



With European leagues taking a two-week break, South American stars returned to their countries and immediately got involved in training for their national teams. Lionel Messi (L) was looking to put behind the Barcelona saga and concentrate on training with the Argentina squad, gearing up for their first World Cup qualifier against Ecuador on Thursday morning while Thiago Silva showed his desire by giving no quarter to Roberto Firmino ahead of Brazil's game against Bolivia on Friday morning.

PHOTO: TWITTER



Salah hailed as 'real-life hero'

AGENCIES

Liverpool star Mohamed Salah's has been described as a "real-life hero" after stepping in to stop the abuse of a homeless man near Anfield.

In late September, Salah pulled up to a petrol station in Liverpool and noticed a homeless man, David Craig, being verbally harassed by a small group. Not liking what he saw, the Egyptian star intervened, warned the abusers that they could one day face a similar fate and handed the homeless man some money.

The gesture, which was caught on CCTV, clearly meant a lot to the man in question, who has now paid tribute to Salah for stepping in on his behalf when many others wouldn't have.

"Mo was every bit as wonderful as he is for Liverpool on the pitch," Mr Craig was quoted by English newspaper The Sun. "He heard what a group of lads were saying to me, then turned to them and said, 'That could be you in a few years'. I only knew I wasn't hallucinating when Mo incredibly handed me £100. What a complete legend."

"Mo had seen a couple of the lads hassling me. They were calling me names, asking why I was begging and telling me to get a job."

"He saw what was happening and said something to them and then he went to the cash machine. I was more than chuffed. I'm a massive fan. Mo is a real-life hero in my eyes and I want to thank him."

2021 JUNIOR ASIA CUP Training to begin in earnest from Saturday

SPORTS REPORTER



Despite uncertainty about the 2021 AHF Junior Asia Cup due to the need for rescheduling, the Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) organised a month-long camp in August to keep players in touch amidst the coronavirus pandemic. The conditioning camp was greatly beneficial especially to those outside service teams and was completed in early September.

However, training for the under-21 team will again be in full swing from Saturday as they prepare for the Junior Asia Cup to be held at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium in Dhaka from January 21. The tournament will also see the top four teams qualify for the 2021 FIH Junior World Cup.

Although 18 players were included in the conditioning camp under Bangladesh Air Force trainer M o h a m m a d Moniruzzaman, 36 players, including those 18, were included this time. They will train under Mamunur Rashid, who had initially started the training with the group in June last year and oversaw three wins and a loss during a five-match series against their Omani counterparts last November, which were also staged as part of preparations for the Junior Asia Cup.

"We selected 36 players from the U-21 national team for residential training. They are scheduled to report to the coach on Saturday," BHF acting general secretary Mohammad Yousuf said. "The players, coaches and officials will undergo

Covid-19 testing next Monday and Tuesday before going to Bangladesh Air Force's Bangabandhu Base in Cantonment on October 15."

Saying that it would take at least a month for players to regain fitness, head coach Mamunur Rashid added: "We will come to the Maulana Hockey Stadium four days a week for practice. Each day will consist of two sessions in the morning and afternoon. There will be two more days' training to be determined on the basis of available facilities at the Bangabandhu Base."

"Some players had physical training a few days ago but I don't know the present condition of players, barring six from Bangladesh Navy. Players from Bangladesh Army and Bangladesh Air Force are also supposed to be in good condition as all service teams have been training," the former national coach said, adding that he would have a better idea about the players after conducting a fitness test.

Explaining why the Bangabandhu Base was chosen as the venue, BHF general secretary Yousuf said: "We thought it would be tough to control players and others and keep them separate, so we took this decision. However, if the [coronavirus] situation is normal in the near future, we will shift the camp to the stadium."

Bangladesh have set their sights on finishing among the top three teams in the 10-team tournament to secure qualification to the U-21 World Cup and Mamunur feels staging a tri-nation tournament involving top two teams in December would allow him to get some perspective.



Empty MCG bids farewell to Jones

AFP, Melbourne

Former Australia batsman Dean Jones has been farewelled in a poignant final lap of an empty Melbourne Cricket Ground following his sudden death last month.

The casket of Jones, who collapsed and died aged 59, was draped in an Australia flag and carried in a white hearse adorned with flowers spelling "324", his Test cap number and his highest first-class score, achieved at the MCG.

"Rocket Man" by Elton John -- a friend of Jones -- echoed through the 100,000-capacity arena as the hearse, followed by only 10 mourners due to anti-coronavirus rules, proceeded around the field on Saturday.

"We have been deeply moved by the outpouring of love for Dean over the last week and can't thank everyone enough for their support and for sharing their memories with us," Jones's widow Jane said in a tribute statement.

"We will forever miss Dean's energy, his zest for life, passion for cricket and his love for us as a family," she added.

The colourful and popular character known universally as "Deano", was an inspiration for his aggressive batting but is also remembered as a fierce competitor whose knockabout demeanour concealed a keen cricketing mind.

Champions return to spotlight at last

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) had long-term plans for the 2019 ICC Under-19 World Cup-winning young Tigers but things changed dramatically in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic that gripped the world since early 2020.

The BCB's game development committee had even formed an under-21 side with all the members of the champion team and were almost in the final stages of arranging a long camp in England.

Akbar Ali and his troops were keen to share the dressing room with senior members and play alongside their idols Tamim Iqbal, Mushfiqur Rahim and others in domestic competitions.

There was much anticipation among the world champions to make the step up but the long wait to return to competitive cricket has frustrated those desires.

Finally, however, the BCB is all set to return to competitive cricket after a gap of seven months through the three-team fifty-over competition starting from October 11, and the selectors have included a majority of the World Cup-winning side, who are divided among the three teams.

Although the tournament may be just another event for the seniors like Tamim and Mushfiqur, for Akbar, Tanzid Hasan Tamim, Shoriful Islam and others it is a golden opportunity for which they have been waiting their entire careers.

"It's been a long wait, honestly, since we won the World Cup last year. We had huge plans to take the next step and we were eager to give our best whenever the

opportunity came. Obviously, we had very little to do during this pandemic, although the board had arranged a training camp in BKSP, which was really helpful," said World Cup-winning captain Akbar.

"If everything remained normal, we might have played the Dhaka [Premier] League which we all were eagerly awaiting, but that didn't happen. But finally, we will get the chance to play competitive cricket in the three-team tournament and I am included in Tamim bhai's team. I will try to utilise this opportunity and learn from my seniors as much I can in the coming days," he added.

Young left-handed opener Tanzim, another young opening batsman, who is nicknamed Tamim, impressed many during the World Cup campaign and will also be playing under the senior Tamim, who he idolises.

"It is like a dream come true playing in Tamim bhai's team. As an opening batsman I have always tried to learn from Tamim bhai and it can't get better than if I could open the innings with him and share the same dressing room. After the World Cup, we were actually waiting to play with the seniors in the domestic circuit, be it in the Dhaka League or in the first-class competitions but that didn't happen. The upcoming tournament will be a huge platform for us to showcase our talent and, more importantly, we will learn a lot from our seniors," said Tamim.

From yesterday, the BCB also started the training camp of the High-Performance squad, in which twelve World Cup-winning players were included. The cricketers currently in the HP squad are expected to join their respective teams from October 10 for the tri-series.



Akbar Ali, who captained Bangladesh to the U-19 World Cup, was feeding throwdowns to Nayeem Sheikh on the first day of the High Performance squad's training at the BCB Academy ground in Mirpur yesterday. A number of prospects from that U-19 team are in the HP squad, who will take part in BCB's three-team 50-over tournament, starting from October 11.

PHOTO: BCB



Petra Kvitová celebrates after moving into the semifinals of the French Open yesterday with a straight-sets win over Laura Siegemund. She will next meet Sofia Kenin.

PHOTO: TWITTER

Courtside Stories

AGENCIES

The surprise runs of Podoroska and Schwartzman into the semifinals in Paris had the whole of Argentina on the edge of their seats.

Writing on Twitter, former US Open winner Gabriela Sabatini said Schwartzman's five-set victory over two-time finalist Thiem of Austria had rendered her "speechless". The five-time Roland-Garros semifinalist lauded Schwartzman's "pure fight, heart and courage".

Argentine basketball legend Manu Ginobili was busy live-tweeting both matches throughout the day. "I'm exhausted of only watching this game. More than four hours of play and one set to go. Amazing players!" he said during the Schwartzman-Thiem marathon.

TEAM TSITSIPAS

After her previous round, Jabeur amused reporters by walking into the press conference wearing a face mask bearing a cartoon caricature of Stefanos Tsitsipas.

"I'm Team Tsitsipas," she declared. She was put in a tight spot on Tuesday when asked if she believed the men's tournament would witness a final between Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic.

"Well, I know that Rafa is unbelievable on clay court," the Tunisian said after her defeat to Collins. "He's playing young talented player today, so I don't know how that's gonna go. But Rafa is still Rafa on the clay. I'm hoping to see Tsitsipas go far here. I'm also really supporting him anywhere. It could go like Nadal-Djokovic, but I always hope that Tsitsipas goes far here."

পুতালী ব্যাংক লিমিটেড

PUBALI BANK LIMITED

www.pubalibangla.com

61 Years

in Banking

1959-2020

“Your Bank... right in Your Hand”

PI MOBILE BANKING

pi a PUBALI BANK product

DOWNLOAD NOW

ANDROID APP ON Google play

Download on the App Store