

Ash's ray outshines everything

Cricket

BISHWAJIT ROY from Chittagong

For many months cricket fans in this country have wept while the rest of the world ridiculed our cricket, our players. There has been a concerted effort in the international media to negatively project anything and everything associated with Bangladesh's cricket, a campaign which has intensified with India's tour of Bangladesh.

Even a couple of days ago Bangladesh were called the 'ugly sister' of the Test world on the most reputed cricket website. This country has been portrayed as a land of no hope, no talent and no world class player. But for most of the day it rained brilliance at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong yesterday at the end of which there were tears in the eyes of millions all over Bangladesh but this outpouring of emotion was of pride and unbridled joy.

With one innings that can dry up your stock of adjectives, Mohammad Ashraful has gone a long way in changing the perception of Bangladesh's cricket, hopefully for ever. True the Tigers will lose the second Test handsomely with nearly two days to spare but the second Test

will always be remembered as the match where Ashraful inspired his side to show what they are capable of if they play to their potential. Single-handedly he earned respect for his country that had been so elusive and when he reached that magical three-figure mark before tea, everyone at the ground stood up to applaud his genius including those in the Indian dressing room and a delighted Ravi Shastri in the ESPN studio -- a rare sight which every Bangladeshi young hopeful should replay in their dreams and try to emulate in the future.

It took over three years for Ashraful to live up to the standards he had set on debut. He was still not 17 when he made world cricket history by becoming the youngest Test centurion on debut against Sri Lanka in September 2001. But he had remained a young prodigy since showing only fleeting signs of brilliance before finally giving a full exhibition on Sunday of what he is capable of.

Ashraful's 158 not out in the Bangladesh first innings was unique because it was celebrated beyond the boundaries that separate the two nations involved in the battle.

"It was absolutely a brilliant knock but not unexpected because he has the talent to play this kind of innings". The way he dominated the

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WHEN THE LITTLE MAN LEADS THE WAY, OTHERS CAN ONLY FOLLOW: Bangladesh's star of the day Mohammad Ashraful being applauded by Indian players as he leads them off the field after the Tigers' first innings had ended in Chittagong yesterday.

TOP BANGLADESH TEST STARS

REUTERS, Chittagong

Highest individual scores by Bangladesh players in Tests after Mohammad Ashraful struck an unbeaten 158 in the second Test on Sunday, to become his nation's highest individual Test score.

Runs	Batsman	Against	Venue	Test	Season
158*	Mohammad Ashraful	India	Chittagong	second Test	2004-05
145	Aminul Islam	India	Dhaka	only Test	2000-01
119	Javed Omar	Pakistan	Peshawar	second Test	2003
114	Mohammad Ashraful	Sri Lanka	Colombo	Asia-Test	2001-02
113	Habibul Bashar	West Indies	Gros Islet	first Test	2004
111	Mohammad Rafique	West Indies	Gros Islet	first Test	2004
108	Habibul Bashar	Zimbabwe	Chittagong	second Test	2001-02
108	Habibul Bashar	Pakistan	Karachi	first Test	2003

(* Denotes not out)

Booters' transfers MSC come alive

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammed Sporting Club officially signed their new recruits for the coming domestic season yesterday, the third day of the inter-club booters' transfers.

Among the players to sign for the popular Motiheel outfit last evening at the Metropolitan Football League Committee office at the Bangabandhu National Stadium was national striker Alfaz Ahmed, who returned to his old club after a

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BTV & ESPN

Bangladesh vs India

Second Test, Day Four

Live at 9:30 am

ESPN

Sportscentre

Live at 8:30 pm

STAR Sports

England vs South Africa

First Test, Day Four

Live at 3:30 pm

Sportsline

Live at 9:30 pm

English Premier Football League

Charlton Athletic vs Fulham

Live at 1:55 am (Tuesday)



Green Delta Premier Hockey League

Sonali Bank vs Railway SC (1:15 pm)

Sadharan Bima vs Azad SC (3:00 pm)

Ashraful, Mashud in 1000-club.

Cricket

SHAHIDUL ISLAM, Cg

On a day of records Mohammad Ashraful and Khaled Mashud became third and fourth Bangladesh batsmen to cross 1,000 runs in Test cricket during the second Test against India at the MA Aziz Stadium yesterday.

It was a double celebration for the young right-hander, Ashraful, who later on the third day scored only his second hundred. He surpassed Aminul Islam (145) as Bangladesh's highest Test scorer.

Test cricket's youngest centurion on debut Ashraful on way to reaching 158 not out in Bangladesh's first innings, joined skipper Habibul Bashar and opener Javed Omar in the elite club.

The talented right-hander

started the day 49 runs short of the mark but reached the magical mark pushing leg-spinner Anil Kumble for two runs.

Bangladesh vice-captain Khaled Mashud's path to the 1,000-run mark was less dramatic as the Rajshahi wicketkeeper required only 20 runs which he duly got before being dismissed for 22 off the bowling of left-arm seamer Zaheer Khan. Mashud however was unlucky being adjudged caught behind as TV replays suggested that the ball made no contact with the bat.

BANGLADESH'S ZAHEER'S FIRST & 100TH

Getting 100 Test wickets is the first target of any aspiring bowler. And Indian left-arm seamer Zaheer Khan has joined that exclusive club when he trapped Manzarul Islam lbw for a duck on the third day of the second Test at the MA Aziz Stadium yesterday.

Playing in his 37th Test, the Maharashtra cricketer had to wait longer than expected to achieve the milestone mainly due to a magnificent century by Mohammad Ashraful.

It was not until the 72nd over that the left-arm seamer got the all-important wicket in a country where he started his Test career four years ago which was also Bangladesh's inaugural Test.

Zaheer took his first wicket at Dhaka's Bangabandhu National Stadium in November 2000 and the batsman on that occasion was opener Mehrab Hossain.

Zaheer, whose best figures in a match is 8 for 138 (5/29 in an innings) against New Zealand, could have claimed his 100th wicket after a couple of overs earlier had VVS Laxman, not dropped centurion Ashraful at mid-wicket.

Ajax abase Abahani

Hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

Ajax Sporting Club pulled off the biggest upset of the Green Delta Premier Hockey League when the mid-table side handed a 2-1 defeat to defending champions Abahani at the Maulana Bhashani National Stadium yesterday.

Sloppy defending cost Abahani their first defeat as well as their solo lead after six unbeaten matches.

Pakistani playmaker Shafiq Rasool set up one goal for Kutubuddin Ahmed Yen and scored the other as Ajax brightened their super league hopes with their third win in six outings. The Elephant Road outfit, who have lost just one match so far, stretched their collection to 11 points.

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Squad for 1st ODI named

SPORTS REPORTER from Chittagong

The selectors yesterday named a 14-member squad for the first of the three-match one-day internationals against India at the MA Aziz Stadium on December 23.

One change was made from the side that is playing the second Test here with all-rounder Khaled Mahmud coming in place of pacerman Talha Jubair.

"We are against making too many changes in the one-day series. Talha was impressive on his comeback to Test cricket after two years. But we always consider him more suited for the longer version than the limited-overs matches and that's why we preferred Mahmud," said chief

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Al Shahriar to lead HP Squad in one-dayer

SPORTS REPORTER

Out-of-favour national cricketer Al Shahriar will lead the BCB HP (High Performance) Squad in tomorrow's first limited-overs match against visiting Sri Lanka Cricket Academy.

The match will be held at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

The 12-member HP Squad also includes Wasel Uddin, the middle-order batsman was rewarded for his sparkling form for Mohammedan Sporting Club in the ongoing Premier Cricket League.

The Lankan Academy have already beaten the HP Squad in the four-day tour opener by eight wickets.

SQUAD

Al Shahriar, Nafees Ahmed, Saqib Al Hasan, Rashedul Haque Sumon, Abdur Razzak, Shamsur Rahman, Tushar Imran, Dhiman Ghosh, Tareq Aziz, SK Russell, Mahmud Ullah Riyadi and Wasel Uddin.

McGrath's Pak massacre

Cricket

REUTERS/AFP, Melbourne

Paceman Glenn McGrath recorded the second-best bowling figures by an Australian in Test history to power the home team to a whopping 491-run win over Pakistan on the fourth morning of the first Test in Perth on Sunday.

Resuming at 18 for one chasing an unlikely 564 for victory, Pakistan had no answer to McGrath, who took eight for 24 on a bouncy WACA pitch as the world's top-ranked side bowled out the tourists for 72 to claim a 1-0 lead in the three-match series.

The only Australian to better McGrath's performance was spinner Arthur Mailey, who picked up nine for 121 against England in Melbourne in 1920-21.

Sunday's victory by Australia was the fourth-highest winning runs margin in Test cricket and Pakistan's innings was their fourth-lowest total in Test history.

"The conditions are suited to fast bowlers, but (McGrath) was great, a match-winner," Australia captain Ricky Ponting told a news conference.

Pakistan lost their first wicket of the day when Salman Butt was caught in the gully by Matthew Hayden off McGrath for nine.

McGrath removed Younis Khan two overs later, snapped up by Shane Warne at first slip for 17.

Abdul Razzaq was then caught by wicketkeeper Adam Gilchrist for one at the start of McGrath's ninth over to make the score 49 for four.

Pakistan captain Inzamam-ul-Haq, forced to bat at number six after missing part of Australia's second innings because of illness and a back complaint, was then caught behind off McGrath for a first-ball duck.

McGrath had seven slips waiting but failed to make wicketkeeper

Kamran Akmal play at the next ball outside off-stump, and the lanky New South Wales paceman was unable to achieve the hat-trick.

But Kamran was out for a duck in McGrath's 11th over when Michael Clarke held on to a sharp chance above his head at fourth slip.

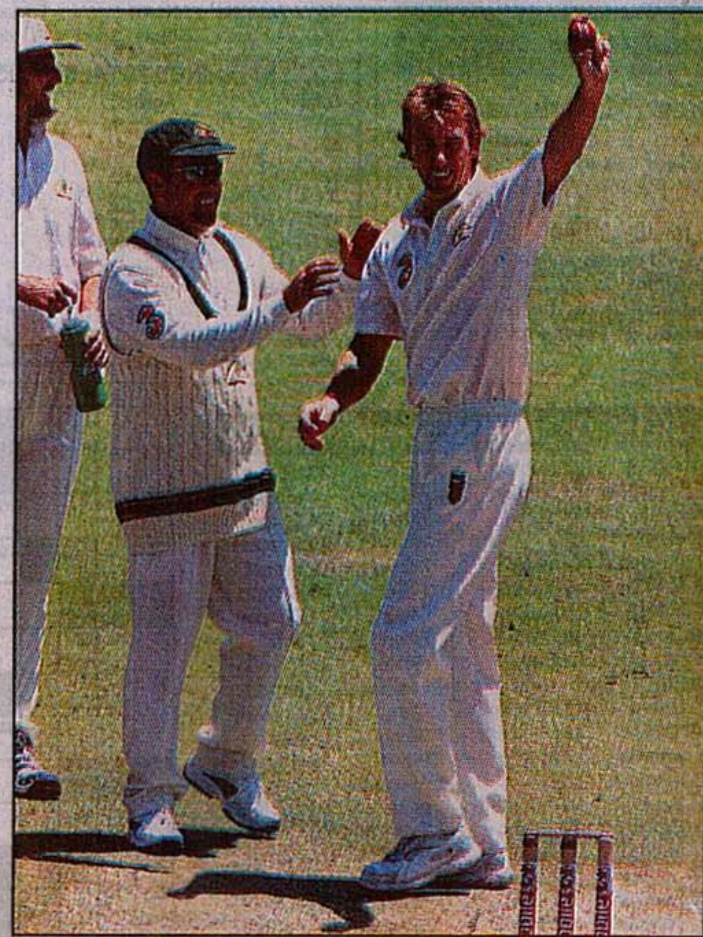
Yousuf Youhana was surprised by a McGrath bouncer and was caught behind for 27, making the total 64 for seven.

Seamer Michael Kasprovic then took two for four in 3.3 overs to ruin McGrath's chances of collecting all 10 wickets.

Introduced to the attack in the 26th over, Kasprovic struck with his sixth ball, clean bowling Mohammad Sami for two.

McGrath grabbed his eighth victim when he had Shoaib Akhtar caught at mid-off by Darren

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TAKE EIGHT! Australian paceman Glenn McGrath shows the ball after his eight-wicket blitz against Pakistan at Perth yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Bangladesh-India Series Quiz 11

Who became the man of the match in the first test of the current India-Bangladesh series?

- A Irfan Pathan B Mohammed Rafique C Mohammed Ashraful D Habibul Bashar

Answer by sending SMS* to the number 2003

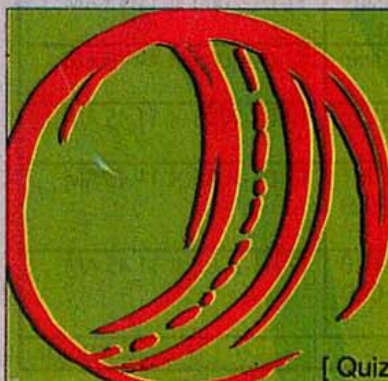
e.g. If your answer is A then write [Quiz11 A] and send it to 2003

[Quiz 10 answer: B]

For each quiz, five correct answer providers (selected by lottery) will receive attractive prizes!!

*Charge Applicable

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