

**Sonali Bank soccer
Big win for Wanderers**

Sports Reporter
Dhaka Wanderers Club recorded a thumping 4-0 win over Lalbagh Krira Chakra in the Sonali Bank Second Division football league in one of the two matches billed for the Mirpur Stadium yesterday.
Wanderers, a reputed outfit of 50s, who fell from grace in the last couple of years and are now fighting to retrieve some sort of pride scored two goals apiece in each half to stick to the top flight for a promotion to the First Division next year.
Harun, Shaifque, Rezaul and Enamul were the scorers for the winners. With this win Wanderers collected 17 points from ten matches, one short of league leaders Little Friends and BRTC SC.
In the other match of the day, Monirul struck the all-important goal in the 40th minute to inspire Little Friends to a lone goal win over Mohakhali XI.

Progoti Div III football

Sports Reporter
East End Boys Club earned a hard-fought 1-0 victory over Moghbazar Kishalaya Sangha in the Progoti Div III football league at the RAJUK ground adjacent to the Dhaka Stadium yesterday.
In a see-saw encounter Momin struck the match-winning goal in the 15th minute for Boys' second win from four matches.
Meanwhile, in the other match of the day, Amin Bazaar KS and Mirpur XI shared points to a one-all draw. Titu put Amin Bazaar into the lead in the fourth minute while Saifur pulled off the equaliser ten minutes into the second half for Mirpur.

No change in Russia's Davis Cup squad

MOSCOW, Jan 31: The captain of Russia's Davis Cup team, Anatoly Leshchin, said Tuesday that the players for the first match of the 1996 season will be the same ones who brought Russia to the finals for the past two years, reports AP.
The first-round match, against Italy, will be played in Rome on Feb 9-11 on a clay court.
Yevgeny Kafelnikov — ranked sixth in the world — will play singles, along with Alexander Volkov and Andrei Chesnokov. One of them will join Andrei Olkhovsky for doubles play.
"We were runners up two times and we hope the break it this year," Leshchin told the Associated Press. "This year, we hope to win the Davis Cup."
The Russian team has never won the Davis Cup. It lost in the finals last year to the United States and in 1994 to Sweden.

Sievinen in superb form

MALMO, Sweden, Jan 31: Jani Sievinen broke a world short course record for the second time in 10 days on Tuesday, reports Reuter.
The 21-year-old Finn clocked 53.10 seconds for the 100 metres medley at a World Cup meeting, shaving more than half a second off his previous record of 53.78 set in November 1992.
Sievinen had equalled the record at a World Cup meeting in Sheffield, England, a week ago.
The in-form Sievinen broke his own 400 metres medley world record at the Finnish national short course championships on January 20.

Bailey belittles himself

LONDON, Jan 31: Linford Christie's agent and British track officials Wednesday rejected Canadian sprinter Donovan Bailey's claim that Christie faked an injury at last summer's World Championships, reports AP.
Bailey, who succeeded Christie as 100-metre champion, alleged Tuesday that the British sprinter was looking for an excuse to cover up the loss of his title.
"These comments are not credible," British Athletic Federation spokesman Tony Ward said. "They reflect unfairly on Linford's efforts to defend the title and on our own medical team who treated him."
He received treatment for the injury after the semi-finals and final, then flew to see a specialist in Switzerland.
Christie's agent, Sue Barrett, called Bailey's allegations "totally unfounded."
"It was a genuine injury," she said. "If necessary the specialist he saw will confirm it. Donovan ought to be careful about what he is saying. It looks like a publicity stunt to me."
Christie fell to the track clutching his right hamstring after finishing sixth in the 100-metre final in Goteborg, Sweden. He limped off holding an icepack to his leg.

Craig comes to a close



PERTH, Australia, Jan 31 (AFP): Last year Craig McDermott went to the West Indies labelled as indispensable.
Australia returned from the trip with a historic series victory. McDermott came back without a Test wicket.



CRAIG McDERMOTT

with an injured leg and an uncertain future.
It was the second time in two years that he had failed to complete a tour. If the 30-year-old Queenslander had chosen to go quietly then, with his 270 wickets and over a decade of campaigning, nobody would have

blamed him.
The Aussies, after all, had discovered a new pace figurehead in the lean and lanky Glenn McGrath from New South Wales. Importantly, he was a mere 25.
If age was trying to tell McDermott something — as it had in 1993 when he was forced to quit the Ashes trip to England after just one Test with a stomach problem — the bowler wasn't listening.
He returned to the Australian line-up in November

first Test, while McGrath was taking five wickets and acting as Shane Warne's sidekick.
But, with a technical problem sorted out, the wickets began to come — eight of them in the third Test — and McDermott's claim that Dennis Lillee's Australian record of 355 wickets was within his reach began to make sense.
An impressive run in the World Cup should secure his place until the end of the year at least, giving him every chance to threaten that target.

"I once had a dream of playing to the year 2000," he says.
"Now I know that has no chance of happening. Cricket has gone from five Tests a year to 14, and I do not think it is going to be possible for bowlers to play 10 or 15 years any more."

McDermott will also be a useful man to have during the tournament because he has met both impostors — success and failure — during his career.
He endured the pain of Australia's humiliating trough in the mid-1980s, but helped rebuild its fortunes in recent years.

That success also included the 1987 World Cup triumph. A repeat win is on the cards — and Australia's chances will be helped enormously if the 6ft 3 1/2ins pace bowler can keep his stomach and leg out of trouble this time.

Italy name Davis Cup team

ROME, Jan 31: Italy's Davis Cup team captain Adriano Panatta named Andrea Gaudenzi, Renzo Furlan, Stefano Pescosolido and Diego Nargiso to face last year's finalists Russia in the opening round of the 1996 Davis Cup, reports Reuter.
Gaudenzi, ranked 25th, and Furlan, 29th in the world, will play the singles. Nargiso and Pescosolido the doubles. Panatta announced the team late on Tuesday.
The matches will be played on February 9-11 in Rome.

Minnows in giants' gala



ISLAMABAD, Jan 31 (AFP): World Cup debutants the United Arab Emirates are used to being outsiders.
Most of them, after all don't even come from the Gulf state.

Only skipper Sultan Zarwani and vice-captain Saeed al-Saffar can boast citizenship, with the rest of the squad made up of expatriates.
The side, minnows in next month's tournament along with Holland and Kenya, could not be better motivated, however.
And with reason, a proposed International Cricket Council (ICC) rules change over citizenship and residency could make this their first and last World Cup.
Their mixed bag of Indians, Pakistanis and Sri Lankans, many drawn to the country by the oil industry, earned the chance to take on the likes of Pakistan, South Africa, England and New Zealand in Group B by winning the ICC trophy in Nairobi two years ago.
Holland came second, ahead of Kenya. Both will be earning their first tournament appearances as well.
If the UAE, who will play without a coach after former Indian international Madan Lal quit over a contract row, lead the world in itinerant cricketers, then the Dutch, also in Group B, head the way in long-toothed veterans.
Holland, who have beaten the likes of England, the West Indies and South Africa on home turf — well, matting actually — will field a side with an average age of almost 32.

Nolan Clarke, the former Barbadian player, is in his pension at the venerable age of 47, while opponents will also be tempted to take quick singles to Sri Lankan-born Flavien Aponso, 43, and Steven Lubbers, who at 42 has played for the national side for 24 years.

The Dutch side also contains former Hampshire seamer PJ Bakker, just back from South Africa trying to get fit for the tournaments. The beach-loving Bakker, nicknamed "Bay Watch" by his western province teammates, has spent more time recently as a skiing instructor in Switzerland.
The side's star turn should have been two other English county players, pace bowler Andre Van Troost and all-rounder Roland Lefebvre.

Van Troost, however, has just had a disastrous injury-hit season at Somerset and asked not to be considered amid suggestions he might consider trying to get selected for England.
The 6ft 5ins bowler is genuinely quick, but wild. Last season he managed little else other than to smash West Indian Test player Jimmy Adams' cheekbone and get ordered out of the attack against Kent for intimidatory bowling.

at the expense of off-spinner Time May against Pakistan and held his place for the visit of Sri Lanka, all the time edging closer to the legendary 300-wicket mark.
The signs had not been good at first, with an unimpressive haul of one for 32 and no wicket for 47 in the

Dutch cricket administrator Alex de La Mar said: "We're going to miss him very much. They say he is the second fastest white bowler in the world behind Allan Donald. He may not be a one-day bowler but it really is a pity."
Lefebvre, meanwhile, once with Somerset and now with Glamorgan, will be in Pakistan but bowling at under medium pace after tearing groin muscles.
"I did it in the one-day game against Durhani," he said. "I collapsed in agony, bowled my last ball and collapsed again before being stretched off."
"The muscles are still stiff but I'm determined to play. If I'm 50 or 60 per cent fit, I will probably be selected. I don't want to miss the Cup. It's so exciting for us."

Grafts getting preferential treatment?

STUTTGART, Jan 31: A parliamentary panel said on Tuesday that German authorities had given tennis star Steffi Graf and her father, both under investigation for tax evasion, preferential treatment over their tax affairs, reports Reuter.

The report by deputies from the Baden-Wuerttemberg state assembly criticized state finance ministry officials for holding meetings with Graf to discuss his affairs, panel chairman Wolfgang Bebbler told reporters.
It also criticized a delay of several years before investigators launched a probe of the Grafts' taxes, but said there was no evidence that any politician had tried to influence that investigation.

The star's father, Peter Graf, 57, has been in investigative custody in a Mannheim prison since August on suspicion of concealing more than 40 million marks of his daughter's earnings from tax inspectors.

Dan Duva passes away

NEW YORK, Jan 31: Dan Duva, who promoted fights involving many of boxing's top champions in the past 15 years, died Tuesday after a long battle with cancer. He was 44, reports Reuter.
Duva had surgery last year to remove a brain tumour. He appeared to be recovering, but had a relapse late last year and had been in failing health recently. He died at Columbia Presbyterian Hospital in New York.

Brian being discreet

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad, Jan 31: He says he's eager and not even in top form. World Cup opponents beware, reports AP.
Despite a 77 and 119 in his innings during Trinidad and Tobago's first-round three-wicket victory in the Red Stripe Cup over Barbados, Brian Lara says he needs a lot of practice.
After missing the World Series Cup in a dispute with the West Indies Cricket Board of Control, the 26-year-old Lara says he feels rejuvenated but needs to get back to peak condition to be ready for the World Cup next month.

His totals came off a Barbados bowling attack that included Test bowlers Otis Gibson and Anderson Cummins, and Vasbert Drakes, who played in the one-day series against Australia less than a year ago.

Lara, who recently denied reports he could return to English county cricket this year, told The Associated Press that for now, he isn't looking beyond the World Cup.

It had been rumored that Lara was entertaining offers from other English clubs, which prompted Warwickshire boss Dennis Amis to lash out at his former star.

Lara said he doesn't expect any negative reaction from his West Indies teammates when they head to the World Cup in India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka Feb 14-March 17.

"I am not expecting any ill feeling towards me by the other members of the team," the 26-year-old Trinidadian left-hander said. "They all understand why I did what I did, and now we must pick ourselves up as a team and move on."

Lara left the West Indies team in November protesting a fine imposed on him by the WICBC for alleged disciplinary problems and complaining of problems with the team.

While his move shocked the cricket world, it is also unearthing many problems in West Indies cricket.

The WICBC last week named Lara to the squad that will play in the World Cup after the star batsman assured the board he was committed to West Indies cricket.

He and the rest of the West Indies' 14-member World Cup squad meet in Barbados on Wednesday for a one-week training camp before leaving for the Asian subcontinent.

Cannabis, cause of France's concern

PARIS, Jan 31: French sports minister Guy Drut called on Tuesday for a two-month ban on all athletes tested positive for taking cannabis, reports Reuter.
Drut's call in a speech to the French National Olympic Committee followed a spate of cannabis cases in French sports, which started when five professional soccer players tested positive for the substance this season.

It later emerged that several other athletes in handball and basketball had also tested positive for cannabis in recent months.

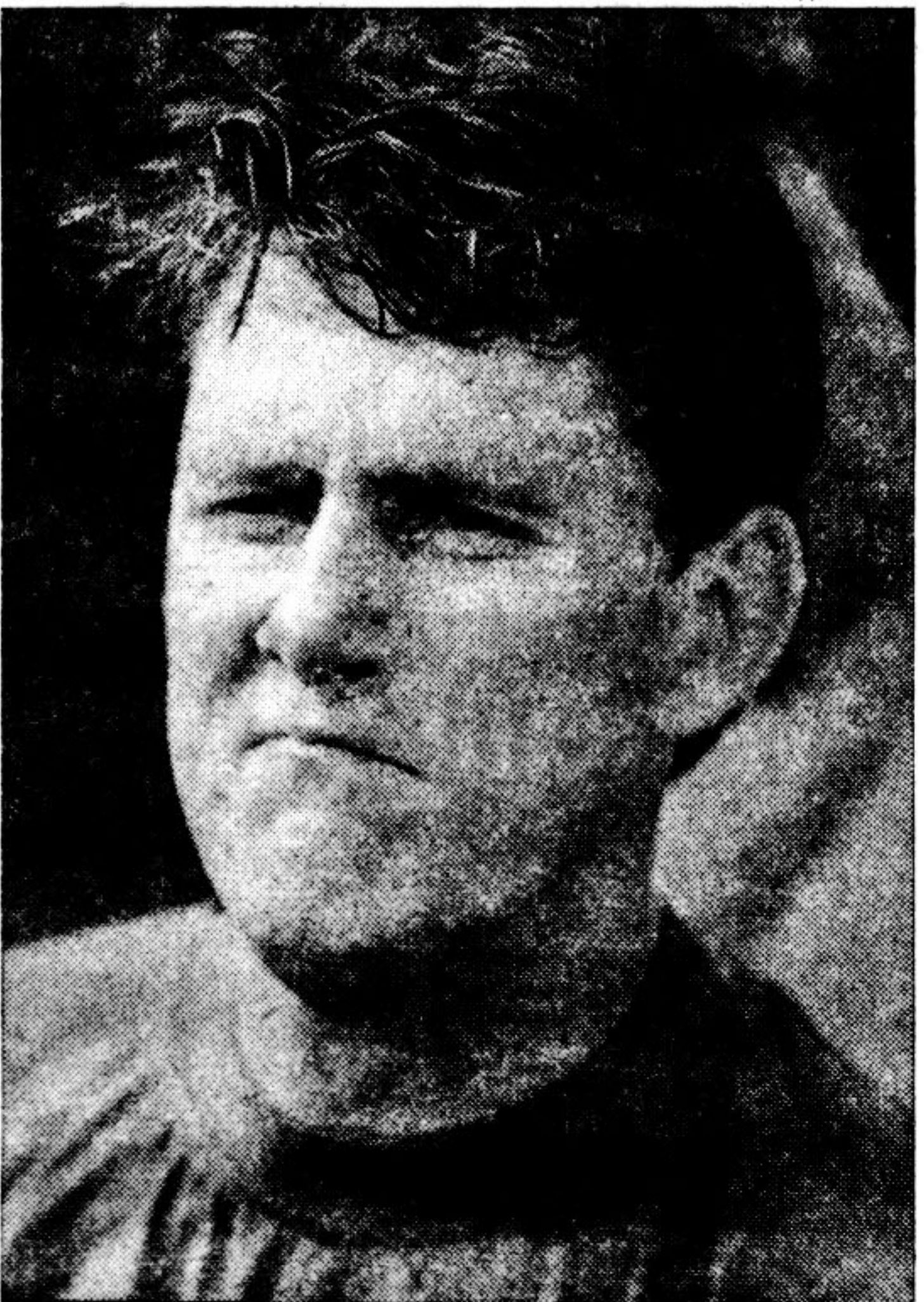
Drut said he wanted harmonisation of penalties in all sports, proposing two months for a first offence and six months for a second.

Cannabis is on the International Olympic Committee's list of banned substances though it is not considered a performance-enhancing drug and international federations are not obliged to impose an automatic ban on athletes using it. The French soccer federation has so far imposed two-month bans on four of the players tested positive, including internationals Fabien Barthez and Stephane Paille.

'Big Mac', adored as ever



ISLAMABAD, Jan 31 (AFP): When the South African selectors sit down to pick their side, the name Brian McMillan invariably heads the list.
Because of his bowling and his slip fielding ... and his swearing.



BRIAN McMILLAN

McMillan is, quite simply, the best all-rounder in the game. He would walk into any side in the world.
Yet, when compared to the other big names of cricket, the 32-year-old western province player is almost unknown.
It is his choice.

There seem to be three distinct faces to this 15-stone son of a miner from Carletonville. As a pace bowler he is brash, as a batsman clinical, as a family man intensely private.
McMillan the all-rounder has often been likened to former English all-rounder Ian Botham. Yet the South African, who tempted the comparison by calling his dog beefy, is in fact a completely different player.
His pace bowling, like

But this is there a fourth McMillan makes his entrance, adding yet another world-class skill to his armoury. For he appears to be the only player in the world with a tactical line in humorous sledging.

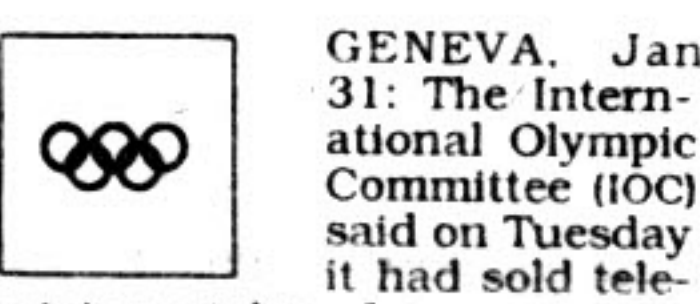
Atherton explains: "He comes nearer to unsettling me than most because his verbal aren't really nasty, they make me want to laugh. Then I look up after he's given me this mouthful and he's winking at me."
McMillan, rated a "world-class sledger" by former Australian captain Allan Border, argues: "You cannot simply get away with swearing at players in the modern game."

"Sledging is part of the game, and the hostility of Test cricket, although it is often tempered with humour. It can unsettle batsmen and make them play shots they wouldn't otherwise play."

Apartheid almost robbed him of his test career, delaying his debut until he was almost 30.

Since then, however, he has averaged over 40 with the bat and his wickets have cost him less than 30 apiece, an unprecedented level of performance unmatched by his only serious rivals Steve Waugh of Australia — whose batting has improved at the expense of his seamers — and Wasim Akram of Pakistan ... or even Botham.
McMillan goes into the World Cup in fine form, particularly with the bat. He averaged just under 45 in the five-match Test series against England and took eight wickets at 30.88 apiece.
South African coach Bob Woolmer knows the player's value.
"He is a selector's dream," he says.

IOC ruins Rupert's hope



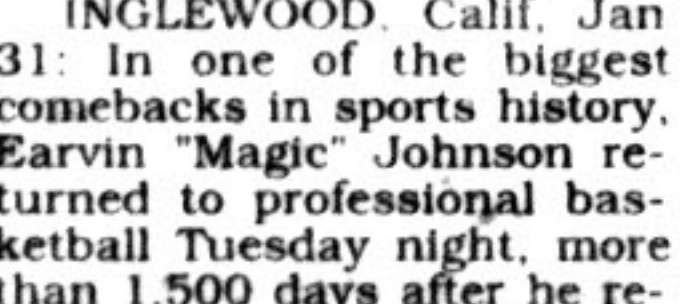
GENEVA, Jan 31: The International Olympic Committee (IOC) said on Tuesday it had sold television rights for successive Olympic Games from 2000 to 2008 to the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) for more than 1.4 billion dollars, reports Reuter.

The sale is a rare piece of good news for the public service broadcasters who form the EBU's membership after the rise of cash-rich satellite broadcasters threatened their Olympic monopoly.
The IOC did receive higher for the rights — including one said to be around 2 billion dollars from a consortium including Rupert Murdoch's News Corp.

But, according to a joint IOC-EBU statement, the IOC decided to stay with the EBU, which has broadcast all Olympics to Europe since the 1960 Rome Games.

"These decisions were taken based on the EBU's experience and expertise, and on the interest of the Olympic movement and all viewers in Europe (including eastern Europe, North Africa and the Middle East," the statement said.

'Magic' brings magic back



INGLEWOOD, Calif, Jan 31: In one of the biggest comebacks in sports history, Earvin "Magic" Johnson returned to professional basketball Tuesday night, more than 1,500 days after he retired with the stunning announcement that he was infected with the AIDS virus, reports Reuter.

Minutes into the first quarter, Johnson strode on to the court to a thunderous standing ovation and proceeded to dazzle fans and players alike on the way to the Los Angeles Lakers' 128-118 home victory over the Golden State Warriors.

Looking at times as if he had never been away, Johnson — a 10-time NBA all-star — showed a sell-out crowd of 17,505 that his repertoire of skills remains almost as sharp as ever. He finished with 19 points, 10 assists and 8 rebounds while playing only 27 minutes.

"A legend comes back," read a hand-written sign held aloft from the stands of the great western forum.
At a crowded post-game news conference, Johnson — who helped propel the National Basketball Association to global popularity — was breathless with excitement. "Oh man," he said. "Thank God for giving strength and courage. Praise him. Can't tell you how great I feel."
Coming off the bench, the bulked-up 6-foot-9 inch Johnson alternated between power forward and point guard, the position he revolutionised in a 12-year career in which he led the Lakers to five NBA championships.
He looked rusty at times but still offered up glimpses

of the Lakers' "showtime" era in the 1980s with no-look passes and "baby skyhooks" that brought the crowd to its feet. Even on the sidelines, Johnson's presence appeared to electrify his teammates as he shouted tips from bench.
Johnson admitted the felt "scared and nervous" when he first entered the game — "Like a 36-year-old rookie" — but said he soon gained confidence and settled down.
It was Johnson's first appearance in a regular-season NBA game since November 7, 1991, when he quit the game after announcing that he had tested positive for HIV.

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Johnson's return makes him the first athlete playing professional sports to have openly admitted to being infected with the HIV virus — "basketball's most valuable outpatient," as Los Angeles Times columnist Mike Downey put it.

Two seasons ago another Johnson comeback bid ended abruptly after several players expressed fears about competing against someone with HIV in the rough-and-tumble — and sometimes bloody — action of the NBA.

But this time, Johnson — who has shown to symptoms of having developed full-blown AIDS — believes his peers are educated enough to realise that the risk of contracting HIV in a basketball game are infinitesimal. Experts say the disease is transmitted almost exclusively by sexual contact or blood transfusion.

A number of NBA stars have welcomed him back, and Johnson's first opponents, the Warriors, showed no hesitation about going head-to-head against him.
"The NBA players are smart enough to know that you get the virus from unprotected sex, and we're not going to have unprotected sex on the basketball court," Warriors centre Rony Seikaly said after the game.

As Magic fever spread, tickets for several upcoming Lakers home games quickly sold out.

Edberg overlooked

STOCKHOLM, Jan 31: Former world number one Stefan Edberg, 30, has been left out of the Swedish team for the country's first-round Davis Cup meeting with Belgium next week, reports Reuter.

Australian Open quarterfinalists Thomas Enqvist and Mikael Tillstrom made the squad along with Magnus Larsson, Jonas Bjorkman and Niklas Kulti for the match starting in Katrineholm, Sweden, on February 9.
Edberg's singles form has suffered recently and he announced 1996 would be his last year on the circuit. But he won the Australian Open doubles title with Czech Petr Korda in Melbourne last week.