



PHOTO: AFP

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 here 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 off 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.

Pakistan found life tough as the Namibian bowlers kept a disciplined line and length while Elahi and Saeed Anwar scored 44 runs in

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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.

Richardson said the current system was faulty because while teams bowling first were docked

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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 falling 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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PHOTO: AFP

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

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 is 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	A de Silva	SL
	Inzamamul Haq	Pak
	Salim Malik	Pak

Collective amnesia

REUTERS, Kimberley

Bangladesh captain Khaled Mashud will attempt to re-launch his side's wretched World Cup campaign with a novel tactic -- collective amnesia.

The team have not won a one-day or a Test match since the 1999 World Cup but Mashud is determined not to dwell on those four long years -- or his side's opening defeats in Pool B to rank outsiders Canada and Sri Lanka.

"We have to forget the games lost. We now have to focus on the games ahead," he said.

The future starts on Tuesday, with their third Cup outing against West Indies in Benoni.

Bangladesh have not beaten West Indies in six one-day meetings but 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 Chameinda Vaas humiliated their top order by taking a hat-trick

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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 by 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 started with classic contest between West Indies and South Africa that the home team lost by three runs with Brian Lara scoring a magnificent century and making the difference.

Lance Klusener almost matched a vintage Lara before the 'Zulu' was out to a long hop in the nail-biting final over.

Sri Lanka captain Sanath Jayasuriya also announced his intentions with a majestic hundred against New Zealand. But the biggest cheers were reserved for Andrew Symonds whose magnificent 143 under pressure against Pakistan showed Australia the way.

New Zealand showed exemplary fielding to beat the West Indies, leaving the fight in Pool B wide open.

Sri Lanka left-arm paceman Chaminda Vaas went into record book in grand style, claiming four wickets in the first over against Bangladesh including wickets in first three deliveries.

Even at this early stage, this

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 pint 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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Top not for a flop

AFP, Johannesburg

When it comes to being top of the flops, Bangladesh are in some pretty good bad company.

The men from Dhaka, currently struggling through the World Cup here, have lost 27 of their last 28 one-day internationals, a sequence only broken when the rains saved them against the West Indies.

Overall, their one-day record reads 63 played and 59 lost, while their Test record is equally uninspiring -- 16 defeats in 17, with the rain again proving their salvation for a draw with Zimbabwe.

In the cricket world, it took some of the burden off New Zealand in the record books -- they took 26 years and 45 Tests before the champagne was poured.

Sport is littered with similar magnificent ineptitude.

The American high school gridiron team of Prairie View lost 80

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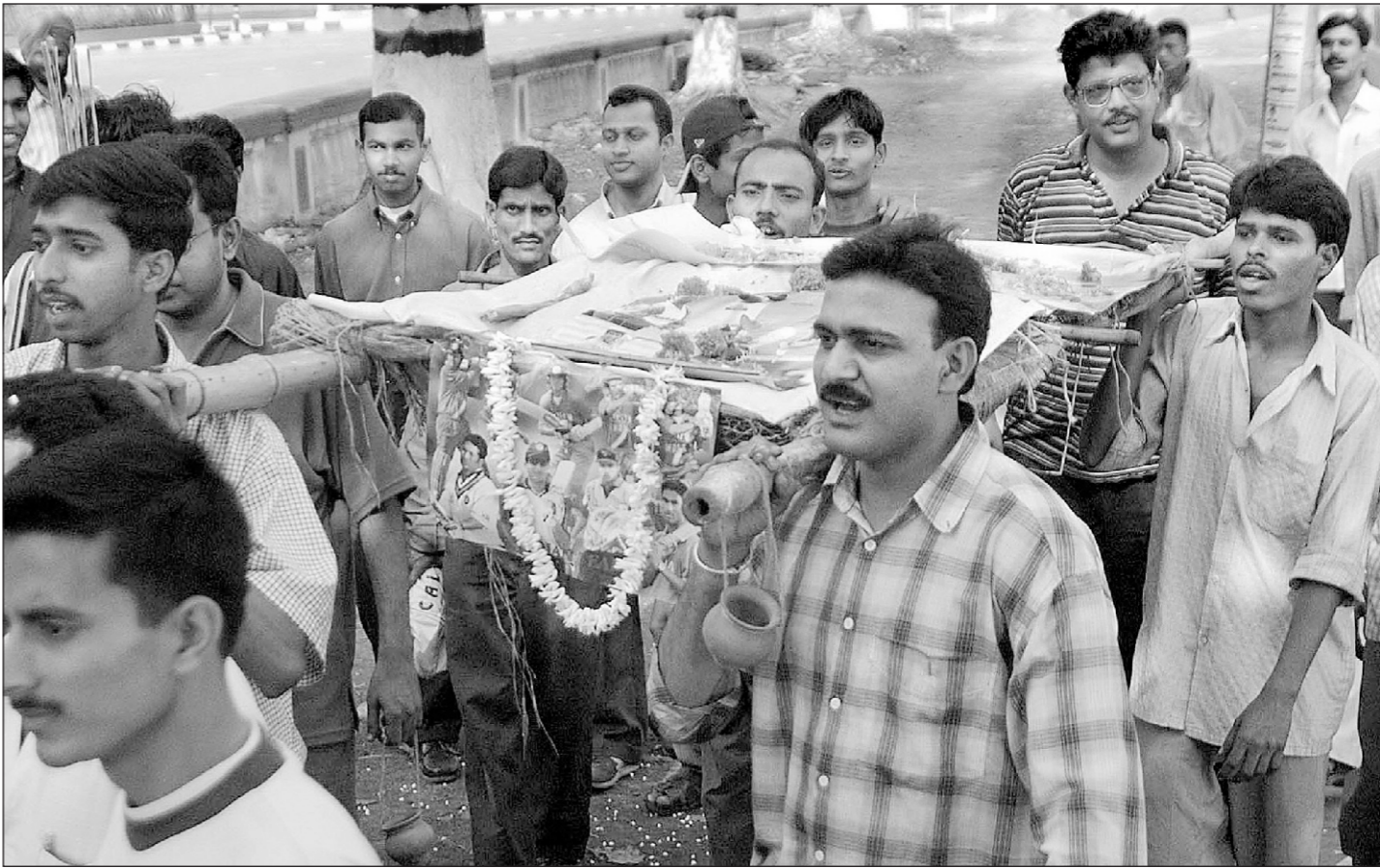


PHOTO: AFP

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