

# Indian Football Coach Stimac Picked Team On Astrologer's Advice

## Why In The News?

- On **June 9, 2022**, India Were Scheduled To Face Afghanistan In A Crucial Asian Cup Qualifier In Kolkata, **National Football Team Coach Igor Stimac Sent Message To Bhupesh Sharma, An Astrologer From Delhi NCR**, Who Was Introduced To Him By **Secretary-General Of AIFF Kushal Das**.

## **The Indian EXPRESS**

**Asian Cup prelims: India football coach gave details of players to astrologer, picked team on his advice**

## Who Is Stimac?

- Igor Stimac Is A **Croatian Professional Football Manager And Former Player** Who Is The **Current Head Coach (Manager) Of The India National Team**.




## What Do We Know?

- The “List” Stimac Referred To Had The Names Of The **Probable 11 For The Game**, A Must-win For An Out-of-form And Injury-ridden India To Remain In Contention For The Prestigious Continental Championship.
- **Within Hours, The Astrologer Replied With His Remarks Against Each Name:** “Good”; “Can Do Very Well”. Needs To Avoid Over Confidence”; “A Below Average Day”; “A Very Good Day For Him But Might Get Over Aggressive”; “Not Recommended For The Day”.
- An Hour Before Kick-off On June 11, When India’s Team For The Match Was Declared, **Two Established Names** Whose Stars Weren’t Favourable, According To The Astrologer, **Did Not Make The Cut**.
- Indeed, There Are **Close To 100 Messages**, Purportedly Exchanged Between Stimac, A Former Croatian International, And Sharma In May-June 2022. India Played Four Matches During This Period: A Friendly Against Jordan Followed By Three Asian Cup Qualifiers Against Cambodia, Afghanistan And Hong Kong.



**EXCERPTS FROM THE CHATS**



**IGOR STIMAC**

**ASTROLOGER:** You let me know the dates which you would prefer me to be there 6th or 7 onwards

**COACH:** 6-9-12. Always 2 days prior to the game

**ASTROLOGER:** Ok so I will be there from 6th to 14th

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**COACH:** Pls check for [a specific player] as you said “not an ideal day or phase for him”? Others are below average so he could do maybe much more?

**ASTROLOGER:** Ok let me check

**COACH:** Compare [that player] to [three other names]

**ASTROLOGER:** The day is in the following order for the four of them [proceeds to list the four names in descending order]

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- Before Each Game, The **Messages Show Stimac Was In Touch With Sharma**. Not Only Do These Messages Put A Question Mark On The Integrity Of The Indian Team’s Selection Process, But They Also Raise Issues Of Propriety - Vital Team Information Shared With An “Outsider” Runs The Risk Of Being Misused.
- Then Secretary-general Of AIFF, Kushal Das, Admitted He Introduced Stimac To Sharma In May 2022. When Asked Das Said: “Since We Used His Professional

Services For Two Months, **We Paid Him Around Rs 12-15 Lakh.** That Didn't Seem A Huge Amount Since India Qualified For The Asian Cup.”



- Recently, The AIFF Issued A Show-cause Notice To The Coach Following An Interview With The Indian Express, Where Stimac Said, Among Other Things, That He **“Wasn't Afraid Of Telling The Truth.”**

