

Tickets almost gone after online rush

NAIMUL KARIM



Tickets for the ICC World Twenty20 next year are close to being sold out just two days after the ICC's ticketing agencies began selling them. According to the organisers -- who expect a complete sell-out by afternoon today -- the matches scheduled to take place in Dhaka have already been sold out, while a few tickets remain for games in Chittagong and Sylhet.

This state of affairs has generated considerable discontent as many ticket-hunters who lined up in front of the 97 Moneygram booths -- hosted by NCC Bank Limited and Agrani Bank Limited -- had to leave empty-handed because of the relatively new phenomenon of online sales claiming the bulk of tickets sold.

Initially there was talk about selling a majority of the tickets through the booths but as it turned out, online purchasers had access to all the tickets.

The move turned out to be a disadvantage for the people lining up in front of the booths to buy their tickets for a number of reasons. Firstly, each of the booths had decided to sell tickets to a maximum of 50 persons per day, whereas there were no restrictions for online purchasers. Online buyers were also not bound by any time restrictions as opposed to the banking hours that the booths adhere to.

Secondly, many of these Moneygram booths faced technical difficulties over the last two days and could not dispatch the desired number of tickets. These difficulties arose due to problems with the server and poor-quality printers. For instance, according to an NCC bank official, their branch at Dinaipur could not sell a single ticket over

the last two days. Several other branches faced similar problems.

According to another bank official, the lack of available tickets at the booths agitated buyers and led to violent scenes in their branches in Chittagong and Narayanganj. The anger shown by the ticket hopefuls could be justified by the fact that even if the booths were operating at full capacity only 39 per cent of the 250,000 available tickets (approximate number) would have been sold through the booths. But the word was that because of the technical problems the booth sales were underwhelming, and the problem was further compounded by the rest being snapped up online.

"A huge portion of buyers bought the tickets online," said AttraBIT Technologies & Solutions Limited's -- the ICC-appointed ticketing agency -- chief marketing officer Ehsan Sarwar Chowdhury.

"There were no specifications as to how many tickets could be sold online and how many in the booths because there are buyers from abroad as well," added Ehsan. He further stated that they had sold more than a lakh tickets on the opening day.

Bank officials criticised the move to provide complete access to online buyers stating that it was harmful for their branches.

"Initially, we were verbally told that there would be a percentage of tickets to be sold from banks only but that did not happen. When we contacted the ticketing agency (Bigtree Entertainment Private Limited and Attrabit Technologies Solutions Limited) they said that there was a miscommunication," said Md. Moniruzzaman, an NCC bank official.

"Because of that, our employees in different branches had to face the wrath of the public," he added.



Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club's Abdur Razzak smacks his way to an 18-ball 39 against Brothers Union at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Brothers' tit for tat falls flat

SPORTS REPORTER

In order to put an end to the controversy that arose during the 11th-round match of the Dhaka Premier League between Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club and Brothers Union on November 9 --Brothers fielded a suspended player -- the match was replayed yesterday and saw Sheikh Jamal cruise to a 70-run win. However, it seemed the controversy did not end there. After losing the match Brothers filed an official complaint to tournament organisers Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis (CCDM) about Sheikh Jamal fielding Abdur Razzak, who according to a circular from the national physio Vibhav Singh, was 'advised' to take rest till November 20.

"Even we had players who were advised not to play, we could have fielded them but we did not," said Brothers' manager Amin Khan.

Razzak however laughed off the matter. "I am in touch with the physio and most importantly I know my fitness levels the best, so there is nothing wrong," he said.

Match referee Roquibul Hassan echoed a similar sentiment. "He was not suspended so there's no way we could not let him play."

Police qualify for Fed Cup

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Police AC qualified for the Walton Federation Cup with a 2-0 win over Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan in their qualifying play-off match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Aminul put Bangladesh Police ahead in the 25th minute before Zahirul doubled the margin in the 39th minute to secure a place in the 12-team competition, which will get underway from Thursday.

Bangladesh Police will play against Team BJMC and Brothers Union in Group C.

Swimming excluded from long-term camp

SPORTS REPORTER

The discipline of swimming has been excluded from the list of the long-term intensive preparation for the next year's Commonwealth Games and Asian Games due to its low standard compared to Asian benchmark.

The Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) initially selected athletes from five disciplines -- shooting, archery, boxing, taekwondo and swimming -- for a nearly 10-month training programme with a target of winning medals from Commonwealth and Asian Games, but swimming was excluded from the list after Sunday's meeting with BOA president and Army Chief General Iqbal Karim Bhuiyan after they analysed the below-par performance of swimmers at the international level.

The exclusion of swimming means the number of athletes will be reduced to 22 from 26, which will be finalised after another meeting between the BOA and the athletes. For the first time in the country's history, BOA is taking

such long-term and intensive training programme under the guidance of foreign coaches.

"If the athletes agree with the BOA's terms and conditions, which will prohibit them from going outside during the residential camp at cantonment without prior permission and enforce them to follow training, food, sleep, study in line with advice of the foreign coaches and physio, then we will select them. If anyone disagrees with the terms and conditions, then we will find his/her possible replacement for the training," said a member yesterday, seeking anonymity.

The BOA training and development committee proposed to provide Tk 12,000 per month for each of the athletes at the residential camp along with Tk 400 daily allowance and Tk 100 laundry payment per day but the source informed that the amount of the honorarium, daily allowance, laundry payment might be increased so that the athletes can fully put their concentration on training.



A Bangladesh Police striker shoots for goal during their Federation Cup qualifying play-off match against BKSP at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Messi first, then Ronaldo

Bangladesh coach, captain pick their choices

SPORTS REPORTER



Both the coach and captain of Bangladesh national football team have voted for Argentine superstar Lionel Messi and Portuguese goal-machine Cristiano Ronaldo as their first and second choice respectively for this year's FIFA Ballon d'Or award.

However coach Lodewijk de Kruijf nominated Swedish striker Zlatan Ibrahimović as his third choice while captain Mamunul Islam nominated Spain midfielder Xavi Hernandez, confirmed a source within the Bangladesh Football Federation yesterday.

In the list of favourite coaches, De Kruijf voted for Champions League holders Bayern Munich's former coach Jupp Heynckes while Mamunul chose Manchester United's retired coach Sir

Alex Ferguson.

The final decision on FIFA Ballon d'Or and the FIFA World Coach of the Year awards will be made by the captains and head coaches of the men's national teams from across the world as well as international media representatives selected by France Football. The winners of the awards in both categories will be revealed during FIFA's congress in Zurich on January 13, 2014.



SPORTS REPORTER

When man-of-the-match Abdur Razzak and Zimbabwean Elton Chigumbura demolished the bowling attack to amass 74 runs from the last five overs, the writing was all but on the wall for Brothers Union yesterday at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur. In the final analysis it was their unbeaten eighth-wicket partnership that made the difference as Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club entered the six-team Super League with a 70-run victory in their Dhaka Premier League re-match. It was a stirring turn of fortunes for Jamal as they replaced Brothers in the six-team competition, which will start from tomorrow. Brothers won the match on November 9 against Jamal by six wickets but they had to play a re-match as that authenticity of that game, in which Brothers fielded a suspended player, was called into question and Mushfiqur Rahim's men grabbed the opportunity with both hands.

The morning had however hardly shown the day as Sheikh Jamal lost two quick wickets with 10 runs on the



PHOTO: STAR

Sk Jamal thru' to Super League

SHEIKH JAMAL: 282-7 in 50 overs (Jahurul 69, Mushfiqur 43, Crook 56, Chigumbura 50 not out, Razzak 39 not out; Rony 2-15, Sanjamul 2-54, Kapali 3-34)

BROTHERS UNION: 212 all out in 46.2 overs (Nafis 62, Ervine 34; Munaweera 2-38, Razzak 3-32, Tanvir 2-9)

Result: Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club won by 70 runs.

board after Mushfiqur decided to bat first and Iftekhar Sajjad Rony gave the perfect start for Brothers. But it was Mushfiqur (43) who joined Jahurul Islam (69) to seize the early initiative by associating 83 run in the third-wicket stand.

Steven Crook then steadied the ship after the departure of his skipper with a composed half-century but the loss of a few wickets helped Brothers keep their opponents in check as Sheikh Jamal reached just 208 for seven in the 45th over. But Razzak's 18-ball 39 with four boundaries and two sixes and the fiery knock of Chigumbura, who clobbered four sixes and two fours during his unbeaten 49-ball 50, helped Jamal set a challenging total of 282.

In reply, Brothers lost wickets at regular intervals before being bundled out for 212. Nafis Iqbal played a sensible knock during his 85-ball 62 that featured eight sweetly timed boundaries while Alok Kapali made the next highest with 45, but Brothers' think tank left everyone bewildered by sending Zimbabwean Sean Ervine to bat at number eight. His big hits during a 34-run knock only increased the bewilderment of all present.

Siddle & Co raring to go

AFP, Brisbane



Australia have a better strategy to defeat England in the Ashes this time round after learning hard lessons from their defeat earlier this year, paceman Peter Siddle said Monday.

Michael Clarke will be looking to reverse his team's fortunes in the first Test starting at the Gabba on Thursday after their 3-0 defeat on English soil, and Siddle said the pace trio of the recalled Mitchell Johnson, Ryan Harris and himself were "ready to go".

"Our plans have got a lot stronger," Siddle told reporters.

"We know what to do differently. We know how to approach it and we'll attack it hard.

"We know there's a few players we need to work on and no doubt we'll have them covered starting on Thursday."

Johnson is set for his first Test since Australia's loss to India in March, while Harris will be hoping to build on his success in the last Ashes series in which he was Australia's best bowler, taking 24 wickets in four Tests.

"I think his experience is going to be great throughout this series," Siddle said of Johnson.

"I just think his knowledge of the game, his skill -- he's taken over 200 Test wickets, that's quite impressive -- so to have Mitch back around the unit and obviously Ryan Harris, the way he bowled over in England was outstanding, so I think we have a nice strong attack ready to go."

Siddle's career best of 6-54 was against England at the Gabba back in 2010 when he dismissed Alastair Cook, Matt Prior and Stuart Broad with a hat-trick and also claimed the wickets of Kevin Pietersen, Paul Collingwood and Graeme Swann.

"Obviously it's a highlight of my career but if you look back on it you want to win Test matches and that's why we play the game," he said.

"It (the hat-trick) is something once I've retired I'll look back and enjoy a lot more than I have now. I'd have rather won that Test match and won the series than worrying about individual highlights."

Australia are hoping to reclaim the Ashes in the five-Test series after three successive losses.

BCB announces Windies U-19 itinerary

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) revealed the itinerary for the West Indies Under-19 tour of Bangladesh yesterday, naming the Sheikh Kamal International Cricket Stadium in Cox's Bazar as one of the venues.

West Indies Under-19 will arrive on December 2 to play seven limited-over games.

The first two one-dayers on December 6 and 8 will take place at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong while the third one-dayer is most likely to be held at the under-construction stadium in Cox's Bazar. If for any reason the board fails to hold it in the seaside town, the match will be played at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium.

The fourth and fifth one-dayers will take place at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium on December 14 and 17 while the last two matches will be held at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur on December 19 and 20.