

ACB says, no problem if ...

REUTERS, Sydney

Australia are ready to play Pakistan in a triangular one-day series in Kenya next month and named a 14-man squad for the series moved from Pakistan due to security concerns.

The Pakistan Cricket Board said on Thursday New Zealand had turned down its invitation to play in the tournament in Nairobi.

Officials are examining whether to ask Australia to play a series of six or seven one-dayers against Pakistan or invite Kenya to play in New Zealand's place.

The series had been intended as the centrepiece of celebrations in Pakistan marking the 50th anniversary of the country attaining Test status.

Australian Cricket Board (ACB) chief executive James Sutherland said the world champion Australians would play in the series once routine security and operational checks were made.

"The ACB has informed the Pakistan Cricket Board that the Australian team is available for the Kenyan one-day international series, but participation is subject to our satisfaction that player security measures are in place and cricket facilities are adequate," Sutherland said.

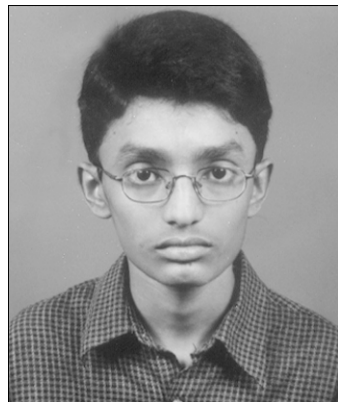
"Having played in Kenya only two years ago we have a reasonable level of comfort that it is a suitable venue, but we need to go through some formalities before we confirm our participation," he added.

Kenya hosted the International Cricket Council "mini World Cup" tournament two years ago.

Final details of the series against Pakistan are yet to be worked out but Pakistan officials have announced a tentative date of August 25 to September 7.

Earlier this year, a two-Test Pakistan-West Indies series was switched to Sharjah and New Zealand cut short their Test tour in May after a bomb went off outside their Karachi hotel.

WHIZZ KID-174 winner



Md Ahsan Ullah (Udayan School, Dhaka)

WHIZZ KID-175 correct answers

- 1. What was the result of the 2002 World Cup final between Brazil and Germany? Ans: 2-0
2. Who won the Golden Ball award? Ans: Oliver Kahn
3. Who became the top scorer in the 2002 World Cup? Ans: Ronaldo
4. How many goals did Ronaldo score during the 2002 World Cup finals? Ans: 8
5. Name the former coach of the South Korean national football team. Ans: Hiddink

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down. Includes a solution time of 23 mins and a solution key at the bottom.

Now Tudor headache



INTERNET, London

England are giving Surrey seamer Alex Tudor more time to recover before finalising their plans for the first Test against India.

The squad for Lord's will be announced on Saturday morning after the previously scheduled time of Thursday 1000 GMT was postponed because of numerous doubts to various players.

Tudor -- man-of-the-match in the last Test against Sri Lanka a month ago -- is the biggest cause for concern.

He has been taking anti-inflammatory tablets in a bid to relieve the discomfort of his shin splints and is a major doubt.

However, it appears the selectors have yet to give up hope of him overcoming the problem.

Accordingly, Surrey granted a request by the England and Wales Cricket Board to rest Tudor for the match at Canterbury today alongside wicketkeeper Alec Stewart.

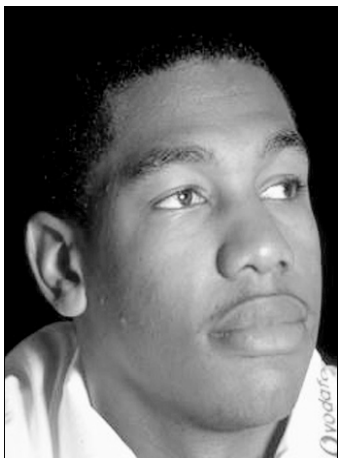
And if there have been signs of improvement overnight, the towering Tudor could be named with another seamer included as cover.

"Alex is having ongoing tests all the time," said Surrey coach Keith Medlycott.

"We are just waiting to reach a point where we can decide the best way to move forward."

"The anti-inflammatories may well smooth the problem over and by Friday lunchtime he could be a lot better."

"I have my fingers crossed for him. I want him to be playing and



ALEX TUDOR

doing really well." Tudor's England and Surrey colleague Mark Butcher makes a return today in that match at Canterbury after knee surgery

kept him away from the game for a month.

He is likely to open the innings, a role he is seemingly set for next week in the Test match following Marcus Trescothick's fractured thumb.

Meanwhile, premier strike bowler Darren Gough makes his first County Championship appearance of the season in the Roses match at Headingley.

But doubts remain as to whether he can stand up to the rigours of a five-day Test, given that he has yet to play anything more than one-day cricket this summer.

Other centrally contracted players -- Yorkshire duo Matthew Hoggard and Michael Vaughan, plus Lancashire's Andrew Flintoff -- will sit out, however, as requested by England coach Duncan Fletcher.

Captain Nasser Hussain and Warwickshire spinner Ashley Giles are also inactive.

POSSIBLE ENGLAND 13: Nasser Hussain (captain), Michael Vaughan, Mark Butcher, Graham Thorpe, Ian Bell, Alec Stewart, Andrew Flintoff, Alex Tudor, Ashley Giles, Darren Gough, Matthew Hoggard, Dominic Cork, Simon Jones.

11th stage Armstrong's

AFP, France

The Tour de France bounced back from a tragic road fatality two days ago in emphatic style with Lance Armstrong pulling on the yellow jersey after claiming his 13th stage win overall here Thursday.

The 30-year-old three-time winner showed he is again the man to beat after he left Spanish climber Joseba Beloki with an apparent mountain to climb in the final 100 metres of the 11th stage.

ONCE rider Beloki, a third place finisher overall for the past two

years, failed to catch the runaway Texan and came in second, seven seconds later after the 158km stage from Pau to La Mongie, a small village found not quite at the summit of the famous Tourmalet.

With nine stages, including six in the mountains and an individual time trial still to race, Armstrong leads Beloki by 1min 12secs, with Gonzalez de Galdeano - who wore the yellow jersey with timid pride for eight days - third at 1:48 after he had a disastrous time on the first mountain stage.

Armstrong's second stage win in

this year's race, following his victory in the opening day prologue, provided plenty of evidence of his climbing skills.

But the American would have been lost without his formidable team, and especially Spanish climber Roberto Heras, a former Tour de Spain winner who set a frightening pace on the Tourmalet.

"It's one thing to get the yellow jersey, but it's also another thing to defend it," Armstrong said after the race.

"I didn't have the legs to attack. The pace Roberto was setting was fast enough for me."

"I can't thank him enough. This stage win should really be for him," he added before explaining why, if Heras had done all the spadework, he didn't let him go for a stage win himself.

"The problem is the time bonuses (at the finish line), because Beloki was still there and if you play around with something like that and Beloki wins the stage and I get second then I would lose a time bonus of eight seconds."

"We have to take all the time possible."

Time bonuses or not, Armstrong seems streets ahead of his main rival who is clinging to the belief he can rustle the Texan's feathers.

"I'm not too worried about this result - I just have to go faster," Beloki said after the race.

"I knew Armstrong was going to move up a gear at the end like he did but I was on my limit. But I continue to believe I can win the Tour."

A day that finished as a classic in the mountains began on a much more sombre note.

The whole peloton of 181 riders, a number reduced at the end of the stage, stood for a minute's silence in honour of the seven-year-old boy killed by one of the vehicles from the sponsors' convoy which precedes the stage.

But the peloton soon jumped into action.

After some early attacks that were quickly brought to heel, France's former world number one Laurent Jalabert took the initiative.

Hingis starts to train

REUTERS, Zurich

Former world number one Martina Hingis has stepped up her bid to compete in next month's U.S. Open with an intense training programme in Florida, Switzerland's Blick newspaper has reported.

Swiss Hingis, the 1997 U.S. Open champion, is struggling to shake off the ankle injury which kept her out of the French Open and Wimbledon in time to compete in the Flushing Meadows tournament, which begins on August 26.

The ankle was operated on in May but it is still swollen and her representatives failed to submit an application to enter the U.S. Open by the July 15 deadline.

On Monday Hingis claimed she could still compete thanks to an invitation if she is declared fit before the start of the final grand slam of the year.

Blick were given an insight into her training camp in Saddlebrook, Florida, which involves an intense programme including at least three hours of tennis a day as well as cycling, swimming and skating.

"I must watch out not to overload the foot sometimes," Hingis told Blick.

Hingis has won five Grand Slam titles. She reached the final of the Australian Open earlier this year but lost to defending champion Jennifer Capriati.

Holyfield still hungry

INTERNET, London

Evander Holyfield wants another heavyweight title tilt against Lennox Lewis - and is ready to fight Mike Tyson to get it.

The 39-year-old is convinced he is still a realistic challenger to Lewis, who knocked out Tyson in eight rounds in Memphis just over a month ago to retain his world heavyweight crown.

But to get there Holyfield must meet his old foe Tyson for a third time.

The last time the pair met, in Las Vegas five years ago, the fight ended in disqualification for Tyson after he bit a chunk out of Holyfield's ear in the third round.

That act of barbarism has not dimmed the ambition of the man from Atlanta, Georgia, however, and he knows Tyson could help him set up a fight with Lewis.

He told the Daily Express: "My goal is to be undisputed heavyweight champion of the world."

"If fighting Mike Tyson would get me to that point, then fine. If we fight for the right to fight Lennox Lewis, I'll do that too."

"My main objective is to fight for a title and I want to be back in the ring sometime in November."

Greene being greedy

AFP, Monaco

Maurice Greene is not just content with being Olympic and world champion and the fastest man in the world - he also wants to be remembered as the best sprinter that ever donned spikes.

The "Kansas Comet" spelled out his ambition here Thursday on the eve of Friday's Golden League event.

"I want to be the best sprinter in history - but it's not me who decides that sort of thing."

The American accepted that he was the best of the current batch competing now, but added: "There have been others better than me"

Agassi accepts invitation

REUTERS, St Petersburg

Andre Agassi is to make his first appearance at the St Petersburg Open later this year, tournament organisers have said.

"We're pleased to welcome such a great player as Andre Agassi to a tournament which already boasts many top-level players," said marketing director Kirill Petrov.

Santini given

FROM PAGE 13 process, such was the crisis opened by France's World Cup failure.

After adding the Euro 2000 and the 2001 Confederations Cup titles to their credits under Lemerre, the 1998 world champions left for South Korea and Japan as tournament favourites.

But France suffered the humiliation of becoming the first holders to be knocked out of the World Cup in the first round of the finals for 36 years.

They finished bottom of group A after failing to score a single goal in three games and gathering just one point. They suffered a shock 1-0 loss in the opening game to newcomers Senegal, were held 0-0 by Uruguay and lost 2-0 to Denmark.

Lemerre refused to resign and Simonet, who did not want to turn him into a scapegoat, waited for 24 days after the defeat to Denmark before sacking him on July 5.

Awarded for

FROM PAGE 13 who will chair the committee, sport director general Greg Fredericks, Soweto Cricket Club president Kedidimetse Tshoma and former Northern Transvaal Cricket Union president Willie Basson.

"There is no conflict whatsoever about Dr Nyoka," Balfour told reporters. "He has made a few comments about change but he will be even handed."

The ministerial committee was formed in the wake of the UCB's decision on July 7 to scrap race quotas in teams selected to play at international and senior provincial level because of what the body saw as the success of its transformation policies.

The committee is expected to report back to Balfour by the end of August.

Mates feel

FROM PAGE 13 Langer, who has been named the A team skipper, also refused to discount Steve Waugh's chances of a recall to the national side but figured it unlikely.

"There is no doubt he has got the ability to, (it is) whether the opportunity comes up for him to," Langer said.

"Having spoken to him recently, he still has the desire to do it and, if any person could do it against all the odds that are probably stacked against him to do it and make a return, he could."

Kuerten slips up



AFP, Stuttgart

Triple French Open winner Gustavo Kuerten slipped up in his bid to claim back-to-back victories within hours of each other at the rain-hit 500,000-dollar ATP tournament here on Thursday.

morning first-round match as he finally got on court after three days of rain.

He easily dispatched Austrian Stefan Koubek 6-3, 6-3 but then fell short in a second-rounder, going out by a whisker to German Lars Burgsmuller 7-6, 3-6, 7-6 in the evening at the Weissenhof club.

The victory avenged a defeat the German suffered against Kuerten six years ago at this event.

the French Open over a month ago before taking time off to recover from a hip injury.

"I'm very happy that I won," he said of his initial effort which took his record against Koubek to 2-0.

"I feel good. He played aggressive in the beginning then I broke his serve and I started to feel comfortable."

But the Burgsmuller match was another story, with the pair level-pegging until mid-way through the final set tie-breaker, when the German held on despite Kuerten recovering from 0-3 down.

"The rain didn't disturb me. I could still play my game," Kuerten said of the chaotic three days of waiting.

"But for me it was a strange day playing two matches."

The Brazilian, who now heads off for the American hardcourt season, lifted Stuttgart titles in 1998 and 2001, taking away not only prize money but the Mercedes cars awarded to the champion.

Burgsmuller next faces Romanian fifth seed Andre Pavel, who ousted Frenchman Julien Boutter 6-2, 6-1.

On the first rain-free day of the week, desperate officials scheduled a back-breaking 14 singles matches in the hope of making up for lost time.

That scenario was brought on by three days of downpours which meant just ten of 16 first-round contests had been completed by Wednesday.

But a dry spell on Thursday provided a window of opportunity, with play beginning at 10 a.m.

The remaining first-round contests were finished without surprise, leaving the afternoon free to squeeze a normal two days of matches into one.

Top seed Jiri Novak of the Czech Republic didn't have to work too hard easily winning 6-0, 6-2 against Brazilian veteran Fernando Meligeni while German seventh seed Rainer Schuttler crashed out in the first round, losing 6-7, 6-2, 6-3 to Spain's Alberto Martin.

Russian Mikhail Younyny continued his charge, beating Moroccan Hicham Arazi in the first round and then ousting sixth seed Nicolas Lapentti of Ecuador 6-2, 6-4 in the second.



PHOTO: INTERNET

Brazil's Gustavo Kuerten looks at his shoes during his second round match against Germany's Lars Burgsmuller at the ATP tennis tournament in Stuttgart yesterday.

The Brazilian second seed, and a double champion here, didn't waste a great deal of effort in his

Kuerten was pleased to have finally got on court for his first match since losing in the fourth round of

British Open Pettersson profits



AFP, Scotland

Former Open champion Nick Price shrugged off the damp miserable conditions to put himself briefly at the top of the leaderboard in the second round of the British Open here on Friday.

The 45-year-old reached the turn with a workmanlike two-under 34 to move to five-under for the championship.

But unheralded Swede Carl Pettersson, who had shared the overnight lead with his opening round four-under 67, moved to six-under after only five holes and sole leader.

Price got the perfect start to his round, going birdie, birdie as he attempts to win his second Open title after Turnberry in 1994.

"There's life in the old dog yet," he joked before going out in wet miserable conditions. "I've played really well this year and I've felt the last couple of days my game was starting to get better."

Price is one of a group of over 40's who are being tipped here this

week to put an end to Tiger Woods' attempt to pull off the Grand Slam.

Unlike the Masters and the US Open where the courses have been stretched to try and rein in the big hitters, the ReTA have virtually left Muirfield untouched, allowing the shorter hitters such as Price to compete on level terms.

"I think the ReTA have done an outstanding job of setting this golf course up. I'm not too keen on what they have done with Augusta and the US Open these days, adding 200 yards because it just plays into the hands of the big hitters," complained Price.

But while Price came out charging, overnight joint leader David Tomms found himself caught in the waist-high rough framing the fairway and double bogeyed the opening hole.

The American, who had shared the overnight lead with fellow American Duffy Wardford and Pettersson, managed to regroup and ran off four straight pars.

Also in trouble off the first tee was world number two Phil Mickelson.

The American watched in despair as his drive plunged into the rough on the right hand side. The 32-year-old slashed at the ball and

nearly put his shoulder out as he only managed to move the ball further in to the long grass.

Clutching his shoulder, Mickelson regrouped but instead of trying to smash the ball clear he gently stuck it back in the fairway on his way to a double bogey.

Mickelson, trying to rid himself of the tag of being the best player never to have won a Major, had started the day at three-under and only one off the lead but his opening disaster saw him slip down the leaderboard. Two more bogeys and he was six adrift of Price and flirting with the cut.

Northern Ireland's Darren Clarke went on a birdie-eagle blitz as he battled to make up for his opening one-over 72. A links specialist, Clarke had moved to four-under in the tournament by the time he walked to the 11th tee.

Colin Montgomerie, who looked to be having the weekend off after his opening three-over 74, was suddenly in red figures thanks to two birdies and an eagle.

With a smile replacing Thursday's scowl the burly Scot went out in a stunning five-under 31 to be two-under for the tournament.

As pre-tournament favourite Woods prepared for a late tee-off, the weathermen forecast that the rain that had begun falling early in the morning would continue for most of the day. There was a brief respite when a watery sun began to peer through the clouds but the rain soon returned.

Nepal and UAE

FROM PAGE 13 to 117-6.

Pradhan finished with three for 39, while Eszrafiq Aziz top scoring for Malaysia with 50.

In the second semifinal, Hong Kong won the toss and put UAE into bat, a rare move on Singapore wickets.

UAE raced to 279 for six, with Asim Saeed scoring 55 and fellow opener Arshad Ali contributing 42.

The chase never looked on for the Hong Kong batsmen, and the innings ended in the 49th over with the score at 193 with Saleem Malik making 52 and UAE skipper Khuram Khan taking four for 46.

The final between UAE and Nepal will be played Sunday. In pool matches UAE beat Nepal by six wickets.

The ACC Trophy is for the 10 non-Test sides in Asia and the Middle East, with the two finalists qualifying for the Asia Cup which also involves Test-playing nations Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.



PHOTO: INTERNET

Nick Price scatters sand as he tees off on the second day of the British Open yesterday.