

PAKISTAN'S YASIR WANTS MATCH WITH INDIA'S ASHWIN

DUBAI: Wily Pakistan leg-spinner Yasir Shah yesterday wished he had a Test face off with magician Indian offie Ravichandran Ashwin in a battle of two fast wicket-taking spinners.

Shah became the joint-second fastest to 100 Test wickets in all Test cricket when he took 5-121 in his 17th match against West Indies in the first day-night Test in Dubai on Sunday.

England's George Lohmann holds the record of fastest to 100 Test wickets when he completed the tally in his 16th Test in 1896. Australia's Charlie Turner and Claire Grimmett and England's Sydney Barnes all reached 100-mark in

their 17th Test. Shah said Aswin's best luck message was an inspiration. "Yes, he had said good luck so I am thankful," Shah said of the Indian master's tweet.

"It's naturally motivating when a great bowler who is second fastest to 200 tweets a good luck message and it's really a great motivation for me."

Ashwin, who became the second fastest to 200 wickets in the recently concluded home series against New Zealand in 37 Tests-one match more than Grimmett-had wished Shah "best of luck" in a tweet last week.

"Good luck, may the force be with him. He is such a delight to watch,"

Ashwin had tweeted last week. On Shah achieving the record, Ashwin tweeted on Sunday: "Just a little late I guess, but very well done @Shah64Y double it up now."

Shah had 76 wickets in his first 12 Test and took ten against England at Lord's but couldn't complete 100 in the next three matches. Shah said he wishes he play against Ashwin.

"Every Pakistani and Indian player has this wish to play against each other," said Shah. "I have not played a Test against India so it's my wish." Political tensions have not allowed Pakistan and India to play a Test series against each

other since 2007. India stalled all bilateral series with Pakistan in the wake of 2008 Mumbai attacks, which New Delhi blamed on militants based across the border.

Ashwin had made his Test debut in 2011 while Shah has only started playing Tests two years ago.

But both have crossed paths in a World Cup 2015 match at Adelaide when Ashwin got one wicket and Shah went wicket-less.

With India number one in Test rankings and Pakistan number two, there was a suggestion of having a one-off Test to determine a world Test champi-

on. But a renewed tension between the two arch-rivals since an attack on a military base in Indian administered Kashmir which left 17 soldiers killed have left the two nations close to war.

That has left no chance of cricket between the South Asian nuclear rivals.

Shah said he has faced no problems in his comeback from a failed dope test of last year.

"I was lucky that I was suspended for three months only and I did not lose any Test series and since my come back I have found no problems," said Shah who escaped a lengthy ban after admitting to taking hyper-tension tablets. —AFP

WATSON PART OF AUSSIE TEAM 'TUMOUR': CLARKE

SYDNEY: Former Australia captain Michael Clarke has revisited old feuds, describing Shane Watson as part of a group that was "like a tumour" on the team.

Star batsman Clarke also spoke of his notorious dressing-room bust-up with Simon Katich, who grabbed the then vice-captain's throat during a disagreement about when the team song should be sung after Australia's Test win against South Africa in 2009.

In a television interview with Channel Nine's 60 Minutes programme aired late Sunday to coincide with the release of his autobiography, Clarke spoke of his stormy relationships.

He denied labelling all-rounder Watson a "cancer" on the team, a claim made by Mickey Arthur in documents connected to the former coach's legal action against Cricket Australia following the South African's sacking three years ago after a 4-0 defeat in India.

Watson had been one of four players stood down by Arthur and Clarke for the third Test against India in Mohali in 2013 in the so-called "homework" affair.

"No, I didn't say that," Clarke said. "I said that there is a number of players, or a group in this team at the moment that are like a tumour, and if we don't fix it, it's going to turn into a cancer."

Asked if Watson was one of them Clarke replied: "Shane was one of those players, yes." He admitted the run-in with Katich caused a divide between him and the older players. "I think a lot of us were getting wound up, so I think I had every reason to be pissed off," Clarke said. "But I don't think my language was appropriate to Kato (Katich). It turned out-I found out four days later-that Matthew Hayden was going to retire after that Test match. So I think Haydos was pissed off as well that that happened in his last Test."

Clarke who retired after the Ashes last year, said some of his problems started when he was appointed vice-captain to Ricky Ponting.

"I don't think I was a good vice-captain at all," he told the programme. "As soon as I got given the vice-captaincy, I think the perception was I was automatically the next captain, and that built."

The former skipper admits he struggled with the public perception of his personality. "I hated not knowing why people didn't like me or why the media perception was they didn't like me," Clarke said.

"The negative stuff I would read, and I felt like I was reading it in bold letters."

"You know, 'you're selfish, you don't care about the team, you're an upstart' - that was hard to deal with." — AFP



DUBAI: West Indies batsman Darren Bravo (front) raises his bat and helmet as he celebrates after scoring century (100 runs) as team captain Jason Holder looks on on the final day of the first day-night Test between Pakistan and the West Indies at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium in the Gulf Emirate yesterday. — AFP

TON-UP DARREN BRAVO THWARTS PAKISTAN IN DAY-NIGHT TEST

DUBAI: Darren Bravo cracked a fighting century to lead West Indies' fight against Pakistan on the fifth and final day in the first day-night Test in Dubai yesterday.

The left-handed genius was unbeaten on 102 for his eighth hundred-fifth in Asia and seven away from home-as West Indies were 232-6 at dinner on a weary final day pitch at Dubai stadium. Pakistan had taken the second new ball with West Indies 224-6 and Bravo needing four for hundred. Bravo smashed an uppish drive off paceman Mohammad Amir's first ball to backward point boundary to complete his magnificent hundred after 329-minutes of defiance.

He has so far hit nine boundaries and a six to frustrate Pakistan who are looking for a 1-0 lead in the three-match series.

Skipper Jason Holder was unbeaten on eight as West Indies still need 114 runs for an unlikely win in the remaining 38 overs.

Bravo put up his best resistance during a 77-run stand for the fifth wicket with Roston Chase (35) and has so far added 38 for the seventh with Holder. Chase, famous for his 137 not out at Jamaica which helped West Indies draw a Test against India in July this year, gave full support to Bravo as the duo frustrated Pakistan.

Pakistan's hopes were rested on leg-spinner

Yasir Shah who was not at his best despite good turn on offer. He finally got his first wicket when he bowled Chase from across his feet.

Paceman Wahab Riaz then dismissed Shane Dowrich for nought to leave West Indies at 194-6. West Indies had resumed at 95-2 and were instantly in trouble when Amir had Marlon Samuels caught behind for four with the first ball of the day. Jermaine Blackwood (15) helped

Bravo take the total to 116 when left-arm spinner Mohammad Nawaz trapped him leg-before, a decision Pakistan only got on referral.

Pakistan did not get what was expected from Shah in the first session as he bowled faster rather than giving flight to the ball.

The remaining two Tests will be played in Abu Dhabi (October 21-25) and Sharjah (October 30-November 3). — AFP

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at dinner on the fifth day in the first Test between Pakistan and West Indies yesterday in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Pakistan 1st innings 579 for 3 decl (A. Ali 302no, S. Aslam 90, B. Azam 69, A. Shafig 67).	R. Chase b Shah	35
West Indies 1st innings 357 (D. Bravo 87, M. Samuels 76; Y. Shah 5-121)	S. Dowrich b Riaz	0
Pakistan 2nd innings 123 (D. Bishoo 8-49)	J. Holder not out	8
West Indies 2nd innings (Overnight: 95-2; Target: 346 runs)	Extras (b-1 lb-6 nb-3 w-5)	15
K. Brathwaite b Amir	Total (for 6 wickets, 83 overs)	232
L. Johnson lbw b Amir	Fall of wickets: 1-27 K. Brathwaite, 2-87 L. Johnson, 3-95 M. Samuels, 4-116 J. Blackwood, 5-193 R. Chase, 6-194 S. Dowrich.	
Da. Bravo not out	To bat: D. Bishoo, M. Cummins, S. Gabriel	
M. Samuels c S. Ahmed b Amir	Bowling: M. Amir 19-5-52-3 (w-5), So. Khan 6-1-12-0, Y. Shah 32-4-98-1, M. Nawaz 13-3-24-1, W. Riaz 13-1-39-1 (nb-3).	
J. Blackwood lbw b Nawaz		15

FIVE THINGS WE LEARNED FROM 8-WEEK IN LA LIGA

MADRID: Atletico Madrid, Real Madrid and Barcelona smashed 17 goals, whilst Sevilla remain in the title hunt thanks to a long-awaited win on the road.

Here, AFP sports looks at five things we learned from week eight in La Liga.

NEW-LOOK ATTACKING ATLETICO SPARKLE

Atletico fell three points short of the title last season despite managing to score four goals or more just once in the entire season. After a 7-1 humbling of Granada, Diego Simeone's men have now hit four or more three times in eight games.

Most impressively of all, Atletico's defensive solidity hasn't been forgotten. Isaac Cuenca's stunning shock opener for Granada was only the third time Atletico have conceded this season.

A reliance on Antoine Griezmann for goals was forgotten as the Frenchman didn't even find the net as Yannick Carrasco continued his brilliant start to the campaign with a first career hat-trick.

Nicolas Gaitan's first two Atletico goals off the bench also underlined Los Rojiblancos new found depth and variety of attacking talent.

SEVILLA END AWAY HOODOO

Next up for Atletico is a trip to the always intimidating Sanchez Pizjuan to face Sevilla. Jorge Sampaoli's men could even leapfrog Atletico after finally ending their woes on the road with a first away league win for 23 games and 17 months at

Leganes to remain third, just a point behind the Madrid duo. Sampaoli's reign has so far produced far better results than performances, but with a marked improvement on their travels a first top-four finish in seven years should be the least of the Europa League holders ambitions.

MESSI HITS THE GROUND RUNNING

Three minutes and three touches were all Lionel Messi needed to net on his return after over three weeks out with a groin problem. Barcelona's struggles post international breaks have become known as the "FIFA virus", but, even before Messi made his return, the champions were well on their way to victory over Deportivo la Coruna with a 3-0 half-time lead.

In the long run Messi's injury may even benefit Barca's long-term ambitions. Nearly a month out and one less transatlantic trip to bail out Argentina's

struggling World Cup qualifying bid after a third consecutive summer representing his country can only help save Messi's legs for the business end of the campaign in the new year.

FREE-SCORING TOP SIX TIGHT AT THE TOP

Ahead of his return to Barcelona later this week in the Champions League, Man City boss Pep Guardiola was quick to shoot down the often touted suggestion that England's Premier League is more demanding week in, week out than La Liga or the Bundesliga.—AFP

DODGERS LEVEL SERIES WITH CUBS BEHIND KERSHAW'S GEM

CHICAGO: Left-handed hurler Clayton Kershaw pitched seven stellar innings and Adrian Gonzalez hit the winning homer Sunday in the Los Angeles Dodgers' 1-0 Major League Baseball playoff victory over the Chicago Cubs.

Dodgers starter Kershaw allowed just two hits to help the Dodgers level the best-of-seven National League Championship Series at one game apiece. Gonzales belted a solo home run off Cubs starting pitcher Kyle Hendricks in the second inning, and thanks to Kershaw and closing pitcher Kenley Jansen it was enough.

Kershaw gave up back-to-back Cubs hits in the fifth inning, when Javier Baez and Willson Contreras produced two-out singles, but not before he retired 14 straight batters.

Kershaw struck out six in the dominant performance, and Jansen pitched a perfect eighth and ninth to secure the win.

"It's fun when you win," Kershaw said, although he said that during the game the level of concentration required leaves little room for enjoyment. "When you're in the moment,

you're just trying to just constantly stop runs, preventing runs ... it was one of those games where one pitch could have been the deciding factor. So, really just kind of couldn't look up for a minute for air and just kind of kept going through it and fortunate to get through it tonight."

Jansen struck out four, including pinch hitter Miguel Montero, whose eight-inning grand slam lifted Chicago to an 8-4 victory in game one on Saturday. Hendricks struck out five, walked four and threw 91 pitches before he was lifted in the sixth inning having surrendered three hits. That included the home run by Gonzalez.

"First at-bat, nobody on base, I wanted to be aggressive," Gonzalez said. "I just wanted to get a fastball and try to elevate it. I felt pretty good about it once I hit it, but I still ran knowing that it could have easily not gone over the wall."

READY FOR TUESDAY

The series shifts to Los Angeles for game three on Tuesday, when the Dodgers give the ball to former Cub Rich Hill, while the Cubs send ace Jake

Arrieta to the mound. Arrieta threw a no-hitter at Dodger Stadium on August 30, 2015.

"I know that we came in here wanting both, but taking one is good and we'll be ready on Tuesday to try to take the series lead." The winner of the series will face either the Cleveland Indians or Toronto Blue Jays in Major League Baseball's World Series championship showcase. The Indians won two games at home to take a strong grip on the American League Championship Series, which shifts to Toronto for game three on Monday. Indians manager Terry Francona said he expected pitcher Trevor Bauer to start the game, after being scratched from his game two start after cutting the little finger of his pitching hand while working on his drone. "I don't think it's going to be a big deal," Francona said of Bauer's injury.

While the Cubs' title drought stretching back to their last World Series triumph in 1908 is the longest in North American sport, the Indians have endured their own epic stretch of futility since last winning it all in 1948. —AFP



CHICAGO: Los Angeles Dodgers' Adrian Gonzalez (23) hits a home run during the second inning of Game 2 of the National League baseball championship series against the Chicago Cubs, in Chicago. — AP