

U-19S CRICKET
Rain plays havoc
SPORTS REPORTER

The rain almost ruined the entire first day's play in the second and final four-day match between Bangladesh Under-19s and visiting Sri Lanka Under-19s at the Sylhet Stadium yesterday.

The match started after the tea break but only 5.2 overs was bowled before rain again came to call off the day's play.

The visitors, who won the toss and decided to bat first, were at 23 for no loss before rain stopped the play.

The first Test ended in a draw at Mirpur.

Ctg Abahani on top

SPORTS REPORTER

Chittagong Abahani went top of the Premier Bank Bangladesh Championship League after they defeated Dhaka United SC 2-0 at the Birshreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday. Palash Samanta opened the scoring in the 52nd minute before Razu Hossen made it 2-0 in the 83rd. The win took Chittagong Abahani's tally to 15 points from seven matches while Dhaka United SC remained at the bottom with four points from eight matches.

Chittagong Abahani will take on Rahmatganj MFS in their next match of the league at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong on Friday.

Seeds safely through

SPORTS REPORTER

The top seeds sailed through to the third round of the tennis event of 8th Bangladesh games beating their respective rivals at the Ramna National Tennis Complex yesterday. Top seed Amol Roy outplayed Haidar Ali 6-1, 6-0; second seed Alamgir Hossain defeated Rafiqul Islam 6-1, 6-1 and third seed Anwar Hossain brushed aside Channu Lal 6-1, 6-0 in the second round matches.

Meanwhile, Henry Mondal, Mohiuddin Sabuj, Omar Faruk, Rustom Ali, Kanchan Ram, Tinku, Asmat Ullah, Akhtar Hossain, Hanif Munna, and Mamun Bepari also made it to the third round.

Matosevic now faces Nadal test

AFP, Monte Carlo

Australian Marinko Matosevic faces the toughest ask in tennis after winning his first match on clay in almost a year to open with a 7-5, 6-3 success over Fernando Verdasco at the Monte Carlo Masters on Tuesday.

But the number 54 won't have time to celebrate an upset of Spain's former ace.

Instead, he will become just the first obstacle placed in the path of Rafael Nadal as the king of clay begins a bid for an unprecedented ninth straight championship at the Country Club overlooking the Mediterranean.

Matosevic sprang a surprise on Verdasco, the one-time clay powerhouse and 2010 runner-up here to Nadal, going through to the second round in a struggle as his Spanish opponent fought back at the end in the one-hour, 51-minute contest.

"It is not a hygienic place to practice,"



PHOTO: CRICINFO

Kings XI Punjab's Manpreet Gony hits a six through the on side against Kolkata Knight Riders in their Indian Premier League match in Mohali yesterday.

KKR stunned by Punjab

PTI, Mohali

Gautam Gambhir's stupendous batting and Sunil Narine's splendid hattrick went in vain as Kings XI Punjab made a miraculous comeback to stun defending champions Kolkata Knight Riders by four runs in a thrilling Pepsi Indian Premier League encounter here on Tuesday.

Chasing a decent target of 158, KKR managed 153 for nine in the end despite a 105-run second wicket partnership between Gambhir, 60 off 39 balls with eight fours, and Eoin Morgan, 47 off 38 balls that included six boundaries.

This is Kings XI's second win from four matches while KKR's woeful away record continued as they have now lost their third game on the road.

From a comfortable 106 for two in 13 overs, KKR batsmen required only 52 off 42 balls but once the two set batsmen were out in quick succession, things changed rapidly.

Manoj Tiwary and 'Million Dollar' man Yusuf Pathan wasted 14 deliveries in between them as Manpreet Gony, who grabbed one for 18 in 4 overs, and Azhar Mahmood (3 for 21) bowled brilliantly to get the home team back in the match.

Needing 11 runs off the final over, Adam Gilchrist saved what would have been 5 wides of the first delivery from Praveen Kumar. Praveen (2 for 26) kept his cool as he first removed Yusuf out of the equation and gave away only six runs to bring cheer for the home team.

Only KKR players could blame themselves for this shock defeat as they committed harakiri towards the end.

Rajat Bhatia (16) tried his best with a couple of sixes but that certainly wasn't enough in the end.

Gony, playing his first game of the cash-rich league certainly made a big impact in the final outcome of the encounter.

First his long-handle came to good effect as his 42 off 18 balls took Kings XI past 150-run mark which had looked improbable when they were tottering at 99 for six.

SCORES IN BRIEF

KINGS XI PUNJAB: 157 for 9 in 20 overs (Mandeep 41, Vohra 17, Hussey 12, Miller 20, Gony 42, Chawla 11 not out; alis 3-24, Narine 3-33)

KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS: 153 for 9 in 20 overs (Gambhir 60, Morgan 47, Pathan 13, Bhatia 16; Kumar 2-26, Mahmood 3-21, Awana 2-39)

Result: Kings XI Punjab won by 4 runs.

Player-of-the-match: Manpreet Gony.

KP out of NZ series

Cricket

AFP, London

Star England batsman Kevin Pietersen has been ruled out of next month's home Test series with New Zealand due to a knee injury, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) said on Tuesday.

The 32-year-old had already been ruled out of the final Test match away to New Zealand due to the persistent problem in his right knee.

He was originally expected to miss six to eight weeks and has now been discounted from the two-match series.

"@kevinpp24 [Pietersen] has been ruled out of the Investec Test series vs @BLACKCAPS [New Zealand] as he continues his recovery from bone bruising to his right knee," said the ECB on their @ECB_cricket Twitter feed.

"Pietersen will have a repeat scan next week to determine when he is able to resume training."

The flamboyant batsman said he was

keeping his "fingers crossed" that he will return to fitness in time for England's defence of the Ashes against Australia, which begins at Trent Bridge on July 10.

Writing on Twitter, he said: "Injuries are a sportsman's worst nightmare! This one is hurting me the most..."

Responding to supportive messages from his followers, he said that he was "trying" to be fit for the Ashes series and had his "fingers crossed".

The Surrey and Delhi Daredevils right-hander first suffered pain in his knee during a warm-up game in New Zealand before the drawn away Test series in March.

The talented batsman was withdrawn from the 2013 Indian Premier League season, which takes place in April and May, due to the injury, which consists of bruising on the bone and cartilage damage in the kneecap.

The South African-born player only returned to the England fold in October following a controversial spat with England captain Andrew Strauss.

Athletes jostling for space

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Besides, practice sessions in both morning and afternoon turned both the venues dirty as the sweepers of the NSC have apparently disappeared even though they were supposed to clean them every day. The athletes were even forced to halt their practice due to insufficient lights during loadshedding as the generators were not fully functional.

"As athletes from four disciplines are practicing here at the same time, I have to put in extra effort behind each player. Even then, the condition is such that they can hardly concentrate," said karatekas coach Jasimuddin adding that the space provided for the karatekas is only one third of the ideal.

"It is not a hygienic place to practice,"

said a weightlifting coach seeking anonymity. The coach also added that the mat was covered with dust and the wash rooms were all dirty.

"We all know that it is not the ideal environment for sports, but we have to make do with it due to our limitations. The authorities should take notice and renovate the venues so that athletes can prepare in a more healthy environment," said taekwondo federation's general secretary Mahmudul Hasan Rana.

When the organisers are busy staging a 8 crore taka opening ceremony on April 20, no one was seemingly bothered with the health and hygiene issues of the athletes, who are the main attraction of the Games.

Boston blasts condemned London event to go ahead; Russia to up security

Athletics

AFP, Paris

Athletics' world governing body and the Olympic movement on Tuesday condemned the twin bombings at the Boston Marathon, describing them as an attack on the spirit of human achievement and benevolence.

"My thoughts and those of all the Olympic Movement are with the victims, their friends and their families today," the president of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) Jacques Rogge said in a statement.

"A marathon is a special, almost magical event that unites different communities with one shared goal and I am sure that this incident will serve to bring together all those who took part and all those who support such an event, with a common resolve."

The International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) also described the blasts, which killed three and injured more than 100 on Monday, as "a mindless attack".

"This ghastly and cowardly attack

strikes at the very core of the freest of human activities," the president of the sport's world governing body, Lamine Diack, said.

"Whether as a fun runner or elite competitor, road running exemplifies the honesty of basic human movement, strength and resilience."

Diack and other senior officials in athletics also vowed to support race organisers.

Reuters adds from Moscow, Russian authorities have promised tougher security measures at August's World Athletics Championships after explosions near the finish line of the Boston Marathon.

"The security arrangements will certainly be reviewed after what happened in Boston," Russia's athletics chief Valentin Balakhnichiy told Reuters on Tuesday.

"Security has always been of the highest standard at all our sporting events but, no doubt, we will take into account the latest events and how it was done."

The Boston blasts on Monday appeared to go off near where spectators were standing behind roadside barriers.

Russia will host the Winter Olympics in Sochi next February and the 2018 soccer World Cup.

Meanwhile, police and officials in London said on Tuesday that the London Marathon would go ahead as planned in the British capital this Sunday.

Sports Minister Hugh Robertson said he was confident of security arrangements for the event and encouraged people to attend as a show of solidarity with the US city.

The 26-mile (42 km) London Marathon will attract 36,000 runners, among them Britain's double Olympic champion Mo Farah, starting at Greenwich Park and winding through city landmarks before finishing at the Mall.

London Mayor Boris Johnson told reporters while on a visit to Dubai: "Obviously what happened in Boston was shocking and horrific and our thoughts are very much with the victims and their families."

In Germany, Hamburg's annual marathon will go ahead as planned on Sunday after German police and security officials said they saw no increased risk for the event, organisers said.

Bangalore win Super Over tie

INTERNET, Bangalore

Royal Challengers Bangalore won the 'Super Over' eliminator against Delhi Daredevils by four runs after their Pepsi Indian Premier League match was tied at 152 at the MA Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bangalore on Tuesday night.

AB de Villiers hammered two sixes of the last two balls from Yadav to help Bangalore make 15.

Daredevils lost Warner off the first ball but Pathan kept alive their hopes by slaming a boundary and a six.

With Delhi needing 5 off the last ball, Rampaul emerged as the hero for Bangalore when he scattered the stumps of Ben Rohrer.

It was the fourth win for Bangalore who lost the previous Super Over eliminator against Sunrisers Hyderabad.

SCORES IN BRIEF

DD: 152 for 5 in 20 overs (Warner 15, Sehwag 25, Juneja 17, Jayawardene 28, Jadhav 29 not out, Pathan 19 not out; Unadkat 2-24)

RCB: 152 for 7 in 20 overs (Gayle 13, Rahal 12, Kohli 65, De Villiers 39, Rampaul 12 not out; Yadav 2-22)

Result: Match tied, Royal Challengers Bangalore won the one-over eliminator.

Player-of-the-match: Virat Kohli.

Mushfiq wants to change

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thing is in the pitch our quicks also will have the same advantage, so we are looking forward to the challenge."

Another pattern that the Tigers will try to change for good is their overseas record. They have become a formidable outfit at home, particularly in ODIs, but the overseas record still needs to be set right. It is a thought that seems to be foremost on the captain's mind. "For the last one and a half years we have played consistent cricket at home, but at the same time we could not replicate that abroad. But in 2013, our first tour (of Sri Lanka) was a very good one. It's history now, but we can take a lot of confidence from that - not only as a team but many individuals also performed very well. Over the next five days if we can play consistent cricket, then we will see favourable results."

Asked for the differences between the team that toured here last and the one he leads now, the skipper alluded to the differing amounts of cricket the two different sides played leading up to the tour. "The last time we played here we were playing Tests after 13 months, if I am not mistaken. Now we have been playing a lot of cricket and just recently finished a Test series in which we played very well. Also, I think this team has a lot of performers. At the same time, they (Zimbabwe) will be hard to beat at home, but I think if we do the basics right, we can come away with something positive."

'Tamim and I should have

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uncertain of a place in the Test today while Tamim will miss the match because of injury.

During Zimbabwe's practice session at the Harare Sports Club yesterday, the ever-smiling and jocular Vitori was bemused by that comment from Tamim still coming up.

"People always think that I have issues with Tamim," laughed Vitori. "But you have to understand that we play the game on the field and all the words are forgotten afterwards. I think Tamim and I should have dinner just to let you guys know that there is no issue between us."

Vitori professed to be a fan of Tamim's batting. "I follow him and enjoy watching him bat. Also [Mohammad] Ashraful, he is a serious cricketer. You know you have to bowl well to get these guys out."

Two years ago they might have been at each other's throats, but this time around it seems Vitori and Tamim may end up dinner dates.

Army clinch hockey title

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Army clinched the title of Walton Refrigerator Independence Day Hockey Tournament after beating Bangladesh Navy 3-2 in the final at the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium yesterday. The inners were leading the first half with an early strike from Abdul Malek. Mamun Mortuza equalised in 56th minute before Milon Hossain scored twice in space of four minutes for Army give a 3-1 lead. Ripon Kumar reduced the margin for Navy in the 65th minute, but could not avoid his side's defeat.

Milon became the highest scorer of the tournament while Sheikh Mohammad Nannu of Players Fashion was adjudged the best player of the tournament.

Shakib

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three pacers and one spinner. The pacers are Rubel Hossain, Shahdat Hossain, Robiul Islam and Sajidul Islam while Enamul Haque Jr and Shohag Gazi make up the spin lineup.

Team management said that the selection of the final eleven would only be done this morning.</p