

Now on Time's cover!

NEW DELHI, May 12: Sachin Tendulkar yesterday became the first Indian sportsman to adorn the cover of the American Newsweekly "Time" which says the "Bombay Bomber's" batting performances have earned him comparisons with soccer great Diego Maradona, reports PTI.

Although cricket is hardly known in the United States, the latest issue of the prestigious magazine carries a write up on this week's World Cup in England with the Indian batting maestro shown in the follow through of a cover drive.

Speaking about comparison between Tendulkar and Maradona, "Time" noted that both were short, stocky and curly-haired.

But unlike the Argentine ace, Tendulkar is a level-headed, even bland professional who does all his hell-raising at the wicket.

He wields the heaviest bat in the game, both literally and figuratively, and is a quick reader of bowlers and wicket conditions, "Time" said.

The magazine said it's difficult to single out a standout Tendulkar performance, as there are so many — and so many to come.

He already owns the record for the most one-day international centuries, and he has at least ten playing years ahead of him.

The four-page cover story which celebrates the top batsmen in the shortened version of the game — who lift the game to dizzy heights as entertainers — and captures cricket's phenomenal growth in the Indian sub-continent thanks to India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka cornering glory in three of the last four editions.

Jadukar Samad soccer final today

Surjita New Bengal Club will take on Rayer Bazar Diamond Kriya Chakra in the final of the Jadukar Samad Kishore Football Tournament today at the Bandhavdhu National Stadium, reports UNB.

Sports Secretary A S M Shahjahan will witness the match and distribute prizes as chief guest.

Surjita New Bengal Club reached the final defeating Abdul Hadi Lane Juba Sangha by 4-2 goals while Rayer Bazar moved into the final beating Narinda Palash Sporting Club by 2-0.

Randell set to face 15 separate trials

HOBART, Australia, May 12: Australia's top international cricket umpire Steve Randell may face 15 separate sex change trials, his counsel said Wednesday, reports AFP.

Randell, 43, who has stood in an Australian record 36 Tests, has pleaded not guilty to 26 charges of indecent assault and one of sexual intercourse involving a male aged under 17.

They involve 14 girls and a boy, and allegedly occurred in different parts of Tasmania between 1979 and 1995.

During a brief appearance in the Tasmanian Supreme Court Wednesday, prosecutor Mike Stoddart said the Crown had not yet filed an indictment with the court.

The indictment was expected to contain a range of charges, but not all 27.

Randell's counsel, Kim Baumeler, said that depending on the indictment which was filed, she would apply to sever it into 15 separate ones, one for each complainant.

Justice Pierre Slicer adjourned the case to May 25 when a date will be set for the severance argument.

Randell has stood down from umpiring and been suspended on full pay from his job as a Hobart city primary schoolteacher until the case is finalised.

Rios sent packing

ROME, May 12: Defending champion Marcelo Rios, Aussie Mark Philippoussis and Spain's Albert Costa found themselves on the Italian Open scrap heap on Tuesday on a bad day for the seeded players, reports AFP.

Pete Sampras very nearly joined them before a three-set victory over unseeded Czech Bohdan Ulrich in a tie-break at the Foro Italico.

Rios, who won the Hamburg tournament last Sunday, was sent packing by German qualifier David Prinosil 6-2, 5-7, 6-3.

The eighth seeded Chilean trailed 6-2, 5-2 before holding serve and breaking twice to draw level — only to find himself in an identical position in the following set.

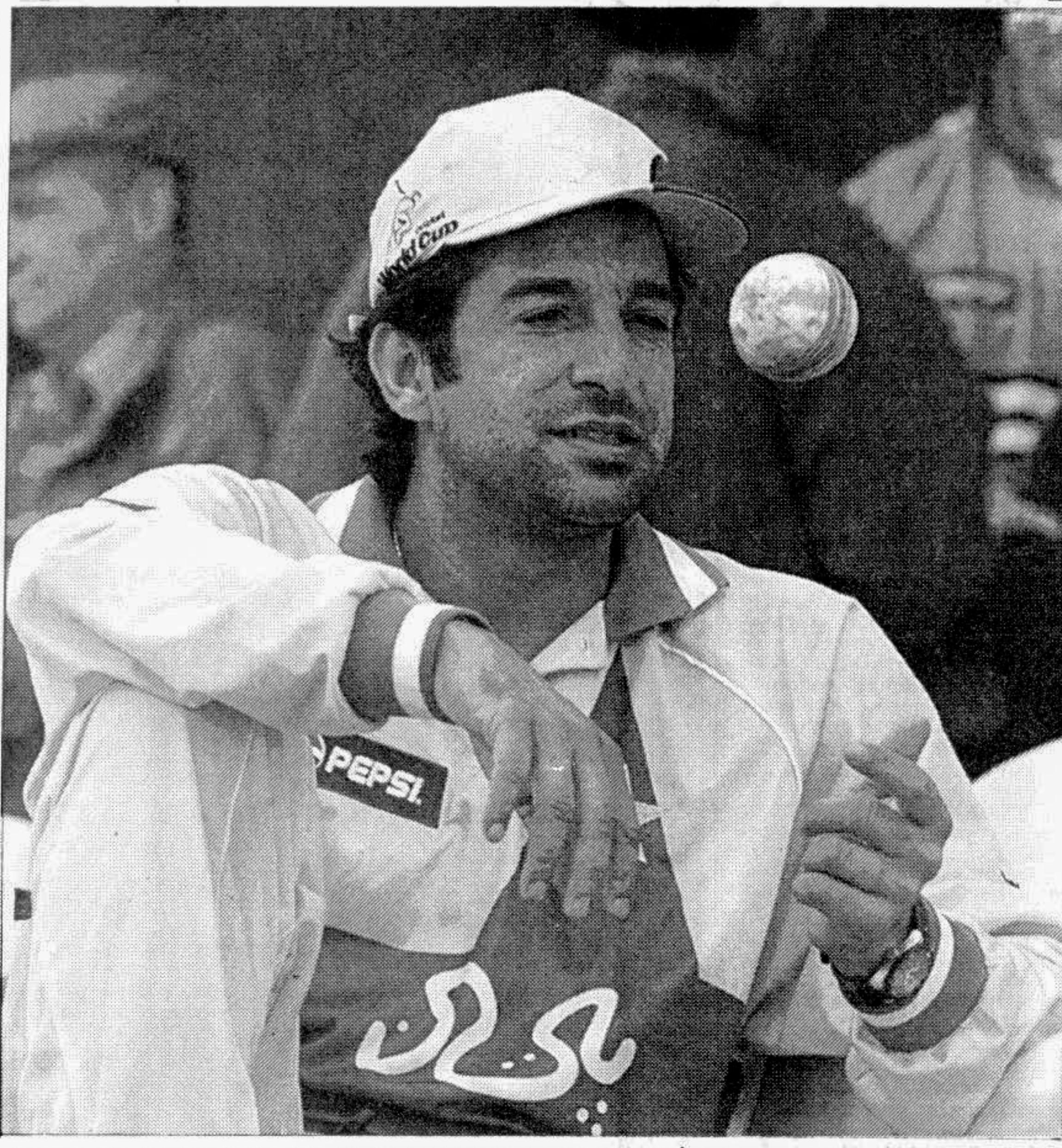
The second time, though, after holding serve for 5-3 and then lining up the first of three break points at 40-15, he failed to get out jail. Prinosil ended the match with a powerful forehand down the right-hand side.

"It was a very bad match, but that's tennis," said Rios, who claimed he'd found it hard to switch from the pace in Germany to a slower court here.

And he added: "I just hope it doesn't affect my confidence."

Philippoussis, seeded ninth, was beaten 7-6 (7/2), 4-6, 6-4, 6-4, 6-3 on the centre court by American Vincent Spadea, a player ranked 25th in the world and who has lost both of his previous two tournament starts.

It was a bitter disappointment for Philippoussis, who won at San Jose and Indian Wells earlier this year, and who was playing his first event since losing last month in the quarter-finals at Monte Carlo.



ALL RAIN AND NO PLAY MAKES WASIM A DULL BOY: Pakistan skipper Wasim Akram passing an uneventful morning at Old Trafford where rain prevented his team's warm-up — AFP photo

NORTHANTS-BANGLADESH SCOREBOARD

First innings scoreboard in the World Cup warm-up match between Bangladesh and Northamptonshire on Wednesday: Northamptonshire won the toss and decided to bat.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE:

Batsman	Runs	Balls	4s	6s
MB Lye c Khaled Mashud b Minhazul	62	83	6	2
ML Hayden c Khaled Mashud b K Mahmud	5	18	1	0
RJ Warren c Aminul b Rafique	20	45	0	0
DJC Sales b Enamul Hoque	50	55	3	2
Penberthy b Enamul Hoque	17	33	0	0
KM Curran not out	57	39	7	1
KJ Innes not out	42	31	4	0
Extras: (lb-10, w-12, nb-4)	26			
Total: (for 5 wkts in 50 overs)	279			
Fall of wickets: 1-15 (15 Hayden, 22 mins); 2-97 (82 Lye, 61 mins); 3-103 (6 Warren, 4 mins); 4-166 (63 Penberthy, 46 mins); 5-181 (5 Sales, 12 mins)				
Did not bat: G P Swann, D Ripley, J P Taylor, D Follett				

Bowler	O	M	R	W	nb	w
Manjural	9	1	34	0	3	3
K Mahmud	10	0	71	1	1	2
Enamul Hoque	10	0	54	2	0	1
Minhazul	10	0	40	1	0	0
Rafique	10	0	56	1	0	0
Aminul	1	0	14	0	0	0

(Source: Internet)

Cup predictions

NEW DELHI, May 12 (India Abroad News Service): On the eve of the World Cup starting on May 14, India's astrologers have put out their predictions, most of them backing India and South Africa to win the tournament.

While some of them have explained the planetary positions that would be in India's favour, others seem to have also depended on patriotic fervour also to predict an Indian triumph, in reports published in Indian dailies over the last few days.

New Delhi based numerologist S S Rao has even gone to the extent of predicting the scores in an India-West Indies final. If India bats first, Rao says they will score 279 runs and West Indies will make 270 in reply. If West Indies bats first it would score 170 runs and India would romp home by scoring 171 runs for the loss of nine wickets, he predicted.

India's star performers this time would be captain Mohammad Azharuddin, his deputy Ajay Jadeja, master blaster Sachin Tendulkar, Rahul Dravid, allrounder Robin Singh and bowler Venkatesh

Prasad, Rao told The Hindu.

Another astrologer Asha Kiran Shukla predicted a West Indies-India final. Ajay Bhambi who runs a daily astrology column too predicted an Indian win.

Not all noted astrologers have backed India though. While Kanpur-based astrologer R K Dube Pankaj has predicted India-South Africa clash in the finals, Soma Banerjee from Calcutta has foreseen a West Indies-South Africa clash. But in both the cases South Africa emerges as favourite to win.

Indian Astrologers Council president A K Dube Padmesh is reported to have said that South Africa has the best chance of winning the cup but India's Sachin Tendulkar would create new records during the tournament.

According to astrologer Kishan Dube India would not progress beyond the semifinals. South Africa would emerge as the world champion, he predicted.

While cynics have brushed aside such predictions as wishful thinking, there are a large number of Indians who swear by astrology prediction and will settle for nothing less than an Indian victory.

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