



Rain forces no-show

SPORTS REPORTER



Rain spoilt the TVS Cup final between India and South Africa at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The day-night match was called off without a ball being bowled as a violent thundershower lashed the city for about 30 minutes before the scheduled start. Weather-permitting the game will commence at 2pm today, the reserve day for the final. The forecast for the day is a partly cloudy sky with little chance of rain.

Although the 30-yard circle was well covered, the downpour caused enough damage to force West Indian match referee Clive Lloyd to postpone the game.

The announcement from the former West Indies captain came at around 4.30pm, but both the finalists, anticipating no possibility of any action, headed for the team hotel well before that.

"No problem, we will play tomorrow," said Indian skipper Saurav Ganguly as he led his team out of the stadium.

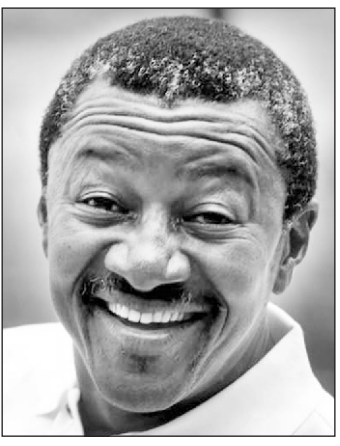
The unfriendly rain also forced the

IT FEELS SO GOOD! Indian captain Saurav Ganguly (R) stands on the balcony in front of the dressing room at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday while an attendant holds a sponsor's umbrella to protect him from the pouring rain.

Bucknor in Dhaka

SPORTS REPORTER

West Indian umpire Steve Bucknor arrived in the capital yesterday morning to officiate two Test matches of the forthcoming GrameenPhone Test series between Bangladesh and South Africa.



Bucknor will stand in along with New Zealander Billy Bowden in the two matches. The first Test will be held in Chittagong from April 24 to 28 while the second matches is scheduled in Dhaka from May 1 to 5.

The 57-year-old Jamaican began his international umpiring career both in Tests and ODIs in 1998-89 and has officiated in 77 Tests and 111 ODIs so far.

It's Whatmore?

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is likely to announce the name of its new foreign coach for the national team today.

Although top officials of the Board are tight-lipped on the subject, speculation is rife in the country's cricket fraternity that former Sri Lankan coach Dav Whatmore will take over the Bangladesh team at the end of the GrameenPhone Test series against South Africa next month.

Born in Sri Lankan capital Colombo in 1954, Whatmore moved to Australia in his childhood and went on to play Sheffield Shield cricket for Victoria as a right-handed batsman. He was also regarded as a brilliant slip fielder.

During the Kerry Packer era, Whatmore made his Test debut. He played seven Test matches and one one-day international for Australia.

After retiring from cricket in 1988-89, Whatmore became a coach and worked at the Victoria Cricket Association and Victoria Institute of Sports before taking over Sri Lankan in 1995.

In his first stint as Sri Lanka's national coach, Whatmore had a highly rewarding 20-month spell that culminated in Sri Lanka's 1996 World Cup triumph. He then spent two years with English county side Lancashire before heading back to Sri Lanka after the 1999



World Cup. 2003, Whatmore decided to... Although his contract with the Sri Lankan Board was up to the end of May... SEE PAGE 14 COL 5

Wright seams alright

Cricket

AFP, Dhaka

India coach John Wright on Sunday said the team's pace attack was doing well and held the key to their success on a tour of Australia later this year.

"Our seamers have been doing a good job and can do well on the Australian tour," said Wright, whose contract was extended by one year by the Indian Board earlier this month.

India start a tour of Australia in December this year for a four-Test series to be followed by a triangular tournament also featuring Zimbabwe.

"Our fast bowlers were very effective during the World Cup and one of the main reasons for our success," said Wright, who coached the team that made the final of the 14-nation tournament in South Africa.

"Our pace attack could do well in Australia as we have some good back-up players," said the coach, who joined the team here after making a short trip to New Zealand on his father's death.

"Zaheer (Khan), Ashish (Nehra) and Ajit (Agarkar) have been bowling well and it is also good to see youngsters like (Aavishkar) Salvi come through."

Salvi, a pacer from Bombay who has modelled himself on Australian great Glenn McGrath and



JOHN WRIGHT has an almost identical action, was blooded during an ongoing three-nation tournament here, featuring

South Africa and hosts Bangladesh. "Salvi is an outstanding prospect, has really added to the bench-strength and will give that much more confidence when the team is playing outside the sub-continent," said the former New Zealand opener.

"Ideally we should have around 10 seamers," he added in jest.

India are here without five frontline players-superstar Sachin Tendulkar, dependable batsman Rahul Dravid, experienced leg-spinner Anil Kumble and seamers Javagal Srinath and Ashish Nehra.

But they have tested their reserves, capping leg-spinner Amit Mishra and batsmen Gautam Gambhir and Abhijit Kale, apart from Salvi, all of whom played for India A on a recent tour of the West Indies.

However the India coach felt that a replacement would not be easy to find for Srinath, who is contemplating retirement. "It will be difficult to fill his shoes," he said.

Wright said it was too early to judge what the new players were worth.

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First day's play cut short

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Rain forced both the GrameenPhone Premier Division Super League matches to be stopped after lunch at yesterday.

At the Fatullah Cricket Stadium, City Club, electing to bat first, were 99 for four against Abahani Kiria Chakra when heavy rain ended play for the day in the 48th over.

Away at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium, Uttara Club had reached 141 for five in 36 overs on the opening day of their four-day game against Brothers Union.

The other match between Victoria Sporting Club and Mohammedan Sporting Club will start today.

SCOREBOARD
Scorecards on the first day of the two GrameenPhone Premier Division Super League clash yesterday:
City Club v Abahani
Venue: FCS.

CITY CLUB

Faruque c Nazir b Arman	59
Moniruzzaman c Imran b Neezamur	4
Jamaluddin run out	16
Mazharul c Mukhter b Suja	11
Rajin batting	1
Extras: (lb-6, nb-1, w-1)	8
Total: (For 4 wkts in 47.2 overs)	99
Fall of wickets: 1-13, 2-69, 3-97, 4-99	

Bowler O M R W

Neezamur	10	3	33	1
Alamgir	9	5	1	20
Suja	14.2	4	21	1
Arman	14	3	27	1

Uttara SC v Brothers Union
Venue: DCS
UTTARA SC

Shafiq c Imon b Sohail	65
Moniruzzaman b Sohail	36
Maruf batting	28
Faisal b Mustakim	5
Samon c Salauddin b Mustadir	1
Runned run out	0
Al-Amin batting	0
Extras: (b-1, nb-5)	6

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THAT RAIN IS NEVER GOOD NEWS FOR US! South African opening batsman Herschelle Gibbs (R) points towards the skies while all-rounder Shaun Pollock watches from the dressing room door at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Vaughan best: Bird

Cricket

INTERNET, London

Michael Vaughan is a better batsman technically than Geoffrey Boycott, according to former Test umpire Dickie Bird.

In an exclusive interview with the BBC Sport website to mark his 70th birthday, Bird said: "To bat for your life, you'd got for Boycott."

"But technically, Vaughan is ranked the best player in the world and rightly so. He would hold his place in any Test side."

His endorsement comes only days after Yorkshire opener Vaughan was elevated to the number one position in the world Test batting rankings, the first England player to reach the number one spot since Graham Gooch a decade ago.

Vaughan was the leading scorer in Test cricket in 2002 with 1,281 runs and made three centuries during the winter Ashes tour to Australia. He is also a leading candidate to succeed Nasser Hussain as England's one-day captain.

Bird believes the future for England is bright with a number of young players beginning to make their mark on the international scene.

"I still think Marcus Trescothick's a fine player and I told the selectors to take this boy Jimmy Anderson to Australia in the Test squad.

"With Anderson and Steve Harmison, and Simon Jones when he's fit, we've got a tremendous attack. They can all bowl at pace, and that's the key."
"I like the wicketkeepers Chris Read and James Foster - it's going to

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DID HE BUY THIS FROM THE ELECTRONICS MARKET OUTSIDE THE STADIUM? Indian players Ajit Agarkar (L) and Harbhajan Singh (R) talk while Mohammed Kaif tests his camera at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Wheel meet again

Cricket

INTERNET, London

Sachin Tendulkar could soon be taking on a new sporting challenge against Steve Waugh and Brian Lara.

The trio have bat sponsorship deals with tyre manufacturers MRF, and the



company plans to pit them against each other in a go-kart race in Madras on July 6.

"Tendulkar expressed his desire to compete in a race, provided it is a level-playing field," said company spokesman Anthony Rodrigues.

There has been no response yet from Waugh or Lara or their respective cricket boards as to whether they are interested in taking part.

The Indian batsman, man-of-the-tournament at last month's World Cup with 673 runs, is shortly to undergo surgery on an injured finger in the USA after skipping a triangular one-day

series in Bangladesh. But he displayed his kart driving skills in Bombay last Friday in front of local media and an invited audience.

The event was staged as a curtain-raiser for the MRF-MAI (Motorsports Association of India) Formulae Mondiale Championship.

Driving is one of Tendulkar's pas-



sions and last year Fiat named a limited edition Palio Sachin model after him.

Unusually for a wealthy Indian - he was recently listed among the top 20 richest in the country - he prefers to drive himself around rather than rely on chauffeurs, and has a fleet of cars including two luxury Mercedes and a Ferrari.

The Ferrari was a gift from Formula One world champion Michael Schumacher after the two met at last year's British Grand Prix meeting at Silverstone during the Indian team's tour to England.

So is Tendulkar considering a

change of career? "Cricket is a serious commitment, while karting is just a passion.

"You tend to get pretty serious while playing cricket, while karting is fun and you can release all the pent up pressure," he said.

Tendulkar is the world's leading one-day batsman with a record 12,219



runs and 34 centuries. He also has 8,811 Test runs at an average of 57.58, with 31 hundreds.

Australia 517/3

SPORTS REPORTER

Australia were piling on the miseries for the West Indies on Day Two of the second Test at Queen's Park Oval, Port-of-Spain in Trinidad yesterday.

At lunch, the tourists were 517 for 3 in their first innings with Ricky Ponting five runs short of a double century. Adam Gilchrist was not out on 74. The pair have added 146 runs in an unbroken fourth wicket stand so far.

Aussie run feast

Cricket

REUTERS, Port-of-Spain

Darren Lehmann scored his maiden Test hundred, while vice-captain Ricky Ponting scored a century for the second match in a row to put Australia in a commanding position against West Indies in the second Test on Saturday.

The pair, who both had let-offs, completed their centuries off the same Mervyn Dillon over as they mauled a lackluster

West Indies attack with a third-wicket partnership of 315 that helped Australia to 391 for three at the close on the first day.

Ponting was still at the crease, unbeaten on 146, while Adam Gilchrist was not out 14.

Lehmann was finally out for 160 -- having faced 229 balls and hit 21 fours and one six -- after he got a faint edge to Vasbert Drakes and was caught behind by debutant wicketkeeper Carlton Baugh.

Ponting completed his century on the first ball of the 63rd over when he knicked Dillon through the slips for his 16th boundary, while Lehmann, whose previous best score was 98, completed his 100 by driving Dillon through the covers for his 13th four on the final ball of the over.

They continued the onslaught in ruthless style after tea, hitting a flurry of fours as Lehmann hit another six boundaries and a six to reach his 150 in the 83rd over.

Marlon Samuels' 15 overs cost 74 runs as West Indies fielded a team with an average age of only 25.

The home team, however did not help themselves with a poor performance in the field.

Ponting was let off when he got an inside edge to a Dillon delivery only for Samuels to drop the catch at first slip while on 37.

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Australia's Ricky Ponting square cuts on the opening day of the second Test match against the West Indies.