

Trip down Brick Lane

From page-13

as he explained how lucky he was to get a ticket to the Northampton match against Pakistan on May 31.

"I failed to get one for the Chelmsford match. Thousands were disappointed on not getting the tickets for the match in nearby Essex," Faruk Uddin lamented.

The ticket that he bought about four months ago cost him sixteen pounds sterling and he was travelling to Northampton with thirty other friends and relatives, including whole families.

He seemed a seasoned supporter. "If we do not support the Bangladesh cricketers, they will not be encouraged. And, that is our work. We are proud because this is our first time (in the World Cup). We do not expect too much. If we win one or two games, that will be enough. It will help us to do better in the future," said Faruk Uddin in one breath.

Rezwan Ahmed of Sangeeta was luckier. He got tickets to both Chelmsford and Northampton. He and his friends, 25 of them, have booked a coach to travel to the Bangladesh matches. "The children are also interested but they have school," seemed his way of justifying an all-adult troupe.

He was humming along to a rural Bangla song that was playing on the speakers, interrupting his crooning skills, he explained: "There is a lot of enthusiasm and support for the Bangladesh cricket team in England because we are in the World Cup. All we want is that they should brighten our face."

His shop, barely fifty yards away from the recent Brick Lane car bomb attack that injured several, has been selling T-shirts and caps with Bangladesh cricket logo.

"We are sold out," Rezwan Ahmed said, pointing to the lone Bangladesh flag hanging at the entry to the shop.

"We receive many phone calls from Bangladeshis inquiring about cricket match tickets. But, no one is selling. Anyone who has bought a ticket is going to the World Cup," he said.

Such is his devotion to the Bangladesh team that he was

not travelling to either Chelmsford or Northampton to lose. Call it ignorance or one hundred per cent nationalism, Rezwan Ahmed expects Bangladesh to defeat both New Zealand and Pakistan. About Scotland he does not even doubt for a second.

"We shall all be praying," he said but thoughtfully.

Hira Miah was realistic about his choice of tickets. He will be travelling in a car to distant Edinburgh with his two other friends, Tofazzal and Shoaib.

"We are very proud as this is our first time. There is big support for the Bangladesh team from our community here. Support is fifty percent of a game," he clarified.

"We are going to take food and drinks, flags, T-shirts and caps... we will be fully loaded for the game," Hira Miah was excited as he said those words.

Why this particular match, then? "Because we know we gonna beat Scotland," was his obvious reply.

Hira Miah and his friends may see some other matches "if we do well," he was optimistic enough to say, "... maybe also in the next round".

There is no doubt there will be full-throated support for Aminul Islam and his boys at all the matches Bangladesh play. Cricket has rekindled a feeling of patriotism. All they have to do now is play to win.

Banglatown celebrated Baishakhi, the Bengali New Year 1406, with much pomp and gaiety last week. Coming up from 7-25 July is the Bangladesh Festival, of which prime ministers Sheikh Hasina and Tony Blair are patrons-in-chief.

Events are earmarked at famous arts centres such as the Barbican Centre and the Queen Elizabeth Hall on the South Bank, and the Brick Lane. It could be a different kind of celebration if Bangladesh lives even partially up to the expectations of the Bangalee here.

How would he like it if he were to give his post-match reaction after every Bangladesh match? "Don't call me if we lose," was Hira Miah's parting remark.



Gavin Hamilton, the Scotland all-rounder plays a reverse sweep during practice at Worcester yesterday.

— AFP photo

KENYA—ZIMBABWE SCOREBOARD

From page-13

Scoreboard of the Kenyan innings against Zimbabwe at Taunton on Saturday:

Kenya	R	B	4	6
K O'Brien c GW Flower b Johnson	16	35	2	0
Ravindu Shah c Strang b AR Whittall	37	43	5	0
SO Tikolo c A Flower b Johnson	9	17	0	0
MO Odumbe lbw b Strang	20	57	0	0
HS Modi b Johnson	7	19	1	0
A Vadar c AR Whittall b Strang	54	90	5	1
T Oduyo b Johnson	28	20	2	2
Asif Karim not out	19	19	2	1
A Suji not out	3	4	0	0
Extras: (b-2, lb-5, w-24, nb-4)	36			
Total: (For 7 wickets in 50 overs)	229			
Did not bat: M A Suji, J Kamande				
Fall of wickets: 1-62 (O'Brien, 12.5 ov); 2-64 (Ravindu Shah, 13.1 ov); 3-74 (Tikolo, 16.2 ov); 4-87 (Modi, 20.4 ov); 5-171 (Odumbe, 42.2 ov); 6-181 (Vadar, 44.1 ov); 7-219 (Oduyo, 48.4 ov).				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Streak	0	1	50	0 (8w)
Mbangwa	8	0	37	0 (1 nb, 3w)
Johnson	10	0	42	4 (3 nb, 2w)
AR Whittall	9	0	51	1 (2w)
GJ Whittall	6	0	20	0 (5w)
Strang	8	0	22	2
Umpires: DB Cowie (NZ) and Javed Akhtar (Pak)				
TV Umpire: KT Francis (SL)				
Match Referee: JR Reid (NZ)				



ANYONE FOR WORLD CUP BALOONS? A street vendor trying to sell his merchandise to spectators entering Lord's cricket ground on May 14.

— AFP photo

Akram: Vintage

From page-13

because he does bowl a few. He is definitely a wicket-taker and other teams will be aware of his presence.

"In an attack that's got big pace with Shoaib Akhtar, everybody will focus on Wasim and in a game situation, when you have a new batsman in, he's the ideal man to bring on and he has every chance of getting him out."

"Any new batsman looking to push the score along and taking a risk here and there against a bowler of that class is going to struggle. No matter who he plays against, the other team are always mindful of when Wasim's coming back on to bowl."

Lloyd looks

From page-13

century to tie the test series 2-2. A one-day series was tied 3-3 but Lara missed the last three with a wrist injury.

"We matched the Australians and we have done well in the one-day game in the past year and a half to two years," said Lloyd.

Lloyd predicted players like wicketkeeper Ridley Jacobs, now opening, pacemen Mervyn Dillon and Kevin King, and 20-year-old Jamaican all-rounder Ricardo Powell would make a big impact on the tournament.

The West Indies team management expect great things of Powell, who has been playing first class cricket for only a year and was drafted in when Carl Hooper suddenly announced his retirement.

He's just come out of the blue, striking the ball hard and clean. It's seeing youngsters like Powell that make me still love the game," said Lloyd.

Bits & pieces

From page-13

pressure," The Times said. "However, if India reach the super-six stage, most of the star wickets plan to rejoin their husbands in England to cheer them on," it said.

Navjot embarks on political innings

PATIALA, May 15: Former Test cricketer Navjot Singh Sidhu yesterday declared his entry into politics and said he would contest Lok Sabha election from Patiala city constituency in the ensuing general elections, reports PTI.

Sidhu, son of senior Congress leader and former state advocate general late Bhagwant Singh Sidhu, filed an application to the Punjab Pradesh Congress for grant of party ticket to him.

Sidhu said he decided to enter politics to ensure speedy promotion of sports and a clean and honest administration to the nation.

Warne spin

From page-16

"It will be interesting if Warne makes himself available for that one," Border told Sky television in England.

Border was unwilling to discuss the incident but, referring to the ACB statement, said: "There might be more heard and said about that."

Belated

From page-16

help coaches talk to their players.

Woolmer said: "The radio contact speeds up the whole game. The idea behind it is to take the game forward." He argued there was nothing in ICC rules outlawing such aids.

The South Africans have a reputation for innovative thinking and exploiting modern technology to help their game.

Woolmer was praised during the last World Cup for using a computer to log information and game patterns.

In a recent interview he said he wanted to see batting helmets equipped with microphones and ear pieces.

Caution for

From page-16

advice. If I have them at mid-off and mid-on I don't need to use my brain.

"There is a lot of good crack among Pakistani bowlers about bowling with the old ball. They have taught me how to reverse swing with the old ball, but I can also swing the new ball both ways."

"The wickets were too wet for me in club cricket, but I am sure they will be dry for the World Cup. I know what the wickets are like here so it doesn't worry me."

"It makes me feel good to be the right of as the world's fastest bowler and I enjoy having people come to watch me for my pace."

"I like to see fear in a batsman. I can't bear a batsman hitting me, so I am prepared to bowl bouncers even if I am no-balled."

"The batsman is a free man. He can hit you where he likes, so I don't think there should be restrictions on bowlers."

The West Indies will wait and see if captain Brian Lara can play as he struggles to recover from an injured wrist.

Stuart Williams may miss out with a leg strain but Courtney Walsh appears to have overcome a minor knee injury and should be fit to play on the ground he graced for 14 years before Gloucestershire controversially withdrew the offer of a new two-year contract to him in the winter.

Powell packs

From page-16

at this level in the one-day and test arena. There are a few adjustments one has to make ... but once you have batting ability it should not be very difficult to adjust when playing in Tests," he said.

Battle of volatile

From page-13

World Cup encounters against the West Indies.

Both teams, following a turbulent period, come into the group B game in good form.

The West Indies were whitewashed in a Test series in South Africa last year but regained their pride with a drawn Test and one-day series against Australia.

Lara, widely regarded as the best left-hander in the world, is expected to play despite a wrist injury that has troubled him for the past month.

Lara was sacked, then reinstated at the end of last year following a row over player payments.

Akram was also sacked - following match-fixing allegations - before being brought back in January.

Akram, one of the foremost all-rounders in the game and one-day cricket's leading wicket-taker with 371 victims, knows a good showing at the World Cup could provide him with an escape route. He and several other players are still the subject of a match-fixing inquiry at home.

"I have nothing to fear because I have done nothing wrong," he said. "But like any self-respecting sportsman I

want to clear my name.

"The best way of silencing those who question my commitment to Pakistani cricket is to do well and bring the World Cup back to Pakistan."

The 33-year-old, playing in his fourth and last World Cup, wants to emulate his mentor Imran Khan's title triumph in the 1992 edition in Australia and New Zealand.

Pakistan, coming off a successful tour of India and Sharjah, go into this World Cup as one of the favoured teams alongside South Africa and Australia.

But veteran Akram warned: "Back home people think we have already won the World Cup. I know we are one of the favourites, but you still have to go out there and win."

Pakistan are so rich in bowling that the once-irreplacable duo of fast bowler Younis and leg-spinner Mushtaq Ahmed may have to sit out Sunday's game as all-rounder Azhar Mahmood shares the new ball with Akram and the "100 miles per hour" man Akhtar.

Even if the West Indies survive them, they will run into wily off-spinner Saqlain Mushtaq, whose well-disguised straight ball can upset the best of well-set batsmen.

KNOW THE NUMBERS

Following is the players' list with shirt numbers:

- PAKISTAN**
1. Wasim Akram (captain)
 2. Moin Khan
 3. Salim Malik
 4. Ijaz Ahmed
 5. Waqar Younis
 6. Saeed Anwar
 7. Mushtaq Ahmed
 8. Inzamam-ul-Haq
 9. Saqlain Mushtaq
 10. Shahid Afridi
 11. Azhar Mahmood
 12. Abdur Razzak
 13. Yousof Youhana
 14. Shoaib Akhtar
 15. Wajahatullah Wasti

- WEST INDIES**
1. Brian Lara (captain)
 2. Shivnarine Chanderpaul
 3. Ricardo Powell
 4. Stuart Williams
 5. Sherwin Campbell
 6. Keith Arthurton
 7. Ridley Jacobs
 8. Phil Simmons
 9. Curtly Ambrose
 10. Courtney Walsh
 11. Jimmy Adams
 12. Herschelle Bryson
 13. Mervyn Dillon
 14. Nehemiah Perry
 15. Reon King

Alec gets it all right

LONDON, May 15 (Reuters/Internet): Alec Stewart celebrated a perfect day at his favourite ground on Friday as England comfortably disposed of defending champions Sri Lanka in the World Cup opener at Lord's.

On a day of alternating spring sunshine and showers at the headquarters of world cricket, the England captain stroked his way with increasing confidence to 88 from 147 balls with six fours.

It was his first international one-day 50 in 18 matches and helped take England to 207 for two off 46.5 overs in reply to Sri Lanka's inadequate 204 all out from 48.4.

"That was a good win," said Stewart, who was named man of the match. "We had to win. I felt confident and it's nice to get 88."

Sri Lanka must have felt the fates had conspired against them when Stewart won the toss on a damp, overcast morning.

Stewart took the obvious option by asking Sri Lanka to bat on a damp, well-grassed pitch and after some exploratory overs first change Alan Mullally ripped the heart out of the Sri Lankan batting.

Lord's on a wet, May morning was no place for the pyrotechnics Sanath Jayasuriya displayed at the 1996 World Cup on the Indian sub-continent but in combination with Roshan Mahanama he saw off Darren Gough's opening five-over burst.

Then Stewart introduced

Mullally from the Pavilion end and the tall left-arm tilted the match irrevocably in England's favour with a hostile and economic seven-over spell.

Bowling with real pace and extracting extravagant movement and lift, Mullally had Mahanama caught for 16 by Hick running back at gully after



ALEC STEWART

aiming an expansive drive through the covers.

Jayasuriya fell for 29 off 52 balls, caught at second slip by Hick before, in his following over, Mullally captured the treasured wicket of Aravinda de Silva for a duck.

De Silva, hero of the 1996 World Cup final against Australia, was well held off a sharp chance to Graham Thorpe at first slip.

Captain Arjuna Ranatunga ran the ball into the gaps with some effect but Sri Lanka's primary hopes of posting a competitive total depended on wicketkeeper Romesh

Kaluwitharana. Jayasuriya's accustomed opening partner.

His entertaining innings finally ended at 57 when he was caught behind off Mullally, returning at the Pavilion End. He hit seven boundaries from 66 balls and after his dismissal the Sri Lankan lower order were unable to lift the tempo against some accurate seam bowling.

"It was a good toss to win," Stewart said. "Alan Mullally bowled very well."

Said Ranatunga: "I think they bowled and fielded very well and bowled to a plan."

The pitch had lost its terrors when England batted and Stewart and Nasser Hussain responded with a cautious but largely untroubled opening partnership of 50.

Hussain, selected to replace the out-of-form Nick Knight, was stunned on the change against Muttiah Muralitharan for 14, leaving the stage clear for Stewart and Hick.

They responded with an assured partnership of 125, studied with crisp driving and a easy pick-up pull shot for six by Hick.

Stewart reached his 50 from 85 balls with four fours followed by Hick who took 63 balls for his half-century from 63 balls with a boundary to accompany his six.

Chaminda Vaas, steadiest of the Sri Lanka bowlers, was rewarded with the wicket of Stewart caught behind but the match was now effectively decided and Hick, who finished unbeaten on 73, struck the winning runs as the evening sun flooded the Lord's stage.

"I think the conditions didn't help us," Ranatunga said. "We are not going to panic. We will have to win the next couple of games."

Aussies attend to all

WORCESTER, England, May 15 (Reuters/Internet): Australia, obviously happy with their batting and bowling form, concentrated on fielding drills at Worcester's New Road on Saturday in preparation for their opening World Cup match against Scotland on Sunday.

The players worked repeatedly on hitting a single stump in the outfield of the picturesque ground.

Ricky Ponting, among the world's best fielders, was relentlessly accurate as he swept in to throw underarm. Opposing batsmen will be loathe to take a quick single in his direction during the tournament.

Shane Warne, not exactly renowned for his mobility in the field, also looked sharp and also found plenty of turn in a

brief net session.

"These sort of conditions could be pretty helpful, as long as the rain holds off on the day," said swing bowler Adam Dale, who is likely to be an important part of the Australian armoury in the current changeable weather.

Dale was one of four Australians who took time out from their World Cup preparations on Thursday to visit Worcester's Royal National Institute for the Blind College.

Dale, along with Michael Bevan, Shane Lee and Damien Fleming, played some cricket with the college youngsters.

All looked something less than international standard when trying to bat wearing black eye masks.

"We hope it's been a bit of a thrill for the students," said Bevan. "It just goes to show how lucky we are and it was a pleasure to be here and help out."

The Scottish squad had a concentrated net session at New Road on Friday and are well aware of the huge task facing them in their first World Cup match.

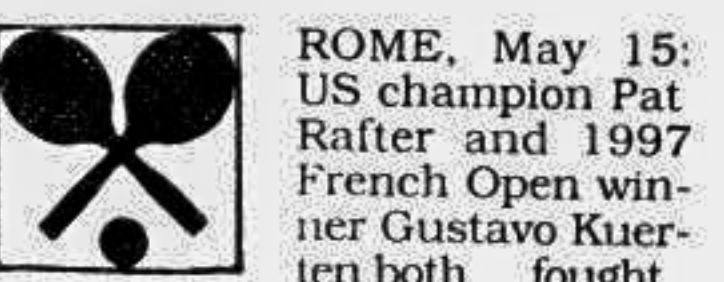
"We've had a good workout today and are optimistic - optimistic but realistic," said long-serving captain George Munro.

"Australia are a team full of stars and we know we will have to be at the top of our game."

"But we hope we show up well and that the game can be a catalyst for better things to come."

The game is a 5.500 sell-out.

Rafter, Kuerten in semis



ROME, May 15: US champion Pat Rafter and 1997 French Open winner Gustavo Kuerten both fought back from a set down on Friday to reach the semifinals of the Italian Open, reports Reuters.

Rafter looked to be sliding out of the 2.45 million dollars tournament after losing the first set of his quarterfinal to Ecuador's Nicolas Pietrangeli but was a break of serve down in the second set before he rallied to win 4-6, 7-5, 6-1.

Kuerten lost four games in a row to lose his first set 6-3 to Slovakia's number 10 seed Karol Kucera but broke serve in the final game of the second to take it 6-4.

The decider could have gone either way as both players missed crisp groundstrokes with sloppy errors. The Brazilian finally took it with a break of serve in the 12th to win 3-6, 6-4, 7-5.

Rafter takes Centre Court: the first of Saturday's semifinals against Spanish 15th seed Felix Mantilla, who, brushed

aside German qualifier David Prinosil 6-2, 6-4.

Kuerten, through to the last four for the second year running, tackled world number seven Alex Corretja, who also had a few nervous moments and had to save a match point before beating Argentine Franco Squilliani 5-7, 7-6, 7-5.

Rafter's win propelled him into his first semifinal of the year and keeps alive his chance of dethroning Yevgeny Kafelnikov as the world number one.

He is currently world number four and will knock the Russian off the top of the rankings if he wins in Rome.

The Queenslander made a slow start against his close friend Pietrangeli and dropped serve in the opening game to give the Ecuadorian his decisive break.

The second set looked destined for a repeat of the first when the world ranked 32 broke Rafter's serve 15 with a backhand return in the opening game.

A change of shirt at the start of the fourth game brought Rafter a change of fortune. He

broke serve to love and kept the initiative to establish a 6-5 lead.

Lapentti suddenly produced three backhand errors to allow Rafter to break serve and take the set 7-5 and from then on the match belonged to Rafter.

He broke serve in the fourth and sixth games before clinching the match after exactly two hours with his fourth ace.

"The third and fourth games of the second set were crucial but so was the fifth as well," said Rafter, who has never won a tournament on clay but reached the semifinals of the French Open last year and will be back at Roland Garros later this month.

He had a break point there and it would have been a real kick in the head if he had won it. It could have been 6-4, 6-1 to Lapentti and the crowd would have booed me off."

"(This tournament) is a big surprise for me so far," said Rafter, whose best previous performance this year was a third round appearance at the Australian Open.

Beware of Bevan

From page-16

tour of England he smacked an unbeaten 108 at the Oval.

He remained unbeaten with his third ton, 101 against India in Sharjah in April last year.

Bevan has only been dismissed twice for a duck in almost a century of one-day internationals.

Bevan became a national sporting hero when he smashed Roger Harper over his head for four clinching a last-ball victory over the West Indies in a supreme unbeaten knock of 78 on New Year's Day 1996.

In recent seasons Bevan has developed his left-arm chinaman wrist spin, which has netted him 30 wickets at 42.20.

Bevan's well-disguised wrong'un is his danger ball, troubling right-handers who often find an edge behind the wicket.

Even if Australia lose early wickets, as they seemingly frequently do, teams should not count the Australians out in the World Cup until they have the wicket of Bevan. He has proved devilishly hard to remove so far.