

FIFA BANGALORE FOOTBALL TURF  
FIFA Approval & final handover.

**TIMES SPORT**

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# Artificial football turf gets stamp of approval

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Bangalore:** FIFA's consultant on artificial pitches, Eric Harrison, has expressed satisfaction over the newly-laid turf at the Bangalore Football Stadium. "The turf is of high standard and has met my expectations. It looks great," he said after the inspection here on Wednesday.

But he said Bangalore has to wait for some more time before getting the FIFA certificate to hold international matches. "FIFA will send one more team to test the ground after monsoon. The ground can host international matches only after they issue the certificate. The test dates will be announced later," he said.

Harrison said the local groundsmen will be trained to maintain the turf. "Maintenance is very important. But it is easier than tending to natural turf. Around 3-4 hours a week should be devoted for it," he said and added that equipment for maintenance will be provided by Greenfields, which laid the turf in Bangalore.

Asked about the concerns raised by many local players that the soles of their shoes came off during league matches, Harrison said: "Natural grass holds moisture, but artificial turf generates heat. That's why the soles are coming off," he said. "It's better to play the matches either in the morning or in the evening. It can reduce exhaustion caused by the heat and the players will enjoy it. The turf needs regular watering too," he said.

Harrison said artificial turf can improve the quality of football in India. "Such turfs are used in all parts of the world. Even the Champions League is being conducted on artificial turf. If a player has skill, the turf will help him play good football. If the pitch is not good, even great players will struggle," he said.

Chethan Shivakumar



**ALL'S WELL:** Eric Harrison (left) inspects artificial turf at the Football Stadium on Wednesday

## Online maintenance portal

Meanwhile, Greenfields has set up an online portal to monitor the turf maintenance work.

"The maintenance personnel have to enter the data once they complete the work every week. Our engineers will monitor data routinely to assess the work progress. "If something goes wrong, they can alert the owners of the ground," according to Deepak Khanolkar, India representative of Greenfields.