

## Yuvraj's WC in jeopardy

REUTERS, Mumbai

Injured India batsman Yuvraj Singh may require knee surgery and could be ruled out of the World Cup in March-April, a team physiotherapist said on Tuesday.

The 24-year-old, a key middle-order batsman, tore ligaments in his left knee playing on the eve of the Champions Trophy clash against eventual winners Australia in Mohali on October 29.

"It will be touch and go for the World Cup because of the length of time it takes to recover from such an injury," Andrew Leipus, consultant physio with the Indian board, told Reuters.

"My understanding is he will have to undergo surgery as the torn ligament needs to be reconstructed," Leipus said.

The injury seems to have sidelined the left-handed batsman for the South Africa tour starting on November 19. He has already been ruled out of the one-dayers which will be played first.

Leipus was India's physio for five years until 2004 and now works as a consultant.

Yuvraj will be examined again by the board's orthopaedic surgeon Anant Joshi next week when a decision on his treatment is expected to be made.

The Punjab player, who has featured in 159 one-dayers and 19 tests, has grown in stature as an aggressive batsman and superb fielder in the point region.

He was nominated for the ICC One-day Player of the Year award which was won last week by Australia's Mike Hussey.

## Inzamam fearful

AFP, London

Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq has admitted his team are now in "serious trouble" after the drugs bans handed out to strike fast bowlers Shoaib Akhtar and Mohammad Asif.

A Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) tribunal on last week banned Akhtar for two years and the less-experienced Asif for 12 months after they each tested positive for the prohibited steroid nandrolone, a performance-enhancing drug.

Their absence leaves Pakistan short of bowling firepower for the West Indies series which starts this weekend and the tour of South Africa early next year.

Inzamam is returning to lead the team after a four-game ban imposed after Pakistan's forfeit of the fourth Test against England at The Oval in August which saw him miss the Champions Trophy one-dayers in India.

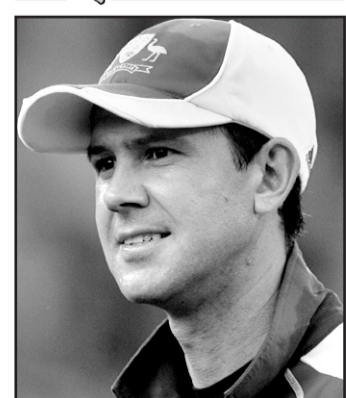
And he returns to an attack where seamer Umar Gul and leg-spinner Danish Kaneria are now the key bowlers.

"Our preparations for the West Indies series have not been helped by the bans on Shoaib Akhtar and Mohammad Asif," Inzamam said Monday in his diary on the Bigstarcricket.com website.



## Did U Know?

For the first time tests to detect EPO and blood tests were performed in the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games.



## Ricky Ponting

(Australia cricket captain) "It's a great feeling to win what we had not been able to do till now." After winning the maiden ICC Champions Trophy title.



ESPN Sportscenter India Live at 8:30 pm



Acme captain Habibul Bashar (L) receives the GrameenPhone Corporate League trophy from Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) general secretary Mahbul Anam at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium yesterday.

## Indian masters join media to blast Aus



AFP, New Delhi

Cricket stars Sunil Gavaskar and Sachin Tendulkar joined the Indian media Tuesday in lashing out at Australian players following incidents after the Champions Trophy final.

Ricky Ponting's men were taken to task for pushing Indian cricket chief Sharad Pawar off the presentation stage after Australia's eight-wicket win over the West Indies in Sunday's final in Mumbai.

Ponting, visibly impatient after the long presentation ceremony, gestured towards Pawar with his forefinger, asking him to quickly give away the trophy which Australia had won for the first time in five editions.

Newspapers Tuesday displayed pictures of Australian batsman Damien Martyn pushing Pawar with his right hand, urging him to get off the stage so that the team could pose with the trophy.

The picture in the Indian Express came under the headline: "This is how champions behave when they get the trophy."

The Times of India added: "They are supposed to be aggressive, even rude on the field. On Sunday, Australia showed they are not exactly polite off it too."

Former India captain Gavaskar, who was also present on the stage, said he was "hurt" by the incident and was "not amused" when another Australian player greeted Pawar as "hiya buddy."

"I am not amused by one of the Australian players who said 'hiya buddy' when he went up to receive his medal from Mr. Pawar," the legendary opener told the Mumbai-based Mid-Day newspaper.

"Just receive it quietly. You are not in your country. In India, we respect our elders."

"Certain decorum has to be maintained, you have to show respect. Would they have done such a thing to their prime minister?" said Gavaskar.

Current superstar Tendulkar, who usually prefers to stay silent on controversial matters, also took a swipe at the Australians.

"I was not watching the proceedings but from what I heard, it was unpleasant and uncalled for," Tendulkar was quoted as saying at a sponsors' function in Mumbai on Monday.

"Firstly, it should never have happened. It's important to show respect to a person who is so dear to the cricketers and is involved with cricket."

"Such incidents should be avoided."

India's chief cricket selector Dilip Vengsarkar added: "You expect such behaviour from uneducated people. If they wanted to pose for photographs, they could have politely requested him. This is appalling."

Indian cricket board secretary Niranjan Shah described the incident as "unintentional," but added: "Anyway, you know how players are once they get on the cricket field. They seem to leave good sense behind."

Pawar, a political heavyweight and federal agriculture minister, laughed off the incident.

"It was a small thing, a stupid thing," Pawar was quoted as saying in the Hindustan Times. "I don't want to react."

The Australians left for home Monday to prepare for the Ashes Tests against England, starting November 23.

## Mariners stay on course

UNB, Dhaka

Dhaka Mariner Youngs Club retained their second position in the first phase of the Green Delta Insurance Premier Division Hockey League as they beat Sonali Bank 3-1 at the Maulana Bhashani National Stadium yesterday.

Rahul, Shishu and Mariner's Pakistani recruit Arshad scored one goal each while Sonali Bank's Gurinder Singh netted the consolation goal.

With this win, Mariners join Abahani as they now have 18 points from eight matches while Sonali Bank remained at 12 points.

## CA to inquire 'rude' team behaviour

AFP, Sydney

Cricket Australia (CA) said Tuesday it would investigate reports of rude behaviour by the Australian team after its Champions Trophy win in India last weekend.

Ricky Ponting's men were taken to task in Indian newspapers Tuesday for pushing Indian cricket chief Sharad Pawar off the presentation dais after Australia's eight-wicket win over the West Indies in Sunday's final in Mumbai.

The Australians arrived home Tuesday to prepare for this month's home Ashes series with England.

Cricket Australia (CA) spokesman Peter Young said the organisation would investigate the claims this week.

"The players have only just arrived back in Australia and over the course of the next few days we will just be finding out what, if anything, did or did not happen," he said.

Young said the players were thrilled to have won the biennial tournament.

"It is a bit of a holy grail because it was the only trophy in world cricket they had not won," he said.

Young said the players had talked about the importance of respect for players and officials at the pre-Ashes boot camp in August.

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"Such incidents should be avoided."

Martyn and Ponting were unable to be reached for comment late Tuesday, while Martyn's management said it was unaware of the incident.

## I want to help

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There was also a hint of humour about the press meet when an apologetic looking Zidane said that he was sorry that he was not able to comment on Indian football because of the lack of transmission in Spain or France!

But the man affectionately called Zizou saved the best for last. When an overeager reporter engaged the services of Professor Yunus to ask the ex-Real Madrid star to take over as coach of Bangladesh, Zidane answered with a wry smile and the hint of a nod.

However, professor Yunus rescued him from the predicament by answering the reporter saying that he had talked about that very thing with Zidane and maybe something could be arranged in the future.

"Maybe in the future," was Prof. Yunus's reply.

## ZZ marked out!

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sking for the ball and when he did not get one, he rushed to even take a throw-in; he held the ball for long moments under his foot and dribbled one or two before sending a few defence splitting passes; there was a stopper and a darting run down the flank and a superlative lay-off and wall passes to break the defence but one thing for sure, he looked out of practice. He took two shots at goal and both were saved by the goalkeeper before he waved the public goodbye from the field and beat a hasty retreat.

## Ganguly reminds again



AFP, New Delhi

Former India captain Sourav Ganguly said Tuesday he had not lost hope of playing in next year's World Cup in the Caribbean after returning to form with a century in a domestic tournament.

The 34-year-old reminded national selectors that he had plenty of cricket left in him when he hammered an unbeaten 118 for East Zone against North Zone in a first-class Duleep Trophy match at Guwahati on Monday.

"If God permits, I'll play the World Cup," said Ganguly, who has not played a one-day international since September 2005.

The stylish left-hander was sacked as captain last year and later dropped from the national side following unfavourable comments from coach Greg Chappell, who branded Ganguly a "disrupting influence".

He was also axed from the Test squad after the tour of Pakistan in February despite leading the team

for an Indian record of 21 victories. Ganguly, playing domestic cricket this season in a bid to regain his place, managed to impress one of the selectors watching the match.

"It's just a matter of getting a couple of hundreds and Sourav will be on the plane to South Africa for the Test series," The Times of India on Tuesday quoted the unnamed selector as saying.

Ganguly has already been ignored for this month's one-day series in South Africa, but still hopes to regain a Test berth. The squad for a three-Test series will be named in the first week of December.

After returning from the South African tour in January, India will play four one-day internationals each against Sri Lanka and West Indies at home before leaving for the Caribbean in the last week of February.

"My job is to score runs and the rest is up to the selectors in whom I have a lot of faith," Ganguly told the Hindustan Times.

Former Test captain Dilip Vengsarkar is India's new chief cricket selector, with former left-arm spinner Venkatapathy Raju also

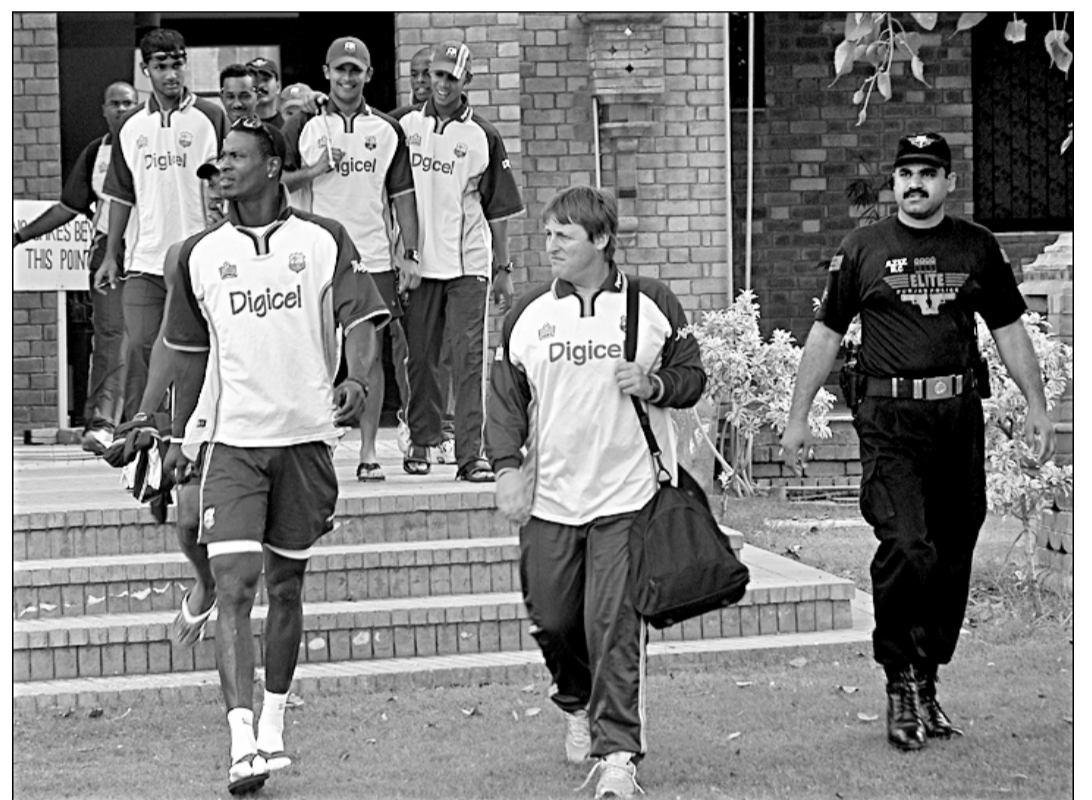
joining the five-man panel. "He (Vengsarkar) is someone who has played a lot of cricket and knows what it takes to compete and perform at the international level," said Ganguly, who has scored 5,221 runs in 88 Tests with 12 centuries.

"He is a former India captain and he knows what would make the best India XI. I have a lot of faith in him."

Ganguly said he was happy to return to big-scores after being under pressure for a long time. "I was determined to play a big knock. I was under immense pressure to do well, but pressure is something I've faced all my life and I am happy that I came through this test," he said.

"I always had faith in my abilities and knew it was only a matter of time before I would be back among runs."

Ganguly's knock came just after India had lost eight of their last 12 one-dayers. Rahul Dravid's side were eliminated in the league phase of the recent Champions Trophy at home.



West Indies cricketers arrive for their first practice session at the Gaddafi Cricket Stadium in Lahore on Tuesday.

## Absence of Pak pace pair boosts WI chances: Lara



AFP, Lahore

The absence of doping-tainted Pakistani bowlers Shoaib Akhtar and Mohammad Asif will boost the chances of the West Indies in their series against Pakistan, captain Brian Lara said Tuesday.

"I think there is no reason to hide the fact it (the absence of Akhtar and Asif) would definitely give us the advantage," Lara told a news conference.

A 15-man West Indies squad arrived here Monday to play three Tests and a five-match one-day series against Pakistan. The first Test starts here on Saturday.

A Pakistan doping tribunal last week banned Akhtar for two years and Asif for one year after both tested positive for banned steroid nandrolone. Asif has appealed against the ban while Akhtar is to appeal in the next few days.

Lara, however, said his team would try to play good cricket to win.

"I am not worried about the advantage because what happened to Akhtar and Asif is a sorry situation. I came to know Akhtar in the world series last year and although I don't know Asif much but he has shown potential."

"It is an unfortunate situation. No team would like to lose their key players but we will have to play good cricket and know we need to improve at Test level," said Lara, whose team has won only one of their past 14 Tests.

Their lone Test win came against Pakistan on home ground last year. However, Lara's men are doing well in one-day cricket. They reached the final of the Champions Trophy in India, eventually losing to world champions Australia in Mumbai on Sunday.

Before the eight-nation Trophy they lost to Australia in the final of a triangular one-day series in Malaysia.

Lara said he hoped his team would rise to the challenge of switching to the longer format of the Test game.

"The Champions Trophy was one-day competition so it would be important to transfer the good form into Test cricket. The boys have this opportunity to do well in the subcontinent and they are keen to do well."

"Pakistan has other good bowlers like leg-spinner Danish Kaneria, who has been successful against us in recent times so we will have to be at our best to beat them," said Lara, who started his Test career in Pakistan 15 years ago.

"My first tour was also of Pakistan and I have good memories of this country. I want to leave a nice legacy. These three Tests are important and we hope it would be a good series," he said.

The West Indies team is touring Pakistan after a gap of nine years. They refused to tour the country over security fears in the wake of the September 11, 2001 attacks. Pakistan had to play two Tests at neutral venue Sharjah, in the United Arab Emirates.

The master batsman said his team were now comfortable playing in the country.

"You never know what's going to happen. But we look forward to play and enjoy cricket," he said.

West Indies' Australian coach Bennett King believes his team have the potential to do well in the Test series.

"We want to do well in (the) Test arena as it's a test of skills and we are consistently working to be very competitive. This is a very talented side but consistency is the key," said King, who took over as coach two years ago.

The second Test will be played at Multan from November 19 while the third and final match is scheduled for Karachi from November 27.

The Test series will be followed by a five-match one-day series.



Australian batsman Damien Martyn (L) is seen urging Indian cricket chief Sharad Pawar off the presentation dais so the team could pose with the trophy after their ICC Champions Trophy triumph over West Indies in Sunday's final in Mumbai.

## ICC, BCCI make friends



AFP, New Delhi

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has paved the way for securing a billion-dollar marketing deal after ending a long dispute with its commercial powerhouse India, officials said on Tuesday.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) not only agreed to sign up with the ICC for major events for the next eight years but also withdrew a controversial move to bid for the sport's global TV and marketing rights.

"We will sign the Members Participation Agreement (MPA) now because the ICC has addressed our concerns," BCCI secretary Niranjan Shah told AFP on Tuesday.

"We have also told the ICC that we will not bid for the global TV rights for the next eight years."

The BCCI had initially declined to sign the MPA in its earlier form after objecting to the clauses which prevented its players from endorsing products that were rivals of the ICC's official sponsors.

Officials, however, refused to reveal which clauses the ICC had agreed to amend in India's favour.

If the BCCI had not signed up, India would have been prevented

from playing in ICC events like the World Cup and Champions Trophy till 2015, a huge blow to the ICC which relies on India for almost 70 percent of revenues.

Officials said the deal with India was worked out at the two-day meeting of the ICC's decision-making Executive Board in Mumbai last week on the sidelines of the Champions Trophy.

The ICC confirmed that differences with India had been resolved.

"The Executive Board achieved a successful resolution of the outstanding issues involving the MPA with the BCCI," the ICC said in a statement.

"Additionally the BCCI has agreed to withdraw its bid for the broadcast rights for ICC events from 2007-2015 after a legal opinion that indicated it would be a conflict of interest."

The ICC's current 550-million dollar deal for seven years with Global Cricket Corporation, a venture owned by Rupert Murdoch's News International, expires after the 2007 World Cup in the Caribbean.

The new deal till 2015 covers 18 ICC tournaments, including two World Cups, three Champions Trophies and the first two Twenty20 world championships.

The deal, likely to be finalised

this month, is expected to fetch the ICC over a billion dollars.

The BCCI, one of the richest cricket boards in the world, secured a whopping 612 million dollars for its own marketing rights for the next four years from Mumbai-based Nimbus Corporation.

Five of the ICC's six official sponsors advertise mainly in India whose large cricket-loving population is a sponsors' dream.

India is due to host the 2011 World Cup -- which forms part of the new agreement -- jointly with its South Asian neighbours Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

The 2015 World Cup will be hosted by Australia and New Zealand.

The ICC last month began meetings with 22 broadcast and media agencies for the sale of rights from late 2007 to 2015.

ICC president Percy Sonn on Tuesday praised India for what he called the "outstanding" conduct of the Champions Trophy, which ended on Sunday when Australia beat the West Indies in the final in Mumbai.

"On behalf of the ICC I would like to thank the BCCI for hosting an outstanding Champions Trophy," Sonn, a South African lawyer, said in a statement.

## Acme's maiden title

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ago. What a fantastic match it was. I am really excited. We lost the match because of poor top-order batting though," said veteran Akram, who had some brilliant domestic records of playing cricket with such big crowds watching.

Surprisingly, it was a first-time experience for the 'Narail Express' Mashrafe as well. He said, "This was my first big crowd experience in domestic cricket and believe me, it was fantastic."

## SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the GrameenPhone Corporate Cricket League final between Acme Laboratories and Beximco at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium on Tuesday:

## ACME

Hannan lbw Razzak	32
Jayasuriya b Nazmul	14
Aftab c Ashraf b Nazmul	56

Bashar run out	68
Ayub st Sangakkara b Razzak	12
Manjarul c Sangakkara b Mahmud	6
Rafique b Nazmul	2
Ghosh c Sangakkara b Nazmul	0
Hasibul c Razzak b Nazmul	0
Kabir b Mashrafe	11
Monjurul not out	0
Extras: (b-9, w-9, nb-5, lb-11)	34
Total: (All out in 49.5 overs)	235
Fall of wickets: 1-33, 2-78, 3-149, 4-184, 5-195, 6-207, 7-207, 8-212, 9-235	

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Kabir	10	0	48	2
Monjurul	10	1	42	2
Hasibul	5	0	21	2
Rafique	9.2	0	39	2
Aftab	6	0	24	1
Jayasuriya	7	0	37	0
Manjarul	2	0	14	0

Result: Acme won by three runs to clinch the title.

Player-of-the-final: Aftab Ahmed.

Player-of-the-tournament: Nadif Chowdhury.