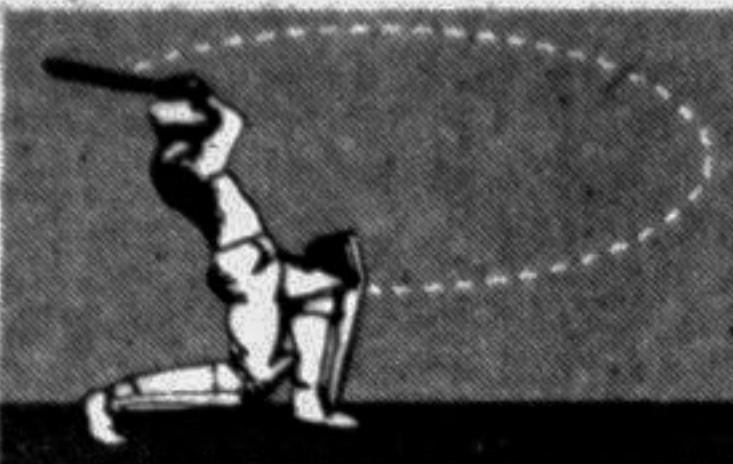


The World Cup with Philips



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Africans at war

PATNA, India, Feb 25: Newcomers Kenya and Zimbabwe will clash on Monday in the eastern Indian city of Patna in an encounter that will decide the tail-end of the tally in Group A of the sixth World Cup cricket tournament, reports AP.

The African teams have lost all their previous matches to powerful teams, and have no points. Sri Lanka tops the chart with six points, four gained from walkovers against Australia last week and West Indies on Sunday.

Zimbabwe are more experienced of the two teams, but the spirited Kenyan resistance to India and Australia have shown that the team's batting and fielding capabilities had been underrated. Kenya scored 199 runs in their 50 overs against India and lost to Australia by 97 runs after scoring 207 against Australia.

But Zimbabwe's skipper said he wasn't worried. "I don't want to think too much about our opponents," Andy Flower told reporters Sunday.

Monday's match will be Zimbabwe's 23rd World Cup game, of which they have won just two. "Our chances of qualifying for the quarterfinals are not good," Flower said.

The teams will be announced before the match begins, but Kenya are likely to rest Kennedy Otiemo, who scored 85 against Australia, and play substitute wicket-keeper Tariq Iqbal when the team fields.

TEAMS

ZIMBABWE: Andy Flower (captain), Andrew Waller, Paul Strang, Bryan Strang, Alistair Campbell, Eddy Brandes, Stephen Peall, Guy Whittall, Grant Flower, Heath Streak, Chris Evans, Charles Lock, Henry Olonga and Sean Davis.

KENYA: Maurice Odumbe (captain), Asif Karim, Edward Odumbe, Dipak Chudasma, Kennedy Otiemo, David Tikolo, Hitesh Modi, Tariq Iqbal, Thomas Ondoy, Rajab Ali, Lameck Onyango, Brifal Patel, Martin Sunji, Steve Tikolo.

Umpires: Khizar Hyat (Pakistan) and Cyril Mitchell (South Africa). Third umpire: Farid Malik. Match referee: MAK Pataudi.

Kiwis right on target

FAISALABAD, Feb 25: New Zealand just one win away from a place in the World Cup quarterfinals, have worked hard to improve their fielding in advance of Tuesday's Group B match against the United Arab Emirates, reports Reuter.

The New Zealanders made a vibrant start to the tournament, upsetting England by 11 runs and romping to a 119-run victory over the Netherlands.

Their progress was abruptly halted by the impressive South Africans who, helped by three dropped catches, won by five wickets last Tuesday.

"We made crucial mistakes in the field but since then, we've worked hard to improve our fielding and catching," said New Zealand captain Lee Germon.

New Zealand manager Glenn Turner freely admits the team intended to use the match against the lowly UAE to prepare for their final group match against champions Pakistan.

For their part the UAE, the weakest team in the tournament, are determined to avenge for their dismal showing against Pakistan on Saturday, when they lost by nine wickets in a rain-shortened match.

Martin Crowe's enforced retirement this year after a losing battle against a chronic knee injury removed the last link with the glory days of the 1980s when New Zealand won series against each of the other Test playing countries and remained undefeated at home.

Following a disastrous centenary season, the New Zealanders have regrouped under Germon's astute captaincy. They showed genuine spirit and fight against England in a game highlighted by the first century of the tournament from Nathan Astle.

But New Zealand need to have both Astle and fellow opener Craig Spearman firing at the same time, the catches sticking and accurate bowling from their medium-pacers if they are going to trouble the leading sides in the tournament.

Novotna meets Majoli in final

ESSEN, Germany, Feb 25: Fourth seed Jana Novotna played what she called her best match of the week to upset German second seed Anke Huber 6-4, 6-4 in the semifinals of the 450,000 dollars WTA tournament in Essen on Saturday, reports Reuter.

The Czech holder of the title will meet top seed Iva Majoli of Croatia in today's final. Majoli, 18, cruised past Sweden's unseeded Asa Carlson 6-3, 6-2 earlier in the day.

Waiting another whacking



seriously, whether facing weak or strong opponents," said Pakistani captain as his side prepared for their second game of the tournament at Lahore's newly-renovated Gaddafi Stadium.

Akram said his side were not underestimating the Dutch, who have produced some determined and creditable performances in their early matches.

The players have been firmly told to maintain the same professional attitude they displayed against the UAE," he said.

If Pakistan get first crack at what is sure to be a good batting strip, Miandad is likely to get his chance — perhaps after a promotion up the order.

The 38-year-old veteran, recalled for his sixth World Cup after revoking a two-year retirement, got into the game early against the Emirates by catching Saleem Raza off Aaqib Javed at long on Pakistan's first wicket.

From then on, apart from one sharp shy at the stumps, he was reduced to the role of spectator.

Wasim quizzed about whether he had considered moving Miandad up the order to get him into the action, said, "It wasn't really needed."

"The other guys needed some practice. He'll get his chance in the coming matches."

Holland, meanwhile, will want to show that they can compete with the very best after impressive shows against New Zealand and England.

Skiper Steven Lubbers felt his side deserved more credit. "With a little more experience we could have turned the tables on England," he argued. "We were well on our way but due to our batsmen's inexperience, we failed to boost the total during the 20th and 35th over."

Many of the Dutch players have suffered stomach upsets since they arrived in the sub-continent, but they have refused to let it get them down.

Captain Steven Lubbers said his team were getting better



WASIM AKRAM

underway on Saturday ... then spent another 18 overs watching Saeed Anwar and Ijaz Ahmed filling their boots during the nine-wicket win over the United Arab Emirates.

The bowlers, led by three-wicket taker Mushtaq Ahmed, also enjoyed Saturday's outings but they must expect a back seat on Monday.

Wasim Akram will be keen to bat first to give his batsmen a 'net' against minor opposition, while Holland could just oblige by choosing to avoid the Emirates' fate — they were reduced to 109 for nine in 33 overs after being put in — and chase instead.

The World Cup holders Pakistan have no intention of lowering their guard when they meet pugnacious minnows.

"We are taking each match

supplied the perfect backdrop for the most exotic of cricketing arts.

Four wrist-spinners, headed by Australia's gifted Shane Warne, have added a further dimension to the sixth World Cup, dominated in its earlier editions by pace and seam bowling.

"It used to be considered a virtual sin to include spinners

Let's make things better.

PHILIPS

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TODAY'S VENUES

LAHORE: Situated on the Grand Trunk Road connects Kabul to Calcutta. This capital city is said to be 2000 years old.

Till today it is a thriving city where Mughal, Gothic and Victorian styles blend to create breathtaking venues and sights.

The historic city, once the seat of power in undivided medieval India, is the capital of the Pakistani province of Punjab. The renovated Gaddafi Stadium making the ideal setting for the World Cup final on March 17. The Stadium, with newly-installed floodlights, will host today's Pakistan-Holland match.

PATNA: The history and heritage of modern day Patna goes back well over two millennia. Legend ascribes its creation to the magic stroke of a mythological King, Putraka for his queen Patali. Known earlier as Pataliputra, this city dominated the political fortunes of the whole of North India between 6th century BC and 5th century AD.

The capital of the eastern state of Bihar is a new international venue. The 25,000-capacity Bihar Stadium will host today's Zimbabwe-Kenya match.

PAUL STRANG

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Tummy trouble strikes Lara

BOMBAY, India, Feb 25: West Indies' leading batsman Brian Lara has become the latest victim of diarrhoea at the sixth World Cup, reports Reuter.

Lara did not appear at practice on Saturday and team physiotherapist Dennis Wright said: "It was a mild case of diarrhoea. He should be fit within a day or two."

The West Indies' next Group A match is against Kenya in PUNE on Thursday.

West Indies, along with a number of other teams, have suffered from colds and stomach complaints.

The Netherlands appear to be the worst affected with at least half their squad of 14 sustaining diarrhoea after eating spaghetti.

England opener Neil Smith was forced to retire during his team's innings against the United Arab Emirates after vomiting in the outfield.

And on Sunday England left-arm spinner Richard Lingworth missed his second match in a row because of a stomach upset when he could not take the field against South Africa.

South African strike bowler Allan Donald also withdrew with a similar complaint.

Steffi hiring a new manager

NEUSS, Germany, Feb 25: Steffi Graf wants Romanian tennis impresario Ion Tiriac to manage her career and the pair has been discussing the possibility in months of secret talks, the news weekly Der Spiegel reported Saturday.

Spiegel reported that Graf had already severed ties with manager Phil de Picciotto of the US-based firm Advantage International. The newsweekly quoted Graf as saying that the contract with Advantage was, in her opinion, binding with her father, who had signed the deal, and not with her.

"There is no contract between me and Advantage," Spiegel quoted Graf as saying.

Tiriac, who was Boris Becker's manager for 10 years, said nothing had been signed with Graf and that reports were "clear speculation." But he confirmed that he had met with the world's top-ranked player several times in the last months, most recently 10 days ago.

All-American clash on cards

MEMPHIS, Tennessee, Feb 25: World number one Pete Sampras overpowered third seed Michael Chang 6-3, 6-2 on Saturday to set up an all-American final with two-time defending champion Todd Martin at the Kroger St Jude tournament, reports Reuter.

Fifth seed Martin earlier continued his mastery of Memphis with a 6-3, 6-5 win over 10th-seeded Australian Mark Philippoussis. The victory put Martin into the final of this event for the fourth year in a row.

Martin played nearly flawless tennis to neutralise the power of 19-year-old rising star Philippoussis and extend his Memphis winning to 14 consecutive matches. Martin has a 20-2 career record in this event.

Sampras gave Chang few chances to get back into the match after the top seed saved two break points in the final game of the first set. Chang had dug himself into a hole the previous game by serving up three double faults.

Big battle in the offing



Bombay-based Wadekar offers the added attraction of being on home territory at the Wankhede Stadium, the venue of the high-profile day-night match.

A copybook batsman, Manjrekar has played 59 internationals with a personal best of 105 not out against South Africa in New Delhi in 1991.

Sidhu's cause, meanwhile, is not helped by a throat infection that kept him away from the nets on Friday and Saturday.

Two out of two is a good start by any reckoning, that way I am pleased," Azharuddin said.

"Whoever plays, the game will be watched by a full-house of 45,000 frenzied fans.

"This could be the best match of the league phase between the two leading one-day sides in the world," said Bombay Cricket Association official Pravin Barve. "I have never seen such excitement before for an international match."

Wadekar, meanwhile, predicted a run feast.

"I expect a high-scoring game because the wicket at the Wankhede has always helped batsmen. We have to be very sure about our batting," he said.

He also suggested Australia, already without strike bowler Craig McDermott after tearing a calf muscle during the first game, would be tougher opponents than the West Indies.

"It's a big move before an important game. A lot of thinking will have to be done before we go for it," he argued.

"Sidhu is one of our most capable batsmen, his free hitting is ideally suited to one-day cricket. It's not easy to drop him. The only good thing is that Manjrekar can also fit the bill perfectly. He can come in early and hold one end up."

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WILL'S WORLD CUP DIARY

ISLAMABAD, Feb 25 (AP): World Cup diary here today:

DALMIYA'S IN THE DOG HOUSE

A if World Cup organiser Jagmohan Dalmiya did not have enough problems. The Australians started to nose into the tournament books. Now his pet Alsatian has landed him in the dog house after biting a police constable guarding his house.

A complaint has been registered against Dalmiya for "negligent conduct in respect of guarding animals against causing danger to human beings." Police officer Gautam Chakraborty was quoted by newspapers as saying Dalmiya could be arrested.

WAUGHS PUT RIVALS ON THE BACK ... OR FRONT ... FOOT

ENYA'S bowlers were the first to discover just how hard the Waughs are to contain when they get together at the crease. The problem is that Mark prefers to play off front foot and Steve off the back, forcing bowlers to keep readjusting their length. But there is one reason to be grateful — just imagine how hard it would be to choose how full to bowl if the Australians had been born identical twins...

PAKISTAN TURNS TO PRAYER

P AKISTAN Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has called on the country to pray for divine blessings to help the side retain its title.

It seemed to work during the opening nine-wicket win over the amateurs from the United Arab Emirates.

STUBBORN SULTAN USES HIS HEAD AT LAST

U NITED Arab Emirates skipper Sultan Zarawani used his head again at the weekend — in the right way this time.

After refusing to wear a helmet against South Africa and being rewarded with a high-speed crack on the skull by Allan Donald, he took guard against Waqar Younis peering through a grill.

Sport

Dealing with dexterity

in teams," observed former Pakistan international Abdul Qadir, himself one of the greatest exponents of back-of-the-hand spin. "But now things have changed. I will be happy to see a revival of what used to be called a dying art."

Warne, Pakistan's Mushtaq Ahmed, Indian Anil Kumble and Zimbabwean Paul Strang have now all exhibited their skills.

Mustaq made an immediate impact in Pakistan's opening match against the United Arab Emirates on Saturday, bamboozling the middle-order to finish with three for 16 and pick up the man-of-the-match award.

Kumble hit the stumps three times in India's comprehensive defeat over West Indies while Strang took the only four West Indian wickets to fall when Zimbabwe went down to the Caribbean side in both teams' opening match.

Only Warne failed