

## Proteas plot Sehwag's downfall

AFP, Ahmedabad

South Africa will target swashbuckling Indian batsman Virender Sehwag with short-pitched bowling in the rest of the series, coach Mickey Arthur said on Tuesday.

Sehwag tore apart the tourists' bowling in the drawn first Test at Chennai with a scintillating 319 off 304 balls, the fastest triple century in history and the second of his career.

Arthur, preparing for the second Test starting here on Thursday, said the South Africans had analysed Sehwag's innings in detail to spot potential loopholes in the opener's play.

"We had a look at Sehwag's fantastic innings. He cuts the ball very well but we saw he played his first pull shot only after scoring 312," the coach said.

"So we are planning to target him with short balls on his body, cramp him for space and see how he takes it."

Arthur, however, insisted his squad was not under pressure and had batsmen and bowlers who were capable of churning out match-winning performances.

"We have probably taken more positives from the first Test," he said. "The top order has performed and we have bowlers who can take 20 wickets."

"We have played a lot in the sub-continent, we have kept the same top six in the batting order and we are comfortable playing spin bowling."

"We have a very balanced attack including a very good spinner in Paul Harris, who is probably a most underrated bowler."

Arthur hoped the wicket will offer more assistance to his fast bowlers, unlike the unresponsive track at Chennai which saw a whopping 1498 runs being scored at the cost of 25 wickets.

"We will have to wait and watch for the first ball to be bowled on how the wicket is," he said. "At the moment it looks good with some grass on it. Hopefully the pitch will help the seamers."

"It will be interesting to see how the ball behaves on the lush green outfield or whether it helps reverse swing."

**11 nat'l hockey**

**FROM PAGE 17** recruit any of these players by Thursday.

The BHF also increased the total quota of local player registration for a team to 24 players from 20. The federation, however, will sit soon to take a decision on relegation after its earlier declaration of not relegating any team this season was heavily criticised by all quarters.

**Shoaib banned**

**FROM PAGE 17** Instead, Akhtar was offered a special retainer deal, which he refused to sign.

The mercurial fast bowler last played for Pakistan in the third and final Test against India at Bangalore in December last year. He broke down with back trouble and was blamed for Pakistan's 1-0 defeat in the series.

He was not selected for Pakistan's five-match series against Zimbabwe in February and was omitted from next month's first two limited overs international against Bangladesh.

Akhtar took 178 wickets in 46 Tests, while his tally in 138 one-day matches stands at 219.

**Biman look**

**FROM PAGE 17** Iftekhar 24, Sabir 12, Habibur 51\*, Jubaan 33\*, extras 8, Khadem 1-13. Result: Young Pegasus won by five wickets.

**VICTORIA:** 213 all out in 49.5 overs (Kaiser 10, Faruk 12, Farhad 92, Ehsanul 34, Shahjada 31, extras 7, Delwar 2-51, Faisel 2-41, Nayem 3-21).

**SURJOTORUN:** 214-8 in 49.2 overs (Shakil 13, Bashar 17, Nayem 86\*, Mashud 31, Nazmul 20, extras 7, Rubel 2-48, Sajib 3-30). Result: Surjo Torun win by two wickets.

**OLD DOHS:** 127 all out in 33.5 overs (Sakib 35, Farhad 15, Rajin 12, Sanjay 13, Monir 11, extras 8, Kibria 2-21, Latif 2-25, Nasir 2-6).

**BKSP:** 128-2 in 23.2 overs (Mithun 21, Aziz 66\*, Rahim 36\*, extra 1, Rashed 1-15).

**Result: BKSP win by eight wickets.**

**PARTEX:** 256-8 in 50 overs (Rafiqul 105, Tariq 13, Shaheen 15, Hanif 63, Arif 17, Raisul 10, Mushtaq 13, extras 11, Rasel 2-41, Sadat 2-19).

**KALABAGAN:** [revised target: 188 in 30 overs]: 189-9 in 29.3 overs (Sadat 46, Butt 69, Nahidul 32, Hannan 14, Farid 10\*, extras 4, Tariq 4-34, Hanif 2-43).

**Result: Kalabagan win by one wicket.**

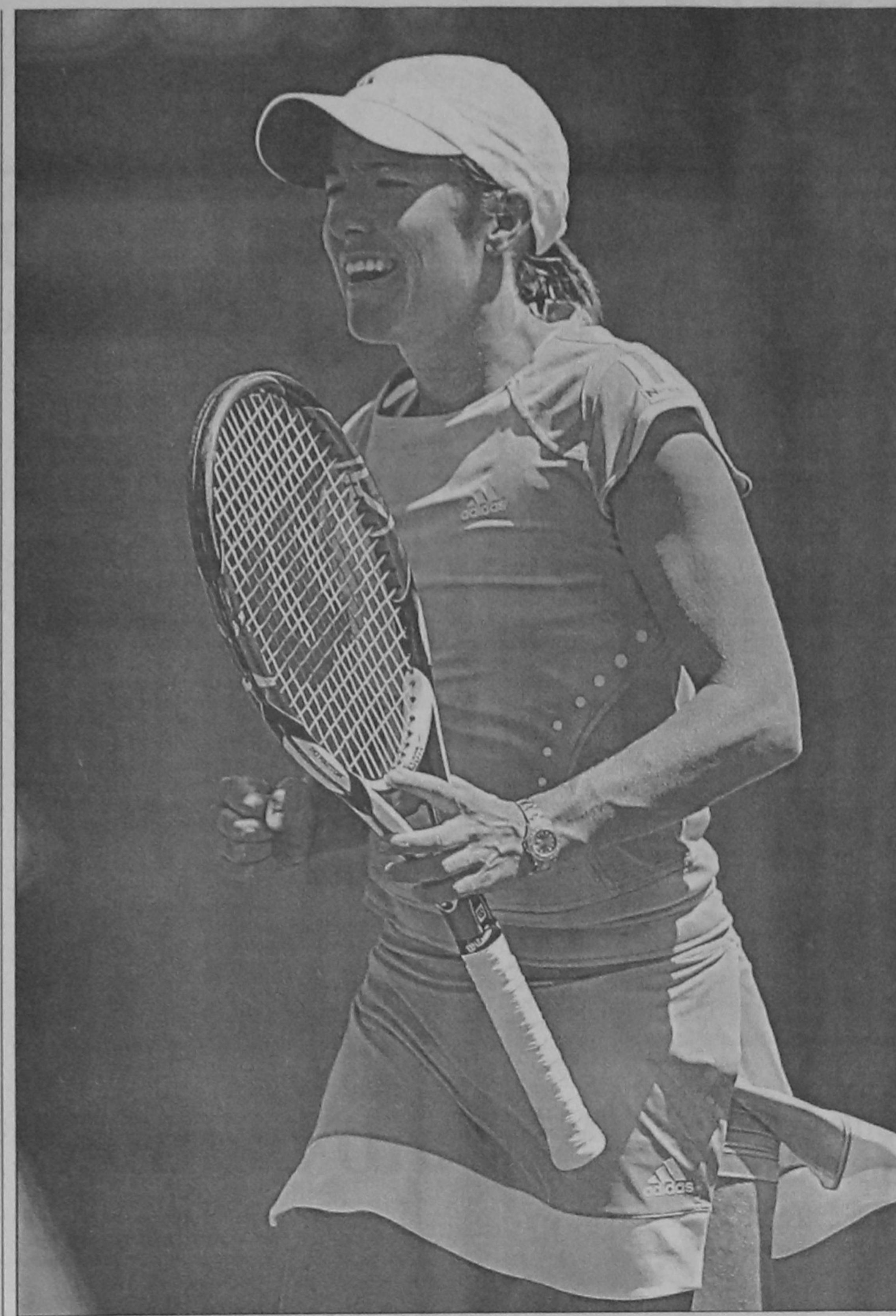


PHOTO: AFP

World number one Justine Henin of Belgium celebrates winning a point against Elena Vesnina of Russia during the Sony Ericsson Open in Florida on Monday.

## Federer, Henin advance

### Tennis

AFP, Miami

World number ones Roger Federer and Justine Henin advanced with ease here Monday at a 7.54 million-dollar ATP and WTA hardcourt event, Henin in straight sets and Federer on an injury retirement. Swiss superstar Federer was leading Robin Soderling 6-4, 3-0 when the ill Swedish player retired, advancing the world number one into the round of 16.

Henin, who won titles at Sydney and Belgium in four starts this year, fired eight aces to overcome six double faults in her victory. She is in her first event since a Dubai quarterfinal ouster.

Possibly awaiting the Williams-Henin winner in the semifinals would be Venus Williams or Russian third seed Svetlana Kuznetsova, the runner-up at Indian Wells.

Kuznetsova, the 2006 winner here, defeated Israeli 16th seed Shahar Peer 6-6 (7/4), 6-3, while the elder Williams sister, seeded sixth, beat Denmark's Caroline Wozniacki 6-3, 6-3.

Serbian fourth seed Jelena Jankovic eliminated China's Zheng Jie 6-4, 7-5 to advance to a quarterfinals date with Russian 10th seed Elena Dementieva, who ousted Germany's Sabine Lisicki 6-3, 6-2.

Also reaching the final eight was Russian Dinara Safina, who ended the run of US tennis mom Lindsay Davenport 6-3, 6-4. She will next face Russian Vera Zvonareva, who beat Japan's Ai Sugiyama, 6-2, 6-3, 6-2.

In other matches on the men's side, Russian fourth seed Nikolay Davydenko reached the round of 16 by defeating Italy's Simone Bolelli 6-7 (5/7), 7-5, 6-1 and will next face Croatian wild card Mario Ancic or Argentina's Juan Monaco.

Australian Open runner-up Jo-Wilfried Tsonga was eliminated by fellow Frenchman Julien Benneteau 6-3, 6-3 in another third-round match.

Benneteau, ranked 72nd, will next face US sixth seed Andy Roddick, who beat Czech qualifier Ivo Minar 7-6 (7/4), 6-4.

## Spin the answer?

### Cricket

AFP, Port of Spain

Stories of the ill-treatment of spin bowlers at the hands of the West Indies selectors over the years are notorious.

Since Lance Gibbs ended his distinguished career on February 5, 1976, West Indies cricket history is littered with several bowlers plying the slow stuff that have been tossed aside in preference for bowlers living in the "fast lane."

Truth be told, though, West Indies -- who face Sri Lanka here in the second Test on Thursday -- have only produced three World-class spin bowlers in the eight decades since their entry into Test cricket -- and this number may be stretched to four when Garfield Sobers is included on the list.

Gibbs has been the most successful with a former world record 309 wickets at 29.09 apiece in 79 Tests, while off-spinner Sonny Ramadhin snared 158 at an average of 28.98 in 43 Tests, and left-arm spinner Alf Valentine snared 139 at 30.32 each in 36 Tests.

Sobers took 235 wickets at an average of 34.03 in 93 Tests -- bowling principally either left-arm orthodox or chinaman -- but some of his scalps were taken when he transformed himself into a left-arm fast-medium bowler.

But West Indies have languished behind the other Test-playing nations of the World in the deployment of spin bowlers in their attack, even after the rules of the

game were changed to render their feared battery of fast bowlers toothless in the 1990s.

The crescendo of noise for spin bowlers to gain recognition at the highest level of the game has escalated, particularly in the face of the friendly fire produced by the modern-day armoury of West Indies fast bowlers, and the continued success of the slower bowlers in domestic competitions at all levels.

The selection of the beano pole left-arm spin bowler, Suleiman Benn for the opening Test of two against Sri Lanka last week at the Guyana National Stadium has given hope that the selectors may finally be getting the message.

It's hard to recall when a West Indies selection panel made such a bold move, and it was a throwback to when a similar combination of spin bowlers Ramadhin and Valentine were given their break in the 1950 tour of England.

"I said before the match that it is good that we have frontline spinners in the squad because it gives us that option that when you get a pitch that might actually be kind to spinners to actually play one," said Dyson.

"We found in South Africa that we didn't have that spin option. We were asking the fast bowlers to do all the 'donkey' work, and all of our fast bowlers are aggressive fast bowlers."

"In assessing his performance, you have got to say that the pitch was a batsman's paradise," Dyson said.

"It didn't help the fast bowlers, and it didn't help the spinners, and I thought he bowled very, very well for his first Test match. He came in, maintained a good line, a good length.

"I felt sorry for him that he didn't take a wicket (in the first innings) albeit there was one opportunity missed from his bowl-

ing, and I was pleased that he came out there again and bowled pretty well (in the second innings)."

Batting legend Gordon Greenidge heads the West Indies selection panel which also comprises former off-spin bowler Clyde Butts and fast bowling legend Andy Roberts took the unprecedented step of including the uncapped pair of Benn and off-spin bowler Amit Jaggernauth in the 15-member squad for the Guyana Test.

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Though fast bowlers have often thrived on the Queen's Park Oval pitch because of its inconsistent bounce, the venue has been the traditional home for spin bowlers in the Caribbean, and there is a delicious prospect in the second Test of watching Sri Lanka's off-spin legend Muttiah Muralitharan working over the West Indies' batsmen.

## LOCAL SNIPS

SPORTS REPORTER

Four Super League matches of First Division Cricket League will take place on Friday.

Gazi Tank will play Indira Road and Cricket Coaching School (CCS) meet Azad Sporting Club in BKSP. Rupali Bank face Orient Sporting Club at Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium while Brothers Union take on neighbours Bangladesh Boys in Fatullah.

On Sunday, Gazi Tank will meet Azad Sporting at Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium, CCS face Bangladesh Boys in BKSP. Brothers Union play Orient at the Mirpur Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium while Rupali Bank meet Indira Road in Fatullah.

**SCHOOLS CRICKET**

BKSP take on Faridpur Zilla School in the final of the Standard Chartered Young Tigers National Schools Cricket tournament at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium today.

The final will be followed by an award distribution ceremony where Vikram Issar, head of consumer banking of Standard Chartered Bank, will be present as chief guest on the occasion.

**WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL**

The 11th inter-district women's volleyball tournament will begin at the Volleyball Stadium on Friday.

Rajbari, Rajshahi, Pabna, Khulna, Rangpur, Dinajpur, Naogaon, Jessor and Bagerhat will be split into three groups in the four-day meet.

**Cricket Australia**

Andrew Hilditch said 37-year-old MacGill, who has claimed 203 Test wickets since earning his baggy green in 1998, had used the domestic series to prove he was back to fitness after hand surgery to treat carpal tunnel syndrome.

Casson also won selectors' attention during the summer, with the 25-year-old taking the wicket that won New South Wales the Sheffield Shield competition and finishing the season with 29 wickets at an average of more than 94.

Chair of national selectors Andrew Hilditch said 26-year-old Clarke would be vice-captain to Ricky Ponting for both squads after he demonstrated his leadership credentials during the summer.

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## Katich handed place Clarke named Aussie vice-captain

### Cricket

AFP, Sydney

Australia on Tuesday named a revamped Test squad for the upcoming tour of the West Indies, recalling run-maker Simon Katich and including two spin bowlers.

Veteran leg spinner Stuart MacGill and left-arm spinner Beau Casson are among 15 players selected in the squad for the three-Test series, while Michael Clarke was named vice-captain after the retirement of Adam Gilchrist.

Cricket Australia (CA) also named a 14-man squad for the five one-day internationals against the West Indies, which includes batsman Michael Hussey's younger brother David for the first time.

Chair of national selectors Andrew Hilditch said 26-year-old Clarke would be vice-captain to Ricky Ponting for both squads after he demonstrated his leadership credentials during the summer.

Clarke, who recently knocked

back the opportunity to play in the lucrative Indian Premier League to spend more time with his ill father, captained the Australian Twenty20 side to victory over India in February.

The participating teams have been asked to report at the Dhanmondi Women's Sports Complex on Thursday.

**Akhtar to fight**

**FROM PAGE 17**

probation for hitting a teammate with a bat.

"I was demoted from central contract 'A' category, which was very hurtful and as a reaction I said something. I have apologised to the PCB, before the disciplinary committee and before everyone," Akhtar said.

"So I thought that they would take a lenient action, but this harsh decision has effectively ended my career. I still want to play for my country," he said.

PCB chairman Nasim Ashraf told reporters as he announced the decision that Akhtar was given several chances and since he was on two-year probation, the ban was justified.

Akhtar refused to accept Ashraf's claims that he was a negative influence on the team.

"As the captain (Shoaib Malik) and coach Geoff Lawson and they would vouch for me. I had played with high fever on the India tour (last year), which proved my commitment for the team," Akhtar said.

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