

Still plenty to play for

SPORTS REPORTER



Incessant rain forced a call-off of the first day's play of the second and final Test between Bangladesh and New Zealand at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Although the drainage system of the 'home of cricket' has been outstanding, but the rain was so persistent that the groundstaff even could not get the chance to pull off the covers from the pitch.

The official confirmation of a 'first day washout' came at 12.30pm following an academic inspection by umpires Daryl Harper and Asoka de Silva along with match referee Javagal Srinath.

The bad news for cricket fans is that inclement weather might also spoil the second day's play as the low over the Bay is turning into a depression with a forecast of heavy to very heavy rainfall during next twenty-four hours.

It was frustrating for everybody after the fascinating one-day series

and the first Test at Chittagong which was played under brilliant sunshine. Not only that everyone was expecting to see a good finish to the series where the Tigers looked more competitive than their previous contests against the Black Caps.

The Tigers secured their first-ever ODI victory against New Zealand when they won the first match by seven wickets and then pushed their opponents in the next two one-day matches and the first Test in Chittagong where the visitors bounced back brilliantly to snatch the three-wicket victory to lead the series 1-0.

"As a team so far we played good cricket in the series and we were expecting plenty of action after running them (New Zealand) very close at Chittagong. It's frustrating that the first day play was washed out," said Bangladesh skipper Mohammad Ashraful.

Bangladesh players made some practice in the indoors yesterday.

Ashraful said that he was expecting some action on Day Two, adding that the toss would be vital.

"The toss is always important in

a Test and it will be much more vital after losing one day. The wicket will be under cover for around 72 hours. There will be moisture. Let's see, till now we have won the toss in three out of four matches," he added.

Bangladesh skipper was not ready to write off the fate of the match as yet.

"If you look at Test cricket you'll see most matches ended in four days. Although the last match (Chittagong Test) rolled on to five days, there is still four more days to go in this match and anything can happen," he said.

"Considering the day's conditions, there could have been a definite extra bowler. If the condition remains the same, we'll think about that. There is moisture on the wicket and it'll take two and a half hours to dry out. A batsman will be dropped if ultimately we considered an additional pacer," he said.

Meanwhile, the organizers announced that spectators holding day one tickets can enter the stadium through designated gates on day two with the same ticket and school students will be allowed free entry but they must be in school uniform in order to get in.



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

WE'RE HERE TO HEAR TIGERS ROAR: Visually impaired children from Blind Education and Rehabilitation Development Organisation in Mirpur were taken to the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday to give them some taste of cricket on the first day of the second Test between Bangladesh and New Zealand. The kids were unlucky as the day's play was rained off without a ball bowled due to persistent rain.



Shane Warne

(Former Australia spin legend)
"I'm disappointed all the countries want to copy the Indian Premier League. Why can't they embrace India and sell the brand worldwide?"



BTV
Bangladesh v New Zealand
Second Test, Day Two
Live from 9:30am

ESPN
English Premier League
Chelsea v Liverpool
Live from 7:25pm
West Ham v Arsenal
Live from 9:55pm

STAR Sports
Primera Liga
Real Madrid v Bilbao
Live from 2:00am (Monday)

TEN Sports
ICL Twenty20
Delhi v Lahore
Live from 8:00pm



Nat'l Cricket League
(Four-Day, Day One)
Chittagong v Khulna
Venue: Chittagong Divisional Stadium
Rajshahi v Dhaka
Venue: Rajshahi Divisional Stadium
Barisal v Sylhet
Venue: Shaheed Chandu Stadium, Bogra

Lawson sends back cheque?

CRICINFO, undated

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has downplayed the prospects of impending legal complications with Geoff Lawson, the outgoing Pakistan coach, of outstanding dues owed to him after the termination of his contract.

Lawson was removed from his post on Friday and given three months salary as per his contract

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Alam named Pak coach

Cricket

AFP, Islamabad

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) named former captain and manager Intikhab Alam as the new national cricket coach on Saturday, a day after Australian Geoff Lawson was sacked.

Alam will take the helm for Pakistan's upcoming series of three one-day internationals against the West Indies in November in the neutral venue of Abu Dhabi.

"We have appointed Intikhab as the coach as we found him to be the suitable candidate," PCB chairman Ejaz Butt told AFP. "He will accompany the team to Abu Dhabi for the one-day internationals against the West Indies."

The PCB sacked former Australian Test fast bowler Lawson on Friday after a string of poor results. He had spent just 15 months in the job, regarded as one of the toughest in world cricket.

The 66-year-old Alam has also been Pakistan coach and manager on several occasions, most notably

during Pakistan's World Cup title win in 1992. Former captain and master batsman Javed Miandad was also a candidate for the post.

Butt said the length of Alam's contract was expected to be decided next week.

"We would like to appoint Alam for a two-year contract, but we have to get final approval from the members of the governing board," said Butt, who took over as chairman earlier this month.



INTIKHAB ALAM

Alam said he would try to do his best for Pakistan.

"It's a big responsibility," Alam told AFP.

"It is not an easy job and I have taken up this assignment as a big challenge," said Alam, who will abandon his contract with Punjab in India, where he was to take over this month.

Alam said discipline would be his top priority for the controversy-hit Pakistan side.

"I will try to maintain discipline because no player is bigger than the game and discipline has been our problem, so that will be my top priority," said Alam, who played 47 Tests between 1959-75 and also led Pakistan in 17 Tests.

As a quality leg-spinner he took 125 wickets, his first coming on his first delivery in Test cricket against Australia in 1959.

LAST DECADE COACHES

Here is a timeline of the country's cricket coaches in the last ten years: **Sept 1998:** Legendary former captain Javed Miandad takes over from Haroon Rasheed, previously a

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'I didn't accuse Sachin'

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Adam Gilchrist has insisted that he did not accuse Sachin Tendulkar of lying while presenting evidence in the racism hearing after the controversial Sydney Test. He also denied calling him a "bad sport" after observing that it was often hard to locate Tendulkar for an after-match handshake following Indian losses.

Gilchrist's comments, quoted from his soon-to-be-released autobiography True Colours, caused a stir in India and both players confirmed they had spoken to each other and agreed that the remarks were taken out of context. The main issue surrounded the racism

hearing of the Indian off-spinner Harbhajan Singh.

Harbhajan was accused of racially abusing Andrew Symonds and was suspended for three Tests but later had his ban overturned on appeal. Tendulkar was batting with Harbhajan when the incident occurred and Gilchrist observed that the evidence Tendulkar gave during the match referee's hearing was different from that he presented during the appeal.

"All I stated are the facts that everyone knows, that initially Sachin mentioned he wasn't sure what Harbhajan had said, then later confirmed his support when Harbhajan said he'd used a Hindi word in the heated exchange with Symonds," Gilchrist wrote in his column for the Times of India.

"Nowhere do I accuse Sachin of lying. So to have spoken directly with Sachin about these matters was a great relief for me."

However MV Sridhar, the Indian team manager for the tour who was present at both the hearings, first with Mike Procter and then with Justice John Hansen, contradicted Gilchrist's statements. Sridhar said Tendulkar had told Procter that he had heard some form of abuse but the match referee did not probe further. Later, Sridhar said, Tendulkar told Hansen he had heard Harbhajan say teri maa ki but clarified that it was an abbreviated form of an abuse.

"I am pleased to say that at the conclusion of our chat the same respect Sachin and I have always

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PHOTO: BANGLASH CHOKH.COM

Players of Summerfield International School and Aga Khan International School are in pursuit of the ball during their Dhaka Metropolitan Women's School Football Tournament encounter at the Dhanmondi Women's Sports Complex yesterday.

NAT'L CRICKET LEAGUE Rokibul set to return

SPORTS REPORTER

Tigers batsman Rokibul Hasan will be back to business with the bat when the third round of the Ispahani Mirzapore Tea 10th National Cricket League kicks off today at three different venues.

The right-hander, who had fractured his right thumb during first one-day in Australia in September to be ruled out from that series and the home series against New Zealand, will play the four-day for Barisal against Sylhet at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra.

It is unlikely to see the the Khulna-Chittagong match start on time at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium due to incessant rain but the organisers were hopeful about the other two venues.

Rajshahi take on Dhaka at the Rajshahi Divisional Stadium in the other third round game.

Rajshahi showed a strong batting display in the second round which helped them outplay Chittagong by an innings and 22 runs and move to the top of the table while Dhaka were indebted to left-arm spinner Elias Sunny, who turned the table from Sylhet to secure a six-wicket victory.

Elias Sunny returned with a match-haul of 13 wickets in that match, which included only the second hat-trick in National Cricket League's history.

B.League postponed

SPORTS REPORTER

The B. League will be postponed till October 29 due to inclement weather following depression at Bay.

The league will resume on October 30 with the match between Mohammedan Sporting Club and Brothers Union, which was scheduled to take place today at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

On the other hand due to local authorities non-cooperation Narasingdi will be no more a home venue for Farashganj Sporting Club. The old city club played three home matches in Narasingdi.

GIRLS FOOTBALL AKS, Scholastica thump rivals

SPORTS REPORTER

Anika made a hat-trick as Aga Khan School blanked Summerfield 5-0 in the Dhaka Metropolitan Women's School Football tournament at the Dhanmondi Women's Sports Complex yesterday.

Nusaiba scored in the early third minute to put the winners ahead and Anika completed her hat-trick by scoring in the 8th, 16th and 32nd minutes. Mahmuda netted the other goal in the 26th minute.

Scholastica rode on a hat-trick from Zerín to get off to an impressive start when they defeated

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Alok, Aftab lift Warriors

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Alok Kapali continued his rich vein of form with the bat and Aftab Ahmed came to the party in spectacular fashion as Dhaka Warriors recorded a competitive 173-7 in their fourth match of the Indian Cricket League (ICL) against Royal Bengal Tigers at the Tau Devi Lal Stadium in Gurgaon yesterday.

Kolkata Royal Bengal Tigers were 50 for 1 in 6 overs.

Kapali smashed 65 off 33 balls after Aftab set the pace of yet another fine innings with a 42-ball 61. It was the Warriors' second best effort after their 174-5 against Delhi Giants that they won at the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Stadium in Ahmedabad a few days back.

Kapali, who has been a revelation in the rebel Twenty20 championship with 100 and 34 in successive games, entertained the Gurgaon crowd with yet another

high-class knock that contained five sixes and four boundaries.

He flayed a few over mid-wicket but his one effortless six over long off and the other over third-man were a testimony to sheer timing from a class batsman who however remained an enigma in international scene while playing for Bangladesh.

Aftab, who failed to live up to his big hitting reputation in the first three games, returned to form in style. Coming in to bat after last match hero Nazimuddin was caught at mid-wicket scoring only two, the Chittagong right-hander raced to his 50 off 30 balls against a side that featured bowlers like South African paceman Lance Klusener and Sri Lankan leg-spinner Upul Chandana.

He struck six fours and three sixes in an innings that needed a 'not out' verdict from the TV umpire after the on-field man in uniform primarily ruled him out leg before to a Klusener delivery that struck him outside the line of the off-stump.

Bhajji blasts Gilchrist

CRICINFO, undated

Harbhajan Singh has hit back at Adam Gilchrist's comments on Sachin Tendulkar and said that Gilchrist was not respected anyway due to his own on-field behaviour. Gilchrist labelled as a "joke" the evidence Tendulkar gave in January during the hearing into Harbhajan's alleged racist remarks against Andrew Symonds.

"He should not be talking about Sachin. It is all rubbish," Harbhajan told the Age. "We don't respect him. He pretends to be a saint and people say he walks when he nicks, but why did he appeal when batsmen don't nick?"

"He always changes his mind according to a situation. If Australia is close to a victory he is always going up [appealing], whether it is out or not out. We don't need him to say these things [about Tendulkar] just because he is retired."

Harbhajan was alleged to have called Symonds a monkey and was initially suspended for three Tests, although the ban was overturned

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Fellaini derails MU

AFP, Liverpool



Sir Alex Ferguson was left counting the cost of Manchester United's failure to beat Everton at Goodison Park after Marouane Fellaini's header cancelled out Darren Fletcher's opening strike.

Elsewhere former United midfielder Kieran Richardson's thunderous free-kick sealed Sunderland's first home win in the Wear-Tyne derby for 28 years as West from bottom Newcastle were beaten 2-1 at the Stadium of Light.

Djibril Cisse put Sunderland ahead in the 20th minute after turning a cross from Steed Malbranque before Newcastle drew level through a header from striker Shola Ameobi.

It looked as if both sides would have to settle for a point until Richardson left fly with a free-kick from the edge of the box 15 minutes from time which gave Newcastle keeper Shay Given no chance.

United, looking for a seventh straight win in all competitions, went ahead in the 22nd minute when Scotland midfielder Darren Fletcher, after receiving a pass from veteran winger Ryan Giggs, took the ball away from Joleon Lescott before shooting through the legs of former United goalkeeper Tim Howard.

But at the other end another United old boy helped Everton draw level, Phil Neville supplying the cross from which midfielder Fellaini headed in a 63rd minute equaliser.

With Wayne Rooney out of sorts and missing out on the chance to claim his 100th career goal against his former club - he was taken off in the 71st minute by Ferguson in

what seemed a bid to pre-empt further trouble after the striker provocatively kissed his United badge after being booked - the visitors paid the price for failing to finish the game off when in total control.

In the end they had cause to be grateful for a point as Everton improved dramatically to fight back during a thrilling second period.

United had looked on course for

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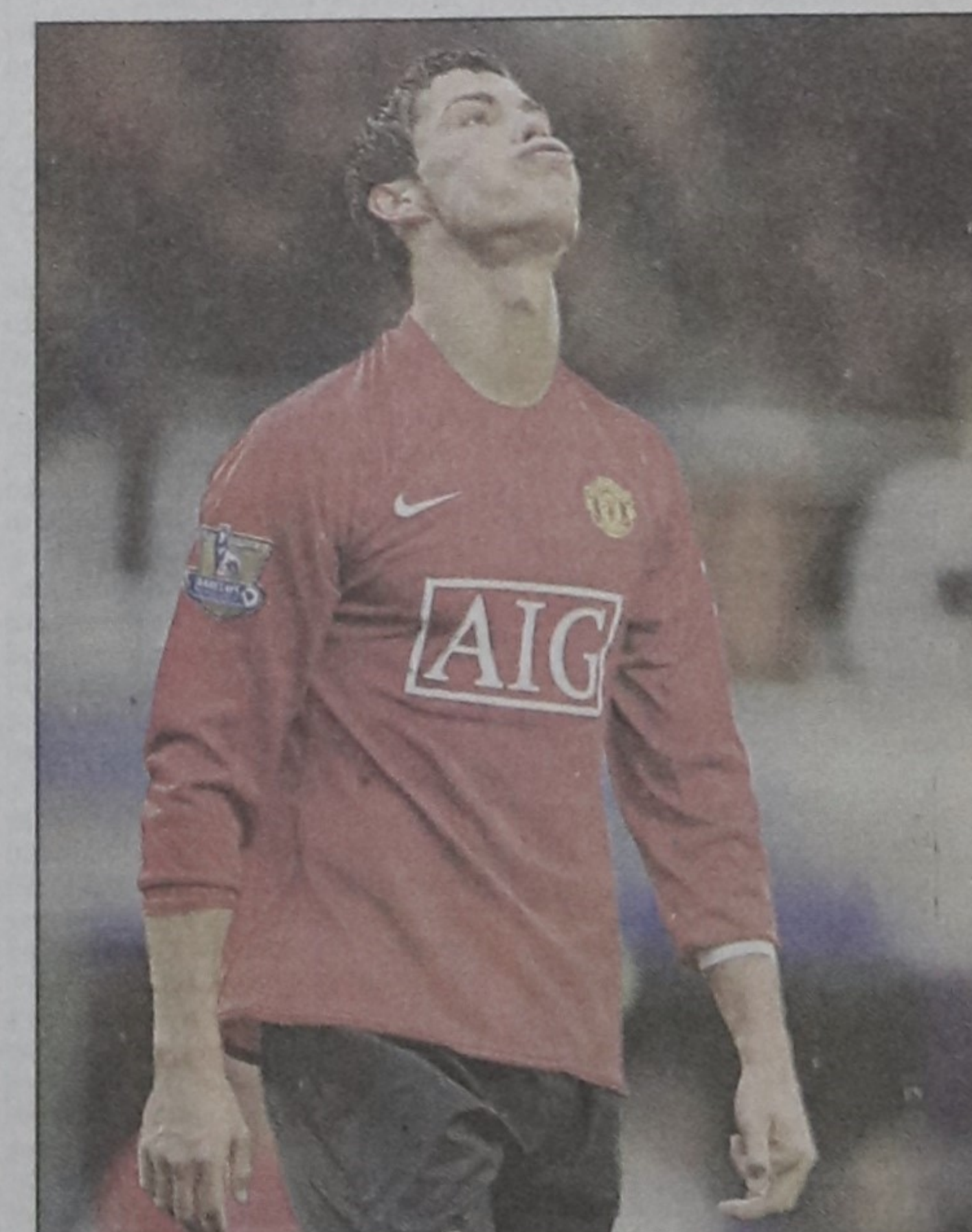


PHOTO: AFP

Manchester United star Cristiano Ronaldo is a picture of frustration after missing a chance during their high-octane Premier League encounter with Everton at Goodison Park on Sunday. Ronaldo failed to provide the spark as the Blues put on a fine second-half performance to salvage a point.