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DHAKA MONDAY, JUNE 7, 1999 Email: dssports@bdonline.com

The ultimate cricket war

MANCHESTER, June 6: Pakistan and India square up for the most highly-charged clash of the World Cup on Tuesday as Old Trafford braces itself for a match which will reverberate far beyond the boundary fence, reports Reuters.

An upsurge of fighting between the two countries in their disputed region of Kashmir has added a whole new dimension to a contest which would be rich in cricketing possibilities alone.

Indian will be desperate for a win after their 77-run defeat by Australia on Friday left them only a faint hope of making the semifinals.

And Pakistan's pulsating defeat by South Africa yesterday has raised the stakes still further, making victory paramount for them to get their World Cup campaign back on track.

Even in peacetime the two sides' fervent fans serve up one of sport's fiercest rivalries and police are planning extra-tight security to try and keep all the fireworks on the field of play.

The crowds can expect a riveting tussle between Pakistan's potent pace attack and an Indian batting line up that has set the tournament alight. India's Rahul Dravid, Saurav Ganguly, Ajay Jadeja and the peerless Sachin Tendulkar have between them scored all five of the tournament's centuries so far.

But they have lost matches that matter. Swept aside by Australia's Glenn McGrath in their first Super Six game and saddled with defeats by fellow qualifiers Zimbabwe and South Africa from the group stage, India now rest at the foot of the second round standings without a point to their name.

They now face daunting opponents who not only thrashed India in April's Sharjah Cup final, but also steamrollered through their World Cup group before a shock late loss to Bangladesh.

Led by one of the world's finest one-day performers in Wasim Akram, Pakistan also have the tournament's fastest bowler in Shoaib Akhtar and the top off-spinner in Saqlain Mushtaq.

Inzamam-ul-Haq has provided the kind of middle order batting power that could exploit India's lack of bowling depth to bring even the toughest total within reach while wicket-keeper Moi Khan showed with his explosive 63 from 56 balls against South Africa that he can turn a match.

The South Africa and Bangladesh defeats have underlined this Pakistan's side's ability to self-destruct, but they will still need to falter badly to miss out on a semifinal spot. India should be prepared for a backlash in a duel that organisers hope will be memorable for events on the pitch, not off it.

Cronje not contented

NOTTINGHAM, England, June 6 (Reuters/ Internet): South Africa's captain Hansie Cronje is not satisfied with the way his side are winning matches in the World Cup.

All-rounder Lance Klusener was again the South African batting hero in the Super Sixes match against Pakistan at Trent Bridge on Saturday, lashing an unbeaten 46 off 41 balls in a fightback that took his side from 135 for six to their victory target of 221 with six balls to spare.

They won by three wickets.

Klusener has now scored 210 runs in five innings in the tournament without being dismissed but while acknowledging his vital contribution Cronje is aware it is covering cracks in the front line batting.

"The guys are playing some good cricket under pressure but I'm still not satisfied with the way in which we're winning," Cronje said. "I'm happy with the fact we are winning but we are not doing so in the way that I want us to."

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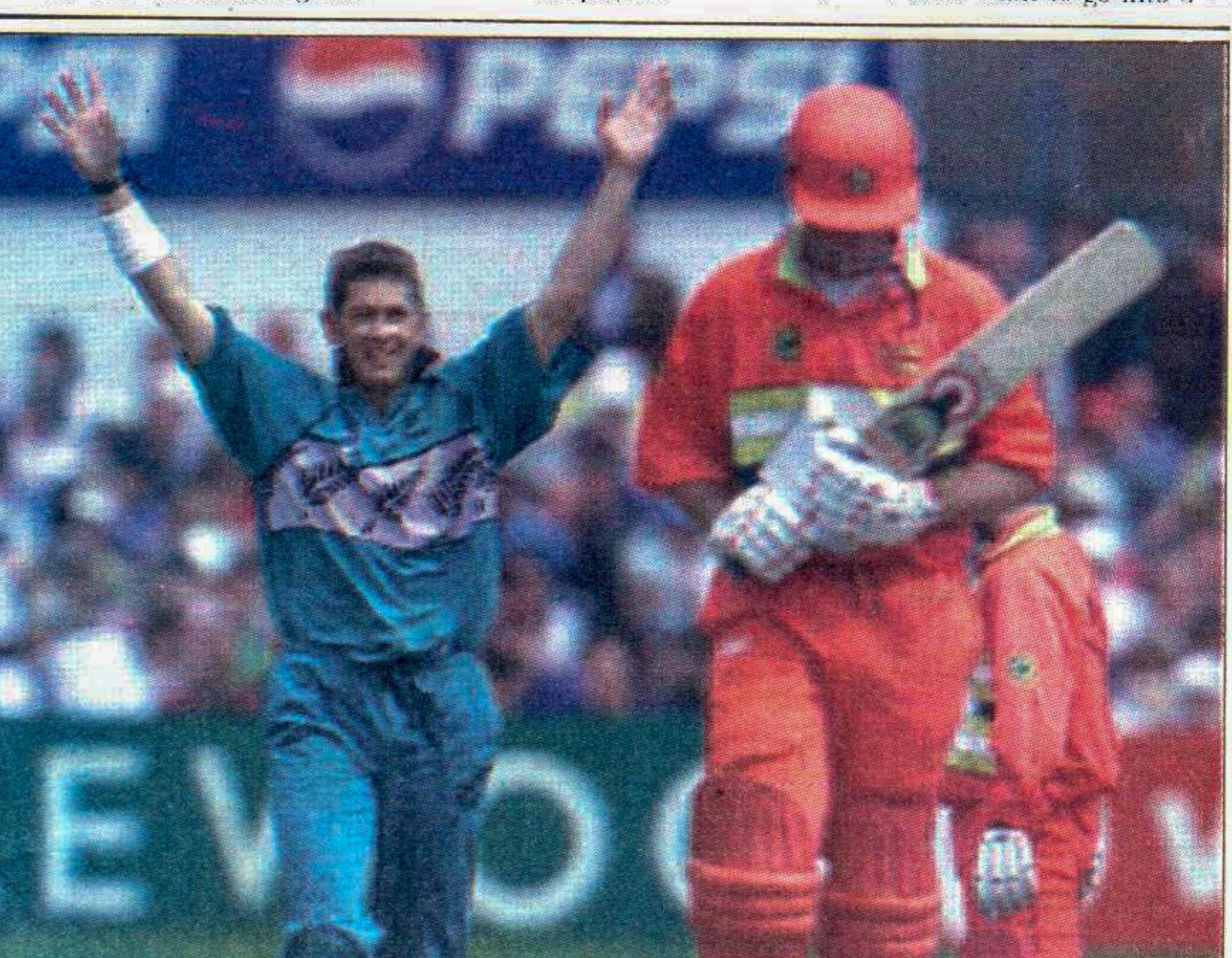
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New Zealand's premier paceman Geoff Allott is euphoric after dismissing Zimbabwe's Neil Johnson yesterday.

— Internet photo



The 'Black Caps' celebrate the dismissal of Zimbabwe's star batsman Andy Flower at Headingly yesterday.

— Internet photo

Saber backs BCB decision

Sports Reporter

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Saber Hossain Chowdhury said that the board did not sack its West Indian coach Gordon Greenidge, but only removed him from the team management in order to restore discipline.

"There has been a misunderstanding. We have only discharged him (Gordon) from his additional job as coach. But he is still the director of coaching", said Saber while talking to a host of reporters in a press conference at his office at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

"We sincerely did not want to go through an experience like the one that had happened with Mahinder Amarnath. We have tried our utmost to bring him (Gordon) back to Bangladesh with the team. But he was not available", said Saber.

"It's a big disappointment that he is not here with us today," said Saber. But the BCB supremo claimed that the Board quite rightly issued the letter to Gordon before Bangladeshi's match against Pakistan.

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