

SPORT

Bowling coach finalised: Papon BCB boss advocates selective coverage

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan Papon criticised Dhaka Premier League (DPL) clubs for not being able to complete the players' payment within the given deadlines as Brothers Union and Victoria Sporting have paid the players just 30 percent of their dues.

Speaking to reporters at a press gathering at the Beximco office, Papon said: "This is very unfortunate. The two clubs haven't paid despite the deadlines. The system is such that if the clubs don't pay the players, BCB will. And BCB should have made the payments already. I don't know why the players haven't been paid."

"This can't be delayed any further. It was a mistake for us to delay it. Whether we take steps against the clubs or not, what matters is that players should not go unpaid."

On another note, Papon also said that the board had finalised a bowling coach for the national team, but he was not ready to reveal who it was.

"We have finalised someone. We are hoping



that he will be in Bangladesh by the end of this month, but we can't name him right now because he is working for another organisation. His contract will end at the end of this month and that's when he himself will make the announcement," said Papon.

With regards to Mustafizur Rahman's operation, the BCB president said that the board was still analysing its options.

"Apart from contacting Greg Hoy in Australia, who has operated on a number of our players before,

we also asked the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) to suggest a few names for the operation. They gave us two. The first doctor is based in Manchester, Lenerd Funk. He said that the operation would take 30 minutes and that the pacer would have to rest for six hours in the hospital.

"But he is going on leave and will not be available before the 22nd. We want Mustafizur to undergo the surgery as soon as possible and so we decided to send his medical documents to Andrew Wallace, the second person that the ECB suggested. We are yet to get a reply from him," said Papon.

"The three options are open. If we see that he can get a date earlier in Australia, he may go there as well," he added.

Furthermore the BCB president also said that the ECB's security team is expected to arrive in Bangladesh in mid-August to perform its pre-series security tasks.

On another note, Papon informed that former Indian spinner Venkatapathy Raju would arrive in Bangladesh this month to work as a spin consultant with the High Performance Unit, which is currently undergoing a camp at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

selective coverage

Yesterday Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) President Nazmul Hassan Papon, upon requests made by members of the media for an audience with him, had called them to his BEXIMCO Pharmaceuticals office where impromptu press briefings have taken place before. However, the unprecedented event of barring certain members of the press took place; the reason given that they were not on the list of attendees. On June 25 the BCB sent out a circular to media houses that only those invited will be allowed to attend press conferences. The following are the relevant excerpts from Papon's discussion on this issue.

Why are some reporters not allowed in?

Nazmul Hassan Papon (NHP): A few days ago we gave a circular to each and every media house, to the effect that from now if we have a press briefing or press conference, those will be only upon invitation, and we are sticking to that and we will continue that. It so happened that I was out of the country, I came back the day before yesterday. Upon coming back many had contacted me wanting to talk for one or two minutes. So today I said, since I cannot give everyone time, I do not like talking to one or two. So I said if they want to come, let them come many at a time. So those who have been asked to come, definitely they are here. There is no reason to leave them out.

Can we ask why Prothom Alo, The Daily Star, Bdnews24.com and Shomoy Television, these reputed media houses, are not on the list?

NHP: Tomorrow someone else might not be on the list. I don't know. Try to understand a simple thing. The issue is not with any particular... no one is targeted here; that is not the issue. It is a sensitive time in Bangladesh and Bangladesh cricket is within Bangladesh. One false interpretation, a negative news can greatly damage our cricket. We don't want to be part of it. Is that why they are being barred?

NHP: It could be. Anybody can write anything, we have no problem with that; we are open. But we don't want a different explanation to a comment we make which will hurt our cricket. I don't want anyone to blame me for it. For now, we can be a little selective. We knew that the BCB believed in free press. Do they?

NHP: Did you know the same even after the circular?

So that means you don't. NHP: No. We believe in free press. Anyone can write anything they want. But we don't want to be involved in it. You can interpret one of my comments in different ways. But if the interpretation hurts cricket, I am not going to be party to that.

Can you give us some examples?

NHP: There are many examples. Watch the TV, look at the newspapers. As far as I know, I try to explain everything. I don't try to hide anything when I talk. Often people tell me to wrap it up quickly, but I still try to say everything in full. For example, suppose I say something to you; after saying it I have a hope that what I said will be represented. But if I see that that very day something else has been represented, what happens then? Then all channels are showing one thing and another channel is showing something else, then it seems I am at fault. It is embarrassing for me.

Is it the board's decision?

NHP: It is a majority decision, not a singular decision.

Can you refuse the role of media in

Bangladesh cricket's progress?

NHP: Impossible. Whatever progress Bangladesh cricket has made, I am quite certain that media had a very important role to play. There is no doubt about it.

The issue is not about who could come in and who couldn't today. You will ask us about England tour and I will say something. If someone twists what I say, it will have a huge effect on our cricket. What we are trying to do is that we want to make sure that our message goes correctly. You can write what you want.

Don't you think this could have more of an adverse effect?

NHP: Let's see. At least we are not party to that. We can say that we were not a party to it. These journalists go to BCB but you're not stopping them. Why are they stopped today?

NHP: I don't know who were stopped from coming in.

Daily Star, Prothom Alo, Somoy TV and Bdnews24.com

NHP: Maybe they were not contacted.

We were informed about it in BCB this morning. We heard it from the BCB but not through an e-mail.

NHP: They were asking me about Mustafizur [Rahman], bowling coach, England tour, etc. I have been trying to speak to everyone together, especially in the last 5-6 months.

Are they here? I think if they are here, we should call them. I am not singling anyone out in the media. Our formal press briefings are upon request. We are changing the entire security environment, like it is in Bangladesh. Everything changes. If you have a problem, you please tell us. We have no problem against anyone in the media.

This office has its own security policy. Maybe they didn't communicate so their name wasn't on the list.

If someone can't be reached, they won't be invited. It can be intentional and in that case, we can talk. We are not targeting anyone individually. If your name is not on the list, security will stop you. It will be the same for me. Leading media house is not the issue. If I went to the Gono Bhaban without prior permission, they will stop me. Shouldn't BCB press conferences be held in the BCB?

NHP: Any official press conference will be held in the BCB. This is not a press conference.

Those downstairs said that they were acting upon a list given by the BCB.

NHP: It was certainly given by the BCB. You are trying to say that why were the leading media houses not contacted? I think word got out of this around 10am and the message was passed on. There is a possibility that the list wasn't updated properly. I don't know the exact situation.

Tigers' maiden India Test on Feb 8-12

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA from New Delhi

Bangladesh will play a historic one-off Test against India in Hyderabad in February next year, marking the neighbouring country's first official trip here since claiming Test status sixteen years ago.

This is the first time Bangladesh will play a Test match on Indian soil.

India will play Bangladesh in a historic one-off Test match from February 08-12, 2017 at the Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium in Hyderabad. The Test match will mark Bangladesh's first official visit to India since attaining Test status in 2000. Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) secretary Ajay Shirke said in a statement.

Underlining the significance of the Test, BCCI president Anurag Thakur said the match would add value to India's home season.

"As a leading Test playing nation, it is BCCI's responsibility to give an opportunity to every Test playing nation. It is my pleasure to announce the historic one-off Test match against our neighbours Bangladesh early next year. This will be a great addition to our home season 2016-17," he said.

BCB president Nazmul Hassan Papon said that the short tour would be a cherished experience for players and fans of both countries.

U-18 ASIA CUP Japan pull out

SPORTS REPORTER

Japan pulled out of the upcoming Under-18 Asia Cup citing security reasons, confirmed a Bangladesh Hockey Federation official yesterday.

The 4th U-18 AFC Cup involving eight nations is scheduled to be held here from September 24 but the withdrawal of Japan means now seven teams, split into two groups, will be competing.

"Two to three days ago we received a letter from Japan Hockey Federation which stated that they would not be able to take part in the U-18 Asia Cup following the death of seven Japanese citizens in Dhaka," said BHF joint secretary Anvir Adil, adding that the matter was raised before the ministerial meeting yesterday.

The remaining participating teams are India, Oman, Pakistan, China, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong and hosts Bangladesh.



Despite conceding the lead early against Uttar Baridhara in their Bangladesh Premier League encounter at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong yesterday, Arambagh's Nigerian striker and stand-in captain Kester Akon (R) scored two sure-footed goals to complete a comeback and give his side a much-needed win. PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

Muktis climb to top

SPORTS REPORTER



Muktijoddha Sangsad continued their impressive run in the JB Bangladesh Premier League as the All Reds handed a 2-0 defeat to Brothers Union at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.

A second successive win from three matches took Muktijoddha to the top of the 12-team table. While they are tied on seven points with both Abahani and Chittagong Abahani, Muktijoddha boast the best goal-difference.

Fresh from a 3-0 win over Arambagh KS, Muktijoddha were a bit under pressure at the start of the match and nearly conceded twice, but were let off the hook by Brothers' Nigerian striker Eleta Kingsley. However, the All Reds regrouped and established control over the game and took a deserved lead in the 65th minute as Habibur Rahman Shohag found the back of the net from a free-kick. Nigerian

Ahmed Kolo Musa wrapped up the victory with a tap-in six minutes from time.

ARAMBAGH KS VS UTTAR BARIDHARA CLUB

In the day's other match, Arambagh KS leapfrogged to the sixth position from eleventh with a 2-1 win over Uttar Baridhara Club thanks to a brace from Nigerian Kester Akon.

In a battle between two promoted

UTTAR BARIDHARA 1-2 ARAMBAGH BROTHERS UNION 0-2 MUKTIJODDHA

sides, Arambagh came out on top despite conceding the lead against the champions of the Bangladesh Championship League.

The two teams fought for every inch of grass throughout the game in a bid to earn the full three points, especially after suffering heavy defeats in their previous matches. Both played attacking football from the start until the final whistle and there would be no wonder if the match produced

a stalemate.

Uttar Baridhara, who garnered a lot of attention after beating Shekh Russel in the league opener, went ahead in the 19th minute as Sentu Chandra Das headed home a Monir Alam cross before Federation Cup runners-up Arambagh hit back just seven minutes later, stand-in captain Kester curling in a free-kick from the edge of the box in the 26th minute.

With the game seemingly headed for a draw, Kester struck against with a left-footed shot that gave goalkeeper Rajib no chance to react in the 81st minute.

Uttar Baridhara coach Rashed Ahmed Pappu strengthened his attacking line-up and sent on two strikers and although they made a positive impact on the match, they failed to snatch a point from Arambagh. Substitute Mohammed Javed added to Uttar Baridhara's woes, squandering two scoring chances in stoppage time to disappoint his coach.

BCCI against two-tier Tests

AFP, New Delhi



ANURAG THAKUR

The head of India's powerful cricket board has voiced opposition to controversial plans for a two-tier Test system being considered by the game's governing body, a report said Wednesday.

Anurag Thakur, president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), told a newspaper smaller nations would lose out on revenue and the chance to compete against the top teams.

"The BCCI is against the two-tier Test system because the smaller countries will lose out and the BCCI wants to take care of them. It is necessary to protect their interests," The New Indian Express, a Chennai-based daily, quoted him as saying.

"In the two-tier system, they will lose out on a lot, including revenue and the opportunity to play against top teams. We don't want that to happen. We want to work in the best interests of world cricket and that is why our team plays against all the countries."

The International Cricket Council (ICC) first discussed the proposal to split Test cricket into two

divisions at a meeting in Edinburgh last month and is due to debate the plan further in September.

Under the scheme being considered, the top seven-ranked teams would join a de facto premier league designed to boost interest in Test cricket.

The other three lowest ranked sides -- which are currently the West Indies, Bangladesh and Zimbabwe -- would then join a second division which would also include the likes of Afghanistan and Ireland.

Although England, Australia and New Zealand have all come out in favour of the proposal, India's opposition could well mean it is now dead in the water.

Former BCCI president Shashank Manohar is head of the ICC and India, which is the game's financial powerhouse, has a history of ensuring that its stance prevails on key debates within the global body.

The plan has been fiercely opposed by the likes of Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, which is at risk of falling outside the top seven after sliding down the rankings in the last year.

The smaller Test teams' financial survival largely depends on their ability to sell television rights to matches against teams such as India and England.

The past is in the past: Shafiqul Islam

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Pacer Shafiqul Islam last played an international match in November 2014 against Zimbabwe. Since that ODI match the lean pacer's return to international cricket has been held back by one injury

after another. At the moment, there are several questions floating around.

Will the 26-year old right-arm pacer be able to make a return in the coming home series against England? Will the absence of Mustafizur Rahman create an opportunity for him?

These questions gain momentum especially because the opposition are England -- a team against whom Shafiqul has some sweet memories.

In the 2011 World Cup, he had an outstanding partnership with Mahmudullah Riyad to give the Tigers a memorable victory against England and one cannot forget his precious 24-run innings. In 2010 his bowling contributed heavily to the Tigers' win, while his lone half-century in Test cricket also came against the same opponents.

However, Shafiqul was well aware of the fact that those past memories would count for little as the competition to get into the team is now so high.

"There is no point in living with past glories. I have to think about what I'm doing now," said Shafiqul while talking to reporters at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

"But I said earlier that I always enjoy challenges. I will try more and more when someone is chasing me. Unlike now, there was not much competition in the national team in the past. The situation is that there are five players in line for one spot and if someone takes your spot then it's very tough to get that place back because Bangladesh are performing so well," he continued.

However, Shafiqul's only desire now is avoid any further injuries.

"You all know why my progress was held back. I suffered several injuries in the past two-three years. My performances were not so bad, but I suffered from an injury again. I am now working on my fitness. In the [Dhaka] Premier League I tried to avoid getting injured. Now I am mainly focusing on my fitness and my aim is to not be injured again," he said.