

Second unofficial one-dayer
Bangladesh A v Sri Lanka A
Time: 9:00am
Venue: Sylhet International Cricket Stadium

SARRI JUST WANTS TO HAVE FUN

New Chelsea manager Maurizio Sarri wants to establish a fun atmosphere at the Premier League club in order to achieve his objectives. The 59-year-old Italian replaced compatriot Antonio Conte who was sacked, a year after leading the team to the title, after Chelsea failed to qualify for next season's Champions League. "My goal is to have fun and be competitive in all the competitions until the end," Sarri told a news conference on Wednesday. If a team has fun, often the fans have fun too. This is very important. We want to reach high-level objectives, but first we must have fun." Spanish media have linked Chelsea playmaker Eden Hazard and goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois with Real Madrid and although Sarri wants to keep the duo at Stamford Bridge, the former banker is happy for the club's hierarchy to handle transfer business.

—REUTERS



THE WORLD CUP IN NUMBERS

519 centimetres made Luka Modric (1.72m), Eden Hazard (1.73m) and Antoine Griezmann the smallest combined height of the Adidas Golden, Silver and Bronze Ball recipients since Toto Schillaci, Lothar Matthaus and Diego Maradona had merely 512 centimetres between them in 1990.

135 years and three months was the cumulative age of Uruguay's Oscar Tabarez and Portugal's Fernando Santos when they met in the Round of 16 -- the oldest combined age for two coaches in a World Cup match.

72.5 kilometres is what Ivan Perisic covered during the tournament -- more than any other player. Xavi (80km) and Thomas Muller (84km) ran unprecedented totals at South Africa 2010 and Brazil 2014 respectively.

40 years have passed since a World Cup Final was without a player from Bayern Munich or Inter Milan. The German giants had their status preserved by Corentin Tolisso coming on for France against Croatia, who started Marcelo Brozovic and Ivan Perisic of Inter Milan.

21 hours and 10 minutes is the combined total Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo have, staggeringly, gone without scoring in the knockout phase of the World Cup. The Argentinian and the Portuguese have made eight and six appearances in the knockout rounds respectively.

12 own-goals were registered at Russia 2018, doubling the previous record of six, set at France 1998. Morocco's Aziz Bouhaddouz netted the latest one in World Cup history in the 95th minute against Iran; Sergei Ignashevich, just before his 39th birthday, became the oldest player to score an own-goal and Mario Mandzukic posted the first one in the final.

5 teenagers have now scored multiple goals in a World Cup game after Kylian Mbappe became the first since Pele 60 years ago to achieve the feat. The 19-year-old Frenchman then became the third teenager to appear in the tournament's decider, after Pele and Giuseppe Bergomi in 1958 and '82 respectively, and the second to score in it after 'The King'.



South Africa cricket team captain Faf du Plessis attends an event to mark former South African leader Nelson Mandela's 100th birthday in Colombo yesterday.

PHOTO:
REUTERS

France glory a win for diversity, says Obama

AGENCIES, Johannesburg

Former US president Barack Obama on Tuesday singled out the African heritage of many players in France's World Cup-winning football team in a speech paying tribute to Nelson Mandela.

Speaking in Johannesburg to mark 100 years since Mandela's birth, Obama said that embracing diversity "delivers practical benefits since it ensures that a society can draw upon the energy and skills of all... people."

"And if you doubt that, just ask the French football team that just won the World Cup -- because not all these folks look like Gauls to me, they are French,

they are French," he stressed with a smile.

France beat Croatia 4-2 in Sunday's final in Moscow, with a team featuring many players of African heritage.

Of the 23 players in the French squad, nearly two-thirds are of Arab or African descent. Two of France's goalscorers against Croatia have African roots: Paul Pogba's parents are from Guinea while Kylian Mbappe's parents are Cameroonian and Algerian.

Of the players who started in the final, Samuel Umtiti was born in Cameroon, Blaise Matuidi's parents are Angolan and Congolese, N'Golo Kante's parents are Malian while Raphael Varane's father is from the Caribbean island of Martinique.

However, suggestions such as those made by Venezuelan president Nicolas Maduro, who said "It was Africa who won", have come under heavy fire.

France left-back Benjamin Mendy hit back at a tweet that had the names of all the French players with flags of different African countries next to them, by writing "fixed" and putting the France flag next to each name.

US-based French basketball player Evan Fournier also fired off on Twitter.

"Stop it with this "Africa won the world cup for France" nonsense. Is it Africa winning when the USA win Gold medals in the Olympics?" he wrote.

ASIAN GAMES HOCKEY BD to start against Oman

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh were placed in Pool B of hockey event in the upcoming Asian Games along with last edition's runners-up Pakistan, Malaysia, Oman, Thailand and Indonesia.

Pool A has holders India, South Korea, Japan, Sri Lanka and Hong Kong.

Bangladesh, who finished eighth in 2014 Asian Games, start their campaign against Oman on August 20 before facing Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Pakistan on August 22, 24, 26 and 28.

Only Roman survives

SPORTS REPORTER



Country's top archer Roman Sana notched two straight victories to move into the third round of men's recurve bow event in the Archery World Cup in Berlin yesterday.

Roman, who failed to put up his best in the qualification round to finish 43rd among 137 competitors, handed a 6-4 defeat to Luo Wei-Min of Chinese Taipei in the first round after a nervy fight against the 70th ranked archer.

He outplayed Wei-Min in the first set before drawing the second and losing the third set. The 23-year-old archer from Khulna took the fourth set before ensuring victory in the fifth and final set.

Then Roman, who is training in Switzerland under the scholarship of Olympic Solidarity

programme, beat Russia's Alexander Kozhin 6-2 in the second round to set up a third round clash against Kim Woojin of Korea, who finished 11th in qualification.

However, Bangladesh's two other archers -- Emdadul Haque Milon and Ibrahim Sheikh Rezwan -- produced disappointed results by losing to Pierre Plihon of France and Furukawa Takaharu of Japan 2-6 and 0-6 respectively to be eliminated from the competition.

In compound event, Ashim Kumar Das and Abdul Kashem Mamun, who produced their best in the qualification round on Tuesday, were eliminated from the first round as 29th ranked Ashim lost to 84th ranked Valerio Della Stua of Italy 140-141 while 41st ranked Mamun lost to 72nd ranked Artyom Gankin of Kazakhstan 130-133.

Bonna Akter was also eliminated from the first round in compound event after losing against Ingrid Olofsson of Sweden 121-128.

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:

Wenger regrets 22-year Arsenal tenure
Arsene Wenger has said staying as Arsenal manager for nearly 22 years may have been the biggest mistake of his career and that he regrets sacrificing "everything" for the job.



Real will sign 'brilliant' players, says Perez
Real Madrid President Florentino Perez has vowed that his club will make a splash in this summer's transfer market.



'Being a champion is in Ronaldo's blood'
Former Real Madrid defender Christian Panucci lauded Cristiano Ronaldo, saying that winning and being a champion come to him naturally. He also predicted a great career for Ronaldo at Juventus.



Beckenbauer welcomes Deschamps to 'our club'
Franz Beckenbauer, who won the World Cup as a player and a coach, welcomed Didier Deschamps "to our club!" Beckenbauer won the World Cup as player with West Germany in 1974 and as Germany manager in 1990. He followed Brazilian Mario Zagallo, who won as a player in 1958 and 1962, and as head coach in 1970.



C'wealth Secretariat to help update sports policy

SPORTS REPORTER

The Ministry for Youth and Sports has finally taken visible initiatives, with technical support from the Commonwealth Secretariat, to update the 1998 sports policy which was hardly followed by any sports authorities in the country over the last 20 years.

Oliver Dudfield, head of sport for peace and development of the Commonwealth Secretariat, and Eion Lendsay, an assistant professor from Durham University, have been in Dhaka the last four days, during which time they met various stakeholders including ministries such as youth and sports, planning, health, women and child, education, social welfare and home. They have also exchanged views with officials of different federations, clubs and districts at a workshop on Monday and talked with different NGOs including Unicef, Brac, Plan Bangladesh and the civil society.

They were scheduled to visit Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protishthan and Manikganj District Sports Association yesterday, but the visit was cancelled due to sudden illness of some of the members of the delegate.

"Now every development programme of the government revolves around SDG [sustainable development goals] and seventh five-year plan, so we want to link the sports policy with SDG, the seventh five-year plan and global interaction. We are taking technical help from the Commonwealth Secretariat, which has been working in 54 nations, to develop the sports policy" said joint secretary Omar Faruque, the responsible person for reviewing the sports policy.

"They have been identifying our good practices, strength, lackings and challenges as they will be involved in policy formation, implementation and monitoring," Faruque said. "We will soon sign an agreement of TAPP [Technical Assistant Project Proposal] with them for a one-year period during which time frame they will hire a consultancy firm for the final draft of the sports policy."

Oliver Dudfield said, "We were invited to Bangladesh by the Ministry of Youth and Sports for a very specific purpose. The ministry is undertaking an update on the sports policy, working with all the key stakeholders in the country. The reason for being taken by the secretariat is the focus on contribution that sport can make to non-sport outcomes. And that's a real focus and expertise for the Commonwealth secretariat."

Dudfield said that they would need six months to a year to develop of the sports policy.

Reds agree £66.8m deal for Alisson?

AGENCIES, London

Liverpool have agreed a world record fee of 66.8 million pounds with Roma for goalkeeper Alisson, reports from England said.

They added that the Reds have been given the green light to hold talks with the Brazil international after increasing their initial offer.

Liverpool's first bid of £62m, which included £53m up front with a further £9m in add-ons, was rejected by the Serie A outfit on Tuesday.

However, sporting director Michael Edwards moved quickly to meet Roma's valuation of 75 million euros.

It remains to be seen whether Chelsea, who have also been heavily linked with Alisson, respond with a similar offer.

Real, Chelsea agree to €35m Courtois deal?

AGENCIES, Madrid

According to France's RMC Sport, Real Madrid are close to signing Belgium and Chelsea goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois, who won the Golden Glove at the recently-concluded FIFA World Cup.

The deal is reportedly imminent and will come at a cost of 35 million euros, with Courtois being given a contract until 2022.

Hazard is also set for a departure with claims that he has given a verbal approval for a move to the Real Madrid directors.

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