

India trounce Bangladesh in schools hockey

CHANDIGARH, Dec 20: India continued their winning spree with yet another resounding victory, against Bangladesh, 7-1, in their last league match of the inaugural Asian schools hockey championship here today, reports PTI.

The hosts led 4-0 at half time. The Indians shot into lead in the very opening minute, with Preetinder Singh, Varinder Singh and Sukhwinder Singh combining to beat the entire Bangladesh defence. Varinder Singh then provided the finishing touch hammering the ball into the goal.

The Indian boys controlled the game for most of the match. Bangladesh had to be content with being the only team in the tournament to score a goal against the Indians. Sheikh Ramiz Ahmed came up with the lone goal for Bangladesh in the 61st minute.

For India, outside-left Chander Pal and inside-right Mukesh Kumar pumped in two goals each, while Alen, Varinder Singh and Deepak Sharma accounted for one goal each.

India got seven penalty corners of which two were converted. Bangladesh got five, all of which were wasted.

After this victory, India top the table with eight points from four matches, Bangladesh stand second with five points, two wins and a draw in four matches. The two teams now meet each other once again in the final tomorrow.

BEXIMCO U-16 soccer results

Sports Reporter

Rajshahi and Sunamganj won their respective openers in the BEXIMCO under-16 national football championship yesterday.

In the Natore zone, Rajshahi edged past Sirajganj by a solitary goal, thanks to a 17th minute strike in the first half from Sohel.

Sunamganj earned their victory without a fight as Chittagong failed to turn up in the Comilla zone encounter.

Biman Open squash results

Ram Jagadish and Ethola Lal moved into the final of the second Biman Open squash tournament at the Gulshan Club squash court yesterday, reports BSS.

Jagadish beat Sohel Hamid 9-8, 4-9, 9-1, 9-3 and Ethola Lal outplayed Muhi 9-6, 9-3, 9-0 in the semi-finals today.

The final will be held today, beginning at 5 pm.

Nuruddin al-Masud, secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism, will watch the final as chief guest.

Brazilian trio J-League bound

TOKYO, Dec 20: Three players from Brazilian club Palmeiras, including Zinho who played in the World Cup-winning team, are to join Japanese side Yokohama Flügels next year, reports Reuter.

The club said today midfielders Zinho and Sampaio as well as striker Evair, would join their spring training starting in February.

Nikkan Sports daily newspaper said the total transfer fees for the three players was estimated at eight million dollars, but the club was unavailable for comment.

Japan's professional J-League which started last year are eager to hunt big name players from Europe or South America to replace Brazil's Zico and former England captain Gary Lineker.

China complies with OCA

BEIJING, Dec 20: China announced today it had suspended 11 top athletes from competition for up to four years, formally accepting the findings of the Olympic Council of Asia that they used performance-enhancing drugs, reports Reuter.

The 11 Chinese athletes who failed dope tests at the Hiroshima Asian Games last October have been banned from competitions by their relative sports associations, the state-run China sports daily said in a brief front-page report.

The report said officials vowed to take unspecified "further steps" to curb doping, which Beijing maintains is an isolated problem and not officially sanctioned or organised as alleged by some trainers and athletes in the west.

The OCA this month stripped the 11 of their Asian Games medals after their urine samples showed traces of DHT, a performance enhancing hormone also called dehydrotestosterone that is banned by the International Olympic Committee.



A beaming Rameez Raja (standing second from right) captain of the Pakistan A team which arrived yesterday, seen at ZIA along with peers and manager Nasimul Ghani for whom it was the beginning of a happy walk down the memory lane. — Star photo

Pakistan first to arrive

Sports Reporter

A 14-member Pakistan team, led by Test discard Rameez Raja, arrived here yesterday to participate in the tournament SAARC cricket tournament, beginning at the Dhaka Stadium from Thursday.

Pakistan, who will field their second string side, will take on hosts Bangladesh on the inaugural day of the week-long meet which also involves India and Sri Lanka.

This is the second time Bangladesh the only nation in the sub-continent sans Test status, will stage the unofficial one-day championship following its first abortive attempt two years ago which was suspended midway due to political unrest resulting from the demolition of Babri Mosque in Ayodhya, India.

Raja, a veteran of 140 one-day international and 47 Tests for Pakistan, top a group of six specialist batsmen in the Pakistani squad.

Raja, who scored eight hundreds in one-day internationals and two in the Test and presently out of the national team, has been in fine nick, scoring consistently in the domestic circuit.

The former national opener, who captained Allied Bank recently achieved the distinction of being the first batsman to score 300 runs in an innings since 1972.

Raja, who had earlier visited Bangladesh twice — first as a member of the Omar Qureshi Eleven and then for the Asia Cup in 1988 — became the first player to reach the 300-mark in first class cricket after Javed Miandad scored 311 eighteen years ago.

The right-handed stylish bat, eagerly awaiting a Test recall, said, "The tournament is important for my bid to return to the national team."



It is going to be a tread down the memory lane for Ghani who played for PWD in the Dhaka league way back in 1967.

At the VIP lounge of ZIA on their arrival by a PIA flight, Ghani, chairman of the Pakistan's national selection committee, said, "Ours is a very strong side with a blend of new and seasoned cricketers. I have seen the list of Indian players and they are also a very balanced side."

Replying to a query, Ghani said, "Among the upcoming

players here, seamer Hasnain Qasem and off-spinner Saklain Mushtaq are really good."

Hasnain, who is regarded only second to Waqar Younis in terms of sheer pace, finished with a haul of 12 for 58 for United Bank Limited against Railway in the Patrons' Trophy at Lahore recently.

The 21-year-old right-hand batsman, who started his first class career in 1992, opens the attack along with his skipper Waqar for United Bank.

But Saklain Mushtaq, a right-arm spinner of PIA team who can produce a lot of variation, is a strong contender for a Test slot, said Nasimul Ghani.

"We are confident of winning the title here," said the balding manager, who expressed his ignorance about the standard of Bangladeshi cricket but promptly added, "I'm delighted to hear that many Pakistanis are playing in the domestic cricket of Bangladesh."

"We had five days to form a team," said Ghani whose squad was taken to the Dhaka Sheraton Hotel from the airport.

The Pakistan team had a practice session at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday afternoon.

Meanwhile, two other participants — India and Sri Lanka — will arrive in the capital at midnight tomorrow.

PAKISTAN SQUAD

M Rameez Raja, M Sajed Ali, Ghulam Ali, Zahed Fazal, Ijaz Ahmed (jr), Mohmod Hamid, Zafar Iqbal, Naem Ashraf, Mohsin Kamal, Aamer Naser, Hasnain Karim, Nadeem Khan, Saqlain Mushtaq and Razaqat Ali.

The officials are: Nasimul Ghani (manager), Eric Johnson (asst manager) and Shakil Khan (umpire).

Mullick, the mar-cricket

Sports Reporter

Ataul Huq Mullick's training as a football referee served him well as the infinitely familiar figure in country's sports arena celebrated his recent selection as one of the three local umpires for the SAARC tournament by running across the turf after a group of irate cricket fans chased him up at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium yesterday during Bangladesh national cricket team's trial match.

Mullick's athleticism came into play in a face in the name of some practice for the freshly-formed Bangladesh national cricket team, which for statisticians' sake, won their match against conglomerate of foreign cricketers playing in Dhaka.

Akram Khan's Bangladesh did some boosting, if any at all, for their morale with a nine-wicket victory.

Chasing 130 for victory only in 43 overs, national cricketers reached the goal in about 37 overs for the loss of Jahan-gir's wicket.

Al Shahriar, tried as opener, succeeded as the young Brothers batsman toasted his maiden call into the national squad with a polished unbeaten innings of 54.

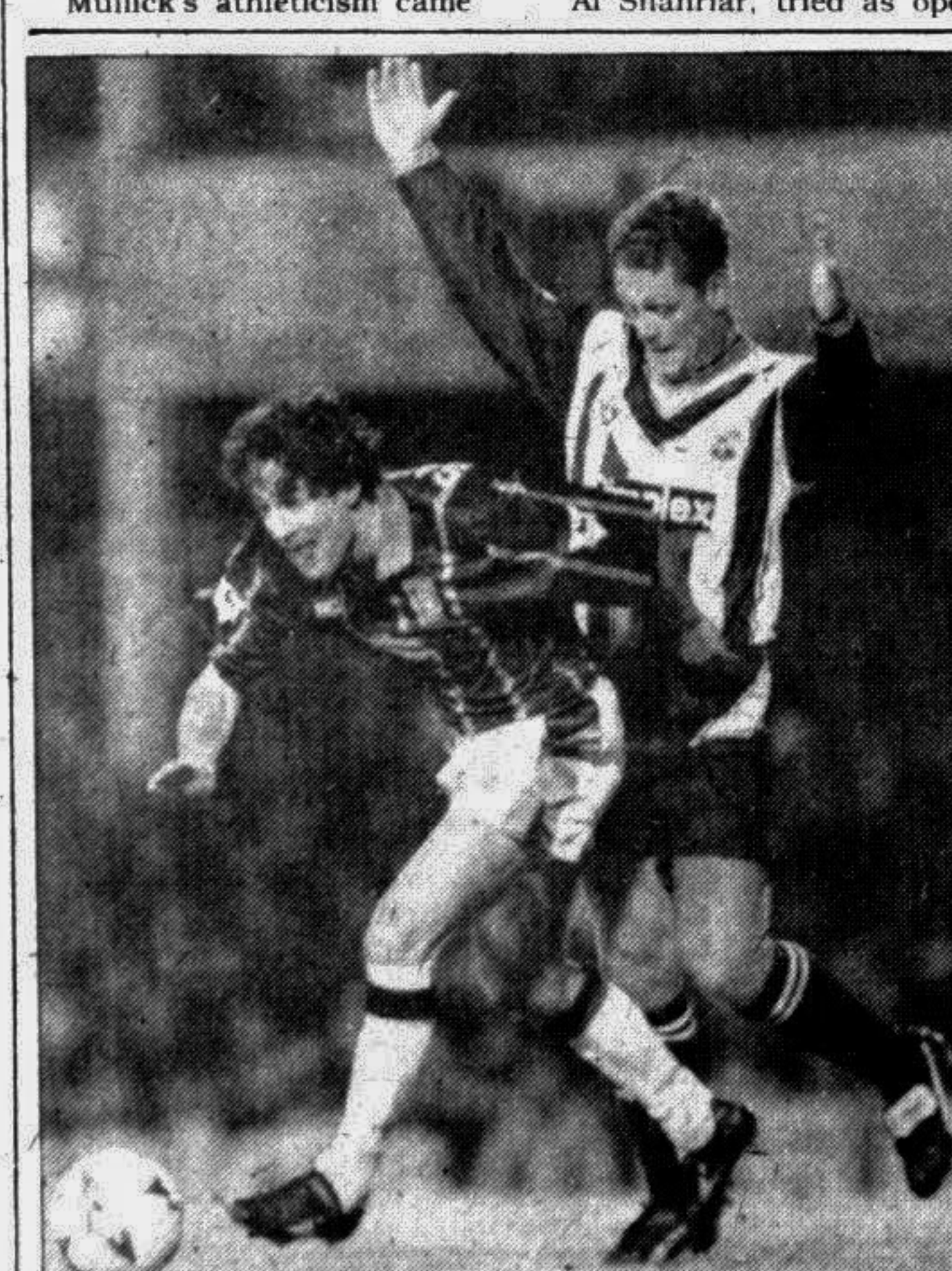
Naimur Rahman, who too has made it to the national side for the first time, kept Rokan company with an aggressive 62 not out.

But the atmosphere aimed at giving a fell of competitive cricket to the national cricketers was marred in the morning by some nonsensical umpiring decisions and a want of enough foreign cricketers to form an eleven.

Although a couple of local players were drafted to save the broth and get the play started, umpire Mullick's incompetence could not be hidden as it surfaced in the course of the day's first innings.

He first passed a very debatable leg before decision against Aabid Hanif and then filled his cup with a highly ludicrous decision against Aamir Malik. He ruled Malik run out when even the fielders did not bother to appeal. When the disconsolate foreigners were bowled out for 138 in 41.5 overs some not so patriotic cricket lovers set Mullick on a retributive course.

The harassed man-in-white, was perhaps still running when the match resumed after which with another official standing for him.



Aston Villa's Dean Saunders (L) stoops to avoid a challenge from Southampton's Jim Magilton during their English Premier league match in Southampton yesterday. Southampton won 2-1. — AFP photo

Gaudino arrested

FRANKFURT, Dec 20: Maurizio Gaudino, a member of Germany's World Cup soccer team, has been arrested on suspicion of dealing in stolen goods, authorities said Thursday, reports AP.

Gaudino was arrested in Munich shortly after midnight as he was leaving a studio following an appearance in a popular late-night television talk show, police said.

He was taken Thursday to be interrogated in Mannheim, south of Frankfurt.

Dhanmondi bleach Evergreen

Sports Reporter

Dhanmondi Club thrashed Evergreen Sporting Club by a massive margin of 115 runs in the lone Yamaha First Division cricket league fixture yesterday.

Sent in to bat first, Dhanmondi amassed a mammoth 236 for two wickets in their 45-over quota, thanks to a 128-run stand for the second wicket between Nehaluddin and Shabbir Khan plus a rapid-fire innings from Mirza Akbar, who hit two sixes and four fours in his 33-ball 44.

After adding 45 runs for the first wicket with opening partner Morshed Alam, Nehal teamed up with Shabbir Khan and took the score to 173 before Shabbir left for a 114-ball 72 in to the last ball of the 40th over.

In the remaining five overs, Dhanmondi rattled 63 runs with Akbar going ruthlessly after the Evergreen bowlers.

When the last ball of the Dhanmondi innings was bowled to Evergreen's great relief, the fate of the match was already sealed.

Opener Nehal, who saw the innings through, remained unbeaten on a patient 58, made of 126 balls and three fours.

Chasing an imposing target of over five runs an over for victory, Evergreen got into trouble very early in their innings as they lost five wickets for only 33 runs with Dhanmondi skipper Imran claiming four of them.

Opening batsman Cezanne kept his head down for a painfully patient 99-ball 35 to guide Evergreen to somewhat a respectable score. When the last Evergreen batsman got back to the dressing room to the third ball of the 41st over, the scoreboard read 121.

Predictably Imran finished as the most successful Dhanmondi bowler conceding 20 runs in seven overs for his four victims while Nehal took two for 15 to crown a fine day of cricket.

SK Shubhro and SM Ziyad got one wicket each.

Acme Div II cricket

Sports Reporter

ASM Khaled once again shone with the bat to pave the path for Bangladesh Boys' 34-run victory over Orient Sporting club in the Acme Second Division cricket league at the Dhanmondi Club ground yesterday.

The Bangladesh Boys opener stroked a fine 52 as his side, opting to bat first, made 186 all out in 37.1 overs.

Kumar Sen and Zahidul Ahsan contributed 35 and 23 respectively to the handsome total.

In reply, Orient could manage 152 in 37.2 overs with Mahbub Khan and Shafiq Azam scoring 37 and 33 respectively.

In the other match of the day at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium, Masumuddin made a fluent 48 to guide Kakrail Boys to a facile six-wicket win over Spreadeagles.

Chasing Spreadeagles' 133 in 37 overs, Kakrail posted the winning runs in 30 overs, making 134 for four wickets.

World champs top FIFA rankings

ZURICH, Switzerland, Dec 20: Brazil ended the year as the world's top football side, according to governing body FIFA's standings, reports AFP.

The World Cup winners take over from last year's winners Germany.

Spain pipped Sweden and World Cup finalists Italy for second place as European sides took eight out of the top ten spots.

The biggest improvement of the year came from Croatia, recent conquerors of Italy in the European Championship qualifiers, who shot up from 122nd in the world to 60th.

Jack Charlton's Republic of Ireland came in a superb ninth while England ended up in 18th as Britain's best team, Asian interest centred on Japan in 36th place and China in 40th.

Standings:

1. Brazil	67.18	points
2. Spain	61.80	
3. Sweden	61.41	
4. Italy	61.35	
5. Germany	61.25	
6. Netherlands	59.91	
7. Switzerland	58.30	
8. Norway	58.11	
9. Republic of Ireland	57.63	
10. Argentina	56.67	

Delage in trouble

PARIS, Dec 20: A 42-year-old Frenchman trying to become the first person to swim alone across the Atlantic Ocean has come down with a bad case of seasickness, slowing his progress, a spokesman said on Monday, reports Reuter.

Guy Delage has been spending most of his time on his raft rather than in the water since setting out on Friday for the Caribbean island of Martinique from the Cape Verde Islands off West Africa, the spokesman said.

Pakistan crush Kiwis by five wickets

Waqar's maiden hat-trick

EAST LONDON, Dec 20: A first hat-trick at international level for pace bowler Waqar Younis set up Pakistan for a convincing five-wicket win over New Zealand in their Mandela Trophy match on Monday, reports Reuter.

Man of the match Waqar took four for 33 as New Zealand were dismissed for 172 in 47.3 overs. Only opener Blair Hartland, with a confident 44, and captain Ken Rutherford, with a fluent 30 from 46 balls, made useful contributions.

"I had a feeling before the game that I might do something," Waqar said afterwards. "I've been on a hat-trick seven or eight times before without getting one. I really do enjoy hitting the stumps and I'm now looking forward to the final where I hope to get a few more wickets in a Pakistan win."

Pakistan were set on their way to a fifth win in six matches in the quadrangular tournament by openers Aamir Sohail and Saeed Awar who put on 97 for the first-wicket.

Sohail made a forceful 52 and Anwar a more solid 41 and despite a slight falter in mid-innings, Pakistan cantered to victory with 11 overs and one ball remaining.

Left-hander Sohail hit nine fours in his 62-ball innings before being caught by wicket-keeper Adam Parore off the medium pace of Chris Harris.

Anwar fell in the next over, driving at the off-spin of Shane Thomson for Parore to take his second catch of the innings.

Pakistan's victory charge stuttered slightly as they lost three more wickets in the space of 29 runs before Ijaz Ahmed (25 not out) and Rashid Latif (eight not out) saw them past the New Zealand total.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the Mandela Trophy 50-overs-a-side cricket match between New Zealand and Pakistan at Buffalo Park on Monday:

Fall of wickets: 1-36; 2-38; 3-62; 4-108; 5-132; 6-136; 7-145; 8-172; 9-172.				
Bowling				
Waqar	8.3	1	33	4
Aaqib	10	2	31	1
Kabir Khan	10	1	32	2
Raza	7	0	25	1
Malik	5	0	30	0
Sohail	7	0	20	2

PAKISTAN:

Anwar c Parore b Thomson	41
Sohail c Parore b Harris	52
Basit c Hartland b Priest	12
Inamuddin Haq run out	15
Malik c So'a b Priest	14
Ijaz not out	25
Latif not out	8
Extras: (lb-2, w-5, nb-1)	78
Total: (for five wickets, 38.5 overs)	172

Fall of wickets: 1-97; 2-102; 3-122; 4-126; 5-51.

Did not bat: Akram Raza, Waqar Younis, Kabir Khan, Aaqib Javed.

Bowling				
Pringle	8	0	36	0
So'a	6	1	26	0
De Groen	4	0	30	0
Thomson	10	0	34	1
Harris	4	0	15	1
Priest	6	0	27	2
Fleming	0.5	0	5	0

Results: Pakistan won by five wickets.

Azhar plays safe: Holford

NEW DELHI, Dec 20: Mohammed Azharuddin is a great, stylish batsman. But is he not a defensive captain? Almost all the famed former cricketers might say a firm yes though Indian cricket bosses and selectors may like to disagree, writes PTI.

But ask the West Indian manager David Holford who admits his team would have been in more trouble in the second Test in Nagpur but for the Indian skipper's defensive approach.

After a surprisingly easy victory in almost a similar situation at Mohali in the third and final Test which enabled the West Indians to square the series and go back with their pride intact, Holford spoke frankly to PTI as his boys celebrated the victory.

A systems analyst by profession and a cricketer with 22 Test caps, Holford was analytical in all his observations — from the Indian captaincy to the development of the modern game and the effect of one-dayers on the Tests — the purest form of the game.

Holford is of the opinion that Azharuddin, who is his most favourite player in terms of how he bats and watching him bat, is "more defensive". He says his observation is based on the Nagpur Test match where, he (Azhar) should have been more attacking on the fourth day afternoon.

"That situation was very much similar to that of ours at Mohali. Naturally we were forced to try to win the match because we were one-down."

"He plays too safe. If he had gone ahead and really attacked the bowling and had made an early declaration by the end of the fourth day or early next day, we would have had serious problems and lots of difficulty in saving the match," the West Indian manager says.

But Holford says, "Apart from that I won't say that he is that much defensive. I have seen him bowling with three fielders in attacking positions in and around the bat. He did quite a competent job."

The West Indian manager has no hesitation in declaring that Sachin Tendulkar, now deputy to Azharuddin, would "make an excellent captain when his time comes."

"Sachin is obviously more positive and aggressive in attitude. You can see that when he is batting. He takes the fight to the bowlers. Azhar is more cautious."

Holford says, "his (Tendulkar's) bowling is indicative of how he thinks. He is a very tricky bowler, always trying to outfox the batsmen."

"He will make an excellent captain when his time comes," the manager, with a computer brain and keen observation skills, said.

PARIS, Dec 20: World Cup star Hristo Stoichkov of Bulgaria was chosen as Europe's footballer-of-the-year on Monday, reports Reuter.

Stoichkov, who plays for Spanish champions Barcelona, collected 210 points in a vote by 49 European journalists, organised by the French weekly magazine France Football.

Last year's winner Roberto Baggio of Italy was second with 136 points with another Italian, Paolo Maldini, third with 109.

Stoichkov, 28, was joint top scorer in the World Cup finals last July in the United States. He and Russian Oleg Salenko each scored six goals.

With Barcelona, he won his fourth consecutive Spanish Championship title and helped them reach the final of the European Cup, where they lost to AC Milan last May.

As famous for his scoring instincts as for his hot temper, Stoichkov helped Bulgaria reach the last four in the World Cup finals, knocking out holders Germany in the quarter-finals.

A volatile player, Stoichkov received an indefinite ban from soccer as a teenager. But he recovered and matured and he has scored 24 goals in 52 appearances for Bulgaria since making his international debut in September 1987.

At his best, he is a potential match-winner with great tactical vision and a ferocious shot, especially with his favoured left foot.

Stoichkov named European footballer-of-the-year

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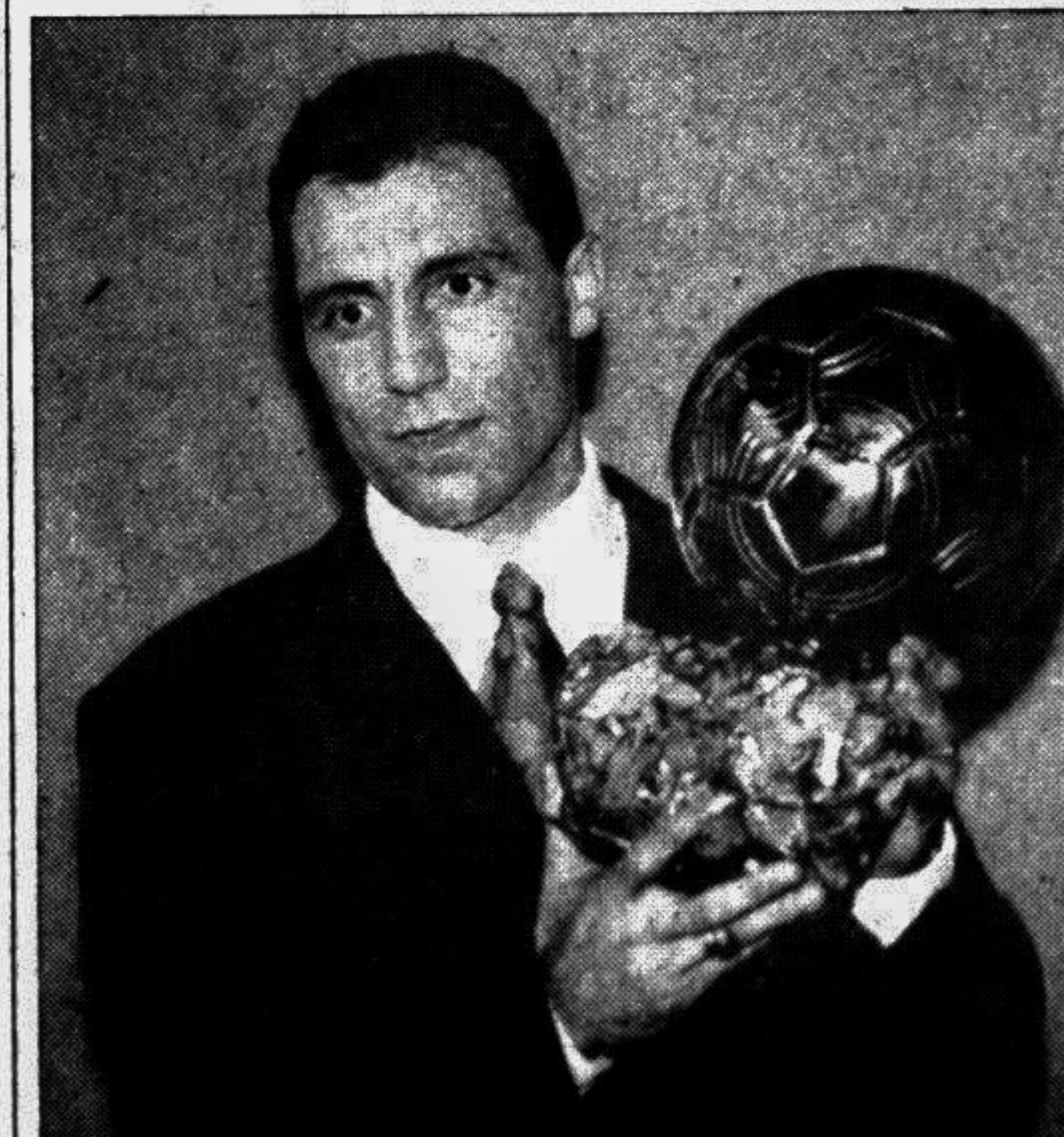
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His most dangerous rival, Juventus player Baggio, who shone in the World Cup finals despite missing a penalty in the shoot-out won by Brazil in the final, said last week that he thought Stoichkov deserved the award.

Two players from England's Premier league appeared in the top 20.

German striker Juergen Klinsmann was sixth with 43 points while Manchester United's French forward Eric Cantona was 13th on four points.

TOPTEN	
1. Hristo Stoichkov (Bulgaria, Barcelona)	210 points
2. Roberto Baggio (Italy, Juventus)	136
3. Paolo Maldini (Italy, AC Milan)	109
4. Equal: Tomas Brodin (Sweden, Parma)	68
4. Equal: Gheorghe Hagi (Romania, Barcelona)	68
6. Juergen Klinsmann (Germany, Tottenham)	43
7. Thomas Ravelli (Sweden, Gothenburg)	21
8. Jari Litmanen (Finland, Ajax)	12
9. Equal: Marcel Desailly (France, AC Milan)	8
10. Equal: Dejan Savicevic (Montenegro, AC Milan)	8



Barcelona's Bulgarian international Hristo Stoichkov poses with the Golden Ball award after being voted the best European player for 1994 in Paris on Dec 19. — AFP photo

Palmeiras' 2nd

SAO PAULO, Dec 20: Palmeiras won the Brazilian Championship for the second consecutive year on Sunday in a bad-tempered clash with Corinthians during which three players were sent from the field, reports Reuter.

The second leg match ended in a 1-1 draw with Palmeiras winning 4-2 on aggregate.

Corinthians, fullback Branco and Palmeiras defender Zinho, teammates in the Brazil side who beat Italy on penalties in the World Cup final in July, were both sent off after clashing in the second half of a bad-tempered game between the two Sao Paulo arch-rivals.