



India on verge of series win despite Sooriyabandara, Mendis fight in Colombo Test

COLOMBO, AUG 26: Sri Lankan batters were defiant in phases but the Indian bowlers made a timely intervention to reduce the hosts to 229 for six in their second innings on day four of the second and final Test here on Wednesday.

Sonal Dinusha (7) and Keshara Nuwantha (3) were in the middle at stumps when the now customary evening rain and bad light stopped play.

But India will be eager to end Lanka's last vestige of hope and wrap the match and series on day five.

Before Indian bowlers established their domination, the 115-run third wicket alliance between Pasindu Sooriyabandara (92) and Kamindu Mendis (55) was the primary source of Lankan fightback.

Sooriyabandara and Mendis joined forces when Lanka were wobbling at 63 for two, but resisted the Indian bowlers for the next 110 minutes.

The pair bridged the heavy 213-run innings deficit that forced them to follow-on.

However, Sri Lanka's effort in that period was a marked improvement from their first dig in which they were bundled out for 290, which was a mere 13 runs shy of the follow-on mark.

That total was constructed around the highly-impressive Dinusha's 103, his second hundred of the series. But the Sooriyabandara-Mendis partnership in



the ongoing innings was the reason behind the match getting extended to its final day after they lost openers Lahiru Udara and Kamil Mishara early in the second essay. It is easy to imagine their stand as an obdurate one considering the situation in which Sri Lanka found themselves in.

But Sooriyabandara and Mendis played with freedom and were never hesitant to take the attack to the bowlers.

Mendis creamed Manav Suthar for two sixes, and did not allow the left-arm spinner to settle into a consistent rhythm.

Later, Sooriyabandara too slog-swept Suthar for a six as the young tweaker struggled for an impact for the first time in this series.

Mendis reached his fifty

off 87 balls with a flourish, pulling Prasidh Krishna for a six and soon Sooriyabandara too joined his teammate with a 78-ball fifty.

However, Prasidh broke the swelling stand with a short-pitched ball which cramped Mendis for room, and Shubman Gill completed a fine running catch to give marching orders to the Lankan batter.

The host went into tea at a rather comfortable position of 199 for three, needing just 14 runs more to overhaul the ignominy of an innings defeat.

However, the final session of the day redrew the complexion of the match as India picked up three wickets.

Skipper Dhananjaya de Silva was the first to depart, inside edging Suthar to Dev-

dutt Padikkal in the cordon.

Sooriyabandara looked primed for his maiden Test hundred but a moment of madness snapped his stay. Till then batting with composure, the right-hander gave a charge to Suthar.

The Indian tweaker detected the charge very early and fired a delivery wide of Sooriyabandara and Rishabh Pant just had the job of whipping the bails.

Saransh Jain, who generated considerable turn, trapped Niroshan Dickwella in front of stumps as the home side slumped to 218 for six.

With nearly an hour remaining on the day, India tried to pull curtains down on Lanka innings but the skies opened up with a vengeance to halt the play at 4.37 pm.

AMSTELVEEN, AUG 26: India will look to put the disappointment of missing out on a semifinal spot behind them and sign off from the Women's Hockey World Cup with a win when they face higher-ranked Germany in the fifth-place playoff here on Wednesday.

For India, the contest is not just about finishing fifth but also about carrying the confidence of an impressive World Cup campaign into next month's Asian Games, where a gold medal would bring direct qualification for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

India have lost just one match in the tournament and, irrespective of the result against the two-time champions, are assured of their best World Cup finish since their fourth-place effort in the inaugural edition in 1974.

India, featuring 11 World



Cup debutants, will face a stern test against a side that has already beaten it twice in practice matches before the tournament.

India's semifinal hopes were dashed on Sunday after a goalless draw against Australia in their final second-round pool match, where they needed a win to progress.

The three-day break, however, has given Sjoerd Marijne's side time to re-

cover from the disappointment and refocus on the final challenge.

"This rest was crucial to recover from the setback in the previous match. Now, the team will play against Germany with renewed vigour and freshness," Marijne said.

"The team has overcome the disappointment of not reaching the semifinals and is now fully focused on defeating Germany and leav-

ing the tournament with a win. We want to improve our game and perform better for the Asian Games."

India began their campaign with a 2-2 draw against Olympic silver medallists China before thrashing South Africa 6-1, with six different players finding the net.

A goalless draw in their final Pool D match against England took them into the second round.

DC inaugurates Annual Athletic Meet at DPL Ramban

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS JAMMU, AUG 26

Deputy Commissioner Ramban Mohammad Alyas Khan today inaugurated the Annual Athletic Meet of six Zones of the district here at District Police Lines (DPL).

SSP Arun Gupta, Dy.SP DAR Kuldeep Sharma, DYSSO Nazir Hussain and other officers and officials were also present.

The event commenced with Nasha Mukht Pledge by the participants reaffirming their commitment to a healthy and drug-free lifestyle.

Addressing the participants, the Deputy Commissioner encouraged them to give their best and emphasized the importance of sports in promoting physical fitness, discipline, teamwork and a positive attitude. He said that participation in sports helps young people develop confidence, leadership qualities and a healthy competitive spirit.

In his address, the SSP appreciated the efforts of the organizers and participants, stressing that sports play an important role in



channelising the energy of youth towards constructive activities. He encouraged the participants to maintain discipline, sportsmanship and dedication while striving for excellence.

Various track and field events were held under the supervision of the DYSSO,

including 100-metre, 200-metre and 400-metre races, long jump, high jump, shot put and other athletic events. The participants displayed remarkable talent, determination and sportsmanship throughout the competition.

The winners of different events were awarded medals, certificates and trophies in recognition of their outstanding performances. The organizers congratulated all the participants and appreciated their dedication and enthusiasm.

ETPL launches to packed stadium in Rotterdam

THE HAGUE [NETHERLANDS], AUGUST 26: The inaugural season of the European T20 Premier League (ETPL) got off to a spectacular start today, with a packed stadium and an overwhelming response from fans at the League's opening match at Voorburg Cricket Club in The Hague.

The blockbuster opening clash saw Amsterdam Flames, captained by Ireland's Scott Edwards, take on Rotterdam Dockers, led by Faf du Plessis. Adding to the excitement was the rivalry between the two franchises, with Amsterdam led by Steve Waugh's team and Rotterdam by Jonty Rhodes' team.

The occasion was attended by cricketing legends Rahul Dravid, Steve Waugh, Jonty Rhodes and Matthew Hayden, as fans turned out in huge numbers to witness the beginning of a new era for cricket in Europe.

Commenting on the inaugural season of the ETPL, Abhishek Bachchan said,



"To see the stadium packed and the League finally come alive is an incredibly proud and emotional moment for all of us. This is the beginning of something we have believed in from day one, bringing world-class cricket to Europe and creating a new platform for the game and local players to grow."

Commenting on the inaugural season, Dublin Guardians owner Rahul Dravid said, "What makes ETPL truly special is the incredible mix of world-class

stars and rising talent. Seeing dynamic young players like Bas de Leede and Jai Moondra hold their own against top-tier opposition, alongside battle-tested stalwarts like Anrich Nortje running in with real pace, and Roelof van der Merwe bringing his years of experience, is exactly what we want to see.

"Having top international stars share the field and rub shoulders with the next generation elevates the standard of the entire tournament," he said.

ETPL is a pioneering partnership between the cricket boards of Ireland, Scotland and the Netherlands, along with its founders Abhishek Bachchan, Priyanka Kaul, Saurav Banerjee and Dhiraj Malhotra.

The packed stands and incredible atmosphere at the opening match reflected the excitement and anticipation surrounding the League, marking a memorable beginning to ETPL's inaugural season.

Diksha Dagar leads Indian challenge at Women's Irish Open

KILDARE [IRELAND], AUGUST 26: Diksha Dagar will spearhead the Indian challenge at the 2026 Women's Irish Open, which gets underway on Thursday at The K Club's Palmer South Course in County Kildare.

The tournament, celebrating its 20th edition, has attracted a strong international field, with more than 129 players from 34 nationalities competing for a share of the 450,000 Euros prize purse. The event has a special significance for the home nation this year, with a record 16 Irish players -- nine professionals and seven amateurs -- in the field.

For India, much of the attention will be on Dagar, a two-time LET winner who has established herself as one of the country's most consistent performers on the European circuit.

Dagar has had five Top-10 finishes and four others in the Top-20 as she lies 11th on the Order of Merit. Her accuracy, tactical approach and reliable short game could prove valuable on a demanding Palmer South layout, particularly if windy conditions add another layer of difficulty.

Dagar will be joined by Pranavi Urs, Avani Prashanth and Tvesa Malik, giving India a blend of experience and emerging talent.

Pranavi, arrives in Kildare after being the only Indian to make the cut at the VP Bank Swiss Ladies Open two weeks ago, where she finished tied 38th. The Mysuru golfer has enjoyed a steady season, making 12 cuts in 17 starts and currently sitting 46th in the LET season rankings. She



will be looking to build on that consistency and convert it into a strong finish this week. Indianews updates

Teenager Avani Prashanth adds further interest to the Indian contingent. The 18-year-old rookie earned her full LET card earlier this season and returns to competition after skipping the Swiss event for a break in India. Prashanth has already shown that she can contend at this level, finishing tied third alongside Dagar at the Dutch Ladies Open. She was also T-5 at Jabra Ladies.

Tvesa Malik completes

the Indian quartet. The experienced campaigner will be hoping to rediscover her best rhythm after missing the cut in Switzerland. Malik, however, has already demonstrated her ability to challenge on the LET this season, finishing tied fifth at the Jabra Ladies Open.

The Palmer South Course is expected to test every aspect of the players' games, with strategic hazards, demanding approaches and potentially strong winds placing a premium on accuracy and course management.

With 16 Irish players chasing a historic home vic-

tory and a strong international field assembled, the KPMG Women's Irish Open promises an intriguing week.

Despite the growing strength of Irish women's golf, the tournament has never produced a home winner. Solheim Cup star and World No. 82 Leona Maguire will lead the local challenge as Ireland bids to end that wait. Maguire remains the only Irish player to have won on the Ladies European Tour (LET), having claimed the individual title at the 2024 Aramco Team Series - London. (ANI)