

STAR SPORTS 1
India v Australia
1st T20
Live from 7:30pm

SONY SIX
Pakistan v Sri Lanka
2nd Test, Day-2
Live from 4:00pm

TEN 1
FIFA World Cup Qualifiers
Andorra v Portugal
Live from 1:00am (Sunday)

TEN 2
FIFA World Cup Qualifiers
Bulgaria v France
Live from 1:00am (Sunday)

DAY'S EVENT

National Cricket League
Four-Day Match, Day-2
Time: 9:30am

Khulna v Rangpur
Venue: SKS, Rajshahi
Dhaka v Barisal

Venue: SANS, Khulna
Dhaka Metro v Chittagong
Venue: ZACS, Chittagong

Rajshahi v Sylhet
Venue: SCS, Bogra

Bangladesh Premier League
Farashganj v Brothers Union
Time: 4:30pm

Team BJMC v Arambagh
Time: 6:45pm
Venue: BNS

Argentina's fate in the balance

AFP, Montevideo

Lionel Messi and Argentina's hopes of reaching the 2018 World Cup were left hanging in the balance on Thursday after another stalemate on a nail-biting day of South American qualifying action.

Argentina were held to a 0-0 draw in Buenos Aires by Peru, leaving the two-time world champions outside the automatic qualification places as they head into the final round of fixtures next Tuesday.

It was another desperately disappointing display by Argentina, who once again struggled to turn a wealth of possession into goals. Barcelona star Messi hit the post in the second half but could only watch in frustration after serving up a stream of chances for team-mates who failed to convert.

The result left Argentina in sixth place in the standings. The first four teams qualify automatically, with the fifth-placed team advancing to a playoff against New Zealand in November. But with only two points separating third-placed Chile and seventh-placed Paraguay, the final standings could change dramatically depending on results on Tuesday.

The margin for error for Argentina, however, has narrowed after their latest setback, their third consecutive draw of a faltering qualification campaign.

Argentina's final qualifier is a challenging away trip to Ecuador in the thin air of Quito. Argentina have a poor record in the Ecuadorian capital, losing two out of three of

POSSIBLE PERMUTATIONS

If Argentina win they are guaranteed to advance.

If Argentina, Chile and Colombia win, then Argentina qualify as the fifth team and go into play-offs.

If Argentina lose, they need Paraguay to not win against Venezuela and Colombia to beat Peru by a bigger margin than what Argentina lost by to qualify directly.

In the case of a draw, two of the following three things must happen for Argentina to qualify:

- I. Paraguay fail to beat Venezuela at home.
- II. Brazil beat Chile by more than one goal.
- III. Colombia beat Peru or Peru beat Colombia by more than one goal.

POINTS TABLE

TEAMS	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	Pts
Brazil (Q)	17	11	5	1	38	11	27	38
Uruguay	17	8	4	5	28	18	10	28
Chile	17	8	2	7	26	24	2	26
Colombia	17	7	5	5	20	18	2	26
Peru	17	7	4	6	26	25	1	25
Argentina	17	6	7	4	16	15	1	25
Paraguay	17	7	3	7	19	24	-5	24

*Top Four get automatic qualification
*5th-placed team goes into play-off

their last World Cup qualifiers there and drawing the other. The Argentines' last World Cup qualifying win in Quito came in 2001.

However a victory on Tuesday would guarantee Argentina at least fifth place in the standings, with Peru and Colombia guaranteed to drop points against each other in their final game.

Brazil, who have already qualified in first place, were held to a 0-0 draw by eliminated Bolivia in La Paz earlier Thursday.

That left the focus on the teams jostling behind the five time champions for the three remaining automatic spots.

Uruguay, who are second with 28 points from 17 games, missed the chance to book their place in Russia after being frustrated 0-0 away at Venezuela.

Uruguay's Paris Saint-Germain striker Edinson Cavani squandered a golden chance to win the game but shot wide in the 83rd minute.

The Uruguayans are all but assured of qualification however, needing only a draw or a win against lowly Bolivia in Montevideo next week to book their place.

South American champions Chile, meanwhile, resurrected their qualification hopes with a thrilling 2-1 win over Ecuador in Santiago.

Striker Eduardo Vargas drilled in a low shot on 22 minutes to put the 2015 & 2016 Copa America champions 1-0 up.

But Alex Ibarra equalised in the 82nd minute for Ecuador to silence the home crowd. But with Chile's fans still struggling to digest Ibarra's strike, the hosts went back up the other end and Arsenal star rammed

home a close-range finish after Arturo Vidal's shot was only partially saved.

The win saw Chile climb from sixth to third in the standings. Chile will qualify automatically if they are able to beat Brazil in their final game next week.

In Barranquilla, Colombia threw away what looked to be a certain victory that would have put them within touching distance of qualification as they crashed to a 2-1 defeat to Paraguay.

Radamel Falcao scored with a deft lob to put Colombia 1-0 ahead in the 79th minute.

But the Colombians inexplicably continued to press forward and were twice caught on the break by Paraguay.

Oscar Cardozo bundled in the equaliser for Paraguay in the 89th minute and then Tony Sanabria punished poor goalkeeping by David Ospina to poke in a second in injury time to clinch the win.

FINAL ROUND FIXTURES

Paraguay v Venezuela, Uruguay v Bolivia, Peru v Colombia, Brazil v Chile, Ecuador v Argentina.

RESULTS

Bolivia	0	-	0	Brazil
Venezuela	0	-	0	Uruguay
Chile	2	-	1	Ecuador
Vargas 22, Sanchez 85				Ibarra 82
Colombia	1	-	2	Paraguay
Falcao 79				Cardozo 89, Sanabria 90+1
Argentina	0	-	0	Peru



Lionel Messi buries his head in his hands after yet another draw left Argentina's hopes for qualification to the 2018 World Cup up in the air. La Albiceleste must secure a win against Ecuador to go through. PHOTO: COLLECTED



The Bangladesh players get used to the artificial light as the last-ditch preparation goes on in full swing yesterday ahead of the Hero Asia Cup, scheduled to start on October 11 at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium.

PHOTO: STAR

Renovation works in race against time

SPORTS REPORTER



With only four days left for the start of the Hero Asia Cup, the Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) is running against time to prepare the venue for the eight-nation tournament, which is being held in Bangladesh after 32 years.

The installation of floodlights, apart from upgradation of other facilities at the Maulana Bhasani Stadium, was one of the preconditions in getting the nod for hosting Asian hockey's showpiece event. However, the BHF officials are a bit worried about handing over the venue to the Asian Hockey Federation (AHF) officials within the deadline [Sunday] due to unfinished work at the big bowl.

The National Sports Council (NSC), the organisation which is responsible for upgradation of facilities, started renovation work at the venue in late August and those works are yet to be completed.

"The NSC was supposed to hand over the stadium to us on September 30, but it deferred the completion date to October 5. The works are still going on," said BHF vice president Khaza

Rahmatullah yesterday.

Though an NSC official claimed that all major works have already been completed and now just the finishing touches such as washing, cleaning and painting are going on, an inspection of the venue revealed something otherwise. The stadium is still full of debris; the boundary fences have not been completed; the installation of electronic board beneath the flood-light towers was still going on while the glasses at the VIP gallery for the players were still being installed.

The NSC official, however, claimed that they got little time to renovate everything including four dressing rooms with ice-bath, the bathrooms, the extension of the press box, upgradation of the VIP boxes, drainage system and installation of a giant screen after having started their work on August 23.

Apart from the scheduled works, the NSC also has to do additional work for the probable attendance of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the final as they have been installing an elevator and decorating a room for the PM.

NSC's assistant director Sukumar Saha said that they would be able to complete all the work by Sunday and

hand it over to the game's local governing body the same day. However, the BHF officials claimed that the newly installed floodlights lack luminosity.

"The average lux of floodlights is 1663 at the moment and it is more in places like the centre of the pitch and the goalposts even though the BHF's demand was only 1250 lux," Sukumar said. "Everything we did has been done after numerous consultations with the BHF officials."

The BHF officials, however, may feel a bit of comfort due to the satisfaction expressed by AHF event and sports director Elisabeth Fuerst. The AHF official, though, emphasised on putting on great effort to complete everything before the start of the tournament.

"I think some very good progress has been made since I last visited couple of weeks ago. Obviously the lighting is now there and it looks very good. I think it's definitely international standard but there are still lots of work to be done and there is very little time left. So I think in the next four days, we must make big effort to make sure that everything is ready for the first day of matches," Fuerst told reporters after inspecting the Maulna Bhasani Hockey Stadium.

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:

Bayern's treble-winning hero returns

After four years in retirement, Jupp Heynckes returned to Bayern Munich for a fourth stint as head coach in the hope of bringing the 2013 glory days back to the Bavarian giants.

Iniesta renews Barca contract 'for life'

Barcelona tied down captain Andres Iniesta for the rest of his career as the club announced the 33-year-old midfielder has agreed a "lifetime contract".

Germany and England qualify for World Cup

Defending champions Germany clinched a place at next year's World Cup in Russia with a 3-1 win in Northern Ireland on Thursday, while England beat Slovenia 1-0 to secure their berth.

Bangladesh U-19s lose Afghan series

SPORTS REPORTER



Batting remains the biggest concern for the Bangladesh Under-19 team as Saif Hasan and his troops failed with the bat and subsequently were defeated in their fifth and final youth ODI against the Afghanistan Under-19 team, this time by 33 runs, to lose the five-match series 3-1 at the Sylhet International Cricket stadium yesterday.

The home side were bundled out on 206 in 48.2 overs in chase of the modest target Afghanistan posted at 239 for 6 after 50 overs.

Towhid Hridly was the only Bangladesh batsman that showed some fight as he scored 93 off 108 balls featuring 10 fours and 2 sixes while the others failed to provide any support.

Saif's 28 was the second highest score for Bangladesh who carried their disappointing form with the bat throughout the series.

Wafadar Momand was the pick of the Afghan bowlers, bagging four wickets while Qais Ahmad picked up three and Mujeeb ur Rahman took two to successfully defend the target and clinch the third consecutive win for the visitors.

Bangladesh did make a good start with the ball after Afghanistan, opting to bat first, struggled on 115 for 5 in 36 overs, where opener Ibrahim Zadrn scored 83 off 107 balls with eight fours and two sixes before being dismissed.

Darwaish Abdul Rasool then smashed a blistering 47 ball 75 run knock featuring eight sixes and a four while Qais added 28 off just 11 deliveries as the visitors tallied 124 runs from the last 14 overs of the innings.

Nayeem Hasan got two wickets while Hasan Mahmud, Afif Hossain and Saif took one apiece for Bangladesh.

Bangladesh comprehensively won the first youth ODI by 145 runs but since then, the home side lost their way and went on to lose the remaining three games after the second match was abandoned due to inclement weather.

It was a big reality check for the young Tigers ahead of next year's ICC Under-19 Cricket World Cup, in preparation for which the selectors will definitely emphasise on the batting department which has been below par throughout the Afghanistan series.

Karunaratne puts SL on top

AFP, Dubai



Opener Dimuth Karunaratne scored a dashing half century to guide Sri Lanka to 174 for 3 at dinner on the first day of the second and final day-night Test against Pakistan in Dubai on Friday.

Karunaratne was unbeaten on 89 and captain Dinesh Chandimal was 14 not out after Sri Lanka won the toss and opted to bat on a flat pitch.

Karunaratne and opening partner Kaushal Silva (27) gave Sri Lanka a solid 63-run start before Pakistan hit back with three wickets in quick succession.

Leg-spinner Yasir Shah provided his team with

the much-needed breakthrough when he had Silva caught behind off a short delivery.

Debutant Sadeera Samarawickrama impressed during his short stay of 38 runs, hitting five boundaries and a six before he miscued a pull and was caught and bowled by pacer Mohammad Amir.

Kusal Mendis played a rash drive off Shah and was caught in the slips for one.

Karunaratne cracked three boundaries in an Amir over and hit Shah for another to reach his sixth Test fifty.

Sri Lanka lead the series 1-0 after winning the first Test by 21 runs in Abu Dhabi.

SCORES IN BRIEF

SRI LANKA: First innings 174 for 3 (Karunaratne 89 not out, Kaushal 27, Sadeera 38; Yasir 2-75)



After playing 12,000 feet above sea level in the Bolivian city of La Paz -- conditions which talisman Neymar termed 'inhuman' on Instagram -- Brazilian players needed a healthy dose of oxygen to get back into shape. PHOTO: TWITTER

Siddikur trails by 7

SPORTS REPORTER

Two double bogeys and a bogey undid all the good work that Siddikur Rahman did in the second round of the Yeangder Tournament Players Championship yesterday.

The 32-year-old golfer carded four birdies, but those bogeys made his pay as he slipped from a promising 12th position to 27th on the leaderboard going into the final two days of the competition.

The Bangladesh golfer, with an aggregate of one-under-par (143), trailed the clubhouse leader Johannes Veerman of USA by seven strokes.

BKSP thrash Hillol

SPORTS REPORTER

BKSP comprehensively beat Hillol Jubo Sangha by 224 runs in their Women's Premier Division Cricket League encounter yesterday, courtesy of a Murshida Khan Happy century, the first over-hundred score of the ongoing tournament, at the BKSP yesterday.

Murshida reached the milestone off 88 balls and ended up scoring 135 runs off 101 deliveries, featuring 19 fours and a six as BKSP posted a huge total of 307 for 6 in 50 overs. Sobhana Mostary added a quick-fire 45 runs off 36 balls which included four boundaries and a six.

In reply, Hillol continued their poor form and were bowled out for just 83 in 30.3 overs thanks to Jannatul Ferdous' fifer.

In the day's other match, Kalabagan KC sealed a four wicket win over Gulshan Youth Club. Kalabagan reached the meagre target of 134 runs in 35.4 overs for the loss of six wickets.

Kalabagan's skipper Lata Mondol was the highest scorer with 65 runs off 68 balls, including ten fours to ensure an easy victory.