

# Dutch relief as Italy escape with a draw

AFP, Paris  
The Netherlands recorded a morale-boosting win in qualifying for Euro 2016 on Sunday while Italy saw their perfect start to the campaign ended by Croatia in an eventful encounter.

Guus Hiddink had indicated that he would resign as coach of the Dutch if they slipped up against Latvia to continue a stuttering start to their bid to reach the finals in France.

However, the World Cup semi-finalists recorded their second win in Group A by thumping Latvia 6-0 in Amsterdam, but the Dutch continue to trail group leaders Czech Republic by six points.

The outstanding Arjen Robben and Klaas-Jan Huntelaar both scored twice while captain Robin van Persie and Jeffrey Bruma were also on target to ensure that Hiddink would not be going anywhere.

The Czechs made it four wins from four games as they ended Iceland's 100 percent record by coming from behind to win 2-1 in Plzen.

Meanwhile, in Istanbul, Turkey got their first win of the campaign by beating Kazakhstan 3-1 as Burak Yilmaz scored

## RESULTS

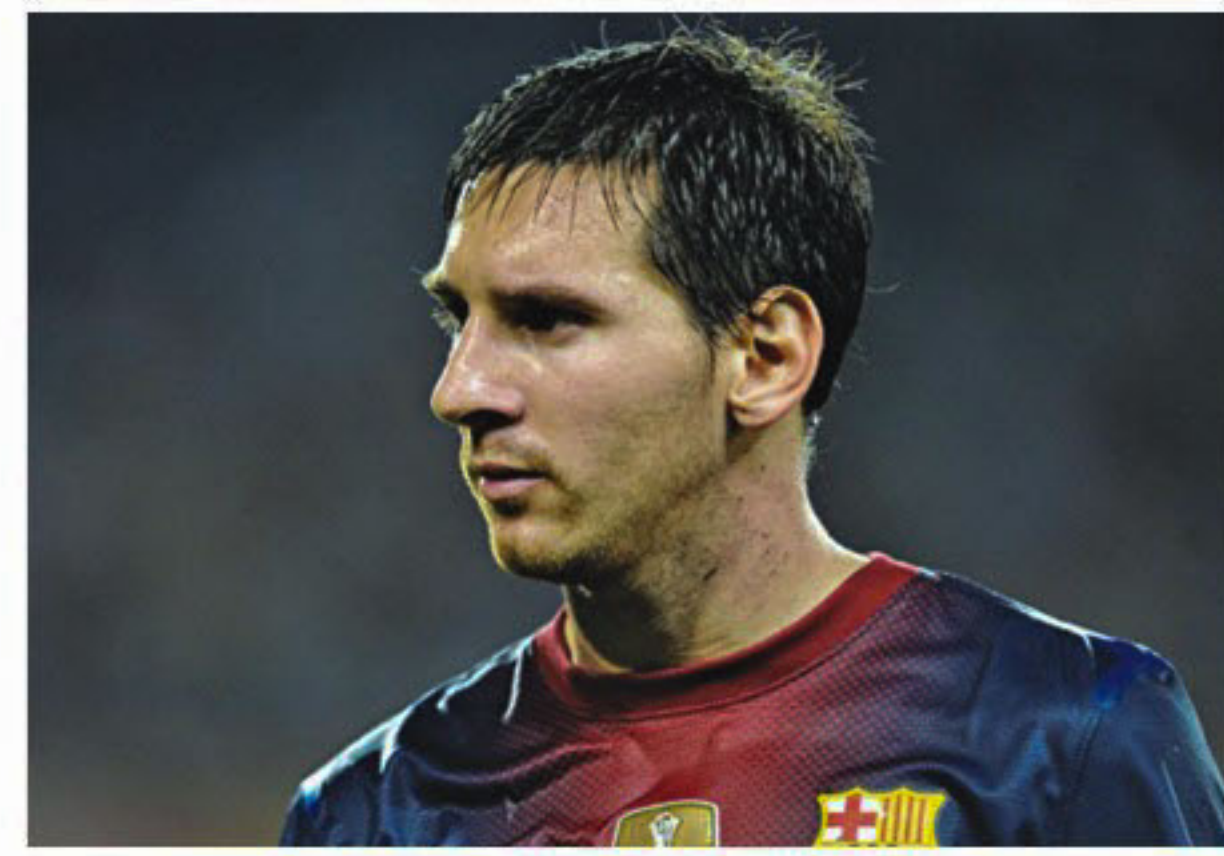
**Czech Republic 2** (Kaderabek 45+1, Bodvarsson 61-og)  
Iceland 1 (R Sigurdsson 9)  
**Netherlands 6** (van Persie 6, Robben 35, 82, Huntelaar 42, 89, Bruma 78) Latvia 0  
**Turkey 3** (Burak Yilmaz 26-pen, 29, Serdar Aziz 83) Kazakhstan 1 (Smakov 87-pen)  
Belgium 0 Wales 0  
**Cyprus 5** (Merkis 9, Erem 31, 42, 60, Christofi 87-pen) Andorra 0  
**Israel 3** (Vermouth 36, Damar 45, Zahavi 70) Bosnia and Herzegovina 0  
**Azerbaijan 0 Norway 1** (Nordtveit 25)  
Bulgaria 1 (Galabinov 6) Malta 1 (Failla 49-pen)  
Italy 1 (Candreva 11) Croatia 1 (Perisic 15)

twice for Fatih Terim's struggling side. In Milan, Italy dropped their first points in Group H in a 1-1 draw with Croatia that was marred by crowd trouble as away supporters sent a hail of flares down onto the pitch from high in the stands. Italy and Croatia are level on 10 points atop the section after four games. In the group's other game, Malta came from behind to draw 1-1 in Bulgaria. Elsewhere, Wales extended their unbeaten start in Group B with a battling performance to hold World Cup quarter-finalists Belgium to a 0-0 draw in Brussels.

# Enzo makes bow for Real reserves

AFP, Madrid  
France great Zinedine Zidane handed his son Enzo, 19, a debut for the Real Madrid reserve team on Sunday. Enzo, a midfielder of great promise who usually turns out for the Spanish giants' third team, was promoted to the Real Madrid Castilla squad by his father, who is also the coach, for Sunday's match away to UB Conquense of Cuenca in the third tier. He profited from the absence of several players due to international duty to appear as a late substitute in a match won 2-1 by Castilla. Enzo, the eldest of Zidane's four sons, made his first appearance in the Madrid youth ranks in 2004. He has dual Spanish and French nationality but has already been called up to the France under-19 set-up.

# Colossal friendlies



AFP, Manchester  
Cristiano Ronaldo will try to outshine Lionel Messi on his return to Old Trafford when the two best players in the world clash in a friendly between Portugal and Argentina on Tuesday. Real Madrid forward Ronaldo and Barcelona striker Messi are locked in a battle to prove themselves the top player on the planet and their latest showdown comes on the former home turf of the Portugal icon. The duo have deservedly become serial trophy collectors over the last decade, with team and individual prizes hoovered up on a regular basis. Ronaldo hopes to add a third Ballon D'Or this year, and few would disagree if he pipped Messi and several contenders from the German World Cup winning team. Ronaldo has 18 league goals already this season, while Messi has -- by his standards -- a modest total of seven, although he was voted player of the tournament at this year's World Cup. Also in Ronaldo's favour, he became the record goalscorer in European Championship qualifying and tournament history with his strike in a 1-0 victory over Armenia at the weekend. That was his 23rd goal in the competition, surpassing the previous high mark set by Jan. There will also be a return to Manchester for former City and United striker Carlos Tevez. Tevez, now with Juventus, came back into the Argentina squad last week after three years in exile and

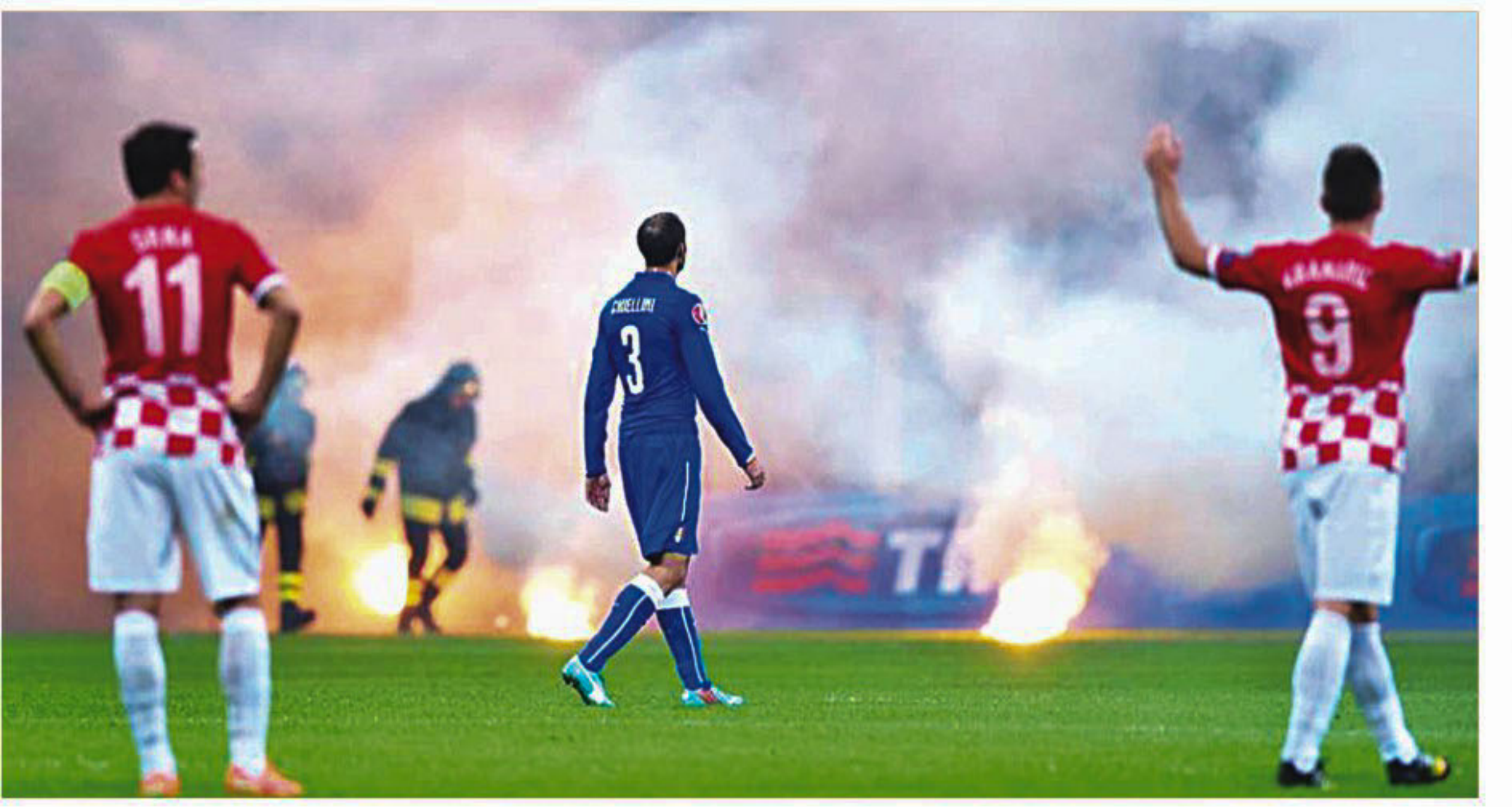
played in last week's 2-1 friendly win over Croatia. Spain side were on the crest of a wave last time they faced Germany on the way to winning the 2010 World Cup but they now meet on Tuesday in what will be a stern test for a new fledgling team. The stalwarts of a golden team that also won Euro 2008 and 2012 such as Carles Puyol, Xavi, Xabi Alonso and David Villa have retired from La Roja, so coach Vicente del Bosque has put the building blocks in place for a new

renew their 142-year-old rivalry in a end-of-year friendly at Glasgow's Celtic Park on Tuesday. Roy Hodgson's England are riding high after opening up a six-point advantage at the top of their qualifying group by coming from behind to beat Slovenia 3-1 on Saturday. Having won all four of their Group E games to date, qualification is already beginning to appear a formality, and in age-old rivals Scotland they face a team who have not beaten them in 15 years. But Scottish confidence is also on the up and with England's dispiriting World Cup group-stage exit still fresh in the memory, Hodgson will know that a poor result could disturb his side's fragile momentum. England won 3-2 when the teams last met at Wembley Stadium in August last year but England have not ventured north of the border since November 1999, when they won the first leg of a Euro 2000 qualifying play-off 2-0 at Hampden Park, and they can expect a fiery reception. Brazil will face a test as well against an Austrian team led by David Alaba, and they will have to overcome the conditions in Vienna to secure a win. PSG star Zlatan Ibrahimovic will return to France, where he plays his club football, but will be unable to lead Sweden out against France, as he is suffering from a niggling injury at the Marseilles. Italy will look to put their draw behind them as they take on Albania, while Ireland will face off against USA in a friendly game.

## FIXTURES

(All Times BST)  
**Tuesday**  
Japan vs Australia (4:20PM)  
Slovenia vs Colombia, Greece vs Serbia (11:00PM)  
**Wednesday**  
Austria vs Brazil (12:00AM)  
Italy vs Albania, Spain vs Germany, Argentina vs Portugal, Republic of Ireland vs United States, Poland vs Switzerland (1:45AM)  
France vs Sweden, Scotland vs England (2:00AM)  
Chile vs Uruguay (6:00AM)

Spain side following the failure at the Brazil World Cup to progress from the group stage. The team that will now take on Germany, who replaced them as world champions, in Vigo are not yet the finished article but there are positive signs. Many of the players coming through enjoyed success with Spain at youth level, including under-21 European champions in 2011 and 2013. In Britain's most anticipated game of the day England and Scotland will



Italy centre-back Giorgio Chiellini stands and watches the flares along with opposition players, as Italy's European qualifier against Croatia at San Siro was postponed for 10 minutes. PHOTO: INTERNET

# Silva angry with Neymar

GOAL.COM  
Thiago Silva has revealed his anger at Neymar after losing the Brazil captaincy to the Barcelona star. Silva led his nation at the World Cup, but the subsequent humiliation has seen new coach Dunga hand Neymar the armband. Silva has not played for Brazil since the tournament with the Selecao recording five clean sheets in his absence, and the centre-back admits he is far from happy with his compatriot's lack of empathy. "Sincerely, I didn't expect this," Silva said at a press conference. "I would be lying if I said it didn't annoy me. It feels like something was taken away from me that was mine. It's painful and makes me sad. Especially because no one has come to talk to me about this. Neymar didn't approach me. But I think we must be prepared for everything, somehow, even if I thought I was going to come and play."

# Bansal keeps BHF waiting

SPORTS REPORTER  
Three weeks after taking decision to appoint AK Bansal as the head coach of the Bangladesh national team, the Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) is still awaiting the arrival of the veteran Indian coach. BHF took the decision keeping in mind the national camp for the World Hockey League (Round-2) to start in Singapore on January 17, but due to Bansal's apparent inability to arrive here, plans for the preparation camp are in a limbo. Bansal, who is involved with a government sports institution in Patiala, needs an official leave before taking up the charge of the Bangladesh national team but he is yet to get the clearance from the authority concerned. The game's governing body had earlier attempted to rope in the Indian coach for a short period last year but due to the same problem, they eventually failed. In such circumstances, the BHF's decision to

appoint an already-engaged Bansal has raised question marks over of its foresight. "To be honest, all the quality coaches of India are involved with local organisations. Despite that we only took the decision to hire Bansal only after discussing the matter with him," said BHF general secretary Khaza Rahmatullah. "Money is also an issue in hiring a foreign coach as we will need a large sum to appoint a coach from Europe." Rahmatullah informed that Bansal has got permission from his sports institution and is now trying to get permission of India's sports ministry. "We will get a clearer picture in this regard within a few days," said Rahmatullah, adding that whether or not Bansal comes, they would start the preparation camp in between November 20 and 22 under local coaches at the Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan. The national players, except for those who are with the U-21 squad, are sitting idle for almost one-and-a-half months since the completion of the Asian Games in September.

# Ton-up Latham lifts NZ

AFP, Istanbul  
Turkey's top goalkeeper Volkan Demirel walked out of a crucial Euro 2016 qualifier due to abuse by Turkish fans on Sunday. Demirel was warming up on the pitch before the qualifier with Kazakhstan when he heard insults directed at him. He initially told the fans to be quiet but the abuse continued and Demirel waved then sarcastically, symbolically removed his gloves and marched off the pitch apparently on the verge of tears.

AFP, Dubai  
Opener Tom Latham scored his second successive hundred to guide New Zealand to 243-3 on the opening day of the second Test against Pakistan in Dubai on Monday. The 22-year-old followed his 103 in the first Test with another confident unbeaten 137 to help his team cash into the early advantage of winning the toss and opting to bat on a flat and grass-less Dubai stadium pitch. When bad lights forced closure three overs before schedule, Corey Anderson was seven not out on a day dominated by left-handed Latham. Latham put on a resolute 77-run stand for the opening wicket with Brendon McCullum (43) and another 76 for the second wicket with Kane Williamson (32). He then added 73 for the third wicket with Ross Taylor who was caught at short cover off leg-spinner Yasir Shah after scoring 23. Latham, playing only his sixth Test, hit Zulfiqar Babar for a six to reach 90s and after hitting a boundary off the same bowler took a

single to complete his century off 192 balls. Pakistan, missing a fifth bowler after Mohammad Hafeez was left out due to a hamstring injury, toiled hard and to add to their woes did not hold their chances. Azhar Ali let off Latham in gully when the batsman was 103 and also grassed Taylor on 11 -- both off Babar. Latham, who impressed in the first Test, once again showed grit and application during his 375-minute stay, hitting 11 boundaries and a six. Babar broke the stubborn second wicket stand when he turned one across Williamson's bat and hit the off stump. Williamson hit only one boundary during his patient 86-ball knock. In the first session Pakistan had to toil hard for wickets with Latham and McCullum batting confidently. **SCORES IN BRIEF**  
**NEW ZEALAND:** First innings 243 for 3 (Latham 137 not out, McCullum 43, Williamson 32, Taylor 23; Adil 1-47, Babar 1-92, Shah 1-51)  
**PAKISTAN:** Taufeeq, Masood, Younis, Azhar, Misbah, Shafiq, Sarfraz, Adil, Babar, Yasir, Rahat.

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