



Italy midfielder Nicolò Barella is the toast of his teammates as his goal early in the second half set the European champions on their way to a 2-1 win against Belgium in the third-place deciding fixture of the UEFA Nations League at the Juventus Stadium in Turin on Sunday night. Domenico Berardi added a second from the spot for the Azzurri before Charles de Kelelaere scored a consolation goal for the Red Devils late in the match.

PHOTO: AFP

'Bangladesh can reach the semifinals'

SPORTS REPORTER



Former Bangladesh captain and Bangladesh Cricket Board director Khaled Mahmud believes that Bangladesh can advance to the semifinals of the upcoming ICC T20 World Cup, set to take place in

Oman and the UAE.

Bangladesh's performance in the previous editions of the World Cup has remained below par; however, Mahmud reckons that it will be difficult to stop the Tigers if the players can perform at their peak in the flagship event.

"My expectations are always high and I feel that Bangladesh will play their best cricket. I've said that Bangladesh can reach semi-final and I believe that. This [T20] is such a format where any team can be beaten on any given day. We've previously lost to India despite going so close to victory and we're not going to repeat the same mistakes again and again.

"We have senior players like Mushfiqur Rahim, Shakib Al Hasan, Mahmudullah Riyad and Mustafizur Rahman. And in our top order, we have the experienced Liton Das alongside Naim Sheikh. If they're able to perform, it'll be difficult to stop us," Mahmud told the media yesterday.

It was under Mahmud's supervision, in the game development committee, which saw the Bangladesh Under-19 team win the ICC Under-19 World Cup in 2020. And according to the 50-year-old, it will be important for the youngsters to make a mark and cement their place in the side for the coming days.

The Tigers reached Abu Dhabi yesterday from Oman and will play 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, before facing Scotland in their first match of the qualifier stage on October 17 at the Al Amerat Cricket Stadium in Muscat.

Bangladesh will then face Oman and Papua New Guinea on October 19 and 21, respectively, in the remaining qualifier matches of the World T20 at the same venue.

"Maybe the likes of Shakib, Mustafiz and Riyad don't play against Oman A team but they all are proven players. I think the team management will be looking to shape the playing eleven keeping the first qualifier game on October 17 [against Scotland] in mind. I'd say, those who'll play the warm-up matches should look to cement their place," Mahmud added.

Meanwhile, pacer Rubel Hossain has been included as the additional player in the Tigers world cup squad. Rubel, however, will still be a reserve player and will only be called upon if any player from the 15-man team is ruled out of the tournament.

According to Mahmud, the team management has opted for Rubel for his experience.

Ismail suspended for a year

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's fastest sprinter Mohammad Ismail has been suspended from participating in any domestic and international meet for one year by the Bangladesh Athletics Federation (BAF) over disciplinary ground.

The suspension has come into effect from October 2, according to BAF general secretary Abdur Rakib Montu.

The 29-year-old athlete, who represents Bangladesh Navy in domestic meets, had questioned BAF's decision of sending Zahir Rayhan instead of him to this year's Olympics in Tokyo. Zahir, a 200m specialist was provided the wildcard allocated to BAF by the IOC for Tokyo 2020, meaning that the reigning 100m champion was ignored.

The Navy athlete had written to BOA to reconsider the decision, pointing finger at the BAF high-ups. Ismail had also spoken to various media outlets, expressing his frustration over the issue.

The BAF, meanwhile, had sent a show-cause notice to the athlete while forming a committee to probe the incident. Upon directives from the committee, the BOA decided to impose the punishment on the athlete. BAF's GS Abdur Rakib Montu revealed the decision to media yesterday.

The sprinter, though, will have the opportunity to appeal against the decision. Although Ismail declined to comment on the matter, it has been learnt that his employers will take steps regarding the suspension.

Big bucks on offer in World T20

AGENCIES



The winners of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2021 will take home a winners' cheque of \$1.6 million while the runners up will get half that amount, the International Cricket Council confirmed on Sunday.

All 16 competing teams will receive part of the US \$5.6m allocated as prize money for the tournament, which will be played in the United Arab Emirates and Oman from 17 October to 14 November.

The two losing semifinalists will receive \$400,000 each from the games taking place on 10 and 11 November.

As in 2016, there will be a bonus amount for every match that teams win in the Super 12 stage. The victors in each of the 30 games in that phase will this time win \$40,000, a total pot of \$1,200,000.

The eight teams whose ICC Men's T20 World Cup campaigns end at that stage will automatically receive

PRIZE MONEY			
POSITION	NO OF TEAMS	PRIZE MONEY	TOTAL AMOUNT
Winners	1	\$1,600,000	\$1,600,000
Runners-up	1	\$800,000	\$800,000
Losing semifinalists	2	\$400,000	\$800,000
Round 2 wins	30	\$40,000	\$1,200,000
Round 2 exit	8	\$70,000	\$560,000
Round 1 win	12	\$40,000	\$480,000
Round 1 exit	4	\$40,000	\$160,000
TOTAL			\$5,600,000

\$70,000 each, totally \$560,000.

The same structure is in place for the first-round victories - with \$40,000 available to those who win each of the 12 games, amounting to \$480,000.

The four teams knocked out in the first round will take \$40,000 each from an overall \$160,000.

DRS to make debut

The Decision Review System (DRS) will make its debut in the men's

T20 World Cup to be held in Oman and UAE starting this month, after the ICC approved its usage in the tournament.

The ICC announced the introduction of DRS at the upcoming showpiece in the playing conditions for the event released by it earlier this week.

According to an ESPNcricinfo report, each team will get a maximum of two reviews per innings.

DRS was not part of the earlier men's T20 World Cups as the review system was not applicable in T20s in 2016 when the marquee event was last held.

'Covid committee to decide on matches'

The fate of Twenty20 World Cup matches if players test Covid positive will be decided by a committee and not by the member boards, the global governing body said Sunday.

ICC's acting chief executive Geoff Allardice said any last-minute decisions will be taken by a bio-safety advisory group.

"We have a committee set up to look at any cases that arise during the event and they will look at identifying close contacts and taking decisions around future events," Allardice told a virtual news conference.

"Any decisions around matches will be taken by that committee and it's not going to be something that's going to be dealt with by the members as it may do in bilateral cricket."

Booters denied bus in Male

SPORTS REPORTER from Male



Bangladesh national football team had a bitter experience in Maldives following a practice session yesterday as the booters had to return to the hotel walking on foot after the Football Association of Maldives refused to provide team bus due to the team's extra training at Henveiru training ground in Male.

The booters waited for 40 minutes following the completion of training, which ended at 6:00pm after starting at 4:00pm and walked 15 minutes' distance on foot back to the hotel. Team's liaison officer informed the Bangladesh team management that the bus was deployed

to carry players of Sri Lanka and Maldives after yesterday's first match.

"After the training, we waited for 40 minutes for the bus at the ground before starting to walk towards the hotel as the hosts did not provide us with the bus, saying that we had trained more than the scheduled time," Bangladesh team's media manager Hasan Mahmud told the Daily Star, adding that FAM's technical director informed them that the bus was busy carrying the players of Sri Lanka and Maldives.

The booters had returned to training after two days' rest following a 2-0 defeat against the hosts in their previous match. They decided to have extra half-hour's training as there was no training schedule of other teams at the same ground.



Dhaka Mariner Young's Club's Indian recruit Harshdeep Kapoor (L) celebrates one of his two goals with a teammate during a 9-0 thrashing of Azad SC in their SIBL Club Cup Hockey Tournament fixture at the Maulana Bhashani Hockey Stadium yesterday. Two wins in two matches have ensured the Arambagh-based outfit a place in the semifinals.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Male's turf pitches 'like Heathrow Airport'

ANISUR RAHMAN from Male



A mini artificial turf ground located on the east of Male, adjacent to the Hiyafseyha Maidhaan, was seen buzzing with the presence of around 30 budding footballers, training under two coaches, of the Friends Football Family Academy. This has been a common sight in all of Male's artificial turfs, which remain occupied by aspiring players -- from different academies, the clubs' youth teams and the school teams -- till midnight since morning, as early as 6:00 am.

The lively presence of those kids clearly gives an impression of Maldives' passion regarding football, which is the number one game in the islands. Even though Maldives had once been on the receiving end of embarrassing results -- for instance, having suffered 0-8 and 0-5 defeats at the hands of Bangladesh in the mid-1980s -- but those days are now a distant memory for the football-obsessed Maldivians.

Maldives are now a force to be reckoned with in South Asia, who have won all four matches against Bangladesh, played over the last 18 years.

Ahmed Shareef, the technical director of Football Association of Maldives (FAM), expressed his pride and contentment regarding the current state of Maldives' football to The Daily Star on Saturday.

"We are pleased that Maldives currently has more than 30 active academies, whereas it was five to



six academies previously. Now the appointed coaches there possess coaching certificates to handle the academy properly, where one coach handles 10 kids at the grassroots level and works on the technical aspects of each individual," said Shareef.

Maldives have now more than 400 hundred AFC-certified coaches (30 A-licensed ones, 100 Bs and 300 Cs), of whom ninety percent are working relentlessly with the FAM, private academies and clubs. Each budding footballer has to pay in the range of 200-1000 Rufiyaa (Approx. Tk 1000-5000) monthly to learn the tricks of the trade from coaches, who are handsomely paid by the academies.

"But we can't provide quiet minutes to the youth footballers on the pitches (FAM turf grounds) because of our very limited resources. FAM only has two turf pitches. The boys get three days in a week with only a 30-minute session per day. It

is like Heathrow Airport," said Shareef, who is well known in Maldives football fraternity as Dunga.

The technical director informed that, ever since the humiliating 0-17 defeat at the hands of Iran in 1997, the government has been financially and directly assisting the FAM in developing the country's football ever since, by installing artificial turfs across the atolls, for example.

"We've strong school competitions, from which a lot of talented players emerged. The FAM has also introduced the leagues for U-12 and U-14, for those who belong to the academies," said Shareef, who has been involved with football for the last 20 years, while he further informed that the FAM has five age-group teams, from which the players move into the national team's pipeline.

"We're delighted to see our national team's players being

technically strong and performing well in Asia. We know the players' strength, technical abilities and mental conditions and always act in line with suggestions of a 20-member technical committee, which is also observing the SAFF Championship.

"You can say that the current national squad is the outcome of our system. We started the process long ago," said Shareef, who is also an AFC coaching instructor.

Replying to a query, Shareef said: "We may not produce good results at age-group competitions but those players become technically equipped before entering the national team. When players move up the ranks of U-21 or U-23 level, they have already worked on their limitations."

Shareef concluded by informing that their coaches do not interfere with a player's position at grassroots and instead they only focus on instilling the core principles of the beautiful game in each footballer.