

EC approves of TV deal

SPORTS REPORTER

The executive committee of Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) accepted and endorsed the bid of Nimbus Sports International for Worldwide Marketing Agency Rights for next six years.

The emergency board meeting chaired by newly appointed president Mohammad Abdul Aziz took the decision unanimously at a local club last night and it also welcomed the huge deal worth 56.88 million dollars for the period of November 1, 2006 to March 31, 2012.

"The view of the emergency meeting was that the bid would be beneficial for Bangladesh cricket. The decision was unanimous," informed chief executive officer Mahmudur Rahman after over the two-hour meeting.

The TV deal was main the agenda in the meeting but the board have also decided to retain former national captain Khaled Mahmud as team operations manager for home series against Zimbabwe and Scotland.



PHOTO: STAR
New Bangladesh Cricket Board president Mohammad Abdul Aziz addresses the first executive committee meeting under his reign at a local club yesterday.

Ashraful, yes or no?

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

When the national selectors sit today to pick up the squad for this month's home series against Zimbabwe, the major issue would be to discuss the fate of ace batsman Mohammad Ashraful.

The selection committee including coach Dav Wharmore and captain Habibul Bashar was seemingly divided over the selection of Ashraful in the 14-member squad for the first three one-dayers of a five-match series against the southern African nation.

But the majority of the panel, however, believes that it is rather dicey to think about bringing in a young prospect as a replacement of Ashraful, who was dropped from the playing eleven against Zimbabwe in the last match of the ICC Champions Trophy in India following the right-hander's poor show with the bat.

Ashraful's blazing 121-runs knock on Thursday in the National Cricket League, however, gave his supporters a strong point to back his position in the side.

It was learnt that most of the members in the panel thought that it would be suicidal to sideline the 22-year old batter in the home series, especially with the World Cup in the West Indies round the corner.

The sentiment is that Ashraful alone is not to be blame for his fall from grace but the selectors should shoulder the responsibility. It were the selectors who have made him confused by rotating his batting position often. Before the ICC Champions Trophy, the selectors had publicly told that they would give Ashraful 'enough time' to settle as an opener but their patience ran out after just two games.

Recently, chief selector Faruque Ahmed has declared that they would not consider the exciting batsman in the opening position while skipper Bashar has also preferred him down the order.

The opening slot is another issue, which will also get the attention in the meeting as a long-term headache for the Tigers.

The think-tank is desperately looking for a partner for Shahrir Nafees in the five-match series but whether they go for a new one bringing young Mehrob Hossain in or go back to good old Javed Omar for a temporary solution would be a decision to watch.

Javed was ignored for the recently concluded ICC Champions Trophy and many thought that the problem would never be solved if the think-tank, seemingly confused about the issue, always goes for transitory solution.

The Faruque-led panel will announce a separate team for the Twenty20 match against Zimbabwe with emphasis on young talents apart from naming a 14-member squad for the first three one-dayers. Zimbabwe will arrive in Dhaka on November 22.

Zia to go to World Cup Chess

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Grandmaster Ziaur Rahman will participate in the Chess World Cup 2007 as a nominee of FIDE president Kirshan Ilyumzhinov.

A grandmaster coach will prepare Zia for six months for the top chess meet, FIDE has confirmed.

It was learnt that Bangladesh Chess Federation's recently sacked president Syed Shujauddin Ahmed got the nod for Zia in return of his support for the FIDE president, who has the power to nominate five players for the World Cup.

Only Japan and a few countries from the middle-east earlier got this opportunity from Asia.

Usually, least developed countries bargain for fund for their support but Shuja, removed as president by the caretaker government on Thursday, gave his backing to Ilyumzhinov on condition of having a representative of Bangladesh in the World Cup.

BHF strays from hard line

SPORTS REPORTER

Having failed to stick to the rules and continue the Premier Hockey League, the Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) yesterday announced the postponement of the Super Five Stage till the end of the Asian Games.

Mohammed Sporting Club and Mariner Youngs Club's sporting attitude and impractical demand of punishment of a few players of Usha Kirra Chakra and Abahani resulted in a stalemate that saw the league halted just after the start of the super league.

Ignoring the federation decision, both the teams gave walkover in their respective matches and according to bylaws, faced the threat of relegation.

Under a directive of its president, Air Vice Marshal Fakhrul Azam, the BHF was determined to end the league on schedule but yesterday's executive committee meeting virtually failed to take a solid decision.

To hide their failure to break the stalemate, the BHF decided to begin the national camp for preparation for next month's Asiad in Doha.

"We have taken this decision for the greater interest of the nation," told BHF general secretary Shamsul Bari.

After heated open discussion in

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Sehwag not ruled out yet

PTI, Johannesburg

Flamboyant opener Virender Sehwag, who suffered a finger injury, hasn't been ruled out of the first cricket one-dayer against South Africa here on Sunday.

Sehwag missed the one-day warmup game in Benoni on Thursday after suffering a gash in the right ring finger prior to the toss and needed four stitches to close the gaping wound.

The injury happened when Sehwag went for a high catch during practice before the start of the match.

According to media manager Rajan Nair, Sehwag is being watched on a regular basis and he stayed put at the ground watching his team suffer a 37-run loss.

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The Galloping Magyar dies

Football

AFP, Madrid

Hungarian football legend Ferenc Puskas, the inspiration of the "Mighty Magyars" national side that dominated world football in the 1950s, has died after a long illness. He was 79.

Puskas, who was suffering from Alzheimer's disease and had been confined to a hospital bed for the past six years, died in Kutvolgyi hospital in Budapest on Friday morning, family spokesman Gyorgy Szollosi told the MTI national news agency.

His condition turned critical on Thursday, after he contracted pneumonia and a high fever.

One of the best strikers ever to play the game, with a fearsome left foot, Puskas, known as the "Galloping Major," led Hungary to Olympic gold in 1952, won league titles in both Hungary and Spain and three European Cups with Real Madrid.

Puskas scored a remarkable 83 goals in 84 international matches from 1945 to 1956, when the Hungarian squad was simply known as the "golden team."

They signalled their dominance with a stunning 6-3 thrashing of England at Wembley in 1953 -- becoming the first overseas team to beat the English national side on their home soil.

The victory, in which Puskas scored twice, was a rare chance for a war-ravaged Hungary to feel a sense of pride and national identity as it was slipping from fascist dictatorship into communist rule.

Hungary then hammered England again 7-1 in Budapest and were hot favourites to win the 1954 World Cup in Switzerland, although they eventually lost in the final to Germany.

After Hungary's failed uprising against Soviet domination in 1956, Puskas was among many who left the country, defecting to Spain where he would join Alfredo De Stafano in a legendary Real Madrid side before returning to Hungary in 1981.

Puskas played for Real from 1958

to 1967 and was crowned top scorer in the Spanish league four times.

He led Madrid to three European Cup titles and seven league championships during his decade at the club.

His contribution was not forgotten.

In August of 2005 a star-studded Real Madrid squad played Hungary in a fundraiser in Budapest with the proceeds of the match going towards the hospital treatment of the ailing legend, who was suffering from

Alzheimer's disease by then.

The match was played in the packed national stadium, which in 2002 was renamed for Puskas.

An accomplished coach after his playing career, Puskas directed Greek club Panathinaikos to league crowns twice and to a European Cup final in the 1970-71 season.

In the 1970s and 80s, Puskas coached nearly a dozen teams from North and South America, Europe, Africa and even Australia.

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FERENC PUSKAS

Steyn blows away India

Cricket

AFP, Benoni

Fast bowler Dale Steyn bowled the Rest of South Africa to a convincing 37-run win over the touring Indians at Willowmoore Park on Thursday.

Steyn took five for 22 as India were bowled out for 218 in reply to the Rest's 255 for eight. Only Indian captain Rahul Dravid, who made 79, stood firm against Steyn's onslaught.

Steyn, 23, bowled at speeds of up to 150kmh as he ripped through the Indian batting in a display which may force the South African selectors to revise their decision to earmark him for Test matches only.

For the Indians, it was anything but an ideal warm-up for the start of a five-match one-day international series against South Africa at the Wanderers Stadium in Johannesburg on Sunday.

"There are areas where we can get better," admitted Dravid.

"We're a pretty young side. Some of the young batsmen and bowlers are learning. It's not an easy place to play cricket, especially if you come straight from India. It is just the start of the tour and there will be better performances as the tour goes on."

The Rest captain Ashwell Prince said: "We wanted to give them a tough game. They (India) have found it tough touring here in the past and we wanted to make sure

we didn't give them any freebies early in the tour."

Steyn struck in his second over when Indian star Sachin Tendulkar cut a short ball straight to backward point, then trapped Tendulkar's opening partner, Wassim Jaffer, caught at second slip two balls later.

Jaffer fell in place of Virender Sehwag who needed stitches in a hand after misjudging a catch in fielding practice shortly before the game.

Steyn's pace was too much for Mahendra Singh Dhoni and Suresh Raina, two of India's younger players, who he dismissed in his second spell. He softened up Dhoni with a short ball then trapped the wicketkeeper-batsman leg before with a fuller delivery before the left-handed Raina could only fend a lifting delivery to short leg.

In his final spell, Steyn bowled Dravid, who was ninth man out after a solid 99-ball innings.

Steyn has played in only four one-day internationals and was dropped after the tour of Australia last season because he was too expensive. He conceded only 12 runs off the bat Thursday with seven wides and three no-balls making up the rest of the runs against him.

Apart from Dravid's innings, there was encouragement for the Indians in the form of bowlers Anil Kumble and Zaheer Khan in their returns to the country's one-day team.

Kumble and Khan, both recalled

after long spells out of the one-day side, were easily the most impressive Indian bowlers.

Left-arm seamer Zhan, whose most recent one-day international was against Pakistan in February, took three for 44 in ten overs.

Veteran leg-spinner Kumble, out of one-day international cricket since playing for Asia against Africa in South Africa in August 2005, took two for 31 in ten overs.

Kumble took two wickets with successive balls as the Rest slipped to 116 for six in the 31st over before left-handers Jacques Rudolph (72 not out) and Albie Morkel (57) lashed 96 off 100 balls for the seventh wicket.

When Morkel skied a catch off Khan, Rudolph carried on hitting out as another 43 runs were scored off the remaining 19 balls of the innings.

Morkel had been due to be twelfth man for the Rest but got his chance to play when it was agreed before the match that both sides could use 12 players, although only 11 could bat or be on the field at any time.

The decision enabled the Indians to field an extra player to get match practice ahead of the one-day international series. It meant that the match would not have official List A limited overs status -- and also enabled the home side to finish with a much better total than might have been the case.

The Indian bowlers took some heavy punishment in the closing

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Did U Know?

Pakistan batsman Mohammad Yousof scored 192 runs from 330 balls in the first innings of the first Test against the West Indies at the Gadaffi Stadium on November 12. It was his twentieth century, fourth against the West Indies.



Jose Mourinho

(Chelsea manager)

"I think my career won't be too long, it will be a shorter career than that of those traditional coaches who are still active at 60 or 65. I don't want any of that."



ESPN

Tennis Masters Cup
Live at 12:00 pm
English Premier Football League
Man City v Fulham
Live at 6:40 pm
Chelsea v West Ham
Live at 8:55 pm
Primera Liga
Real Madrid v Racing
Live at 1:30 am (Sunday)
Sevilla v Valencia
Live at 3:00 am (Sunday)

STAR Sports

English Premier Football League
Sheffield United v Man United
Live at 8:55 pm
Middlesbrough v Liverpool
Live at 11:10 pm

ZEE Sports

Serie A
Empoli v AC Milan
Live at 11:00 pm

BKSP upset DU

SPORTS REPORTER

Mahmudul Hasan steered BKSP to a four-wicket victory against Dhaka University (DU) in the low-scoring match of the National Cricket Championship at the BKSP ground yesterday.

Hasan smashed 61 after taking two wickets for eight runs as BKSP coasted to 134 for six in 37 overs in reply to Dhaka University's 132.

Earlier, deciding to bat first, Dhaka University were bundled out in 40 overs with Abhijit making team highest 37. Kibria was the most successful BKSP bowler with 3-22.

Shahjada, Ehsanul shine

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Left-arm spinner Abdur Razzaq chipped in with two quick wickets as Khulana left Rajshahi in a sticky situation on the third day of the Ispahani Mirzapore Tea 8th National Cricket League at the Rajshahi Divisional Stadium yesterday.

Khulana fought back to score 312 in their second innings despite a magnificent seven-wicket haul by fast bowler Mohammad Shahjada which gave Rajshahi a winning target of 227 runs but they were reduced to 49 for three at stumps.

Chittagong skipper Ehsanul Haque struck a superb 153 to leave his side on a strong position against Sylhet at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium. Sylhet were 97 for no loss in their second innings, replying to Chittagong's first innings score of 360 runs.

Meanwhile, at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium, Dhaka were on top virtually all day as Barisal trailed in their second innings by 221 runs after being bowled out for 175 in

their first innings on the second day of their match.

This was after Dhaka added 65 runs to their overnight total to be all out for 370. In their second innings, Dhaka were 46 without loss.

BARISAL v DHAKA

Overnight batsman Mohammad Sharif hit out at the Barisal bowlers in the morning as Dhaka surged ahead in their first salvo. Sharif hit a couple of sixes and five boundaries to score 41 off 64 balls.

He continued to shine as the Dhaka pace attack walked all over Barisal's batsmen. Shahadat Hossain bowled seven hostile overs to pick up both his Tigers teammate Shahrir Nafees (1), Hannan Sarkar (15) and Nasiruddin Faruq (5).

But his spell was cut short as he twisted an ankle during his eighth over. His injury's gravity could not be determined till filing of this report.

Back to the match and Sharif continued to have a great day. He followed up his batting effort with three wickets to sink Barisal further.

Mohammad Ashraful also shone with the ball as he took two wickets including Humayun Kabir, who top scored for Barisal with 64. Coming

in at number six, he struck eight fours in his 123-ball knock before being the last man out.

Openers Javed Omar (23*) and Mehrob Hossain (21*) saw off nine overs at the end of the day to give Dhaka a substantial lead of 221 runs going into the third day.

SYLHET v CHITTAGONG

Faisal Hossain was the first victim to fall on the day when he was adjudged lbw to Sylhet left-arm spinner Enamul Haque. The Chittagong left-hander added 225 runs for the fifth wicket with skipper Ehsanul Haque. In his five-hour knock, Faisal scored 121 runs in which he struck 17 boundaries.

But Ehsanul batted aloud to hit a brilliant 153 in over seven hours, smashing 16 boundaries in his first century of the season. He added a further 75 runs with Elias Sunny for the eighth wicket before being dismissed with the score on 356 as the ninth wicket.

For Sylhet, Enamul took four for 84 and Nazmul Hossain picked up three. Interestingly, skipper Rajin Saleh used as much as nine bowlers.

Sylhet began smartly but were

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PHOTO: STAR
Barisal lower order batsman Ishraq Sonnet keenly follows the path of the ball as does Dhaka's Mohammad Ashraful (R) during their Ispahani Mirzapore Tea 8th National Cricket League encounter at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium yesterday.

Chappell defends poor start

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Greg Chappell, the coach of the Indian team, has sought to deflect criticism of the team's disappointing performance in the first match of their South African tour, saying the players had been pitted against quality opposition without adequate time to adjust to the local conditions.

"It can happen, stepping out of the airplane and playing in two days' time against genuine quality bowling. But that's the only way you are going to learn," Chappell said in a stout defence of his players after the 37-run loss to Rest of South Africa in a warm-up game on Thursday. Chasing a target of 256, the Indians were blown away by the express speed of Dale Steyn, who finished with five for 22 from ten hostile overs.

"I don't know too many players

who are well equipped to handle real fast bowling when they first walk on to the international stage. Most of them have to get used to it by experience," Chappell said.

Not only did the batsmen find the going tough, even the bowling came apart in the final overs, with Munaf Patel and Sreesanth both going for more than 60 runs. "We gave a couple of guys an opportunity of bowling in the death overs which they haven't done before. If you want to get better you have got to have those opportunities," Chappell said. "Sometimes it is a painful initiation you have to go through. But then you learn the lesson."

Chappell also felt Mahendra Singh Dhoni has now been part of international cricket long enough to take on more responsibility. "He is going to get better if he takes risk and bears responsibility. I think MS is ready for that role. He has played a reasonable amount of international cricket now."

The one Indian batsman who

played a long innings was Rahul Dravid, who made 79, and Chappell felt there was a lot that the younger members of the team could learn from him. "Rahul goes through difficult periods. He did what he has to go to get through those periods. You sometimes don't look very good and you could rather appear uncomfortable. And yet if you go through you gain confidence. It could make it easy next time. It's not something you can teach somebody. It's something you learn by experience. Rahul has learnt it as well as anyone has ever learnt it."

Chappell also found words of praise for Anil Kumble and Zaheer Khan, the two bowlers returning to India's fold. "Zaheer brought his experience to good use and Kumble is the consummate professional. He does everything that needs to be done. He plays with youthful enthusiasm which belies the number of years he has played international cricket."