Dhaka Premier League Time: 9:00am Mohammedan v Khelaghar SKS Sheikh Jamal v Kalabagan KC Venue: KSOAS Legends of Rupganj v Brothers Union

STAR SPORTS SELECT 2

Ireland v Zimbabwe

Live from 1:30pm

ICC World Cup Qualifiers

PATO'S PUBLIC BID TO WOO CHINESE ACTRESS

Brazilian football star Alexandre Pato celebrated Tianjin Quanjian's victory in the AFC Champions League with a very public attempt at wooing the Chinese actress Dilraba Dilmurat. The 28-year-old Pato and his teammates held up a poster showing two pictures -- one of him and one of Dilmurat -- as Tianjin supporters chanted her name following Wednesday's 4-2 home victory over Jeonbuk Motors of South Korea. The poster -- it was unclear who made it -- had a message on it imploring Pato to play well because "Dilraba is watching the live broadcast". Tianjin fans then bombarded Dilmurat with messages on Weibo, China's equivalent of Twitter and where she has nearly 40 million followers, urging her to reciprocate Pato's interest. Dilmurat, 25, a popular television and film actress, did not respond and reports say that she is yet to cave in to Pato's overtures.



Unearthing prospects

SPORTS REPORTER



ries of the inaugural Bangladesh Youth Games, the trio succeeded in impressing national coaches while showcasing their potential on the podium at the National Sports Council for the last two days.

As many as 23 female weightlifters participated across five weight categories, most of whom had no prior experience in competitive tournaments. The budding athletes drew the attention of the crowds and coaches alike regardless of the fact that they only had about one month's training, conducted by the Bangladesh Weightlifting Federation, ahead of the tournament.

"These girls have been unearthed by the Bangladesh Youth Games. They have improved a lot after only 20 days training, which was held in Mymensingh under the supervision of the weightlifting federation, and I believe they have a good future but need long term training to build up," said coach Shahria Sultana Suchi, who along with Firoza Parvin conducted the regional training in Mymensingh before the final phase of the Bangladesh Youth Games began.

Venue: BKSP-3

Sumaiya, a fourth grade student, is the youngest of the lot and only started weightlifting last August. However, there are many other high school students among the participants.

"I believe those girls have a good opportunity to surpass the successes of senior weightlifters like Mabia Akter Simanta, Molla Sabira and others because they have come into weightlifting at a tender age whereas the other weightlifters, who are already established, started playing lately, but these girls need long term training to flourish," Suchi, also a former national weightlifter who began her career when she was a university student, continued.

"I want to do better than Simanta Apu," said Sumaiya, who came to know the name of South Asian Games gold medalist after coming in Dhaka.

"I did not expect to win a silver medal in the 44kg weight category after having only one-month training and I am very happy with the medal and want to continue this and one day surpass the success Simanta Apu had," said Marzia.

Suchi also believes Khulna division's Gini Rani Roy and Badhan have good potential as both of them bagged gold in the 53kg and 63kg weight categories respectively on their debut appearance at the national level, probably because the two have good technique.



Barcelona superstar Lionel Messi drills home the third goal against Chelsea, his 100th in Champions League matches, at the Nou Camp on Wednesday. PHOTO: REUTERS

South Asian Games gold medallist Mabia Akter Simanta (2nd from R) poses for pictures with the future crop of Bangladeshi female weightlifters, some of whom hope to reach the heights she had in the sport, at the National Sports Council gymnasium yesterday.

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:

England downplay Stokes injury England have played down injury concerns surrounding Ben Stokes ahead of the first Test against New Zealand, saying he should be fit to play. The star allrounder picked up a back niggle in the recently completed one-day series win over the Black Caps and has reportedly not trained since. Courtois 'too late' in

closing legs to Messi Before the game started, there was a tifo — a sort of choregraphy with the giant letters imprinted with the words 'God save the King'. On closer look one could find the Barcelona emblem on the middle of the sentence and Lionel Messi's image in the middle. He is their king. The one true king of the Camp Nou.

Bangladesh surge into final

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh hockey team moved into the Asian Games Qualifiers final with a comefrom-behind 3-2 win over Sri Lanka in the first semifinal encounter at the Sultan Qaboos Complex in Mascot, Oman yesterday.

Bangladesh, who had already qualified for 2018 the Asian Games when they entered the semifinals, will play the final tomorrow against the winners of the second semifinal between hosts Oman and Thailand, which was scheduled for last night.

Coming into the match on the back of three convincing wins against Thailand, Hong Kong and Afghanistan, Bangladesh faced a tough challenge from Sri Lanka, who they had thrashed 9-0 in a Hockey World League Round-2 fixture in Dhaka last year. Bangladesh trailed twice before they fought back hard for the win.

Sri Lanka were always a threat to Bangladesh ever since the latter lost to the former in a South Asian Games bronzemedal deciding match in Colombo in 2006. Bangladesh also struggled against the Islanders in the 2014 SA games but ultimately won 3-0 in shootouts.

The Lankans seemed likely to repeat their 2006 feat yesterday after taking the lead in the 34th minute through captain Sudusinghe Sandaruwan but Bangladesh's Roman Sarker stuck back in the 49th minute.

Sri Lanka restored the lead two minutes later with Sandaruwan converting a penalty stroke before Roman rescued Bangladesh in the 52nd minute by converting a penalty corner.

Striker Milon Hossain then scored in the 58th minute to

ensure Bangladesh's final berth.

SPORTS REPORTER

An 18-member Bangladesh national volleyball team will leave for Iran today to participate in a three-week training session for the upcoming Bangabandhu Asian Senior Men's Central Zone International Volleyball Championship, which will be held in Dhaka from April 21 to 27

Bangladesh, who are the reigning champions of the tournament, will play 13 practice matches against different local sides. The team under the guidance of Iranian coach Alipour Aroji, will then attended advanced training in Tehran and also another city of Iran, who are a strong side in world volleyball.

"We have already trained for 45 days in Dhaka and will now train under the Iranian coach and I think it is a good initiative to have training outside the country ahead of the championship," said newly appointed captain Horoshit Biswas.

BKSP shoot to the top

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan (BKSP) became the champions of the Hamidur Rahman 3rd Youth Shooting Championships, which concluded at the National Shooting Complex in Gulshan yesterday.

BKSP bagged one gold and one silver medal to finish on top while the Metropolitan Shooting Club of Chittagong finished second with one gold and one bronze. Chittagong Rifle Club and Patuakhali Rifle Club shared third position with one gold medal each.

Approximately 80 shooters, including 39 girls, took part in the three-day competition that had four gold medals -- two for boys and two for girls - up for grabs.

V'ball team to leave for Iran Conte hails King Messi "He knows in certain moments the

AFP, Barcelona



Barcelona hailed Lionel Messi as "The King" and he handed Chelsea the royal punishment by scoring twice to reach 100 Champions League goals and end their

quarterfinal hopes. After unfurling a banner showing the words "God Save The King" before kick-off, Barca's fans were celebrating after just 129 seconds at the Camp Nou as Messi found the net before Chelsea

had even made a pass. He then teed up Ousmane Dembele to double Barca's lead in the second leg of the last-16 clash before registering a century of Champions League goals on his 123rd appearance to complete a 3-0 victory, 4-1 on aggregate.

Messi becomes only the second player to reach the milestone in Europe's premier tournament, following Real Madrid's Cristiano Ronaldo, who has 117 goals in 152 games.

stars have to come out," Barcelona coach Ernesto Valverde said. "We enjoy him. We're lucky enough to be seeing something that will go down in history." By the end, the Argentinian's scintil-

lating breakaway in the build-up to Dembele's first Barcelona goal had become little more than a footnote to what was another Messi masterclass. "I think that a fantastic player

moved the final result," Chelsea manager Antonio Conte said. "In these two legs, he scored three goals, he made an assist for Dembele to score a goal. It's a pity." It also caps a remarkable five days

for the 30-year-old, who sat out Saturday's La Liga win over Malaga to attend to the birth of his third child.

Chelsea, in touch after the 1-1 draw at Stamford Bridge, were therefore unfortunate enough to encounter the striker fresh, free and at his frighteningly brilliant best.

At the finish, Conte left the field with his arm around the forward,

perhaps with nothing to add but congratulations.

"I think when you have the opportunity to make great compliment to Messi, I think it's right," Conte added. "It's right to recognise a super, super, super top player."

Conte's team had chances, particularly in the first half, but the sense was once Barcelona were in front they were content to sit back and counter.

Chelsea hit the woodwork twice and claimed for a penalty when Alonso was brought down by Gerard Pique.

"If you watch the game you can see the final result is unfair," Conte said. "Over the two legs we hit the post four times. This is very strange."

With Manchester United dumped out by Sevilla and Tottenham outmanoeuvred by Juventus, Chelsea's exit means for all the talk of a Premier League resurgence, Liverpool and Manchester City are its only two representatives in the quarter-finals.

Spain have three, after Real saw off the challenge of Paris Saint-Germain.

Bayern breeze into last eight

REUTERS, Istanbul



Treble-chasing Bayern Munich eased past Turkey's Besiktas 3-1 on Wednesday to breeze into the Champions League quarterfinals with an 8-1

aggregate win.

It was a record 11th straight victory in the competition for coach Jupp Heynckes, who had led Bayern to the title in 2013 before retiring and returning this season.

The German side went ahead through Thiago Alcantara in the 18th minute with the Spaniard volleying in a Thomas Mueller cross to kill off any lingering hopes of a miracle recovery by the Turkish team after Bayern had crushed them 5-0 in the first leg in Munich.

The Spaniard, however, was taken off with a suspected ankle problem a little later after only recently returning from an injury break. He will undergo medical checks in Munich on Thursday, club officials said.

Bayern, who could secure their sixth consecutive Bundesliga title at the weekend,

went 2-0 up seconds after the second-half restart when Gokhan Gonul volleyed a Rafinha cross into his own net.

"In the second half we were not really in control. It was a bit wild, all over the place. We lost possession too often, made unnecessary fouls," Bayern's Mueller told reporters.

"We won 3-1 away from home but somehow that second half did not feel really that good." Besiktas, who were missing their entire central defence, offered little resistance despite controlling possession.

They did manage to pull a goal back through Vagner Love's effort in the 58th minute which breathed some brief life into the hosts and the 40,000 home fans.

Yet Bayern substitute Sandro Wagner chested in a David Alaba cross with six minutes remaining to make sure of Bayern's victory.

Wagner, who joined Bayern in the January transfer window, has already scored in the Champions League qualifying rounds for Hoffenheim this season as well as in the Europa League.

The quarterfinal draw will take place on Friday.

Busquets out with toe injury

AFP, Barcelona

Barcelona midfielder Sergio Busquets will be out for around three weeks with a fractured toe and faces a race to be fit for next month's Champions League quarterfinals.

Busquets hobbled off in the 61st minute of Barca's 3-0 win over Chelsea on Wednesday as Lionel Messi's double sealed a 4-1 victory on aggregate. Ousmane Dembele was also on target at the Camp Nou.

The Catalans will discover on Friday their last eight opponent, with the first leg scheduled for April 3 or 4, leaving Busquets a maximum of 21 days to recover.

Busquets' injury comes at a bad time too for Spain, with coach Julen Lopetegui due to announce on Friday his squad for friendlies against Germany on March 23.

FIFA to give VAR green light

AFP, Bogota



FIFA are expected to rubber-stamp video assistant referee technology (VAR) for this summer's World Cup despite lingering opposi-

tion from within and outside football. Gianni Infantino, the president of FIFA, will oversee the governing body's meeting in Bogota happy to give the green light to the system despite a long,

personal spell of scepticism. "VAR is something positive that will bring much more to the transparency of football," said Infantino ahead of the FIFA Council meeting

"Video refereeing isn't going to be German Bundesliga and Italian Serie A. the solution to everything in football. What we want to do is avoid resounding mistakes by referees."

At the World Cup in Russia from convinced. June 14-July 15, VAR will be used to judge whether or not a goal has been scored, analyse whether a penalty should be awarded, decide on red cards and rectify if a player has been mistakenly sanctioned.

The game's lawmakers, the International Football Association Board (IFAB), had decided two weeks ago at its meeting in Zurich to support

VAR at the World Cup. VAR has been trialled since 2016 by

around 20 federations including the

But it has not been universally welcomed with even UEFA, the European governing body, still to be

"Nobody knows exactly how VAR will work. There is already a lot of confusion," said UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin who insists that VAR will not be used in next season's Champions League. "I am not at all against it but we

must better explain when it will be used. We will see at the World Cup."

One of the problems that dogs VAR, say its critics, is not the accuracy of its decisions but the time it takes to arrive

CAFOR Job Opportunity at OKUP



Ovibashi Karmi Unnayan Program (OKUP) is a non government development organization seeking application for a Finance and Administration Coordinator (FAC) position. The FAC will be responsible for the overall financial management and administration of OKUP. The candidate must have demonstrated ability and competency to lead organizational finance and administration operations and ensure institutional donor funding compliances.

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