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Did U Know?

The first Test in India was played in the year 1933-34 at Bombay Gymkhana against England.



TEN Sports

India vs South Africa
 First Test, Day Two
 Live at 9:50 am

ESPN
 Australia vs New Zealand
 First Test, Day Four
 Live at 6:00 am

Primera Liga
 Real Madrid vs Barcelona
 Repeat at 3:00 pm
 Real Sociedad vs Bilbao
 Live at 1:55 am (Monday)

STAR Sports

Football Extra
 Live at 9:00 am
 English Premier Football League
 Blackburn Rovers vs Birmingham City
 Live at 10:00 pm



Talk Turkey

Wenger also said he was hoping to agree new contracts with England central defender Sol Campbell and Brazilian midfielder Edu.

Campbell, 30, signed a four-year deal in 2001 when he joined from north London rivals Tottenham Hotspur on a free transfer and his representatives have been in talks with the club in recent months.

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Parag loses Round 2

Bangladesh junior champion Mehdi Hasan Parag lost his second round board to Indian Grand Master Kumeru Humpy in the World Youth Chess Championship in the Indian state of Kerala yesterday.

Parag, who secured full point from the first round beating Russian IM Arsen Elmig, will meet Indian International Master Dipen Chakrabartee in the third round today.

Schumi voted top German star of 20th century

German television viewers voted seven-time Formula One world champion Michael Schumacher the country's sportsman of the 20th century on Friday.

Eight-time Olympic canoe gold medalist Birgit Fischer was second and tennis champion Steffi Graf third in the poll, carried out some four years after most of the rest of the world decided their favourites.

Schumacher, 35, has won the world championship seven times while Fischer, 42, won her eight gold medals for both East German and reunited Germany in Olympics over 24 years dating back to Moscow in 1980.

Graf, 35, won 22 grand slam titles and was ranked number one in the world for a record 186 consecutive weeks. She held the top ranking for a total of 377 weeks -- another record.

"I never would have expected an honour like this," said Schumacher, who won his seventh title this year. "It's a total surprise."

More than 100,000 viewers voted in the contest, which was broadcast on ZDF television. Franz Beckenbauer, World Cup-winning captain and coach for West Germany, was fourth, ahead of three-time Wimbledon champion Boris Becker in fifth.

Fishing for big names

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

With the Dhaka Premier Division Cricket League under the corner, local clubs are trying to recruit foreign stars but the busy schedules of the Test-playing countries may hinder their prospects.

While holders Victoria, Mohammedan, City Club, Brothers Union and newcomers Old DOHS have almost signed up their players, local heavyweights Abahani, are yet to confirm any names so far. Fans are already frustrated knowing that quite a number of mediocre locals have joined.

But officials of the popular Dhammond club said yesterday that they are trying to bring former Zimbabwe skipper Heath Sreak to Dhaka. A club will be able to field one foreign player but can register three.

"We have held preliminary talks with the player and are hopeful of acquiring his services. In case we fail

we are also trying to contact some quality players in India and Pakistan," said a club cricket official.

Abahani's only significant local recruit was ex-Bangladesh captain Najmur Rahman, who will lead the team this season following Akram Khan's departure. The big man from Chittagong joined DOHS after spending 16 years at Dhanmondi.

Victoria, aiming for a hat-trick, have already started their camp with two Pakistani recruits -- Fahadullah Khan and Wasim Nayeem. But it was learnt that last year's runners-up City Club, who signed Khaled Mahmud to lead the side, were keen to get Nayeem as their foreign trump card.

On the other hand, Mohammedan in a desperate bid to regain the championship after two successive failures, are bolstered by the signatures of Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashar, Shahriar Hossain and speedster Mashrafe-Bin-Mortuza. Now the Motijhed outfit can welcome back two stalwarts -- Steve Tikolo and Sandeep Sharma.

Kenyan star batsman Tikolo is

expected to join on November 23 while dashing Indian Sharma will reach here before the 12-team league starts on November 25.

Traditional powerhouse Bangladesh Biman failed to secure either Pakistani opener Imran Farhat or middle-order batsman Younis Khan and now they are trying to hire fellow Pakistani Mohammed Ashraf, who played for them in the recent Corporate Cricket League.

Sixth-placed Brothers Union banked on bringing Zimbabwe batsman Grant Flower from Australia. But all their efforts ended without success.

Though the national flag-carrier have switched their attention to Pakistani all-rounder Rehan Rafique, club officials have not ruled out attracting a mega player.

Big-spending Old DOHS have brought Pakistani batsman Selim Elahi and are looking for another quality all-rounder from the sub-continent.

The most-coveted cricket in the country begins with holders Victoria

SEE PAGE 14 COL 1

Bergkamp may extend contract

REUTERS, London

Manager Arsene Wenger says Arsenal could offer 35-year-old Dutch forward Dennis Bergkamp a new one-year contract for next season.

Bergkamp, who will complete 10 years with the Premier League champions when his current one-year deal expires at the end of this season, indicated earlier this week he might seek to play on to 2006.

Wenger told reporters on Friday: "For Bergkamp, the case is quite simple. We always sit together in April or May and we have a frank discussion -- and that will happen."

Pressed on whether he would offer a new deal to the Dutchman, who joined in 1995 after a two-year spell at Inter Milan, the Arsenal boss said: "I would not rule that out."

Wenger also said he was hoping to agree new contracts with England central defender Sol Campbell and Brazilian midfielder Edu.

Campbell, 30, signed a four-year deal in 2001 when he joined from north London rivals Tottenham Hotspur on a free transfer and his representatives have been in talks with the club in recent months.

Bashar joins camp, Sanwar withdraws

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashar has resumed light training. The country's premier batsman, who suffered a broken right toe during the second one-day international against New Zealand on November 5, joined 19 probables for a swim at a city hotel yesterday as part of the national camp's preparations for next month's eagerly-awaited home series against India.

"I only swam today after removing the plaster and I hope to do some light practice like gym, stretching and running tomorrow. But I've been advised not to pick up the bat for at least another week. By that time I should be back to full fitness," said Bashar.

Meanwhile, national discard Sanwar Hossain spurned a chance to kick-start his international career

when he did not report for training.

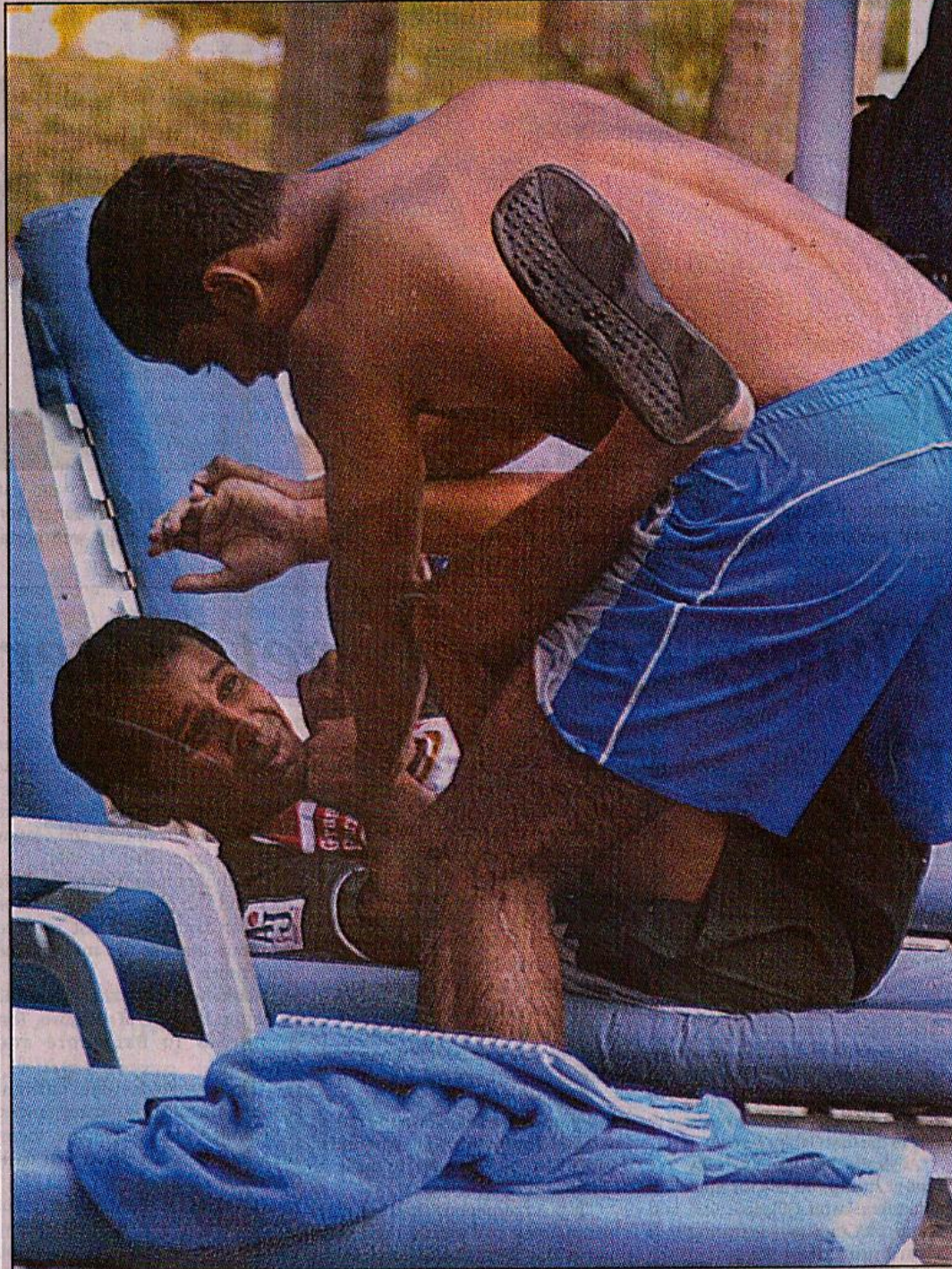
The 31-year-old Sanwar, who was surprisingly called up in the 21-member preliminary list after a year, wrote to the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday requesting that his name be withdrawn from the national camp because he preferred to concentrate on his Bangladesh Biman job.

"At the moment my job is as important as my career. Right at the moment I prefer my professional training as a steward at Bangladesh Biman but I am ready to serve the national team after my training if the Board wants me," said the right-hander's statement on Saturday.

Chief selector Faruque Ahmed said that he had received Sanwar's letter and he would be meeting colleagues today to discuss a replacement.

"There is nothing we could have done because Sanwar didn't want to

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DON'T BE SCARED, I'LL HELP YOU: Pace bowler Mashrafe-Bin-Mortuza yesterday tries to convince Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashar (L) that taking a swim at the Sonargaon Hotel pool would do him the world of good.

Memorial TT begins today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Beximco Pharma Abul Hashem Memorial Table Tennis Championship will begin at the outer stadium wooden floor gymnasium today.

The century-old Wari Club in support with the Bangladesh Table Tennis Federation (BTTF) is arranging the competition after a long fourteen years gap.

Teams from India, Pakistan, Nepal and hosts Bangladesh will take part in the four-day meet in six events -- men's team, women's team, Boys' team, men's singles, women's singles and boys' singles.

General secretary of Wari Club Qayyum Reza Chowdhury informed the press at the National Sports Council (NSC) conference room yesterday that they will get Tk 3,26,000 from sponsor out of total budget Tk 4 lakhs.

State Minister for Youth and Sports Fazur Rahman will inaugurate the meet today while Dhaka City Mayor Sadeque Hossain will grace as chief guest on the closing ceremony on November 24.

Advantage Australia

Cricket

REUTERS, Brisbane

Australia demolished New Zealand's bowlers on Saturday to open up a 211-run lead with two days remaining in the first Test.

Michael Clarke and Adam Gilchrist blasted centuries in a record sixth-wicket stand while fast bowler Glenn McGrath joined in the run spree, registering a career-first fifty in his 102nd Test.

At the close, Australia were in complete control at 564 for nine with a beaming McGrath unbeaten on 54 and Jason Gillespie not out 43. The two tallenders had shared an unbroken last-wicket stand of 93 to break New Zealand's spirits.

"We were pretty happy with the way things were going until that last session," said Kiwi left-arm spinner Daniel Vettori.

"It was pretty tough to watch that partnership develop and there was a lot of frustration out there but we realise we need to get that wicket

pretty quickly tomorrow and put a score on the card that's going to be competitive."

Vettori and paceman Chris Martin were the pick of the New Zealand bowlers, capturing four wickets apiece, but were unable to stem the run flow as the Australians piled on 367 runs in the day after resuming on 197 for four.

Clarke top-scored with 141 on his home debut while Gilchrist smashed 126 to rack up his 12th Test ton to turn the match Australia's way after New Zealand had dominated the previous day.

The pair added 216 for the sixth wicket after Damien Martyn departed before lunch for 70, caught by Craig McMillan at third man off a short ball from Martin.

Clarke, playing his fifth Test but first on home soil, was 31 not out overnight but raced to his century off 148 balls in 206 minutes when he hooked Martin to the boundary from the last ball before lunch.

The 23-year-old batsman also recorded a ton on his debut in India last month and joined Harry

Kabadi World Cup Impressive wins for Bangladesh

SPORTS REPORTER

Half-strength Bangladesh pulled off impressive wins in the first ever Kabadi World Cup at the Physical Education College in Mumbai.

Bangladesh, who were forced to leave behind four players of Bangladesh Army due to visa complications, made a flying start thrashing Germany 112-35 points in their first group encounter on Friday and then beat Nepal 56-35 in the second match yesterday.

Kamal Hossain of Bangladesh was adjudged best player in the first match while Zahidul Islam got it in the second encounter, according to a message received here yesterday.

Bangladesh are scheduled to play Iran in their remaining group match yesterday night.

After the World Cup, Bangladesh will play six Tests against the hosts in different cities.

SAFF team given lands on Nov 24

UNB, Dhaka

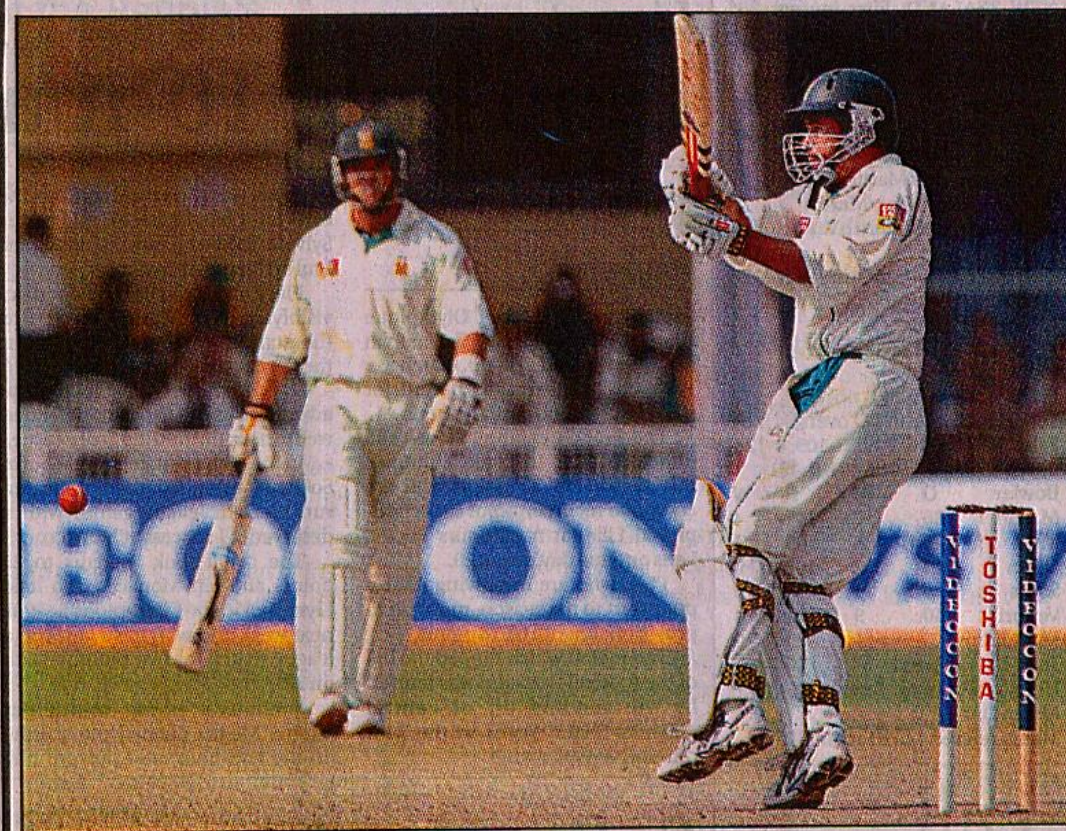
Prime Minister Begum Khaloda Zia will hand over the deeds for lands on Wednesday (Nov 24) to the players and officials of Bangladesh football team which clinched the third SAFF Championship title last year.

The handing over ceremony will take place at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

All the players and officials concerned, and the BFF executive committee members have been requested to be present at the PMO at 10 am on Wednesday.

Earlier, on Tuesday (Nov 23), the players and officials of the 2003 SAFF Championship winning team would make a courtesy call on BFF president SA Sultan MP.

SEE PAGE 14 COL 1



South African batsman Andrew Hall pulls the ball for four during his dogged 78 against India on opening day of the first Test at Kanpur yesterday.

Battling Hall holds India

Cricket

AFP, Kanpur

Andrew Hall's unbeaten knock of 78 helped South Africa make a fine start in their two-Test series against India at the Green Park Stadium here on Saturday.

The 29-year-old struck a defiant third Test half-century in his new role of opener as South Africa scored 230-4 on the opening day of the first Test. Boeta Dippenaar (46) was the other not out batsman.

South Africa were not troubled much by the Indian slow bowlers except for experienced leg-spinner Anil Kumble, who bagged four wickets in two bursts of two scalps each.

Hall, a pace bowler who usually bats way down the order in Tests, defied the attack throughout the day, hitting nine fours off 274 deliveries.

He was involved in three useful partnerships after South Africa

elected to bat on a pitch expected to aid spin bowling as the match progresses.

Hall added 61 runs for the opening stand with skipper Graeme Smith (37), 85 for the third with Jacques Kallis (37) and 76 for the unbroken fifth wicket with Dippenaar.

Hall curtailed his strokes and was also lucky to get away with a chance on 55 when Kumble dropped him at mid-wicket off off-spinner Harbhajan Singh but showed a lot of grit in his knock.

"Hall showed tremendous discipline and considering that he is basically a stroke-player, his innings showed his commitment to the team's cause," said captain Smith.

"It was a good toss to win as batting first is always an advantage on the subcontinent but I am impressed at the way our batsmen batted," added the 23-year-old.

"Putting Hall up the order was a risk that paid off. Now we hope to

build up a big first innings total and put India under pressure," he said.

Their spinners bowled tight but Kumble was the only one who really troubled us," said Smith.

Kumble came up with timely wickets but failed to get support. He dismissed Kallis and Jacques Rudolph off successive deliveries as the visiting side seemed to have got over an earlier twin-strike by the same bowler.

Kumble trapped Kallis leg before wicket with the fifth delivery of his 19th over and bowled left-hander Rudolph with the next after Hall and Kallis had steadied the ship with their useful stand.

Kallis played confidently during his cameo and became the second South African batsman after Gary Kirsten to cross 6,000 runs in Test cricket.

Kumble also grabbed two quick wickets earlier in the day when he bowled Smith (37) and trapped

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Don't dare call him a 'bunny'

Cricket

REUTERS, Brisbane

After years of being ridiculed over his batting, Australian fast bowler Glenn McGrath finally proved his detractors wrong on Saturday by scoring his maiden Test fifty.

The lanky paceman brought up the milestone in his 102nd test when he struck New Zealand left-arm spinner Daniel Vettori for successive boundaries and he ended day three unbeaten on 54.

Beaming with pride, McGrath followed a ritual most observers thought he would never experience when he took off his helmet and raised his bat in triumph.

The Australian dressing room also burst into celebration when McGrath reached the magical milestone, players hugging each other and slapping high-fives.

Michael Clarke, Australia's latest batting sensation, had scored 141 earlier in the day in his first Test on home soil but was more excited by McGrath's achievement.

"That's the best thing I've ever seen in cricket, it was just unbeliev-

able," Clarke said.

"When he went out to bat, we all started getting ready to field because we thought he'd be back in a minute."

Australian leg-spinner Shane Warne cheered louder than most. Years ago, he waged a bet with former teammate Mark Waugh that McGrath would eventually score a first-class fifty.

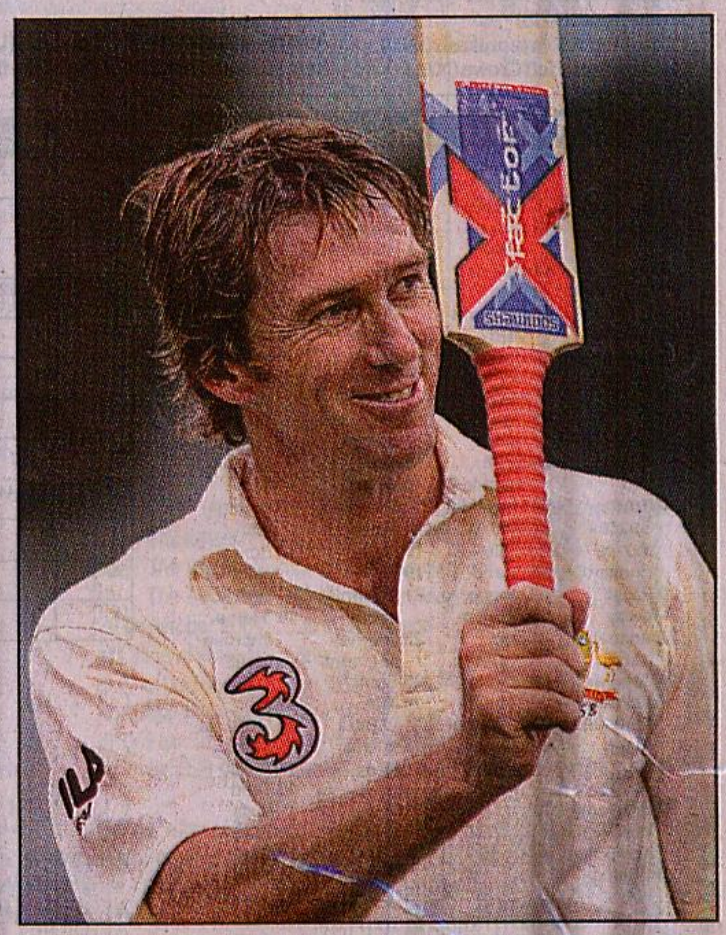
McGrath said Waugh did not pay up when he scored 50 in a county match in England four years ago, but added that he would have to honour his achievement at the Gabba.

McGrath is one of the world's greatest bowlers but has never shown much ability with the bat. He averages less than seven in Test cricket and had passed 30 only once before, reaching 39 against West Indies five years ago.

So, McGrath sensed his big moment in Test cricket had come when he reached 34.

"I think it was about 34 and I was thinking this could be the day and when I was 44, and Vettori came around the wicket and they brought the guy in the deep up I thought 'if he tosses one up I'm going to try to get in one shot.'"

SEE PAGE 14 COL 4



WHAT A FEELING! Australia's Glenn McGrath acknowledges the crowd's applause after completing his first Test half-century in Brisbane yesterday. He was batting on 54.

PHOTO: AFP