

GAME NOTES

Lanka complains to ICC on air pollution at Delhi game

COLOMBO, DEC 6 /- Sri Lanka cricket board has complained to the sport's governing body about the poor air quality in which its players have been compelled to play a Test match in the Indian capital New Delhi. Sports minister Dayasiri Jayasekara said Sri Lanka Cricket made the complaint on Tuesday to the International Cricket Council, saying "we can't play like this as four players had vomited" due to the pollution. He said the ICC had informed them that it will take necessary steps. However, it is not certain what action ICC had taken. Sri Lanka will play their third and final test which ends on Wednesday at the Feroz Shah Kotla stadium. Sri Lanka's cricketers wore face masks during the match and the bowlers complained of shortness of breath.

Mitchell Marsh gets Australia call-up for Perth

ADELAIDE, DEC 6 /- All-rounder Mitchell Marsh was called up to join his brother Shaun in the 13-man Australia squad for next week's third Ashes test in Perth on Wednesday with seamer Chadli Sayers making way. Marsh, who injured his shoulder playing the last of his 21 tests in India in March and needed reconstructive surgery, is no stranger to the WACA as captain of Western Australia. The 26-year-old would be expected to offer a fourth pace option to back up the strike trio of Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood and Pat Cummins, who secured Australia a 120-run victory to give the 2-0 lead in the series on Wednesday. To get into the side, however, he will probably need to supplant Peter Handscomb or brother Shaun, who won the Man of the Match award for his 120-run knock in the first innings in Adelaide. Handscomb, who bats at number five, had 14, 36 and 12 in his three innings in the series and looked jittery at the crease in his second innings in Adelaide.

Australia Squad - David Warner, Cameron Bancroft, Steve Smith (captain), Jackson Bird, Pat Cummins, Peter Handscomb, Josh Hazlewood, Usman Khawaja, Nathan Lyon, Mitchell Marsh, Shaun Marsh, Tim Paine, Mitchell Starc.

ICC U-19 World Cup: Son of milkman makes India squad

RANCHI, DEC 6 /- After Indian cricket stalwart Mahendra Singh Dhoni, who hails from Ranchi, a milkman's son is making headlines on being selected for India's Under-19 World Cup team. The small town champion, Pankaj Yadav, is a right-arm spinner, who rules every match in Ranchi and other neighbouring districts. Expressing gratitude to his mother, father and coach Nath Jha, Pankaj told ANI, "Cricket is my life and I will give my best in the World Cup. Dhoni and Shane Warne are my role models". Meanwhile, the proud father, Chandradeo Yadav told ANI, "I always wanted to see my son doing well in academics but his passion was cricket. So, I encouraged him to pursue it as his career." "I respect his choice and will always support him for it. Pankaj is a great fan of Dhoni, I wish he becomes like him someday," father said. According to sources, Pankaj will leave for Bangalore on a day or two where he will be trained from December 8 to 22. On January 14, 2018, Pankaj will play his first match against Australia Under-19.

NEW DELHI, DEC 6 /- Sri Lanka's unheralded youngsters, led by Dhananjaya De Silva, cashed in on the ineffectiveness of Indian spinners, holding on for a draw in the third Test even as the home team collected its ninth successive series victory here today. While the win in Nagpur ensured a 1-0 series win for India, it will certainly be a moral victory for a beleaguered Sri Lankan team, which also had to endure physical discomfort due to pollution in the national capital. Sri Lanka was never going to chase 410, but did well enough to bat as many as 102 overs in the second innings, finishing at 299 for five. The captains decided to shake hands after the end of seven mandatory overs. En route his third Test hundred, De Silva battled severe muscle stiffness before retiring hurt



Kohli da swag... The India captain in a cheery mood, India v Sri Lanka, 3rd Test, Delhi, 5th day, Delhi

on 119, but he instilled the self belief in debutant Roshen Silva (71 not out) and the maverick Nitroshan Dickwella (44 not out), who displayed enormous determination while playing out the final session of the match. The Roshen-Dickwella pair added invaluable 94 runs for the unbroken sixth-wicket stand as India did not get a single wicket in the final session. Wriddhiman Saha bungled an easy stumping chance of Dickwella off Ravindra Jadeja (3/81 in 38 overs) in the final session and that, effectively, was the end of India's hopes to win the Test match. The Test match once again proved that Indian spinners especially Ravichandran Ashwin (1/126 in 35 overs), is not same bowler when there isn't much help in the wicket. The Kotla track didn't show any wear and tear throughout the five days, rendering Ashwin ineffective in the second innings. He tried a lot of doosras, carom balls and altered the speed of his deliveries, but they were of no use. The trio of De Silva, Roshen and Dickwella used Ashwin's pace picked up runs easily. His stock delivery, which is the conventional off-break, never came into use save once when he had bowled rival captain Dinesh Chandimal. If not getting turn was Ashwin's bane, Jadeja was at his restrictive best but again the 'x-factor' in his bowling, when there is some turn and grip on the surface, was missing. He was quicker through the air, hardly flighted the ball, depending on deliveries that straightened as batsmen played for turn. De Silva, who had a problem using his feet during the later stages due to a muscle pull, was easily able to play him inside the crease. During the final hour of the day, a frustrated Jadeja at times was seen kicking the dust as break-throughs were hard to come by. This is the first time in six Tests this year that the islanders managed to stretch Virat Kohli's men to the last session of a match, deservedly earning a favourable result after all the mauling in the past few months. De Silva's innings was the highlight of the first two sessions as he was hardly troubled by the Indian bowlers en route his third Test hundred. Towards the end, he started



Dhananjaya de Silva brought up his third Test century, India v Sri Lanka, 3rd Test, Delhi, 5th day.

hobbling due to the cramps, having played 219 balls. His innings was studied with 15 boundaries and a six off Ashwin. The range of his strokes was impressive as he cut and pulled with ease whenever the spinners dropped anything short. Anything pitched up was driven with disdain. With the pitch offering little help, Ashwin didn't look as effective although he dismissed Chandimal (36), Jadeja, who completed most of his overs within 90 seconds, bowled quick and flat with the occasional delivery turning sharply. In the Indian quarter, he looked the most effective, keeping the batsmen pegged on the backfoot. During the first session, Jadeja endured mixed luck with a couple of no-balls. The first one accounted for Angelo Mathews (1), with the umpires missing it altogether, while the second was a brilliant delivery to clean up Chandimal but the umpires were more cautious and promptly called him for overstepping. First-innings celebration batsmen was dismissed when he edged one off Jadeja to the slips. But the left-arm spinner was lucky as he was called for a no-ball even as replays showed that no part of his foot was behind the popping crease. However, Jadeja was not so lucky when he bowled a classic left-armers' delivery, which had Chandimal beaten all ends up. This time umpire Joel Wilson checked for the no-ball and the Sri Lanka captain got a reprieve. It was a day when the Feroz Shah Kotla was bathed in bright sunshine, cutting through the haze that had forced the visiting players to don anti-pollution masks till yesterday. The pitch was as flat as it could have been, which made strokeplay easier, as De Silva and Chandimal added 105 runs in 33 overs for the fifth wicket. (PTI)

India 536 for 7 dec (Kohli 243, Vijay 155, Sandakan 4-167) and 246 for 5 dec (Dhananjaya 67) drew with Sri Lanka 373 (Chandimal 164, Mathews 111, Ashwin 3-90, Ishant 3-98) and 299 for 5 (Dhananjaya 119 retired hurt, Roshen 74*, Jadeja 3-81)

Starc, Hazlewood lead Australia to second Ashes Test win

ADELAIDE (AUSTRALIA), DEC 6 /- Pacemen Mitchell Starc and Josh Hazlewood spearheaded Australia to a crushing 120-run win over England to open up a 2-0 lead in the five-Test Ashes series in Adelaide on Wednesday. Hazlewood snuffed out England's outside hopes of a come-from-behind victory when he dismissed captain Joe Root in the third over of the final day of the first-ever night Ashes Test. Starc mopped up the tail to finish with five for 88. Holders England now face the prospect of losing the series in next week's third Test at Perth's WACA Ground where they have not won a Test since 1978.

"We always had the faith in the team and the belief," Australia skipper Steve Smith said. "We thought if we could come out and bowl well this morning, hit our lengths and get one or two wickets then things can happen quickly." While Root was batting, England's hopes lingered of bringing off a record run chase of 345 at Adelaide Oval. But Hazlewood enticed a bottom edge and wicket-keeper Tim Paine did the rest of the Australian team. Root left the field on his overnight score of 67 and with him England's hopes vanished. "Disappointing. I don't think we

did ourselves justice." Root said. "We're still massively in the series. We showed that from the way we played yesterday. That has to be the benchmark how we approach the rest of the series." Nightwatchman Chris Woakes was out to the second ball of the day, caught behind off Hazlewood for five. Woakes sought a review and while the 'Hot Spot' infrared imaging system could not find anything, the 'Snicko' sound-video technology detected an edge and the umpire's decision was upheld.



Mitchell Starc finished with a five-wicket haul, Australia v England, 2nd Test, Adelaide

Nathan Lyon got the wicket of fellow off-spinner Moeen Ali for the fourth time in the series, leg before wicket as he attempted to sweep when on two.

That left England lurching towards defeat on 188 for seven after 45 minutes of play on the final day. Craig Overton stayed around for 39 minutes before he fell to Starc inswinger for seven with the first delivery of the second new ball. Starc had Stuart Broad caught behind for eight and finished off the Test just before tea bowling Jonny Bairstow for 36. England entered the final day 178 runs from victory with six wickets in hand after a dramatic 36-run momentum switch on Tuesday. Australia dismissed England for 227 on Monday but decided against sending them back in to bat despite holding a 215-run first innings lead. The tourists subsequently skittled out the Australians for 138, leaving them with a chance of chasing with a record 354-run victory target in the final five sessions of play. Skipper Root led a spirited English fightback and relished the challenge of a record run chase with a fighting unbeaten half-century. The highest winning margin in 1902. (AFP)

I am hitting balls in Tests the way I do in ODIs: Virat

NEW DELHI, DEC 6 /- Indian skipper Virat Kohli today said he discovered a new facet of his batting in the drawn third Test against Sri Lanka - that hitting the ball as a five-day game is no different from an ODI. Kohli struck 243 off just 287 deliveries with the help of 25 boundaries in the final game against Sri Lanka. He said it was a revelation that he can play at a fast pace in Test cricket, just like he does in ODIs. "On the personal front, I was hitting the ball very well and it was kind of a revelation that I can play and hit balls in Tests the way I can do in ODIs. That was something I always hesitated to do but this made me realise that you can push the game forward even in Test cricket," Kohli said after the match. "There's nothing called set patterns these days, if you can believe in yourself, you can achieve anything in any format," said Kohli who was adjudged Man of the Match as well as the Man of the Series for scoring 610 runs with three hundreds, including two double tons. The 243 was Kohli's sixth double hundred and he became the first captain to score six Test double tons, eclipsing West Indies legend Brian Lara, who had five.

It was also Kohli's highest score, surpassing the previous best of 235 against England last year in Mumbai. He also equalled Sachin Tendulkar and Virender Sehwag for maximum number of double hundreds. Asked what is his state of mind when he reaches a milestone like a hundred, he said, "When I was not a captain, it was difficult to think of situations all the time. When I was finding my feet in Test cricket, I was under pressure. When I got to a milestone, I sort of relaxed. Now, it's a lot different. Now, a captain I have to keep to batting on and even after I reach hundred or 150 and push forward to put up as many runs on board as possible, or if I am batting in the second innings to create a situation where the bowler can get extra overs to bowl the opposition out later," he said. The Indians dropped a few catches in Sri Lanka's first innings and Kohli admitted that slip fielding is something the team needs to improve before the South Africa tour. "First and second slip, if you practice well, you can get used to it. We've identified it as an area we need to work on." On the safe

Ajinkya Rahane not fielding at one of the slips, he said. "Firstly, from his initial days, Ajinkya has always fielded at gully. It's a difficult place, and he has very good reflexes and so we trust him there. About Rohit Sharma coming good in this series, Kohli said, "We've always believed he can change the game in the lower middle order. Very happy with the way the batsmen are playing, everyone won't be able to score in every series, obviously. There are a few areas we have to work on, though." Kohli said he was a bit disappointed to have finished off the match but gave credit to the Sri Lankans. "When you're not able to finish off in the second innings after having them three down on day four, is bit disappointing. But they played well, they showed composure and confidence. The pitch got tired in the end. They (Sri Lankans) did not give us any chances to get into the game. In hindsight, if we would've grabbed our chances in the first innings, maybe they wouldn't have got so many runs. We should've done better. The slip catching and fielding, we need to work on." On resting for the limited-overs leg, he said, "Last time I took rest, it was difficult to handle. But my body is asking for it right now. The workload has been massive, I have been playing non-stop for the last 48 months, I need rest. My body has taken a toll in the last couple of years. Right now is the perfect time to rest before the tour of South Africa." Sri Lankan captain Dinesh Chandimal attributed his side's good show to the execution of the plans. "It was a really good series, apart from the second Test. We learnt a lot. Credit to the players and management for working hard. The guys executed their plans in the middle." Talking about the individual contributions in his team, he said, "Once Rangana was injured, everyone looked up to Angelo Mathews and he delivered. Dhananjaya and Roshen batted really well in tough conditions against some great bowlers in India had gone." "Dickwella played a totally different brand of cricket. Happy with the way we played today." Asked about his own batting, Chandimal, who hit a crucial century, said, "Before I got here, I changed my technique. I'd worked hard at the nets with the batting coach. It's paid off for me. (PTI)

Ashes ain't over, simple as that: Joe Root

ADELAIDE, DEC 6 /- A defiant Joe Root insisted the Ashes series was by no means over despite England falling to a 120-run defeat in the second Test at Adelaide Oval on Wednesday to go 0-2 down with three matches to play. England, swept 0-5 on their last visit to Australia, must now win at least two of the remaining matches in Perth, Melbourne and Sydney, as well as draw the other, to retain the urn they won with a 3-2 triumph on home soil in 2015. Despite England's extremely poor record in Perth, Root thought the fight the tourists put up on the third and fourth days in Adelaide

meant the series was very much alive. "I'd strongly disagree," he said when asked what he would say to those who believed England were heading for another white-wash. "The way we responded with ball and bat in the second innings was outstanding (and) proved to everyone we are still massively in the series, it's simple as that. "We've shown throughout the two games in periods we can outperform Australia, just not over five days, and that's going to be our challenge." If we can get that right, we can perform to our ability for longer periods of time, we'll win

games. Simple as that." England's late resurgence in Adelaide gave them some hope of claiming a victory with a ground record run chase of 354 but they ultimately withered in a record 354-run pace attack on Wednesday. Root's innings was always going to be key to England hopes but he was caught behind off a delivery that nicked the bottom of his bat before he could add to his overnight tally of 67 and the last six wickets fell for just 57 runs. "I don't think we did ourselves justice," Root said. "(But) give credit to the bowlers. They bowled a very good length and made it dif-

ficult to get set. On a fifth day wicket you're going to get balls that stay low." Root said suggestions that this tour would be a carbon copy of the 2013-14 visit were "a little bit naive." The 2013-14 series score was the same after two matches. "I think we're in a much better place than that, there's still a lot of confidence going into that next game," Root added. "We're playing better cricket this time, I don't think we're as unevenly matched as we were last time around. You've seen us in control for periods of the game, whereas, I don't think that was the case last time around."

