



Good Luck Bangladesh!

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MORE THAN YOU THOUGHT POSSIBLE



Pakistan opener Saeed Anwar heads for the dressing room while West Indies fielders start celebrating his dismissal yesterday. — AFP photo

BITS & PIECES



LONDON, May 16 (AFP): Former New Zealand Test captain Jeremy Coney had an unhappy start to his World Cup. Arriving at London's Heathrow after a gruelling 20-hour journey to commentate for BBC Radio, he found himself detained for five hours in a windowless room by airport officials.

Coney, who once remembered his guitar but forgot to take his cricket boots on an international tour, had failed to apply for a work permit. Officials scrutinised his documents and debated whether to let him into the country or send him straight back to the other side of the world.

Even his modest revelation that he was a former Test captain and had been awarded the MBE by Queen Elizabeth for his services to cricket failed to impress the airport bureaucrats. Coney's freedom was finally secured when BBC representatives arrived at Heathrow to fill in a 10-page form and vouch for the Kiwi's good character.

KNEE INJURY STILL HURTS GIBBS

HOVE, England, May 16 (AFP): South Africa's Herschelle Gibbs could have been a footballer rather than a cricketer if it had not been for a knee injury. The opening batsman, who is also an accomplished rugby union stand-off, had hoped to play for leading English football club Tottenham Hotspur, the team he supported as a soccer-mad young boy. The club even signed him on junior forms before a cruciate ligament injury ended his football dream.

"In South Africa, soccer is more prestigious than cricket and at one point I had hopes of playing for my country," says Gibbs. "The injury was very difficult to swallow at the time."

WC NOT THE ONLY APPEAL FOR IMRAN

LONDON, May 16 (AFP): Imran Khan was spotted at Lord's for the opening World Cup match between England and Sri Lanka — but the former Pakistan captain is not in the English capital for the fun of it. Imran, who will also do some commentating during the tournament, has less appealing business on his mind. He is

Bangladesh bank on Gordon brainstorm

CHELMSFORD, England, May 16 : Bangladesh, inspired by coach Gordon Greenidge, make their World Cup debut here on Monday promising New Zealand a fright at least - and a real shock at best, reports AFP. Aminul Islam's men have only once played New Zealand in one day internationals before, giving them one advantage at least - that of surprise.

Bangladesh, who qualified for the tournament by winning the ICC Trophy for non-Test-

playing nations in 1997, warmed up by beating English counties Essex and Middlesex. But defeat to Northamptonshire showed they will need a bit of luck to win the 1,000-US-dollar reward per player promised by the Bangladesh government for a win.

"New Zealand, Australia, Pakistan and the West Indies are way ahead of us," skipper Aminul conceded. "They have more experience and better skills than us.

"But if Kenya could beat the West Indies in the last World Cup, anything can happen, especially in England.

"The weather could prove to be a great help to the smaller teams."

The squad came to England in mid-April, ahead of their rivals, in an attempt to acclimatise.

Their inspiration comes from Greenidge, the former West Indian great, who played in three World Cups and scored

HEAD-TO-HEAD

Bangladesh do not yet have Test status. But the sides have met in the one-day format once during the Australasia Cup in Sharjah in 1990. New Zealand won the game by 161 runs. Bangladesh are making their World Cup debut after winning the 1997 ICC Trophy.

Players to watch

Bangladesh: Mehrab Hossain. The 20-year-old right-hand opener was virtually unknown until this year, when he made history by becoming the first player from Bangladesh to score a century in one-day international cricket, against Zimbabwe in a tri-nations tournament also involving Kenya. Incidentally, Mehrab's uncle Azhar Hossain made the first ODI half century against New Zealand in the only game the sides have played.

New Zealand: Craig McMillan. The muscular 22-year-old from Canterbury came out of the World Cup warm-up games as the man to watch, scoring 86 off 54 balls against Surrey, then 95 off 92 balls against Sussex. Very aggressive at the crease, his wicket will be prized by Bangladesh more than any other.

Venue: Chelmsford. A small, cramped ground, it is the home of county side Essex. Graham Gooch, now an England selector, spent much of his career peppering its boundary boards. South Africa and Zimbabwe play here on May 29. Capacity 5,500. (AFP)

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Sunny weather forecast

LONDON, May 16: The weather will remain sunny during the Bangladesh-New Zealand match at Chelmsford on Monday, reports BSS.

The Met office forecast there will be no rain in London and Essex tomorrow.

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Will spring sing for Kiwis?

LONDON, May 16 (Reuters/Internet): Any team condemned to play regularly in Dunedin have nothing to fear from an English spring.

Based partly on their familiarity with cool, damp weather the New Zealanders, who open their World Cup campaign against Bangladesh at Chelmsford on Monday, are considered a good outside bet at 20-1.

Dunedin, the Scots settlement in the south of the South Island, can be a grim place to play any sport. At one World Cup match in 1992 spectators lit fires to keep warm.

New Zealand have yet to experience weather that cold this May and, in fact, have been lucky with the weather while winning each of their three warm-up matches.

Captain Stephen Fleming agrees that the weather in the South Island comes close to replicating an English spring.

"We are obviously more suited to playing in these conditions than perhaps the teams from the sub-continent," he

said. "Twenty to one is a pretty good bet but we have got a lot of work to do, the other teams are playing very well."

New Zealand, a far more competitive team in the one-day game than the five-day, have genuine cause for optimism in the weaker of the two groups.

They start with Bangladesh, finish with Scotland, and need to beat one of Australia, West Indies or Pakistan, to grab a second round berth.

"There's no way we just target one game," Fleming said. "A lot of people are talking about the West Indies but you get a green, seaming pitch and you lose the toss and all of a sudden the opportunity is gone."

New Zealand's one-day successes have usually involved parsimonious bowling from a battery of medium-pacers, keen and reliable fielding, with the batting firework coming from the Canterbury quartet of Nathan Astle, Craig McMillan, Fleming himself and Chris

Cairns.

Opener Astle clubs the ball powerfully off the front foot in both one-day and Test cricket but even he has been overshadowed by McMillan in the warm-up matches.

McMillan savaged the Surrey and Sussex bowling, hitting four huge sixes at The Oval, and with an average of nearly 49 in Tests he is one of the best young batsmen in world cricket.

Cairns, a gloriously clean striker of the ball, may be used as a floater in the order.

He will combine with Dion Nash and either Geoff Allott or Simon Doull plus the miserly slow-medium Gavin Larsen in the attack. They will be assisted by Chris Harris, one of the world's more successful all-round one-day cricketers, who bowls medium-paced leg-cutters or medium-slow leg spin.

Bangladesh, who make their World Cup debut, arrived in England three weeks ago and have spent a lot of time dodging



HOPING FOR DIVINE DELIVERANCE: These two youngsters travelled across Dhaka to seek blessings for the Bangladesh World Cup squad who play their opening match against New Zealand today. — Star photo by Amran Hossain

World Cup England 99
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PAKISTAN-WINDIES SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the Pakistan innings against West Indies at Bristol on Sunday:

PAKISTAN	R	B	4	6
Saeed Anwar c Lara b Walsh	10	32	2	0
Shahid Afridi c Jacobs b Walsh	11	19	0	0
Abdur Razaq b Dillon	7	34	1	0
Ijaz Ahmed lbw b Dillon	36	70	4	0
Inzamam-ul-Haq c Jacobs b Dillon	0	1	0	0
Yousuf Youhana c & b Simmons	34	53	2	0
Azhar Mahmood c sub (NO Perry) b Ambrose	38	51	1	2
*Wasim Akram b Walsh	42	29	4	2
*Moin Khan not out	10	9	0	0
Saqain Mushtaq not out	2	3	0	0
Extras: (b-2, lb-12, w-23, nb-2)				
Total: (For 8 wickets in 50 overs)		229		

Did not bat: Shoaib Akhtar
Fall of wkts: 1-22 (Shahid Afridi, 7.6 ov); 2-23 (Saeed Anwar, 9.2 ov); 3-42 (Abdur Razaq, 18.3 ov); 4-42 (Inzamam-ul-Haq, 18.4 ov); 5-102 (Ijaz Ahmed, 30.1 ov); 6-135 (Yousuf Youhana, 38.3 ov); 7-209 (Azhar Mahmood, 47.3 ov); 8-217 (Wasim Akram, 48.5 ov).

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Ambrose	10	2	35	1 (1nb)
Walsh	10	3	27	3 (1nb)
Dillon	10	1	29	3 (10 w)
Simmons	10	0	41	1 (4 w)
Arthurton	1	0	10	0
Adams	8	0	57	0 (3 w)
Powell	1	0	16	0 (1 w)

Umpires: DB Hair (Aus) and DL Orchard (SA)
TV Umpire: KE Palmer
Match Referee: R Subba Row

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HSBC

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