

Spanish Cup Bad day for Primera Liga teams

MADRID, Dec 2 (Reuters/Internet): Four First Division sides were eliminated from the Spanish Cup by clubs from lower divisions in Wednesday first round second leg matches.

The major shock was the 1-0 home defeat of Valladolid by Third Division Real Union which gave the underdogs a 2-1 aggregate victory.

Bankruptcy-threatened Second Division Logrones won 1-0 at Real Sociedad, managed by ex-Spanish national coach Javier Clemente, to go through 3-1.

Second Division Osasuna knocked out First Division Sevilla 2-1 on aggregate and Compostela gained a 6-5 aggregate win over top flight opponents Numancia.

Rai no matter what

RIO DE JANEIRO, Dec 2: Sao Paulo captain Rai will continue to be the team's penalty taker despite his double miss against Corinthians, coach Paulo Cesar Carpegiani said Wednesday.

"If we get a penalty, the first on the list is Rai," Carpegiani said.

Rai added: "It I have to take it, I will."

The former Brazil captain saw two second half penalties saved by Dida as Sao Paulo lost 3-2 Corinthians in the first match of their three-leg Brazilian championship semi-final. He had earlier scored a magnificent first half goal.

Dida took his tally of penalty saves this year to a remarkable seven — three for his club and four for his country.

The feat earned veteran Rai instant comparisons with Argentina striker Martin Palermo, who missed three penalties in a Copa America match against Colombia in July.

Rai said the incident had not been the low point of his career. "I suffered more when I had to miss nine months with a knee injury," he said.

Dida was injured in a scramble for the ball following his penalty save but said he would be fit for Sunday's second leg.

**Koeman to coach
Arnhem from
Jan 1**

ARNHEM, Netherlands, Dec 2: Ronald Koeman will take over as coach of Dutch Division Vitesse Arnhem next month, the club said on Wednesday, reports Reuters.

Vitesse said the former Dutch international defender, who has been assistant coach with Barcelona this season, would begin the job on January 1 on a 2-1/2-year contract.

Koeman was in Arnhem on Tuesday to meet the team and organise accommodation.

"I have come to the conclusion that the time has come for me to stand on my own feet as a trainer," Koeman was quoted by the club as saying.

"Vitesse is an attractive team for every coach... Something beautiful is going to take place at Vitesse. I want to be a part of that and contribute to it."

He said Barcelona has not asked for any compensation from Vitesse.

Wednesday's edition of the Barcelona daily Sport quoted Koeman as saying: "Everyone at Barcelona was marvellous with me. It really hurts me to leave."

Koeman, who scored the extra-time goal which won the 1992 European cup final for Barcelona, has been widely tipped as a long-term successor to the club's current Dutch coach Louis van Gaal.

"I have made no secret of my dream to become coach of Barcelona," Koeman said.

Koeman retired as a player in 1997 and joined the Barcelona coaching staff after a spell with the Dutch squad at the 1998 World Cup in France.

His contract with Arnhem expires at the same time as that of Van Gaal at Barcelona.

"I kept Van Gaal informed right from the start of negotiations with Vitesse and he gave me all his help and support," Koeman said.

Koeman's nationality would make him a popular choice as Barcelona coach following the successful tenures of Dutch compatriots Johan Cruyff and Van Gaal.

EU with WADA

BRUSSELS, Dec 2: The European Union backed the newly-established world sports anti-drugs agency on Wednesday, reports Reuters.

Sports commissioner Viviane Reding said the EU would give its "wholehearted commitment" to the World Anti-Doping Agency after receiving assurances from the International Olympic Committee that the body would be both independent and transparent.

The Commission, the EU's executive, will have observer status in the agency while the EU itself will appoint two representatives to its board.

"I was asked to persuade IOC president (Juan Antonio) Samaranch to include Europe's demands into the statutes of the new agency. These conditions have been met... making it possible for the agency to become a reality," Reding said.

"I hope we will rapidly achieve tangible results and make a clean Sydney Olympics a real possibility."

The new body has faced accusations, particularly from the United States, that it would not be independent of the IOC.

Record 197 enter draw

North Korea won't be there

TOKYO, Dec 2 (Reuters/Internet): A record 197 countries out of the 203 affiliated to FIFA will take part in Tuesday's qualifying round for the 2002 World Cup finals — but North Korea will not be one of them.

FIFA spokesman Adrin Cooper said on Thursday North Korea was the only one of FIFA's member associations to have officially withdrawn from the competition, which is being jointly hosted by South Korea and Japan.

"They were the only ones to officially notify us they will not be competing," he said. "The other five countries did not reply by the deadline and will not be in the draw either."

They are Afghanistan, Benin, Guinea-Bissau, Niger and Papua New Guinea. That leaves 197 countries, beating the previous highest mark of 174 in the 1986 World Cup.

In the first World Cup in 1930 in Uruguay only 13 countries took part.

North Korea's absence means that any thoughts the South Koreans had of staging a match there as part of a unification process between the divided halves of the Korean peninsula are at an end.

Cooper said: "By withdrawing from the World Cup, no matches can be staged in North Korea but FIFA's position has long been established. The World Cup was awarded to two countries — South Korea and

Japan — and unless the political status quo changes, the matches in the finals can only be played in those two countries and not a third country."

FIFA will meet over the next few days to finalise the process



for the biggest qualifying round draw in World Cup history.

France qualify automatically as world champions, and South Korea and Japan as hosts, leaving 194 countries in six confederations facing the lack of the draw and battling their way through to the 32-team finals.

The six confederations have all established the procedures for their own qualifying competitions.

The European competition, featuring all 51 UEFA members, will follow the pattern used in the qualifying round for the European championship with nine groups and a series of playoffs to establish their 13 certain qualifiers.

One European team will play off against an Asian side which could give Europe 15 finalists, including France.

The South American, Asian and Oceania confederations will also organise their qualifiers in groups. Four South American nations will definitely qualify, with two certain qualifiers from Asia. With Japan and South Korea as co-hosts, Asia will have at least four places in the finals — and five if the Asian team win the final playoff spot against European opposition.

South America could have five finalists, if their representative wins the final playoff against the winners of the Oceania competition.

Africa, with five qualifiers, and CONCACAF, the confederation that covers North and Central America and will provide three finalists, will employ a knockout competition in the opening rounds of their qualifiers with group matches following.

The qualifying competition will begin on March 1 next year and end in November 2001, with the finals set for June 1-30 in 2002. The opening game will be in Seoul, South Korea, and the final in Yokohama, Japan.

Gaddafi's son turns to Ben!

LILONGWE, Dec 2 (Reuters/Internet): Disgraced Canadian sprinter Ben Johnson will be hired to train Ali

Saad Gaddafi, son of Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi and a member of the national soccer team, Libya's Italian coach said on Thursday.

Speaking in the Malawi capital Lilongwe before a friendly against Malawi, coach Eugenio Bersellini told Reuters that Johnson and a German trainer, whom he did not name, would work on the personal fitness of Gaddafi for 90 days.

"Al-Saad is hiring Ben Johnson," Bersellini said. "He would like to see what Johnson can achieve with him personally and then maybe he will consider an arrangement for the team."

Libyan officials said Johnson would meet to do with Gaddafi what he did with Argentine soccer player Diego Maradona, whom he helped train for a comeback in 1997.

They said message therapist Yusuf Omar and coaches Armando Costa and Raul "Lalo" Maradona would accompany Johnson. Johnson and his col-

leagues are due to arrive in the Libyan capital Tripoli on December 15 to start their assignment.

There was no confirmation of what the deal was worth but Libyan sources said a sum of 400,000 dollars was being considered with 50 percent possibly paid in advance.

Johnson was stripped of his 1988 Seoul Olympics 100 metres gold medal after he tested positive for steroids. His at-

tempted comeback ended in another drugs scandal.

The Libyan soccer team is preparing for the preliminary rounds of the African Cup of Nations and World Cup, which will start next year.

They are emerging from years of isolation over allegations that Libya was behind the bombing of an American jetliner over Scotland in 1988.

Earlier this year Muammar Gaddafi handed over two suspects to a Scottish court in the Netherlands, a move which has ended the country's international isolation and led to a suspension on U.N. sanctions against the north African state.

Bersellini, once on the staff of Inter Milan, took his team to Italy for 40 days of training this year and has since embarked on a long tour of Africa for friendly matches.

"These are the teams we shall play again in the qualifiers. We have been away too long and we have to gauge our strength," Bersellini said.

"If we hope to return as a force in African soccer again we have to start at the very beginning — friendly matches in Africa."

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BEN JOHNSON

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Olympic Order for Graf

LAUSANNE, Switzerland, Dec 2: Steffi Graf will be presented with the Olympic Order from International Olympic Committee president Juan Antonio Samaranch, the IOC said on Wednesday, reports Reuters.

Graf, who retired from competitive tennis earlier this year after winning 22 Grand Slam titles and an Olympic gold medal, will receive the award during a ceremony at the Olympic Museum on Monday.

Beckenbauer in Seoul

SEOUL, Dec 2: German soccer great Franz Beckenbauer urged South Korea on Thursday to support his country's bid to host 2006 World Cup finals, reports AP.

Beckenbauer, who heads the German bid committee, was on a three-day visit to Seoul to drum up support for his country's bid ahead of a vote by FIFA's executive committee on July 6 to choose the venue of the 2006 World Cup.

In Seoul, he met Chung Mong-joon, South Korea's top soccer official and also a member of FIFA's executive committee.

"My main job is to persuade committee members that Germany is the best place for the World Cup," Beckenbauer said at a news conference at a plush Seoul hotel.

Local journalists crowded the conference room, decorated with Pamphlets and a German bid logo made up of black, red and yellow strips with a soccer ball on the green background.

Beckenbauer was a key member of German team when it won the World Cup in 1974, and he served as head coach of the team when it won another World Cup in 1982.

Beckenbauer said bringing the 2006 World Cup to Germany will culminate his lifelong association with soccer.

"Personally, this is my biggest challenge because I will not get a second chance," he said in German.

South Korea will co-host the 2002 World Cup finals together with Japan.

Germany competes with four other countries — England, South Africa, Brazil and Morocco — for the 2006 host rights. German officials expect South Africa and England to be their main rivals.

Before coming to Seoul, Beckenbauer visited New Zealand and Thailand. He was scheduled to fly to Tokyo Saturday.

Vitali Mike's next enemy

BERLIN, Dec 2: Former world heavyweight champion Mike Tyson will fight Ukrainian Vitali Klitschko in Germany next August, Klitschko's manager said Tuesday, reports Reuters.

"The fight will take place in August," manager Klaus-Peter Kohl told the daily Bild. Kohl said he would like the fight between Tyson and Klitschko, the German-based World Boxing Organisation (WBO) heavyweight champion, to be staged in Hamburg's main soccer stadium.

The manager said the fight, which was originally scheduled for January, would be Tyson's first since his October 23 no contest against Orlin Norris in Las Vegas.

Norris injured his right knee and could not continue after falling to the canvas when Tyson punched him after the bell at the end of the first round.

The Norris bout marked Tyson's return to the ring after a nine-month absence during which he spent 3-1/2 months in jail for assaulting two motorists after a minor traffic accident last year in Maryland.

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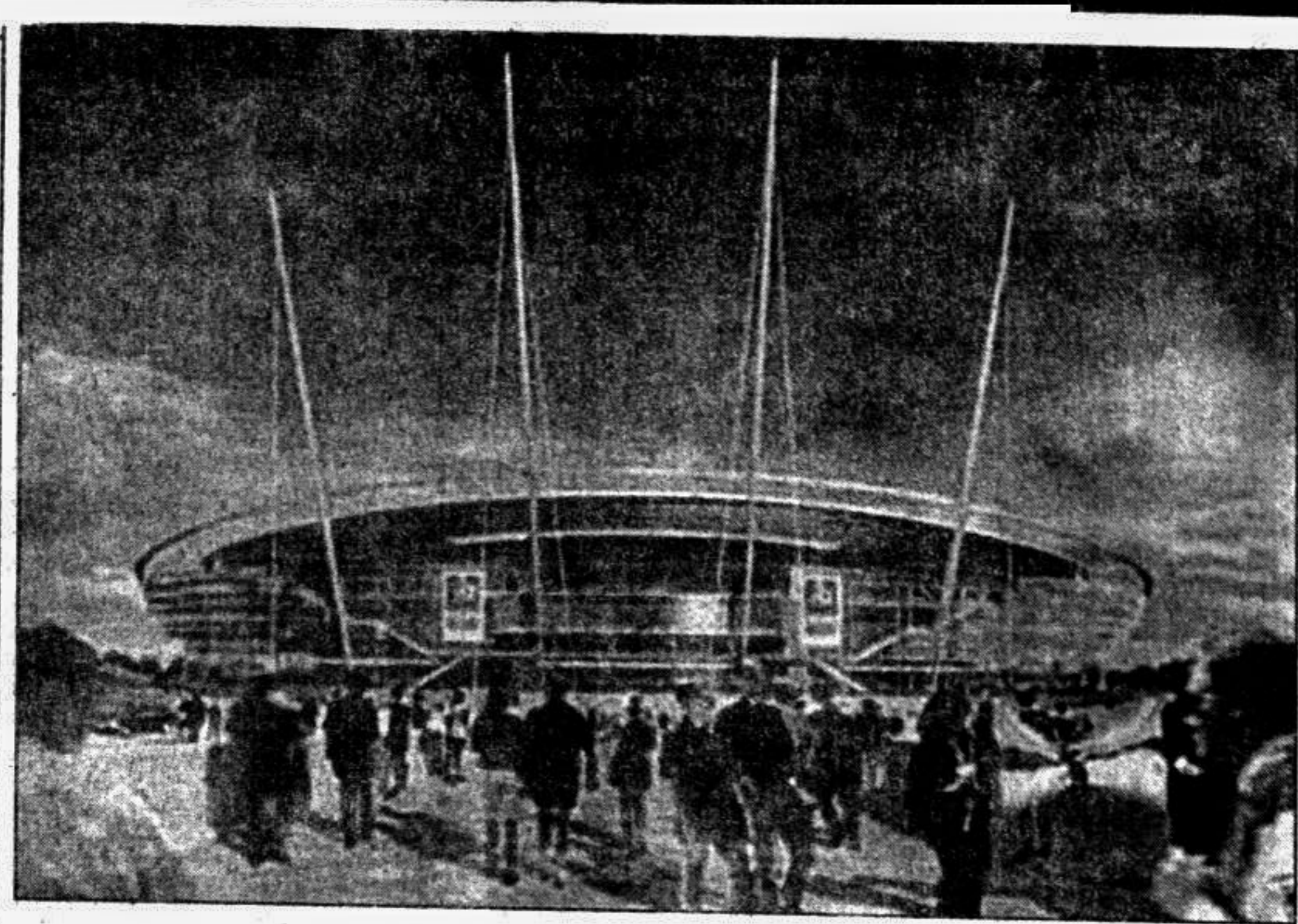
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An artist's impression of the new Wembley Stadium.

— Star file photo

Media predicts a disaster

Govt. rejects new Wembley plan

LONDON, Dec 2 (Reuters/Internet): The planned Wembley Stadium will be unfit for the Olympics and sports officials here 14 days to find a solution that would work for athletics as well as soccer, the British government said on Wednesday.

"This stadium, as designed or in any similar configuration, cannot readily provide the central venue for an Olympic Games bid for London... (or) an appropriate venue for the World Athletics Championships," Chris Smith, minister in charge of sport and culture, told Parliament on Wednesday.

A design for a new national stadium to replace the famous twin-towered venue was submitted in July, but critics said it was aimed only at hosting soccer and with a view to England's 2006 World Cup bid.

Smith told the Wembley authorities to come up with a better idea by December 15.

The new 475 million pound (£60.3 million dollars) stadium, due to open in 2003, would fail to provide adequate seating and sightlines for large numbers of spectators and offer poor cover and access to the track for athletes and officials, he said.

Wembley National Stadium Ltd said later they welcomed the report because it showed the difficulties of meeting the needs of a range of sports.

"We are confident that we will provide satisfactory answers to these technical questions by December 15th," the company said in a statement, adding they felt that given flexibility the stadium could ac-

commodate the different sports satisfactorily.

Sports Minister Kate Hoey commissioned an architectural report on Wembley after plans showed it would only be able to accommodate around 65,000 fans for athletics events.

The British Olympic Association said this was not big enough for a 2012 Olympic bid.

Wembley responded with a design for a 15 million pound (£23.99 million dollars) platform comprising a running track and about 15,000 seats, but Smith has deemed this solution unworkable.

The construction of a temporary concrete deck for the running track could "render the stadium unusable for international-standard football for upwards of two years," Smith said.

The independent report has substantiated our fears that the upgrade from 65,000 to 80,000 spectators is not feasible without severely impairing the quality of the seating," Mark Howell, a British Olympic Association spokesman said on Wednesday.

"But it cannot be beyond the ability of highly competent architects to look at other possibilities," Howell said.

Wembley said in their statement the report contained a number of factual inaccuracies that had to be addressed.

The planned stadium was designed by Sir Norman Foster and H.O.K. Lobb, creators of Sydney's 110,000-capacity Stadium Australia.

Meanwhile, British newspapers said on Thursday that government's rejection of plans for the new Wembley stadium has shattered London's hopes of hosting the soccer World Cup and the Olympic games.

The Times newspaper called the affair a shambles, and "a huge rebuff to the company behind the project and an embarrassment to the government."

"Wembley Flasco," the Sun screamed after Smith gave the planners two weeks to solve problems with seating, access, cover and poor sightlines for fans and competitors at athletics events.

Wembley chief executive Bob Stubbins insisted in a Wednesday media conference that he was "pursuing the design as it stands."

"There are now a few technical questions we have to answer but we do not believe the design has any major technical flaws," Stubbins said.

Many newspapers called for the return of 120 million pounds (£191.8 million dollars) of national lottery money given to the project but a Wembley spokesman said earlier in the week that the money had already been spent on buying the old stadium.

The English Football Association (FA) were quick to try to limit damage to their 2006 World Cup bid. Chief executive David Davies said Smith's rejection was "a disaster for the Olympics issue."

Wembley authorities said they would issue a statement later on Thursday.



Former Bangladesh cricket captain Faruque Ahmed with his wife Shahria Yasmin Shaheen during their post-wedding reception at the Senakunja on November 29.

Connors cruises

LONDON, Dec 2: Jimmy Connors, playing for the first time in Britain in 7 1/2 years — and the first time in an ATP Senior Tour event in Europe — defeated John Lloyd 6-4, 7-5 on Wednesday in the Honda Challenge, reports AP.

Connors faces Bjorn Borg in the next round on Thursday.

"Once I get out there it's always fun and I always enjoy playing John," Connors said after the match at Royal Albert Hall. "We've been friends for a long time, we play a lot of tennis and golf and to play him over here like this adds to it."

Lloyd was brought in at the last minute to replace injured Pat Cash in a round-robin group that includes Borg, Connors and John McEnroe.

In another match Wednesday, Henri Leconte defeated Jeremy Bates 6-2, 6-4. McEnroe faced Borg in a late match on Wednesday. In another late match, Mansour Bahrami played Yannick Noah.

Connors plays McEnroe on Friday, the first match between the two in Britain since Connors smashed McEnroe in three sets to win the 1984 Wimbledon final.

McEnroe and Leconte are the joint leaders atop the ATP Senior Tour Masters standings.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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1 Odin's kid 38 Mount 21 Undivided
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