Bashar shocked by ban

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

After the last three days' chaos, Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) finally cleared their position against the rebel cricketers as the game's governing body in the country came up with a ten-year ban for them.

BCB president Maj Gen Sina Ibn Jamali, appearing in front of the press for the first time after seven cricketers tendered their resignation letter to jolt the country's cricket, to declare the board's stance after a two-hour emergency meeting at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium's offices in Mirpuryesterday.

ten-year suspension is too harsh. I can't believe it," said a 'shellshocked' former national skipper Habibul Bashar in his instant getter. reaction over phone.

"Hopefully we (the rebel crick-

day) to decide our next course of action. We may try to meet with the board officials to explain everything," said Bashar.

Bashar along with three other "Dhaka Warriors" colleagues Shahriar Nafees, Alok Kapali and Dhiman Ghosh returned home yesterday after attending the official launch in New Delhi on

The most successful Bangladesh skipper said that it would be painful for him to be branded as a banned cricketer.

"I think the people in this country will not misunderstand us because we didn't commit any crime, rather we just want to play cricket," said Bashar.

"It would be an unbearable "It is really unexpected. The pain for me to be cast as a banned cricketer after playing for my country for so many years," added the country's highest Test run-

"I don't understand why people

eters) will meet tomorrow (Thurs- reasons for me to take such a deci-

"I didn't consider only money because I know how big it is to represent the national team," he

The board has taken the decision after the rebel cricketers didn't respond to their appeal to meet them on Tuesday.

"We were not available at that time but now we can meet them. We are also available for national selection in any time and ICL authority also assured us that they will release us for any kind of national duty," he said adding that they got exceptional respect from

BCB however hardly had any intention to think more with the cricketers who already signed with the ICL rather they were trying to take the initiative to make sure that there will be no such damages in the future.

The board yesterday met with some former national captains call us rebel cricketers. There were and cricketers to take their opin-

ions regarding the issue.

"I said that what has happened, has happened. Now we should think about with the future. We have to have a complete action to prevent someone to take part in this kind of tournament," said former skipper Roquibul Hasan.

"You can't stop someone to go if he has been offered huge money. There is now ICL and you never know another big-spending tournament might take place anywhere in the world. So we have to look at our whole system," he said.

On the other hand, another former national skipper Aminul Islam believed that there is no difference between ten years ban and a life ban for a cricketer. "BCB has the right to take such a

decision against their employees. But still I am optimistic that they (the players) can understand their mistakes and beg mercy to the board. And definitely board will consider their appeal," said



Bangladesh Cricket Board president Major General Sina Ibn Jamali (3rd from L) briefs the press about the board's decision on the rebel players while (L-R) Shafiqur Rahman, Gazi Ashraf Hossain, Ahmed Sajjadul Alam, MA Momen and Shakil Kasem look on at the board's headquarters at Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Advisroy committees for FAs

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) will soon send a proposal to the National Sports Council (NSC) to form an advisory committee to help the District Football Associations (DFA) and Divisional Football Association (DVFA) run the game.

The FAs were formed before this year's BFF election without any representatives of government officials according to the FIFA and AFC statutes but the newly formed organisations face a stalemate as grounds and facilities in the country all belong to the government.

After a meeting with 50 heads of the FAs at its headquarters yesterday, the BFF sees no other way but to involve government officials in the shape of advisory committees to assist the FAs.

It was learned that the advisory committees will include district and SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

Academy stay in command

SPORTS REPORTER

GP-BCB National Cricket Academy took command on day two of the second four-dayer against Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) Development XI at the R Premadasa Stadium in Colombo yesterday.

Resuming the day on 33 for none, the visitors scored 310-8 in 94 overs in their first innings in reply of the hosts' 252.

the front with an unbeaten 73 while Imrul Kayes hit 67 and Arafat Sunny struck 63. Naveem was at the crease with Ziaur Rahman (13) when stumps

Skipper Nayeem Islam led from

were pulled for the day. Mendis captured three wickets for 61 runs and Masmulla bagged



The word "paralympic" comes from the Latin word "para" which means "with" and "lympic" refers to the Olympic Games.



ESPN Sportscentre India Sports News

Live at 8:30pm



Arambagh v Mohammedan (3:30pm) Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium



Luca Toni

(Bayern Munich's Italian striker) "My goal is for us to get as far a possible. My dream is to win it Everyone wants to play in the Champions League. I'm really look ing forward to the atmosphere. I'll do everything in my power to score."

BCCI distances itself

the ICL authority.

Cricket

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

As the rebel Indian Cricket League (ICL) announced the signing of 13 leading cricketers from Bangladesh at a glitzy function here on Tuesday, the Indian cricket board sought to distance itself from the development saying it was an internal matter of the neighbour- to fill the void. ing country.

"It does not concern with the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI). It is an internal matter of Bangladesh Cricket Board," said BCCI vice-president Rajiv Shukla late on Tuesday night.

"It's for them to study the situation and to act accordingly", he added.

Earlier in the evening, former Bangladesh skipper Habibul Bashar, Alok Kapali, Shariar Nafees and Dhiman Ghosh were paraded by ICL as members of its Dhaka Warriors team in the Twenty20 league in the presence of former

India captain Kapil Dev. The ICL also announced names Forhad Reza, Monjurul Islam, Mahbubul Karim, Golam Mabud, Mohammad Rafique, Mohammad Sharif, Mosharraf Hossain and Tapash Baisya.

Asked what impact their defection to ICL will have on cricket back home, Bashar, for one, said it would leave a vacuum no doubt for sometime but there were enough talent

Bashar, who spoke on behalf of mance' the three other Bangladeshi cricketers who were present, however appeared to send contradictory signals. While he said they joined ICL after applying for retirement from Bangladesh cricket, he also said 'we are still ready to play for Bangladesh if the cricket board allows us'

Bashar refuted the charge that they were "anti-national" by playingforICL.

"We are ready to serve the country whenever we are called to join the national side", he said. Nafees, Kapali and Dhiman said

they did not join the ICL out of any sense of hurt by not being invited by Indian Cricket Board-sponsored and ICC-approved Indian Premiere League (IPL).

"We are professionals and we want to play and earn our livelihood," said Nafees.

Dhiman said both IPL and ICL tournaments are big hits in Bangladesh and 'we just want to delight the fans back home and make them proud by our perfor-

Kapil expressed the hope that Bangladesh cricket would remain fine without the players who joined ICL but added 'if it affect their cricket don't blame us for that'.

The former India captain said ICL has no problem of these Bangladeshi cricketers return home and play for their country as it was ICC and BCCI which 'boycotted' ICL.

Kapil pointed out that last year ICL put together 'Lahore Badshah' team comprising rebel Pakistani cricketers and this year it is the 'Dhaka Warriors'.

Rakib named BSWA's best

UNB, Dhaka

Grandmaster Abdullah Al Rakib was named the best sportsman of the year when

Bangladesh Sports Writers Association (BSWA) yesterday announced its sports awards for 2007.

Rakib will receive the SA Mohsin Trophy and is among seven sportsmen, organisers, associations and sponsors for the awards considering their contribution in the field of SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

Div II football

SPORTS REPORTER

Police Athletic Club beat Kadamtala Sangsad 2-0 in the Second Division Football League at the Kamlapur Stadium yesterday. Barua and Amirul struck one goal each to give Police a comfort-

able victory. In the day's other match at the Army Stadium in Banani, East End Cub edged past Kawran Bazar by a solitary goal scored by Ismail as

early as the 6th minute. In today's matches, Prantik face Sadharan Bima while T&T Club take on Gazirchot.

the leftback who was in attacking A topsy-turvy first round of the Citycell B.

yesterday with LEAGUE Brothers Union, another Dhaka giants, failing to make most of their home match when they drew 1-1 with Chittagong

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammedan. Defending champions Abahani and last year's third Muktijoddha ended up losers, runners-up Mohammedan managed to salvage one point as four of the last year's top five -- Sheikh Russel being the only exception -- got off to poor starts in the eventful opening round.

Three teams are level on three points but Khulna Abahani lead the table by virtue of better goal difference over Sheikh Russel and Rahmatganj.

Brothers, however, not only dropped points but also lost their impressive fullback Atiqur Rahman Mishu who was sent off seven minutes from time a rather lacklustre fifth game of the league at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

mood throughout the game, dived inside the rival penalty area under pressure from two Mohammedan defenders. He claimed for a penalty but referee Tayeb Hasan, who was very close to the scene, immedi-

Brothers survive in a draw

ately showed the Brothers back a second yellow card to ensure the marching order.

The decision was not only protested by the Oranges but also Mishu, who left the ground after SEE PAGE 18 COL 2



PHOTO: STAR

Michael Oniya, the Nigerian striker who scored Brothers Union's equaliser against Chittagong Mohammedan in yesterday's B. League, skips a sliding tackle by the Booked early into the first half, port city side's centre-back Shawkat at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Chelsea cruise, Roma suffer

AFP, Paris



counterparts on Tuesday as Liverpool and Chelsea beat Marseille and Bordeaux respectively in the opening round of

English clubs

ran the rule over

their French

Champions League group stages. A Steven Gerrard double - taking his total to 99 for the club - saw Liverpool to a 2-1 win over Marseille in France while Chelsea

ran out easy 4-0 winners over

Bordeaux. Chelsea's former boss Jose Mourinho also got off to a winning start as Inter Milan beat Panathinaikos 2-0 in Athens but there was no such fate for Inter's Serie A rivals AS Roma who went down 2-1 at home to Champions League debutants Cluj - for whom Juan Culio notched a double.

The two Spanish sides in action also claimed all three points, Barcelona giving coach Pep Guardiola a first competitive win -3-1 over Sporting Lisbon - while Atletico Madrid made a triumphant return to the top European club competition after a 11 year absence beating PSV Eindhoven 3-0.

brought Liverpool back into a match scoring with a sublime effort four minutes after Marseille had taken the lead, and then adding a penalty before half-time. hard done by not to have at least got

mixture of poor finishing and good goalkeeping by Pepe Reina allowed Liverpool to hold out. "We played well in the first half

a point from the encounter but a

but then they pinned us back in the second half," admitted Gerrard.

"We stopped playing in the second-half and we will have to have a look at that and see what the

reason was."

Liverpool coach Rafa Benitez echoed fellow perfectionist Gerrard's own admission afterwards that "he played well - but he could have played better."

Benitez added: "The key was to score a third goal and finish them off but we couldn't and we were Gerrard, not for the first time, under a bit of pressure at the end." Marseille coach Eric Gerets was downcast.

"I am very disappointed and a bit angry with the result, given the chances we created - more than Marseille, though, could feel five. We could have pulled it off," said the Belgian, a competition winner as a player with group rivals PSV Eindhoven 20 years ago.

> Goals from Frank Lampard, Joe Cole, Florent Malouda and Nicolas Anelka ensured Chelsea made a winning return to European action at Stamford Bridge just four months after their heart-breaking Champions League final defeat to Manchester United.

But the road to May's Rome final is certain to feature many tougher tests than this and coach Luiz Felipe Scolari was determined to keep his team's feet on the ground.

"We know that we made many

mistakes in the second half," he said. "We tried to attack without the ball and with no good combinations between the players. "When you play in the Champions League and are win-

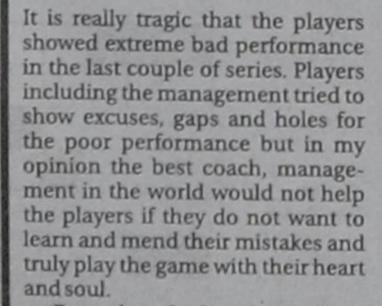
ning 2-0 at half time you need to work the ball and control the game. You don't need to win 5-0, it is still the same three points." Bordeaux boss Laurent Blanc

added: "We were up against a superior team but we showed them too much respect. We weren't aggressive enough. The scoreline says it all."

The scoreline said it all too for AS Roma coach Luciano Spalletti as he contemplated one of the more humiliating results during his tenure.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

VOX POP: Readers speak out on player exodus



Even though the players have made their own decision I truly believe that it did come to a big shock for many fans and views of Bangladesh cricket. As (John) Kennedy said, "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country", I the country but also stranded their

Bangladesh. country at international level. They 3D strategy? Unfortunately no one have tarnished our image numer- has an answer. ous times yet we stand by them. We hope and pray for them. Leaving the directly but their strategy did cost and thus it is high time that ICC

hole in our belief that they never played for the love of the game.

Indian Cricket League chairman Kapil Dev (C) talks to rebel Bangladeshi cricketers (L-R) Alok Kapali, Shahriar

Nafees, Dhiman Ghosh and Habibul Bashar during a press conference to announce the launch of ICL's Season 2 and

-Omio Chowdhury Fredericksburg, Virginia

induction of the tournament's ninth team Dhaka Warriors in New Delhi on Tuesday.

There is one undeniable force that affects most of human race. At times the magnitude of this force can be so large that it can even lead someone to betray his own country. We like to call it the power of money.

From the latest report from some national dailies it is almost confirmed that Dhiman Ghosh and Habibul Bashar have deserted Bangladesh cricket once and for all.

ICL: Inside its the official website, they mentions about the discovery, diligence and display really think that they have without strategy that the group has a doubt not only fulfill their duty for employed to unearth new talent world. How does the young stars of The players represent our Bangladesh cricket factor into this

ers of cricketers, it is now also causing different demographic group.

unacceptable. Rebels: Our country is also our mother. We do not desert our mother for the love of money. The decision to stop playing for the country that spent so much money and help India become the number on these cricketers is absolutely colleagues, friends, fans and 1 ranked cricket nation in this unacceptable. suffer such a fate. We have come a

promising cricketers this country has managed to produce. To ensure -Riasad Bari maximum value, the market must be allowed to be governed by itself. The Ontario, Canada monopoly strategy employed by BCCI has not only cost the consum-

PHOTO: AFP

enormous pain to an entirely BCB: It is undoubtedly the richest sports body inside Bangladesh and yet accused of severe lack of professionalism. The selection policy has always been flawed and the lack of care for out facing and feeling. of form players is absolutely

long way since those dark days prior to Dav Whatmore era. We do not he says, "Unsupportive structure BCCI: It did not play any role want to encounter such fate again led to decision to quit". Bangladesh team has blown a big Bangladesh some of the most steps up and saves Bangladesh

cricket from Apocalypse.

McMaster University

The reason for my e-mail is the frustration I am feeling within myself on the state of Bangladesh cricket. I am not particularly talking about the performance of the team on the field, but the situation of uncertainty everyone involved with Bangladesh cricket is

I am fortunate enough to have seen international cricket in this part of the subcontinent grow from day one, when India visited Pakistan in 1954-55 and the tour opener was played in Chittagong. Ever since that day, I have lived all these years with cricket in this country and have known most of It is a shame that our country will the players of national level. It really hurts if you go through the statement of Habibul Bashar when

> We must build a sense of security -Nikhil Ranjan Das amongst our players, be it cricket or

any other discipline, when he is called upon to perform national duty but at the same time we must ensure a social security so that he out with his head high. It is always a pride for a player to represent his country. We have seen players falling like nine-pins at sweet wills of our selectors and this has given rise even and BCB has already started retaliating by calling back some of them from on going tours.

wants or expects ICC to do? The biggest problem at this moment seems to be indiscipline, a direct result of inept management.

It is time to stop blaming everyone and reflect on reality. I know it is easier said than done but one should know why & how the rot occurred in the first place and make a sincere attempt in fixing the problem. We should not look to others to save our cricket. Let us do it ourselves.

The players have every right to leave a cricket board that maintains very little credibility, is highly dysfunctional, politically tainted can give his best for the country & go and overbearing on its players. The players have had vents with the BCB for quite some time now, and it just seems the cricket board is more interested in fluffy talk to the media, rather than getting any to uncertainty amongst juniors significant development on course. It should not take a foreign coach to see through all the underdeveloped infrastructure of I don't understand what BCB our cricket, years after gaining test status. We still do not have a viable system in place for funnelling top talent, and the lack has never been addressed in actions.

How many innings defeats does it take to finally get started? It seems they remain unmoved till players started deserting the team. If Bangladesh wants to stay as a Test playing nation, things better change soon and change fast. Enough is enough.

-Kaiser Tareque

Actually this is good for

Bangladesh. We do not need unfit players like Shahriar Nafees. He's not done anything against top teams only scoring more runs against minnows. I can understand why Habibul Bashar is playing ICL. He's old and gave everything to us. There's

nothing more he can do. But what guarantee that he score runs there? I am shocked by attitude of Aftab and Kapali. They didn't understand their stardom. Money is a big issue but does it mean give

And lastly, Dhiman Ghosh and Farhad Reza. They are next generation cricketers and show their true colours. I hope other youngsters are not as naive and greedy as they are. BCB must not cry over this

up their name and fame?

matter. Let them go. Bangladesh and cricket is bigger than these small-minded men. Media should forget them and

be careful whom they idolise next

time. -Kamal Uz Zaman

Baridhara, Dhaka.

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