

**29-year prison sentence for Gil demanded**

MALAGA, Spain, July 6: Anti-corruption prosecutors have demanded that Atletico Madrid president and Marbella mayor Jesus Gil be sentenced to 29 and a half years in prison over alleged embezzlement concerning missing funds totalling 2.5 million dollars, judicial authorities announced Thursday, reports AFP.

The prosecution also demanded that Gil be suspended from any civil duties for 74 years and fined over 9.5 million dollars.

The 67-year-old Gil is accused of embezzling some 2.7 million euros (2.5 million dollars) in funds from Marbella, a seaside resort town, to his football club, and of receiving payments for an advertising campaign promoting the city of Marbella on the jerseys of Atletico players.

Other charges against Gil include falsification of public documents, trading of favours and corruption.

"If it's a crime, let God come and see it," Gil said at the outcome of the case on June 1.

"I am the most persecuted person in Spain, by all institutions. I am harassed at every turn," he complained.

Atletico Madrid, champions of Spain in 1996, were relegated to Spain's second division for the first time in 64 years after a disastrous season on the pitch.

**Figero on way to Real?**

MADRID, July 6: Portugal's international star Luis Figero of Spanish giants Barcelona has reportedly agreed a deal with Real Madrid's presidential candidate Florentino Perez to join the European champions, the Spanish press reported Thursday, reports AFP.

"Figero is the electoral bomb of Florentino Perez" say the papers as Perez, head of Spanish construction giant ACS, campaigns for control at Real against reigning president Lorenzo Sanz.

**Bangladesh face**

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Yusuf revealed that Rezaul Karim Biplab, Mahmudul Hasan and Aminur Rahman would be deployed in the defence with a five-man midfield comprising Tito, Tanveer Chowdhury, Kamruzzaman Selim, Monwar Hossain and Asadur Rahman. Rokonzaman Kanchan would partner Shawkat Ali Roman up front.

Maldive coach Ihusan Abdul Ghani was unwilling to let the cat out of the bag regarding team tactics.

"All I will say is that we will play attacking football," responded Ghani.

"My team is a young one. Most of the players are inexperienced, but they are committed to putting up a good fight," said the Maldive coach after his team's practice.

"I have no idea about the strength of other three teams. So, I can't comment on them," Ghani said.

The recent head-to-head between Bangladesh and Maldives is not very encouraging for the hosts. Bangladesh national team lost to Maldives 0-1 in the last SAF Games in Nepal. Their latest meeting against the islanders ended in a 1-1 draw during a four-nation tournament in Male.

**TEAMS**

Bangladesh (from): Titumeer Chowdhury, Tito, Rezaul Karim Biplab, Mahmudul Hasan, Aminur Rahman, Firoz Mahiuddin, Hossain, Tito, Tanveer Chowdhury, Kamruzzaman Selim, Monwar Hossain (captain), Asadur Rahman, Rokonzaman Kanchan, Shawkat Ali Roman, Nisaruddin Ahmed Maju, Shamim Hossain, Dulal Chandra Saha, Masud Khan, Nurul Islam, Jahan-e-Alam Rahel, Anwar Faisal Echo and Maksudul Alam Bulbul.

Maldive (from): Ahmed Shuzan, Ahmed Thaha, A Mamdhooh, A Nadheem, A Iruhas, Abdul Gafoor, A Sunain, A Ibrahim, Fareed Mo-hamed, Hussain Rasheed, Ibrahim Shiyam, Ibrahim Fasah, Ismail Haleem, Muhaaz Hameed, Mohamed Arees, Mohamed Nimreth (captain), Mohamed Faisal, Mohamed Nasir, Mohamed Ahusan and Ibrahim Saagb.

**S Africa**

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South America," it said. When Brazil pulled out of the race, it threw its weight behind South Africa's bid against those of Germany, England and Morocco.

"South Africa waits with bated breath," the Citizens said, its editorial adding: "Buckle up. The World Cup 2006 roller-coaster starts this morning."

It continued: "Conventional wisdom, gut feeling and a few well-timed leaks and a sense of moral entitlement says the prize is in the bag."

Only the country's leading financial daily, Business Day, took a subdued approach, saying "the sense of anticipation ahead of this afternoon's decision needs to be leavened with a dose of caution."

"The emotional argument that the time has come for Africa to host the Cup is unlikely to carry much weight among the FIFA executive," it warned.

**Proteas in Upul spin**



GALLE, Sri Lanka, July 6 (AFP): Sri Lanka's leg-spinner Upul Chandra grabbed four quick wickets to mastermind a sensational South African collapse which gave the hosts a 37-run victory in the Singer Cup here on Thursday.

The South Africans, chasing Sri Lanka's 249-7, appeared to be cruising home when openers Andrew Hall and Gary Kirsten were put on 150 for the first wicket by the 32nd over.

Off-spinner Muttiah Muralitharan triggered the slide by bowling Kirsten for 59 as the South Africans, rusty from a two-month lay-off, lost all 10 wickets in the space of 62 runs.

South Africa ended on 212, giving Sri Lanka their second successive win in the tri-series following their five-wicket romp over Pakistan in Wednesday's opening match.

Muralitharan finished with two for 34 and fellow off-spinner Kumar Dharmasena 1-41 to complete South Africa's downfall in their first match abroad since the match-fixing scandal broke in April and caused the unceremonious exit of former captain Hansie Cronje.

Cronje's successor Shaun Pollock now has two wins and as many defeats in four matches as captain after leading South Africa to a creditable 2-1 win over world champions Australia at home in April.

Sri Lanka's victory was set up by a superb 84 from their new batting find Kumar Sangakkara, who was named man-of-the-match, and 60 from Russell Arnold.

Sangakkara, a 22-year-old left-hander from Kandy justified his inclusion ahead of veteran wicket-keeper Romesh Kaluwitharana with 11 boundaries off 115 balls in only his second match.

Sangakkara and Arnold put on 120 for the fifth wicket, following opener Avishka Gunawardena's 47, as Sri Lanka recovered from 35-3 to set a target of five runs an over.

Hall, who hit 81 in only his third one-day, and Kirsten made light of the slow wicket, till South Africa's march was halted by the spinners.

Kirsten's wicket were dislodged under-riding a sweep off Muralitharan, while Hall, who hit two sixes and six boundaries, followed two overs later when he offered a tame return catch to Chandana.

That started a procession of wickets to justify Sri Lankan captain Sanath Jayasuriya's faith in his spinners.

"I was not unduly worried despite their 150-run start, because the wicket was bound to turn and the spinners had lot of overs left," he said.

"The bowlers stuck to their task but I don't think the win would have been possible without useful contributions from the bat from Sangakkara and Arnold."

Pollock blamed the defeat on 24 wickets and seven no-balls conceded by his bowlers in the first session.

"We gave away too many needless runs and the fact that

we had not played much since April showed in the end," Pollock said.

"We have only ourselves to blame and hopefully we will learn from the mistakes in the later games."

Sri Lanka ended on a winning note after making a disastrous start, losing Jayasuriya off the second ball of the match, run out by a brilliant pick-up and throw from square-leg by Hall.

Gunawardena began the revival by adding 64 for the fourth wicket with Sangakkara.

Jacques Kallis finished with three for 40, but Mortantau Hayward proved expensive with 1-47 from five overs.

**SCOREBOARD**

Scoreboard of the second match of the Singer Cup tri-series between Sri Lanka and South Africa on Thursday:

**SRI LANKA**

Jayasuriya run out	0
Gunawardena c Boucher b Ntini	47
Atapattu c Boucher b Hayward	3
Jayawardena c Boucher b Kallis	8
Sangakkara run out	84
Arnold not out	60
Chandana b Kallis	2
Dharmasena c Pollock b Kallis	4
Vaas not out	5
Extras: (nb-7, w-24, lb-5)	36
Total: (For seven wickets in 50 overs)	249
Fall of wickets: 1-0; 2-14; 3-35; 4-99; 5-219; 6-224; 7-240.	
Did not bat: Nuwan Zoysa.	

Muttiah Muralitharan					
Bowler	O	M	R	W	
Pollock	10	1	34	0	0
Hayward	5	0	47	1	1
Kallis	10	0	42	3	3
Klusecner	10	0	45	0	0
Ntini	8	0	42	1	1
Boje	7	0	34	0	0

**SOUTH AFRICA**

Kirsten b Muralitharan	59
Hall c & b Chandana	81
Kallis c Chandana b Dharmasena	11
Cullinan c sub b Chandana	14
Rhodes c Sangakkara b Chandana	0
Klusecner run out	20
Boucher run out	2
Pollock c Jayawardena b Chandana	5
Boje b Muralitharan	1
Hayward not out	3
Ntini run out	0
Extras: (w-8, lb-4, b-4)	16
Total: (All out in 48.2 overs)	212
Fall of wickets: 1-150; 2-157; 3-176; 4-176; 5-192; 6-194; 7-206; 8-208; 9-211.	

**Bowler**

Vaas	6	0	27	0
Zoysa	7	1	27	0
Dharmasena	10	0	41	1
Muralitharan	10	0	34	2
Chandana	10	0	44	4
Jayasuriya	2	0	15	0
Arnold	3	0	16	0

**Result: Sri Lanka won by 37 runs.**  
**Man-of-the-match: Kumar Sangakkara**  
**Next match: Pakistan v South Africa, Colombo (D/N), Saturday.**



Sri Lanka wicketkeeper-batsman Kumar Sangakkara, who was adjudged man-of-the-match, drives one on the on-side during their tri-series encounter against South Africa at Galle yesterday. —Internet photo

**Fans want more triangular action**

UNDATED (Internet): Six Test-playing nations are currently involved in triangular series, with Sri Lanka hosting Pakistan and South Africa in the Singer Cup, and England taking on West Indies and Zimbabwe in the NatWest Series.

In light of the recent match-fixing scandals, many are claiming that triangular tournaments, particularly those played outside ICC countries, are responsible for an increase in corruption in the game, asking cricketers to play too many games of little worth. India have already pulled out of tournaments scheduled for Singapore and Abu Dhabi in August.

However, if the reaction of CricketLine's (an Internet cricket host) visitors is anything to go by, the fans want more, rather than less, of the one-day game, with its quick fix of action and excitement. Of 1278 votes cast over a 36-hour period around July 5, 56 per cent of voters felt that there should be more one-day triangular tournaments world-wide. Thirty-five per cent said that they would prefer fewer tournaments while only nine per cent said that the figure was fine at the moment.

**Glocs close on another final**

LONDON, July 6 (Reuters): Gloucestershire are within two games of reaching their fourth successive Lord's final after snatching a 10-run victory over Leicestershire in the fourth round of the NatWest Trophy on Wednesday.

Their latest triumph came only 24 hours after pulling off a thrilling five-run victory over Worcestershire in the replayed third round tie, which secured their controversial reprieve in the competition.

Worcestershire had won the original game by three wickets before it was realised they had played an ineligible player which resulted in the England and Wales Cricket Board ordering the tie to be replayed.

Kim Barnett (86) was the mainstay of Gloucestershire's 210 for eight in their 50 overs at Grace Road.

Half-centuries from Darren Maddy (72) and Darren Stevens (55) kept Leicestershire in the hunt. But they were all out for 200 off 48.1 overs with Australian all-rounder Ian Harvey taking four for 40 to seal the holder's route into the quarter-finals.

Hampshire at last gave Shane Warne something to celebrate with a five-wicket win over Durham at Riverside.

Bottom of division one in the championship, and division two in the National League, the visitors demolished Durham for just 91 - Warne taking two for 12 - before knocking off the runs from just 24.3 overs.

Lancashire, the 1998 winners, cruised into the last eight with a 68-run win over Essex at Old Trafford. India's Saurav Ganguly (97) put on 163 for the first wicket with England opener Mike Atherton (70) to provide the platform for Lancashire's 251 for five.

Leg-spinner Chris Schofield followed up with four for 34 in seven overs as Essex were dismissed for 183.

Warwickshire were indebted to a powerful century from Ashley Giles for setting up their 40-run win over Derbyshire at Edgbaston.

Promoted up the order, Giles hammered two sixes and 12 fours in his 107 from just 97 balls as the home side piled up 257 for eight.

Michael Di Venuto (84) kept Derbyshire in contention until he was removed by South African paceman Allan Donald who bagged four for 42 in polishing Derbyshire off for 217.

In the other completed tie Northamptonshire (252) beat Yorkshire (183) by 69 runs thanks in the main to half-centuries from Matthew Hayden (63) and David Sales (65).

**Popov keeps rivals at bay**

HELSINKI, July 6: Alexander Popov dealt the pretenders to his Olympic throne a further blow when he reclaimed his European 100 metres freestyle crown from Dutchman Pieter van den Hoogenband yesterday, reports Reuters.

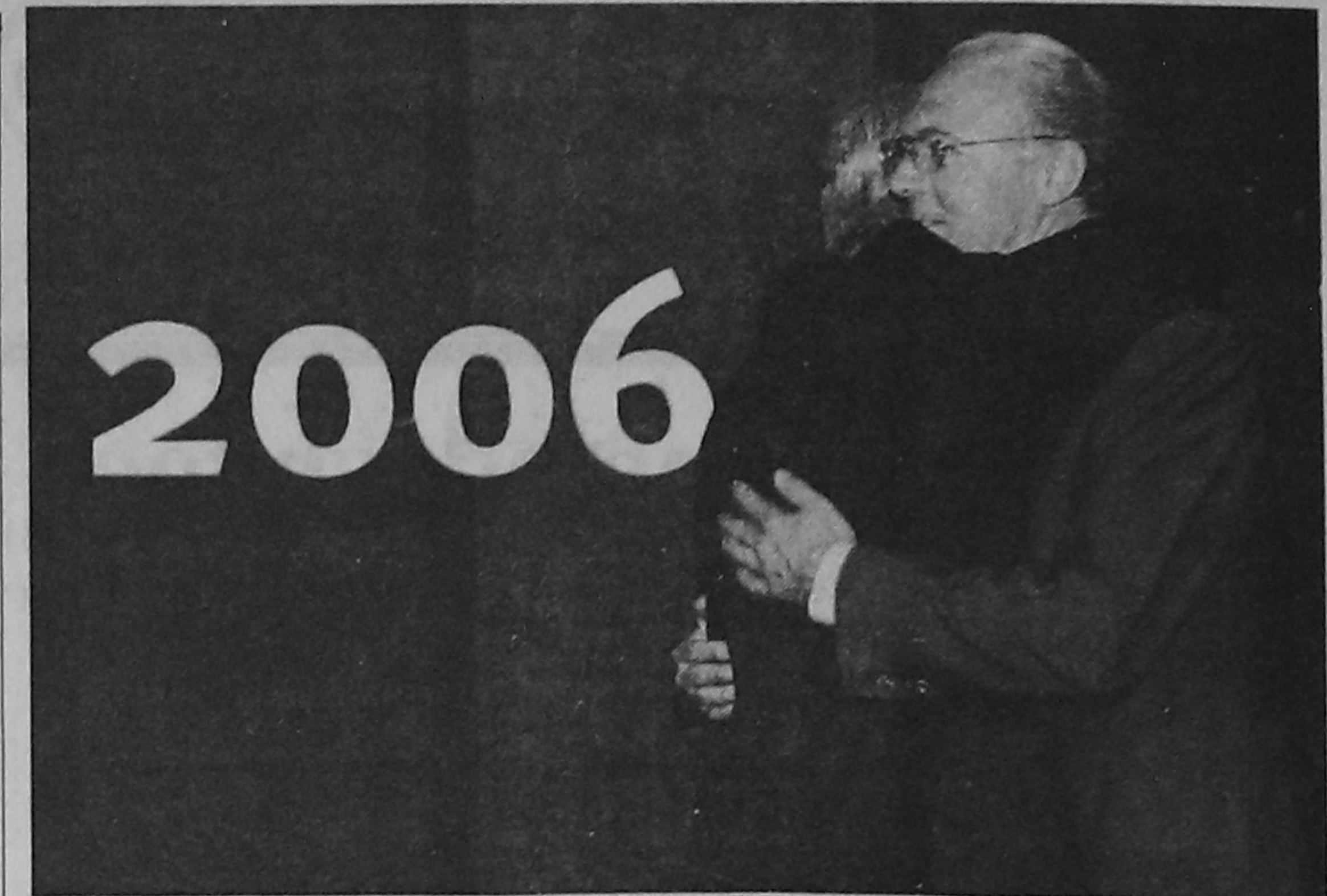
Van den Hoogenband trounced Popov at last year's European championships in Istanbul, unceremoniously ending the Russian's run of four 100 metres freestyle titles and three 50 freestyle wins in the continent's main swimming event.

But Popov struck back at this year's pre-Olympic edition of the championships and claimed his fifth 100 freestyle crown, having left everyone gasping the previous evening when he clocked a sizzling 48.34 seconds in the semifinals - the third-fastest time ever after two of his own.

He did not produce such a thunderbolt in the final and had to repel a fierce challenge from Van den Hoogenband down the return length before winning in 48.61 - his fastest 100 in six European championships.

Third at the turn behind Hungary's Attila Zubor and Sweden's Lars Frolander, he eased to the front on the second length of the Makleankinne pool to clinch his second Helsinki gold after anchoring Russia to victory in Monday's 4x100 freestyle relay.

"Oops, I did it again," Popov said. "But no world record today."



YOU'VE DONE A GREAT JOB: Germany's winning World Cup bid committee chief Franz Beckenbauer (R) being congratulated by someone on the stage after the vote of the FIFA executive committee in Zurich yesterday. —AFP photo

**Kaiser has Midas touch**

ZURICH, July 6 (Reuters/AFP): The decision to award the 2006 World Cup finals to Germany today was a personal triumph for Franz Beckenbauer who showed again that everything he touches turns to gold.

While the man known as the Kaiser cracked jokes and brought in with a flourish Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, supermodel Claudia Schiffer, and tennis star Boris Becker, their European opponents England were quite the opposite as two of the men who defeated him in the 1966 World Cup Sir Geoff Hurst and Sir Bobby Charlton looked like beaten men.

The English seemed to have realised that they were headed for the exit as they dealt their last card - the ethnic one.

Favourites South Africa, who have been sounding less upbeat of late, by contrast tugged at the heartstrings of the FIFA Executive Committee while Morocco went for broke by declaring that the Moroccan people would not understand that the winner had been decided solely by internal FIFA politics and not on merit.

However, it was Beckenbauer who stole the show, entering the room with a piece of turf that he says will be from where the 2006 World Cup will kick-off once it is placed in the centre circle in the Olympic Stadium in Munich.

Such was his confidence that he even brought out a miniature hotel and showed FIFA president Sepp Blatter where his penthouse would be, adding one imagined, at South Africa's expense: "You'll be secure there."

Amid a flurry of films, one bringing back memories of Chitty Chitty Bang Bang as children ran round the streets

of an old German town kicking a football - though without a sign of the infamous Child-catcher - Beckenbauer made a strong political point as to why Germany deserved to host it for the second time.

"You may think that we have already hosted one (1974) but then we were divided - between East and West Germany - now we are united," he said.

With its proven capacity to stage major tournaments and its rich soccer tradition, Germany seemed the safest option to many. But South Africa's claim that it was about time an African nation hosted the showpiece event and the fact that FIFA president Sepp Blatter shared that view made them the favourites until the final act was played out.



"Two days before the vote, Beckenbauer said Germany had considered pulling out because Brazil had lent us support to South Africa after withdrawing its own candidature.

This is horse trading directed against us," he said, clearly upset.

But the next day he was in confident mood again, peppering his speech with jokes during the final presentation of a bid he has promoted tirelessly for

the last three years.

"I trust you," he told the voters after reminding them that Germany had the stadiums, the infrastructure and the experience required.

"You all know that we are capable of staging World Cup finals," he said.

Germany showed the world it could handle major soccer tournaments by hosting the 1974 World Cup and the 1988 European championship finals.

Some felt the fact that it already had staged the World Cup might be a handicap but Beckenbauer insisted it would be a new experience since what was then West Germany has since become part of a unified nation.

The German government played his part, clearing a major hurdle by granting FIFA tax exemption on the huge profits to be made by the ruling body from the competition in Germany.

A history of soccer-related violence was also regarded as an obstacle but tough new laws introduced before Euro 2000 showed the problem was being tackled seriously.

Sixteen cities - among them all 10 venues of the 1974 World Cup - have been shortlisted. The list will now be cut down to 10 to 12 venues, with Munich likely to host the opening match while Berlin should get the final. Both Olympic stadiums are about to undergo major (re)fits.

Germany, whose national team dropped out of Euro 2000 in the group stage in their worst performance at a significant competition, now face the daunting task of having to build a team capable of faring decently on home soil in six years time.

At least they will not have to qualify.

**Aura of unification**

ZURICH, July 6 (Reuters): The World Cup will return to Germany after a 32-year absence but for Franz Beckenbauer the 2006 tournament will be an entirely new experience for Germany following unification.

"We had it in 1974 but it was a divided Germany," said Beckenbauer whose charisma and political skills were instrumental in the triumph of the German bid today.

"People from the Eastern bloc were not able to come then. This time everybody will be welcome," said the former libero.

While presenting his campaign one last time on the eve of the vote, Beckenbauer stressed that Germany had undergone huge change in recent times, recalling what he described as a "peaceful revolution."

Then coach of the national team, Beckenbauer was preparing his squad for a crucial World Cup qualifier against Wales when the Berlin Wall fell in November 1989, paving the way for German unification the following year.

"We couldn't really party because we had to beat Wales to qualify," he said. "Eventually it worked out all right."

West Germany won 2-1 to earn a ticket to Italia 90 where Beckenbauer lifted the coveted trophy as a coach, 16 years after doing so as the West German team captain.

Eastern German football, which had its own tradition and powerful clubs like Dynamo Berlin, Dynamo Dresden and Carl Zeiss Jena, practically collapsed following unification.

Several clubs joined the Bundesliga from the 1991-92 season but most were soon relegated and now play in the Second Division or the regional

league. Only two teams from former East Germany, Hansa Rostock and Energie Cottbus, remain in the top flight.

Of the 16 cities shortlisted as venues for 2006, only one - Leipzig - is in former East German territory. All the 10 towns which hosted games in 1974 have again applied and most are expected to be in the final selection of 10 to 12 stadiums.



Berlin, now the capital, staged matches in 1974 as its Olympic Stadium was in the western part of the divided metropolis.

The arena, undergoing a major facelift, should have the final, while Munich, where Germany beat the Netherlands 2-1 in a memorable final in 1974, should host the opening game.

In 1974, Germany proved the ideal stage for a formidable side inspired by Beckenbauer to demonstrate its supremacy - although not without the odd embarrassment.

Ironically, the only time East Germany ever qualified for the World Cup finals was in 1974 when they were drawn in the same group as west Germany and sensationally beat their powerful neighbours. It was West Germany's only defeat on the way to the title.

Beckenbauer may be dreaming that history will repeat itself in six years time with another World Cup triumph but right now, Germany are only a pale shadow of the merciless winning machine they once were.

The fall of the ailing soccer giants reached a depressing low at Euro 2000, where the Germans disappeared at the group stage in their worst overall performance at a major tournament.

"The world of football needs a strong German team and getting the World Cup would give us something to look forward to," Beckenbauer said on the eve of the vote by the 24 members of FIFA's executive committee.

**Kenya's at a loss**

NAIROBI, July 6: Kenya reacted with shock and disbelief after South Africa lost their bid to host the 2006 World Cup finals, reports AFP.

Despite power rationing, soccer fans crowded into bars and clubs with electricity in the capital Nairobi to watch the voting process live on television.

Tension was high when FIFA president Sepp Blatter read out the verdict after the third and final round of voting. When it appeared Germany had won the vote, the fans became muted.

"It's sad for Africa," said one man. "It's a tragedy," said another. Africa will never get another chance like this again, especially when Blatter, as the FIFA boss supported our bid."

"It's a lost opportunity not only for South Africa but also for Kenya. We would have gained a lot as a country", Kenya Football Federation secretary Yusuf Haji told AFP.

"We had hope that if South Africa had won, participating countries would have used Kenya as a training venue as the two countries have similar climatic conditions.

"Germany has little to achieve in hosting the 2006 World Cup except prestige. But for South Africa, the stage would have gone a long way in healing the wounds of apartheid by bringing all the people together," Haji added.

South Africa and Kenya have enjoyed strong sporting ties since Pretoria was accepted back to the international arena. Kenya was one of the countries invited in 1996 to a four-nation international tournament by South Africa as a prelude to the 1996 Africa Nations Cup.

Kenya may also host some qualifying matches in the 2003 Cricket World Cup which will be held in South Africa.

HERE COMES DEUTSCHLAND: FIFA president Sepp Blatter showing the card bearing Germany's name as the host of the World Cup 2006 after the executive committee vote in Zurich yesterday. —AFP photo