

Shah Alam retires Rifles nat'l kabaddi champs

Sports Reporter
Skipper Shah Alam ended his distinguished career on a high as Bangladesh Rifles clinched the 21st national kabaddi title by defeating Bangladesh Ansars 11-6 in the final at the kabaddi court of the Outer Stadium yesterday.

It was the 14th national crown for the Riflemen since the championships inception in 1973. It also proved to be a fitting farewell for the Rifles and national team captain Alam, who decided to call 16 a day so ending a colourful career spanning 18 years.

Bangladesh Rifles qualified for the final outplaying Magura 49-15 while Ansars eliminated last year's champions Bangladesh Police 18-8.

Abdul Jalil of Dhaka was adjudged the best player and Magura was named the best disciplined team of the championship. The 'Ali Sports' player-of-final award went to Tariqul Islam of Bangladesh rifles.

State Minister for Youth and Sports Sadeque Hossain witnessed the final match as the chief guest and distributed prizes. Bangladesh Kabaddi Federation president M Azizul Haq was also present on the occasion.

ROLL OF HONOUR

Year	Champions	Runners-up
1973	Dinajpur and Faridpur (Joint champions)	
1974	Comilla	Khulna
1975	Tangail	Jessore
1976	Comilla	Tangail
1977	(BDR)	Tangail
1978	Tangail	BDR
1979	BDR	Khulna
1980	BDR	Dhaka Metropolis
1981	BDR and Tangail (Joint champions)	
1982	Police AC	Comilla
1983	BDR	Police
1984	BDR	Police
1985	BDR	Dhaka Metropolis
1986	BDR	Police
1987	BDR	Ansars
1988	BDR	Ansars
1989	BDR	Ansars
1990	Fire Service	Ansars
1991	BDR	Police
1992	Police	BDR
1993	BDR	Ansars

Records tumble

MANAUS, Brazil, May 27: Brazil's Cleide Amaral set a new women's record Friday for the 100-metre dash in the South American Athletic Championship, reports AP.

Amaral finished with a meet record of 11.8 seconds, qualifying her for the World Track and Field Championships in Göteborg, Sweden later this year.

Jose Luiz Barbosa of Brazil broke his own 1990 track record in the men's 800-metre run with a time of 1 minute 46.16 seconds. Barbosa has already gained a spot in the World Championships.

In the 400-metre men's hurdle, Brazil's Eronilde Araujo snapped his own South America record with a time of 48.63 seconds, besting his 1994 time. He has also qualified for the championships in Sweden.

Sampras suffers setback

ROUEN, France, May 27: Pete Sampras, the world number two, was beaten by Frenchman Thierry Guardiola in an invitational tournament here on Friday, just days before the French Open, reports AFP.

But the American, beaten 6-7 (6/10), 6-3, 2-6 on clay, was not too worried.

"I was not too disappointed with the result," he said. "It's more important for me to go for my shots and I'm very happy to be 100 per cent physically fit after my injury."

Sampras, who suffered an ankle injury at the recent Monte Carlo Open, has never won the French Open, which gets underway next week.

He said: "I tried to be aggressive but it's clear that this surface is not ideal for me. Even though my game at the moment is not very good, I'm still hopeful for the French Open."

"It's an event I'd like to win, although it's not yet an obsession."

Guardiola, who sent down 22 aces, faces Andre Agassi, who defeated fellow American Jim Courier, in today's final.

Daorung defends WBA crown

BANGKOK, May 27: Daorung MP Petroleum of Thailand retained his World Boxing Association bantamweight title Saturday by salvaging a draw against challenger Lakhin CP Gym, reports AP.

Judge Anselmo Bonfanti of Venezuela scored the 12-round bout in the southern city of Nakhon Si Thammarat 116-114 in Daorung's favour, while Hiroyuki Makisumi of Japan favoured Lakhin, Daorung's countryman, 115-114.

Moo Hong Moon of South Korea rated the fighters even at 115-115.

Daorung takes his boxing name from one of his sponsors, while Lakhin's ring moniker comes from the gym where he trains.



Players and officials of Bangladesh Rifles who clinched the 21st national kabaddi title beating Bangladesh Ansars by 11-6 points in the final at the court of the Outer Stadium yesterday.

— Star photo

Croatia cruise to finals Sweden ride on Edberg

DUESSELDORF, Germany, May 27: Stefan Edberg rolled past Germany's Karsten Braasch in straight sets Saturday, leaving Sweden on the verge of clinching a berth in the World Team Cup finals, reports AP.

Edberg, the former world No 1, needed just one hour and 18 minutes to beat Braasch 7-5, 6-3, as Sweden took a 1-0 lead against Germany at the 1.8 million dollars tournament.

Germany, the defending champions, sent former Wimbledon winner Michael Stich against Larsson in the second singles Thursday.

Braasch, who lost all his singles, was the hero when Germany stunned the Americans in its opening match.

Braasch teamed up with Patrik Kuehnen in doubles as the unsung Germans upset Australian Open winners Jared Palmer and Richey Reneberg in the deciding doubles.

On Friday Goran Ivanisevic beat Russian Yevgeny Kafelnikov 6-4, 7-6 (7-4), helping send Croatia into finals.

He beat his racket against the court so often that the last outburst led to a penalty point, setting up a match point the Croatian exploited.

But it was Sasa Hirszon who

led Croatia's upset over Russia in the Red Group match, staging an amazing comeback against Andrei Chesnokov.

Hirszon, the world No 280 and winless at the tournament, was down 4-6, 1-5 and faced four match points against Chesnokov, an experienced Davis Cup player.

But when Chesnokov doublefaulted away two of those points, Hirszon roared back to win 4-6, 7-6 (7-4), 6-2 against the world No 44.

Croatia and Russia both finished at 2-1, but Croatia won the head-to-head matchup and will face the Blue Group winner Sunday.

Sergi Bruguera beat Richard Krajicek, 6-1, 6-4, in his last tuneup for the French Open as Spain swept both singles against the Netherlands to grab a Red Group win. Both teams finished at 1-2.

Spain's Alberto Berasategui also beat Jacco Eltingh of the Netherlands 6-4, 6-4, while Eltingh and Paul Haarhuis combined to win the doubles against Berasategui and Carlos Costa, 6-1, 6-2.

Bruguera has used the event as a springboard to win the last two titles at the French Open, which begins Monday. He is 13-2 in singles in his World Team Cup appearances.

Draw does Agassi a favour



PARIS, May 27: If the luck of the draw is any guide, Andre Agassi may be writing tennis history at the French Open where he could become the first male player to win Grand Slam titles on four different surfaces, reports Reuters.

The American world number one was given every chance of reaching the semifinals without working up too much of a sweat when the

draw was made on Friday for the two-week event starting on Monday.

Agassi may never have heard of former French Rugby Union captain Jean-Pierre Rives but he has every reason to be grateful drew the numbers out of the bowl at Roland Garros.

Agassi, who is trying to add the French Open title to the Wimbledon, Australian and US Open crowns he has already won in his career, will play German Karsten Braasch in the first round.

On the basis of present clay court form, arch-rival and fellow-American Pete Sampras has an altogether tougher looking field to face in the bottom half of the draw.

Sampras starts against a tricky clay court player in Gilbert Schaller of Austria, ranked just outside the top 20, and is likely to meet another daunting slow court expert in Jonas Bjorkman of Sweden in the next round.

Swiss Olympic champion Marc Rosset is his scheduled fourth round opponent and, worse still, reigning champion Sergi Bruguera of Spain is lurking as a prospective last-round rival.

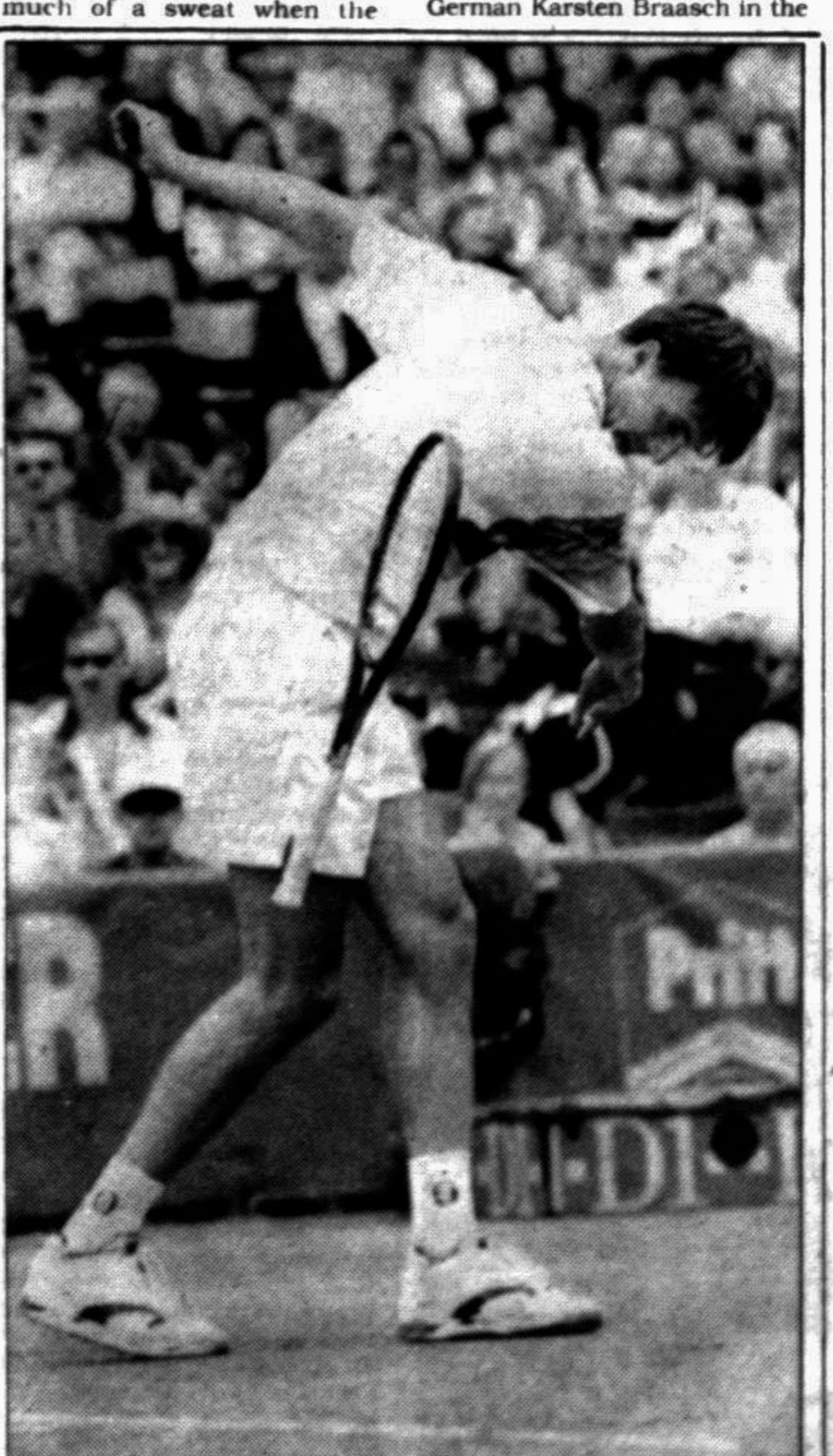
Bruguera, gunning for a third consecutive French Open title, has yet another meeting with Australian Patrick Rafter, this time in the first round.

The two met at Roland Garros last year, with Bruguera a comfortable three-set winner, and were paired again at Wimbledon where the Spaniard won a classic encounter 13-11 in the fifth set of a riveting match.

The scheduled quarter-final-line-up in the men's singles is Agassi v Ferreira, Ivanisevic v Thomas Muster, Michael Chang v Boris Becker and Sampras v Bruguera.

Fifth seed Muster, looking to extend an amazing run of five tournaments and 28 matches without defeat on clay, plays a qualifier in the first round as Ivanisevic and Chang. But Becker has a tough game against Javier Frana of Argentina. Unseeded Andrei Medvedev of Ukraine, feared by all the seeds, ended up harmlessly in the middle of the draw but could be a third round opponent of last year's losing finalist Alberto Berasategui of Spain.

Another dangerous underseeded player, Stefan Edberg of Sweden, was drawn against Fabrice Santoro of France, who beat him in the Monte Carlo Open last month.



Croatian Goran Ivanisevic vents his anger throwing his racket to the ground as a close call went against him during his World Team Cup match with Russian Yevgeni Kafelnikov in Duesseldorf on May 26. Ivanisevic won the match 6-4, 7-6.

— AFP/UNB photo

Liverpool's belated reverence!

LIVERPOOL, May 27: Liverpool revealed here on Saturday they are to erect a memorial to the victims of the 1985 Heysel Stadium disaster, reports AFP.

The monument in the New Kop Stand at Anfield will be a replica of a sculpture in Juventus' Stadium in Turin.

It depicts a soccer terrace and commemorates the death of 39 Italian fans amid crowd trouble before the European Cup final between the two clubs in Brussels on May 29.

"Heysel is something that will remain with Liverpool for a lifetime," said Liverpool chief executive Peter Robinson.

The relationship between the two clubs is fantastic and we will be inviting officials over from Juventus along with their supporters' groups to unveil the memorial," he added.

Monday is the 10th anniversary of the disaster but the sculpture will not be ready for about 14 months.

A number of Liverpool fans were convicted in voluntary manslaughter for their part in the Heysel riot but none served any further time in jail beyond that spent on remand.

The presence in the men's

Susanti, Bango bid 'bye'

LAUSANNE, Switzerland, May 27: China caused a double upset at the World Badminton Championships here Friday when both Olympic champion Susi Susanti and world number two Bango Soo-Hyun crashed out in the semifinals, reports AFP.

World number six, Ye Zhaoying, created the first sensation by beating Indonesia's Susanti 5-11, 11-8, 11-2, her teammate and 5/8 seed Han Jingna defeated South Korea's Bango 11-6, 11-4.

The presence in the men's

semifinals between European and Asia is split as Indonesia's world number one Heryanto Arbi, South Korea's Park Sung Woo, and Denmark's Thomas Stuer-Lauridsen and Poul Erik Hoyer Larsen won through.

But the major shocks were in the women's event as China assured another gold medal. China had beaten Indonesia in the final of the Sudirman Cup, the world mixed team championships, on Sunday.

Ye, the 1995 Swedish Open winner, varied her shots and took advantage as Susanti

netted a backhand on match point as the Swedes led 14-13 in the second set. Antonsson said afterwards: "That was the final. We were beaten by the champions."

Lund and Thomsen meet unseeded compatriots Jens Erikson and Helen Kirkegaard in the final.

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