

A cricket stadium at last

The long-mooted stadium, exclusively for cricket, crossed a significant hurdle with the Urban Development Directorate approving the plan.

The projected venue, which on completion, will have ended a bitter and long drawn-out acrimony between the football and cricket authorities over the control of the Dhaka Stadium, the lone playing stage, is expected to be sited over 20.18 acres of land at Maghbazar.

Although the land has not been acquired yet the promised government allocation of Taka 25 crores, earmarked as initial budget, is all set to be okayed by the Planning Commission.

The Rajdhanii Unnayan Karttripakhkha (RAJUK), authorities of constructional activities in the capital, are expected to give the go-ahead to the National Sports Council (NSC), the supreme body for country's sports, shortly.

The NSC has been the centre of a tug of war between the powers that be in football and those of cricket with the latter often forced to throw in the towel in the face of the strong twin challenges of the Bangladesh Football Federation and the Dhaka Metropolitan Football Association (DMFA) over the allotment of the Dhaka Stadium.

Saddled with the unenviable job of doing justice as the sole authority of the infrastructure of country's sports, the NSC has been apportioning the oldest and economically viable playing arena between the two parties in two halves of a year.

Justice had barely been done in the past with football

Sri Lanka to tour Zimbabwe from Oct

COLOMBO, Sept 21: Arjuna Ranatunga will lead a 15-member Sri Lankan squad on their month-long tour of Zimbabwe next October, cricket board officials said today, reports Reuter.

They said there were no changes in the side, except the recall of veteran batsman Asanka Gurusinha, who was dropped from the team that played in the recently concluded four-nation tournament in Colombo.

Sri Lanka will play three Tests and three one-day games in Zimbabwe from Oct 1 to Nov 9.

TEAM

Arjuna Ranatunga (capt), Aravinda de Silva (vice-capt), Roshan Mahanama, Asanka Gurusinghe, Hashan Tillekeratne, Duleep Samaraweera, Pubudu Dassanayake, Ruwan Kalpage, Sanath Jayasuriya, Sanjewa Ranatunga, Muttiah Muralidharan, Pramodya Wickremasinghe, Chaminda Vaas, Ravindra Pushpakumara and Kumara Dharmasena.

Duisburg call Amunike back

DUISBURG, Germany, Sept 21: MSV Duisburg have ordered Nigerian World Cup soccer star Emmanuel Amunike to report to the German club immediately, reports AFP.

Amunike, who had refused to accept FIFA's ruling in favour of Duisburg, was with the Portuguese side Sporting Lisbon.

Fresh drug worries for FIFA

PARIS, Sept 21: A leading FIFA official called on Tuesday for the sport's world governing body to take a closer look at anti-doping measures after it was revealed that a French First Division player had tested positive, reports Reuter.

FIFA general secretary Sepp Blatter said soccer's third positive test in recent months was a blow to the sport and that FIFA's executive meeting in New York next month would almost certainly examine the problem again.

His comments came after it emerged on Tuesday that an unnamed French player had been secretly punished by the French Federation last season for failing a test.

Soccer, based more on individual skill than on strength or endurance, has long prided itself on not having the chronic doping problems associated with sports such as athletics, cycling or weightlifting.

But the notorious Diego Maradona ephedrine case at the World Cup finals in June and the one-year ban imposed earlier this month on Dyanmo Minks midfielder Valentin Belkevich for using anabolic steroids after a UEFA Cup drugs test this season have brought soccer firmly into the doping spotlight.

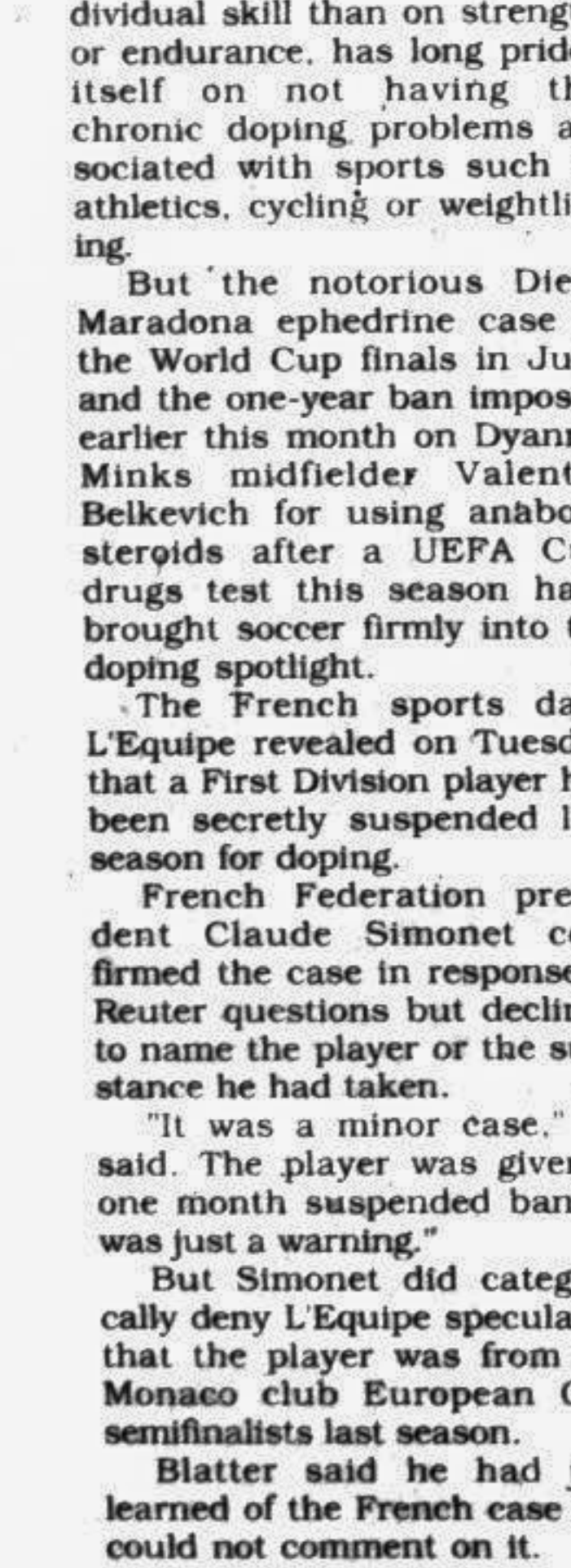
The French sports daily L'Equipe revealed on Tuesday that a First Division player had been secretly suspended last season for doping.

French Federation president Claude Simonet confirmed the case in response to Reuter questions but declined to name the player or the substance he had taken.

"It was a minor case," he said. The player was given a one month suspended ban. It was just a warning."

But Simonet did categorically deny L'Equipe speculation that the player was from the Monaco club European Cup semifinalists last season.

Blatter said he had just learned of the French case and could not comment on it.



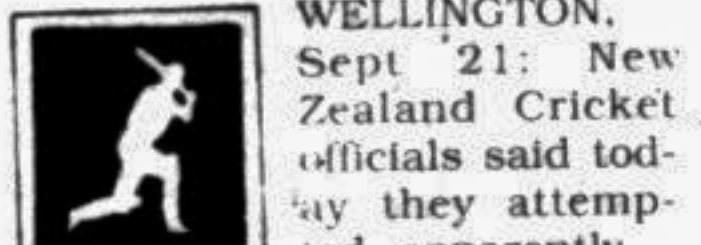
Action from last night's Star First Division football league encounter between Rahmatganj MFS and East End Club at the Dhaka Stadium. Rahmatganj won 2-0. — Star photo

Nat'l swimming from Oct 25

The national age group for boys and girls, third national youth and national women's swimming championships '94 will be held October 25-28 at the Mirpur National Swimming Complex, reports UNB.

The Bangladesh Swimming Federation, organiser of the competitions, has asked the interested teams and organisations to send their entries by October 18 to the Federation's Mirpur office.

Jones won't come out of retirement



Andrew Jones

WELLINGTON, Sept 21: New Zealand Cricket officials said today they attempted, apparently unsuccessfully, to persuade Andrew Jones to curtail his retirement to cover for Martin Crowe on New Zealand's forthcoming tour to India, reports Reuter.

Jones was approached by leading New Zealand Cricket (NZC) officials, chairman Peter McDermott and chief executive Graham Dowling, about the chances of making himself available for New Zealand's tour and busy centenary season.

Jones, 35, retired at the end of last season after forging a reputation as one of New Zealand's most consistent Test

being the more popular and money-minting of the two games, prolonging the possession of the ground much to the chagrin and trouble of the Bangladesh Cricket Control Board.

A second stadium, built a couple of years ago at the city outskirts Mirpur, did not emerge in the role of a trouble shooter for more than one reason.

The area's reputation as the crime pockets of the city added to the already extant deterrent of distance from spectators' viewpoint; hence important soccer tournaments, including the annual Senior Division leagues, kept on being held at the Dhaka Stadium with poaching into the temporal territory of cricket more of ten than not.

A full-fledge cricket stadium is still a long way coming. The shaggy dog story of pointless wrangling will carry over an unspecified period of time in future. But the note of genuine optimism has been audible. Let's hope it is the beginning of the end of a squabble.

Squeaky win for Brothers

Brothers, who began their league campaign in style with a facial 3-0 victory over Combined Sporting, appeared on course for another comfortable win when Rubel set the pace for his side, finishing off his singles tie in 10 time.

But the Ajax paddlers had other plans in mind and for the next two matches it was total Brothers demolition and the eventual losers were just one game away from victory.

But thanks to Badal and Rubel, Brothers were spared their blishes as two kept their cool in registering 2-1 sets victories in the best-of-three-singles matches.

The day's other winners were Swamibagh Boys, Wari Junior and Armanitola against Swamibagh TTS, Combined Sporting and Lalmitia respectively.

Yesterday's results marked second successive wins for Wari and Armanitola youngsters.

Rahmatganj still on top

Rahmatganj Muslim Friends Society maintained their sole lead in the Star First Division football league when they beat Eskaton Sabuj Sangha 2-0 in one of the two matches held for the Dhaka Stadium yesterday.

After a goalless first half, winger Towhid shot Rahmatganj into the lead in the 47th minute, converting a penalty while substitute Mostakim sealed the fate of the match four minutes before the long whistle when he nodded home a Dabloo corner from the right flank.

The win upped Rahmatganj's tally to 18 points from 12 matches while Eskaton remained stuck to their previous collection of 11 points on completion of 12 outings.

In the first match of the day, Victoria Sporting Club shared points with Dhanmondi Club in a 2-2 draw.

Angur and Amin Khan, the striking duo of Victoria, notched one goal each for the Motijheel outfit while Shimu and Collins scored for the Dhanmondi team.

Victoria raised their collection to 16 from 12 matches while Dhanmondi now have 10 from 12.

TODAY'S MATCHES

Farashganj SC vs Sadharan Bima 4:30 pm (Dhaka Stadium) East End vs Dhaka Wanderers 6:30 pm (Dhaka Stadium)

Australia's Asian tour extended

SYDNEY, Sept 21: The Australian soccer team has added an extra game to their Asian tour this week, slotting in a match against Malaysia before playing Kuwait and Japan, reports AFP.

The Australian Soccer Federation announced today that the team will play in Malaysia on Thursday, take on Kuwait, also in Malaysia, on Saturday and meet Japan on September 27 in Tokyo. Their opponents are all preparing for the Asian Games.

Asiad contingent awaits PM's approval

The list of a 78-member contingent for the forthcoming 12th Asian Games, scheduled to begin in the Japanese city of Hiroshima from October 2, has been forwarded to Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia for approval.

Strangely, the catalogue did not include the names of the five soft tennis players as earlier announced by the Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA).

Apart from the representatives in the team events shooters out numbered all in event wise break-up with a squad of 13, which includes four officials.

The proposed delegation for the Hiroshima Asiad contains a 20-member hockey squad and a 14-member kabaddi team.

Hockey and kabaddi are the only team events in which there will be Bangladeshi representation although the latter faces the threat of being scrapped from the Games for inadequate number of entries.

One Member of Parliament has been included in the list and sources close to the BOA revealed yesterday that a woman MP was also trying to have her name drafted in the Hiroshima-bound contingent.

Sanchez-Vicario sails through to Round 2

TOKYO, Sept 21: Top-seeded Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario, keeping her championship form from the US and French Opens, made short work Wednesday of Japanese qualifier Naoko Kijimuta in the first round of the Nichirei International ladies tennis championships, reports AP.

The Spanish player blanked Kijimuta, ranked 134th in the world, 6-0, 6-0 in 54 minutes on the hard court of Ariake Coliseum.

"It's always important to get accustomed to the court and balls in the first match of a tournament. I am always doing my best and playing 100 per cent in every tournament," said Sanchez-Vicario, the world's No 2-ranked woman player.

Asked about her two Grand Slam tournament victories, she said, "I think I am now much stronger on fast surfaces after a lot of practice and I am mentally stronger now."

Vicario Sanchez generally kept control with deep shots and high lobs, but had to rally from behind when Kijimuta took a 40-15 lead on the Spanish player's serve in the second set's second game and then again in the fifth game, when Kijimuta led 40-0 on her own serve.

Third-seeded Lindsay Davenport of the United States needed three sets and 2 hours, 25 minutes to beat Japanese qualifier Kaoru Shibata 6-2, 4-6, 6-0.

The 18-year-old Davenport, ranked eighth in the world, was broken by Shibata, ranked 624th, in the second, fourth, sixth and 10th games of the second set.

"I lost concentration and she played pretty well in the second set," Davenport said.

Eighth-seeded Julie Halard of France beat Argentine Mercedes Paz 6-4, 7-6 (7-2) and Japan's Naoko Sawamatsu, the ninth seed, outlasted hard-hitting Wang Shi-ting of Taiwan 6-0, 4-6, 6-1 in other first-round matches.

Lara living in fast lane



Brian Lara

LONDON, Sept 21: Brian Lara, the brightest jewel in Warwickshire's triple crown, faces one of the most intense playing schedules in cricket history after a hectic debut season in the English domestic game, reports Reuter.

The little Trinidadian left-hander, who scored runs in record quantities with the grace and style that also marked his off-field demeanour, admitted his first summer with Warwickshire was an exhausting experience.

Lara was rarely out of the headlines, playing an influential role as his adopted county landed an unprecedented three titles in a single season.

Endorsements, special appearances and endless interviews added to his mounting involvements, leaving Lara in no doubt when the season ended on Monday that he was truly living in cricket's fast lane.

Lara now has commitments in South Africa and Hong Kong before confronting a rigorous international programme with West Indies.

In the 11 months between the beginning of October and the end of next August, West Indies are to play 15 Tests and at least 16 one-day internationals.

Lara is vice-captain of West Indies' tour of India which starts next month and includes three Tests, to be followed early next year by two Tests in

Euro thinktanks to lay head

STOCKHOLM, Sept 21: Europe's international soccer coaches gathered in force in Sweden on Tuesday to lay down the strategies they and UEFA hope will keep the continent's teams on top of the world for the rest of the decade, reports Reuter.

Roxburgh, who studied the World Cup in great detail, said: "The flaw with the European game is that while our players are quick, powerful and well organised, they are not as mobile as the African players, and they don't have the variety of skills."

"Most of the time they are solid, don't have mobility and are technically limited, missing elements which we should be encouraging. We have to go back to basics to maintain our place in the world order."

Some of the biggest names in soccer were in Stockholm to listen, learn and swap ideas and experiences in a two-day coaches' convention — including the men who led three European sides into the semifinals at the World Cup.

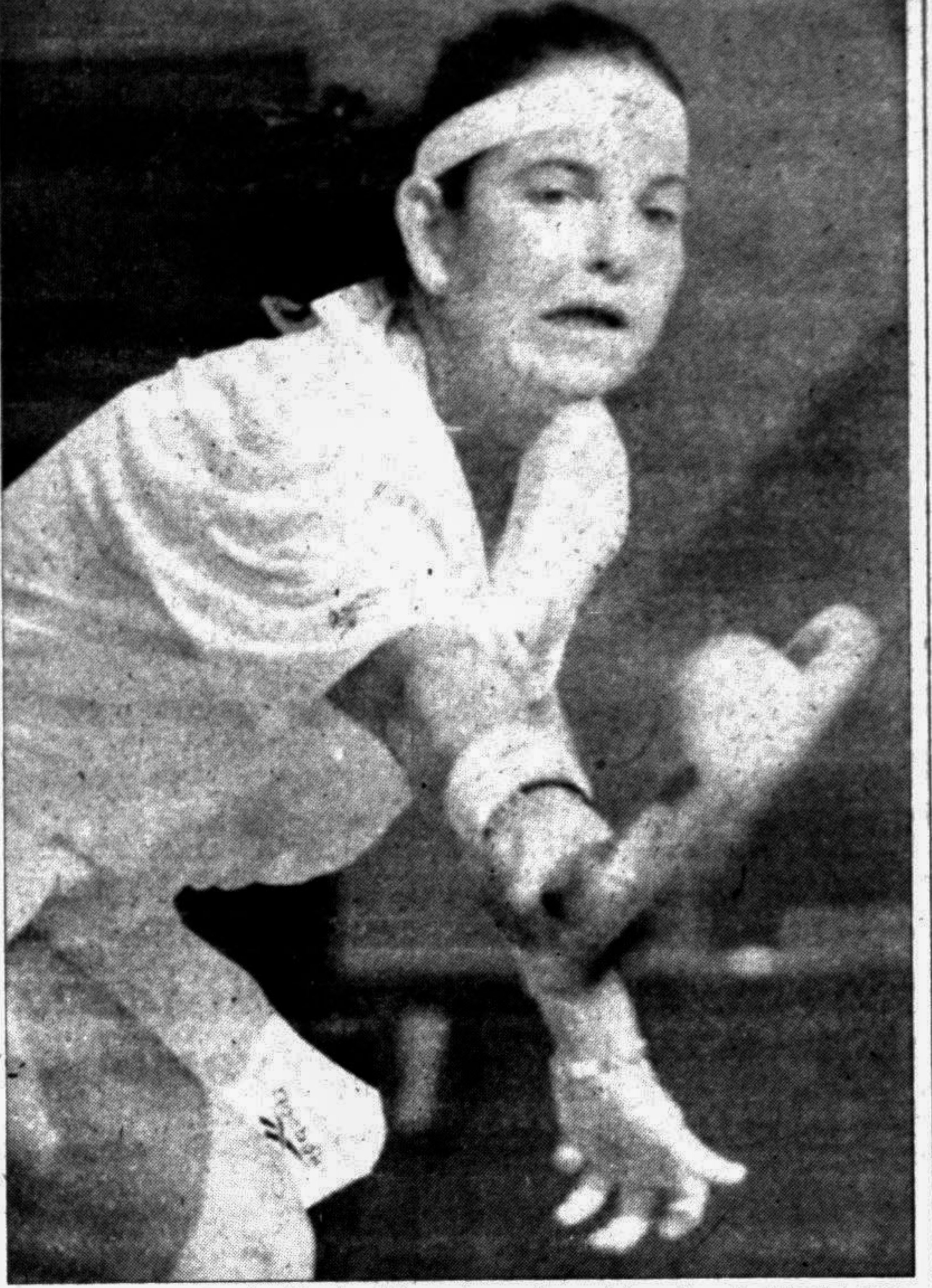
Italy's Arrigo Sacchi, whose team went so close to winning the World Cup final against Brazil, Tommy Svensson, who took Sweden to semifinals for only the second time, and Bulgaria's Dimitar Penev, who led a country that had never won a match at a World Cup final to the last four.

Terry Venables, appointed England coach after they failed to reach the World Cup finals and charged with winning the

Pereira's distinction

BOGOTA, Colombia, Sept 21: Unseeded Nicolas Pereira became the first Venezuelan to win an ATP tour singles title in the Open era, beating sixth-seeded Mauricio Hadad of Colombia 6-3, 3-6, 6-4 Sunday in the final of the 313,000 dollars Club Colombia Open, reports AP.

The victory snapped Hadad's 29-match winning streak.



Top seed Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario of Spain lunges forward to make a backhand return against Japan's Naoko Kijimuta during her first round match at the Nichirei women's tennis tournament in Tokyo yesterday. Sanchez romped home 6-0, 6-0. — AFP photo

1998 World Cup logo unveiled

PARIS, Sept 21: A soccer ball rising like the sun over part of the globe was unveiled on Tuesday by Michel Platini as the official logo for the 1998 World Cup finals in France, reports Reuter.

Platini, who played for France in the 1982 and 1986 World Cup semifinals and who is co-president of France's Organising Committee, said the logo was a symbol of the way soccer, like the sun, brightened people's lives.

The unveiling ceremony, before invited VIPs and the media, took place halfway up Paris' Eiffel Tower, France's most symbolic monument.

Fernand Sastre, the other co-president of France's Organising Committee, said Prime Minister Eduard Balladur would choose the design of a new 80,000-capacity stadium for Paris to stage the opening game and the final in the next few days.

He said a decision on which French cities would stage matches during the finals would also be taken shortly.

Lineker to quit J-League at the end of

LONDON, Sept 21: Former England striker Gary Lineker said on Wednesday he will retire from soccer at the end of the Japanese season in November, reports Reuter.

Lineker, who captained his country and scored 48 goals in 80 internationals, told BBC Radio his injury troubles since joining Nagoya Grampus Eight of the J-League last year had prompted the decision.

"I've suffered badly through injury over the last two years, resulting in a couple of operations," 33-year-old Lineker said from his Nagoya home.

"I've managed to play a few games and score a few goals which is very pleasing but I'm certainly not what I was."

"It's been frustrating not being able to perform like I used to and that made the decision far easier."

Lineker's decision will disappoint several clubs hoping to lure him back to play in England, including Premier league Southampton and First Division Middlesbrough, now managed by his former England teammate Bryan Robson.

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