

## Northants get M Akram

LONDON, Sept 27: English county cricket club Northamptonshire confirmed the signing Thursday of Pakistan fast bowler Mohammad Akram as their overseas player for 1997, reports AFP.

The 24-year-old from Rawalpindi, who toured England this summer and appeared in the final Test at the Oval, replaces West Indian pace ace Curtly Ambrose.

The 33-year-old Antigua bows out after spending six of the last eight seasons as a major force in their NatWest Trophy success in 1992, but he missed nearly half their championship games this season.

"We've been talking to Curtly, but the feeling was that we needed to look to the future and find a potentially longer-term prospect," said chief executive Steve Corderale.

"We liked the look of Mohammad Akram when he played against Northants this year. We did our homework on him and there's no doubt that he's highly rated both inside and outside the Pakistan set-up."

"There is an element of gamble in it for us, but it's not easy now to sign players with a proven track record at international level."

Ambrose made 78 first-class appearances for Northants, taking 318 wickets at 20.60 each.

## Indonesia reigns

ORANGE, California, Sept 27: The world's top-ranked players in men's singles and men's doubles, all three of them Indonesian, overcame tough Malaysian challenges in Thursday's quarter-finals of the US Open badminton championships, reports Reuters.

Indonesia's top-seeded pair of Denny Kartono and Antonius survived two tie-breaker sets in an 18-14, 16-18, 15-2 victory against Malaysia's Lee Wan Wah and Choong Tan Fook, ranked 17th internationally.

Another top-seeded Indonesian, Joko Suprianto, earned a 15-8, 3-15, 12-21 triumph over 12th ranked Ong Ewe Hock from Malaysia.

Suprianto, a quarter finalist at the 1996 Olympics, needed a rally in the third game to win. Ong had a 5-0 lead before Suprianto forced ties of 6-6 and 8-8. The Indonesian then scored the next seven points, including the final five in succession.

Kartono and Antonius had less difficulty in their decisive third set. The pair scored 10 consecutive points on Antonius' serve to take a 13-1 lead. Antonius also scored five of the points off smashes and backhands.

"Most of the time, I used short serves, Antonius said, through a translator. "I wanted to make them lift the bird so we could attack them. Their offense was really strong, but sometimes they made easy mistakes."

Among the internationally ranked players advancing to the semifinals was Denmark's Peter Erik Hoyer-Larsen, Olympic and All-England champion in men's singles. Hoyer-Larsen is ranked third in the world.

## Shimizu win J-League Cup

TOKYO, Sept 27: Coach Ossie Ardiles, the former Argentine World Cup winner, was celebrating on Thursday after his side Shimizu S-Pulse won the J-League Nissio Cup beating holders Verdy Kawasaki 5-4 in a penalty shootout after a 3-3 extra-time draw, reports Reuters.

Shimizu won after Kawasaki's Brazilian striker Magno missed the second penalty in the shootout before 28,232 at Tokyo's Olympic Stadium. Even a hat-trick from the Brazilian striker Bismarck was not enough to bring Kawasaki victory.

Ardiles, a member of the Argentine team which won the World Cup in 1978 and who played for the bulk of his career for Tottenham in England, took over as coach of Shimizu earlier this year.

## Independiente left in cold

RIO DE JANEIRO, Sept 27: Holders Independiente were knocked out of the South American Super cup at the first hurdle when they were beaten 1-0 by Brazil's Flamengo on Wednesday, reports Reuters.

The result in the second leg of their first round tie gave Flamengo a 1-0 aggregate win over the team who beat them in the final of last year's competition.

It was Independiente's first defeat under veteran coach Cesar Luis Menotti.

The Argentine championship leaders were knocked out by a 39th minute goal by midfielder Fabio Balano but could have lost by a bigger margin if Flamengo's international striker Bebeto had been on target with any one of several chances.

Flamengo chose to play the match in Brasilia where they felt they could get a better crowd than in their home city of Rio de Janeiro. The club also said that the fees for using Rio's Maracana Stadium are too expensive.

Boca Juniors beat Argentinos Juniors 3-0 in an all-Argentine clash despite fielding seven reserves.

Coach Carlos Bilardo chose to save most of his team for Sunday's Argentine championship clash with arch-rivals River Plate, who trail Independiente on goal difference.

The Super cup is played every year between past winners of the Libertadores Cup.

## Hosts-world champs opener today Cricket carnival in Kenya

NAIROBI, Sept 27: World Cup holders Sri Lanka, former world champions Pakistan and powerful South Africa jetted into Nairobi on Thursday for the four-nation cricket tournament, which opens Saturday with Sri Lanka playing Kenya, reports AFP.

The 10-day tournament, billed as the biggest cricket event ever held in the region, will be held at the Gymkhana and Aga Khan grounds in the suburbs of Nairobi.

The confident Sri Lankans, undisputed kings of one-day cricket, have a dual purpose. Skipper Arjuna Ranatunga said they have come to enjoy themselves, but also hope to gain more experience as they chase their ambition of becoming the most successful Test-playing nation by 2000.

But missing from the line-up are spinners Muttiah Muralitharan and Jayantha Silva, who starred in Sri Lanka's 2-0 crushing of Zimbabwe in the recent one-day series in Colombo.

The Sri Lankans are not overconfident, according to Ranatunga, even though the islanders beat Kenya by 367 runs in the World Cup.

The team will be chosen from Ranatunga, wicketkeeper Romesh Kaluwitharana, Aravinda de Silva, Sanath Jayasuriya.

Pollock and left-arm spinner Paul Adams have been left behind.

The Pakistanis, still celebrating their 3-2 victory over India in the Sahara Cup in Canada last weekend, are captained by all-rounder Wasim Akram.

Kenya have played all their build-up matches at home, performing indifferently against the Northern Transvaal in a match that ended in a draw.

The Kenyans have plenty at stake. The International Cricket Conference may review Kenya's application for full one-day status depending on how the east African nation performs.

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suriya, Roshan Mahanama, Hashan Tillekeratne, Asanka Gurusinha, Kumar Dharmaasena, Upal Chandana, Chaminda Vaas, Pramodya Wickremasinghe and Ravindra Pushpakumara.

South Africa, captained by Hansie Cronje, are confident of a good showing with uncapped Bob Woolmer, 22, the only new name.

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only his second goal of the season, added to Liverpool's lead before Mauri Heskithro scored with a memorable long-range shot for the Finns. Barnes then rounded off the scoring.

Spanish giants Barcelona were held to a 0-0 draw by AEK Larnaca of Cyprus, but eased through 2-0 on aggregate, while Sparta Prague needed an 87th minute goal from defender Michael Hornak to salvage a 1-1 draw at home to the Austrians of Sturm Graz and advance on the away goals rule after a 2-2 draw in the first leg.

Italians Fiorentina got a 22nd minute goal from Massimo Orlando, who netted from close range, to beat Gloria Bistrita of Romania 1-0 and go through 2-1 on aggregate.

Red Star Belgrade powered to a 4-0 win over Germany's Keiserautoren 4-9 and moved ahead on 4-1 on aggregate. Two goals for the 1991 European champions were scored by Dejan Stankovic with two others from Zoran Njegos and Miodrag Panjelic.

Turkish side Galatasaray — another of the stronger teams in the field — knocked Moldova's Constructorul out with a 4-0 win and advanced 5-

0. Galatasaray's goals were from Hakan Sukur, Arif Erdem, George Hagi and Tugay Keremoglu.

AEK Athens moved on with a 2-1 win at Slovakia's Chemlon Humenne, advancing 3-1. Chemlon's Pavol Diva scored after just 19 seconds for the losers, but AEK rebounded in the 19th minute on a strike by Demis Nikolaidis, and got the second in the 44th from Daniel Batista.

In Varazdin, Croatia, Lokomotiv Moscow advanced despite a 2-1 loss to the homeside FC Varteks. Lokomotiv won the first leg at home 1-0 and advanced on a 2-2 aggregate by virtue of the away-goal rule.

In a lopsided game, Sion of Switzerland advanced on a 6-0 aggregate after a 4-0 win Thursday at Ukrainian side Niva Vinnytsa.

In Ljubljana, Slovenia, Olimpija Ljubljana played a scoreless draw with AFG Aarhus of Denmark, but advanced on aggregate 1-1 with an away goal in the match two weeks ago in Denmark.

In Hungary, French side Nimes won 2-1 as Nimes moved through on a 5-2 aggregate over Kispest Honved.

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## Row between EU, UEFA

BRUSSELS, Sept 27: European Commission commissioner Karel Van Miert warned UEFA on Thursday the commission would act unless European soccer's governing body changed what he called strict broadcasting conditions, reports Reuters.

"We think UEFA conditions are too strict," Van Miert told the European Parliament's economic and monetary affairs committee.

"We are in discussions with UEFA, but if there is no progress we will have to act," he said, adding that the commission had received complaints.

But UEFA spokesman Salvatore Cuccu said that UEFA and the EU were in close contact with each other regarding TV rights and but said Van Miert's warning should be regarded as part of the on-going debate.

"UEFA are working closely with the EU and a solution will be found in the next two years."

Developments on digital technology and satellite television over the past few years have revolutionised the way soccer is now broadcast around the continent, and new rules are being established to take account of the huge new developments.

Commission sources said the complaints had been filed by television channels which broadcast UEFA matches but do not have exclusivity rights. They particularly contested UEFA's sub-licensing conditions which, they said, colluded with their own interests.

Earlier this year UEFA and the EU clashed over a landmark ruling from the EU which forced UEFA to scrap its player system and transfer rules in the wake of a European Court of Justice case filed by Belgian footballer Jean-Marie Bosman.

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## Masterkova's milestones

NEW YORK, Sept 27 (AP): Svetlana Masterkova, the Olympic 800-metre and 1,500-metre gold medalist, had no ambitions of being a runner. And she's still not comfortable in the sport.

"I was 12 years old when I started training," Masterkova said through an interpreter Thursday. "I was forced to do that by a physical education

57.73 seconds, beating 1993 world champion Maria Mutola of Mozambique and 1995 world champion Ana Quirot of Cuba, then five days later, she took the 1,500-metre title in 4:00.83 in only the third 1,500 final of her career.

After the Olympics, she returned to Europe and set two world records before winning the Grand Prix final.

In the first mile race of her career Aug 14 at Zurich,

Masterkova broke the 1,000-metre world record with a 2:26.98 clocking.

In addition to owning the world's fastest times this year in the mile and 1,000, Masterkova has the world's fastest times in the 800 (1:56.04) and the 1,500 (3:56.77). The 800 and 1,500 also are her career bests.

Saturday, Masterkova will try and cap her sensational season by winning the Discover Card Mile on Fifth Avenue against a field that includes defending champion Sinead Delahunty of Ireland, 1994 winner Regina Jacobs of the United States and Olympic 1,500-metre bronze medalist Theresia Kiesel of Austria.

Masterkova's two victories at the Olympics were worth a lot more than the gold she accumulated at Atlanta.

She was given a total of 250,000 dollars in bonus money by the Russian government and a 100,000-dollar apartment, plus a new car.

A victory Saturday would be worth another 5,000 dollars, but that's money she might not keep very long.