

DE LIGT AGREES TO JOIN JUVENTUS

Defender Matthijs de Ligt has agreed to join Juventus, Dutch and Italian media reported on Monday, but it was not clear whether the Turin club had yet agreed a fee with Ajax. Reports said that the 19-year-old Dutch international, who captained Ajax to the semifinals of the Champions League, had agreed personal terms with Juventus and would arrive in Turin on Tuesday and undergo a medical on Wednesday. Media in Italy said Juventus would pay Ajax of Amsterdam 75 million euros (\$85 million). De Ligt has been linked with many of Europe's leading clubs after his impressive play for resurgent Ajax and Netherland teams last season.

- AFP



DRAW FOR WORLD CUP, ASIAN CUP

Booters will learn their opponents today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh national football team will learn their fate today as to which teams they would get to play over the next one year in their second-round joint qualifiers for the Qatar 2022 World Cup and China 2023 Asian Cup.

The draw for the top 40 nations of Asia will be held today at the Malaysia headquarters of Asian Football Confederation (AFC) at 3:00pm Bangladesh time.

The 40 teams have been pitted in five pots depending upon the June, 2019 FIFA Ranking, with Bangladesh in Pot 5 due to their low ranking. The draw will see eight groups, with each group featuring five teams and one team picked from each pot.

The eight champion teams and four best runners-up teams will go into the third round of World Cup qualifying while sealing their Asian Cup berth right away.

The remaining 28 teams will either go

to the third round of Asian Cup qualifiers or go through play-offs to get into the third round depending on the position in the group.

The Bangladesh team will get to play eight matches against four teams from the four other pots, on home and away basis, with the matches scheduled to be held between September 5, 2019 and June 9, 2020.

Bangladesh beat Laos 1-0 on aggregate in the first round of the qualifiers last month to become one of the six teams to join the 34 top teams for the second round of the qualifiers, which serves as a joint platform for both the World Cup and the Asian Cup.

In the last edition of these qualifiers, Bangladesh started from the second round of qualifiers due to their relatively better ranking, and played eight matches in second round of qualifying before playing four more matches - two double-legged playoffs. The second of those two playoffs was against Bhutan where a defeat for the men in red and green ended their qualification campaign.

INDOOR ASIA CUP BD hammered by Iran

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh were handed an 8-0 hammering by seven-time defending champions Iran in their second match of the 8th Indoor Hockey Asia Cup in Chonburi, Thailand yesterday.

Bangladesh, who conceded in the very first minute of the game, went on to trail by four goals at the end of the first half. After the resumption, Bangladesh -- playing in an indoor six-a-side tournament for the first time -- conceded four more goals.

This is Bangladesh's second defeat on the trot after being at the receiving end of a 6-0 defeat against Malaysia in their first game of the tournament.

Bangladesh may still make it to the seventh-place decider if the debutants get their first victory of the tournament when they face Philippine at the same venue today.

'Benitez exit a surprise'

AFP, Nanjing



Newcastle United midfielder Matt Ritchie said on Tuesday that he was "surprised" and "disappointed" to see manager Rafael Benitez leave the Premier League crisis club.

Newcastle have approached Steve Bruce over the vacancy and the former Manchester United defender has reportedly resigned as manager of Sheffield Wednesday.

But the time is ticking down to Newcastle's Premier League opener on August 11 and the club has lost key players, while also in limbo over the managerial hot seat.

Newcastle fans were furious that hated club owner Mike Ashley failed to convince the hugely popular Benitez to stay, and the Spaniard has since moved to China as coach of Dalian Yifang.

Newcastle are now among the favourites for relegation -- Benitez was widely praised for steering the northeast club to 13th last term.

Speaking in Nanjing ahead of the Premier League Asia Trophy, the 29-year-old Ritchie said: "To see the manager leave was disappointing because he had a good reign with the club.

"But it was a decision made between the manager and the club owners so it's out of our hands.

"Now we have to look forward to a new manager and a new season."

"I was surprised, I thought he was going to stay," Ritchie said.



Mohammedan striker Toklish Ahmed celebrates one of his two goals as Abahani defenders reflect on the goal during their Bangladesh Premier League fixture at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. (Inset) Long-serving midfielder Enamul Haque Sharif poses with his wife and daughter during his farewell prior to the match.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

4-star MSC dent Abahani's hopes

SPORTS REPORTER



Mohammedan produced the most extraordinary result of this season's Bangladesh Premier League yesterday when the relegation-threatened side thrashed defending champions Abahani 4-0 at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

The Black and Whites, coming into the match with the ignominy of a record number of losses in professional football league history following last week's 2-1 defeat against Sheikh Russel, completely outplayed arch-rivals Abahani to register their first win over the Dhanmondi giants since May, 2015.

Two goals from former national striker Toklish Ahmed in the first half followed by a goal each from Souleymane Diabate and Zahid Hasan Emily gave the Black and Whites a much-needed win while all but ending the Sky Blues' hopes of a title defence.

The match started on a rain-soaked pitch following a hearty farewell to long-serving Mohammedan midfielder Enamul Haque Sharif in the presence of his family members. Even though the former national midfielder was not named in the

squad, he must have been happy to see his team come out of their doldrums with a comprehensive win over their fiercest rivals.

Toklish opened the scoring in the 17th minute with a strike from the middle of the box as Abahani goalkeeper Shahidul Alam was out of position. The former national team striker doubled Mohammedan's advantage with a superb strike following a counter attack, with his curling effort from the top of the box taking a deflection off an Abahani defender on its way to goal in the second minute of stoppage time of the first half. Diabate made it 3-0 five minutes into the second half with a drive from inside the box before setting up Emily for a diving header at the far post 15 minutes later.

The win took Mohammedan to relative safety, lifting them to ninth place in the 13-team table with 20 points from 20 matches, while Abahani, who have three league matches left, remain seven points behind Bashundhara Kings -- who have a game in hand. This was the most exciting match on a day which saw 16 goals scored in four other matches across the country.

KINGS POUND HAPLESS BROTHERS

League leaders Bashundhara Kings

handed a 5-0 defeat to strugglers Brothers Union at the Sheikh Kamal Stadium in Nilphamari, with Matin Mia scoring a hatrick while Mohammad Ibrahim and Alamgir Kabir Rana scored a goal apiece. Ibrahim gave the hosts a 31st minute lead before Matin scored his first seven minutes later to give the newcomers a 2-0 lead in the first half. Matin scored two more in the 48th and 67th minutes before Rana wrapped up victory two minutes into stoppage time, raising Bashundhara's tally to 58 points from 20 matches. Brothers, on the other hand, remained second from bottom with 16 points from 20 matches.

SK RUSSEL THUMP NOFEL
Third-placed Sheikh Russel, too, notched a big victory, beating NoFEL SC 4-0 at the Shaheed Bulu Stadium in Noakhali. Bipul Ahmed gave the visitors a 24th-minute lead before Raphael Odoyin bagged a hatrick, scoring in the 44th, 81st and 85th minutes as his side regained third position. The win took Sheikh Russel to 42 points, one ahead of Saif SC but nine behind second-placed Abahani.

RAHMATGANJ HEAP MORE MISERY ON TEAM BJMC

Rahmatganj heaped more pressure

on bottom-placed Team BJMC while allaying their own fears of relegation with a hard-fought 3-2 win at the Bangabandhu National Stadium. Goals from Siyo Zunapio and Rakibul Islam gave the hosts a 2-0 lead in the first half before Zunapio added a second four minutes after the restart to all but ensure a comfortable victory. However, Mohammad Al Amin reduced the margin for Team BJMC in the 57th minute before Mukhamedov made things interesting with the team's second goal in the 71st minute. But Team BJMC failed to find an equaliser and remained firmly rooted to the bottom with only eight points from 20 games, with both Brothers and Rahmatganj -- their nearest teams -- eight points ahead.

MUKTIJODDHA HOLD ARAMBAGH

Muktijoddha Sangsad held Arambagh to a 1-1 draw in their home venue at the Sheikh Fazlul Haque Moni Stadium in Gopalganj to move to eighth position with 22 points from 20 matches. Arambagh remain fifth with 27 points from 21 matches. Paul Emile gave visitors Arambagh the lead in the 66th minute but Yamoussa Camara equalised for Muktijoddha 18 minutes later.



Wimbledon champion Simona Halep of Romania takes a selfie with fans after her arrival at the Henry Coanda International Airport in Bucharest on Monday.

PHOTO: AFP

Solskjaer confident De Gea will stay

AFP, Perth

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer said Tuesday he was optimistic that goalkeeper David De Gea would sign a new deal to remain at Old Trafford as Manchester United prepared to face old rivals Leeds in Perth.

United's pre-season tour of Australia has been overshadowed speculation over the futures of several stars, including De Gea who is in the last year of his contract and has been linked with French champions Paris Saint-Germain.

The Spaniard is reportedly close to signing a new five-year deal with United worth in excess of £350,000 a week that would make him the

highest paid goalkeeper in the world.

De Gea was rested from United's pre-season opener against Perth Glory on Saturday but will line up against Leeds on Wednesday to wrap up the Red Devils' 10-day visit to the Western Australia city.

"He'll play and hopefully we can agree (on a new deal) with David, as I've said a few times," Solskjaer told reporters.



Disappointing end to Ruman's Olympic rehearsal

SPORTS REPORTER

World Archery Championships bronze-medallist Ruman Sana lost by 7-3 set points against Kazakhstan's Duzelbayev Sultan in the 1/32-round match of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics Test Event yesterday.

After losing the first set by 23-26 points, Ruman fought back in the next two sets as the 24-year-old drew the next set by 26-26 points before losing the third set by single point with the score being 28-29 to Sultan's favour. Ruman could only win a single set in the match when he edged Sultan by 28-27 points in the fourth set but ended up losing the final set by 26-27 points.

Ruman is scheduled to return to Dhaka, along with coach Martin Frederick, on July 19.

Lampard has confidence on his charges

REUTERS, Tokyo



Chelsea are facing a transfer ban but new manager Frank Lampard is confident the Premier League club do not need to bring in new players to taste success.

Lampard, who is the club's record goalscorer from his time as a player, was appointed Chelsea's new manager this month.

With Chelsea unable to add new players to their squad following a FIFA ban, Lampard has been tasked with improving the players he inherited from predecessor Mauricio Sarri and promoting young players from the club's academy.

Speaking shortly after arriving in Yokohama on Tuesday for the Japan leg of the club's pre-season tour, Lampard said he was impressed with the attitude of his new charges.

"I think I have inherited very good players," Lampard said ahead of Chelsea's pre-season friendly against Japanese champions Kawasaki Frontale on Friday.

"We can't bring in any new players, we know that this year. But I don't need new players. I am very happy with the squad and determined for us to be successful.

"I have my own way that I want to work with the players and I have to say, in the one week we have been training, I have been very happy with the attitude and the qualities of the players."

Friday's clash with Kawasaki will be the third game of Lampard's tenure, with Chelsea having secured a win and a draw during two pre-season matches in Ireland last week.

Lampard will be assisted at Stamford Bridge by former academy coach Jody Morris and the pair are expected to utilise many of the players who have flourished in Chelsea's youth teams and are on loan to other clubs.

Lampard worked with midfielder Mason Mount while he was on loan at Derby



County last season and the 20-year-old signed a new five-year contract on Monday.

Mount, along with striker Tammy Abraham and midfielders Ruben Loftus-Cheek and Callum Hudson-Odoi, have Chelsea fans salivating at the prospect of a young, English core prospering under Lampard.

However, Lampard, who made 648 appearances for Chelsea and scored a club record 211 goals between 2001 and 2014, warned his young players that the hard work has just started.

"Now we have a batch of them that are fighting to get into the first team," Lampard said of his young players.