

Murtagh's sensational five-for rips England apart

Ireland takes a 122-run first innings lead on the opening day after bundling out the host for 85

LORD'S TEST

IANS
LONDON

Ireland ended England's World Cup honeymoon in dramatic style on Wednesday, bowling out the host nation for a derisory 85 on the first day at Lord's as it eyed one of the biggest shocks in Test history.

Tim Murtagh took a stunning five for 13 in nine overs on a ground where he plays for Middlesex.

Ireland then consolidated its position by making 207 in reply for a first-innings lead of 122 with Andy Balbirnie top-scoring with 55.

Ten days after England won the World Cup at the same ground against New Zealand and a week ahead of the Ashes, Ireland exposed their batting fragility in brutal fashion.

Just three England batsmen made it into double figures – Joe Denly, who top-scored with 23, debutant Oly Stone and Sam Curran – in an innings that was over inside 24 overs on a baking day in London.

It was the fourth time in 34 Tests that England had lost all 10 wickets in a session – a worrying sign ahead of the five-Test series against Australia.

Classic demonstration

The 37-year-old seamer, who recently took his 800th First Class wicket, gave a classic



Wrecker-in-chief: Tim Murtagh exults after knocking back the stumps to dismiss Jonny Bairstow. ■ STU FORSTER/GETTY IMAGES

demonstration of his skill after England captain Joe Root won the toss and batted on an emerald green pitch prepared by Irish groundsman Karl McDermott.

"I'm not quite sure what's happened in the last two hours," an elated Murtagh said during the lunch interval.

"It's a dream just to play here in the first place. But to

get on the honours board... It's a fantastic first session for us."

England's collapse followed its 77 all out against the West Indies in Barbados in January.

Deep trouble

The home side was soon in deep trouble despite Root's insistence that they did not

want to "sleepwalk" into this

match, with bigger challenges ahead.

Test debutant Jason Roy, fresh from his World Cup heroics, fell for five when Murtagh, short of express pace but remorselessly attacking the top of off-stump, squared him up, with first slip Paul Stirling holding the ensuing edge.

Debutant Mark Adair (three for 32) had his first

Test wicket when Denly was leg before wicket and he also captured the prize wicket of Root, plumb lbw for two.

When Jonny Bairstow was bowled for a duck off an inside edge by Murtagh, England was 42 for five.

On the honours board

And when Murtagh had Moeen Ali caught behind for a duck, the seamer had a

SCOREBOARD

England – 1st innings: R. Burns c Wilson b Murtagh 6, J. Roy c Stirling b Murtagh 5, J. Denly lbw b Adair 23, J. Root lbw b Adair 2, J. Bairstow b Murtagh 0, Moeen c Wilson b Murtagh 0, C. Woakes lbw b Murtagh 0, S. Curran c McCollum b Rankin 18, S. Broad c Wilson b Rankin 3, O. Stone b Adair 19, J. Leach (not out): 1; Extras (lb-5, nb-2, w-1): 8; Total (in 23.4 overs): 85.

Fall of wickets: 1-8, 2-36, 3-36, 4-42, 5-42, 6-42, 7-43, 8-58, 9-67.

Ireland bowling: Murtagh 9-2-13-5, Adair 7.4-1-32-3, Thompson 4-1-30-0, Rankin 3-1-5-2.

Ireland – 1st innings: W. Porterfield c Leach b Curran 14, J. McCollum b Curran 19, A. Balbirnie b Stone 55, P. Stirling lbw b Broad 36, K. O'Brien (not out) 28, G. Wilson c Root b Stone 0, S. Thompson b Broad 0, M. Adair b Curran 3, A. McBrine b Broad 11, T. Murtagh c Burns b Stone 16, B. Rankin b Moeen 7; Extras (b-10, lb-6, w-2): 18; Total (in 58.2 overs): 207.

Fall of wickets: 1-32, 2-45, 3-132, 4-138, 5-138, 6-141, 7-149, 8-174, 9-195.

England bowling: Broad 19-5-60-3, Woakes 10-2-34-0, Stone 12-3-29-3, Curran 10-3-28-3, Leach 3-0-26-0, Moeen 4.2-1-14-1.

England – 2nd innings: J. Leach (batting) 0, R. Burns (batting) 0; Total (for no loss in 1 over): 0.

Ireland bowling: Murtagh 1-1-0-0.

Toss: England.

CoA refers Raman's selection to Ombudsman

Process followed in appointing coach of the women's team under scrutiny

G. VISWANATH
MUMBAI

The Committee of Administrators (CoA) has recently referred former India player W.V. Raman's selection as coach of the Indian women's team to the BCCI Ombudsman Justice (Retd.) D.K. Jain. The CoA had resolved to approach the Ombudsman after its meeting in Delhi in April.

The process followed for Raman's selection last December divided the CoA members Vinod Rai and Diana Edulji with the latter calling it

"unconstitutional". Diana had contended that when the Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC) comprising Sachin Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly and V.V.S. Laxman was in place, there was no need to appoint an Ad-hoc Committee in Kapil Dev, Aunshuman Gaekwad and Shantha Rangaswamy. Representing the CAC, Laxman had told the CoA that they needed time and also their role to be put in black and white. But Rai went ahead and constituted the Ad-hoc Committee.

Queries raised

The questions that were asked then were: Whether the CoA had the authority to appoint an ad hoc committee, whether Raman, the batting coach at the NCA



W.V. Raman. ■ PHOTO: K. PICHUMANI

could have been asked to travel with the women's team to the West Indies and whether the three-member ad-hoc committee attracted the conflict of interest rule, being part of the steering committee for the formation of the Indian Cricketers Association.

The CoA – which now has three members now with the addition of Lt. Gen. (ret.) Ravi Thodde – would want Jain to give his opinion soon, because, it is keen to continue with the same panel to choose the head coach and other support staff of the men's team.

It appears that the BCCI GM, Operations, Saba Karim, has already spoken to the three former India players.

'Disappointed not to get picked'

Shubman Gill vows to keep performing

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

He was expecting an India recall after a stellar show in the 'A' series and even though Shubman Gill is disappointed by the snub for the West Indies tour, the youngster is not ready to "spend time thinking over it."

Gill, along with Manish Pandey and Shreyas Iyer, was tipped to make it to the limited overs squad but despite being adjudged 'Player of the Series' with 218 runs and three half-centuries, he was the one to miss out.

"I was waiting for the Indian senior team to be announced on Sunday and I expected to be selected for at least one of the squads. It was disappointing not to get picked but I am not going to spend time thinking over it. I'll keep scoring runs and performing to the best of my ability to impress the selec-



Shubman Gill. ■ FILE PHOTO: AKHILESH KUMAR

tors," Gill told 'CricketNext' website.

The Punjab youngster is pretty satisfied with his performance in the just-concluded A series which India won 4-1.

"It was a fantastic series for me and team as well since we won with a 4-1 mar-

gin. Personally, I would have liked to carry on and score at least a couple of hundreds in those fifties. But I will learn from this experience," said Gill, who has played two ODIs in New Zealand before the World Cup.

Having spoken to Rahul Dravid, the biggest takeaway for Gill from the limited overs series has been playing as per the demands of the conditions rather than depending on his natural flair.

Biggest lesson

"The biggest lesson that I have learned from my first West Indies tour is to try to curb my natural game depending on match condition.

"It's important to block the good balls as well and remain at the crease for as long as possible. Person who is set at the crease needs to bat through the difficult period," he said.

Bowlers put India-A ahead

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NORTH SOUND (ANTIGUA)

India-A seized momentum in the unofficial first Test against the West Indies-A with pacer Mohammed Siraj and spinner Shahbaz Nadeem reducing the host to 126 for five on the opening day, here on Wednesday.

After winning the ODI series 4-1, India-A extended its domination of the hosts after they opted to bat at Sir Vivian Richards Stadium.

Siraj sent back both the openers – Jeremy Solozano (9) and Montcin Hodge (16) – in a confident start for India while his pace colleague Shivam Dube saw the back of rival skipper Shamarh Brooks (12).

Brooks was caught by wicketkeeper Wriddhiman Saha, who is playing his first competitive match after a long injury lay-off.

Left-arm spinner Nadeem then swung into action to further tilt it in India's favour as he dented the middle order. Nadeem first dismissed



Shahbaz Nadeem. ■ FILE PHOTO: B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

Roston Chase (25), who was caught by Saha, and then clean bowled Jahmar Hamilton (16).

West Indies-A was reeling at 97 for five at that time but Rahkeem Cornwall (15 batting) and Jermaine Blackwood (29 batting) took the side past the 100-run mark without further damage. **The scores:** West Indies-A 126 for five in 40 overs. (J. Blackwood 29 batting, Roston Chase 25, Mohd. Siraj two for 43, S. Nadeem two for 37) vs India).

IANS
NEW DELHI

Former South Africa cricketer Jonty Rhodes has applied for the position of India's fielding coach after the BCCI invited application for the position of head coach and support staff for the Indian team.

Speaking to IANS, a senior BCCI functionary confirmed that Rhodes has applied for the position of fielding coach and while he hasn't

worked with any national team, he is eligible because he has coached Mumbai Indians for nine seasons.

"Yes, Rhodes has applied and while it is true that he hasn't coached any international team, he has been involved with Mumbai Indians for nine seasons and, as per the eligibility criteria, you need to have worked with an IPL team for three seasons if not an international team," the functionary said.



Jonty Rhodes. ■ FILE PHOTO: SUDHAKARA JAIN



Nuwan Kulasekara. ■ FILE PHOTO: AFP

Kulasekara calls it a day

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
COLOMBO

Sri Lankan seamer Nuwan Kulasekara has decided to call time on his international career, finishing as the third highest wicket-taker among his country's pace bowlers after Chaminda Vaas and Lasith Malinga.

The 37-year-old had 199 scalps in 184 ODIs while he

took 66 wickets in 58 T20 matches in a career spanning over 15 years. He also played 21 Tests, taking 48 wickets.

Kulasekara last represented Sri Lanka in an ODI against Zimbabwe in Hambantota in July 2017 and hasn't played any competitive match since March 2018.

Milak crushes Phelps' 10-year-old record

WORLD SWIMMING

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
GWANGJU (SOUTH KOREA)

Chinese giant Sun Yang suffered defeat on Wednesday after an emotional week in which he has clashed with rival swimmers over doping allegations, while Hungarian teenager Kristof Milak shattered Michael Phelps's 200m butterfly world record.

Triple Olympic champion Sun had already retained his 200 and 400m crown in Gwangju but he finished a distant sixth in the 800m final behind Italian Gregorio Paltrinieri, who claimed gold in seven minutes, 39.27 seconds from Norway's Henrik Christiansen.

A brutal schedule looked to have taken its toll on Sun, who has been involved in angry confrontations with Australian Mack Horton and Britain's Duncan Scott after they snubbed him at two different medal ceremonies in response to bombshell claims made in a FINA doping panel report.

The leaked document alleged that Sun destroyed blood samples after he was visited by testers last year.

After taking bronze behind Milak, South Africa's Chad le Clos weighed in as



Elated: Kristof Milak, who was in elementary school when Michael Phelps set the 200m butterfly record, celebrates. ■ QUINN ROONEY/GETTY IMAGES

the sample-smashing row rumbled on.

"They should all be banned for life, the guys that have cheated," he sniffed. "What Duncan did was fantastic."

Exhausted

"I was exhausted," winced the Chinese idol. "My legs and arms felt sore – the hardest part is juggling a tight schedule but I'll have to do that at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics."

An 11-time world champion, Sun accused Horton of "disrespecting China" by refusing to step onto the podium for the winner's national anthem after the 400m final

at the weekend.

And Sun, who has complained privately of being shunned by other athletes in Korea, went eyeball to eyeball with Scott after Tuesday's 200m medal presentation.

Meanwhile, Milak stormed to gold in the men's 200m fly, clocking a blistering 1:50.73 to obliterate Phelps's 10-year-old mark.

Unprecedented

Elsewhere, Italian Federica Pellegrini retained her 200m freestyle title in 1:54.22, while Britain's Adam Peaty completed an unprecedented hat-trick of world doubles in the 50 and 100m breast-

stroke as he romped to gold in the one-lap final in 26.06.

The results: Men: 800m freestyle: 1. Gregorio Paltrinieri (Ita) 7:39.27s, 2. Henrik Christiansen (Nor) 7:41.28, 3. David Aubry (Fra) 7:42.08.

200m butterfly: 1. Kristof Milak (Hun) 1:50.73 (WR, Old: 1:51.51, Michael Phelps, 2009), 2. Daiya Seto (Jpn) 1:53.86, 3. Chad le Clos (RSA) 1:54.15.

50m breaststroke: 1. Adam Peaty (GBR) 26.06, 2. Felipe Lima (Bra) 26.66, 3. Joao Gomes (Bra) 26.69.

Women: 200m freestyle: 1. Federica Pellegrini (Ita) 1:54.22, 2. Ariarne Titmus (Aus) 1:54.66, 3. Sarah Sjostrom (Swe) 1:54.78.

Mixed 4x100m medley relay: 1. Australia 3:39.08, 2. USA 3:39.10, 3. Great Britain 3:40.68.

PKL

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

Bengal Warriors scored a thumping, 48-17 win over UP Yoddha in the league phase of the Vivo ProKabaddi League Season-7 at Gachibowli Indoor Stadium here on Wednesday.

It was a remarkable performance by PKL debutant Mohammad Nabibakhsh, who overcame a false start when he was 'self-out' with his first raid, to cap a Super-10 from 11 raids. And, with captain Maninder Singh and K. Prapanjan joining the party, all the UP defence could do was watch hopelessly as the rivals picked points at will, especially in the second session.

For the losers, Monu Goyat was the main scorer with five points from 14 raids.

Steady start

Earlier, it was a slow and steady start by Bengal outfit which overcame an early deficit with UP Yodha actually leading 3-0 to start with.

Maninder, who was not as flamboyant as the other big names in his raids, was efficient with four points in the first half.

The Bengal defence, with Rinku Narwal and Baldev Si-



Remarkable: Debutant Mohammad Nabibakhsh, who overcame a false start when he was 'self-out' with his first raid, capped a Super-10 from 11 raids. ■ NAGARA GOPAL

ingh being exceptional, was equal to the task backing their raiders, though Jeeva Kumar's over-enthusiastic tackles saw him concede a couple of points.

First all-out

Just when it looked to be a close contest with the scores tied six-all at one stage in first-half, Bengal scored the first all-out of the game to widen the lead to 11-7 and soon Maninder scored two points including one bonus to further increase the lead to 13-8.

It was then Shrikant Jhadav's turn to slip and concede a 'self-out' to the disappoint-

ment of the UP camp. But on the other hand, K. Prapanjan of Bengal was good in raiding to pick a couple of points to help Bengal lead 17-9 at the break.

On resumption, Bengal went on the offensive, scoring 18 points in the first nine minutes which included the second all-out and also a super raid by Nabibakhsh fetching three points.

With Bengal scoring the fourth all-out with Nabibakhsh being the star performer and defender Baldev Singh finishing with seven points from eight tackles, including a High-five, UP was

nowhere in the game.

Dabang pips Titans

The Desai brothers – Siddharth and Suraj, with the latter scoring the highest points (18) for a debutant in the PKL history – came good for Telugu Titans but it was not enough as the team suffered its third straight defeat, losing to Delhi Dabang 33-34.

For the winner, raider Naveen Kumar scored 14 points from 20 raids.

The result: Bengal Warriors bt UP Yodha 48-17; Dabang Delhi bt Telugu Titans 34-33.

Thursday's match: Dabang Delhi vs Tamil Thalaivas, 7.30 p.m.

Evenly-matched teams promise close title-race

Dabang opens defence against Paltan; Focus remains firmly on home-grown talent



Time for a selfie! A. Sharath Kamal, Bernadette Szocs, Alvaro Robles, Harmeet Desai, Benedikt Duda and Manav Thakkar during a press conference in New Delhi on Wednesday. ■ SANDEEP SAXENA

UTT LEAGUE

RAKESH RAO
NEW DELHI

Rising cost and limited pay-off seems to have led to the formation of six refurbished franchisees – with lesser number of players – to battle it out in a shortened format of the cash-rich Ultimate Table Tennis (UTT) league, beginning at the Thyagaraj Stadium here on Wednesday.

Over the next 18 days, the teams vie for a prize-fund of ₹2 crore. The winner on August 11 will receive ₹75 lakh and the runner-up, ₹50 lakh.

Unlike the previous two seasons, the action will be limited to the Capital.

This is clearly to cut out the travelling expenses and other related costs involved in taking the league to different cities.

To limit the duration of each tie to around two

hours, the number of matches have been reduced – from seven last year to five this year – by cutting down two singles, one each for men and women.

In spite of all the pruning, the focus remains firmly on the home-grown talent, with each team comprising four Indians and two overseas players.

Each tie comprises two women's singles, two men's singles and a mixed doubles.

A player can feature in one singles and one doubles. The mixed doubles combination should have one Indian and one overseas player. Unlike last year, this edition will feature singles involving two Indians.

Well balanced

Since there was no players' auction and those in the fray were drafted into six teams, all teams appear well balanced.

The battlelines

Teams	Players	Coaches
Chennai Lions	A. Sharath Kamal, Tiago Apolonia (Prt), Madhurika Patkar, Petrisa Solja (Ger), Anirban Ghosh, Yashini Sivasankar	A. Muralidhara Rao, Peter Engel (Ger)
Dabang Delhi	G. Sathiyam, Jon Persson (Swe), Krittika Sinha Roy, Bernadette Szocs (Rou), Parth Virmani, Naina	Sachin Shetty, Vesna Ojstersek (Svn)
Puneri Paltan	Harmeet Desai, Chaung Chih-Yuan (Twn), Ayhika Mukherjee, Sabine Winter (Ger), Ronit Bhanja, Selena Selvakumar	Parag Agarwal, Francisco Santos (Prt)
RP-SG Mavericks	Sanil Shetty, Benedikt Duda (Ger), Manika Batra, Matilda Ekholm (Swe), Manush Shah, Prapti Sen	N. Ravichandran, Zoltan Batorfi (Hun)
Goa Challengers	A. Amalraj, Alvaro Robles (Esp), Archana Kamath, Cheng I-Ching (Twn), Siddhesh Pande, Shruti Amrute	Arup Basak, Bettine Vriesekoop (Ned)
U Mumba	Manav Thakkar, Kirill Gerassimenko (Kaz), Sutirtha Mukherjee, Doo Hoi Kem (HKG), Jeet Chandra, Moumita Dutta	Soumyadeep Roy, Jiaqi Zheng (USA)

Teams to vie for a prize-fund of ₹2 crore. The winner will receive ₹75 lakh and the runner-up, ₹50 lakh

Number of matches have been reduced – from seven last year to five this year. Two singles, one each for men and women, have been cut down

Each tie comprises two women's and two men's singles and a mixed doubles. A player can feature in one singles and one doubles. The mixed doubles combination should have one Indian and one overseas player

The action will be limited to New Delhi. This is clearly to cut out the travelling expenses and other related costs involved in taking the league to different cities

Defending champion Dabang Smashers is now Dabang Delhi. With spearhead G. Sathiyam in fine form, Romania's top-ranked woman Bernadette Szocs and Sweden's No. 3 Jon Persson in its fold, Dabang faces new entrant Puneri Paltan in the inaugural clash.

Newly-crowned Commonwealth champions Harmeet Desai and Ayhika Mukherjee, along with World No. 28 Chaung Chih Yuan (Chinese

Taipei) and World No. 62 among women, Sabine Winter (Germany), Paltan is capable of upsetting the calculations of other contenders.

Formidable

Sharath Kamal-led Chennai Lions, too, looks formidable. Portugal No. 2 Tiago Apolonia, Madhurika Patkar and Germany's top-ranked woman Petrisa Solja can all contribute to take the team to the title.

For Kolkata-based RP-SG Mavericks, Manika Batra and Germany No. 5 Benedikt Duda hold the key. Left-hander Sanil Shetty, who had a good 2017 UTT season, along with Sweden No. 1 woman player Matilda Ekholm make the team a serious title-aspirant.

Debutant U Mumba boasts of top ranked Kazakh Kirill Gerassimenko and Hong Kong's No. 1 woman player Doo Hoi Kem, besides Manav Thakkar and Sutirtha Mukherjee.

'Dark horse'

The proverbial 'dark horse' could well be Goa Challengers. Served by World No. 8 woman Cheng I-Ching (Chinese Taipei) and Spain's No. 1 Alvaro Robles, Goa can safely bank on A. Amalraj and Archana Kamath.

Since most teams are evenly matched, the race to the title promises to be close one.

Bopanna & Carreno Busta in quarterfinals

SPORTS BUREAU

HAMBURG
Rohan Bopanna and Pablo Carreno Busta of Spain beat former World No.1 Nenad Zimonjic of Serbia and Rudolf Molleker of Germany 6-3, 5-7, 10-3 in the doubles first round of the €1,855,490 ATP-500 tournament here on Wednesday.

The results: First round: €1,855,490 ATP-500, Hamburg, Germany: Pablo Carreno Busta (Esp) & Rohan Bopanna (Ger) bt Rudolf Molleker (Ger) & Nenad Zimonjic (Srb) 6-3, 5-7, [10-3].

\$777,385 ATP, Atlanta, USA: Kwon Soonwoo (Kor) bt Prajesh Gunneswaran 6-7(4), 7-5, 6-0.

Doubles: Taylor Fritz (USA) & Cameron Norrie (GBR) bt Marius Copil (Rou) & Leander Paes 7-6(2), 6-4.

€586,140 ATP, Gstaad, Switzerland: Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan & Purav Raja bt Denys Molchanov (Ukr) & Igor Zelenay (SVK) 6-4, 6-2.

\$25,000 ITF men, Nonthaburi, Thailand: Alexander Crnokrak (Aus) bt Sidharth Rawat 6-3, 6-2; Naoki Tajima (Jpn) bt Niki Poonacha 6-4, 4-6, 6-1; Manish Sureshkumar (Kaz) & Arjun Kadhe bt Soichiro Moritani (Jpn) & Pol Wattanakul (Tha) 6-2, 6-3; Billy Harris (GBR) & Vladyslav Orlov (Ukr) bt Dusty Boyer (USA) & Karunudu Singh 6-4, 6-4; Niki Poonacha & Manish Sureshkumar bt Kunal Anand & Shahbaz Khan 6-2, 6-3.

\$25,000 ITF women, Porto, Portugal: Gabriella Da Silva Fick (Aus) & Magali Kempen (Bel) bt Shrivalli Rashmikaa Bhamidipaty & Sathwika Sama 6-3, 6-1

Cottrell 'salutes' Indian blind cricket team

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
JAMAICA

West Indies pacer Sheldon Cottrell paid rich tribute to the Indian blind cricket team, the reigning world champion, when the cricketers visited him at his Army base camp in Jamaica.

It's Indian blind team's maiden visit to Jamaica, where it will lock horns with the Jamaican blind team in a series, featuring three ODIs and two T20Is. Cottrell posted his pictures with the players.

"The Indian Blind Cricket team have made an historic visit to Jamaica – I met them at my work place – my army base Up Camp Park. #salute to these men and their achievements," Cottrell tweeted. "You can follow the World Champions here - @blindcricket ...," read his tweet.



Nice gesture: Cottrell had words of praise for the Indian blind cricket team. ■ COURTESY: COTTERELL/TWITTER

All eyes on Malinga as Lanka meets Bangladesh

Improvement in ODI rankings at stake in the series beginning on Friday

CRICKET

ANI
DUBAI

After a downgrade performance in recently concluded World Cup, both Sri Lanka and Bangladesh will look to improve their ODI rankings in the three-match bilateral series beginning in Colombo on Friday.

Seventh-placed Bangladesh can increase the lead over Sri Lanka when the teams face off in a three-match series.

In the focus

Retiring fast bowler Lasith Malinga is in the focus as Sri Lanka and Bangladesh players prepare for their first series after the World Cup.

Malinga, who will retire from ODIs after the opening match, is the second-highest ranked bowler from his side in 35th position, with 552 rating points.

He is nowhere near his



One last time! Lasith Malinga will look to go out with a memorable performance to cap a 15-year ODI career. ■ AP

peak in terms of rankings, but the 35-year-old would like to go out with a memorable performance to cap a 15-year ODI career.

The only bowler to have taken three ODI hat-tricks, Malinga attained a career-high points tally of 675 after a memorable spell of three for 22 against Bangladesh in Colombo on July 2007.

His highest ranking was seventh in November 2011,

achieved against Pakistan in Dubai.

Spinner Akila Dananjaya is the highest-ranked bowler from Sri Lanka in the 21st position, while Angelo Mathews and Niroshan Dickwella are the leading batsmen for the home side, in 35th and 42nd positions, respectively.

In the absence of World Cup star and world's top-ranked all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, who has been rest-

ed from the series, Bangladesh batsmen Mushfiqur Rahim (19th) and Tamim Iqbal (27th) will be leading the charge among batsmen, while Mustafizur Rahman (15th) and Mehidy Hasan Miraz (17th) would be looking to move towards the top 10 in the bowlers' list.

Eighth spot

Currently, Sri Lanka is at the eighth spot with 79 points whereas Bangladesh are at seventh place with eleven points more than the Lankan team.

Bangladesh can increase the lead over Sri Lanka from 11 to 16 points with a 3-0 win while losing the series by the same margin could see them slip to ninth position, behind the West Indies on decimal points.

While if Sri Lanka clean-swept Bangladesh in the series they will gain three points and finish with 82 points at the same spot.

Lanka reduces squad to 16 for Bangladesh ODIs

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
COLOMBO

Sri Lanka on Wednesday reduced its original 22-strong squad to 16 for the three-match ODI series against Bangladesh here. Lasith Malinga, who will retire after the first ODI, will be replaced in the squad for the next two matches by Dasun Shanaka.

The squad: Dimuth Karunaratna (Capt.), Kusal Perera, Avishka Fernando, Kusal Mendis, Angelo Mathews, Lahiru Thirimane, Shehan Jayasuriya, Dhananjaya de Silva, Wainudu Hasaranga, Akila Dananjaya, Lasith Malinga, Nuwan Pradeep, Lahiru Kumara, Thisara Perera, Isuru Udana and Kasun Rajitha.

Buffon denies Inter

Juve legend makes crucial saves in shootout; Ronaldo scores free kick

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
NANJING

Matthijs de Ligt scored an own goal 10 minutes into his first Juventus start before veteran goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon inspired it to a 4-3 penalty shootout win over Inter Milan on Wednesday.

It may only have been a friendly between the Italian arch rivals, but tempers threatened to boil over at times, especially in a feisty second half in stifling Nanjing.

The game ended 1-1 after 90 minutes, with Cristiano Ronaldo drawing Juventus level with a deflected second-half free-kick following De Ligt's own goal.

Then the 41-year-old Buffon – more than twice De Ligt's age – sprang to the fore in the shootout, making a triumphant return to the Serie A champion after a year with Paris Saint-Germain.

New Juventus coach Maurizio Sarri said he could "accept mistakes" – for now.

"The feeling is that we can improve a lot, especially in the offensive part of the game," he said.

"It is about changing the way of thinking and it is not easy to happen in a short time."

Sarri started the 19-year-old in the "Derby d'Italia" but the central defender got off to the worst possible beginning, directing the ball past goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny with his knee to give Inter the lead.

De Ligt was largely untroubled thereafter before being substituted at the break.

Ronaldo roughly treated

It was only a pre-season friendly as part of the International Champions Cup, but Antonio Conte's Inter dealt out some rough treatment to Ronaldo.

Three times in the first half, in a match played in sweltering conditions in eastern China, the Portuguese forward was sent sprawling to the turf.

There was a flashpoint in the 51st minute when Juventus substitute Merih Demiral – who was to score the winning penalty – lashed out while waiting for his side to take a corner.

Besieged Bale scores in comeback win

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

Bale shrugged off uncertainty over his Real Madrid future on Tuesday as his second-half goal helped the La Liga giant rally for a friendly win over Arsenal.

Madrid clawed back from two goals down to finish 2-2 and eventually prevail 3-2 in the penalty shootout in the International Champions Cup exhibition tournament.

Welsh star Bale didn't play in Madrid's 3-1 loss to Bayern Munich in Houston on Saturday, manager Zinedine Zidane saying on Monday he declined to dress for the match as the club pursued options for off-loading him.



Reminding his worth! Gareth Bale was focal to Real's comeback amid speculations of leaving the club. ■ AFP

Zidane said at the weekend he thought it would be "best for everyone" if Bale's departure could be arranged quickly – comments Bale's agent branded "disrespectful" of a player who helped the side to a Spanish league title and four Champions Leagues since arriving from Tottenham six years ago.

Zidane insisted on Monday that he meant no disrespect, and Bale duly came in at halftime on Tuesday and made a statement.

"He had a good game and I'm happy for him," Zidane said. "I do not know what's going to happen, for now he's with us. It did not change anything."

Tokyo unveils 2020 Olympics medal designs

They are made from recycled materials collected from old electronics

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
TOKYO

Tokyo Olympic organisers on Wednesday unveiled medals designed to reflect the "energy" of athletes as the city marked a year to go until the opening ceremony of the 2020 Summer Games.

The medals, which will be made from recycled materials collected from old electronics, are intended to "resemble rough stones that have been polished and which now shine," organisers said. The gold, silver and bronze awards each have a rough, almost meringue like surface on the outer ring, encircling a smooth, shining centre.

"The medals collect and reflect myriad patterns of light, symbolising the energy of the athletes," the organisers said.

The medals were unveiled at a ceremony marking the year-to-go countdown until the Tokyo 2020 Games, with International Olympic Committee chief Thomas Bach praising the city's readiness.

"I can truly say I have never seen an Olympic city as prepared as Tokyo, with one year to go before the Olympic Games," Bach said.



First Look: Fans, sponsors and politicians were all present at the event as organisers showed the 2020 Olympics medals for the first time. ■ REUTERS

"All the elements that make a truly outstanding Olympic Games are in place," he added, predicting "an amazing experience" for athletes.

The Olympic medals design was chosen from more than 400 entries from professional designers and design students.

"I never dreamed that the design I submitted only as a memorial to this lifetime

event would be actually selected," designer Junichi Kawanishi said.

"I hope the medals will be seen as paying tribute to the athletes' efforts, reflecting their glory, and symbolising friendship."

Ryohei Miyata, who chaired the board that chose Kawanishi's design, said the medals showcased Japanese metal moulding techniques.

The medals will come on

ribbons that use traditional Japanese chequered patterns and graphics that symbolises kimono layering techniques.

The medals, which will weigh in at between 556 and 450 grams each, are being manufactured from metal extracted from mobile phones and other small electronics donated by the Japanese public as part of a campaign to make Tokyo 2020 eco-friendly.