



## Arch rivals clash today.

Breaking Boundaries.



OLD TRAFFORD LAKE! The Old Trafford ground at Manchester, venue for the Pakistan-India Super Six clash, is water-logged. Photograph was taken yesterday. —AFP photo

## India v Pakistan: The final of Asia

MANCHESTER, England, June 7: Mohammad Azharuddin's India will make a last-ditch effort to stay in the World Cup when they clash with arch-rivals Pakistan at Old Trafford on Tuesday, reports AFP.

A win for much-vaunted Pakistan will all but ensure their place in the semi-finals. India, languishing at the bottom of the Super Six table without a point following their 77-run defeat by Australia on Friday, need to win to remain in the tournament.

The passion surrounding the game has been amplified further following recent military clashes between the two nations. Azharuddin conceded his team were struggling for form. "We have not been playing well. I can only hope the other teams play worse than us," he said.

But Azharuddin, who could face the axe if his team fails to reach the last four, added they still had a chance.

"This business of having an inferiority complex against Pakistan is only in the minds of the public, not the players," he said. "I am not too concerned about the Pakistan attack."

India, however, may be without in-form opener Saurav

Ganguly, who sprained his ankle while bowling in the nets on Sunday.

"It looks bad, but I hope I will be fit for the game," said Ganguly, who has scored 350 runs and taken five wickets in the tournament. "We will have to wait till Tuesday morning."

Bad weather on Monday kept both teams indoors, with more rain forecast for Tuesday.

Thousands of Indian and Pakistani supporters, from Britain as well as abroad, began

reaching the city on Monday. Wasim Akram's Pakistan, the tournament favourites, go into the match following two consecutive losses, against Bangladesh in the first phase and South Africa on Saturday.

But their recent matches with India suggest a Pakistan victory. They won two of three Test matches in India this year before claiming five one-day wins out of six in a one-month pe-

riod. Pakistan have won nine of their last 10 one-dayers.

"We are very proud of beating India in India, not many teams have been able to do that in recent years," said Akram, but admitted: "I am quite worried about our two defeats after four successive wins earlier in the tournament."

"We seem to be losing it a bit... We will have to raise our game against India."

India can take heart from

Shoaib bowled him first ball in the third.

With India needing to improve their run-rate, Tendulkar will open the innings again despite his fourth-ball dismissal by Australia's Glenn McGrath at the Oval on Friday.

"Even Tendulkar can have a bad day, he's only human," Azharuddin said.

"It's not the first time Sachin got out for a duck. But we know he makes up for it very fast."

If Ganguly recovers, India are likely to field the same team which lost to Australia.

Pakistan may be forced to recall veteran Salim Malik or Shahid Afridi for Yousuf Youhana, who hurt his groin against South Africa.

**SQUAD:** Saurav Ganguly, Sachin Tendulkar, Rahul Dravid, Mohammad Azharuddin (capt), Ajay Jadhava, Robin Singh, Nayan Mongia, Anil Kumble, Javagal Srinath, Venkatesh Prasad, Debashish Mohanty.

**PAKISTAN (probable):** Saeed Anwar, Wajahatullah Wasti, Abdul Razzaq, Ijaz Ahmed, Inzamam-ul Haq, Shahid Afridi, Moin Khan, Wasim Akram (capt), Azhar Mahmood, Saqlain Mushtaq, Shoaib Akhtar.

See page 14

## Old Trafford on red alert

MANCHESTER, June 7: Pakistan's World Cup clash with India will have the tightest security operation ever seen for a cricket match in England in a bid to thwart possible fan violence, officials said here on Monday, reports AFP.

Lancashire chief executive Jim Cumbes, unveiling measures for the second-round game at Old Trafford on Tuesday, said match referee Raman Subba Row will ask the rival captains to help promote a friendly atmosphere on the pitch.

He said there would be "sig-

nificantly larger number of security people, the highest ever for an international cricket match in England."

Cumbes added that banners would be permitted but they would be checked for "offensive political slogans". Alcohol and objects which could be used as weapons, however, would be confiscated.

Many of the stewards on duty will be British Asians.

The two teams are traditional rivals but fears of fan violence have risen following military clashes between the two nations across their disputed Kashmir border.

To add to the tension surrounding the game, India will be knocked out of the tournament if they lose.

Security concerns have dogged the tournament but, until now, the worry has been over player safety during end-of-match pitch invasions rather than over trouble between fans. Several captains have called for greater protection, fearing players could be assaulted by supporters.

Cumbes, however, said: "We think we have got every loophole blocked."

He said most of the match tickets had been sold before people knew which sides would

be playing, thus reducing the chance that the venue would be filled by passionate Indian and Pakistani fans.

But he admitted many tickets could be bought on the black market.

"We are, however, not complacent," he said. "Our objective is for all fans to enjoy what potentially is a wonderful day's cricket between two very fine teams."

"These fans love their cricket and they can be very boisterous, but the paramount thing is the safety of the players and the spectators."

Appeals have already been made by team skippers Wasim Akram and Mohammad Azharuddin, as well as community leaders, for fans to behave.

Indian coach Anshuman Gaekwad said on Monday: "The players are not affected at all by the troubles back home or even think of it - it's just cricket."

"India and Pakistan's political relationship has nothing to do with sport and both sets of players are quite friendly with each other."

"There is more attention on this game than any other because in India and Pakistan, cricket is more of a religion than anything else."

### BITS & PIECES

**GMG AIRLINES**  
First Class All the Way  
Dhaka • Chittagong • Sylhet  
Rajshahi • Barisal • Jessore

NOTTINGHAM, June 7: Pakistan captain Wasim Akram nearly missed his side's three-wicket Super Six defeat against South Africa because his blood sugar level dipped dangerously the day before Saturday's match, reports AP.

Akram, an insulin-dependent diabetic, had been suffering from a fever which sent his blood sugar level plunging. Pakistan team manager Dr Zafar Altaf explained at a post-match press conference which Akram skipped because he was feeling too ill.

"There was a danger he would not play today but he played," Altaf said. "He will play on Tuesday."

Pakistan take on India Tuesday at Old Trafford in a highly-charged clash between two nations engaged in military skirmishes over the disputed Kashmir border province.

### WHITE BALL WORRY

NOTTINGHAM, June 7 (AP): The white balls being used at the World Cup have come in for criticism from bowlers who struggle to control their extrav-

See page 14

## Azhar back in the firing line

NEW DELHI, June 7 (Reuters/Internet): The knives are out again for India's beleaguered World Cup captain Mohammad Azharuddin.

Defeat by Australia in their opening Super Six match on Friday has left India with only an outside chance of winning a semifinal place and the blame was heaped on Azharuddin's shoulders.

Former India seamer Chetan Sharma was quoted on television in the Pioneer daily as saying that if he were in Azharuddin's shoes he would step down and let vice-captain Ajay Jadhava lead the team.

"It is the right time for Azhar to go and will be greatly appreciated coming so close to the Australia defeat," said Sharma. "It may just help the team at this late stage."

Former India captain Sunil Gavaskar stopped short of calling for Azharuddin's head but wrote in a newspaper column that "India shot themselves in the foot" by opting to

field after winning the toss against the Australians.

The Times of India newspaper in a front page story said the issue was not whether Azharuddin should be sacked but when.

"Azhar's World Cup of woes runneth over," the headline said.

Businessman Sanjay Dhin-



gra, who played cricket at college level, was stinging in his criticism of Azharuddin.

"He is out of form, he is not aggressive and he seems to have lost interest in the game," said Dhinra. "So why persist with a leader who is neither motivated nor seems capable of motivating others?"

"I don't remember when he (Azharuddin) last played a match winning innings for India. That is not what you expect from your top line batsman and captain."

Azharuddin, who has scored only 72 runs in five innings, is well used to being pilloried at home.

After defeats by South Africa and Zimbabwe in their opening two group games, fans in Calcutta staged a mock funeral of the 36-year-old Azharuddin.

Elsewhere in the city fans put a garland of shoes on his effigy before burning it. A garland of shoes is a sign of insult in India, linked to their lowly position on the human body.

India's next Super Six match is against arch-rivals and tournament favourites Pakistan at Old Trafford, Manchester, on Tuesday.

## Wasim calls for calm

LONDON, June 7 (Internet report): Pakistan captain Wasim Akram is relishing a return to his adopted Old Trafford home and has renewed his plea for fans to behave in the showdown with rivals India on Tuesday.

The two countries are engaged in military skirmishes in Kashmir and organisers are concerned that the already intense rivalry may be inflamed by the current political situation and have mounted one of the biggest security operations ever for a cricket match in this country.

"The biggest fear is that the players could be in danger by end-of-match pitch invasion, which has become a trademark during the World Cup."

But Wasim, who is battling to overcome a blood-sugar problem to lead his side onto the field, believes the partisan crowd will respect the players' views and that the match will not be disrupted by flashpoints.

"I do ask all the fans to cooperate and not run onto the field - let's make it a day to remember for the right reasons," stressed Wasim, who enjoyed 10 years with Lancashire until being released at the end of last season.

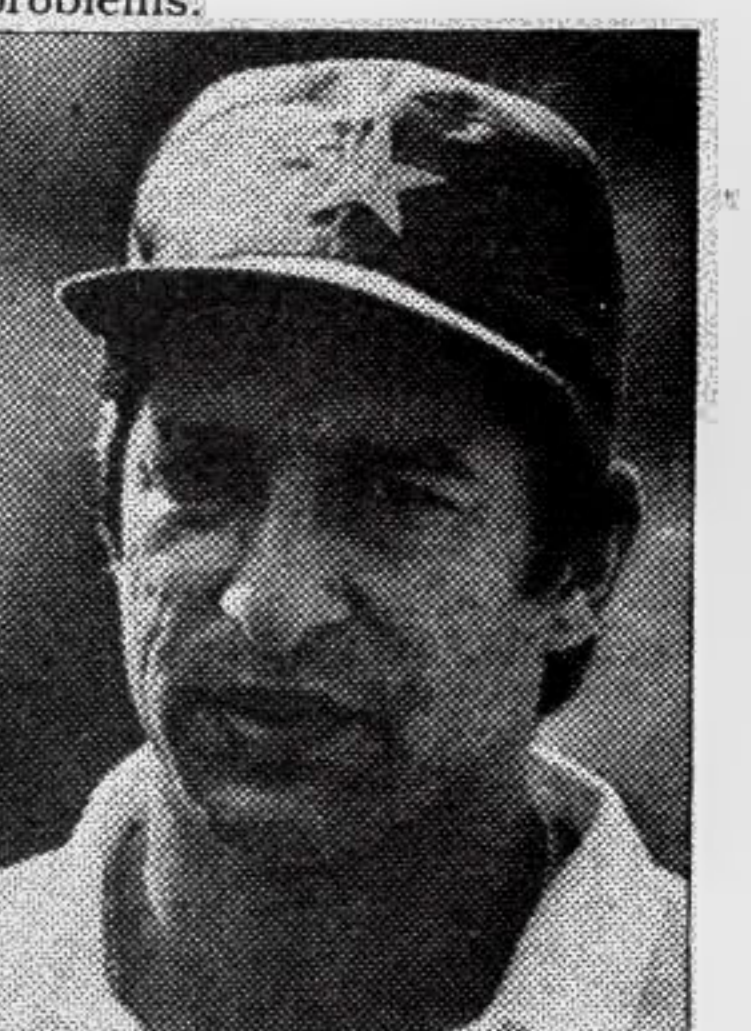
"All we are here for is to play cricket. It's just a game and hopefully the fans will take it in the right spirit and enjoy it."

Wasim is hopeful because the previous two occasions the two sides have met, in one-day tournaments in Toronto and Sharjah, passed off without any trouble although neither event attracted the crowds expected at

Old Trafford and they were played before the latest troubles.

"I have spoken to the Lancashire chairman Jack Simmons about security and he has assured me everything is in place so I'm not worried," he added.

"In fact, I don't think there will be any trouble because we've played India in recent tournaments without any problems."



Lancashire have kept their security arrangements secret after talks with police and local authorities and chief executive Jim Cumbes stressed: "We're not being complacent and are planning accordingly."

"Our objective is for all fans to enjoy what potentially is a wonderful day's cricket between two fine sides and to ensure safety for all concerned."



COOLING DOWN! Shoaib Akhtar, the world's fastest bowler, waiting for play to start during the Super Six fixture against South Africa at Trent Bridge on June 5. —AFP photo

### ZIMBABWE-NEW ZEALAND SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the Super Six match between Zimbabwe and New Zealand at Headingley on Sunday:

ZIMBABWE	R	B	4	6
N Johnson b Allott	25	32	5	0
G Flower run out (Home)	1	9	0	0
M Goodwin c Parore b Harris	57	90	6	0
A Flower c McMillan b Allott	0	2	0	0
A Campbell c Nash b Larsen	40	101	2	0
G Whittall c Astle b Allott	21	34	1	0
S Carlisle c McMillan b Astle	2	11	0	0
H Streak b Cairns	4	13	0	0
A Whittall c Astle b Cairns	3	6	0	0
H Olonga not out	1	1	0	0
A Huckle c Twose b Cairns	0	1	0	0
Extras: (b-4, lb-11, w-3, nb-3)				21
Total: (All out in 49.3 overs)				175
Fall of wickets: 1-10 (G Flower, 2.5 ov); 2-35 (Johnson, 8.5 ov); 3-45 (A Flower, 10.1 ov); 4-136 (Goodwin, 36.3 ov); 5-148 (Campbell, 41.4 ov); 6-154 (Carlisle, 44.5 ov); 7-163 (Streak, 47.2 ov); 8-174 (GJ Whittall, 48.6 ov); 9-174 (Huckle, 49.1 ov); 10-175 (A Whittall, 49.3 ov).				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Allott	10	1	24	3 (1-nb)
Nash	10	2	48	0 (1-nb)
Darsen	10	0	27	1

See page 14



TENDULKAR: About time he delivers. —Star file photo

Maggi | Nestle MILO energy | NESCAFÉ | POLO Mint | Nestle Good Food, Good Life | NESCAFÉ CLASSIC Deluxe