

DOUBLE DEPARTURE HANDS PAK A TESTING TRANSITION

ROSEAU, Dominica: As Younis Khan and Misbah-ul-Haq head off into the sunset after long and illustrious careers, Pakistan begins a tricky period of transition looking for a new wave of players ready to fill a huge void left by the retired batting greats. In a fitting finale, Younis, Pakistan's most prolific test run-scorer, and Misbah, the country's most successful captain, bowed out together in a blaze of glory on Sunday with the team celebrating a first-ever series triumph in the Caribbean.

The thrilling 101-run victory in Dominica sealed a 2-1 win over West Indies and was Pakistan's 26th under the 42-year-old Misbah, who also led the side to the top of the International Cricket Council (ICC) world test rankings last year. Since his 2001 test debut in New Zealand, Misbah accumulated 5,222 runs in 75 matches at an average higher than 46. Admired for his unflappable temperament in a dressing room replete with mercurial talent, Misbah was handed the test captaincy after a 2010 spot-fixing scandal in England led to the expulsion of his predecessor Salman Butt.

ICC chief executive David Richardson was among those to pay a glowing tribute to the consistent right-hander. "Misbah has been the bedrock of many a Pakistan innings, time and time again extracting his team from difficult situations with a terrific temperament," the former South Africa wicketkeeper said. "He knew how to graft for his runs but could also be inventive and score at a brisk pace, as was evident during his impressive 56-ball century against Australia in 2014 in Abu Dhabi, which equalled Viv Richards's world record. "He was a leader who took charge at a difficult time... He was a true sportsman and role model."

If Misbah represented the voice of reason in both the dressing room and out on the field, Younis let his bat do the

talking and is currently the only Pakistani to have joined the coveted 10,000 test-run club.

GREAT SERVANTS

The former captain, who led Pakistan to the World Twenty20 title in 2009, tallied 10,099 runs in 118 tests, embellishing his legacy with 34 hundreds at an average of more than 52. Together they were the pillars of Pakistan's batting lineup for over a decade and it could take many years for the country to find anyone capable of matching their feats. Pakistan's situation mirrors the dilemma South Asian rivals Sri Lanka faced when batting mainstays Kumar Sangakkara and Mahela Jayawardene ended their international careers two years ago.

"I was really sad when Kumar Sangakkara and Mahela Jayawardene left the Sri Lankan team together. Look at their team now, they are in such disarray," former Pakistan leg-spinner Abdul Qadir told the Express Tribune. "Likewise, both of these batsmen leaving together could cause problems for Pakistan's test team. However, they have been great servants to the country."

Pakistan have coped with their absence in the shorter formats since 2015 but the challenge of white-ball cricket is completely different to the patience and technique required in the red-ball arena. "The onus is now on the likes of Azhar Ali, Asad Shafiq and Sarfraz Ahmed to step up and fill the void," Misbah told Cricket Australia's website in an interview last month. "When two Pakistan greats Inzamam-ul-Haq and Mohammad Yousuf left the scene, Younis and I tried to fill that gap. Azhar and Asad have developed in the meantime and now they are at a stage to replace us. "We need Azhar and Asad to take ownership of the test side... Every team goes through transition periods and Pakistan is no different." —Reuters



ROSEAU, Dominica: Members of the Pakistan cricket team celebrate after winning the final test match and the series 2-1 against the West Indies at the Windsor Park Stadium on Sunday. —AFP

PAK WIN THRILLER FOR FIRST WINDIES SERIES VICTORY

ROSEAU, Dominica: Pakistan won a thrilling third and final Test with six balls to spare to clinch a first series victory in the West Indies Sunday and give a fitting farewell to the retiring captain Misbah ul Haq and veteran Younis Khan. Roston Chase's unbeaten 101, his second hundred of the series, proved in vain as the home side, set a target of 303 at Windsor Park in Dominica, slipped to 93 for six before the lower order almost rescued a dramatic draw.

"This was just incredible," said a breathless Misbah after Shannon Gabriel dragged a wide delivery from Yasir Shah onto his stumps with just six balls left in the game to trigger Pakistani celebrations as the West Indies were dismissed for 202 to lose the series 2-1. "There were so many things happening in that last session - dropped catches, appeals, no-ball dismissals - it looked for a while as if it wasn't going to happen. "I am thankful for myself, the team and all supporters of Pakistan cricket that we were able to pull it off."

Chase, who also top scored in the first innings with 69 and earned the man-of-the-match award, was the prime beneficiary of those near-misses. Twice he saw caught-and-bowled attempts by Hasan Ali put down and then was relieved on 91 when an edge to Asad Shafiq at slip off Mohammad Abbas was shown to be off a no-ball. "I'm really disappointed that we couldn't hold on for just one more over," said a crestfallen Chase. "We have showed that we can compete with the best but it's up to us to be able to take it all the way. It doesn't even matter that I got a hundred."

In the end he completed his third Test century but was left helpless at the non-striker's end when Gabriel, who had defended resolutely for 21 balls, inexplicably attempted a wild drive off Shah and dragged the ball back onto his stumps. Shah finished with five for 92 and a series haul of

SCOREBOARD	
ROSEAU, Dominica: Final scoreboard on the fifth day of the third and concluding Test between the West Indies and Pakistan at Windsor Park in Dominica on Sunday	
Pakistan 1st Innings - 376	D. Bishoo c Masood b Abbas 3
West Indies 1st Innings - 247	A. Joseph c Ahmed b Hasan Ali 5
Pakistan 2nd Innings - 174 for 8 declared	S. Gabriel b Shah 4
	Extras (nb-3, w-2, b-6) 11
	Total (all out, 96 overs) 202
West Indies 2nd Innings (overnight 7 for 1)	Fall of wickets: 1-7 (Powell), 2-22 (Brathwaite), 3-47 (Hetmyer), 4-66 (Hope), 5-76 (Singh), 6-93 (Dowrich), 7-151 (Holder), 8-181 (Bishoo), 9-197 (Joseph), 10-202 (Gabriel)
K. Brathwaite c Hasan Ali b Shah 6	Bowling: M. Amir 15-8-22-1 (2w), M. Abbas 20-9-31-1 (2nb), Y. Shah 37-13-92-5, H. Ali 20-7-33-3 (1nb), A. Ali 2-0-3-0, A. Shafiq 2-0-15-0.
K. Powell c Masood b Shah 4	Result: Pakistan won 101 runs
S. Hetmyer b Amir 25	Series: Pakistan won the 3-match series 2-1
S. Hope lbw Hasan Ali 17	
R. Chase not out 101	
V. Singh c Azam b Shah 2	
S. Dowrich c Azam b Shah 2	
J. Holder lbw Hasan Ali 22	

25 wickets, the highest of his career, as he took the man of the series award.

NERVE-JANGLING

From their mid-afternoon perils, a 58-run seventh-wicket partnership between Chase and Jason Holder frustrated Pakistan for an hour-and-a-half, until the West Indies captain missed a knee-high full toss from Hasan Ali to be leg before for 22 just after tea. Devendra Bishoo and Alzarri Joseph also offered some resistance but it was Gabriel's defiance through eight nerve-jangling overs with Chase that almost took the West Indies to safety and a drawn series.

A swift end to the match had looked likely as Vishal Singh and Shane Dowrich both fell to Shah just after lunch. Both were taken at short-leg by Babar Azam and on a pitch offering turn and bounce, it appeared only a matter of time before more wickets fell. But Chase and Holder batted with calm assurance as the Pakistanis

grew increasingly impatient in pursuit of the breakthrough.

Such anxieties appeared unlikely at the start of the day. Having already lost the wicket of Kieran Powell overnight, the home side suffered two further setbacks inside the first hour of the morning. Kraigg Brathwaite's poor run of form continued when the opening batsman miscued an attempted cut off Shah for Hasan Ali to take the comfortable catch at backward point.

Shimron Hetmyer batted positively for 25 but was then comprehensively bowled by Mohammad Amir for the third time in the series. Chase then joined Shai Hope with the pair defying all the challenges presented to them by the Pakistani attack until Hasan Ali got the breakthrough and his first Test wicket 20 minutes before lunch, trapping Hope leg-before with a full-length in-swing. His two additional wickets in that pulsating final session were critical to the victory. —AFP



ROSEAU, Dominica: Retiring Pakistan cricket team members Younis Khan (left) and captain Misbah-ul-Haq celebrate with the series trophy at the Windsor Park Stadium on Sunday. —AFP

LATHAM BACKS YOUNG KIWI GUNS TO STAR IN TRI-SERIES

DUBLIN: New Zealand captain Tom Latham believes his emerging players can help the Blackcaps take the Tri-Series in Dublin after they made a winning start against Ireland. The 51-run victory at Malahide was sealed by a career best five for 50 from left-arm spinner Mitchell Santner and 79 from Neil Broom, but there were also three wickets for opening bowler Scott Kugeleijn on his one-day international debut on Sunday. "These guys called in have been putting in performances back home for the last couple of years and we back them 100 percent," said Latham.

"Our main goal is to win the Tri-Series and make the selectors think and if they can keep putting performances on the board it can only be good for New Zealand cricket," he added. "Neil Broom played really well and the partnership he built with George Worker (who scored his maiden fifty in only his third ODI) put us in a position to get us close to 300. "We haven't played cricket for a while, and it wasn't the complete performance, but the guys came under pressure and played really well," explained Latham, whose side next face Bangladesh in Clontarf, another Dublin suburb, on Wednesday.

With seven New Zealand internationals taking part in the Indian Premier League, rather than on tour in Ireland ahead of next month's Champions

Trophy one-day tournament in England, Latham was delighted at how his youthful side performed under pressure. Ireland were actually ahead of the Blackcaps after 38 overs, needing only another 80 from the last 12 overs with five wickets left to reach their victory target of 290 and claim their first top eight scalp outside a global tournament.

'AGGRESSIVE'

But the next over saw the return of Santner and in it he claimed the wicket of debutant Simi Singh to spark an Ireland collapse which included the vital wicket of Niall O'Brien, stumped by Luke Ronchi for 109, the former Leicestershire wicket-keeper's first ODI century in his 85th match. "Ireland played beautifully and Niall's innings put us under pressure but the way Mitch came back and how Kugeleijn bowled so aggressively, that we are used to back home, it was a good response," said Latham, who was captaining New Zealand for the first time, in place of Kane Williamson who is still at the IPL.

"I enjoyed the captaincy and the win is good for the confidence although I have a couple of experienced guys to lean on and bounce ideas off. "We played Bangladesh not so long ago, we know how strong they can be and we'll see what conditions are like. It'll be interesting to see what the wicket is like and we'll adapt our plans accordingly." — AFP

TWO-MILLION MAN STOKES MISSING FOR IPL PLAYOFFS

NEW DELHI: Rising Pune Supergiant will head into this week's Indian Premier League play-offs without star all-rounder Ben Stokes after he was recalled to England's one-day international squad. Stokes - paid a record \$2.16 million to play the eight-week IPL season - was instrumental to Pune reaching the knockout phase after a brilliant debut campaign in the cash-rich Twenty20 competition. The 25-year-old left-handed batsman and right-handed pace bowler scored 316 runs in 12 matches, with a highest of 103 not out, and took 12 wickets.

He is not the only England star who will be missing from the final week's action. Table-topping Mumbai Indians have also lost Jos Buttler to preparations for the England-South Africa series, which doesn't begin until May 24, three days after Sunday's IPL final in Hyderabad. Their early departures saw an angry response from former England captain Kevin Pietersen, who blasted the England and Wales Cricket Board. "I think it's pathetic. An absolute shambles," Pietersen said on Sky Sports on Sunday. "Stokes should be playing in the semi-final and the final. The last week of the IPL is a huge occasion."

The England duo will join the rest of the squad for an ECB training camp in Spain this week. "What are they going to Spain for?" said Pietersen. "To field a couple of balls? He

should be playing in the IPL. "Just speak to him, speak to Jos Buttler, they'll talk about how much it has helped their development being out there."

Supergiant skipper Steve Smith said other players would have to step up Stokes's absence. "We have a couple of options (to replace) Stokes," said Smith, who is also the Australia captain. "He has been magnificent and will be a big loss. Hopefully, the other guys will stand up for us." Supergiant thrashed Kings XI Punjab by nine wickets in their final regular season match on Sunday to take second spot behind Mumbai.

They meet in the first qualifying playoff in Mumbai today, with the winners going straight into Sunday's final. The losers get another crack at reaching the final on Friday against the winners of Sunrisers Hyderabad and Kolkata Knight Riders, who will clash in tomorrow's eliminator playoff in Bangalore with the losers heading home. The Rohit Sharma-led Mumbai have been the outstanding side in this year's IPL, with 10 wins from their 14 matches and will enjoy home advantage at the Wankhede Stadium for the first playoff encounter against Pune today. Australia vice-captain David Warner leads third-placed finishers Hyderabad while veteran Indian opener Gautam Gambhir leads fourth-placed Kolkata as the 10th season of IPL cricket heads for Sunday's finish line. — AFP



NEW DELHI: Rising Pune Supergiant batsman Ben Stokes reacts after being dismissed during the 2017 Indian Premier League (IPL) Twenty20 cricket match between Delhi Daredevils and Rising Pune Supergiant at The Feroz Shah Kotla Cricket Stadium on May 12, 2017. —AFP

ASHES STRIKE WARNING OVER AUSSIE PAY ROW

SYDNEY: Australia's cricketers union urged a swift resolution to a damaging pay dispute yesterday to avoid any strike disruption to this year's Ashes series. Cricket Australia last week threatened not to pay contracted players beyond the June 30 expiry of their current financial deal if they didn't accept a new offer. The robust statement prompted warnings of a strike, with pace spearhead Mitchell Starc tweeting: "Makes for an interesting men's and women's ashes..."

Former Test all-rounder Shane Watson

added his support by tweeting: "Well said @mstarc56. It will be an interesting game of cricket without any players." Alistair Nicholson, chief executive of the Australian Cricketers' Association, said players wanted the dispute resolved rather than risk damaging the showpiece Ashes series against England, starting in November. "It is in our interest to get this done. The players want it done," he told Melbourne radio yesterday.

"They don't want to be in a dispute. They want to play the Ashes and we now need to get

around to mediation and get this done. We've come up with a solution that's a win-win and that was rejected by Cricket Australia within two hours." The dispute centers on Cricket Australia's desire to scrap the fixed percentage players have earned since the first memorandum of understanding was agreed 20 years ago.

Following Cricket Australia's ultimatum, Nicholson said he had been contacted by several players. "The response from the players was quite swift to me, being clear what they thought about it," he said. —AFP