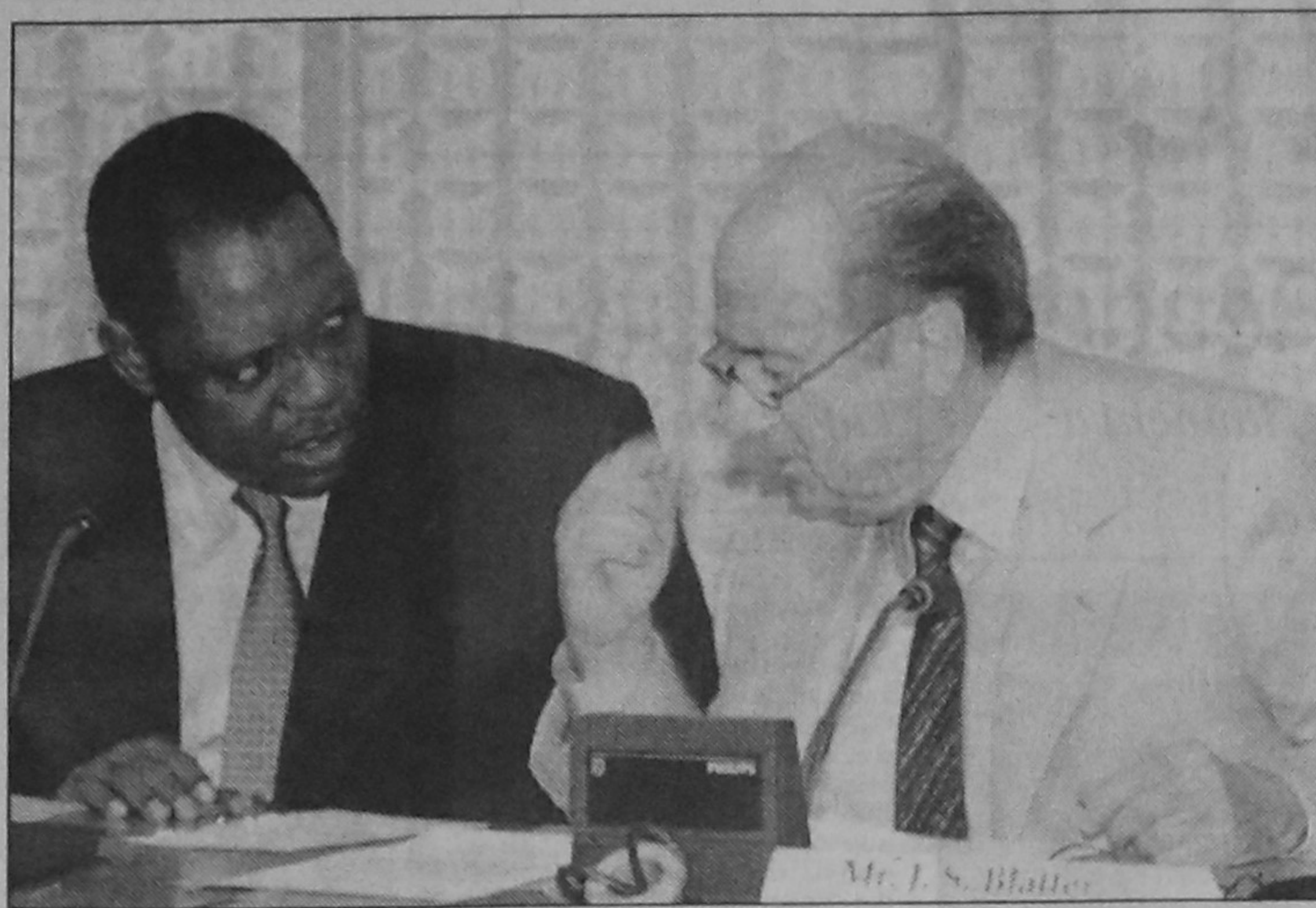


Blatter all for Africa

ACCRA, Jan 22: The multi-million dollar chase to land the biggest prize in football - the World Cup - moved into overdrive here this week as the five bidding countries began a worldwide tour in search of votes, reports AFP.



FIFA president Sepp Blatter (R) discusses something with African Soccer Federation chief Issa Hayatou during a press conference, organised in connection with the African Nations Cup in Ghana and Nigeria, in Accra on January 21. —AFP photo

World Cup 2006

Bidding battle reaching climax

We will know more when we get the reports, said Blatter. Then we will know which candidates can go on. But the FIFA president stressed that he was a friend of Africa.



ACCRA, Jan 22: The multi-million dollar chase to land the biggest prize in football - the World Cup - moved into overdrive here this week as the five bidding countries began a worldwide tour in search of votes, reports AFP.

The early leaders are South Africa and Germany according to FIFA and AFC sources, followed by England, Morocco and Brazil.

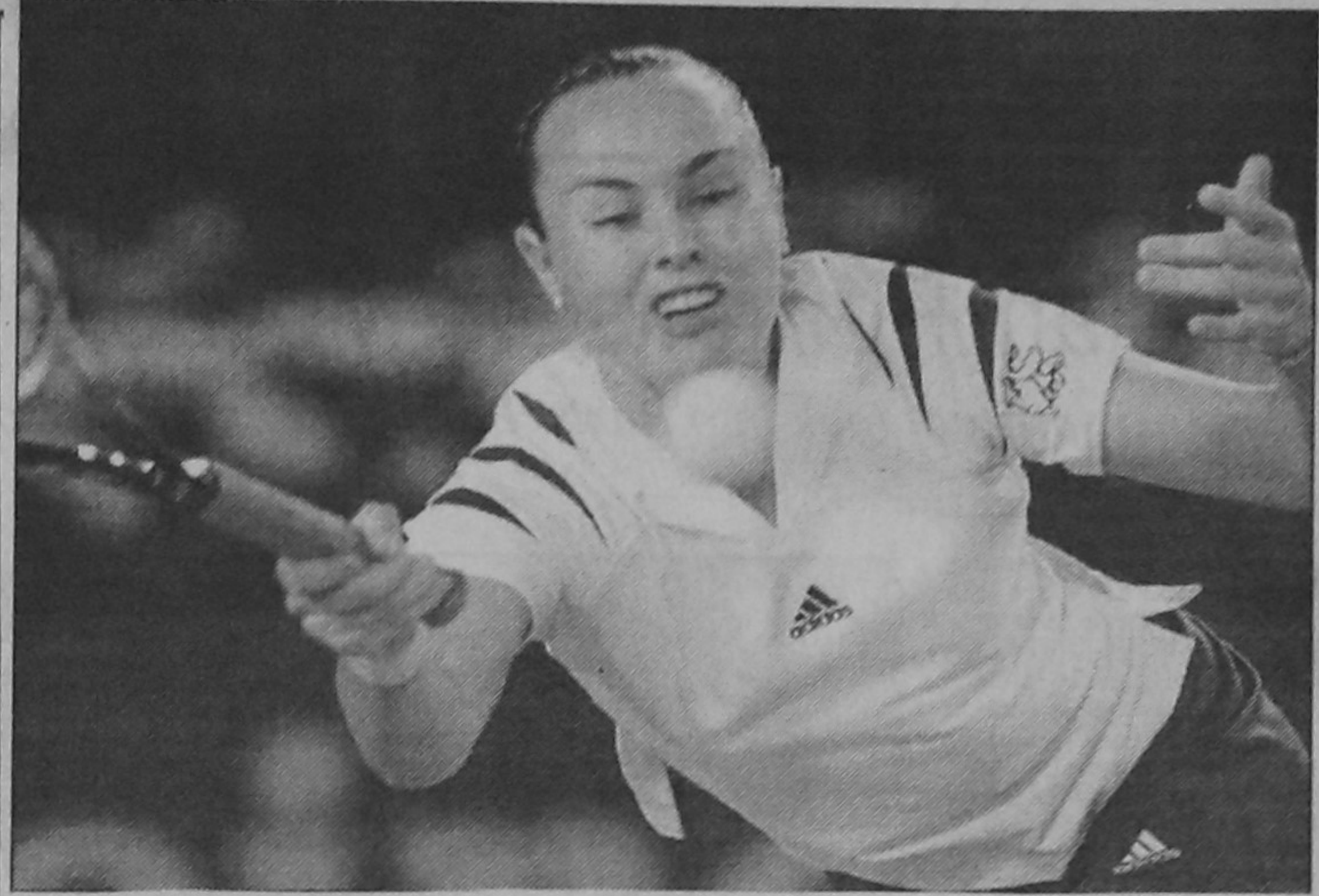
that has the best chance," he added. Africa's case that it is their turn to finally host a World Cup were boosted Friday by FIFA president Sepp Blatter.

AUSSIE OPEN AT A GLANCE

MELBOURNE, Jan 22 (AP): Highlights of the day session Saturday on the sixth day of the Australian Open: Weather: Intermittent rain with a cool temperature of 66 f (19 Celsius). Attendance: 32,841. Results: Men's singles, No. 2 Yevgeny Kafelnikov, No. 4 Nicolas Pietrangeli, No. 12 Magnus Norman all advanced.

Williams quiet amid media questioning

MELBOURNE, Jan 22: Serena Williams had a testy exchange with reporters about her Grand Slam ambitions after producing her best performance at the Australian Open Saturday night, reports AFP.



Martina Hingis of Switzerland in action against local Alicia Molik at the Australian Open. —AFP photo

Serena, Martina sail



MELBOURNE, Jan 22: US Open champion Serena Williams turned from survivor to aggressor Saturday, slugging her way into the fourth round of the Australian Open with a 6-2, 7-6 victory over Sabine Appelmans, reports AP.

and there is so much more improvement I can do," said Williams, who had not played a match since October before starting the tournament here Tuesday.

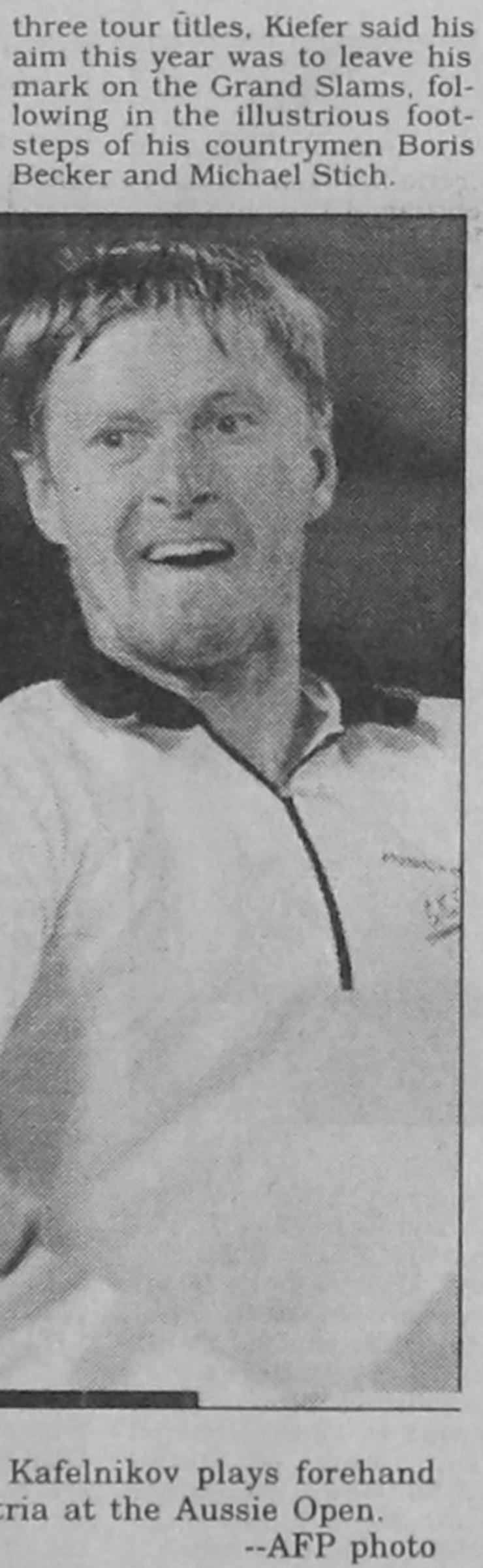
time-defending champion has lost only 14 games. Against 18-year-old Australian Alicia Molik, Hingis faced serves of up to 185 kph (116 mph), and returned some of the hardest, in a 6-2, 6-3 victory that took her into the fourth round.

Kafelnikov, Norman win



MELBOURNE, Jan 22 (Reuters/AP): Defending champion Yevgeny Kafelnikov crushed unseeded Austrian Stefan Koubeck 6-3, 6-3, 6-4 in the third round of the Australian Open today.

when a dispirited Alami started clowning about late in the third set when things started to go against him. Having propelled himself into the top 10 last year with three tour titles, Kiefer said his aim this year was to leave his mark on the Grand Slams, following in the illustrious footsteps of his countrymen Boris Becker and Michael Stich.



Russian second seed Yevgeny Kafelnikov plays forehand against Stefan Koubeck of Austria at the Aussie Open. —AFP photo

Africa stars lead anti-polio campaign

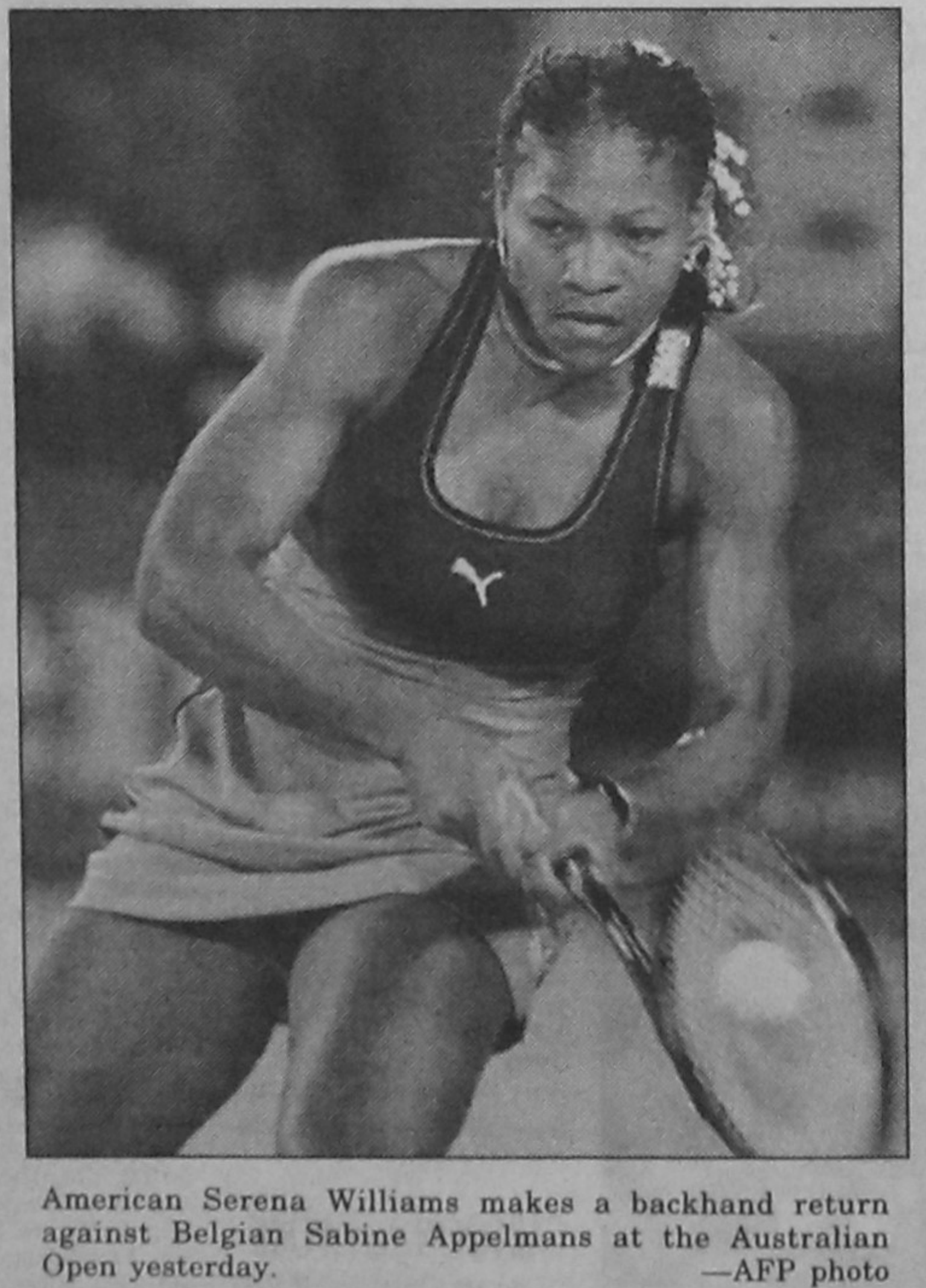
ACCRA, Jan 22: Africa's top football stars launched a campaign here on Friday to rid the continent of polio by the end of the year, reports AFP.

Hayatou re-elected as CAF boss

ACCRA, Jan 22: Issa Hayatou of Cameroon firmly underlined his position as the most powerful man in African football when he was re-elected as president of the Confederation of African Football (CAF) here on Thursday, reports AFP.



Kafelnikov, seeded second, produced a convincing display of controlled aggression and precision reminiscent of the form which carried him to the title last year.



American Serena Williams makes a backhand return against Belgian Sabine Appelmans at the Australian Open yesterday. —AFP photo

AUSTRALIAN OPEN NOTEBOOK

MELBOURNE, Jan 22 (AP): Defending Australian Open finalist Yevgeny Kafelnikov says he'll be demanding an explanation from wayward Russian teammate Marat Safin before next month's opening round of the Davis Cup.

1992, saying he was trying to develop a squad for the future. After bowing out of the Australian Open on Saturday, Federer said he objected to Hisek's decision and demanded a meeting to reconsider the selections.

worthwhile. "They want to be in your position," she said. "What better situation can you get once you realize what a life you've got."

Euro 2000 Police criticise Belgian stadium

BRUSSELS, Jan 22: Belgian police authorities Friday criticised facilities at the Le Mambourg stadium in Charleroi, where England will play Germany on June 17th in a Euro 2000 group A match, reports AFP.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 36 Summary 1 Lobster easter's aid 4 Mrs. Gorbachev Lustrous black 12 Washing-ton bill 13 Word with tuba or ear 14 Plata partner 15 One who's off to see the world? 17 Go the wind 18 South-western Native American tribe 19 Lower legs 21 Stretchy material 24 Made of 25 Kneakin's claim 26 Roulette bet 28 Characterizations 31 Obsessed captain 33 Party bowiful 35 Gabrielle's mentor

Crossword grid with numbers 1-36 indicating starting positions for the clues.

CRYPTOQUIP E M R K R Y T F B K Y B MYDCETRV CLVEBEMRXXS YFLTR IYVRIYXX EB FTMEYRV BKRD IYBBS Saturday's Cryptquip: I FIND THAT SOLDIERS IN PLAYS DEFINITELY LIKE TO SHAKE SPEARS. Today's Cryptquip Clue: B equals T