

AIIFF MAY NOT
AGREE TO
ZICO'S IDEAHT Correspondent
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KOLKATA: The All India Football Federation (AIFF) president Prafulla Patel said, he is unlikely to accept FC Goa coach Zico's suggestion and reduce the number of overseas players from six in Indian Super League (ISL) games. In that context, Patel said comparing the ISL with the I-League, where four imports are allowed, wasn't fair.

"A certain format has been agreed. I think it is good to have international stars coming. It brings more following to the game and our youngsters can play with superior players from outside India," Patel told HT from Goa on Saturday.

Asked whether ISL franchises want to join the I-League in 2015-16, Patel said, "Many ISL franchises are keen on the I-League and some I-League clubs are looking at participation in the ISL. If we can bring a commonality between these two, it will help Indian football because there will be more continuity and fan following. It will also improve the quality of teams because they will be playing as one unit for a longer period. Here, players have come from all over the world for two months, so it really doesn't integrate and knit the team well."

LITTLE AIIFF CAN DO

Patel said there was little the AIIFF could do about Mohun Bagan and East Bengal's accounts attached by the enforcement directorate in connection with a money-laundering investigation. Neither club can pay salaries because of this.

"These are issues beyond the purview of the AIIFF; there is little we can do. (However) we would like to see both clubs in good shape. They have legacy, fan following and their contribution to Indian football is immense," he said.

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Role reversal as Devils head to the 'bigger club'

UNFAMILIAR Settled holders City host big-spending United in 'Madchester' derby

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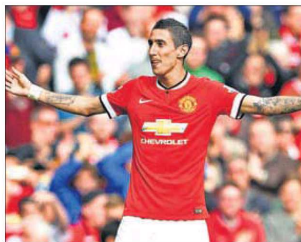
MANCHESTER: Manchester football supremacy will be at stake at the Etihad Stadium on Sunday when Premier League rivals Manchester City and Manchester United face off in a potentially momentous derby showdown.

United goalkeeper Peter Schmeichel, who also played for their cross-town rivals, signed this week that City's status as champions meant that they are presently "a bigger club" than United.

His words echoed a claim made in February by City manager Manuel Pellegrini, whose side beat United 4-1 and 3-0 last season. The I-League clubs are looking at participation in the ISL. If we can bring a commonality between these two, it will help Indian football because there will be more continuity and fan following. It will also improve the quality of teams because they will be playing as one unit for a longer period. Here, players have come from all over the world for two months, so it really doesn't integrate and knit the team well."

City go into Sunday's encounter four points above their neighbours in third place in the table - six points shy of leaders Chelsea - but recent events suggest the gap may be narrowing.

City have gone three games without victory, falling further behind Chelsea after a 2-1 loss at West Ham United last weekend



While Manchester City have kept the expenditure under control of late, neighbours United splurged on players like Angel di Maria (in pic), Marcos Rojo and Daley Blind.

GETTY IMAGES

and then seeing their reign as League Cup holders ended by Newcastle United on Wednesday. Last week's 2-2 draw away to CSKA Moscow, meanwhile, left them facing a battle to qualify from Champions League Group F ahead of a high-stakes return fixture against the Russian champions next week.

Pellegrini complained that his players had shown a "lack of trust" in each other following the 2-0 loss at home to Newcastle, but he believes their downturn in performances will prove short-lived.

"I think they know perfectly what we are doing and I am also

HEAD TO HEAD

In City Draw Utd

Overall 167 48 50 69

League 150 42 49 59

Biggest wins: Utd 1-6 City

(1926 & 2011), Utd 0-5 City

(1955), Utd 5-0 City (1994)

Most recent meeting: Utd

0-3 City (March 25, 2014)

lately sure we will return to our normal performance," the Chilean said. "It is a very important game, but every game has just three points, so it is very important for us to just add three points."

BLUES WIN, REDS LOSE

LONDON: Eden Hazard's late penalty ensured Chelsea maintained a four-point lead at the summit following a 2-1 win at home to QPR. Arsenal climbed into the Champions League places after Alexis Sanchez scored twice in a 3-0 success at home to winless Burnley. Liverpool slumped to their fourth loss of the season as Ayaxe Perez earned hosts Newcastle United a 1-0 victory.

The move paid off as the trio combined well to put the opponents under tremendous pressure, especially in the second half.

FC Goa, who were looking for their first win, started on a promising note and had two early chances to take the lead but striker Miroslav Stjepkic failed on both occasions.

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Injured Irfan to miss Nationals

NEW DELHI: India's leading athlete KT Irfan will not compete in men's 20km walk in the National Open Athletics Championships, which will commence here from Sunday at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, as he is nursing an ankle injury.

"He has been advised rest for four weeks," said his coach Gurdev Singh. Irfan, the national record holder, has been out of training for over a month and will require another 4-6 weeks for rehabilitation before he can start normal training, said people familiar with the event.

In fact, Irfan couldn't give off his best at the recently-concluded Asian Games due to the injury, which went undiagnosed. He finished fifth, clocking 1:23:18. Had he achieved his best of 1:20:21, set during the London Games, it could have fetched him a medal.

HTC



A RCF player (in grey outfit) tries to get the ball past IOB defenders during the 31st Indian Oil Surjit Hockey Tournament at Burdwan Park in Jalandhar on Saturday.

PARDEEP PANDIT

missing a penalty corner conversion in the 45th minute, RCF's Raman Singh snuffed the lead to 3-0 through a strike in the 51st

minute of play. The winners' tally was rounded off in the 68th minute when Raman scored the second goal of the match.

Goa rally from behind to stun Delhi Dynamos

Agencies
sportsdesk@hindustantimes.com

MARGAO: Substitute Tolgay Ozbey scored an injury time goal as FC Goa rallied from behind to beat Delhi Dynamos 2-1 and register their maiden win in the Indian Super League, here on Saturday.

Ozbey snatched the winner for the hosts in the 90th minute after Jewel Raja, who plays for the local club Dempo, kickstarted the late fightback with a 72nd minute equaliser.

Earlier, Dynamos went ahead as early as in the seventh minute of the match, through stand-in skipper Mads Junker. The win takes FC Goa to sixth in the table with four points from five matches, while the Delhi side remained on the fourth spot with six points from five games.

Goa's Brazilian coach Zico made three changes from the last match, bringing in Mandar Rao Dessai, Romeo Fernandes and Jewel Raja.

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Jewel Raja (centre) kickstarted FC Goa's late recovery with a 72nd minute equaliser against Delhi Dynamos in Margao.

SPORTSPICS

the from the middle and relayed the ball to Spaniard Bruno Herrero Arias on the right who in turn sent a goalmouth cross for Junker to do the rest.

The home team suffered a double blow when they lost their playmaker Andre Santos after he got injured while going for a tackle with Stijn Houken.

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