

Lancs omit

Harbhajan

BBC ONLINE, undated

Thursday.

Lancashire on Friday have termi-

nated Harbhajan Singh's contract after the Indian star failed in his bid

to recover from a long-term finger

injury.

The off-spinner sustained the injury during the World Cup but may

now need an operation on the finger

after failing a fitness test on

cover for Harbhajan, is likely to be

offered a contract to stay on until the

end of the season as the second

Lancashire cricket manager Mike Watkinson said: "It's disap-

pointing that Harbhajan won't be

joining us, but at least a firm deci-

sion has been taken. We wish him

well for the future and trust that he

To see him not win so many times

and then finally come through, well

it's a beautiful relationship he has

with the crowd at Wimbledon and it

Ivanisevic pulled out) and I would

get to miss some classic quotes in

Ivanisevic, also a three-time

Wimbledon runner-up, revealed he

was still suffering from elbow and

shoulder injuries which have

"If I had to play the last match of

"But I do not want to go on court

plagued him throughout his career.

my career. I would like it to be at

and crawl like a pig. If I cannot serve

on grass there is nothing I can do.

Mavbe I can help cut the grass or

plaving Wimbledon would be like

going to Rome and not seeing the

Pope. If I can't play, maybe I will walk

"Coming to London and not

Wimbledon," he told the BBC.

serve some strawberries.

After his Queen's Club defeat,

my newspaper every morning."

"It would be a tremendous loss (if

works both ways," Agassi added.

will soon be fully recovered.

Wimbledon

overseas player with Stuart Law.

Carl Hooper, who was signed to

Dominican Republic's Felix Sanchez (R) leaps over the final hurdle ahead of Jiri Muzik from Czech Republic on way to winning the 400 metres hurdles in Ostrava on June 12.

Karachi still haunts NZ

BBC ONLINE, undated

New Zealand do not want to play any games in Karachi, the scene of a suicide bomb attack in 2002, when they tour Pakistan later this year.

The Black Caps were the last team to tour Pakistan, aborting the second Test in July last year after the explosion outside the team hotel

Last month, New Zealand Cricket (NZC) chief Martin Snedden confirmed the national team would return to the country in November to play five one-day internationals.

But it is clear New Zealand do not wish to return to Karachi.

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chief executive Rameez Raja said: "New Zealand have made a request to this effect and the itinerary is yet to be given final shape

"We can understand the reasons for New Zealand's request.

"But at the same time Bangladesh and South Africa have confirmed they will be playing matches at Karachi this season.

Fighting Federer AFP, Halle

Top-seed Roger Federer recovered from a set down to defeat Spaniard Fernando Vicente 4-6, 6-2, 6-1 and move into the quarterfinals of the 800,000-euro ATP tournament here on Thursday for the fourth consecutive year. The Swiss star now faces

Morocco's Younes El Aynaoui, who had a 6-3, 6-3 win over German Lars Burgsmuller, for a place in the semi-

Slovakia's Karol Kucera, who had lost six first-round matches before this week, advanced with a 6-3. 6-3 win over Frenchman Fabrice Santoro while eighth seed Arnaud Clement defeated Ivan Ljubicic 6-4,

"From the first point on I realized he was on fire," said Federer of Vicente.

"It was difficult to get used to his play. I wasn't quite ready early in the first set and I had enough chances to re-break him, but I didn't manage

"I really wanted to work on my groundstrokes the first few days on grass to become more confident. Today I felt very comfortable from the baseline. I need this. But what I'll try to do in the next match is to play more aggressive with more net

45 Bank

48 "Oh.

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54 "Big

55 Hwy

57 Storm

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13 Indivisible 52 —

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nickname

El Guerrouj fails for first time

Athletics

AFP, Ostrava

Morocco's triple 1500m world champion Hicham El Guerrouj had to settle for second place in his first ever attempt at the 5000m at the IAAF Grand Prix meet here on Thursday.

El Guerrouj, who is aiming at a 1500m-5000m double at the World Championships in Paris in August, led into the home straight where he was passed by Kenyan Stephen Cherono, the Commonwealth Games steeplechase champion.

Cherono clocked 12min 48.81sec, the quickest time of the season and the seventh fastest of all time, with El Guerrouj crossing the line 1.43secs behind. "I didn't expect to beat EI

Guerrouj," said the 20-year-old Cherono. "I ran a great time today at

5000m and I also run the steeplechase but I prefer the 1500m."

El Guerrouj, who last ran a 5000m as a junior in 1992, admitted that he still has some work to do before he is a recognised threat in

"I saw tonight I am not a 5000m runner yet, but I have a good feeling from my first 5000m. I have to work

running the distance.' Another Kenyan, Cornelius Chirchir, won the 1500m in 3:31.17.

on my rhythm and I will continue

Britain's Mark Lewis Francis clinched victory in the men's 100m in a time of 10.07secs, a meet record, to edge out Commonwealth champion Kim Collins, of St Kitts and Nevis, with Dwain Chambers, also of Britain, in third place, in

The third British runner in the race, Jason Gardener could only manage seventh in 10.27. The women's sprint was domi-

nated by the Bahamas' double Commonwealth gold medallist Debbie Ferguson who led from the start to finish in 11.20. Felix Sanchez of the Dominican

Republic showed why he is world champion in the speciality when lifting the 400m hurdles in 48.10. Among the women, America's

world record pole vaulter Tracy Dragila was beaten into second, her vault of 4.58m eclipsed by the 4.70m effort produced by Russia's

Showing Real

FROM PAGE 13

to the fire on Thursday by stating that Beckham, if he did move to the Bernabeu, would play in the central midfield role he covets and not out on the right, where he is usually found at United.

"David Beckham is a footballer in exile. He should be playing in the centre

'When played correctly football is like art, a wonderful painting beautiful piece of music. Beckham is a football artist. He is the best striker of the ball anywhere," said Valdano.

Valdano finally answered one of the main questions concerning Beckham's potential move to Real Madrid: where was he going to play with Luis Figo unlikely to cede his place down the right

By Eugene Sheffer

American 28 Funny-

2 "Love

Story'

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Segal

4 Bawl

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23 Map

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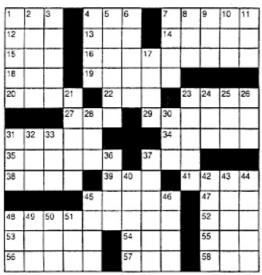
tox VIP

The centre of the pitch is one of the few areas where Real Madrid

have an opening, with someone required to accompany French international Claude Makelele after Flavio Conceicao and Esteban Cambiasso both fell short of expectations during the course of the season.

"If Beckham is coming to play in Spain, I think he would choose Real Madrid over Barcelona." Real's current English midfielder Steve McManaman told Spanish radio station TeleMadridradio on Friday.

However, McManaman may not be on hand to welcome his compatriot at the gates of the Santiago Bernabeu stadium, if Beckham does come to the Spanish capital as the former Liverpool man is one of the players most likely to be leaving Real Madrid this summer.



CRYPTOQUIP

NRK TMPKB TS ZWPH

SBAKPGE X W J JXTM-TBGAPWNTB Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN A LION OR LEOPARD ATTACKS, I SUPPOSE ONE COULD CALL THAT A WILDCAT STRIKE.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: B equals R

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.

Hewitt, Henman escape

Tennis

AFP, London

World number one Lleyton Hewitt kept alive his hopes of an unprecedented fourth successive Queen's Club grass-court title with a hardfought 7-6, 3-6, 6-4 win over Belgium's Dick Norman here on Thursday

Wimbledon champion Hewitt was taken to three sets for the second time in as many days and. iust as he had done on Wednesday against Dutchman Raemon Sluiter. the Australian lost the second set after taking the first on a tie-break. Tim Henman. Queens' runner-

up in three of the last four years, also needed three sets to see off France's Cyril Saulnier 6-7, 6-3, 6-3. Henman, beaten by Hewitt in last year's Wimbledon semi-final, is the lone Briton in the last eight after

American third seed Andy Roddick

defeated Greg Rusedski 6-3, 4-6, 6-

"It's the sign of a good player that you win when things aren't going as well as you like," said Henman.

Andre Agassi completed the quarterfinal line-up when, in a battle of former Wimbledon champions, he thrashed Richard Krajicek 6-1, 6-2 as the light faded.

Hewitt said of 6ft 8 inch lefthander Norman: "He serves as well as anyone I've seen. I don't think anyone at Wimbledon will serve better than that.

"In the second set I played one bad game and he broke me. He's a

flashy player. At times he looked like he was struggling, others he was

hitting cold-winners Hewitt, 22, now faces France's Sebastien Grosjean for a place in the last four.

Grosjean, the sixth seed, beat Australian qualifier and 2002 junior Wimbledon champion Todd Reid 6-

"Sebastien knows how to play on grass. It's not his favourite surface but he's a classy player who can adapt his game," Hewitt said.

Agassi, 33, was happy to dispose of Krajicek in quick time. "I had to be sharp right from the

get and it feels great to have done that against a player like Richard." Dutchman Krajicek is known for his big serves and is not an ideal

opponent to face late in the day. But Agassi said: "Fortunately the ones (serves) I couldn't see were the ones he missed.

Meanwhile Roddick, 20, said of his win: "I felt I played pretty well apart from a couple of service He also unleashed a serve timed

at 147 miles per hour. Not that Roddick, billed by some as the next new American Grand Slam winner, was concerned. "It's a number. I'd rather have

gone through the match without being broken. That's the only service statistic that matters.' After beating Roddick at Wimbledon last year, Rusedski was

sidelined for nine months with a

variety of injuries ranging from foot

Rusedski, 29, beaten in the first round at the French Open, said his

viewed in the context of his fitness

"It was only my seventh match of the season so to come within a couple of balls against a guy ranked number seven in the world, I've got to be pretty pleased," the bigserving left-hander explained.

Roddick, coached by Brad Gilbert who previously supervised American Taylor Dent in the quarterfinals after his compatriot's 7-6, 6-4 win over Dutch fifth seed Sjeng

Paying tribute to his coach Roddick said: "It's been a swift kick in the butt, something fresh and



They retained him for the next

Shane Warne, meanwhile, took

For those still tempted to rush to

match in Delhi and the young

Antiguan clattered 192 not out.

Britain's Tim Henman hits a return during his match against Frenchman Cyril Saulnier at the Stella Artois Championships in London on June 12.

Magic Johnson!

to neck.

Cricket

REUTERS, London

Richard Johnson, by any standards, enjoyed a magical Test debut.

Only a dozen Englishmen before him, Jim Laker and Alex Bedser among them, had taken six wickets or more in an innings first time out.

Nobody will ever be able to take the memory away from him. Whether the right-arm Somerset seamer, however, can translate his Chester-le-Street fairytale against Zimbabwe into a significant international sojourn remains to be seen.

The signs, despite his six for 33 in 12 overs and two wickets with his first four balls, are not promising. Nasser Hussain has repeatedly

bemoaned the lack of out-of-theordinary players in the English game, and particularly the dearth of bowlers blessed with express speed or vicious, wrist-induced spin. Johnson, burdened by regular

injuries which delayed his debut for eight years, swings and seams the ball at a good lick, making him a handful in overcast English condi-

He also bowls consistently stump to stump, asking questions with every delivery

It is unlikely, however, that he would be as menacing in Colombo, in Sydney, Islamabad or Delhi. And, by the end of the second

ways without a change in action, he took eight wickets for 84 in the first ond against England in 1972. That performance earned him a

Wisden cricketer of the year accolade but the Western Australian only

played six Tests in all, spanning a Test, even the outclassed Zimbabweans had begun to read paltry seven months. the way he was shaping to bowl an inswinger before drifting it back into need not be terminal

Johnson conceded 67 wicketless runs in the second innings while James Anderson and Steve Harmison, two of Hussain's 'specials', shared eight wickets.

certainly never guaranteed future Narendra Hirwani would vouch

be a mixed blessing. They have

Great debut performances can

In January 1988 Hirwani, a callow Indian youth barely known beyond the borders of Madhya Pradesh, took a record 16 wickets for 136 in his first Test and that against the mighty West Indians on helpful surface

His eight for 61 and eight for 75, however, are now remembered more as a statistical oddity. Hirwani, crushed by the burden of expectation, played 17 Tests in all, the last a wicketless outing in 1996 against South Africa.

Australia Bob Massie suffered an even worse fate

Unplayable on his debut at Lord's and swinging the ball both innings and eight for 53 in the sec-

Similarly, bad starts to a career

Graham Gooch got a pair on his

one for 150 in his first bowl against India and one for 335 in his first four debut against Australia at Edgbaston in 1975. The second innings before he began to suggest dismissal, caught behind off a Jeff the form which has made him the Thomson thunderbolt pitching just greatest wicket-taking spinner of all

> judgement after a single appearance, horrible or magical, Marvan Atapattu must rank as the best cautionary tale of all. He first appeared against India in November 1990 at Chandigarh and scored 0 and 0. Dropped for almost two years, he returned against Australia in Colombo and managed 0 (a first-

> > faced India again in Ahmedabad and made 0 (10 deliveries) and 0 (seven deliveries).

> > the mental durability of rice paper. But, after another three years in

> > peared for yet another try captain and has scored five Test

Today he is Sri Lanka's one-day

Sharapova silently into last eight



AFP, Birmingham

Maria Sharapova, the leggy Russian blonde whose on-court screams have driven opponents and officials to distraction, moved quietly into the quarterfinals of the WTA tournament here on Thursday

The 16-vear-old from Siberia swept past 11th seed Marie-Gaianeh Mikaelian of Switzerland 6-0, 7-5 to follow on from her second round win over world number 23 Nathalie Dechy on Wednesday.

"I had it in my mind to be guiet," said the girl who has climbed 407 ranking places to 125th in just over 12 months and now faces compatriot Elena Dementieva in the last eight where a win would put her into the top 100. "My dad said I played a much

better game. I played really well out there. I raised the level of my game which is good for me because it shows I can compete with these players. At 5ft 11in, Sharapova has been

followed around the courts here by an army of photographers and autograph hunters and she didn't let them down as she wrapped up the first set in just 30 minutes. Her Swiss opponent, ranked 34th in the world, rallied after a

five-minute toilet break and had

three break points at 2-2 in the

second set before dropping her

serve in the 11th game.

Sharapova, hailed the 'new Kournikova' for her film-star looks, produced some stunning forehand winners from the baseline and has dropped her serve just once since reaching the main draw.

Thailand's Tamarine Tanasugarn defeated sixth seeded American Lisa Raymond to reach the quarterfinals and gain revenge for her 2000 final loss here.

Tanasugarn, 26, who has reached the last 16 of Wimbledon in each of the last five years, wrapped a 6-2, 6-2 victory in just 54 minutes and now faces either number two seed Eleni Daniilidou. of Greece, or Slovakia's Tina Pisnik for a place in Saturday's semifinals.



MARIA SHARAPOVA

baller) and 1 (off two balls). Ignored for another year-and-a-half, he

RICHARD JOHNSON

short of a length and seaming away,

must rank among the greatest

runs over the next 20 years and 118

with scores of four and three in his

first two innings against India in

Bangalore towards the end of 1974.

The selectors, however, saw some

thing they liked in those seven runs.

That did not stop a flow of 8,900

Viv Richards, meanwhile, began

deliveries of all time.

By right, he should have been buried there and then as a man with

the wilderness, Atapattu reap-

double centuries, a record only bettered by Don Bradman, Walter Hammond and Javed Miandad.