

# SPORT



India skipper Virat Kohli continued his *annus mirabilis* with an epic 235 -- his third double-ton of 2016 -- on the fourth day of the fourth Test, all but sealing the five-Test series against England at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai.

## KOHLI RAISES THE BAR

**5** – Batsmen who have scored three or more double-hundreds in Tests in a calendar year. Virat Kohli joins Michael Clarke, Brendon McCullum, Ricky Ponting and Don Bradman in this elite list.

**65.50** – Kohli's Test average as captain, second only to Bradman's 101.51 among captains with 2000-plus Test runs.

**50.53** – Kohli's Test average after his 235, the first time it has gone past 50, making him the first batsman to simultaneously average more than 50 in all three formats in international cricket (52.93 in ODIs, 57.13 in T20Is).

**1** – Where Kohli's innings ranks, in terms of most runs in an innings by an India captain in Tests.

**7** – Just the seventh instance of an Indian batsman scoring 600-plus runs in a series; Kohli joins Sunil Gavaskar and Rahul Dravid among Indian batsmen who have done this twice.

**241** – The partnership between Kohli and Jayant Yadav, India's highest for the eighth wicket.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## BALLON D'OR TONIGHT Ronaldo's 4th?

AFP, Paris

Come 1900 GMT on Monday, what looks to be a poorly kept secret will officially be out -- Cristiano Ronaldo will bag his fourth Ballon d'Or as the world's top footballer.

The Real Madrid and Portugal star won the Champions League for the second time in three seasons and third time overall after one title with Manchester United in 2008.

He then led Portugal to their first major title at Euro 2016 -- albeit he went off early through injury in the win over France.

As has been the case for almost a decade now, the 31-year-old's main rival will be Lionel Messi of Barcelona -- but the Argentine maestro has had by his own exalted standards a less than stellar year both for club and country with the top prizes eluding him on both fronts.

Ronaldo was spotted midweek in training having dyed his hair gold in advance and for his club coach, there can only be one man for the crown this year.

"For me there is no debate. The Ballon will be for him," Zinedine Zidane said after his talisman's hat-trick saw off Atletico Madrid last month to underpin their domination in La Liga.

"He showed it last season and he shows it again and again. We expect a lot of him but he stands above everyone."

This year marks the end of six years of joint awards by founders France Football and FIFA, which will revert to bestowing a "Best" accolade of its own on January 9 to both male and female players.

The Ballon d'Or will henceforth be decided by a vote of 173 journalists while national team captains and managers will no longer have a say.

Argentina and Barcelona star Messi landed a record fifth crown last year. A win will lift Ronaldo to within one award of Messi's record haul of five.

Ronaldo first won the award in 2008 after Premier League and Champions League triumphs with Manchester United.

## India's talisman charms again

AFP, Mumbai

Star batsman Virat Kohli smashed a massive double century before England slumped to 182-6 at stumps on day four as India closed in on victory in the fourth Test Sunday.

Captain Kohli struck 235 runs for his third double ton of the year and Jayant Yadav scored a maiden Test century to fire India to a huge first innings score of 631.

England require something extraordinary to happen to avoid a Test and series defeat after a host of their top-order batsmen then wilted in the Mumbai heat, leaving the visitors trailing by 49 runs going into the final day.

England lost three quick wickets in just 13.2 overs at the Wankhede Stadium as their second innings got off to a nightmare start, all but ending their hopes of mounting a comeback.

Keaton Jennings, who scored a century on his Test debut in the first innings, found for a golden duck, out lbw off Indian medium pace bowler Bhuvneshwar Kumar.

Left-arm spinner Ravindra Jadeja then took captain Alastair Cook for 18 and Moeen Ali, who lasted only three balls and failed to get off the mark.

Joe Root and Jonny Bairstow did their best to restore some respectability by putting on a fourth-wicket partnership of 92 before the former was bowled lbw by Yadav for 77 runs.

Ben Stokes came and went for 18 while Bairstow was unbeaten on 50 at stumps.

"Our spinners bowled in good areas consistently" said Yadav, who lavished praise on India's talismanic Kohli for helping guide the number nine batsman to his 104-run knock.

"Whenever you're batting with Virat, things feel easier," he said.

Kohli blasted a double century that included 25 fours and one six during his 340-ball stay.

It marked his third double century of 2016 in what has been a sensational and record-breaking year for the Indian skipper.

"He's very much suited to playing in these conditions. If you're not bang on the money and take your chances then he'll punish you," England bowler James Anderson said of Kohli.

The 28-year-old Kohli put on a massive 241-run partnership with Yadav as England failed to take any wickets during the morning session.

Kohli removed his helmet and raised his bat to the adoring crowd as he brought up his double ton with a single off his 302nd ball of the match.

The right-hander has been the standout batsman of the year, scoring a double century against the West Indies in July before repeating the feat against New Zealand in October.

He was eventually caught out by Anderson from Chris Woakes.

England, who scored 400 in their first innings, must win to keep the series alive going into the fifth Test in Chennai, a feat that now looks all but impossible.

"We're going to come here tomorrow and try to fight our way back into the game if we can," said Anderson.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

**ENGLAND:** First innings 400 all out  
**INDIA:** First innings 631 all out (Kohli 235, Vijay 136, Yadav 104; Rashid 4-192, Root 2-31)  
**ENGLAND:** Second innings 182 for 6 (Root 77, Bairstow 50 not out; Jadeja 2-58, Ashwin 2-49)

## Siddikur's sorry finish

SPORTS REPORTER

Siddikur Rahman finished the UBS Hong Kong Open on a sorry note after a one-over-par (73) in the final round yesterday.

The 32-year-old golfer exchanged five bogeys for only two birdies at the Hong Kong Golf Club on Sunday after having racked up 67, 70 and 70 in the first three rounds.

He ended up with an aggregate score of even-par (280).

That feat saw the two-time Asian Tour winner finish on 45th position jointly, slipping from his overnight 28th position. Unheralded Australian Sam Brazel claimed the 333,330-dollar winner's cheque with an aggregate score of 13-under-par (267), beating Spain's Rafa Carbera Bello by one stroke.

## Tigers hire specialist

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh national team will be availing the services of a wicket-keeping specialist during their 10-day preparatory camp in Australia. According to the chairman of Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB's) cricket operations Akram Khan, there will be a focus on wicket-keeping, while another individual was hired to provide throwdowns for the batsmen.

"The decision was taken as per the requirements of the team management. The wicket-keeping specialist will obviously focus on keeping, while the other specialist will help the batsmen bat at the nets," Akram told The Daily Star yesterday.

"Our main target is to help the national team acclimatise to the conditions as quickly

as possible. And as a result, we will take all the steps that will help us do that," he added.

The first batch of cricketers who had left for Australia on November 8, attended their first training session at the Blacktown International Sports Park in Sydney yesterday.

The second batch of cricketers, including the likes of Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Tamim Iqbal, Mahmudullah Riyad and a host of others, reached Sydney yesterday evening.

Over the next 10 days, aside from having training sessions, the Bangladeshi cricketers will also play two T20 games against two teams from the Big Bash League.

Meanwhile, Shakib Al Hasan, who was supposed to leave with the second group of cricketers on Saturday, left for Sydney last night after getting an extra day off.

After the 10-day camp in Sydney, the Tigers will leave for New Zealand where they will play three ODIs, three T20Is and two Tests.



Bangladesh cricketers warm up at the Blacktown International Sports Park (BISP) in Sydney during the squad's first training session yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## Starc fires at Arthur

REUTERS, Melbourne

Australia have been a "closer" team since former head coach Mickey Arthur made way for Darren Lehmann, according to pace spearhead Mitchell Starc.

Now at Pakistan, South African Arthur is keen to steer the South Asians to a win against his old team when the three-Test series starts in Brisbane on Thursday.

"I didn't have too much time with him... he obviously had his different theories," Starc said on Sunday.

"He was a nice guy. Our team has changed immensely since he's been put out of the job... we're a lot closer. Boof's [Lehmann's] obviously brought his own coaching theories and concepts."

"The group has changed personnel-wise as well, so we've developed massively as a squad since the time of Mickey Arthur, and I think all for the better."

Arthur was sacked three weeks before the 2013 Ashes, after a breakdown of team discipline during the 4-0 series loss away to India.

Australia have lost five of their last six Tests to put Lehmann under pressure, but Starc said he was the right man to guide a rebuilding team.

## Lessons on offer for fresh U-19s

SPORTS REPORTER

With an aim to form a team for the 2019 Under-19 World Cup, the Bangladesh under-19 team, led by Saif Hassan, will leave for Sri Lanka tomorrow in order to take part in the Under-19 Asia Cup.

A total of eight teams will take part in the competition, which will be held in Sri Lanka from December 13 to 24. Apart from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and hosts Sri Lanka, the tournament will also feature Afghanistan, Nepal, Singapore and Malaysia.

Speaking to reporters yesterday, the U-19 team expressed their confidence ahead of the competition.

Saif Hassan, who was a member of the under-19 team that reached the semifinal of the Under-19 World Cup

in January this year, described his team as a 'balanced' outfit.

"Our team is quite balanced. When we were in the under-17s, many of us played together. We have prepared quite well too. We practised together, did a few camps and that's the reason we are all ready."

"We will take it match by match. Hopefully we will be able to do something really good. We won't worry too much about the results. Whatever we learn from this competition will be beneficial for us," a composed Saif told reporters.

Coach Mohammad Abdul Karim Jewel told reporters about how this tournament could be a good base to help Bangladesh form its under-19 team for the World Cup in 2019.

"We will be facing Pakistan, Afghanistan and Singapore in the first round of the Asia Cup. If we can do well,

we can go into the next round. Aside from this tournament, the other target we have is the 2019 [Under-19] World Cup.

"We can consider this as the preliminary squad for that World Cup. We are working on the team that will be ready to play after a year. This tournament will be a good practice for us," explained Jewel.

Following the press conference, the under-19s took part in a day-night 50-over encounter at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Surprisingly enough, former banned cricketer Mohammad Ashraful played for one of the teams.

When enquired about the reason behind his inclusion, national manager of Bangladesh Cricket Board's game development Nazmul Abedin Fahim said: "Since the rest of the players were taking a break from the BPL and because Ashraful was around we decided to include him in the warm-up game."



The Under-19 Bangladesh national cricket team pose for their official photograph yesterday ahead of their departure tomorrow for Sri Lanka where they will play their first match of the Youth Asia Cup on December 15.

PHOTO: STAR

## BFF FOUR-YEAR PLAN

### Former booters skeptical

SPORTS REPORTER

Former national footballers expressed reservations over the four-year football plan which was revealed by the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) on Saturday.

BFF president Kazi Salahuddin revealed a 71-page plan -- termed the third phase of the continuation of football development -- which elaborated on the activities of his first two terms, the current situation and future plans.

Although none of the former footballers have gone through the details of the plan, they made their comments based on the information from print and electronic media.

"Let them start and wait for what they do," former national player and coach Golam Sarwar Tipu said simply. "The good thing is that they have realised they will have to involve all stakeholders, something that was missing in their previous activities," added Tipu, although he believes there are some limitations to implementing all the programmes.

"We have to admit that there are some limitations such as the lack of venues, the mentality of the District Football Association's officials and club officials as well as the political situation. If he

[Salahuddin] wants to work for development, there is nothing to say. We want something better to happen in football in the next four years," he concluded.

Former Bangladesh captain Jewel Rana went even further, saying that while it was easy to put things on paper, implementing so many programmes would be very tough.

"I think he [Salahuddin] made this calendar to lessen the pressure he is facing at the moment," said Jewel. "The specific dates of the programmes have not been mentioned and we will have to wait till the end of 2017 to see whether or not the plan is working, or even if the BFF has any intention to implement it."

The SAFF Games winning captain was also critical of the lack of importance given to district football and youth development.

"Our main problem is that promising players are not coming through the ranks but what programs have been included to produce promising players?" added Jewel.

Former national goalkeeper Aminul Haque said that there was nothing new to mention in the calendar.

"How is it possible that a person who could not succeed in the past nine years will do everything in three years?" said Aminul, who also believes that implementing all the programmes would not be possible.