

LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

A total of 15 matches decided on the opening day of the 17th Bata School handball tournament at the Dhanmondi Women's Sports Complex yesterday.

After Narinda Government High School outplayed Playpen 21-2 in the opener, Radiant beat Marie Curie 3-0, Bhashantek defeated SOS 12-1, Banani Bidyaniketan beat British School 12-4 and Bhashantek 7-3, Shaheen School blanked South Point 11-0, BIS trounced Khilgaon Oxford Ideal 19-1, St Gregory's edged Scholastica 14-11, Wills beat Bhasha Shaheed Ansar 8-5, SOS beat British School 12-8 in the boys' group.

In the girls' group, Maple Leaf beat Radiant 9-1, Maghbarah Ispahani drew 0-0 with Dhanmondi Tutorial, SOS beat Bhashantek 8-4, BIS beat Agrami 9-3 and Banani Bidyaniketan dumped South Point 11-0.

CRICKET

DU: Department of Marketing set a final clash with Public Administration in the Dhaka University inter-department cricket tournament defeating Political Science by 111 runs at the Jagannath Hall ground.

BOOST CUP: In the Boost Power Cup (Under-13) Twenty20 tournament, Indira Road CA (123-9) snatched a one-wicket win over Keraniganj CA (121-8) at the Kalindi cricket ground.

MUNSHIGANJ: In Munshiganj, Orchid SC (179) lifted the first division cricket league title with a 15-run win over Cricket Development Association (164-9) in the final at the Munshiganj Stadium.

KERANIGANJ: Aganagar PMS (136-6) moved into the final of the Keraniganj Cricket League defeating Amritpur Young Cricketers (130) by four wickets at the Kalindi cricket ground.

Football camp from March 28

SPORTS REPORTER

The national football camp for the AFC Challenge Cup and the SAFF Championship will begin on March 28 at BKSP under new coach Abu Yusuf.

The players have been requested to report to the coach tomorrow.

The Bangladesh Football Federation's (BFF) initial plan to hold the camp in Cox's Bazar had to be abandoned due to lack of accommodation at the tourist resort.

The team are expected to train for two weeks in Cox's Bazar before the June 3-14 SAFF Championship in Colombo.

Meanwhile, the BFF has sent the name of four coaches to the Asian Football Federation's approval to appoint them for different age-groups.

The AFC will pay the salary, US dollars 500 each, for Abu Yusuf, Jobair Nipu, Golam Rabbani Choton and Razzak Sardar.

However, BFF's decision to include national team coach Yusuf in the same category with the junior coaches seemed to be a harsh treatment to the former national footballer.



Did U Know?

Weightlifting was included in the first modern Olympics in 1896 as an official sport, but was left out of the 1900 Games. However it returned to the Olympic stage in 1904, and became a regular event in 1920.



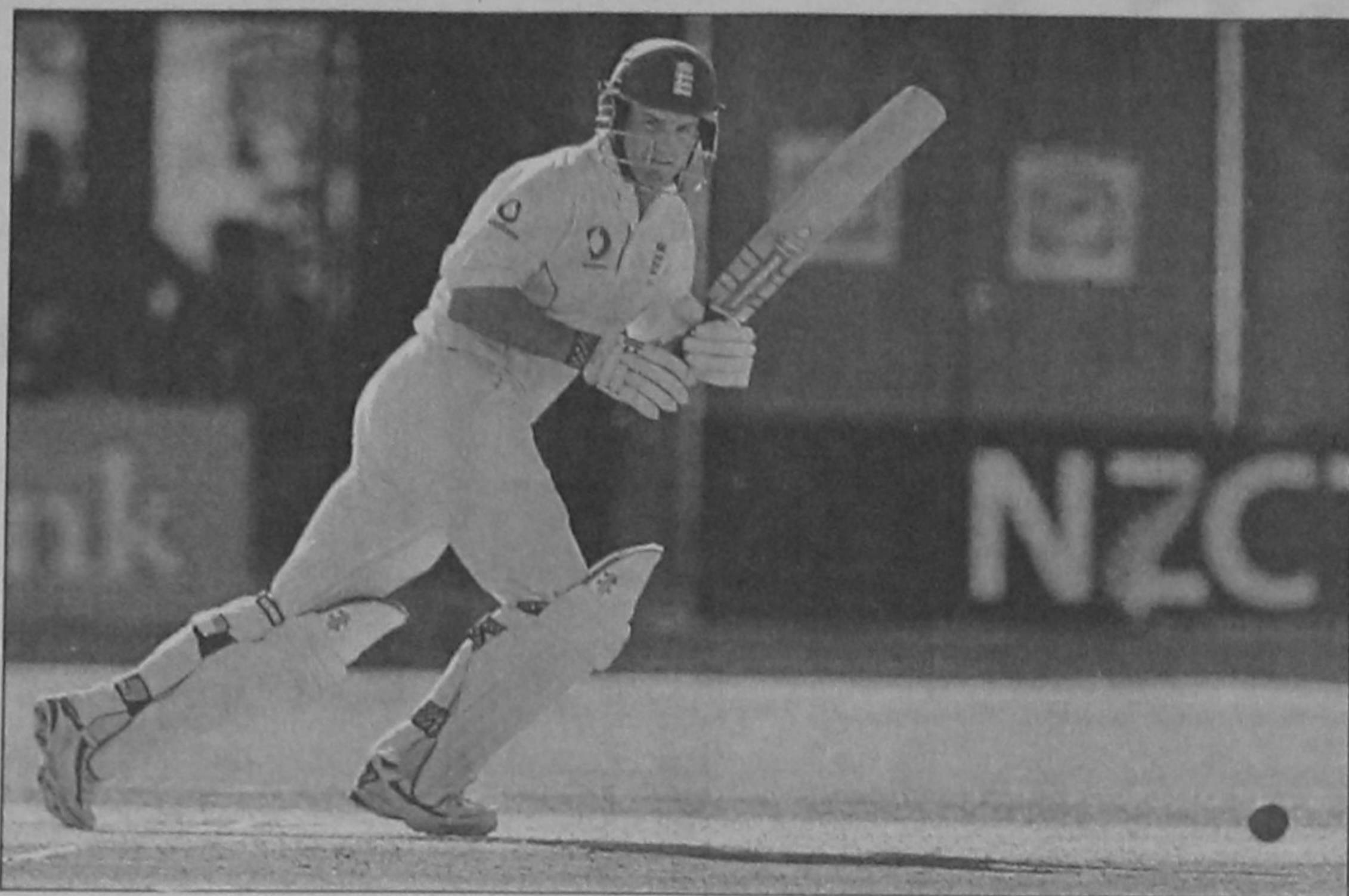
Talk Turkey



Franck Ribery

(Bayern Munich's French midfielder) "It is an enormous honour to be compared to Zinedine Zidane. He is a huge player, perhaps the biggest in history. I want to try to achieve the same things he did."

After Bayern goalkeeper Oliver Kahn compared the two.



England's Andrew Strauss flicks one to the mid-wicket fence on his way to a sparkling unbeaten 173 during the third day of the third Test against New Zealand at Napier on Monday.

Strauss smites Kiwis

Cricket

AFP, Napier

Andrew Strauss and Ian Bell centuries put England firmly in command of the third Test against New Zealand on Monday as they ended Day Three with a 501-run second innings lead.

Strauss remained unbeaten on a career-best 173 with England at 416 for five.

He had earlier shared in a 187-run stand for the fourth wicket with Bell who was out for 110.

In this series-deciding third and final encounter New Zealand will again face a world record fourth innings target after being asked to chase 438 in the second Test in Wellington and falling 126 runs short.

New Zealand won the first Test in Hamilton by 189 runs.

Strauss, who was handed a lifetime by being selected for this England squad after missing the previous series against Sri Lanka, had failed to excite in his early outings in New Zealand.

In his first five Test innings he only averaged 19.4, before coming right to produce his 11th Test century and first in 16 Tests.

Bell scored his seventh Test hundred ending a 12-match lull.

England resumed the day at 91 for two and the only wicket to fall in the first session was first innings centurion Kevin Pietersen who was neatly caught by Ross Taylor at slip.

Pietersen went to turn Daniel Vettori down the leg side only to

have the ball deflect off the back of the bat for Taylor to pick up diving to his right.

Strauss, meanwhile, continued undaunted by his first innings duck and after arriving at the crease in the first over of England's second innings with the early dismissal of captain Michael Vaughan.

The South African-born left-hander brought up his 50 driving Chris Martin straight to the boundary, and his century came slashing Martin for four.

He offered one chance when on 62 when he struck out at Vettori but the ball hit Matthew Bell in the chest at short leg and bounced out.

It was a rather sedate morning session for England when they scored just 76 runs, before adding 135 between lunch and tea and another 114 after tea.

Ian Bell, who arrived at the wicket with Pietersen's dismissal, went hunting runs from the start proving the wicket was batsman friendly despite New Zealand's spectacular collapse when they lost nine wickets for 65 runs on the second day.

Unlike Strauss who took 225 deliveries to reach his century, Bell hooked Martin to the boundary to reach his milestone in 150 balls in an innings that included 16 fours and two sixes.

But his flamboyant knock came to a tame end when he half-heartedly drove Vettori straight to Mathew Sinclair at mid-off.

Vettori also removed Paul Collingwood for 22 with a straight forward caught and bowled leaving Tim Ambrose, unbeaten on 28,

with Strauss at the close.

New Zealand captain Vettori was the only successful bowler on the day, taking all three wickets to fall and finishing with figures of three for 135 off 40 overs.

When, or if, England declare it will be a tough task for New Zealand whose highest successful run chase was 324 for five against Pakistan 14 years ago.

The record winning fourth-innings totals is 418 by the West Indies when they beat Australia in 2003.

The third and final Test between New Zealand and England at McLean Park on Monday.

ENGLAND: First innings 253 (Pietersen 129, Broad 42; Southey 5-55, Patel 2-37, Martin 2-74)

NEW ZEALAND: First Innings 168 (Fleming 59; Sidebottom 7-47, Broad 3-54)

ENGLAND: Second Innings (overnight 91 for 2)

Cook c McCullum b Patel 37
Vaughan c McCullum b Martin 4
Strauss not out 173
Pietersen c Taylor b Vettori 34
Bell c Sinclair b Vettori 110
Collingwood c & b Vettori 22
Ambrose not out 28
Extras: (lb-3, w-1, nb-4) 8
Total: (For 5 wks in 122 overs) 416

To bat: Broad, Sidebottom, Panesar, Anderson.

Fall of wickets: 1-5, 2-77, 3-140, 4-327, 5-361

Bowler O M R W
Martin 18 2 60 1
Southey 24 5 84 0
Elliott 14 1 58 0
Patel 26 4 76 1
Vettori 40 6 135 3

Troubled SA & upbeat India

Cricket

REUTERS, Chennai

South Africa begin a tough Test series in India on Wednesday determined to shrug off a selection row and claim an Asian treble.

Graeme Smith's side thumped unfancied Bangladesh 2-0 this month following their win in Pakistan late last year but they will face a far stronger India.

India aim to cash in on their traditional home advantage after their strong showing in Australia, where they climbed to second in the Test rankings despite losing the close series 2-1 against the champions.

South Africa, fourth in the list, can displace India as number two if they win the three-Test series.

India captain and leg-spinner Anil Kumble will team up with off-spinner Harbhajan Singh on the traditionally slow pitches, backed by a young pace attack and an experienced batting line-up which clicked in Australia.

The tourists, on a high after reeling off six Test series wins in a row since their defeat in Sri Lanka in August 2006, are confident they

have the firepower to rattle India, despite the row centred on their new ball attack.

They arrived for the series amid a controversy following the omission of paceman Andre Nel to fulfil the team's quota of non-white players.

Nel was furious, prompting speculation he could quit the international game and Charl Langeveldt, a mixed-race player chosen in his place, also backed out saying he did not want to be picked on the basis of his colour. South Africa also called off their only warm-up game but the team management is confident they will be ready.

"The myth that South African batsmen cannot play spin doesn't exist anymore," said all-rounder Jacques Kallis, who scored three hundreds in four innings in Pakistan last year.

The focus will be on 24-year-old fast bowler Dale Steyn, who has captured 54 wickets with pace, swing and accuracy in the last three series, emerging as man of the series each time. He will join the experienced Mahayana Ntini with Kallis, the top Test all-rounder, and youngster Morne Morkel backing up.

Smith leads the batting fresh

from setting a world record first wicket partnership of 415 with Neil McKenzie in the second Test in Bangladesh this month.

India can turn to former South Africa opener Gary Kirsten, who begins his tenure as the new coach, to help them rekindle the spark at home.

Although their overseas record has steadily improved, India have been unable to dominate at home. They struggled to beat Pakistan 1-0 late last year and only managed 1-1 draws against Pakistan and England in the previous two major home series.

Indian batsmen came good in Australia where opener Virender Sehwag made a strong Test return and former skipper Rahul Dravid found a semblance of his form.

However, India's pace attack will again be reorganised in the absence of teenager Ishant Sharma, the find of the Australia tour, and experienced Zaheer Khan due to injuries.

However, left-arm Ruma Pratap Singh will return after missing the Australia tri-series due to a hamstring injury.

The second Test will be played in Ahmedabad and the final game in Kanpur.

Nokia aces with Super

FROM PAGE 17

the city late Sunday night.

The screening of the double header matches of Manchester United v Liverpool and Chelsea v Arsenal in Super Sunday of the English Premier League was attended by players of the Bangladesh national team, the press, the four winners of Bangladesh winners of the Nokia man-of-the-match contest (held in ESPN-Star Sports) and all Nokia users who had successfully registered for the event.

The invitee list and others coupled to make the screening a show attended by about a hundred, all of whom combined to make for a pulsating atmosphere during game time.

Not just the bright big screen, there was live entertainment, too. Nokia, which is the sponsor of the national football team, brought a synthetic football turf where the

stars mingled with other guests to play the shoot-out game with cheers from the close-in crowd.

While the food and drink flowed freely, the prizes also came thick and fast. Raffle draws were held to give out licensed merchandise from caps to jerseys and even footballs.

The lucky majority went home smiling while the superbly hosted programme itself proved an ample consolation for those who went home empty-handed.

Managing Director of Nokia Emerging Asia, Prem Chand, himself attired in the colours of his beloved Manchester United said, "Nokia has always had a strong relationship with football. Bangladeshis love football and Nokia is here to fuel their passion for this game."

On this evidence, they are indeed.

Flame lit amidst

FROM PAGE 17

through five continents before reaching Beijing's Olympic Stadium for the opening ceremony.

China's plans to take the torch through Tibet and to the top of Mount Everest has upset Tibetan activist groups, which accuse Beijing of using the site to convey a false message of harmony in the troubled Himalayan region.

The Chinese troops have occupied Tibet since 1951.

The Olympics, held every four years, were the most widely attended sporting event in ancient Greece and symbolised a truce between warring cities. They first began in 776 BC and were abolished in 394 AD by the Christian Byzantine Emperor Theodosius.

As the Beijing games approach, the International Olympic Committee has come under growing criticism from human rights groups in order to pressure China to improve its human rights situation.

Dhaka retain JFA Cup

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka clinched their third consecutive title when they edged BKSP 2-1 in a keenly contested final of the 4th JFA Cup Under-15 football championship yesterday.

The match at the Rajshahi Divisional Stadium was locked 0-0 for an hour before Rubel put Dhaka ahead.

BKSP, who also lost last year's final, equalised five minutes later through Masud Rana but Dhaka regained the lead in the 70th minute with Sagar scoring the winner.

Mahmud Ali of Rajshahi was adjudged player of the tournament while Dinajpur's Sajib won the highest scorer's award with six goals. Narayanjanj were awarded the Fair Play trophy.

DC of Rajshahi Ibrahim Khalil distributed trophies after the final as chief guest. Maksud Takahiro, deputy general manager of international relation department of Japan Football Association, which sponsors the event, was present as special guest.

Surprisingly, no senior official of the Bangladesh Football Federation was present at the final.

Farewell to Rafique

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh national cricket team's unofficial fan club Bengal Tigers bid farewell to Mohammad Rafique yesterday on his retirement from international cricket.

Former national captains Aminul Islam Bulbul, Naimur Rahman Durjoy and Khaled Mahmud Sujon were present at the brief farewell party at the BKSP ground, where Rafique was playing for Abahani in a Premier Cricket League match.

For taking 100 Test wickets, Rafique was also presented a crest.

Former national cricketers Jalal Yunus and GS Hassan Tamim, Bengal Tigers' general secretary Kazi Tabarakul Islam and member Sajjad Hossain were also present.

Musa, Bappy stay at Abahani

SPORTS REPORTER

While a number of national players were struggling to find a club, holders Abahani all but sealed the fort by confirming two players from the national pool yesterday, the second day of the Premier Hockey League transfers scene.

Goalkeeper Russell Khan Bappy and midfielder Musa Miah both decided to stay at Abahani although the sky-blues looked uncertain about their old guards.

In fact, Musa had completed the formalities late on Sunday while Abahani added former national player Moksed from Sonali Bank and Azad Sporting's Rocky.

Club officials informed that former Indian captain and Abahani player Dhanraj Pillay has ensured to bring three Indian players for the Dhanmondi outfit, who however, lost Asif-e-Noor to archrivals Mohammedan.

Mohammedan confirmed 12 youngsters of BKSP including Pintu, Rana, Kiron and Tapash of the national pool although the Savar sport institute students have yet to get clearance to sign for the black and whites.

Pakistani stick wielder Asim has already arrived in the city to play for Mohammedan, who will sign their players today, the final day of the bourse.

Top players like Habul, Zahid and Yamin have yet to secure a team as Usha and Mariner, the other big spenders, are reportedly playing the waiting game to include pool players rather cheaply.

One team can include maximum six players from the 26-member pool, which has made life difficult for the national players who could well resign from the national team altogether to have their revenge against the pool system.

Kandy dropped for India tour

AFP, Colombo

Kandy's Asgiriya Stadium has been excluded as a venue for India's three-Test and one-day international tour of Sri Lanka in July, officials said Monday.

"There will be two Tests in Colombo with one in Galle," Samantha Alaguma, spokesman for Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC), told AFP.

It will be the first time the Indians will not play a Test in Kandy during a three-Test series hosted by Sri Lanka.

The Indians will also play five ODIs, comprising two day matches and three day-night games.

SCHEDULE

| | | |
|---------------|----------|----------|
| July 23-27 | 1st Test | Galle |
| July 31-Aug 4 | 2nd Test | Colombo |
| Aug 8-12 | 3rd Test | Colombo |
| Aug 18 | 1st ODI | Dambulla |
| Aug 20 | 2nd ODI | Dambulla |
| Aug 24 | 3rd ODI | Colombo |
| Aug 26 | 4th ODI | Colombo |
| Aug 29 | 5th ODI | Colombo |

Lanka have upper hand

Cricket

AFP, Providence

Sri Lanka collected the prized scalp of Chris Gayle to strengthen their hold on the opening Test against West Indies on Sunday after their captain Mahela Jayawardene posted his 22nd Test hundred.

Left-arm fast-medium bowler Chaminda Vaas inflicted an early blow to the West Indies' batting, when he removed Gayle for the seventh time in Tests, as the home team reached 29 for one when stumps were drawn on the second day at the Guyana National Stadium.

In stark contrast, the fortunes were much richer for Jayawardene. He rode his luck to hit the top score of 136, and so too Vaas, to help the visitors reach 476 for eight declared in their first innings.

With a little over an hour remaining before the close, Sri Lanka could hardly believe their fortune, when Gayle was adjudged lbw to Vaas for a duck -- his fifth against this opponent -- playing half forward to a well-pitched delivery.

The Sri Lankans however, failed to make further headway when Ramnaresh Sarwan, playing his first Test in nine months, joined Devon Smith.

Vaas felt the weight of Sarwan's bat when the batsman played a silky drive through mid-off for his first boundary, and Rangana Herath also saw him execute a searing extra cover drive for another boundary.

But Vaas put some pressure on Smith, when he made him fend a rising ball to third slip, where Malinda Warnapura swooped low and half-heartedly claimed a low catch, but a subsequent referral to the video umpire gained the West Indies left-handed opener a reprieve.

Off-spin legend Muttiah Muralidaran also appeared to put Smith under the gun, when he appealed for an lbw decision with the batsman on four, but umpire Billy Bowden ruled "not-out", although video replays seemed to suggest differently.

Earlier Sri Lanka continued from their bedtime total of 269 for four, and the batting of Jayawardene took centre stage.

The Sri Lanka captain reached his hundred when he turned his 189th delivery from Dwayne Bravo into mid-wicket for a single.

His innings was key to the balance of power, since he added 54 for the sixth wicket with his unrelated namesake Prasanna Jayawardene, who scored 21, and an important 126 for the seventh wicket with Vaas, who was unbeaten on 54.

Fortune favoured Jayawardene on two occasions however, during his innings which lasted just over six hours.

He saw a top-edged cut at a delivery from left-arm spin bowler Suleiman Benn fly past his opposite number Gayle desperate grab at slip when he was 39, and on 126, Bravo dropped him at fine leg off Gayle when he essayed a sweep.

Jayawardene never let them trouble him, and he soldiered on to be the glue that held his side's innings together, after West Indies removed Tillakaratne Dilshan in the first half-hour, when he was adjudged lbw to Jerome Taylor.

The two Jayawardenes then

carried Sri Lanka to 330 for five at lunch, but not without incident, since Prasanna watched a short delivery from Bravo drop millimetres short of Benn at mid-wicket when he essayed a pull just prior to the interval.

West Indies claimed the second new ball immediately after the interval, and Powell struck in the first over, when he bowled Prasanna Jayawardene when the batsman drove loosely at a good delivery which moved back and sneaked between his bat and pad.

Vaas arrived and had to weather an early storm from Powell and fellow fast bowler Jerome Taylor.

Vaas edged between third slip Bravo and gully Benn to third man for four off Taylor before he had scored, and then Devon Smith dropped him on four at third slip off the same bowler.

Like the other batsmen before him, Vaas quickly assessed the conditions, and proceeded to grind away for the remainder of the afternoon period to help Jayawardene carry Sri Lanka to 418 for six at tea.

After the break, Jayawardene and Vaas continued to plunder the West Indies bowling, and put Sri Lanka in an impregnable position.

Jayawardene's rich vein of luck soon ran out, when he tried to reverse sweep Gayle and was dubiously adjudged lbw, but video replays revealed that Bowden probably erred, since the ball struck gloves of the batsman and came nowhere near his pads.

Gayle added the scalp of Thilan Thushara caught at deep mid-wicket for a duck, but Vaas drove Benn to long-off for a single to reach his 50, and a few flourishing strokes from Rangana Herath hasten the declaration.

Fall of wicket: 1-4.

Bowler O M R W
Vaas 5 2 10 1
Thushara 4 2 2 0
Dilshan 1 0 2 0
Muralidaran 3 0 10 0
Herath 3 1 5 0

WEST INDIES: First Innings
Gayle lbw b Vaas 0
Smith not out 8
Sarwan not out 21
Total: (For 1 wkt in 16 overs) 29
To bat: Samuels, Chanderpaul, Herath, Bravo, Ramdin, Benn, Taylor, Powell.
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