

Aussies snatch a thriller

 Cricket

AFF, Perth

Australian captain Michael Clarke's inspired start to 2012 continued when he led his side to victory over Sri Lanka in their tri-series one-day international at the WACA Ground on Friday.

Man of the match Clarke had an impact with both bat and ball as Australia won by five runs to remain unbeaten after two outings in the triangular tournament.

Australia made 231 from 49.1 overs and in reply Sri Lanka were dismissed for 226 from 49.5 overs, after a last-wicket stand almost snatched an unlikely win for the tourists.

The Sri Lankans appeared to do a good job with the ball after captain Mahela Jayawardene won the toss and elected to field, Clarke top scoring with a polished 57.

Some superb fielding helped the Sri Lankan cause, with a couple of fine catches, highlighted by Nuwan Kulasekara's brilliantly athletic caught and bowled to remove the dangerous Michael Hussey for 23.

However, last year's

beaten World Cup finalists were not as effective with the bat and looked headed for certain defeat at 180 for nine, still needing 51 to win.

But Angelo Mathews and Dhammika Prasad put on 46 for the last wicket to threaten to snatch an incredible win.

The pair needed 18 to win from the final over and Mathews hit the first two Mitchell Starc deliveries for four and six to narrow the equation to eight from four balls.

Two singles left them chasing six from the last two balls, but Mathews (64) holed out to Daniel Christian on the long on boundary from the penultimate ball to hand the relieved Australians a thrilling victory.

The Sri Lankans earlier appeared to be cruising at 61-1, but suffered a major blow when Kumar Sangakkara was run out for 22 in an ugly mix-up with opener Tillakaratne Dilshan (40).

They found it hard to recover from the loss of their most prolific batsman and Clarke's inspired season continued when he brought himself on for a rare bowl in the 31st over.

Dinesh Chandimal was on 37 and appeared to be Sri Lanka's last real hope of victory, but he was trapped leg before wicket by Clarke's first delivery.

Clarke's half-century helped Australia recover from the early loss of opener Matthew Wade and Ricky Ponting, both dismissed for one as the home side started poorly to be 26-2.

Opener David Warner blasted 34 from 29 balls before being bowled by Angelo Mathews (2-37), while David Hussey (27) and Dan Christian (33) both made promising starts but weren't able to convert them into substantial totals.

The 56-run partnership between Clarke and Christian for the sixth wicket was the highest of the innings, but tailenders Clint McKay (25) and Mitchell Starc (14) added 32 ultimately valuable runs for the ninth wicket.

SCOREBOARD

AUSTRALIA	
Warner b Mathews	34
Wade c Sangakkara b Kulasekara	1
Ponting lbw Malinga	1
Clarke c Jayawardene b Mathews	57
M Hussey c and b Kulasekara	23
D Hussey c Thirimanne b Malinga	27

Christian st Sangakkara b Senanayake	33
Harris c Kulasekara b Senanayake	3
McKay c Thirimanne b Prasad	25
Starc c Tharangab Prasad	14
Doherty not out	2
Extras: (lb-6, w-5)	11
Total: (All out in 49.1 overs)	231
Fall of wickets: 1-22, 2-26, 3-50, 4-81, 5-130, 6-180, 7-190, 8-192, 9-224, 10-231.	

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Malinga	10	0	48	2
Kulasekara	10	0	39	2
Mathews	9	0	37	2
Prasad	9.1	0	55	2
Senanayake	10	0	45	2
Dilshan	1	0	1	0

SRI LANKA	
Tharangab Clarke b Starc	5
Dilshan c Wade b Harris	40
Sangakkara run out	22
Chandimal lbw Clarke	37
Jayawardene c Wade b Christian	13
Thirimanne b Doherty	3
Mathews c Christian b Starc	64
Kulasekara c Wade b Christian	8
Senanayake st Wade b Doherty	9
Malinga c Wade b McKay	1
Tharangab not out	15
Extras: (lb-3, w-6)	9
Total: (All out in 49.5 overs)	226
Fall of wickets: 1-11, 2-61, 3-88, 4-110, 5-119, 6-129, 7-143, 8-175, 9-180, 10-226.	

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Harris	10	0	43	1
Starc	9.5	0	50	2
McKay	10	0	50	1
Christian	8	1	47	2
Doherty	10	0	24	2
Clarke	2	0	9	1

Result: Australia won by five runs.
Man-of-the-match: Michael Clarke.



PHOTO: INTERNET

Australians converge to celebrate the dismissal of dangerman Kumar Sangakkara of Sri Lanka during their Tri Nations ODI at the WACA in Perth yesterday.

INTRA-DAILY STAR CRICKET

Sport Stars race out of the blocks

SPORTS REPORTER

The Daily Star's inter-departmental cricket tournament kicked off amidst much fan-fare and celebrations at the Jagannath Hall ground in Dhaka University yesterday.

Sport Stars, the team made up by the members of the sports section, predictably dominated proceedings with two wins from two games sealing their spot in the semifinals. Despite losing a supposedly important player in the BPL-style auction that preceded the tournament, Sport Stars made some clever picks, roping in two players as free agents from other departments. It proved to be a masterstroke in management.

Under the leadership of the burly Mohammad Isam and aided by the batting of Naimul Karim and Hanif Mohammad (no relation to the Pakistani opener) and the wicket-taking exploits of Quazi Zulquarnain, SportStars made easy work of Crick Freaks after clinching a tense encounter against favourites Dynamo Stars in the last over.

Dynamo Stars, who can count most of the DRU Media Cup winning squad in their books, were understandably shocked at their opening loss and took revenge with a thumping 34-run win over the hapless TDS Sixers. The team led by the -- lost both their games to crash to an ignominious exit on the opening day.

In the other group, Team Business mirrored the stock exchange with a shocking start, managing to lose to the make-shift TDS Sportans by 3 runs in a cliff-hanger. But unlike the DSE, they managed to pick up their standing, with a crushing 40-run win over Team Megabiters a rag-tag bunch of graphic artists and IT personnel, who should have probably stayed in front of their snazzy computers.

Text Town Group sponsored the tournament with free T-shirts for the participating teams.

Local snippets

FROM PAGE 16
Helal struck the all-important goal in the 80th minute.

School Football

Baliadanga High School moved to the second phase of the National School Football Islami Bank tournament after emerging Upazila champions in Jhenaidah yesterday.

Baliadanga defeated Dulal Mundira High School 1-0 with Rasel scoring the decisive goal for the winners.

Afridi keeps Afghans in check

 Cricket

AFF, Sharjah

Leg-spinner Shahid Afridi took his eighth five-wicket haul in one-day cricket but Afghanistan still managed 195 in their first-ever day-night international at Sharjah Stadium here on Friday.

The 31-year-old leg-spinner took four wickets in his first spell to derail Afghanistan -- who won the toss and batted -- from 54-1 to 101-5 before finishing with 5-36 in his 10 overs.

Afridi also became the second spinner with the highest one-day wickets (338) behind Muttiah Muralitharan (534), surpassing India's Anil Kumble who had 333 wickets.

But despite Afridi's brilliance, the Afghan batsmen put up an excellent show and had they not lacked experience -- playing their first one-day international against a top nation -- they would have scored more.

There was plenty of fireworks on and off the field as Afghan batsmen hit six sixes during their innings which delighted the bumper 15,000-strong weekend crowd -- mostly Pakistan and Afghan expats.

Paceman Umar Gul provided Pakistan with the early breakthrough when he caught Noor Ali (nine) off his own bowling before Afridi dismissed Mohammad Shahzad (20), Nawroz Mangal (11), Gulbadin Naib (seven) and Karim Sadiq (40) in his first spell.

Sadiq hit two boundaries and two sixes during his aggressive 47-ball knock.

Mohammad Nabi, who scored 37 with two sixes, added 46 for the sixth wicket with Samiullah Shinwari who finished with 32 studded with four boundaries.

Gul and Wahab Riaz took two wickets each.

SCORES IN BRIEF

AFGHANISTAN: 195 all out (Sadiq 40, Shahzad 20, Nabi 37, Shinwari 32; Gul 2-30, Riaz 2-37, Afridi 5-36)

Siddikur survives, Soh el falls

SPORTS REPORTER

Life for the two Bangladeshis didn't get much better on Day Two of the ICTSI Philippine Open as Shakhawat Hossain Soh el failed to make the cut while his more illustrious partner Siddikur Rahman was placed in 36th position yesterday. Bangladesh's only Asian Tour winner Siddikur played a one over round two to take his aggregate to three-over (147) at the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club yesterday while Soh el failed to make the cut as he aggregated seven-over (151) over two rounds. The weekend cut was made at 150 with 80 golfers making it through.

Meanwhile, local swinger Mardan Mamat produced a masterful two-under-par 70 in tough conditions to open up a three-shot halfway lead.

The veteran Singaporean managed two birdies against no bogeys to lead American Ben Fox and local hopes Antonio Lascuna and Ferdinand Aunzo with his two-day total of five-under-par 139.

Disabled cricketers ready to roll

Pakistan-England series starts today

AFF, Dubai

Cricketers with disabilities from Pakistan and England promise to defy all odds during their ground-breaking series which starts on Saturday, hoping it could set examples for such other people in life.

They may not be big names like Misbahul Haq, Andrew Strauss, Saeed Ajmal or a Monty Panesar but they do not lack the passion to show their skills in matches, regarded as more than cricket.

For 24-year-old Pakistan paceman Farhan Saeed life was miserable after his polio-stricken left leg was amputated before he found cricketing salvation.

"I thought I will spend my life in a corner of my house but disabled cricket has given me a new lease of life and now I am about to do something which I had never dreamt of in my life -- playing a match in Dubai," Saeed told AFP.

Saeed runs aided by a crutch in his left hand, jumps and perfectly lands to deliver the ball -- a sight which is going to excite the fans here.

"It's going to be a memorable series and players will not only showcase their talent

but will also send a message to all physically challenged people in the world that they should not get disappointed in life," said Saeed.

Also on display will be the talent of Callum Flynn, now aged just 16, who feared his dreams of even playing cricket again were over two years ago after he was diagnosed with bone cancer.

But cricket has changed Flynn's life.

"Two years ago, I never thought I would play cricket and then when I did start playing again, I just always wanted to play for England and now I am wearing the Three Lions - it's just unbelievable," said Flynn.

For 23-year-old Matloob Qureshi life has blossomed ever since he picked up a cricket bat.

"I lost my left hand in an accident," said Qureshi, who hails from Multan in the Punjab Province. "Cricket has changed my life and now I am gearing up to hit big sixes against England."

The Boards of both the countries have recognised the series which coincides with the one-day series between the able-bodied teams of Pakistan and England starting in Abu Dhabi from February 13.

Emeka gets benefit of doubt

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammedan SC coach Emeka Euzeigo will stand at the team dug-out today in their match against Brothers Union in special consideration as it has not been clarified yet whether he is eligible to coach a team in the Grameenphone Bangladesh Premier League. The Nigerian gets the reprieve, at least for a match, since the AFC has not yet sent any reply to the BFF's queries whether Emeka's licence qualifies him for the job.

According to the by-laws of the league, the head coach of any club must have at least an AFC-B license or an equivalent certificate.

"We are still in dark about his (Emeka) coaching certificate as the AFC has to reply to our letter regarding the license of Emeka we sent. But it is certain that he will stand in for Mohammedan's first match in special consideration," said BFF's acting general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag yesterday.

Emeka had submitted his United States Soccer Association B-license certificates to BFF.

Abahani win

FROM PAGE 16
minute as the Nigerian placed a Zahid Hossain cross past Arambagh goalkeeper Bishu before Zahid made it 3-1 in the 38th minute. Left-back Wali whipped in a cross in the box and but defender Deen Mohammedan failed to clear the ball which fell to Zahid who chipped the ball over the advancing keeper Bishu. Frank sealed the victory in the 75th minute availing a cut-back from Nasirul Islam.

"Local players displayed superb performance today which made it easy for us and I am happy the way team played," said Abahani coach Ali Akbar.

"Zahid made the difference in today's match and we lost to a better side," conceded Arambagh KS coach Zahidur Rahman Milon.

Gayle storm

FROM PAGE 16
none of the Rajshahi batsmen flourished as left-arm spinner Enamul Haque Jr took three key wickets. Junaed, Abdul Razzaq and skipper Mushfiqur Rahim in an excellent performance.

SCORES IN BRIEF

SYLHET: 165-4 in 20 overs (Trego 62, Kapali 56; Arafat 2-33).

BARISAL: 167-0 in 13.1 overs (Gayle 101 not out, Shehzad 56 not out).

Result: Barisal won by ten wickets.

CHITTAGONG: 206-4 in 20 overs (Jamshed 56, Roy 43, Riyad 43 not out; Abbas 1-14).

RAJSHAH: 153 all out in 19.5 overs (Junaed 42, Sabbir 41 not out; Bravo 3-17, Enamul 3-27).

Result: Chittagong won by 53 runs.

Bolt, Blake open low-key meet

 Athletics

AFF, Kingston

Sprinters Usain Bolt and Yohan Blake, who are both expected to draw worldwide attention in this Olympic year, open the 2012 season at a local meeting on Saturday.

The duo's coach Glen Mills is meet director of the Camperdown Classic, which will be held at the National Stadium in Kingston.

Both sprinters are expected to race in the timed finals of the 400m, but likely won't go head-to-head in the same heat.

Bolt, who has often said defending the Olympic 100m and 200m titles he won in scintillating fashion in Beijing would make him a legend, elaborated on the road that stretches before him in an interview with AFP.

"I am excited to begin my season and I am looking forward to a good performance," said Bolt, holder of world records at 100m (9.58sec) and 200m (19.19).

"I aim to successfully defend my Olympic titles and this is just the beginning of competition," added Bolt, who false started in the 100m at last year's World Championships, but days after, defended his 200m crown.

Going into Saturday's meeting, Bolt said he was "happy to be healthy".

Bolt, who has been tipped by 400m world record-holder Michael Johnson as capable of breaking the US legend's longstanding mark of 43.18 -- and perhaps become the first man to run sub-43 -- has a personal best over the distance of 45.28 from May 2007.

His fastest at the Camperdown Classic is 45.54, achieved the last time he raced here, in February 2009.

Blake, who won the 100m world title last year, has a personal best at 400m of 46.80, also done at this same meet in 2009.

Several of Bolt's other training mates from Racers Track Club will also turn out for the meet, which is mainly used to prepare the junior athletes for Jamaica's High School Championships.

Commonwealth Games bronze medallist Jermaine Gonzales, Olympic 400m finalist Rosemarie Whyte, Olympic 100m finalist Daniel Bailey of Antigua, Shereefa Lloyd, and Schillonie Calvert, are expected to take part.

Gallery prices

FROM PAGE 16
The revised prices are as follows:

For matches at Mirpur: East Gallery (Block I to N)- Tk 200, North Gallery (Block O to Q)- Tk 400, Int. Hospitality (Mar-queue) (Block R to S) Tk 2000, Club House (North) (Block T to V) & Disable-Tk 1000, South Gallery (Block F to H)- Tk 400, International Gallery (Block D to E)- Tk 2000, Club House (South) (Block A to C)- Tk 1000.

For matches at Chittagong: East Gallery-Tk 200, Club House (East)-Tk 1000, International Gallery-Tk 2000, Western Gallery-Tk 200.

U-18 cricket

FROM PAGE 16
two wickets for 64 runs.

Earlier, Dhaka Division South declared their second innings for 164 for four to set a 319-run winning target.

Dhaka clinched the title as they scored 261 runs in the first innings and wrapped up the Barisal first innings for 107 runs.

Mashrafe spills

FROM PAGE 16
file a case against the culprits if needed," said Yunus.

It was reportedly told that three other former national cricketers Sanwar Hossain, Javed Omar and Khaled Masud were also present when Shariful Haque made a spot-fixing offer to Mashrafe.

"What I can say is that no stone will be left unturned," Yunus added when asked about the presence of the three other cricketers.