

SPORT

Pintoo demands Salahuddin apology

SPORTS REPORTER

Zakaria Pintoo, captain of Swadhin Bangla Football Team, yesterday denied allegations of receiving money from the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) president Kazi Salahuddin before the 2012 BFF elections.

Pintoo claimed that the allegations brought by the BFF boss are baseless and he also demanded an apology from the BFF boss during a press conference under the banner of 'Save The Sports' at the Mohammedan Sporting Club premises.

Earlier, the BFF boss claimed that Pintoo asked him for funds to withdraw the nomination paper of the president post in the 2012 BFF election.

"According to FIFA rules [actually AFC] anyone who is aged above 72 is ineligible to take part in the president post of the elections," the veteran footballer said. "That time [in 2012] I was 73, so I decided to withdraw my nomination paper. I never took any money from Salahuddin."

"As the captain of Swadhin Bangla Football Team at the age of 77 I had to hear this slander. He [Salahuddin] has to apologise for his baseless speech against me," said Pintoo.

However, former footballer Moyeenuddin, who is the younger brother of Pintoo, admitted that he took money from Salahuddin several times.

"Before the 2012 BFF elections, I was forced by Salahuddin to take Tk 25,000 after my elder brother withdrew his nomination paper," said Moyeen.

"After that another person offered me Tk 2 lakh, which I declined, but Salahuddin again forced me to take Tk 50,000. I took the money but my brother [Pintoo] didn't take any money."



Abahani's English forward Lee Andrew Tuck runs in celebration as his rebound crosses the goalline during the Sky Blues' 5-0 drubbing of Team BJMC in their KFC Independence Cup fixture at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Abahani rout BJMC

Sheikh Jamal edge past Uttar Baridhara

SPORTS REPORTER



Abahani brushed off their lacklustre start in the KFC Independence Cup with a thumping 5-0 victory over Team BJMC yesterday. The four-time champions of the top-tier professional football league, who were held to a 1-1 draw by Feni Soccer Club in their opening Group B fixture, cruised to victory at the Bangabandhu National Stadium, thanks to braces from Camara Sarba and Sunday Chizoba and one from English forward Lee Andrew Tuck.

Tuck gave the Sky Blues a 23rd minute lead smashing home a rebound following a free-kick from Waly Faisal. Tuck then became provider just four minutes later as his corner was headed in by Sarba, who then extended the lead in the 68th

minute from a rebound. Team BJMC, who had collected three points from their first two matches, were reduced to 10 men shortly into the second half following a double yellow card for Samson Iliasu. And Abahani took full toll of their man advantage, with Sunday striking twice in the last six minutes to complete a confidence boosting victory.

Earlier in the day, three-time Premier League champions Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club were made to sweat for a 1-0 win by Uttar Baridhara Club in a Group A fixture. The Dhanmondi giants, who had dispatched Mohammedan Sporting Club 2-0 before mauling Brothers Union 5-0 in their first two matches, needed an own goal to edge past the minnows from Baridhara in their encounter at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

The win kept the Dhanmondi

giants in pole position with maximum points from three matches while Baridhara are yet to open their account.

In a match that saw little goalmouth action, Baridhara defender Monir Alam made the difference in the 20th minute, not the way he wanted though as his back-header meant for his own goalkeeper evaded everyone and found the middle of the net.

The Dhanmondi giants, however, came close to doubling the lead just a minute before the break, but this time they were unlucky as a back-volley from Wedson Anselme, the Haitian striker who struck a hat-trick in Brothers' mauling last week, could only rattle the woodwork.

Wedson then hit the side-netting from a free-kick towards the end of the match as the Bangladesh Premier League champions completed a hard-fought victory.

Mushy bats for autism

SPORTS REPORTER

On the second day of a two-day workshop on 'Development of Communication, Social, Behaviour & Leisure Skills in Children with Autism to enhance participation' at the RDEC Auditorium yesterday, Bangladesh Test skipper Mushfiqur Rahim participated as the guest of honour.

"Autism is such a thing; it could have happened to me. It is God-given," Mushfiqur said "We should do as much as we can. I take my hat off to the teachers and guardians. If any assistance is needed, I am ready to provide it."

"Just posting statuses is not enough, we [cricketers] have reached such a stage that people know us, so there is always an intention to do something if it helps the country," he added.

Sweet start for Supergiants

CRICINFO, Mumbai

Rising Pune Supergiants made a sweet start to their life in the IPL, their seamers waylaid Mumbai Indians' top order to set up a breezy nine-wicket win over the defending champions. Chasing 122, they got there with 32 balls to spare, Ajinkya Rahane steering them home with a fluent unbeaten 66 off 42 balls.

The pitch had lost most of its early bite when Supergiants batted, and Rahane quickly got into the groove with a pair of straight-driven fours off Mitchell McClenaghan, in the first and third overs of the innings. Any residual chasing nerves Supergiants may have had dissipated in McClenaghan's third over - the fifth of the innings - when both Rahane and Faf du Plessis picked up sixes off mis-hits; they probably would not have carried all the way on a bigger ground.

Nonetheless, Supergiants were well on their way, and the openers put on 78 before du Plessis played on to Harbhajan. It left the rest of the batting a mere 44 to get from 62 balls, and Kevin Pietersen hastened their passage home with a couple of monster sixes off Harbhajan. The 15th over began with Supergiants needing eight to win, and Rahane finished the game with two boundaries in four balls, clubbing Hardik Pandya to the long-on boundary before ramping him for six over the third man boundary.

Mumbai made life easier for Supergiants, with Jos Buttler fluffing a chance to run du Plessis out after a dreadful mix-up between the openers, and Shreyas Gopal missing a caught-and-bowled off Rahane.

The season began on a Wankhede Stadium pitch dissimilar to the easy-paced, hit-through-the-line surfaces offered up during the World T20, and Mumbai, after deciding surprisingly to bat first, struggled against the seam movement and bounce. They only got as far as 121 because Harbhajan climbed into Pune's bowling at the death, clubbing an unbeaten 45 off 30 balls and scoring the bulk of the 41 runs Mumbai made in the last three overs.

Till his intervention, they seemed to be struggling to even get to 100.

SCORES IN BRIEF

MUMBAI INDIANS: 121 for 8 in 20 overs (Rayudu 22, Harbhajan 45 not out; Marsh 2/21, Sharma 2/36)

RIISING PUNE SUPERGIANTS: 126 for 1 in 14.4 overs (Rahane 66 not out, Du Plessis 34, Pietersen 21 not out; Harbhajan 1/24)

Result: Pune won by 9 wickets

Man-of-the-match: Ajinkya Rahane

100 crore reasons to not shift

AGENCIES, New Delhi

A day after Maharashtra chief minister Devendra Fadnavis said he was fine with the Indian Premier League (IPL) moving out of the drought-affected state, his party colleague and Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) secretary Anurag Thakur on Saturday warned that shifting the matches would result in a Rs. 100 crore loss for the state.

"Maharashtra gains 100 crore rupees from IPL and if it goes out of the state, it will be a loss," Thakur told reporters.

He said the figure is based on a study done by the BCCI after the last edition of the IPL. Faced with criticism over huge quantity of water usage for pitches for IPL, Fadnavis had said "we do not have any problem if IPL is shifted from Maharashtra this season. No potable water will be provided for IPL this year."

Thakur suggested the money earned from IPL can be used for tackling drought and taking relief measures.

Erratum

Yesterday's issue of The Daily Star Sport carried a picture of Bangladesh batsman Tamim Iqbal's son's 'Akika' ceremony. The caption read "On the occasion of his daughter's 'Akika'..." when it should have been "his son's 'Akika'". We regret the error and apologise to Tamim and his family, in particular to little Mohammed Arham Iqbal.

'The warmth here is amazing'

In a chat with the Hindustan Times on Sunday, Shakib Al Hasan spoke about the budding rivalry with India, how he deals with the heightened expectations from Bangladesh fans since the Tigers' run in 2015 and what it is that makes Bangladeshis love the West Indians. Here are some excerpts from that interview:

Question: It was a disappointing World Twenty20 but what have you learnt?

Shakib Al Hasan: You learn every match. I won't say it was disappointing. Yes, you can say that we didn't achieve the results we wanted, but other than that we played good cricket. If we could have won one or two matches, the team would have looked different. Crucial situations happen more frequently in T20 matches and you get to learn a lot from them.

Q: The expectations at home have increased after the team's display in 2015. How do you deal with it?

SH: We know expectation will increase as we get better. It shouldn't be taken in a negative way. Instead, we should think along the lines that 'since they expect so much from us maybe we have that ability'. We take it positively.

Q: The rivalry with India is peaking, on and off the field. What's your take?

SH: I think it's more off the field. On the field, both teams know that the better team on the day will win.

Both teams try to play their best cricket and I don't feel they think beyond that. You could say that [the rivalry is peaking] because of the crowd or hype created by the media.

Q: Could you share what was going through your mind in the last few minutes of the Bangalore game [against India]?

SH: When Mushfiqur bhai [Mushfiqur Rahim] was out after

hitting those two boundaries, the first thing that went through my head was that Riyad bhai [Mahmudullah] had to get a single at any cost.

If he had got that, they would have had to bring up the field for the last delivery. The worst case scenario was if we didn't get a run then we could have at least tied the

have come here. They told me that I could regain my position and that mattered.

Q: What makes the Kolkata Knight Riders team special for you?

SH: The biggest thing is that it feels like home. After the national team this is the only other team where I have played so long.

We speak the same language,



game. Such is cricket.

Q: Two years back, you had a tiff with your board and almost threatened to quit. How did you come out of that situation?

SH: It took a lot of mental strength to come out of that situation. I received a lot of support from my wife, parents and friends. If I hadn't gotten that, I couldn't

share similar cultures and weather. Even the flight is just under 30 minutes!

The players coming from other states in India take longer to reach Kolkata. It's only because of a fence that I have to play as an overseas player. If I go out people treat me like I'm one of them. The warmth you get here is amazing.

DPL's dull draft today

SPORTS REPORTER



In editions past, the Dhaka Premier League (DPL) had generated a lot of excitement, suspense, drama and above all festivity. With the continuation of the much-reviled lottery-based players' transfer, called 'player-by-choice', will people look back wistfully to the

days when the players' transfer garnered much interest in the negotiations between the powerful clubs and players?

Only time will tell whether those days are gone forever but at least for this season a dull players' transfer is going to take place this morning at a local hotel. A total of 11 clubs have already confirmed two old players as the new system allows them to retain two players and those selected players will not be included in the lottery. The promoted Gazi Group Cricketers were the only team who did not retain any player and the lottery will start with their selection of two players from six categories out of eight as they will not be allowed to pick players from the Icon and A+ groups.

Today 12 Premier League clubs will pick their choice of players from the list of 188 players divided into eight categories -- Icon (fixed salary of Tk 30 lakh), A+ (fixed salary of Tk 25 lakh), A (Tk 20 lakh), B+ (Tk 15 lakh), B (Tk 12 lakh), C (Tk 8 lakh), D (Tk 5 lakh) and E (Tk 3.5 lakh).

Prime Bank Cricket Club retained Nurul Hasan Sohan (A) and Shuvagata Hom (A) from their previous squad while Prime Doleshwar Sporting Club confirmed Rony Talukdar (A) and Sanjamul Islam (B+). Abahani: Liton Das (A) and Mosaddek Hossain Saikat (B+); Kalabagan Cricket Academy: Mehedi Hasan Miraz (B+) and Mahmudul Hasan (B+); Mohammedan: Naeem Islam (A) and Ariful Haque (B+); Legend of Rugganj: Jahurul Islam (A) and Mosharrif Hossain (A), Victoria: Nadif Chowdhury (B+) and Suhrawardi Shuvo (B+); Brothers Union: Asif Hasan (B+) and Iftekhar Rony (C); Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi: Shohag Gazi (B+) and Arafat Sunny (A); Kalabagan KC: Abdur Razzak (A) and Tasamul Haque (B) and Cricket Coaching School: Saif Hasan (B) and Mohammad Saifuddin (B).

The Icon players are Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Mushfiqur Rahim, Shakib Al Hasan, Imrul Kayes, Tamim Iqbal, Mahmudullah Riyad and Shabbir Rahman while Soumya Sarkar, Mustafizur Rahman, Mominul Haque, Mohammad Mithun, Nasir Hossain and Anamul Haque have been drafted in the A+ category.

Shakib and Mustafizur were included in the list but they are unlikely to be available for the competition because of their ongoing Indian Premier League (IPL) commitments as the DPL is set to kick off from April 22. So it would be interesting to see whether any club picks the two prolific players.

As left-arm spinner Arafat Sunny was already confirmed by his old club, Taskin Ahmed -- the other bowler suspended from international cricket by ICC for an illegal action -- was drafted in category A along with Shahriar Nafees, Rubel Hossain and Shamsur Rahman. Another suspended bowler, spinner Sanjit Saha, was included in category C.

Shahadat Hossain is in category B but he will not be available as the pacer was suspended by the board since he has been fighting a legal battle in a case in which he has been charged under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act.

A club has to pick a minimum of 10 players from the long list.

Q: KKR is a team that isn't about superstars. Do you think this formula will still work?

SH: We don't have the superstars but everyone is a team man. That's our strength. Every one gives his 100 per cent and that is what we expect from each of us.

Q: Are you happy batting at number seven?

SH: I'm happy batting wherever the team needs me to.

I always try to contribute as much as possible. But it's also not as if I come in at number seven in all the matches.

There have been situations when I was sent to bat at number four as well. But I don't think about it.

Q: A lot has been said about pitches. Do you think the Eden Gardens pitch will be slower?

SH: The good thing is that the pitch will get a huge gap here after the April 13 game [because of elections]. Otherwise, I don't think it will be bad.

We played a practice match here, it was a good pitch, good for batsmen, and the ball was turning a bit too.

Q: Who are your closest buddies in the KKR team?

SH: Sunil Narine and Andre Russell. I am friends with all of them, but if you ask me to pick then I would say I interact maybe a little more with these two.

Q: Are West Indies cricketers very popular with Bangladesh players?

SH: It's their friendliness. If I don't go to them, they will come to me. That itself can start a great rapport.