

Where did the tickets go?

SPORTS REPORTER

The Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium premises turned into a sea of red as droves of fans, clad in their favourite team's jersey, showed up to watch the final of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) between Comilla Victorians and Fortune Barishal yesterday.

The 25,000-seater stadium was filled to the rafters during the game, much to the credit of the passionate fans, some of whom had to endure a lot of chaos, long queues and even a police charge to procure tickets while others had to pay five-six times more than the fixed rate to buy tickets from ticket blacklers.

Tickets for the final went on sale at the venue on Thursday, a day before the match. The counters were supposed to open at 9:30 am but opened at noon and not long after the ticket sale began, the sellers at the counters announced that they had run out of tickets.

The announcement enraged the crowd and police then stepped in, charged at the fans to control the situation.

In the afternoon, following the crowd troubles, the counters resumed selling tickets but there was a shortage.

On the day of the final, people started queueing for tickets five-six hours before the game began and despite being in line for hours, many failed to procure tickets.

Some of the fans had purchased ticket tokens online but claimed that they could not collect the actual tickets at the online counter at the venue, which was right next to the stadium entrance gate, due to the commotion.

At one point, the counters got closed down due to huge lines and scarcity of tickets to sell. But the ticket blacklers had no shortage of tickets and were selling them at an inflated rate.



"We can provide even 600 tickets. How many do you need?" a ticket blackler told a reporter.

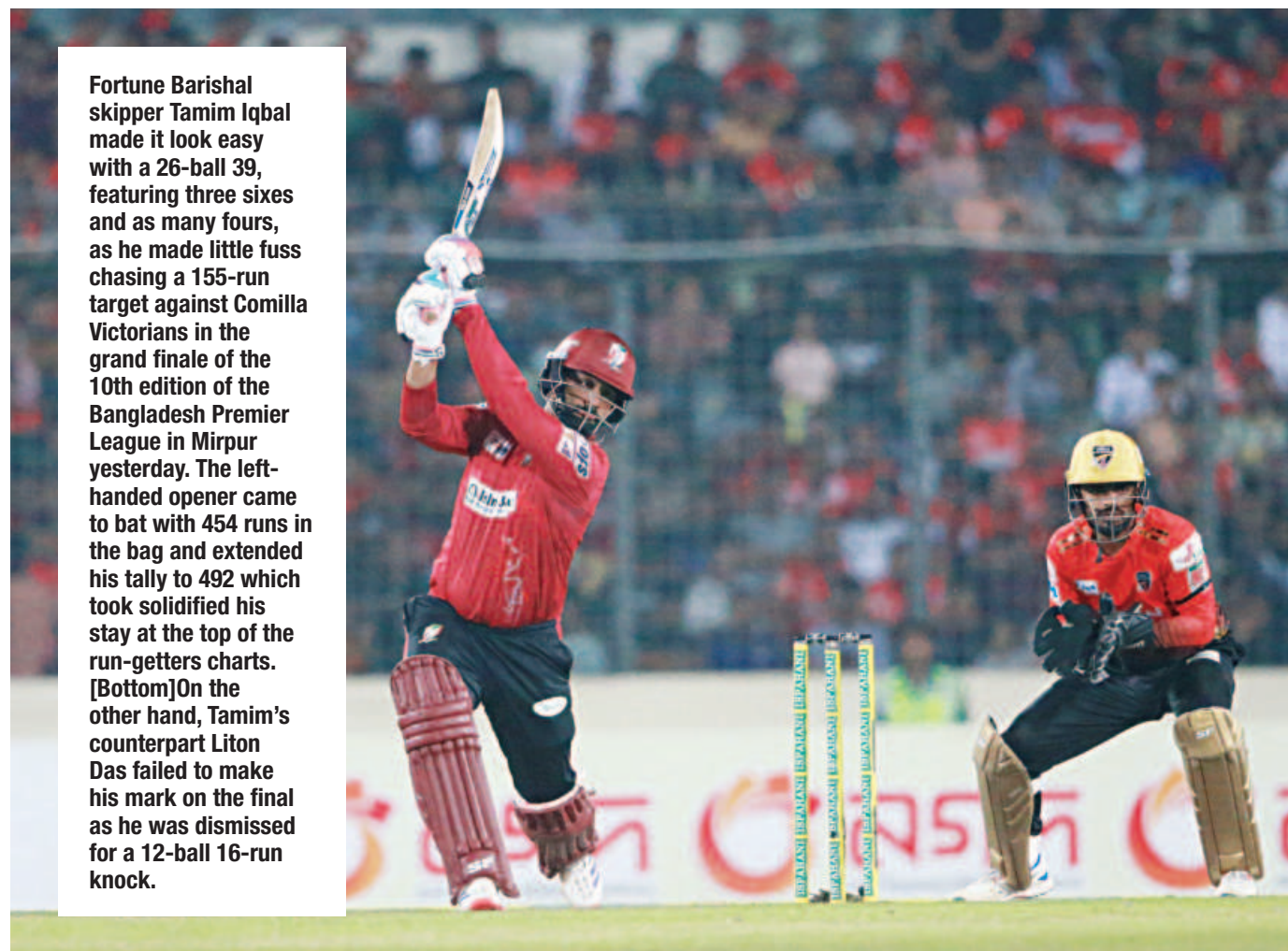
The Eastern Stand tickets were officially priced at Tk 300 but the ticket blacklers were selling them at Tk 1500-1800 each.

Tickets at the Club House were set at Tk 800 but were being sold at Tk 2000 or more and the Grand Stand tickets, Tk 2500, were going for Tk 3500-5000 in the black market.

"I have been looking for tickets since the morning. But they are asking Tk 1500 for tickets that cost Tk 300. We said we will give them Tk 1000 but they replied that we should get it now as later the same tickets would cost Tk 2000 each," Faisal, who came from Patuakhali for the final, told reporters outside the stadium.

BCB officials could not be reached to comment on the chaos for tickets.

But the fans who did manage to get tickets, were in great spirits. One Barishal fan chanted, "We will not let go, the trophy is going to Barishal". The Comilla fans retorted, "The fifth star is coming."



Fortune Barishal skipper Tamim Iqbal made it look easy with a 26-ball 39, featuring three sixes and as many fours, as he made little fuss chasing a 155-run target against Comilla Victorians in the grand finale of the 10th edition of the Bangladesh Premier League in Mirpur yesterday. The left-handed opener came to bat with 454 runs in the bag and extended his tally to 492 which took solidified his stay at the top of the run-getters charts. [Bottom] On the other hand, Tamim's counterpart Liton Das failed to make his mark on the final as he was dismissed for a 12-ball 16-run knock.

Under-16s eye winning start

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh look forward to making a winning start in the SAFF U-16 Women's Championship when they square off against hosts Nepal at the ANFA Stadium in Kathmandu today, with the game getting underway at 3:15pm Bangladesh time.

"The first match is always important, and we need to make a winning start. If we can win the first match, we will have one step in the final," head coach Saiful Bari Titu said in a video message via Bangladesh Football Federation.

This is the first time that the four-nation tournament will take place for under-16 level following previous four editions which were held for under-15 levels. Bangladesh had become champions in the inaugural edition in 2017 before settling for the second-best position in next three times but this time they are targeting to confirm the final berth first and then go for regaining the title.

"Our target is to put up a good performance by overcoming the pressure of the home crowd," said Titu, who had previously informed that this group of players lack in experience have talent.

Comilla batters trip up in final

SPORTS REPORTER

Comilla Victorians underwhelmed with the bat in the all-important final of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL), as they lost early wickets and then failed to keep the scoreboard ticking in the middle-overs against an accurate bowling performance from Fortune Barishal yesterday.

The defending champions were sent to bat by Barishal in front of a jampacked Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur.

Comilla had been aggressive in the first six overs throughout the tournament, with an average Powerplay score of 47.57 for the loss of 1.5 wickets leading up to the final.

Comilla went with the same approach in the all-important final, despite what had transpired in the last two evening matches at the venue.

Both qualifiers were held under floodlights in Mirpur, where the new ball moved around for the first few overs and then the conditions turned ideal for batting for the rest of the match.

Rangpur Riders, the team that had topped the points-table after the league phase, were sent to bat first in both qualifiers, lost three wickets inside the Powerplay and couldn't recover from it, losing to Comilla and Barishal respectively.

Despite the threat, Comilla



for Barishal as the tall Kiwi quick banged the ball short to claim his first victim, Liton, with an easy catch to third man.

Fuller then dismissed Hridoy with a full and wide delivery as the right-hander went hard at the ball but only managed to top edge it straight to third man.

Things then went from bad to worse for Comilla as they scored just 43 runs between overs 7-15 and lost two wickets.

Comilla's decision to send Mahidul Islam at number five while they had Moeen Ali and Andre Russell at their disposal didn't pay dividends as his painstaking innings off 38 off 35 didn't give the innings any momentum heading into the final overs.

He finally got out in the 17th over to Mohammad Saifuddin, making way for Russell, whose 27 off 14 balls with the help of four sixes gave Comilla a somewhat respectable score of 154-6.

Comilla, who averaged 10.77 runs per over in the last five overs before the final, managed to score 55 runs from over 16-20 thanks to Russell but losing too many wickets at the top and poor batting at the middle kept them from setting a better target.

Thanks to the bowlers, it was Barishal who held the advantage at the halfway point of the final.



Bangladesh's fastest man Imranur Rahman storms towards the finish line ahead of a Jamaican and a Pakistani competitor during the heats of the men's 60m sprint at the Indoor World Athletics Championships in Glasgow yesterday. The England-based sprinter clocked 6.64 seconds, 0.05 seconds slower than his personal best, to finish third in the heat and moved into the semifinals as the 17th fastest. PHOTO: AFP



Real Madrid forward Vinicius Jr is all set to return to Mestalla for the first time since enduring racial abuse at the ground last year in May when Los Blancos will be taking on hosts Valencia in a LaLiga encounter on Saturday. Anticipating a fiery atmosphere, Spanish authorities declared the match as 'high risk' and ordered police reinforcements. PHOTO: REAL MADRID

Can Abahani stop spirited Mariners?

SPORTS REPORTER

Star-studded Abahani will look for improved performance to regain the title of Club Cup hockey tournament when they square off against reigning champions Dhaka Mariner Youngs Club in the final at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium today.

The game kicks off at 5:00pm. Despite being the top team on paper, national player-studded Abahani could not prove their mettle in the last three matches even though they won all of those matches, including a hard-fought 3-2 win over Mohammedan in the semifinals.

The Sky Blues will definitely look to up their game against a spirited Mariners, who stormed into the final with a massive 8-4 win over Usha KC. Mariners showed fantastic performance in all three previous matches and are considered as favourites to win back-to-back titles.

It is also going to be a repeat of the last edition final held three years ago when Mariners won 3-0 to claim their first-ever club cup title.

"The key to our strength is the fitness of the players as well as a good understanding among the local and the foreign players. We are playing with good combination, good passing, attacking and defending throughout the matches," Mariners coach Mamunur Rashid told The Daily Star after the team's final preparation.

"If we can carry our natural performance in the final, we will have a good chance of winning the match. We will definitely focus on team game instead of individual performances and that is what

I've told the players today (Friday)," said the former hockey player, who also praised his opposition for their defensive and attacking prowess.

Abahani coach Hedayetull Islam Razib admitted that his charges could not perform well in the previous matches but he is optimistic for an improved performance in the final.

"Mariners have been performing well which we are not being able to do. We are lacking cohesion among the foreign and the local players. Besides, we

The foreign players of both teams have been decisive in their victories so far and the final could be a battle between them.

are also not getting proper service in midfield as the players have just come back from injuries," Razib told The Daily Star.

"We made some mistakes in the match against Mohammedan as there is always nerves during Abahani-Mohammedan matches. Having rectified those mistakes, the boys are expected to perform well against Mariners," said Razib, who however believes if the local players perform well, they will have a good chance to win the final.

The foreign players have been playing key roles in deciding the fate of the matches for both teams. Mariners' Indian recruits have outperformed Abahani's Indians and the final might also turn out to be a battle between the foreigners.

MATCHES TAKEN FOR FIRST TEST WIN

Australia: 1	Zimbabwe: 11
England: 2	South Africa: 12
Pakistan: 2	Sri Lanka: 14
Afghanistan: 2	India: 25
West Indies: 6	Bangladesh: 35
Ireland: 8	New Zealand: 45

Andy Balbirnie has represented Ireland in all eight Tests played by them.

Pacer Mark Adair, who was adjudged the player of the match for his career-best Test figures of eight for 95, has now become the top wicket-taker for Ireland in Tests with 18 wickets in four matches. He went past Andy McBride (14 wickets in six Tests).

Afghanistan also recorded their first Test win against Ireland back in 2019.

Ireland played their first Test in 2018 against Pakistan.



Ending a streak of seven successive losses, Ireland made history on Friday when they defeated Afghanistan by six wickets in Abu Dhabi to claim their maiden Test victory. Captain Andy Balbirnie led from the front with an undefeated 58 as Ireland reached their modest target of 111 in the final session of the third day. PHOTO: X