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KING MAKES THE GRADE: West Indies fast bowler Reon King is elated after getting the prized scalp of New Zealand skipper Steffen Fleming at Southampton yesterday. —AFP photo

India rejoices

NEW DELHI, May 24 (Reuters/Internet): Indians were in raptures on Monday over Sachin Tendulkar's blazing century against Kenya in the World Cup five days after his father's death.

The sombre mood after India's Group A defeat at the hands of South Africa and Zimbabwe turned into one of hope and joy as Tendulkar stroked an unbeaten 140 off 101 balls on Sunday.

"Everytime we think we have seen every aspect of Sachin Tendulkar's cricket, destiny will us to rethink as the Little Big Man reveals a new facet to his personality," Ganesan Rajaraman wrote in the Hindu-Times.

The diminutive batsman dedicated the innings at Bristol to his father, Marathi language poet Ramesh Tendulkar.

"I did it for my father and my country," an emotionally charged Tendulkar said after the scintillating innings. "This was a difficult, but special occasion."

After reaching his 22nd century in one-day internationals, Tendulkar raised his bat, looked skyward, shut his eyes and pursed his lips to take in a deeply private moment.

Tendulkar had missed the defeat by Zimbabwe to fly home to Bombay. He overcame jet lag and sorrow to stroke his hundred, taking heed of his mother's advice that his father would have wanted him to play. India beat Kenya by 94 runs. Millions of Indians sat glued to their television sets to watch the 26-year-old hit 16 fours and three

sixes as India scored their first Cup victory and keep alive their struggle to qualify for the Super Six stage of the tournament.

Pictures of Tendulkar looking skyward after reaching his century were the lead story in most newspapers, pushing the story of a bitter split in the prominent Congress Party ahead of elections down the page.

The Pioneer newspaper said his century came just in time for India, after the collapse of its government last month.

"Country before self," said the daily. "Sachin Tendulkar kept his word in no uncertain terms and an unbeaten century of sparkling brilliance gave India its first victory and lots of self-respect."

"This one was for his father. It was as well as for a beleaguered nation. Something to cheer for this cricket-crazy nation, in political convulsions already, mourning its cricketers' two consecutive losses," it said from Bristol.

The mass-circulation Hindustan Times said the 94-run victory had touched the hearts of millions.

"This one is for you father," he seemed to be saying. The master batsman can be sure that his was not the only throat that had a lump in it."

Indian Express said Tendulkar revealed a steely determination to win over Kenya during pre-game practice.

"When he batted in the nets for almost three hours, it was obvious that the little maestro was steeling himself to play an

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A Pakistan fan takes of with a stump during an invasion of the pitch at Headingley on May 23. —AFP photo

Plight with pitch invaders

LONDON, May 24 (Reuters/Internet): World Cup organisers said on Monday they would ask the British government to introduce emergency measures to stop pitch invasions that have marred several matches at cricket's premier tournament.

World Cup event manager Michael Browning told the news agency that the government would be lobbied to extend legislation that bans crowd invasions at Britain's football grounds to the stadiums where World Cup cricket matches are being played.

"It has escalated to the point where we are very concerned," said Browning after hundreds of fans ran on to pitches at matches on Sunday in Leeds and Bristol.

In Leeds, spectators stole stumps before Pakistan's match with Australia had even finished. Australian captain Steve Waugh warned after his team's first match against Scotland that someone would soon be seriously hurt unless action was taken.

Browning said English cricket's chief, Tim Lamb had summoned chief executives and safety officers from England's test match grounds and police to an emergency meeting in Birmingham on Thursday to consider new measures.

"I am going to ask, through the police, for the Home Office (Interior Ministry) to extend through legislation by decree -- the only way it can be done -- the ban that already exists on trespassing on football pitches," he said.

"We are taking this very seriously. We will take whatever steps are necessary," said Browning.

Browning said organisers had already reviewed ground security twice since the start of the tournament 10 days ago in the face of ugly incidents in which players were threatened.

"We are now reviewing security on a ground by ground basis."

The Birmingham meeting, to be held at the Edgbaston ground two days before England meet India there, would take whatever steps were necessary to clamp down on rowdy fans, he said.

He acknowledged that increased number of stewards and police on duty had been impotent in the face of hundreds of spectators smashing down advertising hoardings and running on to the pitch.

"Whatever it costs we will do it. It's not enough for the players to be safe, they have to feel safe as well," he said. "Players clearly do not feel safe at the

moment."

Australia welcomed the plans. "I think any move that would control the crowds would be welcome," said team manager Steve Bernard.

Australia suffered badly during the recent tour to the West Indies when captain Steve Waugh, who narrowly missed being hit on the head by a bottle thrown from the stands in Barbados, said he feared for his life.

Sunday's invasion after Australia's defeat by Pakistan was the biggest so far, with up to a 1,000 Pakistan supporters swarming on to the pitch at the end and engulfing the players.

"In a situation like yesterday, if something goes wrong... well you just don't know what might happen," Bernard said. "As far as I'm concerned the players should be on the pitch and the fans should be in the stands and that's how it should stay."

Crowd invasions have been a fact of life in international cricket for many years and a World Cup semifinal was abandoned in 1996 in Calcutta after spectators threw missiles when Sri Lanka were on the verge of victory against India.

But organisers and players at the 1999 World Cup have been disturbed by the frenzied nature of those running on the pitch.

Indian batsman Sachin Tendulkar, fielding in front of an Indian-dominated crowd at Bristol on Sunday, sneaked off

the ground two overs before the end to avoid being mobbed.

Captains Waugh, Alec Stewart of England and India's Mohammad Azharuddin have been voicing their fears since the start of the tournament on May 14.

"It's gone on for far too long. Someone is going to end up getting killed," Azharuddin said on Sunday after his players were forced to flee the field as up to 1,000 Indian supporters raced on to the Nevill Road ground.

The worst problems appear to be among the almost hysterical supporters of India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, although there was a pitch invasion in Cardiff when New Zealand beat Australia.

When India played South Africa in Hove, an Indian player was forced to use his fists to defend himself against an irate -- and probably drunk -- spectator who wanted to remonstrate with him for losing.

Organisers of Sunday's Australia v Pakistan clash at Headingley had confidently predicted there would be no pitch invasion because of their experience of international matches.

The opposite was the case and stumps were stolen from the ground when Australia lost their ninth wicket. "It's getting crazy. Players are really getting seriously worried about the end of matches," said former England player Alan Lamb.

Olonga points at pressure

LONDON, May 24 (Internet report): Zimbabwe pace bowler Henry Olonga has warned England "all the pressure is on you" as he aims to inspire his country to another World Cup upset in tomorrow's vital Group A match at Trent Bridge.

And Olonga, whose three wickets in five balls clinched last Wednesday's dramatic win over India, insisted Zimbabwe would be targeting England's fragile batting.

"They can crumble and are vulnerable," was Olonga's verdict on Alec Stewart's side who were rolled over for a paltry 103 by competition favourites South Africa at The Oval on Saturday.

Olonga is aware that Zimbabwe must win to have a realistic chance of reaching the Super Six as they have to play the in-form South Africans in their final game.

But he insisted the heat will



also be on England to deliver the goods and live up to the expectations of the nation as well as making sure of qualifying before their final match with

India. Olonga, the first black player to represent Zimbabwe, said: "England had been playing well before Saturday's hiccup and are a good side in their own conditions but we won't be scared of them."

"We have a good record against England. Our record shows that we have dominated matches with England and we are aware of the fact that they can crumble."

"We know that they can lose quick wickets, that they have had a few collapses in the past and are still vulnerable to the same sort of thing happening."

"They panic in a way other teams don't and there is a lot of pressure on their top order to make the runs."

"The likes of South Africa bat down to number nine whereas England have Darren Gough who can smack it about a

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Proteas on Dutch soil

AMSTELVEEN, Netherlands, May 24 (Reuters/Internet): Fresh from their destruction of England, South Africa undertook a one-game continental tour to face winless Kenya on Wednesday with only one result possible.

A defeat for the tournament favourites would be a shock measuring nine on the cricket 'Richter' scale but the expected victory for South Africa would give them eight points and ensure their progress to the Super Six round of the competition.

Key members of the South African bowling line-up that ripped through England's top order on Saturday on the way to a 122-run win are likely to be spectators at Amstelveen Cricket Club on the edge of Amsterdam.

The South Africans have said they intend to use their full 15-man squad during the tournament so paceman Allan Donald, and all-rounders Shaun Pollock and Jacques Kallis are likely to be rested. Spinners Nicky Boje and Derek Crookes, all-rounder Alan Davidson and Natal batsman Dale Benkenstein could get a game.

South Africa also hope the game will help their middle order, which wilted at the Oval against England, get into the habit of scoring runs.

Kenya have been far from disgraced in their three defeats but their attack, after an Sachin Tendulkar-inspired India destroyed them at Bristol, will be looking for some relief.

Kenya captain Asif Karim is desperate to shore up his bowling. But his hands have been tied by problems surrounding seamer Jimmy Kamande, who has not been selected since it was reported he had been accused of chucking in the opening match against Zimbabwe.

"We will be back on Wednesday and we'll be giving it our best shot," said Karim, who said he would be asking his batsmen for 30 or 40 more runs in their innings.

"That's an area where we have some true class," he said, adding Steve Tikolo could make

it into just about any international team.

Tikolo followed up his half century against England with another on Sunday, while opener Kennedy Otieno also scored a 50.

Karim may call up pace

bowler Tony Suji, younger brother of strike bowler Maurice Suji who pinned down India's openers on Sunday, taking one for 26 from 10 overs.

The Dutch hosts had hoped their side would qualify for the

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AMBROSIAL: The fiery West Indies fast bowler Curtley Ambrose appealing against New Zealand's Matthew Horne yesterday. —AFP photo

Waugh won't throw in the towel

LEEDS, May 24: Skipper Steve Waugh refused to concede Sunday that Australia were virtually out of World Cup contention and said his side was still in with a chance to qualify for the next stage, reports AP.

Australia, hit form but was still beaten by 10 runs by a better Pakistan side in a crucial Group B match at Headingley.

Australia's world champions in 1987 and finalists in 1996, have to secure seven successive wins to win the Cup.

"I haven't thought that far yet," Waugh said after the defeat, their second in successive matches after losing to New Zealand by five wickets in Cardiff.

"We're looking at Bangladesh first up," he said.

"We played a lot better today, that's a good sign. We're capable of winning the next two games, and if we get through to the next round anything is possible."

"A lot of people have written us off already, which is good because it can motivate players. It's up to us now. We've got to big deep and come out and see what lies ahead of us."

The last 15 overs weren't good with the bowling side of things -- 145 off them last 15 has never happened to us before," Waugh added.

"I must admit the hitting was fantastic from the Pakistan players towards the end."

Australia were handicapped by a lack of a quality fifth bowler as Waugh, Darren

Lehmann and Damien Martyn went for 75 runs in 10 overs between them after all-rounder Shane Lee was ruled out with a score knee.

"I fancied my chances of getting a few wickets out there," Waugh said. "I thought I bowled okay. Hindsight is always good... that the fifth bowler went for few."

"Our main bowlers went for a few in the last 6-7 overs as well. So I won't put it down to the fifth bowler being the problem."

Australia also lacked the hitting power of their opponent, managing a solitary six in the last 10 overs to Pakistan's 11 fours and five sixes.

"It was always going to be difficult for any new batsman coming in," Waugh said. "They bowled well and looked much sharper compared to us."

"It's pretty hard to hit those opening bowlers when they are swinging that far in those conditions. It was a good effort to get so close."

The last time Australia failed to qualify for the semifinals was when they hosted the World Cup in 1992.

"We've tried hard to get ourselves up for the game. We've been a little bit flat, which everyone can see from the outside," Waugh said.

"It comes down to, you've got to do it yourself. You've got to lift yourself out in the middle. You can talk a lot off the field. We were much improved today, which is a good sign."

Frost factor

TAUNTON, England, May 24 (Reuters): Phil Frost, rated the top groundsman in English first-class cricket three times in the last five seasons, may be the man to help Sri Lanka's out-of-form World Cup batsmen get back among the runs.

Frost is head groundsman at Somerset's county headquarters in Taunton where holders Sri Lanka meet India on Wednesday in a Group A match that is a 'must win' for both teams.

A flat pitch at a relatively small ground with some invitingly short boundaries is likely for the game.

Frost, who won the groundsman of the year award from England's cricket authorities in 1994, 1996 and 1997, said today: "It should be a good pitch for a one-day game. There will not be any moisture in it, although the white ball may move around if it is overcast early on."

A key factor in producing a good pitch is an early start, according to Frost. "I begin to pre-

pare a pitch three and a half weeks before a match," he said.

The Asian rivals have a battle on their hands to qualify for the Super Six second stage after winning only one of their first three fixtures.

Frost's work on the surface was watched with keen interest by Sri Lanka's manager Duleep Mendis as his squad, who are all fully fit, practised at the ground today.

Nothing would encourage Mendis more than a true batting surface in view of the struggle most of the Sri Lankan top order have had to put together a big score.

Aravinda de Silva, their most experienced player in English conditions, has made 0, 1 and 6 in his three innings while opener Sanath Jayasuriya and captain Arjuna Ranatunga have managed an aggregate of only 82 runs between them in six visits to the crease.

Mendis said: "Our bowling and fielding is excellent but the batting is the problem. It used to be the other way round."

Indian plea turned down

LONDON, May 24 (Reuters/Internet): A protest by India over playing conditions during their group A defeat by Zimbabwe has been rejected by World Cup organisers.

In a statement the organisers said a meeting of their technical committee on Monday decided match officials had been correct in allowing Zimbabwe to end restrictions on field placements after 13 overs of the Indian innings rather than 15.

The reduction followed India being penalised four overs when they batted because of their slow over rate in the Zimbabwe innings.

India sent down 21 wides and 16 no-balls in the game on May 19 and had bowled only 46 overs when the time allotted for the Zimbabwe innings elapsed.

They were therefore restricted to batting for only 46 instead of 50 overs and lost by three runs.



WONDERFUL WASIM: Pakistan captain Wasim Akram is over the moon after having Australian opening batsman Adam Gilchrist clean bowled at Headingley on May 23. —AFP photo



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