



Siljak likely to be in for a short stint

SPORTS REPORTER

Slovenian coach Ermin Siljak is likely to be appointed as the head coach of Bangladesh national football team on trial basis ahead of friendly match against Japan U-21s in December and the Bangabandhu Gold Cup in January. "We are mulling whether Siljak could be appointed for two to three months on a trial basis as we have two engagements -- a friendly match against Japan U-21s and the Bangabandhu Gold Cup -- ahead," said BFF president Kazi Salahuddin after a meeting with Siljak at the BFF House yesterday. "Even though the discussion is at a preliminary stage, Siljak has shown interest and agreed to work with us on trial basis. After analysing his playing and coaching career, it seems to me that he may be a good choice and I will put the matter in the executive meeting within the next seven days for a final decision," said the BFF boss. Siljak has a UEFA Pro coaching license and managed the country's premier league side, Olympija Ljubljana, in 2012. "I have seen video footages of Bangladesh national team's matches and I think they have potential to go forward," said Siljak after the meeting.

Transfer window opens today

Mohammedan lukewarm to recruitment

SPORTS REPORTER



While defending champions Sheikh Jamal DC, runners-up Abahani, former champions Sheikh Russel KC and Muktiyoddha Sangsad have already decked up their possible squads for the upcoming football season, popular outfit Mohammedan SC are yet to rope in any new players in the transfer window, which officially opens today. Abahani, Sheikh Jamal and Sheikh Russel share seven professional league titles among them and it looks like the title race will be confined to within these three clubs this time as well as they have assembled formidable squads. Having completed all their acquisitions, Sheikh Jamal DC and Abahani are leaving for Bhutan this week to participate in the King's Cup, but Mohammedan have been surprisingly lukewarm in assembling players for the professional league, a title that eluded them in all seven editions.

Even though one of the Mohammedan directors revealed some 20 possible names for recruitment -- most of whom are relatively unknown in football fraternity -- the club's director in charge, Lokman Hossain Bhuiyan, informed that they are yet to start the process of players' recruitment. "It is very tough to run a club like Mohammedan every year by begging from others. Whatever donation we have been getting is not good enough to run the club at the present situation. Until we generate our own income, it is becoming difficult to run the club," said Lokman, adding that they are concentrating on improving the club's infrastructure rather than forming formidable sides in all the disciplines that they take part in.

"But Mohammedan will not surely form a bad squad. We are trying to build a balanced side by including good local players as well as quality foreigners," promised Lokman. However, reality is that there are no good players left in the market as Sheikh Jamal DC

have retained most of their star players including foreign striking duo Wedson Anselme and Emeke Darlington, who won the coveted premier league title as well as the Federation Cup even after the departure of talismanic forward Sony Norde.

Sheikh Russel KC have reconstructed their squad by confirming some national team's star players including Zahid Hasan Emily, Zahid Hossain, Mithun Chowdhury, Atiqur Rahman Meshu, Hemanto Vincent Biswas and a few promising players. Abahani are set to form a youthful squad following the departure of the veteran players and have already confirmed national team's Wahed Ahmed, Aminur Rahman Sajib, Atiqur Rahman Fahad, Ariful Islam and Shakil Ahmed.

Muktiyoddha Sangsad are set to be the fourth strongest team, at least on paper, while clubs like Brothers Union, Team BJMC, Feni Soccer Club, Chittagong Abahani, Rahmatganj MFS and Farashganj SC are set to form mediocre squads as usual.

Djokovic back in the groove

AFP, London



Novak Djokovic started his bid for a third successive ATP Tour Finals title with a sublime 6-1, 6-1 victory over Marin Cilic at London's O2 Arena on Monday.

Djokovic took just 57 minutes to thrash US Open champion Cilic as the world number one extended his winning run at indoor events to 28 matches, a streak that includes 11 consecutive victories at the Tour Finals.

The Serb, who has already triumphed in London at Wimbledon earlier this year, is bidding to become the first man to win the Tour Finals three times in a row since Ivan Lendl from 1985 to 1987 and he looks in the mood to do just that on the evidence of his latest masterclass.

"It's been a great, great match. I haven't played here for 12 months, it's great to be back. It was a great performance," Djokovic said. "Marin as a US Open winner has a lot of confidence, but I managed to neutralise his serve and get a lot of ball back in play and that was part of the tactic."

Djokovic arrived in London in buoyant mood after celebrating the birth of his first child, a boy named Stefan, by winning the Paris Masters without dropping a set earlier this month.

He has the additional motivation of knowing if he wins all three of his group matches he will be guaranteed to hold off Roger Federer in the race to finish the year on top of the world rankings.

The 27-year-old, looking to become only the fifth player to win the Tour Finals four or more times, had won all 10 of his previous meetings with Cilic, including a five-set victory in this year's Wimbledon quarterfinals, and once again the Croatian had no way of stopping his rival.

Cilic, making his Tour Finals debut after winning his maiden Grand Slam crown at the US Open, is capable of using his height advantage to overpower opponents with his booming serves.

But in Djokovic he faced one of the greatest returners of all time and the Serb wasted little time neutralising Cilic's biggest weapon as he broke serve in the third game.

On the few occasions Cilic managed to get into a prolonged rally, the champion's flawless groundstrokes invariably overwhelmed the Croat and he was broken again in the fifth game as Djokovic took the first set with ease.

Djokovic's remarkable ability to chase down lost causes was driving his opponent to distraction and the Serb broke in the second game of the second set thanks to another tremendous piece of defensive play.

Earlier on Monday, Switzerland's Stan Wawrinka opened his Group A campaign in scintillating style with a 6-1, 6-1 demolition of Tomas Berdych.



(From R to L) Information minister Hasanul Haq Inu, BFF president Kazi Salahuddin, senior vice-president Abdus Salam Mursheedy and member Harunur Rashid hold tickets of the BFF Lottery 2014 during the official launching at the BFF House yesterday. The lottery is first of its kind for the football's governing body which aims to raise fund to develop the game across the country.

PHOTO: COURTESY

Germany get back to business

AFP, Berlin



After the glamour of their evening on the red-carpet, world champions Germany get back to the business of turning around their Euro 2016 qualifying campaign against minnows Gibraltar on Friday. Memories of Germany's World Cup win were rekindled when Joachim Loew's squad received an award from president Joachim Gauck for their triumph before Monday's gala premiere of 'Die Mannschaft' -- the documentary behind the campaign. "Germany deserved the title, because they were the only team who always attacked," said FIFA president Sepp Blatter, who before the screening presented the squad with the World Cup winners badge to be worn on their shirts for the next four years. "If Germany are world champions again in 2018, we won't have to change much on the badge, so it'll be a bit cheaper for us," joked Blatter during the ceremony.

But a look at Germany's Euro 2016 qualifying group table is no laughing matter for the football-mad nation with their team third after last month's shock defeat 2-0 to Poland and 1-1 draw with Ireland after conceding a late equaliser. The results left Germany in the unusual situation of languishing three points behind leaders Poland with the Irish second.

"I think it's an advantage in preparation for Friday's game that we weren't successful in our last two European Championship qualifiers," said team manager Oliver Bierhoff. "I believe that there won't be a player who doesn't go out onto the pitch with the right attitude." Loew's Germans have a golden chance to pull back points in Nuremberg on Friday against bottom side Gibraltar, who have conceded 17 goals without reply in their three games so far.

The same night, Poland are away to Georgia and Ireland play Scotland in Glasgow in a clash of the Celtic countries.

BFF LOTTERY 2014 Tickets put on sale

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In an effort to raise fund for the development of football and producing future stars, the cash-strapped Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday officially launched the BFF Lottery 2014.

The tickets, worth Tk 20 each, were made available on Monday. A total of 1165 prizes worth Tk 50 lakh ranging from Tk 1000 to Tk 3,000,000 will be awarded to the winners of the lottery.

The draw of ceremony will be held on December 28 and will be beamed live on a television channel.

The tickets will be available at the UNO offices, land offices, LGRD offices, Fisheries and Livestock offices at Upazila level. The tickets will also be available at a few banks, Singer Bangladesh, District Sports Associations, Envoy Group, Bangladesh Air Force and Bangladesh Navy.

Interested people will also have the opportunity to buy the tickets through the SMS option of their mobile phones of any mobile operator by sending a message titled 'bff' to 16329 number.

Insigne out for six months

GOAL.COM

Napoli have been dealt a significant injury blow with the news that Lorenzo Insigne will likely miss the rest of the season thanks to a ruptured anterior cruciate ligament.

The severity of the injury has now been confirmed and Napoli expect the player to be out for six months, with the forward to undergo surgery in the coming days on his right knee.

New start for Tevez

AFP, London



Carlos Tevez will end his three-year international exile in the familiar surroundings of Upton Park when World Cup runners-up Argentina tackle Croatia in a friendly in London on Wednesday.

Tevez has not played for Argentina since their quarterfinal defeat on penalties by Uruguay on home soil at the 2011 Copa America, when he was the only player to miss a spot-kick.

Frozen out by former coach Alejandro Sabella, who stood down after steering Argentina to second place at the World Cup, Tevez has been recalled by Sabella's successor, Gerardo Martino.

By happy coincidence, the 30-year-old stands to make his international return at the east London home of West Ham United, the club he rescued from Premier League relegation in 2007.

Tevez spent only one season at Upton Park, but he is fondly remembered there after scoring a winning goal at Manchester United on the season's final day that spared West Ham from slipping into the second tier.

He subsequently joined Manchester United, winning two league titles and the Champions League, before going on to enjoy comparable success at Manchester City and his current club, Juventus.

However, Sabella's belief that he and Lionel Messi could not be successfully accommodated in the same team meant that Tevez's international career slipped into limbo.

The squat, bustling striker with the

distinctive neck scar demonstrated his ability with a brace in Juventus's 7-0 rout of Parma on Sunday, including a thrilling solo goal that saw him run from inside his own half.

But with Messi having developed a fruitful understanding with Gonzalo Higuain and Sergio Aguero during Tevez's long absence, Martino has warned that he may have to wait for opportunities to add to his 64 caps and 13 international goals.

"It's a fact that Lionel plays very well with Higuain and Kun (Aguero), and we forget that he played with Tevez in a previous time," said the former Barcelona coach, whose team face Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal in another friendly game in Manchester next week.

"I can't guarantee he will be in the 11 or on the bench, but it will happen in some moment of the games that both (Messi and Tevez) can be together on the pitch."

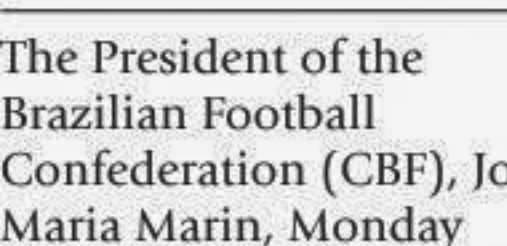
With World Cup defenders Marcos Rojo, Ezequiel Garay and Federico Fernandez all unavailable due to injury, Martino has added Sunderland's Santiago Vergini and uncapped Sporting Lisbon defender Jonathan Silva to his squad.

Argentina have played three friendlies since their 1-0 extra-time loss to Germany in the World Cup final, gaining a measure of revenge against Joachim Loew's side with a 4-2 win in Duesseldorf in September before losing 2-0 to Brazil in Beijing and crushing Hong Kong 7-0.

Croatia failed to make it past the group phase in Brazil, but they have hit the ground running in qualifying for Euro 2016, winning their first four games against Cyprus, Malta, Bulgaria and Azerbaijan without conceding a goal.

Brazil hails FIFA's \$100m legacy fund

AFP, Rio de Janeiro



The President of the Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF), Jose Maria Marin, Monday welcomed the signing of a memorandum enshrining implementation of FIFA's \$100 million World Cup Legacy Fund. Marin signed the memorandum of understanding for the fund at FIFA headquarters in Zurich along with FIFA secretary general Jerome Valcke and CBF president-elect Marco Polo Del Nero. The fund will be used to develop Brazilian football at grassroots level and also to provide welfare provision in poor communities, the bulk of the cash being earmarked for the 15 federal states which did not host World Cup action.

Sociedad hire Moyes

AFP, Madrid



David Moyes has returned to football with Spanish strugglers Real Sociedad following his disastrous 10-month spell as Manchester United manager, the Basque club announced late on Monday. "Real Sociedad have reached an agreement with David Moyes to be the coach of the first team until June 30, 2016," Sociedad said in a statement published on their website.

"Tomorrow (Tuesday) the details for his official presentation and the backroom staff led by the Scottish coach will be finalised."

Moyes, 51, was sacked in April after less than a season in charge of United as they failed to qualify for the Champions League for the first time since 1995.

The Scot enjoyed a broadly successful 11-year spell at Everton prior to taking the job at Old Trafford, although he has yet to win a major trophy as a coach.

Sociedad have been looking for a new coach since Jagoba Arrasate was sacked last weekend after just one win in their opening 10 league games.

Sociedad have a history of appointing British managers, starting with Henry Lowe, who took charge for five years from 1930.

Dunga drafts in Talisca

AFP, Sao Paulo

Brazil coach Dunga on Monday drafted Benfica attacking midfielder Anderson Talisca in place of Paris Saint Germain's Lucas Moura for Wednesday's friendly date with Turkey, the Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) said.

Moura scored in PSG's weekend win over French table-toppers Marseille but had to go off with a bruised foot, opening the door to Under-23 cap Talisca, who has been averaging almost a goal a game in the Portuguese league this season after his move from Bahia.

After meeting the Turks, Brazil will play their final friendly of the year against Austria next Tuesday in Vienna.

As Brazilian club outfits have myriad league and cup commitments at this time of year, Dunga has called up only foreign-based players as he continues his overhaul of the five-time world champions after succeeding Luiz Felipe Scolari in July.

SQUAD

- Goalkeepers:** Rafael Cabral (Napoli/ITA), Neto (Fiorentina/ITA), Diego Alves (Valencia/ESP)
- Defenders:** David Luiz (Paris Saint-Germain/FRA), Marquinhos (Paris Saint-Germain/FRA), Thiago Silva (Paris Saint-Germain/FRA), Miranda (Atletico Madrid/ESP), Mario Fernandes (CSKA MOSCOW/RUS), Filipe Luis (Chelsea/ENG), Alex Sandro (Porto/POR), Danilo (Porto/POR)
- Midfielders:** Luiz Gustavo (Wolfsburg/GER), Fred (Shakhtar Donetsk/UKR), Fernandinho (Manchester City/ENG), Casemiro (Porto/POR), Oscar (Chelsea/ENG), Willian (Chelsea/ENG), Phillippe Coutinho (Liverpool/ENG), Douglas Costa (Shakhtar Donetsk/UKR), Anderson Talisca (Benfica/POR)
- Strikers:** Neymar (Barcelona/ESP), Luiz

