

T SPORTS

La Liga
Elche vs Celta Vigo
Live from 06:00 pm
Espanyol vs Real Madrid
Live from 08:15 pm
Getafe vs Real Sociedad

Live from 10:30 pm

Granada Vs Sevilla
Live from 01:00 am (Monday)
GTV & S
TAR SPORTS HD 1
IPL
Bangalore vs Punjab

Live from 04:00 pm

Kolkata vs Hyderabad
Live from 08:00 pm
STAR SPORTS HD 2
English Premier League
Tottenham vs Aston Villa
Live from 07:00 pm

Liverpool vs Manchester City

Live from 09:30 pm
TEN 2
BUNDESLIGA
Bayern Munich vs Eintracht Frankfurt
Live from 09:30 pm

A winning start yet in search of winning tactics

ANISUR RAHMAN from Male



Bangladesh football team apparently had a hidden pressure to get off to a winning start in the SAFF Championship and the charges of interim coach Oscar Bruzon did it after switching to a brand of possession-based football from a defensive one.

It is not that the footballers are new to possession-based football rather they once adapted well to such playing style under Dutch coach Lodewijk De Kruijff before they switched to a counter-attacking version while prioritising a solid back-line under British coach Jamie Day.

Nevertheless, the boys in red and green did look a bit nervous initially against Sri Lanka, who are ranked 205th and 16 places behind Bangladesh in FIFA ranking but the charges of Bruzon gained control of

the midfield as the match progressed.

Even though Bangladesh had 58 percent of ball possession, during which they strung 15 to 20 short passes on several occasions, they couldn't stabilise the Sri Lankan backline, unlike how Maldives treated Nepal in the second game of the tournament.

Now, the question is how far can Bangladesh progress in the tournament with such an approach – possession without penetration – against comparatively stronger sides like India, Maldives and Nepal.

"Sri Lanka played a high-defence, so it was really tough to penetrate them in their half to create scoring opportunities," said match-winner Tapu Barman,

who yesterday had a full rest at the Turf Ground due to a minor ankle problem.

"Look, in the second half, we played better football compared to the first," said the centre-back. Midfielder Mohammad Ibrahim believes the players need some time to adjust with the playing style.

"The players who have already worked with Bruzon, have good understanding with the coach but the rest of the players need some time," said Ibrahim.

"It's not that only forwards will score in total football. You will see some time that the midfielders and wingers also score goals but to be honest, the coach hasn't gotten much time to work on the finishing aspect."

The Bashundhara winger wants to continue playing the same way in the upcoming matches.

"We've proved yesterday that we can play possession football but we have to improve it day by

day. I think we have to increase communication among the forwards, and then the next matches will be easier for us," believes Ibrahim, who played in the midfield instead of his usual wing position.

Ibrahim seemed optimistic about solving the scoring issue.

"You saw how many chances we created against Sri Lanka which we never did in the past matches. As we have started playing open football, the scoring problem will be gradually solved, I believe."

Regardless of what Ibrahim believes about the solution of the scoring problem upfront, Bangladesh are definitely going to face an uphill task while attempting to penetrate the backlines of India, Maldives and Nepal, as all three opponents are superior to Bangladesh in terms of skill, technique and tactics and, of course, FIFA ranking.



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

INDIA on everyone's mind

ANISUR RAHMAN from Male

After a light training session at the Turf Ground in Male yesterday afternoon following a 1-0 win over Sri Lanka in the opener of SAFF Championship on the previous day, Bangladesh players were waiting for the team bus when suddenly Tapu Barman asked a reporter whether Bangla food was available somewhere near the team hotel.

The reporter replied in the affirmative, giving a condition that they have to India

"India-Bangladesh matches are always high-voltage ones. All players, including myself, are excited to play matches against them because we could not win in the World Cup Qualifying at Salt Lake despite playing better than them. If we can win here, it will really be a great achievement."

MIDFIELDER MOHAMMAD IBRAHIM

in the next match. Left-back Yeasin Arafat, who was sitting beside Tapu, instantly responded to the reporter's condition by joking, "Let us eat first and be strong."

Though the charges of Oscar Bruzon were in joyous mood throughout yesterday's training session, they know the measure of the challenge against India, who are 82 places ahead of Bangladesh in FIFA ranking.

Moments after Yeasin's joke, one of the Bangladeshi expatriates who were watching the training session from outside the main gate, shouted towards the players, "Just beat India, we won't mind even if you don't win the title."

There is huge enthusiasm among the expatriates regarding Monday's match against seven-time champions India, who last December beat Bangladesh 2-0 in a World Cup qualifying fixture and are taking this championship as part of their preparation for next year's Asian Cup Qualifiers.

India have always been a hurdle for

Bangladesh in SAFF Championships as the Blue Tigers beat the men in red and green twice in final and two more times in semifinal stage.

However, Bangladesh, except for the last meeting, had managed to hold India to draws in previous three meetings and midfielder Mohammad Ibrahim is seeking inspiration from those matches.

"India-Bangladesh matches are always high-voltage ones. All players, including myself, are excited to play matches against them because we could not win in the World Cup Qualifying at Salt Lake despite playing better than them. If we can win here, it will really be a great achievement," said Ibrahim, who frightened the India defence with his speedy runs down the left flank at Salt Lake in September, 2019.

Midfielder Sohel Rana, who had his first training session in Maldives yesterday following his recovery from fever, said, "Matches against India have different excitement. If we want to stay in good position on the table, we must play well against India. We are thinking match by match and want to have another good result against India."



Tigers head for preparation camp

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh cricket team will leave for Oman tonight to engage in a preparation camp for the upcoming ICC T20 World Cup.

A 21-member contingent including 14 cricketers will fly as all returned negative results in Covid-19 tests. Apart from 12 cricketers from 15-member world cup squad, pacer Rubel Hossain and leg-spinner Aminul Islam will also accompany the team for only participating in the training camp in Muscat.

Opener Liton Das went to Muscat with his wife four days back while ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan and pacer Mustafizur Rahman will join the team in Abu Dhabi on October 9 after completing their IPL commitments.

"I am accompanying the team as there is an issue of bio-secure bubble," Bangladesh Cricket Board's physician Dr. Debashish Chowdhury told

WARM-UP MATCHES

October 12: Bangladesh v Sri Lanka Abu Dhabi
October 14: Bangladesh v Ireland. Abu Dhabi

QUALIFIER MATCHES

October 17: Bangladesh v Scotland. Muscat
October 19: Bangladesh v Oman. Muscat
October 21: Bangladesh v PNG Muscat

The Daily Star yesterday.

Bangladesh will spend a day in room quarantine in Muscat before starting their training on October 5 in Oman, after which the Tigers will travel to Dubai to take part in two official practice games on October 12 and 14 against Sri Lanka and Ireland respectively.

Mahmudullah Riyad and his troop will then return to Oman on October 15 to participate in the qualifier stage and will face Scotland in their first qualifier game on October 17.

Bangladesh will play their second match against Oman on October 19 and the last match against Papua New Guinea on October 21.

If Bangladesh qualify, then they will travel to Dubai on October 21 to play the Super 12 stage, starting from October 23.

Meanwhile, according to the ICC's regulations, all teams will have to stay for a mandatory six-day quarantine before the Super 12 stage in the United Arab Emirates but this will not be applicable for Bangladesh as they will enter the bio-secure bubble from October 5.

NEWS IN BRIEF

'Koeman won't be sacked after Atletico game'

Ronald Koeman will stay on as Barcelona coach regardless of the result against Atletico Madrid on Saturday, club president Joan Laporta has said. Koeman's future has been in serious doubt after Barca were beaten 3-0 by Benfica in the Champions League on Wednesday, a defeat that leaves them bottom of the group. But Laporta, speaking ahead of Saturday's game against La Liga champions Atletico Madrid, said: "Koeman will continue as Barca coach. He has the benefit of the doubt regardless of today's result."

Laporta has reportedly been considering Roberto Martinez, Xavi Hernandez and Andrea Piro as potential replacements but the job would be a huge challenge, given Barca's atrocious financial situation.

Immobile out of Nations League finals

Lazio and Italy striker Ciro Immobile has been ruled out of next week's UEFA Nations League finals after picking up a thigh injury, the Serie A club said on Saturday. The 31-year-old limped off the pitch during Thursday's Europa League win over Lokomotiv Moscow, and a note on Lazio's website said he sustained a muscular injury in his right thigh. "He will be monitored in the next few days to determine when he can return," the note said. Immobile will miss Sunday's Serie A trip to Bologna, as well as Italy's Nations League double-header, with Sky Italia reporting that the injury will keep him out for seven to 10 days.



'We have to learn and the time is now'

REUTERS



Manchester United were held to a 1-1 draw at home to Everton in the Premier League on Saturday after Andros Townsend's equaliser cancelled out Anthony Martial's opener for the home side.

It was another disappointing result for United, following their home defeat to Aston Villa last week, but continued the impressive start that Everton have made under Rafael Benitez.

Both teams are on 14 points, together with leaders Liverpool who face Manchester City at Anfield on Sunday.

Manchester United midfielder Bruno Fernandes criticised the team's second half display and said the players needed to start learning the lessons from repeat errors.

United led 1-0 at the break thanks to an Anthony Martial strike set up by Fernandes, but they lost their way in the second half and had to share the points after Andros Townsend's equaliser.

"I thought we played really well first half, created a lot of chances. Second half we slow it down, once again we make that

mistake," the Portuguese midfielder told MUTV.

"We have to learn and the time is now. We cannot do it anymore. We did it so many times. We cannot slow it down when we are winning. We have to make it quicker, score another one or two and then after that you can slow it down a little and make them run more," he said.

United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer responded to the challenge of the quick turn-around from Wednesday's Champions League win over Villarreal by starting Cristiano Ronaldo, Paul Pogba and Jadon Sancho on the bench -- although all three were brought on in the second half but the switch did not have the desired effect of finishing the game off.

United have picked up just one point from their last two home games, with Saturday's draw following last week's loss to Aston Villa and 14 points leaves them in the leading pack, Fernandes was not happy with the return.

"It is not good enough, we should have more points, but this is what we have now. We have to look forward now to what we can do until the end of the season," he said.



CLUB CUP HOCKEY Abahani, MSC in same group

SPORTS REPORTER

Abahani and Mohammedan have been placed in the same group of the Club Cup Hockey tournament, which will get underway at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium on October 7.

The two traditional rivals have been pitted alongside Ajax SC and Police SC in Group A while Mariners Youngs Club, Sonali Bank SC, Azad SC and Bangladesh SC have been pitted in Group B.

The 10-day tournament will get underway through the match between Ajax SC and Mohammedan while Abahani will square off against Police SC in the second match of the day.

Defending champions Abahani will meet Mohammedan on October 9.

After the group phase, the top two teams will advance to the semifinals to be held on October 14 while the final of the tournament is slated for October 16 at the same venue.

The Club Cup will end a three-year hiatus for domestic hockey in the country. The eight teams playing in the Club Cup will be joined by four other teams for the Premier Division League, which is expected to begin on October 20.



Spinner Axar Patel celebrates one of his three wickets as Delhi Capitals bounced back after a blip in the last match to overcome struggling Mumbai Indians by four wickets and five balls to spare in the Indian Premier League match at Sharjah yesterday.

PHOTO: TWITTER