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Did U Know?

Pakistan fast bowler Mohammad Sami bowled the longest over in international cricket in his third over of the Asia Cup match against Bangladesh in Colombo in 2004. The sequence of the over was: wd-4-2-nb-wd-nb-1-0-wd-wd-0-wd-nb-wd-wd-nb-0-4.



Harbhajan Singh

(India off-spinner)
"If they play Hogg, I will wish him all the best because (although) I have nothing against him, but I would be happy to see him bowl at our batsmen."
When asked of his opinion on Australia spinner Brad Hogg's appearance in the upcoming Boxing Day Test in Melbourne.



ESPN
Sportscenter India
Sports News
Live at 8:30pm
TEN Sports
Sri Lanka v England
Third Test, Day Two
Live from 10:30am

Bayliss shocked with pitch

CRICINFO, undated

Sri Lanka's coach, Trevor Bayliss, has expressed surprise at the way the Galle wicket played, after his team scored 147 for 4 on a rain-delayed opening day which was curtailed to 55 overs.

"We would have bowled first as well. What we were surprised about is [that] the wicket probably didn't do as much as both teams thought it might. It certainly swung around as we thought it would due to the humidity this morning, but it has flattened out fairly quickly," Bayliss said.

"It hasn't got a lot of pace in it. The wicket is not too dissimilar to the first that we played on. It's a little bit hard to drive on. It's a wicket [where] you've got to work hard to score your runs."

Sri Lanka lost Kumar Sangakkara on the second over after tea and 36 minutes later, Chamara Silva edged a rising delivery to slip, both off Steve Harmison, before the players came off for bad light. "If we hadn't lost the last one we could have had our nose in front," Bayliss said.

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Jamie excited by Glamorgan

BBC ONLINE, undated

New Glamorgan recruit Jamie Dalrymple says he agreed to join them because he believes there are exciting times ahead for the Welsh county.

The England all-rounder, 26, has agreed a three-year deal to play under new Glamorgan manager Matthew Maynard at soon-to-be Test venue Sophia Gardens.

"I came down to visit and quickly got a positive feeling," Dalrymple said.

"I saw the new ground, which is nearly all there already, and Matt's a guy who makes things happen, gets things done."

Dalrymple, an off-spinner and lower middle-order batsman, has played in 27 one-day international matches including the Commonwealth Bank Series triumph in Australia.

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Rajshahi one-day kings

SPORTS REPORTER



Rajshahi regained the one-day title of the 9th National Cricket League on Saturday.

League competition with two games in hand when they took sweet revenge of their four-day defeat to Chittagong with a 70-run victory at the Rajshahi Divisional Stadium yesterday.

With the seventh win in eight matches, Rajshahi took an unassailable lead in the table with 14 points, six ahead of second placed Khulna, Barisal and outgoing champions Dhaka.

A scintillating 95 from opener Shakil Haider on his national league limited-overs debut, laid the foundation before pacer Delwar Hossain came up with a five-wicket brash to script the hosts' win.

Out-of-favour Alok Kapali was hero in Khulna with his all-round performance as Sylhet handed an 86-run defeat on the home side while another national-discard Shahriar Nafees guided Barisal to an emphatic eight-wicket victory against Dhaka to console a humiliating defeat in the four-day game.

RAJSHAHI-CHITTAGONG

Pointing out the performance of Shakil and Delwar in the eighth round, Rajshahi skipper Khaled

Mashud said that the determination of his players was the key behind the success in the tournament.

"The way Shakil played his innings in his first game was outstanding while Delwar simply improved day by day to become a very good one-day bowler. I think Rajshahi players have shown great commitment to take the opportunities in both hands," said an excited Mashud.

"It's nice we retained the one-day title but we are looking forward to regain the four-day title also. We will definitely come back in the next round," added the former national skipper.

In the day's match, Rajshahi rode on Shakil's 103-ball 95 that contained ten fours and two sixes to score 242 in 47.2 overs after deciding to bat first.

Anisur Rahman was second highest scorer with 31 off 42 balls with the help of two boundaries.

It was then Delwar's turn to take charge and demolish the

POINTS TABLE (ONE-DAY)					
Team	M	W	L	T	Total
Rajshahi	8	7	1	0	14
Khulna	8	4	4	0	8
Dhaka	8	4	4	0	8
Barisal	8	4	4	0	8
Sylhet	8	3	5	0	6
Chittagong	8	2	6	0	4

Chittagong top order. The visitors finally reached 172 because of a 72-run last wicket stand between Faisal Hossain and Mahmuduzzaman.

Faisal shone in the lost battle during a run-a-ball 91 that featured seven fours and four sixes. Delwar claimed five for 34 runs while his new ball partner Shafiqul Jabir took 2-21.

SYLHET-KHULNA

Alok Kapali carried his form into the one-day game by making 73 off 93 balls including nine boundaries while Golam Mabud contributed 65 off 90 balls with three fours as Sylhet piled up 278 for eight after deciding to bat first at the Birshreshtha Matur Rahman Stadium.

In reply to a challenging target, Khulna made a bold start but lost their way once the 73-run opening stand between Nazmus Sadat and Imrul Kayes came to an end. They were eventually bowled out for 192.

After the dismissal of Kayes for 22, Sadat blazed with 83 that came from 78 deliveries including a dozen fours but his departure put an end to the home chase.

Kapali was also the most successful bowler with 3-45 to win the man-of-the-match award.

DHAKA-BARISAL

A 115-run opening partnership between Nafees and Nasiruddin Faruque helped Barisal to overtake

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5



SATISFIED? Rajshahi players celebrate their National Cricket League one-day triumph after their 70-run win over Chittagong at the Rajshahi Divisional Stadium yesterday gave them an unassailable lead in the points table.

Leonine going great guns

SPORTS REPORTER

Leonine Chess Club maintained their winning run in the Dutch-Bangla Bank First Division Chess League to stay atop the table after yesterday's sweeping 4-0 victory against i2 Soft Solution.

The leaders increased their tally to 32 points after nine rounds while holders Bangladesh Biman moved to second place with 29.5 points.

Chittagong Mohammedan Sporting Club followed on 28 points.

Leonine's Indian duo GM Neelotpal Das and IM Sriram Jha and local players GM Niaz Murshed and FM Khondokar Aminul Islam won their boards against Nahid Parvej, Obaidul Islam Shahin, Amirul Islam Chowdhury and Shahjahan Kabir of i2 respectively.

In their ninth round matches at the federation hall room, Biman blanked Toyota Motors 4-0, Chittagong Mohammedan drew with Pritam Priyam, Destiny 2000 beat Farashganj 2.5-1.5, Dhaka University drubbed Friends 4-0 and Sultana Kamal Smite Pathaghar beat Faith 2.5-1.5.

PCB opposes county for players

PTI, Karachi

The Pakistan cricket Board has made it clear it would not give a free hand to players to sign county contracts in the near future.

A senior board official said that recently the board had not permitted pacer Rao Iftikhar to accept a contract offered by Gloucestershire for 2008.

"We know some of our players are in demand in English cricket. Although we have not finalized any policy as yet but we are clear that first and foremost national duty and requirements will take precedence over everything else," Shafiqat Naghmi, chief operating officer of the board told PTI Tuesday.

Naghmi said when players approached the board for permission to play county cricket, the PCB said if it gives permission only after seeking guarantees that the player is not overburdened with workload.

"But personally we will not encourage county signings," he said.

Pakistani players Danish Kaneria already has a two-year contract with Essex while Mohammad Asif and Umar Gul have also been made fresh offers. Yasir Arafat is another bowler who has played regularly for Scotland and Kent in recent years.

Sources in the board said the issue would be discussed at the next governing body meeting in January, as the feeling was the players gained nothing professionally by playing in England where the standard of county cricket was not high.

Naghmi said one reason why the board was improving the financial incentives for players in the domestic matches was to discourage its players from signing long-term league and county contracts.

Steve strikes hurt SL

Cricket

AFP, Galle

Steve Harmison grabbed three wickets as England took the opening day's honours in the third and final cricket Test against Sri Lanka here on Tuesday.

England, seeking a series-levelling win, put Sri Lanka in to bat on a moisture-laden wicket and reduced them to 147-4 in a short-end day's cricket at the Galle International Stadium.

Just 55 of the stipulated 90 overs were sent down in the first big game at the refurbished stadium, which was destroyed by the Asian tsunami in December 2004.

The match, watched by some 7,000 local and England supporters, started two hours late at 12 noon (0630 GMT) due to a wet outfield caused by overnight rain.

Sri Lankan captain Mahela

Jayawardene hit an unbeaten half-century to keep the hosts afloat as Harmison dealt heavy blows, including two valuable wickets in the final session.

Jayawardene followed his 195 in the drawn second Test in Colombo with a classy 51 not out that was studded with six boundaries.

Left-handed Kumar Sangakkara (46) put on 88 for the third wicket with his captain after Sri Lanka were reduced to 44-2 within the first 15 overs.

Sangakkara was lucky to get that far, having survived a loud appeal for a catch at the wicket off Matthew Hoggard before lunch when he was on 21.

Television replays revealed a thin edge off the bat which Australian umpire Daryl Harper did not notice.

Sangakkara, however, fell in the second over after tea when he hooked Harmison to deep square-leg where Monty Panesar took a

well-judged catch. Harmison then forced new batsman Chamara Silva to edge a catch to Ian Bell at first slip as Sri Lanka slipped from 132-2 to 138-4 in the final session.

Tillekeratne Dilshan, making a comeback after being dropped for the recent Australian tour, was unbeaten on seven when the umpires called off play due to bad light.

A heavy downpour hit the ground soon after the players came off, raising fears of another delayed start on the second day.

England captain Michael Vaughan's aggressive decision to give Sri Lanka first strike paid off as the tourists removed openers Michael Vandort and Upul Tharanga quickly.

Left-arm seamer Ryan Sidebottom was lucky to claim Vandort leg-before for 18 in the 11th over as replays of umpire Assad Rauf's decision showed the ball

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India land with high hopes

Cricket

AFP, Melbourne

India's cricket team arrived in Australia on Tuesday full of high expectations for a tour which is likely to be the last trip Down Under for veterans such as Sachin Tendulkar and Rahul Dravid.

The Indian squad touched down in Melbourne, where the first game of the four Test series will begin on December 26, full of confidence after recently defeating arch-rival Pakistan 1-0 in a three-Test contest.

Captain Anil Kumble said winning a series against Australia at home, something India has not achieved in almost 60 years, was the number one prize in world cricket.

"It means a lot. We came pretty

close to doing that the last time we came here (in 2003-04)," he told reporters.

"Leading up to the (final) Sydney Test match it was 1-1 and we did extremely well in the last Test series (to draw), so it's going to be very crucial for all of us."

Kumble said conquering Australia at home would be a thrill for himself and fellow veterans Tendulkar, Dravid, Sourav Ganguly and Venkatesh Laxman who are unlikely to tour Down Under again.

"Most of the senior cricketers are here on their last tour of Australia, so it's very important we go back victorious," 37-year-old legspinner Kumble said. "It means a lot to all of us in the team and also it means a lot to Indian cricket."

"Not many teams have come here and gone home victorious, so it's a great opportunity for all of us

and we look forward to that," he added.

If India pull off a series victory, they will be the first team to do so since the West Indies triumphed in 1991-1992 and they will upset Australia's record of not losing a Test since August 2005.

They will also be battling against their past playing experience in Australia, where they have won just four of 32 Tests.

Tendulkar, who at 34 first played here as a teenager, said he was looking forward to what is likely to be his last chance to score runs in front of Australian crowds.

"I think it will be my last tour, I don't know what's in store but I am just going to come and enjoy my cricket," he said. "Australia has been a fantastic place, we've come here in good shape and are looking forward to this tour."

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HOW WAS THE FLIGHT? India superstar Sachin Tendulkar (C) speaks to the media upon arrival at the Melbourne airport on Tuesday. India will play four Tests and a tri-nation one-day series down under.