

Tigers leave for Pakistan tomorrow

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has decided to prepone the men's national team's scheduled flight to Pakistan as the team will now leave for the country tomorrow instead of August 17.

The decision was made after the BCB failed to properly hold the final phase of the Tigers' training session ahead as the foreign coaching staff expressed their reluctance to join practice in Mirpur amidst the current situation of the country.

"That [getting full team together] is the main reason we are travelling to Pakistan much earlier than scheduled time," a member of the selection panel told The Daily Star yesterday.

"Going there few days ahead will also give us a chance to adjust to the conditions. We have also received a positive response from the Pakistan board," he added.

Meanwhile, a BCB source confirmed that the board has booked 18 tickets for players and coaching staff, who will leave for the two-match Test series on Monday at 4:00pm.

A few members of the probable Test squad, including Mushfiqur Rahim and Mominul Haque, have already reached Islamabad with Bangladesh 'A' team for two four-day game against Pakistan 'A' team.

The BCB is expected to announce the national team squad for the Test series today.

France 'happy' and 'united' in Olympics joy

AFP, Paris

Paris Olympics organisers celebrated the country being "united" and "happy" during the widely hailed two-week sports extravaganza amid doubts about how long the feel good mood will last.

"France has shown itself to the world in a very, very good mindset: confident, united, warm, welcoming," head of the Paris 2024 organising committee Tony Estanguet told reporters on Saturday, the penultimate day of the Games.

Estanguet repeatedly voiced his "pride" at organising what he had promised would be an iconic Olympics, which have seen record ticket sales and packed fanzones around the country.

He added: "We've seen a happy France, happy French people, and you shouldn't underestimate that in terms of the legacy of these Games," he added.

Estanguet said the weather had been his biggest cause for concern, while the run-up to the start also saw a global IT outage and an attack on the French railways.

"The weather in the final phase was our main difficulty," said Estanguet.

Heavy rains washed out the opening ceremony on the River Seine – the first times a Games had begun outside the main stadium – while other events had to be postponed because of storms in the first week.

Apart from these, French church leaders and conservatives were left outraged by a scene in the ceremony involving drag queens and lesbian DJ Barbara Butch that appeared to parody Jesus's Last Supper.

Artistic director Thomas Jolly denied any such intention. He and others involved ended up facing online harassment that led to police complaints.



Netherlands women's hockey players pose with their gold medals after beating China 3-1 in penalty shootout following a 1-1 draw in regulation time in the final of the Paris Olympics at the Yves-du-Manoir Stadium in Colombes on Friday. It was double delight for the Dutch, who saw their men's team clinch gold after beating Germany in another penalty shootout on Thursday.

PHOTO: AFP

Khelif answers 'fierce campaign' with gold

REUTERS, Paris

Algeria's Imane Khelif, the female boxer thrust into the centre of a gender dispute at the Paris Games, made a statement on her womanhood after beating China's Yang Liu to take the welterweight Olympic gold medal, sending her newfound devotees into delirium on Friday.

Khelif, silver medallist at the 2022 World Championships, and Taiwan boxer Lin Yu-ting have been in the spotlight as part of a gender dispute in Paris that has dominated headlines and been the subject of much discussion on social media platforms.

Khelif is the first Algerian woman to earn an Olympic boxing title and the first boxer from her country to claim gold since Hocine Soltani at Atlanta 1996.

"This is my dream. Eight years, my dream. I'm Olympic champion, gold medallist. I'm very happy. Eight years, I work," Khelif, 25, said.

"Eight years, no sleep. Eight years, tired. Now I'm Olympic champion. I'm very happy. I want to thank all the people who have come to support me. People, Algeria, and all the people, Paris.

"This gold medal is the best answer to the fierce campaign against me."

Her defeated opponent Yang



said: "I'm happy for her. I respect everybody and I will even learn from her (boxing wise)."

Janjaem Suwannapheng of Thailand and Taiwan's Chen Nien-chin were awarded bronze.

Khelif and double world champion Lin were disqualified by the International Boxing Association (IBA) from the 2023 World Championships, with the body saying at a press conference during the Paris Games that a gender test had ruled them ineligible.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) is using boxing eligibility rules in Paris that were applied at the 2016 and 2021 Olympics and which do not include gender testing.

The volume went up several notches to ear-splitting level when

Khelif entered the arena on Friday in her red trunks and shirt for the last bout on a suffocating Parisian evening, the only breeze coming from the hundreds of flags being waved.

"Imane, Imane, Imane!" the crowd chanted and screamed.

Following yet another straightforward victory, the crowd cheered as Khelif's corner carried her on their shoulders to the end of the stadium.

Khelif's win even sparked wild celebrations back in her poor, rural hometown Biban Mesbah in Algeria, with her father, Omar Khelif, claiming his daughter's triumph as 'Algeria's victory' and crowds invading the city centre of the capital Algiers to celebrate the victory with fireworks and a chorus of car horns.

Tipu doubts progress despite leadership change calls

SPORTS REPORTER

Although there is a growing sentiment for change within the country's sports community following the resignation of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina amidst widespread student protests, former Bangladesh football captain and coach Golam Sarwar Tipu believes that merely changing leadership won't lead to any real progress in the nation's sports.

Since the Awami League government came to power in 2009, most sports federations have been led by organisers affiliated with the party, sidelining those with differing views. After the fall of Sheikh Hasina's government, many organisers – particularly those who had been marginalized and denied opportunities for the past 15 years – have called for new leadership in various sports federations.

Despite this, Tipu remains pessimistic about the future of sports in Bangladesh.



"No change in leadership will bring any real change to Bangladesh's sports because we are a nation of betrayers and immoral people. Two days later, they will call for another change," Tipu told The Daily Star on Tuesday. "Unless we change our mentality and become more humane, this shift in leadership will not bring any real change to the sports community."

"One person will leave, and another will take their place at the helm of different federations... Those who are now vocal are well-known because we've seen them in the past. It would be different if these changes happened naturally, but change by seizing an opportunity is another matter. I don't know if this will bring any real improvement," Tipu reiterated.

The former national defender emphasised the need for changes in sports infrastructure, budgeting, and the election processes of various federations if Bangladesh truly wants to see its sports progress.

"If there are free and fair elections in sports, some changes may come, as organisers will be motivated to work or develop their respective disciplines in order to be re-elected," remarked Tipu, adding that the sports budget is insufficient to drive evolution.

"I've heard for a long time that Bangladesh participates in the Olympics to gain experience, and this goes on; whereas India has been winning medals in various disciplines at the Olympics for the last four editions."

Tipu also addressed the inadequate facilities in football, reflecting a lack of proper planning and concern from the relevant authorities.

"Renovation work at Bangabandhu National Stadium has been ongoing for the last three years, with no urgency or accountability to complete it. The football federation has to search for venues to hold competitions.

"The women footballers have been practicing on artificial turf, which causes muscle damage. But how can the authorities understand the need for natural grounds for these young girls? So, I don't see any change coming," he concluded.

TODAY'S GOLD RUSH

ATHLETICS

Women's Marathon
12:00 PM

WEIGHTLIFTING

Women's +81 kg

WRESTLING

Men's Freestyle 65 kg
4:20 PM

Men's Freestyle 97 kg
4:50 PM

Women's Freestyle 76 kg
5:20 PM

MODERN PENTATHLON

Women's Individual, Laser Run
4:40 PM

WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL

USA vs Italy
5:00 PM

CYCLING TRACK

Women's Sprint
5:44 PM

Men's Keirin
5:32 PM

MEN'S HANDBALL

Germany vs Denmark
5:30 PM

MEN'S WATER POLO

Serbia vs Croatia
6:00 PM

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

France vs USA
7:30 PM

Spain cherish 'unbeatable summer'

AFP, Paris

Spain star Fermin Lopez described his summer as "unbeatable" after he starred on their run to Olympic football gold having also played a part in their triumph at Euro 2024.

"We have had a great tournament. We deserved this and I am really proud of the team," said the 21-year-old Barcelona midfielder after scoring twice in a classic Olympic final on Friday, in which Spain beat France 5-3 following extra time at the Parc des Princes.

"The truth is that this summer has been unbeatable. I am so proud and really happy with everything I have experienced."

Lopez was included in Spain's squad for the European Championship in Germany after an outstanding breakthrough season with his club.

He made one appearance for Luis de la Fuente's team at the Euros, in which Spain beat England 2-1 in the final in Berlin.

Lopez then joined up with Santi Denia's Olympic squad, in which he was the outstanding performer with six goals, including five from the

quarterfinals onwards.

Only Morocco's Soufiane Rahimi, with eight, finished the tournament with more goals.

Lopez scored twice and Alex Baena, another member of Spain's Euro squad, added a free-kick as their team came from behind to lead 3-1 at half-time in Friday's final.

France fought back to level at 3-3 and force extra time, in which Sergio Camello scored twice to seal victory for Spain, and their first Olympic men's football gold since 1992.

"We found ourselves in a difficult position on two separate occasions but the team fought so hard. I think we have a great team, a great family and you could see that on the field," added Lopez.

"The European Championship and Olympics are the first two titles I have won and I am so happy."

Barcelona kick off their season next weekend but, having been away on international duty for more than two months, Lopez admits he needs a short break.

"I always want to play, but a little week's holiday won't do anyone any harm. But just a week, and then I'll be back."



Lisa Carrington reacts after winning the women's kayak single 500m final in the canoe sprint competition at Vaires-sur-Marne Nautical Stadium during the Paris Olympics yesterday. With her third gold medal in Paris, she has become New Zealand's most decorated Olympian, now holding a total of eight gold medals.

PHOTO: AFP