



Indian Grandmaster Viswanathan Anand (L), who beat his American counterpart Gata Kamsky in the PCA candidates final series, is congratulated by Canarias Tourism president in Las Palmas on Thursday. —AFP/UNB photo

Martina back, Seles not ready

KEY BISCAYNE, Florida, Mar 24: Martina Navratilova is back. Monica Seles may never return. Seles said she's not ready to join a US Fed Cup team that will include retired pro Navratilova in its first-round match April 22-23 against Austria at Turnberry Isle near Miami, reports AP. New Fed Cup captain Billie Jean King reached the reclusive Seles by telephone before announcing the team. "I talked to Monica last night," King said Thursday. "She doesn't know if she'll ever play tennis again. One of her dreams is to play Fed Cup, and to be in the Olympics, and she still loves tennis very much. She is practicing off and on. If she becomes more stable in her feelings about playing, I think she'll be back. I think deep down she probably does want to play again. King said she had been wanting to talk with Seles for nearly two years, ever since the young star left the WTA Tour after being stabbed by a deranged fan in Germany.

Former Chinese athlete sentenced

BELJING, Mar 24: China has jailed for eight years a former world high-jump champion convicted of taking 57,000 yuan (6,760 dollar) in bribes, the China Sports daily said today, reports Reuter. A court in China's south-eastern Fujian province sentenced Ni Zhiqin, vice-chairman of the provincial sports commission, to eight years in prison, the newspaper said. In 1970, Ni sprang to fame in China by breaking the men's world high-jump record with a leap of 2.29 metres (7.5 feet) in Hunan province in central China, it said. As official in charge of the Fujian sports lottery, Ni twice took bribes totalling 57,000 yuan (6,760 dollars) from the manager of a leather goods company that wanted to run the lottery, the newspaper said. Ni did not accept the conviction and plans to appeal, it said.

Romantsev still optimistic

MOSCOW, Mar 24: Russian coach Oleg Romantsev, still smarting from an embarrassing loss to lowly Slovakia, is looking to his forwards to ensure victory in next week's crucial European Group Five championship qualifier against Scotland, reports Reuter. Russian Soccer Federation officials today said the coach, who took over after last year's disastrous World Cup outing, had included five strikers and only five defenders in his 20-man squad. Captain Viktor Onopko, who missed the 2-1 loss to Slovakia earlier this month, returns after injury. Young CSKA forward Vyacheslav Radimov, who came on as substitute in the 1-1 draw in Scotland last year, retains his place while Spartak Moscow forward Nikolai Pisarev gains a recall. But there is no place for Reggina striker Igor Smutenkov, Russia's player-of-the-year in 1994, who had a poor game for the Olympic team in Slovakia. First-choice striker Igor Kolyvanov of Foggia is ruled out with a long-term injury. The axe falls on defenders Sergei Gorolokovich — one of the few bright spots in the World Cup — and Rashid Rakhimov, as well as on midfielder Oleg Dobrovolsky.

Story of Warne's success



PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad, Mar 24 (AP): Both athletes have specialty shoes created for them and reported seven-figure paychecks to show for it.

Both are superstars in their sports. But Chicago Bulls basketball star Michael Jordan had never heard of Australian cricket hero Shane Warne when the two met last summer for the shooting of a couple of Nike commercials — Jordan's for the "Air Jordan," Warne's for the "Air Flipper." Americans may not know him, but the blond Australian has been widely hailed as the "Michael Jordan of Cricket" since bursting into prominence in the last couple of years with a lethal ball-throwing style. The 25-year-old Warne is star bowler, cricket's equivalent of a baseball pitcher, for Australia's national team, which is currently dueling the West Indies in the Caribbean. "He's probably the greatest spin bowler of all time," says Everard Gordon, a Trinidadian cricket expert who played professionally in England in the 1960s. "He can do stuff with the ball you have never, ever seen before." With his yellow hair, blue eyes, rosy cheeks and playful smile, Warne looks like a surfer. But the angry scab on his arm earned diving for a ball and the diamond stud in his left ear attest to how he earns his paycheck. Warne came very close to not making it in professional sports. Smoking a Benson and Hedges by a hotel swimming pool on a recent practice day, he said his dream had been to play Australian Rules football, but the husky six-footer (1.8 metres) was cut from the Melbourne team because he was lowest active position on the squad. Dangling by his fingertips, he trained hard for the 1992 season, traveled with the team to Sri Lanka and led it to victory. Back in Australia playing for Victoria, he played the "game of a lifetime" in December 1992, and found himself promoted for good. "That was where my life turned around," said Warne. "I gave me a burst of confidence. I started believing in myself." Since then, Warne has climbed to the top of the game, shutting down batsmen with his unusual ball-throwing style. He tries to send curve and knuckleballs instead of fastballs — only his deliveries have names like the leg spin, left arm spin, wrong in googlee and his trademark flipper, a vicious pitch with topspin that bounces upward in front of the batter. Adjustment to sudden success has brought some growing pains, Warne confessed. In India earlier this year he "snapped," exploding in rage at a batsman and shouting expletives heard on TV sets around the world. He was fined for his behavior, in addition to being thoroughly embarrassed. Warne plugs an Australian-New Zealand jeans company called Just Jeans and is an off-season personality on Australia's Channel 9, which broadcasts cricket in the Land Down Under. The endorsements put him in a different financial strata from other cricketers except world record-holding West Indian batsman Brian Lara. "The going was rocky. I got smashed all over the park," confessed Warne. "I got dropped to 12th man," the

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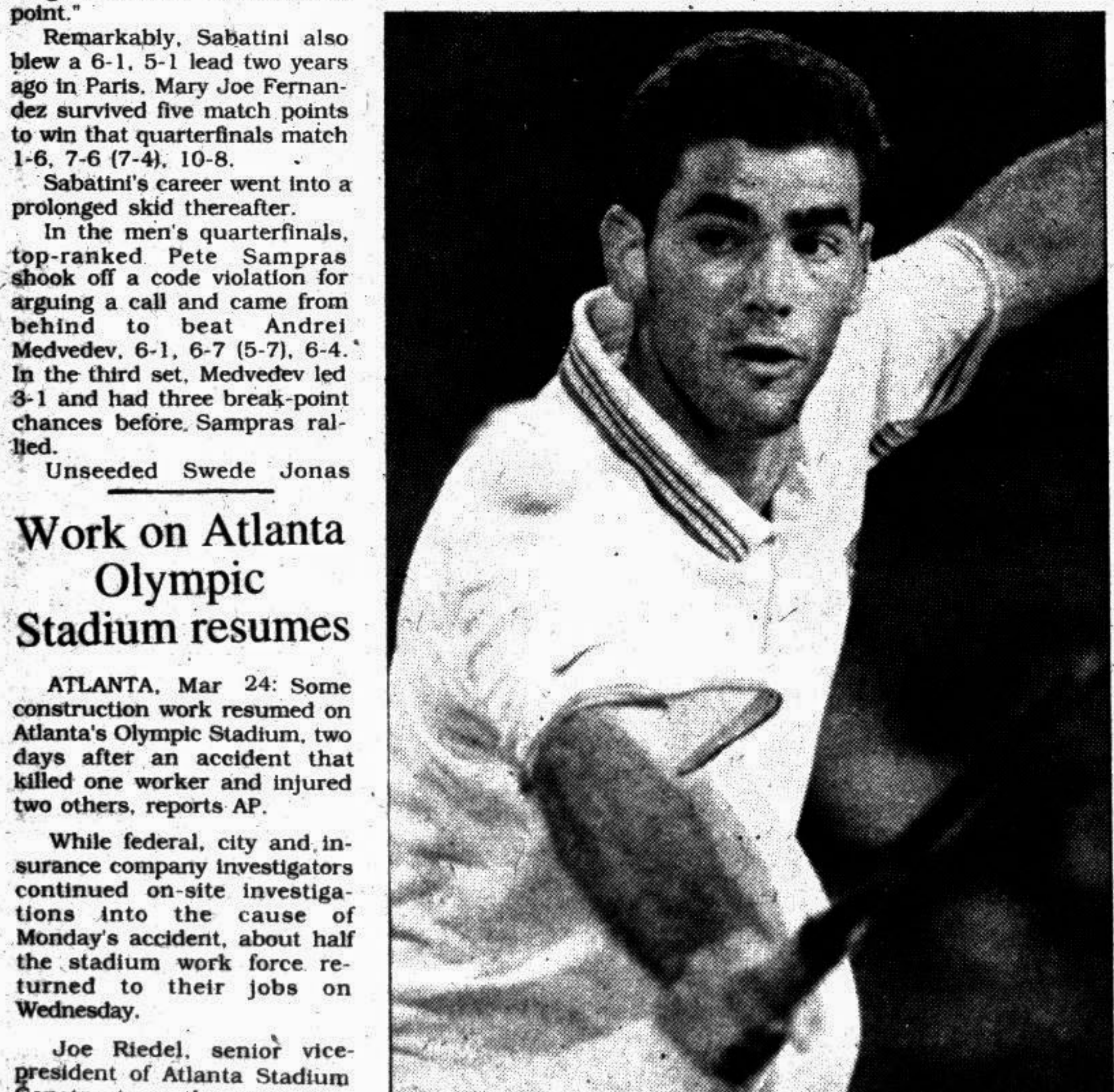
SHANE WARNE too slow and too short. "When I got the axe, I thought, what do I do now? I didn't want to work." So Warne signed on with a pro cricket team in England, then landed a sport on the Victoria state squad in 1990. Dropped after one season, he played on a youth team for a year and was called back up to the state team for four games before the national team grabbed him for the 1991 series against India. "The going was rocky. I got smashed all over the park," confessed Warne. "I got dropped to 12th man," the

King's 'odyssey' for Tyson

NEW YORK, Mar 24: Promoter Don King missed a Thursday news conference for double heavyweight-title boxing show because he was in Florida preparing for an "odyssey" to Indiana, where former champion Mike Tyson is scheduled to be released from prison on Saturday, reports AP. "The journey I'm going on is, what do you call it — is the journey that Homer wrote about," King said on a speaker phone from his office in Florida. "Saturday, I will be Indiana coming out with my friend, my man — Mike Tyson. So, he will be involved with Tyson's boxing comeback. King was asked, "Whatever he chooses," the promoter bellowed. "As long as he's free, I'll jump for joy." King would not answer questions about the details of Tyson's release from the Indiana Youth Center, at Plainfield where he was sent April 15, 1992, after being convicted on a charge of rape. King called it an unjust incarceration. The purpose of the news conference was to promote a pay-per-view television card from Caesars Palace, April 8 at Las Vegas featuring two heavyweight championship fights that involve a former Tyson sparring partner and two men that Tyson has beaten. The main event on the card, that also includes three other title fights, will be Oliver McCall's WBC, heavyweight championship defence against 45-year-old Larry Holmes, a former WBC and IBF champion. McCall once sparred with Tyson, who knocked out Holmes in the fourth round of a defense of the undisputed championship Jan. 22, 1988. The vacant WBA title will be at stake when Tony Tucker fights Bruce Seldon. Tucker is the IBF champion when Tyson, the WBA-WBC champion, outpointed him Aug. 1, 1987, and became the first undisputed heavyweight champion since Leon Spinks in 1978.

Sabatini falls, Sampras sails

KEY BISCAYNE, Florida, Mar 24: Near the end, playing behind the baseline, Gabriela Sabatini actually put her hand to her throat, reports AP. In a collapse almost identical to her 1993 French Open failure, Sabatini blew a 6-1, 5-1 lead, double-faulted 18 times, squandered three match points and lost to ailing Kimiko Date in Thursday's semifinals of the Lipton Championships. Date will probably be able to play, WTA Tour trainer Jill Grealey said. The injury has bothered her for about four years, and she aggravated it earlier in the tournament. "I always have this problem," said Date, seeded seventh. "Once I have enough rest, I can go on." Her 3-hour, 5-minute duel with Sabatini was far from an artistic success for either player. On a hot, sunny afternoon, the restless crowd moaned, groaned and even laughed at the poor quality of shot-making. There were a numbing 148 unforced errors — 79 by Date and 69 by Sabatini. But the 115-pound Date stayed fresher in the 85-degree heat. "Physically she was much better than me," Sabatini said. "That was the difference." The fifth-seeded Sabatini's double faults all came in the final two sets. She double-faulted to lose the second-set tiebreaker, then did it again to lose the second, sixth and 10th games of the final set, giving up the lead each time. As Sabatini fell behind in the second tiebreaker, she wandered near the baseline, looking stunned and exhausted and rubbing her throat with her right hand. Earlier she had appeared on her way to an easy win, especially when Date called for a trainer to attend to her aching right shoulder at the end of the first set. Date clutched her shoulder almost every time she missed a serve or hit an unforced error.



American Pete Sampras returns volley to Andrei Medvedev of Ukraine during his quarterfinal match at the Lipton championship in Key Biscayne on Mar 23. Sampras won 6-1, 6-7 (7-5), 7-6. —AFP/UNB photo

ACOG signs mercantile deal with China

ATLANTA, Mar 24: Organizers of the 1996 Olympics said they have signed a deal to license Atlanta Games merchandise, including items featuring the blue mascot, in China, reports AP. The Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games, the Chinese Olympic Committee and Zong Ao Physical Development Co. of Beijing did not disclose financial terms of the deal announced on Thursday. The parties said that under the agreement, Chinese manufacturers who wish to use trademarks, symbols and designations owned by ACOG will apply for a license through Zong Ao. In return for the rights, the manufacturers will return a portion of their sales receipts as royalties to Zong Ao, ACOG and the Chinese Olympic Committee. The deal includes a minimum royalties guarantee. "The agreement covers the Centennial Olympic Games torch marks, the Izzy character, the "Look of the Games" designs and pictograms and English and Chinese translations of "Atlanta 1996," said Bob Hollander, vice president of the Atlanta Olympics marketing organization. ACOG spokesman Darby Coker said the deal was among the first since a recent US-China agreement aimed at cracking down on piracy of "intellectual properties." That agreement earlier this year averted threatened trade sanctions by both countries. Coker said it is impossible to predict how much demand there would be for Atlanta Olympics merchandise in populous China, though he noted interest in the Games is high. China last year unsuccessfully bid to host the 2000 Summer Games, and is expected to make a bid for the 2004 Olympics.

Pan Am Games

Canadian rower pays the price

MAR DEL PLATA, Argentina, Mar 24: Canadian rower Silken Laumann stripped of one Pan Am Games gold medal Thursday and allowed to keep the other after testing positive for a stimulation that was in a cold medicine, reports AP. Mario Vasquez Rana, president of the Pan American Sports Organization, said the executive committee voted to withdraw the gold medal for the quadruple sculls, but would recommend Laumann receive the minimum sanctions from FISA, the international rowing federation. That could mean merely a warning. Marine, McBean, Diane O'Grady and Wendy Wiebe joined Laumann and easily won the quadruple sculls final. The gold medal will now go to Cuba and the US team moves up from bronze to silver. Laumann will be allowed to keep her single sculls gold, won Saturday, because she did not test positive for ephedrine after that race. After checking with doctors in Argentina and her hometown of Victoria, Laumann, an Olympic bronze medalist, used Benadryl, which contains pseudoephedrine, to treat a cold. She also suffers from asthma. Benadryl is not detectable in the system after more than a few hours, and Vasquez Rana said that is why the tablet she took Saturday night caused her to have a positive test after the team event Sunday. Vasquez Rana said two Canadian physicians were involved in prescribing Benadryl "and they made the mistake. We want to be human, but we have to follow the rules that we have, we hope the doctors will be sanctioned and the rower will not be sanctioned. "A mistake has to be paid for." The US boxing team believes quite a few mistakes have been made by ringside judges. So coach Tom Mustin wasn't going to waste his time worrying whether heavyweight

SEA gymnastics meet from Apr 1

JAKARTA, Mar 24: Some 80 Southeast Asian gymnasts will compete in artistic and rhythmic events in Jakarta, Indonesia, between April 1 and 7, reports Xinhua. Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, Vietnam, Myanmar and defending champion Thailand will send their best teenage gymnasts, aged between 12 and 18, to the second Southeast Asian Gymnastics Confederation championships, said Andi Darusalam Tabusalla, chairman of the organizing committee. A total of 17 gold medals will be up for grabs at the Jakarta meet. Seven are in men's individual artistic gymnastics for pommel horse, rings, floor exercises, horizontal bar, vault, parallel bars and all-around individual. The women's competition will feature 10 events broken into two categories. The first, artistic category, includes the uneven bars, floor exercises, beam, vault and all-around individual. The other is the rhythmic events which includes skipping rope, balls, Indian clubs, scarves and a combined event.

Stuttgart sign Balakov

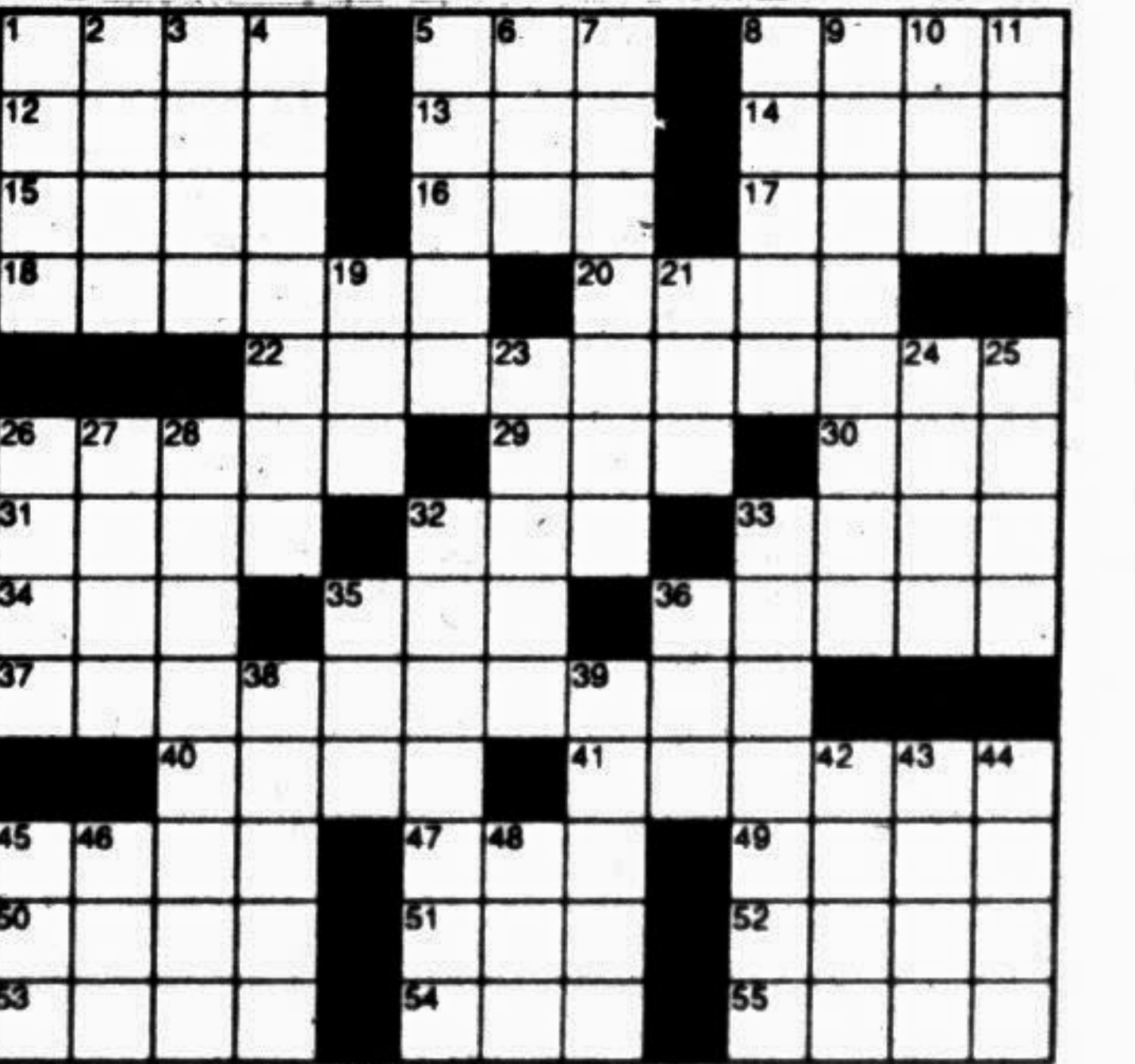
STUTTGART, Mar 24: German First Division club VfB Stuttgart have agreed to sign Bulgarian Krassimir Balakov from Portugal's Sporting for about 3.5 million marks (2.48 million dollars), the German sports news agency SID said, reports Reuter.

Historic soccer sponsorship deal signed

MOSCOW, Mar 24: Russian soccer authorities signed a historic 9 million dollars three-year sponsorship deal on Wednesday but only after overcoming last-minute problems which threatened to scupper the agreement, reports Reuter. Danish chewing-gum manufacturer Stimorol will be the main sponsor in a deal which could net this year's Premier Division champions around 500,000 dollars. A news conference to announce the deal, the first of its kind in the former Soviet Union, was delayed for more than two hours as officials battled over the length of the contract and whether clubs would retain some television rights. Under the deal, one match a week will be televised live throughout Russia. The amount each club receives from the sponsors at the end of the season will depend on how many times their games are televised and on their final league position. The money will come as a shot in the arm to Russian domestic soccer, which is going through troubled times as the best players join foreign clubs and attendances dwindle alarmingly.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS 1 Bona — 5 Fool 8 Complacent 12 Hideout 13 "How — love thee?" 14 Cole Porter's hometown 15 U.S. 16 Possess 17 Spout from the soapbox 18 Shopping quarter 20 Greek X's 22 Chekhov play 26 Fonteyn's frills 29 Twisted Aussie hopper 31 Infinitesimal bit 32 Prompt 33 Bill-signing souvenirs 34 Erstwhile garment 35 Bart, to Homer 36 Bet both ways 37 DeVito portrayal 40 Schoolbook 41 Eyebrow enhancer 45 Rue the run 47 Feed-bag morsel 49 Partner in crime 50 Hunt 51 Gls' entertainment grp. 52 Micro-wave, slangily 53 Towel word 54 Ske- daddled 55 Earl Grey's ilk DOWN 1 Dieter's target 2 — Camera" 3 10, in Tijuana 4 Slipup in print 5 Worship 6 Ms. piggy 7 Honest 8 Parsley serving 9 Rhythmic 10 Grecian vessel 11 Abdomen Solution time: 23 mins.



CRYPTOQUIP M K D X D K D E V M Q Z E M U Y L D W L Z E L Y Z K Z Q Y M J U K Z V Z U D J W M U Y L M J U Yesterday's Cryptogram: ON DISCOUNT AIRLINE, PASSENGERS NEED EXACT CHANGE TO GET ON THE PLANE. Today's Cryptogram clue: V equals B The Cryptogram is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.