

Rain the spoiler

Sports Reporter

Unplayable ground condition resulting from heavy overnight downpour prevented any play in the 19th Gold Leaf national cricket championship final round at both the Dhaka Stadium and the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium yesterday.

The matches will now be held today. Last year's runners-up Sylhet DSA will take on Narayanjanj at the Dhaka Stadium while reigning champions Chittagong meet Kushtia at the DCS.

The remaining matches of the fixture will be shifted accordingly.

BSWA function

Sports Reporter

A programme to mark the Bangla new year 1400 was held at the National Sports Council conference room yesterday under the aegis of the Bangladesh Sports Writers' Association (BSWA), says a press release.

State Minister for Youth and Sports Sadek Hossain Khoka attended the programme as chief guest.

The winners of the recently concluded BSWA indoor sports competition were also awarded their prizes on the occasion.

The programme was rounded off with a cultural function.

Pioneer soccer

Sports Reporter

Swadesh Samaj Kalyan Sangha edged past Kashafutill Samaj Kalyan Parishad by a solitary goal in the Janata Bank Pioneer football league at the Outer Stadium.

Ripon was the scorer.

The other match of the day between Rayshaheb Bazar Tarun Sangha and Sabujbagh Muktyoddha Sangsad ended in a scoreless draw.

Schools kabaddi gets under way

Sports Reporter

Dholairpar High School and CA Staff Welfare High School made good starts by winning their inaugural matches of the fourth schools kabaddi tournament at the Outer Stadium kabaddi court yesterday.

Dholairpar School who collected two jonas, beat Bangladesh Rifles School by 34 points to 31 in the first match of the day.

Staff Welfare School trounced Mirpur Bangla High School by 30 points to 10 in the other match of the opening day.

Twenty city schools in four groups are participating in this year's schools kabaddi tournament. They are Maniknagar Primary School, Gandaria High School, Notre Dame High School, KL Jubilee High School and Haider Ali High School in Group A; Bangladesh Rifles Public School and College, Dipshikha Primary School, Kamalapur High School, Mottijheel Govt Primary School and Wari High School in Group B; Bangladesh Rifles School, CA Staff Welfare High School, Mirpur Bangla High School, Dholairpar High School and Ramkrishna High School in Group C and Segun Bagicha High School, Maniknagar Junior School, Mottijheel Model High School, Dhaka Residential Model School and Bangladesh Ansars and VDP School in Group D.

The group champions will play in the semifinals.

Secretary in charge of Youth and Sports Ministry M Azizul Haq who is also the president of the Bangladesh Kabaddi Federation, inaugurated the meet as chief guest.

TODAY'S MATCHES

Segun Bagicha School vs Residential Model School (3:00 pm)

Maniknagar Jr School vs Mottijheel Model School (3:30 pm)

Y'slavia banned from world TT

LONDON, Apr 16: Yugoslavia have been banned from the world table tennis team championships but their players will be allowed to compete in the singles events, the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) said on Thursday, reports Reuter.

They will take part as independent federation players in the championships to be played in Gothenburg, Sweden from May 11 to 23.

A record 87 men's and 71 women's teams will take part, including players from war-torn Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Slovenia.

North and South Korea have each submitted independent, provisional entries as a stop-gap measure although negotiations are underway to create a unified team.

The ITTF advised the two countries to do so to avoid either team being excluded if talks were unsuccessful. If agreement is reached before teams are drawn next Thursday, a unified Korean team will be substituted.

Windies skittled for 127

Sports Reporter

A dramatic collapse after lunch saw the West Indies crumble to 127 all out in the first Test against Pakistan at Port of Spain, Trinidad, according to the Star TV monitored in Dhaka late last night.

Skipper Richie Richardson's decision of batting first after winning the toss seemed to have worked fine when the opening pair of Desmond Haynes and Phil Simmons put on 63 runs for the first wicket. Both of them, however, were victims of the Ataur Rehman-Moin Khan combination. Haynes made 31 and Simmons 27.

At lunch the score read 83 for two.

But when Richie Richardson and Brian Lara, pushed down the order, came in to resume the innings the Pakistan bowlers took over. Mushtaq Ahmed, the diminutive leg-break and googlie bowler who along with his skipper Wasim Akram, Waqar Younis and Aaqib Javed were charged in Grenada with 'constructive possession' of marijuana a few days back, and later set free, had the West Indian skipper bowled round his legs for seven with only two runs added to the teams lunch score. In the next over, on the same score, Brian Lara was sent back by Waqar Younis after the in-form West Indian batsman offered a catch to Amir Sohail. He made only six.

That dismissal signalled the downfall of the innings. West Indies lost their next six wickets for only 42 runs — and eight wickets for 44 after lunch. Only Anderson Cummins played defiantly among the tailenders, remaining not out on 14.

Ataur Rehman, the 18-year-old Pakistani pacer, bowled superbly to end with the fantastic figures of three wickets for 28 while his more illustrious teammate Waqar Younis, who was on a hatrick after sending back Carl Hooper (9) and Junior Murray (0) in consecutive deliveries, finished with three for 37. Their skipper Akram, who himself is now on a treble after taking the scalps of Curtly Ambrose and

Courtney Walsh with the last two balls of the innings, spent 32 runs with his two scalps. The ball with which he dislodged Walsh's stumps was a beauty. Mushtaq gave away 21 for his

b Ataur Rehman 27
Richardson b Mushtaq 7
Ahmed 7
Lara c Sohail b Waqar Younis 6
Arthurton run out 3
Hooper lbw Waqar Younis 9



Phil Simmons, the other West Indies opener, square-cut during the first day's play of the first Test against Pakistan at Port of Spain, Trinidad yesterday. Simmons made 27. —Star TV photo

prized scalp.

English umpire Dickie Bird, standing in his 53rd Test, and West Indian Steve Bucknor are officiating in this match.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the West Indies first innings on the opening day of the first Test against Pakistan at Port of Spain, Trinidad yesterday:

WEST INDIES: First innings
Haynes c Moin 31
b Ataur Rehman 31
Simmons c Moin

Murray lbw Waqar Younis 0
Bishop c Inzamam 4
b Ataur Rehman 4
Ambrose lbw Akram 14
Cummins not out 14
Walsh b Akram 0
Extras 22
Total: 127

Fall of wickets: 1-63; 2-76; 3-85; 4-85; 5-95; 6-95; 7-102; 8-102; 9-127.

Bowling

	O	M	R	W
Wasim Akram	10.2	2	32	2
Waqar Younis	11	3	37	3
Ataur Rehman	9	1	28	3
Mustaq Ahmed	8	1	21	1

FIFA for professional refs

ZURICH, Apr 16: Soccer leagues across the world have been told by FIFA they must introduce professional referees following their successful debut in Italy this season, reports Reuter.

The sport's world governing body has told all national football associations with professional leagues to follow Italy's lead and asked them to draw up a transitional plan.

"FIFA would like all national associations with professional leagues to follow Italy's lead and have professional referees," spokesman Guido Tognoni said on Friday. He added that FIFA would like to see most top leagues employing professional referees by the turn of the century.

"We can't accept, any more, professional football being refereed by amateurs. We have to move with the times and we have to encourage all the national associations," Tognoni added.

"It will be hard but FIFA has stopped appealing to national associations, we now want them doing something and working on that project. It's a service to the game."

They agreed to ask national associations to draw up plans for training, pay social security benefits and envisaged referees being supervised by the national associations.

They defined a professional

England oppose FIFA's moves

LONDON, Apr 16: England will resist FIFA's efforts to require professional referees for all major soccer leagues, reports AP.

Soccer's world governing body Thursday formally asked national association with professional leagues to draw up plans for having professional referees.

The move was rebuffed by Colin Downey, the referees' officer of the Football Association, English soccer's governing body.

"We do OK in this country with things as they now stand," he said Friday. "That is because most of our referees adopt a very professional attitude. We don't believe that making them full-time and paying them a very large salary will make them any better."

"I don't think many would want to change," Downey said. "Most of them do not reach the highest level until they are in their 40s and by then they are well established in their chosen first profession."

Premier League referees receive 165 pounds (dhs 250) per match, plus expenses and up to 18 pounds (dhs 27) in meal allowances.

referee as someone who might have another occupation but whose primary profession was refereeing.

"This is FIFA's reaction to the rather poor refereeing in Italy in 1990," said Tognoni. "There is no time limit. We have to be realistic as for some leagues it's a very new idea and perhaps one they never thought would happen."

"Italy have been successful and we don't want them to be the only ones."

FIFA had hoped to have enough professional referees to choose from for next year's World Cup finals in the United States and still intends to select some from Italy.

Italy introduced semi-professional referees this season, with the leading 10 and FIFA's international list receiving up to 2.5 million lire (1,600 dollar) a match and another 27 in charge of serie A and B games getting much less.

FIFA said the Spanish Football Federation had also shown them advanced proposals and hoped they would have professional referees next season or the following year.

Kuwait's Brazilian coach Gildo Rodrigues said he was not disappointed with the result and added that his players were cautious about getting injured on the slippery field.

"They dared not go in for close tackles, we have to bear in mind the important matches we have in Kuala Lumpur next month," he said.

Coach Eddie Thompson also blamed the weather for the poor showing.

"This is the softest pitch we have played in. Our players just could not get going," Thompson remarked.

AC Face Juventus

In Italy, AC Milan are rapidly squandering the massive lead they built up early in the season and the seven point gap between them and closest rivals Internazionale could be cut even further this weekend.

Fabio Capello's side had an 11 point lead a month ago but have failed to win a league match since they beat Fiorentina 2-0 on March 7.

Only a late Ruud Gullit

Parma paralysed

Parma, Italy's current form team, have also had bad injury news this week. A freak accident at his home in Colombia led to calf muscle operation for striker Faustino Asprilla.

The forward is out of at least a month a harsh blow to third-placed Parma's chances of clinching a UEFA Cup place and winning the European Cup Winners' Cup.

They entertain mid-table Foggia on Sunday, four days before their Cup Winners' semifinal second leg against Atletico Madrid, who they lead 2-1 from the match in Spain.

Paul Gascoigne's Lazio, who have lost third place to Parma, are on derby duty against Roma in the Italian capital.

Internazionale should maintain their challenge with a win at lowly Brescia.

Dutch champions PSV Eindhoven could well be back

on top of the league by the end of the weekend.

PSV demonstrated their form by thrashing Fortuna Sittard 5-1 in midweek and should take two points at home to FC Utrecht, who have slipped to eighth after a promising start to the season.

PSV pretty close

Presuming they win, PSV will go top unless leaders Feyenoord can beat Ajax in Amsterdam — a task of legendary difficulty.

In Spain, second-from-bottom Cadix, are likely to feel the backlash from Real Madrid's heaviest defeat of the season. The capital outfit were beaten 4-1 by John Toshack's Real Sociedad in Spanish Cup quarter-final on Wednesday.

It didn't stop Real, 4-0 winners in the first leg, reaching the semi-finals but it was nevertheless a sharp slap in the face.

Barcelona, level on points with Real, entertain Real Zaragoza.

Zaragoza will be without German World Cup fullback Andreas Brehme, who was sacked this week after walking out before last Sunday's league match against Tenerife in a dispute over his role in the team.

Sporting Gijon, hovering only four points above the relegation zone, will play host to fellow strugglers Logrono without a coach.

Holland's Bert Jacobs was sacked on Thursday. He was the ninth coach from the 20-club top flight to lose his job this season.

Lineker honoured

TOKYO, Apr 16: Former England captain Gary Lineker will be made a freeman of Leicester, his home city, when he returns next week with his new Japanese team to play a friendly against Leeds United, reports Reuter.

Lineker's Japanese team Nagoya, Grampus Eight said on Friday the 32-year-old striker would be awarded the Freedom-of-Leicester on Monday before joining up with his new teammates for the game at Leeds on April 24.

Freedom of the city is an honorary award recognising a person's contribution to the community.

Lineker, who was born in Leicester and began his professional career at Leicester City before going on to Everton, Barcelona and Tottenham, signed for Grampus Eight last year in a three million pound (4.64 million dollar) deal.

The new Japanese league kicks off on May 15.

Aaqib to return home

PORT OF SPAIN, Apr 16: Pacer Aaqib Javed is to return home early from Pakistan's Caribbean tour because of a back injury, reports Reuter.

Manager Khalid Mahmood said Aaqib had sustained the injury during the first one-day international against West Indies and aggravated it in the match against a President's XI in Guyana.

He said no replacement was being sought.

Aaqib, 20, was one of four players charged with possession of marijuana last week in Grenada. The charges were later dropped.

The first Test against West Indies begins here today.

Australia edge past Kuwait

SINGAPORE, Apr 16: Australia scored a narrow 1-0 victory over Kuwait in a friendly football match at the Woodlands Stadium here Thursday, reports AFP.

Paul Trimbali scored the decisive goal in the 10th minute after picking up a cross from the right and weaving his way past two defenders.

But the match was marred by a heavy downpour mid-way which made the pitch soggy and reduced the players to plodding around in the mid-field having problems in just passing the ball let alone trying anything more exciting.

The Australians had most of the ball but could make nothing of it, while their defence spent most of the game looking on, being barely tested.

Australian manager Peter Gray said he was happy with the narrow win but hoped fine weather for the return game on Monday would enable his players to give a better show.

Coach Eddie Thompson also blamed the weather for the poor showing.

"This is the softest pitch we have played in. Our players just could not get going," Thompson remarked.

Kuwait's Brazilian coach Gildo Rodrigues said he was not disappointed with the result and added that his players were cautious about getting injured on the slippery field.

"They dared not go in for close tackles, we have to bear in mind the important matches we have in Kuala Lumpur next month," he said.

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For Norwich fight isn't over yet

LONDON, Apr 16: Everyone assumes the race for English soccer's Premier League title is between Manchester United and Aston Villa. Everyone, that is, except Norwich.

With four games left in the season, United and Villa are separated by just one point as they chase the championship trophy, reports AP.

This weekend, United play at home against Chelsea on Saturday and Villa host Manchester City on Sunday. In the weekend's other main fixture, Arsenal and Sheffield Wednesday meet in the League Cup final at Wembley on Sunday.

After 38 games, Manchester United have 72 points and Villa have 71. United remain the slight favourite, having won three straight games as they close in on their first league title in 26 years.

But still lurking in the picture in Norwich, with 68 points in 39 games.

Norwich, who are idle this weekend, kept their slim title hopes alive with a 4-2 win Wednesday night over last year's champions Leeds. The victory followed two heavy defeats — 3-1 to Manchester United and 5-1 to Tottenham.

Norwich manager Mike Walker said Wednesday's victory showed his team's strength of character.

"We keep getting written off, but we keep coming back," he said. "I'm pleased because we had two hammerings and we had a word with the players and this is how they responded. We have shown we are not going to lie down."

Walker insisted that

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Apart from the title race, the focus of the Premier League is on the relegation struggles at the bottom of the standings.

Next-to-last Nottingham Forest, whose hopes were raised with a victory over Tottenham last Monday, face a tough task Saturday against Wimbledon. Oldham, one point ahead of Forest, play at

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