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Did U Know?

Lleyton Hewitt was the youngest male to ever be ranked No. 1 in the world, holding the title at the age of 20 in 2001. The fiery Australian has two Grand Slam titles to his name with triumphs in the 2001 US Open and 2002 Wimbledon Championships.



Rafa Benitez

(Liverpool manager)
"It's very clear. I love the club, I love the fans, I want to stay. I have two more years on my contract and if I can stay for more will be really happy."



ESPN
Sportscentre India
Sports News
Live at 8:30pm

Procter in India's bad books

CRICINFO, undated

The Indian cricketers, especially the seniors, are said to be deeply dissatisfied with the manner in which Mike Procter handled the ICC hearing and with the official document on it that followed. Procter handed out a three-match ban to Harbhajan Singh, saying he was sure "beyond reasonable doubt" that a racist taunt had been directed at Andrew Symonds, but the Indians have claimed the document was extremely flimsy.

The bit that has especially offended them is a line in the document which says, "I believe that one group was telling the truth". The players felt Procter had alleged they were lying and they didn't think there was any fairness to the verdict. According to the players, the wording in the two-page document was ambiguous and left a scope for counter questions.

The players, according to a member of the side, were also "very upset" with the "rough" manner in which they were treated during the hearing. The hearing, conducted by ICC match referee Mike Procter (assisted by English lawyer Nigel Peters), lasted well over four hours and discussed the two offensive terms "monkey" and "chicken".

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Hogg hearing before 3rd Test

PTI, Melbourne

The Indian complaint against Australian spinner Brad Hogg for allegedly abusing Anil Kumble and Mahendra Singh Dhoni during the Sydney cricket Test will come up for hearing before match referee Mike Procter prior to the third match in Perth.

International Cricket Council CEO Malcolm Speed Tuesday said the chinaman bowler will appear before Procter ahead of the Perth match which starts January 16.

Hogg was accused by the Indians of abusing skipper Kumble and Dhoni during the final day of the second Test against Australia.

The accusation came after the Australians lodged a racial abuse complaint against Harbhajan Singh, which led to a three-match ban on the off-spinner.

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Dhaka take 2nd place

SPORTS REPORTER

An unbeaten hundred from Imrul Kayes guided Khulna to finish their campaign in style while Dhaka completed with a consolation victory to secure the runners-up trophy in the 9th National Cricket League one-day competition yesterday.

Rajshahi sealed the one-day title with two rounds in hand and therefore the interest was only left for the second position. By winning their respective last round matches, four-day champions Khulna and Dhaka finished with 12 points each but the latter had better net run-rate to snatch the spot.

Dhaka might have lost supremacy in both versions of the game but they ended it with a winning note -- 51-run victory against Rajshahi after a three-wicket success in the four-day game at the Mirpur Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium.

POINTS TABLE (ONE-DAY)

Team	M	W	L	T	Total
Rajshahi	10	7	3	0	14
Dhaka	10	6	4	0	12
Khulna	10	6	4	0	12
Sylhet	10	4	6	0	8
Bansal	10	4	6	0	8
Chittagong	10	3	7	0	6

Stadium. Khulna also finished on a satisfactory note after winning both their last round matches after a seven-wicket victory against Barisal at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Flight Lieutenant Matiur Rahman Stadium in Khulna.

Bottom-side Chittagong also finished with double success against Sylhet as they won the one-day game by seven wickets at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium.

DHAKA-RAJSHAHI

Anwar Hossain and Mahmudullah Riyad slammed half-centuries and shared 88 runs for the fourth wicket as Dhaka recovered from an early hiccup to put up a challenging 254-8 on the board after deciding to bat first.

But it was dashing Nazmul Hossain Milon who made it possible through a typically smashing 31-ball 42 that contained three sixes and a four while Nadif Chowdhury chipped in with 34.

ROLL OF HONOUR

Year	Champions	Runners-up
2001-2002	Sylhet	Chittagong
2002-2003	Dhaka	Khulna
2003-2004	Chittagong	Rajshahi
2004-2005	Rajshahi	Sylhet
2005-2006	Rajshahi	Dhaka
2006-2007	Dhaka	Rajshahi
2007-2008	Rajshahi	Dhaka

with the help of two sixes.

Man-of-the-match Anwar made 65 off 91 deliveries that featured six fours while Riyad added 52 off 82 balls that saw three fours.

Left-arm spinner Saqlain Sajib took four wickets.

In reply, Rajshahi were bundled out for 203 in 48.5 overs. Mohammad Rafique was the most successful bowler with three wickets for 29.

KHULNA-BARISAL

Rokibul Hasan hit his maiden one-day ton but his blazing knock was not good enough for Barisal to finish the campaign with a victory as Imrul Kayes gave a fitting reply for the home team.

Kayes struck eleven fours and four sixes to make his second hundred during a 151-ball 133 and involved in an unbeaten 168-run fourth wicket stand with Sahagor Hossain (75) as Khulna raced to 268-3 in reply to Barisal's 265.

Earlier Rokibul smashed nine fours and three sixes during his 131-ball 133 as Barisal scored a fighting total.

CHITTAGONG-SYLHET

An unbroken 133-run fourth wicket stand between Faisal Hossain and Dhiman Ghosh helped Chittagong to score 202 for three in reply to Sylhet's 198.

Left-handed Faisal made 71 off 77 balls that included nine fours and

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Dhaka batsman Mahmudullah Riyad misses an attempted flick as Rajshahi wicketkeeper Rabiul Karim gets in line to collect the ball during their National Cricket League one-day match at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

Under-19s lose in final

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh under-19 team conceded a massive 137-run loss to India under-19 in the tri-series final at Sinovich Park in Pretoria yesterday.

India posted 260-8 in their stipulated 50 overs after having elected to bat first and then proceeded to bowl out the young Tigers for 123 runs in 37.3 overs. The final loss was the third in a row to the same opponent in the tournament.

Right-arm off-spinner Mahmudul-Hasan bowled the best spell for Bangladesh, picking up three wickets for 29 in ten tight overs. He was aided by paceman Suvashish Roy, who took two for 55. For India, Sourav Tiwari struck 74 while Manish Pandey added 72.

The youth side were off to a good start but once Mithun Ali fell for a quickfire 27 off 37 balls, Bangladesh were never in the game.

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Zimbabwe will tour Pakistan

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan will host Zimbabwe for a five-match one-day series and a four-day game later this month, the Pakistan Cricket Board announced on Tuesday.

According to a revised itinerary, the Zimbabwean team will arrive in Pakistan on January 12 and will now play one four-day game and five one-day matches. A three-day match earlier scheduled was scrapped to shorten the tour.

The tourists will open the one-day series in Karachi instead of Hyderabad.

Victoria record biggest win

SPORTS REPORTER

Victoria Sporting Club recorded their first win in the Senior Division Football League when they handed a 3-1 defeat to Purbachal Parisdad at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

After a goalless draw against City Club in the opening round, the biggest victory in the league so far was shaped by a brace from Mithun and one goal from Polo.

Victoria, who dominated the first half, went ahead after nine minutes through Mithun. It cold have been 2-0 three minutes later but for Gafur's miss from one on one.

Polo added the second for Victoria in the 26th minute from a penalty while Mithun scored his second in the 40th minute to seal the victory.

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Army brighten chance to reach final

SPORTS REPORTER

BKSP suffered a huge blow in the Dhaka Bank Victory Day Hockey tournament when they went down 2-1 to Bangladesh Army in yesterday's league match at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium.

Both the teams came level on nine points after four rounds and must win their last encounters to stay alive for a place in Saturday's final.

Army, who lost 3-0 to fable-toppers Sonali Bank -- who have 12 points after winning all four matches -- bounced back in the race with Didar putting them ahead after 15 minutes.

BKSP equalised through Jamil Bin Talib 12 minutes later but Sanwar's

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A long, dark history

AFP, New Delhi

India's acrimonious tour of Australia is the latest episode in a continuing face-off between cricket's strongest team on the field and the most powerful offit.

The rivalry has provided fascinating and gripping cricket, but is also littered with controversy and bickering over umpiring, foul language, misbehaviour, mistrust and walkouts.

Former India captain Sunil Gavaskar, who heads the International Cricket Council's (ICC's) rule-making cricket committee, sparked the confrontation when he almost forfeited a Test match in Melbourne in 1981.

The opening batsman, angry at being given out leg-before by an Australian umpire off Dennis Lillee, ordered his batting partner Chetan Chauhan off the field as fans and commentators looked on aghast.

Only a timely intervention by the team manager, air force official Shahid Durrani, who rushed down the steps and ordered Chauhan -- the current Indian team manager -- to return to the middle, prevented a forfeit.

India and Australia were involved in only the second Test in history in Madras in 1986, but dubious umpiring and verbal duels marred a great match.

Allan Border's tourists returned to India the following year to win their first-ever World Cup but it was not

until nine years later, in 1996, that Australia played a Test in India again.

Indian fans were miffed when Australian cricketers blamed their defeat in the one-off Test at New Delhi's Ferozeshah Kotla ground in 1996 on the heavy pollution in the Indian capital.

India's brilliant come-from-behind victory in the home series in 2001 was marred by Australian captain Steve Waugh accusing his Indian counterpart Sourav Ganguly of "disrespect" for making him wait at the toss during the series.

India, who had lost the first Test in Mumbai early on the fourth day and were made to follow on 274 runs behind in the second at Kolkata, conjured a remarkable fightback in what is widely regarded as one of the best three-Test series ever played.

India not only won the Kolkata Test on the back of Venkatsai Laxman's magnificent 281 -- ending Australia's 16-match winning streak -- but also squeaked out a narrow win in the final Test in Chennai to win 2-1.

Spinner Harbhajan Singh, at the centre of the racism row on the current tour, ripped Australia apart with 32 wickets in the series, prompting Waugh to declare India as the "final frontier" for his championship.

Ganguly's men almost pulled off an incredible win in Waugh's last series in Australia in 2003, when they won the second Test in Adelaide, lost the third in Melbourne and fell four wickets short of taking the final match in

Sydney.

Ricky Ponting's men conquered Waugh's final frontier in 2005, but returned home angry when they were beaten in two days in the final Test in Mumbai on a dusty spinners' wicket.

Monkey chants greeted Australian batsman Andrew Symonds during the one-day series in India last year, prompting the tourists to accuse local crowds of racist comments against the star all-rounder.

Temperamental Indian fast bowler Shanthakumaran Sreesanth, who had heated exchanges with Australian batsmen during the series, was defended by teammates as only trying to "meet fire with fire."

The current tour was salvaged after the ICC removed controversial umpire Steve Bucknor from standing in the third Test in Perth from January 16, a demand the Indians had made.

The ICC also decided to appoint a code of conduct commissioner to adjudicate on India's appeal against match referee Mike Procter's decision to ban Harbhajan for alleged racist remarks against Symonds during the Sydney Test.

The ICC said Harbhajan will be allowed to play the final two Tests in Perth and Adelaide until the commissioner, who has yet to be named, had completed his inquiry. Cricket-mad India accounts for an estimated 70 percent of the game's revenues while Australia have been the dominant force in the game for more than a decade.



A surfer takes a photograph of Indian off-spinner Harbhajan Singh as he walks along Sydney's Bondi Beach on Tuesday.

Ponting must be fired

CRICKET

PETER ROEBUCK

Ricky Ponting must be sacked as captain of the Australian cricket team. If Cricket Australia cares a fig for the tarnished reputation of our national team on our national sport, it will not for a moment longer tolerate the sort of arrogant and abusive conduct seen from the captain and his senior players over the past few days. Beyond comparison it was the ugliest performance put up by an Australian side for 20 years. The only surprising part of it is that the Indians have not packed their bags and gone home. There is no justice for them in this country, not any more.

That the senior players in the Australian team are oblivious to the fury they raised among many followers of the game in this country and beyond merely confirms their own narrow and self-obsessed viewpoint. Doubtless they were not exposed to the messages that poured in from distressed enthusiasts aghast to see the scenes of bad sportsmanship and triumphalism presented at the SCG during and after the Test. Pained past players rang to express their disgust. It was a wretched and ill-mannered display and not to be endured from any side, let alone an international outfit representing a proud sporting nation.

Make no mistake, it is not only the reputation of these cricketers that has suffered. Australia itself has been embarrassed. The notion that Ponting can hereafter take the

Australian team to India is preposterous. He has shown not the slightest interest in the well-being of the game, not the slightest sign of diplomatic skills, not a single mark of respect for his accomplished and widely admired opponents.

Harbhajan Singh can be an irritating young man but he is head of a family and responsible for raising nine people. And all the Australian elders want to do is to hunt him from the game. Australian fieldsmen fire insults from the corners of their mouths, an intemperate Sikh warrior overreacts and his rudeness is seized upon. It might impress barrackroom lawyers.

In the past few days Ponting has presided over a performance that dragged the game into the pits. He turned a group of professional cricketers into a pack of wild dogs.

As much can be told from the conduct of his closest allies in the team. As usual, Matthew Hayden crossed himself upon reaching three figures in his commanding second innings, a gesture he does not perform while wearing the colours of his state. Exactly how he combines his faith with throwing his weight around on the field has long bemused opposing sides, whose fondness for him ran out a long time ago. Hayden has much better in him.

Michael Clarke also had a dreadful match but he is a young man and has time to rethink his outlook. That his mind was in disarray could be told from his batting. In the first innings he offered no shot to a straight ball and in the second he remained at the crease after giving an easy catch

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PRACTISING ON THE FIFTH DAY: Bangladesh opener Tamim Iqbal smacks a cover drive during practice at a ground adjacent to University Oval in Dunedin on Tuesday.