SPÖRT

Hockey heroes

AFP, New Delhi

of drums

back in India

The Indian field hockey team

returned to a rousing welcome here

on Tuesday after winning a three-

nation tournament in Australia, which

In a scene similar to the kind of

reception the more glamorous

cricketers get after doing well

abroad, fans thronged the interna-

tional airport and danced to the beat

(IHF) president K.P.S. Gill was

among a host of officials present to

welcome the players, who beat Australia 5-3 in the final at Sydney.

team and we hope our players will

continue to do well in the coming

days," said Gill. "The performance

gives us hope for the Olympics next

India played back-to-back tourna-

They lost 1-2 to Australia in the

ments in Australia, making the final

final of the first leg at Perth, but only

after beating neighbours Pakistan 2-

At Sydney, they were held 4-4 by

Pakistan in the league but went on to

beat Olympic bronze medallists

This was the season's first tourna-

ment for India, who are due to play in

the prestigious Champions Trophy in

mental team and we are preparing

for the Champions Trophy and next

Pillay, who was among a group of

players who landed in the southern

city of Bangalore, said the match

against Pakistan at Sydney had

wanted us to lose our temper. It was

surprising that one of our players

(Baljit Dhillon) got a red card and we

had to play with a player short virtu-

we play our hearts out," said Pillay,

adding that the team needed to

improve on penalty-corner conver-

sions as well as in scoring field

Not so long ago Anna Kournikova

was probably the only Russian

woman tennis player most interna-

Famous for her glamorous looks

goals if it had to regain its past glory.

Tennis

REUTERS, Moscow

tional fans had heard of.

When we play against Pakistan

"They were losing (3-1) and badly

tested the nerves of both teams.

ally through the second session.

year's Olympics in Athens.

"This is a good start," said captain

0 in a preliminary league match.

on both occasions

Australia in the final.

"It has been a fine showing by our

The Indian Hockey Federation

also featured arch-rivals Pakistan.

Millennium maestro



Andre Agassi has celebrated his personal millennium with victory at the Stella Artois Championships in his 1,000th professional match.

The 33-year-old juggled swirling winds and a lively Peter Luczak to win 7-6.6-4. It was a fitting milestone win on

Queen's Club's grass Centre Court, mirroring the success he enjoyed in his first match 17 years ago. Then, with flowing blonde hair and

bucket-loads of attitude, he beat John Austin in the first round of an event in La Quinta, California,

The 998 matches in between have featured some of the most scintillating tennis, earning Agassi the world number one spot and eight arand slam titles

"When I started out I wouldn't have thought any of my 1,000 matches would have come on grass," smiled the player who dodged Wimbledon for four of his first five years on the Tour before winning the grasscourt grand slam in 1992".

Seeded second here and ranked two in the world, Agassi could next face a fellow former Wimbledon champion Richard Krajicek in the third round. Krajicek plays Jan Vacek on Wednesday.

Earlier at Queen's, Tim Henman's

Wimbledon preparations got off to a hesitant start when the British number one squeezed past Davide Sanguinetti 3-6, 6-3, 7-6.

Four times a Wimbledon semifinalist, Henman struggled with his serve throughout the match and was fortunate to survive a match point while trailing 6-5 in the third set.

"It's not the best match I ever plaved but it is important to come through," he said.

"I wanted to hang around in this tournament for a while longer. Fortunately I was able to do that."

Fourth seed Paradorn Srichaphan was not so fortunate. though. The popular Thai was sent packing by Mario Ancic.

Ancic is hewn from the same stuff as fellow-Croatian Goran Ivanisevic and served impeccably throughout to win 6-3, 6-3.

There were no shocks for third seed Andy Roddick, though, and the American made light work of his first foray on to grass this season by thrashing Rik De Voest 6-3, 6-2 in the second round.

The American, a first-round loser at the French Open two weeks ago, never looked bothered at the 800,000 Euro championships, advancing in just 51 minutes.

Brazilian Andre Sa's nightmare year finally came to an end. After 15 successive defeats in 2003, Sa managed to beat Belgium's Gilles



Amsterdam in August. Dhanraj Pillay. "Ours is an experi-

American Andre Agassi follows through on a serve against Peter Luczak of Australia in the second round match of the Queen's Club tennis tournament in London on Tuesday.

Backley eves elusive golds

BBC ONLINE, London

Steve Backley is determined to capture a world or Olympic javelin gold medal before he retires at the end of the 2004 season.

Despite being at the top of the sport since 1989, the 34-year-old Briton has never held the world or

Now, Backley is stripping down his domestic appearances so he can focus on his preparation for the

"I have got medals in the World Championships and Olympics, but I would love to go one better," said

"I am one of half a dozen guys capable of winning these titles but it all depends on what happens on the day, the javelin is like that

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

4 De-vise?

5 Normal

6 - shoe-

string

8 Fervid

10 West of

Holly-

wood

unwilling

to share

pronoun

planet

(Abbr.)

19 Potsdam

22 Inmost

Solution time: 25 mins.

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17 Be

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souvenir

7 Humorous

44 Chowder- 3 Vegas

head

50 Experi-

for

56 Throw

57 Exam

58 Mrs.

59 Pitch-

60 Cera-

DOWN

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61 - canto

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4 Fairy-tale 46 Correct

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pooch

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tion?

18 Aromatic

20 Weeding

theatrica

rodents

28 Goat wool

potation

herb

21 Overly

24 Makes

32 Tease

34 Too-too

36 Binary

digit

37 Branch

39 Monetary

41 Hyundai

head-

43 Othello.

concern

quarters

proper

person

33 Pub

Kucera crushes Kafelnikov

Tennis

Russia's former men's tennis world number one Yevgeny Kafelnikov failed at the first hurdle in his bid to retain his ATP title as he was knocked out by Slovakian Karol Kucera 6-1, 6-

Earlier top seed Roger Federer had saved a match point before overpowering Armenia's Sargis Sargsian

Kafelnikov fought back well after being humbled in the first set.

The fourth seed kept his nerve after seeing Kucera break back in the second set and save several set points in the marathon tiebreak to take it into a

23 Hecuba's

quarry

27 Mulligan,

28 Big barrel

member

reader

29 Choir

30 Palm

31 Exxon,

35 Soon

ibly

40 Work-

once

38 Contempt

week end

(Abbr.)

residue

away

47 Smooth

48 Steven

son

villain

49 Mallard's

cousin

50 Greek X

51 Scoot 52 Clumsy

53 Historic

period

54 Clinton's

instru-

42 Bonfire

45 Pack

25 MPs'

The Russian forced another in the third as he broke Kucera when the Slovak served for the match at 5-4 - but the notoriously inconsistent Kafelnikov let it slip when 4-1 up in the tiebreak and his opponent rattled off six successive points to progress to the second round.

It was a welcome boost for Kucera, as the 29-year-old former Australian Open semi-finalist had failed to win on six occasions since taking the Copenhagen ATP tournament in

Sargsian looked to be on the way to another significant scalp - he beat American Andy Roddick at the French Open - when he led Federer 5-3 in the first set and also had one set point, but the Swiss star rebounded to take the set 7-5 and then romped through the second.

CRYPTOQUIP

VWHM BYCM ZDSHGB JDII D BUGYSH, OF UWHK VDIS

DGFLMO JDGGKYMC HZQUK

QYJSHU BYCMB? Yesterday's Cryptoquip: ATTRACTED TO SOLDIERS, SHE'D OFTEN FIND HERSELF IN "PLATOONIC" RELATIONSHIPS.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: B equals S

The Cryptoquip 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.

World Boxing Council champion Lennox Lewis of Britain will defend his crown against top-rated contender Vitali Klitschko of Ukraine here on June 21, promoters announced here Monday.

American Cedric Boswell.

"Klitschko has been calling me champion.'

being used as a tuneup for a Lewisfight fans.

Lewis is 40-2 with one draw and 31 knockouts. Klitschko is 32-1 with all but one triumph coming inside the distance.

of mine to fight Lennox Lewis," Klitschko said. "I am very excited about the opportunity to fight him in Los Angeles. It is going to be a great

fight in the state.

AFP, Los Angeles

in the matchup, which came about when Canadian Kirk Johnson suffered a chest muscle injury during training and pulled out of the main event on the Staples Center

Lewis has not fought in more than a year, the longest layoff of his

Klitschko showdown later in the vear, the fight at the Staples Center becomes an intriguing matchup that has been much anticipated among

ceived as a vehicle for Lewis and Mike Tyson to fight on the same card.

California officials approving him to

career. Rather than extending his idle period. Lewis decided to fight Klitschko, who was set to fight on the undercard against little-known

out for some time, but he is in big trouble." Lewis said. "He should be careful what he wishes for. On June 21, he is going to find out what it is like to be in with an A-class world

The card was originally con-

Lennox, Vitali bout June 21

tance," Lewis vowed. "I do not get paid for overtime.'

Instead of two lackluster

"This has been a life-long dream

fight."

Tyson backed out despite

Lewis has promised a knockout

"The fight will not go the dis-

rather than her winning power -- she has never won a WTA tour singles. title -- Kournikova was Russia's only top-10 representative when she hit a career high of eighth in the world in 2000. But now there are three Russian women in the world's top 20, five

> more have made it into the top 40 and others are on the rise as tennis reaches new heights in a country where it was considered a bourgeois sport just over a decade ago. Rarely a week goes by without one of Russia's legion of talented

> young women making a splash at a tournament somewhere. Nadia Petrova was the latest to take the spotlight last week when she became the first Russian woman in 28 years to reach the French Open

The 20-year-old Muscovite knocked out two former world number ones, Monica Seles and Jennifer Capriati, on her way to the last four.

The 18-year-old Vera Zvonareva also left her mark at Roland Garros by shocking third seed Venus

coming back from leading New Zealand to success in the Sri Lankan tri-series last month, while Vettori had earlier been in negotiations with Warwickshire. Martin Snedden, the chief executive of NZC, said he was happy for both players to have the chance to work

Williams in the fourth round before

bowing out to Petrova in the guarter-

20th in the WTA Tour rankings this

week, while Petrova leapt 47 places

The results in Paris were no

"We have high hopes for many of

"I wasn't surprised by their

surprise to Russian tennis chief

our young female players,"

many good young girls on their way

up at the moment that any one of

them is capable of doing well, even in

"I said that years ago. In fact, I

"It's great that on the men's side

thought our women would achieve

their success much sooner than our

we have players like (Marat) Safin

and (Yevgeny) Kafelnikov, who

paved the way for our Davis Cup

victory, and also guys like (Mikhail)

Youzhny and (Nikolay) Davydenko,

who made an important contribution

gap, whereas in the women's game

we have enough players for two or

"But after them there is a huge

Tarpishchev told Reuters in an

to 29th

Shamil Tarpishchev.

grand slams.

men "he said

when we needed it.

Davis Cup title last year.

Zvonareva moved up one place to

Russian women on rise

even three teams, good enough to

Certainly the days when the Russians had to rely primarily on the mood and physical condition of the U.S.-based Kournikova for their Fed Cup success have long gone.

challenge for the Fed Cup title."

"I think we're already among the top three or four teams in the world, maybe just behind the U.S. and Belgium," said Tarpishchev, who is

also Russia's Fed Cup captain. "Just give us a few more years and we'll be a dominant force, especially in the women's game," he said. We always had a solid, scientific approach and good coaching, now we've added the infrastructure

ust a matter of time before we reap Tarpishchev had been predicting the results of our labour." that Russia would be a dominant Tarpishchev named both Petrova force in tennis long before he led his and Zvonareva along with Elena country as team captain to their first Bovina, Svetlana Kuznetsova and Dinara Safina as the players to

> "If you're talking about Russian players who made themselves known on the Tour in the past 12 months, then these five certainly stand out." he said. "All of them have done well

courts, training centres, etc., so it's

recently. Now they have to make the next big step, which is winning a big one, a grand slam," Tarpishchev said Russia's already established players

Anastasia Myskina and Elena Dementieva, respectively 10th and 15th in the rankings, were coming under pressure from the younger

Azhar wants a reprieve too were banned for life, while Ajay Jadeja and Manoj Prabhakar were Central Bureau of Investigation suspended for five years.

(CBI) found that the four players Although Jadeja recently had his were paid by bookmakers in order to ban overturned, and returned to club cricket, Azharuddin's last

And the BCCI then appointed its own inquiry commissioner, K. Madhavan, who endorsed the CBI's

However, the CBI's naming of six non-Indian players, including England's Alec Stewart and Martin Crowe of New Zealand, has been widely discredited.

on the testimony of bookmaker MK Gupta, who subsequently refused to be cross-examined. Azharuddin, India's most suc-

The findings were based largely

cessful Test captain, was stranded on 99 Test appearances when he was banned

He scored 6,215 Test runs and remains one-day cricket's secondhighest scorer after successor Sachin Tendulkar with 9,378 runs from 334 matches.

County calling Kiwi stars

ronment. He pointed out: "Many

international players find county

MOHAMMAD AZHARUDDIN

attempt to arbitrate with the BCCI

was turned down by a court in

Cricket

cricket three years ago.

Cricket

BBC ONLINE, London

deep rooted malice"

Former India captain Mohammad

Azharuddin has begun an appeal

against his life-ban for match-fixing.

Hyderabad local court that the

Board for Control of Cricket in India

(BCCI) had acted against him with

Test caps when he was banned.

Azharuddin was stranded on 99

He argued the ban had been

handed out to appease the public

sentiment and without evaluating

Azharuddin's performance in the

matches he was alleged to been

Azharuddin, 40, was among four

players banned by the Indian board

at the height of the match-fixing

scandal that swept international

He and batsman Ajay Sharma

The batsman's counsel told a

CRICINFO. London

The New Zealand pair of Stephen Fleming and Daniel Vettori have secured short-term contracts in English county cricket with Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire. Fleming has signed an 11-week contract while Vettori will play for five weeks. New Zealand Cricket (NZC) have given their endorsement to the pair.

Fleming, who has also played for Middlesex, expressed a wish to play some more county cricket after on their games in the county envi-

cricket beneficial in terms of their development." It is a significant step for both players as they have shown signs of being close to their best form in recent months. After a long drought, Vettori looked to have regained the sort of touch that made him such a competitive slow bowler before he suffered stress fractures in his back in 1999-2000. And Fleming had an outstanding

season, displaying the best batting form of his recent career, and his highest score in first-class cricket -274 not out against Sri Lanka.

Fleming, who leaves for England tomorrow and will be available from Saturday until the end of August, will have the opportunity to work on his batting without the worry of captaincy. "I will have the opportunity to share my knowledge and experience with the coach and captain, but my primary job for Yorkshire will be to score runs and take catches." he said. "Right now I feel I'm going

through a growth spurt in terms of my batting development, and I want to take every opportunity to consolidate this. There are still things I want to try and areas of my game I want to advance, and during my time with Yorkshire I will have the forum to do this exclusively." Vettori will temporarily take the

place of the leg spinner Stuart MacGill in the Nottinghamshire team while MacGill plays in Australia's Tests in Darwin and Cairns. Vettori said he was looking

forward to the experience. "I'm excited about my first taste of county cricket and look forward to a change of environment. The workload will also benefit me. When I start with Nottinghamshire I will have had a six-week break since the end of the Sri Lankan tour, and I will then have another break of over a month at the conclusion of my contract before our

Asghar

Bangabandhu National Stadium,

The African qualifier will play in Group D along with Pakistan, West Indies and top qualifier from Europe.

memory's in pretty good working

Woolmer also hinted at provincialism in South African cricket when he said, "Lance, I must tell you that if you live in Cape Town you have more chance of playing for South Africa, and you think I'm joking." Henry, Eric Simons, the national coach, and Smith are all from Cape Town.

As South Africa prepare for what is sure to be a closely contested series in England, Woolmer - who played for Kent and England - said he considered himself a South African though he felt dismayed at the aboutturn in the nation's cricketing fortunes. "I feel more like a masochist at the moment because the state of our sport really hurts me," he said. "I wish knew what was going on in our cricket because at the moment it is a complete mess."

Bend it like Barca!

struck with United would remain "at the disposal" of whoever won the presidential election.

United's announcement came a

day after Beckham acknowledged

for the first time he was ready to leave the club where he has spent his entire career. "I'm contracted to Man United for another two or three years, I think," the England captain, currently on

holiday in the United States, told the Los Angeles Times. "As long as they want me, then I'll stay. But I've never said that I'd never move away from Manchester, and I've never said that I'd end my

Beckham appeared resigned to being sold. "There will always be changes at a team like Man United," he told the LATimes. "With all the big teams there's

always going to be changes

because you look to strengthen the

career there.'

team whether you win three trophies or you win one.' The price tag put on Beckham is only slightly more than United themselves paid for a defender, Rio Ferdinand, a year ago.

in the currently depressed transfer market and reflects Beckham's enormous promotional value. The England captain is as famous for his looks, ever-changing

hairstyles, clothes and links to the

celebrity world of his popstar wife,

But it represents a huge amount

the ex-Spice Girl Victoria Adams, as for his footballing ability.

United pay him a reported 20,000 pounds a week on top of his basic salary just to retain rights to use his image in the club's market-

Whichever club signs him will

expect to recoup a substantial

proportion of their investment

through increased revenue from shirt sales, television deals and other spin-offs. AC Milan's interest was played down earlier this week when the club's president (and Italian prime minister) Silvio Berlusconi said there were "better ways of spending

money other than buying Beckham.' But their neighbours at the San Siro stadium, Inter, have emerged as potential bidders.

Real formally denied making an approach for Beckham in April. But there has been renewed speculation that they intend to snatch the player from under Barcelona's

for Beckham given the illustrious cast of stars already on their books and the fact they are regularly contending for major honours. Barcelona in contrast are struggling to even qualify for next sea-

The transfer moves have been interpreted as a reflection of a

son's UEFA Cup.

Madrid would undeniably repre-

sent a more attractive destination raw financial considerations. Ferguson is determined to bring

> selling Beckham could fund the planned purchase of Brazil's Ronaldinho plus two other top-class

> deterioration in Beckham's relationship with United boss Alex Ferguson.

> United's FA Cup defeat by Arsenal in

A dressing room bust-up after

February ended with Beckham needing stitches in his forehead after being hit by a boot Ferguson had kicked in anger. In April, he was relegated to the substitutes bench for the crucial second leg of the Champions

But Beckham told the LA Times his relationship with Ferguson was not behind the transfer speculation, describing the notoriously shortfused Scot as a "father figure."

League quarter-final against Real

"I've been at Man United for like 12 years now and without him I wouldn't be the player or the person that I am today. "Of course you have your ups and downs with any boss in any job,

lighted with me and him." It seems more likely that United have been driven towards a sale by

but it's just a little bit more high-

the European Cup back to Manchester and knows that, in the current market, the money raised by

FROM PAGE 13 Stadium in Chittagong.

Fatullah Cricket Stadium and BKSP will host Group C matches while Group D matches will be played in

Group A will consist of Australia

Sri Lanka, Zimbabwe and American qualifier while Group B will feature South Africa, England, Asia and Asia Pacific qualifiers.

Henry, Smith

FROM PAGE 13