

BFF okays HK invite for U-15 girls

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) has given its nod to send a team to the under-15 Women's Development Cup tournament in Hong Kong following an invitation from the host nation's football association last month.

The championship is supposed to take place in the latter part of March.

"We have already sent our entry into the competition to the Hong Kong Football Association, who will inform us of a final decision in the latter part of this month as they have so far invited seven to eight countries for the four-nation Development Cup tournament," informed BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag yesterday.

The under-15 team, who clinched the inaugural SAFF U-15 Women's Championship title last month, are currently on vacation and are supposed to join the training camp on January 10.

Young handed 3-match ban

AFP, London

Manchester United wing-back Ashley Young will miss his side's next three matches after he accepted a violent conduct charge for appearing to elbow Dusan Tadic during the 0-0 draw with Southampton on Saturday.

Young has decided not to contest the charge but did query the suspension. "Ashley Young will be suspended for Manchester United's next three matches," an FA spokesman said.

"He accepted a violent conduct charge following an off-the-ball incident during yesterday's game against Southampton, but argued the suspension was excessive. This was rejected by a regulatory commission."

Jan shopping list for top clubs

AFP, Paris



Liverpool's £75 million (\$100 million) splurge on Southampton's Virgil van Dijk indicated that the English Premier League will again be where most money is spent in the January transfer window.

But some of Europe's top clubs will be active this month looking to strengthen their squads for the run-in.

La Liga leaders Barcelona could say they already have their big January signing with Ousmane Dembele close to a return having injured himself shortly after his big-money move from Borussia Dortmund at the start of the season.

That will not stop speculation that the Catalans will go back in for Liverpool's Philippe Coutinho after failing in their bid to sign the Brazilian in the summer. But strengthening at the back might be of more immediate importance with Javier Mascherano set to depart. A move for the giant Colombian Yerry Mina of Palmeiras could be completed imminently.

Atletico Madrid can finally register new players with a FIFA-imposed ban now having ended. That means Diego Costa and Vitolo can make their debuts after agreeing deals to move to the Wanda Metropolitano from Chelsea and Sevilla respectively in the summer. Real Madrid are likely to make moves too. But if there is to be only one signing it should be that of Kepa Arrizabalaga, the Athletic Bilbao and Spain goalkeeper. The 23-year-old's contract expires in June, but Madrid could pay his 20 million-euro buyout clause to get him now.

Juventus could splash some cash as they chase league leaders Napoli and they have been linked with a move for Liverpool's Germany midfielder Emre Can. "We know that he is a good player and a good opportunity but nothing more," Juve CEO Beppe Marotta told Premium Sport on Saturday.

Already out of the Champions League, Napoli are desperate to win a first Serie A title since 1990. They want to reinforce their attack this month, and have been linked with a 25 million-euro move for the Bologna striker Simone Verdi.

There could be sales at AC Milan, who are in financial difficulty and struggling in mid-table. Most headlines, though, currently surround the future of goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma, who has been linked with a move away but said on Saturday that he was "happy" at San Siro.

Bayern Munich are on course for another Bundesliga title. They are top, 11 points clear of Schalke, at the season's halfway stage. And they are set to add insult to injury for their rivals by making a move for Schalke star Leon Goretzka. The 22-year-old German international is out of contract at the end of the season and Sport Bild reported on Sunday that he would sign a pre-contract agreement this month to move to Bavaria in the summer.



Farashganj defender Malick Mandy (R) clears the ball during their Bangladesh Premier League fixture against Muktiyoddha Sangsad at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Inusah sinks Farashganj

Emily ends 28-month goalless streak

SPORTS REPORTER



Ten-man Muktiyoddha Sangsad notched three crucial points to move to relative security with a 1-0 victory over relegation-threatened Farashganj SC in their Bangladesh Premier League fixture at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Ghanaian defender Abbas Inusah scored the winning goal at the start of the second half as the All Reds moved to 17 points from 20 matches, four clear of bottom-of-the-table Rahmatganj MFS. Farashganj are just one point above Rahmatganj with 14 points from same number of matches.

The match was equally important for both sides to get out of the drop zone and both played some attacking football throughout the match, but the All Reds had the last laugh, thanks to Inusah's goal after a barren first-half.

Inusah rose high to nod home a corner from Shyamol Ahmed Rony in the 53rd minute before Farashganj found a good opportunity to equalise

in the dying moments, but Nigerian striker Chinedu Mathew saw his free-kick from the edge of the box go inches over the crossbar. Although Muktiyoddha were reduced to ten men deep into injury time, they held on to the lead for three precious points.

Meanwhile, falling giants Mohammedan were held to a 2-2 draw by Arambagh KS despite a first premier league goal in two-and-a-half

MOHAMMEDAN 2 - 2 ARAMBAGH KS	
(CHIGOZIE 4, EMILY 49)	(SUMAN 80, BUKOLA 90)
FARASHGANJ 0 - 1 MUKTIJODDHA	(INUSAH 52)

years from national striker Zahid Hasan Emily in the day's first match.

The stalemate left both sides at their previous positions as Mohammedan were fifth on the table with 29 points from while Arambagh remained in eighth position with 17 points.

Mohammedan went ahead in the fourth minute when Nigerian forward Kingsley Chigozie broke the off-side trap to beat opposition goalkeeper

Azam Khan with a diagonal shot from inside the box after having availed a defence-splitting through-pass from Biplu Ahmed despite the fact that the Arambagh players had rushed towards the assistant referee claiming off-side.

Arambagh found an opportunity to level the margin in the 27th minute but forward Suman Ali drove wide with only goalkeeper Mamun Khan to beat before Mohammedan wasted a chance to double the lead in the 35th minute, with Chigozie driving narrowly wide of the target.

Emily doubled Mohammedan's lead with a header on Mohammad Linkon's corner home and thereby ended his 28-month goalless streak having scored his last goal for Sheikh Russel against Rahmatganj MFS in May, 2015.

With only ten minutes of regulation time remaining, Arambagh found a lifeline when Suman Ali headed in Rocky's cross before Alamu Bukola scored the equaliser in the 90th minute by tapping in a rebound from close range.



Mamadou Bah in ICU

SPORTS REPORTER



Sheikh Jamal DC striker Mamadou Bah is still under observation at the intensive care unit (ICU) of the Anwar Khan Modern Hospital in Dhanmondi following a convulsive head injury he sustained during his side's Bangladesh Premier League match against Chittagong Abahani on Sunday night.

Bah, who came in place of Raphael Odoyin in the latter part of the match, sustained the injury while trying to race past Chittagong Abahani defender Sushanta Tripura. The Gambian striker tripped inside the penalty box and was subsequently struck by Sushanta's boot. He was immediately rushed off to a hospital with blood dripping off his head.

Bah was initially taken to Dhaka Medical College (DMC) Hospital before being shifted to the Anwar Khan Modern Hospital due to an unavailabil-

ity of space at the DMC ICU, Sheikh Jamal's physiotherapist Saifuzzaman Chayan informed yesterday.

"He has been kept under observation for 48 hours at the ICU as the CT scan showed a haemorrhage inside the scalp," Chayan said.



"However, the good news is he regained his consciousness after one-and-a-half hours following the injury. He was given four stitches on his forehead and has been kept under the observation of Dr. Kamrul Hasan," Chayan continued.

Bah has scored four goals in the

Silva signs for Leicester

AFP, London

Portugal midfielder Adrien Silva says he tried to remain positive during a long saga which came to a happy end on Monday as he completed his move to Premier League side Leicester City.

The 28-year-old -- capped 20 times and a member of the Portugal side that won Euro 2016 -- has had to wait four months to complete the £22 million (\$29.7million) transfer from Sporting Lisbon.

The France-born midfielder has been in a state of limbo since his original transfer was not accepted because the paperwork was 14 seconds past the deadline in August -- an appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) failed.

"When you have a period like this, it's very up and down," Silva told Leicester's in-house television station.

"You have to keep a positive mentality and that's what I've tried to do."

Wenger: The marathon man

AGENCIES, London



Sir Alex Ferguson has paid tribute to Arsene Wenger after the Arsenal boss surpassed his record for most matches as a Premier League manager.

Arsenal's 1-1 draw at West Brom on Sunday saw Wenger reach 811 games in charge of a top-flight team - one more than Ferguson achieved during his 27-year spell at Manchester United.

Ferguson was quick to praise Wenger after he reached the landmark and the former Red Devils boss says he expects the record will never be broken.

In a statement released through the League Managers Association, Ferguson said: "I applaud Arsene on surpassing my record of managing 810 Premier League games.

"It is a fantastic milestone which has required the highest standards of dedication and professional management to achieve. I doubt his record, whatever it turns out to be, will ever be beaten.

"Congratulations on a truly remarkable career and great service to football and Arsenal FC."

LMA chairman Howard Wilkinson added: "On behalf of the League Managers Association and all our members, I would like to congratulate Arsene on his record-breaking achievement. 811 Premier League games, and more to come, is testimony to all he has brought to football in England and to Arsenal FC."



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:

Shakib, Mushfiquir in Cricket.com's best Test XI

Bangladesh star all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan and wicketkeeper-batsman Mushfiquir Rahim have been selected in Cricket.com.au's best Test XI for 2017.

Guardiola pleads for player protection

Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola has demanded more protection for players after seeing Kevin De Bruyne narrowly avoid serious injury as his side's 18-game winning streak came to an end.

Neymar back with ex-girlfriend Bruna

The pair had a topsy-turvy relationship but the end of the year celebrations perhaps sparked something which ended up getting them back together.

Wenger party spoiled by late West Brom leveler

Arsene Wenger's record-breaking day as Arsenal manager ended in frustration as his disjointed side were held to a controversial 1-1 draw at West Bromwich Albion.



PHOTOS: COLLECTED