

Cricketphile Major

LONDON, May 2: Cricket was the first thing on John Major's mind as he left 10 Downing Street for the last time Friday as prime minister, reports AP. Major, swept from power by Labour's landslide victory over the Conservatives in Thursday's general elections, shifted his priorities quickly. "I hope that (Norma (his wife) and I will be able with the children to go to the Oval in time for lunch and some cricket this afternoon," he said. Major is an enthusiastic supporter of the English county cricket side Surrey, which played the British Universities in the Benson and Hedges Cup at the Oval in south London — one of the most storied cricket grounds in the world. Major is also a lifelong fan of the soccer club Chelsea, which will play later this month against Middlesbrough in the prestigious FA Cup final at Wembley.

Seb Coe suffers setback

LONDON, May 2: Two-time Olympic champion Sebastian Coe lost his seat in Parliament as the Conservative Party was swept from power in Britain's general election, reports AP. Coe lost his seat in the south England constituency of Falmouth and Camborne by 2,688 votes to Labour Party candidate Candice Atherton. The 40-year-old Coe won the seat in 1992 by a small margin of just 3,267 votes but was sent packing Thursday in the Labour Party's biggest-ever election triumph. Coe's next defeat could be on the track. His 800-metre world record of 1:41.73 — set in Florence, Italy, in 1981, and the oldest standing record in track and field — is in danger of finally being broken. Wilson Kipketer, the sensational Kenyan-born runner representing Denmark, is likely to claim the record this year. At the World Indoor Championships in Paris in March, Kipketer twice shattered the indoor 800 mark, winning the final in 1:42.67. Last September in Rieti, Italy, Kipketer came within 0.1 seconds of Coe's outdoor mark. Coe, the world's dominant middle distance runner of the 1980s, won gold medals in the 1,500 metres at the 1980 and 1984 Olympics. He won silver in the 800 at both games.

Aussie-World XI ODI May 11

HONG KONG, May 2: Indian star Rohan Gavaskar and South Africa's Lance Klusener are the latest cricketers to be signed up for a Rest-of-the-World XI to take on Australia in a one-day here, organisers announced today, reports AP. The Australians have chosen Hong Kong as the unusual venue for their final warm-up before their Ashes tour in England and will take on the World XI here on May 11. Mark Taylor and his team will be playing in the first-ever one-day international to be held in the territory. After the Sunday game the Aussies will hop on a plane for England. Cricket World International director Papu Butani said: "The World XI comprises a host of fine cricketers and is seemingly without any perceivable weakness. Among the international performers on show I am especially interested to see how the young Gavaskar fares against one of the best bowling attacks in the world. He has come of age and experts believe he has some of his father's (Sunil) considerable talents." Klusener, the powerful all-rounder, will join his Natal and South African teammate Shaun Pollock in the one-day game at the tiny Kowloon Cricket Ground. Among the other Rest-of-the-World team will be gifted batsmen Sanjay Manjrekar and Vinod Kamble of India, Pakistani stars Basit Ali, Aaqib Javed and Aamir Sohail and another South African Brian McMillan. "This will be the last warm-up game for the Australian players," said organiser Brian Catton, executive director of Cricket World International. "These sort of games are important in terms of bonding and team spirit before such an important series as the Ashes."



World champion Garri Kasparov (L) holds the white hat to signify that he will have the first move against the IBM Deep Blue computer during a press conference in New York on May 1.

Peru puzzle Colombia

BARRAQUILLA, Colombia, May 2: Colombia suffered a shock 1-0 defeat at home to Peru on Wednesday, their third successive loss in the South American World Cup qualifying competition, report agencies. It was also their second consecutive defeat in the Metropolitan Stadium in Barrquilla, where they had believed themselves to be invincible, and the second time in three games they had failed to score. Jose Ferreda scored the winner with a spectacular long-distance shot to keep Peru well in the hunt for a place in France next year. Colombia goalkeeper Farid Mondragon, blamed for the goals which allowed Argentina and Paraguay to beat Colombia in the last two games, was again at fault, throwing the ball straight to the Peruvian striker. Colombia's place in France appeared a formality as they took a runaway lead in the nine-team group last year but they are now six points behind leaders Paraguay and only one ahead of third-placed Argentina. Worse still, with 17 points from 10 games, they are in danger of being caught by the chasing pack of Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru and Uruguay, who all have 13 points. The top four teams qualify. Colombia, with striker Faustino Asprilla serving the first of a two-game suspension, were rarely allowed to settle by Peru and went to pieces after falling behind in the 61st minute. They were jeered off the pitch by the 30,000 crowd who chanted 'ole' as the Peruvians passed the ball around. Argentina won the cushion they were looking for two minutes later. Bert fed Veron, who passed forward to Crespo. Crespo ran a few meters and fired. Ibarra saved his first shot but couldn't hold on to the ball and Crespo's second attempt found the net. At the end of the first half Argentina relaxed, but after the interval they again dominated. Both Veron and Crespo had chances as the Ecuadorian defenders gave the hosts plenty of room. Ecuador's attack was enlivened by the substitution of Cruz for Chala in the 65th minute. Minutes later Hurtado saw an attempt fly just wide. Almost immediately, he set up Ecuador's lone goal with a cross that Argentine defender Almeida failed to clear, leaving Aguinaga to fire it across in the 69th minute. Away in Santiago, Chilean Ivan Zamorano scored five times in a 6-0 rout of Venezuela on Tuesday.

Milan seek inspiration

MILAN, May 2: Roberto Baggio and AC Milan are counting on the 'Poland effect' to raise team morale for Sunday's game against Udinese and their bid for a UEFA Cup place next season, reports AP. Italy's reigning champions are languishing 11th in the table and six points adrift of the UEFA zone, currently occupied by Roy Hodgson's Inter Milan, Sampdoria, Lazio and Bologna. But the likes of Baggio will look to reap the benefits of the morale-boosting 3-0 victory over Poland — secured with the help of four Milan players. Baggio, who scored Italy's third after coming on for Gianfranco Zola in the second-half, has been struggling since December to convince club coach Arrigo Sacchi that he deserves a first team place. "Now I hope that things will go better for me at Milan Baggio said at their training ground near the Swiss border. "Getting back into the national team and then scoring a goal was just wonderful, the feelings were indescribable. "However, I'm over all that now, and I have to concentrate on the game against Udinese." Baggio, along with Paolo Maldini, Alessandro Costacurta and Demetrio Albertini, were all in inspired form at Naples on Wednesday night. Milan vice-president Adriano Galliani said: "I didn't see the match, but everyone has told me that Baggio, Maldini, Albertini and Costacurta all had a really great game. "And if Baggio returns feeling happy and relaxed after his experience with the national team, then that can only be to Milan's benefit. "We always knew we had champions in our team," he said. "All we need for next year is a few new recruits and we'll be a great side once again, after what has been a negative season for us." Galliani was wary of commenting on the widely expected return of Fabio Capello, who coached Milan to four league titles and the European Cup in five seasons before leaving for Real Madrid. But he ruled nothing out by saying: "Capello? A year ago, we won the championship and he left. We're professionals and we're not going to let all this speculation affect us." Sacchi recently made it clear that his future here would only be decided after this season ended, even though he has a contract until June 1998.



Major General M Anwar Hossain, vice president of Kurmitola Golf Club, teeing off at the Benson and Hedges golf tournament at the club yesterday.

Ahsanullah wins Benson & Hedges golf title

Major General Ahsanullah won the Benson & Hedges Golf Classic tournament 1997 after an exciting tie-break with a net score of 69, at the Kurmitola Golf Club yesterday. Brig Zahid Latif took the runner-up trophy, says a press release. 202 amateur golfers took part in the 18 hole competition which was tied off in the morning by Vice president of Kurmitola Golf, Major General Anwar Hossain. Farzana Islam took the honours among the ladies, while Mrs Jung Sik Park became the runner-up. Tanvir Malik emerged winner in boys group, while Shahhan Rahman was runner-up. The complete results are: Winner — Major General Ahsanullah Runner-up — Brigadier Zahid Latif Ladies winner — Ms Farzana Islam Ladies runner-up — Mrs Jung Sik Park Best Gross — Shawkat-Uz-Zaman 2nd Best Gross — Saber Afzal 2nd Best Gross (Ladies) — Mrs Negum Koreda 2nd Best Net (Front 9) — M H Samad Best Net (Back 9) — Farruque Ahmed Nearest to Pin — Ming Tseng Sang Longest Drive — Nasir M Khan Senior winner — Major Gen S Amir Ali Junior winner — Tanvir Malik Runner runner-up — Shahhan Rahman

Stich sets for final year

HAMBURG, May 2: Michael Stich, the 1991 Wimbledon champion and veteran German Davis Cup player, said Friday he will retire at the end of the season because of a worn-out shoulder, reports AP. Stich, 28, climbed to the world No 2 ranking in 1994 but now is ranked 26th. Since 1990, he has won 18 singles titles and nine in doubles, including an Olympic gold medal with Boris Becker at the 1992 Barcelona Games. Stich beat Becker in the 1991 Wimbledon final, won the 1992 Grand Slam cup and captured the 1993 ATP World Championship with a victory over Pete Sampras. But he has been sliding since 1994, when he lost the US Open final against Andre Agassi. Stich said he would enter this year's French Open and Wimbledon before ending his career in Germany's Davis Cup relegation series against Mexico in September. Stich said he would enter this year's French Open and Wimbledon before ending his career in Germany's Davis Cup relegation series against Mexico in September.

Yashin's statue unveiled

MOSCOW, May 2: A monument of former Soviet soccer star Lev Yashin (1929-1990), recognised as one of the world's greatest ever goalkeepers, was unveiled here today, reports AP. Yashin played 79 matches for the national team and is the only keeper to ever win the European-footballer-of-the-year award. The monument stands near Moscow's Luzhki Sports Complex.

Baggio back with vigour

LONDON, May 2: It could be Roberto Baggio all over again, reports AP. Baggio, whose goals sent Italy into the 1994 World Cup final, scored on his return to the national side in a 3-0 qualifying victory Wednesday night over Poland. Romario, meanwhile, hit for three goals in Brazil's 4-0 win against Mexico in exhibition play. Both players, left off their national teams for the better part of two years, have been recalled 15 months before the 1998 finals in France. The last time they met, Romario's Brazil beat Baggio's Italy on a penalty shootout in the 1994 final in Pasadena, Calif. The signs are that all of soccer's big powers will be returning for next year's World Cup in France on top form. And Romario and Baggio could be among them. "I really hope to remain on the squad," Baggio said after the victory over Poland in Naples that maintained Italy's four-point lead in Group Two. "Coach Cesare Maldini knows that if he wants, he can continue to call on me." "I was already happy just to be here, but scoring that goal just made it that much more special," Baggio said after his 25th goal in 46 international appearances. For the second game in a row, the 31-year-old Romario linked up with Ronaldo, the 20-year-old superstar who was supposed to be his replacement. The young Barcelona striker had a standout game against the Mexicans and set up Romario's third goal with a defense-splitting pass. With Germany and Sweden powering back into qualifying contention after shaky starts, Romania opening up an eight-point lead in Group Eight, Spain and the Netherlands atop their groups and Bulgaria also in contention, all eight quarter-finalists from 1994 are likely to make it to World Cup '98. The Germans, who tied two of their first three games, downed Group Nine leaders Ukraine 2-0 with goals from Oliver Bierhoff and Mario Basler to jump into second place, only a point behind and with a game in hand. Sweden, who had lost two games in a row, became the first team to score against Group Four leaders Scotland this season and won 2-1. The Swedes are six points behind the Scots but have two games in hand and have one point to make up on second place Austria, who scored a 2-0 victory over fourth place Estonia. Romania edged Ireland 1-0 in Bucharest for their sixth Group Eight victory in a row and look likely to become the first European team to qualify. The Irish, who made it to the last two World Cups, have little chance of qualifying this time after slipping to fourth behind Lithuania, who moved up to third behind Romania and Macedonia by beating Liechtenstein. Spain stayed atop Group Six



ROBERTO BAGGIO

many in last year's European Championship, have only four points from four games and must win their next five to stand any chance of catching them. The Dutch romped to a 6-0 victory at San Marino and lead Group Seven by three points from Belgium, who scored a 3-1 victory at Turkey on three goals by Luis Oliveira. It looks like the top spot is a simple race between the Netherlands and Belgium, who face each other in Rotterdam on Sept 6. Israel and Russia both won Wednesday to stay first and second in Group Five ahead of Bulgaria, which didn't have a game. The Russians cruised to a 3-0 victory over Luxembourg and are in a strong position to go top. But Israel, which downed Cyprus 2-0, now have to travel to Russia (June 8) and then Bulgaria (Aug 2) — by which time the positions could be the other way round. Bulgaria's next game June 8 is at home to minnow Luxembourg, who have lost all five games. Despite winning the European Championship in 1992, Denmark have only made it to the World Cup once, in 1986. That means some of the world's top players, like goalkeeper Peter Schmeichel and striker Brian Laudrup, haven't had the chance to make an impact at World Cup level. Now the Danes appear to have a great chance to make it to next year's finals after a 4-0 victory over Slovenia put them top of Group One on goal difference over Greece, that slumped 1-0 at home to Croatia. Under Swedish coach Bo Johansson, the Danes are unbeaten in six games — five wins one tie. Italy's comfortable victory over Poland means that second place England, which scored a 2-0 victory over Wales at Wembley, remain four points behind in Group Two. But now they are eight points clear of the Poles and must be confident of a top-two place despite having to face them in Katowice May 31. Norway conceded their first goal in a 1-1 tie at home to Finland but still lead Group Three by four points. Switzerland moved up level with Hungary for second by edging the Hungarians 1-0 in Zurich.

BRIDGE NOTES

By An Expert. Hands from Bermuda Bowl. Score: Pakistan 101 1/2, USA 157. Board: 64, Dir: West, Vul: E-W. Open Room: WEST Solodar, NORTH Munir, EAST Levin, SOUTH Fazli. Closed Room: Masood, Meckstroth, Zia, Rodwell.

Pakistan gained 3 IMPs on the last deal of the set, but missed a golden opportunity to pick up 10 more. Masood chose a bad moment to take a position in front of his partner and Meckstroth-Rodwell escaped unscathed when they were about to suffer a serious penalty. Open Room: Munir introduced his majors with a Michaels cuebid, deciding that the disparity between the spades and hearts was not sufficient significant to lean him toward a simple overcall. Fazli had a better hand than he might have had but contented himself with 2♥ because his minor suit strength had no clear value. Solodar rebid his long suit and Levin tried for game by showing his fifth-round spade stopper. Solodar settled for 3NT. The ♠K was led and Solodar took his ace. He led a low diamond and Munir's jack won. He switched to the ♥3 and Solodar guessed right, playing low from dummy. He took Fazli's ♥K with his ♥A and passed the ♠10 around to Fazli's jack. A heart came back to dummy's queen and Solodar was about to be through. He tried the diamonds to no avail and led a club, but Munir showed out and the ♠A was Solodar's last tick — three down, vulnerable. Score: PAKISTAN (N-S)+300 Close Room: Meckstroth eschewed the Michaels cuebid and started with 1♣. Zia tried 1NT and Masood raised him to game, but Meckstroth was not through. His 4♠ showed a major two-suiter with emphasis on spades (4♥ would have shown both majors with no clear preference). When Rodwell removed to 4♥, Masood had no good reason to take the Americans off the hook. Perhaps he was influenced by Zia's failure to double 4♣ which might have suggested a willingness to defend at the four-level. Masood forged on with 4♥ and Zia bid his clubs for the first time at the level of five. Rodwell had very good defense but he, like his opponents, was not quite sure of what was going on and he didn't want to lean in their way. He was mildly disappointed when the bidding died right there. He led his singleton spade and dummy's ace won. The ♣4 went to the queen and king and Rodwell returned a second trump. Zia winning with his own 8. The ♠A and ♠K were cashed and a third round was ruffed with the ♠5. A spade was led and Rodwell pitched a heart as dummy scored the ♣9. A fourth diamond was ruffed with the ♠A and Zia scored the ♠10 en passant with another spade ruff. A good diamond was led and Rodwell ruffed with one of the two remaining trumps in the game. Rodwell was now employed for a total heard play but when he exited with the ♠4, Zia played safe for two down by rising with dummy's ace, this despite Meckstroth's earlier signal with the ♥9 (discouraging). Of course, that didn't have to be a true card. Score: USA (N-S)+200 Net Score: PAKISTAN+100 (3 IMPs) Score Carried Forward: PAKISTAN 104 1/2 USA 157

The Daily Star Entertainment Guide

Saturday 3rd May (All programmes are in local time. There may be changes in group programmes.) BTV: 3:00pm Opening Announcement Al-Quran Programme Summary 3:20 Movie of the Week 4:00 The News 5:25 Banashree 6:00pm Angkor 6:30 News 7:00 News in English 7:05 Gonatarer Abhijata 7:25 Maati-Manush 8:00 News in Bangla 8:30 71 Dinipi 8:40 Deganto 9:10 Abhim 10:00 News in English 10:30 Film Show: Chicago Hope 11:30 News in Bangla 11:35 Tomorrow's Programme Summary 11:40 Close Down. BBC: 6:00 BBC World News 6:30 Hard Talk 7:00 BBC World News 7:30 World Focus: Panorama 8:00 BBC World News 8:30 World Focus: The Money Programme 9:00 BBC World News 9:05 BBC World News 9:05 BBC World News 10:30 World Focus: Window On Europe 11:00 BBC World News 11:30 Reporters 12:00noon BBC World News 12:00noon BBC World News 12:00noon BBC World News 1:00 BBC World News 1:05 World Focus: Correspondent 2:00 BBC World News 2:30 Time Out: Tomorrow's World 3:00 BBC World News 3:05 World Focus: Cracking The Code 4:00 BBC World News 4:30 Time Out: Holiday 5:00 BBC World News 5:30 The Week 6:00pm BBC World News 6:05 Weekend World: Horizon 7:00 BBC World News 7:30 Reporters 8:00 BBC World News 8:30 Time Out: Film 9:00 BBC World News 9:05 Weekend World: Futurewatch 10:00 BBC World News 10:30 Time Out: The Cities Show 11:00 BBC World News 11:30 The Week 12:00pm BBC World News 12:30 Hard Talk 1:00 BBC World News 1:30 Weekend World: Horizon 2:00 BBC World News 2:30 Time Out: Top Gear 3:00 BBC World News 3:30 Reporters 4:00 BBC Newsdesk 4:30 The Week 5:00 BBC World News 5:05 Weekend World: Futurewatch World News 10:30 World Focus: Window On Europe 11:00 BBC World News 11:30 Reporters 12:00noon BBC World News 12:00noon BBC World News 12:00noon BBC World News 1:00 BBC World News 1:05 World Focus: Correspondent 2:00 BBC World News 2:30 Time Out: Tomorrow's World 3:00 BBC World News 3:05 World Focus: Cracking The Code 4:00 BBC World News 4:30 Time Out: Holiday 5:00 BBC World News 5:30 The Week 6:00pm BBC World News 6:05 Weekend World: Horizon 7:00 BBC World News 7:30 Reporters 8:00 BBC World News 8:30 Time Out: Film 9:00 BBC World News 9:05 Weekend World: Futurewatch 10:00 BBC World News 10:30 Time Out: The Cities Show 11:00 BBC World News 11:30 The Week 12:00pm BBC World News 12:30 Hard Talk 1:00 BBC World News 1:30 Weekend World: Horizon 2:00 BBC World News 2:30 Time Out: Top Gear 3:00 BBC World News 3:30 Reporters 4:00 BBC Newsdesk 4:30 The Week 5:00 BBC World News 5:05 Weekend World: Futurewatch