



**AFGHANISTAN  
CRICKET BOARD**



**ANNUAL REPORT  
2018**



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## CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

# AZIZULLAH FAZLI



I am certain that all stakeholders of Afghanistan cricket both within and outside the country would be pleased with the accomplishments and success in 2018, particularly with qualification for the ICC Cricket World Cup 2019.



Cricket has made significant progress in Afghanistan over the past 18 years and Afghanistan cricket has seen various achievements that includes obtaining Full Member status of the International Cricket Council (ICC) and Test status. The continuation and maintaining these achievements require effective management and administration.

I am certain that all stakeholders of Afghanistan cricket both within and outside the country would be pleased with the accomplishments and success in 2018, particularly with qualification for the ICC Cricket World Cup 2019; a startling Asia Cup; the launch and success of our own league – Afghanistan Premier League T20; series wins in both T20Is and ODIs; climbing to 8th position in the ICC T20I rankings and direct qualification to the ICC T20 World Cup in 2020.

The ICC Cricket World Cup 2019 in England and Wales is an important tournament for the Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) and the Afghanistan National Cricket Team.

ACB will ensure that we respond

to the hopes and aspirations of the people of Afghanistan who have struggled due to war and conflict and continue to face several problems. Despite this, they love cricket and have always supported the Afghanistan National Cricket Team. Cricket brings hope and joy to all Afghans and the ACB administration will not go against the wishes of the people and welcomes their suggestions and feedback.

Infrastructure development is a priority for ACB to build academies, grounds and stadiums across the country, particularly in the five cricketing zones to enable the youth and professional cricketers to have access to the right facilities for their skills development and increased participation in the game of cricket.

Domestic cricket is crucial to strengthen the national team and it will be an area of attention for us in the coming years and there will be more domestic cricket competitions of different formats and at different levels throughout the year.

ACB is one family and everyone's

work and commitment is given recognition. I would like to thank everyone who contributed to the success of Afghanistan cricket not only in 2018 but over the last several years.



## CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S MESSAGE

# SHAFIQULLAH STANIKZAI

2018 was another remarkable year for Afghanistan cricket that witnessed several achievements both in terms of teams' performance and administration. Qualification to the ICC Cricket World Cup 2019 was overwhelming because it was not only a priority for all stakeholders but also how Team Afghanistan bounced back in the second round of the ICC Cricket World Cup Qualifier to become the champions of the tournament and qualify for the second consecutive World Cup. The strength of Afghanistan in Twenty20 Internationals (T20Is) continued as we climbed to 8th position in ICC T20I rankings and secured direct qualification for the ICC T20 World Cup in 2020. This was further boosted by the fact that Afghanistan won seven out of seven T20Is in 2018 including a 3-0 series win against Bangladesh.

It was pleasing to see Team Afghanistan performing exceptionally well against better and tougher oppositions in ODIs and securing wins against them, particularly in Asia Cup 2018 when Afghanistan won group stage matches over Sri Lanka and Bangladesh followed by a tie against World No. 1, India. The dominance of Afghanistan over lower-ranked teams including Zimbabwe and Ireland continued in 2018 as Afghanistan won both T20I and ODI series against them. Afghanistan's inaugural Test match was played in 2018 which

will be recorded in history books. The decision to play the Test match against India was prompted by the friendly relations between the Afghanistan Cricket Board and the Board of Control for Cricket in India and secondly, India was chosen as an opposition to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of our team and players in the longer format of the game so we can adapt our plans for the future accordingly. The launch of Afghanistan Premier League T20 and successfully holding its first edition was very satisfying for us as an organisation because all the hard work that went into the project in different phases starting from inception to implementation paid off and a new international platform created for young players. APLT20 will also be beneficial in monetary terms in the years to come because the first edition laid a strong foundation for future editions from media and marketing revenue perspective. Inclusion in the Future Tour Programme (FTP) in 2018 will give us a clear direction to plan ahead and prepare accordingly. The sale of media rights to Total Sports Marketing is a prime example of how a clear pathway can help in better planning and forecasting. This will be also helpful in continuing to improve viewership of Afghan cricket across the globe and target higher media rights income in future, particularly beyond 2023 when the new ICC

FTP comes into place. Higher expenses, for example incurred from hosting other teams, put pressure on the annual budget but the deficit in 2018 was narrowed down due to considerable focus on cost effectiveness in overall operations.

The first calendar year after obtaining Full Membership of ICC was a successful year for the Afghanistan Cricket Board and both team and organisational performances were on par with expectations from a Full Member board. ACB set strategic objectives in 2015 for a period of 10 years despite a lack of clarity for Affiliate and Associate members in terms of elevation in their ICC status but majority of the objectives set at that time were achieved by the end of 2018, which would allow ACB to set new goals as per the current ICC Future Tour Programme (FTP) for the period 2018-2023.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our stakeholders for making 2018 yet another successful and memorable year; ACB Patron-in-Chief and President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan His Excellency Mohammad Ashraf Ghani for his continued support, ACB board members, the International Cricket Council, the Asian Cricket Council, the entire ACB family, ICC member boards, sponsors, partners and especially fans based both in Afghanistan and overseas for their support.

# OVERVIEW



The golden journey of Afghanistan cricket is going from strength to strength over the last years and 2018 was another year that marked significant progress and achievements in both on-field and off-field spheres - professional cricket competitions and administrative affairs. The inception of Afghanistan Premiere League T20 (APLT20) was given a boost in January 2018 when the league's Memorandum

Effective governance and administration has always been a priority for the Afghanistan Cricket Board that is fit for purpose to ensure transparency and accountability in all affairs. The Annual General Meeting of ACB board members was convened in January 2018 and approved key legal and administrative documents including Selection, Human Resource, Procurement and Finance policies to authorize

attention in the cricketing world was on the ICC Cricket World Cup Qualifier in Zimbabwe awaiting confirmation of the two remaining teams in ICC Cricket World Cup 2019. Afghanistan started the tournament as one of the two favourite teams alongside West Indies and was finally crowned the Champions of the ICC Cricket World Cup Qualifier 2018 after a bumpy start and sealing a place in the ICC Cricket World Cup



of Understanding was signed with Investment Partner, Snixer Sports. The challenging task of holding the inaugural edition was given good momentum over the coming months completing the requisite phases including the league launch and players' draft; and the worthwhile project finally completed in October 2018 when the inaugural edition was held successfully at the historic Sharjah Cricket Stadium.

actions in the respective areas and ultimately conform to broader governance practices. The comprehensive ODI and T20I series wins against Zimbabwe in February proved the ability of Afghanistan National Cricket Team to overpower other teams; and the capability of the Afghanistan Cricket Board to host ICC Full Member Boards - balanced performance in both on-field and off-field areas. In March 2018, all

2019. Afghanistan climbed to 8th position in the ICC T20 rankings for the first time after a 3-0 white-wash against Bangladesh in Dehradun and qualified for the ICC T20 World Cup scheduled to be held in Australia in 2020. One year after achieving Test status in June 2017, Afghanistan's much anticipated inaugural Test match was played against World No. 1 Test team India in Bengaluru and with this Afghanistan became

the 12th country in the history of cricket to play Test cricket. The decision to play the inaugural Test match against India was part of ACB's strategy to assess

series against Ireland 2-0 and the ODI series 2-1 and with this Afghanistan won seven out of seven T20Is in 2018. Afghanistan reached new

Lanka and Bangladesh in group stage matches and finishing at the top of table. The successful and widely applauded campaign in the Asia Cup came to an end



the strengths and weaknesses of the team to prepare well for future challenges and become a top Test side in the coming years. Afghanistan also won away T20I

heights in the Asian Cricket Council Asia Cup in 2018 and qualified for the Super Four stage of the competitions after comprehensively beating Sri

with a historical tie against winner of the event, India. The performance in Asia Cup 2018 proved why Afghanistan as a Full Member of ICC deserved direct



qualification for this tournament. Junior level cricket also continued to excel as the Afghanistan U-19 National Cricket Team was Semi Finalist in both ICC U19 Cricket World Cup in New Zealand and ACC U19 Youth Asia Cup in Bangladesh, meeting the

competitions of Ghazi Amanullah Khan Regional One-Day Cup were held on high standards and the last eight matches of the tournament were televised for the first time ever.

Major sources of revenue for most ICC full member boards is media

board members. Field of Play was awarded TV production rights to have consistency in broadcasting and cost saving. Public Relations and Communications activities were doubled to inform the public considering the importance of



expectation level outlined in ACB strategic plan.

Domestic Cricket continued to provide opportunities for players and fans to engage in playing and/or witnessing competitive cricket at home. The annual Ahmad Shah Abdali First Class Tournament was played between six teams on four different venues contributing to skills building of players and organizers. Similarly, List A

and sponsorship rights whilst TV production counts towards major expenses. To balance the two, ACB sold TV broadcast and digital rights of international fixtures in the Future Tours Programme (FTP) and domestic cricket competitions for a period of five years from 2018-2023 for USD 2.3 million to Total Sports Marketing (TSM) after issuing a tender which was duly approved by ACB

fans as vital stakeholders. In 2018, the "Cricket for All" programme was launched to encourage much wider participation in the game of cricket where ACB representatives travelled to far-away areas and provinces that are relatively less familiar with the game of cricket.





# WHY CRICKET?

Cricket is the No.1 sport in Afghanistan after rapid rise of the Afghanistan National Cricket Team over the last few years and the recent elevation of Afghanistan Cricket Board to Full Member status of the International Cricket Council. The unique brand of Afghan cricket is also widely popular across the cricketing world and the emergence of

exceptional talented players like Rashid Khan has made it even more distinctive. The success achieved in cricket by Afghanistan is unparalleled not just in the area of sports but also the role cricket and players have played in reflecting the positive image of the country to the rest of the world. A country that has been suffering from war and conflict for

over four decades is represented on global platforms by a group of young men who continue to achieve substantial results despite a lack of world-class facilities in their homeland. These players are the ambassadors of peace and serve as role models for the young generation who aspire to follow their footsteps with passion and enthusiasm.



# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)



The ACB Board Members' Annual General Meeting was held at the Ministry of Finance in January 2018 chaired by ACB Chairman of the time Shukrullah Atif Mashal and attended by other ACB top management including Chief Executive Officer Shafiqullah Stanikzai who also delivered a presentation on annual report 2017. The board members approved the following:

- Annual plan and budget for 2018
- Human Resource, Selection, Finance and Procurement policies.
- Issuing tenders for media rights and TV production

- Appointment of two new board members
- Acquisition of government land for Kabul Cricket Stadium or on Public Private Partnership (PPP)
- Sanctioning of private leagues
- Issuing tender for grounds rights of bilateral series
- Execution of Afghanistan Premier League T20 and formation of Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) in UAE
- APL team names (Kabul, Kandahar, Paktia, Balkh and Nangarhar)
- Improving relations with PCB
- Additional security arrangements for ACB



# INTERNATIONAL CRICKET



Afghanistan reached new heights in international cricket during 2018 and maintained dominance over Zimbabwe and Ireland by winning T20I and ODI series against them. The National Cricket Team won the 2018 ICC Cricket World Cup Qualifier

to qualify for the 10-team ICC Cricket World Cup 2019 in England and Wales. The 3-0 T20I series win against Bangladesh helped Afghanistan reach 8th position in ICC T20I rankings. The participation of Afghanistan in the ACC Asia Cup in UAE will

be remembered for many years to come as Afghanistan won group stage matches to top the table and deliver a remarkable tie against India in the Super Four stage.

## AFGHANISTAN NATIONAL CRICKET TEAM

The success of Afghanistan National Cricket Team in 2018 was mainly due to thorough planning and investment on increasing players' capabilities by providing them comprehensive technical support in form of a complete coaching staff package that included a Head Coach, Batting Coach, Bowling Coach, Fielding Coach, Strength and Conditioning Coach, Performance Analyst, Physiotherapist, Masseur and other dedicated coaches, for example Power Hitting Coach. In the year 2018, ACB conducted fitness tests in every quarter in order to assess the physical conditions of players and prepare fitness development programmes for them. Players were given individual targets to improve their fitness levels. Around 115 elite-level players involved in both domestic and international teams went through fitness tests and the initial phases of most camps were also dedicated to fitness development. A significant

improvement was witnessed in players' fitness and physical injuries were minimized despite a busy schedule, a prime example of this was playing back to back matches in Asia Cup 2018 in very humid and warm conditions. Nearly 90% of the players were able to achieve the required YoYo Test marks of 17.1. The senior side was much disciplined in implementing the game plan given to them by the team management which used to be an area for improvement; this included strike rotation, bowling at the death, fielding and improving depth in batting line up. There was a clear difference in performance going from one quarter to another. Performance at the Asia Cup was the result of improvement in the mentioned areas increasing level of optimism for the future. Conditioning or pre-visits to respective locations of competitions have proven to play an important role in preparations for the scheduled competitions.

ACB organised conditioning camps prior to every single tour in 2018; besides this, the team played additional warm-up matches in local conditions that proved to be a very useful strategy. Examples of this included early visit to Zimbabwe ahead of the ICC Cricket World Cup Qualifier; early visit to Dehradun for the Bangladesh series; visit to the UK for Ireland series; and pre-visit to UAE for Asia Cup 2018. A qualified Performance Analyst was recruited for the National Team in May 2018 to work with team management and coaching staff to provide analytical reports on all aspects of team and individual player performance; video footage about the strengths and weaknesses of opposition teams; and working closely with players in dedicated sessions to improve their game by highlighting their technical errors and addressing areas of improvement.

AZIZI BANK CUP  
AFGHANISTAN VS ZIMBABWE



Afghanistan Cricket Board hosted Zimbabwe for a two-match T20I and five-match ODI series from 5th- 19th February 2018 at Sharjah Cricket Stadium in the United Arab Emirates. Afghanistan won the T20I series 2-0 and the ODI series 4-1 maintaining dominance over Zimbabwe in both formats. This was the third consecutive T20I series win and fourth consecutive ODI series win against Zimbabwe. The main objective of the series was to select and prepare a competitive side for the ICC Cricket World Cup Qualifier 2018 in Zimbabwe. The series was also a good source of revenue generation for ACB

DATE	MATCH FORMAT	WIN/LOSS
5 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2018	T20I	Won by 6 Wickets
6 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2018	T20I	Won by 17 Runs
9 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2018	ODI	Won by 154 Runs
11 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2018	ODI	Lost by 154 runs
13 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2018	ODI	Won by 6 wickets
16 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2018	ODI	Won by 10 wickets
19 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2018	ODI	Won by 146 Runs

and it helped in engaging local communities including Afghans living in the United Arab Emirates. The positive outcome of the series in favour of Afghanistan

was mainly due to conducting a month-long skills development, condition and preparation camp in Sharjah prior to the series in which 24 players took part.

ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP QUALIFIER 2018



DATE	OPPOSITION	RESULT
4 <sup>th</sup> March 2018	Scotland	Lost by 7 Wickets
6 <sup>th</sup> March 2018	Zimbabwe	Lost by 2 Runs
8 <sup>th</sup> March 2018	Hong Kong	Lost by 30 Runs
10 <sup>th</sup> March 2018	Nepal	Won by 6 Wickets
15 <sup>th</sup> March 2018	Windies	Won by 3 Wickets
20 <sup>th</sup> March 2018	UAE	Won by 5 Wickets
23 <sup>th</sup> March 2018	Ireland	Won by 5 Wickets
25 <sup>th</sup> March 2018	Windies, Final	Won by 7 Wickets

Afghanistan National Cricket Team became qualified for the ICC Cricket World Cup 2019 in England and Wales as they became the champions of the ICC Cricket World Cup Qualifier 2018

in Zimbabwe. This is considered to be a major achievement in the history of Afghan cricket as qualification for the 10-team World Cup was highly competitive and for the first time, four

ICC Full Members were also part of the qualification process. This will be the second consecutive time that Afghanistan makes an appearance at the ICC Cricket World Cup after having participated in the ICC Cricket World Cup 2015 held in Australia and New Zealand. ACB arranged an early visit to Zimbabwe to acclimatize the squad with local conditioning and prepare them for the tournament.

# BIMAN BANGLADESH AIRLINES T20I SERIES AFGHANISTAN VS BANGLADESH

Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) hosted a higher ranked team, Bangladesh, for a three-match T20I series in Dehradun India, the second home ground of ACB outside the country. The initial bilateral agreement was to arrange an ODI series between both sides, however, this was followed by a request from Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) to play T20Is, which was honored by ACB considering the impact on ICC T20I rankings with direct qualification to the first round of ICC T20 World Cup 2020 in view. Afghanistan won the series 3-0 and climbed to 8th position in ICC T20I rankings with 91 points and as a result, Team Afghanistan qualified to the Super 12 round of ICC T20 World Cup 2020 scheduled to be held in Australia.

Preparations for this series and the subsequent inaugural Test match against India started with a skills development camp in late April held at Greater Noida with the participation of over 40 players for screening and further development. The players were divided into two groups to provide them practice with both white and red balls and consequently final squads were selected for both the T20I series and the Test match.

ACB not only hosted its first home series in Dehradun but also took international cricket to Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium in Uttarakhand. The three-match T20I series generated USD 705,000.00 from media rights, sponsorship and gate revenue.

DATE	MATCH FORMAT	RESULT
3 <sup>rd</sup> June 2018	T20I	Won by 45 Runs
5 <sup>th</sup> June 2018	T20I	Won by 6 Wickets
7 <sup>th</sup> June 2018	T20I	Won by 1 Run



# AFGHANISTAN VS INDIA INAUGURAL TEST



After obtaining Test status in June 2017, Afghanistan National Cricket Team played its inaugural Test match against India in June 2018 at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru, India. This historic match was highly anticipated and received significant coverage in the global

media. The pleasant relations between the Afghanistan Cricket Board and the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) made this historic test possible. As ACB targets to be in top Test rankings in the next four years and this match was played to understand the potential as well as strengths and

weaknesses of the team. Although Afghanistan lost the match to India by an innings and 262 runs but it was a truly helpful experience for players and ACB administrations, to identify the areas of weakness and address these in the future, accordingly.

Chief Executive of Afghanistan His Excellency Dr. Abdullah Abdullah and Honourable Sports Minister of India Mr. Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore took part in the inauguration ceremony of the historic Test match and messages of President of Afghanistan His Excellency Mohammad Ashraf Ghani and Indian Prime Minister His Excellency Narendra Modi were delivered by the respective representatives of both countries. Afghanistan-born former Indian Test player Mr. Salim Durani was also present in the inauguration ceremony and accompanied both captains for the toss. Afghanistan players received their memorable Test caps from ACB officials.



# AFGHANISTAN VS IRELAND

Afghanistan National Cricket Team was hosted in Belfast by Cricket Ireland for T20I and ODI series which Afghanistan won 2-0 and 2-1, respectively. Winning the series against Ireland is a major achievement because the matches were played in tougher and different conditions.

It was the first time that Afghanistan won a series in Ireland against Ireland. The series was part of preparations for the ICC Cricket World Cup 2019 and the team showed the ability to adapt to European conditions easily. Young opening batsman Hazratullah Zazai performed exceptionally well with

the bat in T20Is which paved the way for his inclusion in the ODI squad. ACB arranged a 15-day pre-visit to the UK in order to help the squad acclimatize with local conditions by playing practice matches against local teams in Oxford.

DATE	MATCH FORMAT	RESULT
20 <sup>th</sup> Aug 2018	T20I	Won by 16 Runs
22 <sup>nd</sup> Aug 2018	T20I	Won by 81 Runs
24 <sup>th</sup> Aug 2018	T20I	No Result
27 <sup>th</sup> Aug 2018	ODI	Won by 29 Runs
29 <sup>th</sup> Aug 2018	ODI	Lost by 3 wickets
31 <sup>st</sup> Aug 2018	ODI	Won by 8 wickets



# UNIMONI ACC ASIA CUP 2018

Afghanistan National Cricket Team participated in the ACC Asia Cup 2018 in UAE alongside Asian cricket giants India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. Afghanistan topped the group stage after easy wins against

Sri Lanka and Bangladesh and qualified for the Super Four stage of the tournament where Afghanistan ended its very successful Asia Cup 2018 campaign with a tie against World's No. 1 team, India.

Afghanistan's performance in the ACC Asia Cup was widely praised in the cricketing world. According to cricket pundits, Afghanistan was by far the second best team of the tournament and was the



only team that tied a game against World No. 1 and unbeaten team of the tournament, India. The performance of the team in a high-profile tournament demonstrates that Afghanistan will be a competitive side in the upcoming ICC Cricket World Cup 2019.

Preparation stage for the Asia Cup involved a pre-visit to UAE because the team arrived from Ireland where conditions were relatively cooler compared to hot and humid weather in UAE. The team had a five-day recovery period and started their training at the Sheikh Zayed Cricket Stadium in Abu Dhabi one week before the start of the tournament. The early visit was part of a thoughtful planning process to station the team in Abu Dhabi where majority of Afghanistan’s matches were scheduled.



# 2018 ICC ODI AND T20I RANKINGS

The rankings of Afghanistan improved in both ODIs and T20Is during 2018 after important victories in both formats over other ICC Full Members that included Zimbabwe, Ireland, Bangladesh, West Indies and Sri Lanka. The ratings of Afghanistan in the ICC ODI rankings went upto 67 from 54 during 2018, which was largely due to victories against Zimbabwe, Ireland, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. For the first time in history, Afghanistan climbed to 8th position in the ICC T20I rankings in 2018 after a 3-0 series win against Bangladesh and T20I series wins against both Zimbabwe and Ireland.

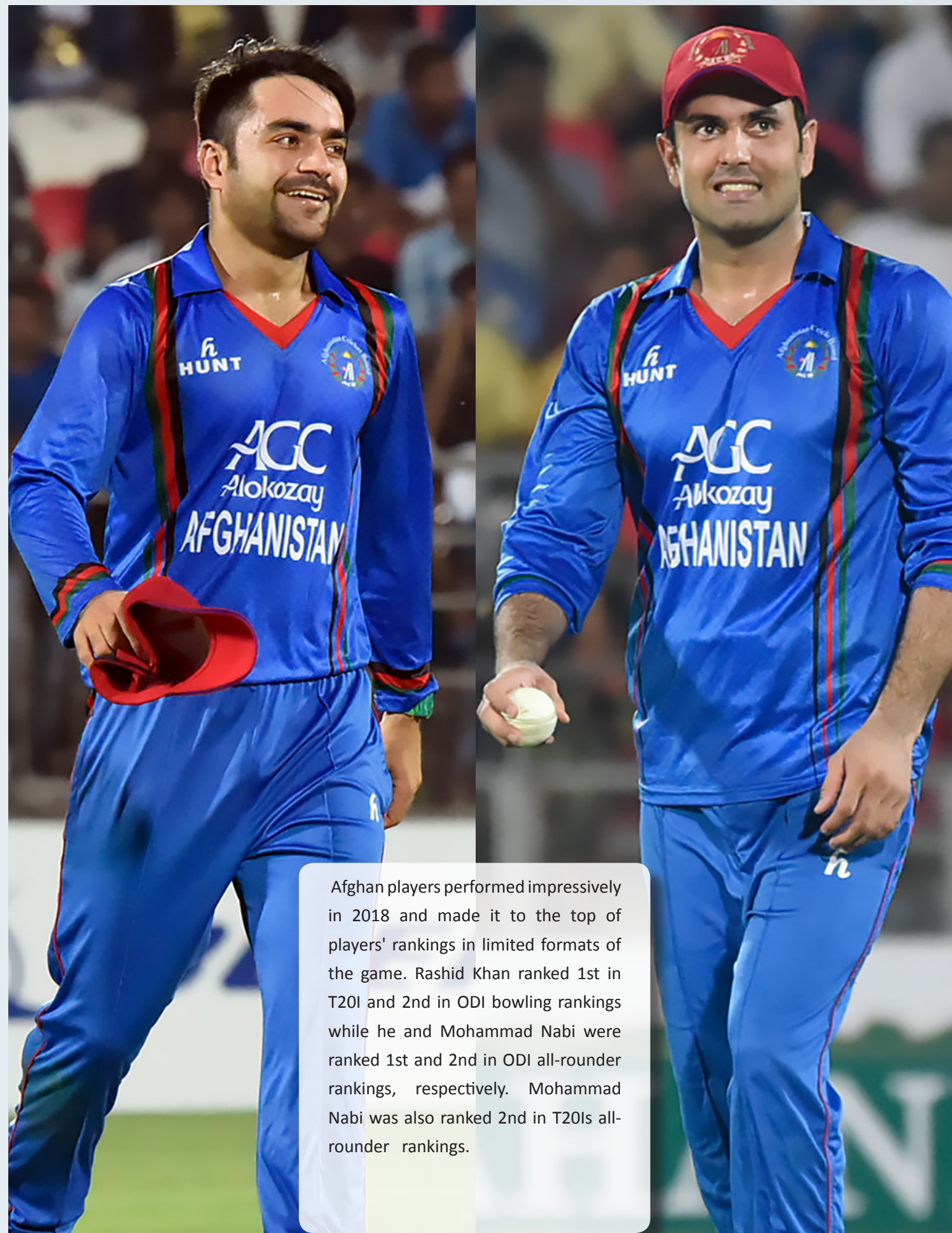
## 2018 ICC ODI RANKINGS

Position	Team	Matches	Points	Rating
1	England	55	6,918	126
2	India	58	7,000	121
3	New Zealand	43	4,803	112
4	South Africa	45	4,985	111
5	Pakistan	43	4,370	102
6	Australia	40	3,980	100
7	Bangladesh	36	3,342	93
8	Sri Lanka	54	4,240	79
9	West Indies	37	2,670	72
10	Afghanistan	36	2,394	67

## 2018 ICC T20I RANKINGS

Position	Team	Matches	Points	Rating
1	Pakistan	36	4,979	138
2	India	40	5,064	127
3	England	22	2,586	118
4	Australia	26	3,014	116
5	South Africa	22	2,502	114
6	New Zealand	25	2,803	112
7	West Indies	24	2,444	102
8	Afghanistan	27	2,490	92
9	Sri Lanka	29	2,518	87
10	Bangladesh	27	2,066	77

## PLAYERS RANKINGS



Afghan players performed impressively in 2018 and made it to the top of players' rankings in limited formats of the game. Rashid Khan ranked 1st in T20I and 2nd in ODI bowling rankings while he and Mohammad Nabi were ranked 1st and 2nd in ODI all-rounder rankings, respectively. Mohammad Nabi was also ranked 2nd in T20Is all-rounder rankings.

## AFGHANISTAN NATIONAL A TEAM

Afghanistan A Team is considered the reserved or back-up bench for the Afghanistan National Cricket Team and it consists of players who are down-graded from the National Team due to performance or injuries; performed well for the National Emerging Team; and those who have performed well in elite-level domestic cricket. In 2018, most of A Team players were part of National

Cricket Team's skills and fitness development, camps that were organised either at home or abroad. They also represented their respective regional domestic teams in various tournaments within the ACB domestic cricket structure. A preparation camp was organised in Kabul for National A Team players prior to a seven-match friendly series against the National Emerging Team that also helped with their

own preparations for the inaugural edition of Afghanistan Premier League T20. Outside the country, they were given the opportunity to participate in a skills development camp and played selection matches alongside National Team players to get a chance to be selected for the National Team.



## AFGHANISTAN NATIONAL EMERGING TEAM

The Emerging Team players are under the age of 23 and have usually been either part of previous U19 team or have performed well recently in elite-level domestic cricket competitions. The team participates in at least one multi-team tournament annually – ACC Emerging Teams Asia Cup. ACB launched a depth chart to identify the right talent at the right age in order to groom them under Emerging Team's programme. ACB provided an opportunity for 20 emerging players to participate in one of the high-profile skills development camps alongside National Cricket Team players in

April 2018 that took place in India. Five of the participants (Wafadar Momand, Darwish Rasooli, Hazratullah Zazai, Waqar Salamkhalil and Nijat Masood) were included in preparation camp ahead of the series against Bangladesh and the Test match against India. Hazratullah Zazai was selected for the T20I series against Bangladesh and Wafadar Momand was later part of the Test squad against India.

ACB revised one of the criteria in selection policy which included implementing fitness benchmark. The players went through fitness tests and those players who achieved 17.3 in YoYo test were

chosen for selection matches. In the process, around 30 players were selected who later played six one-day matches among themselves in Khost. A 20-member squad was selected after considering players' individual performances in selection matches. The squad went on to play three one-day and five T20 matches against Afghanistan National A Team in a friendly series between the two sides in Kabul. The aim of this series was to provide consistent quality cricket for elite-level players and competitive match practice ahead of their participation in the inaugural edition of Afghanistan Premier League T20 (APLT20).

### ACC EMERGING TEAMS ASIA CUP

ACB organised a training camp and selection matches in Chennai for the purpose of selecting a final squad for the ACC Emerging Teams Asia Cup, jointly hosted by Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The team departed for Sri

Lanka on 5th December to take part in the tournament and was placed in Group A with Sri Lanka, India and Oman. Afghanistan was only able to win one group match against Oman and narrowly lost to Sri Lanka and

India. Participation in this event was a good opportunity for those young players who were part of the 2018 ICC U19 Cricket World Cup and performed exceptionally well in domestic cricket.





# CHAMPIONS

GLOBAL PARTNERS

NISSAN

oppo

MRF  
TYRES



EVENT PARTNER

MoneyGram

TIMING PARTNER

HUBLOT

BEER PARTNER

CASTLE  
LAGER

# AFGHANISTAN UNDER-19 NATIONAL TEAM

The Afghanistan U19 National Cricket Team participated in the ICC U19 Cricket World Cup 2018 in New

Zealand and qualified for the Semi Final as per the objective set in the ACB strategic plan.

## 2018 ICC U19 CRICKET WORLD CUP

Afghanistan defeated Pakistan, Sri Lanka and New Zealand that are all Full Members of ICC and strong cricketing sides in ICC U19 Cricket World Cup 2018. Afghanistan lost the Semi Final of the tournament to Australia by six wickets and finished 4th in the competitions. Due to the importance of the tournament, ACB arranged a pre-visit camp in Napier that lasted for 20 days. The team took part in regular training

sessions and played four one-day practice matches against strong local sides that proved to be a fruitful preparation for the tournament. The U19 Cricket World Cup resulted in production of new talent where players including Mujeeb Zadran, Zahir Khan Pakteen, Darwish Rasooli and Rahmanullah Gurbaz were given opportunities to be either part of National Team camps or represent Afghanistan at international level.

## PROCESS OF DEVELOPING A NEW U19 TEAM

After the successful ICC U19 Cricket World Cup 2018, ACB planned to develop a new U19 team in order to be eligible for ACC U19 Asia Cup in 2018 and 2019 as well as ICC U19 Cricket World Cup 2020. The actual process started in 2017 when ACB conducted a skill development camp after the U16 Regional One-Day Tournament.

ACB started to prepare the side in January/February and gave an opportunity to those players who performed well in the U16 Regional One-Day Tournament to showcase their talent and advance to the next level in their career. The selection committee

invited a group of 30 players to play five one-day matches among themselves with an objective of selecting an 18-member squad for a series against Bangladesh U17. To develop the side for the 2018 and 2019 editions of ACC U19 Asia Cup and the ICC U19 World Cup 2020, ACB hosted Bangladesh U17 squad in India. This was a reciprocal series as Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) had hosted Afghanistan U19 in 2017. The series comprised of a three-day match and three one-day matches with the following results:

- Three-day match – drawn
- 1st one-day match – Bangladesh Won
- 2nd one-day match – Afghanistan Won
- 3rd one-day match – Bangladesh won



The aim of this series was to assess the current eligible squad and provide them competitive playing opportunities for further development. The Head Coach of junior teams recommended only six players from the squad to have the skills required to play in ACC U19 Asia Cup and ICC Cricket World Cup. To increase the pool of players, open trails were conducted in all regions across the country to select U19 regional domestic teams to participate in the U19 Regional One-day Tournament that would allow ACB to select an initial squad for the U19 Asia cup 2018. The second step involved screening by regional head coaches in a training camp in Kabul as a result of which squads were selected for the six respective regions. The selection process also included age verification testes by a five-member medical committee

to check players' ages based on their physical appearance who were then sent to French Medical Institute for Children for bone tests to confirm their ages.

Six Regional U19 teams took part in the U19 Regional Tournament and players who performed as per the set selection criteria were considered for further selection process. ACB gave an opportunity to the initial squad to develop their skills under the guidance of coaching staff prior to intra-squad selection matches consisting of 28 players. They played five one-day matches among themselves and finally 22 players were selected for the final stage of selection where they played additional two one-day matches between each other and two one-day matches against the National Emerging side allowing selectors to select 18 players for the ACC U19 Asia Cup 2018 .



## QUADRANGULAR U19 ONE DAY SERIES 2018

The Afghanistan U19 National Cricket Team was invited to Lucknow India to be one of the participating teams alongside India U19 A, India U19 B and Nepal U19 in a quadrangular

series organised by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI). Afghanistan U19s won one match against Nepal. The series was a good opportunity to play competitive cricket and prepare

for the ACC U19 Youth Asia Cup in Bangladesh. ACB selected a very young side aiming to prepare them for ICC U19 Cricket World Cup 2020 and the squad did not include any former U19 players.

## ACC UNDER-19 ASIA CUP

Defending

Afghanistan U19 National Cricket Team travelled to Bangladesh to participate in the ACC U19 Asia Cup with a set objective

Champions

Afghanistan was placed in Group A with India, Nepal and the United Arab Emirates. Afghanistan won group stage matches against both

of reaching the Semi Final stage.

Nepal and UAE and qualified for the Semi Final where Afghanistan lost a close encounter to Sri Lanka.





PLAYERS REHABILITATION

ACB added medical treatment allowance and injury rehabilitation period to players’ contracts based on which if a player is injured during an official commitment, their treatment costs of up to USD 10,000 will be covered by ACB once in every six months. The following injured players were the beneficiaries in 2018:

No.	Name & Injury Type
1	<b>Zahir Khan Pakteen</b> - Should Injury
2	<b>Hamid Hussan</b> - Knee/Growing Injury
3	<b>Shapoor Zadran</b> - Back Injury
4	<b>Dawlat Zadran</b> - Knee Injury
5	<b>Wafadar Momand</b> - Back Injury
6	<b>Merwias Ashraf</b> - Rehabilitation and recovery
7	<b>Hamshmatullah Shahidi</b> - Doctor checkups and surgery
8	<b>Yousaf Zazai</b> - Rehabilitation
9	<b>Sayed Shirzad</b> - Knee Injury



PLAYERS CONTRACT

ACB awarded annual contracts to 83 players in the following two categories:

Central Contracts

The process of awarding central contract to players was updated in 2018 on the basis of performance, discipline and fitness; a total of 33 players were given central contracts considering their overall performance. A grade contracts were given to eight players whilst two players were awarded B grade and 23 players received C grade contracts. The players received an increment in their monthly salaries to motivate and encourage them and their salaries were as follows in 2018:

- A Grade - \$3250 (8 Players)
- B Grade - \$2250 (2 Players)
- C Grade - \$1700 (23 Players)

Domestic Contracts:

For the first time, players involved in elite-level domestic cricket competitions were awarded contracts based on their discipline and performance in major ACB domestic cricket tournaments namely Ghazi Amanullah Khan Regional One-Day Cup, Ahmad Shah Abdali First Class Tournament and Shpageeza T20 Cricket League. Considering the performance of recent six months, 54 players were awarded contracts in A (16), B (14) and C (20) categories:

- A Grade - \$600 (16 Players)
- B Grade - \$300 (14 Players)
- C Grade - \$200 (20 Players)

# DOMESTIC CRICKET



Domestic cricket competitions within the ACB structure continued to provide valuable opportunity for young players to play competitive cricket and increase their chances of representing Afghanistan at international level. Top performers in elite-level domestic cricket are usually considered for selection in National Teams including National Cricket Team, National A Team, National Emerging Team and National U19 Team. Domestic cricket helps increase participation in the game in several ways including players' involvement and building technical capabilities of support staff. There are currently over 350 professional cricketers who play regular elite-level domestic cricket including two commercial T20 leagues – Shpageeza T20 Cricket League and Afghanistan Premier League T20. This encourages the youth to choose cricket as a profession and also earn a reasonable income that they receive as match fees, monthly salaries and other allowances. The different domestic cricket tournaments also engage fans, sponsors and other stakeholders within and outside the country.



## AHMAD SHAH ABDALI FIRST CLASS TOURNAMENT

First Class cricket is red-ball cricket played in white-colour jerseys that lasts for more than two days where each team may have the opportunity to bat and ball twice. The main reason for holding First Class Tournaments within the ACB domestic cricket structure

is to develop players for test cricket in many aspects of the game including improvement of their techniques, skills, fitness and mental toughness. As any recognised multi-day cricket counts towards the career profile of players; First Class games held in 2018 was a good

opportunity for international records of players. Afghanistan Cricket Board, Domestic Department organized the annual Ahmad Shah Abdali Regional Four-Day tournament from 1st March 2018 between six regions of the country representing all 34



provinces. It is the most high-profile long-format cricket tournament in the domestic structure of ACB. ACB domestic cricket department plans, organizes and implements all requirements for this event. The planning process started two months prior to the commencement of the tournament including the preparation of tournament fixture, playing conditions and tournament guideline. This tournament mainly took place

in three provinces (Nangahar, Kunar and Khost) and the final was played at Kandahar Cricket Stadium. Based on the tournament points table, Band-e Amir and Amo Region teams found their way to the final of the tournament where Band-e Amir beat Amo to become the champions of the 2018 edition of Ahmad Shah Abdali First Class Tournament. The completion of the tournament resulted in producing well-groomed First-

Class players in line with the objectives set ahead of the competitions, and helped in training of technical staff in their respective areas. ICC rules and regulations for First Class cricket were implemented throughout the tournament. It gave an opportunity to young players to access an environment of competitive cricket at national level; and have a wider impact all over Afghanistan in terms of promoting elite-level cricket.



## REGIONAL U19 TOURNAMENT

This tournament was played from 1st July 2018 to 9th July 2018 at Kabul Cricket Stadium. Where Six regional teams (Speenghar, Amo, Kabul, Bost, Band-e-Amir and Mis-e-Ainak) took part in it. Preparations of the tournament was good enough and all activities were carried out based on the devised action plan. Band-e-Amir and Amo Regions qualified for the

final of the tournament which was played at Kabul Cricket Stadium. Band-e-Amir beat Amo and became the champions of 2018 Regional U19 Tournament. The tournament was helpful in providing clearer pathways and opportunities from junior to senior level with a key focus on player development.



## REGIONAL PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES (PWDS) T20 TOURNAMENT

The tournament was held from 29th July to 5th August 2018 at Kabul Cricket Stadium with the participation of five regional teams: Speenghar, Amo, Band-e Amir, Bost and Mis-e

Ainak. ACB worked closely with UNICEF as part of the larger social responsibilities programme to enable people with special needs to play competitive cricket and exhibit

their talent. The tournament's main objective was to help in the selection of top performers for the National PwDs Team. Bost emerged victorious in the final of the tournament.



## GHAZI AMANULLAH KHAN REGIONAL ONE-DAY CUP

The other major event of ACB Domestic Department in 2018 was the Ghazi Amanullah Khan Regional One-Day Cup which was given List A status by ICC in 2017. The 2018 edition started on 10th July 2018 and ended on 27th July 2018 in Kabul and Khost provinces. Six regional teams (Speenghar, Amo, Kabul, Bost, Band-e-Amir and Mis-e Ainak) were the participants of this tournament. Preparations started with training camps in Kabul, Khost and Nangarhar. Defending Champions Speenghar

faced Bost in the final of the tournament which was won by Bost to become the new champions of the most high-profile List A tournament within ACB's domestic cricket structure. The tournament delivers consistent quality international cricketers as back up for all national teams and the 2018 edition saw Bost Wicket-keeper batsman Munir Ahmad Kakar finding way to the national side.



## PROVINCIAL AND REGIONAL CLUB LEVEL TOURNAMENTS

### • Provincial Club Level Tournament:

These competitions started from 1st April 2018 and continued until 30th July 2018 across all provinces in which all registered clubs participated.

The winner of each province qualified to the regional club level tournament.

### • Inter-Region Club Level Tournament:

This took place from 20th

October 2018 to 10th November 2018. Winners of all provinces related to the respective regions participated in the tournament. Best players from each region were selected for regional teams.



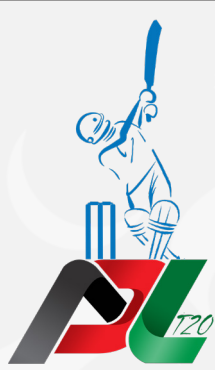


# AFGHANISTAN PREMIER LEAGUE T20

## 1ST EDITION



In 2016, the ACB management had proposed the planning and launching of the Afghanistan Premier League T20 (APLT20) as ACB's international commercial T20 league that was brought into initial discussion in AGM that year. The board members further discussed the launch of APLT20 and initially approved a budget of USD 2 million in the Special Annual General Meeting convened in March 2017. The ACB management had forecasted that the total fund needed for APLT20 would exceed USD 2 million which was difficult to accommodate in the annual budget of ACB, therefore, the board members advised ACB to explore the possibility of finding a potential investment partner for the league. Later in the AGM of July 2017, ACB board members approved Xpert Eventers (later superseded by Snixer Sports) as the investment partner of ACB for APLT20. After receiving and evaluating offers from four major companies including DPM, Field of Play, ITW, and Snixer Sports, the offer from Snixer Sport carried the highest value. The offer included that Snixer Sports will pay an annual license fees of USD

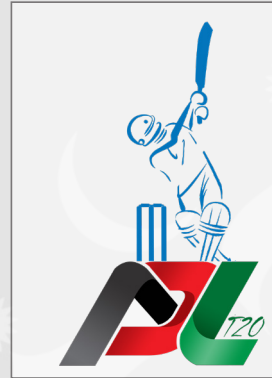


# AFGHANISTAN PREMIER LEAGUE T20

## 1ST EDITION

600,000 to ACB and the company will invest up to USD 7,000,000 in the league. Additionally, ACB will be given an ownership share of 51% whilst the investment partner will retain 49% lasting for a period of six years. After this period, ACB will decide whether or not an investment partner is required but it is certain that the league will be self-sufficient by then. Since the offer from Snixer Sports included a significant amount of license fees and its sole responsibility for the total investment, the board members approved Snixer Sports. They also advised ACB to hire DLA Piper, who are associated with Kakar Advocates in Afghanistan, as legal advisors to overlook all relevant legal matters including the MoU, players' contracts, and Definitive Agreement of the partnership between ACB and Snixer Sports.





# AFGHANISTAN PREMIER LEAGUE T20

## 1ST EDITION

The first step taken for launch of the Afghanistan Premier League T20 (APLT20) was signing of the MoU between ACB and Snixer Sports in January 2018. This event took place at the InterContinental Hotel in Kabul which was attended by top ranking Afghan government officials, ACB top management, Snixer Sports top management and local and international media. During the event, representatives of Snixer Sports delivered a presentation about major points in the partnership agreement and the roadmap for coming six years.



A tender was issued in July 2018 to invite bids for ownership of APLT20 franchises and Afghan businesses were also given additional time. This was followed by the league launch that took place in Dubai on 27th August 2018.

ACB along with Snixer Sports held the players auction in September 2018 in UAE which was a diversified auction from players' registration perspective. The list in the draft had over 450 local and international players out of which 60+ Afghan players and 40+ foreign players later took part in the league.

Similar to other commercial leagues,





# AFGHANISTAN PREMIER LEAGUE T20

## 1ST EDITION

the inaugural season of Afghanistan Premier League T20 had its own challenges which ACB and its partners managed to overcome successfully. There were significant challenges as UAE has served as a good market for cricket and host to a number of similar commercial leagues. ACB battled with considerable negative and structured lobby to change the league and block its implementation. A major challenge occurred when three franchise owners pulled out just before the players draft. Finding three new investors for the franchises was not an easy task. Nevertheless, after considerable efforts the three franchises were resold through the network of both ACB and Snixer Sports. The support of host country's business community plays an important role in the success of a commercial T20 league which was unfortunately not the case in APLT20. The Afghan business community did not contribute in media and marketing opportunities of the

league except Gulbahar Group the title sponsor of the first edition which was confirmed just a few days before the start of the league.

The inaugural edition of the Afghanistan Premier League T20 was successfully completed from 5th – 21st October 2018 at Sharjah Cricket Stadium in UAE. The league was telecasted in 60 countries across the world on 11 TV channels and two digital platforms. APLT20 attracted renowned T20 cricket stars and was largely followed by cricket fans across the world forming a solid foundation for future editions.

APLT20 was a source of revenue for both ACB and the players as well as a learning opportunity for players and technical & administrative staff.

In monetary terms, Afghan players in total earned over USD 1.5 million after being sold in several categories during a high-profile auction prior to the commencement of the league that was dubbed the second best after Indian Premier League (IPL). Players



were bought in seven different categories ranging from US\$10,000 – US\$100,000. This was especially very helpful for the young players. Besides this, the players learned not only from their experienced Afghan counterparts but also several renowned international cricket stars. APLT20 was very helpful for young cricketers who made their way to the league from domestic cricket competitions where they got the right exposure on an international platform.

The Afghanistan Premier League T20 also helped build passion for the game Afghans amongst who closely followed the league on their TV screens. Having observed the financial aspect of being part of such a league, most youngsters will realize the financial benefits of building a professional career in cricket. This will help Afghanistan cricket attract new talent and will strengthen the national team in many years to come.



# GAME DEVELOPMENT



Game development activities are mainly concerned with planning and programming of junior cricket, player development, players and match official rankings, enhancement of technical capacity of coaches, umpires, scorers, curators, performance analysts, physiotherapists,

strength and conditioning coaches, and masseurs; and infrastructure development. The main contribution of the Game Development department is to develop grass-root cricket at different levels such as school cricket, junior club cricket and junior domestic cricket competitions.

The main highlights of the Game Development department activities included the hunt for fast bowlers programme; conducting various educational programmes and workshops across the country; and participation of Afghan match officials in international events.

## ELEMENTARY UMPIRING COURSES

Elementary umpiring courses were conducted in six regions from August – November 2018. The main purpose of the courses was to groom umpires at entry level. Participants from all provinces participated in the course. As a result, basic education of umpiring was given to 120 umpires out of which at least 60 are qualified to complete Level I umpiring course. The training programmes that were previously done by overseas educators were delivered by ACB educators.



## ELEMENTARY COACHING COURSES

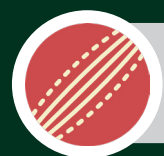
A total of 120 participants took part in elementary coaching courses that were held in six regions from August – November 2018. The main purpose of the courses was to train coaches at basic level. A minimum of 60 participants from 120 are now qualified for Level I coaching course. The instructors in all elementary level coaching courses were Afghans which is a good sign of development in technical sphere.



## ELEMENTARY SCORING COURSES

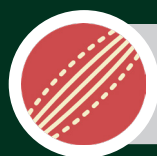
Courses across all six regions were also held at elementary level for scorers in which 120 participants took part. The end result was training at least 60 scorers to be prepared for participation in Level I scoring courses.





## HUNT FOR FAST BOWLERS

The Game Development department in coordination with the Selection Committee held the Hunt for Fast Bowlers programme which was designed to be conducted in four phases across the country with an ultimate goal of identifying potential fast bowlers to represent Afghanistan at international level in the future. The first phase which was held in July involved conducting open trials at regional level. During the first phase a total of 2000 candidates participated in the trials. Based on the criteria of the trials, 66 candidates with bowling speeds of 130+kph were identified as possessing good potential in the second phase. The process was supported and made more transparent by using speed-gun machines to measure the bowling speed of the candidates. In the third phase, a 10-day skills and fitness training camp was held for 18 aspiring fast bowlers who were selected from the initial list of 66 players identified in the second phase. During the third phase, a training camp was conducted in Kabul, where Afghanistan's renowned fast bowlers Hamid Hassan and Dawlat Zadran also shared their experiences with the participants.



## PROVISION OF TECHNICAL STAFF

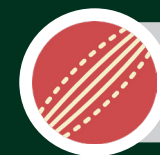
Technical staff including strength and conditioning trainers, masseurs, physios and coaches related to the Game Development Department provided services in their respective areas to various domestic and international

competitions including the Ghazi Amanullah Khan Regional One-Day Cup, Ahmad Shah Abdali First Class tournament U19 Regional Tournament and noticeably the Afghanistan Premier League T20 2018 in Sharjah.



## PARTICIPATION OF AFGHAN UMPIRES IN INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

Four ACB umpires participated in Asian Cricket Council workshop held in Sri Lanka. The entire logistics and expenses were borne by ACC. It was a valuable experience for the umpires to learn new skills from experienced umpires of other Asian cricketing nations. In addition to this, Mr. Ahmad Shah Pakteen supervised matches during the the ACC Asia Cup 2018 in UAE. It was a noticeable achievement as an Afghan umpire participated in a high-profile tournament featuring all ICC Full Members from Asia.



## DEVELOPMENT OF CRITERIA

- **Academies:** A special criteria for private academies was developed to ensure that high standards set for cricket development is not compromised by the private sector. The Game Development department conducted a survey in the month of August to categorize the different academies that operate in Kabul. This process will be extended to other provinces in the future.
- **Grounds:** A criteria for the development of grounds was also devised which will be used for categorization of grounds in Afghanistan based

on the facilities provided in the ground. The main goal of the criteria development was to ensure that certain standards are met in construction and operation of grounds in the private sector as well as ACB.

- **Technical Staff:** A special criteria was also developed for technical staff including match referees, scorers, coaches and umpires. Their assignment to different competitions will be based on their qualification and experience as outlined in the criteria.



## U17 SERIES VS BANGLADESH

Afghanistan Cricket Board hosted a series between Afghanistan and Bangladesh U17s in India consisting of three one-day matches and two three-day matches. The series helped in

identification of a new talent for the U19 National Team and capacity building of organizers.



# WOMEN CRICKET



Women cricket activities encompassed raising the level of awareness in the country with an ultimate goal of increasing participation of women in cricket. Technical

development which forms the basis of development was another theme of women cricket activities during 2018 as part of which training courses for coaching, scoring

and umpiring were conducted. The feedback about taking such primary steps for women cricket development was positive and appreciated by relevant stakeholders.



• **Interest and Awareness Survey:** A survey was carried out by the women cricket department to gauge the interest and awareness of women and girls in cricket, particularly at school level. The result showed decent level of awareness and interest in light of Afghan social norms and values

• **Elementary Technical Development Courses:** Three-day elementary coaching,

umpiring and scoring courses were organised in Kabul and Herat; over 70 girls participated in the courses that will help in provision of technical support in women cricket competitions. • **Skills assessment and training camps:** Skills assessment and training session were held in nearly 20 primary and secondary schools in Kabul to evaluate the potential and talent of girls. The participants were given training

on basic rules and roles of those involved in on-field and off-field activities.

• **Staff Recruitment:** In addition to those working in women cricket department at ACB headquarters, provincial development officers were recruited for Kabul and Herat to effectively manage the increasing women cricket activities.

# ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP TROPHY TOUR OF AFGHANISTAN

The Cricket World Cup Trophy Tour of Afghanistan took place at the end of 2018. During the three-day tour the trophy was displayed in Kabul, Bamyan, Herat and Kandahar provinces.

The trophy arrived at Kabul International Airport on an early morning flight from Dubai on Wednesday 26th December where it was welcomed by Afghanistan Cricket Board officials and staff including Chairman Azizullah Fazli, National Cricket Teams' players, Senate Fazal Hadi Muslimyar and cricket fans.

ACB Patron-in-Chief and President of Afghanistan His Excellency Mohammad Ashraf Ghani hosted ACB delegation and National Team players along with the trophy at the presidential palace in the afternoon of the first day and said that the love of Afghan people for the game of cricket and Afghan players is undisputable and we are hopeful that one day Afghanistan will win the ICC Cricket World Cup and the trophy be brought to Afghanistan permanently. During the first day, the trophy was also displayed at the historic Darul Aman palace in Kabul which was built in early 20th century and used by former King of Afghanistan Ghazi Amanullah Khan. The day ended with a celebration event at the National Radio and Television hall that was attended by ACB board members and top management, high-ranking government officials, civil society members, media



representatives and fans.

On the second day of the tour, the trophy was flown to central Bamyān province, which is known for its historical sites including the Buddhas of Bamyān. The trip to Bamyān started with an event organised in partnership between Afghanistan Cricket Board and the provincial government of Bamyān; it was attended by various stakeholders including ACB delegation, players, provincial government officials, school children and fans. Local artists performed at the event and key note speakers included ACB Chairman Azizullah Fazli, Governor of Bamyān Tahir Zohair and captain Asghar Afghan. The trophy was then displayed in front of Buddhas of Bamyān where a game of Buzkashi was organised to celebrate the Tour of the Trophy to Bamyān and Afghanistan.

Later that day, ACB officials and players flew to western Herat province as part of the tour where a series of events were organised. The care-taker governor of Herat Mr. Muhiudin Noori welcomed the delegation at the Governor House in the morning and called it an honour for Herat province to host the ICC Cricket World Cup Trophy. The trophy was later taken to the Great Mosque of Herat which is over 800-year old and Citadel of Herat which was built over 2000 years ago. In the afternoon, more than 2500 people poured into the Mawlana Jalaluddin Mohammad Balkhi Hall to see the trophy and also watch local artists and school children perform at the event.

As the last stop of the tour later in the

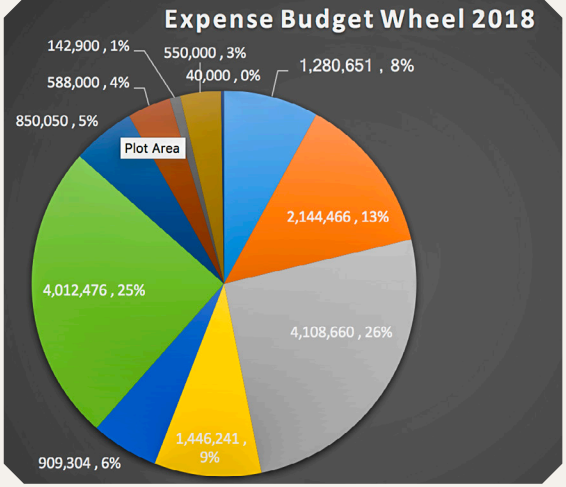
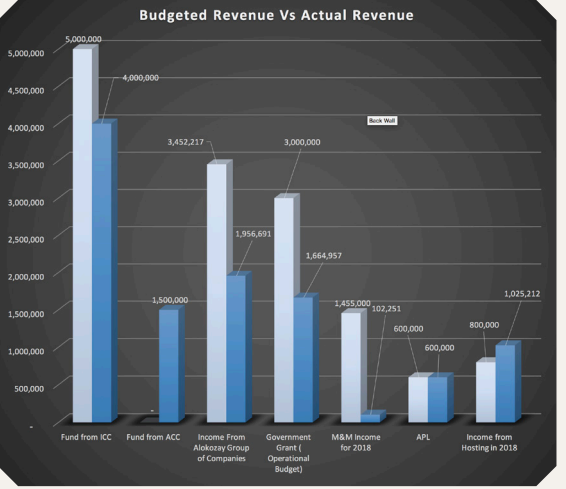
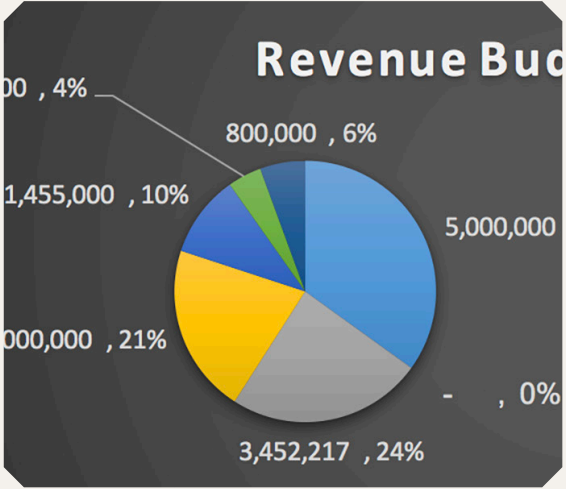
afternoon, the trophy was flown to the southern Kandahar province which has always been in the center of many developments in Afghanistan. Photo shoots were organised outside the Tomb of the Founder of modern Afghanistan Ahmad Shah Durani and a holy site. Residents of Kandahar gathered at a hall in the governor house and welcomed the trophy to the province by beating drums and playing music.

The Cricket World Cup Trophy Tour of Afghanistan was an excellent opportunity to reflect the true image of Afghanistan, its culture and heritage to the rest of the world.





# ACCOUNTS AND FINANCE



The main objective of the Finance department is to provide support to all other ACB departments in terms of their business operations to settle their respective payments; control expenditures; assess and measure risk; and apply processes and procedures to mitigate risk in compliance with all applied policies and procedures, especially ACB financial policy and laws of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. The Finance department continues to fulfil a very important role to ensure that all financial operations are directed towards the development of cricket in Afghanistan.

## ACB BUDGET 2018

A total of USD 16.07 million budget was forecasted for 2018 for Infrastructure Development, High Performance Program (HPP), Domestic Cricket, Human Resource, Administration, Media & Marketing, Information Technology, Game development and Women Cricket. The revenue budget of USD 14.35 million for the year 2018 was prepared based on financial commitments from ICC; (GoIRA); and Sponsorship and Media Rights. A total deficit of USD 1.72m was forecasted but during the year this difference between expense budget and revenue budget increased due to a decreased contribution of ICC funds.

Chief Executive Officer Shafiqullah Stanikzai representing ACB at the ACC Executive Board Meeting in Dubai convinced the members to increase the allocation of ACB from USD 0.4 million to USD 1.5 million. AGC released the total sponsorship amount for the year 2018; commercial contracts tenders were issued and new business agreements signed; and ACB generated decent gate revenue from hosting two series against both Zimbabwe and Bangladesh.

The first edition of Afghanistan Premier League T20 also became a new source of income that will contribute to an increase in ACB revenue in coming years; and additional profit sharing from the league will be shared between ACB and the investment partner as per the signed agreement between the two parties.

REVENUE BUDGET

ACB is creating financial value from different sources to facilitate and finance cricket activities around the country. ACB top management and the finance team play a vital role in financial diversification and sustainability of ACB revenue streams. The primary sources of funding are as follows:

- 1. Media rights
- 2. Ground and sponsorship rights
- 3. ICC contribution
- 4. ACC contribution
- 5. Value in kind (Afghan Government special contribution)
- 6. APLT20 Fee charges

A budget deficit of USD 1.72m was forecasted but strict cash flow management, conservative event management and generation of income from non-forecasted sources made it possible to capitalize expenses for the year 2018. Nevertheless, valued at USD 2m payments will be carried forward to the year 2019 due to lack of sufficient cash. The deficit was covered from participation fee in Asia Cup reimbursed by ACC which was USD 1.5m, Media rights and in-stadia rights agreements with international business partners and extra gate revenue generation

from both Zimbabwe and Bangladesh series. The additional USD 2m payments will be done from 2019 budget. It was forecasted that ICC would contribute USD 5m where they reimbursed USD 4m only. On the other hand, no revenue was forecasted from ACC but they disbursed USD 1.5m as participation fee for Asia Cup during 2018, which largely helped in covering the deficit. The total actual revenue contribution from ICC and ACC was 38% of the total ACB revenue budget.

Revenue Budget 2018					
S.No	Detailed Description	Revenue Budget	Up to Date Revenue	Percentage Revenue Budget	Percentage Revenue Achieved
1.1	Fund from ICC	\$ 5,000,000	\$ 4,000,000	80%	28%
1.2	Fund from ACC	-	\$ 1,500,000	0%	10%
2	Income From Alokozay Group of Companies	\$ 3,452,217	\$ 1,956, 691	24%	14%
3	Government Grant (Operational Budget)	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 1,664,957	21%	12%
4	M & M Income for 2018	\$ 1,455,000	\$ 102,251	10%	1%
5	APL	\$ 600,000	\$ 600,000	4%	4%
6	Income From Hosting in 2018	\$ 800,000	\$ 1,025,212	6%	7%
Total Revenue Budget		\$ 14,307,217	\$ 10,849,111	100%	76%

Sponsorship amount from Alokozay Group of Companies for the year 2018 and carryforward amount from previous years was forecasted at USD 3.45m consisting of USD 1m as AGC Chairman’s grant; USD 1.3m as sponsorship amount for 2018; and remaining USD 1.1m USD as the carryforward sponsorship amount from previous years. A total of USD 1.16m as the 2018 sponsorship fee and USD 800k

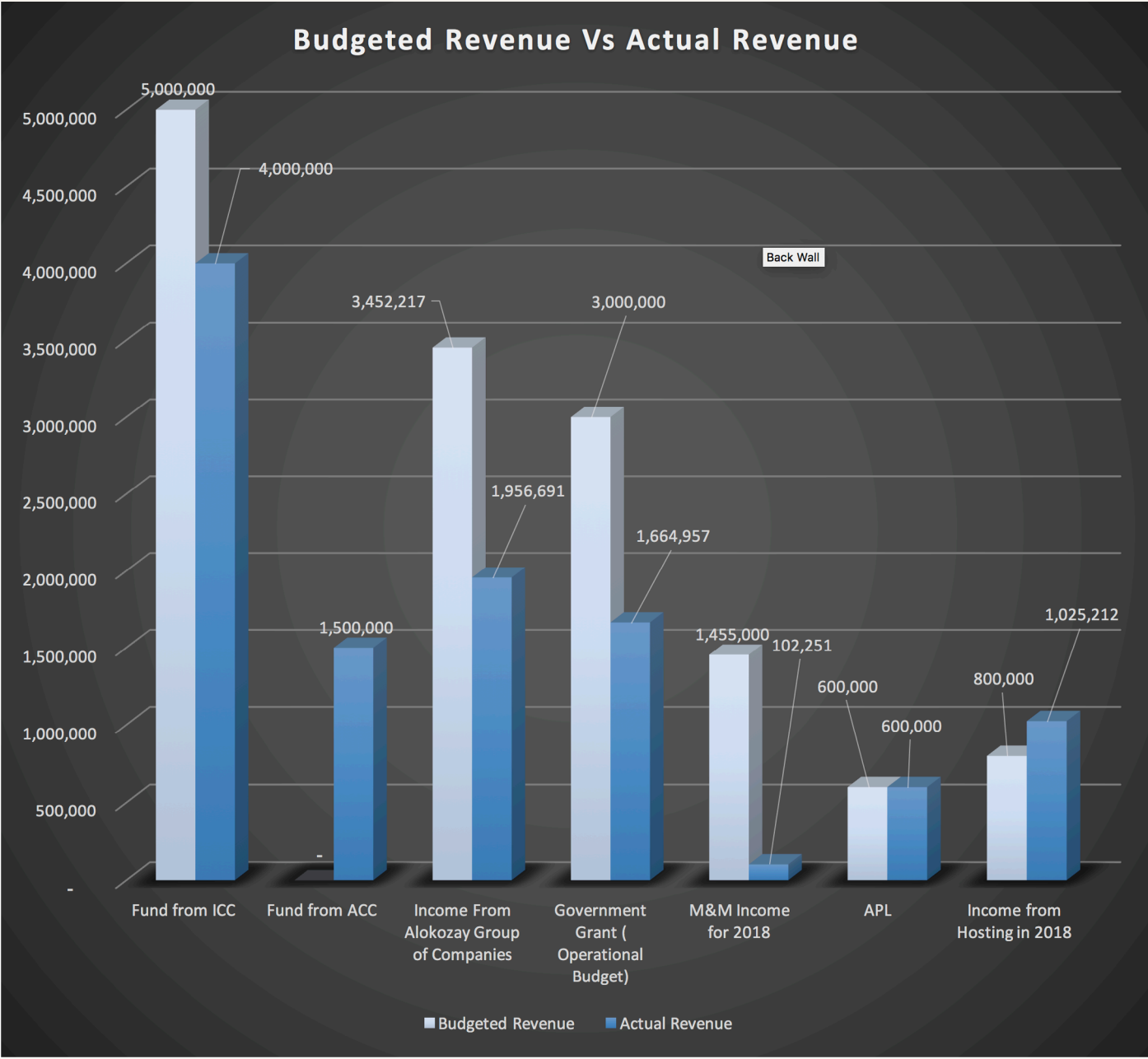
was received as previous years’ dues from AGC during the year and the remaining amount of USD 1.5m has been allocated for the development of cricket grounds (Paktia and Behsood cricket ground) scheduled to be undertaken in 2018 and 2019. AGC released 89 % of the 2018 sponsorship fee which contributed 14% to the total actual revenue of 2018. The remaining 11 % sponsorship

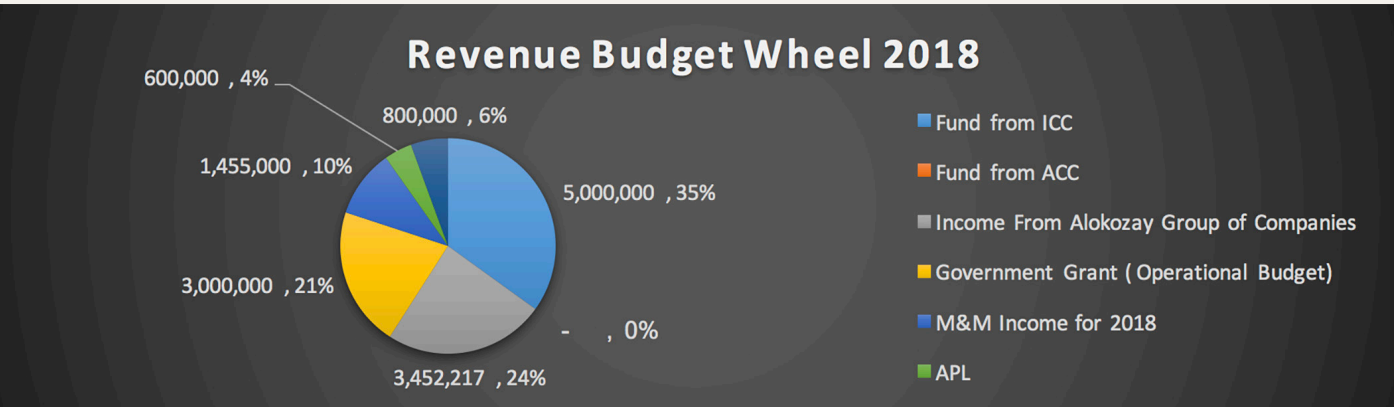
amount was also utilized during the year but its payments will be received in 2019. It was the first time that ACB utilized the total AGC sponsorship amount since the agreement was signed in 2015. ACB requested GoIRA to partly finance ACB operational budget for the year 2018 with an amount of USD 3m but their contribution was only USD 1.6m. This low contribution put ACB in financial

difficulties and ACB is in deficit for amounting 2m USD which will be paid from ACB 2019 budget. Therefore, the total contribution of GoIRA was 12%. ACB expected higher revenue from the Afghan market in domestic cricket events and an amount of USD 1.5m was forecasted from this revenue steam but it did not contribute much due to wider macro-economic problems in the country. The main contribution in this revenue stream was expected from the domestic Shpageeza

T20 Cricket League (franchise fees, media/sponsorship rights and gate revenue) which unfortunately did not take place due to unforeseen circumstances. Therefore, only 1% of the total revenue (around USD 100k) was generated from this source. ACB signed an agreement with Snixer Sports to serve as the investment partner for the Afghanistan Premier League T20 based on which they are expected to pay USD 600k to ACB annually and give a share of 51% in profits

to ACB. During 2018, ACB hosted Zimbabwe and Bangladesh in February and June, respectively. The forecasted revenue for each series was forecasted at USD 400k but due to effective promotion and advocacy by the Media and Marketing Department and higher income from media and sponsorship rights, the actual revenue was USD 1m from both series which is 7% of the total forecasted revenue for 2018.



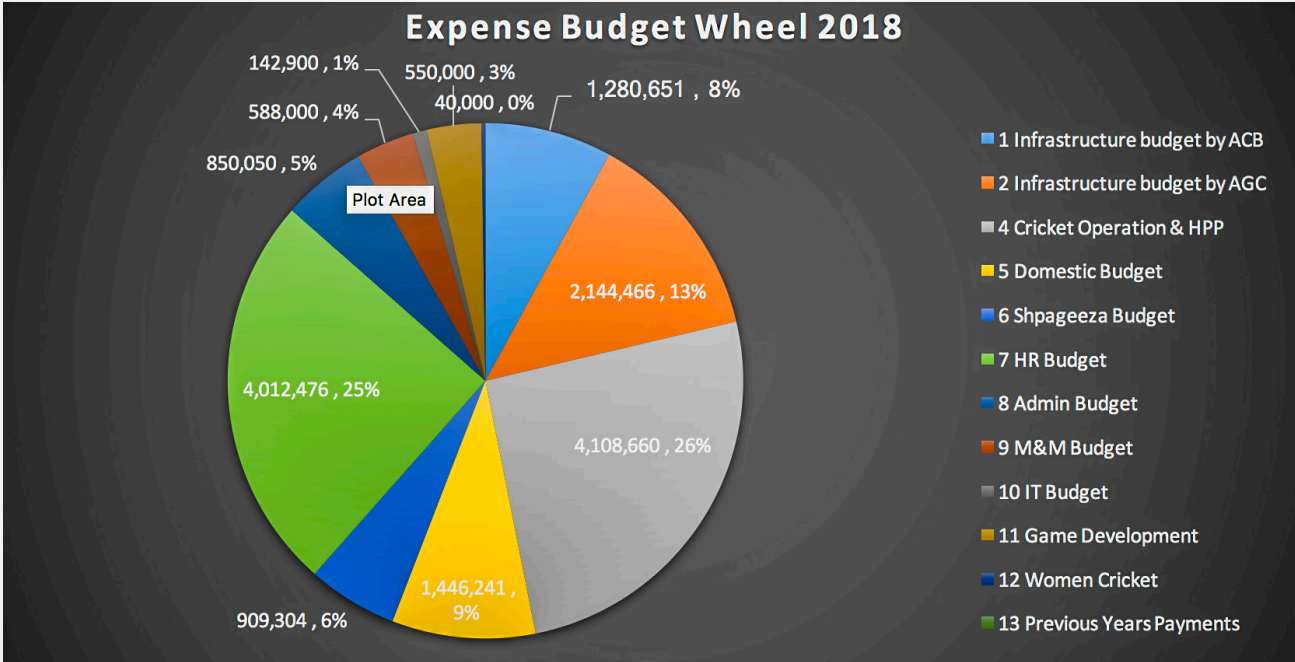


## EXPENDITURE BUDGET

In Total, USD 16.07m was planned for the overall expenditure budget in 2018. For infrastructure development, USD 3.42m was allocated that consisted of allocation of USD 1.28m from ACB and USD 2.14 m from AGC carry forward sponsorship fee and their Chairman grant. USD 5.5m was forecasted for execution of domestic and international cricket events – USD 4.1m for High Performance Program (HPP) and USD 1.4m budgeted for domestic cricket. The remaining (approximate USD 9m) was allocated for other different cricket

development and administrative activities covering game development, HR, Administration, Media and Marketing, Women Cricket and IT. The breakdown of the expenditure budget is presented below. A total of USD 12.21m expenses were made during 2018 which is 76% of the total budget. The lower execution of the budget was mainly due to lesser funds received from the government and ICC.

S.No	Description	Budget 2018	Actual Expenditure	Percentage of Budget 2018	Percentage Budget Execution
1	Infrastructure budget by ACB	\$ 1,280,651	\$ 930,661.06	8%	73%
2	Infrastructure budget by AGC	\$ 2,144,466	\$ 0.00	13%	0%
3	Cricket Operation & HPP	\$ 4,108,660	\$ 3,169,448.25	25%	77%
4	Domestic Budget	\$ 1,446,241	\$ 1,031,585.20	9%	71%
5	Shpageeza Budget	\$ 909,304	\$ 0.00	6%	0%
6	HR Budget	\$ 4,012,476	\$ 3,205,066.11	25%	80%
7	Admin Budget	\$ 850,050	\$ 779,571.43	5%	92%
8	M & M Budget	\$ 588,000	\$ 32,934.19	4%	6%
9	IT Budget	\$ 142,900	\$ 37,471.28	1%	26%
10	Game Development	\$ 550,000	\$ 14,598.54	3%	3%
11	Women Cricket	\$ 40,000	\$ 2,377.03	0%	6%
12	Previous Years Payments		\$ 1,772,050.98	0%	0%
Total Expenses Budget		\$16,072,748	\$ 12,213,264	100%	76%
Budget Deficit		\$ 1,720,531			

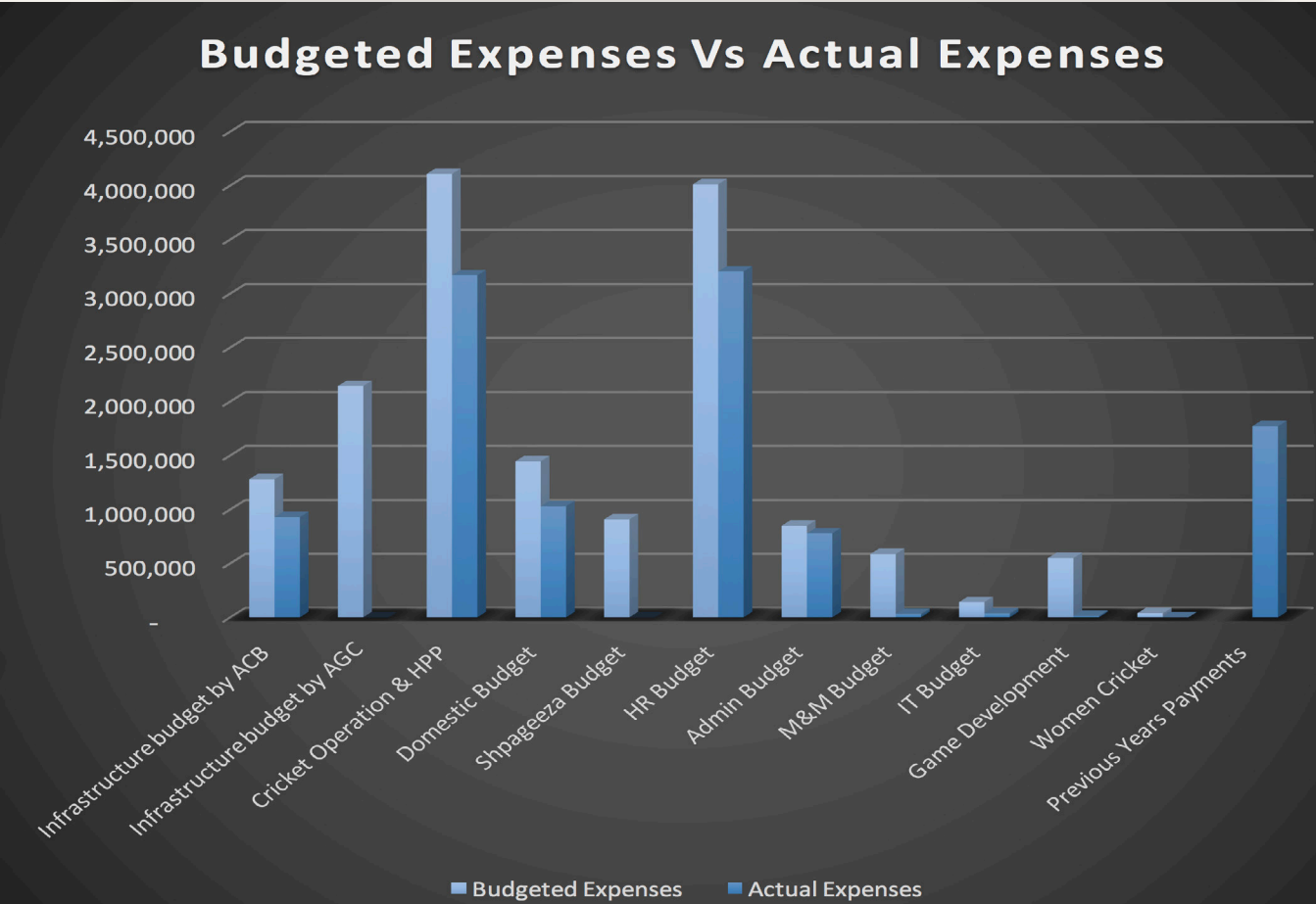


## EXPENDITURE BUDGET

The total expenditure budget was allocated as follows:

- Infrastructure - 21%
- High Performance Programs - 26 %
- Human resources including players' monthly salaries and other increments - 25%
- Domestic cricket tournaments – 9%

- Administration support activities – 5%
- Other cricket development, support and administrative activities 14%. The following graph shows a comparison of budgeted expenses and actual budget expenses.





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# ADMINISTRATIVE DEVELOPMENT



Administrative development continued to be a focus for Afghanistan Cricket Board in 2018 to ensure effective management and utilization of available resources. Departmental policies were approved to administer the respective areas of operations in admin, finance, human resources, information technology, media & marketing and procurement.

## ADMIN

The admin department strived to bring efficiency in its areas of operation including cost cutting and provision of better services. As part of ACB's commitment to the protection of environment, trees were planted at ACB headquarters and regional offices.

- **Record keeping and correspondence:** Database management was introduced for better record keeping of incoming and outgoing correspondence and subsequent reporting to top management; this includes a recorded mail delivery system to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of correspondence as well as prevent the loss of important documents.
- **Asset Management:** For better asset management, a stock and inventory system was introduced to move from manual to automated system, which has been one of the strategic objectives of ACB over the years. Vehicle tracking system was installed in ACB-owned vehicles for monitoring and reduction of fuel consumption.
- **Opening of Regional Offices and Guest Houses:** Regional offices and guest houses were opened in Nangarhar, Kandahar, Paktia, Parwan and Kunduz to facilitate regional administration and cricketing activities that are important for strengthening domestic cricket.
- **Construction of Masjid:** The newly constructed Masjid at ACB headquarters was also completed and inaugurated in 2018.

## ADMINISTRATIVE

## HUMAN RESOURCES

- **Human Resources Policy & Salary Structure:** The Human Resources Policy, which was approved in January 2018, was reviewed to identify any shortcomings in the policy and develop it further for approval in the upcoming Annual General Meeting. During the review, the policy was shared with other departments for their input and comments in order to get their consensus in the process. A comprehensive salary structure was developed for both Administrative and Technical departments and salaries of staff were adjusted accordingly based on person specification and job description.

- **Performance Management & Training Need Analysis (TNA):** For effective people management, the HR Department developed and launched a comprehensive performance management and appraisal system based on which individual objectives are set for all employees at the beginning of the year and then reviewed at the end of the year. In addition to this and considering the importance of employee development, a structured Training Need Analysis (TNA) was conducted in order to gauge the training needs of all ACB employees at different levels. Procedural manuals for both Performance Management and Training Need Analysis were developed and implemented over the course of 2018. Besides general training programmes with the help of RANA Technologies, an English language learning course was delivered for over 40 ACB staff that lacked basic understanding and knowledge of English language.

- **National Internship Programme:** As part of ACB corporate social responsibility and community engagement, an initiative was taken to launch the National Internship Programme and 14 students and/or graduates were recruited. The programme involves career development and progression of young university students and graduates; they are accepted onto a 3-month programme and placed in different departments. Internship at ACB offers students the experience of working in an international organization to gain valuable knowledge and insight into internal practices, particularly of sports organization.

- **Human Resources Management information System (HRMIS):** The HRMIS was developed to make it more sophisticated in order to contain important employee information including attendance record, leave and travel record, personal information, education, experience and other necessary information. The HRMIS is connected to the attendance management system which tracks daily attendance of staff through a device using fingerprint technology.

## ADMINISTRATION

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

In 2018, there was noticeable improvement in information technology development at the Afghanistan Cricket Board. Development activities involved redefinition and restructuring of both front-end and back-end of the official ACB website which provides regular updates an information to viewers in three different languages i.e. English, Pashto and Dari.

- **Website development:** IT department worked closely with the Media and Marketing department to improve contents as well as look and feel of the website in order to make it more user-friendly. One of the major addition to the official ACB website was the incorporation of the web-based Live Score Application that provides live score updates of domestic and international competitions

- **HRMIS (Human Recourse Management Information System):** In coordination with the HR Department, HRMIS was also improved in order to add more features to it and make it more comprehensive in terms of containing information.

- **Bandwidth:** Internet bandwidth was increased from 12MB to 25MB based on the agreement with Internet Service Partner, Rana Technologies. The increase was important because of the newly introduced information management systems requiring high speed internet.

- **Email Server Data transfer and migration from MS Exchange to Gmail:** The IT department transferred and migrated data from a relatively low quality QZeal company's MS exchange to Google hosting (Gmail) for smooth, quick and secure servers to receive 24/7 services.

- **Task Management System:** A task management system was developed to help automate and streamline daily tasks at managerial level for increased productivity. The system allows respective supervisors to track and follow-up on daily activities with top management and subordinates. It includes task assignment, role of relevant departments, start date, end date, comments, approval and tracking progress. Managers are now able to report to their line managers using the task management system and inform them about the status of the tasks in hand.

- **Wired LAN Network:** Other major activities in IT included the adoption of wired LAN network for better and smooth network stability and secure data transaction.

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

## MEDIA AND MARKETING

Media and Marketing activities shaped incredibly well in 2018 contributing to betterment of ACB image and revenue generation. For the first time in the history of Afghanistan cricket, ACB sold TV broadcast and digital rights of domestic competitions and international fixtures in the Future Tours Program (FTP) for a period of five years from 2018-2023 for USD 2.3m to Total Sports Marketing (TSM). The three-match T20I series against Bangladesh in Dehradun India saw record level revenue from media rights, sponsorship rights and gate revenue amounting to nearly AFN 50 million ( USD 703682). The coverage of the inaugural edition of Afghanistan Premier League T20 in Sharjah extended to 60 countries across the world setting an excellent viewership platform for the league in the years to come. The “Cricket for All” general awareness programme was launched and implemented in five provinces to raise the general awareness about the game of cricket and encourage increased participation across the country.

- **Clothing sponsorship contract with Hunt:** An agreement with clothing manufacturer Hunt was signed in January 2019 to provide clothing for all national teams (national, U19, emerging and U16) free of cost and in return for placement of manufacturer’s logo on players’ jerseys. This will save ACB thousands of USD which would otherwise be spent on clothing.

- **APLT20 MoU Signing Ceremony:** A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between ACB and Snixer Sports at Kabul Intercontinental Hotel on 11th January 2018 based on which Snixer Sports will be the investment partner of the Afghanistan Premier League T20 for a period of six years. The event was broadcasted live on 1TV in Afghanistan and attended by various ACB stakeholders including high ranking government officials, ACB board members, ACB leadership, Snixer Sports representatives and various other stakeholders.

- **Series against Zimbabwe:** The 2-match T20I and 5-match ODI series against Zimbabwe was held in February 2018 at Sharjah Cricket Stadium in the UAE. The Media and Marketing Department generated a revenue of USD 315,373 from media rights, sponsorship rights and gate revenue. The matches were telecasted in Afghanistan (1TV), Middle East (OSN), Sub Saharan Africa (Kwese Sports) and Pakistan (GEO Super). The contract of USD100,000 with Kwese Sport in particular was the result of efforts by the media and marketing department.

- **Media training for journalists across the country:** Trainings

## MEDIA AND MARKETING

were organised by the media and marketing department for journalists in various parts of the country including Nangarhar, Kunduz and Kandahar. Hundreds of journalists and media representatives participated in the trainings and improved their knowledge of cricket in different ways including understanding the business aspect, high performance and selection policy. The participants were highly appreciative of the training and emphasized the need for similar trainings in the future across the country.

- **ICC Cricket World Cup 2019 Qualification Celebration Event:** An event was organised at National Radio and Television Hall to celebrate the qualification of the National Cricket Team to the ICC Cricket World Cup 2019 upon their arrival from Zimbabwe. It was attended by high-profile dignitaries and VIPs and was broadcasted live on RTA. The media and marketing team worked tirelessly to make it a successful event in which the country’s renowned signer Farhad Darya also performed.

- **Sponsorship agreements for People with Disabilities (PWDs) Cricket:** The People with Disabilities (PWDs) Regional T20 Tournament was held at Kabul International Cricket Stadium with the participation of five regional teams. This was made possible by the media and marketing department after securing a sponsorship amount of USD 15000 from UNICEF. Besides this, the department also ensured that the tournament gets the wider media coverage by major local and international media houses. Additionally, the Media and Marketing Department successfully negotiated a sponsorship agreement with Voice of America for USD 50,000.00 for the Afghanistan PWDs national team's tour of India in December 2018.

- **Media rights agreement with Total Sports Marketing:** Afghanistan Cricket Board was included in ICC’s Future Tours Program (FTP) 2019-2023. ACB deemed it necessary to sell the media rights for the entire FTP as one package to ensure that ACB gets the most out of it. A Request for Proposal (RFP) was issued to invite bids from interested companies and marketing agencies. At the end, media rights for ACB's international and domestic matches were awarded to Total Sports Marketing (TSM) for USD 2.3 million. TSM’s initial offer was USD 1.8 million which was the highest bid received. The increase in total fees happened after lengthy negotiations between TSM and ACB. TSM also acquired media rights of Cricket Ireland for the same period.

- **TV production agreement with Field of Play:** Following the media rights agreement, ACB also signed an agreement

## MEDIA AND MARKETING

with Field of Play to provide TV production for ACB-hosted international and domestic matches. This will help in consistency and improve the quality of TV production that is important for the reputation and viewership of Afghanistan matches.

- **Series against Bangladesh:** The three-match T20I series against Bangladesh in Dehradun was a highly successful and profitable series from media and marketing department perspective. A total of USD 703682 revenue was generated from the series from media rights, sponsorship rights and gate revenue. The ACB media and marketing department team assigned to travel to Dehradun worked day and night for the promotion of the series using both traditional and digital marketing and promotion techniques. The media coverage that the series received was remarkable where up to 100 local and international media houses covered the matches on daily basis. The crowd turnout ranged from 15k to 18k in the three matches which was directly impacted by the marketing and promotion campaign that was run by the media and marketing department.

- **Town Hall Meeting:** The first town hall meeting was organised by the media and marketing department in coordination with Afghanistan Radio and Television (RTA) which was attended by ACB representatives from various departments. The panelists answered questions of audience that included journalists, cricket players, students, experts and so on. The programme was recorded and televised by RTA and received positive feedback from viewers.



## MEDIA AND MARKETING

- **Ghazi Amanullah Khan Regional One-Day Cup:** This was one of the main domestic cricket events that took place in July 2018. The group stage matches were covered on ACB social and digital platforms and the last eight matches of the competitions were broadcasted live on 1TV in Afghanistan. This required considerable efforts as the tournament was organised on a short notice. TSM gave broadcast rights to 1TV and the ACB media and marketing department was responsible for the ground and sponsorship rights. According to the MoU with TSM, the fees set for Ghazi Amanullah Khan Regional One-Day Cup were USD 10000 for 19 matches but as only eight matches were broadcasted live TSM paid the fees on pro-rata basis i.e. USD 4210. A total of USD 15157 was raised in ground and sponsorship rights.

- **Memorandum of Understanding with ASRA Orphanage:** As part of ACB's Corporate Social Responsibility, a memorandum of understanding was signed with ASRA orphanage based on which 5% of ticketing revenue from all ACB domestic tournaments will be paid to ASRA.

- **Memorandum of Understanding with RANA Technologies:** The MoU with RANA Technologies was renewed on favorable terms which means that RANA will provide services, including 25 mbps internet, to ACB worth a total of USD 58000 and in return ACB will provide marketing opportunities to RANA.

- **"Cricket for All" general awareness programme:** The Cricket for All general awareness programme was launched to help increased participation in the game of cricket by encouraging young people to take up the game of cricket beside



## MEDIA AND MARKETING

their education. It was successfully held in Khost, Bamyan, Faryab, Jozjan and Herat provinces; except Khost, cricket is relatively less popular in the other four provinces. As part of the programme, ACB officials including coaches and educators traveled to far-away and remote provinces to visit schools and educate students and teachers about the basics of cricket and provide information about the global popularity of cricket, viewership, success of Afghanistan National Cricket Team and other related topics.

The second round of Cricket for All programme was conducted in the northern Bamyan province where media and marketing



department staff visited schools to encourage participation in the game of cricket and increase the level of understanding amongst young children and youth. The programme was highly appreciated by the residents of Bamyan province, government officials and cricket fans across the country citing the importance of widening the reach of cricket to every part of the country. The third round of the Cricket for All general awareness programme was held in Faryab and Jozjan provinces that are mainly Turkmen and Uzbek dominated provinces. The last round of the programme in 2018 was held in the western Herat province where a series of events were held to engage various stakeholders of the society including school children, university students, girls, government officials and school teachers.

- **Inaugural Afghanistan Premier League T20:** The much-anticipated APLT20 was launched during an event in Dubai on 27th August 2018. The media and marketing department was key in making the event colourful and successful by working closely with ITW Works in finalising the agenda, creatives, emcee, live streaming and media interaction. The ACB Media

## MEDIA AND MARKETING

and Marketing team finalised the APLT20 logo prior to the league launch. The event was also given coverage on ACB digital and social platforms.

The APLT20 2018 players draft was held on 10th September 2018 in Dubai. The preparation stage of the players draft included collection of data about players' profiles and finalising the look and feel of the event premises including color schemes, sub graphics, invitations, agenda and other details.

The inaugural APLT20 was one of the major projects in the year 2018 in which the media and marketing department played a key role from inception to completion. The ACB Media and Marketing Department was involved in related activities including the attraction of sponsors, distribution of media rights, coordination with TV production, coordination



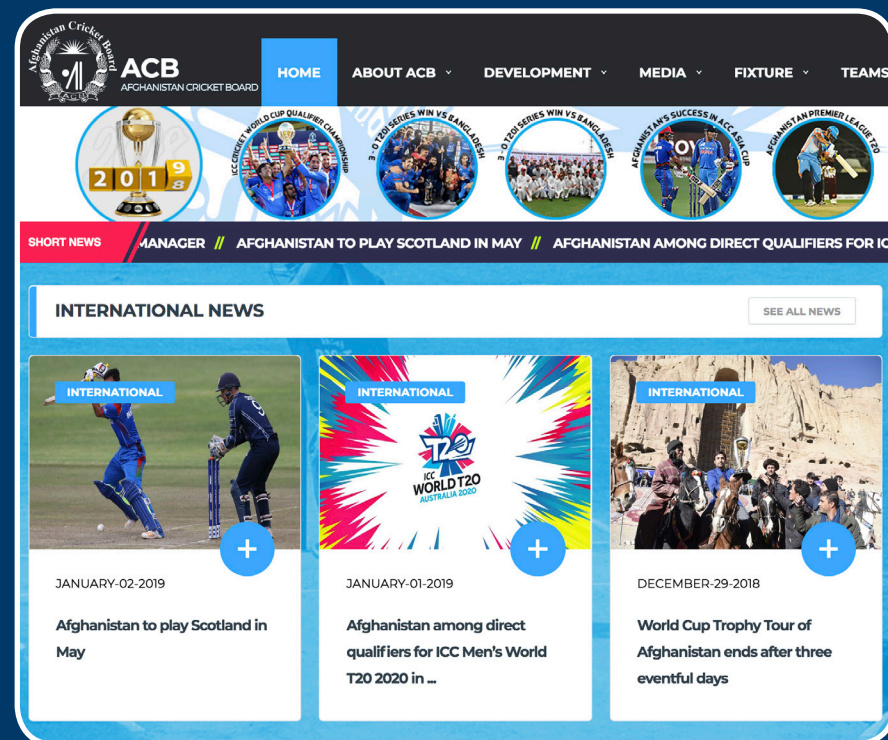
with franchises, media coverage of the league, social and digital media reporting and updates, and liaison with other stakeholders including Snixer Sports, Sharjah Cricket Club, DSPORT, Gulbahar Group and Kakar Advocates. APLT20 was televised on 11 TV channels and two digital platforms covering 60 countries and reaching millions of cricket fans across the world. The matches also received far and wide social media coverage and famous cricketers who were either part of the league or watching the games tweeted on regular basis that was particularly important in brand creation and awareness for the league.

- **ACB website improvement and content generation:** The official ACB website is considered to be an important means of

## MEDIA AND MARKETING

providing information to the general public and all stakeholders. For the purpose of providing detailed information to website visitors in at least three languages; the Dari section of the website was also activated in addition to Pashto and English. This has been particularly helpful in attracting a larger number of viewers. Contents in form of reports, features, articles, interviews, facts and figures were generated on regular basis and published on ACB website.

• **ACB Magazine and Newsletter:** The official ACB magazine



"Afghan Cricket" was published bi-monthly or once in every two months, in 2018 and the Newsletter was published monthly. In total, six issues of the magazine and 12 issues of the newsletter were published and distributed throughout the year. An additional special issue of the magazine was also published dedicated solely to the Afghanistan Premier League T20. All issues contained comprehensive information in form of articles, features, stories, statistics and interviews covering related cricket developments in three languages of Pashto, Dari and English. Besides the aim of conveying information to the readers, the magazine also generates some income from the sponsors.

• **Social Media:** ACB Social Media platforms continued to attract more followers in 2018. The followers of ACB official Facebook page passed the 2.3 million mark and served as an important way of disseminating information to fans and

## MEDIA AND MARKETING



followers. Twitter followers passed 270,000 and the Instagram account which was not active for some time was recovered and used on regular basis for imagery updates. Social media accounts were set up for the Afghanistan Premier League T20 including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. A new Facebook page was created for domestic cricket, and currently being run, by ACB Media and Marketing Department due to excess, and in some cases irrelevance of contents, of information on ACB's main Facebook page.



## MEDIA AND MARKETING



# INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT



Infrastructure development forms an important objective of ACB strategic plan to stimulate the growth of the game by providing appropriate facilities for players at different levels across the country. Although it has been a major challenge, for ACB over the last several years, for reasons such as land acquisition and lack of funds, 2018 saw good progress in this area including new construction projects and developing existing

facilities such as academies, grounds and stadiums. ACB currently has 16 cricket stadiums and grounds across Afghanistan, some of which are operational and some are currently under construction. In addition to this, the design for Behsood Cricket Stadium has been finalised and the land has also been acquired for its construction work that is due to start soon. There are also 14 academies in Kabul and provinces that are run

and managed by ACB. Kabul, Kandahar, Nangarhar, Khost and Kunar stadiums, that host elite-level (First-Class and List-A) domestic cricket competitions, are operational and will be improved further in the years to come. Kunduz Cricket Ground is also operational after development activities and capable of hosting domestic cricket competitions.



## KABUL CRICKET STADIUM

The expansion of Kabul Cricket Stadium has been planned for many years but there has been little or no progress unfortunately because of lack of land in the capital. The lengthy process of acquiring adjacent land and transfer of its ownership to ACB has always been slow as a result of which

the progress of developing the stadium has not occurred. A survey was conducted in 2018 for the development and expansion of Kabul Cricket Stadium and at the end of 2018, ACB Patron-in-Chief and President of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan formed a committee comprising of the Advisor to the President in Urban

Development, representatives of the Independent Land Authority and ACB. The Independent Land Authority suggested four locations for the construction of a new ground to ACB which were duly evaluated and the best option recommended for approval.

## KHOST CRICKET GROUND



Considering a very high interest in cricket in Khost province and turnout of large number of spectators on match days, the development plan for Khost Cricket Stadium in 2019 included the extension of stands for increasing its capacity from 5000 to 15000 spectators. By the end of 2018, 80% progress was made to extend the stands and the remaining 20% is due to be completed in early 2019.

## PAKTIA CRICKET STADIUM



Located in provincial capital Gardez and built in 64000sqm area, all planned activities for 2018 were completed by Hewad Nageen Consturction Company during the year which included a fence around the green area, water supply system, a bore well and an underground water tank. As Paktia is the center of Mis-e Ainak Zone, the stadium will be uplifted to an international-standard facility in the future with technical assistance from the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing.

## ZABUL CRICKET GROUND



The ground in southern Zabul province is funded by the Ministry of Counter Narcotics with an allocated budget of USD 450,000. The contractor Hayat Helmandwal Construction Company completed 50% work of the project by the end of 2018 that includes a pavilion, water supply system, fence, sidewalks, side ditch, outdoor academy and green outfield.

## HELMAND CRICKET GROUND

The project of Helmand Cricket Ground is also funded by the Ministry of Counter Narcotics and awarded to Hayat Helmandwal Construction Company with an allocated budget of USD 450,000. 80% of project activities were completed by the end of 2018 that included a pavilion, water supply system, fence, sidewalks, side ditch, outdoor academy and green outfield.



## PAKTIKA CRICKET GROUND

This ground is built in 120,000m<sup>2</sup> in two phases in provincial capital Sharana. The first phase is funded by the Afghanistan Cricket Board with a total budget of USD 400,000 and includes a two-story pavilion, water supply system, fence, sidewalks and side ditch. The first phase of the project was awarded to Alharamain Construction Company and 90% of its work completed by the end of 2018. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan allocated a budget of USD 1,000,000 for the second phase of the project. The procurement process of awarding the contract was initiated in late 2018 which is expected to be finalised in early 2019. The second phases includes construction of stands for 4000 spectators; green outfield; purchase and supply of equipment; and levelling through cut and fill.



## LAGHMAN CRICKET GROUND

The first phase of the project was completed prior to 2018 which included a surrounding wall, ground levelling and installing water supplying system in the outfield and digging a bore-well. The second phase of the project continued in 2018 and saw 25% work completion by the end of the year. The project is being implemented by United Europe Company and funded by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and includes a three-story pavilion, stands, side ditch, sidewalks and green outfield.



## CRICKET ACADEMIES

There are currently 14 academies across Afghanistan that are managed and operated by the Afghanistan Cricket Board for the development of the game and training of players. The provinces where these facilities exist include Kabul (Kabul and Suroobi), Khost, Logar, Parwan, Kapisa, Kandahar, Helmand, Ghazni, Badakhshan, Herat, Takhar, Kunduz and Kunar. ACB plans to build five National Cricket Academies (NCAs) in the five cricketing zones of the country that would include indoor academies and outdoor facilities.



# CHALLENGES

Infrastructure development is a challenge for a number of reasons including transfer and acquisition of land; for example, the expansion of current Kabul Cricket Stadium did not happen because of difficulties in acquisition of surrounding land and lack of cooperation from relevant ministries and/or government agencies despite repeated follow-ups from ACB. Therefore, ACB has not been able to utilize funds allocated by AGC to infrastructure projects and it is at risk of being withdrawn by AGC. In addition to this, government ministries have allocated funds for several cricket ground across the country without taking into account ACB's priorities for infrastructure projects. These grounds will be handed over to ACB upon completion which would require high maintenance costs.

The support and interest of local business community is vital in the development of cricket in every country. Unfortunately, the market immaturity in Afghanistan and lack of interest from the local business community in cricket, particularly media and sponsorship rights, does not help ACB to generate revenue from the local market. As a result, ACB is often compelled to approach

businesses overseas that may show willingness to work with ACB but contribute very little in monetary terms.

TV rights infringement in Afghanistan has been a major concern for ACB, broadcasters and media rights distributors including Star Sports that has the media rights of all ICC events until 2023. More precisely, TV networks in Afghanistan illegally broadcast cricket matches without paying any licensee fees. As a result, ACB is not able to generate the right amount of revenue from Afghanistan matches, particularly those that are hosted by ACB.

The rapid rise of cricket in Afghanistan and the large interest of people in the game of cricket is both an opportunity and challenge for ACB. It is obvious that increased participation is highly beneficial for the development of cricket in long term but satisfying the increasing level of demands is a challenging task. In addition to this, there is also considerable unnecessary pressure and criticism on ACB as every single individual who is a fan of cricket considers himself as a stakeholder and demands to have a say in cricketing affairs.

# WAY FORWARD

Afghanistan National Cricket Team will participate in the ICC Cricket World Cup 2019 in England and Wales. Preparations for the Cricket World Cup have been underway since late 2018 and the process will be expedited in 2019 starting with a training camp schedule to be held in January in a suitable location in India. Infrastructure development is a priority for ACB to provide facilities for current and potential players in form of building high-standard stadiums, grounds and academies across the country and more specifically in the five different regions. This will enable cricketers to have access to the facilities they need for their skill development and also contribute

to increased participation in the game of cricket all over the country.

ACB will organise various domestic cricket competitions across different formats and levels in 2019 to ensure that young players within the country have the right exposure to competitive and professional cricket. This will help in supply of players for national teams to strengthen Afghanistan cricket in the future and also respond to the passion and interest of Afghans in cricket. In addition to this, the two commercial T20 cricket leagues of ACB, namely Shpageeza and APLT20, will be organised in 2019 with innovations and creativity.





## Official Partners and Sponsors





## **Afghanistan Cricket Board**

Alokozay Kabul International Cricket Stadium  
Near Chaman-e-Huzoori, Khan Abdul Ghani Khan  
Road, Kabul Afghanistan