

Hosts trail by 19 runs

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh A still called the shots as they only trail by 19 runs on the third day of the four-day match against Zimbabwe A at the Fatullah Stadium yesterday.

At stumps, the visitors scored 106 runs for the loss of two wickets in their second innings, after they were behind by 87 runs in the first innings as Bangladesh A were bowled out for 380.

Opener Javed Omar, at 133 overnight, saw wickets tumble in the morning as batsmen Marshall Ayub, Alok Kapali and Sahagir Hossain all fell early. Marshall did not add to his overnight score of 53, falling lbw to seamer Trevor Garwe, who took four wickets in the innings.

But Omar stuck to his guns and found an ally in tail-ender Enamul Haque as the two added 51 runs for the ninth wicket. Omar finally fell to Elton Chigumbura for 173 runs as the discarded national opener struck 32 boundaries in his 315-ball knock that spanned for more than seven hours. Enamul scored 34 off 71 balls. Chigumbura also took four wickets for the visitors.

Tino Mawoyo and Tinashe Hove added 90 for the opening stand with both men showing some restraint. But it was wicketkeeper-

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PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Bangladesh all-rounder Mashrafe-bin-Mortuza crashes one on the off-side during his whirlwind half-century against Scotland in the second ODI at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur on Sunday.

Tigers seal great year

Beat Scotland by 146 runs



SPORTS REPORTER

It was nothing but a mission for Bangladesh to show the difference between a highest-level side and the associate members and the Tigers made it clear after their huge 146-run victory against visiting Scotland in the second match at the Mirpur Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

On their way to a 2-0 series whitewash Habibur Bashar's men faced hardly any resistance from their Scottish counterparts, thanks to a clinical all-round performance from Mashrafe bin Mortuza that enabled the hosts to pull out their biggest margin of victory in the shorter-version of the game.

Coming to bat at number eight Mashrafe smashed an unbeaten 27-ball 51, his maiden half-century in 51 appearances to steer his side to a mammoth 278 for six in stipulated 50 overs and then took two wickets in the very first over to ensure the visitors' another fragile batting display.

Scotland were eventually bundled out for 132 in 41.3 overs to swallow the heavy defeat after their six-wicket loss in the first game at Chittagong last Friday.

With the outcome Bangladesh finished a very successful year as they won 18 one-day internationals, eight in a row, out of 28 games and it was their third, overall fifth, home series victory in this calendar year.

Interestingly the Tigers were just two wins behind from world champi-

ons Australia in this year's one-day success table and they levelled with West Indies (18 from 33 matches) and Sri Lanka (18 from 34 matches) but New Zealand occupied the second place considering the success rate as the Black Caps won eight out of 12 games.

Back to the match and this was only the second time in the last seven games that Bangladesh batsmen saw batting first after the tourists skipper Craig Wright deciding to field first and the hosts rode on two half-centuries from Aftab Ahmed and Mashrafe to put up the highest total in the series on the board.

All the eight batsmen got double figures except young wicketkeeper Mushfiqur Rahim (6), but dashing Aftab took the charge to punish the visitors and he was followed by a

whirlwind knock of man-of-the-match Mashrafe.

The Chittagong boy scored a 46-ball 52, back-to-back fifties, to be adjudged man-of-the-series, that featured four boundaries and two sixes before being callously stumped by Smith off a wide delivery of off-spinner Majid Haq.

Sakib Al Hasan had his characteristic contribution of 52-ball 44 and Mohammad Ashrafal was not out on 38 off 46 balls, but without the scintillating effort from Mashrafe Bangladesh couldn't put the runs they had finally achieved.

The tall right-hander brutally punished Majid hitting three straight sixes to collect 21 runs in the 46th over and he smashed two more over boundaries besides two fours in his 27-ball essay.

In reply Scotland made a disaster start when Mashrafe sent two batsmen back in his first over without any runs on the board and the tourists never recovered from the damage following left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak's spell of 4-23 in ten overs.

The leading Bangladesh pacer, the highest wicket-taker in this year, completed his 10-over quota at 2-39, just one wicket shy to finish the year with fifty wickets while Razzak jumped to third position with 45 wickets in 26 matches after Australian Nathan Bracken's 46.

Mohammad Rafique took two wickets.

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard of the second one-day international between Bangladesh

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Mashrafe's delights



SPORTS REPORTER

Although his only disappointment was not to claim another wicket against Scotland in the second and final one-day on Sunday to complete 50 scalps in a year, leading Bangladesh pacer Mashrafe Bin Mortuza finished a year to remember for many reasons.

Undoubtedly, attaining the crown of highest wicket-taker in the 2006 calendar year was something to cheer about, but the 23-year-old

exciting all-rounder also rated his almost uninterrupted season as a major achievement beside his maiden half-century in the shorter-version of the game.

"I am feeling great that I have achieved the feat of being the highest one-day wicket taker (49) of the world in 2006 but the only dissatisfaction is that I could not grab that 50th wicket which was on the cards today," said Mashrafe, who took two wickets before producing a hurricane 27-ball 51 not out, after the match.

"Another thing is that this was an almost injury-free year for me. I was dropped for only a single match for

ankle injury in Zimbabwe. I was pretty fit though the fear of getting seriously injured has not gone forever from my mind. When I got minor injuries in practices that fear comes again but it did not happen during matches," he added.

Injury became almost synonymous with the pace spearhead, who had both his knees operated upon, since he came to international fold in 2001 and the episode even occurred this year when he twisted his right ankle after falling awkwardly while coming down the stairs just before the ICC Champions Trophy. Fortunately,

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PHOTO: COURTESY

Aktel chairman Salahuddin Kasem Khan (3rd from L) and managing director Ahmad Ismail (2nd from R) hand over the Aktel ODI series trophy to winning captain Habibur Bashar (2nd from L). Also seen are Aktel head of marketing Asif Iqbal (R) and BCB general secretary Mahabub Anam (L).

Sreesanth keeps it up



AFP, Johannesburg

First innings destroyer Shanthakumaran Sreesanth struck two crucial blows for India as South Africa made a poor start in their second innings after being set to make 402 to win on the third day of the first Test at the Wanderers Stadium Sunday.

South Africa were 69 for three at tea.

South Africa's top order failed for the second time in the match after India were bowled out for 236 in their second innings.

Needing to face only one over before lunch, South Africa lost the wicket of Herschelle Gibbs, who was caught at first slip for nought off Zaheer Khan's fourth delivery to complete a "pair".

Sreesanth, who took five for 40 when South Africa were bowled out for 84 in the first innings, took both wickets during the afternoon.

He had the out-of-form Graeme Smith caught at backward point for 10 when the South African captain chased a wide delivery. Sreesanth

followed up by having Hashim Amla caught behind for 17.

It completed a dismal match for South Africa's top three, who made a combined 32 runs over two innings and put India on target for a first Test win in three tours of South Africa.

Jacques Kallis and Ashwell Prince prevented any further breakthroughs before tea as they put on an unbeaten 35 for the fourth wicket.

Only three teams have made more than 400 to win in the fourth innings of a match.

VVS Laxman and Zaheer Khan ensured South Africa would have to chase a daunting target when they put on 70 for the eighth wicket to provide the bulk of the 90 runs that India added for the loss of their remaining five wickets Sunday.

Laxman made a watchful, polished 73 off 134 balls with 12 fours, while Zaheer provided enterprising support in hitting 37 off 80 deliveries.

Zaheer hit two sixes off Smith's off-spin as well as three fours.

Resuming at 146 for five, India quickly lost Mahendra Singh Dhoni, caught behind off Shaun Pollock, and Anil Kumble, caught in the gully off Andre Nel.

But Laxman and Zaheer stayed together for 106 minutes of largely cautious batting apart from Zaheer's onslaught against Smith, whose three overs cost 26 runs.

Makhaya Ntini ended the stand when Laxman was caught at first slip. He dismissed Zaheer, caught behind, two balls later.

Sreesanth provided a moment of comic drama before the innings ended. After Nel advanced threateningly down the pitch after a bounce, Sreesanth hammered the next ball for a straight six and ran down the pitch twirling his bat to taunt the South African fast bowler.

As in the first innings, VRV Singh slogged effectively, hitting two fours off Ntini and making 11 off four balls before being run out when he attempted a second run to deep midwicket.

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard at tea on the third day of the first Test between South Africa and India at the Wanderers Stadium on Sunday:

INDIA: First innings 249

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Aktel wants to sponsor Tigers

SPORTS REPORTER

Aktel, one of the leading cellular phone companies, has set a goal to earn the right of sponsoring the Bangladesh cricket team.

Two top officials of the company expressed their satisfaction yesterday over the success as a title sponsor during the Tigers' two home series against Zimbabwe and Scotland.

"We are really excited because it was nice to see Bangladesh win match after match at home when we sponsored the series. We have a plan to continue the tie with BCB (Bangladesh Cricket Board) in future," said Salahuddin Kasem Khan, chairman of Aktel.

Managing director of the company Ahmed Ismail said that they would try hard to get the right of team sponsorship.

"Definitely we will try our best to earn the right because cricket is a very popular game in the country and we experienced that during the last two series," said Ismail.

Another cellular company GrameenPhone is now enjoying the team sponsorship rights and it will expire before next year's World Cup.

Inzamam to lead Pakistan in 2007 WC

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan have retained Inzamamul Haq as captain of the national cricket team for next year's World Cup, officials said Sunday.

"Inzamam has led the team admirably and we have extended his tenure as captain for the tours of South Africa and more importantly for the World Cup 2007," Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Naseem Ashraf told a press conference.

The 36-year-old Inzamam led Pakistan to a 3-1 victory in a one-day series against the West Indies on Saturday after the home side beat the tourists 2-0 in a three-match Test series last month.

Pakistan play three Tests and five one-day internationals on their tour of South Africa between January and February next year.

Ashraf hoped Pakistan will do well in the World Cup to be held over March and April in the West Indies.

Inzamam, who took over as captain in September 2003, has led Pakistan in 28 Tests, winning ten, losing nine and drawing nine.

He has also led Pakistan in 82 one-day internationals with 50 wins, 29 defeats and three no results.

The PCB also showed confidence in their English coach Bob Woolmer and vice captain Younis Khan who will continue in their posts.

The 58-year-old Woolmer, who took over in July 2004, was appointed Pakistan coach until the World Cup 2007.



PHOTO: AFP

GIVING IT BACK TO NEL: India's young speedster S Sreesanth celebrates after hitting a six off South African paceman Andre Nel mocking the bowler's antics on the third day of the first Test at the Wanderers in Johannesburg on Sunday.



Did U Know?

Shanthakumaran Sreesanth of India took 5 for 40 in the first innings of the first Test against South Africa at the WACA Ground. It was the first time that he has taken five wickets or more in an innings.



Mike Hussey

(Australian batsman)
"It's great for Gilly because he has been working really hard. There have been a few knockers about his recent form so it's great for him to hit the ball so cleanly."

After Adam Gilchrist smashed the second-fastest century in Test cricket on Saturday.

What to WATCH

ESPN

Australia v England
Third Ashes Test, Day Five
Live at 8:15 am
Sportscenter India
Live at 8:30 pm

English Premier Football League
Fulham v Middlesbrough
Live at 1:55 am (Tuesday)

STAR Sports

South Africa v India
First Test, Day Four
Live at 2:30 pm

New Zealand v Sri Lanka
Second Test, Day Five
Live at 3:30 am (Tuesday)

India need five wickets

SPORTS REPORTER

South Africa ended day three on 163 for five, in their pursuit of 402 runs set by India in their second innings at the Wanderers Stadium in Johannesburg last night. Middle-order batsman Ashwell Prince was unbeaten on 54 along with Mark Boucher who was on 23.

India's seamer S Sreesanth took three wickets. Earlier, India were bowled out for 236 in their second innings.

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