

## Jayasinghe lets 'em down

BANGKOK, Dec 15: Sprinter Susantika Jayasinghe's abrupt withdrawal from the Asian Games has upset both officials and fans from Sri Lanka, who were counting on her for medals, at least in relay races, reports AP.

"No one in our camp is sure if she really sustained injuries, or she was scared to run and not win in her personal events," said a Sri Lankan sports official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Jayasinghe, 23, the world 200-metre silver medalist, did not show up for the 100-metre gold medal race Monday. After her semifinal the previous day, she pleaded a headache and a sore leg, possibly a pulled hamstring.

Her departure for home Monday was the latest chapter in a troubled year in which she accused unnamed Sri Lankan officials of sexual harassment and tested positive for a steroid. Her own nation's track federation cleared her after she said she used the drug to control her menstrual cycle, but she is awaiting an international arbitration hearing. Meanwhile, she remains eligible to compete.

"We don't know what really happened in Bangkok. We only this much — that if she was there and running, we could have won some medals at the relays," said Sujatha de Silva, a Colombo resident reached by the telephone from Bangkok.

After her semifinal Sunday, Jayasinghe said she had been down with flu and could not practice.

"She told us she is injured and we got her examined by doctors," said Daya Gunasekhar, chief of the Sri Lankan team. "I am unable to comment on how serious were her injuries, but then if an athlete does not want to run you cannot make him or her run."

A leg injury was not apparent in her semifinal race.

Even without her, Sri Lanka won its first two Asian Games gold medals in 24 years Monday with victories in the women's and men's 400-metre races by Damayanthi Darsha and Suganthi Tilkeratne.

That had led to high hopes for the 4x400 women's relay.

Jayasinghe originally had been counting on these games to help rise above the controversies swirling around her.

She had won silver at the 1997 World Track Championships in Athens, finishing ahead of Jamaican runner Merlene Ottey, making her war-scarred nation proud.

Her rewards included money and a three-bedroom flat in Colombo, capital of the island nation off India's southern coast.

But the good times did not last long.

# Asian Games roundup

BANGKOK, Dec 15 (AP): Taiwan defeated Japan 6-15, 15-12, 13-15, 15-8 Tuesday for the Asian Games men's volleyball bronze medal.

Lin Hsien-chen and Lin Yu-yi replaced two starters at the end of the third set, helping Taiwan rebound for the bronze in only their second volleyball entry in the Games.

Japan won bronze in the women's competition, however, beating Thailand 15-6, 15-5, 15-4.

Japan's Miya Tachibana won her second gold medal of the Games when she teamed with Miho Takeda to claim the synchronized swimming duet title Tuesday.

Tachibana won the individual event Monday. She joined with Takeda in a dominant display, scoring 98.190 points.

The South Korea duo of Yoo Na-Mi and Jang Yoon-Kyeong finished second at 96.504 with China's Li Min and Long Yan in third on 95.943.

Kang Ji-Sook and Lee Mi-Young gained South Korea's third gold medal in Asian Games soft tennis events Tuesday by defeating Taiwan's Lin Li-Jung and Cheng Shu-chien in the women's doubles final, 5-3, 4-1, 4-2, 2-4, 4-2, 4-2.

South Korea previously had won the women's and men's team events in the sport, an Asian variant of tennis that uses soft rubber balls, smaller rackets and a different scoring system.

It was the second gold for Kang and Lee in the Games. They were also part of the champion team.

In doubles, they lost once in qualifying play but beat pre-

viously unbeaten Chang Sun-Chuan and Hsu I-chia of Taiwan in the opening round of the final competition. Kang and Lee went on to beat Japan's Naoko Higash and Yuko Miyaji in the semifinals.

Higash and Miyaji won the bronze over China's Liu Yu and Bai Xia 4-0, 4-2, 4-2, 4-1, 2-4, 4-2.

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## Asiad kids

BANGKOK, Dec 15: An 11-year-old Qatar table tennis player is the Asian Games' youngest athlete, the organizing committee said Monday, re-ports AP.

While some sports federations would consider him under-age, the table tennis and swimming governing bodies have no restrictions, it added.

Aside from 11-year-old Ar-Rahman Al-Hamamdi, the Qatar table tennis team also includes 12-year-olds Naser Al-Muhammadi and Jassim Al-Sulaiti, the committee said.

Other 12-year-olds include Qatar's Ammar Al-Ejji, a 100- and 200-metre freestyle swimmer; Kuwait table tennis player Ibrahim Al-Hasan and Macau swimmer Cheong Weng-jom, who competed in the 100- and 200-metre women's breaststroke.

The gymnastics federation sets a minimum age of 16. Organizers checked the passports of North Korea's women gymnasts after some rival coaches, as well as doctors, suggested they looked younger than that.

For judo, the minimum age is 18.

Defending champion and former drug offender Kim Jin-il of South Korea made a strong return to Games track Tuesday, qualifying comfortably in the men's 800-metre semifinals.

Kim set the Asian record at 1

minute, 44.14 seconds in June 1994, a few months before he won the Hiroshima Games title, also in a record time.

South Korea's Kim Byung-

hyun struck out the first eight batters he faced and 12 in all in a demonstration Tuesday that Asian sports power China still lags in baseball.

The South Koreans didn't

need their act from the Los Angeles Dodgers, Park Chan-ho, as Kim didn't allow a man on base in six relief innings in 9-2 victory over the Chinese.

That put the Koreans in

baseball's gold medal team, against the winner of a later semifinal between Japan and Taiwan.

## MEDALS TABLE

BANGKOK, Dec 15: (AP): Medals standings after Monday's events at the 13th Asian Games:

Nation	G	S	B	T
China	84	58	41	183
S Korea	43	25	35	103
Japan	34	38	47	119
Taiwan	15	10	23	48
Kazakhstan	14	19	21	54
Thailand	13	19	24	56
N Korea	5	11	6	22
Iran	4	4	8	16
Malaysia	3	8	5	16
Kuwait	3	3	2	8
Hong Kong	3	2	6	11
Singapore	2	3	8	13
Pakistan	2	2	3	7
Indonesia	2	1	6	9
Mongolia	2	0	5	7
Sri Lanka	2	0	1	3
Uzbekistan	1	12	9	22
India	1	4	10	15
Vietnam	1	2	4	7
Qatar	1	2	0	3
Turkmenistan	1	0	0	1
Myanmar	0	4	3	7
Philippines	0	3	7	10
Kyrgyzstan	0	3	2	5
Jordan	0	3	1	4
Nepal	0	1	2	3
Syria	0	1	1	2
UAE	0	0	1	1

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