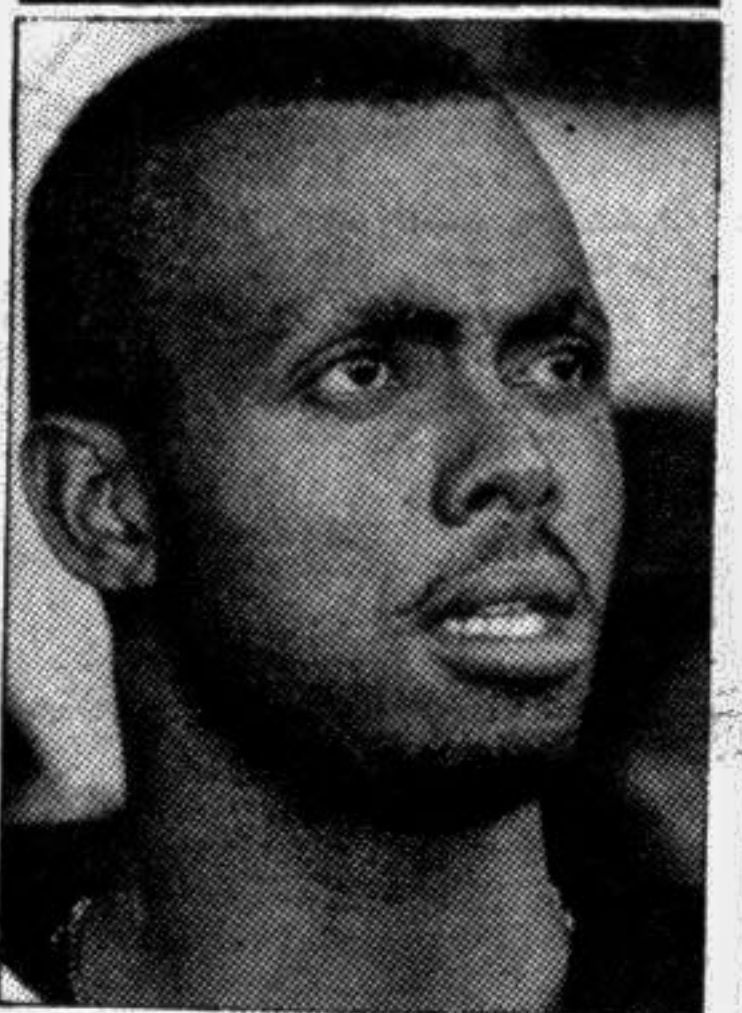


Column One

SPORTS TALK



Courtney Walsh
(West Indies fast bowler)
"It is always on — it's not out of the question."
On Kapil Dev's 434-wicket mark.

DID U' KNOW?

(The Professor does)

THAT it's not because of boxing people observe the Boxing Day on December 26. Traditionally Boxing Day is observed as a public holiday in England, Australia and New Zealand. The custom of boxing derives from the opening of alms boxes in church on December 26, the Feast of St. Stephen, to distribute the collected money to the poor who have not enjoyed as nice a Christmas as those who are better off. The idea was picked up by apprentices and assistants, who would place a Christmas box around to their employer's customers, asking for tips in return for their service during the year. Eventually children picked up the practice, making it a sort of 'trick or treat'. In Australia apprentices and servants break open small earthenware boxes in which their masters have deposited small sums of money. In large households, the family may have used this day to distribute Christmas boxes to their staff. In Canberra, it is the start of the annual exodus to the beach and a holiday on the coast. And, to observe the day more fittingly, international cricket offers a feast on Test matches — Australia versus India in Melbourne, New Zealand versus West Indies in Wellington and South Africa versus England in Durban.

Boost sports WHIZZ KID

COMPETITION FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN
Competition-125
✓ Tick the Correct Answers
Post to: The Daily Star
Win attractive prizes
Competition closes at 5 pm
Dec 31, '99 and draw
shortly afterwards

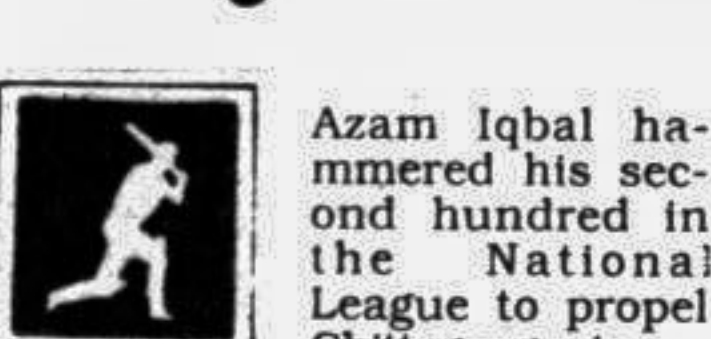
- Who was the man-of-the-series in the Australia-Pakistan Tests?
Langer Ponting Inzamam
- Who was the highest wicket-taker in the Australia-Pakistan Test series?
Akram Fleming McGrath
- How many Test hundreds has Mark Waugh scored to date?
15 16 17
- Who became champions in the Keya Premier soccer?
Muktiyodha Mohammedani Arambagh
- Who lifted the Expatriates' Open chess title?
Rezaei Zia Tanveer

Name
Class Roll No.
School Address
Phone: (if any)

Rajshahi cricket

RAJSHAHI, Dec 25: Bijoy Ekadosh beat Sarak and Janapath by five wickets in the fifth Bishreshtha Captain Mohiuddin Jahangir Smriti cricket tournament at the Railway ground today.
Janapath scored 140 for nine in 23 overs after winning the toss. Mintu (46) was the top scorer for Janapath. Sorful followed him with 34. Rajon (16) and Suvo (14) were the two other players who reached double figures. Shawpan was the most successful bowler taking four wickets giving away 22 runs.
In reply, Bijoy reached the target losing five wickets in 24 overs. Utpol, with 40, and Melon, with 32 were the highest scorers for the winners.
In another match of the day, Friends Ideal Cricket School defeated Prijon Sporting Club by six wickets.

Rajshahi sizzle in Azam blaze



Azam Iqbal hammered his second hundred in the National League to propel Chittagong to a massive 335 for six against Rajshahi on the opening day of their three-day match at the Rangpur Cricket Garden yesterday.
The young opener, who scored 105 against Barisal early this month, hit an uncharacteristically aggressive 188 off 182 balls to take the League leaders at a position from where they can start an early celebration of the title with their two games of the League still remaining.
Chittagong started the tenth round needing four more points to take an unassailable lead in the six-team meet. Realistically, even a draw would suffice for their bid for the first-ever National League title. The chasing teams now only can go level with the runaway leaders if a miracle happens, that is if they lose their next two matches and other aspiring Divisions—Dhaka and Sylhet—win their ones.
Although the visiting captain Minhazul Abedin failed to call the coin correctly, Azam gave his side a dream start on a day, where the willow reigned supreme over the cherry.

Sports Reporter

The diminutive right-hander, known as slow starter, hit back at his critics with scintillating 188, which is also the highest individual knock in the League so far erasing the previous mark of 187 by Dhaka and national opener Javed Omar.
It is the tenth century of the League and the fifth for Chittagong. Akram Khan (118 not out against Khulna), his nephew Nafees Khan (173 against Sylhet) and Minhazul Abedin (113 against Barisal) are the other centuries of the port city.
Azam gave Chittagong a flying start putting on 72 runs with Ehsanul Haq before the latter departed for 37. The dismissal of Ehsanul however paved the way for the most enterprising 127-run stand for the second wicket between Azam and one-down Jahangir, who chipped in with 50.
But that was the beginning of a tall Chittagong batting order as former national captain Akram Khan joined Azam to take the score 260. Azam eventually fell 18 runs short of what could have been a unique double century.
Akram scored a breezy 59 off 67 balls. The portly right-hander was out in the 88th over, but not before Chittagong reached

the 300-mark.

Although Enamul Hoque departed for 22, Chittagong are ready to exploit the remaining ten overs with run-machine Minhazul still batting on two.
Among the Rajshahi bowler Ripon returned with four for 77 in his 24.4 overs. But slow-left arm spinner Mustadir took a terrific beating, conceding 81 runs in his 16.1 overs.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard on the opening day of the three-day National League match between Chittagong and Rajshahi at the Rangpur Cricket Garden yesterday.

CHITTAGONG: First innings				
Azam run out	188			
Ehsanul c K Masood b Ripon	37			
Jahangir c Totam b Mushfiq	50			
Akram c Rokon b Ripon	59			
Enamul c Mushfiq b Ripon	22			
Minhazul batting	2			
S Mehmed c Farid b Ripon	1			
Extras: (b-18, lb-7, nb-10, w-1)	36			
Total: (For 6 wickets in 89.4 overs)	335			
Fall of wickets: 1-72; 2-199; 3-260; 4-321; 5-328; 6-335				
Bowling				
	O	M	R	W
Aminul Islam	15.5	4	44	0
Mushfiq	12	2	40	1
Uzzal	6	0	22	0
Ripon	24.4	3	77	4
Saifullah	16	2	46	0
Mustadir	16.1	1	81	0

Fahim spin fools Khulna



Fahim Muntasir, with a six-wicket haul, spun Dhaka to a commanding position over Khulna on the opening day of their three-day match at Shams-ul-Haq Stadium in Jessore yesterday.
For his big haul, the young off-spinner conceded only 27 runs in his 17.3 overs as Khulna, opting to bat after winning the toss, were bundled out for 118 in 60.3 overs.
Dhaka, in reply, were delicately placed at 92 for three in 35 overs at stumps. Although the star-studded Dhaka lost two quick wickets at the score of 82, the visitors looked certain to take a significant first innings lead with hard-hitting Al-Shahriar batting on seven, and waiting in the wings skipper Aminul Islam and vice-captain Khaled Mahmud.
Khulna got off to a slow but steady start with Sajid Hasan and Mohammad Salim producing 30 runs for the opening stand. But once Khaled Mahmud made the breakthrough by dismissing Salim for 20, the home side lost their way in the spinning web of Fahim.
Sajid fought a lone battle with a patient 32, but support at the other end was hard to come by. They lost wickets at regular intervals as Fahim, playing under the shadow of a more experienced Naimur Rahman, kept on bemusing the middle and lower-order batsmen on a tricky wicket.
Although Fahim, who played for Kalabagan in the

Sports Reporter

Premier League last year, was the toast of his teammates on the day, former national right-arm seamer Saiful Islam with two vital wickets including the scalp of in-form Jamaluddin played the pivotal role in restricting Khulna to a meagre total.
After the good work of Fahim, Dhaka got off to a resounding start with Shahriar Hossain and Javed Omar producing 51 runs for the opening stand.
Shahriar was first to go after scoring a fluent 38 off 48 balls. Javed, who hammered a brilliant 187 in the previous match



FAHIM ... 6/29

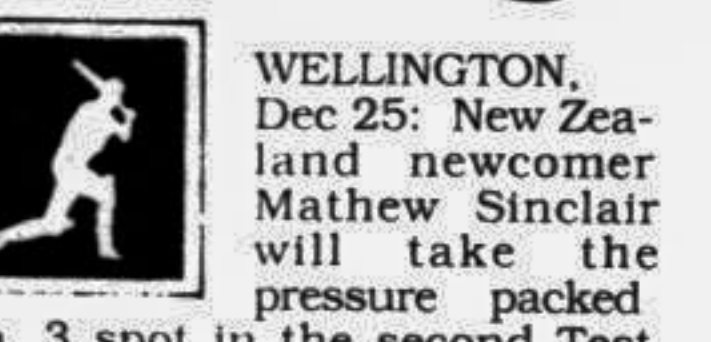
against Sylhet, made 35. Dhaka suffered a sudden slide when Javed and one-down Sanwar, who ran himself out for 13, departed at the score of 82. Al-Shahriar will resume play with Fahim today.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard on the opening day of the three-day National League match between Dhaka and Khulna at the Shams-ul-Haq Stadium, Jessore yesterday.

KHULNA: First innings				
Sajid c b Fahim	32			
Salim c Atiar b K Mahmud	20			
Jamaluddin lbw b Saiful	2			
Mofizul c K Mahmud b Fahim	15			
Jewel c Javed b Fahim	0			
Ahsanullah run out	0			
Masudul lbw b Saiful	2			
A Kamal b Fahim	0			
Khalruzzaman c b Fahim	15			
Al-Amin not out	19			
Salahuddin c Atiar b Fahim	5			
Extras: (b-1, lb-6, nb-1, w-1)	118			
Total: (All out in 60.3 overs)	118			
Fall of wickets: 1-30; 2-37; 3-65; 4-65; 5-69; 6-77; 7-77; 8-84; 9-110				
Bowling				
	O	M	R	W
Morshed Ali	8	4	18	0
K Mahmud	10	4	20	1
Saiful	11	5	12	2
Naimur	12	2	26	0
Fahim Muntasir	17.3	5	29	6
Al-Shahriar	2	0	6	0
DHAKA: First innings				
Shahriar c Mofizul b Al-Amin	33			
Javed lbw b Jewel	35			
Sanwar run out	13			
Al-Shahriar batting	7			
Fahim batting	7			
Extras: (b-1)	1			
Total: (For 3 wickets in 35 overs)	92			
Fall of wickets: 1-51; 2-82; 3-82				
Bowling				
	O	M	R	W
Khairuzzaman	4	0	10	0
Ahmed Kamal	6	1	22	0
Al-Amin	9	1	22	1
Salahuddin	10	4	15	0
Jamaluddin	3	1	8	0
Jewel Hossain	3	1	14	1

Wellington Test from today



WELLINGTON, Dec 25: New Zealand's new opener Mathew Sinclair will take the pressure packed No. 3 spot in the second Test against the West Indies starting Sunday, reports AP.
Kiwi coach David Trist said Sinclair will follow openers Gary Stead and previous No. 3 Craig Spearman, who moves to opener.
No 3 is Mathew's spot and we believe he's very capable of doing the job," Trist said. "Craig is also quite capable of handling the change to opening and he's played a lot of his Test cricket there."
There was speculation either captain Stephen Fleming or Adam Parore might move up to No. 3 to ease Sinclair into the Test at No. 5 or No. 6.
But Sinclair has thrived at No. 3 this year, scoring 182 against England A last month and staying off the West Indies pacemen for 124 minutes for 38 for New Zealand A in the tour opener in Taupo.
Spearman's elevation is to cover for the injured Matthew Horne, who had his right index finger broken by Franklin Rose in the second innings of the first Test. New Zealand won after a remarkable comeback.
Trist hoped to keep the continuity going from the nine-wicket win in Hamilton and end 1999 with a 2-0 series whitewash.
"It's all about maintaining the consistency and the retention of the confidence the players have built up this year," Trist said.
Trist said there was still pressure on to finish the West Indies off and be remembered as the 'Team of 99' and complete three Test series wins this year.
The year started with a series win over India in January, followed by the 2-1 triumph over England in August.
As in Hamilton, Trist and Fleming will wait until the morning of the Test to decide

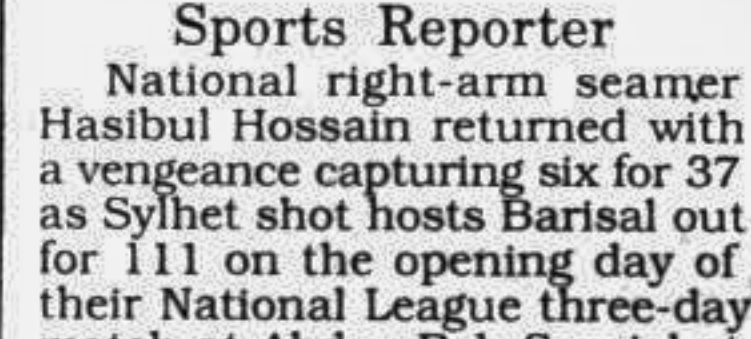
their 11.
The Basin Reserve pitch should again favour the bowlers on the first morning, which will help left-armers Shayne O'Connor's chances of playing.
Trist however, hasn't ruled out the two-seamer, two-spinner option that initially raised eyebrows but eventually won New Zealand the first Test.
The West Indies are unlikely to make wholesale changes though after having their positive moments at Hamilton, none less than being 282 for one after the first day.
Captain Brian Lara was upbeat but deflected questions about West Indian media reports of a rift in the team.
"The personnel that we have here have done a tremendous

job, unfortunately four days of cricket on the field would have thrown up a lot of question marks," Lara said.
"I'm quite happy with the way things are going in the camp."
Lara said he didn't need to read any newspapers to tell how the reaction would be in the West Indies to the team's current form.
"West Indians are very proud people and they take a lot of pride to give them something to smile about."

LINEUPS

NEW ZEALAND (From):
Stephen Fleming (captain), Gary Stead, Craig Spearman, Mathew Sinclair, Nathan Astle, Craig McMillan, Adam Parore.
See page 14

Hasibul humbles Barisal



National right-arm seamer Hasibul Hossain returned with a vengeance capturing six for 37 as Sylhet shot hosts Barisal out for 111 on the opening day of their National League three-day match at Abdur Rab Serniabat Stadium yesterday.
Hasibul revelled with the new-ball after, the home team deciding to bat on a dicey wicket, were bundled out in 45.5 overs. The tall attacking bowler's hostile opening spell accounted for four wickets, leaving Barisal tottering at 17 for four in 10.2 overs.
Hasibul started the demolition act by dismissing Monju for naught in his second over. He then ripped through the top order with disdain, reducing Barisal to 5/57 from where they had never recovered.
National left-arm spinner Mohammad Rafique then took the cue from Hasibul to mop up the fragile tail to finish with four for 18 in his 12.5 overs.
But after the fantastic work by Hasibul and Rafique Sylhet, themselves suffered a sensational batting collapse. The visitors were reeling at 96 for 6 in 41 overs when the stumps were drawn for the day.
Barisal off-spinner Saleh Ahmed with four for 13 runs in 16 economical overs was the man responsible for Sylhet's slide, who started the on an impressive note but lost their way due to the absence of a solid batting line-up.
Pervaz, the most impressive performer for Sylhet, could score only 11 before becoming the first victim of Saleh. Selim Shahed made 13 and, Rajin Saleh scored highest 20, Pakistani Saifullah ran himself out after making 14 and Rafique chipped in with 10.
The hopes of Sylhet to take a first innings lead rests on the shoulders of Naimur Rahman, the last recognised batsmen at the crease with 10.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the opening day of the three-day National League match between Sylhet and Barisal at the Abdur Rab Serniabat Stadium, Barisal yesterday.

BARISAL: First innings				
Rashedul lbw b Hasibul	6			
Monju c Rajin b Hasibul	0			
Faruque c Mortuza b Hasibul	9			
Moin lbw b Hasibul	1			
Moin b Hasibul	33			
Totam b Rafique	15			
Mofizur b Rafique	26			
Nayan c Mortuza b Rafique	3			
Arun b Hasibul	0			
Saleh not out	0			
Ashfaq b Rafique	0			
Extras: (b-4, lb-8, nb-5)	17			
Total: (All out in 45.5 overs)	111			
Fall of wickets: 1-5; 2-6; 3-16; 4-17; 5-57; 6-83; 7-103; 8-110; 9-110				
Bowling				
	O	M	R	W
Hasibul	18	8	37	6
Iqbal	10	3	23	0
Necayamur	6	1	21	0
Rafique	12.5	5	18	4

SYLHET: First innings

Pervaz c Totam b Saleh	11			
S Shahed c Nayan b Totam	13			
Rajin c Arun b Saleh	20			
Naimur c b Saleh	1			
Saifullah run out	14			
Rafique c Arun b Saleh	10			
Necayamur batting	10			
Extras: (b-4, lb-2, nb-5, w-6)	17			
Total: (For 6 wickets in 41 overs)	96			
Fall of wickets: 1-34; 2-42; 3-51; 4-72; 5-67; 6-96				
Bowling				
	O	M	R	W
Ashfaq Ali	8	1	35	0
Faruque	3	1	5	0
Totam	7	2	22	1
Saleh Ahmed	16	10	13	4
Moin	5	0	15	0
Monju	2	1	2	1

Cute h'ball

Victoria SC and Arambagh KS won their respective matches in the Cute First Division handball league at the Outer Stadium handball court yesterday, reports UNES.
In the day's first match, Victoria beat Satirtha Club 18-9 after leading the first half 8-5.
Nurunnabi struck six times and Liton four for the winners while Bayezid scored three and Rafiqul two goals for the losers.
In the other match, Arambagh crushed Mansoor SC 20-6 after dominating the first half 8-3.
Ujjal and Zahid netted six goals each for the winners while Dhanu scored three for the losers.

LINEUPS

NEW ZEALAND (From):
Stephen Fleming (captain), Gary Stead, Craig Spearman, Mathew Sinclair, Nathan Astle, Craig McMillan, Adam Parore.
See page 14

The super confident Waugh denied he was being arrogant in assessing the chances of his team, which has won five straight Tests. Another win in the Melbourne Test will make Waugh only the second Australian skipper to lead more than five consecutive Test wins.
Warwick Armstrong won eight in a row as captain in 1920-21 but Waugh can surpass leaders such as Sir Donald Bradman.
"There's a fine line between being confident, backing yourself and having people see you as being arrogant," Waugh said Saturday.
Generally I consider myself to be pretty icy in my assessments and if I think we are good enough to win this series 3-0, I'll say it. It's not bluff.



Pakistan's military ruler Gen Pervez Musharraf (2nd from R) and national cricket team captain Wasim Akram shake hands during the former's visit to the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore on December 24. Akram and company is currently preparing under the supervision of Intikhab Alam (3rd from R) for a tri-nation one-day series in Australia starting on January 9.
—AFP photo

Australia confident, India desperate



MELBOURNE, Dec 25 (AFP/Reuters): India will throw newcomer Hrishikesh Kanitkar into the deep end when they clash with a supremely confident Australia in the second Test here from tomorrow.
Kanitkar, a left-hand batsman and right-arm off-spinner, will make his Test debut before an expected Boxing Day crowd of 60,000 at the Melbourne cricket ground — weather permitting.
Thunderstorms have been

high standards for themselves," Tendulkar said. "The whole world is watching what they have been doing in recent times. They won the World Cup and are a very confident side."

Australia, meanwhile, will wait until tomorrow morning on whether to include Brett Lee. Waugh said he believed Lee was the fastest bowler he had seen since Jeff Thomson in the 1970s.
But the player who is likely to take centre stage is Australia's incomparable leg-spinner Shane Warne.

Warne needs just one more wicket to become the first slow bowler in history to claim 350 Test scalps and seven wickets to pass Dennis Lillee's Australian Test record of 355 victims.
With the third and final Test starting in Sydney on January 2 and three Tests against New Zealand to follow in March, it is only a matter of time until Warne passes Lillee.

He is hoping to do it at his home ground in Melbourne in what is traditionally the biggest match on the Australian cricket calendar.
Tendulkar's Indians resolved to meet fire with fire as they geared up for the second Test.

The Indians have their own agenda to counter the likely appearance of Lee.

"We are all fired-up," said Tendulkar, as the tourists prepared to end the millennium on a high note.

"We are going into this Test very positive. We know we have to win this match if we are going to win the three-Test series," Tendulkar recalled India's stunning start to the Adelaide Test when Australia were reduced to 52-4 within 18 overs.
"We got into a potentially match-winning position but were unable to finish it off," the master batsman said.

"I don't think we will be giving the Australians a second chance here. We will give as good as we get."

Tendulkar, regarded as the world's best batsman with 21 Test and 24 one-day centuries, laughed away suggestions he'd spent a lot of time practising against short-pitched bowling.

"I have never had problems against short-pitched bowling," he said. "But when the short ball keeps low you can't do much about it."

Tendulkar was referring to his controversial dismissal at Adelaide when he ducked into a

short delivery from Glenn McGrath which did not rise as anticipated and was declared leg-before.

Lee, meanwhile, prepared for the big occasion by talking on the phone with former pacer Ian Dennis Lillee, Australia's most successful Test bowler yet.
"He told me: Don't try too much, don't try too hard, enjoy it. He said it would be the biggest buzz of my life and basically I should just go out there and lap it up," Lee said.

Lee, who dismissed Tendulkar in the Prime Minister's festival match at Canberra, said he was looking forward to renewing the contest with one of his heroes.

"It was probably my biggest wicket so far," he said. "It would be great to actually bowl in a Test to Tendulkar who, growing up, was one of my heroes."
"We'll have another look at the wicket on Saturday, and just decide which bowler is better suited to it," Waugh said, denying Lee had already been told he would be making his debut.

Waugh's twin brother Mark, meanwhile, prepared for his 99th Test, confident the Boxing Day Test will provide the spark to end the form slump threatening his Test career.

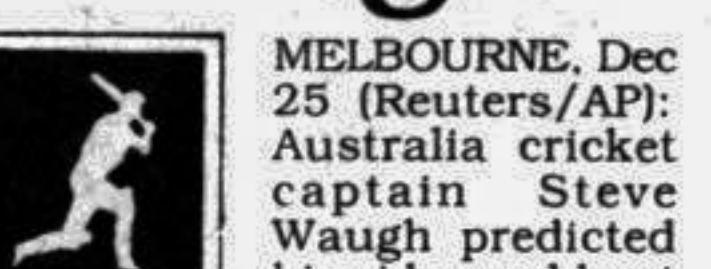
"The elegant right-hander has gone past 13 in only two of his last 15 Test innings, but Mark denied is best was behind him."
"I'm feeling okay, but there is probably a little bit more pressure on me than normal," he said.

"I'm definitely not too old at 34. I got a hundred a few weeks

ago."

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Waugh sticks his neck out!



MELBOURNE, Dec 25 (Reuters/AP): Australia cricket captain Steve Waugh predicted his side would not only win the second Test against India starting on Sunday but go on to complete a 3-0 series victory.
The super confident Waugh denied he was being arrogant in assessing the chances of his team, which has won five straight Tests. Another win in the Melbourne Test will make Waugh only the second Australian skipper to lead more than five consecutive Test wins.
Warwick Armstrong won eight in a row as captain in 1920-21 but Waugh can surpass leaders such as Sir Donald Bradman.
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Generally I consider myself to be pretty icy in my assessments and if I think we are good enough to win this series 3-0, I'll say it. It's not bluff.

"I think we are good enough but we'll wait and see."

Waugh said he was wary of Sachin Tendulkar's Indian team which was thumped by 285 runs in the first Test in Adelaide.

"If I was in their position, you would probably be doubting yourself a little bit," Waugh

said. "But then again, if I was in their position I'd really want to put it right and put the opposition on the back foot and come out really firing in that first session."

He said India's batting lineup had plenty of firepower while he is still waiting to see the best of his bowling.

"But at the moment we are a strong side, if we get a side down then I fancy that we can keep them down," Waugh added.

Waugh said the winning streak, one match against Zimbabwe, three against