

SPORT

BCB floats TV rights tender till 2020

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The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has floated a tender for worldwide media rights for six years until 2020; potentially a major source of income for the country's richest sports body.

The board was yet to disclose the detailed schedule of home matches during the six-year period but the parties will get the list when they buy tenders from April 27 till May 8.

BCB however invited the tenders under the projections of 25-30 Tests, 40-45 ODIs and 10-15 T20 Internationals and was looking for a lucrative deal with the assurance of the commercially attractive India team's visit in 2014, 2015 and 2020. They had however failed in their first attempt to make a long-term deal two years ago following a poor response.

Zimbabwe, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, South Africa and Australia are also scheduled to visit during this period. "We are very much hopeful this time. We will definitely be more careful about the deal considering our previous bitter experience. This time we are not interested to include the live telecast of some domestic matches in this new deal because of what happened in the past," said Kazi Inam Ahmed, chairman of BCB's marketing and commercial committee.

There will be an open auction on May 12. "This time a clause ensured that Bangladeshi TV channels will be able to apply. Broadcasters with a year's experience in the business can also apply," said Inam.

The last such long-term deal with Nimbus lasted till early 2012 but the experience for BCB was a bitter one.



Muktijoddha's Nigerian strikers Eleta Kingsley (C) Nkowcha Kingsley (R) celebrate with compatriot and fellow hitman Sunday Chizoba (L), who became father of his first son on Wednesday, after the latter scored the last goal of his team's 4-2 win over BJMC at the Bangabandhu National Stadium last night.

PHOTO: STAR

Easy sailing for Muktis

SPORTS REPORTER



A last-gasp strike from hitman Wahed Ahmed helped Mohammedan SC overcome Uttar Baridhara Club with a 1-0 win in their Nitol Tata Bangladesh Premier League encounter at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The fifth win in 11 matches mean Mohammedan remain glued on the third position with 22 points, just two ahead of fourth-place Muktijoddha Sangsad, who easily sailed over Team BJMC with a 4-2 win in the day's first match. Sheikh Jamal DC and Abahani are in the first and second position respectively with 27 and 20 points from 11 matches each.

However, Independence Cup champions Mohammedan found them hard against Uttar Baridhara Club, who had held them to a goalless draw in the first-leg match

and the bottom-side of the table were about to hold their mighty opponents again before substitute Wahed tapped in a low cross from left-back Arup Kumar in the 90th minute to extend their winning runs to nine in which five wins came in the recently concluded Independence Cup.

Before scoring the winning goal under the floodlight, Mohammedan did everything and could have killed off the game had debutant Portuguese striker Hardy Pinto was not denied twice by the woodworks.

In the day's first match, the proceeding of the game indicated a fighting match between two mid-table sides as they both displayed attacking football till 23rd minute when Muktijoddha made the game one-sided to toy with BJMC, who have been suffering from lack of adequate training facilities following some internal problems.

BJMC looked a bit of tiring at first but the All Reds did not mistake to grasp the opportunity with both hands going ahead in the 23rd minute with a

strike from Nigerian Nkowcha Kingsley, who drove a rebounder from close after a free-kick from Sunday Chizoba was parried by BJMC goalkeeper Arif Hossain.

Nkowcha's partner Eleta Kingsley doubled the lead with an eye-catching left-footer inside the box on the stroke of the break. Muktijoddha Sangsad kept their dominance over BJMC after widening the margin to 3-0 six minutes into the second half with Nkowcha beating goalkeeper Ariful with a left-footer.

BJMC pulled one goal back through Nigerian Samson Iliasu with a long-rang shot on 58 minutes but Muktijoddha Sangsad took the match far away from them after scoring the fourth in the 61st minute when Sunday Chizoba found the back of the net inside the box.

Ismael Bangoura converted a penalty kick to reduce the margin in the dying minute but the top-scorer of last season could not avert BJMC's second successive defeat in the league.

Narail champs in inter-dist volleyball

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Narail emerged champions in the Walton Inter-District Volleyball Championship with a 3-1 win over Pabna in the final at the Volleyball Stadium yesterday.

Narail went ahead after winning the first two games 25-18 and 25-23 before Pabna came back to win the third 25-15. But Narail ensured the championship winning the last game 25-15.

Khulna became third beating Satkhira 3-2.

Harjit of Pabna was adjudged the best attacker, Al Amin of Satkhira was named the best setter while Sohel of the champions was awarded the most valuable player.

Players excited, BCB lukewarm

SPORTS REPORTER



With the scorching heat kept at bay by the closed windows of the air-conditioned room, the country's leading cricketers assembled to listen to a lecture not from a cricketing expert but a psychological skill development coach named Ali Khan, a Bangladeshi Canadian.

One might say that the time would have been better spent doing some work in these trying conditions, but mental strength in modern sport is as vital as skill and fitness, especially when players have to confront pressure-filled situations.

That is why many officials of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) felt the need of some assistance from an expert like Ali after national cricketers, including the tough Shakib Al Hasan, pointed to pressure as a reason for the team's recent dismal performances.

Left-handed opener Tamim Iqbal was particularly interested in Ali's advice so that he can recover from his prolonged lean patch. The opener was not present at yesterday's first group session at the National Cricket Academy, where a total of 32 cricketers took part, but before going abroad he had more than 30 hours of discussions in six days with Ali Khan. Other cricketers also showed immense interest for one-to-one sessions with the psychological skill development coach after a long session where Ali mostly talked to give an idea about mental strength.

"I think it's a very good idea. The first session was very encouraging and personally I felt that it will help us a lot. And I will keep in touch with him, so I can overcome a few things. It depends on you how you respond to it," said Bangladesh skipper Mushfiqur Rahim.

The extent of a three-day workshop's impact may be questioned. "Maybe not. The first job is to educate and then the second job is to achieve. We started the first bit and the board will definitely think about its continuation and someone may continue it. I have lot of commitments in Canada but I still have passion for my country," said Ali.

The BCB however has no clear idea about what they want to do with the programme and they did not sign any deal with Ali and it was also not sure whether the Bangladeshi expatriate will be paid for the sessions.

"Let's see what happens with the players after the three-day programme. We are still not sure whether we will make any deal with him (Ali Khan). We will take the feedback from the players and also discuss the matter in the board," said an unsure Akram



Psychological skill development coach Ali Khan delivers a lecture to 32 Bangladesh cricketers at the National Cricket Academy in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

KKR edge out RCB

AGENCIES, Sharjah



An amazing turnaround by the Kolkata Knight Riders in the final few overs and that stunning catch by Australian Chris Lynn at deep midwicket proved to be the key in the final analysis as they defeated Royal Challengers Bangalore by two runs in an Indian Premier League game at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium yesterday.

Bangalore looked to be cruising to a third successive victory at 116-2 after 15 overs, but fell short, with Lynn taking a remarkable catch in the final over to prevent AB de Villiers from hitting a winning six.

SCORES IN BRIEF

KKR: 150 for in 20 overs (Lynn 45, Kallis 43, Yadav 24 not out, Uthappa 22; Aaron 3-16, Starc 2-33)

RCB: 148 for 5 in 20 overs (Takawale 40, Kohli 31, Yuvraj 31, Patel 21; Vinay Kumar 2-26)

Result: Kolkata won by 2 runs.

Player-of-the-match: Chris Lynn.

KFC WOMEN'S NAT'L FOOTBALL First round from Apr 30

SPORTS REPORTER

The KFC National Women's Football Championship will start on April 30 with the participation of a record 43 teams.

The participating district women's teams, split into six zones, will play the first round on knockout basis. Later, six zone champions will join the host district and holders Bangladesh Ansar in the eight-team final round.

The knockout phase will be held in Rajshahi, Laxmipur, Kushtia, Rangpur, Bagerhat and Dhaka. The matches of Rajshahi and Laxmipur will start from April 30, Kushtia and Rangpur from May 3 and Bagerhat and Dhaka from May 6 while the final round is expected to get underway by the end of May.

"We are going to hold the women's national

football championship for the fifth time with assistance from FIFA and KFC, who have been with us for the last three years. A record of 43 teams are taking part this time compared to last season's 37," said BFF women's committee chairman Sirajul Islam Bachchu at a press conference at the BFF House yesterday.

Each team will be given Tk 10,000 as participation money while the winning teams will also get another Tk 5,000, informed Bacchu, adding that FIFA provided 30,000 dollars and KFC gave Tk 15 lakh to make the championship a success.

BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag, women's committee's deputy chairman Mahfuz Akter Kiron and KFC area manager Mizanur Rahman were present at the press conference.

DHANMONDI PLAYGROUND Victim of govt apathy

TAWFIQUE ALI

The Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) opened the Dhanmondi-8 playground to the general public yesterday. The development was marked by a signboard on the entrance gate of the playground -- so far used as the private property of Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club -- proclaiming the field open to the general public. Celebrations followed the development in the residential area -- children would finally be able to avail the open space after being denied of that right for more than a year.

However, the question remains how long it will take the authorities concerned to fully comply with a High Court order in 2011 which stated that the ground be freed from illegal occupancy for public access. Unfortunately, in the years following the HC verdict half a dozen government bodies including the DCC and public works department not only brazenly defied it but also favoured the private club -- named after the Prime Minister's slain brother -- that has been illegally occupying the field with several structures.

The public works secretary, undivided Dhaka City Corporation, Rajdhani Unnyan Kartipakkha (Rajuk), Inspector General of Police, officer-in-charge of Dhanmondi police station were the parties at fault.

Not only that, money was spent from the public treasury to fund the illegal occupation.

In clear violation of court directions, the cash-crunched Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) last year funded a 1-crore taka boundary wall with ceramic brick and metal frames around the playground and a palatial entrance engraved with the club's name to directly facilitate the club's exclusive occupancy, said Mubasshar Hussain, a leading architect and resident of the area.

So entrenched were the occupiers in their law-ignoring ways that the club president Manjur Kader, during a meeting at the playground on April 19, audaciously announced that the playground is only for 'elites' and not for any 'street urchins'.

Taking full advantage of government support, the club tightened its grip further on the playground as an exclusive private property with round-the-clock security guards barring access to the general public for over a year now, said Hussain, who has been fighting a legal battle for this public space since 2004.

Meanwhile, local government ministry at the end of last year, granted a block allocation of Tk 1.63 crore in favour of Sheikh Jamal Club to build two lawn tennis courts with floodlights, two badminton courts and a basketball court, altering the existing greenery and triggering a series of public protests over the past several weeks.

Abdul Gaffar, a former footballer and in-charge of implementing the club's ongoing development schemes, said, "Access to these facilities will be exclusive and the local people and school children will have to pay to enjoy those."

Local Government Engineering Division (LGED) was building the said courts without mandatory approval from Rajuk, said officials.

LGED chief engineer Wahidur Rahman said at the time, "It is not our mandate to do such work, but we are working on the dictates of the local government ministry, as Sheikh Jamal Club sought engineering support."

Local Government Division secretary Manzur Hossain said: "I do not know about financing the club but I will look into how it happened."

Official sources however said that immediate predecessor Abu Alam Shahid Khan allocated the money from the minister's special fund meant for DSCC at the fag end of his tenure.

When asked about compliance with the HC order to free the playground, DSCC chief executive officer Ansar Ali Khan said: "We are trying but could not due to different difficulties." He declined to elaborate.

Former Rajuk chairman Nurul Huda said, "We did not go for eviction of illegal structures as the club used the space as a playfield."

Public Works Department (PWD) is the owner of the 13.5-bigha playground that was handed over to City Corporation in 1984 for maintenance and conservation. Public works secretary Md. Golam Rabbani said that PWD chief engineer Kabir Ahmed Bhuiyan would be able to respond as to what his ministry has done to free the playground.

But Bhuiyan did not respond despite repeated phone calls and messages sent to his mobile phone.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner Benazir Ahmed chairs the club's governing body and frequents the illegally-built club office in the playground, said Mubasshar, who lives nearby.

When contacted for his version on his role as the club's governing body chairman, the commissioner assigned one of his deputies to respond to The Daily Star. The deputy however said he would have to communicate with the commissioner to respond but did not come back with any response.

While yesterday's action signals a victory for the residents after a protracted battle for their rights in the grounds' numerous illegal structures lies the threat that years of

Zia loses again

SPORTS REPORTER

Grand Master Ziaur Rahman suffered his second successive defeat in the open section of the Asian Continental Chess Championships when he lost to Kazakh GM Jumabayev Rinat in the 7th round in Sharjah on Wednesday.

Zia played with white pieces used London Colle systems and was checkmated after 64 moves. He now has four points from seven matches.

In the women's section, WFM Nazrana Khan Eva drew with Palestinian Faqeeh Aseel to earn 2.5