

Murali in England

AFP, London

Off-spinner Muttiah Muralitharan has joined the Sri Lanka team in England, a statement issued by the tourists confirmed Sunday.

Muralitharan, 30, had been having treatment in Australia after suffering a dislocation and torn ligaments in his left shoulder during the Sharjah Cup final against Pakistan last month.

"The Sri Lankan team management confirmed that Muttiah Muralitharan had arrived in England yesterday (Saturday)," the statement said.

Tour manager Chandra Schaffter added: "He is in good spirits and looks forward to playing as soon as possible."

"He was wearing a sling and it was removed. His fitness will be assessed again in four days time."

Sri Lanka are currently in a strong position in the first Test having made England follow-on.

Earlier this week Schaffter suggested that there was no chance of Muralitharan being fit for the Second Test of the three match series at Edgbaston on May 30.

And he added that he would not be surprised if the bowler missed the Third Test at Old Trafford on June 13.

After the Test series Sri Lanka are involved in a triangular one-day tournament also featuring England and India, where Muralitharan could still take part.

Muralitharan is one of the most effective bowlers currently in world cricket.

In 73 Tests he has taken 412 wickets at an average of 23.38. He has taken five wickets in an innings 33 times and 10-wicket hauls in a match ten times.

Ranatunga calls 'em amateurs

AFP, London

Former Sri Lanka captain Arjuna Ranatunga has accused England of bowling like 'amateurs' in the First Test at Lord's.

Nasser Hussain's men start Sunday's play 53 without loss in their second innings still 227 runs short of making Sri Lanka bat again after the tourists piled up 555 for eight in their first innings.

And Ranatunga said England's bowlers had helped the Sri Lankan batsmen on their way.

"What Nasser Hussain could not have expected was that his team would bowl like such amateurs, with so many down the leg-side," Ranatunga wrote in the Observer newspaper here Sunday.

"They were bowlers' mistakes but to bowl repeatedly so short to Sri Lanka's batsmen was a tactical mistake," Ranatunga added.

"If conditions don't favour torment, better the batsmen should be teased and tempted than allowed to watch deliveries sail harmlessly by."

"They (England) have to be more imaginative than waiting for us to self-destruct. Nuwan Zoysa's two huge hooked sixes (off Matthew Hoggard) showed how even our tailenders had no problem with the short stuff."

"For all their experience, England have showed Sri Lanka how not to bowl on this wicket," Ranatunga insisted.

Pabna cricket

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

PYC (Green) defeated Shikkharti Cricket Club by 29 runs in the Pepsi First Division Cricket League at the Pabna Stadium yesterday.

Winning the toss, PYC decided to bat first and scored 163 runs for nine wickets in 46.2 overs.

In reply, Shikkharti managed 134 runs all out in 41.2 overs.

Hinds grinds India down

Cricket

AFP, Kingston

Opener Wavell Hinds smashed an attractive 113 as India's decision to put the West Indies in to bat backfired in the fifth and final Test here on Saturday.

The 25-year-old Jamaican cracked two sixes and 14 fours in his second Test hundred to help his team post an impressive 287-4 at stumps on the opening day at the Sabina Park.

Skipper Carl Hooper was unbeaten on 14 and Shivnarine Chanderpaul on four. They already have two double-century stands to their credit in the series.

The West Indies lost three wickets for 18 runs in the closing session, but not before Hinds had put his team in a sound position.

Off-spinner Harbhajan Singh dismissed Hinds and Ramnaresh Sarwan (65), while left-arm fast bowler Ashish Nehra removed Brian Lara (9) for the third time in four innings to reduce the hosts from 246-1 to 264-4.

India came across a chance to improve their position, but Shiv Das dropped a prolific Hooper on 10 in the covers off Nehra.

Sarwan again played an exciting cameo before falling immediately after completing his fourth half-century against the tourists. He has so far hit 13 fifties in his 22 Tests, but is still without a century.

Lara struggled during his brief stay at the crease before edging the fast bowler wicket-keeper Ajay Ratra, who dived to his left to bring off a low catch.

The late reversals, however, failed to severely affect the West Indies as India needed wickets in the first session to gain an upper hand, but were thwarted by Hinds.

Hinds put on 111 for the opening wicket with Chris Gayle (68) and 135 for the second with Sarwan to make India skipper Sourav Ganguly rue his decision to field after winning the toss for the first time in five matches.

His stand with Gayle was the West Indies' best for the opening wicket in the ongoing series, shattering Ganguly's hopes of capturing early wickets on a lively track.

Hinds became off-spinner Harbhajan Singh's 100th Test victim as he was caught by Wasim Jaffer at long-off in the last session while going for his third six.

The left-hander, dropped for the first three Tests, regained his place with an entertaining 175 in a three-

day game against the tourists at St Lucia last month.

He continued to relish the Indian attack, slamming an impressive 65 in his comeback Test at Antigua before exposing the tourists' bowling limitations on his home ground.

The West Indies were indebted to their left-handed openers for



PHOTO: AFP

Security people push back fans who ran onto the field after West Indies' Wavell Hinds had scored a century on the opening day of the fifth and final Test against India in Kingston on May 18.

getting off to a flying start as both Gayle and Hinds dominated the Indian bowling with a wide range of attacking shots.

Gayle struck 13 fours in his sixth Test half-century before being caught steering left-arm fast bowler Zaheer Khan by Jaffer at gully in the afternoon. He also completed 1,000 runs in his 21st Test.

The tourists had to wait for more than a session for their first success before Zaheer dismissed Gayle, suffering from cramps after completing his half-century.

The five-match series is presently tied at 1-1, with India winning the second Test and the West Indies the third.

Sarwan d C das b Harbhajan 65
Lara c Ratra b Nehra 9
Hooper not out 14
Chanderpaul not out 4
Extras: (nb-3, w-5, lb-6) 14
Total: (for 4 wkts) 287

Fall of wickets: 1-111, 2-246, 3-264, 4-264

BOWLING O M R W

Sarwan 21 6 66 0
Nehra 20 8 54 1
Zaheer 18 2 66 1
Ganguly 6 2 12 0
Harbhajan 22 3 83 2

Umpires: David Shepherd (Eng) and Russell Tiffin (Zim)
Match referee: Ranjan Madugalle (Sri)

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