

Sport

American Cup
golf Dec 11

Dan McDermott of Mobil Oil will put his best gross title on the line as the American Cup starts at the lush Kurmitola Golf Club on December 11, says a press release.

Expatriates from United States, Canada, Sweden, Switzerland, South Africa, India, Pakistan are among the participants in this annual event.

Keeping in mind the large turnouts in the past few years, the organisers have expanded the tournament to a two-day event.

This is a premier golf event which is sponsored by major American companies doing business in Bangladesh. The tournament will be formally inaugurated by Maj Gen Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury, Chief of General Staff, vice president of the Club and Charge D'Affaires of the Embassy of the United States, Theodore A Nist.

Not interested

SYDNEY, Dec 8 (AFP/Inter-

net): Test cricket is the sport

most likely to lose popularity

in Australia over the next 25

years, according to a university

study.

University of South Australia academic Tim Olds surveyed 150 university students

and 27 per cent gave Test cricket

the thumbs down.

Basketball was the second

least popular, followed by

Australian Rules football,

triathlon and beach volleyball

were expected

to become the most popular

sports in Australia.

The crush!

BANGKOK, Dec 8: A Thai Airways stewardess who reportedly has a crush on Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai, chased him while he ran through Bangkok carrying the Asian Games torch, The Nation newspaper reported Monday, reports AP.

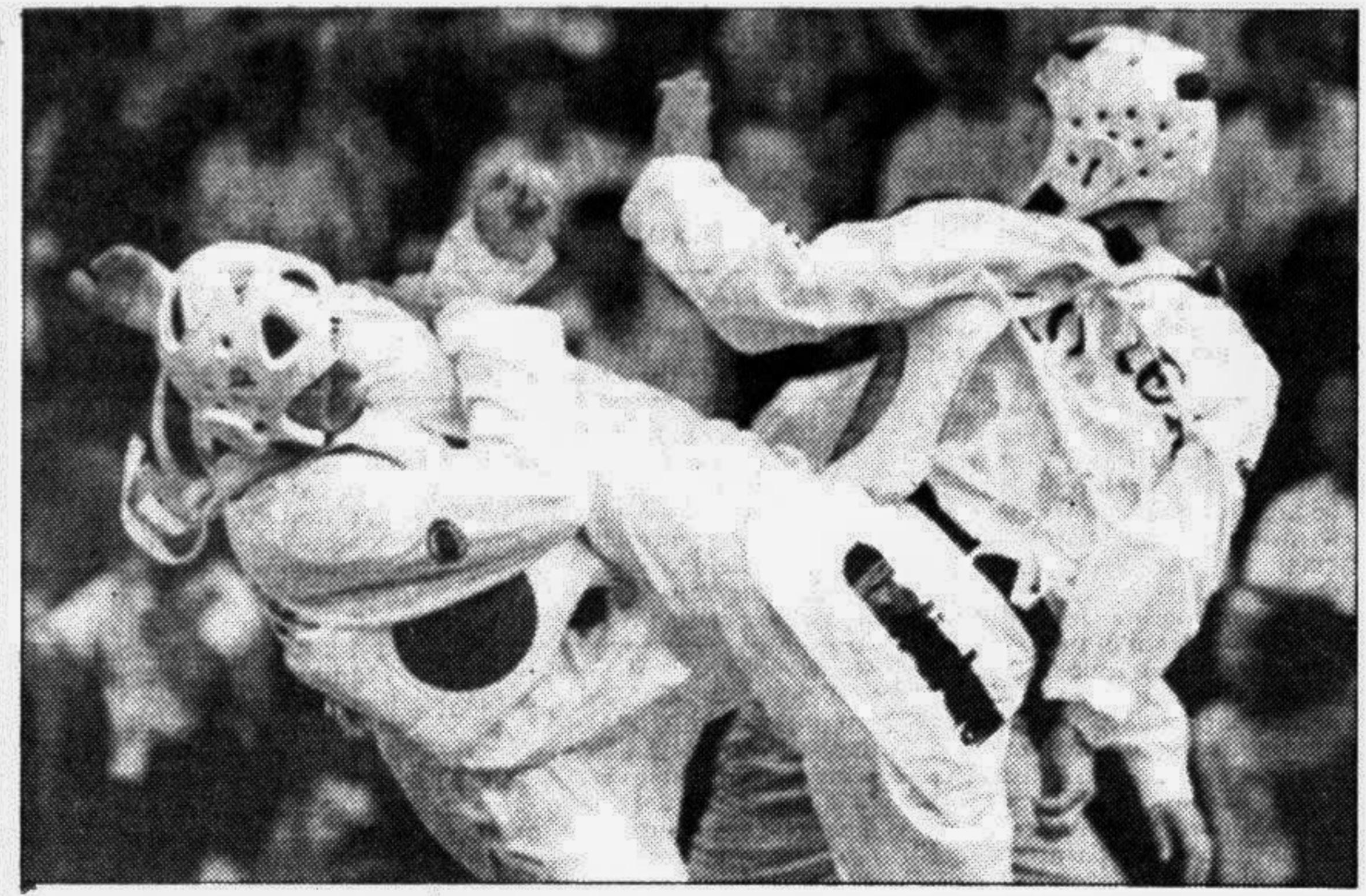
The stewardess, Jittiporn Apibalupawant, made headlines last year when she engaged in an altercation with Chuan's bodyguards after taking a seat next to the Prime Minister on a Thai Airways flight.

The bodyguards complained to airline management, saying she had annoyed the Prime Minister. Jittiporn insisted she was Chuan's friend and knew his mother well.

The Nation reported that Jittiporn waited for Chuan on Sunday outside the Supreme Court. The Prime Minister was one of several prominent Thais who ran in a relay, carrying the torch to the main stadium for the opening ceremony of the 13th Asian Games, being hosted by Bangkok.

Delwar champ

M Delwar Hossain and M A Muttalib Khokon emerged champions and runners-up respectively in the Gulshan Club annual billiards tournament concluded at the Gulshan Club billiards room on Monday, says a press release.



Action from the Asian Games taekwondo finals between Kang Dong-kuk (R) of South Korea and Jordan's Tahlem Hussein in Bangkok on December 7. Kang won the gold.

—AP/UNB photo

Waiting for Usha

BANGKOK, Dec 8 (AP): The Asian Games on Tuesday awaited sprinter P T Usha, the 33-year-old mother from India who will run her last races in an international meet.

"I am really looking forward to talking to her, getting a few tips," said Susant Jayasinghe of Sri Lanka, 10 years in the 200m, even at her best, Usha would find it difficult to beat the Chinese.

"My preparations have been geared toward 400 metres," Usha, mother of a 6-year-old son Ujwal, meaning radiant in the Hindi language, said in a recent interview.

Usha has been India's most unpredictable athlete.

Taking everyone by surprise, she came out of her self-imposed eight years of retirement to run in the Asian Track Championships in Fukuoka, Japan, in July.

She was third, in 23.46 seconds, in the 200m. The same day, she anchored India's victorious 4x100-metre relay. Usha also anchored India's silver medal team in the 4x400, which

missed a crucial part of her training due to a heel injury. In addition, in a November meet in the eastern city of Calcutta, she strained her right hamstring, collapsing in the 200 metres.

In Bangkok, Usha may run only in her favourite 400 metres, since endurance is not among her problems.

In the 200, even at her best, Usha would find it difficult to beat the Chinese.

"She is not only a great runner, but very brave," said Jayasinghe, a runner who herself is fighting odds to return to track honours after a drug abuse scandal that has nearly ruined her career.

Twenty years ago, Usha, then a shy, 13-year-old in pig-tails, arrived on the Indian athletic scene. Today, the railroad public relations official is the only Indian to boast of an Asian Games gold in track and field since 1986.

For these games, she has

finished .16 seconds behind China.

Usha has been unusual in India, where the question has been raised whether the country of 980 million people is a "sleeping giant" of sports, or whether there is something basically wrong that prevents development of very few athletes of international standard.

No Indian has won a track and field medal in the Olympics, but Usha came closest, missing bronze by 0.01 seconds in the 400-metre hurdles at the 1994 Games.

Through Usha made her mark in 1978 in an under-14 Indian National Athletic Championship, her prominence spread in 1982, when she won silver at 100 and 200 metres in the New Delhi Asian Games. One year later, she won gold in the 400 in the Asian Championships in Kuwait and a silver in the 200.

One year after starting her first retirement from sports in 1991, she married Sreenivasan, a sportsman in his own right. He plays the Indian sport of kabadi.

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Sema succeeds IBM

LONDON, Dec 8: Sema, a relatively obscure European computer company, beat out several leading farms to replace IBM as the Olympics' chief technology sponsor, starting in 2001, reports AP.

International Business Machines Corp., the world's largest computer company, said last August it would end its 38-year partnership with the International Olympic Committee at the 2000 Sydney Games.

The Salt Lake City Winter Olympics in 2002 will be the first under the new technology arrangement. IOC marketing director Michael Payne said.

Sema is a computer services and defense technology firm employing 16,500 people. The high-profile tie-in with the Olympics should put the company on the world map.

Sema provided information systems at the 1992 Barcelona Games and has been involved in other sports events such as the 1994 World Cup, the 1996 European Soccer Championship and the 1998 Commonwealth Games.

"It's not a very well-known brand name, but they come to the table with a tremendous amount of knowledge and understanding," IOC marketing director Michael Payne said.

The injury was not serious, Purnchay said.

Budi was taken to a hospital, where he received a number of stitches on one of his fingers, said Purnchay Duangnate, a senior official from the Thai Amateur Cycling Association.

The glass door was very

cleat and there were nothing around to warn that it was there, Purnchay said.

He said Budi smashed into the door as he left a building being used by Games officials for the mountain bicycle competition in Pak Chong District in Nakhon Ratchasima province, northeast of Bangkok.

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