

Border contemplates Ashes hat-trick



LONDON, Apr 13: Allan Border attempts to add an Ashes hat-trick triumph to his mounting personal achievements in the English cricket season starting on Wednesday, reports Reuter.

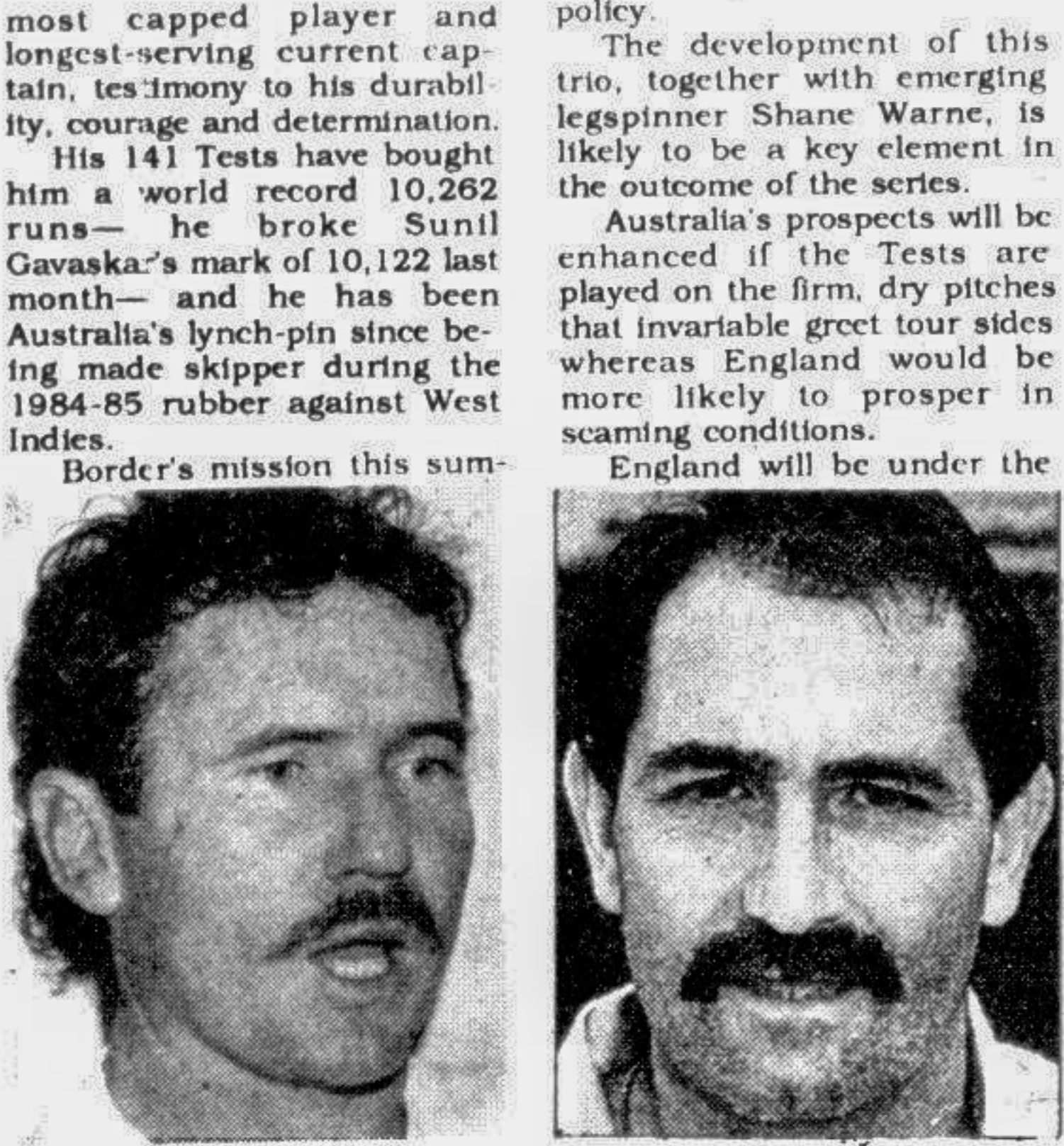
Australian captain Border is making what seems certain to be his last tour of this country, giving added dimension to his bid for a third consecutive Test series victory over England.

Border's Australians regained the Ashes in 1989 and retained them in 1990-91 and the 1993 edition of international cricket's oldest and most compelling contest will be the money-spinning highlight of the summer.

Advance ticket sales from four of the six Test venues—Old Trafford, Lord's, Edgbaston and The Oval—show the appeal of the Ashes battle is greater than ever, despite England's abject tour performances on the Indian subcontinent.

Australia arrive fresh from their own recent Test series disappointments, having lost 2-1 at home to West Indies and been held 1-1 in New Zealand, but there is nothing like the prospect of a tilt at England to rekindle Border's ambitions.

Border, who will be 38 midway through the tour, is Test cricket's leading scorer,



ALLAN BORDER

most capped player and longest-serving current captain, testimony to his durability, courage and determination.

His 141 Tests have bought him a world record 10,262 runs—he broke Sunil Gavaskar's mark of 10,122 last month—and he has been Australia's lynch-pin since being made skipper during the 1984-85 rubber against West Indies.

Border's mission this summer is to win with a touring team chosen partly with an eye to the future.

Australia have never been reluctant to thrust young talent into their squad and the choice of three pace bowlers with only four Test caps between them—Wayne Holdsworth, Paul Reiffel and all-rounder Frensdon Julian—confirms that

policy. The development of this trio, together with emerging legspinner Shane Warne, is likely to be a key element in the outcome of the series.

Australia's prospects will be enhanced if the Tests are played on the firm, dry pitches that invariably greet tour sides whereas England would be more likely to prosper in seaming conditions.

England will be under the little doubt the England committee and team manager Keith Fletcher will want him to do so.

But Gooch has made it clear he will not tour again, leaving England to line up a successor—vice-captain Alec Stewart and opener Michael Atherton are leading candidates—ahead of their next assignment in West Indies early in 1994.

Ideally, England's future skipper would be vice captain in the Ashes Series, providing a measure of grooming and continuity before being pitched into the Caribbean cauldron.

The captaincy is one aspect of a potentially fascinating summer in which the premier domestic competition, the country championship, will be decided for the first time entirely by four-day matches.

English cricket chiefs opted for the new format instead of a mix of games over three and four days in the hope it would breed better quality Test players.

The county season begins on Wednesday with the traditional round of games between county and university teams while the championship—Essex defend the title—starts at the end of this month.

Border's Australians arrive on April 25, their itinerary including three one-day internationals in May before the first Test at Old Trafford starting on June 3.

GRAHAM GOOCH

Graham Gooch, captain in three of those Tests, said he is ready to continue the job he started in 1990 and there is



Awestruck teenagers call out to Michael Chang and his brother Carl during a side-change at the Salem Open in Hong Kong on Apr 12. Hong Kong has claimed the Chinese-American as an adopted son and he has become a sex symbol among young Hong Kong girls. The brothers lost their doubles match to South Africans Gary Muller and Neil Broad 6-3, 3-6, 6-4.

OK Sports cricket

Sports Reporter

Bashaboo Sunflower Sporting Club beat Banani Youth Club by three wickets in the OK Sports Cup cricket tournament at the Azimur Community Centre ground yesterday, says a press release.

Battling first Banani Club were skittled out for a paltry 77 in only 14.3 overs with Hassan Mehdi topscoring with 19.

Sajib and Tulip bagged three and two wickets respectively for Sunflower Sporting.

Sunflower Sporting cruised past their opponents' total making 78 in 16.4 overs with three wickets to spare.

Russel topscored with 25 while Rashed made 14.

Ronny and Tushar claimed four and three wickets respectively for Sunflower Sporting Club.

Kashem Bhuiyan leads in chess

Sports Reporter

Abul Kashem Bhuiyan with full seven points from as many matches yesterday led the table of the ongoing Dhaka Metropolitan qualifying chess for the forthcoming national championship yesterday at the National Sports Council chess room.

Kashem beat AHM Ruhul Amin in the seventh-round encounter yesterday.

Kazi Mahubb Alzal, who beat former national champion Rezaul Huq has six and a half points.

Those who have collected six points each are Ruhul Quddus, Mujibur Rahman and Tojazzal Hossain Tipu.

Khorshed Alam, Arifuzzaman Sikder, Simanul Islam, Abdullah Al-Rakib and Monir Hossain each have five and a half points.

Those with five points each are Rezaul Huq, Jahangir Ahmed, Shaikh Shahadat Hossain, Ali Amjad, Mizanur Rahman, Mehdi Hassan, Waliullah Patwari, Enayet, Inbal Belal, Arman Monir, Shahidullah, Omar Faruk, Enamul Bahar, Fakhruil Islam, Md Sharif, Farhad Mannan and Shaikh Aslam.

Bangla New Year handball meet

Sports Reporter

To mark the Bangla New Year 1400 a handball tournament will begin from April 20 at the Outer Stadium under the joint aegis of the Bangladesh Handball Federation and the Dhaka Divisional Sports Association, says a press release.

The top six teams of the First Division and the champions and runners-up teams of the Second Division league will be eligible to take part in the tourney.

Concerned teams have been asked to contact the Federation office between 4:00 to 7:00 pm daily.

Two Bulgarians fail drug tests

LONDON, Apr 13: Two Bulgarian medalists from last month's world indoor track and field championships tested positive for banned drugs, the sports world governing body said Tuesday, reports AP.

"An athlete is not considered guilty of a doping offense until the second sample tests positive.

Bulgaria bank on Stoichkov

PARIS, Apr 13: Bulgaria coach Dimitar Penev is praying his volatile striker Hrsto Stoichkov recovers his goal touch in time for Wednesday's World Cup qualifier against Austria in Vienna, reports AFP.

France's victory in the Austrian capital last month has put the talented Bulgarians under pressure to match that performance if they are to take one of the two qualifying places from Group Six.

And while Penev and Stoichkov have clashed bitterly in public in the past, the coach knows how important the Barcelona forwards knack of scoring crucial goals is to his team's chances of reaching the United States.

That's why the sharp decline in Stoichkov's form recently will be giving him nightmares.

After starting the season with a burst of 15 goals in 13 league games, Stoichkov has managed only three in his last 13 for the Catalan club.

Austria, having lost twice to France, must beat the Bulgarians to keep alive any chance of making the trip to the United States. They were unlucky to lose to a single goal from French striker Jean-Pierre Papin last month and they could give Bulgaria problems.

Italy expect to go clear at the top of Group One for the first time when they take on Estonia in Trieste.

Coach Arrigo Sacchi is expected to stick with the side that thrashed Malta 6-1 last month, which means Sampdoria's Roberto Mancini is likely to play behind a front two of Lazio's Giuseppe Signori and Alessandro Mellini, of on-form Parma.

European champions Denmark will also be going for goals at home to lowly Latvia as they try to leapfrog the



HRISTO STOICHKOV

Republic of Ireland and join Spain at the top of Group 3.

But the Danes have been dealt a bitter blow by a serious injury to Flemming Povlsen.

The Borussia Dortmund striker, whose winner against Spain last month put the Danish campaign back on the rails, is out for up to six months after tearing knee ligaments.

Coach Richard Moeller Nielsen won't be too concerned for the Latvia match but the tireless running of Povlsen will be sorely missed in the critical match in Dublin against the Republic in two weeks time.

Wednesday's match will mean an exhausting four games in the space of eight days for the big Danish keeper Peter Schmeichel, who is hoping to guide Manchester United to the English Premier League title as well as helping Denmark to the United States.

He was on duty for both United's eastern weekend matches and flew to Denmark straight after the 1-0 win at Coventry on Monday. He will be back on club duty at Old Trafford against Chelsea on Saturday.

In the same group, Lithuania entertain Albania but neither side has any realistic chance of qualifying.

Wales, whose campaign has been revived by a 2-0 win over Group Four leaders Belgium, will be hoping Cyprus can steal a point from Romania in Bucharest. But the Romanians were comfortable 4-1 winners in Cyprus and, with the likes of George Hagi, they are unlikely to slip up against the Cypriots.

Group Five sees Luxembourg, who have yet to win a point, entertain favourites Russia.

The group has been weakened by the exclusion of seeds Yugoslavia, and Greece and Russia look certain to qualify.

Ferguson heaves sigh of relief

LONDON, Apr 13: Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson heaved a huge sigh of relief on Monday after remaining one point clear of Aston Villa at the head of the English Premier League.

He admitted: "We've not been good enough to cope at this level and we won't change things around at this stage."

"I've never known anything so swift, savage and comprehensive as our decline in the last three months.

However, Palace manager Steve Coppell was more cautious about his side's chances of avoiding the drop after second-half goals from Simon Rodger, Eric Young, Chris Armstrong and Chris Coleman had eased the London club's worries.

"There are still a few twists and turns to go yet before we are safe, but I can see the finishing line coming a bit closer for us," said the ex-England winger.

"I feel sympathy for Lennie because it's hard in a team's first season in the top division. I got away with it in my first year because my chairman made funds available to me for players."

Nottingham Forest manager Brian Clough is set for at least another season in the Premier League according to Tottenham coach Doug Livermore, who made his judgement after seeing Spurs lose 2-1 to Clough's side.

"Forest are still in with a chance of survival," said Livermore. "The win will give them a tremendous lift. If they hadn't beaten us, it would have been uphill all the way. But now there is light at the end of the tunnel."

Clough is demanding Forest win their remaining games against Wimbledon, Arsenal and Ipswich away and at home to Sheffield United.

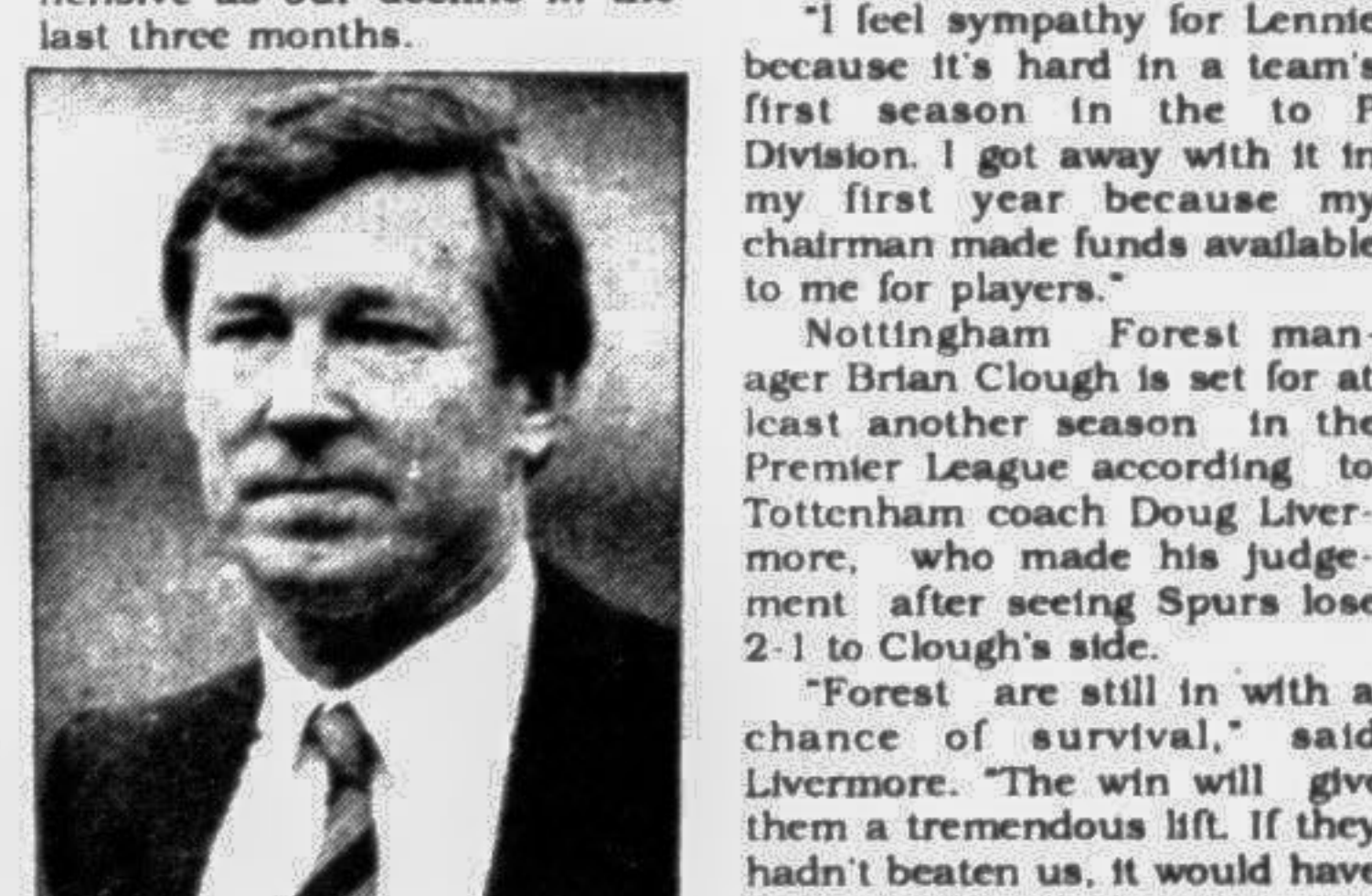
"A hell of a lot can still happen," he said. "I've overcome some hurdles before and I'll be around to overcome some more in the future."

that United slip up. It's as simple as that. But we are confident."

Meanwhile, Middlesbrough manager Lennie Lawrence accepted that relegation was a near certainty after his side's 4-1 thrashing at Crystal Palace.

He admitted: "We've not been good enough to cope at this level and we won't change things around at this stage."

"I've never known anything so swift, savage and comprehensive as our decline in the last three months."



ALEX FERGUSON

"All the injuries we had after Christmas started it and we've never been able to recover."

"We haven't the players capable of doing it in the Premier League and there have got to be changes in personnel which I will make in the summer."

"Otherwise the slump will continue next season, because even against the likes of Barnsley and Peterborough we will let in goals defending like we did today."

"Palace have the experience to get out of trouble, but we haven't. Their players have done it all before."

Sanchez pushes Seles to limit

COLUMBUS, Apr 13: After splitting the first two sets, top-ranked Monica Seles won a tiebreaker Monday night to defeat Arantxa Sanchez Vicario in the featured match of the Big Bear Tennis Challenge exhibition, reports AP.

Sanchez Vicario, ranked No. 3 in the world, then teamed with Billie Jean King to defeat Seles and Virginia Wade 6-3 in doubles. Wade had beaten King 6-3, in a senior singles match to open the third annual charity exhibition.

Andre Agassi will play John McEnroe and Bjorn Borg meets Vitas Gerulaitis in Tuesday night's men's singles matches. Agassi and Gerulaitis will team to play McEnroe and Borg in doubles.

Seles, winner of four of the last five Grand Slam events, dominated the opening set of her singles match with Sanchez Vicario, who was coming off a victory at Amelia Island, Fla., on Sunday. It was Seles' first action since she was sidelined with a flu virus on Feb 21.

Leading 3-2 and at deuce in the sixth game, Seles ripped a service return down the line for the advantage, then broke service when Sanchez Vicario double faulted. Seles held her serve to go up 5-2, then broke again to take the first set 6-2.

But Sanchez Vicario had two service breaks on the way to a quick 4-0 lead, winning the second set 6-2 and sending the exhibition into a 12-point tiebreak.

Trailing 1-2, Seles won the next four points, twice nailing winners on two-handed backhand passing shots.

Seles closed out the match by whistling a two-handed forehand down the line for the 7-3 victory.

In the night's first match, Wade won four of the first five games and was never threatened. With King trailing 1-4, love 40, a spectator yelled, "Come on, Billie Jean!" King shouted back, "I'm doing my best," as the crowd broke up.

Hong Kong favourite Michael Chang also had few problems in his first round match, defeating Australian qualifier Jason Stoltenberg in straight sets.

Chang, world number nine and seeded third here, breezed to a 6-3, 6-4 victory.

Fourth seed Amos Mansdorf of Israel was stretched to a first set tie-break before brushing aside Canada's top player Chris Pridham.

Mansdorf, losing finalist at the Salem Open in Osaka a fortnight ago, won 7-6 (9-7), 6-3 to secure his second round berth.

Other seeds in action, Tuesday, also safely made it into the second round. American Brad Gilbert, number five, crushed Russian Andrei Cherkasov 6-2, 6-3.

Another American David Wheaton, seeded seventh here, also had an easy time in ward-

Sampras blasts Simian off court

HONG KONG, Apr 13: New world number one Pete Sampras dismissed Frenchman Stephane Simian in the first round of the 300,000 US dollars Hong Kong Open here Tuesday, reports AP.

Sampras needed only 65 minutes to reach the next round, leading a charge of the seeded players—fellow Americans Michael Chang and Brad Gilbert included—into the second round.

The 21-year-old Sampras, winner of last week's Japan Open, broke the bespectacled Simian in the third and seventh games to take the first set.

Adapting well to the warm conditions and serving powerfully, Sampras had the bold Simian floundering at the net with pin-point backhand passing shots.

Seeded second here, Sampras needed only one service break in the second set to wrap up the match and make a dream debut in Hong Kong.

"It is a beautiful city," said Sampras, who Monday took over the top ATP slot from fellow-American Jim Courier.

Sampras, who will meet Germany's David Prinosil in the second round, was troubled slightly by a stiff back on court.

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PETE SAMPRAS

ing off the challenge of China's number one Xia Jiaping, winning 6-3, 6-1.

Australian Todd Woodbridge, a semi-finalist here last year, overcame Patrick Kuhn of Germany 6-0, 1-6, 6-1 in a scrappy match which saw fortunes fluctuate.

Woodbridge, who got off to a blistering start looked in danger of conceding the match after suffering a mid-match crisis.

But the 22-year-old Australian Davis Cup player recovered his composure to blitz Kuhn in the deciding set and enter the second round where he will meet Chang.

Woodbridge defeated Chang last week in three sets at the Japan Open in Tokyo.

Old gives way to new

CHARLOTTE, North Carolina, Apr 13: The opening day of the 275,000 US men's clay court championships was tinged with nostalgia on Monday as two 33-year-old left handers with fading careers played matches on the stadium court, reports Reuter.

Tim Wilkison, a local favourite who retired from the tour two years ago, gave up 13 years in age to his 20-year-old opponent, qualifier Michael Joyce, the unranked Wilkison was given a wildcard into the 32-man field but lacked speed and firepower against his fellow-American, losing 6-1, 6-4.

In a later match, 1990 French Open champion Andres Gomez of Ecuador, also 33 but still the owner of a world ranking of 217, was also a loser. Gomez was beaten by 27-year-old, 100th-ranked Claudio Mezzadri of Switzerland, 6-3, 7-5.

Gomez never found his rhythm and missed chances to close out the second set when he squandered a 4-2 lead. Mezzadri pounded heavy topspin winners to keep Gomez off balance but needed three match points to close out the

The day's only upset came when fourth-seeded American Jeff Tarango, ranked 69th, was beaten by Horacio de la Pena of Argentina, ranked 140th, 7-6 (7-5), 6-1.

Second seeded Todd Martin of the United States and third-seeded Jaime Yzaga of Peru advanced easily. Martin beat Ctslav Dosedel of the Czech Republic 6-3, 6-2 while Yzaga defeated Sergio Cortes of Chile 6-2, 6-2.

Wilkison could hold serve only once in the first set against Joyce, ranked 363rd, after trailing 3-0. Despite his trademark willingness to lunge and dive for every shot, he could not keep up with Joyce, who took the first set 6-1.

The younger American appeared to relax in the second set and Wilkison, once nicknamed "Dr. Dirt," briefly gained momentum. But again he failed to capitalise, missing four break points against Joyce in the fourth game.

A lapse of concentration cost Joyce a break in the sixth game, but he quickly broke back.

"I definitely did let up in the second set," said Joyce.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	DOWN	11 Prepare the salad
1 Mermaids'	1 Close-	17 Afternoon
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16 Hairstyle	5 Listens	Denver
for	attent-	27 Japanese
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18 Swamp	6 Black bird	29 Fishing
20 Feels	7 Practical	pole
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teacher	ARISTA TRACES	Spenser:
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39 Malay	ADAPTS ALEXIA	50 Bank acct.
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	Saturday's answer 8-17	

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CRYPTOQUIP

P K V B T C R V W C G T X Q
V C Y Y Q H G R P B H G H
V B H G H ' R X P K Q Q .

V B H G H ' R X P C W ' V

Saturday's Cryptoquip: WHEN TROUT FISHERMAN WROTE A NOVEL, THE NARRATIVE WAS STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS.

Today's Cryptoquip clue: P equals W

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.