

WC games only at Mirpur, Fatullah

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

In a major step towards preparing for the 2011 ICC World Cup, Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has nominated two venues for holding the matches of the tournament.

After it's board of directors' meeting yesterday at Mirpur, the BCB revealed that Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur and Fatullah Cricket Stadium would be the venues for holding matches of the showcase event which will be co-hosted by India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

"The BCB president [Lt Gen Sina Ibn Jamali] apprised the board that after his meeting with the state minister for youth and sports recently it was decided that the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium, Mirpur and the Narayanganj Osmani Stadium, Fatullah will be the nominated venues for holding matches of the ICC Cricket World Cup 2011," a BCB statement said.

The opening ceremony of the cricket's biggest extravaganza will be held at the Bangabandhu National Stadium while alternate ven-

ues will be developed in Chittagong and Khulna from BCB's own resources.

Bangladesh got a bigger share of matches after Pakistan was stripped of its co-hosts status following security concerns.

Bangladesh will now stage eight matches including two quarterfinals as well as the opening ceremony on February 18, 2011. India will host 29 of the 49 matches across eight venues including the final and a semifinal and Sri Lanka will host 12 matches in three venues.

The BCB's decision at least cleared the air about holding matches at the Bangabandhu National Stadium (BNS), the country's premier venue which is now possessed by Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF), as well as BFF's desire to arrange the First Division football league at Fatullah.

"At this moment we have decided about the venues for holding the matches, but if any decision comes from the highest level to hold the matches at the BNS, we will definitely consider it," said BCB's media committee chairman Jalal Yunus.

There has been a lot of talks

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PHOTO: STAR

RAINING FOURS AND SIXES: Dhaka Sports Club's Ziaur Rahman crashes the ball towards deep midwicket during his mind-boggling 78 off only 31 balls against Chittagong Abahani in the second semifinal of the Habib Group PCL Twenty20 tournament at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong yesterday. The tall all-rounder's hurricane knock saw more sixes than fours as Dhaka Sports reached the final.

Zia's one-man show

Dhaka Sports play Brothers in final today

NUR UDDIN ALAMGIR, Chittagong



Ziaur Rahman single-handedly took Dhaka Sports Club to the final of the Habib Group PCL Twenty20 tournament with a six-hitting frenzy that took his side to a thrilling three-wicket victory against Abahani at the MA Aziz stadium here yesterday.

But Dhaka Sports fell into early trouble in their chase of 154 runs, losing their top order very early. But Zia blazed sixes and fours in the final half-hour to take his side through to the first-ever final of the PCL against Brothers Union, to be held today from 5:00pm with private television channel ATN Bangla providing live coverage.

Zia, coming into bat at number six and his side in huge trouble, added 21 for the fourth wicket with Anisur Rahman (35) and a further 25 with Rubel Biswas (7). But then the tall right-hander cut loose, smashing 23 runs off Frank Karunaratne's 16th over. The medium-pacer was peppered over the midwicket boundary for a six and three boundaries in the over. After adding a whirlwind 40 off 15 balls with Taposh Ghosh (10), Zia saw his batting partner cleaned up by Maksudul Hasan off the last ball of the 17th over, leaving 36 needed from 18 balls. Zia reached the fastest 50 of the tournament off just 20 balls and made sure the sixes kept coming, smashing Talha Jubair for a maximum over long-on. Next over, Zia struck Rahat over long-off's

head but when trying to repeat the feat over long-on, Karunaratne dropped a simple chance. Next ball, Zia smashed it over his head to make sure just three runs are required off the final over.

Paceman Rabiul Islam, who took three early wickets, conceded three singles with Zia taking the winning run.

Expressing his joy after the match, Ziaur said he never thought of the result and he tried to stay in the crease to see the final result.

"At first, I would like to thank Almighty Allah and later my teammates, who helped me to play from one side," Ziaur said.

"I believed that if I can stay on crease despite the disaster, it will bring something," said Ziaur who was surprisingly overlooked for Bangladesh's World Cup Twenty20 squad.

Earlier, Abahani opener and the tournament's most expensive player Tamim Iqbal and Rabiul scored 48 in 7.4 overs. Tamim smashed 54 runs off 46 balls with five boundaries and a six.

Sri Lankan Chamara Silva made sure the total went above the 150-mark with an unbeaten 36 off 31 balls.

SCORES IN BRIEF

ABAHANI: 153-6 in 20 overs (Tamim 54, Silva 36*, Karunaratne 24, Hannan 14; Rajin 3-19, Hanif 1-21).

DHAKA SPORTS CLUB: 154-7 in 19.3 overs (Ziaur 78, Anisur 35, Taposh 10; Rabiul 3-16, Maksudul 2-43, Enamul 1-25, Talha 1-27).

Result: Dhaka Sports Club won by three wickets. **Man-of-the-match:** Ziaur Rahman.

Salma Rafiq passes away

SPORTS REPORTER

Country's first woman sports journalist Salma Rafiq is no more. The ever-smiling lady, who always extended her helping hands to young enthusiasts interested to take sports journalism as a career, breathed her last at her Shaymoli residence yesterday.



SALMA RAFIQ

Shewas 57. She was buried at the Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard in Mirpur. Salma left behind her only daughter Prothama and countless well-wishers to mourn her death.

She was suffering from cancer and could not visit her second home, the fortnightly Krira Jagat, for the last month

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Amnesty to ICL players

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has announced 'amnesty' for the players who signed with the Indian Cricket League (ICL) following the guideline of International Cricket Council (ICC) about the players of the unauthorised tournament.

BCB's board of directors, in a marathon meeting on Saturday in Mirpur, has decided to allow Bangladeshi cricketers under contract with the ICL to participate in domestic cricket subjected to their termination of the contract with the unapproved competition by June 15 this year.

BCB imposed a ban on thirteen rebel cricketers in September last year including six contracted players who signed for the ICL under the banner 'Dhaka Warriors' which closed the domestic and international doors for players like former national skipper Habibul Bashar, Shahriar Nafees, Aftab Ahmed, Dhiman Ghosh and Alok Kapali.

"The players who will terminate the contract have to formally apply to the BCB for permission for making themselves available for the forthcoming domestic season. However, the players will not be considered for selection in any international match until December 31,

2009," said BCB's spokesman and media committee chairman Jalal Yunus.

The board also warned that the earlier ten-year ban imposed by the board in its emergency meeting on September 17 last year will remain in effect for the ICL contracted cricketers who fail to terminate their contract by their timeframe.

BCB took the decision following ICC's directive in regards to the players of the unauthorised tournament which was recently endorsed by the Indian board who also announced the amnesty.

In his instant reaction Bashar said that the decision has opened a door for the rebel cricketers but he was not sure whether BCB's approach ultimately would be fruitful.

"The most important thing is that after this decision we have got an option to make our comeback in the domestic and international cricket. But I think the problem will remain because we have to terminate our contract first. Let us see everything before making any final comments," said Bashar.

"We had recently met to discuss what would be our approach if BCB announced amnesty like the Indian board and what we decided is that one can take his own decision. But first of all we have to look at the ICL contract. I know that the contract we have with the ICL is pretty much one-way," he added.

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School football

SPORTS REPORTER

Moslemuddin School of Jhenidah became champions in the Khulna zone trouncing Koyra Madinabad School 5-1 in the Citycell National School Football Championships at the Khulna Stadium yesterday.

Russel of the winning team scored a hat-trick.

At Natore, Singra Dumdum Pilot High School clobbered BL Govt. High School 7-0 in the first zonal semifinal and Younus Ali High School beat Chapainawabganj High School 4-0 in the second zonal semifinal.

In the round robin league matches, Raja Surja Kumar Institute edged past Kabi Nazrul Shikha Manzil 1-0 and Kustia Zilla School beat Jibon Nagar High School 2-0 at the Rajbari Stadium and Sangu High School defeated Manikchori Rani Nihardevi High School 5-2 at the Rangamari Stadium.

In other round robin league matches, Habiganj Govt. High School, Elliotganj High School, Victoria High School, Karar Char Md. Tofazzol High School, Noannoi Union High School and Chakaria High School drew their respective matches.

BD lose 5-0

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh national hockey team suffered a 5-0 drubbing at the hands of Japan in their opening match of the 8th Asia Cup men's hockey tournament in Kuantan, Malaysia yesterday.

Bangladesh, who are placed in tough Pool A with Japan, Korea and hosts Malaysia, will play their second match against the hosts tomorrow and the third and last against Korea on May 12.

Int'l beach volleyball

SPORTS REPORTER

A four-day international beach volleyball tournament starts today at the Laboni Point in Cox's Bazar.

A number of countries including China, Australia, Thailand, India, Sri Lanka and Nepal are participating in this event.

Bangladesh Volleyball Federation is organising a tournament of this kind for the second time in collaboration with Cox's Bazar local government.

Meanwhile, the men's and women's teams of China, Australia, Thailand, India, Sri Lanka and Nepal have already arrived in Cox's Bazar.

Bangladesh Police, Water Development Board, Volleyball Federation A, Volleyball Federation B, Bangladesh Ansar and VDP teams will participate for the hosts.

The tournament will play an important part in voting Cox's Bazar in the seven new wonder of nature of the world.



PHOTO: INTERNET

FROM DUBAI WITH RUNS: Australian batsman Andrew Symonds smashes one over midwicket during his 36-ball 60 scored in a lost cause for Deccan Chargers against Kings XI Punjab at the De Beers Diamond Oval in Kimberley yesterday.

Punjab bounce back

AFP, Kimberley



Kings XI Punjab bounced back into contention with a nail-biting three-wicket victory over Deccan Chargers in a Indian Premier League thriller here on Saturday.

After restricting the formidable Deccan Chargers to 168 for 5, built around Andrew Symonds' unbeaten 60, the Kings XI Punjab rode on Mahela Jayawardene's quickfire 28-ball 43 and some lusty hitting by the tail-enders to scamper home with just one ball to spare.

Fortune fluctuated from one team to the other till the dying moments before Kings XI, who desperately needed a victory to keep themselves afloat in the tournament, tilted the balance in their favour on a tricky track at the De Beers Diamond Oval.

With nine runs required from the last over, Punjab's Piyush Chawla cracked a boundary off pacer R P Singh's first delivery and then held nerves to rotate strikes with Brett Lee to achieve a competitive target of 169.

Punjab's Sri Lankan import Mahela Jayawardene, with his fighting 48 off 23 balls, laid the foundation of the win which denied the Deccan their second victory on the trot.

Earlier, put into bat first, Symonds cracked an unbeaten 60 off just 36 balls to guide Deccan Chargers to competitive 168 for 5.

SCORES IN BRIEF

DECCAN CHARGERS: 168 for

5 in 20 overs (Gilchrist 20, Suman 27, Symonds 60 not out, Venugopal 32)

KINGS XI PUNJAB: 169 for 7 in 19.5 overs (Sohal 30, Sangakkara 25, Yuvraj 18, Jayawardene 43; Sharma 2-12, Shoaib 2-25)

Result: Kings XI Punjab won by 3 wickets.

Man-of-the-match: Mahela Jayawardene.



ATN Bangla

Port-city Cricket League (Final)

Brothers Union v Dhaka Sports

Live from 5:00pm

SET Max

Indian Premier League

Royal Challengers Bangalore v Mumbai Indians

Live from 4:30pm

Delhi Daredevils v Kolkata Knight Riders

Live from 8:30pm

ESPN

English Premier League

Man United v Man City

Live from 6:25pm

Arsenal v Chelsea

Live from 8:55pm

STAR Sports

Primera Liga

Atletico Madrid v Espanyol

Live from 1:00am (Monday)



ATN Bangla

Port-city Cricket League (Final)

Brothers Union v Dhaka Sports

Time: 5:00pm

Venue: MA Aziz Stadium, Chittagong



PHOTO: STAR

YOUR TREAT NAFIS: Brothers Union captain Nafis Iqbal (L) is embraced by younger brother Tamim after the elder sibling struck a match-winning 70 against Dada Warriors in the first semifinal of the Habib Group PCL Twenty20 tournament at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong yesterday. Tamim later scored a breezy half-century but his efforts went in vain.

Chennai's fifth in a row

PTI, Kimberley



S Badrinath smashed a brilliant unbeaten 59 and shared a

crucial 89-run partnership with Matthew Hayden (48) to fashion Chennai Super Kings' impressive seven-wicket win over Rajasthan Royals in their Indian Premier League match here on Saturday.

Chennai not only recorded their fifth win in a row but also beat the defending champions for the second time in the second edition of the event to remain atop the points table.

Chasing 141 to win, last year's finalists, overhauled the

target with 10 balls to spare.

Earlier, riding on a disciplined bowling attack, Chennai had restricted Rajasthan to a modest 140 for seven.

The slow nature of the wicket at the De Beers Diamond Oval made the contest between the ball and the bat interesting and set up an exciting finish.

Hayden and Badrinath batted intelligently as stroke-making was quite difficult on the 22-yard-strip here.

Badrinath supported Hayden well after losing two early wickets as the duo knitted together 89-runs for the third wicket.

The Tamil Nadu batsman

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'Dhoni great motivator'

PTI, Manchester

Star England all-rounder Andrew Flintoff has joined the growing list of Indian cricket captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni's admirers, saying the wicketkeeper batsman is a very impressive leader both on and off the field.

Flintoff played under Dhoni for Chennai Super Kings in the ongoing Indian Premier League before a knee injury forced him out of action.

But the Englishman, the costliest player on the Twenty20 event's roster along with teammate Kevin Pietersen, said he was mighty impressed with what he saw of Dhoni's captaincy during his short stint with Chennai.