



## Yousuf joins teammates

REUTERS, Karachi

Record breaking Pakistani batsman Mohammad Yousuf has left the country to join his teammates ahead of the second Test against South Africa later this week, a Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) official told Reuters on Monday.

"He has left for Johannesburg and will be available for the remainder of the series," PCB director of cricket operations Saleem Altaf said.

Yousuf, who scored a record breaking 1,788 runs including nine centuries in 2006, missed the ongoing first Test at Centurion due to the impending birth of his third child.

The player's wife gave birth to a baby girl last week allowing Yousuf to make himself available, Altaf added.

The second Test of the three-match series starts on January 19 in Port Elizabeth.

### PCB surprised

PTI, Karachi

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has been taken in by "surprise" by the announcement that controversial Australian umpire Darrell Hair would stand in a three-nation series in Kenya next week.

"We have read with interest the appointment of Hair. We have also read the ICC explanation that he has been named since it is an associate members' tournament -- involving Scotland, Kenya and Canada -- and not an international event," a PCB official told PTI.

"We are going to discuss this at our meeting in Islamabad tomorrow and will then decide our next line of action. But our initial reaction is one of surprise certainly," he said.

Hair was suspended from officiating in international matches in November last year after Pakistan filed an official complaint about his conduct during the forfeited Oval Test.

Community leaders condemned the brawling but blamed each other.

"National pride is one thing but this is unacceptable," Croatian Community Association secretary Tom Starcevic said.

"I wasn't there but from what I've seen and heard the Serbs were quite provocative."

Serbian Cultural Club president, Toma Banjanin, said Croatian supporters provoked Serbian fans by flaunting their colours.

"You didn't see many Serbs dressed that way," Banjanin said. "I think Croats are always overdoing things, they are always mixing politics with sport."

Lippi also believes that Inter, another of his former sides, will emerge victorious in this season's Scudetto race.

The Nerazzurri set a new all-time record after winning their 12th consecutive Serie A match against Torino on Saturday, increasing their lead over Roma to nine points.

"The championship is not over, but Inter are definitely in pole position," said Lippi in an interview with Tuttosport.

"That was also the case before Roma's draw with Messina, for two different reasons. They already had a seven-point lead and they are a very strong side."

"Inter are a concrete team and I do not agree with those who say that they do not play well -- they have defeated Milan, Fiorentina, Roma and Palermo."

"How can anyone think that Calcioitalia did not have any consequences? Juventus are in Serie B and they were stripped of two Scudetti. Lazio, Milan and Fiorentina were penalised and the championship conditioned."

### Sourav ready

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in the one-day arena.

"I have opened with Sachin on earlier occasions too. It all depends on the strategy of the team management," Ganguly told reporters at a programme to felicitate him by Tata Teleservices of which he is the brand ambassador.

Asked if he had any priority in the batting order, Ganguly said, "this is not a question about my priority." Talking about the forthcoming one-day series against West Indies, the southpaw said that India have to put up totals in the region of 300 to make it a competitive series.

Ganguly, who has been included in the one-day squad for the home series, said that although the Indian team would do well as the players selected were in good form.

Confident about his own performance, Ganguly said he hoped to carry on his good performance in the Test series against South Africa.

"Performance increases confidence which is the key ... With my performance in South Africa recently, I hope to carry it on in the forthcoming Test series," he said.

Ganguly, who is also included among 30 probables for the World Cup, will join his teammates in Nagpur on January 16.

The players would train for four days ahead of the first ODI there on January 21.

## Crucial game: Vaughan

### Cricket

BBC ONLINE, undated

England captain Michael Vaughan says the clash with New Zealand will be crucial to their one-day series.

"They've beaten us 5-0 in one-day series and that's pretty demoralising. So I know exactly how Michael Vaughan and Andrew Flintoff are feeling."

"We got out of that rut by playing another team. You get away from Australia, take a deep breath and put into practice what you've learned."

England do not have to face the hosts again until next Friday in the tournament, which pits each side against the others four times before the best-of-three finals series.

Fast bowler Shane Bond, who took a hat-trick against Australia on Sunday, pinpointed the Black Caps' batting as their weak point at the moment.

"We've struggled with the bat mainly. It hasn't quite clicked into gear for us. We've tried a couple of combinations and things haven't quite worked," he told BBC Radio Five Live.

"England will be dangerous because they are wounded. They will be pouring so much into this game but this is our chance to keep them down," he said.

England should take advantage

of a weakened New Zealand side now because all-rounders Jacob Oram and Scott Styris are expected back from injury in time for the next meeting between the two sides, in Adelaide on January 23.

Young batsman Ross Taylor has been declared fit despite suffering cramp during his sparkling 84 against Australia on Sunday.

Ed Joyce is set to play in the England middle order for the first time after Kevin Pietersen was ruled out with a fractured rib.

Squad replacement Ravi Bopara will join the squad in Brisbane later in the week.

### TEAMS

**ENGLAND** (from): Michael Vaughan (captain), Andrew Strauss, Ian Bell, Andrew Flintoff, Paul Collingwood, James Dalrymple, Paul Nixon, James Anderson, Jon Lewis, Monty Panesar, Chris Tremlett, Ed Joyce, Sajid Mahmood, Liam Plunkett, Chris Read.

**NEW ZEALAND** (from): Stephen Fleming (captain), Andre Adams, Nathan Astle, Shane Bond, James Franklin, Peter Fulton, Mark Gillespie, Brendon McCullum, Craig McMillan, Hamish Marshall, Michael Mason, Jeetan Patel, Ross Taylor, Daniel Vettori.

## CA seeks one more Test

### Cricket

AFP, Melbourne

to be able to take Test cricket to as many people in Australia as possible.

The Ashes, which dates back to 1882, is traditionally a five-Test series although four and six Tests have been played, the most recently in 1997.

Since cricket is a summer game, and the venues in England and Australia are in opposite hemispheres, the break between series is alternately 18 months and 30 months.

Hobart's Bellerive Oval, the home ground of Australia captain Ricky Ponting, is the only major domestic cricket venue in Australia that does not host an Ashes Test.

A host of attendance records were broken during the recent series, despite the Australians winning 5-0 in a one-sided contest to regain the Ashes.

A sixth Test could be played in Hobart on the southern island of Tasmania when Australia next host the series, a spokesman for the sport's governing body here said.

The large crowds built on the

incredible interest in the oldest

rivalry in cricket generated by the

2005 series which England won at home.

"Cricket Australia is keen in

principal to have six Test matches

the next time we have an Ashes

series in four years," CA public

affairs manager Peter Young said.

"If we do have six it gives us the

ability to schedule an Ashes Test

match in Hobart," he said.

"That's our ambition ... we want

### Serena's dress

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Fashion icon Maria Sharapova is due to unveil her latest creation for the season-opening Grand Slam on Tuesday after wearing a powder-blue dress last year that resembled a baby-doll nightie.

At the 2002 US Open Williams sported a now infamous black lycra catsuit, while at the Australian Open in 2005 she unveiled a lime-green and white costume that included knee-high spaceboots with a detachable leg section that could be removed before play commenced.

Last year she confined herself to a mint-green pleated skirt and regulation-issue tanktop.

### Totti, Mancini

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Inter Milan.

It became apparent that there was a problem in last week's Italian Cup match against Parma when they both scored but chose not to join in with each other's celebrations.

Roma coach Luciano Spalletti explained how the pair fell out.

"A year and a half ago there was a row between the two of them and it continued in the dressing room," he said.

"At the time I didn't feel it was necessary to intervene, but then I saw that things between them were no better and I spoke to them."

"Both of them told me there was no problem, but I knew there was still some ill-feeling."

"I have great respect for them and on the pitch they were playing well together, so I let it go."

"Even the rest of the squad joked about it. It wasn't anything serious."

### Jittery passage

**FROM PAGE 20**  
German's Rainer Schuettler, and said it was unsettling being back at the scene of his career tennis highlight.

"It's not like a normal tournament for me, and that's all. It's a different tournament and I'm not used to it. I have to just find my way," he said.

Mauresmo, the second seed behind Maria Sharapova, fought past Shennay Perry 6-3, 6-4.

The Frenchwoman, who also won Wimbledon last year for Grand Slam success after a decade of frustration, proved too powerful for the American but it was a decent workout ahead of her next match against Olga Poutchko of Russia.

"(It's) not yet quite the feeling that I had at the end of the tournament last year but the first match is never easy," said the Geneva-based 27-year-old, who has shaken off her tag as a choker.

"I'm excited to be back out here and I came out and finally did what I'm supposed to do to a certain level," she said.

Other women through included Russian seventh seed Elena Dementieva, Serbian 11th seed Jelena Jankovic and Czech Republic 10th seed Nicole Vaidisova.

## Mohammedan

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silverware.

"The advantage is that we would be treated underdogs and certainly there would be less pressure from the management."

Trained in Brazil, Manik says that the professional set-up is nothing new for him.

"I have always been a professional in my coaching career. From player contracts to relation with clubs, I have always practised professionalism. So I personally support introducing the system despite lack of infrastructure. Success will not come overnight but ultimately, all the clubs will harvest a good crop."

"It would not only be a source of income but also help them break the tradition. From a coach's point of view, they will gain because coaches will get more freedom and power. The pressure from the federation will force the clubs to create facilities. For example, Mohammedan do not have a permanent training ground, so this is an opportunity to have a competitive series."

Mohammedan began early training as they were scheduled to host an international tournament

## Baghdatis feeling

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over the 2003 Australian Open finalist Rainer Schuettler.

Only cursorily in his answers, crowd favourite Baghdatis said he didn't feel himself out on the court and it felt as if it was a different tournament to the one he captivated last year.

"A lot of changes have happened. I mean, I don't feel very good. Just don't feel very good with my father here, my brother is here, everybody is here," he said.

"It's not like a normal tournament for me, and that's all. It's like a different tournament and I'm not used to it. I have to just find my way."

"I'm happy, of course. I won. It was not a great match."

"I was a bit tight in the beginning coming in the match, thinking too much and I wasn't serving so well, and wasn't feeling good on the court. I'm happy I went through, of course, and that's all."

Baghdatis said he was experiencing the pressure of expectations 12 months on from the high-point of his fledgling professional career.

"Yeah, there's a lot of pressure."

Not by media, it's more like my

group and stuff. I feel a bit of pressure from them," said the 21-year-old, who has a huge following here, particularly among the city's large and vocal Greek community.

"My father is here. You know, that changes things. I will just try to deal with it and try to speak to them and make it a competitive series."

Baghdatis said his father, Christos, was not the problem, but rather his normal tennis routines were out of kilter.

"It's just off the court it's not the

same. I don't have the same routines with my coach and stuff. I'm not happy. I'm not myself, so that's all."

"I'm here and I want to win it. I'm just trying to find the best way to feel good."

Baghdatis will next play

Frenchman Gael Monfils, who knocked out Italian Daniele Bracciali 7-6(7/2), 6-7(9/11), 6-4, 7-6(7/5).

"Monfils is a great player. He's

playing really good. He's physically

ready and has a great physique and

he's a great fighter," Baghdatis said.

"I will speak with my coach and

see how it goes on the court."

## Inzamam not happy

### Cricket

AFP, Centurion

Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq said there would be three or four changes of personnel ahead of the second Test against South Africa starting in Port Elizabeth Friday.

"We will come back hard," said Inzamam after Pakistan were beaten by seven wickets on the fifth day of the first Test at Centurion Park Monday.