

Sport

Aravinda not available

COLOMBO, Jan 6: Batsman Aravinda de Silva has told the cricket selectors that he cannot join the Sri Lankan team for the third Test against South Africa...

But when the selectors asked Aravinda whether he was available, he indicated that he did not have enough preparation for the tour and, as a result, he felt he could not play...

Sri Lanka suffered a humiliating innings defeat at the hands of South Africa in the second Test after the first Test had ended in a draw.

Del Silva could not be reached for comment. The Daily Mirror, an independent English language daily, said De Silva was dropped from the team after he was named a suspect in the match-fixing scandal by India's federal investigators.

The Sri Lankan cricket authorities are investigating the accusations against De Silva.

Weeping

height. The West Indies Cricket Board has not escaped the barrage of abuse either and many Caribbean cricket fans believe the WIBC is as responsible as the players it picked for the embarrassments Under.

Carl Hooper's status, for example, is perplexing. The elegant batsman was not considered for the tour because he did not play in last year's regional first-class competition.

But Marlon Samuel was chosen to replace the injured Shivnarine Chanderpaul despite the fact that he did not take part in the same competition.

In a letter to the Trinidad and Tobago Guardian, cricket fan Hector Salisbury called for a public inquiry into the selection procedures of the WIBC.

Salisbury said the inquiry would help create an acceptable environment of transparency and bring respectability to the WIBC.

He added that it would also allow "the public the opportunity to understand how a team is selected and the assurance of absolutely no outside influences or territorial partisanship."

Outspoken news sports commentator Trevor Chapman wants the entire selection panel to resign "for placing our cricket in a state of disarray."

Chapman said "It is about time we asked Sir Vivian Richards, Gordon Greenidge, Ian Bishop, Andy Roberts, Maurice Foster and Franklyn Stephenson to help us out of this crisis."

"Sir Vivian would be my chairman of selectors and team manager, Stephenson would be coach-selector, Greenidge the batting coach and Andy Roberts the bowling coach. Bishop and Foster will be selectors."

Making a gentle splash, though, in an ocean of bad news for West Indies followers was 34-year-old Hooper's recent announcement that he was planning to play again in this year's domestic competition.

"I have informed the Board I am available to play for the West Indies, I told the selectors I am no longer in retirement and if they feel I can make a meaningful contribution to the team, I am willing to play at any time."

If Hooper and a fit-again Chanderpaul can re-emerge to strengthen the batting line-up, it could galvanise the inconsistent Brian Lara.

And if Lara again started producing big scores on a regular basis, the West Indies would at least have a chance of again developing a side difficult for opponents to beat.

Khulna serve

Table with columns: Rana c Azam b Ehsanul, Al-Amin not out, Extras, Total, Fall of wickets, Bowler, O, M, R, W.



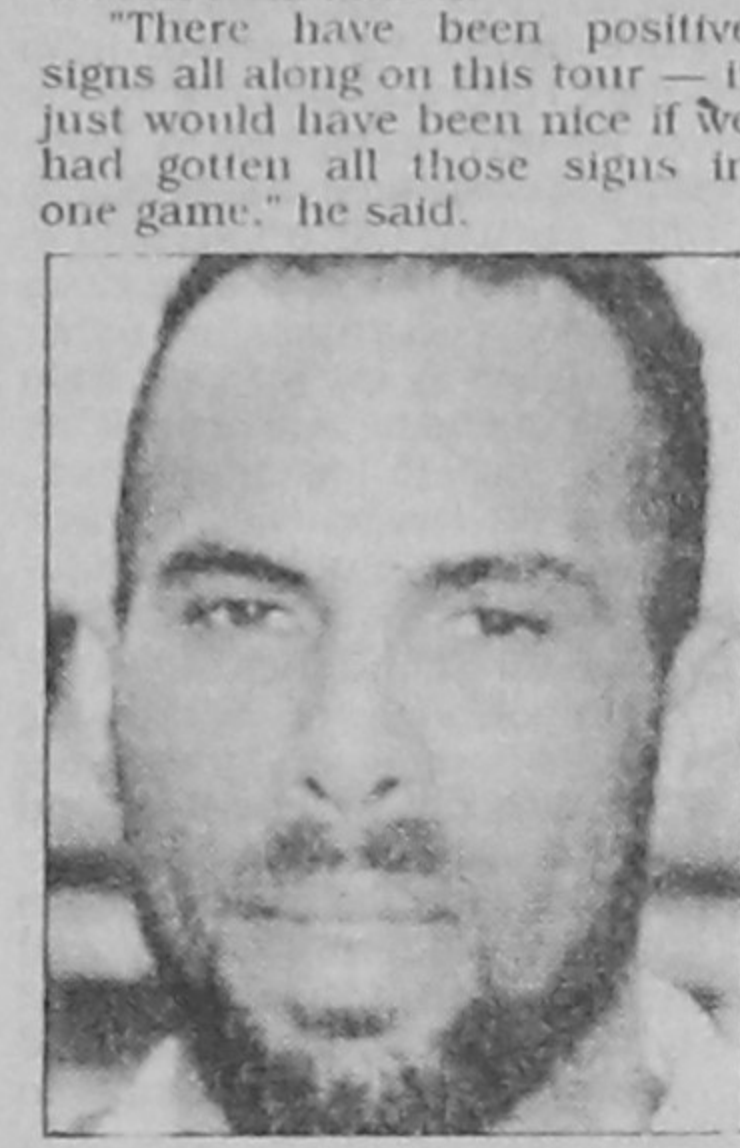
Wayne Phillips, a former Australia wicketkeeper who is the manager-cum-coach of Commonwealth Bank Cricket Academy, imparts some tips to Shahriar Hossain and Hasibul Hossain at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

'Aussies standardise cricket'

Adams wants to continue captaining

33-year-old Adams said his gut reaction was that he wanted to continue as captain. He said there were positives as the West Indies face the next toughest side in Test cricket after Australia - South Africa in a five-Test series in the Caribbean from March.

"There have been positive signs all along on this tour - it just would have been nice if we had gotten all those signs in one game," he said.



JIMMY ADAMS

"But this last game did show a few good signs. He said the batting in the second innings, when the West Indies made 352, was encouraging because the tourists were looking down the barrel and the fellows really put their heads down and batted well collectively.

"That's something that's been a feature of the Australian team this summer and it was good to see our lads doing it, especially under the circumstances when a lot of people thought we would roll over and die.

"It's a credit to the team that they really stuck at it and took the game into the fifth day. Adams said part of the reason the West Indies showed more fight in this match had a lot to do with the fact it was the last Test match.

"We gave people licence, we said 'this is the last Test, whatever you have left you have to leave it out in the middle,'" he said.

"It wasn't as simple as that but the fellows were more relaxed and it showed in the way we played."

5-0 wins

SYDNEY, Jan 6 (Reuters): Australia's victory over the West Indies in the fifth Test today saw them become just the eighth team in Test cricket history to complete a "cleansweep" of a five-match series.

Table with columns: Series, winning team, losing team, venue. Lists various Test series results.

Australia keep it clean

From page 13 said Waugh. "We're not worried about winning or losing the outcome will take care of itself if we play the same way as we planned before the game and that is aggressively - the wins will come along if we stick with those basics."

It was an emotional day for the West Indies, bowing Trojan Courtney Walsh, 38, who was feted for playing his final Test in Australia and was given a standing ovation by the crowd.

Unfortunately for the amiable Jamaican he could not get the six wickets he needed for his 500th Test wicket, but indicated that he would be trying to get himself fit for the home series against South Africa in a few months time.

SCORECARD

Final scorecard of the fifth and final Test between Australia and West Indies at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Saturday.

Table with columns: Series, winning team, losing team, venue. Lists various Test series results.

FACTFILE

SYDNEY, Jan 6 (AFP/Reuters): Australia stretched their world record number of consecutive Test cricket wins to 15 with victory over the West Indies in the fifth and final Test on Saturday.

ROLL OF WORRELL HONOUR

Table with columns: Year, Test, Result, Margin. Lists Test series results from 1964 to 2001.

Match-fixing

Delhi cops could visit S Africa, Britain

NEW DELHI, Jan 6: New Delhi police will visit South Africa and Britain to pursue match-fixing charges against disgraced South African skipper Hansie Cronje, officials said here on Friday, reports AFP.

"We have sought the (Indian) government's permission for this," Delhi Police Commissioner Ajay Raj Sharma announced.

The feedback so far from these countries has been inadequate," he said, adding that a high-powered team of detectives was likely to visit the two nations by the end of February.

Delhi Police crime branch detectives in April last year charged Cronje with accepting money from bookmakers to fix matches during South Africa's tour of India that March.

The police also named South African players Herschelle Gibbs, Nicky Boje and Pieter Strydom in the scandal, sparking off the biggest investigation worldwide ever into allegations of corruption in the game.

Sharma's detectives have sought the help of the Interpol on the whereabouts of a London-based Indian bookie, Sanjiv Chawla, in connection with the Cronje scandal.

Police here have said they secretly taped Cronje's conversations with Chawla before charging the player with match fixing.

Shamilla Batohi, the chief prosecutor in South Africa's King Commission which probed the scandal, visited India in September and agreed to send details of telephone calls made by Cronje to bookmakers in India and abroad.

Police chief Sharma also said that since Cronje had filed a "few petitions in South Africa courts, nothing much could be done as long as the matter was sub-judice."

Seeds no more at Madras

MADRAS, Jan 6: The story of the week at the Indian Open continued into the quarterfinals, with the last remaining seed, France's Cedric Pioline, losing to unranked Czech Michal Tabara on Friday, reports AFP.

Tabara, who finished 195 in the 2000 ATP Champions Race to Pioline's 16, won 6-4, 6-1 in 59 minutes to set up a semi-final meeting with Danish teenager Kristian Pless.

Pless, the world's top junior in 1999 after winning the Australian Open juniors and reaching the final of the junior Wimbledon and the US Open juniors, was a 6-1, 7-5 winner over Romanian Adrian Panu.

The other semifinal in the 400,000-dollar tournament will be between Spanish 18-year-old Tommy Robredo and Russia's Andrei Stoliarov.

Perfect warmup for Dokic

HONG KONG, Jan 6: Jelena Dokic got her Australian Open preparations off to flying start on Saturday with a hard-fought win over Anna Kournikova in the final of Hong Kong's New Year exhibition tournament, reports AFP.

The 17-year-old Australian edged a tight first set in a tie-break and went on to win 7-6, 6-3 after 80 minutes on court.

The Belgrade-born Dokic, ranked number 25 in the world, was delighted to find her early season form with the Australian Open round the corner.

Henman bows out

ADELAIDE, Jan 6: British number one Tim Henman squandered a great chance for a rare tournament win here on Saturday when he crashed out of the Australian hardcourt championships to Nicolas Pietrangeli, reports AFP.

The unranked Chilean, ranked 87th in the world, came from a set down to win 3-6, 7-5, 6-2 in what he described as the best win of his career.

He will face Germany's Tommy Haas, who overcame Australian Jason Stoltenberg 7-6, 6-4, in Sunday's final.

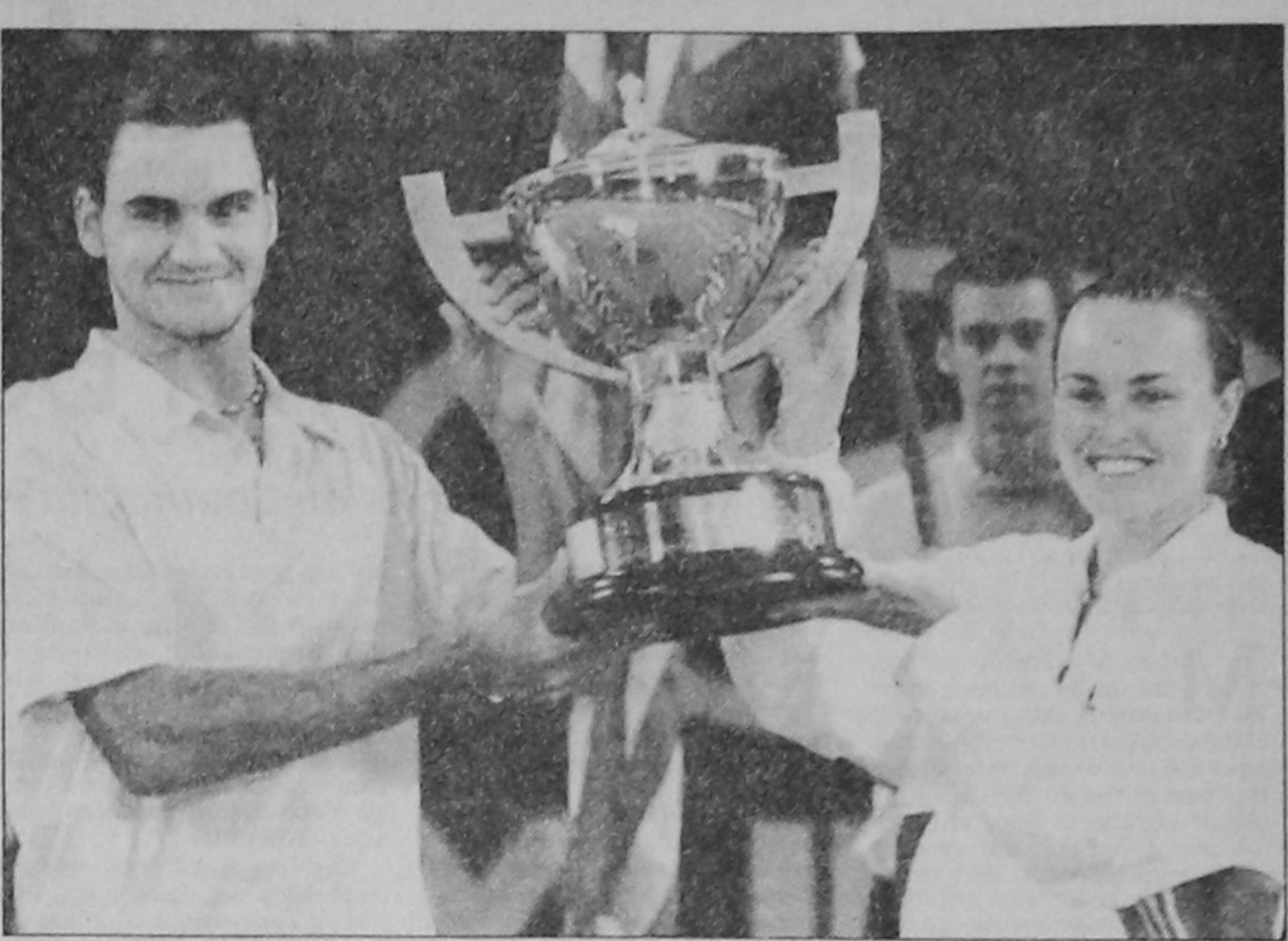
Big blow for Kafelnikov

DOHA, Jan 6: Olympic champion Yevgeny Kafelnikov, who had been keen to return as a winner to Australia next week by capturing the opening event of the 2001 season, instead collapsed to a startling quarterfinal defeat in the 1,000,000-dollar Qatar Mobil Open here, reports AFP.

The top-seeded Russian was beaten 1-6, 7-6, 6-4 by Czech Bohdan Ulihrach, who would not have made the main draw here had he not saved two match points in the final round of the qualifying competition.

Kafelnikov was a set and 3-1 up but still could not make it against a man who played with stoic determination and solid consistency when he was in trouble.

By contrast Kafelnikov began to get edgy and was warned by the umpire for his language early in the final set, during which, at the break of serve at 4-4, he delivered two double faults which effectively cost him the match.



Martina Hingis and Roger Federer of Switzerland pose with the Hopman Cup after beating Americans Monica Seles and Jan-Michael Gambill in the final yesterday. - AFP photo

Swiss ride on Hingis

PERTH, Jan 6: World number one Martina Hingis maintained a remarkable unbeaten record to lead Switzerland to a 2-1 victory over the United States in the Hopman Cup final here on Saturday, reports AFP.

The Swiss Miss, who has never lost a singles match in the mixed team event, teamed up with former world junior champion Roger Federer to overcome Monica Seles and Jan-Michael Gambill and claim the 130,000-dollar winner's cheque in the eight-nation event.

It was Switzerland's second triumph in the 13-year-old contest - the first came nine years ago when Manuela Maleeva-Fragniere and Jakob Hlasek beat Czechoslovakia's Helena Sukova and Karel Novacek in the final.

For Hingis, it was a case of fourth time lucky after unsuccessful bids in 1996, 1997 and 1999.

In Saturday's showdown, Hingis gave Switzerland a flying start, beating Seles, the former world number one who is now ranked fourth, in a classic women's singles clash, 7-5, 6-4.

Then Federer sealed the title, beating Jan-Michael Gambill 6-4, 6-3 to make the outcome of the final mixed doubles rubber academic.

It was a great match," said an obviously relieved Hingis, 20. "Monica is a great competitor and every time we play each other it is always a great match," she said.

"She is such an aggressive player. She served very well, she always had me under pressure. I definitely had to run today."

Federer said he had been very nervous at the start of the tournament.

"But I handled the pressure well and played well," he said.

Seles, smiling in defeat, said: "Switzerland were simply better today."

The Hingis win gave her a 13-2 head-to-head advantage over Seles.

Hingis confirmed she and Seles would soon become doubles team-mates, playing together in Sydney and the Australian Open in Melbourne later this month.

"We will see how it goes and maybe we will continue to play together," she said.

"She is such a professional player. She has a great serve and a great game for the doubles. As a team, I think we have great chances."

Hingis has decided to play with Seles after a much-publicised split with her former doubles partner, glamorous Russian Anna Kournikova.

A fired-up Seles made it clear from the start that Hingis would have her work cut out to overcome her older rival.

Hingis was slow to start, but had found her rhythm by the third game, in which she broke Seles' service.

Gap no good for cricket

JOHANNESBURG, Jan 6 (Internet report): Test cricket's current split into the best and the rest will have a negative long-term impact on the game, says new South African supreme Gerald Majola.

With Australia and South Africa pulling away from the other eight Test-playing nations, a gap is forming that will damage the game's popularity, says the man who has taken over the reins from Ali Bacher.

Australia has 15 consecutive Test wins under its belt, while South Africa have won six of their last eight series.

In no situation, even down to club level, is it desirable for two teams to dominate completely.

Majola told the Saturday Argus, "We should not be happy that we win a series 5-0. If that keeps happening the game could lose impact and spectators.

"Something must be done to fix this situation. I'm definitely not happy to see such a big gap between the top countries and the rest."

Majola says that series against rank underdogs do not have the pulling power to attract fans already distracted by numerous other leisure activities.

"A 10-year plan for international competition is currently being drawn up by the ICC, where we will have to play Bangladesh for example. Will people come to watch if the gap is that big?"

But Majola has concerns closer to the present. South Africa arrive in the West Indies in March for five Tests and seven one-day internationals, and face a team at its lowest ebb in its proud history. Majola believes the once-proud Caribbean team has been left behind.

"I was in Jamaica last year with the SA team, and it appeared that (the West Indies) had been left behind by the changes in the game," he said.

"Maybe they have money problems, maybe their system needs to be looked at, maybe their domestic competition is not good enough. Cricket has totally changed in the professional era."

The man who took the second string South African side to the Caribbean in 1999, Hylton Ackerman, believes it is vital for the game that the West Indies recover their former stature.

"The world situation is not very healthy at the moment. We have to get the West Indies back flying again. I still think their bowlers are not bad."

"The general public in the West Indies are not happy, but they'll still come in droves to watch South Africa. In Barbados, for instance, fans knew all the South African players names off by heart."

However Ackerman warns that a long road lies ahead for the Windies. He said he had observed a remarkable shortage of emerging talent, and the practice facilities had been poor.

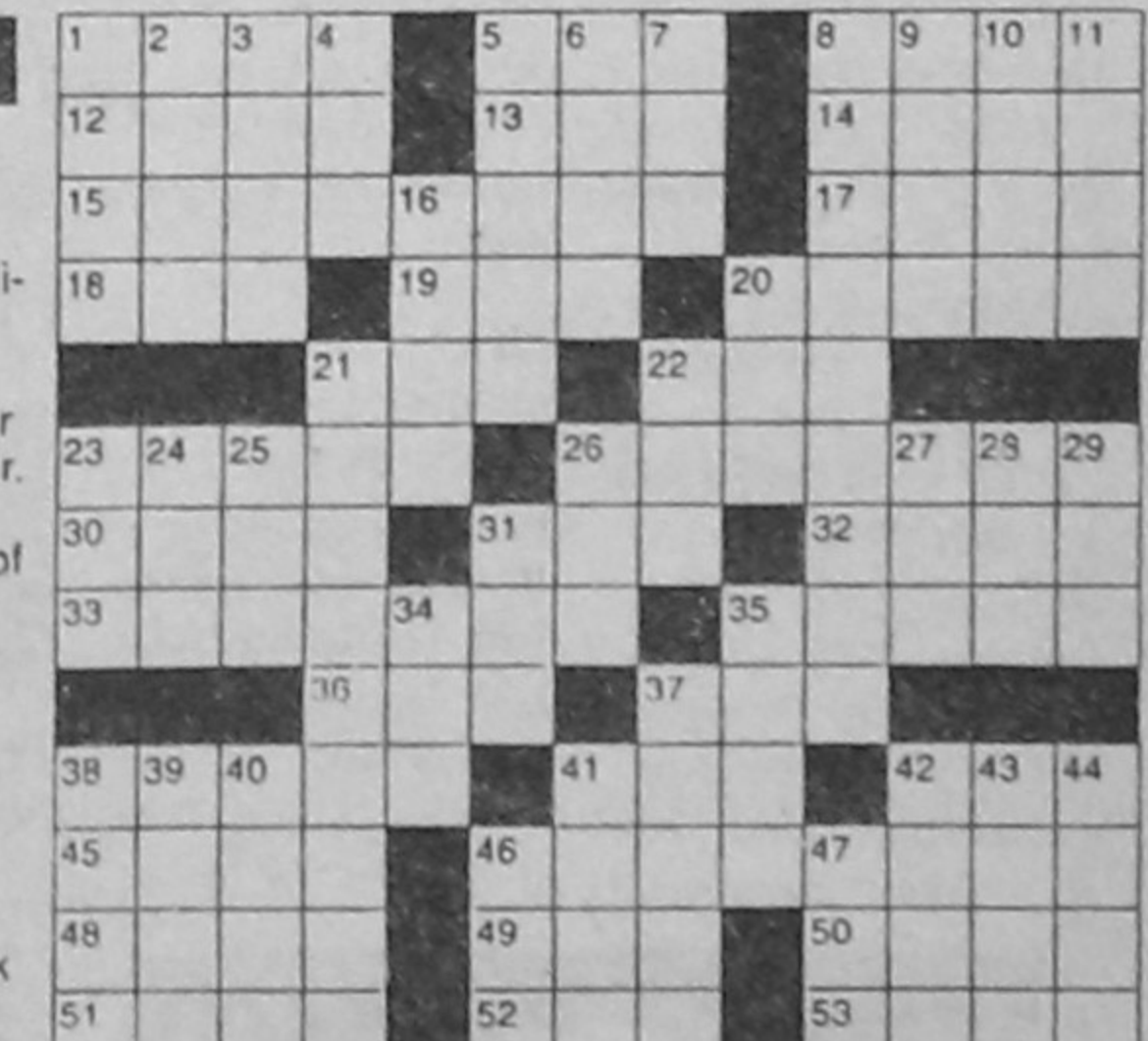
Sri Lankan coach Dav Whatmore, while reluctant to admit to any ranking among the world's Test sides without a formal table, agreed that the division was by accident. "I don't think it is by accident that Australia and South Africa are the two best teams they have very good domestic competitions, in which it is easy to identify talent on the basis of consistent performances."

Whatmore believes an effort must be made to promote cricket in the weaker countries, in order to save the game as a whole.

"I'm not sure it is healthy that the bigger brothers get bigger and the smaller brothers get smaller like Manchester United getting bigger and all the other clubs just making up the numbers and nicely trying to avoid relegation."

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 1 Harrison sci-fi role 5 'The' is product 8 20 Down 20 Barbie's beau 21 Syrian singer metropol...



CRYPTOQUIP GPXYH XMN ZPA CHHV NV DKRS SPVVHAKAET KA ZPGHJMR YX DPRZSKAE RSH CAKESRJX AHDT... Yesterday's Cryptquip: THE CARD GAME WHICH THE PIG FARMER CLAIMED TO LIKE MOST OF ALL WAS PORKER.