

<b>DAY'S EVENT</b>	<b>Bangladesh v Pakistan</b>	Time: 10:00am	Central Zone v South Zone
	Venue: SBNCs, Mirpur Second Test, Day 2	<b>Bangladesh Cricket League</b>	Longer Version, Day 2 Time: 9:30am
		Venue: Fatullah	

## HAIRCUT GONE WRONG

Former South Africa striker Benni McCarthy became a target for more than autograph hunters when he was robbed at gunpoint in a Johannesburg barbershop. McCarthy, 37, back in his homeland as a pundit for a local television station's coverage of Europe's Champions League, which he won with Porto in 2004, had jewellery and other personal items stolen but was not harmed. The ex-Blackburn Rovers forward, his country's record goalscorer who now lives in Edinburgh, was likely recognized and targeted by the three thieves as no other patrons of the shop were relieved of their belongings on Tuesday.



—REUTERS

# Sk Russel lose ground

**SPORTS REPORTER**

Minnows Farashganj SC came from two goals down to hold title contenders Sheikh Russel KC to a 2-2 draw in their Manyavar Bangladesh Premier League encounter at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

With first draw in seven matches, Sheikh Russel joined fourth-placed Abahani on 13 points each, seven behind leaders Sheikh Jamal DC though Sheikh Russel have a match in hand.

The charges of Montenegrin coach Dragomir Djukanovic had a bright chance to close the gap with leaders Sheikh Jamal with an outright victory over relegation-threatened Farashganj but the former champions went through a horrible day after fielding an inexperienced backline, which awarded Farashganj two goals to spoil the party.

Without injured Bosnian stopper Bojan Patrick, Atiqur Rahman Meshu and suspended central-back Rezaul Karim Reza, Sheikh Russel's backline was exposed time and again with Farashganj coming close to stunning their superior opponents in the very second minute but Nigerian striker Akenyele Peter drove wide off the target with goalkeeper Rasel Mahmud Liton to beat.

It worked as a wake-up call for Sheikh Russel, who then took a deserved lead in the 12th minute when Zahid Hasan Emily volleyed home a Jamaican Akeem Sayeed free kick past goalkeeper Sujan Chowdhury.

The lead was doubled in the 27th minute when Cameroonian midfielder Paul Emile negotiated a Mithun Chowdhury cross well inside the box before driving into the back of Farashganj net.

Despite conceding two goals, Farashganj never looked to give up the match and they launched a string of attacks on the half-hour mark before succeeding in the 34th minute. Akenyele whipped a cross from the right and Shahinur Rahman headed past goalkeeper Liton.

Farashganj created only one chance in the second half and capitalized on it when Akenyele put a forward pass for Shankar Das, who darted into the box before firing the equalizer in the 71st minute to snatch a valuable point from Sheikh Russel.

**FENI SOCCER NOTCH 2ND WIN**  
In the day's second match, Feni Soccer notched up their second victory with a come-from-behind 2-1 win over Chittagong Abahani.

Mohammed Hanif provided Chittagong Abahani a lead in the 45th minute before substitute Shohel Mia cancelled it in the 59th minute. Johirul Islam headed the winner in the 80th minute.

<b>SK RUSSEL</b>	<b>2 - 2</b>	<b>FARASHGANJ</b>
<b>FENI SOCCER</b>	<b>2 - 1</b>	<b>CTG ABAHANI</b>



Barcelona superstar Lionel Messi celebrates one of his two goals against Bayern Munich during their Champions League semifinal at the Nou Camp on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Inconsistent Siddikur

**SPORTS REPORTER**

Bangladesh's premier golfer Siddikur Rahman played an even-par 71 in the first round of AfrAsia Bank Mauritius Open at the Heritage Golf Club yesterday.

Siddikur, who had three bad tournaments this season after failing to make the cut, got off to a fine start in the US\$1,110,000 event, playing a birdie in the 3rd hole before stumbling in the next hole with a bogey.

Since then the two-time Asian Tour winner played birdies in the 5th, 6th and 7th holes to raise hopes of finishing on high, but he was again derailed in the 13th, 14th and 17th holes with bogeys, eventually sharing the 46th position with 16 other players.

## Boateng ridiculed on social media

**AFP, Berlin**

Germany defender Jerome Boateng was roundly ridiculed on Twitter Thursday for slipping up ahead of Lionel Messi's second goal in Barcelona's 3-0 Champions League drubbing of Bayern Munich.

Messi's inspired performance in Wednesday's semifinal, first-leg, saw Barca score all three goals in the final 17 minutes with the midfield maestro netting twice in three minutes to stun Pep Guardiola's Bayern before putting Neymar through to score the hosts' third goal.

Messi's magical footwork at the Camp Nou for his second left Germany defender Jerome Boateng flat on the turf in a move former England international Jamie Redknapp described as "almost illegal".

UK newspaper the Daily Mail wrote: "He may have won the World Cup, the Champions League and three league titles, but that does not exclude him from being ridiculed on the internet".

"Internet wasn't gonna let this slip #Boateng" posted one fan with a mocked up picture of Boateng prostrate on the Camp Nou turf with a child's slide super-imposed behind him.

# Magnificent Messi

**AFP, Barcelona**

"Messi devours Guardiola," screamed the front page of Spanish sports daily Marca on Thursday as the Argentine won the battle of Barcelona legends past and present in a 3-0 win for the Catalans in the first-leg of their Champions League semifinal against Bayern Munich.

Pep Guardiola could see it coming, yet was powerless to prevent it. Stop Lionel Messi? "Impossible," he said 24 hours before the game.

"There is not a system or coach to stop talent of his magnitude," he added, and so it proved as Messi struck twice and set up Neymar in the final 13 minutes to take Barca to the brink of next month's final in Berlin.

On his homecoming to the Camp Nou after 11 years as a player and captain and then four more as the club's most successful coach ever in winning 14 trophies between 2008 and 2012, Guardiola tried his best.

An almost suicidal back three going man-to-man with Barca's front three of Messi, Luis Suarez and Neymar, who now have 111 goals between them this season, was ditched early on, but Bayern still displayed a bravado beyond almost any other side when faced with the daunting task of a rampant Barca at the Camp Nou.

Despite being plagued by injuries, most notably to the two men who tore Barca to shreds in a 7-0 thrashing for the Catalans at this stage of the competition two years ago in Arjen Robben and Franck Ribery, Bayern still had more possession.

Yet, in this test of Barca old versus Barca new, Guardiola's old friend Luis Enrique was vindicated as his

more powerful, direct approach won out.

"Percentages here and there don't matter. The important thing is how much you have the ball in the opposition half because that is where you can cause damage," said Enrique afterwards.

The statistics that mattered backed him up too. Barca didn't just score the only three goals on the night, they had all of the eight shots on target too.

Given the exploits of Messi, Suarez and Neymar this season, the defensive solidity instigated by Enrique has often gone overlooked.

This was their sixth consecutive clean sheet, a 31st in 54 games this season.

"Defensively we were very good because that a team like Bayern doesn't have a shot on target is sensational," said Barca defender Gerard Pique.

Yet, with 77 minutes on the clock, Bayern looked to have done their job.

The one man mountain threatening to prove his coach wrong and stop Messi, as he had in last year's World Cup final, was Manuel Neuer. His giant frame had pulled off brilliant saves to deny Luis Suarez and Dani Alves.

Yet, even he proved fallible to Messi's brilliance. When given space on the edge of the area for the first time in the match, the four-time World Player of the Year looked towards the far corner then hooked the ball back at the near post leaving Neuer flummoxed.

Three minutes later he left Jerome Boateng eating grass before nonchalantly dinking the ball beyond Neuer on his weaker right foot.

## Hockey league still in shambles

**SPORTS REPORTER**

The players' transfers of the Premier Division Hockey League hangs in balance after Usha Kriya Chakra demanded to ensure the participation of all 12 teams; four of which announced that they would boycott the league for a second successive season.

Usha KC made this demand at Bangladesh Hockey Federation's executive committee meeting, which ended without a concrete result regarding the premier league. The League Committee had earlier deferred the players' transfers by two weeks as requested by the Old Dhaka outfit, Usha KC.

"What we have asked in the meeting is to ensure the participation of all teams. You know four clubs -- Mohammedan SC, Dhaka Mariner Youngs, Bangladesh SC and Wari Club -- have been boycotting the league since the last season. Now the officials of all clubs will be trying to make those clubs come back to the league," said Usha KC general secretary Abdur Rashid Shikdar.

Replying to a query, Shikdar said that Usha would take part in the league if those clubs refused again.

Deputy sports minister Arif Khan Joy is supposed to have a meeting with all premier league clubs and hockey officials on May 13 to solve the ongoing crisis.



Tigers captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (L) and Tiger Cement has started a new innings with the signing of an agreement on Thursday. Under the deal, Mashrafe became the brand ambassador of Tiger Cement. Here Mashrafe and Madina Cement Industries' managing director Haji Selim are seen exchanging agreement papers at a ceremony at The Daily Star Centre.

PHOTO: STAR

# Leo sinks Bayern

**AFP, Barcelona**

Barcelona's Lionel Messi struck twice and set up Neymar in the final 13 minutes as Pep Guardiola's return to the Camp Nou as Bayern Munich coach ended in a 3-0 defeat in the first-leg of their Champions League semifinal. On his 100th appearance in European football, Messi's double moved him back ahead of Cristiano Ronaldo as the all-time leading scorer in the Champions League and Barca to the brink of their first final in four years.

Manuel Neuer had kept Bayern in the game with a string of fine saves, but was helpless as Messi drilled home the opener from the edge of the area in the 77th minute and then delightfully chipped the German three minutes later.

Messi then fed Neymar in stoppage time to roll past Neuer and hand Bayern an almost impossible task in next week's second-leg.

Guardiola was given a warm reception by the home fans as he took his seat for the first time in the away dugout, but his early tactical plan to play three at the back nearly proved costly.

Bayern's intense pressing was forcing Barca to play long more than they are accustomed to, but it nearly worked to perfection when Messi's headed flick-on sent Luis Suarez clear behind the Bayern defence after 12 minutes.

Neuer, though, stood up brilliantly to divert the Uruguayan's effort to safety with an outstretched right leg.

Suarez turned provider for the next opening as his low cross picked out Neymar only for his goalbound effort to strike Rafinha and deflect behind.

The visitors then had a huge chance of their own as Thomas Mueller picked out the unmarked Robert Lewandowski, but the Polish international -- who was playing with a protective facemask after suffering a broken nose and cheekbone just last week -- sliced his effort wide.

# TV rights row threatens La Liga

**AFP, Madrid**

The race for Spain's La Liga title faces a chaotic conclusion after the country's football federation said Wednesday it would cancel all domestic matches in a row over TV rights.

The proposed shutdown called by the Spanish Football Federation (RFEF) will first affect the penultimate round of fixtures due to take place on May 17.

The RFEF said in a statement it will "suspend competitions of all categories starting from May 16 indefinitely".

"At the same time, once more we reiterate the RFEF is open to dialogue with the Spanish government."

If there is no resolution to the dispute, the key May 17 title clash between Barcelona and Atletico Madrid would fall victim to the stoppage as would the concluding weekend.

The Spanish Cup final, set for May 30 between Barcelona and Athletic Bilbao, would also not take place.

The new TV deal signed into law on April 30 by the Spanish government was seen as a means of helping loosen the financial stranglehold of Barcelona and Real Madrid, the two giants of the Spanish game.

Under the new government plan, announced last week, the tradition of clubs being allowed to negotiate their own TV deals would end.

Instead, the rights would be auctioned just as they are in England's

## MU agree Depay deal

**AFP, London**

Manchester United have reached an agreement to sign Dutch international forward Memphis Depay from PSV Eindhoven, the Premier League giants announced on Thursday.

"#mufc has reached an agreement with PSV Eindhoven and Memphis Depay for the player's transfer, subject to a medical," United announced on their official Twitter account.

"Pending the successful completion of the medical, the deal will go through once the transfer window opens in June."

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