

Indians snub SL's hospitality

COLOMBO, Sept 5: India's four-nation tournament squad ruffled diplomatic and cricket feathers Wednesday when they skipped a Sri Lankan government reception to honour the participants in the ongoing tournament, reports AP.

The Indian team said it could not attend as its invitation card to the reception came too late.

Hosts Sri Lanka denied the card was delivered late.

The missing Indians drew criticism from the host, Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports S. B. Dissanayake and three other cricketing nations who are here to take part in the four-nation cricket trophy.

The invitation by Dissanayake was to honour, all the four cricket teams in Colombo. Players from Australia, Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka attended in full strength at the party held in the high security State Guest House at Visumpaya.

But the Indians, who have a crucial match against Australia Thursday, were missing.

"I really wish our friends from India were here, like the Australians," Dissanayake told the gathering after an hour had passed at the party.

Sri Lankan Foreign Minister, Lakshman Kadirgamar, who took time off to attend the party, said he had come specially to meet some of the Indians cricketers.

"Why they are not here, did we do any mistake?" said Kadirgamar, a former sportsman and an avid cricketer.

India's Ambassador in Colombo, Nareshwar Dayal, in an effort to defuse the crisis, said he was told that the Indian team wanted to rest ahead of their match against Australia.

An Azhar aberration!

COLOMBO, Sept 5: Former Indian skipper Mohammad Azharuddin, suffering from a toothache, had a brush with the law when he refused to show police his driving licence, reports AP.

Azharuddin was driving through Colombo on Wednesday to the dentist's clinic when police stopped him and asked to see his licence.

Police and military soldiers carrying rifles routinely check vehicles because of an ongoing ethnic war between Tamil separatists and government troops, which has left 45,000 people dead in 13 years.

Security is particularly tight in Colombo because of the presence of the cricketers for the four-nation tournament.

Azharuddin apparently was irritated and refused to show his licence, said an Indian diplomat on condition of anonymity. He had borrowed the car from Sri Lankan captain Arjuna Ranatunga.

The Indian High Commission (embassy) had to intervene to prevent the incident from snowballing. A diplomat hastened to the scene and told the police about the identity of their detainee.

The policemen ... felt very bad they had detained the popular former captain," said the diplomat. "Some of them told him they were sorry and took his autograph," he said.

No charges were pressed.

"Nothing would have happened if Azharuddin had explained who he was," the diplomat said.

Azharuddin was not available for comment. His telephone at the Lanka Oberoi Hotel remained unanswered.

Border-Gavaskar trophy

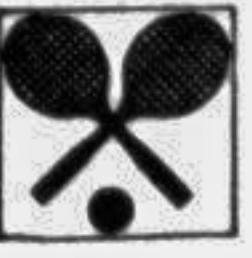
SYDNEY, Sept 5: The Australian Cricket Board and the Board of Control for Cricket in India have agreed to institute a new trophy for Test match competition between the countries, reports AP.

The Border-Gavaskar trophy, named in honour of the only batsmen in Test history to have scored more than 10,000 runs will be presented for the first time to the winner of next month's one-off Test match in New Delhi.

ACB chief executive officer Graham Halbush said the design and the funding of the Border-Gavaskar trophy had been overseen by the Australia-India Council.

Halbush said Allan Border would travel to India next month to join Sunil Gavaskar in New Delhi for the Test match and to present the new trophy.

Agassi passes muster



NEW YORK, Sept 5: It was a bruising battle with firepower from both sides.

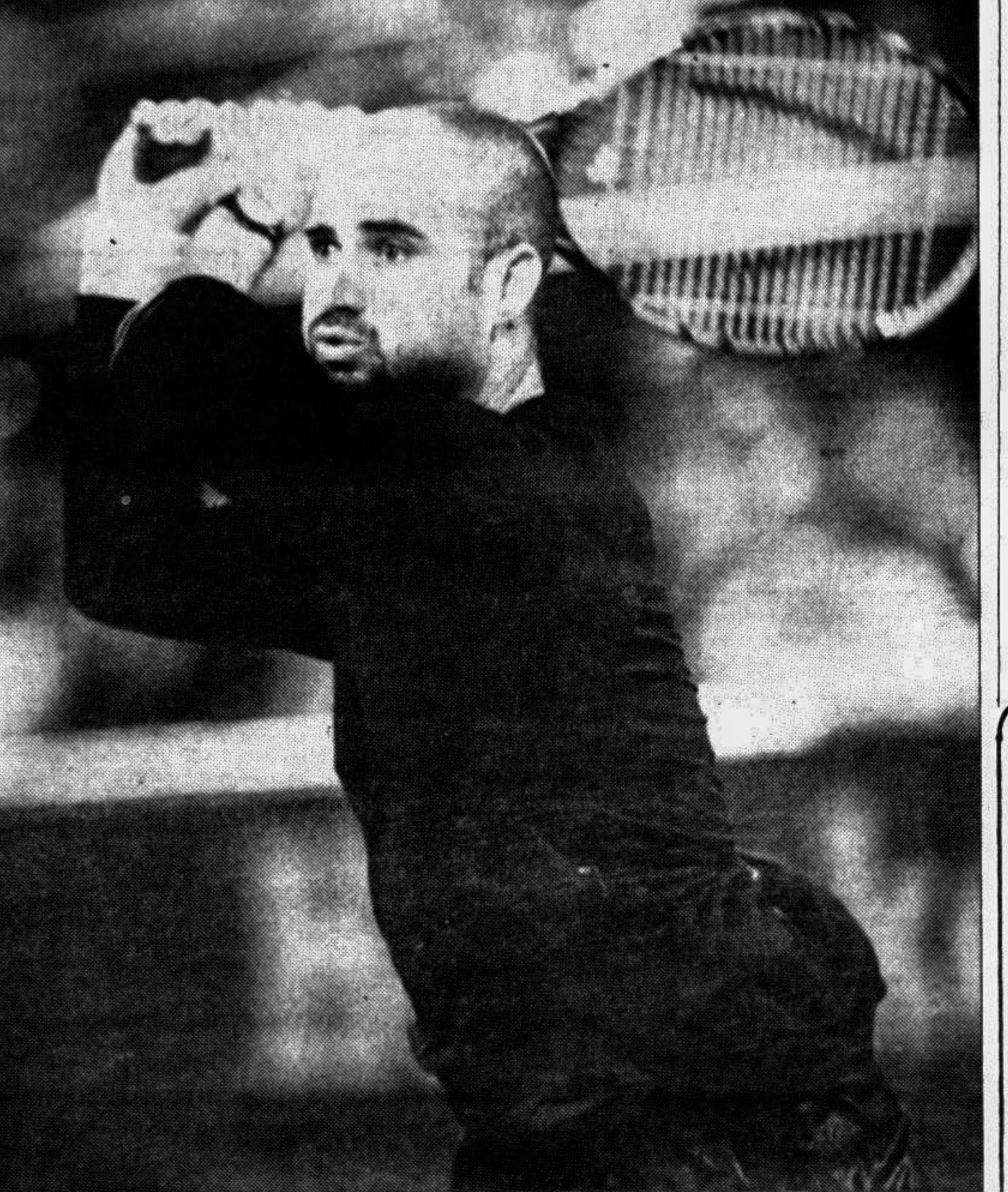
And when they finished rocketing forehands and blasting backhands, Andre Agassi was still standing, ready to fight again in the US Open

year has been on the upswing since he won the Olympic gold medal in Atlanta last month.

"He was playing inside the court and I was pushed back," Muster said.

Agassi agreed.

"Thomas likes to dictate play. If I dictate the play, he's not as comfortable on the de-



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