

Bangladesh Premier League
 Sheikh Jamal v Ctg Abahani
 Time: 4:00pm
 Abahani v Saif SC
 Time: 7:00pm
 Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium, Dhaka

Arambagh v Rahmatganj
 Time: 4:00pm
 Venue: Rofique Uddin Bhuiyan Stadium, Mymensingh
 Sheikh Russel v Bashundhara Kings
 Time: 7:00pm
 Venue: Sylhet District Stadium, Sylhet

DAY'S EVENT

TREZEGUET STOPPED FOR DRINK DRIVING

Former France striker David Trezeguet faces legal action in Italy after being stopped by police for drink driving in Turin. The 41-year-old, who scored the winning goal for France at Euro 2000, was pulled over shortly before 1:00 am Thursday (2300 GMT Wednesday), returning from an evening out with friends. According to media reports, Trezeguet initially refused to take the breathalyser test. When he did take the test it showed a blood alcohol level of 1.5-1.7 grams per litre -- the legal limit in Italy is under 0.5g/l. Trezeguet played 71 times for France and spent a decade as a player with Juventus, for whom he is now a club ambassador.

-AFP



JFA U-14 women's football ends in controversy, farce

ATIQUÉ ANAM



Rangpur became the new champions of the JFA Cup U-14 National Women's Football Championship, beating three-time champions Mymensingh 4-2 in tiebreakers after the final and, in essence, the tournament itself descended into controversy and became a farce at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

The incidents which took place at the stadium in Kamalapur yesterday posed a serious question mark over the professionalism and quality of the event and officials involved.

The final saw three-time champions Mymensingh take on Rangpur despite Mymensingh losing their semifinal against Thakurgaon on Thursday. Following their defeat, Mymensingh District Football Association president Delwar Hossain Mukul lodged a complaint with the Women's Football Wing of the Bangladesh Football Federation, allegedly with proof that Thakurgaon fielded four players who have appeared in two previous editions of this championship.

The bylaws of the championship state that no player will be eligible to take part for more than two times. BFF, upon reviewing the complaint, deemed the complaint against Thakurgaon to be valid, hence replacing Thakurgaon with Mymensingh in the final.

"The bylaws state that no player can take part in the championship more than two times. Mymensingh team lodged a complaint with us with proof in this regard. We also investigated things from our archive and found those allegations to be true. Thakurgaon has to accept the decision," BFF Women's Wing chairman Mahfuz Akter Kiron, who was present as chief guest during the final, told reporters.

"We sent the bylaws to the teams three months prior to the start of the championship. I believe teams have used illegal means in the preliminary rounds. But since no one brought that into our notice, we didn't take it into cognizance. But once it was brought to our notice, we took action," Kiron added.

While Thakurgaon coach Sagu Murmu, himself, alleged that the Mymensingh team too used such unlawful measures in fielding overaged players, the BFF officials claimed that since no formal complaint was lodged against Mymensingh, they could not take any such action.

Mymensingh DFA president Delwar Hossain Mukul refuted the allegation against his team while saying that he did not lodge a complaint against Thakurgaon before the semifinal because 'he did not feel obliged to do so' at that time.

As the final kicked off between Mymensingh and Rangpur, the Thakurgaon players were wailing, begging for a reprieve from the BFF regarding their expulsion from the final, setting a scene of great distress and chaos at the



PHOTO: COLLECTED

Thakurgaon players wail around the manager after their team were expelled from the final of the JFA U-14 National Women's Football Championship at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

match venue.

However, that was not the end of the chaos for the day as the final, which Rangpur won 4-2 on penalties after the regulation 70 minutes ended goalless, saw its fair share of amateurish match officiating.

After Rangpur had converted two of their first three penalties while Mymensingh managed to score only one out of their first three, the referee blew the final whistle, judging Rangpur the winners. It was only after insistence from the journalists and BFF officials that the referee realised her mistake, calling back the players to take the remaining spot-kicks. And then when Rangpur took an unassailable 4-2 lead, with Mymensingh having one shot remaining, the apparently clueless match officials

incredibly allowed the Mymensingh team to take the remaining spot kick.

The JFA under-14 National Women's Football Championship, run under funding from the Japan Football Association for the last five years, has been a strong pipeline for the age-group teams and senior women's team. But at a time when the game's local governing body is churning out coaches and match officials regularly in numbers through courses under AFC guidelines and when flouting with age is seriously frowned upon locally and met with heavy suspensions worldwide, this incident would raise serious questions about the success of the game's local governing body in its pursuit to produce quality young players and match officials.

Mohammedan out of trouble

SPORTS REPORTER



Falling giants Mohammedan all but escaped relegation in the Bangladesh Premier League after a comfortable 3-1 win over NoFeL SC at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The Black and Whites were staring at relegation at the end of the first leg, staying just above bottom-placed Team BJMC with only six points from 12 matches. However, after yesterday's result, they are almost in safe zone in eighth position of the 13-team league with 23 points from 21 matches. The Motijheel-based outfit still need another three points from three matches to mathematically ensure they will be out of reach of the bottom two teams.

Following their own record-equalling 4-0 victory over archrivals Abahani, Mohammedan smashed newcomers NoFeL SC, who had won the first-leg meeting 1-0, with striking duo Souleymane Diabate and Toklish Ahmed sharing the three goals.

Mohammedan took the lead in the ninth minute, with Diabate beating NoFeL goalkeeper Saiful Islam Khan with his second effort before Toklish headed in a free-kick from Zahid Hasan Emily in the 13th minute.

NoFeL SC hit back in the 17th minute when Ashrafur Islam chipped the ball over Mohammedan's advancing goalkeeper Pappu Hossain from the right flank. However, Diabate made sure of Mohammedan's sixth win after converting a spot-kick in the 42nd minute following a push on him by opposition defender Eleta Benjamin.

It is interesting to note the rise of struggling Mohammedan, especially in the second leg under the guidance of English coach Sean Lane, who helped the Motijheel-based outfit secure 17 points from nine matches with five victories along with two draws and two defeats.

Before Lane's arrival, Emily, Toklish, Yousuf Sifat and other senior players used to warm the bench watching the team suffer consecutive defeats, but things changed since then as Lane drafted these players into the starting eleven in each of the second leg matches, and getting immediate results.

"I don't have any idea why they did not play matches of the first leg, but I felt they are the best choices in the starting eleven. Emily is still a very clever player and intelligent with the ball. Sifat has a nice left foot while Toklish is a goal-scorer. They needed some confidence and I ensured that," Lane said, adding that those players are helping him in training more than he asks of them.

"The players are giving everything and working hard in training. They even lost weight from two to seven kilograms. They are now more fit than before and I am pleased with them," said Lane, who believes his side should have got five more points in the second leg against Brothers Union and Sheikh Jamal DC.

Meanwhile, in the day's other match, Brothers Union secured a valuable point playing out a goalless draw against visitors Muktiyoddha Sangsad. With the outcome, Muktiyoddha Sangsad raised their tally to 23 points from 21 outings to stay behind Mohammedan while Brothers Union leapfrogged to 11th position with 17 points from 21 matches.

Kiron made head of AFC committee

SPORTS REPORTER

Mahfuz Akter Kiron, executive member of Bangladesh Football Federation, has been appointed the chairperson of AFC Women's Football Committee for the term of 2019 to 2023, said BFF press release yesterday.

Kiron, who is also executive member of Asian Football Confederation and FIFA, has been working as the chairperson of BFF Women's Football Committee since 2016.

"We are certain that with your experience, expertise and background, your support will be greatly beneficial to the AFC when carrying out the functions and duties of the committee," AFC general secretary Dato Windsor John stated in the appointment letter.

Month-long training in Iran for volleyball team

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh volleyball team is scheduled to leave for Tehran in the early hours of today for a month-long training camp as part of their preparation for Asian Senior Men's Central Zone Volleyball Championship, which will be held in Nepal from August 18 to 25.

Two local coaches and one manager will accompany the 18-member squad which will train under Iranian coach Alipour Aroji, who previously arranged such training camps in Iran for the Bangladesh team with assistance from Bangladesh Volleyball Federation.

Captain Horosit Biswas was ecstatic to get this opportunity to train in Iran where the team is supposed to play at least 15 warm-up matches before travelling to Nepal.

"We trained in Iran before and we are happy to get another opportunity to train there. This type of preparation will help us a lot before the championship because we don't play international matches which teams like Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and

Kyrgyzstan do," the captain told The Daily Star yesterday.

"We will travel to Nepal to keep the tempo intact. We want to take the spirit of our preparation in Iran into the championship because we will face some tough teams in Nepal. Our target will be to regain the title which we lost to Turkmenistan in the last edition held in Bangladesh in 2018," said Horosit.

The captain informed that they will stay at Azad Complex in Tehran where Iranian national volleyball team train too. The team will play 15 practice matches against different clubs, Iran U-19 team, University teams and Air Force team during their month-long training.

Horosit also informed that seven new players from Bangladesh Army, Bangladesh Navy and Bangladesh Air Force have been drafted in, which has increased the strength of the squad.

Hosts Nepal, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan will take part in Asian Senior Men's Central Zone Volleyball Championship.

Solskjaer targets more signings

AFP, Singapore



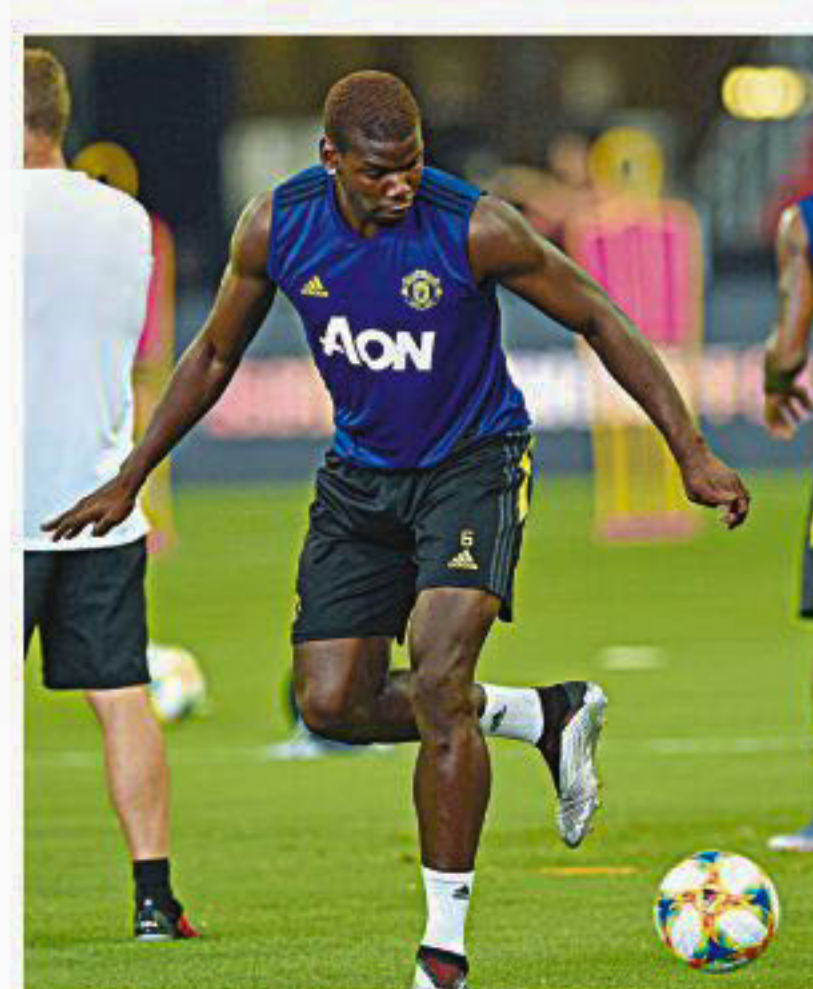
Manchester United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer said Friday the club is working on one or two more signings as he hopes to hit the ground running in the new campaign after stuttering badly towards the end of last season.

Solskjaer enjoyed a stellar start after replacing Jose Mourinho in December, winning 10 and drawing two of his first 12 Premier League fixtures.

But a stunning slump in form saw the side finish sixth in the standings, 32 points behind champions Manchester City.

Aware that his imbalanced squad needed a major overhaul, Solskjaer has already recruited midfielder Daniel James and fullback Aaron Wan-Bissaka, with the club strongly linked to England central defender Harry Maguire and Portuguese playmaker Bruno Fernandes.

"We are working on one or two (signings). My objective here though is we have got to get ready for the games and the training sessions," the



Manchester United midfielder Paul Pogba tries a trick during a training session in Singapore yesterday ahead of their International Champions Cup match against Inter Milan.

PHOTO: AFP

Norwegian told reporters in Singapore on the eve of a pre-season friendly against Inter Milan.

"We are working on putting a squad together which can compete, we have

lots of ways which can play. The Premier League is a very competitive league. Our aim is to focus on ourselves, we have to be better and be our only focus. I am sure we will get closer to the top."

United have already seen midfielder Ander Herrera depart for Paris Saint-Germain and while question marks remain over the futures of Belgian striker Romelu Lukaku and the talismanic Paul Pogba, Solskjaer is continuing to prepare for the new season with the Frenchman central to his plans.

"I am looking to get everyone to get their form back to when we first came in. It is not just about Pogba, it is about all of us as a team," he said, adding that Lukaku was not fit to face the Italian side on Saturday.

"Everyone has been spot on in pre-season in training and the games. I have been very encouraged."

"The start of the season is important, I don't think many of these players have had a pre-season like this in many years. In the first eight or 10 games, you don't win anything but you can lose the chance to win anything."

Eriksen trains alone

REUTERS, Singapore

Tottenham Hotspur midfielder Christian Eriksen trained on his own on Friday ahead of a pre-season match against Juventus in Singapore, adding to speculation the Real Madrid and Barcelona target could leave the London club.

Eriksen is entering the final year of his contract at Tottenham and could leave for free next summer.

Last month, the Denmark international said he was ready to take on a new challenge. Argentine manager Mauricio Pochettino told reporters Eriksen trained alone due to a "minor surgery" the playmaker underwent after Tottenham lost 2-0 in the Champions League final.



Tottenham Hotspur playmaker Christian Eriksen warms up during a training session in Singapore yesterday ahead of the International Champions Cup.

PHOTO: AFP

De Ligt wanted to join Juventus

REUTERS, Turin



Juventus defender Matthijs de Ligt had made up his mind to join the Serie A champions even before Cristiano Ronaldo asked him about a potential move to Italy, the teenager said on Friday.

Juventus announced the signing of the 19-year-old on Thursday, landing one of the most sought-after young players in world soccer from Ajax Amsterdam for 75 million euros (\$84.39 million).

The Netherlands international said last month that he had been asked by Portugal's Ronaldo following the Nations League final about linking up in Turin.

"After the final I was already sure I wanted to join Juve ... it was a big compliment to have Ronaldo ask me to join ... but it didn't make the difference," De Ligt told reporters. "I spoke to (manager) Maurizio Sarri

just to get to know each other. He was one of the reasons I wanted to join here, I've heard a lot of good things about him and I like his footballing philosophy and how he prepares his defence."

De Ligt, who captained his former club in their thrilling run to the Champions League semifinals last season, said he did not feel any additional pressure after becoming one of the most expensive defenders in the world.

"Pressure is normal in football. For me it's not a problem. I'll show what I'm capable of on the pitch," he added.

"I'm 19, I can still improve and I want to do that. It's important to work hard every day and to learn and I hope to become a better player."

"Juventus is a great forward step for me. In Holland there's a lot of building from the back and defending high up the pitch. Italy is more about zonal marking and defending together."

US Open to be richest Slam ever

AFP, New York

This year's US Open will be the richest Grand Slam tennis tournament in history after organisers on Thursday announced prize money for the event had been increased to \$57 million.

The US Tennis Association said the winners of the men's and women's singles titles at the tournament will receive a record payday of \$3.85 million while the men's and women's doubles champions would receive \$740,000.

The purse is an eight percent increase over 2018 prize money, and enables the US Open offer the highest payouts for each round of any of the four tennis majors.