

BCCI promises more Twenty20 showbiz

Buoyed by the roaring success of Indian Premier League (IPL), Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) Sunday promised more Twenty20 showbiz that will keep the country's cricket lovers hooked on to television.

After IPL, the latest blockbuster from BCCI will be the Twenty20 Champions League to be hosted in India in late September this year and will feature top two domestic sides from India, Australia, Pakistan, South Africa and England.

The eight-day tournament will have a whopping prize purse of \$10 million, double the amount given away in IPL.

The winners of the Champions League will take home \$5 million, almost five times the amount of IPL champions Rajasthan Royals, who won \$1.2 million. The runners-up will receive \$2.5 million.

'There will be more sleepless nights for Indian cricket lovers,' a beaming Lalit Modi, BCCI vice-president and IPL Chairman announced Sunday.

'IPL was a huge success. More than 99 million of the 135 million TV viewers watched IPL. We could not have asked for more,' Modi said.

Australia will be represented by Victoria and Western Australia, the winners and runners-up respectively of KFC T20 Big Bash. The South African challenge will be spearheaded by Nashua Titana, who won the Standard Pro T20 league, and KwaZulu Natal Dolphins. England's domestic T20 tournament is being played while Pakistan's will have its tournament in August this year.

The IPL story is being emulated by other cricket boards as well and Texas Billionaire Allen Stanford has struck a deal with the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB) and England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) to hosts a Twenty20 match between the two sides for five years for whopping \$100 million.

Stanford is planning another tournament with four top cricketing nations.

'ECB and WICB are getting together for this Twenty20 event and it is for the good of the game,' said Modi.

BCCI, in its working committee meeting Sunday, lauded Modi for his efforts in making IPL a great success.

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