

Liverpool want to win FA Cup for Souness' sake

LIVERPOOL, Apr 7: Liverpool's players vowed here on Monday to increase their efforts to reach FA Cup final as a tribute to manager Graeme Souness following his admission to hospital for heart surgery, reports AFP.

When they take on Second Division Portsmouth in the semi-final replay at Aston Villa

on April 13, the 38-year-old Scot will be recovering from a triple bypass operation, which will take place on Tuesday.

Soccer result

Sports Reporter Bangladesh Football Federation Eleven defeated Sonali Atli (Golden Oldies) Eleven by two goals to nil in a friendly match in connection with Eidul Fitr held under the joint auspices of the BFF and National Sports Council (NSC) at the Dhaka Stadium, a day after the Eid on April 6.

The Welsh international admitted that he and his teammates had been shocked by the news when they were told by Souness after the 1-1 draw with Portsmouth at Highbury.

"Some of us had heard flutters when he told us," said Ronnie Moran, who has been appointed caretaker manager in Souness' absence.

"But the game has to carry on. I'm hoping all the players will respond to this and try to get some good results and get through to the FA Cup final."

But the long-serving Anfield coach stressed: "I don't want the job permanently and the board knows that. But I'll help them out if they need me. I still enjoy it. That's why I'm still here."

Liverpool chairman David Moores revealed that it had been Souness' wish that Moran take his place for the three months he is expected to be out of action.

AC Milan march towards title

ROME, Apr 7: Italian league leaders AC Milan crushed outgoing champions Sampdoria 5-1 and effectively ended the Italian title race as second-placed Juventus went down 2-0 against city rivals Torino on Sunday, reports Reuter.

Vialli scored the consolation goal for Sampdoria, whose last league defeat was in November. Brazilian striker Walter Casagrande scored both goals for UEFA Cup semifinalists Torino to sink Juventus.

Casagrande headed his first in the 66th minute and tapped home the second in the 72nd minute.

could continue playing despite ankle trouble, headed his 22nd goal in the league this season in the 61st minute, poaching a rebound off the crossbar.

Massaro put Milan 4-0 up in the 81st minute before Vialli pulled one back for Sampdoria. But Milan had the last word when emerging midfielder talent Albertini crashed in the fifth from long range with five minutes remaining.

Torino shrugged off their bruising 2-1 UEFA Cup semifinal first leg defeat at Real Madrid by applying the kiss of death to Juventus's title hopes.

Spanish midfielder Rafael Martin Vazquez was the creator of both Casagrande goals.

The Spaniards sent over a fine cross for the first while Casagrande profited again six minutes later when Juventus goalkeeper Stefano Tacconi made a hash of another centre from Martin Vazquez.

Milan still unbeaten in the League this season, now lead Juventus by six points with only seven games left play.

Dutchman Frank Rijkaard put Milan a goal ahead before halftime and midfielder Alberto Evani doubled the advantage nine minutes after the interval.

Sampdoria had Yugoslav defender Srecko Katancec sent off for arguing moments later and Marco Van Basten, Daniele Massaro and Demetrio Albertini added goals for Milan.

Italian striker Gianluca effectively ended the Italian title race as second-placed Juventus went down 2-0 against city rivals Torino on Sunday, reports Reuter.

Rijkaard shot Milan into the lead with a low right-foot drive in the 34th minute against a Sampdoria side which beat Red Star Belgrade 3-1 last Wednesday and virtually booked a place in next month's European Cup final.

Sampdoria felt their strike Roberto Mancini had been fouled prior to the counter-attack which saw Evani put Milan two goals ahead and once Katancec was sent off for taking the protest too far there was no way back.

Van Basten, told on Friday by a Dutch doctor that he

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Premier League chief executive Rick Parry said the chairmen were determined to reach agreement. Their overall mood was to produce a settlement. There was no hint of deliberate confrontation in the air," he said.

"We have moved some way because there's an over-riding need to reach a settlement. Now Parry awaits an official response from Taylor.

English booters put off strike

MANCHESTER, England, Apr 7: English Players' Union chief Gordon Taylor put the First Division's strike call on hold here yesterday after an improved offer from the Premier League on television money, reports AFP.

Everyone — the supporters, police, clubs and particularly the players — want to know what is happening. They've been concerned about possible action and there has been speculation about what matches could be affected.

The League Cup final and FA Cup semi final have been mentioned, but they will not be affected.

Clearly Taylor now feels that the issue that had threatened to bring the First Division to a standstill can be resolved without the need for a strike.

Taylor sent out the ballot papers after rejecting a "final offer" from the Premier League of five per cent or a minimum

of one million pounds.

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Despite cash crisis, Baltic states focus on Barcelona Olympics

VILNIUS, Lithuania, Apr 7: The Shadow of Big Brother still looms large over the Baltic States seven months after their escape from Moscow's clutches, reports Reuter.

is halfway through a week-long whistle-stop tour of the Baltics and the ex-Soviet Republics of Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova.

The Baltic States, whose National Olympic Committees, were disbanded when the countries were annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940, rejoined the Olympic movement in September.

Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova are among the 12 former Soviet republics competing in Barcelona as a unified team.

Samaranch paid a courtesy call on Landsbergis on Monday, but before leaving Lithuania he also met 36-year-old Prime Minister Gediminas Vagnorius an active basketball player.

Basketball is the premier sport in Lithuania, and has produced some of the world's most talented players.

The Lithuanian line-up in Barcelona is expected to include four players who helped the Soviet Union win the 1988 Olympic gold in Seoul.

Lithuania will relish the chance to put Big Brother back in his place when they play a unified team of ex-Soviet republics in a European Olympic qualifying match in Spain on June 26.

Lithuania and the unified team, comprising the 11 members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) plus Georgia, are expected to grab two of the four European qualifying places and each could finish among the Olympic medals.

to limit them to 35 athletes and officials to ease pressure on Olympic village accommodation.

Lithuania, the largest of the Baltic states with a population of about 3.7 million, believe they should be allowed to send more competitors than their neighbours.

But Latvia and Estonia are facing further selection problems caused by the high proportion of ethnic Russians and other non-Baltics among their population.

Close to half Latvia's 2.7 million people are Russian speakers while more than one third of Estonia's population 1.6 million are non-Estonians.

Nationality is currently a hot issue in the Baltics and all three countries must ensure that Olympic candidates are legal before they can finalise their selection for Barcelona.

The process faces further complications with some ethnic Russians wanting to represent the Baltic countries and some Baltic athletes wanting to join the unified CIS camp.

Most notably among the second group are three re-negade basketball stars from Latvia who have said they want to play for the CIS because they would have a better chance of a medal.

The CIS would welcome them with open arms but Latvian sports fans, including Prime Minister Ivars Godmanis, have been outraged by their proposals.

The sandbags protecting the entrance to the wood-paneled office of Lithuania's President Vytautas Landsbergis are more than mere symbols.

With 10,000 former Soviet army troops placed only 10 minutes from parliament, nervous Lithuanian officials say the sandbags — and the concrete barricades surrounding the building — will remain in place until the last foreign soldiers have left the country.

As well as their worry about the continuing presence of former Soviet troops on Baltic soil, Lithuania and its fellow Baltic states Latvia and Estonia are struggling to bring order out of the economic chaos which followed the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Despite being desperately short of hard currency to finance Olympic training and the cost of travelling to Barcelona, the sports-mad Balts are avidly preparing for the Summer Olympics in July.

"It will be a very emotional moment for us when our team enters the Olympic stadium in Barcelona," Arturas Povilunas, President of the Lithuanian National Olympic Committee, told Reuters.

"It will confirm our identity. In Barcelona I'm sure we'll do well and be recognised as a successful sports nation," he added.

He was speaking during a visit by Juan Antonio Samaranch, President of the IOC, who



Fans of the Bahrain Rugby Club cheer for the Arabian Gulf team during the match against Western Samoa at the Rugby Sevens tournament in Hong Kong on April 4. Rugby fans from all over the world come to Hong Kong every year for the two-day tournament. —AFP photo

Jansher's chance to break the jinx

LONDON, Apr 7: Jansher Khan, the most consistently successful squash player on the circuit in the last four years, is out to beat the jinx that has afflicted him in the world's best known tournament, reports AFP.

run of ten successive British Open titles — a record unlikely ever to be beaten — has come to an end.

By contrast, it could see the start of a new sequence of success for the younger Khan, particularly as Jansher seems to be solving some of his off-court problems.

The 22-year-old Pakistani has already won the World Open three times, helped his country to the world team title in 1987, and captured dozens of titles all around the world.

But he has never won the oldest and most prestigious event, the British Open, which starts here on Wednesday, even though he has twice started as top seed.

Jansher will now be top seed a third time, but perhaps more importantly he will begin as the clear unofficial favourite because his legendary namesake Jahangir Khan is absent for the first time in 13 years.

Jahangir has a badly injured back which means that his

"I thing mentally he is in better shape this year," claimed his manager Satinder Bajwa. "He feels both his private life and his business life is better."

Last year Jansher was discouraged by lack of contracts and was subjected to a demonstration outside Wembley from a man and children demanding return to them their wife and mother.

Now he is married to the woman in question, Naseem, by whom he has a four-month old daughter. He also has three equipment deals which have improved his financial circumstances.

Robson to coach Sporting Lisbon

LISBON, Apr 7: Former England soccer manager Bobby Robson has reached an agreement to coach Portuguese side Sporting Lisbon for two years, club officials said on Monday, reports Reuter.

Robson, whose contract with PSV Eindhoven expires this season, will replace Brazilian coach Martinho Peres, sacked in February because of the club's disappointing performances.

The terms of 59-year-old Robson's contract were not divulged.

"We have a good base to work on," said Robson after watching Sporting lose 1-0 at home to Oufmaroes on Sunday.

Big Mac to back 1994 World Cup

CHICAGO, Apr 7: McDonald's Corp. the international "fast food" restaurant chain, said yesterday it will sponsor the US-hosted 1994 World Cup soccer tournament as the sole retail underwriter of the event, reports Reuter.

McDonald's declined to say how much it was paying FIFA, soccer's world ruling body, for the sponsorship rights but David Green, senior vice president for marketing at the chain, said it was a "major event" for the company.

As one of nine worldwide corporate sponsors McDonald's will be able to use the tournament and its logo and mascot for in-store and in-stadium promotions.

"It's a tremendous opportunity since we're in 60 countries with more than 12,000 restaurants," Green said in an interview.

Ukraine's poser for FIFA

MOSCOW, Apr 7: Ukraine are insisting FIFA run a play-off tournament in July or August to decide which of the ex-Soviet republics can play in the World Cup reports AFP.

"No republic of the old Soviet Union, not even Russia, can claim a place in the World Cup qualifying tournament," said Ukraine Football Federation President Viktor Bainikov.

"We are still waiting for a reply from FIFA," added the former Dynamo Kiev goalkeeper.

The Commonwealth of Independent States were drawn in European Group Five along with Yugoslavia, Hungary, Greece, Iceland and Luxembourg.

Bainikov confirmed that Ukraine's players would play for the CIS in the European Championships in Sweden in June.

"To show good faith we shall not pick any Ukraine players in the CIS team for our first international match against Hungary on April 29 at Uzhgorod," he said.

Soccer results

RIO DE JANEIRO, Apr 7: Vasco Da Gama stay top of the Brazilian soccer championship after a bad-tempered 1-1 draw with Portuguesa on Monday night, which ended with both sides down to 10 men, reports Reuter.

Kostya Tszyu — from Russia with gloves

SYDNEY, Apr 7: It took just 70 seconds to convince the Australian professional boxing world that young Russian fighter Kostya Tszyu was, in the words of the country's top trainer "a kid in a million," reports Reuter.

Melbourne was Tszyu's first since arriving in Australia from his Urals home in Serov, 1,500 kilometres east of Moscow, to join the Lewis boxing stable.

A month later Tszyu dispelled any lingering doubts about his professional potential when he demolished the tough Geyana-born Canadian Ned Simmons in just 58 seconds.

For Lewis, who has helped Fenech win world titles in three divisions, the chance to coach Tszyu was a gift. He had been excited by Tszyu's skills when he watched him fight as an amateur in Moscow three years ago.

"In many years of watching amateur boxing I had never seen his equal," Lewis said.

A blurred flurry of lefts and rights and Australia's leading junior-welterweight Darrell Hiles was on the canvas out for the count.

The March bout in

championships.

"Pound for pound he's the best I have ever seen, which isn't a bad qualification for turning professional," Lewis said.

The 22-year-old Russian southpaw was already a hero back home with a formidable amateur record — a world title, three European championships and a US Goodwill Games gold medal in his record of 259 wins in 270 fights.

With the help of local promoter Bill Mardey, Tszyu was persuaded to give up the chance of almost certain gold at this year's Barcelona Olympics to turn professional under Lewis.

He arrived with his fiancée Natasha, 19, in January on a year's visa and in three months has not only adopted the Australian lifestyle, including a love of the beach, but has won

over the Lewis camp with his dedication and enthusiasm.

Tszyu, who is taking daily English lessons, has already decided he wants to make his home in Australia with the sole ambition of winning a world title.

"I have no regrets about not going to Barcelona. I want to be a professional champion," he told Reuter.

Tszyu, who has a Korean grandfather, was offered more money to become a professional in South Korea but said he felt under Mordey and Lewis he had a better chance of winning a world title in Australia.

"To train with Jeff Fenech is fantastic," he said.

Tszyu, who according to Lewis has the heart of a lion, has stepped into the ring to spar with American former world light-heavyweight champion Virgil Hill, also training under Lewis. "He is afraid of nobody. For a man of only 10 stone (63.5 kg) the power of his punching is awesome," Lewis said.

Lewis's main concern is that he doesn't lose his prodigy at the end of the year if he fails to get permanent residence in Australia when his temporary visa expires.

"I think I would go back to Russia with him, I would be one most disappointed person if he went back. For ever and a day he would like to stay here," Lewis said.

Mordey now has to find an opponent who can stay in the ring with his fighter for more than one round.

"I'm not going to rush him. I'll look for someone he can advance up the line with, but I hope whoever it is has got a chin of granite — he will need it," Mordey said.

Lewis said that given a year of two Tszyu would be ready to meet and beat Mexican Julio Cesar Chavez, the World Boxing Council (WBC) super-lightweight champion, regarded by many boxing aficionados as the world's best fighter.

"I will be grossly disappointed if Kostya does not make it to the top. He knows what he wants.

Broadening gymnastics' appeal

PARIS, Apr 7: The International Gymnastics Federation is to try new ways of organising the World Championships in a bid to broaden the appeal of the sport, reports AFP.

Next month in Paris, Gymnasts are bypassing the team stage and going straight to their choice of apparatus.

Next year in Birmingham, they will largely revert to the traditional practice — but without the compulsory exercises.

In 1994, it's back to the Paris format and in 1995 and 1996, year of the Atlanta Games, the championships will be held as usual with team qualifying followed by compulsory and optional individual exercises.

Announcing the new formats here on Tuesday, FIG official Michel Legies and the move should open up the sport to nations who can ill-afford coaches and equipment for every apparatus.

"Countries with modest resources, such as Nigeria and the Ivory Coast, can now com-

pete in the World Championships without having to put forward someone in each discipline. And that's important," he said.

"In Africa, it costs a lot of money to buy a horse vault."

However, Legies warned there were limits to the FIG's wish to experiment. We want to remain sport and not become a spectacle like Holiday on Ice or the Harlem Globe Trotters."

Organiser of the Paris Championships, Arthur Magakian, highlighted two other advantages of allowing gymnasts to specialise in a single apparatus.

"By the time they're 20, most gymnasts go to university or out to work. They don't have time to train physically and mentally for 30 hours a week, so they leave the sport. And that's a shame."

"This way, they could stay competitive in just one discipline."

Also, if a gymnast gets a severe injury, he or she could concentrate on a discipline which doesn't rely on the affected muscles.

The changes are to be rubber stamped by the FIG Congress in July.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words. Includes a solution time of 21 mins and a solution key at the bottom.

Cryptoquip puzzle grid with a key below it: G Z M I W Z M J N H W A Y T M E F N I L F I F H Z M E Z F H N A W F G N H L F I N J J P N W T P G F W H M I E.

CRYPTOQUIP Today's Cryptoquip clue: G equals W The Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.