

## Akram a fan of India's batting

PTI, New Delhi

Former Pakistan captain Wasim Akram reckons that trio of Sachin Tendulkar, VVS Laxman and Rahul Dravid gave India's batting line-up a 'monstrous' look in the just-concluded Test series against Sri Lanka.

India drew the three-match series 1-1 after registering a five-wicket win over the hosts in the final Test at P Sara Oval in Colombo on Saturday.

"Sachin, Laxman and Dravid continue to give the Indian batting line-up the 'monstrous' look that it has and that showed. The way Laxman batted in the third Test at P Sara Oval was really commendable.

The Indian team looked like a unit," Akram said.

"The best thing about them is that they have gelled well with the youngsters. The team's performance is uppermost in their minds," Akram told ESPNStar.com.

The 44-year-old, however, felt that the poor turnout in the series made it a rather boring experience.

"The 1-1 result was a fair result. But the wickets, the poor turnouts and the general atmosphere made it a rather boring series. Except for some personal landmarks that determined the outcome of the matches and Muralidaran's retirement, the series was nothing much to write about," the legendary pacer said.

## First round exit for top two players

AFP, Toronto

The world's top two players, Spain's Rafael Nadal and Serbian Novak Djokovic, slumped to a shock loss in their Toronto Masters first round doubles match to a pair of wildcard Canadians.

Nadal and Djokovic took the first set 7-5 against the unheralded duo of Vasek Pospisil and Milos Raonic, but then lost the next two sets, 6-3, 10-8.

Not since Jimmy Connors was ranked first and Arthur Ashe second when they played together 34 years ago have the top two singles players joined forces in doubles.

But the dream doubles team here did not produce the goods, the 20-year-old Pospisil and Raonic, 19, winning the final three games of the second set, and immediately gained control in the match tie-break by rolling out to a 4-0 lead.

They earned four match points at 9-5, and after seeing Djokovic and Nadal erase three of those opportunities, finally succeeded in closing out the win in one hour and 34 minutes.

Pospisil and Raonic will next face Wimbledon champions and number five seeds Jurgen Melzer and Philipp Petzschner.

## Kiwis crush

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Pragyan Ojha immediately after hoisting the bowler for a straight six. He also completed 4,000 one-day runs during his 95-ball knock.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

**NEW ZEALAND:** 288 all out in 48.5 overs (Taylor 95, Styris 89, Tuffey 19, Oram 14; Nehra 4-47, Praveen 3-43)

**INDIA:** 88 all out in 29.3 overs (Jadeja 20, Sehwa 19, Karthik 14; Tuffey 3-34, Oram 2-15, Mills 2-26)

**Result:** New Zealand won by 200 runs.

**Man-of-the-match:** Ross Taylor.

**Toss:** New Zealand.

**Umpires:** Ramnare Martinez and Simon Taufel.

## Clash in DU

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Physical instructor of DU Physical Education Centre went to rescue the referee from the grip of agitated students.

The aggrieved Pali department students then harassed the teachers who rescued the referee. After the incident, students of the winning department too joined in the clash, witnesses added.

Police and the members of DU administration rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control.

Vice-Chancellor of Dhaka University Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique told reporters that a inquire committee would be formed to identify the students responsible for the incident and action would be taken against them.



Roger Federer of Switzerland speaks during a news conference at the Rogers Cup tennis tournament in Toronto on Monday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

# Roger takes Paul for test drive

Tennis  
REUTERS, Toronto

Roger Federer celebrated his 29th birthday this week but the cagey Swiss said he was not too old to learn a few new tricks as he launched his North American hardcourt campaign with coach Paul Annacone at his side.

The 16-time grand slam winner came to the Toronto Masters with his wife, twin girls and Annacone -- the newest member of his compact entourage -- eager to finish an up-and-down year on a high note with a victory at the U.S. Open in September.

Federer has spent much of his prime years working alone, but a crushing quarter-final exit at the All England Club, some stagnating play and a lower ranking convinced him it was time for some fresh thinking.

"I've always questioned myself in the best of times and in the worst of times, even though there were not many bad moments the last seven years or so," Federer told reporters on Monday.

"But I always look at new ways I can improve. Paul, I think, with his experience can bring something to our team and that's what we're exploring right now."

Federer would not elaborate on the status of his working relationship with Annacone, who

also coached Pete Sampras and Tim Henman, but said he would likely wait until after the U.S. Open before deciding whether to keep him on a full-time basis.

The well-rested Swiss is spending plenty of time with Annacone on the Toronto hardcourts opting not to play doubles in order to focus on working with the American.

"I've always gotten along very well with Paul, him being obviously the coach of Sampras and Henman who were sort of friends to me," said Federer. "So I thought it was a good time to do a test and this is our first test tournament."

Federer insists he is not a control freak, but from the outside the Swiss seems in complete control of every aspect of his life on the court and off.

Since parting ways with Peter Lundgren in 2003, Federer has not employed a full-time coach, opting instead to work with a string of high-profile part-timers including Australians Tony Roche, Darren Cahill and Spaniard Jose Higueras.

Annacone will be courtside when Federer, Toronto champion in 2004 and 2006, begins play on Tuesday with a second-round match against Argentina's Juan Ignacio Chela.

"I know I can handle a lot by myself but obviously at this stage now I do need help from all sorts of sides because my family has grown and the business is much bigger," said Federer.

## Abbas's apprehension

Cricket  
AFP, Karachi

Former captain Zaheer Abbas said Tuesday he feared for the future of cricket in Pakistan, saying bad administration had led the sport towards disaster.

"Win or lose are part and parcel of the game, but I fear for Pakistan cricket because the manner in which matters like transformation of the team have been handled, we are heading towards a disaster," Abbas told AFP.

His reaction came a day after Pakistan slumped to a nine-wicket defeat against England at Edgbaston, Birmingham -- their second loss following a crushing 354-run mauling in the first Test at Nottingham.

The victory on Monday gave England an unassailable 2-0 lead in the four-Test series.

Abbas said "knee-jerk" reactions by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) administration have been bothering fans and players alike.

"Decisions taken in a haphazard manner have been bothering and the state of Pakistan cricket is deplorable. The main culprit is the administration which should be changed immediately," said Abbas, who played 78 Tests for Pakistan.

"How far this can go? Cricket is a passion in Pakistan and people are getting disheartened by the poor administration of the game."

Abbas criticised senior batsman Mohammad Yousuf's recall.

"Yousuf announced his retirement and suddenly he was sent to England. How come

Yousuf is in the team now and Younus Khan not selected, this is different set of rules for two players," he said.

Both Younus and Yousuf were handed an indefinite ban by the PCB earlier this year after Pakistan's winless tour of Australia. Younus had his ban overturned on appeal, while Yousuf did not appeal and announced his retirement in protest.

However, the PCB recalled Yousuf but did not clear Younus. PCB lawyer Taffazul Rizvi said Yousuf's recall was legal, while Younus would have to complete the legal process with the PCB before he could be recalled.

Abbas said the administration failed to handle the matters.

"Where was the team management and the administration when seven, eight players took oath on the holy book [the Quran] and revolted against the captaincy of Younus," said Abbas of the infighting in the team before and after the Australia tour between November and February.

"Younus should have been sent to England so that a mixture of youth and seniors would have guided this team. These young players are Pakistan's future, but I am sorry their handling is very poor," said Abbas.

Fellow former captain Aamir Sohail said Pakistan team management failed in the England series.

"Pakistan should have adopted an aggressive approach when they were defending 118, they should have opened the bowling with off-spinner Saeed Ajmal, but I must say they failed," said Sohail.

"The Board management and coaching staff are not doing their jobs properly."

## Butt seeks improvement

Cricket  
REUTERS, Birmingham

Pakistan must improve their lacklustre fielding before the third Test against England, captain Salman Butt said on Monday after counting 14 missed catching chances in the nine-wicket loss at Edgbaston.

Pakistan are now 2-0 down in the four-match series and Butt realises if they are to salvage a drawn series by winning at The Oval and Lord's, his team will have to start holding out to opportunities.

Regular wicketkeeper Kamran Akmal was omitted after missing chances in the first Test at Trent Bridge and his replacement Zulqarnain Haider dropped three catches at Edgbaston.

Several of his teammates were also offenders as Kevin Pietersen was missed three times during his innings of 80 that gave England their platform to win.

"The guys themselves realise that we need 20 wickets to win a Test match and if we drop 14 catches in a Test it makes it hard to do that," Butt told reporters.

"They were out in the morning working hard but one day is not enough. You need to do that continuously. These 14 include half chances and being professional we need to account for the half chances."

There were 10 clear drops. Former Pakistan batsman Ijaz Ahmed is part of the team's current backroom staff, officially as an associate coach but with the remit to help the team's fielding.

England have former physical education teacher Richard Halsall as a specialist fielding coach while Australia have had baseball coach

Mike Young helping them.

South Africa have employed one of the greatest fielders of all time in their former batsman Jonty Rhodes, and fielding expert and former Warwickshire player Trevor Penney used to work with Sri Lanka. Pakistan have not considered a specialist.

"Ijaz Ahmed was one of the best Pakistan fielders once and he is doing a good job but we need to work hard ourselves," Butt said. "A culture change in one series is virtually impossible. More than myself, the individual needs to understand what has happened and only that will change them."

Meanwhile, England captain Andrew Strauss gave unequivocal support to his opening partner and vice-captain Alastair Cook who was bowled for four by Mohammad Aamir on Monday and has now failed to reach 30 in his last seven Test innings.

Although he scored two centuries on the tour of Bangladesh in March, when the pitches were slow and did not encourage pace or spin bowlers, Cook's form could be giving England selectors food for thought ahead of the Ashes series, which starts in November. Cook averages 26 from 10 Tests against Australia.

"Opening the batting in Test cricket can be tough at times and when you are down on confidence it can be exploited more than other areas in the batting line-up, but Cooky has played some outstanding innings for England in the past, he's a valuable member of our side," said Strauss.

"I have every confidence he will come back and play some valuable innings in the near future. He's a top-quality opening bat and three or four Tests do not change that. I'm not a selector but he has my full backing because I honestly think a big score is around the corner."

## Team leaves tomorrow

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also be the part of six-member athletes in the contingent.

Chef de mission and general secretary of the Bangladesh Weightlifting Federation, Wing Commander (retired) Mohyuddin Ahmed said that they were participating in the games to give exposure to the upcoming talented athletes.

The officials of the Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) has a dream to expect a medal

from either archer Milon or shooter Sadia as the archer won gold medal in the 70m recurve bow event at the Asian Youth Games in Indonesia while Sadia's pairing with Sharmin Akhter Ratna won the gold medal in the South Asian Games.

Apart from the athletes and three team officials, the BOA is sending three more officials AN Isteaque Ahmed, Jashimuddin Khan Khosru and Mohammed Anisur Rahman as guests of the national council.

## Usha will not

FROM PAGE 17

which Usha forfeited in protest of the Club Cup final, the old Dhaka outfit were supposed to be downgraded to the First Division.

The BHF is bound to inform its decisions to the court by August 15 as the federation sought more time in their first appearance before the court on July 22.

A Dhaka court had earlier asked the BHF to take decision on the Dhaka Bank Club Cup hockey final according to the rules and regulation and not to relegate Usha KC.

## Alonso rates title chances

50/50  
INTERNET

Fernando Alonso says he is confident that Ferrari will continue to close on the F1 championship lead when the season resumes at Spa at the end of the month.

Strong results in Germany and Hungary have brought the Spaniard right back into contention for the title, and he sits just 20 points behind championship leader Mark Webber heading into the summer shutdown.

Alonso admitted that there was work still to do to allow the team to take the fight to Red Bull and McLaren to the title but said he felt there was a '50 per cent' chance of securing the crown.

"It only took us two normal races to be fully back in contention for the title," he said. "It's true we are still behind in the classification and it is always better to be in front, but I am convinced that in the final sprint, by which I mean the last two or three races, we will be closer to the top than we are now."

"The important thing is to remain calm and concentrated and to do our job well. It's hard to say who is my strongest rival: we are all almost equal. Maybe, Hamilton, Button and myself, who have already won a title, will tackle the final rush in a calmer way, having already experienced something similar. Percentage chance? I'd say 50 per cent, which is the normal state of affairs..."

Alonso added that the team will also need to put its appearance in front of the FIA's World Motor Sport Council to one side to focus fully on the job at hand.

"We have to await the decision with confidence, hoping for a positive outcome," he said. "We drivers and the engineers have the task of staying focused on the car and on our work, trying to get the results on track."

## Ivanovic hits form

Tennis  
REUTERS, Cincinnati

Former world number one Ana Ivanovic showed flashes of the form that took her to the pinnacle of tennis as she upset ninth seed Victoria Azarenka 2-6, 7-6, 6-2 in the first round of the Cincinnati Masters on Monday.

Serb Ivanovic, a first-round casualty at San Diego last week, had appeared set for another early exit before

rallying to beat the in-form Belarusian, who won the Stanford Classic earlier this month.

The 2008 French Open champion Ivanovic briefly held the world's top ranking that year, but a subsequent collapse in form and a series of niggling injuries have seen her ranking slip to 62nd. The Serb was joined in the second round by another fallen former top-ranked player in Russia's Dinara Safina, who eased to a 7-5, 6-4 win over Italy's Roberta Vinci.



Serbia's Ana Ivanovic is elated after winning match point against Victoria Azarenka of Belarus in the first round of the Western & Southern Financial Group Women's Open in Cincinnati on Monday.

PHOTO: AFP

Safina was also forced to dig deep, rallying from 3-5 down in the opening set before closing out her fifth win against the Italian from five matches.

The 24-year-old, now ranked 35 and yet to make a semi-final this season after returning from a back injury that sidelined her for three months, will next face Belgian Kim Clijsters.

Israeli Shahar Peer advanced after Olga Govortsova of Belarus retired when trailing 6-3, 4-1, while France's Marion Bartoli thrashed Spain's Anabel Medina Garrigues 6-4, 6-0.

Bartoli's compatriot Aravane Rezaï was not so fortunate, however, being dumped out by Serb qualifier Bojana Jovanovski 4-6, 6-3, 6-4.

US OPEN

## Ivo, Mario withdraw

AFP, New York

Croatians Ivo Karlovic and Mario Ancic have withdrawn from the US Open because of injuries, the US Tennis Association said Monday.

Karlovic, a former top-15 player now ranked 63rd, had surgery on his left Achilles' tendon and hasn't played since the Madrid Masters in May.

The US Open is the third consecutive Grand Slam tournament he'll miss after entering 26 in a row.

Ancic has a back injury and will be skipping a seventh straight major championship.

He has been ranked as high as seven in the world but has tumbled to 469th. Ancic had been given a berth in the US Open based on a protected ranking of 65th. He last played on tour in May at Munich.

## CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

**ACROSS**  
1 Blood-sucker  
6 Charlatan  
11 Roman orator  
12 Small brown finch  
14 Mary-Kate's sister  
15 Poppy derivative  
16 Jurist  
17 Lance  
19 Feathery accessory  
20 Clarinetist's need  
22 Golfer Ernie  
23 Grad  
24 Stranger  
26 Caters (to)  
28 Started  
30 Chic, to Austin Powers

**DOWN**  
1 On the roster  
2 Resounded  
3 Conger or moray  
4 Saskatchewan tribe  
5 Rule-maker?  
6 Stuff in a the water  
7 Fully developed  
8 Singer  
9 Lacking the skill  
10 Round-about path

**31** Become wrinkly  
**35** Old gold coin  
**39** Dregs  
**40** Symbol of intrigue  
**42** Prop for Sherlock  
**43** In need of repair  
**44** Farewell  
**46** Three Little Kittens' reward  
**47** Lethargy  
**49** Cracker type  
**51** Buffet-table heat source  
**52** Willow twigs  
**53** Win it all

**54** Dawdle  
**11** Illinois city  
**13** Squads  
**18** Heidi's height  
**21** Sandwich shops  
**23** Find the sum  
**25** Gun the engine  
**27** Affirmative action?  
**29** Tear on a leaf, so to speak  
**31** Vegas attraction  
**32** Serfs  
**33** Altered a sketch  
**34** Kauai keepsake  
**36** Zero  
**37** Collection of beehives  
**38** Abounds  
**41** Sired  
**44** Top-notch  
**45** —  
**48** Opposite of post-  
**50** Atmosphere

**Solution time: 27 mins.**

MECCA THE GAD  
ALLOT AUK ANI  
BLEAT CLEAVES  
ALASKA ZING  
OAR REL CANTO  
FILM NEPAL  
FRYERS ERECTS  
DEEDS ALOE  
LITUP RTS EYE  
ONES MYOPIA  
CLEANER ONTAP  
HEN EMU DOETH  
STY WON ENDED

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
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							53			

## CRYPTOQUIP

ACDO RV OCV VJWWL DO ACRUC  
N Q W ' V M N L S J Z N U W V V W V  
D U W Z O D R Q D Z N Y D O R U  
C W Z M ? M D V R B Y W O D M N B R V Y .

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: BECAUSE I KEEP MISUSING A CERTAIN PUNCTUATION MARK, THERE MIGHT BE AN APOSTROPHE CATASTROPHE. Today's Cryptoquip Clue: V equals S