

What to WATCH

SONY ESPN & TEN 2
Asian Games
Live from 7:30am
STAR SPORTS SELECT 1
US Open
Men's Singles
Round-1
Live from 9:00pm

STAR SPORTS SELECT 2
US Open
Women's Singles
Round-1
Live from 9:00pm

PETKOV OLDEST IN BULGARIAN TOP FLIGHT

Slavia Sofia goalkeeper Georgi Petkov became the oldest player to appear in the Bulgarian top flight on Sunday and the 42-year-old marked the occasion with a man-of-the-match performance in the goalless draw against champions Ludogorets. "I don't pay attention to these things," said Petkov, who secured his place in the record books on Sunday at the age of 42 years, five months and 12 days. He broke Chernomorets keeper Yordan Filipov's record by a day. Filipov set the previous benchmark when he played in the league game against Lokomotiv Plovdiv in 1988, statisticians said. "I'm trying to be focused and help the team. I think I can still help the team if I stay safe and sound," Petkov, who won four Bulgarian league titles with Levski Sofia and helped Slavia win the Bulgarian Cup in May. Petkov's last appearance for Bulgaria was in 2009 but he has not given up hope of playing for the national team again.

— REUTERS



A chance for seniors to prove themselves

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh national football team are scheduled to fly out for Nilphamari on Wednesday to play Wednesday's FIFA friendly against Sri Lanka sans the eleven players who were in the starting eleven for their four matches in the Asian Games.

Bangladesh coach Jamie Day decided to rest those eleven players ahead of the SAFF Championship and also wanted to use the match against Sri Lanka as an opportunity to gauge the remaining players' performances, in a bid to select the best available squad for the upcoming regional football extravaganza, which is set to take place from September 4 to 15 in Dhaka.

"The reason why we chose to rest those eleven players is that they have just come from playing four matches in the Asian Games in a short period of time. So that's why they don't need to get match time against Sri Lanka," Day said. "However the older boys and the ones who didn't play much recently do need the game time, so we decided to give them that. The ones who need some game time will play against Sri Lanka while the young players will get couple of days off because they are fit."

"It gives the older players 90 minutes, which they need because they have not played since South Korea. This opportunity also allows me to observe them and eventually pick a squad that will go into the SAFF tournament," Day explained. Day's initial squad for their first match in

the Asian Games against Uzbekistan was comprised of defenders Tapu Barman, Tutul Hossain Badsha, Biswanath Gosh and Rahmat Mia; midfielders Jamal Bhuiyan, Atiqur Rahman Fahad, Masuk Mia Jonny, Mahabubur Rahman Sufil, Biplu Ahmed and lone striker Saad Uddin.

However, the 38-year-old coach later drafted defender Sushanta Tripura in place of Rahmat Mia for the next three matches while he sent on Mohammad Abdullah, Jafar Iqbal and Rabiul Hasan as substitutes regularly.

A total of 19 players, including three others who did not participate in the Games

due to injuries -- goalkeeper Shahidul Alam Sohel, Nabib Newaj Jibon and Jewel Rana -- will travel with the squad to Nilphamari for the friendly against Sri Lanka.

The match is a crucial one for the senior players to make an impression that will allow them to make their case for selection before Day announces the finalised team on September 2. The English coach feels that experienced players are needed in the squad to compete in the



JAMIE DAY

SAFF Championship.

"The Asian Games' starting eleven did really well and have made their position in the team stronger but they need experience, so it's another chance for the older boys to stamp their place in the final squad in the match against Sri Lanka. We've said it all along that if they don't play well, they won't get selected, only the best 20 players will be picked for SAFF regardless of age," said Day, hinting that he probably will not bank on the previous starting eleven for the SAFF Championship.



The ground is being prepared at the new-look Sheikh Kamal Stadium in Nilphamari yesterday ahead of tomorrow's FIFA friendly match between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. (INSET) Fans queue outside a bank to buy tickets for what could be the first big match experience for the people of the northern district.

PHOTO: STAR



Nilphamari ready for FIFA friendly

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

The Sri Lanka national football team reached here yesterday amid huge enthusiasm from the spectators, who are gearing up to watch the FIFA friendly match between hosts Bangladesh and Sri Lanka on Wednesday at the new-look Sheikh Kamal Stadium in Nilphamari.

Sri Lanka were given a warm reception as the district's administration, local government and district sports association officials received them upon their arrival at the Saidpur Airport before school and college going students greeted them with flowers.

Sri Lanka got their accommodations at the North View Hotel in Rangpur, where they opted to rest instead of undertaking a training session.

The spectators in Nilphamari endured a restless day on Sunday as they collected tickets for the

FIFA friendly, which was arranged as a part of both teams' preparations for the SAFF Championship. Enthusiastic individuals had to queue up in long lines and wait for hours to get their tickets from different bank branches in the small town.

Meanwhile, the Sheikh Kamal Stadium took on a new look, its adjacent areas are now adorned with colourful flags and banners which sparked further enthusiasm among the people. The renovation

works inside the stadium saw the facility's seating capacity rise from 10,000 to 20,000 and approximately 13 thousand tickets, priced from Tk 100 to 1000, were already sold out Sunday while the remaining 7000 tickets will be available for purchase on the game day from counters inside the stadium. There will also be arrangements for female spectators, informed District Sports Association general secretary and former national footballer Arif Hossain Moon.

Hockey team up against Pakistan

SPORTS REPORTER from Jakarta

The Bangladesh hockey team will take on eight-time champions Pakistan in their last Pool B match of the Asian Games today, with the realistic target of avoiding an embarrassing defeat.

Gobinathan Krishnamurthy's charges are in third position in the group, with three wins from four matches, behind Pakistan and Malaysia and ahead of Oman, Thailand and Kazakhstan.

Mathematically, all three outcomes are still possible for Bangladesh -- they can move into the last four with a 30-odd goal victory against Pakistan, they can lose out on the fifth-sixth position match if they lose against Pakistan and Oman beat Malaysia by a big margin and they can finish third in the group to qualify for the fifth-sixth place decider despite a defeat and a defeat for Oman against Malaysia. The last outcome looks most likely given the strength of teams. The coach, too, was realistic in his

assessment.

"Pakistan are a very big team. They will play all-out. So we will have to fight. Realistically they are here and we are here [indicates the gap with his hands]. But as long as we play our standard, I will be happy," Krishnamurthy said after Sunday's victory against Thailand.

Bangladesh have never been able to beat their Pakistani counterparts, who have won all four of their matches so far, having scored 41 goals against one conceded.

Bangladesh, on the other hand, have so far lost one game, 7-0 against Malaysia, who were beaten 4-1 by Pakistan on Sunday.

It is likely to be an uneven contest, kicking off at 5:00pm today, but one where Bangladesh would want to take some positives from.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh's female sprinter Sumi Akter finished 28th among 30 competitors despite recording her best effort, clocking 2:26.59min in women's 800m at the Gelora Bung Karno stadium yesterday. Her previous best in this event was 2:31 min.

Bastian expects to shed a few tears

AFP, Berlin

Bastian Schweinsteiger expects to shed a few tears on Tuesday on his final Bayern Munich appearance during his testimonial against current club Chicago Fire.

The 34-year-old former Germany captain will play a half each for Bayern and Chicago at the Allianz Arena (1830 GMT).

It will be his farewell appearance in Munich, having quit his childhood club for Manchester United in 2015 after 17 years and a total of 20 titles with Bayern.

Schweinsteiger wept when he received a standing ovation on his 121st and final appearance for Germany in a 2-0 friendly win over Finland two years ago in Moenchengladbach.

More tears are to be expected in Munich on Tuesday. "I felt lots of emotions, you have so many images in your head and let yourself be led by that."

Son's Korea reach semis

AFP, Bekasi

Tottenham forward Son Heung-min helped South Korea reach the Asian Games semifinals as the defending champions beat Uzbekistan 4-3 in an extra-time cliff-hanger on Monday.

The World Cup star, who is in Indonesia chasing a gold medal that would spare him a career-threatening spell of military service, produced a pair of smart assists for hattrick hero Hwang Ui-jo before a late Hwang Hee-chan penalty sent the Koreans through.

As Spurs prepared to visit Manchester United in the Premier League some 7,000 miles away, Son was the driving force as the Koreans squeezed through to face either Syria or Vietnam in the last four.

The 26-year-old South Korea captain provided a superb assist after just five minutes in Bekasi, near Jakarta.

It was the tournament's top scorer Hwang Ui-jo who scored the opener, tucking away his sixth goal after a brilliant run from Son.

But Jaloliddin Masharipov pounced on South Korea's defensive hesitation to equalise with a sharp finish after 17 minutes.

Japan-based Hwang smashed in his seventh of the competition with a dipping shot from long distance to restore his side's advantage 10 minutes before the break.

Ikromjon Alibaev fired Uzbekistan level in the 53rd minute after finding himself unmarked at the back post.

Hwang Ui-jo struck back, latching on to a Son through-ball to complete his hat-trick with aplomb after 75 minutes.

Son then let fly with a ferocious left-foot shot that whistled past the post as the Koreans went in search of a winner in normal time.

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:

BCB to claim full compensation for Robi's contract termination

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury said that their legal team will sit down with the legal team of Robi Axiata Ltd -- the telecommunications company that cut short a sponsorship deal with the BCB.

Anderson uncatchable once he breaks record
James Anderson will not be caught once the England cricketer becomes the most prolific fast bowler in Test history, says Australia's current record-holder Glenn McGrath.

No Ronaldo no problem: Lopetegui

Real Madrid coach Julen Lopetegui insisted after a come from behind 4-1 win at Girona that a 'keep calm under pressure' attitude would deliver the goals previously scored by the prolific but now departed Cristiano Ronaldo.

Salah demands answers from Egyptian FA

Liverpool and Egypt star Mohammad Salah questioned the Egyptian FA and asked why his messages are being ignored by the national body of football. Problems surfaced after Salah had said that he felt insulted after he appeared in a team photo in Egypt national team's official plane.

Inter Milan lose ground

Inter Milan, considered among the Serie A title challengers this season, lost further ground by letting a two-goal lead slip to draw 2-2 with Torino, meaning Luciano Spalletti's side have taken a single point from their first two games.



World number one Simona Halep (L) became the first top seed to crash out in the opening round of this year's US Open as unseeded Kaia Kanepi charged to a straight-sets win at the Louis Armstrong Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Halep suffers shock exit

Dimitrov succumbs to Wawrinka again

AFP, New York



World number one Simona Halep was swept aside 6-2, 6-4 by 44th-ranked Kaia Kanepi yesterday, the first top-seeded woman ever to lose in the US Open first round.

It was the kind of Grand Slam history Halep could have done without as she tried to expunge the memory of her first round loss to Maria Sharapova at Flushing Meadows last year.

But the Romanian, who broke through for a first Grand Slam title at the French Open this year, had no answer for Kanepi's power.

The Estonian fired 26 winners to Halep's nine, and even her 28 unforced errors weren't enough to derail her challenge as she cut the rallies short and remorselessly punished Halep's second serve.

"I thought I just have to be aggressive and try to stay calm," said Kanepi, whose run to the quarter-finals last year is just one of her six trips to the last eight in majors -- although she has never gone farther.

The victory let some light into a tight quarter of the draw that also includes 23-time Grand Slam champion Serena Williams, seven-time Slam winner Venus Williams and two-time major winner Garbine Muguruza.

Serena, seeking her first major title since the birth of daughter Olympia last September 1, was to launch her campaign in a star-studded opening night session on Arthur Ashe Stadium against Poland's Magda Linette.

Venus faced a potentially tricky opener against former champion Svetlana Kuznetsova, with the sisters looking at a possible third-round meeting.

Defending champion Sloane Stephens, the third seed behind Halep and Caroline Wozniacki, opens her title defense against Russian Evgeniya Rodina.

For Halep it was a swift end to the dream of a second major title to go with the French Open she won in June.

The Romanian, whose number one ranking is not in jeopardy, had no excuses.

"I cannot say much about this match, just that I didn't really feel the

ball," Halep said. "But also, she played really strong and pushed me back, so it was tough."

In the men's event, former champion Stan Wawrinka defeated Grigor Dimitrov for the second successive Grand Slam, knocking the eighth-seeded Bulgarian out in the US Open first round.

Wawrinka, the 2016 winner who missed last year's tournament as he underwent two knee surgeries, swept to a 6-3, 6-2, 7-5 victory on Arthur Ashe Stadium to repeat his opening round triumph over Dimitrov at Wimbledon.

"The last time I played on this great court, I won the title so it was great to be able to come back and play again," said the 33-year-old Swiss.

"The level was really high, there were lots of emotions out there."

"It's always tough to play your best in the first round."

Wawrinka, the former world number three, now down at 101, shrugged off having to take a medical time-out early in the third set.

Wawrinka will next face either Ugo Humbert of France or Colin Altamirano of the United States for a place in the last 32.