

WEEKEND SPORTS WEEKEND

A welcome return of the wrist rule

By A Mawaz

Pakistan fully deserved to win the 1994 World Cup hockey title, beating The Netherlands the holders, at Sydney earlier this month. Although the match was stretched into a penalty shoot-out, the superiority of Pakistan was never in doubt. In fact, Pakistan should have won comfortably during the second half, but had no luck with two sitters.

The nervous tension was tremendous in and around the field, reaching climax during the penalty session, when Bovelander flicked wide and Mansoor saved to win the match for Pakistan. Pakistani goalkeeper Mansoor Ahmad should now be reckoned the world's best goalkeeper, and a national hero; while brilliant captain Shahbaz achieved his life's ambition before his much publicised retirement. He once again mesmerized all with electrifying dribbling display.

It was a match of the highest order, between two of the best teams in the world, played at a fast and furious pace, with thrilling exchanges. The Asian wrist-work prevailed over the European bulldozing tactic, by the time the next World Cup comes around, it may be the turn of the European teams to change the tactics and the style of play to hold the Asian stick-charmers at bay. The Dutch were sterling in defence, but the forwards could not find that extra touch to win the match. Gallant losers and magnificent winners — in the best sporting

spirit. The Asian warning is no fluke or flash in the pan. India, once the world leaders, have come up fast and furious, after years of indecisive trials, experiments and organizational traumas. The Indians' remarkable comeback during this series was the pleasant discovery of the year. The Koreans, now passing through a transitional period, have the ability to bounce back, to see to it that the Cup is retained in Asia in 1998. Australia and Germany will continue to be strong challengers with the direct European style; but the Asians will be calling the tune.

The Australians were bemoaning their performance on home ground. Some CIS countries might spring some nasty surprise — polo and hockey have something in common. The western dependence on the conversion of penalty corners seems to be numbered. The field goals are coming back into the game; and it is good for spectator sport (compare the mechanical monotony of power tennis with the zen-like wrist-work of exponents such as Drobny and Kirshnan). The next couple of years will see the tussle between the dazzle of wristy dribbling and a static packed defence — the rush of the spring waters around the boulders. The Asians have by now learnt more from the Europeans than vice versa. In fact, the Pakistanis were seriously adapting themselves since the late '80s; and this time they employed a Dutch coach; (the Koreans had initial coaching from the Pakistanis during the early years).

The world hockey body may like to review the rules under which the better team might lose a game during the penalty flicks. Football is also facing the same dilemma. While a replay would be welcomed by the spectators, the organisers have logistic problems to cope with at the final level.

Pakistan have earned the unique distinction of being world champions in three sports: squash, cricket and now hockey. Defending the titles would be a big challenge for this sporting nation.



Shahbaz Ahmad with the Cathay Pacific World Cup.

More trouble for Krabbe

BONN, Dec 8: German sprinter Katrin Krabbe's hopes of making a comeback after a doping ban have suffered a setback because of a split with her long-term training partner Grit Breuer, reports Reuter.

Former world 400 metres silver medalist Breuer and teammate Manuela Derr, suspended along with Krabbe after admitting taking the banned drug clenbuterol, have decided to leave the former double world champion's Neubrandenburg Club.

The two athletes are expected to move to the Schwerin Athletics Club under the control of Krabbe's former coach Thomas Springstein.

Krabbe's adviser Thorsten Heuser, who confirmed the departure on Wednesday, said he had also cut off his business relationship with the pair.

"Krabbe remains a member of Neubrandenburg at the moment... Grit Breuer and Manuela Derr have decided to leave," Heuser said.

Krabbe and Breuer have been close friends and training partners since their teens and have contested two doping bans together in the past three years.

Both athletes are involved in a law suit against German and international athletics authorities over the doping bans which have kept them out of serious competition since the start of 1992.

Breuer is expected to launch a serious comeback when here present ban runs out after next August's World Championships.

Krabbe, who recently married her former lawyer, is certain to find a similar comeback very hard without the daily support of the 400 metres runner. Many experts believe Krabbe is unlikely to return to serious competition.

Samaranch goes to court



LAUSANNE, Switzerland, Dec 8: International Olympic Committee President Juan Antonio Samaranch testified in a Swiss court Wednesday that two British journalists had libeled him by misrepresenting his past in Franco's Spain and his lea-

told a judge in the Police Tribunal that the authors of 'The Lords of the Rings' had attacked them out of a wish to destroy the structure of the IOC and to make money.

The authors, Yv Simson and Andrew Jennings, refused to attend the proceedings, claiming it was unlikely they would get a fair trial in

case of non-attendance for libel under Swiss law, could well include permission from the court to proceed with a civil suit in which the IOC could demand financial compensation from the book's authors.

'The Lords of the Rings' published in Britain by April 1992 and since translated and distributed in other countries, offers a savage indictment of Samaranch, the IOC and other Olympic leaders.

The books alleges that the Olympic ideals have been corrupted by commercialization and greed under Samaranch's leadership.

It alleges that Samaranch had been an active supporter of the late Spanish dictator Gen Francisco Franco and that he runs the IOC in a similar autocratic fashion.

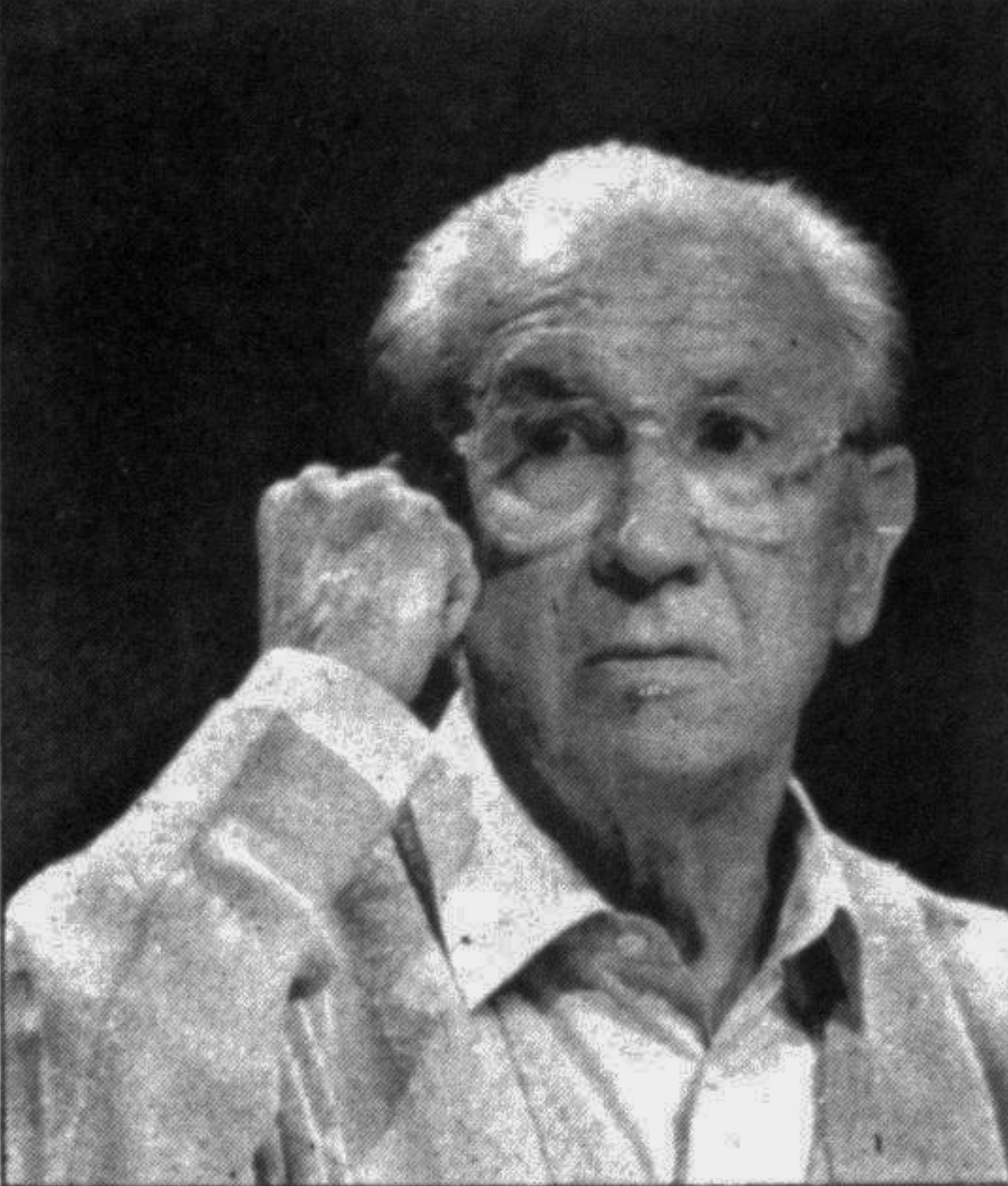
Samaranch, 74, told the court: "I am proud of my past. I served my country. I served under Franco and under others after him. I was the first Spanish ambassador in Russia, appointed by the king and the socialist government."

He said he had never exercised any political power. "I was a high-ranking civil servant. It is wrong to say I organized the repression. That was the comment that hurt the most."

Samaranch and Carrard rejected suggestions that sponsors influenced the sites for the Olympic games.

"Money is not the motor of the IOC," Samaranch said. Simson and Jennings issued a statement this week saying they stand 100 per cent behind the book.

"Our disclosures about president Samaranch and the activities of his IOC may not be palatable to him but they are nonetheless true," they said.



Juan Antonio Samaranch

Lausanne, the seat of the IOC.

They are accused of criminal libel and defamation and could face a jail term of up to six months.

A conviction, likely in the

IAAF to speed up drug-testing procedure

BARCELONA, Nov 8: The International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) will announce positive drugs tests in future after testing just one urine sample, reports Reuter.

At present an athlete is not banned until laboratory tests confirm a second, or AB sample, is also positive.

The IAAF council voted unanimously on Monday to endorse a recommendation calling for positive tests to be announced after one sample to help stop speculation and leaks to the media.

"Our decision is based on a wish to speed up the entire doping control procedure as well as to cut down rumour," said doping commission chairman Arne Ljunqvist.

Ljunqvist, an IAAF vice-president and head of the medical committee, said he had come across only one case in 15 years where the result of the second sample had contradicted the first.

Athletes who test positive will retain all the present rights of appeal and national federations will have 28 days after the first positive test to request that the B sample be tested.

The laboratory where the samples have been tested will then have three weeks to examine the B sample.

The council cleared Spain's Monica Pont-Chafer of any drug use on the basis that the amounts of morphine in her system were too low to report for a drug offence.

In doping cases involving Hedvika Korosak of Slovenia, Frenchman Jean-Pierre Lauthoux and Stavros Tsiouras of Greece, the council agreed the doping commission should seek immediate clarification from member federations over why the athletes were given two-year bans when IAAF rules call for four.

Seles faces damage suit



MIAMI, Dec 8: An Italian sportswear manufacturer has sued tennis star Monica Seles for breach of contract, claiming it lost money on a promotional deal because she has not played since a 1993 knife attack, reports Reuter.

The company, Fila, is seeking damages and wants its contract with Seles, which runs through 1996, ruled invalid.

Fila says that Seles' absence from the professional tennis tour has caused more than three million dollars in lost sales of its Seles Line of products.

The lawsuit, filed in US district court in Miami, also said as long as the contract is in effect, the company can't sign another woman professional for promotions.

Seles' agent, Stephanie Tolleson of International Management Group said the lawsuit is "without merit."

She said, "We have to assume this lawsuit is just Fila's way of trying to cancel their ongoing contractual obligation to Monica."

Seles, formerly the top-ranked female tennis player in the world, has not played professionally since she was stabbed in the back in a tournament in Germany in April, 1993.

The attacker said he wanted to help German star Steffi Graf regain the number-one ranking.

Parsons leads

AUCKLAND, Dec 8: Australian Lucas Parsons shot a six-under-par round of 64 Thursday and took a two-shot lead after the first round of the \$165,000 US Air New Zealand-Shell Open golf championship, reports AP.

Parsons was one of only 21 golfers to better par around the par-70, 5974 meters (6533 yards)

The Miami attorney who filed the suit, Alvin B Davis, said he talks between the company and Seles' representatives in an effort to resolve the issue were fruitless.

"They were very cordial and led to nothing," said Davis.

Seles, giving the company exclusive rights to market a Seles Line of tennis products in return for a retainer and royalties, the lawsuit said.

In 1992, when Seles was the top-ranked player, they

for the 1994 Line of Seles products. But Fila said Seles failed to help promote the line and did not appear at public events in Fila products.

As a result, the Seles Line is "substantially unmerchantable," the lawsuit said.

Martina plans to have fun

FLORENCE, Italy, Dec 8: Tennis great Martina Navratilova says she's right where she wants to be: travelling and playing for fun after 22 years of pressure and high-stakes competition, reports AP.

"Now I will rest more. I will travel the world, but will keep on playing tennis for pleasure," said Navratilova before her first public matches since retiring last month after a first-round loss in the Virginia Slims Championships in New York.

Navratilova, 38, was joined in Florence by one of the rising stars of women's tennis: 14-year-old Martina Hingis, the reigning Wimbledon junior's champion. They were scheduled to play a match dubbed the "generations game."

The Czech-born Hingis, who lives in Switzerland, made her professional debut in October.

Navratilova said she has considered teaching tennis, but has "not yet developed my own method."

"Why did I not retire last year?" Navratilova said. "My heart told me that 1994 was the year to call it a day. I might be wrong when I take decision with the head, but certainly not when they come from the heart."

Earlier, Navratilova and Hingis played on opposite sides in a mixed-doubles match. Navratilova was teamed with Italian film producer Mario Cecchi Gori and Hingis played alongside retired Italian soccer star Giancarlo Antognoni.



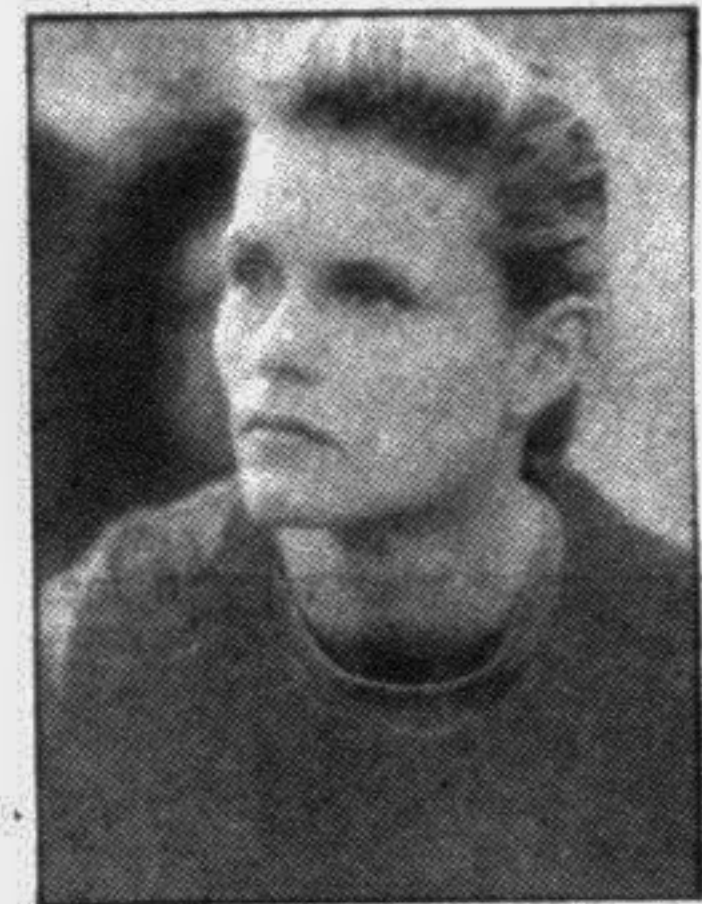
Monica Seles

renewed the agreement and Seles was given a "substantial increase," in compensation, the lawsuit said.

After Seles had been stabbed, her agent told Fila several times that the player would be returning to the women's tour, the suit said.

"Contrary to the allegations... there was never a date promised for Seles' return to professional tennis after her tragic stabbing on April 30, 1993," Tolleson said in a statement.

Fila said it relied on statements from the player's agent that she would return and created samples and advertising



Katrin Krabbe

Heuser said it might not be prudent for any of the athletes to attempt a comeback in next year's outdoor season.

"They would come up against athletes who have come straight back from the World Championships whereas they would have no competition experience," he said.

"There is the danger that they could be clobbered, to put it in simple German. It might be better to wait until the winter season of 1995-96."

Bowe-Hide bout in March

NEW YORK, Dec 8: Riddick Bowe wants to come in from the cold.

In a move in that direction, the former undisputed heavyweight champion will fight Herbie Hide on March 11 in Las Vegas, reports AP.

"This fight will serve as the instrument to show everyone who is the real heavyweight champion of the world," Rock Newman, Bowe's manager, said Wednesday in scoffing at the WBC, which recognizes Oliver McCall as champion, and the IBF and WBA which recognizes George Foreman.

The 12-round fight will be recognized as being for the WBO championship held by the unbeaten Hide. At least it is being recognized as a title bout by two boxers and the WBO.

Home Box Office is showing the bout on US cable television but is not promoting it as a championship.

"We do not recognize the WBO," said Seth Abraham, president of Time Warner Sports, operator of HBO.

"Our view is we had to draw the line in the sand somewhere," Lou Dibella, vice president of HBO Sports, said at a news conference at HBO headquarters. "We'd be happy if there were fewer rather than more titles."

"What we recognize is the reality that McCall won't fight Bowe and that George has his own agenda," said Abraham. "So all we can do is have a fighter who takes on all comers."

Should Bowe win — he opened as a 5-1 favorite — he would fight Cuban Jose Luis Gonzalez in June and either Evander Holyfield or Lennox Lewis in the fall, according to Abraham. Should Hide score an upset, plans call for him to fight Gonzalez next.

McCall's Winning Punches May Put Boxing On The Ropes

Oliver McCall's victory over Lennox Lewis has given controversial US promoter Don King a chance to get back into the prestigious heavyweight division. But some fans reports Gemini News Service, believe it could also be a blow to the credibility of professional boxing.

By Phil Minshull in London

DEFEATED heavyweight champion Lennox Lewis is not yet ready to agree, but Oliver McCall's winning punches may be felt most strongly outside the ring.

McCall's win inside two rounds heralded the re-emer-

gence of the controversial United States promoter Don King, who manages McCall, in the division which captures the public's imagination. King has been the scourge of professional boxing for nearly 20 years. A former gambling baron, he spent four years in prison in the late 1960s for manslaughter.

The United States authorities have tried several times to convict him on charges of tax evasion and soon he will be defending himself in court against allegations that he defrauded Lloyds of London by collecting insurance money on a fight that never took place in 1991.

King, who looks as though his owner has suffered from an electric shock, came to prominence 20 years ago by allying himself to the great Mohammed Ali and promoting the infamous "Rumble in The Jungle" in Zaire against George Foreman, who is ironically still a ranked contender today. Ali regained the world title and King gained control of the division although he has been less visible on the heavyweight scene since Tyson was sent to an Indiana prison in March 1992.

If all goes well Tyson could be released on parole next May and King is already trying to set a match with one of the heavyweight champions.

Champions? Yes, champions because professional boxing has not just one but four world bodies in theory governing the sport, all of which have sprung up in the last 20 years and which add to the air of diminishing credibility. In addition to McCall, the US' Michael Moorer holds the World Boxing Association and International Boxing Federation titles while Britain's Herbie Hide possesses the less-respected World Boxing Organisation belt.

Tyson could beat them all without training," states King, a fact few dispute given the paucity of talent currently in possession of heavyweight title belts.

Purists hark back to the days of Ali, and before him Joe Louis and Rocky Marciano, when there was one title, one organisation and the champion had the right to call himself "The Undisputed Heavyweight Champion of The World".

Heavyweight boxing is what the public and television companies are prepared to pay the biggest prices for. The spectacle of two huge athletes pounding each other into submission captures the imagination of millions of people even if the thought of it disgusts many others.

Ringside seats at the McCall-Lewis fight had a face value of \$420 but, indicative of the public's waning support, many of them were empty.

Everyone is waiting for Tyson to fight and such a contest might gross more than \$100 million in revenue after several years in which the main contenders have been, to borrow from one of Ali's famous phrases, floating like butterflies in order to avoid meeting each other.

However, it might be too late because boxing, plagued by scandal and a lack of charismatic fighters such as Ali and Tyson, is rapidly diminishing in the public's estimation.



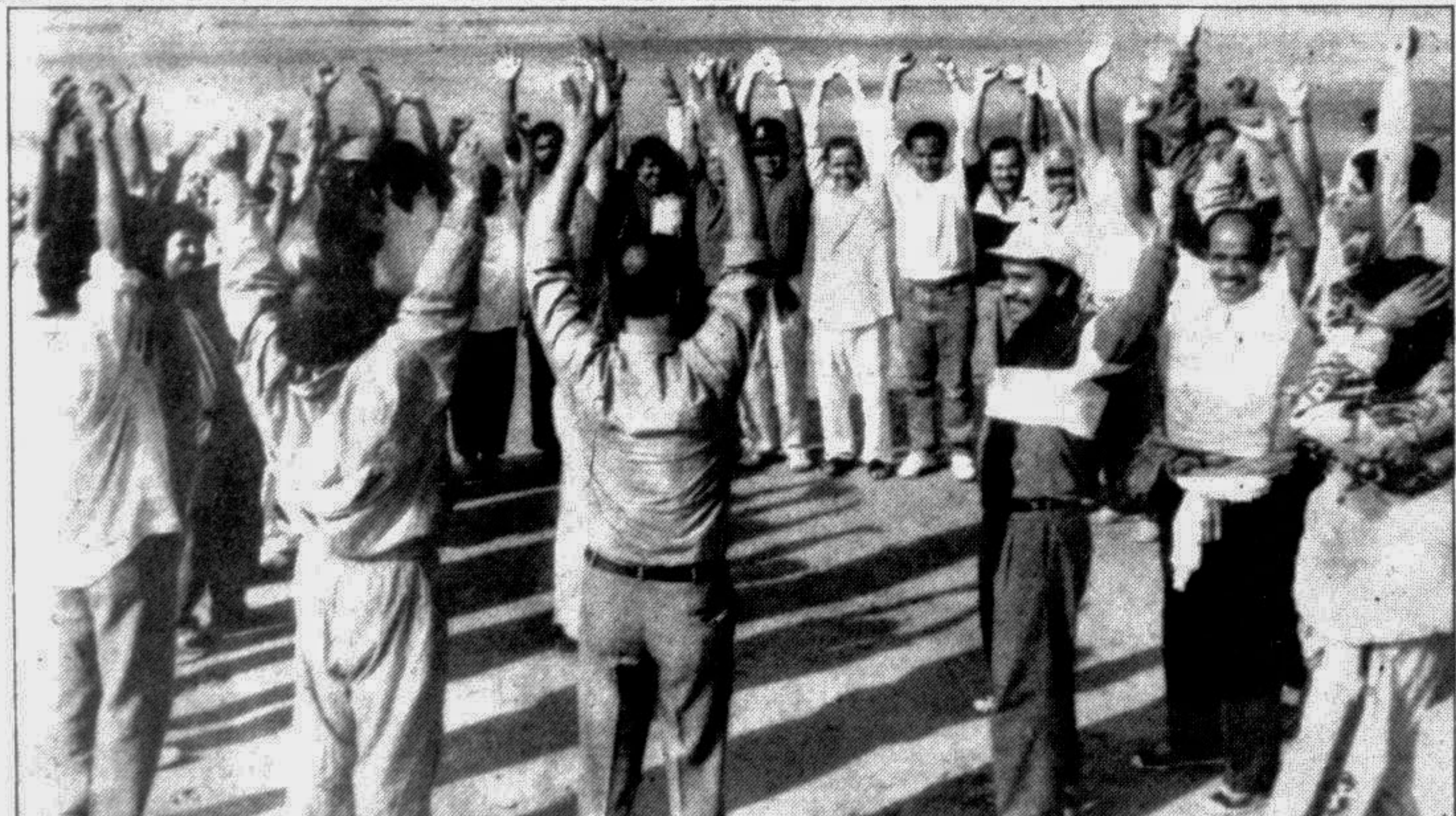
Boxing promoter Don King Finding a fight for Tyson

99 per cent of the reason was Don King.

Cayton has plenty of reason to feel vitriolic about King. In 1988 the pair battled in the courts after King became Tyson's manager. Tyson is currently serving a six-year sentence for raping a beauty pageant contestant.

There are also allegations by scores of boxers that they were ripped off by King and that the only reason they associated with him was to get a shot at a title, any title, because of his influence and control over match-ups in the heavyweight division, especially with the WBC and its equally controversial president, Jose Sulaiman.

King, with his upright hair that looks as though its owner



HEALTH IS WEALTH: Certainly this merry medley of young and old have some faith left in that old adage. Members of the Shatayu Club of Chittagong rustle up at the Patenga beach every morning to give three cheers to life. — Star photo by A KM Mohsin