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Did U Know?

Sugar Ray Leonard won world titles in a record five different weight divisions from 1979 to 1988. These included the WBC welterweight, light middleweight, middleweight, super middleweight and light heavyweight titles.



Mike Hussey
(Australian batsman)
"My aim is to play as many Tests, one-day internationals and Twenty20 matches as possible for Australia and anything else that comes along will be a bonus. And no amount of money will cause me to think otherwise."
While joining the debate over Indian Premier League versus international cricket.



What to WATCH
STAR Cricket
ICC U-19 Cricket World Cup
West Indies v South Africa
Live from 7:55am
ESPN
Sportscentre India
Sports News
Live at 8:30pm

No Pepsi for Sourav, Rahul

PTI, New Delhi
The change of guard in Indian cricket team is reflecting in the endorsement market, with soft drinks major Pepsi deciding to drop Sourav Ganguly and Rahul Dravid as ambassadors while roping in youngsters Ishant Sharma and Rohit Sharma, in line with its brand identity.
As far as master blaster Sachin Tendulkar, who has been Pepsi's brand ambassador for a long time now, is concerned, the company is observing a silence.
"From time to time we review the list of stars and depending on situation and who we think is right, we pick and choose. In case of cricketers, Rohit Sharma and Ishant Sharma are surely in as they have the attitude and aggression reflecting Pepsi's brand image," PepsiCo India executive vice-president Sandeep Singh Arora told this news agency.
"If you talk about Rahul and Ganguly, they are not on the list now," Arora said.
While Ganguly and Dravid have been dropped from the one-day team, on Tendulkar who is a part of the team, Arora said, "It would be inappropriate to talk about him at this point of time."

SL Pakistan's second option

AFP, Colombo
Pakistan are looking to host Sri Lanka if Australia pull out of their scheduled tour of the violence-marred country next month, a report said Sunday.
A three-member Pakistan Cricket Board delegation visited Colombo to ask for Sri Lanka's consent to tour Pakistan and the matter was under consideration, privately-run the Nation newspaper said.
It quoted top Sri Lanka Cricket sources as saying that Sri Lanka had been asked to play either a five-match one-day series or a three-match Test series in Pakistan.
The Sri Lankans, currently touring Australia, are slated to visit

Captain defends Yuvraj Gavaskar angry at Patel's inclusion

AGENCIES, Adelaide
Yuvraj Singh may have squandered yet another chance to impress but his captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni insists he has not made any mistake by picking the out-of-form left-hander ahead of swashbuckling opener Virender Sehwag.
Going through a prolonged slump in form, Yuvraj yesterday contributed 26 and looked in discomfort before Brad Hogg removed him.
Talking to reporters after India lost the match against Australia by 50 runs, Dhoni said Swahag had not fully recovered from a back strain and he also made it clear that Yuvraj, despite his woeful form, would play in the remaining matches as well.
"Veeru was not fully fit. As for Yuvraj, he would be part of the team and play in all the games," Dhoni asserted.
Having declared Yuvraj to be his choice for the rest of the series, Dhoni proceeded to defend his dismissal as well.
"The shot was on. He had to punish the bad ball. The execution perhaps might have been incorrect but the intention was true," he said of his deputy.
He conceded his own dismissal was a crucial point in the match.
He said the batsmen let their bowlers down and was critical of their application, especially given

Locals pluck 8 Proteas

SPORTS REPORTER



Hashim Amla produced a stroke-filled hundred but the BCB XI took the honours against formidable South Africa on the first day of the three-day tour opener at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium yesterday.

South Africa returned on an early jolt to put 329 runs on board before stumps were drawn for the day.

But the encouraging news for the home side ahead of the first Test next week was that they picked up eight wickets on a pitch that favoured the batsmen unlike other venues across the country.

Graeme Smith won the toss and gleefully decided to bat first in an attempt to acclimatise themselves with the conditions as quickly as possible.

However, fit-again paceman Syed Rasel gave the BCB XI a great start by removing both openers -- Smith and JP Duminy -- with the scoreboard reading 35 for 2.

But the bearded right-hander, Amla, took away the early initiative of the home side before pacer Forhad Reza's late strike in a three-wicket haul ensured that the home team would leave the field with their

heads held high in front of a nearly four thousand cheering crowd.

Forhad, who looked ordinary in his first few spells, suddenly produced movement in the last session and was on a hatrick after removing AB De Villiers (39) and Johan Botha (0) in the last two deliveries of an over before Boucher dashed his hopes in the next over.

The pace bowler might have been the most successful on the first day, scalping six of the eight wickets to fall, but the Tigers will no doubt be encouraged to see the visiting batsmen's discomfort against the slow bowlers a fact they will look to exploit when the first Test starts at a slow and low wicket in Mirpur on February 22.

The successful batsman Amla, who struck 18 sweetly-timed boundaries including some eye-catching back-foot drives during his 120-ball 103, also admitted that it was not easy for them to bat once the slow bowlers came into action.

"It was nice that most of our top order batsmen got some runs in the first match of the tour and what I must say is that our purpose was served on the first day. But I must agree that it was not easy for us to bat against the slow bowlers," said the 24-year-old batsman, who is the first South African of Indian descent

to reach the national squad.

The most frustrating part for the home team was their poor fielding in the first session as they not only failed to stop the ball but also dropped three catches. Wicketkeeper Mushfiqur Rahim was the chief culprit as he dropped Jacques Kallis on naught off Rasel while Rajin Saleh failed to clutch Duminy off Sajidul Islam.

Kallis, who made 36 off 88 balls with the help of six fours and a six, survived on another occasion when he was on 17 as Zunaed Siddiqui grassed one at slip off left-arm spinner Enamul Haque, who ultimately managed to get rid of the right-hander.

Rasel, who had missed the entire New Zealand series because of his dislocated shoulder, however said that there was no scope to be disappointed with the ordinary fielding in the first session.

"It's part of the game. I rather want to focus on our bowling effort. We might have conceded too many runs in the end but you also have to consider the fast outfield here. I think our overall bowling performance was good and I am happy that I made a successful return after injury," said the left-arm pacer.

In his first assignment as a captain of any senior team, young

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2

India's woeful batting

AFP, Adelaide

India's batsmen imploded as Australia recorded an unlikely 50-run win in their tri-series match here Sunday.

After the Indian bowlers had done well to restrict Australia to 203 for nine on what looked a good batting wicket, the tourists were in control at 115 for four, but then collapsed against some disciplined bowling to be all out for 153 in the 42nd over.

The result handed Australia another bonus point, all but guaranteeing them a place in the tri-series finals.

India faltered early in the chase, losing three wickets for four runs to slump to 59 for four, but then captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni and

the previously out-of-form Yuvraj Singh steadied the innings.

The pair put on 56 and appeared to be doing it easily, but the match again turned when Yuvraj miscued with a loose Brad Hogg long-hop and was caught in the deep by Stuart Clark for 26.

It was a major setback for India and things got much worse when Dhoni, who was batting with a runner due to a cramp, was run out for 37 just 19 runs later.

A hesitant Rohit Sharma, running for Dhoni, was caught just out of his crease at the non-striker's end by a direct hit as India slumped to 134 for six.

Left-arm Mitchell Johnson bowled impressively to claim 3-42, all-rounder James Hopes did some early damage to bowl Australia back into the match and finished with 2-16, while Adam Gilchrist completed five dismissals.

India's batsmen were unable to

capitalise on the good work with the ball of Irfan Pathan (2-32) and Irfan Shant (4-41).

The Australian top-order again failed to fire, with captain Ricky Ponting's form woes continuing, and only a Michael Clarke half-century helped them set a competitive target after winning the toss and electing to bat.

Clarke, who had been in doubt for the match due to bruised ribs suffered when struck by a Lasith Malinga delivery on Friday, made 79 from 108 balls in a man-of-the-match performance, but lacked support until Hogg chipped in with 32 in a 72-run seventh-wicket stand.

Ponting came to the wicket with an obvious intent to get on top of the bowling with positive strokeplay, but the captain made just 10 before cutting the recalled Munaf Patel straight to Rohit Sharma at point.

It took Ponting's tally for the

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2



Australia vice-captain Michael Clarke (R) plays a lofted cover drive as India wicketkeeper Mehandra Singh Dhoni looks on during their tri-series one-day match in Adelaide yesterday.

Captain defends Yuvraj Gavaskar angry at Patel's inclusion

AGENCIES, Adelaide
Yuvraj Singh may have squandered yet another chance to impress but his captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni insists he has not made any mistake by picking the out-of-form left-hander ahead of swashbuckling opener Virender Sehwag.
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Having declared Yuvraj to be his choice for the rest of the series, Dhoni proceeded to defend his dismissal as well.
"The shot was on. He had to punish the bad ball. The execution perhaps might have been incorrect but the intention was true," he said of his deputy.
He conceded his own dismissal was a crucial point in the match.
He said the batsmen let their bowlers down and was critical of their application, especially given

they gambled on an extra bowler when Sehwag was ruled out.

"The bowlers did their job on a pitch that wasn't doing much," he said.

Dhoni, however, questioned the batsmen's ability to take responsibility and their shot selection as well.

"The batsmen needed to be more careful about their shot selection... Lack of patience could be one factor. Our batsmen failed, they need to stick to their style and play responsibly," Dhoni said.

"They have done it in bits and pieces but they need to get better," he added.

Meanwhile, a livid Sunil Gavaskar lashed out at seamer Munaf Patel for his lackadaisical attitude on the field and suggested

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5



Bangladesh left-arm swing bowler Syed Rasel (L) punches the air after having South Africa captain Graeme Smith (unseen) caught behind on the opening day of their three-day warmup match at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium yesterday. Rasel also had JP Duminy (R) in the same fashion to rock the Proteas top-order.

LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

West Bengal named their men's and women's football teams for the coping 2nd Indo-Bangladesh Bangla Games to begin in Dhaka on February 22.

Both the teams will play best of three series against their Bangladeshi counterparts during the five-day Games.

WB men's team: Sayan Roy, Saddam Hossain, Shanka Guha, Avijit Dey, Arijit Basak, Bhim Oraon, Shiva Mullick, Biswajit Acharya, Sajal Das, Amit Kumar Singh, Lal Rin Dika, Surojit Sardar, Sandip Barma, Kallol Pal, Arup Neogi, Tilak Saha, Dipankar Sarkar and Mithun Saha.

WB women's team: Ranjita Khan, Nanda Mondal, Aparna Sarkar, Dalia Mondal, Tuli Goon, Sabita Singh, Purnima Majhi, Mahua Das, Deepa Bera, Doli Adhikary, Soma Bera, Rosina Khatun, Silpi Deb, Kalpana Roy, Sraboni Boiragi, Anita Das, Mithu Pal and Aduri Khatun.

ABAHANI'S RECEPTION

Abahani will accord a reception to their successful teams in the last season on February 19 at the club premises. The football team will be in the limelight after lifting the title of the inaugural professional football league -- the B. League -- last year while the Premier cricket and hockey league champions will be honoured besides the triumphant women's table tennis team.

SCHOOL CRICKET
Gaibandha correspondent: Shahabullah Sarker High School thrashed Kanchipara Academy High School by 84 runs in the Standard Chartered Young Tigers

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

Murali averts dental loss

PTI, Melbourne

An emergency dental operation helped Sri Lankan off-spinner Muttiah Muralidaran retain his toothy smile, almost by the skin of his teeth.

The toothy tweaker from Sri Lanka had his front tooth knocked back while fielding during Friday's match against Australia at the Sydney Cricket Ground.

Away from public eyes, the Lankan was rushed to the St Vincent's Hospital where Sydney dentist Peter Foltyn, pressed into service when he was actually watching the match on television at home, completed the operation in under an hour to allow the cricketer returned to bat in the match.

"I was peeling potatoes when I got the call from the SCG," Foltyn was quoted as saying by the Daily Telegraph.

"It was fortunate that I was

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

Mohammedan crash out Abahani stay on top



SPORTS REPORTER

A five-wicket burst by paceman Ziaur Rahman put Abahani atop their group with an all-win record in the Premier Division Twenty20 Cricket League yesterday but their archrivals Mohammedan Sporting Club's miseries were extended when the defending champions crashed out of the competition following their third successive defeat.

Abahani all but confirmed a berth in the semifinals from Group A when they handed a four-wicket defeat to City Club at BKSP in the third round, thanks to captain Tushar Imran's run-a-ball 41 that saved the title contenders from a possible upset after Zia's heroics.

Zia bowled two maidens in his four overs to return with 5-12 as the

inserted City Club were bundled out for 76 in their last over. The seamer missed a hatrick after removing two rival batsmen in the first two deliveries of the fourth over of the match but he struck again in the final delivery as City lost three wickets on the total of 14.

Sirajullah with 26 and Rasheedul (16) were the only players to have reached the double-figure for City, who then had Abahani cornered after Shafiq Al Jabir's fiery opening spell of 3-11.

Having lost the first two wickets for four runs, Abahani ran into a further precarious position at 24-4 before Tushar captain's knock featuring five boundaries salvaged them. Man-of-the-match Zia again came handy with the bat, contributing 15 during an unbeaten 30-run stand with out-of-favour national star Tushar that took them to 78-6.

Biman regrouped after the

previous round's loss to Abahani when they joined Kalabagan at second place after a penultimate-ball victory against a depleted Mohammedan also at BKSP.

The leading cricketers' national duty took toll of Mohammedan, who failed to defend their 131-9, shaped by Rasheedul Haque's 33-ball 46.

Left-arm spinner Mosharraf Hossain, who was assaulted by Mohammedan fans during this year's transfer, had the last laugh by taking four rival wickets for 20 runs. Biman cruised to the target with 30-plus knockers from their top three, Arman Haidar (32) and ex-national openers Nafis Iqbal (32) and Javed Omar, who as unusually combative during his quickfire 32 off just 26 deliveries.

Kalabagan (147-8) also picked up their second win to stay in contention for a place in the last four

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

Favourites' fine start Bangladesh open campaign today



AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Holders Pakistan opened their bid for a third successive under-19 cricket World Cup title with a fluent eight-wicket demolition of hosts Malaysia in double-quick time here on Sunday.

Major rivals India, Australia and England also brushed aside lowly opponents in one-sided preliminary round matches on the first day of the 16-nation tournament.

India defeated Papua New Guinea, the East Asia-Pacific qualifiers, by 195 runs, Australia swamped Namibia by 149 runs and England swept aside Ireland by 10 wickets.

Pakistan, who won the last two editions of cricket's premier junior event, needed just one session to complete an easy win over Malaysia in a Group A match in Johor.

The hosts were bowled out for 75 by the 25th over after being given first strike with Adil Raza, a 16-year-old right-arm seamer from Gujranwala, taking 6-29 off his 10 overs.

Left-armer Mohammad Aamer chipped in with 3-11 as nine Malaysian batsmen failed to reach double figures on the easy-paced wicket.

Pakistan surpassed the modest target by the 10th over before the lunch break with Ahmad Shahzad making an unbeaten 27 and Umar Amin 31.

India, runners-up to Pakistan in the previous tournament in 2006, piled up 280-5 against Papua New Guinea, who managed only 85 in

SEE PAGE 18 COL 6



India's Shreevats Goswami plays a front-foot defensive shot on way to a fine 58 against Papua New Guinea in one of the four opening day matches of the ICC Under-19 World Cup in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.