

Bangladesh-Thailand qualifier Saturday

Sports Reporter

The national under-23 Olympic football team left yesterday for South Korea capital Seoul via Bangkok to participate in the first-leg matches of the pre-Olympic qualifying soccer scheduled to begin on May 18. After an overnight halt at Bangkok, the team is expected to reach Seoul this afternoon. Harun-ur-Rashid, General Secretary of Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) is chief-de-mission of the 25-member Bangladesh team which comprises 20 players, four officials and one journalist. Bangladesh is placed in a five-team cluster that includes South Korea, Thailand, Malaysia and Philippines. The Koreans are the obvious bet to qualify for the group for next year's Olympic Games in Barcelona, Spain. The first leg of the qualifiers start in Seoul from May 18 and runs until May 26

while the second leg starts in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from July 1 and runs until July 8. Bangladesh will play their first match on May 18 against Thailand. Syed Rumman-bin-Walid Shabbir of Dhaka Mohammedan Sporting Club is the captain of the side which includes three goalkeeper, six defenders as many midfielders and only four strikers. The following are the members of the Bangladesh contingent. Team Leader: Harun-ur-Rashid, Manager - Anwarul Haque Helal, Assistant Manager - Khatrul Anwar Pearu and Coach - Abdul Hakim, Journalist - Afzal H Khan (The Daily Star). Players: Goalkeepers - Lahul (Rahmatganj), Bijon (Wari Club), Mohsin (Mohammedan). Defenders: Moon (Brothers), Masud Rana (BKSP), Jewel Rana, Barun (Muktijoddha), Jamrul

(BPWD), Aman (Abahani) and Sobel (Rajshahi Division). Midfielders: Shabbir, Zakir (Mohammedans), Alamgir, Munna (Abahani), Roxy (Arambagh) and Gaus (BPWD). Forwards: Nakib (Mohammedans), Mamun (Victoria), Uttam (Fakirerpool) and Ekram Rana (Muktijoddha).

FIXTURE

Following is the fixture for Bangladesh's games: May 18 vs Thailand May 20 vs South Korea May 22 vs Malaysia May 24 vs Philippines The second-leg fixture for Bangladesh is as follows: July 1 vs Thailand July 3 vs South Korea July 5 vs Philippines July 7 vs Malaysia

Under IOC rules only players under 23 years of age can represent their countries in Olympic soccer.



The Bangladesh under-23 football team which left for Seoul yesterday to participate in the pre-Olympic qualifiers —Star photo

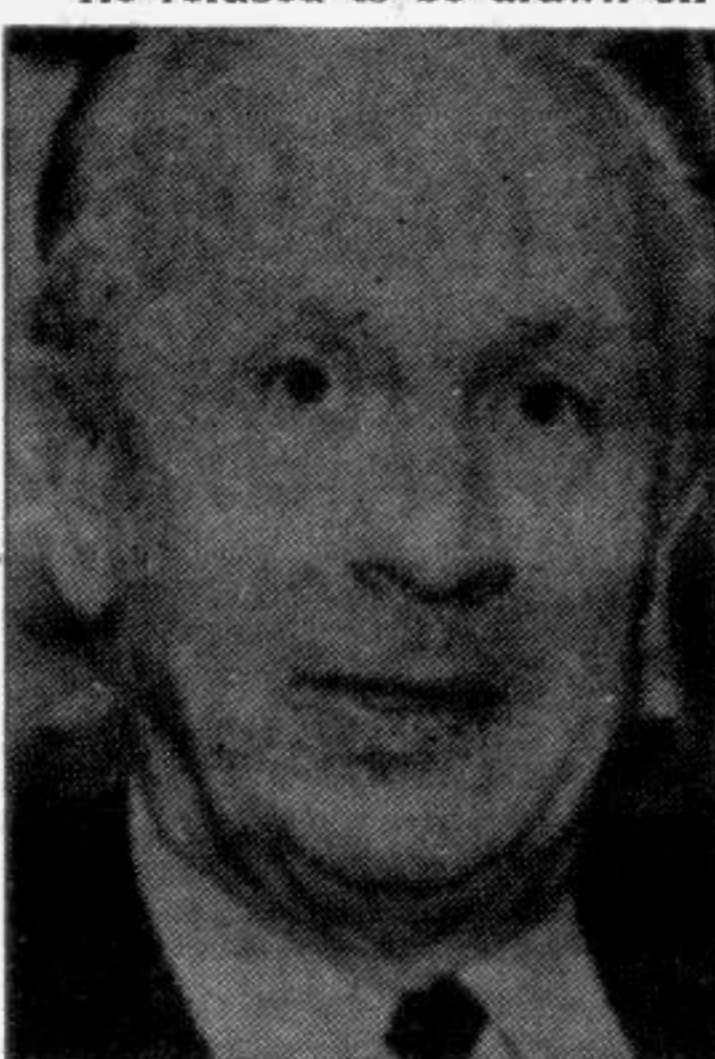
Israel's gamble backfires

BOMBAY, India, May 15 Israel performed its second great escape act Tuesday to move into the boys' final of the World Youth Cup Australasia zone tennis tournament reports AFP. The unseeded Israelis, who upset favourites Australia 2-1 Tuesday, bounced back from a 0-1 deficit to overcome third-seeded Indonesia in a thrilling semi-final. Israel's 2-1 triumph set the stage for an intriguing title clash against New Zealand, who overcame hosts India by a similar margin in another semi-final. The girls final in the under-16 tournament will be contested by top-seeded Japan and South Korea who won in contrasting styles Thursday. While the Japanese girls blanked India 3-0, the Koreans stared defeat in the face before ousting China 2-1. The boys' semi-finals, originally scheduled for Friday, were advanced by a day to enable the players to rest before Saturday's finals in both events. Israel's gamble to field doubles specialist Danny Erez in the opening singles in place of the off-form Lior Mor backfired, as Indonesian number one Champi Halim ran away an easy 7-5, 6-2 winner.

Less popular sports may lose Olympic status

COPENHAGEN, May 15 : Some less popular sports are in danger of losing their Olympic status by the year 2000, International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Juan Antonio Samaranch said here, reports Reuter. Samaranch, attending the finals of the World Badminton Championships — a sport which makes its Olympic debut next year — said if new sports were to be included at the Games others would have to be dropped. The IOC has set a maximum level of 10,000 athletes and 5,000 officials for the 1992 and 1996 Games. "It's very difficult to ask an organising committee to have more than 15,000 people in the Olympic village", he said. "That means that in the future if we want to have new sports or events in the Olympic programme we have to withdraw some sports or some events that are now in the Olympic programme." Asked if some sports were

in definite danger of losing their Olympic status, Samaranch replied: 'yes'. He refused to be drawn on



JUAN A SAMARANCH

which sports might be threatened, but said: "Maybe it is easy to know. They will be the sports that the less popular — which the people and the

young people of today are not interested in practising (playing)." Samaranch said the programme for 1996 would be fixed finally at the IOC meeting in Birmingham, England, next month. Samaranch had good news for his hosts, the International Badminton Federation, who were upset that there was no mixed doubles in the 1992 and 1996 Olympic programmes despite its popularity among players and spectators. The President said he would be asking the IOC Programme Commission to reconsider because no extra players were involved. "In other racket games (at the Olympics) there are no mixed events. In some sports mixed events are not so important. Maybe badminton is different — maybe". Any change would be operational for 1996, not Barcelona next year, and would also need the agreement of the Atlanta organisers, Samaranch said.

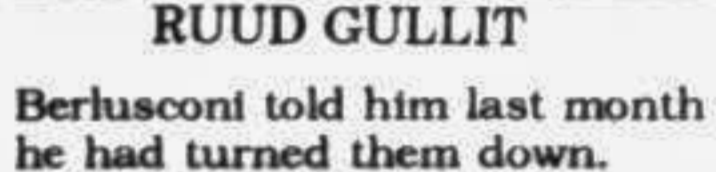
British fans find frustration instead of fun

ROTTERDAM, Netherlands, May 15: They hung around street corners, they ambled past closed bars and boarded-up shops and they looked for something to do. Manchester United's 15,000-strong 'Red Army' of soccer fans arrived here Wednesday found frustration instead of fun, reports AP. Here for the European Cup winners final against Spain's Barcelona, the fans discovered the bars were either shut or did not serve alcohol. "It's a trip we were all looking forward to, but this is a big disappointment," said Gerry Lundin, 22, from Salford, England. "I know people have been worried about soccer violence but most people here have come on properly organized trips and are not looking for trouble." They want to watch the game and enjoy themselves while they are here, Lundin added. "Because English clubs have been banned for five years we haven't had much chance to go anywhere. It's frustrating to find places closed when we get here." Many restaurants in this thriving city port also were closed and some shopowners spent the previous night boarding up their windows, fearing damage or looting. This was the biggest invasion of Europe by English soccer fans since the Heysel tragedy in 1985, when 39 people — mostly Italian fans — died as a result of rioting at the Champions' Cup final between Liverpool and Juventus. The fans were encouraged to head for two pop concerts, one for the English in a park on the north bank of the Maas and the other for the Spaniards close to the stadium. "It seems they had plenty to drink there, so they were quiet this morning," De Jong said.

AC won't sell me: Gullit

ROME, May 15 : Dutch international Ruud Gullit dismissed increasing speculation in Italy that AC Milan were poised to replace him after his fourth knee operation in two years, reports Reuter. Gullit, who was operated on by Belgian specialist Marek Maertens on Monday and could take two months to recover, said: "I know that (AC Milan President) Silvio Berlusconi has no intention of selling me." Throughout the last year I've heard a lot of different stories, he said from his hospital bed. "At one stage I was about to be sold and at another moment I was to join to a rival club. I don't know anything

about all of this." Real Madrid made a bid for the Dutchman, but Gullit said



RUUD GULLIT

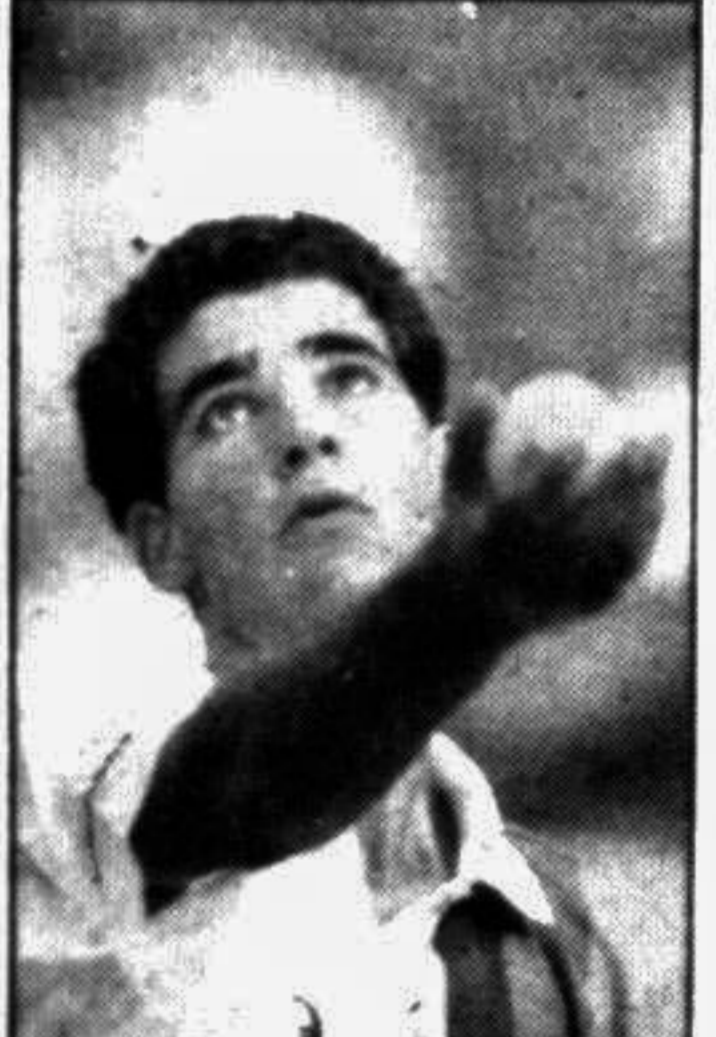
Berlusconi told him last month he had turned them down.

But the length of recovery time for Gullit's latest operation, during which part of a cartilage was removed has led to newspaper speculation that Milan may replace him with another foreigner, possibly Hungarian Lajos Detari of Bologna or Red Star Belgrade's Dejan Savicovic. Both Gullit and Maertens have been at pains to explain that this operation is not related to the problems which kept Gullit off the pitch for more than a year leading up to the 1990 World Cup. Everything's fine Ruud will need a longer rehabilitation period because the right knee now has only the small outside cartilage and, therefore, needs a deal of time to re-establish its equilibrium, said Maertens on Tuesday.

Smooth sailing for Sampras

ROME, May 15: Whether it's an unknown Soviet player gunning for him while trying to get through a tough first round match or a swarm of young fans clutching at him while trying to walk through a hotel lobby, Pete Sampras has had to pay a price for fame, reports AP. "It's still pretty crazy," the handsome 19-year-old said after defeating unknown Soviet qualifier Vladimir Gavrishchidze 7-6, (7-2), 4-6, 6-2 in his Tuesday first round match at the Italian Open. It's tough when you can't walk into a hotel lobby or out onto the street without being mobbed." The Rome tournament received a blow Tuesday morning when top seed Boris Becker announced that he was withdrawing before playing a match. He said he was suffering from back pains that have troubled him since he played an exhibition match 10 days ago at Lausanne, Switzerland, against Stefan Edberg. Andre Agassi, the No. 2 seed, didn't stay in Rome much longer than Becker, losing to unseeded German Eric Jelen 6-3, 7-6 (9-7) in the night match. And fourth seed Goran Ivanesvic further thinned the field by losing to Holland's Paul

Haarhuis 3-6, 7-7, 6-3. Life has not been the same for Sampras since he defeated Ivan Lendl, John McEnroe and Andre Agassi to win last year's US Open. With the victory at Flushing Meadows, and his 2-million-dollar winner-take-all triumph at the Grand Slam



PETE SAMPRAS

Cup in Frankfurt, Germany, the Florida teen-ager has won a share of glory but lost a share of control over his life. "It's calmed down a lot after the US Open," said Sampras, the No. 3 seed at Rome. "There are some experiences I'll never forget, however. One

time after an exhibition against Lendl, the crowd just flooded onto the court during the ceremony, pushing over the guards to get to us. It was like being a rock star. I thought I was going to get trampled." A classic serve-and-volley player who has never been at home on clay, Sampras looked vaguely uninspired in his match against Gavrishchidze. Unable to find his rhythm or to take the net, Sampras watched his hustling Soviet adversary run down nearly every shot he hit. It wasn't until the third set that Sampras started to look like a winner. "It may have looked like I was bored," he said after the match. "But in fact I was frustrated. I thought that I should have beat that guy rather handily. And there I was, still out there on the court. I'm putting my all into it, even if it may not look like it." Looking back, Sampras says he wouldn't want to return to being the young hopeful he was before winning the US Open. "I'm still happy, but it's different now," he said. "I've made a lot of money, and I have a lot of fans. But being a celebrity is tough. Of course it's worth it in the end. And I'm happy about having achieved what I've wanted ever since I was very young. I'm just not too happy about losing my privacy."

But Noam Behr restored parity for Israel by Swamping Andiyta Seopardi 6-3, 6-1 in the second singles. Israel clinched the tie when Behr and Erez combined effectively to destroy Halim and Seopardi 6-3, 6-1 in the decisive doubles. Steven Downs led New Zealand's march into the final by winning the opening singles and playing an important role in the crucial doubles. Downs overcame a fighting T.S. Satyanarayanan 4-6, 7-5, 6-3 but India levelled scores through Rohit Reddy's easy 6-3, 6-0 victory over James Greenhalgh in the next match.

KL marathon

KUALA LUMPUR, May 15 Indonesians won both the men's and women's races by wide margins Sunday in the Kuala Lumpur International marathon reports AP. Naek Sagala won the men's race in 2 hours, 23 minutes, 72 seconds, followed by fellow Indonesian Hendro Suwarno in 2:28:55. Suresh Chandra Dandey of India was third in 2:30:46 and Greg McMohan of Australia was fourth in 2:31:27. In the women's section, Maria Lawalata won in 3:02:36, with Burma's Hla Hla Mu second in 3:05:54, Singapore's Irene Chua third in 3:07:43 and Asha Agarwal of India fourth in 3:08:09.

Fresh row on tobacco sponsorship

WELLINGTON, May 15 : The New Zealand Government today was desperately trying to get itself out of a fresh row over tobacco sponsorship that could end plans to stage one-day World Cup cricket matches here later this year, reports AFP. Following claims by New Zealand Cricket (NZC) Monday that the tournament was in danger, a junior health minister said he would save it, but Health Minister Simon Upton said early today that there was no way to ensure the future of the matches. But later reports said it was likely that a special law would be pushed through Parliament granting an exemption for cricket from the tobacco sponsorship ban. The ruling National Party government promised in its election campaign seven months ago that it would repeal a law passed last year banning tobacco advertising and sponsorship. NZC had assumed in December that the government would keep its promise and with their Australian counterparts went ahead and planned for the 'Benson and Hedges' World Cup to be played on both sides of the Tasman Sea. When it became clear Monday the law would not be amended, NZC Chairman Peter

McDermott protested, saying New Zealand could lose the chance to host the matches and the NZC would be liable for a seven-figure sum. Associate Health Minister Maurice Williamson stepped in, saying he would seek parliamentary leave to pass "a minor technical change" to allow the matches to proceed. But he had not consulted his senior, Mr. Upton, who said the plan would not fly and by the middle of today the Cup was back in crisis. But the Government, already suffering poor public opinion poll ratings, then took a pasting from newspaper headlines, editorials and television talk shows. The New Zealand Press Association (NZPA), quoted well-placed government sources as saying ruling party MPs will Thursday be asked to approve the use of parliamentary "urgency" to push through a law change enabling New Zealand to co-host the Cup. The sources said the government caucus, which is reportedly divided on the issue, would approve the use of urgency, but they warned that Mr. Williamson would be

"rapped over the knuckles" for his intention to seek the leave of parliament to have his bill passed saying it was "less a matter of health and more a matter of the greater public good." His approach, however, means if any single MP opposes his leave to have the bill passed then it would have to go to a select committee where it could be held up for months. At least two opposition MPs said today they would oppose leave being granted. NZPA said the latest play from the government will be to have consideration of the amendment taken under urgency, skipping the select committee stage. Urgency, which also extends parliamentary time to push through legislation, is taken on a vote, which the Government would win because of its majority. It is understood many government MPs are upset by Mr. Williamson's handling of the issue and most cabinet ministers have tried not to get involved in the public debate nor have their names associated with the debacle. Notably absent from the debate in this cricket-crazy na-

tion has been Prime Minister Jim Bolger. Even if cricket wins an exemption from the law, the future of the legislation is still in doubt. International yachting already has an exemption for yachts named after cigarette brands and now soccer and softball want exemptions. Mr. Upton has said he will introduce legislation lifting the ban on tobacco sponsorship, but as voting on it will be a conscience issue and not on party lines, he said he intends to vote in favour of a continued ban on tobacco sponsorship. Mr. McDermott of NZC said unless the problem was swiftly resolved his organisation might ultimately have to relinquish its right to co-host the tournament. "We may be forced to do that, very reluctantly," he said. With timing now critical, especially regarding ticket sales, promotions and finalising and improving venues for the 11 matches, NZC could not afford to wait any longer. Mr. McDermott called on parliament to act so that NZC knew where it stood. "We desperately need a decision of some sort so that we at least will know what our next options are," he said.

More woes for Maradona

NAPLES, May 15: A prosecutor has asked a judge to indict soccer star Diego Maradona on charges of possession and distribution of cocaine, the Italian news agency ANSA reported Tuesday, reports AP. The Argentine superstar, who left Italy for Buenos Aires a few weeks ago, was questioned by police and prosecutors in February in connection with the allegations of drug use. Police have said Maradona's name was mentioned in several taped telephone conversations between suspects in a drug and prostitution case. Maradona is free on bail in Argentina, where he was arrested in another drug case. An Argentine news agency reported Monday that a white powder found during his arrest in a Buenos Aires apartment on April 26 was 91 per cent pure cocaine. In the Naples case, ANSA said, four women testified that Maradona had offered them cocaine. Maradona, who played in Italy for the major league team Napoli, was suspended by the league on April 6 after a urine test administered after a match found traces of cocaine. The 15-month suspension was extended world-wide by FIFA, soccer's governing body.

Fenech confident of fourth title

SYDNEY, May 15: Australia's greatest fighter Jeff Fenech, believes his furious tempo will wear down Azumah Nelson and land him his fourth world boxing title when the two meet in Las Vegas late next month, reports AP. Fenech — the Murrumbidgee mauler — left here Wednesday with his 13-person entourage to prepare for the June 28 World Boxing Council super featherweight bout on the undercard of the Mike Tyson, Razor Ruddock heavyweight re-match. Fenech, who turns 27 on May 28, is on the threshold on international fame and he's bidding for four world titles. Only Sugar Ray Leonard, with five, has more belts. "I'll put a lot of pressure on Nelson and make him fall into my trap," Fenech said. "I'll work him very hard early, which will sap him of his energy and strength because he's not used to fighting at the pace that I'll make him fight. I'm sure that if the fight goes the distance I'll win convincingly, he said. "I'll throw more punches than he will." Fenech had a first-hand look at Nelson when the Ghanaian champion had a points win over American Juan Laporte here last October. "It wasn't the real Azumah

Nelson, but to do what he did that night under the circumstances of losing his wife not long before he left for Australia I thought it was probably the greatest fight of his life," Fenech said. "He didn't even want to get on the plane to come here, yet he still won." The long awaited showdown with Nelson is the first of a four-fight package over two years that will net Fenech if successful five million Australian dollars (\$3.9 million US). "I feel champions rise to the occasion and this will be my greatest occasion and I believe we'll see a greater Jeff Fenech than we've seen before, he said. "I'm still learning and I think I can still be better overall. Going to early and working off my job instead of going out there and rustling up and trying to beat everybody with strength. Now that I'm stepping up in divisions I've got to be a little careful early and as long as I can get my mind on the job I'll be a better fighter for it, Fenech added. He first landed the International Boxing Federation bantamweight title against Japan's Sabtoshi Shingaki in April 1985 followed two years later by his WBC super bantamweight win over Thailand's Samart Payakarun. In March 1988 he won his third belt, the WBC featherweight title, against Puerto Rican Victor Callejas. Fenech beset by broken hands that forced a short-lived retirement in 1989, fought

only once in the past two years when he knocked out Canadian John Kalbhenn in the fourth round in Adelaide last January. A masseur, part of the Fenech entourage will be working on Fenech's hands daily in his six week build up to the Nelson engagement. Fenech, who has won all his 25 bouts 20 by knockout, has fought in 11 world title contests.

Malaysian cagers share lead

BAGUIO, Philippines, May 15: Malaysian snatched their second straight victory Tuesday to share the lead with the Philippines at the sixth Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) junior basketball championship here, reports AFP. After coming from behind to beat Indonesia 51-48 in their first game Monday, the Malaysian pulled off another great escape act with an 82-79 decision over defending champions Thailand, now at the bottom of the table with three straight losses. Wang Tai Boon, with 31 points and Shee Cheong with 20 were Malaysia's top scorers. In the girls divisions, Thailand routed Singapore 79-39 for their third straight victory while the Philippines beat Malaysia 63-53.

Shanghai bids for World Student Games

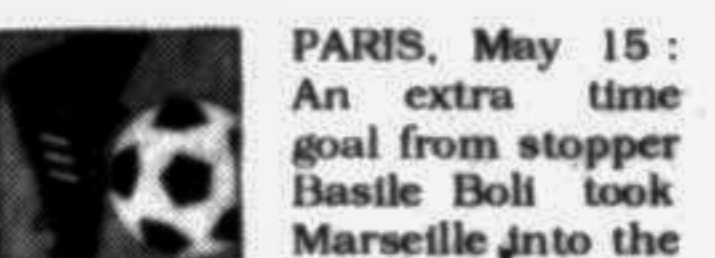
BEIJING, May 15 China's most populous city, Shanghai, announced today a bid to host the 1997 World Student Games, as Beijing officially launched its campaign to stage the Olympic Games in 2000, reports AP. The China Daily said Shanghai, which has about 14 million residents, had set up a bidding committee headed by Vice Mayor Liu Zhenyuan. The city already laid a bid for the 1994 World Student Games. Shanghai has sufficient financial resources to host the event, the English-language daily quoted Mr. Liu as saying. The city is making efforts to complete by the end of 1990 a number of construction projects, including the first phase of a subway, the expansion of Hongqiao International Airport, new express roads and two bridges over the Huangpu river, the Vice Mayor said.

Marvellous McCormack

PORT LAUDERDALE, Fla., May 15 Simon McCormack staged one of the biggest upsets ever for an Australian diver by winning the Alamo international men's one-metre springboard diving championship on Tuesday reports Reuter. McCormack, 19, upset World Cup one-metre gold medalist Wang Yjie of China, American Mark Lenzi — World Cup three-metre gold medalist and World Championships one-metre silver medalist — and veteran US national champion Mark Bradshaw. Bradshaw was second with 382.02 points. Lenzi finished third with 371.94 points and Wang was fourth at 352.20. McCormack, a competitive swimmer-turned-diver, worked his way up from the quarterfinals, while Lenzi, Bradshaw and Wang had byes

Marseille eye a rare treble

PARIS, May 15 : An extra time goal from stopper Basile Boli took Marseille into the semifinals of the French Soccer Cup on Tuesday with a 2-1 away victory over Nantes, reports Reuter. Boli scored with a header from an Abdeki Pele cross in the 103rd minute to clinch a victory which seemed to be slipping away from the European Cup finalists, when they trailed with 10 minutes of regular time to go. Paul Le Guen had given Nantes the lead in the 76th minute but Marseille striker Jean-Pierre Papin, totally marked out of the match until then, equalised four minutes later. The goalscorer extraordinary latched on to a Pele pass to slip the ball past advancing keeper David Marraud. Marseille, who could capture their third successive league title when they meet Auxerre on Friday, remain on



course for a rare treble of European Cup and domestic league and Cup. They play Red Star Belgrade in the European Cup final in Bari, Italy, on May 29. Two Second Division sides also reached the French Cup semifinals. Rodez beat First Division Sochaux 2-1 and Gueugnon defeated Niort 1-0 in a match between two clubs from the lower flight. The last quarter-final between Cannes and Monaco will be played next Tuesday.