

He didn't mean that

Cricket

AFP, Hobart

Indian captain Saurav Ganguly on Sunday denied claiming that India could be considered the world's No.1 Test cricket team if it beats Australia in the current series.

India goes to the Melbourne Boxing Day Test 1-0 up after winning the second Adelaide Test by four wickets last Tuesday.

After that victory, Ganguly appeared to suggest that if India won the four-Test series then his team could be regarded as the best in the world.

India are sixth on the International Cricket Council's World Test Championship table and at best can jump to third if they win the series 3-0.

After his team drew the three-day match against Australia A here on

Sunday, Ganguly said his comments were indicative of where India was aiming, not where it would be.

"We're not number one, that's for sure because the number one team is Australia," Ganguly said when pressed on the issue.

"I don't know what people have understood when I said we wanted to be at the top because any side should look to be the best.

"I hope one day we can be number one. I never said that (the series) had the number one tag. I'm not stupid enough to do that and if people read between lines I can't help that."

Ganguly went on to praise Australia for the way it has played under Steve Waugh and Ricky Ponting in the one-day game.

"The way they've played over the last few years has been phenomenal, winning 16 Test matches in a row and winning a World Cup without dropping a match."

"But you have to give us credit because if any side has competed well against Australia in the past three or four years it's been India."

"That's a good sign for us because we are a young side so if we can compete with the best side in the world we should be thinking of getting close to being termed a very strong side."

"But we have some high standards to match because the standards set for Australia in the last five years under Steve (Waugh) and under (Ricky) Ponting in the one-day arena have been phenomenal."

Ganguly said he was happy with what his team had gained from the three-day match here.

He said Sachin Tendulkar was starting to hit the ball well "which is a good sign" and praised opener Akash Chopra for his doggedness after he made 25 on Sunday in a two-hour stint in which he took 64 minutes to get off the mark.

Biman back on track

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Biman got back on the winning track in the First Division Chess League at the NSC Conference room yesterday.

They led the table with 44.5 points after beating Rajshahi Daba Unnayan Sangstha by 3-1 at the end of the 13th round games.

GM Ziaur Rahman beat Rabiul Islam, IMs Reefat bin Sattar and Abdullah Al Rakib won against Shibli Noman, and Abdul Muttalib while IM Enamul Hossain Rajib lost against Kavar Ali.

Leonine Chess Club followed the leaders with 41 points as they beat Monipur Chess Club by 4-0 points. GMs Alexi Barsov, Alexander Fominyh and Niaz Mursheed beat Sanatan Zahid, Abdur Rob and Mahmudul Hasan while Abdul Maleq beat Shadul Islam.

Bangladesh Ansars were in the third position with 36.5 points.

In the other matches: Titas Club beat Dhaka University Chess Team by 3-1, Destiny 2000 Limited beat Farashgonj Sporting Club by 2.5-1.5, Sonali Bank beat Anushilan Daba Krira Chakra by 4-0, Kamalpur Samaj Kallayan and Krira Sangha drew with Nakhla para Jubo Kallayan Sangha by 2-2 and Narayanganj City Chess Club drew with Fighter Krira Chakra by 2-2 points.

Abahani thank

FROM PAGE 13

Victoria D, who then fired an unstoppable angular shot past Raju (2-0).

Red Card: Idris (Victoria).

Yellow cards: Pranotosh, Joy and Maxim (Abahani), Mehedi and Gobinda (Victoria).

Clarke ton

FROM PAGE 13

December 26.

SCOREBOARD

Final Scorecard at stumps Sunday on the third and final day of three-day match between Australia A and India at Bellerive Oval here:

AUSTRALIA A: First innings 311 for 5 declared (Love 94, Rogers 70, Hussey 67)

INDIA: First innings 245 (Patel 49, Chopra 46; Nicholson 4-25, Tait 3-85)

AUSTRALIA A: Second innings

Rogers c Chopra b Balaji 2

Hussey c Tendulkar b Pathan 7

Love b Balaji 11

Hodge b Pathan 33

Clarke not out 131

White c Dasgupta b Nehra 5

Secombe c Sehwaq b Kartik 27

Nicholson c Patel b Balaji 7

Wright not out 10

Extras: (b-1, lb-1, nb-6) 8

Total: (For 7 wickets in 65 overs) 241

Fall of wickets: 1-5, 2-9, 3-28, 4-97, 5-112, 6-150, 7-195

Bowler O M R W

Pathan 14 1 40 2

Balaji 22 2 87 3

Kartik 12 3 53 1

Nehra 15 0 49 1

Tendulkar 2 0 10 0

INDIA: Second innings

Chopra c Secombe b Rofe 25

Ramesh c Hussey b Wright 22

Dasgupta not out 19

Patel not out 0

Total: (For 2 wickets in 33 overs) 66

Fall of wickets: 1-22, 2-66

Bowler O M R W

Nicholson 8 5 19 0

Wright 8 4 17 1

Tait 5 1 22 0

Rofe 8 4 5 1

White 4 2 3 0

Result: Match drawn.

Man-of-the-match: Thilan Samaraweera.

Man-of-the-series: Muttiah Muralitharan.

Premiership

Bolton again a pain

Football

AFP, London

Bolton took the edge off Arsenal's festive celebrations by grabbing a late equaliser against the Premiership leaders at the end of one of the most memorable weeks in the club's history.

A Henrik Pedersen equaliser seven minutes from time rescued a deserved point for Sam Allardyce's side, who had knocked Chelsea off the top with their last-gasp win at Stamford Bridge last weekend and then booked their place in the League Cup semi-finals in mid-week.

Allardyce said: "We have taken four points off Chelsea and Arsenal and that's an early Christmas present for me."

"I am delighted. Going 1-0 down to Arsenal and trying to come back is a hugely difficult task."

"But we came back strongly which shows the character and confidence of the team now."

A Hernan Crespo header was enough to ensure Chelsea took advantage of Arsenal's slip with a 1-0 win at Fulham that moves them back level with the Gunners at the top of the table.

The two London giants both have 39 points, and a goal difference of +19 with 31 goals scored and 12 conceded.

But Manchester United can leapfrog both of them and ensure they spend Christmas at the top of the table by beating Tottenham at White Hart Lane on Sunday.

Bolton had looked a good bet to beat the Premiership leaders for the second week running as they comfortably dominated Arsenal for almost an hour at the Reebok stadium.

In trademark style however it was Arsenal who went ahead through a 57th minute counter-attack that finished with Robert Pires sweeping home the rebound after Freddie Ljungberg's shot had been blocked by Jussi Jaaskelainen.

But Danish forward Pedersen lashed in a left-foot volley from the

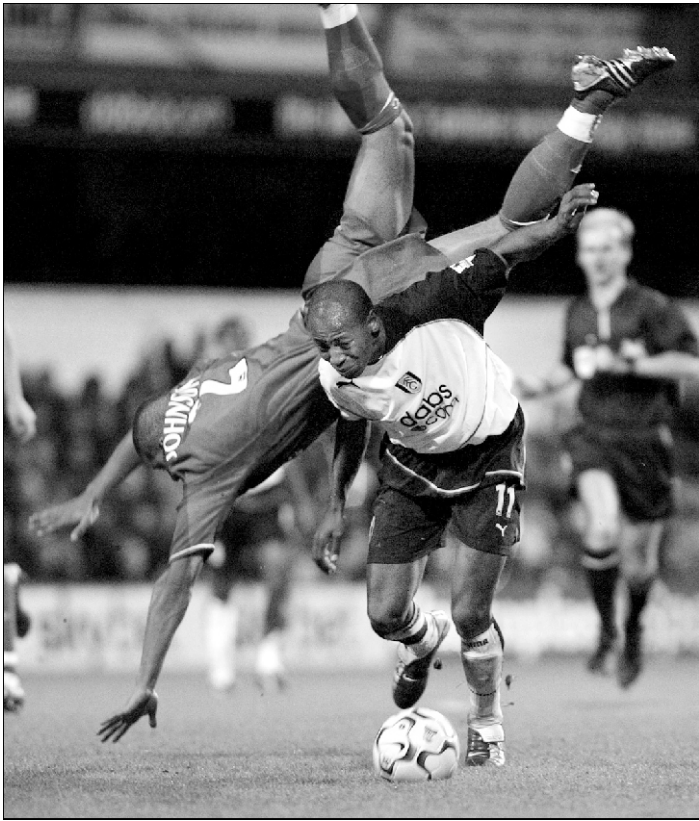


PHOTO: AFP

Chelsea's Glen Johnson (L) taking a heavy fall following a challenge from Luis Boa Morte (R) of Fulham at London on December 20.

edge of the area to ensure Bolton's efforts did not go unrewarded.

Chelsea had gone into their match with Fulham having drawn one and lost two in their previous three matches.

But talk of the first crisis of the Roman Abramovich era was cut short just after the hour mark when Argentine hitman Crespo got across Andy Melville to meet Wayne Bridge's cross with a header that went in off the post.

The win was however marred by Irish winger Damien Duff dislocating his shoulder.

But there was compensation of a sort with the revelation by Chelsea's eccentric manager Claudio Ranieri that Duff has some very influential backing in the form of the Italian's 84-year-old mother.

Serie A

Totti's twin treat

Football

AFP, Rome

AS Roma captain Francesco Totti struck both goals during a 2-0 win at struggling Empoli Saturday to crown his side Serie A winter champions and maintain their unbeaten record going into the three week break.

Roma have a six point lead on AC Milan, with Juventus a further point behind. On Sunday Milan and Juventus should also have difficulties in overcoming Udinese and Lecce respectively.

Roma, who possess the second best scoring record and have only

let in four goals, had been favourites against an Empoli side with just one win all season.

The Serie A leaders got off to an attacking start with Totti opening their account after 22 minutes when he converted a penalty awarded for a foul on John Carew.

But Empoli fought back with Roma goalie Ivan Pelizzoli having to save attempts by Tommaso Rocchi and Antonio Di Natale.

Totti put his side 2-0 up in first half injury time chipping in a pass from Antonio Cassano, and the Roma captain almost grabbed a hattrick after 58 minutes.

The loss leaves Empoli second from bottom with their 10th loss of the season.



PHOTO: AFP

HOW COULD YOU? (L to R) Empoli's Manuel Belleri, Massimiliano Cappellini and Fabrizio Ficini argue with referee Piero Di Genova (R) after he had awarded a penalty to AS Roma during their Serie A match in Empoli on December 20.

Rafiq, Naimur wreck Ctg

FROM PAGE 13

venues across the country yesterday:

DHAKA VS CHITTAGONG
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium

DHAKA: First innings 143 all out in 80.3 overs (Al Shahrir 35, Halim 39 n.o., Mahmud 26, Alamgir 5-44, Arafat 3-35, Sabbir 1-19).

CHITTAGONG: First innings 134 all out in 65.3 overs (Faisal 52, Masum 29, Azam 27; Rafique 6-45, Mahmud 3-31)

DHAKA: Second innings (overnight 220-6 in 67 overs)

Rashedul run out 12

Al Shahrir c Anisul b Sabbir 87

Sanwar c Sabbir b Sabbir 52

Halim c Masum b Sabbir 8

Naimur c sub b Sabbir 38

Neeayamur c sub b Arafat 8

Sajjad not out 33

Mahmud b Arafat 45

Fahim b Arafat 17

Rafique lbw b Arafat 3

Extras: (b-12, lb-2, w-1) 15

Total: (For 9 wickets in 89.4 overs dec.) 318

Fall of wickets: 1-29, 2-145, 3-160, 4-198, 5-211, 6-211, 7-289, 8-314, 9-318

Bowler O M R W

Alamgir 13 2 46 0

Sabbir 37 7 106 4

Arafat 30.4 5 126 4

Faisal 2 0 9 0

Debabrotro 7 3 17 0

CHITTAGONG: Second innings

Anisul lbw b Sanwar 3

Masum c Al-Shahrir b Rafique 4

Azam c & b Rafique 12

Faisal c Rashedul b Naimur 43

Akram b Naimur 1

Minhazul c Neeayamur b Rafique 10

Sabbir b Naimur 4

Shahibul c Naimur b Rafique 0

Arafat not out 14

Alamgir b Naimur 1

Dababrotro c Mahmud b Naimur 4

Extras: (lb-4, w-1) 5

Total: (All out in 37.2 overs) 101

Fall of wickets: 1-11, 2-11, 3-47, 4-63, 5-70, 6-76, 7-81, 8-82, 9-85

Bowler O M R W

Neeayamur 2 1 1 0

Shahrir 5 1 27 1

Rafique 17 6 39 4

Mahmud 5 1 14 0

Naimur 8.2 1 16 5

Result: Dhaka won by 226 runs

Man-of-the-match: Mohammad Rafique (Dhaka)

RAJSHAHI VS SYLHET

Venue: Cricket Garden, Rangpur

SYLHET: First innings 102 all out in 85.1 overs (Parvez 31, Hadi 19, Mousa 12; Aminul 2-7, Shahjada 3-23, Saifullah 4-43)

RAJSHAH: First innings 200 for nine dec in 81.2 overs (Nuruzzaman 26, Hasanuzzaman 77, Shamimul 33 n.o., Tapash 2-37, Nabil 5-41, Wadud 2-26)

SYLHET: Second innings 233 all out in 97 overs (Parvez 91, Himel 36, Tushar 34, Nasirul 24; Saifullah 3-83, Shahjada 3-41)

RAJSHAH: Second innings

Kabir c Masud b Tapan 4

Zharul c Tapan b Rezaul 9

Rafiqul lbw b Tapan 29

Nuruzzaman c Masud b Nabil 25

Hasanuzzaman c Rahman b Wadud 6

K Masud c Hadi b Wadud 0

Shamsul b Wadud 0

Sajjad lbw b Tapan 5

Aminul not out 25

Imran c Mahubub b Rezaul 5

Saifullah b Tapan 0

Extras: (b-1, lb-7, nb-1, w-5) 14

Total: (All out in 53.4 overs) 122

Fall of wickets: 1-12, 2-138, 3-400, 4-428, 5-456, 6-582, 7-605, 8-606

Bowler O M R W

Tapan 15.4 3 24 4

Rezaul 12 5 15 2

Nabil 12 4 28 1

Parvez 2 1 1 0

Imtiaz 1 0 5 0

Wadud 11 3 37 3

Result: Sylhet won by 13 runs.

Man-of-the-match: Parvez Ahmed (Sylhet)

KHULNA VS BARISAL

Venue: Shamsul Huda Stadium, Jessore

KHULNA: First innings (overnight 143-4 in 61 overs)

Sajjadul c Shahin b Anisur 5

Raju run out 4

Bashar c Anisur b Mustadir 28

Tushar not out 103

Hasanuzzaman c Nahidul b Arman 17

Hasibul run out 42

Razzak c Jamal b Kamal 5

Monirul st. Shaheen b Kamal 0

Extras: (b-1, lb-2, nb-7, w-5) 15

Total: (For 7 wickets in 85.3 overs dec) 219

Fall of wickets: 1-5, 2-24, 3-79, 4-106, 5-209

Bowler O M R W

Bikas 11 1 33 0

Anisur 11 1 26 1

Jamal 9 3 17 0

Kamal 11.3 1 27 2

Mustadir 24 4 62 1

Arman 18 3 50 1

Imran 1 0 1 0

BARISAL: First innings

Imran run out 25

Jamal c Tushar b Razzak 2

Nahidul not out 35

Prosenjit lbw b Razzak 2

Faruque st. Hasibul b Tahmim 1

Mustadir not out 28

Extras: (b-2, lb-3, nb-4, w-3) 12

Total: (For 4 wickets in 70 overs) 112

Fall of wickets: 1-26, 2-43, 3-45, 4-46

Bowler O M R W

Monjurul 7 3 7 0

Ashrafal Haq 11 6 7 0

Razzak 23 8 40 2

Tahmim 15 5 39 1

Bashar 4 3 8 0

Hasanuzzaman 3 3 0 0

Raju Parvez 2 1 1 0

Monirul 2 1 5 0

Result: Match drawn.

Man-of-the-match: Tushar Imran (Khulna)

Murali scripts SL win

FROM PAGE 13

Tail-ender Muralitharan made an entertaining 21 not out off just 10 balls with two sixes and a four.

Giles, Kirtley and Flintoff finished with two wickets apiece.

SCOREBOARD

Final scoreboard on the fourth day of the third and final Test between Sri Lanka and England at the Sinhalese Sports Club ground on Sunday:

ENGLAND: First innings 265 (Flintoff 77, Trescottick 70; Muralitharan 3-40, Vaas 3-64)

SRI LANKA: First innings (overnight 563-5)

Skara c Trescottick b Kirtley 31</