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## **Cricket Bursaries and Urban Centres: Initial Progress on the South Asian Action Plan**

- **Pilot cricket bursary project for talented young South Asian cricketers**
- **Invitations for Urban Cricket Centre applications**
- **Partnerships with British Asian Trust and National Asian Cricket Council**

On the Second day of The Participation Test, ECB announced the initial progress that has been made against the 11-point South Asian Action Plan

launched earlier this month (10 May).

To help support talented young South Asian players, the ECB has formed a partnership with the Royal National Children's SpringBoard Foundation to run a pilot cricket scholarship project in 2019 that will identify and connect four young South Asian cricketers from urban areas with schools that have a strong cricketing offer.

Pending a successful pilot, the scheme will be expanded to give young cricketers from inner-city areas life-changing bursaries while also supporting their cricketing development.

The Royal National Children's SpringBoard Foundation offers young people from disadvantaged and vulnerable backgrounds bursaries in state and independent boarding schools. It seeks to increase social mobility by widening educational opportunities for young people. Currently it has over 500 children in schools.

Some of the additional activities undertaken by the ECB as part of the Action Plan include:

- Inviting applications for three pilot Urban Cricket Centres. ECB will be working in collaboration with a range of partners and people to select the most appropriate sites for the pilots. ECB will be sharing expressions of interest for Centres based in targeted areas across the country. The first of those was published yesterday in East London.
- Agreeing to work with the British Asian Trust as a strategic and significant funding partner for the Action Plan. This new partnership will sit alongside the new advisory body relationship between the ECB and the National Asian Cricket Council.
- Commissioning 51 of the 100 non-turf pitches that the ECB have committed to building by the end of 2019.

ECB Non-Executive Director **Lord Kamlesh Patel** said:

“When we launched the Action Plan three weeks ago we knew that we would be judged on our actions rather than words. In this short space of time it is really encouraging to see the progress that is already being made.

“We know that working closely with key partners will play a huge part in making this Action Plan a success. The partnerships with SpringBoard, The British Asian Trust and the National Asian Cricket Council are great news for the game and for South Asian communities. This is an important first step in making our ambitions a reality.”

CEO of SpringBoard **Ian Davenport** added:

“We are delighted to be working with the ECB on this imaginative and transformative scheme. We already know the powerful effect of offering opportunities to deserving young people to fulfil their potential and as importantly the influence that these role models have in their home communities, thus raising youth aspiration which is so important for those in the next generation.”

The second day of The Participation Test is shining a light on the new South Asian Action Plan and it’s aims to better engage with South Asian communities at every level of the game. Three weeks on from the launch, ECB Non-Executive Board Director Lord Kamlesh Patel and Yorkshire off-spinner Azeem Rafiq will talk to Sky about the progress being made on the 11-point action plan.

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