

## Inside four camps

From Nizamuddin Ahmed

MANCHESTER, June 14: Pakistan are happy but not complacent, and New Zealand think they are in with a chance as the two teams prepare for Wednesday's semi-final clash at Old Trafford.

Away at Birmingham, news is that Australia are bubbling with confidence and South Africa realise the cost of Jacques Kallis's absence. The mercurial all-rounder, who missed out on Sunday's Super Six defeat to Australia, will return when the two teams meet back-to-back to feature in Thursday's semi-final at Edgbaston.

Super Six toppers Pakistan are not so fortunate with Yousuf Youhana, who was nursing a hamstring injury. They will risk the semi-final without the star batsman but said coach Mushtaq Mohammad, "We may have to play Yousuf if we reach the final."

Admitting that their match was "an easier game than the other one", Mushtaq revealed that Youhana may have played if their semi-final opponents were either Australia or South Africa.

Pakistan beat New Zealand easily in a group match by 62 runs at Derby and their supporters can only pray that complacency does not ruin the chances of Asia's lone ambassadors.

Pakistan must be haunted by their Super Six defeat to out-of-form India on this very ground at Old Trafford last Tuesday as

they contrive of a plan to do away with New Zealand, easily the weakest of the four semi-finalists.

But, the relative strengths are on paper, and cricket is known for its notoriety in ignoring the book.

Speaking about his team's chances, New Zealand coach Steve Rixon reminded Pakistan that they were in the semi-finals after beating India in an endmost situation. That victory at Trent Bridge last Saturday appeared more important now as they finished above Zimbabwe only on a run-rate difference.

Rixon acknowledged that the semi-final berth was a long time hope for a team that has improved over the years. Citing victory over India as a "big boost", the NZ coach said, "And we can beat anyone on our day."

The team was tipped to reach the semi-finals before the World Cup and, according to Rixon, they have overcome criticism to be where they were today.

With no respect to Zimbabwe, there seems to be some poetic justice in their departure from the tournament as they were about to qualify for the semi-final without winning a single match in the Super Six. To their credit, however, they had beaten South Africa and India in the group stage. This is why there is already much discussion at every ground on how to improve the 1999 format.

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## Pakistan fairly pleased

LONDON, June 14: Pakistan reclaimed the tag of cricket World Cup favourites on Monday as they looked forward to their dream semi-final against New Zealand.

Hansie Cronje's South Africans, in contrast, toppled as tournament top dogs after losing a thriller to Australia, were left licking their wounds, knowing they had missed the perfect chance to take a stranglehold of the competition.

Pakistan, who take on the Kiwis in the first semi-final on Wednesday at Old Trafford, were being quoted by British bookmakers at 13-8 to take the title.

Australia and South Africa, who play again in the second semi on Thursday at Edgbaston, were at 11-5 and New Zealand 15-2.

Pakistan coach Mushtaq Mohammad admitted on Monday: "I don't want to sound complacent, but it is obvious to everyone we have an easier game than the other one."

Pakistan, the most colourful yet unpredictable side in the tournament, have already thrashed New Zealand by 62 runs in the first round. Kiwi captain Stephen Fleming admitted then that his side had been outplayed.

Pakistan skipper Wasim Akram will have the added incentive of playing in front of his Lancashire fans at Old Trafford. Last season he helped the English county to three titles.

South Africa, meanwhile, were regrouping on Monday.

Had they won at the weekend against Australia, they would not only have knocked them out of the Cup but also earned themselves a semi-final tie against lowly Zimbabwe.

Cronje conceded that Australia had gained a psychological advantage after winning by five wickets with two balls to spare on Sunday.

"It normally works like that - you win a match and you go into Thursday's game with your

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COMETH THE HOUR COMETH THE WAUGH! Australian skipper Steve Waugh executing a trademark square drive during his match-winning ton against South Africa. — AFP photo



AUSSIES REVEL: Jubilant Australian fans enjoying themselves at Headingley on June 13. — AFP photo

### BITS & PIECES

LONDON, June 14 (Reuters/Internet): Lance Klusener's heavyweight bat and cavalier approach have combined to make him the World Cup's leading six hitter after the first two rounds.

Klusener, whose ferocious late order hitting has been a vital ingredient of South Africa's smooth passage into the semi-finals, has cleared the boundary nine times.

He leads by one from India's Saurav Ganguly, the tournament's top scorer who hit seven of his sixes in his exhilarating innings of 183 against defending champions Sri Lanka.

**6s CLUB**  
Lance Klusener (South Africa) 9  
Saurav Ganguly (India) 8  
Moin Khan (Pakistan) 6  
Wasim Akram (Pakistan) 5  
Steve Waugh (Australia) 5  
Chris Cairns (New Zealand) 5

### GOLDEN DUCK SKIPPERS

LONDON, June 14 (Reuters/Internet): Three captains were among the 20 players to suffer the embarrassment of a golden duck during the first two rounds of the World Cup.

England's Alec Stewart, Zimbabwe's Alistair Campbell and Aminul Islam of Bangladesh were out first ball, helping to swell the funds of a sporting charity. The National Westminster Bank is paying 100 pounds (160 dollars) for every World Cup duck to the Primary Club which works to provide sport and recreational opportunities for blind and partially sighted people.

Pakistan's Ijaz Ahmed holds the unwanted World Cup record of being the only player to have

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## World Waugh One

LEEDS, England, June 14: Steve Waugh has warned rivals to beware of the ever-improving Australian side after their dramatic five-wicket victory over South Africa Sunday to enter the World Cup semifinals, reports AP.

Waugh's unbeaten 120 lifted his team from a precarious position

first time — if South Africa had won the last Super Six match.

"We are two games away from what we came here to do," said Waugh. "I am not going to get too carried away yet."

Waugh and his South African counterpart Hansie Cronje both said Sunday's win had given Australia an edge go-

me on," he said.

The 34-year-old batsman, who went to the crease with Australia reeling at 48 for three, rated his innings "up there" among his best.

"Given the circumstances, I rate it higher than any other innings I've played."

"I knew I could play that sort of innings in one-day cricket... it's been a while coming. I suppose hundreds don't come that often when you bat at No. 5 and 6."

"It's something you work for all your career... that situation (where) you put yourself on the line and if you come out on top you're good enough."

Waugh's 110-ball knock of 120 not out included two sixes and 10 boundaries and upstaged

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### Youhana to miss semis

OLD TRAFFORD, England, June 14: Pakistan's in-form batsman Yousuf Youhana has been ruled out of the World Cup semi-final against New Zealand



on Wednesday with a hamstring injury, reports AFP.

The 24-year-old, who has averaged 53.66 in four matches, batted in the nets today but coach Mushtaq Mohammad said he was unlikely to be

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## British media view

LONDON, June 14: Steve Waugh's match-winning century and Herschelle Gibbs' match-losing blunder during Australia's momentous cricket World Cup victory over South Africa shared the headlines here on Monday, reports AFP.

Most British newspapers focussed equally on Waugh's 120 not out and Gibbs' missed catch at Headingley on Sunday.

"Second coming for hero Waugh," said the Mirror, while the Sun's headlines read: "Tonzard Waugh a drop of brilliance."

Gibbs, who earlier made a century himself, put down an absolute sitter off Waugh at short mid-wicket after the Australian had made 56.

He dropped the ball only because he tried to throw it up in the air too quickly in celebration.

Waugh took full advantage of the slip as Australia won by five wickets, with two balls to spare. Had Australia lost the game, they would not have made the last four.

The result, crucially, also meant that South Africa were condemned to playing the Australians again in the semi-finals on Thursday, rather than taking on the less daunting Zimbabweans.

The Guardian said: "If Australia go on to win the whole

damn shooting match on Sunday, then Herschelle Gibbs' dropped at Headingley will haunt him for the rest of his days... it will certainly keep him awake at nights until vengeance is possible."

"He obviously decided to consider the manner of the celebrations and self-acclaim that might ice the cake before he had actually pounced the leather."

The Daily Mail, under the headline "Aussies go through thanks to Waugh and a drop of brilliance", said of Waugh: "His superbly-judged, 110-ball innings... will go down as one of the great tours de force of this or any World Cup and the premature celebration of his would-be captor Herschelle Gibbs one of its great gaffes."

The Daily Telegraph, meanwhile, said Waugh played his innings "with such staggering conviction and to such effect that he may have even eclipsed any other of his own remarkable achievements."

"It was an innings that few cricketers could possibly have played. It may well now lead to Waugh's beloved country winning the World Cup."

It added: "Gibbs' memory from the match should have been his impressive hundred. Instead, it will forever be of this ghastly mistake."

## Waiting few riveting wars

LONDON, June 14 (Reuters/Internet): Few sequels can equal the original for excitement and drama.

Thursday's World Cup replay between Australia and South Africa may just prove an exception.

With a place in Sunday's final at stake, the pressure on both sides will be immense and each delivery will be significant.

Australia, needing to win on Sunday to avoid elimination from the tournament, came back from the dead to defeat South Africa in the final match of the second round.

Their reward was a semi-final place against the same opponents at Edgbaston on Thursday, the day after Pakistan meet New Zealand at Old Trafford.

Australia owed their victory to captain Steve Waugh whose steady resolve has been at the heart of the world's most successful test side for the past decade.

"We'll have a party tonight and then prepare for Thursday," Waugh said. "They are a really tough side to beat and the last game doesn't count for much."

A second defeat for the pre-Cup favourites might not matter much in the context of the present tournament but losing yet again to Australia in a big match will be galling for the South Africans.

They lost a test series and the World Series one-day finals to Australia last year and Waugh rubbed salt into their wounds by suggesting they were

"chokers".

Waugh brushed aside an invitation from an Australian journalist to repeat his claim after Australia's victory over Zimbabwe last week, saying instead how much he enjoyed playing against South Africa.

His enjoyment will not have lessened after his unbeaten 120 on Sunday which took Australia from the brink of defeat to victory with two balls to spare.

Shane Warne also had plenty to celebrate, capitalising on South Africa's uncertainty against spin to take two for 33 from 10 overs after conceding 104 from 15.2 in his previous two matches.

South Africa, who desperately want to win both the cricket and rugby World Cup this year, will be strengthened by the return of Jacques Kallis who missed Sunday's game through injury.

"Australia played pretty well but I hope we can better our game by 10 per cent," said captain Hansie Cronje. "Jacques is a fine cricketer and we missed him because Australia looked to get hold of the fifth bowler."

The winners of Thursday's game are expected to play Pakistan in Sunday's final, although New Zealand are more than happy with their position as underdogs.

"We are quite happy to achieve quietly in the background," said captain Stephen Fleming. "We set our own stepping stones but nobody expected too much from us so there has

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## They have it all to do again

LONDON, June 14 (Reuters/Internet): South Africa and Australia will have it all to do again at Edgbaston on Thursday when they meet each other in a World Cup semi-final repeat of Sunday's compelling Super Six match at Headingley.

Pakistan play New Zealand in the other semi-final at Old Trafford on Wednesday.

Australia had to beat the South Africans in the final game of the Super Sixes at Leeds to qualify for the final four. They did so in the best match of the tournament so far by recovering from 48 for three to reach a target of 272 on the strength of a magnificent 120 not out by their captain Steve Waugh.

That result edged out Zimbabwe, who finished fifth in the second stage standings, with India last.

Australia, who won all three of their Super Six fixtures, are playing with mounting confidence and conviction after an indifferent start to the compe-

tion. With leg-spinner Shane Warne producing one of his best performances against South Africa, Waugh's team will face their semi-final clash in buoyant mood.

South Africa, who will hope to have injured all-rounder Jacques Kallis back for the Edgbaston tie, now have a psychological hurdle to overcome as well as an Australian side who are reaching a peak at just the right time.

The Old Trafford semi-final offers the prospect of a fascinating tussle between Pakistan's team off all the talents, who have made a timely return to form after three successive defeats, and a quietly effective New Zealand side.

New Zealand, with the leading wicket-taker of the tournament in left-arm paceman Geoff Allott and a cool and resourceful middle-order batsman in Roger Twose, have reached their fourth semi-final in seven World Cups.

### CENTURY-MAKERS

Runs	Batsman	Country	Against	Date
140*	S Tendulkar	India	Kenya	May 23
104*	R Dravid	India	Kenya	May 23
183	S Ganguly	India	Sri Lanka	May 26
145	R Dravid	India	Sri Lanka	May 26
100	A Jadeja	India	Zimbabwe	June 4
104	M Waugh	Australia	Zimbabwe	June 9
132*	N Johnson	Zimbabwe	Australia	June 9
103	S Anwar	Pakistan	Zimbabwe	June 11
101	H Gibbs	South Africa	Australia	June 13
120*	S Waugh	Australia	South Africa	June 13

(\* denotes not out)

(Compiled by Hasan Masood)



STUNNING: Shane Warne taking a wonderful diving catch in the outfield. — AFP photo