

Tendulkar testifies

BOMBAY, Sept 5: Indian cricket captain Sachin Tendulkar gave evidence on Thursday to a one-man commission inquiring into a betting and bribery scandal, officials said, reports Reuters.

Two former skippers, Sunil Gavaskar and Mohammad Azharuddin, also appeared before the commission headed by Vishnu Chandrachud, a former chief justice of India's Supreme Court.

The players, bound by inquiry rules, would not comment on what happened at the hearing.

The commission was set up by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) after former Indian all-rounder Manoj Prabhakar alleged that a teammate had offered him money to throw away matches.

Rashid Latif, former Pakistan wicketkeeper, had also alleged that players were involved in large scale bribery and betting.

The commission has been asked to find out whether there is any truth in the charges that have been made of betting and bribery against some members of the Indian team.

Former Test player Sandeep Patil and wicket keeper Yashpal Mongia, dropped from a forthcoming one-day series in Toronto and Pakistan, were also heard by the commission on Thursday.

The commission has so far called 12 people in four sittings since its inception in June.

Chandrachud said he was nearing the end of the inquiry but would not say when his findings would be ready.

Thorpe smites Glamorgan

LONDON, Sept 5: Surrey's Graham Thorpe scored a stylish unbeaten century against Glamorgan on Thursday to frustrate the championship hopefuls, reports Reuters.

Thorpe was 140 not out at The Oval as Surrey closed on 324 for six — a lead of 90.

The visitors had been expected to take the maximum 24 points, and Surrey were always on the back foot before Thorpe's heroics gave them some breathing space.

Third-placed Gloucestershire, set 482 to win by a rampant Kent, finished day three on a miserable 59 for four, practically ending their 1997 championship hopes.

Kent, joint top of the table at the start of this game, finally called off the punishment by declaring their second innings at 432 for four.

Yorkshire's Headingley clash with Worcestershire looked to be heading for a stalemate as the visitors, replying to a total of 501 for seven declared, closed on 313 for six.

Craig White reached an unbeaten 172 from 167 balls as Yorkshire prolonged their first innings into the third day, then Worcestershire appeared to be on course for a substantial reply as Phil Western and Graeme Hick added 91 in 26 overs for the second wicket.

A minor collapse had the visitors in a spotnot bother before Gavin Hamilton took charge with a battling 62 and former Yorkshire wicketkeeper Steve Rhodes finished unbeaten on 46.

Durham skipper David Boon proved the only irritant to Warwickshire in making 48 not out at Chester-le-Street as his side followed on after being dismissed for 18.

They closed on Thursday on 120 for five, still 174 behind and looking certain to suffer their first home championship defeat of the season.

Former England under-19 captain Marcus Trescothick hit 65 as Somerset ended the third day on 174 for five in their second innings against Middlesex, a lead of 179.

Dominic Cork, an emergency Derbyshire opener in place of the injured Adrian Rollins, hit back for his county after Kevin Curran's 86 had helped Northamptonshire to a healthy 334. Cork reached an unbeaten 37 from 24 overs as Derbyshire finished the day on 59 for one.

Mathew Dowman's 62 helped Nottinghamshire to overcome the early loss of Tim Robinson as they set about building upon a lead of 31 handed to them when Hampshire skipper John Stephenson declared behind on 260 for six in the hope of being set a target on the final day at Trent Bridge.

U.S. OPEN FROM FLUSHING MEADOWS

U.S. OPEN



FLUSHING MEADOWS, Sept 5: The US and USTA flags have been flying at half-mast over the National Tennis Centre here since the tragic death of Princess of Wales Diana in Paris.

The carnival atmosphere was touched by tinge of sorrow but nothing remains static. The show must go on.

Flushing Meadows can boast of a new stadium christened after the name of one of the country's greatest tennis players Arthur Ashe, who died of AIDS. This is probably the largest tennis stadium built anywhere in the world that can accommodate 23,000 spectators, a staggering figure indeed for a spectator game like tennis, which is nowhere near the popularity of basketball or baseball in the United States. Even during the US Open the news of tennis and its celebrity players take a back seat to baseball in the local print and electronic media.

The new stadium is identical in shape as the Louis Armstrong Stadium which has lost its Number One rating but remains as important as before.

The new stadium has been designed by Rossetti Associate Architects and the \$254 million project has "Transformed an abject corner of one of the world's most poorly designed parks into a place approaching civic stature," according to Herbert Muschamp of The New York Times newspaper.

The southern plaza is the main entrance to the USTA National Tennis Centre adorned by the recently restored unisphere, the immense steel globe that was the symbol of the 1964-65 World's Fair. But the eastern entrance is generally used for the main entry to this picturesque but compact complex because the subway 7 train and also the Long Island Rail Road surface trains stop at the heart of the Shea Stadium, home of baseball in New York and the Corona Park tennis complex. Those who commute by train alight at this stop and walk down the ramp to the entrance. But for coming here for the whole fortnight to watch the day-night sessions in the main stadium and 17 other courts one needs a pair of strong and reliable legs and of course a healthy heart. It's all concrete and less green here, and if you are tired and looking for a

drink you should be pretty sure of your purse. The souvenir shops, lots of them inside the complex, doing good business but at the expense of only the rich. The price tags can cause you nightmares.

Facilities for the media are excellent with two very large media workroom with about 700 lockers and 400 desks fitted with TV sets and telephones (pay phones). About 1200 mediamen from New Zealand to Nigeria and Bangladesh to Britain have come to cover the last Grand Slam of the year.

Tennis is still considered here as rich people's pastime. But with sponsorships of large companies the idea will soon change.

In the new facility the second and third levels have exclusive boxes and suits for people who can afford the comfort of an airconditioned accommodation fitted with TV and equipped with a bar and balcony that can cost a fortune. But there are thousands of individuals or organisations who can afford to spend that kind of money — at least once a year — for the improvement of the game, specially in the United States of America.

Ottey's opportunity knocks



TOKYO, Sept 5: Jamaican sprinter Merlene Ottey will have a chance to assuage her disappointment in Athens by challenging new queen Marion Jones in the Tokyo international athletic meeting here Saturday, reports AFP.

The 37-year-old sprinter, who was overshadowed by American Gail Devers in the Barcelona and Atlanta Olympics, failed to win her first-ever 100-metre world title after a false start last month in Athens.

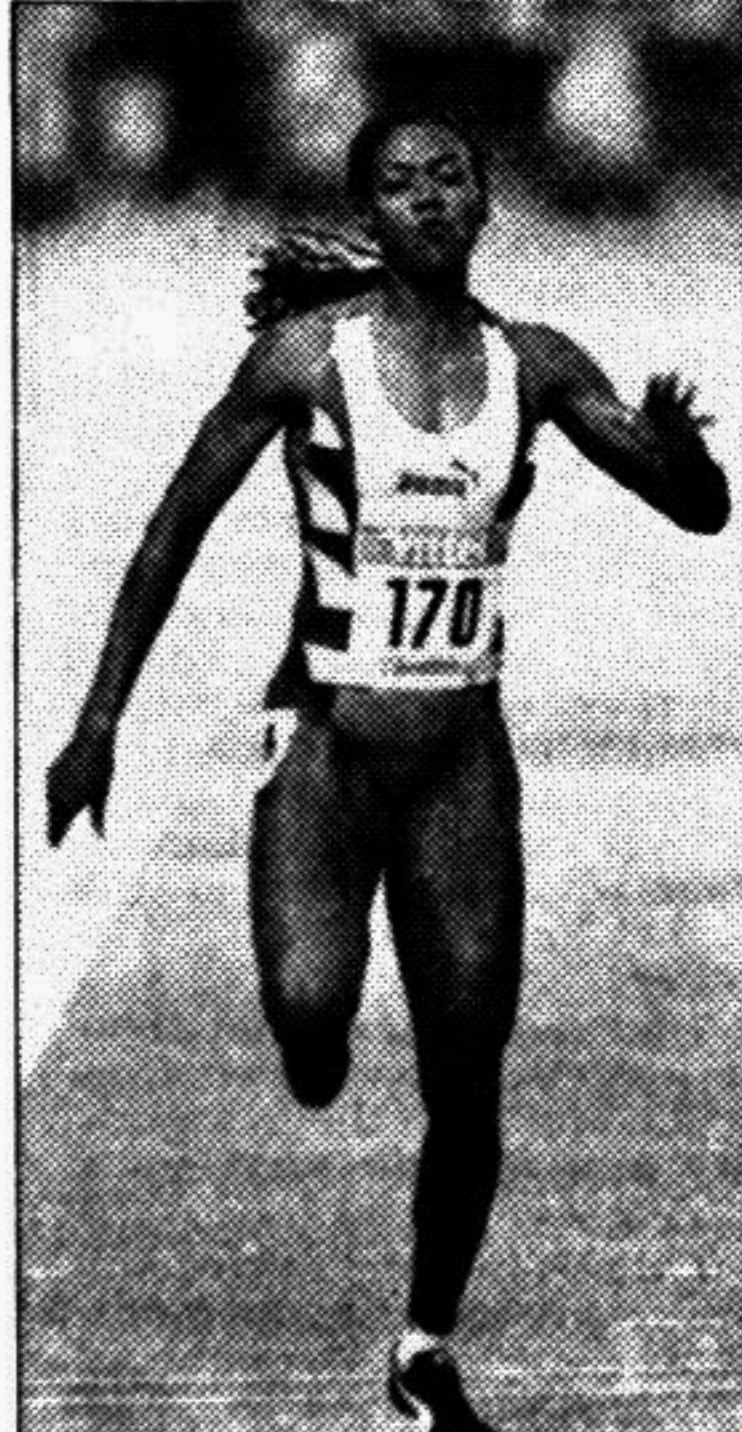
Ottey did not hear the recall and hit the 50-metre mark before she realised she was the only one running. She eventually ended at seventh in a re-run.

Jones emerged as the new sprint queen after the 21-year-old American former basketball player won the photo finish final against Zhanna Pintusevich of Ukraine with her personal best of 10.83.

To the disappointment of fans, Devers and fellow American Atlanta Olympic bronze winner Gwen Torrence as well as Christine Arron of France, fourth in the World Championships, pulled out of the Tokyo meeting.

Pintusevich will skip the 100m and compete against Merlene Frazer of Jamaica and American Inger Miller in the 200m, the distance she won in Athens.

A total of seven Atlanta



MERLENE OTTEY Olympic winners, 13 world champions and eight world record holders, will take part in the 13 men's and nine women's events in Tokyo.

Donovan Bailey of Canada, who set a world record of 9.84 to win the Atlanta Olympics, won't get a chance to avenge his loss in Athens to American star Maurice Greene in the men's 100m race.

Instead, Bailey will take on world bronze medalist Tim Montgomery, Atlanta fourth placer Dennis Mitchell and

Streets Thompson, all from the United States.

World and Olympic silver medalist Frank Fredericks of Namibia is the top favourite in the men's 200m after dual Olympic champion Michael Johnson withdrew with a leg injury.

Other prominent athletes are six-time world pole vault champion Sergey Bubka of Ukraine, Nouredine Morel of Algeria in the 1,500m, high jumper Javier Sotomayor of Cuba and Czech javelin thrower Jan Zelezný.

Denmark's Kenyan-born former world record holder Wilson Boit Kipeter will take on current holder Bernard Barmasai of Kenya in the 3,000m steeple chase.

Female world champions to compete are Cathy Freeman of Australia in the 400m, Ludmila Engquist of Sweden in the 100m hurdles and Nezha Bidouane of Morocco in the 400m hurdles.

Hanne Haugland of Norway in the high jump, Ludmilla Galkina of Russia in the long jump, and Beatrice Faumuina of New Zealand in the discus are also on the list.

There will be a sad note to the meeting as nine-time Olympic champion Carl Lewis, who had set an old world 100m record at the National Stadium here in 1991, is not entered in any official events.

The 36-year-old American legend, in his last competitive season, will instead run an exhibition race with local junior high school students.



IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch presenting a gold medal to a member of the Chinese men's team at the World Gymnastics Championships in Lausanne on Sept 4. The Sino team won the event for the third consecutive time. — AFP/UNB photo

Athens to host 2004 Games

LAUSANNE, Switzerland, Sept 5: Athens was today named by International Olympic Committee President Juan Antonio Samaranch as the host city for the 2004 Olympic Games, reports AFP.

Rome, Cape Town, Buenos Aires and Stockholm were the other candidates.

Stade de France beats the clock

PARIS, Sept 5: Workers will begin laying the pitch in the Stade de France — venue of the opening game and final of the 1998 World Cup tournament — next week, a month ahead of schedule, reports Reuters.

It will take about two weeks to lay the approximately 9,000 squares of grass seeded a year ago at a nursery near Fontainebleau, south of Paris.

France's new stadium will take over all national football and Rugby Union commitments from the Parc des Princes ground from its inauguration in January.

It is estimated the 80,000-seat stadium, begun in May 1995, will have cost 2.6 billion francs (425 million dollars) by its completion at the end of November.

The World Cup hosts will play a friendly against Spain at the inauguration and a week later the stadium will hold the first of France's two home games of the season's five Nations Rugby Union championship.

The Stade de France will stage a total of nine World Cup matches during the tournament, which starts on June 10 and ends on July 12.

The Swedes' no comment

VIENNA, Sept 5: Swedish soccer officials said on Thursday they would not protest against FIFA's decision to allow the World Cup qualifying match between their Group Four rivals Scotland and Belarus to be rescheduled from Saturday to Sunday, reports Reuters.

However, the Swedes will ask FIFA to ensure Belarus players are able to return home as quickly as possible in order to have enough time to prepare for their September 10 match against Austria in Minsk.

The game was rescheduled because of the funeral on Saturday of the Princess of Wales.

"We will ask FIFA to make sure the team from Belarus are able to return home as quickly as possible since they will have one day less to prepare for their next match," a Swedish team spokesman said.

Swedish coach Tommy Svensson said: "The rescheduling of the match between Scotland and Belarus is not really our concern. We understand the pressure on the Scots to reschedule because of the circumstances."

However, it does mean Belarus have one day less to recuperate for their match against Austria.

Bomb suspect arrested in Sweden

STOCKHOLM, Sept 5: A 28-year-old man was arrested on suspicion of trying to blow up the statue that's being used as the symbol for Stockholm's bid for the Summer Olympics in the year 2004, police said Friday, reports AP.

Police said there were "strong reasons to believe" that the suspect was responsible for bombing sports stadiums in Stockholm and Gothenburg last month. The bombings have jeopardized Stockholm's chances for being chosen to stage the Olympics.

The arrest came hours before the International Olympic Committee was to choose among Stockholm and four other candidates for the 2004 Games.

During Friday morning's rush hour, police closed off the main bridge leading from central Stockholm to the historic Old Town. Police said they were searching for a suspicious object they said may have been placed there in the early hours of the morning.

They lifted the barricades several hours later. It was not known whether anything had been found.

It's teenagers' tussle



NEW YORK, Sept 5 (AP): At age 16, top-seeded Martina Hingis is the youngest of the women's semifinals at the US Open. She is also the only one of the four survivors who has ever been this far before.

Hingis, who reached the Open semis a year ago before losing to eventual champions, Steffi Graf, is back again. She faces No. 6 Lindsay Davenport.

Hingis has lost other matches, though, most notably to Davenport in Manhattan Beach, California, in early August, her last tournament before the Open. That loss left the world's No. 1 ranked player a bit wary of Davenport.



MARTINA HINGIS

who is beginning to fulfill her longtime promise, in one of Friday's semis.

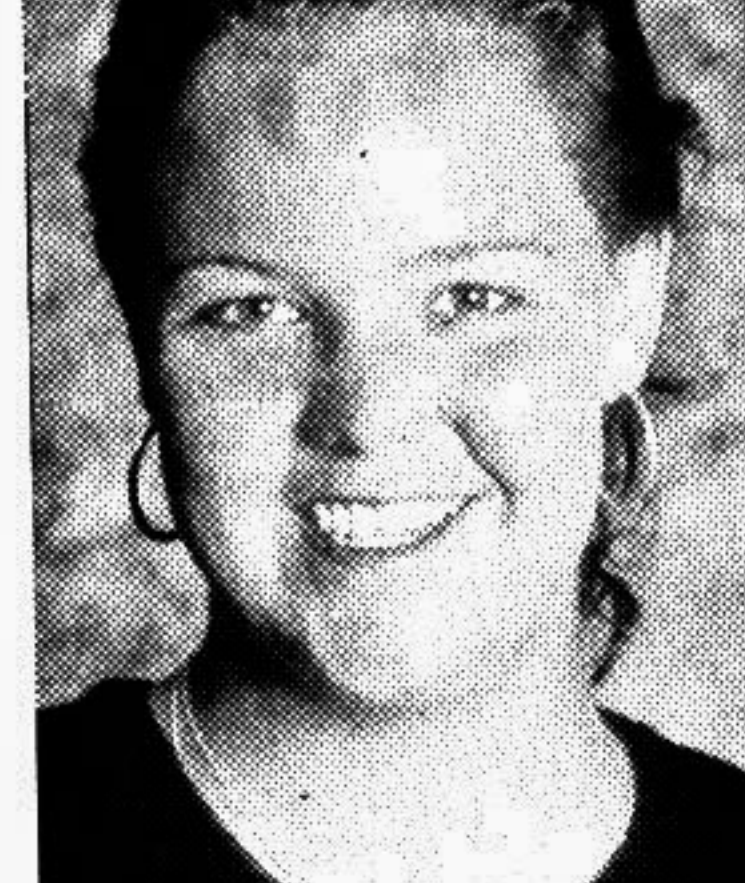
The other semifinal is between No. 11 Irina Spirella, who knocked out-time champion Monica Seles out of the tournament, and unseeded Venus Williams, who has captivated the crowds with her beaded braids and big serve.

For Hingis, the Open has been a straight-set march through five rounds in which she has rarely been threatened. "It was very easy so far for me to play this tournament," she said. "I took two weeks off so I rested very well and I was ready for the tournament."

She arrived as the heavy favorite after winning the Australian Open and Wimbledon. Her only Grand Slam loss this season came in the finals of the French Open against Iva Majoli.

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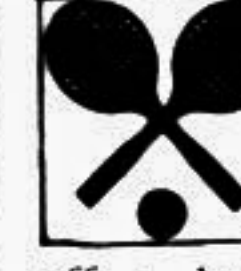


LINDSAY DAVENPORT

"I lost to her there," she said. "There is no excuse that I was tired because she beat me. She hits it very hard from the baseline. She is very aggressive and she doesn't give you many opportunities to do something yourself. She either hits a winner or misses the ball. That doesn't happen too often that she missed in the past. Especially here on hard-court in the United States she is even a class better."

Davenport is enjoying her finest Grand Slam tournament. The 1996 Olympic gold medalist has won 11 WTA Tour titles, three of them this summer. But she's never gotten past the quarterfinals in 1997.

Chang scrapes through



NEW YORK, Sept 5: Michael Chang saved some dignity for the favourites at the US Open by staving off a brilliant comeback by Chile's Marcelo Rios late Thursday night to grab the last berth in the men's semifinals, reports Reuters.

The 10th-seeded Rios, relying on a blistering forehand, came agonisingly close to striking another blow for the Open underdogs by roaring back from two sets down before falling to Chang.

Rios, cheered on by a small but enthusiastic Chilean cheering section in the upper reaches of the five-tiered Arthur Ashe Stadium, gave his all and then gave credit to Chang.

"He's a tough guy to beat and to heat him I made too many mistakes at important times," said the 21-year-old Rios.

"He's a great player and he runs every ball down."

"I knew it was going to be a tough match. Records mean nothing," said Chang, the 1989 French Open champion. "Everyone's out here fighting as hard as he can."

Rios, who had looked a step slower and tentative under the early Chang onslaught,

switched gears in the third set and from then on gave Chang all he could handle.

Hitting out on his devastating forehand and covering the court with Chang-like quickness, Rios, his long, black ponytail bouncing behind him, broke the American twice in the third set to get back into the match.

The 25-year-old Chang, the Open runner-up last year, ensured at least one big-time reputation among the men's final four by advancing to the semifinals against 13th-seed Rios.

But after Chang raced to a fast start, literally leaving scuff marks on the court after making mind-boggling dashes for amazing retrievals — Rios reached back and delivered his best tennis to heat up the atmosphere on a cool, windy night.

"It was very tricky out there," Rafter said about the wind. "It was hard to hit your shots, especially on your serves. It made for some pretty tense tennis out there."

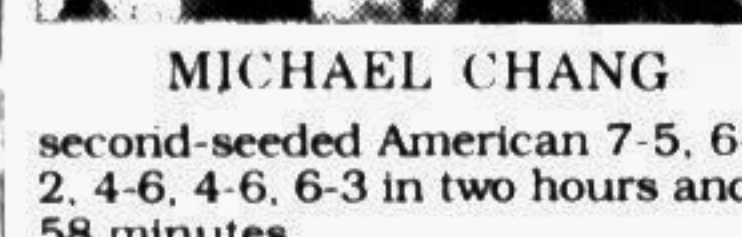
Rafter dealt with the adverse conditions by doing what he does best — patrolling the net and relying on his instincts.

"You just have to go with your strengths," the dark-haired Rafter said. "I stuck with my slice approach, which was working well and I didn't want too many rallies."

Rafter kept the rallies to a minimum with his go-for-broke serve and volley game that recalled Australian greats like John Newcombe, the last Australian to win the Open in 1973.

"They really were our idols," Rafter said about the likes of Newcombe, Tony Roche, Roy Emerson and Rod Laver. "They were like gods when you were growing up."

"Then you find out they are really great people when you get to meet them."



MICHAEL CHANG

second-seeded American 7-5, 6-2, 4-6, 4-6, 6-3 in two hours and 58 minutes.

"Tonight was just an unbelievable match," said Chang, who claimed the lone break of the final set in the penultimate game to go ahead 5-3. "It could have gone either way."

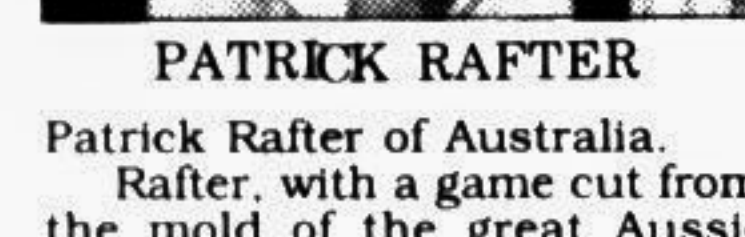
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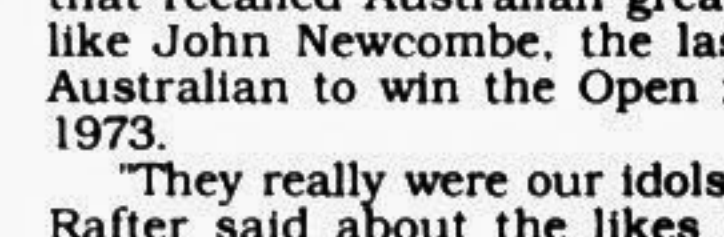
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The Daily Star TV Guide

<p>Saturday 8th September (All programmes are in local time. There may be changes in the programme.)</p> <p>BTV</p> <p>3:00 pm Opening announcement. Al Quran programme summary 3:10 Reflection from the Trip: 3:15 Patriotic Songs 3:20 Movie of the Week 4:00 News 5:25 Sports Programme 5:40 Open University 6:20 Samachar 6:50 Nebadon 7:00 The News 7:05 Health Tatika 7:25 Giti Tatika 8:00 News in Bangla 8:25 Bangla 9:05 Robocop 10:00 News 11:30 News in Bangla 11:35 Sunday Programme Summary 11:40 Close down</p> <p>BBC</p> <p>6:00 BBC World News 6:30 World Living: Tomorrow's World: Time Machine 7:00 BBC World News 7:05 Weekend World: Horizon 8:00 BBC World News 8:30 World News 9:30 Hard Talk 10:30 BBC World News 10:30 World Focus: Window On</p>	<p>Europe 11:00 BBC World News 11:30 Hard Talk: Special 12:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 12:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 1:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 2:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 2:30 The Funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales 3:00 The Funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales 3:05 The Funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales 4:00 The Funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales 4:30 The Funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales 5:00 The Funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales 5:30 The Week 6:00pm BBC Newsdesk Special 6:05 BBC Newsdesk Special 7:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 7:05 BBC Newsdesk Special 8:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 8:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 9:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 9:05 BBC Newsdesk Special 10:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 11:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 11:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 12:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 12:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 1:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 1:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 2:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 2:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 3:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 3:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 4:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 4:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 5:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 5:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 6:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 6:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 7:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 7:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 8:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 8:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 9:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 9:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 10:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 10:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 11:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 11:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 12:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 12:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 1:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 1:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 2:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 2:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 3:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 3:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 4:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 4:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 5:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 5:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 6:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 6:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 7:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 7:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 8:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 8:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 9:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 9:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 10:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 10:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 11:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 11:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 12:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 12:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 1:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 1:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 2:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 2:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 3:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 3:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 4:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 4:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 5:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 5:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 6:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 6:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 7:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 7:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 8:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 8:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 9:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 9:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 10:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 10:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 11:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 11:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 12:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 12:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 1:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 1:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 2:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 2:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 3:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 3:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 4:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 4:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 5:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 5:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 6:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 6:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 7:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 7:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 8:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 8:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 9:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 9:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 10:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 10:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 11:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 11:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 12:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 12:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 1:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 1:30 BBC Newsdesk Special 2:00 BBC Newsdesk Special 2:30 BBC Newsdesk Special </p>
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