



Mohammad Kaif (L) and MS Dhoni try their hand at badminton during BCCI Corporate Trophy in Mohali on wednesday.

Rajon may have op

SPORTS REPORTER

Zahidul Islam Rajon, the captain of the national hockey team, reportedly sustained a knee injury merely a couple of days ahead of their practice match in Holland.

Rajon, who left here on August 24 for Germany to play for Munchen Glabba, a First Division team of the German hockey league, played the first match successfully in Germany, but got hurt during the second match on Dutch soil.

After sustaining the injury, the national striker called Khondokar Hasan Ahmed, who is also scheduled to leave for Germany today, to inform him about it.

However, Anvir Adel, an executive member of the Bangladesh Hockey Federation, said that Rajon needed a surgery and was expected to return to action after two weeks.

Manikganj football

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Newcomers City Club held champions Sonali Atit to a goalless draw in the Hafizul Islam Khan Utu Smriti First Division Football League at Shahid Miraz-Tapan Stadium in Manikganj yesterday.

With the first draw in three outings, City stay top with seven points, two points ahead of Sonali Atit, who secured five points also playing three matches.

16 district

FROM PAGE 17
Cricket Stadium for the 2011 ICC World Cup.

It was also learnt that many members of the committee expressed their frustration over the snail's pace of the construction and renovation work of the South Asian Games establishment and the NSC planning and development section sought two more months to complete all by December ahead of the SA Games to be held over January 29-February 9.

NSC had earlier said that all renovation and construction work would be finished by October this year.

Nielsen takes

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his professional development by stepping up as acting coach for the remainder of the tour."

Nielsen is not alone in taking a break. Australia captain Ricky Ponting returned home after the Ashes series but is due back in England midway through the one-day campaign.

The one-day series starts at the Oval on Friday after the teams endured two washed out no-result Twenty20 internationals on Sunday and Tuesday in Manchester at Old Trafford.



Did U Know?

Sports command the biggest television audiences, led by the Summer Olympics, World Cup Football and Formula One racing.

'No move for 4-day Tests'

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Haroon Lorgat, the ICC chief executive, has said there is no move to reduce Tests from five days to four days. The idea of reducing the longest format had earlier been floated by ICC President David Morgan to make Tests more attractive to the spectators. Morgan had said the move would also protect and enrich Test cricket in the face of lucrative Twenty20 leagues like the IPL. "Morgan must have been putting a thought on the table," Lorgat said.

Speaking at a ceremony in Mumbai, where the nominations for the 2009 ICC awards were unveiled, Lorgat also lent his support to the 50-over game and said the format would continue at the international level even though the ECB had recently reduced matches to 40 overs per side in its domestic set-up. "ECB has done it as it

suits their domestic schedule," Lorgat said. "But at the international level the 50-over format will continue. But we are open to changes if it works for the betterment of the game." Lorgat pointed out that the format of the Champions Trophy, in South Africa later this month, had been revamped to make it more exciting.

Indian batsman Virender Sehwag, who was also present on the occasion, said he preferred to play Tests and ODIs more than Twenty20 matches. "Personally I would like to play more Tests and ODIs than T20 games which I know have become extremely popular," Sehwag said. "I would like to play at least eight to ten Tests in a year."

"The Twenty20 game is big and in future and the message I would like to give to the ICC is to introduce a World Championship of Tests. Every cricketer would like to play Tests against every other country and perform well. Test cricket is the true test (of a cricketer's calibre)."

Safina scrambles thru'

FROM PAGE 17
Open runner-up, beat Italy's Roberta Vinci 6-2, 6-3 in her opener.

But the star was former world number one Sharapova, booking a second-round date with US wild card Christina McHale in only 73 minutes.

Together with Belgian Kim Clijsters, who took a two-year break to start a family, the draw has a pair of former US Open champions and world number ones making compelling comebacks.

"Comebacks are great for the sport," Sharapova said. "We're both still very young. It creates excitement and buzz, considering we're contenders. We've won Grand Slams. We're big competitors. We love the big stage."

Safina, who next faces

Germany's 67th-ranked Kristina Barrois, took two hours and 35 minutes to dispatch 167th-ranked wildcard Rogowska, who would have been the second-lowest woman in rankings to ever beat a top seed in a Slam.

"If I would lose that match, it would be like I lost to myself. It was me, myself and I playing on the court," Safina said. "It would hurt a lot."

The worst showing by a US Open top seed came last year when Ana Ivanovic lost in the second round. The Serbian made an earlier exit this year, the 11th seed dropping her opener to Ukraine's Kateryna Bondarenko 2-6, 6-3, 7-6(9)7.

Sixth seed Kuznetsova, who ousted Germany's Julia Goerges 6-3, 6-2, and Sharapova, 22, are the only US

Rain spoils T20 series

AFP, Manchester

Rain washed out the second and final Twenty20 international between England and Australia without a ball being bowled at Old Trafford on Tuesday.

It meant the series ended 0-0 after Sunday's opener at Lancashire headquarters also finished as a no-result washout.

Heavy overnight rain, and fresh downpours on Tuesday, had left the outfield saturated ahead of the start of what should have been a day/night fixture.

Umpires Peter Hartley and Nigel Llong held an inspection at the scheduled local start time of 7pm (1800GMT), and looked again 45 minutes later, but ultimately decided conditions were so bad there was no prospect of even a five overs per side match, the minimum length required to produce a positive result.

Rain washed out the first Twenty20 at Old Trafford here on Sunday with England four for two in 1.1 overs in reply to Australia's 145 for four.

After this match, England and Australia face each other in a seven-match one-day international series starting at the Oval on Friday.

The latest dispute erupted in July when 13 of the leading West Indies players made themselves unavailable for the first Test against Bangladesh in St Vincent, citing pay and contract issues.

Isinbayeva wins Spanish prize

AFP, Madrid

Open winners in their draw half, Kuznetsova was down a break early but won 10 of the last 12 games.

"First match is always tough," Kuznetsova said. "It's very difficult when you don't know what to expect."

Safina, 23, will stay atop the rankings after the Open regardless of how she fares in the Open, even if second-rated reigning champion Serena Williams takes her third Slam crown of the year and 12th of her career.

Safina lost to Serena Williams at this year's Australian Open final and to Kuznetsova in the French Open.

After this match, Safina look far from such lofty levels.

Shakib in running for top

FROM PAGE 17
It is also a chance for followers of our great sport to reflect on some of the great cricketing feats they have witnessed over the past year. This will be the sixth time the awards have been handed out and yet again there are so many great performances to recall. Selecting the winners will no doubt test our selectors and voting academy."

Nielsen is not alone in taking a break. Australia captain Ricky Ponting returned home after the Ashes series but is due back in England midway through the one-day campaign.

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NOMINATIONS

Cricketer of the Year: Shuvniran Chanderpal (WIS), Tillakaratne Dilshan (SRI), Mahendra Singh Dhoni (IND), Gautam Gambhir (IND), Shakib Al Hasan (BAN), Mitchell Johnson (AUS), Venkatesh Lakman (IND), Jesse Ryder (NZL), Thilan Samaraweera (SRI), Ramnaresh Sarwan (WIS), Peter Siddle (AUS), Harbhajan Singh (IND), Graeme Smith (RSA), Dale Steyn (RSA), Andrew Strauss (ENG), Graeme Swann (ENG), Daniel Vettori (NZL), AB de Villiers (RSA).

ODI Player of the Year: Shuvniran Chanderpal (WIS), Mahendra Singh Dhoni (IND), Andrew Flintoff (ENG), Chris Gayle (WIS), Umar Gul (PAK), Martin Guptill (NZL), Michael Hussey (AUS), Nuwan Kulasekara (SRI), Ajantha Mendis (SRI), Muttiah Muralitharan (SRI), Yuvraj Singh (IND), Virender Sehwag (IND), Thilan Thushara (SRI).

Emerging Player: Martin Guptill (NZL), Ben Hilfenhaus (AUS), Philip Hughes (AUS), Amit Mishra (IND), Graham Onions (ENG), Kemar Roach (WIS), Jesse Ryder (NZL), Peter Siddle (RSA).

Associate and Affiliate Player of the Year: Rizwan Cheema (CAN), Khurram Chohan (CAN), Alex Cusack (IRL), Daniel Vettori (NZL), AB de Villiers (RSA).

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