



Bangladesh Cricket Board president Nazmul Hassan had a busy day yesterday as he attended a series of meetings with players and support staff as well as (INSET) former Bangladesh head coach Chandika Hathurusingha, who did not speak to reporters to clear the air.

PHOTOS: FIROZ AHMED

'He had nothing more to give'

MAZHAR UDDIN



It was a long day for the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) officials and also the media at the Radisson Blu Water Garden hotel in the capital where the centre of discussion was the Tigers head coach, both the outgoing one and incoming one.

Chandika Hathurusingha, who has been appointed as the new coach of Sri Lanka, finally returned to the country after his resignation as the Tigers' coach and the media were eager to know the reason behind his decision.

After concluding a one-and-a-half hour meeting with BCB president Nazmul Hassan, CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury and directors IH Mallick, Jalal Yunus and Khaled Mahmud, Hathurusingha maintained his silence by waving and heading for the elevator, depriving the awaiting pack of journalists a chance to speak to the best person to explain the reason behind his sudden resignation.

Though Hassan initially said it was just a courtesy call from Hathurusingha, in essence the Sri Lankan gave the BCB boss a few slivers of information, such as his frustration over Shakib Al Hasan's decision to rest for the South Africa Tests.

"What he has given importance to is the mindset that no matter how big a player is, he has to remember that the country is bigger than an individual. I may have a personal issue with someone but you can't harm the country for that. He urged us to explain that to our players and make them realise that," Hassan told reporters.

Hassan informed that Hathurusingha was still giving his observations orally and would also provide his report on the South Africa tour by the next few days.

"He had some dissatisfaction over the South Africa tour right from the beginning and he also had problems with the players' mentality. For example Shakib, who did not go for the Test



No coach, no problem

SPORTS REPORTER

Former West Indies head coach Phil Simmons arrived in Dhaka last night to give his presentation to the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) for the vacant post of head coach.

English-born coach Richard Pybus has already made his case to the BCB and Simmons will be the second candidate.

The BCB will have a board meeting today to discuss the candidates for the role, but in a meeting with BCB president Nazmul Hassan yesterday the three captains -- Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Shakib Al Hasan and Mushfiqur Rahim -- asked him not to rush the decision and assured they were ready to

play the upcoming home series against Sri Lanka in January without a coach.

"[Chandika] Hathurusingha is not here with us and at this moment we do not have a coach. It may be the case that we do not appoint a coach ahead of the next series. So I asked them to plan how we can play the next series," Hassan said. "First of all I asked them if they were confident of playing the next series without a coach and they all said that they were confident."

"We are not saying that no coach will be appointed. It may be that we will appoint a coach tomorrow [Saturday] or the day after. I told them to be mentally prepared in case we do not appoint a coach ahead of the next series," the board president concluded.

leave," Hassan added.

Hassan said that the board never asked the Sri Lankan to re-think his decision and added that Hathurusingha having taken the decision meant that he had no feelings left for the team.

According to Hassan, Hathurusingha said he was not sure whether he would get the amount of support which he received from the BCB in any other place in the future and that he had high hopes from the Bangladesh team.

Uncertainty reigns

SPORTS REPORTER



Many may be anticipating another Chris Gayle storm but there are concerns that weather may spoil today's Qualifier-2 of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) between Comilla Victorians and Rangpur Riders, scheduled to start at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur from 6:00pm.

Due to a depression in the Bay rain may continue today, but Abdur Rahman, a meteorologist of the Dhaka met, said it would not be unlikely to see clear skies from the evening.

If rain does ultimately play spoilsport then Comilla Victorians will advance to the final in accordance with the bylaws as they have a higher standing in the table. But when asked about the matter, BPL govern-

ing council member secretary IH Mallick said last night that they were still not sure.

According to sources, a few days back the BPL governing council sent letters to the top four teams to reach a consensus about moving the Eliminator and two Qualifiers a day ahead in case of inclement weather as there were gaps between the matches. However, Comilla Victorians did not agree.

"Let's see what happens tomorrow. We are hoping for the best. According to the bylaws the technical committee can take any decision in greater interest," said Jalal Yunus, Bangladesh Cricket Board director and convenor of the technical committee.

The Victorians will try to bounce back strongly from a poor showing against Dhaka Dynamites in Friday's Qualifier-1 and hope that they will be able to send danger man Gayle back cheaply to set a final against Dynamites on Tuesday.



While the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium was covered due to rain throughout yesterday, the question is whether they will be lifted in time for the BPL's Qualifier-2 today.

PHOTO: STAR

BFF CALENDAR

Less than half of what was promised

ANISUR RAHMAN



Exactly one year ago on this day the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) unveiled its four-year calendar, terming it football's development plan, in the face of huge criticism following the national team's debacle against lowly Bhutan in the Asian Cup Qualifying Play-Off.

The BFF's technical and strategic director Paul Smalley prepared a calendar for 2017 that included 18 competitions from grass-roots to the top level for men and women separate from the six international tournaments abroad and two international tournaments at home.

BFF president Kazi Salahuddin, who retained his post for a third successive term in April 2016, stated then that after having seen through his primary objective of keeping football rolling through the first eight years of his tenure, he now wished to see the country's football take a step forward by implementing a number of new objectives over the next four years.

And with almost two years of his third four-year term having passed, Salahuddin has still not managed to take football outside the capital as district football continues to be overlooked year after year, which has caused the pipeline of footballers to shrink.

At the one-year mark of the much-hyped BFF calendar, the Salahuddin-led committee has managed to implement less than half of the planned activities for 2017 so far. The Dhaka-based football competitions have been partially completed, although there is still uncertainty looming over the Independence Cup and Youth Football Tournament for professional football clubs.

However although most of the Dhaka-based competitions are being held every year,

Football League were staged after two-to-three-year gaps, unfortunately the National School Championship, last held in 2012, continues to be overlooked.

The district football leagues are also in limbo and have not taken place for the past two years despite the BFF boss promising that he would provide the District Football Association with enough funds to run their leagues.

Besides those, tournaments such as the National District Championship, National District Youth Championship and National Club Cup Championship have all but disappeared from the calendar.

In the 14 months since their defeat to Bhutan, the national football side has sat idle as the BFF failed to arrange any friendly international matches while the age-group teams were regularly sent to AFC and SAFF tournaments.

Aside from the calendar, the BFF made some commitments under the FIFA Forward Programme, which includes football festivals among different age-groups for both boys and girls as well as Elite Youth Development for U-14 to U-19 boys and girls. However nothing as such has appeared in the past one year, with only short training camps being arranged for age-group teams ahead of their participation in the SAFF Championships and AFC Championship Qualifiers.

Despite the short training camps, Bangladesh fared quite well in different age-group international tournaments to provide a glimpse of hope but unfortunately, there is no follow-up programme for any of those budding footballers.

Although Salahuddin could not implement the full programme mentioned in the calendar, there is still something that the BFF boss should be praised for and that is coaches' education.

The game's governing body conducted six certificate courses -- four AFC C License and one AFC B License Part-1 and AFC A

SUMMARY OF FIRST YEAR

DID NOT HOLD

The Independence Cup (To be held)
Dhaka Metropolis 3rd Division Football League (To be held)
Elite Player Development U-18 Youth Competition (BPL)
National School Championship
National District U-18 Championship
Divisional Age Group U-18 Football tournament
District Club Football League
National District Championship
Bangabandhu Gold Cup
National Women's U-16 Football Championship

National Women's U-19 Football Championship
National Women's Football Championship
International Friendly matches
BFF Congress
BFF Award Night

COMPLETED

Federation Cup
Bangladesh Premier League (running)
Bangladesh Championship League
Dhaka Metropolis Senior Division Football League

Dhaka Metropolis 2nd Division Football League
Pioneer Football League
Divisional Age Group U-16 Championship
Sheikh Kamal International Club Cup (organised by Ctg Abahani)

PARTICIPATED

AFC U-23 Championship Qualifiers
AFC U-19 Championship Qualifiers
AFC U-16 Championship Qualifiers
SAFF U-18 Championship
SAFF U-15 Championship
AFC Women's U-16 Championship

the game's governing body is sadly not interested in maintaining the timeframe mentioned in the calendar and unpredictably scraps tournaments citing time constraints and unwillingness from participating clubs.

Nobody can argue that Salahuddin kept football rolling around the year, but that is only applicable to the top-tier football in Dhaka. The lower tier competitions hardly get any attention from the BFF boss.

While it is pleasing that the Dhaka Metropolis Senior and Second Division

License Part-1 -- for the coaches under Paul Smalley and the number of AFC C-Licensed coaches almost doubled just in the past year.

Out of the 95 coaches who took part in the four AFC C License courses, 84 passed which is remarkable considering that there were only 85 AFC C-Licensed coaches in the country in February 2017. 24 and 23 coaches completed the first part of AFC B and AFC A License courses respectively and are waiting for the second part to be conducted next year.

Mini-collapse dents Kiwis

AFP, Hamilton



New Zealand drew positives from their batting collapse on day one of the second Test against the West Indies in Hamilton on Saturday, saying the signs looked good for their bowlers.

The hosts slumped from 154 for one to be 286 for seven at stumps, at one stage losing four top-middle order batsmen for 35 runs.

But New Zealand opener Jeet Raval said the innings gave "encouraging signs for our bowlers", who are bolstered by the return of swing bowler Tim Southee.

New Zealand would be looking to add at least another 50 when play resumes on Sunday, said Raval.

Raval, the top scorer with 84, anchored New Zealand's strong start before the West Indies found lines that worked and they slumped to 189 for five.

Lusty hitting by first Test century-maker Colin de Grandhomme (58 off 63 balls) and Mitchell Santner (24) then revived the innings in a rapid 76-run stand before Shannon Gabriel took the new ball and bowled them both.

Tom Blundell was not out 12 at stumps with Neil Wagner on one. "I think it's evenly balanced, we had a good start to the day and they came back later so it's even leading into tomorrow," Raval said.

The West Indies believe they gifted New Zealand at least 30 runs with an



West Indies pacer Shannon Gabriel (L) celebrates after dismissing New Zealand's Jeet Raval on the first day of the second Test yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

ineffectual spell at the start of the day after winning the toss and bowling in accommodating conditions.

"I think we bowled a little too full. Myself I thought I was a little too full. I didn't assess the conditions well enough but as the day went along things got better," said Gabriel, who has three scalps so far including Raval.

But Gabriel, whose first two overs cost 22 runs as he had trouble with a damp piece of ground where he planted his foot, said the West Indies were satisfied with the position of the game.

"If we told ourselves this morning we would have them seven down by the end of the day's play we'd have taken that. I think they've scored 30-40 runs too much but I think it was a good day of Test cricket."

SCORES IN BRIEF

NEW ZEALAND: 286 for 7 (Raval 84, Williamson 43, de Grandhomme 58; Gabriel 3-79, Cummins 2-37)

WEST INDIES: KC Brathwaite (c), Powell, Hetmyer, Hope, Chase, Ambris, Dowrich, Reifer, Roach, Cummins, Gabriel.



Duckett dropped and suspended

Batsman 'poured drink over' Anderson

AFP, Perth

England's Ashes tour has been plunged into a fresh crisis with batsman Ben Duckett stood down from a tour game on Saturday and suspended following a new incident in a Perth bar.

Team coach Trevor Bayliss confirmed that Duckett was involved in an incident late Thursday where he poured a drink over a senior player, identified in reports as fast bowler James Anderson, following a heated row.

"I think that was the issue," Bayliss told reporters. "It was boys being boys, I suppose, but totally unacceptable. It's trivial, but in the current climate not acceptable."