



COULDN'T STOP YOU: West Indies skipper Brian Lara (L) greets Pakistan batsman Mohammad Yousuf after he broke West Indian Sir Vivian Richards's 30-year-old record during the fourth day of the final Test at the National Stadium in Karachi on Thursday.

Yousuf breaks Viv's record Takes Pakistan close to series win

Cricket

AFP, Karachi

Big-scoring Mohammad Yousuf broke two world records including the most runs in a calendar year to put Pakistan on the verge of winning the third Test and the series against the West Indies on Thursday.

Yousuf erased West Indian Vivian Richards's 30-year landmark and set a new record of 1,788 Test runs in 11 Tests during 2006 with his masterly 124, his ninth century of the year.

Pakistan declared their second innings at 399-6 with captain Inzamamul Haq unbeaten on 58,

giving the tourists a mammoth 444-run target at the National Stadium.

The West Indies finished the fourth day at 39-2, needing another 405 runs to win or bat the whole fifth day to draw the match. Captain Brian Lara was unbeaten on 18 and Rammareesh Sarwan was 11 not out.

Pakistani opener Mohammad Hafeez's watchful and valuable innings of 104 was overshadowed by Yousuf's record-breaking feats as the pair added 149 runs for the third wicket.

On 44 Yousuf drove West Indian paceman Corey Collymore to long-on for his ninth boundary to cross Richards's record tally of 1,710 made in 1976. The 32-year-old achieved the new mark in 11 Tests, the same

number it took the West Indian great.

"I wasn't competing with Viv Richards, he is a great player -- it was only with God's help that I achieved this," Yousuf said, adding that he dedicated his innings to his family.

"Richards and Lara are two of the greatest batsmen of this century and to be reckoned alongside the greats is a great satisfaction for me," he said.

Yousuf raised his bat and looked to the sky as Lara, who had pledged his side would try to protect his legendary predecessor's record, applauded the Pakistani and went to congratulate him at the end of the over.

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Freddie banks on spirit Second Test begins today

Cricket

AFP, Adelaide

Captain Andrew Flintoff is expecting England to bounce back in Friday's second Test here in response to their 277-run hiding by Australia in the opening Ashes match.

Flintoff said his players have worked with Test match intensity in the nets this week to prepare themselves for a much-improved performance after they were outplayed for large tracts of the Gabba Test.

"We have to perform better and the way we have practised this week has been fantastic," Flintoff told reporters Thursday.

"I think everyone realises we are better than what we did last week and the nets (practice) have been unbelievably competitive."

"Kevin Pietersen came out of a net yesterday (Wednesday) and said it was like batting in a Test match, the bowlers were keen to prove they are better than what they have shown and they made it hard

for the batsmen in the nets."

The tourists will be boosted by the news that Australian pace spearhead Glenn McGrath is in doubt after picking up a heel injury at the Gabba.

Captain Ricky Ponting said McGrath, who needed a painkilling injection to get through the first match, will be assessed on Friday morning.

"I won't know more on him until tomorrow (Friday) morning. Our physio wanted him to have a good long bowl today (Thursday) and see how he pulled up in the morning so it will be tomorrow morning until we know about him," Ponting said.

Flintoff would not go as far as to say the Adelaide Test was 'win or bust', but said his team expected to get something out of the game.

"Our heads were never going to go down, we've got four Test matches to go," he said.

"I don't know if it's win or bust here, we obviously have three after this but we want to get something out of this game."

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Bangladesh all-rounder Mashrafee Bin Mortuza (L) receives the man-of-the-match award from managing director of AKTEL Ahmed Ismail after his Twenty20 heroics at the Bir Shreshtha Shaheed Flight Lieutenant Motiur Rahman Stadium in Khulna on Tuesday.

Sourav given lifeline

Cricket

AFP, New Delhi

Former India skipper Sourav Ganguly got a chance to extend his international career when he was named in a 16-man squad on Thursday for an upcoming three-Test series in South Africa.

Ganguly's career seemed to be over after a row with coach Greg Chappell last year, when he was sacked as captain before being axed from both the Test and one-day squads.

The stylish 34-year-old batsman played his last Test against Pakistan in Karachi in February this year and his last one-dayer was against New Zealand at Harare in September 2005.

A brittle batting display by India in the ongoing five-match one-day series in South Africa, which they trail 3-0 after four matches, led the selectors to plump for the experienced left-hander.

"We decided to go with Ganguly's experience because our batting has failed in one-dayers. The youngsters have not been able to adjust to the bouncy wickets in South Africa," said chief selector Dilip Vengsarkar.

Ganguly, who has scored 5,221 runs in 88 Tests, said he was hoping to put his experience to good use in South Africa.

"I am happy to be back but it is always a challenge playing in Tests, whether it is your first or 100th. As the tour will go on, players will get used to the bouncy pitches," he said.

"We have done well on bouncy tracks in Australia in the past and it is pretty much the same group of players and I am sure they will do well. It is just a matter of adjusting."

Venkatesh Laxman, recalled for the one-dayers in South Africa after a finger injury to skipper Rahul Dravid, replaced out-of-form opener Virender Sehwag as vice-captain for the Tests.

"Laxman has been named vice-captain because he has led various sides in domestic cricket in the past and also India-A teams," said Vengsarkar, who represented India in 116 Tests.

Paceman Zaheer Khan, who is playing in the ongoing one-day series, has also been named in the Test squad for the first time since the tour of Pakistan earlier this year.

Test centuries is under threat from West Indies captain Brian Lara, returns to Tests after missing the tour of the Caribbean earlier this year because of a shoulder injury. Yuvraj has been ruled out because of a knee injury.

The first Test begins on December 15 in Johannesburg.

SQUAD

Rahul Dravid (captain), Venkatesh Laxman (vice-captain), Virender Sehwag, Wasim Jaffer, Gautam Gambhir, Sachin Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly, Mahendra Dhoni, Dinesh Kaarthik, Harbhajan Singh, Anil Kumble, Irfan Pathan, Munaf Patel, Virender Sehwag, Zaheer Khan and Shantakumaran Sreesanth.

Middle-order batsmen Mohammad Kaif and Suresh Raina have been dropped from the Test side and will return after the one-dayers along with Ajit Agarkar.

Tendulkar, whose record of 35



I'M BACK: Indian batsman Sourav Ganguly smiles on arrival at the Eden Garden Stadium in Kolkata on Thursday.