



Stars blitz

SPORTS REPORTER

If a galaxy comes down to earth, people are bound to be bewildered.

And more than 25,000 spectators were enthralled by the gala show when the stars of 'Dhaliwood' joined footballers of past and present at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday for a noble cause; to raise fund for the country's flood victims.

Even though a trademark Aslam header, a typical Sabbir through pass, dazzling skill out on the flank by Wasim, a fierce Chunnun freekick or a regulation miss by Farhad in front of goal failed to stir the huge crowd during a 50-minute Abahani-Mohammedan friendly that ended in a goalless draw, presence of the silver screen heroes and heroines turned out to be a memorable event if not a blockbuster.

Even the slightest possession of ball or a regulation catch by the goalkeeper of the 'cinema star' team was cheered passionately by the roaring fans, reminding the football lovers that they had not even seen a crowd this big in this season's recently concluded professional football league.

For players like Badal Roy, Salam Murshedi, Kaiser Hamid, Babloo, Jewel Rana (wearing the sky-blue shirt of Abahani for the first time), Biplob or Joy who have graced this great sporting venue and were used to fervent support, the partiality towards the film stars may have been painful.

But they would all return home happy knowing that the joint effort would put a substantial amount of money to the Chief

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PHOTOS: ANISUR RAHMAN

ALL FOR A NOBLE CAUSE: (Clockwise) Silver screen heartthrobs Ferdous and Moushumi waves to cheering crowd, present and past star footballers of Abahani parade on their familiar den, country's film doyen Razzak (R) shares a light moment with former national winger Chunnun and Salam Murshedi led the all-star Mohammedan team ahead of their exhibition match against bitter rivals Abahani at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. The show was arranged to raise fund for the flood victims of the country.

Good start for Academy

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Wicketkeeper batsman Dhiman Gosh slammed an unbeaten century as the visiting BCB National Cricket Academy (NCA) made a flying start in the Crocodile Cup three-day match against Tasmania at the University ground yesterday.

The right-hander hit exactly hundred in 116 balls and Rokibul Hasan contributed 158-ball 67 as NCA declared their innings on 308-7 in 94 overs after deciding to bat first.

Imrul Kayes was the other notable scorer with 48 off 101 balls while Nayeem Islam added 21 off 81 balls.

At the end of the first day's play, Tasmania scored five runs without any damage.



Did U Know?

The first Special Olympics Asia Pacific Cricket Tournament was held from December 1-6, 2004 in Ahmedabad, India 21 teams from 20 states in India and one from Pakistan participated in the meet.



Thierry Henry

(Barcelona's French striker)
"If you want to see *The Fantastic Four* - go to the cinema."



TEN Sports

US Open Tennis
Day Eight
Live from 9:00 pm

ESPN

Sportscenter India
Sports News
Live from 8:30 pm

AB Bank feels lucky

SPORTS REPORTER



It was even hard to believe for the company itself that such a small amount of money enabled them to be a proud sponsor of Bangladesh national cricket team for the coming ICC Twenty20 World Championship to be held in South Africa.

"I must say that luck favoured us because we didn't think that we could manage the team sponsorship with this amount of money," Sajedur Siraj, vice-chairman of AB Bank, made this simple statement yesterday.

The private bank arranged a press conference at a local hotel after more than two weeks since being confirmed as team sponsors by the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB).

But it was not at all a happy meeting both for them and the BCB officials as the questions mainly centered on the poor amount of money.

AB Bank, who also bought the ticket selling right for international matches at home during the period of May 2007 to May 2009, got the right as a highest bidder with the amount of Taka ten lakhs twenty thousand which raised many eyebrows.

In recent times the board's poor marketing policy has been a much talked about issue especially after the way they devalued the brand name of 'Bangladesh cricket' by selling the clothing rights to a local company for only Tk 2 lakhs.

Many were surprise when vice chairman of marketing and commercial committee Selim Bhuiyan told in reply to a question during the press conference that they requested the sponsor company to

consider the matter if Bangladesh managed to reach the second round.

"We made this request and you can also request them," he replied when asked about whether they have mentioned anything in the contract about the additional money if the team qualified to the second round.

"Actually time was a big factor for our ad-hoc committee" Bhuiyan defended.

AB Bank's President and Managing Director Kaiser A Chowdhury however said that they would consider bonus for second round matches.

"We are here to promote Bangladesh Cricket. We are very much hopeful that Bangladesh will progress to the second round of the Twenty20 World Cup. In that case we will sit again with the BCB officials and definitely consider about giving a bonus," he said.

Bangladesh play SL today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh will look for revenge when they take on Sri Lanka in the 7th Asia Cup hockey today at the Radhakrishnan Stadium in Chennai.

The last time the two sides met, Bangladesh went down to Sri Lanka in Kandy in the third-place play-off in last year's 10th SA Games.

Hosts Sri Lanka, who had lost the group match to Bangladesh, won bronze medal.

Bangladesh had also clashed with the Lankans in the South Indian city back in 1995 when hockey was introduced to the then SAF Games. The match ended in a draw but Bangladesh eventually clinched bronze.

Bangladesh, playing without top five stars, got off to a flying start in the ongoing tournament with a 13-0 thrashing of Thailand but crashed 6-0 to China, the Asian silver medalists.

Sri Lanka suffered a 2-0 defeat to India in their last match.

Tendulkar epic soon

PTI, Manchester

Sachin Tendulkar has been appointed ambassador for the Manchester United Opus in India and the publishers are planning a similar epic about the Indian batting great.

Tendulkar, who was the guest of honour at the Premier League match between Manchester United and Sunderland, has been named Indian ambassador for the voluminous hardback epic about the club - and he revealed that the publishers, Kraken, are planning a similar book on Tendulkar.

"This started little more than a year ago," Tendulkar was quoted as saying by a Press Association report.

"They're really doing their homework. It's wonderful to be part of this and I'm looking forward to it," said Tendulkar who watched Alex Ferguson's team beat Sunderland at Old Trafford on Saturday.

Tendulkar has gone without a century in the one-day series so far but the Indian run-machine said more than personal milestone, his priority was now to help India make a comeback in the series.

"I feel I have been batting well and since we left Indian shores I might almost have had five hundreds by now. Nobody wants to miss hundreds but sometime it happens. It doesn't matter if I score a hundred or get out on 99 as long as the team wins. That's what matters to me the most," he said.

He said the ongoing ODI series has been a seesaw affair even though the hosts managed to have an upper hand.

"If you look at the third and fourth one-dayers, both were evenly poised. At one stage, especially the last one-dayer, we were almost 90 per cent there. Stuart Broad and Ravi Bopara batted quite sensibly and all credit to them."



PHOTO: AFP

Star Indian batsman Sachin Tendulkar executes his trademark off-drive during the fifth one-day international against England at Headingley yesterday.

Tigers go down fighting

Nazimuddin flays Pakistan



SPORTS REPORTER

Nazimuddin toyed with the Pakistani attack but his spectacular 81 could not ensure a win as Bangladesh went down by 30 runs in their second match of the four-nation Twenty20 competition at the Nairobi Gymkhana ground yesterday.

It was never easy to chase 192 in 20 overs but thanks to young Nazimuddin, the Tigers made a game of it before being restricted to 161 for seven under fading lights.

None of the other batsmen made any impact on the score with Alok Kapali's 19 being the next best.

Nazimuddin began in spectacular fashion when a short delivery from 'Rawalpindi Express' Shoaib Akhtar was pulled to the midwicket boundary off the second ball of the innings. He treated the opening duo of Akhtar and Mohammad Asif with disdain as the first six overs of

fielding restrictions, barring the loss of Tamim Iqbal (1), was all Bangladesh; and all Nazimuddin!

The over after Tamim's fall, Asif was struck for three fours in a row by the debutant who by now was warming up for a hurried epic. Two pull shots and a blazing square-cut meant that Asif went for 22 in his two overs.



NAZIMUDDIN ... 81

Then came his first six. Akhtar's legside delivery was nonchalantly flicked to the midwicket stand. Next over, medium-pacer Iftikhar Anjum Rao was given a warm welcome with a couple of fours and two sixes: one landed on the adjacent tennis court and the second one flew into the car park. The second big hit brought on his half-century off just 25 balls.

Aftab Ahmed fell two balls later for seven, missing a Shahid Afridi quicker delivery. But Aftab's dismissal or even Mohammad Ashraful's (7) run-out did not discourage Nazimuddin. He went on his merry way with lofting another over long-on off leg-spinner Afridi, who was the most successful bowler with 2-26 off his four overs.

Kapali helped out Nazimuddin but fell after hitting a six off Afridi.

But Nazimuddin was not done hitting sixes. He carted two more -

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Captain Dhoni speaks



CRICINFO, undated

Mahendra Singh Dhoni has said he will need to balance caution and aggression when he leads India in the Twenty20 World Championship.

"It's different being an aggressive batsman and an aggressive captain. Of course, that instinct will be there but you need to balance both," he said. "A lot depends on how the team responds to your leadership."

Dhoni said he has gained experience serving as deputy to Rahul Dravid in England. "His (Dravid's) ability to stay calm and cool under pressure ... As a captain you got to be in control even when things are not going your way. It helps if you keep your nerves in a tense situation and avoid doing things in a rush."

When asked if he was a natural when it came to leadership, Dhoni said, "That's for you guys to decide. But I am a natural. I like to do things my way and I take my own decisions in whatever I do." However, Dhoni, the first India player from the state of Jharkhand, said he never even expected to make the grade as a player, let alone being the captain. "To be honest, I never dreamt of playing for India. I just played the game for the love of it. So just to play for India was like a good fairytale."

"To be named captain is a bit more special because I'm just three years old in international cricket. It's a big opportunity. It's a big responsibility given to me and I'll give it my best shot."

In the absence of Dravid, Sachin Tendulkar and Sourav Ganguly, Dhoni would be leading a team with experienced players such as

Virender Sehwag, Ajit Agarkar, Harbhajan Singh and Yuvraj Singh, along with newcomers such as Yusuf Pathan and youngsters such as Piyush Chawla and Rohit Sharma.

"It's a nice blend of youth and experience. It's nice to have a bit of experience to deal with a tight situation because they have been there and done that before. Then it's always good to have some young blood, players who are keen to prove themselves. Twenty20 cricket will be extremely demanding. It's a fast-paced game and fielding will be extremely important aspect of the game. Fresh legs will be an asset to the team."

He said the team had two dangerous batsmen in Sehwag and

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