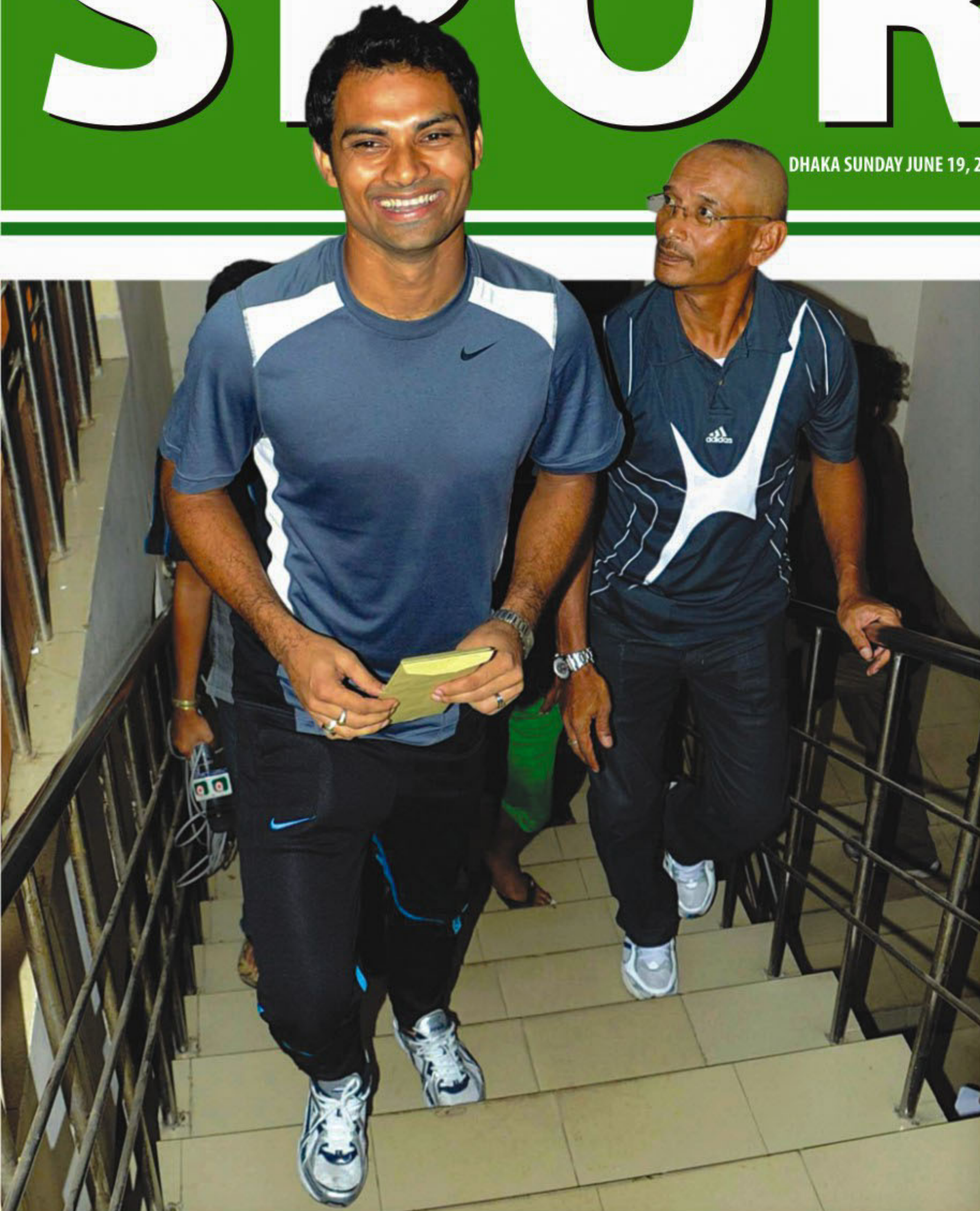
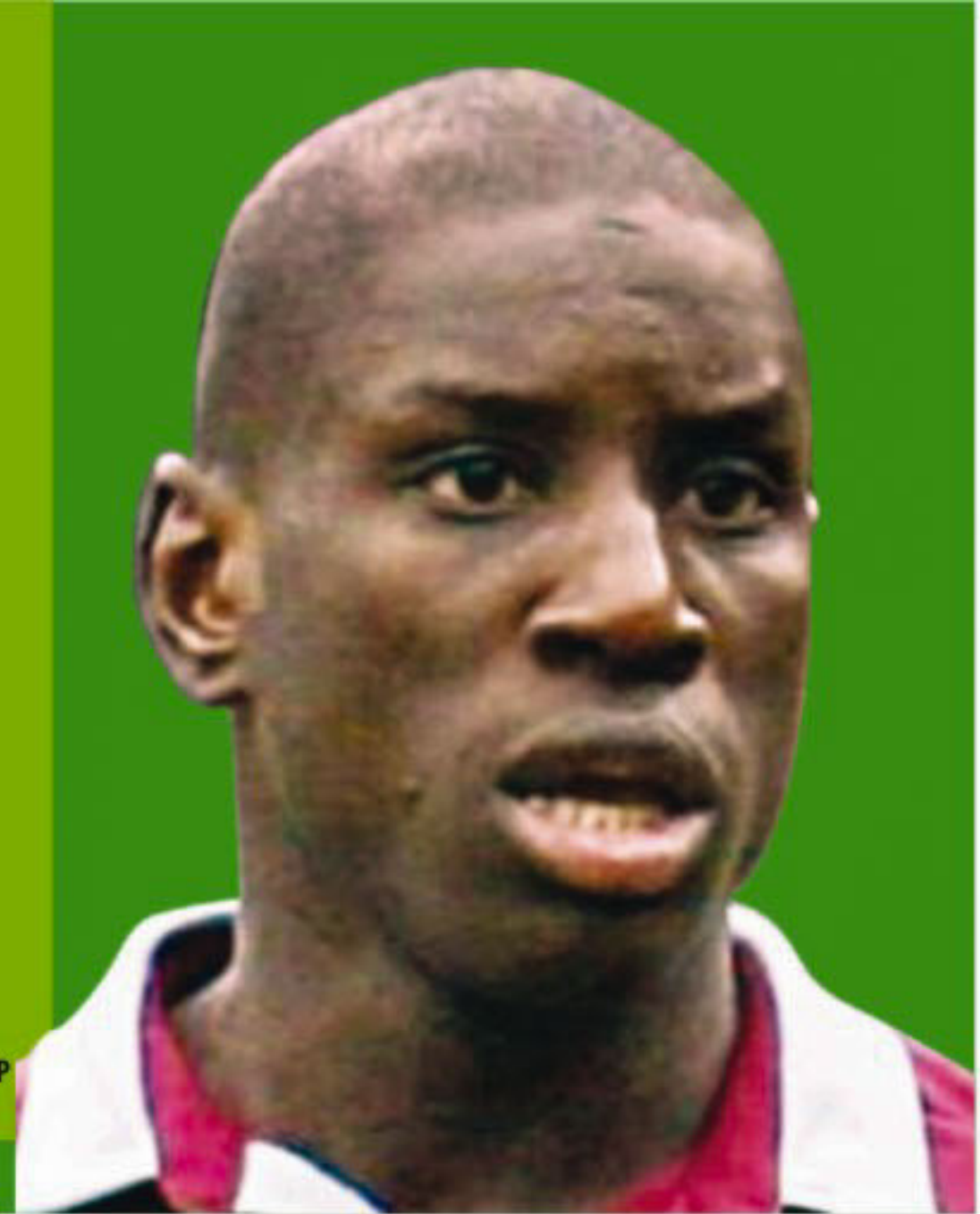


Magpies snap up Demba

Newcastle have clinched the transfer of Senegalese striker Demba Ba from West Ham following the departure of captain Kevin Nolan in the opposite direction. Newcastle manager Alan Pardew has been a long-time admirer of Ba, who scored seven goals in 13 appearances for the Hammers in the second half of the season. Ba, 26, is Pardew's second signing of the summer following the acquisition of French midfielder Yohan Cabaye. "Demba made a great impression with West Ham last season and is a great signing for this club," Pardew said. -- AFP



Former national captain Aminul Haq decided to call time on his international career. Here he arrives at the BFF House yesterday, along with his club (Sheikh Jamal) coach Packer Ali (R), to tender his retirement paper as well as appear before the Bangladesh League Committee in connection with the hearing into the ongoing match-fixing investigation.

Aminul hangs up national gloves

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Aminul Haq, the last line of defence of the Bangladesh national football team for the last decade and a half, tendered his official retirement paper to the Bangladesh Football Federation yesterday. The stalwart goalkeeper who held custody of the national team and many a local club, earning plaudits from coaches, fellow players and supporters, cited family commitments and making room for youngsters as the reason for his decision.

"I have served the national team for a long time, and with satisfaction. I think it's time to call time on my international career while on a relative high. It is the job of the youngsters to take over the mantle now, and there are a few good ones. Now that I am giving up on international duty, I will be able to give more time to my family which was the chief reason for my retirement," replied 33-year-old Aminul to the reporters at the BFF house yesterday.

The retirement of Aminul comes hot on the heels of the denial of two more veterans, defender Rajani Kanta Barman and midfielder Matiur Rahman Munna, to play for the national team. Bangladesh are to be involved in two 2014 FIFA World Cup qualifiers on June 29 and July 03, and all three of them had been named in the preliminary

squad.

"I have received the letter. We will sit for the executive committee meeting and take a decision on this regard," said Badal Roy, vice-president of BFF and chairman of player management committee.

"He has been wanting to retire for some time now. Even though it will be a great loss to the national side, we understand his position and we will consider his point when taking our decision," Roy added.

However, judging from previous instances of players retiring, it may not come as a great surprise if the goalie makes a return soon. Aminul tried to avoid making any replies to such a query saying:

"I cannot say about that at the moment." The long-serving goalkeeper however brushed aside any hint of resentment.

Aminul made his club debut with the Mohammedan junior team in 1994 before moving to Farashganj where he made his first division debut in 1996. He has represented most of the big clubs in the domestic football scene, but it was with Muktijodhha Sangsad that he spent ten years at the prime of his form.

Aminul had been part of the national squad since 1996, but made his debut in 1998 in two friendly matches, first against the Qatar national team which the team drew 1-1 and then against Qatar u-23 which was also drawn 1-1.

His latest commitment with the national

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Sk Jamal duo quizzed

SPORTS REPORTER

Sheikh Jamal coach Packer Ali and captain Aminul Haq appeared before the Bangladesh League Committee in the ongoing investigation about the alleged match-fixing in the league match between Sheikh Jamal and Rahmatganj MFS that took place on 11 June.

The committee, who on Wednesday investigated Rahmatganj players and officials, called the coach, the captain and manager, though the manager Anwarul Kabir Helal did not appear yesterday due to fever.

As to why only three from Sheikh Jamal team were summoned while all members of Rahmatganj were called, the president of league committee Salam Murshey replied:

"The team who lost are more important to the investigation than the team that won."

Sheikh Jamal coach Packer Ali said he was 'surprised and a bit embarrassed' at being called for investigation, as this is the first time he has been questioned for anything like

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Shaping young minds

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

With twenty-four cricketers, the GP-BCB National Cricket Academy began its new journey a few weeks back. Under the guidance of head coach Ross Turner, different kinds of sessions have been ongoing, according to its master plan.

The plan has been designed with a vision to make sure that the individuals selected become complete cricketers who will not only be aware of their duty on the field, but also know everything about life off the field which even includes the art of sleep pattern.

"The most interesting and important things I learnt from the last few sessions is that there is a scientific explanation for everything in sports. You eat something, but for a sportsman it's very important to know why he is

taking something," explained Mominul Haque, one of the trainees at the camp.

A left-handed batsman, Mominul is considered by many as a future prospect. The 20-year-old from Cox's Bazar, the district which hardly produces any cricketers, came to the Academy through a process as the BKSP student was first brought into the Under-17 camp and then selected into the Under-19 team to play in the World Cup in New Zealand last year.

He has already played in the National Cricket League for Chittagong as well as the Premier League for BKSP in the first two seasons, and last season for Victoria Sporting Club. So he has got the experience of learning something from different camps but Mominul said that he is learning things from this camp that he had never experienced previously.

"I took part in the academy's month-long training camp last year,

but it's an altogether different experience this time. I can give you a simple example: after a hard training session we take food but I never knew how much calories the food contains, but it's important to know it," said an excited Mominul, who set his next goal to establish his position in the Bangladesh A team.

"I also enjoyed the lectures of our former captains as well as the advice from the media. The session was really interesting. There is a method of communicating not only with the media but also with different types of people," added Mominul.

"We are yet to start the skill development as the session is focused on things like psychology, nutrition, lifestyle, education, welfare, goal setting, diet, attitude, positive mindset, etc.

"You know there was even an interesting session on first aid," he continued.

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Andrew seals thrilling win

STAR SPORT DESK

Left-hander Gareth Andrew was the hero for Worcestershire as his unbeaten 65 in the Friends Life t20 competition handed them to a one-wicket victory against Warwickshire in near darkness at Edgbaston on Friday.

It was their second victory of the week as they squeezed past their local rivals, who had put up a formidable total, 184 for 6, also their highest Twenty20 total of the season. It still proved inadequate as the ever-dangerous Andrew smashed Neil Carter for a six when four was needed off the last over.

The big-hitting all-rounder smashed four fours

SEE PAGE 17 COL 2

No room for Gayle

Cricket

INTERNET, Kingston

Chris Gayle, currently locked in a dispute with the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB), has been left out of the squad to face India in three Tests across late June through mid July.

The WICB hierarchy, including coach Ottis Gibson, met with former captain Gayle and players union leaders on Tuesday in Kingston to discuss his criticism of them and to explain why he hasn't been picked for the series against Pakistan and India.

The meeting was weeks in the making, and a requirement by the WICB before they made a decision on the aggressive opening batsman's participation in the India Tests.

Tension between Gayle and the board came to a head after the World Cup, where he



CHRIS GAYLE

led the team to the quarterfinals in April. Gibson criticised Gayle and senior players for their effort, and Gayle was among those dropped for early limited-overs games during Pakistan's tour.

While recuperating from an abdominal strain, Gayle agreed to play in the Indian Premier League (IPL) as an injury replacement. He said he did it as a protest at how he'd been treated by the WICB. He ended up leading Bangalore to the IPL final and being named Man of the Tournament. Meanwhile, West Indies lost the one-day series to Pakistan.

During the IPL, Gayle railed against the WICB on Jamaican radio station KLAS, saying the board had threatened his place in the World Cup before the tournament, and treated other players poorly. He also criticised

SEE PAGE 17 COL 2

Siddikur crashes hard

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh ace golfer Siddikur Rahman relinquished his strong position in the Queen's Cup golf championship to slip to joint fifteenth position after a third round score of three-over-par 74 (71-par-course) at the Santiburi Samui Country Club in Thailand yesterday. The first two rounds well went for Siddikur with an opening round of two-under-par 69 and a second round score of three-under-par 68 catapulting him to joint fourth position on Friday.

It was a happy day for local star Chawalit Plapho, who overtook joint leaders Jbe Kruger of South Africa and Japan's Daisuke Maruyama with a cumulative score of eight-under-par 205.

However, yesterday was a horror day for the highest ranked player in the competition, as he hit a bogey on the third and sixteenth

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Eng in early trouble

Cricket

AFP, Southampton

Alastair Cook and Kevin Pietersen rescued England from a slump to 14 for two on a rain-marred third day of the third Test at the Rose Bowl here on Saturday.

England were 69 for two in reply to Sri Lanka's 184, a deficit of 115 runs, at tea.

Cook was 32 not out and Pietersen 27 not out with their third-wicket stand so far worth 55 runs.

Spectators booed after Pakistan umpire Aleem Dar decided tea, after only 4.4 overs were bowled after lunch because of rain, would be taken even though conditions were then arguably at their best all day.

England were in trouble following the early loss of skipper Andrew Strauss and Jonathan Trott.

Strauss, concerningly was dismissed cheaply by Chanaka Welegedara for the third time in as many innings.

He managed just three runs before he opened the face against left-arm seamer Welegedara to a ball he could have left and gave a simple catch to Tharanga Paranavitana at first slip.

Strauss's exit came after he'd twice been dismissed by Welegedara, falling lbw for four and nought, in the drawn second Test at Lord's.

It left Strauss with just 27 runs for the series and meant the 34-year-old had scored just one hundred in his last 35 Test innings -- 110 in the drawn Ashes opener against Australia in Brisbane in November.

But Cook -- playing his 66th consecutive Test and so breaking the England record shared by Alan Knott and Ian Botham -- drove Welegedara off the back foot for a superb boundary.

Suranga Lakmal though had Trott out for just four after a ball angled across the right-hander took the outside edge on its way to wicketkeeper Prasanna Jayawardene.

Pietersen got off the mark with a straight driven four off Lakmal and later used just the one hand in playing a similar shot for another boundary off the same bowler. Although troubled by left-arm spinner Rangana Herath in this series, Pietersen went down the pitch to drive the first ball he faced from him for four in the last over before lunch.

Sri Lanka, 177 for nine overnight, added just seven more runs.

Welegedara was last man out, caught driving to Eoin Morgan at cover to give the wayward Stuart Broad his only wicket of the innings.

Dilhara Fernando was a Test-best 39 not out, runs that looked increasingly valuable as England struggled in reply.

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Sri Lanka's left-arm seamer Chanaka Welegedara snares England skipper Andrew Strauss (third time in the series) on the third day of the third Test at Rose Bowl in Southampton yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Worcs make solid start

SPORTS REPORTER

Worcestershire were 133 for one after a rain delay moments after lunch on the first day of their County Championship Division One match against Hampshire yesterday.

Skipper Daryl Mitchell was unbeaten on 60 off 120 balls with eight boundaries while Vikram Solanki was keeping him company with a 64-ball 46 at the New Road ground, when this report was filed at 9:45 Bangladesh time.

Bangladesh skipper Shakib Al Hasan is playing this four-day game, one of two first-class matches during his brief stay with the county.

School h'ball from Monday

SPORTS REPORTER

The Polar Icecream 19th School Handball (Boys and Girls) Tournament starts Monday at the Handball Stadium in Dhaka.

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