

Saurav signs for Omega

CALCUTTA, Jan 20: Omega, the world leader in watches has decided to appoint Saurav Ganguly its 'brand ambassador', to promote its range of products in India, reports PTI.

"Omega has a tradition of awarding excellence. As part of this tradition we have decided to make Saurav Ganguly as one of our Indian brand ambassadors," Ravi Thakral regional manager of SMH Group, makers of Omega, told a press conference here.

The appointment puts Saurav in line with international celebrities like super model Cindy Crawford, tennis star Martina Hingis, golfer Nick Faldo and racing car driver Michael Schumacher who are also Omega's ambassadors.

Actress Shabana Azmi, model Sushmita Sen and space traveller Rakesh Sharma were also Omega's Indian brand ambassadors, who had appeared in Omega's promotional events in India during 1996 and 1997, Thakral said.

Ctg soccer

CHITTAGONG, Jan 20: Chandanika Ekadash will face Chalanika Krira Chakra in the final match of the Ispahani Mahanagari Pioneer football league '97 at Dampara Police Lines ground tomorrow, reports BSS.

Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Eng Mosharraf Hossain is expected to witness the match and distribute prizes as the chief guest.

Seventeen teams participated in the league, organised by the Chittagang Mahanagari Krira Sangstha.

Michel lays it out

RABAT, Jan 20: Morocco's French coach Henri Michel revealed his side's programme of warm-up friendlies for the World Cup finals on Monday, reports AFP.

Michel, who coached France to the 1986 World Cup semi-finals and was in charge of Cameroon at the 1994 finals, said that he would mainly rely on the forthcoming African Nations' Cup, which begins in Burkina Faso on February 7.

Morocco will also play host to France at Casablanca on May 16 and 17.

Michel added that apart from a friendly with Chile in Avignon, France, on June 4 he would base the rest of his team's preparations on how they fared in the nations' cup.

At the World Cup finals Morocco have been drawn in group One along with Brazil, Norway and Scotland.

Tyson ready to wrestle!

FRESMO, California, Jan 20: Mike Tyson was expected Monday to announce that he would let Tyson wrestle.

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Selectors set to pick Lara's team

Dean awaits baptism of fire



KINGSTON, Jamaica, Jan 20 (AFP/AP): England left-hander Dean Headley refuses the theory that he is at his best against left-handers.

There's no dispute that Headley's natural inswing — way from the left-handers — gave the likes of Australian captain Mark Taylor and Matthew Elliott their fair share of problems last summer.

He also grilled Jimmy Adams in England's innings victory over Jamaica in Montego Bay, twice in three balls causing him to pull away after being hit.

To counter West Indies' captain Brian Lara, rated as the world's top left-hander, Headley would appear to be the right man.

"Yes, I do reasonably well against left-handers," admitted the 27-year-old Kent bowler.

"I get it a lot that I get left-handers out. I seem to have bowled to quite a few for England."

"But before then I hadn't bowled to that many really. But people are always talking about it. It is like throwing five years of my career out of the window."

Lara is a key player, and against the key players you try to step up a gear to make sure they don't succeed.

"Jimmy Adams is a friend of mine, so I didn't want to give him an inch. But it was just a case of me hitting my rhythm when he came in. On a pitch like that your main concern is that you bowl wicket-to-wicket, so they always have to play you."

"The fact that one ball hit him in the box and another on the gloves was governed by where I pitched the ball on that wicket. We're still friends."

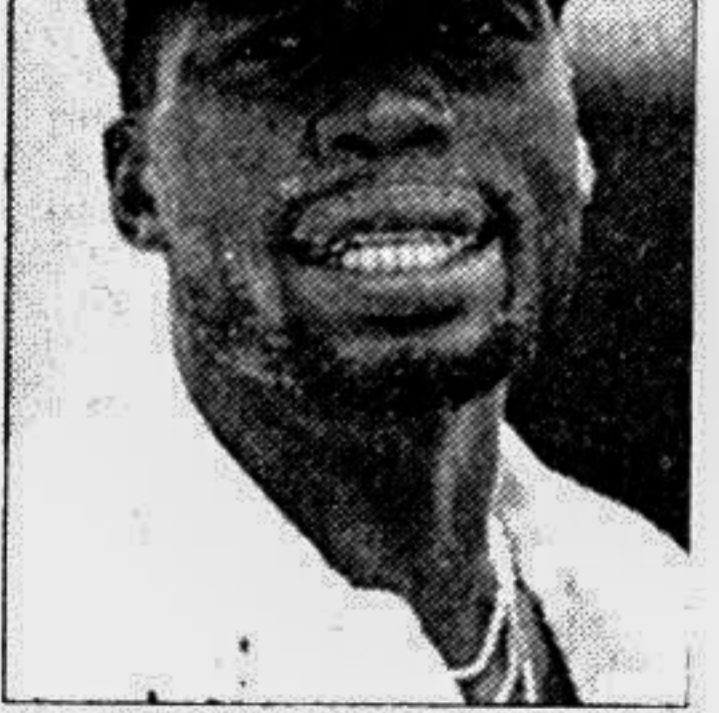
He returned match figures of nine for 46 to send England speeding to an innings and 65 runs victory with more than a day to spare at Jarrett Park.

It might have been the big

Headley show on a special, personal stage, but he is quick to emphasise that he is just one part of the England 'unit'.

"I don't think this series is going to be won by the individual player. I think it will be a collective responsibility. Of course, you are going to get people bowling well through the tour," he said.

The West Indies selectors,



CURTLY AMBROSE

meanwhile, meet on Tuesday to pick their first side under Lara's captaincy, buoyed by Courtney Walsh's decision to bowl on to towards Malcolm Marshall's record of 376 wickets, and Curtly Ambrose's assurance that he has no plans of hanging up his bowling boots.

The champion fast bowler denied reports that he had prepared a letter of retirement, insisting he was available for the five-Test series.

"I'm not done yet and only Curtly knows when to call it quits," Ambrose said in a radio interview. "I still have something to offer to West Indies cricket."

Reports of his retirement, he said, were "just a vicious rumour."

Ambrose said he had been "getting calls from all over the world" in response to the rumours.

The 34-year-old Antiguan has taken 307 wickets in 74 Tests, 117 of them against England, and has been the spearhead of the attack since he came into the team in 1988.

He was forced to come home early from the recent West Indies tour of Pakistan because of a back injury and has been bowling his best form in two Presidents' Cup matches for the Leeward Islands in the current West Indies season.

But he maintained he was fit and ready to play.

"I'm still standing strong," he said in the radio interview, dismissing conjecture that he was on the decline.

"When you set yourself certain standards and you don't live up to that standard in a game or two, people start to talk," he said. "But I know myself and I know my capabilities so I'm not to worried. I know I'm OK."

Walsh and Ambrose have taken 660 Test wickets between them, and Trinidad's Ian Bishop — beyond the 150 mark in Tests — must be in the frame for the series opener after claiming five for 32 against the Windward Islands to receive the man-of-the-match award.

They are formidable statistics confronting England, and all three are in form.

Ambrose, who did not play in the Champions' Trophy in Sharjah because of shoulder trouble, bowled 28 overs in the recent match against Guyana to prove his fitness.

Pace newcomers Franklyn Rose and the highly rated Marvin Dillon should also be in the squad to support the big men.

Jamaica's dependable Sherwin Campbell could partner Stuart Williams at the top of the batting order, and it may be down to a choice of Adams or Trinidad's all-rounder Phil Simmons for the No 6 berth.

Rahmatganj beat Farashganj

Rahmatganj Muslim Friends Society completed the second phase engagements of the Premier Division football league with a 1-0 victory over Farashganj Sporting Club at the Mirpur Stadium yesterday, reports UNB.

Milan netted the match-winner for Rahmatganj in the 55th minute.

With this third win from 18 league matches, Rahmatganj have collected 17 points while Farashganj, who earlier booked a seat for the super league, remained at previous 19 points from 18 outings.

The five-team super league involving Mohammedan Sporting Club, Muktijoddha Sangsad, Abahani Krira Chakra, Brothers Union and Farashganj SC will begin on February 10.

TEAMS
RAHMATGANJ MFS: Pannu, Pons, Kamal, Shafiq, Adil (Awlad), Nayan, Asif, Badal, Saiful (Tipu), Towhid (Jahangir) and Milan.

FARASHGANJ SC: Newshad, Kajal, Montu, Din Mohammad (Pintu), Dulal, Selim, Chanchal (Mithu), Sakawat, Akhtar, Babu Das and Uttam (Rabi).

Referee: Golam Mustafa.

Zia Smriti cricket

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Jan 20: S M Khan Smriti Sangha defeated Rajarhata Tarun Sangha by one wicket in the 10th Shaheed Zia Smriti cricket tournament played today at the Rajshahi Government College playground.

Rajarhata won the toss and batted first to collect 149 runs in 22 overs losing six wickets.

Rana and Shiplu made 32 and 20 runs respectively for the winners.

In reply, S M Khan Smriti Sangha made 150 runs for nine wickets in 21.3 overs.

Rupan and Selim bagged 43 and 20 runs respectively for the winners.

Ranga took four wickets for 25 runs.

In the second match of the day at the same venue, Dishari Sangha defeated Wanderers Cricket Club by seven wickets.

Winning the toss Wanderers Club batted first and made 124 runs for nine wickets in the stipulated 22 overs.

Manoj scored glorious 53 runs for Wanderers.

In reply, Dishari Sangha made 125 runs for three wickets in 20.2 overs.

Biju collected 59 runs.

AUSSIE OPEN AT A GLANCE

MELBOURNE, Jan 20 (AP): Highlights of Tuesday's second day of the 6.7 million dollars Australian Open tennis championships:

Weather: Overcast. Afternoon temperature was 77 degrees (25 C).

Results: Men's singles, first round — No 3 Michael Chang beat Kenneth Carlsen 6-3, 7-6 (7/2), 5-7, 6-3; No 5 Greg Rusedski beat David Witt 7-6 (7/4), 6-3, 6-4; Jan Apell beat No 8 Thomas Muster 6-4, 7-6 (7/5), 7-5; No 9 Marcelo Rios beat Grant Stafford 6-1, 6-0, 6-3; No 12 Gustavo Kuerten beat Jacobo Diaz 6-3, 3-6, 6-3, 6-2; Jan Siemerink beat No 13 Goran Ivanisevic 6-2, 7-6 (7/3), 3-6, 6-4.

Women's Singles, First Round: No 1 Martina Hingis beat Wiltrud Probst 6-1, 6-2; No 7 Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario beat Janet Lee 6-0, 6-4; No 9 Sandrine Testud beat Leon Garcia 6-3, 6-2; No 10 Anke Huber beat Sarah Pitkowski 5-7, 6-0, 6-0; No 14 Dominique Van Roost beat Rene Simpson 6-3, 6-2; No 16 Al Sugiyama beat Maria Sanchez Lorenzo 4-6, 6-1, 6-3; No 11 Brenda Schultz-McCarthy beat Marion Maruska 7-6 (8/6), 7-5.

Stat of the Day: 27 — the number of aces served by Greg Rusedski in his first-round win over David Witt.

Quote of the Day: "We have real turkey here and processed turkey in the Challengers. Actually, it's not true, we have processed turkey here too." — Andre Agassi on the difference between playing the Challengers circuit and a Grand Slam tournament.

Note: The writer was a national player and a non-playing captain of the Bangladesh Davis Cup team.

Muster, Ivanisevic exit



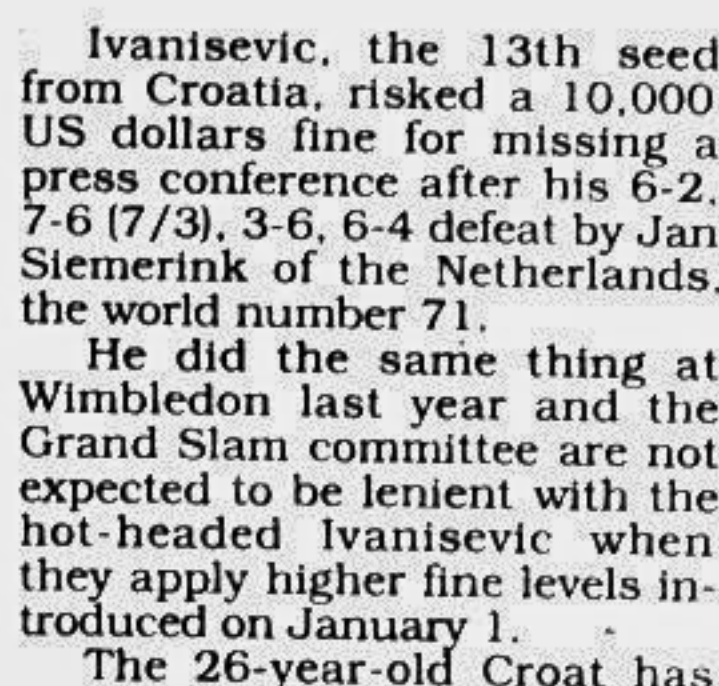
MELBOURNE, Jan 20: Upstart challengers dumped men's seeds Thomas Muster and Goran Ivanisevic on the second day of the Australian Open tennis today, reports AFP.

There was no problem reaching the second round for women's number one Martina Hingis, or men's third seed Michael Chang and a host of other top names.

Ivanisevic, the 13th seed from Croatia, risked a 10,000 US dollars fine for missing a press conference after his 6-2, 7-6 (7/3), 3-6, 6-4 defeat by Jan Siemerink of the Netherlands, the world number 71.

He did the same thing at Wimbledon last year and the Grand Slam committee are not expected to be lenient with the hot-headed Ivanisevic when they apply higher fine levels introduced on January 1.

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you can start talking about contending and trying to win the title.

Michael Chang, the American-Chinese third seed, needed three hours and two minutes, the longest match of the tournament so far, to beat Denmark's Kenneth Carlsen 6-3, 7-6 (7/2), 5-7, 6-3.

The second set alone lasted 69 minutes. Chang, who pulled out of the Kooyong Classic last week with a stomach muscle injury, said: "It was a good first

round workout."

Brazil's Gustavo Kuerten, the French Open champion and number 12 seed, beat Jacobo Diaz of Spain 6-3, 3-6, 6-3, 6-2. Sixteenth seed, Albert Costa of Spain, beat Tommy Haas of Germany 7-6 (7/5), 6-2, 6-4.

Former Australian Open champion Andre Agassi, making a comeback after his ranking slumped to 141 last year, beat Marzio Martelli of Italy 6-3, 6-7 (3/7), 6-2, 6-2.

Hingis eased into the second round by beating Wiltrud Probst of Germany 6-1, 6-2 in a quickfire 53 minutes.

Her victory means both the top seeds are safely past the first round, men's favourite Pete Sampras qualified on Monday.

Women's seventh seed Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario of Spain followed up her victory in the Sydney tournament last week by beating Janet Lee of Taiwan 6-0, 6-4.

Ninth seed Sandrine Testud of France beat Gala Leon Garcia of Spain 6-3, 6-2. Anke Huber, the 10th seed from Germany, beat Sarah Pitkowski of France 5-7, 6-0, 6-0 big serving 11th seed Brenda Schultz-McCarthy of the Netherlands beat Marion Maruska of Austria 7-6 (8/6), 7-5.

Fourteenth seed Dominique van Roost of Belgium ousted Rene Simpson of Canada 6-3, 6-2 but only after needing treatment to an injured shoulder.

Japan's 16th seed Ai Sugiyama came back from a set down against Maria-Antonia Sanchez Lorenzo of Spain to win 4-6, 6-1, 6-3.

Then said "I was not nearly so good as she was when I was 15."

She is now ranked 52 in the world, but that is bound to shoot up even though she is only allowed to play 14 tournaments this year. They will include all four majors this year. She was beaten by world number two Jana Novotna in the third round of the US Open and Australia is her second Grand Slam.

Top Australian coaches John Newcombe and Tony Roche have taken Lucie under their wing and they are pushing her to come more to the net and she is to become a doubles partner with her close friend Martina Hingis.

While Venus and Serena Williams have stated they plan to be number one and two in women's tennis by the end of the year, Lucie says she has ambition but is keeping it to herself.

"Yeah I have a target but I really don't like to talk about it. I'm not planning to put any pressure on myself because it is really not necessary," said Lucie.

Of a Croatian livewire



MELBOURNE, Jan 20 (AFP): The sight of Mirjana Lucic, the 15-year-old Croat, hitting back opponents' serves two metres (six feet) inside the baseline has got the Australian Open in awe.

The 1.81 metre (5 ft 11 inch) right hander is the youngest player on the women's Tour but has one of the most aggressive baseline games and says she will not be changing to take on fellow-Croat Iva Majoli, the number four seed and French Open champion, on Wednesday in the second round.

"It doesn't matter who I play against. I always stand there," said Lucie, the youngest competitor at the Open and one of the leading members of the pack of emerging teenagers.

"I have always stood inside the baseline, but now I've practised doing it a little more. I'm standing up even further, even when I play against men. I always stay there. I feel comfortable there."

By standing so far inside the baseline, Lucie can return balls

