

Lost but not frustrated

BISHWAJIT ROY from Bogra



Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashar found no reasons to be frustrated with his team's performance after a 10-wicket defeat to Sri Lanka in the second and final Test at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium here yesterday.

The Tigers were whitewashed in the Test series after losing the one-day series 2-1 but Bashar believed that they had some achievements in the series to feel some comfort.

"If you make a postmortem, you will definitely find visible improvement. What made us most happy that we removed the tag that we had been too bad against Sri Lanka in the past. The one-day victory erased bitter memories and I think our Test performance was not bad at

all if you consider our previous series," Bashar explained.

"True, we have failed to fulfil our expectation because it could have been a much better series. But I think the overall performance was not frustrating. We can emerge as a much better side if we rectify some small mistakes. We have to work hard to correct those mistakes," he added.

Bashar said that they were not completely found wanting against champion off-spinner Muttiah Muralidaran this time.

"You should accept the fact that he will take wickets against any team. And no doubt, he was successful against us but I honestly believe that unlike the past we have showed lot of characters against him in this series. We even forced the Sri Lanka captain to take him out of attack for a few times and it is not a joke."

Accepting Muralidaran's claim that the home batsmen lacked

patience, Bashar said, "It's true but you should understand that this is a young side and they are still learning. I am hopeful about the young players' potential and I believe that they need time to make impression at this level.

"Shahadat (Hossain) was brilliant and no doubt he is the finding of the series. I hope his career remains injury-free. I have never got my best bowling pair because of injury problems. It would be nice for me if Shahadat shared the new ball with Mashrafe Bin Mortuza."

The 33-year-old also said that they are looking forward to play good cricket against Kenya in the four-match one-day series later this month.

"We have had a very good record of beating world's best teams in the recent past but there is no scope to take Kenya lightly. Kenya are a very good one-day side and their record

against us is very good. So we have to be careful. But I am confident that we can show our supremacy against them," he said.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at close on the fourth day of the second Test between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra on Saturday:

BANGLADESH: First innings 234 (Bashar 69, Omar 35, Rafique 32; Muralidaran 5-79)

SRI LANKA: First innings 316 (Tharanga 165, Jayawardene 49, Dilshan 33; Shahadat 5-86)

BANGLADESH: Second innings 201 (Bashar 73, Rafique 64; Malinga 3-51, Fernando 3-51)

SRI LANKA: Second innings (over-

night 77-0) Vandort not out 40

Tharanga not out 71

SEE PAGE 13 COL 4

18TH C'WEALTH GAMES

Bangladesh team depart for Melbourne

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh contingent left Dhaka in the early hours of today to take part in the 18th Commonwealth Games in Melbourne.

Five officials of the 35-member squad including Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) president Lt Gen Moeen U Ahmed and secretary general Kutubuddin Ahmed, Chef-de-Mission Salahuddin Ahmed and general team manager Ishtiaque Ahmed Curren had left earlier for the Australian city, which hosts the 'Friendly Games' from March 15.

Bangladesh, who have so far earned two gold medals in shooting at the Commonwealth Games, in Auckland in 1988 and in Manchester 2002, will once again pin their hopes to repeat the feat on the eight-member shooting squad.

Bangladesh, who have so far earned two gold medals in shooting at the Commonwealth Games, in Auckland in 1988 and in Manchester 2002, will once again pin their hopes to repeat the feat on the eight-member shooting squad.

The other shooters are veteran Saiful Alam Rinki (50m rifle three position and prone), Towfiqur Rahman (10m air pistol pair and 50m pistol), Mahindra Kumar Singha (10m air pistol pair), Sabrina Sultana (50m rifle three position), Suraiya Akhter (50m rifle prone) and SAF Games gold medalist Sharmin Akhter (10m air rifle).

SEE PAGE 13 COL 1

Mahela happy with young guns

BISHWAJIT ROY from Bogra

Sri Lanka passed a very nervy day at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra on Saturday. But it was not because of their opponents rather for the unfriendly rain in the morning that threatened to spoil their plans to catch an early flight back home.

The Lankans were 43 runs away from victory with all ten second-innings wickets standing on the fourth-day morning. But persistent rain delayed the inevitable for seven hours. And when the rain stopped the Lankan cricketers were in a great hurry to make the ground playable so that they would complete the formalities. Even their coach Tom Moody was seen assisting the ground staff with the players. And Sri Lanka captain Mahela Jayawardene looked a happy man at the end.

"It is nice that we finished the game today. At the end we finished the series with a convincing victory against Bangladesh. We came here without some key players but I must say our young players showed

SEE PAGE 13 COL 1



SRI Lanka wrapped up the series expectedly although rain delayed their party. Bangladesh showed some improvement in the series but I think it was not satisfactory. Bangladesh won their first one-day match against Sri Lanka in this series but they are not in a stage to remain satisfied with one or two one-day victories after a long break.

AKRAM INSWINGER

They should prove their ability in the longer-version game to silence their critics. It would have been really fantastic if they could manage to draw at least one Test match rather than winning just the one-day game.

Ahead of a tough challenge against Australia in April at home, they should learn from their mistakes. Australia have been dominating the world cricket for last ten years that's why nobody will expect much more from Bangladesh in an uneven match. But Bangladesh can take the opportunity to make an impression against the world's number one team playing some good cricket. And to do that their batsman should understand the game, otherwise it would be a humiliating experience on home soil.

But before that Bangladesh have a challenge to show their superiority as a Test nation against Kenya in the four-match one-day series this month. It would be unwise if Bangladesh take Kenya lightly. They should be extra cautious against the ICC associate members because they have already proved their giant killing ability. If Bangladesh fail against Kenya, their reputation would undoubtedly go down.

Which makes me annoyed is the

Bangladeshi players' making the same old mistakes in the longer-version game. They have to learn quickly. It is not good for a new team to make the same mistakes over and over again for last four years. I think consistency is not only a big problem in the players' performance but it was also evident in the team management's thinking. It was really surprised to see the think-tank pick up Mushfiqur Rahim when there were players like Alok Kapali and Aftab Ahmed.

It just puts pressure on the young but talented players. I don't know what was the selection policy of Bangladesh but I must say it's simply stupidity to field a player like Rahim to face world's one of the greatest bowlers Muttiah Muralidaran.

You can just destroy a player picking up him at a wrong time. The Bangladesh think-tank should be careful about the issue to nurse young talents properly.

Once again I want to mention one Bangladeshi player's name and it is Shahadat Hossain who really impressed me and I must say he has a very bright future in international cricket.



Did U Know?

Shahadat Hossain of Bangladesh took 5/86 in the first innings of the second Test against Sri Lanka. It was his best performance, and the first time that he has taken five wickets in an innings.

What to WATCH

DD National

India vs England
Second Test, Day Four
Live at 10:30 am

ESPN

South Africa vs Australia
5th ODI
Live at 2:00 pm

English Premier Football League

Arsenal vs Liverpool
Live at 9:55 pm

New Zealand vs West Indies

1st Test, Day Five
Live at 3:30 am (Monday)

STAR Sports

English Premier Football League

Man United vs Newcastle United
Live at 7:30 pm

DAY'S EVENT

7th National Cricket League

Four-Day Matches (Day Three)

Chittagong vs Dhaka

Venue: Sher-e-Bangla Nat'l Stadium, Mirpur

Rajshahi vs Sylhet

Venue: Rajshahi Divisional Stadium

Barisal vs Khulna

Venue: Barisal Divisional Stadium

Zia shares lead

SPORTS REPORTER

Grand Master Ziaur Rahman shared the lead with FIDE Masters Sheikh Nasir Ahmed and Rezaul Haque after the second round of the Mercantile Bank 30th National Chess Championship yesterday.

Zia defeated Syed Mahfuzur Rahman, Nasir beat Hassan Imam and Rezaul beat Abdul Maleq as all three extended their collections to maximum two points.

International Master Abdullah Al Rakib held GM Niaz Murshed to share the second place with 1.5 points.

In other second-round games, IM Enamul Hossain Rajib defeated Delwar Hossain, IM Reefat Bin Sattar beat Enayet Hossain and Abu Sufian Shakil beat FM Mehdi Hassan.

Nat'l Kabaddi

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Bogra, Dinajpur, Tangail, Khulna and Jessore won their respective matches in the Standard Chartered 27th National Kabaddi Championship at the four different venues in the country on Saturday.

Bogra defeated Rajshahi 54-46 at Natore, Dinajpur beat Rangpur 26-07 at Nilphamari, Tangail outplayed Mymensingh 35-11 at Munshiganj.

Khulna defeated Narail 36-17 while Jessore beat Satkhira 35-26 at Jessore.

Chittagong stay on course



SPORTS REPORTER

While title contenders Chittagong were fortunate to see only 15 overs' play lost on a rain-interrupted second day of the eighth-round four-day matches of the Ispahani Seventh National Cricket League yesterday, their challengers Rajshahi waited in frustration as the whole day's play was washed out without a ball being bowled.

Rajshahi who share the lead with Chittagong, were all out for 306 on the first day at the Rajshahi Divisional Stadium with Sylhet yet to start their first innings.

The match between Barisal and Khulna at the Barisal Stadium was evenly poised after the hosts tied the first-innings score with Khulna when they were bundled out for 265.

DHAKA-CHITTAGONG

Dhaka were struggling to avoid follow-on when they crashed to 169-6 in their first innings at the Dhamondi Cricket Stadium after the match was stopped for 80 minutes due to strong wind and dust.

Chittagong, overnight 464-9, added just nine runs in the morning before being booked.

The home side made a solid start when Uttam Sarkar (35) and Anwar Hossain (34) shared 68 runs for the opening stand. But Chittagong spin duo Ilias Sunny and Sabbir Ahmed destroyed the top-order sharing the six wickets evenly.

Mahmudullah Riyad, the Dhaka top scorer, was batting on 45 with Sajjad Kadir yet to open his account.

BARISAL-KHULNA

Barisal suffered early and late collapses after resuming their first innings on 25-0 and for the first time this season, two sides' first-innings total ended on the same score.

England come back strongly



AFP, Mohali

Anil Kumble became the third spinner to complete 500 wickets before England struck back to put India in trouble in the second Test here on Saturday.

India, helped by Kumble's five-wicket haul, did well to restrict England to 300 in their first innings before squandering the advantage with loose batting to finish the third day at 149-4.

Skipper Rahul Dravid was unbeaten on 60 for his 41st Test half-century with wicketkeeper Mahendra Dhoni (12). The Indian captain has so far hit four boundaries in his solid 147-ball knock.

India suffered three blows in the space of 38 runs after Dravid and

Wasim Jaffer had put on 76 for the second wicket, the wickettakers being spinner Monty Panesar, swing bowler Matthew Hoggard and paceman Andrew Flintoff.

Jaffer (31) was caught off an upish drive in the covers by Flintoff off left-arm spinner Panesar and then star batsman Sachin Tendulkar (four) was beaten by extra bounce to be caught by Andrew Strauss off Flintoff.

Yuvraj Singh (15) fell to a superb diving catch in the covers by Ian Bell off Hoggard to leave his team struggling at 134-4.

Virender Sehwag, who made two and fought in the drawn opening Test at Nagpur, failed again when he contributed 11 before being caught behind off fast bowler Steve Harmison.

England were earlier strongly placed at 283-5 following impressive knocks from stand-in captain

Flintoff (70) and wicketkeeper Geraint Jones (52) before floundering against Kumble.

Kumble grabbed three wickets off four deliveries and debutant seamer Munaf Patel two with the second new ball. The afternoon session belonged to Kumble who finished with 5-76, his 32nd haul of five or more wickets in a Test innings.

His memorable moment came when he trapped England tail-ender Harmison leg-before for his 500th victim and then finished the innings by having Panesar caught by Dravid at first slip.

Patel (3-72) also played a big role in containing England, claiming the prize wicket of all-rounder Flintoff in his opening over with the second new ball.

Flintoff, who was on 26 in his

SEE PAGE 13 COL 5

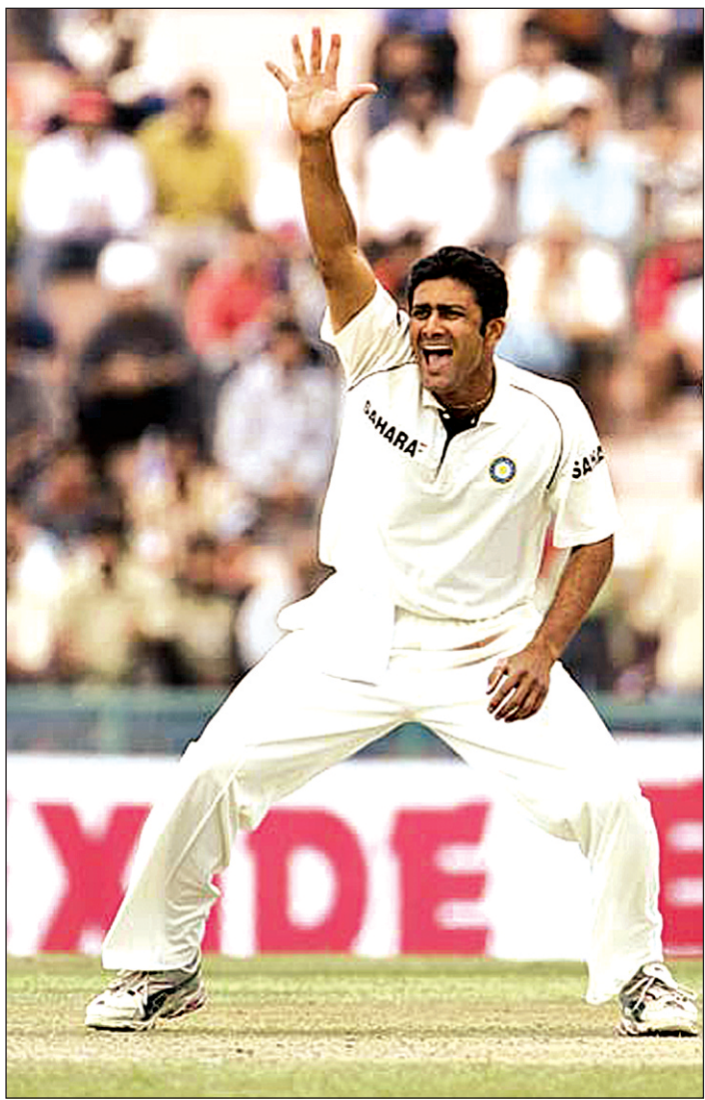


PHOTO: INTERNET

India's leg-spinner Anil Kumble raises his fingers to signify his 500th dismissal during the third day of the second Test against England at Mohali on Saturday.

Kumble gets half a thousand



AFP, Mohali

India's Anil Kumble, who became only the fifth bowler to reach 500 wickets, during the second Test against England here on Saturday, is a leg-spinner with a difference.

The 35-year-old does not turn the ball as prodigiously as Australian leg-spinner Shane Warne or Sri Lankan off-spinner Muttiah Muralidaran, but he is capable of single handedly winning matches for India.

Kumble, who trapped Steve Harmison leg-before in the afternoon session to join the elite 500-club, is capable of making batsmen's lives miserable with his clever variations, speed through the air and uncanny accuracy.

He is now behind only Warne (659 wickets), Muralidaran (600), Australian paceman Glenn McGrath (542) and retired West Indies fast bowler Courtney Walsh (519).

"I am somebody who is different from an orthodox leg-spinner," Kumble once said. He has so far grabbed five or more wickets in a Test innings 32 times and 10 or more in a match eight times.

"It's painful to hear even after taking so many wickets that I cannot turn the ball. I'm happy that even with my style I've been able to get results. At the end of the day, it doesn't matter what style you bowl."

Kumble's magic was on view against Pakistan at Kotla in Delhi in 1999, when he became the world's

second bowler after Englishman Jim Laker to grab 10 wickets in a Test innings.

The skillful spinner, who made his Test debut against England at Manchester in 1990, has often faced criticism despite winning more matches for his team than any other bowler.

Many had initially described him as a "bad-wicket bowler" capable of succeeding only on low, slow and uneven home pitches, but the criticism only made him stronger.

His critics were silent when he finished with 24 wickets in three away Tests against formidable Australia in 2003-04 to help India draw the series.

Kumble also bagged 15 wickets in three Tests in Pakistan in 2004 to play a major role in his team's first-ever series win there.

He may not be a superstar in a team with Sachin Tendulkar, Rahul Dravid and Virender Sehwag, but is an honest trier who believes that success can be achieved only by "self-belief and perseverance".

Indian coach Greg Chappell became Kumble's latest fan after watching the spinner from close quarters for nearly a year.

"He is a fierce competitor," once said Chappell, a former Australian Test captain.

"I have always rated Dennis Lillee (former Australian paceman) as the hardest competitor I have seen and I would put Anil up there with Dennis."

"Kumble is a very under-rated bowler. He has got terrific control, subtle variations and consistency."



AFP, Auckland

The West Indies made a sound start in their quest for 291 runs for victory in the first cricket Test against New Zealand, reaching 48 without loss at the end of another day of fluctuating fortunes here Saturday.

Chris Gayle was unbeaten on 28, while Daren Ganga was on 20.

The West Indies had started the day firmly in control, reducing New Zealand to 146 for seven, a lead of just 164.

But in keeping with a Test where neither side has been able to press home the advantage, Brendon McCullum swung the momentum back New Zealand's way, leading a lower order fightback with an

innings of 74.

In his three hours at the crease he featured in half-century partnerships with Daniel Vettori and Shane Bond to carry New Zealand's second innings total to 272, for an overall lead of 290.

Vettori made 33 before his eighth-wicket stand with McCullum was broken, while Bond ended 18 notout.

McCullum and Vettori both fell to the finger spin of Gayle, who returned the best figures of the five West Indian bowlers, with four for 71 off 30.1 overs.

With two days remaining and fine weather forecast, an outright result is inevitable, but despite Gayle and Ganga making a solid start to the West Indies second innings history is against them.

To reach their target of 291 they will have to post the second highest



PHOTO: AFP

Chris Gayle (L) and Ramnaresh Sarwan of the West Indies celebrate the dismissal of New Zealand batsman Daniel Vettori during the third day of the first Test at Eden Park in Auckland on Saturday.

SEE PAGE 13 COL 6