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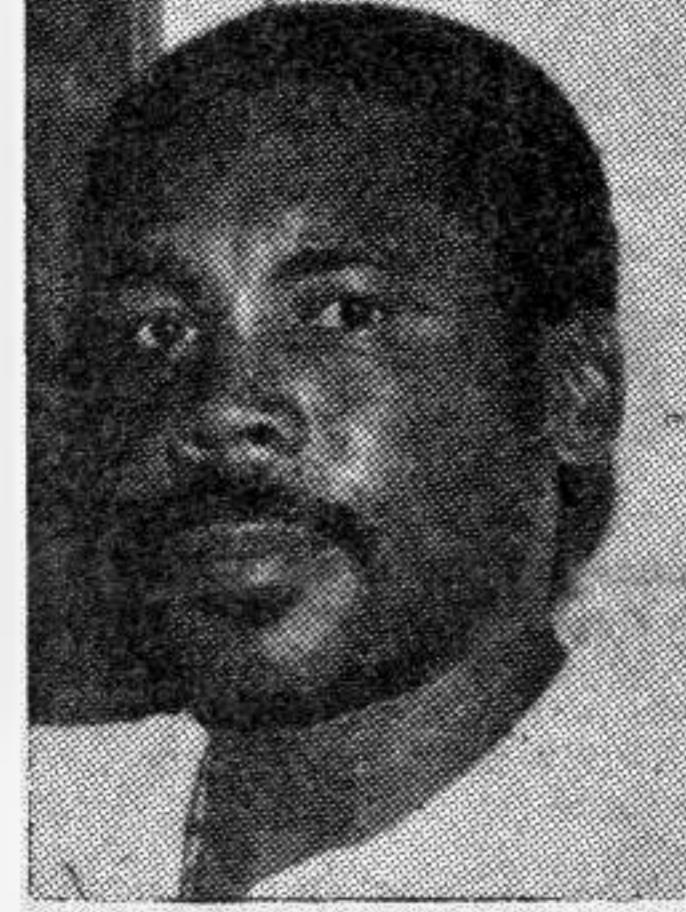


Ajay Jadeja and Javagal Srinath rush towards the dressing room after the victory against Pakistan at Old Trafford on June 8. —AFP photo

Waiting to be swamped or a genuine threat?

From Nizamuddin Ahmed with the cricket establishment.

Greenidge could shoulder some responsibility for cutting off that line. He knows only too



GORDON GREENIDGE

well that it is often more effective to speak through the press. After Bangladesh's disastrous tour of England, Ireland and Scotland last year, Greenidge invited two reporters from The Daily Star one evening and talked freely on tape for hours.

See page 14

LONDON, June 9: The impact that Bangladesh made on world cricket, thanks to their targeted Cup victory against Scotland and cream-topping at the expense of the galloping Pakistanis, seemed ill-defined till Simon Wilde's one-liner in the Sunday Times (June 6).

He warns crestfallen England thus: "... the competition from other nations is only going to stiffen. The likes of Bangladesh and Kenya will soon join Zimbabwe as genuine threats in future tournaments".

This is obviously not the understanding of Gordon Greenidge, Bangladesh Cricket Board's Director of Coaching. Talking to Iain Tennant of the same weekly Greenidge 'bares his soul' about Bangladesh's non-readiness to play Test cricket. Says the West Indian batting legend, 'It would be damaging for them to tour the leading Test nations, because they would be swamped'.

Goes on GG, perhaps in reference to his statement that Bangladesh were not ready for Test status: 'There was a big outcry that I had snubbed Bangladeshis, but there were no lines of communication open

India in raptures

NEW DELHI, June 9: India exploded in joy as its team beat rival Pakistan to keep alive their World Cup hopes Tuesday, with Indian soldiers battling Islamic rebels in Kashmir firing their weapons in celebration, reports AFP.

"These are the moments when a bit of indiscipline is OK," an army colonel said as soldiers opened fire after the cricket results reached them on transistor radios.

India restricted Pakistan to 277 for six off 50 overs, dismissing the traditional rivals for 180 in the second-round cricket match in Old Trafford.

It had to win to remain in the race for a semi-final place in the World Cup series.

"We just did not expect a result as awesome as this," the infantry colonel commanding an unit of battle-hardened troops told AFP by telephone from Kashmir.

India has poured in almost 20,000 soldiers to the divided region, with jets and artillery backing its largest military offensive since a war with Pakistan in 1971.

It has vowed to eliminate hordes of heavily-armed Islamic fighters in the strategic heights of Kargil, which it says have infiltrated the Indian side of Kashmir with Pakistan's help.

This is a fantastic win and it will keep us going in Kargil," the colonel said, adding that the fighting around Kargil had intensified before the crucial cricket match.

The rest of India was jubilant, with reports from Calcutta, Bangalore and Bombay saying people had taken to the streets, dancing and setting off fire crackers in scenes that eclipsed previous celebrations.

The sound of fire-crackers here is deafening ... Have we beaten Pakistan in Kashmir or have we defeated them in England?" asked Ritika Singh, an 18-year-old schoolgirl from Calcutta.

"We have done it," said a jubilant resident from the southern Indian city of Bangalore of the nail-biting match.

In New Delhi, people danced on the streets and hugged each

Rahul Dravid, the tourna- See page 14



SHA MEFUL: An Indian fan being kicked and trampled on by rival Pakistani fans after the Super Six clash at Manchester on June 8. —AFP photo

Asian lesson to Barmy Army

LONDON, June 9 (AFP): England's Barmy Army did not so much go AWOL at the cricket World Cup as fail to turn up for the party altogether.

Perhaps they feared being overrun by the Hindi Hordes, or Pakistan's Potato Men.

The Barmy Army - England's infamous, unofficial cricket supporters' club - has become so well-established that it has a registered trademark, an internet site and a World Cup song in the English pop charts which has outsold the official tourney anthem.

When the tournament organisers sold the event as a "carnival of cricket", they must have hoped for England's touring fans to make a home appearance.

The army was born during the away Ashes series of 1994/95.

The Australians thought anybody who could support

Michael Atherton's struggling side, let alone travel halfway round the world to watch them, had to be mad.

The English fans - there were 1,000-strong at the Sydney Test in January 1995 - rather liked the description and the name stuck.

Their aim, their website proclaims, is "to make watching cricket more fun and much more popular."

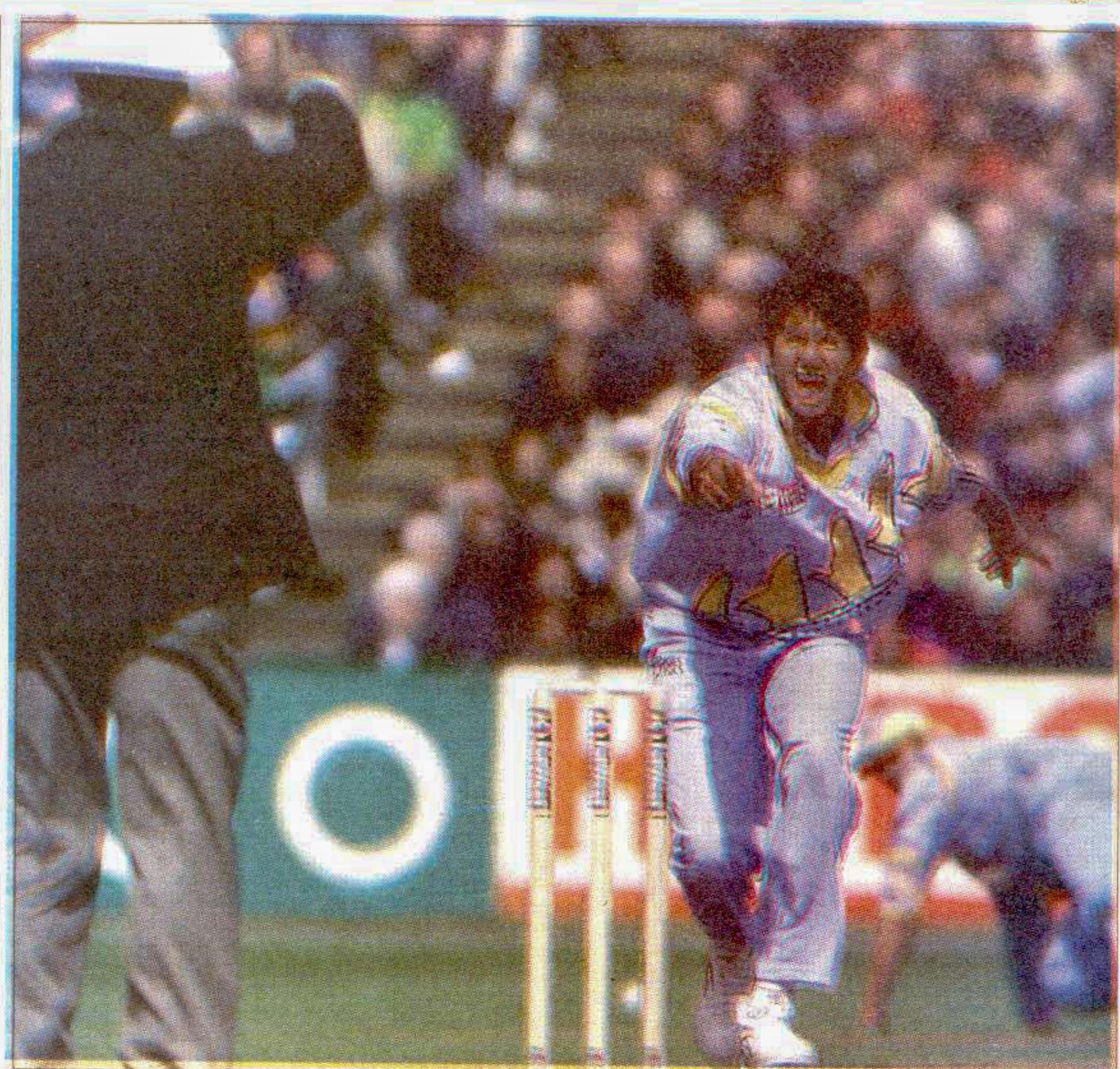
Outsiders confirm they also like drinking while turning lobster-red in the sun.

And they enjoy the gentle - and not so gentle - taunting of opposition players while praising - often ironically - their own team to the skies.

Their song on Shane Warne goes: "He's fat, he's round, he bounces on the ground, Shane Warne, Shane Warne."

Mark Waugh is given an even tougher time: "Mark Waugh is

See page 14



Umpire Steve Bucknor obliging Venkatesh Prasad following an appeal for lbw against Salim Malik. —AFP photo

Reid smells tampering

LONDON, June 9: Pakistan found themselves at the centre of fresh ball tampering allegations at the cricket World Cup on Wednesday, reports AFP.

Wasim Akram's side have been reported for interfering with the ball by match referee John Reid of New Zealand after the second round match against South Africa last Saturday, a Pakistani source told AFP.

The source said: "Match referee John Reid had an argument with our manager Izaafat Altaf about the ball after the match.

"Reid felt it may have been tampered with."

Altaf confirmed speaking to Reid, but said the team was not unduly concerned by the allegations.

"What's sad is that we are singled out every time," Altaf said. "It's made to sound as if we are cheats, which we definitely

are not."

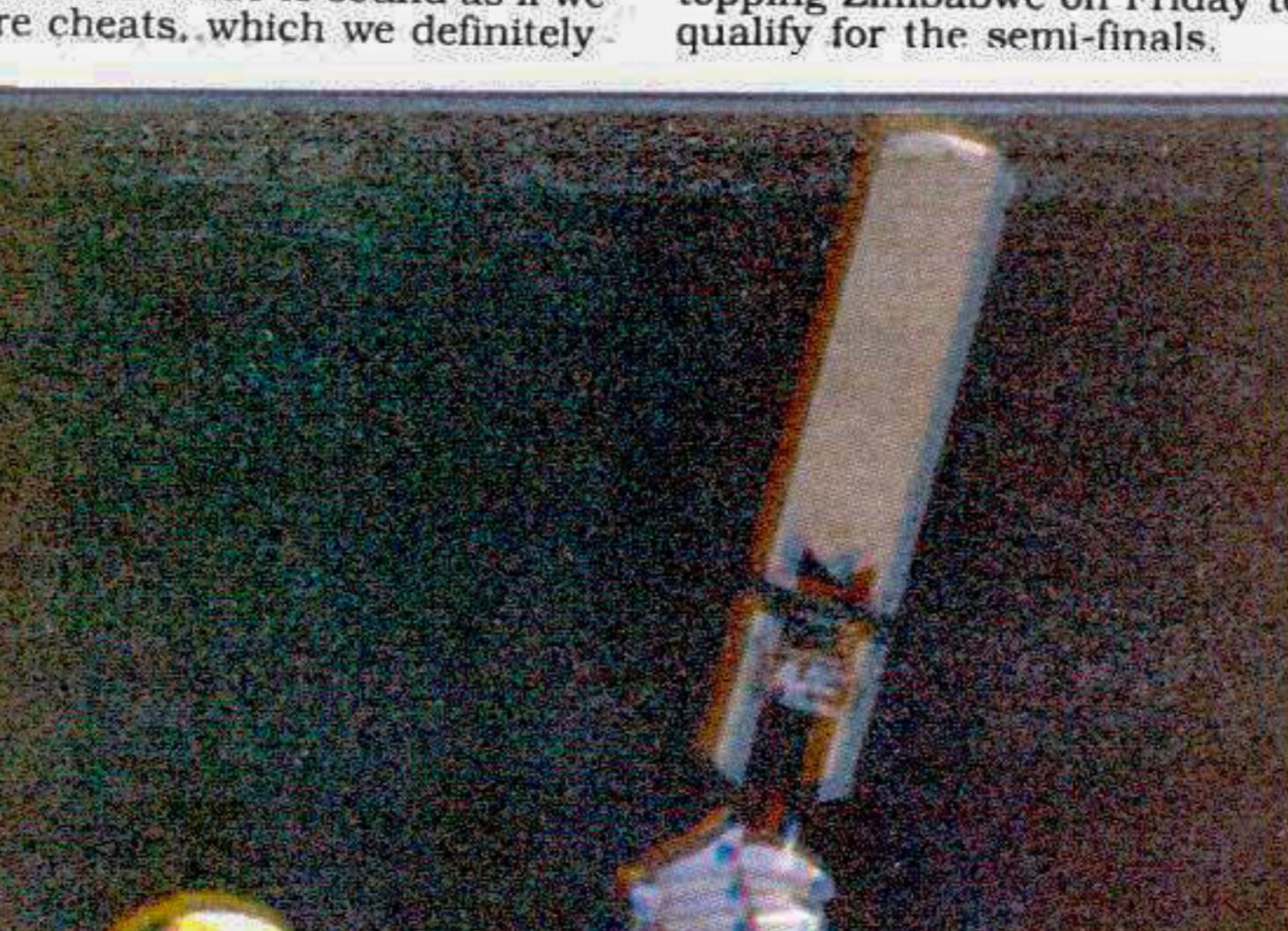
South Africa and Australia have both asked for the ball to be changed late in the innings to prevent Wasim Akram and his fellow seam bowlers from getting the reverse swing they are famous for.

The excuse is that the dirty ball can't be sighted," the source said. "I believe Shoaib Akhtar is being watched very closely."

The allegations come amidst a dramatic change in fortunes for the Pakistanis, who have lost their last three matches after winning the first four.

They were stunned by minnows Bangladesh in the last match of the first round and then lost to South Africa and India in the Super Six second round.

They must now beat table-topping Zimbabwe on Friday to qualify for the semi-finals.



Fans are foes

MANCHESTER, June 9: The rivalry between India and Pakistan may be fierce on the cricket ground. But the players from the two teams are good friends outside the stadium, former Indian captain Dilip Vengsarkar said Tuesday, reports AP.

Vengsarkar, who played 22 Tests and 25 one-day internationals against Pakistan, said the high expectations from the people turn their matches into "mental games where you have to nerves of steel."

"But you meet them outside socially, for a drink or something, and they are absolutely nice and friendly," he told The Associated Press while watching India's Super Six World Cup confrontation with Pakistan here.

Indians and Pakistanis share a love-hate relationship, like two estranged branches of a divided family. Since colonial British India was partitioned into a Muslim Pakistan and predominantly Hindu India, the two peoples have lost touch with each other, fed largely with unflattering government propaganda.

"So when you meet Pakista-

nis one-to-one, you want to know about each other. There is so much curiosity," said Vengsarkar who played for India between 1976 and 1992, scoring 1,284 test runs. He was captain from 1987 to 1989.

Former Pakistan captain Imran Khan also said the players of the two teams get along well.

"Cricketers are too single-minded to think about the political situation. They will be wrapped up in what they are doing, but the pressure ... by supporters and press is immense," he said.

Vengsarkar said he personally had many friends among Pakistani cricketers and found most of them "very nice and friendly." When he toured Pakistan, he would be invited for dinner at home by Pakistani players, he said. He would do the same when Pakistan toured India, he said.

"We would talk about everything. Mostly cricket, but other things also. Sometimes politics but not much," he said, adding that it is also easier to relate to Pakistanis because they speak virtually the same language —

See page 14

Outrage across Pakistan

KARACHI, June 9: Pakistan cricket fans expressed anger and dismay Wednesday over their team's "shameful" defeat by arch rival India in the World Cup, which came as military forces from the countries were locked in fierce artillery clashes in the disputed region of Kashmir, reports AFP.

Wasim Akram's team was bowled out for 180 runs and India inflicted a 47-run defeat in a key contest in the second round match in England Tuesday. The defeat was Pakistan's third consecutive loss at the hands of Indians during last three World Cups.

"Unbelievable. They are making fool out of us, there has to be a probe for their defeat," supporter Ahsan Chaudhary said.

Fans and families were glued to televisions in Pakistan, while huge screens were installed at luxury hotels and roadside cafes to show the match.

But as last man Wasim fell to Anil Kumble they started cursing the team, witnesses said.

"It is shameful," said an elderly man at a roadside restaurant as some viewers held their heads in disbelief.

Pakistan defeated Australia, the West Indies, Scotland and New Zealand before losing to Bangladesh in the group matches. In the Super Six, Pakistan lost to South Africa and India.

The match against South Africa was close and it could be anybody's game," said fan

Abdur Rasheed.

"But this match! How can they do it to us?"

"Now I am not going to watch the World Cup until they reach the finals. It seems a ghost of defeat is shadowing them."

Cricket fans in the sub-continent follow the game fanatically, with clashes between longstanding enemies and neighbours India and Pakistan taken particularly seriously.

"Wasim should throw out all these batsmen who are there for nothing. For me the World Cup was the match against India, and it is over now," fan Abdul Qudoos said of the defeat, as his teenage daughter Maria, with tears in her eyes, postponed celebrations for the "expected" victory.

Many fans said Pakistan's defeat was a case of "bad timing," referring to the recent military tensions between the two countries over Kashmir.

"It is better to support Kashmiri mujahideen who are giving a tough time to Indians rather than cricket players who brought shame to the country," another supporter said.

"Every time there is a bad news from the cricket field, and not from the battlefield."

But some still had hope for the national side.

"It is disappointing but not yet over now as Pakistan just have to face Zimbabwe before

See page 14



Adam Gilchrist, the Australian opener letting go a shortish delivery yesterday. —AFP photo