

RAIPUR | SUNDAY | SEPTEMBER 22, 2024

Pant, Gill put India in command with emotional hundreds

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Rishabh Pant and Shubman Gill cleansed months of hurt, anxiety and disappointments of varying nature with emotional hundreds on the third day to place India in a prime position to win the first Test against Bangladesh here Saturday.



Pant stood near the middle of the pitch with closed eyes, an upward tilted head and a raised bat - offering a silent prayer, perhaps, to the Lord above for returning life and cricket to him.

as Chepauk erupted. Perhaps, the moment stood also as a tribute to Pant equalling Chennai's very own 'Thala' MS Dhoni's record for the most Test hundreds by an Indian wicketkeeper-batsman - six.

himself in the traditional format. However, since making that hundred against England at Visakhapatnam earlier this year, Gill seemed to have turned a corner and he further validated that journey upwards with his fifth Test hundred, fetched through a single off Mehidy Hasan Miraz.

starting from 12, were in the office, all these feelings were hidden as it was time to enjoy the sight of them taking down Bangladesh bowlers in their contrasting methods.

The hundreds by Pant and Gill stood as a testimony of these two fine young men's will to rise above towering personal obstacles that would have strangled the ordinary. Pant's turmoil has been widely-documented after that horrifying car crash in December 2022, and the way he reacted after reaching his sixth Test hundred with a two off Shakib Al-Hasan underscored the value he attached to the knock.

dismantling of Miraz became a feature of the innings as he brought up his fifty off 88 balls. Once the fifty was achieved, the 26-year-old unfurled some of those typical Pant shots. Pant moved around the crease like a trapeze artist, and his scooped six over fine leg off Hasan Mahmud enthralled a sizeable weekend crowd here. He was dropped on 72 by Shanto off Shakib but that was not even a deterrent. He duly completed his ton before offering a return catch to the hard-working Mehidy.



Gurbaz and Rashid lead Afghanistan to first ODI series win over South Africa

AP ■ SHARJAH

Afghanistan won a one-day international series against South Africa for the first time on Friday with a game to spare. The thumping 177-run victory - Afghanistan's biggest in ODIs by runs - came just two days after Afghanistan beat South Africa for the first time. Also, Rahmanullah Gurbaz's 105 made him the first Afghan man to hit seven ODI hundreds.

Africa." Gurbaz and then Azmatullah Omarzai laid the foundation for Afghanistan's first 300-plus score against South Africa in an ODI. Gurbaz and Rahmat Shah combined for a 101-run for the second wicket. The 90s brought some nervy moments for Gurbaz. On 99, he played a maiden over from Bjorn Fortuin then swept Aiden Markram to square leg. He celebrated his century by making a heart shape with his hands and blew a kiss to his teammates in the dressing room.

Harmanpreet nominated for FIH Player of the Year

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Skipper Harmanpreet Singh, who powered India to a second successive bronze medal in hockey at the Olympics in Paris, was on Saturday nominated for the FIH Player of the Year Award.

without the support of my team. "All the goals I have scored in the FIH Hockey Pro League, and the Paris 2024 Olympic Games are because the team created those goal-scoring chances for me," he added.



corners while the remaining three goals were penalty strokes. Harmanpreet described the Paris Olympics as the pinnacle of his career, expressing gratitude to his team for its unwavering support during challenging

times, including his struggles with penalty corners in the previous World Cup. "The Olympic Games in Paris was not just the highlight of my whole career so far. The team has always had my back, especially during the World Cup last year where I couldn't get a goal from penalty corners.

Champions Trophy 2024 in Moqi, China. Leading the team by example again, he scored seven goals in as many games and was named Player of the Tournament. At the end of the tournament, Harmanpreet stood at the pinnacle of the sport having amassed a staggering 205 goals in 226 matches for the country, a feat only achieved by legends of the sport, Major Dhyani Chand and Balbir Singh Sr.

Indians to watch the sport and support us," he added. "As the team prepares for the next Olympics cycle, I urge



Bhui inches towards hundred, Iyer scores fifty to consolidate vs India B

PTI ■ ANANTHAPUR

Ricky Bhui was 10 runs short of his second successive hundred as India D's overall lead swelled to 311 against India B, when stumps were drawn on the third day of the Duleep Trophy encounter here on Saturday. Shreyas Iyer also showed some form with a purposeful half-century for India D, scoring 50 off 40 balls.

Kumar, who has been on the fringes for a long time finished with 5 for 73 while Arshdeep Singh couldn't add to his overnight tally of three victims. In the second innings, India D had quickly slumped to 18 for 3 by the start of the fourth over but Iyer and Bhui counter-attacked with great disdain, adding 75 runs in just 10.3 overs.

Ronaldo helps Al-Nassr win in new coach Pioli's first game

AP ■ RIYADH

Cristiano Ronaldo opened the scoring as Al-Nassr defeated Ettifaq 3-0 and gave Stefano Pioli victory in his first game as coach of the Saudi Arabian club on Friday.

succeed Luis Castro. The Portuguese coach was dismissed the previous day due to Al-Nassr's slow start to the season with just one win in three Saudi Pro League games. Ronaldo, who missed Al-Nassr's 1-1 draw in the AFC Champions League Elite with Al-Shorta of Iraq on Monday due to a viral infection, fired

home from the penalty spot after 33 minutes for his third goal of the season. In the second half, Salem Al-Najdi and Anderson Talisca added to the scoreline. The defeat was the first this season for Ettifaq but the team coached by Steven Gerrard stayed third. Al-Nassr moved to fourth.

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