



WANNA HEAR A JOKE? Indian superstar Sachin Tendulkar (L) pokes his tongue out at teammate Javagal Srinath (R) during training at Supersport Park in Centurion yesterday.

## No threat to Tendulkar

AFP, Centurion

New Zealand's pace bowling sensation Shane Bond will not pose any problems for Sachin Tendulkar, India's Kiwi coach John Wright said on Wednesday.

"Sachin can take care of anything," Wright said as his wards prepared to take on his countrymen in the World Cup Super Six match here on Friday.

India, with seven wins from eight matches, have already qualified for the semifinals along with reigning champions Australia, while New Zealand need a win on Friday to move up.

Tendulkar, one-day cricket's leading batsman, has aggregated a record 571 runs in this tournament, while Bond scored the living daylights out of the Australians on Tuesday with a fiery burst of 6-23 at Port Elizabeth.

India came to the World Cup after a disastrous tour of New

Zealand where they were blanked 2-0 in the Test series before losing the one-dayers 5-2.

But Wright, a former New Zealand captain who took over as Indian coach two years ago, denied Friday's game at Supersport Park was a grudge game.

"There is no grudge, we just have to play as well as we have been doing in the tournament and get through this game," he said.

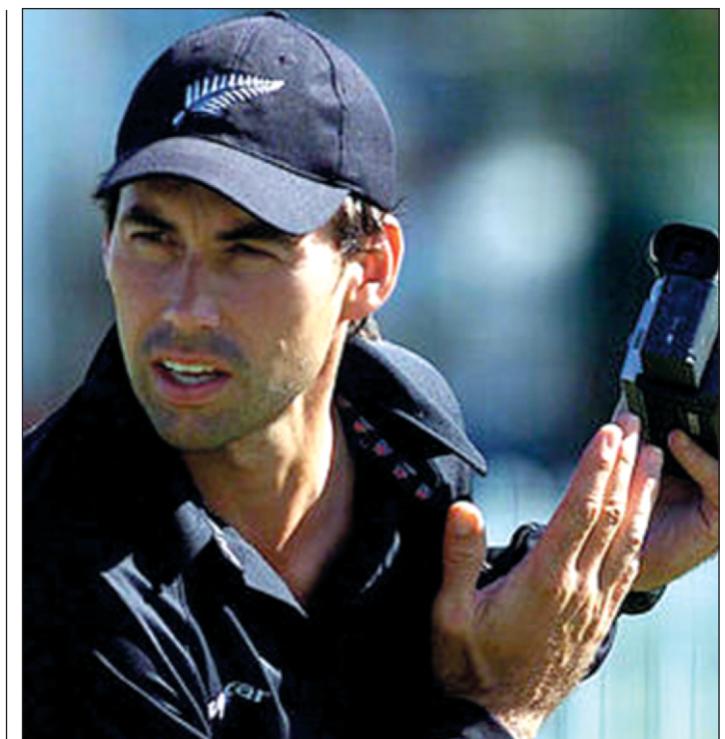
"From 14 teams, we have made it to the top four because we have played very good cricket."

"But we need to concentrate hard because no win is easy."

Wright stressed the Indians were not weighed down by the enormous expectations from millions of cricket lovers at home.

"It's a good position to be in since we have made the semifinals. We have won seven of our eight

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Stephen Fleming

PHOTO: STAR FILE

## Open up India's wounds

REUTERS, Centurion

Zimbabwe selector Andy Pycroft said Wednesday he had quit his post as a selector after he had not been consulted about the make-up of the team to play New Zealand in the country's opening Super Six match.

"I wasn't even consulted or contacted prior to the New Zealand match," said Pycroft who was commenting on television during Zimbabwe's Super Six clash against Kenya here Wednesday.

"The only explanation I was given was that the other selectors could not contact me. That's ridiculous. Everybody knows where I am. I'm not staying in the same hotel as the other selector here but I'm only 100 yards away."

And Pycroft added that ahead of this match, the team that he, as well as selector Stephen Mangongo, coach Geoff Marsh and captain Heath Streak had chosen, was rejected by the four other members of the panel back in Zimbabwe.

"The side we picked was not accepted back home. The side was basically being picked from 3,000km away. If that's the case, then what's the point of continuing," said Pycroft, himself a former Zimbabwe captain and convenor of selectors.

"I was asked to come back on the panel because the players thought they needed that cricketing credibility (convenor Ali Shah is the only other member of the six strong committee to have played senior

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PHOTO: STAR FILE

## Saurav being smart

### Quips & Quotes

APP, Johannesburg

Who's saying what at the World Cup.

"They'll be confident but sometimes that can be a weakness. Hopefully we can open up some of the wounds we opened in New Zealand."

**Kiwi skipper Stephen Fleming looking to continue his team's domination of India when the two sides meet at Centurion on Friday.**

"It was a bit damp at the start, then it played a little bit better but still I don't think it's a great one-day wicket."

**Australia captain Ricky Ponting complaining of the state of the pitch at St George's Park in Port Elizabeth where his team play their semifinal next Tuesday.**

"I would like to think that we are unbeatable. We just have to keep playing well. Even when we are struggling, the effort is always there."

**Brett Lee on Australia's team spirit.**

"I have no choice. I don't want them to say this old man can't bowl."

**India paceman Javagal Srinath thriving on the competition provided by young colleagues Ashish Nehra and Zaheer Khan.**

"I have no regrets about what I

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last played a semifinal at home in Calcutta in 1996.

India captain Saurav Ganguly on Wednesday downplayed his team's advance to the semifinals of the World Cup, saying it did not mean the title was in the bag.

"I'm not getting carried away. None of the boys are either," Ganguly said ahead of the last Super Sixes match against New Zealand at Centurion on Friday.

"It's great to have come so far, but we've only made the semifinals. We haven't won the World Cup and life hasn't changed."

India, with seven wins from their eight matches, and unbeaten reigning champions Australia are the only teams to have booked a place in the last four.

The remaining two berths will be decided after the last round of Super Sixes matches are played on Tuesday.

India will play their semifinal under the Kingsmead lights at Durban next Thursday, two days after the first semifinal featuring Australia at Port Elizabeth on Tuesday.

It will be India's first semifinal away from home since Kapil Dev's team won the title in England in 1983.

"There's no pressure, not yet at least," said Ganguly, who was not part of the Indian team when India

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Saurav Ganguly

## Pycroft quits!

APP, Bloemfontein

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Ali Bacher

INTERNET, Johannesburg

Pakistan's Shoaib Akhtar and Australia's Brett Lee, the world's fastest bowlers, confirmed their status by topping the league table of quickest deliveries recorded during the group stage of the World Cup.

According to statistics from host broadcaster Octagon, CS, they stand out as the only two bowlers to have broken the 160 kmph mark.

Akhtar's fastest delivery took the speed gun up to 161.3 kmph in Pakistan's match against England, while Lee came close to matching his pace rival, also against England, where his top speed was clocked at 160.7 kmph.

Third fastest bowler in the tournament to date is New Zealand's Shane Bond whose quickest delivery of 153.4 kmph was unleashed against Canada. Only 0.2 kmph slower than Bond was West Indies youngster Jermaine Lawson, who surprised the Kenyan batsmen with his pace during his one appearance of the ICC Cricket World Cup 2003 against Kenya.

The fastest recorded deliveries by bowlers from each participating country are:

**AUSTRALIA**

Brett Lee 160.7 kmph v England, Jason Gillespie 148.3 kmph v Zimbabwe and Andy Bichel 146.1 kmph v England

**BANGLADESH**

Mashrafee-bin-Mortuza 139.5 kmph v Canada, Tapash Baisya

138.9 kmph v Kenya and Talha Jabbur 135.9 kmph v West Indies

**CANADA**

Davis Joseph 140.5 kmph v Bangladesh, Sanjay Thuraisingham 135.5 kmph v Bangladesh and Austin Codrington 135.3 kmph v New Zealand

**ENGLAND**

James Anderson 144 kmph v Australia, Andrew Flintoff 143.9 kmph v India and Andrew Caddick 143.3 kmph v Namibia

**HOLLAND**

Edger Schiferli 138.4 kmph v Namibia, Roland Lefebvre 126.1 kmph v India and Tim de Leede 124.8 kmph v Namibia

**INDIA**

Ashish Nehra 149.7 kmph v Zimbabwe, Zaheer Khan 147.4 kmph v Holland and Javagal Srinath 143.0 kmph v England

**NAMIBIA**

Gerrie Snyman 138.2 kmph v Pakistan and Burton van Roon 134.7 kmph v Australia

**NEW ZEALAND**

Shane Bond 153.4 kmph v Canada, Andre Adams 143.8 kmph v West Indies

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Shoaib Akhtar

PHOTO: STAR FILE



PHOTO: STAR FILE

Brett Lee

REUTERS, Port Elizabeth

World Cup executive director Ali Bacher has ordered an examination of the Port Elizabeth pitch in an effort to improve it ahead of next Tuesday's semifinal.

Tuesday's pitch started damp and the early moisture was exploited by New Zealand's pace bowler Shane Bond, who took six for 23 to reduce Australia to 84 for seven.

Bacher said in a statement: "This is not a criticism of the Eastern Province Cricket Board or the ground staff."

"However, we are determined to produce a pitch for the cricket World Cup semifinal at St George's Park that is conducive to great one-day cricket."

The inspection will be carried out by Hilbert Smit, chairman of the South African groundsmen's association, and the United Cricket Board of South Africa's director of cricket operations Brian Basson.

They will work with Adrian Carter, the groundsman at the

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