

TEVEZ INJURED IN GAME WITH PRISON INMATES

Argentine striker Carlos Tevez has injured himself while participating in a kickabout at a prison in Argentina, according to reports in his homeland. The 34-year-old has played 11 games for Boca since moving in January, scoring three times, but his most recent football appearance has enraged Boca officials after he got injured on a trip to visit his brother behind bars. According to reports, Tevez went to visit his half-brother Juan Alberto Martinez -- who is serving a 16-year sentence for armed robbery -- at Bouwer's maximum security prison in Cordoba this week, where he incredibly decided to have a prison-yard game of football with the inmates. In what should have been a friendly match, Tevez suffered a blow to his calf that early tests suggest will rule him out of action for a month. Witnesses suggest he played for around 20 minutes before being chopped down, and he subsequently lied to Boca's coaches about how he had sustained the injury



--AGENCIES

Sabina stars in Sethu FC win

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh women's team captain Sabina Khatun scored one and set up another as Sethu FC of Tamil Nadu beat Gokulam Kerala in their Indian Women's League encounter at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Shillong yesterday.

The prolific striker, who played as a second-half substitute in her team's opening match 5-0 defeat against KRYHPSA, scored the opener in the 17th minute before setting up the second four minutes from time to bring the Tamil Nadu side back into the hunt.

After opening the account, Sabina almost scored another seven minutes past the half-hour mark but her shot was kept out by opposition goalkeeper Rumpa.

Manisha, who missed an earlier chance, made amends by getting on the receiving end of Sabina's pass in the 86th minute to score, handing Sethu a deserved victory.

Bangladesh's former under-16 captain Krishna Rani Sarkar is also playing for Sethu FC in this second edition of the Indian Women's League.

Salahuddin set for 3rd SAFF stint

SPORTS REPORTER



Incumbent president Kazi Salahuddin is all set to stay at the helm of the South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) for the third straight term as the Bangladesh Football Federation boss is the lone candidate for the SAFF presidency in next month's polls.

Sri Lanka's Anura De Silva and Pakistan's Syed Khadim Ali Shah are two of the vice-president candidates, according to the nominations submitted before the deadline of March 27. The member associations will elect one president and three vice-presidents on April 11 in Dhaka while one representative each from the seven member nations will be selected by the respective associations.

"I have scrutinised the documents that they [the candidates] have submitted and saw no flaws, so they have unofficially been elected unopposed for their respective posts," SAFF general secretary Anwarul Haque Helal said yesterday. "Now the SAFF congress will take a decision on the third vice-president post as only two nominations for vice-president were submitted."

Helal informed that the SAFF has a busy schedule this year as the regional football body will host five events -- the Men's Championship in September, Women's Championship in December, U-15 Girls' Championship in August, U-15 Boys' Championship in November and U-18 Women's Championship in September.

The draw for the Men's Championship, for which all seven teams have already sent entries ahead of April 10 deadline, will be held on April 18 in Dhaka. This time the draw will be held on the basis of the last two editions' SAFF standings, with Afghanistan out of the association while Pakistan is once again eligible following the withdrawal of the suspension on its football federation.

The 12th edition of the regional football extravaganza will be held from September 4 to 15 at the Bangabandhu National Stadium in Dhaka.

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh national football team returned home in the early hours of Thursday with happy faces after a spirited 2-2 draw, despite going two goals down in the first half of their FIFA friendly match, against Laos on Tuesday.

It was Bangladesh's first international match in 17 months, following their shocking 3-1 defeat against lowly Bhutan in an Asian Cup Qualifiers Playoff, and fears of further embarrassment emerged when the visitors conceded two goals in the first half. However, the men in red and green kept their nerve and turned the tables with goals from young Jafar Iqbal and Mahbubur Rahman Sufil.

Both forwards said they believed they could score like they did against India during last year's SAFF U-18 Championship.

"Before taking to the field after 17 months, a fear seemingly gripped us as to how we would show our faces to the nation if we lose the match, but we fought till the last minute to spare ourselves the blues," Jafar told The Daily Star over phone from his home in Bandarban, where he received an overwhelming welcome from his neighbours, parents and the city mayor.

"After the first half, I set a target of scoring within 72 minutes but could not do that. Then I revised the target to 75 minutes and also failed before scoring in the 82nd minute" added Jafar, who felt that the two practice matches against Thailand Premier League clubs helped the team

'Everyone fought equally'



PHOTO: COLLECTED

Jafar Iqbal (R) posted this photo of himself alongside friend and national teammate Mahbubur Rahman Sufil on Facebook.

prepare for this international fixture.

Jafar scored the goal that gave Bangladesh rise to hopes of a comeback with an intelligent flick using the side of his boot that went past Laos goalkeeper Outhilath Nammakhot following a goalmouth scramble.

And those hopes were realised when Sufil equalised with a perfectly placed a shot after Topu Barman had teed him up with a header inside the box two minutes into added time.

"If you have the belief of scoring, then you can

score such goals in such situations," said Jafar. "I actually grew confident about scoring when my first effort narrowly missed the target in the fifth minute."

Jafar hardly got a chance in the playing eleven for his club Chittagong Abahani in the Bangladesh Premier League, starting in only three matches and playing 10 as a substitute.

However, Jafar shone in the SAFF U-18 Championships and won the golden boot after scoring five goals, having bagged only a single goal in the league for his side.

"During the interval, we were briefed that we had the ability to score more goals in the second half if the hosts had scored two goals. And we were all confident to reimburse the goals and put up an all-out effort till the 90th minute," said the 20-year-old forward.

"We toiled hard for only this match, so we all were fit and played the full match with the same pace and actually that kept us in the match till the last minute," said Sufil, who kept incredibly cool inside the box and made space to his right before placing the ball at the far post to score the equaliser.

"Fighting throughout 90 minutes is a new thing for the Bangladesh team because everyone -- from senior to junior -- fought equally," continued Sufil, who helped Arambagh win the Independence Cup title.

Jafar however, urged the game's governing body to arrange more FIFA friendlies in the future so that national players can get out of the string of disappointing performances through continuous improvement.



Barcelona superstar Lionel Messi returned to training ahead of the Blaugrana's trip to Sevilla, but the Argentine's participation in the match is far from certain as he recovers from a muscle problem.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Messi fitness a concern ahead of Sevilla trip

REUTERS, Barcelona



LaLiga

Barcelona must decide whether to field Lionel Messi as they resume their bid for the Liga title away to Sevilla on Saturday amid doubts about their talisman's fitness at the start of a gruelling period of seven games in 22 days.

Messi missed Argentina's friendlies against Italy and Spain due to a muscle problem sustained after Barca's last Liga outing against Athletic Bilbao and only completed half of a training session on Thursday.

He is the top scorer in La Liga with 25 goals and has featured in all but one of Barca's league games this campaign, only sitting out the match against Malaga following the birth of his third son.

The trip to Sevilla is likely to be Barca's hardest away game left this season although their 11-point lead over nearest challengers Atletico Madrid gives coach Ernesto Valverde wiggle room in their bid to reclaim the title.

Barca have the first leg of their Champions League quarter-final tie against AS Roma on Wednesday and five more

games, culminating in the Cup final against Sevilla on April 21 before earning a seven day rest before their next league game.

Barca have failed to win on two of their last three visits to Sevilla's famously atmospheric Sanchez Pizjuan stadium, however, and will be keen to extend their 36-game unbeaten record in the league. They are targeting the Liga record of 38 games unbeaten, held by Real Sociedad from the 1979/80 season.

Valverde said on Wednesday he was not overly concerned about Messi's fitness and laughed off suggestions his forward would be affected by Argentina's humiliating 6-1 defeat to Spain on Tuesday. Messi left his seat at the Wanda Metropolitano stadium immediately after the sixth goal went in.

"Messi has a bit of discomfort but we think it's nothing important. We're relaxed," Valverde said. "Argentina only lost a friendly. The World Cup hasn't started yet and not all our players will be able to win it."

Barca are still missing midfield anchor Sergio Busquets with a toe problem, while left back Lucas Digne is out for three weeks with a muscle injury sustained on international duty with France.

Venus stunned by Collins

AFP, Miami

Danielle Collins produced the performance of a lifetime and pulled off an almighty shock at the WTA Miami Open on Wednesday, sending Venus Williams crashing out 6-2, 6-3 to reach the semi-finals.

It was an amazing effort from a 24-year-old qualifier in just her second season as a professional and her debut appearance at Key Biscayne.

This was the first time in two attempts Collins has beaten a top 10 player, and even the crestfallen world number eight Williams would find it impossible to admit Collins didn't deserve to seal a meeting with French Open champion Jelena Ostapenko on Thursday for a place in Saturday's final.

"The first time I saw Venus in the locker room I nearly cried," said a delighted Collins in an on-court interview. "She has been my favourite player so I am finding it difficult to wrap my head around this."

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:

BCB president sees huge potential for women in sports
Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan spoke at the Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) event yesterday and called for more coverage of women in sports. Speaking at the event, the BCB president reiterated that cricket has gained popularity in Bangladesh and the credit goes not only to the cricketers who are inspiring children to go out there and play but also reporters who cover the sports.



Kane could face Chelsea, says Pochettino
Tottenham striker Harry Kane could face Chelsea in a crucial Premier League encounter on Sunday after a quicker than expected recovery from an ankle ligament injury, Spurs manager Mauricio Pochettino said. The 24-year-old England marksman, who has 31 goals to his credit this term, injured his ankle last month against Bournemouth and wasn't expected to return to training until April.



Messi's dressing room message after Argentina defeat
Following Argentina's humiliation at the hands of Spain at Atletico Madrid's Wanda Metropolitano stadium, Lionel Messi ushered the team to come through as a team. Messi, not one to show an excessive amount of emotion, was visibly saddened by the image of Argentina being toyed with and even left for the dressing room early before the game ended. After the 6-1 hammering however, Messi chose to get vocal as he went down to the dressing room to lift the spirit of his teammates.



AC Milan to reward Gattuso with new contract
AC Milan have confirmed that coach Gennaro Gattuso will be rewarded with a new contract this Easter. Gattuso, the club's former youth team coach, took over the seven-time European champions from Vincenzo Montella last November and has rekindled the club's season as they sit within the Europa League spots and with hopes of qualifying for the Champions League.



'It wasn't me': Nainggolan handed one-month drink-drive ban
Belgian international Radja Nainggolan was banned from driving for a month on Wednesday and fined 1,600 euros after being found guilty of drink-driving last year, but the Belgian claims he wasn't the one behind the wheel.



Salah sold cheap due to lack of 'Neymar effect'
AS Roma sporting director Monchi conceded that Egyptian striker Mohamed Salah had been sold on the cheap to Liverpool for 40 million euros before "the Neymar effect" transformed the market.



ইসলামী ব্যাংক
বাংলাদেশ লিমিটেড
ইসলামী শরী'আহ মোতাবেক পরিচালিত

ইসলামী ব্যাংক বাংলাদেশ লিমিটেড
কল্যাণমুখী ব্যাংকিং-এর

৩০ বছর

সোয়া কোটি গ্রাহকের আস্থায়
সঙ্গী অপ্রতিরোধ্য অগ্রযাত্রায়

স্বল্পমূল্য দেশের অবস্থান থেকে উত্তরণের যোগ্যতা অর্জন করেছে বাংলাদেশ।
এ অপ্রতিরোধ্য অগ্রযাত্রায় গত ৩৫ বছর ব্যাংকিং সেবার মাধ্যমে দেশের উন্নয়নে সহযোগী হতে পেরে আমরা গর্বিত।
প্রতিষ্ঠা বার্ষিকীর এই শুভক্ষণে সরকার, নিয়ন্ত্রক সংস্থা, শেয়ারহোল্ডার, গ্রাহক ও শুভানুধ্যায়ীদের জানাই আন্তরিক কৃতজ্ঞতা ও শুভেচ্ছা।