

## Don't go Murali: Ranatunga

CRICINFO, undated

Adding fuel to the fire surrounding racism in cricket, Arjuna Ranatunga, the former Sri Lankan captain, has advised Muttiah Muralidaran to not tour Australia in November.

The comments by Ranatunga, as reported by News Limited papers, come in the wake of Australia's tour of India, a series where racist taunts from the crowd was a topic of discussion.

"I told him I wished he wasn't touring Australia because of the amount of trouble he has had," Ranatunga said. "But he wants to go. It was up to him to decide that. My personal opinion was that he shouldn't go. I think Murali is tough enough to go through that and take whatever gets."

Cricket Australia chief executive James Sutherland said he wasn't surprised with the comments but was confident there would be no issues regarding poor crowd behaviour this summer.

CA would launch a new TV advertisement campaign aimed at stamping out poor behaviour in the stands this season, before the first Test against Sri Lanka at the Gabba starting on November 8. Ricky Ponting had already called for fans to show respect to this summer's visitors, which include Sri Lanka and India.

Murali was subjected to crowd taunts during Sri Lanka's last visit to Australia and he was said to have been upset three years ago by Prime Minister John Howard's suggestion that his action wasn't clean. Murali, though, said that he hoped to break Warne's record of 708 Test wickets during the two-Test series in Brisbane and Hobart.

## Socceroos set

FROM PAGE 20 provide a very competitive match for the Socceroos," Buckley said.

"It is vital that we give the team another match ahead of the World Cup qualifiers and we look forward to seeing Australia's national football team play against a high-quality opposition."

Nigeria are ranked 23 in the FIFA world rankings, with Australia 48.

Australia also played a friendly in London in February, losing 3-1 to Denmark at QPR's Loftus Road stadium.

## Platini gets

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That position goes against a previous stance from the association of European leagues (EPFL) which unanimously opposed the proposed reforms.

Gi4, the grouping of the continent's richest clubs, including the likes of Barcelona, AC Milan and Manchester United, who met last Wednesday, have already rejected Platini's proposals.

## SA President

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It will be difficult to change the names and colours of the teams ... because they are synonymous with the team. People already know them by those names," she told AFP.

Mbeki said it was important the public was involved in the names debate.

The public should participate in a plan where we look for new names for our national teams," he said.

"I'm not saying we must call all our national teams Springboks, but we have to change the names, the emblems and the colours of the teams wear, so that they can be recognised as representatives of South Africa."

## Chelsea look

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If those purist principles help Chelsea beat Schalke in their first home European game since Mourinho's final match - a stale 1-1 draw against Rosenborg - Abramovich will have his side wish.

Mirko Slomka's side have lost only one of their first 10 league matches, but Saturday's 1-1 draw at Hansa Rostock left them nine points behind Bundesliga leaders Bayern Munich.

With the title already almost out of reach, Europe will be Schalke's focus now but defeat in London would leave them facing a tough task to qualify.

## Nike takes over

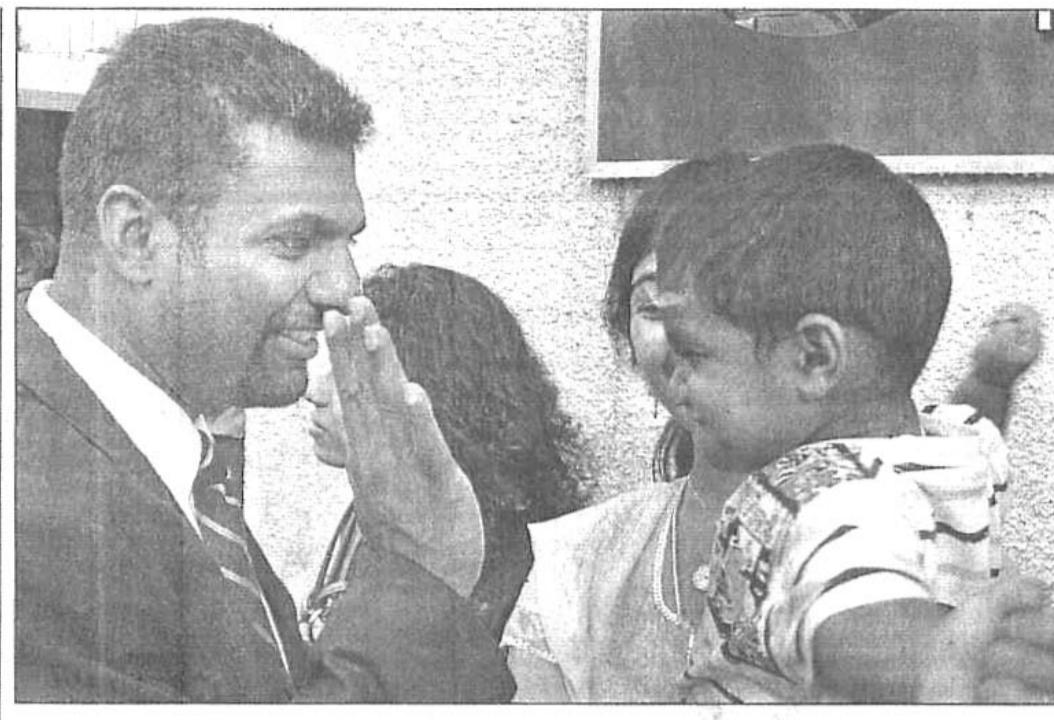
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Nike has expanded aggressively into the football market over the past few years and aims to become the world's leading football brand by the 2010 World Cup in South Africa.

Takeover speculation last week caused Umbro shares to rocket, boosting investors while fans were picking over the national side's 2-1 defeat to Russia, which makes qualification difficult for the 2008 European Championships.

Nike intends to operate Umbro as a stand-alone affiliate brand in the same way as Converse, which the Beaverton, Oregon-based firm acquired in 2003.

Earlier this year, German sportswear manufacturer Puma was bought by French luxury goods empire PPR. In 2006, Puma's German rival Adidas took over US sportswear group Reebok.



SEE YOU SOON: Sri Lanka spinner Muttiah Muralidaran says bye to his son ahead of the Lions' departure for Australia in Colombo yesterday. The Lankans will play Australia in two Tests before participating in a triangular one-day international series also involving India.

## Lankans want first win



AGENCIES, Colombo

Sri Lanka flew out to Australia on Tuesday determined to win their first Test Down Under after an improved performance in recent away matches.

"We have played consistently good cricket away from home in the recent times, so we want to maintain that," captain Mahela Jayawardene said before the team's departure.

"Obviously we want to beat Australia. We have to play as a team and put up our best effort to try and win the series."

Sri Lanka will play two Tests in Brisbane and Hobart next month, before returning to Australia in February for a limited-overs tri-series also featuring India.

Sri Lanka have lost six Tests and drawn two in Australia since their maiden appearance there in 1988.

In recent times, Jayawardene's team have drawn Test series in New Zealand and England and were runners-up at the 2007 World Cup in the Caribbean.

The tour is important for off-spinner Muttiah Muralidaran, who needs nine wickets to overtake Australian leg-spinner

Shane Warne's world record tally of 708 wickets.

Sri Lanka open the tour with a three-day match against a Cricket Australia invitation team in Adelaide from October 27-29.

They play another warm-up match against Queensland in Brisbane from November 2-4 before the first Test starts at the Gabba, Brisbane on Nov 8.

The second Test will be played in Hobart on Nov 16.

PTI adds: After being dramatically picked into Sri Lankan side for the forthcoming tour of Australia, former captain Marvan Atapattu wants to live up to the expectations during the tour Down Under.

"I have been out of the game for sometime and I know I have to perform and prove myself because I was invited due to my ability," Atapattu said in a radio programme on Monday.

The 36-year-old opener, who was not selected in the original touring squad, was brought in as the 17th member on Thursday following the intervention of the country's sports minister Gamini Lokuge.

Expressing happiness over Atapattu's return for the Australian tour, Lokuge said "we are now waiting for victory".

Atapattu's return to the national

team marks the end of a six-month controversy that commenced from the World Cup where he was not selected to play in any of Sri Lanka's 11 matches despite being part of the team.

The former captain was also overlooked for the one-day series against Pakistan in Abu Dhabi in May and he withdrew from the three-Test home series against Bangladesh in June saying he was not mentally prepared to play Test cricket.

Atapattu, who has represented Sri Lanka in 88 Tests and scored 5,330 runs at an average of 38.90, with 16 centuries, had also accused the Sri Lankan selectors of affecting the team's morale.

"Team spirit decreased because the players became insecure," said the right-hander, who played his last Tests against India in Ahmedabad in December 2005.

**SQUAD**

Mahela Jayawardene (captain), Kumar Sangakkara, Sanath Jayasuriya, Upul Tharanga, Marvan Atapattu, Michael Vandort, Chamara Silva, Thilan Samarawickrama, Jehan Mubarak, Prasanna Jayawardene, Chaminda Vaas, Lasith Malinga, Dilshan Fernando, Farveez Maharoof, Chanaka Welegedara, Muttiah Muralidaran, Malinga Bandara.

## Ramadan worries PCB



CRICINFO, undated

Pakistan board officials have been trying to move next year's Champions Trophy from September to October to avoid hosting the tournament during Ramadan, but a packed international calendar is not allowing any change of dates.

"As things stand, the Champions Trophy will be played in September next year at a time when we will be observing the holy month of Ramadan," Shafqat Naghmi, the PCB's chief operating officer, said. "We do not believe it would be an appropriate time to hold such a mega event and have informed the ICC about it."

Naghmi raised this issue at an ICC chief executives' meeting in South Africa last month but the suggestion to move the tournament to October was shot down because of a packed international schedule.

The bad news for the PCB is that it will be a fasting season during

almost the whole of next September which means that all the matches of the Champions Trophy will have to be played during Ramadan.

However, Naghmi said that PCB is still hoping that with mutual consent, Pakistan and the ICC will work out the schedule.

"For the Champions Trophy to be really successful, it is important that we find best possible dates for the event and we are trying our best to do that," he said.

Naghmi is aware that the FTP's schedule might not allow any change of dates and the PCB is already working on plans to have a successful event even during Ramadan.

"We might work out match timings with the innings break coming at iftar time," he said adding that several proposals were under consideration in a bid to successfully host the Champions Trophy.

ICC officials will arrive in Pakistan on November 2 to review the three venues for the event -- Lahore, Karachi and Rawalpindi.

September doesn't suit us because it would be difficult to guarantee attendance for matches during Ramadan," said Naghmi. It will be Pakistan's first time hosting the Champions Trophy and the first major tournament in the country since the World Cup in 1996.

But guaranteeing full stadiums is not the only concern for the PCB officials who are also worried about the timing of the matches.

"We don't want to have action on the ground at a time when spectators and the people watching the matches on television are busy breaking their fast (iftar). I don't think it would be appropriate," Naghmi said.

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## Discipline scripts Pak win

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order to stomp from which they could not recover.

Ifitkar returned for his second spell, removing Albie Morkel (12) and Charl Langeveldt (four) to better his 3-44 he took against the West Indies at Kingston during the 2007 World Cup in March this year.

South Africa lost Mark Boucher (17) to spinner Abdul Rehman as the tourists lost their last six wickets for just 35 runs.

The fourth match will be played at Multan on Friday.

### SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the third one-day international between Pakistan and South Africa at the Iqbal Stadium in Faisalabad on Tuesday:

**SOUTH AFRICA**

Gibbs c Akmal b Gul 19  
Smith run out 48  
Kallis c Misbahul b Afriti 13  
De Villiers c Afriti b Ifitkar 17  
Kemp b Afriti 42  
Morkel c sub (Nazir) b Ifitkar 17  
Pollock c & b Afriti 1  
Botha not out 7  
Ntini b Gul 0  
Result: Pakistan won by six wickets and lead 5-match series 2-1.

**MAN-OF-THE-MATCH: Shahid Afridi.**  
Toss: South Africa  
Umpires: Billy Bowden (NZL) and Zamir Haider (PAK)

TV umpire: Asad Rauf (PAK)  
Match Referee: Alan Hurst (AUS)

only to be bowled by Afridi in the 42nd over.

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