



England all-rounder Moeen Ali struck a fluent unbeaten 120 to drive England to a position of strength at the end of the first day of the fifth Test against India in Chennai yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

U-19s seize top spot

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Under-19 team beat their Singaporean counterparts in the ongoing ACC Under-19 Asia Cup after they raced to their target of 71 in just five overs for the loss of only three wickets at the Galle International Stadium in Sri Lanka yesterday.

The dominant performance from the young Tigers even saw them pick up a bonus point and they are currently at the top of their group with nine points from two matches.

After being sent into bat, Singapore were bundled out for 70 is 25.5 overs as opener Rohan Rangarajan was the only player to get into double figures with his 38-ball 23. The second highest contributor to Singapore's score was the extras column, standing at 15. Bangladesh's Abdul Haleem and Nayeem Hasan took three scalps each, while Shakhawat Hossain took two and Yeasin Arafat one.

After the exchange, captain Saif Hassan, whose heroics had won Bangladesh the last match, smashed an 11-ball 33 with four sixes and two fours to power the young Tigers. Mohammad Rakib came in at five and hit three fours during his 5-ball stay to lead the Tigers home.

Bangladesh's final group stage game will be against Pakistan, who surprisingly went down to Afghanistan yesterday. Pakistan now have 5 points for second, with Afghanistan just behind on four points.

Moeen century drives England

AFP, Chennai



Joe Root urged centurion Moeen Ali and the rest of the England batsmen to put India under pressure on Friday after the visitors made a solid start in the fifth and final Test in Chennai.

The tourists were 284 for four at stumps with Ali (120) and Ben Stokes (five) at the crease after they elected to bat first at Chennai's MA Chidambaram Stadium.

Ali mounted crucial partnerships with Root (88) and Jonny Bairstow (49) to revive the England innings after the visitors lost their openers in the first hour of play.

Ali's 146-run third-wicket stand with Root remained the highlight of the innings as England, who have already lost the series 3-0, search for a consolation win.

"It would be really nice to go home with a win under our belt and we have set it up nicely today, it's (now) about tomorrow going on and taking it forward," Root told reporters on Friday.

"And hopefully Moeen can carry on how he has played today, Stokesy can get in and play one of his mouth-watering innings he is capable of doing," said Root.

Ali, who was promoted to number four following a rejig in England's batting order in the Mohali Test, absorbed the pressure after Root's dismissal to pilot the innings.

"That added responsibility of batting higher up in the batting order he has taken really well on this tour and proved it with two brilliant hundreds," said Root.

Root was also responsible for the rebuilding act after the fall of Keaton

Jennings (1) and skipper Alastair Cook (10) but he missed out on what would have been his second ton of the series.

The Englishman was given caught behind off Ravindra Jadeja by the on-field umpire but India successfully reviewed the decision after a disturbance in the snicko suggested the ball had grazed the bat before going into the keeper's glove.

Root did not seem happy with the call as he dejectedly walked back to the pavilion but later termed his reaction as "childish".

"I was convinced I didn't hit it. Obviously the technology suggests otherwise... you probably just have to take it on the chin - I must have got a fine one on it," said Root, who was seen practising on a road inside the stadium on Thursday.

Ali, who was dropped on nought at mid-wicket, showed grit during his controlled knock as he carried on the good work with Bairstow.

The left-right batting combine of Ali-Root and then Ali-Bairstow thwarted the Indian bowling attack which had looked dangerous in the morning session.

"Good innings from Root. Moeen Ali was the perfect foil for him. Took his time to settle down," India's fielding coach Ramakrishnan Sridhar said.

Ishant Sharma, back in action after an illness, struck first for the hosts on a moisture-laden pitch to get Jennings caught behind for one.

England's all-time leading run-scorer Cook got past the 11,000-run mark on the first ball of the match, but he quickly fell to Jadeja, who ended up claiming three wickets.

SCORES IN BRIEF

ENGLAND: First innings 284 for 4 (Root 88, Moeen 120 not out, Bairstow 49; Jadeja 3-73)

Fringe players try in vain

STAR SPORT DESK



Like their first practice match against the Sydney Sixers on Wednesday, there was overwhelming support for the Bangladesh Cricket Board XI (BCB XI) from a vocal Bangladeshi contingent in their second practice match against the Sydney Thunder at the Spotless Stadium in Sydney yesterday. Unlike the rain-affected first game however, the BCB XI came up well short of the mark as horrible top order batting resulted in a six-wicket defeat.

It was a late hand from second-choice wicketkeeper-batsman Nurul Hasan that gave the BCB XI innings a semblance of respectability, his 27-ball 35 rescuing BCB XI from 76 for seven and taking them to 122 for eight after 20 overs..

The positives for the Bangladeshis playing their last preparatory match before heading to New Zealand was that it was the fringe players that came to the fore. They were given the opportunity as regular skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Tamim Iqbal, Shakib Al Hasan and Mahmudullah Riyad were rested for the match. Even with fringe players like Nurul, Shuvagata Hom, Subhashis Roy, Tanveer Haider and Kamrul Islam Rabbi impressing, it was the lack of experience and the absence of Mashrafe's strong leadership that told on the result.

Stand-in skipper Mushfiqur Rahim chose to bat and they were soon in trouble at 13 for three against the Sydney pacers. Pat Cummins had Imrul Kayes caught behind off a short ball and Gurinder Sandhu had Soumya Sarkar and Sabbir Rahman caught at mid on. Mushfiqur and Mosaddek then flailed their bats at everything, missing most, before

Mushfiqur finally connected, only to be caught at deep third man off Sandhu to leave his team at 21 for four.

Mosaddek was then bowled by off-spinner Arjun Nair with the score on 38. Mominul Haque suffered the same fate to be sixth out with the score on 49 before Shuvagata, who scored a composed 25, was caught off Cummins at long on. Nurul then took over with some fine hits, none better than a scooped six off Sandhu that thudded into the sightscreen behind the keeper's head. He was run out in the last over with the score on 117, before Taijul Islam and Haider took them to 122 for eight.

Rubel Hossain, Subhashis and Rabbi bowled with good pace and discipline in Sydney's chase. After Jay Lenton and Ryan Gibson had put on 48 for the first wicket, Rubel had Lenton leg-before with a searing full delivery before having Gibson caught at cover. When Sabbir took a fine running catch at long on to dismiss Jake Doran off Haider, the equation was a shaky 63 to win from the

last 10 overs for Thunder.

It could have been even worse had Mushfiqur not kept appealing for leg-before and instead picked up the ball that rolled past his left leg to stump Aiden Blizard off Haider in the midst of a crucial 20-run fourth-wicket stand. Subhashis having Blizard bowled off the inside edge with the score on 80 was the last bit of joy for BCB XI before Sydney skipper Eoin Morgan took them to the target with two overs to spare in the company of Nair. Since both teams needed the practice -- Thunders have the Big Bash League-opening Sydney derby on December 20 -- the remaining overs were played out and Rubel started that spell off by trapping Morgan leg-before. The fast bowler finished with figures of three for 27 from four overs, while Morgan ended on 33.

SCORES IN BRIEF

BCB XI: 122 for 8 (Nurul 35, Shuvagata 25; Nair 2-18, Cummins 2-19)

SYDNEY THUNDER: 123 for 4 (Morgan 33 not out, Gibson 25; Rubel 3-27) Result: Sydney Thunder won by 6 wkts.



Bangladesh fast bowler Rubel Hossain was on song in BCB XI's last preparatory match in Australia against Big Bash League team Sydney Thunder at the Spotless Stadium in Sydney yesterday.

PHOTO: CA

Minhajul stars in Victory Day Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

The Akram Khan-led Shaheed Mushtaque XI defeated Shaheed Jewel XI, captained by Khaled Mashud, by six wickets in the Victory Day Exhibition T20 match that took place in Mirpur yesterday.

The game took many on a trip down memory lane as many of the country's former cricketers took part, but it was current chief selector Minhajul Abedin who lit up the show.

After Shaheed Jewel XI rode on Aminul Islam's unbeaten 36 to post 145 for the loss of five wickets. Mehrab Hossain scored 28 and Hasanuzzaman 27.

An unbeaten 48 from Minhajul took his side home with four balls to spare. He might have aged a bit, but he has not lost his elegant style one bit. A number of straight drives were more than pleasing and he was reminiscent of his halcyon days.

BANGLADESH'S TOUR OF NZ

Broom, Ronchi recalled

REUTERS, Wellington



New Zealand batsman Neil Broom could play his first one-day international in six years later this month after being recalled for the three-match home series against Bangladesh.

Wicketkeeper Luke Ronchi was also added to the squad, while gloveman BJ Watling, top order batsman Henry Nicholls and leg-spinner Todd Astle dropped out after the recent 3-0 drubbing in Australia.

The 33-year-old Broom, who played 22 ODIs in 2009 and 2010, has cut short his contract with English county side Derbyshire to return home and make a bid for a return to international cricket.

"With 12 years of domestic cricket under his belt and having previously spent time in the Black Caps squad, Neil brings a lot of experience to the group," selector Gavin Larsen said in news release.

"He has an impressive strike-rate and obviously fills the number four role with

Ross (Taylor) out injured."

The 2015 World Cup finalists, who were beaten 3-2 in India in October before the series sweep in Australia, are rebuilding in the wake of a string of retirements.

"There's six players in this side from the squad of 15 who featured for us in the World Cup last year, so it's important we give the new players the opportunity to feel comfortable on the international stage," Larsen added.

"That takes time. You can't replace 900 ODI caps and the leadership that comes with that experience overnight, but it's an exciting new group and we're learning a lot with each match that is played.

"Although the side is rebuilding it's very important that we do see improvements during the home summer."

The 13-man squad will go into a training camp in Christchurch on Dec. 23 ahead of the start of the series at Hagley Oval on Dec. 26.

ODI SQUAD: Williamson (captain), Boult, Broom, Ferguson, de Grandhomme, Guptill, Henry, Latham, Munro, Neesham, Ronchi, Santner, Southee.



NEIL BROOM

One-girl show

	R	B	4s	6s	SR
Charlize Swanepoel	0	10	0	0	0
Shania-Lee Swart	160	86	18	12	186
Nicolien Van	0	7	0	0	0
Jammie de Vos	0	1	0	0	0
Yonella Velloo	0	9	0	0	0
Angelic Vos	0	2	0	0	0
Maria Malaza	0	3	0	0	0
Shivani Nades	0	1	0	0	0
Lebone Tlou	0	1	0	0	0
Nicholatte Phiri	0	3	0	0	0
Njabulo Nkabinde					
Extras	9				
Total	169	123	18	12	137



SHANIA-LEE SWART ... 160 (86)

coming from extras.

144 of Swart's runs came in boundaries. She smashed 18 fours and 12 sixes off 86 balls -- a strike rate of 186.

"I wanted to [give someone else a go] but every time someone else was on strike we lost a wicket, so I had to play clever cricket to win the game for my team," she wrote on her Facebook page.

Swart's contribution did not stop there. She even chipped in with 2-21 to lead Mpumalanga to a 42-run victory.

ICC wants more teams at the top

AGENCIES, Dubai

International Cricket Council (ICC) chief executive Dave Richardson has said that world cricket's governing body is planning the increase the number of teams playing at the top level to "15-16".

"The ICC has a strategy to have more competitive teams playing at the highest level," Richardson said on Thursday.

"We would like to increase that number to 15-16 countries [with] the likes of Afghanistan, Nepal, Malaysia and various other countries in the Asian region. It's very important that we can develop their cricket to a level where they can play against the big boys on an equal basis," he added.

Richardson shared his concern about the global body functioning with 10 Full Members for too long now.

Pakistan crumble at Gabba

AFP, Brisbane



A withering spell of fast bowling backed up by exceptional catching had Pakistan on their knees as Australia took charge of the day-night first Test in Brisbane on Friday.

Australia's three-man pace attack -- Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood and Jackson Bird -- decimated the tourists' first innings under the Gabba lights.

Starc and Hazlewood took three wickets each and Bird chimed in with two for seven to leave skipper Steve Smith pondering whether to enforce the follow-on after a seven-wicket final session.

At the close, Pakistan were hanging on at 97 for eight and trailing by 332 runs with Sarfraz Ahmed on 31 and Mohammad Amir not out eight.

Rookie Peter Handscomb hit a maiden century in Australia's first innings 429, but it was the bowlers who had the pink ball hurtling to an early resolution.

Hazlewood put the tourists on the skids with two wickets in two balls in his fifth over.

Babar Azam got a thick edge which

flew to Steve Smith at slip for 19 and next ball veteran Younis Khan feathered to wicketkeeper Matthew Wade for a duck.

Skipper Misbahul Haq was never comfortable under the lights and played away from his body, nicking to Matthew Renshaw at first slip off Bird for four.

Asad Shafiq soon followed, prod-ding at Starc to give Khawaja another slips catch for two.

Sami Aslam was caught behind off Bird for 22 off 100 balls.

Wahab Riaz and Yasir Shah followed within minutes of each other but Sarfraz and Amir saw out play to stumps.

Handscomb made the most of his opportunity and followed up a half-century on debut against South Africa in Adelaide last month with a polished 105 in Australia's first innings of 429.

Handscomb was out shortly after tea when he chopped a Wahab delivery on to his stumps, one ball after Josh Hazlewood was caught at first slip in Mohammad Amir's previous over.

Tailenders Nathan Lyon and Bird hit out in a crowd-pleasing last-wicket stand of 49, while Wahab Riaz and Amir both finished with four wickets each.

The Australians, who resumed at

288 for three, lost skipper Steve Smith for 130, Nic Maddinson for one, Matthew Wade for seven and Mitchell Starc for 10 in the first session.

Smith slashed at Wahab in the 100th over and was caught by wicketkeeper Sarfraz Ahmed.

Smith had some luck along the way with his 16th Test century, offering three chances during his 222-ball knock.

The Australian captain was dropped on 53 by Ahmed off spinner Azhar Ali, and on 97 he survived in bizarre circumstances when a faint outside edge off Amir was taken by Ahmed, but there was no appeal.

According to Hot Spot, the pink ball registered a faint contact on the bat and Smith later admitted he had nicked it.

On 129, he jumped down the wicket to luckless leg-spinner Yasir Shah and skied to long-off, where Amir made a hash of the catch.

SCORES IN BRIEF

AUSTRALIA: First innings 429 (Renshaw 71, Smith 130, Handscomb 105; Amir 4-97, Wahab 4-89)

PAKISTAN: First innings 97 for 8 (Aslam 22, Ahmed 31 not out; Starc 3-45, Hazlewood 3-19)

INTERNET

Never has the phrase 'one-man team' been more true.

South African cricketer Shania-Lee Swart recorded the amazing feat of scoring all of her team's runs during a match in Cricket South Africa's Under-19s week in Pretoria.

The Mpumalanga batter scored 160 from 86 balls against Easterns. Eight of her teammates were dismissed for ducks as Mpumalanga posted 169-8 in 20 overs, with the other nine runs