

# SPORT

## Evil design behind Cox's venue attack?

SPORTS REPORTER

Just before the ICC inspection team reached the under-construction Cox's Bazar Stadium, some construction facilities of the venue and its workers were victims of an attack led by Nasima Akhter Bakul, the acting chairman of the Cox's Bazar Sadar Upazila Parishad.

Witnesses said Bakul, also a local BNP leader, went to the spot at around 12 noon with around fifty people, who reportedly vandalised the tin-roof structure and physically assaulted the workers.

Thankfully, local police and Rab-7 battalion members rushed to the spot immediately to pacify a fuming Bakul, making sure the unwanted incident was not brought to the notice of the ICC inspection team that was scheduled to visit the place exactly at the time of the incident, but reached late due to a delay of their flight from Chittagong because of inclement weather.

Bakul in her defence said that she went to the restricted facility to protect her leased lake.

"I have got a five-year lease of the lake inside this under-construction facility from Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation.

I'm evicted without any compensation and that's why I went there with my people to protect my place," Bakul told the Cox's Bazar Correspondent of the Daily Star yesterday.

When contacted, the Cox's Bazar model thana officer-in-charge Md Jasimuddin confirmed the incident and said: "We are yet to file any case as BCB officials informed us that they will sit to discuss the matter before taking any action," he told the Daily Star correspondent.

However, on the surface it looked like an aggrieved person tried to disturb a few under-construction materials of what promises to be the country's first green venue. But many believe it was only an act born of an evil design from a vested quarter, which is out not only to paint a disturbing image of country's cricket to the ICC inspection team but also desires to build commercial facilities instead a cricket stadium now being prepared for next year's ICC Twenty20 Women's World Cup.

"The board had agreed to compensate not only this lady (Bakul) but also the other parties who got leases from the Parjatan Corporation. The compensa-

tion sums have also been agreed in a meeting with Parjatan officials where this lady was present. The board is waiting for the MOU to be signed before compensating them. In that context this incident is not only uncalled for but also disturbing," said a BCB official preferring not to be named.

He also said that there can only be two conceivable for her actions -- she wanted to raise her compensation claim or acted on the wishes of a quarter that does not want the venue to be built here.

He also informed that the BCB agreed to pay nearly Tk 1 crore as compensation in the meeting.

"But to be honest we received a draft MOU from Parjatan and we were surprised to see the figure had been raised three-fold. Not only that, Parjatan has also inserted some very questionable clauses in the draft that we are working upon," said the official acridly.

BCB was supposed to get the 50-acre land in the Golf Course from the Parjatan Corporation to make their long-cherished dream come true. But at the moment they are struggling against time to complete the venue for the mega event due to start in March next year.



All-rounder Nasir Hossain goes for a catch as skipper Mushfiqur Rahim looks on during Bangladesh national team's practice session at the Mirpur Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

## BCB in cloud nine with BPL payments

### ICC sends international non-payment list

NAIMUL KARIM

August 19 was initially supposed to be a date of huge relevance. It was the date by which the Bangladesh Premier League's (BPL's) players' payments were due to be completed. At least that was what was written in the newly formed bylaws of the competition. 50 per cent of the payment had to be completed before the end of the competition and the remainder within six months of the end of the BPL, which ended on February 19.

With regards to that, on Monday the BCB received a list from the ICC of international players who are yet to be given their payments from the second edition. And the board, as seen so many times before, has requested some more time before the completion of those payments.

"We have decided to pay 25 per cent of the remaining payment for the foreign players by this month

and the rest by September," BPL governing council chairman Afzalur Rahman Sinha told The Daily Star yesterday. "The franchises told us that they had made direct payments to some of the international players and we asked the ICC to verify that," he added.

The BCB was supposed to have ensured 50 per cent of the local players' payments before Eid, but a number of players still claim to have not received their money.

The BPL's unique style of payment is something which almost everyone -- the players, the staff members and even some of the media personnel -- have gotten used to and hence the formal date of completing the payments, never really held any value.

There are several reasons why the payment issues have taken a backseat and the recent fixing charges are one of them.

A number of players, among the nine individuals charged, face the risk of a premature end to their careers. To add to that three officials from the Dhaka Gladiators have

been charged as well and the franchisee may not feature in the third edition of the BPL, scheduled for December this year.

"If the BCB's tribunal finds the Gladiators guilty then they are surely not going to feature in the third season. We will have to look for new owners," Sinha said.

In the midst of all this, the players' payment issue may seem less important, but it's something that the BCB will have to take care of as soon as possible since unlike in the first edition, the board is guarantor of player payments for the second edition.

With regards to the local players, the age-old problems continue. "There are many issues here. For instance, one franchisee (Rajshahi Royals) complained that Tamim Iqbal left the country in between the BPL and that his payment would have to be cut accordingly," said Sinha. "So the president will sit down with each franchisee and solve these problems in the coming days," he added.

With so many issues floating

around one would assume that the BPL's governing council would need a miracle to be able to resolve the issues and host the third edition this December.

The BPL governing council however, remains adamant. "The third BPL is going to be different. Many things will change. And we are confident of having a different competition this December," said Sinha.

Considering the fact that certain players are yet to receive payments from the first edition of the BPL, one only wonders how the second edition's problems can be resolved in the next few months. The task seems a lot more difficult this time with the elections and the added responsibility of hosting the T20 World Cup in March-April 2014.

Many would have thought that the ideal thing to do would be for the BPL to take a break, solve all its problems and return with a new face. However, due to reasons known only to the board, shifting the tournament still remains the last option.

## Kiwi series gets some takers

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has received some responses from some local and foreign companies for the television rights to the upcoming home series against New Zealand.

The BCB opted to negotiate with individual companies as none had submitted bids for the rights within the tender submission deadline of the first week of August. 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.

It was learnt that two Indian companies and five local companies submitted their proposal to the board. "We asked for formal proposals from companies who expressed their interest in the TV deal for the upcoming home series and as far as I know seven or eight companies have submitted their proposals. We will wait two-three more days to get more and after that assess and evaluate the proposals before placing the best one to the board," said BCB's commercial and marketing committee chairman Ahmed Sajjadul Alam yesterday.

"Some showed interest only in production, some for marketing and some for both, so we have to check every detail before reaching a decision," he added. 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 because of the financial importance of the matter.

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

## Hockey team leave today

SPORTS REPORTER

The national hockey team will leave for Malaysia today to take part in the AHF Asia Cup after a morale-boosting 6-0 win over BHF Eleven in the second practice match at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

The second consecutive win over the BHF Eleven, a side comprising players from services teams as well as four standby players, may give the national side some relief as they seriously lacked same match practice. However, the preparation could have been better if the game's governing body had arranged a few practice matches against stronger opponents, preferably from abroad.

However, Bangladesh are scheduled to play a practice match against Pakistan on August 22 in Malaysia.

In yesterday's practice match, Pushkor Khisha Mimo struck two goals while Mamunur Rahman Chayan and Hasan Jubair Niloy scored one goal each for the national side, who forced their opponents concede two suicidal goals.

## ZACS gets ICC nod

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An International Cricket Council (ICC) venue inspection team yesterday expressed satisfaction about the preparations at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium (ZACS) in Chittagong as a venue for the World Twenty20 scheduled to be held next year.

The four-member team, led by ICC event manager Chris Tetley, visited the stadium around noon as part of their assessment of world cup venues.

"Chittagong has made good preparation for the mega event. World cup matches were held in this stadium before, so there is no problem with the venue and we are satisfied with the venue preparations," said Tetley at a press briefing held at the MA Aziz Stadium later in the day.

The team also inspected the MA Aziz Stadium as practice matches and practice sessions will be held there. The ICC team left the port city for Cox's Bazar in the afternoon.

## History beckons England Fifth & final Test against Australia starts today

AFP, London



A chance to make history, albeit of different sorts, will confront England and Australia when the final Test of this season's Ashes starts at The Oval in south London on Wednesday.

At 3-0 up with one to play, England have already retained the Ashes and won the series -- the first time since the 1950s they've won three successive Test campaigns against their oldest rivals.

But they still have plenty to play as they've never won four Tests against Australia in England and have never taken any Ashes series by a 4-0 margin although they did win 4-1 in Australia in 1911/12 and in 1928/29 before taking a six-match series against an Australia side weakened by defections to the unofficial World Series Cricket 5-1 in 1978/79.

A result of greater resonance to both current sides is that the last England team to win the Ashes and round off the series with a defeat was Mike Gatting's side at Sydney in 1987.

Following a narrow victory, Australia won the next eight Ashes series.

The last thing England batsman Jonathan Trott wants is for his captain, Alastair Cook, to receive the Ashes urn on the back of a loss.

"I don't think anyone wants to go up on the stage and raise the urn after we have lost," Trott said. "If we do that, it will be a bit of a downer."

Unusually, Australia will have a chance for revenge in a matter of a few months, with the return Ashes 'Down Under' starting in November.

"There are another five games (against Australia) after this one so we are not letting up," Trott said.

"That is an important message to send. If we take our foot off, you give them hope and they can go back to Australia having won a Test," added Trott, who marked his Test debut by making a hundred against Australia at The Oval in the concluding Ashes Test of 2009 where victory saw England regain the urn.

England have been forced into making a change after Tim Bresnan, who starred with both bat and ball in the 74-run fourth Test win at Chester-le-Street was ruled out of the rest of the season with a back injury.

Fast bowler Chris Tremlett, looking to revive his Test career on his Surrey home ground, is one of three players along with the uncapped duo of all-rounder Chris Woakes and left-arm spinner Simon Kerrigan looking to take Bresnan's spot.

Australia, who've used eight batsmen in a series where the top order has been their Achilles heel, could once again make changes despite being urged to 'pick and stick' by the likes of former captain Steve Waugh, who didn't score a hundred until his 26th Test before becoming a world-class batsman.

Usman Khawaja, averaging just 19 in three successive Tests, appears to be the batsman under greatest pressure right now after coach Darren Lehmann warned his top six they were playing for their places following Australia's latest collapse at Chester-le-Street and there have been suggestions reserve wicketkeeper Matthew Wade could come into the side as a specialist batsman.



Ryder banned

AFP, Wellington

Troubled New Zealand cricketer Jesse Ryder was handed a six-month ban Tuesday after testing positive for outlawed substances contained in a weight-loss supplement, the New Zealand Sports Tribunal said.

The disciplinary body said Ryder, who has been in self-imposed exile from international cricket since February 2012, tested positive after a domestic match in March this year.

It said Ryder's sample showed traces of the stimulants PBA and DEBEA, and the batsman admitted he took two supplement tablets in the days before the test.

A downbeat Ryder said he had to accept the consequences of his actions.

## Abahani eyeing European coach

SPORTS REPORTER



Like the previous seasons, Abahani will be relying on a foreign coach for the upcoming season, but this time the four-time

professional league champions have kept their sights on Europe rather than Asia.

Last season, Abahani's Iranian coach Ardashir Pourmehmet failed to defend the league title and the Super Cup title, both of which were delivered by his compatriot Ali Akbar in the two previous seasons.

Ardashir guided Abahani in the Federation Cup, the Bangladesh Premier League, the Independence Cup and the Super Cup last season and failed in all competitions. The club could not even finish second in any of the competitions and failed to qualify for the second round of the AFC President's Cup.

The failure of the Iranian might have prompted the club management to look for a European coach, ten years after they had appointed Russian coach Anatoly in the 2003-04 season, even though the Russian could not bring success during his brief stay at the club.

"We have bio-data of three foreign coaches -- two from Netherlands and one from Australia -- but we are not fully satisfied with those. We are looking forward to getting another two resumes from Europe," said Abahani director Kazi Nabil Ahmed yesterday.

"It is certain that we not going after any Asian coach this time and looking forward to roping in a quality coach from Europe before having the trial of foreign players," added Nabil, who is also a vice-president of Bangladesh Football Federation.

Abahani will start their pre-season camp in the first week of September before conducting a trial for foreign players in the third or fourth week of September. The foreign coach is expected to join the club before the trial of the foreigners.

It has been learnt that Abahani have retained the services of long-serving Ghanaian hitman Awudu Ibrahim and defender Samad Yussif and Nigerian midfielder Yoko Samnick, who joined the Sky Blues last season.

However Nabil said that Ibrahim, Samad and Samnick will be tested again in the trials, along with three Nigerians and two Dutch footballers, before the final confirmation.