

### Asian titans to tussle in Singapore

CALCUTTA, Sept 6: The Asian Cricket Council (ACC) has decided to organise a three-nation limited overs cricket tournament involving Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka at Singapore in April next year, reports PTI.

The three-nation tournament would be staged just after the Wills World Cup cricket championships, the ACC secretary, Jagmohan Dalmiya told reporters here yesterday.

Following is the fixture:  
**April 1:** Pakistan vs Sri Lanka  
**April 3:** India vs Sri Lanka  
**April 5:** India vs Pakistan  
**April 7:** Final

### Saqlain shatters Lankans

RAWALPINDI, Sept 6: Sri Lanka suffered a severe setback on Tuesday when they lost a three-day match to the Pakistan Cricket Board patron's XI by an innings and six runs, just three days before the first Test, reports Reuter.

Sri Lanka, bundled out for 104 in their first innings, were fired out a second time for 171 with more than a day to spare after the home team had declared shortly after lunch on 281 for nine.

Hashan Tillekeratne with 38, Chamara Dunusinghe (27) and Kumar Dharmasena (22) gave some respectability to the tourists' score after their six frontline batsmen had been sent back to the pavilion with just 82 runs on the board.

Local off-spinner Saqlain Mushtaq was the wrecker-in-chief with four for 67, while paceman Mohammad Akram, who had started the riot, ended up with three wickets for 18 runs.

Earlier, the Patron's XI had resumed at 179 for one but soon lost Saad Azad, who scored 81 in 92 balls, and opener Shoaib Mohammad for 73.

Inzamamul Haq then enjoyed some batting practice with a fluent 49 off 63 balls before Lankan off-spinner Muttiah Muralidharan sent the innings into decline with three wickets.

### Warwicks keep hopes alive

LONDON, Sept 6: Warwickshire kept alive their hopes of clinching another English county cricket treble with a tense victory over Gloucestershire on faster scoring-rate in a rearranged Sunday League fixture on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

The NatWest Trophy holders moved up alongside Lancashire in third place and, with two games to play, are now two points behind joint leaders Kent and Worcestershire.

They batted in drizzle throughout their innings and reached a revised target of 110 from 32 overs with four wickets and 23 balls to spare to capture four vital points.

Mark Ramprakash celebrated his selection for England's tour of South Africa with 103 for Middlesex, only to see opponents Northamptonshire win on a faster scoring rate.

### Graham decides not to appeal against ban

LONDON, Sept 6: Former Arsenal manager George Graham said on Tuesday he had decided not to appeal against a one-year worldwide ban from soccer for taking illegal transfer payments, reports Reuter.

"I do not have a bottomless pocket to meet the costs of an appeal," Graham, Arsenal's most successful manager in half a century, said in a statement released by his lawyers.

"Secondly I feel in my heart I would not get a fair hearing and lastly I want to get on with the rest of my life and put this episode behind me," he added.

Graham was sacked by the London Premier League side in February after details of the illegal payments emerged.

The English Football Association (FA), inquiring into the transfers of Norwegian Pal Lydersen and Danish international John Jensen to Arsenal, found Graham guilty of accepting 425,000 pounds (660,600 dollars) in illegal payments.

In July, the FA banned him for 12 months, a suspension which was later endorsed by FIFA.

Graham brought six trophies to Arsenal during his eight years in charge, including the European Cup Winners' Cup in 1994.

## Old foes renew rivalry



NEW YORK, Sept 6: Steffi Graf and Gabriela Sabatini know all about each other and about winning at the US Open.

On Tuesday, the two former champions swept past out-matched American opponents without losing a set to make a date in the semifinals that will continue a rivalry started when both teens were playing junior tournaments, reports Reuter.

The top-seeded Graf overwhelmed unseeded Amy Frazier 6-2, 6-3 under the lights at the National Tennis Centre Stadium hours after the ninth-seeded Sabatini had routed 14th-seeded Mary Joe Fernandez 6-1, 6-3 in a matinee mis-match.

Both Graf and Sabatini look primed for their Friday showdown.

A three-time champion, Graf has not lost a set since rallying for a three-set win over Amanda Coetzer in the first round.

"There is nothing about her game that is not great," Frazier said of Graf after absorbing the 59-minute beating. "She's got a huge serve, a big forehand and she moves unbelievably."

Sabatini, the 1990 champion here, has won five matches without dropping a set.

"There is nothing I can say about my game that is wrong or than I can do a little better," Sabatini said after beating Fernandez in 84 minutes.

"When you feel good technically, physically, mentally, that is the key, and that is how I feel today."

At times, Sabatini seems to float through matches, turning tennis into a form of ballet as she did Tuesday.

In such matches, Sabatini perfectly blends a soft touch with sheer athleticism, confusing opponents with a mix of top-spins and slices, lobs and drop shots, passing winners and volleys.

But Sabatini will need to continue at that level if she wants to snap a seven-match losing streak against the German, who leads their rivalry 28-11.

Fernandez believes that Sabatini has what it takes to score the upset.

"She has got the shots," she said of the 25-year-old Argentine. "She has got an all-around game. I think if she goes out there and believes she can win, she will have a good shot."

Graf and Sabatini always seem to be around for the final weekend.

Graf's 63 match wins at the Open ties her with Helen Jacobs for fourth on the all-time tournament list. She is in the semifinals for the 11th time in 13 US Opens.

Sabatini has 49 wins and this is the second year in a row and fifth time over-all that she has reached the final four.

The hard court surfaces suit both players. Both also feel at home here.

During the tournament, Graf lives in an apartment in Manhattan.



Tennis's pretty woman Gabriela Sabatini exults after drubbing American opponent Mary Joe Fernandez 6-1, 6-3 at the US Open on Sept 5. The flamboyant Argentine set up a seminal showdown with her old rival world number one Steffi Graf.

"This is my own place," said the 26-year-old Graf. "I like to walk around and feel the pulse of the city."

Sabatini feeds off the energy of her legions of New York fans.

"It is a great crowd," she said. "I think it is one of the best ones. They really get involved in the matches. It is more exciting for us, too."

But the match might have gotten a little too exciting for Sabatini after she breezed past Fernandez in the first

set and to a 5-1 second-set lead.

Fernandez, who had trailed in the last two sets of her three-set upset of defending champion Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario in the previous round, again refused to go gently.

Fernandez went on the offensive as she saved three match points for 5-2 and three more for 5-3 before finally succumbing on the seventh on a forehand error.

"That's what she does so well, when she is down, she starts really going for it," Sabatini said.

### US OPEN NOTEBOOK

NEW YORK, Sept 6(AP): The WTA Tour is 25 years old and a lot has happened since its inception.

When it started in 1970, current stars Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario, Gabriela Sabatini and Mary Pierce weren't even born.

When Margaret Court won the four Grand Slam events in 1970, her total prize money was 15,000 dollars.

When Steffi Graf won the Grand Slam in 1988, her Grand Slam prize money was 880,842 dollars, an increase of 5,872 per cent.

When the rankings began for women in 1973, only 70 women were on the list. In 1995, more than 1,000 women tennis players hold a WTA Tour ranking.

Since the professional women's tour began in the early 1970s, there have been more than 150 title sponsors of tour events.

From January 1975 through December 1994, there were more than 1,100 professional women's tennis tournaments.

NAME GAME: There are a couple of tennis players floating around with familiar names.

Like Gabriela Sabatini. Unlike the Argentine star, this Sabatini is a Czech player who has been busy on the futures tour and has a computer ranking of 561.

There's also Conchita Martinez. Not the one who won Wimbledon in 1994 and is seeded fourth at the US Open. This Conchita Martinez of Spain recently won a futures title and is ranked 626th.

To avoid confusion, the younger Conchita Martinez has been listed on the WTA Tour computer as Conchita Martinez Granados.

CROWDED AT THE TOP: Six players, who have been ranked No 1 in the world, were in the men's singles draw at this year's US Open.

Four of them — Andre Agassi, Pete Sampras, Jim Courier and Boris Becker — are still in the running for the title.

The other two, Sweden's Stefan Edberg and Mats Wilander, have been eliminated from the tournament.

### Yeltsin allowed to play tennis

MOSCOW, Sept 6: Doctors have allowed Russian President Boris Yeltsin to resume physical exercise after his mild heart attack in July and he will start training today, his coach Shamil Tarpishev said on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

He told RIA news agency that Yeltsin was likely to start playing tennis again next week during a holiday in the Black Sea resort of Sochi.

"I will go with him and we will have sport sessions and continue playing tennis," RIA quoted Tarpishev as saying.

Yeltsin, 64, was admitted to hospital on July 11 and spent nearly a month there and in a sanatorium outside Moscow. His aides have quoted him as saying he would like to swim and play tennis during his autumn holiday.

### Diving gold for Sino natant

ATLANTA, Sept 6: Yu Zhuocheng of China won the men's 1-metre title Tuesday night in the Diving World Cup as Chinese and Russian competitors took five of six medals, reports AP.

In the biggest surprise of the day, Even Stewart, the 1-metre gold medalist in last year's World Championships, failed to place.

The University of Tennessee star, who dives for Zimbabwe, was 14th in the preliminaries and did not qualify for the semifinals in the competition at the Georgia Tech Aquatics Centre, site of the 1996 Olympic diving events.

Yu performed poorly in the preliminaries, but shot back to capture the gold with a score of 418.40 points.

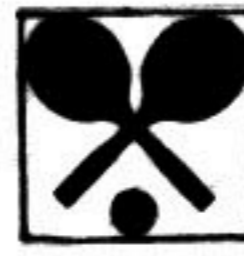
"This morning, I was sorry I didn't do too well, but I was able to bring everything together and win the medal for my country," he said.

Three meters is my strongest. Next year, my goal for the Olympics is the 3-meter gold.

China's Liu Ben, at 16 the youngest athlete in the competition, was second at 388.17 and Germany's Andreas Wels followed at 380.94.

Both Yu and Liu finished with forward 3 1/2 somersaults, a technique perfected by the Chinese that drew wide applause from the audience. About a third of the 2,000 seats at the center were filled.

## Stich so near yet so far



NEW YORK, Sept 6: A pair of seeded men with formidable Grand Slam credentials were upset at the US Open Tuesday by an American whose best days seemed to be behind him and a Zimbabwean avocado farmer's son having his best days, reports Reuter.

Former world number one Jim Courier, who has been struggling and out of the top 10 for nearly two years, overpowered third-seeded French Open champion Thomas Muster 6-3, 6-0, 7-6 in a slugfest contested primarily from well behind the baseline.

"On good days, I'm much better than my ranking reflects," said the 15th-ranked Courier, a former two-time Australian and French Open champion.

Earlier, 70th-ranked Zimbabwean Byron Black withstood a furious comeback by eighth-seeded German Michael Stich to claim a quarterfinal berth with a shocking 6-4, 6-4, 3-6, 2-6, 6-3 victory.

Stich, the 1991 Wimbledon champion and last year's US Open runner-up, had high hopes of making it back to the final this year.

Black, a native of Harare, Zimbabwe who learned to play bare-foot on grass, has never won a singles title and had never been passed the third round at a Grand Slam event.

"I think Harare is going to be pumped up, the parents are going to be pumped up at home," said the delighted Black, who next faces two-time Open champion Pete Sampras.

Second seed Sampras overpowered US Davis Cup teammate Todd Martin, the 15th seed, 7-6 (7-4), 6-3, 6-4 in a night match.

Sampras, winner of six Grand Slam crowns, beat down the line, 6-foot-6 (1.98m) Martin with powerful serves and aggressive shot-making from the baseline and at the net.

Sampras fired his 18th ace to finish the two hour, 13 minute match.

"I didn't deal with his serve," said Martin, who had only three break-point chances and came up empty each time. "It was a bit demoralising."

On the women's side, Steffi Graf and Gabriela Saba-

tin swept past out-matched American opponents without losing a set to make a date in the semifinals that will continue a rivalry started when both were playing junior tournaments.

The top-seeded Graf overwhelmed unseeded Amy Frazier 6-2, 6-3, and ninth seed Sabatini romped to a 6-1, 6-3 victory over 14th-seeded Mary Joe Fernandez, who had stunned defending champion Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario in the previous round.

Sabatini, the 1990 Open champion from Argentina,

never won another tournament this year, skidding to a first round-loss in the Australian and going out in the quarters at the French Open and Wimbledon.

Now she's back with a chance, slim as it may be, to reach a Grand Slam final for the first time since the 1991 Wimbledon, and perhaps to win another major title. Standing in her way is likely to be Steffi Graf, and lurking on the other side of the draw is Monica Seles.

Sabatini can beat any of the top players when she's on her game. Trouble is, neither she nor anyone else knows can anticipate when that will be.

"I've been very focused every single match," said Sabatini, who hasn't dropped a set so far in the tournament. "My game has improved a lot in the last few weeks. My serve has improved a lot. I'm trying to step in from the baseline and be more aggressive."

In an all-American quarterfinal Courier will take on the always dangerous Michael Chang.

The fifth-seeded Chang opened the day's play with a 6-2, 6-2, 4-6, 6-3 win over 119th-ranked Australian Michael Tebbutt.

Stich appeared to have turned the tide after dropping the first two sets and it seemed like a matter of time before Black would collapse under the pressure.

"I got off to a really bad start, but from the third set on, I think I was in charge of the match," said the German serve and volleyer, who made 118 forays to the net, winning 77 of them.

But a couple of mistakes in the sixth game of the final set cost Stich dearly as Black broke for a 4-2 lead, then held his serve to go 5-2 up.

"I was too confident," admitted Stich. "I came to the net, had the volley on my racket, just didn't make it. You know, that is tennis."

Still, Black, who also upset ninth seed Thomas Enqvist in the second round, showed he had the mental toughness to clod it out after Stich held for 5-3 and saved one match point in the final game.

"I should have won the match today and I gave it away in the fifth set," lamented the eighth seed.

"I think it was a very even match, but unfortunately I am not in the next round."

The major excitement of the evening was kept to last when Algerian Noureddine Morceli, awarded the honorary citizenship of Rieti last year after twice setting world records here, had a crack at breaking his own 3,000 metres record.

The rain let up at last as the little Algerian, who set himself a benchmark of one second below his 1994 record time at the 1,000 metres mark and five seconds below at 2,000, set off at a record-breaking pace.

Paced by his brother Ali, Morceli hit 1,000 metres on target and was four seconds inside his record time at 2,000 but finished well outside his 7:25.11 record in a time of 7:29.36, still the third fastest this season.

The Rieti meeting drew a spectacular field of 17 newly-crowned world champions, many of them determined to show support for possibly the last meeting in the central Italian town.

Organiser Sandro Giovannelli has said the lack of sponsorship and increased costs of attracting a top field is likely to mean the 25th meeting will be the last.

### Star circus on the day Kaiser turns 50

MUNICH, Germany, Sept 6: Some of the greatest soccer players of the last 30 years will turn out for a charity match to celebrate Franz Beckenbauer's 50th birthday on Sunday, reports Reuter.

The line-ups for the Munich game between a German XI and world select team read like a 'who's who' of the world game.

Only Brazilian Pele, Argentina's Diego Maradona and Dutchman Johan Cruyff are missing from the big names of the last three decades.

The German team includes Sepp Maier, Berti Vogts, Guenther Netzer, Paul Breitner, Uwe Seeler, Gerd Mueller and Karl-Heinz Rummenigge.

The world select team has Peter Shilton, Bobby Charlton and Kevin Keegan from England, France's Michel Platini, Dutchman Johan Neeskens and Brazil's Zico.

Berendonk gave details of drugs doses given to many athletes during state-run doping by the former Iron curtain country.

## Rain reigns Rieti rally



RIETI, Italy, Sept 6: A steady downpour played havoc with the 25th Rieti athletics meeting on Tuesday and Ukrainian world champion Sergei Bubka was relegated to the role of spectator after the pole vault was cancelled, reports Reuter.

Bubka, one of a host of world champions attending the meeting in the central Italian town, was unable to make even a training jump as the rain poured down.

The jury, after twice delaying the start of the pole vault, finally decided to cancel it for safety reasons.

The rain had a marked effect on the first two races, the women's and men's 400 metres hurdles, with times well outside this season's bests.

Britain's Olympic champion Lanford Christie won the 100 metres sprint in an un-hurried 10.20 seconds.

The rain eased a little as the evening wore on and double world champion Michael Johnson of the United States gave the pitifully small crowd who had braved the bad weather and leaden skies their first real thrill.

Johnson, starting in Lane Four, ran away with the 200 metres with a time of 20.09 seconds, some way off his Gothenberg World Championships time of 19.79 but still the third fastest in the world this season.

Ireland's world champion Sonia O'Sullivan, who had announced her intention to try to break the women's mile world record at the meeting, was an easy winner but way off the world-beating pace in four minutes 29.82 seconds.

"It had nothing to do with the weather," O'Sullivan said later. "I was just too tired."

The second record attempt of the evening also came to nothing as Kenya's Moses Kiptanui, the 3,000 metres steeplechase world champion and record holder, tried to set a new world best in the two-mile mark.

Kiptanui, who ran an exhausting 5,000 metres in Berlin last Friday where he was beaten by Ethiopian rival and record breaker Haile Gebrselassie, clocked

8.13.40.

Britain's Jonathan Edwards, the world record holder



SERGEI BUBKA

der in the triple jump, did his best to warm up the crowd but his 17.29 metres leap was a pale performance compared to the prodigious 18.29 he pulled off in Gothenberg last month.

### Drechsler fined

BONN, Sept 6: Olympic long jump champion Heike Drechsler was fined 6,000 marks (4,300 dollars) on Tuesday for perjury in a civil court, reports AFP.

Drechsler, 30, did not appeal the fine for false statements in a case involving Brigitte Berendonk, author of a book on doping in the former East Germany.

During a press conference at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, Drechsler accused Berendonk of lying in her book. However, she denied this in front of a civil court.

Drechsler produced five witnesses who backed her up, but Berendonk was able to provide a recording to the press conference.

The five witnesses — her husband Andreas, her father-in-law and coach Erich Drechsler, her manager Robert Wagner and two journalists — were also fined from 6,600 to 16,500 marks (4,700 to 12,000 dollars).

Berendonk gave details of drugs doses given to many athletes during state-run doping by the former Iron curtain country.

## Muster at Courier's mercy



NEW YORK, Sept 6: Jim Courier moved into the quarterfinals at the US Open on Tuesday, thumping French Open champion Thomas Muster in straight sets on a day when upsets reigned, report agencies.

There was no indifference by Courier this time, none of the haphazard stretches or moody moments that have marked his descent in the rankings.

This time, for the better part of two hours, he was the Courier of old, drilling 10 aces, drumming baseline winners and reaching the quarterfinals with a 6-3, 6-0, 7-6 (7-4) romp over the No 3 Muster, a clay court specialist who ripped up his feet on these hot hard-courts.

The Muster-Courier match-up had held the promise of an exciting contest in a US Open that has suffered from a dearth of drama in the men's competition thus far.

But Courier seemed to have more sting in his powerful groundstrokes and had the Austrian on his heels early.

From 5-3 in the first set, Courier went on a tear, reeling off seven games in a row to take a quick two-set lead.

"I just wasn't in the match the first two sets at all," said Muster, winner of 10 titles this year on clay. "I put everything in the first three matches and there was nothing left today."

Muster stopped the

### Dowie signs for West Ham

LONDON, Sept 6: Striker Iain Dowie completed his 475,000-pound (740,400 dollars) move from Crystal Palace to English Premier League side West Ham on Monday, a day after helping Northern Ireland to draw with Portugal in a European Championship qualifier, reports Reuter.

As part of the deal, Dutch Striker Jeroen Boere, valued at 350,000 pounds (545,600 dollars), moves to First Division side Crystal Palace from West Ham.

West Ham are hoping that Dowie will boost their scoring rate. They have netted only four goals in their first four league games this season.

bleeding by holding serve to open the third set and played Courier close thereafter. But the confident Courier was not about to let this one slip away, even after the set went to a tie-break.

"I feel pretty good going out against Thomas on any surface, even clay," Courier said. "He's had a phenomenal year, and he deserves all the credit he's gotten. We're going to play the same match on any surface. We're going to play power vs power, even on clay."

Once the best player in the game, the winner of four Grand Slam titles from 1991 to 1993, Courier lost in the second round of the Open a year ago and drifted in this year with few of the other players giving him a chance of winning.

But Courier said he started to feel good about his tennis a few days before the Open started.

"When I feel good," he said, "I always play well."



World number one Steffi Graf puts on her every strength to the serve during her quarterfinal clash against unseeded Amy Frazier of the United States at the National Tennis Centre in New York on Sept 5. The gritty German hardly sweated in dispatching Frazier 6-2, 6-3.

— AFP/UNB photo