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Did U Know?

Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraful has the lowest batting average for anyone with five Test centuries. He scores at 23.82 runs per innings, lower than Zimbabwe's Grant Flower who scored six centuries and had an average of 29.54.



STAR Cricket
Australia v South Africa
Third Test, Day Five
Live from 5:30am
ESPN
Sportscentre India
Sports News
Live at 8:30pm



David Beckham
(English football icon)
"I love my team Los Angeles Galaxy but for me this is a great experience. Not everyone has managed to play in what everyone considers the best club in the world."
After he was invited by AC Milan to play a friendly against German side Hamburg.



National Cricket League
(One-day match)
Barisal v Dhaka
Venue: BKSP
Chittagong v Sylhet
Venue: Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium
Khulna v Rajshahi
Venue: Fatullah Cricket Stadium
Citycell B. League
Abahani v Khulna Abahani
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium
Time: 4:00pm

Nat'l tennis player Pimon passes away

SPORTS REPORTER

Former Davis Cup player and coach of Bangladesh Tennis Federation Mazharul Islam Pimon died from head injury at the United Hospital in Dhaka yesterday.



MAZHARUL ISLAM PIMON

Pimon, an HSC student of Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Prothistan (BKSP), was riding a motorcycle to the Savar sports institute on Monday morning to appear his test examinations when he fell victim to a road accident near Ashulia, says a press release.

He was taken to the United Hospital where he was under observation of Dr. Nuruzzaman

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

Siddons gives no excuses

BISHWAJIT ROY in Chittagong

The picture was all clear after the third day's play about what was going to happen in the second and final Test at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium. So everybody was all but confirmed about the outcome of this Test but there was only interest left to see whether the Tigers could show the same sort of contest, something they did in the second innings in Mirpur only last week.

But they were far away from their impressive first Test efforts to once again prove the critics tag of 'consistently inconsistent' right.

One can't even dream that Bangladesh can win a match by chasing a target of 624 but what one can expect is for Bangladesh to show their character so that one can believe in their improvement.

Though it was difficult to play shots as the wicket was not too deteriorated even on the fourth day for what the deadly spin duo Muttiah Muralidaran and Ajantha Mendis could be dangerous but still the Bangladesh second innings was wrapped up for 158 runs in 49.2 overs in two sessions.

There were a lot of curiosity and debate on why Sri Lanka skipper Mahela Jayawardene took so much time to extend the lead but in the end it proved that two sessions were good enough for the visitors to finish the game with a day in hand.

It was evident that the Bangladesh batsmen were in a hurry

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

LARGEST MARGIN OF VICTORY BY RUNS

Winners	Margin	Opposition	Ground	Match Date
England	675 runs	Australia	Brisbane	Nov 30, 1928
Australia	562 runs	England	The Oval	Aug 18, 1934
Australia	530 runs	South Africa	Melbourne	Feb 17, 1911
Australia	491 runs	Pakistan	Perth	Dec 16, 2004
Sri Lanka	465 runs	Bangladesh	Chittagong	Jan 3, 2009
West Indies	425 runs	England	Manchester	Jul 8, 1976
Australia	409 runs	England	Lord's	Jun 24, 1948
West Indies	408 runs	Australia	Adelaide	Jan 26, 1980
Australia	384 runs	England	Brisbane	Nov 7, 2002
Australia	382 runs	England	Adelaide	Jan 11, 1895

Dilshan in the limelight

SPORTS REPORTER in Chittagong

The focus was firmly on his captain with due to his hundredth Test match but it was Tillakaratne Dilshan who made the second Test against Bangladesh a memorable one in his career at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday.

There had been lot of talking about deadly spin duo Muttiah Muralidaran and mystery spinner Ajantha Mendis before the start of the series. There was also much discussion about batting maestros Mahela Jayawardene and Kumar Sangakkara but it was ultimately the less famous Dilshan who took the spotlight after the two-match Test series, which the Sri Lankans emphatically won to continue their supremacy against the Tigers.

The right-hander's century in both innings made sure that Bangladesh suffered their heaviest defeat (by 465-run) in terms of runs in Test cricket and his fabulous effort left no choice for the adjudicators but declare him man-of-the-match and man-of-the-series.

"I can't forget this Test. I know I am the fourth Sri Lankan to score a hundred in each

innings. I stuck to my game plan which was to attack and I won the battle," said Dilshan, who made 162 and 143 in the second Test and then picked up four wickets for ten runs to mop up the Bangladesh tail to ensure the defeat inside four days.

"It's always a great feeling to score runs. I am really happy with my performance but I didn't know that I was the second batsman after Australian Alan Border to make 150 in both innings."

Dilshan however said that it was not so easy to bat on this kind of slow pitch.

"It's a totally different wicket from Mirpur. It's more difficult to score runs as the bounce is uneven and the pace is slow," he observed.

Sri Lanka skipper Jayawardene also said that it was not easy for them to win the match in these conditions despite the huge 465-run victory margin against the home side.

"I'm very happy because we knew it was going to be tough considering the conditions we were given. We knew we had to adjust. We were in trouble at times but the guys showed a lot of fight and character," he said.

"Dilshan in the first innings showed that

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5



THE LONE RANGER: Left-handed batsman Shakib Al Hasan drives the ball during his face-saving knock of 46 against Sri Lanka at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday. Skakib is the only Bangladesh player who was consistent both with the bat and ball during the two-Test series.

Tricky final day at SCG

BBC ONLINE, undated

South Africa need 314 runs on the final day of the third and final Test if they are to complete a clean sweep of the series after reaching 62-1 at stumps on the penultimate day at the SCG Tuesday.

Australia took their overnight 33-0 to 257 for 4, with Matthew Hayden making 39, his highest Test score of the series.

Simon Katich scored 61 and Ricky Ponting 53 before the skipper declared.

The visitors, set 376 to win, lost make-shift opener Morne Morkel without scoring but Neil McKenzie and Hashim Amla saw play through to stumps.

South Africa will usurp their opponents at the top of the Test-match rankings if they

can clinch victory on what should be a fascinating final day in Sydney.

Australia have an inexperienced attack, while South Africa successfully chased down 414 to win the first Test in Perth.

Nonetheless, it will be a difficult assignment for the visiting team.

Skipper Graeme Smith is unlikely to bat again after injuring his hand in the first innings of the third Test.

And the pitch at the Sydney Cricket Ground is showing signs of wear, while Australia's 288-2 against the Proteas in the 2005-06 season is the highest fourth innings total to win a Test at the ground.

Australia started the fourth day in aggressive fashion, with Hayden advancing down the track to drive through the on-side.

The out-of-form opener eventually fell

to Morne Morkel, inside edging a drive on to his stumps.

The Queenslander, whose place has come under increasing scrutiny during a frustrating summer, was given a rousing reception as he walked off the ground.

Ponting, who almost chopped the ball on to his stumps with the first delivery he faced, was in brilliant form, striking nine fours as he compiled his 53 off just 57 balls.

But just as the skipper looked set to really cut loose as the home team pushed for a declaration total, he too fell to an inside edge as he attempted to cut a delivery from Morkel.

Dale Steyn accounted for Katich lbw with only Mark Boucher appearing to appeal for the decision, while Michael Clarke hit an aggressive 41 off 55 balls in a partnership of 76 with Michael Hussey.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 6

BCB announces ticket prices

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday announced the ticket rates for the upcoming tri-series involving Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe.

AB Bank branches of Motijheel, Gulshan, New Elephant Road, Rokeya Sarani and Mirpur will have tickets from January 8. Ticket booths of the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium will also be open from 7.30am from Thursday.

The same branches will also hold tickets for the Bangladesh-Zimbabwe one-day series that begins on January 16. The daily ticket rates for the two series are as follows.

TICKET DETAILS	RATE
VIP	Tk. 1000
Club House	Tk. 300
Special Enclosure	Tk. 200
Gallery	Tk. 100

Manilal to hand over 3000 footballs today

SPORTS REPORTER

Asian Football Confederation (AFC) vice-president Manilal Fernando will handover three thousand footballs -- a gift from AFC president Mohamed Bin Hammam -- to the National Sports Council (NSC) chairman and Army Chief General Moeen U Ahmed today.

The programme will be held this morning at the newly built NSC Tower.

Manilal, also a FIFA development officer, and Sri Lanka Football Federation's CEO Chrysantha Perera were due to arrive in Dhaka last night.

The main purpose of the visit is to discuss FIFA's 'Goal project' two, under which the

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

Twenty-two wickets fall on Day One

Cricket

STAFF REPORTER, Bogra

It was the day of the bowlers at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium here yesterday as 22 wickets tumbled on the opening day of the three-day practice match between the Zimbabweans and GP-BCB National Cricket Academy.

As a 5000-strong crowd watched the batsmen's processions, the visitors gained a 163-run lead after scoring 133 for two in their second innings after first being bowled out for just 89 and then bowling out the hosts for a paltry 59. Zimbabwe's captain for the match Hamilton Masakadza struck eight boundaries in his unbeaten 55, adding 75 for the second wicket with Stuart Matsikenyeri, who made 42. Batting mainstay Tatenda Taibu remained not out on 19 with Masakadza. The right-hander later refused to blame the wicket. "It was the right decision to bat first after winning the toss," said Masakadza adding, "Our batsmen simply failed."

Even though the batsmen had some say in the late afternoon session, bowlers ruled the roost on a good batting wicket in the teams' first innings. As many as seven batsmen fell for ducks.

Opting to bat first, Zimbabwe openers Masakadza and Vusumuzi Sibanda added a quick 35 but once Nazmul Hossain cleaned up

both by the ninth over, the floodgates opened. Left-arm seamer Sajidul Islam trapped Tatenda Taibu in front for 16 and then went on to dismantle the lower order. He picked up five for 14 while Nazmul had four wickets. However slinger Rubel Hossain was given the full treatment by the visitors, giving away 46 in just six overs.

The local batsmen went after the Zimbabwe attack but their risk backfired. Only Marshall Ayub and Kamrul Islam made it into the double figures while the rest simply wilted. Seamer Edward Rainsford took the key wicket of captain Nayeem Islam for just eight.

Marshall's hour-long innings of 18 runs ended when military medium-pacer Elton Chigumbura bowled him.

The pacemen thrived under the conditions and the only sign of spin came when left-arm spinner Saqlain Sajib was introduced very late in the day. Nayeem praised his bowlers but hoped that the batsmen can turn around.

"The bowlers did their job really well but we (the batsmen) failed. I hope we can turn around in the second innings," said the right-hander who is in line for the tri-nation one-day series.

BRIEF SCORES

ZIMBABWEANS: First innings 89 all out in 21.3 overs (Masakadza 21, Sibanda 15, Matsikenyeri 8, Taibu 16, Williams 1, Chigumbura 4,

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

Ctg MSC rout R'ganj

SPORTS REPORTER



Chittagong Mohammedan returned to winning ways in the Citycell B. League with an impressive 5-2 away victory against giant-killers Rahmatganj at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Akbar Hossain Ridon opened the scoring for the visitors after four minutes while Guinean striker Raphael Sagnio, Nur Hossain Daulat, Imtiaz Hossain Jitu and Liberian midfielder Anthony Pele Doe added the rest.

Rahmatganj briefly came back with Ugandan forward Idris Kasriye's first-half equaliser while Zakir Hossain scored the other for the old-Dhaka side, who stumbled to their second consecutive loss despite bagging seven points out of maximum nine against title contenders Abahani, Mohammedan and Shiekh Russel in the first-leg.

The Chittagonians, who had tasted their first home defeat in the previous round when they lost 1-0 to leaders and defending champions Abahani, pushed their collection to 20 points from 13 matches to retain fifth place.

The result, the port city giants' fifth win, also dashed the Rahmatganj hopes to climb

to fifth place as they stuck to 14 points from 12 games.

The Chittagong Black and Whites took early control when Ridon scored with a placing shot on a square pass by Raphael. The tourists seemed to hang on to the slim lead but

the match came alive in the final end of the first half with three goals in the last four minutes.

Idris delicately headed home a freekick by Mohiuddin to bring the scores level in the 41st minute with his ninth

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1



Chittagong Mohammedan goalkeeper Mamun Khan grips the ball during a Rahmatganj corner in their Citycell B. League match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR