



West Indies pacer Sheldon Cottrell brought out the salute early as he picked up two quick wickets against New Zealand to reduce the Kiwis to seven for two, but Ross Taylor (R) and centurion Kane Williamson put on a 160-run stand to steady the ship at Old Trafford yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Pak selection challenged in High Court

AGENCIES, Islamabad

A petition against the abysmal performance and team selection of the Pakistan cricket team was filed in the Islamabad High Court yesterday.

The petition, filed by Advocate Bilal Farooq, states the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is answerable to the nation and "owing to its present-day precarious operations is causing shame, disrepute and dishonour to the citizens."

It adds that "in the backdrop of recent failures of the Pakistan team and the gradual downfall of the standard of cricket in the country and lastly the manifest politicking and nepotism", the respondents should be answerable.

The petitioner has named prime minister Imran Khan -- patron-in-chief of the PCB -- the ministry of interprovincial coordination, the PCB and its selection committee as respondents in the case.

The petition demands the formation of a fact-finding commission over reports of groups being formed in the current squad and an inquiry against those responsible.

It also requests that Rashid Latif, Shoaib Akhtar and Muhammad Wasim be subpoenaed to give their opinion on the petition and provide technical input.

"One player, namely Shoaib Malik, has previously been found guilty of this. It is for the respondents to answer as to why and how a player of such credentials and such mediocre cricketing skills is still part of the team," it states.

Bowling will decide Australia's clash with England, says Border

REUTERS, London

Bowling will be decisive when Australia meet England at the Cricket World Cup on Tuesday and the reigning champions should consider giving spinner Nathan Lyon a runout at some point in the round-robin stage, former captain Allan Border has said.

Australia currently top the standings from New Zealand with England in third place after the hosts lost by 20 runs to Sri Lanka on Friday, undone by some brilliant pace bowling from the evergreen Lasith Malinga.

Border, who helped Australia to victory over England in the 1987 final, said Aaron Finch's side were building nicely and he could not wait for the resumption of cricket's oldest international rivalry at Lord's in midweek.

"Rivalries run deep and bragging rights are up for grabs ahead of the semi-finals," Border told ICC media.

"It's going to be a good assessment for both teams in terms of where they're at. England are playing this gung-ho form of cricket and are red-hot favourites.

"The game will be won and lost in the bowling. If Australia can hold their ground against the onslaught and put pressure

back on England, that'll be key.

"Both sides have potential to post big scores, so whoever takes those opportunities will win."

In left-arm paceman Mitchell Starc, Australia have the joint highest wicket-taker in the tournament but Border felt off-spinner Lyon, the only unused player in the squad, might give the five-times champions an extra edge.

"The full 100-over performance hasn't been there quite yet, and I've just got a little voice at the back of my head saying 'try Nathan Lyon in a couple of these games,'" he added.

"He's a wicket-taker and knows how to get people out. Test bowling is obviously different, but Lyon is a good attacking bowler and gets lots of revs on the ball.

"The mindset of players now is to really attack the opposition spinner, and it can go two ways, but the other side of the coin is that to win this tournament you're probably going to need to have more of an attacking mindset so that you can limit the opposition."

Leg-spinner Adam Zampa got the nod ahead of Lyon in the matches against India, when he went 0-50 in six overs, and Bangladesh, when he conceded 68 runs for his solitary wicket.

New Zealand survive Brathwaite fireworks

AFP, Manchester

New Zealand boosted their bid to reach the World Cup semi-finals as Kane Williamson's 148 set up a dramatic five-run win over the West Indies on Saturday.

Williamson's imperious 154-ball innings laid the foundations for New Zealand's 291-8 at Old Trafford.

In a thrilling run-chase, West Indies all-rounder Carlos Brathwaite hit 101 from 82 balls to carry his team to the brink of victory before being caught on the boundary going for what would have been the winning six.

New Zealand are top of the 10-team table with five wins from six matches.

SCORES IN BRIEF
NEW ZEALAND: 291 for 8 in 50 overs (Williamson 148, Taylor 69; Cottrell 4-56, Brathwaite 2-58)

WEST INDIES: 286 all out in 49 overs (Gayle 87, Hetmyer 54, Brathwaite 101; Boult 4-30, Ferguson 3-59)

Result: New Zealand won by 5 runs.

Player-of-the-match: Kane Williamson



West Indies destroyer Chris Gayle celebrated a little too hard after picking up the wicket of New Zealand's Ross Taylor yesterday, jokingly grabbing his shoulder afterwards.

PHOTO: REUTERS



BEST QUOTE

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Teams have lost before, they will lose again, but now with social media so big it gets unstoppable. There should be no abusing, criticise our game. That's not an issue. I have said before cricket is such a game that it takes you high one day and then you fall the other day.

Sarfraz Ahmed
 Pakistan captain



(L) Lasith Malinga may have been the hero of the match on the pitch, but there were plenty of Sri Lankans providing vociferous support from the stands during their side's stunning World Cup win against England on Friday.



PHOTO: SL/ICC

Sri Lanka erupts in celebration

AFP, Colombo

Streets in Sri Lanka were lit up by firecrackers and front pages celebrated victory after the national cricket team's stunning World Cup win over England.

Residents in the capital Colombo and across the nation celebrated wildly after as low-ranking Sri Lanka unexpectedly beat England on their home soil by 20 runs to open up the race for a semi-final spot.

"Battered and bruised Lions decimate empire," the local Daily Mirror said while the Island daily front-page the match report with a bold banner headline: "SRI LANKA BEAT ENGLAND."

President Maithripala Sirisena welcomed the "competitive spirit" of the national team while Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe was among the first to congratulate the team.

Sri Lanka captain Dimuth Karunaratne praised Lasith Malinga and Angelo Mathews -- whose painstaking 85 not out helped them recover from a collapse to three for two.

Sri Lanka's 1996 World Cup winning skipper Arjuna Ranatunga said earlier in the week that Karunaratne and his team had improved during the current tournament.

"When we look at the team, they have improved a lot compared to where they were before the tournament. Our weakness is the

team management," Ranatunga said on Monday. Last week, the team faced censure after failing to fulfil their media duties following the damaging defeat against Australia.

Karunaratne's side were beaten by 87 runs at the Oval, leaving their hopes of progressing to the semi-finals hanging by a slender thread.

Sri Lanka's refusal to meet the media came days after their team manager Asantha de Mel slammed the ICC's treatment of the squad.

Sri Lanka -- who have now beaten England in four successive World Cups -- next play South Africa in Durham a week on Friday and Malinga said: "We want to carry on the momentum and confidence into the other matches."

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Although he conceded 110 runs -- the most by any bowler in World Cup history -- against England in their previous game, Afghanistan leg-spinner Rashid Khan bounced back well to give away just 38 runs from his ten overs while also picked up a wicket against India yesterday. Rashid restricted Mahendra Singh Dhoni for some time and eventually dismissed the experienced batsman when he tried to free his arms and came down the track. The bowler's leg-spin, which took a slight turn, deceived Dhoni, who totally missed the line to be stumped on 28. A relieved Rashid celebrated the wicket with a huge smile on his face it what was indeed a happy moment for the Afghans.