

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 Opens.

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 Brady.

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 Budhi Kusuma recovered from a shaky start to claim his second round place at the All England Championships on Wednesday, reports Reuter.

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 seedling of joint fifth does Kusuma less 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.

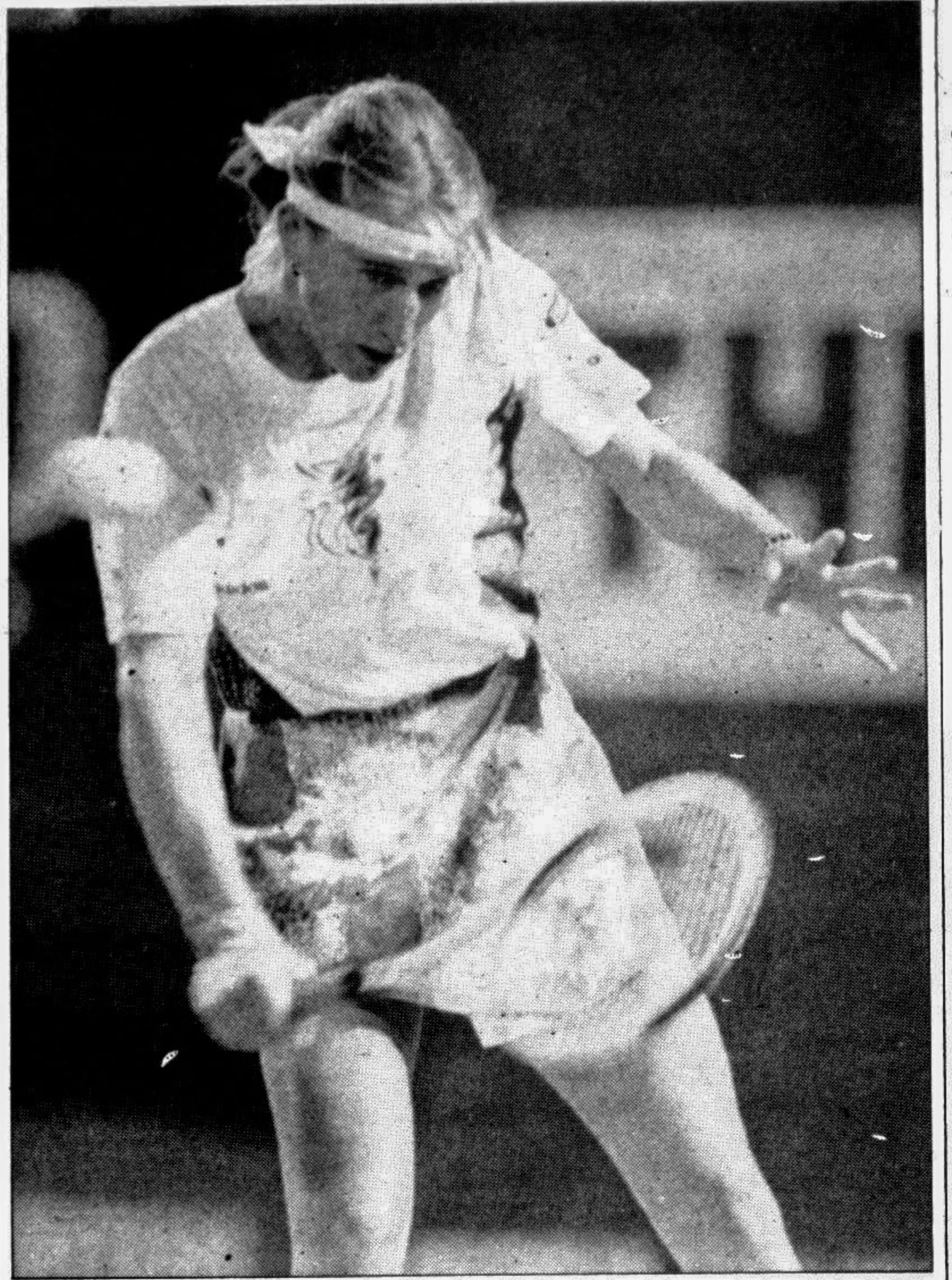
The spokesman said Seoul would also propose the creation of a unified Korean team for this year's Asian Games in Hiroshima, Japan, and other sports exchanges if full-fledged inter-Korean talks begin.

'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 underscoring 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,' Schultz said.

'I'm going to keep writing everything down,' Schultz, 6-foot-2 (1.88-m-

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

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 second-ranked Michael Chang 6-2, 6-7(2-7), 6-2.

Jim Grabb, ranked No. 185, beat Aaron Krickstein 5-7, 6-3, 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 quarter finals 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'm playing great,' she said. 'I think that's good for women's tennis.'

Novotna blew a 4-0 lead in

Real cagers robbed at home

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

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 decider.

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

Juventut, who will face Barcelona or Istanbul in Tel Aviv, only just scrapped 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 Juventut were Rafael Jofresa with 17 points and Corny 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 haltime, 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 one-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 Epifano (22).

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

Sport

Chinese natant sets new world mark

MALMO, Sweden, Mar 16: China's Bai Xuyi 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 Reuter.

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 Fransiska van Almstrik 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 24.76sec — 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.

'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.

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.

André 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,' Andre said. 'The icing on the cake would be to win one

Stade to restore Paris' pride

PARIS, Mar 16: A new athletics stadium opening in Paris later this year could stage annual Grand Prix meetings in the French capital from 1995, city officials said on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

The 20,000-capacity Charlety Stadium will host this season's Grand Prix finals on September 3.

Joel Laine, sports director to Paris Mayor Jacques Chirac, said the city also expected to reclaim the annual international athletics meeting it lost to Lille six years ago.

'This meeting, should be repatriated to Paris from July 1995,' he said.

Karpov's twilight magic

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

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.

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

Eleven would be really something.'

'He has an explosive character and lost his cool.'

Karpov 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 Karpov'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