Coulter-Nile, Starc excel as Australia puts it past the West Indies

Defending champion survives an aggressive spell of fast bowling to set up a total that the men in maroon fail to overhaul



REUTERS

NOTTINGHAM Fast bowler Mitchell Starc's five-wicket haul and a defiant 92 by Nathan Coulter-Nile helped Australia beat West Indies by 15 runs at Trent

Bridge on Thursday to secure

its second consecutive win. Chasing 289 for victory, West Indies got off to a poor start before Shai Hope (68) and Nicholas Pooran (40) laid the platform for the power-hitters, but the Starc-led Australian attack kept them on a tight leash, restricting them to 273 for nine.

"You have to keep trying to get wickets, once the West Indies batsmen get set they are so destructive and can hit it to all parts," Australian captain Aaron Finch said.

Big blow

After leg-spinner Adam Zampa removed Pooran, fast bowler Pat Cummins had Hope caught at mid-on in the 35th over to deliver a body blow to the Windies who never recovered.

Starc claimed Jason Holder (51), Carlos Brathwaite



Rescue act: Coming in at No. 8, Nathan Coulter-Nile played audaciously to bail out Australia after it was rattled early by the Windies quicks. • AP

and Sheldon Cottrell in the final five overs to finish with five for 46 in his 10 overs.

Coulter-Nile Earlier. struck the highest World Cup score for a No. 8 batsman as he took Australia to a competitive total after it lost its first five wickets for 79 runs.

Having won the toss, the Windies new-ball attack of Cottrell and Oshane Thomas removed Australian openers David Warner and Finch with 26 runs on the board.

All-rounder Andre Russell struck in his first over when a thick edge from Usman Kha-

waja was taken by a brilliant one-handed catch by wicketkeeper Hope, before Glenn Maxwell was snared for a

Halting the collapse Smith (73) and wicketkeeper Alex Carey (45) halted a mid-

SCOREBOARD AUSTRALIA VS WEST INDIES

AUSTRALIA

David Warner c Hetmyer b Cottrell 3 (8b), Aaron Finch c Hope b Thomas 6 (10b), Usman Khawaja c Hope b Russell 13 (19b, 2x4), Steve Smith c Cottrell b Thomas 73 (103b, 7x4), Glenn Maxwell c Hope b Cottrell O (2b), Marcus Stoinis c Pooran b Holder 19 (23b, 4x4), Alex Carey c Hope b Russell 45 (55b, 7x4), Nathan Coulter-Nile c Holder b Brathwaite 92 (60b, 8x4, 4x6), Pat Cummins c Cottrell b Brathwaite 2 (6b). Mitchell Starc c Holder b Brathwaite 8 (9b, 1x4), Adam Zampa (not out) O (Ob); Extras (b-1, lb-1, w-24, nb-1): 27; Total (in 49 overs): 288.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-15 (Finch, 2.2 overs), 2-26 (Warner, 3.6), 3-36 (Khawaja, 6.6), 4-38 (Maxwell, 7.4), 5-79 (Stoinis, 16.1), 6-147 (Carey, 30.4), 7-249 (Smith, 44.2), 8-268 (Cummins, 46.1), 9-284 (Coulter-Nile, 48.2).

WEST INDIES BOWLING

Thomas 10-0-63-2, Cottrell 9-0-56-2. Russell 8-0-41-2. Brathwaite 10-0-67-3, Holder 7-2-28-1, Nurse 5-0-31-0.

STAT SPHERE

Starc has taken the fewest ODIs (77) to reach 150 wickets. He is followed by Saqlain (78), Boult (81), Lee (82) and Ajanta Mendis (84)

Russell has reached the 1000-run mark in ODIs. and is the quickest in terms of balls taken (767), edging past Ronchi (807)

2 Starc's five-wicket hauls in the World Cup equals the most by a bowler. Others who have achieved it are: Gilmour, Ashantha de Mel, Vasbert Drakes, McGrath and Afridi

dle-order collapse before

Coulter-Nile struck four sixes

"I didn't think I'd get that

much but happy to. I got a bit

of a spray from the coach af-

ter getting out in a warm-up

game so thought I'd stick

around," man-of-the-match

and eight fours in his 92.

Miandad has had a longe

Most consecutive 50+ scores 9- Miandad, 6- Greenidge, Andrew Jones, Mohd. Yousuf Mark Waugh, Williamson, Ross Taylor and Gayle

Coulter-Nile's 92 is his highest List-A score, Only once before has a No. 8 posted Woakes vs SL, 2016)

Coulter-Nile said.

Umpiring bloopers In a game dotted with umpiring errors reversed by the Decision Review System (DRS), Windies opener Chris Gayle was unlucky to be adjudged lbw when he should

WEST INDIES

Chris Gayle lbw b Starc 21 (17b, 4x4), Evin Lewis c Smith b Cummins 1 (5b), Shai Hope c Khawaja b Cummins 68 (105, 7x4), Nicholas Pooran c Finch b Zampa 40 (36b, 5x4, 1x6), Shimron Hetmyer run out 21 (28b, 3x4), Jason Holder c Zampa b Starc 51 (57b, 7x4, 1x6), Andre Russell c Maxwell b Starc 15 (11b, 2x4, 1x6). Carlos Brathwaite c Finch b Starc 16 (17b, 1x4, 1x6), Ashley Nurse (not out) 19 (18b, 4x4), Sheldon Cottrell b Starc 1 (2b). Oshane Thomas (not out) 0 (4b);

Extras (lb-9, w-11): 20; Total for nine wkts. in 50 overs): 273.

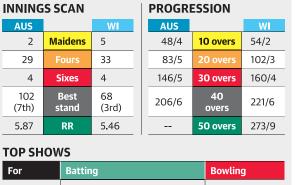
FALL OF WICKETS

1-7 (Lewis, 1.4 overs), 2-31 (Gayle, 4.5), 3-99 (Pooran, 19.1), 4-149 (Hetmyer, 27.2), 5-190 (Hope, 34.6), 6-216 (Russell, 38.5), 7-252 (Brathwaite, 45.3), 8-252 (Holder, 45.6), 9-256 (Cottrell, 47.3)

AUSTRALIA BOWLING

Starc 10-0-46-5, Cummins 10-3-41-2. Coulter-Nile 10-0-70-0. Maxwell 6-1-31-0, Zampa 10-0-58-1. Stoinis 4-0-18-0.

Toss: WI. MoM: Coulter-Nile.



For	Batting	Bowling
Australia	Coulter-Nile 92 (60b, 8x4, 4x6)	Starc 5/46 (10)
West Indies	Hope 68 (105b, 7x4)	Brathwaite 3/67 (10)

have had a free-hit after Starc had overstepped in the pre-

vious delivery. Chris Gaffaney had given Gayle out twice in the third over but the opener survived with two successful DRS appeals.

Holder had two incorrect

decisions reversed.

Next assignment AUSTRALIA: vs India, June 9, The Oval, 3 p.m. WEST INDIES:

vs South Africa, June 10, Southampton, 3 p.m.

India's win was built on hard-work and steely resolve

Gains derived from the South Africa contest will help the team as it gears up for sterner battles

K.C. VIJAYA KUMAR

Parachuting from the nailbiting thrills of the Indian Premier League, where they represented various franchises, the Men in Blue had to pause a while before getting used to the rhythms of the ICC World Cup.

The step up from T20s to conventional 50-overs-aside games might seem an organic one and yet this isn't entirely about rapid runs inflationary asking-

ODIs are constructed upon fine starts leading to steady consolidation that paves the way for the slog. Add to it the middle overs where teams either gain heft or lose their way and you get an idea of how incremental benefits have a larger reso-

Seen in that light, Virat Kohli's men did remarkably well in their opening fixture against South Africa at Southampton's Hampshire Bowl on Wednesday. The sixwicket triumph may have looked easy but it demanded hard-work and a steely resolve, and India delivered on those counts.

Struggling side

The Proteas are no longer the force they once were



Heroes! Rohit Sharma and Yuzvendra Chahal who conjured up the successful start. • AFP

and, to make it worse, key fast bowlers Dale Steyn and Lungi Ngidi have been laid low by injury. Faf du Plessis still had a Kagiso Rabada and a Chris Morris to fall back upon and the batting had bits-and-pieces players deep into the tail. But Kohli found the right men to counter these precise strengths of the rival unit.

Jasprit Bumrah, Bhuvneshwar Kumar and even Hardik Pandya revelled on a surface that promised runs

but instead offered more help as the weather turned grim and the clouds ho-

Spinners Yuzvendra Chahal and Kuldeep Yadav, wristy and nagging, kept a tight leash and in restricting South Africa to 227 for nine, half the battle was won.

"It was a low-scoring game and that was because of how the pitch was throughout. We were very professional with the new ball and, in the middle overs, the spinners picked five wickets between them," Kohli said.

Chahal, who scalped four, varied his air-speed, got his lengths right, had a lovely dip and except when Morris wielded the long-handle, was largely economical.

The former chess player has a ticking brain and he rated his dismissal of du Plessis as "special": "He is their main batsman. I had planned his wicket. My ball was drifting pretty well, so I thought I can bowl the slider on the off-stump, and it drifted onto middle-stump and he didn't pick that. It hit the pad and went on to the stumps.'

Small totals can affect the pacing of the chase. Do you go at break-neck speed and finish the game or hang in for a while, gauge the situation and eventually win?

Composed knock

India lost Shikhar Dhawan early but with Rohit Sharma remaining unbeaten on 122 (144b, 13x4, 2x6), Kohli's men found a spine that lasted. This wasn't the Rohit who blitzes once he gets past his 50. This was a batsman of pedigree buckling down, silencing his ego and being determined to stay till the end.

"He controlled the game beautifully and allowed the others to display themselves and string in little partnerships. He played the perfect innings on that kind of a pitch and against a bowling attack that was threatening to pick up wickets at any stage," Kohli said.

Rohit's effort and the performance of K.L. Rahul and M.S. Dhoni will bolster the team as it gears up for sterner battles, starting with the contest against Australia at the Oval here on Sunday.

Dhoni's tribute draws ICC's censure

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA SOUTHAMPTON

M.S. Dhoni sporting an Army insignia on his glove during the India-South Africa clash was well appreciated by his fans but the International Cricket Council on Thursday

requested the BCCI to have the badge removed, saying it is against regulations.

Claire Furlong, ICC general manager - strategic communications, said, "It is against the regulations and we have requested it

to be removed." When asked if Dhoni, who is an Honorary Lieutenant Colonel in the Parachute Regiment of the Territorial Army, could be penalised, she added: "For

first breach no, just a

request to remove".

Kiwis survive Bangladesh scare

New Zealand defeated Bangladesh by two wickets at the Oval on Wednesday. With this win, the Kiwis have won both their matches in the tournament.

Chasing a target of 245, the Kiwis got off to a flying start as openers Martin Guptill and Colin Munro put on 35 runs in the first five overs, but their stand was cut short as Guptill (25) was sent back by Shakib Al Hasan in the

Munro and skipper Kane Williamson were able to put just 20 runs for the third wicket as Shakib scalped his second wicket, dismissing Munro (24) in the tenth over. Ross Taylor along with

Williamson then added 105 runs to steady the innings for the BlackCaps.

In a see-saw battle and

with the Kiwis requiring seven more runs for the win, Matthew Henry was dismissed by Saifuddin. However, Mitchell Santner and Lockie Ferguson took BlackCaps ov

Next assignment NEW ZEALAND: June 8 vs Afghanistan, Taunton,

England, Cardiff, 3 p.m.

er the line.

SCOREBOARD NEW ZEALAND VS BANGLADESH

BANGLADESH 244 in 49.2 overs **NEW ZEALAND**

Martin Guptill c Tamim b Shakib 25 (14b, 3x4 1x6), Colin Munro c Mehidy b Shakib 24 (34b, 3x4, 1x6). Kane Williamson c Mossadek b Mehidy 40 (72b, 1x4), Ross Taylor c Mushfigur b Mossadek 82 (91b, 9x4), Tom Latham c Saifuddin b Mehidy O (4b), James Neesham c Sarkar b Mossadek 25 (33b, 2x4 1x6), Colin de Grandhomme c Mushfiqur b Saifuddin 15 (13b, 2x4), Mitchell Santner (not out) 17 (12b, 2x4), Matt Henry b Saifuddin 6 (8b, 1x4), Lockie Ferguson (not out) 4 (3b,1 x4); Extras: (nb-1, w-9): 10; Total: (for eight wkts. in 47.1 overs): 248. **FALL OF WICKETS**

1-35 (Guptill, 5.1 overs), 2-55 (Munro, 9.6), 3-160 (Williamson, 31.1), 4-162 (Latham, 31.6), 5-191 (Taylor, 38.3), 6-218 (de Grandhomme, 42.5), 7-218 (Neesham, 43.3), (Henry, 46.3).

BANGLADESH BOWLING

Mortaza 5-0-32-0, Mehidy 10-0-47-2, Mustafizur 7.1-0-48-0, Shakib 10-0-47-2, Saifuddin 7-0-41-2, Mossadek 8-0-33-2. MoM: Ross Taylor.

New Zealand won by two wickets with 17 balls remaining.

We want to create pressure as a bowling unit: Bumrah

'I just try to keep things simple, focus on the processes'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Long after the dust had settled at the Hampshire Bowl on a heady Wednesday for Indian fans, Jasprit Bumrah drew praise from Virat Kohli and Hashim Amla.

The Indian skipper and South African opener were united in their admiration for the speedster and, Amla, not someone prone to hyperbole, exclaimed: "He is one hell of a bowler!"

The man in the centre of attention, however, remained oblivious to the fastdeveloping halo around him. Bumrah, who grabbed two wickets and played his part in India's triumph over South Africa in the key World Cup game, spoke to the media on Wednesday

He stressed that the bow-

If you tick all of the boxes, everything else will fall in place

ling unit wanted to always shackle the batsmen: "We want to create pressure as a bowling unit. Everybody chipped in. Bhuvi (Bhuvneshwar) also took two wickets. Whenever they (Kuldeep Yadav and Yuzvendra Chahal) take crucial wickets in the middle overs, it is always helpful, especially when you come back into the attack."

Bumrah reiterated on the need for right preparation and approach: "On a wicket like this (Hampshire Bowl) you get help and then you can sometimes be tempted to try too many things. At that time, you must realise that you don't need to do too many things, just bowling Test-match type of bowling is enough, be patient when you are getting help.

"That's what we try to adopt and automatically the results will come. I want to do all my preparations before coming into a game. If I have done everything, in the match it is all about execution and keeping a clear head space, and that's very important."

The seamer prefers to stay grounded, taking it one day at a time. "I don't think about expectations. I just think about what the team requires me to do. I don't think I have a reputation to live up to. I just try to keep things simple, focus on the processes. If you tick all of the boxes, everything else will fall in place," Bumrah said and signed off.

Very disappointed to have lost three in a row, says Amla



Quick return: Hashim Amla trudges back to the pavilion after being snared by Jasprit Bumrah in his second over. • REUTERS

Still hopes for a turn-around in South Africa's fortunes

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT SOUTHAMPTON Time's winged chariot seems

to be inexorably catching up with the South African squad. And slowly its stalwarts are ebbing away. If A.B. de Villiers stunned

all by retiring from international cricket and opted to stick to domestic T20 leagues, the vagaries of age and the fickle nature of form seem to be plaguing a few others.

Tipping point

Dale Steyn has been laid low through a shoulder injury and Hashim Amla isn't exactly racking up the runs. At 36, and with previous scores of 6 (against India on Wednesday), 13, 14, 59, 25 and 8 in ODIs, the opener with a zenlike demeanour is at his tipping point. His last limitedover hundred (108 n.o.) was scored against Pakistan at Port Elizabeth in January before he suffered a slump. For the Proteas, down

with three consecutive defeats, Amla has to fire. Aware of his team's needs and a bit perplexed about the squad's dipping fortunes, Amla, who squared up to the media late on Wednesday evening at the ICC's mixed-zone, still hoped for a turn-around: "Very disappointed to have lost three in a row. In previous World Cups, we have played really well but we haven't won a World Cup. This could be the other way round. Imagine that where you start badly and then find some momentum. Obviously we need to win five or six games in a row."

Surprised by pitch Amla expressed surprise ov-

er how the pitch at the Hampshire Bowl eventually turned out: "We anticipated it to be a bit more high-scoring. And the guys went in tion with Tabraiz (Shamsi) being a left-arm wrist-spinner. The wicket was a lot more seamer-friendly, nipping throughout the day. Those are things you can't anticipate." And what about his dis-

with the more attacking op-

missal to Jasprit Bumrah? "Batting upfront, you have to assess the wicket. Unfortunately I didn't get past the assessment period, it was the first ball I faced off Bumrah. You don't know what to expect, it just comes off the wicket and it can happen. When you look around, I think him and Kagiso Rabada are the two best bowlers in the world. They have got pace, accuracy and can bowl at all stages," Amla replied.

In the days ahead, he has to become the Amla of old patient, adhesive and etching consistent runs. South Africa needs that from its veteran batsman.

Team spirit: Coach Mickey Arthur believes that if Pakistan plays with belief and intensity, it would be a difficult team to beat. • LAURENCE GRIFFITHS/GETTY IMAGES

Stay 'ruthless': Arthur

Urges Pakistan not to let up against Sri Lanka

WC PREVIEW

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Pakistan coach Mickey Arthur has urged his team to "stay ruthless" at the World Cup as it trains its sights on Sri Lanka after shocking England.

The notoriously unpredictable Pakistan side held its nerve to beat the host by 14 runs at Trent Bridge on Monday, just three days after crashing to a seven-wicket defeat against the West Indies at the same venue.

Resolve

Arthur praised his team's resolve after a "shocking" defeat in their tournament

"It was just so good to see us go out and play with the belief and intensity that we had spoken about," Arthur told AFP.

"When we put all three disciplines together we know we can beat anybody. We now need to stay consistent and ruthless.

Pakistan posted an impressive 348 for eight against a potent England bowling at-



LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1, 2 (SD & HD), 3 P.M.

tack, with fifties from veteran Mohammad Hafeez, Babar Azam and Sarfaraz Ahmed.

Pacemen Wahab Riaz and Mohammad Amir, and legspinner Shadab Khan, took the wickets to restrict England to 334 for nine in its 50

"You could see the hunger, the determination and the resolve to do well in batting after a horror show and then the bowlers fought hard, so we need to repeat that in the coming matches as well," said Arthur.

Pakistan will be tempted to bring in fast bowler Mohammad Hasnain for his raw pace, something that New Zealand exploited against Sri Lanka during its 10-wicket rout of its opponent in Cardiff on Saturday.

On Tuesday, Sri Lanka beat Afghanistan in a rainshortened match, also in Cardiff, to breathe life into its campaign.

Batting collapse

But the 1996 champion will be wary of another middleorder batting collapse after it lost five wickets for 14 runs against New Zealand and seven wickets for 36 against Afghanistan.

Sri Lankan coach Chandika Hathurusingha said he had told his batsmen to up their game.

"I don't give pep talks. I give honest talk, that's all.

"I tell them what has to be done. They have to come and perform," said Hathu-

Teenager Anisimova dethrones Halep

Meets Barty next; Djokovic, Thiem set up a semifinal clash after straight-set wins

ROLAND GARROS

REUTERS

CSA rejected

de Villiers'

comeback

offer with

'no regrets'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

A.B. de Villiers wanted to

come out of retirement for

the World Cup but Cricket

South Africa (CSA) refused to accept the offer as the

batting great had ignored pleas to not retire last

ESPNCricinfo, de Villiers

made the offer to come

back in May, barely 24

hours before the final

CSA selection panel

confirmed that de Villiers

that skipper Faf du Plessis

convenor Linda Zondi

did make the offer and

and coach Ottis Gibson

him back as well.

However, de Villiers'

omission was based on

principles, Zondi said.

Villiers not to retire in

2018. Although there was

a perception that he was

when to play - which was

not true – I did give him

monitor his season to get

fresh and in a good space,'

release. "He turned down

the offer and said he was

to retire," he recalled.

at peace with his decision

Ottis Gibson to share AB's

desire to be included in

the squad on the day we

announced our World Cup

squad was a shock. AB left

a big vacuum when he

retired, we had a year to

find players at franchise

level to fill the gap," he

"For Faf du Plessis and

the option to plan and

him to the World Cup

Zondi said in the CSA

picking and choosing

"I pleaded with A.B. de

were quite keen to have

squad was to be

announced by CSA.

According to

JOHANNESBURG

Teenage sensation Amanda Anisimova blew defending champion Simona Halep out of the French Open with a shock 6-2, 6-4 victory in the quarterfinals on Thursday, and immediately set her sights on winning the Suzanne Lenglen Cup.

Third seed Halep, who had been looking to become the first woman to retain her title at Roland Garros since Belgian Justine Henin won three times in a row from 2005-07, never found a solution to counter the 17-yearold American's beguiling mix of speed and accuracy.

The unseeded Anisimova, the first player born in the 2000s to reach the last eight at a Grand Slam, can become the first teenager to lift the trophy here since Iva Majoli of Croatia prevailed in 1997.

She next faces Australian eighth seed Ashleigh Barty, who beat American Madison Keys 6-3, 7-5 in the day's other rescheduled quarterfinal after Wednesday's complete washout.

Negating big serves

In the men's section, despite sending mighty serves crashing down from a great height, towering World No. 5 Alexander Zverev could offer only momentary resistance to Novak Djokovic, as the top seed barged into the semifinals in straight sets.

The 6ft 6ins (1.98m) tall German had served for the opening set at 5-4 before Djokovic simply clicked it up a notch to steal that set 7-5 then romp through the next two 6-2, 6-2.

"He was serving very well, it was a big challenge for me to find the right returning position," Djokovic said on court afterwards. "I was 4-5 down, then I played five or six games perfectly, hitting



with ease on Thursday. • AFP

Ultimate showdown

Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal have faced off 38 times. Though the Spaniard leads the headto-head 23-15, the Swiss has won their last five meetings. Their last encounter was at the final of the ATP Masters 1000 Shanghai in 2017.



Outdoor Grass (3): Federer leads 2-1. Outdoor Hard (14): Nadal has an 8-6 lead, Indoor Hard (6): Federer leads 5-1.

Titles: Federer (20), Head-to-head: Nadal leads 9-3.

At Roland Garros Titles: Nadal (11), Federer (1) Head-to-head: Nadal leads 5-0. Their previous meeting came in the final in 2011. The Spaniard won 7-5. 7-6(3), 5-7, 6-1.

Final (four times): Semifinals (once): 4-6, 6-4, 6-3 in 2005)



clean balls. It was very windy but it felt good to play (after Wednesday's washout)."

Thursday's victory over Zverev was a 26th consecutive one in Grand Slam action, and it will take a mammoth effort to end that run.

The man tasked next with stopping him is Austrian Dominic Thiem, ranked one place higher than Thursday's victim.

Thiem was himself ruthless, dispatching Russian Karen Khachanov 6-2, 6-4, 6-2.

Familiar faces occupy the bottom half of the draw with Roger Federer due to face Rafael Nadal in the first sem-

THE RESULTS

Quarterfinals: Women: 8-Ashleigh Barty (Aus) bt 14-Madison Keys (USA) 6-3, 7-5; Amanda Anisimova (USA) bt 3-Simona Halep (Rou) 6-2, 6-4. Men: 1-Novak Djokovic (Srb) bt

5-Alexander Zverev (Ger) 7-5 6-2, 6-2; 4-Dominic Thiem (Rel) bt 10-Karen Khachanov (Rus) 6-2, 6-4, 6-2.

⁺ India starts off with a goal glut against a hapless Russia

The 10-0 scoreline, however, doesn't do justice to the dominance displayed by the hosts

UTHRA GANESAN BHIIBANESWAR

He trapped, turned and flicked in a perfect reverse hit into the net past a hapless Ivan Ozherelev to round off the tally. India's 10th goal of the game by Akashdeep Singh was a perfect display of what the Indian men's hockey team is capable of, when on song. It took time to get into that rhythm though, in its opening game of the Hockey Series Finals against Russia at the Kalinga Stadium here on Thursday.

Below par

The 10-0 scoreline though was below par for the complete dominance the team displayed and the number of

chances it created. To be fair, the Indians hardly exerted themselves through the game. It was still a walk in the park.

The last time the two teams faced off was 11 years ago, at the Olympic qualifying tournament for the 2008 Games, when India won 8-0. But that was also the beginning of the darkest period for Indian hockey with the team failing to travel to Beijing for the first time ever in the Games' history.

The first half showed glimpses of one of Indian hockey's longest running malaise - too much keenness on showing off skills.

The team went into half time with a 3-0 lead but had missed half a dozen chances, both open and through pe-



In control: Akashdeep Singh, who scored a brace, makes his way into Russian territory. ■BISWARNAJAN ROUT

nalty corners, in those 30 minutes, getting the passes and the shots at goal too late or too wayward.

Captain Manpreet Singh had said the team had worked on its finishing but the rough edges were evident. Russia is no tricky customer but it did manage to keep a semblance of discipline in its defence despite India dominating every aspect of the game including

Coach Graham Reid was visibly dissatisfied at half time walking into the dressroom. The team that walked out in the 3rd quarter was different. There was more structure, less holding on and more purpose. Practice was over and it was time to get down to business. And the team began playing like World No. 5.

Aberration

Sumit, Nilakanta Sharma and Manpreet kept feeding high, Simranjit and Mandeep kept getting into position and Gursahibjit continued to impress even as Russia was reduced to a spectator, chasing the ball and the Indians across the field, without success. It did earn a penalty corner in the 42nd minute but that was an aberration. India coach Graham Reid,

meanwhile, admitted he wasn't too happy with the way the team began. "We could have scored more in that first quarter and we did give away a few loose space to them at that time. It was something I spoke about at quarter time but it is also very difficult to judge a game against a team like Russia," said Reid.

"You don't play against them too often at the national level and so you prepare well for them and do your best. But it isn't easy to plan."

Manpreet, playing his 250th game, agreed that the team would look to shore up its finishing in the upcoming games, "We know Poland is a

very defensive team. We started off with a few missed chances but improved as the game progressed," he said.

In another Pool A match, Poland had an easy 4-0 victory against minnows Uzbekistan. The tournament opener in the morning, though, produced the first upset of the competition with USA winning 2-0 against a higher ranked and more experienced South Africa in Pool

The results: USA 2 (Christian D. Angelis, Paul Singh) bt South Africa O; Poland 4 (Mateusz Hulboj 2, Pawel Bratkowski 2) bt Uzbekistan O; India 10 (Harmanpreet Singh 2, Akashdeep Singh 2, Simranjeet Singh, Amit Rohidas, Varun Kumar, Nilakanta Sharma, Gursahibjit Singh, Vivek Prasad) bt Russia O.

NBA FINALS

Raptors take

a 2-1 lead

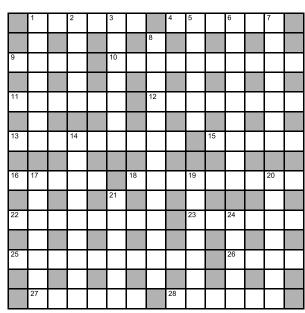
REUTERS

Raptors defeated a shorthanded Golden State War riors 123-109 here on Wednesday to take a 2-1 lead in the best-of-seven NBA Finals. The Raptors won behind 30 points from Kawhi Leonard and a balanced attack that saw five others score in double digits.

Warriors were able to cut the lead to as little as seven points at some stages but Raptors always had an answer.

The result: Toronto Raptors 123 (Kawhi Leonard 30, Kyle Lowry 23, Danny Green 18) bt Golden State Warriors 109 (Stephen Curry 47, Draymond Green 17, Andre Iguodata 11). Raptors lead series 2-1.

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12646



CM YK

ACROSS

- 1 Staff in charge of gum (6)
- 4 Behind a small sea bird (6)
- 9 Boy almost starts debate in
- 10 Placed bowers atop sea vessels 11 Force rude doctor on ship (6)

- 12 Remove reversing bus from land (8)
- 15 Starts soothing patiently, a sore muscle cramp (5)

bodies? (9)

13 Are suites renovated on water

- 16 Tolerate assistant without first book (5)
- 18 Honourees steal urea? Ridiculous! (9)
- 22 Slit tote crudely with spike (8)
- 23 Sickly bird loses warmth at

first (6)

- 25 Regulated variety in musical instrument (10)
- 26 Crave for press reportedly (4)
- 28 Tyrants miss last buses at stations (6)

27 Pervert in USA district (6)

- DOWN
- 1 Mother to scream, from first to last, at drivers (8)
- 2 Son unemployed? Creep! (5)

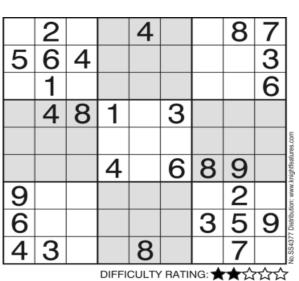
(set by Anon)

- 3 Enforcer extracts bit of truth from fraud (7)
- 5 Cut regular diet, portray clerk
- 6 Weird operations to remove new cross-eye (9)
- 7 Pays attention to advertisements (7)
- 8 Widest rotunda weird, convoluted (7,6)
- 14 In a riot, nude adult rose and
- 17 Annoys siblings, not last sister
- 19 Remains at lodge around Utah boundary (7)
- 20 Extricate device partly from programmers who run away

21 Roams with receptacle in St.

24 Slow 40 day period of love (5)

SUDOKU



Solution to puzzle 12645 Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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FAITH

Vedas speak about Him

How does one know the Supreme One? There are problems in using inference to know Him, said V.S. Karunakarachariar in a discourse. We may argue that since there is a world, then it naturally follows that there must be someone behind it, and that that someone is the Supreme One. But this can lead to some wrong inferences. If there is a product, it is quite possible that it was made through team effort. So, we may conclude that several powers are behind the Universe.

However, this is not correct, for there in only One Supreme power that creates, sustains and dissolves. For making any product, we need raw materials, a person to make it, but in the case of the Lord, He needs just His will to bring into existence everything. So clearly, He cannot be understood through the usual means we resort to understand something. He is unique and cannot be understood through inference. And yet, Krishna while talking about bhakti yoga, suggests inference as a possible means. He asks how does the air move freely? What supports it? The Lord answers

that He supports it. But if inference is wrong, why does the Lord ask Arjuna to infer His greatness through the analogy of freely moving air? What is wrong is to infer Him through analogies alone. We must understand Him through Vedic statements. But once you understand the meaning of what the Vedas say, you can enjoy those meanings through analogies. Once we have got an idea of His qualities from the Vedas, we can then enjoy His greatness through examples. How is it that waves keep coming to the shore and receding? How is it that eclipses can be predicted years ahead? All this is due to the Lord. But we can understand such wonders, only after we understand Him through the Vedas.