

SPORT

Mushfiqur wants more benefits for Tigers

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Test skipper Mushfiqur Rahim has said that the national players deserve more in terms of financial benefits, an issue he said they have already raised with the cricket board and to which they were expecting a resolution soon.

"Both the clubs and the national side should take care of us and they do that. We stay busy with the national team for eight to 10 months a year. If the national players could play in the BPL and Dhaka League, we could get more financial benefits," the 28-year-old wicket-keeper batsman told reporters after signing for the Legends of Rugganj for the upcoming Dhaka Premier League yesterday.

The contracts for the players of the national side expired last December and they are yet to be renewed. The players held discussions with the board on the tour of Sri Lanka, making their demands clear. According to sources, the players are unhappy with the salary they are being paid, and they have not been paid in the last two to three months due to the ongoing negotiations.

"We play for the national team more for pride. If the benefit for playing in the national team could have been a bit more, it would have helped. Many of us have been playing for the national side for 10-11 years, and still feel that we don't have a lot of things. We have appealed to the board and surely they will look into that," Mushfiqur said.

Although the transfers concluded on March 18, the players bracketed in the national pool were on tour during that time and hence were given the option to sign for their desired teams upon return.

Mushfiqur will be playing alongside Mashrafe Bin Mortaza -- who had signed with Rugganj before leaving for Sri Lanka -- in the country's most coveted 50-over competition, which is scheduled to start



Bangladesh Test skipper Mushfiqur Rahim puts pen to paper for the Legends of Rugganj yesterday ahead of the Dhaka Premier League.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

from April 12.

"Maybe this is my first time with Mashrafe bhai, but I will try and make the tournament memorable," Mushfiqur said.

"There is a new challenge every year. The club has a target and players also have a target. The clubs which I had played for before had become champions and although our team is not as strong as some of the others, if the seniors and juniors can perform together then I hope we can expect a good result."

When asked about the national team's busy sched-

ule ahead -- the Tigers will be travelling to England on April 26 ahead of a tri-nation series in Ireland -- the Test skipper said: "This year the national team does not have many gaps, so we will have to manage. But I still believe that you have to play international cricket alongside domestic cricket."

"Many players may not be able to take part in the whole tournament due to international commitments, but those that will be playing should be giving their best. We should be playing consistent cricket for the clubs like we do for the national side," he added.

BFF focusing on coaches' education

SPORTS REPORTER



Even though educated coaches are one of the driving forces behind development of any sporting discipline, coaches' education in

our country's football has cruelly been ignored over the years, resulting in poor technique of footballers.

Bangladesh, despite having a rich history of football, have surprisingly produced only 156 educated coaches who have either of the UEFA A-1, AFC A-17, AFC B-53 and AFC C-85 certificates. This low number of coaches could be a reason behind the country lagging behind in South Asia as teams like Maldives, Nepal and Bhutan are improving all the time, thanks to home-grown coaches.

It is often said that footballers coming into the national team are not sound in technique or skill as they learn wrong methods at a tender age due to a lack of educated coaches at the grassroots level.

Following the consistent failure of the national team at an international level, it seems that the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) have finally realised the importance of coaches' education to groom players from the grassroots level. With that aim, the local game's governing body is all set to conduct seven coaches' courses and one coaches' instructor course in a year, compared to only eight coaches' courses [four AFC C license, two AFC B license and one AFC A and goalkeeping license] over the last eight years.

The BFF will hold four coaches' courses on AFC C, one each on AFC A and B, one goalkeeping coaches' course and one coaches' instructor course. The second course on AFC C is already running at the BFF headquarters with the participation of 24 individuals after the first one was completed last month.

"Coaches' education is the beginning for anyone who wants to be a football coach. It generally indicates the path of how to be a coach and shows the roadmap but eventually everything depends on the individual," said former national coach Saiful Bari Titu, appreciating the BFF initiative.

The AFC A licensed coach, Titu, believes that more individuals are coming to the coaching courses this time because coaches at the professional league are being paid well.

"If the individuals choose coaching profession to earn money, then it will be hard for them to succeed. The individuals must have passion for football and need to study round the year with a motto of improving themselves."

Titu, an instructor of the AFC C license course, believes that the increasing number of educated coaches would help the country's football in future, but the federation should also design courses for the grassroots coaches who will groom up players.

"We need to groom coaches who can give time at the grassroots. There are different coaches' course and BFF should focus on it," said Titu adding that courses should be taken to the divisional level instead of having it confined to Dhaka.

Shakib, Fizz to skip Sussex camp

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan and left-arm pacer Mustafizur Rahman will not be attending the training camp in Sussex, Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB) media operations committee chairman Akram Khan said yesterday.

The Bangladesh cricket team are set to leave for Sussex on April 26 to take part in a 10-day training camp as part of their preparations for the upcoming tri-nation series in Ireland -- which involves the hosts and New Zealand -- and the Champions Trophy in England.

Shakib and Mustafizur will be representing Kolkata Knight Riders and Sunrisers Hyderabad respectively in the Indian Premier League, and will directly join up with the team in Ireland for the tri-series.

"Shakib and Mustafizur will not be joining the team for the 10-day training camp in Sussex," Khan informed. "They will be busy with the Indian Premier League during that time, so they will meet up with the squad in Ireland."

Meanwhile, the team's foreign staff, including head coach Chandika Hathurusingha, went on leave after the tour of Sri Lanka and will join up with the team again in Sussex.

Shakib has already joined the Kolkata Knight Riders, catching a direct flight from Sri Lanka, although he did not feature in last night's clash with the Mumbai Indians.

Sorry defeats for TT teams

SPORTS REPORTERS

Bangladesh men's and women's table tennis teams suffered defeats in the Asian Table Tennis Championship in China yesterday.

The men's team lost against Malaysia and Indonesia by 3-0 sets while the women's team suffered 3-0 sets defeats to Malaysia and Vietnam.

Kenyan couple conquers Paris

AFP, Paris



Kenya's Paul Lonyangata won the 41st Paris marathon on Sunday with his wife Purity Rionoripo making it a memorable family day out in the French capital with success in the women's race.

Lonyangata recorded his biggest career win in a time of two hours six minutes and 10 seconds.

His compatriot, pre-race favourite Stephen Chebogut, came in second at 2hr 6min 56sec, with Solomon Yego completing the all-Kenyan podium in third at 2hr 7min 13sec.

With Paris bathed in spring sunshine Rionoripo made it a redletter day for the couple, the 23-year-old setting a new record time of 2hr 20min 50sec to smash her personal best by almost four minutes.

The couple's success put a smile back on the face of Kenyan athletics 48 hours after the shock news of Olympic marathon champion Jemima Sumgong's failed dope test.

Sumgong was the first Kenyan woman to win an Olympic gold in the marathon when she triumphed in Rio last year.

The 32-year-old, who is also the reigning London Marathon champion, tested positive for the banned blood booster

EPO in a test by the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) in her native Kenya.

Lonyangata, 24, made his decisive move after the 35km marker, surging clear of Chebogut in the Bois de Boulogne to add Paris to his previous marathon wins in Shanghai in 2015 and Lisbon two years earlier.

In the women's race Rionoripo was followed across the line by her compatriot Agnes Barsosio at 2hr 21:02 with Ethiopia's Flomena Cheyech (2hr 21:23.) completing the podium.

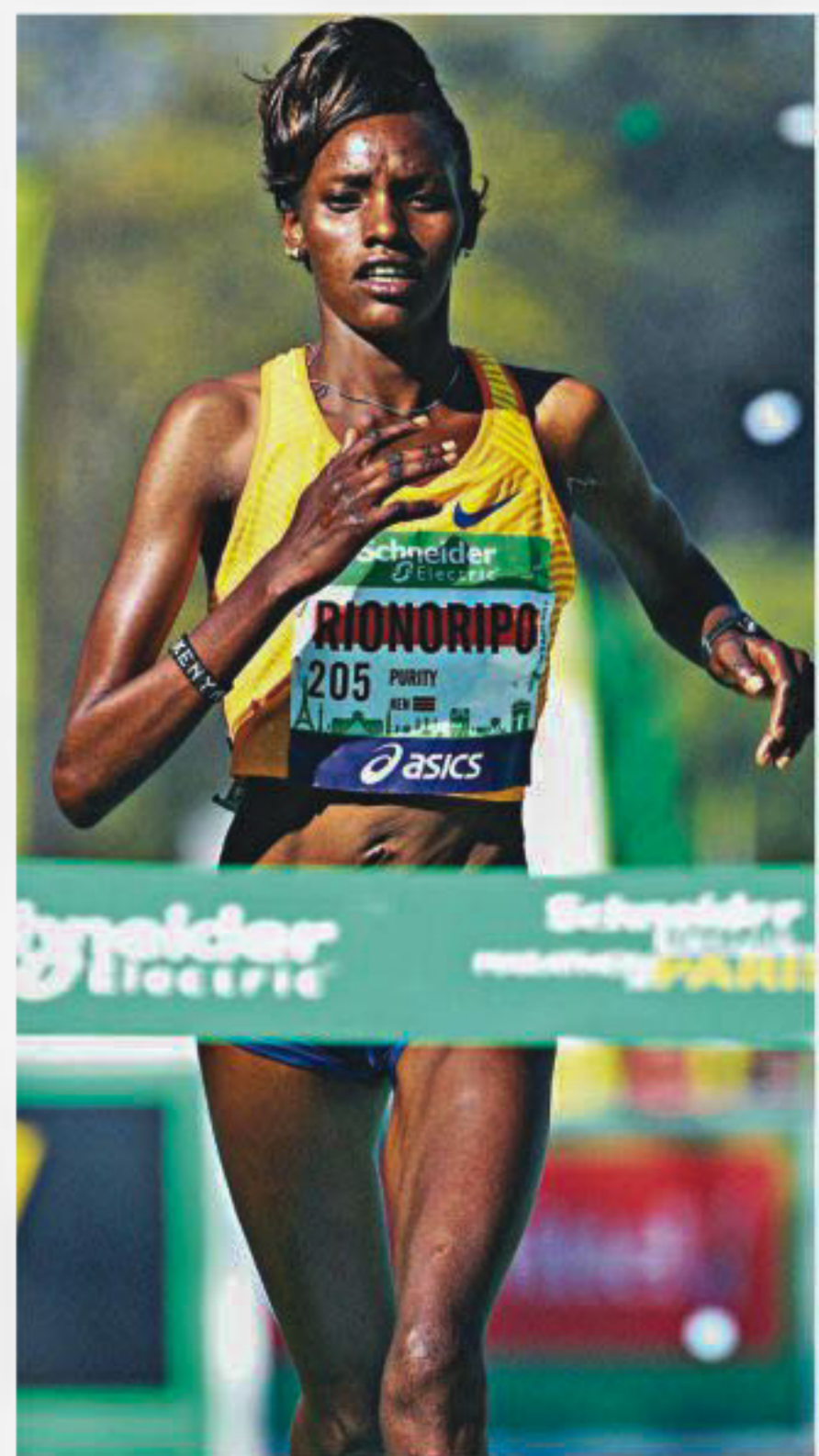
"I'm so happy, it's a great day for me to win and to beat my personal best," said Rionoripo, who had last year's winner Visilline Jekesho among the more fancied contenders in her slipstream.

She lowered the previous women's Paris marathon record time set by Ethiopia's Feyse Tadesse of 2hr 21:06 in 2013.

In the men's race her husband's winning time was 53sec outside the record established by Ethiopian Kenenisa Bekele of 2hr 05:04 in 2014.

Britain's six-time Paralympic champion David Weir tuned up for his career swansong in the London marathon on April 23 with success in Paris.

The 37-year-old wheelchair racer won four gold medals at London 2012 but crashed out of last year's Rio Games marathon.



Kenya's Prurity Rionoripo (L) and her husband Paul Lonyangata crossing the finish line on way to winning the 41st Paris Marathon yesterday.

PHOTOS: AFP

U-16 women booters to play in China

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh under-16 women's team will play four practice matches in China this month as part of their preparation for the upcoming AFC U-16 Women's Championship in Thailand.

The girls, who have recently played a few matches in Japan and Singapore, will play two matches against a combined team of China U-14, U-15 and U-16 teams while the other two matches will be played against a regional team which is yet to be decided.

The girls will leave for China on April 19 and will play the matches in between April 20 and 26, informed BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag after emerging from the first meeting of the BFF women's committee yesterday.

Shohag also informed that the girls will also play a few practice matches in Japan and they are trying to arrange a few more matches in South Korea.

DAVIS CUP Belgium to face Aus in semis

AFP, Charleroi

Belgium's David Goffin defeated Italy's Paolo Lorenzi in straight sets to seal a 3-1 Davis Cup victory for the hosts in Charleroi and a semifinal showdown with Australia.

Goffin came through 6-3, 6-3, 6-2 to ensure a final four meeting between the 2015 runners-up with Australia who beat the United States 3-2 in Adelaide.

It was the second victory by Goffin of the weekend after beating Andreas Seppi 6-4, 6-3, 6-3 on Friday after Darcis beat Lorenzi 6-7 (3/7), 6-1, 6-1, 7-6 (7/4).

But Italy had demonstrated the fighting spirit which saw them knock out defending champions Argentina in the first round to stay alive in their quarter-final on Saturday with a thrilling doubles win.



Sunrisers Hyderabad's Afghan leg-spinner Rashid Khan (C) celebrates with teammates after taking one of his three wickets against Gujarat Lions in the Indian Premier League in Hyderabad on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

Hyderabad, Mumbai win

STAR SPORT DESK



Powered by the brilliant leg-breaks of Rashid Khan and captain David Warner's blistering 76, the Sunrisers Hyderabad cruised to a nine-wicket against the Gujarat Lions in their Indian Premier League match at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium in Hyderabad yesterday.

After electing to bowl, Rashid took three wickets for just 19 runs as his miserly returns restricted Gujarat to 135 for seven in their allotted overs. Rashid was even more influential than the figures show, getting rid of the visitors' major batsmen -- Brendan McCullum, Suresh Raina and Aaron Finch -- to put the writing on the wall early in the first innings.

Warner then stepped up after a dismal outing in the last match and powered his way to an unbeaten 76 off 45 balls, a knock punctuated by six fours and four sixes, as Hyderabad strolled home with 27 balls to spare.

He formed an unbroken 108-run partnership with Moises Henriques, who scored an unbeaten 52 of his own, after Shikhar Dhawan had fallen for nine early in the chase.

It was Hyderabad's second win in as many matches, while Gujarat suffered their second defeat in a row.

In the second match of the day between the Kolkata Knight Riders and Mumbai Indians at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai, a comedy of errors saw the visitors capitulate from a strong position to lose by four wickets.

Ankit Rajpoot came in to bowl the 19th over as Mumbai needed 30 runs with Hardik Pandya and Nitish Rana at the crease. Rana hit a four and a six off successive balls before Pandya added another six as Rajpoot conceded 19 in the over after conceding 18 in his previous three.

Needing 11 to win off the final over, Pandya ran a double off the first ball, before an abject misfield yielded four runs. A very good bouncer from Trent Boult saw a dot on the third, but more misfielding, a dropped chance this time off a skied ball, saw two more runs being run. And Pandya blasted a four to seal the win a ball to spare.

Earlier, Kolkata's Manish Pandey blazed his way to a 47-ball 81, smiting five fours and as many sixes, to take his side to 178 for 7 after they were sent in to bat.

'IPL will help David return to form'

PTI, Melbourne

Former Australia captain Ricky Ponting has tipped David Warner to be one of the contenders for IPL's 'Player of the Tournament' award as he feels extra responsibility always gets the best out of the dashing opener.

Warner didn't have a good Test tour of India and will be aiming to get back to form with some good scores for defending champions Sunrisers Hyderabad in the IPL.

"On the back of a slightly disappointing Test series, he's back at a championship-winning team and he's captain," Ponting told cricket.com.au.

"I think he loves that responsibility. And he's an opening batsman. You'd think the Player of the Tournament is going to be a spinner or an opening batsman. That's the way the T20 game is right now, so I think Davey will be the Player of the Tournament," the Aussie legend said.

Ponting is confident that Warner will not be affected by his dry spell during Test series as he remains in a happy space while playing for the Sunrisers.

"You always like to go into any tournament with a lot of runs under your belt, but to me Davey is the sort of guy that it won't bother too much."