

Euro 2000
Belgium, Britain to collaborate on security

BRUSSELS, Jan 16: The Belgian and British Foreign Ministers said Tuesday that the two countries were collaborating in a bid to avoid crowd trouble at Euro 2000, to be co-hosted by Belgium and Holland next June and July, the Belga news agency reported Tuesday, reports AFP.

Britain's Foreign Secretary Robin Cook met his Belgian counterpart Louis Michel and insisted there was close collaboration between Britain and both host nations.

Cook said: "We are doing everything to ensure that Euro 2000 goes well. Top level officials from both countries are in permanent contact and are exchanging information so everything goes off in the best possible way."

Belgium is particularly sensitive to the problem of football violence.

In 1985, Brussels staged the European Cup final between Liverpool and Juventus in which 39 people died after a stampede caused by rioting Liverpool fans.

England's Group A match with bitter rivals Germany in the Belgian city of Charleroi is one obvious flashpoint that Belgian police will be eager to control.

Kiefer keen on Sydney Games

MELBOURNE, Jan 16: Davis Cup stayaway Nicolas Kiefer says there's "no chance" he will be dropped from Germany's Olympic Games tennis team in retribution for his Cup no-show this year, reports AFP.

Kiefer, preparing here for next week's Australian Open, announced Wednesday he would not be available for the Davis Cup because of his busy ATP Tour playing commitments.

"My schedule is very busy this year, and I've said I'm happy to play Davis Cup for Germany next year and hopefully we're going to win," said Kiefer Thursday.

Kiefer, 22, has not played in the Davis Cup since a fallout last May with team boss Boris Becker, who no longer holds this post.

Asked his reaction to suggestions that the German federation may not choose him in their team for the September Olympics, Kiefer said:

"There is no chance because I'm the number one player and I'm going for the Olympics."

Kiefer said it was his ambition to play at the Olympics.

"It's a great event and it's a chance for me to play at the Olympics, it's every four years, and it will be a great experience for me."

"I saw it on TV when I was young, and the dream is coming true."

Kiefer's decision not to play Davis Cup has split German tennis ranks with No. 2 player Tommy Haas saying last month: "I am not sure whether Nicolas is a team player, maybe he has a team spirit... maybe he thinks more about his personal career."

Trinidad-Reid bout Mar 3

LAS VEGAS, Jan 16: Felix Trinidad and Olympic gold medalist David Reid will fight one night earlier than planned, with promoter Don King asking Nevada boxing officials for a March 3 bout in an outdoor stadium on the Las Vegas Strip, reports AP.

King had wanted the fight for March 4, but rival promoter had already secured pay-per-view rights for the date for another fight and King was forced to move a bout first announced in November.

King sent a letter to the Nevada Athletic Commission late Thursday asking that the March 3 date be reserved.

Trinidad, coming off a win over Oscar De La Hoya, is moving up to 70 kilos (154 pounds) to challenge Reid for his WBA junior middleweight title in a matchup of two undefeated boxers.

The fight is scheduled for a 10,000-seat outdoor stadium that will be constructed at Caesar's Palace.

The promoter Bob Arum thwarted plans for the March 4 date by locking up the pay-per-view capabilities for that night for a fight between WBA bantamweight champion Paulie Ayalu and Denmark's Johnny Bredal.

The two fights are part of a busy Las Vegas weekend in which hotels are expected to be packed with racing fans for the Las Vegas 400 Winston Cup race on March 5 that will draw some 120,000 people to the Las Vegas Speedway.

Jones Jr retains WBC crown

NEW YORK, Jan 16: Roy Jones Jr remained the undisputed light heavyweight champion of the world with a unanimous decision over fellow American David Telesto at Radio City Music Hall on Saturday night, reports Reuters.

Jones, whose 31st birthday came at midnight as Saturday turned to Sunday, retained the World Boxing Council, World Boxing Association and International Boxing Federation titles as two judges scored it 120-108 and the third judge had it 120-106.

Jones, who has won world titles in three weight classes, has lost only once in 43 fights, on a disqualification when he bit Montell Griffin while he was on one knee.

Telesto, also 31, is now 23-3. After the fight, Jones said he had fractured his left wrist 2 1/2 weeks before the fight but refused to back out of it even though he could not make a complete fist and had use only of his right hand.

Likely leading ladies

CORDING TO many in the game,

She trounced Hingis in the final of the season-ending Chase Championship in New York and won all three meetings with the Swiss miss last year in straight sets.

Hingis, who only won one Grand Slam in 1999, admits it is shaping up to be a tough tournament, but also pointed to the top three as her main threats.

Others are playing well and she is ready to challenge for the big four this season.

Unknown a year ago, Mauresmo has floored the tennis world with her athleticism.

The bouncy Rebound ace surface used here seems to suit her game.

She unexpectedly made the final last year and showed over the past week she now has the mental toughness to mix it with the top two.

"There are a lot of tough players to beat in a Grand Slam," said Mauresmo. "I am one of them."

Serena Williams is also in that mould.

The 17-year-old has made an astonishing advance in the past 12 months, winning 17 out of 20 matches against top 10 players, including three against Hingis — most notably the US Open.

The awesome African-American is sitting at a career-high world No. 4 and apart from sister Venus, who's out of the tournament with tendonitis of the left wrist, no other player came close to matching her in strength, confidence and skill last year.

But by opting to miss warm-ups in Hong Kong, the Gold Coast and Sydney, she may lack match practice.

Davenport, beaten in the semis by Mauresmo last year, said every player was different but wanted Williams to find it hard to adapt.

"It's really windy, if it's really, really hot some of those factors can wear on you if you are not used to them, whereas if you have been down here [in Australia] a little longer you are a bit more prepared," she said.

With Steffi Graf retired, serve-and-volley specialist Jana Novotna bowing out and Monica Seles, a four-time Open champion, injured, the field appears wide open.

Davenport, who says she's in better shape than ever, puts Hingis and Williams as her main threats and singled out Pierce as in the "second tier" of challengers.

I really think Martina, the William's sisters and myself this last year have kind of been the ones — and Steffi but she's retired — that won the big tournaments and came through at the end," she said in Sydney.

"I would look at the top four seeds, Mary [Pierce] as well, but really Martina, Serena and myself are the top favourites."

With the winner taking home 717,000 Australian dollars (466,000 US), there's much to play for.

While Hingis ended the season with the prized No. 1 ranking, Wimbledon champion Davenport, another big-hitter, has a more legitimate claim to the title of world's best player, according to Court 3.

Nicolas Escude, France, vs Jim Courier, United States.

Nathalie Tauziat (5), France, vs Henrieta Nagyova, Slovakia.

Todd Martin (8), United States, vs Byron Black, Zimbabwe.

Alexandra Stevenson, United States, vs Asa Carlsson, Sweden.

Court 1

Tim Henman (11), Britain, vs Jerome Golmard, France.

Kuti Kis, Hungary, vs Jelena Dokic, Australia.

Thomas Enqvist (6), Sweden, vs Richard Fromberg, Australia.

Annele Mauresmo (7), France, vs Cristina Torrens Valero, Spain.

Court 2

Jennifer Capriati, United States, vs Barbara Schwartz, Austria.

Richard Krajicek (9), Netherlands, vs Fabrice Santoro, France.

Mary Pierce (4), France, vs Linda Wild, United States.

Andre Ilie, Australia, vs Jeff Tarango, United States.

DAY ONE SCHEDULE

The schedule of matches Monday on the opening at the Australian Open.

Rod Laver Arena

Lindsay Davenport, (2), United States, vs Sarah Pitowski, France.

Andre Agassi (1), United States, vs Mariano Puerta, Argentina.

Mark Philippoussis (16), Australia, vs Noam Okun, Israel.

Night session

Anna Kournikova (11), Russia, vs Patricia Wartusch, Austria.

Pete Sampras (3), United States, vs Wayne Arthurs, Australia.

Other show courts

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Tim Henman (11), Britain, vs Jerome Golmard, France.

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Todd Martin (8), United States, vs Byron Black, Zimbabwe.

Alexandra Stevenson, United States, vs Asa Carlsson, Sweden.

Court 4

Jennifer Capriati, United States, vs Barbara Schwartz, Austria.

Richard Krajicek (9), Netherlands, vs Fabrice Santoro, France.

Mary Pierce (4), France, vs Linda Wild, United States.

Andre Ilie, Australia, vs Jeff Tarango, United States.

Court 5

Nicolas Escude, France, vs Jim Courier, United States.

Nathalie Tauziat (5), France, vs Henrieta Nagyova, Slovakia.

Todd Martin (8), United States, vs Byron Black, Zimbabwe.

Alexandra Stevenson, United States, vs Asa Carlsson, Sweden.

Court 6

Jennifer Capriati, United States, vs Barbara Schwartz, Austria.

Richard Krajicek (9), Netherlands, vs Fabrice Santoro, France.

Mary Pierce (4), France, vs Linda Wild, United States.

Andre Ilie, Australia, vs Jeff Tarango, United States.

Court 7

Nicolas Escude, France, vs Jim Courier, United States.

Nathalie Tauziat (5), France, vs Henrieta Nagyova, Slovakia.

Todd Martin (8), United States, vs Byron Black, Zimbabwe.

Alexandra Stevenson, United States, vs Asa Carlsson, Sweden.

Court 8

Jennifer Capriati, United States, vs Barbara Schwartz, Austria.

Richard Krajicek (9), Netherlands, vs Fabrice Santoro, France.

Mary Pierce (4), France, vs Linda Wild, United States.

Andre Ilie, Australia, vs Jeff Tarango, United States.

Court 9

Nicolas Escude, France, vs Jim Courier, United States.

Nathalie Tauziat (5), France, vs Henrieta Nagyova, Slovakia.

Todd Martin (8), United States, vs Byron Black, Zimbabwe.

Alexandra Stevenson, United States, vs Asa Carlsson, Sweden.

Court 10

Jennifer Capriati, United States, vs Barbara Schwartz, Austria.

Richard Krajicek (9), Netherlands, vs Fabrice Santoro, France.

Mary Pierce (4), France, vs Linda Wild, United States.

Andre Ilie, Australia, vs Jeff Tarango, United States.

Court 11

Nicolas Escude, France, vs Jim Courier, United States.

Nathalie Tauziat (5), France, vs Henrieta Nagyova, Slovakia.

Todd Martin (8), United States, vs Byron Black, Zimbabwe.

Alexandra Stevenson, United States, vs Asa Carlsson, Sweden.

Court 12

Jennifer Capriati, United States, vs Barbara Schwartz, Austria.

Richard Krajicek (9), Netherlands, vs Fabrice Santoro, France.

Mary Pierce (4), France, vs Linda Wild, United States.

Andre Ilie, Australia, vs Jeff Tarango, United States.

Court 13

Nicolas Escude, France, vs Jim Courier, United States.

Nathalie Tauziat (5), France, vs Henrieta Nagyova, Slovakia.

Todd Martin (8), United States, vs Byron Black, Zimbabwe.

Alexandra Stevenson, United States, vs Asa Carlsson, Sweden.

Court 14

Jennifer Capri