



Will the Aussies go umop? under?

Breaking Boundaries.



MORE THAN YOU THOUGHT POSSIBLE

Major changes in the offing?

From Nizamuddin Ahmed

LONDON, May 29: The selectors are toying with the idea of dropping two from amongst captain Aminul Islam, Akram Khan, Faruque Ahmed and vice-captain Khaled Mahmud in a major shake-up of the Bangladesh team to face Pakistan on May 31 at Northampton.

The four batsmen have been a bundle of nerves and failures in this tournament.

Shahriar Hossain is definitely being recalled into the playing eleven for the match against Pakistan. The opener was dropped after his consecutive failure against New Zealand and West Indies.

Three major players of the team are likely to get the axe to make room for the two and medium-pace Shafiuddin

Ahmed, who along with Neezamur remain the only uncapped players in the fifteen-man World Cup squad.

In the unlikely event of three pacers being used, Hasibul Hossain may be rested to give Shafiuddin his opportunity to have crack at the big occasion.

The players were enjoying themselves as they loosened for three hours this morning at the Northampton ground. There are no injuries. Coach Gordon Greenidge came in to the field towards the end of the three-hour practice session.

Although many are considering this as a no-contest situation, all the 7,400 tickets of Bangladesh's match against Pakistan have long been sold out.

Nationalism and demand for tickets are on the high. There is not any visible black-marketing of tickets, but many are frantically searching for one.



DASHING JOHNSON: Zimbabwean all-rounder Neil Johnson executes a fluent drive against South Africa yesterday. — Internet photo

Australia v West Indies: A date with destiny

CHELMSFORD, England, May 29 (AFP/Internet): Australian captain Steve Waugh will take guard against the West Indies in the cricket World Cup at Old Trafford on Sunday with a bat in one hand and a calculator in the other.

Victory, he knows, may not be enough to keep his side in the tournament. A mauling may be required.

With unbeaten Pakistan topping group B, Australia - if they win on Sunday - the West Indies and New Zealand are likely to end up equal on points, with three victories each.

Run rate will then decide which two qualify with Pakistan for the Super Six second phase.

Sunday's match should serve up a tension-packed classic.

Between them, the Australians and the West Indies have won three of the previous six World Cups and appeared in every final apart from the 1992 edition.

The sides met earlier this year in the Caribbean, with Brian Lara the star as the sides shared both the Test and one-day series.

Australia, starting as the World Cup second favourites, appear to be running into form at last after a ragged start.

After losing to New Zealand, they put on a battling display against Pakistan, going down by just 10 runs, and then, with one eye already on their run rate, hammered Bangladesh, scoring at nine runs an over to reach a winning total of 179.

"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 haven't played that well in the first couple of games."

"We've got faith in each other and I believe we can go through to the next stage, and I don't see any reason why we can't go all the way."

"I know it's a big statement but that's how I feel about the team."

The result may hinge on the pace bowlers.

Veteran West Indian Courtney Walsh, who looks set to overhaul Kapil Dev's world record 434 Test dismissals in the coming months, has taken 11 wickets for 83 runs from 37 overs.

His strike partner, Curtly Ambrose, has only four victims but has shut up one end so effectively that his 30 overs have

cost a mere 63 runs, the best economy rate in the tournament.

Australia's Glenn McGrath, in contrast, the pre-tournament favourite to top the wickets list, has struggled, managing five

three wickets for 25 and then thrash 56 off 29 balls.

Lara, meanwhile, said: "There is just one thing in my mind at this moment, and that's to beat Australia. We are not worried about any run rate."



Seize the moment, AKTEL it.

wickets for 173 and conceding four-and-a-half runs an over.

But Waugh says: "He knows he can bowl better, so I think you'll see an improved performance."

Australia look set to include all-rounder Tom Moody after his fine performance against Bangladesh which saw him bag

"It is going to be a tough game. We're underdogs on Sunday. Australia has got nothing to lose and will be coming out tough. They are world champions in Test cricket... they might have stumbled a bit in this tournament, but favouritism should go to them."

See page 14

BCB-Greenidge gap widens

Nizamuddin Ahmed

LONDON, May 29: Just when almost everyone, including British journalists, was considering our bowlers a threat, they let the cat out of the bag and allowed themselves to be pulverised. Had it been true Tom Moody would have been the most flattered among the batsmen Bangladesh faced so far.

Although wickets fell at Chester-le-Street at a rate slower than that against Scotland and New Zealand, two batsmen were able to stand up to the challenges of facing the Wizards of Oz. Mehrab and Minhazul did well to put

Bangla's pioneering steps on firm ground. At lunch, it was a case of settling down to watch Waugh and brother, and nine other big guys overtake the Bangladesh score.

Decent they were not, as they used only five men, thanks to strokes of lightning from Khaled Masud behind stumps and a bit of sorcery from Enamul Hoque. The Australians,

particularly Mark and Moody were in a marauding mood. But juicy apples delivered wide and short of the wicket deserve to be spanked, and the Bangladesh bowlers were duly obliged.

Effectively without a coach for much of the tour, former national spinner Tanveer Muzhar Islam as manager and former national footballer-turned-cricket organiser Dewan Shafiqul Arefin as the team's coordinator are trying to instil as much vivacity as possible into a team that has not done all too

Before the final group match against Pakistan on May 31, the sermons from the two must include 'maintain your line and length, try bowling full pitch' and other predictable stuff. Not that our players have not heard that and more before, but the coach's imputation was they were more often than not failing to apply the education.

Cynics will say that any SSC

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EDGABASTON, May 29: Cricket legend Kapil Dev yesterday rated Sourav Ganguly's 183 against Sri Lanka on May 26 as a much better innings than his unbeaten 175 against Zimbabwe in the 1983 World Cup, which stood as the highest individual score by an Indian in one-day internationals for 16 years, reports PTI.

It was a much better innings than my 175 not out against Zimbabwe in 1983, Kapil Dev said.

"When I came to the wicket, the team was 17 for five. I might have slugged in order to push up the scoring rate but Saurav's was very cultured innings, full of attacking yet cricketing shots," said Kapil Dev, who led India to the World Cup triumph in the 1983 edition.

"I am extremely pleased to see the way Rahul (Dravid) and Saurav played in the match and hope we can keep it up," he added.

LANKANS HOPING FIR IF'S & BUTS

SOUTHAMPTON, England, May 29: Defending champions Sri Lanka sat down in front of their television sets on Saturday waving the flag of Saint George and praying for a World Cup miracle, reports AFP.

A crushing England win over India at Edgbaston would offer them a most slender of lifelines which could — just — keep them

See page 14

Awesome threesome

CHELMSFORD, England, May 29: Australia's do-or-die World Cup confrontation with the West Indies at Old Trafford on Sunday will revolve around three pace bowlers all certain to end their careers as cricketing greats, reports AFP.

In the red corner, Courtney Walsh and Curtly Ambrose of the West Indies; in the yellow, Australia's Glenn McGrath.

With the two West Indians fast approaching their dotage, this could be the last time that the trio appear on a pitch together.

But while Walsh and Ambrose are thriving here, McGrath is struggling.

If he should fail again on Sunday, Australia may be heading home before the second round.

The pre-tournament favourite to top the wickets list, McGrath has managed five wickets for 173 from 38 over, conceding four-and-a-half runs an over.

The only side he has dominated were the part-timers from Scotland.

Pakistan's batsmen destroyed him and even Bangladesh cracked him for four-and-a-half runs an over.

In contrast, Walsh has 11 wickets for 83 runs from 37 overs and Ambrose, while only claiming four victims, has shut up one end so effectively that his 30 overs have cost a mere 63 runs, the best economy rate in the tournament.

Australian captain Steve Waugh says of McGrath: "He's bowled okay without bowling

really well. He knows he can bowl better, so I think you'll see an improved performance."

Before the tournament, Australian legend Dennis Lillee said McGrath, only 29 and with many years ahead of him, was already an all-time great after taking 239 Test wickets.

But his continuing problem with controlling the white, swinging ball at the World Cup have made him look almost ordinary.

He has become so frustrated that he has almost forgotten to indulge in his second-favourite occupation of sledging batsmen.

Ambrose, the 35-year-old from Antigua, and Walsh, 36 and from Jamaica, have had not such trouble.

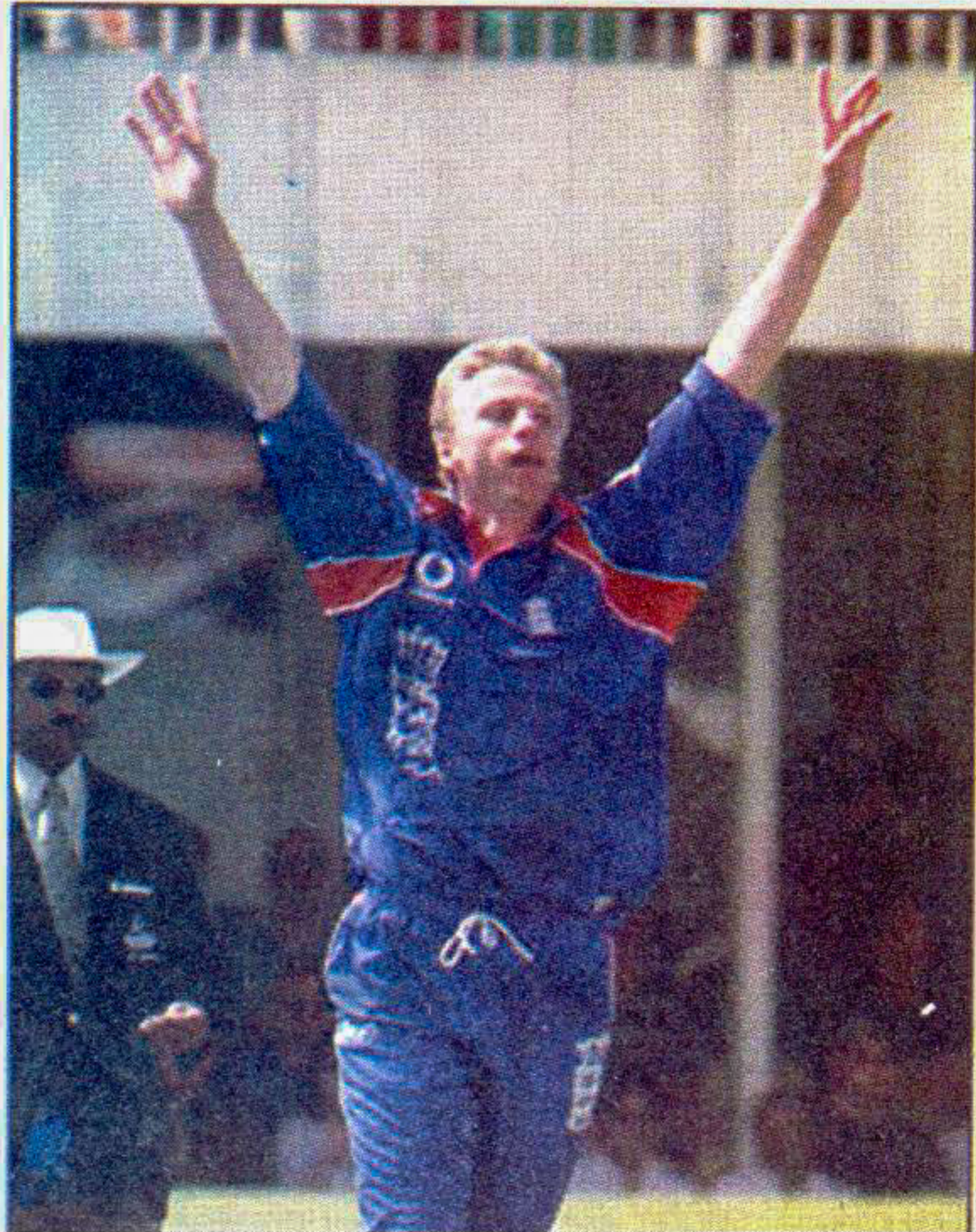
The pair have been shoring up the West Indies' cricket reputation for several years.

While Brian Lara's batting has been seen as the key to the team's success in recent months, it has been the pacesmen that have kept the team afloat.

Walsh, with 423 Test wickets, is in spitting distance of the world record.

Ambrose, whose mother is famous for ringing a bell outside the house every time she hears him take a wicket on the radio, has 369 Tests wickets and 217 one-day victims — exactly the same as his strike partner.

A few more on Sunday — against the West Indies' greatest rivals over the last two decades — would be a perfect way for the two Caribbean giants to cap their World Cup careers.



England's lively paceman Alan Mullally is jubilant seeing the back of India's Sadagopan Ramesh yesterday. — AFP photo



INDIA ABROAD: Colorful Indian fans enjoying every moment of the proceedings at Edgbaston yesterday. — AFP photo

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INDIA-ENGLAND SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the Indian innings against England at Edgbaston yesterday:

INDIA	R	B	4	6
S Ganguly run out (Ealham)	40	59	6	0
S Ramesh c Hick b Mullally	20	41	2	0
R Dravid c Ealham b Flintoff	53	82	6	0
Tendulkar c Hick b Ealham	22	40	2	0
Azharuddin c Hussain b Ealham	26	35	3	0
A Jadeja c Fraser b Gough	39	30	5	0
N Mongia b Mullally	2	5	0	0
J Srinath b Gough	1	2	0	0
A Kumble not out	6	8	0	0
V Prasad not out	2	3	0	0
Extras: (lb-7, w-10, nb-4)	21			
Total: (For 8 wickets in 50 overs)	232			

Did not bat: D Mohanty.

Fall of wickets: 1-49 (Ramesh, 12.5 ov); 2-93 (Ganguly, 21.2 ov); 3-139 (Tendulkar, 33.3 ov); 4-174 (Dravid, 39.5 ov); 5-188 (Azharuddin, 43.5 ov); 6-209 (Mongia, 46.4 ov); 7-210 (Srinath, 47.1 ov); 8-228 (Jadeja, 49.1 ov).

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Gough	10	0	51	2 (2nb, 3w)
Fraser	10	2	30	0 (2w)
Mullally	10	0	54	2 (1nb, 4w)
Ealham	10	2	28	2 (1nb, 1w)
Flintoff	5	0	28	1
Holloake	5	0	34	0

Toss: England
Umpires: DB Hair (Aus) and Javed Akhtar (Pak).
TV Umpire: DB Cowie (NZ).
Match Referee: PJP Burge (Aus).

More scoreboard on page 14

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