

BFF approves match fees, insurances

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday approved the National Team Management Committee's (NTMC) proposal to introduce insurance and match fees for national footballers from this month's Merdeka Cup.

In an emergency committee meeting headed by BFF president Kazi Salahuddin, the BFF decided to bring the players under life and health insurances.

A player's family will get TK 20 lakh for accidental death while being with the national team and Tk 10 lakh for normal death. For injuries, the booters will get up to Tk 5 lakh for health/hospitalisation insurance.

A player in the first eleven will get US dollars 50 match fee and the rest of the squad 25 dollars while winning bonus for an international match will be US dollars 200 for every member of the squad.

The NTMC had proposed bonuses for draws too but it was rejected.

The BFF has also decided to assist the family of deceased Ghana footballer Chalecho, who died at a local hotel last month.

The dead body of Chalecho still lies at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue and his brother is expected to come to Dhaka this week to collect the body.

The BFF feels it has a responsibility to help the family and will sit with his brother to discuss ways of helping.

Meanwhile, the federation has decided to send two coaches, Mohammedan's Maruful Haque and ex-international Saiful Bari Titu, to Sri Lanka for AFC's A-Licence course which will be held from October 20 to November 15.

Yousuf has no regrets

CRICINFO, undated

Visa problems may have cost Mohammad Yousuf his place in Pakistan's 15-man squad to play the quadrangular Twenty20 tournament in Canada, but the batsman is pleased he was in the reckoning for a spot in the team.

"I am happy that finally the selectors did consider me for this brand of the game," Yousuf told PTI on Thursday. "I am satisfied they considered me for the Toronto tournament. But the board knows what happened with the visas."

"I don't know the reasons as yet and I will find out," he said. "But I am just happy to be playing in the domestic Twenty20 championship and to see my team (Lahore Lions) reach the semifinals."

Yousuf had been overlooked by Pakistan's selectors for the Twenty20 format in the past -- he was left out of the team for the ICC World Twenty20. This time, too, Yousuf was not named in the original preliminary squad, but was a late inclusion after he hit out at the selectors.

"I just want to know what the selection procedure is," Yousuf told the Urdu newspaper Daily Jang. "You go and ask great players like Wasim Akram and Inzamamul Haq if I don't deserve to play Twenty20 cricket. If they say I should be dropped then I will quit all cricket."

Yousuf felt Twenty20 was not just about hammering the ball. "I think what is apparent is that now even Twenty20 cricket is now becoming a form of the game where you have to play sensible cricket, in which you have to bowl properly and bat properly and it is no longer bang-bang all the time."

The Lahore Lions lost in the semi-final of the RBS Twenty20 Cup to the defending champions Sialkot Stallions. Chasing 118, Lahore managed only 111, with Yousuf scoring 17 off 34 balls. In Lahore's three games in the tournament, Yousuf managed 32 runs at a strike-rate of 60.37.

The true

FROM PAGE 17 our bowlers. He's a day-in-day-out type of performer for us and he never lets us down.

"(It is a) good reward for him that he gets wickets. The opposition normally gets through him and goes after the others," said Siddons.

He recently revealed that he refused a Tk 15-crore offer from the rebel Indian Cricket League. Maybe dreaming of days like this stopped him from making the move across the border.



Did U Know?

The second most successful club in Serie A is AC Milan. They have won 17 titles to date.



AT LAST: Australia captain Ricky Ponting punches the air after scoring a hundred, his first big knock in India, on the opening day of the first Test at the Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bangalore yesterday.

Ganguly's parting shot

CRICINFO, undated

Sourav Ganguly, who will retire from international cricket after the Australian series, has on Thursday said he was tired of the constant humiliation and at being singled out for scrutiny.

He has also issued a sharply worded criticism of his teammates, saying some "have changed their hairstyle more than they have scored".

"I am bound to feel bad. I had to fight with my heart," he told Aajkal, a Bengali daily.

"If there is a gun to your head all the time, how long can you bear

this? After all, I have played 400 matches for India. I have scored badly in only one series. Yet every Tom, Dick and Harry is playing in the team.

"There are players who haven't scored in the last three series for India, even for the last one year. There are some who have changed their hairstyle more than they have scored for India.

"How long would I have played? Maybe upto 2009. Maybe seven more Tests. For that I was not prepared to take any more humiliation. I was tired of being humiliated again and again. I don't want to play cricket at the mercy of others."

Ganguly made an impressive return to international cricket after losing his captaincy, and his place

in the side, in early 2006. "Everything is possible in Indian cricket," he said. When Greg (Chappell) dropped me, TP Singh (of Railways, now with the ICL) was my replacement. Where is he now?"

Asked what hurt more, being dropped by Chappell or being excluded from the Irani Trophy squad this year, Ganguly said: "Definitely the Irani Trophy. I couldn't imagine being dropped for that. That's when I said, not again."

"I thought a lot before reaching this decision. I have also thought about my plans for the next one year. If this (selection) committee had come three years earlier, the situation would have been slightly better for me."

New boss vows to revive Pakistan

CRICINFO, Karachi

Pakistan's new cricket chief Ejaz Butt Thursday vowed to restore the health of the sport in the nation, plagued by security concerns and disciplinary problems.

Butt, a former secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in Pakistan, now the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), was appointed as chairman on Tuesday, replacing Nasim Ashraf, who resigned in August.

"I know there are problems which have plagued Pakistan cricket but I will try to do my best to remove these problems," Butt told AFP.

The 70-year-old Butt, a former wicketkeeper-batsman who played eight Tests for Pakistan, said he is confident that Pakistan can turn the corner.

The cricket chief's main problem will be to convince foreign teams that it is safe to tour Pakistan. "Security is something which is not in our control. The government is dealing with that and I am confi-

dent that we will overcome this problem and bring international cricket back to Pakistan," said Butt.

International teams have been reluctant to tour the country over terrorism fears since the 9/11 attacks on the United States and the war in neighbouring Afghanistan.

The eight-nation Champions Trophy, scheduled to be held in Pakistan last month, was postponed due to security concerns -- the latest event struck from the calendar in the cricket-mad nation.

Butt said he would attend an International Cricket Council meeting next month and try to allay security fears.

Another priority will be to restore the image of Pakistan cricket, hit by doping controversies and a perceived lack of player discipline.

Pakistani fast bowler Mohammad Asif was due to fly to Mumbai Thursday to appear before an Indian tribunal in a bid to clear his name of doping allegations and paceman Shoaib Akhtar has also been embroiled in controversy after criticising the PCB earlier this year.

"Discipline is paramount and I

will push everyone hard to overcome this problem and will not allow anyone to tarnish Pakistan's cricket image," said Butt.

Cricinfo adds, Butt has hinted that Pakistan may have to play home games at neutral venues if the security situation doesn't improve.

"The holding of the Champions Trophy in Pakistan depends on the security condition of the country and if the current indefinite situation prevails further we may consider the option to play on alternate venues," Butt said shortly after the sports ministry confirmed his appointment.

The idea of playing matches at neutral venues has evoked mixed reactions from former Test players. Abdul Qadir, the former leg-spinner, suggested that the PCB organise matches in Sharjah as it wasn't easy to guarantee security to foreign players, but former captains Rameez Raja and Intikhab Alam disagreed. Raja said Pakistan will lose the home advantage while Alam said neutral venues will set a wrong precedent as even teams like India and Sri Lanka -- who have toured Pakistan in the recent past -- will opt not to tour Pakistan.

Special playing alongside Sourav: Sachin, Rahul

CRICINFO, New Delhi

Sachin Tendulkar and Rahul Dravid, the two most celebrated peers of Sourav Ganguly, on Thursday paid tributes to the retiring member of the 'Fab Four', saying the Bengal stalwart had been a fount of inspiration for his teammates during his 16-year-long glorious international career.

"He just had a way with people and inspired others with his performances," Tendulkar told 'Cricket Nirvana'.

"He's had a brilliant career and I for one have thoroughly enjoyed playing with him. There have been some memorable moments that he has given to the game and also the immense joy he has given to the team," said Tendulkar, who had tipped Ganguly as captain when he stepped down from the hot seat in 2000.

Dravid said Ganguly has achieved everything that any cricketer could possibly want in his career.

"What more could he have asked for? He's seen it all. Played some fascinating knocks in one-dayers; batted well in Tests at home and away; won Tests abroad and

led India to a World Cup final," Dravid said.

"It's been special to have been part of a middle-order alongside him. I hope I learnt something from him and added something to his cricket," he added.

Both, however, admitted they were taken by surprise when Ganguly informed of his decision to retire after the series against Australia.

"It came as a surprise as he told us in the dressing room that he was quitting. It was towards the end of practice and I was surprised. I could not even talk to him since he had to rush to the press conference," revealed Tendulkar.

Dhaka Warriors ready to go

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, Chandigarh

As Dhaka Warriors, the second team in rebel Indian Cricket League (ICL) to be solely represented by a country after Inzamamul Haq-led Lahore Badshahs, ready for their campaign, captain Habibul Bashar banks on his team's "formidable" bowling line-up and "good" fielding while coach Balwinder Singh Sandhu claims the Bangladeshi players can surprise rivals.

"Our team has a formidable bowling line-up and have good fielders also," Bashar told reporters here.

Spinner Mohammad Rafique, the oldest member of Dhaka Warriors, believes playing for first time in Twenty20 format would not be much of a challenge because the side has a good mixture of youth and experience.

After being in charge of Chandigarh Lions last season, Sandhu, a former Indian Test player, is busy acclimatising the Warriors with the demands and rigours of ICL and asking them to get as much practice as possible in local conditions.

Sandhu, also a member of India's 1983 World Cup winning team, said a new team is always more enthusiastic and Dhaka Warriors would have a higher level of motivation than others.

There are no injury worries or fitness problems for the Dhaka side, points out Australian physio of the team John Ourn. Wicketkeeper Dhiman Ghosh said his team will do everything not to let down the fans back in Bangladesh. He has already drawn the attention of the local media covering Dhaka Warriors' net practice by smacking some huge sixes.

Meanwhile, Ghosh and pacer Alok Kapali may have missed the Durga Puja festivals back home but made up for that by visiting a Puja pandal here on Wednesday.

TOUR OF ENGLAND Lanka without top players

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's sports minister has asked the country's cricket board to release players for the Indian Premier League (IPL), forcing selectors to pick a second-string side for the England tour.

Gamini Lokuge instructed Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) to name the best possible squad from the remaining players for the tour from April 21-May 30 next year.

The IPL is scheduled from April 10-May 25. "I have asked the cricket board to release the players for IPL and find other suitable players for the England tour," Lokuge told AFP on Thursday.

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) arranged the tour of two Tests and three one-dayers after a visit by Zimbabwe was cancelled on the advice of the British government.

The hastily arranged tour was opposed by top Sri Lankan players, including captain Mahela Jayawardene, Muttiah Muralitharan, Sanath Jayasuriya and Kumar Sangakkara, who wanted to play in the IPL.

They argued that their IPL contracts were signed before the England tour was finalised and they stood to lose thousands of dollars if they did not take part in the Indian Twenty20 tournament.

"The England tour was a last-minute decision, taken after 13 cricketers had already committed to play in IPL next year. So I have asked the board to release the IPL-contracted players," Lokuge said.

Runs come

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because they are so good. "But the fourth wicket in the last over has evened up things a bit. It was a very good effort on our part to concede just 254 runs in the entire day on a good batting wicket."

Sharma ended Katich's vigil just before tea when the batsman poked at a ball outside the off-stump and the edge was easily taken by wicketkeeper Mahendra Dhoni.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on the opening day of the first Test between India and Australia at the Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bangalore on Thursday: AUSTRALIA: First innings Hayden c Dhoni b Zaheer 0; Katich c Dhoni b Sharma 66; Ponting lbw b Harbhajan 123; Hussey not out 46; Clarke lbw b Zaheer 11; Extras: (lb-5, nb-2, w-1) 8; Total: (For 4 wickets in 89.2 overs) 254; Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-166, 3-226, 4-254; To bat: White, Watson, Haddin, Lee, Johnson, Clark; Bowler O M R W; Zaheer 17.2 4 39 2; Sharma 16 3 49 1; Harbhajan 25 6 71 1; Kumble 27 4 84 0; Swagov 4 0 6 0.

INDIA: Gambhir, Sehwa, Dravid, Tendulkar, Ganguly, Laxman, Dhoni, Kumble, Harbhajan, Zaheer, Sharma. Toss: Australia. Umpires: Rudi Koertzen and Asad Rauf.

ICL time returns

CRICINFO, New Delhi

The rebel Indian Cricket League (ICL) enters its second season on Friday hoping to gain recognition from the sport's world governing body and provide more thrills than before.

ICL owner Subhash Chandra met International Cricket Council (ICC) president David Morgan in London on Tuesday to discuss official approval for the league.

"This is a very positive move by the ICC. We hope the ICC, for the sake of young cricketers, will look into the matter," ICL chairman and legendary all-rounder Kapil Dev told local media on Wednesday.

"The Indian cricket board also should consider the matter by having a dialogue with the authorities concerned and that's what we want."

The month-long Twenty20 tournament begins in the southern city of Hyderabad with a match

between defending champions Hyderabad Heroes and runners-up Lahore Badshahs.

The nine-team event will be held at four venues -- Chandigarh, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad and Gurgaon. The best-of-three finals will begin in Ahmedabad on November 13.

A new side this time is Dhaka Warriors from Bangladesh, led by former captain Habibul Bashar and featuring 11 internationals.

The Bangladeshi players have already been banned for 10 years for joining the ICL, but Dev hoped the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) would change its decision.

"It's really unfortunate that the BCB has banned the players for 10 years. I would like to request the BCB to change its decision because this will harm cricket in Bangladesh," said Dev, India's only World Cup-winning captain.

The ICL players have been banned from official matches by the powerful Indian board, which launched its own lucrative Indian Premier League (IPL) Twenty20

competition earlier this year.

The Indian board also convinced its counterparts from around the world to shun ICL players amid ICC's stated position that only tournaments okayed by the respective boards would be recognised.

"Cricket is like education and it should be open for all," Dev said.

"I don't understand how ICL will harm world cricket and I would like to request ICC not to make it like apartheid and let the ICL players play for their countries."

Dev also promised more fireworks this season.

"As far as marketing is concerned, you can say IPL was better. But when it comes to the quality of cricket, ICL was far better. Let's see who dishes out better fare this year," he said.

Top stars taking part in the ICL include retired Pakistani captain Inzamam-ul Haq, former Sri Lanka skipper Marvan Atapattu, New Zealand fast bowler Shane Bond and Australian batsman Damien Martyn.

Stanford tie on?

CRICINFO, Port of Spain

A deal to salvage the 20-million-dollar Stanford 20/20, the world's richest cricket match, could be announced later Thursday, media reports here claimed.

A "commercial agreement", reached after a reported trans-Atlantic telephone conversation between Sir Allen Stanford and Denis O'Brien, head of Digicel, sponsors of the West Indies Cricket Board, has paved the way for the match between the Stanford Superstars and England to go ahead as planned in Antigua on November 1.

"The agreement is to go before the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB) directors for ratification when they meet in St Lucia today (Thursday), clearing the way for go-ahead," reported the Trinidad Express newspaper.

"A statement is expected after all the details have been finalised."

The match had been thrown

into doubt after a London High Court arbitration hearing upheld the objections of Digicel that the WICB had entered an agreement with Stanford that "wholly compromises the exclusive rights granted to Digicel as principal sponsors of West Indies cricket".

The legal decision meant that either the match would have to be called off or that the Stanford Superstars side would be weakened by the withdrawal of most of the leading West Indian players.

The WICB had previously agreed to make all their players available to play for Texan billionaire Allen Stanford's select side.

But Digicel went to the High Court in a bid to establish that, as the contracted official sponsor of the WICB until 2012, it enjoyed commercial rights associated with a game that was, in effect, a West Indies XI v England.

The High Court upheld that argument and ruled that the Board would be in breach of its contract with Digicel if it sanctioned the match without granting commercial rights to its sponsor.

Pilot bidden

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"It is very sad to leave the field. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who supported me and stood by me," said Mashud who also thanked the Tigers for their time together.

After being accorded the reception by BCB in front of the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium grandstand, the popular cricketer took a stroll around the ground to thank the fans.

A blessing

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model for us with his illustrious career. He was hard working and we all hope to be like him one day."

Bangladesh coach Jamie Siddons had words of praise for the youngster from Rajshahi.

"I am one of his biggest fans. I was pushing for him. I knew he had the talent. I'm glad that he stepped up. He did a good job in Australia after getting the chance. It's a good thing for him."

Not only did Zunaed make the most of his good fortune, he also brought back the smiles on the faces of millions of Bangladeshi fans. Zunaed proved to the pessimists that all hopes are not lost and that there is life after ICL.

Cornered Tigers

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the wicket dried up and we were held up at 201," said Vettori, adding that he decided to play the extra seamer as the conditions were favourable for bowling first.

But the left-arm spinner admitted that he wouldn't put that as an excuse for losing the match. "We weren't good enough on the day," said Vettori.

He probably missed the services of off-spinner Jeetan Patel as the wicket dried up when the sun came out.

"I think it was pretty obvious we wanted to bowl first so if we had done that, the team was right," added Vettori.

"We respect the players at an individual level although their team record is not great. (Mohammad) Ashraf, (Abdur) Razzak and (Mashrafe Bin) Mortaza have very good one-day record and are good cricketers."

"If they can put it together as a team, they can become tougher," said the New Zealand captain.

The New Zealand team are scheduled to train at the Mirpur venue today, ahead of Saturday's second game and the Kiwi hoped that his side learned from their mistakes.

"It is a tough start to the tour and the key is what we make of it in the series. Bangladesh have the momentum and we must make sure we rectify what went wrong we did today (Thursday)," added Vettori.

Pakistan chief selector quits

CRICINFO, Karachi

Pakistan's chief cricket selector said Thursday he had resigned after administrators changed a member of the squad bound for a Twenty20 tournament in Canada without asking him.

Salahuddin Ahmed said he took the decision after off-spinner Saeed Ajmal was replaced in the 15-man squad that selectors had named to take part in the four-nation event.

"We selected the team on pure merit but after it was released to the media we were shocked to see Ajmal replaced by opener Shoaib Khan. The team already had three openers, so I tendered my resignation," Ahmed told AFP.

The resignation was faxed to the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) hours before the team left for Toronto on Wednesday night to compete in the tournament, which takes place October 10-13.

Ahmed, who took over in April 2007 following Pakistan's disastrous first-round exit from the World Cup in the West Indies, said he was hurt by what had happened.

BANGLADESH-NZ SCOREBOARD

Table with 4 columns: Player, Runs, Wickets, Overs. Includes Oram, Vettori, Styris, Ryder. Result: Bangladesh won by 7 wickets.

Man-of-the-match: Zunaed Siddiqui. Toss: Bangladesh. Umpires: Daryl Harper and Nadir Shah.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words. Includes a solution time of 25 mins and a list of words to be filled in.

Cryptogram puzzle grid with a key at the bottom: RFGAT F YUIITG VC OTMTOT, GCVTQ LCMFT UAVOTRR, LFKTR, DCNKQ JCN RJU, VYUV F YUKKCD MTOU?, Yesterday's Cryptogram: DON'T TRY TO ROB A FAST-FOOD RESTAURANT YOU MIGHT IMMEDIATELY SET OFF THE BURGER ALARM. Today's Cryptogram Clue: V equals T