

## Hefty fine on Asif

AFP, Lahore

Pakistani cricket authorities on Thursday fined Mohammad Asif one million rupees (12,500 dollars) over the fast bowler's 19-day detention at Dubai airport for alleged drug possession.

Asif, 26, was detained last June on his way back home after playing in the Indian Premier League (IPL).

A three-member Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) committee headed by former captain and PCB director Wasim Bari investigated the matter.

"On recommendation of the committee we have fined Asif one million rupees," the PCB said in a press release.

Dubai authorities found opium in Asif's possession, but a prosecutor determined that the quantity was small and deported the bowler.

Asif is also banned from playing international cricket until September after testing positive for the banned anabolic steroid Nandrolone last year.

"Asif will be available for selection once he completes the IPL ban," said the release.

The mercurial fast bowler also tested positive for Nandrolone during tests conducted by the PCB in 2006. He and fellow bowler Shoaib Akhtar, who failed the test too, were banned for one and two years respectively.

## Serena staves

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"That's my only regret. I should have taken more of a risk by going down the line," said the 27-year-old Dementieva.

"A passing shot is my favourite shot to make. Maybe it was all too quick. I didn't see that she was moving to cover the cross-court. I should have gone down the line or even used a lob."

Olympic champion Dementieva, who had won three of the pair's last four meetings, defied predictions of a one-sided encounter by breaking the American in the first game although Williams hit straight back.

The Russian bravely fought off three break points in the eighth game before going on to dominate the tie-break despite a nervous double fault on the first of three set points.

Williams, stung by the Russian's all-out assault, broke straightaway in the second set and was quickly 2-0 ahead. But Dementieva refused to yield and broke back to love in the sixth game for 3-3.

## Harmy looks

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"There are things you pick up on like body language. I've seen a little chink there. It is understandable because there are not the players in their side from bygone years."

"There is definitely something to work on for England and, if we can bat well, we have half a chance to win the Ashes back."

Harmison has experienced both the highs and lows of Ashes cricket: on the first morning of England's eventual 2-1 triumph in 2005 he set the tone by hitting Ponting on the cheek at Lord's.

But in the 2006/07 return series, Harmison's first ball in Brisbane -- which ended up in the hands of Andrew Flintoff at second slip -- proved equally indicative of things to come, with Australia romping to a 5-0 whitewash.

At his best, the 6ft 4in Harmison can make the ball rear steeply at pace.

And having seen the way in which left-hander Hughes struggled against the well-directed short ball, Harmison believes he may have found a weakness in the game of the 20-year-old batting sensation, who averages nearly 70 in Tests.

"The only one I hadn't played against in their line-up was Phillip Hughes and I was interested to see how he went," explained the veteran of 61 Tests.

"He is a very good player. I've seen him on television, he is 20 and he is no mug."

"If you put the short ball in the right area, he will belt it. But he is susceptible to any ball coming anywhere around his hip and armpit area."

"That has given him an eye opener for what is to come because we have got some tall bowlers in the England team and they might target that area."



## Did U Know?

The Confederations Cup began its journey in 1992 as the King Fahd Cup, the brainchild of the late Saudi Prince Faisal bin Fahd. When FIFA took control of the competition it became known as the Confederations Cup in 1997.

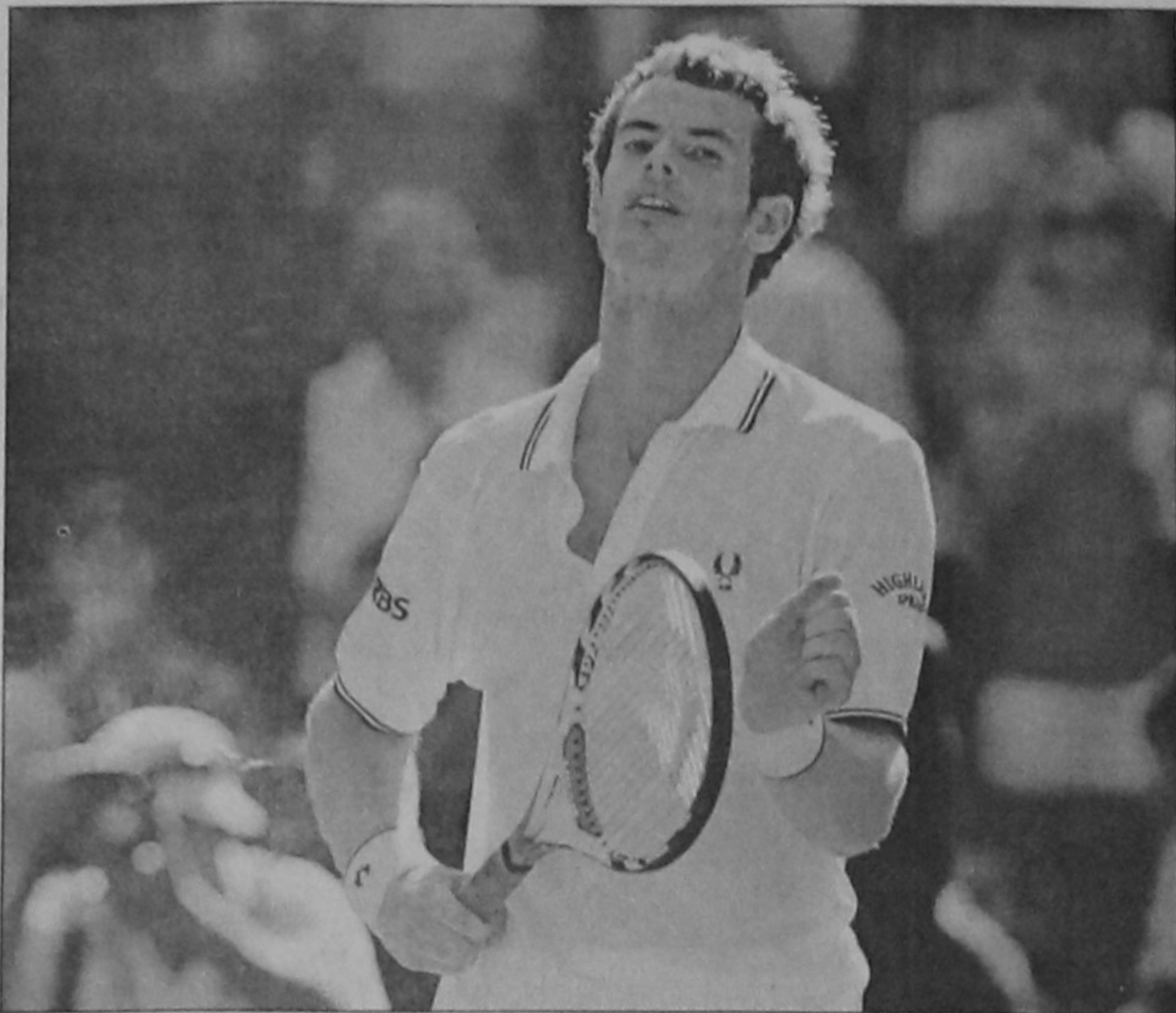


PHOTO: AFP

Britain's Andy Murray jubilates after beating Spain's Juan Carlos Ferrero in the Wimbledon quarterfinals at the All England Club in London on Wednesday.

## 'Federer best'

AFP, London



Roger Federer's run of 21 consecutive Grand Slam semi-final appearances will probably never be matched, his fellow Wimbledon semi-finalist Andy Murray said.

Murray said his own consistency was "very, very good", but Federer's was "incredible", as the top two seeds in the draw stayed on course for a clash in the final.

The Scot, who faces America's two-time Wimbledon finalist Andy Roddick for a place in Sunday's showpiece, vowed to get the adrenaline pumping for Friday's semi-final -- saying he might well lose if he does not.

Murray said five-time Wimbledon-winner Federer's Grand Slam run was astonishing.

"The consistency in the big tournaments, is ridiculous," the 22-year-old said.

"No one will ever match that. The consistency is the one thing. I don't think it's been surprising that once he won a few slams, everyone was saying that he could be the best ever."

"But just to have no slip-ups, to have no injuries -- maybe he has but covered that well -- to not be really sick or to miss one event, one slam through injury, it's pretty incredible."

On his own consistency level, the All England Club third seed, who lost to Federer in September's US Open final, said: "Since Wimbledon last year, my consistency has been

very, very good."

"Bar one very poor match at the Olympics, I've not really lost any early matches, not lost too many guys that I should have won against, and performed well in the slams."

However, Murray was refusing to rest on his laurels, as he bids to become the first Briton to win the Wimbledon men's singles since Fred Perry in 1936.

"I can lose the next match if I don't play my best. That's been one of the things that I've learned, and it's made a huge difference to me over the last year or so," he said.

"I realise that if I don't bring my best game then I'm going to lose to guys like Roddick. I feel confident because I've won a lot of matches on the grass."

"But every day when I get up to play the matches, I know that I'm going to have to perform very well, and that gets the nerves and the adrenaline going and makes me play better."

Murray is leading Roddick 6-2 in head-to-head contests, and won their last two clashes. The Scot also beat the 26-year-old in their only Wimbledon match-up, in the third round in 2006.

However, Murray said he would have to be wary of sixth seed Roddick, the former world number one, in what would be a "very tough match".

"Roddick, along with Ivo Karlovic, is one of the best servers in the game," he said of the 2003 US Open winner.

## Roger, Andy chase history

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Slam semifinal with a straight sets victory over Ivo Karlovic where he became the first player in the tournament to break the giant Croatian's serve.

The Swiss, who went level with Pete Sampras's record of 14 majors with his breakthrough French Open triumph, believes Haas will be a tough proposition on grass.

"He's talented. He's always been one of the best ball strikers in the game. I think he's really gotten his game together again after some tough injuries," said Federer.

Haas will bring a new challenge into the semi-final having reached this stage by reviving the dying art of serve and volley.

"When you get older you try to get free points as much as you can. It's been working so far," said the German.

"It's been good when I'm serving well. I feel like at the net I can do some good stuff."

"We had a good battle at the French, but I'm realistic of who my opponent is. So I'll just out there, compete hard and see what happens."

Murray, with the likes of

Hollywood superstars Kate Winslet and Ewan McGregor rallying to his cause, insisted he will not get carried away by the hype.

"It doesn't make any difference the way you perform," said Murray, only the third British man to reach the Wimbledon semi-finals in the Open era.

"If you work in the media and spend a lot of time reading the papers, watching everything on the TV, all the things that are getting said on the radio, then you get caught up in it."

"If you ignore it you don't realize it's happening."

The 22-year-old Scotsman believes his game matches up to any man left in the tournament.

"I feel confident because I've won a lot of matches on grass. But every day when I get up to play the matches, I know that I'm going to have to perform very well, and that gets the nerves and the adrenaline going."

Roddick trails Murray 6-2 in career meetings including a third round, straight sets loss here to the Briton in 2006.

"Andy has been playing

great. He has come into his own as a player," said Roddick, who hit 43 aces in his five-set quarterfinal win over Lleyton Hewitt.

"But with my serve, I can give myself a chance in any match. I've been in this situation many times."

## Third ODI

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demons of India's early exit from the 2007 World Cup in the Caribbean as another objective that will motivate his side.

In both matches, India have looked a below-par version of the side that before coming to the Caribbean had lost only three of their previous 18 matches, and had climbed to No.3 in the ODI World rankings.

They allowed West Indies to get within sight of a challenging victory target of 340 in the first ODI, and then suffered a batting meltdown in the second ODI as their age-old susceptibility to short-pitched and swing bowling were again exposed.

Yuvraj Singh looks to be the only batsman in touch as was evident from his 131 in the first ODI, and some of the strokes he played in his all-too-brief 35 in the second ODI.

Dhoni made 95 in the second match, but he too, has not cut the picture of the commanding figure at the crease that he is known to be.

Questions about fatigue will continue to preoccupy the discussions about India's performance, but they can silence all of the debate with two commanding victories in the next few days.

## SQUADS

**WEST INDIES** (from): Chris Gayle (captain), Denesh Ramdin, Lionel Baker, Suleman Benn, David Bernard Jr, Darren Bravo, Dwayne Bravo, Shivnarine Chanderpaul, Narsingh Deonarine, Runako Morton, Ravi Rampaul, Ramnaresh Sarwan, Jerome Taylor.

**INDIA** (from): Mahendra Singh Dhoni (captain), Subramaniam Badrinath, Gautam Gambhir, Ravindra Jadeja, Dinesh Karthik, Praveen Kumar, Abhishek Nayar, Ashish Nehra, Pragnan Ojha, Yusuf Pathan, Ishant Sharma, Rohit Sharma, Harbhajan Singh, Rudra Pratap Singh, Yuvraj Singh, Murali Vijay.

## Pak objection to new FTP

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan has complained of being marginalised in the draft of the next six-year international cricket programme, forcing the signing of the schedule to be postponed, an official said Thursday.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) last week began chalking out a Future Tours Programme (FTP) which aims to provide a structured schedule of cricket for the ten member countries from 2012 to 2018.

Teams have been wary of playing in Pakistan amid a wave of Taliban-linked attacks over two years, and the nation was stripped of its World Cup matches after a deadly attack on the Sri Lankan cricket team in Lahore in March.

The ICC had hoped to get the programme approved by member countries last week, but Pakistan objected, saying it had not been granted enough matches.

Pakistan Cricket Board chief operating officer Salim Altuf said the ICC had now assured Pakistan that its interests will be looked after, as the schedule went back to the drawing board.

## BSWA accords

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Day with huge enthusiasm along with other 144 countries across the world.

Dr Nizamuddin Ahmed, a former sports editor of The Daily Star, is renowned for his satirical writings. He received his piece of accolade, a crest, from the sports supreme while Rabra Chowdhury, the only daughter of Jalal Ahmed Chowdhury, received the memento on behalf of her father.

Jalal Ahmed Chowdhury, technical adviser of Bangladesh Under-19 team, could not attend the reception as he is now in England with the team.

Speaking briefly at the function, Ahad Ali Sarkar said that the nation would remember with gratitude the contributions of sports journalists for the development of games in the country.

BSWA president Sarwar Hossain and general secretary Rafiqul Islam were, among others, present at the function along with its members, officials of different sports federations, players, patrons and coaches.

Meanwhile, a rally to mark the day scheduled for Friday morning, has been cancelled due to rough weather. A fresh date for the rally will be announced later.

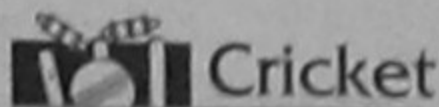
## Zia atop

FROM PAGE 17

three and a half points at the end of the fourth round. He enforced a credible draw against another Grand Master Reefat Bin Sattar, whose latest slip pushed him down the points table. Reefat is now sharing the crowded third position with Fide Master Abu Sufian Shakil and Golam Mostafa Bhuiyan -- all having three points each.

In the other matches, Rajib beat Debaraj Chatterjee, Shakil defeated Fide Master Mohammad Javed of Destiny and Mostafa won against Jamal Ahmed. Meanwhile, country's first Grand Master Niaz Murshed failed to turn up for his fourth round game against Mahtabuddin Ahmed Robin.

# Hussey hits form



AFP, Worcester

Mike Hussey came back to form with his first century in nine months on a day when several Australia top-order batsmen failed in their final warm-up game before the Ashes.

Hussey made 143 not out on the first day of the four-day tour match with the England Lions, the national 'A' side, here at New Road on Wednesday as Australia reached 337 for eight at stumps.

His century was Hussey's first in any form of cricket since his 146 against India in a Test match in Bangalore last October.

"It's been a long time for me to spend so much time at the wicket so it was pretty important at the start of this tour to get my confidence up and spend some good time at the crease," said Hussey.

After a devastating new ball spell by Stephen Harmison, Hussey, approaching his first Ashes series in England at the age of 34, helped rescue Australia with a 141-run stand alongside opener Simon Katich (95).

"It was important to get a partnership going," Hussey explained. "I thought (Katich) played very well again. He's been outstanding really."

Harmison, bidding to regain his Test place, earlier struck left-hander Phillip Hughes square on the helmet with his first delivery of the day.

He then accounted for the 20-year-old with another rising delivery, Hughes caught off his bat handling fending to Joe Denly at gully.

The Durham paceman also struck Ricky Ponting on the shoulder in a fiery opening spell -- which signalled his intent to return to the senior side ahead of Sunday's first Test squad announcement -- before Graham Onions, his county colleague, dismissed the Australia captain for a single.

Harmison famously drew blood from Ponting's cheek on the first morning of the 2005

Ashes series at Lord's but was dropped during England's tour of the Caribbean earlier this year after some wayward displays.

Hussey and Katich steered the tourists away from trouble before the number four, playing up the order above Michael Clarke, shared a crucial seventh-wicket stand with Mitchell Johnson worth 109 in just 29 overs.

Australia had lost four wickets for 32 runs to be 215 for six at tea after Katich, Clarke (four), Marcus North (one) and Brad Haddin (seven) all succumbed in quick succession.

Katich struck 15 boundaries in his 95, but gave England's toiling attack a gift when he failed to capitalise on a wayward leg-side delivery from Harmison and picked out Onions on the fine leg boundary.

The Durham duo are widely regarded to be competing for the same Test place but Onions said he hoped they could play alongside each other in the Ashes.

"Me and Harmy have formed a pretty formidable bowling attack this season. Harmy with his aggressive way ... and me at the other end trying to pitch it up," he explained.

"It's something I think we definitely can do for England. Whether we'll get the opportunity I'm not sure."

New South Wales opener Katich earlier had an escape on 37 when Onions, at leg slip, missed a sharp catch off Sajid Mahmood.

Mahmood also dropped Hussey on 75 off his own bowling -- a chest-high chance he should have grasped -- before Hussey brought up his hundred with a delightful back foot cover drive for four off leg-spinner Adil Rashid.

Hussey also escaped when Rashid grounded him in the slips on 132, but generally looked unflappable in humid conditions.

His return to form will delight the touring side following relative failures against South Africa over the past six months.

Hussey averaged close to three figures for the early part of his belated international career but that dropped to 22 for Australia's 2-1 series win in South Africa and just 17 in their preceding home series loss to the Proteas.

# Teams look forward

FROM PAGE 17

that Sri Lanka, with the record-breaking spinner Muttiah Muralidaran in their ranks, have proved almost unbeatable at home in recent times.

Of the 19 home Tests Sri Lanka have played in the past five years, they have won 13, drawn four and lost just two -- one of them to Pakistan by eight wickets in Kandy in April 2006.

Younus Khan's Pakistan have not experienced the rigours of a Test match on foreign soil since a two-match series in India in December 2007.

Even at home, Pakistan have played just one series over the past two years due to security concerns in the volatile

nation, and that too had to be abandoned after the attack on the Sri Lankan team.

Pakistan will be boosted by the return of veteran batsman Mohammad Yousuf, 34, and seasoned all-rounder Abdur Razzaq, 29, to the Test fold after they ended their links with the rebel Indian Cricket League.

But flamboyant all-rounder Shahid Afridi, who won the player-of-the-match awards in both the semifinal and final of the World Twenty20, has opted to rest from the series.

Kumar Sangakkara, leading Sri Lanka for the first time in a Test series, was confident his team had overcome both the tragedy in Lahore and the loss in the Twenty20 final and were ready to clash with Pakistan

again.

"Lahore is not on our minds, the team has done a really great job mentally getting over it," said Sangakkara. "It was heart-breaking to lose the Twenty20 final but we had a great tournament."

"I am proud of the way the team played in England and I am confident we will do as well in the Test matches."

After the Galle Test, the teams move to Colombo where the second Test will be played at the P. Sara stadium from July 12-16 and the third at the Sinhalese sports club from July 20-24.

The rivals are also scheduled to play five one-day internationals and a Twenty20 match after the Test series.



PHOTO: STAR

Taibur Rahman (L) and Grand Master Ziaur Rahman are engaged in cerebral warfare during their 35th Mercantile Bank National Chess Championship game at the NSC conference room yesterday.

## CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

<b>ACROSS</b>		36 Refine metal	59 Blunder	20 Black-birds
1 Amaze- ment, plus	38 "Holy cow!"		<b>DOWN</b>	21 Kennedy and Koppel
4 Glistened	40 Kimono sash		1 Bonfire residue	
9 Insulation material (Abbr.)	41 Bad witness		2 Personal question	22 Grad
12 That girl	43 In the thick of		3 Conger, for one	23 James Brown hit
13 Melodic and harmonic	45 Hallux		4 Fashions	27 Journal
14 Golf ball's position	47 Couric's network		5 Coyotes' din	29 Watch chains
15 Tinsel- town	48 Fuss		6 Yoko of music	30 Fit of peevish- ness
17 Help	49 Glenn Miller classic		7 Judd or Campbell	32 Narrow cut
18 Having a bug	54 Virgo neighbor		8 Firstborn	34 Head of the class?
19 Villain, slangily	55 Waste conduit		9 Green- house buy	
21 Asian capital	56 Pair		10 Henry —	37 Follower of Lao-tzu
24 "— It Roman- tic?"	57 Pop		11 Relin- quish	39 Heath remains
25 Sprite	58 Crocodile —		16 Back talk	42 Actress Zellweger
26 Lorne Michaels' brain- child, for short				44 Doctrine
28 Quarrels				45 Hairless
31 Union payments				46 Notion
33 Obtained				50 Airline initials
35 Any time now				51 Praiseful verse
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<b>Solution time: 26 mins.</b>		
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NODE	NEER	TNT

Solution time: 24 mins.

FOR BLOB	ADAM
LAW TOTA	LIMA
ATE SOIL	EVEN
THREE	COMPANY
ACE	NTH
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MUM	BOX
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COMPANY	PICNIC
ATOP	SOFT
TITL	OREO
NODE	NEER
	TNT

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