

Butt, Asif found guilty

Cricket
AFP, London

Former Pakistan Test captain Salman Butt and fast bowler Mohammad Asif were found guilty Tuesday of involvement in a "spot-fixing" betting scam during a match against England last year.

Butt, 27, and Asif, 28, were convicted at Southwark Crown Court of conspiracy to obtain and accept corrupt payments and conspiracy to cheat at gambling.

Prosecutors alleged that they conspired with British agent Mazher Majeed and fast bowler Mohammad Aamer to deliver three intentional no-balls during the Lord's Test between Pakistan and England in August 2010.

The pair were charged after allegations about their involvement in spot-fixing appeared in the now-defunct News of the World tabloid, owned by Australian-born media



SALMAN BUTT

tycoon Rupert Murdoch, shortly after the Lord's Test.

Butt and Asif had both pleaded not guilty.

They sat in silence in the dock as the jury delivered their verdicts, after spending nearly 17 hours in deliberations over four days at court, during which the judge said he was prepared to accept a 10-2 majority verdict.

The pair could face jail sentences of up to seven years.

Majeed, 36, and Aamer, 19, were also charged with the same offences but were not standing trial alongside Butt and Asif.

During the three-week trial the



MOHAMMAD ASIF

jury heard that vast sums of money could be made by rigging games for betting syndicates, particularly in South Asia, and that the problem was threatening the game of cricket.

Mazher Mahmood, News of the World's former investigations editor, known as the "fake sheikh" for his disguises, told the court he had approached Majeed pretending to be an Indian businessman.

Majeed claimed he had at least six Pakistani players working for him and that it would cost between 50,000 and 80,000 pounds (78,000 and 125,000 dollars) to fix a "bracket", where bets

are made on incidents during a given period of play.

But the cost of rigging a result was far more, at 400,000 pounds for a Twenty20, 450,000 pounds for a one-day international, and 1 million pounds for Test matches, Majeed allegedly told the reporter.

The agent was secretly filmed accepting 150,000 pounds in cash from the journalist as part of an arrangement to bowl the no-balls, and recorded allegedly making arrangements with Butt for the no balls.

Butt told the court that he had ignored his agent's requests to fix games and had no knowledge of the plan to bowl no balls, while admitting that he had failed in his duty to inform cricketing authorities of Majeed's approach.

Asif meanwhile said he had bowled a no ball at the exact time the agent had predicted to the News of the World journalist because Butt had told him to run faster moments before his delivery.

Happiness in sorrow!

AFP, Lahore

The wife of Pakistan's former captain Salman Butt gave birth to a baby boy just minutes before her husband was found guilty Tuesday of a "spot-fixing" betting scam during a match against England.

The 27-year-old's father told AFP by telephone from Pakistan's eastern city of Lahore that the baby was born 30 minutes before the verdict -- news that was splashed immediately all over Pakistani television stations.

"Salman Butt has a baby boy 30 minutes before the verdict came," his father, Zulfiqar Butt, told AFP, without giving the baby's name.

"It's a matter of great grief for us that Butt has been found guilty. We hope the Almighty will bring him out of this trouble because these are very difficult times for him and the family," he added.

It is Butt's first son -- he already has a daughter.

Emily gets

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(NTMC) had suspended Emily, along with fellow striker Mithun Chowdhury and winger Zahid Hossain from the domestic competitions for different terms on disciplinary ground.

Following the NTMC's decision, Nikola also ignored the trio by keeping them out of the national team announced for a few practice matches against U-19, U-21 and U-22 teams as part of the preparation of the national U-19 team.

However, Ilievski seems to have softened his stance on Emily by calling him up while his view on Mithun and Zahid seemingly remains unchanged. It was learnt that Ilievski took the decision after discussing the matter with the NTMC.

Something

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Our primary approach will be to play it out session by session. If we can do that then we can surely win. It depends on how we play out the first session tomorrow. If we lose too many wickets in the first session then we can never look to achieve a win," he added.

Whatever they said, the order of the day for Bangladesh would be to build good partnerships if they want to leave the match and the series with a share of the spoils.

Nafis Iqbal made a brilliant hundred during his 470-minute vigil against Zimbabwe, making 121 runs while opener Javed Omar also displayed immense reserves of patience. Can Nafis's younger brother Tamim or someone from the middle order match the deeds of 2005 to at least save the match?

Solid start by Kiwis

Cricket
AFP, Bulawayo

Martin Gupthill hit his second Test century to put New Zealand in firm control of their one-off Test against Zimbabwe at Queens Sports Club on Tuesday.

Gupthill made the most of a flat pitch to hit 109, while captain Ross Taylor made an unbeaten half-century as the Black Caps closed day one on 275 for three.

Zimbabwe's bowlers found the going tough on a wicket which offered little assistance, but could have dismissed both Taylor and BJ Watling in the final half hour of the day were it not for a couple of dropped catches.

Taylor, who finished the day unbeaten on 76, was fortunate to see his thin edge down the leg side off Chris Mpofu's bowling dropped by the wicketkeeper Regis Chakabva, while Watling edged a delivery from Kyle Jarvis past first slip just a few overs later.

The rest of the day was often short on entertainment as New Zealand marched methodically towards a big total and Zimbabwe did their best to contain them.

However Gupthill mixed patience and aggression to good effect, allowing himself quiet spells in the face of tight bowling but also launching the ball back over Ray Price's head whenever the left-arm spinner offered the opportunity.

The 25-year-old had two close calls during his innings, with a strong drive going straight through Price's hands shortly before lunch, while umpire Bruce Oxenford turned down a decent shout for lbw by Jarvis when Gupthill was on 77.

Gupthill went to 99 with a monstrous six over long-off from the bowling of Price, and then went to three figures two balls later when he put away a long hop through midwicket.

Sylhet, Khulna victors

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overs with skipper Forhad Reza and Saqlain Sajib taking two wickets each.

Earlier, Farhad's innings reached its heights during his string of partnerships with the middle and lower order, the best of which was 84 for the seventh with all-rounder Zubair Ahmed, who contributed with 48.

BARISAL-DHAKA METRO

Barisal were 70 for two at stumps in pursuit of an improbable 516-run target on the final day after Dhaka Metro batted a second time to grind their much weaker opponents at the Sylhet Stadium.

After the last four wickets in the Barisal first innings fell for 45 runs, Tasamul Haque and Asif Ahmed made merry as they struck half-centuries. Dhaka Metro made 185-5 in 40 overs, declaring in the final session.

SCORES IN BRIEF

KHULNA: First innings 224 all out and second innings 219 all out in 64.2 overs (Sahagir 46, Taposh 43; Sharif 3-35, Apu 3-49).

"Any time you score a hundred is a good time, but it was quite difficult out there today so I was very pleased to come away with one," Gupthill said afterwards.

"There was a little bit of swing in the first few overs and then it went away and it was pretty straight up and down, but they bowled well and set straight fields which made it difficult to score runs.

"They were very disciplined so the way that Ross Taylor and I batted, I think we did quite well."

Gupthill put on 132 for the third wicket with Taylor, before pulling a short ball from part-time seamer Hamilton Masakadza straight to Tatenda Taibu at midwicket.

That kept alive Zimbabwe's tally of one wicket per session, with Jarvis having accounted for Brendon McCullum prior to lunch and Price effecting the run-out of Kane Williamson between lunch and tea.

McCullum attempted to pull a bouncer from Jarvis but played onto his stumps, while Williamson departed for 49 having failed to return to his crease in time after coming down the pitch and nudging a delivery back to the bowler.

A total of five new caps were handed out at the start of the day, as Njabulo Ncube, Malcolm Waller and Regis Chakabva made their debuts for Zimbabwe and Dean Brownlie and Doug Bracewell were included in New Zealand's Test side for the first time.

SCORES IN BRIEF

NEW ZEALAND: First innings 275 for 3 in 90 overs (Gupthill 109, Taylor 76 not out, Williamson 49; Masakadza 1-13, Jarvis 1-53)

ZIMBABWE: Taylor, Sibanda, Mawoyo, Masakadza, Taibu, Waller, Chakabva, Price, Jarvis, Mpofu, Ncube.

Toss: New Zealand.
Umpires: Bruce Oxenford and Marais Erasmus.

DHAKA: First innings 158 all out and second innings 194 all out in 65.2 overs (Parvez 53, Bashar 49; Taposh 5-51, Dollar 2-14). Result: Khulna won by 91 runs.

RANGPUR: First innings 138 all out and second innings 112 all out in 35 overs (Sajedul 35, Dhiman 30; Jahed 5-24, Kapali 2-11). **SYLHET:** First innings 423-9 in 136.5 overs (Rajin 132, Kapali 91, Nadif 61; Sajedul 4-82, Limon 3-74). Result: Sylhet won by an innings and 173 runs.

CHITTAGONG: First innings 378 all out and second innings 13-4 in 7.4 overs (Forhad 2-9, Saqlain 2-4). **RAJSHAHI:** First innings 450-9 declared in 139.3 overs (Farhad 216, Forhad 65, Zubair 48; Kamrul 4-80)

DHAKA METRO: First innings 450-8 declared and second innings 185-5 in 40 overs (Asif 57 not out, Tasamul 53; Islamul 4-42). **BARISAL:** First innings 120 all out in 50.5 overs (Rabbi 34; Sunny 5-11) and second innings 70-2 in 27 overs (Nayem 33 not out, Islamul 26 not out; Ashraful 1-2)

Gibson not

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knows there is still some hard work left for his bowlers.

"It's nice to be in control of a Test match after so many games of trying. We've set them a record target of 508. 418 is the record score so we're happy with that. But we're also mindful of the fact that it's still a very good wicket to bat on, so we have to work hard for our wickets. There is still a lot of time left in the game.

"You can't really rule out a Bangladeshi win, if Bangladesh can chase 508 then they deserve to win. It will be a record," he added.

Hockey players meet Ahad

SPORTS REPORTER

State Minister for Youth and Sports Ahad Ali Sarker promised he would take necessary steps to keep hockey on the field round the year when aggrieved hockey players met with him at his National Sports Council office yesterday.

The minister is expected to sit for a meeting with the hockey federation officials today further discuss the matters brought up by the players.

The former and current national players, in demand for keeping hockey on the field round the year, obstructed the final match of the Youth Hockey Championship on October 24, leaving the game's governing body to announce both teams as champions.

The 25 players who took part in the incident were served a show cause notice by the federation explaining their action which is to be submitted by November 5.

Ahad Ali, although assuring to solve the players' problems, said he was against any such unruly activities by the players.

Hosts play

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ahead of Bangladesh comparing the performances in the three matches but Bangladesh seem determined to prove that they are not far behind.

"After two tough matches, the boys are battle-hardened and will be playing attacking football. Even though it is a difficult match against Oman, the boys try to score," said Bangladesh coach Nikola Ilievski yesterday.

Ilievski, however, believes Oman are not as good as Iraq or Saudi Arabia.

Oman coach Abdul Aziz Semida feels they have nothing to lose. "We want to wrap up the campaign with a win. But we are aware that the hosts will be presenting a tough challenge."

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	40 Weeding tool	59 Chopper	21 Goya subject
1 Get older	41 Diplomacy	DOWN	22 Singer
4 Preclude	43 Like peanuts, often	1 German interjection	23 Acrobat's walkway, maybe
9 With it, once	45 Looking glass	2 Sticky stuff	27 Stir-fry pan
12 Frequent URL ending	47 10 Downing St. VIPs	3 Ostrich's cousin	29 — gin fizz
13 Where French students go	48 Environmentally friendly	4 Less shallow	30 Kept tabs on
14 Buck-eyes' sch.	49 Ali's tactic against Foreman	5 Military formation	32 Burn something
15 Menage	54 Republicans	6 Halloween shout	34 Honor
17 Felon's flight	55 Geological time period	7 Muslim deity	37 Crossed home plate, e.g.
18 Gorilla	56 Uncooked	8 Porter	39 Big name in motor-cycles
19 National park in Maine	57 Undivided	9 "Don't move"	42 Figure of speech
21 Barbie's company	58 Triangular Greek letter	10 Actor Morales	44 1960s hallucinogen
24 Stop		11 Cougar	45 "Let —, Lover"
25 "What Kind of Fool —?"		16 Perched	46 PC picture
		20 Matty of baseball	50 D.C. persona
26 Tier			51 Man-mouse link
28 Grace under pressure			52 Opposite of bellum
31 Trots			53 Ram's mate
33 Neither partner			
35 Extremely unattractive			
36 Fire residue			
38 Lock opener			

Solution time: 24 mins.

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11 Tigers, 4 legs

Cricket

SAKEB SUBHAN

Despite all the talk about the ongoing series against the West Indies -- which ends today with the winding up of the second Test at Mirpur -- being Bangladesh's big chance to prove their credentials as a viable Test team, it should surprise no one that the Tigers seem to have failed the test, barring a miracle today.

Cricketing discourse in the subcontinent tends to focus on the batting side of matters, and the importance of bowling is often overlooked. It is noteworthy that the exception to this rule is the Tigers' next opponents Pakistan, who have traditionally been a very strong bowling side, and consequently the most successful Test team from the subcontinent. It is no big secret that to win Test matches, a side needs to pick up 20 wickets, and for that a competent bowling side is needed.

In this light, Bangladesh coach Stuart Law's words at the post-day press conference on Day Three assume special significance. After lamenting Bangladesh's amateurish, devil-may-care approach with the bat, Law touched on their bowling weakness when he said, "In the future we have to see if we are playing the right combination of bowlers. Maybe we need to think a little bit harder who we play when."

Since what was supposed to be their turnaround performance against West Indies in 2009 (when they won the two-Test series against a second string West Indies team in the Caribbean), the Tigers have used twelve bowlers. Their numbers make for some sorry reading. Elias Sunny, the hero of the Chittagong Test, and Sohrawardi Shuvo have only played one Test each in which they tasted a measure of success, but it is too early in the day to congratulate them.

Among the other ten, only Shakib Al Hasan, Mahmudullah Riyad and Enamul Haque Junior have averages below 40, with Shakib predictably being the best with 31.55. Shahadat Hossain averages 45, Shafiqul Islam 71.12 and Rubel Hossain 75.68. The particularly frightening statistic is that Abdur Razzak, whom chief selector Akram Khan recently called the best spinner in the country, averages

65.83 from nine Tests.

Anyone who has watched this series will know that Bangladesh are not dealing with a full deck bowling-wise. For all of Rubel's shortcomings, amply showcased in his average, along with Shakib -- and during the first Test, Sunny -- he has been Bangladesh's most effective bowler in this series. He is a bowler who has tried his heart out and despite the slim pickings in the wickets column, has kept up pressure by keeping to a good line and length and rarely allowing the West Indies batsmen liberties.

Much has been made of Sunny's bright debut, but the reality is without Shakib building up stifling pressure at the other end Sunny might not have picked up all of those seven wickets. Shahadat, on the other hand, seems to be the bowling equivalent of Mohammad Ashraful; he has all the attributes -- the height of a fast bowler, a decent helping of pace, and indeed, the biggest grunt in Test cricket -- but evidences of these on the scorecard are few and far between. His erratic bowling has been a severe liability for the Tigers in this series, constantly letting off pressure with boundary balls.

You are as weak as your strongest link, and therefore the most damaging evidence that this series throws up is the Tigers' ineptitude when it comes to spin bowling. Yes, on a mown-to-please strip in Chittagong, Sunny and co did some damage. But the fact that, on a subcontinent wicket in Dhaka and against perhaps the weakest players of spin bowling the home spinners were whipped into submission, cannot be escaped.

Sohrawardi has taken four wickets in the match, but if he is the best the domestic system can come up with, dark days are ahead. Devoid of spin and guile, he spent much of the fourth day serving up half trackers to Darren Bravo to do with as he pleased.

This series has shown that we have only one bowler of Test class in Shakib, and one really honest trier in Rubel, but beyond that the shortage of quality is astonishing. It is downright foolish to expect victories from a two-man bowling attack, and the wise will brace themselves for a series of extreme hardship when Pakistan, against whom a Chittagong dustbowl will be of no avail, get here.



A smiling Tayef Quader (4th from L), the winner of the President Cup Snooker Tournament 2010, poses for photographs along with runner-up Masudul Alam and a host of dignitaries at the Uttara Club recently. The five-day meet, sponsored by Juki Bangladesh Ltd, attracted a large number of snooker players from various reputed social clubs.

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CRYPTOQUIP

S Q K X J G V W P U L Q E J U D G H .

L B V S B Q W D C V A D H H X D J A V W P

K Q G D M V G D S U C R J W M X C J V W C R ?

U B D E C Z W U D G E Z W U D G .

Saturday's Cryptoquip: MILITARY STRONGHOLD TYPICALLY OCCUPIED JUST DURING A CERTAIN SUMMER MONTH: THE FORT OF JULY.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: L equals W