

## **FACTS, THREATS and HOPE**

*We have been earnestly discussing match-fixing in football for over five years trying to find a solution to bring this tragic reality under control. The information we gathered through research and real life incidents were disturbing and was not initially digested by some. Incredible stories reached us, exposing football's decaying wellbeing. It is a fact that match-fixing has existed ever since sport competition started. It has now been conveniently branded, by some, as a traditional form of sporting fix, trying to justify its existence.*

*There is no traditional or any other form of match-fixing as any method or objective of corruption and bribery is a crime. It just removes the soul of any sporting event and destroys its basic spirit. The fact is that financial difficulties very often offer fertile ground for corruption approaches, with tempting offers and survival solutions thrown around. Many have resisted the illegal schemes, others have fallen prey, whilst some are unwittingly part of it.*

*The fast incidence of online betting and its easy accessibility has aggravated the scenario beyond control. Betting is a highly thriving business which has gained a steamrolling momentum and presently does not allow any quick solution to stifle it. Betting companies have their own strong safeguards against bogus betting practices and will never lose out, whilst football is losing out all along because many have, unfortunately, lost faith and doubt the veracity of some match results. The recent inclusion of our junior leagues on the betting market has aggravated the situation, offering more platforms and temptations. The real danger is that the athletes themselves may be tempted to abuse the system and fall into a trap which will destroy their character.*

*Betting is totally legal but its abuse is criminal. It is the most serious threat that football has had to battle against for the last two decades. All the honest football stakeholders are facing this precarious situation together and should be united in blocking its abuse.*

*Our efforts to educate as many people as possible is the only weapon in our locker. The various representations we have made to legislators and law enforcers have, as yet, not produced the much desired results. The general public expect us, as a football organisation, to tackle match-fixing at its core, not realising that, alone, we face a momentous task. Our hope has always been the assistance and commitment we yearn for from the law agencies, and are still optimistic that it will finally materialise.*

*The educational process is targeted at the vital cogs of match-fixing; the actors on the field of play. We know that many of them have been listening to us and understanding the severity of the subject, reflecting on their own personal lives and how they feel if they were to trick their own team mates, club officials, fans and families.ft*