### Blatter all for Africa

ACCRA, Jan 22: The multimillion dollar chase to land the biggest prize in football - the World Cup - moved into over drive here this week as the five bidding countries began a worldwide tour in search of votes, reports AFP.

"It is logical that the 2006 World Cup should be in Africa, said Blatter, here for the African Nations Cup which kicks-off on Saturday.

He added that FIFA had already begun an unofficial rotation system for appointing World Cup hosts - the USA in 1994, France in 1998, South Korea and Japan in 2002.

But Blatter warned that all would depend on the report of the FIFA evaluation comm. tee which is visiting the bidding

Earlier this week, committee boss Alan Rotherberg delivered a severe blow to Brazil's 2006 hopes by saying the stadium were not up to the stiff standards set down by FIFA.

"All the stadiums in a general manner need important reforms to adapt to the norms of world football's governing body," said the American.

Rothenberg and his team will visit Morocco and South Africa, both vying to become the first African nation to host a World Cup, at the beginning of

We will know more when we get the reports," said Blatter. Then we will know which candidates can go on."

But the FIFA president stressed that he was a friend of

Africa. "Here I do not feel I ar in your home but that I am in my home," declared Blatter during a joint press conference with African Football Confederation (CAF) president and FIFA executive committee vice-president Issa Hayatou.

Looking at Hayatou, Blatter added: "I am convinced African members on the executive committee will see to it that this legitimate claim will become a reality.'

FIFA's 24-man executive committee, which includes four African members, will decide on the World Cup 2006 host in Zurich next July.

Opposing Brazil, Morocco and South Africa are England and Germany.

Hayatou admitted that the African claim could be harmed by the fact there are two African nations bidding.

"I have tried for over a year to try to get them to reach an agreement so we have a s. igle candidate. We have no power within CAF to force one side or the other to stand down. The only way out is for one of the two sides to pull out," he said.

The CAF president added that he hoped a solution can be found by the end of April.

According to African football sources the FIFA evaluation report could be used as a basis for a solution - the country getting the best report being allowed to be the continent's sole candidate.

### Africa stars lead anti-polio campaign

ACCRA, Jan 22: Africa's top football stars launched a campaign here on Friday to rid the continent of polio by the end of

the year, reports AFP. Backed by FIFA and the World Health Organisation George Weah, Jay Jay Okocha, Marcel Desailly and Abedi Pele have banded together to make a series of television and radio

spots to support the campaign. "Every child in Africa has to be vaccinated so they can have the chance to grow up without fear of this crippling dise use. Together we can do it. We lave kick polio out of Africa," said Pele here on Friday.

The WHO plan to vaccinate 125 million children under five by the end of 200.

#### Hayatou re-elected as CAF boss

ACCRA, Jan 22: Issa Hayatou of Cameroon firmly underlined his position as the most powerful man in African football when he was re-elected as president of the Confederation of African Football (CAF) here on Thursday, reports AFP.

Hayatou defeated Angolan Armando Machado 47-4 at the 24th CAF congress to win a fourth, four-year term. It was the first time he had been opposed for the position.

But more importantly for the 53-year-old Hayatou was that his bid to become the first African president of FIFA, the world's world governing body,

was firmly back on track. Hayatou's presidential dreams looked to be all but destroyed two years ago when he backed UEFA chief Lennart Johansson in his bitter battle against Sepp Blatter to replace Joao Havelange as FIFA presi-

dent. A last minute switch on the eve of the vote in Paris by some Africa delegates saw Blatter

sweep aside the burly Swede. Hayatou, who had hoped to deliver the African vote to Johansson, was stunned and embarassed and appeared to be a

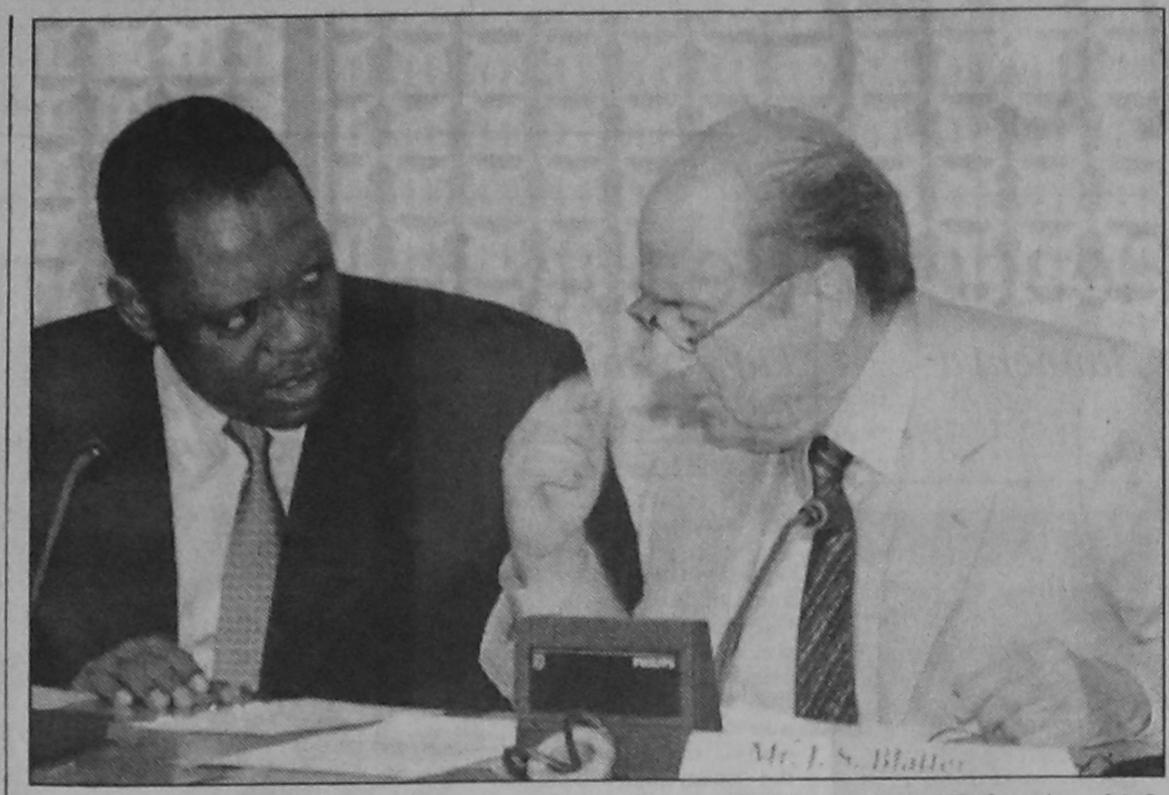
spent force in Africa. But Thursday's vote in the Ghana captial proved that Hayatou, also a FIFA vicepresident, was back on top.

He also increased his influence when the congress agreed to give more power to CAF's ex-

ecutive committee. Hayatou's victory was made ever sweeter by the fact that Blatter was there to witness it. When the final count was announced Hayatou, his arm around Machado, marched back into the Accra International Conference Center to the

strain of a Mali folk group

singing his praises.



FIFA president Sepp Blatter (R) discusses something with African Soccer Federation chief Issa Hayatou during a press conference, organised in connection with the African Nations' Cup in Ghana and Nigeria, in Accra on January 21. -AFP photo

World Cup 2006

## Bidding battle reaching climax



ACCRA, Jan 22: The multi-million dollar chase to land the biggest prize in football the World Cup -

moved into over drive here this week as the five bidding countries began a worldwide tour in search of

votes, reports AFP. England, Morocco, South Africa and Germany all turned up in the Ghanaian capital to meet African delegates at the African Football Confederation (CAF) congress to push their

Only Brazil stayed away. With only six months before

FIFA's 24-strong executive committee meets in Zurich to decide the host of the 2006 World Cup the five candidates know that one vote could decide the outcome. In the next five months the

five will circle the world, lobbying the members of the five other confederations that make up FIFA.

The early leaders are South Africa and Germany according to FIFA and AFC sources, followed by England, Morocco and Brazil.

The Brazilian campaign recieved a severe blow this week when the head of FIFA's evaluation committee announced that the country's stadia were not up to scratch.

"All the stadia in a general manner need important reforms to adapt to the norms of world football's governing body," said Allan Rothenberg. Rothenberg and his committee have already visited England and Germany, both pass-

They tour South Africa and Morocco in March. But all five know that the final decision rests on more that

ing with flying colours.

the evaluation report. "If that was the case it would be simple," admitted one senior FIFA official

"There are a lot of other factors - especially politics. The country that best understands that has the best chance." he

Africa's case that it is their turn to finally host a World Cup were boosted Friday by FIFA president Sepp Blatter.

"It is logical that the 2006 World Cup should be in Africa, said Blatter, here for the African Nations Cup which kicks-off on Saturday. He added that FIFA had al-

ready begun an unofficial rotation system for appointing World Cup hosts - the USA in 1994, France in 1998, South Korea and Japan in 2002. But Blatter's pro-African

stance is unlikely to have little effect on FIFA's executive committee who according to one FIFA member is more divided than it has ever been.

"Blatter does not have the say with the executive committee that Joao Havelange had when he was president," said a FIFA insider.

It is this split that convinces England's bid boss Alec McGivan that the battle is far from

# Kafelnikov, Norman win



MELBOURNE, Jan 22 (Reuters/AP): Defending champion Yevgeny Kafelnikov crushed unseeded Austrian Stelm Koubek 6-3, 6-3, 6-4

in the third round of the Australian Open today. Kafelnikov, seeded second, produced a convincing display of controlled aggression and precision reminiscent of the form which carried him to the

title last year. Kafelnikov's flashy, allcourt game overwhelmed Koubek, a 23-year-old left-han-

der whose best results have been The Russian cruised through the first two sets in 52 minutes

and then grabbed an important break of serve in the opening game of the final set. "I was quite relieved when

the weather turned out to be bad," Kafelnikov said. "I felt if I played indoors my chances would be a lot higher. I served quite well enough and didn't give Stefan any chance."

In the round of 16, he meets Belgian qualifier Christophe Rochus, who beat Max Mirnyi of Belarus 3-6, 6-4, 6-3, 7-6.

No. 12 Magnus Norman took a 5-1 lead in the third set and then waited out the rain before finishing a 6-4, 6-4, 7-6 victory over fellow Swede Jonas Bjorkman.

France's Arnaud Clement defeated Swiss player Roger Federer 6-1, 6-4, 6-3

Koubek, playing in only his fifth Grand Slam tournament, double-faulted to give Kafelnikov two break points and then clubbed a backhand long to surrender the serve. The 25-year-old Russian

sealed a comfortable win in 82 minutes, with the retractable roof over Melbourne park's Centre Court closed after rain stopped play on outside courts. Kafelnikov is hoping to become the eighth man in the

Open era of tennis to win backto-back Australian titles. The last to do so was American Jim Courier in 1992-93. He is in the easier bottom

half of the men's singles draw, away from tournament heavyweights Andre Agassi, Pete Sampras and Mark Philippous-

Nicolas Kiefer, the last remaining German in the men's draw, kept his nation's hopes alive with a straights sets win over Moroccan Karim Alami.

The fourth seed outplayed Alami to win 6-3, 6-4, 6-2 in 99 minutes, advancing to the round of 16 after the six other Germans who entered the men's singles failed to make it past the second round.

Kiefer told reporters his form was steadily improving. "It's my best match so far. I didn't make too many mistakes," he said.

Kiefer won the Australian Open junior title in 1995 and reached the quarter-finals of the seniors in 1998, the same stage he reached at Wimbledon the previous year.

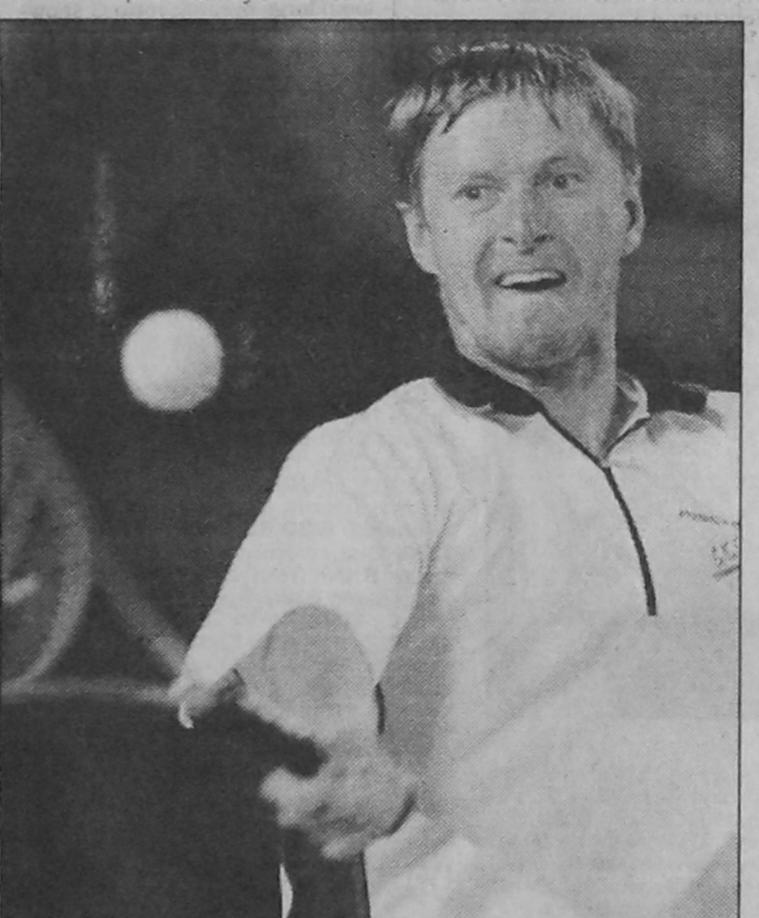
While all the attention has been on Andre Agassi and Pete Sampras, the 22-year-old Kiefer has quietly progressed through the easier bottom half of the men's singles draw, dropping just one set in three matches. More importantly, Kiefer was able to remain focused

throughout the match, even

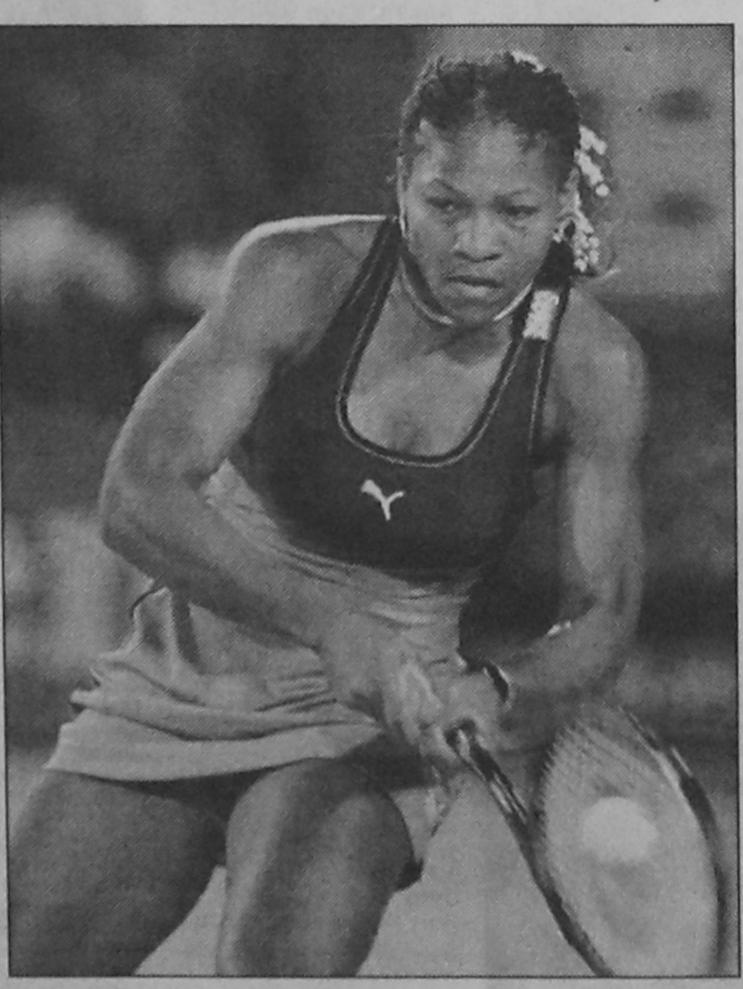
when a dispirited Alami started clowning about late in the third set when things started to go against him.

Having propelled himself into the top 10 last year with

three tour titles. Kiefer said his aim this year was to leave his mark on the Grand Slams, following in the illustrious footsteps of his countrymen Boris Becker and Michael Stich.



Russian second seed Yevgeny Kafelnikov plays forehand against Stefan Koubek of Austria at the Aussie Open. --AFP photo



American Serena Williams makes a backhand return -AFP photo

### AUSSIE OPEN AT A GLANCE

MELBOURNE, Jan 22 (AP): Highlights of the day session Saturday on the sixth day of the

Australian Open: Weather: Intermittent -ain with a cool temperature of 66 f (19 Celsius).

Attendance: 32,841 Results: Men's singles, No. 2 Yevgeny Kafelnikov, No. 4 Nicolas Kiefer, No. 12 Magnus Norman all advanced.

Results: Women's singles. No. 1 Martina Hingis, No. 6 Barbara Schett, No. 10 Conchita Martinez, No. 12 Sandrine Testud, No. 13, Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario and No. 16 Elena Likhovtseva all advanced.

Stat of the Day: In his loss to Frenhman Arnaud Clement, Swiss player Roger Federer hit 77 unforced errors in 26 games.

Quote of the Day: "They are like a surprise package....but I love her dress though." Martina Hingis commenting on the Williams sisters, and Serena's

### Williams quiet amid media questioning

MELBOURNE, Jan 22: Serena Williams had a testy ex-Grand Slam ambitions after producing her best performance at the Australian Open Saturdáy night, reports AFP.

The US Open champion shook off two rusty matches to knock out Belgian Sabine Appelmans and reach the fourth round here for the first time.

Williams was asked about the off-on approach to the Australian Open, when initially her father Richard said she would not be coming to play in Melbourne.

Elder sister Venus did not make the long trip to Australia this year, citing tendinitis in her left wrist.

"I really wasn't feeling that ! was going to come to the Australian Open -- I don't know why I wasn't going to come. "Honestly, I'm kind of tired

of talking about why I was coming and why I wasn't. I don't know what more to say. I just changed my mind.

Pressed on why she would not consider coming to the seeded Williams jumped to a 3-0 Australian Open, when it was lead, catching Appelmans flatone of the four major champifooted with a cross-court foreonships of the year, Williams hand and then drawing two erreplied: "I'm here. I'm really rors. She reached 4-1 with an jaded about talking about this. ace and 6-1 with a cross-court Eighteen-year-old Williams backhand, ending the 71said she planned to play in all minute match when Appelmans of the other three Grand Slams

this year "I really want to do well in the French and it's always my dream to do well in Wimbledon and of course the US Open, so I'm here."

She said Venus, father Richard and herself worked out their schedules separately and that she was free to go where she wanted to play. Williams captured her first

Grand Slam singles title last September in New York, defeating defending champion Lindsay Davenport in the US Open semifinals before beating Hingis in the final. The 18-year-old won five singles titles overall last year,

compiled a 41-7 record and climbed into the top four in the WTA rankings, along with Venus. Serena said more than ever

she was after the world number one ranking. "That's what we (her and

Venus) are trying to do; we are trying to be consistent and we are both trying to reach our top goals," she said

"There is one more thing for us to do and that is to try to be the best at our sport. There are a lot of other peo-

ple playing like Martina, Lindsay and they are really fighting. "They don't want to give it up, trust me, they don't. wouldn't either, so it's going to be a fight and a battle.'

### Euro 2000 Police criticise Belgian stadium

BRUSSELS, Jan 22: Belgian police authorities Friday criticised facilities at the Le Mainbourg stadium in Charleroi, where England will play Germany on June 17th in a Euro 2000 group A match, reports

has said it would be almost impossible to evacuate potential victims of crowd violence should trouble occur. He claimed that the stands are too sloped and warned that

Chief of police Paul Van Keer

the police should not be scapegoated should disaster strike during the tournament. Charleroi deputy mayor Claude Despiegeleer played down the threats. He said: "I have visited the Barcelona and

Real Madrid stadia and can

confirm the stands are much

steeper than the ones at

Charleroi." Belgian and British Foreign Ministers announced last week that the two countries would be collaborating in a bid to avoid crowd trouble at Euro 2000 which is being co-hosted with Holland.

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. The Le Mambourg stadium

will also host the matches be-

tween England and Romania and Yugoslavia versus Slove-England coach Kevin Keegan visited the stadium a fortnight ago and described it as "a very

nice, English-type stadium".

Martina Hingis of Switzerland in action against local Alicia Molik at the Australian Open. -AFP photo Serena, Martina sail change with reporters about her MELBOURNE, Jan and there is so much more improvement I can do," said lost only 14 games. champion Serena Williams, who had not played a match since October before Williams turned starting the tournament here from survivor to

> Tuesday. is her goal "now more than

way into the fourth round of the Australian Open with a 6-2, 7-6 Appelmans noted Williams' patchy opening rounds, but said. "I think she will improve. Williams had floundered

She has the ability to go all the way if she's fit." Appelmans said she was expecting harder, flatter shots

from Williams. "She hits her forehand with a lot of topsin. ... It was very hard but it's different to the other girls. It's more like how the men play," said the 27-yearold Belgian, a quarterfinalist here in 1997.

Adding to the problem, she added, "I had a lot of trouble with her second serve, her kick serve. Williams, who served at up

7-6, 6-3 winner over Belgian Els Callens. Williams' match was the second on Centre Court interrupted by rain and then resumed after the roof was closed. The same thing had hap-

pened earlier in the day to Mar-

tina Hingis. Now entering "middle age." Hingis is happy with the way

she is beating younger women at the Australian. In three matches, the three-

Against 18-year-old Australian Alicia Molik, Hingis faced serves of up to 185 kph (116 mph), and returned some of She said that reaching No 1 the hardest, in a 6-2, 6-3 victory that took her into the fourth round.

She lost only five points on

her own serve. Hingis' second serve is tougher than ever. Molik said, but she didn't need it much, putting in 74 per cent of her first serves.

Hingis said she has had to concentrate hard because her first three opponents "were all younger than me, youngsters coming up, having nothing to

She beat Croatia Mirjana Lucic and Belgium's Justice Henin before Molik. Hingis' next opponent, No 12

Sandrine Testud, saved three match points in the second set and then waited out the rain before beating Thailand's Tamato 184 kph (115 mph), will play No 16 Elena Likhovtseva, a 5-7, rine Tanasugarn 4-6, 7-5, 6-2. In a match moved into the main stadium. No 6 Barbara Schett beat Argentine qualifier

> Sanchez-Vicario, a 7-5, 6-1 winner over Australian wildcard entry Bryanne Stewart American Kristina Brandi

> Florencia Labat 6-1, 6-3. She

next plays No 13 Arantxa

advanced to a meeting with No 10 Conchita Martinez by beating Romania's Ruxandra Dragomir 6-4, 7-6. Martinez defeat Croatia's Jelena Kostanic

### AUSTRALIAN OPEN NOTEBOOK

MELBOURNE, Jan 22(AP): Defending Australian Open ti- develop a squad for the future. tlist Yevgeny Kafelnikov says After bowing out of the Aushe'll be demanding an explana- tralian Open on Saturday, Fedtion from wayward Russian teammate Marat Safin before next month's opening round of meeting to reconsider the selecthe Davis Cup.

aggressor Satur-

day, slugging her

victory over Sabine Appel-

through her first match and

much of her second, but was dic-

tating points from the start

only three points on serve. Ap-

pelmans picked up her game in

the second set, when Williams

had to save break points in the

first with a pair of excellent re-

trievals that pushed Appelmans

into hitting a forehand wide.

She took care of the second by

slamming a forehand down the

line, punctuating it with a loud

hit a backhand serve return

more mentally stable than I

was in my other matches. I still,

however, feel I'm a little rusty

"I played better and I was

In the tiebreaker, the third-

The 18-year-old erased the

In the first set, she yielded

mans, reports AP.

against Appelmans.

third and ninth games.

"Yeah!"

into the net.

Safin was accused of tanking his first-round match at the Australian Open and was fined 3,000 dollars by the tournament referee. A chair umpire reported the 19-year-old for failing to put in enough effort during his loss to South African up. I'm not happy with it at all. qualifier Grant Stafford. "He basically left and I

about it," said the No 2 seeded Kafelnikov. "I will definitely speak to him because we are playing Davis Cup in 10 days. "I have to see what exactly he has in his mind up until this

haven't had a chance to chat

moment Safin was warned four times by the chair umpire for his apparent lack of effort, and at one stage caught the ball in his hand rather than hit it with his she said.

Russia meets Belgium in the Davis Cup opener starting Feb SWISS DIVISION: Roger Fed-

erer, protesting Marc Rosset's omission from Switzerland's Davis Cup team to play Australia next month, has widened tional team by attacking new Swiss captain Jakob Hlasek. Hlasek decided to drop Rosset, a Davis Cup stalwart since No 1 spot was difficult, but

38 "Gosh!"

41 Historic

48 Homer

49 First

Simpson's

American

15-Across

MacGraw

female

54 Actress

55 Space

invader

solution

58 Nervous

coin

59 Albanian

28 Characterizations

JEEPS AGE BAR
OARS BYE MENU
BRA MAE PAGAN

56 Caustic

57 Swab

periods

36 Summary DOWN

CROSSWORD

eater's aid 40 Zero

9 Lustrous 43 Fair of

13 Word with 47 Tavern

12 Washing- 45 Basketball

ACROSS

14 Plata

15 One

partner

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the wind

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American

Native

tribe

19 Lower

21 Stretchy

24 Made

material

music

25 Kreskin's

26 Roulette

31 Obsessed

captain

mentor

35 Gabrielle's PARE

33 Party

17 Go like

18 South-

who's off

to see the

1 Lobster

erer said he objected to Hlasek's decision and demanded a

1992, saying he was trying to

tions. "Marc and I were very shocked by the decision," he said. "Normally for Davis Cup you chose the best players and no questions asked.

"The argument that this is tomorrow's team doesn't stand We'll have to get around a table and talk. As it stands I don't want (Hlasek) on the coaches' seat for the next Davis Cup." Federer, the Swiss No 1, is

contracted to the Swiss federation to play Davis Cup tennis. I LIKE TO BOOGIE: World No 1 Martina Hingis says tennis is becoming more and more like showbiz.

People don't just turn up to Grand Slams to watch the action, they want to see the stars,

Hingis said spending two days working with Russians Anna Kournikova and Marat Safin and American Jan-Michael Gambill on the set of the adidas television commercial in New York last year was brilliant.

"We were really playing, we the division within the na- were dancing ... it was really great fun," she said. The 19-year-old Swiss star said having people chasing your

By Eugene Sheffer

accessory 22 Arthur of

5 Increased 29 Oklahoma

1 Evening

2 Office-

3 Wager

4 Unruly

holders

holdings

6 "Time -

Bottle"

kiddie-lit

7 Prolific

writer

8 Camelot

Estrada

11 Piggies

16 Trench

20 Strong

Solution time: 21 mins.

SUN PAN

yesterday's answer

FROMSQUAREONE

as --

9 Oldest

10 Actor

monarch

15-Across

21 Archie

Bunker's

creator

23 Vessel for

27 Under-

30 Yard

32 Lynn of

34 Fred's

37 Volks-

1940s

Hollywood

daughter

wagen

39 Comedian

Boosler

familiarity

46 Unaccom-

panied

Yutang

weather

spotter's

52 Change

53 Mouse-

cry

50 Author

51 Under

the

42 Tedious

from

44 Bobby of

hockey 45 Eden

model

15-Across

They want to be in your position," she said. What better situation can you get once you realize what a life you've got." HOT WIND: Andre Agassi

says he hopes the Melbourne Park stadium's retractable roof will stay open during his fourth-round match Sunday against big-serving Aussie Mark Philippoussis. "When there's no elements whatsoever, the guy's one of the

the ball out there," No 1 Agassi said after a straight sets win over Argentine Mariano Zabaleta. Light rain forced the closure of the centre court roof during Philippoussis' third-round victory over Andrew Ilie. The No

biggest and cleanest hitters of

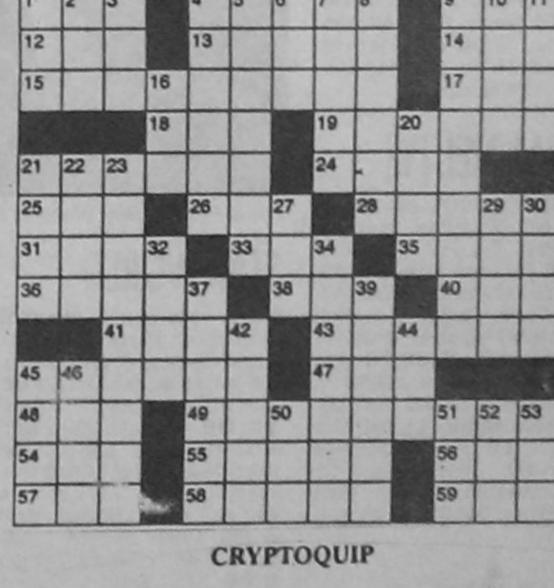
and service winners. BEAM ME UP: American Jan-Michael Gambill is going where no professional tennis

16 seeded Philippoussis o.er-

powered Ilie with a flood of aces

player has gone before. Gambill, ranked No 58 in the world, has been offered a part in the forthcoming series of Star Trek Voyager, the offshoot show of the original series, ac-

cording to the ATP. Gambill, 22, may have better luck in outer space. He lost in the first round of the Australian Open to Zimbabwe's Wayne Black, who was beaten by Pete Sampras two rounds

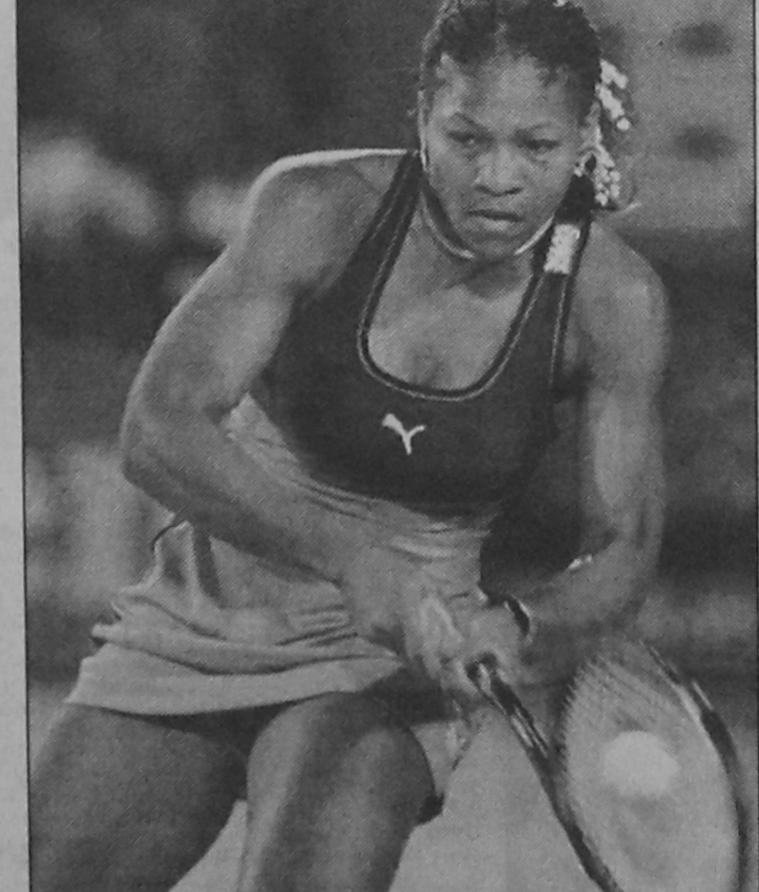


BKYB E'MR CLVEBEMRXS MYDCETRV IYVRIYXX: EB YFLTR

FTEMRV BKKD Saturday's Cryptoquip: I FIND THAT SOLDIERS IN PLAYS DEFINITELY LIKE TO SHAKE SPEARS.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: B equals T

The Cryptoquip is a substitution captier 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.



against Belgian Sabine Appelmans at the Australian Open yesterday.