

SPORT

No takers for NZ series

SPORTS REPORTER

No company has submitted bids for the Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB) television rights for the upcoming home series against New Zealand.

The BCB opened the tender on Thursday and found the box empty.

The Kiwis are scheduled to arrive in Dhaka on October 2 to play two Tests, three ODIs and a lone T20I against Mushfiqur Rahim's men.

"We didn't get any bid for the coming series within the submission deadline. Now we have two options -- either we can go for a re-tender or we can communicate with the companies who earlier expressed interest in the TV deal for the next home series. You know there is a concerned committee and they will take the decision about the matter very soon because we have little time," informed BCB's acting CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury yesterday. Nizamuddin however hinted that the board is likely to communicate with the interested parties as they have little time to go for re-tender.

The television broadcast and marketing rights is a major source of income for the richest sports federation in the country but the BCB has been struggling with the deals ever since Bangladesh were elevated to ICC's Test membership in 2000.

They had a bitter experience with the last deal with Nimbus; arbitration with Nimbus to realise the dues is still ongoing, even though the troublesome six-year agreement with the international marketing agency

ended on March 2012. The hearing is scheduled to take place in November this year.

The BCB had floated a tender for a TV deal from November 1, 2012 to April 30, 2016 after a strong committee headed by its vice-president Ahmed Sajjadul Alam prepared a guideline for the new TV deal, but poor response had forced them to relax some clauses. Even then the response was frustrating, which forced the BCB to sell the worldwide broadcasting rights only for the home series against West Indies last year to Virgo Media Ltd, owner of satellite television channel Channel 9, for 50,000 dollars.

This time too the ad-hoc committee of the board opted for the one-series deal as they believed that a long-term deal must be negotiated by an elected body.

"The board thought that it would be better if an elected body takes the decision about long-term deals considering the financial importance of the matter," said Nizamuddin.

But the problem is that it is not easy to sell a home series against a team like New Zealand as it is seen as a potential financial loss. Series against teams like India, England, Pakistan always ensure huge financial benefits while series against Australia and Sri Lanka are often break-even, but TV rights for series against New Zealand, West Indies and Zimbabwe are tough investments.

Nizamuddin however spoke in favour of long-term deals. "It's always good if we can sell the rights as a bundle."



PHOTO: AFP
Australia captain Michael Clarke pushes one on the on-side on way to hitting an unbeaten 125 on the first day of the third Ashes Test against England at Old Trafford yesterday.

Islami Bank backs School C'ship again

SPORTS REPORTER

Islami Bank Bangladesh once again came forward to sponsor the school football championship across the country but this time they have chopped down the budget to Tk 4 crore from the previous budget of Tk 5 crore.

Apart from the school championship, the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) will have to arrange another tournament at the college level with the curtailed budget.

"The money is not a big factor. There is plenty of time ahead and we will be associated with football in different occasions. This time a college football tournament will also take place apart from the school tournament," said Islami Bank's managing director Abdul Mannan at the agreement signing ceremony at the bank's headquarters at Dilkhusha yesterday.

The school tournament is expected to get underway in October with the participation of some five thousand schools, like in the previous edition which was completed in July last year.

In the last edition, the bank's name was not included in the tournament title but this year the tournament has been named Islami Bank National School Football Championship.

"Last edition the tournament was held under the sub-committee which had members outside of the federation and there were a lot of unfair happenings, but this time the championship will be organised directly by the federation and it is expected to make it a success," said BFF president Kazi Salahuddin.

"Islami Bank made a proposal to us to organise another tournament at college level so that school footballers can get another platform after leaving schools," said BFF vice president and tournament committee chairman Tabith M Awal.

Big pay rise at US Open

AP, New York

All singles players at the US Open are getting a big raise this year, from the record 2.6 million dollars each champion will take home, to the 32,000 dollars for everyone losing in the first round.

The US Tennis Association announced the breakdown of its across-the-board prize money overhaul at the Grand Slam tournament Wednesday, four months after saying it would add more than 8 million dollars to the pool.

Ziaur unbeaten champion

SPORTS REPORTER

GM Ziaur Rahman emerged unbeaten champion in the Bishal Trade & Rupahali Sarees International Rating Chess Tournament which was concluded at the Bangladesh Chess Federation Hall Room yesterday.

Zia, who confirmed the title in the penultimate round with eight straight victories, drew against FM Mehdi Hasan Parag to secure 8.5 points to receive Tk 35,000 prize money.

Former junior champion Abdullah Al-Saif earned 7.5 points to finish as runner-up while four players earned seven points each and their standings were decided via tiebreak.

IM Abu Sufian Shakil, Sharif Hossain and Parag became third, fourth and fifth respectively. Tk 1.2 lakh prize money was distributed among the participants with Mohammad Nasim, president member of Bangladesh Awami League, distributing prizes among the winners as chief guest.

SOUTH AFRICA T20S

Kulasekara recalled by Sri Lanka

REUTERS, Colombo

Fast bowler Nuwan Kulasekara was recalled to Sri Lanka's 15-man squad on Thursday for the three-match Twenty20 series at home to South Africa.

Kulasekara missed the five-match one-day series against the Proteas, which the home team won 4-1 on Wednesday, due to a dislocated finger he suffered during the tri-series in West Indies last month.

SQUAD

Dinesh Chandimal (captain), Lasith Malinga, Kusal Perera, Tillakaratne Dilshan, Kumar Sangakkara, Mahela Jayawardene, Angelo Mathews, Lahiru Thirimanne, Angelo Perera, Jeevan Mendis, Thisara Perera, Nuwan Kulasekara, Suranga Lakmal, Sachithra Senanayake, Ajantha Mendis.

Team gets young blood

SPORTS REPORTER



Experienced midfielder Sheikh Mohammad Nannu and promising winger Sarwar Hossain were both excluded from Bangladesh's Asia Cup squad when the Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) announced an 18-member final squad yesterday.

The squad however included three teenagers -- defender Farhad Ahmed Shitul, midfielder Sabbir Hossain and forward Roman Sarker. Four players, Sadikur Rahman Situl, Irfanul Haque, Sarwar and Rubel Hossain have been kept on standby for the Asia Cup, which is scheduled for August 24 to October 1 in Malaysia.

"We haven't brought any change in the squad which was submitted by the coaches but we have just enquired about the reasons behind the exclusion and inclusion of the players," said selection committee member Abu Jafar Tapan. "Only the performance and fitness of the players have been considered for selection."

Pakistani coach Naveed Alam, thanking the selection committee, later said, "They (selectors) have selected the players who suit the plan Bangladesh want to implement in the Asia Cup."

Nannu has been representing the national team since 2008 and was a vital member during Bangladesh's World Hockey League (round-2) campaign where he scored a couple of goals in three matches. Sarwar was also a member of the national squad that played the World Hockey League.

"At the moment, there are better options than Nannu. It is not the end of the road for him. He is a good player and I believe he will stage a comeback," said Naveed.

On the other hand, getting a place in the final squad was beyond imagination for the teenager trio of Roman, Shitul and Sabbir.

Roman, a class XI student of BKSP, was a member of the U-16 national hockey team which finished second in the U-16 Asia Cup to qualify for next year's Youth Olympics. Roman struck seven goals in that tournament and also played the Premier Division League last season for Azad Sporting Club.

"I didn't expect to get a chance in the senior side. I am very pleased and will be happier if I can do anything for the nation," said Roman.

Shitul had been in the preliminary squad twice but had never landed a place in the final squad. "I have worked hard this time to secure the final place and now my target is to secure a place in the starting eleven," said Shitul, who left BKSP this year after completing his higher secondary certificate.

SQUAD

Zahid Hossain and Asim Ghop (goalkeepers), Mamunur Rahman Chayan (cap), Khorshedur Rahman, Moshir Rahman, Imran Hasan, Rokonzaman, Tapash Barman, Farhad Ahmed Shitul (defenders), AHM Kamruzzaman Rana, Abdul Malek, Sabbir, Rasel Mahmud Jimmy, Pushkor Khisha Mimo (midfielders), Krishna Kumar, Mainul Islam, Hasan Jubair and Roman.

Standby: Sadikur Rahman Situl, Irfanul Haque, Sarwar Hossain and Rubel Hossain.

Captain Clarke at work

REUTERS, Manchester



Centurion Michael Clarke played a true captain's innings as Australia shrugged off another umpiring controversy to produce an Ashes fightback and rack up 303 for three on the first day of the third Test on Thursday.

The unflappable Clarke was 125 not out from 208 balls at the close after notching the tourists' first ton of the series with a flicked single, while Steve Smith was unbeaten on 70 after a day of fluctuating fortunes which ended with Australia on top.

England, who are 2-0 up in the five-match series and will retain the Ashes at the revamped Manchester venue with a win or a draw, were cheered on by a packed crowd and a lone trumpeter but some pizzazz was missing from their play and the atmosphere.

Opener Chris Rogers, 35, fell short of his first Australia century when he was trapped lbw by a fullish ball from spinner Graeme Swann for a Test high 84 in the middle session.

Replays showed Rogers was right to be given out, but Usman Khawaja's dismissal before lunch was the major talking point.

He was adjudged to have

been caught behind off Swann for one but reviewed umpire Tony Hill's decision.

Third umpire Kumar Dharmasena sided with his colleague despite replays showing no obvious edge in the latest decision review system (DRS) dispute to afflict the series and Australia.

Shane Watson earlier got away with several loose shots through the slips, over gully and just short of point but was caught at slip by Alastair Cook off paceman Tim Bresnan for 19.

Clarke and Rogers, obeying the message from on high to knuckle down and build an innings after repeated Australian carelessness with the bat this series, were watchful but pounced on any loose bowling as the pacemen struggled with footholes.

Clarke was impressive in his 24th Test ton if not at his very fluent best having been troubled by spectators above the pavilion sightscreen when taking on Swann, who took two for 82.

The tourists, who risk losing a seventh Test in a row and a third straight Ashes series, brought in David Warner at six after the aggressive left-hander returned from his banishment to the A squad as punishment for punching England's Joe Root in a bar in June.

England were unchanged with Kevin Pietersen fit to play.

SCOREBOARD

AUSTRALIA: First innings				
Watson c Cook b Bresnan				19
Rogers lbw b Swann				84
Khawaja c Prior b Swann				1
Clarke not out				125
Smith not out				70
Extras: (lb-4)				4
Total: (For 3 wks in 90 overs)				303
Fall of wickets: 1-76, 2-82, 3-129				
To bat: Warner, Haddin, Siddie, Starc, Harris, Lyon				
Bowler				
Anderson	21	4	72	0
Broad	21	3	80	0
Bresnan	20	5	51	1
Swann	25	2	82	2
Root	2	0	8	0
Trott	1	0	6	0
ENGLAND: Cook, Root, Trott, Pietersen, Bell, Birstow, Prior, Bresnan, Broad, Swann, Anderson				



Farhad Ahmed (L) is one of the three young guns who made it to the Asia Cup-bound squad. Here the defender gets some tips from Bangladesh hockey team's Pakistani coach Naveed Alam at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

India ease to 4-0 lead

AFP, Bulawayo



India made light work of their fourth one-day international against Zimbabwe on Thursday, as they beat the hosts by nine wickets to take a 4-0 lead in the series.

After bowling Zimbabwe out for just 144, Rohit Sharma and Suresh Raina hit unbeaten half-centuries as India achieved their target inside 31 overs.

Debutant Cheteshwar Pujara was the only Indian batsman to lose his wicket when he was bowled by Tendai Chatara for 13, before Sharma and Raina were granted an easy return to form as they knocked off the remaining 122 runs required.

After going 12 one-day innings without a half-century, Raina was promoted up the order and finished unbeaten on 65 from 71 deliveries.

Although Sharma had failed to contribute in the first three matches, he was not troubled as he constructed a patient innings of 64 not out.

An 80-run partnership for the sixth wicket between half-centurion Elton Chigumbura and Malcolm Waller was as good as it got for Zimbabwe as they posted their lowest total of a disappointing series. The home side slumped to 47 for five

inside the opening 16 overs of the innings as India's bowlers sliced through the Zimbabwean top order.

Player-of-the-match Mohit Sharma led the attack on his international debut, claiming 1 for 13 in his first six-over spell after India had won the toss and elected to field.

Sharma also grabbed the key wicket of Waller to end what little resistance Zimbabwe had to offer, and finished with figures of 2 for 26 from 10 overs.

The 24-year-old set India on their way when he had Sikandar Raza caught behind in the seventh over of the innings, before Hamilton Masakadza contributed to his own demise when he was run out whilst taking a sluggish single.

With Brendan Taylor and Sean Williams both dismissed without scoring and Vusi Sibanda bowled by Ravindra Jadeja for 24, Zimbabwe looked as though they could be bowled out for a double-digit score.

SCORES IN BRIEF

ZIMBABWE: 144 all out in 42.4 overs (Sibanda 24, Waller 35, Chigumbura 50 not out; M Sharma 2-26, Jadeja 2-28, Mishra 3-25)
INDIA: 145 for 1 in 30.5 overs (Pujara 13, R Sharma 64 not out, Raina 65 not out; Chatara 1-31)
Result: India won by nine wickets.
Player-of-the-match: Mohit Sharma.