

# What to WATCH

**SONY ESPN**  
**T10 Cricket League**  
 Punjab Legends v Kerala Kings  
 Live from 10:00pm  
 Pakhtoons v Team Sri Lanka  
 Live from 12:00am (Saturday)

**SONY SIX**  
 Australia v England  
 3rd Test, Day-2  
 Live from 8:30am  
**STAR SPORTS SELECT 2**  
 Bundesliga

Monchengladbach v Hamburger  
 Live from 1:30am (Saturday)  
**TEN 2**  
 La Liga  
 Sevilla v Levante  
 Live from 2:00am (Saturday)

## DAY'S EVENT

**Bangladesh Premier League**  
 Sheikh Jamal v MuktiJoddha  
 Time: 4:30pm

**Brothers Union v Saif Sporting**  
 Time: 6:45pm  
 Venue: BNS, Dhaka

## RONALDINHO RUNNING FOR SENATE?

According to the Brazilian press, Ronaldinho has put himself forward to run for Senate in 2018. A few days on from scoring from behind the halfway line in a charity match, it appears the former Barcelona star is plotting a move into Brazilian politics. According to O Globo, the 2002 World Cup winner will run in the state of Minas Gerais for the Patriota Party. The 37-year-old met with presidential candidate Jair Bolsonaro this week and posed for a photo with the politician's book. However, before Ronaldinho can run, he has to hope Bolsonaro wins the vote to become the party's leader in March next year before he can go for the Senate. The Brazil general election is scheduled to be held in October 2018. Footballers turning to politics appears to be a popular trend of late. After all, former Chelsea striker George Weah could be the president of Liberia by the end of this year.



-AGENCIES



**Spanish midfielder David Silva scored twice as Manchester City dismantled Swansea for a Premier League record 15th consecutive win at the Liberty Stadium on Wednesday.**

PHOTO: AFP

# 'I hope football pays me its debt'

*In the end it was just a scare. Argentina qualified for the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia following a traumatic campaign in which no one suffered more than Lionel Messi. Secure in the knowledge that he had done his job, the Argentina captain spoke to FIFA.com about La Albiceleste's qualifying travails, his decisive contribution in the final match against Ecuador, how he sees the team evolving and the debt the game owes him.*

**Q: Looking ahead to Russia, where are Argentina in relation to teams like Germany and Brazil?**  
**Lionel Messi (LM):** We'll be in good shape when we get there because we're still growing. We had to go through something that we didn't expect or deserve, because we had earlier matches against Venezuela and Peru that we could have won easily. If we had, then we wouldn't have had to go through what we did at the end. We've had four competitive matches with a new coach, but the national team's going to change now that the Ecuador game's behind us. It's going to grow and it's going to get rid of all the tension and fear it felt because of that match and because of the risk of not achieving our objective. The national team's going to change a lot.

I'd say I'm in good shape on and off the pitch. I'm very pleased with where I am right now.  
**Q: Where would you rank the qualifying match against Ecuador [the must-win game where Messi scored a hat-trick] in your career?**  
**LM:** It was very important because missing out on the World Cup would have been a huge blow, firstly for the squad as a whole and then for me on a personal level. I don't know how I would have taken it. The same goes for the people of Argentina. Failing to make Russia would have been an all-time low for the country.

**Q: Were you surprised Chile failed to qualify?**  
**LM:** Yes, like everyone else. After all, Chile won the last two Copas America and they're a side that's grown used to winning. They're a great team with very good players. But it just goes to show you how difficult the South American qualifiers are, because nobody gives you anything. It's not easy to go and play away in Bolivia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Colombia and all the other places where you have to go, not least Brazil. There's less and less of a gap between teams and it's getting more and more difficult to reach the World Cup.



**Q: Have the wounds of Brazil 2014 healed?**  
**LM:** No! I don't know if they're ever going to heal. We're just going to have to live with it. It's going to be there forever. The World Cup is a very happy memory and a bitter one too because of how it ended, how it all worked out. But it's always going to be there.  
**Q: How are you feeling now you've turned 30? Are you where you thought you'd be?**  
**LM:** To tell you the truth, I never thought about how I'd be feeling when I got here. But I'm very happy with both my personal life and football.

**Q: Given the importance of the match, was it a performance that you think you had to give?**  
**LM:** No, I don't know if I had to give it. I've had some really good games with the national team. What I can say is that with the way things turned out it was a very important and special moment for me.  
**Q: After Argentina qualified for Russia 2018, coach Jorge Sampaoli said that football owes Messi a World Cup. Did you hear that and what do you make of it?**  
**LM:** Yes, I did hear it, and he said it to me too. I hope football does end up paying me! (laughs)  
**Q: Talking of the World Cup, we have a little challenge for you. Can you complete the following sentence? In 2018, Messi will be...**  
**LM:** I'll be a father for the third time!

## Manirul Amin passes away

**SPORTS REPORTER**  
 Dr. Md Manirul Amin Shammi passed away aged 46 at Square Hospitals yesterday morning.  
 The BCB physician and member of the BFF medical committee succumbed to a severe cardiac arrest which he suffered on Wednesday.  
 Both the BCB and BFF extended their deepest condolences to the family of the deceased and offered prayers.  
 Dr. Amin was a former member of the BCB Medical Committee. He later joined the BCB's Medical Department as a Sports Physician in September 2010.

# Record-breaking City hailed as greats

**AFP, London**  
**Premier League**  
 Pep Guardiola's Manchester City are being widely hailed as one of the best sides in Premier League history after they set a stunning new record of 15 straight wins.  
 In its 25-year history, the Premier League has boasted a series of outstanding sides including Manchester United's treble-winners, Arsenal's "Invincibles" and Jose Mourinho's powerful Chelsea side in his first stint at the club.  
 But Guardiola's team -- even though they have not won any silverware yet -- are smashing record after record as they sprint towards the Premier League title, leaving allcomers a distant speck in their rear-view mirror.  
 Wednesday's 4-0 win at Swansea took them clear of Arsenal's 14 consecutive victories under Arsene Wenger between February and August 2002.  
 Their 49 points from 17 games is the

best-ever start to an English top-flight campaign, bettering the record of Tottenham's side of 1960-61 -- when a win was worth just two points.  
 When asked whether City are one of the best sides we have ever seen, former England captain Alan Shearer agreed.



**Pep Guardiola now has the record for consecutive wins in La Liga (16, tied with the 2016 Real Madrid side), Bundesliga (19) and now the Premier League (15).**

"I don't think there is any doubt about that, and top players in that team, with hunger and desire to put in a performance week in, week out," he said. "It has to be admired."  
 Guardiola is aware of his team's place in the English game. "In history there were amazing things like Liverpool in the 80s and Manchester United with Sir Alex Ferguson or Chelsea with Jose Mourinho," he said. "There were some amazing teams."  
 "But we are the first ones to win 15 in a row. If we win the title it will just be a record and this record will be broken, but of course it will not be easy."  
 And Guardiola demanded no let-up from his side. City have required late winners in several of their victories, but Guardiola said that reflected their desire.  
 "We are going to try not to stop, to show that feeling to the fans, so when they watch us they know the guys want to win again and again and again. We want to try to maintain it as much as possible."

## Summit Open and Cup from Sunday

**SPORTS REPORTER**  
 The 8th Summit open and the 22nd Summit Cup will take place between 17th December and 22nd December at the Kurmitola Golf Course with a combined estimate of 700 golfers participating.  
 This information was revealed during a press conference for the event at the Summit Group headquarters in Dhaka yesterday.  
 Summit Group arranged the competitions in association with the Bangladesh Professional Golfers Association (BPGA). The Summit Open is expected to see 200 golfers vie for the title in the 15 lakh taka event.  
 The Summit Cup on the other hand, is an all member affair which is played solely for the trophy.

## VICTORY DAY CRICKET Teams announced

**SPORTS REPORTER**  
 The Bangladesh Cricket Board yesterday announced the teams that will participate in the traditional Victory Day cricket match, which will be held at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur tomorrow.  
 The Twenty20 match will start from 10.30 am.  
 The traditional cricket match was first organised in 1972 in memory of Liberation War martyrs Shaheed Abdul Halim Chowdhury Jewel and Shaheed Mushtaque Ahmed.  
**SHAHEED JEWEL XI:** Shahriar Hossain, Javed Omer, Aminul Islam, Ehsanul Haque, Hannan Sarker, Hasanuzzaman, Jahangir Alam, Neeyamur Rashid, Athar Ali Khan, Talha Jubair, Morshed Ali Khan, Shafiuddin Ahmed, Anwar Hossain and Mehrab Hossain. Manager-Roquibul Hassan.  
**COACH:** Dipu Roy Chowdhury.  
**SHAHEED MUSHTAQUE XI:** Harunur Rashid, Habibul Bashar, Minhazul Abedin, Akram Khan, Mushfiqur Rahman, Khaled Mahmud, Jamal Uddin, Mohammad Salim, Mohammed Rafique, Hasibul Hossain, Saiful Islam, Tareq Aziz Khan, Mizanur Rahaman and Faruque Ahmed. Manager-Mohammed Ali.  
**COACH:** Wahidul Ghani.

# Seeking to spark passion

**SPORTS REPORTER**  
 In the quest to create a buzz at the grassroots level, the Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) is all set to start the first-ever Bangladesh Youth Games amid great enthusiasm from athletes and organisers at the upazila level.  
 Approximately 24,000 athletes from 360 upazilas across the 64 districts are expected to take part in 20 disciplines in the inaugural edition, starting across the country from Monday. Nearly 10,500 technical officials and 4,000 coaches and trainers are also expected to be involved with the Games, which will be held in three phases -- district, divisional and final.  
 The Games are being held at a time when there are hardly any sporting activities beyond the capital and the

initiative is expected to bring some life to the country's sports, although there may be some limitations to holding such a big event at the upazila level.  
 The BOA hosted the Bangladesh Games in 2013 and the South Asian Games in 2010 but the Youth Games will be the biggest in terms of participation.  
 The Youth Games was first discussed in 2014, when current vice-president and former footballer Badal Roy raised the issue and the BOA has taken nearly three years to give the tournament a final shape. They have already held a few meetings at the divisional level with the involvement of government officials to ensure participation of all 64 districts and to make it a success.  
 Yesterday, the higher-ups of the BOA held a view exchange meeting with sports editors from different print

and electronic media. The journalists suggested the concerned authorities to hold the Games regularly to create and sustain interest among the youth instead of thinking of producing stars, thereby bringing back a sporting environment across the country which would gradually impact the outcomes at domestic and international level.  
 BOA vice president and media committee chairman Sheikh Bashir Ahmed informed that they will have torch rallies on December 17 and hold the opening ceremony on December 18 in all 64 districts.  
 Of the 20 disciplines, football (5,040), athletics (4,410), Kabaddi (3,200), Swimming (2,600) and volleyball (2,500) will see a good number of budding athletes taking part in the Games, which will be concluded in Dhaka through the final phase from March 9-17 next year.

## Service teams win on day one

**SPORTS REPORTER**  
 Bangladesh Navy, Bangladesh Air Force, Bangladesh Army and Border Guard Bangladesh each notched up wins on the opening day of the Victory Day Basketball Tournament at the Dhanmodi Basketball Gymnasium yesterday.  
 Bangladesh Navy handed an 87-51 defeat to newcomers Bangladesh Ansar, Bangladesh Air Force thrashed Bangladesh Police 65-38, Bangladesh Army outplayed Old DOHS 89-41 and BGB inflicted a massive 97-24 defeat on Hornets SC.  
 Bangladesh Basketball Federation president Dr Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin declared the tournament open.

Glorious Victory Day

The crimson in our flag is the symbol of your blood.  
 You are alive in our hearts forever.  
 Our deepest respect to you.

**CROWN CEMENT**  
 FOR SOLID FOUNDATION