

Star SPORT

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King calls it quits

Tottenham Hotspur's injury-plagued defender Ledley King announced his retirement from the game on Thursday. "Sadly my injuries and inability to train have now finally brought an end to my career," King told the Spurs website. King, an elegant and assured centre back, has suffered with chronic knee problems which restricted his training and game time in recent seasons. He made 323 first-team appearances since making his senior debut in 1999. He also won 21 caps for England. Spurs said King, 31, will remain at the



Tigers' chance to seal series

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Rejuvenated by a comprehensive victory in the first match, the spirited Tigers will try to seal the three-match series when they take on Ireland in the second T20 international at Stormont in Belfast today.

The match will start at 5pm local time (10pm Bangladesh Standard Time).

Mushfiqur Rahim's men have displayed no deficiency in acclimatising to the conditions in the first match, thanks to their hundred percent record in the practice matches, as they dominated throughout the match to script a convincing 71-run victory.

The Tigers amassed their highest T20 score, after which the Irish batsmen found the two Bangladesh left-arm spinners Abdur Razzak and man-of-the-match Elias Sunny too tough to handle.

Tigers' skipper Mushfiqur was delighted with the way they started the series, with the victory dispelling some of the doubts about performing in Irish conditions.

"We played very well in the first game, better than expected. Our performance was excellent in all departments. If we play like we did on Wednesday, I see no reason why we cannot win

today's game as well," said Mushfiqur while talking to the reporters yesterday.

He also hinted that the team will remain unchanged and that Shakib will bat at number three as the best player should be given enough overs to bat, especially in a T20 match.

"Everybody are in a good mood after the victory in the first match and are confident of continuing their good form through the series," told team manager Tanjeeb Ahsan Saad to the Daily Star Sport over telephone yesterday.

"The weather is cloudy today and there has been drizzling from the morning but still the boys completed two hours of practice. The good news is that there is no rain forecast for tomorrow (Friday)," said Saad, adding that the city mayor accorded a reception for the visitors yesterday.

Due to a lack of international matches Bangladesh are not even in the ICC T20 internationals rankings but the victory will help them to break into the top table.

But Ireland will be desperately looking for a much better performance in the second match of the series. Without any doubts the Bangladesh spinners pose a big threat at the same venue where the spinners got unexpected turn in the first match, according to

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Abahani's Pakistani striker Mohammad Mudassar (C) tries to make his way through two Dhaka Mariner Youngs Club defenders during their Green Delta Insurance Premier Division Hockey League match at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

And Semenya to carry the SA flag

AFP, Johannesburg

Former 800m world champion Caster Semenya will be team South Africa's flag bearer at the Olympics in London, the local committee said Thursday.

"Caster is an absolute role model for all sportsmen and women in South Africa," said Gideon Sam, the president of the local Olympic Committee.

"She's proved herself to be an absolute inspiration in the face of adversity and we are sure that this inspiration will rub off on each and every member of the Olympic squad," Sam said in a statement.

The 21-year-old landed in the spotlight in 2009 after she was forced to undergo drug tests followed by gender tests after her world win in Berlin.

She was barred from the track for almost a year before being cleared to run again and her comeback was hampered by a lower back injury.

Semenya is coached by 2000 Sydney Olympics 800m champion Maria Mutola from Mozambique and is due to compete at this Friday's Diamond League meeting in Monaco as part of her final preparations for London.

Her gender test caused widespread anger from the South African public and government and leaked test results said Semenya was a hermaphrodite.

KFC Women's Football Narsingdi zonal champs

SPORTS REPORTER

Narsingdi emerged unbeaten zonal champions to move into the finals of the KFC Women's Football Super League with a lone-goal win over Gopalganj at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

Lipi struck the decisive goal for Narsingdi who secured maximum 12 points from four outings.

At the same venue, Kishoreganj defeated Bangladesh Police 2-0 with Sabina Akter and Rabeya Akter scoring one goal apiece.

Athletes set for quest

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh are all set to take part in another token participation in the Olympic Games as athletes and officials leave here for England for the 2012 Olympics on Sunday.

Predictably there are no expectations; rather there is a hope that the athletes produce a miracle in the world's greatest show, which begins from July 27 in London.

Bangladesh have never won a medal in the Olympics since they first participated in 1984. Bangladesh's participation in the Games has always been determined by wild cards, which are provided to ensure that member nations of the International Olympic Committee can participate even if athletes fail to gain direct entry.

This time Bangladesh have been given five wild cards -- one each for the fields of athletics, swimming, shooting, archery and gymnastics.

Similar to previous editions of the greatest sporting extravaganza, the officials of the Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) once again asserted that they would take better preparation for the next edition, but they could hardly see any hope for the upcoming Games.

"There is no big expectation in the Games as we are still taking part through the wild cards, which comes in our hand in the eleventh hour and so the athletes do not get enough time to be prepared," said BOA

secretary general Kutubuddin Ahmed during the official press conference at the BOA auditorium room where athletes and coaches were introduced.

Despite the fact, Kutubuddin sees some hope in the shooting and gymnastic events while ruling out any chances for sprinter Mohan Khan, swimmer Mahfizur Rahman Sagar and archer Emdadul Haque Milon.

"There are many instances in Olympics history when the athletes who won their entry through wild cards, won medals," Kutubuddin said. "Shooter Sharmin (Akteer Ratna) has been in London over a months to cope with the conditions and I think her training will help her performance. If she is able to better her performance a bit, we can expect a medal from her."

The BOA secretary general was also hopeful of Syque Caesar's chances in the parallel bar event as the gymnast, who lives in the USA, has been training under a foreign coach.

Nick Low, deputy high commissioner of UK to Bangladesh, also spoke on the occasion, informing about the facilities that will be provided in London and expecting that Bangladeshi athletes will feel very happy in East London, which was once an industrial city.

The Bangladesh contingent consists of 21 members -- five athletes and as many match coaches, chef de mission, general manager, two delegates, one attaché, sports minister, the chairman of parliamentary standing committee on sports and youth, sports

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Anamul powers U-19s

SPORTS REPORTER

Anamul Haque led from the front as the World Cup-bound Bangladesh Under-19 team posted a massive 101-run victory over BCB Invitational XI in the limited-over practice match at the Sheikh Abu Naser Stadium in Khulna yesterday.

Captain Anamul hit a 108-ball 91 that contained 13 fours and a six as Bangladesh Under-19 scored 227 all out in 48.1 overs. Liton Kumar Das was the second highest scorer with 26.

Shabbir Rahman claimed three wickets while Saqlain Sajib and Arafat Sunny took two wickets each.

In reply, BCB Invitational XI were bundled out for 126 runs in 35.5 overs. Yasir Ali made 37.

Al Amin and Faizur Rahman captured two wickets each.

Rafa not going to London!

REUTERS, Madrid



The London Olympics were shorn of one of the biggest attractions on Thursday when reigning champion Rafael Nadal said he would not be able to defend his tennis singles gold because of injury.

Spain's Nadal, who won gold in Beijing four years ago and was to carry his nation's flag at next Friday's opening ceremony, said he had failed to recover from a knee problem.

"I am not in a condition to be able to compete," the 26-year-old said in a statement.

"It is one of the saddest moments of my career." Nadal won a record seventh French Open title in June but crashed out in the second round at Wimbledon in a massive upset against lowly-ranked Czech Lukas Rosol.

Earlier this month he pulled out of a charity match against Novak Djokovic at Real Madrid's Bernabeu Stadium saying he was suffering from tendonitis and needed to rest.

He had hoped to return to Wimbledon this month to defend his Olympic title and his withdrawal echoes his plight of 2009 when a similar knee problem meant he had to withdraw from the grasscourt Grand Slam, a year after winning it for the first time in an epic defeat of Roger Federer.

"I have to think of my colleagues, I cannot be selfish and I have to think of the well-being of Spanish sport, especially Spanish tennis, and let a colleague play who has had a better preparation and is in a state to compete," the world number three added.

"Today is one of the saddest days of my career as it was one of my biggest dreams, and perhaps the most anticipated

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Abahani join MSC at the top

SPORTS REPORTER

Title contenders Abahani joined league leaders Mohammedan SC in the Green Delta Insurance Premier Division Hockey League with a 3-2 win over Dhaka Mariner Youngs Club at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Abahani and Mohammedan, joint champions of the previous edition, have 24 points each with Abahani having played a match more than Mohammedan's eight.

The Sky Blues dominated the first half with three strikes from Mohammad Jubair (19th minute), Iqbal Nadir Prince (28th minute) and Pakistani Sabbir Ahmed Khan (34th minute).

And since then they could not add any more goals to their score-sheet, instead raising fears of dropping points as Mariner pulled two goals back in a span of six minutes through Mostafizur

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Bangladesh swimmer Mahfizur Rahman Sagar (L), archer Emdadul Haque Milon (C) and sprinter Mohan Khan pose for a photo at the BOA auditorium yesterday. The trio will leave for London on Sunday as part of Bangladesh's Olympics team.

PHOTO: STAR

Boucher has another op

REUTERS, Cape Town

South Africa wicketkeeper Mark Boucher, forced to announce his international retirement after suffering an eye injury before the Test series with England, underwent further surgery on Thursday.

Boucher suffered a lacerated eye after being struck in the left eye by a ball during the Proteas' warm-up match against Somerset earlier this month.

The 35-year-old underwent a three-hour operation on Thursday when the blood that had accumulated, due to the trauma suffered by his eye after the injury and the subsequent initial surgery, was removed.

Cricketer South Africa (CSA) said in a statement that "it was established that the 'important parts of the retina were intact'."



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