



Espanyol goalkeeper Antoni Jimenez (R) thwarts an Atletico Bilbao attack during the Spanish Primera Liga clash in Barcelona on March 20. The match ended 1-1. — AFP photo

## Juan's moment of truth

BARCELONA, Mar 21 (Reuters/Internet): At a time he is seeking to overcome the worst scandal in the IOC's 105-year history, president Juan Antonio Samaranch admitted that he should have retired after the Barcelona Games in 1992.

"I always thought that the moment to go was after Barcelona, once that dream (to see the Olympics held in his native city) had been fulfilled," Samaranch said in an interview published Saturday in the Barcelona daily *La Vanguardia*.

"But there was an important stage to go through, the IOC centenary, and that took another four years. Then in 1997, I was convinced that I should continue."

Samaranch's comments come after he received a vote of confidence from IOC members to continue his mandate as president until 2001, and after the unprecedented expulsion this week of six members in the Salt Lake City bribery scandal.

"I always say that it is very difficult to reach a position of such responsibility as I now have," said the 70-year-old Samaranch, who has led the IOC since 1980. "But the most difficult thing is to leave at the right time. I didn't do it and that was a mistake."

He said the Salt Lake City corruption scandal has meant the worst moment of his Olympic career.

But Samaranch, who inherited an organisation facing bankruptcy and turned the Olympics into a multibillion-dollar industry, defended his record and assured that he would see better days for the IOC after gaining his members' confidence.

"I feel stronger than some months ago, but my mandate has always been very calm," he said. "This crisis has opened our eyes. We have seen that the existing structure which has 105 years, must be changed."

## Mike may be freed on Friday

INDIANAPOLIS, Mar 21: Local prosecutor Scott Newman plans to contact prison authorities in the state of Maryland on Monday to discuss reports that former heavyweight boxing champion Mike Tyson might be eligible for release from jail as early as Friday, reports AP.

On March 5, Tyson entered into an agreement with Newman and other local authorities to serve an additional 60 days in jail in Indiana for violating his parole in that midwestern state, where he was convicted of rape.

"I expect a 60-day jail sentence to be served following the Maryland sentence," Newman told the Indianapolis Star late Friday. Under "good" time provisions, if Tyson behaves in custody and accomplishes education and work credits, that time can be reduced to 30 days.

If released Friday, Tyson would be placed on work release or home detention to serve out the remainder of his sentence, according to one of his attorneys.

James Voyles of Indianapolis, an attorney for Tyson, said a Washington Post article about the possibility of Tyson's release as early as Friday is accurate.

The story said Stephen P. Johnson, a judge in Maryland, told Tyson's attorneys and the Maryland state's attorney during a private meeting this week that he will rule March 26 on a request to reduce Tyson's one-year Maryland assault sentence to eight months.

Voyles said that under Maryland law, that state's Department of Corrections determines through a grid system how much actual jail time an inmate must serve under a sentence.

If the Maryland judge reduces the sentence to eight months, Voyles said, the jail time could be between three and 30 days.

## Bordeaux win a toughie



PARIS, Mar 21 (Reuters/Internet): Girondins de Bordeaux clung to their one-point lead over Olympique Marseille in the two-horse race for the French league title with a tight 1-0 home win over Strasbourg on Saturday.

After taking an 11-minute lead through captain Michel Pavon, they were indebted to some fine saves from goalkeeper Ulrich Rame as they struggled to shake off the hangover from their 6-0 midweek UEFA Cup pasting at Parma.

Marseille, inspired by two-goal Fabrizio Ravanelli, stayed hot on Bordeaux's heels with a 4-1 victory over 10-man Lorient at the Velodrome.

Lorient goalkeeper Angelo Hugues was sent off in the 16th minute for handling a shot by Florian Maurice outside the box under pressure from Ravanelli, who immediately put his side in front with the free kick.

Bordeaux has 59 points and Marseille, France's sole UEFA Cup survivors, 58 with seven games to go.

Olympique Lyon, like Bordeaux eliminated in the UEFA Cup quarter-finals, were also

reduced to 10 men as they crashed 1-0 at relegation-threatened Le Havre to fall 12 points behind Bordeaux.

Lyon's Swiss striker Marco Grassi, already serving a four-match European suspension, was sent off after half an hour for elbowing Le Havre's Nicolas Huysman in the face.

They are now only one point ahead of Monaco, 1-0 winners at Nantes on Friday, in the race for third place.

Marseille striker Christophe Dugarry said: "Our legs were a bit heavy after our efforts in Vigo (where they had a 0-0 draw with Celta), but we had a good match."

Bordeaux suffered, too, but they also won and the tussle continues. With Lyon's defeat the title will now be played out between us. Both sides deserve to be where they are," the France striker said.

At Marseille, Lorient's reserve goalkeeper Stephane Le Garrec was thrown in at the deep end and had already conceded a goal before his first touch of the ball.

Having taken up his position for Ravanelli's free kick he could only watch, rooted to the spot, as the Italian curled the

ball over the wall and in at the base of the far post.

Hugues was the second goalkeeper sent off for the same offence in two nights, following Bastia's Eric Durand near the end of the Corsicans' 2-1 home defeat by Nancy on Friday.

Maurice put Marseille two up five minutes after the interval with a superb chip over Le Garrec from the edge of the box after being put through by Robert Pires.

Pires hit the post in the 57th minute before Ravanelli made it three in the 72nd from a pass by the French international's replacement Jocelyn Gourvenec.

Five minutes later, Gourvenec converted a penalty after Le Garrec brought down substitute striker Thi Camara.

Paris St Germain eased their relegation worries and climbed into the top half of the standings for the first time this year with a 1-0 away win over AJ Auxerre in their first match under Philippe Bergeroo, their third coach of the season.

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## Becker bids bye to USA



KEY BISCAYNE, Mar 21 (Reuters/Internet): Boris Becker, well beaten by an opponent who was

five-years-old when the German star won his first Wimbledon title, walked off to a standing ovation after playing what was likely his last tennis match on U.S. soil.

"My mind doesn't want to do it anymore," Becker said following a 7-5, 6-0 second-round defeat to Russian teen-ager Marat Safin.

The three-time Wimbledon champion, already semi-retired, has said he will call it quits for good this summer.

"It's 15 years doing the same things. It's something I liked obviously very much and it's still a great passion of mine. But to do it like I used to, six or eight hours a day for 45 weeks a year, I've had enough," Becker said.

Becker has said he will play Davis Cup against Safin and Russia next month and then enter a few tournaments before ending his career with one last Wimbledon, a contradiction to earlier statements that he had given up on the Grand Slams.

Becker reiterated his intentions to play one more Wimbledon. He also announced that he

and wife Barbara are expecting their second child in August.

"I want to give it a good show and I want to prepare for my last Grand Slam," said Becker.

Hartford, I liked very much. The win at the Masters in Madison Square Garden in the fifth, I liked very much," Becker reflected.

Hartford was a reference to a marathon Davis Cup classic. Becker beat John McEnroe in a 6-hour and 21-minute five-setter to clinch a World Group Relocation Round at the Hartford Civic Center in 1987.

The year-end Masters victory came in 1985.

"I had an opportunity to really do what I love doing," said Becker, waxing nostalgic.

To reach a point where I have to have the possibility to choose what I want to do now — I have the freedom to say no. I have time to think about what I want to do next.

"That freedom was given to me by tennis."

It felt like I had one more Wimbledon in me so I could finish my career where it started for me."

After Saturday's forgettable contest, Becker recalled his most enduring tennis moments in America.

"Probably my finest moment was the U.S. Open win '89 against [Ivan] Lendl," Becker said of his first Grand Slam title on a surface other than

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## BAF v'ball

TANGAIL, Mar 21: The international volleyball competition of the Bangladesh Air Force began at the Bangladesh Air Force Base Paharkanchampur here today, reports BSS.

In the opening day Air Headquarters Unit defeated Base Paharkanchampur 3-2.

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## Dozens hurt in Belgrade derby

BELGRADE, Mar 21 (Reuters/Internet): Dozens of Crvena Zvezda and Partizan football fans were hurt in clashes and one stabbed in the back before and during a local Yugoslav league derby on Saturday, eyewitnesses said.

Rival fans clashed outside the stadium before the match, which ended in a 2-2 draw.

Witnesses said a Partizan fan was taken to hospital after being stabbed in the back. While 15 others were treated for minor injuries.

Riot police intervened and tried to separate the warring fans. Local television showed the scene of the fighting littered with iron bars and wooden clubs abandoned by the fans.

A Reuters journalist saw scores of Partizan fans on the terraces of the Marakana stadium tearing up plastic seats and throwing them onto the pitch after their team, the Yugoslav league leaders, fell two goals behind.

Fifteen minutes before the final whistle four Red Star supporters invaded the pitch and were removed by police.

Red Star's stadium will be the venue for a high-risk Euro-2000 qualifier between Yugoslavia and Croatia on March 27.

But the failure of the Kosovo peace talks has cast a shadow of doubt over the match.

Crvena Zvezda took a deserved eighth minute lead after a touch of magic by Savicevic, who has rediscovered his form after a painful knee injury sidelined him for six months.

His defence-splitting through ball released Ivan Dedic, whose cross was met by Mihajlo Pjanovic's diving header.

Savicevic continued to torment the Partizan defence and created the second goal in the 30th minute, when Jovan Gajic had the simple task of placing the ball under the advancing keeper to give Zvezda a 2-0 lead.

Partizan refused to lie down and pulled one back three minutes later. Vladimir Ivic beat the offside trap and laid on a perfect pass to teenage striker Mateja Kezman, who scored.

Zvezda's striker Goran Drulic was sent off after lashing out at his marker Mladen Krstajic and Partizan made the advantage count eight minutes after the interval when skipper Sasa Ilic got on the end of Krstajic's low cross at the far post.

Pires hit the post in the 57th minute before Ravanelli made it three in the 72nd from a pass by the French international's replacement Jocelyn Gour