

DHAKA MONI

Missy Franklin: New Van Dyken is born

Missy Franklin, 16-year-old high school honours student from Centennial, Colorado, is said to be the next big thing in American swimming. Based strictly on results, it's hard to argue otherwise. Although she does not have the five Olympic rings tattooed on her skin -- a number of her peers openly exhibit theirs -- she has legitimate 2012 Olympic aspirations and is already drawing comparisons to two-time Olympian and six-time gold medalist Amy Van Dyken.

-- INTERNET



Prior ton puts Eng on top

Cricket

AFP, London

Rahul Dravid and Venkatsai Laxman held firm as India eyed a record-breaking chase in the first Test after Matt Prior's unbeaten century had swung the match back England's way at Lord's on Sunday.

India, at the close of the fourth day, were 80 for one in their second innings. They needed a further 378 runs in a minimum of 98 overs on Monday's final day to reach their victory target of 458 -- a run-rate of 3.85 an over.

This is the 2,000th Test of all-time and no side has ever scored more in the fourth innings to win such a match than the West Indies' 418 for seven against Australia in Antigua in 2002/03.

Dravid, who made an unbeaten century in India's first innings, was 34 not out, having opened in place of Gautam Gambhir who was injured fielding at short leg earlier in the day, and Laxman 32 not out at stumps.

The two experienced batsmen's stand was so far worth 61.

It didn't look as if India would have to make fourth innings history when Prior came in with England having collapsed to 62 for five.

But the wicketkeeper stuck with his natural game and made 103 not out off 120 balls, including a six and five fours.

It was Prior's sixth century in 44 Tests and second in as many at Lord's following his 126 against Sri Lanka last month.

Stuart Broad, who'd led England's attack with four for 37 in India's first innings, gave Prior excellent support in an unbroken seventh-wicket stand of 162 at nearly a run-a-ball as India's depleted attack toiled on a sunny day.

Broad, who bats left-handed but bowls right, demonstrated his all-round ability with a fluent 74 not out off 90 balls including nine fours.

Prior pulled Suresh Raina for six to go into the 90s before a cover-driven four off the part-time spinner took him to his third Test century at Lord's -- he also made 126 not out at the ground on debut against the West Indies in 2007.

As soon as Prior got to his century, England captain Andrew Strauss declared on 269 for six and with 30 overs left in the day's play.

PHOTO: AFP

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Sheikh Kamal b'ball from tomorrow

SPORTS REPORTER

Sheikh Kamal International Basketball Championship begins tomorrow at the Dhanmondi Basketball Gymnasium with hosts Bangladesh among six teams participating in the tournament.

The other teams -- Nepal, Bhutan, Maldives, West Bengal and Malaysia U-18 -- were all expected to reach the city by yesterday, it was said at a press conference at the Bangladesh Olympic Association auditorium yesterday.

This tournament is being held to recognise Sheikh Kamal's contribution to country's sports. Sheikh Kamal, the eldest son of father of the nation Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, was a noted sportsman and sports organiser, the speakers said. President Zillur Rahman is expected to inaugurate the tournament as the chief guest on the opening day tomorrow.

"In the post-liberation war period, Sheikh Kamal put a great effort to take country's sports forward and he is still in all of our minds for his contribution to sports as well as his simplicity, honesty and patriotism," said BBF general secretary AK Sarker at the press conference.

"Sheikh Kamal gave priority to basketball as he was a basketball player of Dhaka Wanderers Club. He also introduced basketball to Khulna after forming Khulna Abahani in 1974," added AK Sarker.

Citycell, which has been sponsoring the premier division basketball league for the last two years, came forward to sponsor the six-team

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Change of guard

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Nafees Iqbal may well have played his last Test five years ago, but the most telling contribution of his 12-match career came on January 18, 2005.

It was the last day of the second Test against Zimbabwe and in front of a semi-packed Bangabandhu National Stadium, the Tigers had to bat out three full sessions to clinch their maiden series win.

The visitors had set a 374-run target after their captain Tatenda Taibu battled for almost six hours to make 153 out of 286 in the second innings. Javed Omar and Nafees batted stodgily on the fourth evening to end with 98 for no loss, one of the rare bright opening stands during those days of frugality at the top. A 20-year-old opener at the time, Nafees hadn't quite fulfilled his potential as a

compact right-handed batsman who excelled in the age-group level. Having made his Test debut in 2004, the Chittagonian only had a single Test fifty and a barb at English left-armers Ashley Giles as his claim to fame.

This was his big chance to make a name for himself by making an unthinkable contribution: save a Test for Bangladesh. It had been done just the once before when the combined efforts of Habibul Bashar, Khaled Mashud and Mohammad Rafique in Gros Islet earned them a draw without help from the weather.

After the feisty Javed fell in the second hour and the two star batsmen at the time -- skipper Bashar and Mohammad Ashraful -- fell in quick succession, Nafees battled alongside Rajin Saleh to see Bangladesh home safely. He made 121 with the help of 18 boundaries to score his first and only

Test century to date.

That was the last time Bangladesh played Zimbabwe in a Test match because soon after, the African nation lowered their flag in the Test arena in a bid to re-develop their team.

Their first Test opponent after the hiatus is Bangladesh, a team that has gone through rapid changes in the six years. Among the current 15-member side, Ashraful is the only member to have played in the last Test between the two sides but his spot isn't as automatic as it used to be.

While Nafees Iqbal's effort at the time was a rare occurrence, the Tigers now largely bank on Imrul Kayes and Tamim to fire from the top. The middle-order, which used to be manned by Bashar, Rajin Saleh, Aftab Ahmed and Mashud, has a more left-handed look now as Junaed Siddiqui, Shahriar Nafees and

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Defeat expected, not the margin

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's hopes of playing among the top 20 Asian teams for the World Cup Qualifying round has been all but shattered after their 4-0 defeat at the hands of Lebanon in the pre-qualifiers on Saturday. While it was a demoralising defeat for the players and the fans alike, according to local football pundits, the result was not an unexpected one even though the margin wasn't.

Bangladesh team, who are scheduled to return home today, face an uphill task when they host Lebanon home soil on July 28 and many believe there is hardly any chance to qualify for the 20-team qualifying round proper by upsetting the visitors.

"I don't think it was a disappointing result

if we consider the standard of two sides. Lebanon maybe below us in the rankings, but teams of Western Asian region are usually much better than us both technically and physically," said Imtiaz Sultan Jonny, star midfielder of the 80s who is now a member of national team management committee.

"It would have been better had we provided the national team some time for preparation as well as arranged a few practice matches for them," said Jonny adding that the calendar is an important factor to get better results from the national side.

The local coaches also hold a similar view and fear that 4-0 is too much of a defeat for the booters to overcome.

"The margin of defeat was unexpected and it would have been better had we lost by 1-0 or 2-0," coaches' instructor Saiful Bari

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25TH NATIONAL SHOOTING

Ratna shoots to new record

SPORTS REPORTER

Sharmin Akhter Ratna set a new national record in the women's 10m air rifle event when SA Games gold medalist shot 500.3 out of 509 in the 25th National Shooting Championship at the National Shooting Complex in Gulshan yesterday.

Ratna of Bangladesh Ansar & VDP not only dethroned reigning champion and namesake Sharmin Akhter to regain the gold medal but also seized the national record from her competitor.

Ratna, who was tied in the qualification with Tripti Datta having scored 395 out of 400 which is below her best of 398, turned the table in shoot-off to put up her best with a score of 105.3 out of 109. That shoot-off was good enough to take her aggregate score to 500.3, beating the previous record of 495.3 set up by SA Games gold medalist Sharmin Akhter in 2005, and winning her the gold.

Tripti, participating for the BKSP Shooting Club, in her attempt broke Sharmin's record too yet had to be satisfied with a silver medal as she aggregated 497.6, which was 2.7 less than that of Ratna.

Sharmin of Rajarbagh Rifles Club finished third with a score of 494.2 after she scored 392 in the qualification.

"Nothing was going at the right direction after the SA Games. I could not perform well in the Commonwealth Games, Asian Games and lastly the World Shooting Championship. But after that I have been keeping myself in practice and gradually getting back my performance and want to keep up the form," Ratna told reporters after winning the gold medal.

In the day's other event, Toufiq Shahriar Chandan of Kushtia Rifles Club won the 50m rifle prone with a score 687.3 followed by silver medalist Ramjan Ali of Army Shooting Association, who scored 686.4.

Golam Shafiuddin Khan of Gulshan Shooting Club won bronze medal with a score of 678 in the same event.

Antora Islam of BKSP Shooting Club scored 531 to win women's 25m pistol event while Miti Dewan and Sinthia Naznin Tumpa, both from Dhaka Rifles Club, won silver and bronze scoring 530 and 504 respectively.



The three medal winners of the women's 10m rifle event at the 25th National Shooting Championship, gold winner Sharmin Akhter Ratna (C); silver medalist Sharmin Akhter (R); and bronze winner Tripti Datta pose for a photo at the National Shooting Complex yesterday.

PHOTO: STA