

## Shah scores 2nd half century

## Afghanistan clinch historic maiden Test victory

DEHRADUN, India, March 18, (AP): Afghanistan notched a historic maiden win in only its second test match when it defeated Ireland by seven wickets in the one-off Test ending Monday.

Needing 118 runs, Rahmat Shah scored his second half century of the match and Ihsanullah Janat made 50 in his debut Test as Afghanistan reached 149-3 just before lunch on the fourth day.

"It was our dream to play Test cricket and today we won a Test match so I am very happy for Afghanistan and its people," Afghanistan captain Asghar Afghan said.

"I want to give credit to the bowlers, especially Rashid Khan, Waqar (Salamkheil), Yamin (Ahmadzai) and (Mohammad) Nabi because the wicket was good for batting."

## CRICKET

Leg spinner Rashid claimed the match haul of 7-102 and played the Test match while nursing his injured spinning finger.

It was only the second Test match for both countries since gaining Test status in 2017. Afghanistan lost its inaugural Test against India last year before Pakistan went on to beat Ireland.

Man-of-the-match Shah, who missed out on the century in the first innings before falling for 98, played another splendid knock of 76 with 13 fours before he got stumped when Afghanistan required only three runs for victory.

Janat was equally good in scoring an unbeaten 65 off 129 balls as both batsmen dominated Ireland bowling with attacking shots during their 139-run match-winning stand.

Ireland had an early opportunity to break the stand but Shah was dropped on 19 by Stuart Thompson in left-arm spinner George Dockrell's second over of the day after Afghanistan resumed on 29-1.

Although Mohammad Nabi missing Afghanistan's winning moment on the field when he got run out, Hashmatullah Shahidi got the winning runs when he pulled James Cameron-Dow to the square leg fence off his first delivery.

Ireland captain William Porterfield saw his team's first-innings effort of 172 as the prime reason for the defeat as Afghanistan replied strongly with 314.

"In any multi-day game, we had to capitalize on the first innings. If we'd done how we'd done in the second innings then, it could have been a completely different game," Porterfield said.

Ireland fought back in the second innings by scoring 288, thanks largely to the last-wicket half century stand between Cameron-Dow and Tim Murtagh that set up Afghanistan's target of 147 runs.

"Credit to Afghanistan, they outplayed us ... and once Afghanistan got past us in the first innings, it was always going to be hard," Porterfield said.



Quetta Gladiator pacer Mohammad Hasnain runs past the Sri Lankan umpire Ranmore Martinesz to deliver a ball during the final cricket match of the Pakistan Super League against Peshawar Zalmi at National Stadium in Karachi, Pakistan, on March 17. (AP)

## Game abandoned after rivals' clashes

ATHENS, Greece, March 18, (AP): Greek league rivals Panathinaikos and Olympiakos had their soccer game abandoned on Sunday after fans from hosts Panathinaikos clashed with police outside Athens' Olympic Stadium, and attempted to attack the Olympiakos bench inside the stadium.

With tear gas heavily used as police tried to get back control, referee Marco Fritz of Germany stopped play after 70 minutes. He called the game off for good a half-hour later, saying the stadium had not been made sufficiently safe with lingering tear gas forcing Panathinaikos fans close to the field itself.

Most of the 25,000 Panathinaikos fans who attended the game had already left the stadium, affected by the tear gas. Visiting fans are not allowed at Greek league games for fear of violence.

Olympiakos were leading 1-0 at the time the game was abandoned.

The game was first interrupted in the sixth minute, when about 30 Panathinaikos fans, some masked, entered the field and attacked the Olympiakos bench before police intervened. The fans targeted Olympiakos spokesman Costas Karapapas, who defended himself by pushing back.

No arrests were made, and no serious injuries reported, but Olympiakos claimed at least one fan was carrying a knife. The referee added 13 minutes to first-half play.

A fan also tried to attack Karapapas at halftime, jumping out of the stands, but was restrained.

## ICC rules out complacency on WC security after NZ shootings

WELLINGTON, March 18, (RTRS): There is no question of being complacent with security at this year's World Cup following a mass shooting at two Christchurch mosques last week, the International Cricket Council (ICC) has said.

Members of the Bangladesh cricket team narrowly avoided being caught up in the shooting, which killed 50 people, by a suspected white supremacist last Friday.

Their third Test against New Zealand that had been scheduled to start on Saturday at nearby Hagley Oval was subsequently cancelled and it also prompted calls from Asian cricket officials and politicians to step up security for touring teams.

ICC chief executive David Richardson said security was always an issue for his organisation and ensuring the May 30-July 14 World Cup in England and Wales was safe would be a priority.

"It has always been the case that we've had to make sure that we keep security absolutely priority, not only for the players but also for the visiting media, fans, spectators and everyone who attends the event," Richardson was quoted as saying by cricket website Cricinfo.

"Something happening in New Zealand probably

took a lot of people by surprise and it emphasised the need not to be complacent, especially going into the World Cup.

"I know the work done already by the security director together with all the security agencies in the UK, they are leaving no stone unturned, and if the threat level should rise in any way we will (further upgrade) the plans in place."

Cricket teams have previously abandoned tours because of security fears but most had been in South Asia, including Bangladesh which Australia decided against touring in 2015.

Sri Lanka's team bus was attacked by gunmen in Lahore during their tour of Pakistan in 2009. Six members of the team were wounded, while six security personnel and two civilians were killed.

Pakistan still host nearly all of their international matches in the United Arab Emirates due to ongoing security concerns.

New Zealand abandoned their 1987 tour of Sri Lanka following a bombing near their hotel in Colombo in which more than 100 people were killed.

They also abandoned a tour of Pakistan in May 2002 following a suicide bombing outside their hotel in Karachi.

## Afghanistan vs Ireland Scoreboard

DEHRADUN, March 18, (RTRS): Scoreboard at close of play on the fourth day of the one-off Test between Afghanistan and Ireland.

Ireland 1st innings 172 (Murtagh 54; Nabi 3-36; Ahmadzai 3-41)

AFGHANISTAN 1st innings 314 (R. Shah 98; A. Afghan 67; Thompson 3-28; Dockrell 2-63)

Ireland 2nd innings

W. Porterfield c Khalil b Ahmadzai ..... 0

P. Stirling lbw Ahmadzai ..... 14

A. Balbirnie c Khalil b Salamkheil ..... 82

J. McCollum lbw R. Khan ..... 39

K. O'Brien lbw R. Khan ..... 56

S. Poynter c Ihsanullah b Salamkheil ... 1

S. Thompson c Ihsanullah b R. Khan ... 1

G. Dockrell lbw R. Khan ..... 25

A. McBrine st Khalil b R. Khan ..... 4

J. Cameron-Dow not out ..... 32

T. Murtagh c Shah b Ahmadzai ..... 27

Extras: (4b, 2lb, 1w) ..... 7

Total: (all out, 93 overs) ..... 288

Fall of Wickets: 1-0 (Porterfield), 2-33 (Stirling), 3-137 (Balbirnie), 4-141 (McCollum), 5-150 (Poynter), 6-157 (Thompson), 7-220 (Dockrell), 8-229 (O'Brien), 9-230 (McBrine), 10-288 (Murtagh)

Bowling: Ahmadzai 14-1-52-3, Nabi 20-1-58-0, R. Khan 34-7-82-5, Salamkheil 17-2-66-2, Wafadar 8-0-24-0

AFGHANISTAN 2nd innings

M. Shahzad c Poynter b McBrine ..... 2

Ihsanullah not out ..... 65

R. Shah st Poynter b Cameron-Dow .. 76

M. Nabi run out (Tim Murtagh) ..... 1

H. Shahidi not out ..... 4

Extras: (1w) ..... 1

Total: (3 wks, 47.5 overs) ..... 149

Fall of Wickets: 1-5 (Mohammadi), 2-144 (Zurmatai), 3-145 (Nabi)

Did not bat: Afghan, R. Khan, Ahmadzai, Momand, Khalil, Salamkheil

Bowling: Dockrell 22-7-58-0, McBrine 13-5-35-1, Cameron-Dow 5-5-0-24-1, Murtagh 5-3-15-0, Thompson 1-0-9-0, Balbirnie 1-0-8-0

Match result: Afghanistan win by 7 wickets



Dominic Thiem, of Austria, returns a shot to Roger Federer, of Switzerland, during the men's final at the BNP Paribas Open tennis tournament on March 17 in Indian Wells, Calif. (AP)

## Thiem 'topples' Federer to win Indian Wells title

## Andreescu stuns Kerber to win title

WASHINGTON, March 18, (RTRS): Dominic Thiem claimed his first Masters 1000 title after coming from a set down to defeat Roger Federer 3-6 6-3 7-5 and win the BNP Paribas Open on Sunday in Indian Wells.

Momentum swung in Thiem's favour in the deciding set when he smacked a forehand winner down the line to break Federer and take a 6-5 lead.

The Austrian fell on his back and covered his face with his hands when Federer, who had been bidding for a record sixth Indian Wells title and 101st tournament victory, netted on match point.

The 25-year-old Thiem, who will rise four places to a career-high world number four on Monday, paid tribute to his opponent.

"It is such a pleasure to compete

## TENNIS

with you, to learn so much from you, and to play with one of the biggest legends of all time," he told the 20-times Grand Slam champion during the trophy presentation ceremony.

"I feel like it's not my right to congratulate you, you have 88 more titles than me, so I'm just hoping you play more and we can have some other big finals," he said with a laugh.

Federer was gracious in defeat after falling in the final in the Southern California desert for a second consecutive year.

"It has been a great week for me even though it didn't work out today,"

he said.

"What a great week for Dominic. Wonderful playing at the very end and throughout the week. You deserve it."

Federer raced to an early lead, winning the first three games before wrapping up the first set in the Southern California desert.

But baseline specialist Thiem kept his composure and levelled the match in the second, gaining traction by extending rallies and unleashing a torrent of high-kicking serves to keep Federer off balance.

Federer's own serve lost some of its bite in the crucial game in the third set with the score tied at 5-5.

"The game he broke me I didn't serve very well, so I think he took advantage of that fact," said Federer, who was not overly down about the defeat.

"I just got my 100 (career title) in Dubai and I had a good week here,"

the 37-year-old said.

"Really there is no reason to get down. Plus there is more to look forward to in Miami."

Thiem will also play in Miami, hoping to complete the "Sunshine Double" with a victory there after his Indian Wells win.

Canadian teenager Bianca Andreescu stunned three-times Grand Slam champion Angelique Kerber 6-4 3-6 6-4 to win the BNP Paribas Open and capture her first career title in Indian Wells on Sunday.

Andreescu used creative and aggressive shot-making to defeat the German despite suffering with a troublesome right shoulder and leg cramps on a hot and sunny day in the Southern California desert.

The 18-year-old dropped her racket and fell on her back when Kerber hit a backhand into the net on match point to deliver the tournament wildcard the

victory.

"It wasn't an easy match. It was one of the toughest matches I've ever played," she said in an on-court interview. "It's so incredible."

Andreescu would love to follow in the footsteps of world number one Naomi Osaka of Japan, who won the tournament last year before claiming the US and Australian Open titles.

"The next is a Grand Slam. Let's see where this can take me," said the unseeded teenager who is ranked 60th in the world but will rise to 24th on Monday.

"Naomi did this last year. Now to have my name in front of so many champions it means the world to me."

Andreescu played fearlessly at the outset, breaking the former world number one in the opening game of the match and taking the first set.

The eighth seed battled back to claim the second and looked like she would cruise to the finish line when she broke to go up 3-2 in the third after Andreescu needed a medical time out to have her heavily taped right shoulder worked on by a trainer.

Momentum swung in Andreescu's direction when she broke back to level the set at 3-3 and held serve to love in the next game.

Nerves appeared to get to Andreescu near the end, when Kerber saved three match points behind some stout defence. But Andreescu broke the German in the next game to claim the title and become the youngest woman to win at Indian Wells since 17-year-old Serena Williams in 1999.

"Hopefully this moment can be a great inspiration for many young athletes," she said.

"If you believe in yourself anything is possible. This moment has become a reality so it's really, really crazy."



Bianca Andreescu, of Canada, smiles as she hugs her trophy after defeating Angelique Kerber, of Germany, in the women's final at the BNP Paribas Open tennis tournament on March 17, in Indian Wells, Calif. Andreescu won 6-4, 3-6, 6-4. (AP)

## Isco gets second chance at Madrid

BARCELONA, Spain, March 18, (AP): Among the 60,000-plus spectators packed into the Santiago Bernabeu for the return of Zinedine Zidane, nobody seemed happier than Francisco "Isco" Alarcon.

Having his old coach back in charge has given Isco a second chance to salvage his career at Real Madrid — and his status as one of Spain's top talents.

During Zidane's nine-month hiatus from coaching, Isco went from title-winner to soccer outcast. It had gotten so bad for Isco

## SOCCER

under the recently fired Santiago Solari that he had to watch several matches from the stands.

But with Zidane back in charge, so was Isco. The playmaker scored the opening goal of the 2-0 win over Celta Vigo on Saturday to end a horrendous run of four consecutive home losses for Madrid that led to Solari's exit.

Isco was among several members of Zidane's "old guard" to recover their spots in the starting 11 after seeing their playing time diminish during Solari's 4 1-2 months in charge. Others included Marcelo and Gareth Bale, who combined for Bale to score Madrid's second goal, and Marco Asensio, who set up Isco's goal, and goalkeeper Keylor Navas, who had become a backup to Thibaut Courtois.

"Nobody is going to take away what they have done here," Zidane said about his veteran players. "Keylor is very good, and what can I say that you don't already know about Marcelo, Isco and Bale? They looked good to me, Isco got a goal. I will count on them all because they have shown positive things." But none of that group of players had been treated as coldly as Isco had by Solari, who didn't start him once in the 17 Spanish league matches that he coached.