

BRIEF RESULTS

LONDON, May 28 (Reuters): World Cup cricket cumulative results and standings after Thursday's matches.

GROUP A

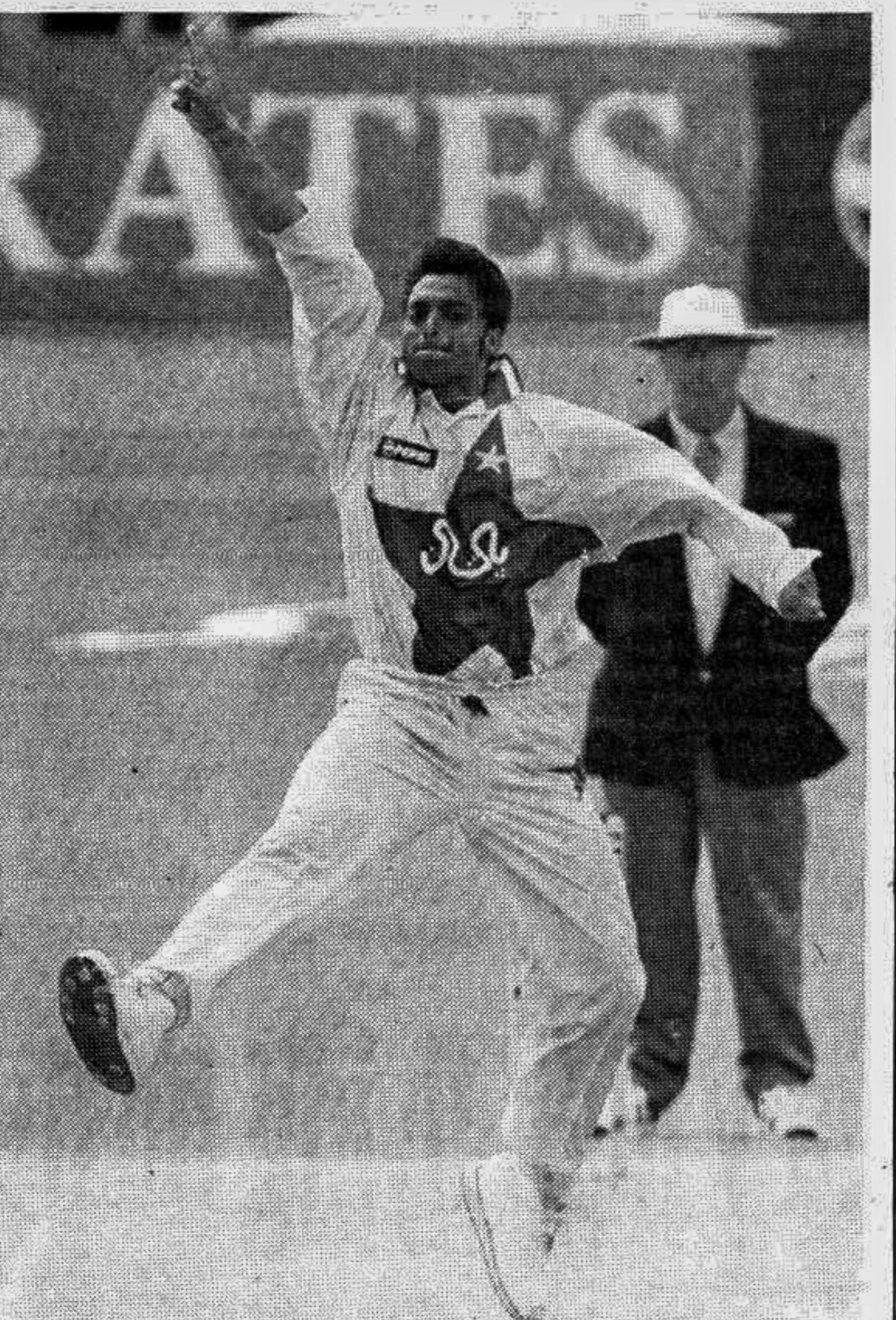
May 14: England beat Sri Lanka by 8 wickets (Lord's).
May 15: South Africa beat India by 4 wickets (Hove).
May 18: Zimbabwe beat Kenya by 5 wickets (Taunton).
May 19: England beat Kenya by 9 wickets (Canterbury).
South Africa beat Sri Lanka by 89 runs (Northampton).
Zimbabwe beat India by 3 runs (Leicester).
South Africa beat England by 122 runs (The Oval).
Sri Lanka beat Zimbabwe by 4 wickets (Worcester).
India beat Kenya by 94 runs (Bristol).
May 25: England beat Zimbabwe by 7 wickets (Nottingham).
May 26: India beat Sri Lanka by 157 runs (Taunton).
South Africa beat Kenya by 7 wickets (Amstelveen).

Team	P	W	L	T	NR	Pts	Net run rate
South Africa	4	4	0	0	0	8	+1.32
England	4	3	1	0	0	6	-0.08
Zimbabwe	4	2	2	0	0	4	-0.24
India	4	2	2	0	0	4	+1.29
Sri Lanka	4	1	3	0	0	2	-1.24
Kenya	4	0	4	0	0	0	-1.27

GROUP B

May 16: Australia beat Scotland by 6 wickets (Worcester).
Pakistan beat West Indies by 27 runs (Bristol).
May 17: New Zealand beat Bangladesh by 6 wickets (Chelmsford).
May 20: New Zealand beat Australia by 5 wickets (Cardiff).
Pakistan beat Scotland by 94 runs (Chester-le-Street).
May 21: West Indies beat Bangladesh by 7 wickets (Dublin).
Pakistan beat Australia by 10 runs (Leeds).
May 24: West Indies beat New Zealand 7 wickets (Southampton).
Bangladesh beat Scotland by 22 runs (Edinburgh).
West Indies beat Scotland by 8 wickets (Leicester).
Australia beat Bangladesh by 7 wickets (Chester-le-Street).
May 27:

Team	P	W	L	T	NR	Pts	Net run rate
Pakistan	3	3	0	0	0	6	+0.84
West Indies	4	3	1	0	0	6	+0.88
New Zealand	3	2	1	0	0	4	+0.42
Australia	4	2	2	0	0	4	+0.77
Bangladesh	4	1	3	0	0	2	-1.04
Scotland	4	0	4	0	0	0	-1.58



Pakistan fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar is exultant after claiming a New Zealand wicket yesterday. — Internet photo

Australia's odds cut

LONDON, May 28 (Reuters): Australia's World Cup odds were cut from 9-1 to 7-1 bookmakers William Hill after their seven-wicket win over Bangladesh on Thursday. West Indies remain at 14-1 following their eight-wicket victory over Scotland.

LATEST ODDS

5-2 South Africa
5-2 Pakistan
7-1 India, Australia
8-1 England
14-1 New Zealand, West Indies
150-1 Sri Lanka
200-1 Zimbabwe

Confident Thorpe

LONDON, May 28: England will reach the cricket World Cup semi-finals, giving them a puncher's chance of the title, batsman Graham Thorpe predicted on Thursday, reports AFP.

The left-hander, speaking before England's final group A game against India at Edgbaston on Saturday, admitted that unbeaten South Africa and Pakistan looked "in a league of their own".

But he said: "I think we can get to the semi-finals and then anything can happen."

"But I'm sure all the other sides will be thinking the same. South Africa and Pakistan have looked the best sides in the tournament so far. They have a lot of skill and have played very good cricket and at the moment they look in a league of their own."

"But when you get down to knock-out cricket all you have to do is have a bad day and you're out."

Bits & pieces

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up seat at India's match against Sri Lanka at Taunton on Wednesday.

"There was certainly an improvement," he said, but added: "I don't agree that crowds should be allowed on the pitch after matches. They want us to run back. Why?"

Pitch invasions at cricket grounds are tolerated in England, where fans are not fenced in. Tournament organisers on Thursday announced they would try to boost security, but also put the onus on players to get off the pitch at the end of games as fast as possible.

ANYTHING FOR TENDULKAR

TAUNTON, England, May 28: Sachin Tendulkar has claims of being the richest-ever cricketer in the game's history with several multi-million dollar sponsorship and endorsement deals with a multitude of consumer goods manufacturers, reports AP.

That means even being a Tendulkar lookalike has its advantages.

Balbir Chand from the village of Sialon in the northern Indian state of Punjab discovered his life changed after he was spotted in the crowd by a television cameraman during a Test match three months ago.

Chand, 29, knows little about cricket and its players but has an uncanny resemblance with the heartthrob of India, and this has turned the ward boy of a hospital into a sought-after model to endorse products whose manufacturers cannot afford the exorbitant Tendulkar.

Being a Tendulkar clone is taking Chand places. He is currently following the Indian team in the World Cup courtesy a sponsorship deal with a two-wheeler manufacturer, whose logo frequently gets beamed whenever the television cameras focus on Chand.

"Having a face which resembles Tendulkar has been a boon for me and changed my life beyond my imagination," says Chand. "I've met Tendulkar and had snaps taken with him."

"He (Tendulkar) took some of my pictures to show to his family. Our faces are so similar."

Soul-searching

quests for higher-profile matches will be hard to justify.

"We had Australia A touring Scotland last year, we've got South Africa A this year. We



GEORGE SALMOND

need to play against the top teams to see where our weaknesses are.

"To come in against the best teams in the world given limited practice against top nations is very, very difficult. We're jumping up 10 leagues and it's like one step forward, two steps back."

There are a lot of guys hurting after that. It's not great to come off having been bowled out for 68 when you're representing Scotland but we've got to do something to remember the World Cup by against New

Zimbabwe's moment

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Lance Klusener, in particular, has emerged as a key man.

Forced out of the side with a bad ankle injury last year, "Zulu", batting at eight or nine, has returned stronger than ever.

Wielding a 31b 20z (about 1.5 kilogram) bat, the heaviest in the tournament, he has twice saved his side from disaster, with a rapid 52 against Sri Lanka and an equally fast 48 not out against England.

He has also chipped in with valuable wickets — three against India, five against Kenya making him the most successful all-rounder in the tournament.

Houghton believes only Pakistan's bowling attack has the quality to kill off the South Africans.

"That's the only way to beat them, to get them all out," he argues. "You've got to knock them right over."

Zimbabwe do not seem to have that kind of quality.

Strike bowler Heath Streak may ruffle a few early feathers and leg spinner Paul Strange will make the South Africans think in mid-innings.

Otherwise, it will take an extraordinary individual performance, similar to Henry Olonga's three wickets in five balls against India, for Zimbabwe to win.

Surely, in private at least, Houghton must be reminding his side that miracles do sometimes happen.

SOUTH AFRICA (Probable): Gary Kirsten, Herschelle Gibbs, Mark Boucher, Jacques Kallis, Darryl Cullinan, Hansie Cronje (capt), Jonty Rhodes, Shaun Pollock, Lance Klusener, Steve Elworthy, Allan Donald.

ZIMBABWE (Probable): Neil Johnson, Grant Flower, Paul Strang, Murray Goodwin, Andy Flower, Alastair Campbell (capt), Guy Whittall, Stuart Carlisle, Heath Streak, Mpumelelo Mbawana, Henry Olonga.

Sweden defeat Jamaica

STOCKHOLM, May 28: Sweden beat Jamaica 2-1 in a friendly on Thursday, spearheaded by Bari striker Yskel Osmanovski who scored twice in the first half, reports Reuters.

Crunch match

abandoned due to a crowd riot, was a good preparation for Australia and Thursday's win put the team back on track.

The West Indies have the edge over Australia in World Cup games played in England but Australian skipper Steve Waugh said his team has plenty of experience in the tight situations.

That game gives us a chance to find some consistency."

"I back all our players to perform under pressure — that's why we're here," Waugh said. "And I believe we're still a good side even though we played not that well in the first couple of games."

Realistically (Sunday) will be a more traditional approach to one-day cricket," he added. "Manchester is a good wicket and we've played good cricket there before — it promises to be a big game."

Call for SL shake-up

COLOMBO, May 28 (AFP/Internet): A Sri Lankan newspaper Friday called for a complete shake-up of the national cricket team and the game's administrators as the country's hopes of defending the World Cup were dashed in England.

The Island newspaper said fielding a team with nine players who took part in the 1996 World Cup was a serious mistake and gave the impression that Sri Lanka had "ageless wonders."

"But that was not to be. That agility that there was in 1996 was gone and thus we had lost a main factor that made us champions — excellent fielding," the Island said in an editorial headlined: "From World Champs to world chumps."

The Island is so far the only newspaper in Sri Lanka to have editorially commented on the Super Six spot, Australia must win in either of two ways: by at least 15 runs or by bowling the West Indies out in less than 47 overs.

To add to the equation, New Zealand have two wins and a loss from three games and was due to play Group B leaders Pakistan on Friday and finish off against Scotland at Edinburgh on Monday. Two wins would guarantee the Kiwis a place in the Super Six, one win would add to the mathematical calculations needed to decide which three Group B teams advance in the tournament.

Moody said last month's tied limited-over series in the Caribbean, where Australia and the West Indies won three games apiece and a seventh game was

Minhaz sick

LONDON, May 28: The most successful Bangladeshi World Cup player Minhazul Abedin has been suffering from fever and two others — captain Aminul Islam and opener Mehrab Hossain received minor injuries, official sources said today.

The experienced Minhaz, who was dropped against New Zealand on May 17, hit two half-centuries — one each against Scotland and Australia.

Aminul Islam received a leg injury against Australia and Mehrab was also injured during the match.

Manager Tanvir Mazharul Islam hoped that all the three important players would be fit by tomorrow.

He indicated that at least two players would be changed against Pakistan at Northampton on May 31.

Defeated, not disgraced

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cials.

Batting is not Bangladesh's problem if the World Cup is any guide. They began nervously with 116 against New Zealand on a difficult pitch but then scored 170 plus in their remaining three games, batting first each time.

Minhazul Abedin, restored to the Cup squad by popular demand shortly before the tournament started, has scored two half centuries and proved a match for Australia's best on Thursday.

Mehrab Hossain has recorded innings of 64 and 42 but the team has not been supported by its bowlers. Bangladesh's frontline bowling is medium pace, and that's at its most hostile.

Islam said there's plenty of up-and-coming talent at home.

"We have got some good fast bowlers at home. They're too young at the moment but they're coming along."

Bangladesh's team has not been helped during the World Cup by uninspired training from coach Gordon Greenidge.

The former West Indies opener, a hero in Bangladesh two years ago when he guided them to Cup qualification, is now a controversial figure and his cause has not been helped by frank and critical comments about the qualities of his players.

In net practice this week before the Australia game Bangladeshi players drifted around the field, aimlessly kicking a football. Greenidge is expected to leave when his contract expires next month.

Greenidge about to be axed?

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In line with the decision, the Bangladeshi team had to refuse many invitations by friends and well-wishers. But, on Friday, the cricketers for some unknown reason gave in to a private party at Manchester.

Such developments will not help the Bangladesh cause, according to another BCB high-up, requesting anonymity because he did not want to upset anyone while on a tour.

All will be revealed in good time," he said.

Smashing Strong!

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man.

"So we'll go back to our usual batting order tomorrow."

Leg-spinner Adam Huckle and off-spinner Andy Whittall may come in to the Zimbabwe side, shifting the balance of attack away from seam.

Houghton said: "A change of personnel, a change of attitude in the field might be the tonic we need."

Zimbabwe have an almost fully fit squad to choose from, the exception being pace bowler Eddo Brander.

He suffered a bad muscle spasm during practice on the day before Saturday's match against Sri Lanka, since when his condition has not improved and he did not take part in today's net session.

Moody matters

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which the World Cup squad was to be chosen but his man of the match performance in Western Australia's Sheffield Shield final win over Queensland, coupled with his experience of English conditions, forced the selectors into a rethink.

When the final 15-man squad was named, Moody was in.