

Kumar a la Brian, Sachin

Cricket

Elegant Kumar Sangakkara helped lift some of the gloom of another underwhelming Sri Lanka first innings as the tourists face a game of catch-up with Australia in the second Melbourne Test on Wednesday.

Coach Graham Ford admitted some of his players might have been under pressure to perform on the big stage of the vast Melbourne Cricket Ground with a 67,138 Boxing Day first day crowd on the showcase day of the Australian cricket season.

Only Sangakkara rose to the special occasion for the tourists with his polished 58 dwarfing the contributions of his teammates in a woeful below-par first innings of 156 off just 43.4 overs after winning the toss.

In doing so Sangakkara joined a select group of Test batsmen who have scored 10,000 runs.

Sangakkara became the equal-fastest to the 10,000 milestone, reaching it in his 195th Test innings, the same as Sachin Tendulkar and Brian Lara.

His stoic knock in 195 minutes was only brought to an end by a stunning running catch made by wicketkeeper Matthew Wade.

"Once you get out there, you've got to have a clear mind and you've got to take good decisions and I think Kumar showed just how important that is," Ford said after Wednesday's play. "I think everybody watching thoroughly enjoyed the elegance of the player. He really is something special when he plays like that."

"And to achieve what he has achieved is absolutely amazing, so for us, although it was a disappointing day in many ways, that brought a lot of joy to the lads."

"He's very popular in



PHOTO: AFP

Sri Lanka's batting superstar Kumar Sangakkara acknowledges the applause from the crowd when he reached 10,000 runs on the first day of the second Test against Australia at the Melbourne Cricket Ground yesterday.

Player	Span	Mat	Inns	NO	Runs	HS	Ave	100	50	0
Tendulkar (India)	1989-2012	194	320	32	15645	248*	54.32	51	66	14
Ponting (Aus)	1995-2012	168	287	29	13378	257	51.85	41	62	17
Dravid (ICC/India)	1996-2012	164	286	32	13288	270	52.31	36	63	8
Kallis (ICC/SA)	1995-2012	158	268	40	12980	224	56.92	44	56	14
Lara (ICC/WI)	1990-2006	131	232	6	11953	400*	52.88	34	48	17
Border (Aus)	1978-1994	156	265	44	11174	205	50.56	27	63	11
S Waugh (Aus)	1985-2004	168	260	46	10927	200	51.06	32	50	22
Chanderpaul (WI)	1994-2012	146	249	42	10696	203*	51.67	27	61	14
M Jayawardene (SL)	1997-2012	137*	229	14	10674	374	49.64	31	43	12
Gavaskar (India)	1971-1987	125	214	16	10122	236*	51.12	34	45	12
Sangakkara (SL)	2000-2012	115*	195	15	10018	287	55.65	30	41	9

the dressing room and to see him achieve that everybody's absolutely delighted."

Sangakkara's knock earned the admiration of Australian left-armed Mitchell Johnson, whose four wickets for 63 enabled him to bring up 200 Test wickets, significantly with the stunning dismissal of Sangakkara.

The stylish left-hander was out to a magnificent running catch behind the wicket by wicketkeeper Matthew Wade, who scampered 30 metres before flinging himself to take a diving catch and deliver Johnson his 200th wicket in his 49th Test.

"He was just patient. He was leaving very well, but also he was going after his shots," Johnson said of Sangakkara.

"He waited on the fuller

balls, he drove really well and he just had more patience and he just wanted to stick out."

"He's an unbelievable player. He's the [joint] quickest to get 10,000 runs and he's been around for a long time and he knows how to play cricket."

Ford realises the uphill task now confronting Sri Lanka after they again struggled to post a challenging first innings total for Australia to chase.

"Pretty clearly we're back to playing catch up unfortunately. We found ourselves doing that in the last Hobart Test and we're desperate not to do it this time round," Ford said.

"But that's what it is. Tomorrow morning's first session is going to be extremely vital that we get in and bowl well and hopefully strike early."

WORLD TEAM CHESS Dhaka eliminated

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka City team were eliminated from the World Cities Team Chess Championship on Tuesday when they suffered defeat against Saratov city of Russia in their first match of the knockout phase at Al-Ain Sports Complex, United Arab Emirates.

Dhaka conceded a 3.5-0.5 defeat to Saratov with GM Niaz Murshed only managing a draw against GM Evgeny Tomashevsky in the four boards. GM Ziaur Rahman, IM Minhazuddin Ahmed Sagor and FM Debaraj Chatterjee lost their respective matches against GM Lysyj Igor, GM Romanov Evgeny and GM Evgeny Shaposhnikov.

Cities from Russia, Netherlands, Sweden, Uzbekistan, China, Greece, Azerbaijan and Serbia qualified for the quarterfinals.

Walton T20

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

Shaheed Tozo Smrity Sangsad beat Ardency Club by 59 runs in the inaugural match of the Walton T20 Cricket Tournament at the Jessore Shamsul Huda Stadium yesterday.

Shaheed Tozo scored 105 for seven after deciding to bat first.

In reply, Ardency were bundled out for 46 runs. Eight teams divided into two groups are taking part in the competition organised by the District Sports Association.

Army overwhelm Police

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Army came from one goal down to register a massive 16-1 victory over Bangladesh Police in the Southeast Bank Victory Day Hockey Tournament at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Army dominated the first half 11-1, before adding five more goals in the second half.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Hockey Federation Eleven thrashed Bangladesh Navy 6-1 while BKSP routed Bangladesh Air Force 7-1 after leading the first half 6-0.

Nene in talks with Besiktas

AFP, Istanbul

Paris Saint Germain's wintery Brazilian forward Nene is close to reaching agreement to join Turkish side Besiktas, local press reported here on Wednesday.

Besiktas president Fikret Orman confirmed the club was interested in signing the 31-year-old.

"If our conditions are met the deal will be done," he told news channel NTV.

According to a report in sports newspaper 'Fanatik' Nene will be joining on a 2.25 million euro salary.

Nene is keen to leave PSG after falling out of favour with coach Carlo Ancelotti.

"I think it is time to follow a new path in my career," the player, who is under contract with the mega-rich French capital club until July 2013, said this month.

Ancelotti however has denied the striker had asked to leave.

Aussies assume control

Sangakkara joins 10,000-run club

Cricket

AFP, Melbourne

Australia skittled out Sri Lanka for 156 and trailed by just six runs at stumps after an eventful opening day saw 13 wickets fall in the second Melbourne Test on Wednesday.

The home side were in command before a Boxing Day crowd of 67,138 at the sun-bathed Melbourne Cricket Ground, after winning the opening Test in Hobart by 137 runs.

Kumar Sangakkara joined the 10,000 runs club and Mitchell Johnson claimed his 200th Test wicket before the Australian batsmen made Sri Lanka pay for their paltry first innings total made off just 43.4 overs, with David Warner clobbering 62 off 46 balls.

Despite a late flurry of wickets Australia finished the day well on top. At the close they were 150 for three with Michael Clarke, who passed a fitness test on a strained hamstring, not out 20 and Shane Watson on 13.

"We're definitely in a strong position," Johnson said. "I think our two openers started exceptionally well. I'm sure they would have liked to have gone on

and make hundreds and you don't want to be run out in Test match cricket, but we're three down, we're 150 and we've got a great wicket."

The Sri Lankans were rueing dropped catches off both batsmen late in the day.

Their only bright spot was Sangakkara's 58, which was ended by a stunning running catch by wicketkeeper Matthew Wade to give Johnson his 200th wicket in his 49th Test.

The Australians then made a lively start with Warner and Ed Cowan putting on 95 off 106 balls, which was ended by a stunning running catch by wicketkeeper Matthew Wade to give Johnson his 200th wicket in his 49th Test.

Phil Hughes was run out for 10 in a dreadful mix-up with Cowan in the 23rd over, well beaten home by Tillakaratne Dilshan's throw to the striker's end.

Cowan was out for 36 in the following over, flashing at Dhammika Prasad. Mahela Jayawardene took a hot catch in the slips.

The pace attack maintained a good line and length but the Sri Lankan batsmen largely self-destructed with poor shot-making.

Debutant Jackson Bird

captured his first Test wicket with his 10th delivery when he moved the ball away from left-hander Dimuth Karuna ratne who was taken by Wade for five.

Hobart centurion Dilshan fell three overs later when Johnson got one through his defences which cannoned into the off-stump for 11.

The tourists' woes deepened when Mahela was out three balls after first-hour drinks for three, continuing a dismal scoring series for the skipper.

Peter Siddle moved one off the pitch and enticed an edge off Jayawardene's bat to give Wade his second catch and leave the Sri Lankans 37 for three in the 13th over.

Thilan Samaraweera was out to a rash shot to the third ball after lunch, top-edging Bird to Warner at short mid-wicket for 10.

Wicketkeeper Prasanna Jayawardene, whose further participation in the match is in doubt with a hairline fractured thumb, went to a Johnson lifter for 24, caught in the slips by Hughes.

Johnson struck again next ball with a brutish riser that struck Prasad's gloves for Wade's third catch of the innings.

Rangana Herath survived Johnson's hat-trick ball before Sangakkara became Johnson's fourth victim of the innings.

SCOREBOARD

SRI LANKA: First innings
Karunaratne c Wade b Bird 11
Dilshan b Johnson 17
Sangakkara c Wade b Johnson 58
M Jayawardene c Wade b Siddle 3
Samaraweera c Warner b Bird 10
Mathews c Hussey b Siddle 15
P Jayawardene c Hughes b Johnson 24
Prasad c Wade b Johnson 0
Herath c Hussey b Lyon 14
Eranga not out 4
Welegedara c Hussey b Lyon 12

Extras: (lb-5, nb-7) 0
Total: (All out in 43.4 overs) 156
Fall of wickets: 1-13, 2-19, 3-37, 4-79, 5-99, 6-134, 7-134, 8-147, 9-156

Bowler O M R W
Johnson 14 2 63 4
Bird 13 5 32 2
Siddle 8 1 30 2
Watson 3 2 3 0
Lyon 5.4 0 23 2

AUSTRALIA: First innings
Cowan c Jayawardene b Prasad 36
Warner c Prasad b Mathews 62
Hughes run out (Dilshan) 10
Watson not out 13
Clarke not out 20
Extras: (lb-2, w-5, nb-2) 9
Total: (For 3 wickets in 39 overs) 150
To bat: Hussey, Wade, Johnson, Siddle, Lyon, Bird

Fall of wickets: 1-95, 2-117, 3-117
Bowler O M R W
Welegedara 11 4 36 0
Eranga 10 2 53 0
Prasad 8 1 39 1
Mathews 4 2 9 1
Herath 6 1 11 0

MS blames middle-order

Cricket

PTI, Bangalore

India skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni feels the failure of middle-order batsmen to capitalise on the good start provided by openers led to the five-wicket loss against Pakistan in the first Twenty20 encounter on Tuesday.

Dhoni said India loss of wickets at regular intervals, after being in a strong position at 75 without loss in 10 overs, hurt the team badly.

"The batsmen got out trying to play big shots. We could have easily scored 200 if we had applied ourselves," Dhoni complained.

On the umpire not giving a decision in India's favour when Ishant Sharma had got Shoaib Malik (57 not out) caught off a ball which climbed a tad above shoulder level, Dhoni said, "It was a fair decision but I am not sure if you are allowed to refer it (to the third umpire) or not."

Asked about Ravichandran Ashwin's omission from the playing eleven, Dhoni said, "Since we had three seamers we wanted to give Jadeja a go. At the same time we had other resources as well."

Pakistan skipper Mohammad Hafeez said the team played according to a plan and targeted India's part-time spinners -- Yuvraj Singh and Ravindra Jadeja -- who are not world-class bowlers.

"I know they are in good form, but they are not world-class spinners. And hence we planned to dominate them after seeing off pacers early on," Hafeez said.

Hafeez said after Pakistan lost three early wickets and were struggling at 12 for three in three overs, he and Shoaib Malik decided to play off Bhuvneshwar Kumar and other Indian pacers.

"Malik showed great character and we built a partnership," he said. Hafeez had words of praise for debutant Bhuvneshwar, who had figures of three for nine in four overs.

"He bowled very well. He was swinging the ball nicely," he said. Hafeez said his players showed a lot of character on the field, especially bowlers who restricted India beyond his expectations.

"Mohammad Irfan was our surprise package. I think he started off like one. Along with him, Sohail Tanvir also bowled well in right areas. Umar Gul also came off good in middle overs," he said.

SA take series

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Africa to overcome a poor start.

Captain Francois du Plessis opened the batting with Davids but was out for one in the second over, to be followed by Quinton de Kock in the fifth over.

But Davids and the recalled Justin Ontong revived the innings with a third wicket stand of 89 off 61 balls before Ontong was caught at cover for 48 off 30 balls.

SCORES IN BRIEF
SOUTH AFRICA: 179 for 6 (Davids 68, Ontong 48, Miller 28, Behardien 22; McClenaghan 2-24, Bracewell 2-35)
NEW ZEALAND: 146 for 9 (Guptill 24, B McCullum 25, Franklin 16, N McCullum 17, Bracewell 15 not out; McLaren 3-25, Phangiso 3-25)

Result: South Africa won by 33 runs and clinched 3-match series 2-1.
Player-of-the-match: Henry Davids.

Brad extends Spurs deal

AFP, London

Veteran American goalkeeper Brad Friedel has extended his contract with Tottenham Hotspur until 2014, the Premier League club announced on Wednesday.

At 41, Friedel is the oldest player in the Premier League and he is also the only man in the history of the division to start 300 consecutive matches.

He started the season as the first-choice goalkeeper at White Hart Lane but has since lost his place in the side to close-season signing Hugo Lloris, the France international.

Friedel, who has 82 international caps for the United States, has been playing in England since 1997, when he joined Liverpool.

He failed to make a name for himself at Anfield and joined Blackburn Rovers three years later, going on to make 300 appearances for the Ewood Park club.

Aston Villa acquired his services in a £2.5 million (\$4 million, 3.1 million euros) deal in 2008 and he spent three years there before joining Spurs in 2011.

Sk Russel's

FROM PAGE 16
charge of the club at the start of the season, will be praying that his side puts on an improved performance today or he might become an early casualty.

BCL starts amid high

FROM PAGE 16

The first twelve players involved in the match will receive Tk 40,000 per match -- double the amount that the players earn in the NCL -- while the non-playing members (5 players) will receive Tk 20,000. The 'player of the league', will receive Tk 1 lakh and the 'Player of the match' will be given Tk 25,000.

The points system resembles that of the recently concluded NCL with six points for an outright win. A bonus point will be awarded to a team if it either wins a match by 10 wickets or by an innings.

Members of the board expect the competition to encourage the players to do well on the field. "We had told the players during the NCL, that out of the 160 odd players, a maximum of 80 players would play in this league and this can compel the players to compete. It will be more beneficial for the players financially as well," said Mahbubul.

The franchise-owners will largely be responsible for the team's management. They'll be paying the match fee of the players and will also have the sole authority with regard to the selection of their teams. "We provided the franchisees with statistics of the players and details about their performances, they selected the team. And those franchisees who wanted our help we provided them with that," said Rahman. The players were selected from a pool of 90 provided by the national selection committee led by Akram Khan. Each team is allowed to field two foreign players.

Meanwhile Rangpur's all-rounder Alauddin Babu, who had a good run in the recently concluded NCL, and Chittagong batsman Nazimuddin, who played in Bangladesh's first Test against the West Indies in November, were excluded from the selection process as penalty for not participating in the Victory Day match on December 16, informed Akram Khan.

Cycling meet ends

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-- national meet and club meet -- in a calendar year. Tariqul's female teammate Sonia Yasmin Ovi dominated the women's events winning four gold, two of which came in team events. Ovi yesterday won gold in Elimination Race after winning her first individual gold in 1000m Sprint on Tuesday. Ovi was also a member of the BJMC's winning squad in Olympic Sprint and 200m Team Trail Race.

Bangladesh Ansar and VDP finished behind BJMC in second position with four gold, eight silver and six bronze medals while Border Guard Bangladesh finished third with four gold and two silver medals.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

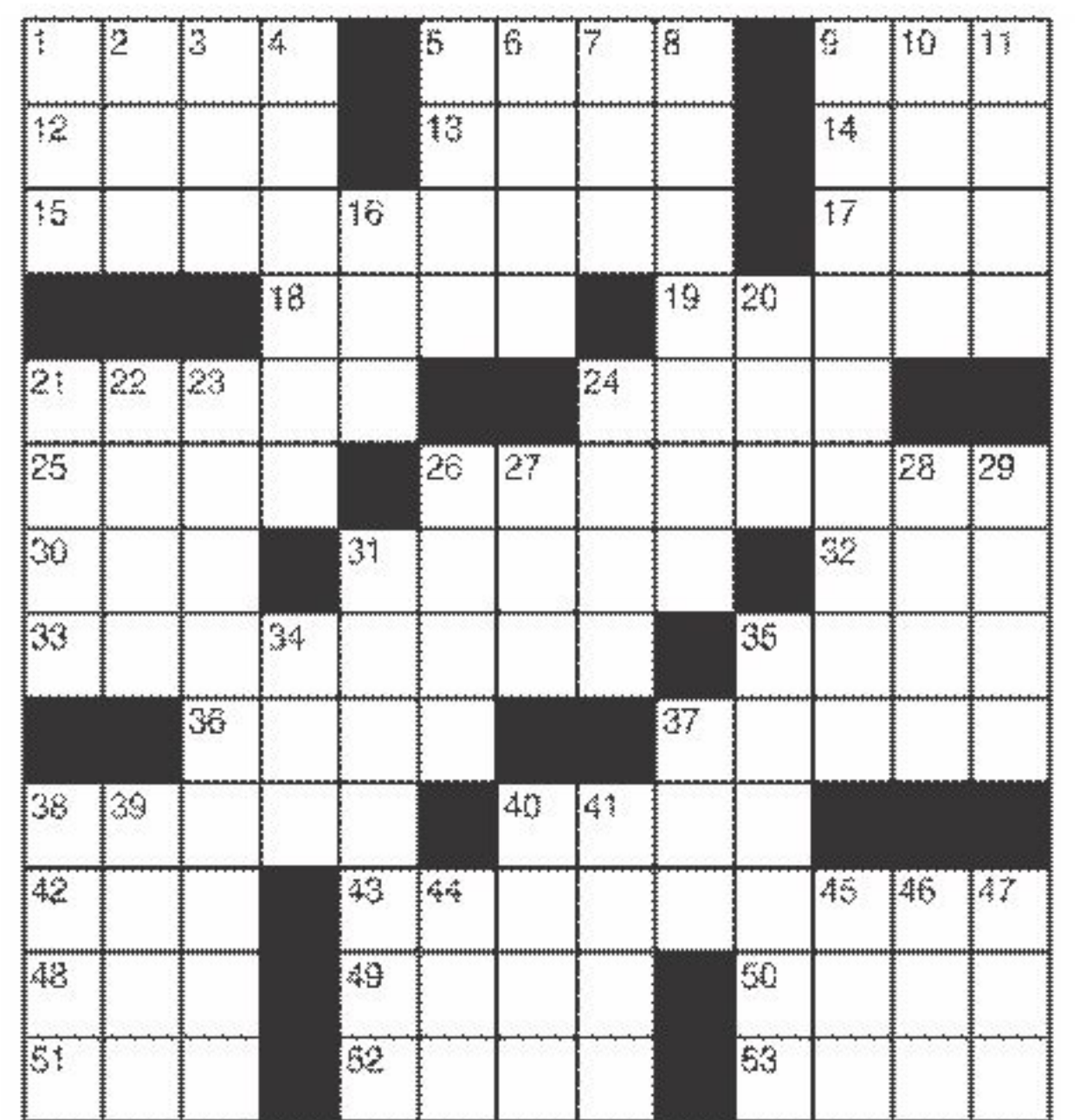
ACROSS 37 Skin-covered craft 38 Stimulant 40 One who's gonna get it? 42 Address for 33- Across 43 Extensive treat for 44 de Janeiro 45 Coup in bridge or baseball 46 Moreover 47 Release 48 Patchwork horse 49 "— Lang Syne" 50 Ticklish Muppet 51 Tyrannosaurus — 52 Wit-nesses

DOWN 1 Crone 2 Blunder 3 Meadow 4 Saute 5 Sit for a snapshot 6 Leer at 7 Historic treat 8 Tennessee city 9 Courtroom group 10 "— That a Shame" 11 Old foggy 12 Parched 13 Author Fleming 14 Fast-shrinking sea

22 PBS science show 23 International auto race 24 Expectorated 25 Tug 26 Yoko of music 27 Tug 28 21-Down's continent 29 Tug 30 Anti-riot chemical 31 Bee follower 32 Type of snake 33 Tease 34 Cold War abbr. 35 Toll road 36 Revolutionary War hero Nathan 37 Tackles' teammates 38 Regret 39 Bullring bravo 40 Actress Thurman 41 Scepter

Solution time: 21 mins.

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B A R N A C L E A R C O
C H A R C O A L V I N E
A M T I M A G E S
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CRYPTOQUIP

F O P D W J Q G K U W D H G D
K P T P W C H H G A P Q O L D Z Q O W Q ` H
H P I K P Q , L L A W Z L D P B G X J G X C U
J W C C L Q W Q P U Z L T P W F W B .

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: FOLK SONG ABOUT THIS VISIONARY MAN WHO IS KNOWN FOR BEING VERY OBEDIENT: "DUTIFUL DREAMER."
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Q equals T