

Sport



Tottenham Hotspurs' Teddy Sheringham (L) anxiously watches, as his shot sailing towards the Norwich City goal during an English Premiership match at White Hart Lane in London on Monday. Tottenham won by a solitary goal. — AFP/UNB photo

FAM imposes int'l ban on 58 booters

KUALA LUMPUR, Apr 18: Fifty-eight Malaysian soccer players who confessed to fixing matches in a national league have been banned from playing anywhere in the world for one to four years, according to Bernama news agency here on Monday, reports Xinhua.

The Football Association of Malaysia (FAM) said Monday two players will be suspended for four years, 12 for three years, 10 for 2-1/2 years, 19 for two years, eight for 1-1/2 years and seven for one year.

FAM officials were quoted by the agency that the players have two weeks to appeal to the council. The ban was decided during a FAM council meeting on Sunday, when it became effective.

Police, who are investigating the players since August, have not put charges on them. The punished players are accused of taking bribes from bookmakers to fix results of matches in the 16-team Premier League, up to 40,000 ringgit (16,000 US dollars) for one of them to let in a goal.

Bernama said 22 players and coaches, earlier placed under virtual house arrest, will also be asked to show cause why they cannot be banned from playing soccer for some period.

The 22 players and coaches are placed under restricted residence for about three years, which means they will have to live in remote districts far from civilization and not be allowed to leave without police permission.

Novotna powers Czechs in Fed Cup qualifier

LA MANGA, Spain, Apr 18: World No 5 Jana Novotna of the Czech Republic defeated Katarzyna Nowak of Poland on Monday to help her country defeat Poland 3-0 in the first day of the Europe-Africa regional qualifying games for the 1996 Federation Cup, reports AP.

Novotna, who heads the top-seeded Czech team, won 6-4, 6-3. The Czech team now leads the four-team Pool A followed by Slovenia which defeated Britain 2-1.

All 16 teams are divided into four pools to play round-robin matches through to Wednesday at La Manga tennis club in southeastern Spain.

The top two teams from each pool will then advance to play-off rounds Thursday and Friday with the final top two teams getting a chance to bid for a place in the Federation's Group One selection of teams to play in the 1996 tournament.

In other games Monday, Natalia Zvereva of Belarus, the world's No. 10, defeated Nanne Dahlman of Finland 7-6 (7-5), 6-2, to help Belarus defeat the Finland 2-1 and place itself atop of Pool C with Latvia which defeated Switzerland 2-1.

In Pool B, Georgia was awarded victory in the three games it was to play against Hungary after the Hungarians failed to field the minimum of three players.

In the same Pool, Russia defeated Ukraine by two matches to one. Romania took the lead in Pool D, defeating Israel 3-0 while Belgium won its games against Croatia 2-1.

IAAF clears Akpan of steroid use

MONTE CARLO, Apr 18: Nigerian hurdler Ime Akpan was cleared of taking steroids by an International Amateur Athletic Federation arbitration panel here on Thursday after a two-year battle, reports AFP.

The panel ruled that the case could not be "proved beyond a reasonable doubt." Akpan, 22, tested positive for the anabolic steroid nandrolone on June 17 two years ago but the athlete, backed by the Nigerian Athletic Federation, argued the positive test could stem from her use of the contraceptive pill norinyl. Akpan was immediately cleared to return to competition.

German athlete faces 4-year ban for doping

COLOGNE, Apr 18: Susen Tiedtke-Greene, the long jump bronze medalist at last month's World Indoor Championships, is set for a four-year drugs ban for testosterone after her positive test for testosterone was confirmed here on Thursday, reports AFP.

Manfred Donike, head of the Cologne laboratory handling the test, confirmed the B sample result, confirming Monday's findings.

Traces of a substance containing testosterone were found in a random test taken during training on March 13, the day after the championships ended in Barcelona.

Chang cruises into Round 2

HONG KONG, Apr 18: Top seed and defending champion Michael Chang of the United States beat Switzerland's Jakob Hlasek 6-1, 6-3 Tuesday in the first round of the \$328,000 Hong Kong Open, reports AP.

Crowd favorite Chang, ranked eighth in the world, said he was happy to get off to a relatively easy start and was looking forward to his second-round match against German qualifier Alex Raquiescu.

"It was a good match for me... Jakob is the kind of player who could beat anybody in the world so it was nice to get this win," Chang said.

American Jim Courier, the third seed, who rose to 12th from 15th in the rankings after his victory in the Japan Open, beat South Korean wild card entry Yoon Yong-il 6-2, 6-4 in his first-round match.

Courier had a harder than expected time against Yoon. The American dropped his serve in the sixth game of the first set, although he broke Yoon three times.

The second set was closer, with Courier gaining a single break in the seventh game for his victory.

Courier said he never expected an easy time against the 287th-ranked Yoon.

"Everybody can play," he said, adding "There are plenty of players ranked below Yoon who can play."

Courier beat new world No 1 Andre Agassi of the United States in the Japan Open final. He was joined in the second round here by sixth seed Alexander Volkov of Russia, who beat Israeli qualifier Ofer Sela 6-3, 6-3.

American Jonathan Stark beat Sweden's Henrik Holm 6-3, 6-4, and Germany's David Prinosil defeated Canada's Sebastien Lareau 7-5, 1-6, 6-4.

In other first-round matches, Kenneth Carlsen of Denmark beat American Jim Grabb 6-4, 7-5, Canadian Greg Rusedski beat Sweden's Anders Jarryd 6-4, 7-6 (7-3), Jan Apell of Sweden beat Ger-

many's Lars Rehmann 6-4, 6-2, and Jonas Bjorkman of Sweden defeated Marcos Ondruska of South Africa 7-6 (7-8), 1-6, 7-6 (7-3).

Seventh seeded Wayne Ferreira dismissed a challenge from Britain's Jeremy Bates, advancing 7-5, 6-4 to the second round.

The South African, ranked No 11 on the ATP Tour, became the first of the tournament's top three to move ahead at the Victoria Park courts here.

Ferreira used solid groundstrokes to finally subdue Bates, who at No. 54 in the world is at his career-best ranking at age 32.

The Briton and the South African traded breaks in the sixth and seventh games of the first set, but Ferreira broke again for 6-5 and served out the set on a call which Bates protested to no avail.

Bates appeared to lose heart in the second set, dropping to 0-4 before finally winning a game.

"The balls were soft and the court was different from last week in Tokyo," said the winner. "For me that was the hardest part of the match. I think that Jeremy lost some heart after the first set."

Top seed and defending champion Michael Chang was opening his week in a night match against Swiss Jakob Hlasek. American Jim Courier,

seeded third, was to face a South Korean wild card entry, Tong Il-Yoon, also at night.

Seventh seeded Russian Alexander Volkov earned a win with a 6-3, 6-3 defeat of unknown Israeli qualifier Ofer Sela. Volkov had been scheduled to play last week in Tokyo at the Japan Open, but left his visa application until too late.

He was denied entry to the country and had to skip the event where he had been a seed.

Other winners on a full day of play under sunny skies were German David Prinosil and Kenneth Carlsen of Denmark.

Prinosil, ranked 91 in the world, upset Canadian No 1 Sebastien Lareau 7-5, 1-6, 6-4. Lareau dropped serve on a double fault to start the final set. He broke back for 2-2, but lost serve in the next game and never regained his momentum on an outside court at the public park venue for the tournament.

Carlsen beat Lars Rehman of Germany 6-4, 7-5.

The Hong Kong event is one of the last on hardcourt before many players move over to the European red clay as the buildup for next month's start of the French Open.

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"We have a three-year agreement with IBM which was coming to a conclusion," Miles said. "We made a decision not to sell the title because we believe a clean title will help us promote the ATP Tour."

The ATP Tour, which runs 85 tournaments in 38 countries, had earlier announced agreements with Broadcasters Eurosport, ZDF and ESPN starting from 1996 and aimed at enhancing the television coverage of men's tennis worldwide.

Ndeti's third Boston Marathon

BOSTON, Massachusetts, Apr 18: Kenya's Cosmas Ndeti won his third straight Boston Marathon here Monday, joining US runners Bill Rodgers and Clarence Demar as the only runners to capture the event three times in a row, reports AFP.

Ndeti, 25, joins Bill Rodgers, who won here from 1978-1980, and Clarence Demar, who took a record seven Boston titles including a sweep from 1922-1924.

Ndeti won the 1993 race in only his second marathon outing ever and set the course record of two hours, seven minutes and 15 seconds last year.

Kenya's Cosmas Ndeti crosses the finish line with a time of 2:09:21 to win the 99th running of the Boston Marathon on April 17 in Boston. Ndeti has won three years in a row. — AFP/UNB photo

Tyson, Ali to perform hajj

DUBAI, Apr 18: Former heavyweight champions Mike Tyson and Mohammed Ali will receive a red carpet welcome in Saudi Arabia when they perform hajj, the annual Muslim pilgrimage, reports Reuter.

Saudi Arabian prince Faisal Bin Fahd, general president of the youth welfare presidency, on Monday welcomed "the visit of the former heavyweight world champion Mike Tyson, who has embraced Islam recently and will perform hajj this year," the official Saudi Press Agency (SPA) reported.

The hajj, attended by more than two million people, is due to start in late April, reaching its climax in the second week of May.

SPA said the prince "urged the departments concerned to take the necessary steps to welcome and host these guests until they complete the hajj rituals."

The two boxing legends will be accompanied by Imam Warthuddin Mohammed who SPA said was "leader of Muslims in the United States."

Ali, who embraced Islam many years ago, has already performed the hajj.

ATP Tour signs deal with Mercedes

PARIS, Apr 18: Men's professional tennis circuit governing body ATP Tour today announced the signing of a major sponsorship deal with German car maker Mercedes, reports Reuter.

"This is the most important deal ever reached by the ATP Tour with a sponsor," said ATP Tour chief executive officer Mark Miles.

Miles declined to give any figures for the four-year deal which will begin in 1996.

Mercedes will become the official car of the ATP Tour and the main sponsor of the ATP World Championship in Frankfurt with a major presence at other tour events worldwide.

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Latest WTA rankings

MIAMI, Florida, Apr 18: Steffi Graf firmed her hold on the world number one ranking, improving her lead to more than 20 points in the latest WTA Tour rankings released here Monday, reports AFP.

The German star remained unbeaten this year and won her fourth tour title of 1995 by beating Asa Carlsson of Sweden on Sunday in the final at Houston.

The victory improved Graf's points average to 319.07 compared to 296.72 for Arantxa Sanchez of Spain.

US veteran Amy Frazier made the only rise among the top 20 players, jumping two places to 16th after beating eighth-ranked Kimiko Date in the Japan Open finals.

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World Youth Championships

Costa Rica rock Germany

DOHA, Apr 18: Costa Rica stunned former champions Germany with a 2-1 victory on Monday in the World Youth Championships, reports AP.

The Costa Ricans outplayed the Germans and led 1-0, at half-time with a penalty by Jewison Benneth.

They increased the lead six minutes into the second half when Soto Jafet covered 30 yards (27 metres) all alone and beat the German keeper Simon Jentsch with a sharp left foot drive.

Germany's face-saving goal was scored by Jan Walle during injury time. Costa Rica, who lost 0-2 to Australia in their first match, was a vastly improved side as they took on the Germans with brimming confidence.

Costa Rica forced a number of corners and free-kicks in the first half with some fine running down the flanks, and cool and intelligent midfield moves controlled by Jafet, a semi-professional player with Heredia FC.

Germany's tall strikers Frank Gerster and Marco Kuentzel were shadowed closely by the Costa Rican defenders Wallace McDonald and Alejandro Sanchez.

The Germans, who played an attacking game against Cameroon in the previous match, were not in their usual

form in the first half which was dominated by the unassuming Costa Ricans.

Costa Rica's hard work paid off in the 42nd minute when the German captain Hinze Castern brought down a charging Benneth, who plays for the Mexican First Division side Zacatepec.

He converted the resulting spot kick with a drive from the white spot and led his colleagues to a nearby corner flag to perform a victory dance in a typical Costa Rican folk style.

Germany suffered further setback before the end of the first half when they had Sven Fischer sent off by the French referee Alain Sars for a dangerous tackle from behind on Jervis Drummond, one of the twin players in the Costa Rican team.

Costa Rica should have won but for the wonderful saves by the German keeper Simon Jentsch, voted the best player-of-the-match.

Both teams played in the last 30 minutes with 10-men each after Kenneth Baltodano was sent off for a dangerous foul on Frank Riethmann.

The match was attended by about 2,500 people.

DULL DRAW Reuter adds: Brazil and Russia each had a player sent off as the two sides played to a dull goalless draw in their Group-A clash.

Brazil, who started the de-

fence of their title with a spectacular 6-0 win over Syria in their opening match, looked short of ideas against Russia whose well-organised defence never looked under threat from Brazilian dangerman Reinaldo.

Reinaldo, who scored a hat-trick against Syria, hit the bar in the final minutes after having an earlier goal disallowed for handball.

Russia's Andrei Krivov and Sergei Semak also wasted golden opportunities in first half which saw Andrei Solomatine sent off for a second bookable offence. He was later followed by Brazil's Ze Elias.

SPAIN BEAT JAPAN In Group B, Spain beat Japan 2-1 to book their place in the quarter-finals.

Raul Gonzalez, voted man-of-the-match, scored the winner in the 80th minute, 10 minutes after Hidetoshi Nakata had equalised direct from a corner kick.

Roger Junyent had earlier given Spain the lead, heading home a swerving cross in the 6th minute.

Japan, needing a win to have any chance of making the last eight, went all out in attack in the second half but were unable to break down a confident Spanish defence which played with a great deal of control and intelligence.

Sponsorship in quagmire

BEIJING, Apr 18: China's top soccer league has kicked-off its 1995 season without a title sponsor because of confusion about whether tobacco firms can legally sponsor sports under a new advertising law, officials said on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

The new law, which took effect on February 1, bans cigarette promotion in sports stadia but makes no direct mention of event sponsorship.

China has not yet reached a decision on whether US tobacco giant Philip Morris, which launched China's Marlboro League in 1994, can resume sponsorship this year, sports and industry officials said.

The league started its new season on Sunday without a title sponsor, but soccer officials said one could be appointed later.

Bureau of Industry and Commerce officials refused to

comment on whether Marlboro's involvement in the league would continue.

"This is a very sensitive question," a spokesman said. "We are waiting for our department chief to answer it."

The International Management Group (IMG), agents for the league, said they were optimistic Marlboro's sponsorship, which links the brand to the development of football in a nation of heavy-smoking soccer fans, would survive.

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CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid and clues. Includes categories like ACROSS, DOWN, and CRYPTOQUIP. Clues include: 1 - de mer, 4 Seaman, 8 Rum cake, 12 Luau, 13 Hibernation station, 14 Oklahoma city, 15 About 80 percent of the atmosphere, 17 Bronx cheer, 18 All together, 19 Emulate Niobe, 21 Cubicle, 22 Balloon fill, 26 West Side Story song, 29 Irritate, 30 Geneticist's abbr., 31 Accepting clients, 32 Stylish, '60s-style, 33 Roulette bet, 34 - Aviv, 35 Dict., 36 Thaws, 37 Kind of, 2 Related, 3 Riga resident, 4 Nova - landing site?, 7 Out of the game, 8 Aviatrix, Markham, 9 Literary collection, 10 Occupation, briefly, 11 Wood-shaping tool, 16 Boy Wonder, 20 Whodunit author, 23 Object of worship, 24 Apparatus, 25 Viking's landing site?, 26 Sleuth played by Lorre, 27 Pinnacle, 28 Count (on), 29 - populi, 32 Pepper-mint-oil derivative, 33 Black (Sp.), 35 Author, Buscaglia, 36 Laments, 38 You can see right through him, 39 Causes annul, 42 Look lecherously, 43 Verifiable, 44 Raggedy Ann's beau, 45 Bugging device, 46 Flamenco cheer, 47 Rattle, 49 Singer, Sumac.

Cryptoquip puzzle grid and clues. Clues include: M Q P V Y J T N F M M S G - J S G Q S W J I Y N E M T G - D S Q D E M S V S W Q V E S G J M. Yesterday's Cryptoquip: OUR COUSIN THE BAKER, WHO HAS LOW SELF-ESTEEM, FEELS LIKE A CRUMB.

Today's Cryptoquip clue: Y equals P. The Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, 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.



The jubilant Bangladesh Ansars poodlers (From L to R) Julekha Begum, Lnu and Rinu, who won the women's team event title of the 20th Karnaphuli national table tennis championships after defeating Barguna in the final at the NSC wooden floor gymnasium yesterday. — Star photo