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Indian fans complain of racism

PTI, Melbourne

Despite Cricket Australia's (CA) repeated warnings, racism has reared its ugly head at the ongoing Boxing Day Test here with Indian supporters complaining of "offensive and ugly" chants being hurled at them by local supporters.

A 'Herald Sun' report said Australian supporters shouted "Show us your visas, show us your visas" at the Indian fans, interviewed by their reporters. The visiting fans described the chant as "offensive, ugly and racist".

Even some Australian fans found the chants racist. "That is racist," a home supporter Heath Robbins was quoted as saying.

"It is attacking a person's country and they should be kicked out of the ground as they should for any offensive behaviour to any other people," he said.

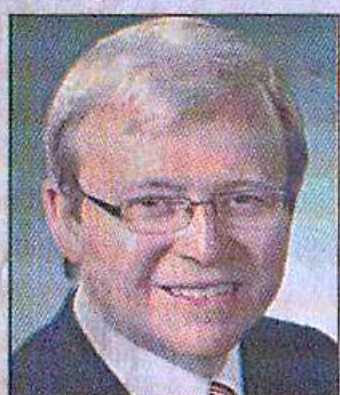
"Everyone feels offended when they are attacked on the basis of their residency or where we came from."

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Did U Know?

Since 1877, the Wimbledon Championships have only ever been disrupted by the World Wars and rain. Four years were lost for the World Wars and six due to the rain.



Kevin Rudd
(Australia's new prime minister)
"Howard did for spin bowling what I did for wicketkeeping -- which was not a lot in both cases."
Who doesn't plan to be showing off his cricket skills anytime soon.



STAR Cricket
Australia v India
First Test, Day Five
Live from 5:30am (Sunday)
TEN Sports
South Africa v West Indies
First Test, Day Four
Live from 2:30pm
ESPN
West Ham United v Manchester United
English Premiership
Live at 8:55pm
STAR SPORTS
Chelsea v Newcastle United
English Premiership
Live at 8:55pm
Everton v Arsenal
English Premiership
Live at 11:10pm



National Cricket League
(Round Nine, Day Three)
Chittagong v Dhaka
Venue: Chittagong Divisional Stadium
Rajshahi v Khulna
Venue: Rajshahi Divisional Stadium
Sylhet v Barisal
Venue: Shaheed Chandra Stadium, Bogra



WAS IT A CATCH REALLY? Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraful looks at the umpires with a big question mark on his face as he trudges back to the dressing room after he had been given out caught by Ross Taylor off the bowling of Kyle Mills during the second one-day international against New Zealand at the McLean Park in Napier yesterday.

Tigers humbled

Cricket

TIGERCRIKET.COM, Napier

A relentless drizzle brought an anti-climactic finish to the second one-day international at McLean Park yesterday with Bangladesh on 161-6 in 43 overs chasing 336 for a win, which had gone out of equation long ago.

Bangladesh, who required 284 under the Duckworth/Lewis method when the match was called off, lost by 102 runs.

The toss which went Daniel Vettori's way for the second game running. Even for a team that fancies chasing totals today's reality was very different for Bangladesh.

The pitch, one could tell by the look of it, was a belter and the tourists would have definitely batted. Instead they toiled on a flat deck without luck (two clear caught behind appeals went against them) and were bludgeoned when the batsmen had their eye in.

When the Tigers batted, Mohammad Ashraful received a contentious decision when umpire Peter Parker gave him out on 3 although television replays proved inconclusive as to whether Ross Taylor had taken the ball cleanly at cover.

Ashraful was the third wicket to fall in 18 balls and with the addition of five runs as the Tigers crashed from a solid 63 without loss to 68 for 3 in 14 overs. That was the defining moment for Bangladesh.

"Yes, we would have batted too if I had won the toss. The conditions were great and it was a very flat track," said captain Mohammad Ashraful at the post-match briefing when asked whether the toss was a factor.

"We had a plan in mind and we were going along according to that plan but we lost three wickets for five runs and the plan changed. The batsmen really did not get going after that and we probably lost our biggest stroke-makers. So it didn't give us any chance to go after 335 which was virtually impossible

from the start," said Jamie Siddons in reply to a question whether he thought the target was attainable.

"We don't pretend that we are going to compete against teams like New Zealand on a regular basis at this point of time. We are building. A lot of young players are getting good practice over here. We've lost two now and hopefully we'll play better in the last one and win," he added.

On the bowling effort, the Australian coach said: "If the ball is not swinging or spinning, which it really didn't today apart from the early overs where I think we bowled really well today, then it is a problem. The pace is also not there. The first two bowlers are bowling around 132-133kmph and not 140kmph."

"It's really hard to contain when you can't bounce and there were not too many get out balls. They were giving us two bouncers last two balls every over and they were dot balls. So it makes it difficult for us to execute perfect yorkers and so

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2

SA U-19 in control

SPORTS REPORTER

South Africa Under-19 took control on the second day of the three-day practice match against Bangladesh Under-19 at Sedgwick Park in Potchefstroom yesterday.

The home team scored 274 for 3 at tea in reply to the visitor's 294. Rony Talukdar, Dollar Mahmud and Mohammad Rubel took one wicket each.

BRIEF SCORES

Bangladesh Under-19s: First innings 294 all out in 80.5 overs (Rony 43, Mithun 39, Nadimuddin 0, Nasir 8, Marshall 23, Mahmudul 64, Sohravardi 68, Ashraf 33 not out, Dollar 3, Rubel 3, Kibria 2; Parnell 2-37, Hendricks 1-28, Swanepoel 1-33, August 1-44).
South Africa Under-19s: First innings 274 for 3 in 71 overs (at tea) (JT Smuts 77, K Smuts 0, Rossouw 9, Hendricks 92, Vandiar 91; Rony 1-21, Dollar 1-30, Rubel 1-56).

Dev Squad crush Malaysia U-19s

SPORTS REPORTER

A 91-run partnership between Ashique Islam and Mominul Haq steered BCB Development Squad to a comfortable six-wicket win against visiting Malaysia Under-19 team in yesterday's friendly limited-overs match at the Khulna Divisional Stadium.

The Malaysian U-19s, who are in the middle of a preparation tour in Bangladesh for next year's Youth Cricket World Cup at home, managed just 128 for eight in 50 overs after electing to bat with Aminuddin making highest 38.

Saikat Ali captured 3-20 while Rumman and Tapash each chipped in with a couple of wickets for the hosts, who took 34.3 overs to reach 128-4.

Although the top-order failed, number three Ashique remained 56 not out while Mominul contributed 45 during the match-winning fourth wicket.

Aussies dictate terms

Cricket

AFF, Melbourne

India will have to do what no other Test team has done before to come from behind and win the first cricket Test after Australia set them a historic run chase at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Friday.

The Australians offered the Indians 499 runs to win with two days left after declaring their second innings at 351 for seven late on the third day.

India safely reached stumps at six without loss, with Rahul Dravid on three and Wasim Jaffer on two.

Only three teams in Test cricket history have scored 400 or more in the fourth innings for victory.

The West Indies hold the Test record of 418 for seven when they beat Australia at St. Johns in 2003, while India amassed 406 for four to down the West Indies in Port-of-Spain in 1976 and Australia hit 404 for three to defeat England at Headingley in 1948.

The highest successful run chase in the fourth innings at the MCG is England's 332 for seven set 79 years ago.

But the drop-in pitch is playing low and cracking, making high scoring problematic in the fourth innings.

"I'd like to say they have no chance, but the reality is they have to get 493 runs and they've got two days to get it so they have plenty of time," Australian batsman Michael Clarke said.

"But I also believe if we bowl as well as we can and hold our chances I think there is a possibility the game could be over tomorrow as well."

Harbhajan Singh, India's leading wicket-taker on Friday, said: "Obviously, it's a stiff target, but I won't say it's not achievable."

"With the kind of batting lineup we have, if we play to our potential anything can happen in cricket and this is a good wicket to bat on and I'm sure our batsmen are looking forward to going out and showing some character tomorrow."

Before lunch India claimed the wickets of first-innings centurion

Matthew Hayden and skipper Ricky Ponting, followed by the dismissals of Phil Jaques, Mike Hussey and Andrew Symonds in the middle session, with Michael Clarke and Adam Gilchrist sent on their way after tea.

Opener Jaques picked up his sixth consecutive Test half-century and was out next ball to a return catch by Anil Kumble for 51 shortly after lunch.

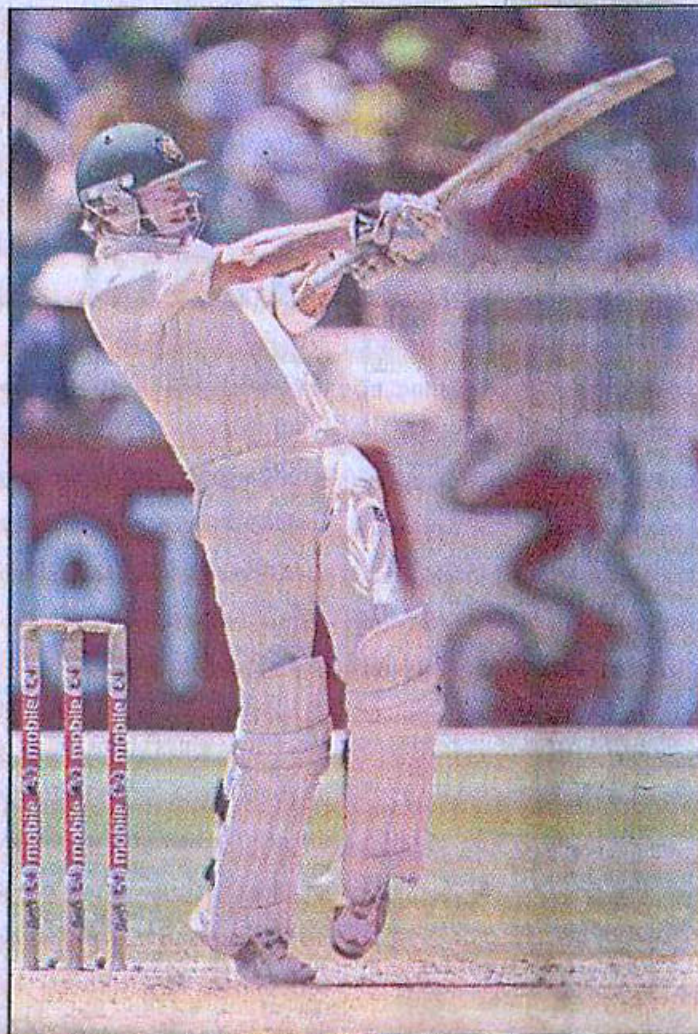
Hussey wrestled for 36 off 84 balls with no boundaries before he was snapped up by Sachin

Tendulkar at first slip off RP Singh.

Symonds had an eventful time at the crease. He was bowled off a no-ball by Zaheer Khan when on six and then crunched spinners Kumble and Harbhajan for sixes before he was leg before wicket to Zaheer Khan for 44.

Clarke looked set for his sixth Test century before he danced down the pitch to Kumble and was well stranded by the turn to be stumped by Mahendra Dhoni for 73 off 113 balls.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2



Australia's Michael Clarke pulls one during his knock of 73 in the second innings on the third day of the first Test against India at the Melbourne Cricket Ground yesterday.

WI take big lead

Cricket

AFF, Port Elizabeth

All-rounder Dwayne Bravo took four wickets in 21 balls as the West Indies took a 213-run first innings lead on the third day of the first Test at St George's Park Friday.

West Indian captain Chris Gayle decided not to enforce the follow on and the tourists increased their overall lead to 279 when they reached 66 for two in their second innings at tea.

Gayle got the innings off to another blazing start before he was caught behind off Makhaya Ntini for 29 off 22 balls. He was followed by Runako Morton, who was leg before wicket for five to Jacques Kallis' first ball of the innings.

Bravo, who finished with four for 24, took the last four wickets at a personal cost of six runs as the West Indies bowled out South Africa for 195.

South Africa suffered an early blow after resuming on 122 for five when Mark Boucher was out in the third over of the morning. Boucher top-edged a hook against Jerome Taylor and was caught by Daren Powell at fine leg.

But AB de Villiers and Paul Harris defied the West Indian bowlers for most of the morning in a

seventh wicket stand of 43 before Bravo struck shortly before lunch.

De Villiers, the only top order batsman to shine, made a patient 59 off 127 balls before he was bowled by a superb delivery from Bravo which straightened off the pitch and clipped his off stump.

Bravo followed up with the wicket of Harris, who batted for 100 minutes and faced 68 balls in making nine. He was caught at mid-off when he attempted a forcing shot off the back foot.

South Africa's last two wickets fell in 13 balls after lunch as Bravo had Andre Nel caught at mid-on and Dale Steyn caught at fine leg.

Gayle, who made 66 off 49 balls in the first innings, hammered 19 off Steyn's third over, starting with a hooked six which sailed over Ntini's head at long leg.

But he was forced on to the back foot and squared up by Ntini and edged a low catch to Boucher's left after dominating an opening stand of 32 with Daren Ganga.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at tea on the third day of the first Test between South Africa and the West Indies at St George's Park in Port Elizabeth on Friday:

WEST INDIES: First innings 408 (Chanderpaul 104, Samuels 94, Gayle 66, Sammy 38, Ganga 33,

Morton 33; Nel 3-85, Ntini 3-100, Steyn 2-121)

SOUTH AFRICA: First innings (overnight 122-5)

Smith lbw b Taylor 28
Gibbs c Ramdin b Powell 0
Amla b Powell 29
Kallis c Bravo b Taylor 0
Prince c Morton b Powell 20
DeVilliers b Bravo 59
Boucher c Powell b Taylor 20
Harris c Taylor b Bravo 9
Nel c Ganga b Bravo 16
Steyn c Powell b Bravo 7
Ntini not out 0
Extras: (b-4, lb-1, nb-1, w-1) 7

Total: (All out in 62.1 overs) 195

Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-45, 3-53, 4-63, 5-96, 6-129, 7-172, 8-161, 9-194

Bowler O M R W

Powell 17 4 58 3
Edwards 15 3 56 0
Taylor 13 4 46 3
Bravo 13.1 3 24 4
Sammy 4 2 6 0

WEST INDIES: Second innings

Ganga c Boucher b Ntini 29

Ganga not out 22

Morton lbw b Kallis 5

Samuels not out 9

Extras: (nb-1) 1

Total: (For 2 wickets in 20 overs) 66

Fall of wickets: 1-32, 2-57

Bowler O M R W

Steyn 7 2 34 0

Ntini 6 3 13 1

Nel 4 0 17 0

Kallis 3 1 2 1

CA observing situation

Cricket

AFF, Sydney

Australia will monitor violence in Pakistan following Benazir Bhutto's assassination to gauge whether the national cricket team can safely tour next year, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd said Friday.

Rudd said his government would liaise closely with Cricket Australia on security issues surrounding the tour after rioting erupted in Pakistan in the wake of the opposition leader's murder late Thursday.

"We've already seen evidence of violence in the short period of time that's elapsed since the assassination, in the days ahead we don't know what's yet to occur," Rudd told reporters in Melbourne.

"Therefore the most responsible course of action is for us to be

in the closest possible contact with Cricket Australia so an appropriate, timely, informed decision can be made about this particular tour."

Rudd said the government's main concern was the safety and security of the Australian team, which is due to arrive in Pakistan on March 10 to play three Tests, five one-dayers and a Twenty20 international.

Cricket Australia spokesman Peter Young said his organisation and the Australian Cricketers' Association would not make a decision on whether to proceed with the tour for several weeks.

"It's an appalling tragedy and we only hope that the civil situation in Pakistan can improve," Young said.

Australia have not toured Pakistan since 1998, with their last scheduled tour in 2002

moved to the neutral venues of Sharjah and Colombo due to security concerns.

Cricket Australia chief executive James Sutherland said there were currently no plans to move the upcoming tour to neutral venues and, in any case, such a decision rested with Pakistani cricket authorities.

"Right now playing in a neutral venue is not something that's under consideration," Sutherland told reporters in Melbourne.

"There's a commitment to tour Pakistan and we'll be pursuing every avenue we can for that tour to go ahead. Whether we play in a neutral venue is not up to Cricket Australia, it's a matter for the Pakistani Cricket Board."

Sutherland said a decision on whether to tour would not be taken until late February, after consultation with independent and Australian government security experts.



STUCK IN THE NINETIES: Dhaka's Nazmul Hossain Milon is in full flow on way to hammering an unbeaten 95 in the first innings on the second day of their National Cricket League four-day at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR