

Americans on song



REUTERS, Melbourne

Andre Agassi, Andy Roddick and Lindsay Davenport kept the stars and stripes flying high above Melbourne Park on Sunday with a trio of sizzling performances in the Australian Open fourth round.

Defending champion Agassi blazed a trail into the quarterfinals, blasting away Thailand's Paradorn Srichaphan 7-6, 6-3, 6-4.

He was swiftly joined by top seed Andy Roddick who made beating Dutchman Sjeng Schalken look as easy as 1-2-3 triumphing 6-1, 6-2, 6-3.

Women's fifth seed Davenport was just as emphatic, beating 11th seed Vera Zvonareva 6-1, 6-3, a thrashing that left the Russian in tears.

Davenport will play Justine Henin-Hardenne next after the top seed remained on track for a first Australian Open crown with an economical 6-1, 7-6 defeat of unorthodox Italian Mara Santangelo.

France's fourth seed Amelie Mauresmo also advanced, made to fight all the way before beating brave local hope Alicia Molik 7-5, 7-5.

Agassi recovered from an early loss of serve to win the first set against Paradorn and never looked back.

"I could have blown the first set open a lot sooner, I had my chances...but I think I did everything pretty well today," said the four-time champion.

"I had to be executing everything pretty well. Against Paradorn I am much better if I am doing everything well and nothing spectacular. You can't give him a lot of looks."

Agassi will meet Sebastian Grosjean for a place in the semis after the Frenchman beat American Robby Ginepri 6-4, 3-6, 6-4, 6-1.

Roddick followed Agassi on to Rod Laver Arena centre court and took just 79 minutes to wipe Schalken.

The Dutchman simply had no answer to Roddick's power off the Australian Open fourth round.



PHOTO: AFP

American Andre Agassi blows a kiss to the crowd after beating Paradorn Srichaphan of Thailand in the fourth round of the Australian Open in Melbourne yesterday.

ground or pace of serve.

"I feel solid out there it's all right," the 21-year-old American said. "I thought I returned really well, from the back of the court that's as well as I've played this tournament."

Roddick will next face former world number one Marat Safin after the Russian overpowered American James Blake 7-6, 6-3, 6-7, 6-3.

The match featured a spectacular shot from Safin to break Blake a final time when the Russian appeared to throw the racket at the ball an illegal shot.

Blake refused to blame that one point for the defeat.

Safin said: "It was just pure luck, 100 per cent. I think I just threw it...I don't know how it happened."

Henin-Hardenne's far from emphatic win over little-known qualifier Santangelo lines her up for a tough last-eight showdown with Davenport, the only former champion still in the draw.

The Belgian, holder of the French and US Open titles, is a strong favourite to win her first Australian Open but did not have things all her own way against an opponent ranked 129th in the world.

"It wasn't an easy match. It was a big fight in the second set. She played a good match," Henin-Hardenne said. "She had nothing to lose."

Henin-Hardenne will have to be in much better form against 2000 champion Davenport.

On Sunday the American's heavy hitting overpowered 19-year-old Zvonareva from the start. Such was Davenport's dominance that the match lasted just 47 minutes.

"I've had a lot of tough matches with her in the past...I really didn't expect it to be like that," said Davenport who showed no sign of the foot injury which hampered her last year.

"I'm feeling great right now. Excited to be back in the quarters, feeling healthy. The foot is feeling good."

Mauresmo, a finalist at Melbourne Park in 1999, was made to work for every point in her fourth round match before finally putting down Molik's challenge.

"She gave me a lot of problems. You guys must be a little disappointed," Mauresmo told the crowd. "But I just really wanted to get through this one and get to the quarters."

Mauresmo will play 32nd seed Fabiola Zuluaga of Colombia for a place in the semis.

Singer chess

SPORTS REPORTER

Debaraj Chattarjee maintained his solo lead with 8 points after the end of the tenth round games of the preliminary phase Singer 30th National Chess Championship at the NSC yesterday.

Six players jointly shared the second position with 7.5 points each.

They are: FM Khandkar Aminul Islam, Shawkat Hossain Pallab, Saifuddin Lavlu, FM Sheikh Nasir Ahmed, Mohammad Javed and Aminul Islam Polash.

In this round Debaraj drew with Nasir, Lavlu drew with Amin, Pallab drew with Parag, Javed drew with Palash, Shakil drew with Sawpan while Maleq beat Apel, Monjur beat Shafiq, Main beat Arman, Enayet beat Reza, Mithu beat Zahid and Monir beat Taher.

Door open for Younis, Latif

REUTERS, Karachi

Pakistan's chief selector Wasim Bari has told former captains Waqar Younis and Rashid Latif they can make a comeback for the India series.

Bari, who was named as Pakistan's new chief selector last week, told this news agency on Sunday his committee would make selections for the home series against India with an open mind.

"Everyone who is fit and playing would be considered by us for selection. I don't think Waqar, Rashid or Saqlain (Mushtaq) should consider their international careers over," Bari said.

Waqar Younis was sacked as captain and player after last year's World Cup debacle. Wicketkeeper Latif was dropped for the recent tour of New Zealand after he stepped down as captain before the home series against South Africa last October.

Other senior players like Saqlain and Shahid Afridi have also lost favour with the selectors since the World Cup.

India are due to play Pakistan in March-April to three Tests and five one-day internationals. It will be their first full tour of Pakistan in 14 years.

"Our immediate task is to shortlist a pool of 40 players from which we will consider players for the final selection," Bari said.

Pakistan Cricket Board chairman Shaharyar Khan has also confirmed Javed Miandad and Haroon Rasheed as coach and manager. Inzamam-ul-Haq remains as captain.

Robin bids cricket bye

AFP, Madras

Trinidad-born Indian one-day specialist Robin Singh on Saturday announced his retirement from international and first-class cricket.

The left-handed middle-order batsman scored 2,336 runs, with a solitary hundred and nine half-centuries, and bagged 69 wickets with his medium-pace bowling in 136 one-day internationals.

"I have no regrets," said the 40-year-old, who is currently coaching the national under-19 squad.

Singh also figured in one Test match, against Zimbabwe at Harare in 1998.

"I was perhaps one of the few cricketers to have staged a comeback after seven years at the age of 33 to serve Indian cricket," he said.

Singh made his one-day debut against the West Indies at Port-of-Spain in 1989 and played one more match on that tour before spending seven years in the wilderness.

He established himself as a useful all-rounder after returning to the one-day fold in 1996. His last appearance was at home against Steve Waugh's Australians in 2001.

"I was rather unfortunate to have played only in one Test, but overall I have done my best for the country," said Singh, who also made 6,997 runs with 22 hundreds and took 172 wickets in 137 first-class matches.

StanChart golf held

PRESS RELEASE

J K Kang and Ito clinched the men's and women's crowns respectively in the ninth Standard Chartered golf tournament at the Bhatary Golf Club in Chittagong on January 23.

135 golfers from different countries, including 8 ladies, participated in the tournament.

Senior vice-president of Bhatary Golf and Country Club and General Officer Commanding of the 24th Infantry Division Major General Moeen U Ahmed distributed prizes as chief guest.

OTHER RESULTS

Runner-up: Mahmood Hossain, Nearest to Pin: T J Kim, Longest Drive: G Y Hong, Nine Hole winner: M A Hashem, Best Back Nine: Mujibur Rahman, Best Front Nine: Wasik Ali Khan, Senior Runner-up: Shamsul Huda, Lady Runner-up: Dr Caroline Bauer, Senior winner: M R Chowdhury, and 2nd Runner-up: CH Moon.

Eng 'told' not to tour Zim



AFP, London

One of English cricket's senior administrators said Sunday the British government had instructed them not to go ahead with the tour of Zimbabwe.

Tim Lamb, chief executive of the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB), said a letter Friday from Foreign Secretary Jack Straw was "tantamount to an instruction not to go" ahead with the November trip.

Lamb told BBC Television here Sunday: "The government have come off the fence and made it quite clear that they are against us going to Zimbabwe."

"It may have been couched in the coded political language of Whitehall, but for them to say that we ought to consider carefully whether a high profile English tour at this time is consistent with the approach the British government are taking, is probably as close as you will get to an instruction not to tour."

He added that if the ECB could convince the International Cricket Council that this was the case then England would have a legitimate excuse for not touring Zimbabwe under the world governing body's own rules and thus escape any possible financial penalty.

'India taking over'



AFP, New Delhi

India is poised to replace Australia as the world's best cricket team after its awesome performance Down Under in both Test and one-day series, say former international players.

Former Australian batsman Dean Jones said Sunday that the Aussie reign was under threat, especially after their failure to win a recent four-Test home series against India.

"There's no doubt about that (threat to Australia's supremacy)," Jones told the Times of India.

"They will continue to go down without Glenn McGrath and Shane Warne," he said, adding the World Cup champions would find it difficult to defend their title in the West Indies in 2007.

"There are not enough quality players to keep pushing the juggernaut ahead. The Waugh brothers have just retired. Hayden,

"We'll have to argue that in a Western, representative democracy that is tantamount to an instruction not to go," Lamb said.

"There are two reasons why you can be excused touring. One is if there are legitimate safety and security concerns. The other is if you get an explicit instruction not



TIM LAMB

to go from your government."

Lamb, who added that he would be speaking to England captain Michael Vaughan later Sunday about the issue, admitted the ECB's stance had not gone down well with the rest of the international cricket community.

"What plays well at home with the domestic audience doesn't

Gilchrist, McGrath and Warne may struggle to go on till then too."

Australia looked vulnerable even at home in the absence of fast bowler McGrath and leg-spinner Warne as they struggled to draw the Test series 1-1 against Saurav Ganguly's Indians.

India's batting flourished throughout the Test series against a depleted Australian attack, with vice-captain Rahul Dravid showing the way with 619 runs in four matches.

Venkatsai Laxman (494), Virender Sehwag (464) and Sachin Tendulkar (383) also reminded Australia that all was not well with their bowling.

Australia are also finding it tough to tame India in the ongoing VB Series triangular one-day tournament, having lost one of their three closely-contested matches against the Indians.

"It's not just about India threatening them (Australia). Even other teams will also be in a position to take them on," said former India captain Sunil Gavaskar, the first batsman to compile 10,000 Test

necessarily do the same internationally.

"We do have obligations internationally, we are signatories to the future tours programme which is a bi-lateral system of tours but we are equally well aware of pressures back home."

Lamb accepted that an England withdrawal could end with the ECB being forced to pay compensation to the Zimbabwe Cricket Union.

And he added that it could have knock-on effects for the ICC Champions Trophy one-day event which is being staged in England in October.

England promised to tour Zimbabwe in exchange for the Zimbabweans visiting England in 2003. That tour had been in doubt after England pulled out of a World Cup match in Harare in February.

The ECB had set themselves a deadline of Thursday to decide whether they will go ahead with the tour or bow to pressure to pull out because of international concerns over the regime of President Robert Mugabe.

But in the light of a report published by senior ECB official Des Wilson earlier this week concluding that England would be justified in withdrawing from the tour on moral grounds, the ECB announced it would not be making a final decision until a special meeting in February.

Chittagong take innings lead

FROM PAGE 13

Sajjad b Sabbir	22				
Mehrab c Salahuddin b Sabbir	24				
Sanwar lbw b Hasan	1				
Halim c Debrobata (sub) b Hasan	2				
Jahangir c Faisal b Sabbir	4				
Neeyamur not out	46				
Kadir lbw b Sabbir	0				
Mosaddek run out	2				
Elias c Azam b Raihan	21				
Mahfuzur c Azam b Sabbir	0				
Extras: (lb-1, nb-2)	3				
Total: (All out in 75.3 overs)	148				
Fall of wkts: 1-38, 2-56, 3-57, 4-73, 5-73, 6-82, 7-82, 8-85, 9-139, 10-148					
Bowler	O	M	R	W	
Muballik	8	3	36	1	
Sabbir	37.3	14	62	5	
Raihan	5	1	18	1	
Hasan	25	13	31	2	

CHITTAGONG: Second innings

Anisul batting	27				
Salahuddin c Halim b Neeyamur	1				
Faisal batting	42				
Extras: (b-1, lb-1)	2				
Total: (For 1 wkt in 30 overs)	72				
Fall of wkts: 1-15					
Bowler	O	M	R	W	
Neeyamur	5	0	10	1	
Mahfuz	4	2	9	0	
Illyas	8	3	10	0	
Sanwar	7	0	27	0	
Mosaddek	3	0	9	0	
Mehrab	2	0	3	0	
Halim Shah	1	0	2	0	

KHULNA V SYLHET
Venue: Shamsul Huda Stadium, Jessore

SYLHET: First innings (overnight 31 for 2 in 17 overs)

Mabud c Hasibul b Al-Amin	20				
Imtiaz lbw b Al-Amin	7				
Atiq b Al-Amin	0				
Nabil b Razzak	18				
Parvez c Hasibul b Razzak	12				
Mowla lbw b Razzak	7				
Nasirul c Niaz b Nizamuddin	47				
Rana c sub b Tamim	55				
Eijab lbw b Russell	14				
Samad lbw b Tamim	0				
Ahmed not out	12				

Extras: (b-1, lb-4, nb-2, w-2)

Total: (All out in 91 overs) 181

Fall of wkts: 1-22, 2-22, 3-31, 4-69, 5-70, 6-77, 7-140, 8-156, 9-162.

Bowler	O	M	R	W	
Russell	22	8	35	1	
Al-Amin	14	4	23	3	
Razzak	22	7	45	3	
Nizamuddin	14	4	27	1	
Tamim	16	3	36	2	
Niaz	3	1	10	0	

KHULNA: First innings

Hasibul batting	3				
Nizamuddin batting	10				
Extras:	0				
Total: (For no loss in 7 overs)	13				
Bowler	O	M	R	W	
Samad	4	0	12	0	
Ahmed	1	0	1	0	
Nabil	2	2	0	0	

BARISAL V RAJSHAHI



PHOTO: COURTESY

Students of Maple Leaf International School take part in the chocolate race during their annual sports competition at the Dhanmondi Women's Sports Complex yesterday. Principal of the school Zeba Ali distributed prizes among the winners.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	37 Not as good	3 Lavatory sign	22 Part of TAE
1 Genie's home	38 Play-time	4 14	23 Close tightly
5 nonfunctioning	"practy"	31 Down	24 Sows' mates
8 Practice for a	41 Adorn oneself in	42 On	26 Table protector
12 21-Across accessory	43 Price reduction	6 Egg-yung	27 Open a bit
13 Oct. cry	48 Demolish cry	7 Dylan's genre	28 Clark's companion
14 Lead-in to stat or goblin	49 "The Greatest"	8 Scabbard	29 Singer Lovett
15 Heredity information	50 Ontario neighbor	9 Makeup artist	31 Lead-in to dextrous
17 Historic times	51 Lean-to	10 Asian nursemaid	34 Drank like a pooch
18 Doctor's due	52 Keg attachment	11 Parks or Bonheur	35 Want to know
19 Money of Malawi	DOWN	20 One way to get to first base	37 Moo goo gal pan pan
21 Washbowl	1 Stocking stuffer?	21 Dog owner's chore	38 "War of the Worlds" invader
24 Pesky kid	2 Reverential fear		39 Beehive State
25 Haley or Karras			40 Catnap
26 "The Color of Money" setting			41 Plumbing problem
30 1933 dam org.			44 Carte preceder
31 "Woel"			45 Raw mineral
32 Rapture			46 Take the trophy
33 Distinquishing feature			47 Profit
35 Lament			
36 Rudiments			

Solution time: 21 mins.

P I G	T O P A Z	I D O
A T E	I R E N E	R O B
S T E A M	I R O N	O L E
C H I S E L	D I S N E Y	
R O U T E	E I G H T	
I G O B	S I C	W R A P
B O N U S	G O B	S R A
O N E S	W O O L E R S	
S E X T E T	H U B	
E L I	S E V E N	I R O N
M A D	A V E R T	A D O
T I N E	W E E D Y	W E D

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12					13			14		
15				16				17		
			18				19	20		
21	22	23				24				
25					26				27	28
30				31					32	
33				34					35	
			36						37	
38	39	40					41			
42					43	44			45	46
48						49			50	
51					52				53	

CRYPTOQUIP

P Q K U O O H G H D H N B H O

W C W X K C Y X O . N B H N ' O

W Q N B C W T H N H K K . H P Z Q T

D Z Q H U O X Y X Z G W C T B N !

Yesterday's Cryptquip: IF A CLEVER IDEAS STRIKES ME, I SUPPOSE I COULD CLAIM TO HAVE A THINKING FEELING.

Today's Cryptquip Clue: N equals T

The Cryptquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.