



ROLLING BACK THE YEARS: A totally fired-up Wasim Akram appeals against a Namibian batsman during his devastating bowling spell at De Beers Diamond Oval in Kimberley yesterday.

Namibia numbed

AFP, Kimberley

Pakistan's fearsome pace duo of Wasim Akram and Shoaib Akhtar took nine wickets between them to rock Namibia for 84 and give their team a 171-run win in the World Cup on Sunday.

Wasim, 5-28 and Shoaib, 4-46, gave the Namibians a lesson in what to expect in the big league with a fiery display after Pakistan had scored 255-9 from 50 overs after electing to bat.

Wasim, making a record 34th World Cup appearance, took his tally in cricket's showpiece to 50 and his overall haul to 498 one-day wickets.

His destructive spell was also Pakistan's best ever at the World Cup, bettering the 5-35 by spinner Saqlain Mushtaq against Bangladesh four years ago.

"It will be fun after 20 years to see how many bowlers have claimed 50 wickets in the World Cup," the veteran left-arm seamer said.

"If you play for 17-18 years and stay fit, you are bound to get records. The important thing is to enjoy the game which I am doing a lot."

Namibian captain Deon Kotze conceded his team had never faced such hostile bowling before.

"It is always difficult to face the likes of Shoaib and Wasim," he said. "We have never faced something like this before."

"I was hoping for a topsy-turvy game, but Pakistan were simply outstanding."

Namibia were in danger of falling for the lowest total in one-day internationals when they slipped to 35-8, before Bjorn Kotze and Rudi van Vuuren added 42 for the last wicket.

Kotze top scored with an unbeaten 24, while van Vuuren

made 14 before he holed out in the deep of Saqlain Mushtaq.

Namibia's 84 in 17.4 overs was the fourth lowest total in World Cup history, but far superior to Canada's record low of 45 against England during the 1979 edition.

Earlier opener Salim Elahi top-

scored for Pakistan with 63 with pacer Gerrie Snyman taking 2-51 and effecting a run out.

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No over-docking after World Cup

AFP, Johannesburg

Teams bowling their overs slowly in the first innings of an one-day international will not be docked overs in future, according to a new rule to be introduced on April 1.

Instead, they will attract heavy fines, just as teams fielding second are, International Cricket Council (ICC) general manager Dave Richardson said on Sunday.

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Captain Clueless India mourning

AFP, Johannesburg

India will bounce back in the World Cup, insists captain Saurav Ganguly, provided he and the other batsmen start putting bat to ball.

For the moment, however, Ganguly has no clue how to turn around his team's fortunes after the disastrous start that has left India in danger of being knocked out in the preliminary stage itself.

India's batting, regarded as one of the best in the world, has embarrassed in the two matches so far, unable to play either pace or spin with any degree of comfort.

They failed to last 50 overs against minnows Netherlands in their opening match, before failing to their lowest World Cup score of 125 against reigning champions Australia at Centurion on Saturday.

India must now win all their key games against Zimbabwe, England and Pakistan to ensure a place in the super six, a task Ganguly said was not beyond his team.

"It's a bit of a comfort that we are not out of the World Cup," he said. "We can still go ahead provided we pull our socks up and start getting runs on the board."

If it's any consolation, India's previous lowest World Cup score of 158 against Australia came during the 1983 tournament, which Kapil Dev's men went on to win.

Having been dismissed for totals of 122 or less four times on the recent tour of New Zealand, the Indians have much to think about after Saturday's World Cup low.

Ganguly, who could be sacked from the captaincy if India fail to qualify for

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REUTERS/AFP, New Delhi

Indian media and fans on Sunday blasted their cricket team's pathetic performance in the World Cup after a humiliating nine-wicket loss at the hands of Australia.

The criticism ranged from sarcasm to questioning the attitude of their star cricketers, who had also struggled against minnows Holland in their opener, folding for just 204 runs.

"Indians go down under," said a front-page headline in The Times of India, while the Hindustan Times daily asked, "125 all out: batting depth or bat-biting abyss?"

India's famed batting line-up on Saturday crumbled against Australia for their lowest World Cup score, a performance termed as "Centurion shame" by The Indian Express and "top batting disorder" by The Asian Age.

Television channels also castigated the cricketers, inviting viewers to send in messages. One channel even asked viewers whether they would still buy products endorsed by Indian cricket team members.

Cricketers are superstars in this country of one billion-plus, and the messages aired on television channels showed fans felt badly let down.

"Indian batsmen can play shots only in advertisements" and "The Indian team should come back" were characteristic of the messages broadcast.

Columnists too had liberal digs at the Indian team.

Former captain Sunil Gavaskar was among the most outspoken critics. The legendary Gavaskar attributed the poor show to "lack of application".

"If only they had shown some resolve, then the Indian batsmen would have been raising their bats to the fans' applause rather than damaging the turf in mock anger," Gavaskar wrote in his column in the Hindustan Times.

"It was obvious India had not learnt anything from the New Zealand tour, where too half the side

Most-capped magician

AFP, Kimberley

Celebrated Pakistan all-rounder Wasim Akram became the most capped World Cup player when he went out for his 34th match against Namibia here on Sunday.

The 36-year-old, playing his fifth World Cup, surpassed former teammate Javed Miandad and Australia's Steve Waugh's record of 33 appearances in the four-yearly tournament.

"A World Cup is the main event in any sport so I am delighted at this record," said the left-arm seamer.

"I would have liked it to come against a tougher opponent than Namibia, but anyway it is a big honour."

Wasim is one-day cricket's most successful bowler with 493 wickets. He also has 414 Test wickets, the only bowler to surpass the 400 mark in both forms of the game.

The Namibia game was Wasim's 352nd match, more than anyone else in history.

"This is my fifth and last World Cup so I want to make it memorable for my country and for myself," said Wasim, whose World Cup tally of 46

wickets is also a record. Later, during the match against Namibia, the gifted all-rounder knocked off 5 wickets.

"This is the most open tournament where every team will win some and lose some, so our loss to Australia was one of those things."

Wasim said Pakistan's crucial matches will be against England and India.

"If we win both we will be in the super six round," he said.

Pakistan meets England in Cape Town on February 22 and arch-rivals India at Centurion on March 1.

MOST APPEARANCES

Top 10 World Cup appearances after Wasim Akram's record-breaking 34th match on Sunday (matches, player, country):

34	Wasim Akram	Pak
33	Javed Miandad	Pak
	Steve Waugh	Aus
30	A Ranatunga	SL
	M Azharuddin	Ind
29	Ijaz Ahmed	Pak
28	Imran Khan	Pak
27	Ade Silva	SL
	Inzamul Haq	Pak
	Salim Malik	Pak

African treats

AL-AMIN from Johannesburg

The 2003 World Cup cricket in

World Cup has made a name for all the wrong reasons. England took the game in political whirlpool for refusing to play in Zimbabwe for



ALOK KAPALI... sexy

South Africa has produced more

in

and off the field drama than anybody's imagination. The event

will be under pressure at least to

achieve respectability on Tuesday,

after posting scores of 120 against

Canada and 124 against Sri Lanka.

Their hopes of ending their long

losing drought were high when they

were drawn to meet Canada in their

opening pool game in Durban but

ended in tears when they crashed to

a 60-run defeat from what seemed

like a winning position.

If that was not bad enough, they

were crushed by 10 wickets in their

second match when Sri Lanka's left-arm

Chaminda Vaas humiliated

their top order by taking a hat-trick

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apparent 'death threats to their cricketers'. New Zealand also forfeited their game in Kenya because of security concerns.

Champion leg-spinner Shane Warne, one of the World Cup's main attractions, took a return flight to Australia after he earned the dubious distinction of becoming the first cricketer ever to be tested positive for drugs. Jonty Rhodes, who turned fielding into an art form, made a premature exit from the competition and the game after breaking a bone in his hand.

Pakistan wicketkeeper Rashid Latif was summoned by the match referee after his Australian counterpart Adam Gilchrist claimed that Latif had hurled racial abuse at him.

Still there has been some great cricket and thankfully the topic of 'match-fixing' has not made news as yet.

From a patriotic point of view, it has been a disaster with Bangladesh becoming laughing stocks of international cricket. However those who betted for Canada against Bangladesh were a satisfied bunch

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CAN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE! A group of upset Indians carry a mock cortege made of photos of national cricketers for a funeral procession at Kolkata yesterday in protest of the defeat against Australia.

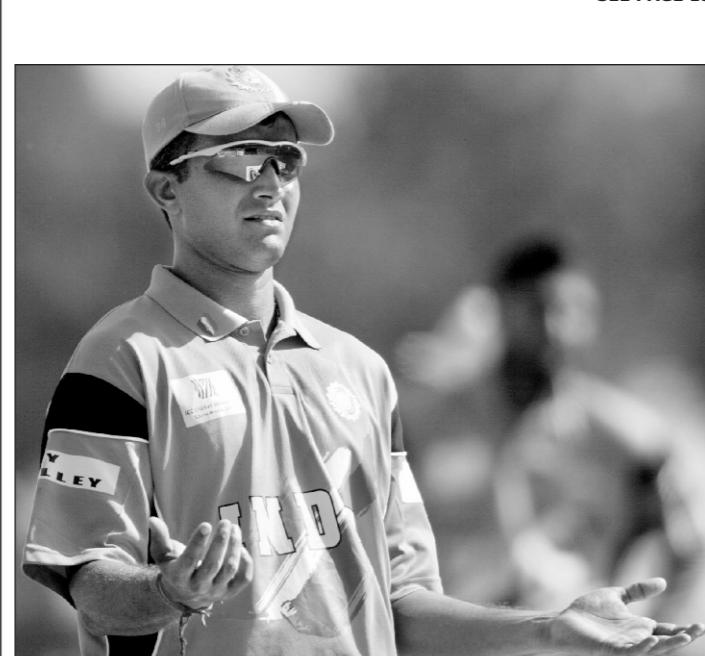


PHOTO: AFP

LOST FOR IDEAS? A frustrated Indian skipper Saurav Ganguly makes adjustments to the field against Australia on February 15.

PHOTO: AFP

The American high school gridiron team of Prairie View lost 80

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