

Louts be aware of 'Robocops'

BRUSSELS, May 19 (AFP): Belgian police said Friday that they will be prepared for hooligan riots at the Euro 2000 football finals which start on June 10 and will use what they have named 'Robocops'.

Security at Euro 2000, which is being co-hosted by Belgium and the Netherlands, has come under the spotlight again this week after English and Turkish hooligans wreaked havoc in the Danish capital, Copenhagen, in the build-up to Wednesday night's UEFA Cup semi-final.

Belgian officials consider the England-Germany fixture - which takes place in Charleroi, Belgium on June 17 - as a high-risk match, and are currently preparing tactics which they are keeping under wraps, in order to outwit the groups of hooligans who are expected to show up.

On May 30, at the Grand Palace in Brussels, the general public will be able to see the new 'Robocop' police equipment which is going to be used - each weighs 14kg and the uniforms cost 500 dollars a piece.

The new uniforms consist of a helmet with built in radio and headset enabling effective communication between officers, a gas mask, throat and neck protection, padded combat leg and foot wear, as well as CS gas hand grenades.

The equipment has been specifically designed to protect the police from physical punches, charges of groups of hooligans, truncheon blows, and blows to the jaw.

A total of forty agents will wear the new gear protecting those groups of police who will not be so heavily protected - and will also be in charge of arresting those who are committing offences.

To aid the arrest process even further, the police will have pocket laser spotlights to point out the criminals to the 'Robocops'.

Once arrested, the hooligans will be placed in armoured vehicles.

The aptly named 'Robocops' will be hosted for free at a local hotel, and will be available 24 hours a day.

Perhaps more importantly, they will be expected to follow the guideline issued by the police commissioner's office: 'There will be zero tolerance of hooligans'.

Van Gaal keeps everyone guessing

BARCELONA, Spain, May 19: Barcelona's controversial Dutch coach, Louis van Gaal, Thursday refused to confirm strong rumours that he was about to step down; local media reported, reports AFP.

"I don't want to talk about it," van Gaal told journalists.

He was speaking before Barcelona take part in what is rumoured to be his last match as coach - Friday's game against league rivals Celta Vigo in their season finale.

"My main aim is to beat Celta and qualify for next season's Champion League," he said. "I don't want to get into this. I am unable to make any comment," he added.

He also told journalists that there would be another press conference on Saturday at 1200 GMT.

"I don't know if it will be my last press conference. I still have two years left on my contract, until June 2002," he said.

The Spanish media are almost certain that Friday's fixture will be the Dutchman's last with Barcelona, and earlier Thursday reported that he had announced his departure on Wednesday night during a dinner meeting with Josep Lluís Nunez, who resigned as club president Wednesday.

Backing for the coach has dwindled following a string of poor league results and the club's failure to reach the final of the European Champions League after a defeat to Spanish rivals Valencia.

Talking on a local radio station, club vice-president Joan Gaspart said: "I'm sure that van Gaal will not continue after Friday."

Gaspart has already made his feelings about the Dutchman quite clear, saying that he does not know how to "bring the club together".

Van Gaal's resignation is also likely to be positive for Gaspart, as he is a likely candidate for the club presidency, for which the elections were originally scheduled for July.

According to a local paper, van Gaal handed in his resignation as soon as the Spanish club were beaten in the Champions League, but Nunez refused to accept it.

Van Gaal's resignation would almost certainly secure Brazilian Rivaldo's position at the club. Rivaldo and van Gaal have reportedly been at loggerheads in the past few months.

Elements slow

From page 13

Atherton not out 45
Rampakrishna lbw b Streak 15
Hussain c Murphy b Streak 10
Hick not out 15
Extras: (lb-4, w-1) 5
Total: (For 2 wds in 33 overs) 90

Fall of wickets: 1-29; 2-49
To bat: A Stewart, N Knight, A Flintoff, C Schofield, A Caddick, D Gough, E Giddins

Bowler: O M R W
Streak 12 5 27 2
Strang 7 1 20 0
Mbangwa 9 1 28 0
Johnson 4 0 10 0
Whitall 1 0 1 0

Umpires: P Willey, D Orchard (Third Umpire: J Holder)
Match Referee: Graham Dowling



England's Ed Giddins (L) exults after getting rid of Zimbabwe batsman Bryan Strang on the opening day of the first Test at Lord's on May 18. —AFP photo

Giddins goes full circle



LONDON, May 19 (Reuters): Ed Giddins has bounced back from a troubled past to launch England's Test series against Zimbabwe with a five-wicket haul at Lord's on Thursday.

Giddins marked only his second Test by exploiting ideal conditions to capture five for 15 as Zimbabwe were skittled for 83 on the opening day of the first Test.

He was an England A bowler before being banned for 18 months after testing positive for cocaine abuse at the end of the 1996 season.

It was a crushing blow to Giddins, who always maintained his innocence. He had to sell Christmas trees to make a living.

But in between times he switched from Sussex to Warwickshire, making an instant impact.

Swing bowler Giddins' comeback has been helped by his confidence and self belief and on Thursday he stressed the value of preparing thoroughly for the big occasion.

"The important thing is the mental aspect of getting yourself ready. It involves a lot of mental visualisation, so I'll recreate images of bowling, pitching leg stump and hitting the top of off stump," Giddins said at a news conference.

"I think about my run, standing up straight, getting to the wicket, and following through, which is very important. When there is a lot of exterior things going on and it's a bigger game you often forget these basics."

He added: "I was more nervous than I thought I would be in my first Test and because of that I was pleased to be so relaxed when I walked out this morning."

"With my style of bowling there is a lot of wrist action and if you are a bit tense you are not going to get the whiplash you need."

Giddins, who joined Warwickshire in 1998, said: "People have written about my lack of pace but I don't bowl at 100 mph, that's not my style of bowling."

"My style is to move the ball around and I think I've received some unfair criticism about being a county plodder."

He has also worked to improve his fitness in the past northern winter at a training centre in England. "It was very regimented, up at six, go for a run, breakfast at eight, then training. It definitely benefited me."

Asked if he was up at 6 am for a run on Thursday, Giddins drew laughter when he replied: "No, I was up at six looking for cloud cover."

Venus stoops to Dokic



ROME, May 19: Australian Jeleni Dokic put back the shaky French Open preparation of Venus Williams, hammering the third seed 6-1, 6-2 in a third-round upset at the 1.08-million-dollar Italian Open Thursday night, reports AFP.

The win over the American ranks with the 17-year-old Dokic's victory over Martina Hingis in the first round of Wimbledon last summer.

"It was great victory, as good as when I beat Martina last year," said Dokic.

"To beat someone in the top five, I had to play very well. I'm very content."

Williams had to fight back tears as she was comforted by her mother and a sister after the loss.

Dokic and Williams had never played, but the Australian, ranked 37th, showed that on a good day she can have the measure of the American two years her senior.

On a day when top seed and world number one Lindsay Davenport dropped out of contention with a lower back injury which could threaten her for Roland Garros starting a week from Monday, second seed Nathalie Tauziat won through.

The Frenchwoman defeated Magdalena Grybowska of Poland 6-3, 4-6, 7-6.

Italian Giulia Casoni, ranked 128th, got the benefit of Davenport's withdrawal shortly before their afternoon match.

The 1999 Australian Open finalist Amelie Mauresmo, the 12th seed, won an all-French battle over last year's losing finalist Mary Pierce 6-3, 6-4.

There was more bad news for France as little-known Fabiola Zuluaga of Colombia knocked out seventh seed Julie Halard-Decugis 6-3, 4-6, 6-2.

Dokic Friday plays 1990 Rome champion Monica Seles, who mounted a comeback over Anne-Gaëlle Sidot of France 3-6, 6-1, 6-1. Spain's sixth seed Arantxa Sanchez Vicario beat Czech Denisa Chladova 6-1, 6-4 and next plays Mauresmo.

Dokic took command of the opening set with a break of point chances in the seventh game, but clinched the set after 38 minutes when Williams produced her third double-fault.

Williams slumped to 15 unforced errors in the set while Dokic converted on three of the seven break points at her disposal.

Dokic, with notorious father Damiir looking on from the stands, continued her demolition. The Aussie ripped to 3-0 without hesitation and found the going easy as the Williams error count mounted.

A backhand to the corner gave Dokic 4-0 but the challenger hit her first bump, losing serve in the next game, while Williams held for a 2-4 lifeline.

Dokic came from 0-30 down in the seventh game and took victory a game later with a closing break after 68 minutes.

Williams in the third game after the American saved the first of two break points but netted a backhand on the second.

The Australian teenager forced the seed into more errors and got another break, 4-1 as the Williams attack was nowhere to be seen.

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Becker's cause for concern

HAMBURG, May 19 (AFP): Men's tennis is in crisis and things will get a lot worse if new stars are not uncovered soon, according to former German star Boris Becker.

Becker said he was appalled to see how standards had slipped since his heyday, when the 32-year-old lifted three Wimbledon titles, an Australian Open and a US Open.

"Anyone who thinks the crisis in tennis has passed is deluding himself. Things haven't bottomed out yet," stormed Becker after taking in the action at the Hamburg Masters Series event.

"Can we speak of top stars these days?" asked Becker, who appeared ready to turn his back on the rest of the tournament in favour of watching Tiger Woods and company playing in the Deutsche Bank-SAP Open golf event just north of the city.

"Anyone left in this tournament can win this tournament on Sunday. They might just as well draw a name out of the hat and say, 'okay, that's the winner. That's bad for everyone,'" said Becker, never a fan of baseline slogging on clay -- where he always failed to shine.

And he decried the new Masters Series, which replaced the old Super 9 series this season, saying he did not believe the ATP Tour would keep faith with the format for long.

Becker, who recently resigned as the head of Germany's Davis Cup team, himself tried to create his own Tour format throughout the late 1990s but failed to gain sufficient support for his ideas among leading ATP Tour figures.

Injury ends Laudrup

AMSTERDAM, May 19: Danish international Brian Laudrup is set to retire from football for medical reasons, the Dutch press agency ANP reported on Thursday, reports AFP.

Laudrup, 31, is suffering from a chronic Achilles tendon injury which will prevent him from fulfilling the remaining year of his contract with leading Dutch First Division side Ajax.



"I wish that I could still play for Ajax - but there is no point if my health will not allow me to play at my best," Laudrup said.

"It is a pity my career has to end this way after 14 memorable years."

Laudrup played 82 internationals for Denmark, scoring 21 goals, and was a member of the side that won the European Championships in 1992 in Sweden.

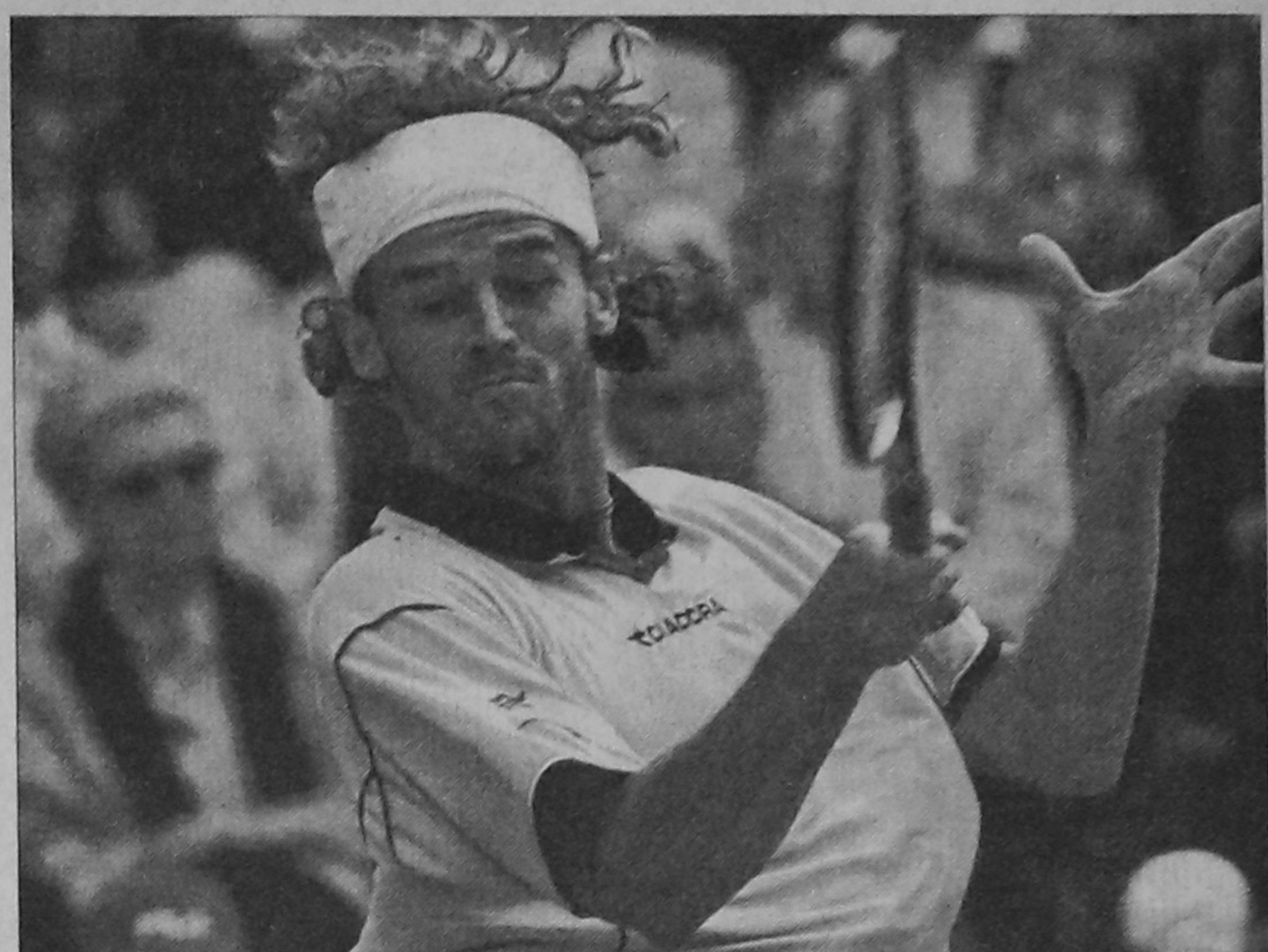
He started his club career with Brondby and then joined Bayern Munich in 1990 before two seasons in Italy with Fiorentina and AC Milan.

In 1994, he joined Glasgow Rangers and spent four years there before joining Chelsea in the English Premiership, where he had a short, unhappy stint.

Laudrup scored 14 goals in his season's Dutch championship for Ajax but missed out on adding to the six league championship medals he had amassed during his career.

His last match for Denmark was in the 1998 World Cup finals.

"As long as I'm playing like I



Gustavo Kuerten of Brazil hits a forehand to Wayne Ferreira of South Africa during their Hamburg Master Series encounter on May 18. — AFP photo

Kuerten, Norman stay on track



HAMBURG, May 19: Gustavo Kuerten and Magnus Norman respected the form book on Thursday, setting up a repeat of last week's Rome Masters final, but Tim Henman didn't as the British eighth seed made a premature exit from the 2.95-million dollar Hamburg Masters Series here, reports AFP.

Brazilian showman Kuerten destroyed South African Wayne Ferreira 6-1, 6-2 in only 52min to book his place in the quarter-finals where he will now play Norman, the man who beat him in Rome to move to the top of the ATP Champions Race 2000 standings.

Kuerten, the 1997 French Open champion, showed dynamic form in blasting Ferreira off centre court but Norman had to expend far more effort as he edged out Moroccan 13th seed Youssef El Aynaoui 3-6, 6-1, 6-4, taking 1hr 34min.

Defending champion Marcelo Rios meanwhile fired a warning to everybody as he overcame Argentina's Mariano Puerta 7-6, 6-0 to win the right to a meeting with Francisco Clavet, who ousted ninth seed and fellow Spaniard Alex Corretja, twice a finalist here, 6-4, 6-1.

Puerta matched Rios for a titanic opening set on the slow red clay where both excel -- but Rios was a class apart in the second where he was simply brilliant.

Henman earlier came off second best to last year's finalist Mariano Zabaleta of Argentina, who advanced with a 7-5, 6-3 win against the same opponent he had beaten a round later 12 months ago.

With Henman, El Aynaoui and Corretja all packing their bags only four seeds have made it to the last eight.

Kuerten, whose first serve success rate topped 70 per cent in the first set, was delighted with his showing, which suggested he is completely over recent back problems.

"Everything went really well today. I was hitting the lines," said Kuerten after sweeping aside twice quarter-finalist Ferreira and boosting his career head-to-head record against his opponent to 4-1.

"Hopefully I can carry on like this," said the 23-year-old who has now reached his third quarterfinal in four visits here -- though he has yet to make a semi.

Asked about his chances against Norman given his defeat in Italy Kuerten said he was confident.

"Every match is completely different even when you play the same guy -- I don't really have to change my game plan."

Norman was also quietly confident after blaming the windy conditions for his edgy start.

"As long as I'm playing like I

did today I'm gonna be happy -- it was really difficult in the conditions out there," said the Swede, who added he felt under more pressure as the Rome winner than as world number one.

Of his meeting with Kuerten he said: "Hopefully I can play my best tennis tomorrow. We are the two players in the best shape at the moment. I just hope I can start a little bit better," said the Swede, who turns 24 on May 30.

Henman gave it his best shot against Zabaleta, but lapses of concentration caused his downfall as he lost in exactly two hours.

He wasn't helped by twisting his ankle midway through the second set but refused to use that as an excuse.

Zabaleta now plays qualifier Andrei Pavel of Romania, who saw off the second-round conqueror of Pete Sampras, Frenchman Arnaud Di Pasquale 6-3, 7-6.

"It's very frustrating," said Henman of his loss.

"The combination of his forehand and serve was making life difficult. He was hitting every ball."

Zabaleta, 22, said he was looking forward to going further in the tournament.

"I feel very good here in Hamburg. I played the final last year and have a lot of confidence," French fourth seed Cedric

Pioline ensured his name went into the quarter-final hat after he scored a 4-6, 6-2, 6-3 win in 1hr 57min over three-time Hamburg champion Andrei Medvedev of Ukraine.

Monte Carlo winner Pioline, making his fifth visit to the Rothenbaum arena, set up a match with Russian 12th seed Marat Safin, who knocked out Swiss veteran Marc Rosset 6-4, 7-5 after taking his career series with Medvedev to 7-1 in his favour.

The Frenchman, who turns 31 next month, is looking for his third title of the year having also won Rotterdam in February.

Riley's no plan to retire

SYDNEY, May 19: Former world champion Samantha Riley has no immediate intention of retiring from swimming after missing a place in the Australian Olympic team yesterday, reports AFP.

Riley's last chance to make the Olympic team was in Thursday night's 200m breaststroke final and after being up in the first two places to halfway she faded to finish fifth (2:32.02) behind Caroline Hildreth.

Riley's preparations for this week's Olympic trials were disrupted by a kidney infection and she said she needed time to consider her future.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Directorate of Food Movement, Storage & Silo
16, Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka-1000

Tender Notice

For Appointment of Railway Transport Contractor for 2000-2001 & 2001-2002 Financial Years

Memo No: 254/MSS/RC-02/2000 Dated: 9-5-2000

Tenders in prescribed schedule are invited from interested Bangladeshis citizens for appointment of Railway Transport Contractor for transportation of foodgrains, edible oil, empty gunny bags, rod, cement, relief and other materials under the Directorate of Food under Ministry of Food for 2000-2001 & 2001-2002 financial years.

2) Tender should be dropped in the prescribed tender box kept in front of the office chamber of the Director General, Food at the first floor of the Khadya Bhaban, 16, Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka by 02:00 PM of 31/05/2000 (17th Jaishta, 1407) and will be opened on the same day at 2:30 PM in presence of the tenderers or their representatives (if any). Schedule of work consisting terms & conditions of the tender, rate list etc. can be purchased on cash payment of Tk 750.00 (seven hundred fifty) only (non-refundable) per set from the office of the Director (Accounts & Finance), Directorate of Food, 16, Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka