

SA A get Eng in trouble

Cricket

AFP, Potchefstroom

England were in danger of defeat despite a fighting innings by captain Michael Vaughan on the second day of their three-day match against South Africa A at Sedgars Park on Sunday.

England finished the day on 154 for seven in their second innings, an overall lead of 98, with Vaughan unbeaten on 82.

After trailing by 56 on the first innings, they lost their first three second-innings wickets for three runs and were later 64 for five.

Vaughan and wicketkeeper Geraint Jones shared a stand of 45 to avoid total embarrassment for the tourists -- but they will go into the first Test against South Africa in Port Elizabeth Friday with concern over the form of some of their leading batsmen.

Marcus Trescothick, Mark Butcher, Graham Thorpe and Andrew Flintoff all failed for the second time in the match, while Andrew Strauss, who top-scored with 50 in the first innings, was out for naught.

On the credit side, England's bowlers did well in hot weather to prevent South Africa A from taking a bigger lead. Starting the day on 133 for two, the home side were bowled out for 281, losing their last five wickets for 20 runs.

Flintoff dismissed three of South Africa A's top five batsmen to finish

with three for 50, while Simon Jones ran through the tail, taking three for 49.

Flintoff gained impressive pace and bounce. He caught home captain Ashwell Prince off his own bowling, then had top-scorer Martin van Jaarsveld caught at short leg for 71 before Jean-Paul Duminy was bowled off an inside edge.

Axed South African Test wicketkeeper Mark Boucher made a dogged unbeaten 26 off 74 balls and left-handed Albie Morkel slammed 47 off 48 balls.

England made a disastrous start when Trescothick was trapped leg before by left-arm swing bowler Charl Willoughby in the first over and Strauss was caught at short leg off off Mhlati in the second over. Butcher, who missed the four-Test series against the West Indies because of injury, failed for the third time in as many innings on tour when he was out for a 10-ball duck, another Willoughby lbw victim.

Willoughby struck again when he bowled Thorpe for 11. Flintoff slammed five fours as he made 21 off 21 balls before he was bowled by Morkel.

SCOREBOARD

England made a dogged unbeaten 26 off 74 balls and left-handed Albie Morkel slammed 47 off 48 balls.

England: First innings 225 (Strauss 50, G Jones 41; Langeveldt 5-48)

SA A: First innings (overnight 133-2)

Van Jaarsveld c Thorpe b Flintoff 71

Ontong c Strauss b Giles 56

Prince c and b Flintoff 33

Duminy b Flintoff 7

Boucher not out 26

Morkel c Vaughan b Hoggard 47

Thomas c Strauss b Jones 12

Langeveldt lbw b Giles 4

Mhlati b S Jones 1

Willoughby c Hoggard b S Jones 0

Extras: (lb-2, nb-12, w-1) 20

Total: (All out in 73 overs) 281

Fall of wickets: 1-11, 2-117, 3-169, 4-183, 5-187, 6-261, 7-275, 8-280, 9-281

Bowler O M R W

Hoggard 19 5 66 1

Harmison 17 3 69 1

S Jones 15 1 49 3

Flintoff 13 1 50 3

Giles 9 2 40 2

ENGLAND: Second innings

Trescothick lbw b Willoughby 2

Strauss c Duminy b Mhlati 0

Butcher lbw b Willoughby 0

Vaughan not out 82

Thorpe b Willoughby 11

Flintoff b Morkel 21

G Jones c Boucher b Mhlati 26

Giles c Van Jaarsveld b Thomas 2

Hoggard not out 3

Extras: (lb-2, nb-4, w-1) 7

Total: (For 7 wts in 44 overs) 154

Fall of wickets: 1-2, 2-3, 3-3, 4-29, 5-64, 6-109, 7-125

To bat: S Jones, Harmison

Bowler O M R W

Willoughby 10 1 47 3

Mhlati 12 3 38 2

Langeveldt 8 3 15 0

Morkel 6 0 31 1

Thomas 6 1 15 1

Ontong 2 0 6 0

Remaining minutes of Real-Sociedad on Jan 5

REUTERS, Madrid

Real Madrid will play the final seven minutes of their league match against Real Sociedad on January 5 after a bomb threat forced the evacuation of their Santiago Bernabeu stadium on Sunday.

About 70,000 people poured out of Real's stadium in central Madrid with the match level at 1-1 after Basque newspaper Gara received a warning from a caller claiming to represent ETA who said there was a bomb in the ground.

Representatives of Madrid and Real Sociedad, a side from the Basque city of San Sebastian, agreed at a meeting at the Spanish Football Federation on Monday to play the remainder of the match at 6.00 pm on January 5.

Ticket holders from the original match will be able to watch the seven remaining minutes of play, including four minutes of injury time.

Real Madrid's team, including England captain David Beckham and Brazilian striker Ronaldo, were left standing around in the street in their soccer kit after the bomb scare. Hundreds of fans streamed across the pitch on their way to the exits. Tourists and fans took advantage of the opportunity for a photograph between the famous stadium's goalposts.

B'DESH-INDIA FIRST TEST SCOREBOARD

FROM PAGE 13

Mashud c Karthik b Pathan 69

Manzarul c Karthik b Zaheer 5

Mushfiq c Dravid b Harbhajan 6

Rafique c Sehwar b Kumble 11

Baisya c Tendulkar b Pathan 29

Mashrafe not out 0

Extras: (lb-5, nb-5, w-2) 12

Total: (All out in 53.2 overs) 202

Fall of wickets: 1-4, 2-24, 3-24, 4-24, 5-36, 6-100, 7-117, 8-133, 9-202

Bowler O M R W

Pathan 15 5 51 6

Zaheer 13.2 2 60 1

Kumble 13 4 42 2

Harbhajan 12 3 44 1

Result: India won by an innings and 140 runs and lead the 2-Test series 1-0.

Man-of-the-match: Irfan Pathan.

Second Test: Dec 17-21, Chittagong, Bangladesh.

Umpires: Jeremy Lloyds (England) and Aleem Dar (Pakistan).

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Primera Liga Scare spoils the end

Football

REUTERS, Madrid

Real Madrid's Primera Liga match against Real Sociedad was abandoned on Sunday with the scores level at 1-1 after police received a warning that a bomb would explode at the stadium at 2000 GMT.

Close to 70,000 fans together with players and officials from both clubs evacuated the Bernabeu stadium a short time after Basque newspaper Gara had received the warning phone call in the name of the Basque separatist group ETA.

Police searched the stadium with sniffer dogs but no explosive device was found in the vicinity of the stadium.

"The police have said they have completed their search and have not found anything," Real Madrid president Florentino Perez told reporters.

"The best thing we can do now is to put this nightmare behind us," the police said the threat was a credible one and that's why we decided to evacuate the stadium a quarter of an hour before the deadline. The evacuation plan worked to perfection.

Spanish football authorities will hold a meeting on Monday to decide if the remaining three minutes of the game will be played at a later date or if the result will be allowed to stand.

If the result remains at 1-1, Real will have dropped to fourth place in the standings, 11 points behind leaders Barcelona, who snatched a late 2-1 win at Albacete on Saturday.

Household names including David Beckham, Ronaldo, Roberto Carlos and Michael Owen were all on the pitch at the time the match against

the Basque side was abandoned.

The players left the stadium in their kit and had to wait in the street before being allowed to return when the police had given the all-clear.

ETA has targeted the Bernabeu stadium before.

In May 2002, an ETA car bomb exploded nearby hours before a European Champions League semi-final between Real Madrid and Barcelona and 17 people were treated for shock or slight injuries.

ETA had warned of that attack in a call to Gara.

On Sunday Real took the lead just before the break when Brazilian striker Ronaldo cracked home with his left foot after controlling a Michel Salgado cross with his chest.

Sociedad levelled the match midway through the second half when Turkish striker Nihat Kahveci smashed home with an acrobatic finish.

Catalans Espanyol moved into second place in the league after giving an assured performance in their 2-1 victory at home to struggling Real Mallorca.

Argentine defender Mauricio Pochettino gave Espanyol the lead when he headed in from a corner in the first half and midfielder Oscar Serrano made it 2-0 eight minutes later when he smashed in after Ivan de la Pena had hit the bar after a brilliant solo run.

Earlier Valencia had put their European woes behind them to notch their fourth Primera Liga win in a row with a 1-0 victory at home to base-side Numancia.

Centre-half Carlos Marchena scored the winner on 21 minutes when he headed in from point-blank range at the far post after Numancia keeper had palmed a Vicente free kick

off the line.

The win put Claudio Ranieri's side -- who exited the Champions League midweek -- into third spot in the table, 10 points behind Barca.

Sociedad, who beat Real Madrid 4-1 at the end of last season, dominated the first half at the Bernabeu, but they sparked into life on the half-hour.

Ronaldo had looked certain to score when Sociedad keeper Asier Riesgo found himself stranded outside his area after he tried to clear the ball, but the Brazilian rushed his shot and fired the ball over the bar.

He made no mistake, though, when he was given another chance two minutes later after Salgado had clipped a fine cross into the heart of the area.

Controlling the ball with his chest he took a step back as the ball dropped and then fired home with his left foot.

Real had several good chances to extend their lead at the start of the second half, Zinedine Zidane forcing a fine save from Asier Riesgo when he shot on the half-volley and Beckham going close with a free kick.

But it was Sociedad who found the net midway through the half when striker Darko Kovacevic nodded the ball down to Nihat who smashed home with a spectacular right-foot finish.

TOP SIX

Spanish football league standings after Sunday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Table with 6 columns: Team, Played, Won, Drawn, Lost, Goals For, Goals Against, Points. Rows include Barcelona, Espanyol, Valencia, Real, Sevilla, Real Betis.

Malik cleared for 1st Test

Cricket

AFP, Perth

Pakistan off-spinner Shoaib Malik is clear to play in the first Test against Australia starting Thursday as the results of tests on his bowling action will not be known for at least a week, officials here said.

All-rounder Malik was cited for a suspect topspin action following a one-day series in Sri Lanka in October and was tested for two hours by human movement specialists at the University of Western Australia on Monday.

Although analysts said they should know the angle of his elbow extension within a few days, it was unlikely the

report would be complete for at least a week.

Human movement specialist Daryl Foster, who conducted the test which saw highly reflective markers attached to the 24-year-old's body, said the report would go to the Pakistan Cricket Board who would then pass it on to the International Cricket Council.

Foster said the process would take time but Malik would be free to bowl against Australia in the interim.

"The rules say until the report goes through to the ICC he can still bowl in the Test match," Foster said.

"The report hasn't gone to the Pakistan board, I doubt whether it will go there before the start of the (first) Test match."

"It takes a couple of days to digitise

all the information and write the report and send it to Pakistan.

"Then they've got to send it to the ICC so if it gets there before Christmas it will be done well."

Earlier this year the university carried out the same tests on Sri Lankan spinner Muttiah Muralitharan, clearing him to use his controversial "doosra" delivery.

Whether Malik is allowed to bowl in the second Test, starting in Melbourne on Boxing Day will depend on the report's findings and timing.

Even if Malik's topspinner is found to be flawed, he could still bowl off-breaks or play solely as a batsman.

He batted at number six in last week's recent tour match against Western Australia and is expected to do the same against Australia.

A pitch too good

FROM PAGE 13

Irfan Pathan, who finished with a match haul of 11, said that it was the best wicket he had bowled on in Asia.

Although the home side was on the receiving end of Irfan's venom, coach David Whatmore took it on the chin.

"It was brilliant wicket. Even on the fourth day there was good bounce when usually wickets in this part of the world die after two days," said the 50-year-old Australian.

Pakistan legend Wasim Akram, who took a hat-trick on this very ground a few years ago, also spoke highly of the pitch.

"It was superb and ideal for seam bowling. And any batsman with a sound technique could have made good runs on this surface," told the sultan of swing turned TV commentator.

Gilly wary

FROM PAGE 13

The team's management maintain he is fit and injury-free.

Langer said earlier this week he agreed with the way Akhtar had been used so far, arguing that he puts everything he has into each delivery -- making him a formidable opponent.

But Gilchrist also noted the potential of Pakistan's batsmen to steal a match, despite their largely mediocre form so far.

"From what I've seen of their batting -- their batting has that flair where they can take it away from you in a short space of time," he said.

The Pakistanists rested on Monday although key off-spinner Shoaib Malik headed to the University of Western Australia to have his action tested by experts in human movement for any illegalities.

The Australian team also assembled in Perth for their first training session at the Western Australian Cricket Association ground ahead of Thursday's first Test.

The Australians have already named their 12 players for the Test but slight question marks linger over the fitness of opener Matthew Hayden who has a hamstring strain.

Hayden sat out the team's net session on Monday but took part in some fielding drills where he seemed to move freely.

The other question mark for Australia is whether pace bowler Brett Lee will be brought into the attack on a lively Perth wicket.

Local reports suggested it was unlikely with the home side instead opting for a three-pronged pace attack of Glenn McGrath, Jason Gillespie, Michael Kasprovic and leg-spinner Shane Warne in order to keep an extra batsman in case Akhtar or his fellow attack bowler Mohammad Sami take early wickets.

Serie A

Milan run riot

Football

REUTERS, Milan

AC Milan crushed Fiorentina 6-0 at the San Siro on Sunday with Andrea Shevchenko and Clarence Seedorf scoring two goals each.

The Italian champions still remain four points behind leaders Juventus, who won 1-0 at Bologna.

Ukrainian Shevchenko, widely tipped to be named European Footballer of the Year on Monday, took his season tally to 11 goals as Milan turned in their best performance of the season.

Juventus needed a superbly struck 86th minute free-kick from the winner of last year's Golden Ball, Czech Pavel Nedved, to win at Bologna and maintain their advantage over Milan before the two teams meet at the Delle Alpi stadium on Saturday.

Inter Milan drew for a remarkable 12th time in 15 games with a late Christian Vieri strike giving them a 2-2 draw away to lowly Siena, who had defender Stefano Argilli sent off in the 57th minute.

Brazilian Adriano, who had opened the scoring, missed a 59th minute penalty and Tore Andre Flo's 87th minute header looked to have given Siena a 2-1 win until Vieri struck in injury time.

challenges from Juve's French defenders Jonathan Zebina and Lillian Thuram.

Then with four minutes of the match remaining referee Tiziano Piero blew for a foul on the edge of the area as Bologna defender Ciro Capuano challenged Juve's Swedish striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic for a header.

It was a harsh decision and after lengthy protests, Nedved blasted a right-foot drive past Gianluca Pagliuca to give Juventus a vital victory.

Earlier Nedved had a struck the post with a header while Mourad Meghni forced a great save out of Juventus keeper Gianluigi Buffon.

Inter's latest point leaves them well out of the title running in fifth place and once again they paid for their poor defending.

Shevchenko's second and Milan's fifth came after a smart exchange with Crespo and then Seedorf tapped in a Massimo Ambrosini pass to make it 6-0 in the 83rd minute.

Bologna defied their lowly position with an aggressive display against Juventus but they were left fuming at three refereeing decisions which proved to be decisive.

"Twice striker Giacomo Cipriani felt he should have had a penalty in the second half after he went down under

Magura soccer

OUR CORRESPONDENT

The match between Shaheed Mintu Sangha and Mohammadpur Ekadosh in the Shaheed Mukul Smriti Football League ended as a goalless draw at the Magura Government college playground yesterday.

Nirmanaduali Sporting club take on Nirmanaduali Ekadosh today at the same venue.

Hockey camp

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

A 15-day long hockey camp for under-16 players began at the Gaibandha Stadium yesterday.

About 25 players are participating in the programme being conducted by the District Sports Association.