Azzu's date

From page 13

God's will that I played for India

and also became captain. It's

the selectors, not the critics.

who made me captain. Only

they can remove me from the

"I don't care if I stay captain or not. But if we don't win the

World Cup, it will not be because

of lack of effort on my part. A

captain is only as good as the team under him."

in a third successive World Cup

achieved only by West Indian

Clive Lloyd, who captained his team to victory in the 1975 and

1979 tournaments only to be

denied a hat-trick in 1983 by

greatest showpiece," Azharud-

din said. "Winning it for the

country overshadows any per-

sonal milestones you may have

the World Cup and that hurts,

because it's the stage everyone

ing champions were knocked

out by England in the semi-fi-

Down Under in 1992, India

failed to pass the league stage

and four years later made a

shameful exit from the semi-fi-

nal at Calcutta, when crowd

trouble led the match being

awarded to the dominant Sri

In 1987, Kapil Dev's defend-

Under Azhar's leadership

wants to do well on."

nal in Bombay.

"It's never clicked for me at

"The World Cup is cricket's

and playing in his fourth.

India.

reached."

Azharuddin is leading India

It's a feat previously

Blewett blows it again

LONDON, May 14 (Reuters/ Internet): Greg Blewett's poor start as Yorkshire's overseas player continued when he was dismissed for only two by Mid-dlesex seamer Richard John-

The Australian, signed as a replacement for World Cup batsman Darren Lehmann, has scored only 67 runs in his first four championship innings for the county.

After his match-winning half century against Scotland on Wednesday however, there were hopes that he was finally running to form.

But after surviving a confident leg before appeal from Johnson's third delivery of the day he was not so fortunate six overs later as he missed an attempted drive and was given out

On an overcast Headingley morning there was plenty of movement for Johnson and Simon Cook after Yorkshire captain David Byas won the toss and elected to bat.

And although Michael Vaughan opened his account with a cover drive for four off Cook, he was twice beaten outside the off stump before reasserting himself with a boundary off each bowler.

Despite the testing batting conditions the score moved along briskly with 43 runs coming from the first 10 overs before Jamie Hewitt replaced Johnson after 40 minutes and immediately beat Vaughan outside the off stump again. The England A captain

brought up the 50 in the 13th over with a straight drive off Hewitt but it was his final scoring shot.

Johnson, returning at the Kirkstall Lane end to replace Cook, immediately produced an excellent delivery which uprooted Vaughan's off stump to leave Yorkshire 64 for two.

Tudor resumes hunting

LONDON, May 14 (Internet report): Alex Tudor, a disappointed England hopeful for the World Cup, claimed the first scalp for Surrey against Essex at The Oval in the PPP County Championship.

Darren Robinson had scored a single before Tudor had him caught by Jason Ratcliffe, with Essex moving on to 28 for one, the other opener Paul Prichard looking strong on 21. England A skipper Michael

Vaughan was in excellent form as he inspired Yorkshire to 50 for one against Middlesex at Headingley.

Vaughan was unbeaten on 32, after Australian opener Greg Blewett was trapped lbw by seamer Richard Johnson for

John Stephenson was an early casualty for Hampshire against visitors Worcestershire. departing for four after being caught by Abdul Hafeez off paceman Alamgir Sheriyar. Hants moved on to 22 for one before the rain came down at

Southampton. Glamorgan struggled to 37 for two against Gloucestershire at Cardiff, losing Alan Evans for four and Ismail Dawood, caught behind off Ben Gannon

Another England paceman, Somerset's Andy Caddick, made the breakthrough at Trent Bridge when he had Nottingham opener Usman Afzaal caught by Marcus Trescothick for five. before Tim Robinson and captain Jason Gallian pushed the score on to 34 for one.

Bits & pieces

From page 13

Bollywood glitz for the real life

drama of the cricket World Cup.

viewership of about 40 per

cent," film producer Shakti

movie industry, which was

banking on this summer to help

pull it out of the tough times it

timated the loss of income

caused by the World Cup at

around 1.5 billion rupees (35

to the movies every day in India

- a passion that only cricket

many producers and distribu-

tors have postponed film re-

leases until after the World Cup

films are released every week in

the summer period. But this

*time almost all releases have

been pushed forward till after

han Deep said about 50 Hindilanguage films were now wait-

ing for release, and shooting on other productions were facing

"The film actors have a love-

hate relationship with cricket.

Many of them love the game,

but all hate the fact that it di-

verts people's attention from

movies. Most of the film stars

are not known outside India,

cricketers get," he said.

try win the World Cup.

performance from us."

and they resent the attention

Caring Premier

NEW DELHI, May 14 (AFP):

Indian Prime Minister Atal Be-

hari Vajpayee Thursday asked the national cricket team to

"play with a cool head" as they

Vajpayee told team man-agers now in England over tele-

phone that millions of Indians

had the "highest expectations"

from the players led by veteran Mohammad Azharuddin.

build "the right pressure at the

right time. The victory will be

He said the team should

Film industry analyst Mo-

the World Cup," he said.

"On average, three or four

According to Samanta,

has been in." Samanta said.

million dollars).

· can compete with.

final on June 20.

disruption.

Samanta admitted Friday.

"We expect a drop in movie

"This is bad news for the

Industry analysts have es-

Some 30 million Indians go



ENGLAND'S STARS TO WATCH: Former England cricket stars (L-R) Bob Willis, David Gower, Paul Allott and Ian Botham, who all are part of World Cup commentary team, posing alongside a road sign at Southampton on May 11. — AFP photo

India v South Africa: Many aces

HOVE, England, May 14: South Africa have built an enviable one-day record coming into the World Cup but the pressure will be on Hansie Cronje's side when they play India in their group A opener on Saturday, reports Reuters.

Boasting the all-round skills of Jacques Kallis, Shaun Pollock and Lance Kluesner, the acrobatic fielding of Jonty Rhodes and Allan Donald's pace bowling, South Africa have been installed as firm Cup favourites and anything short of victory on this southern England ground will be an enormous let-down. After thrashing West Indies

5-0 in Tests and 6-1 in a oneday series earlier this year and then going on to beat New Zealand at both forms of the game, South Africa have every right to feel confident.

Opener Gary Kirsten, who holds the World Cup record for the highest individual score -188 against United Arab Emirates in 1996 — said the team were working together to remain relaxed in the build-up and not get washed away by the

"We've talked together about everything that might affect us," the 32-year-old stalwart seid during training this week. "We've talked about being lavourites. We've spoken about

round of the Italian Open on

Thursday while Carlos Moya,

Kuerten's successor as French

straight sets, reports Reuters.

Open champion, was beaten in

7-5, 6-1 and produced some su-

perb baseline tennis on Rome's

red clay to suggest he may once

again figure next month at

Roland Garros, where he won

his first major title two years

Argentine 'lucky loser' Franco

Squillari, who had lost in the

qualifiers at the weekend and

returned to the frame only

when 11th seed American Todd

Martin dropped out with an in-

Open champion Pat Rafter pro-

nine months to survive a sec-

ond set fightback by Andre

Agassi and win 6-1, 7-6,

duced his best performances for

In the day's other big tie, US

jured shulder.

Moya was beaten 6-3, 7-5 by

Kuerten crushed Kafelnikov

ROME, May 14:

Brazil's Gustavo

Kuerten trounced

world number one

Yevgeny Kafel-

nikov in the third

the size and importance of the tournament." India, winners in 1983, are under a different sort of pres-

sure. They are not tipped to win here but back home the nation is more than usually cricketobsessed. Sales of televisions have

gone through the roof as fans prepare for the Cup and the burden of his compatriots' expectations falls squarely on the shoulders of Sachin Tendulkar, hailed by many as the finest batsman since Donald Brad-The back spasms which kept

Tendulkar out of the Sharjah Cup have eased and he has been able to relax a little in England where he can move freely without being mobbed. He caused a scare at Nottingham on Tuesday when he took a

thump on the leg, but he still went on to score 91 in India's 88-run victory over the county He did not field preferring to ice the bruise but India's coach

Anshuman Gaekwad is confi-

dent Tendulkar will be fit for the tournament. A batting average of 46.73 and the ability to take the occasional wicket make this 26year-old the lynchpin of a side which has struggled in recent one-day series against Pak-

Kuerten will face Slovak

Karol Kucera, who came from a

set down to beat Britain's Tim

Henman 4-6, 7-6, 6-3 in a gru-

elling floodlit late match which

Ecuador's Nicolas Lapentti

while Squillari's prize for de-

feating Moya is a quarter final

clash against another

Spaniard, world number seven

Mantilla against Germany's

David Prinosil completes the

nikov in the quarter finals of

his triumphant 1997 French

Open campaign, broke serve in

the first and fifth games of their

final set as he raced into a 5-1

point at 40-30 on Kafelnikov's

serve when he overhit a fore-

hand return but created another

when he won the next point

with a rasping cross-court

The Russian served to stay in on the final two points.

He squandered one match

Spain's 15th seed Felix

Kuerten, who beat Kafel-

Alex Corretja.

backhand.

quarter final line-up.

Australia's Rafter will meet

lasted two hours 24 minutes.

istan. Sri Lanka and England. India are relying on pace bowlers Javagal Srinath and Venkatesh Prasad, and seamers Ajit Agarkar and Robin Singh to make the most of the damp English wickets. They also have leg-spinner Anil Kumble, who captured 10 wickets in an innings against Pakistan in February.

"I stand to gain from the conditions since I really don't rely on spinning the ball like other spinners .. they will find it tough," he says.

The depth of the South African side has been clearly shown in their warm-up games. In their final six-wicket victory against Middlesex on

Tuesday, wicketkeeper Mark Boucher, promoted to number three, scored 93 after an innings of 123 against Kent. Captain Cronje then showed off by launching into the attack

scoring 42 off 25 balls when the side needed only 64 off 30 overs to win. Cronje said he was trying to put himself under pressure to simulate World Cup conditions.

"The beauty of our team," Cronje said on their arrival in Britain, "is that there are quite a few options. Effectively we can field nine batters and seven bowlers. The opposition can never be sure quite what to ex-Kuerten kills Kafelnikov

the match, Kuerten returned

and the ball thudded into the

net cord before dropping into

Kafelnikov's side of the court to

give the 16th seed victory after

played against a world number

one," Kuerten said. "Maybe I

pushed myself a little bit harder

because of that and played bet-

nine games in his first two

matches but was outplayed by

Squillari, ranked 47th in the

day ... but he played great,"

Moya said. "He lost in the quali-

fiers, he's a lucky loser and he

almost lost yesterday but ... it

he played like he did today he

wouldn't have had any problem

against Agassi, combining his.

natural serve-and-volley game

with his new-found confidence

on clay to take the first set in

just 28 minutes with two aces

Rafter played faultlessly

beating those guys."

"I didn't play at my best to-

Moya had dropped only

"This was the first time I

an hour and eight minutes.

From page 13

computers, printers, a free flow of hot and cold drinks, facsimile service, but no email facilities. Unlike people elsewhere in and around the capital, most people here know about cricket and what the World Cup is all about. More importantly, each and everyone looked up each time this correspondent mentioned Bangladesh. It pays to be in the top twelve of the class.

at the Nursery End. Totally out totally out of context though, today does appear to be something extraterrestrial.

still says Zimbabwe, even i Kenya, earning the nickname of the game's latest "banana skin" produced the biggest shock in World Cup history when they defeated the West Indies in

Zimbabwe, however, beat the Kenyans in that tournament, won four one-dayers out of four against them in a tri-nation event in Nairobi in 1997 and beat them three times in succession in a similar tournament in

They can call on world-class bowling in paceman Heath Streak and leg spinner Paul Strang and their batting has been bolstered by the recruitment of Natal's Neil Johnson and Murray Goodwin, who has played for Western Australia.

Zimbabwe, cricket's newest Test-playing nation, last year won their first series by beating Pakistan. They look wellplaced to improve on a record of three wins in 25 World Cup matches here - so long as they cair acclimatise in time.

Kenya's strength lies in a batting line-up led by captain Maurice Odumbe, the exciting Kennedy Otieno and Steve Tikolo, the only fully-fledged professional in the squad. Coached by former West Indian great Alvin Kallicharan who played in the World Cup winning teams of 1975 and 1979. they like playing their shots, Caribbean style.

KNOW THE

ZIMBABWE 1. Alistair Campbell (captain) 2. Andy Flower

3. Grant Flower 4. Neil Johnson

5. Murray Goodwin 6. Stuart Carlisle 7. Henry Olonga 8. Mpumelelo Mbangwa 9. Heath Streak

10. Adam Huckle 11. Dirk Viljoen 12. Eddo Brandes 13. Paul Strange

KENYA 1. Asif Karim (captain) 2. Maurice Odumbe 3. Ravindu Shah 4. Kennedy Otieno

7. Sandip Gupta 8. Thomas Odoyo 9. Tony Suji 10l. Martin Suji 11. Mohamed Sheikh

12. Joseph Angara 13. Deepak Chudasama 14. Alpesh Vadher 15. Jimmy Kamande

SA v India: Stop Sachin "I believe in destiny. It was

From page 13 "Statistics mean nothing," he said. "All twelve teams start with zero points. Our team are not going to play any better or worse because we might be

among the favourites." The South Africans took a day off on Friday. "I want the players to enjoy playing in the World Cup and not get too in-

tense about it," Cronje said. "Part of the attitude comes from results. We wouldn't feel so

sults behind us." The Indians, meanwhile.

between them in 1998 or 1999.

Gary Kirsten, who made 84.

Players to watch:

most prized wicket.

once favourites. Capacity 6,000. (AFP)

World Cup:

relaxed if we hadn't got the re-

HEAD-TO-HEAD

The teams have not met recently, with no Tests or one-dayers

The teams have played once, in 1992, when South Africa won by six wickets. Mohammad Azharuddin's 79 was trumped by

India - Sachin Tendulkar: The best batsman in the world, he

will open and be under special orders to try and bat throughout

the 50 overs. Logically, that should mean him scoring a century and India making a minimum of around 240, giving them a

fighting chance. Expect, therefore, a more cautious Tendulkar

than usual - not the one who scored 141 off 127 balls against

Australia during the mini World Cup last year.

South Africa - Shaun Pollock: As the team's opening bowler,

he will get first crack at Sachin Tendulkar, the cornerstone of

the Indian batting. The 25-year-old Pollock knows he has the

opportunity to devastate Indian morale if he can snap up their

Venue: Hove. The home of Sussex, on the English south coast,

where Ted Dexter, John Snow, Imran Khan and Tony Greig were

showed no signs of nerves as they prepared for what is likely to be their toughest outing in · the preliminary league.

"A victory is obviously what we want, but the boys will not be unduly worried if we lose," Gaekwad said. "It's good to get a tough match out of the way first, because we will be that much stronger for the other

"The team is in a good frame of mind. The focus so far had been on trying new things, it's now time to put that in prac-

Gaekwad was particularly happy at the improved stan-dards in fielding. "The grounds are soft and the boys are not scared of diving to stop the ball," he said.

KNOW THE NUMBERS

Following is the players' list with shirt numbers:

INDIA 1. Mohammad Azharuddin

(captain)

2. Saurav Ganguly

Ajay Jadeja 4. Sadagopan Ramesh 5. Rahul Dravid

6. Robin Singh

7. Ajit Agarkar 8. Anil Kumble

9. Nayan Mongia 10. Sachin Tendulkar

11. Venkatesh Prasad

12. Nikhil Chopra 13. Debashish Mohanty

14. Javagal Srinath

15. Amay Khurasia SOUTH AFRICA 1. Gary Kirsten

2. Herschelle Gibbs 3. Jacques Kallis 4. Daryll Cullinan

5. Hansie Cronje (captain) 6. Dale Benkenstein

7. Shaun Pollock 8. Jonty Rhodes

9. Mark Boucher

10. Alan Donald 11. Derek Crookes

12. Lance Klusener

14. Stave Elworthy 15. Nicky Boje



British Prime Minister Tony Blair (C) inaugurating the ICC World Cup 1999 at Lord's yesterday. — TV photo by Anisur Rahman.

Target set for 100mph

LONDON, May 14: For years, he is inexperienced but it seems Caribbean pace bowlers ter- unlikely. Akhtar's progress been the model for his 32-yard rorised the rest of the world. Now it's pay-back time. On Sunday the West Indies, launching their World Cup campaign, will find themselves on the wrong end of cricket's '100miles-per-hour man', reports

Shoaib Akhtar likes the sound of the tag, even if it is not quite accurate. The 23-year-old Pakistani, according to the speed gun, is still three or four miles short of breaking cricket's speed limit.

"I would love to bowl at above 100mph." said Shoaib. "I will sort it out. You will see in the World Cup.

Akhtar is still a relative unknown on the world stage but an expectant hush will greet his first delivery. His raw pace is enough to take the breath away.

The Rawalpindi strike bowler - who, strangely for a strike bowler, has small, soft hands - has captured the imagination like no other player in the run-up to the World Cup. It is enthralling to imagine how a batsman can possibly react in the one third of a second it

takes for the ball to reach him.

Few have bowled quicker. Not Harold Larwood, not Fred Trueman, not Andy Roberts. Even Australia's Jeff Thompson never cracked the magic threefigure mark. His fastest ball in 1975 in Perth was recorded at 99.70 miles per hour. The West Indians will hope

that Akhtar proves as wild as

over the past season - including the acquisition of a meanlydisguised slower ball - has been such that the once-irreplacable Waqar Younis is now struggling to get a game for Pakistan.

coach, Sarfraz Nawaz, immediately urged him to go back to his former ways. He is fast enough to worry the In February Sachin Tendulkar, the world's top batsman, looked up in disbelief af-

Akhtar admits Wagar has

run-up. When he tried to cut it

down for the one-day game, he

found he lost his rhythm. His

ter Akhtar scattered his stumps in the Asian Test championships in Calcutta. It was the first time the Indian had been dismissed first ball in a Test. "Yes, he is the fastest," Ten-

dulkar said afterwards. He is also aggressive enough to give anyone a real fright. "It makes me feel good to be thought of as the world's fastest bowler and I enjoy having people come to watch me for my

pace, "he says. "I like to see fear in a batsman. Ruthlessness is part of the make-up. Or, as former England opener Geoffrey Boycott puts it: "He likes to knock you over and

it doesn't matter whether it's you or the stumps." English counties are reportedly queuing up to recruit him. Media reports suggest he has

been offered around 120,000 dollars to sign up. Akhtar, however, who has played one season in Ireland, has decided to wait. A good World Cup will un-

doubtedly enhance his reputation as well as his value. Akhtar, clearly, is not just fast. He's quick-thinking.

CROSS	WORD B	l Eugene	Sheffer	1	2	3			4	5	6		7	8	9	10
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1 Pos- sesses	43 Male turkey			15					16		-		17	-	-	
4 Pouch 7 Arrived	44 Mayberry marshal			18		-		19		20	1	21				
11 Grand- scale	46 Dracula's waking	3 Takes a meeting	heroine				22		23		24			25	26	27
13 Barn denizen	hours 50 Asset	4 "— your old man!"	27 Croupier's tool 28 Skir-	28	29	30				31		32		1		
14 Branch angle	53 Brylcreem application	5 Dumb-	mishes	33					34		35		36			
15 Travel	55 Verifiable	6 Assertion	29 "Who —?" 30 Judicious	37				38		39		40				
agents' org.	56 Seep slowly	7 Piece of baseball	31 Meadow 35 Museum	41					42		43					
16 Galilee, e.g.	57 45 Down student	equipment 8 Downsize	stuff 38 Royal-				44			45		46		47	48	49
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based sauce	59 Clark's co-worker	12 Slogans	nent	56					57				58			
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PUVTJ

49 Spill the

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51 Card

U UPIVUCO PAKJ YAPOXUICK'

YTAUYO WAAX

Saturday's Cryptoquip: WHEN VANDALS SPRAY-PAINTED OUR HOUSE, I POSITIVELY SAW RED.

ZO YALC ZLOIX.

Today's Cryptoquip clue: Y equals C

The Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one 52 Terrorist's letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it 37 Proper 39 Bristles Wednesday's (May 12) answers arm 54 Auction 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.

P. 32200

yours."
Captain Azharuddin replied: "Look forward to a very good NEPAL CATCHES THE FEVER: A Kathmandu resident hanging the flag of world champions Sri Lanka on the outside of a house yesterday. - AFP photo

Lankans. Azharuddin's decision to

field that day, despite being forewarned that the wearing Eden Gardens wicket would favour the side batting first, cost him the captaincy. Yet he was made skipper

once again last year after the selectors decided that Sachin Tendulkar was not ready for the

Azharuddin's 'second innings' has been rewarding, with India winning five of their eight one-day series in 1998 besides a 2-1 home Test series win over

Mark Taylor's Australians. But if Azharuddin fails to win the World Cup in England. he may as well not go home.

Indifferent media

home. The centre has

The Natwest Media Centre, where up to 250 working journalists sat to cover the opening match at Lord's, stands about a 70 feet above the pitch, spanning the Compton and Edrich stands, behind the bowler's arm of place in the traditional setting of Lord's, the futuristic Press Box, seems to have descended from outer space. Not for to some Londoners cricket

The form book, however

Dhaka this year.

NUMBERS

Following is the players' list with shirt numbers:

20 22 (14. Andy Whittall 15. Guy Whittall 24 Angora goat fabric BABAF

Abzug 33 Pronto, on 5. Steve Tikolo a memo 6. Hitesh Modi 34 Shellneed 36 Put on the line

28 Desirous

32 Politico

37 Proper

lover's