

WC opening ceremony at the Bangabandhu

Parliamentary body wants to go to England 'to gain experience'

RASHIDUL HASAN and BISHWAJIT ROY

It is all but confirmed that the opening ceremony of the 2011 Cricket World Cup will take place at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

State Minister for Youth and Sports Ahad Ali Sarkar already made it public recently and now the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Sports also recommended the same when a meeting of the body was held yesterday at the parliament building with high officials of Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) and Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) present.

The committee however also talked about the possibility of holding World Cup matches at the country's premier venue but could not come to a decision.

"The standing committee will sit again soon to decide on the issue," said Zahid Ahsan Russel, chairman of the standing committee, while talking to the reporters after the marathon meeting.

Apart from the opening ceremony, Bangladesh has been awarded eight matches of the showcase event including two quarterfinals.

However, the most interesting part of the meeting was that the committee members expressed their desire to visit England 'to gain experience' during the ICC World Twenty20 next month.

"The members expressed their desire to travel to England to gain experience as we are of the co-hosts of the 2011 World Cup. But it has yet to be decided who will bear the expenses of the tour," said Russel, also a ruling party lawmaker.

It was learnt that BFF president Kazi Salahuddin, who attended the meeting, vehemently opposed the idea of holding matches at the Bangabandhu.

"Cricket is also our sport, but the problem is that football will be badly affected if cricket matches are played at the Bangabandhu (National Stadium)," the BFF boss told journalists after the meeting.

"We therefore requested the committee to arrange only the opening ceremony at this venue," he added.

Russel also informed that the committee members were unanimous in their opinion to

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Naman Ojha of Rajasthan Royals dives in a successful attempt to run-out Brad Hodge (R) of Kolkata Knight Riders during their IPL Twenty20 match at the Kingsmead Stadium in Durban yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP



David Beckham

(England football superstar)
"It would be up there with winning and the success I've had in my career because to be part of a successful bid, like I was with the Olympics, would be a huge honour."
On his role in England's winning the right to host the 2018 FIFA World Cup.

Zia keeps 3rd place

SPORTS REPORTER

Grand Master Ziaur Rahman beat International Master Richard Bitan of Philippines yesterday in the 8th Asian Continental Chess Championship at Subic Freeport in Olongapo City.

Zia also drew with GM Megaranto Susanto of Indonesia in the eighth round of the qualifying meet for the World Cup Chess 2009 to retain his third position.

In other games yesterday GM Enamul Hossain Rajib lost against Iulduchev Saidali of Uzbekistan and FM Abu Sufian Shakil drew with GM Wan Rai of China.

Rajib and Shakil have 4 and 3.5 points respectively.

In the women's section Shamima Akter Liza lost against WIM Bui Kim Le of Vietnam and has three points from 8 games.

Champions Club Cup from Friday

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

After an initial delay due to domestic and international football competitions the Bashundhara Champions Club Cup will kick off on Friday.

59 senior division district champions will compete for the title.

BFF Vice President and Chairman of the tournament committee Shawkat Ali Khan Jahangir termed it as a first of its kind tournament and said that BFF will be providing cash incentives to the participating clubs.

The 59 teams have been split into 12 groups for the first round. Twelve venues have been fixed by the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) to

host the first round matches.

The venues are Rajshahi, Narail, Dinajpur, Meherpur, Rangpur, Sherpur, Bandarban, Habiganj, Barguna, Gopalganj, Feni and Tangail.

The 12 group champions will then play in the final round to be held at four separate venues outside the capital Dhaka.

Bashundhara Group will sponsor this tournament as part of their developmental programme in collaboration with BFF while Citycell will be the co-sponsors.

Twelve coaches will be deployed in the respective venues for scouting local talent. BFF has planned a colourful opening ceremony for the meet on the opening day at Feni.

BFF Development committee chairman Kazi Nabil Ahmed, BFF General Secretary

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UCBL Tigers' official sponsor

SPORTS REPORTER

United Commercial Bank Ltd (UCBL) signed a deal with Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) to become the official sponsors of the national team for the ICC World Twenty20s to be held in England next month.

This was officially declared at a press conference at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday where the match and practice jerseys were also unveiled.

Left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak and pacer Syed Raseel wore the national team's new practice and match jersey at the function.

The tenure of this sponsorship will be from May 23 to June 21 and UCBL will pay the BCB an equivalent amount of 30,000 dollars for the sponsorship rights. To encourage the

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KKR oust Rajasthan

AFP, Durban



Laxmi Ratan Shukla hit a vital 48 not out as Kolkata Knight Riders knocked defending champions Rajasthan Royals out of the Indian Premier League with a four-wicket win here on Wednesday.

Kolkata were tottering at 45-6 chasing a modest 102-run target before Shukla steered his team home with a 57-run stand for the unfinished seventh wicket with Ajit Agarkar (13 not out).

Man-of-the-match Shukla smashed two sixes and three fours in his 46-ball knock.

Shane Warne's Rajasthan failed to qualify for the semifinals, finishing their league engagements with 13 points from 14 matches. Kolkata finished last with seven points.

Delhi led the eight-team tournament with 18 points from 13 games, followed by Chennai (15/13), Deccan (14/13), Bangalore (14/13), Punjab (14/13), Rajasthan (13/14), Mumbai (11/13) and Kolkata (7/14).

The top four sides advance to the semifinals. South African fast bowler Charl Langeveldt earlier played a key role in restricting Rajasthan to a small total, finishing with 3-15 off four overs in his only match of the tournament.

He was backed by Indian seamer Agarkar, who grabbed two wickets for 15 runs in four overs.

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Akhtar's T20 WC in doubt

CRICINFO, undated

Shoaib Akhtar's participation in the World Twenty20 has come into doubt after a skin condition he developed last week failed to improve as was expected.

The skin infection ruled Shoaib out of the training camp the team attended in Bhurban, a mountainous hill resort near Islamabad. At the time, Shoaib expressed confidence that he would recover in time but a failure to do so has cast doubt over his place in the squad. Now, it will keep him out of the three practice matches planned between sides led by Younis Khan and Misbahul Haq at Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore.

"Shoaib will miss all three practice matches because of the condition," Intikhab Alam, Pakistan's coach, told Cricinfo. "At this juncture I will not say

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STAR Cricket

England v West Indies

First ODI

Live from 3:45pm

SET Max

Indian Premier League

Delhi Daredevils v Mumbai Indians

Live from 4:30pm

Royal Challengers Bangalore v Deccan Chargers

Live from 8:30pm

ESPN

Sportscentre India

Sports News

Live at 8:30pm



Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) vice-president and Bashundhara Champions Club Cup tournament committee chairman Shawkat Ali Khan Jahangir (L), brand ambassador of Bashundhara Group Naimur Rahman (2nd from L) and head of marketing of Bashundhara Group ZM Ahmed Prince (2nd from R) unveil the logo of the meet at the BFF House yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Symonds dumped

Ponting promises tough battle

Cricket

AFP, Sydney

Skipper Ricky Ponting says Australia have learned the lessons of their titanic 2005 series loss and promises England a torrid Ashes battle with his rebuilt team.

The Australians hold the famous urn after regaining the Ashes 5-0 in the 2006-07 series, but much has changed with the retirements of modern-day greats Shane Warne, Glenn McGrath, Adam Gilchrist, Matthew Hayden and Justin Langer.

Selectors on Wednesday unveiled a transitional 16-man squad with a total match experience of just 418 Tests, compared with the 796 of the 2005 squad and the 666 of the party that

SQUAD

Ricky Ponting (captain), Michael Clarke (vice-captain), Simon Katich, Phillip Hughes, Mike Hussey, Marcus North, Andrew McDonald, Shane Watson, Brad Haddin, Graham Manou, Brett Lee, Mitchell Johnson, Peter Siddle, Stuart Clark, Ben Hilfenhaus, Nathan Hauritz.

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First Match Today KP out of WI ODIs

AFP, Leeds

Kevin Pietersen has been ruled out of the whole of England's one-day series against the West Indies with an Achilles injury, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) announced on Wednesday.

England play the first of three one-dayers against the West Indies here at Headingley on Thursday.

However, the ECB insisted that by resting now the South Africa born batsman would be fit for next month's World Twenty20 in England and the Ashes Test series against Australia, which starts in Cardiff on July 8.

Chennai in semifinals

AFP, Durban



Muttiah Muralidaran led a disciplined spin attack as Chennai Super Kings qualified for the Indian Premier League semifinals with a 24-run win over Kings XI Punjab here on Wednesday.

The Sri Lankan off-spinner finished with 2-8 off four overs as Chennai restricted Punjab to 92-8 after posting 116-9.

Delhi (18 points) and Chennai (17) have made it to the semifinals, while Punjab await the result of Thursday's match between Deccan and Bangalore as the three teams now have 14 points apiece.

Defending champions Rajasthan Royals (13 points), Mumbai Indians (11) and Kolkata (seven) are already out of the race.

Man-of-the-match Muralidaran was superbly backed by off-spinners Suresh Raina (2-17) and Ravichandran Ashwin (2-13). The trio

conceded only 38 runs off 12 overs.

Australian Luke Pomersbach top-scored with 26 in Punjab's dismal batting display in the last match.

Punjab earlier put in an impressive bowling performance to restrict Chennai to a modest total, with fast bowlers Shanthakumar Sreesanth and Irfan Pathan taking two wickets apiece.

Australian paceman Brett Lee also prevented the Chennai batsmen from scoring freely, conceding only 16 in his four overs.

Chennai added 40 for the opening wicket off just 4.5 overs through India's Parthiv Patel (32) and Australian George Bailey (15), but lost their way after the openers' dismissals. Raina was the other main scorer with 20.

Sreesanth got two wickets in three balls when he had Subramaniam Badrinath (four) caught by Pathan at mid-on and then bowled skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni for two.

Pathan removed New Zealander Jacob Oram (17) and Ashwin (eight) to finish with 2-32.

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Members of the Bangladesh cricket team pose for a photograph with British High Commissioner Stephen Evans (4th from L) and State Minister for Youth and Sports Ahad Ali Sarkar at the diplomat's residence yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR