

## Navy-Rifles final on card

Sports Reporter

Holders Bangladesh Navy and Bangladesh Rifles moved into the final of the Pepsi 17th national basketball championship when they surged off a tough resistance from Bangladesh Army and Dhaka respectively at the NSC wooden-floor gymnasium yesterday.

The eight times champions Navy will take on Rifles in the final scheduled for a 5:00 pm, start today.

Navy, a technically superior side, displayed a touch of class in the second half to win the first semifinal 81-56.

Army, opting for man to man marking, contained both physically and tactically superior navymen during the first session, trailing 29-33.

However, things took a dramatic turn after the breather as the Navy cagers came out strong and simply ran all over Army, scoring as many as 48 points against 27 managed by the eventual losers.

In the second semifinal, Dhaka couldn't get over the loss of their key rearguard Dulal, who was penalised for committing five fouls 14 minutes into the second session, and despite producing some gritty performances in the first half had to capitulate by nine points.

Rifles, who had a somewhat squeaky 39-38 lead before the recess by virtue of a last minute three-pointer, rounded off the match 78-69.

Against favourites Bangladesh Navy, Rifles' hopes of winning the final will possibly lie in their driving urge to clinch a trophy they have never been able to lay their hands on before.

## Rochi, Linu Shaon clinch double crowns

PABNA, July 27: Mosaddequl Haq Rochi of Bangladesh Biman and Zobera Rahman Linu of Bangladesh Ansars and Shaon of Madaripur DSA won double crowns in the Meril 19th national table tennis championships that concluded today at the Pabna district gymnasium, reports UNB.

Nine times national champion Rochi retained his men's singles title beating his compatriot Nasimul Hassan Kochi by 3-2 sets.

Rochi also clinched the doubles crown pairing with Rinu of Ansars to defeat Linu (Ansars) and Kislo (Narail) 15-21, 18-21, 21-16, 21-16 and 21-16 points.

Linu later took the women's singles title beating her teammate Julekha Akhter by 3-2 sets. She earlier lifted the women's doubles with the vanquished.

In the boys' singles, Shaon of Madaripur became champion beating Mona of Ansars.

In the boys' doubles, Shaon and Mona of Madaripur outplayed Goutam and Papu of Narail to clinch the top slot.

In the men's doubles, Saadi and Hamlet of Biman became champions, defeating Rochi and Mostafa of Narail by 3-2 sets.

Besides, Bangladesh Biman won the men's team title while Bangladesh Ansars took the women's. Madaripur DSA clinched the boys' team title.

State Minister for Finance Mojibur Rahman was present as chief guest at the closing ceremony of the six-day meet and distributed prizes among the winners.

## Lolling Lalas

PADUA, Italy, July 27: American World Cup star Alexi Lalas arrived in Italy on Tuesday but failed to sign with Padova as expected, a spokesman for the First Division club said, reports Reuter.

The spokesman said Lalas, 24, had promised to sign with the club, newly promoted to Serie A, after meeting club officials, who presented the player to hundreds of screaming fans.

But Lalas first wanted his lawyer in New York to review the faxed copy of the contract. "Lalas promised us he will send back a signed copy of the contract by midnight local time on Wednesday," spokesman Gildo Fattori said. "We don't think Lalas is pulling our leg."

Lalas has also been linked with English Premier League club Coventry and VfL Bochum in Germany.

He is now due to return to the northern Italian city on Monday when, for the second time, he is expected to sign for Padova to become the first American to play in the Italian league.

Lalas left for the United States via Luxembourg on Tuesday, Fattori said.

The transfer of a player who has never played club soccer, has been marred by mystery and Coventry and Bochum may well be wondering if the red-haired goatee-bearded defender will yet return to visit them, or not, in the next few days.

## Senior Division leagues kick off today Onus heavy on champions

Sports Reporter

Smarting under the terrible pressure of their twin debacle, defending champions Mohammedan Sporting Club begin what seems to be a redemption act when the black and whites take on new kids on the block Bangladesh Boys in the inaugural match of this year's Star Premier Division football league at the Dhaka Stadium today.

The match kicks off at 5pm. Mohammedans, who probably have been going through one of the darkest patches of the club annals after successive failures in the DMFA and Federation Cups, will clearly be burdened with the pressure of coming up with some sort of assurance for their fans, who are, if not impatient, definitely disappointed with the club's dismal run in the domestic season so far.

Not only have they failed to make it to the final of any of the two tournaments, Moha-

medans have exposed lack of coordination among the players on the field. The officials are in even more of a wretched situation following the apparently indiscreet buy of four Russian booters, one of whom has already been sent home after faring miserably in the DMFA Cup. They are surely keeping their fingers crossed for some sort of a reprieve.

Bangladesh Boys, champions of last year's Star First Division league, on the other hand, have very little to lose, against and opponent, who are tipped to demolish them. Boys, neighbours of Brothers Union would certainly be happy if they could in some way contain the Mohammedan strikers. A draw for them would be equal to a win while a victory would surely be the sweetest dream of their life.

The second match of the day also a Star premier tie will be played between Arambagh Krira Sangstha and Agrani Bank at the same venue with the match programmed for a 7

pm kick-off. Just a few kilometres away from the Dhaka Stadium, the Star First Division football league will also get underway at the ticketless Mirpur stadium.

Rahmatganj Muslim Friends Society, who once upon a time enjoyed the status of being a member of the ivy league, will start with the hopes of regaining their position at the top flight while last year's Second Division champions Muslim Institute will be keen to improve upon their ascent.

Meanwhile, the rates of ticket have been announced by the league organisers Dhaka Metropolitan Football Association (DMFA) yesterday. Daily ticket for a seat in the gallery will cost Taka 15 and for a VIP seat it will be Taka 25.

Season tickets for Gate 1, 2 and 3B have been fixed at Taka 800, 500 and 400 each for club officials respectively, while for the galleries it would be Taka 500 per head.

## Romanian stars on the move

LONDON, July 27: Troubled English soccer club Tottenham signed Romanian World Cup star Ilie Dumitrescu on Wednesday in a deal worth 2.6 million pounds (dlsr 3.9 million), reports AP.

Tottenham manager Ossie Ardils had originally chased Dumitrescu's Romanian teammate Gheorghe Hagi, but settled for his second choice when Hagi signed with Barcelona last weekend.

several years ago. Tottenham were also heavily fined and banned from this season's F A Cup for making the payments.

Dumitrescu is due to fly to London on Friday where he must go through a medical examination and get a work permit before he can officially pull on a Spurs shirt. AP adds from Barcelona, forward Florin Raducioiu on Wednesday capitalised on his four goals that led Romania into the World Cup quarterfinals, transferring and signing a three-year contract with RCD Espanol of the Spanish First Division.

While World Cup teammate Gheorghe "Gica" Hagi has joined four-time defending Spanish league champion FC Barcelona, Raducioiu signed with Barcelona's "other" squad, which had to battle through the Second Division last season to earn a spot in the top division.

"With the two of us acting off, the cross-town matches in Barcelona are going to be as in-

tense as the ones between Milan and Inter in Italy," Raducioiu, 24, told reporters Tuesday.

Espanol agreed to a 400 million peseta (dlsr 3.1 million) transfer fee to Raducioiu's old club, European Cup champions AC Milan, Espanol spokesman Juan Segura Palomares said.

The club refused to reveal Raducioiu's salary, but the Spanish daily El Pais reported that he would receive 80 mil-

lion pesetas (dlsr 625,000) per season.

Raducioiu made his Romanian league debut at age 15 with Dinamo Bucharest in 1985-86, making the jump to the first team in the 1987-88 season.

Following the 1990 World Cup in Italy, he transferred to the Italian side Bari, then to Verona and Brescia before heading to Milan before last season.

His performance at Milan was hampered by injuries, but he shone at the World Cup and is the top scorer on the national team.

Detari, 31, who has 57 caps, joins Xamas from Genoa, after earlier spells with Eintracht Frankfurt and Olympiakos Piraeus. The transfer fee was not disclosed.

Neuchatel trainer Frenchman Gilbert Gress said Detari had signed just before the transfer deadline, and would be eligible to play when the new season starts today.

Italy lures Miura, the biggest star of Japan's professional soccer league, left Wednesday to try his luck in a more challenging situation — Italy's top division, reports AP.

Miura, who was named the J-League's MVP in 1993 after leading his team to the league's inaugural championship, is under a one-year contract to play for Genoa.

Terms of the contract have not been disclosed. "I think it will be very hard, but I hope to endure and do my best," the 27-year-old forward said at an airport news conference. Miura, whose fame in Japan rivals that of rock stars and TV heartthrobs, was accompanied by his wife, a former fashion model.

Miura will be the first Japanese soccer player to play in the Italian First Division. German soccer fans, however, may remember another Japanese export who made a name for himself there in the 1970s and early 80s — Yasuhiko Okudera.

## Cricketers leave today

Sports Reporter

A 19-member Bangladesh cricket team leaves Dhaka for Kuala Lumpur today to take part in an invitational youth under-19 cricket tournament to be held in Malaysia from July 30 to August 8.

Bangladesh will play their tournament opener against East and Central Africa on the opening day of the seven-nation meet.

Besides Bangladesh, Test playing Sri Lanka, Papua New Guinea, East and Central Africa, Hong Kong, Denmark and hosts Malaysia will fight it out for the championship to be played in round robin league basis.

Naimur Rahman Durjoy of Mohammedan Sporting Club was appointed as skipper of the team and Khaled Masud Pilot his deputy.

### TEAM

Naimur Rahman Durjoy (captain), Khaled Masud Pilot (vice captain), Javed Omar Bellim Golla, Sharfuddinul ibne Shaheed Saikat, Sharful Haq Plabon, Zakaria Intiaz, Mozilul Islam Biplob, Shahar Hossain Biddyt, Sohrab Hossain Opi, Sajal Ahmed Chawdhury, Morshed Ali Khan Sumon, Sayed Rakib Hasan Bappi, Al Amin, Mostadir Litu and Sohel Islam.

Hassibul Hossain Shanta (manager), Enayet Hosain Siraj (assist manager) Osman Khan (coach) and Sallab Hosain Tutul (umpire).

## Anand slips up again

HYDERABAD, India, July 27: Indian Grandmaster Vishwanath Anand let slip a winning advantage and settled for a draw in the second game of the world chess quarter-finals against Gata Kamsky here on Tuesday night, reports AFP.

Stung by the US based Kamsky's brilliant tactical play in the drawn first game on Monday, the highly-rated Anand seized the early advantage and looked headed for a win till a rare error on the 41st move proved costly.

Anand, playing with black pieces, opted for RD6 when he could have played NG5 for a check and cornered Kamsky. The game continued for another 18 moves before both players settled for a draw.

Australian Grandmaster Ian Rogers, an observer for the match, felt knight to G5 was a clear winner.

## Bobby Charlton knighted

LONDON, July 27: Football legend Bobby Charlton was knighted by the Queen at Buckingham Palace on Tuesday, reports AFP.

He insisted that he should be called Sir Bobby rather than the more formal Sir Robert.

The former Manchester United player, now a club director, added: "The Queen was very charming. It was a wonderful day and this is a tremendous honour."

"You can't plan for being honoured and this is for the game of football really."

Sir Bobby, 56, survived the 1958 Munich air disaster in which several of his Manchester United teammates died and his record of 49 goals for England still stands. He was accompanied by his wife, Norma and daughters Suzanne, a BBC TV weather forecaster, and Andrea.

Warwickshire stay on track

LONDON, July 27: Warwickshire stayed on course for an unequalled clean sweep of all four domestic cricket competitions with a crushing eight-wicket win over Somerset in the latest quarter-finals on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

With the Benson and Hedges Cup already won and a six-point lead in the third one-day competition, the Sunday league, plus being in close contention for the county championship, Warwickshire are now quoted at only 3-1 to win all four trophies.

While West Indian Brian Lara undoubtedly gave Warwickshire their early-season impetus he again proved no more than a bit-part performer on Tuesday as has been the case in most matches in the past few weeks.



The players and officials of the 19-member Bangladesh cricket team which leaves Dhaka for Kuala Lumpur today to take part in the seven-nation international youth under-19 cricket tournament scheduled to begin in Malaysia from July 30.

## Lords lenient to Atherton

LONDON, July 27: Lord's top brass are standing by Michael Atherton, despite increasing pressure to resign over the ball tampering affair, reports AFP.

Frank Chamberlain and Ossie Wheatley, two key Test and County Cricket Board figures, joined chairman of selectors Ray Illingworth in voicing support for the beleaguered skipper on Tuesday.

However, former England players Geoffrey Boycott and Jonathan Agnew, along with leading British newspaper the Times, had earlier said Atherton should quit after TV pictures clearly showed him rubbing something into the ball during the first Test match against South Africa.

Even politicians have joined the debate, which has raged ceaselessly since Saturday's incident.

The 26-year-old Test skipper was fined 2,000 pounds by the England management for applying dirt to the ball lying about it to match referee Peter Burge.

Wheatley, who heads the board's cricket committee, said: "If someone does something thoughtless it should not destroy a promising career as this seems to be in danger of doing."

"We have had England captains pushed too far by the media before. I hope that doesn't happen to Michael because he's a fine captain and a fine man."

Wheatley added: "If people look at these pictures carefully there is no way Mike Atherton could have interfered with the nature of the ball."

"He appears to be drying it and that has been tangled in interpretation and with the various explanations given."

Apart from Illingworth, who continues to say the issue is closed, only TCCB chairman Chamberlain has the clout to fire Atherton.

And board chief executive

Alan Smith said: "I have spoken to frank. He believes the matter has been dealt with and will not be using his power of veto."

Agnew, writing in The Daily Express newspaper, believed the skipper's punishment had been insufficient. "Mike Atherton's position as England captain has become untenable," he said.

"Atherton was attempting in my opinion to change the ball in contravention of law 42.5. It is no less a crime because he didn't succeed in altering its state."

Agnew added that it was "unforgivable" that Atherton did not admit what he had

been doing during the match, which South Africa won by 356 runs.

Former England opener Boycott also believes Atherton should go "before his life is ruined."

Boycott, writing in The Sun, said: "Unless Michael packs it in his life will be made hell by the scrutiny."

"He should quit as England captain right now. Instead, he should concentrate on being the best batsman in the side and maybe, consider tackling the job again in five years."

England batting legend Dennis Compton, quoted in the Daily Telegraph, said: "If he knew what he was doing, I'm afraid he deserves to have a

black mark against him.

"We can't have an England captain like that, with this sort of thing going on."

Until Saturday, Atherton, a Cambridge University graduate, had been commonly regarded as the archetypal gentleman cricketer.

Now a leading article in The Times claims his actions have damaged not just the sport, but "a much wider swathe of English society."

The article concludes: "If the captain of England's cricket team fails to uphold the values of his society... he is unworthy of the uncommon honour, which the captaincy represents. He should be replaced."

The intervention of Members of the British Parliament is ominous for Atherton, for the pattern of the controversy has aped many political scandals, where attempts to close rank and sit tight have been undermined by the sheer volume of condemnation.

Tory MP David Wilshire said: "It would seem to me to be the sensible answer to ensure that pockets of cricketers are sewn up."

"But above all I would hope it would occur to the selectors to make an example of him to show they are people who still believe in the spirit of the game and remove him from the captaincy."

There is a widely held view that the absence of a viable replacement Test captain might be enough to save Atherton's job.

Of the current side, only Alec Stewart and Graham Gooch could seriously be considered as contenders.

Stewart, rejected in favour of Atherton last year, has already been tainted by ball-tampering, controversies involving two bowlers at Surrey, the English county he captains.

Gooch, aged 41, resigned as England captain last summer after a long-run of Test defeats, and his reappointment would be widely seen as a step backwards.

## Lendl turns back the clock

TORONTO, July 27: Ivan Lendl, the 12th seed, began his long shot quest for a seventh crown at the 1.72 million dollars Canadian Open tennis tournament with a decisive 6-4, 6-1 first round victory over Luiz Mattar of Brazil on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

In the only other match featuring a seeded player, 15th seeded Richey Reneberg easily defeated fellow American Patrick McEnroe 6-3, 6-1 in the first round.

Jakob Hlasek of Switzerland soiled Canadian Greg Rusedski's chance of moving into the second round by winning a

marathon 6-4, 3-6, 1-6, (11-9) match.

At 34, Lendl is the oldest singles player in the draw. His most recent of 94 career singles titles came at the Tokyo Indoors in October 1993. His latest Canadian Open title, his sixth, was in 1989.

For the first time in a long time, the 30th ranked Lendl says he feels free of the back pain that has plagued him since February. He underwent a medical procedure to alleviate the problem last month.

"It was done with a needle," Lendl reported. "A very long and very painful needle."

Lendl had a slow start against the 46th-ranked Mattar, falling behind 2-0 in the opening set. But he immediately broke even to 2-2, then on a winning backhand at 30-40 in the fifth game took a lead he never surrendered.

In the second set, Matter held serve only in the fifth game and Lendl lost just four points on his serve.

"I still enjoy competing," Lendl said. "I felt a little bit caught by surprise by the cold conditions out there tonight. I had trouble adjusting to that for a while."

The 51st-ranked Hlasek's long tenure in the game helped him conquer the less experienced 57th-ranked Rusedski in a two hour, 11 minute match that was interrupted by a rain delay of about an hour and a half in the middle of the first set.

In the final set tiebreak, Rusedski double faulted on the 19th point, putting Hlasek in position to serve for the match.

"It's better to win a match like that," Hlasek said. "It could have gone either way."

Overall Hlasek had four match points only in the ninth game of the final set and three in the tiebreak. Rusedski had

two match points on Hlasek's serve in the tiebreak.

I can't be disappointed," said Rusedski. "I lost 7-6 in the third 11-9 and I had a lot of chances in the match."

Rusedski actually won more points than Hlasek, 52 per cent as opposed to 48 per cent. But in the end, the Rusedski saved three match points, but lost four.

Two rain delays caused three matches to be postponed. The three highest seeds playing Tuesday, No. 2 Todd Martin and No. 3 Michael Chang of the United States and No. 7 March Rosset of Switzerland will play Wednesday.

In doubles, the Canadian pair of Bobbie Kovacec and Jocelyn Robichaud beat Ian Bale and Wayne Ferreira of South Africa, 4-6, 7-5, 7-6 (7-4) in a match that resumed after it was suspended Monday because of rain.

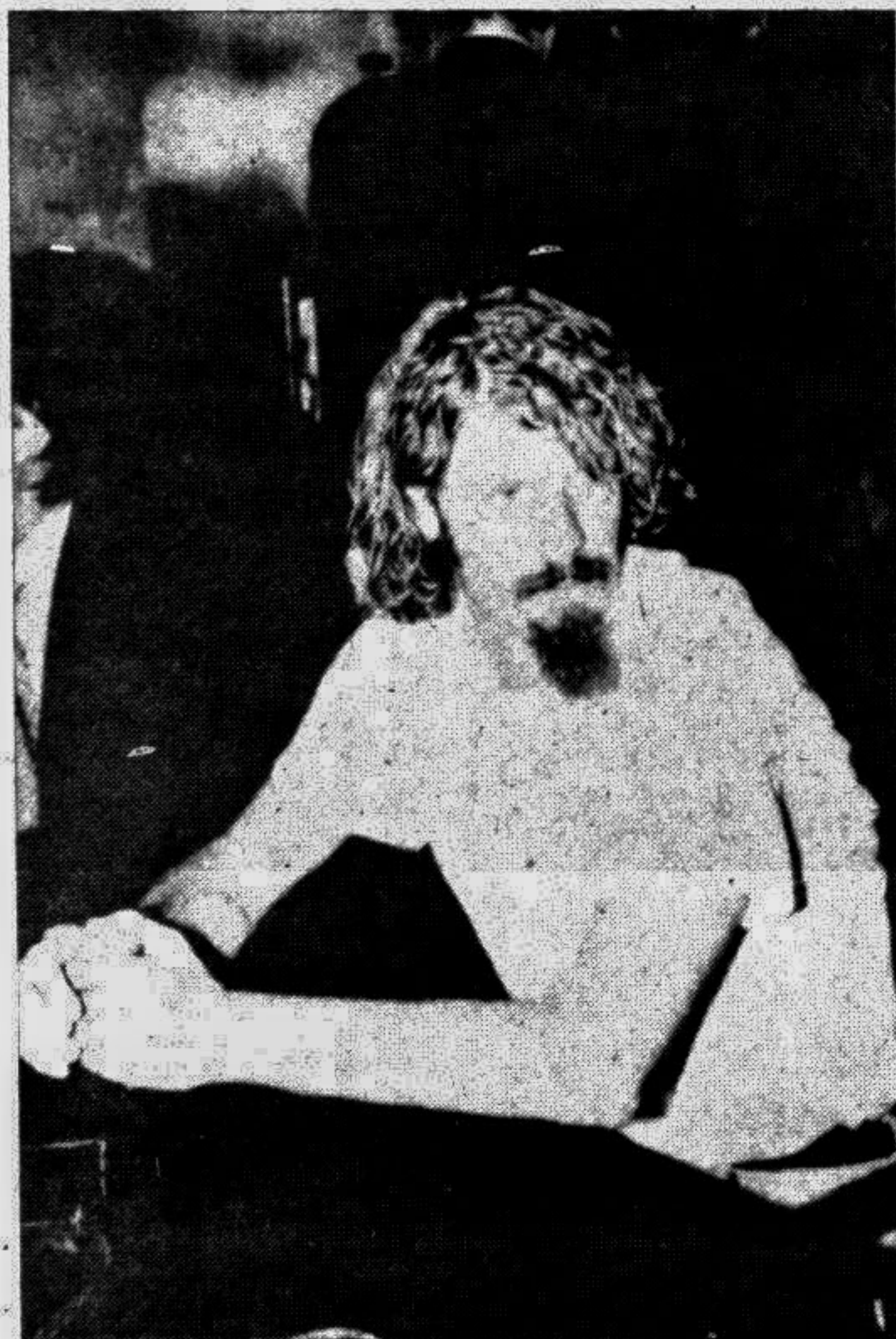
Forget beats Chesnokov

HILVERSUM, Netherlands, July 27: Frenchman Guy Forget ousted sixth-seeded Russian Andrei Chesnokov 2-6, 6-3, 7-5 Tuesday in the dlr 300,000 Hilversum Dutch Open clay court tennis championships, reports AP.

Top seed Alberto Berasategui, ranked 10 in the world, crushed fellow Spaniard Jordi Arrese 6-4, 6-2 in his first-round match.

Spaniard Javier Sanchez, seeded third, beat German Lars Rehmann, in straight sets 6-4, 6-4. Rehmann was a late replacement for the injured Alberto Costa of Spain.

Dutch fourth seed Paul Haarhuis was too strong for his Davis Cup doubles partner Jacco Eltingh, a late wild-card entry, and won in straight sets 7-5, 7-5.



American World Cup star Alexi Lalas waits to sign a contract to play for Italian First Division side Padova at a ceremony in Padova on July 26.