

A pall of gloom falls on Libya

CAIRO, July 15: Libyan television broadcast in black and white Sunday to mourn up to 50 people killed or wounded in a riot at a soccer game, diplomats and opposition figures said, reports AP.

The match in the Libyan capital, Tripoli, on Friday pitted the rival teams Al-Itihad and Al-Ahli, which is controlled by a son of Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi.

Accounts of what happened differed.

State-run Libyan television reported Saturday that several people were killed during "violent incidents" at a soccer game in Tripoli, but gave no details.

The Libyan government declared Sunday a day of mourning, during such mourning periods, public parties are banned and the television broadcasts in black and white.

An opposition leader living in Cairo said he heard that the altercation began with fans shouting and running onto the field to challenge a call by a referee they considered biased in favour of Al-Ahli, which is controlled by Gadhafi's son Al-Saadi.

Al-Saadi's bodyguards opened fire to protect him. Others returned fire, and dozens of people were killed or wounded in the gunfire and a crush to get out of the area, said the opposition leader, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

He said up to 50 people were killed or hurt.

A Western diplomat in Tripoli said by telephone that he had heard there were as many as 40 casualties at the stadium and in a riot in the surrounding streets. He too spoke on condition of anonymity.

No details of the incident have been reported in the government-controlled Libyan newspapers or by the official JANA news agency, he said.

Footballers to play fair

LONDON, July 15: English soccer players will vote this week on whether to take strike action over the payment of television cash, the professional footballers' association (PFA) said on Sunday, reports Reuters.

The Premier League, which has its own TV deal, would not be affected but the threat hangs over the 72 clubs in the other divisions.

The PFA plans to issue ballot forms to the players to ask for a mandate to strike after being told that the football league would not be handing over the usual 10 per cent of television revenue to the union.

The league recently struck a 25 million pounds (\$38.8 million dollars) coverage deal with Sky TV.

"If the players so voted then no game would take place because this is purely about a TV agreement," PFA chief executive Gordon Taylor told British radio.

More than 15,000 professional players at the 72 league clubs would be asked to vote.

Football league assistant secretary Andy Williamson insisted the league would not increase their seasonal payment.

Valencia yet to rope in Romario

RIO DE JANEIRO, July 15: Flamengo and Valencia of Spain have moved closer to wrapping up a deal that would send Brazilian super scorer Romario to the Spanish league, news reports said Sunday, reports AP.

Valencia chairman Francisco Roig wants Romario in Spain this week, but Flamengo would like him to play at least two more games in Brazil, the CBN radio network said.

To lure Romario, the 1994 FIFA player of the year, Valencia has reportedly offered him 9.5 million dollars for a three-year contract — 1.5 million dollars more than last week's offer, the daily O Globo reported Sunday.

"We're still not totally satisfied with Valencia's offer," Flamengo club president Kleber Leite told CBN radio on Sunday. "That's why we're talking it over."

Another obstacle to the transfer was a penalty clause imposed when Spain's Barcelona sold Romario to Flamengo. Any Spanish club wishing to buy him before 1997 would have to pay Barcelona 900 million pesetas, the equivalent of 7 million dollars.

Roig and Leite were meeting again late Sunday for more negotiations. This is Roig's second trip to Rio in the last six weeks to buy the 30-year-old attacker who led Brazil in 1994 to its fourth World Cup.

Iran axes 3 dopers

TEHRAN, July 15: Iran left three members off its Olympic team for taking steroids before departing for the Atlanta Games on Sunday, the Jomhuri Islami daily reported, reports AP.

The newspaper said Mohammad-Reza Tolouie and Abbas Abdi were dropped from the judo team. Shaheen Nasiriniya was pulled from the weight-lifting team after testing positive for steroids.

The National Athletics Association will determine other suspensions and punishments for the athletes, the newspaper said. It did not give the size of the Iranian team.

Brazil beat FIFA stars



EAST RUTHERFORD, New Jersey, July 15: The Brazilian Olympic team beat the FIFA World all-stars 2-1 on late goal by defender Roberto Carlos on Sunday in its final warmup before the start of the Games, reports Reuters.

A record crowd to watch a sports event at Giants Stadium of 78,416 watched as Bebeto set up Carlos, who beat goalkeeper Nelson Tapia of Chile from an acute angle to the near post in the 78th minute.

"This was obviously a good win for us," Brazilian coach Mario Zagallo said. "Beating a team of this calibre will give us confidence going ... in that first match against Japan."

Brazil begins the Olympics against Japan on Sunday in Miami and then meets Hungary and Nigeria in opening round robin games.

Brazil has never won a gold medal in soccer, but the chances are very good. The drought will be over soon, according to the FIFA-all-star coach, the former Danish national team coach Richard Moeller-Neilson.

"As far as I can see, the Brazilians have a very good chance to win in Atlanta," said Moeller-Neilson. "Everybody likes to talk about how technical they are. They are physically very fit. Normally, they are good with the ball."

"They can play the ball in every position," said Moeller-Neilson. "The defence is very strong. The players are very fast. They support each other very well."

Bebeto lifted the Brazilians to a 1-0 lead three minutes into the second half. Saviola sent the World Cup star a long, low pass through the centre of the field. Bebeto raced toward the penalty area as Tapia came out to the top of the box. Tapia tried to knock the ball away, but it bounced right back to Bebeto, who headed it home from 15 yards.

German star striker Juergen Klinsmann equalised on a brilliant volley in the 69th

minute. Argentine midfielder Fernando Redondo raced unmarked into the penalty area on the left side and lofted a cross to Klinsmann, who kicked the ball into the net from 12 yards past goalkeeper Dida.

"My goal wasn't really that difficult," Klinsmann said. "The ball was perfectly prepared for me."

TEAMS

FIFA WORLD STARS: Jorge Campos (Nelson Tapia, 46th), Lothar Matthaeus, John Harkes (Fernando Couto, 46th), Fernando Hierro (Ned Zelic, 46th), Marcel Desailly (Mark Fish, 85th), Mark Fish (Krasimir Blakov, 46th), Michael Laudrup (Abdi Pele, 46th), Fernando Redondo, David Ginola, Juergen Klinsmann, Kazu Miura (George Weah, 46th).

BRAZIL: Dida, Ze Maria, A Aldair, Ronaldo, Roberto Carlos, Flavio Conceicao, Amaral (Ze Elias, 67th), Juninho, Rivaldo, Bebeto, Saviola (Ronaldo, 67th).



Flavio Coceicao of Brazil (L) takes control of the ball from FIFA all-star George Weah during an exhibition match in New Jersey on July 14. — AFP/UNB photo

Coping with clammy chores

ATLANTA, Georgia, July 15 (AFP): It is the definition of a thankless task. You get it right, who cares? You mess up, all hell breaks loose.

Bewildered judges at the Olympics are famous for spawning pandemonium down the ages. Atlanta will not be spared. Look out for the combat sports, notably boxing, unrivalled in Olympic infamy, racket sports, fencing, virtually all team sports and any other event in which an autocratic panel of judges can determine the winner.

Riots and demonstrations have plagued boxing inside and outside the Olympics. At the 1964 Games in Tokyo Cho Dong-Sik of South Korea was disqualified for holding in the flyweight quarterfinal and staged a 51-minute one-man sit-down protest in the ring. The judges were unmoved. Dong-Sik was.

In 1928 in Amsterdam bantamweight Harry Isaac of South Africa was declared winner in his semifinal against American John Daley. Americans stormed the judges' table demanding that the decision be reversed.

It was, Daley lost the final to Italian Vittorio Tamagnini. Police were called as Americans again rose up in protest. This time the protest was in vain.

Judging scandals continued through the decades but Seoul in 1988 produced the worst example to date when a referee was attacked by South Korean boxing officials and security guards.

Keith Walker deducted two points from Byun Jong-Il, costing him the fight against eventual silver medalist Alexander Hristov of Bulgaria. Walker, beaten up, kicked and punched about the head, fled the arena and took the next plane home to New Zealand. Byun staged a 67-minute sit-down protest in the ring, beating the 1964 record set by compatriot Cho.

A team sport, basketball, spawned one of the greatest rows in international sport at the Munich Olympics. The United States, undefeated in 62 Olympic matches, sank two free throws to win 50-49 in the final against the Soviet Union. Or so they thought.

Following a Soviet protest over a time-out call, three seconds were added to the game, allowing Sasha Belov to score the winning basket. The United States filed a protest but a jury of appeal upheld the Soviet win. The US team re-

jected their silver medals.

Another team sport, hockey, saw an entire national team disgraced. Pakistan were banned for life after the 1972 final which they lost to hosts Germany 1-0. They were incensed by what they viewed as biased officiating and players and spectators stormed the judges' table after the match. The ban was lifted in time for the 1976 Olympics.

Blood flowed in earnest after the 1924 Paris Olympics fencing competition. In the final the Italians accused a Hungarian judge of cheating them out of victory against the French.

Hungary's 60-year-old Italian-born coach Italo Santelli was drawn into the controversy and challenged Adolfo Confronte to a duel. Santelli's son Giorgio deputised for his aging father and restored family honour when he delivered a deep slash to Confronte's head, ending the duel after two minutes.

London in 1908 was the scene for remarkable antics in athletics. Wyndham Halswelle, a British army officer who set an Olympic record in the 400m semifinals, faced off against three Americans — John Taylor, William Robbins and John Carpenter.

Fearing the Americans would use team tactics, officials were posted every 20 meters along the track. Robbins led at halfway. Carpenter and Halswelle passed him. As

Haswelle attempted to pass Carpenter on the outside, the American ran wide to block his path.

Officials broke the tape before Carpenter reached it and disqualified him. A re-run was ordered, which the Americans boycotted, leaving Halswelle to run for joyous victory. It was his last race. He quit athletics in disgust.

One of the more astonishing performances by a judging panel took place in gymnastics. In Moscow in 1980 Romanian Nadia Comaneci needed a 9.95 score on the balanced beam to win the all round title outright from 18-year-old Soviet Yelena Davydova.

Following her near flawless routine, spectators waited with bated breath. And waited. Some 30 minutes later the judges scored her at 9.85, thanks largely to the Soviet and Polish judges.

A more bizarre episode than the modern pentathlon affair of 1976 would be hard to find. In the fencing tournament Soviet army major Boris Onyshchenko was observed registering hits on the electronic scoreboard when his sword had come nowhere near touching an opponent.

His British opponent appealed and the Soviet soldier's sword was examined, revealing an elaborate wiring job that permitted him to score whenever he liked. Onyshchenko was disqualified and never heard of again.



CENTENNIAL OLYMPIC MEDALS: Silver, gold and bronze medals (from L-R) for this year's Olympic Games on display at Atlanta on July 14. — AFP/UNB photo

Sample to test sample

ATLANTA, July 15: Even if there is not a single positive doping case at the Atlanta Olympics, the drug testing at the Games will be dominated by one B Sample, reports Reuters.

One of the main officials at the laboratory in charge of analysing the urine of thousands of athletes is appropriately named Dr Barry Sample.

When athletes undergo dope tests their urine is divided up into two bottles which are known as the A and B samples. If the A sample is found to show traces of a banned substance, the second Bw sample is analysed to check the result before an athlete is banned.

Nebiola the fraud!

LONDON, July 15: Primo Nebiola, president of the International Amateur Athletics Federation has been named in a fraud case involving rigging of votes for athletics awards, reports AP.

The report, in The Sunday Times, says the fraud happened at the Monte Carlo headquarters of the IAAF, and after using forensic testing, the newspaper found that a worldwide polls to choose athletes for awards at a televised ceremony in Monte Carlo was rigged.

Handwriting was analysed by using police forensic methods and showed that a set of late ballot papers was the work of one person, who fabricated names of some of the most respected figures in athletics. The Sunday Times alleges.

A former senior official at the IAAF has admitted involvement, saying that Nebiola had informed him that late ballot papers may have been coming in.

In the votes Sally Gunnell, the reigning Olympic 400m hurdle champion, was dropped from first place in the legitimate voting to outside the awards after the vote-rigging.

Jackie Joyner-Kersey was given the award, at a time when Nebiola was trying to achieve a greater profile for athletics in the United States.

Among the men, 100m Olympic champion Linford Christie was also dropped, as was fellow Briton Colin Jackson, to make way for Cuban high-jumper Javier Sotomayor and Ukrainian pole vaulter Sergei Bubka.

These are serious implications for Nebiola on the eve of the 26th Olympiad in Atlanta, with the most senior figures in amateur athletics moving to challenge a man who has already survived a serious of scandals involving fraud and corruption.

Israel's objection

JERUSALEM, July 15: Israel said on Monday it had asked the International Olympic Committee not to let the Palestinian delegation march at the Atlanta Games this week under a banner reading "Palestine," reports Reuters.

Yaacov Levy, deputy director-general of the foreign ministry, said Israel had written to urge that the Olympics not be manipulated for political purposes.

There's no dispute over the participation of the Palestinian athletes. That's not the point. The expectation is precisely over the banner under which they march," he told Israel radio.

Three athletes will compete under the banner, representing the self-rule areas in the West Bank and Gaza Strip handed over by Israel since 1994. They will parade with athletes from around the world at the opening of the Games on Friday.

Levy said Israel was asking the IOC to stick to the rules of its charter and for Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority to stand by interim peace accord that leave final-status issues such as statehood to future negotiations with Israel.

"It's not a question of recognising a people or flag, and it isn't a technical detail. It's not a UN forum, but a sports forum and that's precisely the focus of our appeal — to prevent a sports forum from becoming a political forum," Levy said.

Israeli officials said Israel's own Olympic committee had opposed making a protest.

Hi Ma Goldman, deputy education minister in the government ousted by hardline leader Benjamin Netanyahu in May, said the protest would lead to Israel's being excluded from the forthcoming Mediterranean Games.

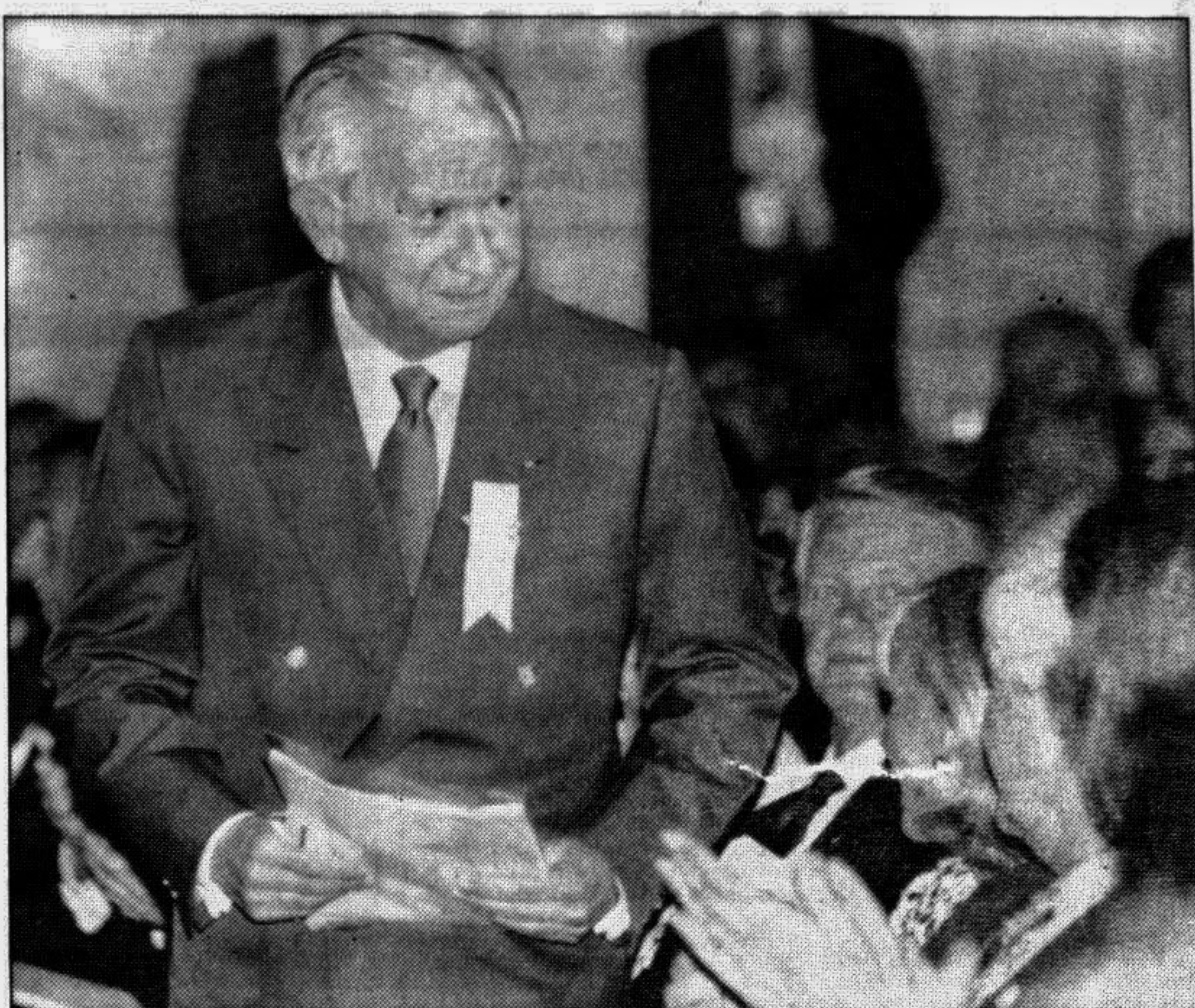
Racer dead

SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS, Belgium, July 15: British racer Lee Pullan and a track official died instantly Sunday in a crash at a 24-hour motorcycle race, the third round of the world endurance championship, reports AP.

Officials said Pullan, riding on Kawasaki, struck Charles Lambert after Lambert had tried to remove a piece of a motorcycle that had fallen onto the track.

Pullan was doing 250 kph (more than 150 mph) on a fast stretch of the track when he struck Lambert. They both died at the scene.

The race, halted after the crash, was later resumed and won by Piergiorgio Bontempi (Italy). Stephane Couelle (France) and Brian Morrison (Britain) on Kawasaki.



International Olympic Committee (IOC) president Juan Antonio Samaranch acknowledges applause from the audience at the opening of the IOC's 105th General Assembly in Atlanta on July 14. — AFP/UNB photo

105th IOC session opens



ATLANTA, July 15: International Olympic Committee president Juan Antonio Samaranch warned Sunday that use of performance-enhancing drugs causes "physical and moral death."

In a speech at the opening ceremony of the 105th IOC session, Samaranch said the Olympic movement would continue to lead the fight against doping, reports AP.

"Doping is the negation of sport and its role as we understand it," he said. "Athletes who use banned substances to improve their performance commit a series of acts that transgress and violate certain immutable principles."

"First and foremost, they destroy their health, which is the most precious thing they possess. Doping leads to physical and moral death because of the irreversible behavioral changes that drug use entails."

Samaranch said the elimination of drugs depends not only on "severe measures" taken against violators but also educational campaigns to inform athletes and the public about this "despicable — and dangerous — form of cheating."

"Once more the Olympic movement is demonstrating its ability to act with concrete facts, not just words," he said.

The IOC will hold three days of meetings, hearing reports from Atlanta organisers, as well as those from the 1998 Winter Games in Nagano, 2000 Summer Games in Sydney and 2002 Winter Games in Salt

Lake City.

Doping could be a major issue during these Centennial Games. Atlanta's drug-testing lab is equipped with three high resolution mass spectrometers, state-of-the-art machines that can detect the use of steroids dating back months.

There have been a total of 51 positive tests at the Olympic Games since doping controls were introduced in 1968. At the last Summer Games in Barcelona in 1992, five athletes failed drug tests.

Among those attending Sunday's ceremony at the Woodruff Arts Centre Symphony Hall were President Clinton's special adviser Thomas McLarty, House Speaker Newt Gingrich, Georgia Gov. Zell Miller, Atlanta mayor Bill Campbell and Atlanta organising chief Billy Payne.

McLarty commended the IOC for helping finance the reconstruction of war-ravaged sports facilities in Sarajevo and said the government supports the call for an "Olympic truce" during the Atlanta Games.

"President Clinton believes we must all ponder the tragedy of sports venues turned into battlegrounds and then graveyards, and redouble our efforts for peace," McLarty said.

Referring to security measures in Atlanta, he said, "Making these Games safe and successful has been our mission since the moment in Tokyo when President Samaranch announced that Atlanta was the winning bid, and will

remain our goal until the flame is extinguished at the closing ceremony of the Paralympics on Aug. 25."

Gingrich, who is from Georgia, said the Olympic movement is more vital than ever in promoting peaceful competition in a world where "it seems we have become a global village made up of strangers."

In his speech, Samaranch thanked Payne and his committee for their work in organising the 100th anniversary Games of the modern Olympics.

There is no doubt in my mind that they will be truly exceptional," he said.

On his favourite topic, Samaranch stressed the need to preserve the "unity" of the Olympic movement, which comprises the IOC, international sports federations and national Olympic bodies.

"Sport is now in a golden age, and this may give rise to self-seeking interests, which could be harmful to our movement if we fail to guard against them."

Samaranch said the financial security of the IOC and the Olympic movement is guaranteed through the year 2012, thanks to a series of long-term TV rights deals — worth more than \$5.5 billion — with NBC and the European Broadcasting Union.

He noted that the IOC's policy was to sell broadcast rights to stations that provide free coverage, ruling out exclusive deals with satellite or pay-per-view networks.

Japan's modest target



ATLANTA, July 15 (AP): Japan expects to rally from poor showings at the last two Olympics and win five gold medals and 25 to 30 silver and bronze at the Atlanta Summer Games.

"Our goal is to win five golds at least," Hironoshin Furuhashi, president of Japan's National Olympic Committee, said Sunday. That would top Japan's three gold medals at the 1992 Barcelona Games and four golds in Seoul in 1988.

Japanese athletes are contenders for gold in men's and women's judo, women's marathon, women's swimming, men's freestyle wrestling and women's table tennis.

"We also expect to win 25 to 30 silver and bronze medals," Furuhashi said at a news conference a day after arriving in Atlanta with half of Japan's 499-member delegation, the nation's largest team.

Among the leaders in the medal standings at Summer Games in the 1960s and 1970s, Japan fell back in the last two Olympics, finishing well below the top 10.

Now Japan is aiming for a substantial improvement in its Olympic medal count here as a prelude to hosting the Nagano Winter Games in 1998.

With the weather and

Olympic Village accommodations meeting their satisfaction, Japanese team officials are optimistic.

"We heard it was very hot, with high humidity in Atlanta," Furuhashi said. "But in Japan we have rainy season now and its getting hot, so I found no difference."

On Saturday, the high temperature was 34 degrees Celsius (93 F), with late afternoon rain showers. At night, the temperature dropped to 23 C (73 F).

"It's cooler than I expected," said Tsuyoshi Aoki, deputy chief of mission, who arrived July 6. "I'm impressed with the Olympic Village. There were some organisational problems at first but now it's better."

Team physician Takashi Kawahara said he has advised athletes to be prepared for torrid weather in Atlanta.

"But now because of air-conditioning in rooms, we have to avoid getting too cold," he told reporters.

Kawahara also said drug tests administered before the team's departure came were all negative.

Of Japan's medal hopefuls, the Nakamura brothers give Japan a triple threat in judo — Yoshio at 95 kilos (209 pounds), Kenzo at 71 kilos (156.5 pounds) and Yukimasa at 65 kilos (143 pounds).

It's the first time that three brothers have qualified for the Olympics in one sport, said Furuhashi, the Japanese committee president.

Other men's judo contenders are Toshihiko Kogo, 78 kilos (172 pounds), Hidehiko Yoshida, 86 kilos (189.5 pounds) and Naoya Ogawa over 95 kilos (over 209 pounds).

Of women judoists, Japan has high hopes for Yoko Tanabe, 72 kilos (158.5 pounds), Noriko Sugawara, 56 kilos (123 pounds) and Yuuko Tamura, 48 kilos (106 pounds).

Japanese women also look strong in the marathon, led by Barcelona silver medalist Yuko Arimori. The other threats are Junko Asari and Izumi Maki.

"I think one of them will win a medal," Furuhashi said.

Japan's best chances for swimming medals are in the butterfly events — Ayumi Aoyama at 100 metres and Hitomi Kashima at 200 metres.

In freestyle wrestling, Takahiro Wada is a gold medal favourite at 62 kilos (136.5 pounds).

In table tennis, Japanese hopes are resting on Chinese-born Chire Koyama in women's singles. As a member of China's team, she was allowed to emigrate after falling in love with a Japanese team member at the world championships.



South African team archers (from left) Leanda Hendricks, Jill Borresen and Kirstin Lewis practice in La Grange, Georgia on July 14. — AFP/UNB photo

Comoros' first

MORONI, July 15: The Comoros Islands sent their first team to the Olympic Games when six athletes left for Atlanta on Saturday night, reports Reuters.