

U-19s in deep trouble

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Under-19 team were 34 runs short of Sri Lanka U-19s first innings total after being forced to follow on, on the second day of the second three-day match at the Police ground in Colombo yesterday.

After continuing on their overnight score of 14 for 3, the visitors were bowled out for 97 in their first innings. But the youngsters improved on their batting as they reached 183 for 4 when the day's played ended.

Skipper Mahmudul Hasan chipped in with 47 in the second essay.

Earlier, hosts' skipper Sachith Pathirana ripped through the Bangladesh batting line-up with his left-arm spin, taking four wickets for 24 while seamer Tissara Perera took three. Only Zabid Hossain showed some resistance, scoring 17 off 80 deliveries.

In the second innings, opener Rony Talukdar played a peculiar knock of 17 off only 10 balls before falling to left-arm bowler Charith Jayampathi but Iftekhar Nayeem (35) and Mithun Ali (38) supported their captain but none of them survived as it is now left to the two batsmen at the crease -- Taposh Ghosh (28*) and Ashraf Aziz (14*) -- to erase the 34-run deficit.

LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

Seven matches took place on the opening day of Spectra Group inter-district women's Kabaddi competition at the Kabaddi Stadium yesterday.

Tangail won two games against Narail and Khulna while Munshiganj had a mixed day with a win and a loss against Rangamati and Narayanganj respectively.

In the other matches, Rajshahi and Jamalpur posted big wins while Dhaka beat Gaibandha 50-20.

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Did U Know?

The distance between the pitcher's rubber and home plate in baseball is 60 feet, 6 inches.



Muttiah Muralidaran

(Sri Lanka's spin wizard)
"He is a talented batsman but a 22 average is not a standard for a top-order batsman. Even Chaminda Vaas has the same average."
On Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraf.



TEN Sports

Bangladesh v Sri Lanka
Third Test, Day 4
Live from 11:00 am



B.League
Farashganj v Mohammedan
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium
Time: 4:30 pm



PHOTO: AFP

SUBLIME SANGAKKARA: Sri Lanka batsman Kumar Sangakkara sweeps one towards square-leg on way to scoring a double century on the third day of the third and final Test against Bangladesh at the Asgiriya Stadium in Kandy yesterday.

Tigers' leather hunt



BISHWAJIT ROY from Kandy

The way this series has been for Bangladesh, more play has equated to more humiliation. The only difference have been the sufferers sometimes it has been the batsmen and sometimes the bowlers. And in the third day of the final Test under brilliant sunshine, it was the turn of the latter to experience embarrassment.

Kumar Sangakkara and captain Mahela Jayawardene sent the tourists on a leather hunt for the whole day, making up for the loss of the first two days. And after winning the first two games quite confidently a clean sweep of the series now remains a mere formality. The rain, if it comes, can be Bangladesh's only saviour.

Left-arm pacer Syed Rasel was the sole successful bowler, picking up three wickets for 104 runs in 31 overs. No surprise then, that he was the man handpicked to represent his sorry squad in the press conference following the day's play. Sadly though, Rasel's off-pitch skills left a lot to be desired as he was a picture of bewilderment.

However, in what was a surprise move, Sangakkara -- who made his second consecutive double hundred in the series to remain not out on 222 was full of praise for the Bangladeshi bowlers.

"It was not easy to bowl here but

(Mashrafe Bin) Mortaza bowled brilliantly although he went wicketless. He is a brilliant bowler and put the ball in the right areas today to give us lot of trouble. Syed Rasel's accuracy also impressed me and Shahadat is quiet a character," praised the left-hander although they amassed 500-4 at stumps to take a huge 369-run lead.

But he issued a warning for the Tigers by saying that spin wizard Muttiah Muralidaran will get an huge assistance from the fourth day pitch.

"We definitely want to see our new ball bowlers exploit the condition first but the fact is that Murali will get huge assistance on the fourth day and it will not be easy to bat against him here," he said adding that they have yet to think about the declaration.

The prolific run-scorer expressed his satisfaction over his first double century in his home ground.

"It's a great pleasure for me that I could manage a double century in front of my home crowd. I have grown up here playing a lot of matches in the process, so it's a special feeling for me. I believe that all of this success is a result of hard work," he said.

Although the day's double hundred was more fluent than his previous one he rated the P Sara effort highly.

"I think the P Sara one was slightly better because I was out of

form then. Though I made consecutive double hundreds, I have to work on my batting when I go to Colombo. Our coach Trevor Penney worked hard to fine-tune the sweep and chip shots which worked quite well today," he added.

"I was a little bit cautious initially because I didn't want to make mistakes when we lost two quick wickets but Mahela was fantastic in his batting. I am a little bit disappointed because the way Mahela batted in the innings, he deserved a bigger score than what he got," he said about his partner with whom he shares a world record partnership of 624.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on the third day of the final Test between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka at the Asgiriya Stadium in Kandy on Friday:

BANGLADESH: First innings 131 (Nafees 29, Ashraf 26; Muralidaran 6-28, De Silva 2-29)

SRI LANKA: First innings (over-night 30-0)

Vandort b Rasel	43
Tharanga lbw b Rasel	12
Sangakkara not out	222
M Jayawardene c Ashraf b Rasel	165
Silva run out	25
Dilshan not out	17
Extras: (b-4, lb-2, nb-8, w-2)	16
Total: (For 4 wkts in 107 overs) 500	

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Adeanka brace lifts R'ganj

SPORTS REPORTER

Adeanka struck twice but was sent off in the dying moments as Rahmatganj beat Chittagong Abahani 2-1 in the B. League at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.

The old Dhaka side's foreign recruit scored both goals in the space of three minutes during the second-half but then saw Santosh of the home side score just eight minutes from time.

Things got a little iffy for Rahmatganj when Adeanka was himself ejected after receiving his second yellow card of the match during injury time but the visitors left the port city with three full points as they survived some heart-stopping moments.

With this win, struggling Rahmatganj reached 11 points from 17 matches while Chittagong Abahani remained on 12 points from 18 matches.

Khan, Powar strike down England A

CRICINFO, undated

A fiery spell from Zaheer Khan was complemented by loopy offspin from Ramesh Powar as the Indians clawed their way back against England Lions at Chelmsford. Powar removed top-scorer Joe Denly with a flighted offbreak before Zaheer sent back two more batsmen during an inspired second session spell that read: 7-3-10-2. England Lions took tea at 225 for 7.

Denly's assertive 83, his fifth half-century of the season, set the ball rolling for England Lions, after they'd elected to bat on a benign surface. Andrew Strauss and Owais Shah fell cheaply and it was left to Jonathan Trott to support Denly in his aggressive knock. Denly's dismissal, though, triggered a mini-collapse: Zaheer induced edges from Trott and Tim Ambrose before Powar got Adil Rashid popping back the simplest of catches. Ravinder Bopara's wicket, at the stroke of tea, meant that the Indians ended the session with plenty to smile.

Denly was no doubt the most confident batsmen on view. He was particularly severe on Zaheer's full-pitched deliveries early on, clattering as many as five fours in the ninth over, and raced to 43 in just 29 balls. It was only when Zaheer changed his length, at the start of his second spell, that Denly was in any sort of trouble, fishing outside off at deliveries that cut away. However, he regained his composure soon, brought up his fifty with a crisp crack through midwicket and went to lunch set for a big one. Ultimately, he couldn't resist the temptation to charge down the track to a flighted offbreak from Powar, left a big gap between bat and pad and watched MS Dhoni pull off a neat stumping.

His dismissal fired up the Indians, especially Zaheer. He

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Shoaib slates new rule



AFP, Lahore

Pakistan paceman Shoaib Akhtar Friday urged cricket's governing body to reconsider a new bowling rule which allows a free hit in case of a no-ball, saying it is harsh on bowlers.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) last month approved the new rule, which allows a batsman to take a free swipe after a front-foot no-ball in a one-day match.

The batsman cannot be dismissed on the free hit except for being run out.

"One-day cricket heavily favours the batsman and the new rule is very harsh on bowlers," Akhtar said of the rule, which will come into effect in October this year.

The ICC's Cricket Management Committee suggested the change to make one-day cricket more attractive, but Akhtar hoped the overturning of bans on Akhtar and fellow paceman Mohammad Asif,

"With this change there will be no margin of error for the bowler. If a bowler has come back from injury he would definitely lose his rhythm and bowl no-balls," said Akhtar, who has been plagued by injuries throughout his career.

The 31-year-old fast bowler regained fitness to force his way back into the preliminary squad for the Twenty20 World Cup in South Africa in September this year.

He missed the World Cup held in the West Indies this year through a knee injury.

Akhtar said one-day cricket has become too tough for fast bowlers.

"Bowlers have to toil hard in one-day cricket because most of the rules favour batsmen. Pitches are tailor-made for batsmen so everything is against bowlers," said Akhtar.

The bowler, known as the Rawalpindi Express for his pace, got a reprieve in a doping case last week.

The Court of Arbitration for Sport dismissed an appeal by the World Anti-Doping Agency against the overturning of bans on Akhtar and fellow paceman Mohammad Asif,

saying it had no jurisdiction to deal with the matter.

Akhtar had been banned for two years and Asif for one year after testing positive for the outlawed steroid nandrolone last year. The bans were controversially lifted on appeal.

Akhtar was also in the team which toured Scotland earlier this month where both of Pakistan's matches -- against Scotland and India -- were washed out, leaving him hugely disappointed.

"It was a damp squib and disappointing for me because I desperately wanted some bowling at the top level," said Akhtar, who is now gearing up for the Twenty20 World Cup.

"Although Twenty20 cricket is tougher than one-day cricket, I am keen to play and help my team win the title," he said.

The inaugural Twenty20 event is to be played between September 11-13.

"Pakistan has talented players who can come good in this type of cricket. The format is very good for spectators and for sponsors so I think this type of cricket will stay."



CRICINFO, undated

West Indies might have beaten England in the recent one-day series, but an old and unwelcome ghost briefly reappeared on Thursday at Clontarf in Dublin as Scotland ran them desperately close in the third match of the Quadrangular series.

They had their captain, Chris Gayle, to thank with a commanding 85, rescuing them from a dramatic collapse in which they lost 5 for 13 in under three overs.

"I guess you see what I'm talking about when playing against these teams -- you can never take them for granted," Gayle said. "You have got to give Scotland credit, I thought they played really well and the spinners did a pretty good job

and kept their calm and cool. But it's good to get it of the way."

Gayle and his opening partner, Devon Smith, were cruising nicely at 95 without loss before Majid Haq, the offspinner, was introduced. Bowling flat and fast, he appeared to turn a seemingly placid surface into a minefield, removing Smith for 32 in the 20th over before bowling Runako Morton and Lendl Simmons with consecutive deliveries in the 24th. From 120 for 1, they collapsed to 133 for 6 until Gayle finally found support from Darren Sammy. As well as Scotland bowled, however, the shot selection from West Indies' middle-order left a lot to be desired.

"(The collapses) are something we've got to improve upon, but it's not going to happen overnight," Gayle said. "It's up to the individuals to really assess the conditions as quickly as possible, and they

should be able to sit from the outside and see what's going on out there, and make the necessary adjustment when they come out to bat."

Scotland have had a torrid last six weeks, culminating in the resignation of their coach, Peter Drinnen, last week, and Watson, their captain, was understandably delighted to have run West Indies so close.

"This is a pretty good cricket team and to run them so close is excellent," he told Cricinfo. "To be honest, I'm slightly disappointed we didn't win. We gave ourselves a great opportunity in those last five overs. They were roughly 100 without loss and sometimes we'd have rolled over and conceded -- but the spinners did a great job."

"I knew that wicket would suit

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PHOTO: STAR

Scene from the B.League encounter between Chittagong Abahani and Rahmatganj at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.

An ad man's dream



BBC ONLINE, undated

It says much for the emergence of Mahendra Dhoni that his face is almost as visible on advertising hoardings as Sachin Tendulkar.

The India wicket-keeper/batsman's panache for hitting big sixes and riding fast motorbikes has helped him acquire the status of a youth icon, which in turn has made him one of the most attractive vehicles for corporate branding.

He has quite literally been converted into a moving billboard, covered from head to toe with endorsements for products ranging from haircare to boot polish.

Dhoni has not yet overtaken Tendulkar, captain Rahul Dravid and Sourav Ganguly in terms of cumulative deals, but the vice-captain of the one-day team has undoubtedly become the flavour of the month.

For over a decade, star batsman Tendulkar was the most attractive personality that every top brand wanted to be associated with.

And though he continues to be the most recognisable face off the field the Mumbai maestro is not signing a plethora of deals

right now, primarily because he is locked into long-term contracts with a minimum tenure of five years.

Tendulkar remains the biggest grosser in cumulative terms and also has the most number of product endorsements under his belt -- 17 in all, worth US\$500,000-750,000 per deal annually -- but Dhoni has made giant strides in building up 12 of his own.

The 26-year-old maverick is more flexible and willing to sign short-term deals with annual fees in the range of US\$250,000-312,500.

Dhoni is also fast exhausting the categories that he can promote -- eye care, tooth care, suits, car batteries, insurance, banking, mobile phones, cars, soft drinks, and footwear are all backed by his smile.

Why Dhoni?

His long tresses with highlights, his need for speed and penchant for hitting the ball a long way have all helped him earn a huge following among young cricket fans.

And the enduring romance of small-time boys -- Dhoni hails from the backwaters of Bihar -- making it big in the global arena continues to attract a massive audience.

Virender Sehwag's decline has also propelled Dhoni into the spot-

light.

The aggressive opener's belligerence had attracted advertisers and marketing men in large numbers, but poor form cost him the national team's vice-captaincy and saw him dropped from the squad altogether.

Like several other Indian stars, the World Cup was a nightmare for Dhoni. However, his match-winning knocks in Bangladesh have resurrected his brand value.

Dhoni is bound to become an even more attractive proposition now that he has been appointed the one-day team's vice-captain -- and the effects of that are likely to be seen when India go into the winter series against Australia and Pakistan.

The future could bring yet more riches off the field -- chief selector Dilip Vengsarkar considers him a long-term candidate as successor to Dravid as skipper.

Vengsarkar says the selectors have found Dhoni to be a keen student of the game.

If he continues the way he is going about things now, the big-hitter will need plenty of time to study his bank accounts.