



Bangladesh women's football team take part in a light training session at the Jinnah Sports Complex Athletic Ground in Islamabad yesterday. Having started their campaign with a 6-1 win over Afghanistan, Bangladesh will take on two-time defending champions India at the Jinnah Football Stadium today. The match will begin at 3:30pm Bangladesh time.

PHOTO: COURTESY

Sheikh Jamal take on Druk United today

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh Premier League Champions Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club are concerned with the high altitude and cold weather of Thimpu as they take on Bhutan's Division-A champions Druk United FC in the opening match of the King's Cup today. The match will be held at the Chianglimithang Stadium and will begin at 4:00pm Bangladesh time.

Having reached Thimpu on Thursday, Maruful Haque's charges had two hour-long training sessions in two days at the match venue, but the coach informed that his players are struggling to cope with the minus-seven degree Celsius temperature and the 7600 ft altitude.

"The main problem is my players are yet to adopt the unusual condition here. The height is also a concern as the players are struggling to breathe normally," said the veteran coach to reporters after their practice session yesterday.

Druk United are quite an unknown quantity for Sheikh Jamal, who boast six quality foreign forwards alongside 14 local players, 11 of whom belong to the current national squad. But despite having an excellent squad and one month's training, Maruful is worried about the fitness level of his players.

"We have a little concern about the lack of fitness of the players but I think existing level is enough to win the title," said a confident Mauful.

After the opening match, Sheikh Jamal will face Thai Premier League outfit Nakhon Ratchasing Mazda on November 23 and I League outfit Mohun Bagan on November 27.

Meanwhile, four-time professional league champions Abahani Limited, who have been placed in Group B, reached Thimpu yesterday. Abahani will begin their campaign tomorrow by taking on Assam Electricity Board of India before playing against Ugyen Academy of Bhutan, defending champions Manang Marsayandi Club of Nepal and I League club FC Pune, who replaced Thailand's Osotspa FC at the eleventh hour.

Novak seals year-end top spot

AFP, London

Novak Djokovic was at his imperious best as he sealed the year-end world number one spot and advanced to the semifinals of the ATP Tour Finals with a 6-2, 6-2 thrashing of Tomas Berdych on Friday.

Djokovic finishes on top of the rankings for the third time in four seasons and is only the seventh player to hold first place at the end of the calendar year on at least three occasions.

The Serb's third successive victory at the prestigious season-ending event at London's O2 Arena ensured he won Group A and will face Japan's Kei Nishikori in Saturday's semifinals.

On Thursday, Roger Federer sent Andy Murray crashing out of the ATP Tour Finals in humiliating fashion with 6-0, 6-1 victory that ensured Japan's Kei Nishikori would qualify for the semifinals.

Nishikori's 4-6, 6-4, 6-1 win over alternate David Ferrer earlier left Murray facing the daunting task of having to beat Federer in straight sets to go through from Group B.

Australia fend off Proteas

REUTERS, Perth

Paceman Nathan Coulter-Nile took four wickets to fire Australia to a 32-run victory over South Africa in the first one-day international in Perth on Friday.

Australia captain Michael Clarke was ruled out midway through the match after re-aggravating his hamstring but stand-in skipper George Bailey scored a telling 70 to help drive the hosts to 300 for eight wickets after a mid-innings collapse.

South Africa captain AB de Villiers and middle-order batsman David Miller (65) combined for 126 runs to drive the tourists past 200, but Coulter-Nile's strikes at crucial times saw the visitors bowled out for 268 in 48.1 overs.

SCORES IN BRIEF
AUSTRALIA: 300 for 8 in 50 overs (Warner 46, Finch 35, Bailey 70, Wade 35, Maxwell 29; Steyn 2-62, Philander 4-45)

SOUTH AFRICA: 268 all out in 48.1 overs (Du Plessis 31, Behardien 20, De Villiers 80, Miller 65; Johnson 2-38, Coulter-Nile 4-48)
Result: Australia won by 32 runs.
Player-of-the-match: Nathan Coulter-Nile.

Johnson bags top ICC awards

CRICINFO, Dubai



Australia fast bowler Mitchell Johnson has won the top ICC awards for 2013-14, being named the Cricketer of the Year, as well as Test Cricketer of the Year.

South Africa's AB de Villiers was named ODI Cricketer of the Year, while Australia's Aaron Finch won the T20 performance award for his 156 off 63 against England at the Rose Bowl in August.

England's Gary Ballance was named Emerging Cricketer of the Year, while Sarah Taylor was named the Women's ODI Cricketer of the Year and Meg Lanning, the Women's T20I Cricketer of the Year.

Scotland's Preston Mommsen got the Associate and Affiliate Cricketer of the Year award, and umpire Richard Kettleborough was named Umpire of the Year.

Responding to the ICC's announcement, Johnson said his success as a fast bowler came down to his "attitude". "Aggressive fast bowlers are something you'd have seen back in the day with the likes of [Dennis] Lillee and [Jeff] Thomson.

For me, it's nice to be able to contribute to the team and do the job that I've always thought I've been able to do. I suppose it comes down to the attitude I've got, the belief and the confidence," he said. "I'm very happy with where I am at the moment and I want to keep getting better as a cricketer.

"This [the awards] is something that I'll be able to look back on in time when my career is over and be exceptionally proud of."

The winners were picked based on their performance between August 26, 2013, and September 17, 2014. In that period, Johnson took 59 wickets in eight Tests at 15.23 and 21 wickets in 16 ODIs at 33.04. Meanwhile, de Villiers had scored 963 runs in ODIs at 60.18 with four centuries.



- TOP AWARDS**
- ICC Cricketer of the Year: **Mitchell Johnson**
 - Test Cricketer of the Year: **Mitchell Johnson**
 - ODI Cricketer of the Year: **AB de Villiers**
 - Emerging Cricketer of the Year: **Gary Ballance**
 - Women's ODI Cricketer of the Year: **Sarah Taylor**

ICC TEST TEAM OF THE YEAR
David Warner, Kane Williamson, Kumar Sangakkara, AB de Villiers (wk), Joe Root, Angelo Mathews (capt), Mitchell Johnson, Stuart Broad, Dale Steyn, Rangana Herath, Tim Southee, Ross Taylor (12th man)

ICC ODI TEAM OF THE YEAR
Mohammad Hafeez, Quinton de Kock, Virat Kohli, George Bailey, AB de Villiers, MS Dhoni (capt & wk), Dwayne Bravo, James Faulkner, Dale Steyn, Mohammed Shami, Ajantha Mendis, Rohit Sharma (12th man).

Mazzari out, Mancini in

AFP, Milan



Roberto Mancini was expected to be confirmed as Inter Milan's new coach after the struggling Serie A giants confirmed the sacking of Walter Mazzarri on Friday.

The announcement followed reports that Mancini, who won three league titles in a successful four-year spell with the club, was on the verge of signing a two-and-a-half year deal to take over the Nerazzurri.

Although the club have yet to confirm Mancini as coach, former Inter goalkeeper Walter Zenga, practically did so when he posted a message on Twitter claiming that he had also been in the 'frame' for the job.

"They have chosen Mancini. I was in the frame, my dream was close. It's a pity, maybe in another life. Thanks to everyone," said Zenga.

Expectations of Mancini's imminent arrival also grew when former Inter president Massimo Moratti denied reports he had played a role in influencing club president Erick Thohir to choose Mancini.

Former Manchester City manager Mancini has been out of work since leaving Galatasaray last season but, if confirmed, will be welcomed with open arms by fans frustrated by Inter's failure to perform to expectations under Mazzarri.

Mazzarri, who led Napoli to the Serie A runner-up spot in 2013, joined Inter in time for the start of last season but despite glimpses of promise had consistently seen his side underperform.



WALTER MAZZARRI

Honda powers Japan

AFP, Toyota

Talisman Keisuke Honda provided the thrust as Japan overpowered Honduras 6-0 on Friday to relieve some of the pressure on coach Javier Aguirre.

Honda scored once, set up three more and was by far Japan's most dangerous player in a lopsided game between two teams who flopped badly at the World Cup in Brazil earlier this year.

Aguirre abandoned the tinkering, naming 10 of Japan's World Cup squad among his starting eleven in Toyota.

Endo marked his return with a superb goal as he extended his record number of Japan caps to 147. Honda had made it 2-0 moments earlier with a cool finish, before neatly teeing up Endo. Takashi Inui netted Japan's fourth moments before the second half after being picked out by Honda and grabbed his second in the 74th minute after fellow substitute Yohei Toyoda had added a fifth.

Srinivasan named in IPL scandal

AFP, New Delhi



Indian cricket was thrown into turmoil on Friday when the country's highest court said four top officials, including the sport's world chief Narayanaswami Srinivasan, may have been involved in corruption in the Indian Premier League.

The Supreme Court said Srinivasan, his son-in-law Gurunath Meiyappan, IPL chief executive Sundar Raman and Rajasthan Royals owner Raj Kundra were among those who were investigated by a panel it had appointed to

look into the scandal.

"We have seen the report and it did suggest some misdemeanour on part of certain individuals," the Press Trust of India quoted a two-judge bench as saying, without elaborating.

"Certain findings recorded by the committee are understood to have indicted some individuals whose conduct has been investigated."

The court ordered that copies of the report be handed to these four officials and asked their lawyers to submit any objections within four days.

It also said the identities of the remaining nine people under investigation, most of whom are believed to

be cricketers, should not be disclosed. Their names were handed to the court in a sealed envelope in February.

A lawyer for the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) told the court the body would delay its annual elections scheduled for November 20, in which Srinivasan was expected to be re-elected as president for a three-year term.

A guilty verdict against the officials could lead to a major shake-up in the glitzy Twenty20 tournament where rules state that a franchise should be banned if any official is found to have brought the game to disrepute.

The next hearing in the case will be on November 24.

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