



LALBAGH GOES BOOM-BOOM: Visitors to Labbagh Fort were in for a treat of a lifetime yesterday as some Dhaka Dynamites players, including Pakistan superstar Shahid Afridi, played a game of 'goli' cricket at the historic landmark.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

A T20 meet involving the local players?

Rain, goli cricket and Baz's desire

SPORTS REPORTER



One can only imagine the carnage that will be unleashed if both

Chris Gayle and Brendon McCullum click simultaneously when they open the innings for Rangpur Riders in the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL). The opposition bowlers will however pray that this kind of coup will not happen. It is however not sure whether the Comilla Victorians will be the first potential victims of the devastating duo as the clash between Rangpur and Comilla may be marred by the persistent rain, with the rain forecast to continue till Sunday due to the depression at the Bay.

The local players are not playing well in the BPL. It's a concern. To improve their skill and ability in the shortest format of the game we are planning to introduce another T20 competition involving only the local players," BPL governing council member secretary IH Mallik told yesterday.

He also said that they might invite the current franchises or seek four to five new teams in the competition, which will take place at a time when all the national players will be available.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board is currently facing criticism for allowing five foreign players in the ongoing fifth edition of the BPL. It substantially curbed the participation of the local players in the seven-team meet.

give him the strike and watch him hit sixes," McCullum, affectionately called Baz, responded to the reporters when asked about his opening partner.

The former New Zealand captain however was quick to shift from the



Rangpur Riders will be the team to watch out for as after Chris Gayle's (L) arrival yesterday, they will have the most destructive opening pair imaginable in the pair of the West Indian and New Zealand former skipper Brendon McCullum.

PHOTOS: STAR

light-heartedness to serious business when talking about his team's chances in the tournament.

"We're one win from three games but it's a long tournament. You need to make sure you remain very calm. We've got a calm support staff and calm captain and we know we'll come right. We've got a quality line-

up and once we get used to playing with each other we'll do well. But there's a lot of very, very good teams in this competition; we've got to make sure that we play well, not get too down on ourselves and make sure we keep putting our best foot



forward," he said.

McCullum also reserved some praise for his Rangpur captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza.

"I've played with him [Mashrafe] as well a few years back in Kolkata. Turned up yesterday and it was good to see him. He's a guy in his mid-30s and he's achieved so much in inter-

national cricket. He's held in such high regard all over the world as well. His longevity in the game is impressive too and I'm looking forward to playing under him," he added.

Suddenly, rain made an appearance to interrupt the teams' preparations as well as carrying the threat of spoiling more games, like it did on Wednesday.

While some players continued their training indoors, others enjoyed a day's outing at the Lalbagh Fort in the old part of the city as the Dhaka Dynamites players visited the landmark and played 'goli' cricket in front of a cheering crowd. And nobody enjoyed it more than former Pakistan captain Shahid Afridi as there is a rich tradition of this form of cricket in his country.

"Obviously, almost every cricketer started their cricket with such type of game. It's not about just cricket, we have a social life and the community we have... we have a lot of fans. They want to see their cricketers in the flesh. So, I am very happy today."

"It's very good. It's a historical place as well. I think it's good not only for me but also for the team to move around and see Dhaka city. It's an opportunity to attract the community," said the all-rounder.

Roxy appointed Sk Jamal coach

SPORTS REPORTER



Mahbub Hossain Roxy was officially appointed as head coach of Sheikh Jamal yesterday. Following the sudden departure of previous coach Joseph Afusi, Roxy was called in to marshal the three-time champions through the ongoing Bangladesh Premier League.

The former national footballer and Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) coach, recently managed the Bangladesh team in the SAFF U-18 Championship and AFC U-19 Championship Qualifiers, where the Boys in Red and Green produced some brilliant performances. Roxy was roped in by Sheikh Jamal chairman Manzur Kader, who felt the AFC A licensed coach was a good replacement.

"I have been working as a coach for 12 years and did well with the U-19 team in two tournaments. I want to thank BFF president Kazi Salahuddin for keeping faith in me. Coaching a club is a new challenge and there are many areas to work on with the team," said Roxy, adding that the game's governing body permitted him to join the Dhanmondi outfit.

However Manzur did reveal his frustrations over Afusi's sudden departure, which apparently no one was informed of beforehand, and that Sheikh Jamal will now take legal action against the Nigerian.

Sheikh Jamal are currently in second position of the ongoing league with 27 points from 12 matches, just two points less than leaders Chittagong Abahani.

Expense under scrutiny

ANISUR RAHMAN

Hero Asia Cup The Budget Committee of the Hero Asia Cup hockey tournament has recently sought explanations from five to six subcommittees for either excessive expenditure or incongruence of the estimated budgets.

This is an interesting exercise as far as the sports federations of the country are concerned where scrutiny in anomalies of expenditure of any domestic or international tournament has hardly been heard of.

After having scrutinised all expenditures amounting Tk. 2.2 crore for the successful holding of the Asia Cup during October 11-22, the budget committee identified approximately Tk 15 lakh incongruence with the submitted bills, a source confirmed on condition of anonymity.

When contacted, Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) general secretary Abdus Sadeque acknowledged that the budget committee had issued letters to different subcommittees, seeking explanations of their expenditure in a bid to bring accountability.

"Ninety percent of the budget has been disbursed on demand to different sub-committees during the tournament and the explanations have been sought to justify their expenditure as the budget committee has found some difference compared to the estimated budgets," Sadeque told The Daily Star over phone from Singapore yesterday. The BHF formed 24 subcommittees to run the Asia Cup, which was staged in Bangladesh for the first time after a long gap of 32 years.

The subcommittees under scrutiny are transport and reception, liaison, law and order, media and floodlight.

It was learnt that the transport and reception committee has been asked to explain the justification of spending Tk 4.5 lakh that included the transport bills of an AHF official's visit to Madaripur from Dhaka, two separate bills of two AHF officials, who arrived on

the same flight and have been accommodated at the same hotel, and some excessive expenditures like hiring vehicles.

When contacted, transport and reception committee secretary Ariful Islam Prince said that they were preparing their reply and were expected to submit it by Sunday.

"They gave us a letter five days ago. But the budget committee did not say anything during the tournament," said Prince, adding that his committee spent less (Tk 22.64 lakh) than the approved budget (Tk 23 lakh).

It has been learnt that the BHF executive committee was generous in approving a hefty budget for the transport and reception committee despite there being a package proposal amounting less than half.

Liaison office committee has been asked to explain an expenditure amounting Tk 2 lakh. The media committee was asked to explain its Tk 1.59 lakh expense.

The 10-member floodlight committee has been asked to explain the bills of honorarium of Tk 66,000 when there is no such provision.

Media committee chairman Yousuf Ali appeared happy with the inquiry.

"I am happy to have such an inquiry and we have already prepared in which areas we had to spend without getting consent" said Yousuf Ali.

The BHF is one of the many federations starving for money to run their activities. They have got Tk 2.5 crore from sponsors to host the Asia Cup. Although the federation has saved nearly Tk 30 lakh, insiders in the cash-starved federation felt that they could have saved more.

It has been a practice in the BHF to save at least 20/25 percent of sponsorship money so that they can conduct other activities including youth development and training. But for the last couple of years injudicious spending has drastically reduced a healthy Tk. 3.75 core FDR they had.

Biren against ad-hoc BHF

SPORTS REPORTER

State minister for Youth and Sports Biren Shikdar informed yesterday that he has instructed Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) officials to resume election procedures ahead of the polls, which were postponed on August 17 due to the then worsening flood situation in northern areas of the country and the national team's international commitments.

"We don't have any plans to form an ad-hoc committee. I have already instructed [the officials] to start the election procedure. Those who were in the election committee will announce [the date of the] rescheduled polls," said Biren.

The state of affairs at the BHF recently got a bit more complicated though following the premature demise of general secretary candidate Khaza Rahmatullah, as his loyalists now want an ad-hoc committee.

Meanwhile BHF general secretary Abdus Sadeque announced a tentative players' transfer scheduled for late November.

However, a few clubs demand that the elections be held before the transfer window.

Lakmal stars on rain-hit day

AFP, Kolkata

Sri Lanka paceman Suranga Lakmal jolted India with three wickets, including skipper Virat Kohli, to leave them reeling at 17 for 3 on a rain-hit opening day of the first Test on Thursday.

Lakmal claimed Lokesh Rahul with the first ball of the match at Kolkata's Eden Gardens and bowled six overs without conceding a run.

Put in after a long rain delay that washed away the first session, India batted for only 11.5 overs before bad light ended the day.

Cheteshwar Pujara, on eight, and Ajinkya Rahane, yet to open his account, were left at the end after India suffered early blows on a green wicket that offered bounce to the seamers.

Rahul edged a rising delivery to wicketkeeper Niroshan Dickwella before the crowd had even settled.

The paceman then took Shikhar Dhawan for eight, after the left-hander dragged a moving delivery on his stumps. That left the hosts on 13 for 2.

Pujara, who was regularly beaten by the moving ball, and Kohli tried to establish themselves before bad light forced



Sri Lanka pacer Suranga Lakmal (L) wreaked havoc with a spell of 3-0 in just 12 overs of play that rain allowed on the first day of the first Test against India at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Sri Lanka, who lost three Tests, five one-day internationals and a Twenty20 international in a home series against India from July to September, are searching for their first Test win in India.

SCORES IN BRIEF

INDIA: 17 for 3 (Dhawan 8, Pujara 8 not out; Lakmal 3-0)

SRI LANKA: Chandimal (captain), Karunaratne, Samarawickrama, Thiramanne, Mathews, Dickwella (wk), Shanaka, Perera, Herath, Lakmal, Gamage.