

SPORT

Cox's stadium – use it & lose it

SPORTS REPORTER

In an unprecedented move, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is actually preparing a stadium in Cox's Bazar at own cost only for one tournament, the women's competition of next year's ICC Twenty20 World Cup.

A sensational disclosure after a meeting between Civil Aviation and Tourism minister Faruk Khan and BCB president Nazmul Hassan Papon yesterday made it all but clear that BCB's long-cherished dream of creating a green stadium on the Cox's Bazar's Golf Course had evaporated.

"Under Public Private Partnership (PPP) it has been confirmed that an international-standard five-star resort will be built at the very place and the project is now in the PPP office. But there will be no problem in hosting the World Cup matches and as you know all the structures have been designed on a temporary basis. We will decide later

where the proper stadium will be built," Faruk Khan told reporters after the meeting.

This effectively means that the BCB will pour nearly Tk 25 crore down the drain after failing to win the long battle with Faruk Khan's intentions of putting the land to commercial use.

It came as a massive boost for Bangladesh and Bangladesh cricket when Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina gave her consent last April to build a new stadium on the Cox's Bazar Golf Course but in reality the BCB is yet to get the land and they are not sure when and where this stadium will finally be built.

BCB president Papon however was not shocked by this undesired outcome.

"As we didn't formally meet earlier we have had some communication gaps, but we will do everything to finish the work on the stadium in time. I'm not shocked as I believe there will be a beautiful stadium there (in Cox's Bazar)," said Papon.

"There have been number of issues regarding the place. We have to go with their (government's) master plan. There is a long procedure but we can't wait for all the formalities if we want to host the world cup matches. A huge amount of Tk 100 to Tk 150 crore will be needed to build an international standard stadium and BCB can't afford that amount," he added.

BCB did not float any tender for making the temporary stadium in Cox's Bazar as ruling party leader in the port city and BCB ad-hoc committee member AJM Nasir is overseeing all the development work at the stadium.

"Actually it's NSC (National Sports Council) who is doing this kind of job but they have a very lengthy process, which is why we have decided to oversee the work so that we can ensure the shape before ICC's September deadline," said Papon, adding that they will make pre-fabricated dressing rooms so that they can shift them after the completion of the tournament.

Papon was also not ready to make any comment about where actually the proper stadium will be built.

BCB not ready to pay grants

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan Papon found no good reason to allocate grants for the Dhaka Premier League clubs for their participation in this year's league.

And what prompted the president to think this way was that he believed that the new payment system had cut the clubs' expenditure drastically.

"But still everything will depend on the board members. I can't take this decision. I never told them [the clubs] that the board would give them money, rather they wanted it," said Papon after club officials showed reluctance to attend Wednesday's CDM meeting, citing they wanted the grants assurance first.

"Last year they got money from the BPL as they suffered a lot for the T20 tournament and I took the initiative, but the fact is that this year their cost will be reduced one third due to the new system. In my opinion this year they should pay the board," he added smilingly.

Papon also said that the players' registration would take place as per schedule on July 25. The country's lone 50-over competition is scheduled to start on September 29.

Women's Club Cup

SPORTS REPORTER

Sathira Jakir hit 86 as Mohammedan Sporting Club posted a massive 134-run victory over Kalabagan Krira Chakra in the Women's Club Cup cricket tournament at the City Club ground yesterday.

Mohammedan scored 229 for eight in 40 overs after deciding to bat. National skipper Salma Khatun was the other notable scorer with 46.

In reply, Kalabagan finished their 40-over quota for 95-8.

In the day's other match at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium, Gulshan Youth, 103-5 in 30 overs, beat BKSP, 100 all out in 37.5 overs, by five wickets.

Ashton-ishing Agar

AFP, Nottingham



Teenage Australia debutant Ashton Agar fell agonisingly short of becoming the first Test match No. 11 to score a century as he frustrated England with a record-breaking 98 on the second day of the Ashes opener at Trent Bridge on Thursday.

It seemed England would have a commanding first innings lead as Australia collapsed to 117 for nine in reply to the Ashes-holders' first innings 215.

But 19-year-old Agar went on to make the highest score by any Test No. 11, surpassing Tino Best's 95 for the West Indies against England at Edgbaston last year.

Together with fellow left-hander Phil Hughes, 81 not out, Agar shared a 10th wicket Test record partnership of 163 to take Australia to 280.

That topped the previous last wicket record stand of 151 held jointly by Brian Hastings and Richard Collinge for New Zealand against Pakistan at Auckland in 1972-73 and Azhar Mahmood and Mushtaq Ahmed for Pakistan against South Africa at Rawalpindi in 1997-98.

Left-arm paceman Mitchell Starc then followed



EVEN A NO. 1 WILL ENVY: Australia's number 11 batsman Ashton Agar plays an eye-pleasing on-drive for four against England paceman James Anderson during his magnificent knock of 98 off 101 balls on the second day of the first Ashes Test at Trent Bridge yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

up by taking two wickets in successive balls to leave England floundering at 11 for two.

But England captain Alastair Cook, 37 not out and Kevin Pietersen, 35 not out, rebuilt the innings with an unbroken stand of 69 that left the hosts 80 for two at stumps -- a lead of 15 runs.

Australia resumed Thursday on 75 for four, a deficit of 140 runs, after an overcast first day where seamer Peter Siddle rocked England with five for 50.

But Thursday saw sunshine and blue skies which promised better batting conditions for Steven Smith, 38 not out overnight, and Hughes.

James Anderson, who on Wednesday had gone past England fast bowling great Fred Trueman's record of 307 Test wickets, made the breakthrough Thursday.

Smith, driving loosely at Anderson, gaining reverse-swing, was caught behind by wicketkeeper Matt Prior for 53.

This was the start of an Australia collapse that saw five wickets lost for nine runs.

Agar did survive a desperately close stumping appeal from Prior off spinner Graeme Swann on six, with Australia then 131 for nine -- 84 runs adrift -- as third umpire Marais Erasmus eventually ruled in his favour.

SCOREBOARD

ENGLAND: First innings 215 (Trott 48, Bairstow 37, Root 30, Bell 25, Broad 24; Siddle 5-50, Pattinson 3-69, Starc 2-54)				
AUSTRALIA: First innings (overnight 75-4)				
Watson c Root b Finn				13
Rogers lbw b Anderson				16
Cowan c Swann b Finn				0
Clarke b Anderson				0
Smith c Prior b Anderson				53
Hughes not out				81
Haddin b Swann				1
Siddle c Prior b Anderson				1
Starc c Prior b Anderson				0
Pattinson lbw b Swann				2
Agar c Swann b Broad				98
Extras: (lb-15)				15
Total: (All out in 64.5 overs)				280
Fall of wickets: 1-19, 2-19, 3-22, 4-53, 5-108, 6-113, 7-114, 8-114, 9-117				
Bowler				
Anderson	24	2	85	5
Finn	15	0	80	2
Swann	19	4	60	2
Broad	6.5	0	40	1
ENGLAND: Second innings				
Cook not out				37
Root c Haddin b Starc				5
Trott lbw b Starc				0
Pietersen not out				35
Extras: (lb-1, nb-2)				3
Total: (For 2 wks in 43 overs)				80
Fall of wickets: 1-11, 2-11				
To bat: Bell, Bairstow, Prior, Broad, Swann, Finn, Anderson				
Bowler				
Pattinson	9	3	27	0
Starc	13	4	15	2

Ashton Agar's 98 is the highest score ever by a number 11, beating West Indian Tino Best's 95 made against England last year.

ASHTON who?

SPORTS REPORTER



When a lanky, floppy-haired, six-foot-plus frame walked out to the field on Trent Bridge wearing the Australian cap, that too for the opening Ashes Test, spectators at the ground and around the world must have been wondering if Australia were dealing with a full deck. Just over a year ago, left-arm spinner Ashton Agar was playing second XI cricket for Richmond in Melbourne, and here he was making his debut in his country's pinnacle contest.

Agar thus far had averaged just under 30 with the ball from 10 first-class matches, an unremarkable return -- not that many knew that at the time, because the general reaction was a bemused, "Ashton who?". After the first day Agar had bowled seven overs without reward for 24 runs -- enough to condemn him as just another in a long line of spin hopefuls after the magician Shane Warne's departure.

All that changed after the second day however. Ashton Agar's name will be remembered for a long time, not least by cricket trivia enthusiasts. After James Anderson and Graeme Swann had chopped their arch-rivals down to 117 for nine, in stode the unassuming number 11 and unfurled records one after the next. In the company of specialist batsman Phil Hughes, who played a disbelieving second fiddle to his debutant teammate's lead guitar, Agar took Australia's score to 280 (and an unlikely lead of 65) before finally falling two heart-wrenching runs short of a debut 100.

But records had already tumbled and astonishing ones set. Before Agar, the highest a number 11 had scored was West Indian Tino Best's 95, also against England. Hughes' and Agar's 163-run association was easily the highest tenth-wicket partnership, beating the record held jointly by New Zealand's Brian Hastings and Richard Collinge (1973) and Mushtaq Ahmed and Azhar Mahmood of Pakistan (1998). Agar is also the first debutant number 11 to score a Test half-century, the previous highest score was Australian Warwick Armstrong's 45 in 1902.

These records will stand at least a while, chiefly because after yesterday's display Agar will not be batting at number 11 any time soon. It was a world removed from Best's slogathon last year. It was an innings of a proper batsman, but it was remarkable because of the poise and balance displayed under extreme pressure. An on-drive off an on-song Anderson and two straight sixes off Swann will linger in the memory. Above all it was an exhibition of typical Australian pluck at a time when the once world conquerors badly needed it.

Naveed to pick 24

SPORTS REPORTER



After having conducted 13 sessions, Pakistani head coach Naveed Alam is set to pick his final 24-member squad for the AHF Asia Cup after the trial match at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium today.

Naveed had basically emphasised on the stress and fitness training in the sessions, with each session stretching to three hours after the former Pakistani coach took charge on July 2 following a two-week conditioning camp with 33 players at the Bangladesh Krira Shiksha Protishthan under the supervision of national coach Mahbub Harun.

Naveed also expressed his desire to play a couple of practice matches prior to the Asia Cup which is scheduled for September 24 to October 1 in Malaysia. Bangladesh have been drawn in Pool B with India, Korea and Oman.

Hanif has cancer op

AFP, Nottingham

Pakistan great Hanif Mohammad has had an operation for liver cancer, a family friend told AFP on Wednesday.

The 78-year-old underwent an operation at London Bridge hospital on Tuesday that saw his right liver lobe and gall bladder removed.

The operation was deemed a success, with surgeon Robert Hutchins saying: "It [the cancer] has been diagnosed at an early stage and it has not spread anywhere else."

Mohammad is now set to spend one week in hospital for observation.

The first star of Pakistan cricket following the country's creation after the partition of India in 1947, Mohammad was also the first batsman to be known as the "Little Master" -- a nickname now carried by India batting great Sachin Tendulkar.



NANJING ON TRACK

PHOTOS: CHINA DAILY

Nanjing, the capital of Jiangsu province in eastern China, is going to host the 2nd Asian Youth Games over August 15-24. The Games' main venue, the Nanjing Olympic Sports Center Stadium (above), has been beating the clock to get ready for the gala event ever since the city won the right on November 13 in 2010. On the sidelines the volunteers (right), most of whom are from the Nanjing University of Technology, are not lagging behind either to welcome the guests with all their warmth and colour.



SAFF squad trimmed to 30 already

SPORTS REPORTER



Before selecting his 23-member squad for the SAFF Championship, Dutch coach Lodewijk de Kruijff yesterday cut down his 33-member preliminary squad to 30 members after axing three players -- Arman Aziz, Shahedul Alam Shaded and Uttam Kumar Banik.

De Kruijff is supposed to declare his 23-member squad on Sunday after Saturday's second practice match against the Eleven, comprising discarded national players, but the 43-year-old coach was seemingly unwilling to wait to start trimming the squad.

The trio had been out of the national squad for long before they staged a comeback to the preliminary national squad through their performance in the Super Cup but midfielders Arman and Shaded and stopper Uttam failed to draw the attention of the Dutchman after their first practice match against Team BJMC on Wednesday.

They were fielded in the first 45 minutes

with Arman and Shaded playing in the midfield of the 4-2-3-1 formation while Uttam stood behind them as stopper.

"De Kruijff wanted to reduce his squad to 25 members from 33 and as part of his plan, three players have been released after today's morning session," said manager Iqbal Hossain. "The coach told me to release them but he thanked the three players for the cooperation and said he would call them in the future."

However, it has been learnt that de Kruijff believes he has good alternatives for Arman, Shaded and Uttam, which is why he released them before announcing his 23-member squad. It is also mentionable that Farhan Khan, who lives in the United States, also left the camp yesterday after talking to the coach.

"I was confident of securing a final place even after the practice match but I have been released from the camp today [Thursday]," said Arman.

"Maybe I have lacked fitness because I sat idle most of the season before the Super Cup, but I hope the squad to be picked by the coach will bring a good result from the SAFF Championship," said Arman.