

WI's adventure in the sky

MELBOURNE, Nov 15: The West Indies cricket squad was forced to make an unexpected detour on their Australian trip Wednesday after bad weather delayed their planned arrival here, reports AFP.

The tourists were heading from Alice Springs to Melbourne, via Sydney, when a storm forced all flights to the Victorian capital to form a holding pattern near the city while the weather abated.

But a lack of fuel meant the Windies' plane was diverted to Adelaide in South Australia, making for a long travel day.

The tourists were scheduled to arrive here late Wednesday, allowing them one rest day before Friday's four-day tour match against Victoria at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

The Windies had played a one-day match in Alice Springs in the centre of Australia on Tuesday, recording their first win of the tour against a Northern Territory Invitation XI by 57 runs.

The first Test against Australia begins in Brisbane on November 23.

Cricketnext.com strikes deal with stars

BOMBAY, Nov 15: Indian cricket portal cricketnext.com Wednesday said it had signed up several leading global players for brand endorsements, creation of websites, coaching clinics and syndicated articles, reports AFP.

Managing director Sanjay Jha said the players included Saad Anwar and Inzamamul Haq of Pakistan, Sri Lanka's Ramesh Kaluwitharana and Marwan Atapattu and Zimbabwean captain Heath Streak.

We will also be announcing the names of a few leading Australian cricketers for brand endorsement during their forthcoming tour of India early next year," he said.

Jha said the portal would focus "increasingly on talent management for both overseas as well as Indian cricketers."

Till September, our portal was averaging approximately five million page views per month, but with the popularity rating of the game almost returning to old times, we have seen a tremendous resurgence.

"We expect to conclude the year with at least 22 million page views per month."

Jha said the portal has also launched an e-commerce initiative called "Batnext," a retail store to sell cricket gear.

Cricketnext.com received its initial funds from Australian media tycoon Kerry Packer and a couple of Indian venture capitalists.

India call off

From page 13

of whether India agrees to play. He added that Pakistan would have no choice but to reject the ICC's ten-year itinerary of international cricket unless the PCB received a guarantee that India would tour Pakistan.

Official contact between the two South Asian rivals has been frozen since May last year when Indian troops began a bitter 10-week battle against Pakistan-backed forces along their disputed border in Kashmir.

India last played a Test match in Pakistan in 1989, but crossed the border for a three-match limited-overs series in 1997.

This is the second time in three months that the Indian government has refused to clear a cricket series against Pakistan.

The annual Sahara Cup series in Canada in September was also cancelled for the second consecutive year at India's behest.

Pakistan, however, played three Test matches in India early last year, before the Kargil conflict broke out in May.

Two of the Tests in Madras and New Delhi passed off without any incident, but the third in Calcutta was marred by unruly crowd behaviour.

Pakistan won the match in front of empty stands after police were forced to evict all spectators, except officials and the media, from the Eden Gardens.

Saqain's late

From page 13

first day of the first cricket Test between Pakistan and England at the Gaddafi Stadium on Wednesday.

ENGLAND: First innings
Atherton c Youhana b Saqain 73
Trescothick c Elahi b Saqain 71
Thorpe not out 22

Stewart lbw b Saqain 3
Hussain c Akram b Saqain 7
Hick not out 6
Extras: (lb-3; lb-3; nb-7) 13
Total: (For 4 wickets in 84 overs) 195

To bat: C White, A Giles, A Caddick, I Salisbury and D Gough

Fall of wickets: 1-134, 2-169, 3-173, 4-183

Bowler O M R W
Razzak 9 4 12 0
Saqain 11 4 29 0
Saqain 30 7 61 4
Mudhira 23 4 69 0
Afidi 6 2 17 0
Abbas 2 1 1 0

PAKISTAN: Saad Anwar, Shahid Afridi, Salim Elahi, Yousef Youhana, Inzamamul Haq, Qaiser Abbas, Abdul Razak, Moir Khan (captain), Wasim Akram, Saqain Mushtaq, Mushtaq Ahmed.

Umpires: Darrell Hair (Australia) and Riazuddin (Pakistan).

Zimbabwe tune up well



FARIDABAD, India, Nov 15: Andy Flower smashed 103 balls as Zimbabwe warmed up for the upcoming Test series against India with a four-wicket victory here on Wednesday, reports AFP.

The tourists took on a sporting target of 262 off 55 overs from the Board President's XI to win the three-day match with seven balls to spare.

It was just the morale-boosting Zimbabwe needed ahead of the first Test against India starting at New Delhi on Sunday.

The exciting finale was set by home captain Hrishikesh Kanitkar, who declared his team's second innings at 183-2 three overs after lunch.

Zimbabwe responded to the challenge by throwing their bats around to the great delight of a small, but vociferous crowd at the Nahar Singh Stadium.

Gavin Rennie, who made 79 in the first innings, ensured his place for the Delhi Test with 71 in the second.

Rennie hit eight boundaries

and two sixes during a third-wicket stand of 115 with Andy Flower that propelled Zimbabwe towards victory.

Flower smashed 12 fours and two sixes, before falling 30 runs short of his second century on the tour.

Stand-in captain Guy Whittall (26 not out) and Muleki Nkala (22 off 19 balls) ensured the effort of the top order batsmen was not wasted.

Earlier, the President's team took their overnight score of 52-0 to 183-2 with all-rounder Virender Sehwag top-scoring with 58.

SCOREBOARD

Final scorecard of the three-day tour match between Zimbabwe and the Indian Board President's XI on Wednesday:

BOARD PRESIDENT'S XI: First innings 314-5 decl (H Kanitkar 118 not out)

ZIMBABWE: First innings 236-5 decl (G Rennie 79, G Flower 49)

PRESIDENT'S XI: Second innings 44
Rickey c Strang b Nkala 44
Dalya retired 23

Kale c A Flower b Nkala	14
Kanitkar not out	33
Schwag not out	58
Extras: (b-6; nb-5)	11
Total: (For 2 wks decl in 54 overs)	183
Fall of wickets: 1-91, 2-92	
Bowler	O M R W
Olonga	11 1 44 0
Nkala	15 7 27 2
Friend	7 2 26 0
Murphy	15 3 35 0
G Flower	2 1 1 0
Strang	4 0 44 0

ZIMBABWE: Second innings
G Rennie c Kale b Kapoor 71
Carlisle c Abbas b Sanghvi 18
A Flower c Kanitkar b Sanghvi 94
Madondo c Kanitkar b Sanghvi 17
G Whittall not out 26
Nkala run out 22
P Strang not out 4
Extras: (lb-3; nb-3) 6
Total: (For 6 wickets in 53 overs) 262
Fall of wickets: 1-51, 2-50, 3-165, 4-197, 5-220, 6-256

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Mohanty	10	3	35	0
Saxena	7	0	29	1
Sanghvi	16.5	0	93	3
Kapoor	15	2	55	1
Kanitkar	2	0	20	0
Sehwag	3	0	27	0

Result: Zimbabwe won by four wickets.

Courtney, Brian ready



ALICE SPRINGS, Nov 15 (Internet report): Courtney Walsh and Brian Lara will both be ready to face Australia in next week's first Test despite a lack of match practice, West Indies captain Jimmy Adams said Wednesday.

Walsh and Lara have yet to play a first-class match on tour, settling for Friday's four-day game against Victoria here as their only hint before the first Test begins of Brisbane's Gabba ground next Thursday.

Lara has hamstring trouble but he has kept in form with centuries in two festival matches while the 38-year-old Walsh has bowled just six overs on tour.

But the world's leading Test wicket-taker looked as smooth as ever when he conceded just four runs against a Northern Territory Invitation XI in Alice Springs Tuesday in his first workout.

Walsh was satisfied and that was good enough for Adams, who needs the veteran

strike bowler to guide the Windies through a Test series he has labelled "the greatest challenge in world cricket."

"Courtney calls the shots and tells me how he feels," Adams said. "He bowled six overs and said he was grooving pretty well. At his age that would do for me. If the rhythm is there, he's happy. I've seen Courtney not play before Test matches but he goes to the nets and comes away saying the rhythm is there, the rhythm is there - I feel good."

That was the case in England earlier this year when Walsh rested from all three lead-up matches before the first Test in Edgbaston.

He then came out and rattled England with figures of 5-36 in the first innings before finishing the series with 34 wickets at an average of 12.82 - lifting his career tally to 483 Test scalps.

Lara didn't have as much fun in England, scoring 239 runs at 26.55, but the influential left-hander has convinced Adams he is ready for the bat-

les with the likely Australian pace trio of Glenn McGrath, Brett Lee and Jason Gillespie.

Lara's hamstring is still causing problems, making him look tentative in Alice Springs, but Adams is not worried. "It's different for batsmen than bowlers because you need that confidence of spending time in the middle, hitting balls and hitting balls," Adams said.

Batsmen might have rhythm in the nets but they still want that time and pressure in the middle and Brian recognises that. "Lara has batted for almost four hours on tour and the 31-year-old has already said he wants to match that total during the Victoria game."

Adams said the Windies would name a line-up "as close to the Test team as possible" but he was non-committal about the spots up for grabs.

Rookie paceman Kerry Jermy is the only player unavailable while he recovers from a broken jaw suffered in the Windies' seven-wicket loss to Western Australia last week.

Donald targets 400 wkts



BLOEMFONTEIN, South Africa, Nov 15: South African fast bowler Allan Donald is determined to reach the milestone of 300 Test wickets when he plays in the first Test against New Zealand in his home town starting Friday, reports AFP.

Donald needs three wickets to become the first South African and the 15th in Test history to join the 300 club.

And the 34-year-old is already looking further ahead.

"Obviously I want to get the remaining three wickets to achieve the 300 mark but I think it is realistic to aim for 400 in the longer term," said Donald.

Donald's career seemed to be drawing to a close when he took a rest from international cricket during the South African winter in order to play a

final season of English county cricket with Warwickshire. There was speculation that he would breach the 300 barrier, then retire at the end of the current season.

But he has come back eager

to extend his career until the 2001 World Cup.

South Africa are provisionally scheduled to play in 36 Tests before then. Donald currently has 297 wickets from 62 Tests.

South Africa are hot favourites to beat New Zealand in the

three-match series with the tourists having been hard hit by injuries to key bowlers Chris Cairns, Dion Nash, Daniel Vettori and Paul Wiseman. New Zealand were hammered 5-0 in a one-day series leading up to the Tests.

But New Zealand gained a confidence-building 265-run win against North West province in Potchefstroom Monday and all their likely Test batsmen played substantial innings over the course of two warm-up matches.

Even though the Test is being played in Bloemfontein, Donald's home town, and the pitch is being prepared by groundsman Nico Pretorius, a former provincial fast bowling teammate of Donald, conditions are likely to favour the batsmen.

The Springbok Park pitch is usually true and although it offers reasonable bounce the pace tends to be somewhat slow. If the weather stays hot, bowlers could struggle. Donald took only one wicket in two innings against Zimbabwe in the only previous Test played in Bloemfontein.

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BCCSL CEO suspended

COLOMBO, Nov 15: The Board of Control for Cricket in Sri Lanka (BCCSL) suspended its chief executive officer, Dharmika Ranatunga, in a row over television rights, official sources here said Wednesday, reports AFP.

The BCCSL took the action Tuesday pending a disciplinary committee inquiry into Ranatunga's public remarks slamming the way in which the cricket board had set about finalising a television deal, the sources said.

No company has won the broadcasting rights yet.

Ranatunga, who is the elder brother of Sri Lanka's world-cup winning skipper Arjuna Ranatunga, said he was yet to be informed of reasons for the sudden action against him.

There had also been differences between board members and Ranatunga over the construction of a new cricket stadium in north-central Sri Lanka.

The latest crisis comes hot on the heels of allegations in a report by India's Central Bureau of Investigations that two Sri Lankan players were also given bribes to throw matches.

A probe is underway here to investigate the allegations against Ranatunga who led Sri Lanka to a world cup victory in 1996 and his deputy Aravinda de Silva.

Rain spoil day at Sydney

SYDNEY, Nov 15: Playing hours will be extended for the remaining three days of the Sheffield Shield cricket match between New South Wales and South Australia to try to make up for the loss of the first day to rain here Wednesday, reports AFP.

Play was abandoned because of persistent rain, which was also forecast to disrupt the second day's play.

Martina, Anna advance

NEW YORK, Nov 15 (AP): On the night Anna Kournikova finally won at Madison Square Garden, Julie Halard-Decugis called it a career.

"It's like 14 years I've been playing on the tour," Halard-Decugis said. "And I have other things to do in my life."

In her last singles match, Halard-Decugis was defeated by Martina Hingis 6-2, 6-3 Tuesday night in the opening round of the 2 million dollars Chase Championships. It was a moment the French women knew was coming.

"I was focused this year because I wanted to play well," she said. "I had some good tournaments.... Now, it's just a feeling that I want to stop, have a family life and do something else."

She ended her career with a double defeat. Despite their top seeding, Halard-Decugis and Japan's Ai Sugiyama lost to Belgium's Els Callens and Dominique Van Roost 2-6, 6-3, 6-4 in the night's final match.

Kournikova has played 84 tournaments and still doesn't have a title. In this, her third season-ending tournament, she finally won a match, beating Jennifer Capriati 6-4, 6-4.

Daddy William's allegation

NEW YORK, Nov 15: Richard Williams, the outspoken father of Venus and Serena Williams, says his daughters are being taken advantage of by the Women's Tennis Association and should be entitled to a cut of revenues, reports Reuters.

Williams, who has coached his daughters to Grand Slam stardom, told the New York Times in a story published on Tuesday that his daughters had dominated the sport's major events and generated higher television ratings and revenue.

The remarks by Williams paralleled some complaints made by golf sensation Tiger Woods, which came to light last week.

Last year, Serena Williams burst into prominence by winning the US Open, while this year older sister Venus was dominant, going unbeaten through the summer as she captured the Wimbledon, US Open and Olympic tennis crowns.

Neither Venus nor Serena Williams are competing in this week's season ending Chase Championships. Venus Williams, 20, said she was suffering from anemia and Serena Williams, 19, pulled out citing a foot injury.

From our standpoint, when you look at the ratings when Venus and Serena play, they are extremely high," Williams said in a telephone interview with the Times. "I think the Tour has been able to benefit from that."

"I think the people who have helped the Tour to get to where it is now, you should want to share some of that with them instead of keeping it all to yourself."

Williams said he is trying to arrange a meeting with WTA CEO Bart McGuire to discuss his concerns.

The Times quoted McGuire as saying: "The players do receive a piece of the pie. We take revenues from television and sponsorships and recycle virtually all of it into tournaments and require them to earmark it for prize money increases."

Williams also told the Times that he would like to see the rankings system revamped.

Early exit for biggies



PARIS, Nov 15: Gustavo Kuerten and Yevgeny Kafelnikov moved into the last 16 of the 2.95 million

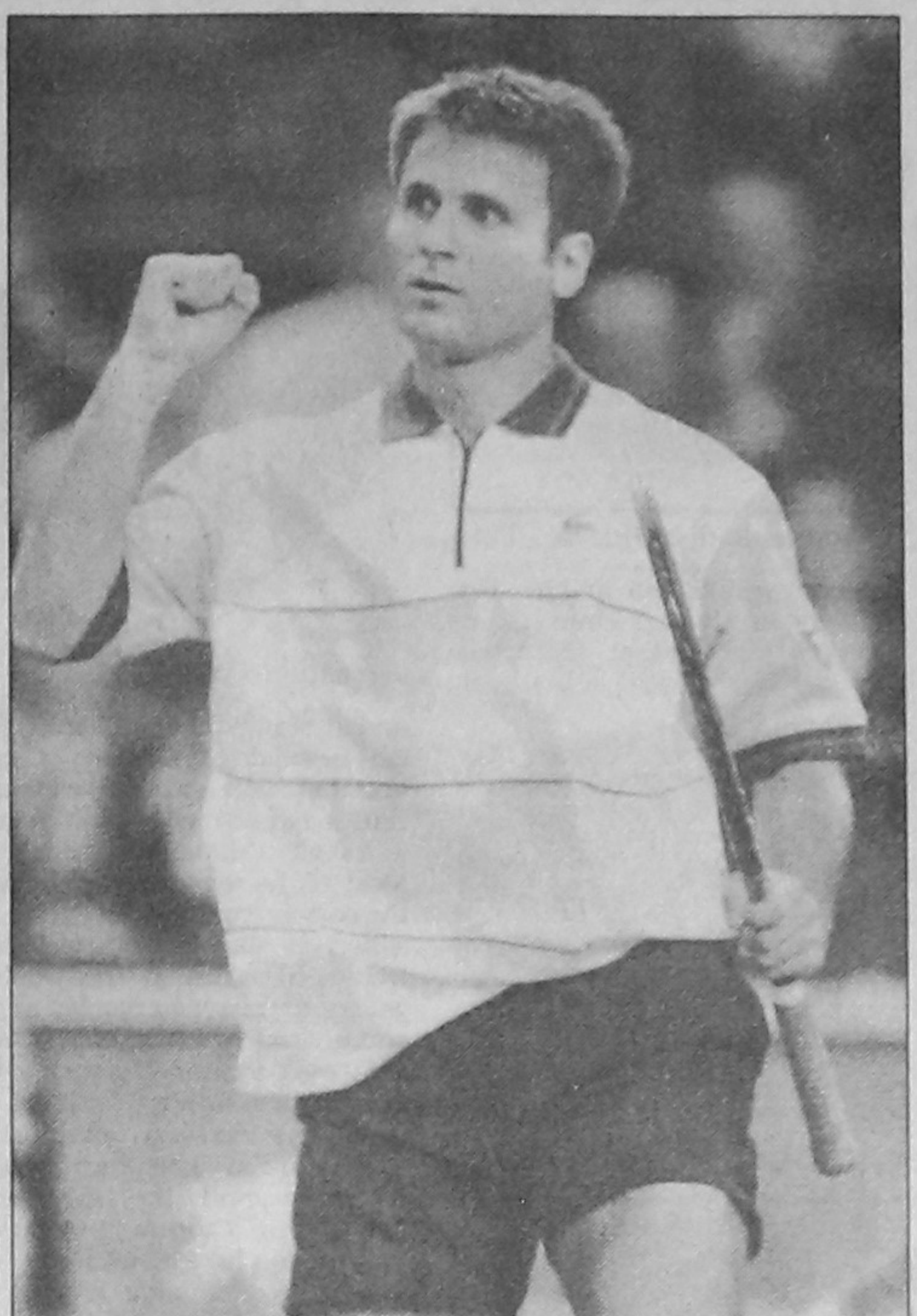
dollars tennis Masters Series event on Tuesday but six other big names fell by the wayside - two without even having played a match, reports Reuters.

Defending champion Andre Agassi withdrew after failing to recover from an injury to his right hip which forced him out of last week's Lyon tournament, while fifth-seeded Australian

down in the second set. The fourth-seeded Russian hopes to win his last three tournaments of the year in a bid to end 2000 as the world's top ranked player.

He is on a roll after victories at the Sydney Olympics and Kremlin Cup in Moscow and could finish top if he were to win here, in Stockholm next week and then at the season-ending Tennis Masters Cup in Lisbon.

"I have never won a Tennis Masters Series event, so that's a goal for me, but I am also



Frenchman Fabrice Santoro is ecstatic after securing a point against Magnus Norman of Sweden in the second round of Masters' Series on November 14.

— AFP photo

Lleyton Hewitt pulled out with a mystery allergy.

Frenchman Fabrice Santoro ousted third-seeded Swede Magnus Norman 6-2, 6-4 while seeded pair Tim Henman of Britain and Frenchman Cedric Pioline were also beaten in their opening matches, as was 1998 champion Greg Rusedski.

Kuerten and Kafelnikov, who both hope to be world number one at the end of the year, were sluggish at times but eased into the third round.

Kafelnikov beat Swedish qualifier Magnus Gustafsson 7-6 (7-5), 6-4, rallying from 1-4

thinking about the possibility of finishing the year at number one," Kafelnikov said.

French Open champion Kuerten, the top seed, scored a 6-3, 7-6 (7-0) win over American qualifier Chris Woodruff. He came from 2-5 down in the second set.

It was the first win for the Brazilian in three appearances in the event. He is seeking his fifth title of the year as he continues his battle with Marat Safin of Russia for top spot in the ATP Champions Race, assuming Kafelnikov does not outdo them both.

High hopes on Hewitt



SYDNEY, Nov 15: An ailing Lleyton Hewitt will play and win his singles rubbers in next month's Davis Cup tennis final against Spain, said today, reports AFP.

Hewitt has been suffering from a virus which forced him to pull out of the Masters Series tournament in Paris on Tuesday.

"I've had cameras put down my throat, I've been to so many doctors - it's unbelievable," Hewitt said today.

"No one can really put their finger on what it is."

However, Newcombe said he was confident Hewitt would be fine to play in the Davis Cup, to be played on clay in Barcelona.

Newcombe and coach Tony Roche Wednesday named the 19-year-old and Pat Rafter as Australia's two singles players with Mark Woodforde and Sandon Stolle the likely doubles combination.