



PHOTO: AFP

CARIBBEAN UNITED: West Indies players surround captain Brian Lara after their comprehensive 54-run win over Pakistan in the opening match of the Cricket World Cup at Sabina Park in Kingston Tuesday night.

West Indies floor Pakistan

AFP, Bridgetown

West Indies got the 2007 World Cup off to a flying start on Tuesday by sending a packed Sabina Park crowd into raptures with a 54-run win over Pakistan.

Brian Lara's home side, who were restricted to 241-9 off their 50 overs, then bowled out Inzamamul Haq's unpredictable Pakistan for just 187 in 47.2 overs.

Chasing 242, Pakistan looked on track when Mohammad Yousuf and Inzamamul Haq, their two most decorated batsmen, were on top of the West Indies bowling in a stand of 60 for the fourth wicket.

But Dwayne Smith, later named man-of-the-match, transformed the complexion of the game, when he snared three wickets -- including Yousuf and Inzamam -- for 36 runs from 10 overs.

Though Shoaib Malik cracked a boundary-studded 62 to lead a late charge for the Pakistanis, Dwayne Bravo snuffed the life out of the visitors' comeback with three for 42 from nine overs.

Pakistan had kept West Indies on a tight rein early, but bled late runs after they won the toss and chose to field under sunny skies.

Several West Indies batsmen got starts, but Marlon Samuels struck five fours and three sixes in the top score of 63 off 68 balls.

Lara, vice-captain Ramaresh Sarwan, and Smith all played crucial knocks along the way to beef up the total.

Rao Iftikhar was the most suc-

cessful Pakistani bowler with three for 44 from his allotment of 10 overs.

Umar Gul supported with two for 38 from nine overs, and Mohammad Hafeez took two for 39 from nine overs.

Imran Nazir then got Pakistan off to an exciting start, when he hit a six off the second ball of the innings bowled by Daren Powell, who then had the batsman caught behind next ball.

Yousuf was the first to crack, when Younis Khan was caught behind off Jerome Taylor top-edging a hook in the fourth over, and Powell returned to have Hafeez caught at mid-on for 11 to leave Pakistan 39 for three.

Inzamam joined Yousuf and the two were hardly troubled by the bowling, although the runs were not flowing freely and the pressure mounted.

Yousuf was the first to crack, when

he essayed a back-foot drive at a rising ball from Smith and was caught behind for 37 in the 29th over, then Inzamam played across a well-pitched delivery and was adjudged lbw for 36 to leave Pakistan 116 for five in the 33rd over.

When Smith had Kamran Akmal caught low down at square cover for a first-ball duck next ball, West Indies knew they were in front, and had only to drive into the garage.

Earlier, West Indies were set back early, when Chris Gayle was caught behind for two off Umar Gul in the third over.

Sarwan came to the wicket, and he was fortunate to have been dropped first ball, when Younis Khan failed to hold onto his top-edged cut.

The nerves of the West Indies vice captain settled, and he prospered, hitting a couple of rasping off-side strokes off Rana Naved-ul-Hasan to lift his confidence.

Shivnarine Chanderpaul was quietly playing the anchor role before Iftikhar Anjum struck to have him caught behind for 19 in the 20th over.

Iftikhar struck another important blow, when Sarwan drove off the back-foot at a delivery widish delivery and was caught at second slip by Younis.

This meant Lara joined Samuels at the wicket with West Indies on 77 for three in the 25th over, and the two batsmen put on 91 for the fourth wicket to revive the innings.

Samuels played some enterprising strokes. He totally dismissed

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WEST INDIES-PAKISTAN SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard in the opening Group D match of the World Cup between West Indies and Pakistan on Tuesday at Sabina Park:

WEST INDIES	R	B	4s	6s
Gayle c Akmal b Gul	2	6	0	0
Chanderpaul c Akmal b Anjum	19	63	1	0
Sarwan c Younis Khan b Anjum	49	65	9	0
Samuels c Malik b Hafeez	63	70	5	3
Lara c Akmal b Hafeez	37	56	3	1
Bravo c Navedul b Anjum	16	17	2	0
Ramdin c Akmal b Kaneria	1	4	0	0
Smith c Inzamam b Gul	32	15	3	2
Taylor run out (Anjum)	2	4	0	0
Powell not out	1	1	0	0
Collymore not out	8	2	0	1
Extras: (lb-2, w-6, nb-3)	11			
Total: (For 9 wickets in 50 overs)	241			
Fall of wickets: 1-7, 2-64, 3-77, 4-168, 5-181, 6-183, 7-223, 8-228, 9-232.				
Bowler	O	M	R	W Econ
Gayle	9	1	38	2 4.22
Umar Gul	9	1	49	0 5.44
Navedul Hasan	10	3	44	3 4.40
Iftikhar Anjum				

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Has Bob Woolmer finally decided to call it quits with the Pakistan Cricket Board? This question is making the rounds in cricket circles of the country ever since Woolmer vacated his room at the National Cricket Academy in Lahore before leaving with the Pakistan team for the World Cup in the West Indies.

Bob's time up?

PTI, Karachi

Has Bob Woolmer finally decided to call it quits with the Pakistan Cricket Board? This question is making the rounds in cricket circles of the country ever since Woolmer vacated his room at the National Cricket Academy in Lahore before leaving with the Pakistan team for the World Cup in the West Indies.

"Woolmer has taken and sent all

his belongings back to South Africa. He used to leave those in his room or at the NCA even when he went abroad for vacations after taking over as coach in June 2004," an official in the board said on Wednesday.

"The indications certainly are that Woolmer has either decided not to continue as coach of Pakistan after the World Cup or has got a signal that the board is not interested in retaining his services after the tournament," a source said.

Woolmer's contract with the PCB expires in June. After the World Cup, Pakistan is likely to have one more international assignment -- a tri-series or a bilateral one-day rubber against Sri Lanka in Abu Dhabi in May.

The source said the PCB had also recently handed over the room used by Woolmer, which used to be locked when he was away, to a representative of the CARICOM

who had come down to Lahore recently in connection with the satellite visa issuance cell in Pakistan.

"It was a tremendous atmosphere, and as soon as we got on the field, we saw the camaraderie and the togetherness which was excellent.

"I thought in the batting department we looked a bit more nervous, and a little bit more aware of our surroundings that this was the opening match of the World Cup, but once we got onto the field for the second half of the match, the guys

Inzy left fuming

Lara happy at early win

AFP, Kingston

West Indies captain Brian Lara believes his team has conquered the stage fright which threatened to cripple their campaign to become the first host nation to win the World Cup.

Before a capacity crowd at the renovated Sabina Park, West Indies won the first ever World Cup match held in the Caribbean when they dismissed Pakistan for 187 in 47.2 overs to clinch a 54-run victory on Tuesday.

It was a huge comeback for the home side following their dismal performance in their final warm-up match against India four days ago when they were bowled out for just 85 and were beaten by nine wickets.

"You have to be out there to really understand what it's like, since it's probably the biggest crowd at Sabina Park watching the West Indies play, and it's the opening of the World Cup," said the skipper who is playing in his fourth and final World Cup.

The West Indies next face Zimbabwe on Monday before concluding their first round Group D programme against Ireland on March 23.

Inzamamul Haq blamed his team's demoralising opening World Cup 54-run defeat to West Indies.

Inzamam feels his batsmen will need to come good in the remaining matches if Pakistan are to repeat their 1992 World Cup triumph after his side failed to chase the hosts' modest total of 241 at Sabina Park here on Tuesday.

"Our middle order is a very experienced batting line-up and we should have taken more responsibility in the opening game of the tournament," said captain Inzamam.

Before a capacity crowd at the renovated Sabina Park, West Indies had a memorable start to the first ever World Cup staged in the Caribbean, when they bowled Pakistan out for 187 in 47.2 overs to clinch victory

"We should have got those runs because I think 242 was a gettable score," added Inzamam.

"We thought we could have chased those runs and we should have successfully chased them."

Pakistan were 39 for three at one stage, but Inzamam scored 36 and Mohammad Yousuf made 37 to put them back on track before Dwayne Smith, who was named man-of-the-match, claimed them both to end with three wickets for 36 runs from his 10 overs.

"Mohammad Yousuf's wicket was crucial, but we lost three early wickets, and we could have done well if we had more wickets left at the end," said Inzamam.

"We just didn't chase properly enough and West Indies bowled a good line and length."

"There is some pressure on us now, but we will regroup and come back for the next match."

Pakistan must now beat Ireland on Saturday, and Zimbabwe next Wednesday to guarantee they

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Skipper wants more from Smith

REUTERS, Kingston

West Indies captain Brian Lara said he expected more of the same from a 11-round rouneder Dwayne Smith after he led his side to a 54-run win over Pakistan in the World Cup opener at Sabina Park.

Man-of-the-match Smith helped his team reach a competitive total of 241 for nine with his innings of 32 in just 15 balls, including two towering sixes.

He then turned the match once more with the ball when he claimed three for 36 from his 10 overs. Pakistan were bowled out for 187.

Smith began his international career in sparkling style with a century on his Test debut in South Africa but over the three years since

he has been inconsistent.

Lara urged the 23-year-old Smith to build on his latest show of potential rather than dwell on his success.

"Dwayne played really well today (Tuesday)," Lara told reporters after the match. "At one time before he went out to bat we were looking at 225, I told him that."

"For him to score in excess of 30 in 15 balls, hitting the ball out of the park and cleanly was very, very good for us."

"(Then) Coming on to bowl after Daren Powell, after we had stifled the run rate in the early overs, you expect them to pick up the run rate from there."

"But Dwayne came on and bowled well and got the wickets of Inzamam and Mohammad Yousuf -- their two best players."

"His performance on Tuesday was excellent and he knows that and from here what he wants to do is build on it, not just sit back and



A scene from a First Division match at Dhaka University ground, one of the worst cricket grounds where professional cricket is played. Apart from the dusty and bumpy outfield, torn sightscreens, no toilets and lack of player comfort is prevalent in this ground for the last two seasons.

Gazi hold Surjo Tarun

SPORTS REPORTER

Gazi Tank stayed atop Group B when their crucial Kai-Altech First Division Cricket League match against Surjo Tarun ended in a tie at BKSP yesterday.

Surjo Tarun needed to win the match to come level with Gazi Tank, the only unbeaten side in the group, but chasing a revised target of 183 after rain interruption, fell one run short (182-9 in 40 overs). Earlier, Gazi Tank were all out for 203 with former national opener Moniruzzaman topscoring with 39.

In other matches, Atiqur's 86 steered Sadharan Bima (257) to a 30-run win over Young Pegasus B (227) at the City Club ground. Fayaz smashed a timely 53 to snatch a two-wicket victory for Dhaka Mariners (226-8) against Agrani Bank at the Dhaka University ground while impressive fifties by Hasan (82) and Ashraful (70) kept BKSP's hundred percent winning run when they reached 246-7 in a last-ball thriller in reply to Eskaton's 243-7 at BKSP.

A new hangover

AFP, Kingston

The Caribbean woke up on Wednesday with a hangover.

It did not come from the bottom of a rum or beer bottle, although plenty may have been consumed overnight by fans still ecstatic, following West Indies' 54-run victory over Pakistan in the opening match of the 2007 World Cup on Tuesday at Sabina Park.

It's the first time that the World Cup is being staged in the region, and Brian Lara's side had the perfect start, confirming their status as the dark horses to lift the coveted trophy for the third time.

The Jamaica Observer newspaper described the win as a 'Superb start', and observed it 'was as good as it can get'.

"Willed on by a vibrant, near-capacity crowd, the West Indies played brilliantly to overwhelm Pakistan by 54 runs as the World Cup -- the first to be held in the Caribbean -- got off to a rolicking start at the new-look Sabina Park," said the newspaper in an editorial.

The Jamaica Gleaner newspaper

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