

City Bank to sell home cricket series tickets

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) on Sunday revealed the rates of tickets for the home series against Sri Lanka.

The board has signed a one-year deal with The City Bank Limited which will sell the tickets for the three home series against Sri Lanka, Kenya and Australia.

The Tigers will play two one-day internationals on February 19 and 20 and the second Test against Sri Lanka starting from March 6 at the 20,000-capacity Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra, the new international venue of the country.

Chittagong will host the third one-dayer on February 24 and the first Test from February 27 at the 15,000-seat Divisional Stadium, another newly approved venue.

City Bank will sell the tickets from eight branches across the country.

The branches are Dhaka's Principal Office and Gulshan Branch, Chittagong's Regional Office, Khatunganj Branch, Jubilee Road Branch, Pahartali Branch and OR Nizam Road Branch and Bogra Branch at Razabazar.

The ticket-selling for Bogra one-dayers will start from February 16 and for the Test will go on sale on March 1. The tickets for the Chittagong matches will go on sale on February 20.

Abbas Uddin Ahmed, managing director of City Bank, however, said that they would consider one of their Rajshahi branches to sell tickets of the Bogra matches if needed.

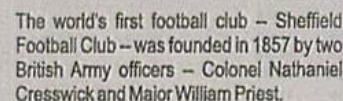
"It is a great privilege for our bank to get involved with the country's most popular game for the first time. We will try to continue the ties in future," said Abbas Uddin at a press conference yesterday at a local hotel.

BCB general secretary Mahbubul Anam informed the press that City Bank has earned the rights of ticket-selling as well as sponsoring the scoreboards for Tk 30 lakh.

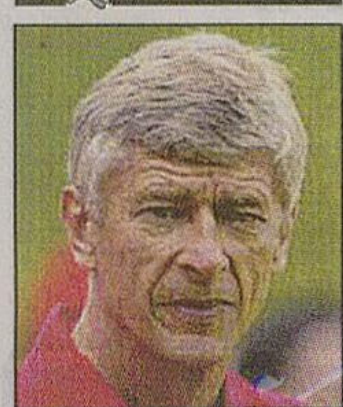
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The world's first football club - Sheffield Football Club - was founded in 1857 by two British Army officers - Colonel Nathaniel Crewsick and Major William Priest.



Pakistan paceman Shoaib Akhtar will be out for four to six weeks and will miss the rest of the one-day series against India due to an ankle injury, captain Inzamam-ul-Haq said Sunday.



Arsene Wenger
(Arsenal's French manager)

"I was asked to take the England job at some stage and I still feel the same because the national team for me is not purely football level. People identify with national culture and pride, the national team, it is all linked together. It is easier to be accepted when you're from the country."

While rejecting an offer to manage England saying the post should not be held by a foreigner.



TEN Sports
India vs Pakistan
Third ODI
Live at 12:00 pm

ESPN
Sportscentre
Live at 10:30 pm

English Premier Football League
West Ham vs Birmingham City
Live at 1:55 am (Tuesday)

Dhaka run continues

ISPAHANI
MIRZAPORE TEA
7th National Cricket League

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka stayed on top of the first-class table of the Ispahani Seventh National Cricket League with a massive 256-run victory against Khulna on the final day of the four-day match at the Dhammondi Cricket Stadium yesterday.

With the third straight victory in four rounds, Dhaka raised their tally to 20 points, six clear of second-placed Rajshahi who improved their position with a thumping innings and 28-run success against Chittagong on Thursday.

Fourth-round losers Sylhet, Khulna and Chittagong crowded the third spot securing 10 points each while Barisal remained at the bottom despite their first outright victory against Sylhet, also on Saturday.

Buried under the pressure of an improbable 513-run victory target, Khulna started the final day's play with only a hope to force a draw

and snatch at least two points.

They resumed on 133-4 and the visitors managed to add only 123 runs before being bundled out for 256 in 80.2 overs.

Jamaluddin Babu top scored with 45 off 97 balls before giving a snick off pacer Talha Jubair, the most successful second-innings bowler picking up three wickets.

Mohammad Sharif captured two wickets to return with a match haul of seven and his efforts on the placid wicket in addition to a quickfire 48 earned him the man-of-the-match award outshining fellow ton-makers Al Shahrar (102) and Anwar Hossain (145).

The fifth round will start from February 15 at three different venues across the country.

SCORES IN BRIEF

DHAKA: First innings 250 and second innings 432-7 declared.
KHULNA: First innings 170 and second innings 256 all out in 80.2 overs (Aslam 36, Tushar 30, Sahagir 31, Jamal 45, Sadat 25, extras 19; Talha 3-42, Ashraf 1-44, Sharif 2-55, Sunny 2-75).
Result: Dhaka won by 256 runs.

Cruciani gets 2-match ban

SPORTS REPORTER

National football coach Diego Cruciani will not be allowed to sit on the bench at least in Bangladesh's next two international matches, informed Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) general secretary yesterday.

The Argentine coach, frustrated by a poor show by Indian referee Rizwan Ul Haque, launched an attack on the official after the Bangladesh-Pakistan Asian Cup pre-qualifying match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium in December 2005. He was banned for the second-leg game in Pakistan and remained confined to the gallery.

"The report came to us from the Asian Football Confederation (AFC). It's a provisional punishment that will remain pending until FIFA takes the final decision," Helal told.

"Chairman of the FIFA disciplinary committee will take the final decision," said Helal adding, "Cruciani will not be able to sit on the bench in Bangladesh's Asian Cup qualifiers against Uzbekistan and Hong Kong."

Bangladesh, preparing for the Asian Cup, travel to Uzbekistan for their first match on February 22 and host Hong Kong in Dhaka in early March.

Aussie avenge in style

Symonds, Ponting set records on a roll

Cricket

AFP, Sydney

Australia, powered by centuries from skipper Ricky Ponting and Andrew Symonds, crushed Sri Lanka by 167 runs to level the three-match triangular one-day series final at the Sydney Cricket Ground Sunday.

There was only ever one winner after the Australians amassed their highest one-day total of 368 for five off 50 overs. The Sri Lankans found it a far too difficult assignment and succumbed to be all out for 201 off just 36 overs.

Coming together at a perilous 10 for three after the first 18 balls, Ponting clobbered 124 off 127 balls and man-of-the-match Symonds pounded the highest one-day innings of 151 off 127 balls at the ground to surpass Australia's all-wicket partnership record with 237.

In a day of records, Australia's 368 for five also bettered the previous highest innings of 359, set twice against India in the 2003 World Cup final in Johannesburg and two years ago in Sydney.

Ponting and Symonds surpassed Australia's previous best one-day stand of 234 between Ponting and Damien Martyn for the third wicket in the 2003 World Cup final against India.

Australia now take winning momentum into Tuesday's deciding third final at Brisbane's Gabba ground.

"Although things didn't start well for us we witnessed one of the best batting displays you'll ever seen from Andrew Symonds," Ponting said.

"His innings was very special and for a team to post 368 after being 3-10 is pretty spectacular stuff."

The last time a team came from losing the opening final in the tri-series here was in 1994 when Australia beat South Africa in the final two matches.

"We had our backs to the wall at 3-10, we just had to get a partnership going and once we got established on that wicket we played their spinners pretty well and who would ever have thought that Murali (Muttiah Muralitharan) would go for 99 off 10 overs."

"The series is now beautifully placed going up to Brisbane and the toss won't matter at all up there."

Sri Lankan skipper Marvan Atapattu said: "We're glad to be in the final contrary to the form we've been in the past few months and

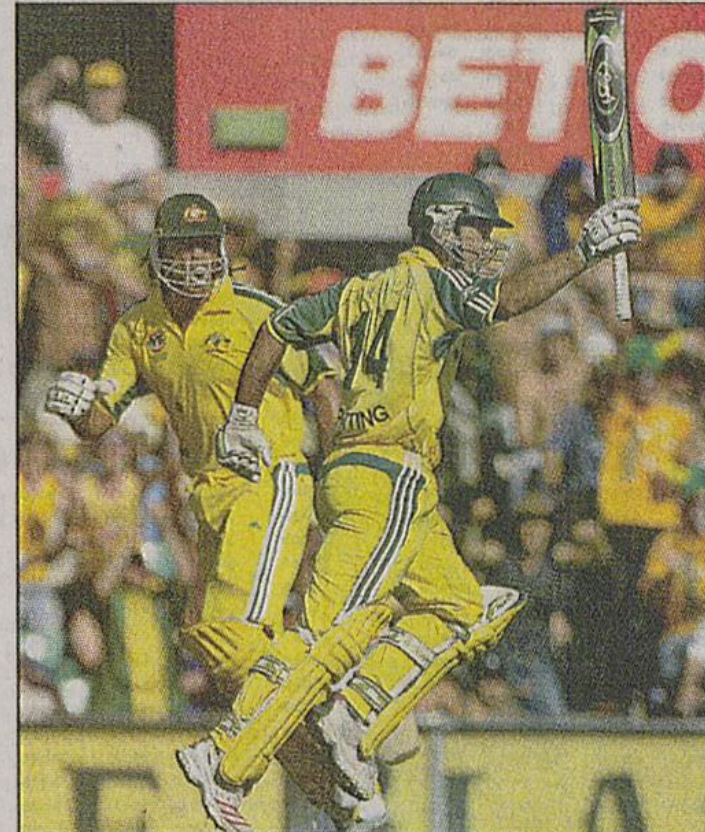


PHOTO: AFP

THE DESTROYERS: Australia captain Ricky Ponting (R) raises his bat on reaching the century during the second final of the triangular series against Sri Lanka in Sydney on Sunday. Andrew Symonds (L) also hit a thunderous century.

we'll just keep enjoying every moment of it in the third final."

Australia, stunned by their 22-run loss to the Sri Lankans in the opening final in Adelaide last Friday, were in trouble early on, losing the wickets of Adam Gilchrist (0), Simon Katich (1) and Martyn (8), all to the swing left-arm bowling of Chaminda Vaas.

But Ponting and Symonds combined to snatch the match away from the Sri Lankans with their overpowering partnership.

Ponting scored his 19th one-day century, passing Mark Waugh's 18 as the most by an Australian, while Symonds hit his fourth one-day century and first in Australia.

The dreadlocked all-rounder, who belted 156 off 127 balls with eight sixes against New Zealand in Wellington last December, plundered 13 fours and three sixes off the hapless Sri Lankan bowlers Sunday.

Symonds also claimed the highest one-day score on the famous ground, surpassing the 130 by India's Yuvraj Singh against Australia in January 2004. He fell just 22 runs short of Mark Waugh's

national mark of 173.

It was a stunning about-turn after Vaas claimed the big wicket of Gilchrist with his second ball, caught by Tillekeratne Dilshan at point and he was joined by fellow opener Katich, who was leg before wicket for one. Martyn soon followed, caught at slip by Mahela Jayawardene.

Michael Clarke rounded off the innings with an unbeaten 54 off 28 balls and with Mike Hussey (23 off eight balls) put on 48 for the unfinished sixth wicket.

Muralitharan was punished, spanked for 99 runs, the most conceded by a bowler in a 10-over spell in one-day cricket. Vaas finished with 4-56 off his 10 overs.

Once Sri Lanka lost their top four batsmen - Sanath Jayasuriya (0), Kumar Sangakkara (13), Marvan Atapattu (24) and Jayawardene (50 off 48 balls) - they were always struggling in the face of Australia's massive total.

Russel Arnold hit out lustily at the death to finish an unbeaten 64 off 62 balls.

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Tigers go to Bogra today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh cricket team leaves the city for Bogra this morning to play the first two day-night one-day internationals against Sri Lanka to be held on February 19 and 20 at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium.

After a weeklong practice in the capital, Habibur Bashar's men will have their final net sessions in Bogra.

They will travel by the team's own luxury bus, presented by GrameenPhone for the series. "We could not have proper net sessions in Dhaka as the wickets at the Mirpur Stadium produced uneven bounce. I think our final practice at Bogra, especially in the nets would be more important for us," said Bashar yesterday.

National selectors on Friday announced a 15-member squad for the three-match one-day series.

Monem Munna remembered

SPORTS REPORTER

A mourning procession was brought yesterday to mark the first death anniversary of former national football captain Monem Munna at his hometown in Narayanganj.

Munna Smriti Sangsad and Sonali Oit, Narayanganj brought out the rally to pay tribute to the football icon and later laid floral wreath at his tomb.

Munna, one of the finest footballers the country has ever produced, passed away at the age of 39 last year of kidney ailments, sending the whole sports fraternity into deep shock.

Munna, who led the nation to win its first trophy in a foreign football tournament in 1995 in Myanmar, is still billed as the 'last superstar' who alone could draw big crowd to the ground.

A central defender, who became a household name during his 12-year stint with Abahani, also graced the Kolkata football playing for East Bengal in 1991-93.

Having retired in 1997, the one-time highest paid footballer of the country became Abahani manager before kidney related complications cut his life short.

Abahani arranged a milad mahfil and offered prayers at the club pavilion in memory of the former great.



PHOTO: STAR

AEA Muhaimen (2nd from R), DMD of The City Bank Limited, takes questions from reporters during a press conference at a city hotel on Sunday.

Lahore ODI today

Akhtar blow for Pakistan

Cricket

AFP, Lahore

Pakistan paceman Shoaib Akhtar will be out for four to six weeks and will miss the rest of the one-day series against India due to an ankle injury, captain Inzamam-ul-Haq said Sunday.

"We were confident that he would recover in time but when he tried to bowl during the practice he aggravated the injury and felt severe pain and that is why he is being ruled out of the one-day series," Inzamam told reporters.

"Shoaib Akhtar is our strike bowler so his absence will be felt but we have other bowlers in the back up who would definitely come up and perform," he said, adding that a replacement would be announced later Sunday.

He said that doctors had advised Akhtar to rest up for four to six weeks.

Earlier Inzamam urged his players to work hard to stop the back-in-form Indian team, saying

they need to improve their overall game specially fielding.

"This one-day series is still open and I think the team that fields well in the remaining three matches will run away with a series victory," Inzamam said ahead of the third match of the five-match series here on Monday.

India excelled in all three



SHOAIB AKHTAR

departments in their impressive seven-wicket win in the second

match at Rawalpindi on Saturday to level the series at 1-1.

The Pakistan captain said his side was capable of coming back from defeat in their last match.

"Getting beaten in one match doesn't really make a big difference. This team is capable of fighting back and winning again," said Inzamam, whose team won the first match by seven runs at Peshawar.

Pakistan's desire to post a big total after winning the toss was not aided by four run-outs as they were dismissed for 265 in 49.2 overs, a total which India surpassed for the loss of three wickets and with 6.5 overs to spare.

A sell-out crowd is expected for the next day-night match with a large contingent of Indian fans expected to cross the border to watch cricket.

An upbeat Indian captain Rahul Dravid said his side would not get carried away with the Rawalpindi win.

"I think we played some good cricket to win, so I think it's going to

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BCB announces match officials

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday revealed the names of match officials for the three-match one-day and two-match Test series between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

Local umpire Mahbubur Rahman will accompany India's Hariharan Krishna in the first two day-night ODIs to be held at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra on February 19 and 20.

Akhteruiddin Shahin will officiate in the third one-day international along with Hariharan at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium on February 24.

Nadir Shah will act as TV umpire in the one-day series.

West Indies' Steve Bucknor and Pakistani Asad Rauf will stand in the first Test at Chittagong starting from February 27 while Hariharan replaces Bucknor in the second at Bogra starting from March 6.

Alan Hurst of England will act as the match referee during first two ODIs before being replaced by Clive Lloyd of the West Indies for the remaining of the series.

Mahbubur Rahman and Akhteruiddin Shahin will act as TV umpires in the two Tests.

Div I cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Jatrabari Sporting Club, Bangladesh Boys and Dhaka Wanderers Club won their respective matches in the last round of the First Division Cricket League at different city venues yesterday.

Jatrabari (182-4) defeated Kathalbagian (178-10) by six wickets at the Fatullah Stadium, Bangladesh Boys (172-3) handed a seven-wicket defeat on Eskaton Sabuj Sangha (171-9) at the Dhaka University ground while Wanderers (282-10) beat Cricket Coaching School (227-10) by 55 runs at the City Club ground.

Partex Sporting Club and Young Pegasus have already qualified for next year's Premier Cricket League as champions and runners-up respectively.

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