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Fahim hails U-19 boys

SPORTS REPORTER

Coach Nazmul Abedin Fahim praised the Bangladesh under-19 players for their splendid efforts in their remarkable turnaround in the one-day series in Pakistan last week.

The under-19 side arrived in Dhaka in the early hours of Sunday after completing a successful tour where they drew the only four-day match and won the five-match one-day series 3-2 against the Pakistan under-19 side.

The hosts thumped Bangladesh under-19 by 144 and 80 runs in the first two matches in Hyderabad. But the young Tigers responded brilliantly, winning the next three in Karachi by 24 runs, 13 runs and two wickets respectively.

"After our two losses in Hyderabad, we tried to identify the weaknesses that let us down. The players responded brilliantly and worked on those areas and all credit goes to them," said Fahim.

"The one-day victory made it a good trip eventually. And it was made much better when you consider that our opponents are two-time world champions and have recently beat teams like

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Rakib in 3rd spot

SPORTS REPORTER

Grand Master Abdullah Al Rakib won the eighth round game against Arghyadip Das in the Commonwealth Chess Championship in New Delhi yesterday.

Rakib secured six points to share the third spot along with 12 other players.

IM Rathnakaran is leading the table with seven points.

Two other Bangladeshi Grand Masters Niaz Murshed and Reefat Bin Sattar earned 5.5 points each while FM Khondokar Aminul Islam bagged 5 points and IWM Rani Hamid 3 points.

Niaz drew with Ramakrishna. Aminul split point with IM Sekher Chandra Sahu and Reefat lost to WGM Nisha Mohota and Rani Hamid lost to Bhavan Kumar.



Did U Know?

Vishwanathan Anand, the World Master of Chess, was taught the first chess moves by his mother Sushila Vishwanathan.



Luiz Felipe Scolari
(Portugal soccer manager)

"I love Portugal even more than Brazil. I have a really good life here. My family loves this country. If I were to move it's by no means certain I'd find the same conditions elsewhere."

Who is keen to renew his deal until the 2010 World Cup.



What to WATCH

DD National
India v Pakistan
Third Test, Day Three
Live from 10:00am

TEN Sports
Sri Lanka v England
Second Test, Day Two
Live from 10:30am

ESPN
Sportscentre India
Sports News
Live at 8:30pm



PHOTO: AFP

THE PRINCE OF KOLKATA IN HIS BEST BIB AND TUCKER: A vintage Sourav Ganguly of India salutes the crowd upon reaching his double hundred on the second day of the third Test against Pakistan at the Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bangalore yesterday.

Ganguly's princely 239

Cricket

AFP, Bangalore

Sourav Ganguly and Irfan Pathan posted career-best knocks as India showed their batting prowess to put Pakistan under pressure in the third and final Test here on Sunday.

Ganguly cracked an elegant 239 for a maiden Test double-century and Pathan marked his comeback with an explosive 102 for a first hundred to help India pile up a mammoth 626 in their first innings.

Pakistan made a strong reply as they reached 86-1 at stumps on the second day. Salman Butt was unbeaten with an aggressive 50 and stand-in captain Younis Khan with seven. They still need 341 more runs to avoid follow-on.

Left-handed Butt swept leg-spinner Anil Kumble for a ninth four to reach his half-century. He also punished paceman Ishant Sharma, hitting three successive boundaries.

It was India's highest total against Pakistan at home, beating the previous best of 616-5 declared in the second Test of the current series at Kolkata.

Left-handed Ganguly and Pathan put the Pakistani attack to the sword with thrilling strokeplay on a good batting track, adding 178 for the seventh wicket to ensure the tourists bat under the threat of a follow-on.

The pair also overshadowed Pakistani seamer Yasir Arafat, who finished with five wickets on his Test debut.

Ganguly, 125 overnight, reached his double-hundred in the afternoon when he drove Arafat through the covers for two runs. His previous best was 173 against Sri Lanka in Mumbai in 1997.

Lower-order batsman Pathan, 23, went on the ramp in his first Test in more than a year as he smashed four sixes and 10 fours in his 133-ball knock.

He needed four runs to complete his century when last-man Sharma joined him, but he did it in style when he hoisted leg-spinner Danish Kaneria for his fourth six.

It was a frustrating day for Pakistan, who struggled for more than two sessions to claim the remaining five wickets after the hosts had resumed at 365-5. None of their bowlers could keep pressure on Ganguly and Pathan.

Pakistan were a bowler short as paceman Shoaib Akhtar was unable to resume bowling after being off the field for more than a session on Saturday due to back pain. He was not given a single over even when he became eligible to bowl.

Younis was left with only three

specialist bowlers but seamers Mohammad Sami and Arafat, and Kaneria were ineffective on an unhelpful wicket.

Ganguly and Pathan made the most of the conditions, reducing the Pakistani bowlers and fielders to a state of helplessness during their big partnership.

Runs came thick and fast when Ganguly and Pathan were at the crease as 96 came off 27 overs in the morning and 150 off 30 in the afternoon.

The 35-year-old Ganguly was bowled attempting to sweep Kaneria in the afternoon session. He struck two sixes off Kaneria and 30 fours in his superb 361-ball knock.

Pakistan got one wicket in the morning when Arafat had Dinesh Karthik (24) caught behind, but not before the batsman had added 66 for the sixth wicket with Ganguly.

Karthik again missed out on a big innings ahead of the Australian tour. He is now under pressure to retain his Test place, having scored 63 in five innings against the tourists.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on the second day of the third and final Test between India and Pakistan on Sunday:

INDIA: First innings (overnight 365-5)
Jaffer lbw b Arafat 17
Gambhir c Akmal b Sami 5
David c Misbah b Arafat 19
Ganguly b Kaneria 239
Laxman b Arafat 5
Yuvraj c Iqbal b Sami 169
Karthik c Akmal b Arafat 24
Pathan c Akmal b Kaneria 102
Kumble lbw b Kaneria 4
Harbhajan b Arafat 4
Sharma not out 0
Extras: (b-13, lb-19, nb-6) 38
Total: (All out in 150.2 overs) 626
Fall of wickets: 1-8, 2-44, 3-51, 4-61, 5-361, 6-427, 7-605, 8-615, 9-620.

Bowler O M R W
Akhtar 10 3 23 0
Sami 36 5 149 2
Arafat 39 5 161 5
Kaneria 46.2 8 168 3
Younis 2 0 14 0
Butt 10 1 36 0
Hameed 7 0 43 0

PAKISTAN: First innings

Butt not out 50
Hameed lbw b Kumble 19
Younis not out 7
Extras: (b-4, lb-2, nb-4) 10
Total: (For one wk in 27 overs) 86

To bat: Younis, Iqbal, Misbahul, Akmal, Akhtar, Sami, Arafat, Kaneria.

Fall of wicket: 1-59.

Bowler O M R W
Pathan 9 4 18 0
Sharma 7 3 39 0
Kumble 8 4 19 1
Ganguly 2 0 2 0
Harbhajan 1 0 2 0

HIGHEST INDIVIDUAL SCORE BY AN INDIAN

Player	Runs	Opposition	Ground	Year
V Sehwag	309	Pakistan	Multan	2004
VVS Laxman	281	Australia	Kolkata	2001
R Dravid	270	Pakistan	Rawalpindi	2004
V Sehwag	254	Pakistan	Lahore	2006
S Tendulkar	248*	Bangladesh	Dhaka	2004
S Tendulkar	241*	Australia	Sydney	2004
S Ganguly	239	Pakistan	Bangalore	2007
S Gavaskar	236*	West Indies	Chennai	1983
R Dravid	233	Australia	Adelaide	2003
V Mankad	231	New Zealand	Chennai	1956

(* denotes not out)

Barisal snap Rajshahi run

SPORTS REPORTER

Nazmus Sadat was brilliant all-round show helped Khulna to a huge victory, Barisal stole the show by breaking Rajshahi's six-match winning streak with a stunning 18-run win and Mohammad Sharif snared five wickets in the 9th National Cricket League one-day competition held across the country yesterday.

At the Chittagong Divisional Stadium, Sadat took three wickets with his left-arm spin and then struck an unbeaten 92 in Khulna's chase of 189 runs set by the hosts.

Barisal defended their modest score of 188 all out, bowling out the visitors for 170 in 45.5 overs at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra.

Dhaka remained in third position with their 51-run victory over Sylhet at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium. Having scored 225, Sharif blew the visitors away for 174 runs in 41.5 overs.

BARISAL-RAJSHAHI

Khaled Mashud's decision to bowl first after winning the toss must have heartened him as his new-ball pairing of Shafiq Al Zahir and Delwar Hossain destroyed the Barisal top-order.

But plucky all-rounder Abul Bashar held the innings together and gave his bowlers a score to defend. He scored 65, chiefly built

POINTS TABLE (ONE-DAY)

Team	M	W	L	T	Total
Rajshahi	7	6	1	0	12
Khulna	7	4	3	0	8
Dhaka	7	4	3	0	8
Barisal	7	3	4	0	6
Chittagong	7	2	5	0	4
Sylhet	7	2	5	0	4

with singles and twos and only a boundary and a six in his 108-ball innings.

Left-arm seamer Shafiq finished with the best figures of three for 24.

Rajshahi were in cruise control with all their top three getting among the 30s but once Farhad Hossain fell for 39, the rest just faded in the face of some great spin bowling from Tarique Islam, who took three wickets.

Bashar, who chipped in with a wicket as well, was declared man-of-the-match. The win meant Barisal move to fourth position with 6 points, jumping over Dhaka and Chittagong.

DHAKA-SYLHET

Former national batsman Mehrab Hossain and Nadif Chowdhury both struck 51 each as Dhaka reached 225 in 49.2 overs. Sylhet seamer Rashidur Rahman took three while Alok Kapali took two from 4.2 overs off leg-spin.

Sylhet never stood a chance once their top-order caved at the feet of Sharif.

The right-arm seamer took the wickets of skipper Rajin Saleh, Golam Rahman, Sharifullah, Enamul Haque and Rashid to be adjudged man-of-the-match.

CHITTAGONG-KHULNA

Left-handed opener Sadat took

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PHOTO: STAR

Nazmus Sadat of Khulna sweeps one fine during the National Cricket League seventh round one-day at Chittagong at the Divisional Stadium yesterday. The opening batsman struck an unbeaten 92 to claim the man-of-the-match award.

'Ton to help bowling'

REUTERS, Bangalore

India all-rounder Irfan Pathan believes the confidence he gained by scoring a maiden Test century against Pakistan on Sunday will help his bowling while he aims to regain a permanent Test spot.

Playing in his first Test in more than a year, Pathan blasted 102 after Yuvraj Singh slammed 169 and Sourav Ganguly hit 239 to help the hosts post 626 in the first innings of the third and final Test.

The visitors, trailing 1-0 in the series, were 86 for one in reply at stumps on day two.

"The boost in confidence will also help my bowling," Pathan told reporters.

The left-armer, opening the attack, bowled four maidens in nine overs after being drafted into the squad for the final Test following injuries to spearhead Zaheer

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Germany lift hockey title

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Germany edged Australia 1-0 to win a nail-biting final of the Champions Trophy Sunday with German skipper Timo Wess' early strike ensuring another feather in the cap for the World Champions.

It was a grand day for 25-year-old Wess, who also scored in the final last year, but that time Germany lost 2-1.

This time his superb flick in the fifth minute was enough to ensure Germany a record ninth title, while Wess received the Best Player of the Final award.

After the final, Wess said: "Last year I was on the losing side and it did not matter that I scored. But this time it was true and we won."

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Eves' cricket league from Dec 27

SPORTS REPORTER

The divisional women's cricket league will kick off at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur on December 27.

This was decided at a combined meeting of the BCB recently.

Four divisional teams will be participating in the tournament. Teams will report at their designated hotels on 25 December 2007.

The BCB Women's Wing has decided to pay match fees for players who will be participating in the tournament.

There will be prize money for the highest run scorer, top wicket taker, player of the matches and player of the tournament.

In the selection process of divisional teams BCB coaches have been assigned to assist the participating divisions.



PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraful (R) replies to a question while coach Jamie Siddons (L) apparently tries to understand the language which is something new for the Australian during a press briefing at the Mairpur National Stadium yesterday. Also seen in the picture is BCB's media committee chairman Ahmed Sajjadul Alam.

Ash expects good days

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraful said that his team will board the New Zealand-bound flight with a promise to do better than what a different set of Tigers did six years ago Down Under.

Bangladesh will embark on their second trip to the land of Black Caps on Wednesday after their first mission way back in 2001. This trip is going to be a first for not only most of the players but also for Jamie Siddons, the Australian coach who took over the demanding job last month.

New Zealand has always been a visitors' nightmare and for a thriving team like Bangladesh, who were

whitewashed in the 2-match Test series in 2001, the coming three one-day internationals followed by two Tests would be a real test.

But on completion of a week's training where Siddons tried to give his charges a feel of the hostility that is destined to come from the Kiwis, Ashraful looked upbeat about the one-day part of the series.

"We will try our best to give our hundred per cent," said Ashraful at a press briefing at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

"We have improved as a team in one-day cricket and we won few good matches this year, so you can't completely rule out one or two wins in the one-day series. But everybody knows how difficult it is to face New Zealand in their own den," said Ashraful, who is going to lead the team in another demand-

ing condition after his debut as captain in Sri Lanka.

Siddons however expressed guarded optimism: "I wouldn't be expecting massive improvement overnight".

He was obviously referring to the poor performance of the Tigers in the longer-version with their last three Tests in Sri Lanka seeing defeats inside three or four days.

"We have only four players who survived from our last tour to the country in 2001 and that means it would be the first visit for our remaining eleven players. The first and foremost challenge would be to adjust with the conditions because you know how difficult it is to survive against the sideways movement of the ball in chilly weather," he explained.

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