

‘We can come back with points’

SPORTS REPORTER

 Centre-back Yeasin Khan was hopeful of returning to the country with points as the Bangladesh national football team departed for Kolkata yesterday to play an away 2022 World Cup Qualifier match against India after putting up a brave performance against Asian champions Qatar on Thursday night. “I don’t know the playing formation to be adopted against India, but I am hopeful of returning with points if we can replicate the performance against Qatar last night,” Yeasin told The Daily Star yesterday. “I believe the environment in Kolkata will be similar to Bangladesh. The venue we are going to play at is familiar to many of us as we played the final of the IFA Shield [in 2014] for Sheikh Jamal DC. There may be a big crowd at the venue like the one we saw last night at the Bangabandhu National Stadium, but we are not going to accept defeat until the last minute,” said Yeasin,

who led a young Bangladesh backline in the absence of experienced defenders as the hosts gave their superior opponents a run for their money before going down 2-0. “To be honest, initially I was not confident in the young backline but coach Jamie Day told me to just enjoy the game without thinking of defence, and to accept defeat only after fighting and making the spectators happy,” said Yeasin. “If you saw the Afghanistan-Qatar match, Afghanistan conceded six goals despite playing a five-man backline but we played with only four men and Qatar had to toil to get goals, and there were no defensive lapses.” Yeasin was however disappointed to have conceded the last goal in stoppage time and believed that both of Qatar’s goals were lucky strikes rather than a result of creating clear-cut chances as every Bangladesh were good in every department. “You know the difference between Asian champions Qatar and Bangladesh, but it is a big achievement for us that we fought against them till the last minute. I think we were able to meet the expectations of our

supporters, although we created some goal-scoring chances but could not take them,” said Yeasin, adding that they should now work on finishing well up front before their encounter against India on October 15. “We could have achieved something had we scored at least one goal. The scenario of the match could have even been different had we struck the equaliser before conceding the second goal at the last moment,” said the veteran centre-back, who was all praise for the huge crowd that braved the rain and turned up at the Big Bowl to back their team. After reaching Kolkata, captain Jamal Bhuiyan urged everyone to forget the match against Qatar and focus on India. “It was a tough match and we are disappointed. Forget yesterday’s result. Now we have a big match against India and we still have the opportunity to do something in our group. The Bangladesh-India match will be a 50-50 affair or maybe it will be 55-45 in India’s favour. We hope for the best and want to win the match,” said Jamal in the video message.



Bangladesh coach Jamie Day briefs his charges at swimming pool during a recovery session at the team hotel JW Marriott in Kolkata after reaching the West Bengal capital yesterday. The booters will play their away match of joint qualifiers of 2022 World Cup and 2023 Asian Cup against India at the Salt Lake Stadium on October 15.

PHOTO: BFF



Bangladesh players celebrate after confirming the final berth of the SAFF U-15 Women's Championship defeating Nepal 2-1 in their second match at the Changlimithang Stadium in Thimphu yesterday.

PHOTO: BFF

Under-15s amble into final

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh confirmed the final berth of the SAFF U-15 Women's Championship following a 2-1 win against Nepal in their second match at Changlimithang Stadium in Thimphu yesterday. With two successive victories, Bangladesh and India topped the four-team group with six points each, but the latter are ahead on goal difference as India saw off Bhutan with a massive 10-1 win in the day's second match. On the back of a 2-0 win over Bhutan in the previous match, Bangladesh squared off against Nepal with sights on the final berth while Nepal, having lost 4-1 against defending champions India, had no alternative but to beat Bangladesh to stay in the race for the last four. The charges of Golam Rabbani Choton dominated the game from the outset and twice came close to taking the lead before Shaheda Akter Ripa, who also scored against Bhutan, opened the

account in the 12th minute, dribbling past three players with ease before finishing calmly with a right-footed shot. Bangladesh kept on mounting pressure for the second goal and the pressure paid off when Nepal defender Pratiksha Chaudhary handled the ball inside the box 12 minutes later. Captain Shamsunnahar converted the spot-kick to double Bangladesh's lead. Bangladesh began the second half promisingly but Nepal clawed their way back into the game after forward Amisha Karki collected a loose ball outside the area and chipped it over Bangladesh goalkeeper Rupna Chakma in the 64th minute. Bangladesh, however, held on to one-goal advantage to end the match. Bangladesh will take on India tomorrow in their last group fixture before playing the final on October 15 against the same side while already-eliminated Bhutan and Nepal will play their last match tomorrow.

‘The boys showed character’

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh may have lost to reigning Asian Champions Qatar 2-0 in their 2022 World Cup Qualifier match, but the men in red and green received warm appreciation from football stakeholders for the sustained fight they put up against the 2022 FIFA World Cup hosts. Zulfiker Mahmud Mintu, one of the country's top coaches on the domestic circuit, believed the footballers showed true character by playing competitive football instead of just defending against superior opponents. “I’m happy with their performance. Before the match I said that if the boys could implement 60 to 70 per cent of the game plan, I would be happy. The boys showed their character, which is very important to become a team, and the boys have to show their character in every match. They have to have the same mentality regardless of whether the opponents are small or big,” Mintu said. “I think the players’ mentalities have also changed because if you want to win the match, you need to defend as well as attack. Now our players know what to do during the transition period,” said the former national footballer, who also believes that this group of national footballers are now capable of implementing the coach’s instructions, having improved in that aspect in club football where they are guided by some foreign coaches as well as a few quality domestic coaches. “It seemed to me that coach Jamie [Day] did some homework on how to stop Qatar and took notes from Qatar-India match. The boys played accordingly and made good defensive blocks that did not allow the opponents to expose the defence. Bangladesh also tried to initiate attacks on break tried to utilize set-pieces like long throw-ins by Raihan Hasan, but unfortunately they could not cash in on those opportunities. I think Bangladesh played well and lost the game,” said Mintu, adding that it would not have been surprising if Bangladesh scored a goal and drew the match against Qatar. Mintu however opined that Qatar could not maintain their speed of play and implement their plans efficiently on a rain-soaked ground, which was to Bangladesh's advantage. “It doesn’t matter whether you lose the game; if you display character to have ball possession, build attacks, create chances and defend collectively, then you have to understand that your football has been improving. Although it is not possible to evaluate the country's football with one match, I think the boys played well against Qatar,” said the former Chittagong Abahani coach.



ZULFIKER MAHMUD MINTU

Former champions in one group ‘Third Sheikh Kamal Club Cup to be even better than the first two’

SPORTS REPORTER



Defending champions TC Sports Club of Maldives and inaugural edition's champions Chattogram Abahani were pitted in the same group in the draw of the third edition of the Sheikh Kamal International Club Cup, which was held at a hotel in the capital yesterday. The other two teams in Group A are Kolkata giants Mohun Bagan and Laos Premier League outfit Young Elephants FC. Group B features Bangladesh Premier League champions Bashundhara Kings, six-time professional league winners Abahani alongside

I-League champions Chennai City FC and Malaysian Super League outfit Terengganu FC. While Group A features two former champions, Group B, pits two Bangladeshi giants who shared the three top-flight titles between them last season. The eight-team event will take place from October 19 to 29 at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chattogram, with two teams from each group making it to the semifinals following round-robin matches. While the first edition of the tournament in 2015 featured all eight teams from the South Asian region with hosts Chattogram Abahani beating Kolkata giants East Bengal in the final, the second edition saw teams from outside



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

State Minister for Youth and Sports Zahid Ahsan Russel picks a team during the draw ceremony for the Sheikh Kamal International Club Cup at a hotel in Dhaka yesterday.

South Asia participating. TC Sports of Maldives beat FC Pocheon FC of South Korea in the final to take home the title. The draw ceremony was held though a glamorous programme where representatives of all the stakeholders were present. Tarafder Ruhul Amin, vice-president of Chattogram Abahani and chief co-ordinator of the tournament, said that this edition will surpass the previous ones. “We have not had as big a tournament at club level as the one that is going to take place. This will be the most colourful event. The MA Aziz Stadium, has been renovated. This will be a Tier-2 competition of FIFA/AFC,” said the sports organiser. BFF president Kazi Salahuddin hoped that the tournament will help reinvigorate the memory of Sheikh Kamal further. “I am indebted to Chattogram Abahani and others for reinvigorating the memory of my childhood friend Sheikh Kamal,” Salahuddin said. State Minister for Youth and Sports Zahid Ahsan Russel hoped that this tournament will help spread the name of Sheikh Kamal to the rest of the world. “I hope that Shaheed Sheikh Kamal's name will spread to not just Asia but beyond through this tournament.” **TEAMS** Group A: TC Sports Club, Mohun Bagan AC, Young Elephants FC, Chattogram Abahani Group B: Bashundhara Kings, Chennai City FC, Terengganu FC, Dhaka Abahani **Schedule:** Octo 19 to 29 **Venue:** MA Aziz Stadium, Chattogram **Champions:** 50,000 dollars **Runners-up:** 25,000 dollars **Participation money:** 10,000 dollars to each team

Bangladesh under-21s go 2-0 up

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh U-21 hockey team took a 2-0 lead in the five-match Test series by handing visitors Oman a 2-0 in the third match at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday. Hosts Bangladesh, who started the series with a 5-1 win before being held to a 2-2 draw in the second match, returned to winning ways against an improving Oman with Ashraful Islam and Saiful Alam Shishir scoring a goal apiece in the first and final quarter respectively. The national team's penalty corner specialist Ashraful opened the account in the ninth minute by converting a penalty corner before the goalless second and third quarters. Shishir, also a national player, wrapped up victory in the 53rd minute converting another penalty corner. The fourth match will take place today at the same venue before the fifth and final match on September 15.

SHORT CORNER

Women's A first T20 abandoned

The first game of the three-match T20 series between Bangladesh Women's A and India A were abandoned without a ball being bowled due to rain at the Sheikh Kamal International Cricket Stadium in Cox's Bazar yesterday. The visitors already whitewashed the home side in the three match one-day series. The second game of the T20 series will take place today at the same venue. -- Sports Reporter

Shakib's Tridents book final berth

Barbados Tridents defeated Trinbago Knight Riders by 12 runs in the second

qualifier match at the Brian Lara Stadium in Trinidad to go through to the final of the Caribbean Premier League on Thursday. Barbados were sent in to bat and scored 160 for six. Shakib Al Hasan came in and breezed to 18 off 12 with a four and a six to get them moving before he was removed in the ninth over. Shakib was hit for 16 runs in his very first over and did not return to the attack until the 13th over. He conceded 27 in the 2 overs he bowled, without managing a wicket. -- Star Sport Desk

CA introduces 12-month paid parental leave

Cricket Australia (CA) unveiled a “game-changing” parental leave scheme Thursday designed to let players in its history-making women's team remain in

the game while raising a family. The policy includes 12 months’ paid parental leave for players who give birth and a guaranteed contract extension for the following season so they know they can return to the sport. CA said it had been working on the policy with players and the Australian Cricketers Association for three years. “(It is) a world-leading parental leave policy providing all professional players peace of mind when starting a family,” it said. -- Afp

Stokes takes legal action against The Sun

England all-rounder Ben Stokes has taken a legal action against an English daily after it published details about his personal life and family.

The Sun had last month published a story which revealed that Stokes’ half-brother and sister were shot dead by his mother’s ex-partner in New Zealand, three years before Stokes was born. Now, according to The Guardian, Stokes and his mother, Deborah have filed proceedings against The Sun for invasion of privacy and recalling the tragic past that had been long forgotten. The legal proceedings were filed before photographs were published earlier this week showing Stokes appearing to grab his wife’s face at an awards event, an incident she described as “nonsense”. When The Sun leaked personal information about Stokes’ family, the star all-rounder had slammed the news article, terming the act as “utterly disgusting” and the “lowest form of journalism”. -- Agencies