

IOC team in Sydney

SYDNEY, Sept 23: International Olympic Committee inspectors began a three-day mission on Monday to assess Sydney's progress in preparing for the 2000 Olympic Games, reports Reuter.

It was the first IOC inspection visit since the ill-starred Atlanta Games, which were marred by the kind of traffic, transport and technical problems that Sydney Games organisers are anxious to avoid.

Earlier this month, regional politician was appointed to head the Sydney organising committee after the resignation of committee president and businessman John Liffe.

The appointment of Michael Knight, the New South Wales Olympics Minister, was said to have the full backing of IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch — who is keen that the Sydney Games has the government support lacked by Atlanta.

An 11-strong delegation, headed by coordination commission chairman and leading IOC member Jacques Rogge, toured several Olympic sites on its first day in Sydney.

The group inspected the proposed base for the yachting regatta on Sydney Harbour and a 43,000-capacity stadium which has been earmarked to host one of the qualifying groups for the soccer tournament.

They also looked at sections of the proposed courses for the marathon and cycling road race.

"Commission members were shown sites which they had not seen on the two previous fact-finding visits to Sydney," a spokesman for the Sydney organising committee told the news agency.

The commission has twice visited over the past 12 months and will monitor progress with further visits every six months until 2000. To ensure closer coordination with IOC headquarters in Lausanne, Switzerland, the IOC also plans to send small working parties even more frequently.

Rogge will give a news conference on Wednesday after a briefing with Sydney Olympic officials on Tuesday.

The New South Wales state government, as underwriters of the Games, has budgeted to spend Australian 1.9 billion dollars (1.5 billion US dollars) on infrastructure to stage the Olympics in Sydney.

Construction of the 110,000-seat main Olympic Stadium at Homebush in Sydney's western suburbs began two weeks ago. The stadium, costing Australian 665 million dollars, is expected to be ready by June 1999.

Jewell won't stand for it

WASHINGTON, Sept 23: Richard Jewell, the security guard who was named as a suspect in the Olympic bombing earlier this year, said Sunday he would sue media organisations who defamed him and may even take the FBI to court, reports AFP.

Myself and my attorneys are looking at everyone and anyone who has said libelous things," Jewell told CBS television.

Jewell reported spotting a suspicious package in Olympic Centennial Park minutes before it exploded on July 27, leaving two people dead.

He was initially hailed as a hero for the warning that prompted an evacuation of the area, but since he has been the subject of intense scrutiny by investigators.

"If they (the FBI) didn't have probable cause to search Richard and his mother's apartment, you can bet that we'll be all over them," Jewell's attorney Watson Bryant said in the interview.

"I think that there are people in the FBI or in the justice department that don't give one damn whether or not Richard Jewell is actually the bomber," he said.

Jewell, interviewed on CBS "60 Minutes" programme, said he is convinced that the Federal Bureau of Investigation leaked to the press that he was the focus of the probe because they "wanted something very public."

"Have you ever seen an FBI investigation this public before?" he asked. "I haven't ever."

The FBI has questioned Jewell several times and searched his home but has not charged him. Jewell, who maintains his innocence, has since sought an apology from the government, but has not received one.

Turning twenty fittingly



MADRID, Sept 23: Spanish record transfer Ronaldo, started paying off on his 2.5 billion peseta (20 million dollars) fee on Sunday, celebrating his 20th birthday with a pair of goals and leading Barcelona to a 3-2 rain-soaked victory over Real Sociedad, report agencies.

The Brazilian wunderkind's second and third goals of the young season, helped improve Barca's points tally to 10 points from four games, and kept them right behind surprise league-leaders Real Betis on goal differential.

Betis stayed atop the table with a 2-0 victory over Celta Vigo.

The point back are Oviedo, and a further point behind them Deportivo Coruna and Real Madrid — who struggled to an unconvincing 1-0 victory over Rayo Vallecano.

Ronaldo's mother saw her son open his account in the second minute after latching on to a ball from Portuguese midfielder Luis Figo and hit the bar with a header minutes afterwards.

The game was suspended for

nearly half an hour at the break because of an intense rainstorm, which at one stage caused a power cut.

When play resumed it was Sociedad who adapted better to the conditions, equalising



RONALDO

through Alberto Albistegi. But Barcelona went ahead again through Juan Pizzi and Ronaldo before Real's Darko

Kovacevic scored a consolation last-minute penalty.

Another Brazilian, Deportivo Coruna's new signing Rivaldo, scored twice in his side's 4-0 trouncing of Hercules, while teenager Raul Gonzalez once again saved Real Madrid with the solitary goal in their home win over struggling neighbours Rayo Vallecano.

Watching the game was Diego Maradona.

Real Betis went to Vigo as leaders for the first time in a decade, and after defending well in the first half, came out to score through Alexis Triunillo and again just before the final whistle through Tomas Olias.

Sevilla host Compostela on Monday to complete the fourth round.

In Saturday's games reigning champions Atletico Madrid woke up after two consecutive defeats to brush aside Logroñes 3-0, while Romario scored on his return to the Valencia line-up in their 2-1 victory over Tenerife.

But the Brazilian striker will not be able to play in Valencia's crucial UEFA Cup second leg tie at Bayern Munich because of a knee injury picked up in the game.

Another UEFA Cup side, Espanyol, came back from 2-0 down to earn a point at Athletic Bilbao, while Racing Santander crashed 3-0 at Valladolid.

Freiburg keep on losing

LEVERKUSEN, Germany, Sept 23: Bayer Leverkusen defeated SC Freiburg 5-3 in Bundesliga Sunday, the sixth loss in a row for the last-place Freiburg, reports AP.

Dieter Frey put the visiting Freiburg team on the board first after 14 minutes of play. Ten minutes later, Bayer Leverkusen's goal-getter Ulf Kirsten tied the score 1-1.

Freiburg's Alain Sutter scored in the 68th minute, followed by two more for Leverkusen: Jan Heintze in the 78th minute and Hans-Peter Lehnhoff in the 85th. Uwe Wassmer scored the final goal for Freiburg a minute later, but it wasn't enough.

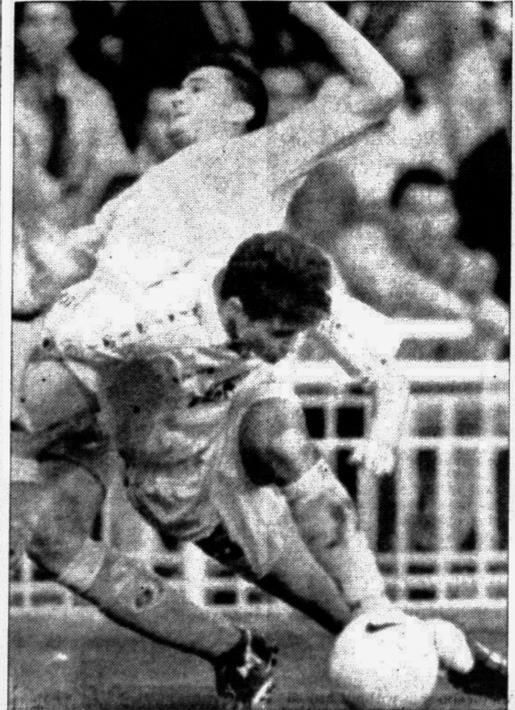
Kirsten now leads the Bundesliga's scoring list with seven goals.

Warsaw Cup Nagyova's

WARSAW, Sept 23: Slovakia's Henrietta Nagyova beat favoured Barbara Paulus of Austria in the final match of the 165,000 dollars (WTA Warsaw Cup Sunday, reports AP.

Paulus, after winning the first set 6-3, seemed to be in full control of the game and looked set to win the Warsaw Cup for the second straight year.

But Nagyova putting more power and spin into her forehands won the next two sets 6-2, 6-1.



Rovo Valledcano defender Jose Mari Lopez takes control of the ball from Real Madrid's Victor Manuel Fernandez (white jersey) through a laborious tackle during their Spanish League match in Madrid on Sept 22. Real Madrid won 1-0. — AFP/UNB photo

Sweden, France in final



PARIS, Sept 23: France, who had looked to have lost their chance of reaching the Davis Cup final when they lost both of the opening singles against Italy on Friday, clawed their way back and completed a 3-2 triumph in the Beaulieu Stadium in Nantes, report agencies.

They will now travel to Malmo on November 29 to face five-time champions Sweden who eliminated the Czech Republic in Prague 4-1.

This was a magnificent win," said French captain Yannick Noah after leading jubilant on-court celebrations with players and team officials after the victory.

"The team spirit was first class and nobody talked of defeat even after losing the opening singles. But we made serious mistakes and we should have done a lot better. We were not certain of coming through until the very last point.

After the victory of Guy Forget and Guillaume Raoux in Saturday's doubles, Cedric Pioline and Arnaud Boetsch, cheered on by an excited and partisan crowd, produced inspired performances.

Pioline levelled the tie at 2-2 with an impressive 6-3, 2-6, 6-2, 6-4 win over Renzo Furlan, and then Boetsch clinched the winning point by defeating Andrea Gaudenzi 6-4, 6-2, 7-6 (10/8).

Gaudenzi, who played with his right wrist tightly strapped,

could not believe his eyes when Australian umpire Wayne McEwen, without waiting for the line-judge, called a deep forehand 'out' at 7-7 in the tense, third-set tie-break.

Italian captain Adriano Panatta, a former French Open champion, was so incensed, he violently shook the umpire's



STEFAN EDBERG

chair and was lucky to escape a warning.

Noah said of the incident: "If that had happened to me I dread to think what I would have done to the umpire."

Veteran Stefan Edberg won both his singles matches 12 years after he had helped Sweden upset the United States in the 1994 final and the Swedes scored a 4-1 victory over the Czech Republic.

Thomas Enqvist came from behind in a roller-coaster five-setter when Daniel Vacek to win 6-3, 6-7 (7/3), 4-6, 7-5, 6-3 to ensure a Swedish victory and then Edberg downed Petr Korda 4-6, 6-2, 7-5.

Now Edberg hopes to get a place on the Swedish lineup for the final on home territory.

"The final will be a very emotional match and it's great we will play at home," said Edberg, who plans to retire at the end of the year.

"I hope I will be able to take part. It would be nice and right to finish my career at home."

In other World Group qualifying matches, Romania gained a place in the elite 16 for the first time in 12 years by coming from behind to beat Belgium 3-2 in Bucharest.

Belgium's Filip Dewulf didn't win a single game in the first two sets and went down 6-0, 6-0, 6-2 in 65 minutes to Adrian Panatta. Then Romania's Andrei Pavel followed up with a 6-3, 6-4, 6-3 victory over Johan Van Herck.

The Netherlands overpowered New Zealand 4-1 in Haarlem, and Mexico topped Argentina 3-2 to qualify. They join other qualifiers Australia, Russia, Spain and Switzerland, who had already clinched their places Saturday to line up against this year's eight quarterfinalists.

Australia went on to down Croatia 4-1 in Split and Russia beat Hungary 4-1 in Moscow. Spain overpowered Denmark 4-1 in Taragona and Switzerland crushed Morocco 5-0.

Elsewhere, Wimbledon's 72-year-old Number One Court was given an emotional send-off as Great Britain marked the passing of the historic venue with an emphatic victory on Sunday.

Britain's Canadian-born No. 2 Greg Rusedski played the final game on the famous court, comfortably beating Egypt's Amr Ghoneim 6-4, 6-2 to complete a comprehensive 5-0 Euro-Africa Zone victory over the visitors.

The win, which followed Tim Henman's hard-fought, rain-interrupted 6-7, 6-2, 6-2 win over Tamer El Sawy earlier in the day, rubber-stamped Britain's promotion to Group One.

"It's been a brilliant occasion. It's shame we are playing our last match on the court, but it's great that the crowds came out, even though the matches were dead rubbers," said British No. 1 Henman.

In a brief farewell ceremony at the end of Rusedski's match, the net from Number One Court was handed over to the Wimbledon Museum for posterity — whilst the court itself now awaits the bulldozers.

SL squad for Kenya meet

COLOMBO, Sept 23: World champions Sri Lanka Monday included an extra pace bowler in place of a batsman in their 14-member cricket squad for the quadrangular cricket tournament in Kenya starting later this week, the cricket board said, reports AP.

With one of the strongest batting sides in one-day cricket, Sri Lanka has left out reserve batsman Marvan Atapattu. Left-arm medium pace bowler Sajeewa de Silva is the new cap in the team.

He joins pacemen Chaminda Vaas, Pramodya Wickremasinghe and Ravindra Pushpakumara. Sri Lanka, with five spinners in the team, has tried out several fast bowlers to find a partner for Vaas to share the new ball.

Sri Lanka is fresh from a 2-0 win over Zimbabwe in a two-Test series, after winning the Singer World Series tournament in Colombo against Australia, India and Zimbabwe. They were undefeated in the tournament, and beat Australia by 51 runs in the final.

South Africa and Pakistan are the other teams in the Kenya tournament, beginning Sept 28.

TEAM (from)
Arjuna Ranatunga (Captain), Aravinda de Silva, Romesh Kaluwitharana (wicket keeper) Sanath Jayasuriya, Roshan Mahanama, Hashan Tillekaratne, Asanka Gurusinghe, Kumar Dharmasena, Muttiah Muralitharan, Upul Chandana, Chaminda Vaas, Pramodya Wickremasinghe, Ravindra Pushpakumara, Sajeewa de Silva.



West Indies team members pose after winning the Hong Kong Sixes' cricket trophy on Sept 22. — AFP/UNB photo

Leicesters' happy roundup



LONDON, Sept 23: Newly-crowned county champions Leicestershire wrapped up the season with a comprehensive win over Middlesex by an innings and 74 runs on Sunday and also earned themselves an extra cash bonus, reports Reuter.

Guaranteed 65,000 pounds (101,000 dollars) for winning the title, Leicestershire added a further 10,000 pounds (15,600 dollars) to their prize fund by completing their 10th victory of the season.

Middlesex, resuming on 194 for five and still 128 runs adrift, collapsed to 248 all out, with seamer David Mills claiming four for 21 from the 5.3 overs he bowled on Sunday.

Mills finished with four for 48 while England pace bowler Alan Mullally claimed three for 40 to round off the easy victory.

But there was one cloud on Leicestershire's horizon with the possibility they could be without the services of West Indian Phil Simmons next season.

The Trinidadian all-rounder has played a major part in the

county's success, having hit more than 1,000 first-class runs and taken 55 championship wickets, but he may not be available for much of next season under a plan by West Indies to put their leading players

Sinister though bizarre!

NICOSIA, Sept 23: A referee had to take cover in an ambulance on Sunday night after fans invaded the pitch in protest at his sending off an Omonia player during a match with Salamina, reports Reuter.

The match was disrupted then abandoned two minutes before the end when Omonia player Costas Malekios was ordered off the pitch by referee Costas Kapitanis. The score stood at 3-2 in Omonia's favour.

Angry fans chased Kapitanis who jumped into an ambulance, waiting to take a Salamina player to hospital.

Football officials said the disciplinary commission of Cyprus football association would decide whether there should be a rematch.

Youngsters stretch for success in new 'people's game'

By Mohammad Allie from Cape Town

South African sporting prowess has long been associated with cricket and rugby — legacies of the British Empire, played mostly by whites. But in the post-apartheid era, reports Gemini News Service, another game, basketball, has begun to flourish among young people of all races, reflecting a new team spirit.

SOUTH Africa is sprouting basketball hoops — on walls, in malls, open spaces and back yards across the nation — as the sport enjoys a huge upsurge in popularity.

The game has taken off in the past three years, particularly since the dawn of multi-racial democracy in 1994.

It is wooing young people of all races — defying the old barriers that have kept the traditional South African sports of cricket and rugby mainly white and soccer mainly black.

Given its rapid growth rate, basketball could overtake these sports in terms of popularity over the next decade.

"People have just realised what basketball is — it's a people's game," says Thory Kita, a leading Zairean player who has been helping to promote the

game in South Africa over the past two years. He holds coaching clinics for young people in shopping malls.

"People at first thought I was crazy to be introducing a sport like basketball when cricket, soccer and rugby are so popular. But a couple of years down the line, I see things you never used to, like people playing basketball in the malls."

The young are attracted by the game's relative newness as a mass-participant sport. In the old apartheid days, basketball was played by a small number of whites.

Now, over weekends and during school holidays in townships and cities such as Cape Town, youngsters flock to indoor and outdoor venues to play informal games and attend coaching sessions.

Kita is one of a growing

number of experienced foreign players who have come to help.

Another is Branislav Lujic, the Yugoslav coach of Cape Town's professional team Western Province Eagles, which plays in the national Professional Basketball League (PBL).

"It's a tremendous development," says Lujic. "Especially when one looks at kids from all races and cultures playing together without any problem."

Local players are joining big-name professionals in nurturing talent at the grassroots.

Liz Bester, one of the few who played basketball during the apartheid years, started out with about 10 young enthusiasts. She now has seven teams in the gang-infested township near Hout Bay in Cape Town. Many local youngsters have given up the gangs in favour of "slam dunking."

She says of the sport's sudden popularity: "I think one of the chief reasons is that basketball is a post-apartheid game which is not connected to the past. Also it's not just a game — it's a culture. It's the baseball caps back to front, the long shorts, rap music, the walk, the look — everything."

Improved media coverage has played a major role in promoting the game. National television now features the weekly North American basketball programme *Inside Stuff*, as well as covering the games in the three-year-old PBL.

Another important factor attracting young people, especially those from poorer areas, is the lack of space and equipment needed to play basketball.

The success of black American role models such as Shaquille O'Neal, Michael Jordan and Patrick Ewing has drawn many teenagers from the impoverished township to the game.

"I liked basketball even before it was brought to South Africa. Soccer is too rough, man... Basketball is cool, you know," says Tembisa Ntjila, who watches the sport on TV and practises every day in the hope of one day reaching the heights of his hero, Michael Jordan.

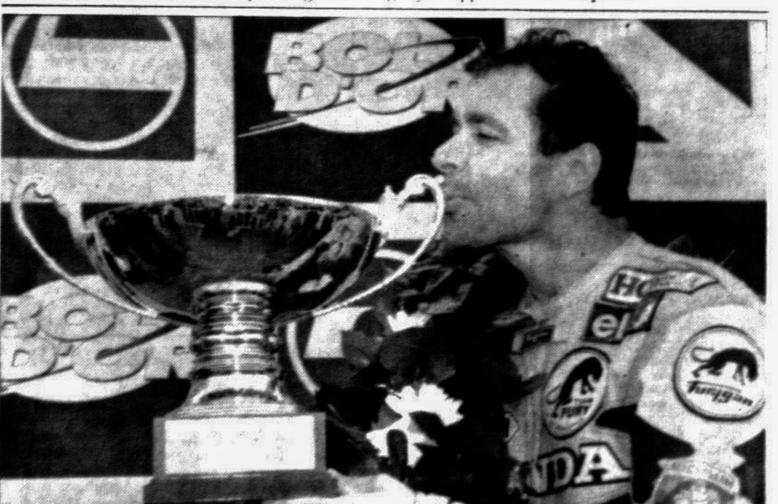
The game may still be in its infancy in sports-crazy South Africa, but the sight of growing numbers of young people carrying basketballs and of new hoops appearing daily is a certain sign that it has a healthy future.

— Gemini News

About the Author: Mohammad Allie is a South African freelance journalist and Cape Town correspondent for the British Broadcasting Corporation's Africa Service.

South Africa's sporting success

	Cricket World Cup semi-finals 1992	
	Golf Ernie Els wins US Open 1994	
	Soccer Africa Cup of Nations 1995 Beat Tunisia in the final	
	Rugby World Cup 1995 Beat New Zealand in the final	
	Athletics Josias Thugwane 1996 Olympic marathon gold	
	Swimming Penny Heyns wins two 1996 Olympic golds - and breaks two world records	
	Tennis Errol Tobias: The first non-white to play for South Africa (first capped 1981)	



Frenchman Alex Vieira kisses the trophy after winning the 60th 24th hour Bol d'Or motorcycle endurance classic in Le Castellet. — AFP/UNB photo