

# Star SPORT

## Ibra says sorry for red card

AC Milan's Sweden striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic has apologised after getting sent off for a foul-mouthed tirade at a linesman during his side's 2-1 win at Fiorentina. Ibrahimovic had only just returned from a two-game ban for striking Bari's Marco Rossi in the ribs. The 29-year-old was already facing a one-match ban having picked up a yellow card during the game, meaning he had earned a suspension for an accumulation of cards over the season. But late on he aimed a rant lined with expletives at a linesman after a throw-in decision went against him.



## BFF's fixture faux pas

SPORTS REPORTER

The lack of professionalism from Bangladesh Football Federation set an unprecedented incident in the top-tier football in Bangladesh after Chittagong Abahani opted not to appear for their match of the Independence Cup football tournament at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Chittagong Abahani were scheduled to take on Sheikh Russel KC in the Group B opener but three hours before the start of the match, BFF informed that Chittagong would not participate in the tournament due to unavoidable circumstance.

However, in their defence, the club claimed they never consented to taking part in the tournament in the first place.

"We were informed about the tournament but we never said that we were going to take part in the tournament. So, keeping us in the tournament fixture was a fault of BFF, and

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**MEGA WATT0:** Australia opener Shane Watson gets down on one knee to pull another one of his record-breaking fifteen sixes in the second ODI against Bangladesh at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

### SHANE WATSON'S SCORECARD

**Most sixes in an ODI innings (15)**  
*Previously held by Xavier Marshall of West Indies (12)*

**Highest score by an Australian in ODIs**  
*Previously held by Matthew Hayden (181)*

**Third fastest 100 in Bangladesh**  
*Ahead of him: Brian Lara (45) & Shakib Al Hasan (68)*

**Third fastest 100 by an Australian in ODIs**  
*Ahead of him: Matthew Hayden (66) & Adam Gilchrist (67)*

**Most runs in boundaries (150 out of 185)**  
*Previously held by Herschelle Gibbs (126 out of 175)*

**Highest career score**  
*Previously 161 against England, 2011*

## A Watson whirlwind

MOHAMMAD ISAM



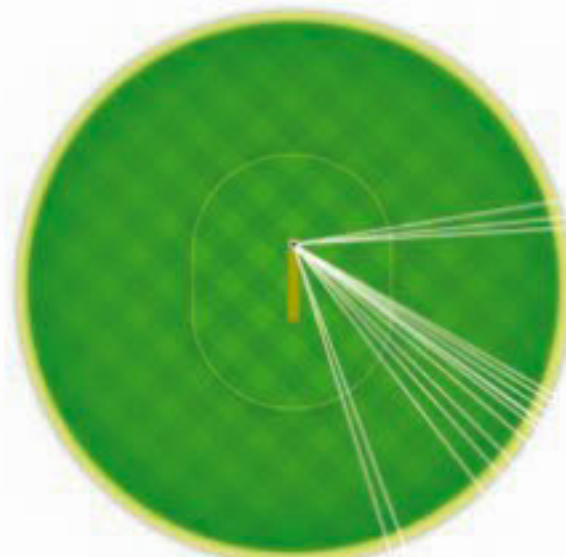
All that remained yesterday was for Shane Watson to clear the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium with one of his 15 sixes, the ball landing on one of the adjoining Mirpur streets and a lucky pedestrian scooping the souvenir.

He threatened that at least five times during his mighty 185, an innings that emanated not just power and intent but a sense of insatiability not present among any of those we are used to seeing day in, day out.

After becoming the third fastest centurion for his country, his tenth six gave him the record for the most sixes for Australia and just ten balls and four sixes later, he overtook Xavier Marshall as the hitter of most sixes in an ODI innings. He also went past his personal best and the highest score in Bangladesh.

Watson later said that the stifling weather was starting to take a toll on him but as records fell near his feet, he hardly flinched.

"It is just one of those days where everything that you try comes out of the middle of the bat, a



**All of Shane Watson's record fifteen sixes, represented here in the wagon wheel, were hit in the arc between square leg and long on.**

miss-hit goes into the gap or you get dropped. I got to a point where I got pretty tired, it was hot and humid out there so I didn't really want to have to run too much so it was nice to be able to get a few out of the middle to save my running," said a

beaming Watson after the match.

Though it was brutal for a Bangladesh fan, the small crowd did begin cheering after the seventh or eighth and by the time he hit his 13th, the one that broke the world record, the loud cheer was out of sheer delight at having witnessed a magical innings.

His 96-ball innings had fifteen boundaries apart from all those sixes, the most runs coming from boundaries, a far cry from Imrul Kayes's 41-ball five earlier in the day (the second slowest 5 in ODI history).

Apart from these, Watson now has the highest score by an Australian in a one-day game. Though he didn't think about breaking the record for the fastest century by Hayden, he did remember the 181.

"I don't know exactly how many balls Matt Hayden faced (for the fastest hundred). In the end I'm not playing to try to break records or anything

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## The mystery of the empty seats

SAKEB SUBHAN



Half-empty grounds during international cricket matches have become a rarity in Bangladesh, especially after the heady days of the World Cup during which the world sat in awe of the Bangladeshi people's passion for the game.

But half-empty stands were the surprising sight that greeted spectators

when they entered the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium during the second match of the three-match ODI series against Australia yesterday.

In itself, the scene should not have been surprising, considering that a momentous cricket event had just ended a bit over a week ago. Moreover, it was a hot weekday and also a day match which may render schoolchildren and office-goers unable to attend.

What added to the confusion, however, was the sight

of a large crowd gathered in front of the South Gate trying to get in, suggesting that there was healthy interest in the match and that something had gone awry somewhere along the demand-supply chain.

Tickets are being sold at Grameenphone centres around the city, and there have already been stories of people being turned away because of a lack of tickets. When contacted, the member secretary of the ticket committee Qazi Aynul Islam said, "There are various reasons for the ground not being full. The hot weather could be one. Also, being a day match on a weekday means that a lot of office-goers could not come, as well as schoolchildren, many of whom are sitting for their exams now."

According to Islam, of the 25,500 available tickets, 4,000 are set aside as complementary tickets given to the various clubs affiliated with the BCB (Bangladesh Cricket Board) and around 1,500 are made up of accreditation holders. That leaves around 20,000 seats for the

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## NATIONAL CRICKET LEAGUE Dhiman props up Rajshahi

SPORTS REPORTER

Rajshahi dominated through Dhiman Ghosh's century of the season in their second phase National Cricket League game against Barisal at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium yesterday.

After scoring 324 in the first innings, Rajshahi bowled out Barisal for just 184 runs with new boy Nayem Islam picking up a five-wicket haul.

Away at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong, the Sylhet-Dhaka tie however had very little excitement as it meandered into the second day with Dhaka at 110-2, chasing Sylhet's 320.

**RAJSHAHI-BARISAL**

Dhiman Ghosh converted his overnight 80 into a century, his second of the season, as the right-handed batsman struck 141 off 212 balls. He hit 16 boundaries in his four-hour long innings, making sure Rajshahi went past the 300-mark by the time he was the last man to get out.

Off-spinner Sohag Gazi picked up five wickets, his third in the season, but Barisal then got a taste of a five-wicket haul when Nayem worked through the top and lower order to grab his first five-for.

Rajshahi were 13 for one, extending their lead to 153 with two days in hand.

**SYLHET-DHAKA**

Rajin Saleh batted out seven and a half hours to score 146 off 319 runs, a fantastic effort if one considers the man's age and the lack of long innings played in domestic cricket.

But apart from the one-time national captain and a late flurry from Tapash Baisya (47 with five fours and a six), none of the Sylhet batsmen made an impact.

Dhaka were 110 for two at stumps, having lost Uttam

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## Jamie's date with destiny

SPORTS REPORTER

Jamie Siddons could find out his fate as early as today when the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) directors sit for a board meeting.

The issue of the head coach, whose contract expires on June 30, is the main agenda up for discussion.

A report by Siddons on the overall performance of the Tigers will also be examined during this meeting, said a source.

## PM's posh rewards

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani on Monday feted the national cricket team which reached the semifinals of the World Cup, honouring them with cash awards and praise.

Pakistan lost to arch-rivals and hosts India in the semifinal at Mohali last month, but Gilani said the team had won many hearts and were able to help efforts to normalise relations

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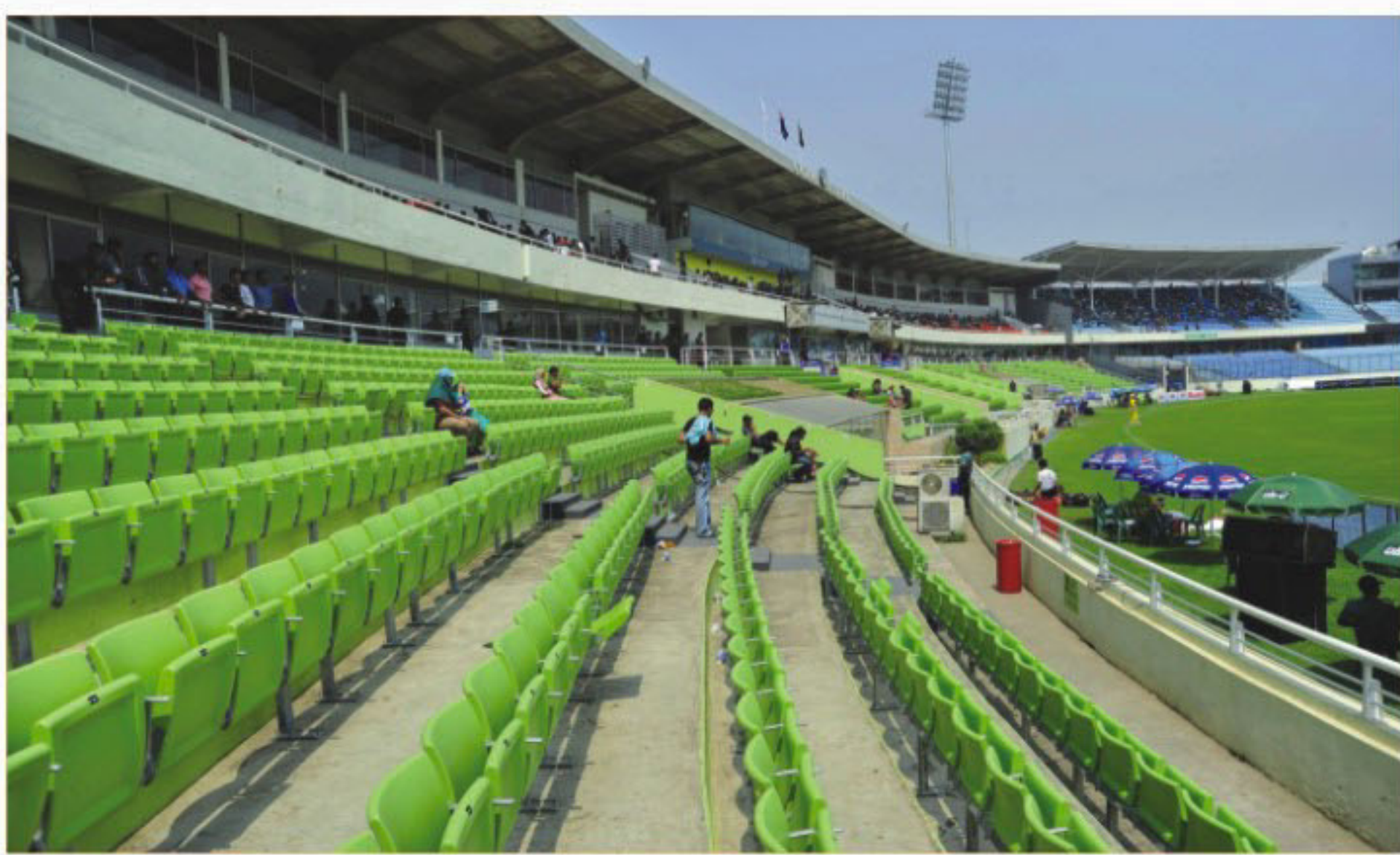


PHOTO: STAR

**The grandstand at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium was near-vacant throughout Bangladesh's second ODI against Australia yesterday, a curious situation considering the demand for tickets outside the stadium and at the official distributors.**

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