

Murali equals Warne

Cricket

AFP, 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 on 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 on a 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."

The second Test will be played at the Sinhalese Sports Club in Colombo from December 9-13, while the third will be held in Galle from Dec 18-22.

SCOREBOARD

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

SRI LANKA: First innings 188 (Sangakkara 92, P Jayawardene 51, Hoggard 4-29, Panesar 3-46)

ENGLAND: First innings (over-night 49-1)

Cook lbw b Vaas 0
Vaughan c Silva b Muralidaran 37
Bell c Silva b Muralidaran 83
Pietersen lbw b Muralidaran 31
Collingwood not out 14

Bopara c P Jayawardene 8
Prior c Mubarak b Fernando 0
Sidebottom not out 12

Extras: (b-5, nb-7) 12

Total: (For six wks in 63 overs) 186

Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-107, 3-132, 4-170, 5-182, 6-185.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Vaas	15	3	60	1
Malinga	11	1	54	0
Muralidaran	23	11	30	4
Jayasuriya	2	0	9	0
Fernando	12	1	28	1

Dilip not to

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threatening to do so. He did however meet with Pawar and Shashank Manohar and spent close to an hour in discussions. What the three discussed, is not clear, though it is widely presumed that the matter of him writing columns had once again come up.

Earlier the BCCI had instructed all selectors to refrain from writing columns in a seven-point dictat. Vengsarkar then asked to be compensated for the loss of earnings that resulted from the board directive. The matter was debated within the board, but it was decided -- at least for the moment -- that no compensation would be paid.

The speculation that Vengsarkar left Kolkata in anger was further fuelled by the confusion surrounding the date and venue for picking the team for the forthcoming tour of Australia. Initially, the selection was to happen on the last day of the Test, December 4, at Kolkata. Later, it was decided that the selection would happen in Bangalore on December 5, ahead of the final Pakistan Test.

Malik a doubt

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Pakistan team spokesman told Reuters on Sunday. The final Test begins on December 8.

The visitors have been beset with fitness troubles.

Pacer Umar Gul, who missed the first Test, was ruled out of the rest of the series with back trouble while quicks Shoaib Akhtar and Mohammad Sami started the second Test after being down with viral infections.

Rio backs

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Sunday: "I think that would be good. We need someone who can organise the team into being a success."

"We did not mark ourselves as the 'golden era', yet look at the players who all perform in the top echelon of players around Europe."

"But we can't seem to do that in an England shirt. The players always play well for their clubs but not on a consistent basis for England."

"The next manager needs to change that - it's as simple as that."

Kaka wins

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He was in the Brazilian World Cup squads in 2002 and 2006.

Milan coach Carlo Ancelotti described Kaka as a 'fabulous' player.

"We're all really happy for him. It's an award he deserves for what he has done and for the image he has given to this sport," Ancelotti said on the Milan TV channel.

"I remember his first training session at Milan (Milan's training ground): we all knew that a fabulous player had arrived."

"Usually Brazilians are circus performers but he is unusual in this way. In the game he is essential."

"He always aims for the goal and with his speed, he creates many chances."

AC Milan vice-president Adriano Galliani said Kaka's name would be added to the list of stars playing for the great Italian team that have won the title.

"It's a fantastic story. We have had (Gianni) Rivera, (Marco) Van Basten won it three times, (Andrie) Shevchenko and now there is Kaka," said Galliani who then dismissed any notion that the Brazilian might be tempted away from the club.

"Congratulations to him and his family. He will stay at Milan, I can guarantee it."



The two finalists of Dhaka Sports Carnival's six-a-side cricket competition. Cadet College Club (sitting) and Calcutta Cricket & Football Club pose for a photograph with Dhaka Club president Selim Bhuyian (C) at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium yesterday. Cadet College Club won the thrilling final by two runs.

Gibbs gives SA series

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in his first match of the series, dismissed both opening batsmen cheaply and were 79 for four after 22 overs before Scott Styris (60) and Mathew Sinclair (73) led a recovery.

Styris and Sinclair put on 49 for the fifth wicket. Sinclair then shared stands of 56 with Oram and 43 with Kyle Mills as the Black Caps reached a competitive total.

Steyn, who took 20 wickets in two Tests against New Zealand last month, quickly had the dangerous Brendon McCullum caught at cover for nought and then bowled Lou Vincent with a slower yorker.

Shaun Pollock bowled economically while Andre Nel and Charl Langeveldt maintained the early pressure before Styris and Sinclair came together. Pollock conceded only 26 runs in ten overs -- the third successive game in which he gave up fewer than 30 runs -- but ended the series without a wicket.

Both Styris and Sinclair hid escapes. Styris edged a no-ball from Langeveldt to wicketkeeper Boucher when he had 33 while Sinclair was dropped by Boucher off Pollock on 26.

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard of the third and final one-day international between South Africa and New Zealand at Newlands on Sunday.

NEW ZEALAND	
Vincent b Steyn	18
McCullum c Gibbs b Steyn	0
Howlbw b Langeveldt	15
Styris c Nel b Botha	60
Taylor b Nel	3
Sinclair run out	73
Oram c Smith b Langeveldt	34
Mills run out	11

Vettori not out	9
Gillespie not out	0
Extras: (lb-6, nb-2, w-7)	15
Total: (For 8 wks in 50 overs)	238
Did not bat: Patel	
Fall of wickets: 1-7, 2-27, 3-68, 4-79, 5-128, 6-184, 7-227, 8-234.	

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Pollock	10	2	26	0
Steyn	9	0	50	2
Nel	10	0	52	1
Langeveldt	10	0	46	2
Botha	9	0	45	1
Kallis	2	0	13	0

SOUTH AFRICA
Smith c Gillespie b Vettori 51
Gibbs c Mills b Vettori 119
Kallis c McCullum b Vincent 30
De Villiers c Sinclair b Mills 2

Duminy c McCullum b Vettori 1
Boucher not out 26
Pollock not out 4
Extras: (b-3, lb-3, nb-1, w-2) 9

Total: (For 5 wks in 45.2 overs) 242

Did not bat: Botha, Nel, Langeveldt, Steyn.

Fall of wickets: 1-173, 2-187, 3-190, 4-191, 5-237.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Mills	10	0	34	1
Gillespie	7	1	58	0
Oram	2	0	20	0
Styris	8	0	37	0
Vettori	10	1	33	3
Patel	7.2	0	54	0
Vincent	1	1	0	1

Result: South Africa won by five wickets and clinched 3-match series 2-1.

Man-of-the-match: Herschelle Gibbs.

Man-of-the-series: Kyle Mills.

Umpires: M Benson (ENG), I Howell (RSA).

TV umpire: M Erasmus (RSA).

Match referee: J Srinath (Ind).

ACC U-15s

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two players in each squad (consisting 14 players) have been found to be over-aged, the teams have been disqualified from the competition," the ACC said in a release issued to announce its decision.

According to ACC, some teams were found to have seven, eight or nine over-aged players. "140 radiology examinations have been conducted in Nepal since the team's arrival with all the players from the ten participating teams," the release said.

Before taking the decision, ACC chief executive Ashraf Haq met managers of all the teams individually.

"Our age-verification protocols have been tested and proven to work. We stand by the results found," Haq said. "In the long-run, cricket in Asia will benefit. Results such as this should act as an eye-opener to all our members."

UAE was already disqualified for not fielding even a single UAE passport-holder in its squad.

Shocked by ACC's decision to disqualify eight of the ten participating teams, Binaya Raj Pandey, president of Cricket Association of Nepal (CAN) told the Kathmandu Post, "We had provided all the necessary documents of players to ACC prior to the event and they didn't say anything on that." He further said that it was bad for both the team and organizers.

"Either it should have been done before the event started or it should be done after completion. Disgracing young kids like this is not good," Pandey said.

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 tournament 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-pace 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 nicety. They punished the bowlers' errant length during their 81-run stand.

Ali edged a straight one to the wicketkeeper, who fumbled 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.

Bayliss thinks it's anybody's game

CRICINFO, undated

Sri Lanka's coach Trevor Bayliss has termed the first Test between Sri Lanka and England an evenly-poised affair at the end of the second day and said that either of the teams can win the contest if they play well from now till the end of the match.

"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.

Questioned on the impending retirement of Sanath Jayasuriya, Bayliss said: "He hasn't said anything to us at this stage. Obviously he is getting close, exactly how close we are not very sure."

Arsenal stay

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Allardyce will be feeling the heat after his side's fifth successive match without a win. The beleaguered Newcastle boss was jeered after the home defeats against Portsmouth and Liverpool and the travelling fans were unhappy again at Ewood Park.

Obafemi Martins put the visitors in front in the 47th minute. But Bentley equalised in the 54th minute with a superb free-kick.

Bentley's second was nearly as good as he drilled in a fine low strike in the 67th minute. Tugay put the result beyond doubt in the 90th minute.

Paul Jewell suffered a painful start to his Derby reign as Anthony Stokes's stoppage time goal gave Sunderland a 1-0 win over the rock-bottom Rams at the Stadium of Light.

Portsmouth manager Harry Redknapp endured a frustrating end to a trying week as his side were held to a 0-0 draw by Everton.

Four days after being one of five men arrested by the City of London police force as part of an investigation into allegations of corruption in the game, Redknapp saw a tedious stalemate at Fratton Park.

Middlesbrough manager Gareth Southgate breathed a sigh of relief as Tuncay's late equaliser earned a 1-1 draw after Dave Kitson put Reading ahead at the Madejski Stadium.

Liverpool host Bolton and Tottenham play Birmingham on Sunday. Manchester United entertain Fulham on Monday.

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.

"In the first game, I was completely winning, but missed it in the time pressure as I failed to bank on two checkmate situations."

"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.

"However, I recovered and outplayed him in time pressure." 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.



ENAMUL HOSSAIN RAJIB

"From the beginning, they were with me so I was missing them badly," said the IM, who drew the last game of the second round.

The young chess talent, however, lamented lack of facilities.

"We need more preparation for such big events, which we never get here. It's not so easy to play chess in Bangladesh, because there's no governmental support, but still

some players manage to develop and show good results.

"If we had adequate facilities, we would have had more grandmasters by this time. We do not get many GM tournaments at home. The few events in India remain our main hope as we cannot travel frequently to Europe -- because it's costly -- where chess is played regularly."

"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 groom the youngsters as other do."

"The sponsors are not interested in us, maybe 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 the 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 wickets 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 bowling slowly wilted.

Morton began the onslaught, signalling his intent by creaming 14 from three balls in the tenth over -- a four and a six off Gary Brent over mid-on, followed by a cut over point for another four. With the seamers operating, Morton was clearly more at ease, and launched expansive drives whenever the bowlers pitched it up, hitting through the line with flourish.

At the other end Gayle found his bearings after a slow start, and both Elton Chigumbura and Chamu Chibhabha felt the heat, being clubbed for sixes over midwicket. Ray Price was pressed into service within the 'Powerplays' as West Indies motored to 106 after 20 overs. The partnership finally came to an end when Gayle was stretched off

the field after hurting his hamstring while attempting a run.

Chanderpaul's run-out soon after gave 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 Keith 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 prolonged 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 Mazakadza edged a drive, while Elton Chigumbura and Chamu Chibhabha felt the heat, being clubbed for sixes over midwicket. Ray Price was pressed into service within the 'Powerplays' as West Indies motored to 106 after 20 overs. The partnership finally came to an end when Gayle was stretched off

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 Taijub b Dabengwa	43
Bravo c Taylor b Dabengwa	10
Ramdin c Chigumbura b Chibhabha	16

Lewis c Masakadza b Chibhabha	19
Rampaul not out	26
Taylor c Chigumbura b Brent	3
Powell run out	1

Extras: (lb-4, w-11, nb-2) 17
Total: (For 9 wks 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, 9-286.

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

Rampaul	11
Taijub b Bravo	6

Masakadza c Ramdin b Bravo	0
Matsikenyeri c Ramdin b Lewis	37

Dabengwa c Taylor b Powell
