



LYON ROARS on Ashes return

After an upsetting omission from the second Ashes Test in Brisbane, spinner Nathan Lyon was all smiles on Thursday as he celebrated his recall to the Australian eleven with a two-wicket burst that launched a day of pain for England at the Adelaide Oval. Introduced into the Australian attack early, Lyon struck with his third ball to have Ollie Pope caught for three. Three balls later, he bowled opener Ben Duckett for 29 with a peach of a delivery that beat the outside edge before clipping the top of off stump. England could not recover from there, hobbling to 213-8 at stumps on Day 2, trailing by 158 after Australia added 45 to their overnight 326-8. Duckett was Lyon's 564th Test scalp, moving him past pace great Glenn McGrath to sixth on the all-time list for most Test wickets. In this regard, Lyon leads the chart among active players, with teammate Mitchell Starc next at 15th on the all-time list with 420 wickets in 103 Tests.

PHOTO: REUTERS

MOST WICKETS IN TESTS

PLAYER	MATCHES	WICKETS
Muthiah Muralidaran (SL)	133	800
Shane Warne (Aus)	145	708
James Anderson (Eng)	188	704
Anil Kumble (Ind)	132	619
Stuart Broad (Eng)	167	604
Nathan Lyon* (Aus)	141*	564

BCB's long-overdue shift in NOC stance

ASHEFAQ-UL-ALAM

By general consensus, the Lord's in London is regarded as the Mecca of cricket, but in terms of significance, the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) – which hosted the first-ever Test – isn't too far behind.

On Thursday, the MCG hosted a league-phase match of the Big Bash League (BBL) between Hobart Hurricanes and Melbourne Stars, and among the 22 cricketers on display was Bangladesh's very own Rishad Hossain.

Rishad, playing for Adelaide, claimed 2 33 in three overs as his side lost the game by eight wickets.

Despite the defeat, it was a memorable match for the leg-spinner as he became only the second Bangladeshi after Shakib Al Hasan to play a T20 at the venue. Shakib has played two T20s there, but like Rishad, his appearances also came in the BBL, as Bangladesh are yet to play a T20I at the MCG.

Rishad could have had this experience last year, when he was roped in by the same side for the BBL. But at that time, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) blocked his path by denying him a No Objection Certificate (NOC), as it clashed with the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL).

What happened with Rishad was far from an isolated incident, as for years the BCB displayed a similar reluctance when issuing NOCs for foreign leagues.

The board has recalled players from overseas leagues for insignificant series against weak sides, delayed NOC decisions until the last moment – creating unnecessary drama – and even offered financial compensation after stopping them from featuring in other leagues.

The BCB's NOC stance has denied many Bangladeshi players opportunities, arguably stagnating their development. But now, the board is seemingly on the path of course correction.



Granting Rishad full NOC for the BBL, even though it would make him entirely unavailable for the upcoming BPL, was a step in the right direction.

The board also allowed Taskin Ahmed to take part in the Abu Dhabi T10 League in November for the Northern Warriors, even though the Tigers were playing a home series against Ireland at that time.

On Thursday, the board cleared up all doubts about Mustafizur Rahman's NOC situation for next year's Indian Premier League (IPL), declaring that the pacer, who was bought for a whopping INR 9.2 crore by the Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR), will be available for all but eight days of the season, which will run from March 26 to May 31.

"He [Mustafizur] will return for eight days to play the ODI series," BCB Cricket Operations chief Nazmul Abedeen Fahim said, explaining the decision was taken with Bangladesh's 2027 ODI World Cup qualification in mind.

"We are not willing to make any compromise on our qualification for the World Cup. Since we are not in a comfortable position, this decision was taken," he added.

Mustafizur and Taskin are currently in the UAE, taking part in ILT20 for Dubai Capitals and Sharjah Warriorz respectively with partial NOCs, which will end on 24 December, two days before the start of the new BPL season.

Batter Saif Hassan too was given a partial NOC for the Abu Dhabi T10 League, as he returned for the Ireland T20Is, Bangladesh's last T20Is before the ICC T20 World Cup.

This shows that while the board is now allowing players more opportunities overseas, the national team's requirements still come first. Striking this balance will be difficult going forward, but the board's change of mindset is a positive sign, as it will allow Rishad and others to develop and showcase Bangladesh's cricketing talents on a bigger stage.



Junior Tigers eye third straight Asia Cup final

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh will be aiming to seal a third successive final berth in the ACC Under-19 Asia Cup when they face Pakistan in the second semifinal at Sevens Stadium in Dubai today.

The junior Tigers, champions of the last two editions, are unbeaten in the competition, having won all three of their group games.

Bangladesh began their campaign with a hard-fought three-wicket victory over Afghanistan before registering comfortable wins against Nepal and Sri Lanka.

Opener Zawad Abrar has been in impressive form, scoring 215 runs in three

innings at a remarkable average of 107.50. Left-arm spinner Shahriar Ahmed is Bangladesh's leading wicket-taker with seven scalps in three matches.

Pakistan, meanwhile, booked a semifinal spot as Group A runners-up. They opened their campaign with a massive 297-run win over Malaysia but suffered a crushing defeat against arch-rivals India in their second group match. Pakistan bounced back with another strong display against hosts UAE.

In the first semifinal today, Group A champions India will face Group B runners-up Sri Lanka at the ICC Academy Ground in Dubai, with the final scheduled for Sunday at the same venue.



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

game 21-19 before the Indians levelled the match with a 21-17 win. The hosts then sealed the decider 21-14, despite Ohidul sustaining an injury in the final game.

"We have just entered into the quarterfinals but still long way to go," Ohidul said. "We could not play the final in Canadian International Challenge but this time we want to win gold medal in home.

"Having played together for a long time, we have a good understanding among us."

Mashud and Asfaq, who train at the Alora Shuttler Academy in Dinajpur, dropped the opening game 21-14 but showed resilience to turn the match around, winning the next two games 21-14 and 21-17 to register an unexpected victory over their higher-ranked opponents.

Elsewhere, Rahatun Nayem and Mizanoor Rahman went down 2-1 to India's Swastik Matharasan and Gokul Sureshkumar in the men's doubles, while Sifat Ullah and Bristi Khatun lost 2-1 to an Indian pair in the mixed doubles.

In the women's doubles, Dalia Rahman and Mithila Bishwas were beaten 2-0 by a British pair, and Reshma Akter and Bristi Khatun suffered a 2-1 defeat to an Indian duo.

SHORT CORNER

FIFA World Cup trophy to arrive in Dhaka on Jan 14

Bangladesh fans will get a chance to witness the FIFA World Cup trophy close up front as the most coveted silverware in the world of football will make a stop in Dhaka on January 14, 2026, as part of the FIFA World Cup Trophy Tour by Coca-Cola.

Pakistan home series next year set to be in two phases

Bangladesh's upcoming full-fledged home series against Pakistan next year is set to be held in two separate phases due to a scheduling clash with the Pakistan Super League (PSL), informed BCB cricket operations chairman Nazmul Abedeen Fahim on Thursday.

PSG topple Flamengo to win Intercontinental Cup

PSG ended a banner year on a high as they defeated CF Flamengo 2-1 in a penalty shootout on Wednesday to win the FIFA Intercontinental Cup after a 1-1 draw in regulation. It has been an incredible 2025 for Luis Enrique's men, who won a treble in the 2024/25 season, including their first UEFA Champions League title.

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Jamal sees football from a different perspective

STAR SPORTS DESK

Bangladesh national football team captain Jamal Bhuyan experienced football from a different perspective during a surprise visit to Camp Abilities Bangladesh 2025 at the Riya Gope Women's Sports Complex in Dhanmondi.

Blindfolded, the midfielder joined visually impaired children on the pitch, taking part in the game without sight and engaging directly with the campers. The visit became a key moment of the three-day inclusive sports camp, held from December 11 to 13, and reflected the camp's theme, "Sports Without Limits".

Jamal interacted with around 50 young participants and later said: "Visually impaired or people with any disabilities should be able to participate in sports and all aspects of life. They are part of the society and we should not ignore their plight to be included."

The camp was organised by Heroes for All (HFA) in collaboration with the Ministry of Youth and Sports and Assistance for Blind Children (ABC). This was the second edition of the initiative, following its first outing in January 2018. According to HFA founder and president Dr. Rehnuma Karim, the camp aimed to challenge stigma around visual impairment and provide children with a space to build confidence through sports.

The programme featured adapted versions of cricket, football, goalball and paired races, with each child paired with a counselor or volunteer to ensure one-on-one support.

The Daily Star was one of the media partners for the event.

Local pairs power into Yonex-Sunrise quarters

SPORTS REPORTER

Riding on their strong showing at the Yonex Canadian International Challenge earlier this month, Al-Amin Jumar and Moajjam Hossain Ohidul continued their impressive form to reach the quarterfinals of the men's doubles at the ongoing Yonex-Sunrise Bangladesh International Challenge yesterday.

The day also saw a surprise success as the unheralded pairing of Mashud Ahmed and Sadakat Robin Asfaq booked a place in the quarterfinals with a win over a Malaysian pair at the Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Indoor Stadium in Paltan, Dhaka. They had earlier received a walkover in the Round of 32 on Wednesday.

Other Bangladeshi shuttlers, however, failed to match their progress, exiting across the men's doubles, women's doubles and mixed doubles events.

Top-seeded Jumar and Ohidul came into the event buoyed by a bronze-medal finish at the Canadian International Challenge earlier this month. After receiving a bye in the round of 32, the Bangladeshi pair were tested by India's Devart Mann and Sourbh Naim.

Jumar and Ohidul edged the opening

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