

Matthew level with the Don

CRICINFO, undated

Matthew Hayden overcame a nagging thigh injury to move level with Don Bradman on Australia's list of century makers with 29.

Hayden's 123 helped Australia earn a lead of 213 entering the final day and he is confident they already have enough to defeat India and secure a world-record equalling 16th victory.

"We've given ourselves the best chance of winning," he said. "We can make up time, we're in there with a shot, which is great."

Hayden will wait to see how bad his leg problem is in the morning before deciding how to prepare for the third Test in Perth on January 16.

Ponting was called after falling to Harbhajan Singh for 1 and he was offering plenty of advice to Hayden while he batted.

For the 8th

FROM PAGE 17

Harbhajan faces a charge of racial abuse against Australian player Andrew Symonds and will appear before match referee Mike Procter after the Test on Sunday.

Ponting has struggled in this series with scores of four and three in Melbourne and 55 and one in Sydney, three times falling to Harbhajan.

Overall Harbhajan has dismissed Ponting cheaply seven times, including three ducks in the 2001 series in India.

"I think he probably has got the wood on Rick at the moment," said long-time Australian teammate Matthew Hayden, who scored his 29th Test century with 123.

"But this is a particularly difficult venue to start, a lot can be and probably will be made of that (getting out again to Harbhajan)."

"But I am sure you will see Ricky come out in subsequent innings and have his day out in the sun as well."

Procter is to convene a hearing into the allegations after the end of the Sydney Test on Sunday.

Procter said neither of the on-field officials was aware of the heated exchange between Harbhajan and Symonds during Friday's final session.

"The umpires did not hear anything, they did not know anything about it," he told Channel Nine television.

Harbhajan has denied he racially abused Symonds.

"I did not say anything racist. I do not know what is going on," he told Saturday's Sydney Morning Herald newspaper.

"I haven't done anything, we were just talking. It wasn't even sledging, it was just normal talk out on the cricket field. I was concentrating on my batting."

In the wake of the allegations Indian great Sunil Gavaskar accused the Australian side of double standards following Ponting's complaints over on-field behaviour.

Earlier, Sylhet added only two runs on the day to their overnight score of 348-8.

BRIEF SCORES

KHULNA: First innings 193 and second innings 73 for 2 in 22 overs (Nazmus 32, Imrul 0, Mostafizur 31*, Sahagir 8*, Abul Bashar 1-3, Talha 1-35).

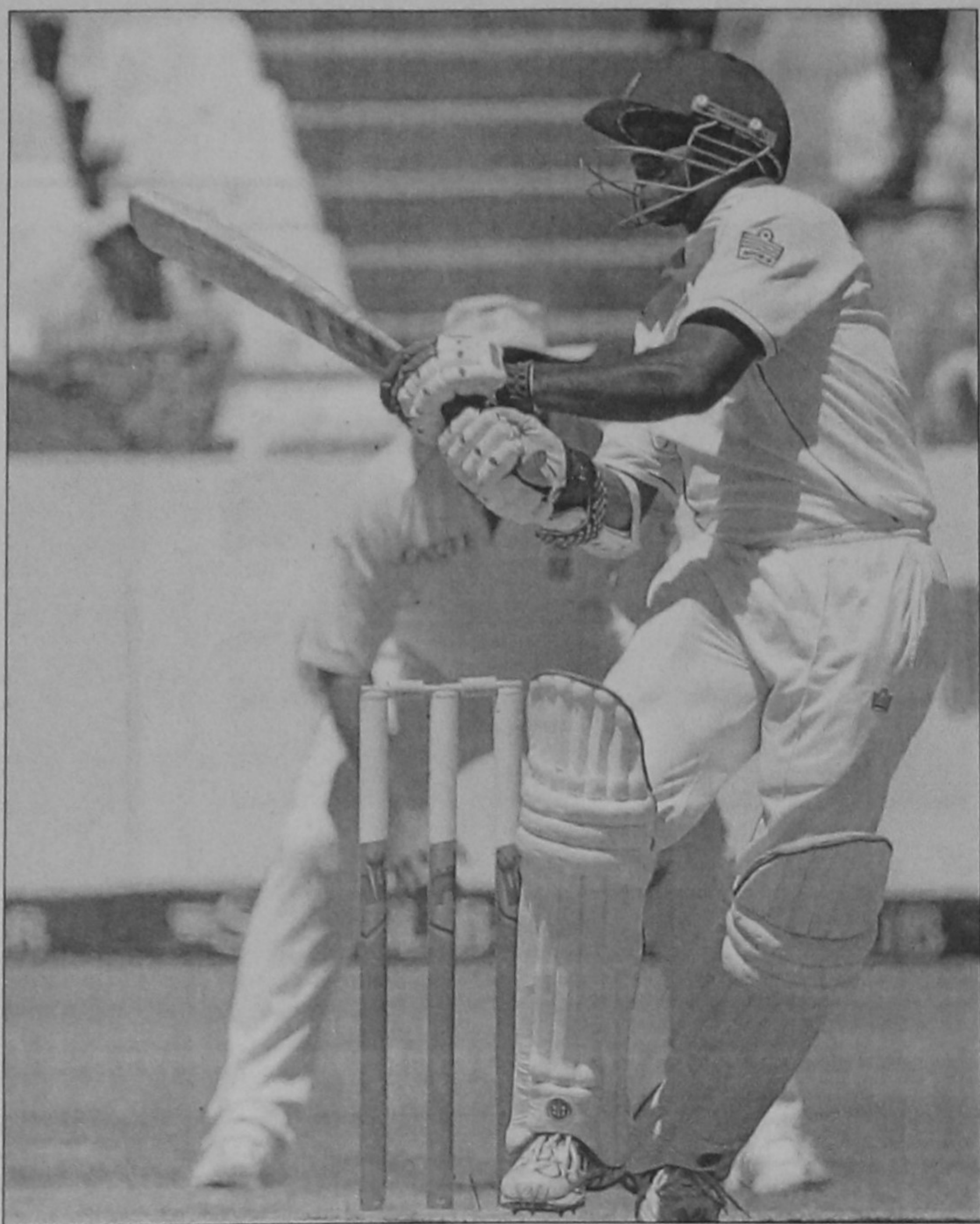
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SYLHET-CHITTAGONG

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Chittagong recovered from an early hiccup in reply to Sylhet's total thanks to Dhiman and Ehsanul, who made 54 off 105 balls with the help of seven boundaries.



West Indies' Shivnarine Chanderpaul, who scored an unbeaten 70, plays a pull in the second innings on the fourth day of the second Test against South Africa in Cape Town yesterday.

'No racial abuse'

CRICINFO, undated

AFP, Sydney

Match umpires did not hear any alleged racial abuse of Australia's Andrew Symonds during the second cricket Test against India, match referee Mike Procter said Saturday.

India spinner Harbhajan Singh faces a charge of racial abuse against Andrew Symonds after a complaint lodged by Australian skipper Ricky Ponting to match umpires Mark Benson and Steve Bucknor during Friday's third day.

Procter is to convene a hearing into the allegations after the end of the Sydney Test on Sunday.

Procter said neither of the on-field officials was aware of the heated exchange between Harbhajan and Symonds during Friday's final session.

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"I haven't done anything, we were just talking. It wasn't even sledging, it was just normal talk out on the cricket field. I was concentrating on my batting."

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India not upset: Ganguly

PTI, Sydney

Australia's racial abuse complaint against Harbhajan Singh may have given a seemingly nasty turn to the ongoing Test series but Indian batsman Sourav Ganguly on Saturday rubbished suggestions that the issue has upset the visiting side.

"We walked out in the field normal. I don't think many of them were aware of what exactly had happened. So there was no such discussion within the team," Ganguly said after the fourth day's play in the second Test here on Saturday.

Applauding Harbhajan Singh's competitive streak despite being under pressure, Ganguly said the off-spinner has shown his class by not letting the incident affect his on-field performance.

"He's a competitor, he's got a lot of quality in him, quality players will always produce their best under pressure," Ganguly said.

Harbhajan picked up just one wicket but it was the prized scalp of Australian skipper Ricky Ponting. His celebration took everyone by surprise, running towards the pavilion, hand held high and then doing a couple of somersaults in front of the members' stand.

"Good that he stayed on the ground. For a second I thought he was going inside the dressing room!" said Ganguly to the utter merriment of the assembled media.

Meanwhile, ICC on Saturday roped in reputed British lawyer Nigel Peters to advise match referee Mike Procter during the disciplinary hearing against the Indian off-spinner here Sunday.

Peters, who is currently in the city, will advise Procter and the two teams -- India and Australia -- on procedural matters during the hearing.

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Sachin's script written

CRICINFO, undated

The script was almost written the moment he played on after making 62 in Melbourne when he appeared set for a big hundred.

The disappointment was etched on his face and the anguish immediately consigned to the memory bank, ready for redemption next time around.

Great players give away telltale signs that they are in the zone and with both Lara and Tendulkar they pay extra attention to their defensive techniques before launching into their strokeplay.

I sensed Tendulkar knew the moment was upon him when he came to the crease and when he executed a perfectly balanced and watertight front foot defence.

This was an exquisitely paced innings where he used his enormous experience to evaluate the requirements of each partnership, beginning with a supporting role alongside the in-form Ganguly, before showing faith in Harbhajan

and Sharma encouraging their talents by giving them the strike and exposing them to the bowling, rather than sheltering and eroding their confidence.

Tendulkar doesn't possess a big backlift which reduces the chances of a technical glitch and ensures his blade, which is 10 per cent heavier than the average comes through straight with more than enough power to pierce the gaps.

He is by far and away the best judge of a run in the Indian line-up, constantly on the prowl to steal singles and forever asking questions of the outfielders.

Quite simply he is the complete package and hell bent on making his final visit to Australia an unforgettable one.

Quality pitches produce quality matches and if the weather holds off we are in for something special.

Both teams have an opportunity to win if they can dominate two of the remaining six sessions of play.

It has been a match of fluctuating fortunes, highlighted by two heroic partnerships involving lower order batsman, illustrating how true this pitch is and a sign that

the sun in conjunction with the heavy roller has binned the surface and that the expected crumbling of the soil may not be as significant as usual.

If this match is to be won it will take a special performance from one or two individuals with India turning to their spin duo Harbhajan and Kumble whose opposing styles and skill sets complement each other and examine the techniques of batsman, especially if the pitch begins to show any variations in bounce.

Their past records suggest they have the arsenal to bowl out Australia while Australia will turn to Lee who is in career best form, swinging the ball away from the right-handers and Hogg who continues to improve each time he enters the fray, with a flipper in the mould of Warne and a wrong un that only Tendulkar has detected, appear most likely to be the match-winners.

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Ponting's biggest punt

CRICINFO, undated

Ricky Ponting will need to take a big risk if Australia are to equal the world record of 16 consecutive wins. The mark set by Steve Waugh does not bother Ponting, who refuses to be swayed by statistics, but winning matters a lot to him.

India's impressive first innings has shorn Ponting of time, which has been one of his greatest assets since the drawn match against South Africa in 2005-06. Now he has to dictate proceedings with a declaration that has many consequences.

A victory would retain the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, continue the streak and evaporate the confidence gained by the tourists over the first four days. If India overcome the total set by Ponting suddenly the series is level and the captain will have lost his fourth Test in 40 games. The disruptions caused by rain and bad light on Saturday, which cut 12 overs from the day, did not help Australia's

momentum and a draw remains the most likely result even though play will start half an hour early on the final day.

Australia will begin with a lead of 213 that was secured by Matthew Hayden's 123 and Michael Hussey's 87 not out. Ponting's dilemma over how many runs to set India is an unusual one for him. For most of his rule there have been a couple of days to dismiss his opponents rather than the limited opportunities that will be available on day five. This time he has to weigh up his tunnel-vision for victory with the reality of miscalculating a total and suffering defeat. A target of 320 would probably be out of India's reach, but 270 over two and a bit sessions might be enticing. It's a tricky call.

The next Test starts in Perth on January 16 and Australia will be confident of a quick success if the pitch delivers the same steep bounce that was a feature of Australia's Twenty20 victory over New Zealand last month. India's discomfort against the short ball

will be on display and the series is likely to be decided there if the home side's fast bowlers perform. It could be a reason for Ponting to play it safe in Sydney.

During one of the handful of rain breaks a video of Waugh's unbeaten run from 1999-2001 was shown to entertain the remaining spectators. It could have stirred the Australians as they sheltered in the dressing room. They spoke about the record only once in the lead-up to the game -- Ponting told them to ignore it and concentrate on this match -- but it must be hard to avoid getting excited by the chance to equal a world mark.

The sense of history and the push for new limits was a feature of the partnership between Waugh and the coach John Buchanan. Buchanan was overseeing the team for the first 12 victories of this streak, but his replacement Tim Nielsen does not motivate the players with the same sort of carrots. When the declaration comes it will be Ponting's decision and it will show how much he is willing to gamble on victory.

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SA level

FROM PAGE 17

South African opening batsman Neil McKenzie joined the match's growing casualty list when it was announced he had suffered a torn right calf muscle while fielding Friday and would be out of action for between four and six weeks.

It was not known whether he would be able to bat but because he was off the field for most of the second innings he would be unable to open and would have to bat at number seven.

SCOREBOARD

Final scorecard of the second Test between South Africa and the West Indies at Newlands in Cape Town on Saturday:

WEST INDIES: First innings 243

SOUTH AFRICA: First innings 321

WEST INDIES: Second innings (overnight 96-4)

Ganga b Ntini 22

Ramdin c Boucher b Kallis 32

Morton c Boucher b Steyn 18

Samuels lbw b Nel 1

Chanderpaul not out 70

Gayle c Harris b Steyn 38

Bravo c Smith b Nel 12

Lewis c Amla b Harris 1

Taylor c Kallis b Steyn 21

Title tilts to north

FROM PAGE 17

out on 40 and Riyad accompanied him with 31 before balls were drawn for the day.

KHULNA-BARISAL

The lower-order batsmen's small but notable contributions helped Barisal take a much-needed first innings lead as well as manage a batting point when they were all out for 217 after resuming the day on 62-3.

Aslam Khan, Jamaluddin Babu and Murad Khan claimed three wickets each but it was not good enough for the home side to save themselves from the deficit.

Nasiruddin Faruque top scored 44 off 86 balls with the help of five boundaries.

Khulna got off a poor start in their second innings when Talha Jubair removed Imrul Kayes for a duck but Nazmus Sadat and Mostafizur Rahman added 57 from the second wicket to repair some damage.

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by occasional off-spinner Abul Bashar for 32 while Mostafizur remained not out on 31.

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