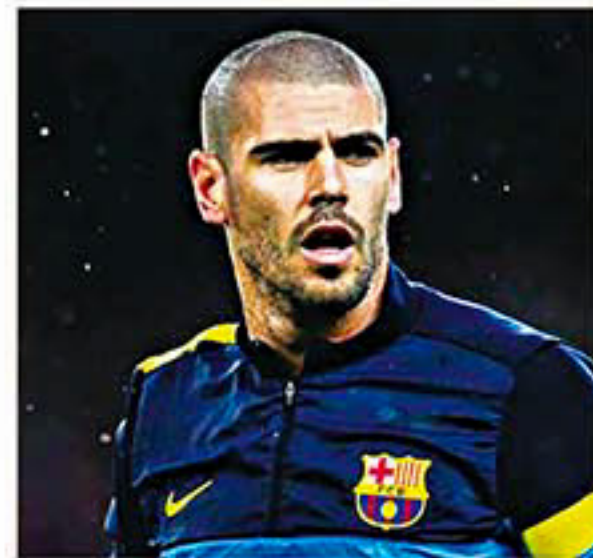


BARCA DISMISS YOUTH COACH VALDES

Barcelona have sacked Juvenil A head coach Victor Valdes with immediate effect, amid rumours of a bust-up with Patrick Kluivert behind the scenes. Valdes returned to Camp Nou to take charge of the U19s back in July, five years after ending his time at the club as a player. Widespread reports have suggested that Valdes and the club's director of youth, Kluivert, do not see eye to eye, with friction between the pair reaching boiling point over the last week. Valdes did not appear on the sidelines during Barca U19s' 2-1 win at Gimnastic de Tarragona on Saturday and he has been officially dismissed on Monday morning. Barcelona have released a statement on their website, which reads: "FC Barcelona has told Victor Valdes that he is no longer the coach of Juvenil A and belonging to the Club. Artiga Franc, until now coach of Juvenil B and in the Masia since 2010, becomes the coach of Juvenil A."

—AGENCIES



Juventus forward Paulo Dybala (R), who scored just four minutes into the match, celebrates with teammate Cristiano Ronaldo after the latter scored a goal during their Serie A encounter with Inter Milan at the San Siro Stadium in Milan yesterday. However, the ex-Real Madrid superstar had his goal disallowed.

Dybala, Higuain down Inter

AFP, Milan



Gonzalo Higuain scored the winner as Juventus inflicted a first Serie A defeat of the season on Inter Milan with a 2-1 victory which sent the defending champions top on Sunday.

Substitute Higuain slotted home on 80 minutes after fellow Argentine Paulo Dybala had opened the scoring in the fourth minute at the San Siro.

Another Argentine forward Lautaro Martinez pulled Inter Milan level from the spot on 18 minutes, but coach Antonio Conte lost in his first meeting against his former club since leaving Juve to take over the Italy national team in 2014.

Juventus moved one point ahead of Inter after seven games as they target a ninth consecutive title, and first under Maurizio Sarri.

Sarri started with Dybala and Federico Bernardeschi up front alongside Cristiano Ronaldo.

Higuain -- who also scored in Juventus's 3-0 Champions League win over Bayer Leverkusen during the week -- began on the bench.

The champions got off to a blistering start with Miralem Pjanic setting up Dybala who took Inter goalkeeper Samir Handanovic by surprise.

Ronaldo rattled the crossbar and then had a goal ruled out when Dybala was in an offside position.

But Inter got back on level terms when Juventus defender Matthijs de Ligt handled the ball, with Lautaro drilling past Wojciech Szczesny.

The hosts were hit with Stefano Sensi going off injured with Sarri making a double substitution after an hour bringing on in-form Higuain and Rodrigo Bentancur.

Ronaldo and Bentancur combined to send Higuain through for the winner, with Szczesny doing well to deny Matias Vecino as Inter desperately pushed forward for an equaliser.

"Congratulations to them, we'll roll up our sleeves now," added Conte whose side lost their midweek Champions League game to Barcelona 2-1.

PHOTO: AFP

Barca thump Sevilla 4-0

AFP, Madrid



Barcelona are back in form and La Liga's big three are back at the top of the table after the defending champions put on a finishing masterclass to thrash Sevilla 4-0 on Sunday.

Lionel Messi scored his first goal of the season by curling in a brilliant free-kick at Camp Nou after three goals in eight minutes from Luis Suarez, Arturo Vidal and Ousmane Dembele had already put Sevilla out of sight.

Suarez launched the flurry, his stunning left-footed bicycle kick arguably even better than the volley he scored in the Champions League win over Inter Milan on Wednesday.

Vidal then finished a superb passing move that involved all 11 Barca players and Dembele powered through to make it three before Messi added a fourth in the second half.

The match descended into farce late on as Barcelona's debutant Ronald Araujo was sent off and Dembele followed after collecting a second yellow card for dissent.

The referee's report said Dembele was dismissed for calling Mateu Lahoz "very bad". He could now miss the Clasico on October 26.

By then, the game was long gone as victory pushed Barcelona up to second in the table, two points behind Real Madrid and one above Atletico.

For all the turbulence and scrutiny on Valverde and Zinedine Zidane, Barca and Madrid head into the international break not only as the league's two frontrunners but with confidence and momentum too.

Eden Hazard scored his first goal for Madrid in their 4-2 win over Granada on Saturday and Barca's star man is off the mark as well after his own injury-interrupted start to the season.

This was Barcelona's fourth consecutive victory.

Messi's return has increased the pressure on Antoine Griezmann, who was left out of the starting line-up following his quiet display against Inter. Dembele was preferred on the left of the front three.

Sevilla, who drop to sixth, had eight shots to Barcelona's seven in the first half but were three down at the break.

BHF not feeling Shaheed's absence

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Hockey Federation vice-president Abdur Rashid Shikdar yesterday said that they do not feel the absence of general secretary AKM Mominul Haque Shaheed, who travelled to Singapore with the Bangladesh team during September's Women's Junior AHF Cup but has since not returned after drives from Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) busted several casino businesses at sports clubs, including two of which where he is president.

"We are not facing any problem in his [Shaheed's] absence and everything is going in right direction. We, including the BHF president, are collectively working to take everything ahead. Till now, we have not faced any problem. Sponsors for the premier league and school hockey tournament are almost ready. But we don't know when he [Shaheed] will return," Rashid said during a press conference for the five-match series between Bangladesh U-21s and visiting Oman U-21s at the BHF conference room yesterday.

Oman series prep for Jr Asia Cup

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh under-21 hockey team will lock horns against their Omani counterparts in the first of five-match test series today at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium as part of preparation for next year's Bangabandhu Junior Asia Cup in Dhaka.

The series, which is a bilateral one with Bangladesh visiting Oman in December to play the same number of games, is expected to play a good role for both sides in fine-tuning the areas they need to improve while giving international exposure to new players.

Bangladesh began their preparation on July 22 with 110 players before the squad was gradually reduced to 36 members. Five of the 36 players are from the senior national team. The Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) set their sights on finishing among the top three in next Junior Asia Cup, which also served as the qualifiers of Junior World Cup.

"We never played the World Cup at any level, but we will try to qualify for the Junior World Cup by producing good results in the Junior Asia Cup. Every participating team is taking the tournament seriously and started preparation long before we did. We were supposed to travel to India, but we could not do so due to visa problem. Now we want to win the five-match series against

Oman," said head coach Mamunur Rashid.

Rashid believes if this team can play 25 to 30 warm-up matches against foreign teams before the start of the Junior Asia Cup, the team will take a good shape to achieve their ultimate target.

However, it is a new challenge for the coach and the new players and they are apparently ready to take the challenge against Oman, a side Bangladesh U-21s beat twice [7-0 and 4-0] in the Junior AHF

Cup in 2014 to emerge unbeaten champions.

Captain of the first match -- Ashrafur Islam -- is confident about having a good series as most of the players are from BKSP and a good understanding among them is already there after some practice matches against local teams.

Oman's head coach Tahir Zaman, on the other hand, has good knowledge of Bangladesh hockey as he played in the Dhaka Premier League several times and

also worked as an advisory coach of Bangladesh national team.

"I played here, coached the national team and know Bangladesh hockey well, but that is different. Our aim is to make a balanced combination within December. We have come here having played two matches against a Pakistan side. However, we are looking forward to having very good training and practice match and I think this series is going to benefit both sides," said Zaman.



The Oman under-21 hockey team, who are here for five matches against their Bangladesh counterparts, had their first training session at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Lloris out for the year

AFP, Paris

Tottenham Hotspur goalkeeper Hugo Lloris will "almost certainly" be out of action for the rest of the year after his horror injury at the weekend, France coach Didier Deschamps said yesterday.

Lloris suffered a dislocated elbow in conceding the opening goal of Spurs' 3-0 defeat by Brighton on Saturday, dropping a cross before falling backwards and landing badly.

The Spurs goalkeeper was given oxygen and morphine as he was carried from the field before being taken to hospital.

"Almost certainly, he won't be back on the pitch in 2019," said Deschamps.

Steve Mandanda will take over in goal for France against Iceland while Paulo Gazzaniga, who replaced Lloris on Saturday, is likely to continue in the role for struggling Spurs.



The match between Bangladesh Air Force (blue) and Bangladesh Army kicked off the super league stage of the Kabaddi Premier League at the Kabaddi Stadium in Paltan yesterday. Air Force won the closely-contested encounter by 44-37 points.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Curtains close on World Championships

AFP, Doha



Sprint hurdler Nia Ali led a final day gold rush for the United States as the curtain came down on the World Championships on Sunday.

Ali powered to victory in the 100 metres hurdles to upset world record holder Keni Harrison with a time of 12.34sec at the Khalifa Stadium.

Ali's win was one of three final day gold medals for the USA, who finished on top of the medal table with 14 golds, 11 silver and four bronze.

Kenya, meanwhile, finished in second spot with five golds, two silvers and four bronze.

The final day's action drew a line under 10 days of competition at the championships, held in the Middle East for the first time.

Despite problems at the start of the championships with sweltering heat and humidity and swathes of empty seats, Sunday's action played out to a packed house.

The United States' other gold medals came in the 4x400m relay events, with comfortable victories for their men's and women's quartets.

The women's relay victory meant a second

gold medal for Dailiah Muhammad, who swept to victory with a world record-breaking display in the 400m hurdles on Friday.

Muhammad ran a blistering third leg for the USA to help set up a win in 3min 18.92sec.

The USA win also saw Allyson Felix extend her record tally of world championship gold medals to 13.

The US men meanwhile were similarly convincing winners in the 4x400, with hurdler Rai Benjamin anchoring their team to gold in a world-leading time of 2:56.69.

Elsewhere Sunday, Kenya's Timothy Cheruiyot produced one of the performances of the games with a superb win in the 1,500m.

The 23-year-old conjured a lung-busting display of front running to win gold, hitting the front in the opening lap at a ferocious pace and not letting up. Cheruiyot won in 3min 29.26sec.

Algeria's 2012 Olympic champion Taoufik Makhloufi took silver in 3:31.38 whilst Poland's Marcin Lewandowski took the bronze in a time of 3:31.46.

Joshua Cheptegei of Uganda was another silver to gold convert in the 10,000 metres. Cheptegei raced home in 26min 48.36sec after a thrilling final lap battle with Yomif Kejelcha of Ethiopia.