

PLAYER FACES SACK FOR STICKING OPPONENT

An Argentine fourth division player is facing the sack after admitting that he poked an opponent with a needle during his team's shock cup win over top tier Estudiantes. Federico Allende, who plays for Sport Club Pacifico in the Federal B championship, said his behaviour was inspired by former Argentine coach Carlos Bilardo, who was reputed to have meted out similar treatment to opponents. Allende was marking Estudiantes forward Juan Otero for most of the Copa Argentina match and said that he nipped his rival several times. "I had to turn to the great Bilardo," Allende said in a radio interview. "The poor guy (Otero), it did his head in. We know we had to make the game dirty because top division players don't like it. He must have hated me, BUT that's football." Otero confirmed that he was poked four times and that he told the referee, who took no action. "I know it was the game of his life, but it's still just a football match," he said.

—REUTERS



We are improving continuously

Says U-16 women's coach ahead of Osaka tour

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh under-16 women's football team is continuously improving, thanks to the nine months of training camps and foreign tours they have already had, and they will improve further in the run-up to September's AFC U-16 Women's Championship in Thailand, hoped the team's coach Golam Rabbani Choton.

Choton was speaking at a press conference at the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) House yesterday, on the eve of the team's departure tomorrow for Osaka, Japan where they will play three matches against local sides.

"We have been having two to three training sessions a day since our camp began almost a year ago and the girls have been continuously improving. The team improved on each tour we made - to China, to Japan and to Singapore. This time it will be a camp for both practice matches as well as educational stuff because the players need to be mentally and technically strong before they take on top sides of Asia in the final round of the AFC U-16 Championship,"

Choton said during the press conference.

The Bangladesh team will play three matches - two against high school teams and one against Sakai Academy team during their six-day stay at the J-Green Sakai National Training Centre in Osaka.

The skipper of the 20-member team, Krishna Rani Sarkar, felt the team is much more confident and prepared than before. "We have played there once before and played well against them," Krishna said.

When asked whether the three sessions of training was putting a bit more load on the players, she said she felt the workload was justified as they would need the stamina and self-belief to face teams such as North Korea, Japan and Australia in the final round.

As part of the build-up to the championship, the Bangladesh team is likely to have another conditioning camp in South Korea before a final camp in Vietnam on their way to Thailand, informed BFF officials at the press conference, which was attended, among others, by women's wing chairman Mahfuza Akter Kiron, general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag and technical and strategic director Paul Smalley.



National under-16 women's team striker Sirat Jahan Swapna eyes up the ball as her teammates look on during a training session at the BFF Artificial Turf yesterday. The team will be off to Osaka in Japan tomorrow for a six-day camp where they will also play three matches.

QUICK SINGLES

The following are a few samples of stories that did not make the print edition. However, if they pique your interest, you can always read them online on The Daily Star website by simply scanning the QR codes listed below:

Terry offered Birmingham deal

Former England captain John Terry has been made an offer by second tier outfit Birmingham City, their manager Harry Redknapp revealed on Thursday.

Leeds appoint Christiansen

Former Spanish international Thomas Christiansen is the new manager of fallen English football giants Leeds United, the second-tier club announced on Thursday.

Mayweather-McGregor to fight on Aug 26

Boxing legend Floyd Mayweather and mixed martial arts icon Conor McGregor confirmed plans for a long-awaited showdown on Wednesday, triggering both criticism and anticipation for what is set to be one of the richest fights in history.

Man Utd seal Lindelof deal

AFP, Manchester



Manchester United on Wednesday completed the signing of Swedish international centre-back Victor Lindelof from Benfica for a fee believed to be £31 million (35m euros, \$39.6m), the English Premier League side announced.

"I am thrilled to be joining Manchester United," said the 22-year-old after penning a four-year deal.

"I have enjoyed my time at Benfica enormously and I have learned a lot there. But I'm looking forward to playing in the Premier League at Old Trafford and for Jose Mourinho."

Lindelof joined Benfica from home-town club Vasteras SK in 2012 and won three Portuguese league titles and two Portuguese Cups during his time in Lisbon.

Lindelof is the second centre-back signed by United manager Mourinho following last year's capture of Ivory Coast international Eric Bailly from Villarreal.

Mourinho also has England pair Chris Smalling and Phil Jones at his disposal, along with Argentina international Marcos Rojo, while Dutch utility man Daley Blind has slotted into central defence on occasion.

"Victor is a very talented young player, who has a great future ahead of him at United," said Mourinho on Wednesday.

"Our season last year showed us that we need options and quality to add depth to the squad and Victor is the first to join us this summer. I know that our fantastic group of players will welcome him as one of us."

Lindelof is United's first new signing of the summer as they build up towards a Champions League campaign next season.

He told MUTV that he was ready to fight for his place in the team.

"Of course there are some great players here in my position," said the Swede.

"I'm here to do my best to try to help the team as much as I can and it's always good to have other good players around you. When you have that, you get better as well."

"I think every move means you have to adapt to a new environment but I feel comfortable in myself. I trust myself and it's going to be tough but I'm looking forward to it."



Decent start for Siddikur

SPORTS REPORTER

Siddikur Rahman made a bright start in the Queen's Cup in Bangkok yesterday with a three-under par (68) in the first round. The 32-year-old golfer exchanged six birdies for a bogey and a double bogey to share the 12th position at the end of the first round at the Santiburi Samui Country Club in Koh Samui.

The two-time Asian Tour winner had raced onto four-under on the front nine with five birdies, separated by a single bogey. He had improved his position by carding another birdie on the 14th hole, but a double bogey on the 16th set him back a bit.

Siddikur is still within touching distance of the leading pack consisting of Prayad Marksaeng, Chanat Sakulpolphaisan, Angelo Que and Rashid Khan, all of whom returned a card of six-under-par (65).

Bayern break bank to sign Tolisso

AFP, Lyon



France midfielder Corentin Tolisso has moved to Bayern Munich from Lyon for a record fee that could reach 47.5 million euros (\$53.5 million), the Bundesliga champions announced on Wednesday.

The 22-year-old signed a five-year deal with Bayern to bring an end to his 10-year association with Lyon.

Before bonuses Bayern paid 41.5 million euros, making Tolisso the most expensive player to be signed by a Bundesliga club, breaking the previous record set when Javi Martinez joined Bayern from Athletic Bilbao in 2012.

It is also Lyon's most expensive sale, ahead of Michael Essien's departure to Chelsea for 38 million euros in 2005.

Tolisso, who made his senior international debut against Spain in March, had been contracted to stay at Parc OL until 2020.

He impressed in the recent French season by scoring 14 goals in all competitions, a career-best tally.

"I had a wonderful time at Lyon, and I'm very thankful for that," Tolisso said in a statement released by his new club.

"Now I'm really pleased to be at one of the best clubs in Europe. I have great aims for my time at FC Bayern. Today is a great day for me."

Tolisso is Bayern coach Carlo Ancelotti's most expensive signing of the close season so far after the arrival of defender Niklas Suele from Hoffenheim for 20 million euros, and the permanent transfer of



Tolisso's compatriot Kingsley Coman from Juventus for 21 million.

The five-time European champions also paid Werder Bremen 10 million euros for former Arsenal winger Serge Gnabry.

After the retirement of Spaniard Xabi Alonso, there is a free slot in the Bayern midfield.

"We're really pleased we've been able to sign such a young and interesting player ahead of stiff competition from abroad. Corentin Tolisso was Carlo Ancelotti's wish for our midfield," Bayern chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge added.

Tolisso will be a big miss though for Lyon, who finished fourth in Ligue 1 to miss out on a place in the Champions League.

"Corentin is an exceptional player and without doubt one of the best European midfielders, but also a man with great personality," said Lyon president Jean-Michel Aulas.

"It's a big and emotional loss for OL, but we are also proud to see one of the players trained in our academy join one of the best clubs in Europe."

Referee Noman no more

SPORTS REPORTER

Prominent referee and Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) official Hamiduzzaman Noman passed away yesterday afternoon at the Holy Family Hospital in Dhaka. He was 55.

Noman had been suffering from various ailments related to diabetes and kidney.

He left behind his wife, two sons and a host of well wishers.

"Hamiduzzaman Noman was one of the referees who conducted big matches of Abahani and Mohammedan confidently in the '80s in front of full-crowd at the stadium," said former FIFA referee Ibrahim Nesar.

"He had burst into the scene through a referees' course titled 'Shada Referee' through which Pratap Shankar Hazra, Bashir Ahmed also came out," said Nesar, adding that Noman had worked as a referee for nearly seven years.

Separate namaj-e-janazas were held at the BFF premises and Laxmibazar before he was buried at the Azimpur graveyard last night.

Southampton sack Puel

AFP, London



Claude Puel was sacked as Southampton manager on Wednesday after just one season in charge, the English Premier Club announced.

Puel, 55, took Southampton to a respectable eighth-place finish in the table and to the League Cup final where they were defeated by Manchester United.

"Southampton Football Club can today confirm that it has terminated the contract of Claude Puel with immediate effect," said a club statement.

Puel, a former Monaco, Lille, Lyon and Nice coach, was booed by his own fans when visitors Stoke City won 1-0 at St Mary's on the final day of the Premier League season in May.

Officials at Southampton had already revealed plans to review the Frenchman's future and Puel's cause was not helped by his side's failure to score for a fifth straight home match.

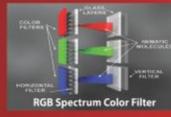
"Everyone at Southampton would like to express our thanks to Claude for his hard work and commitment this year. The highlight of the season was a memorable day at Wembley in the League Cup Final, a day our fans will always treasure," added the club.

"We wish Claude well for the future. The search for a new management team is underway. We are confident that we will find the right fit in line with the long term vision of the club."

Puel replaced Ronald Koeman as manager last year when the Dutchman took over at Everton and signed a two-year contract. Despite Southampton's eighth-place finish, they lost 16 league games and suffered early exits from both the FA Cup and the Europa League. During the defeat against Stoke, his team's own fans chanted "You don't know what you're doing".

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