

What to WATCH

DAY'S EVENT

SONY ESPN

Indian Premier League

Hyderabad v Delhi

Live from 8:30pm

Dhaka Premier Cricket League

Time: 9:00am

Venue: Fatullah

Prime Doleshwar v Legends of Rugpangj

Venue: SBNS

Abahani v Mohammedan

Venue: BKSP-3

Prime Bank v Victoria SC

Green Delta Premier Div Hockey

Abahani v Railway

Time: 4:00pm

Venue: Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium

PAPY'S CUT-THROAT GESTURE

Werder Bremen defender Papy Djilobodji is being investigated by state prosecutors for making a throat-slitting gesture during a Bundesliga game in March. The Senegal international was banned for two games and fined 15,000 euros (\$16,757) by the German FA for unsportsmanlike conduct after pulling his index finger across his throat in the direction of Mainz winger Pablo de Blasis during a league game. He has already apologised to De Blasis for making the gesture. But just three days before Bremen's crucial home match against fellow relegation candidates Eintracht Frankfurt, it has emerged the on-loan Chelsea player is being investigated by public prosecutors. "We're investigating a Werder player for threatening behaviour," senior public prosecutor Frank Passade told German daily Bild. Djilobodji has played 13 of Bremen's 16 league games in the second half of the season since joining Werder from Stamford Bridge in January.

—AFP





Booters jog around the Bangabandhu National Stadium pitch on the first day of training camp for next month's double-legged Asian Cup qualifying playoffs. Out of the 34 called up to camp, only 21 took part yesterday.

Camp starts sans 13

SPORTS REPORTER



The national football team had its first training session for next month's Asian Cup qualifying play-offs at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday without 13 players as Chittagong Abahani refused to release six of their players while seven others were on their way back to the country after playing for Sheikh Jamal in the AFC Cup match in Philippines the night before.

Chittagong Abahani refused to release their players – Nasir Chowdhury, Yeamin Ahmed Munna, Raihan Hasan, Rubel Mia, Ashraf Islam Rana and Koushik Barua – citing that they have not received any letter from the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF).

"We will not release our players until we get an official letter from the federation. Who is the owner of these players? It is the club, not the federation. Who will take care of the players, if they sustain injuries or fall sick during the camp of the national team? The football federation has to come out of the traditional way. If they think they will do it in that traditional way, we can't let it be," Chittagong Abahani's football committee chairman Tarafder Ruhul Amin told the Daily Star yesterday afternoon.

However, Amin later informed this

reporter that they have released the players in the evening but none of those players joined the camp till the report was filed.

Defenders Kesto Kumar, Tapu Barman and Mohammad Linkon, goalkeeper Mazharul Islam Himel, midfielder Jewel Rana, Monaem Khan Raju are expected to join the camp today as they were supposed to return home yesterday night after their AFC Cup match in Philippines. Midfielder Jamal Bhuiyan is also supposed to return home today from Denmark.

Meanwhile, Chittagong Abahani, along with a few other clubs, also raised question about the appointment of the national team's manager [Satyajit Das Rupa], who is also manager of Dhaka Abahani, and urged the BFF to appoint a manager with no association with the clubs.

After conducting the first day's session, interim coach Saiful Bari Titu felt Bangladesh have the quality to do well against Tajikistan in both away and home match.

"Bangladesh are not a team to concede five goals to Tajikistan. We have to play against Tajikistan in two different strategies. If we can hold them in away match, then we can do anything at home but everything depends on how the players prepare as they went through ups and downs in the last few months under three different coaches," said Titu informing that he would conduct training sessions in line with suggestions of Lodewijk de Kruif until the Dutchman arrives here.

Baki gets wild card for Rio

SPORTS REPORTER

The International Olympic Committee yesterday granted a 'wild card' for shooter Abdullah Hel Baki for the upcoming Olympic Games to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil from August 5 to 21.

Though Baki hoped of taking part in the Olympics through qualification rounds, he failed to qualify through any of the tournaments he participated. However, he will now be able to represent Bangladesh in the Greatest Show on Earth through the wild card, which is given to potential athletes of member associations of the IOC to ensure participation of all countries.

Bangladesh Shooting Sports Federation had requested for two wild cards including one for Baki and another for Shuvon Chowdhury. Baki had won a silver medal in the 10m air rifle event in Glasgow Commonwealth Games in 2014.

Apart from shooting, Bangladesh Olympic Association had requested wild cards in archery, weightlifting and boxing but the confirmation for those three disciplines have not come yet.

Luis persuaded Brazil to rest Neymar

GOAL.COM



CBF technical coordinator Gilmar Rinaldi admits Barcelona coach Luis Enrique would not budge on his insistence that Neymar should not play two major international competitions this year.

Brazil coach Dunga was desperate to select his captain for both June's Copa America Centenario in USA and the August's Olympic Games in Rio.

But after long discussion with the reigning European champions, the Selecao backed down and selected the forward only for the Olympic games.

"It's understandable," Gilmar told Radio Barcelona.

"We went to Barcelona and spoke to Luis Enrique because we know that it was a very difficult subject.

"We have to do what's best for the players. We had a great desire that Neymar would be with us, but the arguments put forward from Luis Enrique were too strong and we understood his position.

"He said the Barca players have played many games and travelled extensively this year and so would need a proper vacation in order to recover for next season.

"We agreed it was best for everyone to allow him to do that. If he played both competitions, he would have just 21 days off. It is very important to rest and recharge your batteries for next season."

Neymar made no secret of his desire to be involved in both tournaments but Gilmar concedes sitting out of one is the best decision for all concerned.

"We decided on what was best for Barcelona, Brazil and the player," Gilmar continued. Neymar is a match-winner and a very intelligent person. He always wants to play, but it was better for him, for us and for Barcelona. We respect that."

Juve stalwarts sign extension

AFP, Milan



A "proud" Gianluigi Buffon hinted he is still hopeful of becoming a Champions League winner with Juventus

after he and defender Andrea Barzagli signed two-year contract extensions with the Serie A champions Wednesday.

Italy goalkeeper Buffon has enjoyed another successful season with the Turin giants, helping them to a record-equalling fifth consecutive league title and an Italian Cup final with AC Milan on May 21.

Buffon set a new Serie A record of 974 minutes without conceding a goal during Juve's triumphant league campaign, but once again the 38-year-old 'keeper was left waiting for elusive Champions League glory.

Less than a year after reaching the final, where they lost 3-1 to Barcelona, Juve were ousted by Bayern Munich in this season's last 16 and Buffon admitted defeat in the decisive second leg shattered his emotions.

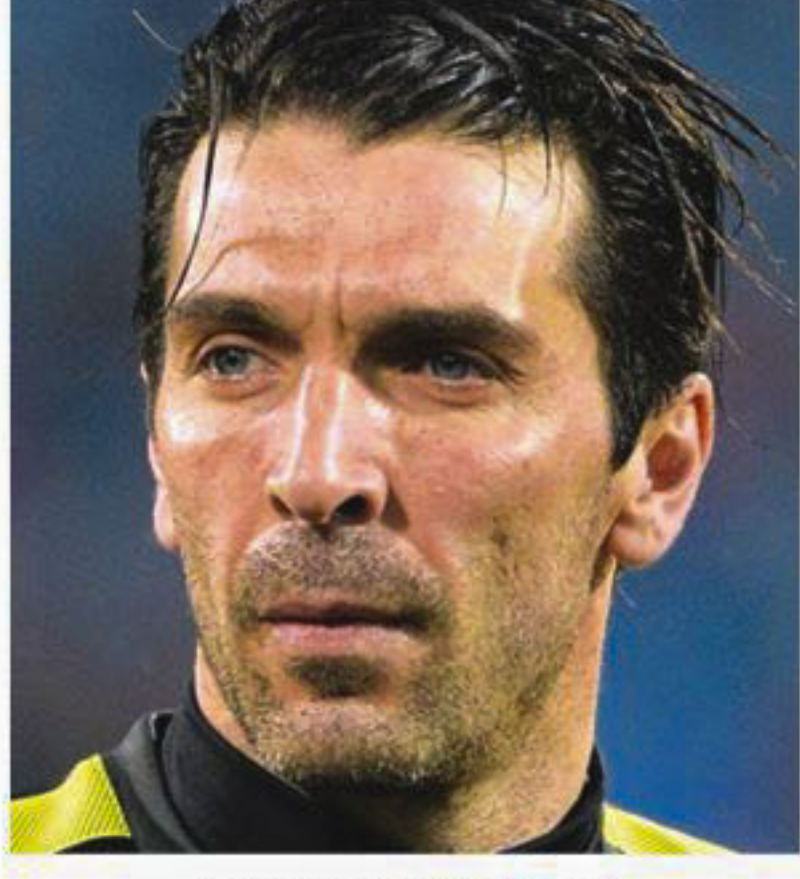
"The goals I've set myself here have always been related to the team as a whole and to work on certain things individually too," said Buffon, who was also a Champions League runner-up with Juve in 2003 but has never won the trophy.

"One area that stands out for me is managing my emotions better, such as the severe disappointment I felt when I

conceded the second goal in the return leg against Bayern Munich."

Buffon and Barzagli, 35, are the defensive rocks on which Juve have built their domestic success in recent seasons and are considered crucial players for the club, and Italy.

With their respective deals set to expire at the end of the season, they are now set to end their careers when their



GIANLUIGI BUFFON

new contracts expire on June 30, 2018.

Buffon, especially, has shown no signs of slowing down and he added: "I'm immensely proud in the faith Juventus have placed in me once more and I hope that my fantastic story with this club can continue to yield many more successes."

Although one of Juve's objectives next season is to set a new, all-time

record of six consecutive league titles, coach Massimiliano Allegri also wants to establish them as regulars in the latter stages of the Champions League.

But after seeing Juventus fight their way back from a disastrous start to this campaign, Buffon said they will remain humble.

"Now we're looking forward to the next two years. We'll approach the



ANDREA BARZAGLI

upcoming campaign with great humility," he said.

"If we were to succeed in what we all hope we can achieve, then the numbers would speak for themselves.

"I'll have won 10 Scudetto titles in 16 seasons here. These figures really give a sense of incredible continuity both for me as a player and as a team unit."

Siddikur needs a good show in Mauritius

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's ace golfer Siddikur Rahman will be hoping for a good outing in the AfrAsia Bank Mauritius Open beginning in Mauritius today as a place in the Olympics looks slipping away.

The 31-year-old golfer is currently in the fourth-replacement category of the reserve list and will need a good show at the one-million-pound event to get back to the original list.

While being out of the original list when the cut-off date of July 11 is reached will not necessarily rule him out of contention for the Olympic Games, as many of the top golfers in the world are opting to not travel to Brazil, failing to make it will nevertheless put his chances under serious jeopardy as other players may fill the void left by those opting not to participate. Hence a good outing in Mauritius is of paramount importance to the two-time Asian Tour winner, who however will get his last chance to rectify his standings in the Yeangder Tournament Players' Championship in Chinese Taipei next month.

West Ham vow life bans for attackers

AFP, London



West Ham United on Wednesday vowed to ban for life any fans found to have taken part in an attack on the Manchester United team bus before their key Premier League game.

The attacked marred West Ham's 3-2 win over the English giants in the final match at the London club's Boleyn Ground on Tuesday.

The match was delayed for 45 minutes as police in riot gear cleared troublemakers who hurled bottles and cans at the bus while United's players cowered on the floor.

"It was an extraordinary night full of extraordinary moments in front of extraordinary fans, 99 percent of whom behaved impeccably and were a credit to the club," West Ham said in a statement.

"However, we are aware that there were some supporters outside the Boleyn Ground who didn't act in an appropriate way when the Manchester United team bus was damaged.

"That was not acceptable and we will work with the police to identify those responsible and ban them for life."

London police said four officers were injured during the trouble, but no arrests have yet been made.

Three men were arrested during the game, including a 20-year-old on suspicion of affray and two men aged 47 and 18 for rushing onto the pitch.

Police are scouring closed circuit televi-

sion images of the incidents and have appealed for witnesses.

West Ham co-chairman David Sullivan initially blamed United for the delay to kick-off, saying they should have arrived earlier at the ground, but on Wednesday he backtracked.

"When I was asked about the incident prior to yesterday's game, I was unaware of the damage that had occurred to the Manchester United team bus," he said in a statement on the West Ham website.

"I want to apologise to Manchester United for that damage and assure them that we will be doing all we can to track down those responsible and ban them for life."

West Ham vice-chairman Karren Brady condemned the bus attack.

"I, the board and everyone at West Ham United totally condemn the unacceptable behaviour we saw outside the ground last night," Brady wrote on Twitter.

"West Ham is a family club and the vast majority of fans attended Tuesday's final game to respectfully say Farewell Boleyn.

"Those who chose to behave unacceptably will be dealt with in the strongest way possible, with life bans for those guilty of violence.

"The events in the stadium last night were incredible and it would be a shame if the actions of a mindless few outside overshadowed them.

"Their behaviour was unacceptable and won't be stood for. But my overriding memory will not be of them but of a fitting farewell to the Boleyn."



The bus carrying the Manchester United team is escorted by police after having a window smashed on its way to West Ham's Boleyn ground before their Premier League encounter on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP