

Inzy will return for ODIs

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq said on Sunday it was tough to sit out the final Test against India due to back injury and vowed to return for the subsequent one-day series.

"Missing this important game was definitely the toughest decision of my career," said Inzamam.

"I desperately wanted to play but I was not feeling comfortable and fit. I underwent a fitness test this morning before deciding to withdraw."

"You need to be confident that you can last out five days and I was not."

Inzamam had scored a century in the drawn second Test at Faisalabad before the flare-up of a past injury forced him out of the game for the last three days.

The 35-year-old also missed the last two Tests on Pakistan's tour to Australia in 2004-05 and was advised by doctors not to take long flights to prevent recurrence of the back injury.

Inzamam said he will be back for the five-match one-day series against India which begins on February 6.

"I should be fit by the time the one-dayers begin. I can't afford to sit out for long," he said.

The first one-dayer will be played at Peshawar on February 6, followed by matches in Rawalpindi (Feb 11), Lahore (Feb 13), Multan (Feb 16) and Karachi (Feb 19).

Zaheer recalled for one-dayers

REUTERS, Mumbai

The Indian selectors have recalled paceman Zaheer Khan for the five-match one-day international series at the end of their Test tour of Pakistan.

At the conclusion of three-match Test series, the first one-dayer will be played in Peshawar on February 6, followed by matches in Rawalpindi (February 11), Lahore (February 13), Multan (February 16) and Karachi (February 19).

The 27-year-old left-arm paceman replaced all-rounder Jai Prakash Yadav in what is the only change to the squad that drew the five-match one-day series against South Africa 2-2 in November. The other match was washed out.

TEAM

Rahul Dravid (captain), Virender Sehwag, Sachin Tendulkar, Yuvraj Singh, Mohammad Kaif, Suresh Raina, Mahendra Singh Dhoni (wicket-keeper), Gautam Gambhir, Irfan Pathan, Ajit Agarkar, Zaheer Khan, Rудра Pratap Singh, Murali Kartik, Harbhajan Singh and Shanthakumaran Sreesanth.

7-star Federer

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and his fourth win over 20-year-old Baghdatis, who beat three top-10 players to reach his first Grand Slam final and only second tour final overall.

"It's like a dream that I just wake up at the end and it's fantastic," Baghdatis said, also wiping away tears.

"It's just been a fantastic two weeks... it's a dream come true, I'm in the final, I lost, it's just amazing."

"I want to thank my parents, they were amazing to me and all the sacrifices we did just paid up today," he said.



Egyptian forward Emad Moteab is over the moon after scoring his second goal against Ivory Coast in the African Nations Cup in Cairo on Saturday.

Joy for Pharaohs

REUTERS, Cairo



Afrifa Cup of Nations
EGYPT 2006

Egypt swept into the African Nations Cup quarterfinals with a 3-1 win over Ivory Coast that also dumped 2004 finalists Morocco out of the tournament on Saturday.

Cairo celebrated to the sound of car horns after two goals from striker Emad Moteab and one by Mohamed Aboutrika propelled the hosts to the top of Group A.

Coach Henri Michel, whose Ivory Coast team had already qualified for the last eight, took a calculated gamble by resting several players, notably top striker Didier Drogba.

The decision may yet come back to haunt the Frenchman as his side are now likely to face tournament favourites and Group B leaders Cameroon in the last eight.

A draw for Cameroon on Sunday with Democratic Republic of Congo would also qualify the Congolese, though Angola have an outside chance of securing the runners-up slot against Togo.

Egypt's joy at getting through in style was tempered by an injury to striker Mido.

The Tottenham Hotspur player, who left with a groin problem in the 24th minute, said the injury was not serious and he hoped to be fit for the next game.

Strike partner Moteab had already put his side in front by the time Mido left the pitch, nodding from close range, while Arouna

Kone levelled for the Ivorians before the break.

Rained on by the 77,000 crowd at Cairo's International Stadium, Aboutrika restored Egypt's lead in the 61st minute before Moteab added the third to put the result beyond doubt.

There was little for Morocco to celebrate at the nearby Military Stadium as they could only draw 0-0 with an already eliminated Libya in their final game.

Egypt's victory meant even a win would not keep Morocco's qualifying hopes alive.

Poor finishing and the football federation's decision to appoint a new coach only two weeks before the tournament started were to blame for their exit, the players said.

Beckham plans Real stay

INTERNET, undated

David Beckham insists he has no plans to return to England and is looking to end his career at Real Madrid.

Speculation has been rife that Beckham could move back to England at the end of the season with reports suggesting the midfielder is unhappy in Madrid.

Beckham has moved to dispel the rumours and is hoping to stay in the Spanish capital for the rest of his career.

"I will always keep my house in London, but I will never hide the fact that I want to be here (Madrid) for the rest of my career," he said.

"I want to continue here at Real and continue being England captain. My children are in school here and I will remain for a couple of years, even after I finish my career."

Record crowd

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American Taylor Dent fired down the fastest serve of the tournament with a 231 km/h (143.5 mph) thunderbolt.

The Williams sisters, Venus and Serena, were locked in a three-way battle with Australias Samatha Stosur, for the fastest women's serve at 194km/h (120.5 mph).

Comeback queen Martina Hingis and the unheralded men's runner-up Marcos Baghdatis were the most popular players among the four million users who racked up 17 million hits on the tournament's website, www.australianopen.com.

A dream

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"It was a very important knock for my team. I came into the match under pressure but my captain told me just play positively and I did that. But I think it was an outstanding spell from Pathman with the new ball."

Pathman felt the ball would continue to seam around on all five days of the Test and batting would be a challenge in bothinnings.

"It is too early to say who will win the Test but we still need to do a lot in this Test. Because you can get runs on it if you play with patience," he said.

He asked me whether we have played too many matches in the last four months. I have told him that the players are a little bit tired and it could be a headache. We can make up for it by light training in the camp for first few days."

Mourinho out of England running

Football

AFP, London

Chelsea chief executive Peter Kenyon has warned the Football Association (FA) against approaching the English to take over as the next England manager.

The FA are looking for a successor to Sven-Goran Eriksson who is due to depart after this summer's World Cup finals.

And Kenyon, who hails Mourinho as "the best manager in Europe," said he would say "no way" if the FA tried to poach the Portuguese coach after his success with Porto and now Premiership champions Chelsea.

"He's made it quite clear he's not interested, and we would make it quite clear we are not interested

New year

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notable performances in the National League. And I must say that you can never compare between domestic and international cricket in the same manner," he explained.

The Bangladesh captain also issued a warning to his colleagues as a bunch of youngsters have proved their mettle to put pressure on the seniors.

"No doubt the Under-19 players are a long way to get into the senior team but the way they played in the last few months, it is really encouraging. Everybody should realise that they have to perform to keep their places because a number of players are in the pipeline," he observed.

Bashar said that he has talked with coach Dave Whatmore to chalk out plans for the upcoming home series.

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