

Abahani's match deferred

SPORTS REPORTER

Inclement weather took its toll on the B. League for the second time as yesterday's match between league leaders Abahani and Arambagh was postponed following heavy showers in the capital.

The ongoing spell of monsoon left the ground at the Bangabandhu National Stadium unplayable and weather permitting, the game will be held today.

The fixtures will be bodily shifted.

Earlier, the competition was halted for four days immediately after the start of the second leg in June.

WOMEN'S H'BALL Familiar finalists

SPORTS REPORTER

Defending champions BJMC set a repeat final against Bangladesh Ansar and VDP after both teams comfortably routed their semifinal opponents in the BASIC Bank 18th Women's Handball Championship yesterday.

BJMC crushed Faridpur 27-4 with Shahida netting a dozen goals while 8-goal Bhulu led last year's runners-up Ansars to thrash Dhaka 25-5 in the two semis at the Dhanmondi Women's Sports Complex.

Dhaka and Faridpur, who clashed in the opening match of the competition, will vie in today's third-place play-off while the final is slated for tomorrow.



Did U Know?

When you hit a baseball really hard, it momentarily changes shape by as much as 25 per cent.



Andrew Symonds

(Star Australian cricketer)

"I just hope the beer drinkers in the sun don't give him a hard time and late one afternoon if he breaks the record they start on him. I hope that doesn't happen. I hope people can stand up and actually applaud him for what he is -- a legend."

While urging Australian cricket fans not to taunt Sri Lanka spinner Muttiah Muralidaran if he passes Shane Warne's Test wicket world record of 708 Test wickets while touring down under this year.

What to WATCH

BTV & TEN Sports

Bangladesh v Sri Lanka
Second One-day International
Live at 10:30 am

ESPN

Sportscenter India
Sports News
Live at 8:30 pm

DAY'S EVENT

B. League
Abahani v Arambagh
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium
Time: 4:30 pm



PHOTO: AFP

CATCHES WIN MATCHES: Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraful takes a catch during practice at the R Premadasa Stadium in Colombo on Sunday.

Steep challenge for Tigers



BISHWAJIT ROY from Colombo

To be brutally honest, the Bangladesh team management have looked utterly clueless as to how they would solve their never-ending top order batting failures ahead of the second one-day of the three-match series against Sri Lanka to be held at the R Premadasa Stadium today.

Even after the barrage that had followed the horrendous performance of the Test series, the first ODI performance bought even more criticism. The Tigers crashed to a 70-run defeat despite restricting the much-vaunted Sri Lanka batting to only 234.

A column in a local newspaper on Sunday even suggested in no uncertain terms that the Bangladesh batsman go back to school to learn first technique and then temperament following their shoddy showing in the first ODI.

The columnist found only Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraful and young wicketkeeper Mushfiqur Rahim as technically correct batsmen but the problem, he suggested was, that the former

hardly applies common sense about his shot selections.

And the reality is that the Bangladesh top-order has to put a price on their wicket otherwise it would be the same old story in the second game.

The Bangladesh team think-tank also believed that everything would depend on the top-order batsmen.

"Our planning is all but the same for the second match and now everything will depend on the top batsmen. I am hopeful that they will bounce back from the disappointing show in the series," was the response of Bangladesh interim coach Shaun Williams.

National selector Akram Khan, who is touring with the side, also said that only the batsmen can save them from more blushes in the series.

"There has been much talk about the batting and what more I can say about it. What I can do is only hope that they will show their potential in the last two games to give some solace. All depends on the batsmen," said the frustrated former Bangladesh skipper.

"We set a plan not to lose too many wickets in first twenty overs but I don't know whether it will work or not," he added.

The Bangladesh team management has also decided that they will promote Mushfiqur Rahim in the batting order if needed because the young stumper gave the impression in the series that he has got the quality to build up a partnership.

Bangladesh skipper Mohammad Ashraful however expressed his optimism, like he always does, about his team's turnaround in the series.

"I know there have been questions raised about our ability but what I can say is that we have proved earlier that we have the ability to win one-day matches. I don't want to say more because people are already disappointed by our performance but I have the self-confidence that we can still win both the matches against Sri Lanka," said the right-hander, who was criticized heavily after the way he got out in the first match.

But what the scathing columnist mentioned about the Bangladesh batsmen was that "You can't teach an old dog, new tricks" and now the challenge is up to Ashraful's men to prove him wrong.

Crowe's no to India

PTI, Christchurch

Former New Zealand captain Martin Crowe has laughed off suggestions that he could be one of the candidates to succeed Greg Chappell as the next cricket coach of India.

Crowe said he was surprised to find his name included on the Indian Board's short-list of candidates for the position as reported in Indian media a few days back.

Crowe said he was not ruling out coaching the Indian team at a later date but at present he was not intending to pursue the matter.

"One can never count out the possibility of consulting for anyone in the future. I back my knowledge and ability to impart it," he was quoted as saying in the New Zealand media.

South African Dave Nosworthy, who is working with New Zealand A team, had also pleaded ignorance about his application to BCCI for the job.

"I haven't heard anything from anyone but I do have a representative in London who looks after these things for me, and acts on my behalf -- that's how I got the Canterbury job. Right now I'm just enjoying my time with Canterbury and NZC. It's news to me that people are talking about me in India," he had said.

India is without a full time coach
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KP puts England on top



AFP, London

Kevin Pietersen's first Test hundred against India put England in a strong position on the fourth day here at Lord's and left the tourists needing to rewrite the record books if they were to claim an unlikely victory.

Pietersen's 134 was the centrepiece of England's second innings 282, which came to an end at tea on Sunday.

India, dismissed for a meagre 201 in the first innings, now had to score a Lord's Test record fourth innings victory total of 380, surpassing the 344 for one, needing 342, made by the West Indies in 1984, to win the opening match of this three-Test series.

But they could take heart from 21-year-old left-arm quick Rudra Pratap Singh who took five for 59, the first time he'd taken five wickets in a Test innings, in what was only his fifth match at this level and first outside the sub-continent.

Fellow left-arm seamer Zaheer Khan took four for 79.

Pietersen and Matt Prior put on 119 for the sixth-wicket before the wicketkeeper was out for 42.

England, having been rocked by Singh's pre-lunch burst of three for 10 in 15 balls, resumed on 161 for five with Pietersen 62 not out and

Mahela cautions Bangladesh



SPORTS REPORTER from Colombo

Sri Lanka skipper Mahela Jayawardene issued a warning for Bangladesh ahead of the second one-day match that the home side will not make the same mistakes they had done in the first game.

Jayawardene and his other front-line batsmen Sanath Jayasuriya and Kumar Sangakkara all were dismissed cheaply to give Bangladesh an upper hand in the first match but the home captain said that they are determined to come back in the second game strongly to secure the series quite convincingly.

"Our main target is to wrap up the series with one match in hand. We will not make the same mistakes in our batting. We realised after the game that we need some fine tunings and we believe that we can rectify those mistakes," said the confident right-hander while talking to reporters at the R Premadasa Stadium yesterday.

"It was the beauty of Sri Lanka cricket the way some of our guys took responsibility on their shoulders after a hiccup in the top order. It was a rare thing that three top batsmen failed simultaneously in a match and I hope it will not happen again," he added when he was asked whether Bangladesh had missed an opportunity to draw the first blood in the series.

The successful Sri Lanka skipper also said that they were hardly bothered with the one-sided contest in the series because their main objective is to improve their own performance.

"We want to continue playing to our potential, which is our main goal, and that is the reason we don't think about who our opponents are. We are focusing only on our own game. We struggled in the first 20 overs in the first game and that's why we have worked on this area to play much better in the second game," he said.

He said that his side were aware of Bangladesh's weakness and strength.

"We know how we can penetrate Bangladesh because we realise the areas. Bangladesh lost the match not because they batted poorly rather our bowlers also put pressure on them and you should give credit to our bowlers. I will definitely try to put pressure on them from the very beginning."

He also threw a challenge to Tamim Iqbal to play his natural game against them following a lot of talks about the left-hander's big hitting ability since the World Cup.

"I would love to see him playing his natural game but the reality is that it would not be so easy against a quality bowling attack like us. He played brilliantly against India but found it difficult against us in the World Cup. Why, because of our quality bowling," he added.

was caught by India captain Rahul Dravid, at slip, off Kumble.

Pietersen was bowled by Singh looking to hit out before the left-arm ended the innings by having Monty Panesar lbw.

England resumed Sunday on 77 for two after swing specialist James Anderson, in his first home Test since 2004 and in an attack missing the injured pace trio of Matthew Hoggard, Stephen Harmison and Andrew Flintoff, had taken a Test-best five for 42 and left-arm seamer Sidebottom four for 65.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at tea and close of England's second innings on the fourth day of the first Test against India at Lord's in London on Sunday:

ENGLAND: First innings 298 (Strauss 96, Vaughan 79; Sreesanth 3-67)

INDIA: First innings 201 (Jaffer 58; Anderson 5-42, Sidebottom 4-65)

ENGLAND: Second innings (over-night 77-2)

Strauss c Tendulkar b Zaheer 18
Cook lbw b Zaheer 17

Vaughan b RP Singh 30
Pietersen b RP Singh 134

Collingwood c Laxman b RP Singh 4
Bell b RP Singh 9

Prior c Dhoni b Zaheer 42
Tremlett b Zaheer 0

Sidebottom c Dravid b Kumble 9
Panesar lbw b RP Singh 3

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PHOTO: AFP

TAKING IT AWAY FROM INDIA: England batsman Kevin Pietersen pulls Sachin Tendulkar (not in picture) to the boundary during his scintillating hundred on the fourth day of the first Test at Lord's on Sunday.

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