



Sri Lanka pacer Nuwan Kulasekara celebrates one of his five wickets during the third ODI against Australia at the Gabba in Brisbane yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

SL edge low-scoring affair

Cricket

AFP, Brisbane

Sri Lanka found prodigious swing Friday to shoot out Australia for 74 runs, their lowest one-day international total in 27 years, and take a 2-1 lead in the series.

The tourists also swung their bats at everything Australia threw at them, missing frequently and losing six wickets before struggling to 75, in a bizarre match that ended with thirty overs to spare.

Mitchell Johnson led Australia's riposte with three wickets for 11 runs off just three overs.

But the hosts put down three catches and fumbled a clear runout chance to forego any real hope of defending such a low total.

They did manage to make it tough for the tourists though.

Sri Lankan captain Mahela Jayawardene scored just one, caught brilliantly by David Warner at backward point off Clint McKay in the first over.

Lahiru Thirimanne, who made a maiden century in Adelaide on Sunday, was out for seven from a Johnson delivery that Warner snatched out of the air.

Angelo Mathews went first ball caught Mitchell Starc again off Johnson. Upal Tharanga battled to 12 before Starc had him caught by Michael Clarke and Jeevan Mendis soon top edged the same bowler to McKay for two.

It was replacement wicketkeeper Kushal Perera, showing great poise and power with the ball zipping around, who found the boundaries after tea to ensure victory.

The youngster was not out 22, the same total as

Dilshan who rode his luck before edging Johnson to Clarke in the slips with the score on 33.

Player-of-the match Nuwan Kulasekara did the damage for Sri Lanka taking five wickets for 22 and Lasith Malinga picked up three for 14.

Skipper Clarke won the toss and decided to bat on what he called "a really good wicket". The next match is at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Sunday and the final game is in Hobart on Wednesday.

SCOREBOARD

AUSTRALIA	
Warner c Eranga b Mathews	4
Hughes c Jayawardene b Kulasekara	3
Clarke b Kulasekara	9
D Hussey c K Perera b Kulasekara	4
Bailey lbw Kulasekara	0
Wade c Dilshan b Malinga	8
Henriques b Kulasekara	2
Johnson b Malinga	2
Starc not out	22
McKay c K Perera b Malinga	0
Doherty c Mendis b Eranga	15

Extras: (lb-2, w-3) 5
Total: (All out in 26.4 overs) 74
Fall of wickets: 1-4, 2-13, 3-21, 4-21, 5-28, 6-30, 7-35, 8-38, 9-40.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Mathews	4	0	10	1
Kulasekara	10	2	22	5
Malinga	7	2	14	3
T Perera	3	0	14	0
Eranga	2.4	0	12	1

SRI LANKA	
Jayawardene c Warner b McKay	1
Dilshan c Clarke b Johnson	22
Thirimanne c Warner b Johnson	7
Perera not out	22
Mathews c Starc b Johnson	0
Tharanga c Clarke b Starc	12
Mendis c McKay b Starc	2
Perera not out	4
Extras: (lb-1, nb-1, w-3)	5
Total: (For six wks in 20 overs)	75
Did not bat: Kulasekara, Malinga, Eranga.	

Bowler	O	M	R	W
McKay	8	0	31	1
Starc	7	0	25	2
Johnson	3	0	11	3
Henriques	2	0	7	0
Result: Sri Lanka won by four wickets				

Div I cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Eskaton Sabuj Shangha posted a massive nine-wicket victory over Bangladesh Boys Club in the Super League match of the First Division Cricket League at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium yesterday.

In the day's other match, Arif Reza hit 74 as City Club scored a comfortable seven-wicket victory over Orient Sporting Club at the Jahangirnagar University ground.

SCORES IN BRIEF BANGLADESH BOYS

CLUB: 94 all out in 36.3 overs (Fazle Nayem 27; Sarfaraj Alam 3-25, Abu Bakkar 2-17, Mustafizur Rahman 2-13)
ESKATON SABUJ SHANGHA: 98-1 in 25.1 overs (Hasanuzzaman 65; Nuruzzaman Masum 1-23)
Result: Eskaton Sabuj Shangha won by nine wickets.

ORIENT SPORTING CLUB

CLUB: 126 all out in 47.1 overs (Shahadat Hossain 34; Mohaiminul 2-10, Hasibur 2-11)
CITY CLUB: 128-3 in 26.4 overs (Arif Reza 74, Ashish Bappy 44; Hossain Babu 2-26)
Result: City Club won by seven wickets.

Novak, Maria

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found time to play some exhibition-style points with Stepanek but still kept enough focus to win 6-4, 6-3, 7-5.

BCB refutes PCB

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under their respective jurisdiction who were interested in participating in the 2nd edition of BPL T20.

"The subsequent player auction, in which a good number of Pakistani players were bid for and picked up by different franchises, received worldwide media coverage. At no point during the continuous communication between the BCB and PCB on various matters since the BPL 2013 auction on 20 December 2012 did the PCB raise any concern about the NOC issue until 16 January 2013," the statement continued.

"This last-minute stance of the PCB of denying permission to its players to participate in the BPL therefore came as a complete surprise and left the BCB, the organisers of the BPL and the Franchises facing a difficult and embarrassing situation," it added.

BCB also pointed out that the history of cooperation between them is not unilateral.

"Bangladesh played a significant role in the resumption of international cricket in Pakistan following the Australian team's refusal to play there due to concerns over security in March 2008. It was the BCB which showed confidence in Pakistan and sent the national team there in April 2008 to play five ODIs and a T20i. The BCB also opened its doors to the Pakistani cricketers in the first edition of the BPL and the players were immensely benefited

Russel win

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Emily and Mithun Chowdhury were denied by Al Amin.

Sheikh Russel could have left the field with a bigger win had three shots --- two from Tareq and one from Rezaul Karim --- not come off the crosspiece.

"It is pleasing to end the first leg on top position even though our nearest rivals Sheikh Jamal and Abahani have a match in their hands," Sheikh Russel coach Maruful Haq said over the phone.

But the coach was worried about refereeing in crucial second leg matches as he believes a couple of groups might be active against them.

Feni Soccer coach Mahmudul Haque Liton said that his relatively immature players played comparatively well against Sheikh Russel but could not overcome their experience and quality.

Liton however promised to put on better show in the second leg as they are all set to include two to three foreign recruits.

AFC U-14 C'SHIP Preliminary squad named

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday picked up a 30-member preliminary squad for the AFC U-14 Women's Championship which will be held in Sri Lanka from March 5 to 9.

Ahead of the competition, the BFF will arrange a residential camp from Sunday and the selected players have been requested to report to chief coach Abdur Razzak.

Treble beckons Shapla

SPORTS REPORTER

Shapla-Javed pair of Narayanan clinched the title of mixed doubles in the Qubee 32nd National Badminton Championships beating same team's Nabila-Hannan pair by 21-18, 21-15 points in the final at the Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Indoor Stadium yesterday.

Shapla, the defending champion in women's singles, was on her way to a probable treble as shuttler from Narayanan was scheduled to play against Sima of Chittagong in the women's singles final last night.

Shapla, pairing with Rehana, also ensured the final of women's doubles after beating Bristi-Irina pair in 2-0 sets and set up today's final against Sima-Akhi pair of Chittagong who defeated Anamika-Liza pair of Munshighanj 2-0 to move into the final.

Royals make

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By the end of the first 10 overs they had lost 6 wickets with just 64 runs on board.

The majority of Barisal's batsmen lost their wickets after reaching double figures. Afghanistan's Mohammad Nabi and Suhrawardi Shuvo shared five wickets between them as they wrecked havoc in Barisal's middle order.

Kabir Ali was the only batsman who seemed comfortable against Sylhet's bowling line up as he smacked a 21-ball 50 towards the end of the innings. His quick fire half-century included four sixes and four fours.

SCORES IN BRIEF SYLHET ROYALS:

175 for 7 in 20 overs (Stirling 50, Mominul 45; Kapali 2-20, Kaabir 2-38) v BARISAL BURNERS 142 for 9 in 20 overs (Kabir Ali 50; Suhrawardi 3-23, Mohammad Nabi 2-15). Result: Sylhet won by 33 runs.

'One big lie'

Cycling

AFP, Los Angeles

Disgraced cycling legend Lance Armstrong's fierce defence of his record finally collapsed Thursday as he admitted that his seven Tour de France titles were fuelled by an array of drugs.

"I made my decisions. They're my mistake," Armstrong told US talk show host Oprah Winfrey, in his first interview since he was stripped of his record yellow jersey haul and banned from sport for life late last year.

"And I'm sitting here today to acknowledge that and to say I'm sorry for that," said Armstrong, who kept any emotions in check as he described years of cheating, lying, and attacking those who had the temerity to doubt him.

"I view this situation as one big lie that I repeated a lot of times," he said.

"Certainly, I'm a flawed character," said Armstrong, who was once revered as a cancer survivor who beat the odds to succeed on cycling's greatest stage, and then used his fame to help others fighting the disease.

"It's just this mythic, perfect story," he said. "And it wasn't true."

Winfrey's interview opened with a rapid-fire series of "yes" or "no" questions that saw Armstrong admit with terse "yes" answers to using the blood-booster EPO, blood-doping transfusions, testosterone and human growth hormone.

All were listed by the US Anti-Doping Agency in the damning report on which it based the 41-year-old American's life ban and the loss of all his cycling achievements since August 1998.

Armstrong confirmed details contained in the report such as the existence of the shadowy courier known as "Motoman" who delivered EPO to riders.

But he took issue with other USADA assertions, saying he didn't believe the doping program on the US Postal Service team was the biggest in the history of sport, and that it couldn't compare to the state-sponsored doping program in the former East Germany, for example.

He denied that the International Cycling Union (UCI) covered up a positive drug test from the 2001 Tour of Switzerland, and he denied that he

used banned drugs when he returned from retirement and raced in the 2009 and 2010 Tours de France.

For many of his admissions, Armstrong related the justifications he made to himself, saying that in the years that he won the Tour from 1999-2005, he did not believe it was possible to capture cycling's greatest race without doping.

Back then, Armstrong said, he didn't even think of himself as cheating. He didn't feel he was doing something wrong.

"Scary," said Armstrong, who went so far as to look up the definition of "cheating" in the dictionary.

"And the definition is to gain an advantage on a rival or foe," he said. "I didn't view it that way. I viewed it as a level playing field."

He described his favored "cocktail" of EPO, blood transfusions and testosterone, recalling that at the time he told himself that his history of testicular cancer somehow justified it.

"All the fault and all the blame here falls on me," Armstrong said. "Whether it's fans or whether it's the media ... it just gets going and I lost myself in all that."

He admitted he bullied people who didn't go along with the "narrative" he constructed, and said some of those most hurt, such as former team-mate Frankie Andreu and his wife, Betsy, may never forgive him.

Asked by Winfrey about whether he'd sued a particular nay-sayer, he

said his camp sued so many people he couldn't even be sure.

Armstrong -- who was stripped of his 2000 Olympic bronze medal hours before the airing of the interview -- denied forcing team-mates to dope, but admitted that they may have felt pressure to follow his example.

Had he not come out of retirement in 2009, Armstrong said, he doubted anti-doping officials would have ever caught up with him.

He said he was worried when accusations against him by former team-mate Floyd Landis sparked a US federal criminal probe in 2010. When it ended in 2012 with no charges, Armstrong thought he was "out of the woods".

Now that USADA have made their case stick, however, Armstrong said he'd be happy to play a role in a "truth and reconciliation" period in cycling.

"If they have it and I'm invited, I'll be the first man in the door," Armstrong said, while acknowledging that he had "no moral platform" from which to pursue a clean-up of the sport.

USADA chief Travis Tygart reiterated after the interview that Armstrong must tell his story under oath to have any chance of reducing his life ban.

But first will come the second installment of his talk with Winfrey on Friday, when he'll talk about the repercussions of his spectacular fall from grace.



Disgraced American cyclist Lance Armstrong (L) appeared on the Oprah Winfrey Show on Thursday where he admitted about his drug-cheating throughout his illustrious career. PHOTO: REUTERS

Key quotes

AFP, Los Angeles

Key quotes from Lance Armstrong's first interview as a banned athlete, broadcast Thursday, in which he admitted to talk show host Oprah Winfrey that he used performance enhancing drugs:

THE ADMISSION
"I view this situation as one big lie that I repeated a lot of times."

THE FLAW
"Certainly, I'm a flawed character. I am flawed, deeply flawed."

I'M SORRY
"I made my decisions. They're my mistake. And I'm sitting here today to acknowledge that and to say I'm sorry for that."

THE DRUGS
"My cocktail, so to speak, was only EPO, but not a lot, transfusions and testosterone."

THE CHEAT
"And I went in and I just looked up the definition of cheat."

"And the definition of cheat is to gain an advantage on a rival or foe, you know, that they don't have or that they -- you know, I didn't do it that way. I viewed it as a level playing field."

THE BULLY
"I was a bully in the sense that I tried to control the narrative and if I didn't like

what somebody said... I tried to control that and say that's a lie, they're liars."

THE SPORT
"I didn't invent the culture, but I didn't try to stop the culture, and that's my mistake and that's what I have to be sorry for, and the sport is now paying the price because of that."

THE WRONGED WOMAN
On team-mate's wife Betsy Andreu, who Armstrong smeared in a bid to silence her: "Well, let me clarify something. I did call her crazy. I did."

THE COMEBACK
"The last time I crossed the line, that line, was 2005," -- Armstrong denies doping in his comeback Tour de France races in 2009 and 2010.

THE RULES
"I disrespected the rules, regardless of what anybody says about the generation. That was my choice."

THE TRUTH
"If there was a truth and reconciliation commission... and I'm invited, I'll be the first man in the door."

THE PROBE
On the US Department of Justice deciding last year not to pursue a case against him: "It's hard to define victory, but I thought I was out of the woods. And those were some serious wolves."

Shah's trust in BCB

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Test and one day international cricket. And when that finished I looked up my game and I thought okay I want to play T20 because there are lots of leagues coming up and the financial rewards are really good," said Shah in a press conference at the end of the game.

The batsman, who last represented England in 2009, despite his good run in the shortest format of the game, however, believed that his 'England days' were long over. "I don't think I'll play for England again, those days are over. If they pick me I will, but I think they are going with a lot of youngsters," said Shah.

Aware of the payment-related problems that embroiled the inaugural edition of the BPL, Shah believed that this year's edition would be different.

"We were told by the Professional Cricketers Association England that there have been problems in payment. But this year the tournament has been structured differently, and we should be getting paid in the next day or so from the board. We have put our trust on the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) and they shouldn't let us down," said Shah.