

ICC can do nothing

INTERNET, Undated

ICC president Malcolm Gray said that he was not in a position to penalise India if the national government forced the side to withdraw from the forthcoming Sharjah triangular tournament.

The tournament, also involving Pakistan and Sri Lanka, was scheduled to begin on April 8. New Zealand have been approached to stand in for India if, as expected, they are prevented from attending.

"Sharjah is a tournament that falls outside of the ICC's International Tours Programme," Gray explained. "Countries are invited to compete by the organisers and as a private agreement it is a matter for them, rather than the ICC, to deal with this particular issue."

He also confirmed that the ICC would not impose any penalty or sanction against a member country if it was prevented by its government from participating in an event.

"This would be a case of the government saying it does not want its national cricket team to play in the tournament, rather than a decision reached by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI)."

Rajshahi cricket

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Jagrata Sangha and Junior Eleven Friends Club won their respective matches of the Hassan Imam and Ali Imam Pintu Smriti cricket tournament at the Rajshahi Medical College play ground yesterday.

Jagrata Sangha defeated Kalabagan SP by two wickets in the first match.

Winning the toss, Kalabagan collected 126 for seven in allotted 23 overs.

In reply, Jagrata Sangha reached the target in 16 overs losing eight wickets.

In the other match of the day, Junior Eleven Friends defeated Wabda Kalabagan by three wickets.

Junior Eleven won the toss and invited Wabda to bat. Wabda were all out for 90 in 20 overs.

In reply, Junior Eleven reached the target in 12 overs losing seven wickets.

Bell indebted to Edgar

Cricket

REUTERS, Hamilton

Matthew Bell paid tribute to the support he has received from former New Zealand opener Bruce Edgar after scoring his maiden Test century against Pakistan on Thursday.

Bell, who is making his comeback for New Zealand after being dropped in 1999, said Edgar helped him get some self-belief back into his game.

"Bruce helps me think outside the square and concentrate on special goals while I'm batting," Bell said. "I've had some good form this summer and there's nothing better to help with confidence and self belief."

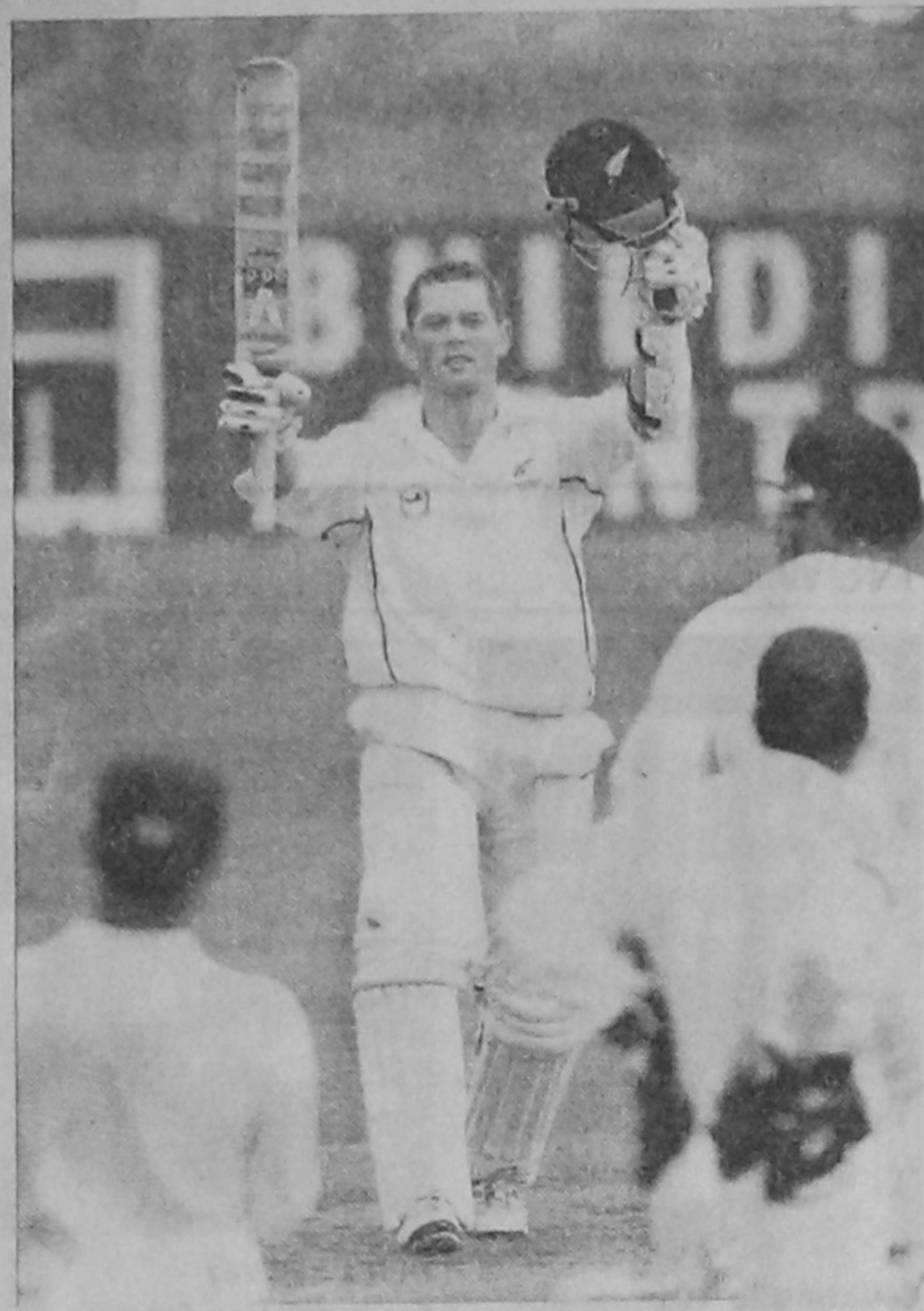
Bell, who hit 105 and shared an opening partnership of 181 with Mark Richardson, whose unbeaten 106 was also his maiden Test century, said reaching the landmark "was a special moment for my parents."

"They had travelled down from Whangarei in the far north of New Zealand. They've been very supportive during the periods when I have struggled and I was glad they were there to share it with me."

Richardson said he was glad he did not have to wait on 99 before reaching three figures, having been out lbw on 99 off the last ball of a day in his second test against Zimbabwe in Harare last September.

"When I got to 97 I backed myself to put the ball through the covers if he Waqar Younis put one up there, and sure enough he did and I got past 99 with a four," he said. "That was a monkey off my back and it was relief."

Richardson and Bell have forged a successful opening combination in this series, their century stand in the third Test here following partnerships of 69 and 102 in the second Test in Christchurch and 91 in the first match in Auckland.



New Zealand opener Matthew Bell acknowledges the crowd's applause after scoring his maiden Test century on Thursday.

Makeshift arrangement to run BCCSL

Cricket

REUTERS, Colombo

A four-member interim committee was appointed on Thursday to run Sri Lankan cricket after the country's sports minister sacked the under-fire cricket board.

Sports Minister Lakshman Kiriella said on Wednesday he was planning to dissolve the board after it lost a legal battle over plans to elect a new administration on Saturday.

"An interim committee has been appointed. The dissolution took effect at midnight," the board's chief executive Anura Tennekoon told Reuters on Thursday.

Sri Lankan cricket was last run by an interim committee when the board was smothered by litigation after an election was disrupted by gun-toting intruders in 1999.

Tennekoon said the committee would be chaired by Vijaya Malasekera, a director of the Ceylon Tobacco Co.

Former Sri Lanka players Sisdath Wettimuny, Asantha de Mel and Michael Tissera were the other members named, but Tennekoon said more appointments were expected.

Just before it was dissolved, the cricket board set May 6 as the new date for the election after lawyers for board president Thilanga Sumathipala tried unsuccessfully to overturn Monday's court order that notice for the election on Saturday was not properly issued.

Kiriella said the board had no choice but to dissolve the board after it failed to furnish proper accounts ahead of the election.

On Monday, the board sacked Tennekoon's predecessor Dharmika Ranatunga on charges of "a financial nature" soon after his brother, Prassanna, announced he would not seek re-election as vice-president because of corruption in the cricket administration.

Both men, brothers of Arjuna Ranatunga who led Sri Lanka to their 1996 World Cup victory, are members of Sri Lanka's most powerful cricketing family which has been involved in a long-running feud with the board.

M'singh cricket

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Myseningsh

Pandit Para AC defeated County Trainee by six wickets in the Beg Steel Premier Division Cricket League at the local stadium yesterday.

Batting first, County Trainee scored 88 runs all out in 30.4 overs.

In reply, Pandit Para reached the target in 28.5 overs losing four wickets.

In another match, Mohammedian AC defeated Nill Kamal AC by nine wickets in the Pepsi First Division Cricket League at the local Circuit House ground yesterday.

Nill Kamal batted first and scored 82 runs all out in 29 overs.

In reply, Mohammedian reached the target of 83 runs in 15.3 overs losing only one wicket.

Crisis

FROM PAGE 13 international cricket in August last year.

Ranatunga has categorically denied charges of accepting bribes while De Silva had said he was approached by bookmakers but did not take bribes.

Indian bookmaker MK Gupta's testimony was published in an Indian Central Bureau of Investigation report last year.

Openers'

FROM PAGE 13 something else as a spinner."

Richardson also escaped a nasty injury when pace bowler Akbar struck him with a waist-high full toss late in the day in near darkness.

Both openers said they struggled with the stop-start nature of the day, with rain arriving twice just before the scheduled start.

New Zealand take a lead of 150 into Friday with two days to play, and Richardson said the team would want at least four sessions for their bowlers to complete the job and square the series 1-1.

After two days of inclement weather, the forecast is for improved conditions.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on the third day of the third Test between New Zealand and Pakistan in Hamilton Thursday:

PAKISTAN: First innings 104 (Younis Khan 36; Daryll Tufley 4-39, Chris Martin 4-52)

NEW ZEALAND: First innings (overnight 160/0)

Richardson not out 106 Bell lbw b Waqar 105 Sinclair c Waqar b Akbar 27 McMillan not out 7 Extras: (lb-9, nb-6) 15 Total: (for 2 wks in 88.1 overs) 260

Fall of wickets: 1-181, 2-239.

Bowler O M R W Waqar 25 1 81 1 Akbar 20 1 5 47 1 M Akram 18 1 71 0 Saqlain 25 5 52 0

No room for Hick

Cricket

AFP, London

Graeme Hick was the major casualty as England's cricket chiefs named their 12 centrally contracted players here at Lord's Thursday for this summer's home Test series against Pakistan and Australia.

The 34-year-old Worcestershire batsman, a powerhouse performer at county level, has never reached the same heights in international cricket and has been dropped 10 times by England.

Another disappointing tour while England were achieving Test series wins against Pakistan and Sri Lanka finds the Zimbabwe-born Hick fighting for his England place once again.

However, David Graveney, England's chairman of selectors, said there was still a way back into the side for Hick, who has scored 111 first-class centuries at 54.28 but in 65 Tests has made a modest 3383 runs at 31.32 with just six centuries since his debut in 1991.

"Selectors took on board observations that last time we were overloaded with batsmen last year and one of the aims of central contracts was to protect the bowlers," said Graveney.

"But judging by the wickets we played on last year the concept of playing seven batsman has not been discounted."

"You'll see from that list that there are only six batsman on that list and I would never say about anybody that there was a line

through their name and there will be a lot of contenders for that position, young and experienced."

England have now won four Test series in a row — Zimbabwe and the West Indies were defeated during the last English summer — and Graveney was particularly pleased with their winter's work.

"It's been a fantastic performance. Even the greatest optimists would not have predicted victories against both Pakistan and Sri Lanka. It was beyond most people's dreams. Therefore, to have won both series is a great effort."

England's players have accrued 1 million pounds in bonuses during the last 12 months according to England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) director of cricket operations, John Carr.

As expected the bulk of contracts go to players involved during the third and final Test in Sri Lanka, with Glamorgan off-spinner Robert Croft the only player to miss out.

All-rounder Cork should have been on England's winter tours but had to withdraw through injury and will have to pass fitness tests before his contract is confirmed.

Contracted players: Nasser Hussain, (Essex, captain), Michael Atherton (Lancashire), Andrew Caddick (Somerset), Dominic Cork (Derbyshire), Ashley Giles (Warwickshire), Darren Gough (Yorkshire), Matthew Hoggard (Yorkshire), Alec Stewart (Surrey, wicketkeeper), Graham Thorpe (Surrey), Marcus Trescothick (Somerset), Michael Vaughan (Yorkshire), Craig White (Yorkshire).

England have made five changes from last year's inaugural central contract list.

Out go Hick, former Middlesex batsman Mark Ramprakash who starts this season at county cham-



GRAEME HICK

Serena sent packing Hewitt in last four

Tennis

AFP, Miami

Australian Open champion Jennifer Capriati and Aussie star Lleyton Hewitt each took straight-set victories Wednesday to reach the semifinals at the 6.12 million-dollar Tennis Masters Series event here.

One day before her 25th birthday, fourth-seeded American Capriati defeated fifth-seeded com-

patriot Serena Williams 6-1, 7-6 (7/5).

Hewitt dispatched American Andy Roddick 6-3, 6-2 to book a semifinal date against the winner of a later match between American Jan-Michael Gambill and Argentina's Gaston Gaudio.

Williams, nursing a sore left thigh muscle, squandered three set points in the second and dropped the match with a pair of errant forehands on the final points. Capriati, hurting with a

blistered foot, was relieved not to go three.

"I was playing so well in the first set and then I just started being thrown off — the injury, the wind," Capriati said. "She also started playing better. But I didn't want to go to a third set. I just gave it all I have got."

Williams said she suffered the injury at Indian Wells, an event which she won but vows never to play again. The Williams family was booed after Serena's sister Venus withdrew at the last moment from a semifinal against her sister.

"I was feeling it more," Serena Williams said. "But with all the bad press we had over there, I thought it better just to go on and play. But I wasn't able to run fast and if I couldn't get to it I would just barely slice it back. Wasn't able to reach my full potential at all."

Capriati did and advanced to meet the winner of a later match between second seed Lindsay Davenport of the United States and seventh seed Elena Dementieva of Russia.

"She hit a lot of big serves," Serena Williams said. "She really got out there and didn't let anything get to her. Sometimes it is hard to play against someone who is on the other end limping and grimacing, but she handled it very well."

Capriati said she did not see any dip in Serena's play until the final moments.

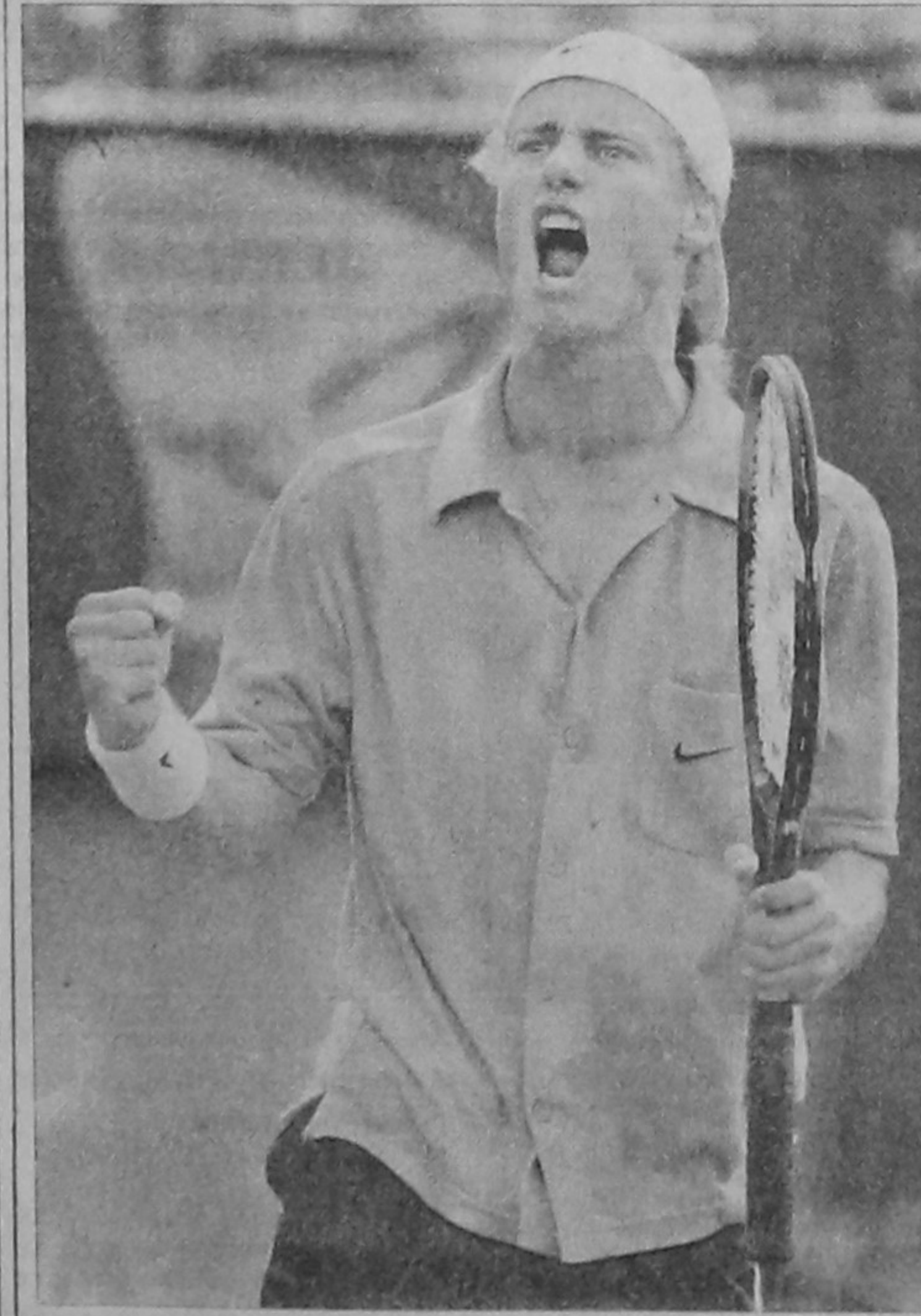
"I didn't notice anything until maybe towards the end when she was making some faces. Just like slowing down," Capriati said. "But she had been doing that from the beginning. She is a difficult player to play with a big serve. She can just play shots, rally and then, all of the sudden, come up with an outright winner."

Swiss World No. 1 Martina Hingis will play third seed Venus Williams in the other women's semifinal.



American Jennifer Capriati plays backhand against compatriot Serena Williams during their Ericsson Open quarterfinal on Wednesday.

Advertisement for 'Daka Ghasa' (ঢাকা ওয়াসা) featuring a list of products and prices, including various types of rice and other goods.



Australian Lleyton Hewitt exults after defeating Andy Roddick of the United States in the Ericsson Open quarterfinal on Wednesday.

Crossword puzzle by Eugene Sheffer and a Cryptiquip puzzle. The crossword includes clues for '37 Regain', '20 E. Eur. nation', etc. The Cryptiquip puzzle is a substitution cipher where X equals O.