

BFF after Fatullah

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) president Kazi Salahuddin loves to wage battle after battle for 'lifting football' in the country. He has recently overlooked popular sentiment or ethos by signing a controversial yet lucrative long-term deal with Bashundhara Group chairman Ahmed Akbar Sobhan.

Salahuddin left Dhaka last night to attend the much-talked-about AFC Congress, where the enlightened BFF boss in all probabilities would be trying for the incumbent AFC president Mohamed Bin Hammam to retain his post despite stiff opposition from other members who have branded Hammam a dictator.

The BFF boss however left the capital with a small yet significant twist that has enough elements to irk the country's cricket officials.

He demanded the Fatullah Cricket Stadium in Narayanganj for their upcoming Senior Division League, which starts from June 1.

In a letter sent to the National Sports Council (NSC) on Monday, the BFF has requested the regulatory body to allow it to use the venue for three months citing that it would not be possible to complete the league at the Bangabandhu National Stadium (BNS) alone as the alternate venue Shaheed Mohammad Mostafa Stadium (SMMS) in Kamalapur is under renovation at the moment.

Salahuddin also explained the reporters why he needed Fatullah in an impromptu briefing at the BFF House yesterday afternoon.

"Apart from the Senior Division League, the

women's wing also wants to arrange a corporate league soon and yesterday I met principals of various schools who want to organise a women's school football league as well. Therefore, I need space to run three leagues at the same time and BNS cannot accommodate it," said the legendary footballer.

He also said that BFF's intention is not to get in cricket's way as it is only for a period of three months that the stadium in Fatullah is being asked for.

"Cricket is also my sport and I have no intention to interrupt their plans and programs at Fatullah. We have sent a letter to the NSC and if they say that the stadium will be occupied from June for cricket I will immediately withdraw my letter. Unfortunately our country is not so rich that every sport can have three or four stadiums exclusively for their own use. I have visited Fatullah a few days back and I see that it is perfect for football and what grabbed my attention most is the fact that it is not being used for anything at the moment. If I do not have a proper venue to run my senior division league then I will be destroying the careers of all the players of the 13 clubs who will participate in it. If God forbid the league does not take place this year it will completely break the consistency of the country's football and a one year gap will put us ten years behind," explained Salahuddin.

His desire and elaborate explanations however surprised the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) and its spokesman Jalal Yunus reacted bitterly.

"If a demand of this kind has been made then it is absolutely absurd. There is hardly any

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Did U Know?

As a child Lionel Messi suffered from a hormonal problem that was preventing him from growing as normal. Barcelona tempted him to Spain by offering to help with his medical bills.



Talk Turkey



Ray Jennings

(Bangalore Royal Challengers coach)

"If everybody can have an attitude like [Anil] Kumble, then this world will be a better place."



What to Watch

- STAR Cricket**
England v West Indies
First Test, Day One
Live from 4:00pm
- SET Max**
Indian Premier League
Deccan Chargers v Mumbai Indians
Live from 8:30pm
- ESPN**
Sportscentre India
Sports News
Live from 8:30pm
- TEN Sports**
UEFA Champions League
(Semifinal 2nd-Leg)
Chelsea v Barcelona
Live from 12:45am (Thursday)



Port-city Cricket League
Brothers Union v Top Sports
Time: 10:00am
Pirates of Cig v Dhaka Tigers
Time: 2:00pm
Venue: MA Aziz Stadium, Chittagong

SL Dev team stand tall

SPORTS REPORTER

Muthumudalige Pushpakumara led from the front with an unbeaten 152 as visiting Sri Lanka Development team recovered from a top order collapse to tighten their grip on the Bangladesh National Cricket Academy team on the second day of the four-day match at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday.

In reply to Bangladesh's first innings total of 256, the visitors stumbled to 78 for five following an impressive spell from new ball bowlers Safiul Islam and Rabiul Islam.

But the scenario was totally

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MCA team to arrive May 15

SPORTS REPORTER

The Maharashtra Cricket Association (MCA) team will arrive in Dhaka on May 15 to play three T20 and as many one-day matches besides two four-dayers.

Harshad Khadiwale will lead the 17-member team while former BCB's game development manager Shaun Williams accompanies the team as a coach.

MCA will play three T20 matches against the England-bound national team who will play under the banner of BCB

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Smith smites Punjab

AFP, Durban



South Africa skipper Graeme Smith staged a boundary blitz as Rajasthan Royals cruised to a 78-run triumph over Kings XI Punjab in the Indian Premier League Tuesday.

Smith struck 12 boundaries at balmey Kingsmead as he shared a 135-run first wicket partnership with Naman Ojha that set up the defending champions for a fourth win in eight outings.

The South African made 77 off 44 balls before being caught at the boundary by Piyush Chawla and the 68-run innings of wicketkeeper Ojha included five sixes and five fours.

Royals made 211-4 in 20 overs and while Punjab recovered from a disastrous start in reply to reach 133-8, the outcome was obvious longer before the final ball was bowled.

Rajasthan bettered the previous highest total this season by 22 runs and the Smith-Ojha stand was also a 2009 IPL record as the round-robin phase of the Twenty20 tournament reached the halfway mark.

No Punjab bowler suffered more than Shanthakumaran Sreesanth, who bowled two no balls in the penultimate over and conceded 23 runs, including a six from 33-run Ravindra Jadeja.

Punjab made the worst possible start in pursuit of a 10.60-runs-an-over target with Sunny Sohal caught by Rajasthan skipper-cum-coach Shane Warne off the first ball of the innings.

Karan Goel contributed just one run before he headed for the pavilion and when Australian Simon Katich departed in the fifth over, Punjab were 25-3 and staring humiliation in the face.

Skipper Yuvraj Singh established some middle-order stability with a 48-run spell at the crease that included three sixes and three

fours, but only Irfan Pathan (19 runs) offered support.

The victory lifted Rajasthan from second last to second on the eight-team standings, behind leaders Chennai Super Kings on net run rate, while Punjab slipped from second to sixth.

SCORES IN BRIEF

RAJASTHAN ROYALS: 211-4 in 20 overs (Smith 77, Ojha 68, Jadeja 33; Chawla 2-30).

KINGS XI PUNJAB: 133-8 in 20 overs (Yuvraj 48, Pathan 19; Amit Singh 3-9, Warne 2-38)

Result: Rajasthan Royals won by 78 runs.

Man-of-the-match: Graeme Smith.



PHOTO: INTERNET

Rajasthan Royals' Graeme Smith sends one rocketing towards the long-off boundary during his 77 off 44 balls against Kings XI Punjab in their IPL Twenty20 match at the Kingsmead Cricket Stadium in Durban yesterday.

Gambhir guides Delhi

AFP, Durban



Riders on Tuesday.

Gambhir's measured innings of 71 not out eased Delhi to their target of 155 with one over to spare, although he did enjoy some luck after being dropped by Kolkata captain Brendon McCullum on 21 and was given not out after being caught behind just short of his half-century.

David Warner's quickfire innings of 36 from 23 deliveries got the Daredevils off to a flying start and eased the pressure on his teammates, allowing Gambhir and Tillakaratne Dilshan (42 not out) to ride home.

Gambhir has struggled for IPL form, but was pleased to finally register a good innings.

"I am not spotting the ball well, but was happy I batted through," he said. "We discussed that someone had to finish the job, and with two batsmen set we managed to do that."

It was Kolkata's seventh loss from nine

matches, and they rued some poor fielding with a number of dropped catches and unnecessary boundaries after their batsmen set a reasonable total.

McCullum finally found form to record a speedy 35, but it was fellow opener Morne van Wyk who really sparkled with 74 from just 48 balls.

The South African hit 11 fours, but was at times starved of the strike by a struggling middle order as the innings tailed away and ended with a total that was a shade under par.

"I thought probably another 20 on top would have been good, but the way they chased them down was thoroughly professional," conceded McCullum.

Defeat leaves Kolkata rooted to the bottom of the table with just three points.

SCORES IN BRIEF

KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS: 154 for 3 in 20 overs (Van Wyk 74, McCullum 35, Henriques 30; Sangwan 2-29)

DELHI DAREDEVILS: 157 for 1 in 19 overs (Gambhir 71 not out, Dilshan 42 not out, Warner 36; Agarkar 1-24)

Result: Delhi Daredevils won by 9 wickets.

Man-of-the-match: Gautam Gambhir.



PHOTO: STAR

Tamim Iqbal of Abahani is in full flow on way to scoring a whirlwind 44 off 37 balls against Top Sports Club in the Port-city Cricket League at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.

U-19s take series lead

SPORTS REPORTER

A magnificent half-century from Saikat Ali gave Bangladesh Under-19s the lead in the five-match one-day series against their Sri Lankan counterparts as they won the third match by 30 runs at the Shamsul Huda Stadium in Jessore yesterday.

The Bangladesh Under-19s earned the second successive victory to lead the series 2-1 thanks to opener Saikat who hit 88 off 75 balls with nine fours and three sixes that enabled the home side to put up a challenging total of 251-9 in 50 overs after deciding to bat first.

Number seven Tasamul Haque was the other notable scorer with 42 off 60 balls that included six boundaries and a six.

Chathura Perera claimed three wickets for 51 runs.

In reply, opener Dinesh Chandimal took the charge for the visitors but his 75-ball 86 that contained nine fours and four sixes was not good enough as Sri Lanka Under-19s were all out for 221 runs in 42.2 overs.

Spinner Sabbir Rahman made the damage by taking four wickets for 37 runs including the prize one of Chandimal.

Kushal Perera made second team highest 46 and he was also victim of Sabbir.

The fourth match will be held on May 7 in Dhaka but the venue is yet to decide.

WOMEN'S CLUB CUP Mohammedan beat Abahani

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammedan defeated their archrivals Abahani by 21-run and Ansar and VDP outclassed BKSP by 108 runs on Tuesday to send them into the final clash of the Women's Club Cup tournament.

The final of the first-ever Women's Club Cup tournament will be held at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur on May 10.

In the clash of the two traditional rivals at the Gulshan Youth Club ground, Mohammedan rode on Suktara's 54 to put up 148 for six in their stipulated 35 overs after being sent into bat first.

Opener Suktara smashed five fours and a six during her 88-ball knock.

In reply, Abahani were all out for 127 runs in 33.2 overs as Tahin Tahera and Shaila Sharmin shared six wickets.

Subarna Islam top scored with 39 off 61 balls that featured five boundaries.

At the City Club ground, a stroke-filled 71 by Shanaj Akter and an all-round performance by Panna Ghosh powered Ansar and VDP to post a 108-run victory over BKSP in the semifinal yesterday.

Opener Shanaj clobbered nine boundaries during her 76-ball knock while captain Panna contributed 31 off 46 balls with

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Dada edge a thriller

Tamim fires Abahani

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong



Local hero Tamim Iqbal came up with another aggressive batting display as Abahani posted a five-wicket victory over Top Sports Club of Noakhali in the day's first match of the Habib Group PCL Twenty20 cricket tournament at the MA Aziz Stadium yesterday.

The dashing left-hander and most expensive player in the competition smote six boundaries during his 37-ball 44 to script his side's first win after they had tied their first game against Brothers Union.

It was however the second match which had all the excitement as Dada Warriors managed a four-run success against Ispahani Sports Club despite young prospect Shamsur Rahman's yet another sparkling innings.

Chasing a moderate target of 128 runs, Ispahani looked well set to win their second successive game after Shamsur Rahman (40) added 59 runs in the opening stand along with Fazle Rabbi (20) in 7.5 overs.

But the last over saw drama with Ispahani needing 10 runs with four wickets in hand.

Ispahani however failed to withstand the pressure despite the fact that there was national wicketkeeper Mushfiqur Rahim who remained not out on 33 off 26 balls but still his team was restricted to 123-7.

Mushfiqur managed two runs in the first delivery from Pakistani left-arm spinner Saeed Anwar and three more runs were added in the next three balls. Ispahani were left to score five off the last ball after Sajjadul Haque got run out in the fifth ball but Mushfiqur failed to score any runs from the last delivery.

Earlier Dada Warriors rode on Saeed Anwar's 25-ball 34 and Arafat Sunny's unbeaten 16-ball 25 to put up 127-9 in 20 overs.

Back to the first game, national middle order batsman Rokiul Hasan shone with a well-composed 48-ball 52 to see Top Sports Club score 144-6 in their share of 20 overs but Tamim, the most expensive player in the tournament, and his opening partner Rabiul Islam made it an easy target for Abahani.

The pair added 77 runs as Abahani coasted to 146 for five with four balls to spare.

Winning the toss, Top Sports elected to bat first and there were two little cameos from Sri Lankan Lokuarachari (21-ball 26) and

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The .6 Million Dollar Man

NADER RAHMAN



Many years ago there was an American TV series named The Six Million Dollar Man, after an accident with a crane, the character Steve Austin (not to be confused with the beer guzzling WWE wrestler) was rebuilt with bionic parts. The operation, which cost six million dollars, resulted in the creation of a superhero. His life and adventures are fondly remembered by pop culture enthusiasts, but only recently have the similarities between Steve and our very own Mashrafe Bin Mortaza come to the public's imagination.

While bionic parts helped Steve attain his bionic eye which could zoom in on objects from miles away, our point six million dollar man needed no such surgery. His pinpoint eyesight has been essential to his nagging line and length, which has made him one of the best proponents of wicket-to-wicket bowling. While Steve also had the luxury of electronic parts in his legs, our Mashrafe had to make do with his own natural ones. Not quite fast enough to catch up with the 100km an hour Steve, Mashrafe's legs have been powerful enough to steal quick singles, spring

into the wicket at full pace and dive around the park saving every run possible.

Finally we must come to the famous of appendage of all, the bionic arm. Steve may have had the power of a bulldozer in his right arm, but Mashrafe's right arm is akin to a tank. It helps hurdle his fast bowling to unsuspecting batsmen as great speed, and combined with that eye and his legs it has the power of nothing short of a tank. That right hand also comes into use when he's batting as his strong bottom hand often sends even the most innocuous bowlers out of the park. With a player like that in one's team, at a tenth of the price of Steve Austin one must truly be blessed.

Unfortunately Shah Rukh Khan and John Buchanan do not think so and their team has seemingly suffered. In TV terms, the programme has been cancelled. The anatomy of the disaster reveals a team of ego's, from Shah Rukh to Buchanan to Ganguly and finally the use and essentially misuse of Mashrafe. From the outset the most hyped team in the tournament seemed to suffer from what Milan Kundera would say was the Unbearable Lightness of Being. Their very existence has been problematic, with reported infighting, an anonymous blogger

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PHOTO: AFP

West Indies captain Chris Gayle (L) and England skipper Andrew Strauss hold the npower Test series trophy at Lord's in London yesterday. The two sides begin the 2-Test series here today.