

ROMANCE IN MANCHESTER

A rumour is sweeping Argentinian gossip columns this week reporting that Sergio Aguero has begun dating Manchester City ladies star Toni Duggan. Aguero has recently ended a relationship with South American singer Karina Tejada, and it's now claimed that Kun has started dating closer to home. If the rumour is true, then Manchester City's leading forwards in both their men and women's team would arguably become the biggest power couple in the



Lopez seeks consistency

Sweden-based midfielder joins trial with hope

SPORTS REPORTER



Nineteen members of the 30-member preliminary squad for next month's World Cup qualifiers yesterday joined the national team's camp at the Bangladesh Football Federation house, with the rest, currently busy with the Sheikh Kamal International Club Cup campaign, expected to join after their engagement in Chittagong ends.

Head coach Fabio Lopez immediately got to work and conducted a training session at the BFF artificial turf in the afternoon as Bangladesh prepare for their away fixture against Tajikistan on November 12 followed by the home fixture against Australia on November 17. Lopez said he was only expecting a steady performance from his charges. "We may not be able to beat Tajikistan or Australia at this stage, but I want to see a steady graph of improvement from my players. I hope you will see a different picture in the SAFF Championship in December," said the Italian ahead of the training session.

Defender Raihan Hassan, who joined along with 12 of his Sheikh Jamal teammates, said that the match against the Socceroos could be an altogether different ball game from what transpired in Perth on September 3.

"Despite losing 5-0 in that game, we played well against Australia, where the conditions were alien to us and so were the crowd. If we can replicate a similar performance here, we can come out with a better result," said the young defender.

Meanwhile, there was a surprise in the form of a Sweden-based Bangladeshi footballer who trained alongside the squad as part of a trial. Even though it was his first day with the Bangladesh team, the 28-year-old attacking midfielder was hopeful he could become the second expatriate after Jamal Bhuiyan to don the red and green jersey.

"Even though I never played in the highest league of Swedish football, I hope to play for the Bangladesh team. If I wasn't confident of securing a place in the national team, I wouldn't have come from such a long distance," said the midfielder named Joseph Nur Rahman, adding that someone in Sweden told him to come to Bangladesh for a trial before one of his uncles talked with BFF officials to arrange the trial.



On-trial Joseph Nur Rahman has the ball as the national football squad start their training camp at the BFF artificial turf yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: BFF

Blatter bares it all

Suspended FIFA president Sepp Blatter, in a tell-all interview with Russian news agency TASS yesterday, provided some interesting insight into the crisis at FIFA. Despite covering the story separately, The Daily Star Sport decided to print some salient points from that interview.

Regarding the contract with Platini

When he was chairman of the organizing committee for the France World Cup, he told me at the end of the Cup, "I would like to work for you." And I said this is great because we all already worked with him. It was in 1998. And then he said that I am very expensive. I said okay. So he said, "I am worth one million a year." I said I cannot pay this, it's impossible. And he said, "Okay, then pay me later." So we have made some contract, where he got some money, but not one million. He was working until he was elected in 2002 to FIFA Executive Committee and UEFA Executive Committee. He stopped his working contract because he was then an official of FIFA. He never touched this item until 2010. In 2010 he approached the financial director of FIFA by saying, "Hey, listen, FIFA owes us money." I was informed about that and I said, okay let him make an invoice of this what we owe him. And then he said we owe him two million Swiss francs. And then I analyzed that and I said okay. Yes, it's a contract we have made. And it's a principle I have in my life that if you owe money to somebody, then you pay it. Then we paid it. That's all. And this money was not paid for any other reasons.



Views about FIFA's problems

The problem in the management and in direction of business in FIFA is that the president is the only one after government, which is called the Executive Committee, who is elected by the Congress. All other members are elected by their Confederations. So, therefore, I am the boss of the government that has not been elected by me. And therefore it is very difficult to govern FIFA. We tried with reforms started in 2011 to change something. But then there was the veto, first, in UEFA, because they don't want to go into integrity check of the members and all others were happy with that.

On reforms

- Balance between the regions. Now Europe

has eight members and three vice presidents. Why Europe should have three vice presidents when Africa has more member associations? That's not correct. The second thing is that we should give access to more women to the executive committee.

Whether he has any regrets

- It's not the time to have regrets because you cannot change anything. But I should have had courage after the World Cup 2014 in Brazil to say that now I go. But at that time five of the six confederations have asked me at the 2014 congress in San Paulo, "Please stay as president." Because if the UEFA will take the presidency, then we are lost. UEFA wanted to change the organization of FIFA. FIFA is actually a federation of 209 national associations. What UEFA wanted to do is to make FIFA a holding of only six confederations. The other confederations were afraid that UEFA will take over everything because they have the money and the players. And that's why they said, "Blatter, stay." And I said that I'll stay.

On a personal note

I was utterly affected by how I was abandoned by my own country. The Swiss media got very aggressive against me because I am from a very small canton, Valais, in the

mountains and some of the people here think those coming from the mountains eat with their fingers. Primitive.

On best candidate for FIFA presidency

- At least 140 national associations cannot exist without FIFA. And these people want somebody who goes on with the same idea that football is not only the Champions League. ... Personally, I think most of the candidates here would like to do that, with exception of Platini.

On FIFA president's age-limit and tenure

- The age limit is a nonsense. The limit of mandate is good but not only for the president. It must be for everybody in the executive committee. But we have already twice voted at the congress against an age limit. It's a discrimination of a human being.

On the prospect of a hostile takeover

- Personally I don't think so. Because even speaking about the American takeover of FIFA - football, the real football, where is the real money, where are the good players, the good competition - it's Europe. They cannot take it. It's not the way Americans would have business. I don't think it is in their business thinking.

Blame it on Platini

AFP, Moscow



Sepp Blatter on Wednesday blamed Michel Platini and "bad losers" England and the United States for the corruption scandal engulfing FIFA.

And he claimed a deal was in place to award Russia the 2018 World Cup, and the USA the 2022 edition before the secret vote to designate the hosts took place.

But according to Blatter, Platini and former French president Nicolas Sarkozy skewed the 2022 plan by cosying up to eventual hosts Qatar.

The 79-year-old Swiss told Russian news agency TASS: "In 2010, we (FIFA's 22-strong executive committee) had taken a double decision, we were agreed to go to Russia (in 2018), then in 2022 we'd return to the United States.

"That way, we'd have had the World Cups in the two biggest powers."

That all changed, he told TASS, "after talks between Sarkozy and Qatar's prince (Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad bin Khalifa al Thani) who is now running the emirate, - a meeting followed by lunch between the two men and Platini.

As a result of that Franco-Qatari summit, at FIFA's secret ballot in December 2010, "four European votes deserted the United States and the result was 14-8 (to Qatar).

"If those four votes had not changed it would've been 12-10 (for the USA).

"And if the United States had received the World Cup all we'd be talking about now would be the marvellous 2018 World Cup in Russia and not about any problem at FIFA."

He dismissed calls to strip Russia of the 2018 World Cup as the beatings of "bad losers".

In the hard-hitting interview, Blatter identified Platini as the original cause of the crisis at the top of football.

"Platini wanted to be FIFA president, but he didn't have the courage to put himself forward (in the May 29 election in which Blatter saw off Prince Ali Bin Al Hussein for his fifth term of office).

"And now look where we are! And the victim of all this at the end of the day is Platini himself!



Mascherano free to play El Clasico

AFP, Madrid



Barcelona will be able to call on Javier Mascherano for next month's clash with Real Madrid after the Argentine received just a two-game ban for the red card he received against Eibar, the club confirmed on Wednesday.

Mascherano was sent-off seven minutes from time in Barca's 3-1 win over the Basque minnows on Sunday by referee Carlos del Cerro Grande for a comment regarding the official's mother, according to the referee's report.

The former Liverpool man could have been banned for at least four games had the comment been deemed as a grave insult, which would have meant him missing the trip to Madrid on November 21.

Barcelona confirmed on Monday that they were planning to appeal the red card.

"It is our moral and legal obligation to present an appeal to defend our player," said Barca vice-president Jordi Mestre.

"We have asked the player about the events and he has explained to us that he was showing an expression of anger and had no intention to insult anyone."

Should the appeal fail, Mascherano will be absent for Saturday's visit to Getafe and a home match against Villarreal on November 8.

WALTON

আমাদের পণ্য

ফ্রিজ কেনার আগে অবশ্যই ওয়ালটন শো-রুম না যুরে
ফ্রিজ কেনার ঝুঁকি নিবেন না।

আমাদের তথ্যমতে যারা ওয়ালটন শো-রুমে যান
তারা ওয়ালটন ফ্রিজই কিনে থাকেন।

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- রেফ্রিজারেটরে সংরক্ষিত খাদ্যদ্রব্য দীর্ঘদিন থাকে টাটকা।
- খাবারে ক্ষতিকর ব্যাকটেরিয়ার অনুপ্রবেশ স্বয়ংক্রিয়ভাবে প্রতিরোধ করে।
- নোশেডিভ অ্যান্ড রেফ্রিজারেটরের ভেতরকে রাখে সজীব ও স্বস্তেজ।
- খাবারের বাদ থাকে অস্বস্তি ও দুর্গন্ধমুক্ত।

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