

CHANNEL 9 & SONY SIX
Bangladesh Premier League T20
 Rangpur Riders v Khulna Titans
 Live from 7:00pm
BOISHAKHI TV
 Bangladesh Premier League

Rahmatganj v Sk Jamal
 Live from 3:00pm
STAR SPORTS 1
 India v England
 First Test, Day 2

Live from 10:00am
TEN 3
 Zimbabwe v Sri Lanka
 Second Test, Day 5
 Live from 2:00pm

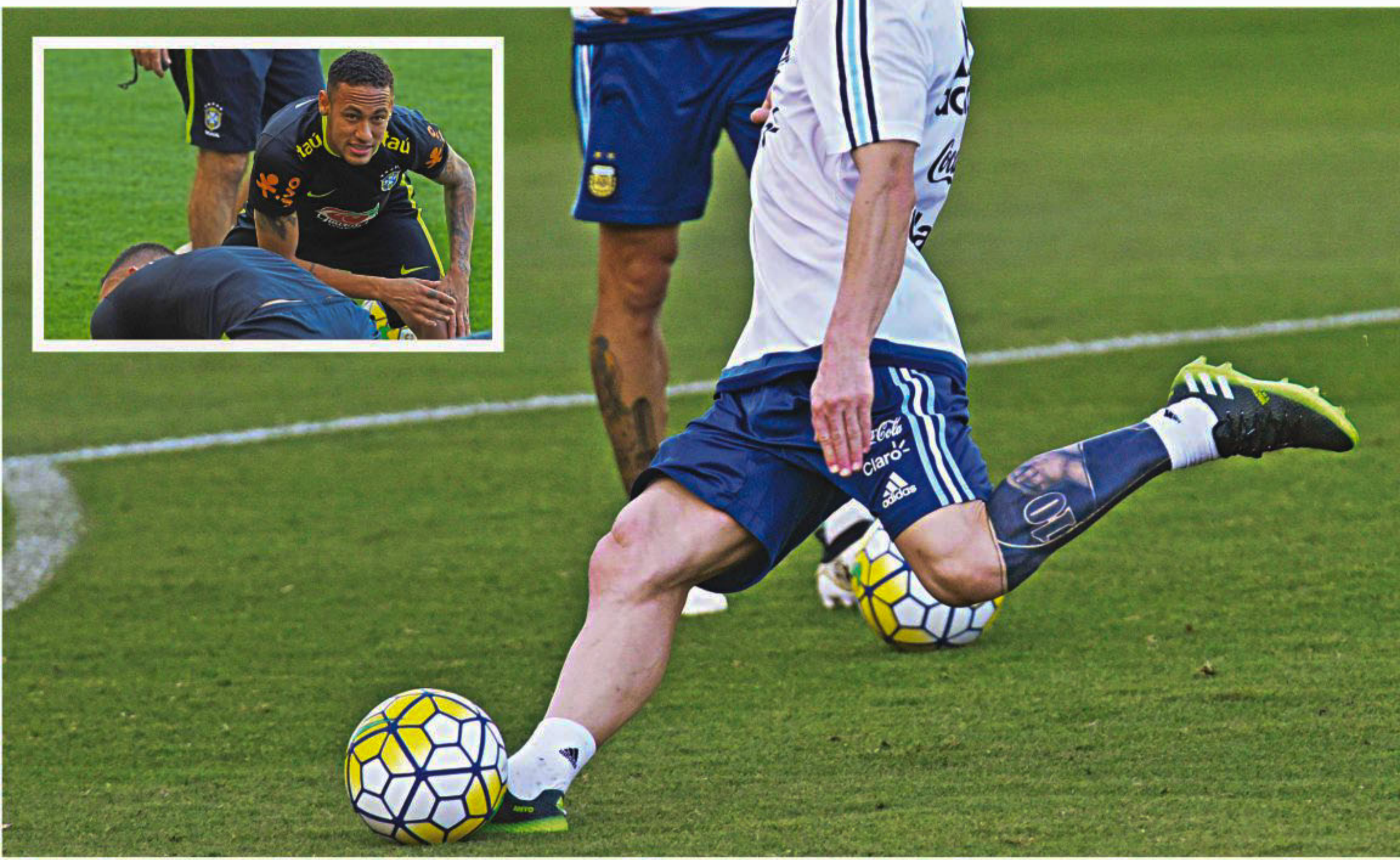
SONY SIX
FIFA World Cup Qualifiers
 Colombia v Chile
 Live from 2:30am (Friday)
 Brazil v Argentina
 Live from 5:45am (Friday)

DAY'S EVENT

Bangladesh Premier League T20
 Rangpur Riders v Khulna Titans
 Time: 7:00pm

Venue: Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium
Bangladesh Premier League
 Rahmatganj v Sk Jamal

Time: 3:00pm
 Venue: Rafiq Uddin Bhuiyan Stadium,
 Mymensingh



Argentina superstar Lionel Messi practises shooting during a training session at the Atletico MG Training Centre, while (INSET) Brazil talisman Neymar stretches during training at the Mineirao Stadium on Tuesday ahead of their 2018 World Cup qualifier on Thursday (Bangladesh Time: 5:45am, Friday).

PHOTOS: AFP

Brazil host Argentina in 'Titanic' Belo Horizonte

AFP, Belo Horizonte

A resurgent Brazil return to the scene of the most humiliating defeat in their history on Thursday when they face Argentina in a titanic 2018 World Cup qualifier.

Two years ago at Belo Horizonte's Estadio Mineirao, Brazil were ripped apart 7-1 by Germany in the World Cup semifinals, a traumatic mauling that sent the football-mad country into a nosedive of despair.

But fast-forward to 2016, and Brazil look to be a team firmly on the road to recovery as they prepare for the 107th meeting with Argentina at the 61,800-seat venue.

A disastrous Copa America Centenario campaign -- which saw Brazil eliminated in the first round of the tournament for the first time since 1987 -- led to the dismissal of coach Dunga in June.

Dunga's replacement, Tite, the successful former Corinthians coach, has overseen a renaissance which has left admirers talking about a return of the Selecao's fabled "jogo bonito" ("beautiful game").

A stylish 3-0 win at Ecuador in September -- the first in Brazil's history -- was followed by a 2-1 win over Colombia before a 5-0 drubbing of Bolivia.

A further win over Venezuela in

October -- Brazil's fourth straight qualifying victory -- catapulted Tite's side to the top of Brazil's 10-team round-robin standings, with 21 points from 10 games.

"I don't have the adjectives. I'm living the dream of any Brazilian coach," Tite said after naming his squad for this week's clash with Argentina. "I try not to think too much about the history. I'm just focused on the strategy."

Brazil are likely to face the most searching examination of their reawakening against Argentina, who will welcome back Lionel Messi after the Barcelona superstar missed their last three games through injury.

Tostao, a veteran of Brazil's magical 1970 World Cup-winning side, wondered whether a decisive win over Argentina could finally help the country turn the page on the traumas of 2014.

"Would it not be a symbolic landmark to end the depression, the mourning, even if it not against Germany," the 69-year-old midfielder wrote in an opinion piece.

Brazil's rediscovered joie de vivre has been best exemplified by the form of Neymar, dazzling in the win over Bolivia last month, while others such as Liverpool's Philippe Coutinho and Roberto Firmino have also shined under Tite.

Manchester City-bound teenager

Gabriel Jesus has also impressed, scoring three goals in four games under Tite.

While Brazil's fortunes have been on an upswing, Argentina's form has tailed off in recent matches.

With Messi missing, Argentina lost one and drew two of their last three games, a run of results that saw them fall off the pace.

A retrospective FIFA decision to award Chile a 3-0 win over Bolivia for the fielding of an ineligible player also hurt Argentina, promoting the Chileans to fifth spot and leaving the Albiceleste in sixth.

The return of Messi to Argentina's ranks should calm the two-time world champions' nerves. Messi arrived in Belo Horizonte this week after hitching a lift in the private jet of Barcelona teammate Neymar.

In other matches on Thursday, second-placed Uruguay meet third-placed Ecuador in Montevideo while fourth-placed Colombia take on fifth-placed Chile in Barranquilla.

Chile's preparations have been jolted by a late injury to striker Alexis Sanchez. The Arsenal star suffered a muscle strain during training in Santiago, preventing him from travelling to Colombia.

The top four finishers in South America's standings qualify automatically for the 2018 finals in Russia. The fifth placed side faces a play-off.

Bangabandhu Gold Cup dropped?

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh footballers will be out of international action until the SAFF Championship takes place in December next year, thanks to Bangladesh Football Federation's (BFF) decision to drop the Bangabandhu Gold Cup from its calendar for the next four years.

Failing to move into the final phase of Asian Cup Qualifiers means Bangladesh will get no FIFA or AFC sanctioned matches for nearly two and a half years until the qualifying rounds of the 2022 Qatar World Cup and the 2023 Asian Cup starts in 2019.

Bangladesh's lone opportunity to play international matches will be in invitational tournaments play FIFA friendly matches, while there is no mention in the draft master about the Bangabandhu Gold Cup, which was in 2015 and 2016.

"We have neither dropped it [Bangabandhu Gold Cup] nor included it in the calendar. We are working on which slot can the tournament be accommodated in the calendar," BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag said.

BFF calendar fails to draw roadmap for grassroots

SPORTS REPORTER



After the national team's debacle in Bhutan, the country's football fraternity has been immersed in discussions about the palpable state of grassroots football and youth development, which the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) has ignored over the years.

The lack of programmes at the grassroots level and the uninspiring attitude towards youth development has been underscored by the fact that the national team is still made up of those veterans that have been present for over 10 years, with no talented youths making their way into the side.

After the Bhutan debacle, that dawned on sitting BFF president Kazi Salahuddin, who admitted the shortcomings and said that grassroots and youth development would be addressed in their recently-approved four-year master plan. The person who was charged with scrutinising that four-year plan, FIFA's senior development manager Mike Pfister, also emphasised that the ignorance in those areas would put the future of Bangladesh football in danger.

However, the master plan -- which has been developed over the past three months -- still leaves a lot to be desired as it needs to properly synchronize its programmes in order to make them more effective.

While the master plan is supposed to breathe new life into those areas, it includes very little which is new. Instead it is the older programmes in the existing structure which have been overlooked in recent years that have been revived. This includes the National School Championship, Sher-e-Bangla National Championship (district teams), Suhrawardi Cup (U-19 teams), Champions Club Cup (district club champions), the District Football League and a proposed U-14 football festival.

In last nine years the National School Championship was held only twice despite attracting sponsors and interest from school students. The tournament is set to roll again from January next year, but the timing of

that clashes with the Dhaka-based Pioneer Football League in which most under-16 players participate.

Apart from the Suhrawardi Cup, where 64 district U-19 teams participate, there is one other tournament in the calendar year where youth teams get a chance. That is during the U-18 tournament where the Premier League clubs participate. However, the Suhrawardi Cup has been scheduled for only 13 days, which raises the question of just how serious the BFF is about the tournament involving the youth.

The BFF calendar also includes training programme for national U-14, U-16 and U-19 teams ahead of the SAFF and AFC tournaments, but there are no tournaments for the U-14 or U-16 teams, which are believed to be the pipeline for the U-19 squad. There are further concerns as the game's governing body also dropped the boys' U-15 tournament which was held last year, although Sailor promised to continue their sponsorship.

While the education board is running the Bangabandhu Gold Cup involving 60,000 primary schools across the country each year, it is believed that those students need another platform and an U-14 tournament either across the country or district-wise or upazila-wise tournaments to find a place in their high school team during the National School Championship.

The continuity of those programmes has also not been addressed in the calendar yet, although it has been learned that some regional and divisional training centres would be set up to offer training to primary school teachers and game teachers as well as U-12 and U-14 boys and girls sometime each year.

Interestingly, when BFF vice-president and development committee chairman Badal Roy was asked whether he was aware of the grassroots and youth programmes, he refused to comment on the issue, saying that he was not fully-aware of the details of these programmes, which are being prepared by the BFF technical staff.

BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag meanwhile said that the finer details of the calendar, such as the timings of the events, were being ironed out.

ITF INTERNATIONAL JUNIOR TENNIS

Local hopes extinguished

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's Afrana Islam Preeti lost against Xiaowei Hu of China in straight sets in the pre-quarterfinal of the Walton 30th Bangladesh ITF Junior Tennis Championships at the Ramna National Tennis Complex yesterday. The 17-year-old Bangladeshi, who had beaten Gouri Agarwal of India sets in the second round on Tuesday, surrendered meekly to the fifth seeded Chinese player (1-6, 0-6) yesterday.

The day also saw Bangladesh's doubles pairs eliminated. Lamisa Suchona Fabiha and Raisa Haider pair lost against India's Harsha Sai Challa and Sharannya Gaware pair (0-6, 0-6); Shafina Sha Laxme and Afrana pair lost against India's Muskan Gupta and Tanisha Kashyap pair (1-6, 0-6) while Bangladesh's Raina Shay Lal and India's Muskaan Ranjan pair lost against Gauri Agarwal and Riddhi Ramesh Sharma pair in straight sets.

Lahm hints at retirement

AFP, Berlin

Philipp Lahm, Germany's World Cup-winning captain and Bayern Munich's current skipper, hinted that he may retire from football at the end of the season.

Lahm stepped down from international football after leading Germany to the 2014 World Cup and has a Bayern contract until 2018, but admitted he might hang up his boots in June 2017.

"I wouldn't rule it out," Lahm, who turns 33 on Friday, told magazine Sport Bild.

Crown Izonil
 An amazing waterproof plaster

Take a right decision before plastering your walls! Don't forget to plaster the walls of your water reservoirs, basements and the roofs by Crown Izonil. 100% waterproof and damp-proof walls are possible only when you use Crown Izonil.

For Details: izonil@crowncement.com
 01709631637, 01766699701

A Product of Crown Cement Group

<http://www.crowncement.com/products/cement/crown-izonil/>