

# SPORT



**LEAPING LION:** Australia spinner Nathan Lyon (C) dives to take a catch to dismiss England batsman Moeen Ali (2nd from R) on the third day of the second Ashes Test in Adelaide in yesterday.

## Aus on top, but England show fight

AFP, Adelaide

Australia wrestled with a seaming pink ball under the lights to build a 268-run lead with six wickets in hand over England in an engrossing second Ashes Test in Adelaide on Monday.

In testing batting conditions the Australians struggled against the moving ball in the final twilight session as England roared back after trailing by 215 runs in the first innings.

On a fast-moving third day, England were dismissed for 227 but the Australians found it difficult to score against the hooping ball under the lights.

At the close, Australia were 53 for four with Peter Handscomb on three and nightwatchman Nathan Lyon not out three.

The Australians lost the wickets of Cameron Bancroft (4) and Usman Khawaja (20) to James Anderson and a restrained David Warner (14) to Chris Woakes in the final session.

Skipper Steve Smith survived a desperately close leg before wicket review before he had scored off Anderson but was not so lucky when he missed out in another tight lbw review to Woakes for six.

Holdovers England were fighting to stay in the Test as Australia chased a potentially decisive 2-0 lead in the five-Test series after winning last week's Brisbane opener by 10 wickets.

Lyon and Mitchell Starc brought off spectacular catches as Australia had England under pressure in the first two sessions Monday.

Off-spinner Lyon pulled off a blinding one-handed catch to dismiss Moeen Ali off his own bowling in the second over after the first break.

Moeen chipped to the left of Lyon, who flung himself across the pitch in a split-second reaction to take the catch.

Lyon, nicknamed GOAT (Greatest Of All Time), again produced a sublime example of cricketing skill following his laser throw to run out James Vince in the first Brisbane Test.

Moeen had scored 25 off 57 balls in a 30-run stand with Jonny Bairstow.

Five overs later Bairstow was on his way for 21 after Starc juggled the return catch and finally accepted behind his back.

Stuart Broad and Anderson were dismissed shortly after the dinner break, both off Lyon, to end the England innings.

Lyon finished with four for 60 and took over from South Africa's Kagiso Rabada (54) as the leading wicket-taker in the world this year with 55, while paceman Mitchell Starc claimed three for 49.

Woakes and Craig Overton dug in to put on 66 for the eighth wicket before Woakes fell to a short-pitched Starc delivery spooning a catch back to the bowler for 36. Overton remained unbeaten on 41.

Australia grabbed four wickets in the first session, including key batsmen Joe Root and Alastair Cook.

Root shaped to drive Pat Cummins only to send a thick edge to Cameron Bancroft at third slip for just nine.

**SCORES IN BRIEF**  
**AUSTRALIA:** First innings 442 for 8 decl.  
**ENGLAND:** First innings 227 (Cook 37, Stoneman 18, Malan 19, Moeen 25, Bairstow 21, Woakes 36, Overton 41 not out; Starc 3-49, Cummins 2-47, Lyon 4-60)  
**AUSTRALIA:** Second innings 53 for 4 (Warner 14, Khawaja 20; Anderson 2-16, Woakes 2-13)

PHOTO: AFP

## Tamim asked to show cause

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) served a show-cause letter to Comilla Victorians captain Tamim Iqbal for his statement regarding the pitches at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur. According to sources, BCB took the step as they felt that being a contracted player Tamim was not supposed to make such a statement.

Rangpur Riders skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza also criticised the pitches but curiously the Bangladesh ODI skipper did not receive a letter from the board as the game's governing body considered Tamim's characterisation of the pitch as 'horrible' in the presentation ceremony was a code of conduct breach.

"I can assure you that the BPL governing council didn't serve anything to him [Tamim Iqbal] but if anything happened then it could only come from the board," said BPL governing council chairman Afzalur Rahman Sinha last night.

The spotlight fell on BCB chief curator Gamini Silva for all the wrong reasons due to the uneven bounce on the Mirpur surface after Rangpur Riders captain Mashrafe Bin

Mortaza and Tamim raised questions about the surfaces on Saturday, when teams were dismissed for totals of 97 and 106, and 67 the following day.

Although BPL governing council mem-

ber secretary IH Mallick expressed a different view on Sunday and put the onus on the batsmen for low-scoring matches, it was not enough to make the issue go away as Dhaka Dynamites batsman Mosaddek

Hossain also felt the need for better pitches. "I think the wicket should be better than what it is now because fans love to watch four and sixes in a T20 game. There is also the question of the batsmen's confidence. We played in Chittagong and you just see the difference between the wickets in Chittagong and Dhaka. I think we should be more caring about the pitches," said Mosaddek while talking to reporters yesterday at Mirpur.

When the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) resumes after a day's break today, there will not be much interest about the outcome of the matches over the next two days, except to see who plays against whom in the playoffs. Instead, the point of interest will be the nature of the pitches as the tournament enters its high-stakes phase.

Four teams -- Comilla Victorians, Dhaka Dynamites, Khulna Titans and Rangpur Riders -- have already confirmed their places in the last four and while Comilla will maintain their pole position regardless of what happens in the remaining league matches, the three other teams are yet to confirm if they will be playing the qualifier against Comilla or duking it out in the Eliminator.



While it cannot be said for certain what the topic of conversation was between Dhaka Dynamites skipper Shakib Al Hasan (R) and BCB's chief curator Gamini Silva yesterday, but it is a safe bet that the poor state of the Mirpur wicket came up. PHOTO: STAR

## Sharifullah's action reported

SPORTS REPORTER

Sylhet Sixers spinner Mohammad Sharifullah was the second bowler in the ongoing Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) to be reported for a suspect bowling action after pacer Al-Amin Hossain.

Sharifullah's action came under scrutiny during the match against Chittagong Vikings on Sunday at Mirpur. Sharifullah was also one of five bowlers deemed suspect by the Bangladesh Cricket Board's bowling action review committee in the 2016 Dhaka Premier League.

He will now have 14 days to respond to the BCB's bowling action review committee, but can continue to bowl until then.

"Sharifullah was reported and his bowling action will be reviewed after 14 days," said Jalal Yunus, the BPL technical committee head yesterday.

## Hales cleared

REUTERS, London

England batsman Alex Hales will not face criminal charges over an incident in Bristol in September and is available for national team selection, the England and Wales Cricket Board said on Monday.

The 28-year-old opening batsman was with all-rounder Ben Stokes, who was arrested on suspicion of causing actual bodily harm during an altercation outside a nightclub.

The pair were suspended from international cricket until further notice.

"The ECB has convened via conference call to make the decision after being informed that Hales is deemed a witness and will face no charges," the ECB said.

## Windies crash to innings defeat

AFP, Wellington

Fortune favoured New Zealand, according to captain Kane Williamson after they cleaned up the first Test against the West Indies by an innings and 67 runs on day four in Wellington on Monday.

The West Indies collapsed spectacularly in their second innings to be all out for 319.

After a strong start, when they reached 231 for two, they lost their last eight wickets for 88 runs as they chased a monumental 386 to make New Zealand bat again.

But the real damage was done when Williamson won the toss and made the West Indies bat first on a green surface.

They were rolled for 134 and as the pitch flattened out New Zealand took charge with a monumental 520 for nine declared.

"I thought in the first innings we were fairly fortunate as well as bowling very well in exploiting the bounce in the surface," Williamson said.

"So we knew in the second innings, when the wicket became a little flatter, it was going to be a tough job to bowl them out.

"I thought the bowlers were exceptional to change their type of thought to play the long game, be patient with the way they operated and we saw the rewards in the second session today."

After resuming Monday at 214 for two, needing a further 172 runs to make New Zealand bat again, the West Indies innings unravelled when Kraigg Brathwaite went for 91.

It was the first of three wickets before lunch and the last five fell for just 33 runs in nine overs after the interval.

But captain Jason Holder rejected suggestions they had caved in, saying the plan was to play positively.

"We said there's two days left in the game and we had to knock off the deficit and the only way to do that was staying positive. I don't think anyone was reckless at any stage," he said.

**SCORES IN BRIEF**  
**WEST INDIES:** First innings 134  
**NEW ZEALAND:** First innings 520 for 9 decl.  
**WEST INDIES:** Second innings 319 (Brathwaite 91, Powell 40, Hetmyer 66, Hope 37; Boult 2-87, Henry 3-57, De Grandhomme 2-40, Wagner 2-102)  
**Result:** New Zealand won by an innings and 67 runs.  
**Player-of-the-match:** Neil Wagner.

## Mathews, Chandimal endure in Delhi smog

AFP, New Delhi

Angelo Mathews expressed helplessness over the worsening pollution levels after his defiant century lifted Sri Lanka on a smoggy day three of the third Test against India in New Delhi on Monday.

Mathews (111) shared a 181-run fourth-wicket stand with skipper Dinesh Chandimal, who was batting on 147 when bad light stopped play at the Feroz Shah Kotla ground.

But the hard work by the Sri Lankan batsmen was undone somewhat as the Indian bowlers struck back to claim six wickets, with spinner Ravichandran Ashwin picking up three of them.

The visitors were 356 for nine at close of play, still trailing India by 180 in their first innings with just one wicket in hand.

The islanders had resumed the day on 131-3 in choking smog that has made international headlines.

Mathews and Chandimal braved the toxic air for about three sessions after getting together on a dramatic Sunday when Sri Lankan players wearing face masks halted play for about 20 minutes, complaining of the pollution.

"It is pretty much the same (from Sunday). Or a bit worse probably. You have got to deal with what you have for the next two days," Mathews told reporters.

"It is up to the match referee and umpires to take the decision (on pollution). We are here to play cricket and we want to get out to the park," he added.

Mathews, who survived three dropped catches, ended his two-year cricket drought with a boundary off paceman Ishant Sharma. His last century, at Galle, had also come

against India.

The former captain played positive cricket during his 268-ball stay that was laced with 11 fours and two sixes. He fell to Ashwin's off-spin a little before the tea break.

"Pressure is there all the time. We have to work extremely hard for runs. You don't get many loose balls," said Mathews.

Sadeera Samarawickrama, who came down the order after taking a blow on his helmet on day one, put up some resistance with a 33-run knock before being caught

behind off Ishant Sharma.

But Ashwin, who ended with 3-90, combined with the fast bowlers to tear into the Sri Lankan lower order in the final session, sending back debutant Roshan Silva and Niroshan Dickwella for zero.

**SCORES IN BRIEF**  
**INDIA:** First innings 536 for 7 decl.  
**SRI LANKA:** First innings 356 for 9 (Perera 42, Samarawickrama 33; Shami 2-74, Sharma 2-93, Jadeja 2-85, Ashwin 3-90)



Sri Lanka captain Dinesh Chandimal (L) and batsman Angelo Mathews, who scored centuries, run between the wickets during the third day of the third Test against India in New Delhi yesterday. PHOTO: AFP