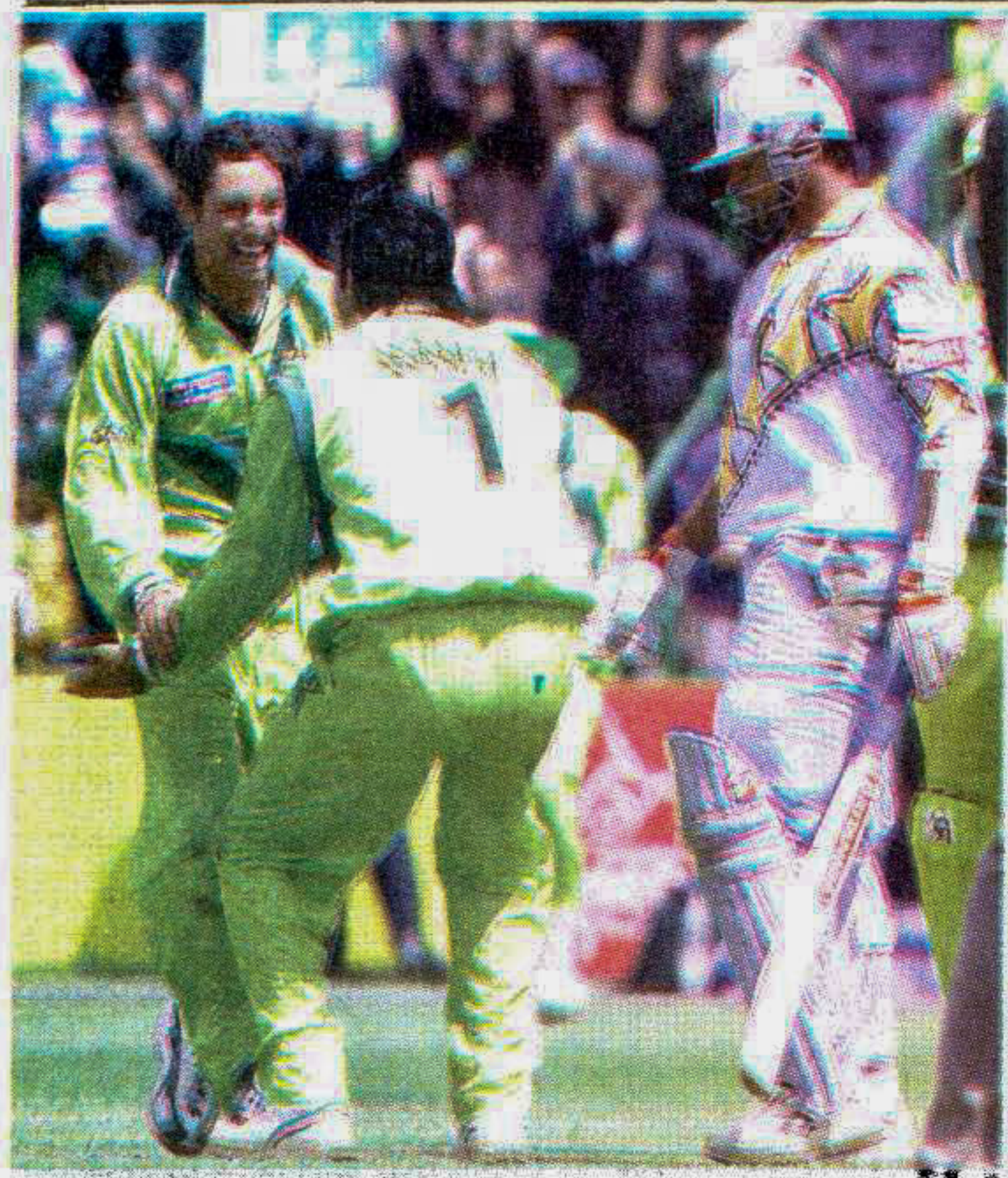


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Shahid Afridi (L) is being congratulated by his captain Wasim Akram after catching Rahul Dravid. — AFP photo

## All-conquering Klusener

LONDON, June 8 (Reuters/Internet): For a cricketer who acknowledges he is publicity-shy, Lance Klusener is ironically spending a lot of his time in the World Cup spotlight.

The South African left-handed batsman and right-arm fast medium bowler is the tournament's leading all-rounder, and the value of his deeds is reflected in four man-of-the-match awards in six games. Klusener's decisive 46 not out off 41 deliveries in his team's three-wicket victory over Pakistan at Trent Bridge on Saturday earned the latest award, thrusting him again under the media microscope and into the public eye.

His thunderous hitting has heightened his appeal to crowds around the country as well as helping South Africa win matches when they are up against it, as he did in characteristically forthright style at Trent Bridge.

When Klusener appeared at Saturday's news conference after his heroics against Pak-

istan, his captain Hansie Cronje caused laughter by saying with mock seriousness: "We're making it harder and harder for Lance, we're seeing how far we can push him."

Klusener meets a crisis fearlessly, and reputations count for nothing, but he is also a thinking cricketer as he showed when batting with Jacques Kallis during the run chase against the Pakistanis.

"I said to Jacques we must try to do it with an over to spare," Klusener said, "because we will then still have six balls if we don't get it quite right."

Well might he add: "It worked out perfectly."

South Africa reached their target of 221 with exactly one over left.

Klusener has now scored 210 runs from six innings in the tournament without being dismissed, giving him a world record sequence for one-day internationals of 396 runs without losing his wicket. Pakistan's Javed Miandad held the

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## Ceasefire for cricket

SRINAGAR, India, June 8: Residents in Kashmir's main city, more used to news about India and Pakistan exchanging artillery shells, sat glued to their television sets today to watch the two countries battle it out on the cricket field, reports Reuters.

The cricket bug bit everybody, including soldiers patrolling the streets.

People thronged outside the windows of television shops to get a glimpse of the World Cup game between India and Pakistan being played in England.

The city's main streets were deserted as many shopkeepers pulled down their shutters early to watch the game.

Both the teams have an even chance. Pakistan has a better bowling attack while India's batting is better, said Wasim, a young shop owner as he watched India's Rahul Dravid playing a forward defensive shot off Pakistan's Azhar Mahmood.

Many offices closed early as employees rushed home to watch the match. "Our office closed at 3.30 pm (1000 GMT) to allow us to go home and watch cricket," said Gulzareen, a federal government employee.

Soldiers, also afflicted by the cricket virus, were seen carrying their guns as they deftly balanced their radio sets on

their shoulders.

"Our duty does not allow us the luxury of watching cricket. We have to listen to the radio commentary," a paramilitary soldier said.

Soldiers guarding the rooftops and other high locations shouted down at people in the streets asking them the latest score.

"Only God knows who will win," said a shopkeeper.

Most of the people on the streets favoured Pakistan but some families were divided in their support.

"I support Pakistan while my wife favours India," said a middle-aged man listening to the radio commentary at a tea stall.

The excitement of the game did not mean people had completely forgotten the conflict between India and Pakistan on the border.

People discussed the clashes between India and Pakistan in the northern Kashmir mountains while watching the match.

In the Hindu-dominated Jammu region, the roads were empty as people returned home early to watch the match.

In some areas, some people rushed to the streets after the electricity connection went off and others made frantic calls to the power department.

## Steve hopeful

LONDON, June 8: Australian cricket captain Steve Waugh will undergo a fitness test on his groin injury on Tuesday before deciding whether to play in the key World Cup match against Zimbabwe at Lord's, reports AFP.

The 34-year-old all-rounder, who aggravated an old injury against India at the Oval last week, said: "I haven't said yes or no at this stage."

"I'm pretty confident I'll play."

The injury flared up again while he was bowling.

Waugh told the Australian Associated Press he might even consider bowling again if he turned out against Zimbabwe on Wednesday.

But team physiotherapist

Errol Alcott advised against, before admitting that the skipper would probably ignore his warning.

He said: "I'd probably advise him not to bowl in this match, but if he feels fine, and he thinks he's a chance then he'll probably bowl himself."

Waugh began his career as an

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### Spirit of '83

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four for the first time in their history.

But the form guide does not invite optimism.

Zimbabwe have lost 10 of their last 11 games against their opponents, as well as their last five World Cup encounters.

The first meeting between the sides, however, in 1983 at Trent Bridge, produced one of the greatest upsets in the history of the tournament as the African team, fully amateur at that stage, won by 13 runs.

Zimbabwe skipper Alistair Campbell, fresh from stealing a point against New Zealand after the weather washed out their Super Six game at Headingley, said: "Australia are going to be a tough nut to crack."

"It's going to be a tough match but we beat South Africa and if we can do that, we can beat anyone."

Australia, however, appear to be running into ominous form at just the right time, with Glenn McGrath's performances transforming the mood in the camp.

## Cautious confidence

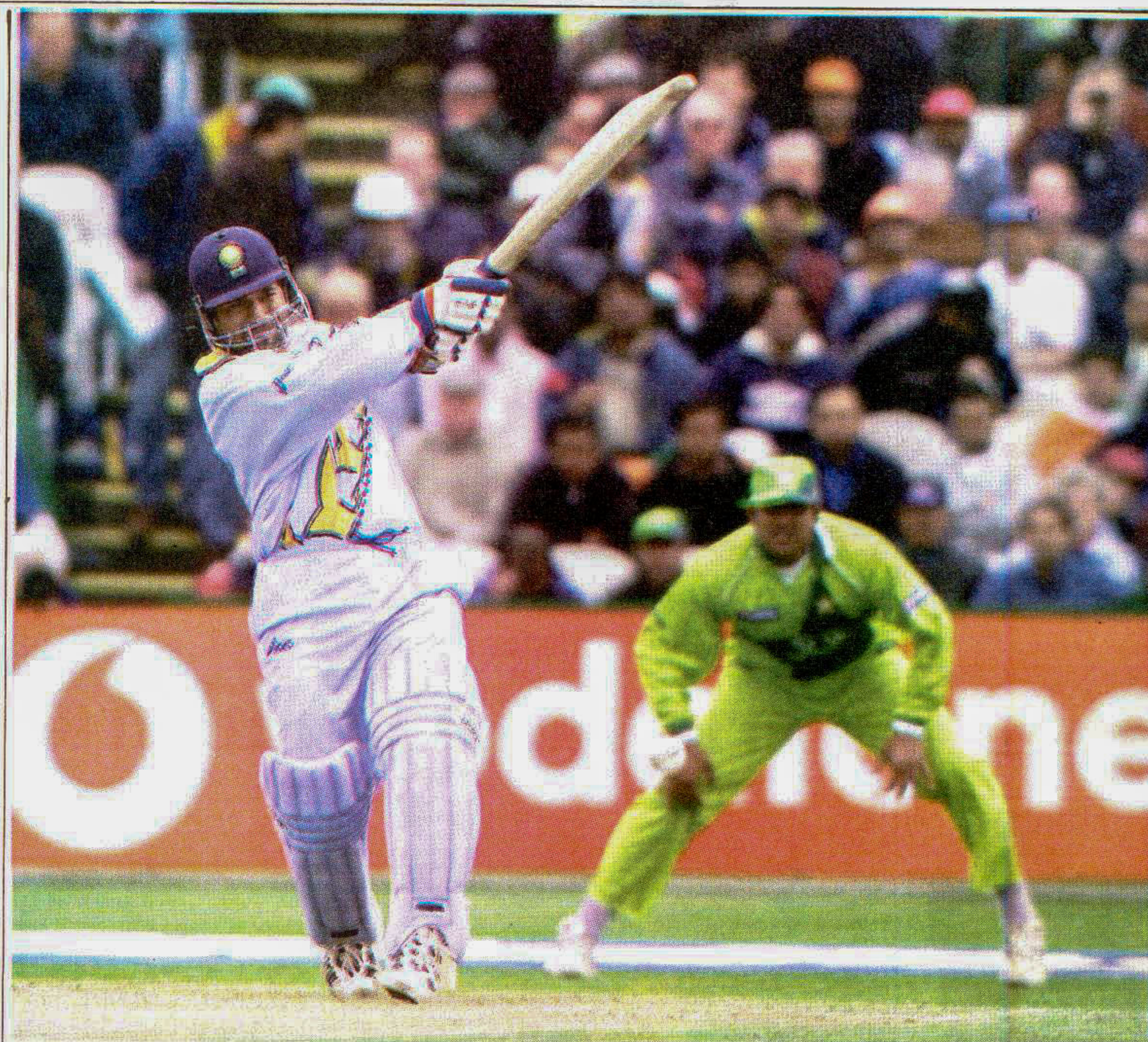
BIRMINGHAM, England, June 8: South Africa have every reason to feel buoyant as they prepare for their second round clash with New Zealand on Thursday but there are few signs of over-confidence in the camp of the World Cup favourites, reports Reuters.

Inspired by another superb performance from the big-hitting Lance Klusener, the South Africans won one of the most exciting matches of the tournament against Pakistan on Saturday to take their total of Super Six points to four.

A victory at Edgbaston would secure the South Africans a place in the semifinals.

But coach Bob Woolmer, who has instilled the same kind of never-say-die instinct into his players for which German soccer teams are famous, is taking nothing for granted.

The New Zealanders, who had to share the points with Zimbabwe in their rain-hit match at Headingley on Monday, ran the South Africans very close in a one-day series on their home soil earlier this year



Sachin Tendulkar pulling against Pakistan yesterday.

— AFP photo

## Well-behaved rivalry

MANCHESTER, England, June 8 (Reuters): The passionate roar welcoming Indian and Pakistani players to the Old Trafford pitch demonstrated that today's World Cup match was about cricketing honour and a great deal more.

The Super Six match was vital for both teams — India had to defeat their arch-rivals to stay in the tournament they won in 1983 while Pakistan badly needed a victory after two successive defeats.

But a cricket match between the two countries always has great political significance and this has been heightened by an upsurge of fighting in the disputed region of Kashmir.

The teams claimed they were concentrating solely on cricket. "There is always an emotional atmosphere when we play India, wherever it takes place," said Pakistan manager Zafar Altaf.

"But this is a cricket match and the players are thinking only of cricket."

India counterpart Brijesh Patel had a similar message.

"The boys aren't thinking about what's going on at home, they are thinking only about winning this game," he said.

But the atmosphere in the early overs was of a sort rarely experienced at cricket matches in England — chanting and the incessant blowing of horns rose to a climax as the Pakistan fast bowlers raced in to bowl to India's openers.

Because the majority of tickets were sold before the two teams involved in the second round match were known, the majority of the crowd were not Indian or Pakistani supporters.

But large pockets of fans roared their support in raucous but well-behaved rivalry.

Fans began arriving at the ground more than two hours before the start — with Pakistan followers in a clear majority — and all seemed entirely focused on the game, the first official match between the Asian neighbours on English soil.

"I really don't think there will be any trouble. I think it's been blown up out of all proportion."

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## Of the virtual victors

LEEDS, June 8 (AP): Zimbabwe's cricketers weren't complaining after spending a day in their Headingley dressing room watching the World Cup's first washout.

After New Zealand had the best of a rain-affected Sunday, a continual drizzle over Leeds on the match's reserve day, Monday, allowed Zimbabwe to es-

cape with one point — nudging them closer to a semifinal place — when the game was finally abandoned.

"Obviously New Zealand were in the better position overnight but two quick wickets in the morning would have redressed the balance," Zimbabwe captain Alistair Campbell said.

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Fans at Old Trafford hang a banner with messages for world peace written on it.

— AFP photo

## Wet summer shock

BIRMINGHAM, England, June 8 (Reuters/Internet report): New Zealand's World Cup programme was upset by English summer rain again on Tuesday but they remain confident ahead of the Super Six game with tournament favourites South Africa on Thursday.

The Kiwis had to settle for one point from their opening second round game against Zimbabwe after the Headingley match was abandoned on Monday's second day because of rain.

The Kiwis now need a victory at Edgbaston on Thursday to underpin their hopes of a place in the semifinals. They were unable to hold a practice ses-

sion outdoors on Tuesday because of the weather and the players went indoors for nets.

Captain Stephen Fleming said the New Zealanders had got the rain-hit match in Leeds, which they were well set to win, out of their system.

"There is nothing you can do about it. We got a point out of it which is positive," he said. "We have got a lot of information about the South Africans. We have played pretty well against them but we have to be well prepared."

Coach Steve Rixon added: "If you are thinking about the last result you can't give your best for the next challenge. The players are confident. They are in very good shape."

New Zealand have three points, one less than South Africa who are bracketed with Pakistan on four points. Zimbabwe lead with five points.

The New Zealanders ran South Africa very close in a one-day series on their home soil earlier this year which the South Africans won 3-2.

"They don't have many weaknesses at all...They are a good side with quality players all the way through," Fleming said.

"You can have them at five for 50 and they still have got three or four players who are world class to bat."

"They have got so many options that they are spoilt for

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HANSIE CRONJE

before losing 3-2.

"I don't bet on anything at the moment. We play New Zealand at Edgbaston on Thursday and just like any good

soccer manager we are treating every game as it comes," Woolmer said.

Although their middle and late-order batsmen showed excellent form in the dramatic three-wicket defeat of Pakistan, captain Hansie Cronje admits their is room for improvement.

The problem lies with repeated failure by the top order batsmen and the reliance on the lower order, Klusener in particular, to dig them out of trouble in the closing overs.

"We are confident of doing it (making the semifinals) but I'm not happy with the way in which we are winning," he said.

"Over the next few days we have to work on our batting, not in a technical sense, but mentally we have to come to terms with expressing ourselves."

Woolmer is a great believer that cricket matches can be won or lost from most positions.

It will be a tough match for New Zealand to win, especially since South African fast bowler Allan Donald will be returning to the Warwickshire county ground he has played on for the past 12 years.



Injured Indian star Saurav Ganguly coming down the stairs of the indoor practice venue at Manchester yesterday.

— AFP photo



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