

# 'Football has already been laid to rest'

Former footballers, organisers blast Salahuddin

SPORTS REPORTER

Expressing their concerns over the present status of the country's football following Bangladesh's disastrous defeat at the hands of lightweights Bhutan, a section of former national footballers and organisers have said they have 'no confidence' in Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) president Kazi Salahuddin.

"We don't believe the man [Kazi Salahuddin], who could not do anything in last nine years, can bring a change in the country's football in the next three years.

"He [Salahuddin] was a renowned footballer and our football was supposed to go forward during his last two tenures but football has been on a downward slope during his regime and now Bangladesh has lost to a team like Bhutan," said former national captain-cum-goalkeeper Aminul Haque at a press conference at the Dhaka Reporters Unity yesterday.

Former national footballers Golam Sarwar Tipu, Hasanuzzaman Khan Bablu, Shamsul Alam Manju, Kaiser Hamid, Hasan Al Mamun and organiser Manzoor Hossain

Malu spoke on the occasion.

Malu not only blamed the existing committee of the game's governing body, but also pointed to other committees who were at the helm in the past.

"Not only the members of this committee, everyone is responsible for the present condition of our football and I will say that this committee is a failure because they never drafted any plans for the development of football. Football is now being played in Dhaka, there is no football outside the capital and there is no accountability," said former BFF joint secretary Malu.

Meanwhile, Hasan Al Mamun said: "Competitive football started in Dhaka in 1947 but football has not got an institutional shape yet. It is unfortunate for everyone involved. I think the crisis of quality players can be overcome if the government takes care of the BKSP footballers across the country by providing quality coaches."

"There is nothing to be proud of in regards to football. Many say football is on life-support but I think football has already been laid to rest," said Bablu.

## Milestone for BCB

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB's) official Facebook page crossed the '10 million followers' mark yesterday.

The Tigers have long had a loyal following in Bangladesh, but ever since their unheralded run in the 2015 World Cup and the successes in the following series, their popularity has grown worldwide.

On the occasion, the BCB extended their gratitude towards its fans.

"The BCB takes this opportunity to thank the millions of fans for their undying devotion, continuous support and encouragement to Bangladesh cricket," read a BCB statement.

"The Board joins the Bangladesh cricket fans around the world, the country's cricketing fraternity including the cricketers, organisers, officials and members of the media in celebrating this momentous occasion," the statement added.

## Shahadat, wife plead not guilty

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Former national cricketer Shahadat Hossain and his wife yesterday pleaded not guilty and demanded justice in a case filed over the torture of the couple's 11-year-old domestic help.

The couple made the appeal after Judge Tanjina Ismail of the Fifth Tribunal for Prevention of Women & Children Repression asked them to place their self-defence statements. The court set October 31 as the date for hearing arguments.

Earlier, seven prosecution witnesses, including complainant and the victim of the case, gave their statements before the court during trial. However, while giving her statements on August 25, she sided with the accused and said that Shahadat and his wife Jesmine Jahan Nritya did not torture her.

On September 6 last year, domestic help Mahfuza Akhtar Happy brought allegations of torture by Shahadat and his wife.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) suspended Shahadat on September 13 after the allegation was brought against him.

## INTER-SCHOOL V'BALL Greenherald crowned champs

SPORTS REPORTER

SFX Greenherald School emerged as champions in the women's section of the Pran-Froto Dhaka Metropolitan School Volleyball tournament after defeating BISC 3-0 in the final.

In the boy's section, Baridhara Rajuk School became champions with a 3-0 win over South Breeze (Dhanmondi), said a press release yesterday.

## Real run riot

AFP, Leon

A much-weakened Real Madrid went goal crazy in the Copa del Rey on Wednesday, smashing third-division minnows Cultural Leonesa 7-1 away from home in the first leg of their last-32 encounter.

Marco Asensio and Alvaro Morata each struck twice in a one-sided match, but Spanish international Morata should have had at least a hat-trick as Real ran riot, ensuring the return leg at the Santiago Bernabeu is effectively a dead rubber.

## Messi, Ronaldo not friends

AGENCIES, Madrid



Cristiano Ronaldo has downplayed the significance of his rivalry with Lionel Messi and stressed that there is a mutual respect between them, even though the two are not friends.

The Real Madrid star and his Barcelona counterpart have dominated the Ballon d'Or election over the past eight years and they are widely regarded as the two best players in the game.

There is an ongoing debate about who is the better of the pair, but Ronaldo is adamant there is no bitterness between the two.

"There is a big mutual respect between myself and Messi," the 31-year-old told Coach Magazine. "The media like to make out like we have this big rivalry, but we don't."

"It is not like we are good friends, but there is a mutual respect on both sides."

Ronaldo has faced plenty of high-profile defenders since making his professional debut at Sporting CP, but there is one opponent who stands out for the prolific attacker.

"Over the years I had some great battles with Ashley Cole, he does not give you a second to breathe," Ronaldo added.

"He was such a tenacious player when he was at his peak, quick, tough in the tackle. You knew it would never be an easy game."

A defender who has mainly been battling alongside Ronaldo is Pepe and the forward has nothing but praise for his team-mate.

"Pepe is the team-mate I would want next to me in a war," he continued. "Not only is he a fantastic defender, but he leaves nothing on the field. He gives everything."

## FA charges Mourinho

REUTERS, London

Jose Mourinho has been charged with misconduct in the wake of his comments about referee Anthony Taylor before Manchester United's goalless draw with Liverpool last week, the Football Association said on Thursday.

United manager Mourinho said it would be "difficult" for Taylor, who is from the Greater Manchester area, to have "a very good performance" after being put in charge of the Premier League game between two fierce rivals.

"Manchester United manager Jose Mourinho has been charged with misconduct, in respect of comments he made relating to the appointed match referee prior to the Liverpool FC v Manchester United FC fixture on Monday 17 October 2016," the FA said in a statement.

The 53-year-old has until on Monday to respond to the charge.



Manchester United midfielder Juan Mata jumps for joy after scoring the all-important goal against Manchester City during their EFL Cup fourth round match at Old Trafford on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Jose humbled by support

AFP, Manchester



Jose Mourinho lauded Manchester United's supporters after his team put the disappointment of their 4-0 humiliation at Chelsea behind them to sink Manchester City in England's League Cup.

Sunday's defeat at Chelsea, Mourinho's former club, was United's worst in the league for five years, but they bounced back to beat holders City 1-0 on Wednesday courtesy of Juan Mata's 54th-minute goal.

Mourinho made a gesture of apology to United's fans at the end -- making a '4-0' symbol with his fingers and lowering his head -- and said he had been moved by their backing.

"We were on a good run of results, but it was a big defeat," said the United manager, whose side had gone six games unbeaten prior to coming off the rails at Stamford Bridge.

"(They are) numbers that the history of this club doesn't deserve and when I'm in a club my heart belongs to the fans and I felt deeply for them. The reality is that I never had people like these ones."

"We lost 4-0 and they were supportive. Today the stadium was full of real

support and it looks like the love people have for the club is bigger than bad results, bigger than three bad seasons.

"We must give something back. The players gave everything, but even if we'd lost the feeling was fantastic because the players showed they really care and they fought for the fans."

Mourinho spoke to television reporters after the game at Old Trafford, but did not appear at his post-match press conference. United did not offer an explanation.

While Mourinho made just four changes to his starting XI, his opposite number, Pep Guardiola, made nine.

Both teams disappointed in a drab first half, but it was United who seized the advantage after the break, with Mata sweeping home Zlatan Ibrahimovic's low cross after Paul Pogba had hit the post.

City captain Vincent Kompany, one of only two players to keep his place from Sunday's 1-1 draw against Southampton, was substituted at half-time.

The Belgian centre-back has been dogged by injuries in recent seasons and Guardiola said he had not felt able to play on.

"He told us he is tired and not ready to play the second half," explained

Guardiola, whose side beat Liverpool on penalties in last season's final prior to his arrival.

"The important thing is after two years (repeatedly) injured, he played three days ago 70 minutes, today 45 and no injuries.

"That is a good step, the first step. After we have to see. He felt not good, knowing what happened in the past."

Guardiola has now gone six games without victory for the first time in his managerial career, but he said he had "no regrets" about selecting a weakened team.

"Sometimes it happens in football the managers doesn't win," he said.

"It is the first time. OK, hopefully it does not happen again, but it is part of our profession. Sometimes you win and sometimes you lose."

Asked if he had learnt anything during his team's slump, he replied: "The same as when we won 10 games in a row (at the start of the season)."

"Every match is different. I need to analyse them all. Every team has streaks of good results and bad results. The strange thing is after seven years as a manager, it happens now."

"But we are still getting to know each other, still improving and we will (improve)."



Bangladesh skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (C) signed an MoU with the Diabetic Association of Bangladesh and Novo Nordisk in Dhaka yesterday in a bid to carry out a campaign to deal with diabetes. Novo Nordisk has had a partnership with Transcom Distribution Company since 2006.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## Violence mars Hammers' win

AFP, London



London police said they were holding Thursday seven men arrested following violence at the English League Cup clash between West Ham and Chelsea.

Skirmishes broke out towards the end of the Hammers' 2-1 win on Wednesday, with police and stewards battling to keep supporters apart as coins, bottles and plastic seats were thrown.

There was a heavy police presence in place at the London Stadium, formerly the Olympic Stadium, which has seen repeated violence involving West Ham fans since they moved into their new home at the start of the season.

The seven men were arrested for pub-

lic order offences and were being held in custody at several police stations.

Commander BJ Harrington, who led the match day police operation, said an investigation had been opened.

"There were a minority of people who attended the match that were clearly intent on being involved in confrontation and violence," he said.

"There were unacceptable incidents inside and outside the stadium, before, during and after the game."

"We have already made seven arrests and will work tirelessly to identify people involved and bring them to justice."

The police said 30 people were stopped from attending the game prior to the match between the two London sides.

Chelsea supporter Paul Streeter said he and his eight-year-old daughter

were pelted with coins while sitting in the disabled supporters' section of the ground.

"My daughter was hit with seven coins all over her body," he told BBC radio.

"Other kids were hit, it was not just my daughter."

"She's never experienced violence like this before or the aggression we have had to suffer. We want to take this matter further. It is disgusting."

West Ham United pledged to ban supporters involved in the violence.

"Those found to have acted improperly will be banned from attending any West Ham United fixtures for life and we will request the courts serve banning orders to prevent these individuals attending any other football," the club said in a statement.

## Southgate backs Vardy to end drought

AFP, London



England caretaker boss Gareth Southgate on Thursday backed Leicester City striker Jamie Vardy to rediscover his best form after suffering his worst scoring drought in almost two years.

Vardy, one of 30 players shortlisted for the Ballon d'Or this week, has not scored in his last 10 appearances for club and country and was dropped by Foxes coach Claudio Ranieri last weekend.

Last season Vardy found the net in a record 11 successive Premier League matches with his 24 goals helping spur Leicester towards their improbable title triumph.

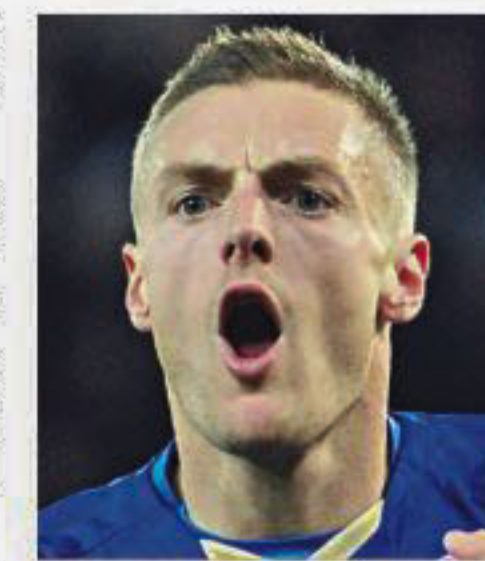
However, the 29-year-old has scored just three times this term and was left out of Leicester's starting line-up for the first time in the league since March 2015 in Saturday's 3-1 win over Crystal Palace.

"All goalscorers have periods where they are not scoring. History and records over the years show you what they are likely to fall back into and his scoring record is phenomenal," Southgate told Britain's Press Association.

"I have played with Alan Shearer when he went through the same - and Andy Cole. Over a long period of time if they have a record of one in two or one in three they will come back to that."

"You can take a small sample of games for any player but that's all it is. You have to look longer-term, especially with goalscorers. He has proven himself at every level."

Vardy endured a run of 23 matches without a goal between September 2014 -- after he inspired a famous 5-3 win over Manchester United -- and March 2015, but finished joint-second behind Harry Kane in last season's scoring chart.



JAMIE VARDY

## Sociedad and their social benefits

AGENCIES, Madrid

Football may appear to be a cut-throat business run by multi-billionaires who care about little more than lining their pockets and adopting a revolving door policy when it comes to managerial appointments.

Occasionally, though, some clubs go above and beyond to restore your faith in humanity and a sport which continues to offer so much joy to millions of followers around the world.

One such tale has emerged from Spain, where Real Sociedad have been doing their bit for the local community.

Ruben Vitoriano is a homeless man from nearby Vitoria who has spent three years sleeping rough -- with the last eight months of that cycle spent in a doorway of Sociedad's Anoeta Stadium with his dog Mundo.

He has, however, been offered a route off the streets by the Liga outfit, with a position found for him within the club's maintenance department.

An initial two-month contract will be extended if Vitoriano's probationary period proves successful, but the role has already allowed the 35-year-old to put a roof over his head.