



Zimbabwe keeper Brendan Taylor (L) looks on as Bangladesh batsman Mohammad Ashraful goes inside out to loft one over extra-cover for a boundary during his scintillating knock of 103 in the 1st ODI at the Queens Sports Club in Bulawayo yesterday.

## ASHRAFUL STAR OF THE SHOW Tigers prey on the Lions

### Cricket

ATIQUE ANAM

It couldn't have been any more emphatic for the Tigers. An eight-wicket victory to start the five-match series against Zimbabwe at their own backyard just lighted up the Grameenphone Cup at Queens Sports Club in Bulawayo yesterday.

Carrying their form and confidence from the Caribbean and not distracted by the shock loss in the practice match, Bangladesh made a statement loud and clear, we are here to win.

And who is better to lead the way than their most successful batsman, Mohammad Ashraful? Once again he led Bangladesh to their victory with a magnificent unbeaten century, one that was full of class, temperament, cleverness and audacity.

Ashraful hammered a run-a-ball 103 as Bangladesh chased down a modest Zimbabwe total of 207 with a lavish 15.3 overs to spare. Ashraful, who struck a dozen boundaries and a couple of sixes, completed his third hundred by running down a ball to the third-man boundary. His bout with left-arm spinner Raymond Price was the highlight of an otherwise one-sided match. Understandably irked after being taunted by the bowler, Ashraful hit back by smashing a six followed by three successive fours in the 15th over that produced 19 runs.

It all started with Tamim Iqbal and Zunaed Siddiqui getting the innings off to a flyer on a pitch that lived up to its reputation as a belter. Tamim thrashed the second ball of the innings from Elton Chigumbura through point for four followed by a splendid straight drive for the same result. His opening partner Zunaed provided even harsher treatment to the other bowler, Chamu Chibhaba, spanking him for three boundaries in different directions. The bowler had the last laugh though, as Zunaed played one drive too many, this time going straight to the

hands of Graeme Cremer at mid-off. Bangladesh had raced to 30 in four overs by then, 28 of those coming in boundaries and Zunaed contributing 21 off only 12 balls.

Zimbabwe skipper Prosper Utseya was quick to read the signs and brought himself on as early as the sixth over in a bid to stem the flow of runs. Ashraful was cautious to start, probably not in form as yet, left a few deliveries outside the off-stump and dealt with the spin carefully. But he was soon to join the act as he sliced two slightly wide deliveries from Utseya through point for back-to-back boundaries. Both batsmen were looking at ease with the bowling as they maintained a steady run-rate of six through the first two powerplays. Zimbabwe's most experienced bowler Price was taken to task by Ashraful as the spinner was dispensed to all parts of the ground including a huge six over long-on. Both the batsmen soon got to their fifties and started to milk in the boundaries without showing much respect to any of the bowlers. Utseya tried out all his options, but no one seemed to make any impact on the scoring rate as the Tigers raced towards the target. Tamim's late dismissal brought a few cheers from the crowd and a few smiles on the Zimbabwe players, but was too little to bring in any decisive turnaround for the home team. Ashraful inserted his total command over this benign attack and led the visitors to a most convincing victory, beating their bitter rivals by eight wickets and 15 overs left.

Earlier, having won the toss and electing to bowl first on a wicket with some grass that surely had some assistance for the pacemen early on. And the pacers didn't take long to reward their skipper. Syed Rasel, the left arm seamer with very little pace, used the early moisture expertly and beat opener Hamilton Masakadza a couple of times before the batsman went after a wide ball only to nick it to keeper Mushfiqur Rahim. The other opener Mark Vermeulen, back after a long time in the wilderness, would go on to play a commanding knock.

Along with Rasel, other pacer Nazmul Hossain kept the batsmen quiet for most part, occasionally faltering in line and length and being duly punished for. The second wicket to fall was Chibhaba having scored only 7 runs. Nazmul bowled a back of a length delivery outside off-stump, and the batsman got a thin edge to the keeper with the score on 25.

It was in the 13th over that spin was introduced as captain Shakib Al Hasan brought himself into the attack and immediately made some impact as he had a loud appeal against Vermeulen for lbw only to be turned down by the umpire. Enamul Haque was brought in at the other end.

Shakib was unlucky again a few overs later as Vermeulen swung one high over midwicket but the fielder (Nazmul) under that one, having all the time in the world, spilled it in the end. That proved to be a costly mistake. Shakib however got the reward for his consistent line and length when he trapped Brendan Taylor in front of the wicket. The batsman might consider himself a bit unlucky as replays showed that he got a thin inside edge as he defended, and he had got a massive stride in as well.

Vermeulen, at the other end, was battoning quite comfortably, no sign of rustiness from his long absence from international cricket. He milked deliveries on all parts and hit boundaries occasionally as he reached his 50 off just 73 deliveries.

Chris Coventry came in and was looking ominous as he hit a boundary and a six off to race off to 19 before Shakib made a surprising change to bring on Ashraful who with his very first delivery lured the batsman to play a big shot towards midwicket, but he top-edged it and Mahmudullah took a well-judged catch just within the rope.

The later batsmen came in and played a few lusty blows but eventually were skinned by Nazmul who outshone others taking three wickets for 29 in 6.5 overs. Once looking good for a 230-plus score,

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## Abahani start camp Aug 12

SPORTS REPORTER

While most of clubs are yet to complete their players' registration formalities for the 3rd B. League, holders Abahani are all set to begin camp on Wednesday (August 12) at the club ground.

The Dhanmondi-based outfit were supposed to have a conditioning camp in Cox's Bazar under Argentine trainer Diego Alvaro, but the team management dropped the idea due to a rush at the world's largest sea beach following the government holiday halfway through this month.

Besides, the Federation Cup is very close to get started and we are doubtful whether the players can recover after the conditioning camp if we begin the camp in Cox's Bazar after August 20. That's why we dropped the idea and are trying to get the allotment at the Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protishthan (BKSP) after the national football camp ends,"

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## Farashganj vow upsets

### Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Farashganj Sporting Club promised yesterday that they would be a title-deciding factor in the B. League after singling up 15 booters including three who are in the ongoing national football camp at BKSP.

The trio are defender Rezaul Karim Reza (new registration), midfielder Imtiaz Sultan Jitu of Chittagong Mohammedan SC and midfielder Mezbabol Haq Manik (new registration), who was supposed to join star-studded Mohammedan SC.

The Old Dhaka outfit, who finished sixth in last season's professional football league, roped in Chittagong Mohammedan's defender Dhamir Barua, Chittagong Abahani's midfielder Ismail Zahid, Rahmatganj MFS's striker Hirok Joarder, defender Imroz Chowdhury and Sheikh Russell KC's defender Prashanta Day.

Besides, they retained the services of goalkeeper Sujan Chowdhury, defenders Abu Faisal and Arafat Ronny and midfielder Ali Hossain, but they could not stop losing 12-goal striker Enamul Haq, who joined holders Abahani.

Coach Abu Yousuf believes his juvenile side would give others a tough time in the upcoming season and to be factor for the title aspirant.

"I always prefer young and energetic players, who I believe are capable of picking up three key components -- power, speed and skill," Yousuf said. "And, if those three things can be combined, the results will automatically come."

The veteran coach also promised that his side would be able to present an entertaining show to help bring the spectators to the big bowl.

The former national footballer is also thinking of elevating Farashganj from where they ended in the prestigious league.

The signed players are Sujan Chowdhury, Abu Faisal Ahmed, Arafat Ali Ronny, M Rezaul Karim Reza, Dhamir Barua, Mahfuzur Rahman Babu, Imroz Chowdhury, Prashanto Day, Mustafizur Rahman Saikat, Imtiaz Sultan Jitu, Mezbabol Haq Manik, Ismail Zahid, Ali Hossain, Hirok Joarder and Touhidul Alam Sabu.

## NCA keep pace in S Africa

SPORTS REPORTER

Standard Bank National Academy of South Africa took a slim 13-run lead against visiting GP-BCB National Cricket Academy (NCA) on the second day of the first four-day Tukkies 1 in Pretoria yesterday.

The hosts reached 280-7 at stumps in the first innings, thanks to fifties from Zondo and Adair, after the visitors posted 267 in the first innings.

Soon after resumption of the hosts' second day on 19 for no loss, the NCA struck to reduce their counterparts to 36-1 and later picked up another two wickets before having lunch with the scoreboard reading 111-3 in 33 overs.

Rossouw kept the hosts' wheel running smashing an attacking 47 off 68 balls studded with two sixes and four fours while Zondo played a patient 56 off 130 balls that included two sixes and as many fours.

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Australia paceman Mitchell Johnson (C) celebrates as he dismisses England batsman Graeme Swann (L) on the third day of the fourth Ashes Test at Headingley on Sunday.

## Australia thrash England

### Cricket

AFP, Leeds

Australia thrashed England by an innings and 80 runs as they won the fourth Test at Headingley here on Sunday inside three days to level the series at 1-1 and revive their bid to retain the Ashes.

The result left the Ashes all square ahead of the fifth and final Test at The Oval starting on August 20.

England, who resumed Sunday in the dire position of 82 for five in their second innings, still 261 runs behind Australia's first innings 445 and facing the prospect of a record-breaking home defeat, were bowled out for 263.

Stuart Broad (61) and Graeme Swann (62) delayed the seemingly inevitable with an eighth-wicket stand of 108 off 79 balls that delighted home fans after the pair had come together with England on 120 for seven.

At lunch, England were 245 for eight, 98 behind, with Swann 56 not out and Stephen Harmison six not out.

But soon after the break Swann on 62, one shy of his Test-best score, was caught behind off left-arm quick Mitchell Johnson, who took five wickets for 69 runs in the innings.

Johnson then wrapped up the match in the sixth over after lunch when he clean bowled last man Graham Onions for nought.

England captain Andrew Strauss said despite the lopsided result it was important that his side retain their composure.

"We started very poorly -- we're not proud of what we've done this week, no we have

got to lift ourselves.

"The whole point now is to be calm and not to panic -- we're still in a good position, if we win at The Oval we win the series," he told Sky Sports.

Winning captain Ricky Ponting said: "It's been an enjoyable week for us, we played some great cricket -- all credit to our bowlers who bowled brilliantly on the first morning to set up the game for us."

England started the day with night-watchman James Anderson unbeaten on nought and wicket-keeper Matthew Prior four not out.

Anderson, off Sunday's second ball, extended his world record for most consecutive Test innings without a duck to 54 thanks to a square cut four off Ben Hilfenhaus for four.

But next ball he edged to Ponting at second slip.

Prior offered brief resistance before he too fell to Hilfenhaus, for 22, well caught one-handed by diving wicket-keeper Brad Haddin to leave England 120 for seven.

Pace bowler Broad, who took a Test-best six for 91 on Saturday, was given a life

on 18 when Peter Siddle at mid-off dropped a difficult chance, running back, off left-arm quick Mitchell Johnson.

Broad's four off Stuart Clark ensured England would not suffer Sunday a record home Test defeat by Australia to top their innings and 180 run loss at Trent Bridge in 1989.

Driving strongly, left-hand bat Broad struck four fours off one Clark over in 51 balls.

Broad then went to his fifth Test fifty in style with an off-drive off Siddle to the boundary, the 23-year-old reaching landmark in

78 balls with eight fours.

Broad could have gone on 53 when a drive off Siddle saw Johnson, backpedalling at long-off, drop the difficult chance and knock the ball over the boundary for four and on 57 he was missed at long leg by Simon Katich.

He eventually held out off Siddle for six to bring up his fifty in just 53 balls with 10 fours.

But Swann hooked Siddle for six to bring up his fifty in just 53 balls with 10 fours.

Siddle whose first six overs this innings on Saturday yielded just four runs, conceded 46 in his six overs before lunch on Sunday.

England, without injured stars Andrew Flintoff -- the inspiration behind their 115-run second Test win at Lord's -- and Kevin Pietersen, were on the backfoot after collapsing to 102 all out on Friday's first day.

Clark took three wickets for 18 runs on his return to international cricket and Siddle a Test-best five for 21.

Australia, in reply, were 151 for four, just 49 runs ahead, before a stand of 152 between Marcus North, whose 110 was his second century of the series, and vice-captain Michael Clarke (93) all but doubled the score.

England slumped for the second time Saturday, in a match where top-order batsmen Ravi Bopara, Ian Bell and Paul Collingwood managed just 16 runs between them, losing five wickets for 20 runs in 44 balls.

England had a frantic build-up to this match with an early morning fire alarm at their hotel on Friday before Prior suffered a back spasm during the warm-up which

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## Pakistan near win

### Cricket

AGENCIES, Colombo

Pakistan were on course for their second victory of the series as they reduced Sri Lanka to 101 for eight in 23 overs in the fifth and final one-day international at R Premadasa Stadium in Colombo yesterday.

Thilina Kandamby was fighting a losing battle with 20 not out while Malinga Bandara kept him company with 10. Of the batsmen already out only former captain Mahela Jayawardene (31) and current skipper Kumar Sangakkara (16) managed double figures in the face of some fierce pace bowling by Mohammad Aamer and Navedul Hasan, who equally shared the wickets for 28 and 44 runs respectively.

Earlier, skipper Younus Khan and Misbahul Haq hit half-centuries as Pakistan posted 279 for eight.

Younus made 76 and Misbah an unbeaten 73 to help Pakistan recover from the first-ball dismissal of Kamran Akmal, who was given out leg-before off Nuwan Kulasekara despite getting an edge on the bat.

Younus put on 69 for the third wicket with veteran Mohammad Yousuf (43) and 83 for the fourth with Misbah before being bowled by seamer Dammika Prasad in the 37th over.

Misbah stepped in to keep the scoreboard moving after the captain's dismissal, adding 60 for the seventh wicket with Rana Naved with 25 to carry Pakistan past the 250-run mark.

Kulasekara was the most impressive bowler with three for 46 from his 10 overs. Sri Lanka face a target of 5.6 runs an over in the day-night

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Ariel Ortega  
(Argentine veteran midfielder)

"I'm really happy. It's going to do me a lot of good to pull the Argentina shirt on again."

After getting a recall for an upcoming friendly against New Zealand.



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