

SPORT

Koster bringing Yamali today

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The preparation of the national football team for September's SAFF championship is expected to gather pace from today as Dutch assistant coach Rene Koster and fitness trainer Yamali Muhammet will arrive this morning, before conducting a training session in the afternoon.

Head coach Lodewijk De Kruijff, who guided the national side in the AFC Challenge Cup qualifiers, is expected to arrive in a few days to take full charge of the squad, which hardly had any practice in the last four sessions due to constant rain.

Training was mostly confined to stretching sessions even though the selected 35 players practised with the ball for the first time yesterday. Two expatriate footballers - Jamal Bhuiyan and Anando Rahman - also joined in after arriving in the morning yesterday, while another expatriate - Germany-born Reasat Khaton - is yet to arrive or make any contact with the football federation.

Denmark-born Jamal, who had a trial here in 2011 for the World Cup pre-qualifying against Pakistan but had to

leave after failing to cope with the humidity, looked more at ease with the condition and the weather. Jamal was contacted by Koster when the coaches started search of promising Bangladeshi footballers living abroad, and is confident of proving his worth this time.

"Rene called me and wanted to see me in Denmark but he could not. However, I sent him footages of my game," said Jamal Bhuiyan. "Last time the trial I attended did not go well and everyone said I could not play. However, I'm not bothered about it as I know I'm good."

"Any footballer's dream is to play for his national team and mine is no different," said the midfielder.

Anando, on the other hand, contacted with the coach after seeing the news of the coaches' search at the internet and like Jamal, he also wants to represent his country of origin. The 20-year old, also a BBA second-year student, informed that he plays for the Sydney University side, a team of the second division in Sydney where he struck ten goals and assisted in 12. He was also adjudged player of the tournament in Mini Football Federation Cup, organised by the Bengali community in Sydney.



Australia-based Anondo Rahman (L) and Denmark-based Jamal Bhuiyan (C) share a chat with national team's forward Mihun Chowdhury during their first practice session with the national squad at the BFF artificial turf on Sunday. PHOTO: STAR

Naveed due today

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Pakistani hockey coach Naveed Alam is scheduled to arrive here this afternoon to take charge of the national hockey team for at least six months during which he will guide them in the Asia Cup which will be held in Malaysia from August 24 to September 1.

The former Pakistani national player had already signed up the contract through internet and he will complete the formalities before taking charge officially. Naveed will be paid 3,500 dollars per month apart from accommodation, transport and other facilities.

Naveed will start work from tomorrow with the players, who had close to three weeks of fitness training under local coach Mahubul Harun at the Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protishthan, where the players did not get any training with the ball on the astro-turf, which is being re-installed.

Meanwhile, national team's key players Russel Mahmud Jimmyn and Moshir Rahman Biplob are expected to join the ongoing camp after returning from Germany today.

Transfers postponed

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The interim committee of the Bangladesh Hockey Federation yesterday postponed the scheduled inter-club players' transfers (July 2-4), owing to the fact that the elected committee is yet to take over the office at the federation.

"As soon as the elected committee takes office, steps will be taken to hold the transfers," stated a press release from the federation yesterday. The BHF's new committee was elected unopposed on June 19 after a group, backed by six clubs including Mohammedan SC and Mariner Youngs Club, pulled out of the elections. However, the National Sports Council (NSC), country's sports regulatory body, has not yet published any circular on it following a writ petition filed by Mahubul Alam Mitu, an umpire.

"We are examining the instructions of the court and I think it won't affect the procedure of the elections and I am hoping to declare a circulation on it within a week," said election commissioner and NSC director (Sports) Haiul Kaiyum yesterday.

After pulling out of the elections, the six clubs stated that they would not take part in any activities under the elected committee, leading to another uncertainty of the players' transfers. The stalemate over transfers had already forced the players boycott the national camp for three weeks, before they returned to the camp after getting the assurance from the BHF president.

The newly-elected committee is trying to convince the clubs who threatened to boycott the elected committee.

"I had a discussion with some clubs, who agreed to take part in the players' transfer," said general secretary-elect Rahmatullah. "I haven't talked to Mohammedan and Mariner Youngs but we will call all of the clubs officially after taking the charge."

Niaz, Sagar off to good start

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Grand Master Niaz Murshed and International Master Minhazuddin Ahmed Sagar got off to a winning start in the 4th Asian Indoor and Martial Art Games, which is being held in Incheon, South Korea.

In the Classical Chess of the men's individual category, both Niaz and Sagar won their respective first round matches on Sunday.

Niaz beat Celis Chang Joel of Macau and Sagar beat Ashraf Ahmed of Maldives.

In the women's individual category, WIM Shamima Sultana defeated Cho Yeonhee of South Korea while WFM Sharmin Sultana Shirin lost against GM Zhao Xue of China.

Kool-BSJA Media Cup

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Seven matches of the Kool-BSJA Media Cup Football Tournament took place at the official turf at BFF premises yesterday. Gazi TV beat Daily Sangram 2-0, Channel 71 beat BSS by the same margin, Dhaka Tribune defeated Manabkantha also by the same margin, Daily Independent drew 0-0 with Manabzamin, Baishakhi TV edged Banik Barta 2-1, Daily Samakal beat Daily Naya Diganta 1-0 and Alokito Bangladesh defeated SA TV by 2-0. The scheduled match between New National and Janakantha did not take place as the teams failed to turn up.

AKRAM KHAN wants to continue

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The tenure of Bangladesh's three-member selection committee came to an end yesterday following a two-year run at the helm. The future of the committee and possible changes to it will be discussed in the next board meeting.

Former national captain Akram Khan, who headed the selection committee for the last two years, said that while he would want to continue as chief selector, he also has aims of getting a position in the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB).

"I have worked for six years and I want to contest for a position in the board. It can only allow me to do more for Bangladesh's cricket," Akram told The Daily Star.

"As a selector I faced certain limitations. There were a number of things that I could

not do. I want to stand in the elections. As long as the elections don't take place I would like to continue as chief selector if the board allows me. However, in that case I will resign before the elections take place," he added.

In a similar vein, Akram's colleague Minhajul Abedin said that he would continue working as a national selector if the BCB gives him the opportunity. "If the board wants me to continue I definitely will. However, we do not know much about the situation right now. The cricket operations chief [Enayat Hossain Siraj] is not in town and neither is the president," said Abedin.

"But I am hoping to get some good news on Monday once the president arrives," he added.

The three-member selection panel led by Akram took charge in June 2011 following Bangladesh's tame exit in the ICC World Cup.

Rain halts NCC

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Inclement weather has caused indefinite suspension of the second round matches of the 33rd National Cricket Championship. A press release sent by the Bangladesh Cricket Board yesterday stated: "The matches of the National Cricket Championship have been suspended until further notice due to the inclement weather prevailing across the country. A fresh itinerary of the round will be announced in due course."

The second round of the competition - which began on June 27 - saw the first six matches of the round washed out, eventually leading to the suspension. Rangpur, Moulvibazar, Barisal, Narayanganj, Pabna, Brahmanbaria, Faridpur and Jessore are the eight teams in the second round.

Premier League dates soon?

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Fresh dates are likely to be announced for the Dhaka Premier League as Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan Papon told reporters in London on Saturday that he had received a positive signal from the ICC and that the league could start without Mohammad Ashraful, who had earlier publicly confessed to his wrongdoings and been temporarily suspended.

The Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis (CCDM) though has yet to

fix a date for the domestic 50-over competition and is waiting for the president to arrive here today evening.

"There's no point announcing a date and changing it again. Once the president arrives, we'll have a joint meeting with the clubs and come to a final decision soon," said CCDM chairman Jalal Yunus.

The BCB president was earlier hesitant about starting the league before receiving the ICC Anti-Corruption and Security Unit's report on suspected match-fixing in Bangladesh. However on Saturday he told reporters that the ACSU needed more time to complete its investiga-

tion and that the BCB would not receive the report before August. The question now is whether the league will begin in July. The league has been delayed three times already.

Meanwhile the ICC has decided to increase the number of teams participating in the ICC Women's T20 World Cup in Bangladesh next year from seven to ten. The tournament is scheduled to take place in Cox's Bazar.

Regarding the concerns about the World Cup venues in Cox's Bazar and Sylhet, the ICC stated a further inspection and report is scheduled for August after which a final decision will be taken on the venues for the event.



Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (C) shows his soccer skills to his colleagues during a fitness training session at the Mirpur Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

2016 World T20 in India Inaugural Test C'Ship in England in 2017

AGENCIES, London



It was double bonanza for the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) as it would host the World Twenty20 for the first time in 2016 and its fourth 50-over World Cup in 2023.

The BCCI was awarded the two events during the International Cricket Council (ICC) Annual Conference that ended here Saturday. India was represented by interim chief Jagmohan Dalmiya, also a former ICC president.

During the conference, the ICC finalised its global events from 2015 to 2023 and decided that full members have to play a minimum of 16 Tests over a four-year period to retain their Test status.

The ICC also confirmed that the inaugural ICC World Test Championship will be staged in 2017 and will be hosted by England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) June-July. The second edition, slated for 2021, will be held in India in February-March.

The World Test Championship will replace the Champions Trophy, won by India last month after they beat hosts England by five runs in the final at Birmingham's Edgbaston ground.

The ICC had planned to stage the first Test Championship in England this year but

existing commercial agreements meant it had to stage a one-day international tournament instead, hence the last edition of the Champions Trophy.

The ECB will also host the 2019 World Cup and Cricket Australia (CA) got the hosting rights of the 2020 World Twenty20.

The ICC Board supported the strategy of ensuring an optimum balance between the three formats of the game - especially Test cricket.

To ensure that all ODIs played over the four-year cycle between ICC Cricket World Cups count towards a team's ranking, the ICC Board agreed to change the ODI rankings period from three years to four years.

For the sake of consistency, the ICC Board also agreed to change the calculation of the T20 rankings to cover the same period.

Afghanistan was confirmed as the 37th Associate Member of the ICC while Romania was accepted as an Affiliate Member.

Among the changes to playing conditions agreed this week was a revised policy on when umpires need to change the ball in an international match.

The issue became a hot topic during the Champions Trophy after England were accused by former captain Bob Willis of ball-tampering after the ball was changed by umpires Aleem Dar and Billy Bowden when the hosts were in the field against Sri Lanka at The Oval.