



PHOTO: AFP

Sri Lanka batsman Chamara Silva plays a flashy cover drive during the third day of the second Test against New Zealand at The Basin Reserve in Wellington on Sunday.

Silva makes his mark

Cricket
AFP, Wellington

A standout unbeaten 152 by Chamara Silva put Sri Lanka firmly in command of the second cricket Test on Sunday as New Zealand were set an improbable 504 to win.

The home side now require a world-record fourth innings for victory after Sri Lanka were dismissed for 365 in their second innings.

Battling to save the game and protect a 1-0 series lead, New Zealand made a positive start to reach 56 without loss before openers Jamie How and Craig Cumming fell in quick succession.

Mathew Sinclair was not out 10 with Stephen Fleming on four when bad light brought an early end to the day with New Zealand at 75 for two, leaving them needing another 429 runs with two days remaining.

Silva put the embarrassment of a double duck in the first Test behind him to produce his maiden Test century following his 61 in the first innings here.

He was at the crease for five-and-a-half hours and hit 20 boundaries as Sri Lanka built a dominant total until Daniel Vettori cleaned up the last three wickets in the space of four balls.

Vettori was New Zealand's chief destroyer, at one stage sitting on

hat trick when he dismissed Farveez Maharoof and Lasith Malinga in successive balls and finishing with seven for 130, his 13th five-in Test cricket.

The 27-year-old Silva put his name in the record books by becoming the first player in Test history to score a century in his first game after a pair of ducks.

After a tentative start in his debut Test in Christchurch, Silva showed no sign of nerves here at the Basin Reserve as he anchored Sri Lanka's charge to level the series.

When play began after rain wiped out the first 40 minutes of the third morning, Silva and Prasanna Jayawardene added 37 runs before the new ball came into play and Chris Martin took the only wicket of the morning.

Jayawardene pulled a short-pitched Martin ball to the boundary, and was suckered into the same shot two deliveries later, spooning the ball straight to the substitute fielder at square-leg to be out for 37.

Chaminda Vaas joined Silva to further frustrate the New Zealand bowlers as they added 88 for the seventh wicket before Vaas edged Vettori to wicket-keeper Brendon McCullum to be out for 47.

How and Fleming were untroubled as they set about the run chase for New Zealand until the 15th over, when How was completely baffled by a Malinga delivery which trapped him leg before wicket for 33.

Cumming followed eight balls later for 20 when he failed to read the famous "doorsra" of Muttiah Muralidaran and succeeded only in nicking the ball to Kumar Sangakkara behind the stumps.

Time is not an issue in a Test marked by a low-scoring first innings but the weather could be a factor, with two days remaining and showers in the forecast.

For New Zealand even to get close to their 504-run target, they will have to beat the current best fourth-innings winning performance of the West Indies, who made 418 for seven to beat Australia three years ago.

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard at close on the third day of the second Test between New Zealand and Sri Lanka at the Basin Reserve on Sunday:

SRI LANKA: First innings 268 (Sangakkara 156 n.o., Silva 61; Martin 3-50, Vettori 3-53)
NEW ZEALAND: First innings 130 (McCullum 43; Malinga 5-68, Muralidaran 4-31)
SRI LANKA: Second innings (over-night 225 for 5 in 71 overs)
Tharanga lbw b Martin 20
Jayasuriya c Fleming b Vettori 31
Sangakkara c Franklin b Bond 8
M Jayawardene c Sinclair b Vettori 31
Kapugedera b Vettori 27
Silva not out 152
P Jayawardene c sub b Martin 37
Vass c McCullum b Vettori 47

Maharoof lbw b Vettori 1	Malinga lbw b Vettori 0
Muralidaran st McCullum b Vettori 0	Extras: (lb-7, nb-4) 11
Total: (All out in 109.3 overs) 365	Fall of wickets: 1-44, 2-62, 3-62, 4-100, 5-168, 6-262, 7-350, 8-356, 9-365, 10-365.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Bond	19	3	67	1
Martin	23	1	98	2
Vettori	42.3	6	130	7
Franklin	25	8	63	0

NEW ZEALAND: Second innings
Cumming c Sangakkara b Muralidaran 20
How lbw b Malinga 33
Sinclair not out 10
Fleming not out 4
Extras: (b-5, nb-3) 8
Total: (For 2 wickets in 22 overs) 75
Fall of wickets: 1-56, 2-60

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Vaas	6	0	28	0
Malinga	6	1	20	1
Maharoof	5	1	17	0
Muralidaran	4	2	4	1
Jayasuriya	1	0	1	0

Toss: Sri Lanka
Umpires: Simon Taufel (AUS), Brian Jerling (RSA)
Match referee: Javagal Srinath (IND)

Pollock picks 400th victim

PTI, Durban

Cricket South Africa (CSA) will honour Shaun Pollock for his feat of taking 400 Test wickets with a special ceremony during next week's second Test against India at the all-rounder's home pitch at Kingsmead Stadium here.

The veteran seamer took his 400th wicket when he claimed Rahul Dravid's scalp during India's second innings in the ongoing first Test in Johannesburg yesterday (on Saturday).

Cricket South Africa CEO Gerald Majola described Pollock's achievement as phenomenal.

"Cricket South Africa salutes Shaun Pollock on the incredible achievement of becoming the first South African to take 400 Test wickets. This puts him up there with some of the legends of world cricket, and he is certainly one of the greatest cricketers ever produced by South Africa."

"This is a richly deserved milestone in the career of a player who has always given his all for South Africa." Majola said it was most fitting that Pollock's 400th and 401st victims were Rahul Dravid and Sachin Tendulkar, two of the best batsmen in the world.

"He has followed in the footsteps of his famous father, Peter, and even more famous uncle, Graeme. But in one major way, he has surpassed them because his world triumphs have gone beyond one form of the game. Only last week, he was rated the world's best ODI all-rounder and bowler," he pointed out.

Pollock, who reached the milestone in his 103rd Test, said "I am chuffed to have taken so many wickets. I hope it continues tomorrow (on Monday) in order for us to win this Test." He also has more than 3,500 Test runs to his credit, including two centuries.

Dalmiya to challenge BCCI ban

PTI, Kolkata

Claiming that he has become a victim of conspiracy, Jagmohan Dalmiya Saturday vowed to challenge in a court of law the life ban imposed on him by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).

"You can call it witch hunt, you can call it conspiracy. I have become a victim of it," Dalmiya said on his arrival here from Jaipur where the punitive action was taken against him at the board's special general meeting earlier in the day.

"This (BCCI decision) will not go unchallenged. I will definitely challenge it," Dalmiya said adding he would decide his next course of action after talking to his lawyers. Asked whether he would now step down from the CAB president's post, Dalmiya said, "I will talk to my lawyers first, see what the rules say and then take a decision."

Press redefines the 'Ashes'

AFP, London

"Appalling Shameful Horrific England Shambles" -- that was how Britain's biggest-selling Sunday paper spelt out its view of the performance which has put England all but out of the Ashes series.

Skipper Andrew Flintoff is likely to be the first casualty of the slump, the News of the World added, predicting that Michael Vaughan, under whose leadership England regained the urn last year, would return for next month's one-day series.

"I can't tell you how sombre a place our dressing room is at the moment," wrote batsman Kevin Pietersen in his column for the same paper.

"It still hurts to be going down to the Aussies like this. I'm feeling pretty low right now ... we are not giving the Aussies a fight at the moment."

As well as feeling downhearted about their performance, players had also been hit by the news that spinner Ashley Giles was flying home to be with his wife, who was diagnosed with a brain tumour.

"It was a horrible moment when he told me. I felt ill," Pietersen wrote. Many papers point the finger of blame for England's display at coach Duncan Fletcher -- the Sunday Times headlined its double page spread: "High Price For Fletcher Folly".

The Zimbabwean has faced criticism for selections including leaving spinner Monty Panesar, a star performer at the WACA, out of the first two tests in favour of Giles. This decision was included in a list of "ten ways in which England got it wrong" compiled by the paper. Fletcher also faced flak from the Sunday Express, which noted that "this England is very much the coach's team, moulded and prepared the way he sees fit".

Duncan on sticky wicket

Cricket

AFP, Perth

Duncan Fletcher has been forced to defend his dual role as England coach and selector as the media searches for a scapegoat to blame for the disastrous Ashes campaign.

With Australia leading the series 2-0 and well on top in the third Test at the WACA ground here, Fletcher has come under attack in England and Australia for everything from poor preparation to ignoring form at the selection table and choosing favourites instead.

The two main selection issues were omitting Monty Panesar for the first two Tests for Ashley Giles and preferring wicketkeeper Geraint Jones to Chris Read because of Jones' superior batting.

It hasn't helped Fletcher that when Panesar got his chance here, he was England's most dangerous bowler taking eight wickets for the match, and that Jones has failed each time he's been at the crease.

Fletcher has gone from national hero to the most maligned man in English cricket in the space of just 18 months and there is every chance he will be one of the casualties of the tour.

Widely hailed as a coaching mastermind when England regained the Ashes in the summer of 2005, the Zimbabwean has been equally widely blamed for losing them in Australia.

So it was no surprise that when Fletcher finally made himself available to speak to the media, questions quickly turned to his position within the England set-up.

Fletcher showed no emotion as he defended his dual role as coach and selector.

"I've got a job to do," he said. "(The rest of this match) is very important and then we've got to go on to the fourth and fifth Tests."

He said he stood by all his selections so far on the tour and said there was no reason why he, as coach, shouldn't also be a selector. "From my point of view we've been quite comfortable with who

we've picked," Fletcher said. "I've been a selector for seven years and people forget we've lost one Test series in 11 with this system so it must have proved pretty successful."

Whether Fletcher's confidence is well-founded is another matter. After Adam Gilchrist's brutal assault on the English bowlers on Saturday, combined with centuries from Michael Clarke and Mike Hussey, English newspapers launched a savage attack.

The Sunday Times headlined its double page spread: "High Price For Fletcher Folly", with Panesar's omission from the first two Tests included in a list of "ten ways in which England got it wrong".

Fletcher also faced flak from the Sunday Express, which noted that "this England is very much the coach's team, moulded and prepared the way he sees fit".

He is now "in dire straits" and at the "mercy of critics", the paper added.

Cook's best to date

Cricket

AFP, Perth

Young English opener Alastair Cook admitted to mixed emotions after scoring what he called the best century of his career against Australia at the WACA ground here Sunday.

Cook defied the Australians for six and a half hours for his 116, his fifth Test century and his first against Australia, only to perish in the third last over of the day.

He said he felt pride at what he had achieved Sunday, but disappointed with himself that he got out so close to the close of play.

"Playing Australia in Australia is quite tough and it's nice to come out with a few runs at the end of the day," Cook said. Cook said facing a bowling attack featuring Shane Warne with

696 Test wickets at one end and Glenn McGrath with 551 at the other was as tough a test as there is in cricket.

"It's hard work, you don't get a respite really," he said. "There are no free runs out there so you're made to work for every run and sometimes you just have to battle through it, and I think I did that quite well today (Sunday)."

Cook showed immense concentration throughout his innings as Perth turned on another hot and humid day.

"You've got to stick to a game plan against them and not get overawed with the situation and just try and play your game in your areas," he said.

"I've been getting out nicking and I thought I left the ball a bit better today."

Cook, who scored a double century against Australia playing for Essex on the Ashes tour in 2005,

said he felt he missed a golden opportunity to go on and make a really big score.

"I'll sit back tonight and think 'yeah I got a hundred' but I wouldn't be human if I didn't have that nagging feeling that I could be walking out tomorrow again to get an even bigger one and get us close to the target," he said.

McGrath, who eventually had Cook caught behind, said he had been impressed with the 21-year-old's concentration.

"I thought he batted exceptionally well -- he applied himself and set himself for a long innings and walked off with a hundred," McGrath said.

"He was prepared to do the hard work, really work hard and wait till we probably bowled a bad ball before he scored and he really applied himself well so I thought it was a big effort."

Pigeon smells the urn

Cricket

REUTERS, Perth

Fast bowler Glenn McGrath said Australia were getting ready to celebrate regaining the Ashes with just five wickets needed to wrap up the series.

McGrath dismissed defiant opener Alastair Cook then night-watchman Matthew Hoggard just before stumps on Sunday to leave Australia poised to win the third Test on the last day on Monday.

England would need to bat through the final day to salvage a draw or pull off a miracle to win after slumping to 265 for five chasing 557 to win.

But McGrath said the Australians were confident of finishing off the tourists on Monday to take an unbeatable 3-0 lead in the five-match series and regain the Ashes they lost last year.

"As soon as that last wicket falls,

hopefully at some stage tomorrow, then we can start celebrating and the Ashes will be back home," McGrath told a news conference after the fourth day at the WACA.

When stumps were drawn on Sunday night, Kevin Pietersen was unbeaten on 37 with Andrew Flintoff on two with only wicketkeeper Geraint Jones and the bowler to come.

McGrath said Australia knew they still had their work cut out getting the next two wickets but were confident of polishing off the tail once they made the breakthrough.

"If we can get some early wickets, then hopefully we can wrap it up," McGrath said.

Australia's bowlers were forced to work hard on Sunday with Cook making 116 and Ian Bell 87 to stall their push for victory.

The pair battled through the first three and a half hours of the day in a 170-run partnership for the second wicket and it was not until the final session that Australia finally turned the screws.

"I thought he (Cook) batted exceptionally well. He set himself up for a long innings and walked off with a hundred," McGrath said.

"He was prepared to do the hard work and wait until we bowled a bad ball before he scored. He really applied himself well."

"And (Ian Bell) has obviously matured a lot and got a lot of confidence in himself after the last 12 months."

"He's come a long way so it's looking good for England in the future. He said Australia had seen in Adelaide that England could bat for a long innings, especially when the wicket was not too quick."

"So we knew that if they applied themselves and got a couple of good partnerships together it was going to be hard work," he said.

"So we just tried to stick to it all day, really keep the pressure on and not let them get too far away from us and we were rewarded with those last two wickets because of that."

Tigers seal

FROM PAGE 17 and Scotland at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur on Sunday:

BANGLADESH

Nafees c Hoffmann b Wright 23
Mehrab c Rogers b Wright 15
Aftab st Smith b Haq 52
Sakib c Smith b Haq 44
Bashar c Smith b Brown 22
Ashrafu not out 38
Rahim c Brown b Rogers 6
Mortuza not out 51
Extras: (lb-7, w-15, nb-5) 27
Total: (For 6 wickets in 50 overs) 278
Did not bat: Rafique, Shahadat, Razzak.
Fall of wickets: 1-42, 2-90, 3-133, 4-175, 5-186, 6-199.

Bowler

O	M	R	W
Blain	9	0	54
Rogers	8	2	38
Wright	10	1	46
Hoffmann	6	0	26
Haq	9	0	57
Brown	8	1	50

Kallis's no to anthem

Cricket

AFP, Johannesburg

South African cricket, already reeling after the national team collapsed to 84 all out in the first Test against India, found itself enmeshed in front page controversy Sunday.

The Sunday Times reported that vice-captain and star all-rounder Jacques Kallis refused to sing the national anthem, while the Afrikaans newspaper Rapport published strong criticism of the sport's officials by spin bowler Nicky Boje, who retired suddenly when he was due to join the team for the Test.

Cricket South Africa (SA) will discuss with Kallis what the player describes as "good and valid personal reasons" why he does not sing the national anthem when it is played before international matches.

The Sunday Times published an email from Kallis to a member of the public who had queried why he did not sing the anthem. Kallis wrote: "It is my choice whether I sing or do not sing the anthem. I certainly do not have to explain my reasons to anyone, especially you. I do have good and valid personal reasons and I intend to keep it that way."

Kallis refused to elaborate on his comments but Cricket SA chief executive Gerald Majola said the issue would be discussed with the player after the Test.

National symbols are a particularly sensitive issue in South Africa with a new anthem and new flag introduced when the country achieved majority rule in 1994. Majola said Cricket SA "insists on having the SA anthem sung." He listed several reasons, including the enhancement and encouragement of nation-building and because it was "a bridge between the players and the

spectators, unifying their support of their nation and of each other."

Majola said these reasons had been explained to the players and there had been no request from any player not to sing the anthem.

Meanwhile, Boje told Rapport he felt he had been harshly treated by the selectors. "At some stage you have to ask yourself where you are going and where your loyalties lie. Mine are no longer with the Proteas."

Boje, who will continue to play domestic cricket for the Eagles franchise, said an unhealthy situation had developed in South African cricket.

He said he believed several players would opt to play their cricket in other countries if they were not selected for the 2007 World Cup in the West Indies.

"With the uncertainty over places and the scramble to be part of the group it seems as though certain players are playing for themselves and their own places -- and that is unhealthy for SA cricket," said Boje.

Capello wants

FROM PAGE 20 he is signing him," coach Fabio Capello told a news conference on Saturday.

"We've got good players but we will sign if it is to improve the squad."

Gago, one of the stars of Argentina's team that won the Under 20 World Cup last year, has drawn comparisons with the Argentine and Real Madrid icon Fernando Redondo for his abundant talent and also his long, lank hairstyle.

Sreesanth

FROM PAGE 17 **SOUTH AFRICA:** First innings 84

INDIA: Second innings (overnight 146-5)

Jaffer c Smith b Nel 4
Sehwag c Gibbs b Nel 33
Dravid c Boucher b Pollock 1
Tendulkar b Pollock 14
Laxman c Smith b Ntini 73
Ganguly c Boucher b Ntini 25
Dhoni c Boucher b Pollock 18
Kumble c Prince b Nel 1
Zaheer c Boucher b Ntini 37
Sreesanth not out 6
V Singh run out 11
Extras: (b-2, lb-10, w-1) 13
Total: (All out in 64.4 overs) 236
Fall of wickets: 1-20, 2-37, 3-41, 4-61, 5-119, 6-147, 7-148, 8-218, 9-219.

Bowler

O	M	R	W
Ntini	15.4	2	77
Nel	19	4	58
Pollock	16	4	33
Kallis	11	2	30
Smith	3	0	26

SOUTH AFRICA: Second innings
Gibbs c Tendulkar b Zaheer 0
Smith c Sehwag b Sreesanth 10
Amla c Dhoni b Sreesanth 17
Kallis not out 24
Prince not out 5
Extras: (lb-3, nb-10) 13
Total: (For 3 wickets in 25 overs) 69
Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-22, 3-34

Bowler

O	M	R	W
Zaheer	8	2	19
Sreesanth	7	3	15
V Singh	7	1	18
Ganguly	1	0	11
Kumble	2	1	3

Umpires: M Benson (ENG), D Harper (AUS).
Match referee: R Mahanama (SRI)

Hosts trail

FROM PAGE 17 batsman Mawoyo who fell to pacer-mohammad Shahjada for 47. Mohammad Sharif took the other wicket of Hove on the last over of the day, caught behind by wicketkeeper Sahagiri.

BRIEF SCORES

ZIMBABWE A: 293 and 106 for two in 49.3 overs (Mawoyo 47, Hove 38, Chibhaba 8 not out, Williams 0 not out; Shahjada 1-20, Sharif 1-22)
BANGLADESH A: First innings 380 all out in 115.5 overs (Javed 173, Jahurul 59, Rajin 10, Tushar 7, Marshall 53, Kapali 1, Sahagir 4, Baisya 3, Sharif 1, Enamul 34, Shahjada