

Uphill task for India

Ponting, Clarke hit double tons



AFP, Adelaide

Double centuries by Michael Clarke and Ricky Ponting and another shaky start by India's stuttering batsman left the visitors under pressure in the fourth Test in Adelaide on Wednesday.

Skipper Clarke declared for the second time in the one-sided series -- this time at 604 for seven -- before his bowlers claimed two early wickets to put Australia well on top at the end of second day.

India were 61 for two at stumps in reply with Sachin Tendulkar, chasing his elusive 100th international century, unbeaten on 12 and Gautam Gambhir 30 not out.

Clarke hit 210 and Ponting 221 in an Australian innings that had the beleaguered Indians toiling in the field under a hot sun for 10 and a half hours.

They then grabbed the key wickets of under-fire opener Virender Sehwag and Rahul Dravid in the 21 overs to stumps to have the tourists reeling with three days left and a mountain to climb to avoid a 4-0 series defeat.

"It was probably more about the runs, to be honest, trying to get to 600," Clarke said on the timing of his declaration.

"We still had plenty of time left in the day as we scored quite quickly in our innings and to take those two key wickets is a really good start for us but there's a lot of work still to be done."

Sehwag, captaining India in place of the suspended Mahendra Singh Dhoni, again fell cheaply, out to the first ball of Peter Siddle's opening over for 18.

He played a leading edge to a low full toss and leaping Siddle plucked the ball with his outstretched right hand.

The normally prolific batsman, who averages over 50 in Tests, has scored just 136 runs at 19.42 in the Australia series.

Dravid, Test cricket's

second all-time leading run-getter, was bowled for the sixth time in the series, this time off Ben Hilfenhaus.

"In 2003 here Australia scored 550-odd runs and we won the game from there," India pacesman Ishaant Sharma said.

"I think there is a positive you can take out of that, everyone is positive and looking forward to a good next three days."

Earlier Clarke called a halt to Australia's run onslaught midway through the final session after Ryan Harris clouted Umesh Yadav for six.

Clarke and Ponting shared in Australia's fourth-highest ever partnership of 386. The top three stands all featured the great Don Bradman.

"The wicket is very flat to bat on and both Ricky and I spoke early in our innings, once we'd got in, and today was about scoring a big one," Clarke said.

Their stand also eclipsed the highest overall partnership at the Adelaide Oval of 341 made by South Africans Eddie Barlow and Graeme Pollock in 1964.

Clarke, who scored an unbeaten 329 in the Sydney Test, was out on the third ball after lunch bowled by Yadav ending his 380-minute and 275-ball stand, which included 26 fours and one six.

So far in this series Clarke has amassed 589 runs at 147.25 with Ponting following up his 134 in Sydney to have 484 runs at 96.80.

India removed Ponting short of his highest score of 242 at Adelaide when he was caught in the deep by Sachin Tendulkar off Zaheer Khan.

The former Test skipper was at the crease for 516 minutes and faced 404 balls, hitting 21 fours for his sixth Test double-century.

Mike Hussey was run out by a slick piece of close-in fielding by Gambhir for 25 and Siddle became wicketkeeper Wriddhiman Saha's first catch in Test cricket off Ravi Ashwin for two.

Brad Haddin (42) and Harris (35) remained not out



Australia captain Michael Clarke raises his bat in celebration after completing his double-century on the second day of the fourth Test against India at the Adelaide Oval yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Scoreboard table showing innings details for Australia and India, including batsmen like Clarke, Ponting, and bowlers like Hussey and Siddle.

Clubs at odds over pool system

SPORTS REPORTER

The hockey clubs have again divided into two groups regarding possible incorporation of 'pool system' in the upcoming Premier Hockey League even though the governing body of the Bangladesh Hockey Federation last season promised to keep all players free for the transfer.

At the League Committee meeting yesterday, former national striker Rafiqul Islam Kamal, representative of Usha Kirra Chakra, proposed to insert the pool system and former national midfielder Mahbulul Ehsan Rana, representative of Abahani, supported the proposal.

But former national striker Ariful Haque Prince, representative of Mohammedan, strongly opposed the pool system and threatened to boycott the upcoming players' transfer as well as refrain from playing the league.

"Last season 11 players found no clubs due to the pool system and they finally joined Usha KC in negotiation with all clubs and as a secretary of the players' welfare association, I don't want the pool system this time," said Mohammedan representative Prince after the meeting.

"The matter regarding the pool system has been referred to the governing body which will take the final decision on Thursday," said League committee secretary Mohammad Yousuf Ali.

However, the meeting decided to start the three-day inter-club players' transfer from February 26 and begin the season through the Independence Cup from March 15 where all premier divisional clubs will be invited.

The Club Cup will start from April 7 while the Premier Division Hockey League will get underway from May 7.

Even going on Day 1



AFP, Abu Dhabi

England's pace-cum-spin attack delivered the goods to keep Pakistan down to 256-7 on the opening day of the second Test at Abu Dhabi Stadium here on Wednesday.

Paceman Stuart Broad took 3-47 while spinner Graeme Swann (3-52) bowled well to keep England's hopes of squaring the three-Test series alive after they lost the first match in Dubai by 10 wickets inside three days.

Skipper Misbahul Haq, unbeaten on 83 at the close with Saeed Ajmal on nought, held the Pakistan innings together during a fighting stand of 100 for the fifth wicket with Asad Shafiq (58).

That partnership helped Pakistan revive their innings after Broad chipped in with two wickets in the post-lunch session but England got three more wickets in the last session, two off which were claimed by Swann.

England, ranked world number one in Test cricket, could have had a more fruitful day had they not dropped four regulation catches, but Broad and Swann made sure their fumbles did not prove too costly.

James Anderson dropped Misbah on 30 off Monty Panesar, while Cook let off Shafiq off Swann on 53 before Andrew Strauss floored Adnan Akmal on nought in Anderson's first over with the second new ball.

Misbah notched his 12th half-century in 14 Tests -- and 16th in all -- since being made Test captain in October 2010 and holds the key for Pakistan to post a challenging total on

a pitch that was expected to help batsmen. The Pakistani skipper has so far hit five boundaries and four sixes -- all off Panesar -- during his fighting 168-ball knock.

Swann dismissed Abdul Rehman leg before for nought in the penultimate over of the day.

England were rewarded for picking two spinners in Swann and recalled left-arm Panesar after they introduced spin as early as in the 10th over.

Hafeez and Umar, who put on 114 for the opening wicket in the first Test, negotiated the first hour without any discomfort before Swann gave England the breakthrough.

Umar misjudged a delivery and lost his off stump after seemingly playing no stroke on 16.

Panesar, brought in to replace paceman Chris Tremlett -- flying home after a recurrence of a back injury -- dropped Hafeez off his own bowling but had the Pakistani opener bowled off the very next ball.

Hafeez made 31 with four boundaries.

Broad then chipped in with the wickets of Younis and Ali, both bowled on incoming deliveries to leave Pakistan struggling at 103-4.

Misbah hit Panesar for two towering sixes to help ease the pressure. Shafiq, who also hit Panesar for a six, hit seven boundaries during his 126-ball knock.

The inclusion of Panesar, playing his first Test since the July 2009 Ashes Test in Cardiff, is the first time England have played with two spinners since the Dhaka Test against Bangladesh in early 2010.

Pakistan brought in left-arm pacesman Junaid Khan for Aizaz Cheema.

Scoreboard table for Pakistan vs England, showing first innings scores for both teams and a list of bowlers with their figures.

Open's hottest

FROM PAGE 16

On the women's side, former and reigning Wimbledon winners Maria Sharapova and Petra Kvitova -- two of the three players who can take the No. 1 ranking -- advanced to the semifinals.

Sharapova won 6-2, 6-3 on Wednesday against fellow Russian Ekaterina Makarova, who knocked out five-time champion Serena Williams in the previous round. Kvitova reached the semifinals at Melbourne Park for the first time with a 6-4, 6-4 win over unseeded Italian Sara Errani.

The other player who can reach No. 1 -- third-seeded Victoria Azarenka -- plays defending champion Kim Clijsters in the other semifinal Thursday.

Sharapova must repeat her 2008 Australian title run if she is to take over the No. 1 spot from Caroline Wozniacki, who lost any chance of maintaining her top ranking when she lost in the quarterfinals to Clijsters. Kvitova only has to match or better Azarenka to take the top spot.

New order here to stay

FROM PAGE 16

preparation much before the start of the season and the determination among the players to give maximum on the pitch was the key to our success."

If Sheikh Jamal winning the trophy was a surprise, Team BJMC reaching the final, let alone fighting gamely in the title-decider, was awe-inspiring.

Tuesday's final was evidence enough that the status quo is changing in local football, and that final battles could become classics even without the presence of the two popular outfits Abahani and Mohammedan.

With a 29-year absence from top-flight football and a squad which has an average age of 30, not many people would have dreamt of BJMC reaching the final. But they did and proved that they are a force to be reckoned with in the upcoming league.

"Even though the boys are a bit disappointed with the final defeat, they are all looking forward to doing better in the upcoming professional league," said BJMC coach Jakaria Babu.

Veteran players like Alfaz Ahmed, Abdul Hossain, Saiful Islam Saif, Amit Khan Shuvro and Masud Khan Jonny, all of whom spent the last season warming the benches of different clubs, have turned out to be key weapons of BJMC along with their hard-working foreign trio of Ismael Bangoura, Ajagun Abdul Rasheed and Jeans Jules Ikanga.

The Team BJMC were encouraged by the presence of Textiles and Jute Minister Abdul Latif Siddique who met them yesterday and had lunch with the players.

"Maybe we were not considered among the favourites as we have an ageing side but we were determined to prove our worth and that there is still football left in us," said BJMC captain Alfaz Ahmed, who is likely the oldest player on the circuit at 37 years of age.

Under-18 cricket

FROM PAGE 16

all out for 94 in the first innings, to which Dhaka Metro replied with 207. Jashim picked up seven wickets for Chittagong.

At the Shaheed Kamruzzaman Stadium in Rajshahi, Khulna suffered a batting collapse in their second innings against Dhaka South, losing five wickets for 65 runs at stumps.

At the Faridpur District Stadium, Rakibul Hasan hit an unbeaten 108 as Rajshahi amassed 330 runs in their first innings while Dhaka Division North were made to follow on after being bundled out for 173. Dhaka then scored 133 for six in their second innings.

Table with crossword clues and solutions, including words like 'Red Square', 'Society new-comer', and 'Cover of gloom'.

BPL tickets go on sale today

FROM PAGE 16

Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong while the remaining 25 matches including semifinals and final will take place at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

The first-ever BPL will start on February 10 at Mirpur with each match day consisting of two games, an afternoon match and an evening match. The first match will start at 2pm while the second match will begin at 6.30pm.

The two semifinals are scheduled to be held on February 28 while the final will be held on February 29 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

Each person will be able to buy a maximum of five tickets and one can watch both matches in a day with one ticket.

Twenty percent of the total tickets will go to the BCB's accounts for meeting the complementary demands while twenty percent tickets will be available online.

"We are delighted to get the rights. We are hopeful about selling tickets as we will try to add glamour to the cricket by bringing in Bollywood stars like Priyanka Chopra, Rani Mukherjee and Preity Zinta," said Salim Chowdhury, chairman of Shihab Trading who are the franchise owner of Dhaka Gladiators, when asked about the expensive rates of the tickets, the cheapest ones being priced at Tk 500.

Table listing branches of Dhaka Bank, including Foreign Exchange Branch, Bangshal Branch, Imamgonj Branch, Dhanmondi Model Branch, Gulshan Branch, Banani Branch, Mohakhali Branch, Moghbazar Branch, Mirpur Branch, Uttara Branch, Narayanganj Branch, Agrabad Branch in Chittagong, Jubilee Branch in Chittagong, CDA Avenue Branch in Chittagong, Cox's Bazar Branch, Lalidighirpar Branch in Sylhet, Barisal Branch, Rajshahi Branch, Bogra Branch and

Table listing ticket rates at SBNCs for various stadium stands and seating options, including Eastern Stand-Tk 500, Southern Stand-Tk 1000, Northern Stand-Tk 1000, Shahid Mustaque Stand-Tk 3500, Shahid Jewel Stand-Tk 3500, International Stand South-Tk 5000, VIP Grand Stand-Tk 5000, Director Enclosure-Tk 5000, BCB Dignitaries-Tk 5000, BCB Corporate Lounge-Tk 8000, International Stand North (Marquee)-Tk 8000, BCB Lounge-Tk 12000 (per seat), BCB Corporate Box South-Tk 12000 (per seat) and BCB Corporate Box West-Tk 12000 (per seat).

Table listing ticket rates at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong, including Western Gallery-Tk 500, Eastern Gallery-Tk 500, Club House-Tk 3500, Grand Stand-Tk 5000, International Gallery-Tk 6000, Grand Stand Roof Top (with meal)-Tk 8000,

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with across and down clues, including 'Household member', 'Shock', 'Baby bed', 'Retirement plan acronym', 'Acknowledgement', 'Hum-dinger', 'Sports fans', 'Party site', 'With dexterity', 'Journey segment', 'Blue quality', 'Light color', 'Frat-party need', 'Matter-horn, for one', 'Slight touch', 'Staff members?', 'Pacific rings?', 'Standard', 'Bar'.

Cryptoquip puzzle grid with letters and numbers, including words like 'EQW RJKKP ZQ V EBOZV', 'CFWR R V KAK KMGKAEKBX EBC', 'W R KAEZTR WXJK, VZTFO EP', 'CKP W G W B K O K M G A K R R E Z B ?'.

Cryptoquip clue: Yesterday's Cryptoquip: AN AIR-FRESHENING JARFUL OF DRY HERBS AND JALAPENOS MIGHT BE TERMED A PEPPERY POTPOURRI. Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Q equals F