



On a day that totally belonged to hosts Sri Lanka, Bangladesh wicketkeeper-batter Litton Das had one thing to celebrate as he surpassed veteran Mushfiqur Rahim for most dismissals with the gloves as a Bangladeshi yesterday. Having drawn level with Mushfiqur's tally of 113 dismissals during the first Test last week, Litton moved ahead by taking a simple catch behind the stumps to dismiss Dinesh Chandimal in the final session. The dismissal marked his 114th overall -- comprising 99 catches and 15 stumpings. Litton achieved the feat in just his 65th innings, whereas Mushfiqur had taken 97 innings to reach his total.



SCORES IN BRIEF

Bangladesh first innings:
247 all out in 79.3 overs
(Shadman 46, Taijul 33;
Dinusha 3-22, Asitha 3-51)

Sri Lanka first innings:
290 for two in 78 overs
(Nissanka 146 not out,
Chandimal 93, Udara 40; Taijul
1-90, Nayeem 1-45)

Sri Lanka lead by 43 runs

Bangladesh veteran Mushfiqur Rahim and Sri Lanka opener Pathum Nissanka wear broad smiles as they walk out of the ground at the end of the second day's play in their second and final Test at the Sinhalese Sports Club Ground in Colombo yesterday. The picture, however, reflects half-truth about yesterday's proceedings as hosts Sri Lanka dominated throughout, with Nissanka notching his fourth Test ton. Nissanka remained unbeaten on 146 with nightwatchman Prabath Jayasuriya on 5 not out as Sri Lanka reached 290 for two in their first innings, leading by 43 runs.

PHOTO: AFP

BCB marks milestone with 'limitations'

SPORTS REPORTER

Marking the 25th anniversary of earning Test status, Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) staged a celebratory event at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Most members of the inaugural Test squad attended the occasion. However, the absence of some key figures made the celebration feel somewhat underwhelming.

Notably, former BCB president Saber Hossain Chowdhury and ex-general secretary Syed Ashraful Haque -- instrumental in initiating Bangladesh's Test status campaign -- were neither mentioned during the two-hour programme nor invited to the event.

Meanwhile, former Test captain Naimur Rahman Durjoy, despite receiving an invitation, was unable to attend. Moreover, former players Akram Khan and Khaled Mashud Pilot were also missing due to personal commitments abroad.

The event began with a speech from the board president Aminul Islam Bulbul, who announced a decentralisation initiative to strengthen grassroots cricket.

"Today, on the occasion of our 25 years in Test cricket, I want to declare that we have selected four regions to form four mini BCBs," Bulbul said during the ceremony.

"There will be a head of cricket in each of the four regions, monitoring everything in their respective regions. We are thinking of holding premier league matches, coaching development



programmes, and introducing a funding model so that they don't need to depend on Mirpur every time," he further informed.

Meanwhile, chief guest and Youth and Sports advisor Asif Mahmud Sajib Bhuiyan pledged support, announcing plans to install synthetic pitches in 100 schools across the country through BCB.

The board honoured the inaugural Test cricketers -- who will mark the silver jubilee of their maiden Test this November -- with commemorative blazers, as the players shared memories while signing a ceremonial jersey on stage.

"I'm feeling so great to meet all those players with whom I played the inaugural Test 25 years ago. I hope to see similar programmes continue in the coming years as well," left-arm spin maestro Mohammad Rafique said in his speech.

A Test players' honours board was unveiled following the formalities. The evening concluded with a cake-cutting and group photo session.

Ultimately, while it is commendable to honour the legacy of the frontliners, the contributions of those who laid the foundational groundwork 25 years ago should ideally not have been overlooked.

BCB boss Bulbul, who assumed leadership on May this year, justified the omissions. "The programme was arranged within a small capacity and we only targeted those who played [the inaugural Test]," he told reporters after the event.

"Their names are always in the core of our hearts. But such were the limitations."

From 'chapter over' to 'Al Nassr forever'

AFP, Riyadh

Cristiano Ronaldo inked a two-year extension with Saudi Arabia's Al Nassr, the club announced Thursday, following months of speculation over which team he would sign for next season.

"Cristiano Ronaldo is staying at @AlNassrFC until 2027," the club wrote in a post on X.

Minutes before the official confirmation, the team posted a teaser video, with the 40-year-old Ronaldo walking along a beachfront and saying: "Al Nassr forever".

Ronaldo later posted a message on his Instagram, confirming the extension.

"A new chapter begins. Same passion, same dream. Let's make history together," read the post.

The Portuguese superstar arrived in 2023 in the kingdom to play with the club, heralding a rush of players in the latter stages of their careers to the oil-rich country.

Last month, Ronaldo posted "This chapter is over" hours after the Saudi Pro League wrapped up with Al Nassr finishing third and trophyless once again.

Although Ronaldo was the Pro League's top scorer with 25 goals, he has been unable to win a Saudi or continental trophy with Al Nassr, who lost in the Asian Champions League semifinals last month.



Lankans provide lessons for Bangladesh

ASHEFAQ-UL-ALAM

Bangladesh captain Najmul Hossain Shanto was left scratching his head throughout the day -- figuratively, for ideas, and literally, out of frustration -- as Sri Lanka bolstered their control over the Colombo Test, thanks to Pathum Nissanka and Co on the second day of the second and final Test yesterday.

Off-spinner Taijul Islam put in a 32-over shift, keeping things tight on one end only to see pressure getting released from the other, as Bangladesh were unsuccessful in breaking the resolve of Nissanka, whose unbeaten 146 catapulted the hosts to 290-2 and ended the day with a 43-run lead.

The pitch that had shown signs of life on Day 1 looked completely docile yesterday once the Sri Lankan innings began.

But more than the pitch actually settling down and improving for batting, it was the controlled aggression of the Sri Lankan batters and inconsistent bowling from the visitors that made it seem that way.

Taijul, who earlier in the day pushed the team's total to 247 with a 33-run knock, delivered 41 percent of the total deliveries Bangladesh bowled on the day, conceding 90 runs at an economy rate of 2.81 and claiming one wicket.

The rest of the five bowlers banded together for the remaining 46 overs, which went for 200 runs at 4.35 runs per over.

Openers Nissanka and Lahiru Udana set the tone of the innings with the opening stand, as they pounced on every bad delivery from the Bangladesh pacers and brought up the team 50 in just 53 balls.

Taijul broke the opening stand on 88, trapping Udana lbw for 40, but that didn't alter the momentum at all as Nissanka and the experienced Dinesh

Had the Lankan batters not played their shots and instead scored at the same rate as Bangladesh had done in the first innings, 3.10, they would have ended the day still trailing Bangladesh by five runs.

Chandimal maintained the same tempo in a mammoth 194-run second wicket stand.

Chandimal missed out on a hundred, getting caught off Nayeem Hasan late in the day, but the damage had already been done for Bangladesh.

Overall, Sri Lanka scored at a run-rate of 3.71, almost identical to their run-rate in the first innings of the previous Test in Galle, which was 3.69.

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But Sri Lanka remained consistent with their batting approach as Nissanka and the others took the game by the scruff of the neck with their proactive batting.

The positive intent shown by Sri Lanka is not an anomaly, as teams currently are progressively scoring at a higher rate in red-ball cricket, with the game in general shifting towards a more result-oriented approach.

Bangladesh showed no real intent to push for a win in the earlier Test, scoring at a run-rate of 3.27 in the second innings, and as a result, a three-hour rain interruption on the final day did not leave them with enough time to take 10 wickets in the second innings and the match ended in a draw.

But even if rain plays spoilsport in the following three days, Sri Lanka are now well-positioned to earn a sizeable lead and test Bangladesh in their second innings.

Favourable conditions coupled with the correct approach have placed Sri Lanka in a position of strength in Colombo, and along the way, they have also imparted a lesson for Bangladesh on what the batting approach should be in these conditions.

IT'S ALL YELLOW

Brazilian clubs bridge the Europe-South America gap

KHALID HOSSAIN

For decades, the FIFA Club World Cup has been viewed largely as a European procession; a stage where the continent's financial and sporting powerhouses have reigned supreme. The 2025 edition seemed destined to follow that script. Yet, as the tournament unfolds on American soil, Brazilian clubs have dramatically rewritten the narrative.

Flamengo, Palmeiras, Botafogo, and Fluminense have emerged as the tournament's surprise protagonists, defying expectations and the prevailing assumption of European dominance.

Together, they've lost just once in 12 group-stage matches.

Flamengo's emphatic 3-1 win over Chelsea in Philadelphia, powered by a sea of black and red fans, sent a clear message. Botafogo stunned the tournament with a 1-0 upset over Champions League holders Paris Saint-Germain, while Palmeiras dominated their group with strong performances. Meanwhile, Fluminense's resilient 0-0 draw against Mamelodi Sundowns in Miami yesterday secured their place as group runners-up.

"It's not a surprise to us. We know



our level," said Fluminense midfielder Nonato. "But now we get to show the world."

This resurgence is the result of a perfect storm of timing, tactical evolution, and sheer determination. European sides arrived drained from exhausting seasons, struggling to adapt to the humid American summer. Brazilian clubs, by contrast, are in peak season rhythm and have taken full advantage.

Across stadiums in New York, Los Angeles, and Miami, Brazilian fans have transformed these arenas into carnival grounds.

"The synergy between the team and fans is unbelievable," added Nonato, whose team will face a daunting test

against Italian giants Inter Milan -- runners-up in last season's Champions League -- in a clash that could define the tournament's new balance of power.

Even European coaches acknowledge the challenge. "Nearly every game for a European team is like an away game," said Bayern Munich head coach Vincent Kompany.

No team embodies this renaissance better than Botafogo. Just four years ago, they battled in Brazil's second division; and tomorrow, they prepare to face Palmeiras in the Round of 16, guaranteeing a Brazilian quarterfinalist.

With a heritage rich in legends like Garrincha, Didi, and Jairzinho, Botafogo's rise feels like a revival of Brazil's golden past.

Perhaps most importantly, this club-level surge offers hope for their national team, record five-time world champions.

The Selecao Canarinho ("Canary Squad", after their bright yellow jersey) have not lifted the World Cup since 2002 and have struggled to produce a unified core of stars. But with Carlo Ancelotti now guiding the national side, and forwards like Raphinha and Antony finding form, the winds of change may be blowing strong.



Bangladesh kicked off their training session yesterday morning at Training Field 1 in Yangon, ahead of their AFC Women's Asian Cup Qualifiers opener against Bahrain on Sunday. Ranked 128th, Bangladesh face a daunting challenge in a group that includes hosts Myanmar (55th), Bahrain (92nd) and Turkmenistan (141st), but expectations have recently escalated following spirited performances against stronger teams like Jordan and Indonesia.

PHOTO: BFF