

Who can stop Agassi? Men's singles preview

Australian 🖪 Open

AFP, Melbourne

An overwhelming wave of momentum is sweeping Andre Agassi towards further tennis glory in Sunday's Australian Open final against German Rainer Schuettler.

The 32-year-old American has been likened to a steamroller crushing all in his path to his fourth Australian final and with the tennis world expecting more Grand Slam success for one of the sport's modern-day greats.

The stats bear grim reading for the chances of 26-year-old Grand Slam final debutant Schuettler.

Agassi has lost only 43 games en route to Sunday's showpiece, the fewest he has conceded in any of his four trips to the Melbourne final and he is vying for a record-breaking 21 consecutive wins at the Open, one more than two-time champion Ivan Lendl. He is one win away from becoming only the fourth player to capture four Australian Open titles and should he beat Schuettler he will claim his eighth Grand Slam title -- only five players in history have

won more Agassi is on an 11-match winning streak against German players. He has not lost to a German since the 1999 Grand Slam Cup when Tommy Haas beat him in the quarterfinals.

The signs all point to Agassi holding the trophy aloft on Sunday, but Schuettler is quietly determined that he can bring off one of the monumental upsets in Grand Slam

Saurav Kashmiri militants' target!

AFP, Calcutta

Security was beefed up for India's cricket captain Saurav Ganguly on Friday after police indicated his life may be threatened by suspected Kashmiri militants, police officials

Ganguly, who leaves for the World Cup in Africa next Tuesday, found his residence in the eastern metropolis of Calcutta surrounded by security personnel and sniffer

dogs. "Commandos, riot police and a number of plainclothes policemen have been posted in and around Ganguly's residence because of a threat from militant outfit Lashkar-e-Toiba on his life," police officer Rajesh Singh told AFP.

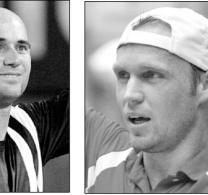
"For security reasons, we cannot disclose the source from where the threat came from, or when it came." Another police officer said federal intelligence officials had

recently intercepted a message from the Pakistan-based outfit Lashkar-e-Toiba indicating Ganguly was a target ahead of Sunday's Republic Day celebrations

history. Fresh after snuffing out Australian heat to win here. American Andy Roddick in the semifinal, Schuettler said: "There's

another guy from the States waiting, Andre looks in great shape, so we'll see what's going to happen on Sunday

"Maybe he'll eat something



been here.

semi-final

ANDRE AGASSI

wrong the day before," he laughed. have no pressure on me at all. I just go on the court. He has played unbelievable. I will give my best and in the end I will see the result." Agassi has been meticulous in

his build-up to the final. He has dropped just one set, to Frenchman Nicolas Escude in the third round, but crushed Sebastien Grosjean and Wayne Ferreira in the second week in regulation sets. He comes to Australia in peak

condition every year, forsaking the normal vacation time over Christmas-New Year to put in the work needed to play seven best-offive-set matches often in fierce

pummelling from Agassi, said of "It's not easy to come down here Schuettler's chances in the final: "If very prepared, but it sure beats the he plays like that on Sunday, I don't alternative," Agassi said after his think Rainer has a chance."

88-minute rout of Ferreira in the Roddick was a bit more charitable, saying: "Rainer is going to do "That's what I always remind what he does. He's going to make myself. As hard as it is to be pre-Andre work for every point. He's going to run down everything. pared, it's a lot harder to come down

"He might have to step up and be a little more aggressive at times. He's going to have to serve well, too.'

Schuettler is the first German to reach a Grand Slam final since Michael Stich at the 1996 French Open. Boris Becker was the last German winner at the Australian Open in the same year.

Schuettler, who has moved steadily through the top half of the men's draw beating Spaniard Albert Portas, former Wimbledon champion Richard Krajicek, last year's Wimbledon runnerup David Nalbandian and highly-rated Americans James Blake and Roddick.

He received a walkover into the fourth round when last year's Australian Open finalist Marat Safin withdrew with a wrist injury before the match.

Schuettler has enjoyed the benefit of an extensive five-week off-season training program before coming to Australia and his fitness and court speed were deciding factors against Roddick in Friday's semifinal

if he wins the final here. He has timed his challenge to perfection, taking out much younger rivals with almost surgical precision. Ferreira, after his 11th straight

RAINER SCHUETTLER

Agassi thrives at the Australian

Open. He relishes the high bounce

of the Rebound Ace hardcourt, the

heat and the breeze to put his stamp

on the event in the seven years he's

lenge to win his fourth Australian title

by making a bet with his wife and 22

singles Grand Slam champion Steffi

Graf to partner her in the mixed

doubles at the French Open in June,

Agassi has spruced up his chal-

here and not be prepared.'

It's for grandma REUTERS, Melbourne

SPORT

Serena and Venus Williams dedicated their Australian Open final performances on Saturday to their late grandmother.

REUTERS, Melbourne

Saturday.

Venus Williams insisted she had

plans to become one of the all-time

greats of tennis, despite her crush-

ing defeat by younger sister Serena

in the Australian Open final on

brated a non-calendar year sweep

of Grand Slam titles, Venus was

As a teary-eyed Serena cele-

The two sisters both paused from the celebrations to pay a tribute to their mother's mother, Ora Lee Price, who died recently, "We wanted to dedicate it to her

because she was someone really special in our life," said Serena. "It was great getting to know her, I wish I could have known her better. She never missed a match if we

were on TV or anything. Venus said: "We really wanted to do this for her. She was someone very special to us."

Dare call 'em monkeys!

AFP, Brussels

A complaint of racism has been lodged with public prosecutors after a private Flemish radio station Q-Music allegedly described tennis sisters Venus and Serena Williams as monkeys.

The comments are reported to have been made after the American sisters ousted Belgian duo Justine Henin and Kim Cliisters in the singles semi-finals at the Australian Open this week.

Belgian listener, Pierre Van Doorne, who is of Martinique origin, lodged a complaint with the public prosecutor in the northern city of Antwerp accusing the station of inciting racial hatred. Van Doorne complained that the

station's two presenters used racist terms and then allowed listeners to have their say, of which some were similarly racist against the tennis stars.

"As a coloured man, I feel personally insulted with the words of the two presenters but I also believe they incited listeners to expressions of racial hatred," Van Doorne told Belga news agency.

The Belgian equal opportunities centre told AFP Friday that they had received a copy of the complaint and were considering whether to take legal action against the station. A presenter of Belgian's top private radio station Radio Contact

was fired last July for saying that Henin, who was defeated in the Wimbledon final by Serena Williams, had been beaten by a monkey.

Llodra, Santoro lift doubles

AFP, Melbourne

French pair Michael Llodra and Fabrice Santoro avenged last year's defeat by Mark Knowles and Daniel Nestor to win the men's doubles final at the Australian Open on Saturday.

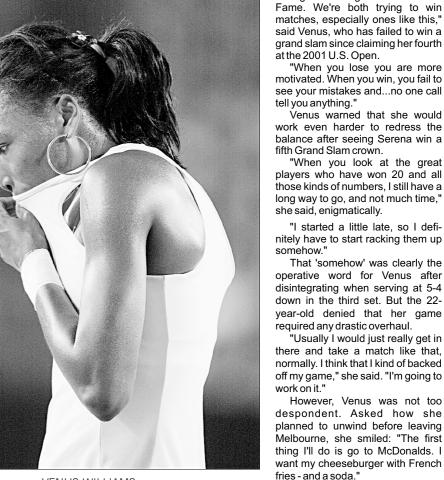
Venus still in orbit

already plotting her revenge at the Australian 🖪 Open French Open in May.

"These are major championships at stake. This is history, a career. I don't want to be the player that won four Grand Slams," said Venus after losing her fourth straight grand slam final to Serena, thereby creating some unwanted history of her own

"I have experience. It's a good thing to keep in the back pocket. I'm going to fight."

final indoors, denied that her latest Serena scratched and snarled defeat to Serena had blunted her her way to victory in a high-octane own ambitions for the future.



VENUS WILLIAMS

Series Australia's

FROM PAGE 13 ahead of the World Cup and Hussain said they used debate about that as motivation. "In this game, we deserved something better." he said.

"I was very proud of my team today ... a few people have said that just because a few people want to go home, they don't want to be out there playing "We used that as a bit of a motive

today to prove people wrong." Michael Vaughan and Alec Stewart scored 60 apiece for England, while Australian Brad Hogg continued to impress with a top score of 71 not out and 1-41 from 10 overs of leftarm spin.

England needed only six runs off the last over with two wickets left. but Lee bowled Andy Caddick (four) before last batsman Jimmv

in searing heat, which hit 44 degrees Celsius (111 Fahrenheit). Collingwood not out Flintoff b Lee Opening bowler Caddick was in superb touch, completing his 10 overs in one spell and returning 2-23 Caddick b Lee Anderson run out to put the early pressure on the After Australia had skidded to 147 for five, left-hander Hogg pro-

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Villiams	10	1	46	1				
Bichel	10	0	42	0				
logg	10	1	41	1				
Varne	10	0	58	2				
Result: Australia won by five runs								
nd clinch the series 2-0.								
lan-of-the-match: Brett Lee.								
lan-of-the-series: Brett Lee								

day series second final at McGrath new

69

3

0

Stewart c Lee b Warne 60 25 16 Blackwell c Martyn b Lee 0 Extras: (lb-7, w-4, nb-7) 18 Total: (All out in 49.3 overs) 224 Fall of wickets: 1-8, 2-18, 3-20, 4-88

The Daily Star

match played under a closed roof at

Rod Laver Arena to keep the sun off

the players with the mercury push-

Connolly, Margaret Court, Martina

Navratilova and Steffi Graf as the

only women to hold all four grand

slam titles at once, a feat she has

But Venus, who said it was "a

"When we look back, we want to

"When you lose you are more

Venus warned that she would

"When you look at the great

"I started a little late, so I defi-

That 'somehow' was clearly the

"Usually I would just really get in

However, Venus was not too

be legends and go into the Hall of

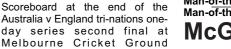
little weird" playing a Grand Slam

dubbed the "Serena Slam."

The 21-year-old joined Maureen

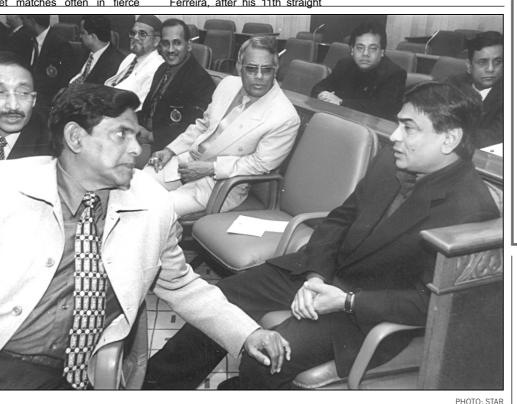
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n-of-the-match: Brett Lee.								



151, 6-182, 7-216, 8-218, 9-							
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of-the-match: Brett Lee.							
of-the-series. Brett Lee							





Football superstars of yesteryear's Zakaria Pintu (L) and Kazi Salahuddin talk while attending a reception to the SAFF champions Bangladesh team members at the PMO yesterday.

The match was dominated by

The opening set had gone to

It's been a dream tournament for

BCCI, ICC settle row

AFP, London

The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Friday announced a truce in the contracts row that had threatened to result in an Indian boycott of the upcoming World Cup.

A teleconference meeting of the ICC's executive board approved a compromise deal that effectively puts a resolution of the row off until after the event.

But the ICC is threatening to withhold India's nine-million-dollars cut of World Cup proceeds in the event it is sued for compensation as a result of the Indian players decision to unilaterally alter their contracts for the February 8-March 23 tournament.

"This agreement will see the ICC and the BCCI (Board of Control for Cricket in India) put the current commercial dispute aside for the period of the ICC Cricket World Cup 2003," ICC president Malcolm Gray said.

"It clears the way for the best team to represent India and ensures that the ICC is able to protect the commercial interests of the game around the world through the agreed process to deal with these issues.

Last week the ICC confirmed it had received "signed but amended contracts" from the Indian players by its January 14 deadline.

The BCCI and the players strongly oppose two of the 22 clauses in the players' contracts.

These clauses are designed to ban commercial rivals of the official tournament sponsors using their pre-existing deals with individual players to gain publicity, before, during and after the World Cup.

Many Indian stars, including Sachin Tendulkar and Virender Sehwag, enjoy lucrative deals with non-official sponsors, which they would have had to forego if the original World Cup contracts were enforced.

ICC chief executive Malcolm Speed admitted the dispute had only been put in abeyance, not resolved.

Slam-bang Serena

two service breaks.

decider

FROM PAGE 13 "When you're on top, you're on top.

in women's tennis. That's the way it is," she said. Typically, the ever-loyal Serena sister's weak second service game later refused to accept Venus' to her advantage throughout the match, winning 28 of 48 points. assertion that she had a mental edge. "I wouldn't say I'm more serves and thunderous mentally tough than Venus," she groundstrokes, with both players

said. "Most of my ideas and everyadvancing to the net less frequently thing I actually get from her. "Most of my fight and courage I've gotten from Venus. So I don't than in previous matches and

from the baseline. know if that's a true statement." Serena secured her place in Serena when her sister failed to hold

history when Venus overhit a backhand which sailed out wide in the 10th game of the decisive set. Nowhere was the difference in

the two sisters' mental make-up more apparent than in the final game, when Venus double-faulted to hand her sister two match points. She also seen her serve broken when serving for the first set, eventually won by Serena on a tiebreak. It summed up a frustrating afternoon

Prof Razzak chess on

SPORTS REPORTER

Fifty-two players won their preliminary phase matches of the Professor Abdur Razzak 29th National Chess Championship vesterday

FIDE Master Taibur Rahman drew with junior champion Mohammad Ali. However, FIDE Master Abu Sufian Shakil, FIDE Master Nasir Ahmed, Saifuddin Lovlu, Khandakar Aminul Islam, Sawkat Hossain and Mehdi Hasan won their boards.

Nine players will qualify from 11round preliminary phase.

Grand Master Ziaur Rahman, GM Niaz Murshed, International Master Enamul Hossain, IM Reefatbin-Sattar and IM Abdullah Al-Rakib will directly participate in the final phase.

A total of 109 players from Dhaka, selected players from 37 districts, and selected players Federation Affiliated organisations and universities are participating in the event.

for the player with the biggest serve in the women's game, made her sister pay and took the decisive break in the 10th to win. Serena was able to exploit her

"I think she just about had me," Serena admitted later. "I just wanted to win so bad. I think if she served in the first and the third, the way she did in the second, I wouldn't have had a chance.'

PM hails seemingly content to trade blows

FROM PAGE 13

Sports Fazlur Rahman thanked the Prime Minister for her support and encouragement in the development

President of Bangladesh Football Federation SA Sultan and vice captain of the team Hasan Al Mamun also spoke at the function. Former national players includng Zakaria Pintoo, Zahir, Maj (retd) Hafizuddin, Salauddin, Ashrafuddin

The tournament eighth seeds accounted for top-ranking combination 6-4, 3-6, 6-3 in 1hr 45min to become the first all-French combination to win the Australian doubles title in 74 years.

Jean Borotra and Jacques Brugnon last won the doubles here for France in 1928.

Llodra and Santoro's victory was also the first by a French pair in a Grand Slam final since Henri Leconte and Yannick Noah beat Pavel Slozil and Tomas Smid at Roland Garros in 1984 It was Llodra and Santoro's first

title together since teaming for the first time at last year's Australian Open.

Pakistan reach

FROM PAGE 13 Zimbabwe. The top three teams will qualify for the Super Sixes stage.

The eighth World Cup starts with an opening ceremony in Cape Town on February 8 with a record 14 teams lining part.

Most of the matches will be in South Africa while Zimbabwe will stage six games and Kenya will host



Scene from the opening round of the national chess championship at the National Sports Council conference room vesterday.

Anderson was run out by wicketkeeper Adam Gilchrist to end the match.

England had seemed headed for a repeat of their embarrassing loss two days earlier in the first final when they slumped to 20 for three. But Vaughan, who scored 174 in the Boxing Day Test at the ground,

again anchored the innings in impressive style.

He put on 70 with captain Nasser Hussain, who gave his wicket away when he tried to slog Hogg and was bowled for 26.

Vaughan combined for 68 with Stewart before he tried to turn a ball from Warne to leg and hit a simple catch to Ricky Ponting at midwicket

Stewart then top-edged a Warne delivery to Brett Lee at point in the 42nd over to leave his side 182 for

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playmate

Paul Collingwood, with an unbeaten 25, maintained pressure on Australia but he ran out of batting partners

Australia won the toss and batted

Saturday AUSTRALIA Gilchrist c Anderson b Flintoff

SCOREBOARD

Australian top order.

duced his match-saving knock.

collect 86 in the last 10 overs.

Hogg figured in crucial stands

Spinner Ian Blackwell returned a

miserly 0-32 from 10 overs, while

Ronnie Irani took 3-46 for England.

with tailenders Lee (18) and Andy

Bichel (11 not out), helping Australia

26 Hayden c sub (Shah) b Irani Ponting c Flintoff b Caddick Martyn c Stewart b Caddick Bevan retired hurt Symonds b Irani Hogg not out Warne c and b Irani Lee c Blackwell b Anderson Bichel not out Extras: (b-3,w-1) Total: (For 7 wkts in 50 overs) 229

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Bowler	ο	м	R					
Caddick	10	2	23					
Anderson	9	0	57					
Flintoff	10	0	56					
Blackwell	10	0	32					
Irani	10	1	46					
Vaughan	1	0	12					
ENGLAND)							

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By Eugene Sheffer

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Tykes captain

REUTERS, Leeds

Australia's Darren Lehmann has 11 been replaced as captain of English 10 county Yorkshire by England A batsman Andrew McGrath, the club 8 71 announced on its official website on 0 Friday. 18 Lehmann has been suspended 11 for five one-day internationals following his racist outburst in a recent triangular series one-day -56. match with Sri Lanka but Yorkshire officials have said his removal as w captain is not related 2 "Our existing captain, Darren

Lehmann, is contracted to the (Australia Cricket Board) ACB until December 2003, and therefore it is unlikely that he will be available to play in the forthcoming 2003 English season," the club said in a statement.

"Darren's appointment last year was agreed by both parties that it was only a short-term one, and was not intended to be long-term.

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Today's Cryptoquip Clue: A equals T

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.

her nerve as she served for the set at 5-4 after scoring the second of of sports in the country. But after serving superbly to take the second set - her first serve

completion percentage was a high 71 per cent - the biggest weapon in her armoury went walkabout in the Williams' first service percentage plummeted to 41 percent in the Chunnu, Mohammed Aslam, Badal third, and Serena, the best returner Roy were also present.