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Brazil defender Thiago Silva (L) celebrates his opening goal with teammate Roberto Firmino during their Copa America encounter against Venezuela in Santiago on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

U-15 C'ship a platform for future events

SPORTS REPORTER



Keeping the 2016 AFC U-16 Championship Qualifiers and 2017 FIFA Under-17 World Cup in mind, the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) is going to the Sailor-BFF Under-15 National Football Championship from Sunday at eight different venues.

The dreams were shared at a press conference at the BFF House yesterday arranged to unveil the logo and jersey of Under-15 Championship were unveiled in presence of national captain Mamunul Islam, Enamul Haque, Shahedul Alam and former footballers Kaiser Hamid, Joshim Uddin Joshi and goalkeeper Mohammad Mohsin.

"We are going to hold the U-15 Championship in a bid to form the under-16 squad for the SAFF Under-16 Championship and AFC Under-16 Championship Qualifiers. If we qualify for the finals of the AFC Under-16 Championship, then we will be trying to get one of three Asian quotas for the FIFA Under-17 World Cup in 2017," said BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag.

Bangladesh will host the SAFF U-16 Championship and AFC U-16 Championship Qualifiers in August and September respectively while India will host the FIFA U-17 World Cup in 2017.

Some 61 districts, split into eight zones, will be taking part in knockout-basis preliminary round of the Sailor-BFF U-15 Championship and each venue champion will advance to the eight-team finals.

"We have been forced to hold the championship in knockout format due to shortage of time but we will consider about having a round-robin basis tournament in future," said BFF vice president Badal Roy, also chairman of the development committee.

It is first time that district youth teams have been formed under supervision of the game's governing body, which sent its coaches across the country to scout the best players from upazila level before forming the district teams. The coaches strictly determined the age of the players, informed the speakers.

Satyajit Das Rupu, Hasanuzzaman Khan Bablu, Fazlur Rahman Babul and sponsor Epyllion's director Junaed Abu Saleh Musa were also present on the occasion.

Ugly Brazil reach quarters

AFP, Santiago

Brazil shrugged off the absence of suspended captain Neymar to reach the Copa America quarterfinals here Sunday with a 2-1 victory over Venezuela.

Goals in each half from Paris Saint-Germain star Thiago Silva and Bundesliga-based striker Roberto Firmino clinched a win which ensured Brazil qualified for the last eight on top of Group C.

Venezuela's goal came from Rayo Vallecano striker Nicolas Fedor in the 84th minute.

Silva - who earlier celebrated finding the net with a dedication to Neymar - praised Brazil's team effort.

"The best thing today is we had a very cohesive team," he said. "Football is played this way -- as a team."

"If you are an individual player you can lose focus on the collective effort. Neymar is missed, he won't play any more in this Copa America. We played for him but in a different way."

Brazil will now face Group B runners-up Paraguay in the quarterfinals on Saturday.

Brazil coach Dunga had opted to replace Neymar -- looking down from the stands at Santiago's Estadio Monumental -- with Santos striker

Robinho while the captain's armband was passed to defender Miranda.

With Colombia being held to a 0-0 draw in the earlier Group C game, Brazil headed into the match comfortable in the knowledge that a point would be good enough.

But any suggestion Brazil would give Venezuela an easy ride was snuffed out in the opening minutes as they seized control of the contest.

The breakthrough came after only nine minutes.

Robinho flighted a corner from the

Venezuelan goal.

LAST 8 LINE-UPS

Chile v Uruguay
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Brazil v Paraguay

right into the heart of the penalty area and Silva was on hand to sidefoot a sweetly struck volley past goalkeeper Alain Baroja, who failed to react in time as the ball flew into the roof of the net.

Silva celebrated by gesturing support to the watching Neymar, signalling the suspended striker's shirt number.

Brazil then set about extending their lead but were unable to find a second goal.

Robinho came close but saw his

shot go just over following patient approach play before Chelsea defender Filipe Luis drew a fine save from Baroja when he thumped a fierce angled shot goalwards from the left hand side of the box.

Venezuela's lone first-half attempt on goal came on the half-hour mark, when a free-kick from Malaga defender Roberto Tunes was flicked on by Andres Tunes, forcing Jefferson to save smartly.

Brazil started the second half as they finished the first, laying siege to the Venezuelan goal.

Liverpool forward Philippe Coutinho unleashed a shot which flew wide, and Silva almost grabbed his second goal from a set piece, thumping a header from a Willian corner only to be denied by a superb Baroja save on 49 minutes.

Brazil did not have long to wait for their second, however, which arrived on 52 minutes. Willian skipped away from Rosales with ease down the left flank before crossing to Firmino who sidefooted home from close range for 2-0.

Brazil looked to be heading to an easy victory but Venezuela ensured a tense finale with Fedor's late goal.

Juan Arango's free-kick was tipped onto the post by Jefferson but Fedor was on hand to head in the rebound.

Diego to run for FIFA presidency

REUTERS, Paris



Argentine soccer great Diego Maradona has decided to stand as a candidate for the FIFA presidency to replace Sepp Blatter, Uruguayan journalist and author Victor Hugo Morales has said.

Morales said Maradona had told him of his intention when he called the former coach of the Argentina national team to check on the condition of his sick father on Sunday.

"He told me he was going to run for president of FIFA and authorised me to inform," Morales posted in Spanish on his twitter feed.

"I am a candidate" were the two words Diego Maradona used to answer me when I consulted him about the nomination for the presidency of FIFA," he added in another tweet.

Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro earlier this month suggested Maradona become the next FIFA president.

Maradona, 54, has long been a trenchant critic of Blatter and last month said he was "enjoying" the corruption scandal that led the Swiss to announce he would stand down at an extraordinary congress of soccer's world governing body.

Like Brazilian Zico, another great former player who has announced his candidacy, Maradona might struggle to get the support of federations from five countries, as required under FIFA statutes.

Liberia Football Association Chairman Musa Bility is the other candidate announced so far for a ballot likely to take place later this year or in early 2016.



Morales is famous around Latin America for his passionate commentary of Maradona's wonder goal against England at the 1986 World Cup. Maradona led Argentina to their second World Cup triumph in that tournament.

The pair hosted a TV show together for Venezuelan station Telesur during last year's World Cup in Brazil.

Selecao won't appeal Neymar ban

AFP, Santiago

Brazil said Monday it will not appeal against a four-match ban on captain Neymar which will rule him out of the rest of the Copa America tournament.

The Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) said the Barcelona superstar would leave the team base in Santiago on Monday.

"During a meeting on Sunday night between Neymar and the technical management it was decided that the CBF would respect CONMEBOL's decision," said a CBF statement.

Neymar was sent off at the end of Brazil's Copa game against Colombia last Wednesday when he appeared to headbutt an opposing player.

"The coaching staff and the player hope that the same rigour with which CONMEBOL punished Neymar will be applied in all competitions organised by the entity," the statement added.

Kondogbia joins Inter

AFP, Milan

French international Geoffrey Kondogbia has completed his move from Monaco to Inter Milan, signing a five-year deal with the Serie A club after snubbing city rivals AC Milan at the 11th hour.

Kondogbia completed his medical with Inter on Monday morning, after which a club official told AFP: "He will be unveiled to fans after 5p.m. this evening in Milan."

The 22-year-old Frenchman, who spent two seasons at Monaco after joining the Ligue 1 club from Sevilla, is expected to earn four million euros (\$4.5m, £2.9m) a season plus bonuses after making a last-gasp decision to snub AC Milan.

Monaco are expected to receive a fee believed to be in the region of 35m euros.

'Signing Cech would be good for Arsenal'

AFP, London



Petr Cech will save Arsenal "12 to 15 points a season" if he joins from English champions Chelsea, according to Blues skipper John Terry.

The Gunners have long been reported as eyeing a deal to bring Cech across London from their Premier League rivals, with the goalkeeper now playing understudy to Thibault Courtois at Stamford Bridge.

But there is no denying the contribution Cech has made to Chelsea's success since his arrival from Rennes in 2004 and club captain Terry believes the 33-year-old still has plenty to offer in top-flight football.

Terry, in an interview with Britain's talkSPORT radio from China, where the Chelsea centre-half is on a promotional tour, said of Cech: "I am sure if he does leave the club, which nobody wants to see, but we understand he wants to play football, he is going to be sorely missed."

"He will improve whatever side he goes to," added Terry in an interview broadcast on Monday.

The former England defender added: "There is obviously talk of Arsenal signing Petr and if they do get Pete that will strengthen them for sure. He will save them 12 to 15 points a season."

Meanwhile Chelsea are set to be active in the transfer market themselves, amid widespread reports they will soon complete a season-long move for Monaco forward Radamel Falcao, whose temporary stay at Manchester United last season proved unsuccessful.

And Terry said resting on their laurels was not an option for Chelsea.

"To be top of the league the whole way through the season was an exceptional thing to do, but you can't kind of dwell on that," he said.

"We have to start concentrating on next season and try to improve on that again."

"When you win the league, you know teams go and spend money to buy the best." Meanwhile Terry said he expected Jose Mourinho's side would face even tougher title challenges next term.

"Manchester City were a little way off this year and will strengthen."

Mourinho a fan of Murray

AFP, London

Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho has revealed he shed tears of joy when Andy Murray won Wimbledon.

Mourinho is a big tennis fan and has been at the Wimbledon warm-up event at Queen's Club several times this week to watch Murray and Rafael Nadal in action.

The Portuguese coach has become close to Murray in recent years and shared a chat and photo with the world number three after his quarterfinal win over Gilles Muller at Queen's.

"I have to say I had a couple of tears for Andy when he won Wimbledon," Mourinho told the Aegon Championships' tennis podcast.

Andy sets his sights on beating Novak

AFP, London



Andy Murray set his sights on ending his barren run against Novak Djokovic after the world number three wrapped up his Wimbledon preparations with a sublime demolition of Kevin Anderson in the Queen's Club final.

Murray clinched a record-equalling fourth Queen's title in just 64 minutes as he delivered a grass-court masterclass that left world number 17 Anderson utterly bewildered.

Murray also won his first clay-court titles in Munich and Madrid, and reached the French Open semifinals.

"You have to improve. If you don't people will take your spot," Murray said.

"Physically I'm definitely in a better place than I was then and I'm using my variety much better just now. That's been good for me."

But there is still one big issue looming for Murray as he heads to Wimbledon's practice courts before the tournament gets underway on June 29.

For all his success over the last six months, he has failed to solve the problems posed by world number one Djokovic.

Murray has lost only six of his 41 matches in 2015 and four of those defeats have come against Djokovic, in the Australian Open and Miami finals and the last four in Indian Wells and Roland Garros.

Yet Murray draws strength from his performances in several of those matches, as well as his Wimbledon and US Open final wins over the Serb, and insists he can close the gap if they meet again at the All England Club.

"It's obviously a shame I've lost to Novak, but I've been close in a lot of the matches," Murray said.

"He's had a great year and there's no disgrace in losing to him. But if I want to win the major competitions I have to beat him."

"I've done it before when I won US Open and Wimbledon and the Olympics, and I need to continue to improve and learn from those matches."

"There's only one player in the world that's played better than me this year."

"I would like to be that player and hopefully in the future I can be."

বাংলাদেশ সেনাবাহিনীতে কমিশন্ড অফিসার হিসেবে যোগ দিন

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