

India leave Sri Lanka reeling

Galle

India's bowlers tore through the Sri Lankan top order to put the visitors firmly on top on the second day of the first Test in Galle yesterday.

Paceman Mohammed Shami picked two wickets in the same over and Umesh Yadav got rid of opener Dimuth Karunaratne after India posted a commanding 600 all out, their biggest total in Sri Lanka.

Former captain Angelo Mathews was batting on 54 with Dilruwan Perera on six when stumps were drawn for the day, with Sri Lanka still trailing by 446 runs with five wickets in hand.

Indian batsman Cheteshwar Pujara, who struck a solid 153, said he was pleased that India had lived up to its billing as the number one Test side in the world.

"We would like to maintain that standard. We have scored enough runs, and we've got five wickets today. We are very well poised at this stage.

"I think the key for us, even in the last season, was that we've bowled really well. Our bowlers are bowling good lines and lengths," he said referring to India's 10 wins in the last 13 Tests.

Sri Lankan opener Upul



Indian cricket team captain Virat Kohli (2L) celebrates with his teammates

Tharanga struck a defiant 64 off 93 balls but was run out thanks to a quick piece of fielding by Abhinav Mukund.

Mukund, fielding at silly point, also took a fine one-handed catch off Ravichandran Ashwin to send back Niroshan Dickwella (eight) and reduce the hosts to a shaky 143-5.

Yadav gave his side an early breakthrough after the Indian lower-order batsmen scored at a quick pace despite losing wickets at regular intervals.

Yadav had Karunaratne trapped leg before and although the batsman went for a review, the decision was upheld after replays showed the ball pitching on the middle stump.

Shami, making his Test comeback after an injury layoff, then dismissed debutant Danushka Gunathilaka for 16 and Kusal Mendis for a duck in the space of four balls. (AFP)

SCOREBOARD

India 1st innings (overnight 399-3):	
S. Dhawan c Mathews b Pradeep	190
A. Mukund c Dickwella b Pradeep	12
C. Pujara c Dickwella b Pradeep	153
V. Kohli c Dickwella b Pradeep	3
A. Rahane c Karunaratne b Kumara	57
R. Ashwin c Dickwella b Pradeep	47
W. Saha c Perera b Herath	16
H. Pandya c sub (de Silva) b Kumara	50
R. Jadeja b Pradeep	15
M. Shami c Tharanga b Kumara	30
U. Yadav not out	11
Extras (w6, nb3, lb5, b2)	16
Total (all out; 133.1 overs)	600
Sri Lanka 1st innings:	
D. Karunaratne lbw b Yadav	2
U. Tharanga run out	64
D. Gunathilaka c Dhawan b Shami	16
A. Mendis c Dhawan b Shami	0
A. Mathews not out	54
N. Dickwella c Mukund b Ashwin	8
D. Perera not out	6
Extras (w1, lb3)	4
Total (for 5 wkts, 44 overs)	154

Philander strikes as Cook defies South Africa

London

Vernon Philander again proved a thorn in England's side as Alastair Cook held firm against South Africa in the third Test at The Oval yesterday.

England were 171 for four at stumps, having won the toss, with 31 of the scheduled 90 overs lost to bad weather on the opening day of the 100th Test at The Oval.

Pace bowling all-rounder Philander had superb figures of two wickets for 17 runs in 12 overs, including five maidens, despite a stomach bug.

That followed his man-of-the-match display with both bat and ball in South Africa's crushing 340-run victory in the second Test at Trent Bridge last week -- a result that left the four-match series level at 1-1.

But former England captain Cook was 82 not out at



England's Alastair Cook sets off for a run yesterday's close.

Already England's leading Test run-scorer, the left-handed opener spent more than four-and-a-half hours at the crease to be in sight of his 31st century at this level.

Ben Stokes was unbeaten

on 21. England had been heavily criticised by several former captains for an inability to bat time and wear down the Proteas at Trent Bridge, where they were twice bowled out cheaply and folded for just

133 in their second innings.

Although the overcast conditions and green-tinged pitch promised to assist pace bowlers, England captain Joe Root opted to bat first after winning the toss, just as South Africa captain Faf du Plessis had done in a similar situation in Nottingham.

Root clearly hoped England could come through some early adverse circumstances and may also have wanted to show confidence in his under-fire batsmen. (AFP)

SCOREBOARD

England 1st Innings	
A. Cook not out	82
K. Jennings c Elgar b Philander	0
T. Westley c du Plessis b Morris	25
J. Root c de Kock b Philander	29
D. Malan b Rabada	1
B. Stokes not out	21
Extras (b7, lb3, w3)	13
Total (4 wkts, 59 overs, 272 mins)	171

Froome eyes historic double in Vuelta

London

Chris Froome has set his sights on an historic double as the Tour de France champion confirmed he will race in the 'vicious' Vuelta a Espana.

Froome claimed his fourth yellow jersey in Paris on Sunday and now he hopes to become the first rider in 22 years to win both the Tour and the Vuelta in the same year.

The 32-year-old has finished second three times in the Vuelta and believes he can go one better this time despite the formidable test provided by the Spanish race.

Romain Bardet, Fabio Aru, and Alberto Contador are all expected to ride, while Vincenzo Nibali, who missed the Tour, may also be a strong contender.



Chris Froome

"I've got the opportunity and I'm certainly going to go for it," Froome said on Team Sky's website.

"The Vuelta is a race I love, it's vicious but it's three weeks that I enjoy.

"I've come second three times now and I'd love to win. To win both the Tour and the Vuelta in one year would be absolutely incredible." (AFP)

Sharapova gets wildcard

Los Angeles

Maria Sharapova was yesterday handed a wildcard into the Cincinnati WTA tournament, a key warm-up for the US Open, the season's final Grand Slam which has yet to guarantee the Russian star a place.

Former world number one and five-time Grand Slam title winner Sharapova is still rebuilding her career following a 15-month doping ban which ended in April.

Injury then ruled her out of contention for Wimbledon where she had been due to play qualifying after French Open organisers had refused her a wildcard.

The Cincinnati event, which runs from August 12-20, also



Maria Sharapova (file pic)

granted a wildcard to Victoria Azarenka, the two-time major winner who only recently returned to the tour after maternity leave.

"The addition of these players add to our already strong player field," said tournament director Andre Silva. (AFP)

Slow-go Budapest quickens Alonso pulse

Budapest

After months of frustration, Fernando Alonso is hoping to enjoy a competitive outing this weekend when he leads McLaren's bid for points at the Hungarian Grand Prix.

The two-time world champion believes that McLaren-Honda's strategy of focussing on the slow-paced Hungaroring circuit may give them a chance to climb off the bottom of the constructors' standings.

"I think Monaco was a great track for us, in terms of the characteristics of it," he said. "But, I was not there! So, for me, it's really the first time that I have had the possibility of hopefully feeling



Fernando Alonso

competitive.

"There is a possibility to be in (qualifying) Q3, and then in the points and if something happens, in front of us, to get even a better result than seventh or eighth -- that is the maximum you can fight for at the moment.

"So it's definitely an important weekend for us. We pay some penalties in the last two races to arrive here with more freedom of engine choices." (AFP)