

# WHAT THEY SAY

"The spot-fixing cancer has spread far and wide and there is no cure unless authorities take strict action against players. Cricketers who are found guilty should have nothing to do with the game for the rest of their lives," said cricket historian **Boria Majumdar**.

"It is a fact that illegal syndicates of bookies and punters are thriving across the sub-continent. Cricket has become a vehicle for bookies to make pots of money," said **one of the investigators** behind Thursday's arrests.

"The sport's governing body and its members have collectively taken measures to tighten vigilance... as well as offering strict penalties to those found guilty of illegal conduct," said ICC chief executive **Dave Richardson**.

"It is time the administrators show they mean business. The latest corruption scandal is a test case for the authorities," said **Sharda Ugra**, senior editor at ESPNcricinfo.

"We buy tickets to watch the matches and cheer on the players only to realise that some of them were just puppets in the hands of the

# R'ganj rout Agrani Bank

**SPORTS REPORTER**

Rahmatganj MFS routed Agrani Bank Club 3-1 in their match of the Premier Bank Bangladesh Championship League at the Bishreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium yesterday.

Mohammad Helal put Rahmatganj ahead in the second minute before Shirfin Rony doubled the lead five minutes later.

Ziaur Rahman scored for Agrani Bank in the 21st minute before Atikul Islam sealed the win for Rahmatganj in the 24th minute.

# Azarenka, Williams in Rome final

**AFP, Rome**

World number one Serena Williams eased into the Rome Open final with a 6-3, 6-0 win over qualifier Simona Halep.

Williams, the 15-times Grand Slam winner, stretched her run of consecutive wins to 23 on her way to Sunday's final, where she will meet Victoria Azarenka.

Azarenka, the third seed, proved too strong for Italian hopeful Sara Errani in a 6-0, 7-5 win in the other semi-final that was interrupted by rain twice and once by Errani, who called for her coach after losing the first three games.

Williams, meanwhile, will head to next week's French Open as one of the favourites and with revenge on her mind after a shock defeat in last year's tournament to Frenchwoman Virginie Razzano.

# Cops chasing money trail

**AGENCIES, New Delhi**

Delhi Police has sent investigators to four cities in the country to trace the money trail in the IPL spot-fixing case.

According to sources, teams have been sent to Ahmedabad, Kolkata, Mumbai and Hyderabad in this connection.

Sreesanth and the other two cricketers -- Ankeet Chavan and Ajit Chandila -- were arrested in Mumbai on Thursday by Delhi Police for spot-fixing IPL matches for huge payments for giving away pre-determined number of runs in an over.

Sources said all calls to and for Sreesanth were made by his close friend Jiju Janardanan.

"Jiju has been a constant companion of Sreesanth and had been travelling with him and staying in the same hotel," a senior police official said.

Delhi Police on Friday claimed that Sreesanth and the two other arrested Rajasthan Royal players have "confessed" to spot-fixing.

Six bookies were held in Tamil Nadu in connection with another IPL betting racket and one each picked up in Mumbai and Delhi yesterday. 11

bookies were arrested earlier along with cricketers Sreesanth, Chavan and Chandila.

Lawyers of the three cricketers have denied their involvement and claimed that they were falsely implicated as part of a deep-rooted conspiracy.

The role of more players whose names cropped up during interrogation of the arrested cricketers and bookies in the IPL spot-fixing scandal could be probed, police had said.

Delhi Police is also likely to probe some more IPL matches in the current season even as Sreesanth, Chavan and Chandila along with 11 other arrested bookies were subjected to interrogation by its Special Cell.

Meanwhile, Delhi Police is likely to quiz Rajasthan Royals captain Rahul Dravid and co-owners Shilpa Shetty and Raj Kundra in the case, according to Times Now. All three have to appear before Delhi Police on May 21.

According to Times Now, the May 3 match between Rajasthan Royals and Kolkata Knight Riders at Eden Gardens has come under police scanner for match-fixing. KKR won the match by eight wickets. Rajasthan had fielded only two spinners -- Chavan and Brad Hogg -- on the spin friendly Eden track.

In Mumbai, crime branch sleuths

have seized a laptop and some other articles from a room in a city hotel where Sreesanth is reported to have stayed in before his arrest, police said on Saturday.

The recovery was made on Friday night. The investigators are trying to look for clues to the player's links with bookies and other details relating to the allegations, sources told PTI.

Sreesanth and his close friend Jiju Janardanan, who was allegedly in touch with the bookies on behalf of the cricketer, were reported to have stayed in the hotel.

Facing criticism for not keeping a check on the menace of fixing despite warnings from various quarters, defiant BCCI chief S Srinivasan insisted that it is the greed of individual players that has created the ongoing crisis.

"IPL has not let down people, it is the dirty cricketers who have let down people. We feel bad that such a thing has happened. But I don't have to personally apologise as long as people can see that we are acting against the problem," he said.

"We are really shocked. I have no words to condemn what has happened. We want it never to happen again. We are an honest organisation," he added.

# All quiet on Premier League front

**SPORTS REPORTER**

The cricketers are passing anxious moments as they are still to receive a concrete decision from the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) regarding the staging of this season's Dhaka Premier Division Cricket League.

One month has already elapsed since BCB president Nazmul Hassan Papon assured the aggrieved players that the only 50-over contest of the domestic calendar will take place in 'mid June'. But little progress has been made so far except for talk about a new payment system in line with the BPL that the board intends to introduce this year.

"The players are really worried. It will be unfortunate if the league finally doesn't take place and many players will suffer heavily for that. We are still hopeful that the BCB president will do something. We have learnt that a decision can come from a meeting to be held within the next two-three days. And we are waiting with our fingers crossed," said veteran cricketer Tushar Imran.

A number of cricketers wishing not to be

named said that the national players and the CWAB (Cricketers Welfare Association of Bangladesh) should play a strong role so that the league, which is their bread and butter, takes place.

"The national players should come forward in the greater interest of the cricketers and CWAB also should play the proper role," said one frustrated player.

"We don't know why CWAB is lukewarm on this pressing issue. One good reason may be that its president (Naimur Rahman) is now a board member," said a discarded national cricketer.

CCDM (Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis) chairman Jalal Yunus said when asked about the issue: "We are yet to make any progress about this year's Premier League."

CWAB general secretary Debabrata Paul said that he was confused about the whole episode.

"We are actually confused with everything. We are not clear about the new payment system but right at this moment it is important to take a decision about starting the league. Let us see what happens over the next two-three days; then we will decide our next course of action," said Paul.



# Southee evens scales

**AFP, London**

Tim Southee bowled New Zealand back into contention in the first Test against England with a dramatic burst late on the third day at Lord's on Saturday. At stumps, England were 180 for six in their second innings -- a lead of 205 runs.

England were in the sound position at 159 for two when paceman Southee wrested back the initiative with three wickets for four runs in 17 balls.

In all, England lost four wickets for 12 runs to throw the first of this two-Test series wide open, although their lead was now almost as much as New Zealand's meagre first innings 207.

Jonathan Trott and Joe Root shared a third-wicket stand of 123 before the latter's exit sparked England's slump. They had steadied the ship after England captain Alastair Cook and fellow opener Nick Compton had both fallen with the total on 36.

BJ Watling injured his knee in an attempt to run

out Root and was replaced behind the stumps by Brendon McCullum. In sight of beating his personal best of 73 the 22-year-old Root, promoted up the order because Ian Bell was suffering with flu, inside edged Southee on to his stumps. Jonny Bairstow, top-scorer in England's first innings with 41, was then yorked off his foot by Southee for five. Matt Prior, so often England's saviour with the bat, completed a pair when he pulled Southee straight to square leg before Trott's painstaking innings ended when he was bowled by a sharply turning off-break from part-time spinner Kane Williamson.

Southee had close figures of three for 34 in 14 overs.

Nightwatchman Steven Finn was six not out and Ian Bell nought not out at stumps.

Before lunch, England dismissed New Zealand for 207 in reply to their first innings 232 -- a lead of 25 runs.

James Anderson, who on Friday had become only the fourth England bowler to take 300 Test wickets, finished with five wickets for 47 runs in 24 overs.

**SCOREBOARD**

**ENGLAND:** First innings 232 (Bairstow 41, Root 40, Trott 39; Southee 4-58, Wagner 3-70)

**NEW ZEALAND:** First innings (overnight 153-4)

Fulton c Swann b Anderson 2  
Rutherford c Cook b Anderson 4  
Williamson c Prior b Anderson 60  
Taylor lbw b Anderson 66  
Brownlie lbw b Finn 23  
Finn not out 2  
Watling c Prior b Finn 17  
Southee c Root b Finn 12  
Martin b Anderson 0  
Wagner not out 6  
Boult c Anderson b Finn 0  
Extras: (lb-4, lb-8, nb-3) 15  
Total: (All out in 69 overs) 207  
Fall of wickets: 1-5, 2-7, 3-100, 4-147, 5-155, 6-177, 7-194, 8-195, 9-207

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Anderson	24	11	47	5
Broad	21	4	64	1
Finn	15	3	63	4
Swann	8	0	19	0
Trott	1	0	2	0

**ENGLAND:** Second innings  
Cook c Brownlie b Boult 21  
Compton b Wagner 15  
Trott b Williamson 56  
Root b Southee 71  
Bairstow b Southee 5  
Prior c sub b Southee 0  
Finn not out 6  
Bell not out 0  
Extras: (lb-3, w-1, nb-2) 6  
Total: (For 6 wkts in 59 overs) 180  
Fall of wickets: 1-36, 2-36, 3-159, 4-167, 5-171, 6-171

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Boult	12	3	42	1
Southee	14	3	34	3

# Nadal cruises

**AFP, Rome**

Rafael Nadal set up a potential Rome Masters final with Swiss rival Roger Federer after dominating Tomas Berdych 6-2, 6-4 in the semi-finals on Saturday.

Berdych had caused the first major upset of the tournament when he ousted world number one Novak Djokovic on Friday.

However, despite an improved second set performance against the fifth seed, the Czech could not match Nadal's power as the Spaniard put himself within touch of a second title inside a week following his Madrid Masters triumph last Sunday.

Nadal, who has now reached eight finals in as many events since his return from a seven-month injury lay-off, broke Berdych twice in the opening set, including in the opening game.

The second was a much tighter set, but Berdych's slim hopes were tempered by a Nadal forehand winner in the ninth game which gave him the break.

The Spaniard sealed the win in the 10th game when Berdych sent a backhand return beyond the baseline.

# Another tourney faces roadblocks

**SPORTS REPORTER**

Organising a cricket tournament, currently, seems a complicated task for the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB). Apart from the board's ongoing troubles with the Dhaka Premier League, it is also facing difficulties in hosting the National Cricket Championship -- a competition that features the 64 districts of the country.

Originally scheduled to begin last Friday, the championship was postponed as per the request of the District and Divisional Sports Organisers Forum. Incessant rainfall and HSC exams were the prime reasons behind the action.

This was the second time that Forum had sought to delay the competition. A similar occurrence took place in April this year when they had opposed the new format of the competition -- a two-tier system. Following Forum's latest request, the BCB sent individual letters to the representatives of the districts, asking them if they were ready to play.

"Most of the districts want to play. We are just waiting for everyone's response before fixing a date. The venues will also have to be renovated," said Naimur Rahman, head of BCB's tournament committee.

Explaining the reason behind Forum's desire to re-schedule the competition, joint secretary Abdullah Al Fuad Redwan said, "A lot of money is spent in the championship every year. However, the matches either get washed out or the venues are not good enough. We just want a good time to host the league."

"Why can't we schedule the competition in Dec-Jan? It won't coincide with the Dhaka Premier League or the Bangladesh Premier League, it can take place side by side," he added. He further stated that Forum would have no objection if the championship begins by the end of May this year.

When asked if there is a possibility of hosting the competition during the non-rainy season, Rahman said, "One has to stick to the cricket season. Even in county cricket, which spends more money than us, 20 per cent of their season was washed off."

# Pizza Hut to sponsor AFC qualifiers

**SPORTS REPORTER**

Philippines arrived in Dhaka last night to participate in the AFC Women's Asian Cup Qualifiers which will kick off on Tuesday. Iran had already arrived three days ago to acclimatise with the conditions here while Thailand are expected to arrive today. Hosts Bangladesh are the other team to feature in Group B from which one team will qualify for the finals to be played in 2014.

Organisers at a press conference at the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) house yesterday said their preparations for the tournament are almost complete with last-moment repair works at the Bangabandhu National Stadium to be finished by today.

Meanwhile, Pizza Hut has come forward to sponsor the tournament. The international fast food chain will provide Tk 15 lakh out of an estimated budget of Tk 60 lakh, half of which will come from the Asian Football Confederation in the form of participation money. Thailand (26) are the highest-ranked team, followed by Iran (53) Philippines (83) and Bangladesh (108). Iran will take on Philippines while Bangladesh will play against Thailand in the opening day's matches. All the matches will be telecast live on BTv, informed speakers at the press conference.

# Hill Tracts Hockey from May 22

**SPORTS REPORTER**

The Walton 3rd Hill Tracts Hockey Tournament will kick off at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium on May 22 with five teams participating in this edition.

Dinaipur, the defending champions will take on Panchagarh while runners-up Bandarban will take on Rangamati on the opening day's matches. Khagrachari makes up five teams which will be divided into two groups. The final will take place on May 28.

Sponsors Walton Group will provide Tk 4 lakh out of a total budget of Tk 5 lakh for the competition, of which Tk 20,000 will go to the champions. Satellite channel ATN Bangla will telecast the semifinals and the final match live.