

SPORT

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Asia Cup
tickets from
Feb 22

SPORTS REPORTER

Tickets for the Asia Cup 2014 will go on sale at different branches of the United Commercial Bank from February 22. The branches in Dhaka include Mirpur, Mirpur Road (Dhanmondi), Bijoynagar, Bashundhara and Uttara. The branches in Narayanganj are Tanbazar, Chashara and Paglabazar.

Tickets can also be bought through UCB's mobile transaction system, UCASH.

The following are the rates for matches at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium:

Eastern Stand: Tk 200; Northern and Southern stands: Tk 400; Shaheed Jewel and Mushtaq Stands: Tk 600; VIP Stand: Tk 800; Grand Stand: Tk 400.

The following are the rates of the tickets for the matches at the Khan Shaheb Osman Ali Stadium at Fatullah: Eastern Gallery: Tk 200; Western Gallery: Tk 400; Club House (East): Tk 600; International Gallery: Tk 800; Grand Stand: Tk 400.

The Asia Cup is scheduled to begin from February 25 with matches taking place at Mirpur and Fatullah.

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SCOREBOARD

SRI LANKA	R	B	4s	6s
K Perera lbw b Rubel	20	18	2	1
Dilshan c Mushfiqur b Rubel	3	11	0	0
Sangakkara c Sunny b Al-Amin	8	14	1	0
Chandimal run out	13	28	0	0
Priyanjan lbw b Shakib	6	8	1	0
Mathews b Sunny	3	15	0	0
Vithanage run out	7	22	1	0
Kulasekara b Sunny	0	9	0	0
T Perera not out	80	57	4	6
Senanayake b Shakib	30	48	2	1
Malinga c Anamul b Shohag	0	10	0	0
Extras: (lb-1, w-9)	10			
Total: (All out in 40 overs)	180			
Fall of wickets: 1-22, 2-28, 3-43, 4-52, 5-58, 6-62, 7-64, 8-67, 9-149.				

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Al-Amin	8	1	34	1
Rubel	8	0	37	2
Shakib	7	0	29	2
Sunny	6	2	31	2
Shohag	7	0	22	1
Mahmudullah	4	0	26	0
BANGLADESH	R	B	4s	6s
Anamul c Mathews b Malinga	0	2	0	0
Shamsur run out	62	49	5	3
Mominul c Dilshan b T Perera	44	53	7	0
Mushfiqur c Sangakkara b Mathews	27	50	0	1
Shakib run out	3	9	0	0
Nasir c Mathews b Senanayake	8	29	1	0
Mahmudullah c Priyanjan b	0	2	0	0
Shohag c Vithanage b Mathews	6	9	1	0
Sunny c Sangakkara b Mathews	5	13	1	0
Rubel run out	4	16	0	0
Al-Amin not out	2	5	0	0
Extras: (lb-1, w-2, w-2, nb-1)	6			
Total: (All out in 39.2 overs)	167			
Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-79, 3-114, 4-119, 5-133, 6-133, 7-142, 8-161, 9-162.				

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Malinga	8	1	37	1
Kulasekara	6	0	38	0
Mathews	7.2	1	21	3
Senanayake	9	0	33	2
T Perera	9	1	35	1
Result: Sri Lanka won by 13 runs.				
Player-of-the-match: Thisara Perera.				

Liza, Eva in lead

SPORTS REPORTER

Last year's runner-up WIM Shamima Akter Liza and WFM Nazrana Khan Eva shared the lead in the Sultan Kamal 34th National Women's Chess

Championship at the close of penultimate round at the Bangladesh Chess Federation Hall Room yesterday.

Liza and Eva have eight points each from ten matches after Liza beat Dilara Jahan Nupur and Eva beat Janhara Haque Runu yesterday.

Awful Tigers

SAKEB SUBHAN

If cricket was the winner in the 2006 humdinger between South Africa and Australia which the former won after conceding 434 in 50 overs, yesterday in the first ODI between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka at Mirpur cricket was a sorry loser. The match lasted 79.2 overs and for 68 overs it seemed a contest to see who could play the worse cricket and in the end, when tailenders Rubel Hossain and Al Amin Hossain partook in a comical run out to signal the end of the innings, Bangladesh won the bad cricket contest by a landslide.

While it is hard to even attempt objectivity when a side loses after having the opposition at 67 for eight and then being 79 for one in chase of 181, but Bangladesh's performance yesterday seemed to undo all the good work achieved since the heady days of the Asia Cup in 2012.

Five catches were dropped, three of them off the bat of top-scorer Thisara Perera, a number nine batsman who apparently transformed into Chris Gayle in the eyes of the home team. Most damaging was Mushfiqur Rahim's captaincy as he went on the defensive the moment Perera hit the first of his three sixes off Arafat Sunny, even though the first of those was a dropped catch.

Mushfiqur then took the inexplicable decision to bowl Mahmudullah Riyad when ideally he should have been throwing his best bowlers at the Lankan tail. "When Perera was hitting [Arafat] Sunny bhai we thought that the away-going delivery would yield a top edge and give us his wicket," Mushfiqur explained his fallback to the age old notion that left-arm spinners are no good for left-arm batsmen.

"Silly run-outs and [missed] catches made the difference. We can't play 30 overs really well and let off in the later 20 overs. We need to play well throughout the game," he said.

If there was a theme that bound this bizarre contest, it was the Tigers' overpowering anxiety at the slightest sign of danger. Anamul Haque was his leaden-footed self as he played away from his body in the first over of the chase, but a 79-run partnership followed between

Shamsur Rahman and Mominul Haque and there seemed to be only one possible winner at that point. Mominul departed hitting in the air to point and Shamsur's run-out, his bat getting stuck just short of the crease, was the only bit of misfortune the Tigers had suffered. The rest, as the captain himself admitted, was self-inflicted.

"I would have to say that it seems that we lost purposely. I cannot remember the last time we lost like this," said a dejected Mushfiqur.

"Having a team at 80 for eight and then conceding 180, that put us on the back foot a bit. But even then chasing 180 on the pitch was not a tough task. It was a little slow, but I would say the two run-outs [Shakib Al Hasan and Shamsur Rahman] really took the match away from us."

Shakib's run out was the first sign that panic had set in, quite unusual for a team needing 62 runs with seven wickets and 21 overs in hand. The final nail was Mushfiqur, who had seemed settled till then, trying a scoop off Angelo Mathews to be caught easily behind the wicket with only 19 to get from 35 deliveries.

In the end, it looked like Bangladesh were back to being minnows and Sri Lanka, the bigger team, just had a shocker from which they managed to recover. To their credit, Sri Lanka showed just how a side can get out of the worst of trouble, but the helping hand that Bangladesh provided will always be remembered.

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"It's been a great day," McCullum said as he walked off, unbeaten on 281 after posting a raft of records and steering New Zealand into a safe position in the second Test.

"I'm a little bit tired, the body is a bit sore, but when you're scoring runs your body doesn't hurt so much."

The hosts began their second innings 246 behind India and were staring down the barrel of defeat at 94-5. But they ended day four on 571-6, 325 runs ahead and with four wickets in hand.

McCullum was 19 runs away from being the first New Zealander to reach 300, with the record currently held by Martin Crowe's 299 against Sri Lanka on the same ground in 1991.

Battling back, leg and shoulder injuries, the 32-year-old McCullum has been in the middle for nearly 12 hours and was exhausted as he entered the dressing room.

"The last hour was a bit of a daze in all honesty and I was just trying to get through. Thankfully Neesh (Jimmy Neesham) was playing some shots and ticking the board



Sri Lanka all-rounder Thisara Perera pulls one on way to scoring an unbeaten knock of 80 runs, which not only revived their teetering innings, but also played a big role in coming out with a 13-run win over Bangladesh in the first one-day at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



Crown Cement has been contributing to nation building since its inception. All recent mega structures of the country like Jatrabari-Gulistan Flyover, Kuril Flyover and Hatirjheel Project are built with Crown Cement.

Defensive Mushfiqur

NAIMUL KARIM



In an ideal cricketing world, when a side is struggling at 67 for eight one would expect the fielding captain to have his best bowlers operating from both ends, with close-in fielders dominating the batsman's field of vision in order to bring a quick end to the innings.

The match at Mirpur yesterday however, followed a rather unfamiliar script. Not only did the Sri Lankans avoid a quick end to their innings but remarkably went on to post a defendable total.

Thisara Perera's score of 80 was the third highest by a number nine in ODIs. The ninth and tenth wickets added 113 runs for Sri Lanka, which happens to be their second highest ever.

While Perera and co -- helped by some lacklustre fielding by the hosts -- displayed plenty of guts, there were several moments during the tail's

fight-back that reflected Mushfiqur Rahim's defensive mindset on the field.

Until the 19th over Arafat Sunny had brilliant figures of 2 for 7 in five overs. The 23rd saw Perera start the counter by hitting three sixes off Sunny, the first of which was palmed over by Shohag Gazi at the boundary rope. All of a sudden Sunny, who seemed threatening throughout, was taken off; that over was his last of the match.

Instead of putting pressure on the batsmen with the side's best bowlers during that crucial moment, the captain brought on Mahmudullah Riyad, who unfortunately had a torrid time with the ball.

He had a bad time on the field as well, dropping Senanayake at slip in the 26th over off Gazi. But what was perhaps more surprising was that Perera's aggression compelled the captain to remove the slips, even though the opponents were eight down and numbers nine and ten were at the crease.

While Perera being left-handed

could have been a reason behind bowling Gazi and Riyad, the strategy did not seem to work and should have been changed sooner than it was. It was something that Mushfiqur eventually did by bringing in Shakib Al Hasan in the 34th over, more than 11 overs after the eighth wicket fell. By then the visitors had already put on 140 on the board.

Shakib, who finished his first spell in the 18th over -- 1 for 12 in three overs -- came back and broke the partnership almost instantly by bowling Senanayake.

Captaincy cannot be the only factor to be blamed. Bangladesh's performance on the field, which saw them drop four simple catches -- three of them off Perera's bat -- played a role as well.

Bangladesh were at fault at a number of stages during the game; they seemed slightly overconfident during the chase, threw away their wickets and dropped a number of catches. However, it was the defensive mindset while on the field that ended up costing them the match.

Afusi praises Sohel, defends himself

SPORTS REPORTER



Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club coach Joseph Afusi highly praised young midfielder Sohel Rana for his brilliant performance throughout the 11th IFA Shield in Kolkata and tipped the youngster for a potential career in Europe. The Nigerian termed Sheikh Jamal's IFA Shield campaign as outstanding, and reserved extra praise for the lanky midfielder, who put a tireless performance throughout the 120 minutes of the final, which Sheikh Jamal eventually lost in tie-breakers against Kolkatta Mohammedan.

"Sohel is very young and talented and has a massive future ahead of him," said Afusi while talking to a couple of reporters at his residence in Dhanmondi yesterday after returning with his side from Kolkata early in the morning. "I have already one or two contacts for him from abroad and I believe he could be the first Bangladeshi player to play in Europe."

"He has every quality to play in any Under-21 team in Europe. He is a complete footballer who knows how to play complement his teammates, when to preserve his stamina and when to deliver the final effort," Afusi said about the 21-year-old attacking midfielder who switched to Sheikh Jamal at the end of last season after spending three years at the Dhaka Mohammedan SC.

The Nigerian also defended the crucial decisions he made towards the end of the final, including the replacement of striker Emeka Darlington for midfielder Ali Abdullahi.

"According to the bylaws, I can only change a foreign player in place of another foreigner and we had no option but to send Ali because the defenders Yesin, Didar, Munna and Linkon were telling me that they were struggling to stop the opposition's two forwards -- number 8 (Penn) and 9 (Joshimar). So I chose to play Nasir up front and sent Ali in place of him," said Afusi. "Manmum and Sohel told me that they didn't want to take penalty kicks, so I could not force them as taking penalties is a matter of confidence."

Afusi also said his side will take inspiration from their performance in Kolkata and transform that performance into the Bangladesh Premier League, where they have four matches left in the first leg including one against leaders Abahani. Sheikh Jamal are currently in fourth position with 13 points from five matches while Abahani lead the table with 18 points from eight matches.

Thisara was brilliant

SPORTS REPORTER

From 67 for eight Sri Lanka went on to win yesterday's first ODI against Bangladesh by 13 runs, and the lion's share of the credit must go to Thisara Perera, who clubbed a 57-ball 84.

"He is one of the best all-rounders that we have. He has been winning us matches in the past few years with bat and ball, he is matured," said Sri Lanka skipper Angelo Mathews after the match. "He did it in the T20s in Chittagong, and he has improved quite rapidly.

"The way he batted was absolutely brilliant. When Thisara and Sachithra (Senanayake) were batting, I thought we should get to at least 150 to give the bowlers some sort of chance," he said.