Zhou all were "athletes without fame," Xinhua said.

"Most of them were caught at the Chinese National Games (in October), the agency said. It said the offenders were disciplined by the Chinese organisations governing their respective sports but no details of the punishments were given.

Two of the violations were imposed by IAAF spot checks and the rest by Chinese-administered checks.

Rhodes ready to go

MELBOURNE, Dec 25: Inspirational South African fielder Jonny Rhodes passed a Christmas Day fitness test and will play in the first cricket Test against Australia at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, reports AP.

Rhodes broke a bone in his left hand 10 days ago, but said he would be available to play in the historic Test, which begins on Sunday.

The 24-year-old middle-order batsman from Natal batted in the nets Saturday and took part in fielding drills before declaring his availability.

Rhodes said there still was some pain in his hand, but not enough to force him out of South Africa's first Test meeting with Australia for almost 24 years.

"The hand will be fine," Rhodes said, vowing to give 100 per cent effort.

"If I play heartily, it will only hurt more," he said. "As long as I keep exercising it, I'll be fine and I'll play."

Rhodes will fill the number five spot in the South African batting lineup, while his outstanding fielding in the cover region will also be valuable for the tourists.

Anand surges ahead

GRONINGEN, Netherlands, Dec 25: Indian Grandmaster Viswanathan Anand took over first place in the dlr 230,000 PCA qualifier chess tournament after a sixth round win Friday over American Joel Benjamin, reports AP.

Anand has four wins and two draws, giving him five points from his six games. He now appears assured of placing among the top seven of the 54 Grandmasters competing here.



Pakistan's Muhammad Amin (L) clearing the final hurdle to win the 400m hurdles in a time of 51.29 seconds yesterday. Bangladesh's Abdur Rahman Naim pocketed the silver. — Star photo