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Anguish in India

NEW DELHI, June 12 (Reuters): Dejected fans today lashed out at cricket captain Mohammad Azharuddin and his team after Pakistan's crushing defeat of Zimbabwe brought down the curtain on India's World Cup hopes, reports Reuters.

"The team deserved this. How could you deserve to be in the semifinals when you can't even beat a team like Zimbabwe," said Abhishek Kumar, an avid cricket fan.

India would still have had

an outside chance of finishing among the top four in the Super Six if Pakistan had lost to Zimbabwe on Friday.

Indian fans said they could accept losing to strong teams such as South Africa or Australia but a loss against Zimbabwe was difficult to stomach.

Zimbabwe spoiled India's start in the World Cup campaign with a three-run defeat. "All they needed was three runs and they lost from there," said a fan.

Newspapers said India's failure to make the semifinals meant the end of Azharuddin's captaincy.

TOP RUN-GETTERS

Rahul Dravid (India)	432
Nail Johnson (Zimbabwe)	367
Saurav Ganguly (India)	350
Mark Waugh (Australia)	333
Jacques Kallis (South Africa)	259
Saeed Anwar (Pakistan)	240
Inzamam-ul-Haq (Pakistan)	239
Sachin Tendulkar (India)	237
Moin Khan (Pakistan)	236
Ricky Ponting (Australia)	224
Steve Waugh (Australia)	222
Gavin Hamilton (Scotland)	217
Lance Klusener (South Africa)	214
Roger Twose (New Zealand)	212

TOP WICKET TAKERS

Geoff Allott (New Zealand)	19
Lance Klusener (South Africa)	16
Saqlain Mushtaq (Pakistan)	16
Glenn McGrath (Australia)	14
Shoaib Akhtar (Pakistan)	13
Azhar Mahmood (Pakistan)	13
Allan Donald (South Africa)	12
Wasim Akram (Pakistan)	12
Neil Johnson (Zimbabwe)	12
Darren Gough (England)	11
Courtney Walsh (West Indies)	11
Javagal Srinath (India)	11
Heath Streak (Zimbabwe)	11
Abdul Razzaq (Pakistan)	11

Mohammad Azharuddin, having played in four World Cup tournaments, and led in three, will go out and toss tomorrow (Saturday) for the last time in a World Cup, aware that the prayers of millions of people back home were not strong enough for India to take to the semifinals," said the Hindustan Times.

"They play New Zealand today in a game in which the result is of little consequence to India part from pride but a win could mean a ticket to the semis for the Kiwis.

"Heads may now roll in soccer style, thanks to the hype the event received and the wave of resentment over India failing to get past the Super Six," the Times of India wrote.

"The first casualty has to be the leader and Mohammad Azharuddin will face the wrath of public criticism."

The Indian Express, taking off on a popular slogan on Indian buses, said: "It doesn't matter anymore. The light has gone out of India's World Cup hopes. Ok Ta Ta Bye Bye."

Reader's view

M Afsar

Shorn, worn, shamed and warned, Shane Warne may prematurely decide not to play the next World Cup. Before the Australia-India game they said Sachin would do this and Shane Warne would do that. After that match, both wanted to forget it. Shane had wanted to do something, some said, because he remembered Sachin Tendulkar's hospitality and personal attention the last time Shane came calling. Didn't happen that way because Sachin was *hors d'oeuvre* to McGrath and in one over Shane Warne had done enough for his captain to send him to sick bay. "No more work for you boy. Later perhaps..."

gave his team the best mathematical calculation: "We have to win the next two matches. This is fixed! After that you can lose a few..."

"The next two? Only two? No more?"

"No, just the two."

"Okay!"

This they could understand. But the Pakistanis shouldn't drop Ijaz for a half-fit Youhana. There's no need to do a Ronaldo. A hundred per cent fit Youhana for the final is a much better bet. Also, Ijaz is too good a player (and I don't agree he's not) to be wasted at No.3 or 4. After Saeed, Wasti, Razzaq, they should send in Inzi and Ijaz can come after him with Afridi, Moin, Wasim and Azhar (in that order) to follow.

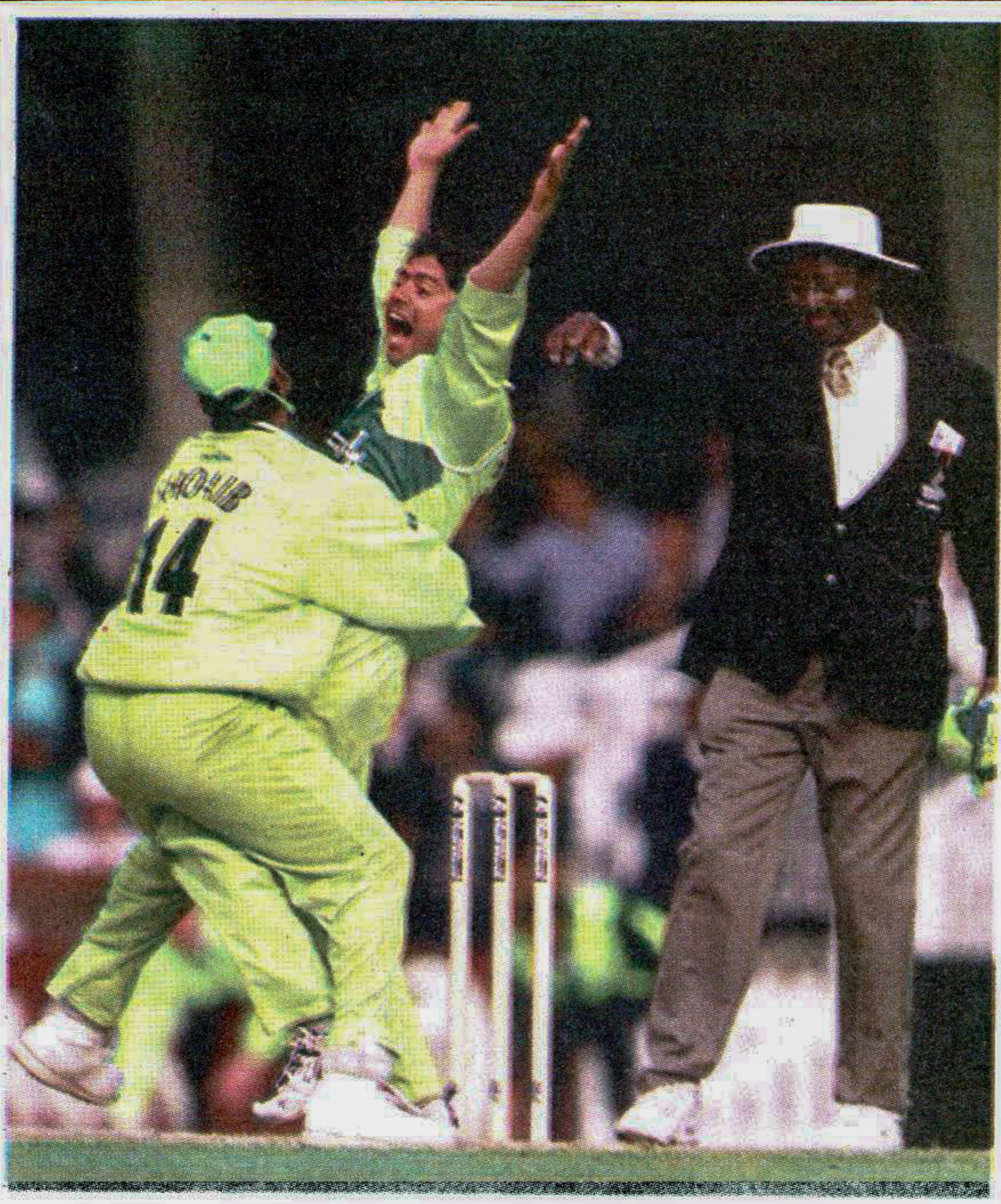
At the beginning of the tournament, Pakistan showed us how to win in an impossible manner. In its last three games they showed us how to lose in an impossible manner. Which team is a masochist's delight? Which team brings the most anguish to its supporters as well as its detractors? Which achieves unheard-of results? Which gives nightmares to the bookies. For instance, a dubious rumour is that they lost to India because it was becoming so monotonous. Why not create real trouble for them indirectly? That's what they ended up doing in the end. But they say there is a pattern, a Pakistani logic to it if you like. Bangladesh won but didn't go anywhere. India won against them but where are they? So it looks like the South Africans were embarrassed in the semis. Remember Wasim had promised that after a good workout in the practice matches (with Bangladesh, South Africa and India) they'd play good, serious cricket. And he

Finally, one of my favourite batsman, Saeed (The Talwar) Anwar came good. But then, almost everyone came well. In two matches Wasim didn't pick up any wicket but he troubled them like hell. Flashing and missing, flashing and missing.

And India? There's a dastardly rumour doing the rounds that there had been in fact a practical plan to offset (or upset) Glenn McGrath. Sachin or Azhar or Kumble was supposed to serenade him in the morning of the game and words were "Lamba hai tu, khubsurat hai tu" to the tune of "Chanda hai tu, mera Suraj hai tu." However, owing to some misunderstanding it was Ajay Jadeja who was sent to deliver the goods and he ended up singing "Tu Lambu hai-ray" to the tune of "Tu Chalu hai-ray." McGrath apparently asked a Pakistani to translate and the rest was hysteria. But it could be a chapa.



Pakistan skipper Wasim Akram and fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar celebrating the dismissal of Zimbabwe captain Alistair Campbell on June 11. —AFP photo



SAQLAIN STUNNER: Magical Pakistani off-spinner Saqlain Mushtaq is over the moon after umpire Steve Bucknor adjudges Zimbabwe's Mpuemelelo Mbangwa lbw thus giving Saqlain his hat-trick. —AFP photo

Of the superb Saqi

LONDON, June 12 (Reuters/ AFP): Saqlain Mushtaq showed that "The Oval is one of his happiest hunting grounds as he did the hat-trick to crown Pakistan's World Cup Super Six victory over Zimbabwe on Friday.

Acknowledged as the world's best off-spinner, Saqlain has honed his skills at Surrey's headquarters while playing for the county as their overseas signing during the past two seasons.

No one in the Pakistan squad knows The Oval pitches better than Saqlain. He wrapped up Zimbabwe's innings for 123, to secure a 148-run victory, by snapping up their last three wickets in three balls.

Saqlain had Henry Olonga stumped by Moin Khan for five, removed Adam Huckle with another Moin stumping and then had Mpuemelelo Mbangwa lbw, becoming only the second bowler to do the hat-trick in the 24-year history of the World Cup.

All three of his victims fell to "sliders" — a disguised ball which Saqlain drifts from leg to off. Those wickets gave him match figures of three for 16 off 6.3 overs.

India's Chetan Sharma also performed the feat, against New Zealand at Nagpur in the 1987 tournament.

Saqlain, who regards The Oval as his second home said: "I am delighted to take a hat-trick in the World Cup."

"It is great for me, my supporters and Pakistan."

Pakistan skipper Wasim

FACTFILE

Saqlain Mushtaq
 Born: 27 November 1976, Lahore.
 Major teams: Pakistan, Surrey, Pakistan International Airlines, Islamabad.
 Known as: Saqlain Mushtaq.
 Pronounced: Saqlain Mushtaq.
 Bowling style: Right-hand bat.
 Bowling style: Right arm off-break.
 Test debut: Pakistan v Sri Lanka at Peshawar, 1st Test, 1995/96.
 Latest Test: Pakistan v Sri Lanka at Dhaka, Asia-Test, 1998/99.
 ODI debut: Pakistan v Sri Lanka at Gujranwala, 1st ODI, 1995/96.
 Latest ODI: Pakistan v Zimbabwe at The Oval, World Cup 1999.

STATISTICAL RECORD										
TESTS (including 12/03/1999)										
Batting	M	I	NO	Runs	HS	Ave	100	50	Ct	St
	22	34	7	372	79	13.77	-	2	8	-
Bowling	O	M	R	W	Ave	Best	5	10	SR	Econ
	1064.5	257	2867	97	29.55	5-32	8	2	65.8	2.69
ONE-DAY INTERNATIONALS (including 11-06-1999)										
Batting	M	I	NO	Runs	HS	Ave	SR	100	50	Ct
	106	62	23	509	30*	13.05	-	-	-	30
Bowling	O	M	R	W	Ave	Best	4w	5w	SR	Econ
	927.4	46	3955	203	19.48	5-29	9	5	27.4	4.26

Wasim's winning recipe

LONDON, June 12: Pakistan captain Wasim Akram is confident he has found the winning combination to complete a World Cup triumph at Lord's on June 20, reports Reuters.

Wasim's team are just two matches away from lifting the trophy after reaching the semifinals with a crushing 148-run victory over Zimbabwe in their last Super Six match at The Oval on Friday.

"I want to stick with the same combination for the semifinals, and with the way we are playing I'm not bothered who our opponents are," Wasim said.

Asked if Pakistan could go all the way and win the Cup, he said: "Absolutely, we are in the

semis, one game away from the big day. The boys are full of confidence, they can rise to the occasion and they can beat any side."

Pakistan's 271 for nine against Zimbabwe was their second highest total of the tournament which they achieved despite losing six wickets for 48 runs between the 36th and 45th overs, a situation which Wasim says they must guard against.

Shrewd Shane

LONDON, June 12: Australian leg-spinner Shane Warne has suggested playing a best-of-three-games World Cup final in order to find the top side of the tournament, reports Reuters.

"Even the greatest side can have an off-day," Warne wrote in the Times.

"A three-match series, played on different grounds in varying conditions, gives us all a more even chance to perform."

The World Series Cup played annually in Australia stages the final over three matches.

"There is also a way of making one-day cricket in general more attractive," Warne added.

"At the moment, two fielders are allowed outside the circle in the first 15 overs."

"My idea is for the batting side to be able to call another period of five overs when the same restrictions apply."

"The skipper of the batting side can 'play the joker' at any stage of the innings — may be by sounding a siren around the ground to add a touch of drama."

India was because they had more of a problem mentally than anything else, but it kept him under pressure from sources at home.

"I have been getting calls from all over Pakistan, saying do this or do that, why are you playing this player or why are you not playing him, and I have to answer every one," Wasim said.

Asked if the calls were from members of the public, Pakistan's skipper replied, with a telling insight into the role of the national cricket captain: "No, the higher authorities."

Pakistanis not stirred

KARACHI, June 12 (Reuters): Pakistan fans were pleased their team had joined co-favourites South Africa in the World Cup semifinals but some fans could not forget an earlier defeat by arch-rivals India.

"What's there to cheer about?" said auto mechanic Naubat Khan. "We lost the crunch match against India (at Old Trafford) and that's where my interest in the World Cup ended."

Even if we win the Cup, the defeat to India will remain a black mark," he said as tensions between the South Asian neighbours remained high because of their dispute over Kashmir.

Ironically, Pakistan's 148-run victory over Zimbabwe at The Oval on Friday ended India's faint hopes of reaching the knockout stage.

match sitting in their armchairs while we will be duly involved as Pakistan would be playing that match.

"We lost three matches on the trot and now win three in a row to regain the title."

Pakistan's defeat by India led to effigies of captain Wasim Akram being burnt and the port city of Karachi came to a complete standstill on Tuesday.

But the victory against Zimbabwe was taken quietly.

"It was never expected to be a contest. Pakistan has a tradition of performing in crunch and pressure situations and I knew they would be a different team which they proved in the end," said Aftab Chaudhry, a newspaper seller.

Former Test stalwarts remained cautious ahead of the semifinals.

"So far, it is the bowling which has won matches for Pakistan. But with knockout matches left, what will happen if it (bowling) fails to deliver? The batsmen need some good scores on the board," said former off-spinner Tauseef Ahmad.

Former manager Haroon Rashid said that things were getting better for Pakistan. "The

wickets are getting flatter and the seam movement is ending. I am sure Pakistan batsmen would now feel more at ease and Saeed Anwar scored a century against Zimbabwe."

Former paceman Jalaluddin said the team needed consistency.

"Past performances (in the World Cup) are history and what is now required is responsible batting and accurate bowling. If Pakistan can't do that, they shouldn't regret losing the Cup."

A judicial commission in Pakistan is investigating charges of match-fixing by players, an affair that has been hanging over the team for several months.

Alli Sibtain Fazli, lawyer of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said performances at the Cup would have no bearing on the findings of the commission.

"It is a wrong impression that the findings of the investigations depend on World Cup results. In fact, everything depends on whatever evidence is gathered," he said.

The findings of the commission have been delayed until after the end of the tournament.

Fortune favours Anwar

LONDON, June 12 (AFP): Saeed Anwar admitted that Lady Luck had smiled on him here on Friday — then wondered what had taken her so long.

The Pakistani opener was given two lives on his way to his first World Cup century against Zimbabwe, after being dropped first on 20, then on 85.

On 28 he edged a half-chance over cover but the fielder failed to get a hand on the looping ball.

down a regulation chance at slip off Mpuemelelo Mbangwa. It was an expensive miss, bringing back painful memories of the defeat against Australia at Lord's on Wednesday.

Then, Grant Flower had got one hand on a full-blooded cut from Mark Waugh at point but had failed to hold on.

Waugh was on seven at the time and went on to make 104 as Australia won by 44 runs.

Flower's miss cost Zimbabwe 97 runs, while Campbell's much easier chance cost 83.

As for Anwar, his innings was a major change in fortune.

Before his 103, he had made 137 runs in seven innings with a highest score of 36, a poor return for the holder of the one-day record score of 194.

The 30-year-old from Karachi is one of only two players to hit three successive one-day hundreds, and only the third Pakistan player to cross the 6,000-run mark in limited-overs.

Wasim Akram says: "For me, he is the best opener in the world." But a little luck always helps.

SAEED ANWAR

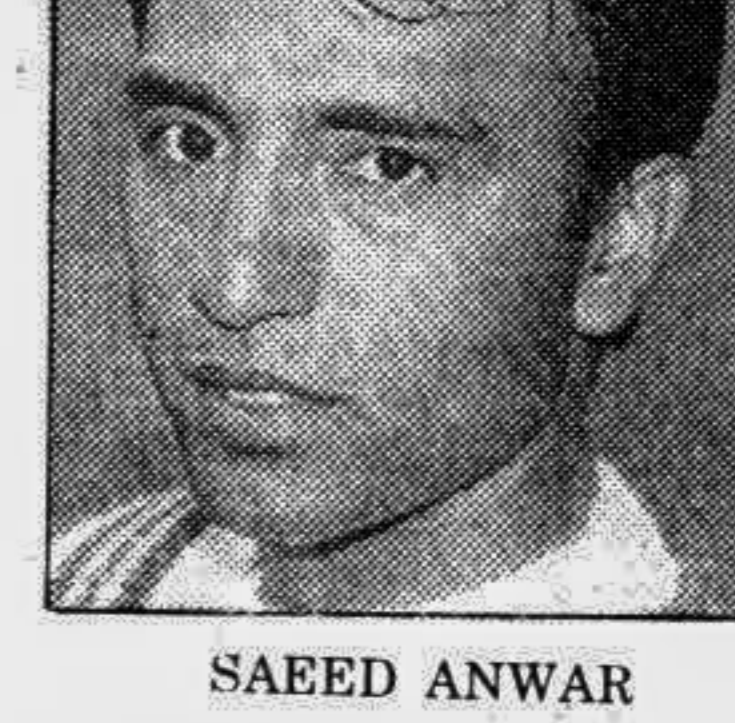
"Today I was lucky and it was the luck I needed," Anwar said.

"I have been playing well but been getting out. The wickets have been too bowler-friendly."

"The first chance I gave was not difficult but it was my day. Nobody could do anything about it."

"I thought I would come good when it mattered and it mattered."

Zimbabwe skipper Alistair Campbell was the man who spilled Anwar first. He put



gained for bringing down the feathered variety.

English support for India

LONDON, June 12 (India Abroad News Service): Teams must beware of drawing support from an unexpected source during the World Cup. The English chose to cheer the Indians on against Australia because they did not get the showdown against their old rivals that they would have fancied in the Super Six. Many of the hosts chose to support India and look what happened.

PACKER'S LOVE SEATS
 Remember Kerry Packer, the media magnate who split cricket with his Circus in the late '70s? What is he up to these days you may be wondering, apart from making money in all his ventures including Channel Nine, still the standard bearer when it comes to telecasting cricket.

olutions in anything, from cricket to cinema. Young moviegoers are however warned that they are being watched by closed-circuit television.

"Mate, I have just had three months in India. This is bloody crazy," was what one Aussie said of the cheers India were drawing at The Oval, to no avail of course. The English people then began to back the South Africans against the Aussies who could possibly be the tournament favourite's biggest threat yet.

HIGH EXPECTATIONS
 This delightful tale came out at the start of the World Cup. The England off-spinner and one-day all rounder Robert Croft and his wife Marle are expecting a baby on June 20, a significant day in cricket history. Ahead of the World Cup. See page 14

English support for India

"Anyone but England" is a book made famous by England's continuing failures. The host country's choice of teams to support has been somewhat sensational, but they did not pick one or the other as the Aussies clashed at Old Trafford. They may have feared retribution from the other group. The British were perfectly bipartisan on the memorable day.

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CRICKET'S NOT THE GAME FOR PIGEONS

The Royal Society of Birds must be up in arms against the cricket World Cup. How can you play such a cruel game in which two pigeons were brought down on the same afternoon? And they say cricket is a genteel game!

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The first culprit, to be booked for cruelty to birds, was Paul Reiffel, whose nickname 'Pistol' is somewhat appropriate in the killing sense. His throw from the deep went straight into a pigeon and down it came in a flutter of wings, feathers and blood.

Poor Reiffel, the most gentle of men despite being a fast bowler, was distraught. He carried the bird with loving care to the boundary rope only for it to be pronounced dead on arrival. It was his colleague Glenn McGrath who had reshaped a famous old quote about blood and gore when he declared how he hated batsmen and how 'cricket is a game played with a hard ball'.

English support for India

English support for India

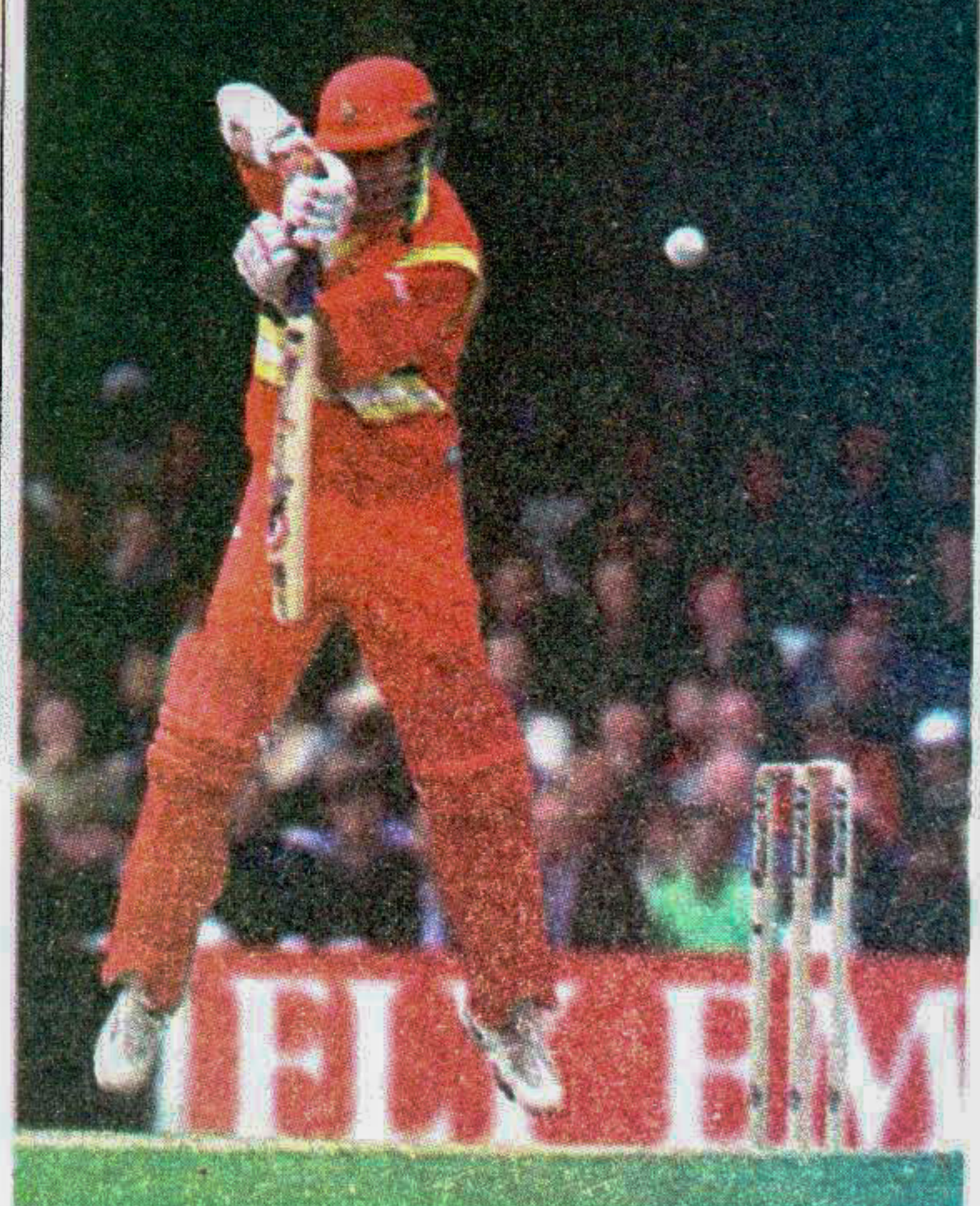
As if one killing in a day was not enough came the drive by Ajay Jadeja that brought another innocent pigeon down.

"The poor guy was himself so distraught he did not take the single that would have taken him to his century. He was on 99 for a while longer than the Aussie keeper Adam Gilchrist carried the ex-bird off."

Jadeja is somewhat famous for his hit rate with birds. But even he would not have bar-

English support for India

English support for India



THAT WAS QUICK: An express Shoaib Akhtar delivery whizzes past Zimbabwe all-rounder Neil Johnson during their Super Six encounter at The Oval on June 11. —AFP photo