

## U-19 WORLD CUP India thrash Afghanistan Bangladesh play today

PTI, Lincoln

Defending champions India started their quest for a second successive title in style, thrashing qualifiers Afghanistan by eight wickets in their opening Group A match of the ICC Under-19 Cricket World Cup here on Friday.

India skipper Ashok Maneria elected to field in the lop-sided encounter and his bowlers kept the faith by packing off the minnows for 118 in 49.2 overs.

Chasing the paltry target, Indian batsmen hardly broke a sweat and romped to 122 for two in just 25.2 overs.

For Afghanistan, skipper Noor-ul-Haq waged a lone battle with a painfully slow 61-run knock that came off 119 balls.

The rest of the Afghan lineup flopped in unison with eight batsmen failing to touch double figures.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh launch their campaign in the tournament today by taking on Papua New Guinea at the Fitzherbert Park in Napier in of the four matches for the day. Bangladesh have also Pakistan and West Indies in their group.

## India give SA tour dates

AFP, New Delhi

South Africa will begin their tour of India next month with the first Test at Nagpur from February 6-10, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) said on Friday.

The second and final Test will be played at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata from February 14-18, the BCCI said in a media release.

The Tests will be followed by three one-day internationals in Jaipur (February 21), Kanpur (February 24) and Ahmedabad (February 27). India and South Africa are the two top teams in the International Cricket Council's official Test rankings.

SCHEDULE		
Feb 6-10	1st Test	Nagpur
Feb 14-18	2nd Test	Kolkata
Feb 21	1st ODI	Jaipur
Feb 24	2nd ODI	Kanpur
Feb 27	3rd OD	Ahmedabad

## Sangakkara new Kings XI captain

CRICINFO, undated

Sri Lanka captain Kumar Sangakkara has replaced Yuvraj Singh as the captain of Kings XI Punjab for this year's Indian Premier League (IPL). Speculation was rife over the past few weeks in India that Sangakkara was the man to take over the captaincy and Anil Srivatsa, the franchise's chief executive officer, confirmed the news Friday.

"Kumar Sangakkara is the new captain of Kings XI Punjab. We are hoping for good things to come out of it," he told reporters in New Delhi. Under Yuvraj's captaincy in

## Zaheer offers to head PCB

PTI, Karachi

Former captain Zaheer Abbas has offered to become the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman in a bid to salvage the PCB's sinking reputation in the country.

"Pakistan cricket is facing problems because of variety of reasons and if the government asks me to head the cricket board I would be willing to do it as we need to set our cricket system right," Abbas said.

The PCB is drawing flak for its handling of the game and a parliamentary committee on sports has even recommended that the board officials be sacked.

Meanwhile, Zaheer said the fielding standards of the team had plunged to new lows in recent matches and there was a need to have a professional fielding coach attached with the team.

"When I say a fielding coach I mean someone like the Australian fielding coach the Indian team has appointed," Zaheer said.



PHOTO: STAR

The Tigers concentrate on catching during a practice session at the Zahir Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong yesterday on the eve of the first Test against India.

## Rajshahi squeeze Sylhet

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Sylhet were on the verge of following on at the close of second day's play in the National Cricket League after Rajshahi declared their first having amassed a huge total of 529 for seven, riding on a century by Naem Islam at Fatullah yesterday.

Away in Rajshahi, both Dhaka and Khulna have chance to post win as Dhaka were 215 runs away from the target while Khulna needed 10 wickets with two more days to left.

In Khulna, Chittagong took an overall lead of 51 runs in the second innings after Barisal obtained a 156-run lead in the first innings, thanks to a century from opener Asif Ahmed.

At Fatullah, Rajshahi spinner Saqlain Sajib cracked the Sylhet middle order claiming four scalps after Delwar Hossain and Nasir Uddin sent back openers Rummon Ahmed (0) and Sayem Alam Rezvi (27).

After the dismissal of Rummon, Sayem and Rajin Saleh (23) repaired the innings to take the side to 50 before the latter became the first victim of Saqlain, who returned four for 24.

The departure of Rajin prompted Sylhet to a slump and they were quickly reduced to 64 for six, the last three wickets falling for 64. Tapash Kumar and Abu Jahid then denied the Rajshahi bowlers taking Barisal innings to 86 for six at stumps though they still need another 187 runs

to avoid follow-on.

Earlier, having resumed on overnight total of 300 for four Rajshahi added another 229 runs before declaring the innings at 529 for seven with Naem converting his overnight 10 to 123 not out after opener Jahurul Islam had struck a hundred on the first day.

Naem added exactly 100 runs for the fifth wicket with Nasir Hossain (44) and then contributed another 136 for the seventh wicket with Anisur Rahman, who made a 112-ball 79 which was studded with eight fours and one six.

Naem remained unbeaten on 123 off 192 balls that featured 16 fours and one six before Rajshahi captain Khaled Masud declared the innings at tea.

Both the Dhaka and Khulna players could not shine with their bats on the second day as well and a result is awaiting on the third day.

Chasing a winning target of 233 set by Khulna, Dhaka were 17 for no loss in the second innings at stumps with two unbeaten batsmen Uttam Sarkar (8) and Rony Talukdar (9).

After bowling Khulna out for a meagre total of 132, Dhaka themselves were skittled out for 120 in the first innings in face of some fierce bowling from pace Robiul Islam (4/48), Ziaur Rahman (2/24) and Dollar Mahmud (2/37).

Lower order batsmen Mosharrar Hossain (31) and Mohammad Sharif (28) offered some resistance with their 52-run partnership for the eighth wicket before both fell victim to spinner Murad Khan, who returned two for eight.

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## Pakistan in dire straits

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Ricky Ponting's fifth Test double-century and Michael Clarke's highest Test score have left Pakistan facing a mountainous task to avoid defeat over the next three days in Hobart. Their already fragile confidence took another hit when Peter Siddle struck twice in one over and Salman Butt ran out two partners to leave them 425 runs adrift by stumps on the second day of the third and final Test on Friday. With six wickets in hand, avoiding the follow-on looked as far away as the Australian mainland.

There is every chance that, given the opportunity, Ponting will enforce the follow-on for the second time this summer as there are showers forecast over the next three days and the fast men are on the verge of a two-month break from Tests. He'll also be buoyed by Pakistan's ongoing self-implosion, which continued with the two run-outs.

The captain Mohammad Yousuf went hard for a third, which was refused by an overly casual Butt, and turned back to be caught short for 7. Yousuf stood by the pitch glowering at Butt before walking off and Pakistan's frustrations continued when Butt and Umar Akmal took off for a single, Butt stopped far too late, and Umar was run-out after his about-face. It was all the more disappointing after Butt and Imran Farhat reached 63 without loss.

Farhat (38) drove away from his body off Siddle and was caught behind and four balls later Khurram Manzoor, the No. 3 brought in for this match, played an ill-advised cut that on the slower pitches in Pakistan might have worked, but here resulted in an ugly edge to second slip. The wickets were a timely boost to Siddle, who had only six in his previous four Tests this summer and has been by far the least potent member of the attack.

But there was no doubt that the second day belonged to Ponting and Clarke, as had the first. Their 352-run partnership, which lasted 437 minutes and 626 balls, was Australia's sixth-highest for any wicket in Test history. The stand ended when Clarke tried to pad up to the leg-spinner Danish Kaneria coming around the wicket but saw it take his off stump on 166.

Ponting's innings of 209 came to a close when he attacked in spite of Pakistan's defensive wide-outside-off line and skied a catch to cover off Mohammad Aamer. The captain Yousuf took the chance, showing Aamer how it should be done after he put Ponting down at deep square-leg before he had scored on the first day. It wasn't the most expensive miss in Test history -- in 1938 Ben Barnett missed a stumping off Len Hutton on 40 and he went on to score 364 -- but it was depressingly costly for Pakistan.

When Ponting finally departed, fans stood all around the ground to cheer off their local Tasmanian hero, who made his third-highest

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PHOTO: INTERNET

Australia skipper Ricky Ponting cuts one for a boundary during his double century on the second day of the Hobart Test against Pakistan yesterday.

## FIRST TEST FROM TOMORROW Tigers want draw

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong



Bangladesh would be looking towards their batsmen to put up a good fight when they take on India in the First Test at Zahir Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong tomorrow.

The batsmen looked resolved to carry their good form from the ODIs of Idea Cup Tri-nation Tournament in Dhaka.

Mahmudullah Riad, the all-rounder who excelled in batting in the ODIs said, "We all are confident to play good cricket. If we can bat well in the first innings, we can expect a draw."

"We have batted well in the ODIs and want it to continue in the Test match as well.

"In test match, we will have red balls with more swing and good seam. So, it is a bit tougher than one-day. But, we are optimistic to bat well and force a draw," said Mahmudullah.

Talking about the strength of opponent he said, "We are not much concerned about their strength. Our aim will be to make the best use of our strength and play our best cricket."

Regarding the absence of regular skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, he said, "It would have been better if he was here. However, Rubel (Hossain), (Shahadat) Rajib and (Mahbulul Alam) Robin can make up his absence in pace attack. Besides, Sakib and myself, with our spin, may check the runs."

Asked about their weak bowling compared to visitors' strong batting line-up Mahmudullah said, "It won't be a problem if we are positive about scoring more from less number of balls."

Bangladesh opener Tamim Iqbal, a local boy, also emphasised on good batting to enforce a draw in the first Test.

"We hope to get a draw with good batting performance," he said.

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PHOTO: STAR

India cricketers play a game of football during a practice session at the Zahir Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong yesterday, ahead of the first Test that starts tomorrow.

## Golf's golden target

SPORTS REPORTER



The sport of golf in the country has more or less been made known by Siddiqui Rahman, but a few others, who have come from underprivileged group, have appeared to follow in the footsteps of Siddiqui

and the Bangladesh Golf Federation (BGF) is dreaming of clinching gold medals in the event on its introduction in the upcoming 11th South Asian Games in Bangladesh.

After having rewritten his name on the professional circuit from amateur, Siddiqui has lost his eligibility to represent Bangladesh in the regional extravaganza, but amateur golfers like Jamal Hossain Mollah and Shakhawat Hossain Soheli have been providing the golden hopes in the upcoming Games with their recent successes in different sub-continental tournaments.

Sohel became champion in different open championships in India, Nepal and Pakistan between 2006 and 2008 while Jamal finished second two months ago in a tournament in Bahrain.

BGF expressed all these yesterday at the Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) Bhaban when they announced the final squad for the 12-day meet, beginning on January 29.

"Sri Lankan Mithun Perera and India's Rashid Khan are the main opponents for our golfers, but both of them have little experience of playing abroad and keeping that on mind as well as playing at home, we think our golfers will remain ahead and present the nation with

gold in both individual and team events," said manager major (ret'd) Anis-ul Islam.

"Mithun is better compared to Rashid, but Mithun never became champion playing in Bangladesh. That's why we are more confident that either Soheli or Jamal will be able to finish first in the individual competition capitalising on the home advantage," said Anis, presenting his logistics.

Coach Babu Ahmed was also positive like the manager and believed the boys would be able to maintain their unbeaten run at home.

"Our boys frequently get the opportunity to play against these opponents at home and aboard and they know very well about their them. I don't think they will lose to them at home because we have been unbeaten for four to five years on home soil," said Babu adding that some triumphs outside the country had strengthened their self-belief about winning gold.

Like golf, the officials of Bangladesh Archery Federation (BAF) were not so optimistic, but apparently they also laid their ultimate target on gold medal.

"As a greenhorn discipline, our success in international arena is not bad and five archers have already secured their places in the world rankings since our real journey began in 2005. Sajjad Hossain and Emdadul Haq Milon are leading the way staying at 60th and 72nd positions out of 200 respectively," informed BAF general secretary Razibuddin Ahmed Chapal.

Describing the improvement in the sport, Chapal said after forming the association in 2001, two archers from Bangladesh went to participate the 13th Asian Archery

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## Nikolay awaits Roger?

Justine, Kim and Dinara in same half

AFP, Melbourne



Roger Federer faces a potential quarterfinal against Russian bogeyman Nikolay Davydenko following Friday's Australian Open draw, as the world number one chases a 16th Grand Slam title.

Davydenko, the sixth seed, has beaten the Swiss legend at their previous two meetings and could pose another test as top-seeded Federer goes after a fourth Australian title.

Davydenko beat Federer in straight sets in the semifinals at Doha this month and also mastered him at the ATP World Tour Finals event in London in November.

Federer will open the tournament against Russian world number 36 Igor Andreev and could face either Lleyton Hewitt or Marcos Baghdatis, both former Australian Open finalists, in the fourth round.

Serb Novak Djokovic, who beat Federer in the semifinals of the 2008 Australian Open on the way to winning his first Grand Slam, was drawn in the same top half of the men's draw as the world number one.

Third-seeded Djokovic is drawn to face French Open finalist Robin Soderling of Sweden in the quarters before a potential tilt at Federer in the semis.

In the bottom half of the draw, world num-

ber two and defending champion Rafael Nadal could run up against British title contender Andy Murray in the quarters.

Nadal, who beat Federer in last year's five-set final in Melbourne, opens against Australian Davis Cup player Peter Luczak, while fifth-seeded Murray takes on a qualifier first up.

Another prospective quarterfinal looms between US Open champion Juan Martin del Potro, the fourth seed, and Wimbledon finalist Andy Roddick.

Veteran Frenchman Fabrice Santoro, 37, who will become the first player to participate in 70 Grand Slam tournaments stretched over four decades, faces Croatian 14th seed Marin Cilic in the first round.

In the women's draw, Belgium's unseeded former world number one Justine Henin was drawn in the same half as US Open champion Kim Clijsters and world number two Dinara Safina.

The seven-time Grand Slam champion is on the comeback trail after 19 months out of the game and is rated the most dangerous unseeded floater in the women's draw.

Henin, who begins with an opening round match against fellow Belgian Kirsten Flipkens and a likely second-round engagement with Russian fifth seed Elena Dementieva, could face Clijsters in the quarterfinals in the bottom half of the women's draw.

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## British-born booters join camp

SPORTS REPORTER

Two British-born Bangladeshi footballers arrived in Dhaka yesterday to join the Bangladesh Under-23 football camp for the 11th South Asian Games to be held in Bangladesh from January 29 to February 9.

Striker Shibli Mia and midfielder Sarwar Ahmed Sadik will practice today with the local players at Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan (BKSP) as the number of the players now stand at 36 after five players -- midfielders Shahedul Islam and Maruf Ahmed, defenders Mofazzal Hossain Saikat and Ariful Islam and goalkeeper Mostaqur Rahman were forced to leave the camp due to their injuries.

Following the departure of five players, Serbian coach Zoran Djordjevic called on two more -- striker Rokonuzzaman Kanchan and defender Rezaul Karim Reza -- on Thursday.

## PLAYING IN IPL Aussies can decide on their own

CRICINFO, undated

Cricket Australia will let players involved in the Indian Premier League (IPL) make their own decisions about whether to take part in the tournament following threats on their safety from India. The Shiv Sena political party has said they would not allow Australians to play in Maharashtra following attacks on Indian students in Melbourne.

"At the end of the day those players make their own decision about whether or not they go," Peter Young, the Cricket Australia spokesman, told AAP. "But we want them to be able to make informed decisions and we'd like to work with the ACA [Australian Cricketers' Association] to ensure they can make

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## Sachin not playing for Middlesex

CRICINFO, undated

Sachin Tendulkar has opted not to join Middlesex for this summer's domestic Twenty20 Cup, telling the county that the additional workload would place too much pressure on an already busy international schedule. It had been hoped that he would join Adam Gilchrist, who has already signed a contract with Middlesex, for the 2010 edition of the competition.

"We are all naturally extremely disappointed that Sachin has reached the decision not to join us this year, as without doubt, his presence within the Middlesex ranks alongside Adam Gilchrist would have been a major coup for the club," said Vinny Codrington, Middlesex CCC chief executive.

"When the news initially broke that we were in negotiations with Sachin, it quite

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**STAR Cricket**  
England v Hong Kong  
U-19 Cricket World Cup  
Live from 3:30am

**ESPN**  
Australia v Pakistan  
Third Test, Day Three  
Live from 5:30am  
English Premiership  
Stoke City v Liverpool  
Live from 6:40pm  
Man United v Burnley  
Live from 8:55pm  
Everton v Man City  
Live from 11:25pm

**TEN Sports**  
South Africa v England  
Fourth Test, Day Three  
Live from 2:30pm  
**STAR Sports**  
English Premiership  
Chelsea v Sunderland  
Live from 8:55pm