

**QUICK SINGLES**

The following are a few samples of stories that did not make the print edition. However, if they pique your interest, you can always read them online on The Daily Star website by simply scanning the QR codes listed below:

**'Winning combination not sacred'**

Having won the first ODI and with the prospect of a first away series win against a higher-ranked side in the second ODI, Bangladesh captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza is not ruling out changes to the combination that delivered the win.

**Ozil to decide on his Arsenal future**

Arsenal midfielder Mesut Ozil insists he is comfortable at the North London club and will make a decision regarding his future soon.

**BD vs SL match: 2 Indians arrested for betting**

Indian police have busted a cricket betting den in which the accused were allegedly betting on the one-day match, played between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka in Dambulla.

**Nadal rallies to reach fourth round**

Rafael Nadal came back from an awful first set to defeat Germany's Philipp Kohlschreiber 0-6, 6-2, 6-3 and advance to the fourth round of the Miami Open.

**Shoaib and Shadab lead Pak to opening win**

Shoaib Malik made a composed unbeaten 38 to lead Pakistan to a six-wicket victory over West Indies in Barbados in the first of four Twenty20 internationals.

**Stung Mercedes vow to strike back**

Lewis Hamilton's Mercedes are vowing to come back hard in China after being ambushed by resurgent Ferrari in the Formulae One season-opener in Australia.

**FIFA to cover Coleman's wages**

Everton defender Seamus Coleman's wages will be paid by FIFA while he recovers from a double leg fracture suffered during international duty with Ireland.

**Williamson ton puts NZ on top**

A record-equalling Test century by Kane Williamson on Monday put New Zealand in charge of the third Test against South Africa and had them talking of victory in Hamilton.

**Army chief, Reza set to retain BOA posts**

Army Chief General Abu Belal Muhammad Shafiqul Huq and Syed Shahed Reza are all set to retain their posts as the president and secretary general of the Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) respectively as they are the lone candidates for the top two posts when the BOA polls are held on April 8.



Brazil stars Willian (L), Neymar (C) and Paulinho stretch during a training session at the Arena Corinthians in Sao Paulo on Sunday ahead of their 2018 World Cup qualifier against Paraguay tomorrow.

**Brazil eyeing WC spot**  
*Argentina face high-altitude Bolivia test*

AFP, Montevideo



A buoyant Brazil could book their place at the 2018 World Cup on Tuesday while Argentina will attempt to give their qualifying campaign more breathing space with a game at altitude against Bolivia.

After sinking into a protracted depression after the trauma of their humiliating 2014 World Cup exit, Brazil have undergone a transformation since new manager Tite took over last year.

Tite, who was appointed after the debacle of the 2016 Copa America Centenario, when Brazil failed to qualify from the group stage, has overseen a record-breaking run of seven straight wins.

The latest of those victories came on Thursday, when Brazil shrugged off an early Edinson Cavani goal to destroy Uruguay 4-1 in Montevideo.

That win marked a new record for Brazil in qualifiers, surpassing the six

straight victories recorded by the fabled Pele-led team which went on to win the 1970 World Cup in Mexico.

Brazil's magnificent run of form under Tite means they now lead the South American standings with 30 points from 13 games, seven points clear of second placed Uruguay who have 23 points.

FIXTURES	
Bolivia v Argentina	
Ecuador v Colombia	
Chile v Venezuela	
Brazil v Paraguay	
Peru v Uruguay	

On Tuesday, if Brazil beat Paraguay in Sao Paulo, and Chile and both Ecuador and Chile lose their games, the five-time World Cup-winners will have secured their berth in Russia.

Argentina hauled themselves back into the qualifying places on Thursday with a battling 1-0 win over Chile.

The Argentinians will attempt to

build on that crucial victory when the travel to the thin air of La Paz to face Bolivia on Tuesday.

The city's Estadio Hernando Siles is situated some 3,600 metres (11,800 ft) above sea level, and was the scene of a famous 6-1 Argentinian defeat in qualifiers for the 2010 World Cup.

In qualifying for the 2014 World Cup, Lionel Messi was left vomiting at half-time while Angel Di Maria needed to be given oxygen on the pitch before Argentina ground out a 1-1 draw.

Failure to beat Bolivia on Tuesday could see Argentina fall out of the automatic qualifying positions once more, if Colombia beat Ecuador in Quito and reigning South American champions Chile down bottom team Venezuela in Santiago.

Chile, back-to-back winners of the Copa America in 2015 and 2016, are currently outside the qualifying places following last week's defeat in Buenos Aires.

Captain Claudio Bravo vowed 'La Roja' would go all out to secure victory against Venezuela.



Kane Williamson celebrates his century against South Africa during the third day of the third Test at Seddon Park in Hamilton yesterday. The New Zealand captain equalled Martin Crowe's Kiwi record of 17 centuries.

**Williamson ton puts NZ on top**

AFP, Hamilton

A record-equalling Test century by Kane Williamson on Monday put New Zealand in charge of the third Test against South Africa and had them talking of victory in Hamilton.

At stumps on the third day, New Zealand were 321 for four, leading South Africa by seven runs with Williamson -- who equalled Martin Crowe's record of 17 Test centuries for the Black Caps -- not out on 148 with Mitchell Santner on 13.

It was a remarkable fightback by a side completely outclassed in the second Test when they were beaten by eight wickets inside three days.

Opener Jeet Raval, who put on a 190-run partnership with Williamson, said New Zealand were eyeing a 200 first innings lead.

"We'd love to get 500. We're in a good position and we've still got six wickets in the shed," said Raval.

"If we can get a couple of hundred-run lead and then put South Africa under pressure with the new ball it puts us right in the game.

"It's about putting us in a position where we can win this game and draw the series."

New Zealand, battling to square the series which South Africa lead 1-0, enjoyed a solid start from Raval and Tom Latham with an 83-run opening partnership before Williamson took control.

**SCORES IN BRIEF**

**SOUTH AFRICA:** First innings 314 (De Kock 90, Du Plessis 53, Amla 50; Henry 4-93, Wagner 3-104)

**NEW ZEALAND:** First innings 321 for 4 (Latham 50, Raval 88, Williamson 148 not out; Morkel 2-74, Rabada 2-83)

**No word from Maradona: FIFA**

REUTERS, Zurich

Soccer's governing body FIFA said on Monday it had heard nothing official from Diego Maradona since the Argentine World Cup winner threatened last week to quit his ambassadorial role.

FIFA said its last official contact with Maradona had been when he took part in a draw for the under-20 World Cup in South Korea on March 15.

"There have been no updates from him since then," said a FIFA spokesman.

Maradona told Argentine newspaper Clarin last Wednesday that he was angry over the Argentina Football Association's (AFA) decision to appoint television presenter Marcelo Tinelli as head of its national

teams committee.

Maradona told FIFA president Gianni Infantino in a telephone call that he would step down if the decision was not reversed within two days, the interview said.

The AFA is currently under FIFA intervention which, Maradona said, gave soccer's governing body the power to reverse the appointment.

Last June, FIFA responded to a financial and governance crisis in the AFA by stepping in and putting it under the administration of a 'normalisation committee'.

The committee's main role is to prepare the AFA for a presidential election which is due to be held on Wednesday.

Maradona took up his new role in February and said at the time he had fulfilled a lifelong dream.

**Blind sacked**

AFP, Amsterdam



Danny Blind was sacked as Netherlands coach on Sunday after a 2-0 defeat to Bulgaria left the team's chances of reaching the World Cup finals hanging by the slenderest of threads.

Blind, 55, had been in charge since July 2015, succeeding Guus Hiddink, but Saturday's loss in Sofia left the Dutch in fourth place in qualifying Group A, six points behind leaders France.

Only the group winners are guaranteed a place in the 2018 finals in Russia.

Blind said he was saddened by the decision.

"We were on the right track in Bulgaria, but it's a pity that it ends like this," he said.

Blind's assistant Fred Grim will take charge of the team for Tuesday's friendly against Italy in Amsterdam, the Dutch football federation (KNVB) said.

"We (the federation) have a lot of respect for Danny, but due to negative results and the difficulty we have to qualify for the 2018 World Cup, we must part company with him," said the KNVB in a statement.

The Netherlands, three-times World Cup runners-up, also failed to qualify for Euro 2016.

"To qualify for Russia will be very complicated," admitted star midfielder Wesley Sneijder.

The writing was already on the wall for Blind after he was summoned to meet the federation in the aftermath of the Bulgarian setback.



**Ronaldo tops Messi in earnings**

AFP, Paris

Real Madrid's Portuguese striker Cristiano Ronaldo was the best paid footballer in 2016-17, with 87.5 million euros (\$95.3m) in earnings, ahead of his Argentinian rival at Barcelona, Lionel Messi (76.5m), according to figures to appear in Tuesday's edition of France Football.

Messi's Brazilian teammate Neymar is third with 55.5 million euros ahead of Real Madrid's Welsh forward Gareth Bale (41m) and Argentina's Ezequiel Lavezzi (28.5m), who plays for Hebei Fortune.

**Independence Day squash on in Ctg**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Ispahani Bangladesh Independence Squash Open Tournament kicked off at the Chittagong Club yesterday evening.

A total of 36 players from nine teams are participating in this tournament. The teams are: Bangladesh Navy, BMA Officers' Club, Chittagong Club Limited, Elite Paint, ABC Limited, Ananta Group Dhaka Club, Gulshan Club and Officers' Club Dhaka.

Managing Director of MM Ispahani Limited Mirza Salman Ispahani inaugurated the tournament where general secretary of Bangladesh Squash Racket Federation Jahangir Hamid, director of title sponsors MM Ispahani Limited Mirza Sakir Ispahani and convener of Chittagong Club Squash subcommittee Yusuf Ali Mansur were present among others.

**HAQUE**

**Ding Dong Wafers**

৫ টাকার মিনি প্যাক কিনলেই মুটু-পাতলু স্টীকার ফ্রি