

King enjoys last laugh

LAS VEGAS, Apr 7: Last week it seemed that just about everyone was counting Don King out in what appeared likely to be a gang fight for the millions of dollars that come with promoting Mike Tyson's fights, reports Reuter.

But just five days after his release from prison, Tyson named King as his promoter, to the shock of many people — except, of course, Don King, who said here on Thursday that Tyson's return to his fold was not a big coup.

"No. The only thing that makes it seem that way is that we had a reporter that created a furore with nothing but lies," King said, referring to a New York city tabloid among several papers that reported that he was out.

King said the stories had "no foundation, no substance, nothing but categoric, unmitigated lies."

King just laughed — and then expended a few dozen words on lies and liars — upon being asked if there were millions of dollars in a bag one newspaper said he had brought to Tyson late one night last week to buy his loyalty.

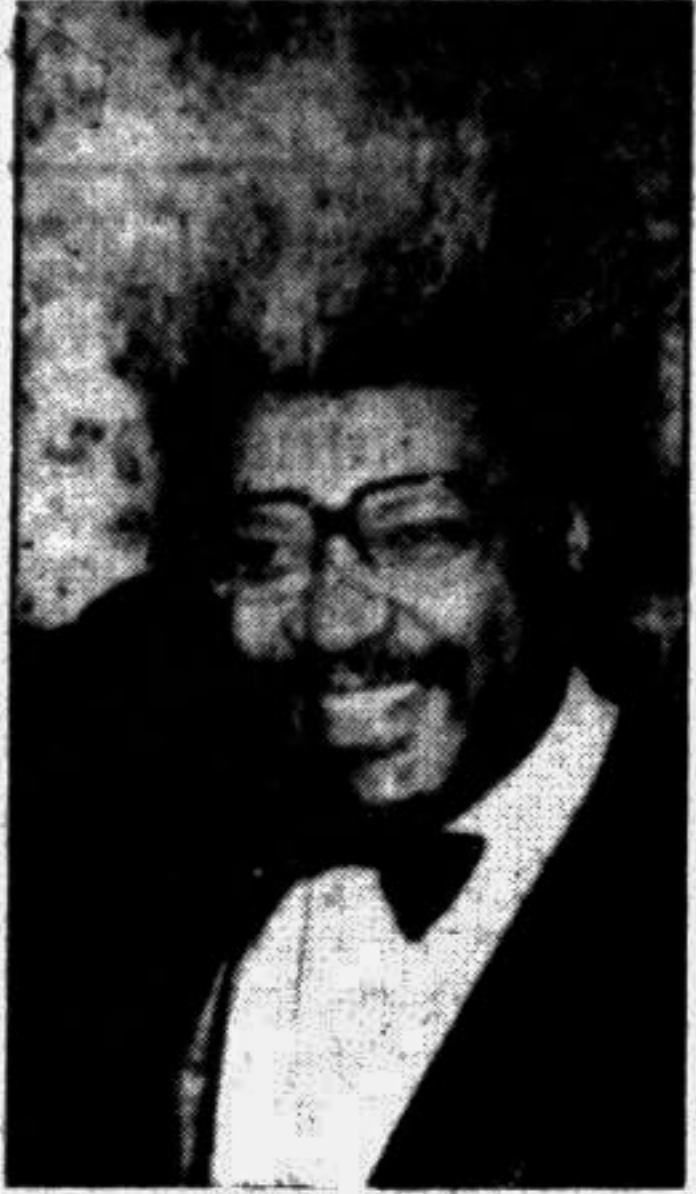
As for remaining Tyson's promoter and signing the former world heavyweight champion to multi-million-dollar contracts with the MGM Grand Hotel here and Showtime cable television network, King said that "in reality, it was never out."

Added: "You can't come back if you never left."

King was asked if he had

short-changed Tyson by not negotiating with other cable television companies to raise the ante for the contracts, whose total value has not been disclosed.

"That's the seeds of discontent, the seeds of sour grapes that they're (his enemies) trying to plant in the vineyard, because they didn't win. I won," said King, who is promoting a five-title fight card at Caesars Palace on Saturday, including two heavyweight championship fights that will



DON KING

likely anoint a future opponent for Tyson.

"So the game is over. So now we just start a new game, maybe they win the next one. This one is over. I mean don't keep belaboring me on this game," King said. "This game is

over. We won, man." King, who had been Tyson's promoter for several years before the youngest heavyweight champion in history went to prison for three years on a conviction for rape, attempted to be magnanimous in victory.

"You can't get mad at competition, you know mobsters and titans and guys is the one that try to vanquish their enemies. ... That ain't the way you do it in America."

"(America is) the home of the brave and the free, with liberty and justice for all, with room for everybody to work."

"So I whipped them this time, but that don't mean it's gonna be forever. They may whip me one day," said King, whose cackling "heh, heh, heh" didn't inspire confidence that he really believed that was possible.

King was asked about the possibility of a Tyson-George Foreman fight, which has several obstacles, including Foreman's insistence he will not fight Tyson if King is involved, and Foreman's long-term, exclusive contract with Showtime's rival, Home Box Office.

"My reputation has been snatching the possible out of the impossible, snatching victory out of the jaws of defeat. If you have faith, nothing is impossible."

But King seemed to fail in his attempt to do the impossible — to completely minimize his accomplishment in reuniting with Tyson.

He said he would find a quiet moment when "We can give some significance to the story so we can inspire others to towering heights."

Maradona plans a comeback in September

BUENOS AIRES, Apr 7: Diego Maradona may be down — but he's not out, his club president said Thursday, reports AP.

Maradona, whose playing days seemed over after failing a doping test at the World Cup finals, is planning a comeback in September once a 15-month ban expires. Racing Club's Juan Destefano said.

"Diego instructed me to start negotiations with his lawyer for a comeback," Destefano told local radio.

However, the 34-year-old star could see his latest comeback thwarted if found guilty of firing an air rifle at reporters last year. A prosecutor has requested that the former national idol serve a four-year prison term.

Maradona, who hid in a downtown hotel last week while on the run from reporters, has taken 20 days leave as coach of Racing to get over a bout of depression allegedly linked to marital problems.

The weekly magazine Caras on Thursday quoted Maradona's mother, Dalma, as saying Diego, "said he could end all this by shooting himself. Reporters won't let him be and he can't leave the house."

Maradona has repeatedly missed training sessions and matches this year after signing a one-year contract to coach Racing, which is seeking its first title in 28 years.

Never far from controversy, he was sent off twice in the first three games of the season and later fined by the Argentine Football Association for verbally abusing referees.

With Maradona at the helm, Racing has slumped into the bottom half of the table after winning just one match out of six. In December he stormed out of struggling Deportivo Mandiyu after his side won one out of 12 games.

Cute handball Sports Reporter

Bangladesh Rifles recorded a thumping 38-2 goals win over Dhaka Wanderers Club in the lone CUTE Premier handball league match held at the court adjacent to the Dhaka Stadium yesterday.

The strong services outfit, who led the first half 17-1 in a one-sided affair, pumped in another 21 goals after the breather to complete the Dhaka Wanderers' rout.

Jahangir with the highest 10 goals led the winners charge followed by Mong Sha Pru and Sanath, who scored six and five goals respectively.

Lawyers want another review of Guenter's trial

HAMBURG, Apr 7: Prosecutors appealed Thursday for another chance to imprison the East German lathe operator who stabbed Monica Seles two years ago because he wanted Steffi Graf to become No. 1 in women's professional tennis, reports AP.

Guenter Parche, given a two-year suspended sentence at his first trial in October 1993, was hauled back into court last month by prosecutors seeking a prison term for the 41-year-old. Seles' attorneys had also appealed.

But judge Gertraut Goering on Monday confirmed the earlier sentence, much to the outrage of Seles and the international tennis world.

The new appeal lodged Thursday probably won't be considered until Goering releases the written explanation of her decision in the next month or two, said Ruediger Bagger, spokesman for the Hamburg prosecutor.

Parche stabbed Seles in the back with a kitchen knife as she sat on a court-side bench during the 1993 Hamburg Open. He said he did it to allow Graf to regain the No. 1 world ranking then held by Seles.

Graf became No. 1 and Seles hasn't returned to professional tennis. Graf had also said she hoped Parche would get a stiffer sentence.

Seles wrote a letter to Judge Goering, saying Parche had ruined her life. Seles' psychologist, Jerry Russel May of Reno, Nevada, testified that the 21-year-old Seles suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder, and has trouble going out in public, such as to the grocery store.

He said it would have been impossible for Seles to face Parche in court, something the judge said was necessary in order to consider the effect the attack had on Seles' life and career.

Seles wrote that she believed Parche wanted to kill her, rejecting his contention during his two trials that he meant only to wound her.

The judge accepted two psychiatric reports that Parche was harmless, aside from his fixation about Graf, and was unlikely to commit such a crime again.



The US president of the Atlanta Committee for the 1996 Summer Games, Billy Payne (R), presents the Olympic torch made of aluminum, brass, gold leaf and wood, to Antonis Tsikas (L), head of the Greek Olympic Committee in Athens, April 6. The torch will be ignited in the ancient temple of Olympia next spring. — AFP/UNB photo

Atlanta Games' torch given to Greece

ATHENS, Apr 7: The Atlanta Olympics Organising Committee on Thursday presented the torch which will carry the Olympic flame from ancient Olympia in Greece to Atlanta in the United States to open the 1996 Summer Olympic Games, reports Reuter.

"In presenting this torch I want to thank Greece for its gift to the world, the Olympic Movement. It is the single idea in this world which calls on all people to unite," said Billy Payne, president of the Atlanta Organising Committee.

The torch, made out of aluminum, wood, brass and gold, will be lit next summer from the rays of the sun in a ceremony at the ruins of ancient Olympia where the first Olympics were held in 776 BC. Athletes will carry the torch to Athens and it will then be flown to the United States.

"The exact route has yet to be decided because many cities want to be part of the torch relay but I can tell you that this relay will be longer than any other in past," said Antonis Tsikas, president of the Greek Olympic Committee.

Sino natants set to return

BEIJING, Apr 7: Chinese swimmers are to return to international competition for the first time since seven top performers tested positive for performance-enhancing drugs, the official Xinhua news agency said on Thursday, reports Reuter.

Quoting officials of the Chinese Swimming Association, the agency said China would attend the University Games, in Fukuoka, Japan, in June and the Pan-Pacific Games in Cali, Colombia, at the end of August.

The seven were banned for two years after testing positive at the 1994 Hiroshima Asian Games and prompted rumours that China's emergence as a swimming power was a result of systematic doping.

Although the Chinese government rejected the claims, calling the offences isolated acts of ignorant or misguided individuals some swimming associations called for all Chinese swimmers to be banned.

On the first day of China's National Championships on Wednesday organisers tested seven unnamed swimmers for drugs, including past champions and new competitors, said the official Guangming daily.

All seven had recorded exceptional qualifying times at the meeting in Baoding in Northern Hebei province.

World champions Le Jingyi and Liu Limin are among many national team members competing in the tournament but it was not known if they were among those tested.

The meeting's high-profile drug-testing reflected new Chinese Swimming Association (CSA) measures to fight doping, which association officials said on Wednesday had infected the sport in China in recent years.

The association on Wednesday ordered an immediate expansion of random drug testing, including surprise out-of-competition screening.

It said it also was considering increasing the standard two year ban for first time offenders and imposing equivalent bans on "anyone responsible for the offence."

Top seeds sail into qtrs

AMELIA ISLAND, Florida, Apr 7: The top three seeds — Conchita Martinez, Gabriela Sabatini and Maggie Maleeva — advanced Thursday to the quarterfinals on another windy, rainy day at the Bausch and Lomb Championships, reports AP.

The bad weather forced a five-hour delay of the start of play after halting matches Wednesday afternoon. Warmer, calmer and dryer weather is forecast for the last three days of the tournament.

Martinez, the top seed, routed Irina Spirlea of Romania 6-1, 6-2 and will next face Amanda Coetzer. The No. 5 seed from South Africa defeated Virginia Ruano Pascual of Spain 7-5, 7-5.

"I think I played a near perfect game today," said Martinez, who is looking for her second straight victory following last week's triumph at the Family Circle Magazine Cup at Hilton Head Island, South Carolina.

"That's not easy to do, as Irina is a good player," Martinez said. "There were some difficult points out there that could have gone either way."

No. 2 Sabatini won her second straight match in a romp, overwhelming fellow Argentine Bettina Fulco-Villella 6-1, 6-0. Sabatini will next play another compatriot, No. 6 Ines Gorrochategu, a 6-2, 7-5 winner over Wiltrud Probst of Germany.

"I feel very good about my game," said Sabatini who has lost only one game in two matches. "I've got a lot of confidence in the way I'm playing, more so than a year ago at this time. That's from winning some key matches in recent months."

Maleeva, the No. 3 seed, lost her opening set to Chanda Rubin of Lafayette, La. before rebounding for a 2-6, 6-3, 6-0 win and the right to take on Italy's Laurence Courtois. Courtois surprised No. 7 Zina Garrison Jackson of Houston 6-1, 3-6, 6-4, in one of the two three-set matches of the third round.

"I have never had anyone hit as many winners as Chanda did in our opening set," Maleeva said. "I've played her quite a few times in the past and have always won. She was just unbelievable that first set."

The other two quarterfinalists are Katarzyna Nowak from Poland, who advanced with a 6-2, 6-3 triumph over Melke Babel of Germany, and No. 8 Sabine Hack of Germany, who downed Silvia Ramon of Spain 6-1, 7-5.

The finals of the durs 430,000 event are Sunday, with durs 79,000 awarded to the winner.

Wimbledon, Ivanisevic's goal

SPLIT, Croatia, Apr 7: Big-hitting Goran Ivanisevic, all set to return to tennis action in Barcelona on Monday is already thinking of the Wimbledon title which has twice narrowly eluded him, reports Reuter.

The 23-year-old Croat has been recovering in his homeland from an operation five weeks ago on a knee injured during a soccer game in Rome last April.

Cocooned from his waist down in pressurised leggings which have aided the recovery, Ivanisevic told Reuters: "I've been in the Wimbledon final twice so that (the title) is my goal for the future. If I can achieve it, that would be great."

Australian coach Bob Brett, in Croatia to monitor his charge's progress, said: "I know inside my heart what I think he can be, but it's not something you should say openly."

Ivanisevic lost the 1992 Wimbledon final in five sets to Andre Agassi. Last year he succumbed in three to Pete Sampras.

Questions have been posed about his fragile temperament, but his coach is optimistic.

"I see him as being very competitive with everybody in the world. He is much calmer, he's very fit," Brett said. "His tennis and technique are not going to change. He just needs to take advantage of the particular situation you have at the particular time in a big match."

After his 1994 Wimbledon final defeat, Ivanisevic failed in the first round at both the US and Australian Opens.

In between, he sustained a semifinal loss in the six million dollar Grand Slam Cup in Munich, again to Sampras.

By the Australian Open in January, the knee was clearly troublesome, though he declined to blame it for a poor performance.

The crunch came in February when he had to default his opening match in the Stuttgart Open after just four games, his right knee totally locked.

But Ivanisevic says he is "really surprised" at the speed of his recovery and is looking forward to returning to the fray, beginning with next week's ATP Tour event in Barcelona.

He has dropped to ninth in the world rankings but is confident of staying in the top 10, at the very least.

"Now, I think my time is coming," the Croat forecast.

"I can't say I'll win Wimbledon," he added. "But I would love to because it's the biggest tournament and it's my biggest wish."

Kusuma sent packing

BEIJING, Apr 7: A confident Park Sung-Woo of South Korea sent Indonesia's Olympic champion and top seed Allan Budi Kusuma crashing out of the men's quarter-finals at the Asian Badminton Championships on Thursday, reports Reuter.

Park's dramatic 15-11, 15-0 defeat of Kusuma started a series of upsets that left six Chinese and two South Koreans — but none of the sport's usually dominant Indonesians — in contention for Friday's semi-finals.

In the women's quarter-finals, unseeded 19-year-old Wang Chen of China burst onto the scene with an emphatic 11-6, 11-4, victory over number two seed Ra Kyung-Min of South Korea. Wang's compatriot Yao Yan, also unseeded, upset number four seed Lee Joo-Hyun 11-6, 4-11, 11-5.

Ringside at Caesars Palace

LAS VEGAS, Apr 7: Instead of calling them world heavyweight champions, the winners of the two titles up for grabs on Saturday could just as well be dubbed world champion babysitters, reports Reuter.

That's because many people believe the two fighters who will end up with the World Boxing Association (WBA) and World Boxing Council (WBC) belts will be just tucking them in safe and snug for the man of the house to come home and claim them.

That man, of course, is Mike Tyson, fresh from three years in prison and flush from signing a six-figure, multi-million-dollar deal aimed at having him reclaim the heavyweight mansion, which he has dominated — in or out of prison, with or without a title — for years.

In addition to the two heavyweight title fights, three other championship bouts will be on the card at Caesars Palace.

WBC super lightweight champion Julio Cesar Chavez of Mexico (93-1-1) will defend against 29-1 Giovanni Parisi of Italy, and International Boxing Federation (IBF) welterweight titlist Felix Trinidad of Puerto Rico (25-0) will take on Roger Turner (29-2) of the United States.

WBC super welterweight champion Luis Santana of the Dominican Republic (39-15-2) will fight Terry Norris of the United States in a rematch of their controversial first fight.

In that fight last November, Norris (38-5) was the champion and ended a fifth-round flurry of punches to Santana's head with a blow to the back of the head. The Dominican went down and stayed flat on his back for several minutes. Norris was disqualified and lost his title.

Chavez, 32, is on the downside of great career. He no longer has his once vaunted power or speed, but still is aggressive and damaging, especially to the body.

Chavez is a 6-1 favourite, but the relatively unknown Parisi is given a better chance

by some to upset the Mexican hero by using exceptional speed and sharp counter punches.

Trinidad, 22, is considered by many to be one of the best pound-for-pound fighters in the world. His last two victories were against fighters who were a combined 88-0.

There are good reasons why Turner, 31, is a 12-1 underdog.



MIKE TYSON

In the first of the heavyweight babysitting tryouts on Saturday, Tony Tucker will

Cruyff staying at Barcelona

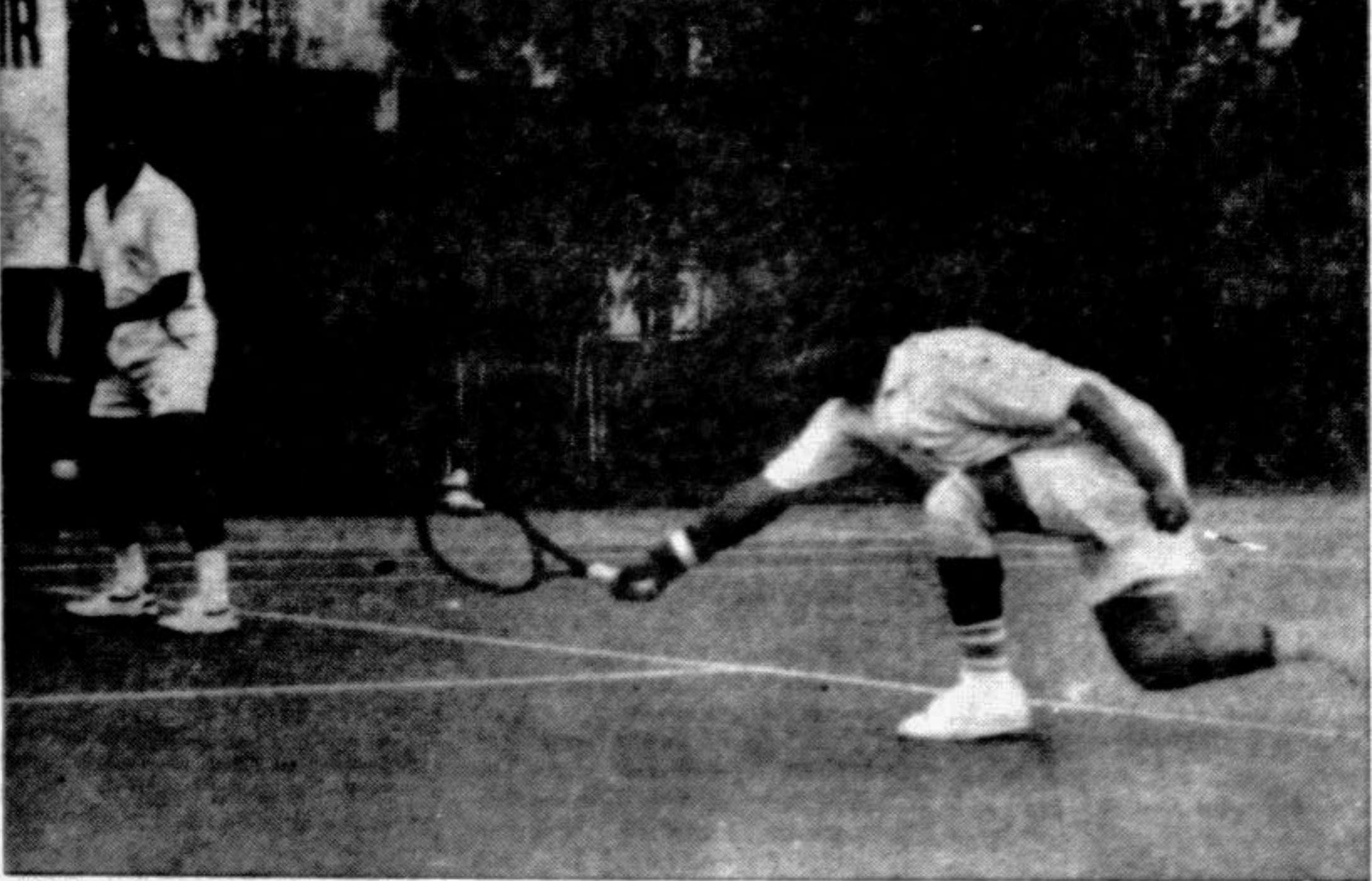
BARCELONA, Apr 7: Dutch coach Johan Cruyff has decided to stay with Barcelona, ending weeks of speculation that the most successful manager in the club's history was on his way out, reports AFP.

"Everything is fine, we've agreed on everything," said Cruyff after a meeting on Thursday night with club president Jose Luis Nunez and vice-president Joan Gaspart.

Cruyff had been threatening to quit because he felt undermined on certain team issues and was personally upset at local press treatment of his son and first team contender, Jordi.

Noble gesture

TOKYO, Apr 7: President Nicolas Leoz of the South American Football Confederation donated durs 20,000 Friday to the victims of Japan's worst earthquake in seven decades, reports AP.



Action from the Binjan inter-club tennis tournament doubles match involving the Dhaka Cantonment Club duo of Col Jahangir and S I Khan and the Officers' Club pair of Zohar and Mesbah at Dhaka Club court yesterday. The Cantonment Club pair won the match 2-1. —Star photo

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

- News-paper stat.
- Squid squirt
- Con game
- Largest of the seven
- Brad-street's partner
- Million: pref.
- Long-distance phone service
- Milwaukee products
- Emulate Brian
- Boitano
- Billfold
- "Quantum"
- Winter affliction
- Spiked weapon
- Othello was one
- Drag
- "— Yankee Doodle Dandy"
- Conversation piece?
- Simile center
- Art medium
- Off the

DOWN

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- Moreno or Rudner
- Rook
- Amin
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- Recognized
- Infinite-simal
- Mobile-phone type
- "A Death in the Family" writer
- Spar
- "Gypsy" subject
- Full hairstyle
- NYSE counter-
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- Steered a gondola
- "O Sole —"
- Parisian pal
- New-fangled phone feature
- Shopper description
- "Born in the —"
- Festive
- Vibraphonist Lionel, to fans
- Comparison shopper's data
- Yellow fever mosquito
- In the style of
- Feed the hogs
- Timber wolf
- Ketch's kin
- Relocate
- Brainstorm
- "Flying Down to —"
- Future flamingo

Solution time: 21 mins.

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AUTUMNAL EDGE
RAY BORDER
RELAX KEPT
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MNO HEARD RAE
EASTERLY TAKE
ALVA BABES
SCAMPI LIZ
HAWA DRIZZLES
OPAL LEE EARS
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CRYPTOQUIP

MEYKY'LP EGSY WF

MEY' DPWSDPF'L OPR,

OYIPNLY MEY DPWS

DNLM RG MEKGNRE.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: ON THE LOCAL FARM HE TRIED TO RIDE A MULE, AND GOT A KICK OUT OF IT.

Today's Cryptoquip clue: O equals B

The Cryptoquip 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.