

Too many wickets lost

BISHWAJIT ROY from Chittagong

It could have been an exciting day of cricket but the 'weather god' played foul on the second day of the first Test at the Zahur Ahmed Stadium in the port city yesterday and it was not cricket rather fog hogged the spotlight on the day.

It was not a day to watch cricket but still a good number of crowd turned up braving the chilly weather and waited till the declaration came from the umpires and the reason was simple: the brilliant bowling effort of the Tigers who mesmerised the vaunted Indian batting line-up on the previous day.

It was a great achievement for the local bowlers especially Shakib Al Hasan and Shahadat Hossain, who equally shared ten wickets, as they wrapped up their opponents, who resumed the day on 213 for 8, for 243 runs.

The foggy weather condition only allowed less than two hours of play on the second day but it was good enough for Bangladesh coach Jamie Siddons, who alone appeared before the press as India ducked it, to be both happy and unhappy in the end as Bangladesh lost three wickets in a span of five runs before bad light stopped play after making a bold start.

"I am really happy [with the bowling performance]. The first three wickets have obviously put damp on the fantastic bowling performance and the fielders have certainly

done a great job yesterday [Sunday]. This morning we got the last two wickets for 30 odd runs. That was pleasing," he said while praising his bowlers who exploited the condition brilliantly to torment the famed Indian batting.

But the Australian expressed his disappointment because of losing two many

wickets in the end as Zaheer Khan took the wickets of Tamim Iqbal (31) and Imrul Kayes (23) while Shahriar Nafees became victim of Ishant Sharma to collapse to 59 for three from 53 for no loss.

"I think Sachin [Tendulkar] could have put a really a big score on the board if the tail hung around him. So it was a

good day as the bowlers did their job brilliantly to wrap up the innings, but three wickets at the end of day were pretty ordinary," said Siddons.

"We played two bad shots today and the other was really a good ball. You got to hit the bad balls. They were instructed to hit the bad balls.

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PHOTO: STAR
DO YOU NEED A CAPTION FOR THIS? The electronic scoreboard in the background reads: 'Play has been suspended due to bad light' as umpires of the first Test at Chittagong take a good look at the wicket of Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium yesterday.

Many feds blast BOA

SPORTS REPORTER

The high-ups of different federations kept on slamming the ignorance of the Bangladesh Olympic Association for not involving their technical persons during the finalisation of different events for the 11th South Asian Games to be held in Bangladesh over January 29-February 9.

A total of 16 new events have been included in the 11th SA Games during the 40th meeting of the South Asia Olympic Council in Dhaka on November 16, two-and-a-half months before the regional extravaganza takes place.

"We were not aware about the inclusion of women's events in judo and we now have to take part in those two events without preparation," said Bangladesh Judo Federation general secretary Abdul Kader during the announcement of the squad at the BOA Bhaban yesterday.

He also added that three events were excluded from the previous list without letting them know though they had a good chance to win a gold medal in the -45kg, an event that was excluded.

Bangladesh Swimming Federation also blamed the BOA for dropping their desired events -- men's 4x100m free style relay and women's 200m breaststroke.

"We bagged silver medal in the men's 4x100m free style relay, which was excluded from the Games without our consent. Besides, we have no chance in the new event of women's 100m butterfly," said coach Abdul Hamid at the press conference yesterday.

Bangladesh Karate Federation, Bangladesh Boxing Federation, Bangladesh Wrestling Federation and Bangladesh Weightlifting Federation also blamed the BOA for exclusion and inclusion of different events without letting them know.



PHOTO: AFP
Shahriar Nafees (R) made a forgettable comeback to the Bangladesh team. Here the ICL-returnee trudges back to the dressing room after being dismissed by lanky Indian paceman Ishant Sharma on the second day of the first Test at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.

Natants eye four gold

SPORTS REPORTER



Nepal has been the bogey place for Bangladesh's swimmers. Because in both South Asian (SA) Games that were held in Kathmandu in 1984 and 1999, Bangladesh left the pool without a gold medal. In every other meet elsewhere in the subcontinent the natants finished atop the podium.

And since this time the Games is being held at their own backyard, Bangladesh Swimming Federation (BSF) officials are all the more upbeat about their golden prospect. They say that they are expecting better results in swimming than any other discipline in the upcoming 11th SA Games,

to be held over January 29-February 9.

The country's swimmers and shooters have been walking side by side in terms of success in the regional sporting extravaganza as both of them grabbed 15 gold medals each till the last edition though shooting was introduced from the fifth edition after the Games had started its journey in 1984.

However, swimming is likely to topple shooting to take the pole position this time as the natants under the supervision of Korean coach Park Tae Gun look very positive to put in their best effort and the officials are looking forward to winning as many as four gold medals, two less than their best gold-success in the second edition on home soil in 1985.

Shahjahan Ali Rony was the lone swimmer, who won the 50m breaststroke gold in the Colombo Games in 2006 while renowned swimmers like Rubel Rana, Jewel Ahmed, Dolly Akhter had to be content with silver in the meet and the BSF is now dreaming of converting those into gold this time around.

The BSF officials however have a concern for Rony. If he doesn't get healed from the hepatitis B virus he is now down with, he may not even take to the pool. But, the officials are very positive about Rony, who has been admitted to hospital one week ago, as the swimmer is improving and is expected to return to pool before the start of the Games.

"He is much better now compared to

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PHOTO: AFP
Russian star Maria Sharapova groans during her Australian Open women's singles first round match against compatriot Maria Kirilenko. Sharapova bowed out of the tournament after conceding a 7-6, 3-6, 6-4 defeat.

Sharapova sent packing

AFP, Melbourne

Former champion Maria Sharapova was a high profile casualty at the Australian Open on Monday but there were no dramas for Rafael Nadal and Dinara Safina who led the charge into the second round.

Britain's Andy Murray and American Andy Roddick also cruised through, as did comeback queens Kim Clijsters and Justine Henin on a day plagued by persistent rain delays with numerous matches unable to finish.

Sharapova was a shadow of her former self in a 7-6 (7/4), 3-6, 6-4 defeat to Maria Kirilenko.

It was a disastrous start to the year for the underdone 22-year-old, seeded 14, who opted to only play exhibitions in

Thailand and Hong Kong as a warm-up to the opening Grand Slam of the season.

Playing with the roof closed on the Rod Laver Arena, she struggled to find consistency against a player ranked 58.

"I certainly had my chances and just didn't execute," she said.

"There is no grey area. It was just up and down in many areas, and just finished at the down level."

The pin-up won here in 2008 but was deprived of defending her title last year after failing to recover from shoulder surgery which kept her out of action until May.

Another of the Russian contingent, Safina, downed Slovakia's 47th-ranked Magdalena Rybarikova 6-4, 6-4, while third seed Svetlana Kuznetsova also progressed.

Safina battled double faults and

unforced errors in an emotional and spasmodic performance and was happy to get the win.

"It was not an easy first round match, she's a very good opponent," said the number two seed, who was thrashed in the final last year by Serena Williams.

"I had some good moments and bad moments, but overall I'm happy I went through."

Clijsters, who sensationally won the US Open last year after coming out of retirement, was too good for Canada's Valerie Tetreault, romping home 6-0, 6-4 in under an hour.

The powerful 15th seeded Belgian, along with Henin, lurk as dark horses to bookmakers' favourite Williams, who gets her title defence underway on Tuesday against Poland's Urszula Radwanska.

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Nepalese swimmers arrive

SPORTS REPORTER

With 10 days left to the start of the 11th South Asian Games, Nepalese swimmers have reached the capital of Bangladesh a couple of days ahead in a bid to prepare themselves at Mirpur National Swimming Complex in Dhaka.

Due to chilly weather in their own den, the Nepal Swimming Federation had requested the Bangladesh Olympic Association to give their swimmers an opportunity to practice in Bangladesh and the BOA allowed them after getting the green signal from the Bangladesh Swimming Federation.

Four swimmers arrived here on Saturday after five others reached Dhaka last

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BTV & Neo Cricket
Bangladesh v India
First Test, Day Three
Live from 9:30am
STAR Sports
Australian Open
First Round
Live from 6:00am
STAR Cricket
New Zealand v Zimbabwe
U-19 Cricket World Cup
Live from 3:30am
ESPN
Sportscentre India
Sports News
Live at 8:30pm



DAY'S EVENT
Bangladesh v India
First Test, Day Three
Venue: Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium, Chittagong.

Cook captain for Bangladesh tour

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Alastair Cook has been named as England's Test captain for their tour of Bangladesh in February and March, after the selectors opted to rest the regular captain Andrew Strauss, as well as their leading strike bowler, James Anderson, from the two-Test and three-ODI tour that also includes a two-match Twenty20 series against Pakistan in Dubai, in which Paul Collingwood will once again take charge.

Anderson has been rested from the tour in order to undergo a specialist review and a programme of rehabilitation for his chronic right knee injury. In a statement, the ECB anticipated that, following his rehabilitation period, he would be fully fit and available for selection for the World T20 tournament in the West Indies in late April.

Two uncapped players, the Yorkshire pace bowler Ajmal Shahzad and the Kent off-spinner James Tredwell, have won places in both squads while another uncapped player, Hampshire's opening batsman, Michael Carberry has been included in the Test squad.

National Selector Geoff Miller said: "Andrew Strauss has provided outstanding leadership for the team in both forms of the game over the past 12 months and the selectors feel it is important that he takes a break ahead of an extremely busy programme of international cricket leading up

to and including the Ashes series in Australia and the ICC Cricket World Cup in 2011.

Strauss is the only frontline Test batsman to miss the trip. "We want to try and keep this unit together as much as possible," said Miller. "One or two batters didn't perform as well as they might have done in South Africa, but captaincy is a mental battle and we want Strauss to come back refreshed for the summer. He's had an arduous time, the selectors feel he needs a break, and this is an opportunity.

"Our decision to appoint Alastair Cook to the Test vice-captaincy last year clearly demonstrated the belief that he has the potential to be a future England captain. Alastair will now have an opportunity to develop his leadership skills still further by leading the side in both forms of cricket in Bangladesh and I know that he is excited by the challenge and looking forward to working closely with Andy Flower.

"He's played over 50 Tests now," added Miller, "so it's not just a matter of thinking about the present time or the immediate future. It's a matter of thinking of the far future as well. He was given the vice-captaincy and we want to see how he performs with the onus of captaincy as well. It will be a difficult test, it always is with the captaincy because he's got to work on his batting too, but he'll get the opportunity to do that."

Although Cook will lead England in the three ODIs against Bangladesh, the selectors have once again asked Collingwood to fill the role for the Twenty20s in Dubai. "Paul Collingwood had

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PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN
I HAVE SOME WORK FINALLY: India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni, who missed the first Test against Bangladesh due to injury, is learning the art of photography during the second day's play at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.