

BKSP suspended from football

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh Football Federation has suspended Bangladesh Krira Shikha Protisthan, the lone sports education institute of the country, from taking part in any of its competitions for one year over 'forgery and falsification' of players' identities.

The governing body of local football also penalised BKSP with one lakh taka monetary fine while slapping two of its football coaches with one-year suspension along with Tk 25,000 fine. Furthermore, four players, whose identities were forged to field them in different lower league matches, were suspended for various terms.

The decisions came at a meeting of the BFF disciplinary committee on Sunday after it deemed the allegations against the institute and the concerned coaches and players to be beyond any doubt.

BFF, in a press release, mentioned that BKSP forged identities of three of its players while fielding them for Chawkbazar Kings in the U-17 Third Division League matches. When these three players were registered to play for BKSP in the Second Division League, it came to BFF's notice and the federation instantly suspended them from taking part. These players later admitted to the forgery to BFF and it came out that two of their coaches were also involved in the forgery.

Despite instruction from the BFF to refrain these players from the BFF competitions, BKSP later fielded another of their players who played in the Third Division for Chawkbazar Kings in the BKSP team in the Second Division.

The suspended coaches are: Shahinul Haque and Robiul Islam while the suspended players are: Tasin Shahed, Ihsan Habib Riduwan, Rifat Kazi, and Ikramul Islam.

BFF instructed BKSP and the two coaches to pay the monetary fines within a month.

When contacted, Mizanur Rahman, BKSP's director of training, said that he did not yet get the letter and would only comment on the issue after he had gone through the verdict.

Special committee meets Hathurusingha

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Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB) three-member special committee to investigate the World Cup debacle met with the Bangladesh head coach Chandika Hathurusingha as the process of taking statements from players and people around the team continued.

The head coach met with the committee at a city hotel. The Sri Lankan will leave the country today with the second batch of Bangladesh cricketers for the white-ball tour of New Zealand.

Earlier, while talking to the press on Saturday, BCB president Najmul Hassan had said, "They [special committee] will prepare the report and it's a long procedure because they will talk with a lot of people."

BCB officials have also insisted that there is no deadline for the special committee.

Bangladesh had their worst World Cup outing since 2003, winning only two of nine matches that saw them finish eighth.

Following the World Cup, the Bangladesh Test side played a two-match Test series against New Zealand at home which ended 1-1.

Earlier, Skipper Shakib Al Hasan and team director Khaled Mahmud presented their World Cup reports to the BCB boss while the committee met with some players and the selectors before the Test series.



Bangladesh's Afif Hossain and Soumya Sarker were amongst the returnees to the white-ball squads headed for New Zealand. The duo, along with Mustafizur Rahman, Tanzid Tamim, and Liton Das were part of the first contingent of the team who left Dhaka yesterday. Another contingent of players, who were part of the recent Test series against the Kiwis at home, will depart today. Bangladesh are still on the lookout for their first ODI win against the Kiwis in New Zealand, having played 16 matches. The Tigers are winless in nine T20Is in the country as well. The only white-ball match they've won in New Zealand was against Scotland in the 2015 World Cup. The Najmul Hossain Shanto-led side will play three ODIs and as many T20Is against New Zealand, with the ODIs starting on December 17.

PHOTO: FACEBOOK

‘Not worried about being in the limelight’

Taijul Islam, who spun Bangladesh to their maiden home Test win over New Zealand in Sylhet, spoke with The Daily Star's Mazhar Uddin, where he opened up about his views on getting overshadowed by his more prominent teammates. The excerpts are given below:

The Daily Star (DS): The just concluded New Zealand series was a memorable one for you.

Taijul Islam (TI): To be honest, yes, it was a good one for me but it would have been great if we could win the series. Overall, I can say I have gained a lot yet at the same time I got to learn a lot of things from this series. I think as a team it was also an important series where a bunch of young players showed what they are capable of. Maybe we weren't able to win the series but it will give the belief to the youngsters going forward.

DS: How did it feel as a bowler to get a 10-wicket haul in a sporting pitch in Sylhet?

TI: The Sylhet track was a sporting one as there was something on offer for both batters and bowlers. As a bowler, it was a challenge and I was up for it. It is important as a bowler to read the surface and also play with the mind of the batter. It feels great to be able to contribute to the teams' win and I would also like to add that the other bowlers like Mehedi Hasan Miraz, Nayeem Hasan and even Shoriful Islam gave good support and it was a total team effort.

DS: Whenever Shakib is absent, you get asked whether the team will miss his presence. Do you feel overshadowed by this line of questioning?

TI: Look, the media tends to focus on getting more views. Since Shakib bhai is not playing, I don't know



why his name keeps popping up when he is not even in the team. For example, Sachin Tendulkar is no longer playing for India or Wasim Akram is not playing for Pakistan. Aren't those teams playing without him and winning matches? It's just like that.

DS: So, do you feel you are finally in the limelight now?

TI: I am not worried or thinking about being in the limelight. When my team will benefit from my performance, I will automatically get everyone's attention. The thing is nowadays every media looks for big names. I don't know if the media really analyses and checks the stats about my bowling since the number of views are more important for them.

DS: Do you feel you have a lot to give in the other formats as well?

TI: Definitely. By the grace of

the almighty I have done well in white-ball formats whenever I was given the opportunity. But I don't know what the team's plan is. If the team requires my services, I am always available to play for my country. I am always prepared for that. Every player wants to play in all the formats but I can't go and ask everyone to give me a chance.. (smiles).

DS: We always say that Bangladeshi spinners are successful at home but are unable to make an impact when they tour abroad. What is the reason behind this?

TI: Look, a lot depends on the sort of pitch we get abroad. Since there is hardly anything for the spinners on those surfaces, the team is forced to play just one spinner. If there's grass on the surface, spinners can come into the game on the third or fourth day of the Test. A spinner won't be able to make a difference if he bowls on the first day of a Test match in Australia, New Zealand or South Africa. When we beat New Zealand at Mount Maunganui, Miraz was the only spinner while our pacers bowled brilliantly. So, in that case Miraz chipped in as a supporting bowler and even picked up a couple of wickets in the second innings. So, it is important we get that support from the pace unit, only then the spinners can also make an impact. This can be the blueprint for us to win abroad. But if we expect the spinners to pick wickets abroad on the first or second day of a Test, then it's difficult.

WI get Russell boost after ODI series win over England

AGENCIES

The West Indies have named a 15-player squad for the first three of five home T20Is against England, with Andre Russell making a long-awaited return following the Caribbean's 2-1 win in the ODI series.

Russell last featured in West Indies colours back in 2021 at the T20 World Cup in UAE and Oman.

Joining him in the new-look squad is Matthew Forde, having impressed in the recent ODI series against the English, on top of success in recent domestic T20 seasons. Sherfane Rutherford has also earned a call up, as well as spinner Gudakesh Motie after recovering from an injury that forced him out of the India Series.

The West Indies claimed a 3-2 T20I series win when India visited in August, though the inclusions for the England series mean that Johnson Charles, Obed McCoy, Odean Smith, and Oshane Thomas, who all featured in the successful series, miss out.

A dream debut by Forde helped guide the West Indies to a series-clinching four-wicket win over England in the decisive third and final match of their ODI series at the Kensington Oval in Barbados on Saturday.

In a rain affected encounter, the 21-year-old Barbadian delighted the few home supporters among a majority English audience with figures of three for 29 as the tourists were restricted to 206 for nine off 40 overs after being put in.

The first of the five-match T20I series starts at the Kensington Oval in Barbados on Wednesday.



Tennis fed signs 2yr deal with Saif

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Bangladesh Tennis Federation (BTF) signed a two-year agreement with Saif Powertec Ltd yesterday in a bid to develop the country's tennis.

As per the agreement, which will run from January 2024 to December 2025, Saif will provide Tk two crores to the BTF over the course of two years to stage tournaments and provide training to coaches.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the parties yesterday in the presence of BTF president Khalid Mahmood Chowdhury, who is also the state minister for shipping, and the managing director of Saif Powertec Ltd Tarafder Md Ruhul Amin.

The MoU focused upon organising junior tennis tournaments across the country, coaches training and school teachers' training programmes, district and divisional tennis tournaments, inter-school tennis championship and victory day tennis tournament.

Fahad's one-point regret

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International Master (IM) Fahad Rahman wasted another opportunity to earn his first Grand Master (GM) norm when he lost to Indonesia's IM Setyaki Azarya Jodi in the ninth and final round of Hanoi Grandmasters Chess in Vietnam yesterday.

Fahad, who was leading the tournament with eight points, needed a win over Azarya to earn the GM norm but he ended up losing that opportunity for the fourth time in his career.

"He could have drawn the game but he tried to win the match and lost it," said international arbitrator Haroon Ur Rashid.

The Bangladeshi IM had earlier missed the GM norm by a narrow margin in tournaments in India, Iran and Vietnam.

Kings aim for Odisha win despite hassles

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Shrugging off some off-the-field hassles in India, Bashundhara Kings are looking forward to moving into the knockout stage of the AFC Cup for the first time when they take on Odisha FC in their last group match at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar today.

The game will get underway at 8:00pm (Bangladesh time).

Kings lead the table with 10 points and need a single point to move into the zonal semifinals while Odisha FC, with nine points, need a victory to do the same.

Hence the match has turned into a do-or-die clash for both teams, who are in very good form in both domestic and international circuit.

However, the focus on the eve of the match was less on the match and more on the hassles faced by the Kings contingent since their arrival in India on Saturday. According to the club officials, the team had to wait for nearly two hours to catch a connecting flight from Kolkata to Bhubaneswar and then had another big delay in finding accommodation, forcing the cancellation of Saturday's scheduled training before having the only preparation at the match venue



yesterday.

"I want the AFC to take a look because when we travel aboard, we have been facing (problems) during the last games and for years a number of problems. I think this competition and the AFC deserve more. Yesterday unfortunately we reached the hotel after two hours' interruption. Our players were provided

with a single room to share. And, today there has been a concert till the late night with music which doesn't make any sense," Kings coach Oscar Bruzon said at the pre-match press conference.

The 46-year-old coach, who is guiding Kings in their fourth consecutive AFC Cup campaign, also urged authorities for fair refereeing, blaming harsh

decisions for their eliminations in the last two campaigns.

Bruzon also said that the off-field issues made them much more determined in their dream to play the inter-zonal semifinals of the Asia's second-tier club competition.

"I think that everything that happens, what the people don't realize is that those make us stronger, more convinced and more motivated, more creative to overcome and to bring the show that Bangladesh football community waiting for years," said Bruzon, who believes today's match will be the biggest of the competition and both teams will adopt attacking approaches.

Captain Robson Robinho is also aware of the challenge and what is at stake for them.

"For the first time we are in a good position for the club and for the players who have been in a very good mood. I think this is our chance to do our job for qualifying from this division [group] and I wish we do a very good job tomorrow. All the players have the same goal for the game which is difficult we know, but we have the chance and we need to do it for our club, fans and the country," said the Brazilian forward.