Fibak, Sarde cleared

PARIS, Apr 18: A French magistrate Friday dropped charges of rape against former Polish tennis ace Wojciech Fibak and one of France's top movie producers. Alaim Sarde, both cited in a prostitution ring for the rich and famous, reports

Both men were placed under investigation in 1997 in an inquiry involving a French glam-our photographer accused of pimping for Middle East potentates, rich businessmen and showbiz stars.

The photographer, Jean-Pierre Bourgeois, was sentenced to five years jail last January for a prostitution ring involv-ing some 40 women who were dispatched two dates with wellheeled businessmen from a Paris telephone number.

The women, often aspiring actresses and models, were commissioned for sums ranging from 5,000 to 20,000 francs, excluding travel expenses, to dates in Paris as well as in Monaco, New York, London or the Arab Emirates.

Fibak, Ivan Lendl's former trainer, was charged with "at-tempted rape" and "sexual as-sault" on testimony from two of the women involved.

Sarde, who worked with Roman Polanski and has pro-duced films directed by the likes of Jean-Luc Godard, Bertrand Tavernier and Andrew Technine, was charged with rape.

Judicial sources said Magistrate Marie-Paule Moracchini had dropped the charges because

attempted rape in either case. The two women, who incriminated Fibak and Sarde had prostituted themselves with clients of Bourgeois and there was no evidence of constraint involving the former tennis star of the French producer, she said.

US film star Robert de Niro was also questioned in the case early last year, but was heard only as witness and is not facing charges.

A French court has postponed until May the trial of Bourgeois' co-defendant Swedish ex-model Anika Brumark, 48, Bourgeois most often worked for soft porn maga-

Aussies annex triathlon races

GAMAGORI, Japan, Apr 18: Australia's Chris McCormack won the men's championship and Harrop Loretta took the women's title Sunday in the ITU Triathlon World Cup Gamagori championship, the second leg of the 11-series competition, reports AP.

McCormick, the 1997 world champion, won the 51.5 kilometre (32-mile) triathlon in the central Japan city of Gamagori in one hour, 43 minutes, 38 sec-

Craig Watson of New Zealand was second in 1:43:45. followed by Reto Hug of Switzerland in 1:43:37 and Eric Van der Linden of Netherlands in 1:44:09.

McCormack won the 10kilometre (6.2 mile) marathon in 29 minutes, 42 seconds, placed 20th in the 1.5-kilometre (0.93-mile) swimming competition with a time of 17:20, and finished 14th in the 40kilometre (24.9 mile) cycling event in 56:36.

In the women's competition, Australians took the first three

Harrop Loretta won in 1:54:26, followed by Nicole Hackett in 1:55:21 and Michellie Jones in 1:55:25.

Loretta won both the 40kilometre (24.9-mile) cycling and the 10-kilometre (6.2-mile) marathon and finished fourth in the 1.5-kilometre swim.

Siri Lindley of the United States was fourth in 1:55:26. A total of 150 men and

women competed in the race. The third leg will be held in Sydney, Australia, on May 2.

Nagano marathon Yegorova's

NAGANO, Japan, Apr 18: Barcelona Olympic champion Valentina Yegorova of Russia broke away from Ethiopia's Elfinesh Alemu in the last kilometre to win the women's race in the Nagano marathon today, reports AFP.

The men's title went to Kenya's Jackson Kabiga, who won the Fukuoka and Paris marathons last year, as his nearest rival had to relieve himself with four kilometres to

Yegorova, who also won the silver at the last 1996 Atlanta Olympics, clocked 2hr 28min 41sec with Alemu crossing the line 18 seconds behind in the inaugural marathon commemorating the 1998 Nagano Winter

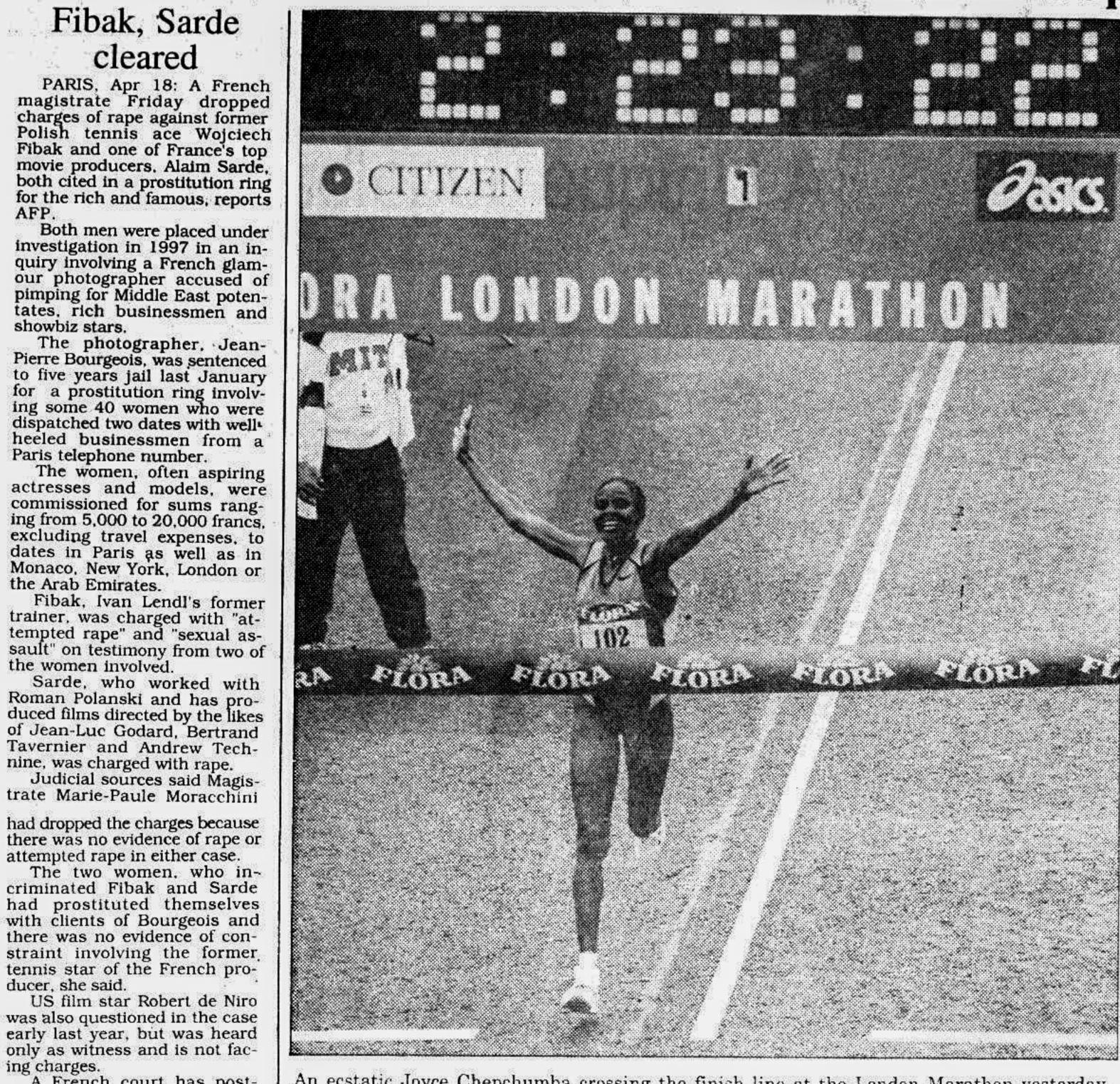
Olympics. Poland's Malgorzata Sobanska finished third in 2:31:02. "I made the final spurt as I planned it," said 35-year-old Yegorova who resumed training in February after a layoff for more than a year. "I am very satisfied with victory in a

memorial, inaugural event." The Russian said she would skip the World Championships in Spain in August to let

younger talent compete. She shrugged off a question about the possibility of her entry in the 2000 Sydney Olympics. "I can't tell until next year.

Kabiga pulled away from the disappointing performance from an out-of-sorts Alami. pack at seven kilometres to win the men's event in 2:13:26, followed by Japan's Shinji Kawashima 12 seconds behind. Another Japanese Katsuya Nat-sume was third in 2:16:58.

Kawashima closed up on the Kenyan with 30 kilometres to go. But a rumbling stomach forced the Japanese to relieve himself beside the course at 38 kilometres and end his title challenge.



An ecstatic Joyce Chepchumba crossing the finish line at the London Marathon yesterday. - AFP photo

Chepchumba's double delight

African triumph in London

LONDON, Apr 18: Abdelkader El Mouaziz broke away from a star-studded field to become the first Moroccan to win the London Marathon on Sunday. And Kenya's Joyce Chepchumba made it an African double by winning the women's race for the second time to collect a 125,000 dollar bonus for a world fastest time recognised by the organisers, reports AP.

El Mouaziz, who led last year's race until he faded to finish second, stayed on the shoulder of the pacemakers before breaking out in his own with nine miles (15 kilometres) to go. The Moroccan crossed the

line in 2 hours 07 minutes 57 seconds to miss the course record by a second with twotime titlist Antonio Pinto second, 1:03 minutes behind and defending titlist Abel Anton of Spain third in 2:09.41.

World record holder Ronaldo Da Costa of Brazil placed a disappointing 17th, more than eight minutes slower than his mark of 2:06.05 set in Berlin last year. Olympic champion Josia Thugwane, who was among the leaders for half the race, dropped out at 22 miles (35 kilometres) when he developed

a cough. Chepchumba crossed the finish line in 2 hours 23 minutes 22 seconds to shave two seconds off the time owned by Lidia Simon and set in Osaka, Japan, in

January. Although there are 11 times faster than that, organisers of the London Marathon recognise it as the world's best as it was

smarted Morocco's Karim

Alann to post a 7-6, 6-3, 6-3

victory in the Barcelona Open

his first final on home soil.

kept the crowd happy and the

big-serving Alami pegged to the back of the court with his re-

lentless ground-hitting and

the same rhythm on his serve

which accounted for Todd Mar-

tin in a blistering semifinal

win, Mantilla was able to run

out a comfortable winner in two

Spaniards and baseline special-

ists Carlos Moya and Francisco

Clavet in the previous two

rounds, recognised he was up

against a very different chal-

ing game and the only way to

combat him is to concentrate

on your passing shots," he said.

pressure and is very agile at the

net. I had to be aggressive

ous best showing at Barcelona

was in 1997 when he reached

the third round, was aided by a

The Moroccan blamed tired-

"After five tough games this

"My service didn't have the

week, I couldn't maintain that

speed and aggression on court. I

lost my concentration at

same rhythm and the serve is a

very important part of my

game. If that doesn't go well, it

becomes very difficult for me.

ness for his drop in form.

times," Alami said.

The Spaniard, whose previ-

against him on those shots."

"Karim plays a very attack-

"He puts you under a lot of

Mantilla, who saw off fellow

With Alami failing to find

some thoughtful serving.

hours and 16 minutes.

lenge in the final.

Barcelona-born Mantilla, in

final on Sunday.

BARCELONA.

Spain, Apr 18

(Reuters/ Inter-

net): Spanish

baseliner Felix

set in a women-only race whereas the other times were set in races which had a men's event too which would have influenced the times.

Adriana Fernandez of Mexico placed second in 2:24.06 and world champion Manuela Machado of Portugal was third in 2:25.09.

Meanwhile, the world record holder recognised by the International Amateur Athletic Federation. Tegla Loroupe of Kenya, was running in Rotterdam where she set the mark of 2:20.47 in last year's race.

Chepchumba hit the front three miles (5 kilometres) from home to maintain her remarkable record in the race. Her finishing positions in the four London Marathons are second in 1996, first in '97, third last year and now a winner again.

Behind the elite runners, a race record total of 31,582 took part in the 19th running of the marathon around central Lon-

In the men's race, a small group of five led by pacemaker Luis Jesus of Portugal but including Olympic champion Thugwane and El Mouaziz, opened up an advantage of more than 1:30 minutes over the other main contenders. Da Costa, defending titlist Anton, two-time winner Pinto and Olympic silver medalist Lee Bong-Ju.

Jesus and El Mouaziz put in a fast mile of 4:30 at the 15th mile (25 km) to leave Thugwane and Kenyans Philip Tarus and Isaac Chemobo behind with no

That was the main problem."

Alami's problems on his

serve, coupled with some woeful

net play, saw Mantilla race into

a 4-0 lead with two breaks be-

He managed to get back both

fore the Moroccan recovered.

sign of the others coming back at the leaders.

After Jesus dropped out at 17 miles, El Mouaziz was on his own almost two minutes ahead and he stretched that to 2:30 with seven miles to go.

In the finish straight, the Moroccan began waving in celebration and probably missed out on a course record bonus as a result.

Pacemaker Svetlana Zakharova of Russia led the women's field before dropping out halfway in a time of 1:10.57. The tall Carroll, who took up long distance running while a developing tennis player as a teenager, took over and started to stretch the field with Meyer. Chepchumba, Machado and Adriana Fernandez of Mexico chasing.

Seven miles (12 kilometers) from home, Fernandez, who faded after leading most of last year's race to finish seventh. made a break but Chepchumba didn't let her get away. The Kenyan tracked the Mexican for two miles before moving ahead with three to go.

Running along the embankment with the River Thames to her left, the Houses of Parliament ahead and the finish line barely a mile away, Thugwane had dropped the Mexican and was well clear by the finish straight. Unlike El Mouaziz, she

quickened as she got closer to the line and collapsed into the arms of her coach after win-

breaks as he sought to attack

Mantilla, particularly on the

second serve, but he wilted once

more in the tie-break and mis-

hit two simple forehands to go

down 7-2.

FILA

Morocco's Abdelkader El Mouaziz crosses the finish line

— Internet photo

first to win the London Marathon yesterday.

No hope from Kournikova

MOSCOW, Apr 18 (Reuters/ Internet): Russia's Fed Cup cap-tain Konstantin Bogorodetsky doubts Anna Kournikova will

play for Russia again.
"It has been two years since the last time she played for us and, quite honestly, I don't think she will ever play for us again," Bogorodetsky told dur-ing the Fed Cup World Group first round tie against France in Moscow on Saturday. Kournikova, 17, Russia's top

woman player who is ranked 13th in the world and who lives in the United States, has refused to play for her country on several occasions in the past two years, each time citing in-

On Friday, during the open-ing draw ceremony, Bogorodet-sky was visibly upset when asked about her absence. "I don't want to talk about

those who are not here," he snapped back at reporters. "Let's focus on the ones who

are here to play." On Saturday, a calmer Bo-gorodetsky explained himself: "It has always been a one-way street with Anna. It was us who tried to contact her or her mom all the time, but now such prac-

tice must stop," he said. "If she wants to play, she should get in touch with us. That is why. I think honestly, she will not play for us in the

Boston Marathon today

BOSTON, Apr 18: The world's fastest long distance runners are gathering this weekend for Monday's 103rd running of the Boston Marathon, reports Reuters.

Last year's winners, Moses Tanui of Kenya and Fatuma Roba of Ethiopia, will be back for this year's staging of the race which along with the Olympic Marathon is one of the most prestigious in the world.

The 26.2 mile (41.92 km) challenge will also Feature the return of William Boston Villy" Rogers, a four-time winner and father of the US running boom that started in the

Now 51, Rogers aims to break the record in his age group of two hours 31 minutes no small feat for a man who has pounded the pavement competitively for almost 30 years.

Tve been racing for over a quarter of a century," Rogers

"Mentally, I'm there, but physically, that's the hard part after all these years."

Rogers calls this race, the world's most competitive marathon. Kenyan runners' recent domination of the race could continue but he said athletes from other countries -- especially those born in the higher elevations of Africa such as Ethiopia - have made great headway in training.

"The Kenyans are probably per capita the best runners on the planet in terms of their professionals, so we know they'll be right up front," Rogers said. "They're great champions.

Tanui, a two-time winner of the Boston Marathon, said he expects to draw energy from the crowds who helped him to victory last year. 'The race is one of the best in

the world. It has history." The Kenyan said "Another thing is that there are people around the course ... even if it is chilly or rainy they stay on the course and cheer all the way to the finish line. This is very important for the athletes."

Mosley keeps IBF belt

WASHINGTON. Apr 18: Shane Mosley retained his International Boxing Federation lightweight title by stopping fel-low American John Brown with an eight-round barrage in California yesterday, reports Xin-Mantilla keeps it in Spain

Referee Pat Russell stopped the fight before the start of the ninth round, giving Mosley his 30th win in 32 fights and kept his unbeaten record intact. while Brown fell to 19-6.

Kosgei captures Rotterdam Marathon

ROTTERDAM, Apr 18: Japhet Kosgei attacked three times in the final stages of Sunday's Rotterdam marathon, finally breaking free to win in 2 hours 7 minutes and 11 seconds reports AP.

The Kenyan outsider shook off last year's winner, Spaniard Fabian Roncero, who finished second in 2:07:24. Spaniard Julio Rey was third in 2:07:38. Tegla Loroupe made it a Kenyan double, winning the women's race in this year's fastest time of 2:22.46. Roncero led a leading group

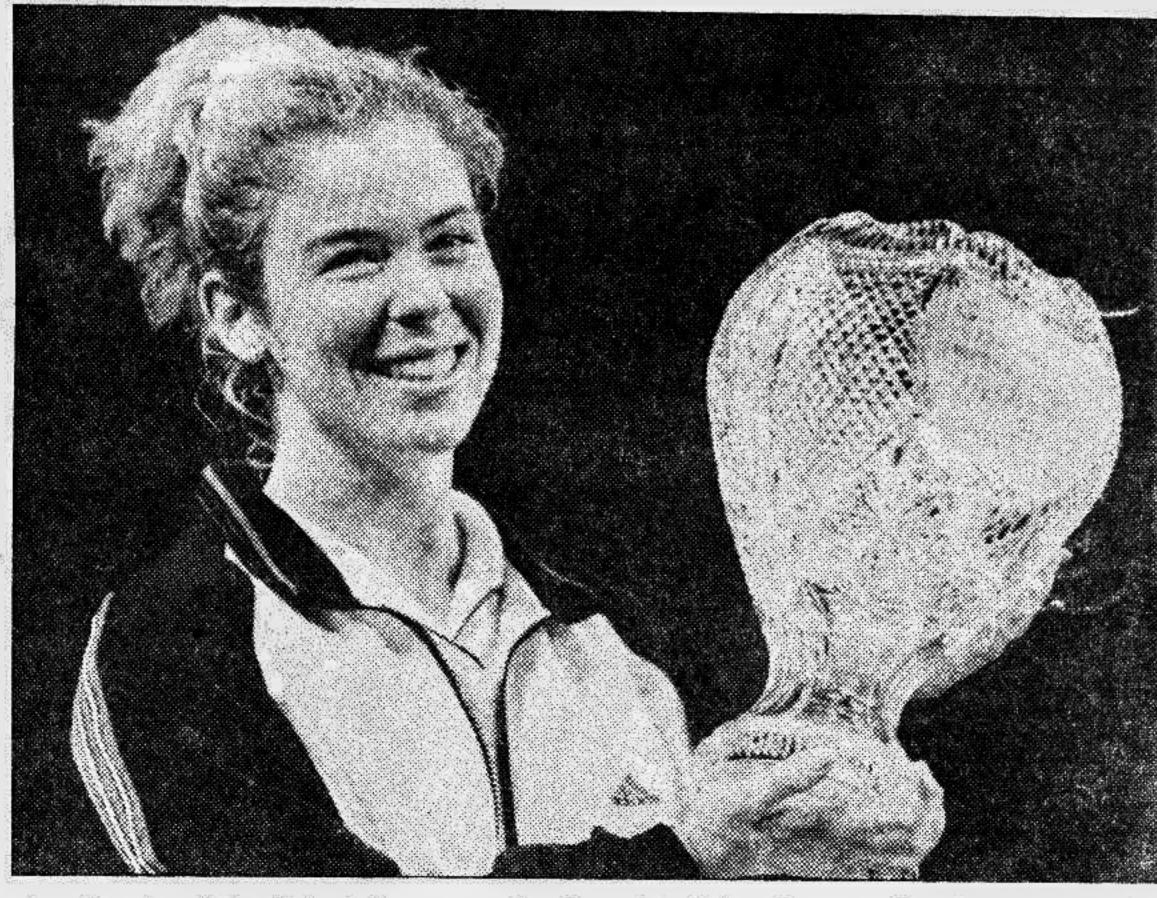
of eight athletes including Dutch rabbit Kamiel Maase past the half-marathon mark in 1:02.53, close to the world record schedule. Besides Kosgei and Rey, the group included Japanese

Yi-Yong Kim, Moroccan Abdesalem Serrokh and Kenyan and Simon Biwott. Maase surprisingly stayed with the group till past the 37kilometer mark (23-mile mark) when first Serrokh and Ojima dropped back then Kim was the

Muneyuki Ojima, South Korean

next to go. Roncero and Kosgei were alone when they passed 40 kilometres (25 miles) in 2:00:50, then Kosgei launched two unsuccessful breaks before finally freeing himself inside the final kilometer (miles).

The flat course here is known for fast times. The weather was overcast, temperature around ten degrees Celsius and the wind at the runners' backs during the closing stages.



Amy Frazier of the United States proudly shows her Tokyo Open trophy after winning the ladies' singles final against local favourite Ai Sugiyama yesterday. - AFP photo

Frazier, Kiefer lift titles



German fifth seed Nicolas Kiefer capped a masterful Japan Open today. beating South African Wayne Ferreira 7-6, 7-5 in the final, reports Reuters.

Kiefer earned 99,000 dollars for his hard-fought victory over the seventh seed to notch up his second career singles title. Kiefer last won a title in Toulouse in 1997. The victory in Tokyo will

also move Kiefer, ranked 26 in the world, closer to his first ever top 20 ranking. Kiefer played strong, allround tennis to pull out the win

by the slimmest of margins, with a pair of errant Ferreira shots in a tie-break leading to a first-set win for the German. At 5-4 in the second set. Kiefer was serving for the match. But he double faulted at

a return winner to leave the set levelled at 5-5. Kiefer was the player with the greater patience and the

30 all Ferreira broke serve with

skill over the next two games as he broke back Ferreira in the next game and blitzed him on his serve to win the championship and the biggest cheque of his career.

"When I come to Asia, I play good every time. It is a very good place," Kiefer said. The 21-yearold reached the finals in Singapore in 1997 and lost last week in the quarterfinals in Hong Kong to American Andre Agassi. Kiefer knocked out a pair of

Swedes in his championship

run in Tokyo, beating eighth seed Jonas Bjorkman in a semifinal and third seed Thomas Enqvist in a quarterfinal, Ferreira was making his first appearance in a final since

1996 and was trying for his 14th singles title in Tokyo. The South African said he had regained confidence in his game and was ready to reverse his three-year slide in the rank-

ings brought about by injuries. Top seed Richard Krajicek came to Tokyo but could not play because of a shoulder injury he suffered last week in Hong Kong.

On the women's side, American Amy Frazier picked up her sixth career singles title today with a 6-2, 6-2 finals drubbing of top seed Ai Sugiyama of

The win was Frazier's first since winning the women's singles crown in Mahwah, New Jersey, in 1998 and the title in Tokyo earned her 27,000 dollars.

Number two seed Frazier easily disposed of local favourite Sugiyama in about an hour as numerous unforced errors made it impossible for Sugivama to defend her Japan Open title.

Besides, in the men's doubles, Jeff Tarango of the United States and Daniel Vacek of the Czech Republic lifted the title when Zimbabwean Wayne Black and Brian MacPhie of the United States withdrew on 4-3 of the first set.

Tough opener awaits Becker

lost in the quarterfinals to

Bjorkman. Second seed Agassi



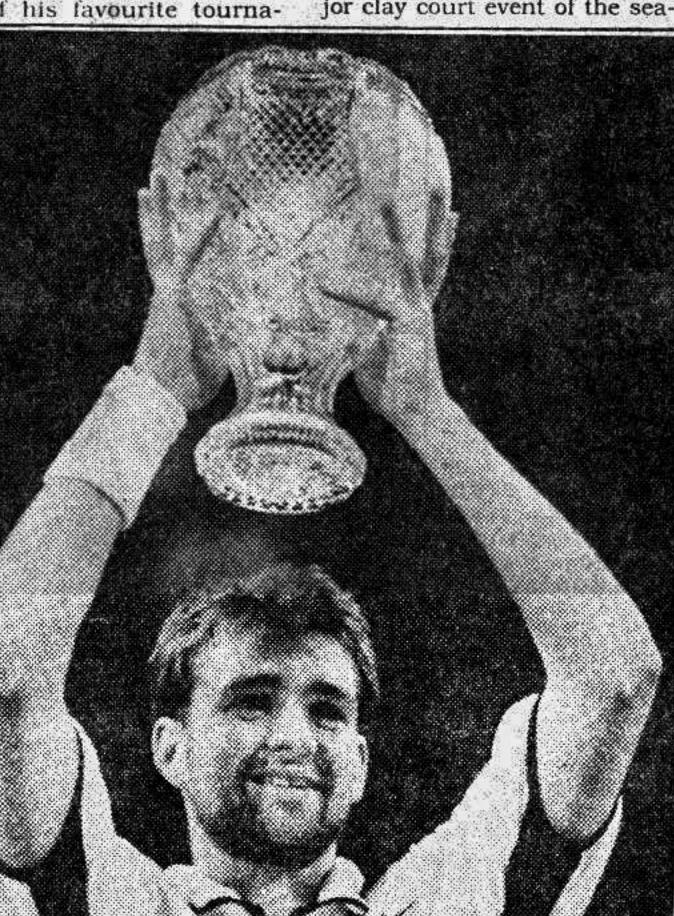
Internet): Semiretired Boris Becker faces a dillicult task this

MONTE CARLO.

Apr 18 (Reuters/

week in the opening round of one of his favourite tournaments, the Monte Carlo Open, when he meets 1997 winner Marcelo Rios of Chile. The clash between two for-

mer world number ones will be the highlight of the first round of the tournament, the first major clay court event of the sea-



Nicolas Kiefer of Germany holds aloft the Japan Open tennis tournament trophy after winning the men's singles final against South African Wayne Ferreira at Tokyo yesterday. - AFP photo

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

38 Grand ---

55 "I" strain?

56 "...playing

fields of

57 Bullring

bravos

58 Microcom- 9 Crisp

Solution time: 21 mins.

CAPER CON FAT

Yesterday's answer

ACROSS

17 Give as

18 Verdi

opera

19 Matches

21 Predeter-

mine

Bolivia

olden

times

31 "Or would

rather

be ---?"

33 Bill

35 Cicatrix

36 Cashew

shrub

28 Sleepy,

26 Your, in

22 Nitwit

23 La --,

example

Monte Carlo has always been special to Becker. He lives in the principality and has reached the final there three times, the closest he has ever come to winning a tournament The 32-year-old German returns to the event in fine form and could well deliver another upset as he did in reaching the Hong Kong Open final two

weeks ago where he eventually lost to Andre Agassi. Ninth-seeded Rios, in contrast, has yet to reach his best form so far this season.

In his two clay tournaments so far this year, he lost in the semifinals in Estoril to Todd Martin - who has withdrawn from Monte Carlo through injury - and then went down to Albert Costa in Barcelona. The Chilean lost both matches in straight sets.

the match between former French Open winner Gustavo Kuerten of Brazil and local favourite Cedric Pioline should be closely contested. Pioline, often at his best on clay, lost in last year's final to

Of the other first-round ties.

Spain's Carlos Moya and will have vital ATP Tour points to defend. The match will also be a dress rehearsal of next sum-

mer's Davis Cup match between France and Brazil. Moya, who was beaten in the Barcelona quarterfinals by compatriot Felix Mantilla, is

the top seed in Monte Carlo in the absence of injured American Pete Sampras.

With all the top eight seeds getting a bye into the second round, the Spaniard will meet the winner of the first-round match between Czech Slava Dosedel and Swede Magnus

Gustafsson.

ILTFRHS DRMWLD DLFOW LUGVM

IVNRMW SRNHVOU: KZMV TZRM.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHAT DO YOU GET BY

CROSSING A LEPRECHAUN WITH A PURPLE DINO-Today's Cryptoquip clue: M equals N

CRYPTOQUIP GSV

IVKZRINZM

SAUR? BLARNEY.

The Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error. 53 Playwright

10 Assess-N.S. acronym 40 Crucial 59 Everything else 11 "My Cup 5 Salt Lake 41 Tar's bars tribesman 43 Plata's DOWN Runneth 8 Pound of Over" 1 Lounge partner 45 National singer poetry about 16 Monad 12 Sur-2 Arab park in Maine prince 20 Creator rounded 3 Autograph 23 - de deux 47 It ain't 13 Greek 4 Whodunit 24 "Simpsons" worth a dime writer's consostore-51 Judicial nants award keeper 14 Emulated 5 Erect 25 Harare is raiment 52 Summer Leander 6 Actress its capital Carrere 27 Kennel 15 Terraced squash pyramid 54 Grad rags 7 Corner-

stone

abbr.

8 Third-

party

arrange-

ments

ARC APE AGNEW 45 Jason's

EAT MESS 50 Dryer

bread

comment

29 "Norma -- '

30 Saute

32 Plots

37 XVII

34 Denver

team

39 Leif's old

42 Stared

craft

46 Beatnik's

48 Diamond

49 Eve's

adjective

in the sky?

grandson

residue

44 Brownish

sextupled