

Sport

Bits & pieces

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sport there," he said, as he prepared to fly home after his side was knocked out of the tournament.

"It is essential that if the game is to survive and prosper in places like that, they must get to play against top players on a regular basis. "Cricket has been dying a little in some places."

His comments, however, might spark some wry amusement in England, once regarded as the home of cricket.

Like Bangladesh and Kenya — who have one-day status but are not regarded as good enough to play Test — England failed to reach the Super Six second round.

The game is massively popular in Bangladesh, a country of 120 million. In England, which has nearer to 50 million inhabitants, the sports has declined sharply in popularity in recent years at the expense of football.

FLEMING SAYS IT'S ALRIGHT

EDINBURGH, June 1: New Zealand captain Stephen Fleming said Monday he would have adopted the same go-slow tactic that Australia did if his team was in Australia's position in the World Cup, reports AP.

Cruising toward their victory target of 111 to beat the West Indies at Old Trafford Sunday, Steve Waugh and Michael Bevan slowed their scoring to help the West Indies boost their run rate. The aim was to make New Zealand's run rate fall behind the West Indies' and deprive it of a place in the second round Super Six.

The tactic, however, failed as New Zealand bettered the West Indies after its six wicket victory over Scotland Monday.

"You could understand what they were doing," Fleming said. "If we were in that situation, we would have done the same thing. They were exploiting a rule that needs to be tightened up," he said.

Australia were keen to see the West Indies progress instead of New Zealand because, under World Cup rules, teams carry with them points earned in the qualifying round against other Super Six qualifiers.

Because Australia beat the Windies to earn two points, Waugh's team would have carried those points in the Super Six if the West Indies had qualified. Now Australia are carrying none because they did not beat either New Zealand or Pakistan, the other Group B qualifiers, in the preliminary round.

Defending his tactics, Waugh said: "I don't know about it being moral, but it was within the rules and we needed the two points."

The Old Trafford crowd booed and jeered the Australians and Fleming said he could understand why.

"It was frustrating to watch, put it that way," he said.

But Australia's tactics meant the sellout 4,000 crowd at The Grange was treated to a frantic run chase by New Zealand after the Kiwis bowled out Scotland for 121.

New Zealand had to overhaul Scotland's total within 22 overs to qualify on a better net run rate than the Windies after finishing level on six points in Group B.

Roger Twose led the assault with an undefeated 54-run knock that included five boundaries and a six as the Kiwis reached the target in 17.5 overs.

BCB approaches

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not be made immediately.

"The board will discuss the matter and the possible candidates before making a decision," he said.

Seeking to press their claim for Test status from the International Cricket Council, minorities Bangladesh caused the upset of the World Cup with Monday's win over previously undefeated Pakistan.

Greengrave's sacking came in the wake of his controversial remarks about his players being "a million miles" away from Test match press conferences.

His comments were at odds with the BCB's attempt to become the 10th Test playing nation and prompted the BCB to ban him from post-match press conferences.

BCB secretary Ashraf Haq said Bangladesh's performance in their World Cup debut was being watched with interest.

"Our team knows that its performance will be closely monitored while (the ICC is) analyzing Bangladesh's case for Test grade," Haq said.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has put Bangladesh's application for becoming the 10th Test-playing nation on hold until it is satisfied with the quality of domestic three-day competition.

Two sides

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field showed that they were least interested in the match. The agility in the field was missing while the application and concentration of the batsmen was lacking."

One Mukhtar Ahmed, a student of Karachi University, opined that Pakistan have washed all the good work they did in the league matches. "They (the team) have no face to show. Even if they return with the World Cup, the stigma of losing comprehensively to cricket bales will remain fresh for years to come."

The knives were all out for Shahid Afridi who has managed just 38 runs in four matches.

"What is he actually doing in England? Probably he (Shahid Afridi) even doesn't know. The lack of visuality of the selectors is exposed. They picked big names instead of assessing which players would excel in conditions like England," observed Fida Sarwar, an engineer.

FIRST ROUND RESULTS

LONDON, June 1 (Reuters): World Cup cumulative results and standings after end of the first round on Monday:

GROUP A

May 14: England beat Sri Lanka by 8 wickets — Lord's.
May 15: South Africa beat India by 4 wickets — Hove.
Zimbabwe beat Kenya by 5 wickets — Taunton.
May 18: England beat Kenya by 9 wickets — Canterbury.
South Africa beat Sri Lanka by 89 runs — Northampton.
Zimbabwe beat India by 3 runs — Leicester.
May 22: South Africa beat England by 122 runs — The Oval.
Sri Lanka beat Zimbabwe by 4 wickets — Worcester.
May 23: India beat Kenya by 94 runs — Bristol.
England beat Zimbabwe by 7 wickets — Nottingham.
May 25: India beat Sri Lanka by 157 runs — Taunton.
South Africa beat Kenya by 7 wickets — Amstelveen.
May 29: India beat England by 63 runs — Birmingham.
Zimbabwe beat South Africa by 48 runs — Chelmsford.
Sri Lanka beat Kenya by 45 runs — Southampton.

Team P W L T NR Pts Net Run rate

South Africa 5 4 1 0 0 8 +0.86

India 5 3 2 0 0 6 +1.28

Zimbabwe 5 3 2 0 0 6 +0.02

England 5 3 2 0 0 6 -0.33

Sri Lanka 5 2 3 0 0 4 -0.81

Kenya 5 0 5 0 0 0 -1.20

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.
May 23: Pakistan beat Australia by 10 runs — Leeds.
May 24: West Indies beat New Zealand by 7 wickets — Southampton.
Bangladesh beat Scotland by 22 runs — Edinburgh.
May 27: West Indies beat Scotland by 8 wickets — Leicester.
Australia beat Bangladesh by 7 wickets — Chester-le-Street.
May 28: Pakistan beat New Zealand by 62 runs — Derby.
May 30: Australia beat West Indies by 6 wickets — Manchester.
May 31: New Zealand beat Scotland by six wickets — Edinburgh.

Team P W L T NR Pts Net Run rate

Pakistan 5 4 1 0 0 8 -0.53

Australia 5 3 2 0 0 6 +0.73

New Zealand 5 3 2 0 0 6 +0.58

West Indies 5 3 2 0 0 6 +0.50

Bangladesh 5 2 3 0 0 4 -0.54

Scotland 5 0 5 0 0 0 -1.93

Top team totals:

373-6 — India v Sri Lanka, May 26, Taunton.

329-2 — India v Kenya, May 23, Bristol.

275-8 — Pakistan v Australia, May 23, Headingly.

275-8 — Sri Lanka v Kenya, May 30, Southampton.

269-8 — Pakistan v New Zealand, May 28, Derby.

265 — Australia v Pakistan, May 23, Headingly.

265 — Australia v Sri Lanka, May 31, Edinburgh.

265 — Australia v New Zealand, May 23, Chelmsford.

265 — Scotland v New Zealand, May 31, Edinburgh.

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