

Ticket-sale starts with some hiccups

SPORTS REPORTER

The ticket-sales for the World Twenty20 2014 got off to a mixed start yesterday as a number of the 97 Moneygram outlets of NCC Bank and Agrani Bank faced technical difficulties while dispatching the vouchers to buyers.

According to bank managers the problems were caused by 'poor quality printers' and the online software used to book the tickets.

Stating examples of the difficulties faced, an official of NCC claimed that the bank's Dinajpur branch could not dispatch any vouchers yesterday, the branch at Kushtia could provide just 16 vouchers and the Narayanganj branch until 3:15pm handed over only three vouchers. Customers will have to submit these vouchers at designated branches of the banks before the tournament in order to get their tickets.

"In some branches it took up to 30 minutes to sell a ticket and this happened due to the laggardness of the software. Our branch managers faced a lot of problems," said a bank official.

"We tried to contact the ticketing agency and the local organising committee of the tournament as well, but there was no response," added the official.

Ticket-sales at other Moneygram booths though worked out fluently. According to

bank officials, the numbers in Chittagong, Savar and Motijheel were positive. The India v Pakistan match, which is scheduled to take place at Mirpur on March 21, has been sold out, whereas, the matches in which Bangladesh will be playing in are in high demand.

The queues in front of the counters did not resemble the chaos generally associated with a home-series and that was because each of the counters agreed to sell vouchers to a maximum of 50 persons per day.

The sale of tickets online also began yesterday on the ICC's official website, www.icc-cricket.com/world-t20/tickets. In order to buy a ticket, one must first need to go to the website, then register and then select a match. After that they will be given an option to select their desired seats, following which they will have to ensure payment using Visa or Master or Nexus Credit Cards.

Customers will then receive e-mails confirming their booking, which they will have to produce, along with details of their credit cards, at authorised locations to exchange it for the official ticket. A full list of these locations will be available from February 1.

Each customer will be entitled to a maximum of four tickets for a single match and a total of 10 tickets for the entire tournament. Bigtree Entertainment Private Limited and AttraBIT Technologies & Solutions Limited are the ICC's appointed ticketing agencies.



World Twenty20 2014 ticket-vouchers are displayed by a fan on the first day of sales yesterday. (Inset) A queue awaits its turn to get the vouchers outside the NCC Bank's Motijheel Branch on the day.

PHOTOS: STAR

'Unique farewell'

PTI, London

"There has never been a farewell to sport quite like this" -- this was the unanimous view of the British media as it gave a collective round of applause to Indian cricket icon Sachin Tendulkar, who called time on his inspiring international career at the end of his 200th Test.

Tendulkar, immensely popular in this part of the world as well for his exquisite batting, was lauded for remaining extraordinarily humble despite being the most followed cricketer of his generation.

"There has never been a farewell to sport quite like this, one perfectly designed to induce a billion cheers and a billion tears," said The Daily Telegraph, referring to the emotional farewell speech that the maestro gave at the end of his journey on Saturday.

"How fitting that Sachin Tendulkar's last performance on his home cricket field should have been among his very finest, even if it came not with a bat but with a microphone."

The newspaper went on to highlight the 40-year-old's emotional hold over his millions of fans, many of whom were moved to tears while listening to the speech, during which Tendulkar also found it hard to keep his composure.

"As all around the Wankhede Stadium eyes were being dabbed, the little man just stood on the grass, transfixing those followers one last time, only for once in silent, emotional thrall as he gave a wonderful speech charting one of sport's most fantastical careers. 'My life, between 22 yards, for 24 years,' as he put it so perfectly, it wrote.

"A full-house was already celebrating that life with delirious acclaim...the crowd had whooped with delight at seeing the first never-ending, moveable guard of honour for a tearful Sachin as the little master's young teammates kept bouncing alongside him towards the pavilion like gleeful, star-struck kids.

"Yet though his worshippers wanted to honour him, it somehow felt typical of his humility that he only cared about saluting them."

Draw denies a dream final

Federation Cup draw held

SPORTS REPORTER



Abahani and Mohammedan have been drawn in the same group of the Federation Cup after eight years and

football fans can expect two possible show-downs between the two arch-rivals, but unfortunately not a dream final.

The two bitter rivals in domestic football have been placed in Group D along with Rahmatganj during a draw ceremony held at the BFF House yesterday.

The 26th edition of season's curtain-raiser will get underway from November 21 at the Bangabandhu National Stadium with Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club taking on Uttar Baridhara and Abahani facing Rahmatganj in the opening day fixtures.

The last time the two powerhouses, who shared the trophy 18 times, were placed in the same group was in 2005. Abahani won that first round battle against Mohammedan 5-1 but both teams have failed to make it to the final which was a Brothers Union-Muktijoddha Sangsad affair.

Mohammedan, who holds the record of winning the Federation Cup ten times, and eight-time winners Abahani are most likely to stave off a Rahmatganj threat to progress into the eight-team knock-out stage, with two teams from four groups making it to the quarterfinals.

Both Abahani and Mohammedan, who have failed to make it to the final in the last two editions of the tournament, however will face an uphill task to turn the tide around. A second place finish for either of

the two teams in the group stage means an inevitable face-off against Sheikh Jamal.

The runners-up of last year, comprising nine current national players and few quality foreign players, are leading Group A that also contains two mediocre sides Feni Soccer and Uttar Baridhara.

And even if Jamal is conquered a dream Abahani-Mohammedan final is not designed in the fixture since victory for both teams in the quarterfinals would land them in a semifinal showdown.

Defending champions Sheikh Russel, who won three out of four of the domestic trophies last season, have formed Group B along Muktijoddha Sangsad and Ctg Abahani.

Group C consisted of three-time champions Brothers Union, Team BJMC and the winners between BKSP-Police play-off.

"We are happy that football is finally rolling despite the political unrest. And it was possible with the helps from all quarters," said BFF senior vice president Abdus Salam Murshedy during the draw ceremony.

Sponsors Walton group's director in sports Iqbal Bin Anwar, Walton brand ambassador Zobera Rahman Linu, national coach Lodewijk de Kruij, professional football league committee's co-chairman Abdur Rahim and representatives from the clubs were among others present at the draw ceremony.

GROUPINGS			
Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D
Sheikh Jamal SC Feni Uttar Baridhara	Sheikh Russel Muktijoddha Ctg. Abahani	Team BJMC Brothers Union Winner of Playoff	Abahani Mohammedan Rahmatganj

Taipei grab girls' titles

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Lee Yan of Chinese Taipei clinched the girls' singles title of the 27th Bangladesh International Junior Tennis Championship with a convincing 6-2, 6-3 win over Umarova Komola of Uzbekistan in the final at the National Tennis Complex in Ramna yesterday.

The title of girls' doubles event also went to Chinese Taipei when the Han Chi Chen and Yang Lee pair beat Melisa Bekirova of Uzbekistan and Luciana Rabines of USA pair by 6-1 and 6-3 in the final.

The semifinal line-up of boys' singles and doubles were also completed yesterday as Shamael Chaudhury of England beat Ko Shao Min of Chinese Taipei 6-2, 6-4 and Chen Tin of Chinese Taipei beat Ballekere Ravikumar of India 6-2, 6-2 in the semifinals to move into the final.

In the boys' doubles semifinals, Indian pair of Nikshap Ballekere Ravikumar and Sahil Gaware beat Kareem Allaf of Syria and Shamael Chaudhury of England 6-4, 6-4 while Tin Chen and Chen Shan Kuo of Chinese Taipei beat Zhansultan Chembolayev and Bolat Mamyr of Kazakhstan 6-3, 6-4 to book the final berth. Both the finals will be held today.

It's right time: SRT

CNN-IBN, Mumbai



Termining his decision to retire from international cricket correct, the iconic Sachin Tendulkar on Sunday said he feels this is the right time to leave as his body gave him the message that he won't be able to take the load of professional cricket anymore.

"I feel this is the best time to leave, I have no regrets. My body gave me the message, I wasn't able to take the load," Tendulkar said in his first press conference after playing his 200th and last Test match.

Tendulkar said playing for India was paramount for him for the last 24 years and the thought of not able to play cricket any-



Indian cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar gestures during a press conference in Mumbai yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

more hasn't sunk in yet. "Playing for India was paramount for me over the last 24 years. It hasn't struck me yet that I won't be playing cricket anymore," he added.

The Government of India on Saturday decided to award the Bharat Ratna to Tendulkar. Reacting to the news, Tendulkar, who is the first sportsperson and the youngest to get the Bharat Ratna, told CNN-IBN on Saturday that he dedicates this award to his mother. "I am thankful for this honour. I dedicate it to my mother. India is my motherland," he said.

Tendulkar reiterated the same thing on Sunday as well, saying he wants to dedicate the award to his mother for the sacrifices she made. "Bharat Ratna is dedicated for my mother for the sacrifices she has made. I also want to dedicate this award to all the mothers who have made sacrifices for their children."

He also congratulated Professor CNR Rao for his Bharat Ratna, saying his contribution to the country is immense. "I want to congratulate Prof Rao for his Bharat Ratna, his contribution is immense."

Tendulkar wept as he left the pitch for the final time on Saturday after his 200th Test match, ending a dazzling career spanning nearly a quarter of a century.

The master batsman waved to thousands of cheering, emotional fans and wiped tears from his eyes as he left the field through guard of honour formed by his teammates at Mumbai's Wankhede Stadium.

At the age of 40, Tendulkar retired from the game as the world's leading scorer in both Test and one-day cricket and the only man to score 100 international centuries.

In a lengthy and poignant speech on the field after the match against the West Indies in his hometown, Tendulkar thanked everyone who had supported him, from family members and friends, coaches and managers through to teammates and ardent fans.

And then there was one

QUAZI ZULQUARNAIN ISLAM



It is time to confess. I have never idolised Sachin Tendulkar. In fact, a large part of my school-going years were dedicated to hours spent scribbling away on the back of my class notebook every conceivable reason, logical and otherwise, as to why the West Indian Brian Lara was a better batsman than Tendulkar.

I grew up in the late 80s and 90s, at a time when cable television first began beaming us grainy Prime Sports footage of two young cricketers whose talent and meteoric rise would surely see them one day ascend the pantheon of the cricketing gods.

There was Lara, the Calypso prince, all twinkle toes and flamboyant backlift, a gnome among the impossibly tall West Indians, a man who delivered back foot punches through the covers with both feet in the air and played hook shots with his right leg raised in dismissive nonchalance.

And then there was Tendulkar, who leant into cover drives like the manuals told you to, his elbows high, his head steady, the ball striking his heavy willow precisely beneath the eyes and then racing to the boundary.

In the eyes of a seven-year-old Sachin was perfect, but whisper it, boring. Inevitably then, when my cricket coach asked me to watch the upcoming Indian batsman and

model my own game on him, I didn't listen. In my eyes, Lara's batting held so much more charm. Like most cricket-mad kids of that era I spent hours in front of the mirror shadow batting, but instead of following Tendulkar's regimented example, I practised Lara's skittle across the stumps, high backlift, his full follow-through, his delicate late cuts.

In my eyes, Lara could do no wrong. Every big Lara inning was, to me, a vindication of his greater talent, his higher ceiling, and his greater appeal. Tendulkar was constant, omnipresent, boringly brilliant, a man whose name could only be whispered begrudgingly against the whimsical Lara. It was a blinding bias and in hindsight, I look like a fool. Then again, what pre-teen isn't?

But as the years rolled by, and the careers of the cricketers I had grown up with slowly faded to black, the true and stark greatness of Sachin Tendulkar began to present itself.

The numbers are behemoth, as is expected of someone who has played top-level cricket for 24 years across four decades. Just let this sink in -- for 17 of the 24 years that Sachin played cricket, he was amongst the top five batsmen in the world. Most cricketers are lucky to have one purple patch in their career; Sachin had at least three. But even beyond that, the stories Sachin has scripted stand beyond reproach; his records are an apotheosis.

As any man worth his salt will tell you, the true test of greatness is in sustenance and no man in cricket, nay, any

sport has sustained better than Tendulkar. Consider this, Tendulkar made his Test debut six days after the fall of the Berlin Wall. At that time Usain Bolt was three years old, Lionel Messi was two, Barcelona had never won the Champions League, and the world had yet to hear of Zinedine Zidane.

But Tendulkar has persisted, a deity among mortals, a man whose name will reverberate through cricket history. As Bangladesh's own Shakib al Hasan put it, "We have this running competition between ourselves in the Bangladesh team to see who can get him out, so that we can all talk about it years later, when we have all quit the game."

And that in a nutshell is the legacy of Tendulkar. Someday we will all be gone, but the stories of Tendulkar will remain, no longer dusty through the lens of history, but caught in the vivid colors of modernity, told either through endless repeats on television or through stories told to children.

And so, if I could get a do-over, I would go back and erase those clever choice phrases on the back of my school notebooks and strongly chastise the young me for choosing a path that would lead only to madness.

Because over the course of the last two decades and some, as the chapters of the players I have grown up with closed finally one by one, I have realised one utter, irrevocable truth. Sachin Tendulkar is not just a great, he is the great.

Tremlett & Prior given green light

AFP, Brisbane

Paceman Chris Tremlett and injured wicketkeeper Matt Prior were given the thumbs up by England on Sunday, suggesting both are likely to play in the first Ashes Test against Australia starting Thursday.

England bowling coach David Saker said Tremlett, bidding for the third seamer's spot, was doing well bowling in the nets after being rested for the tourists' seven-wicket win over the Cricket Australia Invitational XI in Sydney.

Prior has been a concern since straining his calf during the tour match against Australia A in Hobart. But Saker said he was confident the first-choice gloveman will be fit to start on Thursday in Brisbane, with Jonny Bairstow on standby.