

“We had an inferiority complex against France after their win in the World Cup and so to win at the Stade de France in front of almost 80,000 people against the world champions is extraordinary.”

Zlatko Dalic
Croatia coach



‘A red-letter day for India Cricket’

AFP, MUMBAI

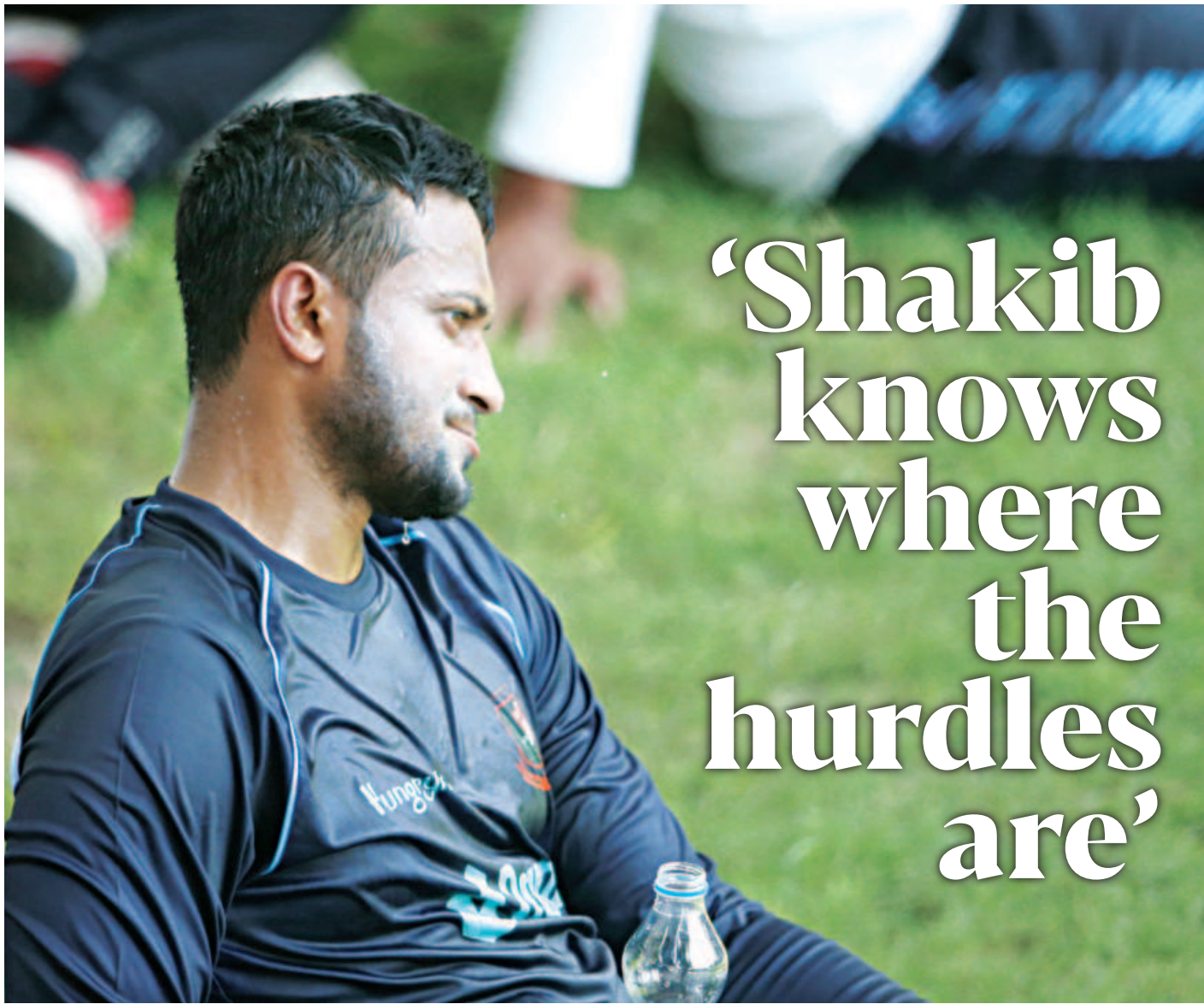
India's cricket board said Tuesday it has sold the broadcast rights of the IPL tournament for the next five seasons to global media giants for an eye-popping \$6.2 billion.

Star, owned by US behemoth Disney, bought the TV rights while Viacom18 – a joint venture between Indian tycoon Mukesh Ambani's Reliance and US group Paramount Global – picked up the streaming rights, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) said.

“Since its inception, the IPL has been synonymous with growth & today is a red-letter day for India Cricket, with Brand IPL touching a new high with e-auction resulting in (483.9 billion rupees) value,” BCCI secretary Jay Shah tweeted.

“IPL is now the 2nd most valued sporting league in the world in terms of per match value!” he said, announcing the results of a hotly contested three-day online auction.

Star paid \$3.01 billion while Viacom18 shelled out



‘Shakib knows where the hurdles are’

SPORTS REPORTER

With the upcoming Test series against West Indies starting from June 16, Shakib Al Hasan will begin a new journey as the captain of the Bangladesh Test side. The third stint as Test captain, it will be interesting to see how Bangladesh perform this time under Shakib's leadership. Prominent coach Nazmul Abedeen Fahim, who mentored Shakib right from his childhood days, expressed his expectation regarding Shakib's impact in his new role, during a conversation with The Daily Star. Following are the excerpts of the interview.

FEARLESS MENTALITY
The first is the performance and that will probably depend on the culture of the team. There is a presence of softness in our culture and I think this team also lack vision. I also feel that even if we set a goal, there are some shortcomings as a team. Our team have got the ability to perform better but there is a lack of belief among our players and the team. Shakib can probably change these things. Since he is part of the team, he knows where the hurdles are. If he can counter this, our

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team can go a long way. This is nothing about technique and you can change this overnight. If Shakib can do that it will be a big achievement for him. I think this will set the tone for performance and to set a goal. As a result, the preparation will be accurate and intense.

MAN ON A MISSION
The way he assesses his game and the level of cricket he plays clearly sets him apart from some of the others. Shakib can point out those things and will work on how to trigger on the basis of that and I think keeping those in mind he has taken the

captaincy. It's not that he is only willing to become the leader of the team for the sake of it. He will try to lead the side with a mission. He will try to plan on how to maximise the inner strength of the team and get the output. I am sure he had a chat with the BCB president so that he can get the support, whether it's logistical or anything else. I am sure he will get support. He will try to do something as a captain and after the talk, he thinks that this team has the potential to do better.

WHAT SETS SHAKIB APART

I don't want to demean others but Shakib's decision-making ability will be his biggest strength. In our culture we tend to think 10 times before making a decision as we have to be accountable to at least 10 people. But he won't think twice and will take risks when needed. His decision-making ability and reading of the game are really good. He follows everything, every detail and he will do something unimaginable.

EXPECTATIONS FROM THE TEAM

What I hope is that he will play freely and will remain in the game which however didn't happen recently. The reason was there were a lot of talks around the team and there was no one to absorb that pressure. Shakib probably can neutralise that aspect to keep the focus on the game. Those who are not in form, be it seniors or juniors, tend to suffer from insecurity. These things should go away this time and everyone will be able to focus only on the game which will create the opportunity to play better. I think we are going to see a more organised side this time. I can't predict results but the process is expected to be organised.

‘Doubters eat your hats’

AGENCIES

Australia erupted in celebration Tuesday after the Socceroos made a fifth straight World Cup, with football superstar Sam Kerr leading the charge, telling the doubters to “eat your hats”.

Graham Arnold's men stunned Peru in a penalty shootout in Doha to clinch the penultimate spot at the global showcase this year, with substitute goalkeeper Andrew Redmayne the hero.

It was an extraordinary turnaround for a team that won 11 games on the trot during qualifying before a slump forced them into a do-or-die qualifier against the United Arab Emirates and then Peru.

But with doubts mounting and coach Graham Arnold's job on the line, they beat UAE 2-1 last week, then crushed Peruvian dreams 5-4 on penalties after the match finished 0-0 after extra-time.

“Doubters eat your hats, we're going to the World Cup,” tweeted jubilant Chelsea and Australian striker Kerr, who was named player of the year by England's Professional Footballers Association last week.

A host of former Australian players were equally ecstatic, with Socceroos all-time top goalscorer Tim Cahill admitting there were “so many emotions”.

Former Aston Villa, Manchester United and Australian goalkeeper Mark Bosnich called it a deserved win while the Wallabies rugby union team simply said: “You little beauty!”.

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, a



Australia became the sixth nation from the Asian zone to qualify for the World Cup. Never before in the history of World Cups have six teams affiliated to the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) qualified for the final tournament.

staunch rugby league fan, also waded in, tweeting: “World Cup here we come.”

Australia will face France, Denmark and Tunisia in Group D at the World Cup, with Arnold firmly back in charge, having survived mounting calls to be sacked after their failure to qualify automatically.

Arnold said he nearly quit during the team's rocky road to the Qatar World Cup but felt obliged to repay his players for their sacrifices.

Arnold was beset with challenges, testing positive to COVID-19 twice in three months this year, while losing the services of a number of players due to the coronavirus.

The isolation from his squad proved almost too hard to bear, Arnold said. “My style is man management and getting the best out of players and doing things face-to-face,” he told reporters.

“Trying to do meetings and talk to the players on Zoom meetings, it's not my style, I don't like it and I didn't like it at all. I'll be honest, there were times where I nearly walked away because it's not my style of coaching. “The only reason I didn't walk away was because of the players, their sacrifices they've made.”

Underwhelming end to booters' campaign

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh completed their Asian Cup Qualifiers campaign on a disappointing note, suffering a 4-1 defeat to Malaysia in their third and final group match at the Bukit Jalil National Stadium in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Although Bangladesh showed signs of improvement in the first two matches against Bahrain and Turkmenistan, they failed to carry that momentum and maintain that consistency against Malaysia, ultimately returning home with a wooden spoon and losses in all three matches.

Spanish coach Javier Cabrera pinned his hopes on the same squad that lost to Turkmenistan and Bahrain in the first two matches but the boys in red and green were on their toes from the start, with the hosts pressing for the lead.

Malaysia not only had the upper-hand in terms of the FIFA Rankings, they were also bolstered by the home crowd, with some 58000 cheering the hosts on from the gallery. There was also a contingent of about 12000 Bangladeshi expatriates but Bangladesh could not match the expectations they had set after the first two matches.

Malaysia forced Bangladesh to defend deep on a rain-soaked ground as the hosts showed excellent skill to hold onto the ball in the attacking third with

some brilliant exchanges around the box. That trend would continue as Bangladesh were mainly busy thwarting attacks one after one till the last minute.

Cabrera's charges tried to counter on the break and even reduced the margin once after creating a few good chances, but this time the effort was not enough to hold the mighty Malaysia to a draw as it had been in their last two international friendlies in 2012 and 2015.

Although they survived a scare in the sixth minute when Muhammad Syafiq Ahmed rattled the far post, Bangladesh could not stop Malaysia after Iraqi referee Mohammad Zaid Thamer awarded a controversial penalty to the hosts in the 15th minute.

Forward Muhammad Safawi Rashid beat goalkeeper Anisur Rahman Zico from the spot. While Bangladesh's No. 1 would make some fine saves as he did in the previous games, he was slow to react and allowed the ball to be fired past his near post for Malaysia's second goal just seven minutes after Bangladesh had equalised courtesy of a long throw that was headed home by Mohammad Ibrahim.

After the break, Malaysia hit two more goals against some sloppy defending. Unmarked Mohamad Faisal Halim made it 3-1 in the 47th minute following a set-piece routine before substitute Darren Lok tapped in with only the keeper to beat to complete the rout in the 73rd minute.



England's in-form batter Joe Root walks back after being dismissed by New Zealand pacer Trent Boult on a fascinating final day of the second Test at Trent Bridge yesterday. England reached 139 for four by Tea, requiring 160 runs in the final session to win the match.

PHOTO: REUTERS