

Lendl beats Becker in marathon match

NEW YORK, Sept 9: Ivan Lendl advanced to the quarter-finals of the US Open Tuesday night with a 6-7 (4/7), 6-2, 6-7 (4/7), 6-3, 6-4 victory over Boris Becker that took a record five hours, report agencies.

In fact, Wednesday morning had rolled around when Lendl sealed the see-saw battle with a backhand passing shot with 5:01 showing on the court clock.

The ninth day of the tournament was packed with marathon matches.

Defending champion Stefan Edberg took four hours and 18 minutes to beat Richard Krajicek 6-4, 6-7 (6/8), 6-3, 3-6, 6-4.

Fourth-seeded Michael Chang beat number 14 MaliVai Washington 6-2, 2-6, 3-6, 6-3, 6-1 in a match that lasted three and a half hours.

In another fourth-round match, Wayne Ferreira beat Emilio Sanchez 6-2, 6-4, 2-6, 6-4.

The Lendl-Becker match was the longest at the US Open since the introduction of tie-breakers in 1970.

The previous record was Mats Wilander's four hour, 55 minute victory over Lendl in the 1988 final.

"You have to keep trying, that's the only way," said Lendl. "I finally made some break points and that turned it around."

Becker, who had a 24-9 record in five-setters going into the match, fended off two break points in the seventh game of the decider, before Lendl broke him with a forehand passing shot.

"That was the turning point for him," Becker said. "After that he had some air."

In the final game, every point was greeted by cheers from the keyed up crowd.

Lendl set up double match point with a service winner, then blasted the backhand past the German on the next point.

"It was a hard struggle for both players," Becker said. "I had chances to do something, and I didn't."

Edberg, the second seed, had lost to the 15th-seeded Krajicek in two previous meetings.

He said the experience gained in winning five Grand Slam titles stood him in good stead.

"I had an advantage over him, because I have played enough Slams to know that what it takes to come through."



Ninth seed Ivan Lendl, the Czech-born American, yells as he wins match point during his five-hour and one minute marathon match against Boris Becker of Germany at Flushing Meadow on Tuesday. Lendl won 6-7, 6-2, 6-7, 6-3, 6-4. — AFP photo



Boris Becker of Germany is infuriated by a controversial line-call in his epic fourth round US Open clash against Ivan Lendl on Tuesday. — Star TV photo

relief to get through a tough one.

"It's good to push yourself physically and mentally," he said. "Playing a match like this is like 20 or 30 hours of practice."

EDBERG EXTENDED

Edberg blew a chance to wrap up the match early when he sloppily slapped two volleys into the net at the end of the tie-breaker, and he looked like a loser when he fell behind 1-3 in the fifth set.

"To be down a break in the fifth set, it was not good news," Edberg said. "But somehow I managed to get back in the match. I fought the way through."

And he had a little help from Krajicek, who let one ball float by that virtually cost him the match.

Krajicek was serving at 30-40, up a break at 3-2 in the fifth set, when he boomed a serve to Edberg's backhand. Edberg leaped almost horizontally to the court, stretching his racket and body as far as possible, and softly popped a windblown return. Krajicek had come in behind his serve but he had plenty of time to backpedal and put the ball away with an overhead. Instead, thinking it was going long, he let it drift over his head and watched dumbfounded as it landed 6 inches from the corner.

That break-point was all the encouragement Edberg needed. He held at love to go ahead 4-3, and after an exchange of services, Edberg holding off two break points, he watched Krajicek make another crucial mistake — an easy forehand volley into the net at match point.

"This was a match I really wanted because I lost to him twice," said Edberg, who showed more emotion than usual, throwing a towel after losing the second set and punching his fist repeatedly in the fifth set. "I had never beaten Richard. I said to myself before today, I am going to give everything I have."

Chang, the 1989 French Open champion, reached the quarter-finals of the US Open for the first time.

"I was able to play another style other than just at the back," he said. "I was able to attack, I was able to hit a few volleys."

Washington, in his first Grand Slam round of 16, said he could not be dissatisfied with the result.

"I thought I did what I wanted to do," he said. "He just came up with better shots."

Cold keeps Seles from grunting

NEW YORK, Sept 9: After all the carrying on about the grunting Monica Seles does during her matches, consider this ultimate of frontiers, reports AP.

The No 1 seed and defending champion goes into the semifinals of the US Open with — hang on, now — laryngitis.

"I have a problem with my voice," Seles whispered after eliminating Patricia Hy 6-1, 6-2 Tuesday.

"Are you kidding? A silent Seles going to be jokes tomorrow in the papers," she said softly. "But I just got a cold. I think there is a virus going around the locker room. A lot of players have it. The thing is, you come off from practice and you sit in the locker room and you freeze. The locker room is about 60 degrees (15 C). It is freezing in there. Sitting in there for 2-1.2 hours before your match, you are bound to catch something."

Seles has had it for three days and her temperature was just over 100 degrees (38 C) when she turned the heat on Hy.

Capitalising on 36 unforced errors and converting five of six break point opportunities, Seles dispatched her in 55 minutes.

"It was easier than I expected, but ... it could have gone either way," Seles rasped. "I wasn't feeling very well."

Seles knew the danger Hy posed, coming off upsets of two seeded players, Jennifer Capriati and Helena Sukova. "I wanted to keep her as far from me as I could not let her get into the match," Seles said.

"I think in the beginning she was probably a little nervous. She was trying some different tactics against me and I was just responding to them pretty well. I was playing pretty well."

Quietly, too. Seles said the virus made her a little dizzy on the court. Doctors have prescribed antibiotics and she has two days off before she must face Mary Joe Fernandez in the semifinals. "Hopefully, that is going to help me," she said.

Sidek leads in Malaysian Open badminton

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 9: Defending champion Rashid Sidek defeated India's Ajay Kumar to lead the top seeds into the third round of the 180,000 US dollars Malaysian Open badminton championship here Wednesday, reports AFP.

Rashid, Malaysia's number one and seeking a hattrick crown in the five-day meet marred by the absence of notable world class players, bundled out Ajay Kumar 15-5, 15-1.

Danish Olympic bronze medalist Thomas Stuer-Lauridsen, considered the biggest threat to Sidek, outclassed his weak Malaysian opponent Daviny Saha 15-2, 15-5 in their second round encounter.

The match was his first of the tournament as all seeded players skip the first round.

Lauridsen is seeded number two behind Rashid, although he has beaten the Malaysian in all their three previous encounters, including in the quarter-finals at the Barcelona Olympics.

China's top prospect, third seed Wu Wenkai, beat another Malaysian, Azahan Othman, 15-4, 15-12 to cruise into the third round. Indonesians Alan Budi Kusuma and Ardy Wiranata, the Olympic gold and silver medalists, are among the notable absentees, while China's world champion, Zhao Jianhua, is only playing in the mixed doubles.

In the women's section, top seed and Barcelona bronze medalist Huang Hua met little resistance from Malaysia's Kuak Siek Choon, winning 11-1, 11-3.

Biman meet ends

The 15-day annual indoor games of Biman concluded at the Biman press building in the city yesterday, reports BSS.

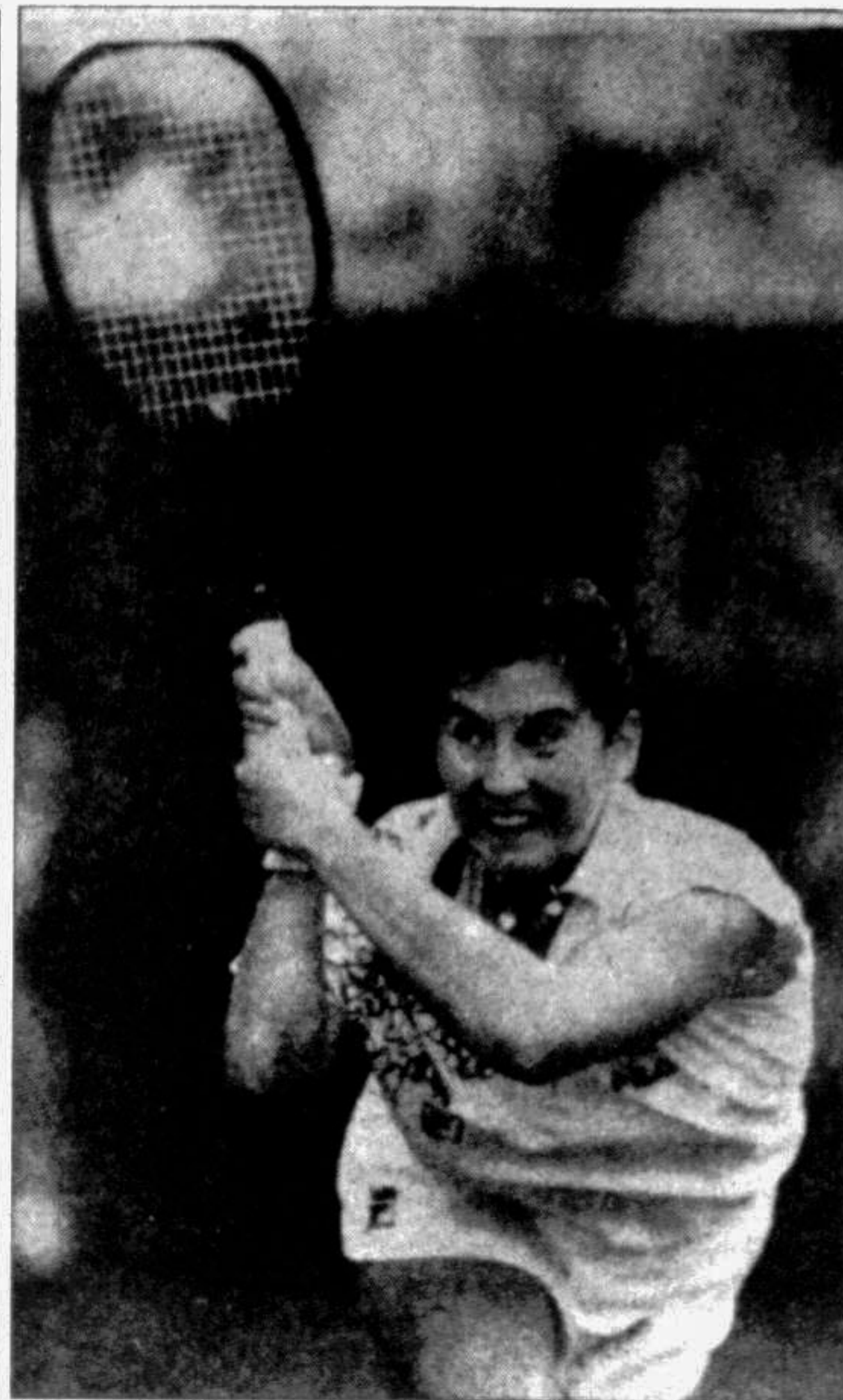
A total of 174 Biman employees and their family members took part in nine events of the games.

State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Abdul Mannan distributed prizes among the winners as the chief guest. Biman Managing Director Abdul Mueed Chowdhury was present on the occasion.

Allahma soccer

Sports Reporter

Golapgarj Sabuj Sangha and Shantir Bazar Jubo Sangha shared two points and six goals in their second-leg match of the third Mustafá Allahma Gold Cup soccer tournament played at the Dhaka Dakshin School Stadium yesterday.



Top-seeded Monica Seles of Yugoslavia makes a double-fisted backhand return in her quarterfinal match against Canadian Patricia Hy at Flushing Meadow, NY on Tuesday. Seles made it to the last four by winning in straight sets. — AFP photo

Sabatini, Hy bid 'bye

NEW YORK, Sept 9: World number one Monica Seles brought high-flying Canadian Patricia Hy back down to earth with a thud on Tuesday as the top-seeded defending champion marched into the semifinal of the US Open championships, report agencies.

Seles, playing with a virus and sore throat, nevertheless needed just 55 minutes to end Hy's upset run 6-1, 6-2, on a hot, sunny day at the National Tennis Centre.

Due to the rash of upsets in the women's draw, Seles will face her first seeded opponent in the semifinals when she takes on seventh-seeded American Mary Joe Fernandez. Fernandez, the Olympic doubles champion, abandoned her usual steady baseline tactics to upset fourth-seeded Argentine Gabriela Sabatini 6-2, 1-6, 6-2.

The Cambodian-born Hy did Seles a huge favour by taking Olympic champion Jennifer Capriati out in a stunning third-round upset.

Capriati had vowed to avenge last year's narrow semifinal defeat to Seles, but thanks to Hy, never got the chance.

But Seles showed no gratitude on Tuesday, punishing the 36th-ranked Canadian with her relentless, powerful two-fisted groundstrokes to take

her place in the final four. Sabatini, the 1990 champion, hardly seemed aware that she was playing in the second week of a Grand Slam as Fernandez rolled out to a 5-0 first set lead.

Sabatini seemed to wake up and took charge in the second set to level the match.

"The first five games I hardly made any mistakes," Fernandez said. "She started playing a little better in the second."

Fernandez, taught a painful lesson she never forgot in an Open loss to Sabatini two years ago, reversed roles Tuesday. Fernandez, seeded No 7, used the same net-rushing, aggressive style that Sabatini suddenly and spectacularly adopted when she won the 1990 Open.

This time it was Fernandez rushing the net, risking winners, forcing the action, and Sabatini staying back. This time when Fernandez took the lead at the critical moment, she kept it, instead of letting it drift away as she did then, 7-5, 5-7, 6-3 after leading the first set 4-1, 40-15.

It took Fernandez months of get over that loss, and it prompted her to change her coach and style. Harold Solomon began tutoring her in 1991, convincing her to get off the baseline and play aggressively at the net, and Fernandez showed just how far she's come against Sabatini.

Veira's prison term halved

BUENOS AIRES, Sept 9: Former Argentine soccer coach Hector Veira, jailed for raping a teenage boy, could be freed shortly, following the Supreme Court's reduction of the charge to attempted rape and halved his six-year prison sentence, reports Reuter.

Local news agencies said on Tuesday that Veira, 48, was overjoyed when his lawyers told him the Supreme Court had overturned an appeals court that had found him guilty in 1990 of rape.

Veira, a former international who coached several local and foreign first division teams, has maintained his innocence.

He was first accused in 1987 of trying to rape the boy, who was 13 at the time. The victim's parents said Veira attacked their son after luring him into his flat promising him an autographed picture.

A local judge first sentenced Veira to four years in jail in 1989 for attempted rape but that same year an appeals court overturned the decision and cleared him of all charges.

But in 1990 the Supreme Court ruled evidence had been overlooked and sent the case to another appeals court, which found him guilty of rape and sentenced him to six years in jail.

Tuesday's Supreme Court ruling said the second appeals court had overlooked the testimony that found no conclusive evidence that intercourse had taken place.

The state news agency Telam said Veira's lawyers will immediately request their client's liberty on bail.

Div II soccer Sports Reporter

Muslim Institute by the odd goal in the three won in the Sonali Second Division football league yesterday at the Dhaka Stadium.

Babu of Muslim scored from a penalty and Palaah doubled the margin for the winners.

Raja of Lalbagh Sporting Club pulled back one from a spot kick.

Earlier in the first match of the day, at the same venue, Prantik Krira Chakra shared points with City Club.

Both teams scored one each in the dull encounter under the blazing sun and sweltering heat.

Fayez Noor scored for Prantik while Rezaur Rahman Sagar drew level for City.

SB Karate results Sports Reporter

Mohammed Basat of Bangladesh Martial Art Association was the first man and Mosammat Jinu of DOHS Club was the first woman to pick gold medals on the first day of the three day-long Sadharan Bima Karate championship that got underway yesterday at the judo room of the National Coaching Centre.

Ninety-five karatekas including 32 women off 56 clubs from all over the country are taking part in this competition which includes 14 weight categories.

In men's open weight division Md Basat of Bangladesh Martial Art Association bagged the gold medal.

Md Harun of Chandpur Usu School took the silver. Md Sobel of Bangladesh Young King Martial Art Centre pocketed the bronze medal.

In women's 56-kg weight category Mosammat Jinu of DOHS Club won the gold.

Afroz Akhtar of Bangladesh Judo and Karate Centre settled for the silver.

Mahmud Khatun Bobby of Young Dragon Karate Club took the bronze.

In women's 50-kg weight class Maroof Akhtar Swarna of Young Martial Fighter Karate Club notched the gold.

Sathi of Young Dragon Martial Art Club took the silver while Tuhin Sultan of Bangladesh Royal Bengal Tiger Karate Club won the bronze medal.

Earlier, State Minister for Youth and Sports Sadek Hossain inaugurated the meet.

Angry fans feel cheated

NEW YORK, Sept 9: Scores of tennis fans became infuriated when US Open officials suddenly switched the eagerly-awaited Lendl-Boris Becker match from the afternoon to the evening session on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

"They cheated me out of money," said Rafael Rovito of New Jersey, one of 100-150 fans who clamoured for satisfaction after being forced to leave the stadium before the 7:30 pm (2330 GMT) start of the Becker and Lendl fourth-round showdown of former champions.

"This is the first and last time I'm coming here," Rovito said. "I'm even returning the shirt I bought because I don't want anybody to know I came here."

Tournament officials delayed the match after the day session, starting at 11 am, featured a nearly 4-1/2-hour match between Stefan Edberg and Richard Krajicek and a two-hour quarter-final between Mary Joe Fernandez and Gabriela Sabatini.

"At 7:30 we will have up-

wards of 20,000 people show up and we can not have a match on Stadium Court that potentially could run two-three hours past 7:30," said tournament director Stephen Devove of the prospect of Becker-Lendl not beginning until nearly 6:00 pm. "There would be a safety problem and a practical problem."

Those concerns did nothing to alleviate angry fans, who paid 27 dollars for a ticket, expecting to see three Stadium Court matches.

"I'm not coming back," said Matthew Saadat of New York. "We are getting two-thirds of the afternoon session, not the full session."

Four Becker fans had arrived from Germany on Monday just to watch their hero play.

"It's really bad and we never want to come back again," said Anna Pozzia.

Though Devove sympathised with the fans, he could offer no assurance it would not happen again.

"The simple thing would be just to schedule to matches on the stadium but that we feel would be short-changing the fans."

Brasilia ATP tour called off

RIO DE JANEIRO, Sept 9: The 240,000 Brasilia ATP tennis tournament, due to be held in the Brazilian capital from September 12 to 20, has been cancelled because of Brazil's political crisis, the organisers said on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

Tawaric Promotions said in a statement that the decision was taken because of "the tense political atmosphere in the city and public demonstrations planned from September 11 onwards".

Brazilian cities have been the scene of demonstrations against the government in the last month.

The demonstrations have been peaceful but the Brasilia tournament is traditionally held at a temporary complex near to the congress building.

"We decided not to run any risks," said a statement issued by Tawaric.

Jaime Oncins and Luiz Mattar of Brazil, Kaime Yzaga of Peru, Andres Gomez of Ecuador and Brayan Shelton of the United States were among the players due to take part.



Action from yesterday's Sadharan Bima karate competition at the NSC gymnasium. — Star photo