All three options open

Cricket

AFP, Pallekele

Pakistan's Azhar Ali smashed a second century in successive matches Wednesday to leave the final Test against Sri Lanka poised for an intriguing finish.

Azhar made 136 as Pakistan wriggled out of a corner to post 299-8 in their second innings by stumps on the fourth day in Pallekele, a lead of 188 runs with two wickets in hand.

The tourists now have three sessions on the fifth day to conjure a series-levelling win on a wearing pitch that will offer some turn to prolific off-spinner Saeed Ajmal.

But Sri Lanka remain favourites to win or draw the match and clinch their first series victory in three years since beating New Zealand at home in 2009.

The hosts won the first Test in Galle by 209 runs before the second in Colombo was drawn.

Azhar, who made 157 in the Colombo Test, held the innings together for six hours, hitting 13 boundaries in his fourth Test century and the third this year.

The 27-year-old put on 94 for the second wicket with his overnight partner Mohammad Hafeez and 48 for the third with Younis Khan after Pakistan resumed the day at 27-1.

But the most crucial partnership came towards the end of the day when Asad Shafiq helped Azhar add 100 for the fifth wicket after Younis and skipper Misbahul Haq had departed quickly.

Fast bowler Dilhara Fernando and left-arm spinner Rangana Herath sparked a lower order collapse in the final hour as Pakistan slipped from a comfortable 276-4 to 299-8.



Pakistan batsman Azhar Ali celebrates his fourth century in Tests, second on the trot, on the fourth day of the third and final Test against Sri Lanka at the Pallekele Cricket Stadium yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

to point.

Ajmal 3-66)

Shafiq not out

Samilbw b Fernando

Gul Ibw b Herath

Akmal not out

Bowler

Kulasekara

Fernando

Ajmal Ibw b Herath

Extras: (b-6, lb-8, w-6)

To bat: Junaid Khan

Total: (For 8 wkts in 104 overs)

5-276, 6-280, 7-281, 8-299

Fall of wickets: 1-16, 2-110, 3-158, 4-176,

Angelo Mathews.

Perera 4-63, Herath 3-40)

Umar Ibw b Kulasekara

team the lead by tapping

Angelo Mathews for a single

Jayawardene dropped a low

catch when Younis, then on

12, followed a wide ball from

PAKISTAN: First innings 226 (Shafiq 75

SRI LANKA: First innings 337 (Paranavitana

75, Samaraweera 73, Perera 75; Junaid 5-70,

PAKISTAN: Second innings (overnight 27-1

Hafeez c Paranavitana b Fernando

Azhar c P Jayawardene b Fernando

Younis c Paranavitana b Herath

Misbah c M Jayawardene b Herath

Wicketkeeper Prasanna

Fernando had Azhar caught behind and then claimed his 100th Test wicket by trapping Mohammad Samileg-before.

Herath claimed Umar Gul and Saeed Ajmal legbefore, but Shafiq saw out the day for Pakistan in the SCOREBOARD company of injured wicketkeeper Adnan Akmal.

Shafiq was unbeaten on 55 after top-scoring with 75 in the first innings, while Akmal, batting with a hairline fracture in his left hand, had yet to score.

Hafeez, who also hit a century in Colombo, made 52 when he was dismissed just before lunch with Pakistan two runs away from wiping out the first innings deficit of 111 runs.

The Pakistan vice-captain edged a wild drive off Fernando to Tharanga Paranavitana in the slips.

The wicket of Hafeez came against the run of play after Sri Lanka's bowlers failed to contain the flow of runs on a pitch that appeared to ease out under bright sunshine.

Pakistan went to lunch at 119-2, in front by eight runs, after Younis had given his 56 goals on Day 2

KFC Women's Football

SPORTS REPORTER

The KFC National Women's Football Super League enjoyed another day of goalfest as a total of 56 were struck in eight matches at five different venues on the second day of the league yesterday.

Sabina Khatun struck an astonishing number of goals (12) as Satkhira slaughtered Magura 19-0 at the Kushtia Stadium. Apart from Sabina's strikes, Suriya slotted four goals while Rowshanara scored twice and Jahanara netted one goal in the one-sided affair where Satkhira led the first half 10-0.

Narail followed the footsteps of Satkhira t the same venue by blanking Jhenaidah 10-0, thanks to a quadruple of goals from Salma, Bipasha scored a brace while Ruma Padmabati and Sharawasati scored one goal each.

At the Khagrachari Stadium, hosts Khagrachari suffered a 2-0 defeat against Rangamati while Chittagong thrashed Laxmipur 7-0, riding on five strikes from Mili Barua.

Jessore handed an 11-0 defeat to Sirajganj at the Joypurhat Stadium as Khaleda and Rehana struck five and four goals respectively.

Naogaon defeated Bogra 2-1 at the same venue.

At the Nilfamari Stadium, the hosts recorded a 2-0 win over Panchagarh while Agricultural University of Mymensingh suffered a 2-0 loss at the hand of Netrokona at the University ground.

Balotelli success brings racism into spotlight

Football

REUTERS, Rome

Italian striker Mario Balotelli's starring performance in the Euro soccer championship last month has focused a rare spotlight on the serious but neglected problem of racism in Italy.

Balotelli's two stunning goals, which knocked out Germany in the semi-final, turned him into a national hero - even if that aura was diminished after Italy's rout by Spain in the final.

The tournament generated a rash of local media stories looking at how Balotelli's life reflects the travails of black Italians and immigrants in a country which seems largely in denial about whether there is a problem at all. Such coverage or discussion is rare

despite regular episodes of racist violence, including the murder of two Senegalese street traders by a militant rightist in Florence and the burning down of a Roma camp in Turin, both last December. Some of the most shocking episodes

have been linked to mafia gangs in the south, where many illegal African immigrants are employed in fruit and vegetable picking.

In a notorious incident at Castelvolturno, near Naples, in 2008, a hit squad from the Camorra mafia killed six immigrants from Ghana and other parts of west Africa in a racist attack during an operation against a rival group of gangsters.

In 2010 more than 50 people were injured during rioting in the Calabrian town of Rosarno after immigrant farm workers were attacked by local youths. Interior Minister Roberto Maroni, now leader of the anti-immigrant Northern League, blamed the problem on lax policies against illegal immigration. All the African workers were later shipped out of the town.

Racism is often most obvious in soccer stadiums where Balotelli, and a string of other black players, have frequently been the victims of racist abuse, despite claims by soccer authorities that it is not a big problem.

But Balotelli suffered racism long before he became its most prominent victim in Italy.

The 21-year-old striker was born to Ghanaian parents in Sicily and then given up for adoption to an Italian family when he was three. He grew up in the city of Brescia - a stronghold of the xenophobic Northern League. Like other children of immigrants, he

had to wait until he was 18 to go through the complex and difficult process to win Italian citizenship after years of having to obtain residence permits like a foreigner. "You are forced to queue intermina-

bly at police headquarters for a residence permit. I did it once with my mother and that was enough. She did it for me dozens of times...and this is one of the lesser problems you face," he said.

He has suffered a lot worse on the soccer field. Both in Italy and during the Euro championship he endured monkey chants and bananas thrown on the pitch. He seems to anger racist fans more than other black players in Italy, precisely because he is Italian and not a foreigner.

When Balotelli played for Inter-Milan, rival Juventus fans liked to shout: "There are no black Italians." His decision to move to Manchester City in 2010 was said to be partly motivated by this kind of treatment. Critics say Italy's head-in-the-sand

attitude is blocking a systematic response to racism - which has been on the rise since mass immigration began in the late 1980s and accelerated in the last decade. Until 1990 immigrants made up less

than one per cent of the population compared with more than 7.5 per cent According to a Human Rights Watch report last year, Italy has failed to take

effective action to prevent and prosecute

racist violence and consistently under-

HRW called for a much more aggressive official condemnation of racist violence, a strengthening of the law against racist-linked offences and more specialised training for police.

The Gazzetta dello Sport newspaper issued a somewhat half hearted apology when there were protests after it published a cartoon during the Euro championship depicting Balotelli as King Kong, swatting away footballs from the top of London's Big Ben.

Soccer, a national passion, often mirrors both the strengths and weaknesses of Italy. President Giorgio Napoletano said as much welcoming the Italian team back from the Euro championships. "You have achieved extraordinary

results and there is still much to do to achieve a fundamental renewal...but am I talking about Italy or football? The arguments are very similar." As it has done several times in the

past, the team went to a major tournament with low expectations following a debacle in the 2010 World Cup and on the heels of the latest in a string of major match-fixing scandals. While there are hopes that a figure as

high profile as Balotelli can make a difference, there are plenty of reservations about how much change he might achieve. "Obviously it is a long process. I don't

think it will make an enormous difference overnight," said Simon Martin, a soccer historian from the American University of Rome. Martin sees Italy in the same situation

with racism in soccer as England in the 1970s, where similar banana throwing and monkey chants were rife. Since then vigorous action by soccer authorities and the prominence of black players has largely eradicated the problem there and in other European countries. UISP's Balestri felt Balotelli was not

the perfect role model given his playboy reputation and history of bizarre offpitch antics including setting fire to his house in England with fireworks.

Thami takes up Mark's position

AFP, London

South Africa wicketkeeper Thami Tsolekile has been called up to replace Mark Boucher ahead of the forthcoming Test series against England following the veteran's enforced retirement.

Boucher decided to end his 15-year international career on Tuesday after a serious eye injury suffered during a warm-up game against Somerset left him needing three hours of sur-

The 35-year-old was struck by a flying bail while standing up to the stumps and was immediately taken to hospital with blood apparently coming from his eye.

Boucher is set to return to South Africa to begin his recovery and Tsolekile will join up with the squad ahead of the three-Test series which starts at The Oval next week.

However, the 31-year-old is unlikely to play in the first Test after coach Gary Kirsten claimed AB de Villiers would

initially take over the gloves. Tsolekile's call-up had been expected after he was handed a central contract

earlier this year. "Thami has done very well with both the Lions and South Africa A for a couple of seasons, culminating in his South African record eight catches in an innings this past week," said Cricket South Africa selection convener

Andrew Hudson. Tsolekile has three Test caps, all of which came in 2004 when Boucher was sidelined, while he has 132 first-class appearances.

Div-I h'ball

SPORTS REPORTER

Arambagh KS maintained their winning spree in the Orient Bread First Division Handball League when they handed a 39-13 defeat to Jatrabari SC at the Shaheed M Mansur Ali Stadium yesterday. Arambagh dominated the first half 23-5.

In the other match, Prime Sports Club posted a 39-9 win over Mansur Sporting Club after leading the first half 22-6.

Eng blank Australia

Cricket

AFP, Manchester

Ravi Bopara starred with bat and ball as England routed Australia by seven wickets in the fifth and final one-day international at Old Trafford here on Tuesday to complete a 4-0 series win.

It was the heaviest defeat ever suffered by Australia, still the world number one in the 50-over game, in any head-to-head limited overs series.

By contrast, this was England's 10th oneday win in a row.

Man-of-the-match Bopara took two wickets for eight runs in four overs with his medium-pacers as England held Australia to 145 for seven in an innings reduced by rain to 32 overs.

Then, after a further rain break saw England set a revised victory target of 138 in 29 overs, Bopara made 52 not out off 56 balls with five fours. Together with England captain Alastair

Cook, who made 58, he shared a stand of 92 in 98 balls that took the team to the brink of victory.

And when Eoin Morgan struck the winning runs England had triumphed with 11 balls to spare.

"The pitch was a little bit 'stoppy' but I think it got better as the night went on," said Bopara, glad to see England home having made runs previously this series before getting out in sight of the winning post.

"It's about time I was there at the end!" said Bopara. "It was important that I got an early knock and that one at the Oval [82 from 85 balls in England's six-wicket win in the second match] gave me confidence and stood me in good stead for the series."

Cook praised Essex colleague Bopara by saying: "We all know what a quality player he is, and he is starting to deliver for England now."

Australia captain Michael Clarke praised England but said his side would be stronger come their return for next year's Ashes Test series.

"We have no excuses, we came here to win all five games," said Clarke.

"I don't want to take anything away from England, but I will make sure we are as well prepared as we can possibly be for the Ashes."

Before this match, Australia coach Mickey Arthur had called on his side to show some "mongrel" but there was precious little in evidence in this day/night fixture or indeed grounds. the series as a whole.

And had it not been for a washed-out third match at Edgbaston, England might have been looking at a 5-0 clean sweep which would have taken them to number one and put them on top of the standings in all three

international formats. England's attack put the brakes on Australia's innings after David Warner had made a run-a-ball 32 following Cook's decision to field first in overcast conditions upon win-

65

Australia slumped to 55 for four and 86 for six before No 7 George Bailey's unbeaten 46 gave them some hope.

Off-spinner James Tredwell, in for the

injured Tim Bresnan (elbow) and playing his first match at this level since England's World Cup quarter-final defeat by Sri Lanka in Colombo in March last year, took two for 23 in his maximum seven overs.

Australia's plight would have been worse had not England dropped two catches and missed another before they'd taken a single wicket.

But Australia failed to make England pay for their mistakes, with Warner lbw after missing a sweep as Tredwell struck fourth

Peter Forrest was run out when Tredwell gathered Samit Patel's throw from long-on.

Two balls later Matthew Wade, who faced 41 balls for just 12 runs after opening in place of the injured Shane Watson, was stumped comfortably by opposing wicketkeeper Craig Kieswetter off a sharply-spun Tredwell delivery.

Clarke couldn't halt the slide, run out for one by Morgan's direct hit.

Steven Smith made a useful 21 but was caught down the legside by Kieswetter off Bopara's first ball loosener.

And Bopara struck again when David Hussey, trying to run the ball down to third man, was caught behind.

England suffered a first over setback when man-of-the-series Ian Bell chipped Clint McKay to Bailey and, after the rain break, Jonathan Trott was bowled trying to sweep Clarke's fourth ball of left-arm spin.

But that was as good as it got for Australia.

SCORES IN BRIEF

AUSTRALIA: 145 for 7 (Warner 32, Bailey 46 not out; Tredwell 2-23, Bopara 2-8) ENGLAND: 138 for 3 (Cook 58, Bopara 52 not

Result: England won by seven wickets (D/L method) and clinched five-match series 4-0. Man-of-the-match: Ravi Bopara. Man-of-the-series: Ian Bell.

Saglain joins Tigers FROM PAGE 16

Cricket Academy for a period of two years. He is expected to arrive later this month

and take over a position that has been vacant since October last year when his countryman Ross Turner resigned on health This is McInnes' second stint in

Bangladesh after serving as the Bangladesh Under-19s coach as well as helping set up the high performance unit, which had many of today's national players in its programme. The unit is also the precursor of the

Academy he's going to take over.

29 Tawny Meanwhile, Oshadee Weerasinghe will **31** Talk become the new coach of the Bangladesh women's team, taking over from former India cricketer Mamatha Maben.

Isinbayeva back with a win

AFP, Sotteville-les-rouen

Russia's pole vaulting legend Yelena Isinbayeva won on her first appearance at an open air athletics meeting this season here on Tuesday just under a month ahead of her bid for a third successive Olympic title.

The 30-year-old -- who won her fourth world indoor title earlier this year in Istan bul -- won with a best vault of 4.75 metres, which she achieved on her first attempt.

Isinbayeva, who had pulled out of the meeting in Reims last week because she said she wasn't ready, tried her luck at what would have been a season best 4.85m but failed in her three attempts.

Nevertheless she was happy at her evening's work and looking forward to competing at the higher-profile Monaco meeting on July 20 before heading for London.

Ruby

24 Wearers

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25 "Phooey!"

27 Memo-

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Thick on domestic and Rahmatganj MFS and promised to make the

Football Federation and it was reiterated as Club Cup Championship is scheduled to take place for the district clubs.

stated the problem.

"We could not give much attention on the district football in the last four years but this time it will get the highest priority. Three sponsors are almost confirmed for district football leagues and an age-level tournament," said Murshedy adding that the champions club of each district would take part in the Club Cup Championship.

While the local football scene is expected to remain busy throughout nine months, footballers will have very little engagement at the international level. In the last four years, the football's governing body could not hold a single international tournament, apart from the SAFF Championship, and this time too they could not give any definite promise of holding any tournament of their own accord, although they said they are working on it.

"Holding international tournament is in our mind and hope to organise a high-standard international tournament on home soil this time," said Murshedy.

Bangladesh will however take part in the AFC Challenge Cup qualifiers in March next year while the U-18 team will travel to Russia to

take part in a tournament there. During the press conference, the professional football league chairman, Murshedy, faced a lot of questions over the ongoing investigation on

the alleged fixed match between Brothers Union

report public within two weeks. MAIN EVENTS OF BFF CALENDAR

Players' Transfer: Aug 16-Sep 30, 2012 Federation Cup finals: Sep 24, 2012 Oct 20, 2012 Bangladesh Premier League: Nov 5, 2012 Feb

Bangladesh Championship League: Nov 10, 2012 Feb 25, 2013

Independence Cup: March, 2013 Super Cup: Mid April Mid May, 2013 Club Cup Championship: Nov 10, 2012 Feb

AFC Challenge Cup Qualifiers: March 2-17, 2013

Tigers leave for Europe

FROM PAGE 16

a result, this tour is important for the Tigers as there is a chance for them to break into the table if they can win matches on this tour.

Bangladesh have so far played 18 T20 internationals, winning only four and having lost their only T20 match against Ireland -- a sixwicket defeat at Trent Bridge in the 2009 ICC WorldTwenty20s.

Meanwhile left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak, who recently got married, will fly for Ireland on July 14 along with chief selector Akram Khan and head of delegation and BCB's vicepresident Ahmed Sajjadul Alam.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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SLED

30 Neatnik's diagnosis, at times solution 38 Squabble 39 Words to live by 40 Match 42 Reveille

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CRYPTOQUIP

KLXPN GX SKJ JAFFPW FZX

FL XAP KNPK, XAP OFZCR

LGNPLBO BKHPCXPW "SAPNP

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: UPBEAT SONG ABOUT CHECKING POTENTIAL FLOODWATER FLOWING

RBFS LNFH APNP?"

INTO CORRIDORS: "DIKE THE HALLS." Today's Cryptoquip Clue: A equals H