

India's Robin Dravid has his stumps spreadeagled following an unsuccessful attempt to swing across the line during the match against Sri Lanka in the SAARC cricket tournament yesterday. Touted as a Test hopeful Dravid top-scored with a laborious 44 while India won the match comfortably to get off to a winning start.

India's sound sleepy start

Sports Reporter

Favourites India opened their campaign in the SAARC cricket tournament in a reassuring manner beating Sri Lanka by 44 runs at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday.

After an exceptionally exciting opening day's cricket that saw hosts Bangladesh pipped to the post by the fickleness of a faithless fortune rather than the speculated strength of their fancied counterparts from Pakistan in an ideal one-day contest Thursday, the smouldering fire of a holiday crowd's excitement found little to be fanned up.

Put in to bat by the toss-winning Sri Lankan captain Chandika Hathurusinghe, India batted unspectacularly on an uneasy wicket to collect 182 and then with their disciplined attack bowled out the Lankan team for 138 with almost nine overs to spare.

Pace man Venkatesh Prasad eagerly awaiting his first Test cap made early inroads into the Sri Lankan batting while Utpal Chatterjee later named man-of-the-match by former national cricketer Ishtiaq Ahmad to be richer for 125 dollars made his debut for India memorably with the best bowling analysis to complete a fine day's performance.

Utpal, who few years ago had taken part in the local league cricket for Abahani, claimed three wickets with his accurate left-arm spin to snuff out a belated Sri Lankan resurgence led by wicketkeeper Dunusinghe.

The stocky right-hander, who came in at number nine heaved a sixer off the seemingly overrated young Bombay leg-spinner Sairaj Bahutule, chanced his arm against Chatterjee's flatter trajectory and Arun Kumar completed a regulation catch at long on to end a cameo knock of 34 made off 25 balls with the help of four fours and a sixer.

Although Sri Lanka completely lost the way in the middle of their innings with the score reading 76 for eight in the 29th over, they got off to a fairly positive start with Test-discard Athula Samarasekara delighting the expectant spectators with some

characteristically audacious on-the-rise strokes.

If Samarasekara's attitude in the light of the cliché of instant cricket being a batsman's game was just about right the pitch certainly was not. Like it had done on so many occasions in this inchoate meet the wicket at the pavilion played the villain and Lanka's best bet had his castle shattered by a



delivery from Prasad that darted in and kept fatally low.

Prasad, who finished with a haul of three wickets, had earlier put Sri Lanka on the backfoot when he had their skipper and Test-discard Hathurusinghe smartly taken at first slip by Rathore.

Marvin Attapattu another Test-reject padded up to another Prasad delivery relying much too heavily on umpire Shakil Khan's mercy and the man in a sweater rather than an apron betrayed in badly.

Earlier in the morning India were rescued from utter embarrassment by some resolute batting by Rahul Dravid

and wicketkeeper Vijay Yadav and of course a timely little flourish from Utpal Chatterjee.

India were reduced to 55 for five with all their top batsmen like skipper Amre who is now engaged in a serious struggle to regain his lot in the Test squad and hard-hitting Atul Bedade gone, as the Lankan seamers backed up by athletic fielding gained far too much movement in the air well as off the wicket for the comfort of the batsmen and a reasonable bill from Mr Sundries.

Stroke playing was almost non-existent barring a few hefty blows by Yadav and Chatterjee at the tag end.

Dravid top-scored with a painful 44 off 116 balls while Yadav needed 51 balls for his 42 including four hits to the fence.

Left handed Chatterjee was instrumental for India's reaching a fighting total as the Calcutta all-rounder made 24 off 23 balls with a sixer and a couple of boundaries.

Spinner Arnold was the most successful Lankan bowler with bag of three wickets for 35.

New-ball bowler Mario Villavarayan bowled well to finish with two for 24.

PEPSI OFFICIAL SPONSOR OF BANGLADESH CRICKET

Scoreboard of the SAARC cricket match between India and Sri Lanka played at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday.

V. Rathore c Dunusinghe

Table with columns: O, M, R, W. Lists bowlers like Munasinghe, Arun Kumar, Prasad, etc. and their performance statistics.

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SRI LANKA: Hathurusinghe c V. Rathore 1; Prasad 15; Samarasekara b Prasad 7; M. Attapattu lbw b Prasad 7; N. Nawaz b Vaidya 6; I. De Saram run out 17; R. Arnold c Yadav b Chauhan 29; U. Chandana b Utpal Chatterjee 6; M. Munasinghe lbw b Utpal Chatterjee 1; C. Dunusinghe c Arun Kumar 34; M. Villavarayan not out 3; De Silva st V. Yadav b Bahutule 16; Extras: (b-2, lb-8, nb-2, w-4) 138; Total: (all out in 41.3 overs) 138.

Fall of wickets: 1/12 (Hathurusinghe); 2/25 (Samarasekara); 3/31 (Attapattu); 4/46 (Nawaz); 5/55 (De Saram); 6/72 (Chandana); 7/76 (Munasinghe); 8/125 (Dunusinghe); 9/130 (Arnold); 10/138 (De Silva).

Table with columns: O, M, R, W. Lists batsmen like V. Prasad, P. Vidya, R. Chauhan, Utpal Chatterjee, S. Bahutule and their performance statistics.

Result: India won by 44 runs. Man-of-the Match: Utpal Chatterjee.

TODAY'S MATCH: Bangladesh vs Sri Lanka

Bazlu memorial cricket

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Dec 23: The Pro-jur Shaheed Bazlu memorial cricket tournament got underway today.

Sixteen teams from the district are taking part in the 20-over-a-side competition.

Forest and Environment Minister Akbar Hossain inaugurated the meet as chief guest.

Two matches were played on the opening day.

Faith Club and Biplob Smriti shared points after their game ended in an exciting tie.

Kabir Ahsan Habib Club beat Balakala Club by ten runs.

Fed Cup b'ball

Dhaka Mariner Youngs Club got walkover against Hawks in the only match of the Purabi General Insurance seventh Federation Cup basketball tournament at the NSC wooden floor gymnasium yesterday, reports UNB.

This was the second match of the tournament which got underway on Thursday.

Shantinagar 'B' win

Sports Reporter

Skipper Chandan guided Shantinagar 'B' to a three wicket victory over former Navana Premier outfit Public Works Department (PWD) in the lone Acme Second Division cricket league match played on the western strip of the Dhamondi Cricket stadium yesterday.

Chandan remained unbeaten on 23 made from 30 balls with the help of a sixer and two fours as Shantinagar 'B' chasing 133 for victory, posted 134 for seven in 33.4 overs.

There were useful scores from opener Raju who made 25 and middle order batsman Tushar topscoring with 26.

Veteran Fazlul Wadud was the most successful bowler for the office team with a haul of three for 25.

Earlier PWD were all out for 132 with five balls to spare in their stipulated quota of 40 overs.

After the upper order batsmen failed miserably Masum with some support from Shahidullah helped the total cross the three figure mark.

Masum made a patient 25 while Shahidullah coming low down the order contributed a lusty 19.

Almost all the Shantinagar bowlers met with success with opening bowler Reazuddin returning the best analysis.

He took two for 27. Tushar took two wickets too for 15 runs but from six overs.

Ansars reign in nat'l karate

Sports Reporter

Bangladesh Ansars emerged champions in the eleventh national karate competition that concluded at the Mirpur Indoor Stadium yesterday.

Ansars collected eight gold, one silver and bronze medals. They were followed by Dhaka Metropolitan Judo and Karate Sangstha with four gold, three silver and two bronzes.

Food Minister Mir Shawkat Ali witnessed the final as chief guest and gave away prizes and certificates.

President of Bangladesh Judo and Karate Federation and Director General of Bangladesh Rifles Major General Mohammad Anwar Hossain was also present as special guest.

Forty judo and karate teams from across the country took part in the two-day meet. Six-year-old Master Manik of the Bangladesh Yangking Marshal Art Centre of Narayanganj was the youngest among some 200 men and women competitors.

Bangladesh take on SL today

Sports Reporter



Athar Ali Khan returns to the Bangladesh line-up for today's vital match against Sri Lanka with both sides badly in need of a victory to stay on course for a place in the final of the four-nation SAARC cricket tournament.

The tall right-handed opener, who is also a useful bowler will replace young Naimur Rahman, who didn't do very well against Pakistan in the tournament opener on Thursday.

Although the outcome of that thriller meant a squeaky one-wicket win for Pakistan, Bangladesh emboldened by the obvious moral victory must be looking forward to today's tie having got so close to beat the second selection of the one-day World champions.

"Our team spirit is very high, mood is upbeat after such neck and neck race with Pakistan," said Tanveer Haider, the manager of the Bangladesh team. "But you know limited-over cricket is a funny game and what we need is to perform at our best on the particular day. I hope my boys put up another valiant fight against Sri Lanka," said the newly appointed Bangladesh manager who termed the present Sri Lankan side a far better team than the previous one which Bangladesh beat by seven wickets in 1992.

Athar Ali, who has had his sore shoulder headed now is likely to open the Bangladesh

innings along with Jahangir Alam and Al Shahrar, one of the openers on the other day is expected to be followed by them in the batting order.

"The return of Athar will certainly bolster our strength," said Akram Khan, who nearly had a dream debut as the skipper of the Bangladesh team.



"If the Sri Lankans fully live up to their potential, we have to give hundred twenty per cent of our abilities to win the match. We should not forget that ours is the weakest team among the four."

The score is as simple for the hosts. Although it is rather cruel to be made to play matches on successive days, particularly when pitted against the home team within

twenty-four hours of a depressing defeat, the relatively inexperienced cricketers are left with no other option but win the match in order to entertain any realistic chances of making the final.

The probable Bangladesh line-up: Jahangir Alam, Athar Ali Khan, Al Shahrar, Aminul Islam, Minhazul Abedin, Akram Khan (cap), Enamul Haq, Mohammed Rafique, Saiful Islam, Sajal Chowdhury and Arisur Rahman.

Meanwhile, leaders of the Opposition in Parliament now engaged in an anti-government campaign, assured that today's match of the ongoing SAARC cricket tournament will not be affected by their planned 'blockade' programme.

Taylor warns Warne

MELBOURNE, Dec 23: Australia captain Mark Taylor on Friday spoke about the danger of spinner Shane Warne burning himself out as a match-winner by bowling too many overs, reports Reuter.

Speaking on the eve of the second Ashes Test against England, Taylor said Warne had to accept the responsibility for protecting his own Test future.

Taylor's comments followed a warning from vice-captain Ian Healy about the 25-year-old spinner's excessive workload in recent matches.

Warne bowled several marathon spells during last month's first Test in Brisbane, taking 11 wickets to help Australia to a crushing 184-run victory against the tourists.

Healy said Australia risked bowling Warne to a breakdown by asking him to maintain such an arduous work rate.

"He's bowling too many overs," Healy told an Australian newspaper on Friday. "We don't need him bowling that many otherwise he won't last. He just can't last."

Taylor said it is up to Warne to be honest about his condition.

"If he's tired he should come off and that way he can stay fresh and remain a match-winner for years to come," Taylor said.

"Shane had problems with his shoulder about a year ago which required ice after a game, a bit like a baseball pitcher."

"We must watch for the warning signs because if things get too bad it could put him out of the game," Taylor added.

Mandela Trophy stats

CAPE TOWN, Dec 23 (Reuter): Final standings and leading batting/bowling averages after the preliminary round of matches in the Mandela Trophy one-day quadrangular cricket tournament:

Final standings (tabulated under played, won, lost, no result, points):

Table with columns: Team, Played, Won, Lost, No Result, Points. Lists Pakistan, South Africa, Sri Lanka, New Zealand.

Batting averages (tabulated under innings, not out, runs, highest score, average, hundreds - denotes not out):

Table with columns: Player, Innings, Not Out, Runs, Highest Score, Average, Hundreds. Lists D. Callaghan, A. Ramnattunga, Salim Malik, Ijaz Ahmed, Aamir Sohail.

Bowling averages (tabulated under overs, maidens, runs, wickets, average, best bowling):

Table with columns: Player, Overs, Maidens, Runs, Wickets, Average, Best Bowling. Lists Waqar Younis, K. Dharmasena, E. Simons, Aaqib Javed, R. Snell.

The final takes place between South Africa and Pakistan from January 10-14.

First leg: Cape Town, January 10; Second leg: Johannesburg, January 12; Third leg (if necessary): Johannesburg, January 14.

Lara the lord, Warne the wizard

LONDON, Dec 23: Even Shane Warne would be forced to agree that 1994 was a year that will be forever remembered for the remarkable achievements of just one man - Brian Lara, reports AFP.

Lara's exceptional batting talent had never been in doubt but not even the most outrageous of pundits could have predicted his astonishing rise from promising youngster to one of cricket's greats in the space of two months.

If anyone had dared to suggest at the start of the year that the young West Indian would score the highest Test innings in history and follow it by scoring the highest first-class innings, he would have been laughed all the way to the nearest cricket psychiatrist.

In the fifth Test against England at Antigua, the apparently unsurpassable was surpassed. On the morning of April 16 he was no more than a good and gifted batsman but at 11.45 two days later Brian Lara became a legend when he pulled a delivery from Chris Lewis to the square-leg boundary.

That shot took him to 369 and past the record for the highest Test innings that had stood since Sir Gary Sobers scored 365 against Pakistan in 1958, 12 years before Lara was born.

"We've all said this kid is an embryonic great player. Maybe greatness has come a bit quicker than we imagined," said Geoff Boycott.

West Indies won the series 3-1 but England restored some respect after being bowled out for 46 in third Test at Trinidad by winning the fourth in fortress Barbados in emphatic fashion.

With greatness suddenly thrust upon him, Lara arrived for a season with English county side, Warwickshire. The records continued to tumble.

Against Durham in early June, Lara recorded the highest first-class innings in history, scoring 501 not out to surpass Hanif Mohammed's 499 for Karachi in the 1958/59 season.

With that innings alone, Lara sent the statisticians and publishers of records into a frenzy of activity, as milestone after milestone was reached.

Amongst the many records he claimed were: the most runs in a day's play (390), the most boundaries in an innings (72), two triple-century stands in the same innings while hitting his seventh century in eight innings - also a record - following scores of 375, 147, 106, 120 not out, 136, 26 and 140.

But if 1994 was a year that Lara will always want to remember, it was also one that England captain Mike Atherton will wish to forget.

The "dirt-in-the-pocket" affair in England's first Test simply bent down in full view of the cameras and crowd and rubbed dust into the ball, barely an eyebrow would have been raised.

But the furtive manner of the application was Atherton's mistake which he made considerably worse for himself by failing to come clean with Peter Burge.

The storm in cricket's tea-cup rumbled on for the rest of the summer but the England captain showed admirable qualities of resilience by scoring 99 in the next Test at Headingley before leading England

wicket-taker in third Test against Sri Lanka at Ahmedabad.

His dismissal of Tillekarantne was his 432nd Test wicket and took him past Sir Richard Hadlee's record at the end of a series that India won 3-0 - each by an innings.

Javed Miandad announced his retirement from international cricket but was persuaded to change his mind by Pakistan's Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto.

Australia and South Africa met twice in 1994, first in Australia and then in South Africa, but both three-match series were drawn 1-1.

But there were a number of memorable moments in their confrontations.

In arguably the most exciting Test match of the year, South Africa sneaked a five run win at Sydney in what was the sixth narrowest victory in Test history, despite some late order belligerence by Craig McDermott.

The series in South Africa could not have started in more controversial circumstance as Merv Hughes and Shane Warne displayed a petulance more appropriate to a borsal playground than an historic event in international sports history.

Australian captain Allan Border later announced his retirement from Test cricket, leaving behind records for most appearances as a player (156), most appearances as a captain (93), most runs (11,174) and most catches (156), he was succeeded by his vice-captain Mark Taylor.

But leg-spinner Warne capped a year that confirmed his status as the most feared and potent bowler in international cricket by taking career-best figures of 8 for 71 runs to send England tumbling to defeat in the first Test in Brisbane.

Phil Tufnell also found himself in trouble with the authorities when he was charged by the police for assaulting his wife, whose father was also charged after later attacking the England off-spinner with a brick.

There was also controversy in Australia where Denise Annets, who holds the record for the highest score in a women's Test, claimed she had been left out from the Australian tour to New Zealand, because she was not a lesbian.

Sri Lanka leave it late

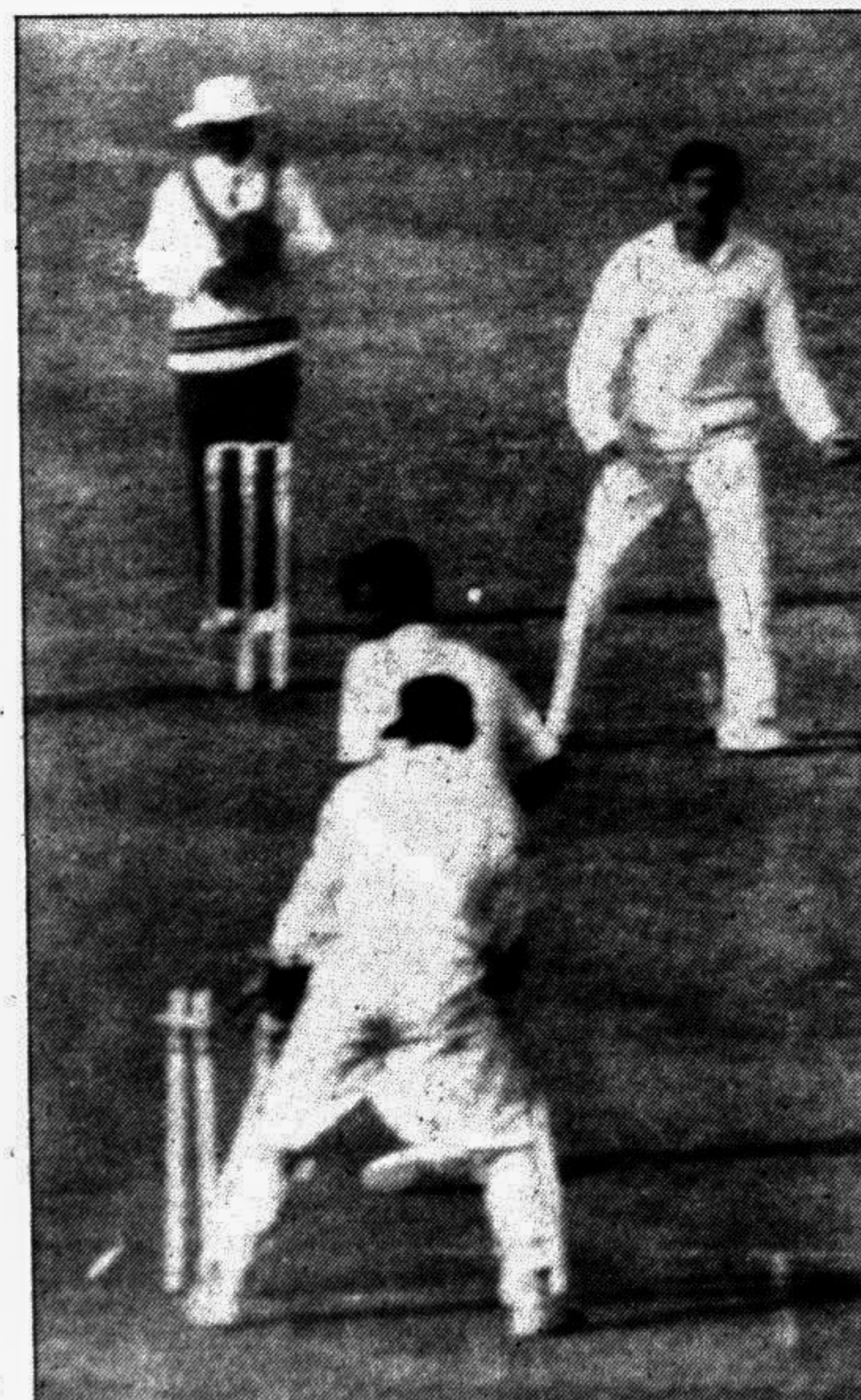
PORT ELIZABETH, South Africa, Dec 23: Sri Lanka captured an Eastern province Invitation XI's last eight wickets for 52 to pull off a 36-run victory in their 50 overs match in Zwide Township just outside Port Elizabeth on Thursday, reports Reuter.

Sri Lanka were bowled out for 202 in 49.4 overs after being put in to bat and the Invitation XI slumped from 114 for two to 166 all out with 16 balls left.

Several Sri Lankan batsmen got established but none stayed to play a long innings. Wicket-keeper Pubudu Dassanayake (29), Sanjeeva Ranatunga (27) and off-spinner Muttiah Muralidharan, with a 17-ball 23, were the main contributors.

The pick of the Invitation attack were Eastern Province off-spinner Shafiq Abrahams, who conceded only 25 runs in his 10 overs, and Roger Quee, who played for Minor County Devon in the last English season. He took three for 40.

After the Invitation XI reached 114 for two, three run outs contributed to their middle and lower order collapse.



Man of the match Utpal Chatterjee claims his first of the three wickets by clean bowling Sri Lankan Chandana during India's opening match of the SAARC cricket tournament at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday. India won by 44 runs.

Star photo by AKM Mohsin