

60 booters collect tokens

Sports Reporter



Abahani Krima Chakra and Mohammedan Sporting Club shared the limelight when sixty players collected their tokens from the Senior Division football league office on the inaugural day of soccer transfers yesterday.

After a lapse of two years, the first step towards the First Division soccer transfer began yesterday when players started collecting their tokens, thus bringing life back to the Dhaka Stadium arena. Club officials, fans and journalists crowded the corridors in and around the Dhaka Metropolitan Football Association (DMFA) office.

As usual, the first day's token drama centred around the giants of Dhaka football — Abahani KC and Mohammedan SC.

Mohammed Shafiqul Islam Prince of BRTC Club was the first player to collect his token for the 1991-92 season.

The first hour passed without any fuss. A section of the waiting fans started chanting slogans as Abahani's officials entered DMFA office with six players.

Two Mohammedans players — Zakir and Emily were among the Abahani's surprise package. Mamun Joardar of Victoria Club who initially showed his desire to play for Mohammedans, decided to join Abahani yesterday. Rubel of Adamjee, PWD's Swapon, Emily's younger brother and Muktiyoddha right back Mustafa Babu collected their tokens and left with Abahani's officials.

Half an hour later, Mohammedans' waiting fans also had their chance to raise slogans for their team when MSC officials came to the DMFA office with eight players.

Star defender Jewel Rana of Muktiyoddha Sangsad led the Mohammedans' entrants followed by much talked-about Barun Dewan, also of Muktiyoddha.

Chandan and goalkeeper Milon of Agrani Bank, Zakir of

Parashganj, Manu Singh of Victoria, Shamim of Badda Jagoroni and Mohammedans' Mizan collected their tokens and left with the MSC officials. Brothers Union, the other leading club of Dhaka, played a little part with collections of token of lesser known players Lokman and Jaglul of

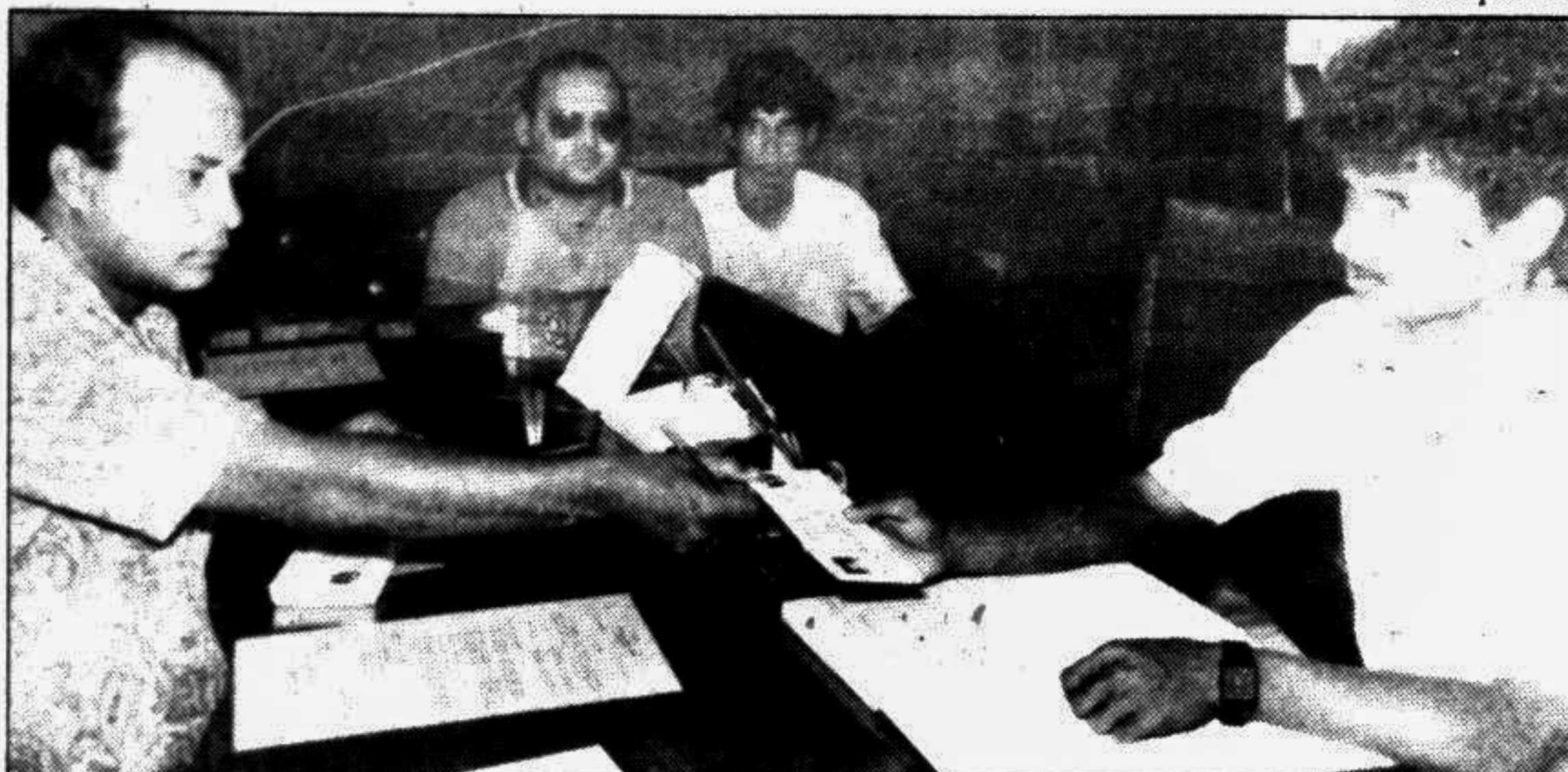
Fakirerpool. Kaiser Hamid, national and Mohammedans' star defender, came alone to collect his token.

Kaiser, according to a reliable source, has already had a fruitful discussion with Mohammedan officials and there is a very little chance of

seeing him in a different jersey. Two players — Abahani defender Aman and Rahmatganj goalkeeper Lahul took their token through a special commission. It is believed that these two players will most probably be playing for PWD Club.



Five players — Emily, Rubel, Swapon, Zakir and Mustafa Babu — waiting in the DMFA office yesterday to collect their tokens. These players were accompanied by the Abahani officials. — Star photo



Shafiqul Islam Prince of BRTC Sports Club was the first booter to collect token when football transfers for the 1991-92 season began at the Senior Division football league office yesterday. — Star photo

Crowd celebrates Connors birthday

NEW YORK, Sept 3 : Jimmy Connors celebrated his 39th birthday at the US Open on Monday by winning a grueling marathon that ended in a classic, tension-filled, fifth-set tiebreak with Caaron Krickstein, reports Reuter.

"This is what I live for, to win a match like this, 7-6 in the fifth," said Connors after reaching the quarter-finals with a 3-6, 7-6, 1-6, 6-3, 7-6 victory in four hours 41 minutes.

"It's another Connors miracle right here. I couldn't have done anything better than I did," the five-time champion said after completing the longest match of the tournament by blasting a backhand crosscourt volley winner to take the final tiebreak 7-4.

Several times during the match it seemed that Connors had run out of miracles, but each time he dug down and produced a little more magic to the delight of 20,000 adoring fans who came out to see him play on his birthday at the Louis Armstrong Stadium.

Krickstein, a steady baseline player, never showed signs of cracking as the tension mounted but acknowledged that it was difficult to play with thousands of people rooting for your opponent and cheering your every mistake.

"It was a lot like a Davis Cup match when everybody is cheering against you," said Krickstein, who had upset eight seed Andre Agassi in the first round. "But I understand it. Jimmy's a legend."

In his 17th US Open quarter-final, Connors will play unseeded Dutchman Paul Haarhuis, who beat top seed Boris Becker.

Haarhuis reached his first career Grand Slam quarter-final by beating German Carl-Uwe Steeb 6-2, 6-3, 6-4.

In the opening Stadium Court match of day, sixth-seeded defending champion Pete Sampras overcame a sluggish start to oust fellow-American David Wheaton, the 11th seed, 3-6, 6-2, 6-2, 6-4.

Sampras, the only 1990 semifinalist remaining in the draw following the early upsets of Andre Agassi, Boris Becker and John McEnroe, will play French Open champion Jim Courier.

Courier, the fourth seed, eliminated 14th-seeded Spaniard Emilio Sanchez by taking a 6-4, 6-4, 6-3 victory in their fourth-round match.

The Sanchez family is still represented at the Open by Emilio's younger brother Javier, slated to play second seed Stefan Edberg, who joined in the quarter-finals on Monday by sister Arantxa.

Sanchez Vicario, the fourth-seeded former French Open champion, won her berth in the last eight of the women's draw by beating Soviet Natalia Zvereva 6-3, 7-6.

The Spaniard will next play four-time champion Martina Navratilova, a 7-6, 1-6, 6-2 winner over Manuela Maleeva-Fragiere of Switzerland.

Top-seeded Steffi Graf and Spain's Conchita Martinez set up another quarter-final clash. Graf beat Austrian Judith Wiesner 7-5, 6-4, and Martinez ousted 12th-seeded American Zina Garrison 6-4, 6-4.

Connors often looked as if his 39-year-old legs would betray him, but his unrivalled desire always kept him in the battle.

After taking the dramatic second set tiebreak 10-8, the former world number one had to have his knee iced down.

But when he held serve at love to level the fifth set at 2-2, he walked over to the court-side television camera and said: "I feel better than I look. Don't worry, I'm okay."

It was at 7-7 in the second set tiebreak that the chair umpire overruled a line call, giving Krickstein set point instead of Connors and he went into a furious frenzy.

He charged the chair, called the umpire a "son of a bitch" and shouted: "I'm playing my butt off at 39 years old and you're doing that? You can't see a ball right in front of you much less over there."

Naturally the tirade got Connors and the crowd pumped up and he won the next three points to take the set.

"He can look really tired, but you know he'll be right back going after the next ball," said Krickstein, who has never beaten Connors in six encounters.

Connors, who began the tournament by coming back from two sets down to beat Patrick McEnroe, appeared to have lost much of his mobility in the third set.

But in the fourth and fifth sets he again began fighting his way to the net in an effort to shorten points against the 24-year-old Krickstein, who only

lost the baseline when absolutely forced to.

Krickstein showed great poise under pressure as he fought off 19 of 24 break points against his serve. But one break by Connors in the sixth game of the fourth set sent the match into a fifth.

Krickstein came up with the first break of the final set for 4-2 and held serve in the tense seventh game on his

denied. Two games later he put the set back on serve by converting his fourth break point of the game. When he held serve for 5-5 the crowd gave him a rousing standing ovation.

"I'm disappointed to lose, but I'm happy for Jimmy," Krickstein said. "He's such a great competitor. You know he's never going to give up."

As the exhausted, but victo-



Jimmy Connors of the US screams in celebrations of his US Open victory over compatriot Aaron Krickstein on Sept 2. Connors was victorious on his 39th birthday by a score of 3-6, 7-6, 1-6, 6-3, 7-6. — AFP photo

sets he again began fighting his way to the net in an effort to shorten points against the 24-year-old Krickstein, who only

seventh game point after eight deuces and three break points for Connors.

But Connors would not be victorious Connors dragged himself out of the stadium, he was met with a chorus of "happy birthday."

Jimbo bemoans power game

NEW YORK, Sept 3 : Today's oversized, high-tech rackets are turning tennis into a serving contest that is sapping the excitement out of the sport, Jimmy Connors

with the feel or the touch or the caressing of the ball. Because if you don't hit the ball 140 mph (225 kph), you're out."

couldn't keep up any longer. "I was just losing too much room. I had to be so perfect and everyone else was running the ball around the rim," he said. "I had to go along with it. I don't have to like it."

"Something has to be done. There has to be a limitation on the size of the rackets," he said. "Something has to be done because if you don't, the excitement of moving the ball around and using the whole court and working the point around to show what you can do is gone. It's taken a lot of the talent out of the game."

The power game that used to awe fans is now commonplace, and there's no room for finesse players.

There have been many ideas considered to try to take away a little from the power, such as adding a second service line about 3 feet (1 meter) behind the baseline. But Connors doesn't like that.

"They come out with equipment that allows everyone to be a big hitter. And if you're not a big hitter, then you're in a group of your own," Connors said Tuesday after losing in the first round of the Volvo International. "Players don't rely on the touch of a (John) McEnroe or an (Ilie) Nastase or a (Vitas) Gerulaitas

the question is, how far will it go? Will it get to the point where guys come out and press a button and it serves for them? That's got to be the next step," he said.

"You can't penalize a guy by moving him back three feet because he's got a good serve. If you do that, then let me move up two feet (61 centimeters) because I don't have one," he said.

Connors said he senses that crowds aren't quite as enthusiastic either.

"I came up in an era of incredible excitement and great electricity every time you walked into a stadium," he said. "My current's a little low."

Instead, regulate the size of the racket and put the skill back in the game, Connors said.

The oversized racket was designed to add fun for the recreational tennis player, but instead is stealing the fun from the professional game, he said.

Connors said he tried to resist the change, but finally surrendered in 1986 when he

"In golf they took out the square grooves because the pros were so good they could stick it right on the pin. In tennis, why give the guys who are supposed to be the best in the world such a huge advantage? I'm supposed to be able to hit the ball on a dime."

Iran allows 'women only' sports

TEHRAN, Sept 3 : In a further move to break its international isolation, Iran is allowing women to take up sports again, but the Islamic Republic has ruled out mixed contests, reports AFP.

Two years ago the revolutionary Komitehs in charge of enforcing Islamic code banned women from taking part in morning gymnastics that were being organised in the parks by the Tehran municipality.

The Komitehs also patrolled the streets of the capital to ensure that women were covered from head to toe and wore no make-up, jewellery or sheer hose in infringement of the Islamic dress code.

But these restrictions have been eased in recent months and now the authorities are encouraging women to take to the tennis courts, indoor gyms and swimming pools.

An international women's sports tournament is planned

for January and Iran has invited 47 countries to take part in basketball, gymnastics, swimming, table tennis and volleyball competitions.

Organising the Games is Faazeh Hashemi, Director of the National Olympic Committee and daughter of President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, who had vowed after his election in July 1989 to introduce reforms.

The government is also planning many sports programmes for women and we have decided to play things for them just as we would for men," Vice President Ghafour Fard said recently.

Fard, who is in charge of sports programmes nationwide, warned however that men would be strictly barred from sporting events for women.

Gyms will be sealed off for several hours each day to allow only women and there are no

immediate plans to even permit a husband to challenge his own wife on public tennis courts.

The city of Tehran has also set aside 15 swimming pools for women only that are enclosed by canvas 10 meters (yards) high to ensure privacy.

"Girls as well as boys need to practice sports and they must have physical education," Fard said.

Before the Islamic revolution which toppled the Shah in 1979 there were no restrictions on sports for women in Iran.

Although Iranian women were enrolled in the Army during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq conflict, they still wore black chador robes in strict observance of Islamic rules.

Tahereh Taherian, the official responsible for women's sports in Iran, said her country recently hosted a series of competitions involving women

athletes from Iran and the neighbouring Muslim Republic of Soviet Azerbaijan.

"We plan on inviting more teams from the Soviet Union because this country is culturally very close to us," she said.

"We had no problems with the Azerbaijani athletes who are Muslims like us and willingly accept our (Islamic) dress code," she said.

Taherian said that the Iranian athletes presented their Azerbaijani guests with head scarves and loose robes that serve as chadors.

"They immediately wore them and said they were very comfortable, in the new clothes," she said.

She also revealed that women trainers from Azerbaijan could soon come to Iran and noted that a team of Iranian women had performed with distinction in shooting competitions at last year's Asian Games in Beijing.

Brazil recalls 5 World Cuppers

TIO DE JANEIRO, Sept 3 : Brazil recalled World Cup players Ricardo, Careca, Mozer, Ricardo Gomes and Jorginho on Monday for their friendly international against Wales in Cardiff next week, reports Reuter.

Caretaker coach Ernesto Paulos called up striker Bebeto, who walked out on the Brazil squad on the eve of the South American championship in June.

Paulo said he intended to field Careca, Romario and Bebeto in attack.

Most of the players who represented Brazil in the last World Cup have been ignored since because they were through by the Brazilian press and the Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) to have let the country down in the competition.

Brazil were knocked out in the second round by Argentina after scoring just four goals in four games.

Stars vie in Delhi today

NEW DELHI, Sept 3 : World 800 metres champion Billy Konchellah of Kenya and Canadian sprinter Den Johnson head a list of top athletes taking part in an international track and field meet here Wednesday, reports AFP.

Men's shot put champion Werner Gunthor of Switzerland and the Soviet Union's Tatyana Dorovoskikh, who won the women's 300m event at the World Championships in Tokyo, are other star attractions, organisers said Tuesday.

Some 150 athletes from 27 countries, most of them on their way home from Tokyo, are taking part in the one-day meet under floodlights at the 75,000-capacity Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium here.

A host of former world champions will also be seen in action at the meet, the fifth India is hosting in as many years, chief organiser Suresh

Kalmadi said. Among them are sprinter Calvin Smith of the United States, German discus throwers Martina Hellman and Wolfgang Schmidt and former Olympic 400m gold medalist Diana Dixon of the United States.

Kalmadi said the impressive line-up for the meet will boost New Delhi's bid to become the first Asian city to host a Grand Prix event.

"We are determined to get the Grand Prix status, and this event will go a long way towards achieving that goal," said Kalmadi, a member of parliament who heads the Amateur Athletics Federation of India.

The swimmers were selected following their performances in the 14th National Swimming Championships, which concluded recently at the National Swimming Pool.

The training camp will begin at the National Swimming Pool on September 10 and the selected swimmers have been requested to contact the federation office on September 9.

The swimmers are: Shamsul Islam, Harunur Rashid, Takbir Hossain, Kasir Ahmed, Abdus Salam, Yasin Ali, Asaduzzaman and Abdul Mannan of Bangladesh Army, Selim Mia, Nazmul Kabir, Mukheesur Rahman, Ilias Hossain, Mahbubur Rahman, and Deen Amin of Bangladesh Navy, Moniruzzaman of Bangladesh Krima Shikkya Protishthan and Abdul Hamid of Pabna

Sheroil SC win. Sheroil Sporting Club yesterday defeated Allied SC by a lone goal in the Rajshahi Coca-Cola Super Division football league being held at the Rajshahi Stadium, according to a message received in Dhaka yesterday, reports UNB.

Riaz scored the match winner for Sheroil SC in the 38th minute of the last half.

Gullit threatens strike

ROME, Sept 3 : Dutch soccer international Ruud Gullit has called for a one-day strike if the crowd violence

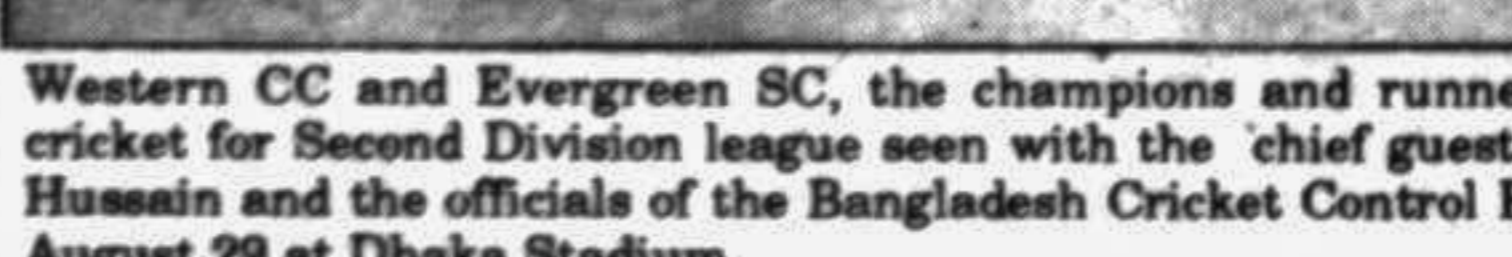
which marked the opening day of the Italian League season on Sunday is repeated, reports Reuter.

A total of 48 people were arrested following incidents at matches in Turin, where Fiorentina fans clashed with local police, Genoa and Verona.

Italian Minister of the Interior Vincenzo Scotti has summoned football federation President Antonio Matarrese to a meeting next week to discuss the implications of the crowd trouble.

AC Milan midfielder Gullit told the Gazzetta Dello Sport newspaper he feared violence would kill off soccer and added: "As far as violence in the stadium is concerned, I myself will promote a new initiative — a strike."

"If, during the season, incidents like those of Turin and Verona should be repeated then we could stop the championship for one day."



Western CC and Evergreen SC, the champions and runners-up teams of the qualifying cricket for Second Division league seen with the chief guest and national coach Syed Altaf Hussain and the officials of the Bangladesh Cricket Control Board (BCCB) after the final on August 29 at Dhaka Stadium.