

Column One

Boost sports
WHIZZ KIDCOMPETITION FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN
Competition-77

✓ Tick the Correct Answers

Competition closes at 8 pm,
Sept 5, '971 The century Saurav
Ganguly hit against Sri
Lanka in the second one-
day match was his

First Second Third

2 Who clinched the Pilot Pen
tennis title?

Goran Rafer Yevgeny

3 Who holds the 800m world
record?

Reynolds Morel Kipketer

4 Who won the 12th schools
chess tournament?

Parag Bobby Ratul

5 Who lifted the Pioneer Division
soccer league title?

Sk Russell Suritola Dilkusha

Name



Russian ace swimmer Alexander Popov (C) shows off his gold medal after winning the 100 metres freestyle at the European Championships in Seville on Thursday.

— AFP/UNB photo

Smith fails to be De Bruin



SEVILLE, Spain, Aug 22: Michelle de Bruin's gold rush at the European Championships came to an unexpected halt on Thursday but Russian Alexander Popov made a triumphant return after injury to capture the 100 metres freestyle title, reports AFP.

De Bruin, who won three Olympic golds last year under her maiden name Smith, had to settle for silver in the 400m freestyle — one of the events she won in Atlanta.

German Dagmar Hase produced a perfectly timed swim to go past De Bruin in the final 50m after the Irishwoman, who was dogged by rumours of drug-taking during and after Atlanta, had led almost from start to finish.

Hase's time was 4 mins 9.58 secs, the fastest in Europe this year with De Bruin finishing second in 4:10.50 another German Kerstin Kielgass took bronze.

De Bruin, 27, has already won the 400m individual medley and 200m freestyle here. And she plans to compete in a further two events — the 200m

individual medley and the 200m butterfly — this week.

If she wins them, she will equal Hungarian legend Kristina Egerszegi's record of



MICHELLE SMITH

four individual golds in a single European Championship, set in Sheffield in 1993.

Popov, competing in his first major championship since his stabbing by a watermelon seller in Moscow last August, showed he has made full recovery with the fastest time in the world this year in the 100 free.

After looking sluggish in the heats the reigning Olympic 50m and 100m freestyle champion from Russia once again rose to the big occasion, clocking 49.09 sec to hold off Swede Lars Frolander and Oleg Rousklevitch of Belarus.

"I wasn't very happy with my time in the heats this morning, but I'm amazed at my speed this afternoon, especially in the last 50," Popov said.

"When I saw the time I said 'Wow... this is a real renaissance.'

Other golds on Thursday went to German Antje Buschschulte in the women's 100m backstroke and Russian Vladimir Selkov, who hung on grimly to grab the men's 200m backstroke title.

Germany won the final event of the day, the 4x100m freestyle, by more than two seconds.

Boris pays last hommage to Axel

MUNICH, Germany, Aug 22: Boris Becker, who dropped out of next week's US Open because of the death of his adviser Axel Meyer-Woelken, attended his close friend's funeral today at a sombre ceremony with about 300 other mourners, reports Reuter.

Wearing a black suit, Becker and his wife filed silently past dozens of journalists into a small cemetery church in the southern Munich district of Gruenwald for a 45-minute mass that was held in Italian — a final request from Meyer-Woelken.

Many German celebrities were at the funeral, including Bayern Munich president Franz Beckenbauer.

Becker had hoped to play his last Grand Slam at the US Open starting next Monday. But he felt he could no longer compete.

An influential sports manager, the Munich lawyer died on Monday after fighting liver cancer for several years. He was, 56.

Becker worked closely with Meyer-Woelken in the later part of his career after breaking up with former manager Ion Tiriac. The lawyer also because a close friend and the pair often watched soccer matches together at Becker's beloved Bay-

The 29-year-old former world number one, who had been training hard for the last two weeks to prepare for the Open, first cancelled his trip to Boston where he was scheduled to play Brazilian Fernando Meligeni on Tuesday night.

On Wednesday, Meyer-Woelken's aide Peter Duvinage said he had informed the US Open organisers of Becker's decision not to take part in the tournament.

Becker won the US Open in 1989.

World GP women's v'ball results

GIFU, Japan, Aug 22: Russia stormed back from two sets down to seize a five-set victory over Atlanta Olympic gold medalists Cuba in the World Grand Prix women's volleyball tournament today, reports AFP.

The Russian spikers, losers in the bronze-medal playoff at Atlanta, profited from fine blocks by Evgenia Artamanova and Elizaveta Tichchenko for a 14-16, 14-16, 15-8, 15-12, 15-12 victory.

"As I had expected, our young players have been improving a lot. We started to play better and were better physically and won the match," said Russian coach Nikolai Karpov.

In the other match Japan defeated the United States 9-15, 15-7, 15-10, 11-15, 15-12.

The three-day tournament is the third stage of the eight-team World Grand Prix series. The top three teams as well as hosts Japan will advance to the finals to be held in Kobe next week.

Nantes back on track

PARIS, Aug 22: Doubt-ridden Nantes restored some confidence and claimed their first points of the season with a convincing 2-1 away win at Strasbourg on Thursday, reports Reuter.

The 1995 champions lost several key players as well as their coach during the summer break and began the new season with three defeats, failing to score in the process.

They finally found their way to the net Thursday thanks to their new striker Samba N'Diaye who beat Strasbourg goalkeeper Alexander Venczel in the 22nd minute.

Strasbourg reacted strongly and equalised shortly before halftime when former Metz striker Frederic Arpinon headed home a David Zitelli cross.

But Nantes claimed all three points when defender Bruno Carotti scored with a powerful shot in the 54th minute.

The victory lifted Nantes to 13th place and left Cannes rooted to the bottom without a point after they lost 2-0 at home to Bordeaux in the night's other game.

Cannes seemed on course for a point until the visitors struck twice in the last 10 minutes. Kadu Afanou got the first in the 81st minute and Kaba Diawara the second during injury time.

India-SL third ODI today

Bowling saddens Sachin



COLOMBO, Aug 22: India's captain Sachin Tendulkar today urged cricket officials back home to prepare wickets for domestic cricket if his team was to perform well abroad.

Tendulkar admitted the failure of his two strike bowlers Venkatesh Prasad and Anil Kumble contributed to India's inept tour of the Sri Lankan tour, which concludes Saturday with the final one-day, reports AFP.

It's a match that holds only academic interest after Arjuna Ranatunga's reigning world

champion won the first two internationals easily to take a decisive lead in the three-match series.

India's limited bowling re-

sources were ruthlessly exposed during the 45-day tour, as Sri

Lanka also won the four-nation Asia Cup and created batting records in the drawn two-Test series.

"Prasad and Kumble's poor form hit us badly because they are our main strike bowlers," the 24-year-old Tendulkar said.

"They are world class performers, but I don't blame them because even the best have their off-days. Unfortunately there was no one else to shoulder the burden."

The absence of injured pace spearhead Jagaval Srinath was sorely felt as new-ball partner Prasad and leg-spinner Kumble managed only seven wickets each in eight international innings during the tour.

The Sri Lankans hammered a world record score of 952 for seven in the first Test, while left-handed opener Sanath Jayasuriya amassed 773 runs in his last six innings against the Indians.

Not surprisingly, India's lone success on the tour was against Test-aspirants Bangladesh which helped them qualify for the Asia Cup one-day final.

Tendulkar said the practice of preparing turning wickets at home had undermined the skills of Indian bowlers.

"On those tracks anybody can get wickets. The real test of skill comes when you have to bowl on truer wickets abroad."

"Bowlers sometimes complain the wicket did not help them. But it's the job of bowlers to get wickets. Otherwise, we may as well play with 11 batsmen."

Tendulkar hoped the fort-

night's rest before the Indians travel to Toronto, Canada for a five-match one-day series against arch-rivals Pakistan will rejuvenate Prasad and Kumble.

"With Srinath still out, these two are my main bowlers. They will obviously be overworked. I am sure the rest will do them good," he said.

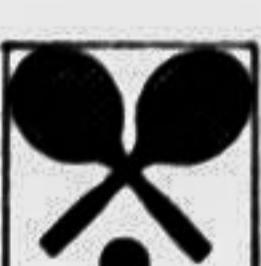
Tendulkar, still looking for his first series win abroad after a year as captain, said India badly needed a physical trainer to improve the fitness of his team.

"We are obviously not the fittest team in the world and it shows in our fielding. Having a

SACHIN TENDULKAR
trainer with the team will help.

The Indian board has so far not needed Tendulkar's repeated pleas to hire a fitness specialist, although physiotherapist Ali Irfani has been travelling with the team for the last 10 years.

Coetzer defeats Novotna



STONE MOUNTAIN, Georgia, Aug 22: Top seeded Czech Jana Novotna was ousted in the quarterfinals of the 450,000 dollars US women's Hardcourt Championships Thursday by fifth-seeded Amanda Coetzer, whose 1-6, 6-3, 6-1 victory put her in her 10th semifinal of the year, reports AFP.

The 5 foot 2 inch South African has failed to advance past the semifinals in eight previous tournaments this year but won in Budapest in April.

Lindsay Davenport continued her unbeaten streak on the court where she won her Olympic gold medal last year as she advanced to the semifinals. The tournament is being held at the Olympic Tennis Stadium.

Davenport, the fourth seed, will play Coetzer in Friday's semifinals after beating unseeded Dominique van Roos 6-1, 7-5 in Thursday's quarterfinals.

The seventh-ranked American beat Spain's Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario on the same court to win the Olympic gold for the United States just over a year ago.

Second seed Monica Seles' 10-match win streak ended when she pulled out of the tournament because of illness on Thursday morning. Her opponent — unseeded Sandrine Testud of France, the player who beat Seles in the third round at

Wimbledon earlier this summer — got a walkover into the semifinals where she will play third-seeded Croatian Iva Majoli.

Majoli, the reigning French Open champion, defeated sixth

seeded Brenda Schultz-McCarthy of the Netherlands 6-2, 7-5 to advance to the last four.

Coetzer remains one of the few healthy players among the top women. Seles withdrew from the tournament with a fever and throat virus and both Majoli and Schultz-McCarthy have injured back, Novotna was playing in her first tournament since July 13, returning from an abdominal muscle strain.

Novotna dictated play in the

first set by creating opportunities to reach the net and put away the winning volley, taking it 6-1 in 38 minutes.

But Coetzer turned on the power in the second set, accelerating the pace on her backhand to win the set 6-3 with a backhand crosscourt passing shot.

The players traded breaks for the first three game of the third set until Coetzer took advantage of forehand errors by the Czech to break her three straight times. Coetzer won the match as Novotna netted a backhand crosscourt passing shot.

"I doubted myself a little because I got down at first," Coetzer said. "Luckily it turned for me. Things tend to happen naturally for me. I tend to play well if I get myself really focused and somebody like her gives me more of a target to hit."

"I was struggling hard in the first set to get myself in a good state of mind," she said. "I told myself to focus on every point, and not on the outcome of the match. I felt really into the match, really committed, and things start to happen for me when I'm focused."

It was a great match despite the scores," said Novotna, nursing a sore shoulder afterwards.

"We played some incredible points but in the second set she started to be more aggressive when I kept coming in she kept passing me."

Italian Super Cup final today



TURIN, Italy, Aug 22: Juventus need to bounce back from their resounding defeat to AC Milan if they are to lift the Super Cup against Vicenza on Saturday night, reports AFP.

The reigning champions were beaten 3-1 in front of 76,000 people at San Siro on Tuesday night, after Milan tore apart what was supposed to be the toughest defence in the Serie A.

Now coach Marcello Lippi has to rebuild confidence in time to face the Italian Cup winners, who have re-shuffled their squad since last season.

Lippi can also count on the returning members of his foreign legion — Portugal's Manuel Diogo, and Uruguay's Iglesias Montero and Daniel Fonseca —

who all missed the match in Milan.

Dimas and Montero are almost certain to play, at the back and in midfield respectively, while Fonseca will be on the substitutes' bench, waiting to come on for either Alessandro Del Piero or Filippo Inzaghi.

Vicenza were one of the revelations last season, but have subsequently paid the price. Three of their best players have been snapped up by bigger clubs — Giampiero Maini (AC Milan), Luigi Sartori (Inter Milan) and Giovanni Lopez (Lazio).

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Last season's Italian Cup was their first trophy to be won in the club's 95-year history. With Juventus anxious to put their European Cup final and Berlusconi Trophy disappointments firmly behind them, Vicenza will be hard pressed to add another one on Saturday.

"Against Juventus, it will be enough for us just to put on a good performance, so that we don't lose face," he said.

"The team are not where I want them to be, but that's only to be expected since half of the squad are new and we've only been training for a month. But I can see a real desire to work and to improve in everyone."

"We've just got to keep our heads up, and accept that in normal circumstances, it's hard for us to attack a team who are as well organised as Juventus are."

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