



Sanctity at the Bangabandhu

SPORTS REPORTER

The visitors experienced a rare scene at the Bangabandhu National Stadium and its surroundings yesterday. It was a pleasant surprise for the cricket fans who turned up in their thousands to witness the opening ceremony of the ICC U-19 Cricket World Cup at the big bowl.

However, it was neither the colourful opening ceremony nor the nicely decorated settings that struck them most, but the suspension of multi-purpose business for at least a day.

Not only the shops of the all-purpose venue, which over the years has turned into a commercial hub, were totally closed but also the addicts and drug peddlers could hardly be seen around the sporting arena.

"I'm a regular visitor to this place, but have not seen such a vivifying and sporting atmosphere in the last few years," said Mojibul Islam.

The middle-aged man was also happy at the vanishing act of the

PHOTOS: ANISUR RAHMAN

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Did U Know?

As well as being the youngest man ever to win the World Heavyweight Championship Mike Tyson was also the youngest man to lose it.

What to Watch

ESPN

Sportscentre
Sport News
Live at 8:30 pm

STAR Sports

Sportsline
Sport News
Live at 8:00 pm

TALK TURKEY



Emmanuel Petit
(French soccer star)
"I can see myself playing for at least two more years and my priority will be to stay at Chelsea."

Star Whizz Kid COMPETITION 2004

Tick the correct answers,
Post to
The Daily Star

Competition closes at 8 pm
Feb 13, 2004 and draw shortly afterwards

- Who won the 25th National Women's Chess Championship title?
Shabana Parveer, Rani Hamid, Zakia Sultana
- Who lifted the Hopman Cup tennis title?
Australia, America, Russia
- Steve Waugh has played how many Test matches?
132, 168, 200
- David Seaman quit football at the age of
38, 40

Name
Class Roll No.
School Address
Phone: (If any)

Colourful youth show starts

ICC U-19 CRICKET WORLD CUP BANGLADESH 2004
SPORTS REPORTER

Amidst music, colour and the splendour of fireworks in front of an appreciative full house, the fifth ICC U-19 Cricket World Cup 2004 was opened at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday evening.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia inaugurated the 16-nation competition before a gala two-hour ceremony of which the best part was a spectacular fireworks display.

State Minister for Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman, International Cricket Council (ICC) president Ehsan Mani and Bangladesh Cricket Board President Ali Asghar also delivered speeches welcoming the participants and wishing a successful competition.

The U-19 World Cup is the third most important event in the ICC's calendar after the World Cup and the ICC Knockout competition.

"The U-19 World Cup is being held in eight venues across the country including Dhaka. I believe this can only inspire cricketers and cricket lovers from every sphere of the society. This event will go a long way for future development of the game in Bangladesh," said the Prime Minister.

Fazlur Rahman said that by hosting this competition, Bangladesh has proven that it has the ability and can organise events like the World Cup in the future.

ICC president Mani said this year's event was the biggest ever in the youth World Cup's 16-year history.

"This tournament is being organised on a larger scale than ever before. Matches will be played at more venues and in front of what we expect to be the biggest crowds ever in the event's history."

Mani also expected the standard of cricket to be very high as a number of full internationals were taking part.

At this year's tournament, there are players that already have full international experience. Nafees Iqbal, Talha Jubair and Enamul Haque have all played for the Bangladesh national team and Ravi Rampaul has flown here directly from the West Indies tour of South Africa.

Asghar expressed his gratitude to the clubs and local cricket organisers for their cooperation in hosting the U-19 World Cup.

There were unprecedented security measures taken for the ceremony. Army personnel and Special Security Force (SSF) members and roamed the venue and its adjacent areas from early in the day. In a refreshing change, all the shops of the BNS and its adjacent Maulana Bhashani Hockey Stadium remained closed and nothing undesired was allowed inside the Stadium premises.

Metal detectors were placed at the entry points to the galleries and the

Army's dog squad was on the prowl too.

The ceremony came to life with the march-past of the participating nations -- defending champions Australia, Canada, England, India, Ireland, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Scotland, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Uganda, the West Indies, Zimbabwe and hosts Bangladesh.

Popular artistes Shafin Ahmed, Bappa Majumder and Mehreen then entered the ground aboard a mobile stage and circled the BNS singing the U-19 World Cup's theme song 'Utshabe Anande Mete Uthuk Cricket'.

Some 600 boys and girls from Bir Shreshtha Nur Mohammad Rifle Public School and College and Bir Shreshtha Munshi Abdur Rouf Rifle School and College took part in an impressive ground display of national symbols, flags and the ICC logo while placards were flashing at a corner of the north-west gallery denoting the spirit of the nation and the tournament.

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Sun shines on Morton

ICC U-19 CRICKET WORLD CUP BANGLADESH 2004
SPORTS REPORTER

The first thing that impressed Scotland coach Willie Morton more than anything else was the gorgeous sunshine that bathed a wintry Bangladesh.

"For the first time in five months it's nice to see the sun come out in all its glory. Because at the moment most parts of Scotland are covered in deep snow," said Morton yesterday.

A sports-loving nation more known for its football and rugby union stars, it has only recently made forays into cricket. The highlight of Scotland's introduction to the popular game was qualification for the 1999 World Cup in England where they played and lost to Bangladesh, who themselves were making their debut on the world stage.

So it was quite natural for the ICC associate member country to be

caught up in the excitement ahead of another major competition the ICC U-19 Cricket World Cup.

"We feel great to be here and be a part of the cricket carnival. We were surprised to see the excitement for cricket. We thought people like us only loved football," said manager Alistair Scott.

While team officials most of whom are ex-international stars like Pakistan fast bowler Aaqib Javed and Indian all-rounder Robin Singh showered appreciative words on the tournament, it was Bangladesh Under-19 captain Ashiqur Rahman who was boring in his comment.

"Steve Waugh is my idol because he was never satisfied with anything. I'm not excited and I feel as usual ahead of the competition," said Ashiqur.

New Zealand, planned in Group C with the hosts, had only one week to get ready but are oozing with confidence and are eyeing a place in the super league.

"We've come here after playing just two practice matches in a week. But we still are keen to progress to the super league although India and Bangladesh are strong opponents

in our group", said the Kiwis team coach Dayle Hadlee. The elder brother of bowling great Sir Richard Hadlee however lamented the lack of funds that prevented his team from having extensive preparations.

But another contender South Africa wanted use the competition to discover some fresh talent who can go on and represent the senior side for years to come.

"We too have come to win the title like the others but we won't mind if we fail to do so. In fact for us it's more important if we can identify new players to groom for the future," said coach Russel Dmango.

Former West Indian hard-hitting batsman Phil Simons unfortunately was not wearing the famous maroon blazer. Rather he was accompanying Zimbabwe as a technical advisor. However, he will have divided loyalties if the two sides meet.

"I'm a West Indian at heart, no doubt, but being a professional I'll accept if Zimbabwe win in the competition," said the tall right-hander.

Sylhet smash Ctg

ISPANHANI Mirzapore Tea 5th National Cricket League
SPORTS REPORTER

Sylhet handed Chittagong a massive 124-run defeat yesterday to share the top slot with Dhaka after the eighth round of the Ispahani Mirzapore Tea Fifth National Cricket League.

Chasing a huge 421-run target, Chittagong hit out to score 296 after the port city side resumed on 130-3.

Spinner Nabil Ahmed was the most successful bowler claiming four wickets for 78 runs in 38.2 overs while Rezaul Haq Nayem, Imtiaz Hossain and Syed Parvez captured two wickets each.

Faisal Hossain hammered 79 off 175 balls and Arif Ahmed scored 44

off 140 balls.

With their third straight victory, Sylhet raised their tally to 30 points to end the solo lead of Dhaka, which suffered an eight-wicket defeat against Rajshahi at Rangpur on Sunday.

Rajshahi followed the leaders securing 22 points.

Away at the Barisal Stadium, Khulna gained four points when Barisal rode on a brilliant 105 by Proshenjit Roy to force the holders to draw the match.

Proshenjit's century helped the hosts bat out the final day and make 247 for six. Khulna began on 67-2.

The middle-order batsman hammered 17 boundaries in his 228-ball innings.

The result enabled Khulna to move up to third place with 20 points.

Chittagong and Barisal both finished with 18 points.

SCOREBOARD
Scorecards on the last day of the two National Cricket League four-day matches held at different venues yesterday:

Barisal v Khulna
Venue: Barisal Stadium
BARISAL: First innings 193 all out in 77.4 overs (Salahuddin 59, Arman 28, Touhid 25; Russell 8/67)
KHULNA: First innings 375 all out in 154 overs (Jamaluddin 113, Sanjay 63, Shafiu 61, Salahuddin 55; Arafat 3-63, Arman 3-70).
BARISAL: Second innings (overnight 67 for 2 in 42 overs)
Imran c Sanjay b Jamaluddin 23
Nayan b Jamaluddin 19
Nahidul c Al-Amin b Jamaluddin 31
Proshenjit c Hasibul b Shafiu 105
Touhid lbw b Razzak 5
Mustadir lbw b 18

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Security worries 'em

AFP, Calcutta

India's cricket captain Saurav Ganguly on Tuesday played down doubts over next month's historic tour of Pakistan, but stressed he was concerned about the team's safety during the six-week visit.

"We are not worried about the Pakistan tour, but we are worried about the security," Ganguly told reporters on his return from a tour of Australia.

"We all have to take the concern of our families into account. I do not want to comment any further till I have spoken to cricket board officials."

Ganguly said he will meet Jagmohan Dalmyia, president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), over the next few days to discuss the Pakistan tour.

India is scheduled to play three Tests and five one-day internationals during the March-April visit, their first Test tour of Pakistan since 1989.

A three-member BCCI delegation, which includes security expert Yashovardhan Azad, is currently in Pakistan to assess the safety and organisational aspects of the tour.

Indian and Pakistani officials will announce the itinerary and venues of the tour after the delegation completes its assessment.

The Pakistan government has promised top security to the Indian cricketers, but many former Indian players remain unconvinced it was the right time to tour Pakistan.

"Nobody can give any guarantee against terrorism," said Arun Lal, secretary of the Indian Cricket Players Association (IPCA).

"Security definitely must be a big issue playing in Pakistan. The whole world is concerned and players would definitely be worried."

Mohinder Amarnath, who toured Pakistan thrice in 1978, 1982

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PCB chairman clears the air

CRICINFO, undated

Shahryar Khan, the chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), has said that the match-fixing claims that came out to the open in recently leaked letters has been investigated and laid to rest.

In a press conference held at the Gaddafi Stadium on February 9 he made it clear that the PCB would be taking no further action on the issue in question.

"My attention has been drawn to two leaked letters from the International Cricket Council's Anti-Corruption Unit to the former PCB chairman and former PCB director. The only comment I have on these letters is that the first was sent on September 29, 2002 and the second on March 22, 2003," he said.

"In both the letters, there is a clear indication that the letters were based on information that needed

Sarwar steers Maple Leaf

SPORTS REPORTER

Maple Leaf International rode on a remarkable century from Sarwar to post an exciting seven-run victory over Dhanmondi Tutorial in one of the five Dhaka Zone matches of the Standard Chartered 22nd National Schools Cricket Championship yesterday.

Sarwar hammered 131 in Maple Leaf's impressive total of 247-7 in the stipulated 35 overs at the Residential Model School ground.

But Dhanmondi Tutorial almost turned the table around with Rohan

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Shane Warne leads his Victorian second XI teammates on to the field during his comeback game at the Junction Oval in Melbourne yesterday.

Rain extends Warne's ban

Cricket
AFP, Melbourne

Shane Warne's comeback from a 12-month doping ban was spoiled by rain here on Tuesday robbing him of his first opportunity to impress the national selectors before they choose the Test squad this month to tour Sri Lanka.

Warne came into bat for the Victorian second XI at number six, made 11 runs, and later took a good catch, but he did not bowl.

For the remainder of his first day back as a professional cricketer he waited in the team dressing room for a break in the rain.

The crowd at the tiny Junction Oval ground in suburban St Kilda swelled to more than 1000 on day two of the match against the Queensland Academy of Sport, in expectation of Warne bowling his leg-spinners.

But the 34-year-old Test star,

whose 12-month doping ban expired at midnight Monday, will have to wait until Wednesday to bowl.

Warne declined to speak on Tuesday and is unlikely to do so until he finally has a bowl.

The media attention for his return was at least as big as his doping case this time last year.

The Australian Test squad to play in Sri Lanka is scheduled to be announced on February 20.

At least 10 television cameras were at the ground throughout the day.

The media met Warne when he arrived at the ground for an early morning yoga class.

His only bowling for the day was a dozen deliveries he sent down in the nets before the start of play.

Cricketers officials had arranged for Warne to come into the Victorian team a day later despite this game starting on Monday.

The crowd included Warne's mother Brigitte, who gave him the fluid tablet which led to his ban.

Warne's father Keith, wife Simone, their youngest child Summer and brother/manager Jason were also at the game.

Victoria resumed at 290 for three and a guard followed Warne as he went out to bat to resume his career, with the score 354 for four.

Warne hit a boundary before Steven Magoffin had him caught behind and Victoria declared before lunch at 379 for five.

Warne took a sharp chance at first slip to dismiss opener Ryan Broad off Brad Knowles' first delivery for 17.

But the rain arrived in the early afternoon to stop Queensland's first innings at 87 for one.

Warne's former Australian and Victorian teammate, Paul Reffel, and fellow umpire Steve Soulsby called the day's play off a couple of minutes before 5:00pm (0600 GMT).

PHOTO: AFP