

MAN CITY TO BUILD KOMPANY STATUE

Manchester City will honour former captain Vincent Kompany with a statue of the Belgian outside the club's Etihad stadium. Kompany will miss playing in his City testimonial on Wednesday due to a hamstring injury, but was in attendance as the club also named a road at their training base after the centre-back. "The road connecting the City Football Academy youth and community pitches with the Club's First Team Centre has been renamed 'Vincent Kompany Crescent' and is marked by a mosaic inspired by Vincent's unforgettable goal-celebration in the 2012 Manchester derby," City said in a statement. City failed to replace Kompany in the summer transfer window and are now short at centre-back with Aymeric Laporte facing a lengthy spell out injured.

—AFP



31 records set on final day

SPORTS REPORTER



The Saif Powertec 33rd National Age-group Swimming and Diving Championships came to a close at the Syed Nazrul Islam National Swimming Complex in Mirpur yesterday.

Throughout the course of the tournament a total of 31 national records were set, eight of which were produced on the final day.

BKSP dominated the medals tally, finishing on top with 51 gold, 58 silver and 35 bronze medals while Bangladesh Ansar came in second with 24 gold, 17 silver and 19 bronze medals.

BKSP's Mobarak Hossain, who hails from Kishoreganj, registered four national records and won seven gold medals to be rightfully adjudged the best swimmer in the boys' events. Bangladesh Ansar's Anny Khatun was the best performer in the girls' events, having produced a national record of her own while winning seven gold medals.

"I had a strong feeling that I could do something special this time since I worked hard in practice. I also produced good timings during training," said Mobarak, who participated in the 11-12 age-group events.

Mobarak was inspired to enter the sport

by his elder brother, Titu Mia, who is a former BKSP swimmer. Titu, now working with Bangladesh Army, helped a young Mobarak get admission to the BKSP in hopes of getting him a job with the service team.

"I want to be a good swimmer and win medals for the country," said the five-foot tall swimmer, who won five gold and one silver medal in the last edition of the championship in 2017.

Meanwhile Anny, who recently moved to Kushtia to live with her maternal grandparents following her father's passing just ahead of Eid-ul-Adha, was pleased with her results.

"I could not win any medals in the last championships but this time I practised well and won seven gold medals. I want to be a swimmer like [Mahfuza Akter] Shila apa," said Anny.

Before the championship even began, great focus was placed on members of the Bangladesh team who were selected through a talent hunt programmed called 'Bangladesh in search of best swimmer' and underwent a long-term training camp under the supervision of the Bangladesh Swimming Federation.

Of the 103 gold medals earned during the three-day meet, 55 gold medals went to those talented swimmers.

WOMEN'S JR HOCKEY
Bangladesh lose third match

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh under-21 hockey team suffered a 1-0 defeat against Hong Kong in their third match of the Air Asia Women's Junior Asia Cup in Singapore yesterday.

On the back of a historic 2-0 maiden win over Sri Lanka, Bangladesh took the field in hopes of notching a second successive victory but despite their spirited display in the first quarter, Bangladesh conceded the lead in the second.

SO Mei Ke separated the sides in the 27th minute through a field goal. The women in red and green then tried to pull one back but to no avail as they suffered their second defeat in three matches.

Bangladesh, now fourth on the six-team table, will play tomorrow's match against the third-placed Uzbekistan, who have four points from three matches.



The best performer in the girls' events, Bangladesh Ansar's Anny Khatun celebrates with her seven gold medals in the National Age-group Swimming and Diving Championships at the National Swimming Complex yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

Two weeks' rest for Booters

SPORTS REPORTER

The national football team have been given a two-week break ahead of next month's Joint Qualifiers for the 2022 World Cup and 2023 Asian Cup against Qatar and India. This decision was taken yesterday during a Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) National Teams Committee meeting.

The BFF elected to resume the residential camp from September 25, which means that the team will get two weeks to prepare ahead of their clash with Qatar on October 10 at the Bangabandhu National Stadium in Dhaka. Bangladesh will then travel to Kolkata for their third fixture, which will pit them against India on October 15.

"We felt that we don't need to have a longer camp now because the boys showed that they are fit enough and showed that their attitude was very good. For us, making the camp longer could have negative effects on the players both mentally and

physically," said head coach Jamie Day after meeting with the National Teams Committee at the BFF House.

"The timing of the camp is good for us. It gives us enough time to work on the players. It's not too long and I pretty much trust the players. I'm looking forward to the new camp as we will try to get some positive results in the upcoming matches," said the 39-year-old, who is scheduled to leave for England today.

National Teams Committee vice chairman and BFF vice president Tabith Awal informed that the national team will play two practice matches before hosting Qatar, seeing as the squad will leave for India just the day after.

"It was disappointing not to win against Afghanistan but we are satisfied with how the team performed as they showed a fighting spirit for the full 90 minutes. We are hopeful and confident that they will show more fight in the next matches and get some points," said Awal.

ASIA CUP ARCHERY

BD to contest in two finals

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh made it to the recurve men's team event final in the Asia Cup Archery: Stage-3 by beating Malaysia by 5-3 set points in Clark City, Philippines yesterday.

Earlier in the competition, the country's top archer, Ruman Sana, secured his place in the final of the recurve men's event.

The Bangladesh team, comprised of Ruman, Tamimul Islam and Hakib Ahmed Rubel, were trailing by 1-3 set points at one stage against the formidable Malaysia. However, Bangladesh came back strongly to win the following two sets and ensure a final berth against China.

In the quarterfinals, Bangladesh defeated Thailand by an identical 5-3 set point margin.

In the recurve mixed event, Bangladesh, featuring Sana and Beauty Roy, overcame Thailand 5-1 in the quarterfinals but went on to lose their semifinal clash with China 0-6, bringing an end to any hope of featuring in all three event finals. However, the mixed team will contend with Chinese Taipei for the bronze-medal.

The Bangladesh contingent, sponsored by Madhumati Bank, will play all three medal-deciding matches today.



Syed Mahboob (L), secretary general of Billiards & Snooker Federation and Showkat Aziz Russell, president of Gulshan Club Limited inaugurated the 15th National Billiards Championship at Gulshan Club yesterday. 72 participants from 13 social clubs are participating in the week-long tournament. PHOTO: STAR

'Barca is my home, but I want to win'

STAR SPORT DESK



Seemingly scorned by Barcelona's failure to sign Neymar in the summer, Lionel Messi gave a very cryptic message about his future, saying that although Barcelona was his home, he wanted to win.

His words ignited global interest and led to a flurry of headlines, although most cannot picture the Argentine anywhere other than in the blue and garnet of Barcelona, most of all due to the Argentine's loyalty.

Barcelona president Josep Maria Bartomeu recently confirmed that Messi had a clause in his contract which would allow him to leave for free at the end of the season. Gerard Pique also spoke about having knowledge of the clause, but both maintained that Messi would be going nowhere. The club's prize jewel, however, did not speak as clearly on the matter.

Speaking to Sport, Messi said when probed about his 'get-out clause': "I can't confirm anything because there are confidentiality agreements in our contracts. What I can say is that I want to be at Barcelona as long as possible. I've said throughout my career that this is my home. But I also don't want to have a long-term contract and only be here because of it. I want to be here because physically I'm fine, to play and be an important member of the squad. And as I said before, I need see there's a winning team because I want to keep winning things at this club. For me, money or a clause don't mean anything. Other things motivate me and the most important thing is having a winning team."

He added: "Obviously, I want to win and I want to win at this club. This is my home. I don't have

any intention of going anywhere but I want to keep competing and winning."

Much of the interview was dedicated to talk of Neymar, with Messi admitting that he did not know whether the board had done everything possible to pry the Brazilian away from PSG. Messi did admit that he would have loved to have Neymar back.

"I would have loved to have Neymar back. I understand those people who are against his return and it's understandable for what happened with Ney and the way that he left. But thinking about it on a sporting level, I personally think Neymar is one of the best players in the world and having him in our squad would increase our chances of achieving our objectives. But, in the end, it didn't happen and we have to only think about the squad we have and focus on our goals."

When asked about the board's attempts to lure Neymar away from Paris, Messi said: "To be honest, I don't know. I didn't have much information about how the negotiations were going to say whether or not Barcelona did everything possible."

"I don't know what happened with the board. I know that I spoke with Ney and he told me how things were going. He was desperate to come back. I don't know if the club really tried or not. What I do know, Neymar was hoping it would happen. I also understand it's very difficult to negotiate with PSG after all their previous back and forth issues with Barcelona. And it's difficult because Neymar is one of the best around. Negotiations are never easy. I can't offer an opinion because I don't know everything. I know what was published and what they said."



Messi also refused to say that the Barcelona squad was better than the last season, despite the signings of Antoine Griezmann and Frenkie de Jong. When asked about if the team had improved over last season, he said: "I don't know if it's better or not. Last year we had a very good squad as well. It's true that very important players have arrived and now we have greater depth, more variety, both in midfield and upfront. Next year will decide whether it's better or not. It depends on what we achieve."

The 32-year-old, who has made

plenty of headlines in tabloids for apparently always forcing his will on Barcelona, was also asked if he actually decided what happens at the club as reported once again this summer.

"I'm used to it by now. It isn't the first time I've heard that [I'm running the club] either. It's clear this isn't the case. The same thing is said about the national team. They claim I pick the players and the coaches or that my father does. I don't pay too much attention to it. I know what my role and the truth is," Messi, who is mockingly referred to

as 'the little dictator' by rival fans in light of such rumours, said.

When asked point-blank whether or not he controlled things, Messi responded: "Obviously not. I'm just another player. The only thing I want is to win and continue to lift titles. I also want to win another Champions League and give my best to the team, which is by playing football."

Messi, who has been out injured for Barcelona's opening games, said that he was not worried about the team's current form which has seen them win just one of three La Liga games. However, when asked if he would exchange La Liga title for Champions League glory, the winner in Messi came out again.

"No. When we start the season we always say the same thing that we want to win everything and try our best to achieve that. I hope we can settle in quickly, we want to win every title. But it's clear I would like to win the Champions League because it's been a long time since I last did that. As a club, and on a personal level, we must win the Champions League. But at the start of the season I wouldn't take one or the other. I want to win them both."

Finally, the Argentine was asked if he would take up Cristiano Ronaldo's offer of dinner. Messi said: "Yes, I don't have any problem with that. I've always said that I don't have any issue with him. We might not be friends because we've never shared a dressing room together but I always see him at award shows and there's no problem. We actually spoke with each other for quite a long time at the most recent show. I don't know if there will be a dinner because I don't know if our paths will cross for obvious reasons, each one of us has our own life and our own commitments. But obviously I would accept the invitation."

Buttler fifty keeps England afloat

AFP, London



Jos Buttler saved England's blushes on Thursday, counter-attacking against Australia to lift his side to 271-8 after they collapsed on the opening day of the fifth Ashes Test.

World Cup winners England, desperate to level the series at 2-2, have struggled to find consistency all series and contributed to their own downfall at the Oval, slipping from 170-3 to 226-8.

But Buttler, who did not look comfortable early on, dipped into his white-ball playbook, smashing paceman Josh Hazlewood for successive sixes as Jack Leach dug in at the other end.

Buttler ended the day 64 not out, while Leach was unbeaten on 10 but England will need to add runs on Friday on what looks like a good pitch for batting.

Australian all-rounder Mitchell Marsh claimed four wickets on his return to the side. Pat Cummins and Hazlewood were again impressive for the tourists.

Australia are seeking their first Ashes series win in England for 18 years.

Australia captain Tim Paine won the toss and put the home side in under grey skies. Joe Root then enjoyed astonishing good fortune as England reached 170-3.

The skipper was dropped three times but failed to make the most of his let offs, comprehensively bowled for 57 by Cummins shortly after tea.

Root has reached fifty 61 times in Tests but has gone on to reach three figures on just 16 occasions.

By contrast, Australia's former captain Steve Smith, who has dominated the Ashes with his bat, has reached fifty 52 times and made 26 hundreds -- a far better conversion rate.

- Root dropped -Root was dropped on 24 by Peter Siddle on the boundary. Then wicketkeeper Paine failed to cling on to a one-handed chance in front of David Warner at first slip. Both drops were off Cummins.

Shortly after lunch, with the ground now bathed in sunshine, the skipper had yet another reprieve when a diving Smith failed to hold on to a sharp chance at second slip off Siddle.

Root drove Hazlewood square of the wicket to bring up 7,000 Test runs in his 158th innings -- only three England players have reached the mark faster. But he eventually ran out of lives.

Earlier, opener Rory Burns (47) and Ben Stokes (20) were guilty of throwing their wickets away with misjudged shots as England's top order struggled again.