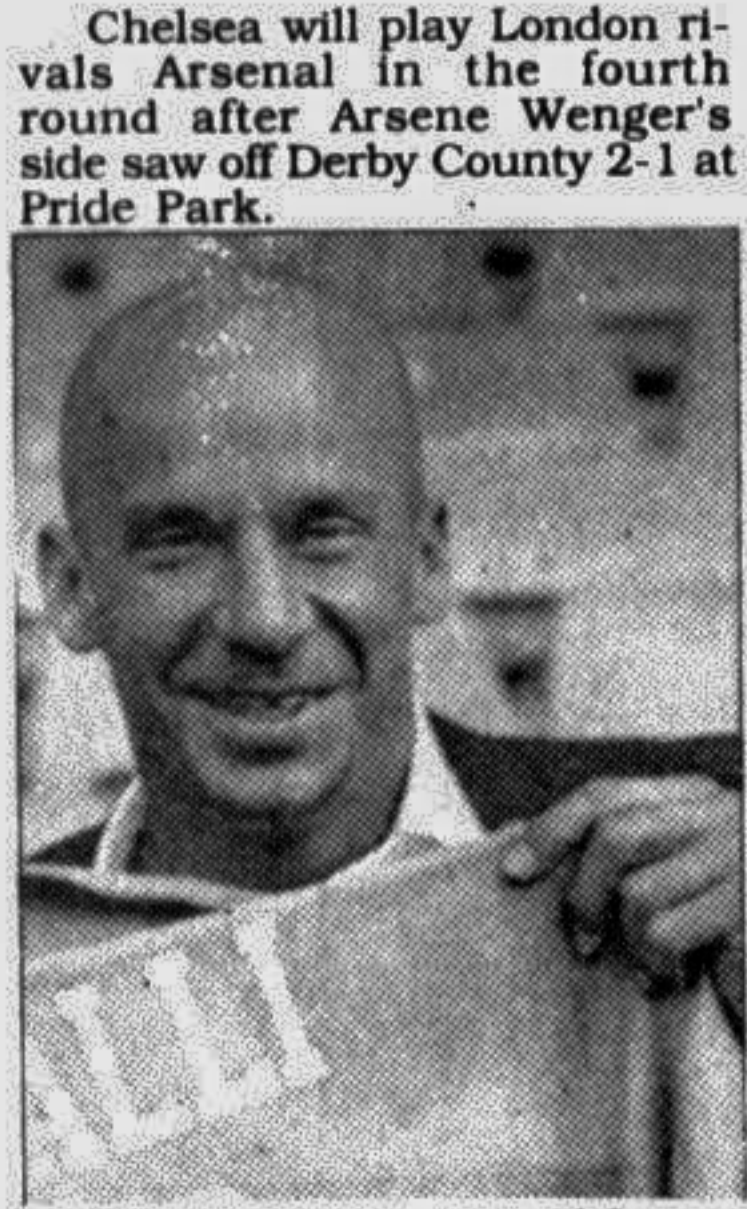


Inter's injury woes mount

MILAN, Oct 29 (Reuters/Internet): Inter Milan's Brazilian midfielder Ze Elias will be sidelined for a month and Uruguayan teammate Alvaro Recoba absent for two weeks after receiving injuries in the Italian Cup on Wednesday. The injuries were a further blow for coach Gigi Simoni, whose side have lost their last two league matches to Lazio and Juventus and had their bus pelted with eggs by angry fans before the lacklustre 1-0 cup win over third division Castell di Sangro. Ze Elias twisted his right knee. "We'll see how things are in 25 days, if not a month," an Inter team doctor said. Recoba wrenched his left ankle midway through the first half. Ironically, Recoba's replacement Nicola Ventola scored Inter's 26th minute goal which at least gave the UEFA Cup holders a first leg lead to take to Castel di Sangro's modest ground, perched high in the mountains east of Rome. Simoni acknowledged his team was under-performing but took the egg attack in his stride. "At least they weren't throwing stones," he said.

Vialli shoots Villa down

LONDON, Oct 29: Italian player-manager Gianluca Vialli grabbed a hat-trick as holders Chelsea knocked previously unbeaten English Premier league leaders Aston Villa out of the League Cup in style of Wednesday, reports Reuters. Vialli struck his first goals of the season as the Londoners, fielding a number of reserve players, won their third round tie 4-1 at Stamford Bridge. Mark Draper had put Villa in front but Vialli equalised with a calm sidefoot after 32 minutes and then put the home side ahead with a superb turn and shot after 67 minutes. Norwegian Tore Andre Flo made it 3-1 before Vialli completed his hat-trick five minutes from time. But Chelsea's night was marred when captain Dennis Wise was sent off for a reckless late tackle on Darren Byfield, an incident which so incensed Vialli that he was booked for arguing with the Villa bench.



GIANLUCA VIALLI Arsenal scored through a Lee Carsley own goal in the first half and a 55th-minute strike by Argentine Nelson Vivas. Dean Sturridge scored Derby's consolation.

Chelsea will play London rivals Arsenal in the fourth round after Arsene Wenger's side saw off Derby County 2-1 at Pride Park. Manchester United, fielding a severely weakened side, laboured to a 2-0 victory over First Division Bury at Old Trafford to set up a fourth round clash at home to Nottingham Forest. Norwegians Ole Gunnar Solskjaer and Erik Nevland scored United's goals in the second period of extra-time in front of 52,000 fans. Elsewhere Australian Harry Kewell was on target as Premier league Leeds United beat First Division Bradford 1-0 in manager David O'Leary's first game in charge. Wimbledon beat Birmingham 2-1 at St Andrews thanks to two Neal Ardley goals, while Blackburn also came through against First Division opposition, winning 1-0 at Crewe with a goal by Chris Sutton. They now visit Newcastle in the next round. Ivory Coast striker Ibrahim Bakayoko scored his first goal for Everton as the Merseysiders won 3-2 after extra-time at fellow Premier league side Middlesbrough.

Upbeat Blair

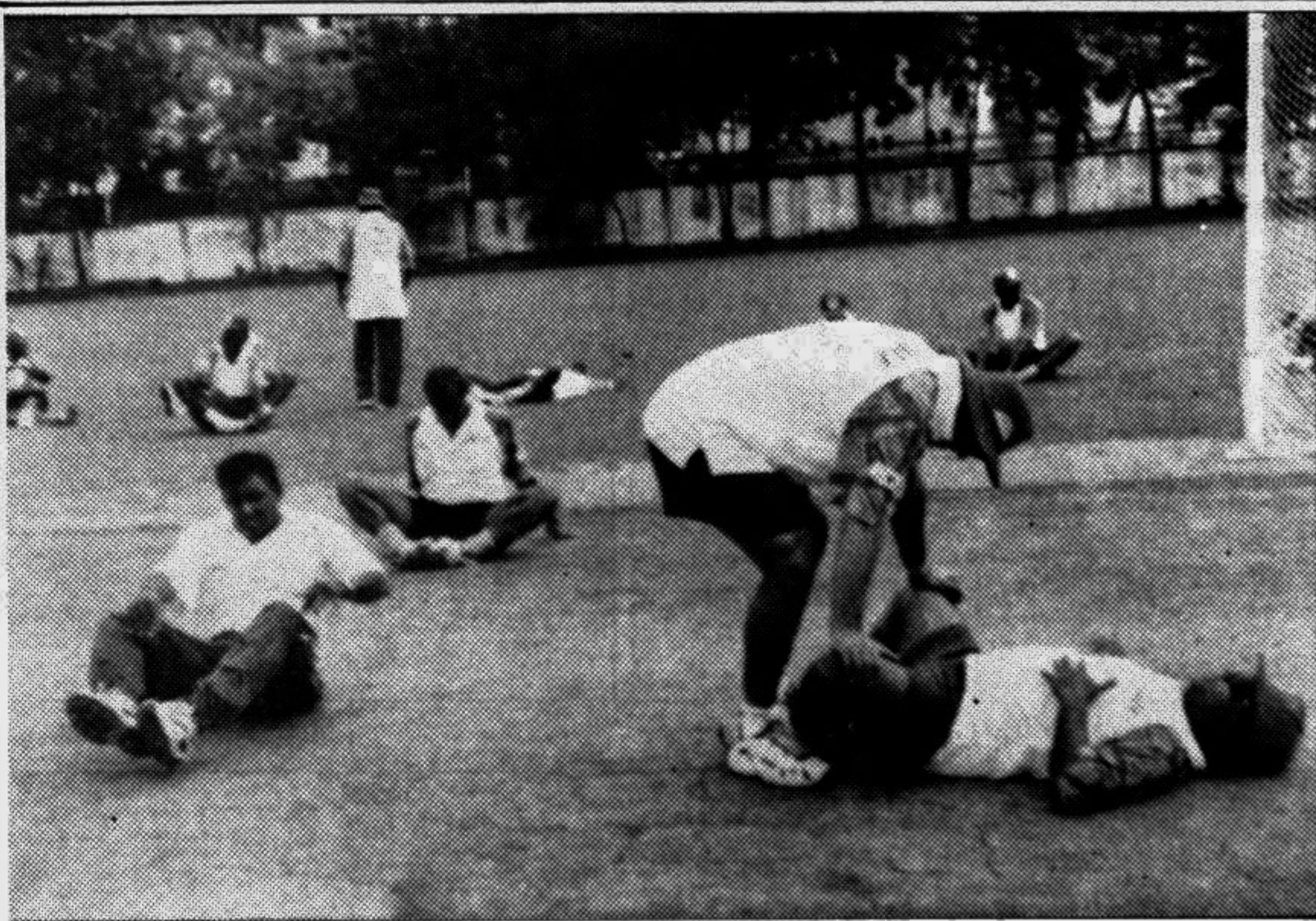
LONDON, Oct 29: British Prime Minister Tony Blair on Wednesday told the House of Commons that he was confident of England's chances of hosting the 2006 World Cup, reports AFP. But he conceded that in the light of comments earlier this week by Sepp Blatter, the head of football's world governing body FIFA, South Africa were the favourites. Blair said FIFA president Blatter had made it clear at a recent meeting with him that there was a "strong case" for an African country to host the tournament. Blair added that while he "obviously recognised the strong case for an African country to host the 2006 World Cup if they have the right facilities and the right infrastructure to do it. He recognised the very, very powerful case that England has with the finest stadia in the world, with massive new investment in that stadia and England, of course, as he pointed out himself, being the motherland of football." Blair, a Newcastle United fan, said the 300 million pound (500 million dollar) redevelopment of Wembley Stadium would make it "the finest stadium anywhere in the world." South Africa are widely considered to be the current favourite for hosting the tournament, while Germany are also in the running.



Fiorentina's Gabriel Batistuta goes for the ball during the Italian Cup encounter against Lecce on Oct 28. — AFP photo

M United's opportunity

LONDON, Oct 29 (Reuters/Internet): Manchester United are likely to be offered a 15 million-pound second chance to buy Marcelo Salas, who is squabbling with his Italian club Lazio. United boss Alex Ferguson worked hard to try to land the 22-year-old last season before the player opted to become part of the multi-million-pound rebuilding programme at the Rome Club. But Ferguson remained so impressed by the man whose brilliant goal sank England at Wembley in February that, earlier this season, United asked Lazio for first refusal if Salas came up for sale. Originally that bold move was given scant encouragement by the Lazio board but now two major developments have increased United's chance of landing Salas.



Members of the Sri Lankan team limbering up at the BUET ground yesterday ahead of their semifinal clash against South Africa. — Star photo

German Cup roundup

BONN, Oct 29: Two goals from Brazil striker Elber helped Bayern Munich stage a brilliant comeback to beat MSV Duisburg 4-2 in a German Cup third round tie on Wednesday, reports Reuters. Duisburg, who fell 2-1 to Bayern in last season's final, hoped for a revenge after building a 2-0 lead through goals by midfielder Markus Beierle in the 37th and 50th minutes. But the league leaders fought back and Elber, the Bundesliga's top marksman with eight goals, reduced the arrears in the 56th minute before equalising four minutes later. International midfielder Jens Jeremies, playing in central defence in the absence of injured Lothar Matthaus, put Bayern in front with a header in the 76th minute and France defender Bixente Lizarazu sealed victory from close range one minute from time. "I had warned my team that Duisburg would be dangerous," Bayern coach Ottmar Hitzfeld said. "For most of the match they were the better team. We reacted well but also had a bit of luck."

Elber won't be missed

BONN, Oct 29 (Reuters/Internet): Runaway German league leaders Bayern Munich look far too strong for Eintracht Frankfurt as they visit the promoted side on Saturday, despite missing Brazil striker Elber. "We showed our class," Bayern commercial manager Uli Hoernes said after his men fought back from two goals down to move past MSV Duisburg 4-2 in a German Cup third round tie on Wednesday. Elber, who struck twice in that match and tops the Bundesliga's scorers' table with eight goals, will have to sit out of Saturday's game after collecting five red cards. But coach Ottmar Hitzfeld has plenty of suitable replacements in his start-studded squad. He is expected to pair Croatian Hasan Salihamidzic with Carsten Jancker up front. Bayern, who have won a record 14 German titles, look on their way to a 15th after making their best ever Bundesliga start with eight wins and one draw. There was an upset, with second division Tennis Borussia Berlin beating city rivals Hertha Berlin 4-2 to reach the quarterfinals. First Division Hertha moved in front with a headed goal from Andreas Thon in the 11th minute but Tennis Borussia levelled through Ilya Arsic in the 30th minute. The less glamorous Berlin club then moved ahead with goals from Francisco Copado and Kresko Kovacevic and a second strike from Aracic. Hertha, currently fifth in the Bundesliga standings after a promising start, reduced the arrears with a goal from alphonse tchami in the 68th minute. Lowly Werder Bremen boosted their morale by beating Second Division Fortuna Dueseldorf 3-2 in the first home match for Werder's new coach Felix Magath, who was appointed last week. Two goals from striker Thorsten Frings in the 17th and 66th minutes and one from Ukraine midfielder Yuri Maximov in the 60th brightened the future for the 1992 European Cup Winners' Cup champions who are a miserable 17th in the 18-strong First Division. Veteran Russian midfielder Igor Dobrovolski and Chilean striker Nelson Pizarro scored Duesseldorf's goals in the 30th and 85th minutes. Rot-Weiss Oberhausen, struggling in the Second Division, caused a sensation on Tuesday by knocking out First Division Hamburg SV on penalties. The match between amateurs Sportfreunde Siegen and Second Division KFC Uerdingen was postponed because the pitch was flooded and will now take place on November 3.

Bayern in the first division, in the 1995-96 season, they won 4-1. The Bavarians, eager to recapture the title they lost to Kaiserslautern last May, will be looking for a morale booster for Wednesday's Champions' league match away to Barcelona. "At home, Bayern lead the German league comfortably with 25 points, five more than second-placed city rivals TSV 1860 Munich, whom they will face in a much-awaited derby on November 7. Since losing their first match to Kaiserslautern, TSV, re-emerging as a soccer force after years in the doldrums, have enjoyed a run of eight matches without defeat. They host lowly VfL Wolfsburg on Saturday. Kaiserslautern, a modest 10th after losing three times already, have not other ambition than to clinch a berth in a European club competition. They welcome back striker Olaf Marschall, who had been sidelined by lumbago, as they entertain Hansa Rostock on Friday. Third-placed Bayer Leverkusen also play on Friday, away to troubled Borussia Moenchengladbach. "I am convinced that we will avoid relegation," said Moenchengladbach coach Friedel Rauch, whose men lie bottom after winning only one of their first nine games. "We can only get better."

While outclassing the opposition in the league, Bayern have been less convincing in Europe, winning only one of their three matches so far. "If we want to be sure of qualifying, we have to win all our remaining matches and I believe we're strong enough to do that," said club president Franz Beckenbauer. At home, Bayern lead the German league comfortably with 25 points, five more than second-placed city rivals TSV 1860 Munich, whom they will face in a much-awaited derby on November 7. Since losing their first match to Kaiserslautern, TSV, re-emerging as a soccer force after years in the doldrums, have enjoyed a run of eight matches without defeat. They host lowly VfL Wolfsburg on Saturday. Kaiserslautern, a modest 10th after losing three times already, have not other ambition than to clinch a berth in a European club competition. They welcome back striker Olaf Marschall, who had been sidelined by lumbago, as they entertain Hansa Rostock on Friday. Third-placed Bayer Leverkusen also play on Friday, away to troubled Borussia Moenchengladbach. "I am convinced that we will avoid relegation," said Moenchengladbach coach Friedel Rauch, whose men lie bottom after winning only one of their first nine games. "We can only get better."

A game of one grandson

By Beauty Lupiya from Rio de Janeiro

Sandra Arantes do Nascimento is the daughter of Pele, the greatest footballer ever in Brazilian eyes. But she only got him to admit it thanks to a DNA test — an avenue, as Gemini News Service reports, to which increasing numbers of Brazilians are turning.

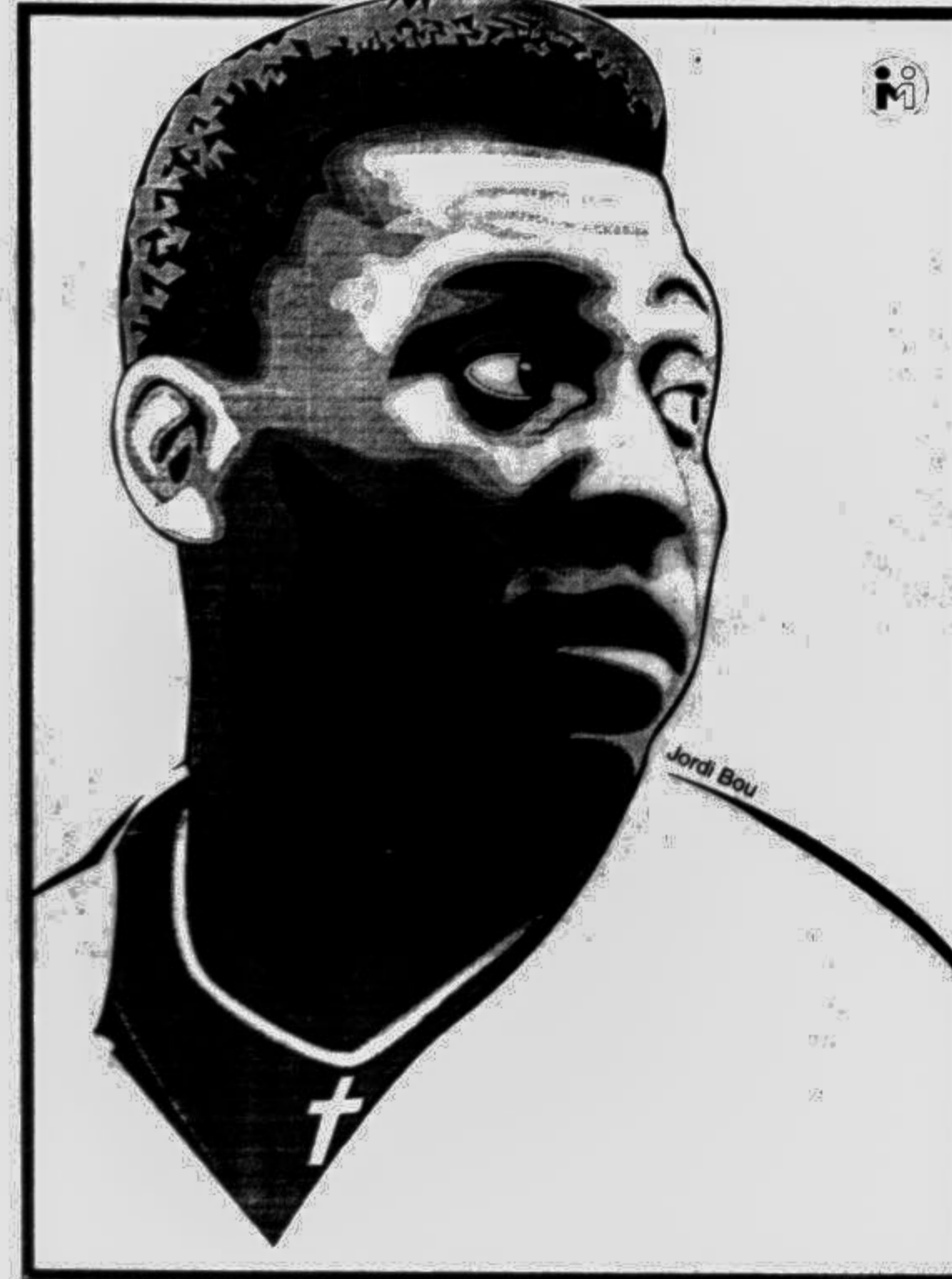
The King of Football is a grandfather. And that's official. Nevertheless, Edson Arantes do Nascimento is not a proud parent. The famous greatest footballer of all time, alias King Pele, is not rejoicing at the birth of his first grandson, Octavio Celinto Neto, born in August. The mother to Pele's grandson is 34-year-old Sandra Arantes do Nascimento, who has spent all her life fighting to be recognised as Pele's child. Even though the law and several DNA tests have declared Sandra the unquestionable daughter to Pele, Sandra continues to be rejected. She has gained Pele's surname and the right to inheritance, but no more. "I hope he'll now have a different attitude," Sandra says about Pele. "Since it's his first grandson and I'm his eldest child, things could change for the better." Sandra won the right to call Pele "father" in 1996 when the courts ruled that she was the football star's true child. She was immediately issued with a new birth certificate bearing Pele's surname. Even then, the king of soccer did not trust the DNA tests. He had to demand several other tests, all of which turned out to be positive. As far as Pele is concerned, Sandra does not exist. On his official internet website, only Pele's five other children — Edinho, Jennifer, Kelly Cristina and the twins, Joshua and Celeste — have been listed. "I'm not surprised at being left out. I have always been rejected, even when justice ruled in my favour," says Sandra. It goes without saying that Pele is not the only famous person to have an illegitimate child. As in every country many well-known Brazilians, including high-ranking political figures, have children on the side. But increasing numbers of Brazilians who claim lofty, but unacknowledged, parentage, are turning to DNA tests to prove their cases. Former president Fernando Collor de Mello has just recognised an 18-year-old son, James, who he had denied since birth. Here, too, it was a positive DNA test which pressured Collor into acknowledging his "new" son, whom he has promised to introduce to his other legitimate children. The current president, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, is in similar straits. A local Brazilian newspaper, Tribuna da Imprensa, has revealed that he has a seven-year old illegitimate child with "a beautiful and competent journalist in Brasilia (the capital)". Soccer star Romario de Souza Faria has denied he is the father of Gabriel Joseph Faria, allegedly the product of a relationship of two years he had with 24-year-old model Andrea de Oliveira. The courts have ordered a DNA test to prove whether he is the father or not. Other well-known people with similar cases include the late Formula One star Ayrton Senna, and the musicians Roberto Carlos and Alexandre

Indeed, in the last four years, the Institute of Social Medicine in Sao Paulo has registered an increase of 158 per cent in the number of Brazilian mothers seeking DNA tests. At the Institute of Biology in Rio de Janeiro, 5,000 people are waiting for DNA exams. The institute receives hundreds of enquiries about DNA tests every month. The sheer number of Brazilians queuing up to pass their parentage under the microscope could find some solace in the book Sandra Arantes do Nascimento has written about her battle to be recognised as a member of Pele's family. In *A Filha que o Rei nao quis* (The Child the King did not Want), Sandra narrates her miserable childhood without a father and how — when she grew up — she decided to settle the dispute in court. Sandra writes how, as a child, she was among the multitude of kids who had gathered to have a glimpse at the King of Football during his visit to Santos, Sandra's hometown near Sao Paulo. To show affection for the children, Pele had embraced some of them and by coincidence, gently touched Sandra's head without knowing it was his own daughter. Sandra remembers telling everyone with excitement, "I will never wash my hair again!" Sandra's husband, Ozeas Celinto, 31, is a proud father. He named his son after his late father Octavio Celinto. He does not want to say much about Pele's attitude. "Everyone is happy except for Pele. We have received many blessings from relatives and friends. The baby is healthy and very handsome," he says.

On account of Pele's attitude, parliament voted against the idea to give him the title of honorary citizen of Brasilia. However, he is still King in the eyes of the Brazilian population. Hordes of people still crowd him when he appears in public. They ask for his autograph or merely beg to kiss his hand. Some would kneel down before him, kissing his feet and saying nothing but, "Rei Pele, obrigado, obrigado!" ("King Pele, thank you, thank you!"). Sandra also hopes the King will one day call the "Princess" home. She recalls an interview in which Pele told a local TV station that a miracle could happen, that one day, he might feel like uniting with her. In the last chapter of her book of 143 pages, Sandra then writes, "who knows, a day might come when the telephone rings." Gemini News

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PELE Footballer, government minister... and now grandfather



SOCOG needs Norman's help

SYDNEY, Oct 29: Sydney Olympic organisers, almost 75 million US dollars short of their sponsorship target, have called in golfing superstar Greg Norman to help, reports AFP. "His involvement in America will be very helpful, particularly in the fund-raising and sponsorship areas," Sydney Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (SOCOG) spokeswoman Karen Webb said today. An independent audit of the Games has been delayed by SOCOG fearing its budget because of fears of cost overruns and concerns about sponsorship. SOCOG marketing chief John Moore said last week they were almost 124 million dollars (74.5 million US) short of their 873 million dollar (524 million US) sponsorship target. International Olympic Committee executive board member Jacques Rogge, who heads the Games' coordinating commission, said when he visited last week Sydney's budget target of 2.6 billion dollars (1.56 million US) was ambitious but feasible. SOCOG chief executive Sandy Holloway said Wednesday: "We have to be very, very assertive and innovative to get the money." Norman looks like being the newest approach to fund-raising. The Florida-based Norman would also supply the 50,000 volunteers with his trademark great white shark hats and raise funds for the Australian Olympic team by staging golf tournaments. Three pro-AM tournaments in Australia could raise up to 600,000 dollars (36,000 US) for Australia's elite athletes preparing for the 2000 Games.

Laudrup makes Copenhagen shares soar

COPENHAGEN, Oct 29 (Reuters/Internet): Shares in Danish soccer club FC Copenhagen soared more than 15 per cent on Thursday on media reports that Dane Brian Laudrup may transfer to the team from English Premier league side Chelsea, dealers said. At 1015 GMT, FC Copenhagen was 40.7 crowns up at 300 crowns after hitting an all-time high of 320 crowns. "Volume was lively with 17.4 million shares changing hands. The share is rising on Laudrup," one dealer said. The stock was expected to settle around 300 crowns, dealers said. FC Copenhagen said in a statement that it had not entered into any agreement with Chelsea and that neither team would make any further comment. FC Copenhagen will play Chelsea at home on November 5 in the return leg of the second round of the European Cup Winners' Cup. Playing as attacking midfielder or striker, Brian Laudrup, 29, is regarded as the best Danish soccer player around. He retired from Denmark's national team after the World Cup in France last summer.

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