

SPORTS



BCB North Zone opener Junaid Siddique smashed 136 off 124 balls against Islami Bank East Zone at Fataullah, but Mother Nature rained on his parade, as the game was eventually called off.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

'Re-bid' benefits BCB

Top of Mind Tigers' sponsor

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board yesterday awarded Top of Mind, a media planning agency, the team's sponsorship rights for the Pakistan series.

According to the company's CEO Ziauddin Adil the deal was made at a cost of TK 3.17 crore.

It was learnt that telecom giant Grameenphone in its second bid offered a little more than TK 2.50 crore, which wasn't enough to beat Top of Mind's offer.

While the much sought-after decision was finalised yesterday, it did however, had its share of drama.

The BCB decided to go for a 're-bid' involving the top two bidders -- Top of Mind and Grameenphone -- after the initial bidding failed to fulfil the board's mooted base price of Taka 2.5 crore which was expressed only after the April 5 BCB board meeting.

Reportedly Top of Mind offered TK 2.11 crore, while GP, the second highest bidder, offered less than Taka 2 crore, in the initial bidding where the BCB didn't mention a floor-price.

Since the BCB wasn't satisfied with the bids they conducted a re-bid with Top of Mind and Grameenphone yesterday, when

both parties had to submit revised offers in sealed envelopes, which is a move away from the standard practice.

The BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury however said that it was not a 're-bid' but something close to negotiations with the top two bidders in line with the board's decision.

However, the move to go for a re-bid also went against the BCB president Nazmul Hassan Papon's media statement at Mirpur on Sunday, where he had said that the BCB would first negotiate with the highest bidder.

The end scenario however proved to be profitable for the BCB as it led the richest sports body of the country to receiving TK 1 crore more.

"Top of Mind have fulfilled our expectations. The company was awarded the team's sponsorship rights yesterday. We are working on making this official," Nizamuddin told the Daily Star last night.

While Nizamuddin wasn't ready to reveal the amount which Top of Mind had agreed to pay, his counterpart Adil was more than happy to disclose the price his company paid to win the battle against GP.

"We think TK 3.17 crore is a fair price and we are very happy to have won the rights after a second bid," said Adil.

Rain is the spoilsport

SPORTS REPORTER



Rain spoiled a spectacular setting at Fataullah yesterday as the Bangladesh Cricket League match between Nasir Hossain's BCB North Zone and Mominul Haque's Islami Bank East Zone was abandoned.

Batting first, North Zone were bundled out for 328. East Zone were going good at 84 for 2 in 13 overs before inclement weather compelled the umpires to ask the players to leave the field. A couple of hours later the match was called off.

Prior to that though the match witnessed a few entertaining knocks. Former Bangladesh under-19 captain Mahmudul Hasan and former national opener Junaid Siddique hammered 168 runs in 28.1 overs for the first wicket and gave North Zone their best possible start.

While Mahmudul played a cautious 80, Junaid seemed to take a leaf out of his past to hammer 136 off 124 balls. The opener, who has been in good touch ever since the National Cricket League, hit four sixes and 12 fours at a strike-rate of 109.

Perhaps the best part about his innings was that he continued to stay on the crease despite reaching his hundred. That was the reason why North Zone managed to surpass the 300-run mark.

The other batsmen, in a bid to take advantage of the scenario attempted to up the run-rate and lost their wickets in the process. Mushfiqur Rahim was stumped for four in the 31st over after he attempted to smack part-time bowler Mominul out of the ground. Nasir departed for a 13-ball 20, while Sabbir Rahman smacked five fours in his 25-ball 32 before getting stumped to Arafat Sunny.

Sunny was the key wicket-taker for North Zone yet again as he returned figures of 3 for 51 in 10 overs.

After the exchange, it was a Liton Kumar show as the young batsman hammered 47 off 33 balls and continued to hit those boundaries despite losing Tamim Iqbal and Mominul early in the innings. Liton, who is a candidate for the upcoming series against Pakistan, was in a menacing mood as he hit two sixes and six fours.

SCORES IN BRIEF

BCB NORTH ZONE: 328 all out in 50 overs (Junaid 136, Mahmudul 80; Arafat 3-51) v ISLAMI BANK EAST ZONE: 84 for 2 in 13 overs (Liton 47; Nasir 1-15) Result: Match abandoned.

'Coach violated rules'

SPORTS REPORTER



The chairman of Bangladesh Cricket Board's cricket operations committee, Naimur Rahman, expressed his discontent over the way head coach Chandika Hathurusingha had spoken on Bangladesh's team selection following the World Cup.

After Bangladesh's World Cup exit from the quarterfinals, Hathurusingha told reporters that he didn't think that the team that toured Australia and New Zealand was their 'best squad' and also stated that he wasn't happy with a 'few of the selections'.

It is a known fact that the Sri Lankan had vouched for leg-spinner Jubair Hossain prior to the World Cup; something that was made public by the BCB president Nazmul Hassan Papon himself.



NAIMUR RAHMAN

"He is not authorised to talk that way. The comments that he made ultimately breached the code of conduct. When the selectors give the team, the president approves it. So these statements go against the board and the board president.

"Such statements can affect players as well. A player's mindset may change

when he sees that the coach is blindly vouching for him or when he notices that the coach is neglecting him," Naimur told reporters at Mirpur yesterday.

"If the coach wants to be a part of the selection committee he needs to say that to me and not just to the media. I think it's a case of highlighting one's personal glory here. He wanted to highlight that he was a very successful coach... at least that's what the interview meant to me... that had he gotten the players he wanted, Bangladesh would have gone on to have won the trophy.

"I have reported my observation to the board. Whether they are going to give him a letter or not that now depends on the CEO," he added.

When asked regarding the issue, BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury said, "This is an internal matter and I cannot comment on this issue."

Maqsood out, Nasim in

AFP, Karachi

Pakistani middle-order batsman Sohaib Maqsood was ruled out of the Bangladesh tour with an arm injury, with uncapped all-rounder Saad Nasim named as his replacement in the ODI squad.

Maqsood had a mediocre World Cup and was criticised for his lack of fitness during the event.

His replacement Nasim was already named in the Twenty20 squad so there will be no replacement for Maqsood in that squad.

Trying times for Tamim

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh have a dismal record against Pakistan. They have lost 31 out of the 32 ODIs against their South Asian neighbours, with the only win coming way back in the 1999 World Cup. There however were a few close matches in the recent past, which saw the Tigers battle neck and neck against them and in those games, opener Tamim Iqbal played a vital role.

He has got four half-centuries against Pakistan and three of them almost helped Bangladesh go over the line. From the agonising two-run defeat in the Asia Cup final in 2012 to his resolute 63 in Faisalabad which gave the Tigers a sniff at a rare away win, against Pakistan, Tamim has often been the key.

And that's the reason why the question with regards to Tamim's form becomes a lot more relevant as the series approaches.

The left-handed opener who recently returned from Saudi Arabia after performing Umrah, had an off-day on the field for Islami Bank East Zone as he was sent back to the pavilion after scoring just 10 runs. It was bound to be a difficult task for the left-hander to perform merely a day after he returned to the country.

However, with the Pakistan series knocking at the doors and the selectors yet to settle on an opening partner for Tamim, one would hope that the left-hander returns to his merry stroke-making self in time.



Tamim Iqbal's (R) poor run of form continued in the BCL yesterday, where he scored only ten in his first competitive appearance after the World Cup. PHOTO: STAR

Sri Lanka to tour Pakistan?

ANI, Karachi

Sri Lanka President Maithripala Sirisena has reportedly expressed that his country's cricket team will soon travel to Pakistan for a cricket series.

Sirisena announced the move on his first state visit to Pakistan, where he had a meeting with Pakistan President Mamnoon Hussain.

While condemning the tragic attack on Sri Lankan Cricket Team in Lahore in 2009, Mamnoon assured his Sri Lankan counterpart Sirisena that maximum security would be provided to the visiting team, the Express Tribune reported.

No Test team has visited Pakistan since March 2009, when militants attacked the Sri Lankan team in Lahore, killing at least six Pakistani policemen and a van driver, and some of the visiting players were wounded.

Hafeez confident of bowling

AGENCIES, Karachi

Pakistan's star all-rounder Mohammad Hafeez was confident of clearing his bowling action test in Chennai on April 9.

Hafeez said he had been bowling with the same action for the past eleven years and made adjustments to correct his action.

"I am an ordinary bowler with no special deliveries such as doosra or teesra but have been effective for Pakistan the way I bowl naturally," said Hafeez.

Hafeez has already failed two unofficial bio-mechanics tests.

IN A NUTSHELL

Mahmudullah feted in hometown

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Bangladesh national team's all-rounder Mahmudullah Riyad was accorded a heroic reception in his hometown of Mymensingh yesterday for his excellent performance during the recently-concluded World Cup.

The 29-year-old all-rounder, who scored consecutive centuries in one-day cricket's marquee event, reached the Mymensingh circuit house, the reception venue, on a horse-driven cart after being paraded through the main thoroughfares of the town.

Mahmudullah was greeted with bouquets of flowers by the Minister for Religious Affairs Principal Motiur Rahman. Thanking the organisers and the audience, Mahmudullah hoped that this recognition will encourage him in adding more feathers to his cap in future.



The reception, organised by Mymensingh District Administration in association with Mymensingh District Sports Association (DSA), was sponsored by the Pran Group Ltd. Riyad's father, Mohammad Obaidullah Nabab, was among others present at the program. The reception was followed by performance of artistes of the Zila Shilpakala Academy and Mukul Niketan Cultural Academy.

Drones in IPL?

GULF NEWS, Abu Dhabi

These days at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai, set of tiny remote controlled aircraft are creating buzz.

These planes are very much on the lines of the drones - used by the army to intelligence agencies these days. Mumbai Indians are using this to give their fans an insight into the team's preparations. With a Go-Pro camera fitted on it, the drone captures videos and images of players which are then uploaded on the MI website and the team's social media pages.

It is also learnt that in this IPL, drones are set to replace the spidercam - whose cables are a distraction - to provide an aerial view of the action in the middle.

The videos generated by these drones have already attracted a lot of viewership according to Mumbai Indians spokesperson Leeladhar Singh.

"We have to be innovative when it comes to fans. They always want to know what's happening on and off the field and it is a better medium to interact with the fans and keep them updated on the players' activities," Singh told Gulf News.

Yuvraj apologises for father

INTERNET

At a time when he should be focusing on the IPL in order to make a national comeback, Yuvraj Singh was forced to respond once again to the comments made by his father earlier in the day. Just like things almost a couple of months ago, Yuvraj once again had to clear the air.

He first distanced himself from the comments made by his dad, and then mentioned that he had always loved playing under Dhoni.

England off to a flyer

AGENCIES, St. Kitts and Nevis

England made a flying start to their tour of West Indies by bowling out a St Kitts Invitational XI for 59 before Alastair Cook and Jonathan Trott added 158 for the first wicket on Monday.

In England's first match game since their dismal World Cup campaign in Australia and New Zealand, Ben Stokes took three wickets and Stuart Broad and Chris Jordan two each as the hosts were dismissed in 26.3 overs.

Captain Cook opened the England innings with Trott, back in the international side for the first time since leaving the Ashes tour in 2013 due to depression issues, and they added 158 before Trott was out for 72.

England reached the close on 181 for one with Cook unbeaten on 95.

The first of three Tests against West Indies starts next Monday in Antigua.

HOSTS BANK ON SPIN

7-game youth ODI series from today

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh Under-19 cricketers are hoping to catch their South African counterparts in a spin as the seven-match youth ODI series begins at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium today.

"We are targeting to win the series. Our main strength is spin, so they will have to adjust to the pitch and conditions," said Bangladesh U-19 captain Nazmul Hossain Shanto.

The visitors were welcomed with a five-wicket thumping in a practice match on Monday.

"We saw that they played pace particularly well in the practice match. They also fielded very well. I think we have to focus on these areas," added Shanto.

The players are shaping up for the Under-19 World Cup that will take place in Bangladesh in 2016. The South Africans are the reigning champions.

"I think, for me and the boys this is the best preparation for the World Cup. It is a massive chance to get used to the conditions and culture of Bangladesh cricket. It is a very important tour for us. We are ready mentally and physically for it. It will be a great experience for us," said South African skipper Sibonelo Makhanya.

"The spinners will be a key factor. Bangladesh do play a different type of cricket compared to us. Spin is one of the things we have to conquer. If we want to grow up and be the best in the world, these are the types of challenges that we have to face. I am sure Bangladesh is one of the places where the best cricketers are tested," he added.