

Column One

SPORTS TALK



Ali Bacher

(South Africa cricket chief) "Cricket is receiving tremendous support from all the people in South Africa and I have no doubt that years to come, the national team will truly reflect the different people of the country."



COMPETITION FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN

Sports WHIZZ KID competition-60

✓ Tick the Correct Answers

Competition closes : 8 pm Jan 3, '97	
1 Who won the Danish Premier Division football title this season?	Mohammedan Abahani Muktijoddha
2 Which team won the Bijo Dabsh Cup hockey title?	Usha Ajax Bangladesh Army
3 Which country won the Champions Trophy hockey title recently?	Pakistan Holland Germany
4 Who is the top scorer in this season's Premier Division football league?	Nakib Mizan Alfaz
5 Former Italian national soccer coach Arrigo Sacchi now coaches	Inter Milan AC Milan Fiorentina

Name
Class Roll No.
School Address
Phone: (if any)

Kafelnikov upbeat

ADELAIDE, Australia, Dec 29: French Open champion Yevgeny Kafelnikov will be aiming to win his third Australian Hardcourt tennis championship when the US \$28,000 dollars event begins Monday at Memorial Drive, reports AP.

Kafelnikov faces Swede Mikael Tillstrom in the first round of the 32-draw ATP Tour event, one of a series of warm-up events for the Australian Open.

Kafelnikov won in Adelaide in 1994 and again this year at the start of a season that saw him go on to win his first Grand Slam title and rise to No 3 in the world rankings.

"I use this tournament to measure my year," he said. "If I play well here I know the rest of my year is going to be okay."

"It's where it all started for me. I came here with nothing and won my first tournament and I won it again this year. Adelaide has been very good for me."

Kafelnikov said his confidence has been lifted by his victory in the French Open.

"It feels good to be able to say I've won a Grand Slam," he said. "It means I haven't wasted my life trying to achieve something I couldn't. It means I have something I have worked all my life to achieve."

"In the future I can maybe win more Grand Slams. At the moment, I'm proud of myself and what I have done."

Iranians arrive in city

Sports Reporter

Replying to a query, the soft-spoken bearded team leader said that this was their second overseas tour to feature in any competitive meet.

"We are here to exchange our experience with others," said Salidi, adding that the average age of his bowlers is 22.

Talking with the assistance of an interpreter the middle-



aged Bargh manager claimed that his team was the best per-

former from Fars Province and had been taking part in the Iranian national league for the last couple of years. Their current position in the tough national league is sixth where Peruzzi is the defending champion.

Ali Ashgar, the captain of the team who had also attended the crowded press briefing, is a midfielder. It was learnt that two players, plays in the national team, are Moshen and Abdur Rahim. Off the two, Moshen is a defender while the latter plays in the upfront.

Revised grouping:
Group-A: Abahani Limited, Mohammedan SC (India), Malaysia B.

Group-B: Mohammedan SC, East Bengal (India), Friends Club (Nepal).

Group-C: Mohun Bagan AC (India), Bargh Siraj FC (Iran), Eastern All Star FC (Thailand).

Group-D: Muktijoddha Sangsad, Moscow Cosmos Club (Russia), Ujung Pandang FC (Indonesia), Malaysia A.

FIXTURES	
Dec 31: Abahani vs Malaysia B 6:00 pm (Dhaka Stadium)	
Jan 1: East Bengal (India) vs Friends Club (Nepal) 4 pm (DS)	
Bargh Siraj FC (Iran) vs Eastern All Star FC (Thai) 6 pm (DS)	
Jan 2: MSC (India) vs Malaysia B 4 pm (DS)	
Moscow Cosmos (Russia) vs Muktijoddha 6:00 pm (DS)	
Ujan Pandang FC (Indonesia) vs Malaysia A 4:00 pm (MS)	
Jan 3: MSC (India) vs Bargh Siraj 4:00 pm (DS)	
MSC (Bangladesh) vs Friends Club (Nepal) 6:00 pm (DS)	
Jan 4: Muktijoddha vs Ujan Pandang 4:00 pm (DS)	
Cosmos vs Malaysia A 6:00 pm (DS)	
Jan 5: Mohun Bagan (India) vs Eastern All Star (Thai) 4:00 pm (DS)	
Abahani vs MSC (India) 6:00 pm (DS)	
Muktijoddha vs Malaysia A 4:00 pm (DS)	
Jan 6: MSC (Bangladesh) vs East Bengal 6:00 pm (DS)	
Moscow Cosmos vs Ujan Pandang 4:00 pm (MS)	
Rest day	
Jan 7: Semifinals 4:00 pm & 6:00 pm (DS)	
Jan 8: Final 4:00 pm (DS)	



The Bargh Siraj Football Club team on their arrival at the ZIA yesterday. — Star photo

Rise of an Irish icon

LOS ANGELES, Dec 29 (APF): The demise of China and the rise of Michelle Smith — swimming in 1996 could not be cape the murky waters of doping suspicions.

Smith became the first Irish woman to win an Olympic gold medal, capturing three individual golds and a bronze and shuffling off the cloud of controversy that surrounded her.

Smith won the 400m freestyle and both the 200m and 400m individual medley. Her late entry in the 400m free sparked a US protest, but that was nothing to the unsubstantiated doping rumours she was forced to respond to over and over as her victories multiplied.

Smith suffered from guilt by association. Her husband and coach Erik de Bruin, a Dutch discus thrower, was banned for steroid use in 1993.

All of Smith's dope tests were negative, and when US coaches and swimmers suggested her progress over the past two years was too spectacular to be true, she was not slow to chastise her critics.

NZ Classic from today

AUCKLAND, New Zealand, Dec 29: Top-seeded Anke Huber of Germany hopes to get her 1997 tennis campaign off to a strong start in the US \$107,500 dollars New Zealand Classic tournament that begins Monday, reports AP.

Huber, who collected US \$691,335 dollars in 1996 to finish ninth on the women's Tennis Association earnings list, plays Francesca Lubiani of Italy in the first round of the 32-draw tournament on the Rebound Ace courts at the Stanley Street center.

The winner of the tournament, one of several tuneup events for the Australian Open beginning Jan. 13 in Melbourne, Australia, receives US \$17,700 dollars, with the runner-up getting US \$8,350 dollars.

"Every time I'm tested, it's always negative," she said. "I'm tested again and again. For every one time a person on the US team is tested, I'm tested five times."

Finally asked point blank, Smith said: "I have never used performance enhancing drugs."

The rapid demise of China's women, from 12 of 16 gold medals at the 1994 World Championships to just one Olympic gold, was seized on as proof that tighter doping control was working.

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for a fifth individual gold, finishing sixth in the 800m freestyle and missing the final altogether in the 400m free.

Three individual world records fell in the seven days of swimming. Belgian Fred Deburghaere set a world record of 1 min 0.60 sec in the 100m breaststroke heats, though he couldn't swim that fast in winning the gold.

South African Penelope Heyns, who won both breaststroke events, also got her world record of 1:07.02 in the morning and her gold medal at night in the women's 100m.

While Russian Denis Pankratov improved his 100m butterfly world record to 52.27.

Several other world record holders, including Australian Kieren Perkins in the 1500m free, Americans Tom Dolan in the 400m medley and Jeff Rouse in the 100m backstroke and China's Li in the 100m free, won with times outside their best.

Australian swimmers in particular were frustrated by their failure to produce their best times that should have given them their best Olympics in decades.

US women's head coach Richard Quick summed up their disappointment for them.

"Times," Quick said, "are very secondary to winning in the Olympic Games."

Hockey player passes away

ISLAMABAD, Dec 29: Former Pakistan hockey captain Qazi Mohib died on Sunday after a long illness, according to reports from the official Associated Press of Pakistan (APP). He was 37, reports Reuters.

Mohib, who left behind a widow and young daughter, developed cancer on his right thigh and was admitted to a hospital in Peshawar 10 days ago, the APP said.

Delwar Smriti cricket

A cricket tournament will be commencing soon in Kathirhat, Chittagong, says a press release. The Delwar Hossain Smriti Gold Cup tournament, organized by the Nabo Chetana Yubo Goshthi, will feature in different clubs in Chittagong. Interested clubs have been requested to enlist their names.



The Bargh Siraj Football Club members of Iran, who are now in the city to take part in the Bangladesh Cup tournament, attending a press briefing shortly after their arrival in the capital yesterday. — Star photo

BCB picks 25 for ICC Trophy

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has finally selected 25 cricketers to represent Bangladesh in the ICC Trophy to be held in Malaysia next March, reports UNB.

The net practice of the team will begin on January 3.

Selected cricketers are: Athar Ali Khan, Javed Omar, Belim Golla, Shahriar Hossain Bidyut, Imran Hamid Partha, Aminul Islam Bulbul, Akram Khan, Habibul Bashar Sumon, Al Shahriar Rokan, Sarwar Hossain, Minhazul Abedin Nannu, Enamul Haq Moni, Khaled Mahmud Sujon, Naimur Rahman Durjoy, Mohammad Rafique, Sheikh Salauddin, Khaled Masud Pilot, Atiar Rahman, Jahangir Alam, Hasiul Hossain Shanta, Moshed Ali Khan, Saifur Islam, Zakir Hossain, Nazimuddin Manna, Sajal Chowdhury and Anisur Rahman.

The cricketers have been asked to report at the BCB office today evening with their passports.

Bangabandhu cricket at Satkhira

From Our Correspondent

SATKHIRA, Dec 29: The Bangabandhu memorial cricket tournament, organised by the local unit of Bangabandhu Parishad, began at the Satkhira Govt College ground recently.

District Awami League president Syed Kamal Bakht, MP, formally inaugurated the meet being participated by eight teams. In the first match of the tourney Town Club beat United Cricket Club by 89 runs.

Queensland Open begins today

GOLD COAST, Australia, Dec 29: For the past three years, Austrian Barbara Paulus has had disappointing first or second round losses in the Queensland Open tennis tournament at the Milton Courts in Brisbane, reports AP.

This year, with the tournament renamed the Gold Coast Classic and moved south about 75 kilometres to the Hope Island resort, Paulus, 26, is hoping for a better result.

Brenda Schultz-McCarthy of the Netherlands is top seed and Paulus the second seed in the US \$164,250 dollars, 32-draw tournament that begins Monday on the cushioned hard courts at Hope Island.

Third seed Julie Halard-Decugis of France has withdrawn from the tournament due to a knee injury.

"Milton was one of my worst tournament because it was the first one in warm weather," Paulus said Sunday. "You couldn't see anything and you couldn't breathe in the heat."

Paulus, coming off a six-week break, trained in Florida for two weeks to prepare herself for the searing Australian conditions that often prevail up to and including the Australian Open beginning Jan 13.

Paulus has made a strong comeback after a series of injuries threatened to end her career after reaching the top 12 in 1990. She had seven operations, involving both wrists and ankles, and three knee reconstructions that sidelined her for three months in 1992.

She attributes her 1995 and 1996 successes — she's earned more than US \$350,000 dollar on the tour this year — to staying free of injuries.

Cyprus FA forms probe body

NICOSIA, Dec 29: The Cyprus FA has launched an investigation into newspaper allegations that players in the national team placed bets on losing to Bulgaria in a World Cup qualifier on December 14, reports Reuters.

Abahani keep cruising

Title aspirants Abahani Krita Chakra took the solo lead in the Premier cricket league when they posted their sixth consecutive victory at the cost of a lowly Lalmitia at the BKSP ground in Savar yesterday.

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The winners of Damal Smriti and Reporters Cup, after being sent into bat by Lalmitia skipper Ziauddin Shovon, piled up a commanding total of 213 in their share of 50 overs. In reply, the promotes in the elite group of 12, could only muster 133 before being skittled out with more than four overs to spare.

Earlier, the Abahani total was built around some healthy contributions from their toporders. Dashing opener Imran Hamid Partha hammered a breezy 29 lacing with five savage hits across the rope.

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A plucky Javed Omar Belim, who after the fall of Partha at 45 featured in a vital second wicket stand of 88 runs with a lithe Al Shahriar Rokan, laid a solid foundation for his side.

Rokon, who came into bat at number three, fell two runs short of what would have been a well deserved half-century. The departure of the right-hand bat inflicted a mini collapse as Abahani lost their next five wickets for the addition of only 31 runs to the total. Javed quickly followed Rokan after scoring a sedate 46 off 105 balls.

Naimur Rahman Durjoy fell for only five while wicket-keeper Khaled Masud Pilot returned for a duck.

But skipper Akram Khan, who was helplessly witnessing the sudden slide at the other end, played a captain's knock of an watchful 43 to steer his side cross the 200-mark.

Together with tallender Biplob Sarkar Billu, the portly national skipper shared a potential match-winning partnership of 46 runs for the seventh wicket before being dismissed in the final over. Left-hander Billu remained unbeaten on a run-a-ball 18.

For Lalmitia, new-ball bowler Korshed Alam took two wickets for 43 runs in his ten economic overs. But it was Nahid, who returned most successful with three for 37.

In reply, Lalmitia, fresh after their giant-slaying act against Bangladesh Biman, were never up in their chase. They were off to disastrous start losing three wicket for only 23 runs from where the new-town outfit hardly recovered despite a valiant effort from their middle-order.

lqbal, one of the two Pakistani stars of Agran's sensational semifinal victory over the star-studded Mohammedans in the Damal Smriti tourney, was the wrecker-in-chief with five for 31 in his ten eagerly overs. While Shuvro, guided by the visionary captain, he was consistent with the ball, gave away only 11 runs for his three scalps.

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Pakistani Amir Uddin scored a patient 40 while skipper Shovon, who scored a match-winning half-century against Biman, and Asif Iqbal caved in with 20 runs each.

Among the Abahani bowlers, off-spinner Naimur Rahman Durjoy, though failed with the bat, sparked with the cherry scalping three for 17 in his seven overs. While Rahat, the young medium pacer of Abahani, justified his selection in the team with two for 19.

Meanwhile, in the other match of the day at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium, Agran Bank recorded a thumping 157-run win over Gulshan Youth.

In a lop-sided affair, the bankers, after winning the toss and electing to bat first, scored a lighting 219 and then went on to shoot out Gulshan Youth for a meagre 56 to celebrate a welcome victory after a streak of defeats. Pakistani Shahid Iqbal and Shuvro, who were responsible for playing havoc in the fragile Gulshan batting line-up, shared eight wickets among them.

Iqbal, one of the two Pakistani stars of Agran's sensational semifinal victory over the star-studded Mohammedans in the Damal Smriti tourney, was the wrecker-in-chief with five for 31 in his ten eagerly overs. While Shuvro, guided by the visionary captain, he was consistent with the ball, gave away only 11 runs for his three scalps.

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