

Agents, sponsors up against BCCI

PTI, New Delhi

Miffed at the BCCI's decision to curtail players' endorsements, the business managers of cricketers are planning to get united and also rope in the major sponsors of the national team to consolidate their stance.

"We have already contacted sponsors like TCL, Puma and Sahara which have agreed to unite and also talking to others over the issue," Shaileendra Singh of Percept D'Mark told PTI. The company handles accounts for Sourav Ganguly and Yuvraj Singh.

"Our interest is to set up a united front to consolidate and represent the sponsors and the players' interest because some where down the line the focus is being lost," he said.

In its meeting, BCCI on Saturday announced that players would not be allowed to endorse more than three products and would need prior permission from it before signing contracts.

Singh said the BCCI should have at least taken the sponsors in confidence before making such a move and informed that the media managers of the players would meet later this week to put up a collective issue with the Board.

"The focus needs to be on the amount of money which comes into cricket and who is going to be answerable for that. Some 25-30 clients have put serious money into the sport, what about the accountability for that," Singh said.

The business agents are terming it as a populist move, which may face legal hurdles and may not be implemental.

They took it

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"There is still an opportunity with three big games coming up and we need to be competitive and it's important that we regroup," added Smith, whose team spent almost two weeks in Guyana and were known to be frustrated with the facilities and unpredictable weather.

"It's difficult to come up with answers after the Bangladesh defeat. We didn't do the basics well and gave them an opportunity. They grabbed it with both hands."

South Africa, who sent Bangladesh in to bat on a slow-paced wicket at the National Stadium here, allowed their opponents to post a challenging 251-8.

In reply, South Africa faltered against Bangladesh's spinners and folded at 184.

Left-arm slow bowlers Abdul Razzaq (3-25), Shabik Al Hasan (2-49) and Mohammad Rafique (1-25) bowled superbly after paceman Syed Rasel gave Bangladesh two wickets.

"Their spinners bowled very well and I think we allowed them to bowl very well because we were under pressure. We lost a few wickets in a clutch and put ourselves under pressure," said Smith.

"Once we lost those wickets we became tentative and allowed them to grow in confidence. All credit to Bangladesh."

Bangladesh were reeling at 84-4 before middle-order batsmen Mohammad Ashraful (87) and Aftab Ahmed (35) steadied the innings with a 76-run stand.

Their efforts overshadowed a career best 5-45 from recalled paceman Andre Nel.

Smith praised man-of-the-match Ashraful.

"His innings changed things, he set it well, worked the field well and kept us under pressure through the 50 overs from when he came into bat."

For South Africa Herschelle Gibbs, batting at number seven with a runner due to a calf injury, top scored with 56.

But Smith feared Gibbs may not be available for the crucial match against the West Indies.

"His injury is being reassessed and he has a 50-50 chance for the next match."

Ash feels great

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fans plenty to cheer about in both Tests and one-dayers with his exciting stroke-play.

He was only a teenager when he grabbed the headlines with a brilliant hundred against a strong Sri Lankan attack at Colombo six years ago, using his feet remarkably well against ace off-spinner Muttiah Muralidaran.

It was India's turn to suffer in 2004 when Ashraful treated their seamers and spinners with disdain in his career-best 158 not out in the second and final Test at Chittagong.

Ashraful batted as if he was playing in a one-day, hitting three sixes and 24 fours in his 194-ball knock.

"I never think about the bowlers when I am batting. I just watch the deliveries," said the 22-year-old.

He said his team needed a big win in the second round to boost their confidence ahead of the remaining three matches against England, the West Indies and debutants Ireland.

"When we scored 250, we thought we could win," said Ashraful.

"We need this kind of victory. We came to the Super Eights and did not do well in the initial matches. Now we have three games remaining and if we play well, we have a good chance."



England batsman Ian Bell cuts the ball hard as Australia wicketkeeper Adam Gilchrist looks on during their World Cup Super Eights match in St John's on Sunday.

LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

respectively in the two-day meet.

DIV 1 CRICKET

With his win over FM Aminul Islam in the sixth round of the 33rd National Chess Championship yesterday, IM Abdullah Al Rakib maintained his sole lead.

Rakib now has accumulated six points, closely followed by GM Ziaur Rahman who has 5.5 points.

Ziaur beat Abdul Maleq in the day's other important game.

NATIONAL CYCLING

The three-day 31st National Cycling Competition will begin in Narail on April 11.

Some hundred participants representing teams from different divisions, districts, universities and the services will compete in the meet.

PRIME BANK GOLF

Col Zafar clinched the Prime Bank Cup Golf tournament at the Maynamoti golf and country club in Comilla.

Major General Abdul Hafiz finished runner-up while Major Ashfaque won the Best Gross trophy.

Delwar and Col Ashfaque won the best front nine and back nine

innings for 195 runs in 44.2 overs.

In the third division, DCA beat Hillol by two wickets at the Uttara Friends Club ground.

Chasing 244 for victory, DCA rode on Babu (59) and Rohan (43) but it was Al Amin's last-ditch effort which saw them through to victory with four balls to spare. Al Amin scored an unbeaten 26.

WOMEN'S CRICKET

Bangladesh will take part in the first Women's Cricket Championship in Kuala Lumpur from July 11.

Ahead of the championship, the women's cricket team began their practice camp on Saturday with the selected 30 players at the Dhanmondi Women's Sports Complex.

Apart from Bangladesh, the emerging Asian cricket nations Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, UAE, Thailand, Nepal and China will also compete in the meet.

We've made

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"Our job is to play the game in the right manner. If we can keep doing like this, keep playing good cricket, I leave it to the people what they call us."

Bangladesh will now meet England in their next match at Barbados on April 11, followed by games against Ireland and the West Indies at the same venue.

Bashar said it was a home away from home for his team which enjoyed the crowd support at the Providence Stadium.

"Everybody saw how much support they gave us in the whole game. It was like we were playing in Bangladesh. They gave us support which helped us keep going," he said.

"People have supported us since we have arrived here. Wherever we go, people have told us they are a little bit upset because India is not there, but they love the way we play."

Bashar points at semis

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"Celebrations are not what we had after beating India. That was the beginning, but it is down a little bit this time because we are getting a little bit familiar with victories," said Bashar.

The Bangladeshi captain said his team could be a force if they kept giving consistent performances at the top level.

"We need to be consistent. We don't want to play one good game and then play three bad games. I think we need to be a bit more confident and consistent," he said.

"We have always believed we can play good cricket. We came to the Super Eights because we had done something good in the first round. But we needed to prove ourselves as well that we can play at this level."

Asked if Bangladesh had finally shed their minnows' tag after wins over India and South Africa, he said: "Leave it for the people to decide."

LADESH V SOUTH AFRICA SCOREB

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Bowler

O M R W NB/W

Bowler	O	M	R	W	NB/W
Pollack	10	1	25	0	w-2
Ntini	10	1	61	1	w-2
Nel	10	1	45	5	nb-3, w-2
Langenfeldt	10	0	57	0	nb-2
Kallis	6	0	27	1	w-3
Smith	3	0	16	0	w-3
Kemp	1	0	13	0	
SOUTH AFRICA					
Smith b Syed Rasel	12	26	24	1	0
De Villiers b Abdul Razzaq	15	73	39	1	0
Kallis c Tamim Iqbal b Syed Rasel	32	41	36	5	0
Kemp & b Shabik Al Hasan	7	40	29	0	0
Prince run out	1	11	7	0	0
Boucher c Syed Rasel b Shabik Al Hasan	12	19	26	0	1
Gibbs not out	56	85	59	1	2
Pollack run out	17	32	23	0	0
Nel & b Mohammad Rafique	1	4	5	0	0
Langenfeldt b Abdul Razzaq	9	28	32	0	0
Ntini c Mashrafe Bin Mortaza b Abdul Razzaq	8	10	11	1	0
Extras: (lb-2, w-12)	14				
Total: (All out in 48.4 overs)	184				
Fall of wickets: 1-18, 2-63, 3-64, 4-67, 5-87, 6-87, 7-132, 8-137, 9-162, 10-184.					
Bowler	O	M	R	W	NB/W
Mashrafe Bin Mortaza	9	0	45	0	w-1
Syed Rasel	10	0	41	2	w-1
Abdul Razzaq	9.4	1	25	3	w-5
Mohammad Rafique	10	2	22	1	-
Shabik Al Hasan	10	0	49	2	-

Result: Bangladesh won by 67 runs.

Man-of-the-match: Mohammad Ashraful.

Toss: South Africa

Umpires: M Benson and B Doherty.

Match referee: B Broad (England)

Ireland given more money

BBC ONLINE, undated

Ireland's World Cup cricketers have received a donation of more than 100,000 pounds from a prominent businessman to help ease their financial burden.

The Irish team of amateur players are having an unexpectedly long stay in the Caribbean after reaching the Super 8s.

Telecoms multi-millionaire Denis O'Brien has given the money directly to the 15-strong Irish squad.

"It did not pass through the union," Irish Cricket Union chairman Murray Power told the Sunday Times.

"I am aware of a donation from Denis O'Brien to the players, not the union.

"It was a reward for the players reaching the Super 8s."

O'Brien already has a financial interest in the sport as his Digicel mobile phone company sponsor the West Indies team.

The Irish team's official sponsor, the Bank of Ireland, paid the squad an extra bonus of around 35,000 pounds prior to the Super 8 game against England.

The Irish Cricket Union is expected to earn around 750,000 pounds from the competition.

Organisers tone down

AFP, Bridgetown

World Cup organisers, widely accused of pricing local fans out of the tournament and for stifling atmosphere inside the grounds, have been forced into an embarrassing climbdown.

In a desperate attempt to salvage the World Cup's reputation as the event enters its final three weeks, fans will now be allowed to take musical instruments into grounds without first applying to the local organising committees.

In another move to try and cure the problem of matches being played in virtually empty stadiums, the controversial policy of no re-entry has also been abandoned.

Starting from Saturday's Bangladesh v South Africa Super Eights match in Guyana, spectators can turn up with their musical instruments and be given approval as they pass through security.

"Safety must be paramount at matches but we do want everyone to watch cricket in a festive and lively atmosphere," said World Cup chief executive Chris Dehring.

"This has already been happening at several matches. There were lots of people with bands and instruments and noise-makers in Jamaica and we have seen the same elsewhere, in Guyana and other venues.

Bob tests may

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murder, the investigators remained adamant that Woolmer was strangled to death and say "factors known only to them suggest foul play." Meanwhile, Shields said the results of the CCTV footage from the hotel have been encouraging.

"They (the Met police) are doing quickly what we would do more slowly. They have more resources and more practice at putting it together," he said.

The Jamaican Police will also be sending a team to Pakistan to question the country's cricketers after "ambiguities" came to light in their initial statements to the police.

Proteas vilified

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where are we? Sometimes we have to think on our feet," said Henry who was himself a left-arm spinner.</