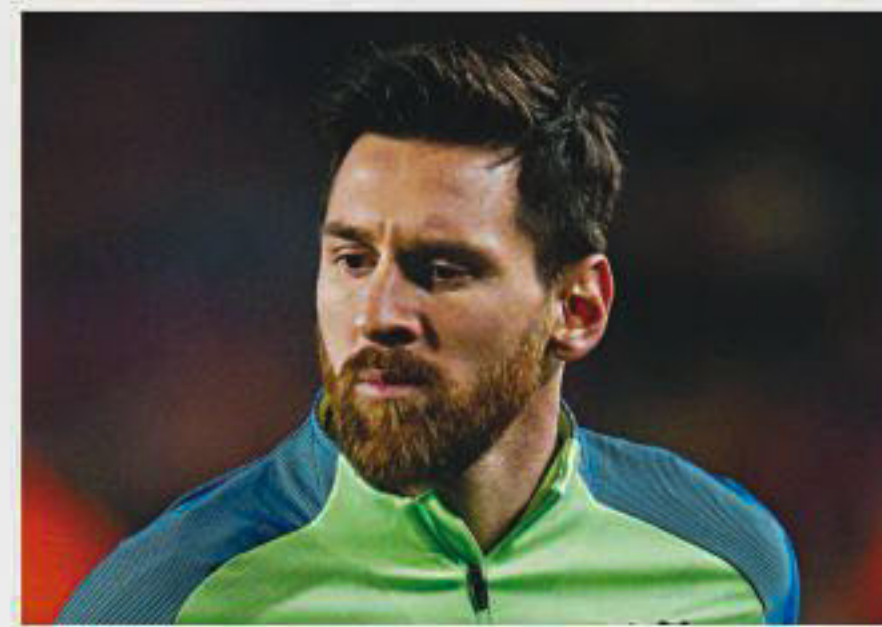


MESSI BOUGHT NOISY NEIGHBOUR'S HOUSE

Noisy neighbours can be frustrating but when you're Lionel Messi, you can just buy their house. That's what the Barcelona star did in 2013, according to teammate Ivan Rakitic. The Argentine superstar lives in the fashionable suburb of Castelldefels and has team-mate Luis Suarez living nearby, but found some rowdy neighbours were making life difficult for Messi and his young family. Rakitic, who lives in the same plush neighbourhood, told Spanish newspaper Dairio Gol: "I did not have any problems with my neighbours, unlike Messi in Castelldefels, who had to buy the house from the neighbours because they were noisy and so he could be alone." Reportedly, Messi's neighbours were "rude" and played loud music which resulted in "unease" for Messi and his young family. They also rented out the house to star-spotters who would peek into Messi's house. Messi initially tried to install a dividing wall but the structure didn't meet building regulations so he just gave up and bought the house instead.

-Agencies



Lahm to hang up boots at end of season

AFP, Berlin

Germany's World Cup winning captain Philipp Lahm on Tuesday confirmed he will retire at the end of the season and leave Bayern Munich, having rejected a role as sports director.

"I have decided to stop playing football at the end of the season," Lahm said after Bayern's 1-0 win over Wolfsburg in the third round of the German Cup.

"I am sure I can keep putting in the performances until the end of the season, but not after that," added the Bayern captain, confirming an earlier press report.

The 33-year-old made his 500th appearance for Bayern last Saturday and will hang up his boots in June despite having a year left on his contract.

Oscar shows golden touch for Shanghai

AFP, Shanghai

Megabucks import Oscar began repaying some of his hefty price tag when he scored on his competitive debut for Shanghai SIPG, helping them seal a spot in the AFC Champions League group stage.

The Brazil midfielder, who quit Chelsea in a 60 million euro (\$64 million) deal, rolled in SIPG's opener in Tuesday's 3-0 play-off victory over Thailand's Sukhothai FC.

Suarez hero and villain



PHOTO: AFP

Barcelona striker Luis Suarez celebrates his opening goal against Atletico Madrid during their Copa del Rey semifinal second leg tie at the Nou Camp on Tuesday.

REUTERS, Barcelona



Tuesday.

Suarez was one of three players dismissed and will now miss the final after Barcelona edged through 3-2 on aggregate.

The Uruguayan tapped in from close range in the 43rd minute after an inspired run and shot from Lionel Messi to deliver a sucker punch to Atletico, who had dominated the first half at the Nou Camp but failed to take their chances.

Kevin Gameiro blazed a penalty over the bar with 10 minutes remaining but the French striker still made for a tense finale by tapping in an Antoine Griezmann cross moments later.

Barca defender Sergi Roberto will also be suspended for the final after being sent off for a second booking in the second half and Atletico winger Yannick Carrasco was dismissed as well for a second yellow card.

Suarez was then sent off in the 90th minute for an elbow on Atletico midfielder Koke.

Atletico had five minutes of stoppage time to snatch a winner and force extra time, but Barca withstood the pressure.

Pakistan tame Tigresses

Sports Reporter



WOMEN'S WORLD CUP ENGLAND 2017

Bangladesh women's team captain Rumana Ahmed had promised better batting performances but in reality her team continued with their poor showings as they suffered a heavy defeat at the hands of their Pakistani counterparts in their second ICC Women's World Cup Qualifier match at the P Sara Oval in Colombo yesterday.

Bangladesh made a flying start to the competition with a thumping victory over Papua New Guinea but lost the second game by 67 runs as they were bundled out for 160 in reply to Pakistan's 227.

They will face Scotland in the third group match at the Colombo Cricket Club ground tomorrow.

Pakistan got off to a good start after deciding to bat first as openers Ayesha Zafar

and Nahida Khan enjoyed a 76-run partnership in 18.5 overs. However, they were pegged back as they lost three quick wickets to reach 3 for 78. However a 69-run fourth-wicket stand followed by a sixth-wicket partnership of 49 helped them put up a challenging total.

Rumana grabbed three wickets for 40 runs while Khadija Tul Kubra and Salma Khatun chipped in with two wickets each.

In reply, Bangladesh failed to build any good partnerships to achieve the target. Nigar Sultana top-scored with 41, followed by Sanjida Islam's 34.

Ghulam Fatima claimed three wickets for 28.

SCORES IN BRIEF

PAKISTAN: 227 all out in 50 overs (Bismah 35, Rabiya 34, Ayesha 34; Rumana 3-40)

BANGLADESH: 160 all out in 49.3 overs (Nigar 41, Sanjida 34; Fatima 3-28)

Result: Pakistan won by 67 runs.

SHAILA'S stunning skill

Agencies, Colombo



WOMEN'S WORLD CUP ENGLAND 2017

Spin bowler Shaila Sharmin flew onto the cricketing world's radar during Bangladesh's Women's World Cup Qualifying match against Pakistan in Colombo yesterday as she shocked the crowd, bowling with both hands in the same over.

An off-spinner, she bowled with her left arm to the right-handed batsman, while when the turn came for the south-paw batsman, she used her right.

Cricket writer and BBC summariser David Townsend tweeted: "If you watch enough cricket you'll see everything: Shaila Sharmin bowling right-arm and left-arm spin in the same over for Bangladesh."

Former England women's cricketer Ebony Rainford Brent also tweeted: "Love it! Shaila Sharmin for @BCBTigers bowls slow left arm to right-handers and right-arm to left handers!! Serious skill!!"

The 27-year-old became the first woman to show this



kind of skill on the international stage, completing three overs and giving away 18 runs.

This however is not the first time that a player has shown such talent.

Most recently, Sri Lanka's Under-19 player Kamindu Mendis came into the limelight at the 2016 ICC Under-19 World Cup in Bangladesh when he did the same.

Legendary Pakistani batsman Hanif Mohammad once bowled using both hands against the West Indies during a Test match in Kingston in 1958.

The highest profile case was in the 1996 World Cup when Sri Lanka's Hashan Tillakaratne bowled off-spin with both hands against Kenya.

Athletics funds mishandled?

Sports Reporter

Bangladesh Athletics Federation (BAF) president ASM Ali Kabir recently brought an allegation against the federation's general secretary Ibrahim Chengis and treasurer Mizanur Rahman, alleging them of withdrawal of Tk 10.47 lakh last month from the federation's bank account without taking his consent or even appraising him.

"I have recently served notices to them asking the reasons behind the withdrawal of more than Tk 10 lakh. They have withdrawn Tk 10.47 lakh through four cheques between January 5 and 15. It is a big irregularity and financial disorder," Kabir told reporters.

"When I realised something was wrong, I froze the bank account temporarily," informed Kabir, who was once secretary of National Sports Council.

Kabir also expressed his disappointment over activities of the BAF executive committee, whose tenure expired on Tuesday [February 7].

"Athletics is gradually going downward. I was optimistic that good days of athletics would return. But to be honest it did not

happen," said Kabir.

Chengis, however, denied the allegation of financial irregularities but admitted that they did not take consent from the president.

"It is not a serious matter. We generally take permission from him [the president] before withdrawing money but sometimes we, who have signatory power, withdraw money for activities of the federation if the president is not available," said Chengis.

"We conducted a solidarity camp in BKSP last year and I had to bear some expenditure of that camp out of my own pocket. Besides, I had also provided some of the salaries to federation employees. I just took my money back as the tenure of the committee expired yesterday [Tuesday]. I did not embezzle the money" claimed Chengis.

Mizanur termed the matter as a misunderstanding between the president and themselves.

"It is a just a misunderstanding. It is true that the president is informed before withdrawal of money but this time we did not do so. Usually the general secretary informs the president about all financial activities," said Mizanur.

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