

While A Few Thousand Seats Will Be Sacrificed In The Stadium's Revamp, There Will Be Better Comforts For Fans & Players

WANKHEDE SET FOR NEW INNINGS

Nitin Naik | TNN

Mumbai: A concrete jungle. The worst stadium in India. A crucible of sweaty crowds. The Wankhede Stadium has had to live with these ugly tags over the last 33-odd years, ever since the first Test was played between India and the West Indies in January 1975.

But once the Rs 100-crore renovation of the famous stadium, which will host the final of the 2011 ICC World Cup, is complete, cricket fans, the media and cricketers could find themselves speaking of the Wankhede in glowing terms. The first round of 'operation facelift 2011', in which the wooden seats around the stadium, the asbestos sheets on the roof and the light towers are being removed, began on August 8. The contractors for the job, Saba Enterprises, have been given a 60-day deadline.

"We are on track to meet the October 8 deadline," informed Zafar, one of the partners in Saba Enterprises. "We have 75 workers working from 9am to 6pm. We could do with a dry spell as the rains have slowed us down a bit," he added.

Interestingly, the revamped stadium will have fewer seats. A few thousand of them are being sacrificed to offer greater comforts to the spectators. The wooden benches, which once accommodated close to 45,000 people, are making way for spacious bucket seats that will hold 39,000 fans.

Ratnakar Shetty, the chief administration officer of the BCCI, told TOI that in the second phase, the concrete and RCC structures in the North and South Stands will be demolished. "We

Shashi Prabhu and the firm P K Das Associates start work on rebuilding the demolished parts and redesigning the stadium. Prabhu constructed the current stadium in the incredibly short span of 11 months in the early 1970s.

So what will the new stadium have? "Bucket seats all across the ground. A larger press box with a capacity for 250 print journalists, better and bigger commentary boxes, which will be located in the North Stand. (The current one, which

WHAT TO EXPECT

- Spacious bucket seats that will hold **39,000** fans. The current capacity is **45,000**

- Three-tier seating as opposed to the current two-tier system
- More entrances and exits
- Larger dressing rooms on the first tier
- Elevators for even fans to enter the stadium

- A **250-seater** box for journals at northern end. The older box held **140**

- A refurbished commentary box with **25 positions**

- Improved toilets

- Higher roof of **27 metres**. The current height is just **15.66 metres**. Seats will reach up to **24 metres**

RS 100 CRORE TO REVAMP



REVAMPING THE THEATRE OF DREAMS: The old wooden seats are being removed as part of Phase I of the Rs 100-crore makeover. They will make way for more spacious and comfortable bucket seats (seen at left)

Pak won 1982 hockey World Cup at Wankhede

The Shiv Sena's politics never allowed Pakistan's cricketers to set foot on the Wankhede pitch after December 1979, when they lost a Test to a Sunil Gavaskar-led India. However, Wankhede holds nostalgia not just for India, but also Pakistan, whose hockey players and fans will have pleasant memories of lifting the 1982 World Cup at the venue when they beat Germany 3-1 in the final. The Wankhede Stadium and the Bombay Hockey Association were joint hosts of the tournament, which was the last of its kind played on grass. India and Pakistan were drawn in different groups and hence couldn't meet. In fact, India didn't even qualify for the semifinals.

The cost: Then and now

The stadium is undergoing a Rs 100-crore makeover so it can host some matches and the final of the 2011 ICC World Cup. The original construction in 1974-75 cost merely around Rs 2 crore.

Who was SK Wankhede?

Seshrao Krishnarao Wankhede was a politician and BCCI president from 1980 to 1981 and 1982 to 1983. He also served as the vice president of the board from 1972 to 1980. Wankhede also was the president of the Bombay Cricket Association from 1964 to 1988. TNN



RS 2 CRORE TO BUILD



ACTION REPLAY: The Wankhede under construction in 1974 (top) and the completed stadium (above)

A man for all stadia

Pradeep Vijayakar | TNN

Mumbai: Shashi Prabhu, who is involved in revamping the Wankhede Stadium in time to host the 2011 World Cup final, has crossed the 40 mark where the building of stadia is concerned.

The last cricket stadium he was consulted for was the Rajiv Gandhi International at Uppal on the outskirts of Hyderabad in 2004. He has just completed a new stadium for the Assam Cricket Association in Guwahati, while another 40,000-seater stadium at Nagpur for the Vidarbha Cricket Association is nearing completion. There is also the Usha Raje Cricket Stadium in Indore, which is owned by the Madhya Pradesh Cricket Association.

All three associations were holding their matches at stadia owned by the government or civic bodies.

Prabhu, 64, has built 14 sports complexes at Balewadi, which will host the Commonwealth Youth Games after staging the National Games in 1994. He has built 10 complexes at Hyderabad for the National Games in 2002 and later the Afro-Asian Games in 2003.

After building the Wankhede in 1974, he built the Bishen Singh Bedi Stadium (Jalandhar), Indira Gandhi Stadium (New Delhi) and sports complexes in Pune, Bhopal, Nagpur and Bhubaneswar.

Asked what he keeps uppermost in mind when building stadia, Prabhu said, "The first thing is the north-south direction. Then the parabola sighting, which ensures that everyone in the stadium can see the ball going to the boundary without having to get up. And finally the panoramic view."

They consulted him for Ahmedabad's Motera stadium but Mohali was the one that got away. "Mr I S Bindra wanted me to stay for three months. That was out, so I built the Jalandhar stadium," he said.

Subsequently, Shiv Sena leader Bal Thackeray and Sena corporator Satish Prabhu asked him to build a stadium for the Thane Municipal Corporation. He duly obliged and the outcome was the Dadoji Konddeo stadium.

Then came the Asian Games in 1982 and Prabhu's profile grew, for he built the magnificent Indira Gandhi indoor stadium. Sharad Pawar, when chief minister of Maharashtra, and Congress minister Suresh Kalmadi then gave Prabhu the opportunity to design the sports complex at Balewadi, a sports city for Olympic disciplines over 160 acres of land near Pune.

Then the focus shifted to Hyderabad. "It was only because of the interest shown by (former CM) Chandrababu Naidu that we had the magnificent stadium at Gadchiboli for the National Games and later the Afro-Asian Games in Hyderabad two years ago," he offered.

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ON-FIELD ARCHITECT

FOR THE RECORD

FIRST TEST: India vs West Indies | Jan 23 to 29, 1975

LAST TEST: India vs England | Mar 18 to 22, 2006



FIRST ODI: India vs Sri Lanka | Jan 17, 1987

LAST ODI: India vs Australia | Oct 17, 2007

TESTS
OVERALL TESTS: 21

HIGHEST SCORE: 242 not out by Clive Lloyd (WI) vs India | Jan 23, 1975

HIGHEST SCORE BY AN INDIAN: 224 by Vinod Kambli vs England | Feb 19, 1993

MOST RUNS: Sunil Gavaskar—1,122

MOST WICKETS: Anil Kumble—38

ODIS
TOTAL ODIS: 15

HIGHEST SCORE: 151 not out by Sanath Jayasuriya (SL) vs India | May 17, 1997

HIGHEST SCORE BY AN INDIAN: 114 by Sachin Tendulkar vs South Africa | Dec 14, 1996

MOST RUNS: Sachin Tendulkar—437

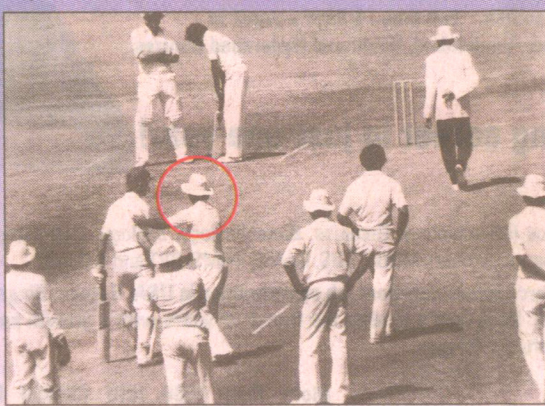
MOST WICKETS: Venkatesh Prasad—15



- International cricket moved from Brabourne Stadium, or the Cricket Club of India (CCI), to the Wankhede after a row between the CCI and the Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA) over the allocation of tickets. It was the initiative of S K Wankhede, a politician and MCA secretary

- In the inaugural Test in 1975 between India and West Indies, there was a disturbance

- India and England played the jubilee Test in 1980, in which stand-in captain Gundappa Viswanath (circled) recalled England keeper batsman Bob Taylor after the umpire had declared him out. It went on to change the course of the Test. In the same Test, Ian Botham grabbed 13 wickets and smashed a ton



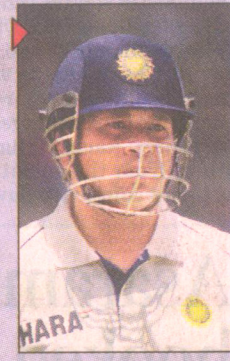
THE WANKHEDE DIARY: TRIUMPHS, TRIALS AND TRIVIA

- In May 1991, Bombay lost a classic and star-studded Ranji Trophy final to a Kapil Dev-led Haryana by two runs. Dilip Vengsarkar (shown batting), who batted with a runner, and scored an unbeaten 139, rates it as the worst loss of his career. Kapil is the bowler in the picture.



- In November 2004, India and Australia contested the infamous 'two-day Test'. On a shocking pitch, India defended a paltry 107 in the fourth innings and won by 13 runs

- In March 2006, Sachin Tendulkar was booed by crowds in the Garware Pavilion after he was out caught behind to James Anderson for 1. It irked England legend Ian Botham so much that he wrote in his column for TOI: 'People booing Sachin should be lynched'



- In the summer of 2008, the Wankhede was the home ground to the Mumbai Indians team in the Indian Premier League

Docs at Navi Mumbai hosp remove 3.5kg tumour from farmer's thigh

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Navi Mumbai: Imagine dragging along a weight of 3.5 kg every time you move your leg. This painful experience was part of the every day reality of Vaman Gaikwad from Nanded who had been living with a rare tumour in his thigh for the past two years.

Gaikwad (63), who recently came to the satellite town near Mumbai seeking medical help, caused quite a flutter in MGM Hospital when doctors found a 25 cm X 15 cm mass in his left thigh, nearly thrice the size of an average tumour.

"The tumour seemed to have grown to this size over a period of two years. He has gone to eight hospitals in the interiors of the state but only parts of the tumour seem to have been removed while the entire mass remains untouched," said chief of surgery at MGM Hospital Dr Margaret Topno, adding that Gaikwad had suffered due to neglect and lack of awareness.

A farmer from Kalka village in Nanded, Gaikwad recalls how awkward the mass



BIG RELIEF: Vaman Gaikwad of Nanded had been living with the tumour for two years

was. "It was very painful. I couldn't go about my normal work in the fields," he said. Wife Kamal said their desperation had driven them to eight hospitals and forced them to try out alternative therapies, in vain. When the pain became unbearable, they were referred to Mumbai.

He was admitted to the Navi Mumbai hospital on July 16 and made to undergo a battery of tests. "We were shocked to find a rare form of tumour called desmoid

(which develops in the fibrous tissue that covers muscles or organs) in preliminary tests. These tumours are generally found only in the abdomen or around it," said lecturer Tanweer Karim, who added that they planned to publish their findings soon.

Gaikwad was wheeled in for a surgery on Monday and underwent a six-hour-long operation under general anaesthesia. Doctors claimed his tumour weighed nearly 3.5 kg and they would send it for further analysis to confirm their diagnosis.

Doctors say desmoid tumours like Gaikwad's are extremely rare. While data for Indian patients aren't available, studies from the US show that the incidence is estimated to be 2-4 per million people per year.

"We got a lot of desmoid tumours but 3.5 kg is huge," said Dr B M Subnis, head of surgery at JJ Hospital. He echoed the views of Gaikwad's doctor that such tumours are generally seen in the abdomen and are "rare in the thigh". "Doctors should however, reconfirm the diagnosis with a histopathological test," he said.

Another sniffer dog feels the heat

Sanjeev Shivadekar | TNN

Mumbai: The fast pace of life in Mumbai is not only stressing out its human residents, but is becoming a major concern for its canine sentinels—or sniffer dogs—as well.

Pinky, a four-year-old Labrador, was checking Union power minister Sushilkumar Shinde's motorcade at the domestic airport nearly a month ago when she suddenly started shivering. The dog collapsed soon after.

This was not the first time that Pinky collapsed on duty. She had suffered a similar fit at a mall in the western suburbs while undertaking a search of explosives.

"Pinky started shivering all of a sudden and then her whole body went stiff. She then collapsed," said an official associated with the dog squad at Goregaon. "We took her to the veterinary hospi-



tal in Goregaon," he added.

Dr R V Gaikwad, superintendent at Bombay Veterinary College, told TOI, "The dog must have collapsed due to stress or an epileptic fit." If it fainted due to fit, then the use of this particular dog (Pinky) should be avoided, he added. Dr Gaikwad, though, did not treat Pinky.

With the growing threat

Pinky (not in picture), a four-year-old Labrador, collapsed during duty nearly a month ago. The dog had earlier fainted at a mall in the western suburbs. A doctor said the dog collapsed either due to stress or an epileptic fit

perception in the city and series of hoax calls, sniffer dogs have to attend to almost two calls daily. "This hectic schedule has stressed out the canines," the official said.

The dog squad at Goregaon has five canines—Sultan, Tiger, Don, Snoopy and Pinky. Senior officials from the protection branch declined to comment on the issue.

Stating that there could be a problem with the nervous system of the dog, Col J C Khanna of BSPCA said, "Such dogs should be kept as reserve and should be used only during emergencies and not on routine calls."

Even breeding of this specific dog should be avoided as the disease may be genetic, he pointed out.

Expressing concern over the effects of stress on the sniffer dogs of the Mumbai police, Khanna said, "There is need to strengthen the dog squad and decentralise the squad zone-wise." He further pointed out that in the army, there were special recruitment drives for dog handlers.

"The police should recruit people who love animals and not just post or transfer officers to the dog squad as a matter of routine departmental procedure," he added.

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