

Warne-d

MELBOURNE, Jan 12: Australian cricket's naughty boy Shane Warne was cautioned by police for throwing tennis balls back into the crowd during the opening one-day match of the summer here, police said Friday, reports AFP.

The incident occurred during Thursday's tedious, one-sided match in which some commentators said there was more action of the field than on it as the mercury soared, hitting 41 degrees Celsius at one stage.

Police Commander Leigh Gassner said an officer asked Warne to "desist" from throwing balls back into the crowd after they were hurled onto the turf of the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG).

It was Warne's first match after a long absence due to a broken finger, but he failed to take a wicket in a match in which Australia gave the West Indies a 74-run drubbing.

Police arrested 34 spectators, mainly for drunkenness, and evicted 165 people — almost three times the number of arrests and twice the number of evictions compared to the first one-day game last summer.

Few appeared to pay much attention to a plea for good behaviour by Australian vice-captain Adam Gilchrist.

Gassner said the high temperatures were a factor in the crowd behaviour.

"The hot weather and alcohol can tend to mix into a cocktail particularly when you're getting 41 degrees," he said.

He said the number of arrests and evictions was disappointing but it also showed police determination to crack down on unruly behaviour.

Can WI take a U-turn?



BRISBANE, Jan 12: West Indies' cricket captain Jimmy Adams showed signs of strain Friday as he fended off questions about his leadership in the wake of another inept display by his team against Australia, reports AFP.

The wobbly Windies — thrashed 5-0 by Australia in the just-completed Test series — stumbled to a 74-run loss to the home country at the Melbourne Cricket Ground Thursday night in the opening match of the summer's Carlton tri-nation one-day contest.

Batting second after Australia had compiled 267 for six, the West Indies granted an unimpressive 16 runs off their first 11 overs and effectively killed the match as a contest. They finished with 193 for seven from their 50 overs.

"Last night looked really bad," conceded Adams, who is at the mercy of his under-performing players, including the enigmatic Brian Lara, once regarded as the world's top batsman.

"Players have a responsibility to accept roles that they are given and hopefully we won't have a repeat of last night for the rest of this series."

Today's match between West Indies and Zimbabwe will be shown live on ESPN from 9:30am (BST).

Adams said he did not con-

sider his leadership under threat despite the woeful Test results and the miserable early one-day form.

"It's not a case of me feeling the pressure," he said, rejecting suggestions the time had come to lay down the law to his players.

Unless Zimbabwe, who have been playing well, can at least be competitive against Australia, there are major concerns the triangular series could be a non-event, costing the Australian Cricket Board vital revenue.

Twin losses by the Windies would see their spirits slump even lower. Despite the Windies' woes, Australian pace spearhead Glenn McGrath said Friday there would be no holding back.

"They're going through some tough times, but we won't be taking it easy on them," he said.

TEAMS

WEST INDIES: Jimmy Adams (captain), Shervin Campbell, Wavell Hinds, Brian Lara, Marlon Samuels, Ricardo Powell, Ridley Jacobs, Laurie Williams, Mahendra Nagamootoo, Nixon McLean, Cameroun Cuffy.

ZIMBABWE (from): Heath Streak (captain), Alistair Campbell, Stuart Carlisle, Andy Flower, Grant Flower, Travis Friend, Angus Mackay, Trevor Madondo, Douglas Marillier, Bryan Murphy, Muteki Nkala, Henry Olonga, Gavin Rennie, Bryan Strang, Dirk Viljoen, Guy Whittall.

"I'm here to do a job in Australia and as far as the captaincy goes we'll see what happens after that."

A number of factors had contributed to Thursday's below-par effort, in which at least five catches went to ground, he said.

"It's fair to say we had a poor outing in the field, we didn't back up the bowlers as well as we should have and we lost the

plot in the middle overs, while batting as well," he said.

Improvement could be expected against Zimbabwe at the Gabba here Saturday and against Australia on the same ground Sunday.

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Alauddin no more

Sports Reporter

Renowned footballer of the subcontinent and a member of the All-India Football team, Alauddin Khan alias Mia Bhai, died at his Pijepara residence in Narayanganj on Thursday. He was 82.

Alauddin left behind his wife, three sons and six

daughters as well as a host admirers to mourn his death.

His *namaj-e-janaja* was held at Jimkhana ground after *Juma* prayers and was buried at Pijepara graveyard.

Selected for the All-India football team in 1946, Alauddin also toured South Africa in the same year.

During a chequered career spanning over 22 years, he played for football giants AB Railway Sports Club, East Bengal Club, East Pakistan Gymkhana Club and East Bengal Eleven.

Alauddin won the National Sports Award for his services to the game in 1978.

Sub-Jr Chess

Minaulzuddin Ahmed Sagar and Moksedul Monir will meet in a tie-deciding play-off match in the 21st National Sub-Junior chess tournament today, reports UNB.

The tie-late rolled into the play-off as per the tournament by-laws after Sagar and Monir finished jointly on top with 7 points each after the eighth and final round at the Chess Federation auditorium yesterday.

Sagar of Anirban Chess School lost his top spot after losing his last round match from a clear winning position to Moksedul Monir.

In the other last round matches, Raulul beat Moniruzzaman. Sumi overcame Nagir Saleheen. Sadi outwitted Masud Rana. Jahry defeated Maulul and Arefin downed Seimon.

A total of 58 players participated in the tournament.

Meanwhile, the 22nd National Junior Chess Tournament begins tomorrow from 3 pm at the Bangladesh Chess Federation auditorium, said a press release.

Tri-nation cricket

KL to request India to play

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 12: Malaysian Cricket Association president Tunku Imran Tuanku Jaafar said Friday he would urge India to change their minds and join a tri-nation cricket tournament involving Pakistan, reports AFP.

India had told Malaysia they could not compete because of time constraints, but Tunku Imran said he would try his best to change their minds.

"Sure, I personally invited them during my visit to India last month. I shall try to get them to reverse their decision. It will be a major boost for Malaysian cricket if we can get both India and Pakistan to play here," he said.

Malaysia had invited Pakistan and India to join them for a tri-series tournament from January 28 to February 9 in Kuala Lumpur.

Pakistan Cricket Board official Munawar Rana reportedly said earlier this month that the real reason behind India's withdrawal was because they did not want to play against Pakistan.

Tunku Imran said he had high hopes that India would eventually take part despite the political differences.

"We have good relations with our Indian counterparts and I am confident they will compete," he added.

The Indian government had earlier refused to allow its cricket team to tour Pakistan because of political tensions between the two countries. It has refused to review the decision despite pressure from the International Cricket Council (ICC).

Hrbaty makes his way thru'

AUCKLAND, Jan 12: New Zealand ATP Open tennis tournament second seed Dominik Hrbaty reached the final Friday after surviving a three set quarterfinal before going on to beat popular Spaniard Juan Balcells in the semis, reports AFP.

In the morning Hrbaty from the Czech Republic saw off the tough Swede Thomas Johansson 6-7 (7-4), 6-3, 6-2 before taking out the dangerous but tired Balcells 7-6 (7-2), 6-3.

Balcells fought his way to a 6-3, 6-4 win over American qualifier Glenn Weiner in his quarterfinal but said afterwards the trip from Qatar at the start of the week after playing the doubles final there and the hectic schedule here had taken its toll.

A Pete-Agassi quarterfinal



MELBOURNE, Jan 12 (AFP): The Australian Open won't be featuring a Pete Sampras-Agassi quarterfinal this year after the tennis titans were drawn to collide in a quarterfinal.

The two modern-day greats were placed in the bottom half of the men's singles draw headed by second seed and US Open champion Marat Safin.

Only one of them will live to fight another day after their quarter-final showdown.

The draw also wasn't charitable for Martina Hingis. She will have to negotiate both the Williams' sisters, potentially Serena in the quarters and US Open, Wimbledon and Sydney Olympic champion Venus in the semi-final, just to reach the women's final.

Meanwhile, defending champion Lindsay Davenport has a time bomb awaiting her in the first round against Australian giantkiller Jelena Dokic, who dumped Hingis out in the opening round of Wimbledon two years ago.

Sampras and Agassi have played each other in four grand slam finals -- 1995 Australian Open, 1999 Wimbledon, 1990 and 1995 US Open -- with Sampras winning three of them.

Defending champion Agassi, one of only five men to have won all four grand slam titles, is seeded to face Spanish Davis Cup hero Juan Carlos Ferrero in the round of 16. Agassi's

opening match is against Jiri Vanek of the Czech Republic.

All-time Grand Slam leader Sampras could be reunited with Frenchman Cedric Pioline, whom he beat in the finals of the 1993 US Open and 1997 Wimbledon, in the fourth round.

But Sampras has to negotiate a first round encounter with Slovakia's Karol Kucera, who ousted him in the quarterfinals of the 1998 Australian Open.

"It's on my mind (playing in same quarter as Agassi). I have a tough first-round match and you can't look that far ahead especially in the men's game, there's too many good players that can take you down, there's a lot of flouters in the draw," said Sampras.

It's a long way away before we play each other and my main focus is Kucera and I'll have my hands full with him."

Russian Yevgeny Kafelnikov, runner-up to Agassi here last year after beating Thomas Enqvist the previous year, was delighted to learn that he had drawn apart from Agassi and Sampras.

His half of the draw looks easier with top seeded Brazilian Gustavo Kuerten, fourth seed Magnus Norman and young Australian hope Lleyton Hewitt.

"That's the best news I've had in the four days I've been here," said Kafelnikov. "It's going to make my life a little bit easier towards the end of the tournament."

Kuerten, although he finished top of the rankings last season, has a wretched record in the Australian Open, losing more matches than he has won (3-4).

Hewitt has a gruelling start to his campaign. He has been pitted against hardy Swede Jonas Bjorkman and if progresses there's the probability that he will face the most dangerous unseeded floater in the men's draw, German Tommy Haas, ranked 20.

Hings, who didn't win a major last year, faces the prospect of having to slug it out with the intimidating Williams sisters to get a possible crack against Davenport, another of the power-hitters on the circuit.

The Swiss Miss tees off against Hungary's Katalin Marosi-Aracama in the first round, while Serena tackles Taiwan wild card Janet Lee and Venus is up against a qualifier.

If Hings cannot get past Serena should they meet in the quarters, then the stage could be set for an intriguing all-Williams semi-final.

There is considerably less fireworks in the bottom half of the women's draw with old campaigners, fifth-seeded Conchita Martinez projected to meet four-time winner Monica Seles in the quarters.

Russian glamour girl Anna Kournikova -- yet to start a tournament in four years -- is in the bottom half of the draw with Davenport and will play Daniela Hantuchova of the Slovak Republic in the first round.

Acute sacroiliac joint pain (lower back injury) sidelined Mauresmo from the tour for seven weeks in March last year. The problem recurred in late July, forcing her to miss the US Open.

The Hings-Davenport showdown is a replay of last year's final which the big American won 6-4, 6-3 and could be a pointer to the outcome of the Australian Open.

If the seedings go to plan Davenport will play Hings for the Grand Slam honours.

The world number one though believes she has the early-season advantage going into their 22nd career contest -- which Davenport leads 12-9.

"My standard right now is very high," she said. "I feel confident and I think right now I have a little edge over her because I played the Hopman Cup already."

I have played more matches than her and tougher ones."

Davenport said she was glad to have a day off.

"It's good for me to have a day off, especially as it was so hot. But I had a good practice and will be ready for the final."

On the men's side of the draw, Norman won an all Swedish joust with Jonas Bjorkman, digging deep to come from one set down to break in the 12th game of the

third set and win 5-7, 6-3, 7-5 in a gruelling two hours 37 minutes.

"I'm just very, very happy with this week," said Norman who came of age last year when he won five titles.

"I think that's going to give me a lot of confidence for the Australian Open. I know that I can do it."

All this just three years after a five hour operation to correct an irregular heart rate which threatened to end his career.

The Monaco-based Swede will face a tough test though against Hewitt who has looked untouchable all week, although Frenchman Sebastian Grosjean took him to three sets on Friday before the Aussie star nailed it 6-3, 4-6, 6-4.

Hewitt's successful campaign here a year ago contributed to a 13-month winning streak that was ended, ironically, by Norman in the fourth round of the Australian Open.

While the Australian won four tournaments last year, he feels he is now ready to make the breakthrough in a major.

"I think if everything goes right and I start hitting the ball really well, the path that I've been going on the last couple of weeks, I think I'm going to be a good chance," he said.

Kafelnikov has been in tremendous touch at the eight-man exhibition tournament this week.

"Obviously, my confidence is up at the moment, the expectation is quite high and I feel like the way I played against Pat and Juan Carlos that good things are going to happen in the Australian Open because confidence is a huge factor in grand slams."

Martina, Lleyton on track



SYDNEY, Jan 12: Martina Hingis wasted little energy Friday in topping veteran campaigner Conchita Martinez to set up a Sydney International final against arch-rival Lindsay Davenport, reports AFP.

Defending champion Lleyton Hewitt will play world number four Magnus Norman for the men's crown.

In searing heat, Hings, the top seed, had the look of someone who didn't want to hang around on court, blazing past the Spaniard 6-3, 6-2 in 69 minutes.

Davenport was spared the energy-sapping high temperatures when title holder Amelie Mauresmo pulled out of their semifinal before it started, citing a recurring back injury.

The nagging problem throws the French star's Australian Open plans into chaos.

The world number 16, seeded 13 for the first Grand Slam of the season, said she remained optimistic of playing in Melbourne but only if the pain eased.

"I felt it yesterday (Thursday). I had the same problem last year but I thought it was over," said the 21-year-old who was defeated by Hings in the 1999 Australian Open final.

MELBOURNE, Jan 12: Andre Agassi and Yevgeny Kafelnikov will meet in another Melbourne final

after the Russian continued his rich form at the Kooyong Classic Friday, reports AFP.

Kafelnikov, polished off Spanish youngster Juan Carlos Ferrero 6-3, 6-4 in an hour in a semi-final to set up a decider with Agassi on Saturday.

Last year Agassi won his sixth grand slam title when he repulsed Kafelnikov in the final of the Australian Open here.

"It's different circumstances this time -- too bad we're not playing 23 or 24 days later in the final again like we did last year," said Kafelnikov.

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CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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CRYPTOQUIP

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Yesterday's Cryptoquip: THE REFEREE WAS SO
THIRSTY THAT HE DEFINITELY NEEDED TO WET
HIS WHISTLE.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: R