

## Klusener back

FROM PAGE 13  
overs matches against the West Indies. The series starts at Newlands, Cape Town, Sunday.

Klusener, 32, one of the hardest-hitting batsmen in the world game and player of the tournament in the 1999 World Cup in England, sued the United Cricket Board for unfair dismissal after he was left out of the side for a tour of England last year and was dropped from the board's list of contracted players.

Klusener claimed he had been told by the selectors that he was being rested from a tour of Bangladesh which preceded the England trip and had been led to believe he would be picked for England.

The case was settled out of court recently and Klusener was given a short-term contract from January to April 2004.

He backed up his claim for selection with consistent performances for KwaZulu-Natal in domestic cricket and his chances received a further boost when rival all-rounder Andrew Hall was put of action with a back injury in the fourth Test against the West Indies which ended at Centurion Tuesday.

Smith, who was appointed after the country's 2003 World Cup failure, criticised Klusener at a public function last year, saying Klusener was a disruptive influence, while Klusener said in a newspaper interview after he was dropped that he had not agreed with the tactics and preparation methods of coach Eric Simons during the World Cup.

Smith said: "Lance has come a long way since then. He's got an opportunity to fit back in. He's definitely got the ability but as an all-rounder he's got to be able to bowl 10 overs.

"He's got an opportunity to fit into the structures and cultures that have developed. Eric (Simons) has a saying that the bus is waiting, who wants to get on? He's got that chance now to get back on the bus."

**SOUTH AFRICA:** Graeme Smith (captain), Mark Boucher (vice-captain), Boeta Dippenaar, Herschelle Gibbs, Jacques Kallis, Lance Klusener, Albie Morkel, Andre Nel, Makhaya Ntini, Robin Peterson, Shaun Pollock, Ashwell Prince, Shaun Pollock, Ashwell Prince, Jacques Rudolph, Morné van Wyk.

**SOUTH AFRICA A:** Neil McKenzie (captain), Martin van Jaarsveld, Loots Bosman, Hashim Amla, Justin Ontong, Justin Kemp, Nicky Boje, Thami Tsolekile, Garnett Kruger, Mfuneko Ngam, Roger Temelachus.

**Selectors believe**

FROM PAGE 13  
some of our plans to some of their players haven't been as good as they can be.

"But I don't think it's going to be too far away before you see us take a few early wickets and put them under pressure. So far, right through the summer, that hasn't happened but it's bound to happen very soon."

India will be boosted by the return of new-ball bowler Ajit Agarkar but the opening pair Sachin Tendulkar and Virender Sehwag remain under an injury cloud.

India's coach John Wright said Tendulkar, who has a sore ankle and Sehwag, who is carrying a shoulder strain, would be assessed just before play started on Thursday.

"We obviously want to put out our strongest team tomorrow and we would like both of them to be in it but we have to assess that in the morning," he said.

## TEAMS

**AUSTRALIA:** Ricky Ponting (captain), Adam Gilchrist, Simon Katich, Damien Martyn, Michael Bevan, Michael Clarke, Andrew Symonds, Ian Harvey, Andy Bichel, Brett Lee, Jason Gillespie, Brad Williams (12th man to be named).

**INDIA** (from): Saurav Ganguly (captain), Sachin Tendulkar, Virender Sehwag, Rahul Dravid, VVS Laxman, Yuvraj Singh, Parthiv Patel, Hemant Badani, Rohan Gavaskar, Ajit Agarkar, Anil Kumble, Irfan Pathan, Lakshmanpathy Balaji. (Two to be omitted).



PHOTO: INTERNET  
American Andre Agassi reacts during his match against Tomas Berdych of the Czech Republic at the Australian Open yesterday.

## American collision nears

## Australian Open

AFP, Melbourne

Andy Roddick and Andre Agassi bounced two Czechs out of the Australia Open Wednesday as the Americans headed towards a semifinal clash of generations in the season's first Grand Slam.

World number one Andy Roddick, aiming to become the first man in 15 majors to win consecutive Grand Slam titles after taking the US Open in September, blasted aside 205-ranked Bohdan Ulihrach 6-2, 6-2, 6-3 in 73 minutes.

Roddick, at 21 the youngest end-of-season number one in tennis history, broke Ulihrach's serve five times and served 20 aces with his service on song.

Asked what difference being number one has made, Roddick said it all boiled down to confidence.

"I think the biggest difference is when I don't feel like I'm playing that well, I still have an underlying confidence, whereas before maybe I would have panicked a little bit more," he said.

He now faces 22-year-old American Taylor Dent in round three and has few serious rivals standing between him and a likely semifinal match-up with Agassi.

Seeded fourth and at 33 the oldest man in the tournament, Agassi gave one of the Open's youngest competitors, 18-year-old qualifier Tomas Berdych, a 6-0, 6-2, 6-4 tutorial.

Agassi romped through the first eight games against Berdych, but encountered stiffer opposition in the final set when the Czech held a break point on Agassi's service in the fourth game.

"I like his game a lot. He is a lot of potential. He's going to be a real good player," Agassi said of Berdych.

In round three, Agassi will face the experienced Swede Thomas Enqvist but is expected to run into little trouble in the run-up to the semifinal.

On the women's side, top seed and world number one Justine Henin-Hardenne overcame a stomach ailment to pursue her campaign to win back-to-back Grand Slams by blowing away Camille Pin of France 6-1, 6-1.

"I haven't felt well for two or three days and I was feeling a little bit tired and out of energy," Henin-Hardenne said after the match.

"I need some rest for sure," added the reigning French and US Open champion, adding that she expected to be fit for her third-round tie against Russian 30th seed Svetlana Kuznetsova on Friday.

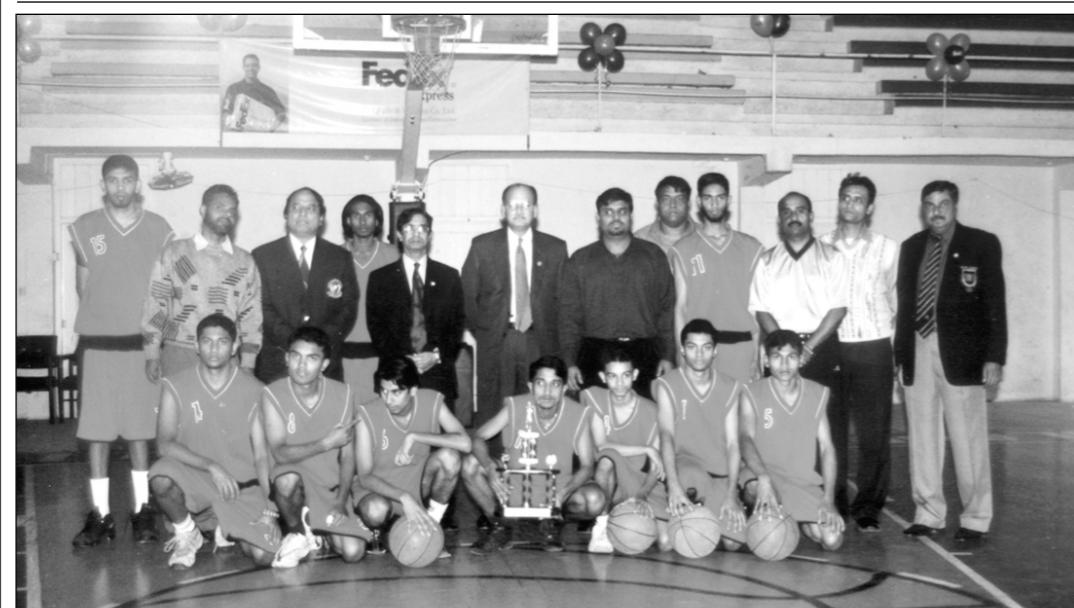


PHOTO: STAR  
Bakshibazar Club players pose with the guests after winning the FedEx Second Division Basketball League title at the Dhamondi Basketball Gymnasium on Thursday.

## CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer



## Aussies' SL tour on TEN Sports

CRICINFO, undated

Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) have signed a television broadcasting agreement with TEN Sports for the forthcoming Australia tour of Sri Lanka. Australia are due to play five ODIs and three Tests in February and March.

TEN Sports, a satellite sports channel owned by the Dubai-based Taj Television, was one of five companies that had bid for rights. PCN Sports, Sony Max and TWI had pulled out of the bid process after an initial expression of interest while TEN Sports' offer was preferred to one made by WSG Nimbus.

SLC had initially planned to sell the broadcasting and sponsorship rights for a three-year term but the low bids tabled prompted the board to sell only for the Australia tour. SLC will now try to confirm two triangular tournaments involving India in 2005 and 2006 to make their rights more attractive to potential broadcasters.

TEN Sports, who also own all rights for CBFS managed tournaments in Sharjah and Morocco as well as all matches played in Pakistan, had been clear frontrunners in the bid process after negotiating a deal last September that gave them important country-specific rights for the Australia tour.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: X equals E

The Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it 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.

## India to build stadium in Guyana

AFP, New Delhi

India has agreed to finance and construct a brand new cricket stadium in Guyana that could host matches during the 2007 World Cup in the Caribbean, it was announced on Wednesday.

The 26-million-dollar stadium will be built in the small town of Providence, 11 kilometres (seven miles) south of Guyana's capital city Georgetown and is scheduled to be completed by 2006, according to a Guyanese government release received here.

The Indian government will release a grant of six million dollars and low-interest loans of 20 million dollars towards the construction of the stadium, it said.

The funding of the new facility was negotiated with the Indian government by Guyanese President Bharrat Jagdeo during an official visit to India earlier this month.

"I came back with the assurance from the prime minister and president of India that the cricket stadium will be built," Jagdeo, who has Indian origins, was quoted as saying.

Guyana is among the Caribbean nations bidding to host matches at the first ever cricket World Cup in the region. The sport's world ruling body has urged these nations to upgrade existing facilities.

Work on the new stadium is expected to begin later this year. Indian engineers recently visited Guyana to conduct soil tests and other studies.

Cricket is one of the most popular sports among Guyana's 700,000 residents, half of whom are of East Indian descent.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) awarded the 2007 World Cup to the Caribbean despite criticism the region did not have the required infrastructure to host the sport's showpiece event.

India, with millions of cricket-crazy television audiences, is widely regarded as cricket's financial superpower.

## Love ton

AFP, Hobart

Former world number one Gustavo Kuerten reached the third round for the first time, ending a miserable run at Melbourne Park.

Until Wednesday's 7-5, 6-7, 6-4, 6-3 victory over Ivan Ljubicic, the Brazilian had endured five second-round losses and two defeats in the first round here.

Marat Safin, runner-up in 2002, conquered his emotions to beat Finland's Jarkko Nieminen 7-6, 6-4, 4-6, 6-4 in a pulsating encounter at Melbourne Park.

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## Strong SA batting, poor WI bowling

## Cricket

APP, Centurion

South Africa grabbed the initiative early in every Test, West Indian captain Brian Lara admitted after South Africa wrapped up a 3-0 series win with a ten-wicket victory on the fifth day of the fourth and final Test at Centurion Park Tuesday.

"We had to play catch-up from Day One," said Lara. "It is a fact that the opposition seemed to grab the opportunity on the first day every time."

South African skipper Graeme Smith said it was no accident.

"We put big importance on the first session of every Test and we want to win Day One every time."

Smith praised what he described as "a great culture in the squad".

He said the batsmen were no longer satisfied with making one century in a series, while the bowlers had been "fantastic" on pitches which were so good for batting that 20 centuries were scored by the two teams in four matches, only one short of the world record for hundreds in a five-match series.

Lara was not despondent about the series result and said it had been a much better team performance than when the West Indies lost all five Tests in 1998-99.

"I must congratulate the South African team, who played very good cricket, but we can take a lot

of positives from the series," said Lara. "The batting performance, in terms of runs and application, was maybe the best of my entire career by a West Indies team away from home."

Lara acknowledged that the bowling and fielding had not matched the batting. "The South Africans were scoring too quickly and that is why they won the series 3-0. If you don't bowl in the right areas to players like Smith and (Herschelle) Gibbs they are going to get off to a flier."

The West Indian captain called for the West Indies board to introduce a system of central contracts, which have become the norm in most leading cricket nations.

"You can't play international sport if you don't do anything for four months. I would like the board to contract these guys to make sure they stay fit and keep going to the nets."

Lara said his team had been hit hard by injuries and he expected a much better performance when England tour the Caribbean later this year. He also expected the West Indies would be more competitive in a five-match one-day series against South Africa which starts in Newlands in Cape Town Sunday.

Almost four hours of play was lost because of rain Tuesday but South Africa were able to claim the last seven West Indies wickets for 85 runs before, with more rain threatening, they knocked off the 46 runs they needed in just 21 minutes off 34 overs.

Shaun Pollock took four wickets

and bowled unchanged through three brief periods of play.

After claiming only one wicket in 64 overs Monday, when rain and bad light cut play, South Africa's hopes of completing the series with a win were re-ignited when they took three wickets in 22 balls before lunch. Two more wickets after lunch left the tourists precariously placed before the rain returned.

Finally, with a nominal 24 overs remaining, the players returned after tea and South Africa were able to wrap up the innings, although they had some anxious moments as Corey Collymore and Fidel Edwards put on 26 runs in 29 minutes for the last wicket, with an ever-increasing likelihood that bad light might stop play.

The floodlights were on throughout the day and were used on each of the five days of the match.

Play started 100 minutes late but man of the series Makhaya Ntini, armed with the second new ball, gave South Africa an ideal start when he had Chris Gayle (107) caught at gully with the last ball of the fifth over.

Gayle and Rammareesh Sarwan put on a record 174 for the fourth wicket. Shaun Pollock trapped Sarwan leg before wicket in the next over for 119 before Ntini bowled Dwayne Smith for nought. Smith was Ntini's 29th victim of the series, equalling Pollock's record for most wickets in a series against the West Indies, set in a five-Test contest in 1998-99.

## A hero after one over

## Cricket

REUTERS, Melbourne

David Hookes, who died on Monday after