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**MOTLEY MELANGE:** Youngsters embellished with umbrellas of different colours rehearse for the opening ceremony of the 15th World Cup at the Citrus Bowl, Orlando on June 16. Belgium will take on Morocco on June 19 to trigger off World Cup action at this stadium.

— AFP photo

## A visit to Silverdome

PONTIAC, Michigan, June 17: The indoor Pontiac Silverdome, which will host four opening-round World Cup matches, is situated about 30 miles (50 km) northwest of Detroit in the industrial town of Pontiac. — Reuter

The 77,570-seater domed stadium has hosted concerts by singer Madonna, a visit by the Pope John Paul II, country fairs and rodeos since it opened in 1974.

The Silverdome is home to the Detroit Lions of the NFL. It was once the base for the Detroit Express side of the defunct North American Soccer League and home to the Detroit Pistons of the NBA until they moved out in 1986.

The stadium was fitted out with an astroturf surface from the start but this has been replaced by a revolutionary grass pitch for the World Cup in line with FIFA regulations.

A special turf was grown from tough grasses which could survive inside the gloomy stadium and then transferred onto 11,994 modules, each fitted with six inches (15 cm) of soil, which were installed in 31 hours last week.

The pitch is narrower than usual, with no room for traditional touchline benches, so trainers and reserve players will have to sit in the stands.

Another technological feat is the 500-tonne domed roof, which is supported purely by air pressure maintained by a system of big fans and ventilation shafts inside the stadium.

The grass and soil will be taken up after the fourth game on June 28 and sold in a bid to repay the two million dollars development costs of the new pitch.

## Morocco bank on defence

ORLANDO, June 17: Abdellah Ajri Blinda is banking on his defence to see Morocco through the first round of the World Cup, reports Reuter.

"We'll have defend for sure," The Moroccan coach told a news conference at the team's hotel in Orlando on Thursday.

The Moroccans, who reached the second round in the 1986 finals in Mexico, meet Belgium in their opening Group F match on Sunday.

"Tactically, the Belgians are a great team," said Blinda. They have good players with a lot of experience."

He said he would settle for a draw.

Blinda acknowledged that his short length of time at the helm put Morocco at a competitive disadvantage in the finals.

"You can't know the players in five or six months, it's not enough," he said.

## Nigeria will win World Cup?



DALLAS, June 17: Cameroon blazed the World Cup trail for black Africa four years ago but Nigeria believe they will be the ones to take the trophy home from America, reports Reuter.

While most countries are reluctant to predict anything on the eve to the finals, Nigeria's players and Dutch coach are oozing confidence.

"We are here to win the World Cup," said coach Clemens Westerhof. "Pressure? We don't know what that is."

African soccer came of age at the 1990 World Cup when Cameroon reached the quarter-finals and served notice that the continent would one day triumph.

If Westerhof is to be believed, that time has already come.

And it is his Nigerian side-crowned African champions in April — who will do it, not fellow qualifiers Cameroon.

"When I came to Nigeria five years ago I saw people playing football everywhere, on small patches of land, under bridges, and I was impressed with the way they handled the ball. I was a footballer and they could do things I couldn't," he said.

"I knew if I could mix

European tactics with what they already had, and bring in discipline, I could make a world champion team, we could reach for the sky. That's what I have been doing for five years and that's why we are here now."

The shadow of Cameroon 1990 hangs heavy over Nigeria. Everyone wants to know if Nigeria will set USA '94 alive the way their neighbours illustrated Italia '90.

"I don't think I will have any problems, but what you need to win a World Cup is luck. If you have the luck, you are the best," he said.

If Nigeria are to carry the African torch that Cameroon lit so brilliantly four years ago, the Super Eagles may have to emulate the 'Indomitable Lions' amazing feat in beating Argentina, for they are drawn in the same group.

"We respect Argentina very much," said Westerhof. "But our respect goes only until the referee blows his whistle in the first minute. Then we shall see who is the strongest."

He anticipates some physical games against first-round opponents Argentina, Bulgaria and Greece, but said, Nigeria would play fair.

"It's football, not war. We should play good, fair football."

But we came here to win the World Cup, not the fair play Cup," he warned.

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Pocock c Smith b Such 10  
Rutherford c Stewart b DeFreitas 37  
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Fleming Ibw b Fraser 41  
Thomson run out 69  
Parore c Rhodes b Taylor 40  
Hert b Such 25  
Cash b White 56  
Pringle c Hick b DeFreitas 14  
Owens not out 2  
extras (b-3, lb-15, w-1, nb-21) 40  
Total 476

Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-39, 3-67, 4-138, 5-318, 6-350, 7-391, 8-397, 9-434.

**Bowling** O M R W  
Fraser 36 9 102 2  
DeFreitas 35 8 102 3  
Taylor 20 4 64 1  
Such 30 8 84 2  
White 21.1 4 84 1  
Goch 5 1 13 0  
Hick 2 0 9 0  
(Incomplete)

Scoreboard

Scoreboard on the second day of the second cricket Test between England and New Zealand at Lord's on Friday:

**NEW ZEALAND:** First innings

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