

FINALLY SOMETHING RONALDO CAN'T DO

Real Madrid star Cristiano Ronaldo keeps posting videos of his domestic activity after he gets home from the club's training. Until now he has 'entertained' us with work in his gym, but this time he headed to the pool for a few lengths. He has a large swimming pool in his house and he made good use of it on this video. Perhaps he was inspired by Michael Phelps, the star of the Olympic Games in Rio. However, Cristiano showed that despite his physique, his swimming stamina is not high. After just a couple of lengths he already seemed out of breath. Ronaldo is currently trying to recover from a knee injury he sustained in the Euro 2016 final.



Spain, Wales cruise

AFP, Paris



Spain began life under new coach Julen Lopetegui in perfect style while Gareth Bale inspired Euro 2016 sensations Wales and Kosovo earned a historic point in World Cup qualifying on Monday.

Lopetegui enjoyed a perfect competitive debut as Diego Costa, David Silva and Alvaro Morata all hit doubles in an 8-0 drubbing of Liechtenstein in Leon.

Over in Cardiff, Real Madrid forward Bale teed up Sam Vokes for a 38th-minute opener and then scored his 23rd and 24th international goals either side of an effort by Joe Allen, who registered his first in a 4-0 crushing of Moldova.

Elsewhere Daryl Murphy's first ever international goal secured the Republic of Ireland a 2-2 draw against Serbia in Belgrade, and 10-man Italy beat Israel 3-1 in Haifa.

But arguably the performance of the night was in Turkey where Valon Berisha made history, scoring Kosovo's first goal on their competitive debut as they came from behind to draw 1-1 away to Finland.

The goal gave Kosovo a precious point in qualifying Group I after Paulus Arajuuri had put Finland in front from close range in the 18th minute.

Kosovo were accepted into FIFA in May, and this was a remarkable result given that world football's governing body only gave their approval for a host of players to represent the Balkan outfit earlier on Monday.

Among those given the green light at the last minute were goalkeeper and captain Samir Ujkani, previously capped by Albania, Albert Bunjaku, who featured for Switzerland at the 2010 World Cup, and goal-scorer Berisha, who was playing for Norway as recently as June.

With several thousand Kosovans living in the Turkey region, there was a sizeable support for the away side in their first ever competitive outing.

Kosovo declared independence from Serbia in 2008. About 100 countries recognise it as a state now, but major countries like 2018 World Cup hosts Russia do not.

Serbia vehemently opposed Kosovo's admittance to world governing body FIFA, which came soon after Europe's governing body UEFA narrowly approved their membership.

Their World Cup bow comes after their Olympic debut at the Rio Games last month, with Kosovo being accepted by the International Olympic Committee in 2014.

Spain's comprehensive win put them atop Group C ahead of Italy on goal difference.

"We reaped our rewards in the second-half for what we did right in the first-half," said Lopetegui.

"I am happy. They are the first three points and it was important to start well."

Spain and Italy meet in their next qualifier in Turin on October 6.

In Israel, new Italian manager Giampiero Ventura reflected on his debut win with goals from Graziano Pelle, Antonio Candreva from the penalty spot, and Ciro Immobile, after veteran defender Giorgio Chiellini was sent off in the 55th minute for his second yellow card.



After claiming a spot among the top eight teams in Asia, the members of the Bangladesh under-16 girls team finally took some time to celebrate, making merry at the Purbani Hotel on Monday before leaving for their homes yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Happy homecoming for U-16 girls

SPORTS REPORTER



The members of Bangladesh U-16 women's team left the capital for their respective homes last morning after spending two-and-a-half months away from their family members, but now they are carrying with them an unforgettable tale which kept the whole nation enthralled over the last 10 days.

Having emerged unbeaten champions of Group C of AFC U-16 Championship Qualifiers and thus qualifying for the eight-team final round to be held in Thailand in 2017, some of the girls enjoyed their last afternoon in the capital by shopping for their family members while some others spent time giving interviews to TV channels.

On the night before leaving, the girls attended an official dinner at Hotel Purbani, where the other teams had stayed throughout the campaign, with all the teams and enjoyed the occa-

sion till 11:00pm.

Like their sizzling performance on the pitch, the Bangladesh girls enchanted with song and dance alongside girls from Singapore, Kyrgyzstan, Chinese Taipei and the others and captured those moments of celebration on their smart phones.

The family members of skipper Krishna Rani Sarkar, Akhi Khatun and Mousumi Jahan turned up in the morning to pick them up while the rest of the players returned home on the team bus.

All the players of this 23-member squad except for Akhi and Nila are products of Bangamata Gold Cup and they all drew attention of the football coaches through their respective primary schools which either emerged champions or finished in the top three.

The skill and technique of these girls were honed during a two-month regional training under 14 BFF coaches including Golam Rabbani Choton, Mahmudur Rahman Litu and others

following the completion of Plan U-15 women's championship in 2013.

Since then these girls have been together for most of the time and participated in consecutive AFC U-14 Girls' Regional Championships in Sri Lanka, Nepal and Kyrgyzstan; the AFC U-16 women's Championship Qualifiers and the South Asian Games over the last three years. The continued exposure to international football and playing together as a team have instilled a winning habit in these girls.

"Now football is part of my life," says Krishna while Sanjida's realisation is she cannot think of a moment without football.

"I can't sleep well without playing football," was the reply of Marzia while Maria and Anuching urged the authorities to continue the financial assistance so that they could keep playing football alongside their studies.

The girls are supposed to return to the capital on September 14 to start training for the 2017 final round.

Kurtz named hockey coach

SPORTS REPORTER

German coach Oliver Kurtz has been appointed the head coach of the Bangladesh national hockey team ahead of the AHF Cup which will be held from November 19-27 in Hong Kong.

The Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) has not only appointed the German head coach for three months, they have also pinned their hopes on a full German coaching staff which includes an adviser, technical adviser, video analyst and physiotherapist.

It is so far the first time that the game's governing body has appointed a five-member full foreign coaching staff, which will cost 23,000 US dollars per month.

Former national coach Peter Gerhard Rach will act as the main adviser of Kurtz, who had once been the deputy of Gerhard during Bangladesh's campaign in the 2010 South Asian Games in Dhaka.

The national team management committee (NTMC) of the game's governing body has appointed Mahbub Harun as the local head coach, who will assist the foreign coaching staff and conduct the training in their absence.

The NTMC committee headed by BHF vice president Safiullah Al Munir also presented their future plans -- short-term, mid-term and long term -- to strengthen grassroots development, coaches' development and bring professionalism to the hockey federation.

The committee is also mulling over sending the national hockey team to Europe as part of their conditioning camp for the AHF Cup.



Australian opener Glen Maxwell set the stage for Australia's world-record total of 263, pulverising the Sri Lanka bowlers with 14 fours and 9 sixes on his way to an unbeaten 145 in the first T20I at Pallekele yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Mad Max plunders SL

AFP, Pallekele

Opener Glenn Maxwell's blistering century in Australia's world record 263 powered the visitors to a comprehensive 85-run win over Sri Lanka in the first Twenty20 international in Pallekele on Tuesday.

Australia, who broke Sri Lanka's nine-year record of 260/6 against Kenya in 2007, restricted the hosts to 178 for nine in 20 overs to take the lead in the two-match series.

Maxwell destroyed the Sri Lankan bowling attack with his unbeaten 145 off 65 balls,

which was laced with 14 fours and nine sixes, after the visitors were invited to bat first.

Skipper David Warner gave Australia a fiery start with his 28 runs off 12 balls as he put on a 57-run opening partnership with Maxwell to lay a solid foundation.

Off-spinner Sachithra Senanayake bowled Warner on a looping delivery that held its line to take the off stump, but Sri Lanka's joy was shortlived as Maxwell was just warming up at the other end.

The opener, who registered his maiden T20 century in his 35th game, found the perfect partner in Usman Khawaja, who scored 36 off 22 balls, as the duo put together 97 runs for the second wicket.

Maxwell and Travis Head, who scored an 18-ball 45, then put on 109 runs for the third wicket as it was raining boundaries at a packed Pallekele International Stadium.

In reply, Sri Lanka were never in the chase after losing openers Tillakaratne Dilshan and Kusal Perera (4) in the first two overs of the innings.

SCORES IN BRIEF

AUSTRALIA: 263 for 3 in 20 overs (Maxwell 145 not out, Head 45, Khawaja 36; Pathirana 1-45)

SRI LANKA: 178 for 9 in 20 overs (Chandimal 58, Mendis 22, Kapugedara 43; Starc 3-26, Boland 3-26)

Result: Australia won by 85 runs. Player-of-the-match: Glenn Maxwell.

Washout sees Tigresses lose T20 series

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh women's cricket team suffered a 1-0 series loss in the T20I series against their Irish counterparts after the second and final T20I at the Bredy Cricket Club in Maghermason was abandoned without a ball being bowled due to a wet outfield.

The tour so far has been blighted by inclement weather. The first T20I faced an obstacle in the form of rain and, although it eventually continued, the match was reduced to a 10-overs-a-side affair.

Both teams had struggled with the bat in that rain-curtailed game, with Ireland successfully defending 54 after some tidy bowling.

Bangladesh will now have a shot at redemption in the ODI phase, with the first ODI on Thursday at the Bredy Cricket Club, while the second and final ODI will be held on Saturday at the same venue.

China earn 1st point

AFP, Shenyang

China held heavyweights Iran to a gritty 0-0 draw to lift their hopes of reaching just their second World Cup in Asian qualifying on Tuesday.

Asia's sleeping giants lacked ambition in the first half but they went for broke in the second in a performance that was good enough to earn their first point of the third round.

China have only ever reached one World Cup, in 2002, but qualifying for Russia 2018 would be a significant statement for a country which aims to become a global football power.

Murray in last eight

AFP, New York



Open quarter-final Monday, clocking up a personal fast serve record in the process.

The 29-year-old reigning Wimbledon and Olympic champion stormed to an impressive seventh win in 10 meetings against the 22nd-seeded Dimitrov.

From the moment Murray broke for a 3-1 lead in the first set, on the back of a lung-busting 32-shot rally, the outcome of the Arthur Ashe Stadium clash was never in doubt.

For good measure, Murray sent down his fastest ever serve of 141mph (226.9 km/h) at the end of a set where he allowed Dimitrov just five points on his service.

Dimitrov broke only once in the match in the fourth game of the second set but it was a brief respite as Murray quickly reclaimed it before taking 10 of the next 12 games to seal the rout.

Dimitrov committed 43 unforced errors as Murray set up a last-eight clash with Japanese sixth seed Kei Nishikori, the 2014 runner-up who downed 37-year-old Ivo Karlovic 6-3, 6-4, 7-6 (7/4).

Karlovic fired 21 aces in the contest but Nishikori's 44 winners and a miserly seven unforced errors proved the key.

LATEST

Angelique Kerber reached her second US Open semifinal on Tuesday with a 7-5, 6-0 victory over 2015 runner-up Roberta Vinci which also edged her closer to the world number one spot.

Wawrinka, a former Australian and French Open champion, reached a fourth successive quarter-final in New York with a hard-fought 6-4, 6-1, 6-7 (5/7), 6-3 win over Ilya Marchenko, the world number 63 from Ukraine.

Serena Williams broke through another barrier on Monday, her 308th Grand Slam match win taking her past Roger Federer for the most in major tournaments and into the quarter-finals of the US Open.

As Williams, never seriously challenged in a 6-2, 6-3 victory over 52nd-ranked Yaroslava Shvedova, sailed on, one of the two players with a chance to topple her from the world number one spot in this tournament bowed out as fourth-seeded Agnieszka Radwanska was shocked by 18-year-old Croatian Ana Konjuh.

The 6-4, 6-4 triumph avenged a bitter disappointment for Konjuh, who held three match points against Radwanska in the second round at Wimbledon before falling 9-7 in the third round after stepping on a ball and turning her ankle.



Andy Murray of Great Britain stretches to hit a return against Grigor Dimitrov of Bulgaria during their US Open men's singles fourth round match at Flushing Meadows on Monday.

PHOTO: AFP