

Confeds Cup FFF's fresh concern

PARIS, Dec 12: The chances of France participating in next year's Confederations' Cup nosedived here on Friday, reports AFP.

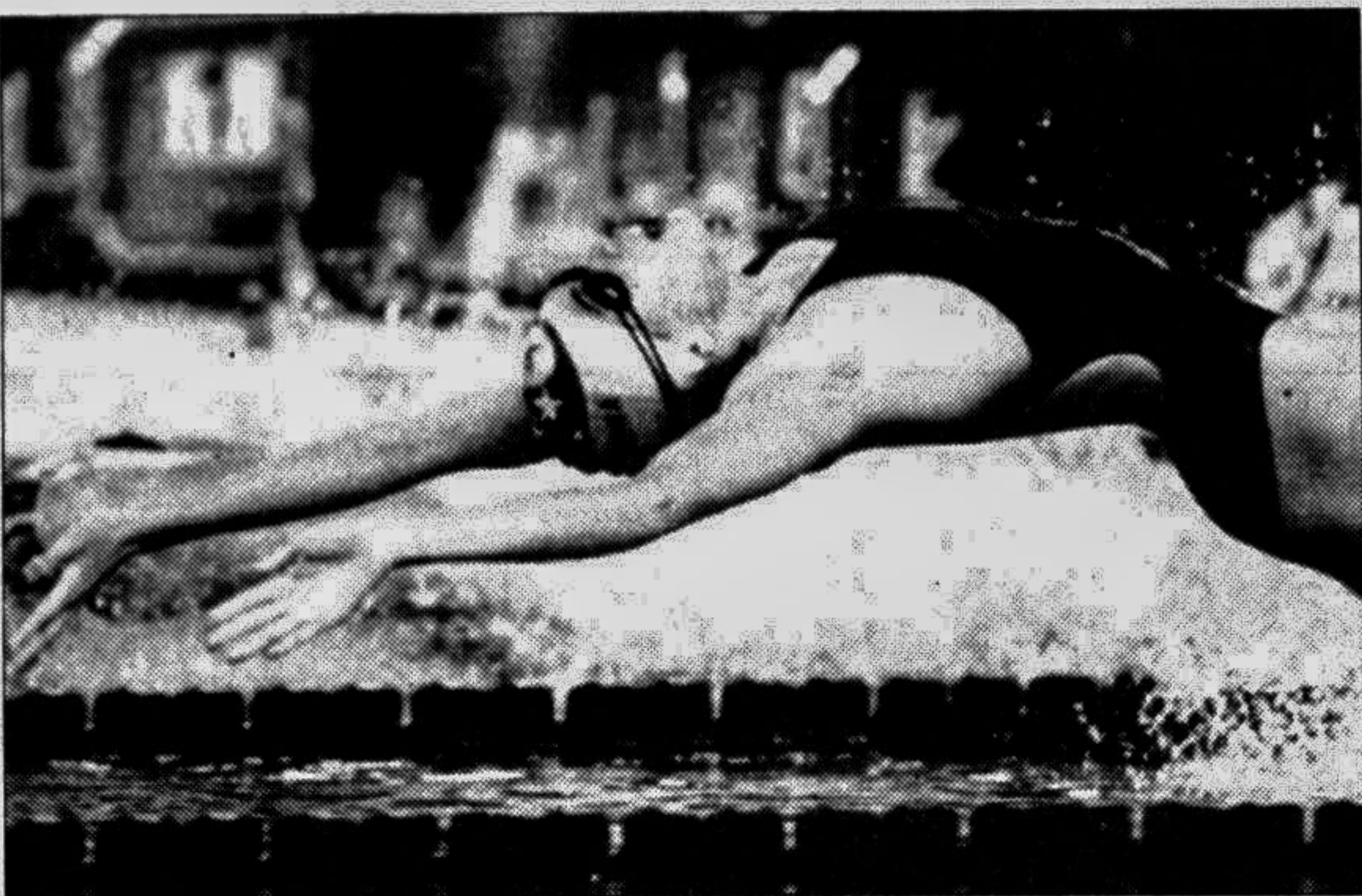
A final decision on the World Cup presence in the competition will be taken when Joseph Blatter, president of FIFA, football's governing body, meets French Football Federation (FFF) president Claude Simonet in Rome next week.

The French are concerned about the timing of the event, which has been switched to the summer on their request from its original date in January.

But the announcement by UEFA, the organisation overseeing European football, of seven additional summer ties for the new European competitions, has sparked fresh concern.

Blatter, speaking from Zurich, said: "There is a flexibility of two to three days, not more because the Copa America finishes on July 18 and you have to have a little time between competitions."

But Simonet described the additional leeway granted by FIFA as insufficient.



China's Wu Yanyan starts her heat in the women's 200 metres backstroke at the Asian Games yesterday. —AP/UNB photo

Asian Games roundup

BANGKOK, Dec 12: Chinese women sharpshooters swept four Asian Games gold medals Saturday, giving their nation 18 of the 30 on offer at the Games, reports AP.

Kazakhstan won three of the day's silver medals. Cai Yeqing's gold in the sport pistol individual competition was her third here. She beat Kazakhstan's Yuliya Bondareva 685.3 to 683.8, with China's Cao Ying taking the bronze with 681.9.

Cai, Cao and Li Duihong shot a combined 1,743 in the team event for another Chinese gold. Bondareva and her Kazakhstan teammates took silver with 1,729, and Mongolia won the bronze with 1,726.

In the sport rifle event, China's Shan Hong won with 672.8, followed by Olga Dovgun of Kazakhstan with 670.8 and Kong Hyun-ah of South Korea with 670.2.

Shan helped her team take another gold with 1,715 to 1,702 for Thailand and 1,700 for Uzbekistan.

The squad won 12 gold medals at this year's world championships.

Chinese head shooting coach Zheng Heng said the team had aimed for 16 here.

Thailand racked up another gold Saturday with a convincing victory over Myanmar in the women's team competition of sepak takraw, sparking frenzied celebrations by the home crowd.

One delighted member of the Thai team graded her young son from the stands for a victory lap of the arena. The crowd, which had been growing noisier with each point, erupted with screaming and cheering as the team clinched gold by win-

ning the second set 15-5, 15-9 for an unassailable 2-0 lead in the best-of-three set final.

Thailand won the first set 15-6, 15-13 and was ahead early in the third set too.

It was Thailand's eight gold overall at these games.

China and Vietnam, the semifinal losers, got bronze. Sepak takraw is akin to volleyball, with players using their feet to kick a rattan ball back and forth across a net.

Cheering, flag-waving and kazoo-playing erupted from the crowd every time Thailand scored, and spectators joined in the wave.

The Thai team and spectators fed off each other, which players gesturing to the crowd to make more noise.

The men's team from Myanmar, which was on the sidelines watching and had been quite boisterous at the start, grew quieter and quieter as their women's team edged nearer to defeat.

Thailand was to play Malaysia later for the men's gold.

Lu Hsiao-chuan shot an even-par 72 Friday, taking a two-stroke lead over two Taiwanese teammates midway through the women's golf tournament.

Japan's Tomohiro Kondo shot a 3-under 69 and led India's Harmeet S Kahlon by two shots in the men's tournament.

Lu was one under at 143 for 36 holes. Wei Yun-jie and Ling Yu-ping were at 145 after Wei shot 72 and Ling 73 Friday. The Philippines' Dorothy Delasin followed at 71-76-147.

Kondo was at 5-under 139. Kahlon, who also shot 69 Friday, was at 141, followed by Gerald Rosales of the Philippines and Hidemasa Hoshino of Japan at 143. Hoshino shot a 69 and Rosales a 70.

Two Taiwanese were at 144. Chan Yih-shin shot 71 and Hong Chia-yun 73.

Lu Hsiao-chuan shot an even-par 72 Friday, taking a two-stroke lead over two Taiwanese teammates midway through the women's golf tournament.

Japan's Tomohiro Kondo shot a 3-under 69 and led India's Harmeet S Kahlon by two shots in the men's tournament.

Lu was one under at 143 for 36 holes. Wei Yun-jie and Ling Yu-ping were at 145 after Wei shot 72 and Ling 73 Friday. The Philippines' Dorothy Delasin followed at 71-76-147.

Kondo was at 5-under 139. Kahlon, who also shot 69 Friday, was at 141, followed by Gerald Rosales of the Philippines and Hidemasa Hoshino of Japan at 143. Hoshino shot a 69 and Rosales a 70.

Two Taiwanese were at 144. Chan Yih-shin shot 71 and Hong Chia-yun 73.

Lu Hsiao-chuan shot an even-par 72 Friday, taking a two-stroke lead over two Taiwanese teammates midway through the women's golf tournament.

Japan's Tomohiro Kondo shot a 3-under 69 and led India's Harmeet S Kahlon by two shots in the men's tournament.

Lu was one under at 143 for 36 holes. Wei Yun-jie and Ling Yu-ping were at 145 after Wei shot 72 and Ling 73 Friday. The Philippines' Dorothy Delasin followed at 71-76-147.

Kondo was at 5-under 139. Kahlon, who also shot 69 Friday, was at 141, followed by Gerald Rosales of the Philippines and Hidemasa Hoshino of Japan at 143. Hoshino shot a 69 and Rosales a 70.

Two Taiwanese were at 144. Chan Yih-shin shot 71 and Hong Chia-yun 73.

Lu Hsiao-chuan shot an even-par 72 Friday, taking a two-stroke lead over two Taiwanese teammates midway through the women's golf tournament.

Japan's Tomohiro Kondo shot a 3-under 69 and led India's Harmeet S Kahlon by two shots in the men's tournament.

BANGKOK, Dec 12: Zarak Jahan Khan made a spectacular comeback in an all-Pakistani squash final against Amjad Khan to win the Asian Games singles title here today, reports AFP.

Zarak fought back from a 2-1 deficit to take the last two games in a marathon battle against his fancied opponent.

Zarak won 1-9, 9-0, 6-9, 9-7, 9-3 to hand Pakistan their second gold of the Games after Shaikat Ali's victory in the snooker singles final on Tuesday.

Malaysia's Nicol-Ann David underlined her status as Asia's leading player by winning the title.

David, the Asian and SEA Games champion, thrashed Hong Kong's Rebecca Chiu 9-3, 9-1, 9-6.

The bronze was shared by the two losing semifinalists, Abdul Fahim Khan of Hong Kong and Low Ewe-Long of Malaysia.

Malaysia's Nicol-Ann David underlined her status as Asia's leading player by winning the title.

David, the Asian and SEA Games champion, thrashed Hong Kong's Rebecca Chiu 9-3, 9-1, 9-6.

The bronze was shared by the two losing semifinalists, Abdul Fahim Khan of Hong Kong and Low Ewe-Long of Malaysia.

Malaysia's Nicol-Ann David underlined her status as Asia's leading player by winning the title.

David, the Asian and SEA Games champion, thrashed Hong Kong's Rebecca Chiu 9-3, 9-1, 9-6.

The bronze was shared by the two losing semifinalists, Abdul Fahim Khan of Hong Kong and Low Ewe-Long of Malaysia.

Malaysia's Nicol-Ann David underlined her status as Asia's leading player by winning the title.

David, the Asian and SEA Games champion, thrashed Hong Kong's Rebecca Chiu 9-3, 9-1, 9-6.

The bronze was shared by the two losing semifinalists, Abdul Fahim Khan of Hong Kong and Low Ewe-Long of Malaysia.

Malaysia's Nicol-Ann David underlined her status as Asia's leading player by winning the title.

David, the Asian and SEA Games champion, thrashed Hong Kong's Rebecca Chiu 9-3, 9-1, 9-6.

The bronze was shared by the two losing semifinalists, Abdul Fahim Khan of Hong Kong and Low Ewe-Long of Malaysia.

Malaysia's Nicol-Ann David underlined her status as Asia's leading player by winning the title.

David, the Asian and SEA Games champion, thrashed Hong Kong's Rebecca Chiu 9-3, 9-1, 9-6.

The bronze was shared by the two losing semifinalists, Abdul Fahim Khan of Hong Kong and Low Ewe-Long of Malaysia.

Malaysia's Nicol-Ann David underlined her status as Asia's leading player by winning the title.

David, the Asian and SEA Games champion, thrashed Hong Kong's Rebecca Chiu 9-3, 9-1, 9-6.

The bronze was shared by the two losing semifinalists, Abdul Fahim Khan of Hong Kong and Low Ewe-Long of Malaysia.

Sino paddlers pocket team title

BANGKOK, Dec 12: China rallied from an opening match loss by Olympic champion Liu Guoliang to beat archrivals South Korea 3-1 in the final of the Asian Games men's table tennis Saturday, reports AP.

Paced by veteran Kong Linghui and rookie Wang Liquin, China's men made it a sweep of the team titles again.

China's men and women have routinely dominated the team events at world competitions and the Asian Games, although South Korea have always been menace to the Chinese, staging stunning upsets in both events at the 1988 Asian Games at home in Seoul.

In singles and doubles, China have won 14 of the last 15 world or Olympic titles since 1995.

It seemed South Korea were ready to spring another surprise when Kim Taek-soo upset Liu in the opening match. Liu had routinely won the opening game, 21-14, and appeared on his way to victory then Kim won the next two games, 21-14, 21-15.

However veteran Kong, the 1995 world champion and silver medalist in the 1996 Olympics behind Liu, came back to defeat Oh Sang-Eun 23-21, 19-21, 21-16.

Kong finally solved Oh's game in the third set, when he started to serve better.

"Oh's returns on my serves were poor and it cost him too much," Kong said.

Wang Liquin, a newcomer to the Chinese team, came on to beat Lee Chul-Seung 21-14, 15-21, 21-8. A 19-year-old former national junior champion, Wang is regarded as a future star after upsetting a former world champion at his first world championships last year in England.

Kong returned to face Kim and beat him 21-17, 21-18. The South Korean had the early lead in both games. Then Kong started to win the long rallies.

putting the South Korean on the defensive and forcing errors. Kong took the lead at 14-13 in the first game and held it the rest of the way.

At 18-all in the second game, a long exchange put Kong ahead and then he took the final two points, springing up in victory on the match point when Kim could not handle a return that curved into his body.

China's coach Cai Zhehua was not surprised at the victory. "We prepared very carefully for this match since the South Koreans are tenacious and aggressive," Cai said. "However, we have never lost confidence. Just as I said before the final, China is a sure bet for the team title."

The Chinese women, playing without superstar and multi-world champion Deng Yaping, won their team title Friday. The doubles and mixed competitions start Sunday, with the singles beginning Monday.

The Chinese women, playing without superstar and multi-world champion Deng Yaping, won their team title Friday. The doubles and mixed competitions start Sunday, with the singles beginning Monday.

The Chinese women, playing without superstar and multi-world champion Deng Yaping, won their team title Friday. The doubles and mixed competitions start Sunday, with the singles beginning Monday.

The Chinese women, playing without superstar and multi-world champion Deng Yaping, won their team title Friday. The doubles and mixed competitions start Sunday, with the singles beginning Monday.

The Chinese women, playing without superstar and multi-world champion Deng Yaping, won their team title Friday. The doubles and mixed competitions start Sunday, with the singles beginning Monday.

The Chinese women, playing without superstar and multi-world champion Deng Yaping, won their team title Friday. The doubles and mixed competitions start Sunday, with the singles beginning Monday.

The Chinese women, playing without superstar and multi-world champion Deng Yaping, won their team title Friday. The doubles and mixed competitions start Sunday, with the singles beginning Monday.

The Chinese women, playing without superstar and multi-world champion Deng Yaping, won their team title Friday. The doubles and mixed competitions start Sunday, with the singles beginning Monday.

The Chinese women, playing without superstar and multi-world champion Deng Yaping, won their team title Friday. The doubles and mixed competitions start Sunday, with the singles beginning Monday.

The Chinese women, playing without superstar and multi-world champion Deng Yaping, won their team title Friday. The doubles and mixed competitions start Sunday, with the singles beginning Monday.

The Chinese women, playing without superstar and multi-world champion Deng Yaping, won their team title Friday. The doubles and mixed competitions start Sunday, with the singles beginning Monday.

The Chinese women, playing without superstar and multi-world champion Deng Yaping, won their team title Friday. The doubles and mixed competitions start Sunday, with the singles beginning Monday.

The Chinese women, playing without superstar and multi-world champion Deng Yaping, won their team title Friday. The doubles and mixed competitions start Sunday, with the singles beginning Monday.

The Chinese women, playing without superstar and multi-world champion Deng Yaping, won their team title Friday. The doubles and mixed competitions start Sunday, with the singles beginning Monday.

The Chinese women, playing without superstar and multi-world champion Deng Yaping, won their team title Friday. The doubles and mixed competitions start Sunday, with the singles beginning Monday.

The Chinese women, playing without superstar and multi-world champion Deng Yaping, won their team title Friday. The doubles and mixed competitions start Sunday, with the singles beginning Monday.

The Chinese women, playing without superstar and multi-world champion Deng Yaping, won their team title Friday. The doubles and mixed competitions start Sunday, with the singles beginning Monday.

Daei, Baghari inspire Iran

BANGKOK, Dec 12 (AP/AF): World Cup veterans Ali Daei and Karim Baghari rallied against China to spearhead Iran's 2-1 victory Saturday in an Asian Games soccer group decider earning both teams quarterfinal berths.

Oman faced group weakling Tajikistan in the last match of the tough qualifying group needing a victory by a near im-

possible seven goals to overtake the Iranians in the runners-up spot and advance.

China finished atop Group 3 with two victories and a loss. Iran also ended up with two victories and a loss, but behind China on goal differential.

The Chinese face Turkmenistan and the Iranians meet Uzbekistan in the knockout quarterfinals Monday.

The defeat left the Chinese, who were unbeaten in their first four Asian Games matches, still unavenged for the pair of Iranian victories that kept them out of this year's World Cup in France.

Bobby Houghton, the English coach who has since taken control of the young Chinese team, said his players had no complex about Iran and were hoping to meet it again in the semifinals.

China scored first. Li Jinyu fired through a wall of Iranians in the 5th minute but his shot went straight back off the keeper's hand. Yao Xia took control and flipped a pass to a charging Li in front of the goal mouth.

Li chipped in for his fourth goal of the Asian Games.

The Iranians' experience and power began to show a half-hour into the half as they got through the middle of the China defence headed by Crystal Palace's Fan Zhiyi.

Daei sent a low pass from midfield to the top of the penalty area and Baghari sent in a blistering shot to equalise.

Two minutes later, captain Mohammad Kani Nader, whose own goal led to Iran's defeat to Oman in the group opener, lofted a 30-metre free kick that found Daei's head at point blank range before the goal.

The Bayern Munich star easily put Iran ahead with his fifth goal of the tournament.

Earlier on Friday, South Korea managed to put one over on fellow World Cup 2002 hosts Japan by qualifying for the quarterfinals while their aged archrivals were left to book their tickets back to Tokyo.

The Japanese were unable to overcome the United Arab Emirates, losing 1-0 when a victory was required to take Philippe Troussier's side through to the knock-out phase of the competition.

In contrast the Koreans completed the group with a 100 per cent record, defeating a visibly tiring Kuwaiti side thanks to Choi Yong-Soo's seventh goal of the tournament.

Both Japan and South Korea sent experimental sides to the Games with both having an eye on the Olympic Games in Sydney and, more importantly, the next World Cup finals.

Japan's side was made up entirely of players from the nation's under 19 side that represented the country at the Asian youth championship in Chiangmai and players from the side that reached the quarterfinals of the World youth championship in Malaysia last year.

They will be accompanied by a delegation from the English Football Association, which helped bring Thailand's British soccer coach, Pter Withe, to the country.

Banks and Sir Bobby visited Thailand in February to discuss England's bid to stage the 2006 World Cup. They are scheduled to arrive in Bangkok Wednesday.

They will be accompanied by a delegation from the English Football Association, which helped bring Thailand's British soccer coach, Pter Withe, to the country.

Banks and Sir Bobby visited Thailand in February to discuss England's bid to stage the 2006 World Cup. They are scheduled to arrive in Bangkok Wednesday.

They will be accompanied by a delegation from the English Football Association, which helped bring Thailand's British soccer coach, Pter Withe, to the country.

Banks and Sir Bobby visited Thailand in February to discuss England's bid to stage the 2006 World Cup. They are scheduled to arrive in Bangkok Wednesday.

They will be accompanied by a delegation from the English Football Association, which helped bring Thailand's British soccer coach, Pter Withe, to the country.

Banks and Sir Bobby visited Thailand in February to discuss England's bid to stage the 2006 World Cup. They are scheduled to arrive in Bangkok Wednesday.

They will be accompanied by a delegation from the English Football Association, which helped bring Thailand's British soccer coach, Pter Withe, to the country.

Banks and Sir Bobby visited Thailand in February to discuss England's bid to stage the 2006 World Cup. They are scheduled to arrive in Bangkok Wednesday.

They will be accompanied by a delegation from the English Football Association, which helped bring Thailand's British soccer coach, Pter Withe, to the country.

Banks and Sir Bobby visited Thailand in February to discuss England's bid to stage the 2006 World Cup. They are scheduled to arrive in Bangkok Wednesday.

They will be accompanied by a delegation from the English Football Association, which helped bring Thailand's British soccer coach, Pter Withe, to the country.

Banks and Sir Bobby visited Thailand in February to discuss England's bid to stage the 2006 World Cup. They are scheduled to arrive in Bangkok Wednesday.

They will be accompanied by a delegation from the English Football Association, which helped bring Thailand's British soccer coach, Pter Withe, to the country.

Banks and Sir Bobby visited Thailand in February to discuss England's bid to stage the 2006 World Cup. They are scheduled to arrive in Bangkok Wednesday.

They will be accompanied by a delegation from the English Football Association, which helped bring Thailand's British soccer coach, Pter Withe, to the country.

Banks and Sir Bobby visited Thailand in February to discuss England's bid to stage the 2006 World Cup. They are scheduled to arrive in Bangkok Wednesday.

They will be accompanied by a delegation from the English Football Association, which helped bring Thailand's British soccer coach, Pter Withe, to the country.

Banks and Sir Bobby visited Thailand in February to discuss England's bid to stage the 2006 World Cup. They are scheduled to arrive in Bangkok Wednesday.

They will be accompanied by a delegation from the English Football Association, which helped bring Thailand's British soccer coach, Pter Withe, to the country.

Banks and Sir Bobby visited Thailand in February to discuss England's bid to stage the 2006 World Cup. They are scheduled to arrive in Bangkok Wednesday.

They will be accompanied by a delegation from the English Football Association, which helped bring Thailand's British soccer coach, Pter Withe, to the country.

Banks and Sir Bobby visited Thailand in February to discuss England's bid to stage the 2006 World Cup. They are scheduled to arrive in Bangkok Wednesday.

They will be accompanied by a delegation from the English Football Association, which helped bring Thailand's British soccer coach, Pter Withe, to the country.

Banks and Sir Bobby visited Thailand in February to discuss England's bid to stage the 2006 World Cup. They are scheduled to arrive in Bangkok Wednesday.

They will be accompanied by a delegation from the English Football Association, which helped bring Thailand's British soccer coach, Pter Withe, to the country.

Banks and Sir Bobby visited Thailand in February to discuss England's bid to stage the 2006 World Cup. They are scheduled to arrive in Bangkok Wednesday.

They will be accompanied by a delegation from the English Football Association, which helped bring Thailand's British soccer coach, Pter Withe, to the country.

Banks and Sir Bobby visited Thailand in February to discuss England's bid to stage the 2006 World Cup. They are scheduled to arrive in Bangkok Wednesday.

They will be accompanied by a delegation from the English Football Association, which helped bring Thailand's British soccer coach, Pter Withe, to the country.

Banks and Sir Bobby visited Thailand in February to discuss England's bid to stage the 2006 World Cup. They are scheduled to arrive in Bangkok Wednesday.

They will be accompanied by a delegation from the English Football Association, which helped bring Thailand's British soccer coach, Pter Withe, to the country.

Banks and Sir Bobby visited Thailand in February to discuss England's bid to stage the 2006 World Cup. They are scheduled to arrive in Bangkok Wednesday.

They will be accompanied by a delegation from the English Football Association, which helped bring Thailand's British soccer coach, Pter Withe, to the country.

Banks and Sir Bobby visited Thailand in February to discuss England's bid to stage the 2006 World Cup. They are scheduled to arrive in Bangkok Wednesday.

They will be accompanied by a delegation from the English Football Association, which helped bring Thailand's British soccer coach, Pter Withe, to the country.

Banks and Sir Bobby visited Thailand in February to discuss England's bid to stage the 2006 World Cup. They are scheduled to arrive in Bangkok Wednesday.

They will be accompanied by a delegation from the English Football Association, which helped bring Thailand's British soccer coach, Pter Withe, to the country.

Banks and Sir Bobby visited Thailand in February to discuss England's bid to stage the 2006 World Cup. They are scheduled to arrive in Bangkok Wednesday.

They will be accompanied by a delegation from the English Football Association, which helped bring Thailand's British soccer coach, Pter Withe, to the country.

Banks and Sir Bobby visited Thailand in February to discuss England's bid to stage the 2006 World Cup. They are scheduled to arrive in Bangkok Wednesday.

The Daily Star Entertainment Guide

Sunday 13th December

(All programmes are in local time. The Daily Star will not be responsible for any change in the programme.)

BTB

3:00 Opening announcement, Al-Quran, Programme summary 3:12 Recitation from the Bible 3:15 Patriotic song 3:20 Animation film: Bananas in Pajamas 3:45 Programme on Nutrition 4:00 Khabar 4:05 Aamar Thikana 4:30 Open University 5:25 National TV Debate 6:05 Jibon O Jeebika 6:30 Khabar 6:40 Programme of Chittagong Centre 7:05 Matti O Manus 7:25 Aamra Tomader Bulbona 8:00 News in Bangla 8:30 Nobo Jagoron 9:30 Film show: The New Adventure of Robinhood 10:00 News in English 10:30 Magazine programme: Uddog 11:30 Khabar/The News 11:40 Tomorrow's programme 11:45 Closed down

BBC

6:00 BBC News Followed by Weather 6:30 World Living: The Net (A special edition which looks at the 'golden age' of computing and talks to those maintaining the giant room sized computers that started it all 40 years ago) 7:00 BBC News Followed by Weather 7:30 World Focus: Correspondents (BBC correspondents around the globe provide an insight into life around the world. Followed by World City Guides) 8:00 BBC News Followed by Weather 8:30 World Living: The Net (A special edition which looks at the 'golden age' of computing and talks to those maintaining the giant room sized computers that started it all 40 years ago) 9:00 BBC News Followed by Weather 9:30 World Focus: Correspondents (BBC correspondents around the globe provide an insight into life around the world. Followed by World City Guides) 10:00 BBC News Followed by Weather 10:30 World Living: The Net (A special edition which looks at the 'golden age' of computing and talks to those maintaining the giant room sized computers that started it all 40 years ago) 11:00 BBC News Followed by Weather 11:30 World Focus: Correspondents (BBC correspondents around the globe provide an insight into life around the world. Followed by World City Guides) 12:00 BBC News Followed by Weather 12:30 World Living: The Net (A special edition which looks at the 'golden age' of computing and talks to those maintaining the giant room sized computers that started it all 40 years ago) 1:00 BBC News Followed by Weather 1:30 World Focus: Correspondents (BBC correspondents around the globe provide an insight into life around the world. Followed by World City Guides) 2:00 BBC News Followed by Weather 2:30 World Living: The Net (A special edition which looks at the 'golden age' of computing and talks to those maintaining the giant room sized computers that started it all 40 years ago) 3:00 BBC News Followed by Weather 3:30 World Living: The Net (A special edition which looks at the 'golden age' of computing and talks to those maintaining the giant room sized computers that started it all 40 years ago) 4:00 BBC News Followed by Weather 4:30 World Living: The Net (A special edition which looks at the 'golden age' of computing and talks to those maintaining the giant room sized computers that started it all 40 years ago) 5:00 BBC News Followed by Weather 5:30 World Living: The Net (A special edition which looks at the 'golden