

Dhaka to host Asian Club Cup

Bangladesh will host the 10th Asian Club Cup football championship, including its semifinals and finals, reports UNB.

The final round will be held in the capital from July 19 to 24 while the semifinals, final and the position-deciding matches will be held from July 25 to 28 at the Dhaka Stadium.

The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) had earlier selected Bangladesh for holding the final round matches only with the eight qualified Asian teams.

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday responded positively to the offer made by the AFC to organise all the matches of the tournament, including the semifinals and the final.

The matches were earlier scheduled to be played on a home-and-away basis with the qualified teams.

The champion teams from eight Asian countries—Jordan, Oman, China, Indonesia, Iran, North Korea, Thailand and Bangladesh—will participate in the final round of the championship.

The teams, divided into two groups, will contest on a league basis.

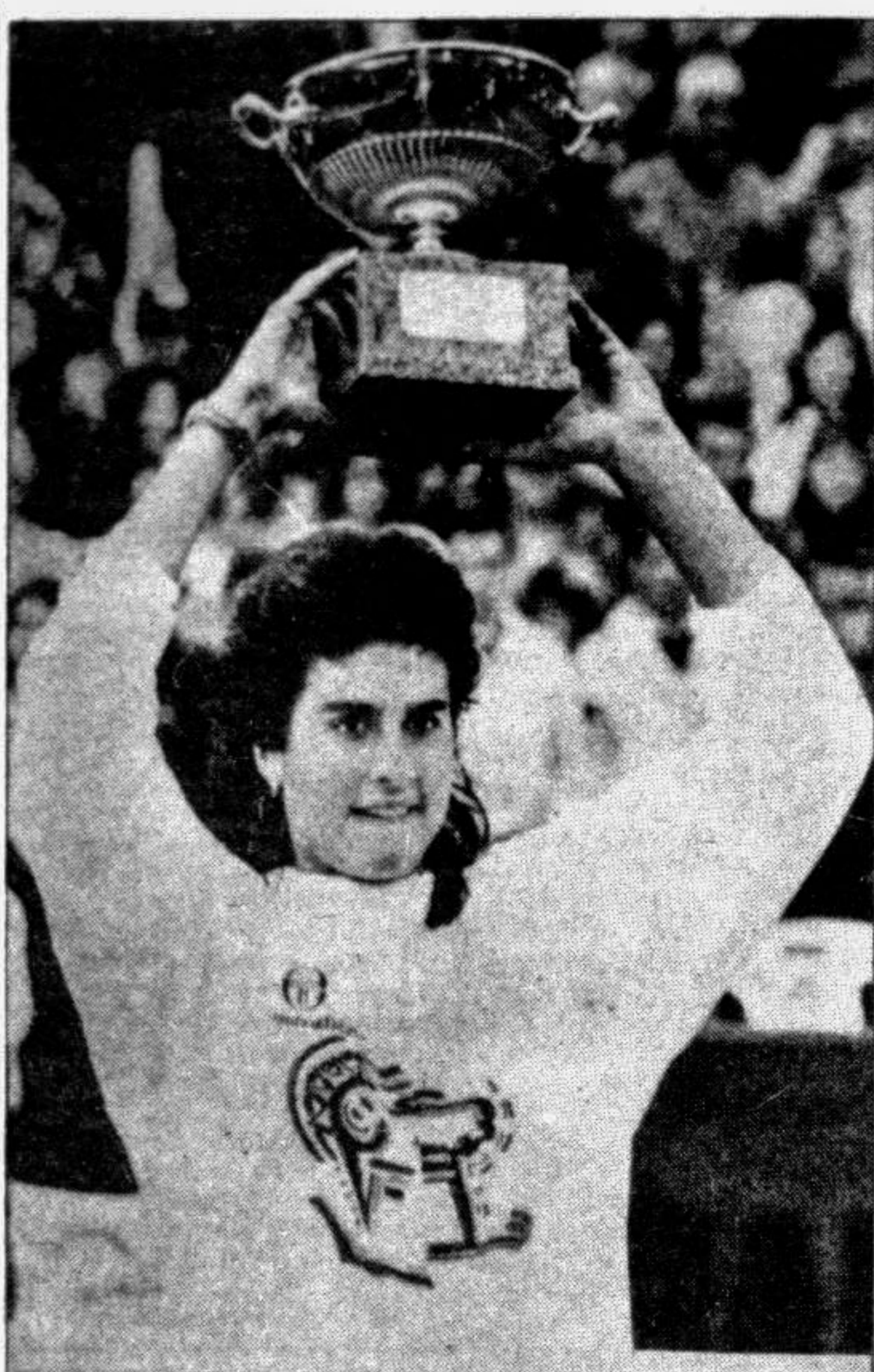
The teams are: Group A: Ramtha Club (Jordan), Al Nasr Club (Oman), P. S. Pelita Jaya (Indonesia) and Liaoning Club of China.

Group B: Esteghal Club (Iran), Mohammedan SC (Bangladesh), Bangkok Bank Club (Thailand) and April 25 Club (DPR Korea).

The group champions and runners-up team will qualify for the semi-finals.

Dhaka Mohammedan Sporting Club qualified for the final of the tournament after beating a Maldivian Club 5-0 and Indian champions Salgaokar Club 2-1 goals in the first round match last year.

BFF will provide air travel costs and local hospitality for the AFC representatives and foreign referees in the



Gabriela Sabatini of Argentina holds the winner's trophy of the Women's International Tennis Tournament on Monday (May 13) after defeating world number one Monica Seles of Yugoslavia 6-3, 6-2. — AFP photo

Rain the spoiler

The charity soccer match between Mohammedan Sporting Club and Abahani Krira Chakra was abandoned at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday midway in the first half due to a strong nor-wester that left the crowd totally drenched.

Both teams were locked goalless at the time of abandonment.

Ironically, at long last a healthy crowd had turned up to watch the prestige match between the two arch-rival giants of Dhaka soccer compared to the gates for the two preceding games in the three-match charity series in aid of the country's cyclone victims.

Alas, the seven to eight thousand strong crowd was disappointed by the insipid display by the frontliners of both teams, producing a litany of missed scoring chances.

Nevertheless, the BFF reaped reasonable sum from yesterday's match with tickets worth Taka one lakh three thousand two hundred and eighty being sold.

The BFF collected a total sum of Taka 1,70,070 from the three matches. The money will be donated to the Prime Minister's Relief Fund.

New team leader

Meanwhile, a BFF press release yesterday said Harunur Rashid, General Secretary of the federation will be the new chef-de-mission of the Bangladesh under-23 Pre-Olympic side which leaves for Seoul tomorrow to take part in the first leg of the Olympic qualifiers with Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines and South Korea.

Earlier, Sadeq Hossain Khoka, MP, and a Vice President of the BFF was supposed to lead the Bangladesh team. But the adverse situation prevailing in the country following the devastating cyclone made Mr. Khoka withdraw from the team for pressing preoccupations at home.

SOCCER SCENARIO

Sampdoria 2 points away from title

ROME, May 13: League leaders Sampdoria were held 1-1 by Torino in Turin on Sunday to be left needing two points from their last two games to clinch their first Italian championship, reports Reuter.

Second placed AC Milan recorded a spectacular 6-0 home win over relegation-bound Bologna to close the season.

Sampdoria play Lecce at home and Lazio away in their last two games.

The Genoa went a goal up after 32 minutes on Sunday when Torino's Gianluca Sordo misjudged a back pass, allowing Sampdoria mid-fielder Giovanni Invernizzi to score.

Sampdoria were forced on the defensive for much of the rest of the game.

They held firm until the 77th minute when mid-fielder Roberto Polcano was felled in the penalty box and Giorgio Bresciani stepped up to net the spot kick.

Milan had little more than a training game against bottom-of-the-table Bologna, running in five goals in a hopelessly one-sided second half.

Dutch striker Marco Van Basten grabbed a hat-trick while team-mates Alberto Eusebi, Marco Simone and Frank Rijkaard also got on to the score-sheet.

Barcelona Spanish champions

MADRID, May 13: Barcelona clinched the Spanish championship on Sunday when second-placed Atletico Madrid lost 2-1 to Real Sociedad, reports Reuter.

Barcelona crashed 4-0 at bottom-placed Cadiz on Saturday but Atletico's defeat left the Catalans nine points ahead with four matches left.

The title was Barcelona's first success in the league since 1985. Real Madrid had been champions since.

Anderlecht win Belgian league

BRUSSELS, May 13: Anderlecht won the Belgian championship on Sunday after struggling to beat RWD Molenbeek 1-0 in their Brussels derby clash, reports Reuter.

A goal from Marc Degryse sewed up Anderlecht's 21st league title with two matches to go before the season ends.

Although second placed Mechelen are only four points adrift, the championship here is not decided on goal averages but by the number of victories if two sides finish the season level on points.

Anderlecht have won 23 matches, compared to Mechelen's 20, and also have a far superior strike record to boot — 74 goals compared to 58.

Mechelen enjoyed a 4-0 consolation victory over Courtrai, and with a three-point lead over La Gantoise, look set for Europe next season.

La Gantoise were also on form on Sunday, romping home 5-1 over Lokeren.

Romania review transfer curbs

BUCHAREST, May 13: Romanian soccer authorities are reviewing curbs on the transfer of players abroad after complaints from clubs that the restrictions were hampering their financial growth, a federation official said on Sunday, reports Reuter.

At the start of the present season the Romanian Soccer Federation ruled that only players with a minimum age of 28 and 40 international matches to their record could be sold abroad.

"We must carefully study how to allow all clubs to sell at least two players a year to foreign clubs without restriction," federation General Secretary Albert Cassai told Reuters.

His declaration came after a wave of club pressure and complaints about the restrictions.

Emerit Jenet, Manager of Bucharest's First Division Steaua, said a new exodus of players could not be ruled out very soon.

"Dan Petrescu and the Dumitrescu could bring us lots of money, which is necessary for building up a strong new team capable of competing in a European Cup," Jenet said.

Petrescu, one of the most aggressive defenders in the Romanian league with 12 goals scored in 24 matches, has received a tentative three-million-dollar offer from the Turkish Club Galatasaray of Istanbul, club sources said.

Another jewel in Sabatini's crown

ROME, May 13: Resurgent Gabriela Sabatini landed her third women's Italian Open tennis championship in four years when she topped world number one Monica Seles in straight sets in Sunday's final, reports Reuter.

The Argentine second seed, in brilliant form all week, won the rain-interrupted match 6-3, 6-2 to add to her Italian titles of 1988 and 1989.

"I feel very happy. It was difficult but I think the rain favoured me," said Sabatini, who during recent months has found the consistent winning formula missing from her game.

"Sabatini played a fantastic match," said Yugoslav Seles, a popular champion here last year.

Sabatini, clinching her fifth title of 1991, dropped only 13 games in her five matches in Rome where she has enjoyed support from a large and vociferous group of fans.

She broke the Yugoslav in the fifth and seventh games of the opening set, winning many of her points by pinning Seles to the baseline with a variety of strokes to both corners, before chipping short.

Seles had a break of serve before rain halted play for 80 minutes with Sabatini leading 5-3 and trailing 30-15 on the Yugoslav's serve.

The Argentine came back on court to break Seles again and clinch the set in 45 minutes.

Sabatini raced to a 3-0 lead in the second set only for Seles, in a brave bid to reverse her fortunes, to pull back two games with the aid of a service break.

But Seles' third double fault of the match allowed Sabatini

to hit back with a break.

After twice going to deuce to hold her service, Sabatini reached match point with Seles serving at 30-40 and did not let the chance slip, forcing a hurried shot by the Yugoslav that went wide.

Seles had beaten Sabatini in three of their previous four meetings, including this year's Key Biscayne players' championships final.

The Yugoslav has reached the final in all seven Women's Tennis Association tournaments she has played in 1991, but won only three.

Chinese underline strength anew

BRONDBY, Denmark, May 13: China, humiliated at the All England badminton championships in March, bounced back in sensational style Sunday by harvesting three of the five world titles, reports AFP.

Singles gold medals for Tang Jihong and Zhao Jianhua were followed by a third in succession in the women's doubles for Guan Weizhen, who this time was partnered by Nong Qunhua.

The two other crowns were collected by South Korea, who followed last weekend's Sudirman Cup triumph by winning the men's and mixed doubles.

But it is the Chinese who have the most reason to celebrate after the seventh World Championship, especially considering that they lifted only one trophy at Wembley through the men's doubles pairing of Li Yongbo and Tian Bingyi.

Evert Leo Wiranata, assistant manager of their biggest rivals, Indonesia, acknowledged that Sunday was China's day. "Today was a total failure for us," he admitted.

It went wrong for Indonesia from the moment Juan Antonio Samaranch, President of the International Olympic Committee, and Prince Frederik of Denmark took their seats among the 6,000 capacity crowd.

Sarwendah Kusumawardhani never got to

grips with Tang in the women's singles final, the 22-year-old Asian Games champion overpowering fellow joint third seed 11-6, 11-1 in only 27 minutes.

"She was very good", conceded Kusumawardhani, "she has changed her style since I beat her in the All England. She's now more patient and waits for the kill."

Zhao struggles

Zhao had a difficult match. Kusuma pushed him to 18-13, 15-4 before the tall left-hander sealed China's fourth world singles clean sweep in a row.

"It was hard, especially in the second set," Zhao confessed. "Allan's defence was very good in that game against my smashes and I started to feel a little bit tired."

Zhao was being generous to the Indonesian, though. The world number three always looked in control, even when he allowed Kusuma to come back from 7-10 down in the first game to nudge in front 12-10.

The Indonesian number three, who has never beaten Zhao, admitted as much. He played better than me, said Kusuma. He attacked more and his attack was good.

Kusuma now feels that Zhao is the best men's singles player in the world, as does Wiranata, the father of Ardy, who lost to Zhao in the semi-finals.

At the moment there is no player who can beat Zhao," said the Indonesian official. His smashes are so sharp, his attacking lob is so good and so is his net play. I don't think any player is as good as him in technique.

But Zhao refused accept the plaudits. You can't say one person who has obtained the title is the best player in the world, because some of the best players have not had very good performances here, he reasoned.

There was no arguing about

Becker top seed

ROME, May 13: Boris Becker is looking for his first major clay court title and to inch closer to the No. 1 ranking as the men move into the Foro Italico Monday in the 1.2 million-dollar Italian Open, reports AP.

Becker heads the 54 player field that also includes Andre Agassi, Pete Sampras, Goran Ivanisovic, Sergio Bruguera and Jim Courier.

To opening day matches include Brad Gilbert of the United States, seeded eighth, against Mark Woodforde of Australia, Andrei Cherkasov of the Soviet Union, 11th seed, against Alex Antontsch of Austria, and another Soviet, 15th Alexander Volkov, against Jan Siemerink of the Netherlands.

While the chase is on for leadership among the men, the battle among the women seems even fiercer.

Seles dethroned Steffi Graf from the top spot in March. But she lost to Graf last week and Sunday to third-ranked Sabatini.

There is no question that Gabriela, Steffi, Martina (Navratilova) and I are all very close. It really depends on who is in better shape that particular week, and who has a little luck."

Sabatini, who says she is playing better every tournament, unleashed her full-court game against Seles. She rushed the net, fired top-spin drives from the baseline and won seven points, most in key situations, with deft drop shots.

"I'm using everything on the court now, everything is coming together." Graf can regain the top spot with a win in next week's Lufthansa Cup in Berlin. Sabatini can also move up with strong showings in Berlin and Paris.

SA athletics bodies unite

JOHANNESBURG, May 13: South Africa's rival athletics bodies cleared the biggest remaining hurdle to international recognition on Sunday when they announced the formation of a unified, non-racial movement, reports Reuter.

But readmittance to the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) is unlikely to be in time for Springbok athletes to compete in August's Tokyo World Championship.

It seems to me time is too short—but it is possible, IAAF Vice-President Lamine Diack told a news conference.

Officials said that with Tokyo prospects slipping, a likely venue for South Africa ending its isolation would be the All-Africa Games, to be held in September in Cairo.

"I personally feel we should participate in Africa before we go outside Africa, said Harry Hendricks, chairman of the headline anti-apartheid South African Amateur Athletics Board.

Diack and other IAAF officials, ending a four-day mission to South Africa, said they had given the newly-formed

Frost's solace

BRONDBY, Denmark, May 13: Morten Frost, the Danish badminton master whose world title hopes here were wrecked in the first round, received some compensation on Sunday with a distinguished service award, reports AFP.

The 33-year-old four-times All England champion, who retired from full-time badminton after his defeat by unseeded Soviet Andrei Antropov on Monday, was presented with a certificate and lapel badge by International Badminton Federation President Arthur Jones after the men's singles final.

"Morten has done marvelous service to international badminton for 15 years, said Jones.

Windies beaten

ARUNDEL, England, May 13: The Duchess of Norfolk's XI beat West Indies by two wickets in the traditional tour opening one-day (50 overs) cricket match on Sunday, reports Reuter.

Salov closer to title

AMSTERDAM, May 13: Soviet grandmaster Valery Salov is tipped as the most likely winner of the tough Verentge Spaarbank international chess tournament which ends today after his eighth round draw with Britain's Nigel Short, reports Reuter.

Salov will hold white in his final round game against 28-year-old Icelandic grandmaster Johan Hjartarsson, the ninth strongest of the 10 competitors.

This category 16 tournament is the toughest in the chess calendar.

Karpov is just half a point behind the leaders, with Saturday's draws in all five matches leaving positions unchanged.

Short and Salov entered Saturday's game in combative form, electing for a sharp variation of the Sicilian defence. Salov castled queen side and piled up his queen and rook on the king's knight file against the rank of pawns shielding Short's king.

Short replied with pressure in the centre, but after a queen exchange much of the impetus went out of the game which ended in a draw on move 65.

Yzaga ends title drought

CHARLOTTE, North Carolina, May 13: Seventh-seed Jaime Yzaga defeated fifth-seed Jimmy Arias 6-3, 7-5 to win the US men's clay court tennis championships and his first tournament in three years on Sunday, reports Reuter.

Yzaga earned 30,960 dollars in the rain-delayed final. Arias, who won 18,230 dollars, has lost all seven finals he has played since 1983.

Both players, looking to force play during the baseline exchanges, began nervously in the first set. In the fifth game, Yzaga broke Arias' serve to go up 3-2 with a decisive backhand pass down the line off a weak Arias backhand volley.

Yzaga, constantly pressuring the weaker Arias backhand, then broke in the seventh and ninth games to take the first set 6-3.

"I was trying to pull him wide on his forehand and then come in to his backhand, and also attack his second serve," said Yzaga, ranked 76th.

In the second set, after both players held to 3-3, Arias showed signs of life as he broke Yzaga in the seventh game. Arias converted on his ninth break point opportunity in the lengthy, 20-point game.

His momentum was short-lived, however, as Yzaga broke back in the very next game to tie at 4-4.

Yzaga pulled Arias wide on his backhand and then came in to volley Arias' floating backhand for a winner.

"This game was a huge turning point. It took a lot of steam out of me," said Arias, ranked 58th, who started the match with 'heavy legs' due to nerves and fatigue.

Arias, despite saving three match points on his serve at 4-5, finally ran out of steam in the twelfth game. Yzaga ripped

Novacek's title

HAMBURG, Germany, May 13: Karel Novacek proved match practice pays when he overcame Swede Magnus Gustafsson 6-3, 6-3, 5-7, 6-6, 6-1 in a draining five-set German Open tennis final on Sunday, reports Reuter.

The 26-year-old Czechoslovak, who has already played 15 tournaments this year, held off a courageous comeback from Gustafsson to win the fifth title of his career.

Novacek, ranked 26th in the world, dominated the early part of the match, taking the first two sets 6-3, 6-3 with ease.

But Gustafsson staged a remarkable recovery and battled back to win next two sets 7-5, 6-0 and force a fifth set.

Novacek seemed to be heading for a disastrous defeat but in the deciding fifth set Gustafsson's serve faltered.

Pilic picks his replacement

HAMBURG, Germany, May 13: Niki Pilic on Sunday tipped former Czechoslovak Davis Cup player Tomas Smid to take his place as Boris Becker's coach, reports Reuter.

"He (Smid) has the best chance to become my successor," said Pilic, also Germany's Davis Cup team chief.

The Yugoslav took over as coach to the world number two in February, replacing Australian Bob Brett.

But Pilic decided at the weekend he could no longer carry out both jobs.

"It was all too much for me from the start. I took the job more as a gratitude towards a man who has done the impossible for tennis in Germany. Boris is my friend. But we simply can't make it together.

Sixsmith ensures Cup for England

BRUSSELS, May 13: England's Jane Sixsmith scored twice to ensure a surprise victory over a strong German side in the final of the European Cup women's hockey here on Sunday, reports AFP.

The first goal came after just eight minutes and Sixsmith added her second after 40 minutes against the run of play.

The Germans dominated the match and enjoyed 12 penalty corners to 0 for England. But they managed to convert only one through Franziska Hentschel in the 51st minute as England battled to hang on to their lead.

Christina Ferneck missed a penalty stroke just minutes before the end for Germany.

Jennings wins Washington race

WASHINGTON, May 13: Women's cross country world champion, Lynn Jennings, comfortably beat Kenya's Susan Sirma to win the Washington 8 km race in record time on Sunday, reports AFP.

Jennings came home in 25 min 2 sec, well clear of Sirma's 25:14 and fellow American Judi St. Hilare in 25:40, and also knocking one second off the course record set by Norway's Grete Waitz.



JOHN MORRIS — missed ton

Scores after eight rounds:

Short	5	1/2
Salov	5	1/2
Karpov	5	1/2
Kasparov	4	1/2
Korchnoi	4	1/2
Hjartarsson	3	1/2
Ljubojevic	3	
Van der Wiel	3	
Timman	3	
Gurevich	3	



JOHN MORRIS — missed ton