

Siddikur facing early exit

SPORTS REPORTER

Siddikur Rahman faced a potential early exit from the Ballantine's Championship in Korea at the end of a rain-disrupted second day. Siddikur was on one-under-par and on joint 66th position after his day had ended early having completed only five holes, due to rain. Siddikur had carded two birdies and a bogey in those five holes. Siddikur, along with 76 other players were to complete their second round early this morning before the third round takes place later on.

Thailand's Arnond Vongvanij shared the lead with Australia's Wade Ormsby at seven-under-par (137).

Heat is on kabaddi

SPORTS REPORTER

The National Kabaddi Stadium in Paltan was once again tuned into a scene of blood and shame as two teams clashed during the men's semifinal of the 8th Bangladesh Games yesterday.

Three days after the infamous clash during the women's semifinal which left a couple of match officials seriously injured, Bangladesh Army and Bangladesh Police players engaged in a bloody clash yesterday.

The incident occurred when Army's prolific raider Abu Saleh Musa was raiding Police, and the Army man seemed to bite one of the Police players. At this the Police players got enraged and beat up Musa. They hurled the plastic chairs all around and forced to halt the match, before they left the scene. Army were leading by 17-12 points before the trouble broke out.

The Bangladesh Kabaddi Federation could not decide on the outcome of the match till the filing of this report. Meanwhile, the report on the previous incident was learnt to have been delivered to the Bangladesh Olympic Association, which reportedly, only descried the events rather than provide any suggestions on the punishment.

Closing ceremony without pomp

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) decided to hold Sunday's closing ceremony of the 8th Bangladesh Games without any extravagance due to the Savar tragedy which has so far claimed more than 300 lives and left hundreds injured.

The closing ceremony was supposed to feature a 30-minute program with a 20-minute cultural show and 10 minutes of fireworks. But the BOA has decided to hold only a simple closing ceremony where chairman of the Games Organising Committee and finance minister Abul Maal Abdul Muhith will announce the closing after the athletes congregate.

"We have cancelled all the fireworks and cultural programs and will stage only a simple closing ceremony expressing our sympathy for the people who died in the Savar Tragedy," said Harunur Rashid, BOA vice president and chairman of the Steering Committee of Games, yesterday.

AFRICAN adventures

BY SAKEB SUBHAN



TIGER AT THE CRICKET

He is certainly a sight, but more than that, he is that sound you hear on your TV sets when watching the action from Harare -- 'Shabaaaaash!!'

After his ordeal at the Harare airport, Shoaib Ali, the maniacal Bangladesh fan turned up to the ground in all his painted splendour. He spoke about his adventures at the airport freely, and the measures he undertakes to support his beloved Tigers are at once hilarious and touching.

But it's not for nothing. His efforts are appreciated by many in the Bangladesh dressing room, especially on foreign tours where his roars are often the only counterpoint to local support. His voice has to be heard to be believed.

When Robiul Islam took the wicket of Vusi Sibanda, a roaring 'Shabash Robiul Bhai' went out, and every ball after that,

whether it was a dot ball or a good stop by a fielder, similar roars went out. He had single-handedly silenced the local crowd, many of whom were staring at him in amazement.

"It doesn't hurt now, I have gotten used to it," said Shoaib when asked how he kept on shouting ball after ball. "It's a gift from above." It certainly is -- it has gotten him from Dhaka to Harare.

TAXI MINI-SAFARI

For newcomers to the region, a visit to the Lion and Cheetah Park is a rare treat. The magnificence of lions and lionesses roaming around freely is something to which words will never do justice.

A taxi through the park was certainly a unique and at times unnerving experience. The lionesses attracted more awe than the lions, even with their kingly manes. The males were lazing about, while the more naturally aggressive females got up from their roadside resting areas and peered threateningly into the cab. There was more than a slight fear that the small taxi would break down on the rough road, and its occupants would be at the mercy of nature's terrifying power as they assisted in the tire-changing or some such activity.

Thankfully that did not happen, and we made it through zebras, deer and giraffe to the mini-zoo, where the most revered attraction of the park was resting in lazy majesty. Toby is a 300-year-old turtle, and can be seen near the entrance of the zoo, the only animal left out of its cage. He pokes his head out of his enormous shell to clear the area in front of grass, and when he is done, lifts his 500 kg body up, rotates to a fresher patch, plops down and he is set -- for the next month possibly.

Sharapova in qtrs



AFP, Stuttgart

French Open champion Maria Sharapova admitted she had dug deep to reach the quarterfinals of Stuttgart's WTA tournament after her three-hour marathon victory over claycourt specialist Lucie Safarova on Thursday.

Sharapova, who won last year's Stuttgart title en route to her Roland Garros victory, needed three hours, nine minutes to squeeze past her Czech opponent for a 6-4, 6-7 (3/7), 6-3 second-round victory.

With a 5-2 lead in the third set and serving for the match, Sharapova squandered three match points as Safarova broke her, before the Russian returned the compliment to claim the match.

"I've had a few three-hour games in my career, so I knew I just had to keep fighting until the end," said the statuesque Russian, who faces former world number one Ana Ivanovic in Friday's quarter-finals.

"That's when it's the time to get the game-plan going and calm down a little bit.

"Clay is one of her favourite surfaces and I knew this was going to be a tough game, so I am glad to get through.

"The first match of the claycourt season is always tough, it's nothing like practising."

Sharapova's last eight opponent Ivanovic beat Russia's Nadia Petrova 6-4, 6-3 in her second round game, having dropped to 17th in the world rankings.

Earlier second-seed China's Li Na has

admitted she has one eye on a brand new sports car, the winner's prize here, as she prepares to face Petra Kvitova in the quarter-finals.

Li, who reached January's Australian Open final, breezed through Thursday's second-round match in 74 minutes to see off Croatia's Mirjana Lucic-Baroni 6-1, 6-2 in straight sets in her first match of the claycourt season.

Kvitova made the last eight after beating Germany's Julia Goerges 2-6, 7-6 (7/4), 6-2 in her second round match.

"I have a lot of room in my garage for a new car and it's a pretty nice car," joked Li, with a brand-new Porsche parked at the side of the court, ready for the winner of Sunday's final to drive away.

"It's always tough when you change surface, so I'm excited to win my first match on clay for the season.

"Mirjana plays flat, so I had to prepare for that.

"I thought it would be a tough match because she has a lot of experience.

"I was happy I could play more aggressive and had the right game plan to win."

Third-seed Angelique Kerber, ranked sixth in the world, also had no problems as she blasted past Russia's Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova 6-0, 6-4 to set up a quarter-final clash with Kazakhstan's Yaroslava Shvedova.

Former world number one Jelena Jankovic of Serbia crashed out in the second round when she was beaten in straight sets 7-6 (7/3), 7-5 by Germany's Sabine Lisicki.



PHOTO: AFP

Germany's Angelique Kerber exults after winning the first set against Kazakhstan's Yaroslava Shvedova during the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix quarterfinal in Stuttgart yesterday.

Under-19s scrape to a win

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh under-19 scraped through to a one wicket victory over their Sri Lankan counterparts at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday and took a 2-1 lead in the five-match one day series. Batting first, the visitors finished on a competitive 277 for 8 in 50 overs. The total was overcome by the hosts, who ended on 281 for 9, in a last ball finish.

The major share of Sri Lanka's scoring was done by their top three batsmen. The top order -- Kusal Mendis (47), Sadeera Samarawickrama (83) and Sandun Weerakody (65) -- laid a good foundation for the team. Bangladesh, however, pulled things back at the latter stage of the game as the visitors could manage only 79 off the last 12 overs.

In reply, Bangladesh were driven by their captain Mosaddek Hossain (98) and top-order batsman Joyraj Sheik (74). When they required just two runs to win in the last over with four wickets in hand, the seemingly easy task however, was made difficult by Ramesh Mendis who gave away just one run and picked up three wickets in the first five balls.

A boundary in the last ball eventually, led the hosts to victory.

Feni upset Sk Jamal

SPORTS REPORTER

Feni Soccer Club all but ensured their safety while denting Sheikh Jamal DC's title hopes with a 2-1 home win in their Grameenphone Bangladesh Premier League match at the Feni Stadium yesterday.

The win lifted Feni to 11 points with two matches remaining, five clear of bottom-placed Arambagh KS. The win however dented Sheikh Jamal DC's title hopes massively as they fell four points behind leaders Sheikh Russel (32 points) and one point adrift of defending champions Abahani.

Nigerian striker Sunday Chizoba put Sheikh Jamal ahead in the 37th, scoring his 7th goal in the campaign. But Feni SC bounced back in the second half, thanks to goals from Beninese forward Wassiou Okalawan Oladikpikro and Liberian forward Anthony Pole Doe.

The result will benefit Sheikh Russel mostly as they will need only four points from their remaining two matches to complete a treble of trophies this season.

Pakistan vow fixing vigil

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan vowed Friday to keep their cricketers under a strict vigil in England to avoid any repeat of a 2010 spot-fixing scandal that resulted in bans and jail for three players.

An undercover reporter of the now defunct News of the World exposed former captain Salman Butt along with pacemen Mohammad Asif and Mohammad Aamer in a scandal that shook the cricket world during Pakistan's tour of England.

'I wanted to be a mix of Viv & Sunil'



PTI, Mumbai

Sachin Tendulkar, one of the greatest batsmen the game has ever seen, today said it was important to have heroes in life and he himself wanted to be a combination of his childhood idols Vivian Richards and Sunil Gavaskar.

"Every person likes his own identity and that is important. It is good to have heroes. When I was growing up, I had a couple of heroes. I wanted to be a combination, a mixture of Vivian Richards and Sunil Gavaskar," said Tendulkar during an interaction with his fans at gaming and experience centre 'Smaaash' here today.

"So it is important for this generation to



SACHIN TENDULKAR

Tigers edge Day 2

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first over -- a turner the previous ball was followed by an arm ball that sneaked between bat and pad to rattle timber.

The battle between Robiul and Taylor was a classic Test contest. The opposition skipper would not be allowed to settle -- Robiul kept surprising him with bouncers and did not let him settle down to his preferred front-foot game.

After tea with Robiul resting, as he must, Taylor started playing pressure-releasing shots, but he played one shot too many, trying to lift off-spinner Shohag Gazi straight into the stands, but was beaten in flight to be caught at midwicket by Shakib.

"When he (Brendan Taylor) scored well in the last game, we obviously planned to do something different this time around. That (bowling bouncers at Taylor) was definitely part of it, and I think that pressure contributed to his dismissal," said Shakib.

Earlier, resuming the day on 300 for six, Nasir Hossain carried on from the previous evening when he scored 37 off 39 balls. His overnight partner, debutant Ziaur Rahman however did not last long -- a gigantic Meth inswinger beating his bat and umpire Ian Gould ruling it leg-before, although replays proved inconclusive.

After Zimbabwe's late order heroics in the first Test, it was Bangladesh's turn to frustrate the hosts. Shohag Gazi showed glimpses of his batting abilities to score 21 in a 51-run eighth-wicket stand. Nasir, as expected dominated the stand with his favoured slashes and dabs over the slips to a vacant third man fence. Gazi was well caught by Elton Chigumbura off leg-spinner Graeme Cremer at long off with the score 364, and three runs later the impressive leg-spinner bowled Nasir around his legs for a 103-ball 77 studded with 11 boundaries. The tail kept wagging as Robiul Islam and Sajidul Islam added 24 runs for the last wicket.

On a day when Bangladesh fought back strongly Shakib too hit back strongly when asked for a reaction to former England great Sir Geoffrey Boycott's assessment of Bangladesh as a waste of ICC's funds for their 13 years of Test cricket. "I think people say these things to come into the limelight. I am not worried about it and I am sure the Bangladesh team are not worried about it."

Hard work pays off

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early, not letting him settle to a particular type of delivery. Robiul in particular took the attack to Taylor, peppering him with bouncers early in his innings, with the result being that Taylor could not settle into his favoured front-foot style.

The home skipper could have been out thrice in the 17th over bowled by Robiul. Taylor was unusually anxious to get to the other end and set off for a non-existent run to the first delivery, and only Tamim Iqbal's misfield from mid on saved him. In the fifth ball, Taylor fended away a bouncer that lobbed into the off side, out of reach of the close-in fielder stationed on the leg side. Having pinned him back Robiul bowled his stock delivery next ball, but the resultant edge landed cruelly short of first slip.

Robiul's input yesterday may have only been two wickets, but the presence of a bowler like him in a Test side is enormous. With Shakib Al Hasan back to full fitness and Shohag Gazi in the side, the Tigers' are now are in a position to reap the benefits of early pressure created by a marathon spell like Robiul's. Taylor holing out in the deep off Gazi late in the day is due in no small part to the fact that he was not allowed to dictate terms as in the first Test, which was largely Robiul's doing.

Considering the value he brings to a previously impoverished pace cupboard the team, searching for a series-lelling win, may well consider keeping Robiul's arm on ice whenever he is not bowling over the next four days. Judging by yesterday's effort, that may just be a necessity.

have heroes and try and get closer to anywhere you can to your heroes. Heroes will always be heroes, so that is how it should be."

The senior cricketer, who celebrated his 40th birthday a couple of days ago, also cut a cake to mark the occasion and said "This was the 40th cake that I have cut, so we should stop now."

As a batsman he has had problems with the sightscreen and the scorer of 100 international hundreds admitted this.

"You know I keep complaining about sightscreens. That is what I go through. When I am batting there are more than 50,000 people around and you can't spot the ball because of the release point sometimes as the sightscreens are not high enough.

"But there is not much choice. It makes you focus harder. You get a fraction of a second less to react and those are the things that you can't change much. You just have to adjust and try and find ways to prepare yourself early when the bowler is delivering," the master blaster said.

"Because you get a fraction second less the adjustment to make up for that loss time is in your hands, to get ready a fraction earlier to that spot. That is what I try to do on various occasions when I find it difficult to spot the ball."

Asked whether he and Mumbai Indians teammate and skipper Ricky Ponting, a former captain of Australia, are sharing tips during the ongoing Indian Premier League, Tendulkar replied in the affirmative.

"Yes we do. We play for the same team. We want to achieve the same goal. When you become part of the same team, you do share whatever your thoughts are and that is how any team should be," he said.

KKR beat Punjab

SPORTS DESK

Kolkata Knight Riders snapped their losing streak with a 6 wicket win of Kings XI Punjab in their IPL clash last night.

Batting first, Kings XI put on 149 for 6 with Adam Gilchrist and Manan Vohra the best performers. Some of Kolkata's bowling was wayward but Sunil Narine kept it tight and Jacques Kallis took 2-14 to restrict Punjab.

In reply, Kolkata romped home despite an early hiccup, with Mavinder Bisla scoring a well-made half-century. He was ably supported by a swashbuckling Morgan as the team got home with 10 balls to spare.

SCORES IN BRIEF
KINGS XI PUNJAB: 149-6 in 20 overs (Vohra 31, Gilchrist 27; Kallis 2-14) lost to
KKR: 150-4 in 18.2 overs (Bisla 51, Morgan 42; Mahmood 3-35).

Games corner

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Basketball Gymnasium yesterday.

Army beat Khulna 109-66 while Navy beat Border Guard Bangladesh 99-69 to advance to the final to be held today.

BOXING

SA Games gold medallists Abdur Rahim and Jewel Ahmed were eliminated from the quarterfinals at the Mohammad Ali Boxing Stadium yesterday.

Rahim of Bangladesh Army lost to Sur Krishna Chakma of Railway in 69kg category while Jewel Ahmed of Bangladesh Ansar lost to AlAmin of Bangladesh Army in 64kg category bout in which some tension broke out between the officials of Bangladesh Army and Bangladesh Ansar. Jewel alleged that he was forced to lose the game through an arranged judgment.

Munna

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"I could not move my shoulder smoothly because of neck problem," Asif said. "It doesn't matter to be eliminated from the qualification."