

## PAKISTAN BANK ON SPIN DUO TO MAKE ENGLAND TOIL

**DUBAI:** Pakistan are pinning their hopes on relative test novices Yasir Shah and Zulfiqar Babar to cause England's batsmen problems when the two countries renew a 51-year rivalry in the United Arab Emirates tomorrow.

England should be confident after reclaiming the Ashes on home soil this year with a 3-2 win over Australia, but Alastair Cook's charges may also feel some trepidation after their last series against Pakistan in 2012 ended in a 3-0 whitewash.

Spin duo Saeed Ajmal and Abdur Rehman were England's tormentors back then, taking 43 wickets for an average of 15.6 runs, but they are absent this

time so Shah and Babar will be Pakistan's main spin threat in the three-test series. Both are late bloomers.

Shah, 29, made his test debut last year and has since claimed 61 wickets in 10 matches including 24 against Sri Lanka in July. Babar, 36, has 42 wickets in 10 matches following his 2013 bow. "The way he (Shah) is bowling he's a threat to every team, he's our strength," said Pakistan captain Misbah-ul-Haq, 41.

"To win a test match, a series, you can't just focus on one bowler. Zulfiqar and the fast bowlers will play a key role because of the reverse swing, especially with the new ball." Younis Khan, Pakistan's all-time third-highest run scor-

er, will be crucial to the host's batting hopes especially after Azhar Ali was ruled out of the first test due to injury.

Most Pakistan players arrived in the UAE on Wednesday from a one-day series in Zimbabwe. The team opted for just one warm-up match, a sign of confidence about playing in their adopted UAE home where Pakistan remain unbeaten in seven series.

"Any away team these days seem to be the underdogs," England coach Trevor Bayliss told reporters. "Experience-wise, we've got some young players but players with a lot of ability and skill. There's no reason why we can't play some good cricket and if we play some good cricket

we'll be hard to beat." Joe Root, the world's third-ranked batsman, will be England's main scoring hope after many of the specialist batsmen struggled in the Ashes.

All-rounder Moeen Ali, a handy off-spinner and regular at No.8, seems likely to become Cook's seventh opening partner since Andrew Strauss's retirement in 2012 as the tourists try to instil greater resolve at the top of the order.

"It's always a challenge whenever you play Pakistan; the trial by spin will be tough," said Cook. Only five England players remain from the 2012 mauling-batsmen Cook and Ian Bell, plus fast bowlers James Anderson, Stuart Broad

and Steve Finn.

All should make the starting XI for the opening test in Abu Dhabi, Finn staking his claim with 4-16 in the final warm-up game against Pakistan A.

On-field temperatures could top 40 degrees Celsius for much of play so England may opt for a six-man attack. Adil Rashid seems poised for his test debut after the spinner ended a six-year absence from one-day internationals this year, which would likely leave Mark Wood and Ben Stokes, another all-rounder, vying for the final bowling spot. Dubai will stage the second Test from Oct. 22 and Sharjah the third from Nov. 1.—Reuters



INCHEON: US team captain Jay Haas (front centre) poses with his team after they defeated the International team 15.5 to 14.5 to retain the Presidents Cup at the Jack Nicklaus Golf Club Korea. —AP

## US BEAT INTERNATIONALS TO WIN PRESIDENTS CUP

**INCHEON:** Captain's pick Bill Haas claimed the crucial final point at the Presidents Cup yesterday, as the United States beat the Internationals 15.5 to 14.5 to clinch the team golf event for the ninth time in 11 editions. Haas, who is also the son of US captain Jay Haas, held his nerve in the last of Sunday's 12 singles matches to beat local favourite Bae Sang-moon on a day of missed putts, momentum swings and hand-wringing tension.

Jordan Spieth and Jason Day, the top two players in the world, both lost their matches, while there was delight and heartbreak in equal measure for Asia's four representatives—Thongchai Jaidee, Anirban Lahiri, Hideki Matsuyama and Bae.

After five straight comfortable US wins, the one-point margin of victory was the narrowest since the Americans won 16.5 to 15.5 in 1996, and suggests the PGA Tour got it right by

reducing the total number of points on offer to 30 from 34.

An emotional US captain Jay Haas struggled to get through a televised interview next to the 18th green but said he had given his son a pep talk through the closing stages. "I told him, 'Come on, win one for your mom, your mom deserves this,'" he said. "We put him out 12th and had no idea this was going to happen. Couldn't even have dreamt this."

The Internationals trailed 9.5 to 8.5 going into the final day at the Jack Nicklaus Golf Club Korea but got the first point on the board when Adam Scott thrashed an out-of-sorts Rickie Fowler 6&5 to level the match. Louis Oosthuizen eagled the 18th to claim a half of his match against Patrick Reed, while fellow South African Branden Grace beat Matt Kuchar 2&1 and became just the fifth player to win five matches at a single Presidents Cup. American

veteran Phil Mickelson, who has played in all 11 Presidents Cups but needed a captain's pick for the first time since 1994, crushed Charl Schwartzel 5&4, while Dustin Johnson overcame a game Danny Lee, who led by one through 14 but then lost three in a row.

### NO BLAME GAME

The early American red plastered across the other matches on the scoreboard began to fade in the afternoon as Japanese sensation Matsuyama fought back to beat J.B. Holmes and Thai Jaidee took an unexpected half point when Bubba Watson missed from five feet on the 18th.

Watson missed a similar tiddler at the same hole on Saturday but he was not the only one who struggled with short putts on the difficult final hole. Lahiri, the first Indian to play at the Presidents Cup, lipped out from just over two

feet to hand Chris Kirk victory, just as the Internationals looked to be turning the corner.

"I had Bubba Watson come up to me about a minute after we finished up and he said that he had done the same exact thing," said a despondent Lahiri. "I guess wasn't meant to be unfortunately."

After Spieth was stunned by Australian Marc Leishman and Day lost to Zach Johnson, the Cup boiled down to the final match between two captain's picks—Haas and Bae. South Korean Bae, playing in his last event before he swaps four irons for firearms and begins compulsory military service, trailed by one with two holes to play and drained a 10-footer on the 17th that kept the Internationals' hopes of a tie alive.

With the home crowd's hopes on his shoulders and the fate of his team in his hands, the pressure finally told on Bae and he cracked on

the last, stubbing his chip into a steep bank and seeing the ball roll back down the hill.

International skipper Nick Price was determined no blame should be apportioned to Bae and Lahiri and said his team could have had a much easier task had it not been for their woe-filled foursomes performance on the opening day. "I don't want any of you to be negative in any way toward Anirban and to Moon," Price told reporters. "The truth of it is, is that if we got off to a better start on Thursday and we had not been 4-1 down, it might not have been quite as exciting today... so we all feel for Anirban and for Moon for what happened. But they are part of our team, and we will leave here as a team."

The Presidents Cup returns to US soil in two years' time at Liberty National, New Jersey before coming to Melbourne for a third time in 2019.—Reuters

## DE VILLIERS SPARKLES AS SOUTH AFRICA EDGE INDIA

**KANPUR:** AB de Villiers and Rohit Sharma enhanced personal reputations with scintillating centuries but it was the timely interventions of South African bowlers that secured the visitors' five-run win over India in the first one-dayer yesterday.

De Villiers' unbeaten 73-ball century provided the late impetus as South Africa posted 303 for five, the highest team total at the Green Park Stadium, after deciding to bat first.

Sharma led India's strong reply with a brilliant 150 before leg-spinner Imran Tahir turned the runfest on its head by claiming two wickets in his final over.

Paceman Kagiso Rabada then dismissed two Indian batsmen in two deliveries in the

final over to put South Africa 1-0 up in the five-match series.

India needed 22 runs of the last two overs with five wickets in hand and Dale Steyn conceded 11 before 20-year-old Rabada claimed back-to-back wickets to restrict the hosts to 298 for seven.

"I thought Imran Tahir first of all changed the game and gave us a chance," De Villiers, who was adjudged man-of-the-match for his unbeaten 104-run blitz, told reporters.

"And lot of credit to Dale and Kagiso. The youngster proved quite handy and he has got a bright future," added the South Africa captain who set alight the stadium with his superb stroke-making.

Containing De Villiers is one of the toughest

jobs in international cricket and India were severely handicapped when their strike bowler Ravichandran Ashwin left the field after sending down only 4.4 overs. Ashwin struck in his first over to dismissed Quinton de Kock but Faf du Plessis (62) and Hashim Amla (37) shared a half-century stand.

De Villiers did not hit a boundary in the first 33 balls he faced but was unstoppable when he got going. The right-hander clobbered his sixth six off the final ball of the innings to bring up his 21st ODI century as South Africa plundered 109 runs from the last 10 overs.

When India came out to bat, Sharma added 149 runs with Ajinkya Rahane (60) and the hosts looked on course to chase down the target without any fuss.

Sharma hit six sixes and 13 boundaries before giving a return catch to Tahir who dismissed Suresh Raina in the same over. India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni (31) struggled throughout his scratchy knock and fell in the final over.

Off-spinner Harbhajan Singh will join the Indian squad as Ashwin's cover before the second match in Indore on Wednesday.—Reuters



KANPUR: South African batsman A B de Villiers hits a ball while playing against India in the first of their five one-day match series in Kanpur. —AP

## KUWAIT CRICKET TEAM TO PLAY UAE MASTERS PREMIER LEAGUE

**KUWAIT:** For the very first time a Hard Tennis Cricket Team from Kuwait is participating in a GCC Cricket Tournament, Vanoo Masters Premiere League to be held in Dubai in Oct 15-16, 2015. VMPL Dubai 2015 is going to be a grand event as this tournament will be graced by many celebrities and personalities from India. Teams from Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar & Kuwait will be participating in this 2-day tournament which promises to be an action-packed event.

Kuwait Raiders team is owned and formed by 3 cricket loving individuals, Don D'Souza, Sharan Noronha &

Salaudin Bandarkar. The Owners of Kuwait Raiders would like to thank their Sponsors for supporting the Team. This team that is going to participate in Dubai was analysed based on individual performance & handpicked from all over Kuwait. Players that will be representing Kuwait in this 2-day tournament are experienced and have made their mark in Kuwait, Qatar, Dubai and India.

Kuwait Raiders Team Management sincerely hopes for all the wishes and support from people in Kuwait in order to make this a successful one for Kuwait Raiders.

### SCOREBOARD

**KANPUR:** Scoreboard at close of play in the first One Day International between India and South Africa on yesterday in Kanpur, India.

#### South Africa Innings

Q. de Kock c Raina b Ashwin	29
H. Amla b Mishra	37
F. du Plessis lbw b U. Yadav	62
A. de Villiers not out	104
D. Miller st Dhoni b Mishra	13
J. Duminy c Dhoni b U. Yadav	15
F. Behardien not out	35
Extras (lb-3 w-5)	8
Total (for 5 wickets, 50 overs)	303
Fall of wickets: 1-45 Q. de Kock, 2-104 H. Amla, 3-152 F. du Plessis, 4-197 D. Miller, 5-238 J. Duminy	
Did not bat: D. Steyn, K. Rabada, M. Morkel, I. Tahir	

#### Bowling

B. Kumar 10 - 0 - 67 - 0	
U. Yadav 10 - 0 - 71 - 2(w-1)	
R. Ashwin 4.4 - 0 - 14 - 1	
A. Mishra 10 - 0 - 47 - 2(w-1)	
S. Binny 8 - 0 - 63 - 0(w-2)	
S. Raina 7 - 0 - 37 - 0(w-1)	
V. Kohli 0.2 - 0 - 1 - 0	

#### India Innings

Ro. Sharma c&amp;b Tahir	150
S. Dhawan lbw b M. Morkel	23
A. Rahane c Miller b Behardien	60
V. Kohli c M. Morkel b Steyn	11
M. Dhoni c&amp;b Rabada	31
S. Raina c Duminy b Tahir	3
S. Binny c Amla b Rabada	2
B. Kumar not out	1
A. Mishra not out	0
Extras (lb-4 w-13)	17
Total (for 7 wickets, 50 overs) 298	
Fall of wickets: 1-42 S. Dhawan, 2-191 A. Rahane, 3-214 V. Kohli, 4-269 Ro. Sharma, 5-273 S. Raina, 6-297 M. Dhoni, 7-297 S. Binny	
Did not bat: R. Ashwin, U. Yadav	

#### Bowling

D. Steyn 10 - 0 - 54 - 1(w-1)	
K. Rabada 10 - 0 - 58 - 2(w-4)	
F. Behardien 6 - 0 - 38 - 1(w-1)	
M. Morkel 10 - 0 - 51 - 1(w-2)	
J. Duminy 4 - 0 - 36 - 0(w-1)	
I. Tahir 10 - 0 - 57 - 2	
Result: South Africa won by 5 runs	