



BAGERHAT SCHOOL CROWNED NATIONAL CHAMPIONS

Members of the Bagerhat Bahumukhi Collegiate School celebrate on the podium with the trophy of National School Football Championship following their 4-0 win over Chagalnaiya Govt. Pilot High School of Feni in the final at the Paltan ground yesterday. Tamim Hossain gave the Bagerhat school the lead in the first half before Ramjan Ali, adjudged man-of-the-final, Hasan Hawlader and Mirajul Islam scored one apiece in the second half. The eight-team final round of the championship had started on December 18 following nine month's suspension due to the pandemic. Muntasir Fuad Ibne Nur of Chagalnaiya was adjudged best player of the tournament for scoring four goals in the final round.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Baridhara stay alive with exciting win

SPORTS REPORTER



Uttar Baridhara Club kept their hopes of getting out of their group alive with an exciting 3-2 win over Arambagh in a Walton Federation Cup encounter at Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Abdul Khalek Hammad played a key role behind the triumph, the Egyptian forward assisting the first two goals before striking the third for Baridhara, who came into the match on the back of a 0-3 drubbing at the hands of Saif SC.

A rejuvenated Arambagh looked determined to carry over the tempo

Saif Sporting Club have all but confirmed quarterfinal berth from Group B with their second win, a massive 6-1 victory against Brothers Union, who had lost their first match 2-0.

from their 2-0 win over Brothers Union by pressing from the start and maintaining a high line. But the former Federation Cup runners-up had to pay a high price for leaving large spaces behind the backline, which were exploited on the right flank by the pacy Hammad.

After being denied by woodwork,



Uttar Baridhara Club's Egyptian forward Abdul Khalek Hammad starred in a 3-2 win over Arambagh with two assists before dancing past opposition goalkeeper Abul Kashem Milon to score team's third in a Federation Cup fixture at Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

national striker Suman Reza gave Baridhara a well-deserved lead with a simple tap-in from a low cross from Hammad in the 24th minute before Suhan Biswas, availing a forward pass from Hammad, doubled the lead with a clever chip over goalkeeper Abdul Kashem Milon in the 30th minute.

Arambagh reduced the deficit to 2-1 in the 37th minute with a placed shot from Nigerian Chizoba Christopher before Suman

squandered a chance to equalise as his strike rattled the post. A minute later, Hammad got onto a defence-splitting pass and widened the margin for Baridhara.

After resumption, Arambagh made three chances and went all out in an effort to equalise and substitute Nihat Jamal Uchash made it 3-2 in the 75th minute with a header off a cross from substitute Miraj Mollah

but they could not avert a defeat.

Chandimal, De Silva put SL on top

REUTERS, PRETORIA

Dinesh Chandimal and Dhananjaya de Silva scored fluent half-centuries as Sri Lanka took advantage of some lacklustre South Africa bowling to post 340 for six at the close of day one of the first Test at Centurion Park yesterday.

The tourists won the toss and elected to bat first.

Chandimal's bright innings of 85 came to an end when home seamer Wiaan Mulder (3-68) got the ball to leap spitefully off a length, clipping his glove and flying to Faf du Plessis in a second slip position.

De Silva was in complete control at the crease but suffered a hip injury as he jogged through for a comfortable single, dropping to the floor at the end of the run in obvious discomfort. He will have a scan on Saturday evening to assess the damage.

Bereaved Siraj savours emotional Test debut

India take Day 1 honours

AGENCIES



India paceman Mohammed Siraj was urged by his captain Virat Kohli and his mother to stay in Australia and push for selection in the Test side rather than head home to grieve with his family following the death of his father last month.

On Saturday, at a sun-bathed Melbourne Cricket Ground, Siraj was rewarded for his tough decision as he took two wickets on an emotional debut in the Boxing Day Test. India proved there is life without captain Virat Kohli as an inspired Indian bowling unit, led by the menacing Jasprit Bumrah and the crafty Ravichandran Ashwin, bowled Australia out for 195.

India were 36 for one at stumps. Prior to Mohammed Shami's injury, Hyderabad native Siraj had no assurances he would feature at all in the four-Test series but he hit the pitch hard in the tour matches to put himself at the front of the queue.

The door opened when Shami suffered an arm fracture in the series opener, and Siraj found himself thrust into a much-changed team needing to respond to the eight-wicket humiliation within three days at Adelaide Oval.

Siraj had to bide his time on Saturday, as stand-in skipper Rahane Ajinkya opted for spinner Ravichandran Ashwin as first change bowler on a moist wicket in the morning. The captain's call proved a sound one, as Ashwin took two wickets to leave Australia shaky at 65 for three at lunch.

Siraj was finally thrown the ball after



lunch and made his presence felt with a bouncer that struck Marnus Labuschagne on the helmet.

Though wicketless from his first spell, Siraj returned to remove danger man Labuschagne for 48, helped by fellow debutant Shubman Gill's fine catch at backward square leg.

With Ishant Sharma and Shami sidelined, there were fears in India that pacemen Jasprit Bumrah and Umesh Yadav would have to shoulder too big a burden over the remainder of the series but Siraj's special day renewed hope the tourists might have the resources to claw their way back in Melbourne.

"Playing his first international (test) match, he bowled really well and he showed confidence of using all his skills," he said. "That's a very heartening sign for us and hopefully he continues to play like this."



DEAN JONES REMEMBERED

More than three months after his death, Dean Jones was paid another tribute at his home ground by Indian and Australian players, who were joined by his wife, daughters and the legendary Allan Border in remembering the effervescent former player on Saturday. Border, Jones' wife Jane, and daughters -- Augusta and Phoebe -- took a long walk from the boundary of the Jones's favourite Melbourne Cricket Ground to the centre, carrying his baggy green, sunglasses and Kookaburra bat and laid the items to rest on the stumps at the Great Southern Stand end of the ground during the tea break of the ongoing Boxing Day Test.

PHOTO: TWITTER



Jamie Vardy (L) celebrates Leicester City's 85th-minute equaliser against Manchester United in a Premier League encounter yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Foxes end United's away streak

REUTERS, LEICESTER



Leicester City came back twice to end Manchester United's away winning streak in the Premier League with a 2-2 draw at the King Power stadium on Saturday. A Jamie Vardy shot which deflected off United defender Axel Tuanzebe, five minutes from the end, secured a point for Brendan Rodgers' side after Bruno Fernandes appeared to have secured another victory on the road for United.

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's side, who had won their last ten away games in the Premier League, stay third on 27 points, a

point behind second-placed Leicester.

Liverpool are top of the standings on 31 points and have a chance to extend their lead when they face West Bromwich Albion on Sunday.

Marcus Rashford had missed a wide-open header but put United ahead in the 23rd minute with a cool finish after being slipped in by Fernandes before Harvey Barnes equalised eight minutes later with a fine shot from the edge of the box.

"Disappointed we didn't win today because we had loads of big chances and we could've finished it off but they're a dangerous side," said Solskjaer.

'It's just Kane, isn't it?'

AGENCIES



New Zealand captain Kane Williamson was within sight of his 23rd Test century after he rebuilt the home side's innings and guided them to a solid 222-3 at the end of the opening day of the first Test against Pakistan in Mount Maunganui on Saturday.

Williamson, who missed the last Test against West Indies as he awaited the birth of his first child, was on 94 at Bay Oval with Henry Nicholls on 42 as New Zealand battled for much of the day against Pakistan's disciplined and accurate bowling attack.

The 30-year-old Williamson combined with Ross Taylor (70) in a 120-run partnership to

resurrect the innings after Shaheen Afridi vindicated stand-in captain Mohammad Rizwan's decision to bowl first on the grassy wicket. At 13-2, captain Kane Williamson and former captain Ross Taylor got together to demonstrate exactly what that meant.

New Zealand captain equalled the record for most number of fifties by a New Zealand batsman in Test cricket. Kane Williamson has 55 50-plus scores in 82 matches as he equals Stephen Fleming's record.

"It's just Kane, isn't it? He batted very well. It was good to bat with him and get through that initial stage," Taylor said. "He batted all day pretty much, apart from three balls, the temperament, the timing, obviously you need a little bit of luck here and there but I thought he batted fantastically well. We

need him and Henry Nicholls to go on and get through that new ball and keep them out there as long as possible."

Taylor, who hit a positive fifty against Pakistan, is not far behind as he has 53 from 104 matches. Ross Taylor departed for 70 as Shaheen Afridi struck again in the post-Tea session at the Bay Oval. However, the veteran New Zealand batsman set a new record as he became the most capped player for the country across all 3 formats of international cricket.

Taylor has represented New Zealand in 438 matches as he went past Daniel Vettori's tally of 437 matches for New Zealand. Former captain Brendon McCullum is 3rd on the list with 432 matches followed by Stephen Fleming who played 395 games.



New Zealand captain Kane Williamson acknowledges the crowd at the end of the opening day of the first Test against Pakistan in Mount Maunganui yesterday.

PHOTO: TWITTER



Murray to return with Delray Beach Open

REUTERS

Andy Murray will begin his 2021 season at the Delray Beach Open next month after accepting a wildcard for the ATP 250 tournament, the men's tour said on Saturday.

The former world number one, whose has slipped to 122nd in the rankings, will join defending champion Reilly Opelka, top-ranked American John Isner and Canada's Milos Raonic in the Florida field.

The tournament takes place from January 7-13 and will serve as part of the preparations for the Australian Open Grand Slam. Murray, a three-times Grand Slam champion, underwent hip resurfacing surgery in January last year but returned to win the Antwerp title seven months later -- his first since 2017.

He missed most of the 2020 season due to complications with his hip and struggled for form.