



Former Sri Lankan cricket captain Marvan Atapattu has made sporting headlines in the cricket world recently. His bold remark for Sri Lanka cricket selectors as Muppets and Jokers creates food for chat among cricket circles. Immediately after these comments Australian cricket pundits predicted that Atapattu would be sent home from Australian tour on the next day. But it wasn't to be. What was the story behind this drama? What stirred up this quiet unassuming character to become aggressive and outspoken?

Farewell Marvellous Marvan



This saga has been a result of a personality clash started in 2004. Atapattu was Sri Lankan cricket captain then and the chief selector during that tenure was also the current head of selectors. Former Sri Lankan fast bowler Asantha de Mel has been appointed as the chief selector of cricket by the sports minister according to Sri Lankan norms. De Mel wanted to bring in young blood to the Sri Lankan team in a bid to focus on future. During that tenure de Mel led selectors picked and sent some upcoming young players for overseas tours with the experienced players. When they return home after the tours without having to play a single game, de Mel criticised the captain in a press brief. During the next Pakistan series in 2004, de Mel axed Tilekeratne Dilshan for a new young player. Captain Atapattu was furious about it not so much of the young policy but the manner in forcing the decision upon him without consultation. This time Atapattu said to the

media that de Mel was operating through the press not with the players.

Unfortunately Atapattu had to leave the captaincy and the team for treatment for his injured back for a prolonged time. During that period Mahela Jayawardene was given the helm as an interim leader. Jayawardene excelled as a top leader and luck was with him.

Story behind Muppets and Jokers comment

When Atapattu returned recovered many months later, new emerging players like Upul Tharanga and Chamara Silva cement their places in the team. It was a sorry sight to see former captain Marvan in the bench during the whole of the last cricket world cup. This is a special man who failed six times in Tests scoring ducks initially but compensated for them by scoring six double centuries later. His determination, strong will and commitment has been a rare quality among Sri Lankan cricketers. Above all Marvan possessed most perfect batting techniques. Apparently, during 2005 tour of Australia when Marvan scored a century in Cairns Test, Australian commentator Michael Slater described him as the technically most perfect batsman in the world at the time.

Cricket fans never doubt Marvan's ability, commitment and hard work. Ensuring these qualities still intact within himself, Marvan performed to the best of his ability during the November tour of Australia. He was never slack in the cricket field.

One might think that Marvan made up his mind as this tour was his last for Sri Lanka when he arrives in Australia. Atapattu wanted to retire in high and may not want to let go his enemies without a swipe. He volunteered for a media briefing and calling selectors as muppets led by a joker referring to de Mel was premeditated. This attack might have relieved Marvan's frustration and anger somewhat temporarily. Whether he will regret his decisions later may be another matter. However it is cricket lovers around the world will miss a classy player and a vision of a marvellous cover drive.

Rohan Godahewa
Brisbane

Murali.. Again..



Sri Lanka's Muttiah Muralitharan unsuccessfully appeals for the wicket of England's Paul Collingwood, unseemingly, during the first day of the second cricket test match between Sri Lanka and England in Colombo, Sri Lanka. This is the 62nd time Murali has taken five wickets in an innings in Tests. At the SSC alone, the bowler has taken 11 five wicket hauls.

Photo/Eranga Jayawardena

SL in Australia ODI Shedule

Fixtures

Commonwealth Bank Series, 2007/08

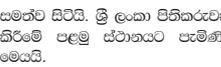
February 2008

- Sun 3 - **1st Match** - Australia v India
Brisbane Cricket Ground
- Tue 5 - **2nd Match** - India v Sri Lanka
Brisbane Cricket Ground
- Fri 8 - **3rd Match** - Australia v Sri Lanka
Sydney Cricket Ground
- Sun 10 - **4th Match** - Australia v India
Melbourne Cricket Ground
- Tue 12 - **5th Match** - India v Sri Lanka
Manuka Oval, Canberra
- Fri 15 - **6th Match** - Australia v Sri Lanka
W.A.C.A. Ground, Perth
- Sun 17 - **7th Match** - Australia v India
Adelaide Oval
- Tue 19 - **8th Match** - India v Sri Lanka
Adelaide Oval
- Fri 22 - **9th Match** - Australia v Sri Lanka
Melbourne Cricket Ground
- Sun 24 - **10th Match** - Australia v India
Sydney Cricket Ground
- Tue 26 - **11th Match** - India v Sri Lanka
Bellerive Oval, Hobart
- Fri 29 - **12th Match** - Australia v Sri Lanka
Melbourne Cricket Ground

March 2008

- Sun 2 - **1st Final** - TBC v TBC
Sydney Cricket Ground
- Tue 4 - **2nd Final** - TBC v TBC
Brisbane Cricket Ground
- Fri 7 - **3rd Final** - TBC v TBC
Adelaide Oval (if required)

සංගක්කාර පිතිකරුවන් අතර මුල් තරඟ



අයිතිරියේදී පැවැති ශ්‍රී ලංකා සහ එංගලන්තය අතර ලෙමු ටෙස්ට් තරඟය තිබූ විට සංගක්කාර තරඟ 69 කට සහභාගි වී තෙක 16 ක් සහ අර්ධ තෙක 24 ක් සමඟින් සාමාන්‍ය 57 ක් රඳවා ගනිමින් ලකුණු 5,985ක් රැස් කිරීමට සමත්ව සිටියේය.

මේ අතර ලෝක ටෙස්ට් කඩුළු වාර්තාවට ගිම්කම් කියන මුත්තසියා මුරලිදරන් කඩුළු 713 ක් ලබා ගනිමින් වසරකට වැඩි කාලයක් ටෙස්ට් පන්දු යවන්නන් අතර අංක එක ස්ථානය ගිම්කරගෙන සිටී. ඔහුගේ ප්‍රසාද ලකුණු සංඛ්‍යාව 910 ක් වන අතර ප්‍රසාද ලකුණු 900 ක්මවා ගිය පළමු වැනි ශ්‍රී ලාංකික පන්දු යවන්නා ලෙසින්ද මුරලිදරන්ය.

අයිතිරියේදී පැවැති පළමු ටෙස්ට් තරඟයේ දෙවැනි ඉතිමේදී ලකුණු 152 ක් ලබාගැනීමත් සමගම පිට පිටම ටෙස්ට් තරඟ 4 කදී ලකුණු 150 සීමාව ඉක්මවා ගිය ලෝකයේ පළමු වැනි පිතිකරුවා විමද සංගක්කාර සමත් විය. වසර 130 ක ලෝක ටෙස්ට් ක්‍රිකට් ඉතිහාසයේදී පිට පිටම ටෙස්ට් තරඟ 3 කදී ලකුණු 150 ඉක්මවා ගෑමට සමත්ව සිටියේ මුත්තසියාගේ වූයේය. ටෝලිටර් හැමන්ඩ් සහ මුලාසර් හසාර් වගකී.

බැන්ලාදේශ සංචාරයේ සිට ඉතිම හසකදී ලකුණු 901 ක් ලබාගත් සංගක්කාරගේ ලකුණු රැස්කිරීම් සටහන් වූයේ නොදැවී 200, නොදැවී 222, 57, 192, 92 සහ 152 වන පරිද්දෙනි. ඔහුගේ එම ඉතිම හසේ ඉතිමක සාමාන්‍යය ලකුණු 222.25 කි.



ශ්‍රී ලංකා ගිටපු පිතිකරුවන්ගෙන් අරවින්ද ද සිල්වා සහ මහේශ් රජවර්ධන ලෝක ටෙස්ට් පිතිකරුවන් ශ්‍රේණිගත කිරීම අතර පස්වැනි ස්ථානයට පත්ව සිටි අතර ගිටපු නායක අර්ජුන රණතුංග වරක් 6 වැනි ස්ථානයේ පසු විය. නමුත් එම පිතිකරුවෝ තිදෙනාම ප්‍රසාද ලකුණු 900 සීමාව ඉක්කම්වීමට සමත් නොවූහ.

මුරලිදරන් අයිතිරියේදී ටෙස්ට් තරඟයට පෙර ප්‍රසාද ලකුණු 904 ක් ගිම්කර ගෙන සිටි අතර එම තරඟය අවසන් වන විට ඔහුගේ ප්‍රසාද ලකුණු සංඛ්‍යාව 910 ක් දක්වා වැඩි විය. මහේශ් රජවර්ධන පිතිකර ශ්‍රේණිගත කිරීමේ 12 වැනි ස්ථානයේ ද, එමින්ද වාස් පන්දු යවන්නන් ශ්‍රේණිගත කිරීමේ