

Malaysian players in match-fixing row against India

In a startling revelation, several Malaysian hockey players reportedly colluded to fix their last pool game against India in the Azlan Shah Cup tournament at Ipoh in May.

The Malaysian Hockey Federation (MHF) has launched an internal probe and lodged a police complaint after a Malaysian tabloid reported that the national players were allegedly involved with betting syndicates and threw their last league match against India 1-2 May 17.

The 'Malay Mail' reported that the players had placed online bets on Malaysia losing the game.

Indian hockey authorities, meanwhile, said it was an 'internal matter' of the MHF and its authorities.

Chief selector Aslam Sher Khan told IANS: 'It is their internal matter and we have nothing to do with it. Moreover, if the Malaysian players are involved, it is for them to look into it and I am told that an inquiry has been ordered.'

India's coach at the Azlan Shah tournament A K Bansal is stunned over the revelation. Bansal told IANS that he finds it absurd that Malaysia, who were the runner-up in the last edition, would have intentionally lost that match, which resulted in them finishing last in the tournament.

'Malaysia were runners-up at the previous Azlan Shah tournament and were under pressure. I fail to understand why they would then choose to lose their last pool match and finish last.'

India went into the tournament with a bunch of youngsters after controversies shrouded the sacking of the national federation. But the Indians played well and against heavy odds to finish runners-up in the event. They lost to Pakistan in the final, after beating them in a league match.

The International Hockey Federation (FIH) claimed it was in the dark about the allegations and would wait for the findings of the MHF.

'This is for the first time we have heard of such allegations. We compliment the MHF for their prompt action and will wait for the results of the investigation,' FIH president Els van Breda Vriesman was quoted as saying by the tabloid.

Malaysian chief coach Sarjit Singh and his assistant coaches were seen at the police station Tuesday, the tabloid report said.

The investigating officer said the coaches had come on their own accord to make a police report similar to the one made by MHF secretary Hashim Yusoff Friday.

He added the police would speak to players and others, including Malay Mail journalist Johnson Fernandez, and seek their assistance in the investigation.

Bansal said: 'Our team beat some of the strongest sides like Pakistan to reach the final. We played well throughout the tournament. Malaysia were among the strong teams but they were lacking in form. They lost all their matches and finished last.' he said.

'It is good that they have launched a probe in the matter. The truth should come out because hockey will be defamed otherwise,' added Bansal.

Aslam said the IHF has not received any communication from the MHF or the International Hockey Federation in this regard.

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