

Star SPORT

DHAKA FRIDAY JUNE 15, 2012, E-MAIL: sports@thedailystar.net

Spurs sack Redknapp

Harry Redknapp was sacked as manager of Tottenham Hotspur on Thursday after nearly four years in charge of the Premier League club. "This is not a decision the board and I have taken lightly," said Tottenham chairman Daniel Levy in a statement. Redknapp, in a brief statement issued by Tottenham, said: "I have thoroughly enjoyed my time at Spurs and am proud of my achievements. "I am sad to be leaving but wish to thank the players, staff and fans for



Muktis, Abahani neck and neck

SPORTS REPORTER

Gamephone Bangladesh Premier League 2011-12
Title contenders Muktijoddha Sangsad joined leaders Abahani on top of the points table in the Gamephone Bangladesh Premier League with a 2-0 win over Team BJMC at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. Nigerian forward Sunday Chizoba struck the brace to go joint top on the scorers' list with Abahani's Lucky Paul and Team BJMC's Ismael Bangoura on 13 goals each. Now Muktijoddha Sangsad and Abahani have equal 40 points but Muktijoddha Sangsad have played a match more than Abahani's 17 games. They will now face holders Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club and Abahani in their remaining two matches in quest of their maiden professional football league title. If all results go in favour of Abahani and Muktijoddha Sangsad before they lock horns in their league last match, Abahani just need a single point against Muktijoddha to win their fourth league title but Muktijoddha have to win against Abahani to set up a play-off match to decide the title. Muktijoddha went to the field without their suspended coach Shafiqul Islam Manik as well

as suspended midfielder Mamunul Islam and injured Brazilian playmaker Souza Lima. They looked disorganized but they gradually grew in confidence to control the game as Team BJMC failed to replicate their performance against Mohammedan and Abahani. Team BJMC's Guinean on-form striker Bangoura and Nigerian midfielders Ajagun Abdul Rasheed and Uche Felix were not up to mark throughout the game, thereby putting pressure on the BJMC backline. Even Rasheed and Bangoura, who are considered among the best recruits in the league, could hardly muster any shot on target while BJMC's backline was feeble and it was only a matter of time before they conceded. Muktijoddha should have taken lead in the first half as they came close thrice but Mithun Chowdhury, Zahid Hasan Emily and Sunday Chizoba all squandered presentable chances. Three minutes before half-time, BJMC mustered their lone shot on target but Muktijoddha Sangsad goalkeeper Mashudur Rahman Mustak brilliantly saved a powerful shot from Rasheed. After resumption, Muktijoddha controlled the game and yielded a good scoring chance

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Muktijoddha's Nigerian hitman Sunday Chizoba celebrates his double strike against Team BJMC in a crucial Bangladesh Premier League match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. The Reds won 2-0. PHOTO: STAR

Tigers' first match on tour today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Tigers will play a practice match against Zimbabwe Select today at the Country Club ground in Harare. Mushfiqur Rahim's men, who reached Harare on Wednesday after a long journey, had their first practice session yesterday. The Tigers left for Harare on June 12 to play in an unofficial tri-nation T20 tournament also involving hosts Zimbabwe and South Africa. Bangladesh are scheduled to play a number of T20 matches as part of their preparation for the upcoming ICC Twenty20 World Cup to be held in Sri Lanka in September this year. Richard Pybus's charges will face Zimbabwe on June 17 and June 21, South Africa on June 19 and June 22 at the Harare Sports Club. The final is slated for June 24 at the same venue.

Nat'l school football

SPORTS REPORTER

A hat-trick from Leon powered Boro Bill High School of Rangpur to a 3-1 win over Dhaka Residential Model High School in the National School Islami Bank Football Tournament at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

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Italy can't defend



ANDREA PIRLO 39

ITALY 1:1 CROATIA

MARIO MANDZUKIC 72



AP, Poznan

Italy sat back and paid for it Thursday in a 1-1 draw with Croatia at the European Championship. Andrea Pirlo gave Italy the lead with a curving free kick in the 39th minute but Mario Mandzukic was left unmarked to equalize in the 72nd. Having opened with a 3-1 win over Ireland, Croatia have four points in Group C. Italy have two points after their opening 1-1 with defending champions Spain. In the final round of group matches on Monday, Italy face Ireland and Croatia meet world champions Spain. Italy had numerous other first-half chances from Mario Balotelli, Claudio

Marchisio and Antonio Cassano, but the Azzurri lacked finishing quality. At the start of the second half, Italy rarely threatened, instead choosing to absorb Croatia's attacks. The tactic backfired when Ivan Strinic launched a long pass from the left flank to Mandzukic, who had time to control at the edge of the box and shoot in off the post. Mandzukic, who appears on his way out from German club Wolfsburg, scored twice against Ireland. For his goal, Pirlo placed the ball over Croatia's three-man wall and just inside the near post. Croatia goalkeeper Stipe Pletikosa could only get a weak hand on it once the ball was already inside his net.

Italy remain winless against their Mediterranean neighbours in all six meetings since Croatia declared independence from the former Yugoslavia in 1991. The Azzurri are also now winless in their second matches at their last six major tournaments. Before the match, Croatian fans burned a European Union flag and paraded around Poznan's main old town square with posters of a convicted war criminal. Police, some in riot gear, monitored the situation, but did not intervene. Already being investigated for fan behavior in the first match, Croatian supporters again threw flares on the field several times in the second half.

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Italy's midfield marshal and dead-ball specialist Andrea Pirlo runs for joy after finding the back of the Croatian net with a sublime free-kick during their Group C Euro 2012 match at city stadium in Poznan yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

U-22s' rough initiation

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh U-22 national football team faced an unexpected obstacle at their hotel, having to wait for three hours to check in after reaching Nepal yesterday morning to take part in the AFC U-22 Asia Cup. The five-nation Group D qualifying round is scheduled to take place in Kathmandu from June 16 with Bangladesh facing hosts Nepal on the opening day. Bangladesh coach Syed Golam Jilani expressed his dissatisfaction to a travelling journalists during the team's practice at ANFA Regional Technical Center at Lalitpur where the pitch is also reportedly not up to the mark for practice. "As it is a tournament organised by AFC, we expected better facilities but the hotel rooms we were provided are not good, there isn't even air conditioning in the rooms. Besides, the worst part was that we had to wait three hours to check in," Jilani was quoted as saying.

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Shakib inspires JDC, Millenium

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Millennium Cricket Academy and JDC Udioman Cricket Academy won their respective matches in the CJKS-Urban American Under-18 T-20 Cricket Tournament at the MA Aziz Stadium yesterday. The presence of top Bangladesh cricketer Shakib Al Hasan however hogged the spotlight on the day. Shakib, who has been rested for the Tigers' ongoing Zimbabwe tour, appeared in the stadium to inspire the young cricketers participating in this tournament. The 25-year old Magura lad enjoyed the second match between JDC Academy and Junior Academy.

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Gomez sinks Dutch



HOLLAND 1:2 GERMANY
VAN PERSIE 73



GOMEZ 24, 38

AFP, Kharkiv

Germany are on the verge of the Euro 2012 quarterfinals following their 2-1 win over Holland on Wednesday as Mario Gomez scored twice, while the Dutch are heading for a first-round exit. World Cup finalists Holland will bow out on Sunday unless they beat Portugal in their final game here at the Metalist Stadium and hope Germany defeat Denmark the same day in Lviv to give them a chance of reaching the last eight. After Portugal earlier beat Denmark 3-2 in Group B, Germany now need only a point against the Danes in Lviv the same day to be sure of reaching the last eight at Euro 2012 as group winners. Having scored the winning header in Germany's opening 1-0 victory over Portugal, Germany's Gomez is now the tournament's early joint top-scorer with Russia's Alan Dzagoev with three goals after Bastian Schweinsteiger set up both his first-half strikes.

Holland gave themselves a late lifeline when Arsenal striker Robin van Persie pulled a goal back 15 minutes from time, but it was not enough to prevent their second Euro 2012 defeat after Saturday's shock 1-0 defeat to Denmark. Scorching temperatures in eastern Ukraine meant the game kicked off with the thermometer showing 29 degrees Celsius (84 degrees Fahrenheit). Dutch defender Joris Mathijsen was the only change to the team beaten 1-0 by Denmark last Saturday here at Kharkiv's Metalist Stadium, while the Germans kept the same team which beat Portugal. A great chance fell to Van Persie after five minutes as a ball over the top got behind the German defence, but the striker could only fire his shot into Neuer's grateful arms. Germany replied as Mesut Ozil hit the post from the edge of the penalty area on eight minutes, but the Dutch went back on

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