

Richards salutes Kapil

BOMBAY, Feb 13: "It's a marvelous feat," the cricket legend Vivian Richards said of Kapil Dev becoming the highest wicket taker in Test history...

"Believe in yourself. If you don't believe in yourself, nobody will believe in you," the Antiguan told some 30 teenaged cricketers during a brief coaching session...

"You know how you play. If that works with you, do it," Richards told the youngsters at the session organised at Brabourne Stadium this morning by Cathy Pacific.

Replaying to questions by the enthusiastic teenagers, the former West Indies' captain complimented the Indian skipper and said "Azharuddin's batting is an art. He is a fresh breath of air, so developed skills he has got..."

Looking ahead at Indian cricket, he said, "Given the potential you have here, things can only improve. It cannot get worse."

He felt that Brian Lara, Sachin Tendulkar and Carl Hooper were the most promising batsmen today.

As a parting advice to the teenagers, he said, "To be a good attacking player, one has to dictate terms and build up the confidence level. Stick to your goal and you will succeed."



Britain's Colin Jackson (R) powers over the final hurdle to win the men's 60m hurdles event at an indoor meet in Scotland on Feb 12. — AFP photo

Harding strikes a deal

OREGON CITY, Ore, Feb 13: Tonya Harding will skate in the Winter Games after all, her berth secured Saturday by a deal with the US Olympic Committee...

Harding, accused by her ex-husband of helping to plot the attack on Nancy Kerrigan last month, will join Kerrigan as a teammate upon arrival Wednesday at the athletes' village near the figure skating arena.

"I finally get to prove to the world I can win a gold medal," Harding said later, climbing into her truck outside the apartment where she has been staying.

The agreement calls for Harding to drop her \$25 million lawsuit and for the USOC to let her join in the Olympics without a disciplinary hearing.

"Tonya Harding will skate in the 1994 Olympics," Clackamas County Circuit Judge Patrick D Gilroy said in his order after attorneys for the two sides met in his chambers for seven hours Saturday.

Frustrated American athletes and Olympic officials had put pressure on the USOC to resolve the dispute, which was threatening to overshadow everything else at the Olympics.

Moments after the settlement in Oregon, USOC officials held a news conference in Lillehammer. Asked whether the USOC had backed down, USOC spokesman Mike Moran said "that would be inaccurate."

He said the agreement was "very much a combination of the right thing to do, plus the time left and the distractions to the athletes."

Gilroy had urged the two sides Friday to come to an agreement rather than fight it out in court.

Gilroy's order said the USOC disciplinary hearing that Harding was to have faced later this week had been cancelled and Harding's lawsuit "is concluded."

The judge said the case "involved difficult legal issues and well-warranted concerns on both sides."

"The USOC has the right and obligation to oversee and discipline certain conduct of its Olympic athletes," Gilroy said.

Harding claimed that she was threatened with a lifetime ban from the Olympics if she did not settle the lawsuit. She said she was "appalled" by the attack on Kerrigan, "which was not only an attack on the athlete but an assault on the basic ideals of the Olympic movement..."

Harding also released a statement expressing her regrets for any inconvenience. "Tonya simply wants to skate in the Olympics and be treated fairly. She appreciates the United States Olympic committee working with her to resolve this matter," it said.

"It's time to put this matter behind all of us and focus on the Olympic Games," said the statement, which added that Harding and her attorneys hope "they do not have to grant interviews, hold press conferences or make additional public statements on this resolution."

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Martin's marathon march

MEMPHIS, Tenn, Feb 13: Todd Martin played nearly five hours over two matches Saturday to reach the finals of the Kroger-St. Jude International tennis tournament, reports AP.

Martin, the No. 2 seed, needed 2 hours, 20 minutes to defeat eighth-seeded Paul Haarhuis 6-1, 6-7 (7-9), 7-6 (7-2) in the quarterfinals Saturday afternoon. After resting five hours, he beat Alex O'Brien 6-3, 4-6, 7-5 in a 2-hour semifinal.

"I really feel fairly good, ready to go to bed," Martin said. "I got a little strung out there once, but when the trainer, Bill Norris, came out, I was fine."

Martin will play two-time champion Brad Gilbert, a 7-6 (7-3), 6-1 winner over Patrick McEnroe, on Sunday in his second straight finals appearance this year. He lost to Pete Sampras in the Australian Open last month and moved to No. 9 in the rankings. Martin also reached his first final at Memphis last year before losing to Jim Courier.

"I think there was a lot less pressure on me coming in last year, and I think it made it easier for me, like Alex playing all this week," Martin said. "I felt the pressure this week. I think it's resulted in some tight play in some critical places. It's interesting because once I let my opponent back into a set or match, I automatically started playing better."

Martin easily took the first set, moving O'Brien around the court. Neither player could take control in the second. O'Brien, ranked 128th, finally broke Martin to tie the set at 4-4.

Then Martin missed on two break points, and O'Brien held on to go up 5-4. He won the set by breaking Martin after using a changeover period to wrap his upper right thigh.

Martin held O'Brien scoreless on breaks in the final set for a 6-5 lead and then held serve for the victory.

O'Brien, who also was set for a doubles quarterfinals match Saturday night, advanced to his first semifinal ever by ousting No. 13 seed Karsten Braasch 6-3, 6-3.

Gilbert, 1-5 against top 10 opponents in 1993, looked for his third tournament title after upsetting No. 3-ranked Courier 6-4, 6-4.

"I thought I had him when that last point went out," Gilbert said. "When I got the break at 5-4, I still felt it was going to be tough."



Steve Moneghetti of Australia raises arms after crossing the finish line of '94 Tokyo International Marathon in Japan yesterday. — AFP photo

Moneghetti pips Hayata

TOKYO, Feb 13: Australian Steve Moneghetti overtook Japan's ace runner Toshiyuki Hayata on a hill in the last five km to win the Tokyo International Marathon on Sunday, reports Reuter.

"I haven't had a great marathon in two years," said Moneghetti after finishing in two hours, eight minutes and 55 seconds. "I was afraid to take Hayata there but I was able to keep my cool."

Moneghetti was followed by Belgium's Vincent Rousseau at 2:09.08 and Hayata at 2:10.19. Moneghetti, winner of the 1990 Berlin Marathon, was the runner-up in last year's Tokyo Marathon.

The event faced cancellation because of Saturday's snow storm that hit the capital, but with help from construction ministry snow plows, organisers worked all night to clear the streets before the noon start.

Running under fine, windless weather, Hayata spurred ahead from the halfway point but lost his energy at the 38th km.

"My coach and I had gone over the hill part. I usually would end behind, but this time we decided to go forward there," Moneghetti said. Thirteen of the field of about 60 runners were foreigners, including last year's winner, Abebe Mekonnen of Ethiopia.

Nirman cricket

Sports Reporter Arif missed a hundred by three runs but his team Tejgaon High School pulled off an impressive 84-run win against Ahmed Bawani School in the Nirman Schools cricket championship at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium yesterday.

Arif's 97 was the cornerstone of Tejgaon's 217 for eight wickets. Ferdous was the other notable run-getter with 27.

Ahsan of Bawani took three wickets for 40. Nabi captured two for 14.

Noman had a rich haul of five wickets for 25 runs as Bawani chasing a huge target 218 for an outright victory were skittled out for 133.

With the cutting edge of the Tejgaon attack being lent by Noman, Arif played the role of the back up bowler quite well snaring two batsmen for 12 runs.

Ahsan with 25 and Hasib with 21 offered some resistance among the backpedalling Bawani batsmen.

In days other encounter held at the Dhanmondi Club ground, Dhanmondi Boys School raced to an awesome win by a yawning margin of 119 runs.

Here also two players — batsmen Anjan and bowler Shaon played the key roles in Dhanmondi's win. Anjan shone with the bat in Dhanmondi innings in the morning with knock of 89 followed by 57 extras. Shaon dismissed four batsmen for eight runs when the other outfit from the same locality — West Dhanmondi Yusuf High School were all out for 110.

Shaon enjoyed excellent support from Dipu who removed no less than three batsmen at a cost of 15 runs.

Suman was the only Dhanmondi Yusuf School batsman to make any impression with bat. He scored 22 while extras provided the bulk of contribution with 58.

Centa wins first medal

LILLEHAMMER, Feb 13: Italian veteran Manuela Di Centa finally silenced her critics here on Sunday, when she won the first gold medal of the Winter Olympics in the women's 15 km cross-country race, reports AP.

Di Centa, the 31-year-old who had never won a major championship before, led from the start to defy Russian favourite Lyubov Egorova, who settled for silver.

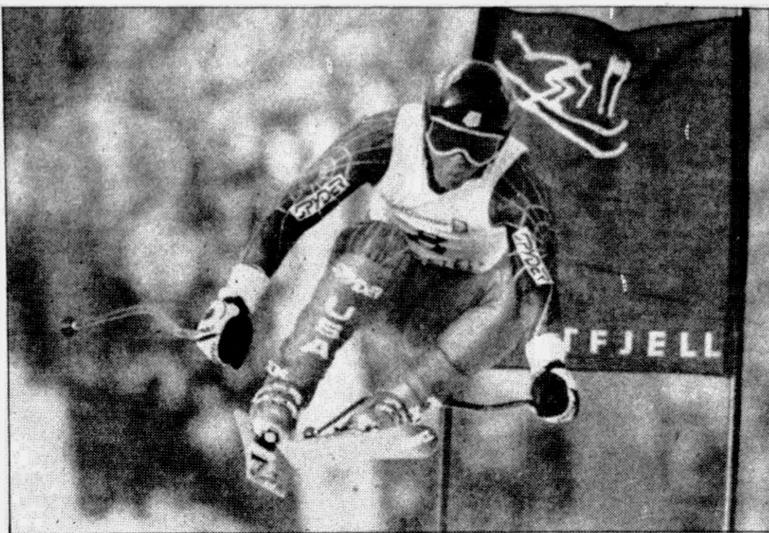
Egorova's compatriot Nina Gavriluk took the bronze, while Italy's main pre-race hope Stefania Belmondo came a disappointing fourth.

Di Centa, who put Italian women's cross-country skiing on the map a decade ago, was already ahead of Egorova, the champion in Albertville two years ago, after just 1.7 km. Gavriluk was already trailing in third.

The places stayed that way throughout the race, with Di Centa establishing a rock-solid lead of more than half a minute by the halfway stage.

She won in 39 minutes 44.5 seconds. Egorova clocked 41:03.0 and Gavriluk was timed in 41:10.4.

The low-key Italian first competed at the top in the 1982 World Championships in Oslo.



American Tommy Moe in action in the men's downhill event of the XVII Winter Olympic Games in Lillehammer yesterday. He won the gold clocking 1 min 45.75. — AFP photo

Lillehammer Games roundup

LILLEHAMMER, Feb 13: It's time for the thrills of downhill racing, after the chills of a nighttime ski jump with a lighted torch to help officially launch the 17th Winter Olympics.

It's also time to end the disruptions caused by figure skater Tonya Harding's legal battle to stay on the US Olympic team, both Harding and American Olympic authorities said. They said she will skate here, and questions in connection with the clubbing attack on her rival Nancy Kerrigan will be taken up later.

Competition actually began hours before King Harald V declared the Games open Saturday and Norwegian Stein Gruben, a late substitute for an injured jumper, made his heart-stopping leap into a stadium filled with 36,000 white-clad spectators.

In the ice hockey opener, Finland upset the third-seeded Czech Republic 3-1.

Saturday night, after the ceremonies, the Russian hockey players took up where they left off in previous Games, when they were the heart of the gold medalist Unified Team and before that the Soviet squad. They beat Norway 5-1. Germany opened with a 4-3 victory over Austria, which was unable to cash in on a last-minute power play.

The first of these Games' 61 gold medals were to come Sunday in the women's 15-kilometre cross-country skiing, the men's downhill race and men's 5,000-metre speed skating.

Lyubov Egorova, a 1992 triple gold medalist, predicted that she and Russian teammate Elena Valbe would finish 1-2 in the cross-country. But they faced stiff competition from Italy's Manuela Di Centa.

Prospects were less certain in the men's downhill, an event in which a number of past Olympic winners had never won on the World Cup circuit. Austrian Patrick Ortleb, who is back to defend his Olympic title, falls into that category.

Then there is Marc Girardelli of Luxembourg, the current World Cup downhill leader and a five-time overall champion. He has never won an Olympic gold medal, and professes not to be concerned: "I feel no pressure because I see no difference between an Olympic race and a World Cup race," he said on the race's eve.

Other favourites include host Norway's Kjetil Andre Aamodt, the 1992 super-G gold medalist and overall World Cup leader, and Austria's Armin Assinger, who won the World Cup race on this course last year.

Norway also has a favourite in the speedskating — Johann Olav Koss, who set the 5,000-

metre world record of 6 minutes, 35.53 seconds at the Olympic rink on Dec 12. But the Dutch lineup also is formidable: Falko Zandstra, Rintje Ritsma and Bart Veldkamp. About 12,000 people were expected to watch in the stadium, with an estimated 7 million of the Netherlands' 14.5 million residents on television.

Competition also was to start Sunday in the luge, with the first two of four men's singles runs, and in pairs figure skating, with the technical programme.

Germany's Georg Hackl, trying to become the first man to win consecutive Olympic luge titles, was to be the first starter on the first run. Austrian Markus Prock, a five-time World Cup champion, seeks revenge for his narrow loss to Hackl in the last Olympics.

As usual, Russians dominate the pair figure-skating field. The 1988 gold medalists, Ekaterina Gordeeva and Sergei Grinkov, are favored on their return after 2 1/2 years as professionals. Also back are 1992 champions Natalia Mishkutenok and Artur Dmitriev. The current world champions also are here, Canadians Isabelle Brasseur and Lloyd Eisler, but they are given little chance.

The day's hockey programme featured Sweden vs. Slovakia, Italy vs. Canada and the United States vs. France. Some 2,000 athletes from at least 66 nations are to compete in these Games.

Most of them marched Saturday into the stadium that lies at the foot of two towering ski jumps in a ceremony built around Norwegian folklore. Fiddlers, dancers and sleigh riders pulled by horses and reindeer led the celebrations of Norway's second Olympics. Oslo was host in 1952.

But before an audience that included US first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch urged remembrance of the tragedy of war-battered Sarajevo, host of the 1984 Winter Games.

"Please stop fighting. Please stop killing. Drop your guns," said Samaranch, after calling for a moment of silence for Bosnia.

Organic medals

LILLEHAMMER, Feb 13: Olympic champions in Lillehammer will get medals made mostly of grey stone with only a decorative smattering of gold, silver or bronze, reports Reuter.

The 345 medals — 115 in each category — were carved from rocks cleared from the hillside behind Lillehammer when the ski jump arena was built. A metal band encloses the stone disc made of sparaguite.

One side of the stone is etched "The XXVII Olympic Winter Games" with the five Olympic rings and "Lillehammer '94" inscribed in metal.

The other side of the 10 cm (four inch) diameter medal has a metal pictogram of an athlete showing the particular sport and stylised snowflakes.

Lillehammer used stone in the 130 gram (4.58 oz) medals to stress the ancient roots of winter sport in Norway — the victory podiums are also made of huge chunks of 500-year-old ice carved from a Norwegian Glacier.

Medals at the 1992 Albertville Games were made mostly of crystal. Austrian Nordic skiing bronze medalist Stefan Kreiner dropped his and it shattered.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down. Includes a solution key for the crossword puzzle.

Cryptoquip puzzle grid with a 11x11 grid of letters and numbers.

CRYPTOQUIP RZSUSF QSEYRTZ GLOESVLG LFKYVI LW BTGG LMS HYI TVTLWQK LSGI MTUS LW HWVS OB Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN GARDENER GOT MARRIED, HIS BEST FRIEND WAS A MEMBER OF THE WEEDING. Today's Cryptoquip clue: U equals V 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.

Manuela goes out in style

AMAGASAKI, Japan, Feb 13: Manuela Maleeva-Fragniere bade farewell to tournament tennis on winning note here today when she brushed aside the challenge from Iva Majoli to win the 150,000-dollar Asia Open women's tennis tournament, reports AFP.

Determined to shine in her final tournament, the Bulgarian-born Swiss controlled the match from the baseline to take the first set in style against the 16-year-old rising Croatian star.

Maleeva-Fragniere, whose highest ranking was third in February 1985, succumbed to an array of powerful strokes off Majoli to lose the second, but bounced back from a 2-4 deficit in the final set to win 6-1, 4-6, 7-5.