

Fans flock to curtailed show

SPORTS REPORTER



People from all walks of life turned up in numbers to bask in the FIFA World Cup trophy display at the Radisson Blu Water Garden Hotel yesterday. In spite of the nationwide blockade called by the 18-party opposition alliance, there was a constant flow of ticket-holders -- mostly youngsters -- at the hotel throughout the day. The festivities, though, were mostly limited to taking photographs with the coveted trophy enclosed within a glass cube as the other sideshows -- a festive football match, musical performance, hologram show, etc. -- had to be curtailed to a minimum due to the last-moment shift of venue from the originally scheduled Bangabandhu National Stadium to the hotel.

Among the spectators, Milon from Shantinogor caught the eye especially. Milon had come with a flag in hand and the national colours painted on his bare chest. The 30-something guy, who was recently spotted during a match of the Federation Cup, said he had long been going to cricket matches in that attire. "This is a special occasion and I love football as much as I do cricket. So I thought I should be part of this occasion too," said Milon.

Ferdous, a businessman from Gulshan, who came with nine members of his extended family, said that the shift of venue suited him well as they might not have gone to the original

venue of BNS as it would have been too far for them, considering the security issues. But conversely there were many -- the exact number could not be confirmed by the authorities -- who could not come due to the shift of venue.

Neeraj Garg, the vice-president of Coca Cola for India and South West Asia region, believes that despite the shift of venue, the turnout proved it a success. "People's participation proves they are very much a part of this celebration and we are glad as corporate partners of FIFA to bring the cup here," said Garg, who will travel with this cup to Bhutan, Nepal and India -- the three other stopovers for this trophy in the South Asian region.

Most of the visitors that came yesterday were ordinary people who either love the game or were just there to be part of a historic event. But there were celebrities too, mostly from sports as some former footballers and other sports personalities came to spend a day of football fiesta.

The trophy will be on display again at the same venue from 9:00am to 3:00pm today where key stakeholders of Coca Cola will have access by invitation only. There will be a group of 20 from the Bangladesh team that recently took part in the Asia Pacific Games of Special Olympics in Newcastle, Australia allowed in while a group of children from Shishu Academy and Jaago Foundation will also have the chance to be part of the event. Organisers said they will try to hold a joint musical performance from bands Shunno,



Fans gather in huge numbers at the Radisson Blu Water Garden Hotel in Dhaka to get a glimpse of the coveted World Cup trophy yesterday. (INSET) World Cup mascot Fuleco at the inauguration with Coca Cola representatives and the Bangladesh Football Federation officials.

PHOTOS: STAR

Kohli makes SA toil

AFP, Johannesburg



Virat Kohli endorsed his succession to Sachin Tendulkar's place in India's batting order with a cultured century on the first day of the first Test against South Africa at the Wanderers Stadium on Wednesday. Promoted to the number four position filled for the better part of two decades by Tendulkar before his recent retirement, Kohli hit a career-best 119 as India reached 255 for five at the close of play.

Coming in with his side in trouble at 24 for two, Kohli stroked 18 boundaries in a 181-ball innings.

His innings went a long way towards justifying captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni's decision to bat first but he could not hide his disappointment when he was dismissed

SCOREBOARD

INDIA: First Innings				
Vijay c De Villiers b Morkel	6			
Dhawan c Imran Tahir b Steyn	13			
Pujara run out (Imran Tahir)	25			
Kohli c Duminy b Kallis	119			
Sharma c De Villiers b Philander	14			
Rahane not out	43			
Dhoni not out	17			
Extras (lb-3, nb-1, w-14)	18			
Total (For 5 wickets in 90 overs)	255			
Fall of wickets: 1-17, 2-24, 3-113, 4-151, 5-219				
Bowler				
Steyn	23	5	56	1
Philander	21	2	55	1
Morkel	19	10	27	1
Kallis	14	4	37	1
Tahir	8	0	47	0
Duminy	5	0	30	0

shortly before the second new ball was due, driving Jacques Kallis upishly to cover.

South Africa could not take advantage of his dismissal, however, as Ajankya Rahane, playing in his second Test, and Dhoni saw out the rest of the day.

Kohli shared two important partnerships as South Africa's vaunted pace attack was blunted on a well-grassed pitch which offered plenty of bounce but minimal sideways movement.

He and Cheteshwar Pujara put on 89 for the third wicket before Pujara was run out for a patient 25 made off 98 balls. Then Kohli and Rahane, playing in his second Test, added 68 for the fifth wicket.

Rahane batted solidly, especially against the second new ball, and was unbeaten on 43.

The Kohli-Pujara partnership ended with a mix-up which led to Pujara being run out after making 25 off 98 balls.

Navy's winning start in India

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Navy got off to a winning start in the 4th All India Shahibzada Ajit Singh Hockey Tournament as they handed a 3-1 defeat to Namdhari Hockey Eleven in India's Ludhiana yesterday.

Mamunur Rahman Chayan converted a penalty corner to put Navy ahead in the first half before Rimon and Shihab increased the margin in the second half, said a press release from Bangladesh Hockey Federation yesterday.

Navy will play their second match against ONGC today.

Prior could be axed

AFP, Perth

England coach Andy Flower Wednesday admitted out-of-sorts wicketkeeper Matt Prior may be axed for the fourth Ashes Test after Australia raced to an unbeatable 3-0 lead.

Prior, 31, has made just 107 runs at 17.83, with 69 of them coming in the second innings of the second Test in Adelaide when he threw the bat with England's cause already lost.

His woes with the bat have been compounded by this poor keeping, missing two stumpings and a catch on the third day of the third Test in Perth.

T20 tourney in Sylhet?

SPORTS REPORTER



The newly-built Sylhet Divisional Stadium is all set for a dress rehearsal for next year's ICC World Twenty20 by hosting a domestic T20 tournament this month involving the country's top cricketers.

Abahani, Mohammedan and Prime Bank have all but confirmed their participation while the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is trying to give Sylhet a chance to participate in the tournament most likely to start from December 22.

"Yes, three Premier League clubs have confirmed their participation while we are interested in giving Sylhet a chance to take a team. Sylhet, one of the venues for the World T20, will hold the tournament," informed BCB's media committee chairman Jalal Yunus yesterday.

The board however is thinking of arranging a few matches, including the final, in Dhaka. The tournament

No visit by nat'l team

SPORTS REPORTER



It took many by surprise when Federation Cup champions Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club players turned up at the FIFA World Cup trophy site at the Radisson Hotel yesterday afternoon while the national team, which was supposed to make a visit, did not show up.

The Sheikh Jamal players -- both local and foreign -- and the coaching staff spent some time at the hall room taking photographs with the trophy and talking to the media. Captain Mamunul Islam, who is also the current national team captain, said it would have been more meaningful and apt for the occasion had they come as the national team.

"We were told by the club to be here at a half hour's notice. We are glad to be here but sad that we could not come as the national team. It would have been more graceful if we [national team] had come together wearing the national jersey. After the cancellation of the BNS venue, we were told by the Bangladesh Football Federation to attend of our own accord," said Mamunul.

General secretary of BFF Abu Nayeem Shohag claimed that some of the clubs refused to let their national team

SL series TV rights go to Maasranga

SPORTS REPORTER

Maasranga Television is all set to get the television rights for Bangladesh's next home cricket series against Sri Lanka.

"We are going to sign a deal with Maasranga as they are the higher bidder in two," said Kazi Inam Ahmed, chairman of the Bangladesh Cricket Board's marketing and commercial committee, yesterday. He also expressed satisfaction over the offer they got from Maasranga, compared to their last deal for a home series. Gazi TV, who acquired the rights for the last home series against New Zealand, was the other bidder and far behind its competitor. According to sources, Maasranga offered over Tk 1 crore.

Sri Lanka will arrive in Dhaka on January 24 to play two Tests, three ODIs and two T20 Internationals

Boris becomes Novak's coach

REUTERS, Belgrade

World number two Novak Djokovic has appointed six-time grand slam winner Boris Becker as his head coach, the Serbian announced on Wednesday.

"I am really excited to have the opportunity to work with Boris," the 26-year-old Djokovic said in a statement on his website [www.novakdjokovic.com].

V-Day hockey semifinalists confirmed

SPORTS REPORTER

Usha KC emerged Group B champions and moved into the semifinals of the Victory Day Hockey Tournament after playing out a 1-1 draw against Bangladesh Air Force at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Habul put Usha ahead in the 19th minute before Shamim Mia cancelled it in the 65th minute.

In the same group, Azad Sporting Club defeated Bangladesh Police 1-0 to finish runners-up. They meet either Abahani or Bangladesh Army in the semifinals.

Both Abahani and Army have already qualified into the last four from Group A and they play the group decider today at the same venue.

V-DAY WRESTLING BGB, Police share spoils

SPORTS REPORTER

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) emerged champions in the men's category of the Victory Day Wrestling Competition after grabbing all seven gold medals at the Handball Stadium yesterday.

The BGB men also won one silver while Bangladesh Police finished second with six silver medals, but the policewomen emerged champions in the women's category with four gold and as many silver medals, said a press release yesterday.



PHOTO: AFP

India batsman Virat Kohli celebrates his century on the first day of the first Test against South Africa at the Wanderers Stadium in Johannesburg yesterday.

'Aussies urn-ed it'

AFP, Sydney



Australia's media wallowed in the Ashes humbling of old enemy England on Wednesday, saying "they urn-ed it" and the glory days are back.

The triumph was given prominent coverage, with the Sydney Daily Telegraph screaming "No mercy for the dismal Poms" while lavishing praise on Michael Clarke. Cricket writer Malcolm Conn called it the skipper's finest hour.

"To pick up a cobbled-together side from the wreckage of poor Indian and England tours and reclaim the Ashes in such emphatic fashion is one of the great achievements in Australian cricket," he said, after the home side took an unbeatable 3-0 lead in the series.

"Clarke and coach Darren Lehmann have not built a side with Australia's next generation of stars, as Allan Border and coach Bob Simpson did through the late 80s to so surprisingly win

the 1987 World Cup and 1989 Ashes.

"Instead, the current captain and coach have dragged a bunch of ageing hard heads out of the Last Chance saloon and given them an unexpected shot at glory."

An ageing team finally coming good was a theme the Sydney Morning Herald also ran with, while simply stating "It's ours" on its front page.

"Seldom can it be confidently stated that one moment is a highpoint in a sportsman's career, but for a lot of this Australian team, nothing will match it because there is so little time left," wrote Malcolm Knox.

He pointed to Chris Rogers and Brad Haddin, who are both 36, while Ryan Harris is 34.

"Shane Watson, George Bailey, Mitchell Johnson and Clarke all have, as cricketers, a lot more yesterdays than tomorrows. They are a mature team with only the present to play for," he added, while rejoicing in their emphatic defeat of England.



Federation Cup winners Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club get a taste of the World Cup trophy at the Radisson Blu Water Garden Hotel in Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR