

What to WATCH

STAR SPORTS SELECT 2

ICC World Cup Qualifier

West Indies v Zimbabwe

Live from 1:30pm

'I THINK MY TEACHER WILL UNDERSTAND'

There's a new 'New Neymar' in town and his name is Rodrygo Goes, the prodigious teenage sensation currently causing an uproar at Santos. At just 17 years, two months and six days old, Rodrygo became the youngest ever player to score in the Copa Libertadores after finding the net in Santos' 3-1 win over Nacional of Uruguay on Thursday evening. The goal itself was actually rather reminiscent of the young Neymar, with Rodrygo picking the ball up on the half-way line, burning a defender for pace and then poking a shot through the Nacional goalkeeper's legs from a tight angle. In scoring, Rodrygo broke the record held by former Werder Bremen midfielder Diego (set in 2003) to become the youngest goalscorer in the 58-year history of the Copa Libertadores. However, speaking at a press conference after the match, the precocious Santos forward still had an apology to make: "I'm happy to be the youngest to score. It's a dream coming true. About skipping school [to play], I think the teachers will understand."

--AGENCIES



Lionel Messi scored for the sixth consecutive game against Athletic Bilbao at the Nou Camp and in the process scored his first goal from open-play from outside the box this season as Barcelona ran out 2-0 winners in a La Liga encounter yesterday night.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## Chelsea take extra time to tame Foxes

AFP, Leicester

Pedro Rodriguez came off the bench to halt Chelsea's slide with an extra-time winner in a 2-1 victory at Leicester on Sunday to reach the FA Cup semifinals.

Alvaro Morata's first goal since Boxing Day put the visitors on course but Jamie Vardy's equaliser 15 minutes from time made them do it the hard way in an extra 30 minutes.

Yet, for all Antonio Conte's complaints this season about his side's strength in depth, the Italian was able to call on Pedro to turn the game in Chelsea's favour when he headed home former Leicester favourite N'Golo Kante's cross.

## Messi shines in Bilbao win

AFP, Madrid



Lionel Messi delivered another masterful performance as Barcelona sailed past Athletic Bilbao 2-0 on Sunday to take an 11-point lead over nearest rivals Atletico Madrid in La Liga.

After putting Chelsea to the sword in the Champions League midweek, Messi scored for the sixth game in a row against Athletic at the Camp Nou to propel Barca closer to the domestic title.

"Every day he discovers something new, something different, he's very aware of what he has to do, what the team needs from him at each moment," Barca coach Ernesto Valverde said of Messi, the Spanish league's leading scorer this season with 25 goals.

"Many times it seems that the coach has to teach the players, but what the coach really does is learn alongside them as things go on. We hope to keep on learning together."

A dominant start from Barca yielded the opening goal after just eight minutes as Messi found Jordi

Alba out on the left, his pull back neatly side-footed into the far corner by Paco Alcacer, filling in for the suspended Luis Suarez.

The hosts looked a constant threat early on and Philippe Coutinho was denied a second when he rattled the woodwork, while Ousmane Dembele should have done much better with just Kepa Arrizabalaga to beat. But the Athletic goalkeeper was powerless to keep out a crunching low drive from Messi on the half hour, the Argentine taking a touch to control a pass from Dembele before lashing home.

Coutinho, the club's record signing, struck the woodwork for a second time as he tried to lob Kepa after latching onto a clever lofted pass from Paulinho, who then smacked a curling shot of his own against the upright.

Barca extended their unbeaten La Liga run to 36 matches dating back to last season, drawing to within two games of the record set Real Sociedad between 1979 and 1980.

"I would love to (break the record) but why carry on talking about it if we can lose, win or draw the next game,"

Valverde said. "We're not going to tempt fate. The next match in Seville will be a very difficult trip."

Second-placed Atletico effectively surrendered their hopes of overhauling Barca at the top, as two late goals from 20-year-old Turkey striker Enes Unal handed Villarreal a 2-1 victory over Diego Simeone's side.

Antoine Griezmann converted a first-half penalty after he was impeded by Jaume Costa, before Koke hit the post. But Unal headed in an 82nd-minute equaliser for the hosts and turned home a stoppage-time winner as Villarreal climbed up to fifth.

Real Madrid can reclaim third place from Valencia at home to Girona later on Sunday.

Earlier, Sevilla crashed to a 2-1 league defeat to Leganes just days after pulling off the surprise elimination of Manchester United in the Champions League.

The loss means Sevilla are increasingly unlikely to qualify for the Champions League through La Liga this season.

## Booters fly for Thailand today

SPORTS REPORTER



The national football team will fly out for Thailand today for the final preparation phase before taking on Laos in a FIFA friendly match, the first international match for Bangladesh since their shock 3-1 defeat against Bhutan in the Asian Cup playoffs in October, 2016.

The booters have been in preparation since early February and have already passed two phases -- BKSP and Qatar -- ahead of the final phase in Thailand where they will play two warm-up matches against Ratchaburi Mittr Phol FC and Bangkok Glass FC on March 21 and 23 respectively before heading to Laos for the FIFA friendly on March 27.

Head coach Andrew Ord picked his 23-member squad after yesterday's training session.

Ord, who is going to guide the team for the first time since his appointment in June last year, believes the third-phase of training is going to be the toughest one for them.

"After good preparation in BKSP and Qatar, the hardest part of training is in Thailand with the players coming in from Abahani. They can help improve the quality and improve the depth of the squad. The real challenge is for everybody to get the same pace quickly as we will get two fantastic games in Thailand."

"It is a really good test for the players. I believe Thai football would be better than that of Laos. So the style of play from the Thai premier league teams is going to be the same that we are going to face in Laos" Ord

said at a press conference at the BFF House yesterday.

The Australian did not make any promises for victory against Laos, rather he wants to see Bangladesh as a team, with strong mentality and availing the opportunities that they would get.

"The expectation [from the Laos match] is to perform like a national team and we have got to look like a football team which was missing in past. We have to go to the pitch with a strong mentality; we have to show the physical capability and confidence and have to try to play according to our strength. The key is to keep possession to press on the opponents and avail the chances we will create. We need to explore everything to win the game. So I am looking forward," said the 38-year-old.

Scoring has been a big concern for the Bangladesh team and there is hardly any recognised striker in the ranks. However, Ord is optimistic with Abahani forward Nabib Newaj Jibon.

"I am more excited with Jibon than any other Abahani player. I am a not a negative coach. Jibon is a player I am looking forward to work with. Abahani won the league and Jibon played matches every week. I think he can help the team in the attacking third," said Ord.

Even though the coach did not make any promises, winger Faisal Mahmud seemed confident about winning.

"All the preparation has been designed keeping the match against Laos in mind. If we don't concede any goals and avail the opportunities we can create, I am hopeful we will win the match against Laos," said the veteran.



Technical and strategic director of BFF Paul Smalley (L) speaks as manager Satyajit Das Rupu and coach Andrew Ord (R) look on during a press conference yesterday ahead of Bangladesh team's departure for Thailand and Laos.

PHOTO: BFF



Mohamed Salah floored three Watford players before poking home the third of his four goals in a Premier League encounter on Saturday.

## 'Mo can succeed Messi'

AFP, Liverpool



Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp believes comparisons between Mohamed Salah and Barcelona's five-time Ballon d'Or winner Lionel Messi are premature, but that the Egyptian is on his way to one day becoming the best player in the world.

Salah's stunning season continued with a four-goal haul in a 5-0 thrashing of Watford to take his tally for the season to 36 on Saturday - the most goals ever scored by a Liverpool player in their debut year at the club.

Klopp believes Salah, 25, has time on his side to succeed Messi and Real Madrid rival Cristiano Ronaldo, both now in their thirties, as the world's best player.

"I think Mo is on the way (to being the best in the world)," said Klopp. "I don't think Mo or anybody else wants to be compared with Lionel Messi. He is the one who is doing what he's doing for what feels like 20 years or so."

And Klopp challenged Salah to maintain the standards he has set this season.

"As it always is in life, if you have the skills, you have to show that constantly, and consistently he is very good and he helps us a lot."

### 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:

#### Late Alves goal gives PSG win at Nice

With Paris Saint-Germain struggling to find inspiration, veteran defender Dani Alves did a surprising impersonation of injured compatriot Neymar to score the winner in Nice on Sunday.



#### Icardi hits four to break 100-goal mark

Captain Mauro Icardi scored four goals to break through the 100-goal mark in Serie A as Inter Milan returned to the top four with a 5-0 rout of Sampdoria on Sunday.



#### Magic Batshuayi strike seals narrow win

A superb goal off the outside of his boot by Michy Batshuayi gave Borussia Dortmund a 1-0 win over Hanover on Sunday and kept them third in the Bundesliga.



#### 'RIP SL Cricket' writer demands 1000 demerit points for Dalmiya

After the closely fought contest between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, where tensions were running high in a virtual semi-final game which saw Tigers triumph in a match set up to be a knock out contest, Lankan media are fuming that Tigers have disgraced themselves and the main culprit was Jagmohan Dalmiya.



Major General Md. Moshfequr Rahman, General Officer Commanding, 11 Infantry Division and Area Commander, Bogra Area, inaugurated the Baizid Steel Cup Golf Tournament 2018 at the Bogra Golf Club yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## 'No personality, no class, no desire'

### Mourinho lays into his players after win

AFP, Manchester



Jose Mourinho launched an astonishing verbal tirade against his Manchester United players after they reached the FA Cup semi-finals, accusing them of "a lack of personality, lack of class and lack of desire."

Just 24 hours after the United manager had made a memorable defence of his own record in the pre-match press conference, Mourinho turned his attention to his players after a comfortable 2-0 quarter-final victory over Brighton.

Only Nemanja Matic, who set up the opening goal for Romelu Lukaku before scoring a late second himself, and youngster Scott McTominay were spared massive criticism.

And after Mourinho claimed he was looking for a response to the midweek Champions League exit to Sevilla, the Portuguese veteran even claimed some of his players lacked the personality and desire to play for the famous Premier League club.

"I didn't like the game," said Mourinho. "I think we deserved to win but I didn't have the reaction from all of them."

"I had the reaction from some of them. Some of them were mentally strong enough with the football quality to play -- that was the reason we won."

"But a team of 11, when you have a minimum of six or seven players performing and wanting to play, who want the responsibility to have the ball, who have the desire really to play -- it is difficult to have a good performance. So I am not happy with the performance all all. But I am happy with the result."

England full-back Luke Shaw was the one player named by Mourinho as having failed to follow his game plan and was, accordingly, substituted at half-time. That made Shaw an obvious target for Mourinho to be questioned about although the United manager clearly had other players in mind when issuing his widespread critique.

"I wanted more personality in the team because many, many times I felt that Matic was an island of personality, desire and control surrounded by lack of personality, lack of class and lack of desire."

"I have to say that for example McTominay lost more passes today in all the matches he played put together but he was a Manchester United player."

"And for me a Manchester United player is one who when he plays badly still gives to the team. That is a question of personality, that is a Manchester United player for me. And that is what some of the others did not have."

## Mistakes better than nightmare of VAR: Poch

AFP, Swansea

Tottenham manager Mauricio Pochettino branded the Video Assistant Referee (VAR) system that will be used at the World Cup this summer a 'nightmare' after his side were involved in another stop-start FA Cup tie.

Spurs cruised into the semifinals with a 3-0 win at Swansea with Christian Eriksen scoring twice to make light of Harry Kane's absence through injury.

"It's a nightmare. I feel so sorry for the people trying to use that system," said Pochettino. "I think I prefer it when the ref and assistant make mistakes than to wait three or four minutes."

"We now need to see the reality of how it is going to affect the staff on the touchline and the officials," added Pochettino. "It is so complex, but the worst thing for me is the effect for the fan. It is going to be a massive problem for the future. We will see what happens at the World Cup."

CORPORATE BOOKING

Water Kingdom will be reserved on 20<sup>th</sup> March(Tuesday), 2018 for Corporate Booking.

From 21<sup>st</sup> March(Wednesday), 2018 Water Kingdom will remain open for all.

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