

## BCB facing quarantine quandary

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) will face the challenge of hosting a second international series against the backdrop of the pandemic and preparations for the upcoming ODI series against Sri Lanka are well underway.

The BCB successfully hosted the West Indies for three ODIs and two Tests earlier this year in the first instance of Bangladesh hosting an international series since the outbreak of Covid-19 led to the halt of sporting activities in the country in March, 2020.

The board was also working on shortening the mandatory 14-day quarantine for Shakib Al Hasan and Mustafizur Rahman, who returned from India after the Indian Premier League was suspended. The cricketers have been staying in separate hotels since arriving to Dhaka on May 6.

However, the main challenge for the BCB will be to iron out any issues related to the broadcast of the series as the quarantine protocols for the broadcasting crew can prove to be tricky for the board. The BCB invited a fresh tender for a two-year deal on April 28, with the bidding process slated

to be held on May 17. Since the board has already announced that the first of the three ODIs will begin on May 23, that leaves just five days to arrange things following the bidding.

Normally, the BCB hires crew members from India and South Africa but, according to Bangladesh's health protocols, individuals arriving from these countries have undergo a 14-day quarantine, which complicates matters.

"It is obviously going to be a challenge for us. According to government health protocols, it is difficult to bring in an Indian crew in the current context considering the 14-day quarantine protocol. However, we are trying to make arrangements with some of our other sources and we are hopeful about it. But it is too early for us to make a concrete comment over the issue as the work is still in progress," BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury told The Daily Star yesterday.

The three-match ODI series against Sri Lanka is also part of the ICC's World Super League and the presence of a Decision Review System (DRS) is a necessary requirement. Normally the technicians who operate the DRS system come from South Africa and if that remains the case, the 14-day quarantine is also applicable there.



Arambagh forward Isomjon Abdukadyrov (C) celebrates his goal during a 3-1 win against Sheikh Jamal in the Bangladesh Premier League at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. It was the first win of the campaign for the basement club and a first defeat for Sheikh Jamal.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## Archers leave for Lausanne on Sunday

SPORTS REPORTER

An 11-member Bangladesh archery contingent will leave for Lausanne, Switzerland next Sunday to take part in the World Cup Stage-2 with moderate hopes.

Bangladesh will be represented by seven recurve archers and one compound archer in the tournament, which will feature top archers from 35 countries and will be held from May 17 to 23. Two coaches and an official of the Bangladesh Archery Federation (BAF) will accompany the archers.

The Bangladeshi archers will compete in six events: men's recurve individual and team, women's recurve individual and team, recurve mixed team and men's compound individual.

Four male recurve archers along with three female recurve archers and a single compound archer make up the eight-member team.

Talking about expectations from this tournament at a press conference at the BOA auditorium yesterday, BAF's general secretary Kazi Razibuddin Ahmed Chapal said they are not expecting anything



big as the players are participating in an international event after 16 months. They are taking this tournament as a platform for next month's World Cup Stage-3 in Paris, he said, where there will be three Olympic quota places up for grabs.

The team's head coach Martin Frederick expressed his satisfaction in the performance of the archers, especially the female ones, in recent times following a long break due to the pandemic. He said that the archers, including the country's top recurve archer Ruman Sana, are close to their best, which they proved in the recent three-day trial for this tournament. The German coach also expressed high hopes about compound archer Ashim Kumar Das, who recently set a new national record.

## Arambagh stun Sheikh Jamal

SPORTS REPORTER

Bottom-placed Arambagh pulled out the biggest surprise in the Bangladesh Premier League when they came from behind to hand a 3-1 defeat to second-placed Sheikh Jamal at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Gambia's Pa Omar Jobe gave the three-time league champions the lead before Arambagh rallied for a maiden victory in 16 outings, thanks to the strikes from Uzbek forward Isomjon Abdukodirov, midfielder Umor Faruk and promising forward Nihat Jaman Uccchash.

Sheikh Jamal had an opportunity to reduce the gap with league leaders Bashundhara Kings when they took the field against Arambagh, who had been on the receiving end of a 6-0 defeat in their previous league meeting, but now the gap stands at 11 points, with Kings on 43 points from 15 matches.

With a first defeat in 15 matches, Sheikh Jamal are behind Abahani despite having 32 points from 15 outings while Arambagh raised

their tally to five points, equal with Brothers Union.

Despite the absence of hard-working Uzbek midfielder Jonov Otabek, Sheikh Jamal dominated Arambagh from the word go and took the lead in the 15th minute through a strike from Jobe, who chested down a Monir Hossain cross and volleyed home.

Jamal came close to doubling the lead in the 36th minute when Gambia's Soulaymane Sillah danced past Uzbek defender Ildar Mamatkazin Rustamovich on the left flank before poking the ball under the goalkeeper hands only to see his shot come off the post.

The scenario changed in stoppage time of the first half when Arambagh's Uzbek forward Abdukodirov found the back of net with a dipping free kick from 25 yards to equalise. They went ahead after resumption following a lucky break as Umor Faruk's close-range header from a Rahmat Mia long throw-in found its way into goal after deflecting off Sheikh Jamal defender Monir Hossain in the 54th minute. Two minutes later, Abdukodirov ran down the right and cut back inside for Nihat Jamam Uccchash, who made no mistake in driving to the near post despite failing to keep his balance on a rain-soaked ground. Afterwards, Arambagh parked bus and held Sheikh Jamal at bay to deliver a big upset.

With a first defeat in 15 matches, Sheikh Jamal are behind Abahani despite having 32 points from 15 outings while Arambagh raised their tally to five points, equal with Brothers Union.

Abahani climbed to fourth place in the 13-team table with a 2-0 win over Sheikh Russel, thanks to strikes from Brazil's Nixon Guylherme and Rakib Hossain. Ctg Abahani are now equal on 28 points with Mohammedan but are ahead of the Black and Whites by virtue of goal difference. Sheikh Russel slipped to sixth place with 27 points from 15 matches.

### SHORT CORNER

#### 'My future is clear'

REUTERS

Juventus goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon says he will leave the club when his contract expires at the end of the season but could still join another team if he receives a suitable offer.

"My future is clear. This year I will definitely end my long and beautiful experience at Juventus," Buffon told beIN Sports. "I will either retire or find a situation that motivates me, a different experience to take into consideration."

#### Madrid injury nightmare continues

Real Madrid's injury crisis dragged on when left back Ferland Mendy was on Tuesday ruled out for the rest of the season with a shin problem, leaving coach Zinedine Zidane without all four of his first choice defenders. A medical report published by Real said the Frenchman, Real's first choice left back, had been diagnosed with shin splints.

#### 'Juventus must fight until the end'

Andrea Pirlo called on his Juventus players to continue believing in Champions League qualification after they were left furious by a damaging 3-0 defeat by AC Milan on Sunday.

Pirlo's side are at risk of failing to qualify for Europe's top club competition for the first time in a decade ahead of their trip to Sassuolo on Wednesday.

"We are very angry. I do not want to see resignation on the faces of the players," Pirlo told a news conference.

"We are Juventus and we cannot be resigned. We must fight until the end."

#### Nishikori adds voice to Olympic concerns

REUTERS

Japan's top-ranked men's tennis player Kei Nishikori added his voice to concerns about staging the Olympic Games in Tokyo in July, as the country battles a surge in Covid-19 cases.

Naomi Osaka, Japan's No.1 women's tennis player, raised similar concerns on Sunday, saying that the risks of holding the Games amid the pandemic should continue to be carefully discussed.

"This is not like 100 people like these tournaments," Nishikori said at the Italian Open in Rome on Monday.

"It's 10,000 people in a Village, playing a tournament," he added, referring to the Olympic Village where athletes will stay.



Neymar had a blast on the famous Fortnite video game alongside gaming stars on Monday evening. After disappointment in the Champions League and Ligue 1 title race, Neymar had a good time by indulging in one of his favourite pastimes: video games.

PHOTO: INSTAGRAM

## 'You don't just win by clicking your fingers'

AFP



Didier Deschamps captained France to a World Cup and European Championship double as a player and is now hoping to repeat the feat as a coach when the delayed Euro 2020 finally goes ahead in June and July.

However, in an exclusive interview with AFP, the 52-year-old warned against any complacency from the defending world champions, saying major international tournaments are not won "just by clicking your fingers."

After lifting the World Cup in Russia in 2018, a gifted France squad is inevitably among the favorites to win the European Championship which concludes in London on July 11.

However, they could not have asked for a harder group in the first Euro to be held -- despite the pandemic -- in multiple countries all across the continent.

France play Germany in Munich and Hungary in Budapest, as well as facing the reigning European champions Portugal.

"Two years at the highest level is a long time, even if it is not a lot in life in general. There are obviously big expectations after the success we have had and that is the aim of this squad, of this generation," Deschamps told AFP in Monaco as he pondered the chances of doing the double.

"Nobody can take away what we have done. It will always be there, but we need to tell ourselves that we can't just stop here, we need to go and try to win more titles," he said before warning of the looming threat from the likes of England, Spain, Belgium, and several other sides at the Euro which kicks off in a month's time.

"You don't just win by clicking your fingers. The other nations are progressing,



working hard, not sitting still. We need to have that ambition. When a tournament starts we want to go as far as possible."

West Germany held both trophies when they won the 1974 World Cup on home soil after winning the European Championship when it was just a four-nation event in Belgium in 1972.

Spain then pulled off the remarkable feat of winning back-to-back Euros in 2008 and 2012, either side of their 2010 World Cup triumph.

Before that Deschamps skipped France to glory in 1998 and at Euro 2000 as they defeated Italy in extra time in the final in Rotterdam. He has gone on to enjoy a remarkable coaching career, having success at Monaco, Juventus, and Marseille before accepting the France job in 2012 and reviving the fortunes of the national team in stunning fashion.