

BOISHAKHI TV
Bangladesh Premier League
Abahani v Sk Jamal
Live from 3:00pm
Mohammedan v Sk Russel
Live from 5:45pm

STAR SPORTS 2
Australia v Pakistan
First Test, Day 1
Live from 9:00am

Bangladesh Premier League
Abahani v Sk Jamal
Time: 3:00pm

Mohammedan v Sk Russel
Time: 5:45pm
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium

DAY'S EVENT



Players of the Mymensingh team burst into unbridled joy after beating Rangpur 6-0 in the final of the JFA U-14 Women's National Championship at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Abahani meet Sk Jamal today

SPORTS REPORTER

Title contenders Abahani will take on holders Sheikh Jamal DC in a crucial tie of JB Bangladesh Premier League at the Bangabandhu National Stadium today.

Four-time professional league champions Abahani are on top of the 12-team table with 43 points from 19 matches, three points clear of second-placed Chittagong Abahani. The Sky Blues will need a maximum of seven points in remaining three matches to win back the title. An outright win over Sheikh Jamal today will put them in an advantageous position ahead of their last two matches against lowly Feni Soccer Club and giant-killers Rahmatganj MFS.

Chittagong Abahani, meanwhile, stayed strongly in the title race with a 2-1 win against Feni Soccer Club, thanks to a last gasp strike from Alison Udoka.

Fallen giants Mohammedan SC will also take the field today when they face a resurgent Sheikh Russel KC.

Who's to blame for Satkhira withdrawal?

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

The women's wing chairman of the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF), Mahfuz Aker Kiron, lamented the fact that one of the teams withdrew and went home ahead of the semifinal of the JFA U-14 Women's National Championship on Monday. Satkhira, the team in question, did not turn up for their semifinal against Mymensingh, the eventual champions of the tournament, and went back home over a payment issue between the team's coach and the district football association.

"We did not have any prior knowledge about the issue. We only learned about it after the team [Satkhira] failed to turn up and Mymensingh were declared winners," Kiron told The Daily Star yesterday. "Had they [Satkhira] informed us about their financial troubles, we could have solved it or at least convinced them to stay."

Kiron informed that the BFF gave Tk 40,000 to the team in three instalments, like all the other participating teams, out of the coffer which is provided by the Japan Football Association.

The coach of the Satkhira team, Ali Akbar, claimed he had to withdraw his team from the tournament as there was no money left to

run the team's expenses and that despite asking the DFA president for money repeatedly, he did not get any help.

"We were supposed to get Tk 40,000 from the DFA, part of which was to be given by the BFF. However, our team received only Tk 30,000 from the DFA. I asked for the rest of the money several times, but he [DFA president Sirajul Islam Khan] did not give any more money," Akbar said. "As there was no money left, we tried to lose a match willingly, yet unfortunately went through to the semifinals. But it wasn't possible to continue, so I took the girls back to Satkhira."

The DFA president, however, refuted the allegation, saying: "The coach was given Tk 52,000. Yet he wanted more money from time to time, which I did not give. He was in fact once suspended temporarily for the same reason."

It may be mentioned here that there was Tk 50,000 and Tk 25,000 on offer for the tournament's champions and runners-up teams respectively.

A BFF spokesperson, meanwhile, told The Daily Star that Satkhira will be served with a show-cause notice by the games' governing body and the reply sent to the disciplinary committee, adding that all guidelines and procedures will be followed in case of any disciplinary action.

Biman Indoor Games begin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Biman Annual Indoor Games 2016 began at the Bangladesh Airlines Training Centre yesterday.

Director Administration and Chairman, Biman Sports and Cultural committee Belayet Hossain inaugurated the five day long completion as the Chief Guest, said a Biman release.

Biman officers, employees and their children from Dhaka, Chittagong, Sylhet and Jharkhanda stations took part in ten different categories of chess, carrom board, contract bridge, badminton and table tennis.

Superclassico in Australia

AFP, Sydney

Brazil and Argentina are set to play a South American "Superclassico" gala match in Australia next year, it was reported Tuesday.

The Australian newspaper said the clash would take place in early June at the 100,000-capacity Melbourne Cricket Ground.

'CR7 a rare breed'

AFP, Yokohama

Cristiano Ronaldo is itching to prove just why he deserved the Ballon d'Or by leading Real Madrid to another Club World Cup title, Zinedine Zidane said Wednesday.

The Portuguese superstar, voted the world's best player for a fourth time earlier this week, will lead Real's charge in Japan, where the European champions face Mexico's Club America in Thursday's semifinal.

"Cristiano is hugely motivated for this game -- as always," Real coach Zidane told reporters in Yokohama.

"He would be motivated even if it were a friendly, that's just the sort of player he is."

"Obviously we have many great players at Real Madrid but it's very rare one player wins so many awards," added the Frenchman, whose side are chasing their second world title in three years this week.

"To win four Ballon d'Ors is a fabulous achievement and it's not an easy thing to do. What he's doing is absolutely incredible -- maybe he deserves a fifth one too!"

Ronaldo closed on Lionel Messi's record



AFGHAN BOY MEETS IDOL MESSI

An Afghan boy who became an internet sensation after pictures of him wearing an improvised Lionel Messi football shirt went viral finally got to meet his superstar idol on Tuesday. Murtaza Ahmadi met the Barcelona forward in Doha, where the Spanish league champions played a friendly match against Saudi Arabian side Al-Ahli. Six-year-old Murtaza, from the rural Ghazni province south-west of Kabul, walked out onto the pitch as a mascot hand-in-hand with the Argentinian at the start of the match at Doha's Al-Gharrafa stadium. A delighted Murtaza said: "I'm very happy to have met my hero. It is a dream for me," according to a statement released by Qatar's Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy, the committee overseeing organisation of the 2022 tournament. —AFP

travelled to Tajikistan earlier this year to take part in the AFC Regional Girls' Championship.

Interestingly, Tania, one of the players in the Mymensingh squad is the younger sister of Marzia -- the star of the under-16 team.

"I follow my sister and I want to be like her and play in the national team," said Tania, who plays as a left-back, unlike Marzia who plays on the right wing.

Their triumph in this tournament will help girls like Amena who want to represent the national team, as the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) has kept a close eye on this tournament in order to bolster the under-14 women's team for the next AFC Regional Championship, which is likely to be held in May next year.

"We have found some talented players and picked them for a training camp for the national under-14 team. However, we still have 13 under-16 players in the ongoing under-16 camp and the addition of these talented girls will give us more options to select the best team before the AFC tournament," said national women's team's head coach Golam Rabbani Choton after the final.

ICB ISLAMIC BANK

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Williams stuns Arsenal

AFP, London

Ashley Williams's 86th-minute header ended Arsenal's 14-game unbeaten run and kept Arsene Wenger's side from the Premier League summit as Everton claimed a much-needed 2-1 win on Tuesday.

Arsenal would have provisionally supplanted leaders Chelsea on goals scored with victory and took a 20th-minute lead when Alexis Sanchez's free-kick deflected in off Williams.

But Seamus Coleman equalised with a 44th-minute header before Williams's first Everton goal ended his team's five-game winless run and sent Ronald Koeman's men up to seventh in the table.

"We showed two faces," Everton manager Koeman, who had defender Phil Jagielka sent off in stoppage time, told BT Sport.

"The first face, I hate that face because it is all about being nervous. You cannot lose the game like that."

"This was a good match though because we showed how we have to play -- with commitment and aggression. You see the reaction of the crowd when you go for it and that's what we did."

Arsenal manager Wenger said the game had been "very physical".

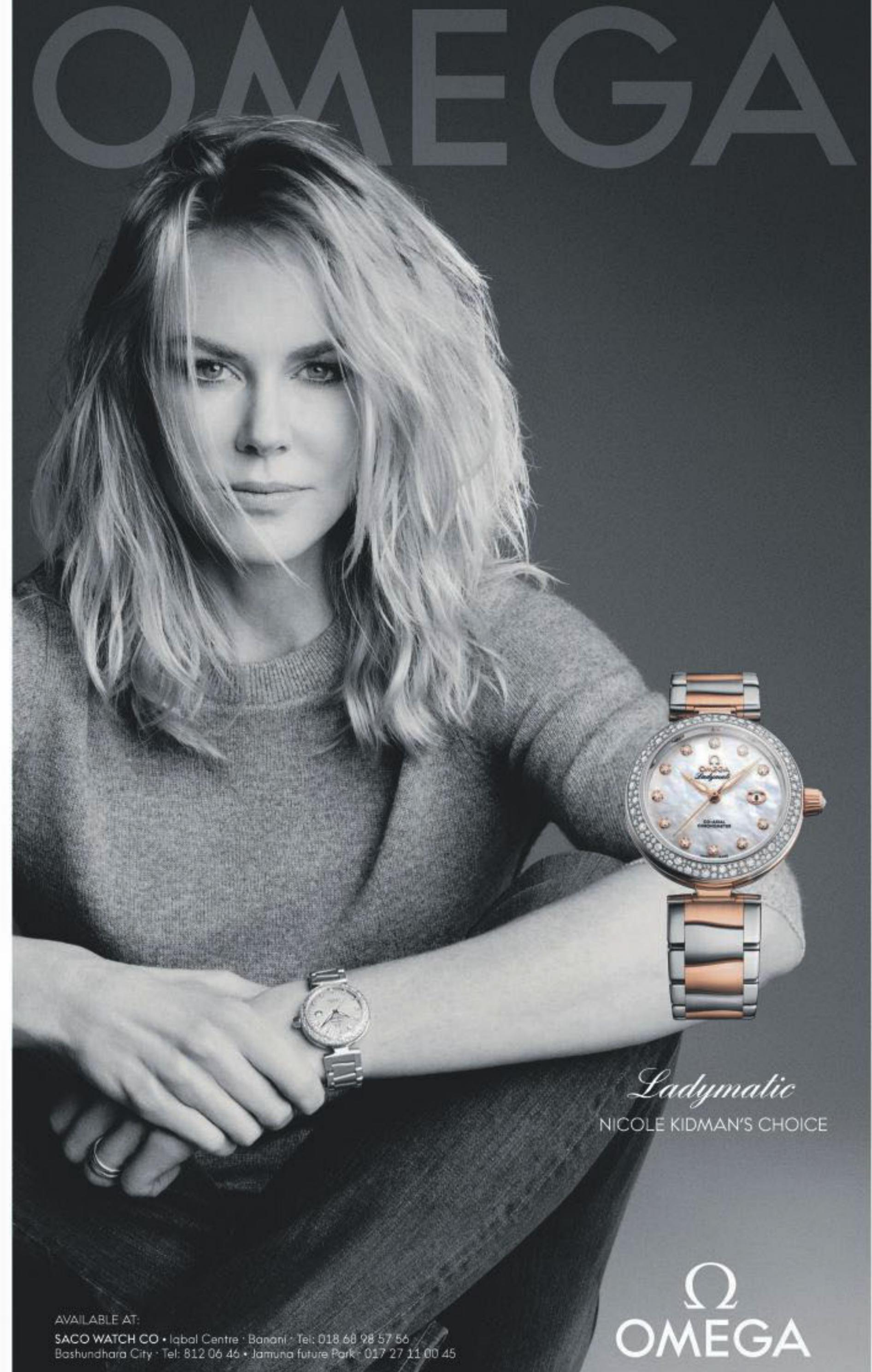
"We faced many physical challenges and that disturbed our game, but we were a bit unlucky to lose as well," he said.

Meanwhile, champions Leicester City were brought down to earth after their 4-2 demolition of Manchester City as Marc Pugh's goal earned Bournemouth a 1-0 win at the Vitality Stadium.

Arsenal made only one change from their 3-1 win over Stoke City, fit-again right-back Hector Bellerin replacing injured centre-back Shkodran Mustafi, and took a 20th-minute lead.

The goal stemmed from a comedy of errors on the edge of Everton's box as Ross Barkley lost possession, Williams fouled his own teammate Idrissa Gueye and Jagielka tripped Francis Coquelin.

Sanchez sent the free-kick curling towards Everton goalkeeper Maarten Stekelenburg and in seeking to clear the ball, Williams succeeded only in deflecting it into his own net.



OMEGA

Ladymatic

NICOLE KIDMAN'S CHOICE