

Uncertainty over IPL's Mumbai venues continues

Though only two weeks are left for the lucrative Indian Premier League (IPL) to start, the venues for the 10 matches to be played in Mumbai, including the semi-finals and final, are yet to be finalised.

Mumbai Indians side will play all seven home matches in Mumbai, The two semi-finals on May 30 and 31 and the final on June 1 will also be played in the city.

'Five matches each will be played at the Wankhede Stadium and at D.Y. Patil Stadium. But it has not been decided where the semi-finals and the final will be played,' Niranjan Shah, secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), told IANS.

'It has, however, been decided that the semi-finals and final will be played at the same venue.'

Shah said the venues could be finalised at the IPL governing council meeting in [Mumbai](#) later Wednesday. Officials from Mukesh Ambani's Reliance group which bought Mumbai Indians for \$111.9 million, the International Management Group (IMG), which is assisting BCCI in organising the tournament and the match hosting associations will be present at the meeting.

Wankhede Stadium in south Mumbai, although floodlit, is not the ideal venue as it does not match international standards on several fronts, especially where players' dressing rooms are concerned.

The stadium was to be completely renovated last year. But the plan has been deferred.

D.Y. Patil Stadium, designed by famous architect Hafeez Contractor, is a modern cricket venue with floodlights in Nerul, a new township off Mumbai on the Mumbai-Pune Highway. The stadium is at about a 90-minute drive from Wankhede Stadium.

The uncertainty over venues in Mumbai has meant that the IPL schedule has not been finalised. Mumbai Indians are tentatively scheduled to play their opening match against [Bangalore](#) Royal Challengers at home April 20.

All eight competing teams will play seven home matches and an equal number of away games as per the round-robin league format, before the knockout semi-finals and final.

It is reliably learnt that neither IMG nor Reliance is happy about having two venues in Mumbai.

'IMG wanted Mumbai matches to be played at one venue. It feels that by having two venues not only will the cost of organising matches go up, but it will also be time consuming for the personnel involved in organising matches,' said a BCCI source.

'With hardly any time left for the tournament to begin, planning the matches in Mumbai and elsewhere is also becoming a problem.'

A total of 59 matches will be played for the \$3 million prize money.

The source also said that there was a dispute between Reliance and BCCI/IPL/IMG as to who would bear the extra cost of organising matches at the second venue.

'Reliance has been asking the BCCI/IPL for a long time to settle the venues quickly. But the board has been delaying the issue,' he said.

All Mumbai matches as well as the semi-finals and final were originally scheduled at the Cricket Club of India's (CCI) Brabourne Stadium. Since CCI members are entitled to watch all matches played at the stadium, the CCI asked IPL to provide tickets to all of them.

But IPL declined to provide CCI more than 20 percent tickets - the same that will be given to all match-hosting associations - and the club rejected the offer, forcing a change of venue.

Besides the Mumbai Indians, the other competing teams in the IPL are Bangalore Royal Challengers, [Kolkata](#) Knight Riders, Kings of Punjab (Mohali), Rajasthan Royals (Jaipur), [Hyderabad](#) Deccan Chargers, [Chennai](#) Super Kings and Delhi Daredevils.

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