



Centurions Murali Vijay and Cheteshwar Pujara leave the field at the tea break on the second day of the second Test against Australia in Hyderabad yesterday.

PHOTO: INTERNET

India assume full control

Pujara, Vijay form record partnership

Cricket

PTI, Hyderabad

Opener Murali Vijay and Cheteshwar Pujara decimated the Australian attack with scintillating centuries as India took complete control of the second Test on Sunday.

Pujara (162 batting) notched up his fourth Test hundred and Vijay (129 batting) scored his second ton as the record second-wicket partnership of 294 runs took India to a comfortable 311 for one, at close on second day.

The duo eclipsed the stand of 224 against Australia, set by Sunil Gavaskar and Mohinder Amarnath in 1986 at Sydney.

Having already secured a lead of 74 runs, India would target a huge one, which would take batteing fourth on this track out of equation.

India scored only 49 runs in the 27 overs bowled during the opening session but the two Indian batsmen came out with a far more positive approach as they smashed 257 runs in the next two sessions.

If the first session was about consolidation, the next two sessions were about attacking the bowlers. Both Pujara and Vijay hit a flurry of boundaries with Aussie bowlers suddenly dishing out pedestrian stuff from the disciplined and accurate bowling during the first session.

Once they went off the boil, there was no looking back for the Indians. As the day pro-

SCOREBOARD

AUSTRALIA: First innings 237 for 9 declared (Clarke 91, Wade 62, Watson 23, Hughes 19; Jadeja 3-33, Kumar 3-53, Harbhajan 2-52)

INDIA: First innings (overnight 5-0)

Vijay not out 129

Sehwag c Wade b Siddle 6

Pujara not out 162

Extras: (b-1, lb-11, w-2) 14

Total: (For 1 wkt in 93 overs) 311

To bat: Tendulkar, Kohli, Jadeja, Dhoni, Ashwin, Harbhajan, Kumar, Sharma

Fall of wicket: 1-17

Bowler O M R W

Pattinson 18 7 56 0

Siddle 19 5 51 1

Henriques 19 7 38 0

Doherty 26 7 85 0

Maxwell 10 1 55 0

gressed, Australian bowlers were sent into an absolute leatherhurt.

Vijay struck 17 boundaries and two sixes in 288 balls. Pujara hit 25 boundaries and also hooked Peter Siddle for a six to bring up his 150 having faced 251 balls in the process.

The Saurashtra lad stood tall and square as he cut the rising deliveries outside the off-stump with a lot of ferocity and it was a delightful sight.

When Henriques dug one short, he was in perfect position to play the pull-shot.

Although both adhered to the tried and tested theory of giving the first session to the bowlers, Pujara looked much more composed and assured in comparison to Vijay's safety first approach.

May be it has got a lot to do with Pujara being in good form and is slowly and surely making Rahul Dravid's batting slot his own while the talented Vijay knows only too well that chances may dry up in near future.

The manner in which Vijay concentrated was impressive as he curbed his natural instinct of going for flashy strokes till the time he was set.

In the final session, while both started on 73, Pujara suddenly raced ahead as he hit five boundaries in quick time to reach 90's. A late cut for a couple of runs off Glenn Maxwell brought up his fourth Test hundred in 188 balls.

Vijay reached his second Test ton in 245 balls and the relief was palpable on his face as his celebration was far more emotional than the muted one by Pujara.

Shakib

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return flight for Wednesday," he added.

Shakib, who went to Australia in mid-February, was operated on for exertional compartmental syndrome, which is one of the three problems with which he was diagnosed by the board's physicians last month.

The syndrome, according to the board's physio, was caused due to an excessive amount of pressure on his right leg. In order to correct the other two problems -- tenoperiostitis and stress reaction -- the player will have to go through measures such as physiotherapy, rehabilitation and biomechanical correction.

However, sources close to the Gunners' board told Britain's PA domestic news agency that there had been no approach -- informal or otherwise -- to the US owner Stan Kroenke, who has no intention of selling his controlling stake and remains "in it for the long term".

Kroenke pushed through his £430 million-plus takeover in April 2011, and now holds 66.83 percent of the club, giving him overall control.

Gunners in dark over takeover

AFP, London

Arsenal have had no contact over a potential takeover, sources told the Press Association on Sunday, amid reports of a looming record bid by a Gulf consortium.

Reports in British newspapers suggested that an investment group backed by funds from Qatar and the United Arab Emirates were preparing a £1.5 billion (\$2.25 billion, 1.75 billion euro) bid for the English Premier League club.

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Sanath at ease amid

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but Jayasuriya has confidence in the young guys. "You can't match Murali with any other bowler but we have some young talents. I have no prediction about the series but I hope young players will take the challenge and work hard," said the former Lankan skipper.

There had been rumours about the fate of senior players after Jayasuriya's ascension to the chief selector's role, but he has his own principles about playing the role of selector.

"Broadmindedness is very important when you play this role. You don't think against any particular player. We should not mix politics and cricket and you have to be right and straight in your approach," he asserted.

When asked about which of his two avatars -- as a member of parliament and as chairman of the selection panel -- he prefers, he said: "I got a different label after joining politics. Both cricket and politics is tough. I'm new in the game of politics but I am enjoying it. I am enjoying all the roles and I think every role is challenging but definitely I like to be known as Sanath Jayasuriya."

The cricketing hero dreams of making a positive impact on the development of his country as a politician, and specifically to contribute to the development of his hometown. He was a people's hero as a cricketer, but in politics people are always divided. Jayasuriya however is aware of the fact and accepts it sportingly.

concerned about the runs they gave away.

Ashan Priyanjan, who made 83, and Vithanage played the biggest role to post a sizeable total by adding 159 for the fifth wicket.

The batting of Vithanage, who is considered one of the island's most promising cricketers, was rich entertainment for the local crowd who were hosting an international team after a long break.

Now the tourists must also make sure that they make maximum use of a good batting track to get the confidence before the start of the first Test on Friday at Galle.

Skipper

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Mushfiqur and spinners Shohag Gazi and Mahmudullah Riyad, and it was learnt that the two spinners' bowling actions had come under the suspicion of the two on-field umpires.

It was learnt that the match referee told the Bangladesh team management that the quicker deliveries of the two spinners are suspect. No one from the Bangladesh team management offered an official comment on the issue and was neither willing to pay any heed to the issue, believing that it's just a ploy to demoralise the team.

Novak wins back his Dubai title

AFP, Dubai

Novak Djokovic won his fifth title in six tournaments and extended an unbeaten run to 18 matches as he clinched a fourth Dubai Open title with a 7-5, 6-3 win over Tomas Berdych on Saturday.

The world number one from Serbia underlined his pre-eminence in the world game with an athletically aggressive performance against the world number six from the Czech Republic, who knocked out Roger Federer, the titleholder, in the semifinals.

Berdych had chances to take control of the first set after making the first break of serve, but missed three chances to consolidate it, and also narrowly failed to convert three crucial break points in the following game.

These moments suggested that the biggest difference between the two men is a mental one, something indicated again near the end when Djokovic coped with a time violation warning from the umpire as he was serving for the match.

Djokovic was clearly delighted to triumph in his first tournament since successfully defending the Australian Open title five weeks ago.

Swadhin Bangla

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a son and a host of well-wishers. He was laid to rest at the Mutual Graveyard after his namaj-e-janaza was held with state honours.

Sonali Otit Club, Bangladesh Football Federation, Bangladesh Sports Journalists Association, Bangladesh Sports Press Association, Sammilito Krira Paribar expressed their condolence at the death of former footballer and freedom fighter and conveyed their deepest sympathy to the family of the deceased.

Crisis

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team selection was due to be made over the weekend. Players were not immediately available for comment.

The players had insisted that they need a 25 percent share of all payments made by the International Cricket Council as guarantee money for tournaments, as well as a business-class ticket for a spouse to travel on tour.

Hafeez T20 hero

Cricket

AFP, Centurion

Mohammad Hafeez put a poor Test series behind him to lead Pakistan to a crushing 95-run win in the second and final Twenty20 International against South Africa at SuperSport Park here on Sunday.

Hafeez hammered 86 and took three wickets for 25 runs, while fast bowler Umar Gul took five for six as South Africa collapsed to 100 all out in reply to Pakistan's 195 for seven in what was effectively a series decider after the first match in Durban was washed out.

Appointed Pakistan's captain in the shortest form of the game, Hafeez thrashed four sixes and nine fours off 50 balls and when he reached 73 became the first Pakistani to reach 1,000 runs in the shortest format of the game.

His innings was in dramatic contrast to his struggles in a three-match Test series which ended last week, in which he could score only 43 runs in six innings at an average of 7.16.

A second wicket partnership of 83 off 48 balls with Ahmed Shehzad (46) set

Pakistan on target for a massive total but the innings lost momentum when Hafeez was out off the third ball of the 17th over, with the total on 170.

Hafeez slipped as he stepped back in his crease to hit Rory Kleinveldt to the cover boundary and he dislodged his bats.

South Africa made a flying start, with AB de Villiers batting audaciously as the home side reached 48 for one in four overs.

But Gul then took four wickets in six balls, spread across two overs, as the match swung irrevocably in Pakistan's favour.

In between, De Villiers was bowled by Mohammad Irfan for 36, made off 22 balls with two sixes and four fours.

SCORES IN BRIEF

PAKISTAN: 195 for 7 in 20 overs (Hafeez 86, Shehzad 46, Afridi 19 not out, Jamshed 13; Kleinveldt 2-27, Morris 2-35)

SOUTH AFRICA: 100 all out in 12.2 overs (De Villiers 36, Kleinveldt 22, Peterson 13; Gul 5-6, Hafeez 3-25)

Result: Pakistan won by 95 runs and clinched the two-match series 1-0.

Player-of-the-match: Mohammad Hafeez.

Simmons

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Dwayne (38 not out) benefited from a missed run out opportunity at the start of his innings to ensure that the early strikes of medium-fast bowler Chris Mpofu did not result in an upset win for the visitors.

"It was a clinical result because we did just what we wanted to do," said West Indies captain Darren Sammy, acknowledging that his team wanted to make a statement in their first home T20 match since lifting the world title last October in Sri Lanka.

Mpofu trapped Johnson Charles leg-before after the opener had taken five consecutive fours off fellow opening bowler Kyle Jarvis and then removed Darren Bravo without scoring to a miscued pull off a short ball.

Dwayne should have been run out shortly after but Zimbabwe captain Brendan Taylor failed to hold on to a return with the all-rounder short of his ground.

Earlier, Malcolm Waller fell one run short of a maiden T20 half-century and fast bowler Tino Best claimed three wickets to limit Zimbabwe.

SCORES IN BRIEF

ZIMBABWE: 130 for 8 in 20 overs (Ervine 34, Waller 49; Best 3-18, Narine 2-17, Dwayne 2-16)

WEST INDIES: 131 for 2 in 16.1 overs (Charles 26, Simmons 63 not out, Dwayne 38 not out; Mpofu 2-14)

Result: West Indies won by 8 wickets.

Nadal blows Ferrer away

Tennis

AFP, Acapulco

Rafael Nadal destroyed David Ferrer to win the Mexican Open on Saturday, losing just two games as he claimed his second title in three events since returning from a lengthy injury lay-off.

The former world number one, who has never lost to a fellow Spaniard in a final, kept his perfect record intact by routing reigning three-time champion Ferrer 6-0, 6-2 to win his 38th clay court title.

Since returning from a seven-month absence with a left knee injury in February, Nadal has won 12 of his 13 matches, finishing as runner-up in Vina del Mar, Chile, before triumphing in Sao Paulo last month.

"I have had some difficult months, especially during my time away from tennis. But I take with me fond memories of returning to Acapulco," said Nadal.



Rafael Nadal, wearing a sombrero, gestures to the crowd after winning the Mexico ATP Open in Acapulco on Saturday.

PHOTO: AFP

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

39 Title-holder's proof