

At a standstill

AMEERUDDIN ZAIN

The city's sports arena saw a new sort of standstill yesterday due to BDR soldiers' mutiny at its headquarters. It led to the postponement of many sports events across the city and its suburbs.

The Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis (CCDM) suspended all three matches of the Premier Division Cricket League halfway through as well as the First Division Cricket League games. However, the committee has decided to restart the suspended matches today from the point of stops.

Given the volatile political and military environment that we live in, it will be either a challenge or a cake-walk for CCDM and other sports organisations to run the show today. Panic and uncertainty was widespread in the morning, which played a key role in extending the fears from the rebellion reach upto distant places like BKSP, Savar and Fatullah in Narayanganj.

Teams hastily packed their bags and rushed back to their nests, after team officials and on-field umpires deemed it necessary to shelve the day's proceedings.

A young cricketer, who is playing for Indra Road in the

First Division Cricket League yesterday found himself distressed when his game stopped midway. More misery was added when he found himself stranded at Mohammadpur, from where he had to walk to his Dhanmondi residence, owing to the unavailability of transports due to extensive fright

among the populace.

The Bangladesh Golf Federation also postponed a scheduled reception for the golfers, who emerged winners in the All India Amateur Golf Championship in Kolkata and City Bank-Dhaka Bank Bangladesh Open, citing unavoidable circumstances.

Only two matches of the KFC Pizza Hut 5th Mini Handball Tournament (Girls) were held with Moghbazar Ispahani Girls School and Banani Bidya Niketan beating Viharunissa School and College and Summer Field respectively.

However, the Bangladesh Handball Federation in a statement later said that the tournament would remain suspended until further notice.

Football matches, however, were uninterrupted.

Postponements were not limited to sporting activities only due to the fiasco, as the much awaited media conference to announce the title sponsor for next month's Pakistan tour at Heritage Restaurant was also dropped. Owner of the restaurant Rizwan Bin Farouq expressed grief over the abrupt cancellation and said the meeting will be rescheduled at a later date.

There is a supposed lesson which sports bodies in the country can learn from yesterday's occurrence, which is: you never know if a simple game of cricket, golf, handball or even a press conference can take place as planned, even when it is 30 odd kilometres away from the place of the event.



PHOTO: STAR

LET'S FACE IT: Players of City Club and the on-field umpire come off the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium ground yesterday after their Premier Division Cricket League match against Biman was unexpectedly postponed due to mutiny at BDR headquarters.

'Nobody wants to disturb football'

SPORTS REPORTER

Even if the opening ceremony of the 2011 World Cup Cricket takes place at the Bangabandhu National Stadium, football will not be disturbed.

The statement came from State Minister for Youth and Sports Ahad Ali Sarkar yesterday during his meeting with Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) high-ups.

"I had a reasonably good, satisfactory meeting with the sports minister at his office this afternoon," BFF president Kazi Salahuddin told The Daily Star last night.

The issue of the discussion was obviously the hottest one that has been gripping the sports arena since the sports minister and cricket officials' wish to stage the Cricket World Cup at the national number one stadium.

Salahuddin, who had not made a single comment on the issue for the past few days, said his federation would be glad to help the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) in making the proposed opening ceremony success.

But the country's football chief said he would not accept any long-term disturbance of football for this purpose.

"The sports minister has said nobody wants to disturb football," said Salahuddin, who was accompanied by his vice-presidents Abdus Salam Murshedi and Badal Roy.

"He said that football will not be disturbed because it is a nationally popular game as is cricket. He also added that the government wants to make sure that one game doesn't have to walk into other's territories.

"I think it is possible to work out a formula for the two games to co-exist on this issue," Salahuddin said quoting Ahad Ali.

"I also believe that the minister is right. If the preparations (for World Cup opening ceremony) do not take too long, there is no problem for us. We are willing to help the cricket board.

"I have told him what we need. Everyone has to understand that if the whole preparation stops football for more than one month, the damage would be irreparable for us. If it is one month, we can work out a plan to stop football for that small window.

"But if it goes over a month, the structure changes, the sponsor changes...the whole thing for us changes and it doesn't work at all. It will affect two generations of footballers and

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Liza, Shirin share the lead

SPORTS REPORTER

WFM Shamima Akhter Liza and Sharmin Sultana Shirin shared joint lead in the 30th Parachute National Women's Chess Championship with maximum four points.

Masuda Begum, who was top-of-the-table after third round, lost her position as she went down to holder WIM Rani Hamid in the fourth round at the federation hall-room yesterday.

Rani and Masuda were at second place with three points each.

In the 4th round, Liza defeated Farjana Hossain Anne, Shirin beat Nazranna Khan Eva, WFM Zakia Sultana beat Ahely Sarkar, Rokhsana Tili beat Amena Khatun and Jahanara Haque Runu beat Protiva Talukder.



PHOTO: AFP

IN HIS TOP GEAR: Manchester United's Portuguese midfielder Cristiano Ronaldo (L) slips the ball past a sliding Inter Milan defender Cristian Chivu during their UEFA Champions League quarterfinal first-leg match at the San Siro in Milan on Tuesday.

Inter live to fight

AFP, Paris



Arsenal were the sole winners on Tuesday in the Champions League last 16 first leg matches and that was only thanks to a Robin van Persie penalty giving them a 1-0 victory over AS Roma.

Elsewhere, the much-awaited clash between Jose Mourinho's Inter Milan and old rival Sir Alex Ferguson's titleholders Manchester United ended in a 0-0 draw in Milan which at least handed United a Champions League record of 20 successive matches without defeat.

Former Arsenal hero Thierry Henry scored with a neatly taken header to earn Barcelona a 1-1 draw away at seven-time French champions Lyon, who had taken the lead through a freekick from Brazilian Juninho.

Henry's goal took him into sole fourth place in the list of all-time European Cup goalscorers with 48, some 14 shy of record holder Raul.

A former Manchester United striker Diego Forlan was also on the mark for Atletico Madrid but it was not enough to give them victory at home as a double by

Lisandro Lopez grabbed a 2-2 draw for one of Mourinho's former clubs FC Porto.

Despite Arsenal grabbing a useful advantage to take to Rome in a fortnight manager Arsene Wenger was left frustrated as the Gunners, especially misfiring striker Nicklas Bendtner were guilty of wasting chance after chance.

"I am happy with our performance but of course there was room to score more goals. That is the regret we have," said Wenger, who has had to watch as Arsenal have failed to score in their last three Premier League matches.

Ferguson too was left to bemoan the fact that his side had dominated but failed to find the back of the net with Inter's Brazilian goalkeeper Julio Cesar the hosts most impressive player as he pulled off a series of great saves.

"I hope not scoring a goal doesn't come back to bite us," said Ferguson. United took control from the kick off and dominated so totally in the opening 45 minutes that Ferguson must have been more than just disappointed in turning around goalless at the break.

What had seemed like a cautious team selection with Wayne Rooney and Carlos Tevez on the bench proved anything but with Ryan Giggs excellent in the hole

behind Dimitar Berbatov.

And the veteran Welshman created the first chance from a corner that Cristiano Ronaldo met with a firm header on five minutes only for Julio Cesar to pull off the first of a series of brilliant saves.

Ronaldo had two early efforts from free-kicks but struck the first straight at Julio Cesar and the second narrowly wide.

Berbatov was dominating Inter centre-backs Cristian Chivu and Nelson Rivas in the air and he twice rose highest to meet crosses but headed off target from Patrice Evra on 23 minutes and Park Ji-sung four minutes from the break.

On 26 minutes United had their best chance of the half as Rivas mis-read Michael Carrick's pass to Giggs but the Welsh wizard lost his wand and opted to shoot from a tight angle instead of squaring to Park or Berbatov allowing Julio Cesar to spread himself well to block.

The Brazilian stopper threw himself to his left two minutes later to pull off his best save yet from another Ronaldo free-kick.

Mourinho, who switched the unfortunate Rivas for Ivan Cordoba, must have said something to his team at half-time because on 48 minutes they created their best chance of the game as Zlatan

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Diego Maradona (Argentina soccer manager)

"I thought that saying 'I'm a granddad' would make me old but when I saw 'Benja' a big youthful wave swept over me and gave me a beautiful new sensation, the desire to keep on living."

After the birth of his first grandchild Benjamin to daughter Giannina and Atletico Madrid star Sergio Aguero last week.



TEN Sports
South Africa v Australia
First Test, Day One
Live from 2:30pm

ESPN
Sportscentre India
Sports News
Live at 8:30pm

ZEE Sports
West Indies v England
Fourth Test, Day One
Live from 8:00pm

Unfinished business

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

All three Premier Division Cricket League matches stopped midway due to the daylong crisis at BDR headquarters yesterday.

The Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis (CCDM) decided to continue the matches today from yesterday's position and the league will be bodily shifted.

League leaders Biman were well placed while second-placed Abahani and Surjo Torun had been in control before the proceedings were suspended at three different venues in Dhaka and its suburban areas.

At the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur, Nadim Karamat made 70 runs as winless City Club put up a descent total of 236 for nine after being sent into bat first.

After a good start by Rasel Al Mamun and Mayshekur Rahman, who shared a 50-run opening stand, Nadim took the charge before

he was caught by Javed Omar off Zahid Niaz, who was the most successful bowler with four wickets for 39 runs.

Nadim struck nine boundaries and a six during his 76-ball essay while Lalmon Hossain hit unbeaten 28 off 22 balls that contained three boundaries.

In reply, Biman scored 41 runs without any loss in 8 overs with Nazmus Sadat batting on 24 and Zahid Niaz at 14.

Abahani missed the services of their inspirational captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, who was given rest on national physio Michael Henry's advice, in their attempt to overcome the hurdle against Old DOHS but a 136-run third wicket stand between Imran Ahmed and Indian Venugopal Rao put them into a comfortable position as they made 290 runs for seven at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium.

Imran, who hit a hundred in the last round against Victoria, carried his good form with a 107-ball 70 that featured six boundaries while Venugopal contributed 77 off 82 balls with the

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Younis falls short

Exciting draw at Karachi

Cricket

AFP, Karachi

Younis Khan failed to post the highest Test score by a Pakistani batsman as the first Test against Sri Lanka ended in a draw, after some late excitement raised hopes of an unlikely result.

Khan fell for 313, 24 short of Hanif Mohammad's record score of 337, but the home team still achieved their highest Test innings score of 765-6.

Sri Lanka had declared their first innings at 644-7. After Younis's dismissal leg-spinner Danish Kaneria sparked late interest in a game

heading for a draw when he claimed the wickets of Sri Lankan captain Mahela Jayawardene (22) and Kumar Sangakkara (65) in the space of four overs.

But Thilan Samaraweera (24) and Prasanna Jayawardene (seven) played out seven overs to take their team to 144-5 and thwart Pakistan's attempts of an unlikely win.

The second and final Test starts in Lahore Sunday.

Younis said he did not feel disappointed at not breaking records. "I am not heartbroken," said Younis. "I may have more opportunities in the future so records don't matter for me. I am satisfied with the team

effort and will go into the second Test, hoping Sri Lanka struggle like they did today."

Jayawardene was also satisfied with the result.

"You always want to play well in the first Test of a two-match series," said Jayawardene, who scored 241 and shared a world record stand of 437 with Thilan Samaraweera (231) in his team's first innings.

"We batted badly in the second innings but overall it was a satisfying result. We had our opportunities but Younis played a brilliant knock and took away our chances."

Trailing by 121 runs, Sri Lanka had a disastrous start to their second innings as they lost

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LOCAL SNIPPETS

Dilkusha SC and Kasaituli Samaj Kalyan Parishad won their respective matches in the Citycell Metropolis 3rd Division Football League at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Sepoy Mohammad Mostafa Stadium at Kamalapur yesterday.

In the day's first match, Kasaituli SKP beat Shantinagar Club 1-0, scored by Mohammad Arif in the 21st minute.

Kasaituli bagged 12 points and Shantinagar Club remained on six points, playing six matches each.

In the day's other match, Dilkusha defeated Tongi by the same margin. Raju Ahmed netted the match-winning goal in the 75th minute.

GIRLS' HANDBALL

Moghbazar Ispahani Girls' School upset Viharunissa Noon School and College 3-2 in the KFC-Pizza Hut 5th Mini Girls Handball Tournament on the third day of the meet at the Outer Stadium handball ground.

In the day's other match, Banani Bidya Niketan outplayed Summerfield 9-0 after a goalless first-half at the same venue.

The day's other scheduled matches were postponed due to unavoidable circumstances. The tournament committee will announce a fresh schedule for the matches in due course.

SCHOOL CRICKET

Police Line High School defeated Islamia High School by seven wickets in the Standard Chartered National School Cricket Competition at the Gaibandha Stadium.

Islamia batted first and were bowled out for a measly 54 which was successfully chased down by the victors for the loss of three wickets in 10.2 overs.

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Kiwis blow India out

Cricket

AFP, Christchurch

New Zealand belted their way to a seven-wicket win over India in an explosive Twenty20 cricket match here Wednesday that produced a record number of sixes.

India, world champions of the shortest form of the game, fired from the start when they were sent into bat first in their New Zealand tour opener.

But they lost wickets at regular intervals and were 162 for eight at the end of their innings.

New Zealand, with Brendon McCullum carrying his bat through their innings, replied with 166 for three, the winning runs coming from a six over the cover boundary by Jacob Oram.

It was the 24th six of the match, played on a ground with short boundaries, easily surpassing the previous record of 20 set by Australia and India in Durban two years ago during the inaugural Twenty20 World Cup.

Virender Sehwag started the six-fest, clouting three off consecutive balls in the first over as

India raced to 25 in the first 11 balls.

But their rollicking start was shortlived with Iain O'Brien removing both openers in consecutive balls.

Gautam Gambhir went for six on the last ball of O'Brien's first over and Sehwag was bowled for 26 on the first ball of his second over leaving Rohit Sharma to avoid the hat-trick.

But Sharma's innings lasted only seven balls, indicative of the problems the Indian batsmen had in trying to force the pace on a slow wicket.

Indian captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni described it as a good lesson in Twenty20 batting.

"That's where we failed as a team, there was nobody who took the responsibility to stay there in the middle," he said.

"Losing too many wickets, later you can't really capitalise on the start you have got. So it's very important to have wickets in hand so you can capitalise on maybe the last four or five overs."

The most pleasing aspect for New Zealand captain Daniel Vettori was the way his bowlers responded to the heavy Indian hitting.

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PHOTO: AFP

New Zealand batsman Brendon McCullum drives a ball for six as Indian wicketkeeper Mahendra Singh Dhoni (R) looks on during their first Twenty20 international in Christchurch yesterday.