

India make records roll

AFP, Port of Spain



Bermuda by 257 runs in their second World Cup match here on Monday.

India posted the highest Cup total of 413-5 after being put in to bat, with Sehwag (114), Sourav Ganguly (89), Yuvraj Singh (83) and Sachin Tendulkar (57 not out) making merry against a mediocre Bermudian attack.

The previous best total was 398-5 by Sri Lanka against Kenya at Kandy in the 1996 World Cup.

It was also the biggest victory in one-day internationals by run-margin, the previous highest being Australia's 256-run win over Namibia in the last World Cup in South Africa.

Bermuda, shot out for 78 during their 243-run loss against Sri Lanka in their first game, did better this time as they managed 156 which was still not good enough to save them from a second successive massive defeat.

"We achieved what we wanted to do in this match as we finished ahead of Sri Lanka's margin of victory against Bermuda," said India skipper Rahul Dravid.

"Sehwag is a good player and it is good that he got back into form ahead of the crucial game (against Sri Lanka). It was just a matter of one knock and we expect a lot from him."

Left-handed David Hemp, who plays for English county Glamorgan, top-scored with a solid 76 not out, the first Cup half-century by a Bermudian. Dean Minors (21) was the other notable contributor, as

five other players went for ducks.

Leg-spinner Anil Kumble and seamer Ajit Agarkar grabbed three wickets apiece, while left-arm fast bowler Zaheer Khan finished with two.

India, who had suffered a shock five-wicket defeat against Bangladesh, now need to beat Sri Lanka in their last Group-B match here on Friday to keep alive their

hopes of qualifying for the next Super Eight stage.

"We are improving every day. Hemp did really well as somebody in the top order got some runs and this is what we wanted," said Bermuda skipper Irvine Romaine.

"India are one of the better sides in the World Cup and we knew we

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INDIA V BERMUDA SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the World Cup Group B match between India and Bermuda at the Queen's Park Oval in Port of Spain on Monday:

INDIA	R	M	B	4s	6s
Uthappa c Leverock b Jones	3	5	4	0	0
Ganguly st Minors b Borden	89	161	114	6	2
Sehwag c Jones b Hurdle	114	127	87	17	3
Dhoni c Tucker b Borden	29	34	25	2	1
Yuvraj Singh c Jones b Leverock	83	52	46	3	7
Tendulkar not out	57	46	29	2	4
Dravid not out	7	5	2	0	1
Extras: (lb-7, w-17, nb-7)	31				
Total: (For 5 wickets in 50 overs)	413				
Did not bat: Agarkar, Kumble, Zaheer Khan, Patel.					
Fall of wickets: 1-3, 2-205, 3-238, 4-269, 5-391.					

Bowler	O	M	R	W	Econ
Hurdle	10	0	53	1	5.30
Jones	7	0	74	1	10.57
Tucker	9	1	67	0	7.44
Hemp	2	0	32	0	16.00
Leverock	10	0	96	1	9.60
Borden	5	0	30	2	6.00
Cann	7	0	54	0	7.71
BERMUDA	R	M	B	4s	6s
Pitcher b Zaheer Khan	0	3	6	0	0
Outerbridge b Zaheer Khan	9	35	16	1	0
Borden lbw b Patel	13	65	38	1	0
Hemp not out	76	156	105	9	1

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PHOTO: AFP

TOOK A LONG TIME: India opener Virender Sehwag raises his bat after reaching his century during the Group B World Cup match against Bermuda at the Queen's Park Oval in Port of Spain on Monday.

'Effigies get burnt everyday'

REUTERS, Port of Spain

India captain Rahul Dravid has called on his players to stay strong and ignore the boorish behaviour of their supporters back at home.

Irate fans in cricket-mad India pelted stones at a house being built by wicketkeeper Mahendra Dhoni and burnt effigies of Dravid and the team's Australian coach Greg Chappell following India's shock opening Group B defeat by Bangladesh.

India crushed debutants Bermuda by a record one-day margin of 257 runs on Monday after Virender Sehwag's rapid 114 powered them to a World Cup record score of 413 to five.

They still need to beat Sri Lanka on Friday to ensure they qualify for the next round.

"We should be used to it, effigies get burnt everyday," Dravid told reporters after the Bermuda win.

"You don't lose sleep over somebody shouting 'Dravid, hai, hai' (down, down)," he said. "People should get on with life and be resilient. We have got some important games coming up."

Dravid said players were mainly concerned about their families.

"The worrying thing is the safety of our families, we have some young families out there.

Indian cricketers face adulation like movie stars, but face regular criticism from fans who often react violently if the team flops.

Dravid blamed the media for whipping up expectations, referring particularly to the blanket coverage provided by India's numerous TV channels.

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Cricket to unite 'em

AFP, Sydney

More than 140,000 people are expected to play cricket in Australia on Wednesday in a celebration of "Harmony Day", which aims to bring the country's races, cultures and religions closer together.

"A total of 895 schools and community groups with an estimated 141,467 participants will occupy local sporting fields, school grounds and ovals around Australia to celebrate cultural diversity and unity through Australia's favourite sport, cricket," officials said Tuesday.

Harmony Day is a government initiative celebrated on March 21 each year to coincide with the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

"The CrickKids Australia's Biggest Cricket Game is about providing the opportunity for all Australians to join in a sport that is part of Australia's history and culture," said Cricket Australia.

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WI into last eight

AFP, Kingston



Zimbabwe by six wickets in their Group D match here Monday.

Chasing 203 runs from their allocation of 50 overs, West Indies struck gold with 13 balls to spare when captain Brian Lara lofted Elton Chigumbura over wide long-on for a six.

The victory gave West Indies their second straight win in the competition, following their 54-run triumph over Pakistan in the World Cup opener last Tuesday at the same venue.

The win puts West Indies in the lead of Group D with four points, one more than giant-killers Ireland, and three ahead of Zimbabwe, leaving Pakistan at the bottom of the table with no points.

West Indies and Ireland complete the group phase on Friday, two days after the Pakistanis and Zimbabweans contest their final match on Wednesday.

Lara, unbeaten on 44, and Dwayne Bravo, not out on 37, shared 75, unbroken, for the fifth wicket to take West Indies over the

line.

The World Cup hosts had wobbled to 129 for four, after openers Chris Gayle and Shivanine Chanderpaul had put on 73.

Both Chanderpaul and Gayle were caught at slip off Chigumbura and Christopher Mpofu respectively within four balls of each other.

Anthony Ireland held a return catch to remove Ramnaresh Sarwan for 12 in the 25th over, and Tawanda Mupariwa had Marlon Samuels caught at backward point for 28 in the 33rd over to send a few jitters through the West Indies' dressing room, but Lara and Bravo made it safe.

Earlier, Zimbabwe, sent in to bat on a hard, true Sabina Park pitch under partly cloudy skies, were indebted to half-centuries from Sean Williams and Brendon Taylor, as well as a late cameo from Chigumbura for getting them to a respectable total.

Left-hander Williams hit an undefeated top score of 70 from 88 balls and Taylor gathered 50 from 121 balls in a vital stand of 83 for the fifth wicket to lead a Zimbabwe recovery.

When Taylor backed up too far and was run out by Bravo's throw from point to bowler Samuels in the 41st over, Chigumbura arrived and gave the Zimbabweans a late boost.

He collected five fours in the closing overs to gather 30 not out from 29 balls and share an unbro-

ken stand of 60 with Williams.

West Indies had early success, when new ball bowlers Jerome Taylor and Daren Powell bowled both Zimbabweans openers Friday Kasten and Vusumuzi Sibanda inside the first three overs.

Taylor added the wicket of Justice Chibhabha also bowled for 12 in the 10th over before Dwayne Smith had Stuart Matsikenyeri caught at mid-on for 16.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the World Cup Group D match between West Indies and Zimbabwe at Sabina Park in Kingston on Monday:

ZIMBABWE	O	M	R	W
Sibanda b Powell	1			
Kasten b Taylor	0			
Chibhabha b Taylor	12			
Taylor run out	50			
Matsikenyeri c Powell b D Smith	16			
Williams not out	70			
Chigumbura not out	30			
Extras: (b-5, lb-3, w-15)	23			
Total: (For 5 wkts in 50 overs)	202			
Did not bat: Utseya, Mupariwa, Mpofu, Ireland.				
Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-2, 3-31, 4-59, 5-142.				

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Taylor	6	1	15	1
Powell	10	0	42	2
Collymore	9	0	29	0
D Smith	5	0	28	1

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Yuvraj just played his 'shots'

AFP, Port of Spain

Flamboyant Indian batsman Yuvraj Singh said he was delighted with his World Cup 46-ball 83 against Bermuda which included seven massive sixes.

Coming in at number five, Yuvraj and Sachin Tendulkar added 122 for the fifth wicket off just 62 balls. Tendulkar made a 29-ball 57 not out with four sixes.

India, in a must-win situation after being upset by Bangladesh in their previous Group B game, found the going easy against Bermuda and eventually won by 257 runs.

Yuvraj came to the crease with the score at 238-3 after Sourav Ganguly and Virender Sehwag shared a second-wicket partnership of 202.

"The wicket was slow but as I got my eye in I played my shots," said Yuvraj.

He was not wrong about that, hitting three fours and seven sixes in his quick-fire knock, many through mid-wicket.

"I just went in there thinking about batting to the 50th over," he said.

"I played my shots a little late in the innings. But after my first hit, I felt confident in the mid-wicket area and I just went for my shots."

Yuvraj said he was happy to be back on the square after making a recent return to fitness after tearing a ligament in the left knee at a practice session during the Champions

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G-force in play

AFP, Kingston

West Indies opener Chris Gayle smashed three successive sixes in one over on Monday and admitted he had wanted to equal Herschelle Gibbs's record of six-in-a-row.

Gibbs created history last week when he became the first player to hit six sixes in an over in a one-day international in South Africa's win against the Netherlands.

Gayle was halfway there on Monday as West Indies beat Zimbabwe by six wickets to reach the Super Eights when he hit three on the trot against seamer Tawanda Mupariwa in the 14th over.

"I was thinking about Gibbs's record when I got the third, but it's hard to hit the ball out of the ground here -- the roof is too high," said Gayle who made 40 to help West Indies on their way in their Sabina Park victory.

West Indies have joined defending champions Australia in making sure of their place in the next round.

Their final Group D fixture is against Ireland on Friday and Gayle is keen for another win as they would carry an extra two points into the Super Eights should the Irish also qualify.

"We won't be taking anything for granted against them," said Gayle.

'Real test awaits'

AFP, Port of Spain



breaking 257-run win over hapless Bermuda.

India, who suffered a shock five-wicket defeat against Bangladesh in their opening Group B game, still need to beat Sri Lanka on Friday to boost their chances of advancing to the Super Eight stage.

"The real challenge is ahead of us. We had two must-win matches, but have won just one. The guys know what they have to do," said skipper Dravid, whose side set two records during their win over Bermuda here on Monday.

India posted the highest Cup total of 413-5 and then bowled Bermuda out for 156 to register the biggest victory in one-day internationals.

Dravid said his team needed to focus on the Sri Lanka match as they had not only to win it, but also win it by a handsome margin to better their run-rate.

Sri Lanka and Bangladesh have both won their opening matches.

Bangladesh are in a better position as they have to take on Bermuda in their last group game. Sri Lanka defeated Bermuda by 243 runs.

"There are some things which are not in our control, like the net

run-rate. The other teams' matches and results are not in our control," said the Indian captain.

"What is in our control is to go and try to win the next game and win it as well as possible."

The Indian skipper said hard-hitting opener Virender Sehwag's return to big-scoring ways augured well for the team ahead of the vital clash against Mahela Jayawardene's Sri Lankans.

"Viru (Sehwag) is a very good player and I'm happy he's part of my team -- a key member. He's back into form just when we need him before a very critical match," said Dravid.

Sehwag, who had just one half-century in his last 14 matches, regained his form against the weakest team in the group when he hammered an 87-ball 114 with three sixes and 17 fours.

Sehwag was named man of the match after scoring his eighth hundred, but first in nearly two years.

"The effort he has put in is fantastic. All credit to him. We expect a lot from him. He has been picked to score more than one hundred for us," said Dravid.

Sehwag said a big innings from him was long overdue.

"I had the confidence. I knew the captain, coach and selectors were backing me and I had to deliver," he said.

"I was waiting for just one innings. It was due for a long time. Thank God, it has come at the right time. So I am happy with my performance."

King not impressed

AFP, Kingston



West Indies coach Bennett King has demanded his team discover a killer instinct if they are to win the World Cup.

West Indies became the second side to confirm a place in the Super Eights of the tournament with a six-wicket victory over Zimbabwe at Sabina Park on Monday, but having reduced the African side to 59-4 they then allowed their opponents to reach a respectable 202-5 off 50 overs.

"We certainly didn't bowl as well as we did the other day (in the opening win over Pakistan), and the wides, (15 in total), are still a concern because we bowled too many of them," complained King.

"We probably should have been looking at a target of 150 to 170. We've still got some work to do on those middle overs. We found it hard to get some wickets there."

competition, following their 54-run triumph over Pakistan.

The win puts West Indies in the lead of Group D with four points, one more than giant-killers Ireland, and three ahead of Zimbabwe, leaving Pakistan at the bottom with no points.

"This was a scrappy win, and I'm glad that we fought it out nice and hard to get the points," King said.

"The pitch showed that if you got in, you really needed to knuckle down, work hard and continue on. It took people a little bit of time to get in once they started, and we didn't do that very well."

King feels that Zimbabwe, torn apart by players' strikes and political strife, and debutants Ireland have made good use of the resources at their disposal.

"Sometimes the conditions and the environment can aid sides," said the coach.

"I think Ireland and Zimbabwe have given a good account of themselves. They have played good cricket. Zimbabwe kept on fighting in this match, and I think (coach) Kevin Curran has done an absolutely wonderful job with the side."

West Indies and Ireland complete the group phase on Friday, two days after Pakistan and Zimbabwe contest their final match on Wednesday.

Dravid decision vindicated

CRICINFO, undated

Rahul Dravid, the Indian captain, was delighted with Virender Sehwag's return to form against Bermuda and hopes for more match-winning knocks from him in the tournament. Under pressure to justify his place in the team, Sehwag blasted 114 off 87 balls in India's massive total of 413 on the way to a 257-run victory.

Dravid's elation was understandable after facing criticism for backing Sehwag despite his inconsistent returns. Sehwag's frailties at the top of the order were exposed against Bangladesh on Saturday, when he fell for just two, but he made his chance count against Bermuda, smashing 17 fours and three sixes and partnering Sourav Ganguly in a stand of 202 for the third wicket.

"The effort he has put in is fantastic," Dravid told reporters. "All credit to him. We expect a lot from him. He has been picked to score more than one hundred for us."

Sehwag was happy to justify the faith shown in him by the team management. "I had the confidence," Sehwag said. "I knew the captain, coach and selectors were backing me and I had to deliver. I was waiting for just one innings. Thankfully, it has come at the right time."

With India yet to book a spot in the Super Eights, the final group match against Sri Lanka on Friday is crucial. Dravid is aware a victory by a handsome margin will be required,

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Utseya admits to pressure

AFP, Kingston

Zimbabwe captain Prosper Utseya has admitted feeling the pressure of being a young, inexperienced captain at the World Cup.

Utseya, just 21, was speaking to journalists following his side's six-wicket defeat to West Indies in Group D at Sabina Park.

"It's a big challenge, and a big ask for me as a young player because I'm still learning the game," he said.

"But I'm trying to get as much help as I can from the senior players, the coach, and the other captains as well."

Zimbabwe tied their opening match of the competition last Thursday with Ireland and need a victory over Pakistan in their final group match on Wednesday if they are to keep alive their hopes of reaching the next stage.

"We were trying for a win to put us in a better position to reach the Super Eights, but I thought the guys fought well which was good, so we will have to get it in our next game," he said.

Though they lost against the West Indies, Zimbabwe's Sean Williams took the man-of-the-match honours for his undefeated 70 which helped his side reach a respectable 203 for five from their 50 overs.

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