

## Reflections on yet another sorry day

Cricket

AL MUSABBIR SADI from Colombo

One certainly loses count of the times when Bangladesh had suffered an all too familiar batting collapse in their 40 Tests and coach Dav Whatmore, who took charge of the Tigers over two years ago, was no exception.

"Obviously it wasn't good batting. The target was really to avoid the follow-on. In the end, we batted 46 overs in the first innings, that's losing one wicket every four overs and that's not going to avoid follow-on. It was a bit more fight in second innings though," Whatmore told after second day's play at the P Sara Stadium.

"Four batsmen got stars but they did not get on with their innings. We got two 18s, and 20 and 30s and when you get to that stages, you got to grind it out," said the 51-year-old Australian while regretting the way his boys threw their wickets away.

"We saw a little partnership in the end, and even Enamul and Shahadat were playing straight with Pilot (Khaled Mashud). They could not get them out. So it's more disappointing the way the boys played shots to get out."

"It might happen. Every time you look at the scoreboard, it's human nature to get tense about a 450-plus total. But their target was 258 to avoid the follow-on. It was a fairly tough day as results suggest but we created a bit of that," he said.

The Tigers denied Chaminda

Vaas any wicket and more importantly kept champion off-spinner

Muralitharan at bay, but they were too generous to Dilhara Fernando,



Sri Lanka's Dilhara Fernando appeals successfully for a caught behind decision against Bangladesh's Aftab Ahmed in the first innings at Colombo on Wednesday.

who ran away with a 5-wicket haul.

"Dilhara bowled okay but not that well to get five, with an exception of the wicket of Nafees Iqbal. It was a pretty good ball and a great catch to get him out."

Whatmore thought that it was not justified to give wickets to Fernando having negotiated Vaas and Murali, Sri Lanka's best bowlers. "Also giving two to another (Malinga) who came back from injury was not justified," he added.

He however was impressed with the performances of Syed Rasel and Shahadat Hossain, who picked four wickets each. "It was great for the medium pacers picking up wickets early. Don't forget if Ashraf had taken that catch with Dilshan on 11, that would have been 5-60. Dilshan played a good innings, he is a bit of a bully, he attacked and got away with it. He was lucky, a couple catches fell short to our fielders."

"With Vaas coming at five down for 60 to join Samarawera, who is a different type of player, it could have been different. We are talking about 'ifs' but that's the way it goes."

Whatmore added that the decision to send Shahadat as a nightwatchman was taken to protect a batsman from coming under fading light.

"The light was fading and we thought it better to save a batsman for better condition to see the ball."

"I don't know how long he will survive but our objective is to make them bat again. We have to increase the average of losing wickets to eight overs or ten overs to do that."

SEE PAGE 13 COL 1

## Ganga-Padma set to flow

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

The long awaited Ganga-Padma Football Tournament finally got official recognition when the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) and All India Football Federation (AIFF) signed an agreement at the newly built BFF Bhawan yesterday.

The event named after two mighty rivers of the two neighbours was planned in 2000 so that four leading clubs from both countries could lock horns once a year.

But it had remained in the drawing board for the last five years until the Indian Water Resources Minister Priya Ranjan Dasmunshi, who is also the president of AIFF, put pen to paper fulfilling a long cherished dream. BFF president SA Sultan, who signed the agreement on behalf of Bangladesh, termed it a landmark occasion.

But everybody will have to wait

till next November to know when the much-talked about event would be pencilled in the annual calendar of both federations.

"The AIFF has already approved its domestic calendar for next year and we have also made our 2007 calendar. That's why both sides will meet in November to find a slot for holding the tournament. But we agreed that Bangladesh will host the first meet," Dasmunshi told reporters before the signing ceremony.

Asked why it took so long, the long-serving Indian soccer boss said that it was mainly because they did not want to upset the domestic calendar for any international event.

"We thought that this kind of tournament will enhance the friendly relationship between the two neighboring countries. But there is a problem for us to find a suitable time for the tournament because we are determined not to hamper our domestic competitions, especially the national league," he explained adding that Bangladesh

should concentrate on their national league too.

But BFF president Sultan said that they are ready to hold the tournament at any cost.

"We are ready to sacrifice anything to start the tournament. This tournament will strengthen the solidarity between India and Bangladesh, and I believe we can also arrange such type of tournaments in other sport like cricket, hockey and kabaddi."

According to the agreement four top clubs from each country will compete in the meet and the host country will bear all expenses.

State minister for youth and sports Fazlur Rahman, state minister for water resources Advocate Goutam Chakrabarty, Indian High Commissioner Veena Sikri, president of Mohonbagan Club and member of Indian parliament Swapan Sadhan Bose, BFF general secretary Anwarul Haque Helal and other BFF officials were also present on the occasion.



India's Water Resources Minister Priya Ranjan Dasmunshi (R) and Bangladesh Football Federation president SA Sultan shake hands while exchanging the agreement on the Ganga-Padma Football Tournament at the BFF Bhawan on Wednesday.



### Did U Know?

The first Commonwealth Games, known as the British Empire Games at the time, were held in Canada in 1930 in Hamilton, Ontario.



### Talk Turkey



### Michael Owen

(England star striker)  
"It was a good day all round for us. Let's hope it's the start of big things. It was a special day for myself, the team and everyone."

After opening his goal-scoring account for Newcastle in a 3-0 win against Blackburn Rovers in the Premiership.



### What to Watch

**TEN Sports**  
Bangladesh vs Sri Lanka  
Second Test, Day Three  
Live at 10:30 am

**STAR Sports**  
Zimbabwe vs India  
Second Test, Day Three  
Live at 2:00 pm

### Lara's present for Mandela

REUTERS, Johannesburg

West Indies batsman Brian Lara traded jokes with Nelson Mandela on Wednesday and handed him the bat with which he plundered the South African bowling attack this year.

"This is one of the greatest days of my life," Lara told Reuters after a 30-minute meeting with Mandela in Johannesburg. "We spoke about his love for cricket and what cricket does to influence the world."

Lara said the meeting brought back memories of the opening match of the 2003 cricket World Cup when Mandela watched West Indies beat South Africa in Cape Town.

"As our national anthem played before the match, I looked up and saw him. I knew I was part of a great occasion," said Lara, who went on to score 116.

"Today he smiled when he referred to my first century there," said Lara, whose innings of 400 not out against England last year is the highest individual score in test history.

Mandela, 87, and increasingly frail, leaned on an aide as he arrived for the photo call with Lara.

### Thorpe's first class career has ended

BBC ONLINE, undated

Graham Thorpe has played his final first class match in England after Surrey went into their vital relegation tussle against Middlesex without him on Wednesday.

Thorpe, 36, has scored 21,937 runs, with 49 centuries -- 16 of them coming in the 100 Tests he played for England.

He made his debut for Surrey in 1988 and was named one of Wisden's cricketers-of-the-year in 1998.

Thorpe's final season for Surrey saw him play eight first-class matches, with 346 runs at an average of 31.45.

He has a three-month contract to act as an assistant coach for New South Wales in Australia this winter.

When that comes to an end, he has an open diary next summer, and has said he is open to offers to work in the media.

## Confidence sorely missing

Cricket

AL MUSABBIR SADI from Colombo

Ability is nothing without performance. Although it has been often said about Bangladeshi cricketers that they have the skill, the bottomline is that their failure to turn that into consistent performance has still kept them at the base of the Test rankings.

That was again portrayed by Bangladesh's feebleness especially in the first innings of the second Test against Sri Lanka. The home side on the other hand, showed why they are feared by all visiting sides by recovering from a precarious position to post 449 runs in the opening day's 90 overs, thanks to one big partnership in the middle that changed the complexion of the game.

No doubt when Bangladesh came out to bat half an hour into the morning on a firm second-day pitch, they were under pressure. But a target of 258 to save the follow-on and force the opposition to bat again was not a difficult task if they only tried to hang on till the end of the day.

However, no one was surprised when the Tigers collapsed like a pack of cards on an absolute batting track because their confidence was low. It seems it was easier to hit a few lousy shots to get a start but was difficult for batsmen to stay and fight to save a game especially with the moral is down.

From batsman number one to four, it was perhaps sheer frustration that got the better of their nerves.

Shahriar Nafees, playing his third Test innings, once again proved that he has yet to learn the traits to handle a shining red cherry properly. His one-

day form earned him the nod from the selectors as he opened the innings in the Tests but he had an indifferent start, falling to an outswinger with his feet rooted to the crease.

Habibul Bashar loves to pull and hook and a large portion of his 2000-odd Test runs have come from those shots. But as it has often happened in the past, the Bangladesh captain perished while trying to hook Dilhara Fernando as Chaminda Vaas ran from deep fine leg to take a diving catch off a top-edge.

Javed Omar was surprised by a short-of-length delivery that nipped back to get through his gates while Nafees Iqbal, back to the Test team after being dropped in the first match, was dismissed while fishing outside his off-stump as wicket-keeper Kumar Sangakkara took a spectacular one-handed catch in

SEE PAGE 13 COL 1

## Kacharipara in zonal final

SPORTS REPORTER

Kacharipara SC of Jamalpur blanked Muslim Renaissance Club of Tangail 2-0 to move into the zonal final of the Nitol-Tata National Football League at Jamalpur Stadium yesterday.

The hosts led the first half 1-0 as Arif put them ahead in the 31st minute. Walid doubled the margin in the 78th minute.

Three teams -- Naba Nabin Samabesh Club of Munsiganj, Kushitia Crescent Club and Moonlight SC of Rangpur -- confirmed their respective zonal semifinal berths on the day.

At Faridpur Stadium, Masum

SEE PAGE 13 COL 1

## Inzamam to replace

REUTERS, New Delhi

India's Sachin Tendulkar has opted out of next month's challenge series between Australia and a World XI and is likely to be replaced by Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq.

Inzamam, who has played 101 Tests and 347 one-day internationals, confirmed his availability to replace Tendulkar on Wednesday. "I have just been told by the board to give my confirmation for the Super Series," Inzamam said. "I am available to play because it is a big honour to play alongside the world's best."

## Streak slows Indiadown

Cricket

REUTERS, Harare

Heath Streak dried up the runs and took wickets as India plodded to 318 for seven at tea on the second day of the second Test against Zimbabwe on Wednesday.

India's batsmen floundered against the new-ball bowling of Streak (four for 52) and Blessing Mahwire (two for 82) and they have added just 123 runs in 52 overs on the second day. Zimbabwe made only 161 in their first innings.

Streak's probing efforts with the second new ball, taken 50 minutes after the lunch break, finally brought reward when Yuvraj Singh could not handle a yorker and was bowled for 25. Zimbabwe enjoyed more success two balls later when Mahwire bowled Rahul Dravid for 98.

Dravid's innings lasted for 341 minutes and included 14 fours off 237 balls, but the Indian vice-captain was less fluent than on the first day.

Indian wicketkeeper Dinesh Karthik could score just a single before he played on as Streak seamed a delivery back into the batsman.

Hard-hitting left-hander Irfan Pathan was at the crease for India on eight not out, with Anil Kumble yet to score.

The Zimbabwe fightback pegged India back after they began the second day already 34 runs ahead on 195-1.

Opening batsman Gautam Gambhir, who resumed on 95 not out, was not able to go on to his century, adding just two more runs in the media.

SEE PAGE 13 COL 4



Master India batsman Rahul Dravid, who missed a century by two runs, readies himself for a cut on the second day of the Harare Test against Zimbabwe on Wednesday.

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Scoreboard at stumps on the second day of the second and final cricket Test between Sri Lanka and Bangladesh at the P Sara Stadium in Colombo on Wednesday:					
<b>SRI LANKA: First innings (overnight 449-7)</b>	Nafees c Sangakkara b Malinga	5			
	Bashar c Vaas b Fernando	18			
	Iqbal c Sangakkara b Fernando	5			
	Atapattu c Mashud b Shahadat	11			
	Sangakkara b Rasel	5			
	Aftab c Sangakkara b Fernando	23			
	Jayawardene b Shahadat	2			
	Mashud st Sangakkara b Muralitharan	26			
	Rafique c Dilshan b Muralitharan	6			
	Samaraweera c Nafees b Rasel	138			
	Dilshan c Mashud b Aftab	168			
	Vaas b Rasel	65			
	Herath lbw b Shahadat	1			
	Muralitharan b Shahadat	24			
	Fernando not out	4			
	Extras: (b-8, lb-9, nb-16, w-1)	34			
	Total: (All out in 45.4 overs)	191			
	Fall of wickets: 1-16, 2-46, 3-52, 4-72, 5-115, 6-135, 7-143, 8-157, 9-166				
	<b>Bowler</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>W</b>
	Vaas	10	0	31	0
	Malinga	9	1	32	2
	Fernando	11	2	60	5
	Muralitharan	14.4	2	47	3
	Herath	1	0	4	0
	<b>BANGLADESH: Second innings</b>				
	Iqbal c Sangakkara b Fernando	30			
	Omar c Atapattu b Vaas	9			
	Bashar c Muralitharan b Fernando	10			
	Nafees c Samaraweera b Muralitharan	51			
	<b>BANGLADESH: First innings</b>				
	Omar b Fernando	18			

SEE PAGE 13 COL 4



AFP, New Delhi

Sachin Tendulkar has not recovered sufficiently from elbow surgery to take part in next month's Super Series matches in Australia, Indian cricket board president Ranbir Singh Mahendra said on Wednesday.

Tendulkar, 32, who had been selected in both the world Test and one-day squads to play against Australia, was given a Wednesday deadline by the International Cricket Council (ICC) to indicate his availability.

"Sachin is not fully fit yet and he has been advised not to go to Australia," Mahendra told AFP.

The ICC-organised Super Series between Australia and the Rest of the World features three one-dayers

## Sachin not fit enough

at the Telstra Dome in Melbourne on October 5, 7 and 9 and a six-day Test at the Sydney Cricket Ground from October 14-19.

A statement by the Indian cricket board said Tendulkar's decision to withdraw was prompted by advice from doctors.

"Dr Anant Joshi, who has been supervising the rehabilitation programme for Tendulkar's elbow, has advised that Sachin should participate in at least one domestic game to evaluate his recovery," the statement said.

"Therefore Tendulkar has opted out of the Super Series."

The Indian domestic season is not scheduled to begin before the first week of October.

With South African opener Herschelle Gibbs also out of the one-day squad due to injury, the world selectors will have to name two replacements for the limited-overs games and one for the Test.

Three current Test captains,

SEE PAGE 13 COL 4

**BANGLADESH'S TOUR TO SRI LANKA**

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**GLOBAL REACH**  
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3rd Floor, BSL Office Complex, Dhaka Sheraton Hotel, Dhaka-1000  
Ph.: 9357909, 9673533  
E-mail: dhaka@globalreach.in