



ICC Cricket World Cup
2011

16
DAYS TO GO

Galliani vilifies crazy spending

AC Milan vice-president Adriano Galliani on Tuesday hit out at English teams for their "crazy" transfer spending in the wake of big money moves for Fernando Torres and Andy Carroll. Chelsea broke the English transfer record in shelling out 50 million pounds to Liverpool for Torres while the Reds spent 35 million pounds of that on Carroll. "Everyone's talking about balancing the books but then they spend like crazy people," said Galliani. "(Chelsea) strengthened in an amazing way spending 80 million euros, I just don't know where financial sense will end up."

- AFP



BATTLE PLAN

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

Bangladesh cricketer Mohammad Ashraful (L) takes part in an innovative fielding drill while teammates Naeem Islam (C) and Shakib Al Hasan watch during the Tigers' practice session at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.

The Powerplay riddle

MOHAMMAD ISAM



Jamie Siddons should be slightly miffed by a comment made recently, but it is very likely, he already knows that Mahmudullah Riyad is not the big hitter his team needs down the order.

The right-handed batsman, after Monday's training at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur, admitted that he is not the kind of batsman who can go after the bowling as soon as he arrives at the crease. "I cannot start my innings by hitting fours and sixes. I need a bit of time to settle in and then go for the shots. If I get that little period, I can always do well," said Riyad, a frank enough admission from a batsman who is pure enough to bat in the top four.

From his lowly position of No 7, Riyad usually struggles to find the boundaries during the slog overs, and especially during the batting Powerplay. He averages 31.3 from 28 innings but with a strike-rate of only 72.8. Clearly it is not enough and even more understandable is the fact that Riyad is not the correct man to go into bats so late.

Regardless, the responsibility in the batting Powerplay rests with the likes of Riyad, Naeem Islam, Mushfiqur Rahim, Shakib Al Hasan and the bowlers, but none of them have so far really made the Powerplay count.

Like Riyad, Naeem too is a proper batsman and during his formative years, he used

to open the batting. He moved to spin bowling and batting in the middle-order after his Under-19 days, so it is sometimes a wonder that he has somewhat transformed himself into a late-order hitter. Naeem banked on his ability to hit the big ones but he sometimes seem to be all or nothing. Out of his top three scores in one-day cricket, his strike-rate has been above 80 just once.

One might say that since they are batsmen, they should be able to bat anywhere and at anytime, but it takes a special skill to clear the in-field, find the boundaries and hit sixes.

Shakib and Mushfiqur too have to share the blame of not using the Powerplay properly. Both have joked recently that they are always getting out before the five-over restriction begins but they too know where they fail.

Slogging is generally an unselfish act, batsman requiring an adventurous spirit as he is always at a higher risk of being dismissed. It is definitely hard for a proper batsman to slog, knowing full well that a lower average would work against him. As a result, it has been the duty of the tail-enders but here too, the Tigers have been poor. Abdur Razzak hardly looks good for a hit while the potentially good Shafiqul Islam and Sohrwardi Shuvo have been disappointing.

While the players have said on a number of occasions that they have done well during the Powerplay in Premier League matches and it has been seen almost regularly that

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Dharmasena, Davis to umpire first match

PTI, Dubai

England's Steve Davis and Sri Lanka's Kumar Dharmasena will be the on-field umpires during the inaugural match of the ICC Cricket World Cup between India and Bangladesh to be played in Mirpur on February 19.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Wednesday named the umpires and match referees appointed for the warm-up and group stage matches for the February 19 to April 2 event to be jointly held by India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

"Steve Davis of the Emirates Elite Panel of ICC Umpires and Kumar Dharmasena of the Emirates International Panel of ICC Umpires and a former World Cup winner with Sri Lanka in 1996, will stand in the tournament opener which will be played between Bangladesh and India in Mirpur," the ICC said in a statement.

Thorpedo returning to pool

AFP, Sydney

Five-time Olympic freestyle champion Ian Thorpe announced his return to swimming for the 2012 London games Wednesday, saying he could "actually taste" his desire to compete.

"Ian Thorpe is very much back," said John Borghetti of sponsor Virgin Blue, opening a joint press conference with Thorpe.

"He registered this morning with the international drug testing register and he's planning to win lots of gold at the 2012 Olympics."

Australia's most decorated Olympian, Thorpe said he decided to return to the sport back in September and started training on the sly, using eight different pools to dodge suspicion and telling friends to "lie through their teeth" about his plans.

Touring the "extraordinary" Olympic swimming venue in London sealed his decision, he said.

Trophy now in Dhaka

SPORTS REPORTER



After making a long and spectacular journey in Sri Lanka and India, the cricket World Cup trophy is now in Bangladesh.

The glittering piece of silverware is all set to hit the city streets today. Although it has not been confirmed whether the trophy will have a ride on Hero Honda, an official global partner of the ICC, the Cup is scheduled to start its journey from Atlas Bangladesh (local distributor of Hero Honda) premises at 9:30am and after stops in different places, it will be officially handed over to the BCB at around 8:00pm.

According to the LOC, another official sponsor, Pepsi, will hold the trophy from February 9-11 and use it for their commercial purposes.

Although in between the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) and ICC will have the Cup for five days, nobody could confirm the detail of the 'Cup plan'.

BCB media committee chairman Jalal

Yunus was the best person to provide all the details. But his response raised more questions than answers.

"As far as we know, the trophy is here. But we are still in the dark about the details program with it," Yunus told The Daily Star at around 7pm on Wednesday.

His first statement was confusing in the context that the original World Cup trophy was supposed to be in India on Wednesday for a promotional event in New Delhi.

His second statement only reflected that not many things are going smoothly in regards to Bangladesh's preparation for hosting its first-ever World Cup. Many feel a well concerted plan in advance might have provided Bangladesh an opportunity to showcase its build-up to the mega opening ceremony, which will take place at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on February 17. The Cup will be on display in front of a world audience on that day and than head to Mumbai, where a new world champions will lift it after the final on April 2.

Tigers train under lights

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cig



Taking consent from the International Cricket Council, the Tigers have started their practice sessions under the lights at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in the port city yesterday to suit themselves with the conditions.

The practice sessions have brought extra facilities for Tigers to understand the pitch's behaviour and outfield condition and the local cricket organisers will also get the chance to test the floodlights before the first practice match between Canada and Bangladesh on February 12. "Pitches also have been prepared at the Women's Sporting Complex ground and MA Aziz Stadium for the teams that are participating in the World Cup for extra practice of the cricketers", said Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) director and Local Organising Committee (LOC) member secretary Dewan Shafiqul Arefin Tutul yesterday at a press conference.

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Delwar runner-up

SPORTS REPORTER

Delwar Hossain of Bangladesh became runner-up in the ITF under-14 Asian Championship Group 2.

Delwar lost to top seed Al Ansighasan of Yemen 2-6, 2-6 in the final at the Tainbo Centre in Yangon, Myanmar yesterday, said a press release.

By finishing second, Delwar now stands a chance to play the Group 1 Championship that will be held in March.

Bangladesh's Wy Mong Marma became fifth and Shajal eighteenth in the final standings.

In the girls' group, Ishita Afroze and Jhilik Chakma finished fifteenth and sixteenth respectively.

Biggest bat

SPORTS REPORTER

Akij Food and Beverages inaugurated their World Cup campaign 'Clemon Big Bat' yesterday at a press conference at the Sangsad Bhaban's South Plaza.

The bat which will travel over selected districts during the World Cup is expected to collect inspiring wishes from the cricket fans.

The 'Big Bat' is 71-feet in length and 10-feet in height. Clemon had initiated a similar campaign before the 2007 World Cup.



PHOTO: AFP

IS IT THE REAL ONE?: Indian captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni (L) and Harbhajan Singh take a closer look at the coveted World Cup trophy during a promotional event ahead of the 2011 Cricket World Cup in New Delhi yesterday.

ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP HISTORY

Keeper of Tigers' fortunes

In 2005, at the tender age of sixteen, Mushfiqur Rahim was a surprise inclusion in the 2005 squad to tour England. As an understudy to Bangladesh's long-time wicketkeeper the iconic Khaled Mashud, he impressed in the tour games, scoring a half-century and century against Sussex and Northamptonshire respectively. That gave him a chance to play as batsman in the first Test at Lord's, and earn the distinction of being the youngest cricketer to play a Test at the home of cricket.

As Khaled Mashud's career wound down, Mushfiqur became a more prominent member of the side, and edged

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MUSHFIQUR RAHIM



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Sony National TENNIS Tournament - 2011

Opening Friday 4 Feb. 2011, at 11 am

Venue Bangladesh Tennis Federation, Ramna Green, Dhaka-1000.

Closing Friday 11 Feb. 2011, at 4 pm



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