

Khulna warm-ups postponed

UNB, Dhaka

Khulna Division's two practice matches against GP-BCB National Cricket Academy for preparation of the National Cricket League have been postponed due to rain and soggy outfield.

Both the limited-overs matches were to be played yesterday and today in Khulna.

Earlier on Monday, another practice match between Dhaka and Bangladesh Under-19s at the Mirpur Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium was called off also for rain.

Anglo-Scot ODI in 2008

BBC ONLINE, undated

Scotland have announced they will play against England next summer in the first one-day international between the two countries.

The match in Edinburgh will be played at the Citylets Grange on August 18.

Cricket Scotland chief executive Roddy Smith said: "It will be a fantastic event, with an anticipated sell-out crowd of 6,000."

"I am sure the Scottish cricketing public's appetite for the game will be huge," added Smith.

The match is a chance for Scotland, who are mostly made up of part-time cricketers, to again test themselves against the elite after facing Pakistan and India in the Twenty20 World Championship in South Africa.

Grange club secretary Gordon Tolland is excited at the prospect of hosting the fixture.

He said: "This will be the biggest cricket match ever seen on Scottish soil and the Grange Club is delighted to host such a prestigious and historic event."

Chingoka can't enter UK

CRICINFO, undated

Peter Chingoka, chairman of Zimbabwe Cricket, has been refused a visa to enter the UK by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO).

Chingoka was due to arrive in London to give testimony at the 'Darrell Hair hearing' -- he was a member of the three-man sub-committee that recommended to the International Cricket Council (ICC) board in 2006 that Hair be demoted as an international umpire -- but his application was rejected late last Friday. He will now address the tribunal by video link from Harare.

The refusal is a blow to Chingoka, mainly because his family are understood to have set up home in London. It will also cast doubts on his claims that he and his board are apolitical.

In June, the British embassy in Harare recommended that Chingoka be refused a visa to attend the annual ICC get together in London as he was alleged to have close links with Robert Mugabe and the ruling Zanu-PF party. This block was endorsed by the FCO. However, Richard Caborn, at the time the sports minister, overruled the ban as he felt such a move might have jeopardised the appointment of ECB chief David Morgan as ICC president-elect.

Morgan is now confirmed in that role, and there has also been an apparent hardening of the British government's attitude to Zimbabwe since Gordon Brown took over from Tony Blair.

The decision also makes it unlikely that the ICC will be able to hold any more executive meetings in London as it is inconceivable that they would carry on if one of the most senior board members was not allowed to enter the country.

Owen blames

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his post-operation stitches still in but says he is now pain-free.

He also admitted to disagreeing with Allardycy over his readiness to start the game on Sunday, when he played just the last 16 minutes as substitute having hoped to start. "I don't see why there was any risk in me playing Everton," Owen said. "I want to get back and play for Newcastle and it shows a lot of determination on my part to want to get back out there."

Sunday, though, was not the only day when Allardycy has seen things differently from his star striker. While Newcastle's manager maintains Owen's latest injuries appeared while he was on England duty against Israel and Russia last month, the player begs to differ.

"I know the manager says I did it in the last internationals but I was playing in pain before then," Owen stressed. "I have been pushing myself through a lot of pain for about six weeks - even before the last two internationals. I didn't have any option but to have the operations. When I played Derby a couple of weeks ago I felt it badly and then in the following game [against West Ham] I realised I didn't have any option but to get it done."

Broad lost no sleep

Cricket

AFP, Colombo

Young England paceman Stuart Broad has come back strongly against Sri Lanka in the one-day series after becoming the fourth bowler in history to be smashed for six sixes in an over.

The 21-year-old played a big role in England's tense two-wicket win over the hosts at Dambulla on Sunday, scoring an unbeaten 20 on a difficult track to help his side chase a 164-run target for a 2-1 lead in the five-match series.

Broad's gutsy performance came just two weeks after he was hit for six sixes in an over by Indian batsman Yuvraj Singh in a World Twenty20 match at Durban in South Africa.

"It was obviously not a pleasant experience, but I didn't lose any sleep over it. It happened. I can't get away from that, but I think I've

come back pretty strongly," Broad said.

"I could have bowled better. I bowled a poor over, to be fair, but my variations are something I can work on. It was quite nice coming to Sri Lanka straightaway, and I could focus on my practice for 50-over cricket."

Former West Indies skipper Garry Sobers, Indian all-rounder Ravi Shastri and South African Herschelle Gibbs are the other batsmen to have hammered six sixes in an over.

Many would have found it difficult to recover from such a mauling, but Broad was made of a sterner stuff. He bounced back quickly to play a key role with both ball and bat in his very next tournament.

Broad, son of former England batsman Chris Broad, has so far grabbed six wickets in three games on low, slow Sri Lankan pitches, and contributed vital runs as a lower-order batsman.

Broad said he was unlikely to be

the last bowler to concede six sixes in an over in the Twenty20 game.

"Twenty20 gives batsmen a real freedom and I'm sure it will happen again in the future. I was the bowler it happened to in this World Cup, but I'm sure it will happen again," said Broad.

He said he was focused on the ongoing series and hoped to continue in the same vein to help England win.

"In our team meetings it's popped up a couple of times that we could be the first (England) side to win on the sub-continent for 20 years," he said.

"It's very exciting going into the next game knowing if we get our games 100 percent right, no matter what we'll do, we'll come away with a series win."

England's last one-day series victory in the sub-continent came in Pakistan in 1986-87.

The last two matches will be played here on Wednesday and Saturday.

ICC, Hair shake hands

Cricket

AFP, London

Darrell Hair on Tuesday dropped his claim for racial discrimination against the International Cricket Council (ICC) in a deal that could allow the Australian to resume his career as a Test match umpire next year.

A statement made to a London employment tribunal on the seventh day of what was supposed to be a ten-day hearing said that Hair "unconditionally" withdrew his allegation of race discrimination by world cricket's governing body.

Under a deal finalised on Tuesday morning, the 55-year-old umpire will now work with ICC management on a "rehabilitation" programme and the ICC will decide in March 2008 whether he can return to top-level umpiring.

Hair took the ICC to the tribunal after being barred from officiating in Test matches following last year's controversial England-Pakistan match at The Oval.

The Test became the first in history to be won by forfeit after Pakistan refused to resume playing after being penalised for ball tampering by Australian Hair and his fellow umpire Billy Doctrove, a black West Indian.

Hair had claimed he was a victim of racial discrimination because, while he has not been allowed to officiate in Tests since the incident, Doctrove has been able to continue his top-level career.

Pending the conclusion of his rehabilitation programme, Hair will continue to umpire matches just below Test level.

ICC president Ray Mali welcomed the move and said: "We are pleased the issue has been

resolved. We had no option but to defend these serious allegations but now it is time to move on."

Both parties will have to finance their own legal costs but the ICC may regard that as a price worth paying after avoiding the risk of an adverse judgement that would have been hugely embarrassing.

Hair's solicitor, Paul Gilbert, said his client had no regrets about bringing the case and said he was pleased that the ICC would now look at the possibility of restoring Hair to the ranks of Test match umpires.

"This is really about getting back to umpiring top cricket matches," Gilbert said. "Darrell feels relieved and glad it's all over, and he does feel this is in the best interests of all parties."

"What we have now is a future for Darrell that leads to the possibility of his return to top-level umpiring."

SL won't risk Murali

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Muralidaran's fitness with important tests in the near future. "We'll have to see whether we definitely need him because he's very important to us in the five Test matches we've got ahead of us -- once we get back to Colombo we'll see how he is but we're not going to rush him."

Sri Lanka also have an injury concern with Farveez Maharoof who suffered a back spasm during Sunday's match at Dambulla. He has been their leading bowler in the series with 10 wickets at 9.5 but faces a race to be fit for Wednesday's game in Colombo.

Seam bowler Farveez Maharoof suffered a back spasm during Sunday's game. He is receiving treatment but the home side will not make a decision on his fitness until shortly before the start of the match.

Paul Collingwood has set his sights on sealing a first one-day series triumph for England in Sri Lanka by winning Wednesday's fourth game in Colombo.

The captain was passed fit after a precautionary scan on his shoulder.

"It's nothing more than a niggle, and I can't wait for the game. I'm hitting the ball well and desperate to get on the park," Collingwood told BBC Sport.

"We're 2-1 up, have a chance to achieve something massive here and take the series home with us. It's exciting."

Collingwood hurt his right shoulder in the first match of the

series, which they lost by 119 runs, but the tourists learned from that by winning the next two games on similarly slow pitches in Dambulla.

They will go into the fourth instalment at the Premadasa Stadium in good heart as they look to clinch their first one-day series success on the subcontinent since winning in Pakistan in 1986-87.

"The boys are really up for it," he added. "The boys who have been out on the park have done fantastically well and are all very keen to get out there."

"We're on the verge of it -- and that's the key phrase. We haven't done anything yet, when we win more game we can turn around and say we've done something special."

"It's been great but we've got one more to win and I'm enjoying the buzz from boys and the excitement of winning that game. It will be a great achievement to take home."

TEAMS SRI LANKA (probable): Upul Tharanga, Sanath Jayasuriya, Kumar Sangakkara, Mahela Jayawardene (captain), Chamara Silva, Tillakaratne Dilshan, Jehan Mubarak, Farveez Maharoof, Chaminda Vaas, Dilhara Fernando, Lasith Malinga.

ENGLAND (probable): Alastair Cook, Phil Mustard, Ian Bell, Kevin Pietersen, Paul Collingwood (captain), Owais Shah, Ravi Bopara, Greame Swann, James Anderson, Ryan Sidebottom, Stuart Broad.

BCCI cautions its officials

PTI, Rajkot

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has taken exception to selection committee chairman Dilip Vengsarkar and Indian team manager Lalchand Rajput's statements to media over senior players' performance.

"If selectors are not happy with the performance of seniors, then selection committee can drop them. But they should not go to media to discuss the matter," BCCI secretary Niranjan Shah said here on Tuesday.

The board has asked Vengsarkar and Rajput not to speak to media about such matters in future, Shah said.

"I have personally discussed the matter with Vengsarkar and Rajput and cautioned them not to speak openly against any players of the team," Shah said.

"Vengsarkar is chairman of selection committee and he should talk to concerned players and discuss the matter with them. It is not proper to criticise players openly," he said.

Vengsarkar had recently said that senior players will have to perform if they want to stay in team, while Rajput responded by saying that he should not have made such comments in the middle of a series.

Patience pays off

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number of wickets -- and were able to swing the ball at high speeds close to (and on occasion exceeding) 150kph.

Why bat first on such a pitch? Dhoni said that it is a chance they "had to take" especially because they "weren't chasing well". India's run-chases in the previous three games had suffered because the first wicket had fallen at 1, 11 and 10. On Monday, they didn't have a target of 300 to chase and Tendulkar and Ganguly could afford to play themselves in.

It was hard work, though, and Tendulkar perhaps made it look even harder than it was. He was in trouble first ball, when Nathan Bracken hit him on the pads, but his major struggle was against Lee, who kept him pinned at one end. Lee repeatedly beat Tendulkar on the drive with fast outswingers outside the off stump. He tested Tendulkar with the ball that tipped back as well and also used the bouncer as a surprise delivery. On another day one of those outswingers would have taken an edge, or the umpire would have upheld Lee's close caught behind and lbw appeals but on Monday Tendulkar managed to survive. He also faced another uncertain moment when

Mitchell Johnson got a ball to rise sharply and hit the shoulder of the bat only to fall safely on the off-side.

Ganguly, meanwhile, managed to get scoring at a steady pace; he had the relative comfort of facing Bracken and Johnson, who gave him the occasional ball on the pads or the width outside off to put away to the boundary.

After ten overs, India had scraped through to 34 for no loss, Ganguly on 21 off 31 balls and Tendulkar on 4 off 29. But the worst was over -- and, most importantly, all ten wickets were intact. The pressure eased after Lee was taken out of the attack and India scored 34 runs off the second Powerplay to steadily increase the scoring rate. Stealth was still the key for India because losing a wicket at that stage would have undone the hard work of the first ten overs. Tendulkar and Ganguly used all their experience to play patiently, where a younger batsman might have tried to counter the difficult conditions by hitting his way out of trouble.

The bowler-friendly conditions disappeared, however, once India took the field. The pitch got slower and Dhoni said that "it didn't really assist the fast bowlers like it did in

the first innings". It didn't help matters that RP Singh and Zaheer Khan kept pitching on the shorter side and were severely punished by the Australian top-order, Matthew Hayden in particular.

The Australians raced to 75 for 1 in ten overs with a flurry of boundaries and they were on course to make short work of India's hard-earned 291. The match looked like ending in 40 overs.

"We identified early in the game that batting against the new ball was the best time to score quickly," said Ponting. "It looked like the wicket had become more consistent in the second innings with the new ball than the first innings. A few stayed down, a few bounced earlier and there was some seam movement. When there's a flat wicket, a fast outfield and a new ball you really have to make the most of it."

The Australians did, India did not. While India's openers had to sweat just to survive, their Australian counterparts came out shooting from the hip. Both approaches were successful, but the Indian middle order built on their start while Australia's stumbled under pressure at the death.

McClaren calls

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Andorra - came against Macedonia, a team England failed to beat on home soil 12 months ago.

"Russia is the make-or-break game for us but sometimes you can be too clever with yourself," said McClaren.

"You should go into every game respecting your opponents and realising you are never going to get an easy game."

"Ask any of the managers whose teams were playing in Europe this week and they will tell you exactly the same thing."

"They might play clubs they have never heard of, who they think they should beat, and still have difficult games against them. I know that because I have experienced it myself."

"If you go into any game not respecting your opponent or not taking them seriously, you are going to be in trouble."

"Estonia are a tough, organised team who will play with a dogged determination to keep us out."

McClaren will be without strikers Dean Ashton and Andy Johnson, who miss out with respective knee and ankle problems.

West Ham striker Ashton said: "It's frustrating but there are plenty of players with the same sort of luck and I'm not going to get too down about it."

It is part of the game and one of those things."

New payroll

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only yardstick," explained Lipu.

The former national skipper also said that they would ask the national selectors to thoroughly scrutinise the national players' performance in the last one year.

"The selectors will examine everything like a player's ins-and-outs during this period, his overall performance, etc.," he added.

Lipu also informed that they were planning to bring five or six best performers from the National Cricket League under the payroll.

"We are determined to ensure that the country's first-class competition would be meaningful all the way. We will love to see them (cricketers) give the tournament similar importance like international cricket," said Lipu.

"There is a whispering that some national players even escaped the league citing silly excuses. We just want to bring them out of this bad practice and only then our cricket will go ahead as per our expectation," he observed.

Meanwhile, cricket committee will take interview of some local physiotherapists for the six divisional teams.

Arsenal launch

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Titan Sports that we should be more than doubling that figure over the next 12 months, 24 months."

However Edelman said the club had no plans for the moment to match Chelsea and Manchester United with a pre-season Asian tour.

He said, however, that the Londoners were working on joint ventures in China along similar lines to the club's work in Thailand and Vietnam, where Arsenal run football clinics for local youths.

"We believe we will make a significant contribution to football in those countries as we hope to do in China," Edelman said.

"We are very excited about today and we're very excited about the future in China."

Chelsea set up a partnership with Sina.com, one of China's top portals, in January for a China-hosted Internet site.

The club is investing two million dollars a year to help finance training for Chinese leagues, and develop professional club management, marketing strategies and sports medicine.

Bayern, Bolton

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In Group F Bolton have home games against Portugal's Braga and Greece's Aris Salonika before trips to Bayern Munich and Red Star Belgrade, who won the competition in 1991.

"The match against Red Star will be very intimidating," Anelka added. "They always seem to raise their game in European competition and their fanatical fans are always very passionate at home. It will be a great atmosphere in Belgrade and one that the Bolton fans will look forward to."

Meanwhile Tottenham Hotspurs have been drawn against Belgium's Anderlecht, the team they beat in the 1994 final, in Group G while Everton are up against Dutch side AZ Alkmaar in Group A.

In Group B, Scotland's Aberdeen meet Greece's Panathinaikos and Atletico Madrid.

Each team will play two matches at home and two away with the group stage starting on 25 October and the top three of the five go through. They will be joined by eight third-placed teams from the Champions League groups for the knockout round.

Marion surrenders Olympic medals

Athletics

AFP, Los Angeles

Disgraced sprinter Marion Jones has been stripped of her gold medals from the 2000 Olympics and asked repay more than 100,000 dollars in prize and bonus money, the United States Olympic Committee said Monday.

Jones, who admitted in a US court last week to using performance-enhancing drugs, has returned the three gold and two bronze medals she won in Sydney, USOC chief executive Jim Scherr said.

"She relinquished this afternoon the medals that were won unfairly at the Sydney Games," Scherr said.

"She has taken the right step and worked quickly and voluntarily returned the medals and that is a start. I think there is still a long ways to go."

"They (medals) are in the possession of the USOC and will be returned to the IOC so they can be awarded to the appropriate winners at the Olympic Games."

The 31-year-old American pled guilty Friday to lying to federal investigators and USOC chairman Peter Ueberroth said the next step would be for her to hand back the Olympic medals.

"We have the medals in our possession and they will be returned," Ueberroth said Monday.

Scherr said Jones would also have to forfeit all her competition

results since September 1, 2000. "We also will go after prize bonuses and it is in excess of 100,000 dollars," Scherr said. "We will ask her to make restitution for any money she received from the USOC."

Jones was also slapped with a two-year competition ban by the United States Anti-doping Agency (USADA) Monday but she had already announced her retirement on Friday.



MARION JONES

Jones was unavailable for comment on Monday.

"She's not going to comment on the matter while it's pending in court but the medals were returned today," Jones' New York lawyer Henry DePippo told the US media.

Jones, who won the 100 metres and 200 metres in addition to taking third in the long jump, was part of the winning 4x400 team and

the third-place 4x100 team in Australia.

Ueberroth said they are also asking Jones' relay teammates to turn over their medals from 2000 as well.

"Basically it is unfortunate. But your results involved cheating so you are not entitled to the medals," Ueberroth said.

Some of the other American athletes who are being asked to return their relay medals include, Chryste Gaines, Torri Edwards, Nanceen Perry, Jeal Miles-Clark, Monique Hennagan and LaTasha Colander-Richardson.

Said Scherr, "Our opinion is that something was won unfairly and it has completely tarnished the relay events."

Greek sprinter Katerina Thanou is in line to receive one of the golds because she finished second behind Jones in the Sydney 100 metres. Thanou's situation poses another problem for the IOC as she was given a two-year ban for allegedly faking a motorbike crash to cover up missing a drug test during the 2004 Summer Games.

Scherr said Jones handed the medals over to USOC officials Monday in the Austin, Texas offices of her lawyer.

"They were picked up today after being turned over," Scherr said.

He said the five medals will be taken to Colorado Springs before being shipped to the International Olympic Committee's head office in Switzerland.

Jones told the court last week

Pakistan lose upper hand

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before hitting Nel for a boundary.

Earlier, Pakistan squandered the first day's initiative when Mark Boucher scored 54 and a career-best 46 from Paul Harris took the tourists to a respectable total after they resumed at 259-6.

Pakistan had dismissed the overnight batsman Andre Nel for nought off the fifth ball of the day when paceman Umar Gul had him caught fending a short delivery.

Harris showed remarkable guts as the tail-ender improved his best Test score of 11 made against India in Cape Town earlier this year.

Pakistan captain Shoaib Malik once again did not use left-arm spinner Abdul Rehman until half-an-hour before lunch.

It was Gul who finally broke the stubborn stand when he had Harris driving uppishly and was caught by Malik in the covers. Harris hit six boundaries during his resolute 160-minute knock.

Boucher was the last man out when he holed out at leg-spinner Danish Kaneria who was the pick of the home bowlers with 4-114. He hit Kaneria for a six to reach his 26th half-century.

Boucher hit four boundaries and a six during his 132-ball knock. Kaneria was the best of Pakistan's bowlers with 4-114, while Gul finished with 3-103.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at close on the second day of the second Test between Pakistan and South Africa at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore on Tuesday:

SOUTH AFRICA: First innings (overnight 259-6)			
Gibbs	c Misbahul b Gul	43	16
Smith	b Kaneria	16	10
Asif	b Asif	10	59
Kallis	b w b Kaneria	59	10
Prince	lbw b Rehman	63	43
De Villiers	run out	63	45
Boucher	c Rehman b Kaneria	54	54

Nel	c Misbahul b Gul	0	0
Harris	c Malik b Gul	46	21
Steyn	b Kaneria	0	0
Ntini	not out	0	0
Extras	(lb-2, nb-7, w-7, pn-5)	21	357
Total	(All out in 125.1 overs)	357	357
Fall of wickets	1-24, 2-47, 3-100, 4-160, 5-243, 6-259, 7-259, 8-347, 9-350.		

PAKISTAN: First innings			
Butt	c Smith b Harris	40	40
Akmal	c Smith b Harris	52	52
Younis	Khan b Nel	3	3
Yousuf	lbw b Steyn	25	25