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Did U Know?

There are four archery events in the Olympics - individual events for women and men, and team events for men and women.



Cafu

(Veteran Brazilian defender)
"It is time to leave. It's sad, it's tough but I knew that one day or another the time would come to go home to Brazil."
After quitting Italian giants AC Milan.



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Sportscentre India
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Live from 8:30pm

Trouble thy name is Shoaib

PTI, Kolkata

Kolkata Knight Riders on Saturday threatened to take "all actions including legal" against Pakistan's daily Nation for its report that fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar was questioned at the Karachi airport for allegedly carrying a large number of syringes.

"We are contemplating all action including legal against the paper," Knight Riders manager Jay Bhattacharjee told newsmen here.

Other reports add, contrary to Akhtar's reported claim that the syringes recovered from his luggage by customs officials were meant to inject himself with insulin, Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) officials in Lahore say the fast bowler, rather than being diabetic, is infamous for being a druggie who had been using cocaine and performance-enhancing drugs to boost his bowling speed.

Approached for comments, Shafiqat Naghmi, chief operating officer of the PCB, expressed ignorance over the medical history of the Rawalpindi Express, saying as far as he knows, former skipper Wasim Akram was the only Pakistani fast bowler known to be an insulin-dependent diabetic. "It is for the first time that I have heard of the fast bowler suffering from diabetes and will have to recheck with his personal physician to find out if he was actually a diabetic."

However, another senior PCB official, who requested not to be named, said Shoaib had been using performance-enhancing drugs, cocaine, and cannabis for almost four years now and was banned on the same charges in November 2006 from playing international and domestic cricket after failing a drugs test. He pointed out that Shoaib never took this plea during the hearing of the doping charges against him by a three-member tribunal. "Had he been diabetic, he would have informed the tribunal of his ailment at that time," he added.

The PCB official, while quoting

Abahani alive

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Nazmul Hossain kept Abahani in the Premier League title race with a telling four-wicket burst that spelled doom on Bangladesh Biman in the vital Super League tie at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

With the comfortable seven-wicket victory achieved in just 22.4 overs after they skittled Biman for 125, Abahani kept their destiny in their own hands going into the final day of the competition. The massive back-to-back victories over Mohammedan (on Thursday) and Biman ensured that if Abahani win their last league outing against Surjo Torun on April 21, they will lift the title even if Biman beat Mohammedan on the same day as the Dhanmondi-outfit already have superior run-rate than Biman.

But this change in fortune came through Nazmul's intelligent spell after skipper Tushar Imran predictably opted to field first.

Opens Tamim Iqbal and Pakistani international Nasir

Jamshed struck six boundaries to move to 40 for no loss but with the introduction of Nazmul in the seventh over, the entire complexion of the match took a different shade.

Nazmul's fifth ball, an away-swinging, saw Nasir (19) flay at the ball and Abahani's Sri Lankan recruit Thilina Kandamby took a sharp catch at slip. Next over, Tamim (18) crashed a cover drive without moving his feet and inevitably, the adrenaline rush made him chase the next delivery and



NAZMUL HOSSAIN ... 4 for 14

edged to Sahagir Hossain who took a comfortable catch. Mosharraf Hossain (1) came in at four but had little chance to make any impression, edging a peach of a delivery to reduce Biman to 3-58. Five runs later, Mushfiqur Rahman was all at sea as he was stuck in the crease to a Nazmul delivery that straightened after pitching.

A smart piece of wicketkeeping from Sahagir outfoxed Biman captain Sanwar Hossain who seemingly took off for a single thinking that Sahagir had missed Arafat Sunny's wide. Sahagir saw the batsman leave the crease and coolly whipped the balls off to make it 74 for five.

Talha Jubair removed dangerous Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and Sajjad Kadir in the space of two overs but in the middle of this mayhem, Alok Kapali smashed cover drives and scorched straight drives to remind everyone one more time that he is still knocking at the door of selection. The stylish right-hander caressed five boundaries as he coasted to 33 off 51 balls but his stay was cut short by Mohammad Rafique's in-dipper in the 33rd over. Nafis Iqbal, who

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2



Shahriar Nafees sweeps on his way to 36 during Abahani's crucial Premier Cricket Super League match against Bangladesh Biman at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

Arambagh first at it again

SPORTS REPORTER

Like the inaugural edition of the professional football league last year, Arambagh also came alive first in the transfer of the 2nd B. League yesterday.

Although the 35-day transfer began on Thursday, no team look set to join the market this month but Arambagh, who signed the first professional footballer in the country last year, signed three of their own footballers.

Club officials including general secretary Mabinul Islam submitted registration forms of goalkeeper Piaruzzaman Piru and defenders Akram Hossain and Farhad Hossain to B. League manager Abu Nayeem Sohag at the BFF Bhaban.

Piru gets a one-year agreement but the contracts of the two defenders are for six months, which run till December 2008.

Arambagh, the only club of the city to have teams in both the B. League and the Senior Division Football League, finished sixth in last year's competition.

BFF defuses boycott

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

The so-called 'gentlemen's agreement' among the eight Dhaka clubs to shackle the top footballers for the B. League transfers resulted in a national camp boycott yesterday morning.

Fearing underpayment due to this agreement, the national players -- preparing for next month's SAFF Championship in Colombo and Maldives -- skipped training and threatened to quit.

However, the Bangladesh Football Federation (officials) apparently resolved the issue following a quick meeting in the afternoon and the booters returned to practice later in the day.

"We have talked with the players and assured them that we will sit with the clubs and solve the issue. We will make sure that there is no such agreement to damage the players' rights," told Badal Roy, BFF vice-president and chairman

of the National Team Management Committee.

All the clubs except Brothers Union had a meeting on Saturday to come with a verbal agreement that each of the big names will select seven of their own players who will not be targeted by rival clubs. For the smaller teams, the number would be five.

Although the rumour was in the air for quite some time, the news of the meeting sparked the players to go into instant action and boycott training.

"The footballers made a mistake by not attending training. They have admitted it but we can't afford such loss with just a few days' time to prepare for the SAFF," said Badal, a former national captain.

Badal feels that one or two clubs are really 'involved in the agreement' and the others are just playing to the tune. I have asked Nabil (Ahmed) but he has said that no such agreement has happened.

It was learned that Saturday's meeting was held at the office of

Kazi Nabil Ahmed, who is director of defending B. League champions Abahani, a vice-president of BFF and also the vice-chairman of the B. League committee.

It is believed that Abahani and Mohammedan, the two giants, initiated the agreement and Nabil's role was heavily criticised by footballers and organisers.

"We know that the clubs are going through financial crisis. The players realise this and are ready to negotiate. But they want proper remuneration."

"We are ready to help the players if they do not get the contract money from the clubs or the transfer make them losers. If needed, we will give them legal aid too," added Badal.

Meanwhile, the BFF, worried over the present condition of heavyweights Muktijoddha Sangsad, will take steps to involve its high-ups in the transfer.

The club, who have no proper committee to run the show, are likely to stay away from the race of building a strong team.

Usha atop alone

SPORTS REPORTER

First-half goals by Zahidul Islam Rajan and Tariq Aziz gave Usha Kriha Chakra solo lead in the Green Delta Insurance Premier Hockey League table for the first time after the defending joint champion's 2-0 defeat of Mariner Youngs Club yesterday.

Rajan slotted home a 14-minute penalty corner and Pakistani recruit Tariq fired a field goal just after the half-hour at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium as Usha topped Abahani to reach the top of the table with maximum 21 points after seven rounds.

Abahani, who dropped their first points yesterday -- a thrilling 3-3 draw against archrivals Mohammedan -- after a six-match winning streak, are at second place with 19 points.

Mariners' chances to qualify for the super league was heavily dashed as they remained on seven points, two adrift of fifth-placed Azad Sporting Club who crashed 4-1 to Ajax Sporting Club yesterday.

Prolific striker and captain Rahat Sarwar scored twice while Rubel and Ronny added the rest for the winners who moved to seven points top come level with Mariners.

Hasan Zubair reduced the arrears for Azad.

Zia shares 2nd place

SPORTS REPORTER

Refaat Bin Sattar and Abdullah Al Rakib lost in the tenth round of the Mayors Cup 1st International Open Chess tournament yesterday in Mumbai but their fellow Bangladeshi grandmaster Ziaur Rahman drew with Uzbekistan GM Anton Filipov.

The draw helped Zia share the second place along with seven other players, all level on eight points.

Refaat and Rakib stuck to 7.5 points at third place following defeats to Uzbekistan's Uldachev Saidali and current leader Polish GM Krasenkow, who has nine points, respectively.

Today is the concluding day of the 11-round Swiss League.

Azlan Shah Cup Argentina's

PTI, Ipoh

Mario Almada struck a golden goal as a spirited India suffered a narrow 1-2 defeat to Argentina in the final of the Azlan Shah hockey tournament on Sunday.

Sandeep Singh's 10th minute penalty corner conversion put India ahead in the title clash, but veteran Almada led Argentina's fightback and scored a brace (14th, 73rd) to help his side clinch the championship.

India will take the silver medal with pride as they showcased a brilliant turnaround in the tournament and won four matches in a row after two defeats to book a berth in the final after a huge gap of 12 years.

The title clash had all the components of a final match as the keenly-contested and ill-tempered encounter went down to the wire before being decided through Almada's golden goal in the extra-time.

From the beginning, both the wingers of Argentina worked overtime to give some jittery moments to the Indian defenders. But

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1



The BFF executive committee members present in Dhaka sit with the national booters in a meeting at the BFF Bhaban yesterday to convince them to return to the camp following their boycott in the morning over transfers issue.

Chennai prevail in rain

CRICINFO, undated



Duckworth-Lewis to decide what was shaping into a fascinating contest in the Indian Premier League at the Eden Gardens yesterday. This time, Chennai Super Kings were on the right end of the result, as their total of 55 without loss after eight overs, chasing 150, was three runs ahead of the par score when a severe dust storm descended upon the Eden Gardens, and the rains that followed ensured there was no chance for the match to resume. The two points to Chennai moves them up to 14, while Kolkata slipped back with 10 points in 11 games.

The weather marred the contest, but through 28 overs the crowd witnessed a couple of fine performances. At the same ground

where he had announced his arrival in international cricket, Salman Butt played another gem, scoring a classy 73 off 54 balls, to lift an otherwise subdued performance from Kolkata Knight Riders.

Chennai had their own man for the moment, as Makhaya Ntini took the third hat-trick of the IPL, dismissing Sourav Ganguly in his third over, and then returning 11 overs later to bowl Debabrata Das -- who had been involved in an 86-run stand with Butt -- and David Hussey off successive balls.

That stand gave Kolkata's bowlers something to defend, but the most crucial moment of the match came three deliveries before the interruption. Their defence of the total had got off to a poor start as Shoaib Akhtar struggled with what seemed an injured ankle. Stephen Fleming, at last showing the form and fluency of old, and Parthiv Patel had eased to a half-century stand when Parthiv top-edged a pull, but Ashok Dinda put down the skier, and in the process allowed a single. Had that chance been taken,

Chennai would have ended level with the par score, and with no further play possible, Kolkata would have gone away with one point.

The only positive for Kolkata was that their batting put together a reasonable performance after their abysmal display against Mumbai, when they had been bundled out for 67. Butt's knock wasn't the fastest by Twenty20 standards, but considering the context -- a pitch lacking in pace, and a batting line-up lacking in confidence -- it was just what Kolkata would have wanted.

Their start here was poor yet again, as Ntini struck twice in his first three overs -- Mohammad Hafeez flicked to fine leg and Sourav Ganguly attempted an ungainly heave and found his middle stump knocked back.

At 28 for 2 after five overs, Chennai had taken the early honours, before Butt found a partner who was ready to play the support act. Das, drafted into the side in place of Aakash Chopra, created a

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2



Punjab co-owner and Bollywood superstar Preity Zinta can hardly stop smiling after her franchise were declared winners through the Duckworth/Lewis method against hosts Delhi in the Indian Premier League match at the Feroz Shah Kotla Stadium on Saturday.

PHOTO: INTERNET

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1