



POLICE FLY HIGH IN HANDBALL

Bangladesh Police clinched the title of the Bangabandhu Federation Cup Handball Competition following a 31-26 goal victory over Bangladesh Ansar & VDP at the Shaheed M Mansur Ali National Handball Stadium in Paltan yesterday. The first half of this thrilling encounter was tied 14-14. This is the first Federation Cup title for Police, who had been second best on three previous occasions. The fifth edition of the competition, with Bandarban DSA and Team Handball Dhaka being the other two teams, was held after a gap of 15 years.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Jamal on the verge of signing for Kolkata Mohammedan

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh national team captain Jamal Bhuiyan is all but confirmed to sign for Indian outfit Kolkata Mohammedan for the upcoming I-League, subject to a confirmation to return to his current outfit Saif SC for the second phase of the upcoming Bangladesh Premier League (BPL).

It was learned that a tri-party agreement involving Jamal, Kolkata Mohammedan and Saif SC is going to be signed within a couple of days.

"The transfer window of the Indian League has already been closed [on October 24] but as per an exceptional clause of FIFA, the clubs can still sign players, who, however, must be a free player during the period of the transfer window. And Kolkata Mohammedan are taking this opportunity to sign Jamal," Saif SC general secretary Mahbubur Rahman Sumon told The Daily Star yesterday.

"As we want Jamal to play for Saif SC from the second phase of the upcoming BPL, we have asked Jamal to discuss with Kolkata Mohammedan on whether he can sign an agreement till April 20," said Suman



adding that they want to re-sign Jamal during the mid-season transfer window of BPL from April 15 to 30 as the I-League is scheduled to end on April 30.

"Jamal has already informed Mohammedan about the matter and if they agree on it, then we don't have any objection in giving Jamal a clearance to play for them," said Suman.

Jamal, who has been playing for Saif SC for the last three seasons, wasn't responding though he had said earlier that if he was offered a good contract, then he would consider it. But if the contract was similar to that of Saif SC, he would rather choose to play in Bangladesh.

Nepal to land today

SPORTS REPORTER



Nepal national football team faced another blow yesterday with two more players testing Covid-19 positive before leaving the country today for Dhaka where they are scheduled to play two friendlies this month.

Nepal are scheduled to land in the capital this morning. After arriving here, all 35 members of the visiting team will undergo further Covid-19 tests today under the supervision of the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF).

"All members of Nepal team are supposed to board after Covid-19 negative results and they will again be tested here. The visitors will stay at the hotel until the results of the covid-19 tests come out and then avail training facilities," said BFF executive Mahmudul Hasan.

It has been learned that Nepal are going to keep two footballers, who were the roommates of two footballers who tested positive yesterday, out of the squad in fear of further infection among the rest members.

Nepal had initially called up 30 players for the friendlies but five tested Covid-19 positive before the start of their preparation on Oct 31. Bangladesh are scheduled to play the friendlies on November 13 and 17 at Bangabandhu National Stadium. The matches will kick off at 5:00pm in front of a limited number of spectators.

Meanwhile, defender Tutul Hossain Badsha withdrew himself citing his sickness. Earlier, the defender had however skipped the training camp on account of tending to his sick wife. Midfielder Mamunul Islam is in doubt to be included in the final squad following a small fracture on his left hand.

Back on top, can Shakib return strong again?

MAZHAR UDDIN



Back in 2014, after a six-month suspension by the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) for his 'misbehaviour' with the then Bangladesh head coach Chandika Hathurusingha and for his altercation with a spectator during an ODI against India in Mirpur, all eyes were on Shakib Al Hasan when he returned.

The champion all-rounder made a grand comeback by picking up a six-wicket haul against Zimbabwe in the first Test in October 2014 and followed it up with a magnificent hundred in the second Test.

With his one-year ICC ban for not reporting corrupt approaches from a bookie ending on October 29, Shakib's

the challenges he will face and works accordingly, which was reflected in both his fitness and skills during the World Cup.

Shakib had expected to return after the one-year ban with the tour of Sri Lanka which was supposed to start last month. The champion cricketer returned from the US in September and worked both on his fitness and skills under his two mentors Salahuddin and Nazmul Abedin at BKSP for nearly a month.

The tour was postponed due to the host country's strict quarantine protocols, and Shakib will return to competitive cricket in the upcoming Bangabandhu T20 tournament. After returning tonight, Shakib is expected to appear for the BCB's fitness test on November 9.

With the cricket world mostly being



return to the cricketing sphere was marked by him reclaiming the number-one ODI all-rounder spot without a ball being bowled.

He will return to the country tonight from the US and will take the field in the Bangabandhu T20 tournament late this month, and when he does there is every chance that he will shine.

Before the 2019 World Cup, when the 33-year-old was not being picked regularly by Indian Premier League side Sunrisers Hyderabad, he had his mentor Mohammad Salahuddin flown in and worked silently ahead of the mega event.

The rest was history as Shakib went put in an all-time great all-round performance in the World Cup and could well have been the player of the tournament, had Bangladesh not been eliminated before the semis.

His preparation method has always been very specific as Shakib knows

at a standstill for the past seven months due to Covid-19 pandemic, Shakib was fortunate that he did not miss much international cricket.

His climb back to the top of the all-rounders' charts, which he has dominated for a decade, serves as a reminder to the rest of the world that Bangladesh's pre-eminent player is back.

But anyone who knows Shakib closely will definitely say that it will not distract him for a second; his focus instead will only be that his new beginning continues in the tradition of comebacks past.

Considering all the comebacks he made over the years, and the controversies he was at the centre of, the absence in the last year – caused by arguably the darkest chain of events of his career – perhaps helped Shakib grow both as a player and as a person, which may bode well for Bangladesh.



"DIEGO, DIEGO!"

A fan of Diego Maradona, with his idol's name and jersey number emblazoned on his back, stands outside the clinic where the Argentine football legend underwent a surgery for a subdural haematoma, a blood clot on the brain, in Olivos on the outskirts of Buenos Aires on Tuesday. "We managed to successfully remove the clot. Diego coped well with the surgery," Leopoldo Luque, Maradona's neurosurgeon and personal physician, said. "It's under control, there's a little drainage (of blood). He'll remain under observation." Around 50 fans gathered in front of the clinic to celebrate when reports of the successful outcome started to emerge, chanting: "Diego, Diego!". "What we want the most is for Diego to get out of all this. He can be, he is the greatest, the greatest in the world," said Diego Bermudez, a Maradona fan.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Mumbai in the hunt again

REUTERS, Undated

Mumbai Indians are in familiar territory as the Indian Premier League moves into the playoffs but the defending champions know they will have to take their game to another level when they face Delhi Capitals on Thursday.

Mumbai, the tournament's most successful team with four titles, became the first side to reach the playoffs last week and used Tuesday's game against Sunrisers Hyderabad to test the strength of their bench.

It did not work out well, a 10-wicket thrashing coming as a wake-up call ahead of the Delhi tie.

Delhi, led by the tournament's youngest captain in 25-year-old Shreyas Iyer, will be hoping it is third time lucky against Mumbai having lost both their group matches to them last month.

The winners of Thursday's match will move straight into the Nov. 10 final in Dubai but all is not lost for the losers.

They will meet the team that comes through Friday's eliminator between Royal Challengers Bangalore and 2016 champions Hyderabad to decide the second finalist.

Liverpool, Bayern run riot as Real edge Inter

AFP, PARIS



Diogo Jota scored a stunning hat-trick in Liverpool's 5-0 demolition of Atalanta in the Champions League on Tuesday, as holders Bayern Munich scored six and Real Madrid struck late to beat Inter Milan in a thriller.

On a prolific night across Europe which also saw a rampant Borussia Moenchengladbach hit six in Ukraine, the star individual performances came from Jota and Alassane Plea.

Real, the 13-time European champions, ran out 3-2 winners in a dramatic encounter with Inter behind closed doors at the Alfredo di Stefano Stadium, as Vinicius Junior set up his fellow Brazilian substitute Rodrigo to lash in the decisive goal 10 minutes from time.

Portugal forward Jota joined Liverpool from Wolverhampton Wanderers in September and has



(Anticlockwise from top) Bayern Munich extended their winning streak to 14 matches with a 6-2 mauling of Salzburg, two of the goals coming from Robert Lewandowski while Diogo Jota netted a hat-trick as Liverpool thrashed last season's quarterfinalists Atalanta 5-0. Meanwhile, Sergio Ramos leaped high in the air and headed home his 100th goal for Real Madrid as Los Blancos resurrected their Champions League campaign with a thrilling 3-2 win over Inter Milan in Madrid on a night of extraordinary football on Tuesday.



wasted little time making an impact with seven goals from just five starts.

In Bergamo, against an Atalanta side who reached the quarter-finals last season, Jota was brought into the starting line-up in place of Roberto Firmino and required just

16 minutes to open the scoring.

Jota then got his hat-trick as the Premier League champions recorded their biggest win in Europe since beating Porto 5-0 away in February 2018.

"I'm playing in the best team of

my career so far. I don't know if it's the best moment of my career but obviously scoring goals is my way of playing football," Jota told BT Sport.

Ajax won 2-1 away to Midtjylland in Denmark, as Brazilian youngster Antony opened the scoring in the first minute and Dusan Tadic netted from an indirect free-kick inside the box soon after. Anders Dreyer got one back for the hosts, who remain pointless.

French forward Plea had earlier scored a hat-trick as Gladbach claimed a stunning 6-0 victory over Shakhtar Donetsk in Kiev, the German side's biggest European triumph since their 1970s heyday.

The unfortunate Valeriy Bondar scored an own goal, with Rami Benisebaini and Lars Stindl also scoring as Gladbach went top of Group B, a point clear of Shakhtar and Real Madrid.

Gladbach coach Marco Rose said: "Six-nil is extraordinary. We did a lot right today -- not to say almost everything."



PHOTO: TWITTER