

Nat'l boat race

A colourful boat race on the river Buriganga yesterday charmed all those who thronged both sides of the river to witness the traditional annual sports event, reports UNB.

President Abdur Rahman Biswas inaugurated the second junior and 20th national boat race competition near Postagola.

Competitors in their rowing boats displayed their performance amidst of continuous applause by the spectators.

Speaking on the occasion, President Biswas said the popularity of boat race was on the increase in riverine Bangladesh. He noted with satisfaction that the attractive and colourful boat race is an enjoyable sports event to the villagers, specially to those who live on the riversides.

Referring to the increasing popularity of boat race in the developed countries, the President observed that measures were being taken there to develop the standard of the sport.

He lauded the initiative of the Bangladesh Rowing Federation in developing and popularising boat race in the country.

The inaugural function was attended, among others, by the special envoy of Prime Minister M Morshed Khan.

A total of 58 boats of different categories participated in various events.

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman enjoyed the final events and distributed prizes among the winners.

Speaking on the occasion the Finance Minister assured the Bangladesh Rowing Federation of all possible help from the government to flourish the competition and to impart training to the participants.

HK Sixes' cricket Dougie digs England out

HONG KONG, Sept 30: England relied on Scotsman Dougie Brown today to keep their hopes alive of winning their third successive Hong Kong Sixes title and a US 100,000 dollars diamond encrusted bat, reports Reuter.

Brown, a cricketer and under-18 football international for Scotland, scored an unbeaten 23 to steer England past a strong Australian team by three wickets after a shock earlier defeat by New Zealand.

Each team of six players bowled five overs in the quickfire matches. The tournament has gained in popularity each year and organisers are pressing for an official spot in the International Cricket Council's calendar.

"We lost a couple of early wickets against Australia but Dougie Brown batted really well to help us win. I promoted him from six to number four and it paid off," said England captain Dermot Reeve, who is Brown's county captain at Warwickshire.

Australia, victors over New Zealand joined England as qualifiers from the Red Group. Both had better records than the Kiwis on a count back.

Also through to the next round were India, who bounced back from a surprise defeat at the hands of part-timers Hong Kong, and Sri Lanka from the Green Group.

South Africa were inspired by some monstrous sixes by Jonty Rhodes as they made the next stage along with Richie Richardson's West Indies.

In the second round robin phase on Sunday, England are grouped with Australia and West Indies while South Africa, India and Sri Lanka form the other group. The two top teams will contest the final.

A piece of cricketing history was made when Hong Kong's Eddie Tse, the first Chinese to play international cricket, bowled Indian captain Mohammad Azharuddin with his second ball.

"It was a fantastic feeling to get the wicket of somebody as famous as Azharuddin," said the 33-year-old businessman who has been playing cricket since his school days.

Wild wins Nokia Open title

BEIJING, Sept 30: Linda Wild of the United States defeated Wang Shi-ting of Taiwan on Saturday to win the Nokia Open women's tennis tournament, reports AP.

The unseeded Wild had upset defending champion Yayuk Basuki of Indonesia in the second round. She overpowered third-seeded Wang 7-5, 6-2 with powerful serves and consistent baseline returns.



South Korean booters having a tough time to stymie Argentine superstar Diego Maradona during their friendly match against Boca Juniors at the Seoul Olympic Stadium yesterday. Boca beat the Koreans 2-1. — AFP/UNB photo

Maradona sans magic

SEOUL, Sept 30: Argentine soccer superstar Diego Maradona made a colour full but un-

acular comeback from a 15-month drug suspension on Saturday, as his Boca Juniors beat the South Korean national team 2-1, reports AP.

Sporting a blonde streak dyed in his black hair like a racing stripe from his right temple, Maradona did set up a goal in the 42nd minute when Carlos MacAllister headed in his curling corner kick.

The 70,000 fans who packed the Chamsil Olympic Stadium in southern Seoul exploded into applause when the international soccer celebrity demonstrated occasional passing brilliance.

But Maradona, 34, looked tired and sluggish in the second half and was on the sidelines giving interviews after leaving the game with five minutes left when the winning goal was scored.

Maradona failed to demonstrate the mesmerising foot work and spectacular goals known as his trademarks in leading Argentina to the World Cup title in 1986. His only goal attempt slid wide over the crossbar in the second half.

Ha Suk-joo scored South Korea's only goal seconds before the end of the first half on a header off a lob from Ko Jong-un.

It appeared the game would end in a tie until Boca forward Sergio Martinez Alzuri broke away and lofted a soft kick over South Korean goalie Kim Byung-ji, who rushed out in an attempt to stymie the rush.

Forward Claudio Caniggia and midfielders Fabian Carizzo and Cristian Gonzalez, leading Boca's offensive, launched sharp close-range shots but were thwarted by Kim.

Local organisers reportedly offered 1.75 million dollar for Maradona to play his comeback match here. He was booted from the 1994 World Cup for using a cocktail stimulant, his second suspension for drug use.

The game was part of South Korea's efforts to promote their bid to host the 2002 World Cup finals, and the production threatened to overshadow the match.

Both President Kim Young-sam and Argentine President Carlos Menem watched the whole game after each made a ceremonial kick off. They hammed together with Maradona for dozens of domestic and foreign photographers.

Organisers invited south Korea's best pop singers for a half-hour pre-game event and a halftime gala. State-run KBS television, which sponsored the match, said it was broadcast by satellite to 27 countries.

Maradona was the biggest

name South Korea rounded up to raise the profile of Seoul's bid. But his nine-day visit sparked controversy over what the local media called "strange" behavior by the international soccer star.

He embarrassed South Korea organisers when he missed his plane Sept 21, forcing changes in the schedule for elaborately planned welcoming ceremonies and a news conference.

He cancelled a coaching session for children at an amusement park after keeping them waiting two hours.

About 1,000 fans who waited in the rain for an hour at a train station for a scheduled autograph session were disappointed to see the maestro perform some juggling tricks for only 10 minutes. A planned tour of an auto plant run by Hyundai, one of the South Korean bid's primary sponsors, was also dropped.

South Korea submitted its bid to host the World Cup finals Friday, stressing its superior soccer pedigree over rival Japan. South Korea made it to last three World Cup finals.

Japan, with better facilities and economic backing, is regarded as the favourite, although the Korean bid is believed to be gaining ground. The 21-man executive committee of soccer's governing body, FIFA, will make the final choice next June 1.

Old-timers to renew rivalry in Sharjah

DUBAI, Sept 30: Some of the top names of cricket's recent past are to play in a World Masters series in the United Arab Emirates' desert venue — Sharjah in January, reports Reuter.

The three-day tournament, starting on January 5, was announced by former West Indies captain Clive Lloyd at a press conference today and is being sponsored by Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation through its subsidiaries — the Sports Corporation and the Asia Star Television.

"We believe that the World Masters cricket series will develop into a legendary sporting event," Lloyd said.

All those taking part must have played Test cricket and be at least 35 years of age.

The four teams taking part are England, India, Pakistan and West Indies and will be captained, respectively, by Mike Gatting, Sunil Gavaskar, Zaheer Abbas and Joel Garner.

A total of 121,500-dollar prize-money will be at stake with 50,000 dollars going to the winners.

It will be followed with a second tournament in July or August at a venue yet to be confirmed, with the final in Bombay at the end of 1996.

"World Masters cricket Sharjah will see old rivalries renewed and it is a chance for unsettled playing scores to be resolved," Lloyd said.

Bizarre soccer!

BUENOS AIRES, Sept 30: A group of Argentine teenagers found a human skull in their school grounds, but overcame their shock and used it as a ball in a soccer match, local news agencies reported on Friday, reports Reuter.

After the game, the boys broke the skull to pieces with a stick, said a teacher at the school in Parana, northern Argentina, in a statement to police.

Police are investigating and analysing the broken bones.

Becker, Courier in semis

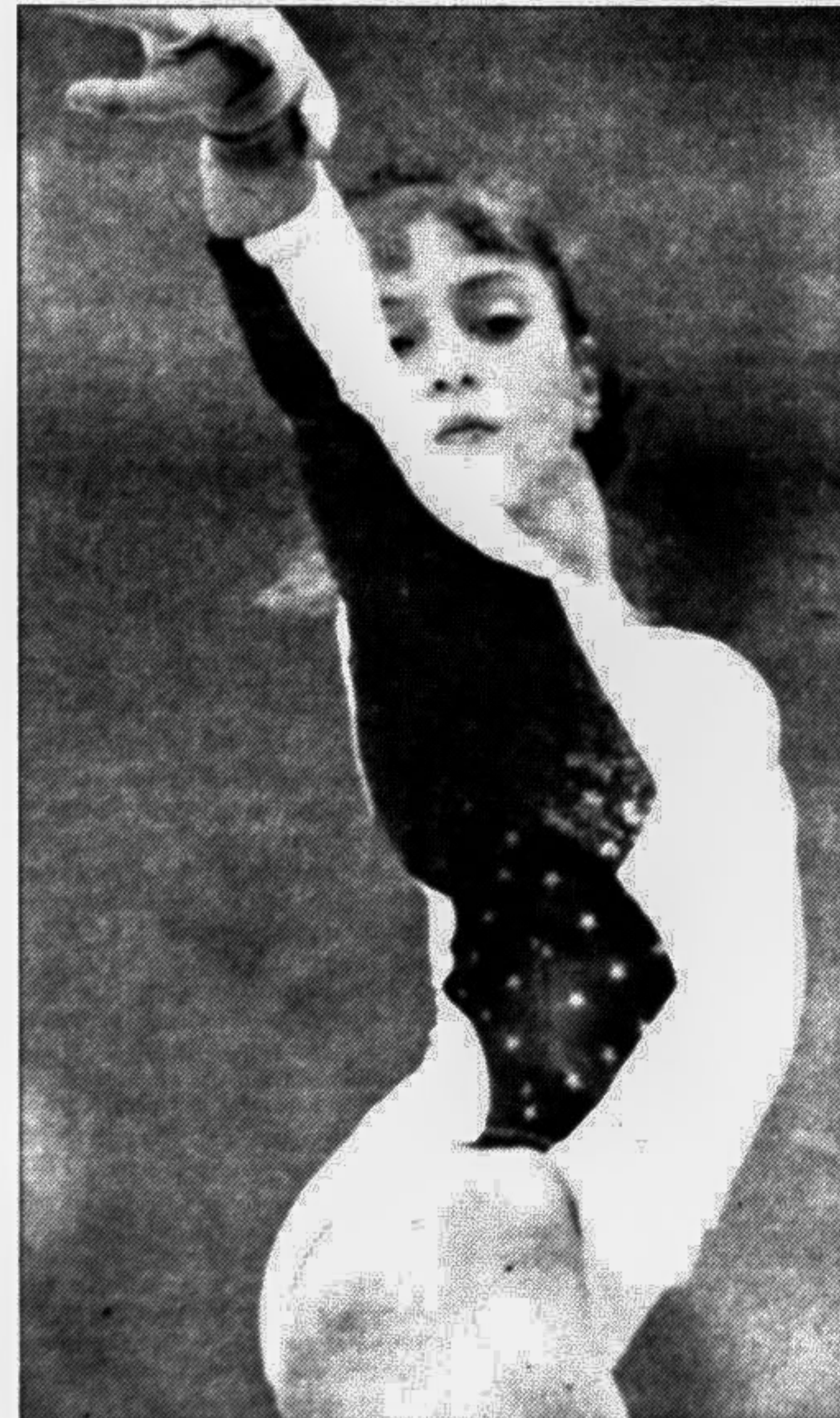
BASEL, Switzerland, Sept 30: Top-seeded Boris Becker of Germany beat eighth-seeded Stefan Edberg of Sweden 6-4, 3-6, 6-3 on Friday to advance to the semifinals of the Swiss Open, reports AP.

"We have known one another long enough and each of us is aware of the other's smallest strengths and weaknesses," said Becker, 23-10 in his career against Edberg.

Becker will face Jan Siemerink of the Netherlands on Saturday and No. 5 Jim Courier of the United States will play Greg Rusedski of Britain.

Courier, playing only his second indoor tournament of the year, beat Martin Damm of the Czech Republic 7-6 (7-5), 7-6 (7-3).

Siemerink defeated Petu Korda of the Czech Republic 3-6, 7-6 (7-4), 7-5 and Greg Rusedski beat Jasor Stoltenberg of Australia 3-6, 6-3, 6-2.



Dominique Mochanu of the United States performs on the floor during a practice session of the World gymnastics Championships in Sabae, Japan, on Sept 29. — AFP/UNB photo

Aussies advance to final



BERLIN, Sept 30: Goalie Simon Mason stymied Australia with magnificent saves on

Saturday but the Kookaburras still gained a 1-1 draw against England to reach the final of the prestigious Champions' Trophy field hockey tournament, report agencies.

The draw gave the Kookaburras (2-3-0) seven points, sending them into Sunday's final against either world champion Pakistan or Olympic gold medalist Germany. Their match was scheduled for later Saturday.

Favorite Australia dominated the match against England, piling up numerous shots-on-goal and landing 12 penalty corners to their opponent's one in the first half alone.

But their shots either sailed wide or high or were thwarted by Mason.

"Our boys are a little down," said Australian assistant coach Greg Browning after the disappointing draw. "We really dominated play but we couldn't put the ball in the net. Mason had two magnificent saves in the first

half alone."

The Kookaburras broke through for their only goal in the 15th minute when full-back Stuart Carruthers knocked a direct shot past Mason off a penalty corner.

With seven minutes left, England caught Australia napping on a counter-attack to gain the draw. They mounted a four-on-two breakaway which ended with Danny Hall driving in the equaliser.

England then mounted an all-out attack to win the match as a furious see-saw battle ensued during the final minutes.

Australia's best chance came when Darren Duff's shot from the top of the circle missed by a foot.

While, two goals from Taco van Den Honert, the recalled Dutch corner specialist, saw the Netherlands snatch a 2-1 win over India on the final day of group matches.

Van Den Honert scored a 17th minute equaliser and then stole the winner three minutes from time with his third goal of the event.

The Netherlands' third win was their fourth in succession against India, eight

times Olympic champions, and ensured they will play-off for 3rd and 4th places tomorrow while condemning India to a 5th place play-off against England.

India had taken the lead when Dhanraj Pillay, their centre forward, capitalised on a rare error by Maurits Cruic, the Dutch centre back who failed to trap a ball. Pillay shot into the roof of the Dutch goal from the top of the circle. It was his second goal of the tournament.

Van Den Honert equalised from Netherlands' first corner of the match, the only one of the first half. When a second came their way midway through the second half, Van Den Honert shot against an upright. His winner came from their sixth and last corner of the match.

The Dutch defence did allow themselves to be caught square on one or two occasions but their goalkeeper Ronald Jansen was so quick off his line that India could not capitalise. The Indians failed to force a single corner.

World judo results

CHIBA, Japan, Sept 30: Britain's defending champion Nicola Fairbrother and Japan's Barcelona Olympic, silver medalist Noriko Mizoguchi took early exits from the women's 56-kilogram competition Saturday, the third day of the World Judo Championships, reports AP.

Fairbrother, who was seeking her second consecutive victory, was dethroned by South Korea's Jung Sun-young in their quarterfinal bout at Makuhari Messe just outside Tokyo.

The Korean wrestler captured the bronze at the 1992 Olympics at Barcelona and was the winner at the French international contest this year.

In third round action, Fairbrother scored an "ippon" victory over Pavlina Pechovicova of the Czech Republic.

Germany's Tania Muenzinger overwhelmed Japan's gold medal hopeful Mizoguchi in their second round bout, but the German judoka was denied her march toward the semifinal by Cuba's Driulis Gonzalez.

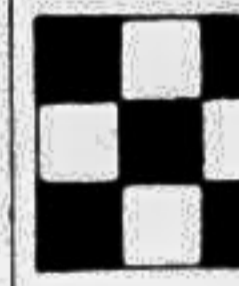
Mizoguchi captured the silver in the 52-kilogram class in the Barcelona Olympics.

In other quarterfinal events, Japan's defending champion Yukimasa Nakamura advanced into the semifinals, downing South Korea's Kim Dae-ik in the 65-kilogram event.



South Korean Chung Sung-Sook (L) tries to throw Jenny Gal of Holland in the 61 kg category final of the World Judo Championships in Chiba, Japan on Sept 29. Chung won the category. — AFP/UNB photo

Anand halts Garris run



NEW YORK, Sept 30: Challenger Viswanathan Anand, after two consecutive

defeats by title holder Garri Kasparov, held on for a draw despite a slight material deficit in Friday's 12th game of the World Chess Championship, report agencies.

The players agreed their position was drawn after 43 moves and more than three hours at the board even though Kasparov had an extra pawn in the end game.

With eight games remaining in the best of 20-game contest, Kasparov leads 6.5 points to 5.5.

Anand, beaten soundly by Kasparov in games 10 and 11 after a dramatic win on Monday in game nine, told reporters that the 32-year-old Russian admitted missing Anand's 31st move, a pawn

check on the white king that earned him time to defend in the complicated end game involving pawns and rooks.

"He said he didn't see the check," commented Anand who fell for a trap in Thursday's 11th game and badly needed the draw to recover his equilibrium according to Grand Master analysts. "I could tell from his score-sheet also because he had already written a different move."

Although the players have two hours each to make 40 moves and they were both within the time limit, they played moves 36 to 40 in a flurry that is usually only seen in speed chess games.

With more than half the games played, expert observers believe the Russian is on target to win the championship scheduled to end October 13.

When play began, the moves followed the Ruy Lopez

opening which Kasparov used to score a crushing victory in the 10th game.

Playing with the disadvantage of the black pieces, Anand chose a quieter defence but drifted into a position where Kasparov maintained a slow but enduring advantage.

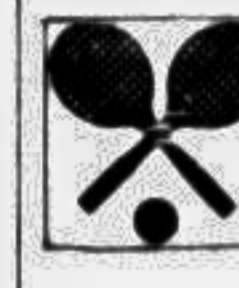
Anand traded off the queens and both sets of bishops to ease the pressure but Kasparov was able to penetrate a rook deep into his position on the 24th move.

With Anand facing possible defeat, Kasparov missed a trick on the 31st move, where Anand sacrificed a pawn to trade down and reach a drawn end game.

Despite avoiding a hatrick of losses, a subdued Anand said his standing in the series was "not brilliant."

The 13th game is scheduled for Monday with Anand playing white.

It's Grafts-taxmen deal?



BONN, Sept 30: Tennis star Steffi Graf and her father, both under investigation for tax eva-

sion, did a deal with authorities in 1993 agreeing on their tax liability, a family lawyer said on Friday, reports Reuter.

Graf's father, Peter, has been in jail since early August to stop him fleeing or concealing evidence to support accusations that he and his daughter evaded taxes between 1989 and 1992 put in media reports at around 10 million marks (seven million dollars).

Family tax adviser Joachim Eckhardt was arrested this week on suspicion of helping to hide the tennis star's wealth from tax authorities.

Lawyer Joachim Schwenn told reporters the Grafts were being investigated for a period covered by a "conclusive de facto understanding" made with local and regional tax authorities in Baden-

Wuerttemberg state on December 1, 1993.

Schwenn added he expected to appeal again against Peter Graf's continued detention.

A senior finance official in the state capital Stuttgart confirmed that a signed protocol existed covering such an agreement, but a ministry spokesman pointed out that such a pact would be invalid if it was based on false information.

Schwenn said it was common practice to reach such agreements with someone like Graf, who has homes abroad as well as in Germany, to short-circuit time-consuming investigations and legal procedures.

Graf, who this month added the 1995 US Open title to her glittering collection of prizes has said she entrusted her financial affairs to her father at the start of her career and had no idea how much money she was earning.

Unlike other top German

sports stars such as fellow tennis player Boris Becker, Graf always refused to move to a tax haven abroad to avoid some of Europe's highest taxes.

Baden-Wuerttemberg's state Finance Minister Gerhard Mayer-Vorfelder denied on Thursday before the state assembly's finance committee that tax authorities had made any serious errors or excessive concessions in the Graf case.

Schmeichel Europe's best

LONDON, Sept 30: Manchester United's Peter Schmeichel, who scored a headed goal in the UEFA Cup on Tuesday, has been named Europe's top goalkeeper by the International Federation of Football History and Statistics, reports Reuter.

The Dane finished ahead of Gothenburg's Thomas Ravelli and Belgian Michel Preud'Homme.