

'Pak tour to go on'

Cricket

REUTERS, Karachi

Threats from radical Hindu groups to disrupt Pakistan's Test series in India later this year will not derail the tour. Pakistan's top cricket official said on Sunday.

Activists of the radical Hindu party, Shiv Sena, have said they would attempt to disrupt the one-day match in Delhi in protest at Pakistan touring India for a full Test series for the first time since early 1999.

"We have full confidence in the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) to look after the security and other arrangements for our team. We are not going to be affected by such threats," said Shaharyar Khan, chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board.

On the 1999 tour, Shiv Sena activists dug up a pitch at the Feroze Shah Kotla ground in Delhi in an unsuccessful attempt to prevent a Test match taking place. "We will not allow the one-day

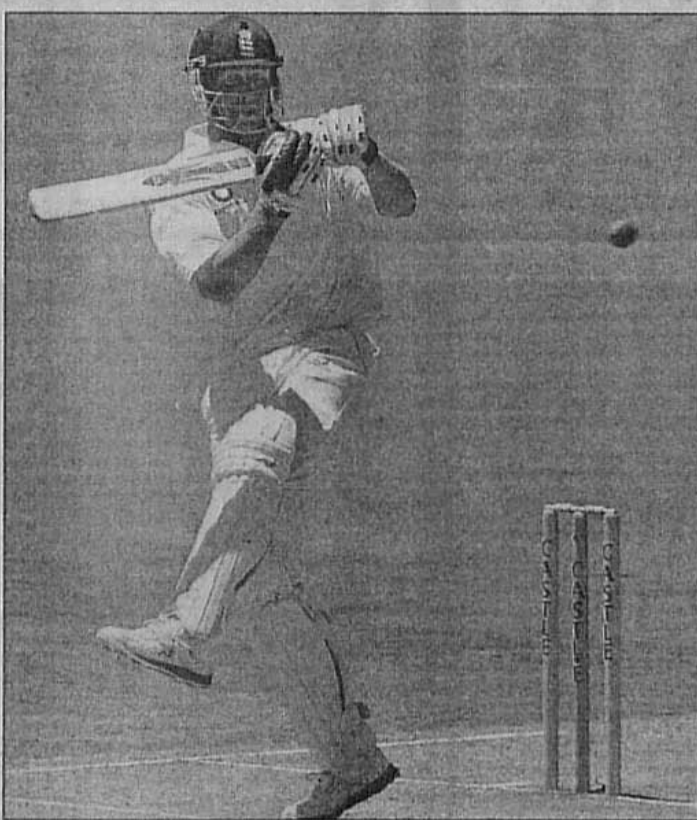
cricket match in Delhi at any cost," said Shiv Sena's local unit president Jai Bhagwan Goyal was quoted as saying by the Indian Express on Friday.

The BCCI on Thursday announced Mohali, Ahmedabad and Bangalore as the Test venues and Cochin, Vishakapatnam, Delhi, Kanpur and Jamshedpur as the one-day venues for the February 25-April 9 tour.

Ahmedabad, the major city in Gujarat, is controversial as the western state was rocked by India's worst communal riots for a decade in 2002.

Shaharyar said the board would give its response on the proposed venues, which India had announced as provisional, after a visit of a Pakistani security team there from January 24 to 29.

"These are proposed venues and there is always a process of dialogue between countries," he said. "When India visited Pakistan we took everything into consideration before finalising the venues."



England all-rounder Andrew Flintoff lets a wide delivery go during the fourth day's play of the fifth and final Test against South Africa at Centurion yesterday.

Lewis rules out return to ring

REUTERS, London

Former undisputed world heavyweight champion Lennox Lewis has denied a newspaper report that he is making a comeback.

The Sunday Mirror said the 39-year-old Briton was planning to fight World Boxing Council champion Vitali Klitschko of Ukraine this year.

"I want to reiterate what I said when I retired in February 2004 that I was fortunate to leave the sport on my own terms and that I will be one of the few heavyweight champions in history to retire on top and stay retired," Lewis said in a statement.

Lewis has not fought since his bout with Klitschko in June 2003 was stopped after six rounds because of severe cuts to the Ukrainian, who had been dominating the fight to that stage.

Nadal's top 20 dream

REUTERS, Melbourne

Spaniard Rafael Nadal set his sights on the world's top 20 after pushing third seed Lleyton Hewitt to the limit in a pulsating Australian Open fourth-round match on Monday.

Australian Hewitt recovered from two sets to one down to deny the 18-year-old Nadal a place in his first Grand Slam quarterfinal.

"In the fourth set, I had big chances," Nadal told reporters.

"I had three times 15-30, and at 4-4 I had 15-30.

"Today I didn't play bad in the important moments, but he played very, very good in the important moments, and he won because of that."

In front of a packed crowd at the Rod Laver Arena, Nadal dominated Hewitt for long periods as his sizzling forehand worked to perfection.

Hewitt snatched the fourth set in a tiebreak and with the Spaniard suffering from leg cramps the home favourite held on to clinch the decider 6-2.

Nadal, who ended 2004 in style by beating world number two Andy Roddick to help Spain defeat the United States in the Davis Cup final, was proud of his performance.

"I am happy because I played a good match and I had a lot of chances for a win," he said.

"I am happy because he is number three in the world and I played the same as him today. If I play at this level, I can do important things this year."

Lehmann urges

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"We are not getting through our overs quickly enough," he said on Monday.

"Brett Lee has got a long run up and he knows that and he has to be quicker through his overs."

"He knows that, we have made him quite aware of that and it costs us money every time we are late. It is something we are aware of, and we are trying to work through it."

Pakistan has had similar problems with their lightning-fast but injury-prone bowler Shoaib Akhtar, who has been sent home after tearing a hamstring.

It's Super Tuesday

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"This week has been a little bit easier. I'm playing a little bit smarter and I'm just trying to save my time on the court," the Russian fourth seed said.

"It's a long tournament and there is no need to waste the energy on something that you don't have to."

A fascinating confrontation looms in the women's quarterfinals with Wimbledon champion Maria Sharapova meeting US Open champion Svetlana Kuznetsova in an all-Russian affair.

Russian women have won the last three Grand Slam titles and looked to be in with a great chance of completing a sweep of the four majors when seven made it through to the last 16.

But Sharapova and Kuznetsova were the only two to survive and the winner of their match will be left flying the flag.

Adding spice to their meeting is that the pair have never been the closest of friends though Kuznetsova was keen to hose down any talk of a rift.

"I think she's all right. She's a bit different, like each of us, we are all different," Kuznetsova said.

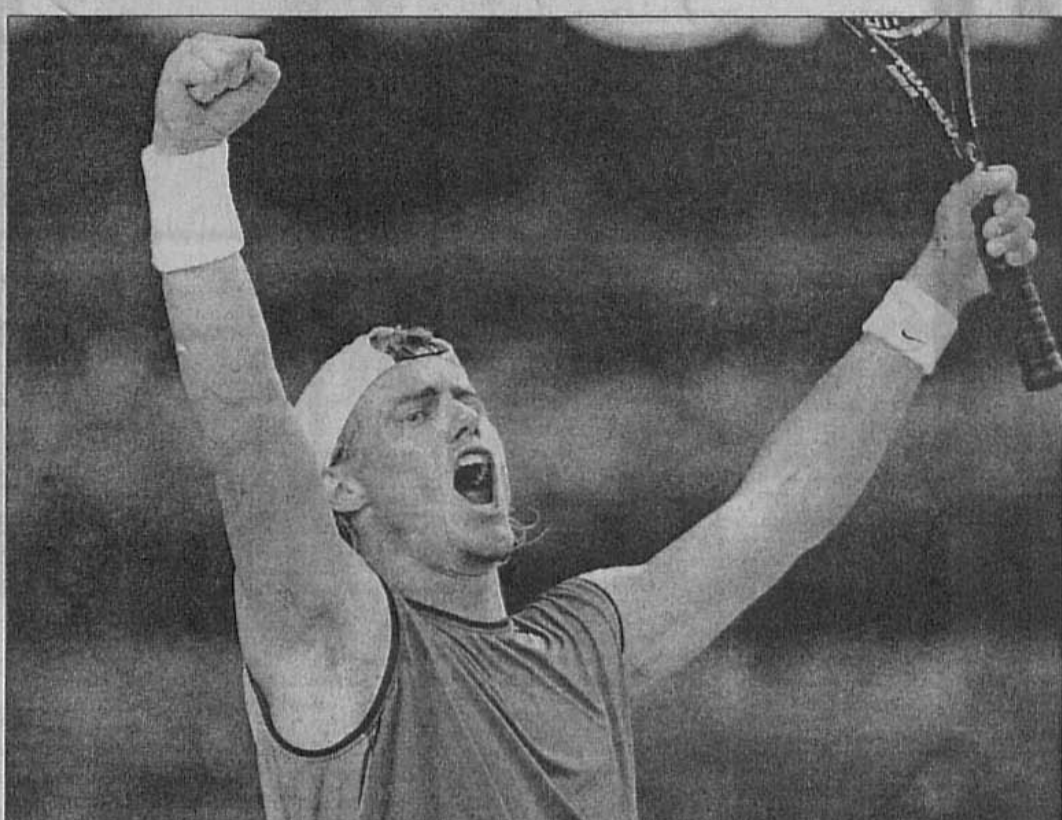
"Nobody does nothing against her. I don't mind as long as we defend the colours of our country."

The winner of the all-Russian match will play either Serena Williams, the 2003 Australian Open winner, or French world number two Amelie Mauresmo after they meet in Tuesday's second women's quarter-final.

Williams has won eight of her previous nine matches with Mauresmo but says she's expecting a tough match.

"I actually really like playing her. We've had some great matches and she definitely brings out some great shots," Williams said.

"She hits some great shots and plays some great tennis. I definitely think I bring out the best in her as well."



Australian Lleyton Hewitt exults on defeating Spain's Rafael Nadal in a marathon five-setter at the Australian Open yesterday.

Myskina falters, high drama for Hewitt

Australian Open

AFP, Melbourne

Russian top seeds Anastasia Myskina and Elena Dementieva suffered shock defeats at the Australian Open Monday as local hope Lleyton Hewitt produced a dramatic fightback to reach the quarterfinals for the first time.

French Open champion Myskina and sixth seed Dementieva had been expected to easily join compatriots Maria Sharapova and Svetlana Kuznetsova in the last eight by beating lower-ranked fourth round opponents.

But in the biggest upset of the tournament so far, third seed Myskina was sent crashing out by 19th seeded Frenchwoman Nathalie Dechy, losing a one-sided encounter 6-4, 6-2 on the Rod Laver Arena.

"No problems, just a bad day, a bad game," said Myskina, who committed 45 unforced errors throughout. "Nathalie played pretty smart against me today... I can't say really that she won the match. I can say that I lost the match."

Dechy was delighted after reaching a grand slam quarterfinal for the first time in her career but bristled at Myskina's assertion that the result had more to do with the Russian's own shortcomings.

"I'll just focus on the result," Dechy said.

"I'm in the next round and she's not. I won the match. I played the way I needed to play against her."

Dechy will now play Swiss 12th seed Patty Schnyder, who advanced to the quarter-finals after a dramatic collapse by Dementieva, the losing finalist at the French and US Opens last season.

Dementieva was beaten after

leading Schnyder by a set and 4-0 to eventually lose 6-7, 7-6, 6-2.

"I mean, what can I say?" said a disconsolate Dementieva.

"I was 4-0, 30-0. You know, I didn't take my chance."

Elsewhere in the women's draw, top seed Lindsay Davenport got through to a last eight match against Australian Alicia Molik.

Home hope Molik scored the biggest win of her life on Monday as she upset former world number one Venus Williams 7-5, 6-7.

Molik, bidding to become the first Australian woman to win the title since Chris O'Neil in 1978, outslugged eighth-seeded Williams to move into the last eight of a grand slam event for the first time.

Molik began the match with an ace and after trading breaks, a backhand over the baseline from Williams handed the 23-year-old a second break and the opening set.

The second set went with serve but Molik played a superb tiebreak, winning it 7-3.

World number one Davenport had too much power for her 13th-seeded opponent, Karolina Sprem of Croatia, and clinched a 6-2, 6-2 victory in an hour.

Davenport, who shelved retirement plans at the end of last season to chase her fourth Grand Slam title this year, said she was encouraged by her display.

"I felt today was a big improvement from my last few matches and I felt I did some things a lot better in terms of groundstrokes and being more aggressive," the experienced American said.

"If my game's improving that's always a good sign."

In the men's draw, third seed Hewitt -- aiming to become the first home winner since Mark Edmondson in 1976 -- was given the fright of his life by Spanish teenager Rafael Nadal before winning a gruelling five-set

thriller.

Nadal, the gifted 18-year-old ranked 56th in the world, forced Hewitt to fight back from two sets to one down to clinch an epic 7-5, 3-6, 1-6, 7-6, 6-2 victory in 3hr 53min.

Hewitt's win put him in the quarterfinals for the first time, where he will play the winner of Monday's late fourth-round game between Argentines Guillermo Coria and David Nalbandian.

Hewitt admitted he had been clinging on after falling 2-1 behind.

"I tried to put all the negative thoughts out of my mind, just hang in and wait for the opportunities," Hewitt said, paying tribute to his beaten opponent.

"He had nothing to lose, he's got a great attitude and he's good for the game. He's hungry, he wants to play these matches in front of these big crowds."

"This guy's going to be around for a while."

Earlier, second seed Andy Roddick beat Germany's world number 102 Philipp Kohlschreiber 6-3, 7-6, 6-1 in 1hr 27min and will now take on Russian 26th-seed Nikolay Davydenko in Wednesday's quarterfinals.

Davydenko, who sent British seventh seed Tim Henman tumbling out in the previous round, accounted for another higher-ranked player by beating Argentine 12th seed Guillermo Canas 6-3, 6-4, 6-3.

Roddick, on course for a semifinal in the bottom half of the draw with Hewitt, served up a total of 15 aces in Monday's match, but his error count was a much higher 25.

"I don't think I hit the ball as clean as I did in my first three matches, but I felt like I started hitting the right way in the third set," Roddick said.

"I'm not too concerned, I got through okay."

Clarke crushes Pakistan

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eight in the 12th over.

Yousuf Youhana made four before being caught by Ponting at third slip off Michael Kasprovic and Mohammad Hafeez contributed just 13.

When all-rounder Abdul Razzaq was brilliantly run out with a direct hit from Clarke in the covers, Pakistan were in deep trouble on 98 for 6 off 26 overs.

Azhar Mahmood with one run and Navedul Hasan with six could not stem the flow of wickets.

Captain Inzamam-ul-Haq, who had moved up to fourth in the order, and big hitter Shahid Afridi were the only players to offer serious resistance.

Inzamam's 50 off 61 balls offered some hope before he holed out to Clarke at backward square leg off Darren Lehmann.

Again, the wisdom of playing big-hitter Afridi at number eight appeared questionable. He belted 48 off 37 balls before being stumped by stand-in wicketkeeper Brad Haddin off Lehmann, as he tried desperately to build up the tally while running out of partners.

McGrath finished with 2-18 from 10 overs. Lee was far more expensive, taking 2-54 off 10 overs while part-time spinner Lehmann nabbed 3-44 off 7.2 overs on a turning wicket.

Earlier on Friday at Brisbane's Gabba ground, Rain had forced the abandonment of the match between Australia and the West Indies.

Australia had been staring down the barrel of almost certain defeat after falling to 5-43 off 11

overs as they set out in pursuit of a rain-revised tally of 195 off 28 overs for victory.

The West Indies had earlier made 263 for 9 off 50 overs, with opener Wavell Hinds top-scoring with 107.

But Australia, who won their opening two matches in the series, started badly, losing openers Matthew Hayden and Adam

Gilchrist for six runs each. They were at 12 for 2 off five overs when the rain first hit.

After resuming, the Australians were set the new target under the Duckworth-Lewis scoring system and had 23 overs remaining to reach 195.

Thorpe, Flintoff

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England Test players.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at tea on the fourth day of the fifth Test between South Africa and England in Centurion on Monday:

SOUTH AFRICA: First innings 247 (De Villiers 92, Rudolph 33, Smith 25, Boucher 25; Flintoff 4-44, Jones 4-47)

ENGLAND: First innings (overnight 114-4)

Trescothick run out (Boje) 20 Strauss c Boucher b Nel 44 Key c Boucher b Pollock 1 Vaughan c Rudolph b Pollock 0 Thorpe b Nel 86 Flintoff c Boucher b Hall 77 Jones not out 44 Giles not out 25

Extras: (b-1, lb-21, nb-3, w-7) 32 Total: (For 6 wickets in 111 overs) 329

Fall of wickets: 1-27, 2-29, 3-29, 4-114, 5-255, 6-257.

To bat: Hoggard, Jones, Harmison

Bowler O M R W

Pollock 26 11 30 2 Ntini 26 7 91 0 Nel 23 4 63 2 Hall 12 0 48 1 Boje 19 7 59 0 Kallis 2 0 5 0 Smith 8 2 11 0

Ex-Windies star battling cancer

AFP, London

Former West Indies Test all-rounder Bernard Julien is battling throat cancer, according to a newspaper report.

The 54-year-old has been given a 90-per cent chance of beating the disease.

"I want to live. It is life you are talking about," Julien told the Trinidad Express newspaper. "I want to beat this thing. I am not giving up."

Julien, who also played English county cricket for Kent, was a left-arm fast bowler and respected right-hand batsman.

Bashar vows

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Mahmud run out 23 Mashud run out 17 Baisya c Taibu b Hondo 3 Enamul not out 0

Extras: (b-2, lb-2, w-5, nb-1) 10 Total: (All out in 47.1 overs) 206

Fall of wickets: 1-13, 2-40, 3-130, 4-130, 5-160, 6-161, 7-165, 8-192, 9-205

Bowler O M R W Panyangara 8 0 22 1 Mpofu 5.1 0 19 2 Hondo 10 0 52 2 Rogers 10 0 55 2 Matsikenyeri 4 0 17 0 Utseya 10 1 37 1

Result: Zimbabwe won by 31 runs and take 2-0 lead in the 5-ODI series. Man-of-the-match: Barney Rogers. Toss: Zimbabwe.

Umpires: Asad Rauf (Pakistan) and Mahbubur Rahman (Bangladesh).

PCB rubishes

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The PCB also hired a lawyer in Australia and contacted the Pakistan High Commission to probe the matter.

"It (the report) was an attack on Pakistan cricket. The team management, as well as the PCB, from its sources, conducted a thorough probe but we found the allegations were baseless," said Zaidi.

"We said earlier that it was something very intriguing that an incident that happened three or four weeks ago -- with no lawyers hired and no police complaint made -- has been reported in the media," he said.

"Our players know their duties, and since they are forbidden from all off field activities through a central contract they would not do anything that would bring shame on them or their country," the spokesman added.

World XI draw level

Cricket

AFP, Wellington

A World XI put their humiliating weekend drubbing behind them Monday to beat New Zealand by three wickets here in the second one-day cricket match of a series to raise money for tsunami victims.

New Zealand had the man-of-the-match in century-maker Nathan Astle but the Federation of International Cricketers' Associations (FICA) World XI put in a genuine team effort to overhaul the home side's 256-9 with more than two overs to spare.

Half-centuries from Australian Matthew Elliott and Sri Lanka's Kumara Sangakkara as well as vital contributions from Australia's Andy Bichel and Sri Lanka's Chaminda Vaas down the order allowed the World XI to pull ahead when it counted.

Bichel may no longer be required by Ricky Ponting's Australian national side but no one did more to ensure New Zealand's defeat, taking 3-56 with the ball and following up with 37 runs from 38 balls, batting at number eight.

The steel of the visitors was in contrast to the series' first match in Christchurch on Saturday when a lack of team cohesion as well as not enough recent time in the middle from the world stars saw New Zealand race to a nine-wicket victory in only 16.1 overs.

As well, there was no repeat of the weekend fireworks when Fleming hit a whirlwind 106 off 57 balls. Opener Astle's century provided

the backbone in New Zealand's innings. He started aggressively before settling into the anchor role and batted through 44.3 overs.

Astle scored his 109 in 113 balls and hit nine fours and one six, finally being caught in the gully off the bowling of Bichel.

Astle and Matthew Sinclair (30) added a valuable 82 runs for the second wicket for New Zealand. Recalled batsman Craig McMillan scored 33, including three sixes before falling to Sri Lanka's Sanath Jayasuriya and Daniel Vettori made a quick fire 26 at the tail of the innings.

The World XI tracked New Zealand's progress in their own innings and got off to a confident start with openers Nick Knight and Elliott.

The sides will play the final and deciding match of the series on Wednesday in Hamilton. New Zealand Cricket is aiming to raise one million New Zealand dollars (700,000 US) for victims of the Asian tsunami from the series. A total of 752,000 NZ dollars had been raised after the second game.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the second one-day match between a World XI and New Zealand to raise money for tsunami relief at Westpac Stadium on Monday:

NEW ZEALAND Fleming c and b Vaas 14 Astle c Rhodes b Bichel 109 Sinclair c Sangakkara b Klusener 30 Cairns c Warner b Klusener 9 Marshall c Vaas b Muralitharan 6 McMillan c and b Jayasuriya 33 McCullum c Sangakkara b Bichel 0 Vettori not out 26

Wilson c Klusener b Bichel 11 Mills run out 8 Tuffey not out 0 Extras: (lb-2, w-7, nb-1) 10 Total: (For 9 wickets in 50 overs) 256

Fall of wickets: 1-25, 2-107, 3-135, 4-148, 5-202, 6-205, 7-214, 8-233, 9-252

Bowler O M R W Bichel 10 1 56 3 Vaas 5 0 35 1 Klusener 7 1 35 2 Jayasuriya 10 0 38 1 Warner 10 0 44 0 Muralitharan 8 0 46 1

WORLD XI Elliott c Sinclair b Astle 57 Knight c McCullum b Cairns 29 Jayasuriya c Marshall b Mills 4 Hick lbw b Vettori 24 Sangakkara c Marshall b Tuffey 51 Rhodes run out 16

Klusener c and b Wilson 4 Bichel not out 37 Vaas not out 23

Extras: (lb-8, w-3, nb-1) 12 Total: (For 7 wickets in 47.5 overs) 257

Fall of wickets: 1-65, 2-74, 3-111, 4-122, 5-167, 6-172, 7-222

Did not bat: Warner, Muralitharan

Bowler O M R W Tuffey 8.5 0 64 1 Mills 8 1 47 1 Cairns 7 0 33 1 Vettori 10 0 45 1 Astle 5 0 24 1 Wilson 8 0 26 1 McMillan 1 0 10 0

Result: World XI won by 3 wickets and level the 3-match series 1-1. Man-of-the-match: Nathan Astle. Toss: World XI.

Umpires: Evan Watkin (New Zealand) and Doug Cowie (New Zealand).

Katich recalled for WI

Cricket

AFP, Sydney

Australia are expected to keep faith in out-of-form batsmen Matthew Hayden and Andrew Symonds, retaining both for Wednesday's triangular VB Series limited-overs match against the West Indies in Adelaide.

But elegant batsman Damien Martyn will be rested and replaced by Simon Katich as the world champions fine-tune their team in the lead-up to the best-of-three finals for which they have already qualified.

Australia secured their berth with a nine-wicket thrashing of Pakistan in Sydney on Sunday when the only

wicket to fall was that of Hayden.

The big left-hander, once considered an automatic selection to open the Australian batting in limited-overs matches with the brilliant Adam Gilchrist, is now under increasing pressure from 23-year-old Michael Clarke.

Hayden was rested for the first two matches of the tri-series and since returning has made innings of six and 27 -- the latter off a laborious 65 balls in Sunday's match -- while Clarke delivered an unbeaten 103.

Katich, who is likely to play only his second one-day international in 11 months, made 38 from 48 balls as an opener in his only tri-series appearance this summer against Pakistan in Hobart.

But he is unlikely to be anywhere near the top of the order on Wednesday as Australia attempt to free Hayden and Symonds from their batting blues.

The team is considering elevating the hard-hitting Symonds up the order following five ducks in his last six one-day international knocks.

Veteran batsman Darren Lehmann said Monday he expected the Australians to persist with the 2003 World Cup hero and predicted the powerful right-hander to end his run of outstrokes.

"He is in a bit of a rut, but he is a class player and he will come out of it and the only way he will come out of it is to keep playing," Lehmann said.

"I think he will probably bat up the order in the next couple of games and give him a good opportunity to bat for a long period of time, he has had a couple of good balls and played a couple of bad shots."

"But you get that in cricket and I am sure he will work through that."

Symonds is expected to slot into the absent Martyn's spot at number four with Katich likely to come in at six in front of stand-in wicketkeeper Brad Haddin.

Vice-captain and first-choice wicketkeeper Gilchrist and Martyn will return to the side for the one-day match against Pakistan in Perth on Sunday.

The national selectors have been rotating senior players for the tri-series following a hectic calendar late last year and with a tour of New Zealand coming up next month.

Australia's opponent in the finals is yet to be decided with only two points separating Pakistan and the West Indies. Both teams have two matches remaining.

Hefty fine

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Africa's series-leveling victory in Cape Town.

The offence was Gibbs' sixth serious run-in with cricket authorities.

His most significant breach came in August, 2000 when he was fined 60,000 rand and banned for six months for agreeing to underperform in a one-day international against India.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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