

India's first overseas win in 7 yrs

COLOMBO, Aug 1: India won their first Test in seven years on foreign soil with a massive 253-run win over Sri Lanka on the fifth day of the second Test at the Sinhalese Sports Club Grounds here Sunday, reports AFP.

Set a victory target of 472 in nearly nine hours, Sri Lanka crumbled to India's pace-spin attack to be bowled out for 236 in their second innings with just over an hour to spare.

The Sri Lankan innings folded up tamely in the final two hours despite a brave 93 from Aravinda de Silva.

Leg-spinner Anil Kumble, one of the heroes of India's 3-0 triumph over England earlier in the year, got the winning wicket by trapping tail-ender Pramodya Wickramasinghe leg-before off the first ball of his 39th over.

De Silva continuing from an overnight score of 10 single-handedly led a fightback smashing 16 boundaries in a 321-minute knock.

However his valiant performance failed to prevent India recording their fourth win over Sri Lanka in 10 Tests and go one-up in the three Test series.

Indian skipper Mohammad Azharuddin, who took a tumbling catch at silly mid-off to dismiss Dulip Liyanage off spinner Rajesh Chauhan shortly after tea, drove the final nail into Sri Lanka's coffin by taking an easy catch from the diminutive De Silva.

"Praise be to Allah. This was one of my best wins. I got excellent support from the team," said an elated Azharuddin.

The first Test was abandoned as a draw due to rain in central Kandy. The third Test begins at the P. Saravanamuttu Stadium on Wednesday.

India's three-pronged pace attack comprising veteran Kapil Dev, Manoj Prabhakar and Javagal Srinath laid the foundation for victory before the spin combination of Anil Kumble (leg-break) and Rajesh Chauhan (off-break) wrapped up the tail.

It was all-rounder Major Prabhakar who master-minded India's marvellous performance on the final day with a two-wicket burst in six balls that broke through Sri Lanka's solid middle-order.

Prabhakar capped off a fine all-round show — six wickets in the match and making a masterly 95 in the second innings — by carrying away the man-of-the-match award.

Kumble with a match-haul of 8-172 clinched the best bowler's award.

But the adage catches win matches was never truer for India than on the fifth day with its brilliant catches by Rajesh Chauhan and substitute Woorikeri Raman making up some of the outstanding moments for India in the field.

India made the initial breakthrough by capturing the wicket of overnight batsman Asanka Gurusinha in the morning session.

Gurusinha whacked a straight six over leg-spinner Anil Kumble in his 22nd over but was dismissed in the next over from Kumble for 39 to end through by capturing the wicket of Prabhakar but paid the penalty for checking his shot with the ball flying to a diving wicket-keeper Kiran More.

Ranatunga made 14 with a six and two fours. The fourth-wicket pair produced 53 runs. The hardworking Prabhakar continued Sri Lanka's slide six balls later by claiming the wicket of Hashan Tilakaratne.

Raman, substituting for vice-captain Sachin Tendulkar who was off the field with a troubled ankle, went sliding on one knee to his left to take a marvellous catch at cover point.

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