



PHOTO: AFP

Sri Lanka all-rounder Thisara Perera plays a front-foot drive as Pakistan wicketkeeper Taufeeq Umar watches during the third day's play of the third and final Test at the Pallekele International Stadium on Tuesday.

Perera puts SL on top

Cricket

AFP, Pallekele

Young all-rounder Thisara Perera followed his four wickets with 75 off 86 balls as Sri Lanka seized control of the final Test against Pakistan in Pallekele on Tuesday. Pakistan, seeking a series-levelling win, paid for sloppy fielding as Sri Lanka recovered from a middle-order collapse to make 337 in their first innings on the third day. The tourists, trailing by 111 runs, were 27-1 in their second knock by stumps, losing opener Taufeeq Umar for four, leg-before to seamer Nuwan Kulasekara. Mohammad Hafeez was unbeaten on eight and Azhar Ali was on six, with Pakistan trailing by 84 runs with nine wickets in hand. The resolute batting by the hosts has given them a chance to build on the 1-0 series lead. Sri Lanka won the first Test by 209 runs before the second was drawn. Sri Lanka were only 10 runs ahead when they lost their seventh wicket, but Perera and Kulasekara (33) snatched the initiative by adding 84 for the eighth.

Perera, a 23-year-old from Colombo playing only his sixth Test, smashed off his sixth Test, smashed four fours and three sixes in his maiden half-century after being dropped twice on 11 and 22.

Seamer Umar Gul first missed a return catch and then saw skipper Misbahul Haq spill a low chance in the slips off his own bowling. Perera, whose four wickets in the first innings engineered Pakistan's collapse for 226, was last man out when he was bowled by left-arm seamer Junaid Khan. Junaid finished with 5-70, his second successive five-wicket haul, while off-spinner Saeed Ajmal claimed 3-66. The third day's play provided a keen tussle between bat and ball, compensating for the entire second day being lost due to rain. Tharanga Paranavithana and Thilan Samaraweera led Sri Lanka's charge with a fourth-wicket stand of 143 after surviving a testing morning session in overcast conditions. The pair had come together when skipper Mahela Jayawardene fell off the last ball of the first day's

play to leave Sri Lanka tottering at 44-3 at stumps.

Left-hander Paranavithana scored 75, his highest score in the series, and Samaraweera made 73 in a timely return to form after aggregating just 21 runs in the previous two Tests. Pakistan bounced back in the post-lunch session as Ajmal grabbed two quick wickets to leave Sri Lanka on 204-6 after they were comfortably placed at 187-3.

Samaraweera was lucky to get to a half-century as Younis Khan floored a shoulder-high catch off Gul when the batsman was on 49.

The fourth-wicket stand was broken midway through the afternoon session when Samaraweera played back to Ajmal and was out leg-before. New man Angelo Mathews began with a promising on-drive off Mohammad Sami for four, but fell for nine when he sliced Junaid to Asad Shafiq at gully. Paranavithana's five-hour vigil ended soon after, bowled by Ajmal to make Sri Lanka 204-6, still 23 runs away from gaining the lead. Pakistan felt the absence of wicket-keeper Adnan Akmal, who was confined to

the dressing room with a hairline fracture in his left hand sustained while batting on the opening day. Umar, who kept wickets, conceded 16 byes.

SCOREBOARD

PAKISTAN: First innings 226 (Shafiq 75; Perera 4-63, Herath 3-40)
SRI LANKA: First innings (overnight 44-3)
Paranavithana b Ajmal 75
Chandimal lbw b Junaid 8
Sangakkara b Junaid 0
M Jayawardene lbw b Sami 12
Samaraweera lbw b Ajmal 73
Mathews c Shafiq b Junaid 9
P Jayawardene lbw b Gul 20
Perera not out 75
Kulasekara c Taufeeq b Junaid 33
Herath lbw b Ajmal 2
Fernando not out 0
Extras: (b-16, lb-7, w-6, nb-1) 30
Total: (All out in 100.2 overs) 337

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Gul	22	3	90	1
Junaid	28.2	3	70	5
Sami	17	1	69	1
Ajmal	25	5	66	3
Younis	3	0	9	0
Hafeez	5	0	10	0

PAKISTAN: Second innings
Hafeez not out 8
Umar lbw b Kulasekara 4
Azhar not out 6
Extras: (lb-4, w-5) 9
Total: (For 1 wkt in 6 overs) 27
To bat: Younis, Misbahul, Shafiq, Akmal, Gul, Ajmal, Junaid, Sami
Fall of wicket: 1-16

Bowler	O	M	R	W
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Some spots

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will build towards the World Cup T-20. I think a lot of spots got settled in Zimbabwe and there are a couple for which there is still competition," he said. Like Mushfiqur, the Bangladesh coach was also excited about the fact that the world's number one all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan is back to the squad for the trip but he once again made it clear that the team comes first to him.

"It's always great to have some of your key players come back into the side. I think it was also very important for him (Shakib) to have a rest. He played cricket for the better part of last 10 to 11 months with IPL and county cricket, I think he came back and is now looking forward to playing with the boys. For me it's about the team. I am glad about him coming back and I am looking forward to Tamim coming back. But it's about the team focus and getting it right there," said Pybus.

Another Pakistani forward Sabbir Ahmed scored a brace while Khandokar Hasan and Pushkor Khisha Mimo netted one goal apiece for Abahani, who have now 15 points from six matches while Bima have six points from five matches.

Mohammedan

FROM PAGE 16
Billah scoring three goals. Another Pakistani forward Sabbir Ahmed scored a brace while Khandokar Hasan and Pushkor Khisha Mimo netted one goal apiece for Abahani, who have now 15 points from six matches while Bima have six points from five matches.

Rokibul slaughters

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"I know Mushy [Mushfiqur Rahim] didn't enjoy today as he wanted more out of the boys in terms of preparation. It's important for me as a head coach to see what depth we got in the system out of the match that we played. I have been waiting for guys to put their hand up under pressure and show what they can do. So that for me is really important. Our bowling was obviously not as good as it should have been today," opined coach Richard Pybus when asked about the outcome of the last preparation match.

"We trained really hard this week but we were not as good as we should have been today. I am not going to put blame on my bowlers for this today. But what really is important is that every time we play we take the opportunity even if you play against the A side you have a very professional attitude and were highly motivated," he added.

The Bangladesh team will fly for Belfast today morning without left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak, who will fly for Ireland on July 14 along with chief selector Akram Khan and head of delegation and BCB's vice-president Ahmed Sajjadul Alam.

The tour will kick off with a practice match against Ireland on July 16.

Boucher retired

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number of people for their heartfelt support for the last 24 hours. I now head onto a road of uncertain recovery." Boucher has been a mainstay of the South Africa side for 15 years, appearing in 147 Tests and becoming the first wicket-keeper to take 500 catches in Test cricket, where he has also scored five hundreds.

He had intended for this tour to England to be his final in international cricket, with his 150th Test scheduled for the third of the series at Lord's.

Smith paid tribute to Boucher's contribution to South African cricket and hailed his fierce competitive instincts, as well as his high-class displays behind the stumps and as a powerful batsman.

"For the 14 years of your international year you have been a Proteas warrior. You have given 100 per cent for this team," Smith said.

"You are a very good friend to many of us. You leave us today with sad hearts but also with our deepest gratitude." "We have walked a long road together, and we are saddened to part under these circumstances.

"You have been more than a performer, you have been a motivator, an inspirer, an energizer. The fighting spirit you brought to team remains with us.

"We wish you a good as possible recovery from your injury. As we bid you a farewell as an International cricketer and wish you well for your future, we keep you as a friend and respected Proteas warrior."

Brathwaite to lead WI in U-19 WC

CRICINFO, Port of Spain

Kraigh Brathwaite, the Test opener, has been named captain of the 15-man West Indies squad for the Under-19 World Cup in Australia in August. John Campbell, the left-hand top-order batsman, will be vice-captain. Former West Indies captain and fast bowler Courtney Walsh has been named manager of the squad.

Brathwaite has already played nine Test matches and has four half-centuries. Campbell and Brathwaite were also part of the West Indies top order in the previous edition of the U-19 World Cup in 2010. The other opener in the squad is Keiron Joseph.

The middle order has Anthony Alleyne, Akeal Hoseney and Kavem Hodge. Stephen Katwaroo is the wicketkeeper while Sunil Ambris is the reserve keeper.

The squad includes two fast-bowling all-rounders - Kyle Mayers and Justin Greaves. There are three specialist fast bowlers in Marquino Mindley, Jerome Jones and Ronsford Beaton, who has played eight first-class matches for Guyana.

There are also two specialist spinners - Amir Khan, who bowls legbreaks and googlies, and Derone Davis, who bowls left-arm orthodox.

The team will leave from Barbados on July 17 for a camp in Brisbane before the official pre-tournament matches. West Indies have been drawn in Group C alongside India, Zimbabwe and Papua New Guinea in the 16-team biennial event. They play their first match against India on August 12.

Flying Man coming back

AFP, Shanghai



Chinese hurdler Liu Xiang endured injury agony at the Beijing Olympics and bitter injustice at last year's World Championships, but now he looks on the verge of redemption in London. It's been a long road back for the unassuming "Flying Man", 28, who won 110m hurdles gold at Athens 2004 but was struck down by an Achilles injury in Beijing, a bleak moment in an otherwise glittering Olympics for the hosts.

Liu's withdrawal in severe pain, without even clearing a hurdle in his first heat, caused such profound shock that fans flooded out of the Bird's Nest stadium and a Chinese TV presenter wept as he announced the news. It was the start of the long spell in the doldrums for Liu, who had claimed China's first ever sprint gold in a world record-equalling 12.91sec in Athens, and lowered the mark to 12.88 two years later in Lausanne.

American surgeons removed calcium deposits from his right Achilles tendon

in December 2008, but it was more than a year after Beijing before he returned to the track in his home city of Shanghai.

But Liu remained troubled by the injury and he took another six months off in 2010 before returning to form with Asian Games gold that November, clocking 13.09 in front of a huge crowd in China's Guangzhou.

The breakthrough came in May last year when Liu, with a new starting technique of taking seven strides rather than eight to the first hurdle, glided over the barriers to shock in-form American David Oliver in Shanghai.

It set up a mouth-watering world championships final two months later in Daegu, South Korea, featuring Liu, Oliver and reigning Olympic champion Dayron Robles, the world record-holder from Cuba.

Liu was accelerating smoothly over the last third and looked set to overhaul Robles, leading in the next lane, at the line.

But the Cuban reached across and grabbed Liu's arm once before the last hurdle and once again after, checking his momentum as the Chinese runner finished third.

Robles was later disqualified, handing the title to America's Jason Richardson, while Liu was awarded silver. Although there was outrage in China, Liu took the incident calmly.

Revenge could be on the menu this year. In the current season, Liu has beaten Robles over 60 metres in Birmingham and he came second to Aries Merritt in the world indoor championships in March.

Outdoors, he has enjoyed convincing wins in Kawasaki and Shanghai where he left Oliver and Richardson trailing. At the Prefontaine Classic, he equalled Robles' world mark of 12.87, aided by wind.

Liu's personal best, the former world record of 12.88, is now six years old, and his last world title came in Osaka 2007.

But in London, he can cap a momentous comeback by claiming a second Olympic gold medal, along with retribution over Robles -- and, if the stars align, erase the Cuban's 12.87 from the record books.

"I hope to compete against him. But I want to say that every athlete is strong. He is only one," shrugged Liu about Robles. "I'm not so bad myself."

Maria is the flag-bearer

REUTERS, Moscow

Former tennis world number one Maria Sharapova will be Russia's first female Olympic flag-bearer at the London Games later this month, the national Olympic committee confirmed on Tuesday.

"Sharapova will carry our flag," president of the Russian Olympic Committee (ROC) Alexander Zhukov told reporters following the ROC's executive board meeting. "She was the most worthy candidate among all our athletes. In June she claimed her fourth grand slam title (French Open)."

Russia broke with tradition by naming Sharapova, who also won Wimbledon (2004), US Open (2006) and Australian Open (2008) titles, for the rare honour.

Since the Russians first took part in the 1952 Summer Games in Helsinki as part of the Soviet Union this great honour was traditionally given to famous male athletes such as Greco-Roman wrestler Alexander Karelin and swimmer Alexander Popov, who have won numerous Olympic titles.

"I am so honored, and especially excited as it will be my first Olympics in my career," the Florida-based Russian said on her official website (www.mariasharapova.com) when she first heard the news about her nomination last month. "I have had to keep this hush hush for two weeks and keeping secrets is not my best quality!"

The 25-year-old will be making her Olympic debut in London after failing to qualify for the 2004 Games in Athens and missing the 2008 edition in Beijing with a shoulder injury.

LOCOG takes hold of the All England Club

REUTERS, London



Even before Andy Murray's Centre Court tears have dried, the All England Club is being transformed from its traditional Wimbledon Championships guise into a London 2012 Olympics venue.

The London 2012 Organising Committee (LOCOG) took control of the world's most famous tennis courts on Tuesday, 18 days before players such as Wimbledon champion Roger Federer and Serena Williams and runner-up Murray begin battling for gold medals.

Already, the dark green canvas backstops on the outside courts have been replaced with the purple brand of London 2012, complete with Olympic rings, while the club's groundstaff are busy restoring the lawns after their two-week battering during the rain-hit championships which ended on Sunday.

"This is a milestone in the whole process," former British player Clare Wood, the tennis competition manager, told Reuters on Tuesday. "We will be based there from Thursday and the players arrive on Monday so it is really a very, very short turnaround time."

The Olympic tennis event, which was held at the All England Club's previous site in 1908, will begin on July 28 and last nine days. There will be medals in men's and women's singles and doubles and, for the first time since Paris 1924, mixed doubles.

With 64-strong singles draws, 32 pairs in the men's and women's doubles and 16 mixed doubles pairs, it means a busy schedule on 12 playing courts, rather than the 19 used at the Wimbledon championships.

Centre Court's roof and lights will mean that some play will always be possible, but organisers and groundstaff will be casting anxious glances to the skies over the next few weeks.

"We have a contingency day on the Monday after (Aug. 6) and if we are behind we can use that but we don't want to be going too far into the second week," Wood, who played for Britain in the Seoul, Barcelona and Atlanta Games, said.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 39 Pitch
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5 Bottom line?
8 Bedouin
12 Exist
13 Exploit
14 Brightest star in Lyra
15 Ear-related
16 Needle-fish
17 Blue hue
18 No-goodnik
20 Locations
22 Fawn's mama
23 Chowed down
24 Use a paper towel
27 Clerics' vesting place
32 Melody
33 Ring decision
34 Ball prop
35 Bishop, often
38 Now, on a memo

DOWN 21 Listener
1 Unkempt one
2 Pocket bread
3 Eager, and then some
4 Withdraw
5 Hints at
6 "Born in the —"
7 Griffin of old TV
8 Forward, in Florence
9 Asks
10 Malaria
11 Sheepish remarks
19 With 41-Down, continue

21 Listener
24 Bankroll
25 Mid-afternoon, in a way
26 Disaprovers' demonstrations
28 Alias (Abbr.)
29 Creates a jam
30 Earl Grey, for one
31 "Uh-huh"
36 Drive-in staffer
37 Blunder
38 Authentic
41 See 19-Down
42 Pack away
43 Greek vowel
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46 Between jobs
47 Roger of "Cheers"
48 Tackles' team-mates
51 Intention

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CRYPTOQUIP

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" ETJC HMC MKQQU."

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: I ENJOY PUTTING ON DENIM PANTS TO SUCH A DEGREE THAT WHEN I WEAR THEM I CALL IT JEAN THERAPY.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: T equals I