

Div I cricket

Khelaghar, Boys canter

SPORTS REPORTER

Khelaghar Samaj Kalyan Sangha and Bangladesh Boys Club won their respective First Division Cricket League matches played at different city venues yesterday.

Khelaghar, in a rain-curtailed 25-over-a-side match, beat Nabin Sangha by six wickets at the Jagannath Hall ground of Dhaka University.

Chasing a modest 113, Khelaghar reached home in 23.4 overs with six wickets in hand.

Middle-order Hira topscored with a 36-ball 38 that included a six and three boundaries and opener Shaheen chipped in with 32.

Earlier, put in to bat, Nabin Sangha were restricted to 113 for nine, one-down Asadul Habib topscoring with 36.

Nasirul led the Khelaghar attack with three for 18 while Faisal and Islam evened shared four wickets.

In the days' other match, reduced to 35-over-a-side at the Khan Shaheb Osman Ali Stadium in Fatullah, Bangladesh Boys handed down a three-wicket defeat to Dhaka Wanderers Club.

Chasing a paltry 75 in 35 overs, Boys lost seven wickets in 13.4 overs but recovered to reach home and dry (79) safely.

Opener Ruben scored highest 34.

Earlier, Dhaka wanderers were bundled out in just 12.2 overs.

Seamer Abdullah Al-Mamun was the wrecker-in-chief taking three wickets for 19. His new-ball partner Khaleq and Manoj took two wickets each.

Athletes, natants leave today

UNB, Dhaka

Six national athletes and six swimmers along with two coaches leave here for Bangkok today for a 48-day intensive training under the Sports Authority of Thailand.

The Bangladeshi athletes and swimmers will be groomed at the famous Thai Academy as part of their preparations for three upcoming major sports meets Commonwealth Games, Asian Games and SAF Games.

The 17th Commonwealth Games will be held in Manchester in United Kingdom during July 29-August 4, the 14th Asian Games will be held in the South Korean city of Busan from September 29 to October 14.

The athletics team comprises country's fastest man SM Maruf Reza, Humayan Kabir, Shafiqul Islam, Delwar Hossain, Masudul Karim , SM Haider Ali and coach Abdul Karim.

The swimming team includes Karar Samedul Islam, Abdul Hamid Ripon, Jewel Ahmed, Kazi Monirul Islam, Rubel Rana, Niaz Ali and coach M Mahbubur Rahman.

JU football

UNB, Savar

Government & Politics retained the title of the Jahangirnagar University inter-department football competition crushing Archaeology 4-0 at the varsity central playground yesterday.

After a barren first half, Rouza Ching struck twice while Millat and Shakik one each for the winners.

Vice Chancellor Prof Jasimuddin Ahmed distributed the prizes as the chief guest.

Indecision on Murali

AP, Birmingham

Skipper Sanath Jayasuriya and coach Dav Whatmore remain divided Tuesday on whether to risk match-winning off-spinner Muttiah Muralitharan in Sri Lanka's second Test against England starting at Edgbaston on Thursday.

Muralitharan is recuperating from a ligament tear and a partial dislocation in his left shoulder, which he sustained during a one-day final against Pakistan in Sharjah on April 17.

Despite Muralitharan's absence, the inexperienced Sri Lankan bowling attack performed admirably in the three-Test series opener before England escaped with a draw at Lord's after being forced to follow-on.

"He's been bowling and bowling for the 4-5 days," Whatmore said. "He's shown he can run up and bowl with his usual tricks. He's not 100 per cent. But he's building up to that. Even if he plays he won't be 100 per cent."

"It's a calculated decision to selectors have to make."

Whatmore believes the 30-year-old Muralitharan, with 412 wickets in 73 Tests, will want to play.

"We must understand what he can and can't do. Like with the bat and when fielding -- he's got no regards for his body at times." Whatmore said.

What to watch

FROM PAGE 13

Sport News
Live at 10:30 pm
World Cup Soccer mix
Taped Version at 11:00 pm



Scene from the eighth round of the Open FIDE Rating Chess Tournament at the NSC yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Green Delta hockey

Mariner's final act

SPORTS REPORTER

Mariner Youngs Club came from behind scoring two goals in two minutes at the dying moments of the match to pull off an emphatic 2-1 win over Sonali Bank in a Green Delta Premier Hockey League return leg clash yesterday.

Mariner remained down by a goal until midfielder Yamin levelled the score with a field goal in the 66th minute. Razzak netted another field goal two minutes later to guide the Arambagh-based club to their ninth win in eleven matches.

Sonali Bank took the lead in the 12th minute through Rahman and looked quite composed till the last

few minutes when Mariner went all out and finally came out as victors.

Mariner maintained their second position unrivalled with a collection of 28 points, three adrift of leaders Mohammedan Sporting Club and one clear of Abahani Krira Chakra.

On the other hand, the bankers have earned eight points so far from 11 outings.

In the other match of the day, Ajax Sporting Club registered a 3-1 win over Wari Club.

Rahman, Biaka Lusa and Rubel struck one each for the winners while Rahat reduced the margin for Wari Club.

STANDINGS								
Teams	M	W	D	L	GF	GA	POINTS	
Mohammedan SC	11	10	1	0	58	6	31	
Mariner Youngs Club	11	9	1	1	48	6	28	
Abahani KC	11	9	0	2	39	7	27	
Usha KC	11	6	4	1	37	13	22	
Dhaka Railway	11	3	2	6	21	32	11	
Ajax SC	11	4	1	6	11	34	13	
Wari Club	12	2	3	7	12	40	9	
Sonali Bank	11	1	5	5	11	11	8	
Bangladesh SC	10	2	1	7	11	35	7	
Farashganj SC	11	0	0	11	3	72	0	



PHOTO: STAR

A Mariner Youngs attack at the Sonali Bank goal during their Green Delta Premier Division Hockey League encounter at the Maulana Bhasani Stadium yesterday.

Long live Edgbaston!

Cricket

INTERNET, Birmingham

The day after the 100th anniversary of Edgbaston's inauguration as a Test venue, England and Sri Lanka begin contesting the 38th Test match to be staged at the ground.

But for the thousands who watched that first game enthralled, as England, having posted a competitive 376, dismissed Australia for 36 (still the Baggy Greens' lowest Test score), a visit to Warwickshire's home was akin to a day in the country.

"It was almost a rural venue in 1902", says Phil Britt, curator of Edgbaston's museum, "part of the vast Calthorpe Estate, which owns large tracts of the surrounding area."

The current pavilion existed, albeit in rudimentary form, as did what is now the Leslie Deakins stand, but in order to stage the game the club had to invest heavily in upgrading their facilities."

They were rewarded with a crowd totalling 25,000 over the

three days of the Test. Unfortunately, they weren't rewarded with good weather, and lost time meant the match fizzled to a draw.

It was seven years before Warwickshire next staged a Test, again Australia were the visitors, and this time England completed the job with a ten-wicket win.

While today Edgbaston is virtually an automatic choice for Test cricket, it was not ever thus, with only two matches staged between 1909 and 1957.

"The club made a conscious decision to host regular Test cricket", says Phil Britt, "but with most internationals played in London, and the onset of war, opportunities were limited."

Warwickshire's 1951 Championship triumph provided new impetus, and with significant ground redevelopment, regular Test cricket finally arrived in 1957.

Memorably so, as England's highest ever partnership -- a fourth wicket stand of 411 between Peter May and Colin Cowdrey -- saved the match and contributed to Sonny Ramadhin's ultra-marathon match



PHOTO: INTERNET

EDGBASTON NOW & THEN: The Eric Hollies stand (top) which opens on Thursday and the Edgbaston's pavilion back in 1902.



Open FIDE Chess

Rajib emerges champion

SPORTS REPORTER

International Master (IM) Enamul Hossain Rajib of Biman clinched the Open FIDE Rating Chess title with victory over Aminul Islam at the NSC chess room yesterday.

Rajib earned maximum eight points at the end of the eighth round to confirm the title with a round to go.

Grand Master Ziaur Rahman of Biman and Manjur Alam of Leonine Club were jointly sharing the second spot with 7 points each.

Sohel Chowdhury was in the third position with 6.5 points while Sheikh Nasir Ahmed, Taibur Rahman Sumon, Aminul Islam, Mehdi Hasan Parag, Arman Monir, Abdul Maleq, Moniruzzaman Khan, Debaraj Chatterjee, Saifuddin Lavlu and Humayan Kabir were crowding at the 4th position with 6 points each.

The final round begins from 3:30 pm at the same venue today.

Otherwise alike?

Cricket

REUTERS, London

Sri Lanka minus Muttiah Muralitharan and England with their one-dimensional attack resembled two armies who had shields but no swords in the high-scoring drawn first Test at Lord's.

How to take 20 wickets if confronted by another bland pitch is the pressing problem for England captain Nasser Hussain and his opposite number Sanath Jayasuriya in the second Test at Edgbaston starting on Thursday.

Jayasuriya would like nothing more than to be able to call on the talents of his potential match-winner Muralitharan but the off-spinning magician has still not fully recovered from an injury to his left shoulder and it seems as though his first appearance of the series will have to wait until the third and final Test at Old Trafford.

Sri Lanka's four-pronged pace attack responded to Muralitharan being sidelined by dismissing England for 275 in the first innings at Lord's but they were exposed when Hussain's men followed on 280 behind.

England saved the match by diligent batting on a pitch that became more benign the longer the game went on and they amassed 529 for five declared, with the top five in the order contributing two hundreds and three half-centuries.

As the door gradually closed on the prospect of a 10th consecutive Test win for Sri Lanka, the spotlight fell increasingly on left-arm seamer Ruchira Perera's suspect action which at the end of the Test was reported to the International Cricket Council (ICC) by umpires Srinivas Venkataraghavan of India and Australia's Daryl Harper.

Perera, who had a five-wicket match haul at Lord's, has been working with Australian specialist bowling advisor Daryl Harper to iron out the problems with his action, and a report on their progress must be submitted to the ICC after six

weeks.

In the meantime there is nothing to stop Perera from playing international cricket and, given the continued absence of Muralitharan, he is likely to keep his place at Edgbaston.

Certainly, there has been scant chance for other bowlers in the squad to press their Test claims, with rain washing out the last three days of the four-day match against Glamorgan in Cardiff at the weekend -- the touring team's only game between the first and second Tests.

For the moment, Sri Lanka's main strength remains their batting. They took 555 for eight declared off the England attack in the first Test, prompting Hussain to call for a bowler of "raw pace" to rattle his opponents.

England's selectors replied by naming just such a player -- Glamorgan's Simon Jones. The son of former Test paceman Jeff Jones, he was among a group of promising cricketers chosen for the English National Academy and impressed its Australian director Rod Marsh when working under him in the former Test wicketkeeper's home country late last year.

Jones is in a squad of 14 for Edgbaston where England are again likely to bank on four seamers, meaning he is competing with Dominic Cork and Alex Tudor for the remaining place in the attack alongside Andy Caddick, Matthew Hoggard and Andrew Flintoff.

England were conservative in their selections for Lord's. Playing Jones at Birmingham would be the bold gesture, but one that for the time being they might shy away from.

Unless the pitch offers the prospect of significant pace, England are more likely to give Tudor his first Test since the fourth match of the Ashes series last August.

FRENCH OPEN AT A GLANCE

REUTERS, Paris

Quote, stat and fact of the day at Roland Garros on Monday:

Quote of the day: "I want to rediscover myself tennis-wise".

Last year's finalist Alex Corretja of Spain, who demolished Czech Bohdan Ulihrach 6-1 6-4 6-1 after a string of poor results on clay this season.

Stat of the day: 1989 champion Michael Chang is playing in his 15th French Open. He is followed by France's Cedric Pioline with 14 appearances and American Pete Sampras with 12. Frenchman Francois Jauffret holds the all-time men's participation record with 20 appearances.

Fact of the day: Defending champion Gustavo Kuerten has now won 15 matches in succession in Paris. He was last beaten by Ukraine's Andrei Medvedev in the 1999 quarterfinals.

More French frustration

Tennis

REUTERS, Paris

Declining form and advancing years will not stop Pete Sampras from coming back to Roland Garros and make a 14th bid to win the elusive French Open crown next year.

The 30-year-old American still

can do is keep trying and that's what I'm planning on doing," said the American following his 3-6, 6-4, 6-2, 7-6 first round defeat to Italy's Andrea Gaudenzi on Monday.

"I think over the years I have played with a little anxiety and put pressure on myself which affects me to a certain point."

"If Paris never happens in my career life will go on but I will come back and try again."



PETE SAMPRAS

years to add the Paris trophy to his record 13 Grand Slam titles despite being at the twilight of his glittering career.

"Over the course of my career, it just hasn't clicked here but all you

But Sampras's frustration with his early demise at the tournament was clearly evident during the post match media conference as he only managed to convert three of his 17 break point opportunities against

Monica, Kim battle

Tennis

REUTERS, Paris

Monica Seles survived an early scare on the opening day of the French Open before battling back to beat Spain's Angeles Montolio 6-7, 6-3, 6-0 in the first round.

The American sixth seed was left shell-shocked in the first set as Montolio barely put a foot wrong on the damp red clay to race into a 5-0 lead.

Seles displayed trademark grit to pull herself back into contention with her pinpoint passing shots to draw level at 5-5.

But Montolio, who attempted to serve out the set on three occasions but was broken each time, withstood the Seles attack to win the first set on a tiebreak (7-4) in 47 minutes.

Although both players tried to stamp their authority early in the second with little success, a lengthy rain break midway through the seventh game allowed Seles to re-think her tactics and she clinched it

6-3 to level the contest.

The three times French Open champion did not allow her opponent another game, tearing through the decider with a minimum of fuss.

Belgian Kim Clijsters was given a stern French Open test before battling past Tatiana Poutchek of Belarus 3-6, 6-3, 8-6 in the first round.

Clijsters, runner-up to Jennifer Capriati at Roland Garros last year, started sluggishly in the overcast conditions and was broken in the opening game as her 23-year-old opponent raced to a 3-1 lead.

With the 18-year-old Belgian struggling to find range in her shots, Poutchek kept hammering away from the baseline to grab the first set.

But fourth seed Clijsters, winner in Hamburg earlier this month, hit back to take the second 6-3 after breaking in the seventh game with a series of blistering groundstroke winners.

Poutchek, who is coached by doubles specialist Natasha Zvereva's father, wilted under pressure following a lengthy rain

Gaudenzi.

While the seven-time Wimbledon champion admitted he would usually be expected to grab those chances on any other surface, playing on clay was a different story altogether.

"I had so many chances today and when I couldn't put the ball away, I became anxious," said Sampras, who has suffered a title drought since his Wimbledon 2000 triumph.

"When you win a lot of matches it's easier to play those break points and those big points."

"But when you are trying to find your game you get more frustrated and the only place you can then go is down."

"When it came to the crunch, I simply didn't come up with the goods."

In a few days, Sampras is expected to turn his attention to his favourite grasscourt season and take stock of his chances of winning an eighth Wimbledon crown.

But for the time being, an emotional Sampras was left to lick his wounds after yet another French Open campaign came to a grinding halt in the first round, his third such exit in Paris.

"It's a pretty empty feeling right now because I put so much effort and energy into my French Open preparations and it's really, really frustrating not to even get into the second round," said Sampras.

"Once again I came up with nothing to show for my efforts and the next few days are going to be very tough to get over this."

disruption at the start of the topsy-turvy decider.

Clijsters, broken twice during the set, eventually booked her place in the second round when Poutchek hit a weak backhand return into the net.

Henman sees off Blanco

Tim Henman shrugged off a poor start to beat Spaniard Galo Blanco 6-4, 6-3 7-6 in the first round of the French Open at Roland Garros.

The Briton lost his serve twice to go 4-1 down, but recovered to clinch the opening set.

Henman led 3-2 in the second set before rain interrupted play and, after an hour and 40 minutes delay, he broke Blanco on the way to a 2-0 lead.

The third set went with serve as the players reached 6-6 before Henman gained the vital advantage to win the tiebreak 8-6 and the match in two hours 10 minutes.

In the second round the sixth seed will play Xavier Malisse, of Belgium, who knocked out Alexander Popp of Germany 6-4, 6-1, 4-6, 6-1.



PHOTO: INTERNET

American Monica Seles hitting a backhand against Spain's Angeles Montolio yesterday.

Sampras slumps

Tennis

REUTERS, Paris

Pete Sampras'13th attempt to win the elusive French Open crown ended in the first round when Italian Andrea Gaudenzi secured a battling 3-6, 6-4, 6-2, 7-6 win.

It was a disappointing finish to the day for the 12th-seeded American as he looked set for victory before two rain interruptions put paid to his hopes.

"It was frustrating to have so many opportunities and yet not being able to break," said Sampras following the match, which spanned for almost six hours due to the interruptions but lasted for three hours five minutes.

Sampras, who has never progressed beyond the semifinals at Roland Garros despite being holder of a record 13 Grand Slams,

seemed to be in the driving seat after capturing the first set with his trademark serve and volley tactics.

With the conditions getting colder and damper, Sampras tried to up the pace but sudden showers thwarted his attempts to convert break points in both the seventh and ninth games of the second set.

A lengthy rain break at 4-4 allowed the 69th ranked Italian, who had failed to advance beyond the second round in any of his 16 previous tournaments this season, to regroup and snatch the initiative away from Sampras.

A hesitant Sampras was duly punished for sending in some wayward deliveries in the 10th game as Gaudenzi levelled the match with a scintillating backhand winner on set point.

Despite being cheered on by a loud partisan French crowd, a visibly frustrated Sampras -- seeking his first title since winning Wimbledon 2000 -- failed to convert

any of his five break points in the third set.

Having saved Gaudenzi's first set point with an overhead smash, the Italian sealed his two-set to one advantage with a crosscourt winner that left the 30-year-old American stranded at the net.

A second rain interruption forced the players off when they were engaged in an intriguing tussle on Gaudenzi's serve at 3-3 in the fourth set.

While the American had looked dead and buried by the close of the third, his serves misfiring and volleys going wide, a rejuvenated Sampras hit the right gear when play restarted and immediately broke Gaudenzi for a 4-3 lead.

Kicking the ball away in disgust, Sampras tried to calm his nerves and his frustration as the players headed into the tiebreak.

Inevitably the errors crept into Sampras's game and Gaudenzi raced away with the tiebreak 7-3 to

book a place in the second round against American qualifier Jack Brasington.

Besides, Sampras the only seeded player to lose on Monday was No 8 Sandrine Testud, who was taken out by Paola Suarez of Argentina 2-6, 7-5, 6-1.

However, Gustavo Kuerten opened the defence of his French crown in fine style on Monday, beating Swiss Ivo Heuberger 7-5, 6-2 in an opening round centre-court clash.

Teenage tennis sensation Richard Gasquet was sent packing by Albert Costa.

The experienced Spaniard, playing in his ninth Roland Garros, dismissed the 15-year-old hopeful 3-6 6-0 6-4 6-3 in two hours and 21 minutes of a match which was in many ways too big, too soon for men's tennis most promising player.

Former French Open champion Iva Majoli beat American Kristina Brandi 6-4, 6-3 to reach the second round.