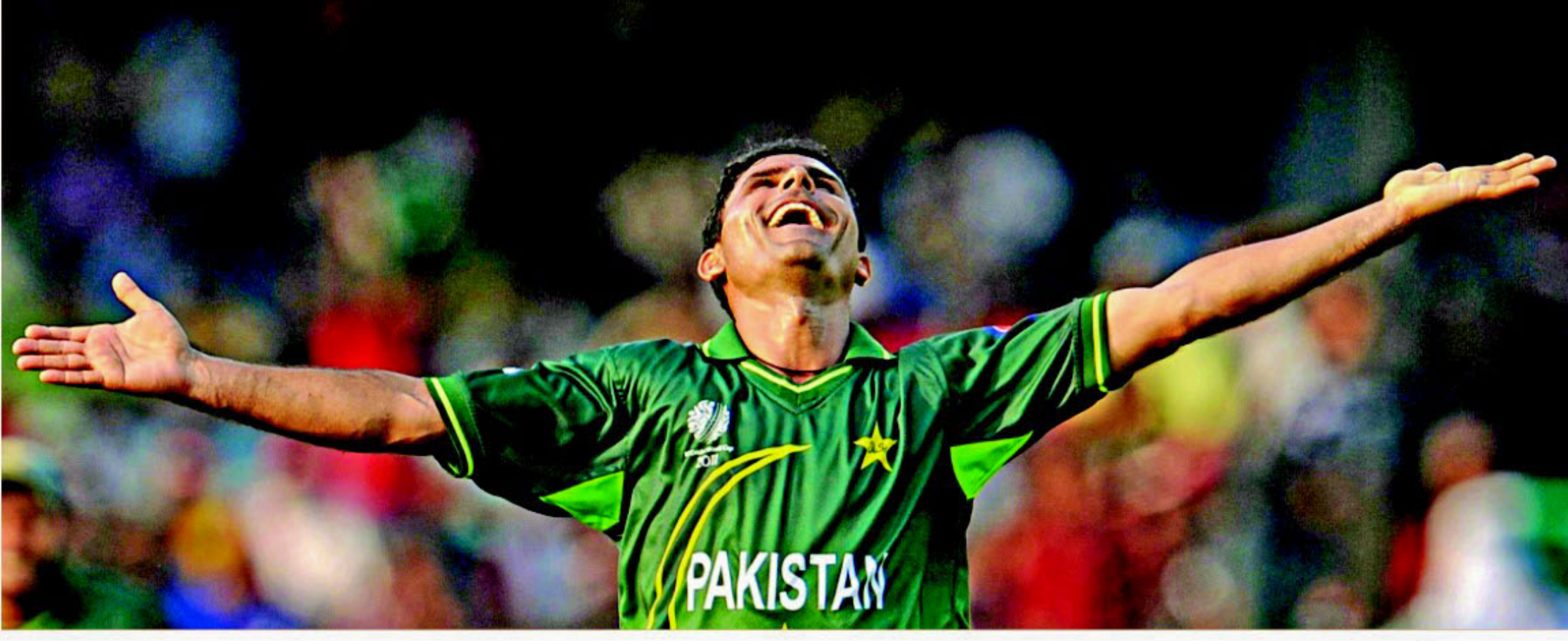


Pakistan end Aussie WC streak



Pakistan medium-pacer Abdul Razzaq spreads his arms for joy after getting Australia batsman Mitchell Johnson out for a duck during their match at the R Premadasa Stadium in Colombo yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Test return excites Zim coach

AFP, Kolkata

Coach Alan Butcher said Saturday that a return to Test cricket after six years away from the circuit will be "massive" for Zimbabwe, as they prepare to end their exile in August.

"Our return to Test cricket is happening in August against Bangladesh. And I think after that Pakistan and New Zealand come to Zimbabwe to play one Test each and some ODIs."

He said Zimbabwe would face a similar challenge to that of Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, who both faced a tough baptism in Test cricket.

"The only place to learn to play Test cricket is actually by doing that."

"So obviously we will be doing all that we can but I will be surprised if we can come out of it without some beatings in the initial stages. But I hope the players can learn from the experience."

Taylor's call: Trust fielder

AFP, Mumbai



New Zealand's stand-in skipper Ross Taylor says the fielder's word should be trusted in case of close catches after his side ended up on the receiving end of a controversial umpire decision.

Sri Lanka vice-captain Mahela Jayawardene and Kiwi off-spinner Nathan McCullum clashed during their World Cup match at the Wankhede Stadium on Friday.

Jayawardene tried to play a defensive shot in the 24th over against McCullum but ended up chipping the

ball back towards the bowler who dived and managed to get his right hand under the ball to cap a stunning effort.

But even as McCullum broke into a celebration, TV umpire Amish Saheba was called in and he ruled it not out.

It was a critical moment in the match since Sri Lanka were struggling at 87 for 2 and Jayawardene was on 26.

"I haven't seen the catch [on TV] I have seen it only live," said Taylor.

"I thought it carried, but the third umpire obviously had other things [in mind]. When you generally think that you have taken the catch, it's your natural instinct. It is disappointing."

Taylor said it would make things

easier if batsmen were to take the word of the fielder in such situations.

"It depends upon the person. You look at [South Africa batsman] Jacques Kallis, he asks the fielders if they caught it cleanly and he trusts the words of the fielders."

"You put it up to the batsman to make the decision and at the end of the day you just hope the technology is right and if the technology is not right, well then don't use it."

Jayawardene went on to make 66 and shared a vital 145-run stand with captain Kumar Sangakkara (111) to set up Sri Lanka's comprehensive 112-run win in the day-night clash.

ZIMBABWE V KENYA: KOLKATA

Zim to stake a claim

AFP, Kolkata



Zimbabwe are desperate to prove they belong with cricket's big beasts as they wrap up their World Cup campaign against tournament whipping boys Kenya on Sunday.

Zimbabwe, who played their last Test match in 2005, want to start playing Tests again but have often looked out of their depth at the World Cup.

They have slumped to heavy defeats against all four of the qualifiers from Group A -- Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan and Sri Lanka -- with their only victory coming against minnows Canada.

Two points from five matches is a poor return for a team that harbours ambitions of becoming a competitive force again at the top level, meaning a win against the poorest side in the tournament is crucial.

Kenya are rooted at the bottom of Group A with five defeats from five matches and the poorest run-rate at the World Cup by some distance.

Zimbabwe captain Elton Chigumbura singled out poor batting as the reason

for his team's first round exit.

"Throughout the tournament we have fielded well and bowled superbly, but it can't be said about our batting. It was a big problem."

Zimbabwe have managed only one total of more than 200 during the tournament, hitting 298 in their win against Canada.

Collins Obuya just missed out on a century and Tanmay Mishra scored 72.

Kenya captain Jimmy Kamande has urged cricket chiefs to give his side more top-class matches in between World Cups to raise

standards.

They have to make do with only a handful of matches against top-class opposition between World Cups and Kamande said: "One thing I know for sure is that if we keep playing against the Test-playing nations or their 'A' sides the (improved) performances will be there."

"But the thing is after this World Cup you might go and never see these teams again so it becomes very difficult."

"If we're going to prepare to play Australia again [in a World Cup] in the next five or 10 years it's going to become very difficult for us [without] regular matches."

Zimbabwe's English coach Alan Butcher has also pinpointed batting as the weak area.

"All the batsmen worked hard for this World Cup. None of our players tried to give their wickets away, they are all working hard and trying to improve. Everyone is disappointed because we prepared well but couldn't deliver," said Butcher.

Zimbabwe's slow bowlers have impressed, with left-arm spinner Raymond Price emerging as his team's leading wicket-taker with seven scalps in five games.

Shahzad out

CRICINFO

The Surrey seamer Jade Dernbach has been named as the surprise replacement in England's World Cup squad, after Ajmal Shahzad sustained a hamstring strain that ruled him out of contention for the knock-out stages of the tournament.

Dernbach, who is currently in the West Indies with the England Lions, has received approval from the ICC Event Technical Committee, and is expected to be released from his current fixture against Windward Islands, and will arrive in the subcontinent in time for the quarter-finals, which get underway on March 23.

AFP, Colombo



Pace man Umar Gul claimed three victims as Pakistan beat Australia by four wickets on Saturday, ending the defending champions' unbeaten 34-match World Cup run and capturing top spot in Group A.

Gul took 3-30 to help Pakistan dismiss Australia for 176 -- their lowest World Cup total since 1992 -- before Umar Akmal hit an unbeaten 44 to steer Pakistan to victory in 41 overs, finishing top of the pool with 10 points.

Pakistan, champions in 1992, will play the fourth placed team in Group B, while Australia (nine points) finished third behind Sri Lanka (nine points) on run-rate and will play the second placed team from Group B.

Saturday's loss was Australia's first in the World Cup since losing to Pakistan by 10 runs in Leeds in 1999.

But the champions, led by spearhead Brett Lee (4-28), fought hard and twice raised hopes of an unlikely win.

Pakistan were cruising along on 98-2 before Lee derailed the chase in his first over of his second spell, dismissing Younis Khan (31) and Misbah-ul-Haq for a first-ball duck -- both caught by keeper Brad Haddin.

Mitchell Johnson removed Asad Shafiq (46) while Jason Krejza tempted skipper Shahid Afridi (two) to hole out in the deep, but Umar and Abdul Razzaq (20 not out) saw their team home with a cautious 36-run stand for the seventh wicket.

Razzaq hit two boundaries off spinner Jason Krejza

to complete the victory.

Lee had taken two wickets in his first spell, taking a smart catch off his own bowling to dismiss opener Mohammad Hafeez (five) before trapping Kamran Akmal lbw for 23.

Shafiq, who hit five boundaries during his 81-ball knock, added 53 with Younis and 41 with Umar to keep Pakistan on track.

Earlier, Gul and Razzaq (2-8) exposed the untested Australian batting after Ricky Ponting won the toss and decided to bat on a seemingly flat R. Premadasa stadium pitch.

Haddin (42), Michael Clarke (34) and Steve Smith (25) offered some resistance as Pakistan applied relentless pressure to take the last seven Australian wickets for a mere 59 runs after they were 117-3.

Pakistan, who opened the attack with left-arm spinner Abdur Rehman from one end, forced an early breakthrough when Gul bowled opener Shane Watson with a sharp incoming delivery for nine.

Haddin added 63 for the second wicket with Ponting (19) before Pakistan struck twice, with Hafeez removing the Australian skipper off a miscued cut, caught by wicket-keeper Kamran Akmal.

Umpire Marais Erasmus of South Africa turned down a vociferous appeal before Pakistan successfully overturned the verdict on review to leave Australia 75-2.

Left-arm pacer Wahab Riaz then had Haddin caught behind by Kamran in the 24th over. Haddin hit three boundaries and a six during his 80-ball knock.

Pakistan then took four crucial wickets in the space

of just 30 runs to reduce the Australians to 147-7, including wickets of Clarke and Michael Hussey for 12.

Gul removed Krejza and Lee cheaply to wrap the Australian innings for their sixth lowest World Cup total.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the World Cup Group A match between Pakistan and Australia at the R Premadasa Stadium in Colombo on Saturday:

AUSTRALIA			
Watson b Gul			
Haddin c Kamran b Riaz	42		
Ponting c Kamran b Hafeez	19		
Clarke b Razzaq	34		
White run out	8		
Hussey c Misbah b Rehman	12		
Smith b Afridi	25		
Johnson c Kamran b Razzaq	0		
Krejza b Gul	7		
Lee c Misbah b Gul	5		
Tait not out	0		
Extras: (lb-5, w-10)	15		
Total: (All out in 46.4 overs)	176		
Fall of wickets: 1-12, 2-75, 3-90, 4-117, 5-134, 6-144, 7-147, 8-169, 9-176			

PAKISTAN			
Kamran lbw b Lee	23		
Hafeez c and b Lee	5		
Shafiq c Watson b Johnson	46		
Younis c Haddin b Lee	31		
Misbah c Haddin b Lee	0		
Umar not out	44		
Afridi c Lee b Krejza	2		
Razzaq not out	20		
Extras: (b-2, lb-1, w-4)	7		
Total: (For 6 wks in 41 overs)	178		
Did not bat: Rehman, Gul, Riaz			
Fall of wickets: 1-12, 2-45, 3-98, 4-98, 5-139, 6-142			

PAKISTAN			
Lee	8	1	28
Tait	8	1	37
Johnson	9	1	40
Watson	6	0	26
Krejza	10	0	44

Result: Pakistan won by four wickets.

Man-of-the-match: Umar Akmal.



Zimbabwe wicketkeeper Tatenda Taibu is about to throw a ball during practice at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata yesterday, ahead of today's World Cup match against Kenya here.

PHOTO: AFP

SPORTS POLL
WEEKLY QUESTION
Which big team will miss out in the World Cup quarterfinals?
Visit the sports page of www.thedailystar.net to cast vote
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ICC Cricket World Cup
Kenya v Zimbabwe
Live from 10:00am
English Premiership
Sunderland v Liverpool
Live from 7:25pm
Chelsea v Man City
Live from 9:55pm
BTV/STAR Sports/STAR Cricket
ICC Cricket World Cup
India v West Indies
Live from 3:00pm
TEN Action
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