

Bravo steadies WI

Cricket
AFP, Pallekele

Darren Bravo hit an impressive 63 not out for his third half-century to boost the West Indies in the third and final Test against Sri Lanka on Wednesday.

Bravo, who made 58 and 80 in the first two Tests, cracked nine fours in his 111-ball knock to steady the innings after the first-ball dismissal of former captain Chris Gayle.

He put on 115 for the second wicket with opener Devon Smith, who hit a solid 55 before being trapped leg-before by unorthodox spinner Ajantha Mendis in the final session. Smith hit seven fours in his fifth Test half-century.

Only 40 overs were possible in the day due to bad light and rain.

Shivnarine Chandepaul, trying to play a big knock after making 40 runs in two completed innings of the series, was unbeaten on 11.

Bravo, 21, continued to impress with his exciting stroke-play as he fluently drove paceman Dilhara Fernando through the covers for a boundary and then hit seamer Angelo Mathews for two fours in an over.

He completed his half-century in the last session with a four off Fernando. He then offered a chance on 56, but Mahela Jayawardene dropped the catch in the slips off Fernando.

The first Test at the Pallekele International Stadium started on a sensational note when

paceman Suranga Lakmal trapped Gayle leg-before with his first delivery after the tourists had been put in to bat.

It was a big blow to the West Indies as Gayle began the three-Test series with an explosive 333 in the opening match. The series is tied 0-0 following rain-hit drawn matches in Colombo and Galle.

Sri Lanka captain Kumar Sangakkara kept changing his bowlers, using five in the opening 15 overs, but had to wait for more than 32 overs for the second success as Bravo and Smith batted well.

Part-time spinner Tillakaratne Dilshan, who took two wickets in an over in the last Test, was pressed into the attack after seven overs and bowled just three overs for four runs.

Sri Lanka made one change from the side that played in the second Test, bringing in Fernando in place of paceman Nuwan Kulasekara.

The West Indies replaced opener Adrian Barath and off-spinner Shane Shillingford with Smith and Nelon Pascal.

The West Indies have lost five and drawn three of their eight Tests in Sri Lanka.

SCORES IN BRIEF
WEST INDIES: First innings 134 for 2 (Smith 55, Bravo 63 not out, Chandepaul 11 not out 11; Lakmal 1-20, Mendis 1-31)
SRI LANKA: Kumar Sangakkara (captain), Mahela Jayawardene, Tillakaratne Dilshan, Tharanga Paranavithana, Thilan Samaraweera, Angelo Mathews, Prasanna Jayawardene, Ajantha Mendis, Dilhara Fernando, Suranga Lakmal, Rangana Herath.



West Indies cricketer Darren Bravo glides the ball behind square during his unbeaten 63 on the first day of the third and final Test against Sri Lanka at the Pallekele International Cricket Stadium yesterday.

ICC moves on Test & ODI leagues

PTI, Dubai

Taking another step forward in finalising a new Future Tours Programme for the 2012-2020 period, ICC's Chief Executive Committee has begun the process of drawing up rules and regulations for the Test and ODI leagues.

The Committee also agreed to reconstitute its working group comprising David Collier (ECB), Nishantha Ranatunga (SLC), N Srinivasan (BCCI), James Sutherland (CA) and David Richardson (ICC General Manager/Cricket) to consider rules, regulations and points system for the leagues.

The working group, which previously made recommendations on the leagues and ICC global event calendar, will also have top statistician and ICC Cricket Committee member, David Kendix. The group will report back in January next year.

With the ODI league commencing immediately after the ICC Cricket World Cup 2011, the ICC Board will need to confirm the rules and regulations at its February meeting.

ICC extends use of DRS

REUTERS, Mumbai

The Decision Review System (DRS) has been extended to bilateral one-day internationals to help teams get used to it in time for next year's World Cup, the International Cricket Council (ICC) said on Wednesday.

The ICC currently allows the use of DRS, which permits players a set number of challenges per innings through a third umpire watching on a video monitor, only in test matches.

"This will provide further opportunities for players, match officials and the technology suppliers to experience the use of the system," the sport's governing body said in a statement.

"The long-term use of DRS in one-day internationals will, however, be considered by the ICC cricket committee at its meeting following the Cricket World Cup."

Currently, the jury remains out on DRS with a number of cricketers, including India's Sachin Tendulkar and Australia captain Ricky Ponting, unsure about the system's accuracy.

The powerful Indian Cricket Board have also opposed its use and opted against using the system in the recent test matches against Australia and New Zealand.

The ICC added that its chief executives' committee (CEC) had begun the process of drawing up rules, regulations and a points system for proposed test and ODI leagues.

"With the ODI league commencing immediately after the Cricket World Cup 2011, the ICC board will need to confirm the rules and regulations at its February meeting," ICC chief executive Haroon Lorgat said.

The Ashraful fantasy

FROM PAGE 17

in the National Cricket League. Such a performance, a total of 470 domestic runs, can only be enough for a youngster to earn a place in the Academy side but not for Ashraful, not for his talent, inconsistency and especially not due to his lack of hunger.

His return, unlike that of Tamim Iqbal, not only disturbed the winning combination that completed the 4-0 whitewash of New Zealand but also removed one of the better fielders in the side. Essentially, Ashraful returned with less material than a washed-up stand-up comedian fighting for his space in the spotlight, replacing the one who could give you more laughs.

On Wednesday, the comedy that has become Ashraful's international career unfolded once more and it was quite a sight when Ray Price, animated as ever and a master of the needle, took aim at the man supposedly under fire.

The first ball was well swept, ran away for four but it didn't stop Price or the Zimbabweans sensing that they were in for the kill. The

next ball Ashraful faced, he tried to steal a single, only to run Junaed Siddiqui out.

After seeing off two deliveries from Price, the man who has dismissed him on six previous occasions, Ashraful played three more before Prosper Utseya's floated off-spin got him out.

It was just an attempted late-cut, less a shot than a prod, and it left the Tigers at 89 for four.

The brief innings irked many observers who compared his inclusion to the axe that fell on Shahriar Nafees. The left-hander was slowly getting reacquainted to international cricket before his sudden omission, a clear paradox to Ashraful's sudden rise.

If Bangladesh cricket claims to be getting out of the mindset of picking potential talents, then Ashraful's was a bad example. In no uncertain terms, he is a once-in-a-generation batsman, but as the curtailed careers of Al Shahriar Rokon, Alok Kapali and Aftab Ahmed will tell you, talent only takes you so far.

Ashraful has the eleventh highest batting average among Bangladeshi batsmen

in one-day cricket and although he has averaged more than 25 in four calendar years (2005 to 2008) he has never yet cracked 30.

He could still turn his 18.33 average in 2010 into something significant but waiting for that single innings (or in other words a string of fantastic shots) will do more harm than help to Bangladesh cricket.

Gambhir lifts

FROM PAGE 17

him caught behind off Ravichandran Ashwin even as the wicketkeeper appealed for a stumping.

SCORES IN BRIEF
NEW ZEALAND: 259 for 8 (Guptill 70, Williamson 29, Taylor 15, Styris 59, Vettori 31, Hopkins 11 not out, McCullum 12 run out, Mills 13; Sreesanth 4-47)
INDIA: 259 for 2 (Vijay 33, Gambhir 138 not out, Kohli 64, Yuvraj 16 not out; McKay 1-59, Vettori 1-32)
Result: India won by eight wickets and lead 5-match series 2-0.
Man-of-the-match: Gautam Gambhir.

We can't expect more

FROM PAGE 17

It goes without saying how pivotal the role of a captain is in cricket, with most leaders now responsible not just for on-field decisions but also in picking and choosing the side in the first place.

But the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has seemingly been short-sighted about its importance, based on its delay and indecision over choosing a leader. Shakib, it seems, was chosen after much deliberation and surprisingly for one series only, even as the World Cup knocks ever louder on the door and long-term planning becomes a must.

Many will say that the outburst from the young man came about because of the poor performance, but Shakib pointed that it was not 'his team' as he was had played no part in team selection, is food for thought.

The star man is seemingly peeved that BCB was treating him as a 'caretaker' for the actual captaincy job and he was not satisfied with the freedom and power that the role gave him.

Shakib further remarked that he was not happy to lead a team, which excluded performers like Shahriar Nafees but retained out-of-form players like Junaed Siddiqui and Mohammad Ashraful.

"The captain should have a clearly defined role, but anyway I don't want to talk about the team. What I can say is that I gave my hundred per cent as a captain in the field," said Shakib adding that he was not interested to disclose what team he would have picked if given the opportunity.

"Fielding-wise we could not expect more from this team because we had two good fielders in Rokibul Hasan and Naeem Islam out of the team. Those who were in the team are not capable. Actually we can't expect more from this team as they did what they are capable of," he added.

The young Bangladesh skipper however spoke to the point when singling out the reasons behind the defeat.

"Ordinary batting was the main reason. The simple thing is we didn't bat well though the wicket was really good for batting in the second innings. In the end, one can lose the match but the fact was that we played poor cricket today. We must do the basic things correctly," opined Shakib.

"We didn't bat well against New Zealand too and it's really worrying that we have batted badly five matches in a row. We will lose more matches if we play like this," he warned.

TT training camp starts

SPORTS REPORTER

With a view to table tennis players from national as well as grassroots level, a 40-day training camp got underway at the newly built Wooden Floor Gymnasium yesterday.

Twenty two national players including ten women will participate in the 10 day training under Pakistani trainer Arif Khan. Arif, who had earlier conducted a training for national players in 2008 under the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) Development Project. This time too, the ITTF has provided a fund worth 2500 US dollars.

After the completion of the training of the national players, some 26 young players, most of whom trained under the supervision of Arif Khan after the South Asian Games earlier this year, will start their month-long training from December 11.

AB Bank, official partners of the Bangladesh Table Tennis Federation, will sponsor the training programme like they did in the first-phase of the youth development training earlier this year.

Sports Minister Ahad Ali Sarker inaugurated the training programme while youth and sports secretary Mahub Ahmed, AB Bank president and managing director Kaiser A Chowdhury and BTF general secretary ATM Shamsul Bari were among others present.

More Pak players implicated

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan's cricket fixing scandal deepened Wednesday as television footage apparently showed bookmaker Mazhar Majeed implicating another four Pakistan players during a crisis-hit tour of England.

Pakistan's largest private television station Geo aired the footage late Tuesday, apparently taken from a British tabloid sting operation during Pakistan's fourth Test against England at Lord's in August.

The News of the World report showed Majeed posing as a marketing agent and claiming that seven Pakistan players would obey his orders during matches.

In August, the newspaper named former Test captain Salman Butt, Mohammad Asif and Mohammad Aamer as implicated in the sting. All three have since been provisionally suspended by the International Cricket Council (ICC).

But the latest footage showed Majeed speaking to an undercover reporter and revealing the names of four other players.

Majeed said: "I'll tell you who we've got then. We've got Umar Akmal, Kamran Akmal, Mohammad Aamer, Mohammad Asif, Salman Butt, Wahab Riaz... that's six, yeah? Imran Farhat... that's seven out of 11 players."

In the footage, Majeed suggested he was thinking long-term.

"These boys are going to be around years and

More Pak players implicated

"I've got the best boys and it's long-term thinking." "Some players are not interested, like Younis Khan, Shahid Afridi, Abdul Razzaq and Saeed Ajmal -- they are too religious," he was shown saying.

Opener Farhat denied any involvement.

"Majeed is neither my agent nor I am involved in any wrongdoing," Farhat told AFP. "I will talk to my lawyer to decide what to do because this footage and the claims are a character assassination attempt."

The footage is likely to increase pressure on Pakistan cricket, which has been plunged into a series of crises.

In October, the ICC told the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) to take strict measures to curb corruption and threatened sanctions if it failed to do so.

As a result, the PCB introduced a new code of conduct for players, with stricter punishments for any wrongdoing.

The PCB has not cleared Kamran, Shoaib Malik and leg-spinner Danish Kaneria -- all reportedly under suspicion of corruption -- for team selection.

Farhat was dropped over poor form, but Riaz and Umar Akmal were chosen in the Twenty20 and Test squads for this month's tour of New Zealand.

The ICC rejected appeals by Salman and Aamer against their suspensions last month, while Asif withdrew his appeal. The three players will appear before an ICC commission in Qatar in January to face the fixing charges.

The PCB declined to comment on the latest footage.

Wozniacki to play in Sydney

AFP, Sydney

World number one Caroline Wozniacki will use the Sydney International as her final preparation for next month's Australian Open, organisers said on Wednesday.

Denmark's Wozniacki, 20, becomes the fourth top 20 ranked women's player to commit to the January 9-15 tournament along with US Open champion Kim Clijsters, Australian Samantha Stosur and Ana Ivanovic.

Batting fallacy cost Tigers

FROM PAGE 17

star of Bangladesh cricket, who was involved in Junaed's run-out and dropped a catch earlier, was consistent with his fondness for bizarre shots.

Ashraful's attempted late-cut when Prosper Utseya's delivery turned in was a cardinal sin against an off-spinner, the Tigers falling to 89-4 from 82-2.

That soon became 115-6 when Sohrawardi Shuvo became the second run-out casualty, a similar fate that befell Mashrafe and Shafiq.

Ultimately Shakib's botched scoop off Mpofo in the 48th over was the final nail as it ended all hopes of a 1-0 lead. The skipper became the ninth wicket to fall with Keegan Meth gulping down a simple chance at short fine-leg.

Earlier, Zimbabwe, apart from a good opening stand and bright knocks from newcomers Regis Chakabva (45) and Craig Ervine (41), were always chasing the game as the spinners had full control of proceedings.

Abdur Razzak picked up the first three wickets, first of which (Chibhabha) became the 150th in his ODI career, and the wicket of Keith Dabengwa to finish with figures of four for 41. Shuvo and Riyad took two each and Shakib took one.

"It is a big positive, a boost for the moral of the team. It will

give the team confidence for the next match where we will do even better," said Zimbabwe skipper Elton Chigumbura in the post-match press conference.

Mpofo, who made Riyad his 50th wicket in ODIs, was also pleased with his performance in tough conditions for pacemen. "I'm feeling really good to pick up the man-of-the-match in a spinner-friendly wicket. I really enjoyed it," said the 25-year old seamer.

The second one-dayer will be played at the same venue tomorrow, the Tigers trying not to repeat the same fate and the fans hoping the Tigers have a hand in their change of fortune.

SCORE BOARD
Scoreboard of the first one-day international between Bangladesh and Zimbabwe at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur yesterday:

ZIMBABWE
Taylor st Mushfiqur b Razzak 27
Chibhabha b Razzak 24
Chakabva c & b Mahmudullah 45
Chigumbura b Razzak 7
Taiibu c Junaed b Sohrawardi 14
Ervine c Ashraful b Shakib 41
Utseya c Sohrawardi b Mahmudullah 21
Dabengwa c Shakib b Razzak 8
Meth st Mushfiqur b Sohrawardi 3
Price not out 1

Table:
Mpofo run out 2
Extras: (lb-4, w-12) 16
Total: (All out in 49 overs) 209
Fall of wickets: 1-53, 2-58, 3-71, 4-94, 5-159, 6-184, 7-201, 8-204, 9-207, 10-209.
Bowler O M R W
Mashrafe 6 0 36 0
Shafiq 4 0 21 0
Razzak 10 1 41 4
Sohrawardi 10 2 32 2
Shakib 10 0 37 1
Mahmudullah 9 1 38 2

BANGLADESH
Tamim lbw b Mpofo 23
Imrul c Chakabva b Price 41
Junaed run out 11
Ashraful b Utseya 6
Shakib c Meth b Mpofo 63
Mushfiqur b Price 11
Sohrawardi run out 1
Mahmudullah c Chibhabha b Mpofo 14
Mashrafe run out 12
Razzak not out 5
Shafiq run out 3
Extras: (lb-2, w-8) 10
Total: (All out in 49 overs) 200
Fall of wickets: 1-44, 2-76, 3-82, 4-89, 5-98, 6-115, 7-169, 8-187, 9-195, 10-200.
Bowler O M R W
Mpofo 9 0 25 3
Meth 8 0 50 0
Utseya 10 0 35 1
Price 10 1 29 2
Dabengwa 5 0 32 0
Taylor 7 0 27 0
Result: Zimbabwe won by nine runs.
Man-of-the-match: Christopher Mpofo.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Spree
4 Tent peg
9 Hot tub
12 Eggs
13 "American Idol" alum
14 Audiology subject
15 Piano style
17 Performance
18 Birthday statistic
19 Mickey Mouse's creator
21 Stuck
24 Sans siblings
25 Blackbird
26 Homer's interjection
28 Play your last card
31 Hostels
33 Watch chain
35 Ballerina's frill
36 Crazy folks
38 Deity
40 Apprehend

DOWN
1 Occupation
2 Actress Gardner
3 Talk on and on
4 Drooped
5 Fed up with
6 Alias (Abbr.)
7 Japanese form of fencing
8 Conclusion
9 "No Way Out"
10 Gait
11 Bohemian
12 Sweet potato
20 Coin aperture
21 "Monopoly" corner
22 Domini predecessor
23 Diamonds or clubs, in bridge
27 Glutton
29 Great Salt Lake state
30 Vats
32 Break suddenly
34 Common lunch meat
37 Cured, as ham
39 Texas city
42 Steps over a fence
44 Japanese vegetable
45 Sweetie
46 Actress Thompson
50 B.A., for ex.
51 Moving vehicle
52 Id counterpart
53 Scatter seeds

Solution time: 24 mins.

ASH ACTS MAMA
MAO THAW EMIR
ORR HERRA SIEDE
KINGOFFRUSSIA
EMS TRV
NOBLE CHIT LYE
THUS BOY FEEL
HMM MAX SLINK
BIZ SHE
QUEENOFHEARTS
URGE ORAL URL
ASAP KARL NEO
DADS AYES GET

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
12			13						14		
15		16							17		
			18			19		20			
21	22	23					24				
25			26	27		28			29	30	
31			32	33		34		35			
36			37		38		39		40		
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45	46						47				
48				49	50				51	52	53
54				55					56		
57				58					59		

CRYPTOQUIP

W V M D U V ' H U E G X O N U W V Z U
X G U O X O M G X R U Z S G K F A P F
G A D P Z H U N C O D O Z G M V , V
E P U W W V R O H U U F S G K Z G G C .

Saturday's Cryptoquip: MYSTERY BOOK ABOUT THE SPACE SHUTTLE AND ITS PAYLOAD OF MANY PASTRIES: "A ROCKET FULL OF PIE."
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: H equals V