

SAF snippets

MADRAS, Dec 26: Sri Lanka ended Bangladesh's hope of a bronze in the men's volleyball after beating them in straight three sets at the Indoor Stadium here today, reports agencies. The superior Lankans disposed of their counterpart 15-8, 15-4, 16-14 in 82 minutes. Meanwhile, Zafar Ali of Pakistan brought joy to his camp when he secured the gold in the 108kg category in the weightlifting championships here today. Zafar lifted a total of 320kg (snatch 145+jerk 175). This is Pakistan's second gold in the championship, the first having been bagged by Shujaiddin Malik in the 70kg. India's gold medal hope, S Kishore Kumar was eliminated from the competition as he could not clear 185kg, called by him in the clean and jerk. Kishore was trying for a higher weight as the Pakistani had already hoisted 175 in the jerk (second try), and had 145 in the snatch, five kg more than Kishore's effort. Kishore failed to clear 185 in his first two attempts. Then it was Zafar's turn. But he too could not lift it. Tension mounted as Kishore came on to the stage for his last try and when he failed, the silence was deafening. Sri Lanka's N N Athukorla got the silver and Bangladesh's Rahmat Ali the bronze.

Indian spikers snatch gold

MADRAS, Dec 26: An inspired India pulled off a thrilling four-set victory over defending champions Pakistan in their last round-robin match to regain the gold medal in the SAF Games men's volleyball championship at the Indoor Stadium, here today, reports PTI. The Indians, who had suffered a shock defeat at the hands of Sri Lanka's staged a dramatic comeback to shatter Pakistani hopes of retaining the title with a pulsating 15-9, 9-15, 15-7, 15-13 victory in a marathon tussle that lasted 132 minutes. The hosts, who were tied with Pakistan winning three matches each, were declared victors by virtue of a better set average. Pakistan had to be content with the silver while the bronze was claimed by Sri Lanka.

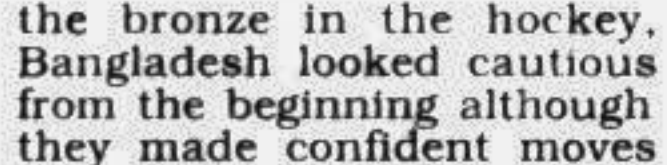
Emerson amerces Flugels

TOKYO, Dec 26: A four-goal blast by Brazilian striker Emerson swept Bellmare Hiratsuka into the Asian Cup Winners Cup final at the expense of holders and J-League rivals Yokohama Flugels, reports AFP. Emerson was the star of remarkable semifinal at Hiratsuka, near Tokyo, last night, that saw four penalty awards and needed sudden death play-off time added to get the 4-3 result. The 22-year-old Brazilian scored all his side's goals, including two from the penalty spot. Bellmare now meet Iraqi side Talaba in the final in Yokohama on Wednesday. Talaba's Kuwaiti opponents Kazma withdrew from the competition in a political protest showing lingering animosity since the 1990 Gulf war. Kazma claimed 600 Kuwaitis are still being held prisoner in Baghdad. But there was no politics to mar the all Japanese soccer clash on a bitterly cold Christmas night. Emerson scored with penalties in the 14th and 44th minutes — the first for a foul by Flugels sweeper Naoto Otake and the second for a handball by substitute defender Yasuhiro Hato — to give Bellmare a 2-0 half-time lead. But 10 minutes into the second half, the Flugels Brazilian import Evar also scored from the penalty spot after Bellmare midfielder Simao brought down Japanese Olympic team captain Masakiyo Masuzono. Emerson completed his hat-trick in the 71st minute, breaking through the centre of the Flugels defence to shoot home. The contest then looked over. But the introduction of 19-year-old striker Shinya Mitsuoka changed the game. His sixth goal of the competition, a low drive from 12 yards, gave the Flugels new hope at 3-2 down with six minutes remaining. In the dying seconds, Mitsuoka raced into the penalty area and was brought down by two defenders. The Chinese referee Yu Jing Yin had no hesitation awarding the fourth penalty of the night which Evar smashed in to make it 3-3. Emerson had the final word, scoring a brilliant winner in the second minute of the sudden death extra time. The ball was crossed from the left, the Brazilian collected the ball on the edge of the penalty area, controlled it, turned and struck a half-volley into the top corner. By that time the Iraqis had left the stadium.

Bangladesh bag bronze

MADRAS, Dec 26: Bangladesh won the bronze after playing a one-all drawn encounter with Sri Lanka in the hockey competition of the SAF Games at the Mayor Radhakrishnan Stadium here this afternoon, reports BSS. Bangladesh led the first half 1-0 in a dreary display on the newly laid astro-turf of the magnificent hockey stadium before a capacity crowd who thronged there mainly to witness the scheduled India-Pakistan match later. Bangladesh, who won six penalty corners against Sri Lanka's four could utilise only one of the three penalty corners they got in the first half. Sri Lanka also scored from penalty corner. The introduction of hockey in the SAF Games for the first time since its inception in 1984 from Nepal has not only infused lot of interests and enthusiasm but also gave the SAF Games it-

self a greater dimension internationally as the two world hockey giants Pakistan and India locked horns. As a draw was enough for at times. But the spirited Lankans foiled their attacks with fast counter moves. In the sixth minute, they missed a chance due to fumbling by their forwards. In the 25th minute, Bangladesh ace player Khurshid Alam scored from a penalty corner from the goalmouth melee. His hard hit ball entered the cage after deflecting a Sri Lanka defender's stick. In the second half, Bangladesh failed to convert three penalty corners in a row and the Lankans continued to level the score. The Lankans won a penalty corner in the 56th minute of the match and equalised after their forward S J Vandalan converted magnificently. Bangladesh then tried to score the match winner but failed. The Lankans also came close to scoring in the 65th minute but their efforts went awry due to poor finishing.



the bronze in the hockey, Bangladesh looked cautious from the beginning although they made confident moves

Pfister still furious

From Al-Amin... MADRAS, Dec 26: Ever-dependable national custodian Mohammed Ponir and a cool, composed Masud Rana helped Bangladesh into the final of the football competition of the seventh SAF Games with a 5-4 tie-break win over Sri Lanka at the Nehru Stadium here on Monday. After a nerve-wracking 120-minute showdown followed by a 3-3 deadlock in the regulation penalty shootout, during which a handsome number of Bangladeshi supporters painfully observed two brilliant saves by Ponir going in vain, Bangladesh finally emerged from a living nightmare as Rana converted the deciding twelve-yarder in the sudden-death period to end the gripping drama. After Masud Rana had sent the ball into the left-hand corner of the net, a Thousand or so Bangladeshi students, donned in the native green-and-red attire, along with the officials and athletes in the stands burst into rapturous jubilation. Although Masud Rana drove the final nail into the Sri Lankan coffin, it was Ponir who deserved all the credit for setting the stage for his colleague with his enviable show under the bar. The ever-smiling Ponir who along with his Lankan counterpart Lalith Weerasinghe, stepped into the middle in the tie-breaker after a goalless 120 minutes, promptly proved his superiority when he gathered from the first spot kick taken by ace Sri Lankan striker Amanullah. But defender Jewel Rana squandered the chance of taking the lead when his feeble shot went wide of the mark. However, undaunted by the setback, Ponir saved another to set the stage for Manik to convert the fifth shot for a victory. But alas, that was not to happen as the substitute midfielder blasted

the ball straight to a watchful Weerasinghe forcing the match into sudden death. In the sudden death situation Mohammed Kabeer of Sri Lanka and midfielder Arman of Bangladesh stepped up to make it 4-4. But Ramlan shot the ball wide outside the right hand post to set up Masud Rana for the winning shot. The spine-chilling penalty shoot-out inclusive, the 120-minute encounter was a treat to watch with attacks and counter attacks from both sides. Bangladesh dominated most of the proceedings. But it was the Sri Lankan team which created more easy chances. For Bangladesh Arman struck the first salvo in the 34th minute with a neat placing shot from inside the box. But a flamboyant Weerasinghe denied him with a spectacular diving save. Two minutes later Arman, the diminutive midfielder, tested Weerasinghe with a gem of a corner from the right which was almost swung into the post before the Sri Lankan custodian collected the ball in his second attempt. On the other hand Amanullah, the speedy Sri Lankan striker, deprived his side a 41st minute lead shooting the ball straight to Ponir from close. In the second half



OTTO PFISTER, the German coach of the national team, started with blasting the organisers for forcing the team to play three matches in five days. "I'm not ready to kill my boys," said a furious Pfister. Besides, he also added that Sri Lanka had played a far better game than their previous match against India. Bangladesh, who had earlier made to three finals in the regional meet without any success will take on hosts India at the same venue on Wednesday at 1 pm. India beat Nepal in the second semifinals 3-0. After a barren first half Bijoyan opened the winners' account in the 76th minute before Champan pumped in two more in quick succession to complete the rout.

World champs stunned

MADRAS, Dec 26: Hosts India upset arch-rivals Pakistan 5-2 in a high-quality clash of the hockey giants here today to win the most coveted gold medal of the South Asian Federation (SAF) Games, reports AFP. Mercurial striker Dhanraj Pillay slammed three goals and winger Mukesh Kumar chipped in with two as India defied pre-match predictions to record their biggest ever win against the world champions. Pakistan, who needed only a draw to take the title on a superior goal difference, pulled back two consolation goals in the last five minutes through Tahir Zaman and Kamran Ashraf. The match, watched by 20,000 vociferous home supporters at the overflowing Mayor Radhakrishnan Stadium and followed by millions around the country on television, produced exhilarating hockey. Pakistan, playing their first tournament on Indian soil since 1989, raided the Indian defence from the start, but failed to convert three penalty corners in the first 16 minutes. India counter-attacked immediately and were rewarded by their first two penalty corners in the space of three minutes, both of which resulted in goals. Pillay broke free from a goalmouth scramble following the first penalty corner in the 17th minute and gave India the lead with a hard push past the Pakistani custodian. Three minutes later, Mukesh swooped on a rebound off Anil Aldrin penalty corner drive and scooped in to make it 2-0. The Indians launched a blistering attack after half-time and Pillay sealed Pakistan's fate with two brilliant field goals in the 46th and 48th minutes. Mukesh netted his second to put India 5-0

ahead by the 54th minute. Pakistan succeeded in reducing the margin in the closing stages of the game, but paid the price for fumbling with eight penalty corners. "The Indians played well and deserved to win," said Pakistani captain Shahbaz Ahmed. "It just goes to prove there is little difference between the two teams." Shahbaz, who led Pakistan to victory in the World Cup in Sydney last year, said his team failed to make concrete moves against the determined Indians. "We had our chances, but failed to score." Veteran defender Pargat Singh, recalled to lead the Indians in the biennial regional Games, said the win would boost the team's morale ahead of the Olympic qualifiers in Spain next month. "The boys know they are not lagging behind in anyway. We're ready to take on the best," he said. TEAMS INDIA: D Subbaiah, Baljit Singh, Sanjeev Kumar, Ramandeep Singh, Md Riz, Mukesh Kumar, Pargat Singh (capt), Dhanraj Pillay, Harpreet Singh, Anil Aldrin and Baljit Singh jr extras: Sandeep Singh, Edgar Mascarenhas, Dilip Tirkey, Hasrat Qureshi, Saranjit Singh. PAKISTAN: Mansoor Ahmed, Naveed Alam, Md Nadeem Tahir Zaman, Kamran Ashraf, Md Usman, Asif Bajwa, Shahbaz Ahmed (capt), Rana Mujahid, Md Shahbaz, and K M Junaid extras: Danish Kaleem, Aizam Raza, Ahmed Alam, Rahim Khan and Malik Shaikat.

Shooters keep the flag flying

MADRAS, Dec 26: Bangladesh won one more silver and a bronze in the team and individual performances of the skeet event of the shooting competition of the SAF Games here at the Dr Sivanthi Shooting Range at Almadi here today, reports BSS. Bangladesh trio Iqbal Islam (99), Anwar Karim (97) and Altamash Kabir (89) picked up the silver with a total of 285 points in the team event. Indian trio Harinder Singh (107), Inderjit Singh (107) and Zorawar Singh (92) got the gold with 306 points while Pakistan's Ahmed Sultan (101), Muhammad Nasiruddin (93), and Sultan Mahmood Rana (63) accounted for the bronze with 257 points. In the individual event of the skeet, Indian Inderjit Singh took the gold securing 129 points and his compatriot Harinder Singh won the silver with 123 points and Iqbal Islam of Bangladesh bagged the bronze with his individual score of 121 points. Bangladesh's shooting medal tally at the end of the competition stood at five golds, four silvers and 10 bronzes.

SA 135 for three at tea

PORT ELIZABETH, South Africa, Dec 26: South Africa were 135 for three at tea on the opening day of the fourth Test against England at St Georges Park today, reports Reuter.

Barcelona barely win

MADRID, Dec 26: An early goal by Romanian Gheorghe Popescu gave Barcelona a 1-0 home victory over Sporting Gijon which moved Johan Cruyff's side to within a point of Spanish league leaders Atletico Madrid on Saturday reports Reuter. Atletico, Real Madrid and Espanyol — who slip back to third because of the Barcelona result — all play today. But Sporting can consider themselves unlucky to leave Barcelona without at least a draw, and the Camp Nou crowd once again booed their team from the field at the end of the game. The fans were particularly annoyed by the decision to substitute midfield playmaker Ivan de la Pena midway through the second period. Former Barcelona forward Julio Salinas nearly equalised for Sporting at the end of the game, but saw his shot bounce off the post to the relief of Barcelona keeper Jesus Angoy. Angoy was playing in the absence of first-choice keeper Carlos Bustegui, both of whom are injured.

Vietnam welcomes victors

HANOI, Dec 26: Large crowds turned out in Ho Chi Minh City this week to welcome home Vietnam's soccer team from the Southeast Asian Games in a continued outpouring of emotions which had earlier fuelled a wave of soccer violence, reports Reuter. A Ho Chi Minh City newspaper that reached Hanoi today gave no precise figures but said large crowds gathered on Tuesday at Tan Son Nhat airport to welcome home the soccer team and other athletes from the Games in Thailand. Local residents contacted by phone said huge crowds lined the route into the city and surrounded the Reunification Hall, the former South Vietnam presidential palace, where 10,000 people were invited to an official reception.

Sayed sizzles with willow for Kalabagan

Wari wallop Brothers

Wari Club caused the biggest upset so far of the Premier cricket league inflicting a 91-run defeat on Brothers Union at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium yesterday, reports UNB. Batting first, Wari Club scored 226 for eight in their allotted 50 overs and later dismissed the fancied Brothers Union for 135 in 39.1 overs. Wari's new-ball bowler Mofizur Rahman Munna claimed four wickets for 34 runs in 10 overs, Sri Lankan Karman Mapatuna took two while three others took one apiece to carve out the emphatic victory.

Munna clean bowled the last three of his victims to paralyse the Gopibag outfit while Mapatuna crushed the tail. Brothers' in-form Pakistani opener Abed Hanif (28 runs off 67 balls) offered some resistance but that was not enough to revive the comatose Brothers Union. He was run out in the 23rd over. Abed's younger brother, Rashed Hanif, with 13 runs, Sajal Chowdhury 18, Iqbal Hossain not out 14 and Salauddin 16 merely struggled to reduce the margin of defeat. Earlier, put to bat first, Wari Club scored a modest 226 for 8 in 50 overs with skipper Masudur Rahman Mukul before being run out in the 41st over with Wari on 166 runs. Skipper Mukul's sparkling 73 runs off 70 balls featured three fours and provided strength for his bowlers. Wari rattled 88 runs in the last 10 overs. Brothers opening bowler seamer Sajal Chowdhury claimed three wickets for an economical 26 runs, but Iqbal Hossain, the other seamer, bagged two wickets for costly 65 runs. This was the second successive victory for Wari Club, who earlier upset Victoria SC in their opening match. For Brothers, it was the first defeat after winning their league opener against GMCC. A sparkling 104 off 94 balls by Shahid Sayeed steered title contenders Kalabagan KC to pick up a 107-run win over Gulshan Youth their second consecutive victory in the league at the Dhaka Stadium. Sayeed, a specialist batsman from Pakistan, received good support from tall and handsome Zahid Razzak Masum who scored 70 off 95 balls. They teamed up to add 97 runs after Kalabagan lost three wickets, including the openers, Wahidul Islam (4) and Nurul Abedin Novel (3). The departure of skipper Faruque Ahmed (23) brought Sayeed into action. The Pakistani scored his first century, the third in the league, from 90 deliveries with eight boundaries before being out in the second ball of the last over bowled by Ahmed Babu. Another Pakistani, Nadeem Younus, who plays for Mohammedan SC, scored the first ton of the league while the other came from veteran Athar Ali Khan of Bangladesh Bitan. Amin Abbas was the other notable contributor for Kalabagan with a gusty 22 runs off 29 balls that included one four and also a sixer over the deep mid-wicket. Gulshan Youth's opening bowler Talha and Indian Test discard Arun Lal captured two wickets each. In reply, Gulshan Youth were all out for 146 runs in 44.2 overs with seamers Saiful Islam and Amin Abbas sharing seven wickets. National new-ball bowler Saiful claimed both the openers Rabbu (28) and Ripon (21) in his first 8-over spell and took the last two Gulshan wickets in his second spell to finish with 9.2-1-25-4. Seamer Amin Abbas' three wickets, including Arun Lal (18), cost 33 runs. Spinner Saiful Islam Efee captured two wickets, including that of skipper Ashoke Malhotra (24), to accelerate the Gulshan fall.



The Kalabagan heroes: Pakistani batsman Shahid Sayeed (L) and national pacer Saiful Islam — brilliant performance, brilliant smiles. — Star photo

Seamer Munna's four-wicket haul included the Brothers' top order — opener Shahriar Hossain Bidyut (8), national cap one down Sajjad Ahmed Shipon (10) — as well as middle order Halim Shah (4) and skipper Ziauddin Shovon (0). At one stage, Brothers were only 59 for five in 16

Mukul (not out 73 off 70 balls) and one down Hasanuzzaman (55 off 101 balls) leading the way. Despite a bad start, Hasanuzzaman played a patient innings and made three partnerships. He shared 46 runs with Mona (28), 34 runs with Lankan Mapatuna (19) and 56 runs with skipper

The glittering greats of Asian gallery

PARIS, Dec 26: Asian racket sports exponents shone in 1995 with China winning two badminton world titles, plus a clean sweep of seven World Table Tennis Championship golds and the men's singles World Cup, but Pakistan earned the squash men's singles title, reports AFP. In table tennis, China's World Cup winner Kong Linghui gave a taste of his strong challenge for next year's Olympics after winning the World Cup singles in Nimes, France in October. Kong, who added the World Cup crown to the world title he won in Tianjin, China in May, said: "Winning in Atlanta will be much tougher than my World Championship or World Cup titles." China completed a clean sweep of all seven World Championship titles on home soil earlier in the year. Should Kong, who beat Germany's 1992 European champion Jorg Rosskopf 18-21, 24-22, 22-20, 21-14 to earn the 33,000 US dollars World Cup top prize, win in Atlanta, Georgia, he would complete an unprecedented treble. He would become the holder of the world, Olympic and World Cup titles at the same time. Kong, quick on his feet and with a powerful right-handed attacking game, showed tenacity in tight situations throughout the match. Rosskopf, however, known for a lightning fast backhand, good physical fitness and steady nerves, could have won 3-0, but kept losing big leads. China have now won the World Cup title nine times in the 16-year history of this 16-man invitation event — the most prestigious annual tournament in the sport as the World Championships are held every two years and the Olympics every four years. Guo Yuehua won in 1980 and 1982, Jiang Jialiang won in 1984, Chen Cinhua, who now plays for England, won for China in 1985, Chen Longcan won a year later, and Teng Yi won in 1987. Then Ma Wenge won in both 1989 and 1992. Jansher Khan, who won the 1995 men's World Open

Squash Championships in Cyprus in November, was on the verge of pulling out during the final because of terrible pain in a blistered right foot. Khan, 26, who beat England's Del Harris 15-10, 17-14, 16-17, 15-8 in the final for a record seventh victory, said afterwards: "The blisters were so painful, when I lost the third game, I was about to scratch." However Khan decided to keep going and managed to win in 101 minutes for his seventh title, one better than the six crowns held jointly by Jansher and compatriot legend Jahangir Khan. A large blister on the ball of his right foot and another on his right heel were lanced on Friday night and bandaged. However the pain was considerable until the bandage was tightened for the fourth game when Khan ran out an easy winner. Khan added afterwards, "My country Pakistan will be very happy with the record. They have all been waiting for it."

eight-time British Open winner and four-time world champion, Jahangir Khan of Pakistan, a 10-time British Open winner and a six-time world champion, compared to Jansher, Khan's seven world titles, one better than his namesake, and four British Opens. Meanwhile in the world of badminton, Hervanto Arby of Indonesia and China's Ye Zhaoying were the singles winners in the World Championships in Lausanne, Switzerland in May. Arby overcame poor form in the Sudirman Cup world mixed team event the week before to beat South Korea's Park Sung-Woo 15-11, 15-8 in the singles final. And Ye was the surprise winner — Olympic and defending world champion Susi Susanti of Indonesia was the favourite — in the women's event. Ye beat compatriot Han Jingna 11-7, 11-0 in the final. The week before in the Sudirman Cup, China caused a sensation to beat holders and favourites Indonesia 3-1 in a controversial final. At the end of the fourth rubber, a Chinese flag was thrown on to the head of an Indonesian official who refused to give the flag back. There was jostling and pushing, and after the ensuing bad feeling, the fifth and final dead rubber was not played. In the three doubles events, Indonesia, Denmark and South Korea had gold medals. In the men's doubles, top seeds and overwhelming favourites Ricky Subagia and Rexy Mainaky of Indonesia beat Denmark's Jon Holst-Christensen and Thomas Lund 15-5, 15-2. South Korea celebrated the victory of Gil Young Ah and Yang Hye Ock, who beat Finarsih and Lili Tampi of Indonesia 3-15, 15-11, 15-10 in the women's doubles. Europe, who won both All England singles titles in Denmark's Paul-Erik Hoyer — Larsen and Sweden's China-born Lim Xiaoqing earlier in the year, at least won one gold — in the mixed doubles. Denmark's Thomas Lund and Marlene Thomsen beat compatriots Jens Eriksen and Helene Kirkegaard 15-2, 15-6.

World champs stunned



FBCCI president and deputy chairman of Beximco Group Salman F Rahman giving away trophies to winners of the Beximco inter company sports meet on Sunday. — Star photo

Balakov Bulgaria's best booter

SOFIA, Dec 26: Krassimir Balakov, an attacking midfielder with German First Division club VfB Stuttgart, was voted Bulgarian footballer-of-the-year for the first time today, reports Reuter. Balakov, 29, joined Stuttgart from Portugal's Sporting earlier this year on a two-year contract worth 3.5 million marks.

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