

Bangladesh to take part in C'wealth Games hockey

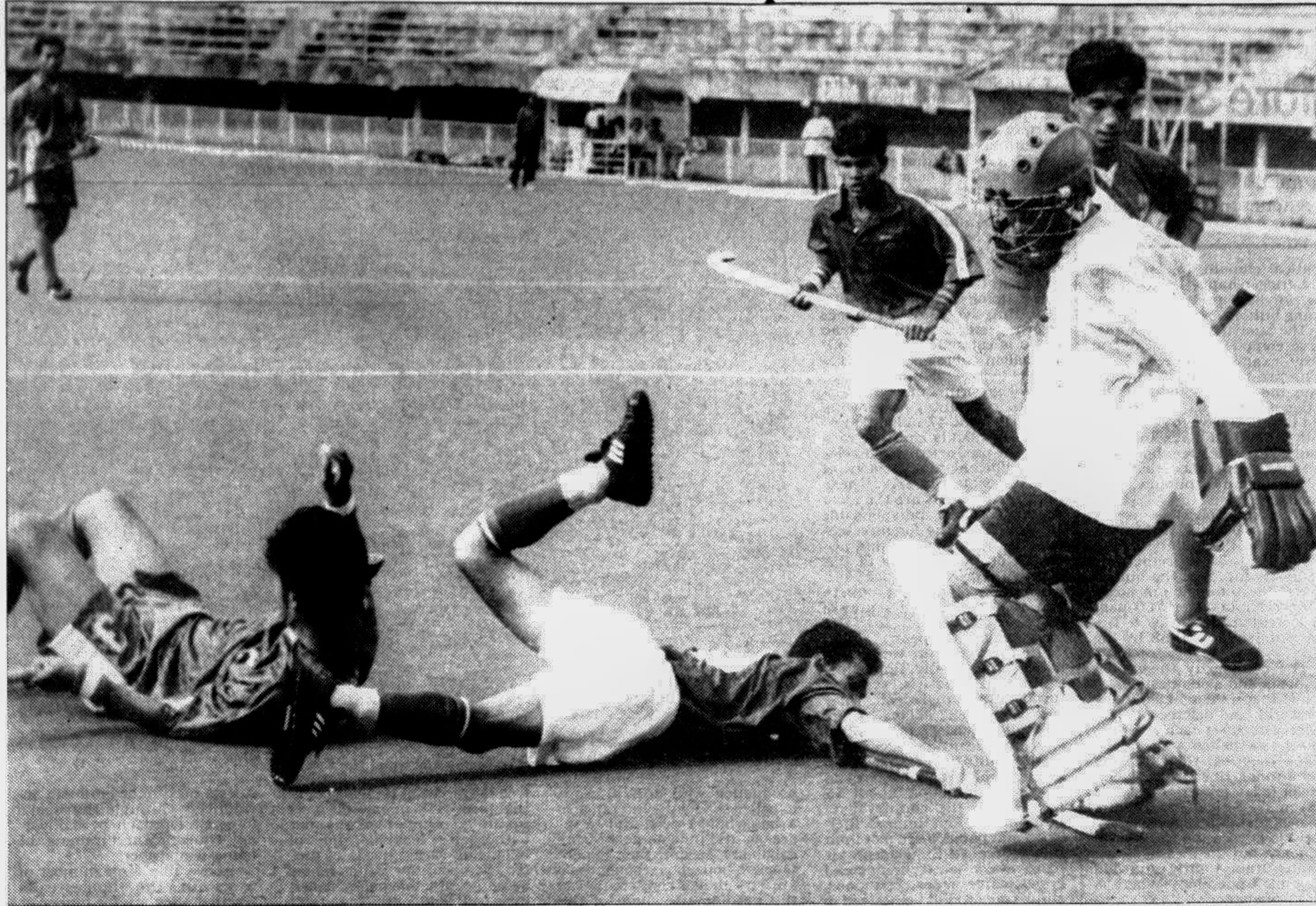
Sports Reporter
Twelve countries including Bangladesh will take part in the men's hockey competition of the 16th Commonwealth Games to be held in Malaysia from September 9 to 21.
According to a revised fixture published by the Games' organising committee, Bangladesh have been penciled in Group A along with Pakistan, England, Canada, Kenya and hosts Malaysia for the robin league while Group B comprises of Australia, India, Wales, Trinidad & Tobago, New Zealand and South Africa.
The group matches will start from September 9, two days before the official opening of the Games and will continue up to September 17.
Top two teams from each group will qualify for the September 19 semifinals. The final will be held on September 20.
Meanwhile, 25 hockey players reported to coach Ehtesham Sultan for the national camp at the National Hockey Stadium yesterday evening. A final squad of 16 will be selected for the competition by the end of this month.

Brazil may not go to S Korea, Japan

SAO PAULO, Brazil, July 16: Following their 3-0 defeat to France in the World Cup final, Brazil may cancel two exhibition matches scheduled for August in South Korea and Japan, the location of the next tournament in 2002, a local daily reported Wednesday, reports AFP.
The Folha de Sao Paulo newspaper said Ricardo Teixeira, president of the Brazilian Soccer Confederation mentioned the possibility of canceling the games during the flight that brought the national team back home.
The two games were scheduled for August 16 in Japan and August 19 in Korea.
The Confederation was not available for immediate comment.
Despite their worst World Cup defeat ever, Brazilian fans turned out by the thousands on Tuesday to give their team a hero's welcome in Brasilia, the capital.
President Fernando Henrique Cardoso hailed "our glorious team" and bestowed the National Merit Order on each player at a ceremony in the Presidential Palace.

Spartak Moscow stay on top

MOSCOW, July 16: Champions Spartak Moscow kept a narrow one-point lead at the top of the Russian Premier Division on Wednesday after grinding out a scoreless draw with second-place Zenit St Petersburg in Moscow, reports Reuters.
The Muscovites failed to score, sparing several chances, and had Andrei Tikhonov hit the bar minutes before half-time at Dynamo Stadium.
Spartak now have 32 points to Zenit's 31.
In other action, Lokomotiv Moscow won 2-0 at bottom-of-the-league Tyumen to move into third with 26 points.
Rotor Volgograd leapfrogged visitors Rostselmash Rostov into fourth place by thrashing them 5-1 at home.
The win puts Rotor level with Lokomotiv on 26 points. The league's top scorer Oleg Veretennikov raised his tally to 13 goals with a double strike for Rotor while Alexander Berke-to also scored a pair for last year's runners-up Valery Yesipov bagged the fifth.



Action from yesterday's office league semifinal match between Sonali Bank and Blue Berry Travels at the National Hockey Stadium. — Star photo

3-day match evenly poised

Sports Reporter
Scotland were 85 for six at stumps on the second day of the three-day match against visiting Bangladesh at Boghall, Scotland on Wednesday.
According to a telephone message received here yesterday, left-arm spinner Enamul Haque captured three wickets to put a spoke in Scotland's smooth progress. The homeside, who wrested the initiative after Bangladesh were bundled out for 138, took an overall lead of a 146 at the end of the second day.
Enamul, who gave only 28 runs for his three scalps, was ably supported by Mohammad Rafique. The southpaw, who claimed five wickets in Scotland's first innings, took two wickets for 15 runs to raise his tally to seven wickets in the match. Right-arm seamer Hasibul Hossain took the other wicket conceding 13 runs.
Earlier, Bangladesh, who began the day with 19 for no loss, were shot out for a meagre 138 with opener Azam Iqbal hammering highest 30, Khaled Masood (25) and Hasibul Hossain (24) were the other notable run getters for Bangladesh.

BRIEF SCORES
SCOTLAND: 1st innings 199 (Williamson 67, Lockhart 48, Rafique 5/44, Morshed 2/9) and 2nd innings 85 for six (Lockhart 30, Salmond 22, Enamul 3/28, Rafique 2/15).
BANGLADESH: 1st innings 138 (Azam 30, K Masood 25, Hasibul 24, Athar 23, Williamson 4/21, Sheridan 3/34).

Materazzi signs for Everton

LIVERPOOL, July 16: Everton have completed the signing of defender Marco Materazzi from Italian side Perugia for 2.8 million pounds (4.6 million US dollars), reports Reuters.
The 24-year-old Italian is the first signing by the premier league club's new boss Walter Smith.

Office hockey league Sonali Bank, Army reach final

Sonali Bank Club and Bangladesh Army reached the final of the Shah Sports Office hockey league eliminating their respective opponents in the last Super League matches at the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium yesterday, reports UNB.
They will play the final of the eight-team metropolis office meet at 4 pm at the same venue today.
President of the Bangladesh Olympic Association Lt Gen (ret'd) Muhammad Mahubur Rahman will be the chief guest in the final.
In the day's first match, youthful Sonali Bank pulled off an upset 4-2 win over nine national players-studded Blue Berry Travels. The winners led the first half 3-0.
Rafiqun Nabi Nakib opened the bankers' account in the 6th minute from a penalty stroke (1-0) and national striker Rafiqul Islam Kamal doubled the margin in the 27th minute by a field goal (2-0).
Mamun Hossain further widened the bankers' margin also by a field goal in the 32nd minute (3-0) while Shahidullah Khokon completed winners' tally (4-0) from a penalty stroke in the 46th minute.
Taking the advantage of the bankers' relax mood, national stars Rabiuddin Ahmed and Alamgir Alam of the Blue Berry Travels scored two field goals in the 52nd and 67th minutes respectively to reduce the margin (4-2).
In the day's second match, a last minute goal by Abdus Salam enabled Bangladesh Army to qualify for the final eliminating holders Sadharan Bima KS by 2-1 goals at the same venue also in the afternoon.
The match was locked in 1-1 draw in the first half.
Siam-e-Noor put the insurancemen ahead in the 10th minute by a field goal (1-0) while Rahajuddin of Army restored the parity just after three minutes also from a field goal (1-0).
When the match was heading towards a draw awarding a final berth for the Sadharan Bima for better goal margin, Abdus Salam came to rescue the Army team scoring the match winning goal in the 69th minute by a cool field goal from a vantage position (2-1).

Nat'l wrestling for July 95

Sports Reporter
The 22nd national wrestling championship, scheduled for July 17 start at the NSC gymnasium, has been deferred for eight days, according to a Bangladesh Amateur Wrestling Federation press release yesterday.
The championship will now be held at the same venue from July 25 to 27.

4th Goodwill Games

NEW YORK, July 16: Scaled down and seeking a new identity for the 21st century, the fourth Goodwill Games open here Saturday trying to overcome lack of public interest and a legacy of financial loss, reports AFP.
Michael Johnson, Donovan Bailey, Aleksander Popov and Michelle Kwan are among 1,500 competitors from 60 nations taking part in 15 sports for five million dollars in prize money at the 16-day multi-sport event.
Barely 25 per cent of the 600,000 available tickets have been sold in a city hopeful of hosting the 2012 Olympic Games. The Goodwill Games have drawn little attention outside founder Ted Turner's media empire.
"You will see some of the world's greatest athletes competing for prize money. People will come out for that," Goodwill Games president Michael Plant said.
Three prior goodwills have lost a total of 109 million dollars. But a fifth edition of the games is planned in 2001, these to be conducted in Asia or Australia. An exact site will be revealed Saturday.
Athletics, swimming, boxing, basketball, gymnastics, figure skating and diving will command the greatest attention. Cycling, wrestling, water polo, triathlon, rhythmic gymnastics, beach volleyball, women's football and synchronized swimming are also included.
Olympic 200m and 400m champion Johnson, nursing an injury, will run only the 400 here after he had planned to attempt a double. "The 200 would take more time to get in shape. I don't have time," he said.
Jackie Joyner-Kersey will compete in her final heptathlon here before her farewell meet July 25, with new American star Marion Jones set for the 100, 200 and long jump.
Canada's reigning 100m champion and world record holder Bailey, Trinidad's 200m world champion Ato Boldon and American world champion Maurice Greene in the 100m will also star in athletics.
Russian world swim sprint champion Popov faces American Bill Pilczuk, his top world's foe, even though US veteran Gary Hall Jr is out after a positive drug test for marijuana.
Rival US and Chinese women's swimmers meet in the goodwill team format as will US and Iran wrestling teams. World champions Michelle Kwan and Alexei Yagudin top figure skating.

Star war starts tomorrow

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Novotna eyeing US Open

MAHWAH, New Jersey, July 16 (AP): The smile comes quickly to Jana Novotna's face these days.
She jokes about being recognised by fans as she walks down the street, kids about the "choke label" placed on her after near misses in some majors and blushes about winning this year's Wimbledon's doubles title with a slight hangover.
Nothing seems to bother her, and why should it?
Novotna, 29, has been riding the crest of winning the Wimbledon women's singles title some two weeks ago, her first Grand Slam title since turning pro more than 11 years ago.
"Now that I have finally done it, I really feel the relief and the kind of satisfaction I got out of this, and it's more than I could ask for," Novotna said Wednesday during a news conference for the A and P Tennis Classic, an exhibition that also features Steffi Graf.
Winning Wimbledon has not changed Novotna's life dramatically, but it's obvious she feels a tremendous sense of accomplishment — and relief — since beating Nathalie Tauziat in straight sets.
"I know that it was a big thing for me and I can feel from the comments from ordinary people watching the match it was a big thing for them as well," said Novotna, who lost two heartbreaking three-set Wimbledon finals, in 1993 to Graf and in 1997 to Martina Hingis. "I'm glad I not only did it for myself, but also everyone rooting for me and cheering for me."
Novotna and Hingis combined to win the doubles title the following day, and Novotna said that was as memorable, considering she celebrated the night before with champagne and other refreshments.
With a blush, Novotna admitted she was still feeling the effects of the celebration the next day.
"I still did very well," she quipped. "I said maybe this is working and I should do it more often. I was really enjoying myself in the doubles. I was really feeling good."
Novotna, who has not lost since the quarterfinals of the French Open in early June, isn't feeling any pressure to add a couple more Grand Slam titles now that she has her first.
However, she would not be surprised if she wins a few more, starting with the US Open in September.
"I think if I can keep going with the same confidence and with the same enjoyment I have at this moment on the court, it could easily happen," she said. "If it doesn't happen, my dream just came true a week ago, and that was the ultimate goal. Anything I can do afterward is a bonus."
Speaking of bonuses, Novotna said she earned a few monetary ones winning Wimbledon and she added that her overall value has increased.
A perfect example is this event. Novotna got at least a 100,000 dollars appearance fee late last week to play here, with her first match on Thursday.

Miandad longing to coach Pakistan

KARACHI, July 16: Former Pakistan Test captain Javed Miandad said Wednesday he was willing to work as coach of the national team, reports AFP.
The Board wanted by availability and I have conveyed to them that I am ready to take the post and will serve me the country to the best of my abilities," Miandad told the news agency.
The Pakistan team has had four coaches in the past four years, with Mushtaq Mohammad taking the tough job twice. The last coach Haroon Rasheed resigned from his post in May.
The Pakistan Cricket Board is likely to decide on a new coach and team captain in a meeting later this month. Reports have suggested the body's council is divided on both choices.
Miandad believes that he can improve the team's overall consistency.
"Now it's up to the Board to decide but I think I can help the players a great deal," the 41-year-old said.
Following Pakistan's mixed tour of South Africa captain Rashid Latif looks set to be replaced by Aamir Sohail.
Former captain Wasim Akram has refused to lead Pakistan again after he was stripped of the job last February amid match-fixing and betting allegations.
Miandad, with 8832 runs in 124 Tests and 7381 runs in 231 one-day matches, played his last international match at Bangalore against India in the 1996 World Cup.
The Pakistan Cricket Board is also hunting for a foreign advisor to help the team overcome its lack of consistency.
England's former opening batsman Geoff Boycott is tipped for the job.

Kournikova to miss Fed Cup

MAHWAH, New Jersey, July 16 (AP/Reuters): Anna Kournikova is going to have to wait a little longer to return to tennis.
The Russian teen-age sensation aggravated a thumb injury preparing for an exhibition here and will be sidelined several weeks, forcing her to miss the Federation Cup in Spain next weekend.

C'wealth Games Computer hitches bug organisers

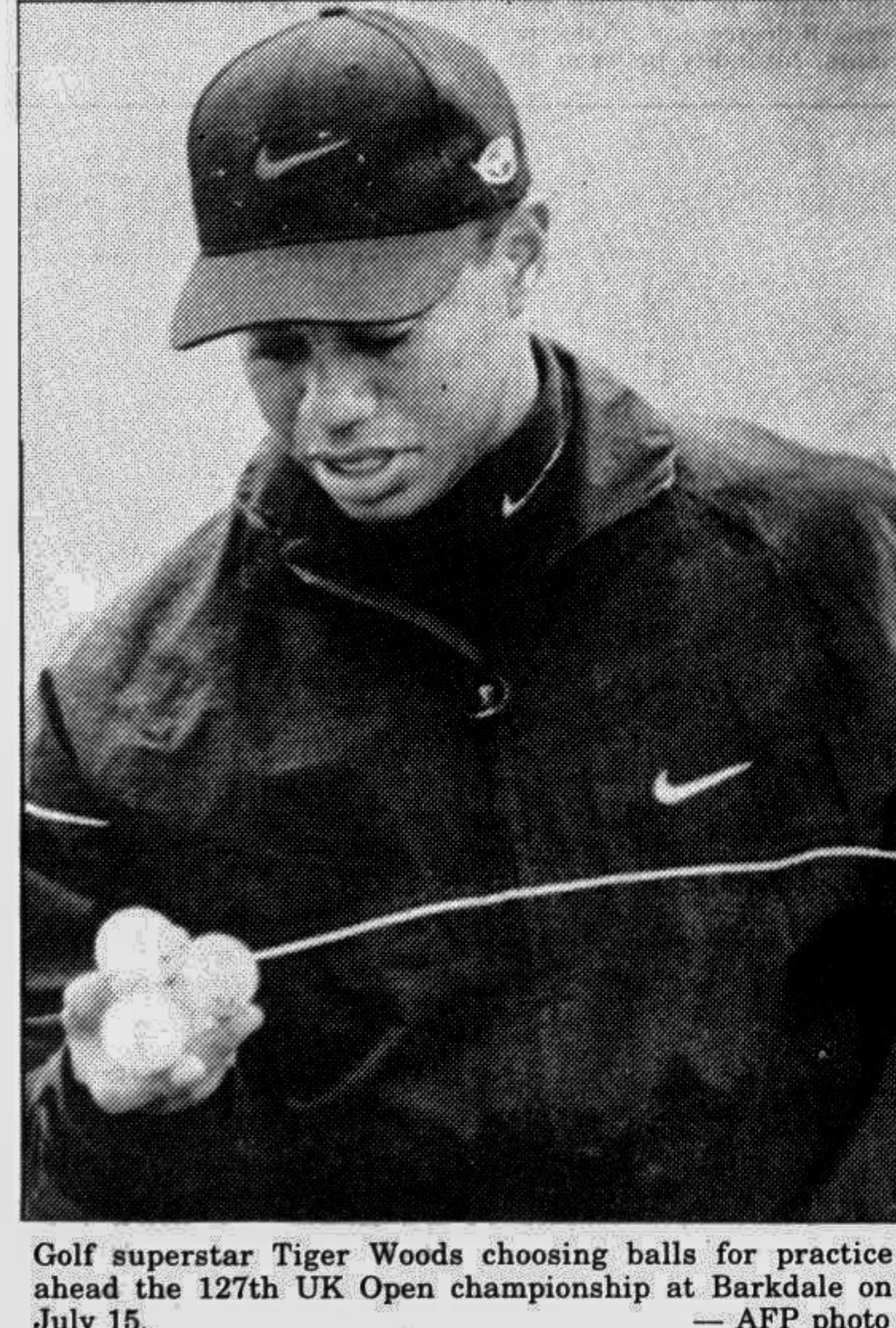
KUALA LUMPUR, July 16: Commonwealth Games organisers said Wednesday they had experienced computer hitches and power problems during ongoing pre-Games trials, but gave assurances all will be well for the main event, reports AFP.
"It is a good lesson for everyone involved. This is not the time to point fingers but instead take note of the problems," Hashim Mohamad Ali, SUKOM '98 Executive Chairman, was quoted as saying by Bernama News Agency.
Bernama said among the major problems were certain technical problems that prevented a centralised computer linkage of all five venues, power fluctuations and a communications breakdown.
The events in the pre-games are athletics, squash, gymnastics, swimming, cycling, men's hockey and cricket. SUKOM is holding the games to test the sophisticated technologies installed at different venues prior to the game proper which begin on September 11.
"We will do our own post-mortem while the ministry of youth and sports will carry out a post-mortem on the opening of the complex last Saturday. We will then discuss both reports," said Hashim.
Hashim said the problems would not recur during the games proper, adding that televisions and refrigerators would be placed in the rooms at the games village where participants and officials will be put up.
"There is no television and refrigerator now but there will be during the games proper," he said.
The Commonwealth Games chief had Sunday urged Malaysian organisers to speed up work on computer systems linking venues and transport.
"Malaysia is absolutely ready... but there are a number of areas to be worked on in a short-time — computer linkages between the various venues and ground transport system," Commonwealth Games Federation chairman Michael Fennell said.
Malaysian prime minister Mahathir Mohamad on Saturday inaugurated a multi-million dollar national sports complex for the Commonwealth Games and a rail link from the centre of Kuala Lumpur to the complex.
The 1.2 billion-ringgit (286-million-dollar) complex on the outskirts of the capital houses the main athletics stadium where the opening and closing ceremonies will be held, a swimming centre, a hockey stadium and a squash centre.
Malaysia is the first Asian country to host the Commonwealth Games in its 68-year history.

SA, OCF in a row

SYDNEY, July 16: A dispute has broken out between Australia and the Oceania Football Confederation over the procedure to select a country to represent the region at next year's Lucrative Confederations Cup, reports AFP.
Oceania is insisting that Australia has to qualify for the Cup to be staged in Mexico next January against its member states — New Zealand, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Tahiti, Fiji and Papua New Guinea.
World football body FIFA last week reversed a decision to allow Australia to play in the eight-team Cup without participating in qualifiers.
Soccer Australia (SA) appealed against the decision, promoting FIFA to recommend to Oceania that Australia, a finalist in the last series in Saudi Arabia, represent the region.
SA argued in their letter to FIFA that "no other country chosen to represent their confederation in the Cup in Mexico had been obliged to play qualifiers and it was unfair to expect Australia to do so."
The appeal received a sympathetic hearing from FIFA, which made it clear to the OCF that it wanted the Socceros in Mexico.
"In FIFA's view there is some merit in this protest in that not one of the other teams which are to participate in this tournament had previously to qualify through a qualifying tournament," Michael Zernuffen, the acting general secretary of FIFA, told the OCF.
"We are therefore of the opinion that Australia, as the best Oceania team on the record of the last year, should qualify." "Australia should be declared the team representing your confederation."
There was, however, a diplomatic out-claus in his recommendation, saying that Oceania was of course free to play a qualifying tournament in September.
Oceania President Charlie Dempsey said he had seen no notification from FIFA and had told the world soccer body that the qualifiers would go ahead.
New Zealand based Dempsey and SA chairman David Hill have been at loggerheads over the value of Oceania, with Australia looking to pull out of the federation.
Dempsey said Thursday if Australia did not want to participate in the tournament, then some of the developing nations would be glad to pick up the 750,000 US dollar qualifying hand-out.
"If they want to do so Mexico then they will have to play in this tournament," Dempsey said.
"There is going to be a competition in Australia in September and Australia will be in it. I know Australia does not want to play against the islands, but it is part of our development programme."

What Tyson has to do...

LAS VEGAS, July 16 (AP): If Mike Tyson wants to fight again, he's going to have to pick up a telephone and let Nevada boxing officials know his intentions.
On the first day Tyson could formally ask to return to the sport he once dominated, Nevada officials made it clear Thursday they want to hear from Tyson personally before setting a hearing on his request for a new boxing licence.
"I want to hear from Mike directly," said Marc Ratner, executive director of the Nevada Athletic Commission. "I will need to talk to him before we do anything."
A year after Tyson's licence was revoked and he was fined three million dollars for biting Evander Holyfield's ears, the former heavyweight champion became eligible Thursday to apply for a new licence that would allow him to return to the ring.
No such request had been made to the commission by midday, however, and both Ratner and members of the commission say it will have to come from Tyson himself.
That's because, they don't know who is representing Tyson.
"Every time we turn around we have another person representing him or meeting with him," said Dr James Nave, a commission member. "As far as I know, nobody has given us anything in writing to indicate they are representing him."
In the year since his licence was revoked, Tyson split from promoter Don King and his former co-managers, Rory Holoway and John Horne, claiming they took millions of dollars from him that were rightfully his.
In February, Tyson aligned himself with Hollywood agents Jeff Wald and Irving Azoff, but that relationship has since cooled. Recently, fight manager Shelly Finkel said he represents the boxer.
Finkel said in June that Tyson would apply for one this month, with hopes of a comeback fight in October or November.
Nave, who was influential in the decision to revoke Tyson's licence instead of suspending him from boxing for a set period of time, said he and other commissioners have paid little attention to the one-year anniversary of the licence revocation.
Nave said he remains comfortable with the decision the commission made in the wake of the June 28, 1997, WBA heavyweight title fight that ended when Tyson was disqualified in the third round after biting a chunk out of Holyfield's right ear, then biting his left ear.



Golf superstar Tiger Woods choosing balls for practice ahead the 127th UK Open championship at Barkdale on July 15. — AFP photo



Amanda Coetzer of South Africa executes a backhand against American Lisa Raymond during their A&P Classic tournament match at Mahwah, New Jersey on July 15. Coetzer won 6-1, 6-3. — AP/UNB photo