

Confusion all around

ATIQUÉ ANAM

Much of the talk since the start of the Idea Cup has surrounded the high price of tickets and the consequent low turnout in the matches. One thing that was attributed earlier was the cold, but there hasn't been any significant improvement in crowd turnout, except for the matches involving Bangladesh, despite the weather becoming more clement.

Whereas the crowd should have built on throughout the tournament, the lowest turnout was registered yesterday during the match between India and Sri Lanka. It was disappointing to see two of the world's cricketing giants playing in front of almost empty stands. However, more frustrating was the fact that people had come to the stadium and left without watching the game due to a confusion surrounding the ticket price.

It was on Saturday that the BCB president AHM Mustafa Kamal while talking to reporters after the organising committee meeting of the 2011 ICC World Cup at a local hotel said that gallery ticket price has been 'slashed to Tk 50' from Taka 200 for the remaining matches and that was quoted by a section of media.

Perhaps, some lack of communication inside the cricket board led him to make such a wrong remark as the BCB has only slashed the price of gallery tickets from Taka 300 to Taka 200 only for the final.

Whatever the reason, it caused confusion and chaos among the enthusiasts, some of whom had to go back home seeing the price not being reduced, while others stayed in for the sake of enjoying the game. And they expressed their anger and frustration at the sorry gatemen who had no idea what it was all about. So the question arises, will the cricket board be prepared enough when they will have to host the World Cup come February 2011?



India opener Gautam Gambhir pulls one down to the mid-wicket boundary during his fine knock of 71 against Sri Lanka in the Idea Cup tri-series at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

SA GAMES

Zoran picks 39

SPORTS REPORTER

New coach Zoran Djordjevic yesterday declared a 39-member preliminary squad for the residential camp for the South Asian Games to be held in Bangladesh from January 29 to February 9.

The preliminary squad consists of maximum familiar faces, who were also in the preliminary squad of the SAFF Championship. Players like goalkeeper Aminul Haque, Zahid Hasan Emily, Wali Faisal, Enamul Haque, Arman Aziz, Mamunul Islam, Zahid Hossain all were picked up for the SA Games preliminary squad. However, Mehdi Hasan Ujjal, Biplob Bhattacharja, Rajani Kanti Barman and Pranotosh Kumar of SAFF squad were dropped from the meet of Under-23. Only three over-age players will be allowed in the squad.

The Serbian coach and his two assistants, who watched a few matches of the Bangladesh League in and outside Dhaka, have picked some faces like striker Touhidul Alam Sabuj of Farashganj SC, striker Touhidul Islam Siddique of Ctg Mohammedan, defenders Akramuzzaman Liton and Mintu Sheikh of Feni Soccer.

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Only pride to play for

SPORTS REPORTER

For a team like Bangladesh it's always important to prove themselves no matter whether the game holds any consequences or not.

India's win against Sri Lanka on Sunday means today's game against India is nothing but a dead-rubber for the Tigers.

Still, Shakib Al Hasan's men have every reason to be fully focused because an impressive performance in the final league match of the Idea Cup would be a real morale boost for them ahead of the two-match Test series against their big next-door neighbours which will start from January 17 at Chittagong.

Jamie Siddons' charges will definitely try to improve two things that they desper-

ately missed in the last three games of the tri-nation tournament. Priority number one should be the improvement of bowling that got a lot of stick at the hands of two quality opponents. The inexperienced pace attack in the absence of Mashrafe Bin Mortaza looked not only ordinary but also lacked discipline. The experienced spin attack also struggled against India and Sri Lanka for obvious reasons.

Batting was quite consistent in the three games but there was a big score missing from the top order as most of the batsmen got starts but failed to convert into a big one. It was refreshing to watch the team given good starts by their two southpaw openers Tamim Iqbal and Imrul Kayes--and former Bangladesh skipper Mohammed Ashrafu batted with some responsibility while captain Shakib Al Hasan also returned amongst the runs

in the last game against Sri Lanka. Shakib is still looking for a big score from the top order but before that he wanted to win the toss so that they can field first as he had made a farce of the opportunity against India which brought him wide criticism.

"We want to win the toss and take fielding, let's see how the bowlers do," said the young Bangladesh skipper during the practice session at Mirpur yesterday.

He joked when asked about his team's chances of playing in the final of the tournament on January 13. "Yes, if India win today and we beat them tomorrow," said the smiling Tigers skipper.

There is a possibility of bringing in a change in the bowling department and there was a talk about three pacers at the cost of one experienced left-arm spinner but the team sources said that Shaiful

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Ticket prices for Tests slashed

SPORTS REPORTER

The ticket prices for the Idea Cup 2010 Bangladesh India two-match Test series have been slashed. The ticket price for VIP grandstand has been revised to Tk 500 from Tk 1000, club house from Tk 200 from Tk 300, and special enclosure to Tk 100 from Tk 200, said a press release from Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday.

However, the price for gallery tickets have remained as previous at Tk 50.

Earlier, the gallery ticket price for the final of the ongoing Idea Cup Tri-Nation had been revised to Tk 200 from Tk 300.

Shuktara's first win

SPORTS REPORTER

Shuktara Jubo Sangsad tasted their first triumph of the Bangladesh League when they defeated visitors Chittagong Abahani 1-0 in their third home match at the Osmani Stadium in Narayanganj yesterday.

Shohel separated both the sides in the 33rd minute striking the season's first goal as Shuktara raised their point tally to six to join Farashganj, Beanibazar and Arambagh KS, who, however have played a match less than Shuktara's seven.

The fourth defeat in a row meant Chittagong Abahani remained stuck to their previous five points to stay third from bottom.

Visiting Feni Soccer Club held Rahmatganj MFS to a goalless draw at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Sepoy Mostafa Kamal Stadium.

Newcomers Feni maintained their fifth position of the 13-team points table to secure nine points from seven outings, just one point behind fourth-placed Brothers Union.

Rahmatganj, who had an impressive run in the previous season crushing giants Abahani and Mohammedan, stayed second from the bottom with just two draws from seven matches.

Razzaq out with injury

CRICINFO, undated

Pakistan all-rounder Abdul Razzaq has injured his hand and will be unavailable for the limited-overs leg of the tour of Australia.

"I've sustained a fracture while batting" Razzaq told Pakpassion.net. "It was one of those out-of-the-blue injuries, where I was batting and the ball smashed into my hand. The hand has been plastered and I've been advised rest for one month by the medical staff. It's very unfortunate, as I was really looking forward to playing in

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Experiment goes awry

BISHWAJIT ROY

Lady Luck once again smiled on Kumar Sangakkara, but the Sri Lankan captain's experiment to bat first backfired as India crushed them by eight wickets on Sunday to confirm the final clash with the same opponents at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur on January 13.

"Keeping the final in mind we took the decision to bat first as we have no experience of fielding second in the tournament, but we didn't bat well today because we were careless," said Sri Lanka coach Trevor Bayliss in the post-match briefing.

India too experimented with the team as they rested key players like Virender Sehwag, Harbhajan Singh and Ashish Nehra, but they will definitely come up with the full-strength side in the final as the Sri Lanka coach said that they were ready to take the challenge.

"We are ready for that challenge," he added.

This is the first time that bowlers dominated on a flat track as India skittled their opposition in 46.1 overs for a paltry 213. And it was also the first time that a bowler, Zaheer Khan, got the man-of-the-match award in the tournament.

"It is highly satisfying that a bowler has got the man-of-the-match award on this sort of track. It is becoming evermore difficult for bowlers to dominate, considering the way one-day cricket is shaping up. Especially it is hard to contain batsmen in the batting powerplay. We are still trying to adjust to the new format," said Zaheer who took three wickets for 38 runs.

"If we can be consistent in our bowling, we will be successful in the future. In this format, the most important thing is to take wickets as it is hard to contain them. Basically Twenty20 cricket is what changed the approach to the one-day game," observed the left-arm bowler.

Another paceman Sudeep Tyagi, who played in this tournament for the first time, has impressed Zaheer. He believes like his captain that if there is a specialist bowling coach in the

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NSF and BWF expect better performance

SPORTS REPORTER

Neither the National Shooting Federation (NSF) nor Bangladesh Weightlifting Federation (BWF) have boldly given any hopes of clinching gold in the upcoming South Asian Games when both the federations declared their squads for the regional extravaganza to be held from January 29 to February 9 in Bangladesh.

The Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA), which has been running the residential camps of 23 disciplines of the SA Games for one year with a hope of clinching 17 golds including shooting and weightlifting, arranged a programme at the BOA Bhaban to inform the media about their preparations as well as possibilities in the 11th edition of the Games. The shooting team consists of 25 members while weightlifting team comprises eight members.

The BOA had earlier drawn up a list of possi-

ble gold medals it had been expecting and shooting and weightlifting were on the list. They have been expecting three gold medals from shooting and one gold from weightlifting, but the general secretaries of both federations did not give them any assurance of bagging gold medal.

Mohiuddin Ahmed, general secretary of Bangladesh Weightlifting Federation, however hoped to do better than what they did in Colombo SA Games in 2006 where they bagged one silver and five bronze medals.

"We will perform better this time but I can't give you any hope that the weightlifters will clinch gold medal. We almost matched the performance of our main rivals India and Pakistan," said Mohiuddin hinting that Hamidul Islam had a chance to surprise all as he had improved a lot since January last year.

Istiaque Ahmed Bablu, the general secretary of National Shooting Federation, also echoed the sentiment of Mohiuddin and said they want

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PHOTO: STAR

OUR ONE LAST CHANCE: Bangladesh cricket team's Australian coach Jamie Siddons makes a point to his charges on Sunday ahead of their final match of the tri-nation one-day series against India today.

What to WATCH

BTV & NEO Cricket

Bangladesh v India
Sixth ODI, Idea Cup
Live from 2:00pm

ESPN

Sportscenter India
Sports News
Live from 8:30pm
English Premiership
Man City v Blackburn
Live from 1:54am (Tuesday)

DAY'S EVENT

Idea Cup
Bangladesh v India
Venue: Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium, Mirpur
Time: 2:00pm
Bangladesh League
Arambagh v Muktijoddha
Venue: Kalalapur Stadium
Time: 2:45pm

Simons India's bowling adviser

CRICINFO, undated

The South African presence in the Indian coaching bench has gained further weight after it was revealed that Eric Simons, the former South Africa coach, was appointed bowling consultant for the upcoming Test series against Bangladesh.

The duration of his appointment is not yet certain but Simons will join the Indian squad sometime next week, ahead of the first Test starting in Chittagong on January 17. "Yes, he [Simons] would be joining the squad from the Bangladesh Test series as consultant," a top BCCI official confirmed to Cricinfo. A comment from Simons was still awaited.

It has been learned that Simons spoke to Gary Kirsten, India's coach, last week and that was the first occasion he learned of the management's interest in him. Simons' appointment comes after former South African fast bowler Allan Donald's name cropped up last Tuesday, as

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INDIA-SL SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the day-night fifth one-day international of the tri-nation Idea Cup between India and Sri Lanka at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur on Sunday:

SRI LANKA	R	B	4s	6s
Tharanga c Karthik b Tyagi	0	4	0	0
Dilshan c Gambhir b Zaheer	33	17	8	0
Sangakkara c Raina b Yuvraj	68	78	9	0
Jayawardene c Kohli b Zaheer	5	13	1	0
Samaraweera lbw b Sreesanth	0	6	0	0
Kandamby run out (Zaheer/Karthik)	1	11	0	0
Perera c Yuvraj b Mishra	11	17	2	0
Randiv b Mishra	56	76	5	0
Thushara c Yuvraj b Zaheer	28	44	3	0
Welegedara st Dhoni b Mishra	1	4	0	0
Lakmal not out	0	8	0	0
Extras: (lb-3, w-6, nb-1)	10			
Total: (All out in 46.1 overs)	213			

Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-42, 3-60, 4-61, 5-66, 6-84, 7-143, 8-202, 9-209

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Tyagi	7	1	46	1
Sreesanth	7	0	38	1
Zaheer	10	2	38	3
Mishra	9.1	1	40	3
Jadeja	6	1	21	0
Yuvraj	4	0	18	1
Raina	3	0	9	0
INDIA	R	B	4s	6s
Karthik c Sangakkara b Thushara	48	40	9	0
Gambhir c Welegedara b Perera	71	86	10	0
Kohli not out	71	68	9	0
Yuvraj not out	8	7	0	0
Extras: (lb-4, w-3, nb-9)	16			
Total: (For 2 wickets in 32.4 overs)	214			

Fall of wickets: 1-89, 2-161,

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PHOTO: INTERNET

Bangladesh Under-19 skipper Mahmudul Hasan (R, front row), along with other captains, poses for photographs during the opening ceremony of the ICC U-19 World Cup at Christchurch yesterday. The tournament kicks off on January 15. Bangladesh have been placed in one group along with Papua New Guinea, West Indies and Pakistan.