



Indian superstar Sachin Tendulkar (C) stretches as he takes part in a training session along with his teammates at the MAC stadium in Chennai yesterday.

ICC for better behaviour

CRICINFO, undated

India's often ill-tempered tour of Australia, during which players from both sides were hauled up by match officials, has prompted the ICC to formally stress on the need to avoid "obscene, offensive or insulting language". A note, urging players to improve their behaviour, has been issued by the ICC chief executive, Malcolm Speed, and its general manager, David Richardson, to the captains of international teams, Elite Panel umpires and Referees and CEOs of Full Members.

"Recent events and, in particular, the series between Australia and India have highlighted the issue of 'sledding', the note said. "We seek your support in learning lessons from these issues and moving forward in a positive way."

It pointed to "several controversial incidents" on the field in international cricket which "originated from the use by players of language or gestures which are considered obscene, offensive or insulting."

The Indian board had proposed a ban on sledding when the ICC executive committee met in Kuala Lumpur in the third week of February.

The note also asked players to be more respectful towards fellow players, umpires and referees. "Players are asked to take their responsibility as role models seriously and to make an effort to improve their behaviour in this regard. Captains are requested to lead by example and to ensure that they keep tight control over the behaviour of their players. There is no question that international cricket must be played with intensity and with no quarter asked nor given but within the bounds of mutual respect and the spirit of the game."

The ICC also acknowledged that it was difficult to define what combination of words and gestures would be construed as offensive, and asked umpires to apply "a degree of individual interpretation and judgement" to determine whether a player's behaviour had fallen below acceptable standards.

Trent takes

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"There are also the demands on my time with work. I've now got a terrific job with Architectural Hardware, who have been fantastic with their support."

Johnston indicated that he was hoping to return to the Ireland fold later in the year.

"I do feel I've still got a lot to offer, particularly in the four-day format."

"I suppose I could still field in the slips, and I've been in good form with the bat, so could maybe concentrate on that aspect of my game more."

"I'll be sitting down with Phil Simmons this week and discussing my plans."

"I don't think I'm up to the strains of one-day cricket any more. These three one-day internationals in the space of five days have nearly killed me."

"It's only fair to give Phil a chance to build up a working relationship with William Porterfield now, rather than drop this on him in six months."

Johnston will continue to play domestic cricket in Leinster, where he is captain of Railway Union.

Fish stuns Federer

Tennis

AFP, Indian Wells

Mardy Fish pulled off a whale of an upset on Saturday, stunning world number one Roger Federer 6-3, 6-2 to reach the final of the ATP Masters Series Pacific Life Open.

Fish, ranked 98th in the world, needed just 63 minutes to roll past the Swiss superstar, who mustered just one break point and couldn't convert it.

The defeat leaves Federer still searching for his first tournament victory of 2008, the first time since 2000 that the 12-time Grand Slam champion has gone so far into a season without a title.

Fish sent a shock through the stadium-court crowd with his first break of Federer in the second game. He held for 3-0 and never looked back, taking the opening set in 39 minutes.

The American opened the second set with a break - firing a stinging service return on break point - and broke again in the fifth game for a 4-1 lead.

Federer fended off two match points against his own serve in the seventh game, but Fish took a 40-0 lead in the next game to give himself three more chances, and claimed the unlikely triumph when Federer netted a forehand.

Fish had lost all five of his previous encounters with Federer, winning just one set in the process.

"I've had a great record against him, always controlled matches against him," Federer said. "Today was different. He played great today, so congratulations. Fantastic."

Fish became the lowest-ranked player to beat Federer since then 101st-ranked Richard Gasquet of France beat him at Monte Carlo in 2005.

However, Federer said that was misleading, since Fish has been ranked as high as 17th in the world in March of 2004.

"We all know how good Mardy can be," Federer said.

While Fish had to battle through five tough rounds to reach the semifinals, Federer enjoyed a first-round bye and then advanced from the quarters on a walkover when his scheduled opponent, German Tommy Haas, withdrew with a sinus infection.

"I was a bit deflated yesterday," Federer said. "I was ready to play against Tommy. But that's not an excuse. Mardy played incredible."

Fish next faces Australian Open champion Novak Djokovic, who ousted defending champion Rafael Nadal 6-3, 6-2.

Djokovic, the third seed, turned the tables on the second-seeded Spaniard, who beat him in the final here last year.

Sunny blasts old firm

Cricket

REUTERS, Mumbai

England and Australia cannot come to terms with India's growing importance in world cricket, according to Sunil Gavaskar, the International Cricket Council's cricket committee chief.

"Gone are the days when two countries, England and Australia, had the veto power in international cricket, even though the dinosaurs, still trying to voice their prejudiced opinions in the media, may not open their eyes and see the reality," Gavaskar wrote in a syndicated newspaper column published on Sunday.

"The cricketing world has found that India has no longer a diffident voice in the international cricketing community, but a confident one that knows what is good for its cricket, and will strive to get it," the former India captain wrote.

"What may have worried these people was the manner in which India defended its player Harbhajan Singh on the 'racist' allegation made against him."

"When all the technology in the world was unable to prove that he had indeed said anything, these guys, especially those in Australia, having got so used to getting it their way, were unable to stomach it."

India lost the heated four-test series in Australia 2-1 but won the one-day tri-series after beating the hosts 2-0 in the finals.

India, the financial centre of the global game, is currently second in the ICC Test rankings.

After Indian board chief Sharad Pawar was awarded the ICC presidency for 2010, the shortlisting of Inderjit Bindra as a possible successor to Malcolm Speed as ICC chief executive did not go down well with the British and Australian press, Gavaskar added.

"As soon as Mr. Bindra's name was announced there were a flurry of

articles in England and Australia that giving him the job would put too much power in India's hands," he said.

The ICC, however, has selected South African Imtiaz Patel as its preferred candidate to take over as chief executive.

"Those worried of the prospect of India's hegemony were conveniently forgetting that only a few years back, there were two Australians at the top of the ICC."

"Once again, it is a misplaced belief that they are the only ones with honesty, integrity and have the welfare of the game at heart, while the 'subcontinentals' do not."

"Every controversy in international cricket has shown that no country has the monopoly on honesty and integrity, and so should not be looking down upon others."

"Still, it is a habit that is hard to get over, and so it is anathema to think that those who were the ruled can one day become the rulers."

Aussies near IPL go-ahead

CRICINFO, undated

Tim Nielsen, the Australia coach, wants a maximum of six days to prepare his squad before it leaves for the West Indies, which would allow the players signed with the Indian Premier League (IPL) to spend two weeks at the tournament. Nielsen is not concerned about the country's contract holders, including Andrew Symonds, Ricky Ponting and Brett Lee, taking part in the Twenty20 competition as long as they return in good shape.

The six-week IPL event begins on April 18 and a camp is likely to be held in the first week of May before Australia travel to the West Indies for Test and one-day series. "We're still working through the process with Cricket Australia, but I would expect the guys would have time to play in India," Nielsen said in the Sunday Mail. "So long as the guys turn up okay and ready to go and Cricket Australia finalises any issues with the IPL I can't see a problem."

If the plan goes ahead the IPL-aligned players will be able to earn about a third of their prices from the auction in India last month.

Symonds was bought for 1.35 million dollars while Brett Lee (900,000 dollars), Ricky Ponting (400,000 dollars), Matthew Hayden (375,000 dollars) and Michael Hussey (350,000 dollars) were also picked up.

Sidebottom sinks

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with Sidebottom caught by Matthew Bell at mid-off for 14, while in between the two Southie dismissals Chris Martin bowled Monty Panesar for one.

Southie returned an impressive five for 55 off 23.1 overs, the third best debut figures for a New Zealand bowler.

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard at close on the second day of the third and final Test between New Zealand and England at McLean Park on Sunday:

ENGLAND: First innings 253 (Pietersen 129, Broad 42; Southie 5-55, Patel 2-37, Martin 2-74)
NEW ZEALAND: First innings
How c Strauss b Sidebottom 44
Bell lbw b Sidebottom 0
Fleming c Collingwood b Sidebottom 59
Sinclair c Broad b Sidebottom 7
Taylor c Ambrose b Broad 2
Elliott c Ambrose b Sidebottom 6
McCullum b Sidebottom 9
Vettori c Cook b Sidebottom 14
Southie c Pietersen b Broad 5
Patel c Panesar b Broad 4
Martin not out 4
Extras: (lb-13, w-1) 14
Total: (All out in 48.4 overs) 168
Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-103, 3-116, 4-119, 5-119, 6-137, 7-138, 8-152, 9-164, 10-168.

Bowler O M R W
Sidebottom 21.4 6 47 7
Anderson 17 1 54 0
Broad 17 3 54 3
Panesar 1 1 0 0
Collingwood 2 2 0 0
ENGLAND: Second innings

Cook c McCullum b Patel 40
Vaughan c McCullum b Martin 4
Strauss not out 7
Pietersen not out 4
Extras: 0
Total: (For 2 wickets in 32 overs) 91

To bat: Bell, Collingwood, Ambrose, Broad, Sidebottom, Panesar, Anderson
Fall of wickets: 1-5, 2-77.

Bowler O M R W
Martin 6 2 23 1
Southie 6 3 18 0
Elliott 4 0 19 0
Patel 9 1 14 1
Vettori 7 0 17 0

MU maul

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meet Rooney's cross and settle any nerves that may have existed in the United side.

Unsurprisingly, the sending off then changed the dynamic of the game, and with a goal and a man to the good, United never really looked like letting the three points slip.

Further chances fell to Ronaldo, Rooney again and Carlos Tavez with his first touch after having been introduced with Nani in the 73rd minute, before Ronaldo headed the host's second to effectively seal the win.

Nani applied the icing on United's cake on 81 minutes, firing past Reina after latching onto a cute Rooney through pass. The result hammered a final nail into Liverpool's title hopes as their five-game winning streak was brought to an end.

LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

Kamol struck a late winner as Badda Jagarani defeated Jatrabari Kirta Chakra by a solitary goal in the super league of the Senior Division Football League at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Kamol separated the two sides after 83 minutes as Badda stayed above Jatrabari in the super six table.

In the relegation league, Agrani Bank blanked Wari Club 2-0 at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur Stadium with Chowmrin Rakhain scoring both the goals.

JFA CUP

The final of the 4th JFA Cup Under-15 Football Championship between Dhaka and BKSP will be held today at the Rajshahi Divisional Stadium.

Japan Football Association's representative Maksud Takahiro is expected to be present as special guest and will distribute gifts from the football's governing body in Japan, which has been sponsoring the event regularly.

UNBadds:

HANDBALL

The 17th Bata School Handball Tournament (Under-17 boys and girls) begins today at the Dhanmondi Women's Sports Complex.

ZD Hunts, managing director of Bata, will formally inaugurate the five-day meet sponsored by Bata, at 3pm.

Ten matches in the girls' group and five in boys' are billed for the opening day.

A total of 32 metropolitan schools, including 15 from girls, split into four groups will participate in the tournament.

Later, the top team from each group will participate in the semifinals on March 28. The final will be held on March 29.

Of the total budget of Tk 3.30 lakh, Bata will provide Tk 2.52 lakh for holding the tournament.

Tournament committee secretary Khalekuzzaman Swapan disclosed the details at a press conference at the National Sports Council (NSC) conference room yesterday.

MA Kader, marketing manager of Bata, Nurul Islam, deputy general secretary of Bangladesh Handball Federation and Hamida Begum, tournament committee chairman, were also present.

HOCKEY

Old Dhaka Hockey Association brushed aside Bangladesh Navy 7-0 in the Dhaka Bank Independence Day Hockey Tournament played at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium.

Maksud Alam Habul struck three and his national teammate Russell Mahmud Jimmy netted twice while Rashed Hasan Ronny and Mahbubul Ehsan Rana scored one each for the winners, who led the first half 3-0.

In the day's other match, Sepahi Para SC outplayed Police AC 7-1.

Ashrafur Islam Shishu struck four goals, Krishna, Shahjahan and skipper Rajan netted one each for the winners while Nannu scored the face-saving goal for the losers.

Pak-SL series under threat

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's proposed series of one-day internationals against Pakistan next month is in jeopardy due to a clash of dates with the cash-rich Indian Premier League.

Sri Lanka had offered to play in the short series following a pullout by Australia from a full tour of Pakistan in March-April due to security concerns.

But the dates of the series -- from April 23 to May 5 -- are in direct clash with the inaugural Twenty20 league, to be played over 44 days at various venues in India from April 18 to June 1.

The lure of playing in the cash-rich IPL ahead of the Pakistan series could prompt top Sri Lankan players to shun their national colours, media reports said Sunday.

Captain Mahela Jayawardene, key batsman Kumar Sangakkara and spin wizard Muttiah Muralidaran are among a host of Sri Lankan players contracted to play in the IPL.

Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC), the governing body for the sport here, would be helpless to prevent the players from playing in the league as they are currently bound only by the West Indies tour contract, The Nation reported.

It said the players, currently in the West Indies to play two Tests and three one-day internationals, had deliberated at length over the clash.

Issa leaves

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have 18 paid well. The rest of the stick wielders will find it difficult to find a decent living for the season and the players' plea for increasing the pool quota to seven fell to deaf ears as the federation, which originally had fixed the quota to five, decided to stop at six.

'I'm not Sanath'

Cricket

AFP, Providence

Malinda Warnapura feels he has a long way to go before anyone can put his name in the same bracket with Sanath Jayasuriya.

The left-hander was speaking after he collected his maiden Test hundred against West Indies on the opening day of the opening Test at the Guyana National Stadium.

Warnapura made 120 playing in his third Test to lead Sri Lanka to 269 for four in their first innings when stumps were drawn, after they chose to bat in ideal conditions.

The retirements of Jayasuriya and Marvan Atapattu have left vacant spots at the top of the Sri Lanka batting line-up, and Warnapura is the latest choice of the national selection committee to try and fill the void.

"I don't feel any pressure from the expectations that I can replace

Sanath Jayasuriya," Warnapura told reporters after the day's play.

"I am not Sanath Jayasuriya. I am only a player who has been given an opportunity, and I will have to take the chance and prove that I am good enough to play for Sri Lanka."

The 28-year-old Warnapura believes that the Sri Lankans' good fortune of having to play their only warm-up match prior to the Test at the National Stadium worked in his favour.

Warnapura entered the match in a rich vein of form with the benefit of retiring-out in both innings of the match, against a West Indies Select XI for scores of 132 and 50.

"I think it helped us a lot to adjust to the conditions," he said. "It was much easier batting against the new ball on this pitch, since it was coming out to the batsmen nicely."

"But once the ball got old, the pitch became a lot slower, and it was much more difficult to play your strokes."

"It was the same thing when we

played the three-day game, so I knew it was going to be slow, and I just had to be patient."

Warnapura, a nephew of former Sri Lanka batsman Bandura Warnapura, felt his knock was vital since it gave him a strong start to the series.

"It was the responsibility of each one of us to bat through the innings whichever one of us got to 60 or 70, and I think I did well to achieve this goal," he said.

"We had a game plan to not lose more than two wickets a session, and I think we did well, since we batted through the first session without losing a wicket, and we only lost one wicket in the second session which was good."

"Unfortunately, we lost three wickets in the last session, and I think that was the only thing that went wrong. But we are looking alright at the end of the day."

Sri Lanka are aiming to win their first Test match in the Caribbean having lost two and drawn two of their previous four.

Malinda's lone battle

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In the same over, Dilshan almost played a delivery into his stumps, but he and Jayawardene soon regained their composure and saw Sri Lanka through to the close without further damage.

Taylor was the most successful West Indies bowler with three wickets for 59 runs from 10 overs.

Earlier, Warnapura reached his milestone, when he cut his 182nd ball from West Indies captain Chris Gayle for a single to backward point.

But he was fortunate on 95, when Dwayne Bravo dropped him at slip, after he top-edged a cut at a delivery from Gayle that turned and bounce sharply.

The 28-year-old Warnapura entered the Test in a rich vein of form, after retiring-out in both innings of Sri Lanka's only warm-up prior to the Test against a West Indies Select XI for scores of 132 and 50.

Following the retirement of Sanath Jayasuriya and Marvan Atapattu, a void has been left at the top of the Sri Lanka batting line-up, and Warnapura gave evidence that

he could adequately fill the role of opening the innings.

He shared a record-breaking opening stand of 130 with Michael Vandort, whose knock of 52 ended when he was adjudged lbw to Jerome Taylor in the first hour after lunch.

Vandort struck seven boundaries from 117 balls in 2-3/4 hours before he played back and across to a full-length delivery from Taylor.

His stand with Warnapura eclipsed the 126 -- unbroken -- shared between Atapattu and Jayasuriya four years ago at the Beausejour Stadium in the Caribbean island of St. Lucia.

Sangakkara came to the crease, and the runs continued to flow for the Sri Lankans, as he looked to lay the groundwork for a significant innings and Warnapura continued to dig in.

Before lunch, Warnapura drove Benn through cover off the back-foot for two to reach his 50 and helped catapult Sri Lanka to 85 without loss at the interval.

The closest Warnapura and Vandort came to gifting West Indies a wicket was, when Benn had a

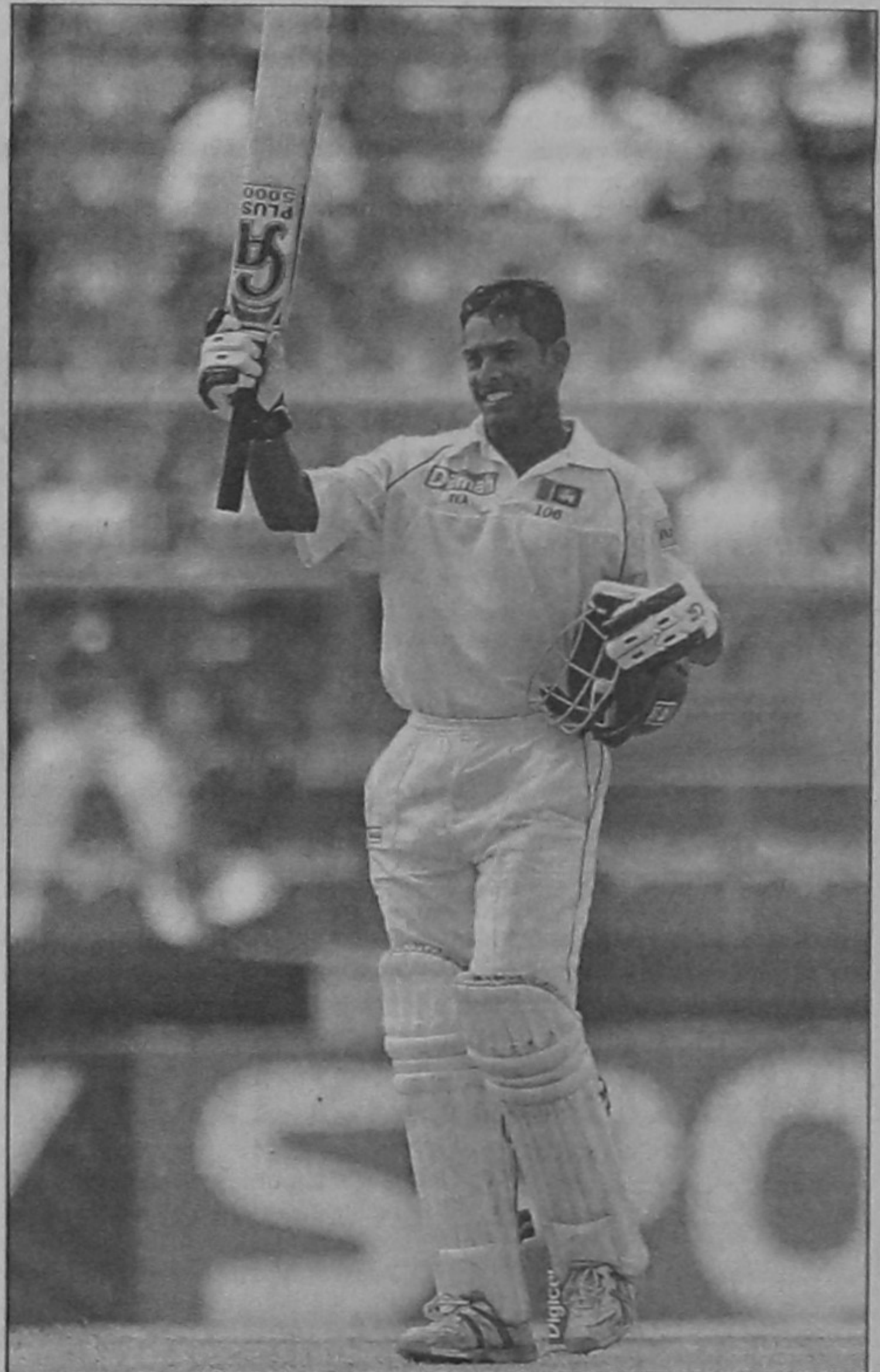


PHOTO: AFP

Young Sri Lankan opener Malinda Warnapura celebrates his maiden Test century during the opening day of the first Test against the West Indies in Georgetown on Saturday.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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5 Marry	money	22 Resistance	units
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14 Medal	47 Charged	7 Caused	27 Lan-
earner	49 Notion	8 Lidded	box
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ing	55 History	39 Eats in	style
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your life?	30 Grown-up	48 "—	Town"

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