

Bangladesh in tough group

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Bangladesh have been placed in a challenging group with India, South Africa, England and the West Indies as the groupings for the ICC World Cup 2011 was approved at an ICC meeting in Johannesburg yesterday.

In a break from tradition, the tournament to be held in the sub-continent sees the 14 competing teams divided into two groups of seven with the Tigers finding themselves in Group B alongside the four giants. Bogeys team Ireland are also penultimate in the same group with the Netherlands expected to be the minnows in the pot.

The Tigers will however be thankful to have avoided champions Australia, who lead Group A along with Pakistan, New Zealand, Sri Lanka, Zimbabwe, Canada and Kenya.

The groupings also mean that India and Pakistan will avoid a potentially fiery early clash as the bitter rivals find themselves placed in different groups.

The groups of seven was finalised on the second day of the ICC Board meeting in Johannesburg.

At the meeting, the ICC also lauded the success of the World Cup's miniature version, the ICC Champions Trophy, which had earlier won the endorsement of Ricky Ponting and Daniel Vettori. "I think most experts of the game and the opinion-makers are now convinced the ICC Champions Trophy definitely has a place in the cricket calendar," David Morgan, the ICC President, said. "It also gives

BD A lose in T20 opener

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Bangladesh A lost to Maharashtra Cricket Association by 12 runs on Duckworth-Lewis method in the first Twenty20 match at the Poona Cricket Club in Pune yesterday.

Put in to bat, Bangladesh A made 149 runs for the loss of six wickets in their allotted

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'50-overs will stay'

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

The ICC Champions Trophy has gone a long way to ensuring the continuance of ODIs, the captains of Australia and New Zealand, the two finalists, have said. Since the advent of the Twenty20 game, which has drawn huge crowds around the world, there has been increasing talk of the 50-over format falling away.

But Ricky Ponting and Brendon McCullum, standing in for injured Blacks Caps captain Daniel Vettori, gave their thumbs-up for the 50-over format and the tournament after Australia beat New Zealand by six wickets in Monday's final in Centurion.

"There's been a lot of talk about that since the 20-over game has become as popular as it is," Ponting said. "There's plenty of space for both 20-over cricket and 50-over cricket to fit in alongside the Test game. The Test game is the form of the game I enjoy the most, but 50-over cricket, with tournaments like this, will certainly hold its own."

"I've worried at the time when 20-over cricket became as popular as it did that we might start playing a few less 50-over games, but I think tournaments like this can only help the game."

"I've really enjoyed the tournament and I think the fans around South Africa have enjoyed the tournament, so it's got some endorsement from me, and even a low-scoring game like today can probably be one of the more entertaining games that you can watch and be involved in as a player."

Ponting, who also picked up the Player-of-the-Series and Golden Bat awards after his side defended their title, has played in all six editions of the Champions Trophy. But he said the latest edition, which was reduced to only eight teams for the first time, had been the best organised.

"We've only been here a couple of weeks and the tournament's over," Ponting said. "You've got the best eight teams in the world playing for it and you've got a great place to play here in South Africa with two very good grounds to play on."

McCullum endorsed Ponting's views on the tournament, which was postponed by a year after it was moved from Pakistan for security reasons. "I thought this tournament was good," he said. "The top eight teams in the world coming together and playing over a short period of time; I thought it worked well. I guess there weren't too many nail-biting games, but I still think the quality of cricket was fantastic."

"If 50-over cricket is to remain in the calendar, it's a great way to certainly push it with tournaments like this can only help the game."

Amol sails into semifinals

Tennis

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Top seed Amol Roy of Engineers' Club reached the semifinals of the Anlene National Tennis Tournament without any hiccup as he disposed of Lakshman Lal of the American Club 6-2, 6-2 at the National Tennis Complex in Ramna yesterday.

He will face Nordic Club's Alangir Hossain who got better of BKSP's Oamr Faruk 6-2, 6-0, in the semis. In the other semifinal Ranjan Ram of Dhaka DSA will face Dipu Lal of Nordic Club. Ranjan had an easy game against Biplob Ram of NTC as he dropped only two games in the match. Dipu Lal though faced stiff opposition from Mofazzel Hossain of NTC, but ultimately won the match in straight sets, 6-2, 6-4.

Women's top-seed Sathi Sarkar of NTC was pushed hard by her club-mate Sarda in the first game, but eventually got across the line with an easier second set. The game was decided 7-5, 6-1. She will be facing Ma Hai Ching of Bandarban in the semifinals. Ching beat Narshingdi's Nipa 6-1, 6-1.

NTC's Disha Islam dropped just one game in the second set against Mouni of BKSP to book herself a semifinal berth. She will be facing Ripa of Narshingdi who produced a comeback after dropping the first set 4-6 against NTC's Barsha Islam to take the next two sets 6-3, 6-4 and complete the semifinal line-up.

All the semifinal matches of the men's and women's groups will start today at 9 am at the National Tennis Complex.

Nat'l cricketers warm up well

SPORTS REPORTER

Left-arm spinner Enamul Haq shone in the Twenty20 practice matches to guide the Bangladesh national cricket team win against Gazi Tank and Kalabagan KC yesterday ahead of Zimbabwe's tour of Bangladesh later this month.

Enamul claimed three scalps for 28 to bowl out Gazi Tank for 95 in the allotted 20 overs after the national side made a modest 117 for seven, riding on 80-run partnership between Mehrab Hossain and

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Eng U-19 cricketers due today

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The England under-19 cricket team arrive in Dhaka today on a month-long tour to play one four-day Test and seven one-dayers against Bangladesh under-19 team.

The English start their tour with a two-day match against BCB Selection XI at the Khan Shaheb Osman Ali Stadium in Fatullah on the 12th and 13th of October. They then travel to Chittagong where the Test will be held over 16-19 October at

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BFF mulls new academy

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

the Sylhet sports institution to the Bangladesh Football Federation on conditions after the football's governing body appealed to allocate the Sylhet

BKSP to run a 100-player football academy.

"It was not possible to get a fruitful outcome, if we started an academy at the Sylhet BKSP

with only 50 to 55 footballers. Because, the number of players would have been reduced to 30-35 due to the different problems of the players. But we want to get the hundred percent outcome from the academy and are planning for a private football academy that might be a profitable organisation," said Salahuddin, also the president of the South Asian Football Federation.

The BFF boss said that they would generate Tk 30 crore for the football academy through floating shares if needed.

"To generate the amount, we may float shares with each share worth Tk 10 lakh and later the profit will be distributed amongst the shareholders in a certain period after selling the footballers."

Salahuddin informed that half of the amount would be spent to build the academy with modern facilities and the rest of the money would be set as a fixed deposit to run the academy around the year.

He also informed the academy would also give general lessons on English, Mathematics and Bangla.



KAZI SALAHUDDIN

FICA rejects FTP draft

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

In its strongest indictment yet of the manner in which cricket is being run by the ICC, the Federation of International Cricketers' Associations (FICA) -- the players' lobby group -- has rejected the draft of the post-2012 Future Tours Programme (FTP) that was approved in principle on Tuesday by the governing body's executive board, the game's apex decision-making body. It has, instead, sent the ICC a series of counter-proposals including the setting up of annual Test and ODI championships and allotting official windows to Twenty20 tournaments like the IPL and Champions League Twenty20.

FICA CEO Tim May said the ICC's proposed international schedule is merely an extension of the existing format that does not address changes in the game and diminishes its value. "The ICC's draft is just a continuation of the ad-hoc bilateral series that we have seen going on for 100 years," May told Cricinfo. "The ICC draft does not address an increasingly changing cricket landscape, which demands considerations of changing priorities of players and broadcasters and the increasing need for context, not volume."

FICA's decision to reject the post-2012 FTP draft was unanimous, May said, and the alternative proposals were finalised at the federation's annual meeting in Johannesburg on October 1-2. "FICA have supplied the feedback to the ICC and await their consideration of the

matter," May said.

While the ICC admits that FICA is a key stakeholder in the game and has given the federation a seat on its cricket committee, it is not bound by law to accept any of its proposals. In fact, May admits that he would not be surprised if the ICC board rejects these proposals, but he also warns that in such a scenario "the natural forces will take effect."

"More and more players will follow Andrew Flintoff by retiring prematurely from one or all forms of international cricket," May said. "The grind of the present international calendar just can't exist with the attraction of shorter-duration, less physical, better-remunerated T20 leagues. International cricket will no longer be the best versus the best. Crowds will diminish, commercial rights will reduce, and international cricket will be very much an inferior product."

If this happens, May said, the ICC will have to accept the blame. "They will have no one to blame but themselves. It won't be the first business to be destroyed by failing to recognise a changing landscape."

The ICC will find it difficult to reject in toto FICA's proposals because the federation comprises representatives of powerful players' associations from Australia, England, South Africa, Sri Lanka and West Indies, who are also members of the ICC Board. These players' associations have a strong voice within their national governing structures on issues involving players' rights, scheduling and security.

Besides, some of FICA's ideas are shared by many officials within the ICC. For instance,



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14th

TRANSCOM CUP Golf Tournament

8th and 9th October, 2009
Kurmitola Golf Club, Dhaka

