



PHOTO: AFP
Leg-spinner Amit Mishra (R) hugs India captain Suresh Raina after dismissing West Indies batsman Marlon Samuels, one of his three wickets, during the third ODI in St John's yesterday. The hosts were 174-8 in 46 overs.

Lahiru stakes Test claim

AFP, London

Left-hander Lahiru Thirimanne rode his luck to score a fine century and virtually assure a first Test cap when Sri Lanka take on England in Southampton next week.

The 21-year-old made 104 with 15 boundaries as the tourists reached 324 for four on a rain-interrupted first day of their three-day match against Essex at Chelmsford.

Sri Lanka need a new opener after skipper Tillakaratne Dilshan broke his thumb when making 193 at Lord's in the drawn second Test at Lord's.

Thirimanne did receive one slice of luck when he was dropped at third slip by Tom Westley when surprised by the additional bounce of left-arm paceman Reece Topley.

It proved a costly miss as Thirimanne found his touch to score freely both sides of the wicket, either side of opening partner Tharanga Paranavitana being caught behind off Tymal Mills.

The first wicket fell at 71 and paved the way for Kumar Sangakkara to inflict further punishment on an inexperienced Essex attack which included Tom Craddock, a 21-year-old leg-spinner on a two-month trial.

Court okays burial of Wanjiru

AFP, Nairobi

A court has finally ruled that the burial of reigning Olympic marathon champion Sammy Wanjiru can go ahead, a month after his death and despite the protests of his mother, who says he was murdered.

A requiem mass is expected to take place later on Saturday in the athlete's home town of Nyahururu, to the north of Nairobi in Kenya's Rift Valley, followed by the burial at a farm belonging to the family outside town.

The marathon runner died on May 16 at the age of 24, three years after making history at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, when he fell from the balcony of his home after his wife caught him with another woman.

A magistrate at Nakuru High Court, Anyara Emukule, who on May 19 had ruled that the burial should be delayed to allow for an autopsy, said on Friday evening that "everything that needed to be done on the remains, including a post mortem, has already been completed".

Tsonga shocks Nadal

FROM PAGE 16

without a break of serve.

The tie-break was equally close, but Nadal raised his game at the key moment and, aided by a Tsonga double-fault that gave him set-point, the Spaniard buried a volley to take the set.

Tsonga came at Nadal just as strongly in the second set however and the Wimbledon champion found it harder to keep him at bay this time.

The Frenchman's brilliant diving winner put Nadal under pressure at 4-4 and he broke when Nadal dragged a forehand well wide before producing a strong service game to send the match to a final set.

Nadal looked a spent force now and Tsonga went for the kill. He broke twice in quick succession to establish a 3-0 lead and was never in danger of relinquishing his advantage.

Tsonga was a picture of joy as he danced on the court in celebration of only his second career win over Nadal, a triumph that sets up a semifinal against British wildcard James Ward.

Andy Roddick kept his bid for a record fifth Queen's title on course as the American set up a semifinal clash with Andy Murray after beating Spain's Fernando Verdasco 6-2, 6-2.

Ward, ranked 216th, started the day by ending Sam Querrey's reign as Queen's champion as he won the final set of their rain-delayed third-round match to clinch a shock 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 victory.

The 24-year-old son of a London taxi driver had to return just hours later for his quarterfinal clash against France's Adrian Mannarino.

But Ward showed no signs of tiredness as he recovered from wasting seven match points in the second set to win 6-2, 6-7 (14/16), 6-4.

Ward, who was watched by British Prime Minister David Cameron, said: "This is a brilliant feeling. I played a poor game at the beginning of the third but I knew I'd get my chances.

"It's a shame I'm not playing Rafael Nadal, but it's not exactly a bonus draw playing Tsonga."

Bitter past should trigger better

FROM PAGE 16

right track. There's no way we can make wholesale changes in the current team so our first policy is to continue with the current team and keep faith on the boys who proved their worth in the last two years. We have some problem with 2-3 positions in the team and definitely we will work on that," said a confident Akram, who on many occasions confessed at how badly he was treated by the former Bangladesh coach Trevor Chappell.

"This is very young team but what our selection committee believes is that one player starts to give his best from the age of 27 or 28.

"So we must give the current players enough time to get the best from them. In my observation, ninety per cent of the players established themselves in their respective position, so our main focus would be on the fitness. There may be ups and downs in the performance but one must maintain the required fitness level to keep his position in

the team," added Akram, who was also a member of the last selection panel.

The chief of the new selection committee said that their main challenge is to bring quality players into the pipeline and that's why they have to widen their net in scouting for new talent. "Our main objective would be to watch domestic matches as much as possible so that we can spot some talented players. We brought three First Division players to the academy. Besides the Under-19 team, GPCB National Cricket Academy team, the National Cricket League and Premier League, we also want to watch the First Division matches. As I earlier said, it would be a real achievement for our committee if we could leave enough players in the pipeline when we are done with the job," said the former Bangladesh skipper.

And in the end what the burly batsman said that they will work with utmost integrity.

So, time will only say whether they could stand up with their choices or not.

Stalwarts urge

FROM PAGE 16

tug-of-war over its control. Recently a court injunction barred the club from holding its AGM and election for three months, which was later stayed by a High Court bench.

A High Court bench presided over by Justice Mamoon Rahman passed the order after hearing a petition filed by club member Lutfar Rahman Badal, who sought rectification of the club's 213 registered members. The stay order, which was overruled on June 9 paved the way for the club to hold its election and AGM. It was later decided at a club meeting that the election and AGM will be held on the June 23, a day before the three-month period for holding election, which is a must according to the legislation of limited companies, expires.

However, another lawsuit was filed recently by Riazuddin Ahmed, a former footballer alleging financial irregularities and seeking appointment of an auditor according to the rules of the limited company. This however does not affect the holding of elections or AGMs. There is another legal notice filed against the club.

Riazuddin himself was present at the meeting yesterday and he said: "This lawsuit will in no way hinder either AGM or election. In any case, I am willing to withdraw the lawsuit for the greater good of the club."

Amongst those present at the press brief were Mahbub Anam, Minhazul Abedin, Salam Murshed, Badal Roy, Zakaria Pratap Shankar Hazra, Kamrunnahar Dana, who all echoed the sentiment of taking the club forward and overcoming personal differences and egos.

Do not belittle our wins, argues Raina

Cricket

PTI, Antigua

A second-string India's dominance in the ODI series against the West Indies has raised questions about the quality of the host team, leaving visiting skipper Suresh Raina livid as he feels this amounts to belittling his young side's good show.

"Earlier you termed us a young [second-string] side. Now you are terming the opposition too weak," said Raina when asked whether India have been helped by the West Indies' shambolic performance.

"The fact is that we all have played too well. Someone or other has put his hand up and we have prevailed," he added.

Equally agitated by these suggestions was new coach Duncan Fletcher, who was rather agitated when asked about the occasional slip-ups on the field.

"These guys are players. They are not machines. There would be one or two slip-ups," he said.

"I don't think it [the West Indies] is a bad side. It's an international side. It has players who have performed well in the past," rebutted Fletcher on whether a tougher test awaits India when they tour England next month.

Fletcher was asked if he was surprised by the level of maturity the young Indians are exhibiting on and off the field.

"It's a reflection on the pool of talent India currently have. It's a reflection on India's standard of cricket. IPL must have done some good. This pool of talent is a massive advantage to the Indians," he replied.

During the second one-dayer, India needed 83 from 15 overs and Raina promoted himself up the order, upped the scoring rate and eased the pressure on his partner Virat Kohli and on his team.

Raina said it was part of plan laid out by Fletcher. "Actually it was the coach's idea. He felt that a right-left combination in the middle would work to India's advantage primarily because West Indies had two leg break bowlers."

Raina, who had a disastrous first stint as a captain, losing his matches against Zimbabwe of all sides last year, is setting the score right.

"This side has far more experience than that side which played in Zimbabwe. We have experienced bowlers in Harbhajan Singh and Amit Mishra and medium-fast bowlers Praveen Kumar and Munaf Patel have bowled very well in difficult conditions," he said.

The day also brought happy tidings for Praveen Kumar, who has been asked to stay back in the Caribbean by the Indian selectors to strengthen the team for Tests, now that both Zaheer Khan and S Sreesanth have been reported unfit.

Abhimanyu Mithun of Karnataka is also being flown in from India.

"He's [Praveen] very happy to be part of the Test squad," rounded up Raina, speaking up for the man who is now closer to Test debut than ever.

India's pace bowling stock in the Tests in the Caribbean would be handled by Praveen, Munaf Patel, Ishant Sharma and Abhimanyu Mithun.

TESTS THROUGH TIME

In Affectionate Remembrance
of
ENGLISH CRICKET,
WHICH DIED AT THE OVAL
ON
29th AUGUST, 1882,
Deeply lamented by a large circle of sorrowing
friends and acquaintances.

R. I. P.

N.B.—The body will be cremated and the ashes taken to Australia.

The embers still burn

The ultimate form of cricket Tests -- is also the most primitive. Since the 19th century, it has enthralled millions and on July 21 this year, the 2000th Test match will be held at its spiritual home Lord's. The Daily Star Sport pays tribute to Test cricket and over the next 39 days will take you on a journey spanning 134 years.

Although Test cricket has now grown to include ten nations, in the beginning, back in the 19th century, it was only England and Australia who fought for cricketing supremacy. The Ashes, the trophy they still fight for, is one steeped in tradition. On the face of it, it's a small, almost inconsequential trinket, but perhaps for this very reason cricket-lovers are drawn to its origins.

The popularly believed version of the story is well-known among cricket faithfuls. In the summer of 1882, the Australian team under the captaincy of Billy Murdoch visited England to play one Test match at the Oval. It was the ninth Test ever played and in their previous visits, Australia failed to notch a win over the mother country.

On their tour that year, the Australians played just one Test at The Oval in London. It was a low-scoring affair on a difficult wicket. Australia made a mere 63 runs in their first innings, and England, led by AN Hornby, took a 38-run lead with a total of 101. In their second innings, the Australians, boosted by a spectacular run-a-minute 55 from Hugh Massie, managed 122, which left England only 85 runs to win.

But Fred 'Demon' Spofforth, Australia's fearsome fast bowler at the time, had other ideas. He devastated the English batting, taking his final four wickets for only two runs to leave England just eight runs short of victory in one of the closest finishes in cricket history of all time.

All of England were shocked to witness the first defeat at home at the hands of a mere colony.

The following day, a journalist named Reginald Shirley Brooks ran a mock obituary in the Sporting Times: "In Affectionate Remembrance of ENGLISH CRICKET, which died at the Oval on 29th AUGUST, 1882, Deeply lamented by a large circle of sorrowing friends and acquaintances R.I.P. N.B. The body will be cremated and the ashes taken to Australia."

This laid the catalyst of the Ashes legend.

That winter, when Ivo Bligh, later Lord Darnley, led a team to Australia, he promised to bring back the ashes. As per his word, England won the second and third Tests of the series to take a 2-1 lead, and a group of Melbourne ladies presented an urn to him that supposedly contained the ashes of the bail used in the third Test. That is what the world knew of the origins of cricket's oldest trophy. The legend, however, took a romantic turn at the end of the 20th century.

Among the group of ladies that presented Ivo Bligh the urn was his future wife Florence Morphew. In April 1998, Rosemary, Dowager Countess of Darnley, claimed that Morphew, her mother-in-law, had told her in secret that the urn contained the ashes of a veil that she was wearing when watching the visiting England side play in Melbourne in 1883.

She burnt her veil to get the attention of the England Captain and her future husband, Bligh.

A bail or veil has hardly mattered for the cricketers and the public of the two nations who rate this Test series as the ultimate competition.

-- Sakeb Subhan

A 'tainted' Jamal win

FROM PAGE 16

nine-yard chip in the 35th minute that evaded Rahmatganj goalie Iran sheikh to find the net. Two minutes later, Cameroonian striker Stephan Bouga headed in a Ferni Orunimini cross to restore parity.

Sheikh Jamal bombarded the Rahmatganj defence for the rest of the half, and got a penalty in the process in the 43rd minute. Rahmatganj were reduced to ten men, but the resulting spot-kick from Mohammad Sujan was saved by Iran sheikh, for a change.

However, it didn't take long for Sheikh Jamal to take the lead once play resumed. Seven minutes into the second half Emmanuel Ayuk, one of their four Cameroonian, took a diagonal shot from inside the box to find the back of the net as the goalie was reduced to a mere spectator.

Rahmatganj burst into a counter attack in the 74th minute and Felix's cross was volleyed just over by Pushbon Molla. But that sudden burst of pace led to their own undoing as Sheikh Jamal came out in numbers and found the fourth goal, courtesy of Meshu's minus finished off by Bouga. The stocky Cameroonian then completed his treble in the 89th minute with another simple tap-in from Abdul Baten Mojumdar cross.

The win took Sheikh Jamal to 47 points from twenty matches, four ahead of second-placed Muktijoddha Sangsab who have a game in hand. Rahmatganj are in seventh position with 25 points. There are no matches of the league today and tomorrow due to the nation-wide strike.

Shakib stars with ball

FROM PAGE 16

a trio of spinners.

Wakely, the former England under-19 batsman, steadied the side after a sticky start in which Jack Shantry knocked over openers Andrew Hall and the Sri Lankan Chaminda Vaas in a tidy spell of 2 for 12 from three overs.

To make matters worse for Northamptonshire, David Sales had to retire with a hamstring injury after facing only seven balls, but Wakely and former Worcestershire batsman Stephen Peters, who struck a steady 22, made some progress by adding 49 together.

Later, Solanki's departure in Jack Brooks's second over didn't deter the Royals as Ali and Alexei Kervezee put on 85 in 11 overs for the hosts despite batting through bad light and rain. Moeen picked up six boundaries in a 45-ball half-century and when Kervezee smashed a six and a four in James Middlebrook's final over, the target was down to 41 from 36 deliveries.

In the end the Royals had two overs to spare as Kervezee reached an unbeaten 44 from 34 balls and Andrew smashed a couple of sixes in making 21 from 15 balls.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 36 Nephew 53 Allows 22 Others (Lat.)

1 Hair salon request 23 Moving vehicles

5 Witness 24 Inane

8 Poker variety 26 Opaque-glazed earthenware pieces

12 Vicinity 3 In medias

13 Skillet 4 Count

14 Walking stick 5 Remnant

15 Argument concluder 43 Very strong, as a stomach