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Sri Lankan cricketer Mahela Jayawardene, center, plays a shot as Indian cricket captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni, left, and teammate Rahul Dravid look on during the fourth day of the first cricket test between India and Sri Lanka in Ahmedabad, India, Thursday, Nov. 19, 2009. Jayawardene scored 9000 runs of his test career Thursday. (AP)

Mahela and Prasanna break 72-year-old World Record

After records, Sri Lanka toil for first Test win in India

Rex Clementine reporting from Ahmedabad

The target for Sri Lanka's cricketers to complete their mission of recording the country's maiden Test win in India is simple. They need to take eight more wickets to secure that elusive win in India and with at least 90 overs left today - the final day of the Test, on a track where some balls keep low, history should be in the making here at the Sardar Patel Stadium in Ahmedabad.

After a day where several records fell, the Sri Lankans declared on a mammoth 760 for seven one hour into lunch with a first innings lead of 334. They had a crack at the Indians for 45 overs on the penultimate day of the Test and picked up two wickets including the crucial one of Rahul Dravid.

The day however, completely belonged to Mahela and Prasanna Jayawardene, who laid the foundation for what could be an historic win and in the process broke several records, most importantly the 72-year-old World Record for the sixth wicket.

In 1937, Sir Don Bradman and Jack Fingleton had added 346 runs for the sixth wicket at the MCG against England and the two Sri Lankans, who share the same surname, put on 351 runs breaking Test cricket's oldest partnership record.

The Sri Lankans now possess the World Records for the second, third, fourth and sixth wickets in Test cricket and Jayawardene has been involved in three of those with Kumar Sangakkara, Thilan Samaraweera along with Prasanna being his partners during his record breaking efforts.

They batted the whole of the morning yesterday further strengthening Sri Lanka's position and in all had batted for three full sessions.

India took the new ball in the morning immediately after it was due, but the decision backfired as the new ball brought in quick runs instead of wickets. The two batsmen were going steadily scoring four runs an over and one hour into the day's play, the Indian bowlers and fielders gave in, hoping for the declaration to come.

True the wicket was flat, but the application, enthusiasm, patience and the sheer mental strength Mahela proved why he's the country's best batsman at the moment by a distance and a much under-rated player among contem-



porary cricketers.

The sheer quality of his knock overshadowed the efforts of the other Jayawardene, who may have been under some sort of pressure coming into the game.

Mahela occupied the crease for more than ten hours for his marathon 275 where he faced 435 deliveries hitting 27 boundaries and a six.

His resistance ended when he came down the track to hoist leg-spinner Amit Mishra, who was persisting on a negative line coming round the wicket and bowling outside the leg-stump. Mahela's attempt to go inside out didn't pay off as he was beaten by the flight and was bowled.

When he reached his 253rd run in the morning, Jayawardene completed 9000 runs in Test cricket. The former captain is now ninth in the all time list of most run scorers in the history of the game. He also completed 1000 runs in the calendar year, joining team-mate Thilan Samaraweera and England captain Andrew Strauss as the only players to have reached the milestone this year.

Prasanna, meanwhile was a revelation. The inclusion of Kaushal Silva in the Test squad wasn't good news for the wicketkeeper as that meant that Sri Lanka looked for big scores from him.

He had only scored a hundred against Bangladesh before this and when he walked into bat at 375 for five, the game was still hanging in the balance. But by providing solid support to Mahela what he did was to ensure that there can be only one winner in this game.

Resuming from his overnight score of 84, the only moment of uncertainty for Prasanna came when he top edged an Ishant Sharma delivery, that too on 99, but fortunately for him that died on Rahul Dravid at first slip and soon he reached three figures with a boundary.

He went onto post his highest score in Tests and was unbeaten on 154 when Sangakkara decided to declare once Dammika Prasad got out.

The total of 760 for seven is the sixth highest in the history of Test cricket and Sri Lanka's second high-

est.

Given more than four sessions to survive, India started off positively and raced to 77 for no loss at tea time.

In the first over after tea, Virender Sehwag reached his half-century off a boundary but in the same over took the bait to play a big shot off Rangana Herath, but failed to get to the pitch of the ball and ended up giving Angelo Mathews a catch at mid-on.

Rahul Dravid then added 88 runs with Gautam Gambhir and the defining moment for the Sri Lankans came when Chanaka Welagedara came round the wicket and trapped the batsman leg-before wicket.

Mishra was sent in as the night watchman and he survived some nervous moments before stumps. Gambhir, meanwhile was looking solid unbeaten on 74.

SCOREBOARD

India 1st Innings 426 all out		Mishra 58-6-203-1 (8 nb), Yuvraj 16-1-64-0,	
Sri Lanka 1st Innings (overnight 591for five)		Tendulkar 7-0-20-0, Sehwag 4-1-19-0.	
T. Dilshan ct Dravid b Zaheer	112	India 2nd Innings	
T. Paranavithana ct Dhoni b Ishant	35	G. Gambhir not out	74
K. Sangakkara ct Tendulkar b Zaheer	31	V. Sehwag ct Mathews b Herath	51
M. Jayawardene b Mishra	275	R. Dravid lbw b Welagedara	38
T. Samaraweera ct Yuvraj b Ishant	70	A. Mishra not out	12
A. Mathews ct Gambhir b Harbhajan	17	Extras : (lb 7, nb 8)	15
P. Jayawardene not out	154	Total: for two wickets	190
D. Prasad ct Mishra b Harbhajan	21	Overs: 45	
Extras: (b 5, lb 16, nb 20, w 4)	41	To bat: S. Tendulkar, V.V.S. Laxman, Yuvraj Singh, M.S. Dhoni, Harbhajan Singh, Zaheer Khan and Ishant Sharma.	
Total: for 7 wickets declared	760	Bowling: Welagedara 9-0-31-1 (1 nb), Prasad 9-0-49-0 (3 nb), Herath 13-0-47-1, Muralitharan 14-0-56-0 (4 nb)	
Overs: 202.4		Umpires: Tony Hill (NZ) and Darrel Harper (Aus)	
Fall of wickets: 1-74, 2-189, 3-194, 4-332, 5-375, 6-726, 7-760.		Match Referee: Jeff Crowe (NZ)	
Bowling: Zaheer 36-6-109-2 (9 nb) (2 w), Ishant 33-0-135-2 (3 nb) (2 w), Harbhajan 48.4-4-189-2,			

Most runs in Test cricket

Sri Lankan batsman Mahela Jayawardene completed 9000 Test runs during the fourth day's play of the first Test Match against India in Ahmedabad yesterday. Jayawardene is now ninth in the list of most run scorers in Test cricket.

Below is a list of most run scorers in Test cricket.

Player	Mat	Inns	No	Runs	HS	Ave	100	50
S. Tendulkar (India)	160	262	27	12777	248*	54.37	42	53
B. Lara (WI)	131	232	6	11953	400*	52.88	34	48
R. Ponting (Aus)	136	229	26	11345	257	55.88	38	48
A. Border (Aus)	156	265	44	11174	205	50.56	27	63
R. Dravid (India)	135	235	28	11029	270	53.28	27	57
S. Waugh (Aus)	168	260	46	10927	200	51.06	32	50
J. Kallis (SA)	131	221	33	10277	189*	54.66	31	51
S. Gavaskar (India)	125	214	16	10122	236*	51.12	34	45
M. Jayawardene (SL)	108	178	13	9022	374	54.67	27	35
G. Gooch (Eng)	118	215	6	8900	333	42.58	20	46

Kirsten hails Mahela

Rex Clementine reporting from Ahmedabad

India's coach Gary Kirsten hailed Mahela Jayawardene's batting effort over the last two days where he made 275 runs and went pass 9000 career runs in Tests here in Ahmedabad where India play hosts to Sri Lanka in the first Test of the three match series.

The game was evenly balanced on the third day afternoon, but a World Record stand for the sixth wicket took the game away from India and Jayawardene passed several milestones while putting Sri Lanka on top.

"You have to give credit to the way the Sri Lankan batsmen batted. It was a superb effort. Their batsmen are hungry for big scores and Mahela just showed what a quality player he is at Test Match level. He doesn't give it away and bats for long periods," the former South African opener said.

"I knew when he reached 100 runs he was going to go on. He's not the sort of chap who'll make a hundred and say thank you very much and give it away. If he gets a start he will go on," Kirsten added.

Asked whether India can save the game, Kirsten was optimistic that the hosts could do that. "We have got the batsmen to do it and we have got the skill as well. But it requires a lot of concentration and a lot of effort and people in the top order to say that I am ready to save the game for India."

"I think the quicker we get to the 330 or whatever it is, that we need to get over their total is better. You don't want to dig yourself into a hole by playing defensively. At the same time you don't want to take too much risk. A bit of a balancing act is what's needed.

He also reiterated the need to play Muttiah Muralitharan well to save the game. "Murali is always a threat. He's a world class bowler and a threat to any team. It's up to us to be able to make sure we can prevent him from doing any major damage. Our guys have played him a lot and they know what to expect from him. But then he's not the world record holder for no reason."

Prasanna says Murali will be key

Rex Clementine reporting from Ahmedabad

Wicketkeeper Prasanna Jayawardene, who hit an unbeaten career best 154 in the first Test against India at the Sardar Patel Stadium in Ahmedabad believes off-spinner Muttiah Muralitharan will play a key role on the final day's play today as Sri Lanka are looking to record their first Test win in India.

The tourists have three sessions to get eight wickets today, the final day of the Test and Muralitharan, who is probably on his last Test tour, will like a crumpling wicket here.

"I am sure he will play a big role. He's a legend and a lot depends on how he performs tomorrow. The ball is taking turn, but there's not much of bounce. So the bowlers need to put in some effort to take wickets," Prasanna told journalists.

"We have a good target and they have to defend that and we are on top at the moment. We have a good base and we'll build on from that. The main thing is not to panic. We want to do the basics right. We have a lead of around 200 and India will be under some pressure," the wicketkeeper who completed his second Test hundred said.

He was also asked whether the presence of Kaushal Silva in the touring squad threatening his place in the side was a motivation by any means, "We came to India as a team with one goal. That is to win a Test Match and the series. That's the sole aim. I have been ma1 the last few series, whenever the team wanted runs I have contributed. But for some reason there's a thinking going on that I have not been contributing with the bat. I didn't think too much into that. That wasn't much of a pressure as well and I would like to think that I was able to fulfill what was required by me."

Speaking on the World Record he established with Mahela Jayawardene for the sixth wicket, Prasanna said he was unaware of the record until the team manager Brendon Kuruppu brought it to his notice. *