

Perfect stage for Botham

OLD TRAFFORD, England, Sept 14: The stage is set for something special from England all round in the Sunday League Cup final here between Lancashire and Lancashire, reports AFP.

It will be Botham's last game for Lancashire and nobody would be surprised if he led them to their second trophy of the English season.

Mike Jones, Chairman of Lancashire's cricket committee, said, "obviously, it's Ian's stage and he'll want to leave everybody at New Road with something to remember him by."

Worcestershire, who defeated Lancashire in the Benson and Hedges Cup final, are virtually certain to avoid the temptation to open the innings with Botham in the absence of the record-breaking Australian, Tom Moody.

The batting giant, who amassed 917 runs in the Sunday League, is prevented from playing by his recruitment to an Australian XI touring Zimbabwe.

A crucial 47 by Steve Rhodes against Nottinghamshire in the semi-



IAN BOTHAM

final makes him the likely nominee to replace Moody as Tim Curtis opening partner in a side minus ex-England pacesman Graham Dilley and current captain Phil Neale.

Lancashire beat Neale's side by 52 runs against the odds in the first Refuge final in 1988, catching the favourites with their guard down.

But Curtis warned, "We don't intend to make the same mistake. We'd won the Sunday League the previous weekend and the Championship two days before the final. It had been a tremendous week and we just couldn't get ourselves up for the match."

Lancashire, out to avenge their Lord's defeat, will give fitness tests to Pakistan-all rounder Wasim Akram (foot) and ex-England men Paul Allott (back) and Graeme Fowler (neck).

Alan Ormrod, the Lancashire manager, said "some supporters might be disappointed with our season, but I'm happy enough after reaching two one-day finals."

"We're determined to end the season with something to show for our worth, particularly as they beat us in the Benson final."

"The sides now each other so well and Worcester have no weaknesses to be exploited."

Jr int'l tennis in Dhaka from Nov 18

The sixth Bangladesh International Junior Tennis Championships, organised by the Bangladesh Tennis Federation, will be held at the National Tennis Complex in Dhaka from November 18 to 24, reports BSS.

Top level junior players from different countries are expected to take part in the tournament, which has been upgraded from Number Five to Number Four by the International Tennis Federation.

Tournament director Bayazidur Rashid told BSS yesterday that four countries — Saudi Arabia, India the USSR and Pakistan — had already confirmed their participation in the meet.

Formerly this meet used to be called the Ershad Junior championship during the regime of disgraced President Ershad.

The Khans in Pak Open semis

KARACHI, Pakistan, Sept 14: Top seed Jansher Khan and big rival Jahangir Khan remained on course in the Pakistan Open squash championship, winning their quarter-finals on Friday, reports Reuter.

Defending champion Jansher disposed of acrobatic Australian Tristan Nancarrow in 25 minutes 15-5, 17-15, 15-3.

Jahangir, hoping to lift the title for a 10th time dropped a game against hard-hitting Briton Del Harris before winning 15-7, 11-15, 15-11, 15-6 to set up a semifinal with Australian Chris Dittmar.

Harris was upset with some of local referee Mohammad Yasin's decisions in the third game which the Pakistani won after a close contest.

Harris said: "I thought I played very well today. The first game was close, I played very well in the second but because of bad decisions in the third I lost concentration."

Jahangir said: "The refereeing was all right. There were no bad decisions. The players try to pressurise the referee but a person of the calibre of Muhammad Yasin knew how to handle things."

Yasin warned Harris for using bad language and repeatedly opening the door of the court.

Berbeck convicted of assault

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla., Sept 14: Former heavyweight boxing champion Trevor Berbick was sentenced to six months probation after he was convicted Friday of misdemeanor assault for attacking his former financial manager, reports AP.

A Broward County jury acquitted Berbick, 39, of armed kidnapping and aggravated assault. A conviction on those charges could have led to up to 17 years in jail.

Berbeck, jailed for the past eight days for missing a court date, maintained he was innocent.

"The world is going to see

Ottey, Ngugi brilliant in Brussels



BRUSSELS, Sept 14: Merlene Ottey and John Ngugi gave consummate exhibitions of sprinting and long distance running respectively at the Brussels Grand Prix on Friday, reports Reuter.

Jamaican Ottey ran the third fastest time in history for the women's 200 metres while Ngugi, running alone for a third of the race, clocked the third fastest time ever for the men's 10,000.

Ottey, determined to atone for her bitter disappointment at the Tokyo World Championships where she collected bronze medals in both the women's sprint events, clocked 21.64 seconds. Only American Florence Griffith-Joyner has run faster.

Ngugi, the Olympic 5,000 metres champion who could not even qualify for the Kenyan World Championships team, loped easily around the track on a cool evening to win the 10,000 by more than 40 seconds in 27 minutes 11.62 seconds.

Although he failed in his bid to break Arturo Barrios's world record, the four-times world cross country champion is now behind only the Mexican and compatriot Richard Chelimo in the all-time list.

Two other Kenyans, both world champions, made bold but ultimately abortive world record attempts in the penultimate Grand Prix of the season.

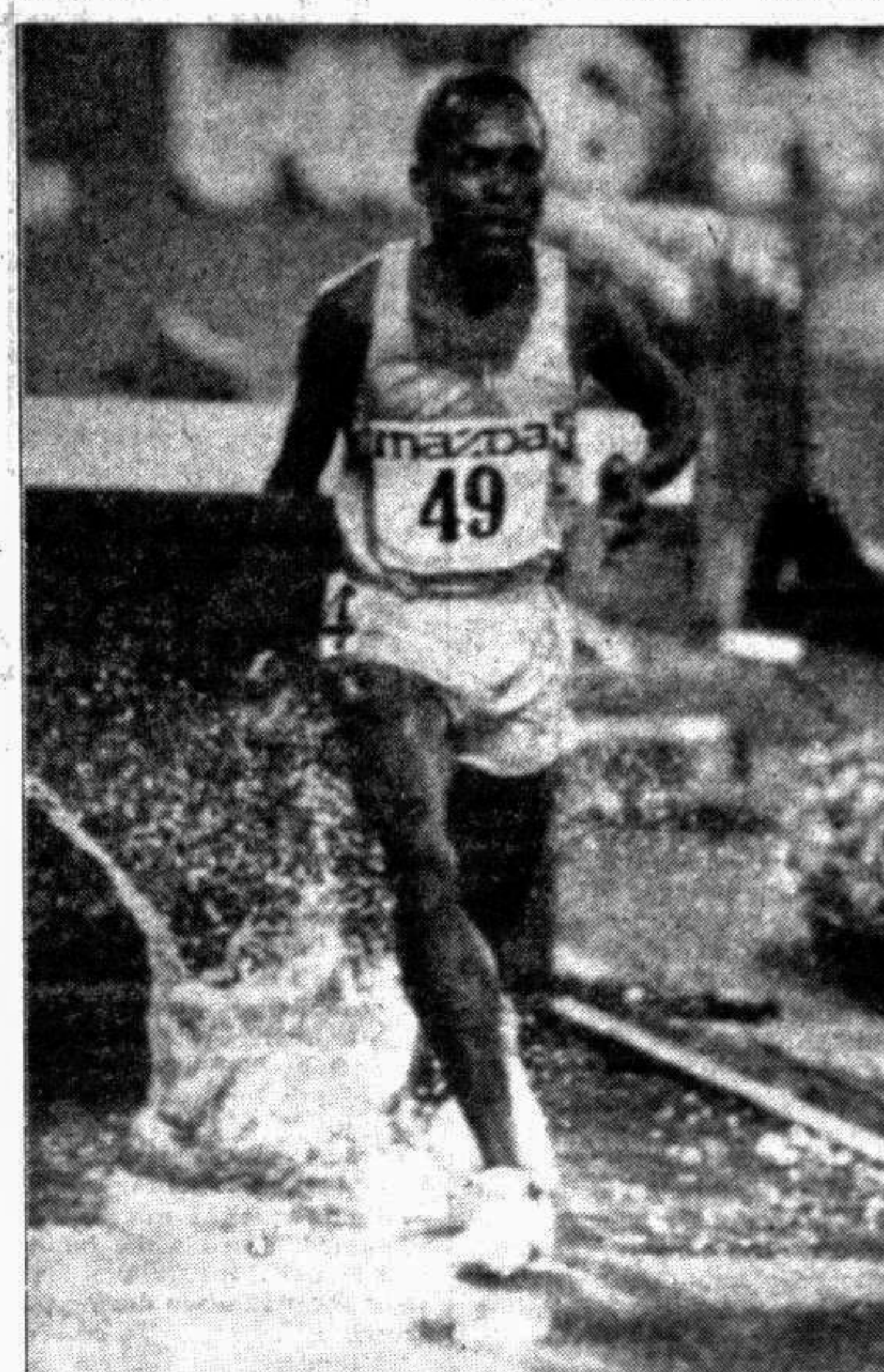
Moses Kiptanui clocked a year's best of 8:06.46 in the 3,000 metres steeplechase while Yobes Ondieki, looking as tired as he felt, won the 5,000 in 13:21.79.

"You can't push the body

when it doesn't want to go," Ondieki said. "I felt so tired... the season has been so long, I obtained my major goal — the world title."

Kiptanui said: "I guess I'm too tired, it's only my first year at the steeplechase."

American world champion Michael Johnson, who has



Kenyan Moses Kiptanui crosses the river during the men's 3000m steeplechase of the Van Damme Memorial Athletics Grand Prix in Brussels on Sept 13. Kiptanui won the race in 8:06.46, the best time of the year.

made the 200 metres his own special preserve in the last two years, ran a season's best of 19.89. He is the only person to break 20 seconds this year.

"Merlene Ottey inspired me today," Johnson said. "I thought if she can do that well, so can I."

The feature race of the night, the men's 1,500, also failed to produce a world record but confirmed that Nourredine Moreel is untouchable over four laps.

The world champion took over from pacemaker Edgar De Oliveira on the final lap then accelerated in the straight to beat off a challenge from Britain's Peter Elliott and win in 3:32.38.

Elliott, the Commonwealth champion who was forced to withdraw from the World Championships with tendon troubles, set off in pursuit of Moreel at the bell but could not match the Algerian's speed over the final 80 metres.

The first part of the evening at a meeting which now rates only behind Zurich in prestige on the Grand Prix circuit belonged to Ottey.

The 31-year-old Jamaican was fast out of the blocks, ran brilliantly on the turn and won going away from world silver medalist Gwen Torrence of the United States.

"I just didn't want to finish the season on a bad note," the world's premier women's sprinter over the past two years said.

"If I win the 100 at next year's Barcelona Olympics, then I'll win the 200."

Ngugi was similarly impressive, striding on his own through the September mist after the last of his pacemakers had stepped aside.

"My big goal is to break the world record at 10,000," he said. "I believe I can run below 27 minutes."

First world bout in SA after 5 years



JOHANNESBURG, Sept 14: Champion Dingaan Thobela defends his World Boxing Organization light-weight title Saturday in a strange place — at home, reports AP.

The undefeated "Rose of Soweto," with 25 victories and one draw, faces top challenger Antonio Rivera of Puerto Rico in the first world title bout in South Africa in five years.

Some boxing organizations earlier this year lifted a ban on title fights in South Africa, imposed to protest the apartheid system of racial segregation.

Thobela, who turns 25 on Sept 24, makes his second title defense almost a year after he defeated Uricio Acceves in a 12-round decision in the United States, to win the WBO belt. He successfully defended the title in March in San Jose, Calif. with a 12-round decision over Mario Martinez.

Thobela has called the chance to defend his crown before a home crowd a dream of his life.

"My fans at home have... given me great support, even when I have been fighting overseas," Thobela said.

Except for a draw in his fourth professional fight, Thobela has stopped 15 of his 26 opponents with a smooth style featuring a stiff left jab and crisp counter-punching.

Rivera has won his last three fights in the early rounds after two straight losses, including being stopped in eight

rounds by Kamel Bou-Ali in a WBO lightweight title bout two years ago.

Asked about the political implications of fighting in South Africa, Rivera said his job was to fight. "It care of."

The last title fight in South Africa was in November 1986, when World Boxing Association bantamweight champion

Bernardo Pinango of Venezuela stopped South African challenger Simon Skosana in the 15th round.

Organisers said Friday about 5,000 tickets in the 7,500-seat Standard Bank Arena had been sold for the 12-round bout, which will be televised live in South Africa and also broadcast in the United States.

Galloway, Malcolm both predict win



GOLD COAST, Australia, Sept 14: Manning Galloway resulted with challenger Jeff Malcolm on Thursday and predicted he would easily become World Boxing Organization welterweight Champion, reports AP.

Galloway, who makes the fourth defense of his title on Sunday at Jupiters Casino, predicted a win within seven rounds and looking to be already booking at further challenges.

"From what I've seen he can't matter to me," said Galloway, a 31-year-old from Columbus, Ohio. "This is a stepping stone. I have other fights, bigger fights, lined up already."

Challenger Malcolm called Galloway arrogant and said he plans to teach him a lesson during the scheduled 12-round bout.

"He's really cocky and I'm going to aim for the biggest target — his mouth," Malcolm said. "He just keeps making the sort of stupid statements American fighters are so fond of."

Malcolm said he had been studying videotapes of Galloway in action and was growing in confidence.

"He just can't punch," Malcolm said. "He's not a bad boxer, but he wouldn't crack an egg with his punches."

Malcolm said he planned to

be as aggressive in the title fight as in any of the 110 professional fights in his 20-year professional career.

"I know that he's champion and I've got to take the title from him. That means I've got to be aggressive," he said.

Galloway said he expects seven rounds, but admitted he doesn't really know what to expect when the two left-handers tangle.

"That's kind of scary," he said. "But I'm still confident."

Malcolm, who splits his time between Australia and Honolulu, Hawaii, is aiming to become Australia's 11th world professional champion — and the oldest to achieve that feat.

The former Australian and Commonwealth champion has a career record of 79 wins, 21 losses and 10 draws. He began fighting professionally as a 15-year-old and is rated No. 7 in the division by the WBO.

Galloway boasts a 43-10-1 record and is unbeaten since 1986.

The undercard features a heavyweight bout between world-rated Australian Craig Petersen and American Mike "Boss Man" Jones, who is making a comeback after a three-year layoff.

Jones said, "He can't hurt me, but I can hurt him."

Jones, from Memphis, Tenn., claims the record, while Petersen is 15-3-1 and ranked No. 9 as a cruiserweight by the WBC.



National chess qualifiers in progress yesterday in the chess room of National Sports Council. —Star photo

Warwicks still in race

LONDON, Sept 14: Warwickshire took their county championship title tussle with Essex into the final round of games with a thrilling three-wicket win over Northamptonshire with four balls to spare at Edgbaston, reports Reuter.

After leaders Essex completed a crushing nine-wicket win at Leicestershire on Friday, second-placed Warwickshire had to triumph to stay in with a chance of their first pennant since 1972.

Their last-gasp win leaves them on 276 points, 12 behind Essex.

Chasing 296 from 98 overs, Warwickshire got off to a solid

start with Andy Lloyd making 61 and Jason Ratcliffe 70.

They reached 195 for four at tea but slipped to 271 for seven when all-rounder Dermot Reeve was bowled by leg-spinner Andy Roberts for 64.

With 15 runs needed from the last three overs, Warwickshire were pushed nearer the target by a fielders' helmet.

A delivery from Roberts beat both Keith Piper and wicketkeeper Wayne Noon and hit the helmet left a few yards further back. That gave Warwickshire five runs, easing the pressure before Piper hit the winning runs in the final over.

Essex sent Leicestershire stumbling from their overnight

204 for three to 290 all out at Grace Road, left-arm spinner John Child's taking four for 82.

That left Essex needing only 23 to claim their 10th win of the summer.

Essex start their final match against current champions Middlesex at Chelmsford on Tuesday, while Somerset entertain Warwickshire at Taunton.

Fourth-placed Surrey's fading championship hopes finally bit the dust at Lord's after a 61-run defeat by Middlesex.

Resuming on 69 for four, Surrey slid to 116 all out with England slow left-arm Phil Tufnell claiming five for 17 — including four for five in an 11-over spell.

Rape case against Mike Tyson

Lawyers told to keep mum

INDIANAPOLIS, Sept 14: Attorneys, investigators and others involved in Mike Tyson's rape case have been ordered not to say anything that would contribute to pre-trial publicity which could prejudice potential jurors, reports AP.

Marion Superior Court Judge, Patricia J Gifford, issued the gag order Friday at the request of Tyson's attorneys, one of whom said Tyson's case has joined the Florida rape case of William Kennedy Smith as the most publicised of 1991.

"It has already attracted extraordinary, extraordinary publicity," said F Lane Heard III, a lawyer for Tyson. "And it's almost an absolute certainty this kind of publicity will continue."

"Much of this publicity has been highly prejudicial," Heard said. "This is not an effort to stop all publicity in the case, but in a highly charged atmosphere, we are saying that we as attorneys should not contribute to more publicity."

Heard noted that the judge

in the Smith case had issued a similar order.

Gifford said she was aware of the intense local and national publicity the case has generated. Tyson was indicted this week on rape, two counts of criminal deviate sexual conduct and one count of confinement for an alleged attack on an 18-year-old Miss Black America beauty pageant contestant.

The order applies to attorneys for Tyson, prosecutors, attorneys for potential witnesses, police, private investigators working on the case and the court clerk and staff.

Gifford also told Tyson's attorneys: "I would hope counsel might be able to curb any statements" by the boxer and his entourage.

"I was somewhat appalled immediately after you filed this order to find your client and others holding a press conference," Gifford told Heard.

Tyson and his promoter, Don King, held an 80-minute news conference on Wednesday. Both men proclaimed Tyson's innocence, both mentioned the alleged

victim's name, and King urged reporters to ask what the woman was doing in Tyson's hotel room at 2 am on the morning of July 19, when the alleged rape took place.

"It will certainly be our advice to Mr Tyson that he not address the evidence," Heard said. "But they are entitled to proclaim their innocence."

Marion County Deputy Prosecutor Mark A Jones argued against the order, calling it "completely unnecessary."

He said attorneys in the case already were prevented by professional rules of conduct from discussing the case in a way that could prejudice a jury.

He claimed that the request also was premature because there hadn't been any instances of an attorney saying something that could damage Tyson's chances for a fair trial.

However, Heard read a list of 11 statements made by Prosecutor Jeffery Modisett at a news conference after the indictments were announced Monday and claimed some of them could be considered prejudicial.

"The world is going to see

Martina demands Nelson drop her book

FORT WORTH, Texas, Sept 14: Tennis star Martina Navratilova said on Friday she would not agree to pay palimony to her former live-in lover Judy Nelson unless Nelson drops plans to write a book about their affair, reports Reuter.

"Basically I'm tired and disappointed that the only way she seems capable of making a living is somehow through me," Navratilova said at the conclusion of an emotion-laden four-day court hearing on a palimony lawsuit filed by Nelson.

Both women displayed flashes of temper during the hearing and each burst into tears several times.

Navratilova stormed out of court on Thursday, angrily slamming a door after a brief private meeting with Nelson, a 45-year-old divorced mother of two.

She said the case could have been settled out-of-court if Nelson had agreed not to write a book.

"The reason I stormed out of there and the reason the case is not settled is because Judy insists on having the rights to write about our story, or her story, rather," said the 34-year-old nine-time Wimbledon singles champion.

"Generally speaking, when you do divorce settlements or whatever, part of the settlement is that there will be no further publicity regarding the matter."

But Nelson said privacy was not the issue.

"For me it goes much deeper than that," she said.

"It's an American right, my freedom of speech."

"That relationship was very special, very good, very healthy," Nelson said of the affair that began when she met Navratilova at a Fort Worth tournament in 1984. "She is a very special person in my life."

Nelson, who has demanded half of Navratilova's 10 million dollar estate, said she might not ever write a book but refuses to sign away her right to do so.

On the witness stand on Thursday Nelson acknowledged she and her family lived lavishly on Navratilova's earnings.

In an interview with the Fort Worth Star Telegram, Navratilova said she spent nearly 2 million dollars on Nelson and her family in their seven years together.

"I don't know all the money that went out," she said.

She said Nelson's brother had sold a packet of photographs to a British newspaper for 6,000 dollars and offered her old tennis shoes for sale.

"I don't know what to expect anymore," Navratilova said.

"They tell you they love you and on the other hand they

want to get as much money as possible."

"Judy wants me to pay for the pain I caused her in not wanting to be with her anymore," she said. "My crime here is stupidity, naivete, and not loving Judy anymore."

The hearing was on Navratilova's motion to disqualify Nelson's attorney, Jerry Loftin, from the case, saying he had represented Navratilova on several occasions and had access to information that could unfairly help Nelson.

A ruling is not expected until late November. A trial on the merits of the case might



Navratilova and Judy Nelson (L) — in happier times not long ago.