

TOSHIBA TV FOR THE LATEST & THE BEST RANGS GROUP



Players and officials of the Bangladesh cricket team paying their homage at the Central Shaheed Minar yesterday. —Star photo by Anisur Rahman

Menacing McGrath

LONDON, June 5: With a delivery hurtling at about 85 miles per hour (133 kilometres per hour), Glenn McGrath broke the shoulder of Indian captain Mohammad Azharuddin's bat in his fourth over Friday. He may as well have broken the back of India's innings, reports AP.

Azharuddin grimaced as he attempted to fend the ball which lobbed to Steve Waugh at point for an easy catch, and India were 17 for four — their hopes of progressing in the tournament all but drowned by McGrath's fiery bowling.

The 29-year-old farm lad from New South Wales was the toast of the Australian side after scalping not only Azharuddin, but also India's cricketing demigod Sachin Tendulkar in the first over for a duck and run machine Rahul Dravid in his second. With Azharuddin's wicket, McGrath's figures read an astounding 3.2-0-8-3.

The highest accolade for McGrath came from his opponents.

"He bowled extremely well. No two questions. Absolutely brilliant," said Anshuman Gaekwad, India's coach. Gaekwad said the deliveries that dismissed Dravid and Tendulkar, considered by many the best batsman in the world, were virtually unplayable.

McGrath's success is a reflection of the unusual dominance of the ball over the bat at this World Cup, the pinnacle of one-day cricket made popular by its high run scoring games. Eleven bowlers have finished the preliminary round with 10 or more wickets and 10 bowlers had four or more wickets in a

match.

"It is good to see the ball dominating the bat but you still have to get the ball in the right spot," said the lanky right arm fast bowler who was clocked bowling at a maximum speed of 88 miles per hour (141 kmph).

For the match against India McGrath threw the gauntlet on Thursday, saying he will be gunning for Tendulkar's wicket.

My game plan was to get the ball up there, get him coming forward and get the edge that way," McGrath said. "And that's the way it turned out," he added, referring to Tendulkar's hypnotic nudge at the ball that was caught by wicketkeeper Adam Gilchrist.

The strike bowler for Australia's Test team, McGrath's success is even more stunning considering that he was bowling first change for Australia at the beginning of the tournament because of a wavering line. But batsmen finally took notice when he took five wickets for 14 against the West Indies, crafting a six-wicket victory that helped Australia qualify for the Super Six.

After that there was little doubt that he had regained his traditional Test position as the opening bowler.

"I prefer to bowl from the first ball, but my rhythm is back and if I was bowling first change I would be bowling as well as I am now," he said.

McGrath remained modest in his success. "I came out pretty well. There was quite a bit in the wicket for the new ball," he said.

McGrath acknowledged that he had trouble getting used to, See page 14



Allan Donald is ecstatic after sending back Wajahatullah Wasti yesterday. —AFP photo

Heads held high - II

From Nizamuddin Ahmed

(This interview was taken on June 3 prior to the Bangladesh team's departure from London, Heathrow. Part I appeared on June 5 issue)

Akram Khan

He was filled with emotion and was 'feeling great' because he was on his way home and with such a big victory.

"We are really delighted and very proud," said the former captain, who was accompanied by his wife and baby daughter on the tour.

In the coming days he would try and play better, and produce even better results.

Akram's wife was standing next to him as he said, "We have many things to match with Pakistan. After beating them, time and again I remembered those martyrs who had laid down their lives in the War of Liberation."

"My wife has been a great help on the tour. She and my daughter have always inspired me," he said as they exchanged a smile.

Akram's wife agreed that players have their bad days and added, "On that day (against Pakistan) I knew he would play well."

World Cup stats: Played: 5, Runs: 62, HS: 42, Ave: 12.40



Shahriar Hussain

The opening batsman was surrounded by friends.

"I am feeling great, more so because I am going home after being on the tour for two months. I really missed my *bhaat* and *daal*," said Shahriar Hussain, who was drafted as an opener against Pakistan to share a record 68-run stand with Mehrab Hossain.

So what did you have all these days?

"Did not like it too much (whatever it was)," he said with a big smile.

Shahriar revealed that he was going to get married very soon. The girl is from Narayanganj. His bride-to-be wife is a degree examinee.

"I remembered my Amma most after beating Pakistan," he added.

As his debt for his success as a cricketer, he mentioned, "Gordon Greenidge made me do a lot of knocking yesterday (last Sunday). He told me 'Score some runs, you are not scoring' and then he encouraged me a lot to do so."

His ambition was to play in the next World Cup in the year 2003 in South Africa.

World Cup stats: Played: 3, Runs: 41, HS: 39, Ave: 13.66



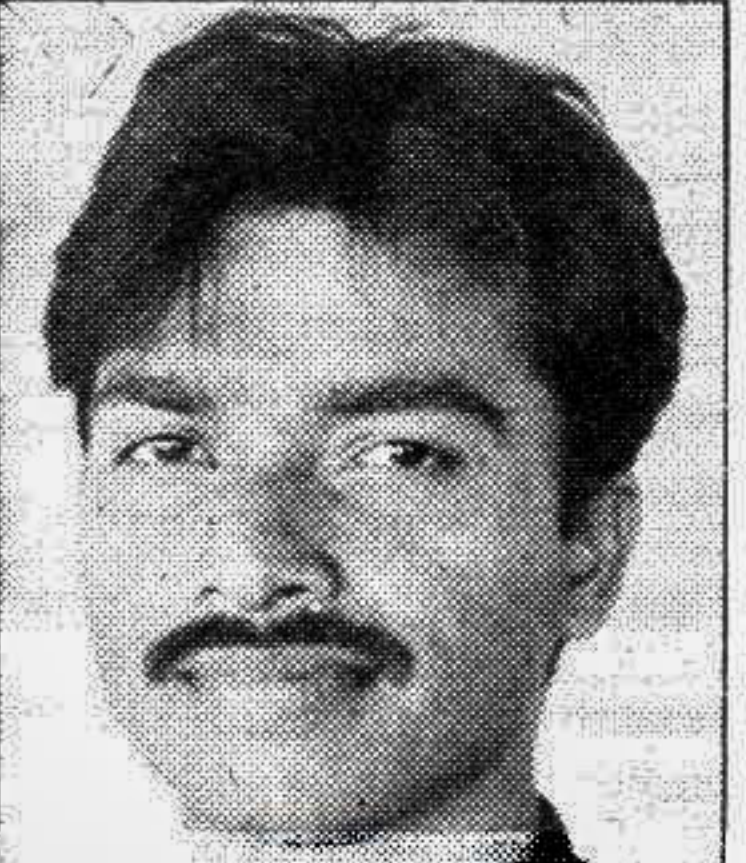
Faruque Ahmed

Narrating his feelings, former captain Faruque, who said he would soon announce his retirement, said, "Even two days after the win, I am feeling very well because we are taking home something with us."

"Winning against Scotland was a delight and then against Pakistan, that was definitely a very good game. We really enjoyed it and we are very happy," said Faruque, who has a business of sports goods at Dhaka's Elephant Road.

Reflecting on the future Faruque said, "I am planning to retire anyway. But this win will take us a long way. Beating a Test-playing nation is a great achievement for Bangladesh. The time has come to not look back anymore and just look forward."

About the timing of his retirement, Faruque said, "Maybe



Astle gets another chance

LEEDS, England, June 5 (Reuters/Internet): Nathan Astle will not find a better time to recapture lost form than in Sunday's World Cup Super Six match against Zimbabwe at Headingley.

Astle has the best one-day record in the New Zealand side and was particularly successful against Zimbabwe in a one-day home series last year, scoring a century and three fifties in the Kiwis' 4-1 series victory.

Yet he has scored only 21 runs in five innings in the present tournament and his repeated failures have put extra pressure on the New Zealand top-order.

"We haven't hit our straps yet," said New Zealand captain Stephen Fleming on Saturday. "We haven't batted as well as we can."

New Zealand have won 13 of their 17 one-day matches against Zimbabwe and believe they must win on Sunday if they are to advance to the semi-

finals.

"We have got two points at the moment and two points from this game would be crucial to us," Fleming added.

"Zimbabwe have been playing quite well. They beat South Africa pretty easily but they probably fluctuate as much as we do. That's the distinction between the good sides and the teams who don't do so well."

"We haven't got the superstars who win matches single-handedly. Obviously, our top-order hasn't fired at all but the positive side of that is that we hope to fire for this match."

Zimbabwe captain Alistair Campbell, whose team have taken a maximum four points into the Super Sixes, agreed with Fleming's assessment.

"New Zealand will be very tough," he said. "They are like us. They don't have any superstars, world class players like Sachin Tendulkar. But they are a very good all-round outfit."

Retirement? Not now

LONDON, June 5 (Reuters/Internet): Veteran West Indies fast bowler Courtney Walsh has no plans to retire until he becomes the world's leading Test wicket taker.

Walsh, West Indies' most successful bowler with 11 wickets in their unsuccessful bid to reach the second stage of the World Cup, has 423 tests scalps, 11 short of the world record held by India's Kapil Dev.

Walsh, 36, told Sky television that the expected rest he would get by not playing English county cricket for Gloucestershire this summer would give him a chance to recharge his batteries.

"New I've got a rest so I may be fresh for (the Test series in) England next year," Walsh said.

He said he was motivated to continue playing following rewarding series against South Africa and Australia when he captured 22 and 26 wickets respectively.

"I had very good series in South Africa and the Caribbean and I've now got the option of

getting the highest number of test wickets," Walsh said.

"I would have been satisfied with 400 but I have the chance of getting past two great bowlers, Sir Richard Hadlee and Kapil Dev."



COURTNEY WALSH

Turning points

LONDON, June 4 (AFP): Ten key moments during Australia and India's World Cup Super Six clash here at The Oval on Friday:

- + Robin Singh gets smashed for 19 off his first two overs after Australia's openers make a fine start but Mohammad Azharuddin decides to stick with him. He dismisses Mark Waugh and Ricky Ponting in his third over to check the run rate.
- + Steve Waugh, scoring at a run a ball and putting the innings back on track, is caught at mid on to make it 218 for four.
- + Ajay Jadeja swoops from backward point and throws down the stumps with a direct hit to remove Darren Lehmann with the score on 231 for four with six overs of the Australian innings to go.
- + Tom Moody cracks three fours on his way to 26 off 20 balls as 78 runs come off the last 60 balls.
- + Sachin Tendulkar, shuf-

fling forward, is caught behind off his fourth ball from Glenn McGrath, making the score one for one.

- + Rahul Dravid falls to the same bowler in identical fashion, a lunging Adam Gilchrist taking the catch with both legs off the ground to make it 10 for two after just 17 balls.
- + Saurav Ganguly inside-edges a Damien Fleming delivery into his stumps with the score on 12 for three.
- + Azharuddin falls, also to McGrath, with the score on 17 as he top edges to gully.
- + Shane Warne gets blasted for three sixes and 21 runs off an over by Robin Singh and Ajay Jadeja. The game was already dead by then, but it gave the subdued Indian supporters something to cheer about.
- + Ajay Jadeja pushed Shane Warne into the covers for a single to reach his century off 138 balls with seven fours and two sixes.

Teachers taught a lesson

LONDON, June 5: England were conspicuous by their absence as the World Cup carnival moved into top gear Friday when Australia took center-stage with their 77-run win over India to launch the Super Six league, reports AP.

The return of the World Cup to the "home of cricket" was expected to mark a new era for cricket in England, which introduced the game around the Commonwealth countries.

But cricket from the former British empire have hit back, leaving the game's founder a mere spectator at its own festival of the limited-overs game, which the traditionalists term 'the pajama game'.

Countries which learnt the

rudiments of cricket from English colonialists have demonstrated their prowess, while spectators from all over the world visiting England are propounding different theories for their rise as a cricketing power.

But, surprisingly, most have similar views on England's decline.

South African Mike Meikle-Braes, a marketing executive from Johannesburg said: "England is no longer the lord of the cricketing arena... South Africa is."

Watching Australia take their first two points in the Super Six, Meikle-Braes said he had come to watch South Africa lift the World Cup.

"The World Cup is ours, take

that down," said Meikle-Braes, who is following Hansie Cronje's South African side in England. "The countries which adapted cricket from England have overtaken it, haven't they?"

Mark Branscombe, a Londoner said this reminded him of England having taught soccer to the world and later being left behind.

"I never imagined England's plight at cricket would be that bad and so soon," said Branscombe, who said he was a house husband and had got a day off for cricket with his wife's permission.

"I feel sick to think that English cricket's gone the soccer



PLUGHING IN SAND: Ajay Jadeja, the Indian centurion, stepping out to drive against Australia on June 4. —AFP photo

Javagal goes faster, Glenn ends deadlier

LONDON, June 5: Indian paceman Javagal Srinath was timed faster than Australia's Glenn McGrath when the speed gun was unveiled for the first time at the cricket World Cup, reports said on Saturday, reports AP.

Srinath's fastest delivery was clocked by the speed gun at 93 miles per hour against McGrath's 88 — which removed Sachin Tendulkar for zero — at the Oval on Friday.

But the lanky New South Welshman had the last laugh, leading Australia to a 77-run victory with a hostile opening spell that claimed Tendulkar, Rahul Dravid and skipper Mohammad Azharuddin.

Srinath also worked up higher pace through his spells, averaging 86 miles an hour against McGrath's 84.

The speed gun, created by a South African firm, measures the speed of the ball from the

moment it leaves the hand till it hits the wicket.

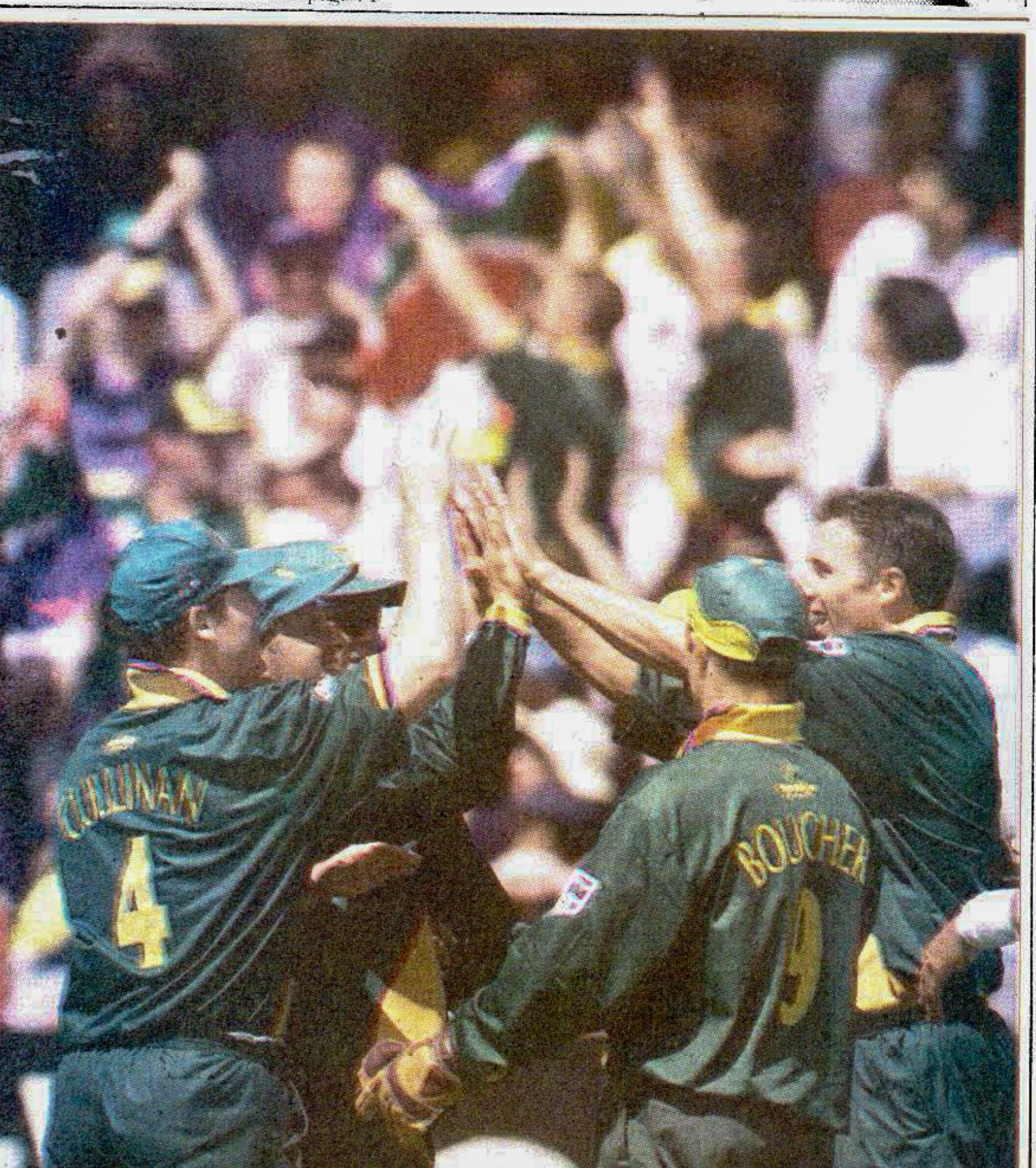
Among the other bowlers timed at the first Super Six match, the fastest deliveries by Aussies Damien Fleming and Paul Reiffel were identical at 86 miles an hour.

Indian seamer Venkatesh Prasad was clocked at 83 miles an hour and Debashish Mohanty at 81 miles.

Leg-spinners Shane Warne



Robin Singh, the Indian all-rounder, fails to connect on an attempted pull at the Foster's Oval on June 4. —AFP photo



Paceman Steve Elworthy is congratulated by team-mates on getting a wicket yesterday. —AFP photo