

GP-BCB bond extended

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Grameenphone has been retained as official sponsors of the national cricket team for a further two years after they increased their amount from their offered price in the bidding. However the sponsorship deal this time will also cover the national women's team.

The leading mobile phone operators got the prestigious

rights by providing Tk 9 crore as total royalty fee and they will provide Tk 1 crore more as other fees for travel bags, coffins, travel attires and blazers. In addition Grameenphone will also provide the team bus during any home series or practice sessions of the men and women's teams.

The previous contract expired in October but was extended till November 15 to cover the Zimbabwe cricket team's tour of Bangladesh and the sponsorship amount was

Tk 6 crore and 15 lakh for the period of 2007-2009.

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) officials expressed their satisfaction over the increased amount on the new contract while talking at a press conference at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

BCB had invited tenders setting the floor price at Tk 12 crore where Grameenphone was the lone bidder at a lower price, but the successful negotiation between the two parties led to increasing the

amount.

"As per our view we have got a very handsome amount this time which came through a very amicable negotiation and we feel it's justified. We always set a higher floor price as the previous experience showed that there has been a tendency to offer low price than the floor price," said Aziz Al Kaiser Tito, BCB's marketing and commercial committee chairman.

"If we considered the current economical situation I must say the amount is quite high. This time we also added the women's team but you must understand that we have got minimal amount for the women's team," added Jalal Yunus, BCB's media committee chairman.

Question was raised whether the board lacked professionals who could drive for more and needed a proactive and dynamic chief executive officer, a post that has been lying vacant for more than two and a half years, who could attract more companies to gain more money.

"There are paid staff in the commercial committee and they prepared the papers and on the other hand it's not the platform to discuss about the CEO issue today," responded Tito.

"We view our relationship with GP as a friendly one. By coming forward to sponsor the national team once again GP has given a shining example of its passion and commitment towards Bangladesh cricket. This is also a positive statement for the growing value of the national team and with a partner like GP I am

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PHOTO: STAR
Grameenphone's chief communication officer Kazi Monirul Kabir addresses a press conference at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday after retaining the title sponsorship of the national team for a two-year term. On his right is Bangladesh Cricket Board's marketing and commercial committee chairman Aziz Al Kaiser Tito.



PHOTO: INTERNET
GALLANT GAYLE: West Indies captain Chris Gayle dispatches one down to the square-leg boundary during his blistering 102 off 72 balls on the second day of the third Test against Australia in Perth yesterday.



STAR Cricket & SuperSport6

Australia v West Indies
Third Test, Day 3
Live from 9:30am

ETV

Mohammedan v Kalabagan
Premier Cricket Super League
Live from 10:00am

Ten Sports

South Africa v England
First Test, Day 3
Live from 3:30pm

Neo Cricket

India v Sri Lanka
Second ODI
Live from 4:00pm



Premier Super League
Mohammedan v Kalabagan
Venue: Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium
Abahani v CCS
Venue: Fatullah Cricket Stadium
Biman v Victoria
Venue: BKSP-2

Resigned hockey players return

SPORTS REPORTER

National hockey players have returned to their camp hardly a day after tendering their resignation citing 'discriminating behaviour by the coach' as the reason for their walk-out.

Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) called an emergency meeting to bring them back to the camp and in the early hours of the Thursday, the meeting succeeded in breaking the deadlock.

All the 19 players, except for Chandan and John, reported to the camp last morning, while those two are expected to join the camp today.

After the peace deal between the aggrieved players and German coach Gerhard Rach, BHF general secretary Khondoker Jamiluddin said that misunderstanding among them had given rise to the situation, but after consulting with both parties things were back to normal.

"It was a misunderstanding between the coach and the players. But now both parties have realised their mistakes and we are all looking forward for the good of the game."

The surprise mass resignation came on Wednesday after the Victory Day match between the Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) XI comprising national players and Bangladesh police. The match for which Rach kept six players -- Chandan, Kuti, Shuvo, Hasan, Rimon and Rajan -- out of the BHF XI squad stoked the fire of the aggrieved players. Calling the coach Gerhard Rach a dictator, they blamed that the German had not for not taken

care of them during their two-month tour of Europe in the resignation letter.

However, Jamiluddin said that the players have agreed to overlook such trivialities, ahead of the South Asian Games, and for the overall good of the game.

"It was a two-month tour of Europe. Differences can arise in such a long arduous tour. But the players have now forgotten all that and decided to concentrate on the camp."

About the selection of the BHF XI where some of the senior players of the current national side were ignored, Jamiluddin said, "Two players from the touring party are injured and may not be able to play in SA Games. So, the coach had wanted to give those players a trial that were not part of the touring team. This team was picked only for the Victory Day match, not for the SA Games squad."

Bangladesh have been preparing for a long time to perform better against the top guns like India and Pakistan during the SA Games, which will take place in Bangladesh from January 29 to February 9.

Rasel Mahmood Jimmy, a senior player of the national side, also echoed Jamiluddin's sentiments.

"It was a misunderstanding between us, the players and the coach. But now we have decided to return to the camp at the request of the BHF officials. We have been assured that we will not be discriminated when it comes to choosing the national side in future."

Vital Super League ties today

SPORTS REPORTER

Archivals Mohammedan and Abahani play their respective opponents in the Super League matches of the Premier Division Cricket League today to make sure that their clash in the last round would be a title deciding affair.

Mohammedan, with one point advantage over their nearest rivals Abahani, take on giant killers Kalabagan at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur while Abahani meet Cricket Coaching School (CCS) at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium.

Mohammedan will desperately be looking forward to seeing their star-studded batting line-up get their rhythm back to bounce back from their shocking 112-run defeat against Biman in the previous match while Abahani

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Div I cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Orient Sporting Club secured an exciting one-wicket victory over City Club in the First Division Cricket Super League match at BKSP yesterday.

Rezwana Kabir hit 89 off 88 balls as City Club scored 230 for seven in 42 overs and in reply, Orient reached the target with 234 for nine in 41.4 overs thanks to a 59-run knock by Mosaddek.

In the day's other match at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium, Al-Imran claimed four wickets as Prime Doleshwar Sporting Club defeated Rupali Bank by six wickets.

Prime Doleshwar made 133 for four in 25.4 overs in reply to Rupali Bank's 130 all out in 44.5 overs.

Hurricane Gayle

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Chris Gayle whipped up the fifth fastest century by balls faced in Test history as West Indies refused to be blown over on a dramatic and heated day in Perth. Gayle unleashed the controlled fury of a captain who had watched his bowlers struggle for penetration with a 70-ball hundred that catapulted his side to 2 for 214, a promising collection which still leaves them 306 behind, at stumps on the second day of the third Test against Australia.

Australia felt chirpy after declaring at 7 for 520 but were soon silenced by Gayle's hot blade as he clumped 102 within 25 overs. The WACA has hosted some brutal innings and this one probably included the biggest six at the ground, with one of his straight sixes off Nathan Hauritz landing on the roof of the towering Lillee-Marsh Stand.

That rocket, which was powered by his charge down the pitch and a free-flowing swing, took him to 91 and it was appropriate that his century came with another six, this one sailing over the sight screen. It was his fourth clearance off Hauritz and sixth of the innings,

prompting him to drop to his knees for a praiseworthy celebration. Everyone watching deserved to be bowing down at him.

After a hard-working, unbeaten 165 in Adelaide, which re-floated his side after their three-day defeat in Brisbane, Gayle followed up in his traditional style. This was a batsman preening and flexing, exterminating the frustration of time in the field.

Sulaiman Benn, the giant spinner with a seriously grumpy alter ego, had signalled that West Indies would not slip away meekly when he started a lengthy confrontation with Brad Haddin that ended with Mitchell Johnson pushing the bowler away. Gayle then showed the right sort of aggression for a modern cricket field, an innings containing defence and leaving with Twenty20-style explosions thrown in.

Gayle is without two of his best batsmen -- Shivnarine Chanderpaul and Adrian Barath are out injured -- on a surface with a reputation for supporting fast bowlers. He didn't care. His team might look fragile but he was not going to be pushed around. Four boundaries were taken in Johnson's opening two overs to set Gayle's tempo and he would calm down only momentarily.

The debutant Clint McKay was initiated with a four in front of point first ball and

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INDIA V SRI LANKA, 2ND ODI

Yet another belter?

Cricket

CRICINFO, Nagpur

The bowlers of both India and Sri Lanka will head into Nagpur with the Rajkot run fest on their minds, but they won't get much relief from another hard track at the Vidarbha Cricket Association Stadium when sides meet in the second one-day international today.

India have the momentum and victory in Nagpur will give them a formidable 2-0 lead in the five-match series. Making it worse for Sri Lanka is the fact that they are down two bowlers. Muttiah Muralidaran and Dilhara Fernando have been ruled out for the series, meaning the visitors have two fresh faces, both potential debutants, which will not help a side aiming to level the series. It will take a huge effort for them to turn the tide their way on this surface.

The most alarming feature of the limited-

overs leg of this tour has been the fielding of both sides; on what is believed to be another belter of a track, bowling straight and full and, most importantly, taking every chance will be paramount. The fast bowlers on either side were carted around for the first half of both innings in Rajkot, and the epidemic of spilling catches continued from the Tests and Twenty20s. Three catches and one half chance to Zaheer Khan went down, taking India's drop tally from three limited-overs games this past week to an even dozen.

For one side aiming to tighten their grasp on the series, and the other attempting to clutch a piece of it, wrapping their fingers around the key moments will be decisive.

Sri Lanka's former captain Mahela Jayawardene has experienced an unusual run of form in 2009 where he either gets a start and can't convert or falls early. In 23 innings this year, he has a century and three half-centuries;

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PHOTO: STAR
DICTATOR NO MORE: Bangladesh hockey team's German coach Gerhard Peter Rach (R) talks with his charges, who tendered their resignation only the other day terming him as a dictator, during the morning practice session at the Maulana Bhashani National Stadium yesterday.