



CONTRASTING EMOTIONS: (L) Sabbir Rahman was in effervescent mood the day after his heroics against Sri Lanka while pace sensation Mustafizur Rahman (C) had to endure the misery of seeing his Asia Cup stint end prematurely due to a side strain. Meanwhile dashing left-hand opener Tamim Iqbal wasted no time in joining his teammates at the nets following the birth of his first child the day before in Bangkok.

PHOTOS: STAR

Swimming fed in a quandary

SPORTS REPORTER

Ten days after the arrival of Park Tae Gun, the Bangladesh Swimming Federation (BSF) is still not being able to award a long-term deal to the successful Korean coach, who guided the Bangladesh swimming team to two gold and 14 silver medals in the 12th South Asian Games.

The BSF had earlier declared to keep Park for long term and brought him back from Australia on Feb 20 for the deal, but the federation is yet to get the confirmation from the Bangladesh Olympic Association as well as sponsors to put pen on paper.

"We have already discussed the matter with BOA and the deputy sports minister but we have yet to get any confirmation regarding the deal. As we don't have any source of income, it is not possible for the federation to provide 5000 dollars per month to Park. We are still negotiating with BOA and other sources and we are hopeful about keeping Park in Bangladesh," BSF's general secretary Rafizuddin Ahmed said, adding that they requested the Korean coach to stay for one more week to finalise the deal.

Juve move four clear

AFP, Turin



Alvaro Morata came off the bench to earn then score a late penalty as champions Juventus went four points clear at the top of Serie A on Sunday with a 2-0 win over hapless Inter Milan.

Days after rescuing their Champions League hopes with a 2-2 home draw with Bayern Munich, Juventus welcomed Roberto Mancini's visitors looking to steal a march on title challengers Napoli.

After a dominant first half, the hosts broke the deadlock two minutes after the restart when Leonardo Bonucci fired Inter midfielder Danilo D'Ambrosio's header past Samir Handanovic on the volley.

Morata replaced Juve striker Paulo Dybala with eight minutes remaining, and two minutes later stepped up to send Handanovic the wrong way after winning a penalty when he was chopped down in the box by Joao Miranda.



Centre-back Leonardo Bonucci (R) scores the opening goal with a fantastic volley during league-leaders Juventus' 2-0 victory over Inter Milan at the Juventus Stadium on Sunday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Women's hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

Defending champions Naril got off to a winning start in the 3rd Women's Hockey tournament with a 1-0 win over Kishoreganj at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Kimi Karmakar struck the decisive goal in the 23th minute.

A 24th-minute strike from Shimu Akter helped Thakurgaon to a surprise 1-0 win over Dhaka in the second match while the day's first match between Dinajpur and Jhenaidah ended goalless.

A total of nine district teams, split into three groups, are taking part in the tournament, the last edition of which was held in 2013.

PSG's 36-game run ends

REUTERS, Paris

The ending of Paris St Germain's league record 36-game undefeated streak after a 2-1 defeat to Olympique Lyonnais could serve as a wake-up call to the squad, according to president Nasser Al-Khelaifi.

Maxwell Cornet and Sergi Darder put hosts Olympique Lyonnais 2-0 up. The run-away leaders replied through Lucas Moura but it was not enough to prevent their first Ligue 1 defeat since March 2015.

Luis not satisfied yet

AFP, Barcelona



Barcelona boss Luis Enrique insists he will only be satisfied once his side have delivered another La Liga title after equaling a Spanish record by stretching their unbeaten run to 34 games.

Barca were forced to come from behind against Sevilla on Sunday as a brilliant Lionel Messi free-kick and Gerard Pique's winner overcame Vitolo's early strike for the visitors.

Victory restored Barca's eight-point lead over Atletico Madrid at the top of the table with Real Madrid now 12 points adrift after losing 1-0 to Atletico on Saturday.

And it is Madrid's record of 34 games unbeaten from the 1988-89 season which will fall if Barca avoid defeat at Rayo Vallecano on Thursday.

"The record tells me nothing. If we win titles then fine, but if not it doesn't tell me a thing," said Luis Enrique.

"We have wanted to retain the title since

the first day of the season. That is the primary objective and we are in better position.

"Now we need to win the points necessary to be champions."

Barca have been far from their brilliant best in many of their recent league games with fatigue starting to set in from an already gruelling campaign of 46 games across six competitions.

However, Pique highlighted their resolve to put themselves on the brink of a sixth league title in eight years.

"We have suffered against Las Palmas, Malaga and other matches, but we have managed to win the games," said the Spanish international.

"I think you win leagues like that if you can suffer and continue to win."

Sevilla have consistently caused Barca in three games so far this season.

The European champions edged a thrilling UEFA Super Cup 5-4 after extra time in their first game of the campaign before Sevilla inflicted Barca's last defeat in all competitions back in October.



DCC PIONEER LEAGUE

Super League from Thursday

SPORTS REPORTER



The Super League of the Dhaka (South and North) City Corporation Pioneer Football League gets underway from Thursday at five different venues, with 20 teams vying for THE top three spots and an opportunity to get promoted to the Third Division Football League.

Being Having divided into 10 groups, a total of 60 teams played over 150 matches in the preliminary round before the 20 teams – the ten group champions and runners-up -- qualified for the Super League. Now these 20 teams will play in four groups in round-robin format, from where the top two teams from each group will advance to the quarterfinals.

The draw for the Super League stage was held at the BFF house yesterday in presence of former national captain Jewel Rana and current Bangladesh under-16 captain Shawon Hossain, both of whom are products of the pioneer league.

"Pioneer football league is the first step for footballers to flourish. I also played the pioneer league in 2012. Now my target is to secure a place in the national team and I will give my full effort to make my dream come true," said Shawon.

"It is really a good feeling for me because I once played this league and I think if the BFF gives more attention to it and increase the facilities, then many talented footballers will come through," Jewel Rana said, adding that the BFF should also pay attention to increase grounds.

"We are proud to say that the all players of national under-16 team, who emerged champions in SAFF U-16 championship, were from the pioneer league," said deputy chairman of BFF pioneer football league committee Bijon Barua. He also informed that they have already got a lot of response from teams from outside and inside the capital for the next season.

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