



THE CATCH IS MINE: Sri Lanka cricketers play with a ball in the swimming pool of the team hotel in Bogra on Saturday.

PHOTO: AFP

Where have all the tickets gone?

HASIBUR RAHMAN BILU, Bogra

Although it was announced that all the tickets for the first two one-day internationals between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka had been sold out, there are allegations that most of the tickets went to the hands of black-market dealers and politically influential people.

Many waited in long queues in front of the three outlets -- City Bank, District Council and Swimming Pool -- designated to sell the passes only to learn that all the tickets had been sold out much earlier.

But yet, Rezaul of Jhoggari, Shahjahan of Padmapara and newspaper hawk Farul complained they had seen tickets were being sold in the black market at Tk. 300, the actual price of what is 50.

They alleged that the black-market dealers, in collaboration with some dishonest bank officials, got hold of most of the tickets.

However, the authorities concerned put aside all the allegations and maintained that there had been no irregularities in ticket sale.

Rajshahi rout Dhaka

ISPAHANI MIRZAPORE TEA 7th National Cricket League

SPORTS REPORTER

Rajshahi completed a Dhaka demolition in the fifth round of the Ispahani National Cricket League with a massive 218-run victory on the third day of their four-day match at the Rajshahi Divisional Stadium yesterday.

The victory completed a double delight for Rajshahi, who had earlier defeated Dhaka by five wickets in the one-day fixture. The cricketers of the northern headquarters now joined holders Dhaka at the top of the first-class table with 20 points each.

Away at the Khulna Divisional Stadium, Sylhet were on course of a victory after the hosts, chasing an improbable winning target of 445, were struggling at 131-4 at stumps on the third day.

In the other match, Barisal made a gallant reply against Chittagong's mammoth first innings total but the port city side were still in an advantageous posi-

tion to take a first innings lead in a match heading for a draw.

DHAKA-RAJSHAHI

Dhaka fared even badly in their second day when they were bundled out for 130.

After a disappointing first innings total of 177, Al Shahrar-led Dhaka collapsed against the gentle medium-pace of Mushfiqur Rahman, who took four wickets for 23 runs in nine overs.

Set to score 348 for a win, only Shahrar with a 47-ball 40 offered some resistance.

Shafaq Al Zahir claimed three wickets conceding 35 in 10 overs.

Earlier resuming the day on 120-2, Rajshahi were all out for 242 in 75.4 overs.

Man-of-the-match Farhad Hossain added eleven runs to his overnight score of 46 while Naeem Islam hit a 116-ball 50.

Mohammad Sharif was the most successful Dhaka bowler claiming four wickets for 76 runs.

SYLHET-KHULNA

Young opener Nazmus Sadat held one end up but it might not be enough for Khulna who were starting at defeat chasing a mammoth

Sylhet total.

Sadat scored an unbeaten 55 off 134 balls after Khulna, set to score 445 to win, finished the day on 131-4.

Wicketkeeper Mohammad Shahin, with first-class centuries in both innings under his belt, was batting on one with the doughy opener.

Experienced paceman Hasibul Hossain, who destroyed Khulna's first innings with 5-20, also struck early in the second innings. He picked up two wickets for 18 and Sadekur took two for 16.

Earlier, Sylhet, resuming the day on 103-1, collapsed to 222 all out with opener Golam Rahman notching up highest 82 and his partner Imtiaz Hossain contributing 43.

CHITTAGONG-BARISAL

A 149-run opening stand between Imran Ahmed and Hannan Sarker guided Barisal to 319-7 at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium.

But they were still 153 runs behind of Chittagong's massive first-innings total of 471 at close of Day Three.

Imran scored 63 off 163 balls with eight hits to the fence while

SEE PAGE 17 COL 1

Junior Tigers finish fifth

ICC U/19 CRICKET WORLD CUP SRI LANKA 2006

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh youths finished fifth in the ICC Under-19 World Cup when they handed a 98-run defeat on Sri Lanka at the Sinhalese Sports Club ground in Colombo yesterday.

The victory provided a small piece of encouragement for the senior Tigers at home with the one-day series against the Lankans starting tomorrow.

The boys of Mushfiqur Rahim who were thrown out of the title race after a five-wicket defeat against England in the quarter-finals, however completed a fruitful campaign in the youth jamboree with an impressive victory against the home side.

Bangladesh Under-19s, who had earlier defeated the same side at home thrice to clinch a tri-nation trophy, piled up a massive 278-8 in the stipulated 50 overs after being put into bat.

Dashing opener Tamim Iqbal was dropped for the last match but still

Bangladesh suffered an early hiccup as they lost three wickets for 66 runs.

Sakib Al Hasan and Shamsur Rahman repaired the early damages producing 89 runs for the fourth wicket. Sakib made a 63-ball 67 with eight boundaries while Shamsur added 35 off 38 balls.

Man-of-the-match Mehrrab Hossain, who later picked up two wickets for 13 runs, struck an unbeaten 66 off 80 balls that contained five fours and a six while Sohrawardi Shuvo was the other notable scorer with a quickfire 42 off 40 balls that featured three fours and a six.

In reply, Sri Lanka were bundled out for 180 in 44.5 overs.

Meanwhile, two old foes India and Pakistan, the defending champions, face off in the final today.

SCORES IN BRIEF

INDIA UNDER-19: 278-8 in 50 overs (Mehdi 21, Raqibul 11, Khadem 9, Sakib 67, Shamsur 35, Mehrrab 66 not out, Mushfiqur 7, Shuvo 42, extras 17; Perera 1-50, Karunanayake 4-63)

SRI LANKA UNDER-19: 180 all out in 44.5 overs (Coory 58, Priyanjan 26, Dollar 1-22, Nabil 1-29, Sakib 1-

34, Shuvo 2-21, Rezaul 2-31, Mehrrab 2-13)

Result: Bangladesh Under-19 won by 98 runs.

Bangladesh off to Uzbekistan

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh football team left Dhaka yesterday to play their Asian Cup qualifiers Group F opener against Uzbekistan on February 22.

Prior to their departure for the tough game against the Central Asian giants, Bangladesh captain Arif Khan Joy said that damage limitation would be the main target of his experienced side.

"You all know that Uzbekistan is a far better side than us and that's why it would not be wise to expect anything special against them. We are just looking forward to see how we perform as a team," said Joy.

The national team trained together for three weeks under Argentine coach Diego Cruciani.

Qatar and Hong Kong are the other sides in Group F.

LEMON PRESENTS THEM BLAZERS

District Sports Association (DSA) general secretary MR Siddiqi Lemon came under fire for providing blazers to a number of persons who are not involved with sports activities.

It was learnt that Lemon misused money obtained from Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) to give blazers to some local persons that included three ADCs. What made matters worse is that one of the blazer-recipients is known to many as a smuggler.

The issue created an outcry during a meeting of the DSA on Thursday night. And when some DSA officials sought Lemon's clarification on the matter he failed to provide any.

When contacted by this correspondent, Lemon admitted that only members of the DSA have been provided with blazers.

Bell, Vaughan in the runs

AFP, Mumbai

England captain Michael Vaughan and Ian Bell warmed up for the upcoming Test series in India with half-centuries in a practice match at Mumbai on Saturday.

Bell top-scored with a solid 78 and Vaughan made a fluent 54 as England were bowled out for 299 in their first innings on the opening day of a three-day tour opener against the Cricket Club of India President's XI.

Left-handed opener Andrew Strauss also made merry with a 77-ball 51 in a match which is not a first-class fixture as each side is allowed to try out more than 11 players.

England's only first-class game before the three Test series starts at Vadodara on February 23. The first Test begins at Nagpur on March 1.

The tourists gained valuable batting practice against a mediocre attack. The hosts used as many as nine bowlers, but seamer Kshemal Waigankar impressed the most with three wickets.

Electing to bat, England lost Matthew Prior for a duck before Strauss and Vaughan propped up the innings with a 102-run stand for the second wicket.

The England pair were subdued early in their innings, but grew in confidence as the match progressed.

Strauss was bowled by Waigankar soon after reaching his half-century with a cover-driven four off medium-pace Swapnil Hazare. He hit 11 fours.

Vaughan also completed his half-century with an aggressive shot, lofting left-arm spinner Hitshu Bachani for a straight six. He also struck 11 fours in his 68-ball knock before being caught behind while attempting to slash Waigankar.

England lost Ashes heroes Kevin Pietersen (26) and Andrew Flintoff (20) in the afternoon session, but Bell rallied the team with a 60-run stand for the sixth wicket with Paul Collingwood.

Bell struck one six and seven fours in his 186-ball knock, while all-rounder Collingwood remained unbeaten with 47.

Opener Marcus Trescothick and fast bowler Liam Plunkett missed the opening day due to illness, but England media manager Andrew Waipole said the two players could take part in the match if they recovered.

BRIEF SCORES

ENGLAND: First innings 299 (Bell 78, Vaughan 54, Strauss 51, Collingwood 47 not out, Pietersen 26, Flintoff 20; Waigankar 3-53, Bachani 2-66)



Bangladesh captain Habibur Bashar honing his batting skills during a net session at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra on Saturday.

PHOTO: AFP

Kiwis fly in front

Cricket

AFP, Wellington

A 136-run opening partnership by veteran Nathan Astle and newcomer Jamie How laid the foundations for an 81-run victory by New Zealand over the West Indies in their five-match one-day series opener at Wellington on Saturday.

The visitors' poor one-day record stretched to 14 losses from their last 16 games as their pursuit of New Zealand's 288 for nine foundered in the face of a tidy bowling display.

They were all out for 207 in the 48th over with New Zealand's spin twins Daniel Vettori and Jeetan Patel snapping up two wickets apiece.

New Zealand captain Stephen Fleming did not hesitate to bat when he won the toss on a hot day with a dry track and the rewards were immediate as Astle and How cut and drove their way to rapid half-centuries.

Astle was particularly severe on errant bowling as he consistently cut cleanly between cover-point and gully and went on to compile an invaluable 90.

How added 66 and Fleming chipped in with 55, but after reaching 234 for two, and eyeing a total well in excess of 300, the rest of the New Zealand batting collapsed.

The expected fireworks over the final 10 overs failed to materialise as the West Indies ripped through the remainder of the batting order taking the next seven wickets for

just 64 runs.

Of the remaining batsmen, only Scott Styris was able to reach double figures.

The West Indies in reply recovered from the early loss of two wickets to reach 102 before the third wicket fell in the 22nd over and at that stage were still in with a chance.

Although their tail also failed to fire, they still showed enough to suggest they could still challenge New Zealand in this series.

It was their first one-day game since August, and as they did in the Twenty20 match in Auckland on Thursday, their slow bowlers managed to peg the Black Caps batsmen down, with Chris Gayle leading the charge taking two for 42.

However their quick's let them down early in the New Zealand innings. They were guilty of bowling too short, which How, Astle and Fleming happily feasted on.

New Zealand in turn have concerns over their middle-order collapse.

The West Indian chase started poorly when dangerous Gayle slapped a weak back-foot shot off Shane Bond to Vettori on six and Runako Morton was bowled first ball by James Franklin to have the visitors at 14 for two.

Daren Ganga rectified proceedings with a gutsy 54 from 77 balls taking them to 102 before he was removed.

Chanderpaul didn't hang around too long before New Zealand's super-sub Patel sent a ball between his legs, bowling him for 18. Ramnaresh Sarwan raised his half-century off 70 balls to keep the chase alive.

However, Wavell Hinds went cheaply and Sarwan followed for 56 when his attempted sweep shot flew off the wicketkeeper and then into the hands of replacement fielder Vincent.

From there the innings staggered to a slow death despite some lusty hitting from Dwayne Smith, with his 38 coming off 25 balls.

SCOREBOARD

Scorecard for the first one-day international between New Zealand and the West Indies at Wellington on Saturday:

NEW ZEALAND
How b Gayle 66
Astle c Bradshaw b Smith 90

SEE PAGE 17 COL 4

What to WATCH

TEN Sports

India vs Pakistan

5th ODI

Live at 10:30 am

ESPN

Football Extra

Live at 9:00 am

STAR Sports

English Premier Football League
Tottenham vs Wigan
Live at 7:00 pm

FA Cup

Chelsea vs Colchester United

Live at 9:55 pm

Aston Villa vs Man City

Live at 12:25 am (Monday)



7th Nat'l Cricket League
Four-Day Matches (Day Four)
Khulna vs Sylhet
Venue: Khulna Divisional Stadium
Barisal vs Chittagong
Venue: Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium

Monty won't let the chance go

REUTERS, Mumbai

England spinner Monty Panesar hopes to take away a few useful lessons from the tour of India even if he doesn't win his first cap. Left-arm Panesar, whose parents were born in India, became the first Sikh to be chosen for the full England squad following an injury to the experienced Ashley Giles.

"The sub-continent has produced so many good spinners," he told reporters.

"I view this as an opportunity for me to see how they bowl, to see what differently they do, how they bowl here."

Panesar, 23, has been rewarded for his successful stint with English county Northamptonshire, where he took 46 wickets at 21.54 runs apiece from eight games in 2005.

Panesar said he was keen to play in a nation seen as the spiritual home for spin bowling but that the decision was entirely up to the selectors.

"I'm going to give myself the best chance, train with the boys, enjoy my training and make the best of my time here."

Panesar previously toured India with the England under-19 side in 2000.

"I hadn't played too much first class cricket before then back home and they play spinners here very well," he said. "It was a good learning curve for me, to take back and work on it."

Eva remains on top

SPORTS REPORTER

Nazrana Khan Eva maintained solo lead in the Camellia 27th National Women Chess Championship after the ninth round at the federation hall on Saturday.

Eva beat Tanima Parveen to improve her tally to 7.5 points.

International Women Master Rani Hamid kept the second spot beating Shamima Akhter in this round. Rani secured seven points.



The Bangladesh football squad that left for Uzbekistan on Saturday.

PHOTO: STAR

Last one-dayer today

Inzy seeks consolation win

Cricket

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan cricket captain Inzamamul Haq Saturday urged his team to make best efforts for a consolation victory after conceding an unbeatable lead to India in the one-day series.

"We need to win this last match because a win is always encouraging," Inzamam said ahead of the final match at the National stadium at Karachi on Sunday.

Pakistan, who beat India, the West Indies and England in one-day series last year, landed in a no-win situation after India took an unbeatable 3-1 lead.

"Our team has been playing good cricket for the last 15 months and results prove this. India has outplayed us in this series and deserve the win," Inzamam said.

Pakistan took the first match at Peshawar by seven runs before India hit back by winning the next three matches at Rawalpindi, Lahore and

Multan. Inzamam said better fielding has decided the series.

"You have high-scoring one-day matches in the sub-continent so fielding is vital, and it was the difference between the two teams in this series," he said.

TEAMS

PAKISTAN (from): Inzamamul Haq (captain), Salman Butt, Kamran Akmal, Shoaib Malik, Imran Farhat, Mohammad Yousuf, Younis Khan, Faisal Iqbal, Abdul Razzaq,

Navedul Hasan, Mohammad Asif, Mohammad Sami, Yasir Arafat, Arshad Khan, Rao Iftikhar.

INDIA (from): Rahul Dravid (captain), Sachin Tendulkar, Gautam Gambhir, Yuvraj Singh, Mohammad Kaif, Suresh Raina, Mahendra Dhoni, Irfan Pathan, Ajit Agarkar, Rudra Pratap Singh, Sri Sreesanth, Zaheer Khan, Murali Kartik, Ramesh Powar.

Umpires: Steve Bucknor and Aleem Dar.

CRICKET UPDATE

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