

## Nazmul 'wants to resign', but what's next for BCB?

SPORTS REPORTER

Word around the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is that Nazmul Hassan Papon has informed one of the directors that he is in favour of resigning as board president. Many other directors, however, claimed to have no knowledge of the president's wish.

It is understood that the BCB president is currently in London. Many of the board directors are untraceable since the fall of the Awami League government on August 5, and those that are there, are facing a crisis.

BCB sources told The Daily Star on Thursday that one of the board directors got in touch with Nazmul and has been told that the board president is ready to cooperate.

"I have heard that Papon bhai told one of our directors that he wants to cooperate. I have not talked to the BCB president directly. I have only heard that he is ready to cooperate but haven't heard of resigning," a BCB director told The Daily Star on condition of anonymity.

BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury could not be reached over phone at the time of filing this report.

A few BCB directors who are still present, have informed this newspaper that they have asked for a guideline on how to go on about their proceedings from relevant authorities. "What would be best is that if a guideline comes from the interim government that's in our constitution and within ICC's legal framework, it would be good for us," one BCB director said on condition of anonymity yesterday.

"We are still waiting for that guideline," another director said.

According to the BCB constitution, only the BCB president or a vice president can call for a board meeting. Despite there being provision for two vice-presidents in the current constitution, the BCB did not appoint any. Thus under the current circumstances, a board meeting cannot be called unless the BCB president himself communicates to the BCB CEO that he wants to resign and calls for a meeting



even if he is absent from the meeting. He can also appoint a board director as vice-president in his absence and then the vice-president can call a meeting.

The resignation will then have to be approved or rejected by the board.

If a resignation comes from the president, elections are the likely due

process and will have to be called since there is nothing in the BCB constitution regarding an interim body.

The BCB president can also communicate and call for a board meeting to appoint two vice-presidents through elections among the 25 directors.

The other way to resolve the current scenario in absence of key figureheads is through the National Sports Council, who can appoint two new directors in place of the ones currently in place. The two new NSC directors can then be appointed as vice-presidents through a meeting to resolve the crisis at the board.

Along with the present scenario in the board, the fate of the upcoming Women's T20 World Cup, originally scheduled to be played in Bangladesh, hangs in the balance. Following an initial August 15 deadline, there is not much time left for ICC to make a decision. For the board, the guideline it seeks would clarify what moves it can make to resurrect Bangladesh's chances of hosting the tournament.

## Inter's bid to maintain Serie A status quo starts

REUTERS

Inter Milan begin their Serie A title defence this weekend with a trip to Genoa, looking to get off to another bright start as they bid to become the first team to retain the Scudetto since Juventus in 2020.

That was Juve's ninth consecutive league title but since then the Italian top flight has become a lot less predictable with Inter (twice), AC Milan and Napoli all tasting success. Now, Inter hope to carve out their own period of domination.

In order to do that, Inter will want to make a similar start to last season, where they began with five consecutive wins to hit the top of the table early on, and they have the advantage of continuity on their side.

Simone Inzaghi is still at the helm, whereas their likely rivals all have a new man on the bench. AC Milan brought in Paulo Fonseca and Juventus have Thiago Motta in charge, while Antonio Conte is the man looking to take Napoli back to the top.



Inter have been relatively quiet so far in the transfer market and their main business has been bringing in Polish midfielder Piotr Zielinski and Iranian forward Mehdi Taremi on free transfers.

Zielinski will not be available for Inter's opening games because of injury but Taremi should be on the bench for the trip to Genoa on Saturday and ready to give Lautaro Martinez a chance to rest after his Copa America exploits with winners Argentina last month.

Last season, Inter were held to a 1-1 draw at Genoa at the end of December and Alberto Gilardino is another manager hoping for a repeat of his side's previous campaign.

Genoa were a newly promoted side last time out and more than held their own as they finished the season in a respectable 11th place, but they are expected to find it tougher going this season and avoiding relegation will be the target.

Against Inter, Genoa could struggle for goals with many of their forwards unavailable, and they have also lost striker Mateo Retegui to Atalanta.

Vitinha will likely start, as Gilardino will be without Caleb Ekuban and David Ankeye, and their top scorer from last season, Albert Gudmundsson, could also be an absentee. He is heavily linked with a move away before the transfer window closes.

Milan begin life under Fonseca with a home game against Torino on Saturday and new signing Alvaro Morata, fresh from captaining Spain to Euro 2024 success, will lead the attack.

Motta impressed at Bologna last season, leading them to a top-five finish and Champions League football, but the pressure will be much greater at Juventus.

It should be an interesting start for the new man as his side host newly promoted Como on Monday, a team managed by Cesc Fabregas.

Como have been busy in the transfer market bringing in Spanish keeper Pepe Reina and his compatriot, defender Alberto Moreno, along with striker Andrea Belotti.

Napoli will look to bounce back from their dismal attempt to defend their title last season, when they finished 10th, and life under Conte begins at Hellas Verona on Sunday.

## BPL in limbo as Sk Jamal, Sk Russel set to miss out



ANISUR RAHMAN

Troubles for the forthcoming season of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) have deepened further as two top clubs - three-time BPL champions Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club and treble winners Sheikh Russel Krira Chakra - are seemingly set to miss the upcoming edition.

It has been learnt that Bashundhara Group, which used to sponsor both clubs, has backed out as financiers, leaving the sides without a sponsor with just three days left in the transfer window.

Players and coaches of Sheikh Russel KC and Sheikh Jamal DC have confirmed that the clubs will not compete in the forthcoming season, however, no officials from Bashundhara nor from the two clubs could be reached for confirmation.

"The officials who usually handle the forming of the squad for Sheikh Russel, told us about a week ago that they won't form a squad," said a coach who was supposed to be part of Sheikh Russel's coaching staff, seeking anonymity.

National team defender Rahmat Mia, who was supposed to join Sheikh Russel from Abahani, said, "The day after the resignation of Sheikh Hasina, some 20-25 players were kicked out of a Whatsapp group which was the main medium of communication among players, officials and coaches.

"Since then, we have no idea whether Sheikh Russel are going to play or not. No one from the club has officially communicated with us though some 20 to 25 players have signed contracts and have received token money ranging between Tk 5-10 lakh from the club," he said.

It has been learned that Sheikh Russel director-in-charge Ismat Jamil Akhond has been trying to form the squad after Bashundhara pulled out as sponsor but the information could not be verified as he did not respond to repeated calls and text messages from The Daily Star.

Alamgir Mollah, another defender who was supposed to join Sheikh Russel from Abahani, said, "I'm really confused. They once said they will not play, but then they said they will play but haven't taken

any visible steps. They are not acting professionally."

Sheikh Jamal midfielder Atiqur Rahman Fahad, who was set to continue with the club this season, said, "Yesterday [Thursday], the club informed us that they won't form a squad."

Both clubs have a regular feature in the BPL, with Sheikh Russel breaking into top-flight football in the 2003-04 season and Sheikh Jamal returning to the top tier in 2010 and remaining there ever since.

According to BPL regulations, both Sheikh Russel and Sheikh Jamal would get demoted to the Bangladesh Championship League next season if they don't compete in this year's BPL.

Both clubs are named after sons of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and brothers of former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, who resigned and fled the country on August 5 in the face of a massive uprising.

It has also been learned that Sheikh Jamal officials want to revert the club to its previous name, Dhanmondi Club, but could not do so this season as the club is

already registered as Sheikh Jamal DC. It had adopted its current name in 2010.

Chittagong Abahani are also at risk of missing the next season as team manager Arman Aziz has failed to communicate with club high-ups since the ouster of the Awami League government.

"I will again try to communicate with them [high-ups] tonight [Friday] and if I can't, I will inform the players that Chittagong Abahani will not form a squad," said the former national footballer.

The remaining nine BPL clubs are trying to complete the players' registration formalities before the deadline though most clubs are struggling to manage the funds.

The players of Sheikh Russel and Sheikh Jamal are searching for new teams and many of them have reached out to Brothers Union manager Amer Khan.

"How many players can we sign? I think all clubs should play this season without foreign players and accommodate those 50-60 players," said Amer, who is also BFF executive committee member.

## Will Arteta's unique methods do the trick this time?

AFP, London

Arsenal will begin their Premier League campaign at home against Wolves on Saturday, hoping for their manager Mikel Arteta's unique methods - which involved hiring a group of pickpockets to teach his players a valuable lesson - to stay with the troops for the entirety of the season.

Arteta's side suffered an agonising end to last season as City pipped them to the trophy by just two points on the final day.

That painful near miss came 12 months after the Gunners allowed City to snatch the 2022/23 title from their grasp after squandering an eight-point lead.

Rather than dull his appetite for success, those blows inspired Arteta to take his already obsessive attention to detail to new heights as he chases Arsenal's first league title in 21 years.

With that in mind, Arteta secretly tasked a team of professional pickpockets with taking phones and wallets during a dinner with his players.

At the end of the meal, he asked the squad to empty their pockets and they immediately realised they were missing valuable items.

The exercise was done to teach them of the importance of being alert at all times, on and off the pitch.

Arteta, who is no stranger to using creative ideas in a bid to motivate his players, brought an olive tree into a team meeting last season, describing the players as the branches and the staff as the roots.

But the 42-year-old's admirable ability to think outside the box has yet to deliver a prize that is beyond the reach of even his pickpockets.

And for the likes of Martin Odegaard, Bukayo Saka, Declan Rice, and William Saliba to earn themselves a place in the club's hall of fame alongside the "Invincibles" of Arsene Wenger who brought the club's last title in an unbeaten 2003-04 season, they would need to acquire the abilities of being so aware that no one would be able to steal anything from them - be it from their pockets or from their grasps.



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