

It augurs well for Jansher

LONDON, Mar 16: Jansher Khan's chances of winning his third successive British Open title next month have been enhanced by a draw which keeps him clear of the man who has beaten him most often, reports AFP.

The 24-year-old Pakistani is in the opposite half from the unpredictably brilliant Australian Rodney Martin who in the past has beaten Jansher to win the World, US and Australian Open titles.

Jansher is desperate to win the British Open again, for though he will be attempting to equal the record of six World Open titles in Barcelona this year, it was when he won the Wembley event for the first time in 1992 that he achieved his greatest acclaim.

That was because it kept his country pre-eminent in squash after the semi-retirement of Jahangir Khan, the ten times British Open champion whose legendary status Jansher wants to emulate.

Martin has been bothered by a back injury ever since losing to Jansher in the world team final in Karachi in November, and is reportedly distressed by the separation from his new wife, the former world number two Danielle Gady.

But at his stroke-making best the Brisbane player is close to unstoppable, although a semifinal with his elder brother Brett Martin, the new world number two, may make it difficult for him.

Martin junior also has a possible last eight with the new sensation, Peter Nicol of Scotland, who beat Brett Martin last week and Jansher three weeks ago.

Jansher's projected semifinal is against the Englishman Peter Marshall, who gave him a hard match in the Portuguese Open final in Vale Lobo on Saturday.

However, although the double-handed 22-year-old has done well against Jansher in the super series final in Zurich in December and the World Open semifinal in Karachi in November as well, he has never beaten the man from Peshawar nicknamed 'Mr Motion'.

Kusuma survives Danish scare

BIRMINGHAM, England, Mar 16: Olympic badminton champion Allan Budi Kusuma recovered from a shaky start to claim his second round place at the All England Championships on Wednesday, reports Reuters.

The Indonesian trailed little-known Dane Thomas Madsen 8-1 before gradually restoring order and proceeding to a 35-minute 15-11, 15-3 victory.

But left-hander Madsen could take some pride from a game performance against one of the sport's most experienced campaigners.

In the absence of world champion Joko Suprianto, compatriot Kusuma has bright prospects of winning the prestigious all England crown for the first time.

Many observers feel a seeding of joint fifth does Kusuma less than justice.

In other first round action, veteran Malaysian Foo Kok Meong, beaten finalist in 1991, cruised past Russian Sergei Melnikov 15-3, 15-4 in just 22 minutes.

ROK counts on DPRK for joint World Cup bid

SEOUL, Mar 16: South Korea will accelerate its bid to co-host the 2002 World Cup soccer tournament along with rival North Korea, government officials said today, reports AFP.

Seoul's chances to host the Cup will be bolstered if North Korea accepts "our proposal to share the venues," said a spokesman for the Ministry of Culture and Sports.

The ministry's decision to speed up its co-hosting bid came with the resumption of inter-Korean talks Thursday after a four-month break.

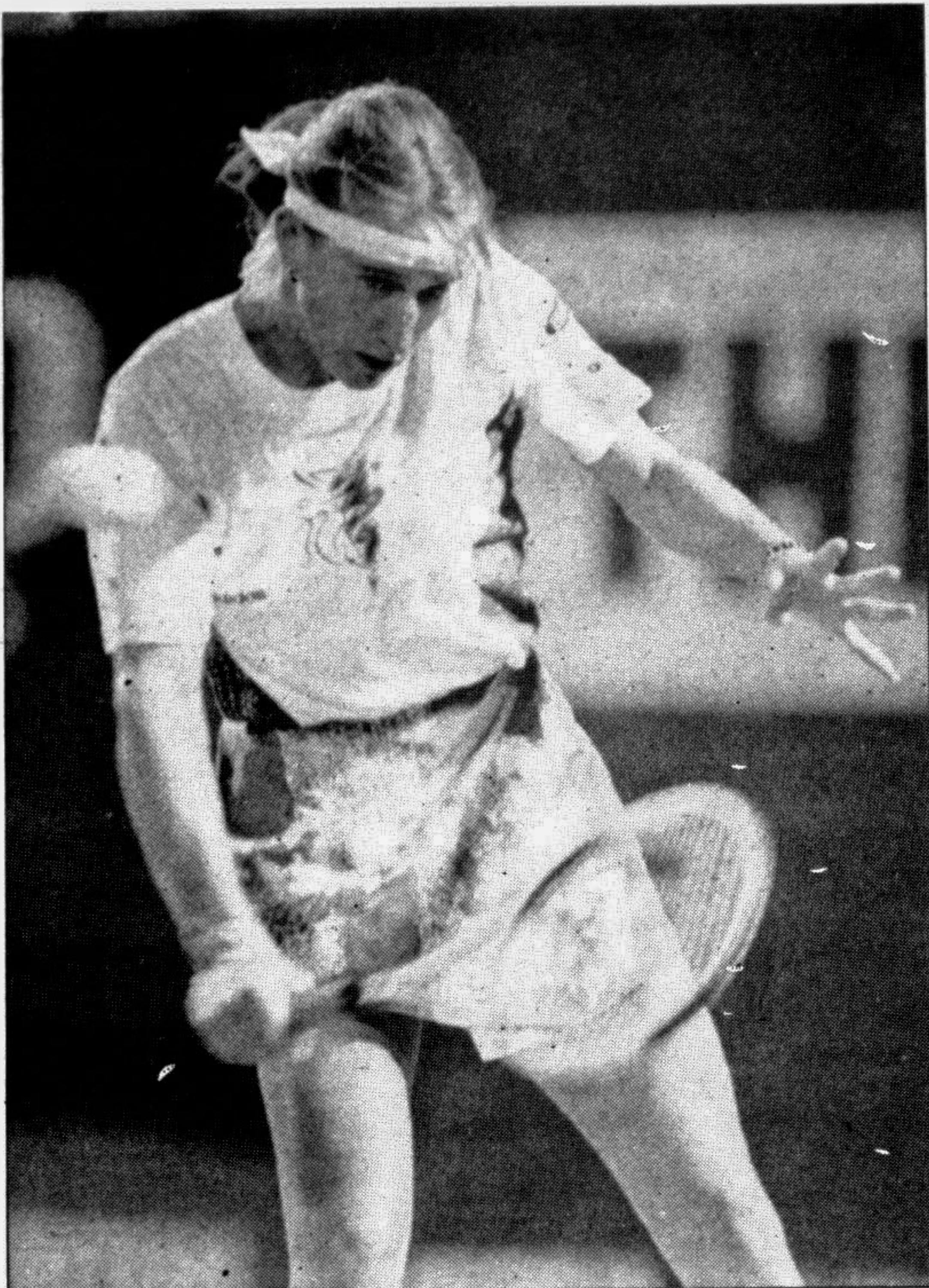
The spokesman said Seoul would also propose the creation of a unified Korean team for this year's Asian Games in Hiroshima, Japan, and other sports exchanges if full-fledged inter-Korean talks begin.

"We will take a cautious approach, however, because inter-Korean relations are always unpredictable," he said.

Seoul has disclosed its intention to co-host the World Cup with Pyongyang, but has yet to make a formal proposal because of tensions over the north's secret nuclear programme.

South Korea launched its drive to host the world's biggest single sports event in February by forming a preparatory committee.

Sports officials said they would seek help from international sports organisations such as FIFA, soccer's world governing body, and the International Olympic Committee.



Steffi Graf of Germany returns a backhand to Kimiko Date of Japan during their Lipton Championship quarter-final match on March 16. Top seed Graf won the match in straight sets 6-1, 6-1. —AFP photo

Graf unscathed, unruffled

KEY BISCAYNE, Fla, Mar 16: Upsets eliminated Steffi Graf's three foremost challengers Tuesday at the Lipton Championships, reports AP.

Two-time defending champion Arantxa Sanchez Vicario, Gabriela Sabatini and Jana Novotna — seeded second, third and fourth — all departed in the space of less than three hours.

The quarterfinal results left only longshots to face the top-seeded Graf, who beat No. 5 Kimiko Date 6-1, 6-1.

Graf has won 30 consecutive matches and 53 sets in a row. Her dominance underscores a predictability and lack of depth that have hampered women's tennis in the absence of Monica Seles and Jennifer Capriati.

The wave of upsets provided a rare jolt.

"I hope all of women's tennis gets may be a little bit more recognized," said 17-year-old Californian Lindsay Davenport, who beat Sabatini 6-1, 6-2. "May be some more players will be pushed into the media and the public's knowledge."

The biggest stunner ousted Sanchez Vicario, who squandered five consecutive match points and lost to Brenda Schultz 1-6, 7-6(8-6), 6-3.

"I have the match in my hands," Sanchez Vicario said. "But it went away."

Novotna blew a 4-0 lead in

the second set against Natalia Zvereva, who won 7-6(7-5), 7-6(7-4).

Zvereva will play Schultz in Thursday's semifinals, and Davenport will face Graf.

The men's field wasn't immune to upsets. Unseeded Australian Patrick Rafter beat eight-ranked Michael Chang 6-2, 6-7(2-7), 6-2.

Jim Grabb, ranked No. 185, beat Aaron Krickstein 5-7, 6-4, 7-5. Andre Agassi eliminated Cedric Pioline 6-4, 6-2.

No. 6 Goran Ivanisevic won in singles, then retired from his doubles match when he was hit in the side of the neck by a second serve from partner Marc Rosset. Ivanisevic is expected to play singles Wednesday night against Jim Courier but will be re-evaluated beforehand.

Courier, top-ranked Pete Sampras, Stefan Edberg and Petr Korda all advanced to the quarterfinals with straight-set victories.

Sanchez Vicario nearly was a straight-set winner. She led Schultz 6-1 in their second-set tiebreaker, but the Dutchwoman took the next seven points to force a third set.

Schultz, ranked No. 32, enjoyed her biggest victory. In her diary, she predicted she would beat Sanchez Vicario.

"I wrote down last night 10 times, I am going to beat her. I am better. And I did it," Schultz said.

"I am going to keep writing everything down," Schultz said. "I think that's good for women's tennis."

tres), slammed 10 aces and won 38 points at the net to 10 for Sanchez Vicario.

"She hits the ball very hard, harder than may be any woman," Sanchez Vicario said. "When she puts in her serve, she is really dangerous."

Delighted to provide the tournament with a fresh face, Schultz said her sport needs more excitement.

"When I was young, I always loved to watch Ilie Nastase or Jimmy Connors," she said. "They really made it a show on the court. I think right now that is kind of missing."

While Schultz won a dramatic match, Davenport beat Sabatini in an hour-long mismatch.

"She didn't make any mistakes," said Sabatini, who hasn't won a title in her past 31 tournaments.

At No. 7, Davenport is the highest remaining seed aside from Graf. The 6-foot-2 high school senior avenged a three-set loss to Sabatini in last year's US Open.

"I dictated the points," Davenport said, "and really played pretty awesome to beat her."

Graf is undefeated in five tournaments this year and now has six winning streaks of at least 30 matches in her career. She expressed surprise at Tuesday's upsets but believes there are other ways to stir interest in the sport.

"I'm playing great," she said. "I think that's good for women's tennis."

Real cagers robbed at home

LONDON, Mar 16: Real Madrid crashed 67-71 at home to big Spanish rivals Joventut Badalona on Tuesday as their bid for a final four place in the European clubs' basketball championship fell apart, reports Reuters.

Defeat for Real, following the 88-69 reverse in last week's quarter-final first leg, headed Badalona their slot in next month's semifinals, scheduled for Tel Aviv.

But the three other final four contenders have still to be resolved.

Champions Limoges lost 59-48 at Panathinaikos and face a tough deciding game in Athens on Thursday.

Bologna, first leg winners at Hime, were also beaten in Greece — 89-69 by Olympiakos — and must endure a similar stern task in the deciding.

Barcelona, narrow winners last week against Istanbul, were beaten 73-64 by the Turks on Tuesday, seeking yet another decider, in Istanbul.

Joventut, who will face Barcelona or Istanbul in Tel Aviv, only just scraped into the quarter-finals when they beat Istanbul in their final round-robin match last month.

But they rose splendidly to the occasion against on Tuesday with some sharp shooting and efficient rebound-

ing as Real Madrid were made to suffer.

The game was fraught with tension and both teams committed their share of fouls. Real, who seemed invincible earlier in the season, were off-target too often.

A 16-points burst early in the second half gave the visitors the edge and although Jose Biriukov fought hard to bring Real back into the game, the spirit was lacking.

Arvidas Sabonis's distraught face as he protested against his fourth personal foul summed up the home team's distress.

Top scorers for Joventut were Rafael Jofresa with 17 points and Cory Thompson with 14.

In Athens, Nick Gallis, the god of Greek basketball, led

Nicolson dies in car accident

BRISBANE, Mar 16: Jamie Nicolson, one of Australia's most talented young boxers, was one of two people killed Monday in a car accident at Helensvale, south of Brisbane, the Australian National Boxing Federation announced, reports AP.

Nicolson, 22, was a six-time Australian amateur champion and won bronze medals at the 1989 world championships in Moscow

Panathinaikos to victory over titleholders Limoges.

Scoring heavily and passing brilliantly the veteran guard sank 23 points, mostly with solo runs, to the delight of the 5,000 fans at Glyfada Stadium.

Limoges's American guard Michael Young also grabbed 23 points, but was the only man from the French side to make double figures.

In front of 14,000 fans, Olympiakos put on a masterful performance against Bologna, confirming their reputation as favourites to succeed Limoges.

Leading 53-30 at halftime, Olympiakos scored 16 unanswered points in the first 15 minutes of the second half to put the issue beyond doubt.

American forward Roy Tarpley proved his class again, pulling down 13 rebounds and sinking 18 points. Bologna's star guard Predrag Danilovic was confined to 18 points, compared with his European average of 28.

In Istanbul, 10,000 fans cheered Efes Pilsen to their nine-point win over Barcelona.

The Spanish team led 17-9 early on, but Macedonian star Petar Naumoski (23 points) and American Larry Richards (18) lifted the Turks to victory, despite a fine performance by Juan San Epifanio (22).

Chinese natant sets new world mark

MALMO, Sweden, Mar 16: China's Bai Xiyu improved on her own mark to set a new world best of 27.62 seconds in the women's 50-metre backstroke at a World Cup short course meeting on Tuesday, reports Reuters.

Bai improved on the record of 27.64 which she set in Desenzano, Italy last Saturday to win ahead of American Angel Martino, who clocked 28.09 seconds.

In the absence of Russian Alexander Popov, German Dirk Bludau won the men's 100 metres freestyle in 48.91, nearly two seconds outside Popov's world record of 47.12 set in Desenzano last weekend.

Bludau's compatriot Franziska van Almsick won two freestyle events, the women's 50 metres in 25.38 and 200 metres in 1:57.00. Her times were well outside her own European record of 24.75 for the 50 metres and world record of 1:55.84 for the 200 metres.

Against poor opposition, Britain's Martin Harris won the men's 100 metres backstroke event in 54.01 seconds, nearly a second slower than Russian Vladimir Selkov's year-old European record of 53.02.

Rebecca Brown comes of age

BRISBANE, Australia, Mar 16: Teenage Australian Rebecca Brown smashed the women's 200 metres breaststroke world record at the Australian Swimming Championships here Wednesday night by more than half a second, reports AFP.

Sixteen-year-old Brown, from Queensland, was under world record pace at every turn to set a new record of 2min 24.76secs — 0.59 of a second less than American Anita Nall's previous record of 2:25.35, set two years ago.

Brown has been steadily climbing the world rankings and last January here came within 0.05sec and 0.09sec of the world record in the 200m breaststroke heats and final at the Queensland championships.

She is Australia's first female world record holder since Tracey Wickham lowered the 1500m freestyle record in 1979.

Brown is also the first Australian to hold a world record in the 200m women's breaststroke.

Australia's 1500m Olympic champion Kieren Perkins currently holds the world record in the 800m and 1500m men's freestyle.

Nall set the previous 200m breaststroke world record at the US trials for the Barcelona Olympics in March 1992 and was the subsequent bronze medalist at the Olympics.

Powell puts it off

MELBOURNE, Mar 16: Long jump world record holder Mike Powell on Monday announced plans to put back his retirement until after the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games, reports Reuters.

The 30-year-old American, who set his world record leap of 8.95 metres at the 1991 World Championships in Tokyo, had intended to retire in 1997.

But Powell said he would attempt to win gold in Sydney at the age of 36.

Karpov's twilight magic

LINARES, Spain, Mar 16: Anatoly Karpov, ranked second in the world, won the Linares world chess tournament on Monday

unbeaten in 13 rounds and with an exceptional 11 points from nine wins and four draws, reports Reuters.

But his arch rival, fellow Russian Garry Kasparov, who ranks top in ELO points, lost for a second time in the three-week contest, this time to 20-year-old Frenchman Joel Lautier.

Karpov, practically a veteran in the chess world at the age of 42, took his final point from Alexander Beliavsky of the Ukraine to emerge with nine, wins and four draws.

Playing white, he opted for the Catalan opening favoured by the Russian emigre and chess expert Xavier Tartakover, who lived in Catalonia, between the World Wars.

Winning 11 points out of a possible 13 is practically unheard of in a tournament with so many heavyweight players.

"It (11 points) would be an exceptional performance for a tournament of this level," said a French chess fan watching the game. "Eight and a half points are enough to win."

Eleven would be really something."

Beliavsky, a late replacement for Briton Michael Adams in the tournament, gave Karpov an easy ride.

"Beliavsky played very badly," said fellow contestant, Ukrainian Vassily Ivanchuk.

Kasparov, who was defeated by his former pupil, 18-year-old Vladimir Kramnik, last Wednesday, won the Linares tournament with 10 points in



ANATOLY KARPOV

1993 and 1992 but was on poor form on Monday and finished second with 8.5.

"He started well with an Italian Open, but then things got complicated," said a Spanish chess journalist in the

audience.

"He has an explosive character and lost his cool," Kasparov was visibly annoyed by noise from TV cameras and marched abruptly out of the room when his defeat became clear.

"I don't know what he was doing today. He just burnt all his bridges," Indian player Viswanathan Anand said of Kasparov's game.

Anand, ranked third in the world after the two Russians, drew against Karpov but lost to Kasparov and on the last day fell to Latvian Alexi Shirov to finish with six points.

"I was disappointed not to win today," he told Reuters. "It's not been a very good tournament for me."

Shirov was classed third after Kasparov but equalled his 8.5 point total.

The Linares tournament, held in a modest three star hotel in the Andalusian town of the same name, has achieved category 18 status, the highest in the world chess circuit and this year's 14 contestants have an average ELO ranking of 2,685 points. Karpov earns just over the one million pesetas gross (7,000 dollars) for his three week effort. Total prize money amounts to 5.3 million pesetas (38,000 dollars).

Andretti to bow out in style

SURFERS PARADISE, Australia, Mar 16: Mario Andretti aims to be as competitive as ever when he starts his 36th and final season in auto racing at the Australian IndyCar Grand Prix, reports AP.

Andretti will bow out of driving at the end of the 1994 PPG Cup series, but said Wednesday that he will be a factor in his 12th season as a driver for the Newman-Haas team.

"I'll be more motivated to do well. It's my last chance," Andretti said. "The icing on the cake would be to win one or two more races."

The Italian-born Andretti, 54, has 52 IndyCars victories to his credit and finished sixth in last year's PPG Cup standings. His farewell season — his 31st in IndyCars — has been dubbed "Arrivederci Mario."

Andretti is the only driver to win IndyCar events in four different decades and is a former Formula One and four-time IndyCar series champion.

He said he hoped to finish his career "being competitive, being a factor and coming down with some podium finishes," but he isn't looking too far ahead.

"I'll be taking it a day at a time and making the current event the most important event," he said. "I love what I'm doing, but realistically you can't go on for ever."

Andretti said he has been delighted with his 1994 car's performance during testing.

"Everything is pretty much on schedule," he said. "Everywhere we've gone we've gone quicker than last year."

IndyCar veterans Al Unser Jr. and Bobby Rahal will be among the seasoned campaigners gunning for Andretti's teammate Nigel Mansell in Sunday's season-opening race.

Englishman Mansell, the 1992 world Formula One champion, upstaged the Americans by winning the PPG Cup series in his debut year as an IndyCar driver.

"Mansell is the past champion. He's wearing the No. 1 on his car so he's definitely the hunted," said Unser, who will link with the Penske Racing team this year.

"It's a big jungle out there — and it's mean, too," Rahal, a three-time PPG Series winner, said he expected Mansell would find things tougher in his second year of IndyCar racing.

"He's not God by any means," Rahal said. "He just did a good job, and you can't take that away from him."

Mansell made a spectacular debut last year. His victory on the Surfers Paradise street

circuit was one of his five race wins.

He goes into 1994 with a new Lola chassis and a new generation Ford-Cosworth V-8 engine, as well as considerably more experience racing on North American tracks.

That said, both Rahal and Unser believe the 16-race 1994 series will be closer than ever.

"It will be extremely competitive this year. There are going to be a lot of fireworks," Rahal said.

"At least 12-14 cars in this series can run up front and there are a lot more people to consider than just Nigel Mansell. This will be perhaps the toughest season ever."

Qualifying for the Australian IndyCar Grand Prix starts Friday. Sunday's race will be over 181.675 miles (290.68 kilometers) — 65 laps on the 2.975-mile (4.76-kilometre) street circuit.

Qiaobo feels it's all over

BEIJING, Mar 16: Chinese speedskater Ye Qiaobo, who won a bronze medal at this year's Olympics, said Wednesday that extensive knee surgery has ended her career, reports AP.

Speaking on arrival in Beijing, a tearful Ye said, "I'm very happy to be back because this is the final trip of my athletic career."

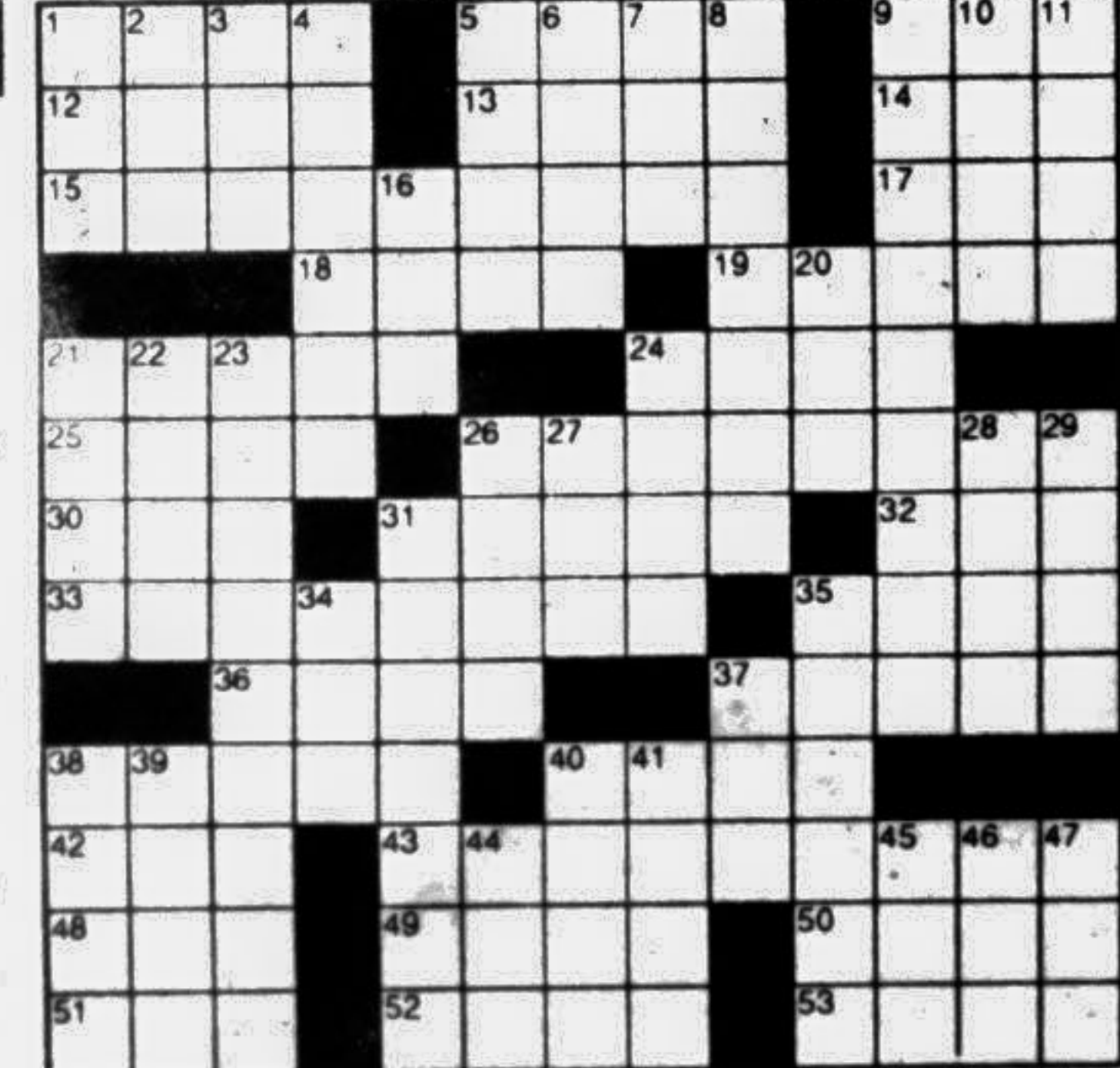
After competing in the Winter Games at Lillehammer, Ye underwent a three-hour knee operation in Germany. The nationally televised evening news said Ye, who was shown in a wheelchair, would need a long period of bed rest and faces at least one more operation.

Ye, 29, won her nation's first Winter Olympics medal ever in 1992, when she captured silver medals in the women's 500 and 1,000-metre races.

This year, she won a bronze in the 1,000.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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35 Metric weight	61 Impression	28 Enter-tainer	46 Raring to go
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CRYPTOQUIP

L W H H Z Q Z H K Z W H
O B S N H X H J S K O H S N H X
A K X J X K K Z S N H X B Z Q
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN I LOST MONEY IN TWO SODA MACHINES TODAY, WAS THAT A COIN-INCIDENCE?

Today's Cryptoquip clue: O equals G

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.