

What to Watch

DAY'S EVENT

GTV & MAASTRANGA
Bangladesh Premier League
Rajshahi Kings v Sylhet Sixers
Live from 2:00pm
Khulna Titans v Ctg Vikings
Live from 7:00pm

STAR SPORTS 1
India v Sri Lanka
1st Test, Day-2
Live from 10:00am

STAR SPORTS SELECT 2
Bundesliga
Stuttgart v Dortmund
Live from 1:30am (Saturday)

SONY ESPN
ATP Finals
Group Stage
Thiem v Goffin
Live from 8:00pm
Busta v Dimitrov
Live from 2:00am (Saturday)

TEN 2
La Liga
Girona v Real Sociedad
Live from 2:00am (Saturday)

Peru end 35-year wait

AFP, Lima

 Emotional Peru advanced to the World Cup for the first time since 1982 by defeating New Zealand 2-0 on Wednesday, goals by Jefferson Farfan and Christian Ramos sealing the last ticket to Russia.

Farfan struck in the 27th minute and Ramos scored in the 65th to give "Los Incas" their fifth overall World Cup finals appearance and the first in 35 years.

"It's a big emotion, beyond making history," Peru midfielder Christian Cueva said. "It's a child's dream. We have not broken this bad streak for so long. Now I'm going to celebrate."

The second-leg match at Lima's Estadio Nacional was the decider after New Zealand and Peru played to a 0-0 draw in the first leg.

Peru President Pedro Pablo Kuczynski tweeted his joy after the match: "We waited more than 35 years to be in a World Cup again. Thank you warriors for giving us this joy."

Peru attacked the "All-Whites" from the start, Incas defender Luis Advincula slamming a left-footed shot off the crossbar in the third minute to delight a capacity crowd of 40,000.

The opening goal came after Cueva raced down the left wing and flicked a pinpoint pass with the outside of his right foot to Farfan. The 33-year-old forward for Lokomotiv Moscow blasted a right-footed shot from the edge of the penalty area past goalkeeper Stefan Marinovic and into the back of the net.

In celebrating the goal, Farfan covered his head with the jersey of suspended Peru teammate Paolo Guerrero, unavailable after failing a doping test last month.

THE PICTURE SO FAR



QUALIFYING KINGS

Germany have not lost a World Cup finals or qualifying game since the 2010 semifinal against Spain. They came through 2018 qualifying with 10 wins from 10 -- scoring 43 times and only conceding on four occasions.

Belgium, Spain and England all came through European qualifying unbeaten too.

Brazil cruised through South American qualifying - but only after replacing manager Dunga with Tite midway through the campaign. They had only won one of their opening six qualifiers, but under Tite they won 10 and drew two of their final 12 games to finish 10 points clear.

In Asia, Iran came through two different groups unbeaten - 18 games without defeat that included a run of 12 consecutive clean sheets.

Morocco qualified without conceding a goal in their six-game African group, finishing top ahead of Ivory Coast.

THE DEBUTANTS

Iceland are the only country with a population of under one million to have ever reached a World Cup. The Nordic nation had never qualified for a major tournament before Euro 2016, when they beat England on their way to the quarterfinals.

Central American nation Panama reached their first World Cup thanks to an 88th-minute winner against Costa Rica, which also eliminated the United States.

FIRST TIMERS

This World Cup will be the first time that there will be five Asian sides in the tournament. Iran, Japan, South Korea, Saudi Arabia and Australia will be representing the continent. Although these five teams also featured in the 2006 edition, Australia at the time qualified as a member of the OFC. After none qualified for the last World Cup, a record three Nordic countries have qualified this time around.

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:

Hathurusingha not expecting big salary at SL

Sri Lanka's sports Minister Dayasiri Jayasekara suggests that Chandika Hathurusingha is not expecting a big salary when he takes up the Sri Lanka job.

Mourinho hits out at England

Manchester United manager Jose Mourinho has criticised the England set-up after

Phil Jones aggravated a thigh

injury in his country's friendly

draw with Germany. Players

including Harry Kane, Dele Alli,

Raheem Sterling and Jordan

Henderson withdrew from Gareth

Southgate's England squad for

friendlies against Germany and

Brazil due to injury.

The federation president (Tavecchio)

Italy sack Ventura Ancelotti favourite to take over

AFP, Milan

 Gian Piero Ventura's reign as Italy coach ended on Wednesday after World Cup qualifying fiasco during which the four-time champions failed to reach next year's finals in Russia.

The 69-year-old's fate was sealed after a crisis meeting of the Italian Football Federation (FIGC) in Rome, with former Chelsea and Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti among the favourites to take over and rebuild the Azzurri.

Ventura had refused to resign despite a 1-0 aggregate play-off defeat to Sweden on Monday that saw Italy miss the World Cup for the first time since 1958.

"As of today Gian Piero Ventura is no longer the coach of the national team," the FIGC said in a statement.

According to reports, Ventura will be paid his salary until the end of his contract in June 2018, which amounts to approximately 800,000 euros.

But FIGC president Carlo Tavecchio will stay on despite mounting pressure on him to also resign after a defeat which has left a nation traumatised.

The federation president (Tavecchio)

informed participants at the (crisis) meeting... of the impossibility for him to resign," a FIGC statement read, awaiting "a series of proposals" on how to fix Italian football.

Tavecchio later told journalists that a new coach would be named at a special meeting of the FIGC federal council which would take place next Monday.

"We are considering big names for the role of coach," the 74-year-old promised.

Ancelotti is seen as the frontrunner, as the 58-year-old is free since being sacked by Bayern Munich at the end of September.

Italian Ancelotti has won three Champions League crowns, and league titles in Italy, England, Germany and France, and would provide the high profile required after the Ventura fiasco.

A return by Chelsea manager Antonio Conte, Juventus boss Massimiliano Allegri and former Manchester City manager Roberto Mancini are also being considered.

But opposition to Tavecchio remains despite promises to rebuild Italian football from grassroots level upwards with Damiano Tommasi, the head of the Italian Players' Union, storming out of the FIGC meeting after Tavecchio refused to quit.

The federation president (Tavecchio)

Serena to tie the knot in New Orleans

AFP, Washington

Tennis superstar Serena Williams is used to hoisting trophies, but on Thursday, it looks like she'll be carrying a wedding bouquet.

Music royalty Beyoncé and Jay Z, along with actress Eva Longoria are among the A-listers reportedly convening in New Orleans for Williams' wedding to Reddit co-founder Alexis Ohanian.

People, citing unnamed sources, have reported that about 250 guests will be invited to the ceremony at the Contemporary Arts Center in the Big Easy.

The Daily Mail said the event would cost more than \$1 million and guests would be asked not to bring their cell phones because an exclusive photo deal has been signed with Vogue.

Williams, 36, and Ohanian, 34, welcomed their first child, daughter Alexis Olympia, on September 1.

The Missing XI

STAR SPORT DESK



32 teams have made it to the promised land but of the 180-odd teams that failed to make the cut, there are a number of notable exclusions.

Italy, Netherlands and Chile are the highest-profile casualties of the qualifying rounds but there are a number of stars from the other teams that have failed to make the cut as well.

In a Loser's XI, to put it harshly, Italian stalwart Gianluigi Buffon was the undisputed choice between the sticks.

He will have no trouble marshalling the backline, which features two of his countrymen in Leonardo Bonucci and Giorgio Chiellini, who fill in as centrebacks.

Powerful Austrian David Alaba will fill in at left-back, fending off a tough challenge from Ivory Coast's Serge Aurier. On the other side is Ecuador captain Antonio Valencia.

Considering the number of options up front, a three-man midfield is the way to go.

Chile's Arturo Vidal will fill in as the destroyer, acting as an engine in midfield with his tenacity and box-to-box playstyle.

Joining him will be the incredible Marek Hamsik. The Slovakian has not had many chances to shine for his country on the biggest stage, but his exploits at Napoli over the years ensure he picks up a spot over Bosnia's Miralem Pjanic.

The fourth and final Italian in the playing XI completes the midfield three as Marco Verratti slots in to provide those delicious passes and perfectly-timed tackles.

The front three was where the troubles began, but in the end it is solely a blend of explosive pace.

Highlighting the range of talent in the team and the lack thereof in the Netherlands side is that not a single Dutchman -- not even Arjen Robben -- finds a place in the playing XI.

Gabon's Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang is tasked with leading the line. He is flanked by often-injured Welshman Gareth Bale and Chile's Alexis Sanchez, both of whom need no justification.

And in a hilariously cruel twist, Lorenzo Insigne still finds himself on the bench. Thankfully for him though, there is no chance that Gian Piero Ventura will be managing this side.

NOT AT THE WORLD CUP XI



Federer haunts Cilic again

AFP, London

Roger Federer condemned Marin Cilic to more frustration in London as he repeated his Wimbledon heroics against the Croatian with a 6-7 (5/7), 6-4, 6-1 victory in the ATP Finals on Thursday.

Just four months ago and only a few miles across south London, Federer was celebrating his record eighth Wimbledon title after crushing Cilic in a brutally one-sided final.

Cilic had been hampered by a blistered foot and the Croat was reduced to tears during the match as his predicament sunk in.

In their first meeting since All England Club showdown, Federer haunted Cilic once again as he fought back at the O2 Arena.

Having beaten Jack Sock and Alexander Zverev in his first two matches, Federer was already guaranteed to qualify as the winner of the Boris Becker group, but he didn't take it easy against Cilic.

By extending his current winning streak to 13 matches, the 36-year-old advanced from the Tour Finals group stage with an unblemished 3-0 record for the 10th time in his glittering career.

With Andy Murray, Novak Djokovic and Stan Wawrinka all absent due to injury and world number one Rafael Nadal withdrawing

after his first match due to a knee problem, Federer appears to have a clear path to his seventh triumph in the season-ending event.

"It was a tough match. I was in trouble, a set and a break point down, but I found a way out of it and I'm happy to be playing this way," Federer said.

"It's nice to play tennis this freely. It gives me a great idea how I want to be on Saturday. I'm looking forward to facing (David) Goffin or (Dominic) Thiem."

The prize money from Federer's win over Zverev on Tuesday took him past golfer Tiger Woods to become the world's highest earning athlete, with a career total of £84 million (\$110 million, 94 million euros) according to Forbes.

But Federer is motivated by his legacy rather than the size of his bank balance and winning the Tour Finals for the first time since 2011 would be another feather in his cap at the end of a remarkable renaissance year.

When Federer missed last year's Tour Finals through injury, it seemed possible he would never recapture his former glories.

But this year Federer has been revitalised, winning the Australian Open and Wimbledon among seven titles - more than other male player over the last 11 months.



Roger Federer is full stretched as he makes a return to Croatia's Marin Cilic during their men's singles round-robin match of the ATP World Tour Finals tennis tournament at the O2 Arena in London yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP