

SPORT

Golden eggs turning sterile?

SPORTS REPORTER

Apparently it seems that the incumbent officials at the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) have given up all hopes of solving BPL-related problems. The agreements with all the franchises have already been terminated and naturally there is only one option left for the board -- to pursue a legal course of action to realise the huge amounts of money owed by the franchisees.

Even so, the board has decided to give it one last try with president Nazmul Hassan Papon to meet with the franchisees on a one-to-one basis. Because many have doubts over success in a legal battle, especially the time it may need, the board will probably

BCB president to meet with franchisees individually.

BCB stands to suffer losses up to Tk 70 crore if dues not realised

"We ran the tournament absolutely on wrong structure." -- Mallick

3rd edition, if it does take place, will be held after T20 WC

rations for next year's ICC Twenty20 World Cup. With that another question arose: is there any chance of the third edition of the BPL taking place on time?

"Realistically, the third edition must take place after the World Cup. And before that the board has to bring huge changes in the structure of the tournament. We ran the tournament absolutely on wrong structure. I realised from first-hand experience that it's quite unrealistic to expect one franchise to spend around Tk 15 crore each year and return a profit," he responded.

On condition of anonymity a board official said that he sees little chance of the tournament continuing with the old franchisees while conceding that one or two may make it through.

Whatever the scenario is, the board stands to lose around Tk 45 crore if BCB president's last effort goes in vain as the board are supposed to get Tk 22 crore from the franchisees and Tk 19 crore from event management firm Game On Sports, besides other expenses. Furthermore the BCB, as the guarantor of players' payments, has to pay the dues of the players if the franchisees do not pay which means they have to suffer a loss of around Tk 70 crore. Despite repeated attempts, only two franchisees have completed fifty per cent players' payment.

BPL governing council chairman Afzalur Rahman Sinha however was still hopeful that the board will not suffer the financial loss despite the mess with the second edition.

"The agreement has already terminated but we still believe that the problem will be solved when the board president meets with Game On and the franchisees. They are talking about compensation as they claimed that the second edition lost its glamour because of the non-participation of Pakistani players. But one thing is clear -- they have to give the bank guarantee before making any argument. They should pay the dues, so I'm not worried about the financial loss of the board," said the veteran organiser.



Young striker Wahed Ahmed (R) celebrates one of his two goals during national football squad's practice match against the Team BJMC at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

NCC resumes from July 15

SPORTS REPORTER

The second round of the 33rd National Cricket Championship will resume from July 15 onwards after a break of nearly three weeks. The inter-district one-day competition was earlier postponed due to inclement weather. The first six matches of the second round of the competition were abandoned. The remaining six group matches will take place at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra and the Cricket Garden in Rangpur.

Rangpur, Moulvibazar, Barisal, Narayanganj are in Group A while Pabna, Brahmanbaria, Faridpur and Jessore are in Group B.

Wahed surprises de Kruif

SPORTS REPORTER

Coach Lodewijk de Kruif kept eleven of his 34-member squad out of the first practice match against Team BJMC at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday, but those that he picked did not disappoint the Dutchman as they notched up a 2-0 win, thanks to a second-half brace from promising striker Wahed Ahmed.

Keeping eleven players (Mamunul Islam, Wali Faisal, Pranotosh, Shakhawat Hossain Rony, Sohel Rana, Raihan Hasan, Mohammad Linkon, Zahid Hossain, Mamun Khan, Shahidul Alam Shohel and Jamal Bhuiyan) could be an indication that those players are first choice for the coach, and he is now looking for another 12 players for his 23-member

squad, which might be declared on Saturday or Sunday.

"It was the first practice match and every player had the opportunity to show his worth to me and to the other players," said de Kruif.

However, the Dutch coach indicated that the 23 members he was going to pick might not be the final squad for the SAFF Championship as he would love to have a reserve list.

"It is too early to say anything (about the SAFF squad). There is still two months left. Few players are still injured, some of whom are good players and we will need them later."

De Kruif felt the second half performance was much better than the first as the players failed to create too many chances in the first 45.

"I think nobody enjoyed the first half but the second half was much better (where he fielded a new set of 11 players), when the players created five or six chances and converted two of them," opined the coach.

The coach was however impressed with the Mohammedan-striker Wahed Ahmed, whom he picked up for the squad after watching the Super Cup.

"Wahed is very difficult to contain for any defender because he is always busy and looks very aggressive. I am surprised with his performance. I picked him because of his performance in the Super Cup, as nobody had told me about him before," said Kruif, who did not want to compare Wahed with Zahid Hasan Emily who missed the AFC Challenge Cup due to injury.

"I don't want to compare the players. I am happy with every one and also happy to have a player like Emily in the side," said the coach.

NSC makes it official

SPORTS REPORTER

The election commission of the Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) announced the official circular on the elected executive body of the BHF yesterday, 13 days after the scheduled date of elections.

"We could not issue the circular due to a court ruling, but there is no obstacle to declaring the circular now according to experts whom we have consulted," said election commissioner and NSC director Haiul Quaiyum yesterday.

The Khwaza Rahmatullah-led panel was elected unopposed on June 20 after the Shafiqul Alam Munir panel, backed by Mohammedan and Mariner Youngs Club, pulled out of the election and the election commission was supposed to issue the circular on June 28 after the scheduled date of election on June 27.

Honours even on Day 1

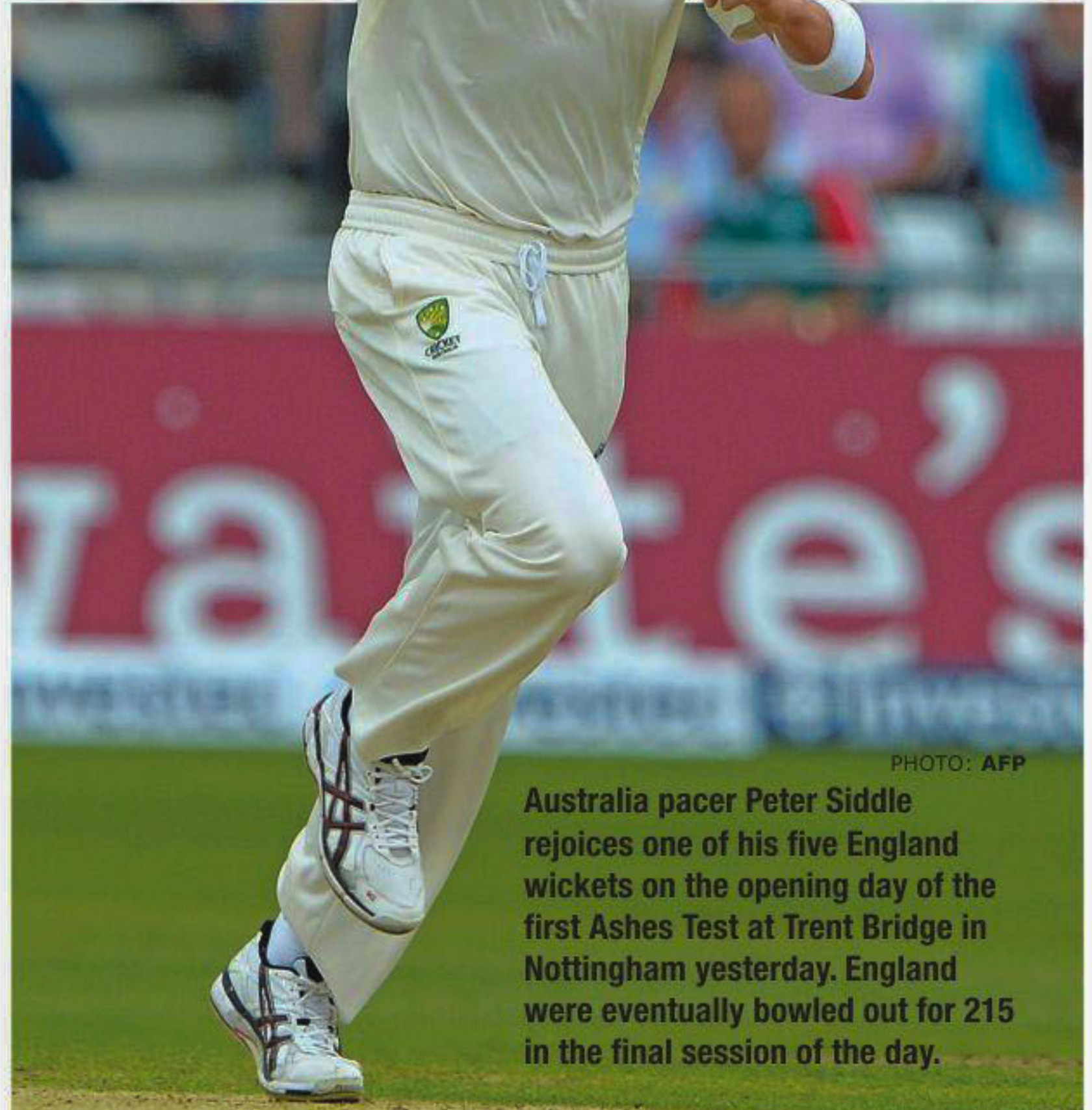
AFP, Nottingham

Steven Finn brought England back into the first Ashes Test as bowlers held sway on an overcast opening day at Nottingham's Trent Bridge on Wednesday.

At stumps, Australia were 75 for four in reply to England's seemingly meagre 215, a deficit of 140 runs, after 14 wickets had fallen in the day's play.

Fast bowler Finn took two wickets in two balls before England spearhead James Anderson produced a superb delivery to clean bowl Australia captain Michael Clarke, the tourists' best batsman, for nought.

Steven Smith, not even in the original Ashes squad, was 38 not out and Phil Hughes, no longer an opener but batting at six, seven not out as floodlights pierced the gloom.



Australia pacer Peter Siddle rejoices one of his five England wickets on the opening day of the first Ashes Test at Trent Bridge in Nottingham yesterday. England were eventually bowled out for 215 in the final session of the day. PHOTO: AFP

New Australia coach Darren Lehmann decided to restore Shane Watson to his preferred spot at the top of the order.

But Watson, who in 41 previous Tests had managed just two hundreds, was out in familiar fashion when he pushed forward firmly against Finn without adjusting for away movement and was caught by third slip Joe Root for 13.

Next ball Australia were 19 for two when Ed Cowan carelessly chased a wide delivery and was caught at second slip by county colleague Graeme Swann.

Clarke lasted just five more balls with Anderson producing a near unplayable delivery that angled in and seamed away late to hit off stump.

Opener Chris Rogers, recalled for his second Test five years after his debut, hung on for over an hour. But the 35-year-old veteran of the

English county circuit was eventually lbw for 16 to Anderson, bowling from around the wicket.

Earlier, Australia fast medium-bowler Peter Siddle took five wickets for 50 runs after England captain Alastair Cook won the toss, with Jonathan Trott's 48 the hosts' top score.

But in his first Ashes Test as captain, Cook was caught behind off James Pattinson for just 13.

Root, in his first Ashes Test and first as an opener, made a promising 30 before he was bowled off-stump by Siddle's excellent outswinging yorker.

England, notoriously slow starters in recent Test series, lost star batsman Kevin Pietersen for 14 shortly after lunch when he nicked Siddle to Clarke in the slips.

Trott was in good touch and struck nine fours before Siddle, bowling from wide on the crease, induced him to play on.

Bell had made 25, 24 in boundaries, when he edged a half-cock shot off Siddle to Watson in the slips.

SCOREBOARD				
ENGLAND: First Innings				
Cook c Haddin b Pattinson				13
Root b Siddle				30
Trott b Siddle				48
Pietersen c Clarke b Siddle				14
Bell c Watson b Siddle				25
Baird c Swann b Starc				37
Prior c Hughes b Siddle				1
Broad c and b Pattinson				24
Swann c Hughes b Pattinson				1
Finn c Haddin b Starc				0
Anderson not out				1
Extras (lb-6, lb-5, w-8, nb-2)				21
Total (All out in 59 overs)				215
Fall of wickets: 1-27, 2-78, 3-102, 4-124, 5-178, 6-180, 7-213, 8-213, 9-213				
BOWLER				
Pattinson	17	2	69	3
Starc	17	5	54	2
Siddle	14	4	50	5
Agar	7	1	24	0
Watson	4	2	7	0
AUSTRALIA: First Innings				
Watson c Root b Finn				13
Rogers lbw b Anderson				16
Cowan c Swann b Finn				0
Clarke b Anderson				0
Smith not out				38
Hughes not out				7
Extras (lb-1)				1
Total (For 4 wks in 21 overs)				75
Fall of wickets: 1-19, 2-19, 3-22, 4-53				
To bat: B Haddin, P Siddle, J Pattinson, M Starc, A Agar				
BOWLER				
Anderson	10	0	25	2
Finn	8	0	37	2

Record deal for school hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) yesterday struck a record deal worth Tk 2 crore with the First Security Islami Bank for the 2014 National School Hockey Championship.

This comes as the biggest sponsorship deal for BHF, after they had signed a deal worth Tk 90.44 lakh with Janata Bank Ltd for the national coach, following national team's excellent performance in the World Hockey League (Rd-2) in February.

ATN Bangla has been chosen as the media partner of the school hockey championship.

The championship is supposed to get underway from February next year at 10 venues in seven divisions with 120 schools expecting to take part. The sponsors will provide the 50 per cent of the total amount of money within one month of the deal, as per the contract.

"Like football and cricket, we will have to make the game of hockey popular at grass root level. The BHF has already taken initiatives to make it popular and we have just responded to their proposal as a partner in hockey's development," said managing director of FSIB, AAM Zakaria at a press conference at the Bangladesh Olympic Association auditorium yesterday.

"If there is this brings a fruitful impact on the country's hockey, then we will feel that our initiative has been successful," said Zakaria adding that the board of directors approved Tk 2 crore for one year.

ATN Bangla chairman Mahfuzur Rahman informed that the channel would try to provide wide coverage of the tournament from each venue and would telecast the matches of the final round live from the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium.

Irish through to 2015 WC

AFP, Amstelveen

Ireland on Tuesday qualified for the ICC Cricket World Cup 2015 after a dramatic last-gasp tie with the Netherlands.

The Netherlands' number-nine batsman Michael Rippon hit a four and a six from the final two deliveries off John Mooney to snatch a point for his side.

But Ireland's point was good enough to see them top the ICC World Cup League Championship and advance, for the third successive time, to ICC's flagship event that will be staged in Australia and New Zealand in 2015.

After Tuesday's result, Ireland topped the table on 20 points, with nine wins from 12 matches.

There is still one place up for grabs from this tournament with four sides -- Scotland, Netherlands, Afghanistan, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) -- all still capable of claiming second position.

Women's Club Cup

SPORTS REPORTER

A fluent 83 by Farzana Haque led Sheikh Jamal to a thrashing 147-run victory over Victory AC in the Women's Club Cup at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium yesterday. Batting first Jamal rode on Farzana's half-century and Panna Ghosh's unbeaten 41. Victoria's Pobitro Roy was the pick of the bowlers with figures of three for 27.

In reply Victoria could only manage 55 all out in 25.4 overs. Jamal's Jahanara Alam took four for three, whereas Panna Ghosh took two for 11.

In the day's other game Gulshan Youth Club defeated Rising Girls by nine wickets at the City Club Ground.

MS might be playing India take on Sri Lanka in final today

AFP, Port of Spain

India and Sri Lanka meet yet again, this time in the final of the Tri-Nation Series at Queen's Park Oval on Thursday, amid increasing speculation that Mahendra Singh Dhoni will be back to lead the World Cup and Champions Trophy holders.

Dhoni sustained a right hamstring strain while batting against the West Indies in his team's first match of the tournament on June 30 at Sabina Park in Kingston and an announcement was made the following day that he was ruled out of the rest of the competition with uncapped batsman Ambati Rayudu being flown in as his replacement.

With or without Dhoni though, India are bracing for a much tougher Sri Lankan challenge than what transpired on Tuesday when fast-medium bowler Bhuvneshwar Kumar produced the outstanding figures of four for eight and engineered the demolition of the 1996 World Cup winners for just 96.

Sri Lanka had all but qualified for the final ahead of that encounter and their performance with the bat on the way to an 81-run defeat on the Duckworth-Lewis Method reflected a noticeable lack of intensity that is not expected to be repeated in the final.

SCORES IN BRIEF

INDIA: 119 for 3 in 29 overs (Rohit 48 not out, Kohli 31, Dhawan 15; Herath 2-32)

SRI LANKA: 96 all out in 24.4 overs (Chandimal 26, Mendis 13, Jayawardene 11; Bhuvneshwar 4-8, Ishant 2-17, Jadeja 2-17)

Result: India won by 81 runs on D-L method.

Player-of-the-match: Bhuvneshwar Kumar