



Bangladesh footballers were hard in training yesterday at the Bangabandhu National Stadium where they will take on Laos in the second leg of their first-round joint qualifiers for the 2022 World Cup and 2023 Asian Cup. Bangladesh won the first leg 1-0. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Booters thinking only of victory

Bangladesh take on Laos in Dhaka today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh are looking forward to a positive result against Laos in today's encounter of Joint Qualifiers (Round-1) for 2022 FIFA World Cup and 2023 Asian Cup with the aim of prolonging their FIFA/AFC engagement.

Bangladesh have an edge over visiting Laos, thanks to a 1-0 away win, and a win or a draw in Dhaka would put the men in red and green into 40-team qualification round, ensuring at least eight more international matches in group stages over the next one year. However, an aggregate defeat to Laos will throw Bangladesh out of AFC/FIFA-sanctioned international matches for nearly two-and-half years.

The Bangladesh players are well aware of the consequences and they are apparently well prepared for today's match, which will kick

off at 7:00pm at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

"I'm not thinking of the future rather I am thinking of tomorrow's match. Everybody in the squad knows it is an important match because if we can't go through, we can't play international matches for two to three years. Every player is motivated to perform," captain Jamal Bhuiyan said at a pre-match confere at the BFF House yesterday.

The match is not expected to be an easy one for Jamal & Co after they faced stiff challenge in the away match against Laos. However, head-to-head record gives Bangladesh the edge as they won twice, drew one and lost one in the four previous four meetings between the two teams.

"First match was tough for us, especially in the first half. In the second half we played a little better. If we look at all other away matches, visiting teams lost but only we won our away match, so credit goes to us. In tomorrow's match, they

[Laos] are going to attack us, so we have to be cautious from the first minute," warned Jamal.

Bangladesh can get inspiration from the last two meetings in which they managed to beat Laos by 1-0 margin and this time they are playing in their familiar ground in front of home crowd.

Putting behind all the mistakes of the away match, Bangladesh coach Jamie Day wants a bold start from his men to leave the ground with another win.

"We want to start tomorrow's match on the front foot with good tempo that carry to the last minute. We have an advantage and we want to use it. We have to use our crowd at home; it is our stadium, it is our country, so we need to take the game to the last minute. Even though it is not going to be an easy task, I think we need to put the pressure on them in the first half and we need to score early," Day said.

"We are going to play on

the back of a 1-0 win which is a positive thing, but I think we need to play our game, not be complacent. The boys have worked hard in the last couple of days. We are not going to play the match for draw and try to make the game comfortable. We want to score goals. We want to make sure not to be complacent, not nervous like the first half of the first leg, so we want to enjoy the occasion and hopefully perform well and win the game," Day said, hinting that he may bring a couple of changes in the starting eleven.

The 39-year-old coach is also planning on how to stop set-pieces from Laos, who really put Bangladesh under tremendous pressure from free-kicks and corners kicks in the first half. The English coach wants his charges to make less mistakes around the danger zone and wants his forwards to capitalise on the vacant space in the Laos defence when they come all-out for goals.

Archers improve in Netherlands

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladeshi archers improved their performance in Hyundai World Archery Championships by advancing into the elimination round of men's recurve individual event, which started in Netherlands yesterday.

Top archer Ruman Sana finished 20th out of 200 archers with a score of 676 points, which was 21 points more than he scored in World Cup in Shanghai in May. Hakim Ahmed Rubel and Tamimul Islam, too, bettered their score by scoring 662 and 659 points to finish 59th and 67th respectively as some 104 archers moved into the elimination round.

Ruman will face 93rd-ranked Thomas Rufer of Switzerland. Rubel will play against 54th-ranked Alexander Wise of England while Tamimul will square off against 46th-ranked Steve Wijler of Netherlands in the first matches of qualification round.

Bangladesh, comprising Ruman, Rubel and Tamimul, also moved into the elimination round of men's recurve team event after finishing 16th out of 55 teams with a score of 1997 points as only 24 teams got tickets to play the elimination round. Bangladesh will play against 17th-ranked Spain in the first match of elimination round. Bangladesh played in the bronze medal match in World Cup in Shanghai in May.

Portugal crowned champions

AFF, Porto

Portugal added the inaugural Nations League title to their Euro 2016 triumph as Goncalo Guedes's strike on the hour won an underwhelming final 1-0 against the Netherlands in Porto on Sunday.

The Dutch defensive pairing of Virgil van Dijk and Matthijs de Ligt largely kept Cristiano Ronaldo quiet, but Valencia winger Guedes proved the match winner as his shot had too much power for Jasper Cillessen in the Netherlands goal.

"Thank god things have gone well for the national team in recent years. Portugal has won important things like Euro 2016 and now the League of Nations," said Ronaldo.

"It may seem like an easy job but it's hard, it takes a lot of dedication and willingness. I think the players deserve to be congratulated."



YUVRAJ RETIRES

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DAY'S EVENTS

WORLD CUP QUALIFIER BANGLADESH V LAOS
TIME: 7:00PM
VENUE: BNS, DHAKA

WHAT TO WATCH

BANGLA TV
WORLD CUP QUALIFIER BANGLADESH V LAOS
LIVE FROM 7:00PM

GTV, BTV & MAASRANGA
ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP BANGLADESH V SRI LANKA
LIVE FROM 3:30PM

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