

Cricketers' transfer begins today

Sports Reporter

The inter-club transfer of cricket players for 1993-94 season will begin today and go on upto September 30.

For the first five days, players will have two hours — from 5 to 7 pm — to retain or change their respective allegiances. The deadline will be stretched till 8 pm on the last day.

Local players, intending to join the transfer market, will have to spend Taka 300 each, including Taka 200 for token and 100 for clearance certificate.

The registration fee for a new foreign player in the Navana Premier league has been fixed at Taka 1000. The fee is the same for old registrations.

Each Premier team will be able to recruit four foreigners, two of whom can be fielded in a match.

Teams in the Milnars First Division league have the provision of recruiting maximum three with only one allowed per match. The rate of new registrations of foreign players has been fixed at Taka 500. Old registrations looking for new homes will have to pay the same fee.

East End give Farashganj a jolt

Sports Reporter

Promotees East End Club beat fancied Farashganj Sporting Club by a solitary goal in one of the two engagements of the Star First Division football league at the Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Substitute Ujjal scored the match-winning two minutes before the short whistle. East End, who won promotion to Senior Division only this year, took their tally to 21 from 17 matches and they have a match in hand. With this win they have boosted their hopes of completing a twin promotion in a year as they are now in with a realistic chance of filling one of the two berths for next year's Star Premier league.

The defeat should jolt Farashganj a bit, who were earlier appearing coasting towards their goal along with chart-toppers Fakirpool. Farashganj are stuck with 20 points from 17 matches.

Sadharan Bima Krira Sangstha registered a big victory in a fight of no-hoppers enacted at the same venue. The insurance men, who trounced BRTC 4-1, were, however, deadlocked 1-1 in the first half.

BRTC shot into the lead through Faisal in the 39th minute of the match.

Minut restored parity with a goal five minutes later.

Munna added two more for Bima in the 20th and 35th minutes of the second half. Maung completed the tally for the winners six minutes before the final whistle. Bima now have 19 points from 17 matches while BRTC continue to eddy in their previous collection of 13 from 17 matches.

Brazil top FIFA rankings

ATLANTA, Sept 24: Brazil have taken over the top spot in the FIFA rankings of national teams while Germany have dropped from No 1 for the first time since they won the World Cup in July 1990, reports AP.

Germany's ranking was hurt because they played only exhibition games since as champions they got an automatic World Cup berth.

Brazil qualified for the World Cup on Sunday, the only nation to have appeared in all 15 tournaments.

Italy remained second while Norway, a surprising leader in their World Cup group, moved up six spots from their Aug 8 ranking to third. European champions Denmark moved up six spots to fourth and Germany slipped into a tie for fifth with England, who moved up six places.

France, moving up five spots, were seventh, followed by Russia, who dropped a notch to eighth. Ireland dropped three spots to ninth and Switzerland fell seven places to 10th.

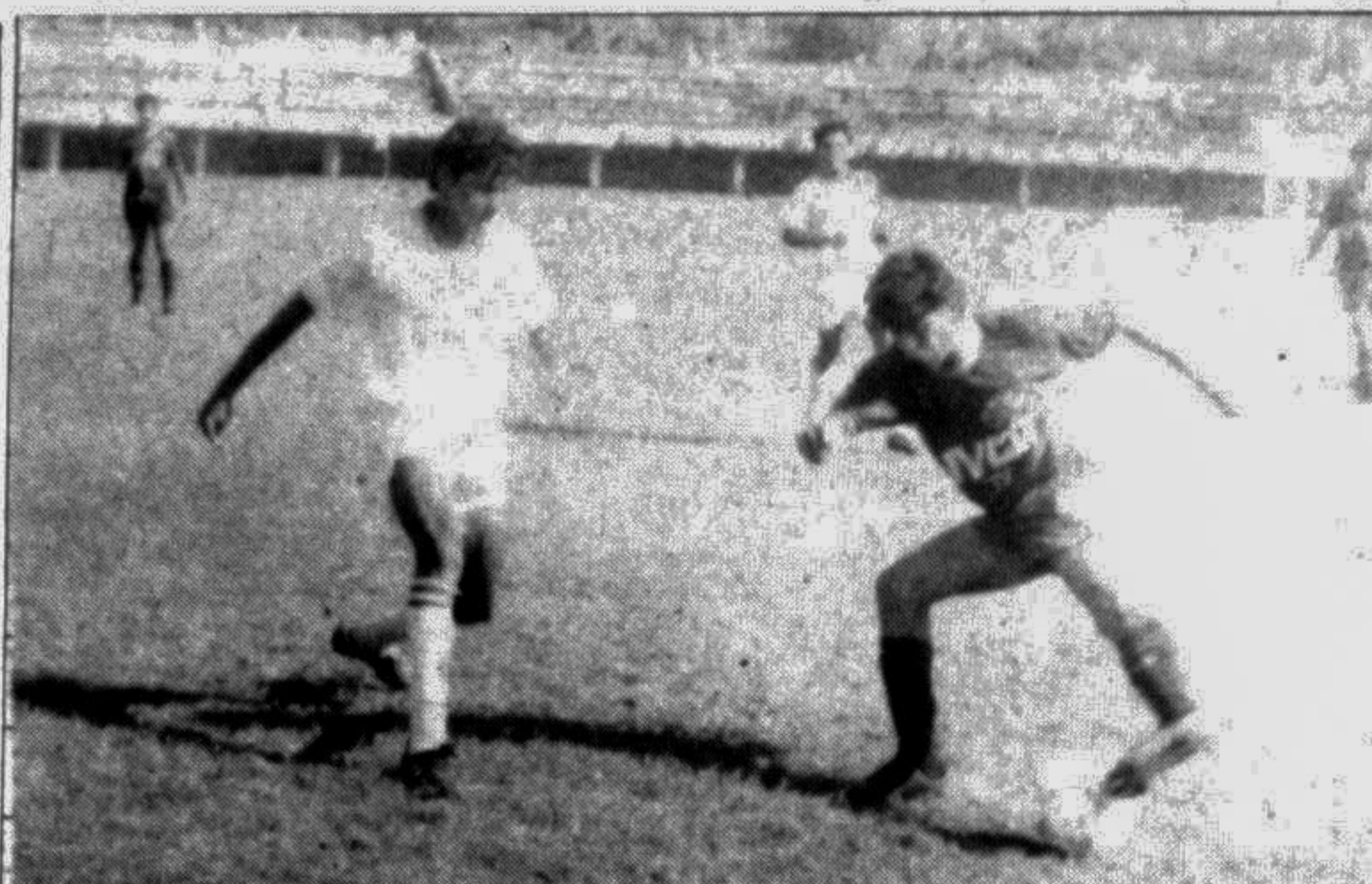
The World Cup host United States were 26th, up two places.

Aussie build-up takes a bump

SEOUL, Sept 24: A last-minute goal by Damian Mori lifted Australia to a one-all draw against South Korea in a tune-up match for his country's preparation for the World Cup soccer, reports AP.

In the first of two warm-up matches at Seoul's Olympic Stadium, South Korea's World Cup squad went ahead 1-0 with a goal by striker Suh Jung-Won 38 minutes into the first half.

Suh, one of the most popular soccer players in South Korea, trapped a centering from the left with his chest, beat an Australian defender and right-footed from close range.



Action from yesterday's Star First Division football league match between Sadharan Bima Krira Sangstha and BRTC at the Hockey Stadium. Bima beat BRTC by four goals to one. — Star photo

Australia one match away

CHANDIGARH, India, Sept 24: Heavily favoured Australia outlasted India Friday to take a commanding 2-0 lead in Davis Cup semifinals, reports AP.

Fielding one of the world's best doubles partnerships on Saturday, the Australians appeared unstoppable on their way to the final against the winner the Sweden-Germany match, also being held this weekend.

Wally Masur, playing almost flawless tennis, had little trouble from Indian Davis Cup veteran Ramesh Krishnan, winning 6-2, 6-0, 6-4. Earlier, Jason Stoltenberg overpowered Leander Paes 6-3, 7-6 (7-5), 6-2.

"Winning six straight sets — I'm very happy," said Australia's non-playing captain Neale Fraser.

Sweating in muggy sunshine, Masur avenged his loss to Krishnan the last time they met in a Davis Cup encounter in 1987.

Krishnan, who is 32 and has played few matches on the ATP circuit this year, showed a brief spark of life in the third set when he won seven out of eight points to break Masur and even the set at 2-2. But Masur broke Krishnan's serve for a second time in the seventh game.

"When you're out there, it

never seems so easy. It wasn't as easy as the score suggested," Masur said.

Krishnan, he said, was "one step slower" than he was six years ago. "He's not playing day in and day out the way he was then."

In the first match, Stoltenberg buried Paes with his snapping backhand service returns and steadier net play.

His only crisis came in the second set. Down 0-3 and facing a pumped up opponent, Stoltenberg saved five break points to hold his serve and stop Paes' steamroller.

Stoltenberg broke Paes in the fifth game, but lost his own serve at love in the sixth game. Then he broke Paes again with a blistering backhand into the corner and a double-fault from Paes.

"I was lucky to get out of that game," Stoltenberg said later. "It was a ridiculous set, really. It wasn't grass court tennis."

Paes agreed the game could have been a turning point. "He kept holding. I was going for a little too much instead of playing the safe shots. That was a big game. It helped him a lot," he said.

Leander displayed masterly chips angling across the net and pinpoint corner shots, but couldn't win the important points. In the second set tiebreak, he missed two volleys.

India had hoped that a first match victory would give it a psychological edge in the semifinal, which it would need to overcome an Australian team ranked far higher.

Stoltenberg said the team was "on a high" after hearing that Sydney had won the bid to host the 2000 Olympics.

But he said it was one of his worst serving games, with only three aces and five double-faults. The Indian-made balls were heavy and bounced lower than other balls, which dragged some of his shots into the net.

The 6,000-seat red-brick stadium was less than full and ringed by security. A small army camp was set up outside the Center Court, and troops with metal detectors screened the crowd.

Chandigarh is the capital of the northern Indian state of Punjab, where Sikh separatists have fought a decade-old terrorist campaign for independence which began to wane last year.

The winner of the five-match series will meet the winner of Sweden and Germany playing this weekend in Borlange, Sweden.

On Saturday, Paes and Krishnan play Todd Woodbridge and Mark Woodford, the reigning Wimbledon champions who are ranked 1 and 2 respectively in doubles in the world rankings.

Close call for Garri Kasparov

LONDON, Sept 24: World chess champion Garri Kasparov confessed that he had escaped from a seemingly lost position on Thursday in the eighth game of his title defence against brilliant play from British challenger Nigel Short, reports Reuters.

The players were in agreement that Short, playing white, missed at least two chances to score his first win of the event.

Kasparov, 30, leads the 24-game series 6-2 after four wins and four draws and needs only a 12-12 tie to retain the crown.

For the fourth time in a row when playing these colours, the opening was the mutually dangerous Majord Variation of the Sicilian Defence.

Kasparov replied to Short's obvious aggression with a provocative stance that forced the challenger to choose between many tempting but risky ways to sacrifice material for a possible mating attack.

Short, 28, set the stage for what experts agreed was one of the most exciting title games in memory by sacrificing two rooks — one of the strongest pieces on the board — in order to smoke out and hunt the champion's king.

Even Kasparov was enthusiastic about the daring and imagination of Short's sacrificial attack.

"It was great, it was absolutely great," Kasparov told a press conference after the game, obviously pleased by the intensity of the game.

"Short found all the right sacrifices and suddenly I understood I was lost. I thought it was going to be an immortal game, with me on the wrong side of the table," Kasparov added.

Kasparov explained that his precarious position on Thursday was due to his vow to deliver fighting and exciting chess. "Anything can happen. I'm not hiding behind a wall. I'm trying to score too," Kasparov said.

Short denied that there was

anything wrong with him for missing a winning continuation, but was further pressed to explain the champion's huge lead.

"I'm playing a very strong opponent. I was a bit unlucky in the first game. I feel I'm playing better. I'm just missing a little something," Short said.

Azeri-born Kasparov, asked about the situation in Russia, said: "I don't think there is a crisis in my country. The country is quiet now and the President did what he had to do. I think we will have elections in December and the remnants of Soviet power will be dissolved."

Game Nine is scheduled for Saturday with Kasparov having the advantage of the white pieces and first move.

The official FIDE World Championship in Amsterdam on Thursday featured a brief draw, with Russian Anatoly Kasparov maintaining his two point lead over Dutchman Jan Timman, now by a score of 6½ to 4½.

Professional Chess Association after being disqualified by the world chess body FIDE over a dispute about title match conditions.

The Times of London newspaper is the sponsor of the breakaway match, having raised a purse of 1.7 million pounds (2.6 million dollars), 62.5 per cent going to the winner.

Short denied that there was

Ranatunga retains captaincy

COLOMBO, Sept 24: Sri Lanka has retained Arjuna Ranatunga as captain for the one-off Test against the West Indies and separate limited over tournaments in Sharjah and India this year, it was announced here Friday, reports AFP.

The Sri Lankan selectors appointed Ranatunga for the Sharjah Champions Trophy from October 28 to November 5 and for the six-nation contest in India from November 7 to November 27, the cricket board said in a brief statement.

The dashing left-hand batsman will also lead Sri Lanka when the West Indians tour the island from November 29 to December 19.

The itinerary for the West Indies tour has not been finalised but it is expected to include one Test and three one-day internationals. This will be the first West Indies tour of Sri Lanka since the island won Test status in 1981.

Ranatunga, 29, keeps the top job despite demoralising defeats to India and South Africa in successive home series from July. However, he has led Sri Lanka to their first wins over England and New Zealand in the past year.

Sri Lanka, the West Indies and Pakistan will play in the Sharjah contest, the three will then join hosts India, South Africa and Zimbabwe for the one-day series organised by the Cricket Association of Bengal.

Austrians go two up against Kiwis

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand, Sept 24: Alex Antonitsch and Horst Skoff scored contrasting singles victories Friday to lift Austria to a 2-0 lead over New Zealand in the Davis Cup qualifying round tennis match at Pioneer park, reports AP.

Antonitsch, ranked 81st in the world, breezed by 37th ranked New Zealander Brett Steven 7-5, 6-4, 6-4.

Skoff had a much tougher task but won a five-set marathon against veteran Kelly Evernden 3-6, 7-6 (7-2), 4-6, 6-4, 6-4.

Skoff is ranked 59th to Evernden's 334th, but the New Zealander put up a tough fight, leading two sets to one before Skoff fought back impressively.

"I was very happy to get through that match," Skoff said. "I expected it to be very hard because Kelly is a very experienced player even though he hasn't played much on the ATP tour lately."

Evernden felt he had control of the match after winning the third set, but came back on to the court cold after the break and served a bad game which gave Skoff an advantage he never relinquished.

One break of serve in each of the final two sets clinched the match for Skoff, who is the Austrian No. 1 in the absence of the unavailable Thomas Muster.

"When you lose in five sets it's always tough," Evernden said.

The New Zealanders now must win Saturday's doubles to keep alive their hopes of regaining a World Group place.

Captain Jeff Simpson confirmed he would retain Steven and Evernden as his doubles pairing, but Australian captain Gunter Bresnik said he was undecided on his combination.

Austria lost to France in their World Group match earlier this year, while New Zealand beat Japan to gain their chance of promotion.

Natore soccer

From Our Correspondent

NATORE, Sept 24: Maradona Sporting Club drew 1-1 with Darbar Krira Chakra in the Natore football super league at the Natore Stadium today.

Dara scored for Maradona while Mamun equalised it for Darbar.

Maradona Sporting Club take on Kheyali Sangha tomorrow.

Sanchez-Vicario in last four



TOKYO, Sept 24: Top-seeded Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario of Spain on Friday won twice and advanced into the semifinals of the Nihirei International ladies tennis championships, reports AP.

Also advancing into the semifinals were third-seeded Kimiko Date of Japan, fourth-seeded Amanda Coetzer of South Africa and eighth-seeded Julie Halard of France.

Sanchez-Vicario, No. 2 in the world, beat American Amy Frazier 6-2, 6-3. Date defeated the 17-year-old American Lindsay Davenport 6-2, 6-4; Coetzer trounced Laura Arraya of Peru 6-4, 6-1 and Halard downed American Marianne Werdel 6-1, 6-3 in the quarterfinals.

Werdel upset second-seeded

Gabriela Sabatini of Argentina 6-3, 3-6, 7-5 in the second round match Thursday.

Sanchez-Vicario said: "My condition is very good. I had nice groundstrokes and played well at the net. I was very aggressive. I am happy with the way I played today."

Firing an ace, sixth-seeded Davenport kept the first game of the first set at love and broke the next game.

But Date, No. 13 in the world and the quarter-finalist in the US Open early September, won the rest of the six games of the first set.

In the second set, Davenport fired her third ace and kept the first game at love. Date broke the fifth and ninth games while Davenport, the 1992 US Open junior singles and doubles champion, broke back the eighth game.



Top seed Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario makes a forehand return during her second round match of the Nihirei tennis championship against Frenchwoman Alexandra Fusail. The world number three Spaniard won 6-1, 6-2. — AFP photo

Edberg eager to bounce back



BORLANGE, Sweden, Sept 24: It's been a bad year for Stefan Edberg. He has only won one ATP tournament — on clay of all surfaces — and failed to win a Grand Slam event for the first time since 1989, reports AP.

And the second-round set-back to Karel Novacek in the U.S. Open dropped him to fifth in the world, matching his lowest ranking in nine years on the pro tennis tour.

A Davis Cup success could save the year.

"It would certainly be nice to play the Davis Cup final in December," the Swedish serve-and-volley specialist says.

"It would make up for a bad year. But we have to win this match first."

It won't be easy. Sweden, winner of the Davis Cup four times and the dominant team of the 1980s, plays Germany on indoor clay in the semifinals at this northern Swedish city this weekend.

Edberg didn't play in the quarterfinals against the Netherlands in July because his wife was expecting the couple's first child. He will share singles duties with Magnus Gustafsson on that Swedish team.

Germany upset the Swedes

on indoor clay in Gothenburg, Sweden, in the 1988 final and then retained the prestigious trophy one year later on carpet at Stuttgart, Germany. They will rely on Michael Stich and March Goellner in singles.

Boris Becker, the German hero in the two previous finals against Sweden, is not playing the Davis Cup this year. But the Germans are probably stronger without him on indoor clay. Becker is an average player on clay and has never won a singles title on the slow stuff.

Stich, the 1991 Wimbledon champion, will have the toughest programme this weekend, playing both singles and teaming with Patrick Kuhrnen in the doubles match.

Stich opens the best-of-5 match series at the 12,000-seat Kupolen arena here Friday against Magnus Gustafsson, one of the best clay court players this season.

Edberg takes on Goellner in the second singles match. The Swedes will have veteran Anders Jarryd, one of the greatest doubles players in history, and Henrik Holm against Stich and Kuhrnen on Saturday.

In the reverse singles on Sunday, Edberg starts against Stich, followed by Gustafsson against Goellner.

Gustafsson beat Goellner

In the 10th game, Davenport let two break points slipped away and she netted Date's cross court shot to wrap up the match that took just one hour.

"She (Davenport) is tall and powerful player so I had expected a tough match. My condition is getting better," said Date.

Davenport said, "I missed a lot. She (Date) was hitting the ball very deep and a lot of my balls were going short so she was on the offence."

Earlier Friday, Sanchez-Vicario beat Alexandra Fusail of France 6-1, 6-2 in the second round match.

The singles winner earns \$75,000 from the total purse of \$375,000.

Spain sail

SEOUL, Sept 24: Spain won the two first-day singles matches Friday to take a 2-0 lead in their final of the Davis Cup tennis qualifying rounds, reports AP.

Spain now need one more win in the remaining three matches — one doubles and two singles — scheduled for Saturday and Sunday to advance to the 16-nation World Group.

Spain's Sergi Bruguera and Carlos Costa defeated South Korea's Chang Ui-Jong and Shin Han-Chul 6-4, 6-4, 6-2 and 5-7, 6-1, 6-2, 6-0, respectively, at Seoul's hardcourt Olympic Court.

South Korea's Chang, ranked 461st in the world, surprised spectators by holding his serve against Bruguera, the world's No. 4 player, until he double-faulted to fall 4-5 in the first set.

The 22-year-old Spaniard, using his powerful serve, then held his serve to win the first set 6-4. After tying at 4-4 in the second set, Chang, under pressure, hit two returns into the net to fall behind.

Bruguera easily won the third set 6-2 by forcing Chang to make errors frequently under pressure. Chang won applause from hometown spectators with occasional superb returns but overall, he lacked concentration.

In the other singles match, Costa, ranked 34th in the world, lost the first set but rallied to take the next three sets in a row to defeat his South Korean opponent, currently ranked 572nd in the world.

USOC immensely delighted



COLORADO SPRINGS, Colorado, Sept 24: US Olympic Committee officials and Atlanta Games organisers on Thursday expressed delight at the news that Sydney had won the right to stage the 2000 Olympics, reports Reuters.

This is terrific for Sydney and I know that our athletes are looking forward to going down there," said USOC spokesman Mike Moran.

"It's wonderful that the Games are going back down there for the first time since 1956," he said, referring to the 1956 Melbourne Games.

Moran said there was "chaos" at the US Olympic Committee Recreational Centre when the vote was announced on television.

A group of visiting women weightlifters from Australia provided the excitement, cheering wildly when the announcement was made.

Lyn May, a director of communications for the Atlanta Olympic Committee, reacted as if Atlanta had won all over again.

"We're excited," May said.

"This is the same way we felt three years ago. We think they will put on a wonderful Games."

Moran said he was not surprised by the vote for Sydney.

"I just felt that the initial report about the quality of facilities and the overall bid all along would put Sydney in it, pending the last week's emotions," he said.

Moran said the vote brought back memories of 1990 when Atlanta was chosen for the 1996 Games over the emotional favourite, Athens, Greece.

"They (the IOC) ignored the emotions and went with the city that had the best infrastructure and facilities just like they did with Atlanta," Moran said.

He called the vote "A tribute to the IOC."

"I think more and more it recognises the importance of the infrastructure, the facilities and all of that."

"Sydney was no ahead of the Game in terms of the facilities on hand and the facilities planned that they must have impressed a great number of the voters."

Former world cross country champion Lynn Jennings said she greeted the announcement

with "ecstasy and relief."

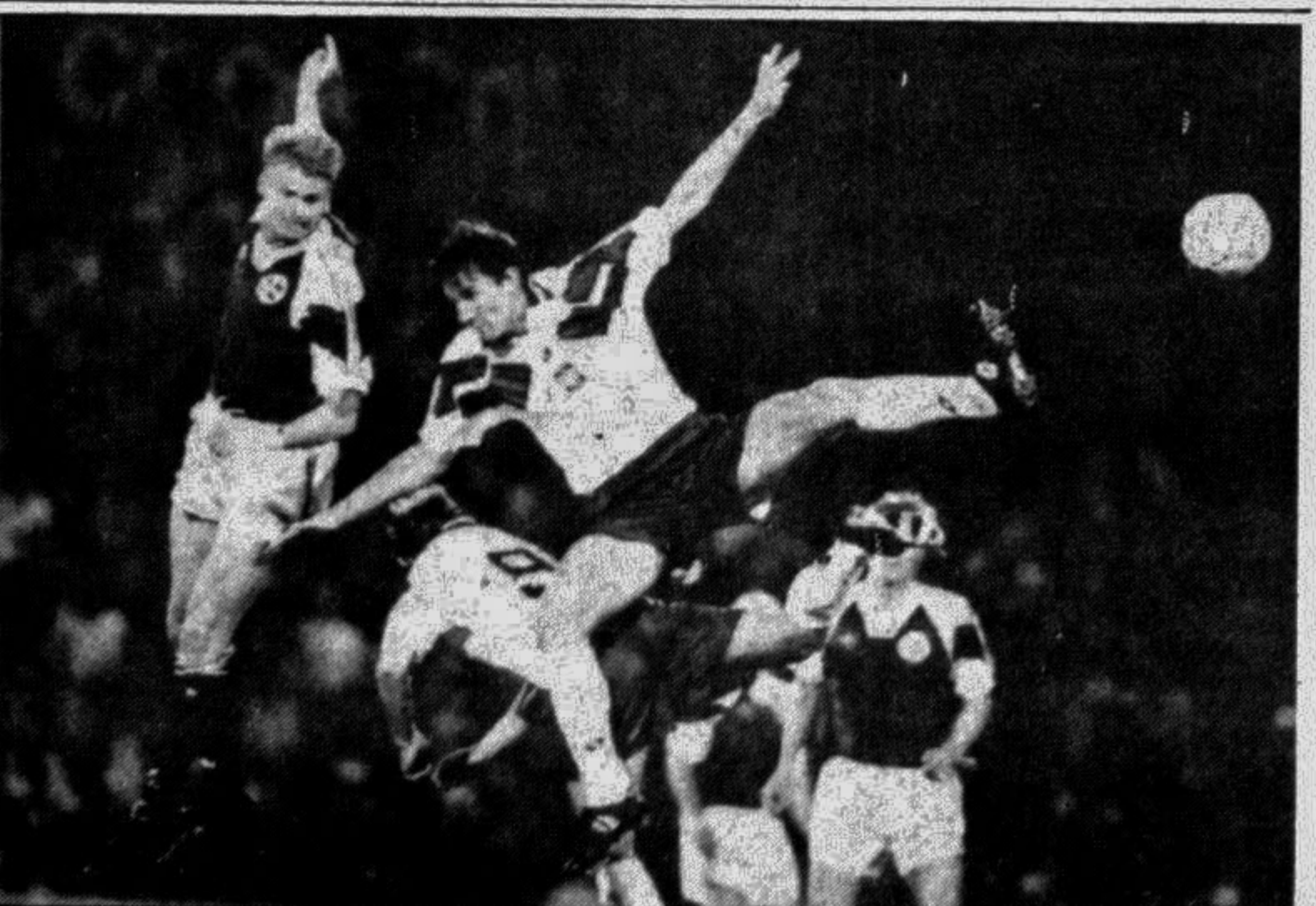
"I'm thrilled it's going to Sydney, and I'm relieved, at least at this point, that Beijing has to wait for their Olympics," Jennings told Reuters from her New Hampshire home.

"I'm really looking forward to going there," Jennings said of Australia's biggest city. "They have a population that adores sports, and I think they will treat an Olympics with care."

Two-time Olympic gold medalist and former 400-metre hurdles world record holder Edwin Moses, a member of the IOC Athletes Advisory Panel, said he believed the debate over China's human rights policies had little to do with the outcome. He said IOC members judged each city from a sporting point of view when they voted.

It's no news to Turks

ISTANBUL, Sept 24: Turks were not surprised at the outcome of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) vote on the venue for the 2000 Olympics, awarded to Sydney, reports Reuters.



BALLET IN SPACE: Norwegian goal-getter Jostein Flo (R) and a Polish player are locked in an acrobatic aerial duel during their World Cup qualifying match in Oslo on Sept 22. Norway piped Poland 1-0 to brighten their chances of a place in the finals of '94 World Cup. — AFP photo