

T20 WC hosting rights in danger

ICC to propose alternate venue

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh face a steep challenge to maintain its right to host the ICC World Twenty20 next year as the International Cricket Council (ICC) will propose an alternate country for the competition at its Annual General Meeting (AGM) in the United Kingdom later this month. Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan Papon made the sensational disclosure while talking to reporters at the end of an indoor cricket event yesterday.

The proposal, which the BCB will contest, has been raised due to issues with preparations for the mega event at the Sylhet Divisional Stadium.

"The ICC team that earlier came to Bangladesh to check the venues was not satisfied with the progress in the Sylhet Divisional stadium, which is one of the proposed venues," said Papon.

"They visited the stadium twice in the last six months and did not see any development. So they are a bit worried about it being ready by September," he added.

The president however was confident that Bangladesh would not lose its hosting rights, an honour conferred on the country four years ago. "We have to convince them that there is no need for an alternate venue and that we can do with whatever we have," said Papon.

"The tender process regarding the Sylhet Stadium has been completed and the work has already started. I am confident that the

ICC officials won't be disappointed on their next visit in August," he added.

He also stated that the venue in Fatullah could be a possible replacement for Sylhet. "They (ICC) have kept the Fatullah stadium as a practice venue, but the facilities there are of international standard. If they consider that, we won't have to finish Sylhet in a hurry," said Papon.

The only question they will raise is the traffic congestion issue. In that case, we will take the support of the government and create a situation where they can commute faster," he added.

He further stated that the ICC officials did not raise any objections regarding the upcoming stadium in Cox's Bazar which aims to host the women's T20 world cup at the same time.

Echoing the president's thoughts, BCB's acting CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury said, "The current situation is very alarming and we need to work faster, there is no other alternative."

16 men's teams and eight women's teams will take part in the event which is scheduled to take place between March 16 to April 6 next year.

The other agenda on the table at the AGM will be the ICC Anti Corruption and Security Unit's (ACSU) report on match fixing in Bangladesh. "We will have a number of meetings regarding ACSU's report I am sure. We might have it within the AGM, or we might have it separately," said Papon.

Apart from the above mentioned agendas the president will also aim to make progress in the 'tour of India' issue, which he described as one of his 'main objectives' in the meet. He also stated that the BCB election, which may be discussed during the meeting, was not an official agenda for the meet.

Mohammedan favourites against Muktijoddha

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Former champions Mohammedan SC are looking forward to ensuring the final berth of the Super Cup for the third successive time when they take on Muktijoddha Sangsads in the second semifinal at the Bangabandhu National Stadium today.

The match will start at 6:00pm which will be telecast live on state-owned Bangladesh Television.

The 2011 finalists, Mohammedan, stormed into the last four of the money-spinning tournament like they did in the Federation Cup and Independence Cup before being eliminated by Sheikh Russel KC and Sheikh Jamal DC respectively. But this time they are seemingly much more confident of going one better as they have got slightly less powerful Muktijoddha Sangsads to deal with.

"Definitely it is a relief not to face Sheikh Russel or Sheikh Jamal but Muktijoddha Sangsads are a good side as well and they have been performing well in the Super Cup," said Mohammedan coach Saiful Bari

Titu.

The former national footballer is counting on his boys, who according to him have done exceedingly well in the last three matches, to deliver the goods again.

"If the boys can keep their tempo in the semifinal too, we will win the game and confirm the final berth for the third time in a row," said Titu.

The two sides have met twice in the league this season, both having won once. Muktijoddha's win was a 4-1 victory in Gopalganj while Mohammedan won 1-0 in the reverse fixture.

Titu's counterpart Shafiqul Islam Manik is not that optimistic, but was looking for a good performance from his team to book a place in the final of tournament for the first time since 2005 where they emerged champions in the Independence Cup.

"We did not get all of our players in the last two matches but we are expecting to field a better side against Mohammedan," said Manik. "But we must need to improve on our performance if we have to beat Mohammedan."

Manik believes luck favoured them in qualifying for the semifinal and was expecting lady luck to smile on them once more.



Sheikh Russel's veteran striker Zahid Hasan Emily runs with the ball after bagging a brace during their 2-0 win over Brothers Union in the Super Cup semifinal at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Sk Russel tame Brothers to reach another final

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Sheikh Russel KC tamed the youthful exuberance of Brothers Union in an entertaining 2-0 win at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday to reach the final of the Super Cup. Zahid Hasan Emily, the premier marksman of the country, scored twice in the first half to propel the treble winners to the verge of a fourth title win this season, which has already been a historic one for the new power-house of domestic football.

The scoreline could have been 3-0 in favour of Sheikh Russel had Emily not wasted a spot kick in the second half, but that would have only flattened Sheikh Russel, given the fightback they faced from a Brothers side, full of youth and vigour, lacking only in big-match experience.

The game got off to a sparkling start as Brothers came close to taking a lead in the very second minute but referee Mizanur Rahman ignored a handle-the-ball incident by a Sheikh Russel defender inside the box.

That was a wake up call for the treble-winners, and they woke up to take the lead in the fifth minute when Emily stabbed home from inside the box after receiving a cross from left-back Nahidul Islam.

Brothers, who had earlier lost against Sheikh Russel on three occasions this season despite taking the lead every time, tried to hit back with Arif Hossain testing Sheikh Russel goalkeeper Biplob Bhattacharjee from outside the box.

The Gopibagh outfit kept pressing for the equaliser with Biplob brilliantly thwarting a powerful shot from Jewel Rana in the 27th minute before they conceded again two minutes later.

Mamunul Islam played a long ball for Mithun Chowdhury, who darted into the box to flick it for unmarked Emily, headed in from close range after defender Ashrafur Karim failed to clear the ball.

The margin could have been bigger had speedy winger Zahid Hasan not squandered a chance with only goalkeeper Sujan to beat on the half-hour mark and Emily not missed the spot-kick in the 65th minute.

Brothers' efforts in the second half

were remarkable as the ball was mostly confined inside the half of Sheikh Russel, who adopted a counter-attack strategy after the resumption. The performance, despite the result, did not please Sheikh Russel's treble-winning coach Maruf Haque.

"I am not happy with the performance," said Maruf. "Our experienced side played immaturely and they seemed a bit relaxed after getting two early goals."

However, the successful coach, whose side has remained unbeaten for 15 matches, believes that Sheikh Russel will win the season's last title to complete their quadruple.

Maruf's counterpart Mahidur Rahman Miraz expressed his satisfaction despite losing the semifinal, a stage from where they were eliminated in the inaugural edition in 2009.

"The boys played according to my plans and created a good number of scoring chances but they could not cash in on them. I am happy with the way they played throughout the tournament," said Miraz, who however blamed the hectic schedule for the defeat as he felt his boys were tired after playing four matches in six days.

CHAMPIONS TROPHY Dharmasena, Tucker to umpire final

AFP, Cardiff

Sri Lanka's Kumar Dharmasena and Australia's Rod Tucker will umpire the Champions Trophy final between England and India at Edgbaston on Sunday, the International Cricket Council (ICC) announced Friday in a statement.

Dharmasena, the ICC's umpire of the year for 2012, and Tucker were also in the middle for England's seven-wicket semi-final win over South Africa at The Oval on Wednesday.

As was the case in that match, they will be backed up in Birmingham by Australia's Bruce Oxenford in his role as television umpire.

But whereas former India fast bowler Javagal Srinath was the match referee at The Oval, the fact India are now in the final ruled him out of contention for the task this weekend, with the job given instead to ex-Sri Lanka international Ranjan Madugalle.



This picture, taken on Thursday, shows Siddheswari playground overrun with construction materials for the nearby Moghbazar-Mouchak flyover. The High Court on Wednesday issued a ruling forbidding the constructors to keep any of their material at the City Corporation playground.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

DPL delayed yet again

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) officially confirmed yesterday that the Dhaka Premier League (DPL), which has already been delayed numerous times, will yet again not start on the scheduled date.

"The player recruitment programme and the commencement of the Dhaka Premier Division Cricket League 2012-13 originally scheduled for June 23 and 03 July, respectively have been deferred due to unavoidable circumstances," the BCB said in a press release.

Earlier in the day BCB President Nazmul Hassan Papon, who had made his preference about hosting the league in September quite clear last week, stated that he would sit with the Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis (CCDM) on Saturday to find a solution.

"I will sit with them tomorrow. The starting date may be deferred by one or two days. It's still not clear," said Papon.

When asked as to what would be the course of action with regard to the DPL if more names emerged from the International Cricket Council's Anti Corruption and Security Unit's report, he said: "It won't matter if names merely come up. We have to be completely convinced and have enough evidence. We have to see the evidence that they come up with and how much of it we can accept. If they are acceptable, then those players won't be able to play the league, that is for sure."



Cricket thoughts are far from Tamim Iqbal's mind as he shares a quiet word with his wife-to-be Ayesha Siddiqi during their gaye holud in Chittagong last night.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

MS wary of England

AFP, Cardiff



ICC CHAMPIONS TROPHY ENGLAND & WALES 2013

India may be entering the Champions Trophy final on the back of the only unbeaten run in the tournament but captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni insisted he was taking nothing for granted ahead of the world champions' clash with hosts England at Edgbaston on Sunday.

India thrashed Asian rivals Sri Lanka, the team they beat to win the 2011 World Cup final on home soil in Mumbai, by eight wickets in Cardiff in the semi-final on Thursday.

England, bidding for a first major one-day international title, looked in fine form in defeating South Africa by seven wickets at the Oval in Wednesday's first semifinal.

"I think they are a very good side, like each and every side when it comes to the Champions Trophy, which means all of them are strong enough to beat anyone on that particular day and win the trophy," Dhoni said. "We have played quite often in the last couple of years so we know the same amount about them and they know the same about us," added Dhoni, whose side have won eight of their last 10 one-dayers against England, albeit all those matches were in India.

Semi-final man-of-the-match Ishant Sharma, asked if an England top order including captain Alastair Cook, Ian Bell and Jonathan Trott, known collectively for solid rather than spectacular run-making, was the most dangerous India had faced in this competition, replied: "I don't think so."