one more REUTERS, Melbourne

Another major milestone is looming for Shane Warne as the Australian prepares for his final Test against England in Sydney next week -- 1,000 international wickets.

Warne needs

The 37-year-old crowned his farewell appearance at the Melbourne Cricket Ground by becoming the first player to reach 700 Tests wickets in Australia's emphatic three-day victory.

He went into the match on 699 wickets and needing just one more to reach the once-unimaginable 700 barrier and finished with seven to lift his career total to 706

Combined with his 293 one-day scalps, Warne now has 999 international wickets, leaving him on the cusp of another remarkable achievement when he farewells the game at the same ground where he made his Test debut in 1992

"I couldn't ask for this Test match to go any better, from a team point of view and a personal point of view," Warne

"And going back to Sydney, where it all started for me. If I can continue to bowl well and get a few wickets in Sydney, it'll be great.

Sri Lanka's Muttiah Muralidaran is the only bowler to have taken a 1,000 international wickets and the offspinner claimed his 1,100th victim in a one-daver against New Zealand on Thursday.

Warne stunned the cricketing world when he announced last week he was retiring after the Ashes series but said he has no regrets about his decision.

He took seven wickets in Melbourne and scored an unbeaten 40 with the bat to win the man of the match award, proving his retirement is unrelated to his form.

Sanath blazes

FROM PAGE 21 J Marshall Ibw b Vaas H Marshall c Sangakkara				0
b Fernando				17
Franklin b Malinga				2
Adams b Malinga				3
Gillespie not out				1
Extras: (lb-4, nb-4, w-4) 12				
Total: (For 8 wkts 50 overs) 285				
Fall of wickets: 1-18, 2-169, 3-222,				
4-229, 5-229, 6-257, 7-262, 8-280.				
Bowler	0	M	R	W
Vaas	10	0	50	3
Malinga	10	0	66	2
Fernando	5	0	43	1
Muralidaran	10	0	48	1
Jayasuriya	10	0	42	0
Dilshan	5	0	32	0
SRILANKA				
Thorongo a Ma Callum h Franklin 60				

Tharanga c McCallum b Franklin68 Jayasuriya c Fulton b Franklin 111 M Jayawardene not out Sangakkara c and b Vettori Atapattu not out Extras: (b-3, lb-3, nb-12, w-12) 30 Total: (For 3 wkts in 40 overs) 286 Fall of wickets: 1-201, 201-2, 3-271.

Bowler 0 М R W 0 Franklin 69 Mason 60 0 Gillespie 64 54 0 Adams Vettori 0 36 Result: Sri Lanka won by seven wickets.

Man-of-the-match: Sanath Jayasuriya.

Toss: New Zealand Umpires: Steve Davis (AUS), Tony Hill (NZL) Television umpire: Evan Watkin



English cricketer George Gunn was recalled at the age of fifty to tour West Indies after an interval of 17 years.





Jagmohan Dalmiya (Former Indian cricket board chief)

"I am confident that I will fully regain the opportunity to continue to serve the game of cricket with full honour.'

After quitting the post of the president of Cricket Association of Bengal.

Asif set for SA tour

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Pakistan are considering sending an extended 17-member squad for next month's tour of South Africa, according to Igbal Qasim, who is standing in for chief selector Wasim Bari. The team is due to be announced on December 29.

Qasim, a former Test cricketer, said the selectors still have to take a couple of key decisions before announcing the squad. "We are undecided on the final composition and are also considering including an extra member in the squad," he

The national team probables are currently in a conditioning camp at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore, ahead of the tour that begins on January 6 with a tour match against South Africa A.

Pakistan are unlikely to make any surprise changes in the Test squad that won the home series against the West Indies 2-0 earlier this season though Mohammad Asif, the Pakistan seamer involved in the drug controversy along with Shoaib Akhtar, is sure to make a comeback.

Shoaib, however, remains doubtful after having failed to impress much in the few domestic games he took part in recently.

Shoaib and Asif missed the Champions Trophy and the series against the West Indies because of the ban for testing positive for nandrolone. However, the two were cleared by an appeals committee earlier this month and are available for the tour of South Africa.

While Asif has proved his form and fitness in the recently concluded Twenty20 Cup, Shoaib is yet to convince the selectors.

Qasim, who was in Lahore to witness the conditioning camp on December 27, refrained from commenting on Shoaib's physical fitness. "We have seen Shoaib play in domestic matches and also in the camp," he said. "The bowler

remains in contention for a place in the team.

If Shoaib is overlooked for the tour of South Africa. Mohammad Sami is most likely to get the selectors' nod.

Sami was dropped from the Test squad against West Indies after a disappointing tour of England this summer in which he took eight wickets at 58.25 from three Tests. But he returned for the last two

one-day games against West Indies and took two wickets for 76 from two matches.

Another decision to be considered. Qasim said, involved the inclusion of a reserve wicketkeeper for the tour, an idea suggested by Bob Woolmer, the coach. Pakistan A team's Zulgarnain Haider is expected to be included in touring party as



BACK FOR GOOD? Pakistan fast bowler Mohammad Asif is on his delivery stride as teammate Younis Khan (L) watches him during a practice session at the Gadaffi Stadium in Lahore on Thursday.

Panelist slams drug upend

Cricket

An expert on a panel which overturned doping bans on Shoaib Akhtar and Mohammad Asif said Wednesday that the handling of the case by Pakistani cricket authorities did not meet international standards.

Danish Zaheer, who is also vice-president of the Asian Federation of Sports Medicine, said the original tests on the pacemen were flawed as there was confusion over a urine sample, while forms were not dated properly.

But Zaheer, the only member of the three-man appeals committee that voted against clearing the new-ball pair, said the decision to lift the bans was also against world doping guidelines.

"There were numerous evidence-based major departures and non-compliance with international standards while con-

ducting tests on the Pakistani cricketers and due to these the whole procedure becomes null and void," Zaheer told reporters.

A Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) tribunal in November banned Akthar for two years and Asif for one after they tested positive for the banned steroid Zaheer said the "PCB's test-

ing procedure was flawed" and that the committee which originally banned the pair should have taken several technical problems into account

"There was no proper notification to the players for the tests, as you need to give players written notifications before testing, but instead players were informed on the telephone," he

"There were no names on the forms. Asif's form had no date on it and it could not be established whose urine sample it was, whether of (Pakistan captain) Inzamamul Haq or of Akhtar,"

An appeals tribunal headed by a retired high court judge overturned the bans on December 5 on the grounds that the pair had not knowingly taken the drugs and had not been fully educated about doping.

"The two bowlers did not know much about doping and that was why they refused to have their 'B' samples tested, which was very important," said Zaheer. But Zaheer, the dissenting

voice in the 2-1 verdict, said the reasons for clearing them were also not acceptable. "I differed on the verdict sim-

ply because... those (reasons) given by the appellate may not be acceptable to the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA)," said WADA last week challenged

the lifting of the bans in the Court of Arbitration for Sports in Switzerland. The International Cricket Council has backed its

Aussies rout England Warne not out

FROM PAGE 21

Pietersen, promoted above Paul Collingwood to No.4 in the order, lasted just nine balls before he was beaten by Clark and bowled offstump for one.

Collingwood was out for 16 in a soft dismissal, taking a Lee delivery on the rise and driving straight to Justin Langer close to the wicket.

Andrew Strauss was out to the fifth ball after tea, nibbling at Lee to be caught by Gilchrist for 31 made in 174 minutes

Clark struck again for the third time, trapping Flintoff leg before wicket for 25, to expose England's brittle tail at 108 for six.

Shane Warne removed Sajid Mahmood (0) and Steve Harmison (4), both lbw, to reach 706 Test

"To play against the second best side in the world and be four-nil up. and to play the way we're playing, I

don't think any Australian side I've played in has played so good at the moment." Warne said. Lee had Monty Panesar caught

in the gully for 14 and clinched victory when he bowled Matthew Hoggard for five. Chris Read remained not out on 26, made in 127 minutes Warne, playing in his last Test in

Melbourne before he retires after next week's final Test, remained unbeaten on 40, with six fours, in Australia's first innings total of 419. McGrath, who will also retire

from Test cricket in Sydney, was last man out for a duck, giving Mahmood four wickets for the innings, while wicketkeeper Read

marked his debut Ashes Test with six catches

Symonds only added two runs to his overnight total before he was out for 156

He had a rush of blood and chased after a wide ball from Steve Harmison to edge to Read and end his five-and-a-half hour knock containing 15 boundaries and the six off Collingwood that brought up his maiden Test century on Wednesday

Clark gave Read his sixth dismissal, off Mahmood for eight, before McGrath lasted six balls for his 35th Test duck, second only in Test cricket to West Indian Courtney Walsh (43).

Mahmood finished England's most successful bowler with 4-100 off 21.3 overs, with Flintoff taking 3-77 off 22 overs

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard on the third day of the fourth Ashes Test between Australia and England at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Thursday

ENGLAND: First innings 159 (Strauss 50, Collingwood 28; Warne 5-39) AUSTRALIA: First innings (372 for 7 overnight) Langer c Read b Flintoff

Hayden c Read b Mahmood 153 Lee c Read b Flintoff Ponting c Cook b Flintoff Hussey b Hoggard Clarke c Read b Harmison Symonds c Read b Harmison 156 Gilchrist c Collingwood b Mahmood

Clark c Read b Mahmood McGrath c Bell b Mahmood Extras: (lb-6, w-1, nb-9) 16 Total: (All out in 108.3 overs) 419 Fall of wickets: 1-44, 2-44, 3-62, 4-79, 5-84, 6-363, 7-365, 8-383, 9-417, 10-419.

Bowler 0 6 82 21 Hoggard Flintoff 22 77 Harmison 28 6 69 Mahmood 21.3 100 Panesar 12 52 Collingwood 3 0 20 0 13 Pietersen **ENGLAND:** Second innings

20

2

16

25

Strauss c Gilchrist b Lee Cook b Clark Bell Ibw b McGrath Pietersen b Clark Collingwood c Langer b Lee Flintoff lbw b Clark Read not out Mahmood Ibw b Warne

Harmison Ibw b Warne 4 Panesar c Clarke b Lee 14 Hoggard b Lee 5 Extras: (lb-12, w-1, nb-4) 17 Total: (All out in 65.5 overs) 161 Fall of wickets: 1-41, 2-47, 3-49, 4-75, 5-90, 6-108, 7-109, 8-127, 9-146, 10-161,

R Bowler 18.5 6 47 12 26 McGrath 2 Clark 16 Warne 19 46 3 Result: Australia won by an innings and 99 runs and lead the fivematch series 4-0.

Man-of-the-match: Shane Warne.

Power cut stops

SPÖRT

unit for observation overnight. He was replaced by Howell, a South African who started the match as the

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at close on the third day of the second Test between South Africa and India at Kingsmead on

SOUTHAFRICA: First innings 328 INDIA: First innings (overnight 103-

Jaffer c De Villiers b Ntini Sehwag c De Villiers b Nel Dravid Ibw b Nel Tendulkar c Boucher b Ntini Laxman not out Ganguly c Gibbs b Ntini Dhoni c De Villiers b Morkel 34 Kumble c Boucher b Morkel Zaheer Khan c Amla b Morkel Sreesanth c Boucher b Hall V Singh c Boucher b Pollock Extras: (b-1, lb-7, nb-12, w-2) Total: (All out in 77.5 overs) Fall of wickets: 1-5, 2-35, 3-61, 4-125, 5-125, 6-179, 7-179, 8-183, 9-235.

R М Bowler 0 5 Nel 60 41 Ntini 15 4 Morkel 18 86 14.5 10 17 Pollock **SOUTH AFRICA:** Second innings De Villiers not out Smith not out Extras: (lb-2, nb-2, w-1) Total: (For no wkt in 19.3 overs) **Bowler** 0 M 4 22 20 Sreesanth 7.3 2

Mourinho

V Singh

FROM PAGE 24 not have handled the demands that were put on Hilario," said Mourinho.

20

Hilario joined Chelsea in June on a two-year deal from Portuguese first division side Nacional

He became Chelsea's firstchoice keeper in October after Petr Cech and Carlo Cudicini, the club's two other keepers, suffered head injuries

Totti forever

FROM PAGE 24 director, but never as a coach. It's not in my DNA."

Totti has played for Roma since the 1992-93 season. His finest hour came in the 2000-01 season when he led Roma to their first Serie Atitle

He is one of the best paid players in Serie A, earning an estimated five million euros (6.6 million dollars) a

Totti is something of a rarity in modern day football having spent his entire professional career with the same team despite being courted by some of Europe's leading clubs

Juve in for

they were relegated for their role in the match-fixing scandal that engulfed Italian football in summer

FIFA regulations state that a player cannot appear for more than two clubs in any one season, but it they can grant a dispensation for a player they believe to be a 'special case'.

Drogba FROM PAGE 24

playing up front

"It's a pity I have also have problems in attack because if in this moment I had other strikers playing at a great level then I would play Didier as a central defender," admitted the Chelsea boss.

"I have no Joe Cole, I have no Robben, and I have Shevchenko playing very, very far from his level, so in this moment, I have Didier as the only attacking player, so I cannot play him as a central defender."

Mourinho admits his side's shakiness at the back in recent games is cause for concern, but he has yet to decide whether he is going to splash the cash on a new defender in the January transfer window

"At the moment, teams feel they can score goals against us, they feel it and they are scoring them, and this is a team that usually never concedes so many goals," he said.

"I can't say I will buy in January, I want JT (Terry) back as soon as possible and we are doing what we

Heat rising

FROM PAGE 24 boss explained

"This is a difficult period because we don't have the players to improve things, rotate and put pressure on other players. But it's not a drama.

"We're in the (last) 16 of the Champions League, semi-finals of the Carling (League) Cup, we start the FA Cup next month and in the Premiership we are four points behind the leaders with 18 matches to play. retirements of McGrath and Warne.

"On top of that, Manchester United must come to Stamford Bridge. I think the situation is okay.'

Warne bids MCG bye

Cricket

AFP, Melbourne

Shane Warne was carried off the field on the shoulders of his teammates Thursday after the incomparable star helped Australia pull off another soul-destroying Ashes win over England.

Test cricket's all-time leading wicket-taker claimed two more as England capitulated to an innings and 99 run defeat, handing the Australians a 4-0 series lead heading into next Tuesday's fifth and final Sydney Test. Warne, who has now taken 706

career wickets, will retire after

Sydney -- his 145th Test and an

emotional match for the 37-year-

he had no regrets after a remark-Warne said his 5-39 in unhelpful spinning conditions in the first innings on Boxing Day could not have been scripted well, as he savoured playing in his last Test on his Melbourne home ground before

huge crowds.

we won," he said. "That gave me great satisfaction for three days. To land the ball the way I have through the series and to walk off in Melbourne

"It was nice of Andrew Symonds and Matty Hayden to put me on the houlders. I was trying to get Pigeon (Glenn McGrath) but they said we can't hold two of you, so I jumped down and we walked off together.

McGrath has also announced that his hometown Sydney Test match will be his 124th and last.

Warne said he revelled in going out on an incredible high after a trailblazing career that revolutionised the art of wrist-spin bowling.

old Australian superstar, who said "I've got no disappointments from the game whatsoever. I've been very lucky to play in a wonderful era of Australian cricket," he told reporters after the win at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG).

"It was just a great time. It was great to have that satisfaction

Good to share it. It's just been a great summer so far. 'The overriding factor was that "To bowl well and land a couple

of flippers and some wrong'uns today (Thursday), it was really "These sort of moments are

something to enjoy. It doesn't make me sad. I'm leaving on top of my game. I feel like I'm bowling as good as I have in any stage of my "Hopefully 5-0 (a series sweep) is a real goal for us now. A white-

wash against an excellent cricket side. If I can continue to bowl well and get a few wickets in Sydney, it'll be great." Skipper Ricky Ponting has joked about trying to talk Warne out of his intention to retire but the master

lea-spinner said he feels on top of the world, rather than disconsolate. at ending his fabulous career. "I'm just jumping out of my skin

at the moment. I suppose that's why I'm trying different tricks and all those things. I feel very happy and young and fresh."

Galle greets gesture

Cricket

AFP, Sydney

Test cricket's leading wicket-taker Shane Warne has committed his charitable foundation to donate 20,000 dollars (15,600 USD) to tsunami reconstruction efforts in Sri Lanka, reports said Thursday.

The move, announced at a breakfast event in Melbourne on December 26, followed reports that the foundation had failed to deliver a promised 50,000 dollars (39.000 USD) for repair of the devastated cricket ground in the Sri Lankan town of Galle.

Galle is where Warne took his 500th Test wicket in March 2004.

The Sydney Morning Herald said Warne told the celebrity breakfast -attended by Australia's richest man James Packer and Warne's fellow retiring cricketer Glenn McGrath -which a promotion at last year's Boxing Day Test for the sale of wristbands had failed to attract much support.

Only 5,000 of the three-dollar wristbands had been sold, he reportedly said.

to Galle International Cricket Club this year but more than five months after the foundation had promised in an email that the fund-raiser would net 50,000 dollars for the reconstruction of the ground, the newspaper said. The foundation's then chief

That information was conveyed

executive Brad Grapsas told the director of the Galle club, Javananda Warnaweera, that the cost of the promotion was greater than the amount collected and there would be no money forth-Warne told this week's break-

the coastal town and swamped its picturesque cricket around.

mated 31,000 people in Sri Lanka.

October-November 2007.

Lankan Cricket Club 20,000 dollars today (Thursday), which goes towards helping build some cricket grounds," Warne told the function, according to the Herald.

England in Melbourne on Boxing The 37-year-old leg-spinner will play his final Test in Sydney

cial Warnaweera welcomed Warne's offer. fast he had been greatly moved by visit he made to Galle a month after the 2004 tsunami devastated

He handed out food, cricket kit and toys to children orphaned in the tsunami, which killed an esti-

Sri Lanka Cricket told AFP this week that work had got underway at the ground and there were plans to hold a Test match during the England tour planned for late

"I can say we're giving the Sri

Warne became the first bowler to pass 700 Test wickets during the fourth Ashes Test against

next week after announcing his retirement from Test cricket.

Meanwhile. Galle cricket offi-

"It is nice on Shane's part to offer the money and it is for a very worthy cause," Warnaweera, also a former Sri Lankan Test spinner,

told AFP.

Australia has an unwanted vanquished England 5-0 in the

southern Sri Lanka's cricket fans, wish to express my thanks to him. We will have a totally new Galle Stadium when the work is completed and Shane could be

"On behalf of the whole of

proud of his contribution. Sri Lanka have won six out of the 11 Tests played at the venue.

Punter 'bets' whitewash

Cricket

AFP. Melbourne Ricky Ponting says Australia are reputation of losing "dead" rub- last Ashes clean sweep in looking to create something special and whitewash demoral-

ised England in an Ashes series clean sweep next week after yet another pulverising victory here Thursday. The Australians will go to Sydney aiming for the first 5-0 Ashes series win in 85 years after crushing England by an innings

inside three days at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. Ponting senses Andrew Flintoff's team are at rock-bottom

and 99 runs in the fourth Test

after their fourth heavy defeat of the series. Australia have outplayed England to win by 277 runs in Brisbane, six wickets in Adelaide, 206 runs in Perth and by an

innings here. "Losing a game here in three days after winning the toss, I think they would be pretty demoralised at the moment," Ponting

"I guess when you're in a and we'll be giving it the best situation like that you just have to play for personal and team pride. that's about all you can do.

South Africa won the third Durban Test in March 2002 after losing the first two of the series; England won in Sydney on the last Ashes tour here in January 2003 after losing the first four Tests; the West Indies scored a world record 418 for seven in the last innings to beat Australia in

rubber in Mumbai in November "There's a great feeling in the team and we're playing some great cricket, so I don't think we have to focus on any outcomes. We just have to focus on the process," Ponting said of next

the fourth Antiqua Test in May

2003 and India won the dead

week's Sydney Test. "You can't ever take for granted winning a Test match, it's not an easy thing to do. It's hard work, but we have an opportunity now to create something very

special for this team in Sydney

shake we can to try and win that game." Warwick Armstrong's team

Australia in 1921. Ponting, who has taken special delight in having the boot on the other foot after his anguish of becoming the Australian captain to lose the Ashes last year, said England would be crestfallen with their Melbourne perfor-

"We've done everything in our power to make that be the way. England wouldn't be happy with their performance here, no doubt about that." he said "When we are playing as well

as we are and we're on a bit of a run then I'm sure all those little doubts turn into big doubts. We've seen that through this "The way Matthew Hayden and Andrew Symonds were able

to play right through most of

yesterday (in a 279-run partner-

ship) was obviously the defining

moment in the game.'

Onus on non-stars

Cricket

AFP, Melbourne

Two of Australia's greatest ever Test bowlers are just days away from retirement, but Ricky Ponting said the manner of his team's crushing fourth Test victory at the MCG again showed the future was in good hands

in the series by completing an innings victory over England in less than three days here Thursday and will aim for a series whitewash in Shane Warne and Glenn McGrath's final Test in Sydney. Unheralded seamer Stuart Clark again impressed in the fourth

Test with five wickets at little more

than 10 runs apiece, while all-

The Australians took a 4-0 lead

rounder Andrew Symonds produced his maiden Test century. Those performances, along with the outstanding form of Michael Clarke in the previous three Tests, had Ponting enthusiastic about the new era that will be heralded by the

"They have been terrific right the way through," he said of Clarke,

Clark and Symonds. "With Shane and Glenn announcing the retirements, it is an emotional time, but for Australian cricket it can also be a pretty exciting time as well to see some of the younger players get an opportunity that have been on the fringes for a

little while. "They are going to get their opportunity to show themselves and show everybody else how good they can be.

"Stuart Clark has played eight or nine games now and hasn't put a foot wrong and Michael Clarke has looked a different player since coming back into the Test

"Hopefully we have seen the emergence of a very highly talented and skilled player in Symonds here." Ponting, a long-time supporter

of Symonds who pushed for his recall to the Test side and also championed his thencontroversial selection in the 1999 World Cup squad, was particularly thrilled by the breakthrough effort of the all-rounder here, making a match-turning

"That could be the start of a really good Test career for him, Ponting compared the control

McGrath is famous. "The discipline and the way he has able to execute what he has wanted to do has been the differ-

shown by Clark to that for which

and Gilly behind the stumps today (Thursday) that at the moment it seems like he is bowling the ball in exactly the spot that he wants to nine times out of 10.

"I was only saying to Warney

"He's asking a question of the batsman every ball and putting them under pressure all the time.

Milan set

FROM PAGE 24 9th of January

ence." he said.

The left-back, who will turn 22 in February, admits he is relishing the prospect of playing for the

"For me to arrive at a prestigious club like Milan is a dream come true, I'm delighted," he said.