

Rain delays US Open

AFP, New York
The start of the 2006 US Open has been delayed because of rain.
The hardcourt tournament and final Grand Slam of the season was supposed to kick off at 11am local time (15:00GMT) on Monday but two days of rain have made the courts slippery.

Sania falls out of top-50

PTI, New Delhi
Sania Mirza's fortunes hit a new low yesterday as she dropped out of the top-50 in world rankings for the first time in more than a year.
The 19-year old Indian went down 10 places to be 54th in the latest WTA rankings.



ANDRE AGASSI

All eyes on Agassi

Tennis

AP, New York
Andre Agassi and Pete Sampras forever will be linked in tennis history. Across 34 matches, five in Grand Slam finals, their rivalry thrived thanks to their contrasting styles of play and personalities.
Appropriately, the last match of Sampras' pro career came against Agassi, in the 2002 US Open championship match. No one knew for sure at the time that it would indeed wind up being Sampras' farewell match. He didn't announce anything before the tournament, before the final or immediately after hoisting the trophy. He didn't announce anything the next day, week or month, either.

"To be here, the inspiration of it -- I'm hoping to get out there and feel awesome," said the 36-year-old Agassi, participating in his record 21st consecutive US Open.
He won the event in 1994 and 1999, part of his eight major titles forming a career Grand Slam, and was the runner-up four times, including last year against Roger Federer.
The US Tennis Association approached Agassi's team about the possibility of some sort of tribute during the Open, but the idea was scrapped.
"We're going to respect the wishes of Andre Agassi and respect the fact that he wants to approach this tournament as he does any other one," USTA spokesman Chris Widmar said.
Instead, Agassi's first-round match against Andrei Pavel of Romania on Monday night was scheduled to be preceded by an on-court ceremony marking the renaming of the National Tennis Centre to honour ex-player and pioneer Billie Jean King.
"Obviously, the story from the 2006 U.S. Open, regardless of what happens, is going to be Andre's last tournament. I hope that it's a celebration of his career, for this whole event, and that's what it should be," said Andy Roddick.
"He's earned that right. That will

Liesel sets new world mark

AFP, Hobart
Australian Liesel Jones smashed her new 100-metre breaststroke world record at the Australian short course swimming championships here Monday.
Jones set a new world record of one minute 3.86 seconds in the final of the event, slashing the time of 1:04.12s she set in Sunday's semifinals.
In her first world record of the meet in the semifinal, Jones slashed 0.67secs off the old mark set by American Tara Kirk in Texas in 2004.
"Obviously, it was a goal to improve on the 1:04 and didn't think I actually had it in me so I just had to psyche myself up for it and found something that I probably didn't think I had," she said after Monday's final.
Jones now holds the long and short course 100 and 200m breaststroke world records.

Complaint lodged against Pataudi

PTI, New Delhi
A complaint was filed yesterday against former cricket captain Mansoor Ali Khan Pataudi, an accused in a black buck poaching case, for allegedly threatening a co-accused in the case.
Madan Singh, an accused in the poaching case, filed a complaint at Vasant Vihar Police Station in south-west Delhi claiming that the former cricketer had threatened him with "dire consequences" if he did not change his testimony given to police.
Singh alleged that Pataudi called him to his Vasant Kunj residence in south-west Delhi on August 20 and in the presence of his lawyer, asked him to change the statement given to police and own up the crime of killing the black buck.
When he refused to comply, Pataudi allegedly threatened him with "dire consequences".
NGO People For Animals (PFA), which is demanding registration of a case against Pataudi in this connection, said it had also lodged a complaint backing Singh in the office of the SP.
Police had found carcasses of black buck and some other animals in Pataudi's vehicle last year and registered a case against him in Jhajjar, where he was stopped by police.

CA mourns Walcott

AFP, Sydney
The late West Indies legend Sir Clyde Walcott will always hold a special place in the hearts of Australian cricket lovers, Cricket Australia (CA) said Monday.
Walcott, one of the three Ws of Caribbean cricket along with Sir Frank Worrell and Everton Weekes who shot to fame in the 1950s, died in a Barbados hospital on Saturday at the age of 80.
CA Chairman Creagh O'Connor said Walcott played cricket in a manner that endeared him to fans and opponents.
"Sir Clyde also contributed to the game after his playing days, including serving as International Cricket Council president," O'Connor said in a CA statement.
"On behalf of Cricket Australia, I express our condolences to his family, friends and to West Indian cricket as we collectively mourn the passing of a genuine cricketer great."

France treat

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The scenario has left Makelele unsure over his next move.
But Mourinho said: "He is a slave. He has no human rights, no right to choice or liberty, so he is a slave. But the rules are there, so what can we do?"
Later Sunday, Chelsea issued a statement revealing they would be appealing to the French Football Federation in an effort to resolve the situation.
The statement on the club website, www.chelseafc.com, read: "Chelsea Football Club will be making further representations to the French Football Federation, after discussions with Claude Makelele, regarding his desire to retire from international football.
"Chelsea FC believes that a player should have the freedom to choose about his own international career, especially in the case of Claude who has served his country at the highest level and with distinction for several years.
"His view was expressed to the French national coach Raymond Domenech in a meeting last week at our training ground. We understand the letter of the law is very clear on this subject, and the ramifications for Claude and Chelsea if he is called up but does not play.
"We would like to stress that this is not a club versus country issue, we are not seeking conflict with the FFF.
"His issue is about supporting the wishes of one of our players whose past commitment to his country cannot be called into question."

ICC denies Hair claim

Cricket
AGENCIES, New Delhi
The International Cricket Council (ICC) has said it never discussed a financial offer with umpire Darrell Hair following the Pakistan ball-tampering row.
Australian Hair, at the centre of last week's controversy when Pakistan forfeited the final Test at The Oval against England after being penalised for alleged ball tampering, said on Sunday he was encouraged by the ICC to make an offer to quit.
Hair was responding after ICC chief executive Malcolm Speed said he requested 500,000 dollars as a one-off payment to quit the ruling body's elite panel of umpires during discussions with ICC umpires' manager Doug Cowie.
The ICC, responding to Hair's statement, confirmed that Hair only discussed the future of his umpiring career with Cowie before sending him an email on Tuesday. "There were many informal discussions between Hair and Cowie between the end of The Oval Test and Hair's first email on Tuesday, including a discussion on the potential impact on Hair's umpiring career," an ICC spokesman said in

a statement released late on Sunday.
"Cowie's role was to support and counsel Hair, as his manager, at a difficult time and it is our understanding that at no stage during their conversations was there any discussion of a pay-off, nor secrecy, nor deadlines, nor misleading the public regarding reasons for retirement, all of which were subsequently laid out in Hair's email."
The spokesman said no other ICC staff member discussed any of these issues with Hair during the period in question.
"We have no desire to be in conflict with Hair," the spokesman said.
Hair has been heavily criticised, particularly in the sub-continent due to his past conflicts with Asian teams. Pakistan have demanded that he should not officiate in any of their future matches.
His future as an international umpire was thrown into doubt by Speed's revelation.
Hair has said his decision, subsequently withdrawn, "wasn't a spur of the moment thing", and his lawyers released a statement on Sunday.
"I was encouraged to make the offer that was disclosed by ICC on 25 August 2006," Hair said.

"During an extended conversation on 21 August 2006 with Cowie, the Umpires' Manager for ICC, I was invited to make a written offer.
"I would have thought that it was quite apparent from the text of correspondence that I had been in discussions with ICC about the issue. The opening words of my e-mail to Cowie confirm this: 'Just (to) firm up what we discussed earlier this evening...'
"I was encouraged to make a written offer by ICC. The figure in the email correspondence was in line with those canvassed with the ICC.
Hair also said he did not give his consent to the emails being made public, adding that the context in which they were sent was not made clear.
Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq is facing an ICC disciplinary hearing, likely at end-September, over charges of alleged ball-tampering and for bringing the game into disrepute.
The ICC is to hold an emergency executive board meeting on Saturday at their Dubai headquarters to discuss the situation.
Pakistan's remaining matches on their tour of England were thrown into doubt by the row, with charges still hanging over Inzamam.

Bob hits back at Barry

Cricket
AFP, London
Pakistan coach Bob Woolmer was forced to defend his reputation on Sunday when it was claimed South Africa players tampered with the ball when he was in charge of the team 10 years ago.

remember a ball being taken off after the 16th over. I surely would have remembered it.
"I wasn't ball-scratching. I'm the coach. What does he think ... that I teach ball-scratching?"
A mystified Woolmer has even taken the step of contacting the officials in the match he believes is in question -- and he reports they are unaware of any wrongdoing.
"Go and ask the two umpires in the same game that I'm supposed to have done this," he advised.
"They will say that they don't know anything about it."
Woolmer, echoing the hopes of England captain Andrew Strauss, believes a return to the field of play can help mark a watershed which pushes the ball-tampering crisis of the past week off the front of the agenda.
It is highly debatable whether that is realistic -- particularly in light of the counter-claims from Hair, that he spoke to his employers at the ICC before he embarked on his infamous offer to resign his position in return for 500,000 US dollars in "compensation".
Even with ICC charges of ball-tampering and bringing cricket into disrepute still hanging over Pakistan captain Inzamam-ul-Haq -- and an emergency board meeting scheduled next weekend in Dubai -- Woolmer is determined to set such thoughts aside.

tain everyone as much as we can and win this series," he said ahead of the Twenty20 and the five one-dayers.
"We are looking forward to the cricket and getting everything else that's happened over the past week out of the way.
"Whatever happened in the past week has not been good for cricket. We just want to leave that alone now and get on with the rest of the tour."
Woolmer remains optimistic that wish will prove achievable.
"All the players want to do is forget what has happened. We think that is possible," he said.
Woolmer's plans for the series seem likely to include fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar, who has played for his country only once -- in a rain-affected one-day match against West Indies A -- since ankle surgery earlier this year.
Strauss has told his England colleagues they have a responsibility to consign the fourth Test fiasco to history as quickly as possible.
"I don't think anyone wants to see a cricket game finish in that manner and it wasn't a great week for cricket full stop," said Strauss.
"Looking forward it's probably an opportunity, and responsibility of ours, to get cricket back in the news for the right reasons."

Lightning kills

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Paramedics revived the teenager, who had severe burns, and rushed him to a hospital with four other players. They have since been discharged.
The game was played in Ulfborg, 2.05 miles northwest of Copenhagen. Lightning struck 10 minutes before the final whistle and the game was cancelled.
Several games in Denmark's top SAS League tournament were cancelled or stopped during the weekend because of heavy rain and thunder.

Panchhari rout

FROM PAGE 17
mark and Nazir Ahmed then scoring with a nice individual goal fifteen minutes from the end. All that remained was for Siddikur to round off the scoring by bagging his fourth goal of the day near the end of the game.

TEAMS

Laxmichhari Upazila: Bijon, Promit, Usazi, Jony, Tapan, Amjad, Abdullah Parvez, Ershad, Nasir, Uttam, Bellal and Chapruchai Marna.
Panchhari Upazila: Ekbal, Shahazan, Abul Hossen, Shimul, Mongshi Marna, Sagor Chakma, Najir, Saluk Chakma, Kayapru Marna, Siddikur Rahman, Usain Marna, Kamal and Priyo Moy.
Referee: Moncro Marna

Cassano gets

FROM PAGE 17
He scored on his Real debut in a Copa del Rey match against Real Betis, but failed to hold down a regular place in the side and his waistline quickly expanded due to his weakness for sweet things.
Real took action by placing him on a strict diet.
Cassano was expected to leave Real this summer, but his future now looks brighter following the arrival of Fabio Capello as coach.
Capello, who left Juve in the wake of the match-fixing scandal, was Cassano's mentor and former coach at Roma.
As expected, Italy coach Roberto Donadoni left Francesco Totti out of his 24-man squad with the Roma captain asking for more time to improve his fitness after a strenuous World Cup.

Buchanan to go after WC

Cricket

AFP, Sydney
Australia coach John Buchanan, who presided over a golden era in Australian cricket, has confirmed he will quit after next year's World Cup in the Caribbean.
Buchanan, who has been coach for seven years since replacing Geoff Marsh in 1999, had his contract extended after last year's Ashes series loss in England.
But Buchanan, 53, said there was a "shelf life" in coaching and he felt after the World Cup was an appropriate time for him to step down.
"There's a good foundation of systems and processes for the next coach to shape the future of the Australian cricket team," Buchanan said in a Cricket Australia statement Monday.



JOHN BUCHANAN

"There's a shelf life in coaching and I believe that following the World Cup it will be the appropriate time to hand over the reins to someone new.
"My absolute focus however is the upcoming summer of cricket. I am extremely excited about the challenges we face with the ICC Champions Trophy, the Ashes and one-day international series and the 2007 World Cup," he said.
"This summer is a significant moment in Australian cricket's history. We are playing three huge tournaments in a brief period of time with a view to winning them all."
Buchanan said he would sit

down with Cricket Australia officials after the March 5-April 28 World Cup and discuss what future contribution he could make.
Buchanan has presided over a golden era in Australian cricket. Under Buchanan, Australia had a 75 per cent success rate in Test cricket from 85 Tests. England are Pakistan with 58 per cent from their 193 games.
Australia also won a record 21 consecutive one-day international matches in early 2003, including a clean sweep of 11 matches in the World Cup in South Africa.
CA chief executive James Sutherland praised Buchanan's contribution to Australian cricket and said the process of appointing a new coach would begin soon.
"John has had extraordinary success as the national coach during his tenure and has given an enormous amount to the game in this time," Sutherland said in the statement.
"The success he has helped achieve is a driving force behind cricket's continued growth in this country and one that we are extremely grateful for."
Sutherland said his organisation was keen to have Buchanan's continued involvement in the game beyond the World Cup.
"Cricket Australia will be instigating a management committee in the next month to start the search process for a new coach," he said.
Sri Lanka coach Tom Moody, head coach of Australia's centre of excellence Tim Nielsen, India coach Greg Chappell and Dav Whatmore, now coaching Bangladesh, are among those mentioned to replace Buchanan.
But India's cricket chiefs subsequently dismissed suggestions that Chappell's contract would not be renewed after next year's World Cup.

Ponting wants

FROM PAGE 17
But it's a notion that does not have the support of the England and Wales Cricket Board.
"The ICC have a well-established principle of appointing neutral umpires for Test matches -- it's a process the ECB are extremely comfortable with," a board spokesman told the Press Association Sunday.
Under ICC guidelines, Test matches must be controlled by neutral umpires and it has been done since the formation of the ICC's elite list of umpires in 2002, although one-day internationals do still include one man put forward by the host board.
Ponting said he was less interested in neutral umpires than having the best.
"I'd just like to have the best umpires to umpire cricket around the world all the time," Ponting told reporters Monday.

BCB AGM on Oct 3

FROM PAGE 17
players raised in the meeting, Mahub however denied it at the press conference.
"Nobody raised the issue in the meeting that's why it was not discussed there," said the bearded organiser.
There was however hot exchanges with the issue when Mahub said that the working committee didn't recommend the cricket committee to unearth the truth although CEO Mahmudur Rahman and some other working committee members reportedly told the press that they had asked the Mahub-led Cricket Committee to find the real fact.
"There was however hot exchanges with the issue when Mahub said that the working committee didn't recommend the cricket committee to unearth the truth although CEO Mahmudur Rahman and some other working committee members reportedly told the press that they had asked the Mahub-led Cricket Committee to find the real fact.
"The issue was not put in the minutes of the working committee that's why you can't say that the board gave the job to my committee. But my committee independently is trying to look into the issue but the fact is we have to get three selectors together. I will submit my observation to the president," he added.

ABOUT AFRICAN TRIP DEBACLE

BCB will disclose the facts about the Bangladesh's team's debacle in Zimbabwe and some of the field incident involving coach Dav Whatmore after their meeting with the whole team members on September 5.
"We have discussed some points of the tour but we can only speak about the outcomes of our fact-find mission after meeting with the players on September 5," he said.
He also defended their decision to send eight officials during the African trip as observers.
"RECruitment COMMITTEE
The EC meeting also formed a recruitment committee to not only decide about the new recruitment but also to evaluate the staff's performance.
"We formed this committee to make the appointment transparent," he added.

'Nothing to do with us'

Cricket

AFP, Bristol
England captain Andrew Strauss has stressed his side had no part in the ball-tampering row that almost led Pakistan to call off their tour of England.
Strauss's team play Pakistan in a Twenty20 international here at the County Ground later Monday.
It will be the first match between the teams since England were awarded the fourth Test at The Oval following the unprecedented decision by the umpires to make Pakistan forfeit the match.

lars.
"We were all pretty surprised by it but it's not something that we really want to focus on too much," Strauss said.
"From a cricketing point of view it's wasting a lot of time and effort to do so. Once we knew the series was going ahead as planned, it was important to prepare ourselves both mentally and physically for what is coming up.
"I don't think anyone wants to see a cricket game finish in that manner and it wasn't a great week for cricket full stop," said the Middlesex left-hander.
"Looking forward it's probably an



ANDREW STRAUSS

The tourists had refused to take the field having been earlier penalised for ball-tampering.
That sparked a sequence of events that threw the remainder of Pakistan's tour into doubt with the one-day leg of their trip, which sees Monday's match followed by a five-game limited overs series, only confirmed last Friday.
There were reports that England coach Duncan Fletcher may have had a role in the drama by mentioning the issue of ball-tampering to match referee Mike Procter -- reports denied utterly by the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB).
And Strauss said his men were too busy trying to fight back in the Test to cast suspicions on Pakistan.
"Whatever has happened is nothing to do with England players at all from my point of view, so hopefully the good spirit that the game has been played in will continue in the one-dayers as well.
"We obviously got ourselves in a pretty dodgy position in the game so we spent a lot of time and thought on trying to extricate ourselves from the situation.
"Those sort of things are best left to the officials rather than players."
Australian umpire Darrell Hair who, together with West Indian colleague Billy Doctrove, penalised Pakistan five runs for ball-tampering at The Oval, hit the headlines again when it was revealed he had offered his resignation from the International Cricket Council's elite panel of umpires in return for a payment of 500,000 dol-

opportunity, and responsibility of ours, to get cricket back in the news for the right reasons."
Pakistan's one-day contests in England five years ago were marred by crowd trouble and pitch invasions.
But both crowd and player relations have caused no alarms this season and Strauss said: "The crowd behaviour has been excellent through the Test series and we all want to see a good atmosphere at the grounds and the crowds getting stuck in.
"There have not been any problems between the two sides, there is a bit of respect there between the players and there have not been any issues between us at all."
For England, thrashed 5-0 at home to Sri Lanka in a one-day series concluded in July, the upcoming matches represent a chance to find some badly needed form in the shorter version of the game before next year's World

Sunderland

FROM PAGE 20
Brom tomorrow (Monday).
The 35-year-old met the players after training and he is expected to be among the crowd as the Black Cats entertain West Brom looking for a first point of the season.
Quinn has been talking to his former international team-mate over several days, although he refused to confirm that after the news leaked out.
But it represents a major coup for Quinn and his Drumaville consortium after luring Keane to Wearside for his first managerial post. Ironically, he would replace Mick McCarthy, the man with whom he suffered a spectacular bust-up at the 2002 World Cup finals.
Keane's appointment would give the club a huge lift despite his lack of experience, although with the transfer window due to close next Thursday, he would have little opportunity to strengthen his squad.
Italy recall Cassano for Euro 2008 qualifiers

Beckham denies

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There is intention on both sides to tie David to an extension.
"Madrid are happy and likewise David has gone on record to say he has enjoyed his time at Madrid."
Beckham moved to Real from Manchester United in 2003 in a deal worth 25 million pounds (46.8 million dollars, 36.7 million euros), and his contract was due to expire at the end of this season.
Beckham would have been free to negotiate with other clubs in January if he failed to agree a new contract with Real, who have have failed to win a major trophy in his three seasons in Spain.