



Did U Know?

Bangladesh's Shakib Al Hasan took five wickets in an innings for the second time on the second day of the first Test against South Africa on Thursday.



Javier Mascherano (Argentine soccer captain) "We think it is a new era and it was very important to win. When you start to play with a new manager the motivation is so different -- maybe it's a little bit extra when you see (Diego) Maradona on the bench." After winning against Scotland on Wednesday.



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- STAR Sports**
English Premier League
Chelsea v Newcastle United
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- Aston Villa v Man United
Live from 11:25pm
- Primera Liga**
Sevilla v Valencia
Live from 2:00am (Sunday)

Sachin, Pathan return

One-day cricket's leading batsman Sachin Tendulkar was on Thursday included in the India squad for the next two matches against England, the cricket board said.

Tendulkar, 35, was rested for the first three games at his own request following the four-Test series against world champions Australia which India won 2-0 to annex the Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

Tendulkar, who has a world record 16,361 runs and 42 centuries to his name in 417 one-day internationals, last played limited-overs cricket for India in the tri-series in Australia in March.

Tendulkar and all-rounder Irfan Pathan are the two changes in the 15-man squad which took a 3-0 lead in the seven-match series against England here earlier on Thursday.

The duo replaces seamer Rudra Pratap Singh and

Siddons stays upbeat

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER in Bloemfontein

Before rain stopped the third day's proceedings half an hour before the lunch break, Bangladesh lost two more wickets when Tamim Iqbal and Zunaed Siddiqui got out in similar fashion by chasing short and wide deliveries at the OUTsurance Oval here yesterday.

The two overnight batsmen showed some resistance after pathetic first innings batting before they lost their concentration although Zunaed became a laughing stock by the way he fended off the short deliveries.

Despite the poor batting show, Bangladesh coach Jamie Siddons however was not at all frustrated with the outcome so far where they were all set to concede another innings defeat against

the Proteas if there is nothing special from his charges.

"(I'm) not that frustrated. I am just hoping they are learning. I think today (Friday) the performance is really good under a lot of pressure against a good bowling attack. Two attacking shots were there to hit, but we didn't execute them well," said Siddons.

"(In the) first innings, in greenish wicket against a good bowling attack, our boys were under pressure without the experience of having done that sort of thing before. I think they didn't expect much more... Maybe 200 on that track against such an attack. I expected a lot more fight in the remaining proceedings," he added.

The Bangladesh coach found nothing wrong when his side was bowled out for only 153 runs in the first innings to concede follow-on.

"It's not frustrating, just another expe-

rience. When New Zealand came over here they got bowled out for 120 every time they batted against the same attack. They are a lot better cricket team. It happens against these teams in their own condition," the Australian defended.

Siddons was also not ready to blame Tamim Iqbal for chasing the outside off stump delivery against Makhaya Ntini when he started the day brilliantly and showed rare patience in the middle.

"Tamim has got to hit, if he don't hit that ball, he is never going to score. I don't mind that at all. A short wide ball, he had to hit it. Yuvraj Singh, Ricky Ponting, all good batsman will try to hit that ball. That's what he waited for after letting go (of several deliveries). He has got a bad ball, just didn't execute it well. It's not the shot selection. It's the execution," Siddons explained the reason behind the dismissal.

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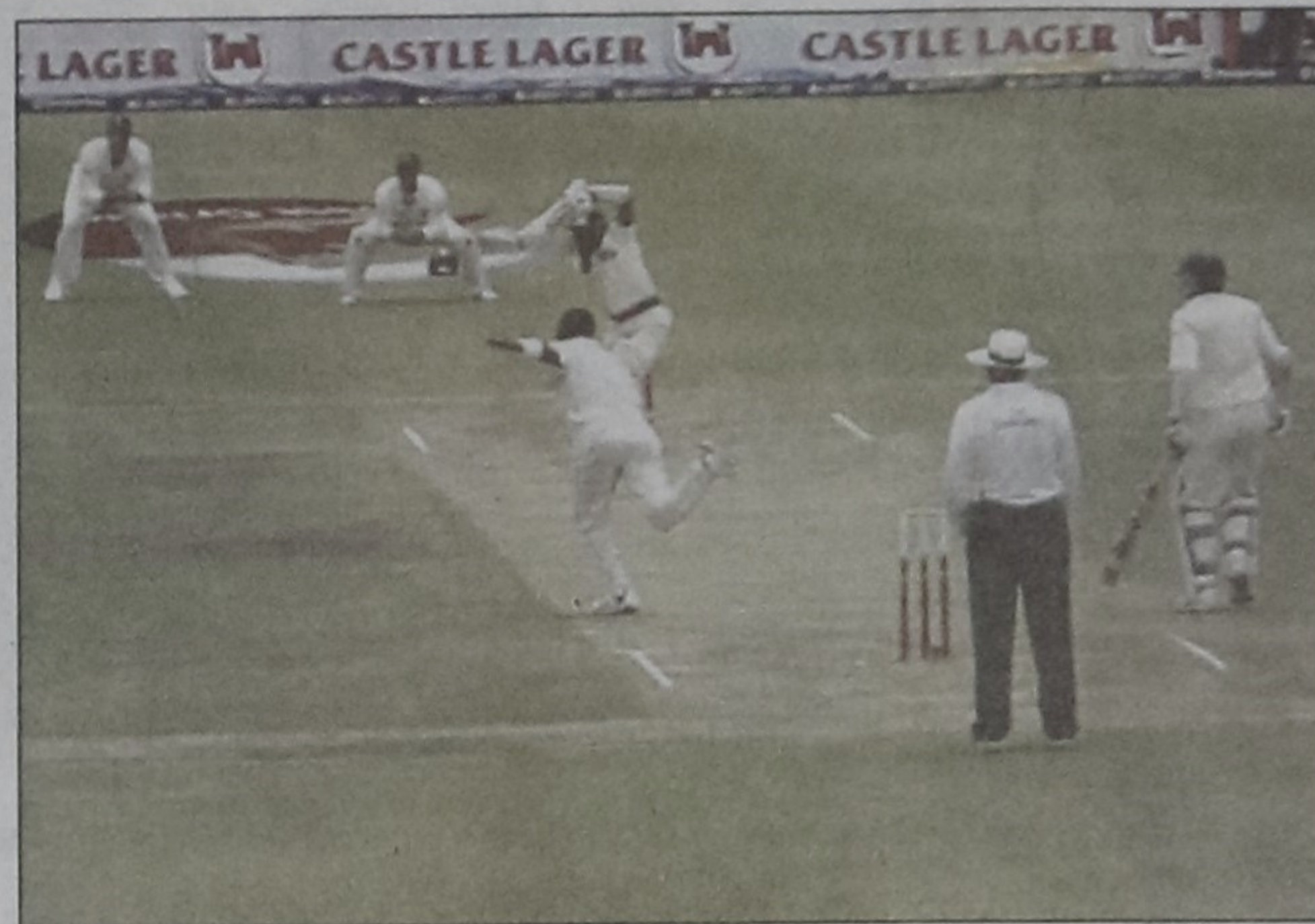


PHOTO: TIGERCRIKET.COM

Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraf follows through on a cover drive off South Africa paceman Makhaya Ntini during the third day of the first Test at the OUTsurance Oval in Bloemfontein yesterday.

The future is there

Football

AL MUSABBIR SADI

After two tournaments and five matches, national football coach Shafiqul Islam Manik believes that Bangladesh have taken two steps ahead from their stand in the last SAFF Championship, where they failed to win a match and bowed out of the group stages.

"Our expectations were not to reach the final or win the Merdeka Cup or the Grand Royal Challenge Cup. We just wanted to know where we stand in Asian football. Having played Southeast Asian (SEA) teams in the two meets, we know that we are still far behind them," Manik told The Daily Star yesterday after his return from Myanmar's Grand Royal Challenge Cup.

"We played better teams in both tournaments and we actually didn't have the preparation to cope with them. Still I'd say our results were not too bad," opined the former national footballer.

Bangladesh suffered identical 1-0 defeats to Myanmar and Mozambique U-21s in Malaysia before holding eventual Merdeka champions Vietnam (Under-23) to a 2-2 draw in the group stage in Manik's debut as national coach last month.

And this month, Bangladesh drew goalless with hosts Myanmar before going 2-0 down to Indonesia, who ousted Korea's Ulsan Hyundai in the semifinals to set a clash against Myanmar in yesterday's final.

"We lost to Myanmar in Malaysia but at their home ground, we held them. Maybe we would be third time lucky against our neighbours," hoped Manik adding that a long journey and unfriendly fixture -- playing two matches inside 48 hours -- was Bangladesh's curse in the Challenge Cup.

"I would rate our show in Merdeka better than Challenge Cup. In Malaysia, we played better against Myanmar but lost. In Myanmar, the hosts dominated but could not score.



SHAFIQU L ISLAM MANIK

Indonesia, who had a four-day rest before their opening match, had the chance to do homework on us but we played against them without any knowledge about them.

"We were the only team from Saarc in the Challenge Cup and the teams from the SEA region were much better prepared," said Manik, who thinks that the Grand Royal Challenge Cup was a more advanced tournament than the Merdeka.

"Indonesia scored twice in the first half but once we could study their style, we bounced back in the second half.

"Also, we suffered two setbacks in the two matches. Ariful started against Myanmar with a bandage that perhaps stopped his blood circulation and had to be withdrawn early. Similarly, Waly Faisal, who started against Indonesia despite a stomach upset from the previous night's dinner, felt so weak after half an hour that I had to replace him. Both the players were vital in our set-up.

"It's possible to play well in a friendly after two-three days' preparation but very difficult to get results in a tournament unless you have two weeks to train, especially for a nation whose main league weak.

"After seeing the SEA

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Khulna play it safe

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Khulna preferred the security of a draw rather than chasing a small target against Sylhet on the final day of their sixth round National Cricket League tie at the Sylhet Stadium yesterday.

After Atiqur Rahman's five-for helped bowl out the hosts for 198 runs in the second innings, Khulna were set a target of 135 runs but they settled with 78 for four as play ended.

Maybe the early wickets of Ashraful Aziz, Amit Mazumder and Sahagir Hossain held them back but Khulna did send Ziaur Rahman to up the run-rate but when the lanky big-hitter fell, skipper Tushar Imran decided to shut up shop and play out the remaining overs.

Earlier, Kamrul Islam held the Sylhet innings together with an unbeaten 197-ball 89 that had a dozen boundaries

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Chess Olympiad Bangladesh draw with Norway

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh men's held 19th-seeded Norway 2-2 in the seventh round of the 38th Chess Olympiad in Dresden, Germany on Thursday.

Grandmaster Enamul Hossain Rajib defeated his higher-ranked opponent GM Lie Kjetil after 55 moves while GM Ziaur Rahman drew with world No. 4 GM Carlsen Magnus at 38th move.

GM Abdullah Al Rakib shared points with GM Leif Erlend Johannessen while FM Abu Sufian Shakil lost to IM Jon Ludvig Hammer as the Bangladesh men's team moved to 37th place out of 154

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Premier Cricket begins in Rangpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Kamalkatchna Club defeated Eleven Stars of Guptapara by 33 runs on the opening day of the Dhaka Bank Premier Cricket at the Rangpur Cricket Garden yesterday.

Kamalkatchna were all out for 187 after electing to bat with Rony scoring 79. Guptapara managed 154-9 in reply.

A total of 19 clubs will compete in the league, which was declared open by Police Superintendent of Rangpur Mahfuzul Islam. Deputy managing director of Dhaka Bank Sufi Mahmudul Islam was present.

Shakib keeps it simple

Cricket

BISHWAJIT ROY in Bloemfontein

It is itself a riddle for Shakib Al Hasan whether he is a batting all-rounder or a bowling all-rounder. This is however not a big issue for the young man as he has a very simple answer in this mixture: "I enjoy the game, that's it."

For the soft-spoken Magura-lad, talking with the press is much more difficult rather than performing in the middle and he always loves to come up with as brief an answer as it could be.

But definitely his second five-wicket haul in Tests gave him some comfort when coach Jamie Siddons always has considered the left-arm spinner as his side's main slow bowler. Many raised eyebrows when the Australian first disclosed that Shakib was chosen in the team as a key slow bowler. And the young bowler took no time to prove his coach's words right in the very first attempt as he bowled his best figures of 7-36 against New Zealand to create a chance for his side to win a Test match against a major team other than Zimbabwe.

That was in a friendly condition at home but Shakib again proved that it's not a stroke of luck rather he has got the ability to take the position of the number one slow bowler after the departure of look-a-like Mohammad Rafique. The left-arm spinner's second five-wicket haul came in a more difficult situation when the mighty opponents South Africa was in the

middle of a run feast.

Understandably the bowling of Shakib excited Siddons. "Excellent, world-class bowling! He is a world-class cricketer and we can rely day and day on him," was the response of the Tigers mentor when asked about Shakib's bowling in the first innings which enabled them to restrict the hosts to 441 for 9.

"It's a big thing that the team kept faith on me as the main spinner but I don't think about this matter. I always love to play cricket no matter whether it's bowling or batting. My main objective is to perform for the team," said Shakib.

"I think we got a few successes because I am enjoying the game... there is nothing else," he said when asked whether the tag of main spinner put any pressure on him.

Shakib, who proved himself as very much a one-day bowler from the beginning of his career, also informed that he didn't add anything in his bowling for the Tests.

"I have been bowling my way and didn't bring any change or add anything to earn success in the Tests. I am not experimenting anything rather I am always focussing on what I can do," said the 21-year-old all-rounder.

His first big effort in Chittagong ultimately went in vain while the joy was also short-lived in Bloemfontein following the brittle batting, so the left-hander also knows that he has to be also good enough as a batsman to bring the result and as well as prove his coach's words 'a world class' cricketer right.

'Ishant changed it'

Cricket

PTI, Melbourne

Australia captain Ricky Ponting feels his team could have won the crucial third Test at Perth but for that awesome spell by India pacer Ishant Sharma during the hosts second innings and said he was lucky to be part of a great sporting duel.

"I will always reckon that if I could have got through just one more over in our second innings, then we might still have won," Ponting wrote in his Captain's Diary 2008.

"Tall, lean, ultra-impressive Ishant Sharma, playing just his fourth Test and still eight-and-a-half months short of his 20th birthday, had bowled an awesome spell to me: seven overs when he was fast, aggressive and relentless, where I never felt as if I was truly 'in'," he said.

Ponting lamented that Australia, who had never lost a Test to a team from the sub-continent at the difficult WACA track, went down to India by 72 runs in January this year.

"But even with his heroics, we were 2-117 seeking 413, I was 45 not out, Mike Hussey was 26 not out and I sensed Sharma was about to be taken off. However, ...Kumble gave his teenage quick one more over.

"First ball, I pushed forward at a delivery that fizzed through and edged a straightforward catch to Dravid at first slip. From then on, whenever we seemed we might be in a chance to reach our imposing target, we faltered," he added.

Ponting, however, said he cherished his duel with the Delhi speedster as it was a great cricketing moment which put the bitterness of Sydney Test behind.

"Though that personal battle with Ishant Sharma ended badly, it still remains a positive memory for me because it reminded me of what it is that makes Test cricket such a fantastic experience. All the off-field angst and argy-bargy of the previous 12 days was forgotten, and this contest between bat and ball took precedence," Ponting said.

The Tasmanian right-handed batsman

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Katich holds firm

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Simon Katich was the main man standing between New Zealand and a gettable fourth-innings chase at the Gabba, where 16 wickets tumbled on an eventful second day. Mitchell Johnson led Australia's fast men back into form as they bundled New Zealand out for 156 but they will need to retain that spark on the third day after New Zealand's seamers were equally dangerous in Australia's second innings.

Australia closed the day with a lead of 189, which was a handy but hardly intimidating buffer. Ricky Ponting said at the toss the pitch looked under-prepared by a day due to the storms earlier in the week and more resembled a Gabba Sheffield Shield surface than a typical Brisbane Test pitch. He was spot on. In the two Sheffield Shield games that have been held at the venue this season, quality batsmen faced a task as hopeless as becoming Chris Martin's batting coach.

There was so much spice in the pitches that the average for completed innings totals across the two state games was 185. It could have come as no surprise that after Australia battled to 214, New Zealand would be bundled out for 156 -- the mean of those two totals is also 185. According to the numbers Australia could almost have enough, though they will feel far from comfortable.

They would have been seriously concerned but for the effort of Katich, who displayed powerful concentration in compiling a half-century that featured several terrific drives through off-side gaps. He continued the trend

of the game -- batsmen willing to apply themselves could succeed, although most of the men from both teams lacked patience.

A couple of the Australians in the second innings lacked luck as well. Matthew Hayden received a peach of an offcut first ball and edged behind off Martin and Michael Hussey was wrongly given caught behind off an Iain O'Brien delivery that clearly brushed pad only. New Zealand also continued their excellent fielding and a side-on direct hit from Aaron Redmond caught Michael Clarke short for 9.

Worryingly for Australia two of their most important batsmen, Ricky Ponting and Andrew Symonds, fell to injudicious shots having made reasonable starts. Ponting, who was impatient in the first innings as well, top-edged a pull off O'Brien and Symonds edged behind trying to hook. When Shane Watson was lbw to Martin late in the day, it completed a magnificent session for New Zealand's consistent seamers.

The bowlers did need to fire after they failed to offer a resolute Daniel Flynn any assistance with the bat. Flynn was justified in playing a watchful innings after he came to the crease at 4 for 73 when his top-order colleagues had failed to capitalise on their starts. But he was left stranded on 39 as the final four wickets fell for 13 and none of the bottom five batsmen reached double-figures.

The only disappointment for Australia in the dying stages of New Zealand's innings was that Johnson missed out on the best chance he will ever have of taking a Test hat-trick. Johnson collected three wickets in six balls, beginning with Daniel Vettori, who prodded to point for 2, and following with Tim Southee for a duck in similar fashion from the last ball of the same over.

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All about Cricket



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