



PHOTO: ZOAHER HOSSAIN SIKDER
 Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraf celebrates after dismissing Sri Lanka opener Malinda Warnapura on the third day of the second Test at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday.

Concentration the keyword

BISHWAJIT ROY in Chittagong

Bangladesh passed a tough day as the Sri Lankan batsmen showed real vigilance on way to building up an innings on the third day of the final Test at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday.

With a 176-run first innings cushion, the visitors could easily have gone for the kill against the home team bowlers but none of their batsmen showed that kind of arrogance, only picking the bad balls to hit on a tricky pitch where it's not so easy to play shots.

Sri Lanka already possess a huge 472-run lead after ending the day on 296 for four and after the third day's play the question all around was whether the Tigers can apply the same concentration as the visiting batsmen showed in their second innings.

The home batters can easily take the lesson from them when they go to bat in their second innings with an improbable target to chase. Their second innings effort in the first Test where they scored 413 runs in reply to a towering target of 521 could be an inspiration for them as well.

But the Sri Lankans issued a warning by saying that it would be a different story here as the pitch is different from the one in Mirpur.

"The two wickets are totally different. Here it is not easy to play shots, that is the important difference and you have to bat very straight from the start to the end. The Dhaka wicket got better and better each day but this one is

uneven and getting slower. There are cracks developing and if you bowl slowly then it gets very difficult to play strokes," said Thilan Samaraweera, who shared an unbeaten 131-run partnership with Tillakaratne Dilshan to put his side in a commanding position.

Then was the total they have already achieved not good enough?

"I think it is a good lead. The wicket is getting more difficult and at the moment it is a bit uneven. We'll decide in the morning whether to declare or not. Regarding waiting for the hundreds, well it is upto the team management," said Samaraweera, who was not out on 72 while his partner Dilshan remained not out on 81.

"I think 400 is a safe score. We didn't declare today probably because the bowlers needed a rest after bowling long spells. Murali bowled 70-odd overs in the first Test," he added.

While everybody was focusing on the deadly spinning duo -- Muttiah Muralidaran and Ajantha Mendis -- the Sri Lankan batsmen however put more attention to their two new ball bowlers Chaminda Vaas and Dilhara Fernando.

"Murali and Ajantha will be the key but the new ball is most important. Dilhara [Fernando] and [Chaminda] Vaas bowled extremely well with the new ball in the first innings and if they can do that again then the spinners' job will become easy," he warned. Undoubtedly the main focus will be on Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraf who made a hundred in the second innings of the first Test and in the second Test.

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Did U Know?

Gymnastics in Special Olympics was first included in 1972 as an official sport. In the third International Special Olympics World Summer Games 11 athletes competed in tumbling and free exercise routines.



What to WATCH

BTV
 Bangladesh v Sri Lanka
 Second Test, Day Four
 Live from 9:30am

STAR Cricket
 Australia v South Africa
 Third Test, Day Five
 Live from 5:30am (Wednesday)

ESPN
 Sportscentre India
 Sports News
 Live at 8:30pm



TALK TURKEY



Graeme Smith

(South Africa cricket captain)
 "Any guy who is going to try 150,000% in this game is someone we're going to have to respect."
 On Doug Bollinger's statement about his commitment to Australia.



DAY'S EVENT

Bangladesh v Sri Lanka
 Second Test, Day Four
 Venue: Chittagong Divisional Stadium
 Time: 9:30am

Citycell B. League
 Rahmatganj v Ctg Mohammedan
 Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium
 Time: 4:00pm

CHITS FROM CHITTAGONG

NUR UDDIN ALAMGIR, Chittagong

BOWLERASHRAFUL

In his early days Mohammad Ashraf was tipped as a future leg-spinner like his guru Wahidul Ghani. But eventually the Bangladesh captain emerged as a premier batsman of the country.

However, the little right-hander on Monday showed that his exploits as a bowler could be very handy for his team after claiming two vital wickets.

He made the first breakthrough in the morning by dismissing opener Malinda Warnapura with the score-board reading 55 in 16.5 overs. Ashraf also saw the back of champion Sri Lankan batsman Kumar Sangakkara (54 runs off 103 balls).

It was also the last achievement of the Tigers on a day the Lankans dictated the terms.

Despite being an occasional bowler, Ashraf's success on the day was quite enviable. He bowled a total of 11 overs and conceded just 29 runs with an average of 2.63 runs per over, which was the second lowest of the bowling statistics of Tigers in the second innings.

LOOSE FIELDING

It was hard work all day for Bangladesh at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday. The bowling lacked penetration against the tall Lankan batting order. But the most frustrating scenario was average ground fielding. Although the bowlers did create a few chances, they went begging like the first innings. Eventually those let offs proved costly in the end of the

day. Standing at slips, Junaed Siddiqui dropped a sharp chance offered by Dilshan, who followed up his first innings century with yet another impressive unbeaten 81. Substitute Rajin Saleh also missed a golden opportunity to run Dilshan out while he was only six. His throw from a vantage position surprisingly missed the wicket by miles.

Contribution from all is important...
 To score a big total it does not necessarily mean that you need big hundreds. Rather you need partnerships and collective contributions. And the Lankans did exactly that to post an impressive 296-4 in their second innings after the third day's play.

The innings so far contained three fifties. But Warnapura's 27, wicketkeeper Prasanna Jayawardene's 28 and skipper Jayawardene's 22 proved that combined effort

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PHOTO: STAR
 WE ARE NOT FINISHED YET: The undefeated Sri Lankan pair of Tillakaratne Dilshan (R) and Thilan Samaraweera leave the ground after the third day's play of the second Test against Bangladesh at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday.

Siddle puts Aussies atop

Cricket

BBC ONLINE, undated

Peter Siddle picked up his first five-wicket Test haul as Australia seized a notable advantage on Day Three of the third and final Test against South Africa at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Monday.

Resuming the day on 125 for one, and with Graeme Smith out with a broken hand, South Africa were dismissed for 327.

Australia then reached 33 without losing a wicket for a lead of 151, Matthew Hayden surviving a very close lbw appeal from Dale Steyn.

South Africa's score owed much to a 115-run partnership between Mark Boucher (89) and Morne Morkel (40).

Their sixth-wicket stand either side of tea was the only high point in a generally uncertain performance by South Africa, who were understandably suspicious of a pitch with widening cracks --

one of which had caused their skipper Smith's injury. Monday's play was always going to be an important baptism for the inexperienced Australian attack.

With Brett Lee and Stuart Clark both out injured, Shane Warne in the commentary box and Glenn McGrath encouraging the crowd to turn pink for breast cancer awareness in his late wife Jane's memory, Ricky Ponting was relying on a bowling group that boasted Mitchell Johnson (17 Tests) as its most experienced member.

The first session was a good one for the hosts. South Africa lost three wickets and were unable to score with much freedom.

Hashim Amla concentrated hard to bring up his half-century from 125 balls, having lost his overnight partner Jacques Kallis early in the day when the veteran all-rounder slashed carelessly at a wide one from Johnson and edged to slip.

The next wicket was highly avoidable, AB de Villiers (11)

BCB-Zimbabwe 3-day match from today

STAFF REPORTER, Bogra

The visiting Zimbabweans will open their tour of Bangladesh today with a three-day match against GP-BCB Cricket Academy here at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium.

Zimbabwe, whose Test status has been stripped off by the ICC after decline of the team's strength following the top cricketers' rebel, arrived in Dhaka on Sunday to play a triangular one-day international series involving Sri Lanka and hosts Bangladesh from next week.

It will be the only warm-up game for Prosper Utseya's side, also featuring the likes of Tatenda Taibu, Hamilton Masakadza, Elton Chigumbura and Brendan Taylor, who had hard training yesterday afternoon at the match venue.

Zimbabwe have lost the last ten matches out of 11 against Bangladesh although they had been the superior force in the heydays. The tourists, who had won a tri-nation series also involving Kenya in Dhaka in 1998, lost the last three series out of four against Bangladesh.

However, they showed that they are improving after putting a tremendous fight against Sri Lanka in a home series last year despite a 5-0 whitewash.

The home side will be led by Nayeem Islam, who has to prove his fitness through this game for a return to the national fold.

Clark cheers up Australia

PTI, Melbourne

Injured pacer Stuart Clark does not think Australia's days of absolute domination is over and believes the team would bounce back with renewed vigour after the series defeat against South Africa.

Clark finds a similarity between this series defeat and the 2005 Ashes loss, after which Australia hit back with vengeance and went on to win 16 Test matches on the trot.

"I see things turning around very quickly," said Clark, who remains out of action with an elbow injury.

"It hasn't been the most ideal series, but at the same time, a couple of losses, as we saw with the Ashes in '05, is the start of something new," Clark was quoted as saying by 'The Age'.

"After those losses in the Ashes in '05, we won 16 straight Tests," he added.

Clark's absence has hit Australia hard in the home series, especially when spearhead Brett Lee also battled with injury.

Clark also hailed grooming newcomers like Peter Siddle

Sadat, Shuvo shine

SPORTS REPORTER



ISPAHANI MEZAPORE TEA

Nazmus Sadat and Sohrawardy Shuvo put on brilliant all-round shows as Khulna and Rajshahi took joint lead in the National Cricket League's one-day competition after exciting wins in the fourth round yesterday.

After hammering a 97-ball 87, opener Sadat grabbed three wickets for 40 to help Khulna snatch a two-run victory against Dhaka in a last-ball thriller at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium.

It was Shuvo's turn at BKSP where the left-arm spinner bagged 3-35 after hitting 62 to shape Rajshahi's 17-run defeat of Sylhet, co-leaders of the previous round.

In the other match, Barisal put an end to their two-match losing streak with a 30-run victory against Chittagong at the Fatullah Stadium.

Rajshahi and Khulna now have six points each, followed by Sylhet and Barisal on four and Dhaka and Chittagong at the bottom on two.

KHULNA-DHAKA

Amit Majumder contributed 37 during a 117-run opening stand with Sadat but Khulna failed to utilise the good start. Despite Sadat's domination over the rival bowlers, which saw him hitting a dozen boundaries inclusive of two sixes, they were bundled out for 231.

Dhaka recovered from a top-order collapse but most of the batsmen including captain Mahmudullah Riyad (32) and Nadif Chowdhury (24) wasted good starts as they were reduced to 178-9 by the 44th over.

Khulna, however, faced an unexpected challenge by the unbroken last wicket stand between Mohammed Azim (39 off 27 balls) -- who smashed two fours and three sixes -- and Ashraf Khan (9), who fell just three runs shy of the required 54 runs from the last 38 deliveries to reach the target.

RAJSHAHI-SYLHET

The inserted Rajshahi were 19-4 but skipper Anisur Rahman (36) halted the initial debacle before Shuvo (62 off 95 balls) and Sabbir

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Bukola treble fires MSC

SPORTS REPORTER



ALAMU BUKOLA

Alamu Bukola slotted the third hattrick of Citycell B. League to give Mohammedan a crushing 5-0 win over Muktijoddha yesterday.

Nigerian striker Bukola, who opened the scoring in the very second minute of the embarrassing one-sided affair at the Bangabandhu National Stadium, completed his treble on the half hour while Abdul Baten Komol scored a brace for the Black and Whites, who played their first match in ten days after a break in the previous round.

For second-from-bottom Reds, who suffered a 7-0 defeat to Mohammedan in the first leg, it was the first second-leg loss and overall ninth in 13 matches. They have eight points, five clear of Khulna Abahani.

Mohammedan, who won three consecutive matches for the first time in the competition after an inconsistent start, joined Brothers Union at second place on 25 points -- just one point adrift of leaders and archrivals Abahani -- after 12 rounds.

Maruful Haque's side got off to a superb

start as Bukola, playing behind striking pair Robin and Komol, struck twice in the first eight minutes.

Midfielder Arman Aziz set the first goal with a low cross as Muktijoddha custodian Paul James lost the ball under pressure from Bukola. Both were on the ground but Bukola managed to slide it home.

Six minutes later, Bukola dribbled past one rival defender with a through ball from Nasir for a clinical finish.

There was no respite for the Reds and this time, Bukola was the provider for Komol, who placed the ball past James near from the six-yard box to make it 3-0 in the 15th minute for his maiden professional league goal.

With the competition all but over, Mohammedan added their fourth when Bukola pounced on a rebound after James had made a diving save on Arman Aziz's effort from the top of the box.

It was the Nigerian's ninth league goal that placed him along side Alfaz Ahmed, who got the league's first hattrick, atop the scorers' list. Arambagh's Kenyan forward Nicodemus, released by the club in the mid-season break,

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PHOTO: STAR
 Mohammedan's Nigerian defender Damil Emmanuel (L) and Egyptian midfielder Hazem Mahmud (C) celebrate Nigerian striker Alamu Bukola's hattrick against Muktijoddha in the Citycell B. League at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.