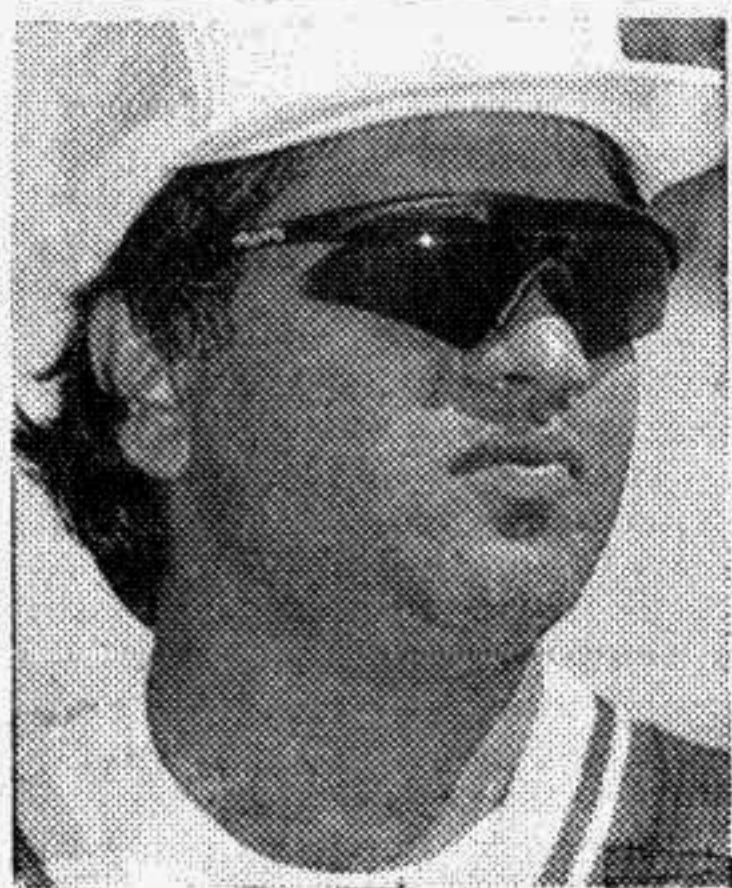


## Column One

### SPORTS TALK



**Arjuna Ranatunga**

(Sri Lankan captain)  
"I don't know how Alec Stewart can assess Sri Lankan cricket ... he doesn't know anything about it."  
On his English counterpart.

## Boost sports WHIZZ KID

COMPETITION FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN

### Competition-115

✓ **Tick the Correct Answers**  
Post to The Daily Star  
Win attractive prizes  
Competition closes at 8 pm  
May 14 '99 and draw shortly afterwards

- Who will replace Bob Woolmer as South African cricket coach?  
Ford Stewart Marsh
- When England last hosted cricket World Cup?  
1975 1987 1993
- Umpire Steve Bucknor is a  
Guyanese Jamaican Trinidadian
- The final match of the 1999 cricket World Cup will be held at  
Edgbaston Lord's Oval
- The World Cup match between Bangladesh and Scotland will be played in  
Edinburgh Belfast Cardiff

Name .....  
Class ..... Roll No. ....  
School Address .....  
Phone: (If any) .....

POWERED WITH  
**EN-VITS**  
ENERGY RELEASING VITAMINS

## Sachin scare

LONDON, May 12 (Internet report): Sachin Tendulkar gave India another injury scare as they finally emerged from a damp start to their World Cup preparations with a comfortable victory over Nottinghamshire at Trent Bridge.

Tendulkar, who has been suffering from a back problem in the countdown to the World Cup, was unable to take the field because of a calf problem after making a dazzling 91 with the bat.

Even so India's coach Anshuman Gaekwad - who saw opener Shahid Afridi injured against Durham yesterday - is confident his star batsman will be fit to open the World Cup proper campaign later this week against South Africa.

"Sachin got struck on the calf while he was batting," said Gaekwad.

"It's very sore, and he's got an ice pack on it. But there is no real cause for alarm."

## WC fever

### sweeps DU

Cricket fever gripped the Dhaka University campus ahead of the World Cup beginning in England on Saturday, reports UNB.

Cricket is the common subject of discussion among the students whether they understand it or not.

A group of students of Bengali, Islamic Studies and History Department yesterday brought out a procession on the campus wearing Bangladesh national flag on their back.

They paraded the campus beating bowls and plates and shouting slogans in an inexperienced tone in favour of Bangladesh team.

Residents of the university have already hung tournament fixture on the walls of their rooms and taking all out preparation to enjoy the World Cup tournament.

Meanwhile, rumours of closure of the university classes before the tournament is now a talk of the campus, although the authorities have already declared that the summer vacation will begin from June 1.

Students, both male and female, are keeping sharp eyes on the TV rooms to avoid unwanted disturbs during the matches.

Hall authorities are repairing the broken chairs of the TV rooms and trying to increase the number of seats for the cricket lovers.

# Hair in the line of fire?

SYDNEY, May 12 (Reuters/AFP): Australian cricket umpire Darrell Hair has received a death threat, purportedly from a Tamil group for having no-balled Sri Lankan spin star Muttiah Muralitharan in 1995, Australian newspapers reported today.

They said Hair, who is officiating at the World Cup about to start in England, had received a letter from a person claiming to be a supporter of the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). The LTTE have been fighting since 1983 for a separate homeland for Tamils in Sri Lanka's north and east.

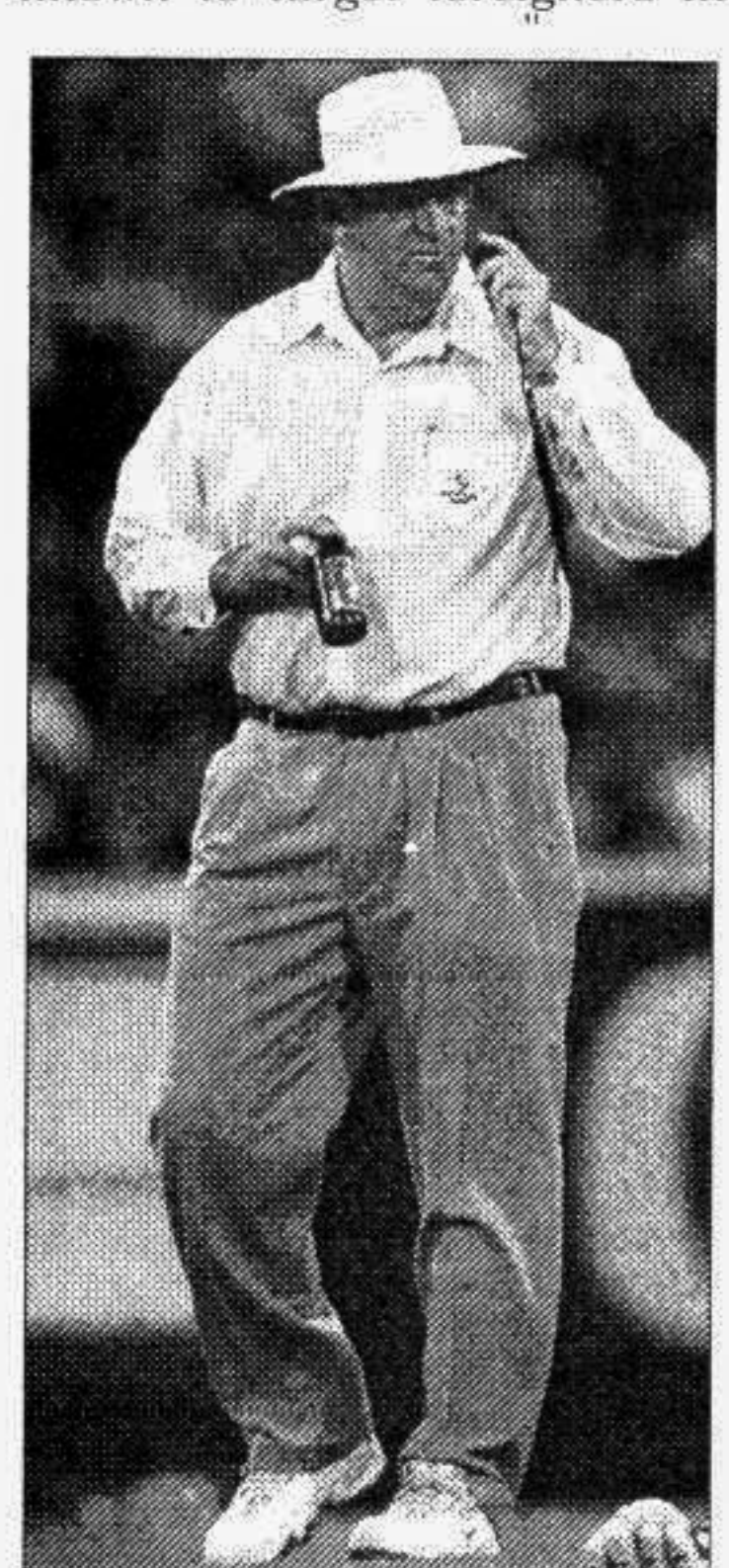
Part of the letter warned Hair that "we have representatives of our people throughout all major nations of the world and we will take action against you for what you have done," the Sydney Daily Telegraph reported from England.

However the Australasian Federation of Tamil Associations released a statement refuting the death threat.

"The Federation is astonished that the reports are targeting an umpire who was mercilessly slandered and demonstrated against by the Sri Lankans for doing his duty," the statement said.

"Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam is a liberation move-

ment waging a war for liberation ... (they) have never been known to target foreigners in



**DARRELL HAIR**

Sri Lanka or overseas.  
Hair sensationally no-balled Muralitharan for "throwing" in the 1995 Boxing

Day test in Melbourne, setting off a storm of protests in Sri Lanka. Muralitharan is his country's most prominent Tamil cricketer.

The Telegraph said Hair received the letter, postmarked from the English town of Harrow but left unsigned, shortly before leaving Australia and reported it immediately to the Australian Cricket Board and the International Cricket Council.

The newspaper said the ICC had decided that Hair should not umpire any matches involving Sri Lanka.

Hair stood down from a triangular series involving the Sri Lankans in Australia earlier this year after writing in a book that he would have no hesitation no-balling Muralitharan again. He was found guilty of bringing the game into disrepute for the book but escaped punishment.

Hair was unable to comment on the affair because of ICC regulations preventing umpires making public comments about anything other than rain delays, the newspaper said.

The LTTE is a guerrilla organisation which has been fighting since 1983 for a separate homeland for Tamils in Sri Lanka's north and east.

The ACB declined to discuss the threat when contacted but a spokesman said they were closely monitoring the situation.



LISTEN GUYS, HAVE FUN BUT DON'T RELAX: Bangladesh coach Gordon Greenidge (C) makes a point while (R-L) skipper Aminul Islam, Akram Khan, Mehrab Hossain and Khaled Mahmood listen during a practice session on May 9. — AFP photo

# A just strike against BTV

Dr. Nizamuddin Ahmed

One has to support the lawful demands of the striking BTV employees against packaged programmes being run on the national electronic media. Their claim that BTV staff were voluntarily involved in package programmes, obviously because it pays more, to the extent that they are ignoring BTV's routine programmes has found truth in light of BTV's dismal innings on the occasion of this 'forsaken' nation's first-ever appearance at a world-level sporting carnival.

Need the BTV salaried staff be reminded that they are missing their position as employees of a government organisation. They are but using the BTV, built on public money, as a springboard for their personal gain. The losers -- this nation. The winners -- none, not even those who are earning some money on the side.

Never ever had one any plausible reason to believe that BTV did the right thing at the right time. But, in this cricket World Cup, the first this 28-year old country has qualified based

on performance in any world sporting event, Bangladesh Television has chosen to play the role of a vendor of 30 of the 42 matches and of other programmes that have come in packages.

The satellite has given us full view of what the Doordarshan and other Indian channels are doing for the Indian team, or what PTV is trying for the Pakistanis. Take a look at ESPN, Star Sports, BBC, CNN, you name it, they are going crazy over the cricket World Cup. BTV, it seems, has already raised the white flag of surrender even before the World Cup has begun.

Where is BTV's campaign to lift the nation? Where are the songs to encourage our boys? Where is BTV?

Bangladesh qualified for the 1999 World Cup in April 1997. Two years the BTV got time to plan for the event. What does it do? It comes out with an announcement that it will telecast, subletting the rights from someone else, thirty matches of the tournament. Should we be grateful? Are we not indebted? Should we not all go and kiss their feet?

Perhaps we shall be the only participating team at this World Cup, who will not have been backed by their television. But, who cares? When, after all, was the BTV ever a people's network. With some forefront freedom fighters at the helm of BTV affairs, it is indeed deplorable how our World Cup merit has been flushed down the drain.

For over two years, could not the BTV invite our World Cup players to their studio? For a chat, what else? Could not the BTV focus on the planning and development activities of the Bangladesh Cricket Board? Could it not talk to former players? Could it not organise programmes based on the World Cup where viewers could take part? Could it not highlight the lifestyle of our ICC heroes and the World Cup stars? Have they all been ignored by the BTV because they are Bangladeshi?

We are not here to give our very experienced BTV programme producers any ideas. We dare not. For each of them is an authority on entertainment. Unfortunately, what we needed this time was patriotism. And, that was sadly missing.

# Knight smarts under pressure

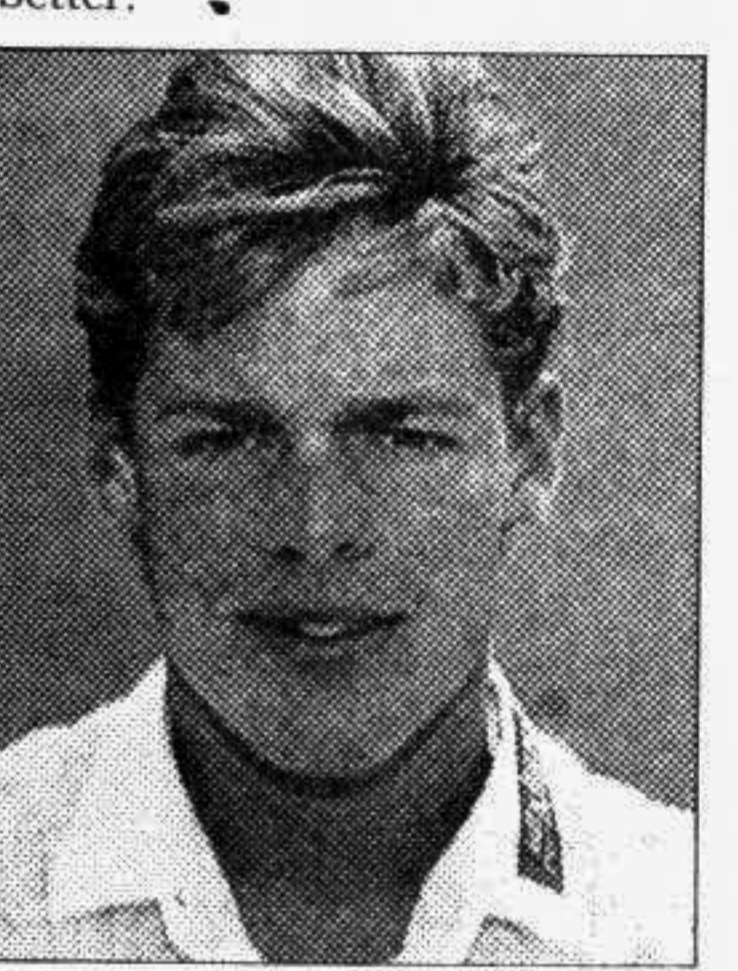
LONDON, May 12 (Internet report): Nick Knight today vowed to work his way out of the form slump which is threatening his place in England's line-up for the World Cup opener against Sri Lanka.

The Warwickshire left-hander has faced just 37 balls and scored 17 runs in the three innings during England's warm-up programme against Kent, Essex and Hampshire and received a second ball duck at Southampton yesterday.

That third successive failure has increased calls for England to bring Nasser Hussain in as Knight's replacement alongside captain Alec Stewart at the top of the order.

Coach David Lloyd believes a big score from Knight is immi-

nent, but until then he intends to keep working on his game until his luck changes for the better.



**NICK KNIGHT**

"I have been working well and practising well it's just not happening for me when I get to the crease but I will keep working on my game until that changes."

"I don't feel as if I am doing anything different with my game and although I am not going to let it get me down."

Like Knight, Stewart has also struggled to find anything like his best form and rode his luck yesterday - he edged the first ball he faced just short of slip - to battle for 76 minutes to reach an unbeaten 20 and secure England's emphatic nine wicket victory.

It is that determination, and the respective records of both Knight and Stewart, which is likely to persuade England to persevere with their tried and tested opening partnership.

## Dublin match to go ahead

DUBLIN, May 12: Irish organisers of next week's World Cup match between the West Indies and Bangladesh in Dublin today dismissed reports the fixture was under threat, reports Reuters.

"As far as we're concerned the match is going ahead," Irish Cricket Union under-secretary John Wright told Reuters.

Media reports this week claimed the match, scheduled for May 21, faced cancellation because a strike by Irish scaffolders would prevent construction of temporary seating at the venue.

"There are no foundations to these rumours," Wright said, adding the 3,500 seats being installed at Clontarf Cricket Club in north Dublin did not require scaffolding.

Tickets for the match - the biggest cricket event staged in Ireland - had sold out, he said, with the majority of spectators expected to fly in from Britain. Ireland failed to qualify for the Cup, losing to Scotland in Kuala Lumpur in March 1997.

## William Hill odds

LONDON, May 12 (Reuters): South Africa remain London bookmakers' favourites at 5-2 to win the World Cup while Australians Mark Waugh and Glenn McGrath are tipped to be the tournament's top batsman and bowler.

William Hill gave the following odds on the World Cup that starts on Friday:

**LATEST ODDS:**  
5-2 South Africa  
100-30 Australia  
4-1 Pakistan  
5-1 England  
9-1 West Indies  
10-1 India, Sri Lanka  
20-1 New Zealand  
80-1 Zimbabwe  
500-1 Bangladesh, Kenya  
1,000-1 Scotland

### TO WIN THEIR FIRST ROUND GROUP:

**Group A**  
10-1 South Africa  
11-4 England  
11-2 India, Sri Lanka  
25-1 Zimbabwe  
150-1 Kenya  
**Group B**  
11-10 Australia  
2-1 Pakistan  
9-2 West Indies  
7-1 New Zealand  
100-1 Bangladesh  
200-1 Scotland

### Top batsman

11-1 Mark Waugh (Australia)  
12-1 Brian Lara (West Indies)  
14-1 Jacques Kallis (South Africa), Sachin Tendulkar (India)  
16-1 Shahid Afridi (Pakistan), Ijaz Ahmed (Pakistan), Gary Kirsten (South Africa), Darren Lehmann (Australia), Inzamam-ul-Haq (Pakistan)  
20-1 Daryll Cullinan (South Africa), Adam Gilchrist (Australia), Graeme Hick (England), Ricky Ponting (Australia), Steve Waugh (Australia)  
25-1 Saeed Anwar (Pakistan), Michael Bevan (Australia), Hansie Cronje (South Africa), Aravinda de Silva (Sri Lanka), Nick Knight (England), Graham Thorpe (England)

### Top bowler

9-1 Glenn McGrath (Australia)  
12-1 Shoaib Akhtar (Pakistan)  
14-1 Shaun Pollock (South Africa), Shane Warne (Australia)  
16-1 Wasim Akram (Pakistan), Allan Donald (South Africa), Darren Gough (England)  
20-1 Damien Fleming (Australia), Shane Lee (Australia), Muttiah Muralitharan (Sri Lanka), Saqlain Mushtaq (Pakistan), Waqar Younis (Pakistan)  
25-1 Adam Dale (Australia), Anil Kumble (India), Paul Reiffel (Australia)

## The Daily Star Sport Countdown Gallery



days to go Shoaib is super fast.

—Star file photo

# Shoaib the sheikh of speed

UNDATED (AFP): Pakistan's new pace ace Shoaib Akhtar has come of age this year. His devastating pace was a key factor when Pakistan beat India in the first Asian Test in Calcutta, taking eight wickets in the match.

His two yorkers which removed Rahul Dravid and Sachin Tendulkar remained a talking point for some time, especially the one that dislodged Tendulkar first ball for the first time in his illustrious career.

"I was fired up and it was in my mind that if I get quick wickets Pakistan can defend a low total. Then in the second innings I was told to fire on all cylinders and that I did," Shoaib said of his stint in Calcutta.

The fiery paceman promises more of the same in the World Cup. "I relish bowling in English conditions and I am confident I will bowl well to contribute in Pakistan's World Cup win," he said.

A negative report on Shoaib by the manager of the Pakistan "A" tour to England in 1996 temporarily put the brakes on his career. Shoaib was selected for the Pakistan team to play in the first Sahara Cup in 1996 but dropped on disciplinary grounds.

"There were some people who wanted to destroy my career," claimed Shoaib. "I have never been a bad boy."

Shoaib took 25 wickets on that England tour and impressed many with his pace and movement. Two prolific do-

mestic seasons paved the way for his entry into the Pakistani side, with his 69 wickets in the 1996-97 season and 85 in the following home season.

Shoaib, who hails from Rawalpindi, was never interested in cricket in his childhood and developed an interest in fast bowling only after watching Waqar Younis.

"I liked Imran Khan and Wasim Akram, but it was Waqar Younis who inspired me to bowl fast. He is a world class fast bowler," Shoaib said.

Shoaib developed as a fast bowler on the domestic scene where he plays for Agricultural Development Bank of Pakistan. He made his Test debut under Aamir Sohail in the Durban Test in 1998. He instantly made his mark, taking 5-43 in Pakistan's 29-run win over the South Africans.

"The lad is really fast and can go places," South African coach Bob Woolmer remarked. "Shoaib will be an asset for the Pakistan team in the coming World Cup, said former coach Javed Miandad, asking what other team could match Wasim, Waqar and Shoaib in the pace department."

Shoaib himself says he owes a lot to Wasim, Waqar and Miandad for their guidance. "I still have a lot of distance to go to make my mark."

Meanwhile South African Allan Donald, known as White Lightning for his rearing pace, does not want to turn the World Cup into a pace race against Shoaib.

"I'm not bothered about who is the quickest bowler in the World Cup. I'm just here to do a

job and do it well," said Donald. Shoaib, who recorded 96mph in Sharjah, is determined to bowl the first 100mph delivery.

But Donald, who clocked 93mph in last summer's Test series in England, warned there was more to one-day bowling in this country than pure speed.

Donald said: "I played against Akhtar in Durban and he's the quickest thing I've seen. He went on to bowl very well in Sharjah. Pakistan have had a great era of fast bowlers."

Meanwhile, Pakistani cricket legend Imran Khan Wednesday snubbed reports that suggested paceman Shoaib Akhtar had a suspect bowling action, calling it a campaign against Pakistan on the eve of the World Cup.

"It is ridiculous and generated by those who fear Shoaib. He has a clear and genuine action," the former Pakistani captain and renowned paceman told reporters.

Unsubstantiated media reports from India and Sri Lanka questioned Shoaib's bowling action and said it could be "illegal."

Shoaib caused havoc in India with his pace and bowled too well against Sri Lanka in the limited over games and that is why they are raising questions," Imran said.

Imran praised Shoaib's rise in international cricket. If the youngster kept his momentum he would be a key player in Pakistan's World Cup campaign, he said.

Pakistan faces the West Indies in the opening match of the World Cup in Bristol on Sunday.

# SA sail on Boucher

LONDON, May 12: Mark Boucher hit 93 as World Cup favourites South Africa continued their impressive build-up to the tournament with a six-wicket win over Middlesex on Tuesday, reports Reuters.

The South Africans made light work of a 217-run target, scoring 219 for four in just 36.5 overs.

They lost Gary Kirsten for two but were always in control after Herschelle Gibbs (41) and Boucher had added 80 for the second wicket.

Skipper Hansie Cronje ended the match in style by lashing an unbeaten 42 from 25 balls.

Earlier, Paul Weekes had batted through the Middlesex innings, scoring an unbeaten 102.

Hosts England enjoyed an even easier day against Hampshire at Southampton, winning by nine wickets in mid-afternoon.

England romped to 92 for one off just 20.2 overs after Hampshire - at one stage 47 for seven - had been bowled out for 91 in 38.2 overs.

Left-arm pace bowler Alan Mullally made the most of conditions favouring seamers to take four for 20.

England lost opener Nick Knight for nought in the opening over of their reply but skipper Alex Stewart whose shortage of runs in the build-up to the World Cup has been a major worry for the hosts, spent valuable time in the middle making an unbeaten 20.

Graeme Hick was in superb touch, scoring 65 off just 66 balls.

A second wicket stand of 155 between Sachin Tendulkar, who made 91 from 113 balls, and Rahul Dravid (89) carried India to 243 for five in their match against Nottinghamshire, reduced to 44 overs a side because of rain.

India's bowlers then ensured victory at Trent Bridge by restricting Notts to 159 for six after they had been asked to chase a revised target of 247.

Paceman Javagal Srinath was the pick of the attack with three for 21.

After dismissing Warwickshire for a modest 171 at Edgbaston, Zimbabwe must have been confident of a morale-boosting victory.

Seamers Eddo Brandes and Neil Johnson tore through the top order to reduce Warwickshire to 41 for five and leg spinner Adam Huckle picked up three for 28 to sweep away the tail.

However, Zimbabwe were soon in deep trouble at 26 for four and were eventually bundled out for 106 in 35.2 overs.

World champions Sri Lanka rattled up 143 for five in Leicester after their clash with Leicestershire had been reduced to 25 overs per side because of rain.

Aravinda de Silva led the way with a classy, unbeaten 54 and was well supported by Sanath Jayasuriya (36) and Marvan Atapattu (21).

Left-arm pace bowler Chaminda Vaas struck with the first ball of the home side's reply, removing Darren Maddy leg before, and went on to take four for 14 as Leicestershire crumbled to 95 all out.

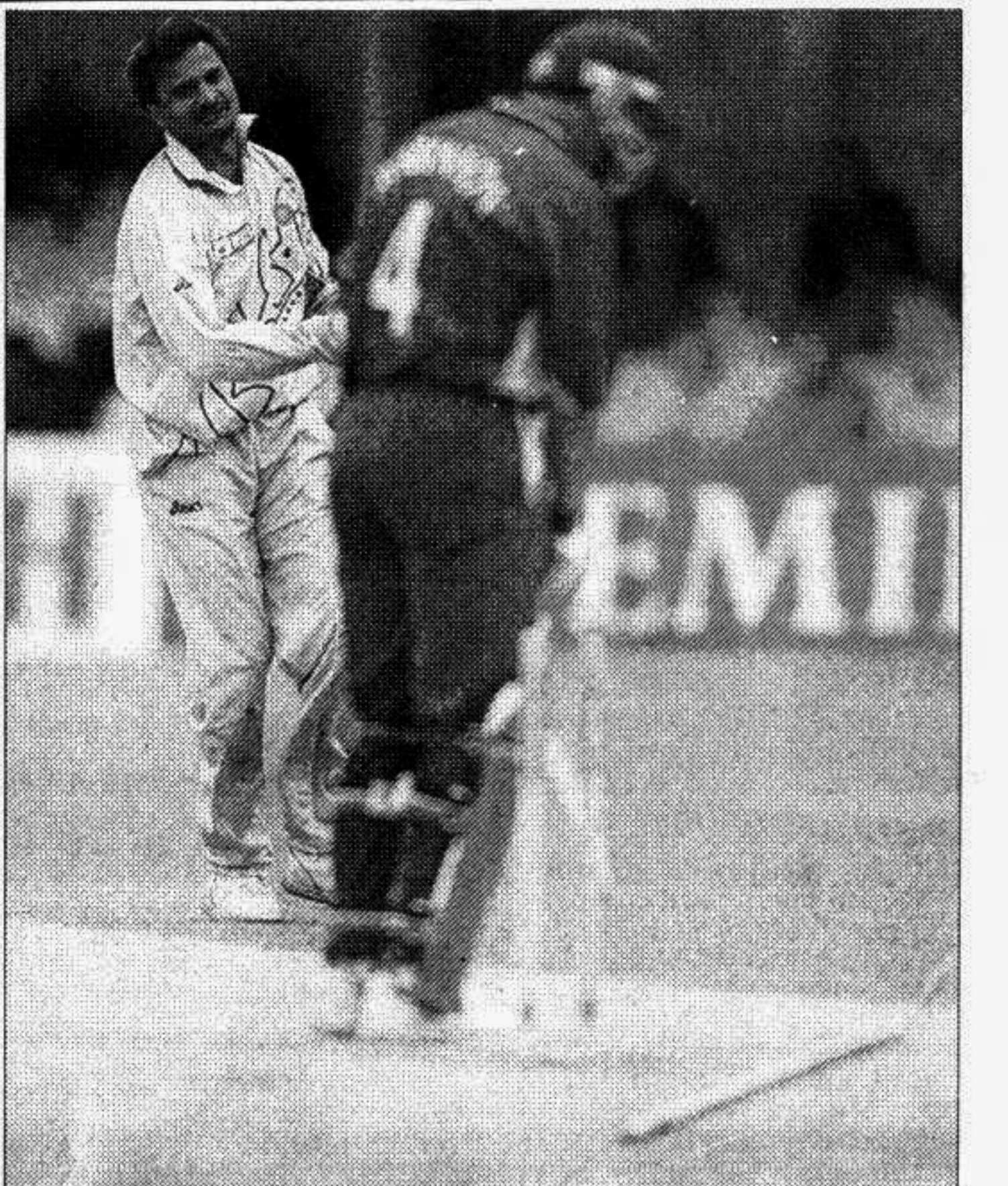
Kenya's final warm-up game against Glamorgan in Cardiff was washed out by rain.

## Special stamps

Bangladesh Postal Department will publish a set of two commemorative stamps of Tk 8 and Tk 10 denominations and a souvenir sheet valued at Tk 30 today on the occasion of the World Cup, reports UNB.

A first day cover valued at Tk 6 will be published and a special canceller will also be used on the occasion.

The commemorative stamps, souvenir sheet and first day cover will be sold from all head post offices, including the four GPOs. Later, the stamps will be also sold from all post offices of the country.



Indian speedster Javagal Srinath uproots the off stump of Nottinghamshire's former England batsman Tim Robinson at Trent Bridge on May 11. — AFP photo