

Sport

Wanderers without a win

Sports Reporter

Dhaka Wanderers Club maintained their dubious status of being the only outfit in the Star First Division football league not to have scored a victory so far when they drew goalless with Sadharan Bima Krira Sangstha at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday.

The day's only senior division encounter was hardly an entertainer with both teams showing somewhat ridiculous conservatism, crowding the midfield more often than not.

With one point from yesterday's outing the Wanderers, who finished among the top four on completion of the first leg engagements, topped their tally to 12 from ten matches while Wanderers, with seven from ten, wander around the deadly relegation zone — just one point clear from bottomers Muslim Institute.

Bangladeshi boxer seeks Canadian asylum

VICTORIA, British Columbia, Sept 16: A Bangladeshi boxer who came here for the Commonwealth Games has sought refugee status in Canada, reports AP.

Muzzammel Haque, who was a member of the Bangladesh contingent, filed an application after the Games seeking refugee status, his lawyer Chris Considine said Thursday.

Considine said Haque's application has been referred to the Convention Refugee Determination Division, a body appointed by the federal immigration minister but independent from the Immigration Department.

Haque, 25, left the Athletes Village at the University of Victoria before the Games closing ceremonies.

He is living in small community northwest of Victoria with boxing trainer Monty Brown and his wife Carol.

Brown was appointed by Games officials after Haque arrived in Victoria for the August 18-28 competition with no trainer.

Jansher in World Open qtrs

BARCELONA, Sept 16: Defending champion Jansher Khan cruised through to the quarter-finals of the World Open squash tournament with a 15-9, 15-8, 15-7 victory over England's Philip Whitlock on Thursday, reports Reuters.

Jansher, aiming to win the World crown for a sixth time and match the record of his illustrious Pakistani compatriot Jahanir Khan, meets another Englishman, Chris Walker in the quarter-finals today.

Sixth-seed Walker beat Zairak Jahan Khan of Pakistan 15-10, 15-7, 10-15, 15-9.

Apart from Jansher, the quarter-finals are in all Australian-British affair.

Fourth-seeded Rodney Eyles of Australia meets compatriot Anthony Hill, while 1991 champion Rodney Martin of Australia, who has been troubled by injuries and marital problems in recent months, blasted his way out of trouble against England's Jason Nicol 5-15, 15-7, 15-13, 14-17, 15-5 to set up a meeting with British champion Peter Marshall.

Martin's brother Brett, the number two seed, beat Danny Meddings of England 15-13, 15-8, 15-13 for a replay of the Hong Kong Open quarter-final that he lost two weeks ago to Scotland's Peter Nicol.

Everton-Muller deal falls through

LONDON, Sept 16: Brazilian striker Muller walked out of Everton on Thursday night, refusing to sign for the English club after a dispute over his pay, reports Reuters.

Everton, who had agreed a 2.5 million pound (3.91 million dollars) fee for the 28-year-old Muller with his club Sao Paulo, said they had failed to reach an agreement over personal terms.

Muller, who flew in to Manchester on Thursday morning after a 16-hour flight, spent seven hours in negotiations with the club but refused to sign after learning the salary offered by Everton was pre-tax.

Everton chairman Peter Johnson, flanked by manager Mike Walker, said: "regrettably we have to advise that the signing of Muller will not now take place. Differences unfortunately arose because of the interpretation of the UK tax regulations."

Johnson said Muller and his advisers thought the gross salary in his contract was in fact the net free.

"In spite of everyone involved attempting to resolve the situation it is quite apparent that there is no ready solution and the player and his advisers will now return to Brazil immediately," added Johnson.

Flying start for Gunners



LONDON, Sept 16: Holders Arsenal began the defence of the European Cup Winners' Cup with a 3-1 win over the Cypriot part-timers of Omonia Nicosia on Thursday thanks to Paul Merson and Ian Wright rediscovering their scoring boots, reports Reuters.

Merson's opening goal after

sheet as the English side, bidding to become the first team to win the Cup Winners' Cup in successive seasons, proved too strong for the hosts.

Omonia may well face a punishment from UEFA after a bottle landed precariously near the playing area as the notoriously volatile home fans vented their wrath on their own team.

Internazionale, the UEFA Cup holders, also started with

minute penalty. The 17 matches played on Thursday brought to a close three successive nights of European club soccer, following the majority of UEFA Cup games played on Tuesday and the opening round of the European Cup Champions' League matches played on Wednesday.

The biggest surprise of the night was in Oslo where Norwegian amateurs Bodo/Blimt, who were in the regionalised Norwegian Second Division just two years ago, defeated Sampdoria of Italy 3-2 in their Cup Winners' Cup match.

Bodo/Blimt, who beat Olimpia Riga of Latvia in the preliminary round, stunned the 1990 winners with a first-minute goal from Tom Kaare Staurvik before going 2-0 up through Bent Inge Johnsen in the 32nd minute.

Sampdoria pulled one back just after half-time through Mauro Bertarelli, but the home side made it 3-1 when Johnsen scored his second and Bodo/Blimt's third before England skipper David Platt headed Sampdoria's second.

The highest scorers of the night were Chelsea, playing in their first European match for 22 years.

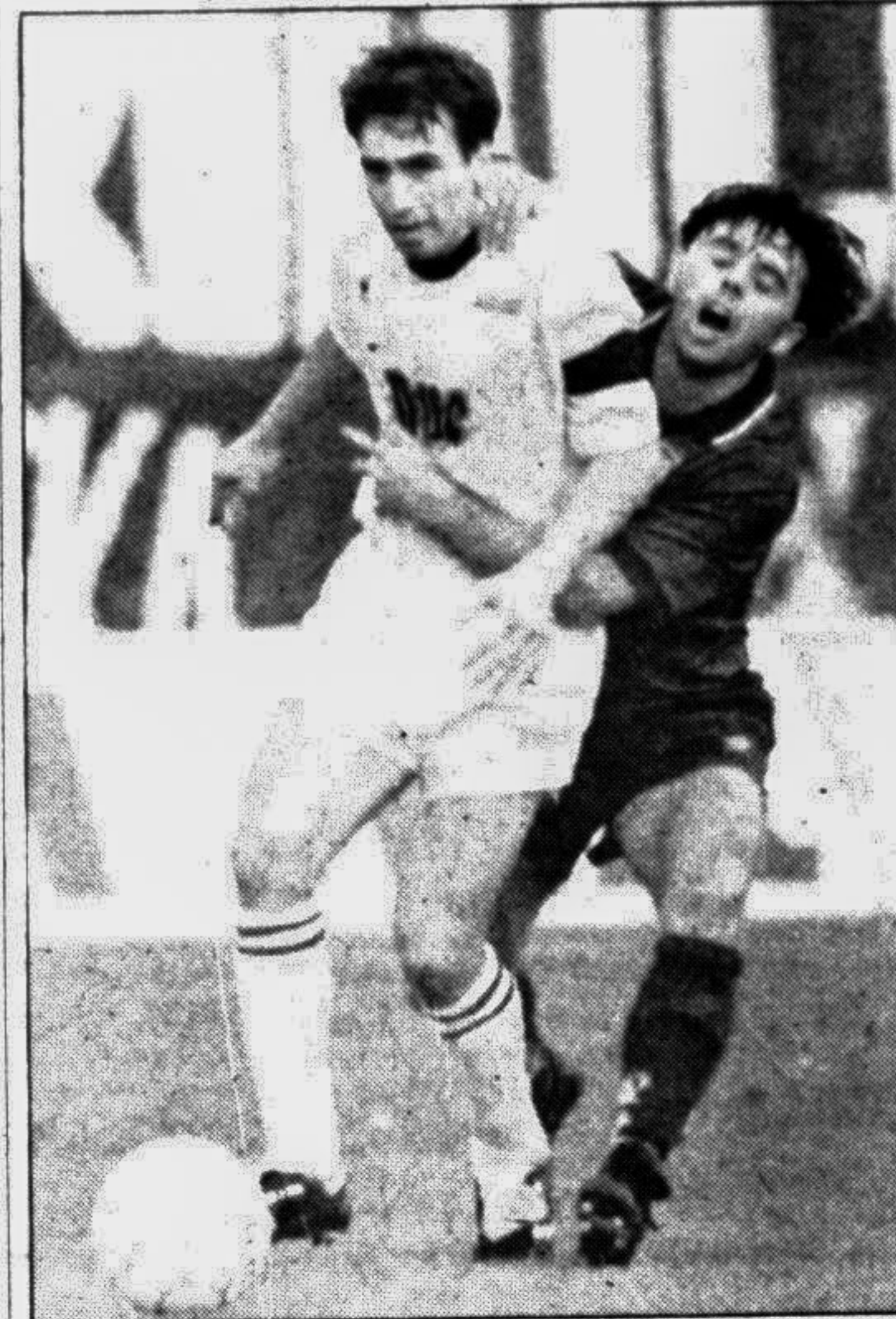
Chelsea, who won the Cup Winners' Cup in 1971, beat Viktoria Zizkov of the Czech Republic 4-2 after racing into a 2-0 lead after only five minutes on a rainy, windswept night in London.

Paul Furlong and Frank Sinclair gave Chelsea their electrifying start before Viktoria hit back with two goals from Jozef Majoros.

The home side re-asserted their authority in the second half with goals from David Rocastle and Dennis Wise.

Brondy of Denmark, who beat Tirana of Albania 3-0, and Grasshoppers of Zurich, who beat Chernomorets Odessa of Ukraine by the same score, were the biggest winners of the night.

But there was no repeat goal feast for Maribor Branik of Slovenia who beat Norma Tallin of Estonia 14-1 on aggregate in the preliminary round. They were held to a 1-1 draw at home by Austria Vienna.



Croatia Zagreb's Igor Panic (R) holds back Auerre captain Corentin Martins (L) during their Cup Winners' Cup match on Sept 15. Zagreb won 3-1. — AFP photo

37 minutes was Arsenal's first in six hours and 51 minutes of competitive soccer after the Gunners had failed to score in their previous four matches.

Merson added another and Wright also got on the score-

win in their quest to retain their trophy, but had a far tougher job beating Aston Villa of England 1-0 at home in Milan. The only goal was scored by Dutch international Dennis Bergkamp from a 75th

Mixed day for French trio

PARIS, Sept 16: Only two matches were completed as rain reduced the day's programme at the Bordeaux passing shot tournament on Thursday, reports AFP.

Frenchman Guy Forget and compatriot Olivier Delatre gave the soaked home fans something to cheer — Forget continuing his impressive return to form by defeating Australia qualifier David Adams 6-3, 6-2, and seventh-seeded Olivier Delatre beating compatriot Thierry Champion 6-1, 3-6, 7-5.

But as rain finally stopped play for the day, third-seeded Cedric Pioline was struggling against Italy's Gianluca Pozzi. He had dropped the first set by tie-break and was facing another tie-break in the second set.

On Wednesday Russian Yevgeny Kafelnikov, one of the season's biggest success stories after his astonishing rise from 104th to 12th in the rankings, clearly had seen enough of rain-swept Bordeaux.

The 20-year-old 6ft 3in player from Sochi looked look-

and anything but happy as he went down 0-6, 1-6 in just 45 minutes to Jeff Tarango of the United States in the second-round of the ATP's 400,000 dollar passing shot event.

By contrast Guy Forget needed just 17 minutes to continue his successful comeback to top flight tennis and complete a 6-3, 6-1 victory over French-based Haitian Ronald Agemor. He had been leading 5-3 in the first set when rain stopped play Tuesday. Forget now faces Australian qualifier David Adams for a place in the quarter-finals.

In Wednesday's other matches, squeezed between renewed rain, big-serving fourth-seeded March Rosset of Switzerland put out home player Gilles Bastie 6-1, 6-2 and will now play another Frenchman, Fabrice Santoro, in the quarter-finals.

Santoro's hopes of continuing in the event, however, will depend on a specialist's advice. After beating Alex Antonitsch of Austria 6-1, 6-7 (5/7), 6-2 he travelled to Paris for treatment to a painful hip.

In the day's only other match Guillaume Raoux won an all-French showdown with

Rodolphe Gilbert 2-6, 6-2, 6-1.

Top-seed and Wimbledon finalist Goran Ivanisevic appeared to have recovered from his first-round fright at the ATP event in Bucharest when he dropped a set to Paolo Cane of Italy, on Wednesday the Croatian was always in charge against Tomas Carbonell of Spain and he scored a non-sense straight-sets 6-4, 6-2 victory.

The day's other winners in Romania were Carol Kucera of Slovakia and Franco Davin of Argentina.

Kucera beat seventh-seeded Czech Ctislav Dosedel 6-3, 6-3 while Davin defeated Dimitri Poljakov of the Ukraine 6-1, 6-1.

The shocks and surprises continued at the ATP's 300,000 dollar Bogota tournament in Colombia.

The top two seeds, Carlos Costa of Spain and Peru's Jaime Yzaga, were sent tumbling in the first round. On Wednesday the third seed, Russian Andrei Chesnokov, also went out. He was beaten in the second round by Sergio Cortes of Chile who scored a 7-5, 6-7 (7/9), 6-2 win.

India in final

COLOMBO, Sept 16: A continued wet spell over the capital forced officials to abandon the one-day cricket match between India and Pakistan on Friday, automatically pushing India into the finals of the Singer World Series, reports AP.

Organisers of the four-nation series were disappointed since it has never rained at this time in the last seven years. But 38 millimetres (1.5 inches) of rain in the last two days turned the pitch soggy and kept the players indoors, weather office and cricket board officials said.

India will now meet Sri Lanka in the finals Saturday at the Sinhalese Sports Club grounds, said Tissa Gunaratne, an official of the cricket board.

India entered the final of the four-nation tournament with three points, one of which was received when Friday's match was called off.

Sri Lanka won all three matches in the round-robin tournament to receive six points. Australia won one match of three, while Pakistan obtained a point from the abandoned game.

The venue of the finals has been changed from the Rana-singhe Premadasa Stadium because the ground is more dry at the Sinhalese Sports Club. The weather department forecast scattered showers Saturday.

POINTS TABLE

Points table (played, won, lost, abandoned, points, run rate):
Sri Lanka.....3-3-0-0-6-4.8
India.....2-1-1-3-4.96
Australia.....3-1-2-0-2-4.11
Pakistan.....2-0-2-1-1-3.61

Wadekar's call for standard ICC rules

COLOMBO, Sept 16: Indian cricket manager Ajit Wadekar on Friday called for standardisation of rules by the International Cricket Council (ICC) for one-day limited over international matches, reports Reuters.

"The rules vary from country to country and it is very difficult to adjust to all kinds of rules and regulations wherever we go," said Wadekar after his team had qualified to meet hosts Sri Lanka in the final of the four-nation tournament.

"One-day cricket has come to stay and I think there should be some uniformity in its rules like in Test matches," he said.

The Indian manager was referring to differences in rules governing fielding restrictions, the number of overs played and also those concerning rain affected matches.

Romario sidelined

BARCELONA, Sept 16: Barcelona's Brazilian centre-forward Romario will be out of action for 10 days after slightly tearing a thigh ligament, club doctor Fernando Banos said Thursday, reports AFP.

But after tests, Banos indicated the injury was "less serious than we feared at first."

Wenger fired

MONACO, Sept 16: Arsene Wenger, who guided AS Monaco to the semifinals of the European Champions Cup last season, was fired Friday after coaching the French League club since 1987, reports AP.

The club was reeling in 17th place in the 20-team league after losing five of its first eight matches this season.



Brazilian soccer legend Pele gazes at the lifetime achievement award he received from the Sportsmen's Hall of Fame in Budapest on Sept 15. Pele will play in an exhibition match against a senior Hungarian team.

Spain's annus mirabilis

MADRID, Sept 16: Angel Gomez is a Madrid accountant who's never been a big flag-waver — but a remarkable string of Spanish sporting triumphs is making him strut like a bullfighter, reports AP.

"I feel much prouder to be a Spaniard now that we are winning in all of these sports — before we were always finishing near the end," Gomez said.

"I don't care that much for (Arantzazu) Sanchez-Vicario, but you have to give her due for winning again."

Sanchez-Vicario's victory at the US Open last weekend was her second major title of the year, one of many achievements that prompted the daily "El Pais" this week to dub 1994 as Spain's "Golden Year of Sports."

Put simply, sports are reigning in Spain.



SANCHEZ VICARIO

Spaniards are winning like never before in tennis, cycling, athletics and golf.

Sanchez-Vicario's victory at Flushing Meadows gave Spain its fourth Grand Slam title this year. Sergi Bruguera and Sanchez-Vicario swept the singles titles at the French Open, and Conchita Martinez won Wimbledon.

Miguel Indurain captured his fourth-straight Tour de France in July, and earlier this month set the world one-hour record. This year's US Masters golf title went to Jose Maria Olazabal.

There's more. The Spanish national team reached the World Cup quarterfinals in July, losing to eventual runners-up Italy despite out-playing the highly touted Azzurri.

Never regarded as a distance-running power, Spain swept the middle-distances through the marathon at the European Athletics Championships in August and claims the Olympic 1,500-metre champion in Fermin Cacho.

In addition, Spain's professional soccer and basketball leagues are arguably Europe's best. Ten of the top 30 scorers from the World Cup play in Spain — and the European Cup basketball champion is Spanish club Barcelona.

It's a remarkable change in a country prone to biting self-criticism — usually with a cigarette in one hand and a drink in the other.

"These victories have helped to reduce the sense of

inferiority we have felt relative to other Europeans," said Gomez, a 26-year-old accountant. "We see now we're as good as anybody else better than many, which is how it always should have been."

The watershed was the record 22 medals, including 13 gold, Spain won at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics. Spanish officials are now in a quandary as the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta approach.

"It's satisfying we're winning all this attention and respect, but it increases expectations all around, including what we'll do in Atlanta," said Rafael Cortes Elvira, the government's highest ranking sports official.

No country after holding the Games has matched its medal total four years later, attributable to the "home field" advantage which spurs athletes on and increases the money raised to support them.

"I think it's almost impossible that Spain will win more," said Cortes Elvira, president of the Consejo Superior de Deportes.

"What we don't want to happen is to slip back to only the four we won in Seoul."

That's unlikely. In 1990, two years prior to Barcelona, Spanish athletes won 224 medals in world-level competitions in Olympic sports. They've already won 257 this year and seem sure to pass 300.

"We were at a very low point eight years ago," Cortes Elvira added. "We knew where we were and we knew we had to do something for '92."

Spain had been an embarrassing sporting lightweight alongside "countries its size." During the 36 year Franco dictatorship — which ended with his death in 1975 — about the only bragging point was the

Pireaus coach resigns

PIREAEUS, Greece, Sept 16: Nikos Alefantos has resigned as coach of Olympiakos of Pireaus following a 2-1 UEFA Cup loss to Olympique Marseille, the club announced Friday, reports AP.

He was replaced on an interim basis by Nikos Yiotis, a former Olympiakos player.

A brief announcement said Alefantos' cooperation with the club had ceased. The club said both had mutually agreed to terminate their relationship.

Alefantos' resignation came after Tuesday's loss at home in a first-round, first leg match in the annual pan-European Cypriot tournament.

Alefantos was named coach by club president Socrates Kokkalis on Jan 27.

Olympiakos are 2-0-0 in the Greek first division this season and in third place behind PAOK and Panathinaikos. They finished third last season, 11 points behind AEK of Athens.

Real Madrid soccer club, which Franco used for propaganda purposes to support his rule.

"What this new sports power reflects in Spain is a transformation of the society," said Cortes Elvira, who holds a doctorate in chemistry. "Sports is not isolated from society. The richest countries, the ones who are most socially developed, are the countries that show the best results in sports. Spain has simply moved up. Not many years ago we hardly had telephones, highways."

Young Spaniards are now noticeably taller, attributed to an improved diet over the last two decades. Several years ago standard bed lengths were increased about 10 centimetres (4 inches) to accommodate the growing population.



FERMIN CACHO

In the years leading up to the Barcelona Games, 20 businesses contributed \$15 million annually to subsidize top-flight Spanish athletes. The figure this year is down to \$11 million from 15 businesses — a shortfall that's being made up by the government.

The government has also spent heavily on several new high-tech training centers and has brought in foreign coaches in many sports.

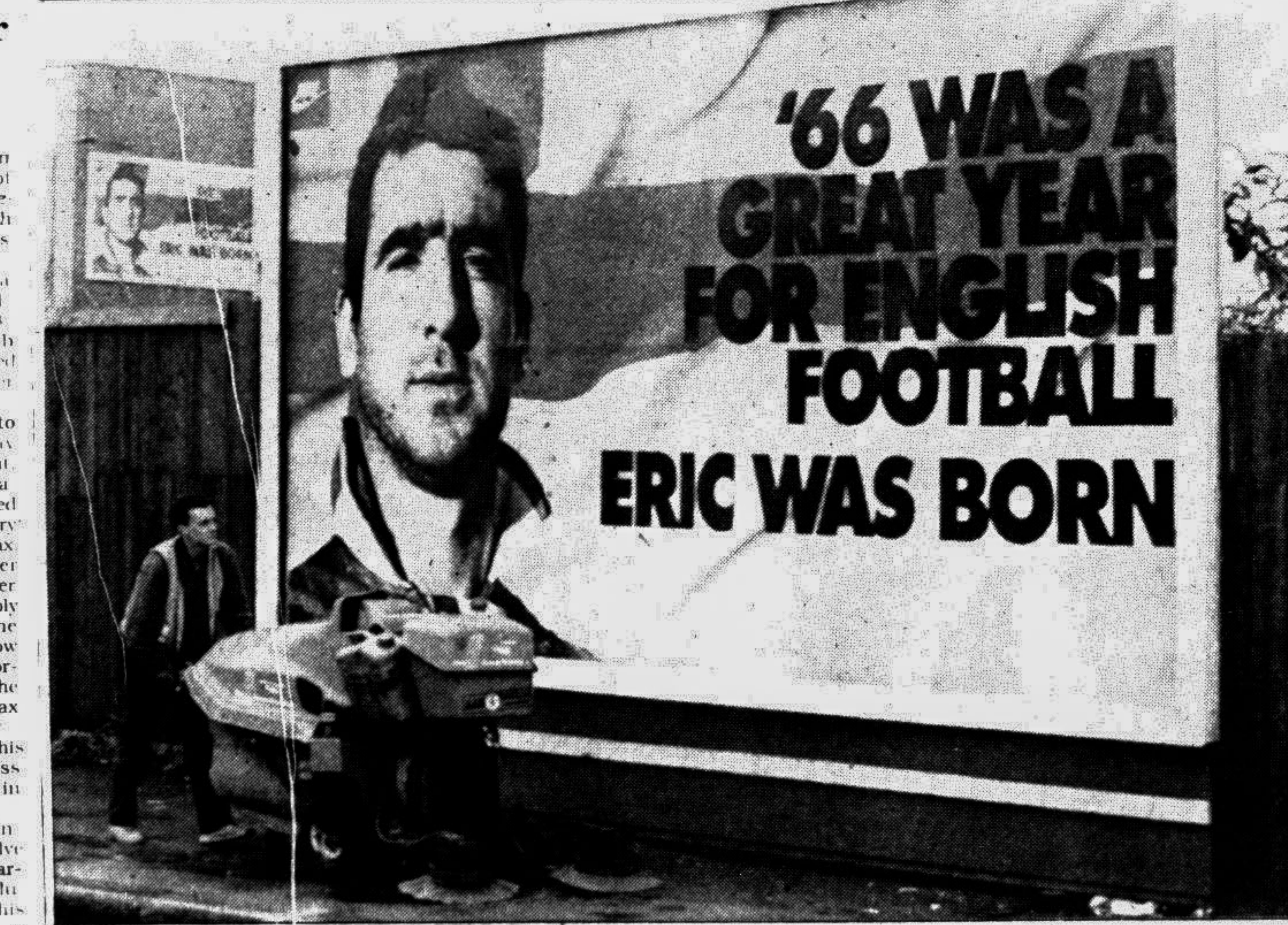
And after the Olympics, Spain has continued to invite the world to its doorstep.

Early next year, Barcelona will host the world indoor athletics championships and Sierra Nevada the world Alpine ski championships. The resort of Jaca has the next Winter University Games and is a candidate for the 2002 Winter Olympics.

At the non-elite end, a decade ago there were four private sports facilities to every public one. Cortes Elvira said that figure has been reversed with junior programmes thriving in many sports.

For instance, the French Open junior title went this year to Roberto Carretero, who trains with dozens of other promising young Spanish players at the Sant Cugat center in Barcelona.

A Bruguera, an Indurain doesn't come along often, but we have quality behind them. It's no vacuum," Cortes Elvira said.



US sports manufacturer Nike ranks the birth of Manchester United's French star Eric Cantona as of equal importance to English soccer as its 1966 World victory as this advertising board says yesterday. — AFP photo