

Rain delays first ODI

REUTERS, London

The start of the first one-day international between England and New Zealand at Old Trafford in Manchester was delayed due to rain on Thursday.

The umpires are permitted to reduce the number of overs-per-side to 20 and the latest start time for the match has been set at 1847 GMT. Weather forecasts said the rain would stop around 1600 GMT.

Marcus Trescothick has recovered from a twisted ankle to take his place in the England side and both teams will name their line-ups at the toss.

The two sides are competing in a 10-match triangular one-day series with the West Indies. The final takes place at Lord's on July 10.

No India player will be a loser

CRICINFO, undated

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has on Thursday clarified that the players will earn more than they currently do once the contract system comes into place.

Responding to reports in the media which stated that the match fees would be reduced by about 1,410 dollars, Ratnakar Shetty, the BCCI joint secretary, told Press Trust of India: "It's wrong to say that there is a pay cut as any perceived reduction in match fees that is being proposed would be more than compensated by the retainer fees they would be getting annually."

The players currently earn 5,825 dollars per Test and 4,890 dollars per one-day international. Those figures are likely to come down by 1,410 dollars, but the players will also earn retainer fees once the central contracts are put into place.

Tigers

FROM PAGE 13

This year. The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) on Wednesday announced England's home international schedule for 2005.

ENGLAND HOME SCHEDULE

May 26-30: 1st Test England v Bangladesh, Lord's

June 3-7: 2nd Test England v Bangladesh, Durham

ASHES SCHEDULE

Twenty20 International

June 13: England v Australia, The Rose Bowl

NATWEST SERIES

June 16: England v Bangladesh, The Oval

June 18: Australia v Bangladesh, Cardiff

June 19: England v Australia, Bristol

June 21: England v Bangladesh, Trent Bridge (D/N)

June 23: England v Australia, Chester (D/N)

June 25: Australia v Bangladesh, Old Trafford

June 26: England v Bangladesh, Headingley

June 28: England v Australia, Edgbaston (D/N)

June 30: Australia v Bangladesh, Canterbury

July 2: Final, Lord's

NATWEST CHALLENGE

July 7: England v Australia, Headingley

July 10: England v Australia, Lord's

July 12: England v Australia, The Oval

ASHES TESTS

July 21-25: 1st Test England v Australia, Lord's

Aug 4-8: 2nd Test England v Australia, Edgbaston

Aug 11-15: 3rd Test England v Australia, Old Trafford

Aug 25-29: 4th Test England v Australia, Trent Bridge

Sept 8-12: 5th Test England v Australia, The Oval



Argentina's Gisela Dulko poses with an umbrella at Wimbledon on Wednesday. Heavy rain and high winds delayed the start of play at the All England Club.

STRAWBERRIES & CREAM

WIMBLEDON

THE GUARDIAN, London

It wasn't a totally wasted day for the Williams sisters Venus and Serena on Wednesday, who managed to put the spare time they had on their hands to constructive use.

Instead of kicking her heels in the locker room, Venus sneaked out of the Wimbledon complex and visited a number of nearby bookshops, where she bought some foreign language study books.

Venus, who was scheduled to play on Centre Court, is already considered to be quite fluent in French and Italian and is now

believed to be focusing her attention on Spanish.

Younger sister Serena, meanwhile, spent the day reading through a number of film scripts she has been sent as she attempts to develop her acting career.

TENNIS BIG BROTHER STYLE

Big Brother contestants could soon be screaming "You cannot be serious" as tennis looms for the Channel 4 show.

Representatives of Big Brother TV show and the Lawn Tennis Association are believed to be in talks about introducing mini-tennis to the BB house. Contestants will be provided with rackets, balls and a net and will play

each other as one of the many challenges they are set.

The LTA, which is trying to give the game a younger, fresher image, believes that this just might be the way to reach out to a newer audience.

Given the much publicised rows within the house and the recent punch up, both the LTA and the show's producers will be hoping that it is just the balls that get hit when rackets are handed out.

PURISTS BEWARE

Tennis purists at Wimbledon were left choking on their strawberries and champagne as news of a new tournament designed, like the Big Brother project.

Super Set Tennis, which will

take place at Wembley in October and televised by the BBC, will see eight big names playing one set each against each other with the winner taking home £250,000.

Super Set will take place against a backdrop of live music, bright lights and other entertainment and is being seen as crucial to the drive to help maintain interest in the sport when Wimbledon is over.

Players will be allowed to appeal against controversial calls to a video umpire and coaches will wear microphones so that viewers can hear them. Given that John McEnroe has already agreed to take part it should make for interesting listening. Tim Henman, Goran Ivanisevic and a number of other leading players have also agreed to take part.

Talented yet tormented

WIMBLEDON

AFP, London

At just 21 Slovakia's Daniela Hantuchova can hardly be classed as a veteran but she could be excused for telling likely Wimbledon third round opponent, Russian teen Maria Sharapova, "been there, done it."

The leggy brunette became the new "tennis babe" when she beat then world number one Martina Hingis in the final at Indian Wells to claim her first trophy in 2002.

But alarmingly her slender appearance turned increasingly waif-like and the focus shifted onto her dramatic weight loss which some put down to an eating disorder.

It all became too much for her at Wimbledon last year.

Looking distinctly underweight, she blew three match points when 5-2 up in the final set against Japan's Shinobu Asagoe and broke down in tears as she crumbled to a 12-10 defeat.

Clearly feeling the pressure, her ranking slumped from number five to 54 as the glamour focus switched elsewhere.

But it was a reinvigorated Hantuchova who turned up for the short grass court season at Eastbourne last week.

Looking much healthier and

happier she made it into the final defeating powerful French woman Amelie Mauresmo on the way.

"I feel really great and really happy to be back," Hantuchova said.

"I've just totally put the last year behind me and am just focussed on my future, making sure that I do everything that's in my control to



DANIELA HANTUCHOVA

get where I want to be. "Everything seems to be in place now and I think things are going the right way now."

In the meanwhile the statuesque Russian blonde Sharapova has taken on the "new Anna Kournikova mantle" reaching the Wimbledon quarterfinals last year on her first appearance.

She won the Birmingham warm-up title last week and is riding on a career-high ranking of 15.

Hantuchova is already in the third round, her second round opponent Elena Bovina of Russia withdrawing through injury, and Sharapova is expected to cruise past British No. 1 Anne Keothavong to



MARIA SHARAPOVA

set up the showcase tie.

But the media spotlight is not always the most comfortable of places, as Hantuchova knows only too well.

Sharapova, at just 17, has yet fully to go through the media mincer.

The Siberian followed in the footsteps of fellow Russian beauty Kournikova, learning her trade at Nick Bollettieri's academy in Bradenton, Florida.

But the tall blonde is fed up with the comparisons, as she has three singles trophies to her name, whereas her predecessor came under media fire for combining her perfect 10 in the beauty scores with a perfect zero in singles titles.

Sharapova had one of the loudest grunts in the game, but the youngster tempered her screams after coming in for criticism.

And she brushed off a potential bust-up in March after Bulgarian teen Sesil Karatcheva threatened to "kick her butt off" in their next match.

Sharapova seems to have the temperament to continue to the top. But with Hantuchova full of confidence and experience, Wimbledon spectators might get to see a thrilling match between two genuine talents.

85 killed

FROM PAGE 1

infidel Zarqawi," Allawi said of the bombings in the northern city.

STRICKEN CITY

At least seven large explosions shook Mosul and local television stations ordered residents to stay at home. Police blocked all major roads and announced a dusk-to-dawn curfew.

The US military said an American soldier had been killed and three wounded in the blasts. It said a security guard was killed in a separate attack on a private security firm.

Gunfire rattled across Mosul as insurgents fought running battles with US troops and Iraqi police.

Fighting in Anbar province, which includes Falluja and Ramadi in the Sunni heartlands of central Iraq, killed at least nine people and wounded 27, the Health Ministry said.

Four Iraqi national guardsmen were killed and two civilians wounded by a car bomb blast in southern Baghdad, an officer in the force said. Hospital staff put the death toll at five.

The US Army said two soldiers had been killed and seven wounded in an ambush in Baquba. The Health Ministry said 13 people had been killed and 15 wounded in the town.

US air strikes destroyed three buildings that guerrillas were using to fire on 1st Infantry Division soldiers and Iraqi security forces near Baquba's sports stadium.

Many fighters wore headbands marked "Saraya of Unification and Holy War" (Battalions of Unification and Jihad War), a name that closely resembles Zarqawi's Jama'at al-Tawhid and Jihad group.

They handed out leaflets warning Iraqis not to work with U.S.-led occupation authorities. "The flesh of collaborators is tastier than that of Americans," the leaflets said.

Condolence

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Sports Writers Association (BSWA) has consoled the death of Arunoday Chanda, a retired government officer, who passed away on Wednesday at the Holy Family Hospital. He was 66.

He was cremated at the central crematorium at Sharishabari in Jamalpur yesterday.

Arunoday was the father of Utpal Shuvra, sports editor of Daily Prothom Alo and a member of BSWA.

Ex-cadet soccer

CU CORRESPONDENT

Typhoon Group defeated Dhumkeu Group 6-0 in the ex-cadet association football tournament at Marine Fisheries Academy playground here on Wednesday.

Sayem scored a hat-trick for the winners. The tournament is organised ahead of the upcoming national conference and reunion of ex-cadets of the Marine Fisheries Academy, which will be held on July 23.

Wet, windy Wednesday

WIMBLEDON

AFP, London

Wimbledon suffered its first all-day washout for five years and only the 31st in its 127 year history when torrential rain, gale force winds and biting cold wiped out any prospect of play.

After a frustrating and miserable day, All England Club officials finally conceded defeat at 6:45 p.m. (1745 GMT) leaving 45 first round matches in the men's and women's singles still to be completed.

Start of play on Thursday and Friday has been brought forward by an hour to compensate for the backlog while the men's doubles has been reduced to the best-of-three sets up to the quarterfinal stage.

But with more rain forecast for later in the week, organisers could be forced to play on the middle Sunday, traditionally a rest day at the championships.

"We're not unduly concerned," insisted referee Alan Mills.

"If we were thinking of playing on Sunday that would not be until Friday. Obviously, we would like not to play on the middle Sunday."

The middle Sunday has been used just twice in the tournament's history.

The only issue resolved on Wednesday was Slovakia's Daniela Hantuchova reaching the third round of the women's singles after her scheduled opponent Elena Bovina withdrew with an abdominal strain.

The unseeded Hantuchova, who beat America's Samantha Reeves in the first round, will now face either 13th seeded Russian Maria Shara-pova or Britain's Anne Keothavong for a place in the fourth round.

Bovina, the Russian 20th seed, defeated Edina Galloviets, of Romania, 6-1, 6-2 in her opener when she complained of the injury.

While Hantuchova was looking ahead to the third round, poor Argentinian third seed Guillermo Coria and Wesley Moodie of South Africa faced the prospect of completing their first round match on Thursday - four days after they

started. The match stands at two sets all with Coria serving for the tie at 5-3 and 30-30 in the decider.

Men's top seed Roger Federer, who made it through to the second round in double quick time on Monday had been due to be back in action on Wednesday in a second round tie against Colombia's Alejandro Falla on Court 1.

Veteran American Martina Navratilova was also chomping at the bit to get at Argentina's Gisela Dulko, who beat her easily on clay in Paris in the French Open last month.

The 47-year-old nine-time former winner won her first singles match at Wimbledon in 10 years on Monday when she crushed Catalina Castano of Colombia for the loss of just one game.

Also on unfinished business on centre court is men's No 2 seed Andy Roddick who was forced off the court by Tuesday's rain while leading 4-2 in the first set of his match against Taiwan's Wang Yeu-Tzuoo.

Mercedes sent

FROM PAGE 13

backline and captain Oliver Kahn needed to whip the ball from the feet of VfL Bochum marksman Vratislav Lokvenec.

Germany were eager to attack in a must-win game but lacked cohesion until a bright move in the 19th minute saw Ballack get free but his shot was deflected onto the roof of the net.

But two minutes seconds later Ballack made no mistake, unleashing an unstoppable left-footed volley from the edge of the area after Jaroslav Plasil foolishly gave away possession.

Rudi Voller claimed it was vital to get Ballack into goalscoring positions before the match and he delivered with his first goal of the tournament.

Germany had the lead they craved but it lasted just nine minutes.

Philipp Lahm fouled Marek Heinz narrowly outside the penalty area and the midfielder stepped up to curl a brilliant free-kick over the wall and past Kahn.

At half-time Germany were on their way out of the competition with the Netherlands leading Latvia 2-0 in the other Group D match.

The name of Lukas Podolski of

Cologne was chanted by the anxious German followers before the interval and Voller obliged by introducing the 18-year-old for his first appearance in Portugal.

Just 60 seconds after the restart the Czechs almost went in front with Lokvenec forcing a fine point-blank save from Kahn after a dangerous cross from the right.

Bernd Schneider then produced a powerful shot that Czech goalkeeper Jaromir Blazek tipped over.

Ballack then crashed a 65th minute shot off the left post and Schneider should have scored from the follow-up but hit a tame effort at Blazek.

Seven minutes the Germans had three chances to score in a goalmouth scramble but some desperate defending and bizarre rebounds somehow saved the Czechs.

Baros had only been on the pitch for 16 minutes when he struck the killer blow on 77 minutes, dancing around some stationary German defenders before lashing a shot at Kahn.

The Bayern Munich keeper parried brilliantly but the Liverpool striker tucked the rebound into the net.

Brothers freed from captors

FROM PAGE 1

The family said the boys were about to be smuggled out of the country, which the rescuer policemen however could not confirm.

Moktar, whom the children addressed as uncle, with his accomplices abducted the two brothers after they came out of their school, Baikalik Cadet Academy, at Moinartek in Uttara Monday afternoon.

Sajib is a student of class three and his younger brother Sabbir of class one.

THE RESCUE

Tipped off that two boys were being kept in custody of Imdadul Haq, a contingent of Dupchachia police of Bogra arrested him at Itakhola Technical Institute, where he teaches, yesterday noon.

Imdad confessed to abducting the boys and disclosed the name of Mamunur Rashid as his accomplice.

Acting on his confession, police later rescued the children from the house of Abdul Wahab, an activist of ruling alliance leader BNP, in Mitna village.

Hundreds of people thronged in front of Dupchachia Police Station after news of their rescue spread around.

Police seized a microbus used to abduct and take the boys from Uttara, but failed to arrest its driver Babul and Imdad's accomplice Mamun.

Mamun, son of Abdur Rahim of Khalishagari village of Khetlal, is also a teacher of Itakhola Technical Institute.

TALE OF ABDUCTION

"As Sabbir and Sajib came out of their school at Moinartek in Uttara Monday afternoon, Mamun introduced himself as an uncle of them and said their grandfather and uncle were waiting for them at Nandan Park in Gazipur," Imdad told police.

As the two boys boarded the microbus, in which Imdad was sitting, the abductors gave them some juice mixed with sleeping pills to drink. Police said the boys got into the vehicle only after seeing Moktar present with Mamun.

"We brought them first to a house at Chawkpura in Dupchachia and shifted later to Mitna village in Joypurhat," Imdad said.

From Mitna, they phoned to Sabbir-Sajib's house and demanded Tk 10 lakh as ransom, he confessed.

JOY ISHERS

After Sajib and Sabbir were brought to Dupchachia Police Station, police phoned to the boys' house at 4pm yesterday to confirm their identity.

"As I heard their voice, the belief that God does save the faithful returned to my mind," said Salma.

TRADER RESCUE

A gang abducted Mohammad Manik, a manpower recruiting agent, from in front of Motijheel Police Station at around 7pm Tuesday and took to Allama Kashgari Hostel of Aliya Madrasa in Bakshibazar in the capital.

Tracing a negotiator of the abductors, police on Wednesday arrested Shahadat Hossain Sohel, assistant general secretary of Allama Kashgari Hostel unit of BNP's student wing Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, and Nazrul Islam Jewel and Mofazzal Hossain Rubel, activists of BNP's youth front Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal, at Gulistan.

Police later rescued the businessman from Aliya Madrasa hostel in an operation during which the abductors roughed them up, tore their uniform apart and smashed a wireless set.

STUART IN FOR BRAD

AFP, Darwin

Stuart MacGill was on Thursday called up to replace injured fast bowler Brad Williams in the Australian squad for the two-Test cricket series against Sri Lanka beginning here next week.

Chairman of selectors Trevor Hohns announced the leg-spinner's selection after Williams was ruled out of the series with a lower back complaint.

MacGill, who is holidaying in Venice after playing for English county Nottinghamshire, has been told to return home immediately.

"It's obvious that we haven't gone for a like replacement for Brad Williams," Hohns said.

"But given we already have four fit fast bowlers in the squad, Stuart gives us some added flexibility."

"He is a proven Test performer and is match fit having spent the last few months playing county cricket."

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 35 Tear 3 Go off 22 Bread spread 1 George-town athlete 36 Dieter's entree 4 In 23 Injured in the bull-ring 5 "Hum-bug!" 40 Bath spot 25 1957 movie, " 8 Actress 41 Romance novelist 6 Grafon's " for County" 12 Lengthy choral work 42 Lake trans- portation 7 Square dances 14 Persia, now 47 Pinnacle wearing nothing "atoll" 29 Idyllic locale 15 One of a set of adjoining dwellings 49 Pitch 9 "Go Bragh!" 31 Craze 16 Benevolent ending 50 Super-lative 10 Sudden noise 34 Mandrill, e.g. 17 Make up your mind 51 On deck 11 Remnants 13 "I'm sorry" 36 Hero sand-wiches 18 Activities DOWN 19 They give a hoot 20 Tear gold 21 Stench 37 Excellent, in rap-speak 38 Crazy 39 Charitable donations 40 Silly fool 43 Harvest goddess 44 Clitic 45 Cowboy's nickname 46 Concorde, e.g.

Solution time: 24 mins.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
12 13 14
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17 18 19
20 21 22 23
24 25 26 27 28
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32 33 34
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37 38 39 40
41 42 43 44 45 46
47 48
49 50 51

CRYPTOQUIP
R Q K Y R D G Y S F I X K F J
R A G J X L R S D K L J W A U S R S
X R Q J , R A Y G K Y K
L W K F Y R F K X F G U I J W ?
Saturday's Cryptiquip: IF SOMEONE SUCCESSFULLY HAILS A CAB, I SUPPOSE HE MAY BE CONSIDERED A TAXI MEETER.
Today's Cryptiquip Clue: X equals L

The Cryptiquip 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.

