



## 'Happy with hattrick'

AFP, Georgetown



man Chaminda Vaas (v Bangladesh in 2003) and Australia fast bowler Brett Lee (v Kenya in 2003). "He's amazing. With an action like that, he still manages to keep the ball straight in line and the right length all the time. He is a magnificent bowler and I like him," said former West Indies fast bowler Colin Croft.

"He is going to surprise a lot of batsmen in the ongoing tournament have been finding it difficult to read the 23-year-old Malinga."

He had already taken three wickets each in his first two group matches in Trinidad against debutants Bermuda and Bangladesh before threatening to alter the course of the match against South Africa.

South Africa, chasing a modest 210 to win, were cruising at 206-5 before being nearly blown away by Malinga's magic spell.

Graeme Smith's side heaved a collective sigh of relief when Robin Peterson edged Malinga past the slip for a winning four.

"I'm feeling bad because we lost the game, but I'm happy that I took a hattrick," said Malinga, only the fifth bowler in the Cup history to achieve such a feat.

"The old ball was reverse-swinging and I got the wickets. I tried to get five-in-a-row, but unfortunately couldn't. I think we didn't have enough runs."

Other hattrick bowlers were India paceman Chetan Sharma (v New Zealand in 1987), Pakistani off-spinner Saqlain Mushtaq (v Zimbabwe in 1999), Sri Lanka pace-

"That spell at the end from Malinga really tested us," South Africa captain Graeme Smith said after his team's one-wicket victory.

Malinga's action caused New Zealand's batsmen a lot of problems in a Test series in 2005.

New Zealand skipper Stephen Fleming admitted most of his batsmen found it difficult to sight the ball, which was coming virtually in front of the umpires and missing the sightscreen.

"We asked the umpires to change the colour of their trousers. There's a period where when he's delivering when it gets lost against the trousers," Fleming said.

The umpires didn't change their

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## MALINGA PIPS THE LOT

SPORTS REPORTER

Sri Lanka paceman Lasith Malinga became the first bowler to take four wickets in consecutive balls in one-day international cricket. He also became the fifth bowler overall to have claimed a hattrick in World Cup tournaments.

World Cup hattricks (player, team, opponents, venue, date):  
 Chetan Sharma (Ind) New Zealand Nagpur 1987  
 Saqlain Mushtaq (Pak) Zimbabwe London 1999  
 Chaminda Vaas (SL) Bangladesh Pietermaritzburg 2003  
 Brett Lee (Aus) Kenya Durban 2003  
 Lasith Malinga (SL) South Africa Georgetown 2007

*\*Malinga took four wickets in four balls*

THE NEW MAGICIAN: Sri Lanka fast bowler Lasith Malinga takes off to celebrate his fourth wicket, that of Makhaya Ntini, during their World Cup Super Eights match against South Africa at Guyana National Stadium in Georgetown on Wednesday.

## SA almost choke

AFP, Georgetown



Sri Lanka fast bowler Lasith Malinga became the first man to take four wickets in four balls in an international match before South Africa scrambled a one-wicket win in a World Cup Super Eights match at Providence here on Wednesday.

"It was pretty stressful," admitted South Africa captain Graeme Smith. "I even caught one or two of the guys having a cigarette!"

South Africa were heading for a comfortable win, with four runs needed and five wickets in hand to reach a target of 210 when Malinga yorked Shaun Pollock with the fifth ball of his eighth over.

Andrew Hall then scooped a catch to cover off the next ball.

Jacques Kallis took a single off the next over from Chaminda Vaas but was then caught behind for 86 off the fifth ball of Malinga's ninth over.

Makhaya Ntini had his stumps scattered by a fast yorker as Malinga became the first bowler in one-day international history to take four wickets of successive balls.

Charl Langeveldt, who earlier took a career-best five for 39 as Sri Lanka limped to 209 all out, scrambled a single off Malinga before Robin

Peterson edged a boundary to clinch a crucial win for South Africa.

Smith said his team had dominated 95 overs of the match. "We always knew it was going to be a difficult chase. It was a very good effort on our part to restrict them to 209 and then chase the way we did. But the last five overs I think we were very

good today (Wednesday)."

The win relieved some of the pressure on South Africa, whose 83-run defeat against Australia in St Kitts Saturday meant they entered the Super Eight phase without any points.

It also ensured that South Africa would collect a 150,000-dollar

bonus as the world's number one-ranked team as they cannot be topped by the April 1 cut-off for the International Cricket Council's championship ratings.

Sri Lanka captain Mahela Jayawardene was philosophical about the defeat, his team's first in the tournament.

"The way we batted wasn't very pleasing. We didn't deserve to win. But Malinga's heroics showed that we don't give up."

Jayawardene, who delayed taking the final power play until the 45th over, when Malinga took his first two wickets, admitted that Sri Lanka were not in the game until the wickets started to fall.

"We never had a chance. So when he took his wickets I just told him to enjoy it and not put a lot of pressure on himself."

Smith said that despite the late collapse it was a key win for South Africa.

"We have won a tight game and in the last while we have been in tight games a number of times and have won them. It hasn't always happened that way for South African teams in World Cups," said the skipper.

Off-spinner Muttiah Muralidaran had appeared the only major obstacle to South Africa's win.

### SOUTH AFRICA V SRI LANKA SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the World Cup Super Eight match between Sri Lanka and South Africa at the Providence Stadium in Guyana on Wednesday:

SRILANKA	R	M	B	4s	6s
Tharanga c Kemp b Ntini	12	13	13	2	0
Jayasuriya c Kallis b Langeveldt	26	44	27	4	0
Jayawardene c de Villiers b Langeveldt	12	49	31	1	0
Sangakkara c Boucher b Hall	28	50	38	4	0
Silva run out (Gibbs)	9	44	27	1	0
Dilshan c Kemp b Ntini	58	100	76	4	0
Arnold c Boucher b Langeveldt	50	99	73	2	0
Maharoff c Ntini b Langeveldt	5	14	9	0	0
Vaas c Gibbs b Langeveldt	0	3	1	0	0
Malinga not out	0	3	2	0	0
Muralidaran run out (Pollock)	1	1	1	0	0
Extras: (lb-3, w-4, nb-1)	8				
Total: (All out in 49.3 overs)	209				

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## Pollock form a concern

AFP, Georgetown

Shaun Pollock was South Africa's star bowler during his country's home one-day international season but his World Cup form is a worry for captain Graeme Smith.

In two successive matches, the normally miserly Pollock has "travelled", in Smith's words, after being targeted by opposition batsmen.

Against Australia in St Kitts Saturday, Pollock was hammered for 42 runs in an opening spell of five overs. He finished with a career-worst none for 83 in ten.

The pattern was similar against Sri Lanka at the Guyana National Stadium here on Wednesday when Smith had to take his star bowler out of the attack after he conceded 32 runs in four overs.

Sri Lanka beat India on their way to the World Cup second round Super Eights.

India, meanwhile, crashed out and went home to face the unrelenting fury of fans let down by a team

many considered to be potential World Cup winners in the Caribbean.

"I feel sorry for India's cricketers," said Sangakkara.

"They'll now face a torrent of criticism and abuse in the coming weeks. Fanatical fans will no doubt be burning effigies. The huge expectation places their players under enormous pressure. And when that expectation is raised a degree or two, it can easily have a

crippling effect.

## Kumara tells India to be sporting

AFP, Georgetown

In Sri Lanka, the public seem to have a more easy-going perspective. Most Sri Lankans are passionate about sport, especially cricket, but we also seem to understand that sport is sport.

"I am not sure whether that more balanced attitude is the product of two decades of civil war, or merely reflects the more happy-go-lucky style of an island nation."

"The attitude of our fans makes it easier for us. We still get our fair share of criticism. But our houses are not stoned when we lose and we can still walk down the street without fearing for our safety. I'm grateful for this and really don't envy the situation of India and Pakistan's top cricketers."

Sangakkara admitted that the World Cup felt strange without India and Pakistan.

India also lost to Bangladesh in their group games while Pakistan suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of part-timers Ireland. They also lost to the West Indies.

"It leaves the tournament with a

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## India fined for slow over rate

AFP, Georgetown

The International Cricket Council (ICC) Wednesday penalised India for a slow over rate during their World Cup first round defeat against Sri Lanka last week.

"The Indian team bowled one over short during their stipulated time and hence the captain Rahul Dravid is fined ten per cent of his match fee and every member is fined five percent," the ICC announced in a statement.

India lost their crucial Group B match at Port of Spain by 69 runs, a defeat which virtually ruled them out of the World Cup on Friday.

India's group rivals Bangladesh, to whom India lost their first match by five wickets, overwhelmed Bermuda two days later, to book their place in the Super Eights.

India, champions in 1983 and runners-up in last World Cup held in South Africa in 2003, were ousted after losing two of their three matches – their worst ever performance in the World Cup since the inaugural tournament in England in 1975.

## Gone are the Sachin days

PTI, Antigua

It is unlikely that Sachin Tendulkar would call it a day or the Board would pull the plug on his career but what's certain is that his spell on an adoring nation is over.

Since he first made it to local Mumbai newspapers in the mid 1980s, Tendulkar has been pretty much the reigning deity of Indian cricket. His one snap could trigger a stampede among press photographers; his one quote, however banal, would make front page headlines. Media respected his privacy like they did with no one else.

It was the same with his mates. Tendulkar always got the spot he wanted in the team bus. It was also the same in the dressing room where his mates didn't dare to put even a towel on his chair. He was always accorded the space, grown up men always walked a step behind him.

Andrew Leipus, former physio

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UNLIKELY HEROES: South Africa tail-enders Robin Peterson (R) and Charl Langeveldt exchange high-fives after the former struck the winning runs against Sri Lanka in the World Cup Super Eights match at Guyana National Stadium in Georgetown on Wednesday.