

Benjamin bids cricket bye

LONDON, Aug 8: West Indies pace bowler Winston Benjamin announced his retirement from first class cricket today due to a shoulder injury, reports Reuter.



The 31-year-old Antiguan pace bowler, who played in 21 Tests for West Indies, damaged a shoulder tendon playing for Hampshire in the county championship earlier this year.

Benjamin scored 3985 runs and took 476 first-class wickets in 171 matches, including Tests.

A noble dedication

PRETORIA, Aug 8: South Africa's four Olympic medalists dedicated their awards Wednesday to 78-year-old President Nelson Mandela, who they said, had provided the inspiration behind their successes, reports AFP.

Medalists Penny Heyns, Josiah Thugwane, Hezekiel Sepeng and Marianne Kriel made the dedication to Mandela outside his official residence here after having tea with the President.

Heyns, who won two medals in the 100 and 200 metre women's breaststroke, read Mandela personalised letter written by the four to their leader.

"We pray for your continued wisdom, health and leadership... and thank you for helping us achieve our goals," the letter read.

Thugwane, who on Sunday became South Africa's first ever black gold medalist, winning the men's marathon, addressed reporters in Zulu, saying he was honoured to meet Mandela, who had helped him succeed "against all odds."

Thugwane, who is a coal miner in the eastern Mpumalanga province, has been one of South Africa's top marathoners for several years, despite training without the aid of a coach.

In March he also survived being grazed in the chin by a bullet shot at point blank range by a group of men who tried to hijack his car.

Mandela, who gave the four medalists a guided tour of the spacious grounds surrounding his residence, complimented them for their successes, achieved despite South Africa's years of isolation and deprivation.

"South Africa is a gold exporter," he said. "But now, these young people brought gold back to us."

He further predicted the country would increase its medal haul in the 2000 Sydney Games.

Earlier in the day, several dozen of members of South Africa's historic Olympic team, which is the first multi-racial squad to fly under the country's new flag and anthem, attended a public victory parade in Johannesburg.

Visa affair

TEHRAN, Aug 8: The United States has withheld visas for six members of the Iranian sports delegation heading to the Paralympic Games for the disabled in Atlanta, Iran's official news agency IRNA said today, reports AFP.

The agency, citing an unidentified sports official, said US authorities had "refrained from issuing visas" to a runner, a weightlifter and four officials accompanying the team, although they had presented "full documents" with the visa request.

The two athletes "had high hopes for winning gold medals, but their presence at the Games is unclear," it said.

The Paralympics are to open next Thursday, August 15, and the Iranian delegation was due to leave for Atlanta on Sunday.

Linford still ill at ease

SESTRIERE, Italy, Aug 8: Britain's Linford Christie ran his first 100 metres race on Wednesday since his shock disqualification in the Olympic final but could only manage second place behind Canada's Bruny Surin, reports Reuter.

Surin, who was part of Canada's triumphant 4x100 metres Olympic relay squad, won in a time of 10.17 seconds with Christie trailing in more than a 10th of a second behind.

The 36-year-old Christie was ordered off the track at the Olympic 100 metres final in Atlanta 11 days ago after making two false starts but said despite the disqualification he was still the greatest athlete in the world.

Many competitors travelled to this high altitude ski resort in northwestern Italy direct from Atlanta in the hope of setting world records.

In the event, none of them managed to shake off their jet lag and find the inspiration.

despite the fact organisers were offering a new Ferrari sports car to any record breakers.

Allen Johnson, who won the Olympic gold medal in 110 metres hurdles, said on Tuesday he was convinced the world record was now within his grasp.

Racing alongside current record holder Colin Jackson of Britain, Johnson got off to a flying start but then struggled in the face of a stiff headwind and hit two hurdles heavily.

He still managed to win the race, but his time of 13.25 was well outside Jackson's record of 12.91 set three years ago.

Johnson and shot putter Randy Barnes were the only two US gold medalists to come to Sestriere, with the others deciding to attend a reception being thrown for them by President Bill Clinton later on Wednesday.

Barnes won his gold medal after a tense tussle with John Godina and he triumphed again over his compatriot in another close competition in Sestriere.

Britain's Olympic silver medalist Jonatha Edwards won Wednesday's triple jump event with a final leap of 17.67 metres, well inside his world record of 18.29 metres.

"It was disappointing not to do better but I was tired after the Olympics... I think we were all feeling a bit flat," he told reporters.

Sestriere, which is due to host next year's World ski championships, is the only place to regularly hold international athletics meetings more than 2,000 metres above sea level - an altitude which can help boost athletes' performances.

Two years ago Sergei Bubka broke his pole vault world record here while in 1995, Cuba's Ivan Pedroso set a new long jump mark, although it was later annulled amid claims the wind machine had been interfered with.

The European athletics circuit continues in earnest on Saturday with a Grand Prix meeting in Monte Carlo followed by the prestigious Zurich meeting on August 14.

Clinton sings Games' praises

WASHINGTON, Aug 8 (AFP): President Bill Clinton paid tribute to some 200 Olympic medal winners at the White House Wednesday, and called the Atlanta Games "the greatest Games in the history of the Olympics."

Clinton's wording was no coincidence. Juan Antonio Samaranch, president of the International Olympic Committee, left out his traditional hyperbolic praise at the close of the Games, widely criticized as unorganized and over-commercialized.

Samaranch simply called the Games "most exceptional." Clinton, who also saluted the "community spirit" in Atlanta following the fatal terrorist bombing, acknowledged there "May have been some discussion" about the success of the Games.

But, addressing the athletes, he said: "Because you were so magnificent, and because of the way people reacted to the tragedy, as far as I am concerned, these Atlanta Games were the best... these were the greatest Games in the history of the Olympics." Clinton paid special tribute to the women athletes, noting that as a father of a young daughter, he was appreciative of their efforts to break down barriers and compete on an international level.

"We should be on the forefront always of bringing more people into the world of sport, more people into competition, more people having a chance to live out their dreams, whatever they are," Clinton said.

Two greats meet for the first time

LOUISVILLE, Kentucky, Aug 8: Muhammad Ali and Jack Nicklaus met for the first time on Wednesday - on a golf course, not in a ring, reports Reuter.

One of history's greatest boxers and one of its greatest golfers shook hands and exchanged pleasantries at the ninth green of Valhalla Golf Club, where the PGA championships begins today.

"Muhammad wanted to show the golden bear some real gold," an Ali spokesman said of the event, in which the former heavyweight champion displayed the replacement Olympic gold medal he received on Saturday at the Summer Games in Atlanta.

Ali, slowed by Parkinson's syndrome from his years in the ring, seemed to offer Nicklaus the shiny disc, a replacement for the gold medal he won in the 1960 Olympics, which was lost.

"This is not for me - it's yours," Nicklaus said, taking the beribboned medal and hanging it over Ali's broad shoulders - to the delight of hundreds of surprised golf fans, who had not been told in advance of the meeting.



South African President Nelson Mandela seen flanked by country's Olympic medal winners (from L to R) Marianne Kriel, Josiah Thugwane, Penny Heyns and Hezekiel Sepeng at a reception in their honour at the presidential palace in Pretoria on August 7.

Sanchez gets up steam

MONTREAL, Aug 8: Second seeded Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario of Spain showed no ill effects of her Olympic singles final loss to American Lindsay Davenport last Saturday as she shut out Italian qualifier Nathalie Baudone 6-0, 6-0 in second round play at the Canadian Open on Wednesday, reports Reuter.

"I just tried to take the ball early and be aggressive and everything worked," said the number two ranked Sanchez-Vicario. "I really did do everything right."

Other seeded players advancing to the third round included number five Mary Joe Fernandez, number nine Gabriela Sabatini of Argentina, number 15 Nathalie Tauziat of France and number 16 Elena Likhovtseva of Russia.

Third seeded Iva Majoli of Croatia and number four Anke Huber of Germany were upset.

Majoli was disappointed that she could not convert the three set points she had in the opening set against Basuki, a clever all court player. "I should have won the first set because I had those set points," said Majoli. "In the second set, I got a little tired and my shots got shorter and she was able to get into rhythm and play better and better."

Huber was decidedly displeased with her performance against Po, who played a solid baseline game and kept the ball deep. "Everything went wrong with what I was doing," summed up Huber. "I hope I don't have that bad a match for the rest of the year."

Africa eliminated American Jolene Watanabe 6-0, 6-0.

In an exciting and well played confrontation of unseeded American players, Jennifer Capriati defeated Lori McNeil 7-6 (7-5), 7-5.

Capriati was able to overcome McNeil's net rushing in a two hour and seven minute contest that featured thrilling rallies. "It was a good match and we both played well," Capriati said. "Those kind of matches are exactly what I've missed."

Fernandez, who won a gold medal in doubles at the Atlanta Olympics, said it was difficult playing so soon after that memorable victory.

"Winning a gold medal was the thrill of a lifetime," she said. "It's tough playing this week because I really don't feel I've had time to enjoy it."

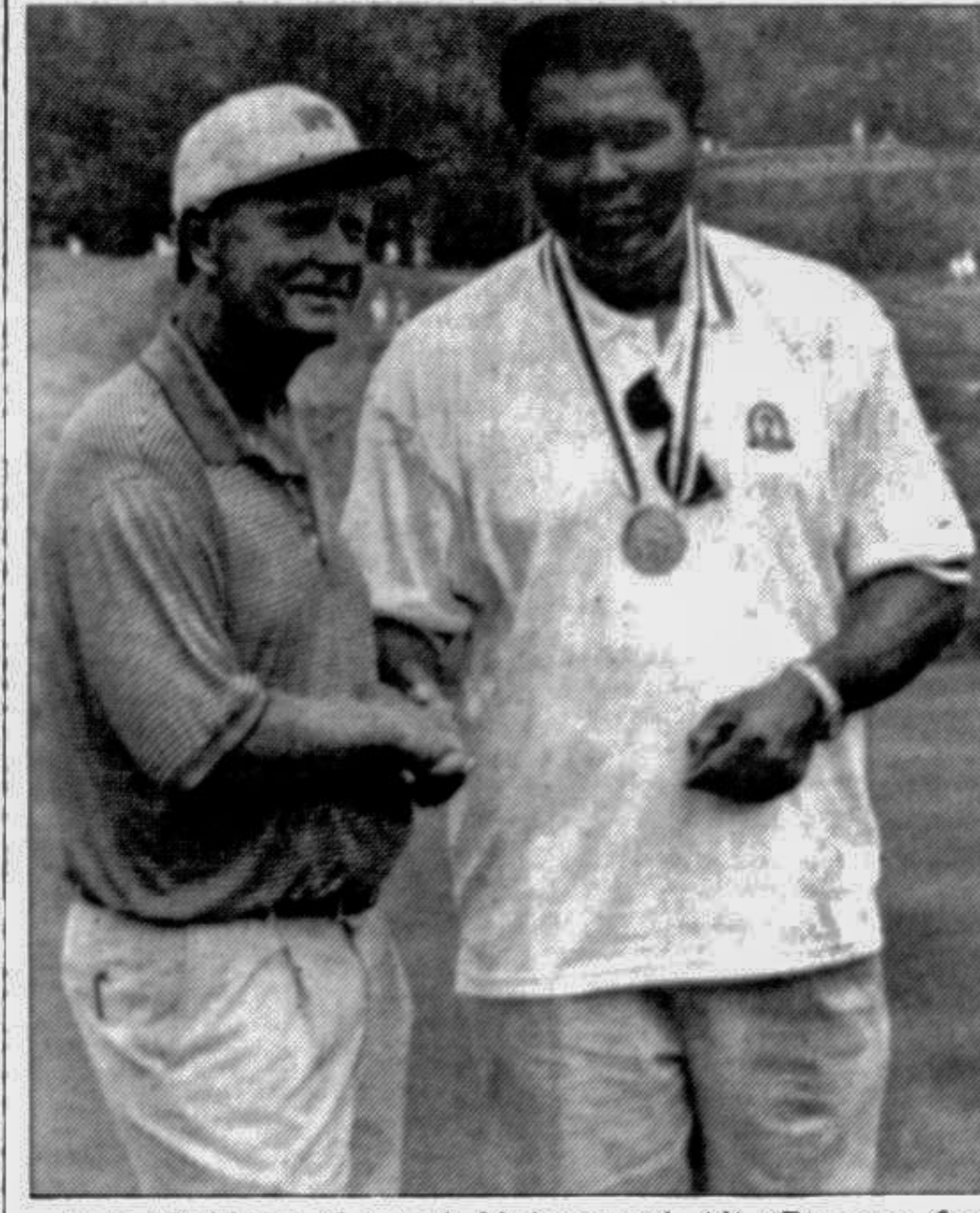
Talking about tennis' place in the Olympics, Fernandez added, "I think every time it's going to be a bigger deal. It's still not recognised as a top sport but I think (Andre) Agassi winning the gold medal is going to help a lot. But I think I'd still like to see it as a team competition."

Olympic trivias

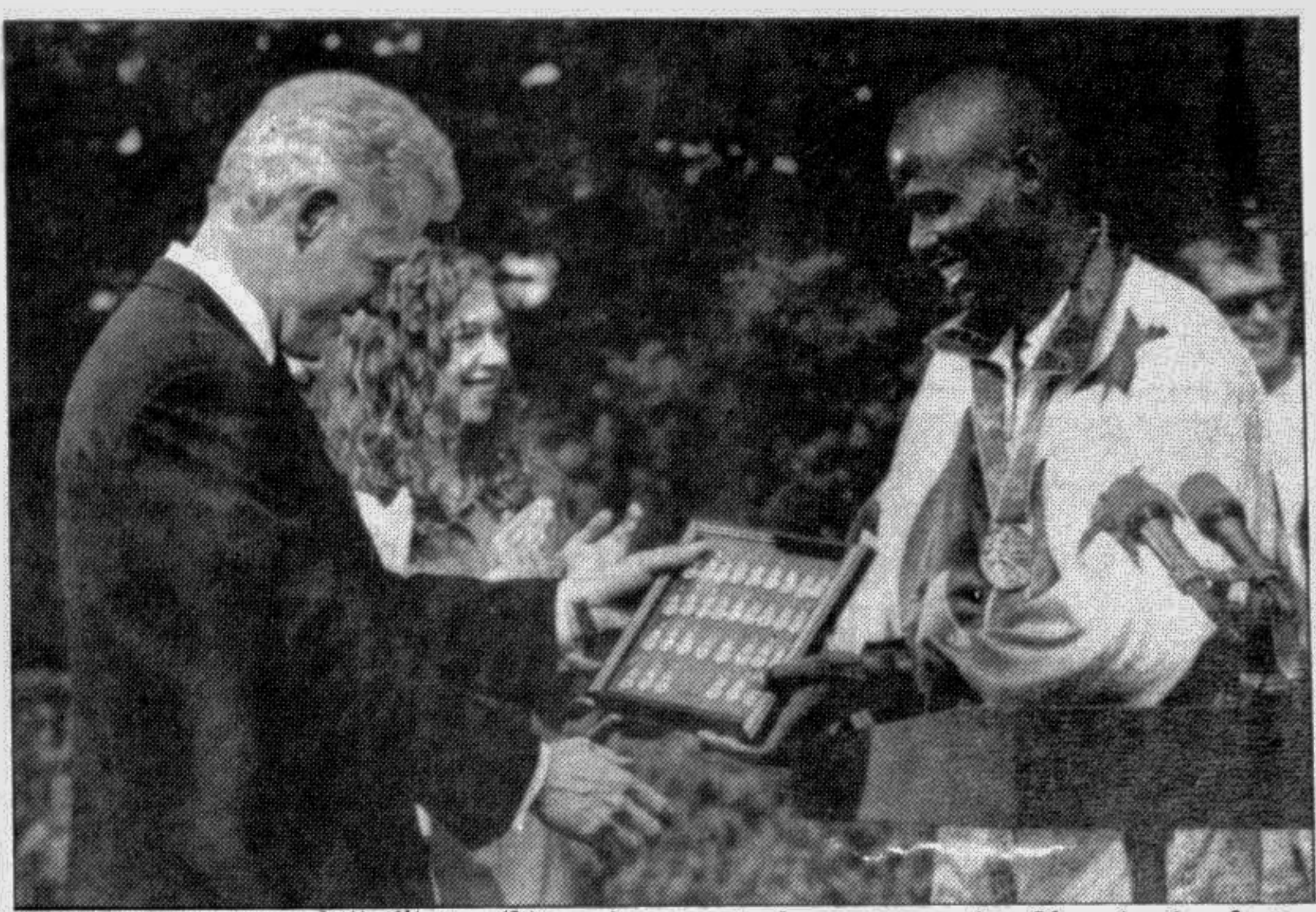
ATLANTA, Aug 8: A man who carried a gun into Olympic Stadium just before the opening ceremony waived a preliminary hearing Wednesday, while an Olympic boxer who used counterfeit bills to buy women's lingerie was cleared of federal charges, reports AP.

Federal authorities agreed Tuesday to drop charges against Ugandan boxer Bakule Charles Kizza, who was arrested on July 17 after buying 500 dollars worth of women's lingerie with counterfeit bills at a Wal-Mart in Gainesville, about 50 miles northeast of Atlanta.

still not recognised as a top sport but I think (Andre) Agassi winning the gold medal is going to help a lot. But I think I'd still like to see it as a team competition."



Jack Nicklaus (L) and Muhammad Ali (R) pose for photographers during the final practice round for the 78th PGA championship at Valhalla Golf Club in Louisville, Kentucky on Wednesday.



American President Bill Clinton (L) receives a set of commemorative Olympic pins from high jump gold medalist Charles Austin (R) at a welcome ceremony while Clinton's daughter Chelsea (C) looks on at the White House in Washington DC on August 7.

Asians floating on air

HONG KONG, Aug 8 (Reuter): Some arrived home to new cars, others to fatter wallets, showers of golden confetti, new corporate sponsorships and handshakes from prime ministers.

Asia's Olympic medal winners returned from Atlanta on Wednesday to a range of rewards as diverse as the region itself.

China, which finished fourth at the Atlanta Games with 16 gold medals, 22 silvers and 12 bronzes, championed its winners as heroes and rendered them instant millionaires in the local currency despite the nation's widespread poverty.

Cash gifts and perks from Chinese companies could bring total earnings of a gold-medal winner to more than one million yuan (120,000 dollars), an astronomical sum in China where urban residents have earned an average of 367 yuan (44 dollars) a month so far this year.

Australia, host of the 2000 Games in Sydney, celebrated its medal haul at Atlanta after finishing seventh on the final table with nine gold, nine silver and 23 bronze.

Sports officials in Seoul said gold medalists will receive US 740 dollar a month for life, while silver medalists US 370 dollars and bronze US 120 dollars.

South Korean President Kim Young-sam invited the athletes to a luncheon at the presidential Blue House to congratulate them.

Japan, smarting from its worst Olympic showing since the 1952 Helsinki Games, delivered "reward money" to its 14 medalists while its judo contenders who won gold are to receive a silver cup each from the emperor.

"I thank each of you for having done your best in splendid matches to give us wonderful dreams," Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto told the athletes before hosting an informal party.

Thousands of people turned out in the south island city of Dunedin to welcome New Zealand's double gold medal-winning swimmer Xanyon Loader with a tricker tape parade. His achievement has been hailed as one of the country's greatest Olympic feats.

In an unusual twist, a leading bank said it would repay Loader's parents' home loan after they remortgaged their house to scrape together the plane fare to watch him in Atlanta.

Indonesian Olympic champions are to be greeted by a floral tribute, a welcome from 10,000 students and handsome financial bonuses to mark the team's four medals, local media reported.

Rich rewards await Somluck-Kamsing, Thailand's first-ever gold medal winner. The boxer gets about 32 million baht (1.28 million dollars) in cash, tax-free. When he returns on Thursday with his teammates, who will receive a welcome from King Bhumibol Adulyadej.

Police are bracing for crowds of up to 10,000 well-wishers who expected to line Hong Kong's roads from the airport to cheer their golden girl, Windurfer Lee Lai-Shan who clinched Hong Kong's first and last gold medal as a British colony.

Her feat immediately earned the 25-year-old more than HK two million dollars (275,000 dollars) in awards, pledged before the Games. Tributes, gifts, sponsorships and cash have flowed in relentlessly, including lifetime free ride on the Hong Kong subway.

Filipino boxer Mansueto Velasco, a former ice cream vendor, who won silver, the Philippine's only medal in Atlanta, is to receive a welcome at the presidential palace after a motorcade through city and showers of golden confetti.

On top of his financial reward, Velasco will enjoy a lifetime monthly pension of 7,000 pesos (270 dollars) two cars and a promotion in the navy to staff sergeant from corporal.

India's lone medal winner, tennis star Leander Paes, saved the 930-million strong nation from a medal rout and has been pledged awards totalling about 31,000 dollars.

Malaysia's two medal winners - both in badminton - also walked away wealthier.

Returning home with no medals, Vietnam's tiny Atlanta team of five nevertheless will each receive 500 dollars from Coca-Cola - more than twice the country's annual per capita income.



Heart rate and exercise

How do you know whether the exercise is aerobic and provides cardiovascular benefit? Well, the answer is "Heart Rate." Heart rate is widely accepted as a good method for measuring intensity during running, swimming, cycling and other aerobic activities. Exercise that doesn't raise your heart rate to a certain level and keep it there for 20 minutes won't contribute significantly to cardiovascular fitness.

Because heart rate increases proportionately with an increase in work-load, heart rate can indicate the stress placed on the cardiovascular system. Heart rate can be monitored easily by periodically taking the pulse during an exercise session and then adjusting the exercise intensity to bring the heart rate to a recommended level.

The heart rate you should maintain is called your Target Heart Rate. There are several ways of arriving at this figure. One of the simplest is: Maximum Heart Rate ((220-age) x 70%). Thus, the target heart

rate for 40-year-old would be 126. Although this formula is practical for a class setting, it is not always accurate because maximal heart rates can vary at

any given age.

The most common errors that occur in recording intensity using heart rate include miscounting and taking too

long to begin counting. The two most common places for recording heart rate are wrist and neck.

Wrist: place the tips of the index and middle fingers (not the thumb, which has a pulse of its own) and press down slightly.

Neck: Press two fingers gently on the carotid artery, which runs up the neck alongside the jaw bone. Too much pressure placed on the carotid artery may stimulate a reflex mechanism that causes the heart to slow down. The pulse can be taken for 10 seconds (and multiplied by 6). For example, the exercising heart rate zone of 20-30-year-old man or woman should range from 144 to 174 beat per minute (24-29 x 10 seconds).

Because heart rate begins to decrease soon after exercise stops, one should begin the count as soon as possible, preferably within 5 seconds. Stopping suddenly during exercise for taking pulse may cause blood to pool in the extremities and result in lightheadedness or fainting.



The Daily Star Entertainment Guide. Includes sections for Friday 9th August, STAR MOVIES, STAR PLUS, STAR Sports, ZEE TV, EL TV, PTV, and ZEE CINEMA. Lists various TV shows and movies available on different channels.