



CRICKETERS HERE AND CRICKETERS THERE: Pakistan captain Waqar Younis having fun with Abdur Razzaq while Wasim Akram looks on (L) at the Zia International Airport. A cup of coffee for wicketkeeper Rashid Latif while Shoaib Akhtar, perhaps, thinking of having one too (C). Youngsters (L-R) Naveed Latif, Danish Kaneria, Younis Khan and Mohammad Sami passing some time at the lobby of the hotel.

# Openers' opening day

Cricket

AFP, Sydney

Justin Langer and Matthew Hayden scored their fourth double-century opening partnership in six Tests to flatten South Africa's bowlers on another dominant day for Australia in the third cricket Test here Wednesday.

The Proteas, with the series already gone after humiliating defeats in Adelaide and Melbourne, had another trying day in the field chasing leather in the heat as Australia began building another formidable first innings total.

Following scores of 439 and 487 in the first innings in the previous Tests, Australia were well on the way to amassing another considerable total to all but bat themselves into another unbeatable position.

At stumps on the opening day, Australia were 308 for five with Mark Waugh caught behind by wicketkeeper Mark Boucher off Allan Donald for 19 with three balls left and Damien Martyn not out one.

The South Africans rallied in the final session, snaring five wickets for 93 runs to take some gloss off Australia's first day.

Left-handed tormentors Langer and Hayden plundered centuries and put on 219 for the opening wicket to heap more misery on the Proteas, again reportedly distracted by off-field selection controversy with Justin Ontong preferred to Jacques Rudolph to make his Test debut.

Langer scored 126, his fifth century in seven Tests and 12th overall, and Hayden 105, his third in successive Tests and seventh overall, to give Australia another overpowering start.

The Australians were free-wheeling at 215 without loss at tea with the South Africans reflecting on two dropped catches off either batsman in the middle session.

Hayden was put down by Boeta Dippenaar at square-leg off spinner Claude Henderson when he was on 68, and Langer on 102 was dropped by Boucher standing up to the stumps for left-arm spinner Nicky Boje.

But the South Africans got their first breakthrough in four hours' play when Hayden was caught by Jacques Kallis off Shaun Pollock.

Ricky Ponting lasted 28 minutes before he was run out by Ontong by 14, with Langer going for a sharpish single.

Langer's 276-minute vigil ended when he was caught by Neil McKenzie at bat-pad giving Boje, who only arrived on the eve of the Test, his first wicket of the innings.

Pollock grabbed a key wicket for his beleaguered team when he bowled Steve Waugh for 30 with the second new ball five overs before stumps, ending a dangerous 49-run partnership with his twin brother Mark.

Mark Waugh didn't make it to stumps either giving the South Africans some late cheer when he edged Donald to Boucher with three balls left to force an early closure to the opening day.

The danger for Pollock's team is that the more runs Australia score the more difficult it will be to combat the twin leg-spin menace of Warne and MacGill on an anticipated turning pitch.

Steve Waugh's third toss win this series means that South Africa will have to bat last on a wearing SCG pitch, which has a reputation as a spinner's pitch.

So far Warne has taken 11 wickets in the series and MacGill claimed nine for New South Wales in the four match against the Proteas here just before Christmas.

Scoreboard at stumps on the opening day of the third and final cricket Test between Australia and South Africa at the Sydney Cricket Ground Thursday:

**AUSTRALIA:** First innings  
 Langer c McKenzie b Boje 126  
 Hayden c Kallis b Pollock 105  
 Ponting run out (Ontong) 14  
 M Waugh c Boucher b Donald 19  
 S Waugh b Pollock 30  
 Martyn not out 1  
 Extras: (b-4, lb-2, w-1, nb-6) 13  
 Total: (For 5 wks in 89.3 overs) 308  
 Fall of wickets: 1-219, 2-247, 3-253, 4-302, 5-308  
 To bat: Adam Gilchrist, Shane Warne, Brett Lee, Glenn McGrath, Stuart MacGill.

**Bowler** O M R W  
 Donald 19.3 3 64 1  
 Pollock 24 7 64 2  
 Kallis 18 1 111 0  
 Henderson 11 3 28 0  
 Boje 15 5 25 1  
 Ontong 2 0 10 0

**SOUTH AFRICA:** Gary Kirsten, Herschelle Gibbs, Jacques Kallis, Boeta Dippenaar, Neil McKenzie, Justin Ontong, Mark Boucher, Shaun Pollock, Nicky Boje, Claude Henderson, Allan Donald.

**Umpires:** David Shepherd (England) and Daryl Harper (Australia).

## SCOREBOARD

# Sonn flexes his muscle

Reuters, Sydney

South Africa's United Cricket Board (UCB) president Percy Sonn ordered the selectors to include black all-rounder Justin Ontong in their team for the third Test against Australia.

Sonn told a news conference he had asked the selectors to select Ontong as a replacement for all-rounder Lance Klusener instead of their preferred choice of Jacques Rudolph.

The selectors had wanted Rudolph to bat at three with Boeta Dippenaar dropping to number six.

"I did intervene on a matter of policy and that right is invested in me as president," Sonn said.

"The team was given to me without a certain player of colour (Ontong) who was selected to fill a position in the batting list."

"Jacques Rudolph came over to shadow the first three, he's a top order batsman, as is Boeta Dippenaar. Ontong was brought in to shadow positions six and lower."

"If you try to shuffle number threes into number sixes, you are doing something that is exclusionary to people who are brought in to shadow other positions."

"So I intervened and I said 'you take this team back and this is how I understand the policy and this policy must be complied with. You go back and reformulate your team.'"

"If there is an opportunity for a person of colour to represent his country, then we must make sure he does get that opportunity."

"I regarded that as not having been complied with."

Sonn added he had discussed the matter with South Africa captain Shaun Pollock who he said had not initially understood the policy.

He also said he had rejected an argument that Ontong's two ducks in last month's tour match against New South Wales suggested he was not in good enough form for a Test match.

"That (form) was raised with me but I didn't regard that as cogent enough for me not to take action," Sonn said.

"And how do you determine form? When do you start gazing into the future and saying when form is going to be permanent?"

Ontong bowled two overs, conceding 10 runs, in Australia's first innings 308 for five.

# Above all Aussie

Cricket

AFP, Sydney

Justin Langer and Matthew Hayden's fourth double-century stand, against South Africa here Wednesday, have made them statistically Australian cricket's greatest opening pair.

And they are now in the exalted class of the mighty West Indian combination of Gordon Greenidge and Desmond Haynes.

While Greenidge and Haynes, Langer became the first Australian batsman since former captain Taylor in 1989-90 to score four centuries in a season as Australia further tightened the screws on the demoralised South Africans.

Hayden, who was the leading scorer in Test cricket last year with 1,391 runs, has now scored 705 runs this season to eclipse Greg Chappell's 702 in the 1975-76 season.

Langer and Hayden gave Australia a flying start with a 219-run opening partnership on the opening day of the third Test at the Sydney Cricket Ground to surpass the scoring exploits of Bob Simpson-Bill Lawry and Mark Taylor-Michael Slater, who both compiled three double-century stands.

Langer, a diminutive Western Australian, and Hayden, a strapping Queenslander, are very close and often embrace each other upon reaching batting milestones.

Only coming together seven Tests ago at The Oval for the first



OPENERS ONLY: Australia's Matthew Hayden (R) being congratulated by fellow opener Justin Langer on reaching his hundred against South Africa on the first day of the third and last Test at Sydney yesterday.

the most prolific opening combination in the history of cricket, took 10 years to amass their four double-century stands from 1979-80 to 1989-90, the Australians have done it in one season.

The two left handers passed 1,000 runs in their 10th innings together and now have 1,125 runs at an average of 112.50.

That's easily the best of the nine combinations which have scored more than 1,000 runs.

The next best average of 63.75 belongs to Australians Bill Brown and Jack Fingleton who made 1,020 runs together in 16 innings.

Langer and Hayden are now the third-best left-handed opening pair in cricket history, behind Kiwi combination John Wright and Bruce Edgar and Pakistanis Aamir Sohail and Saeed Anwar.

Wright and Edgar made 1,655 runs at 31.83 in 56 innings while Sohail and Anwar have made 1,563 runs at 44.66 in 37 innings.

the Ashes Test against England last August, they have proved a phenomenal success and a major reason why Australia have dominated the South Africans so comprehensively this southern hemisphere summer.

Langer and Hayden launched the Australian season with a 224-run stand against New Zealand in Brisbane followed by 223 in the next Test in Hobart.

Last week they put on 202 in the first innings of the Melbourne Test against South Africa and backed that up with 219 in four hours on Wednesday.

Langer scored 126 for his fifth century in seven Tests and 12th overall and Hayden's 105 was his third in successive Tests and fourth overall.

**ASTONISHING OPENERS**  
 Most double-century stands by an opening pair in Test matches:  
 4: Gordon Greenidge-Desmond Haynes (West Indies)  
 4: Matthew Hayden-Justin Langer (Australia)  
 3: Mark Taylor-Michael Slater (Australia)  
 3: Bill Lawry-Bob Simpson (Australia)  
 3: Mike Atherton-Graham Gooch (England)

# Wasim eying

FROM PAGE 13  
 Wasim also showed his sympathy for pace demon Shoaib Akhtar as he felt that his bowling action being questioned by umpires repeatedly was almost ruining the career of the Rawalpindi Express.

"I feel bad for the guy. I think, he is one of the brightest prospects we have in world cricket... not just in Pakistan. So, he needs all the backing. He is a match-winning bowler. If I were playing for the team, I would like to have him in the side."

# Female ref!

AFP, Madrid  
 A woman will referee a Real Madrid tie for the first time ever when they take on city rivals Atletico Madrid in a friendly here at Real's Santiago-Bernabeu stadium on Wednesday.

The 25-year-old Spaniard Carolina Domenech qualified to referee women's FIFA matches on January 1, but will first oversee this derby, part of the Madrid 2012 Trophy, organised to promote the city's Olympic bid.

# Mazharul to

FROM PAGE 13  
**SCOREBOARD**  
 Scoreboard on the first day of the Ispahani Third National Cricket League match between Dhaka and Barisal at Barisal Stadium on Wednesday.

**DHAKA:** First innings  
 Sajjad c Shaimol b Shahnewaz 11  
 Sadik c Tinku b Sayem 0  
 Jahangir c Kiron b Sayem 8  
 Halim batting 55  
 Naimur c Shahnewaz b Biplob 21  
 Mazharul batting 100  
 Extras: (nb-2, w-2) 7  
 Total: (For 4 wickets in 93 overs) 202  
 Fall of wickets: 1/2, 2/14, 3/20, 4/51

**BOWLER** O M R W  
 Shahnewaz 21 12 23 1  
 Sayem 13 4 38 2  
 Moin 20 9 33 0  
 Biplob 17 5 40 1  
 Mukul 13 1 36 0  
 Shaimol 7 0 23 0  
 Shaheen 2 0 9 0

# Huda new BVF boss

BSS, Dhaka

Government has appointed Secretary of the Ministry of Youth and Sports Nurul Huda the president of Bangladesh Volleyball Federation on Wednesday.

A former Inspector General of Police Huda replaced Major Gen Abu Ishaque Ibrahim.

**Nothing less**

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 About Shoaib Akhtar, the Pakistan coach said that the Rawalpindi Express is now working hard to avoid getting injured by bowling fast.

"He is prepared to sacrifice his pace for a smoother action. However, he is still free to bowl occasionally fast," said Mudassar.

**SQUAD**  
 Waqar Younis (captain), Inzamamul Haq (vice captain), Taufeeq Umar, Faisal Iqbal, Yousof Youhana, Naved Latif, Younis Khan, Rashid Latif, Saqlain Mushtaq, Danish Kaneria, Wasim Akram, Mohammad Sami, Abdur Razzaq, Shoaib Akhtar, Shadab Kabir. Manager: Yawar Khan, Coach: Mudassar Nazar.

# No risk no gain!

Cricket

Reuters/AFP, Sydney

Australia said they were confident of winning the third and final Test against South Africa after they gambled on batting first.

Australia finished the first day at the Sydney Cricket Ground in a strong position at 308 for five after Justin Langer and Matthew Hayden scored hundreds in a double-century partnership for the opening wicket.

The South Africans fought back to capture five wickets after tea but the Australians said they remained upbeat because the pitch was starting to break up.

"I thought they showed a bit of fightback. They didn't know where the next wicket was going to come from but they stuck in there," Hayden said after making 105.

"But it's going to be a deteriorating wicket. The cracks are already starting to open up and I think if we can get another 150 tomorrow we'll

be in a really good position."

Langer said that captain Steve Waugh had spoken with both openers before the start of play and said if he won the toss they would have to work hard early on.

"The first hour was hard work, but I think it's a wicket that's going to deteriorate, it will seam around with the new ball and early wickets when we bowl will be vital," he said.

Langer, who made 126, added: "I think we're in the box seat because we had a good day. It's going to be tough for the South Africans from here."

"They're obviously under pressure. They're disappointed to have lost the first two Tests and their demeanour was pretty flat."

But Langer said it was a difficult wicket to bat on, adding: "We knew we were taking a bit of a risk batting first after winning the toss and batting on that wicket."

"For the first hour I didn't know where the next run was coming from because the ball was seaming all around the place and Allan

Donald and Shaun Pollock were bowling really well."

Langer and Hayden have been the stars of the Australian summer, scoring four hundreds each in six domestic Tests as well sharing four double-century stands.

Langer has scored five centuries in his last seven matches since being recalled to the Australian team during last year's Ashes tour of England.

"It's been exciting, even a bit surreal but if you'd ask me a few months ago if I'd be feeling like I am now I'd think you're crazy," Langer said.

"I've found a good recipe that works at the moment and I think I can stick to that and plenty of runs should come as a result."

"The key to batting is to be able to give 100 per cent to every ball and clear your mind. I'm happy with the way I'm going but I'm also disappointed I really haven't gone on with it after making these hundreds but I think the big one's just around the corner."

# Man Utd's hunt still on

AFP, London

Manchester United are insisting that despite recent comments, Alex Ferguson will stand down at the end of the season and that the hunt is on for a successor.

Ferguson hinted at the weekend that he may change his mind about retiring in the summer and stay on for another year, but United see it otherwise.

"As was always planned, we are about to embark on our search for a new manager. Nothing has changed," United's director of communications Paddy Harverson told the Press Association.

So far virtually all of the contenders for the job have ruled themselves out, including England manager Sven-Goran Eriksson, Leeds coach David O'Leary, Arsenal boss Arsene Wenger and Marcello Lippi at Juventus.

However Celtic boss Martin O'Neill suggested he might be interested when he refused to rule himself out.

When asked how he would feel if United came knocking at his door he said: "I wouldn't regret it if someone United offered you something and I assume then they might be pleased with the job that you're doing." United if they came calling.

# Wickets fall

FROM PAGE 13

**SCOREBOARD**  
 Scoreboard on the first day of the four-day National Cricket League match between Sylhet and Khulna at the Sylhet Stadium on Wednesday:

**SYLHET:** First innings  
 Parvez lbw b Jamaluddin 36  
 Hussain c Manzarul b Sohel 33  
 Nasirul c Nahidul b Sohel 2  
 Rajin c Raju b Jamaluddin 27  
 Alok c Jamaluddin b Sohel 7  
 Tariqul c Sohel b Manzarul 14  
 Nayeem b Jamaluddin 0  
 Joy c Raju b Sohel 0  
 Taposh not out 5  
 Mistu Das c Ahmed b Jamaluddin 1  
 Emanul lbw b Jamaluddin 0  
 Extras: (b-3, nb-2, w-2) 7  
 Total: (all out in 65.1 overs) 132  
 Fall of wickets: 1-70, 2-74, 3-79, 4-111, 5-111, 6-112, 7-115, 8-126, 9-127.

**Bowler** O M R W  
 Ahmed 12 4 27 0  
 Al-Amin 7 1 18 0  
 Manzarul 7.1 1 20 2  
 Jamaluddin 21 8 31 4  
 Sohel 18 5 33 4

**KHULNA:** First innings  
 Sajjadul b Taposh 6  
 Nahidul c Nasirul b Nayeem 15  
 Salim c Nasirul b Mistu Das 17  
 Raju batting 11  
 Manzarul lbw b Hussain 1  
 Sohel batting 1  
 Extras: (lb-2, nb-2, w-1) 5  
 Total: (for 4 wks in 26 overs) 56  
 Fall of wickets: 1-18, 2-31, 3-52, 4-55.

**Bowler** O M R W  
 Taposh 7 0 22 1  
 Nayeem 6 3 13 1  
 Mistu Das 7 2 11 1  
 Hussain 6 0 8 1