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Almost a good day for the Tigers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT from Ctg

The wise words of Wasim Akram in his 'ministry of cricket' on the second of the Chittagong Test had an impact for the home side.

The former Pakistan captain turned TV commentator emphasised on three important things before Habibul Bashar's men took to the field in a desperate attempt to limit the flow of India's runs.

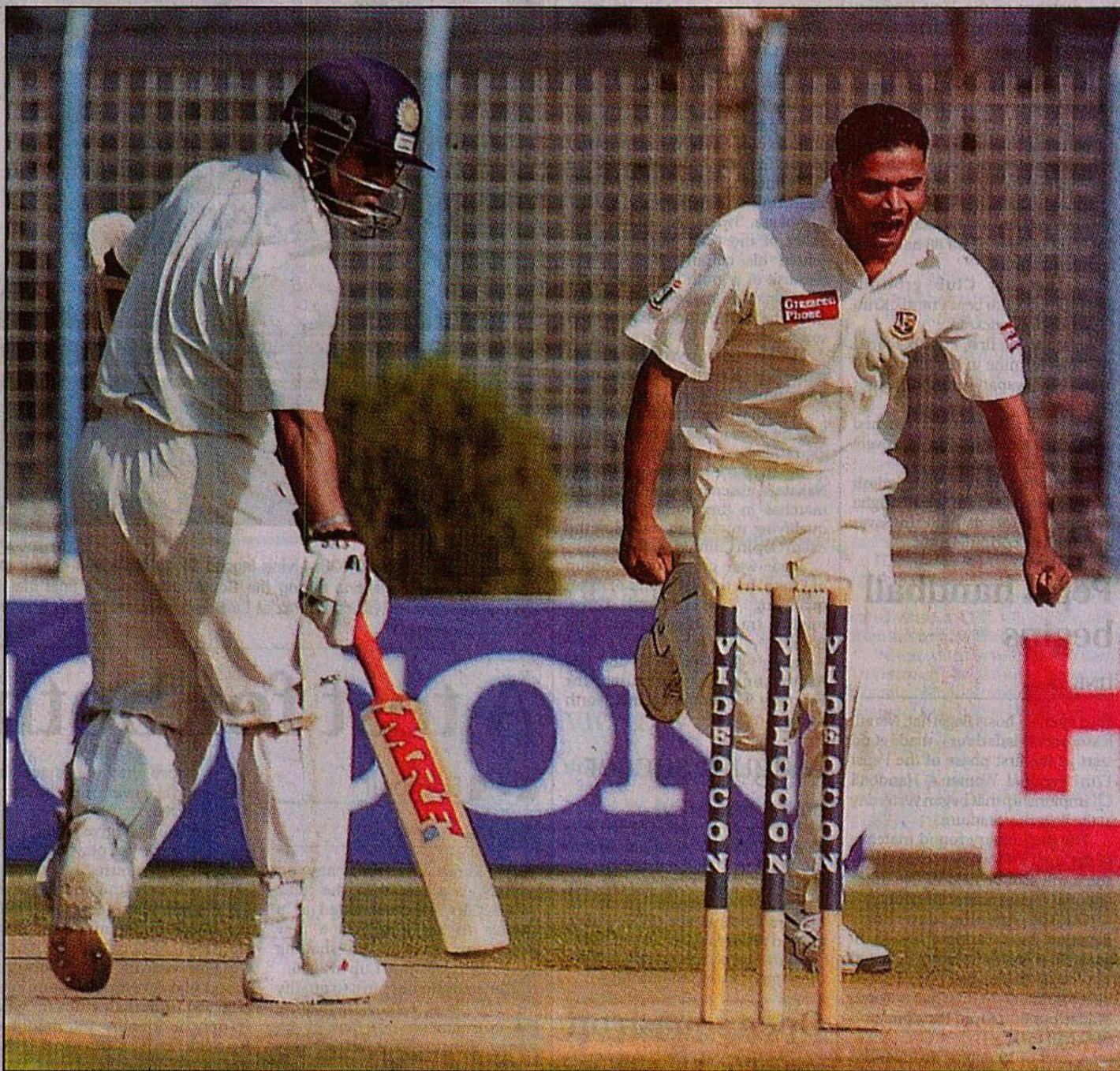
Akram, the best left-arm seamer world cricket has ever seen, advised the Tigers to swing the ball, and take their catches.

It paid off as Narail Express Mashrafe-Bin Mortuza dismissed master batsman Sachin Tendulkar leg before with the day's very first ball. He also took the prized scalp of Rahul Dravid in a lively spell that left of the Indian batsmen in discomfort.

The catching also showed a marked improvement with Manjarul Rana, who dropped Gautam Gambhir in the slip on the first day with the southpaw then on 44, made amends taking a spectacular running catch to get rid of Harbhajan Singh. Also a wily left-arm spinner Mohammad Rafique plucked the ball out of the air to complete a smart return catch ending VVS Laxman's brief stay at the crease.

It appeared that Bangladesh were playing to their potential when the opening pair Nafees Iqbal and Javed Omar shown some grit when it was the turn of the hosts to start their chase for a massive Indian score of 540.

But as always happens, Bangladesh pressed the panic button losing three wickets just before close of play.



THAT'S THE BIGGEST ONE: Bangladesh fast bowler Mashrafe-Bin-Mortuza celebrates scalping India's master batsman Sachin Tendulkar with the very first ball on the second day of the second and final Test at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.

Rafique's spin worry

Cricket

BISHWAJIT ROY from Chittagong

Mohammad Rafique said that he would have loved to bowl at the Indians again on this wicket.

But the persevering left-arm spinner, fresh after his four-wicket haul on the second day of the second Test at the MA Aziz Stadium, felt that it would be highly unlikely after India amassed 540 runs in their first essay.

His fear was not unrealistic as Bangladesh, already three down for only 50 runs on the board, face a tall order to save the follow-on.

Rafique was interested to bowl because he knew that the track was going to aid the spinners for the next three days.

"The pitch will definitely turn into a paradise for spinners. So we must be very careful against their twin operators (Anil Kumble and

Harbhajan Singh) tomorrow if we are to stand any chance of saving the match," said the left-arm spinner, who finished the day with four wickets for 156 runs in a marathon 50-overs spell.

The biggest satisfaction for the 34-year-old on the day was that he hardly allowed Sourav Ganguly, one of the finest exponents against spinners, to free his arms.

"You know it is very difficult for a left-arm spinner to contain the free-scoring Indians but I used the track to dry up the runs. I tested his (Ganguly's) patience with a tight line and I'm happy that I frustrated him so much that it caused his downfall," said Rafique, who had Ganguly caught in the deep for 88.

"I would have liked to bowl a second time on the track but I know it is very difficult," he added.

Mashrafe-Bin-Mortuza was the other successful bowler of the day. The Narail quick was delighted after dismissing Sachin Tendulkar with the very first ball of the day and

claiming Rahul Dravid for the second match in a row.

"I'm really excited. It is a memorable day for me because I dismissed two great Indian batsmen. I was successful against Dravid in the first Test but failed to pick up Tendulkar's wicket at Dhaka. Getting both batsmen here is satisfying because the wicket was not at all assisting the bowlers," he said.

Bangladesh coach Dav Whatmore was all praise for the efforts of his two main bowlers but was disappointed by the batsmen's performance.

"I think the bowlers were very impressive against the formidable Indian batting but all the good work went vain near the day. The batting failed to carry the momentum the bowlers had created especially in the morning session," he said.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on the second day of the second and final Test

SEE PAGE 14 COL 1

Usha upend MSC

Hockey

UNB, Dhaka

Usha Kriya Chakra could not think of a better way to celebrate their maiden victory over giants Mohammedan Sporting Club as they thrashed the Motijheel outfit 5-1 in a key Green Delta Premier Division Hockey League match at the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium yesterday.

Since inception in 1984, this was for the first time that the old town outfit, who have three Pakistani players in their ranks, had beaten Mohammedan in the prestigious league. The famous win also gave

them a solo lead in the meet.

By virtue of the day's creditable win, Usha stretched their collection to 18 points from seven matches to dominate the league after losing their lone match to Abahani on Thursday.

And the day's ignominy ensured that the black and whites, who also boast an Indian, were pushed down to the fourth position. This was their first defeat in the meet.

Holders Abahani, who so far are unbeaten, followed the leaders with 16 points from six matches while Dhaka Mariner Youngs Club were in the third position with 15 points from seven outings.

Captain of the Pakistan Olympic team Mohammed Nadeem struck

twice while Mazharul Islam, Yamin Hossain and skipper Moududur Rahman Shuvo scored one goal each for Usha KC who dominated the first half 2-1.

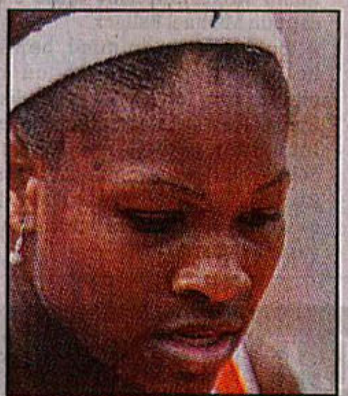
Skipper Ariful Haq Prince scored the consolation goal for the last year's runners-up.

Usha were the deserved winners as they outplayed their gigantic opponents in all the departments, especially in the second half.

Mazharul Islam put Usha ahead in the 13th minute by a perfect hit utilising a pass from Asif-a-Noor (1-0) while Ariful Haque restored parity after five minutes converting a Rajon pass (1-1).

Pakistani forward Nadeem, the

SEE PAGE 14 COL 4



Serena Williams
(American tennis star)
"For a Serena year, it wasn't superb."
On her failure to win a Grand Slam title in 2004.



BTV & ESPN
Bangladesh vs India
Second Test, Day Three
Live at 9:30 am

ESPN
English Premier Football League
Liverpool vs Newcastle
Live at 7:25 pm

Arsenal vs Portsmouth
Live at 10:00 pm

STAR Sports
Australia vs Pakistan
First Test, Day Four
Live at 8:30 am

England vs South Africa
First Test, Day Three
Live at 3:30 pm



DAY'S EVENT
Green Delta Premier Hockey League
Abahani vs Ajax (3:00 pm)

Aussies stifle Pakistan

Cricket

AFP, Perth

Stylish right-hander Damien Martyn was 100 not out as Australia twisted the knife in a lifeless Pakistan Saturday, setting a massive 564-run victory target and giving themselves two full days of the first Test to bowl the visitors out.

After Australia had declared their second innings at 361 for five, Pakistan were 18-1 at stumps. Badly out-of-form opener Imran Farhat had gone for one while Salman Butt was on eight and Younis Khan seven.

To add to the visitors' woes, star pacesman Shoaib Akhtar was taken for X-rays after injuring his left shoulder while fielding shortly after lunch.

He did not return to the match but looked on with his arm in a sling as his teammates endured another day of torment in the field as Australia amassed a massive lead of 563 before declaring their second innings closed at 361 for five.

Captain Inzamamul Haq was also in the wars, unable to take the field between lunch and tea due to a stomach virus.

Australia, with a lead of 217 when play began, turned the screws further on Pakistan during the day. But their tally featured two disappointing dismissals for captain Ricky Ponting and Justin Langer, the first innings hero with 191.

Langer went agonisingly close to becoming the first player to score a century in each innings of a Test at the Western Australian Cricket Association ground, reaching 97 before he was bowled by all-rounder Abdul Razzaq.

Ponting went even closer to a century but fell for 98, dragging his back foot and stumped by wicketkeeper Kamran Akmal while trying to sweep leg-spinner Danish Kaneria.

The Australian skipper had not scored a Test century in his last 17 innings, since the Boxing Day Test against India in Melbourne last year.

But local hero Martyn made amends when he reached 100 in his fifth century for the year -- prompt-

ing Ponting to declare.

"Making a century on home soil is always a nice feeling," Martyn said.

Opener Matthew Hayden earlier was bowled by Akhtar in the morning session for 10 with the score on 28.

But Ponting and Langer crushed any lingering Pakistani hopes, adding 163 for the second wicket.

Pakistan are due to play two more Tests, the first starting in Melbourne on Boxing Day and the second in Sydney on January 2 and will need

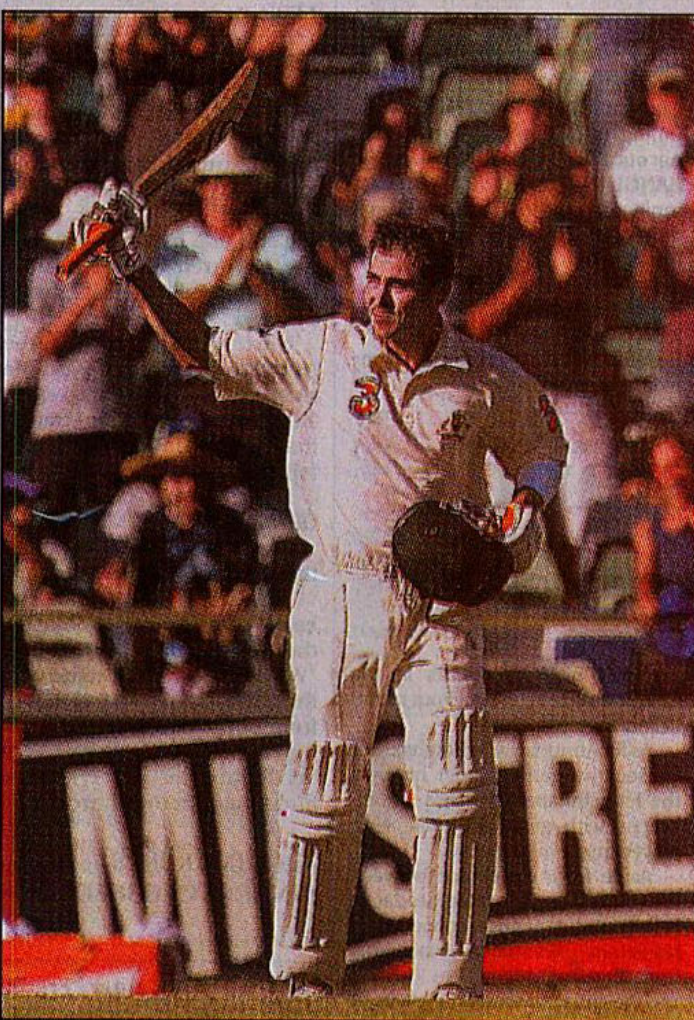
paceman Akhtar fit if they are to have any chance of upsetting their hosts.

Officials were optimistic Akhtar would be fit to play in the final two Tests.

Western Australian Cricket Association spokesman Shaun Taylor said Akhtar had been taken for X-rays but it was unlikely there was any serious damage to his shoulder.

"He's unlikely to play again in this game but he will be fine for the

SEE PAGE 14 COL 4



HOMETOWN HERO: Damien Martyn waves to the Western Australian crowd upon reaching his century against Pakistan in Perth yesterday.

Lankan Academy win emphatically

UNB, Dhaka

Visiting Sri Lanka Cricket Academy registered a convincing eight-wicket victory against Bangladesh High Performance (HP) Squad on the third day of the four-day match at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium in Narayanganj yesterday.

Resuming the day on 123 for 4 in the second innings, the HP side were bowled out for 189 in 67.1 overs as the visitors were set a 35-run target.

Top scorer Tushar Imran, who was 59 not out overnight, could add only four runs to the score before being caught by Abyeedera off Chaminda Vidanapathirana. He batted for 158 minutes and faced 126 balls that featured nine fours.

Another useful contributions came from wicketkeeper Mushfiqur Rahim, who made 33 runs off 98 balls, and Syed Russel, 31 off 47.

Vidanapathirana led the Lankan Academy bowling claiming four wickets for 27 runs while Chanka Wijaysinghe and Damith Gunathilake took two wickets each

SEE PAGE 14 COL 5

Simmons looks to Bangladesh tour

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

The beleaguered Zimbabwe cricket team, bedevilled by revolt and desertion by white players, is looking forward to next month's away series against Bangladesh to provide an indicator of the progress made by the young African side.

"We are going to Bangladesh with a lot of hope and next month will show how much we have improved," said its coach and former West Indies batsman Phil Simmons.

He told reporters in southern Indian coastal city of Visakhapatnam, where the team is training for the tour, that Zimbabwe was now a young team and there were players who can do well.

"Besides, the players have trained hard in the last few months," added Simmons who replaced former Australian opener Geoff Marsh who left as Zimbabwe coach in September.



CAPTAIN IN THE ACT: India captain Sourav Ganguly sets off for a single on way to scoring a fine 88 in the first innings of the Chittagong Test yesterday.

Solid England reply

Cricket

REUTERS, Port Elizabeth

Openers Marcus Trescothick and Andrew Strauss shared an unbeaten century stand on Saturday to give England a solid start in reply to South Africa's 337 on the second day of the first Test.

At tea England were 109 without loss with Trescothick on 33 and Strauss on 54, the fourth half-century of his fledgling Test career.

Earlier Boeta Dippenaar scored 110, his third century, to assist the home side's recovery from 66 for three on Friday.

South Africa, who won the toss and chose to bat, resumed on 273 for seven with Dippenaar on 79 and Thami Isoleleke on six.

Dippenaar reached his century

in the 14th over of the day with an upper cut for four through backward point off fast bowler Stephen Harmison.

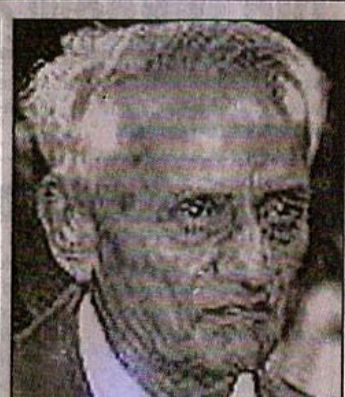
He was out four overs later when he edged a drive off fast bowler

SEE PAGE 14 COL 2

Latest

STAR SPORT MONITOR

Opener Andrew Strauss completed a fine century as England reached 227-1 by the close on the second day of the first Test against South Africa at Port Elizabeth yesterday. Strauss, who put on 152 runs for the first wicket with Marcus Trescothick (47), was batting on 120 and Mark Butcher was not out on 24 at the other end.



VIJAY HAZARE
Ex-India captain
Hazare no more

REUTERS/AFP, New Delhi

Former Indian cricket captain Vijay Hazare, who led the country to their first ever Test victory, has died in the

SEE PAGE 14 COL 1

Bangladesh-India Series Quiz 10
Who surpassed Kapil Dev's 434 Test wicket record for India?
A Sachin Tendulkar B Anil Kumble C Irfan Pathan D Zaheer Khan

Answer by sending SMS* to the number 2003
e.g. If your answer is A then write Quiz1 A and send it to 2003

For each quiz, five correct answer providers selected will receive attractive prizes. *Charge Applicable

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