

FPWA demands reduction of foreign players

SPORTS REPORTER

The Football Players Welfare Association (FPWA) yesterday placed a memorandum to Bangladesh Football Federation president Kazi Salahuddin, demanding reduction of foreign players' quota from four to three in the Bangladesh Premier League.

The demand came at a time when defending champions Bashundhara Kings demanded increase of foreign players' registration from five to six ahead of their AFC Champions League commitments.

"We have noticed that recently a proposal of increasing the number of the foreign players in Bangladesh Premier League has been proposed and we are scared about players at the grassroots level," read the memorandum letter as FPWA president Iqbal Hossain, along with some other national players, met with the BFF president yesterday.

Currently a club is allowed to sign five foreign players and play four foreigners including one on Asian quota in a match while the remaining foreign player will be out of the 23 players squad for the match.

Sports organiser Tipu no more

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Rafiqul Islam Tipu, a renowned face in Bangladesh's sports community, passed away yesterday at the Azgar Ali Hospital in Dhaka.

He was 69 years old.

He left behind his wife and a daughter and a host of well-wishers.

His namaz-e-janazas were held at the Sheikh Russel Roller Skating Complex in Paltan and in Swamibagh before he was laid to rest at the Azimur Graveyard.

The late Tipu was admitted to the Azgar Ali Hospital after suddenly falling ill on Monday. A CT scan report found blood clots in his brain, and he was under observation at the intensive care unit of the hospital. He was taken to life support later on Monday before being pronounced dead at 3:03pm on Tuesday.

Tipu was a selfless sports organiser, the likes of whom are very rare these days. He had dedicated his life to sports, serving a number of sporting federations in various capacities close to four decades. A former general secretary of Bangladesh Table Tennis Federation, Tipu was an executive member of Bangladesh Archery Federation till his demise.



While several stars of the national team currently participating in foreign franchise leagues, batter Najmul Hossain Shanto trains at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur yesterday as the left-hander looks to recover purple patch following a disappointing run of form in the recently concluded white-ball home series against Afghanistan.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

BCB's tricky challenge over foreign league participation

Taskin denied but Hridoy to be granted NOC

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh players Taskin Ahmed and Tawhid Hridoy had sought No Objection Certificate (NOC) to play the Lankan Premier League (LPL), in line with the recent trend where many of the national team stars are getting opportunities to play in franchise leagues around the world, marking an increasing demand for their services. It allows players to get more confidence in their game while also gaining much-needed exposure to foreign conditions.

Both Taskin and Hridoy applied for NOC on an official basis for the LPL but it was learned that Taskin will not be granted NOC for the tournament, due to workload management issues ahead of the Asia Cup and the World Cup, but Hridoy's NOC will be granted, BCB sources confirmed to The Daily Star yesterday.

Taskin had sought NOC for the full LPL while Hridoy's NOC application sought permission to play the tournament for Jaffna Kings till August 8. Shoriful Islam has also informed the board about an LPL offer but has not asked for NOC officially.

"Towhid Hridoy will be granted NOC. For Taskin, however, the board has decided against it since there is World Cup and Asia Cup coming up and also since he is currently playing in a franchise league (Zim Afro T10 league), he will cross the level of workload he should take on.



With that in mind, the team management and board has decided not to grant him [Taskin] NOC for LPL," a Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) official told The Daily Star on conditions of anonymity.

It will come as a disappointment to Taskin, who so far has not put aside appearances in the IPL, English County cricket with Yorkshire and a stint in the PSL, due to focus on national duty. Since batters go through less stress than fast bowlers, the BCB decided to only grant NOC to Hridoy for now.

"Because Taskin is performing so well, the interest is there to get him signed and it will remain but for this year, the Asia Cup and World Cup is there and BCB wants

him fresh and fit for the tournament," the BCB official added.

Along with Taskin, Mushfiqur Rahim is also playing the ongoing Zim Afro T10 league in Zimbabwe. Meanwhile, star all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan and batter Liton Das are playing the Global T20 Canada tournament while Shakib is also set to feature in the LPL along with compatriot Mohammad Mithun for Galle Gladiators.

For the players, it is renewed inspiration that doing well for the national team grants them opportunities to flourish in other leagues.

"Our players are performing outstandingly and that's why the interest from other franchise leagues is on the rise. Previously when there was a limit set for NOC in two tournaments only, the interest from other franchise leagues was only on Shakib. Now our players are doing well and interest has increased and the board will be taking things into account before making decisions on these," cricket operations manager, Shahriar Nafees, told The Daily Star yesterday.

While Taskin's case may be an exception given the all-important ODI World Cup ahead of the Tigers, the BCB would have to rethink their workload scheme after the showpiece event in India. More players being sought out for foreign leagues mean that the player pool will have to be adequate enough to allow stars to feature in other leagues when schedule allows.

Kaur suspended for two matches

ICC

India captain Harmanpreet Kaur has been suspended for her team's next two international matches following two separate breaches of the ICC Code of Conduct during the third match of their ICC Women's Championship series against Bangladesh in Dhaka on Saturday.

Kaur was fined 50 per cent of her match fee and three demerit points were added to her disciplinary record for a Level 2 offence after she was found guilty of breaching article 2.8 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel, which relates to "showing dissent at an umpire's decision".

Kaur was also fined 25 per cent of her match fee for a Level 1 offence after she was found guilty of breaching article 2.7, which relates to "public criticism in relation to an incident occurring in an international match." This is the highest penalty imposed in women's international cricket.

The first incident occurred in the 34th over of India's innings when Kaur hit the wickets with her bat in a show of dissent after she was adjudged caught at slip off spinner Nahida Akter. The other incident was during the presentation ceremony when Kaur criticized the umpiring in the match.

Kaur admitted the offences and accepted the sanctions proposed by Akhtar Ahmed of the Emirates ICC International Panel of Match Referees and, as such, there was no need for a formal hearing.

On-field umpires Tanvir Ahmed and Muhammad Kamruzzaman, third umpire Moniruzzaman and fourth umpire Ali Arman levelled the charges.



Fargana, Nahida scale new height

STAR SPORT DESK

Bangladesh women's cricket team's commendable performance in the recent ODI series against India was reflected in the latest ICC rankings.

Bangladesh drew the three-match ODI series with India 1-1 as the third and deciding match ended in a tie. Fargana Hoque became the first Bangladeshi woman to score a century in the format during the third match. Earlier, the Tigresses lost the T20I series against the same opposition 2-1.

The latest weekly update released by ICC on Tuesday considered performances in the last two matches of the series, which was part of ICC Women's Championship, with Fargana and Nahida Akter attaining new highs.

Fargana's 565 rating points are the highest by a Bangladeshi woman batter, and she is the first from her country to break into the top 20 (19th position) after scoring 107 in the tied final ODI in Mirpur. The previous best was Rumana Ahmed's 25th position in February 2017.

Left-arm spinner Nahida's figures of three for 37 in the final ODI have helped her move up to 19th position in the bowling rankings. The previous best by a Bangladeshi bowler was 20th position reached by Salma Khatun in December 2022.



Sarina Bolden is ecstatic after scoring her side's all-important goal as the Philippines stunned co-hosts New Zealand to win their maiden World Cup match in Wellington yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

India's Test transition begins smoothly

REUTERS

India would be reasonably pleased with the smooth start to the transition of their Test team against the West Indies, even if a 1-0 series victory against a side seven rungs below them in the official rankings may not sound impressive.

Persistent rain in Port of Spain did not allow any play on Monday, resulting in a stalemate between the sides and depriving India of a 2-0 series sweep when they needed eight wickets to win.

Smarting from their defeat, second in a row, in the World Test Championship final against Australia last month, India went to the Caribbean with a new top order, an uncapped stumper, and a rookie pace attack for the two-test series.

With Shubman Gill moving down to number three after veteran Cheteshwar Pujara was dropped, India harnessed an uncapped Yashasvi Jaiswal with skipper Rohit Sharma in a left-right opening combination.

Jaiswal smashed a match-winning 171 in his debut in Roseau and scored 57 and 38 in the drawn Test in Port of Spain making immediate impact.

Gill is yet to settle in his new position, but the team management is more than willing to be patient with a player hailed as the future of Indian cricket.

India have badly missed wicketkeeper Rishabh Pant since his horrific car crash in December but have unearthed a



replica in stumper Ishan Kishan, an identical left-handed batter known for his six-hitting prowess.

While his glove work drew praise from his captain, Kishan smashed an unbeaten 52 off 34 balls in India's second innings at Port of Spain after being promoted to number four.

"You need guys like Ishan. We wanted quick runs, we promoted him," Rohit said.

"He wasn't afraid, he was the first one to put his hand up."

"You need the mixture of everything. We have depth, we have got variety."

While Jaiswal finished the series as its leading scorer, Rohit and Virat Kohli

completed the top three.

Of India's old guard, only Ajinkya Rahane should worry about his Test future having managed just three and eight in his two outings in West Indies.

Rohit was particularly pleased how Mohammed Siraj led an inexperienced pace attack in the absence of a recovering Jasprit Bumrah and a rested Mohammed Shami.

"I have been watching him closely," Rohit said of the right-arm seamer who breathed fire on a docile track to claim 5-60 in West Indies' first innings at Port of Spain.

"He's taken such a giant step. He has led this attack (superbly)."