



DHAKA SUNDAY, MAY 23, 1999 Email: dssports@bdonline.com



Will the pace team wreck the ace team?

Breaking Boundaries.



MORE THAN YOU THOUGHT POSSIBLE



England paceman Mark Ealham starts celebrating after getting the edge from South African opener Gary Kirsten yesterday. — AFP photo

Pakistan v Australia: Battle of big guns

LONDON, May 22: Australia shape up with bitter rivals Pakistan at Headingley on Sunday in a World Cup confrontation made for cricket connoisseurs, reports AFP.

Both team sheets are peppered with household names, both sides packed with extravagance.

There is no love lost between them and the stakes - particularly for Steve Waugh's side - could not be higher.

If the game comes close to matching the drama of their last one-day meeting - it produced a world record run chase and four individual centuries - it will become etched into World Cup history.

Australia, defeated by New Zealand in their last group B outing on Thursday and lethargic in their opening win over Scotland, are fighting for survival.

Defeat at Headingley could mean a humiliating first-round exit for the 1987 champions and the second favourites here.

Steve Waugh conceded: "We just haven't played well enough so far. It's just up to us now to lift; everyone has to lift about 10 percent."

"I don't want to read too much into the New Zealand defeat; it's not desperation stage just yet. We've got to back ourselves and we've been planning for this for about 18 months."

"It's a pretty basic equation - we've got to win three games. They're all big games but this one's pretty crucial now."

The game will throw up a series of intriguing head-to-heads.

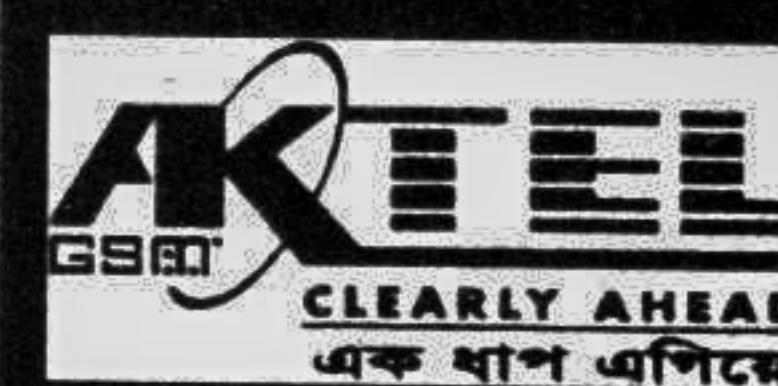
Shoaib Akhtar is the world's fastest strike bowler in the world while Glenn McGrath is arguably its best.

Pinch-hitters do not come more exciting than Adam Gilchrist and Shahid Afridi and bowlers rarely more beguiling than leg spinner Shane Warne and off spinner Saqlain Mushtaq.

Waugh and his immediate rival Wasim Akram, meanwhile, both all-rounders, are giants of the game.

Akram, however, the hero of Pakistan's 1992 World Cup triumph, admitted that his side, while unbeaten against the West Indies and Scotland, had problems of its own, particularly with the top-order batting.

He told AFP on Saturday:



his side from early trouble. The game is given added spice by the sides' troubled relations.

Five years ago, Warne and Mark Waugh accused Pakistan's Salim Malik - who is in the frame to play against them on Sunday - of offering them a

"Australia are always tough to beat but we are very confident. But I must concede the batting has not clicked."

"That is because the boys are still getting used to the moving ball. I am telling them to adjust to the swing."

Twice Akram has had to resort to powerful hitting to save

Seize the moment, AKTEL it.

bribe to lose a match.

The incident caused a controversy still reverberating in Pakistan today, where inquiries into match-fixing continue.

Sunday's match should be hard-fought from first ball to last, however, as was the game

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HEAD-TO-HEAD

Australia had a remarkable tour to Pakistan last year, when they won the three-Test series 1-0, then clean-swept the one-dayers by 3-0. The third fixture saw them win after scoring a world record second innings of 316 for four, with Adam Gilchrist and Ricky Ponting both scoring centuries.

World Cup:

They have met four times, with the spoils shared. In 1987, Australia had won and gone on to take the title, beating England in the final. In 1992, Pakistan won - and went on to take the title, also beating England.

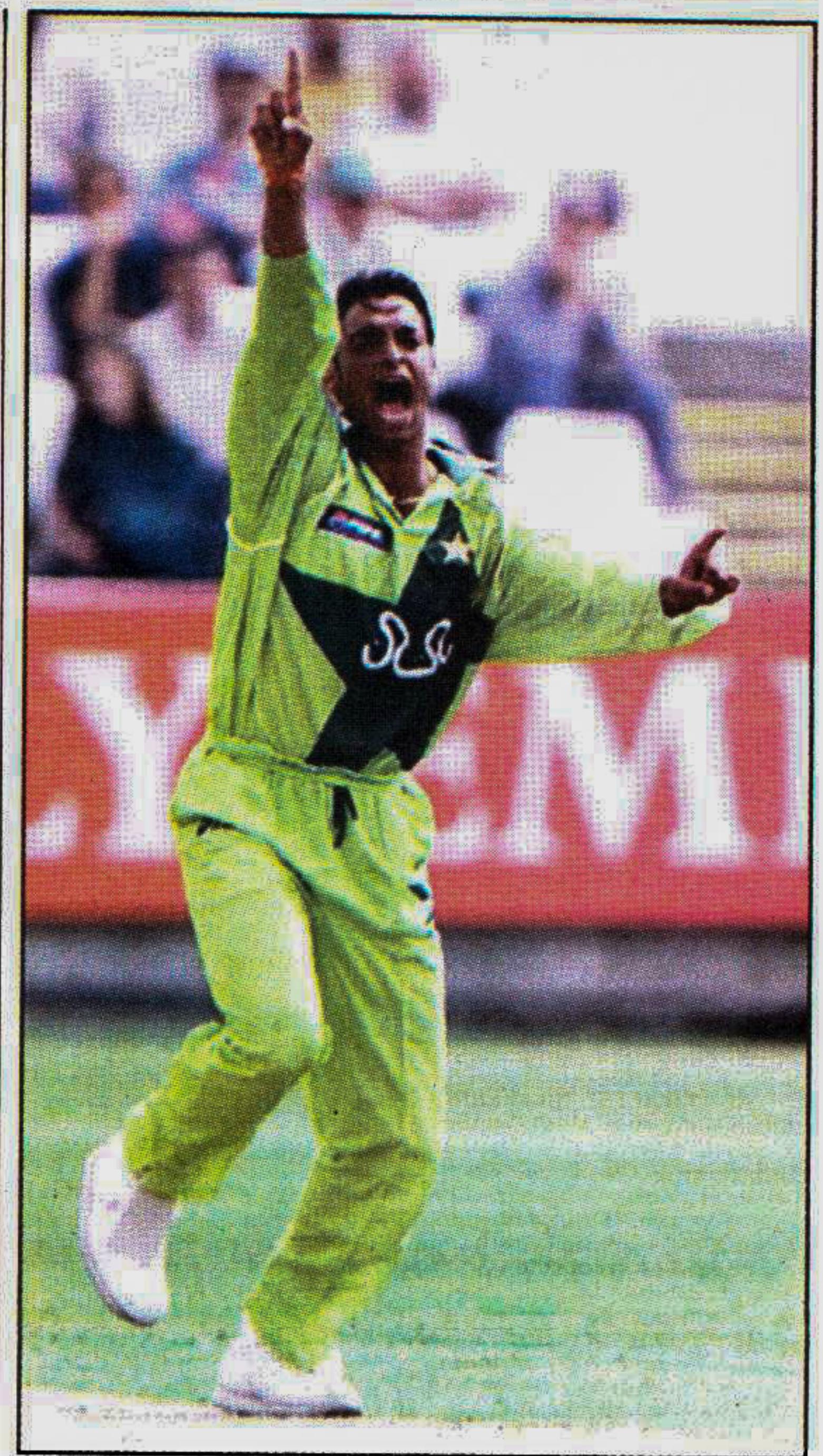
Players to watch:

Australia: Glenn McGrath. The 29-year-old New South Welshman will be compared directly with Shoaib Akhtar. McGrath may not share his pace but he is quick and accurate and loves a challenge. The Pakistan top five batsmen have yet to impress and they can expect another tough examination from the man they call "Pigeon" because of his thin legs and splayed feet.

Pakistan: Shahid Afridi. The only cricketer in the world who scores at more than one-run-a-ball in one-dayers. Aged 19, he acts as Pakistan's pinch-hitter and is regarded as one of the most destructive one-day openers in the world. Scored a world record one-day century off 37 balls against Sri Lanka in 1997-98 which included 11 sixes.

Venue:

Headingly. A long-time Test venue, but regarded as cramped and unattractive, with a sloping pitch. County side Yorkshire tried to leave the venue two years ago for a new ground but have decided to stay. Don Bradman scored 309 runs in a day here in 1948. Capacity: 14,750. (AFP)



SHOAIB AKHTAR

— File photo

It's now football time

From Nizamuddin Ahmed in London

May 22: It is not easy to talk about cricket today, the day of the FA Cup final. The entire nation, the television channels and the media are all struck by the Wembley spectacle.

World Cup cricket, in spite of the hosts' meeting tournament hot shots South Africa at the celebrated Oval today, the clash of the Uniteds - Manchester and Newcastle - dominated all but four of the 24 pages of sport in the popular tabloid The Sun. Cricket got two.

Yesterday's Bangladesh-West Indies encounter at Dublin was disposed off with barely three hundred words, including the scorecard. The story is not different elsewhere.

Thankfully, as an apology to

the inevitable obscurity, it is a rest day for the Bangladesh cricketers who are lodged in the tranquillity of the Clontarf bay in suburban Dublin in a hotel that is built around a medieval castle.

The players went for nets in the afternoon on the same ground on which they made history by playing with the West Indies the first ODI yesterday.

The team will fly to Edinburgh tomorrow, as will the entourage of BCB officials, who are providing support and encouragement. At Scotland's capital, where they meet the hosts on the coming Monday in their most important match of the World Cup, and perhaps history too, Bangladesh will

check-in into Stakis Grosvenor Edinburgh.

It is surprising how low-key the cricket mega-event is being made out to be. Except those who have specifically gone to the stadium with a match ticket, the last great sporting event this millennium is passing by as yet another shopping day at Sainsbury's.

Zimbabwe made the first genuine ripples on Thursday by humiliating Azharuddin Company. And India seem well stung. The protest that Azharuddin's team lodged against the decision to curtail their innings to 46 overs could be the next best thing that has happened to kick alive the anaesthetised tournament.

India are also contemplating protesting fielding restrictions of Zimbabwe being lifted after the thirteenth over instead of fifteen.

If the ICC agree to India's protest and grant them the Zimbabwe game or calls for a replay, that bombshell may make as much an impact on this football-crazy nation as a crow does on an elephant's head.

The South Africans are also trying their best to liven up things by making a seemingly unnecessary early announcement that Hansie Cronje will don Bob Woolmer's boots after the World Cup. Perhaps the only bearing of the timing could be to nip speculations in London that yet another Englishman could be in charge of the Proteas.

This latest South African move could further fluster the English, who are already disturbed by a move to steal the 2006 football World Cup from England. The South Africans came to training yesterday wearing T-shirts with the message: I back South Africa for the 2006 World Cup. The timing is crafty considering that 24 FIFA chiefs are in London to make the decision.

All this really goes to show that even Hansie has football on his mind. And why not? The seventy-nine thousand Wembley crowds will down twenty-four thousand pints of beer, sixty thousand cola drinks and

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LONDON, May 22: South African World Cup captain Hansie Cronje will take complete charge of the team when coach Bob Woolmer leaves after the tournament, a senior official said today, reports AFP.

Ali Bacher, managing director of the United Cricket Board of South Africa, said Woolmer's successor Graham Ford will "act as back-up for the captain."

"The overall boss will be the captain."

Ford, the 38-year-old Natal coach, was given a three-year contract after impressing Cronje with his technical expertise and communications skills.

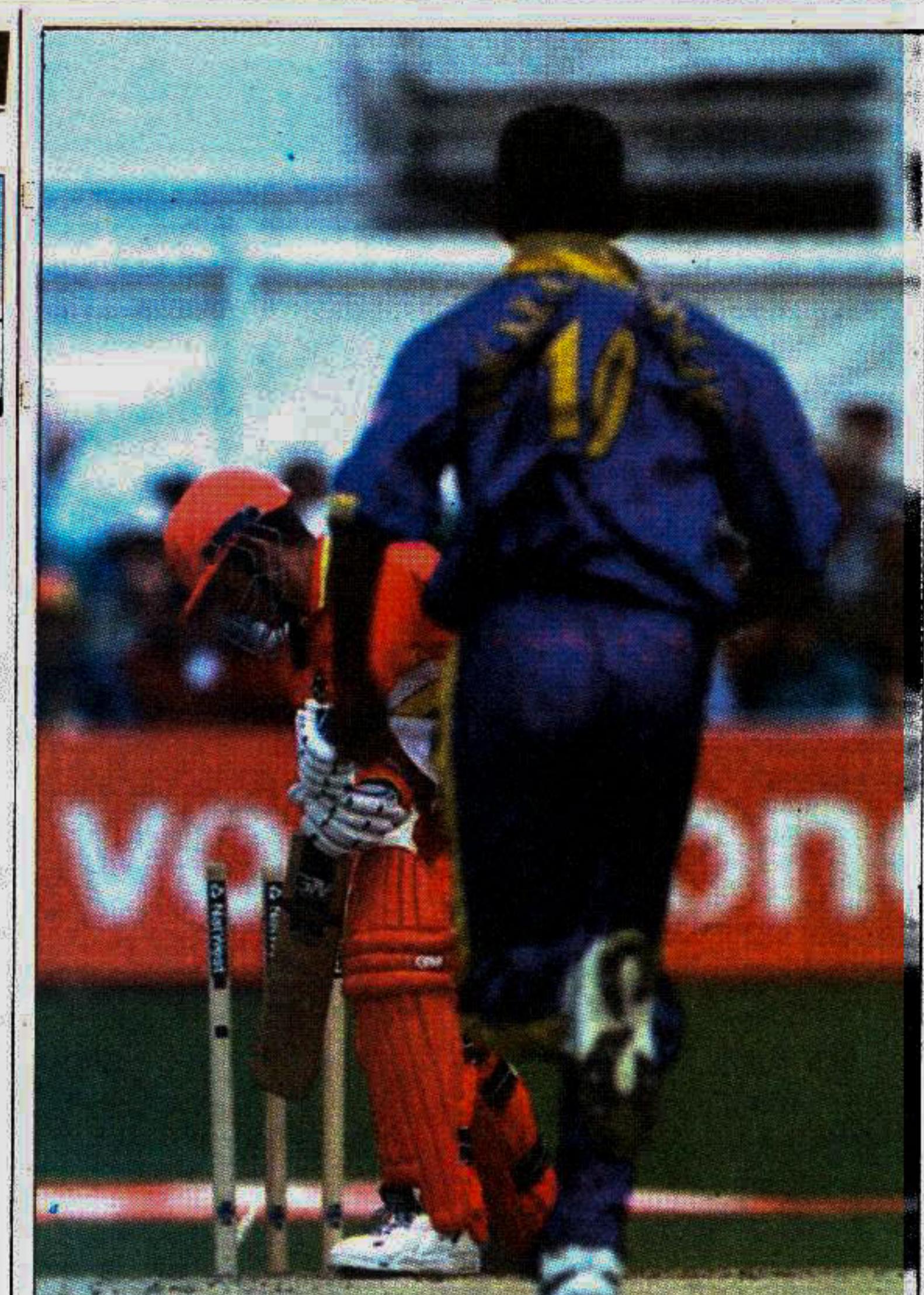
"We did not want an international figure," Bacher said. "There is no one better than Ford on the technical side."

HOLDING RATES

MURHAB HIGHLY

DUBLIN, May 22: Former West Indian fast bowler Michael Holding today paid tribute to Bangladesh's promising batsman Mehrab Hossain, reports BSS.

Opener Mehrab hammered a magnificent 64 against the West Indies on Friday and registered his name in the record book as the first Bangladeshi to hit a



Zimbabwe's Paul Strang is bowled by Sri Lankan paceman Promodha Wickremasinghe at Worcester yesterday.

Internet photo



few days to loosen up and I'll be faster tomorrow," he said. "I'm really looking forward to it."

His captain, Wasim Akram predicted the young fast bowler will be steaming in with much more venom when the unbeaten Pakistanis clash with Australia.

Wasim will be expecting much more of his young destroyer later in the tournament and he said: "You do not have to bowl 100 per cent all the time."

"I think Shoaib will be bowling quicker against Australia. You do not always have to pull effort out all the time. You can get away with 80 per cent."

News that Shoaib had been taking it easy was greeted with near incredulity by one of his victims, Scotland captain George Salmon.

"He is as quick as anything we have faced," said Salmon, four days after coming up against Australian paceman Glenn McGrath at Worcester in Scotland's first ever World Cup game.

"If he is not going on full effort when you get to 90 miles an hour there is not much difference between 90 and 92 or 93 - it is all pretty quick."

Shoaib is an admirer of the pace bowling of current captain Wasim Akram and Waqar Younis who has yet to play in this tournament. He models his 30-metre run-up on Waqar's.

Shoaib tried to reduce the length of the run-up but said he lost his rhythm. He has no fears about lasting the pace.

"I've worked hard on my fitness and the secret is in the sprint. I'm like Ben Johnson," he said. "If I don't run in fast I don't bowl fast. It's as simple as that."

Shoaib first made his mark when touring England with the Pakistan A team two years ago, ripping through the defences of many leading county batsmen.

The Pakistan selectors wasted no time in throwing him straight into the senior side

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S AFRICA-ENGLAND SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the South African innings against England at the Oval yesterday.

SOUTH AFRICA

	R	B	4	6
G Kirsten c Stewart b Ealham	46	62	3	0
H Gibbs c Hick b Ealham	60	94	6	1
J Kallis b Mullally	0	5	0	0
D Cullinan c Fraser b Mullally	10	20	2	0
W Cronje c Stewart b Flintoff	16	28	0	0
J Rhodes c sub (N V Knight) b Gough	18	24	1	0
L Klusener not out	48	40	3	0
S Pollock b Gough	0	1	0	0
M Boucher not out	17	27	0	0
Extras: (lb-5, w-5)	10			
Total: (For 7 wickets in 50 overs)	225			

Did not bat: S Elworthy, A Donald.

Fall of wkt's: 1-111 (Gibbs, 24.6 ov); 2-112 (Kirsten, 26.2 ov); 3-112 (Kallis, 27.2 ov); 4-127 (Cullinan, 31.6 ov); 5-146 (Cronje, 36.5 ov); 6-168 (Rhodes, 40.3 ov); 7-168 (Pollock, 40.4 ov).

Bowler

	O	M	R	W
Gough	10	1	33	2
Fraser	10	0	54	0 (lw)
Mullally	10	1	28	2 (lw)
Cronje	2	0	13	0 (lw)
Ealham	10	2	48	1 (lw)
Flintoff	8	0	42	1 (lw)

Umpires: RS Dunne (NZ) and S Venkataraman (Ind). TV Umpire: Javed Akhtar (Pak). Match Referee: CW Smith (WI).

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