

Kamal Babu handed one-year suspension

SPORTS REPORTER

Rahmatganj MFS coach Kamal Babu has been banned from all football activities for one year, effective from Tuesday, after being found guilty of entering the ground unlawfully during the semifinal match of Independence Cup between Rahmatganj and Chittagong Abahani on February 6.

The disciplinary committee of the Bangladesh Football Federation took the decision after scrutinising reports of the match commissioner, the referee and media reports. Kamal Babu had sought



Rahmatganj coach Kamal Babu entered the pitch and got into an altercation with the opposition players and the referee during their Independence Cup semifinal against Chittagong Abahani on February 6.

PHOTO: STAR FILE

World No. 259 stuns Wawrinka

AFP, Rotterdam

Three-time Grand Slam champion Stan Wawrinka blew a one-set lead to fall 4-6, 6-3, 6-2 to unfancied Dutchman Tallon Griekspoor in a first-round shock at the Rotterdam Open on Tuesday.

The Swiss fifth seed slumped to another surprise defeat by an outsider, after losing in the Australian Open second round to Tennys Sandgren.

It was the biggest success of career for world number 259 Griekspoor in only his third ATP-level match.

Nepal in ICC WC qualifiers

AFP, Dubai

Young leg-spinner Sandeep Lamichhane led Nepal to a thrilling one-wicket win over Canada on Wednesday in the World Cricket League Div-2 in Namibia to book a place at next month's 2019 cricket World Cup qualifying tournament.

Nepal were indebted to an unbroken 51-run stand for the final wicket between Lamichhane and Karan KC, who hit the winning run off the final ball to chase down 195.

Nepal will take on PNG, Ireland, the Netherlands and West Indies in Group A while Group B features UAE, Zimbabwe, Afghanistan, Scotland and Hong Kong.

Green Delta, BHF strengthen ties

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) and Green Delta Insurance Company Ltd yesterday strengthened their relationship by signing another three-year MoU (memorandum of understanding) to sponsor premier, first and second division hockey leagues for the next three years.

Under the agreement, the company will provide Tk one crore, which is Tk 60 lakh more than what they had provided over the previous term of 2012-14.

The insurance giants have been associated with the local game's governing body since 1985.

"It is a unique relationship between the two organisations and such sponsorship is rare in sports arena. I hope the relationship will continue as long as the federation exists," BHF general secretary Abdus Sadeque said at the agreement signing ceremony at the BOA auditorium.

"One day in 1985, Sadeque bhai approached for sponsoring hockey and since then we have been with hockey even though I had to face a lot of criticism from colleagues and fellow businessmen. Hockey is now in my blood and I feel proud to be a part of Bangladesh hockey which is going forward and I can assure we will stay with hockey in future," said Green Delta's founding managing director and adviser Nasir A Chowdhury.

"The window of the players' transfer for premier league has been declared and we expect to start the league in April. We want to keep the game on the ground round the year, but we need help from club officials and players to make it successful," said BHF president and Air chief Air Marshal Abu Esrar.

Green Delta's managing director and CEO Farzana Chowdhury informed that they have also brought the national players under its insurance scheme for next one year and that each of the players will get a benefit of maximum Tk 3 lakh if they sustain injuries in competitive matches for national team.

"It is a historical moment for both organisations who have grown gradually together," Farzana said. "We are not only sponsoring leagues for the last 33 years, but we have also been involved with different activities of the federation as well."

At the agreement signing ceremony, 2016 premier league champions Dhaka Mariner Youngs club and runners-up Usha KC were handed over trophies. AKM Mominul Haque Sayeed, chairman of Mariner Youngs Club's hockey committee and vice president of BHF, handed over Tk 10 lakh to the BHF president for the national team, which will travel to Oman next month for the qualifying round of the Asian Games.



Tottenham's Christian Eriksen (L) provided a masterclass in midfield, standing out as the best player on the pitch against a vaunted Juventus side. He scored the equaliser with a sublime free-kick, hitting it under the wall and giving Gianluigi Buffon no chance as Spurs fought back from 2-0 down to take the away-goal advantage into the second leg.

PHOTO: AFP

Spurs take the edge in Turin

It's still 50-50, says Allegri after 2-2 draw

AFP, Turin



Juventus coach Massimiliano Allegri insisted he would not be getting depressed despite criticism at failing to land the killer blow against Tottenham in their Champions League last 16, first leg clash in Turin.

"If anyone thought that Juventus would win 4-0 this evening he was way off track," blasted Allegri, after his more experienced side threw away a dream start with two Gonzalo Higuain goals inside ten minutes to end with a 2-2 draw in front of their frustrated fans at the Allianz Stadium.

"The Champions League is a dream and an objective, but winning it is not easy. I think people have lost some objectivity here. Juve play to win, but they are not the favourites. You can't reach the final every year," said Allegri.

Higuain got the first goal after 73 seconds, and minutes later added a second from the spot after Ben Davies' foul on Federico Bernardeschi.

But Harry Kane revived Spurs hopes after half an hour, with his seventh goal in the competition this season, rounding flattened goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon.

Higuain missed a second penalty before the break following Serge Aurier's reckless challenge on Douglas Costa to keep the English side in the game.

Christian Eriksen scored

Tottenham's second goal from a free-kick after centre-back Giorgio Chiellini fouled Dele Alli, sending it low past a wrong-footed Buffon, leaving all to play for in Wembley on March 7.

"It's like we lost 8-0 -- good doctors are needed, not one, but many very, very good," Allegri berated journalists at the post-match press conference.

"Football is like this, we went from 3-0 to 2-1, we had a 3-1 penalty and instead Tottenham equalised 2-2," explained Allegri of the game. "I believe the lads are putting in a fantastic season, but that's a long way off thinking they can win a last 16 match by a 3-0 scoreline."

"People must realise that win-



Despite scoring the fastest brace in Champions League history by grabbing two goals inside the opening 8 minutes and 7 seconds, Juventus striker Gonzalo Higuain let his team down when it mattered most, missing a penalty while leading 2-1.

PHOTO: AFP

Cycling team off to Malaysia

SPORTS REPORTER

A seven-member cycling team including four cyclists left for Malaysia last night to take part in the 38th Asian Track Championships and the 25th Asian Junior Track Championships, beginning tomorrow, with the hope of bagging at least one medal.

Samapti Biswas Aurther and Shilpi Khatun will participate in four events in senior category while Nishi Khatun and Samanta will take part in four junior events -- 500m time trial, team sprint, 1000m sprint and individual pursuit.

The cyclists are hopeful about carrying the momentum from the Delhi Asian Track Championships where the men's team won a bronze medal in team sprint even last year. This time the women cyclists are optimistic about winning a bronze medal in the same event.

"We are determined to win a medal from the championships. We want to win medal

in team sprint so that the junior cyclists get opportunity to play in next Youth Games, which did not feature cycling this time," Samapti said at a press conference at the Bangladesh Cycling Federation (BCF) office yesterday. The cyclists have had one month of preparation.

The women cyclists had previously won medals in the championship, with Farhana Sultana Shila and Parul Akter winning silver and bronze medals respectively in the 2014 Delhi edition.

BCF president Mizanur Rahman Manu ensured that cycling teams would take part in the championship regularly in a bid to drawing attention of everyone despite the financial constraints.

"Last year, India helped us financially to take part in the Delhi Asian Track Championships and this time Malaysia is helping us by providing for accommodation and food. If we can arrange money, we will send both men's and women's teams in next year championships as well," said Manu.

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:

Referee 'didn't hear' racist abuse of Balotelli

The referee who booked Mario Balotelli while the Nice striker was complaining of racist abuse has said he "didn't hear insults or shouts from the stand" during Saturday's match at Dijon. "If I had heard 'monkey chants' as indicated in the query by Nice, I would at no point have given Mario Balotelli a yellow card," Nicolas Rainville said in a statement from French referees' union SAFE on Wednesday.



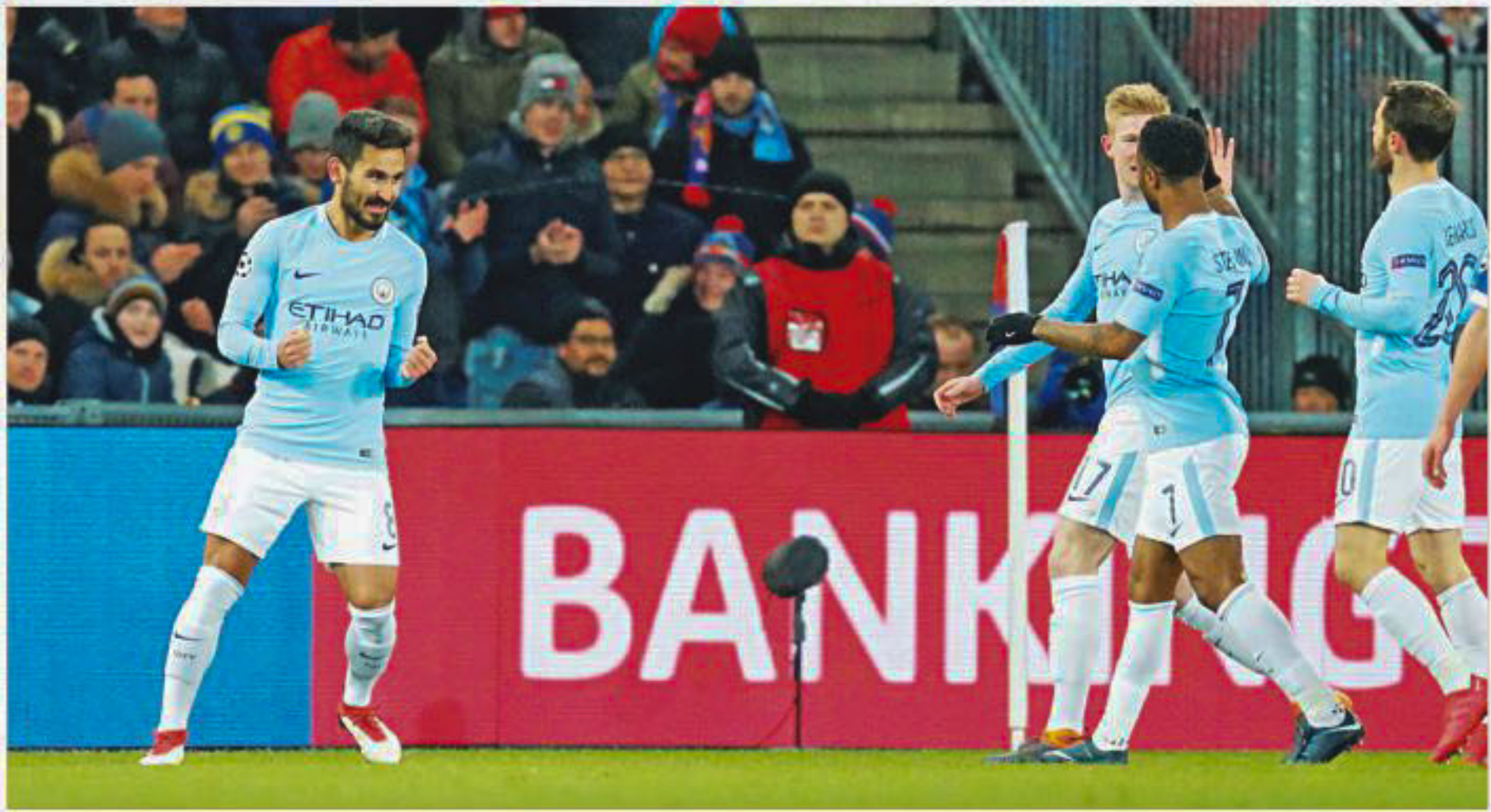
Leo puts on a show at Barca training

Barcelona star Lionel Messi was his usual relaxed self as he trained with Barcelona teammates on Tuesday, and the forward put on a show which might have left some jaws dropped on the floor.



Has Premier League TV bubble burst?

The Premier League could be set for a pay cut after eye-watering back-to-back domestic TV deals but experts say the boom times are far from over for English football. Sky held on to its position as the main broadcaster of live matches, claiming four of the seven available packages for 2019-2022, with BT taking the other package sold so far at a total combined cost of £4.46 billion.



Manchester City midfielder Ilkay Gundogan (L) shone against Basel with two goals in a 4-0 drubbing at Sankt Jakob Park on Tuesday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

City demolish Basel

AFP, Basel



Ilkay Gundogan says there is still more to come from Manchester City after their "perfect" 4-0 rout of Basel left them on the verge of the Champions League quarterfinals.

City destroyed Basel's morale with a three-goal burst after just 23 minutes of the first leg last-16 mismatch. City's first three goals came in a devastating nine-minute spell thanks to a header from Gundogan, a Bernardo Silva volley and a long-range Sergio Aguero strike.

It was Aguero's 14th goal in 11 games in 2018.

Gundogan added a fourth after the break

and was only denied a hattrick by the determination of Basel goalkeeper Tomas Vaclik.

The tie looks all but settled ahead of the return leg at the Etihad on March 7.

"The result was maybe perfect, but there are still things to improve," said Gundogan.

The 27-year-old German singled out City's playmaker Kevin de Bruyne for his part in his opening goal.

"I had the opponent on my back so it was not really easy to head it, but the timing was perfect and the ball was perfect from Kevin," said Gundogan.

"To win 4-0 away in the last 16 is an amazing result, we are almost in the quarter-finals, but I am not saying we are already there, out of respect for Basel," said Guardiola.



ডাঃ শামীম মতিন চৌধুরী স্পেশাল অলিম্পিকস এশিয়া প্যাসিফিক গ্যাডভাইজরি কাউন্সিলের চেয়ারম্যান নির্বাচিত

স্পেশাল অলিম্পিকস বাংলাদেশের চেয়ারম্যান ডাঃ শামীম মতিন চৌধুরী স্পেশাল অলিম্পিকস এশিয়া প্যাসিফিক গ্যাডভাইজরি কাউন্সিল এর ২০১৮-২০২০ সনের জন্য কাউন্সিলের চেয়ারম্যান নির্বাচিত হয়েছেন। গত ১লা ফেব্রুয়ারী ২০১৮ সিংগাপুরে অনুষ্ঠিত স্পেশাল অলিম্পিকস এশিয়া প্যাসিফিক কাউন্সিল এর সভায় তিনি চেয়ারম্যান নির্বাচিত হয়েছেন।

ডাঃ শামীম মতিন চৌধুরী স্পেশাল অলিম্পিকস বাংলাদেশের অন্যতম প্রতিষ্ঠাতা এবং ২০০৮ সন থেকে অদ্যাবধি স্পেশাল অলিম্পিকস বাংলাদেশের চেয়ারম্যান হিসাবে দায়িত্ব পালন করছেন। তিনি বাংলাদেশের একজন প্রথিতযশা সাহিত্যিক। বুদ্ধিপ্রতিবন্ধী ও অটিষ্টিক শিশুদের জন্য তিনি বিউটিফুল মাইন্ড স্পেশাল স্কুল প্রতিষ্ঠা করেছেন। তার গতিশীল নেতৃত্বে স্পেশাল অলিম্পিকস বাংলাদেশ আজ পর্যন্ত কয়েক হাজার বুদ্ধিপ্রতিবন্ধী ছেলে মেয়েকে ১০টি ক্রীড়ায় প্রশিক্ষণ দিয়ে জাতীয় এবং আন্তর্জাতিক মানে উন্নীত করেছে এবং তারা দেশের জন্য গৌরব বয়ে এনেছে।