

## Column One

### DID U' KNOW?

(The Professor does)

That the term Grand Prix (GP), which is commonly used in connection with Formula One (F1) racing, sometimes causes confusion in discussions of automobile racing. Originally the phrase, meaning grand prize in French, was used in the names of many races. But beginning in 1906 it came to refer to the principal F1 auto race in any nation (except in the United States, where it was and continues to be used indiscriminately). After the end of the World War I in 1918, when automobile racing blossomed internationally, a series of GP races in several nations was reserved for F1 competition, and an annual GP calendar was developed consisting of national races, such as the French Grand Prix and the British Grand Prix. An annual award called the World Championship of Drivers was established in 1950, with the winner being determined from the F1 results each year. In 1958 an F1 Constructors' Championship was established to rival the World Manufacturers' Championship, a competition held in sports-car racing. These championships are based on race results, but reward the companies that build race cars, rather than rewarding drivers.

If our drivers knew that it is the car he is driving that is to be credited, and not him, I am sure they would slow down.

## SPORTS TALK



Alec Stewart  
(England Test captain)

To spend time out in the middle was the most important thing for me.  
After scoring a hundred against Victoria

## Roost sports WHIZZ KID

COMPETITION FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN  
Competition-108  
✓ Tick the Correct Answers  
Post to *The Daily Star*  
Win attractive prizes  
Competition closes at 6 pm  
Dec 18 '98, and draw  
shortly afterwards

- National cricket team captain Aminul Islam will play this season for  
Biman | Mohammedan | Surjo Tarun
- Who won the Premier league cricket title last season?  
Mohammedan | Kalabagan | Abahani
- How many teams play in the Premier league cricket?  
10 | 8 | 12
- How many overs will be played per side in the Premier league this season?  
50 | 80 | 100
- How many venues will be used for the Premier league this year?  
One | Two | Three

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

POWERED WITH  
**EN-VITS**  
ENERGY-RELEASING VITAMINS

## Europa Cup b'ball begins today

The 21st Europa Cup national basketball championship begins today at the Dhanmondi basketball gymnasium, reports UNB.

Twelve teams, split into two groups, are participating in the tournament, organised by Bangladesh Amateur Basketball Federation.

Group A: Bangladesh Navy, Khulna DSA, Dhaka University, Rajshahi DSA, Bangladesh Police and Pabna DSA.

Group B: Bangladesh Army, Bangladesh Rifles, Bangladesh Air Force, Bangladesh University of Engineering & Technology (BUET), Satkhira DSA and Sylhet DSA.

Jatya Sangsad Whip S M Mustafa Rashidi Suja will formally inaugurate the meet as chief guest at 4 pm.

## Eyes of the world focused on Thailand

BANGKOK, Dec 6 (AFP): The problem-plagued Asian Games opened here in a blaze of colour today, with the organisers hoping their musical extravaganza would blot out a week of rows and recriminations — for a day at least.

But they knew they will ultimately be judged not by the

the games and complaints of sub-standard venues and unfinished road links, was briefly forgotten.

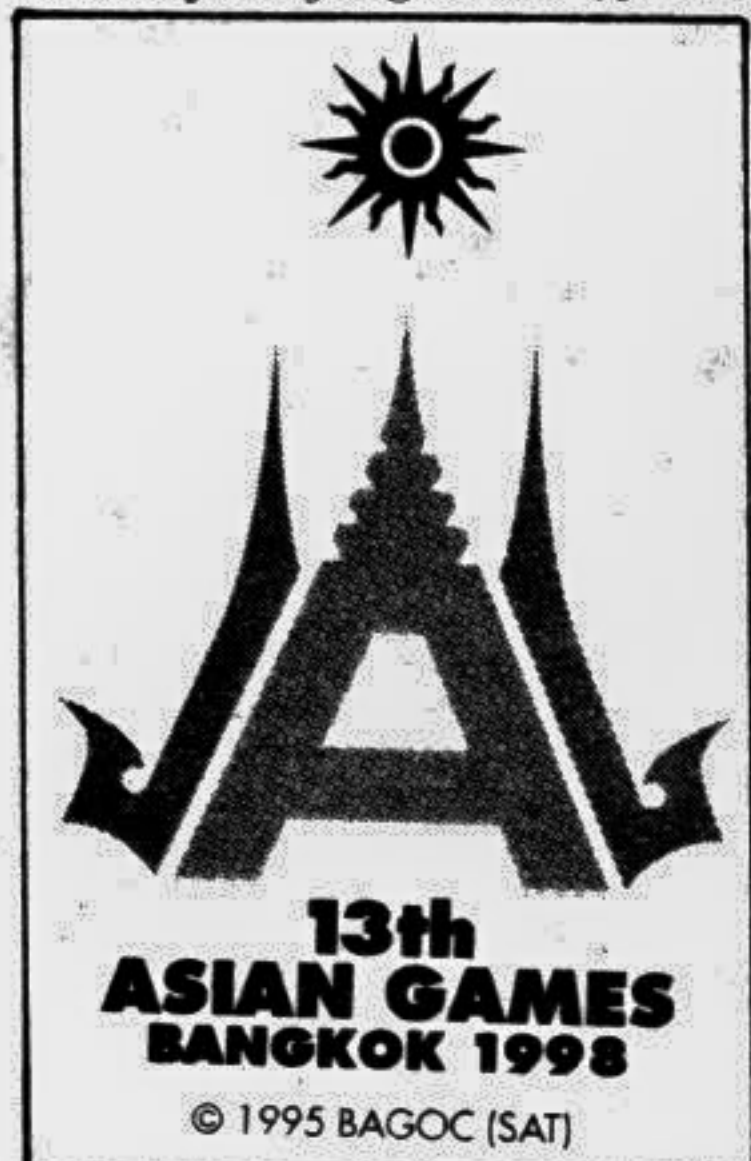
Poor ticket sales, a fight between Thai and Qatari footballers, a plague of insects in the Games swimming pool and a security scare were papered over as hundreds of singers,

not include more than half the Games' 6,888 athletes, with the organisers rationing places for each national delegation.

Nor did it include the Saudi Arabians.

They pulled out last month, saying the event clashed with the holy month of Ramadan.

Most people here linked their



planned two-and-a-half-hour of spectacular pageant, but by the smooth running of a two-week event boldly touting itself as a source of Asian unity.

Thailand, hoping to bid for the Olympics one day, fears it will lose face if it fails to pull off the difficult challenge of organising a 41-nation Asiad blighted by an ongoing regional economic crisis.

The opening ceremony, watched by Thailand's King Bhumibol Adulyadej at the Rajamangala Stadium, burst into life with a symphony orchestra and choir before progressing into a series of musical tableaux with titles such as the dawn, united Asia, the gathering of heavenly spirits and songs of friendship.

Hundreds of actors wearing shimmering golden traditional costumes, reminiscent of the ancient kingdom of Siam, paraded around a silver royal barge carrying the Sun God huge swatches of coloured materials extended out to represent the sun's rays.

Banners and posters, meanwhile, proclaiming slogans such as "all hearts weaved into one" and "one heart, one mind, one spirit, one Asia" bedecked the stadium.

The past fortnight, dominated by Saudi Arabia's controversial late withdrawal from



A TOUCH OF THAI TRADITION: Dancers clad in mythical costumes performing a cultural spectacle during the opening ceremony of the 13th Asian Games at the Rajamangala National Stadium in Bangkok yesterday. —AFP photo

dancers and children took centre stage.

The core of the colourful ceremony was to come when the Thai King, after watching the athletes' parade, declared the Games officially open.

Some 60,000 people — including president of the International Olympic Committee Juan Antonio Samaranch — were packed into the venue, entertained by series of mass synchronised dances and sports demonstrations like Thai boxing.

The spectators, however, did

absence instead to a bitter, long-running political row with Thailand.

The atmosphere was further marred last week when four Pakistani were arrested as suspected terrorists before the charges. The arrests, however, sent the Indian delegation in a spin.

Today's show, however, offered some respite for the organisers who almost lost the right to stage the Games last year following fears Bangkok would not be ready.

## Asiad snooker UAE's Al-Hashemi frames Mofazzal

BANGKOK, Dec 6: Bangladesh started their participation in the Asiad with a bitter taste when Mofazzal Hossain was whitewashed by Al Hashemi Mohamed of the United Arab Emirates in 0-5 frames in the first round of singles in snooker, reports BSS.

AFP adds: Meanwhile, Thai snooker superstar, James Wattana, crashed out of the Asian Games snooker tournament when he was convincingly beaten 5-1 by Hong Kong's Chan Wok-Ming in the first round.

Wattana, who was expected to be Thailand's first gold medal winner of the Games, struggled throughout the one-sided match.

The 23-year-old Chan, the 1996 world junior champion, played steadily, taking what chances came his way.

## Bangla athletes find late comfort

BANGKOK, Dec 6: The accommodation problems of Bangladesh athletes at the Games Village are over, Bangladesh chef-de-mission Col (ret'd) Faruq Khan, MP, said here today, reports BSS.

Bangladesh players have been experiencing extreme inconvenience in accommodation with three players staying in each of the rooms since their arrival on December 3 late night.

Bangladesh chef-de-mission, from the very beginning, drew the attention of the Games officials, who could not keep their word despite commitments till yesterday.

But Col (ret'd) Faruq Khan said, "The problem is now over and we have been allotted five more rooms from today."

## Halim Shah in MSC by default

Sports Reporter

Middle-order batsman Halim Shah, who joined new powerhouse Surjo Tarun Club from Brothers Union last month, may move to Mohammedan Sporting Club through mutual negotiation.

Jahangir Shah, Badshah, former national cricketer and the coach of Surjo Tarun Club, revealed this while talking to the Daily Star at the Bangladesh National Stadium yesterday afternoon.

"We have enough of batsmen in the side and I think this gentleman has to keep sitting if he stays here," said Badshah.

When asked about the club he may switch to, Badshah informed that Mohammedan Sporting Club, who have lost most of their recognised batsmen during last month's transfer, were showing interest in Halim Shah.

When contacted over telephone last night, Mohammedan Sporting Club manager Badal confirmed the matter and said that both Mohammedan and Surjo Tarun may reach a deal today.

## SA cricketer accused of rape

JOHANNESBURG, Dec 6: Cricket chief Al Bacher said today he believes a member of the South African cricket squad accused of rape has been framed.

"I am absolutely certain he is innocent, for reasons that I do not want to go into," Bacher told AFP.

The player, who may not be named because he has not yet been charged, is a strong contender to play for South Africa in the second Test against the touring West Indies in Port Elizabeth on Thursday.

Bacher, managing director of the United Cricket Board of South Africa, said the allegations against the player would "in no way" affect the selection process for the match.

A 21-year-old woman laid a charge of rape against the cricketer in the south coast city of East London on Tuesday.

The Sunday Independent newspaper here said the player had reacted with bemusement when told of the charges.

The woman is apparently a neighbour of the cricketer. The alleged rape took place after he offered her a lift in his car.

The woman has apparently given conflicting statements to police.

A police spokesman said the cricketer had not been formally charged as detectives were still investigating the charges.

"There are a number of things in the woman's statement which need to be clarified," the spokesman said.

"We are trying to get statements from witnesses before we take further action."

He said a doctor had confirmed that sexual penetration had occurred.

## Schools kabadi

Dholaihar High School take on Sharmin Textile Mills High School in the final of the 8th All Sports schools kabadi tournament today at 3 pm at the Outer Stadium kabadi court, reports UNB.

## Gold goes to Takahashi



HANGKOK, Dec 6: Rising star Naoko Takahashi of Japan broke all the rules in sensational style here today as she flirted with the world record to win the first gold of the Asian Games, reports AFP.

The 26-year-old, already the Japanese record holder despite only running two previous marathons, ran from the front in high heat and humidity to win in an two hours, 21 minutes

officials. The drama continued when Kim Chang of North Korea, 13 minutes behind in 2:34.54, out-sprinted Tomoko Kai of Japan for the silver.

Kai then collapsed on the track and had to be helped by officials as the North Korean team hoisted Kim in the air in triumph.

For most of the early part of the race Takahashi was on schedule to beat Kenyan Tegla Loroupe's world record of

cient city of Ayutthaya, took an unusual pattern from the start as Takahashi broke clean away from the field of less than a dozen runners.

The 26-year-old's tactics seemed suicidal.

Ignoring the traditional wisdom that marathon racing only begins at halfway, she blasted into a huge early lead, reaching the five-kilometre mark in 16 mins 37sec, inside world record pace and more than one-and-a-half minutes

| MEDALS TABLE                            |   |   |   |       |
|---|---|---|---|-------|
| Medals standings after Sunday's events: |   |   |   |       |
| Nation                                  | G | S | B | Total |
| Japan                                   | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2     |
| North Korea                             | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1     |

ahead of a six-strong chasing pack.

By 10 kilometres, which Takahashi crossed in 33mins 03secs, her lead had passed four minutes, with China's Pan Jihong Tomill Kai, Kim Chang and South Korean Kim Hye-Young leading the chase.

The gap continued to widen, to almost six minutes at the 15km mark, Takahashi shrugging off the rising morning temperature and the growing flow of commuter traffic on the roads running parallel to the race route.

By halfway her approach, allowing her to run her own pace and not have her rhythm disturbed by her opponents, had been fully vindicated.

Her hands flicking left and right as if she was shadow boxing, she was a full 10 minutes clear and, barring disaster, sure of victory.

Pan Jihong, meanwhile, whose personal best before the race was less than a minute slower than Takahashi's, and Indonesia's Ruwiyu were beginning to fade leaving Kai and Kim Chang as the only pursuers.

Takahashi, however — who had waited for 30km before attacking when she won the Nagoya marathon earlier this year in 2:25.48 — was still edging further ahead, passing 30 kilometres in 1:39:02.

At 35th she was on 1:56.11 but the world record slowly slipped out of her grasp in the closing stages.

Before Loroupe's record run earlier this year, the previous marathon record of 2:21.06 held by Norway's Ingrid Christensen, had stood since 1985.

The previous Asian Games record stood at 2:29.32, recorded by Zong Huandi of China in Hiroshima in 1994.



A pleased Naoko Takahashi of Japan who won the first gold of the 13th Asiad in the ladies' marathon with a Asian record time of 2:21:47 sec. in Bangkok yesterday.

— AP/UNB photo

and 46 seconds. That performance, the fourth best of all time, smashed the Asian record and beat her own personal best by four minutes.

Barely out of breath, Takahashi smiled and bowed twice to the crowd.

She ran almost the entire distance on her own, with only commuter traffic on adjoining roads for company.

Within seconds of her win she was chatting happily with

2:20.47 secs, run in much easier conditions this April in Rotterdam.

Extraordinarily, Takahashi's coach Yoshio Kode had predicted that the conditions would mean most runners losing around seven to eight minutes off their best times.

The previous Asian record was held by China's Wang Junxia in 2:24.07.

Today's marathon, which began at 6.30 am from the an-

## Pillay's last shot at glory



BANGKOK, Dec 6 (AFP): Indian hockey captain Dhanraj Pillay is desperate to lead his team to victory in his third and last Asian Games so he can end the insults against him.

The 33-year-old striker was humiliated in front of the entire team by Indian Hockey Federation secretary Jyoti Kumaran at half time of the Commonwealth Games semifinal against Malaysia in September.

Jyoti Kumaran, ignoring the spectators and officials nearby, lashed out at a stunned Pillay for missing easy openings in the match which India ultimately lost by a last minute goal from rival skipper Miranawan Nawawi.

"Okay, I'll sit, you play," Pillay retorted, Jyoti Kumaran,

who has never played hockey at any level, backed off.

But Pillay was clearly shocked by the official's behaviour, and even contemplated throwing in the towel before the match resumed.

"I will retire, I want to play with respect, not with this," he said later.

Pillay changed his mind after a quiet word with coach Maharaj Kishen Kaushik on the team's return home amid the hope that he can finally win a gold medal for India.

"My biggest regret over the last 10 years is that India has never won a major title," he said.

"It's not that we are a bad team, but somehow we never seem to click on important occasions."

"I hope we can do it here," Pillay said ahead of India's opening match against Singa-

pore on Wednesday. The 10-team hockey event gets underway on Tuesday.

Pillay, whose best match was a 5-1 drubbing of arch-rivals Pakistan in the South Asian Federation Games final in 1995 has faced similar humiliation before.

Former coach Vasudevan Bhaskaran publicly upbraided Pillay after India finished ninth in the World Cup earlier this year suggesting the Indian captain and a few other senior players were unfit for international hockey.

The IHF sacked Bhaskaran instead and retained Pillay and the others for the Commonwealth Games.

"I know they won't give me another chance," said Pillay, India's flag-bearer at Sunday's opening ceremony. "It's got to be now... or never."

Noted hockey critic S Thyagarajan said Pillay carried an enormous burden to prove his credentials as a leader and player.

"He is truly a passionate player often marooned in his own emotions," Thyagarajan wrote in the weekly magazine Sportstar.

"But if the ball rolls kindly for him, no defence is safe."

India, once the masters of the game with eight Olympic titles, have won the Asian Games gold just once — 22 years ago in the 1966 Games here in Bangkok.

This time they face stiff competition from defending champions and hot favourites South Korea and Pakistan, winners of seven Asiad titles.

The winner of the tournament gains a direct entry into the 2000 Sydney Olympics.

## Abahani earn full points

CHITTAGONG, Dec 6: Abahani Krira Chakra earned full points in the CJKP First Division football super league defeating Naojoan Club 2-1 at M A Aziz Stadium here today.

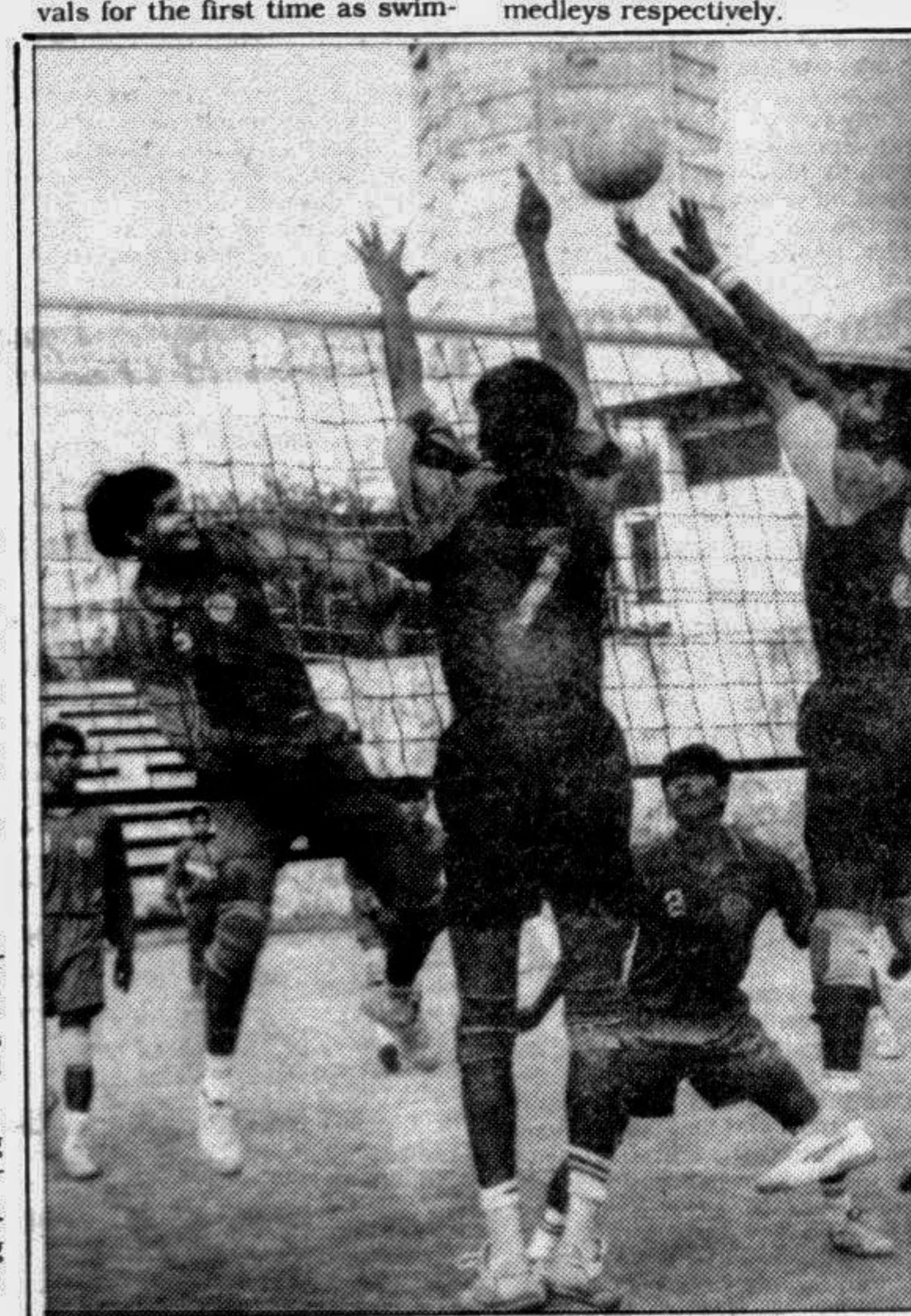
Abahani led the first half 1-0.

Rajani put Abahani ahead in the first half.

Naojoan equalised the margin in the 47th minute while striker Abul brilliantly sent the ball home.

Abahani scored the winning goal just two minutes before the long whistle when Iqbal netted the ball by a good header off a free-kick from Rajani.

Abahani collected full six points from their two super league encounters while Naojoan bag was empty from the same number of matches.



Action from yesterday's National Bank Premier Division volleyball game between Brothers Union and Dilkusha Sporting. — Star photo