

India on top after solid batting display

Kanpur, November 25: Replying to India's first innings total of 642, Sri Lanka reached 66/1 at stumps on Day 2 of the second Test, still trailing the hosts by 576 runs.

The visitors made a recovery of sorts after a disastrous start that saw them being reduced to 0/1 as Zaheer Khan removed Tillakaratne Dilshan off the first delivery of the innings.

At stumps, both Kumar Sangakkara and Tharanga Paranavitana were batting on 30 a piece.

Earlier, India scored 642 in their innings as Rahul Dravid smashed a brilliant 144. For the Lankans, Rangana Herath took five wickets while Muttiah Muralitharan and Ajantha Mendis captured two wickets each.

Morning Session

Though the morning session on Day 2 did not witness too many big hits as was the highlight of the first Day, but both Tendulkar and Dravid ensured that the hosts were off to a steady start and did not lose early wickets.

Carrying on from the overnight score of 417/2, the duo kept rotating the strike and ensured that the pressure did not build on either.

Tendulkar got a lucky break at a score of 29 as he was dropped by a diving Tillakaratne Dilshan off Ajantha Mendis. Tendulkar stepped out a little while later to Mendis and smashed him back over his head for a six but perished just 4 balls later while trying to attempt another similar shot.

Tendulkar was caught by Thilan Samaraweera at mid-off for 40.

Meanwhile, Dravid reached the three figure mark and went on to overtake Allan Border to become the fourth highest run getter in Tests.

Having reached his hundred, Dravid cut loose and unleashed a flurry of big shots to build another good partnership with new man VVS Laxman.

But the partnership did not last long as Dravid departed to a kind of dismissal seen rarely in cricket.

VVS Laxman stepped out and smashed Herath straight back into the hands of the bowler, who dropped the ball but ended up throwing it on the wicket while Dravid was caught out of the wicket. Dravid made 144 off 226 balls including 15 fours and a six.

Rahul Dravid's 28th Test ton helped India reach a daunting 525 runs for the loss of 4 wickets at lunch on the second day.

Post Lunch Session

The session started on a nervy note for India as Laxman edged the ball wide off the first slip past the boundary ropes.

The Lankans were concentrating on keeping a check on the run flow with a defensive field but Yuvraj and Laxman kept ticking the scoreboard and brought up their 50 partnership in 87 balls.

Laxman completed his half-ton off 92 deliveries as he nudged Muralitharan for a single on the leg side. Yuvraj followed him to the 50-run mark soon, consuming just 69 deliveries to eclipse the mark.

India got a lucky break as the umpire turned down a LBW appeal off the bowling of Herath. The bowler came back though to remove Laxman in his next over as he attempted a big shot but holed out to Dilshan at mid-off. Laxman made 63 off 121 balls.

Skipper Dhoni, who came in at the fall of Laxman's wicket could not do much and was cleaned up by Herath for just 4 off 15 deliveries.

Yuvraj kept the scoreboard ticking with well timed boundaries but wickets kept falling at the other end. Harbhajan Singh was bowled by Herath off the last delivery before tea to reduce India to 639/7.

India all out for 642

India could not add much to their total after tea as Yuvraj was caught by Sangakkara at mid-wicket while attempting a pull shot off the bowling of Mendis. Yuvraj made 67 off 105 deliveries including 4 fours and 2 sixes.

Herath then did not waste much time to polish off the tail as he claimed Zaheer Khan and S Sreesanth to finish with a five wicket haul and wrap up India for 642 runs.

Sri Lanka started their innings on a disastrous note as Zaheer Khan sent back Tillakartne Dilshan with the Lankans still to open their account. Dilshan was caught by Pragyan Ojha off the first delivery of the innings.

Vaibhav Arora/Zeecric Bureau

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