

Bangladesh may get direct

From page 13
The annual general meeting of the ICC associate members and election of three members from the group to ICC executive board will be held on June 22.

Proteas receive

From page 13
my future with (United Cricket Board managing director) Dr Ali Bacher when all the dust has settled."

Despite the welcome, the team were clearly still suffering from the effects of the tied semi-final when it could not have ended with them playing Pakistan in Sunday's final.

"It's been a hard three days," opening batsman Herschelle Gibbs said. "I think we're still battling to come to terms with it. That's what's going to be the biggest challenge now."

The South Africans were favourites going into the tournament and won their opening group. But they then lost twice to Australia in succession, the second time off a run out in the final over of the semi-final.

Despite promises by harassed airport officials, the team did not leave the building through the departure hall but slipped out of a side entrance.

When it was announced that the team had already left, many young children were left in tears after not seeing their heroes.

MCC contented

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the way the tickets had been allocated.

"We're obviously disappointed more ordinary fans of both teams who are in the final could not attend the match, but unfortunately we are constrained by the capacity of the ground," said the ECB statement.

Highlights of six finals

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He top-scored with 72 then watched as Wasim Akram, the present captain, ripped through the England middle-order.

1996 - Sri Lanka beat Australia by seven wickets.

Sri Lanka had set the pace during tournament through the pyrotechnics of opener Sanath Jayasuriya.

He failed in the final but Aravinda de Silva (107) and captain Arjuna Ranatunga (47) ensured Sri Lanka easily overhauled Australia's 241.

Retirement not

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the reason why three batsmen were out during the test over.

"With four runs needed off seven balls there's no need for a message, it's just common sense," Azharuddin said.

Gaekwad writing in the same issue of the magazine said that no such instructions were sent.

"I wish Sunil had checked with me before demanding an inquiry. Even if such instructions were given, how many of our last four batsmen, except Javagal Srinath, were dismissed hitting across the line?" Gaekwad asked.

Azharuddin again emphasised that he had his own style of captaining the team and he did not believe in sending out messages when players could judge by themselves. He said that even in the match against South Africa he did not think it was necessary to send out a message to accelerate when the score was 190 for one.

"When you look at the scoreboard you should be able to judge and decide for yourself," Azharuddin said.

The stylish middle-order batsman who has been struggling with his batting form also said that his team was not consistent even though they had big partnerships. Too much of cricket also reflected on the performance of the team according to him. "If you play 100 matches you can't win them all...I don't want to go against the board but the schedule is tough," Azharuddin said.

Life came to

From page 16
positions on the field.

Those who don't have a TV set of their own have arranged to either spend the day at a friend or relative's house or have saved up their wages for weeks to rent a set.

Around 30 million people are expected to watch the coverage, sources at the state-owned Pakistan Television estimated.

As television stations began broadcasting songs specially written for the match, petrol stations set up scoreboards for the benefit of passing motorists.

And if Pakistan does win, the country is likely to light up as reports say many people have quietly stockpiled fireworks.

"If they win, we will give them an historic welcome," said fan Saad Khan, ruling out the chances of a defeat.

"The News daily published free 'good luck' messages for the cricket team. One message says, 'a team of flair, with wise players, wishes and prayers, will win the World Cup and make nation feel proud.'"

Tickets in high demand

From page 13
ery from the pavilion end to Saad Anwar. Some had come from as far as Glasgow and Southampton. Londoners without tickets were more sensible in staying home and watching on television. The match was being telecast LIVE on BBC and Sky Sports channels, the first time in the tournament that two channels in Britain were allowed simultaneous rights to the event.

There was brisk business in selling Pakistani flags and whistles, both legally importable into the ground. The Aussies, they came prepared with their brown kangaroos. Judging from the size of the meat being consumed, many were obviously having breakfast at the ground. On the menu were freshly made sandwiches, baguettes, burgers, and fish and chips.

Security was tightened for the final. Right from the bus and underground stations, the crowd was policed. Bags were

checked and till the writing of this report no fireworks were heard. Police on horseback were also called in to maintain peace, and there was no breach of it.

But then, unlike in all other World Cup matches featuring Pakistan, their fans were heavily outnumbered in this one by the 'casual neutrals' as one English journalist described himself and me. It was definitely a mixed crowd and a lack of consolidation of supporters of either finalist would have greatly relieved the organisers.

The final was without the lengthy rituals that constitute any such event in the subcontinent. And, this from a country that thrives on ceremonial traditions! The only 'rajanigandha' fragrance at the beginning of the final was the appearance of the Duke of Edinburgh Prince Phillip, a chief guest as our convention goes. Teams, officials and umpires were presented to the royalty, who exchanged a few words with some of the players. ICC chairman Jagmohan Dalmiya tagged behind.

The hand that the Duke shook, Umpire David Shepherd

raised it sometime later for the wrong reason. The burly umpire was again at the centre of conversation. This time for giving Inzaim-ul-Haq unbelievably out caught behind off a ball that slow-motion replay showed was nowhere near his bat.

Shepherd also blundered at Edgbaston last Thursday by giving South African captain Hansie Cronje out caught at slips when the ball had hit his toe.

But, as Pakistan's winning captain of 1992 Imran Khan explained, 'they do not have the benefit of television replays' and that umpires 'were human too'.

Steve Waugh's Australia began the final as slight favourites after their extraordinary tied match against South Africa in the semi-final. But Pakistan were more than capable of winning. Whoever goes shall be carrying home the crown jewels of cricket World Cup, all eleven kilos of it.

Two nations were waiting for the Cup. The rest of the world would applaud one for the feat and empathise with the other. Both Pakistan and Australia wanted to evade the latter.

Pre-match euphoria

LONDON, June 20 (Reuters/Internet): Hundreds of Pakistani fans swarmed around Lord's ahead of the World Cup final against Australia on Sunday, blowing whistles and setting off fireworks, but that was as near to the pitch as most of them would get.

A Sunday morning snooze was not an option for the residents of the expensive flats around the world's most famous cricket ground as the six-week tournament reached its climax.

Despite the occasional rain shower, Pakistani fans were intent on enjoying themselves, watched by police on horseback.

The atmosphere was boisterous but friendly. One elderly Englishman, sporting a grey moustache, blazer and striped tie, stood in astonishment taking in the scene.

If he was a member of the Marylebone Cricket Club, the famous institution based at Lord's, he would certainly have had a better chance of seeing the game than the fans who had followed Pakistan around Britain over the past six weeks.

Many of the fans did not have tickets for the sold-out game. One man arriving in a taxi was asked by two people if he had tickets to sell before he had even got out of the cab outside the 30,000-capacity ground.

One Pakistani fan stood at the media entrance reading the accreditation tags of the reporters entering the ground.

One journalist called Peter entered Lord's. Seconds later the fan shouted: "Oh, Peter, you remember me, don't you?"

Inside the ground there were no large groups of either set of supporters. Chanting and drum-beating, a feature of other games, were not to be heard.

Organisers have been widely criticised for not holding back tickets to sell after the semifinals to the fans of the winning teams. The game was sold out months ago.

The atmosphere was a model of British reserve. The entrance of the teams was greeted by polite applause.

About 100 Pakistan fans were perched on the roof of a block of flats just outside the ground, waving flags and trying to get a glimpse of the game.

World Cup chiefs had warned fans on Friday they would be thrown out of the final if they let off fireworks.

Exuberant Pakistani fans celebrated their team's defeat of New Zealand in Wednesday's semi-final at Old Trafford by lighting fireworks during and after the game.

The semi-final was held up just before the finish by a pitch invasion of Pakistani fans.

Rowdy fans

HONG KONG, June 20: Several Malaysian players were hurt today when they were attacked by at least 100 Nepalese fans who invaded the pitch in the dying seconds of an Olympic football qualifying game here, reports AFP.

The Malaysian goalkeeper was helped off the pitch clutching his ribs and grimacing in pain.

He was among several players punched and kicked by the invading fans after Nepal equalised in the last minute.

The cause of the incident was that a Nepalese fan picked up the ball after they scored and Malaysian players went after him and attacked him," said Hong Kong Football Association official Peter Leung.

Police helped the referee and some players off the pitch with some of the Malaysian footballers "running for their lives", an AFP photographer said.

Calm was eventually restored but the game was abandoned, leaving the Asian Football Confederation to rule on whether the 1-1 scoreline will stand as the final result or whether a replay is needed.

Bits & pieces

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The Pakistan skipper won the toss in previous four games — at Lahore, Peshawar and Karachi in 1998 and Melbourne in 1997 — but Australia won each of those games by six wickets five wickets, 86 runs and three wickets respectively.

Captains Wasim Akram and Steve Waugh have both said they'd like to win the toss and bat first on Sunday.

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SECURITY DOUBLED

LONDON, June 20: World Cup organisers are planning to double security for the Australia vs Pakistan final at Lord's on Sunday and have called in extra police in a bid to ensure the decider isn't ruined by over-enthusiastic fans swarming the pitch in the critical last overs, reports AP.

Australian captain Steve Waugh said the extra security was for the good of cricketers.

"I would not want to see (fans) running out there if there is one over left and everything to play for," he was quoted saying.

Rival skipper Wasim Akram said the Pakistani supporters have made his players feel at home with their vocal support but he hoped they wouldn't invade the field and wreck the game.

BEVAN THE BRADMAN!

LONDON, June 20 (AP): If the fleet footed Michael Bevan needed any praise, there is plenty coming from his skipper.

Steve Waugh says Bevan is to one day cricket what Sir Donald Bradman was to Test cricket.

"Blessed with a touch of genius, he has a head start on the other mere mortals who accompany him and oppose him on the field," Waugh wrote in a newspaper column.

Bevan will be revered by future generations in "much the same way" as Bradman is for "Test cricket," he wrote.

Those statements emphasise how vital Bevan is in Australia's one day team.

Bevan's talents with the bat and his speed were seen to the full in the remarkable semi-final victory over South Africa at Birmingham when he top scored with 65 and saved many a boundary which fielding at mid-wicket roped.

Faithful with the power and direction of his throw, the South Africans balked at taking a second or third run when Bevan was picking up the ball.

"If he wanted to, might well be contesting the 100 meters final at the Sydney Olympics next year, such is his phenomenal speed," Waugh wrote.

The left-handed Bevan, 29, once of Yorkshire and set to re-join Sussex next season on a three-year contract, came into the World Cup.

Cup with a lofty one-day average of 62.19, double that of Waugh and around 23 runs better than the next highest Australian, Ricky Ponting.

He currently sits on top of the PriceWaterhouseCoopers ratings of one-day international players, with 36 more points than South Africa's Lance Klusener and 75 superior to Indian master Sachin Tendulkar, placed third in the elite list.

MCGRATH TO REPLACE MOODY

WORCESTER, June 20: Australian fast bowler Glenn McGrath is set to replace countryman Tom Moody as Worcestershire's overseas player next season, reports AP.

McGrath, playing for his country in Sunday's World Cup final at Lord's, has been offered a two-year contract to play in the seasons 2000 and 2002 either side of Australia's tour of England in 2001.

Worcestershire cricket committee chairman Martin Horton confirmed that the country had agreed terms with the 29-year-old paceman who was wanted by three other counties.

Worcestershire is reported to be paying McGrath 100,000 pounds for each of his two seasons.

McGrath indicated before the start of the season that he wanted to play county cricket in England and Worcestershire is hopeful the Australian Cricket Board will not block the move.

"Glenn hasn't actually signed yet for Worcestershire but it is pretty certain that he will," Horton said. "Everything

Legend of the trophy

LONDON, June 20: The 11-kilogram (24.2-pound) World Cup trophy, crafted in silver and gilt, took two months to prepare in the workshop of crown jeweller Garrard, and is the first permanent prize in the history of the 24-year-old tournament, reports AP.

Valued at more than 27,000 pounds (43,200 dollars), the trophy features a golden globe in the form of a cricket ball held aloft by three silver columns styled as stumps and balls. Each column has the World Cup logo on the inside.

A team of craftsmen spent more than 500 man hours in the Garrard workshop to create the 60-centimetre (2-foot) trophy, engraving and gilding the globe and turning the wood for the base, which is inscribed with the names of the previous champions: the West Indies (1975 and 1979), India (1983), Australia (1987), Pakistan (1992) and Sri Lanka (1996).

There is room for the next 12 champions.

Although the trophy will remain in possession of the International Cricket Council, a replica identical in every detail except for the inscription of the previous winners will be presented to the 1999 champions keep permanently.

CRICKET'S DISCIPLINE

LONDON, June 20 (AP): As one TV commentator put it, if cricket is a religion then Abu Jilal is its first fundamentalist preacher.

The 50-year-old unemployed man from Pakistan has not missed a home match since 1984 and over the past five years has travelled to India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Sharjah and now England to cheer for Pakistan.

During that time, the Guardian newspaper reported, he did it without spending a single penny on flights, accommodation or match tickets.

He has usually been looked after by Pakistanis in other countries, including in England.

Millions of television viewers of this World Cup have come to know Jalil's moustache, silver-bearded face as cameras have zoomed in on him countless times at Pakistan matches, showing him dancing ecstatically with arms raised toward the heavens.

He has always appeared at matches wearing a green robe and scarf, the national colour of Pakistan, always managing to get tickets even though Pakistan games were a sell out before the tournament.

To the Pakistani fans and players, Jalil is known as "chacha" or uncle in Punjabi and Urdu, and fans queue in hundreds to take photographs or take his autograph at matches, the Guardian said.

The fans and the players are like my children," he was quoted as saying, "I love to follow the team and make them happy. That's my job now," he said.

Jalil, who is married with six children, took the role of Pakistan's chief cheerleader after he lost his job in an engineering factory 15 years ago.

"I can't keep away from a match," he said.

PUNTERS PUZZLED

LONDON, June 20 (AP): The bookmakers are found it tough to split Australia and Pakistan and come up with a clear favourite for Sunday's final at Lord's.

On Saturday, Ladbrokes offered odds of 10-11 for both teams, while rival William Hills offered odds of 8-11 on Australia to win and even money for Pakistan. A third company, Coral, listed both teams at joint 5-6 favourites.

Taylor's caution

LONDON, June 20 (Reuters/Internet): Former captain Mark Taylor is hoping Australia will remember lessons learned from their defeat three years ago against Sri Lanka when they face Pakistan in Sunday's World Cup final at Lord's.

Taylor captained Australia in that Lahore final in March 1996 and he said during a BBC interview on Saturday there were many similarities in the way the team had progressed in both tournaments.

Commenting on the remarkable tie against South Africa in this year's semi-final, he recalled that Australia had also faced an exhausting match against West Indies three years ago to win by five runs and earn their place in the final against Sri Lanka.

By the time the final came around we were almost exhausted," Taylor said. "I know, senior members of the Australian party realise that they've got to put that game (against South Africa) behind them and gear up for Sunday because they've got another big game."

He said Pakistan were in tremendous form. "They've got match winners both with the bat and the ball. Australia are going to have to play at their best to beat Pakistan and they all know that."

"So hopefully the lessons of three years ago will be well learned."

Lucky room for 'em

LONDON, June 20 (Reuters/Internet): Australia will have their "lucky" dressing rooms at Lord's for Sunday's World Cup final against Pakistan.

Australia asked for the less fashionable visitors' changing rooms instead of going through the normal process of tossing a coin to see who would have the home side's facilities which are more spacious than that for the visitors.

"We've got a lot of good memories from those rooms from playing here on Ashes tours," Australian captain Steve Waugh said.

The players have their favourite spots in the room and they go straight to them. "We feel very comfortable here."

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Rosy days for Vieri

SYDNEY, June 20: Christian Vieri, the world's most expensive footballer, says he is savouring the dream life but all his money goes to his mum, reports AFP.

"The money I make, I give it to my mother," he said. "I don't even know where it goes."

Earlier this month he completed a 50 million US dollars move from Lazio to Inter Milan in Italy, sparking a hostile response by the Vatican's daily newspaper which described it as "an offence against poor people."

"You have to show people you are worth the money," he told Sydney's Sunday Telegraph.

"I've trained hard the last couple of years to try and be one of the biggest players in the world. I just try to do my work."

He left Australia for Italy Saturday after a week of partying in Sydney and visiting old haunts.

"He hasn't had any sleep since he arrived," said close friend Attilio Labozzetta, with whom Vieri launched an Italian restaurant in Sydney's Darling Harbour.

But he has not lost his heart to any local girls.

"I think the women are nice all over the world," he said. "I hope to find a girl and get married sooner or later."

In Italy he is instantly recognisable and he enjoyed the anonymity in Australia.

"The only thing they talk about in Italy is soccer — morning and night and I'm happy no one recognises me here," he said, adding that being surrounded by fans was a challenge but he had a "dream life."

"You can't have everything," he said. "And I'm very happy with the life I have. My dream has come true."

Their World Cups

LONDON, June 20 (AP): Following is how Australia and Pakistan have performed in previous World Cups:

PAKISTAN
1975 in England
Finished fifth after one win and two losses.
— Lost to Australia at Headingley by 73 runs.
— Lost to West Indies at Edgbaston by one wicket.
— Beat Sri Lanka at Trent Bridge by 192 runs.

1979 in England
Finished third after two wins and two losses.
— Beat Canada at Headingley by 8 wickets.
— Beat Australia at Trent Bridge by 89 runs.
— Lost to England at Headingley by 14 runs.

Semifinals
— Lost to the West Indies at The Oval by 43 runs.
1983 in England
Finished fourth after three wins and four losses.
— Beat Sri Lanka at Swansea by 50 runs.
— Beat New Zealand at Edgbaston by 52 runs.
— Lost to England at Lord's by 8 wickets.
— Beat Sri Lanka at Headingley by 11 runs.
— Lost to England at Old Trafford by 7 wickets.
— Beat New Zealand at Trent Bridge by 11 runs.

Semifinals
— Lost to the West Indies at The Oval by 8 wickets.
1987 in India and Pakistan
Finished third after five wins and two losses.
— Beat Sri Lanka at Hyderabad, Pakistan by 15 runs.
— Beat England at Rawalpindi by 18 runs.
— Beat West Indies at Lahore by one wicket.
— Beat England at Karachi by 7 wickets.
— Beat Sri Lanka at Faisalabad by 113 runs.
— Lost to the West Indies at Karachi by 28 runs.

Semifinals
— Lost to Australia at Lahore by 18 runs.
1992 in Australia and New Zealand
Won the World Cup after six wins, three losses and a no-result.
— Lost to the West Indies at Melbourne by 10 wickets.
— Beat Zimbabwe at Hobart by 53 runs.

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