



Abahani striker Camara Sabra (R) celebrates his goal with a teammate during their 2-2 draw against Rahmatganj MFS in their KFC Independence Cup encounter at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

BFF ELECTIONS 2016

Save Football panel loses bite

SPORTS REPORTER

Three of the leading candidates of the Save Football panel -- Dewan Shafiqul Arefin Tutul, Manzur Kader and Lokman Hossain Bhuiyan -- withdrew their nominations for the senior vice-president post of the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) polls, leaving incumbent Abdus Salam Murshed as the only candidate for the post.

Tutul, a former BCB director and a sports secretary of Bangladesh Awami League, and Lokman, director-in-charge of Mohammedan SC, also pulled out of the executive member and vice-president posts respectively yesterday afternoon despite declaring their intention to contest at a press conference earlier in the day.

The withdrawal of the prime leaders of the panel raised eyebrows in football fraternity as many are now trying to find the motive of their movement.

Apart from those three, six more candidates withdrew their nominations for executive posts.

"Abdus Salam Murshed will be elected unopposed as the three remaining candidates withdrew their nominations for the senior vice-president post," chief election commissioner Mezbah Uddin said. "Now the elections will be held for three posts --

president, vice-presidents and member posts -- as there is no opportunity to withdraw nomination papers after the deadline which ended today [Wednesday] at 6:00pm."

Before the official briefing of the chief election commissioner, there were whispers that incumbent president Kazi Salahuddin was asked to withdraw his nomination by an influential group to make way for president candidate Kamrul Ashraf Khan MP, who was learnt to have met Prime Minister. It was also learnt that the Salahuddin-led panel to share four vice president posts excluding former footballer Badal Roy. It was even learnt that the Salahuddin-led panel might refrain from the election proceedings.

A marathon meeting among the members of the BFF executive committee then only added fuel to the rumour-mill.

However, Salahuddin later cleared the air by stating that there was no pressure on himself or his panel from any quarters.

"Whatever you have heard is nothing but rumour. I am contesting in the polls. There is no pressure on me from any quarter, rather I want support from the councillors and I have faith on them," said a visibly tensed Salahuddin, who will be contesting against Kamrul Ashraf, Nurul Islam Nuru and Golam Rabbani Helal.

Rahmatganj keep Abahani waiting

SPORTS REPORTER



Rahmatganj MFS kept Abahani waiting for a semifinal berth in the KFC Independence Cup as they held the Sky Blues to a 2-2 draw at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

With a second consecutive draw, Abahani are now third in Group B with six points from four matches, one behind second-placed Team BJMC and four behind leaders Sheikh Russel KC, who have confirmed their semifinal berth.

A win today would have taken Abahani through but they will now need at least a draw in their match against Sheikh Russel to advance.

In the absence of suspended English forward Lee Tuck, Mamic handed a debut to another Englishman, midfielder Rohan Ricketts and it took the former Arsenal and

Tottenham Hotspur midfielder just two minutes to show his class as he rattled the post with a volley after capitalising on a low cross from Jewel Rana.

However, Ricketts was not to be denied a debut goal and seven minutes into the game, he put Abahani ahead with a well-placed shot.

However, Congolese striker Siyo Zunapio brought Rahmatganj back into the game in the 38th minute, shrugging off his marker and nodding a Faisal Ahmed cross home.

Eight minutes into the second half defender Alauddin made a goal-line clearance from Jewel Rana's attempt before Nurul Absar stunned Abahani in the 71st minute.

Having received a ball from Faisal, Absar raced past two defenders to enter the box and chipped the ball over the advancing goalkeeper.

A defeat was becoming an increasingly likely prospect for Abahani, but Senegalese striker Camara Sarba pounced on a rebound five minutes from time after Sunday

Barca won't sell Neymar

GOAL.COM



Barcelona vice-president Jordi Mestre has reiterated that the club has no intention of parting company with Brazil superstar Neymar.

The forward is without a goal in his past five club matches, during which time Barcelona's lead at the top of La Liga has collapsed due to three consecutive defeats.

Atletico Madrid have also dumped the soon-to-be deposed European champions out of the Champions League and Neymar's form has come in for criticism.

The 24-year-old was involved in an altercation with Valencia defender Antonio Barragan after Sunday's 2-1 defeat at Camp Nou and he is currently embroiled in a club versus country row due to Brazil's desire for him to play in both the forthcoming Copa America

Centenario and the Rio 2016 Olympic Games.

Neymar is also yet to pen a new contract with Barca following months of speculation but Mestre is relaxed over the situation.



On whether Neymar could leave Camp Nou, he told Barca TV: "Absolutely not. I've said it many times, but it's something which keeps coming up."

"I have said it actively and passively. We are delighted with Neymar and he is not for sale -- it's not even crossed our

minds.

"He's a player who made an economical effort [by turning down better offers] when he signed. He came because he wanted to play good football, with Lionel Messi and company, and to win titles."

"He's having a spectacular season. He will renew when the moment arrives. He still has a contract. If we speak, we will speak."

"But the most important thing is how the club is with him and how he is with the club."

Barcelona president Josep Maria Bartomeu sent a letter to the Brazil Football Confederation (CBF) earlier this month with a proposal for Neymar to only play in one international tournament this year - with the Olympics between August 3-20 being the club's preference.

But Mestre concedes FIFA rules mean the club would be unable to prevent Neymar from playing if he is called up to the Copa America Centenario.

PSG approach Mourinho

INTERNET

Paris Saint-Germain have made an approach to Jose Mourinho to become their new manager this summer, according to Sky sources.

PSG chairman Nasser al Khelaifi is reported to have approached Mourinho through his agent Jorge Mendes after PSG's Champions League exit.

Sky Sports are reporting that Mourinho's preference is to wait until the end of the season and see if the Manchester United job is still available.

Current PSG boss Laurent Blanc signed a new two-year contract in February but Al Khelaifi wants Mourinho to replace him this summer.

Mumbai thump RCB

STAR SPORT DESK

A second-wicket partnership of 76 between Rohit Sharma and Ambati Rayudu and some late power-hitting by Jos Buttler and Kieron Pollard drove Mumbai Indians to a six-wicket win over Royal Challengers Bangalore in their Indian Premier League encounter at the Wankhede stadium last night.

Rohit, the Mumbai skipper, hammered 44-ball 62 while Rayudu added 23-ball 31 to get Mumbai off to a rollicking start chasing a victory target of 171. After Buttler's 14-ball 28, Pollard hit a whirlwind 19-ball 40 as the hosts romped to the target with two overs to spare.

Earlier, a late-order assault by Travis Head and Sarfaraz Khan had taken Royal Challengers Bangalore to 170 for 7 after being put into bat. The duo helped RCB compile 71 in the final 6.3 overs.

Head scored 37 while Sarfaraz smashed 28 off 17 balls. Skipper Virat Kohli and AB de Villiers contributed 33 and 29 respectively. Jasprit Bumrah ended with best figures of 3 for 31 for the Mumbai Indians.

SCORES IN BRIEF
ROYAL CHALLENGERS BANGALORE: 170 for 7 in 20 overs (Head 37, Kohli 33; Bumrah 3-31)
MUMBAI INDIANS: 171 for 4 in 18 overs (Rohit 62, Pollard 40 not out; Abdulla 3-40)
Result: Mumbai Indians won by 6 wickets.

Bolt eyeing sub-19

REUTERS, Rio de Janeiro



Sprint king Usain Bolt aims to crown his legacy with an unprecedented Olympic threepeat at the Rio Games, and to top that off by running the first ever sub-19 seconds 200 meters.

The long-striding Jamaican suggested he might not stop there, leaving open the chance he could extend his career beyond the 2017 season he has said would be his last.

Bolt has already swept the 100 and 200m sprints at the last two Olympics and added gold in the 4x100 relays in both Beijing (2008) and London (2012) with his Jamaican team mates.

"Just to defend my titles, to do the threepeat. That's my main goal. That's my main focus," Bolt told Reuters on Tuesday after helping sponsors Hublot open their biggest U.S. fine watch store with a grand opening on Fifth Avenue.

"My secondary goal is to try and run sub-19," added Bolt, who set the world 200m record of 19.19 in 2009. "That's something I really want and I hope that everything goes smoothly and I can get it. That would be a big step for me."



Bolt said he has been gradually rounding into shape after dealing with ankle problems.

"I'm feeling OK," he said. "My coach says my fitness is not exactly where he wants it to be."

"Starting out this season I had a problem with my ankles and it was a setback but not that bad. We're getting back on track and he's happy with the progress I'm making."

Bolt said he would ramp up his preparations carefully so he can end his Olympic career with a flourish.

"I really want to be at my best leading up to the championships. I have two months before [Jamaican] trials and three and a half months before the championships," he said.

"I'll keep pushing myself and hopefully everything smooths out and I'll be at my best when the Olympics comes around."

Bolt said he would run his first race in Cayman, then in Ostrava and then to his coach's June meet in Jamaica before the trials and then on to the Diamond League meeting in London.

The 29-year-old said his coach, Glen Mills, wanted him to leave the retirement door open.

"Coach says I shouldn't say I want to retire just yet, I should focus on the year and see how I feel after the [2017] world championships [in London]," said the six-time Olympic gold medalist.

"And if I still feel like I want to retire, I should. But he says to give it a chance, because I think my coach is pushing for me to go a few more years. We'll see what happens," he added.

"Personally, I don't really want to continue for years and years because it's getting hard. I have to sacrifice more and more. It takes up so much of your time."

In any event, Bolt said he would not treat 2017 like a farewell tour.

"I'm never going to come out and joke or be a joke in a season. I'm a winner. I believe in winning. I hate to lose. I will never come out and say it is a farewell tour. I will want to compete at my best, go to the championships and win again."

Young SA cricketer dies in training

AGENCIES, Undated

A South African cricketer has collapsed and died of suspected heart failure while training with his academy side in the Eastern Cape Town on Wednesday.

Lukhanya Tsiki, 22, was taking part in fitness tests on Monday at Fort Hare Academy when he suddenly collapsed when his group took a break from their exercises.

The academy is run by former South Africa Test fast bowler Mfuneko Ngam.

"He was fine, he didn't have any problems, he was one of those guys who could run the yo-yo (bleep test) up to 20. He ran 17 and after he was finished, he took his shirt off and sat with his mates and coughed and collapsed. We took him to the hospital but it was too late," Ngam was quoted as saying by 'ESPNCricinfo.com'.

Tsiki was a student at the Fort Hare Academy, which has a partnership with Cricket South Africa, where he was studying a diploma course in Marketing Management. Tsiki is survived by his brothers, Khaya and Cebo, and his sister, Neliswa. Cebo represented SA Schools in 2007 and made his franchise debut for the Cape Cobras during the course of the 2015-16 season.

Cricketer South Africa chief executive Haroon Lorgat expressed condolences to his family and called it a shocking news.

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