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Captain Jason Holder (R) led his side from the front with a four-wicket burst as the West Indies thrashed UAE by seven wickets at the McLean Park in Napier yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

There's no rift: captain Holder

AFP, Napier

West Indies skipper Jason Holder dismissed talk of a rift in the ranks Sunday as he led his side to a likely World Cup quarterfinal against New Zealand.

Holder, a surprise choice to lead the West Indies to the World Cup, appeared to be involved in an on-field argument with former captain Darren Sammy during their must-win final Pool B match against the United Arab Emirates in Napier.

The West Indies' eventual six-wicket victory propelled them into the knock-out phase, with only an unlikely tie in the final match between Pakistan and Ireland in Adelaide able to derail them.

The mission seemed in the bag when Holder won the toss, put UAE into bat and rapidly reduced them to 46-6 before Nasir Aziz and Amjad Javed staged a 107-run stand.

Sammy was brought on to try to break the partnership with the score at 108-6 after 30 overs and was not happy when taken out of the attack after just one over that yielded four runs.

Sammy and Holder appeared having strong words which Holder later played down as "a little banter on the field" saying they wanted to have some fun but "unfortunately it probably didn't look that way."

He later conceded they "had a little tussle there. It's just part of the game. At the end of the day we shake hands and still smile together."

Sammy later posted a picture on Instagram of him enjoying a beer with Holder in the locker room although his conciliatory smile was in stark contrast to his captain's stony-faced expression.

The West Indies World Cup campaign has been dogged with suggestions of unhappiness in the camp with the 23-year-old Holder struggling to get the respect of the senior players.

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Windies eyes on Kiwis now

REUTERS, Napier

West Indies captain Jason Holder praised his team's effort in the do-or-die clash against United Arab Emirates on Sunday and will target the batting of World Cup quarterfinal opponents New Zealand in Wellington next week.

West Indies secured a spot in the knockout stage after finishing fourth in Pool B following their six-wicket win over UAE in Napier.

"I couldn't ask for anything more. It was a must-win and we had to win by a big margin," Holder told reporters at McLean Park. "The way the guys came out and played cricket today I can't say much more."

West Indies had been facing elimination if they could not secure a large win on Sunday.

Holder and Jerome Taylor reduced UAE to 46 for six before Amjad Javed and Nasir Aziz combined for a 107-run partnership that gave their score some credibility.

The Associate nation were eventually dis-

The Export Leader



missed for 175 and Holder's team romped to 176-4 in the 31st over, with Johnson Charles (55) and Jonathan Carter (50 not out) providing the bulk of the runs.

Charles's form will put pressure on Dwayne Smith, who has scored just 93 runs in six innings, for the quarterfinals if Chris Gayle is fit enough to play after he pulled out of Sunday's match with a back injury.

Holder expects him to play in Wellington next Saturday.

"He has had the same back problem he has had for a year and he has good days and bad days," Holder said of Gayle's injury.

"But he is a crucial player for us going into the quarterfinal. He will be up for it, even if he is not 100 per cent.

"He is a big game player and we all know what he can do on those days.

"Obviously Johnson played a very good innings and has probably pretty much secured his spot for the next game but we will sit down, see the conditions and pick the team."

Holder was mindful they could still possibly face Australia in the quarterfinals but were expecting to face Brendon McCullum's side.

"New Zealand has been playing some pretty decent cricket," he added in noting McCullum's side were unbeaten.

"They have done reasonably well up top with guys like [Martin] Guptill, McCullum and Kane Williamson, so obviously the quicker we get into their middle order, the better off for us."

Tauqir thanks SA pacers

AFP, Napier

World Cup amateurs United Arab Emirates prepared to head home to their day jobs Sunday with words of thanks to Dale Steyn and Morne Morkel and one regret over a dropped catch against Ireland.

The UAE's World Cup comeback, 19 years after their one and only previous appearance, ended with a sixth straight loss when the West Indies pulled off a six-wicket win at McLean Park in Napier.

"It was a satisfactory performance from us, but we know we could have done better," captain Mohammad Tauqir said.

"Overall the whole tournament has been very special for the whole team."

Morkel and Steyn were singled out for a ferocious spell of intimidating bowling which Tauqir took as recognition that his team of part-timers deserved to be part of cricket's ODI showpiece.

"I'm very thankful to them for bowl-

ing to us they way they did," said Tauqir, who scored three before he was bowled by Steyn.

"By facing them it gave us a lot of confidence. We almost played 48 overs in that match and it was the most hostile bowling we faced in this tournament."

UAE's closest game was against Ireland who won with two wickets in hand and just four balls to spare.

But that game turned when Ireland's Kevin O'Brien was dropped on 24 on his way to notching a half-century.

Tauqir was in no doubt that "if that catch was taken we would definitely have won that game."

Meanwhile, Tauqir, a 43-year-old banker, and his fellow 43-year-old deputy Khurram Khan, an airline purser, prepared to put aside full-time cricket for a while but harboured thoughts of still being around in four years for the next World Cup.

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SARFRAZ AHMED

That Pakistan suddenly picked their form and turned their fortunes in this World Cup, owes as much to their seam bowlers as to Sarfraz Ahmed. The wicketkeeper-batsman wasn't considered for the first four matches of the tournament due to some indifferent form. So the selectors tried Younis Khan and Nasir Jamshed to partner Ahmed Shehzad in the opener's role. But both failed to impress and Sarfraz's chance came in the fifth match, against South Africa. The stylish right-hander grabbed the opportunity with a run-a-ball 49, only to be dismissed through a run out, before claiming six catches behind the stumps as Pakistan breezed past high-flying South Africa. Yesterday, in a must-win game, Sarfraz gave his side the start they needed with an unbeaten hundred as Pakistan comfortably chased down Ireland's 237 with 23 balls to spare.

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WORLD CUP COCKTAIL

An imposter posing as a former Pakistani cricketer has duped the BBC into paying him to appear as an expert on cricket shows and even took part in a discussion involving ex-Indian batsman Aakash Chopra. Nadeem Alam posed as ex-batsman Nadeem Abbasi to give his "expert" opinion on BBC World News, BBC Asian Network and Radio Five Live, despite only ever playing cricket for his home town of Huddersfield. Abbasi, furious about the fraudster's deceit, has decried the BBC for failing to check its facts. "If I ever find Nadeem Alam, I will punch him in the face for damaging the country's reputation. The BBC is a big institution and surely they must check?" he told the Sun newspaper. Abbasi, a wicket-keeper batsman, played in three Tests for Pakistan in 1989. Alam, however, told the daily that he is "no longer pretending to be Nadeem Abbasi." "I like to think I have been talking good cricket," he said. The BBC has apologised and launched an inquiry.

Johnson's milestone

It's not quite the gift Ricky Ponting received from his teammates after his Test career but Mitchell Johnson was chuffed nevertheless with how his 150th one-day international appearance was commemorated. The left-arm pace demon was given two bottles of Penfolds Bin 150, which



India losing sleep over schedule

India's cricketers have already complained about the quality of food and the state of practice wickets this summer, you can now add travel to their list of gripes. Though this time they might have a bit more sympathy. Captain MS Dhoni was not happy with a schedule which left them with just a four-day gap between matches in Perth and Hamilton. The fixture meant Dhoni's men had to travel from Perth to Melbourne on March 7 for a connecting flight to Auckland, arriving in New Zealand at midnight local time. They then had a one-and-a-half hour bus trip to Hamilton, which is five hours in front of Perth. The Indians will fly to Melbourne on Monday for their quarter-final with Bangladesh. "[We] hope to get decent business class seats so that we are properly rested before our next game!" Dhoni said. "A lot of people had problems in adjusting with the change of time and it affected their sleeping pattern."

retail at \$75 each, though his will be worth infinitely more. One was signed by Australia's World Cup squad to be kept as a memento. "Thanks to the lads for making my 150th game special!" Johnson tweeted. Ponting was given 33 bottles of Grange Hermitage, one for each Test century, when he hung up the baggy green in 2012.

Zimbabwe facing difficult times

Zimbabwe's cricket director, Alistair Campbell, fears the country might have a "bleak future" unless their players can lift to fill the void left by the departure of star batsman Brendan Taylor. Campbell is worried Zimbabwe will not get enough matches from the major nations in order to qualify automatically for the 2019 World Cup and says the players must accept that "their futures lie in their hands." "By winning more games and being consistently more competitive, they will ensure themselves a future," wrote Campbell. --COMPILED