

Olympic tickets Bangladeshis deprived

SYDNEY, Jan 27: Hundreds of Bangladeshis who fronted up with thousands of dollars to travel to Sydney for the Olympic Games have been told they will not be able to get tickets to events, a report here said today, reports AFP.

The 600 Bangladeshis had bought tickets through a Sydney restaurateur who told Sydney's Daily Telegraph he will now have to refund 150,000 Australian (\$7,500 US) dollars after he was unable to secure tickets.

Nurul Azad said he had been acting as an agent for The Olympic Club, a botched attempt to lure Australian members which began targeting people overseas when its efforts at home failed.

"I lost face... my point of view is it really damaged the Australian image and they (the Bangladeshi clients) are disappointed," he said.

The club's management, TOC Management Services, signed agents to sell Olympic Club merchandise kits to Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Turkey and Macedonia.

Tickets were not included in the packages, however some overseas agents were led to believe the management company would help them secure seats at Games venues.

Police in Australia began investigating the scheme after a Chinese agent for the Olympic Club was charged with fraud for allegedly selling packages which included tickets.

Shahriar seizes

From page 13

Talking to the reporters after the match, the Kent all-rounder admitted that this was for the first time on the tour his team came under pressure.

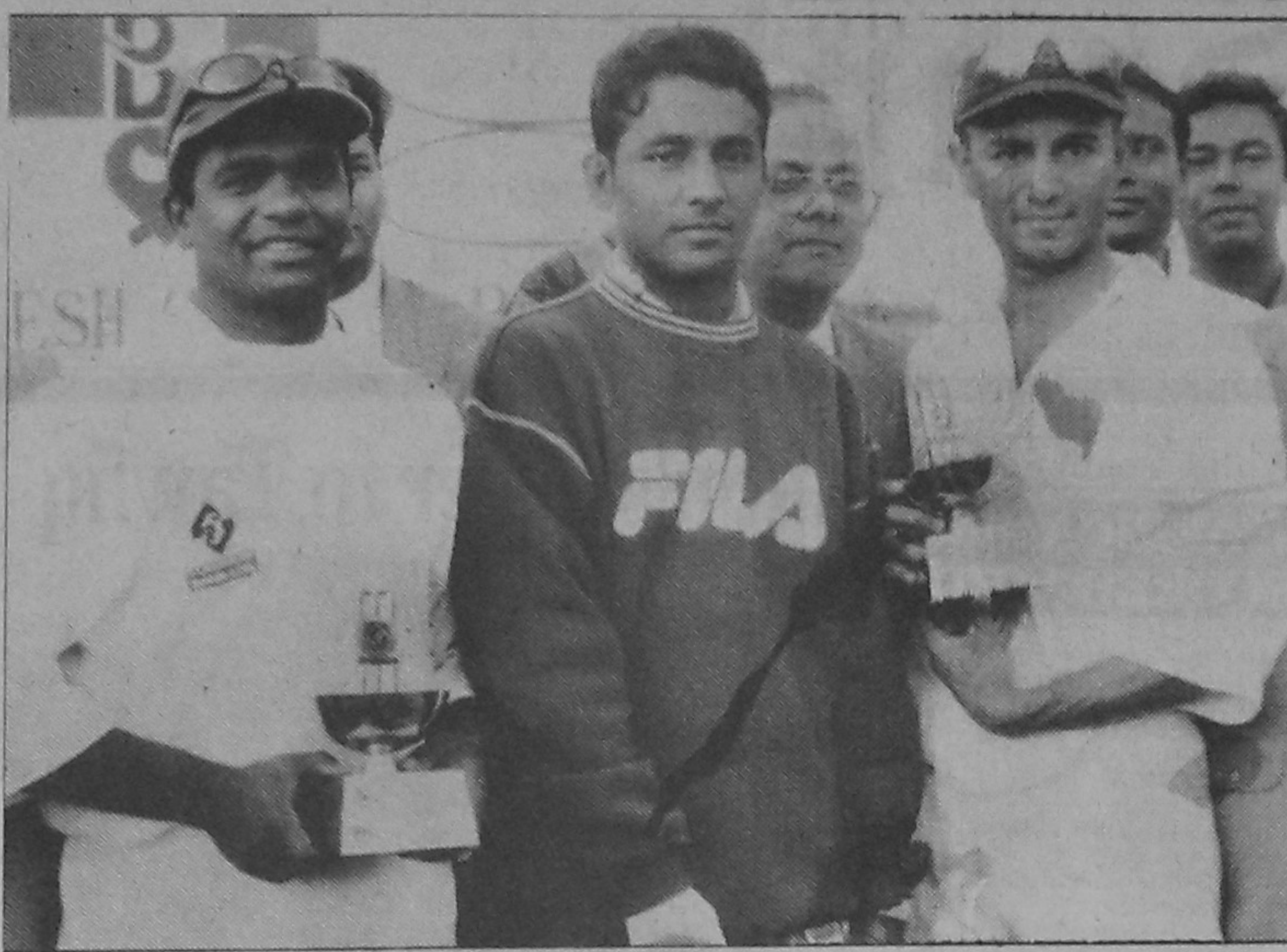
"They had a big chance to win. My congratulations to them for their fantastic fight," said Patel.

About Bangladesh prospect of getting a Test status, Patel made a guarded remark saying that five-day match was more difficult than three-day affair.

On the other hand, Bangladesh skipper said that it was a good match and his team came up with close to their best.

"This will definitely help us in our cause," said Aminul, who also praised Shahriar for his back-to-back century.

"He is a good batsman. Today he has shown how good he is in selecting shots," Aminul added.



Man-of-the-match Shahriar Hossain (C) is flanked by the two captains — Bangladesh's Aminul Islam (L) and Mir Patel of MCC — after the three-day match yesterday. — Star photo

ECB cautions Atherton

LONDON, Jan 27: The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) on Wednesday delivered a warning to former captain Michael Atherton over his rejection of county cricket's new format for next season, reports AFP.

Atherton said on Tuesday he was doubtful whether ECB chief Lord MacLaurin's new two-division format would improve flagging standards.

The Lancashire and England opener also claimed the game was failing to attract interest from supporters and sponsors alike and missing the quality needed to aid the Test side.

Atherton said: "I do not have an argument in defence of county cricket."

"I do not think it serves any purpose whatsoever. Very few people turn up to watch; it does not prepare people for a higher level of cricket, and it does not attract TV deals or sponsorship."

"It is living on borrowed time. There are so many players playing county cricket that there is always someone getting 200 and putting their name to the selectors," he said.

"But it is very difficult to pick out the right people because county cricket does not really give a good indication of who is going to be successful at a higher level."

Tim Lamb, chief executive of the ECB, was dismayed by former England captain Atherton's attack on four-day cricket and revealed it had shocked the championship sponsors.

Lamb said: "It seems to me to be completely inappropriate for Mike to prejudice and write off a new format before it has even started. We are more than disappointed and would firmly rebut his comments."

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South Africa

From page 13

land at Newlands Wednesday: SOUTH AFRICA Kirsten lbw b Gough 13 Gibbs c and b Gough 13 Kallis run out (Ealham) 43 Rhodes c Caddick b White 14 Cronje c Read b Gough 39 Klusener not out 42 Strydom b Caddick 2 Boucheer c Ealham b Alleyne 15 Pollock not out 13 Extras: (lb-3; w-7) 10 Total: (For 7 wks in 50 overs) 204

Fall of wickets: 1-26; 2-32; 3-71; 4-108; 5-147; 6-153; 7-182.

Bowler O M R W Gough 10 0 36 3 Caddick 10 0 29 1 White 10 0 36 1 Ealham 6 0 33 0 Alleyne 10 0 42 1 Hick 4 0 25 0

Did not bat: Hayward, Williams. ENGLAND Hussain c Boucheer b Hayward 1 Knight c Boucheer b Williams 36 Hick lbw b Kallis 25 Solanki c Kallis b Klusener 47 Adams c Pollock b Klusener 42 Alleyne c Boucheer b Hayward 12 White c Rhodes b Williams 6 Ealham c Rhodes b Pollock 25 Read not out 0 Caddick b Kallis 0 Gough not out 0 Extras: (lb-5; w-9; nb-6) 20 Total: (For 9 wks in 50 overs) 203

Fall of wickets: 1-3; 2-72; 3-72; 4-86; 5-121; 6-138; 7-151; 8-191; 9-197.

Bowler O M R W Pollock 10 0 48 1 Hayward 10 0 39 2 Williams 10 0 36 2 White 10 0 41 2 Klusener 10 0 34 2

Result: South Africa won by one run. Man-of-the-match: Jacques Kallis.

Next match: Jan 28 England v Zimbabwe (D/N), Cape Town. POINTS TABLE

Table with 5 columns: Country, P, W, L, P. Rows: S Africa (3, 2, 1, 4), England (2, 1, 1, 2), Zimbabwe (1, 0, 1, 0).

Rivaldo statue

RIO DE JANEIRO, Jan 27: When Barcelona midfielder Rivaldo was named FIFA's 1999 player-of-the-year it marked the fourth time in five years that a Brazilian snagged the prize, reports AP.

But soon Rivaldo will have something that makes him unique -- a statue, the Brazilian media reported Wednesday.

Geraldo Alves, mayor of Rivaldo's hometown, said Wednesday he's commissioned a statue in the player's honour.

It will be placed in the main square of Paulista, about 1,160 miles (1,868 kilometers) northeast of Rio, the mayor said.

Alves was unavailable for comment on Wednesday.

Olympic qualifiers Colombia, Brazil breeze

LONDRINA, Brazil, Jan 27: A hat-trick by Leon Dario Munoz powered Colombia on Wednesday to a 5-1 win over Chile in Group A of the South American Olympic qualifying tournament, reports AP.

Munoz scored in the 16th, 29th and 53rd minutes, while Rubiel Quintana scored in the 59th minute and Mayer Candelo in the 60th. Chile's only goal was scored in the 87th minute by Julio Gutierrez.

In the second match of the evening Brazil defeated Venezuela 3-0.

Ronaldinho scored in the 9th minute and in the 84th minute on a penalty shot, while Lucas scored in the 75th minute.

Primer Liga Real down Betis

MADRID, Jan 27 (Reuters/Internet): Resurgent Real Madrid extended their unbeaten run to six matches on Wednesday with a 2-1 win over Real Betis on Wednesday.

After a poor start to the season and the sacking of coach John Toshack sacked in mid-November, the seven-times European champions have notched up 14 points from the last 18 on offer.

The victory over the visitors from Seville moved them up to seventh place in the Spanish First Division.

International friendly Spain too good for Poland

CARTAGENA, Spain, Jan 27 (Reuters/Internet): Raul Gonzalez's 16th international goal set Spain on their way to a 3-0 victory over Poland on Wednesday as Jose Antonio Camacho's side got their Euro 2000 warm-up programme off to an untaxing start.

Raul, whose presence in the squad prompted a club versus country row that led to threats of resignation from coach Camacho, struck after 15 minutes with an expertly-taken poacher's goal.

Two Ismael Urzaiz headers early in the second half completed a highly satisfactory work-out for Spain, one of the favourites for the European championship finals following their sparkling form in the qualifying series.

Spain's build-up to this match was completely overshadowed by a row with Real Madrid, who were unhappy that Raul and Fernando Hierro were included in the squad when they were playing a rescheduled league match on the same night.

Poland tightened up their defence as the first half wore on, limiting Spain to a couple of hopeful shots.

But two defensive lapses in the second half enabled Spain to increase their lead.

French First Division

PSG cruise on Christian

PARIS, Jan 27: Brazil's Christian scored all four goals in a scintillating display of finishing as Paris Saint Germain earned a 4-2 victory over Strasbourg to cut Monaco's lead to eight points at the top of the French first division on Wednesday, reports AFP.

Christian's fabulous four goals mean he has scored 15 goals in his last 14 games in 10 competitions after not scoring in his first seven.

Christian had scored twice after 10 minutes to effectively kill off the game before Strasbourg had got out into their stride.

He also nearly scored just before the break after good work by Laurent Robert. Towards the end of the second half, he added a further two to give the only Paris first division club hope of bringing the league title back to the capital city.

Strasbourg's late flurry to score two goals by Fabrice Ehret gave the impression the match was closer than it really was.

Monaco drew 1-1 at Metz on Tuesday to provisionally restore 11 points clear on 49 points and it was up to Paris Saint Germain, Lyon, and Auxerre, all on 38, to try and haul back some of that deficit 24 hours later.

However, Auxerre had a goalless draw at St Etienne and Lyon drew 1-1 at home to Bordeaux meaning they are third and fourth respectively 10 points behind Monaco.

Christian scored the first from about six metres and although Strasbourg keeper Thierry Debes got his left hand to it, he could not stop the ball going in the net.

after just two minutes. His second goal on 10 minutes came from a cross from the left by Robert and Christian was perfectly positioned to rifle it into the roof of the net.

He fired home his third goal on 76 minutes after good work by Russia's Igor Yanovski on

the left and got his fourth when a Laurent Leroy shot was blocked and he made no mistake with the follow-up just three minutes later.

Ehret at least improved the visitors' goal difference as he twice got on target in the 85th and 90 minutes.

Monaco went a goal down to Metz's winter-break signing Gerald Batlle after 59 minutes before Italy's Marco Simone hit a 65th-minute equalizer to salvage a point.

Monaco could consider it was a good night's work as they were without injured players David Trezeguet, Marcelo Gallardo and Philippe Christenval, and were playing on an icy pitch rarely seen down in the principality.

Simone, who equalized Batlle's opener following a good cross from Sabri Lamouchi on the right, hit his 16th goal of the season to leave him on top of the league scoring list.

Monaco might even have won the match as they dominated towards the end though it was only thanks to their in-form keeper Fabien Barthez that they did not go behind in the first half.

Auxerre did well to play out a goalless match at St Etienne, who were without Tchiressoua Guel, Lucien Mettomo and Pape Sarr, all at the African Nations Cup, though new recruits Bruno Carotti and Alain Masudi of Nimes were playing for 'Les Verts'.

St Etienne dominated for the whole match and had their best chance when Stephane Pedron hit the crossbar in the second half. Burgundy club Auxerre, meanwhile, had no clear cut chance for the whole 90 minutes.

Lyon scored after just four minutes when a Jacek Bak header met a Vikash Dhorasoju freekick. Lillan Laslandes equalized for Bordeaux in the 16th minute to earn the draw.

In other Wednesday games, Lens had a superb 4-0 victory over Le Havre, Rennes drew 0-0 with Nantes, Montpellier had a 1-0 victory over Nancy and Bastia beat Sedan 1-0.

Patrice Loko scored after just two minutes for Montpellier before Nancy were reduced to 10 men on 15 minutes when Mehdi Meniri was sent off for a foul on Cedric Barbosa. Nancy's Olivier Rambo was also taken off the pitch on a stretcher in the second half.

On Tuesday, Marseille, who have been through the wars in recent weeks as their coach Bernard Casoni began a new regime, managed a 2-1 win at Troyes.

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