

Murali equals Warne

Cricket

APP, Kandy

Muttiah Muralidaran equalled Shane Warne's world record tally of 708 wickets as Sri Lanka sent England crashing in the first cricket Test here on Sunday.

The off-spinner grabbed 4-30 in 23 overs as England, replying to Sri Lanka's modest 188, slumped to 186-6 by tea before heavy rain washed out the rest of the day's play.

The weather gods in Muralidaran's hometown of Kandy held up his bid to become Test cricket's most successful bowler, but the 35-year-old is unlikely to be denied the honour when play resumes Monday.

Muralidaran looked unplayable on the uneven pitch at the Asgiriya Stadium as the batsmen groped to negotiate the alarming turn and bounce he extracted from the surface.

Paul Collingwood, unbeaten on 14, was England's last remaining hope to gain a substantial lead on a wicket where 16 wickets have already fallen on the first two days.

Ryan Sidebottom was the other batsman at the crease, on one.

Muralidaran, who went into the

match needing five wickets to overtake Warne, had debutant Ravi Bopara caught behind by wicketkeeper Prasanna Jayawardene in the post-lunch session to claim his 708th victim.

Sri Lanka's Australian coach Trevor Bayliss said the team was disappointed the record did not come Muralidaran's way on Sunday, but he was delighted the hosts had fought back strongly in the Test.

"It was disappointing for all that the rain came but I am sure Murali will get there soon, so we are just trying to focus on the team's performance" said Bayliss.

"We knew if we kept getting wickets we would be back in the Test. Hopefully we will keep England down and match them in the second innings.

"Two days down, I think it is 50-50. Like I said, it all depends on how we bat the second time because anything over 150-200 will be difficult for England to chase in the fourth innings."

The overnight pair of Ian Bell (83) and captain Michael Vaughan put on 107 for the second wicket after opener Alastair Cook had been removed third ball in Saturday's final session.

The partnership, which threatened to take the game away from Sri Lanka, was cut short by a controversial decision by Pakistani umpire Aleem Dar against the England captain just before lunch.

Vaughan, looking solid on 37, was given out caught at silly-point off Muralidaran even as television replays showed the ball may have bounced off his pad to the fielder.

A shocked Vaughan stood aghast at his crease as Dar raised his finger, before trudging back slowly to the pavilion amid loud jeers from 3,000 England supporters.

There was, however, no doubt about Bell's wicket as Chamara Silva lunged to his left at short mid-on to catch an uppish flick by the batsman off Muralidaran.

England took their lunch score of 145-3 to 170 before three wickets fell for 15 runs, two of them to Muralidaran.

"Anytime you play Murali on his home ground is a challenge," said Bell. "He makes things happen because obviously he is the best bowler in the world."

"It's important we have some good partnerships on Monday and build a reasonable lead and put ourselves in a good position to win the match."

Scoreboard at stumps on the second day of the first Test between England and Sri Lanka at the Asgiriya Stadium on Sunday:

Taufeeq guides Jets to win

CRICINFO, undated

Taufeeq Umar powered Delhi Jets to their first win of the tournament, overcoming Hyderabad Heroes by five wickets in Panchkula. The fourth game of the tournaments saw the first instance of a team batting second chasing successfully.

The Heroes, who enjoyed a fine win last night, struggled early on after choosing to bat. TP Sudhindra, the medium-pacer from Madhya Pradesh, extracted good bounce off the track to dismiss the Heroes' openers. Nicky Boje led the revival with an aggressive 45 before the Pakistan duo of Inzamam-ul-Haq and Abdul Razzaq propelled them to a healthy 141.

Ali Mortaza, the quickish left-arm spinner, impressed for the second time in as many games and ended with 2 for 24 in his four overs. The Jets began the chase in blistering fashion with Monish Mishra cracking three fours and a six. It was Umar and Abbas Ali, though, who held the innings together, pacing their innings to a nicely. They punished the bowlers' errant length during their 81-run stand.

Ali edged a straight one to the wicketkeeper, who tumbled the ball -- which went on to hit the stumps -- before completing the catch, but Umar ensured the target was reached with 14 balls to spare. Only a smattering of spectators saw the game, despite it being a Sunday, but a sizeable audience is expected in the evening.

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"In the second game (of the first round) I was well placed after the opening, but a few inaccurate moves in the middle gave the control back to Eljanov," said Rajib, who awaits his third and final norm for a grandmaster title.

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Rajib urges for support

Chess

SPORTS REPORTER

Enamul Hossain Rajib considers reaching the second round of the World Chess Cup in Russia last month as the greatest achievement in his career.

The Bangladeshi International Master, who upset world No 19 Pavel Eljanov of Ukraine in the first round, bowed out of the ongoing meet in the west Siberian city Khanty-Mansiysk when he was knocked out by Russian Grand Master Evgeny Tomashevsky in the second round.

Beating Eljanov was a great joy because it was the first victory for a Bangladeshi player in World Cup. Reaching the round of 64 was a great feeling," the 26-year-old Rajib, who returned home on Saturday, told The Daily Star last night.

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Rajib conceded he had a bad day when he lost to Tomashevsky in

the opening game of the second round.

"I made a few poor moves. May be I was upset because I was left alone," he said referring to the return of his teammate GM Ziaur Rahman and coach Igor Rausis from Russia.

Zia returned home and Rausis, who left for Latvia, is expected to return to Dhaka on December 10 to continue coaching.

"We got our first grandmaster before India but now they have more than us. They get tremendous support and the national team players including the juniors are provided tours to Europe and America every year. Here, we can't grow the youngsters as other do."

"The sponsors are not interested in us, may be because chess is not a spectators' game. We need support from all."

Rajib, who was on his second trip to Russia after participating in the Chess Olympiad in Elista previously, said he enjoyed the freezing conditions in Khanty-Mansiysk, where the temperature was around -12 degrees Celsius throughout his stay.

"Everyone was very scared before the trip and asked how I was going to survive in -25. But inside rooms it was normal due to the heating system. I needed heavy dressing while going out. I liked the icy weather with snow everywhere. It was like a 'white city,'" added Rajib, who will now begin preparation for the local league and a GM tournament in Delhi early next year.

WI level in style

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which completely swung the initiative West Indies' way. Zimbabwe's slow bowlers kept the runs in check in the middle overs, but Ravi Rampaul's late charge ensured 60 came off the last six, and a gettable total became a daunting one.

Zimbabwe were clearly up against a much-improved opposition, but they were also let down by their own indiscipline -- they'd only conceded four wides in the first game, but gave away 11 here, plus two no-balls. The start was excellent -- only 19 came from the first eight overs -- but as Morton and Gayle took charge, the bowlers slowly wilted.

"We obviously didn't have a great day yesterday (Saturday). But I thought we fought hard and got ourselves back into the game today (Sunday)," Bayliss said.

"On a wicket that suits spin bowling, we knew if we could keep England down to a reasonable total even if they passed us, we can hopefully match them in our second innings as chasing 180 to 200 in the final innings will turn out to be a tough job."

"Bayliss expressed disappointment that Muttiah Muralidaran could not break Shane Warne's world record of 708 Test wickets before play was called off for the day due to rain.

"It was a bit disappointing for everyone watching and I am sure for him as well. He would have liked to get it out of the way today (Sunday). But all along our focus has been on the team's performance. Everyone knows it that Murali will take those wickets somewhere in one Test or another."

"Bayliss, however, did express his disappointment at Sri Lanka's failure to post big first-innings totals.

Pakistan's batting problems continued as stand-in captain Younis Khan (43) and Faisal Iqbal fell in the space of 16 runs to leave their team wobbling at 150-5.

Younis, leading the side in the absence of the unfit Shoaib Malik, hit a six off Harbhajan and five fours before falling to a rash stroke. He was caught behind trying to drive a delivery from Patel that was moving away from him.

Malik, who was injured playing football after the first Test, is doubtful for the third and final match starting in Bangalore on December 8.

Scoreboard at stumps on the third day of the second Test between India and Pakistan on Sunday:

INDIA: First innings 616-5 dec

the field after hurting his hamstring while attempting a run.

Chanderpaul's run-out soon after Zimbabwe some hope, but Marlon Samuels shut it off with a run-a-ball 43, ensuring the home team didn't get back into the game despite an excellent spell by Ray Price, who gave nothing away in a ten-over spell that cost just 39.

Rampaul's late charge, which included three successive sixes off Kei Dabengwa in the 48th over, gave West Indies the momentum going into the break, and they kept control over proceedings with a fine new-ball display. Both Rampaul and Daren Powell didn't give away too many scoring opportunities, and with the asking rate mounting, the pressure told on the batsmen.

Brendon Taylor lashed at one and nicked to Denesh Ramdin for a promising 27 and Vusi Sibanda followed soon after a protracted struggle, before Dwayne Bravo -- the acting captain in the absence of the injured Gayle -- shut Zimbabwe out of the match with two wickets in the space of four overs. Hamilton Masakadza edged a drive, while Tatenda Taibu missed a cut and found his stumps knocked back. Zimbabwe were 65 for 5, the asking rate was more than seven, and the contest was effectively over. Stuart Matsikenyeri, Dabengwa and Prosper Utseya all got some batting practice, but the contest was over

much before Ramdin held his fifth catch of the innings to give Rawl Lewis career-best figures of 3 for 43.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the second one-day international between West Indies and Zimbabwe at Harare Sports Club on Sunday.

WEST INDIES

Gayle retired hurt 58

Smith b Chigumbura 2

Morton c Chibhabha b Utseya 79

Chanderpaul run out 12

Samuels c Taibu b Dabengwa 43

Bravo c Taylor b Dabengwa 10

Ramdin c Chigumbura b Chibhabha 16

Lewis c Masakadza b Chibhabha 19

Chibhabha not out 26

Taylor c Chigumbura b Brent 3

Powell run out 1

Extras: (lb-4, w-11, nb-2) 17

Total: (For 9 wkts in 50 overs) 286

Fall of wickets: 1-3, 1-123* (Gayle, retired not out), 2-149, 3-175, 4-214, 5-222, 6-251, 7-274, 8-284, 9-

Bowler O M R W

Chigumbura 7 0 30 1

Brent 8 1 47 1

Chibhabha 4 0 36 2

Masakadza 3 0 17 0

Price 10 0 39 0

Utseya 10 0 56 1

Dabengwa 8 0 57 2

ZIMBABWE

Sibanda c Ramdin b Taylor 12

Taylor c Ramdin b Powell 27

Chibhabha c Samuels b Ramdin 11

Taibu b Bravo 6

Masakadza c Ramdin b Bravo 0

Dabengwa c Taylor b Powell 24

Chigumbura c Bravo b Lewis 2

Utseya b Samuels 23

Brent c Ramdin b Lewis 12

Price not out 0

Extras: (b-6, lb-5, w-10, nb-1) 22

Total: (All out in 44.3 overs) 176

Fall of wickets: 1-42, 2-55, 3-55, 4-57, 5-65, 6-124, 7-131, 8-140, 9-170, 10-176.

Bowler O M R W

Ramdin 8 2 26 1

Powell 10 0 39 2

Chibhabha 4 0 22 1

Samuels 9.3 0 43 3

Result: West Indies won by 110.

Man-of-the-match: Runako Morton

Toss: Zimbabwe

Umpires: BG Jerling (South Africa)

and RB Tiffen

Match referee: BC Broad (England)

Akmal, Haq defy India

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while Yousuf was bowled off a delivery that turned sharply to surprise the batsman.

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