

Rangers to fight sectarianism

GLASGOW, Sept 3: Rangers chairman David Murray has vowed to carry on the fight to stamp out sectarianism at Ibrox, reports AFP.

As his club breathe a sigh of relief after being cleared of misconduct by the Scottish Premier League following the mayhem at the Old Firm match at Parkhead in May, Murray insists the bigotry which has surrounded Rangers must come to an end.

Outsiders have condemned the Glasgow giants for doing little to eradicate the anti-Catholic songs which his supporters bellow at most games. But Murray says he does not want the fans who lower his club's image.

"Surely our fans can celebrate our success without denigrating the club like this," said Murray.

"We are a European club in the true sense of the word now and we have to prove it."

Rangers reached the Champions League this season with a stunning two-legged victory over Parma.

But the joy of the momentous achievement was tarnished as the Rangers fans celebrated their success with sectarian chants aimed at their bitter Glasgow rivals.

"I have found myself watching games on TV and sometimes I cringe. Surely we have moved on from that," said Murray.

"It is unacceptable and I am asking our fans to think twice about singing songs like this."

"You can't change a club in a year, it takes an era. But fewer fans are singing sectarian songs now and I won't be happy until they are wiped out altogether."

"I would ask our supporters to take a step back and consider the image they are projecting of the club," Murray told the Daily Record.

Kahn ready to leave Germany

BONN, Sept 3: Bayern Munich and Germany goalkeeper Oliver Kahn gave a hint on Thursday that he may be ready to leave the Bundesliga, reports Reuters.

Kahn, currently nursing an ankle injury, told soccer magazine Kicker he had been disgusted to see a training incident involving Bayern veteran Lothar Matthaus and French teammate Bixente Lizarazu blown out of proportion by the local media.

"This has reminded me what kind of country I live in," said Kahn, whose contract with Bayern runs until 2003. "This gives me further proof that at some stage you have to say enough."

Lizarazu apparently slapped Matthaus's face during a training session. Popular daily Bild on Thursday carried a picture of the incident.

Romario stars in Flamengo win

RIO DE JANEIRO, Sept 3: Romario ended Corinthians' run of seven successive wins in the Brazilian championship by scoring both goals in Flamengo's 2-1 away win, reports Reuters.

Corinthians, seeking to equal the championship record of eight consecutive wins set by Atletico Mineiro in 1977, made the ideal start on Wednesday. Luizao scoring in the fifth minute.

But Romario turned the tables with goals in the 27th and 34th minutes.

Luizao was jeered later when he missed a penalty.

In Wednesday's other games Sao Paulo beat Guarani 3-2 and Botafogo-Ribeirao Preto edged out Gremio 4-3.

Corinthians lead the championship by four points from Cruzeiro.

Firework ends Mercusor Cup game

RIO DE JANEIRO, Sept 3: A firework thrown at Velez Sarsfield goalkeeper Jose Luis Chilavert led to the abandonment of the all-Argentine Mercusor Cup match against Independiente in Buenos Aires, reports Reuters.

The incident occurred in the 44th minute after Paraguayan Chilavert collided with a post as he intercepted a free kick from Marcelo Saralegui.

Chilavert was receiving treatment when the firework hurled from the terraces exploded close by a stunned him.

"Chilavert told me he could not play because he was not feeling well," said Velez president Raul Gomez.

"Do we want to wait for a tragedy to occur? Chilavert is always a victim of disgruntled fans who take it out on someone."

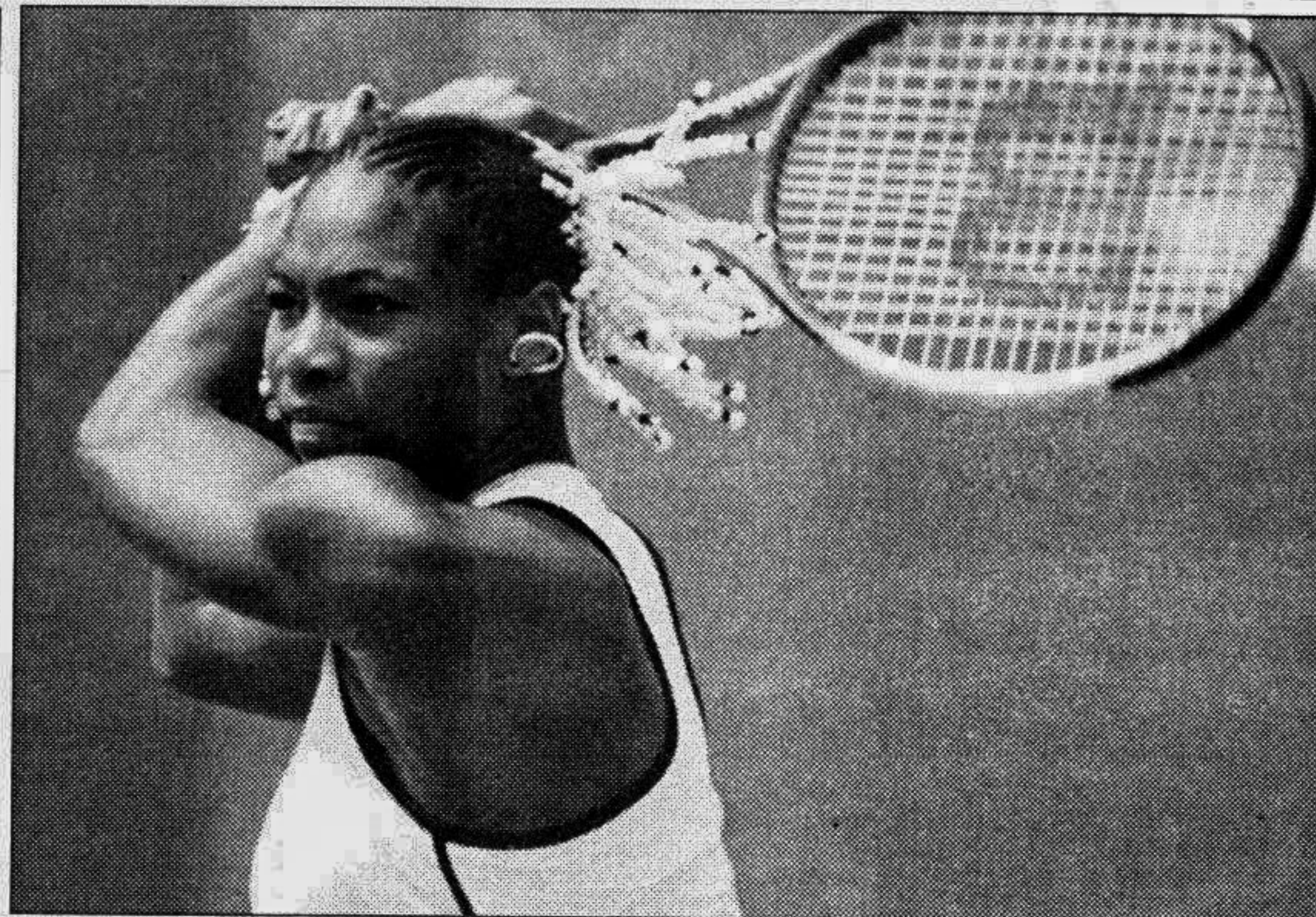
Independiente president Hector Grondona, angered by the decision to stop the game, said Chilavert was "always provoking trouble."

Argentine referee Daniel Gimenez called off play after 38 minutes of deliberations with the score at 0-0. He had verified that Chilavert had recovered.

Two players were sent off for fighting in the 1-1 draw between Vasco da Gama of Brazil and Uruguayan Penarol in Rio de Janeiro.

Vasco's Viola and Penarol's Dario Rodriguez received red cards in the first half.

Angry Vasco fans tried to invade the pitch at the end. Both teams and the Argentine referee were given a police escort to safety.



American Serena Williams hits a return in her match against Croatian Jelena Kostanic. — AFP photo

Exchanging verbal volleys

NEW YORK, Sept 3 (AFP): Serena Williams smashed another winner in the exchange of verbal shots with world number one Martina Hingis on Thursday, saying the Swiss star needs to "use her brain a little more."

The latest volley in the war of teen tennis tongues came after seventh seed Williams dispatched 128th-ranked Croatian qualifier Jelena Kostanic 6-4, 6-2 to reach the third round of the US Open.

The 68-minute triumph sent the 17-year-old sister of third-seeded Venus Williams into a matchup with the youngest player in the women's field, 16-year-old Belgian Kim Clijsters, who is ranked 98th.

Hingis, whose 19th birthday on September 30 comes four days after Serena Williams turns 18, started the war of words on Wednesday when she said the Williams sisters and their father Richard were all "big mouths."

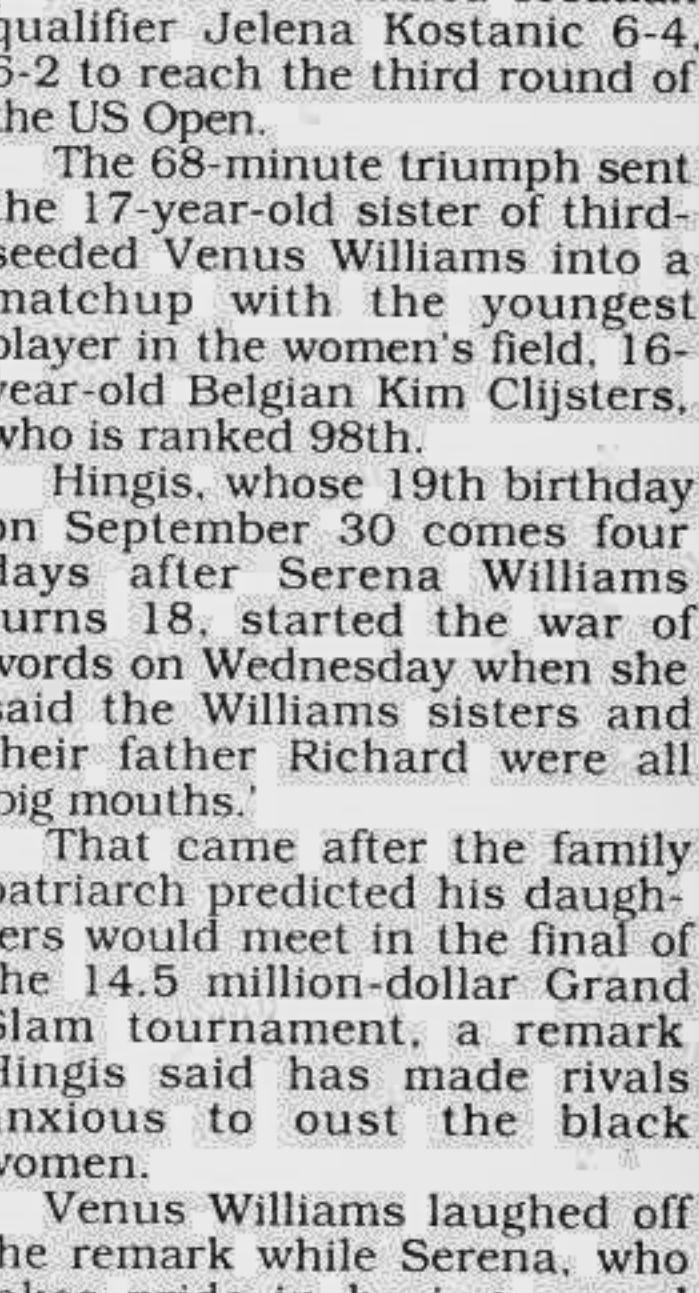
That came after the family patriarch predicted his daughters would meet in the final of the 14.5 million-dollar Grand Slam tournament, a remark Hingis said has made rivals anxious to oust the black women.

Venus Williams laughed off the remark while Serena, who takes pride in having earned her high school diploma last December, hit back with digs at Hingis' education. "That's just her problem," Williams said.

"She has always been the type of person that says things, it speaks her mind. I guess it has a little bit to do with not having a formal education."

"But you just have to somehow just think more. You have to use your brain a little more in the tennis world. She does that well on the court."

"That's her opinion and she's entitled to it. She is number one, so she can say whatever she would like to say. I person-



MARTINA HINGIS

ally don't think my mouth is big."

History supports Hingis to a degree. When Venus was rising in the tennis rankings, she said she expected Serena would be a tougher foe than Hingis in the fight for women's tennis supremacy.

And after winning her first match here, Serena Williams said, "When I'm on my game, nobody can beat me. I think it's impossible for anyone to have a chance against me when I'm playing my best. Anyone."

"Serena also rejected Hingis' claim that the predictions added to the pressure on the Williams sisters, saying she gets no extra motivation or pressure from the confidence of her father."

"I have already been motivated, just to play the best I can," Serena Williams said.

"(What Hingis said) doesn't matter. I just go out and play my best."

"No, no, no," she said. "It's survival out there. If I don't then the other person will, so you go into that automatic mode that you have no choice."

When it was suggested she might be too nice a person, Seles laughed and said, "I sometimes am and I've been working on that. But it's a hard one."

"I just want to be able to say no more to people and I don't like this," not I like this just for them to be happy... It's just part of growing up. I think, and not being such a pleaser."

Seles said she misses practicing with her father and continues to wonder on which path he would have led her if he had not been stricken with cancer. But she is starting to enjoy the serenity she is now experiencing, and expresses simple — if unrealistic — goals for herself.

"Just to have no other problems in my life," she said. "Just to be able to play and focus on my tennis fully, like the majority of the top 10 players now."

Seles' sigh of relief

NEW YORK, Sept 3 (Reuters): Six years after being stabbed, a year-and-a-half after the death of her father, and more than one month since her most recent injury, Monica Seles is finally at peace with her life.

One of the more star-crossed athletes to grace the women's tennis tour, Seles, for the first time in a long while, can utter the words, "I am happy."

"Probably the last four weeks of this summer, for the first time in my life, I really have no outside problems," Seles said on Thursday after routing Italian Silvia Farina 6-2, 6-3 in the second round of the US Open. "And it's been really nice. I've really enjoyed the last four weeks of my life. If I can just have this for the next two years I'd be really happy."

Even for one more week, Seles would love nothing more than to ride this euphoric feeling into another grand showing in this final Grand Slam of the year.

She won the US Open in 1991 and 1992 but did not return for three years after being stabbed in the back during a tournament in Germany in 1993. She was the losing finalist in 1995 and 1996, but did not make it out of the quarter-finals the following two years.

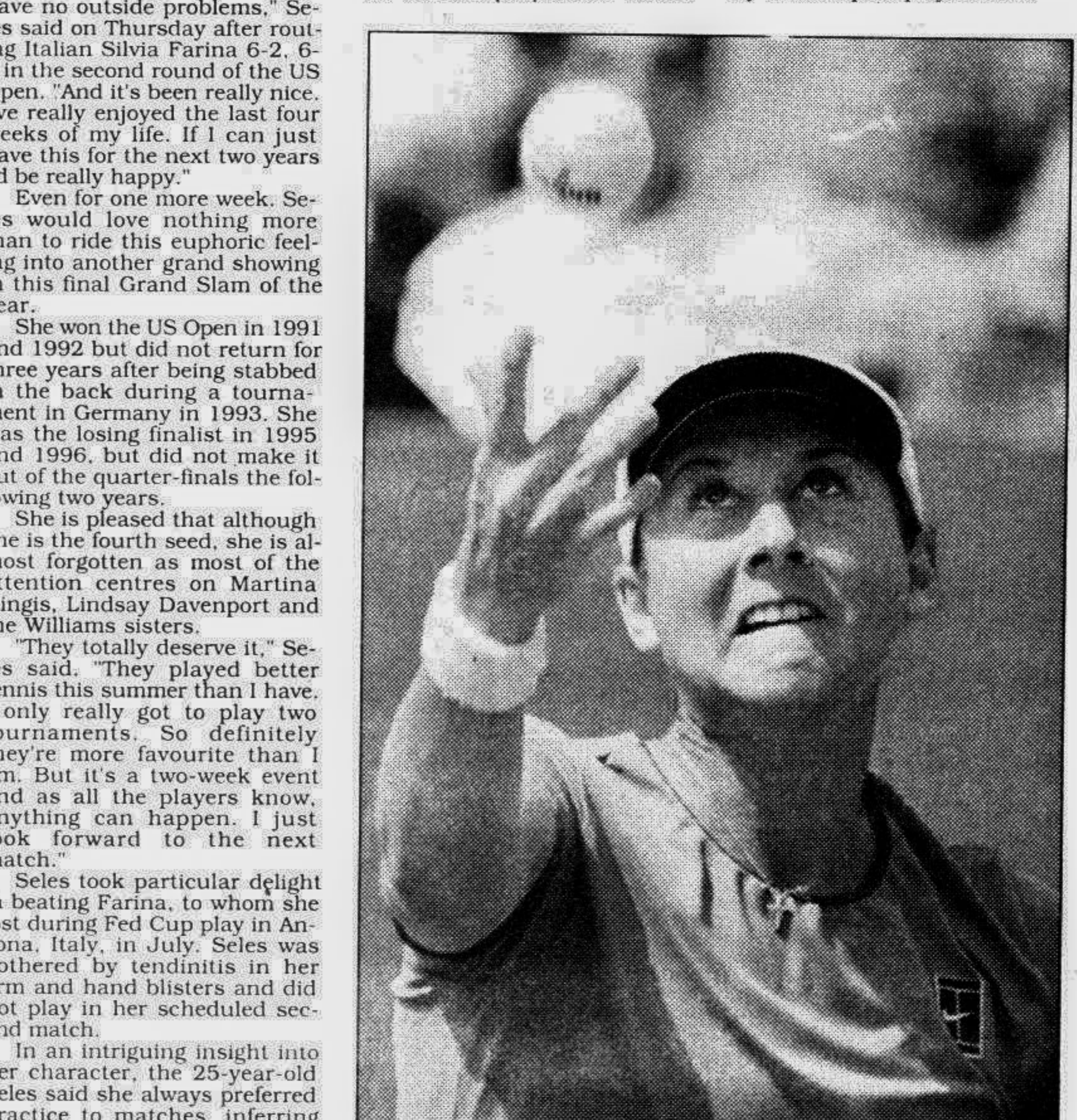
She is pleased that although she is the fourth seed, she is almost forgotten as most of the attention centres on Martina Hingis, Lindsay Davenport and the Williams sisters.

"They totally deserve it," Seles said. "They played better tennis this summer than I have. I only really got to play two tournaments. So definitely they're more favourite than I am. But it's a two-week event and as all the players know, anything can happen. I just look forward to the next match."

Seles took particular delight in beating Farina, to whom she lost during Fed Cup play in Ancona, Italy, in July. Seles was bothered by tendinitis in her arm and hand blisters and did not play in her scheduled second match.

In an intriguing insight into her character, the 25-year-old Seles said she always preferred practice to matches, inferring she does not like the concept of beating up on someone else.

"I just hate the whole thought that one is better than



Monica Seles of the United States is about to serve to Italy's Silvia Farina. — AFP photo

Agassi rolls, Moya retires

NEW YORK, Sept 3: Andre Agassi rolled to a difficult match must lie ahead of him somewhere but on Thursday he had more trouble with the chair umpire than with his second-round opponent at the US Open, reports Reuters.

The second-seeded baseline basher pounded his way to a 6-3, 6-2, 6-1 victory over German qualifier Axel Pretzsch in a match that featured a heated, running dialogue with the umpire over a series of questionable line calls he refused to overrule.

That verbal battle may prove to be the most taxing challenge Agassi faces on court in the near future as the flamboyant American had one more dangerous foe removed from his path Thursday and is set to meet a hobbled opponent in his next match.

Eighth-seeded Carlos Moya, 23, became the third player ranked number one this year to be forced out due to injury, following Pete Sampras and defending champion Patrick Rafter. Moya retired in the third set against France's Nicolas Escude because of a back injury.

Moya, the 1998 French Open champion and 1997 Australian Open runner-up, was trailing the 136th-ranked Escude 1-6, 4-6, 1-0 when he quit the match. The Spaniard was seeded to meet Agassi in the quarterfinals.

Next up for Agassi is 22-year-old American Justin Gimelstob, who had an aching elbow attended to during his five-set win over Czech Daniel Vacek and was in visible pain from cramping in his leg after the marathon match.

Against Pretzsch, each time the agitated Agassi had a call go against him, the reigning French Open champion responded by taking it out on his hapless opponent. Then, after winning the game anyway, Agassi would resume his discussion with the chair.

"It's good that it didn't take a whole lot out of me," he said of the one hour and 34 minute match. "But there's always a level of intensity that goes along with a match, especially at the US Open, that makes it feel difficult."

Agassi appeared less loose and carefree than in his opening romp over Sweden's Nicklas Pietrangeli, but he insisted that had nothing to do with being thrust into the role of prohibitive favourite with the disappearance of Sampras and Rafter.

"I can say I'll be disappointed if I don't win here because I want it so bad," said the 1994 champion, who is playing his 14th consecutive US Open.

"All it takes is one bad match for your US Open dreams to be squashed," added Agassi, who speaks from experience.

But his most recent experiences — winning the French, reaching the Wimbledon final and winning his last Open tune-up in Washington — have Agassi brimming with confidence.

"It's hard to play seven great matches, so a difficult match is coming and I'm mentally focused enough to deal with that and hopefully get through it," he said.

"Overall my game is right where I would like it to be."

Three seeded players Agassi might well run into over the next nine days — 12th seed Richard Krajicek, 10th seed Marcelo Rios and 15th-seeded German Nicolas Pietrangeli — joined him in the third round on Thursday afternoon.

Krajicek exacted some revenge from 121st-ranked Swiss qualifier Lorenzo Mantia for a devastating third-round defeat at Wimbledon this year. The 1996 Wimbledon champion dispatched Mantia handily, 6-2, 6-4, 6-1.

Rios also faced a Swiss qualifier and the unpredictable Chilean dropped a set to George Bastle before recovering for a 4-6, 6-3, 6-2, 6-3 victory.

Kiefer, who could face Agassi as early as the fourth round, ousted fellow-German Michael Kohlmann 6-3, 6-2, 6-2.

There was one upset on the women's side as 14th seed Sandrine Testud, one of five seeded French women, sleepwalked her way to a 6-3, 6-3 loss to Spaniard Magui Serna.

"I was just tired," Testud said of her morning match on an outside court. "Nothing was going in and I didn't feel mentally that I could get through today."

Second-seeded defending champion Lindsay Davenport romped to a 6-0, 6-2 win over Romanian Ruxandra Dragomir, while fourth seed Monica Seles was a 6-2, 6-3 winner over Italian Silvia Farina. Mary Pierce (5) led a charge of three seeded Frenchwomen into the third round.

The drubbing of the tournament was administered by 16th-seeded former Wimbledon champion Conchita Martinez. The Spaniard handed Alexia Dechaume-Balleret of France what they call in New York the double bagel, beating her 6-0, 6-0 in 45 minutes.

Seventh-seeded teenager Serena Williams also posted a convincing straight-sets win, 6-4, 6-2 over Croat Jelena Kostanic.

But Williams' big sister Venus, the third seed, stayed one jump ahead of her sibling. Venus' third-round opponent, Henrieta Nagyova of Slovakia, pulled out with a wrist injury, giving the third seed a walkover into the fourth round.

Determined Davenport

NEW YORK, Sept 3: (Reuters): Defending champion Lindsay Davenport says winning the Wimbledon title this summer was a liberating experience for her, allowing her to freely enjoy the season's last Grand Slam.

"All the pressure was taken off by winning Wimbledon," said Davenport after strutting her power-tennis stuff in a 6-0, 6-2, 45-minute thrashing of 23rd-ranked Ruxandra Dragomir of Romania.

The courts are fast and this is my favourite surface. I'm just excited about the opportunity here."

Davenport put on an awesome show for Thursday night's audience at Arthur Ashe Stadium as she overwhelmed Dragomir with 31 winners and polished off 12 of 14 approaches to the net.

The Romanian never once reached break point against the hard-hitting Davenport, who lost only three games in her first-round victory over doubles partner Corina Morariu.

Davenport has been a consistent threat in the Grand Slam tournaments but finally proved to herself with last year's Open championship victory over Martina Hingis that she belonged among the game's elite.

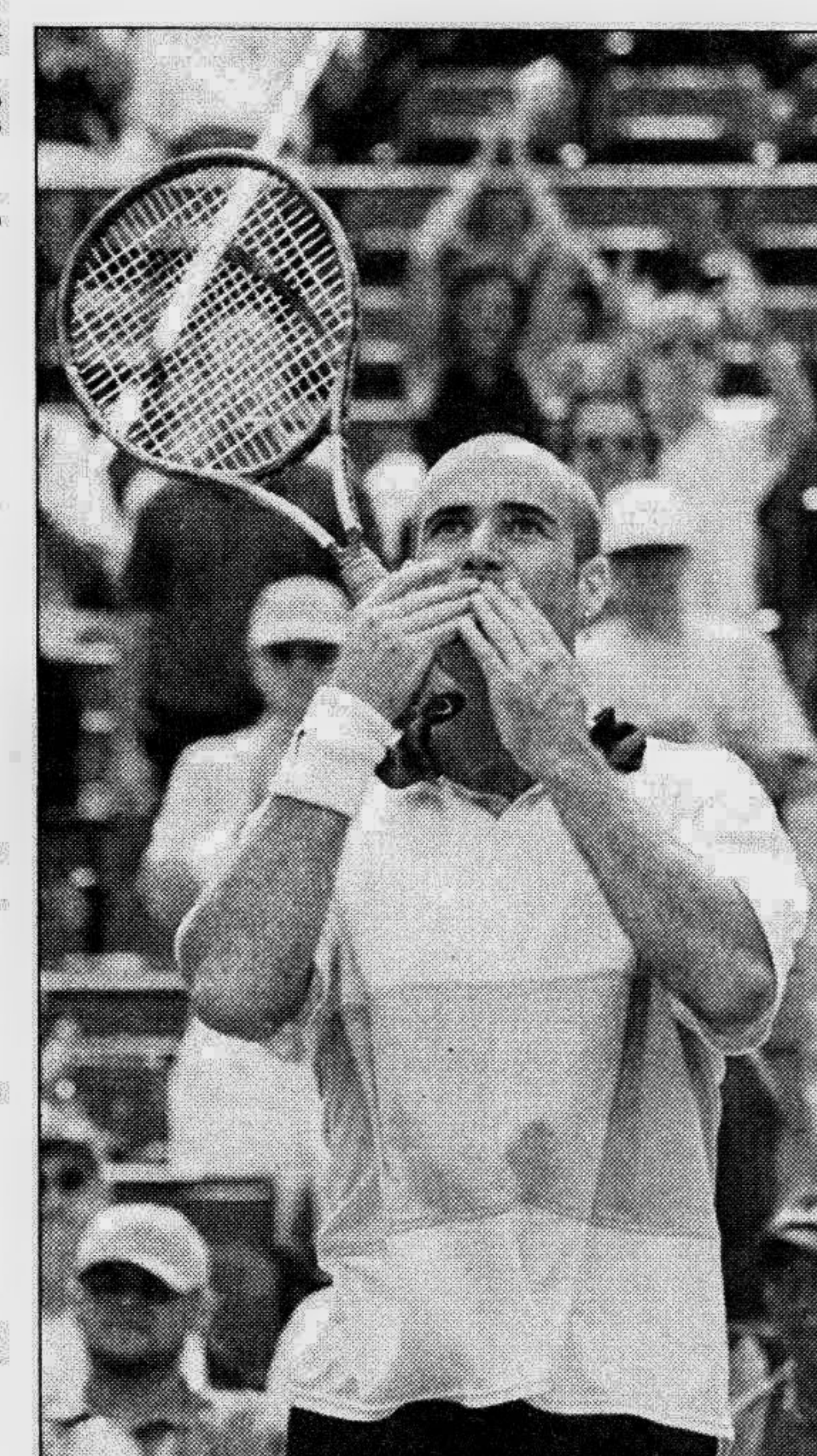
"At the Open last year I stepped up to the plate as a great player," said Davenport.

Davenport has been a big-time player for some time. The 23-year-old American has reached the semifinals in six of her last eight Grand Slam tournaments and made it to the quarterfinals in the other two during that stretch.

Now Davenport, who beat the great Steffi Graf in the Wimbledon final, is not worried about whether she can win. She is free to go about the business of winning.

"It feels different," said Davenport. "You know, last year and in Grand Slams in the past, maybe I'd get more nervous because I hadn't won one and I thought I needed to win one to prove to myself."

"Coming back here in a year, it's a much different feeling."



American Andre Agassi blows a kiss to his adoring fans after defeating German Axel Pretzsch on September 2. — AFP photo

IAAF to clear Jayasinghe

COLOMBO, Sept 3: The world governing body of athletics is set to clear Sri Lanka's controversial sprinter Susanthika Jayasinghe of doping charges, a press report here said today quoting her manager, reports AFP.

Jayasinghe's manager Tony Campbell was quoted as saying in the English language The Island newspaper that the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) was expected to exonerate her within a week.

The paper quoted Campbell as saying that the IAAF had actually cleared her of any wrongdoing in July but an announcement had been delayed because the organisation was involved in arranging the World Games in Seville, Spain.

"The IAAF secretary apologised to me and said that since they had so many other work including organising the world games he could not attend to this matter," Campbell was quoted as saying.

Campbell said Jayasinghe had lost sponsorship deals following the drug charge but that she would sign a new agreement with Nike shortly.

Jayasinghe, a silver medalist in the 200m at the 1997 championship in Athens, went to the World Championships last month eyeing both the 100m and 200m titles.

But after a single 100m heat she was forced to pull-out because of injury and despite treatment failed to make it for the opening 200m heats.

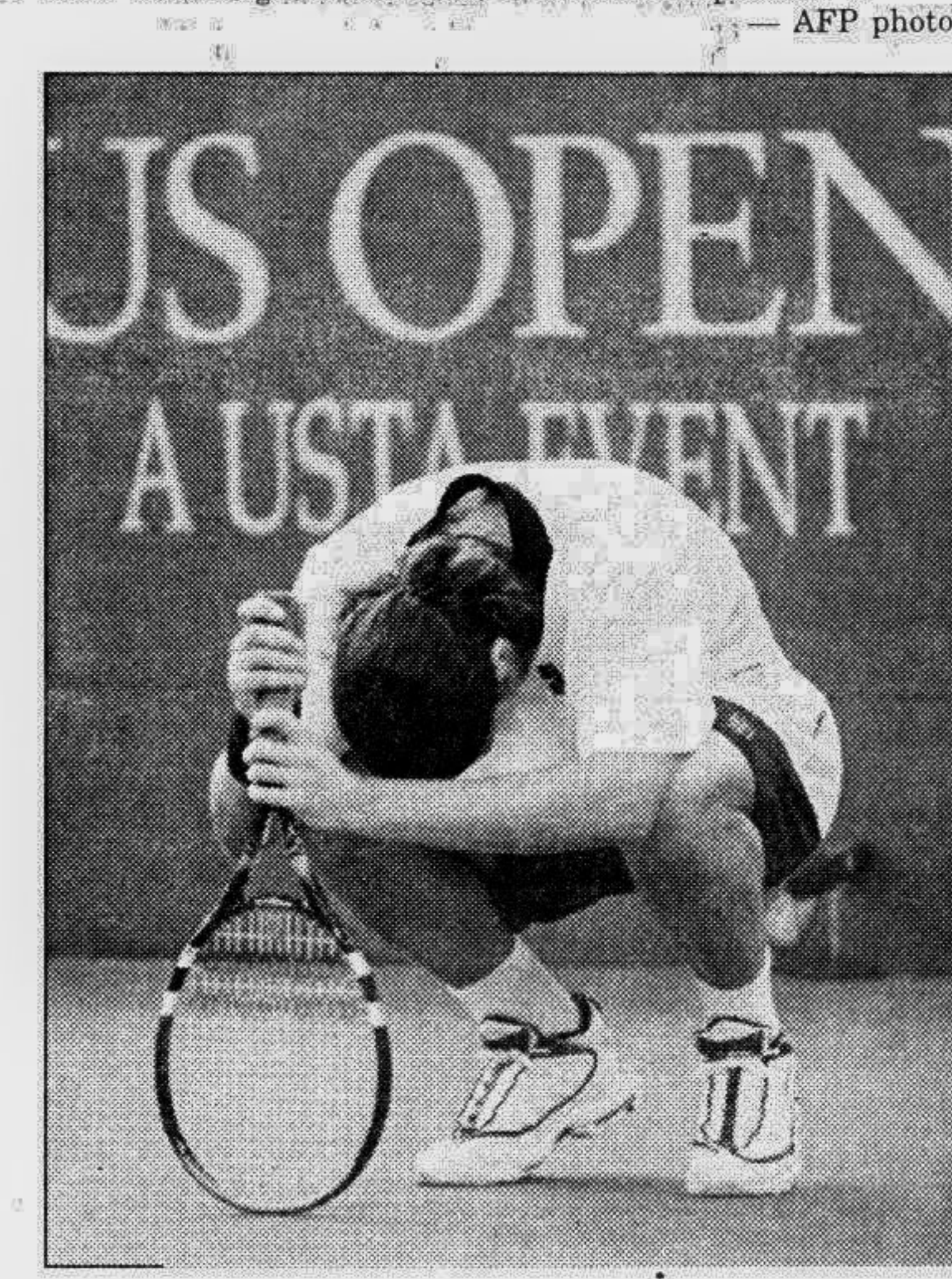
Jayasinghe, who tested positive for a banned steroid, was suspended in April last year, but her ban was lifted four months later after a local hearing.

However, the IAAF was unhappy over the inquiry and referred her case to an arbitration panel.

The arbitration hearing, which was due to be held in April, was put off following representations by Jayasinghe's lawyers on the basis that they were keen to produce fresh material before the committee.

Jayasinghe has also accused local officials of sexually harassing her and attempting to ruin her athletic career.

She also refused to stay with the rest of the Sri Lankan athletes in Seville for fear of her compatriots spiking her food.



DOWN AND OUT: Spain's Carlos Moya trying to come to terms with a back injury during his US Open match against Nicolas Escude on September 2. — AFP photo

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

- 1 Speed
- 4 "Damn Yankooes" vamp
- 8 Bullets
- 12 Oklahoma city
- 13 Tournament format
- 14 4/1 victim
- 15 Asuncion is its capital
- 17 Burden
- 18 Writer Kingsley
- 19 Pub pastime
- 20 Doc
- 22 Use a natalon
- 24 Entusiastic, plus bridge
- 25 Bridge table item
- 29 Absolutely
- 30 Ignite
- 31 Expert
- 32 Three digits after "1"
- 34 Cheshire countenance

DOWN

- 2 McKinley's First Lady
- 3 Unimprovable
- 4 Place
- 5 "Bloom and County" penguin
- 6 Meadow amount
- 7 Whatever amount
- 8 Burning
- 9 Health
- 10 Gator bowl?
- 11 Automaker
- 12 Ransom
- 13 Eli
- 16 Surrounded by
- 19 Actor Bogarde
- 21 Incessantly
- 22 Oodles
- 23 Sported
- 25 Dick and Jane's dog
- 26 Plane curve
- 27 Low-pH
- 28 Say it ain't so
- 30 Cone game
- 33 Soak up
- 34 Forbidding
- 36 High officials
- 37 Grouch
- 38 Medal earner
- 39 Leading man
- 40 Cut short
- 42 Vanna's cohort
- 43 "Blue?"
- 44 Eg. and Sfr. once
- 45 Calcher's place

Solution time: 23 mins.

AMATEUR CIA KAYE
SALA ARS IWAIS
TRON DOH RAMP
AYEAYE AMOR
GIEGET AMOVEICIN
RISHES BIE NVAE
BOARS BAO VETIS
ILLLE TIC MIDIST
GOFLYAKIITE
PEEN BATHOS
ERIN OIS NEMO
BOND UKE ARES
BETS PIEN MONIA

Yesterday's answer

Son of IOC official indicted

NEW YORK, Sept 3: The son of a powerful South Korean member of the International Olympic Committee has been indicted on US federal fraud charges, becoming the second person to face criminal charges stemming from the Salt Lake City Olympics bribery scandal, prosecutors said yesterday, reports Reuters.

Two indictments against Kim Jung Ho were returned by federal grand juries in Brooklyn and Salt Lake City on Wednesday. The cases are being handled by the US Justice Department in Washington.

The indictments alleged Kim, who goes by the name John Kim, fraudulently obtained US residency and then lied about it to investigators. He is the son of Kim Un-Young, a member of the IOC's executive board and a power broker in the world of international sports.

Because of the scheme, the Immigration and Naturalisation Service granted Kim permanent resident status in 1992 based on false information.

CRYPTOQUIP

V X Y G D P F V N W K O U F K R V P R

N V F Z D W G I I U Z H V I W D V Z Z

G H K U P N U K O R Z Z U Y X V X V

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: ALL HARDWORKING WINEMAKERS ARE VEHEMENT: THEIR GRAPE PLANTS ARE DOING VINE.

Today's Cryptoquip clue: O equals C

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.