



## Will the minnows surprise us again?

Breaking Boundaries.



MORE THAN YOU THOUGHT POSSIBLE

## On-song Johnson

HEADINGLEY, England, June 5: Zimbabwe's Neil Johnson is a World Cup one-off - a player who opens both batting and bowling, reports AFP.

The only man who gets close is Jacques Kallis, who opens the bowling for South Africa and bats at three or four.

The fact that Johnson is not doing it for his first-choice side is a disappointment which he has buried with his past.

If the 29-year-old all-rounder - who lines up for Zimbabwe against New Zealand in their Super Six clash here on Sunday - had any lingering regrets, he dismissed them in perfect fashion against South Africa at Chelmsford on May 29.

Playing against many of his old team-mate and friends, he took three wickets with his right-arm swing bowling and scored 76 runs to win the game for Zimbabwe.

"It was the greatest day of my cricketing career. I hope they think they lost someone who could have played for them," he said of the South Africans. "But they could never admit it."

Johnson was born in Harare but has played most of his cricket in Natal in South

Africa. He also toured Zimbabwe with South Africa A in 1994-95.

"I grew up with Pollock and Klusener and I've known Jonty Rhodes the longest," he said.

The call to play alongside them for the Proteas, however, never came.

Last year, Johnson was awarded Zimbabwean citizenship and made an immediate impact for his adoptive country. First he took four wickets on his Test debut, including the highly-valued scalp of India's Sachin Tendulkar.

Then in his second Test, he made a 107-ball hundred in Pakistan that formed the cornerstone of Zimbabwe's first ever Test series win.

He has also been a building block for the team's success here.

He has not looked back since scoring 59 and taking four for 42 in his first game against Kenya.

After the first round, he had 10 wickets at 16.90 apiece, his economy rate 4.3 runs an over. That put him 11th in the bowling averages. His 156 runs at an average of 31.20 make him the tournament's 27th most suc-

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Pakistan all-rounder Abdul Razzak plays an uppish drive off Lance Klusener at Trent Bridge yesterday. —AFP photo

## Intriguing encounter

From Nizamuddin Ahmad in London

TRENT BRIDGE, June 5: The Pakistan-South Africa match generated a lot of interest, not only because it was the clash of the two group champions, a calibration of group strengths, but also because it was Pakistan's opportunity to keep the enduring 'fans' at bay. New Zealand and Australia may have to work that much harder to prove the pundits wrong.

South African fans, in their yellow-banded green jerseys, seemed to have interred the Zimbabwe zap and were as exuberant as the bright Saturday morning sun. The Pakistanis appeared still dazed from the Bangladesh belt from the blue.

The day began very well, but weather forecasts predicted cloud and rain later in the afternoon.

All sorts of people thronged Nottingham today. There was a school teacher, now head of a school in Bournemouth, who came to a cricket match after thirty years. "My son is giving me a birthday treat," he said with a wide grin. His big day was next week.

Nine-member of the 'Lady Supporters of Cricket Clubs' have travelled all the way from South Africa to follow the team in the World Cup.

There are about two hundred of us in the whole of the tournament," said one of the ladies dressed in the majestic flag of Mandela-land.

Grounds around England are waking up to the call of Wasim Akram and Azharuddin to make them safe.

Security has been beefed up and bags were searched. Spectators were warned over the public address system yet again that they should not invade the playing area during play and that offenders would be ejected from the ground. Despite stewards forming a garland around the ground, a crowd invasion at the Oval on Friday could not be stopped at the end of the India-Australia match. Today, if predictions are in order, will be no different.

Additional security measures are in place for the India-Pakistan clash at Old Trafford in Tuesday next. Unlike at other grounds, only accredited personnel will be allowed access when the two teams practice. See page 14

## Azhar faces the music

LONDON, June 5 (AP/PTI): Indian captain Mohammad Azharuddin faces the prospects of an unceremonious exit from the hottest job in Indian sport after his team's loss to Australia in the Super Six clash Friday at The Oval.

The defeat virtually put India out of the World Cup, unless a series of improbable results fetches them a place in the semifinals.

Australia picked up their first two points in the Super Six league with the 77-run victory over India, who are without any points with two matches remaining.

Captains who failed to live up to the expectations of 900 million cricket-mad Indians have frequently been shown the door in the past.

Azharuddin, going through a lean patch as batsman, knows the fate of Indian cricket's fallen idols but said criticism of his captaincy had been unfair.

"The criticism of my captaincy has been unfair," Azharuddin told reporters Friday. "The captain is only as good as his team."

Azharuddin acknowledged that his own batting form had hit rock bottom but it was

wrong to lay the blame for India's defeat on him alone.

"Eleven players play every game and the captain is just one of them," he said. "We simply did not play up to our potential but to blame the captain alone is not done."

Azharuddin said his decision to field first was made as the wicket was under the covers and it was expected to help the fast bowlers because of the moisture. With India in danger of making a premature exit, Azhar hoped his team would win the next two games to bring it to a stage where it would boil down to net turn rate.

"Our hope is in calculations at the moment," he added.

Coach Anshuman Gaekwad criticised the lethargic Indian fielding. "We were simply not up to the mark. We did not attack the ball aggressively and our throwing from the deep left a lot to be desired. There is no question we have fielded better than yesterday in this tournament."

Azharuddin attributed India's defeat to loose bowling. "We did not do well because we bowled a bit short in the initial overs," he said.

Gaekwad said the wicket had

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## New Zealand v Zimbabwe: Clash of Super Six babes

HEADINGLEY, England, June 5: High-flying Zimbabwe, short on superstars but strong on team spirit, take on New Zealand in the cricket World Cup here on Sunday knowing that one more victory should see them into the semi-finals, reports AFP.

matched only by Wasim Akram's Pakistan.

New Zealand, however, are also riding high after beating Australia and edging out 1975 and 1979 trophy winners West Indies to reach the second phase.

The Kiwis also know they

"We have great respect for Zimbabwe," Rixon, the former Australian wicket-keeper said. "They are very good in these conditions."

Houghton, meanwhile, has told his side that they are on the brink of a major breakthrough. "We are better placed than many other teams and should take advantage of that," Houghton said. "This could be the World Cup we were waiting for."

Zimbabwe had won only three of their 25 Cup matches before this tournament. They have already equalled that in five games here.

Alistair Campbell's team had already had a memorable season before arriving here, winning their first Test series abroad against Pakistan and making their first one-day final in the Sharjah Cup last November.

Neil Johnson, whose 76 and three for 27 secured Zimbabwe their first win over South Africa last week, is confident the team can go far.

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## Allot the pace ace

LONDON, June 5: Pace bowler Geoff Allott will top New Zealand's list of potential match-winners when they clash in the World Cup Super Six second round with Zimbabwe at Headingley on Sunday. His excellent bowling is now earning him as many headlines as is batting did earlier in the year, reports AFP.

The 27-year-old Canterbury bowler - known affectionately as a genuine number 11 - became the toast of his teammates in March when he battled for a world-record 102 minutes without scoring in the first Test against South Africa in Auckland.

That performance, which out did the previous 50-year mark set by England's Godfrey Evans, helped save the match but has led to him being teased ever since.

"I'm not sure whether to be happy with it or not," he says of the record. "They boys have given me a bit of gibbing."

Allot's bowling, however, is now the issue. The powerful left-arter, whose style makes him a mirror image of England's right-arm, paceman Darren Gough, tops the wicket-taking charts with 15 after the first phase of the World Cup.

His best, four for 37, helped New Zealand defeat Australia and get them through to the sec-

ond round. Before the tournament, Allot was seen as a bowler offering pace and bounce rather than control but he has managed to balance those twin necessities here.



His victims have cost him just 12.33 runs apiece - only five bowlers have a better average there - and he is conceding less than four runs an over.

That success has left his batting in the shade.

He has only managed to get to the crease once in five games, playing a robust if unspectacular knock to finish on nought not out.

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Seize the moment, AKTEL it.

The Africans have already made history in getting as far as the second round.

Having beaten India and pre-tournament favourites South Africa in the first phase, Zimbabwe already have four points going into the Super Six, a feat

have won all three of their World Cup meetings and 13 of 17 one-dayers against Zimbabwe.

Rival coaches Steve Rixon of New Zealand and David Houghton of Zimbabwe expect an evenly-matched contest.

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**PAKISTAN-S AFRICA SCOREBOARD**

Scoreboard of the Pakistan innings in the Super Six match against South Africa at Trent Bridge yesterday:

PAKISTAN	R	B	4	6
Saeed Anwar c Boucher b Elworthy	23	37	2	0
Wajahatullah Wasti c Boucher b Donald	17	56	2	0
Abdul Razzak c Kirsten b Elworthy	30	60	2	0
Ijaz Ahmed c Cullinan b Klusener	23	36	1	1
Inzamam-ul-Haq run out (Rhodes)	4	15	0	0
Yousuf Youhana run out (Klusener)	17	27	1	0
Moin Khan run out (Cronje/Boucher)	63	56	6	2
Azhar Mahmood not out	15	10	1	0
Wasim Akram not out	5	3	1	0
Extras: (b-4, lb-8, w-11)	23			
Total: (For 7 wickets in 50 overs)	220			

Did not bat: Saqlain Mushtaq, Shoaib Akhtar.

Fall of wickets: 1-41 (Saeed Anwar, 13.2 ov); 2-58 (Wajahatullah, 18.4 ov); 3-102 (Abdul Razzak, 29.5 ov); 4-111 (Ijaz Ahmed, 32.3 ov); 5-118 (Inzamam-ul-Haq, 35.1 ov) 6-150 (Yousuf Youhana, 42.6 ov); 7-206 (Moin Khan, 48.5 ov).

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Pollock	10	1	42	0
Kallis	10	0	47	0 (7-w)
Donald	10	2	49	1 (2-w)
Elworthy	10	2	23	2 (1-w)
Klusener	9	0	41	1
Cronje	1	0	6	0 (1-w)

Toss: Pakistan.  
Umpires: DB Hair (Aus) and DR Shepherd.  
TV Umpire: DB Cowie (NZ).  
Match Referee: JR Reid (NZ).



Steve Elworthy has Pakistan opener Saeed Anwar caught behind yesterday. —AFP photo



GOT YOU: Lance Klusener gestures after getting the wicket of Ijaz Ahmed yesterday. —AFP photo

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