

Sport

Column One SPORTS TALK



Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario (Spanish tennis star) "Before, I was Emilio's sister; now my brothers are Arantxa's brothers." About the changed realities.

DID U' KNOW? (The Professor does)

HAT Star Wars, despite being a recent phenomenon had been in vogue in Brazilian football grounds for decades. During a match at Rio Prato in 1952 an enraged soccer fan produced a rifle, tracked the ball in play and burst it in mid-flight as it was about to enter the goal of his team. I never found out the ruling of the referee. He must have run for cover. On a much lower and perhaps sensible scale, we have had crowds in Bangladesh football grounds pelting missiles at the rival goalkeeper from behind the post. The missiles are usually in the form of small stones, remnants of a fruit, banana peel and the sort. Actually, any linesman could supply a complete inventory of what is thrown from the gallery.

Sports WHIZZ KID

COMPETITION FOR SCHOOLCHILDREN (The rules are published every Saturday.) Sports WHIZZ KID competition-8. Tick the Correct Answer

Table with 5 questions about tennis, cricket, hockey, and soccer. Includes a name, class, and school address field.

Del Piero, a scary proposition

ROME, Oct 7: Croatia coach Miroslav Blazevic is worried about the influence Italy's 20-year-old attacking midfielder Alessandro Del Piero will have in Sunday's European Championship qualifier, reports Reuter. Blazevic is one of Del Piero's greatest admirers, rating him the best player in the world. "Del Piero is a phenomenon. He has become the best player in the world," Blazevic was quoted as saying in the Gazzetta Dello Sport daily ahead of the crucial Group Four game in Split.

Injuries worry Wales

CARDIFF, Oct 7: Injury has robbed Wales of three key players for next Wednesday's European Championship qualifier against Germany, reports Reuter. Strikers Ian Rush and Mark Hughes and midfielder Dave Phillips, who all played in the 1-0 win over Moldova last month, will have to sit out of the Group Seven game in Cardiff. Hughes damaged his groin in Chelsea's League Cup match against Stoke on Wednesday. Rush strained his back in Liverpool's tie against Sunderland and Phillips has failed to recover from the hamstring problem which has kept him out of Nottingham Forest's last four games.

Zia opens against Rakib

Joint favourite IM Ziaur Rahman of Bangladesh will take on Abdullah Al Rakib in the opening round of the 12th Beximco Quazi Motahar Hossain International Masters chess tournament which begins this afternoon at the National Sports Council chess room.

Inter-services athletics

The annual inter-services athletic championship got underway at the Army Stadium in Banani yesterday afternoon, an ISPR press release said, reports BSS. Army clinched all the four golds at stake on the inaugural day. Bangladesh Air Force trailed the Army with a silver in javelin throw and bronze in hammer throw and discus throw.

Kiwis enjoy run spree

RAJKOT, India, Oct 7: New Zealand began their eight-week tour of India on a positive note today with a strokeful century by Mark Greatbatch and half-centuries by Bryan Young and Adam Parore against a listless BCCI President's XI here, reports AFP. The left-handed Greatbatch, who scored 138 runs, shared century stands with Young and Parore as the New Zealanders raced to 366 for five before their new skipper Lee Germon declared the innings closed at the Municipal Stadium here. Danny Morrison found reward immediately when he got the first ball of the final over to break back sharply through the young Indian hopeful Vikram Rathore's bat and pad to send the middle stump crashing. The home side led by Indian skipper Mohammed Azharuddin closed the day at 24 for one in the three-day match. Greatbatch was in great form and took his time to get his eye in but did not hesitate to punish the BCCI President's XI bowlers when they erred in line or length on the placid wicket. The left-hander from Central Districts was let off at least twice but made capital

Zia is the 1992 champion and the highest-rated player (2465) among the 14 participants this time when he drew for the 13 round meet was held yesterday at the Chess Federation office. The other favourite and last year's runner up Pakistani IM Mahmood Lodhi (2425) who won the tournament twice in 1990 and 1993, was drawn to face Indian Rahul Shethy (2380) in the opening rounds. Of the 14 players five are International Masters from Bangladesh, India and Pakistan. The winner will receive cash Taka 30,000 as prize-money while the runner up will be earn Taka 16,000. Taka 10,000 will go to for the third position holder. In the other matches of the opening round, Indian IM Parama Sharma Mitrakanta (2370) will take on Khondakari Kayes Hasan (2190) of Bangladesh, IM Shahjad

Asian shooting Jaspal wins first gold for India

JAKARTA, Oct 7: Rana Jaspal claimed the first gold for India as China continued domination on Saturday in the fifth day of the eighth Asian Shooting Championships, reports AP. Jaspal took the individual title of the men's standard pistol with a winning score of 576, one point ahead of silver medalist, Meng Gang of China.

Wasim won't go to Sharjah

LAHORE, Oct 7: Pakistan's ace paceman Wasim Akram will not play in the upcoming three-nation Sharjah cricket competition, a senior cricket official said today, reports AFP. "Wasim Akram has informed us that he will not be available for the tournament," said Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chief executive, Arif Ali Abbasi, without disclosing the reason. The cricketer is currently out of Pakistan. Rameez Raja, under whom the Pakistan team suffered humiliating defeats in both Test and one-day international series against Sri Lanka, has been retained as captain for Sharjah, Abbasi said. The Pakistan team for Sharjah is likely to be announced on Sunday, the PCB official told reporters. Meanwhile, a PCB general council meeting here today "hotly debated" Pakistan's debacle in both the Test and one-day international series against Sri Lanka, sources said. The PCB management came under bitter attack during the meeting of the council, which includes cricket associations and representatives of various institutions associated with the game, the sources said. Abbasi, who emerged from the meeting to talk briefly with reporters, said Majid Khan and Mushtaq Mohammad would go to Sharjah as tour manager and cricket manager respectively. The two managers as well as Abbasi have been targets of bitter criticism by cricket commentators following the defeat against Sri Lanka.

Gunners gunning for Juninho

RIO DE JANEIRO, Oct 7: Arsenal have joined the chase for Brazilian international winger Juninho whose signature is also being sought by English Premier League, rivals Middlesbrough, a spokesman with Juninho's club Sao Paulo said on Friday, reports Reuter. "Arsenal sent us a fax yesterday which did not mention money but showed interest in signing Juninho," Eduardo Prada said. "What they want is to begin negotiations." Meanwhile, Middlesbrough manager Bryan Robson and the club's chairman Keith Lambert returned to Britain on Thursday to study a proposal by Sao Paulo that half an agreed 7.5 million dollars transfer fee is paid up front with the other half due within 30 days.

Swiss FA gets off the hook

GENEVA, Oct 7: UEFA said on Friday it was letting off Swiss soccer chiefs with a reprimand after Swiss players unfurled a banner protesting against French nuclear tests before an international last month, reports Reuter. But European soccer's governing body said it would not tolerate any form of political, religious or racist demonstration on the field of play and was warning member federations that similar acts in the future would be "severely punished."

Cantona suffers knee injury

MANCHESTER, Oct 7: Eric Cantona limped off the field injured after only 18 minutes of his third comeback game Saturday, reports AP. Playing for Manchester United's reserve team against Leeds reserves at Old Trafford, the French striker, who was banned for eight months for attacking a spectator in February, went into a challenge with Leeds midfielder Jason Blunt and came out with his right knee injured.

Crossword By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words. Includes a solution time of 25 min and a solution key at the bottom.

Romania retains crown

SABAE, Japan, Oct 7: Romania scored and somersaulted to victory Saturday, defending its women's gymnastics team World Championship against a spectacular onslaught by the Chinese, reports AP. The Romanians scored high on the uneven bars and then finished with a series of flawless floor exercise routines, ending with 387.865 to 386.476 for China, which had defended its men's team championship on Friday. The US team, second after the compulsory exercises that account for half the score, slipped to third with 384.705 after two consecutive silver medals. Russia, third after the compulsories, finished a close fourth with 384.699. It was the Romanians' fourth women's team gold. They also have four silver and two bronze medals from World Championships. The five Romanian scorers on the uneven bars had marks ranging from 9.800 to 9.875, by Gina Gogean, the 1994 individual fourth placer. Then, with China closing in, Gogean scored 9.900 in the floor exercises, last year's individual silver medalist Lavinia Milosovici had 9.862 and Simona Amanar had 9.912. But China's Mo Huihan, known to her teammates as "Might Mouse," stole the individual show with a 9.800 on the floor, 9.937 — the highest mark so far in the championships — in the vault, 9.862 on the uneven bars and 9.900 on the balance beam. The 15-year-old star of last year's Asian Games delighted the crowd with acrobatics that were exuberant, confident and daring. The top 12 teams in these championships qualify for next year's Olympic Games in Atlanta. Other qualifiers include Ukraine, France, Spain, Belarus, Hungary, Japan, Greece and Australia.



Romania's Lavinia Milosovici competes on the uneven bars on the final day of the women's team event at the World Gymnastics Championships in Sabae, Japan yesterday. — AFP/UNB photo

Dalian bracing for worst

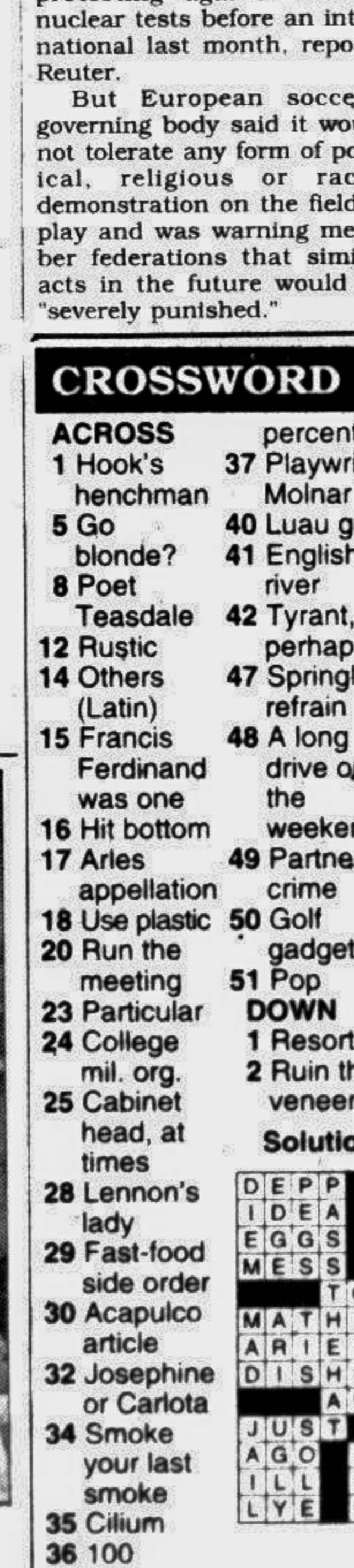
BEIJING, Oct 7: Under the growing shadow of soccer hooliganism, 1,000 Beijing fans set off today on an epic voyage trip to Dalian for a Sunday match that had police in that northeastern city laying on heavy extra security, reports Reuter. "Let's get lively" some soccer fanatics cried amid a din of cymbals, bugles and other noisemakers as they formed a convoy of 19 chartered buses at temple-of-modern-farming stadium. After a two-hour drive to Dalian and a short but important stopover in the port city, the 1,000-strong party was to board a sleeper ferry for an 18-hour crossing of Bohai Bay to Dalian, a soccer crazed port in Liaoning province. Their mission: to cheer Beijing's Guoan to victory against Dalian's Wanda team, still undefeated at home in the second season of China's fledgling professional soccer league. But it is the Tianjin stop that makes the trip interesting. Scores of supporters of Tianjin's Samsung team planned a dockside ceremony to apologise to Beijing for a near-riot that marred a September 24 Guoan-Samsung match in their city. "They are very sincere about this Guoan Fan Association leader Wang Wen told Reuters, they want to apologise and wish us a safe voyage." Bracing for trouble Dalian has laid on elaborate security, assigning paramilitary People's Armed Police, mounted officers and teams of officials to look after the Beijing

visitors and sharpening stadium gate screening for weapons and banned items. China's top league went professional two years ago, gambling correctly this would raise the quality of play but also unleashing the unexpected side effect of hooliganism. The Tianjin melee was the latest of several incidents to come to light in recent weeks, the worst outbreak of soccer violence since May 19, 1985, when fans rioted after the national team lost an "unlooseable" match to lowly Hong Kong. Some critics blame Beijing fans, saying that wherever Guoan and its hyperactive supporters go, trouble is not far behind. "Soccer brings great pleasure to many, but we've already seen the prototype of soccer violence, the Nanfang weekly of Guangzhou a soccer mad city in South China, said in one of the few public reports of the Tianjin incident. "People are seeing the danger signals of stadium violence." The newspaper and several witnesses said zealous profane and often sarcastic cheering by Beijing fans and poor stadium management in Tianjin created ideal conditions for a riot. The second half opened with a rain of apples water bottles and other missiles after Tianjin equalised at 1-1. Fistfights and small fires erupted in the stands after fans of Beijing which had quickly run the score up to 4-1, enraged Tianjin fans by rooting for their already humiliated side. One man was beaten unconscious and taken to hospital. Afterwards more than 10,000 Tianjin fans massed outside the stadium barring Beijing fans departure. Beijing's Armed Police were summoned to bolster a paralysed force of city officers who managed to form a lane through the mob to the Beijing buses. Ignoring a police escort, Tianjin fans pelted the convoy with bricks smashing 27 windows and injuring seven passengers. More than 100 Tianjin rioters were reported arrested. On July 30, supporters of the Taishan team in the Shandong province capital Jinan clashed with more than 100 rowdy Beijing fans forcing police to escort the visitors out of town. A league official said soccer violence though worrying, was nowhere near as bad as it has been in Europe and Latin America, but said stadium had yet to adjust to the far higher levels of spectator energy spawned by the professional league. "People are getting ever more fanatical about soccer, he said. But we need to strengthen management of fans from out of town."

Caution is Vogts' style

LEVERKUSEN, Germany, Oct 7: Germany's soccer federation has already made special scarves, flags and T-shirts for next year's European Championship finals, reports Reuter. But coach Berti Vogts is assuming nothing as his team bid to secure qualification next week. Vogts, who almost lost his job after a poor World Cup last year, knows the Germans will be almost certain of making next year's finals in England if they beat unfancied Moldova in Leverkusen on Sunday and Wales in Cardiff next Wednesday. But on Friday Vogts, who came under pressure from the media to quit after the 1990 world champions lost to Bulgaria in the World Cup quarter-finals, refused to look further ahead than Sunday's clash. Asked whether the tougher game was against Wales, a sombre Vogts replied abruptly: "I'm not going to talk about Wales until after the Moldova game." The Germans have already beaten Moldova 3-0 away in the group. Vogts has largely managed to survive with a conservative selection policy. Critics called for him to change the guard after the 1994 World Cup. But his caution paid off. Despite the absence of injured World Cup captain Lothar Matthaeus, Vogts has weaned new talent while keeping the experience of striker Juergen Klinsmann, midfielder Thomas Haessler and playmaker Andy Moeller, the biggest flop of the World Cup. Bayer Leverkusen striker Oulf Kirsten was ruled out of the two qualifiers with a thigh strain on Friday. But Borussia Dortmund libero Matthias Sammer returns after being suspended for Germany's 4-1 victory over Georgia in Nuremberg last month. Dortmund striker Heiko Herrlich is expected to return after injury to partner Klinsmann up front. PROBABLE TEAM Andreas Koepke, Matthias Sammer, Markus Babel, Thomas Helmer, Thomas Strunz, Steffen Freund, Christian Ziege, Thomas Haessler, Andy Moeller, Jergen Klinsmann, Heiko Herrlich.

The triumphant Chinese men raise their hands after retaining the team title at the World Gymnastics Championships in Sabae, Japan on Oct 6.



CRYPTOQUIP

Cryptoquip puzzle with clues and solution. Clues include: 1. Computer key: abbr., 2. Hibernian Hill, 3. Bunker Hill, 4. Cultural command, 5. Fife accompaniment, 6. Hebrew month, 7. Run up the phone bill, 8. Bar attachment, 9. Spicy sausage, 10. Humor writer, 11. Winglike Lebowitz, 12. Pigs' digs, 13. More than enough, 14. Comforters, 15. Tee outcry, 16. White House pooch, 17. Maleficence, 18. List, 19. Soccer legend, 20. Chur-Chur-Chur gesture, 21. "So that's it, eh?", 22. Staff, 23. Modern crime-fighting aid.