

## 120 MILLION CHEERS FOR BANGLADESH

### It's all in the rules

MANCHESTER, May 31: Captain Steve Waugh admitted on Sunday he had deliberately slowed down Australia's innings during a World Cup qualifier against West Indies but said the tactic was triggered by World Cup rules, reports Reuters.

Waugh, West Indies captain Brian Lara and Cup organisers faced hostile questions when Australia delayed passing a modest West Indies total of 110 to try to give West Indies a better chance of qualifying for the second round than New Zealand.

Pakistan had already qualified from Group B and, before Sunday's game, Australia, West Indies and New Zealand were chasing the last two qualifying places. Australia qualified with their six-wicket victory over West Indies.

Because teams carry points into the next round which they gained through wins over fellow qualifiers, Australia were keen not only to win on Sunday but make life hard for New Zealand.

New Zealand beat Australia as did Pakistan.

If New Zealand beat Scotland handsomely on Monday, and qualify via a better run rate than West Indies, Australia will

take zero points into the next round making it much harder for them to qualify for the knock-out semifinals.

"I don't know if it's moral but it's within the rules and we needed two points to get through. The bigger picture is that we are here to win the World Cup," said Waugh, who acknowledged the rules needed reviewing.

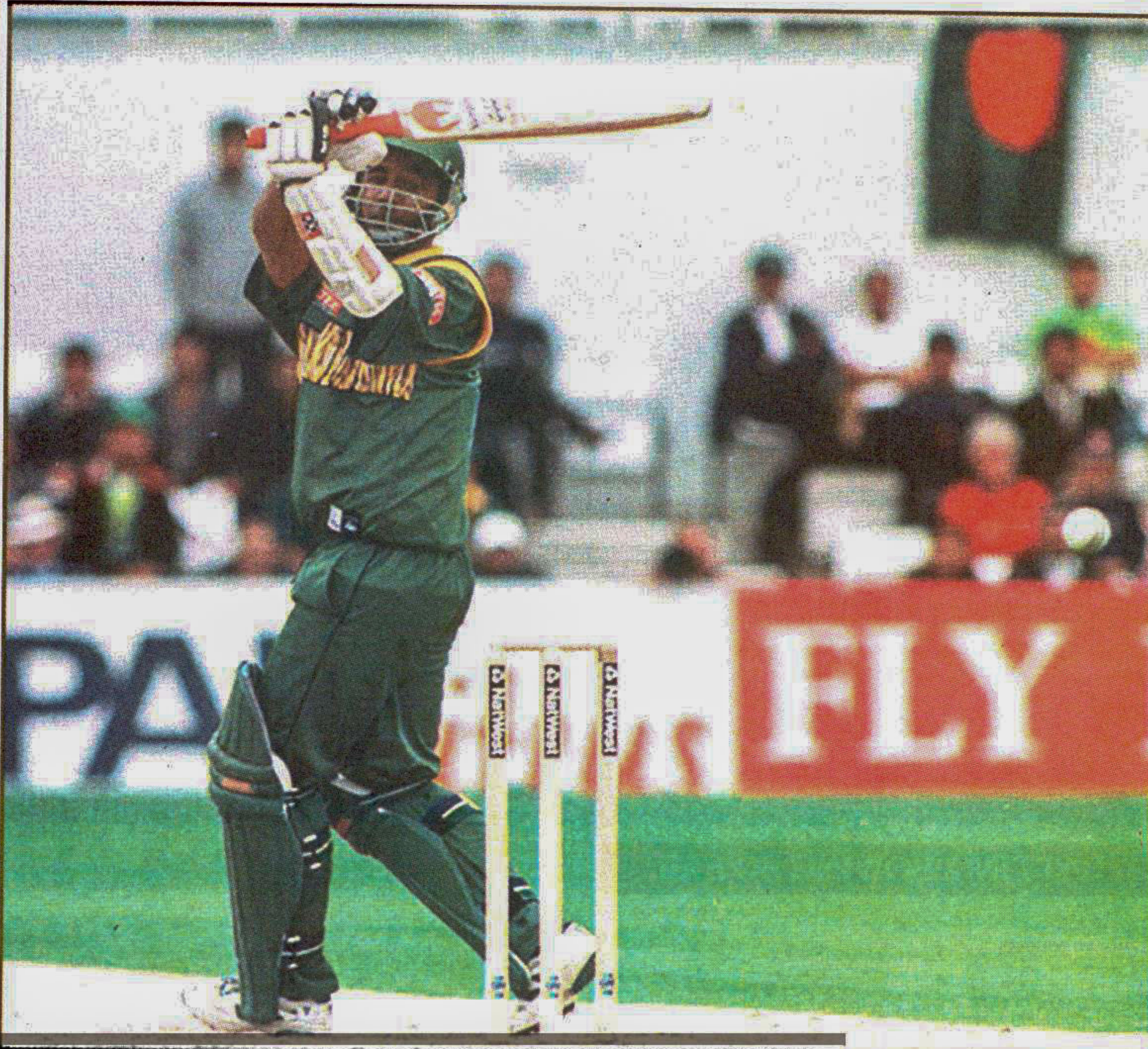
"It's disappointing for the crowd who want to see fours and sixes but that was not going to happen," Waugh and Michael Bevan took 21 overs to score the 49 runs needed to win the match after coming together at 62 for four.

Lara was immediately on the defensive after the match when asked if there had been collusion with the Australian team.

Lara, pointing his finger angrily at a questioner who asked if there had been collusion, told a news conference: "I don't want to hear anything like that. Cricket is not played like that."

Australia batted normally as West Indies bowled aggressively, and Australia were soon in some trouble at 62 for four. But Waugh and Michael Bevan then held out against bowling that appeared less threatening

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Shahriar Hossain, the Bangladeshi opener, follows through on a pull shot.

— AFP photo

### Puzzled press

LONDON, May 31: Australia's deliberate slow play during their cricket World Cup victory over the West Indies was greeted with disdain in the English press today, reports AFP.

Steve Waugh's decision to bat as slowly as possible to try and help the West Indies qualify for the second round instead of New Zealand — in the process helping Australia's own chances in the next phase — reduced the tournament to a "farce", according to the Daily Mail.

It said the Old Trafford crowd, many of them Australians, "boiled its contempt" when it realised what the Australians were up to.

With teams retaining points won against fellow qualifiers in the second round, Australia wanted the West Indies to qualify rather than the New Zealanders, who had beaten Waugh's side earlier.

The Independent said the game "degenerated into the cricketing equivalent of a slow bicycle race."

New Zealand, who play Scotland in their last group B game today, now know what they must do. If they bat first and score 200, they must win by at least 121 runs, if they score 250

they must win by 118 to qualify ahead of the West Indies on run rate.

If Scotland bat first and score 150, New Zealand will have to win in 23 overs and in 25 if the Scots reach 200.

New Zealand skipper Stephen Fleming was reported as saying he understood why the Australians had played as they did.

But the Daily Telegraph accused Waugh of reducing the tournament to a "dreary crawl" adding: "This was a poor advertisement for the World Cup spoiled by the complicated points system which actually encouraged Australia to adopt go-slow tactics."

The bizarre end to the game overshadowed Glenn McGrath's magnificent five wickets for 14 in the first innings.

This is not the first time the Australians have been accused of bad sportsmanship, with New Zealand as their intended victims.

In 1981, Trevor Chappell bowled an underarm ball along the ground to Brian McKechnie to stop him hitting the six he needed to tie the game for New Zealand.

### Sorry song

LONDON, May 31: The cricket World Cup's official song will be released here on Monday - 24 hours after hosts England were knocked out and 18 days after the launch of the tournament, reports AFP.

The lyrics of the song, "Life is a carnival", caused some wry amusement in the media.

Its opening line, "Heroes come and heroes go", according to the British press, clearly did not refer to Alec Stewart's home side, who failed to reach the second round after being beaten by India.

The Guardian, meanwhile, ridiculed the late release of the song - and England's early exit - argued it should be translated immediately into Hindi.

"As a marketing disaster, even one caused as much by bad luck as bad planning, it takes some beating," it said. The World Cup began on May 14.

Arguing that the tournament's continuing success would rely on the passionate interest of British Asians, it said a Hindi version should be released immediately.

To give them a hand, it published four lines of its own translation, beginning: "Duniya ke sab log, Tyohar me aao."

It added: "Failing that, they could appeal to the African market and mark South Africa and Zimbabwe's progress to the Super Six by proclaiming that 'Life is a barbecue.'"

### Sporting Black Caps

LONDON, May 31(Reuters/Internet): Much as they might have wanted to, New Zealanders could not bring themselves to condemn Australia for their controversial go-slow tactics in Sunday's World Cup match against the West Indies.

Australian captain Steve Waugh and Michael Bevan slowed to a crawl as they "chased" West Indies' total of 110 so as not to damage their opponents' run rate too much.



Seize the moment, AKTEL it.

If West Indies qualify for the Super Six that will enable Australia to take two points through to the second round. But if New Zealand go through by beating Scotland heavily on Monday, and bettering the West Indies' run rate, the Australians will advance with no points in the bag.

Many commentators considered Waugh's action lacking in sportsmanship, but the Kiwi reaction was muted.

True, headlines such as "Underarm blow for NZ" in the Wellington Evening Post tried to stir up national indignation by comparing Waugh's actions with the infamous underarm order of Greg Chappell in 1981. Chappell told his brother Trevor to bowl the last ball of a one-day international underarm to prevent New Zealand scoring the six they needed to win.

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### BITS & PIECES



Dhaka • Chittagong • Sylhet • Rajshahi • Barisal • Jessore

BIRMINGHAM, England, May 31 (AP): Manchester United's title treble has left cricket's showpiece World Cup struggling to make a mark in England where sports fans were more enthralled by the soccer magic of Alex Ferguson's men than cricketers in coloured clothes.

The World Cup may have brought the Indian subcontinent to a virtual standstill and hogged media coverage elsewhere, but in England it has remained in the shadow of the

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COLOMBO, May 31: Sri Lanka cricket chief Thilanga Sumathipala Monday blamed infighting in the governing body for the defending champions' humiliating exit from the World Cup, reports AFP.

Sumathipala told BBC that a challenge to his presidency as the head of the Board of Control for Cricket in Sri Lanka from a close relative of President Chandrika Kumaratunga had thrown management into disarray.

"At the time the team left Sri Lanka (for the World Cup), the board had been suspended by courts," Sumathipala said. "The person who challenged me and those who supported him must feel ashamed."

Sumathipala defeated Clifford Ratwatte, a relative of Kumaratunga, in an election that was later challenged in court. A final ruling is yet to be made.

Cricket Board chief executive Dhammika Ranatunga, an elder brother of Sri Lankan

skipper Arjuna Ranatunga, said before the World Cup that the crisis in the board battle had seriously affected players.

Just before the team left for England, the cricket board arranged a three-day "motivation session" for the team to re-focus on the game with the help of a Pakistan psychologist.

Sri Lanka scored an unconvincing 45-run run over Group A minnows Kenya on Sunday. But the demoralised champions failed to reach the second round with just two wins out of five games.

Sri Lanka lost to England, South Africa and India and won against Zimbabwe.

Local newspapers said the team which is expected to leave England shortly may not return immediately.

Some senior players were planning visits in Europe where they may not be easily recognised, the press reports said adding that the team expect a frosty reception at home.



Shoaib Akhtar about to start his run up against Bangladesh yesterday. — AFP photo



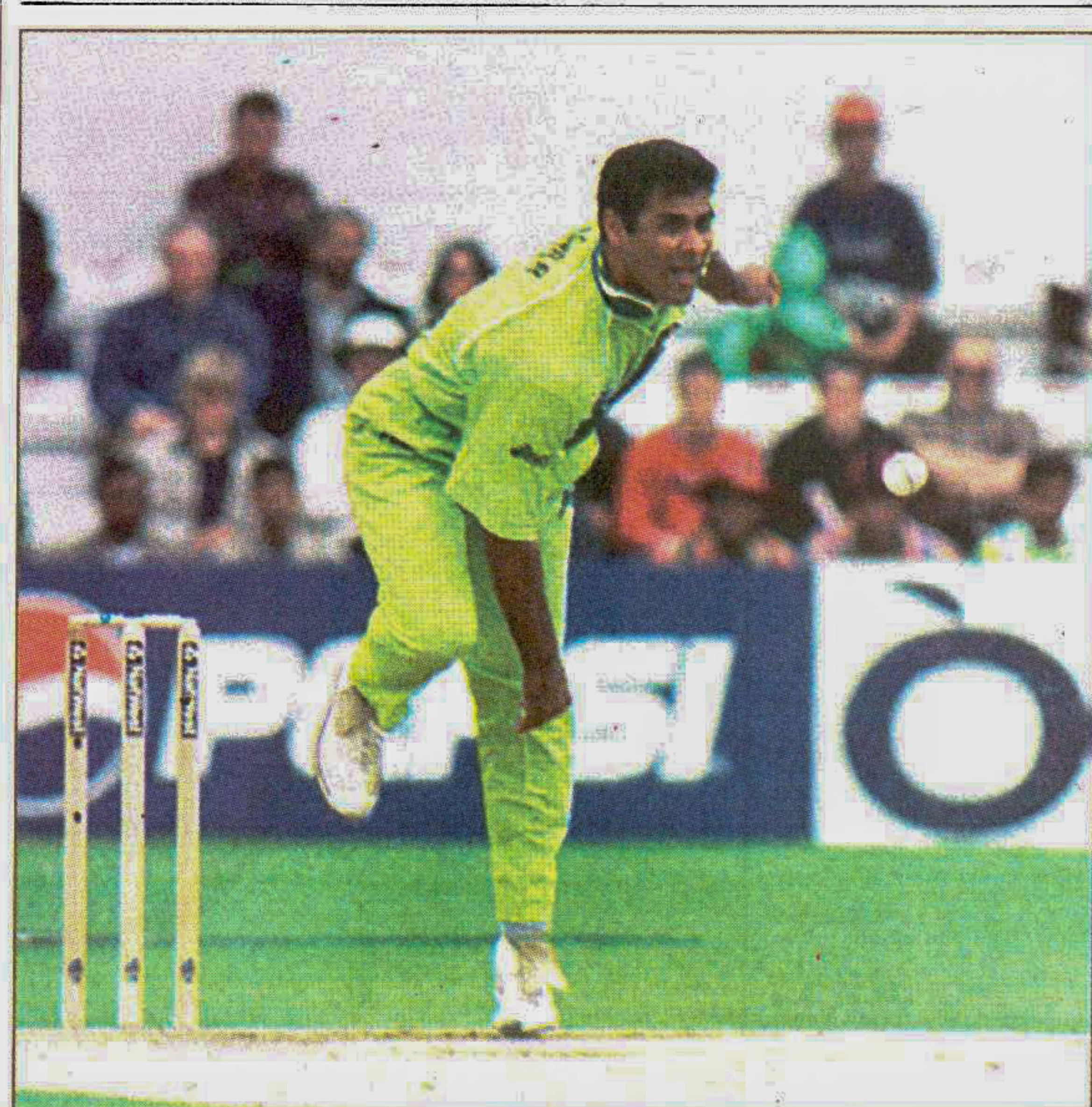
### BANGLADESH-PAKISTAN SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the Bangladesh innings against Pakistan at Northampton yesterday:

BANGLADESH	R	B	4	6
Shahriar Hossain lbw b Saqlain Mushtaq	39	60	5	0
Mehrab Hossain st Moin Khan b Saqlain Mushtaq	9	42	0	0
Akram Khan c Wasim Akram b Waqar Younis	42	66	6	0
Aminul Islam b Shahid Afridi	15	26	2	0
Naimur Rahman b Waqar Younis	13	20	2	0
Minhajul Abedin c b Saqlain Mushtaq	14	14	2	0
Khaled Mahmud st Moin Khan b Saqlain Mushtaq	27	34	3	0
Khaled Mahmud not out	15	21	1	0
Mohammad Rafique c Shoaib Akhtar b Saqlain Mushtaq	6	19	0	0
Neyamur Rashid lbw b Wasim Akram	1	2	0	0
Shafiuddin Ahmed not out	2	3	0	0
Extras (lb-5, w-28, nb-7)	40			
Total (For 9 wickets in 50 overs)	223			
Fall of wickets: 1-69 (Mehrab Hossain, 15.3 ov); 2-70 (Shahriar Hossain, 17.4 ov); 3-120 (Aminul Islam, 29.1 ov); 4-148 (Akram Khan, 34.3 ov); 5-148 (Naimur Rahman, 34.5 ov); 6-187 (Minhajul Abedin, 41.1 ov); 7-195 (Khaled Mahmud, 43.1 ov); 8-208 (Khaled Mahmud, 47.1 ov); 9-212 (Neyamur Rashid, 48.1 ov).				

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Waqar Younis	9	1	36	2 (1 w)
Shoaib Akhtar	8	0	30	0 (2 nb, 1 w)
Wasim Akram	10	0	35	1 (4 nb, 9 w)
Azhar Mahmood	8	0	56	0 (3 w)
Saqlain Mushtaq	10	1	35	5 (6 w)
Shahid Afridi	5	0	26	1 (1 nb, 1 w)

(More scoreboard on Page-14)  
Toss: Pakistan.  
Umpires: DB Cowie (NZ) and DB Hair (Aus).  
TV Umpire: DR Shepherd.  
Match Referee: RS Madugalle (SL)



Pakistan fast bowler Waqar Younis bowling against Bangladesh yesterday. — AFP photo