

All roads lead to Melbourne : Day of reckoning for Imran, Gooch

# Pakistanis hope for crowd support

MELBOURNE, Mar 24: Pakistan expect full-throated support from Australian fans when the World Cup cricket final against England is played at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) on Wednesday, reports AFP.

With the home team out of the competition, the Pakistanis are hoping some 90,000 local enthusiasts at the MCG will indulge in their favourite pastime of Pommie-bashing.

Australian fans have never taken kindly to arch-rivals England, especially after Ian Botham predicted his team would love to defeat the home team "before 100,000 convicts."

"I am happy we are playing England in the final because I expect the crowd to root for us," said Pakistani captain Imran Khan.

"It is a big boost to have the fans behind you because it gets the adrenalin flowing."

Despite Australia not figuring in the final, the last of the 66,500 general admission tickets were snapped up late Monday to raise hopes of a record crowd turning up for the game.

If all the 28,000 seats in the members stand are filled, the attendance will break the previous record of 90,800 who watched the second day's play in the 1961 Test between Australia and the West Indies at the same ground.

But Imran is aware that crowd support alone will not be enough to see Pakistan succeed in their first appearance in a Cup final.

"England are a very professional side and we will have to play well to beat them," the 39-year-old all-rounder said.

"We are a talented, but inexperienced team and everything will depend on how well we take the pressure."

Pakistan is likely to bring in

hard-hitting batsman Ijaz Ahmed for leg spinner Iqbal Sikander to the team that de-

plugged Englishmen hope to have a full squad of 14 players to choose from for the match.

league matches, but Gooch was confident the niggling injuries were a thing of the past.

Star batsman Robin Smith had recovered from a back injury which forced him to miss Sunday's semi-final against South Africa, and is expected to come in for the off-form Allan Lamb.

Seamer Derek Pringle, who suffered a rib injury, was also being considered for the final in place of either Gladstone Small or Dermot Reeve.

"We are keyed up for the big game," said Gooch, who also figured in England's two previous Cup finals in 1979 and 1987.

"We have done well so far and it won't be a disaster if we were beaten, but losing three finals would be too much of a disappointment for me."

To enable the batsmen to prepare against the unfamiliar leg spin of Pakistan's Mushtaq Ahmed, England called up two local leg spinners to bowl at their nets today.

Mushtaq has taken 13 wickets in the tournament so far and is expected to pose a major threat on the traditionally slow MCG wicket.

### TEAMS

**England:** (from) : Graham Gooch (captain), Ian Botham, Robin Smith, Graeme Hick, Neil Fairbrother, Alec Stewart (wicket-keeper), Allan Lamb, Chris Lewis, Dermot Reeve, Philip DeFreitas, Richard Illingworth, Phil Tufnell, Derek Pringle, Gladstone Small.

**Pakistan:** (from) : Imran Khan (captain), Rameez Raja, Aamer Sohail, Javed Miandad, Salim Malik, Inzamam-ul-Haq, Wasim Akram, Aaqib Javed, Moin Khan (wicket-keeper), Mushtaq Ahmed, Ijaz Ahmed, Iqbal Sikander, Waseem Haider, Zahid Fazal.

**Umpires:** : Steve Bucknor (West Indies) and Brian Aldridge (New Zealand)

Captain Graham Gooch, who has hinted at retirement if England win their maiden title, said after nets today that all the players were available for selection.

England have struggled to field 11 fit players in a few

feated New Zealand in the semi-final in Auckland last Saturday.

The change will bolster the batting but leave Ijaz to share the job of the fifth bowler with left-arm spinner Aamer Sohail.

Meanwhile, the injury-

unchanged.

Pakistan captain Imran Khan has been a harsh critic of the rain-interruption rules, which have affected the outcome of a number of matches during the tournament.

"For a team to be wiped out by rain is cheating the people," Imran said.

"I don't know if the Australian Cricket Board is embarrassed, but the flaws have been very obvious. In five World Cups, I can tell you it has been the worst organized of all."

The Pakistanis had urged that the final be played over its full 100 overs if rain intervened, even if that meant extending it to a second day.

"Discussions have been held this morning between the management of the Pakistan and England teams and the World Cup committee in regard to the playing conditions," organizing committee chairman Malcolm Gray said in a statement.

Under the rules, South Africa's victory target was reduced by 12 balls but by only one run, leaving it in the impossible situation of needing 21 runs from one ball for victory.

Halbish said England team manager Bob Bennett and Pakistan manager Intikhab Alam had met with the World Cup organizing committee members early Tuesday and agreed to the rules remaining

## No rules change for final

MELBOURNE, Mar 24: There will be no changes to controversial rain-interruption rules for Wednesday's World Cup cricket final between England and Pakistan, reports AP.

Australian Cricket Board general manager Graham Halbish said the rules would remain intact despite a wave of criticism that followed England's farcical semi-final victory over South Africa in Sydney on Sunday night.

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## MSC put 2 past Agrani

Two second half goals — a spectacular first-time and another from a dubious penalty — marked the twin victory of Dhaka Mohammedan Sporting Club against Agrani Bank in the First Division football league at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday.

Mohammedans, last year's runners up, were given a tough fight by their less fancied opponents and although they could not really test the Mohammedan custodian they had equal share in the exchanges and more often than not circumvented the Mohammedan players in the midfield.

Pappu, in particular, embarrassed Titu, and the two Russians — Kuznetsov and Nabikov. The Bank forwards, however, could not cause much concern to the Mohammedan defence where Kaiser and Jewel were anything but confident.

After a barren first half Mohammedan began the second half with a felt sense of urgency and forced three corners in a row from the north eastern side of the ground. The goal came within ten minutes after the breather when Rahimov, the dapper Russian forward chased a through ball in the midfield but he was felled on the border line of the penalty box and referee awarded the black-and-whites a penalty. Kaiser Hamid, the safe but unspectacular converter, made no mistake, placing the ball wide to the right of the Bank custodian Curzon (1-0).

Rahimov, who was unlucky to have his shot obstructed by the side post early in the first half, looked back of stretching the Bank defence with his

speed and at times combined well with his two compatriots. He was allowed little space to maneuver and the others failed to make the most of the free spaces.

Rumman bin-Wali Shabbir, the live wire of the Mohammedan attack, laid a lovely square pass on to the path of a tearing Kuznetsov midway through the second half and the hoary looking foreigner unleashed a thunderous left-footer that gave Curzon no chance (2-0).

The match was held up for a while after this as stones were pelted at the players from the south-western gallery. Police later brought the situation under control and play resumed again but the score remained unchanged.

Mohammedans' points collection soar to 21 from 12 matches while Agrani Bank's remain at 13 from 12 matches.

### TODAY'S MATCH

S Bima vs Wanderers (6.45)

### Hockey results

#### Sports Reporter

Bangladesh Railway collected two valuable points beating Azad Sporting Club by a solitary goal in the Green Delta First Division hockey league at the Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Ziauddin netted for the railwaymen in the 21st minute. The result left both teams at par on nine points from 15 outings.

Earlier in the afternoon, the match between Dhaka Ansars and new-comers Bangladesh Sporting Club ended in a one-all draw.

Ansars now have 11 points from 14 matches while Bangladesh Sporting have nine, also from 14 encounters.

## English fans spread flu?

WELLINGTON, Mar 24: English touring World Cup cricket fans have probably introduced a flu virus into New Zealand, Communicable Disease Centre virologist David Featherstone said today, reports AFP.

He said the Beijing A virus has been dominant in Europe during the present winter.

That might mean New Zealand was headed for the same flu virus this winter, although flu viruses changed quickly.

"The World Cup cricket may be enough to start seeding the population of New Zealand," Featherstone said.

## '94 World Cup venues picked

NEW YORK, Mar 24: The 1994 World Cup soccer tournament to be hosted by the United States will be staged in nine venues and will feature the first indoor stadium ever used in the championship, organisers announced on Monday, reports Reuters.

The 72,794-seat Silverdome in Pontiac, Michigan, near Detroit, will have natural grass laid on top of its artificial turf to conform to requirements for World Cup matches.

As expected, the cities named by FIFA, soccer's world governing body, included New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and Washington, DC.

Other sites selected were Orlando, Florida, Dallas, Texas, San Francisco, Palo Alto, California, and Boston Foxboro, Massachusetts.



Pakistan captain Imran Khan seen exercising with the help of his team's physiotherapist at the MCG yesterday. A capacity crowd of 96,000 people is expected for today's World Cup final. —AFP photo

## MCG expects record crowd

MELBOURNE, Mar 24: A world record crowd in excess of 100,000 people is expected to watch Wednesday's World Cup cricket final between England and Pakistan, reports AP.

The match also will be watched by a television audience in 29 countries that could exceed one billion people, organisers said Tuesday.

The revamped Melbourne Cricket Ground holds 108,000 spectators and all seats have been sold in advance. Some fans may not turn up following defending champion Australia's failure to advance past the first round.

The sellout has enabled organisers to allow the match to be televised live in the host city.

"The match will be seen in 29 countries, giving it a potential audience of more than one billion people," said Australian Cricket Board chairman David Richards.

The match has been promoted as the biggest sports event to be held in Melbourne, capital of Victoria state, since the 1956 Olympic Games.

Existing world attendance records are 90,800 for a Test between Australia and the West Indies at the Melbourne Cricket Ground in 1960-61, and 86,133 for a limited-overs match between Australia and West Indies at the same venue in 1983-84.

The crowd for the 1987 World Cup final between Australia and England in Calcutta was estimated at 100,000 but the figure never has been confirmed.

Wednesday's match marks the culmination of a five-week, nine-nation tournament that has comprised 39 matches and set a number of records.

It will be the first time the World Cup final has been played in the southern hemisphere, the first time under floodlights, the first time a white ball has been used, and the first time colored clothing has been worn.

Police said they had taken precautions to avoid crowd trouble but declined to reveal specifics. Thousands of English fans have traveled Down Under for the tournament.

In addition to the cricket, fans will be entertained by former Seekers lead singer Judith Durham, skydivers and a sky-surfer riding a giant cricket bat as well as a post-match fireworks display.

Business consultants Coopers and Lybrand estimate the tournament has pumped \$55 million into the Australian economy.

## Baig blames umpires

NEW DELHI, Mar 24: Indian cricket manager Abbas Ali Baig finally shed his reticence Tuesday and blasted Australian umpiring during his team's disastrous tour Down Under, reports AFP.

"It was ridiculously poor," Baig said of the umpiring.

"But the Australian experts called all the wrong decisions mistakes."

"If it had happened in India, they would have called our umpires foolish and biased," the former cricketer told reporters.

Baig did not spare his team either, calling its World Cup debacle a "collective failure" for a side which on paper was "very good."

"We played badly, especially in tight situations," he said. "We panicked under pressure, lost our cool in tense situations. It is sad, but it happened."

## Tyson may get 6 yrs

INDIANAPOLIS, Mar 24: The state will ask that Mike Tyson be sentenced to six to 10 years in prison and pay the maximum \$30,000 fine for his convictions on rape and related charges, a published report said, reports AP.

Special Prosecutor Greg Garrison said the state has no plans to call witnesses. And with the possible exception of Camille Ewald, Tyson's elderly surrogate mother, the defence may have none, either.

"The defence will ask for leniency, we'll be asking for significant jail time, and then the judge calls it," Garrison said.

## ROAD TO THE FINAL

How Pakistan and New Zealand reached the final of the fifth World Cup cricket:

- PAKISTAN:**
- Lost to West Indies by 10 wickets, Melbourne, Feb 23 (Pak 220-2, 50 overs, 221-0, 46.5 overs)
  - Beat Zimbabwe by 53 runs, Hobart, Feb 27 (Pak 254-4, 50 overs, Zim 201-7, 50 overs)
  - No result against England, Adelaide, March 1 due to rain (Pak 74, 40.2 overs, Eng 24-1, 8 overs)
  - Lost to India by 43 runs, Sydney, March 4 (Ind 216-7, 49 overs, Pak 173, 48.1 overs)
  - Lost to South Africa on run rate, Brisbane, March 8 (SA 211-7, 50 overs, Pak 173-8, 36 overs)
  - Beat Australia by 48 runs, Perth, March 11 (Pak 220-9, 50 overs, Aus 172, 45.2 overs)
  - Beat Sri Lanka by four wickets, Perth, March 15 (SL 212-6, 50 overs, Pak 216-6, 49.1 overs)
  - Beat New Zealand by seven wickets, Christchurch, March 18 (NZ 166, 48.2 overs, Pak 167-3, 44.4 overs)
  - Beat New Zealand by four wickets in the first semi-final Auckland, March 21 (NZ 282-7, 50 overs, Pak 264-6, 49 overs)

- ENGLAND:**
- Beat India by nine runs, Perth, Feb 22 (Eng 236-9, 50 overs, Ind 227, 49.2 overs)
  - Beat West Indies by six wickets, Melbourne, Feb 27 (WI 157, 49.2 overs, Eng 160-4, 39.5 overs)
  - No result against Pakistan due to rain, Adelaide, March 1 (Pak 74, 40.2 overs, Eng 24-1, 8 overs)
  - Beat Australia by eight wickets, Sydney, March 5 (Aus 171, 49 overs, Eng 173-2, 40.5 overs)
  - Beat Sri Lanka by 106 runs, Ballarat, March 9 (Eng 280-6, 50 overs, SL 174, 44 overs)
  - Beat South Africa on run rate, Melbourne, March 12 (SA 236-4, 50 overs, Eng 226-7, 40.5 overs)
  - Lost to New Zealand, Wellington, March 15 (Eng 200-8, 50 overs, NZ 201-3, 41 overs)
  - Lost to Zimbabwe by nine runs, Albury, March 18 (Zim 134, 46.1 overs, Eng 125, 49.1 overs)
  - Beat South Africa by 20 runs in the second semi-final Sydney (Eng 252-6, 43 overs, SA 232-6, 43 overs) after rain rules came into play.

## LEADING PERFORMERS

Following are the leading individual performances in the World Cup after Sunday's semi-final:

**BATTING:** (Tabulate under batsman, country, matches, innings, not out, highest score, runs, average)

	M	I	No	HS	R	Ave
M D Crowe	9	9	5	100	456	114
P N Kirsten	8	8	2	90	410	68.33
Rameez Raja (Pak)	7	7	2	119	341	68.2
N H Fairbrother (Eng)	7	6	2	75	223	55.75
Javed Miandad (Pak)	8	8	2	89	377	53.33
D C Boon (Aus)	8	8	1	100	368	52.57
A Ranatunga (SL)	7	7	2	88	262	52.40
B M McMillan (SA)	5	5	3	33	125	52
A H Jones (NZ)	9	9	2	78	322	46
M U Greatbatch (NZ)	7	7	—	73	323	44.71
K C Wesel (SA)	9	9	2	85	313	44.71

**BOWLING:** (Overs, maidens, runs, wickets, average) minimum five wickets:

	O	M	R	W	Ave
D A Reeve (Eng)	31.4	4	104	8	13
I T Botham (Eng)	82	7	264	15	17.6
Mushtaq Ahmed (Pak)	68	2	250	13	19.23
Wasim Akram (Pak)	79.4	2	289	15	19.26
C Z Harris (NZ)	72.1	4	310	16	19.37
Peter Kirsten (SA)	18	1	97	5	19.40
U C Haturanghe (SL)	17	0	97	5	19.40
M Prabhakar (India)	57.1	5	245	12	20.41
A C Cummins (WI)	59	1	246	12	20.50
C C Lewis (Eng)	40.4	3	162	7	21.71

**CATCHES**

K C Wesels (SA)	7
N H Fairbrother (Eng)	6
A R Border (Aus)	5
C L Cairns (NZ)	5
P A DeFreitas (Eng)	5
D A Reeve (Eng)	5

**WICKETKEEPERS** (catches, stumpings, total):

D Williams (WI)	11	3	14
D J Richardson (SA)	14	1	15
I A Healy (Aust)	9	—	9
Moin Khan (Pak)	8	3	11
A J Stewart (Eng)	7	1	8
A Flower (Zim)	6	1	7
K S More (India)	6	1	7
H P Tillekepatne (SL)	6	1	7
D Smith (NZ)	5	—	5

## WORLD CUP NOTEBOOK

MELBOURNE, Mar 24: The daily notebook on the World Cup cricket:

**MELBOURNE** — Organisers are anticipating balmy autumn weather will help attract an official world record crowd of around 95,000 for Wednesday's World Cup cricket final between England and Pakistan at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

Although bigger crowds have been reported on the Indian sub-continent, they have never been confirmed — the turn out at Calcutta's Eden Gardens for the 1987 Australia-England World Cup final was estimated at 100,000.

The existing records are 90,800 for a Test between Australia and the West Indies at the MCG in 1960-61, and 86,133 for a one-day match between Australia and West Indies at the MCG in 1983-84.

West Indies captain Richie Richardson says the 48,000 all-seater 150 million dollar (115 US million) great Southern stand holds more people than his native island of Antigua.

### AERIAL STUNTS

MELBOURNE — As part of the Cup final festivities a sky diver will surf a 1.8 metre (approx. 6 feet) cricket bat from a height of about 4,500 metres (14,850 feet) onto the MCG playing area during the dinner break.

A team of nine who will also perform aerial formations in the shape of stumps and various other cricketing symbols.

To ensure as much of the sky diving action is seen by the crowd, several of the parachutists will be equipped with a camera to beam the manoeuvres onto the scoreboard's giant video screen.

### BIG ECONOMIC BONANZA

On an economic note business consultants Coopers and Lybrand estimate, on behalf of the Australian Cricket Board, that the World Cup has pumped 70 million Australian dollars (53 million US) into the Australian economy.

### SEVERAL FIRSTS

Wednesday's extravaganza will be sprinkled with firsts: It will be the first time the World Cup final has been played in the southern Hemisphere, the first time under lights, the first time a white ball has been used and the first time coloured clothing has been used.

### LIGHTNING FAST OUTFIELD

Melbourne — England and Pakistan will have to aim for a 240 target to win Wednesday's World Cup cricket final, Melbourne Cricket Ground curator Tony Ware said here today.

Ware said the pitch to be used for the first time since the Boxing Day Test match against India would be similar to the last two matches played at the 108,000 capacity stadium but the outfield would be even quicker.

## Police raid gambling den

NEW DLEHI, Mar 24: Police have raided an illegal gambling den in the sports-crazy Indian city of Calcutta and arrested bookies busy taking wagers for Wednesday's cricket World Cup final, press reports said today, reports AFP.

The Telegraph newspaper said city detectives raided the den, arrested 10 bookies and seized three of their computers programmed to meet the betting rush for Wednesday's game between Pakistan and England to be played in Sydney.

"Wealthy people were involved in the betting," the Telegraph quoted a Calcutta police spokesman as saying, adding that the detectives clean bowled the bookies.

The daily did not say when the police wound up the illegal operation, but said the bookies had been using the computers since last year to take in wagers on domestic sporting events.

Robbers recently held up a Calcutta bank and walked away with thousands of dollars as its guard remained glued to television at home watching India play Pakistan, and in another incident city television viewers smashed a powerhouse to protest a blackout during a live World Cup broadcast.

## BskyB bows to public pressure

LONDON, Mar 24: British Sky Broadcasting have bowed to public pressure by allowing the BBC to show extended highlights from Wednesday's World Cup cricket final between England and Pakistan. Up to now they had been limited to one minute of recorded highlights in news bulletins.

BBC will screen 30 minutes highlights from the final on Wednesday night.

"Live coverage will remain exclusive to Sky but we have agreed today that it would be in the public interest to make highlights of the final available to BBC free of charge," Sam Chisholm, chief executive of Bsky B, said.

The cricket World Cup is not among the official list of 10 sporting events — including the FA Cup final, the Derby and Wimbledon — which must be available to all channels.

There has been public anger that live viewing of the competition has been restricted to those with Sky satellite dishes.

The controversy even found its way into the election campaign with Labour leader Neil Kinnock urging Prime Minister John Major to ensure everyone in Britain could watch the final.