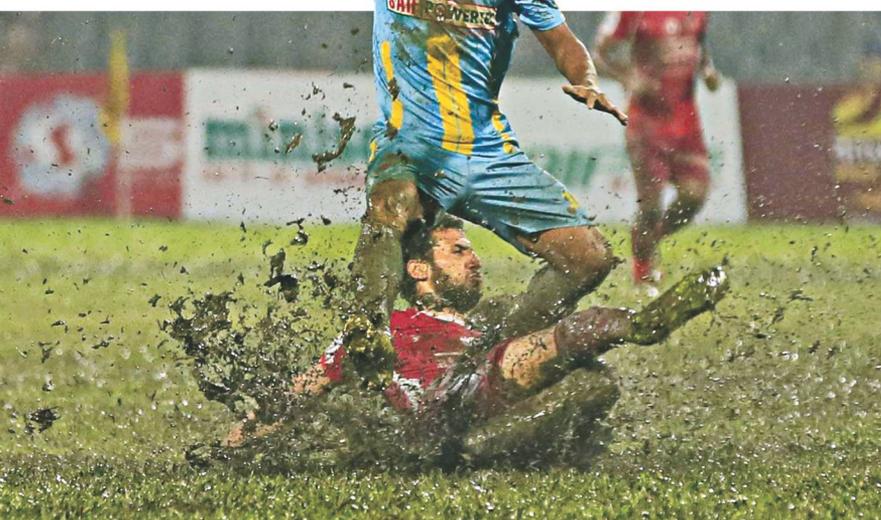


SPORTS



With the rain refusing to cease, causing fresh floods in the country again, sporting fields bear the brunt of the inclement weather. Here players of rival teams wrestle to control the ball in what was a muddy Bangladesh Premier League affair at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Brothers to make do without Scun

SPORTS REPORTER

Brothers Union's Italian coach Giovanni Scun is set to be replaced by the team's assistant coach Anirul Rahman Pannu, according to team manager Amer Khan. The Italian, who guided the side to consecutive goalless draws in the first two games of the Bangladesh Premier League -- against team BJMC and Sheikh Russel -- has since left for Germany to be with his ailing mother.

According to the manager, Scun said that he needed three to four more weeks at least to take care of his mother, who had a surgery recently.

However, the club is reluctant to allow him that sort of time away, and are hence looking to replace him with a local coach while continuing with the assistant coach for the time being.

Brothers Union had recruited Subrata Bhattacharjee Jr. at the beginning of the season. But they got rid of the Indian coach after he failed to impress with his tactics during a disappointing Federation Cup campaign.

Hockey team notch first win in China

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh national hockey team posted a 4-2 win over Canada Cobras in the fourth practice match in their China Tour yesterday on their China Tour yesterday. It was their first win on the tour, which has been arranged as part of their preparations ahead of the October's 10th Men's Asia Cup.

According to a press release from the Bangladesh Hockey Federation, Ashraful Islam, Milon Hossain, Khlorshedur Rahman and Jubayer Hossain Niloy secured one goal apiece for Bangladesh. Ashraful and Khlorshedur scored from penalty corners while Milon and Niloy scored field goals.

Bangladesh, who had narrowly lost to the same opposition in the first two matches before drawing the third, will play four more practice matches against a rival province side.

No stopping Chittagong Abahani

SPORTS REPORTER

Chittagong Abahani continued their spectacular start to the Bangladesh Premier League with a 3-1 victory over Sheikh Russel KC -- their fourth win in four matches -- on a muddy and sluggish pitch at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The early pace setters grabbed the opening goal in the 11th minute, courtesy a header from Nigerian striker Afeez Oladipo. Sheikh Russel, who came into the match on the back of a 1-2 defeat against Sheikh Jamal following a win and a draw, were fortunate to grab an equaliser from an own goal seven minutes after the restart. But the dominant port city side were ahead again, thanks to another expert header from Oladipo before Tahwidul Alam Sabuz sealed the victory late in the match.

The victory put Chittagong Abahani solely on top of the table with 12 points. Sheikh Jamal DC, who have also maintained a perfect record thus far, can catch them if they manage to beat Rahmatganj MFS today.

The start to the league this season has coincided with the last stages of monsoon. Even though monsoon is nearing its end, there seems to be no respite from continuous downpour, which has had a negative impact on the teams' performances. Players struggle to control the ball or race with it, and passes often fail to find their intended target. The overall quality of the game has been badly affected, yet some teams have managed to get a grip of

Sheikh Russel 1 - 3 Chittagong Abahani
(08:00PM 11, 72, 54:02 81)

things better than others. Chittagong Abahani, with former national team coach Saiful Bari Tiu at the helm and an array of match-winners at their disposal, seemed to have gotten the better of the elements.

The port city side grabbed the lead in the 11th minute when skipper Zahid Hossain's corner kick was turned in with a bullet header by Oladipo. Sheikh Russel were unlucky not to get the

equaliser on 25 minutes when Dawda Ceasey's left-footed free-kick from the edge of the box brushed the outside of the far post, but they found luck on their side seven minutes after restart as Chittagong Abahani defender Lidoka headed the ball into his own net. The Nigerian recruit, while trying to get the ball back to the keeper, headed it onto the ground, but misdirected it into the net as goalkeeper Ashraful Islam Rana had rushed out to gather the ball.

However, Oladipo restored Chittagong Abahani's lead with a fine glancing header in the 73rd minute, turning in a perfectly-weighted cross from Mansur Amin.

Tahwidul Alam Sabuz then sealed the victory with a fine solo effort in the 82nd minute while grabbing his fourth goal in four games. The former national team forward ran on to a through-ball from Zahid before chipping the onrushing Sheikh Russel goalkeeper while losing his footing. The ball stopped in the middle of the box, but Sabuz had enough time to get back on his feet before slotting it into the back of the net.

Australia's Tour of Bangladesh Aussies dial up preparations

AGENCIES, Dhawan

Australia's preparation for the Qantas tour of Bangladesh is set to crank up a notch this week with the addition of some of the country's best young talent to the squad in Darwin for a highly competitive Steve Smith XI v David Warner XI three-day clash.

Among the young faces joining the 14-man touring party are Darwin products Jake Weatherald and Tom Andrews, both of whom made their first-class debuts for South Australia in the 2015-16 season.

Additionally, the three-day contest at Marrara Oval, beginning on Monday, will include Redbacks captain Travis Head, two more South Australians in Adam Zampa and Kane Richardson, as well as Victoria trio Marcus Stoinis, Chris Tremain and Jon Holland.

Australia has regularly played intra-squad matches to prepare for Test series -- they did so in Dubai in February ahead of their tour of India -- but the nature of this contest is set to be more closely resemble match conditions, with players wearing whites and two full Xis taking part under the leadership of usual captain Smith and his deputy, Warner.

Darren Lehmann's squad arrived in the Northern Territory on Wednesday and have been working hard on conditioning their bodies to the heat of Bangladesh, though the humidity will be another factor to take in once they land in Dhaka next Friday as Darwin is currently in the middle of its dry season.

"We've been doing a lot of fitness and strength testing since we've been here," Queensland leg-spinner Mitch Swepson said on Saturday. "It's going to be good for the boys to acclimatise before we get to Bangladesh -- it'll be humid and hot over there. It's great that we've got a base in Australia with weather like this where we can come and acclimatise."

The South Australian contingent was scheduled to arrive in Darwin late Saturday, completing a 23-man group ahead of the intra-squad fixture. The injured Mitchell Starc, who is still recovering from a foot injury and will not tour Bangladesh, is the only player present who won't play on Monday, while part-time 'keeper Peter Handscomb looms as the likely glove-man for the Warner XI.

The arrival of left-arm orthodox spinners Andrews and Weatherald as well as leggie Zampa brings the number of spinners in the group to six as the Australians ready themselves for spin-friendly conditions for the Tests in Dhaka and Chittagong.

U-19 Asia Cup moved to Malaysia

IANS, Bangalore

The Under-19 Asia Cup, scheduled to be held in Bangalore, has been moved to Malaysia following the Pakistan Cricket Board's (PCB) objection to the tournament being held in India. The tournament will now be held in November in Malaysia.

"The matter of shifting the tournament to Malaysia was amicably agreed by all participants in the development and executive committees, since no one wanted it mired by security considerations of any member," PCB chairman Najam Sethi was quoted as saying by espnricinfo on Saturday.

The PCB had earlier expressed its reservations in travelling to India owing to the political tensions between the two countries.

But the Western Region qualifying round -- consisting of teams from Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Oman and Bahrain -- will be played in Kuwait although the political crisis in the region is quite bad and a number of countries have broken their ties with Qatar.

Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka have earned an automatic qualification.

Two teams each from the Western and Southern Region will join them with a total of eight teams featuring in the meet.

SL strike after Dhawan ton

AFP, Palakkate

Shikhar Dhawan smashed a scintillating century for India, but Sri Lanka's spinners struck five times to leave the tourists on edge after the first day of the third Test yesterday.

Malinda Puskhamakura took three wickets and Lakshan Sandakan two, leaving India on 329-6 at the close, with Wriddhiman Saha on 13 and Hardik Pandya on one.

Puskhamakura rattled the Indian top-order with his left-arm spin after a 188-run opening stand between Dhawan, who hit 119 in 123 balls, and Lokeslh Rahul.

Left-arm wrist spinner Sandakan's wickets included the prized scalp of Indian skipper Virat Kohli for 42.

"The Sri Lankan bowlers bowled well and pulled the match a little bit on their side. Dhawan, who celebrated his sixth Test century, told reporters.

"We got a good start and still feel at the end of the day, 329 is a good score. Those (who) are batting now are capable of scoring big runs," said Dhawan, adding India are looking to get 400 and more.

The left-right opening batting team of Dhawan and Rahul, who made 85, took India through the first session against a hapless Sri Lankan bowling attack.

Sri Lanka captain Dinesh Chandimal then rotated his spinners in the second session and India lost three top batsmen in just 11 overs.

The 30-year-old Puskhamakura, who made his Test debut in the second Test in Colombo, removed the openers to bring the hosts back into the contest.

Rahul, who scored his seventh consecutive Test fifty, mistimed a drive to mid-on and Dhawan soon followed his partner to the pavilion.

Rahul joined Everton Weekes, Andy Flower, Shivnarine Chanderpaul, Kumar

Sangakkara and Chris Rogers on the list of batsmen who have made seven consecutive 50-plus scores in Tests. Kohli tried to stem the rot during a 84-ball innings, ended when he edged a Sandakan delivery to slip.

Kohli and India toiled in the last session. The innings run-rate plummeted from around five in the morning session to 2.76 after tea.

let them to 320 (329) for the first day. I'm really, really happy with the spinners," Sri Lanka's fast bowling consultant Chaminda Vaas said.

"At the end, the way Vishva bowled in the last two spells was also good. I think the way he's going has a future and potential," added the former pacer.

India elected to bat first as they eye a



Left-handed opener Shikhar Dhawan hit a blistering century on the opening day of the third Test against Sri Lanka in Palakkate yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

"It's not easy to score runs out there and even outfield is not that quick. When Sri Lanka come out to bat, we are going to make sure that we squeeze them hard," said Dhawan.

Pace spearhead Vishwa Fernando chipped in with the wicket of Wriddhiman Saha, who was caught behind after a hard-working 31.

"The bowlers came and bowled pretty well. Especially the spinners. We

series sweep after taking an unassailable 2-0 lead in Colombo. Scoreboard at stumps on the opening day of the third and final Test between Sri Lanka and India in Palakkate on Saturday:

SCORES IN BRIEF
INDIA: First innings 329-6 in 90 overs (Dhawan 119, Rahul 85, Kohli 42, Ashwin 31; Sandakan 2-44, Puskhamakura 3-40)