Venue: Birshrestha Ruhul

Time: 2:30pm

Amin Stadium, Cox's Bazar

National Cricket League

Day-2

Khulna v Barishal

Time: 9:00am

Time: 9:00am

Venue: SANS, Khulna

Rangpur v Rajshahi

Venue: SKS, Rajshahi Dhaka v Dhaka Metro Time: 9:00am Venue: KSOAS, Fatullah

SONY SIX

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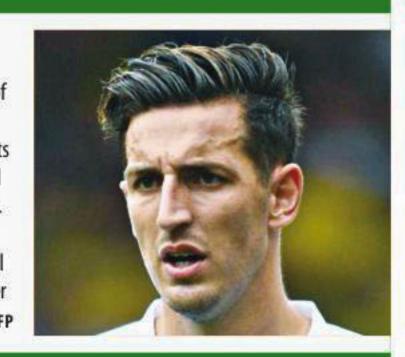
South Africa v Zimbabwe

Live from 10:00pm

Sylhet v Chattogram Time: 9:00am Venue: SKICS, Cox's Bazar

DUNK **BRIGHTON'S FIRST IN 35 YEARS**

Brighton defender Lewis Dunk received his first call-up into the England squad on Sunday ahead of the Nations League fixtures against Croatia and Spain. Dunk, 26, has replaced Burnley's injured James Tarkowski in Gareth Southgate's 25-man squad for Friday's match against World Cup finalists Croatia in Rijeka and the game against Spain in Seville three days later. "We are absolutely thrilled for Lewis, he fully deserves this call up," said Brighton manager Chris Hughton in a club statement. "He's improved with every season, and on the back of an impressive first season in the Premier League he continues to progress; I'm delighted he has now been given recognition at international level." Dunk is the first Brighton player to be called up by England since Steve Foster was a member of Ron Greenwood's squad for the 1982 World Cup in Spain and only the fourth overall.



What's in store for the champions?

ATIQUE ANAM

Players of the Bangladesh under-18 women's football team spent a sleepless night on Sunday. No, they were not sleepless from any tension of

playing a match the following day; instead they were sleepless from the excitement of just having clinched the title of the inaugural SAFF U-18 Women's Championship at the Changlimithang Stadium in Thimphu. The excitement was very understandable given that most of the players of this team had gone through a heartbreak at the same venue just two months ago.

They were also probably sleepless since they had an early morning flight to catch. They were dying to get back home and tell the tales of triumph to their near and dear ones. These girls have been to many places across Asia over the last four or so years. Coming from the most remote villages of the country, these girls now have access to new things and many new places, including the Prime Minister's Office -they were there before and will be again this Thursday to attend a reception. However, one thing these girls barely have access to are cellphones. But after the final win, they were handed cellphones for the night so that they could talk to their families. And that excitement kept them awake till late as well.

The fatigue and sleeplessness was visible in their eyes when they touched down in Dhaka yesterday morning, yet the satisfaction of conquering another frontier shone through. The players were greeted with bouquets and sweetmeats at the airport before they headed to the Bangladesh Football Federation headquarters for a full two days of rest to get rid of the fatigue and prepare for their next assignment.

Defender Masura Parvin, who sprung from relative obscurity to become the centre of attention following her winning goal against Nepal on Sunday, said she was 'delighted with having scored her first international goal, which became the 'titlewinning goal'.

Another centre-back Akhi Khatun was already well-known since she won the most valuable player award of the SAFF U-15 Girls' Championship in Dhaka last year. She was fast-tracked to the under-18 team like many of her peers and continued her rich vein of form into this tournament. It takes quite a performance from a defender to become the most valuable player, especially when her team concedes only one goal against 24 scored. It was Akhi's assured presence at the back that made things look easy for Bangladesh even when the going got tough.

"Last time I was the best player when playing at home. This time I became the best player while playing abroad. I feel really delighted with that," said the tall centre-back.

But they know that their job is not done yet since it is a continuous process and since they are still

Bangladesh players and officials walk out of the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport yesterday morning on their return from Bhutan where they won the title of the inaugural SAFF U-18 Women's Championship on the previous night. PHOTO: STAR

closer to the beginning mark than the finishing one. Most of the players of the under-18 and under-15 teams have had pretty busy schedules over the past year, and it is not likely to be any different for the next year. They will be playing in the first round of the AFC U-19 Women's Championship Qualifiers in Tajikistan later this month and will be off to a much sterner test in the 2020 Olympic Qualifiers in Myanmar next month.

Midfielder Misrat Jahan Mousumi, who wore the captain's armband in Bhutan, realises the hardest part of becoming a good team at the international level still remains.

"We are trying to improve our own areas every day. But we have much bigger tests ahead. We will have to play against teams like Korea and Japan, so we will have to improve continuously," she said.

These two assignments will be followed by the most important and most relevant assignment for the girls -- the SAFF Women's Championship, scheduled for December this year. Having won the under-15 championship last year and the under-18 championship on Sunday, the Bangladesh girls will be eyeing that title to stamp their supremacy in the South Asian region. And it will be mostly this group

of players plus senior striker Sabina Khatun who will take the challenge to achieve that. But that title is likely to be the hardest one to achieve.

India are an established superpower here, having won all four editions so far. Nepal remains another team that Bangladesh will have to better consistently. The girls in red and green did manage to break into the top two the last time around, but they are yet to be considered a force to be reckoned with at the senior level, for good reason too.

When asked about the Bangladesh's chances in the upcoming SAFF Women's Championship, coach Golam Rabbani Choton could not muster too much optimism in his voice. "We would want to do well in this competition. Even if we don't win it this time, we should aim for the next one in 2020 and keep the current under-18 players under continuous training for at least two more years," Choton said, adding that 'if the young ones do better than the older ones, why keep holding on to the older players?'.

What the coach was hiding behind was the fact that he does not have the system at his disposal to keep those older players in the game. The reason is that our women's youth development system comes to a dead end after the under-18 level, with no scope

for transition into the senior team. There is hardly any platform for the seniors to keep their feet moving -- no club football at home and basically no international engagements. The last competitive matches that the senior women's team played were 20 months ago.

As a result many promising players from agegroup have disappeared, either due to social pressure or the lack of playing opportunities. Players like Suinu Pru Marma, Mainu Pru Marma and Aumra Ching Marma have disappeared from the scene while only Sabina has stuck around simply because of her personal dedication and commitment. Not everyone in this current crop will have the personal resolve or the family backing to stick around for long once the lure of playing around the world fades, and even the insurance of having a source of income from football disappears.

Hence the onus is on the game's local governing body to ensure that successes at the age-group level are translated into those of a proper and successful senior team. And given that part of the blueprint has already been set forth, it should not be difficult for the game's governing body to strategise a plan to achieve that.

PM wants houses built for girls

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday announced an initiative to build houses for the women footballers who won the inaugural SAFF U-18 Women's Championship in Bhutan on Sunday.

She made the announcement at yesterday's cabinet meeting, held at Prime Minister Office (PMO), said meeting insiders.

The premier already ordered salwar kameezes and suits for the girls, said a minister who attended the meeting.

"All of them are from poor families and they need help. I will take the initiative to construct houses for them," the PM was quoted as saying by the minister, who wished to remain anonymous.

"I came to know that they [the girls] don't even have nice dresses to attend any programme... I already ordered salwar kameezes and suits for them so that they can participate in any programme," she was also quoted.

Hasina also asked her cabinet colleagues to come forward to help the girls and some ministers assured her that they would.

Sources said that after PM's call, State Minister for Labour and Employment Mujibul Haque Chunnu replied that his ministry has a fund to train children of workers and he will spend a portion of the fund to train the girls.

Sources said that the prime minister was over the moon as she recalled the match between Bangladesh and Pakistan, where Bangladesh scored 17 goals.

"Our girls have scored 17 goals against Pakistan... what more can I expect from them?" the PM was further quoted by the minister.

MBAPPE'S FOUR IN 13 MINUTES

AFP, Paris



Kylian Mbappe tore Lyon to shreds on Sunday with four goals as a 5-0 thrashing at the Parc des Princes saw Paris Saint-Germain set a new French top-flight record of nine straight wins to start a season.

Teenage sensation Kylian Mbappe insisted that he "should have scored more" despite netting four times in a magnificent individual display as Paris Saint-Germain thrashed Lyon on Sunday.

The 19-year-old scored four goals in the space of 13 second-half minutes as a 5-0 victory saw PSG set a new French top-flight record of nine straight

wins to start a season. But Mbappe did miss several earlier chances as he was thrice denied when one-on-one with Lyon goalkeeper Anthony Lopes and struck the post before grabbing his first goal just after

"I missed opportunities, I should have scored more," he told Canal+. "I keep working

I knew I had the sup-

the hour mark. and I never doubted.

port of my team-mates. I often say that as long as an attacker is creating chances, everything is fine."

Mbappe has started the new Ligue 1 season in similar fashion and already has eight goals to his name from just five appearances.

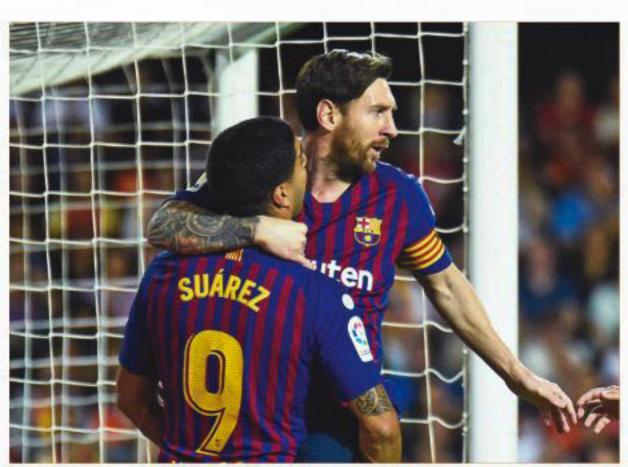
PSG are already eight points clear at the top of the table after breaking an 82-yearold record set by Olympique Lillois in 1936, as Mbappe looks to win the title for the third straight campaign after also lifting the trophy with Monaco in 2016-17. "It was the work of the whole team, but the

most important thing was the record," he added. "I insist we talk about the collective, we will have time to talk about me, Neymar. "We wanted to win, we

> A Neymar penalty gave PSG a ninth-minute advantage, but Presnel Kimpembe was sent off just after the halfhour mark to give Lyon hope. Bruno Genesio's side threw away their man advantage, though, as Lucas Tousart was dismissed, and after missing string of chances, the sensational Mbappe capped a virtuoso display by scoring four times in 13 minutes to seal history for PSG.

> > Emirales

wanted this record at all costs."



Barcelona superstar Lionel Messi (R) scored the equalising goal against Valencia at the Mestalla on PHOTO: AFP

Barca held as Sevilla go top

AFP, Madrid

Sevilla are the surprise leaders in La Liga after Lionel Messi could only rescue a draw for 0 Barcelona away to Valencia on Sunday.

Barca started the day at the top of the pile and LaLiga then Atletico Madrid enjoyed a couple of hours at the summit after edging past Real Betis at the Wanda Metropolitano.

Sevilla, however, usurped them both by beating 10-man Celta Vigo and Barca were unable to reclaim the lead in the late kick-off, held by Valencia to a 1-1 draw at the Mestalla.

It means Ernesto Valverde's side are a point behind Sevilla and without a league victory now in four matches, a dip that comes in stark contrast to their enthralling triumph over Tottenham in the Champions League on Wednesday. Messi, mesmeric at Wembley, was on target again, his

driven shot into the corner cancelling out a bizarre opener for Valencia, scored after just 78 seconds.

Ezequiel Garay claimed the final touch but Daniel Parejo's corner had been flicked on by Geoffrey Kondogbia, missed by Thomas Vermaelen and skimmed through off Gerard Pique's back.

Philippe Coutinho should have won it for Barcelona in the second half but took too long to pull the trigger and Jose Gaya was able to make the block.

"When we don't win we always think of it as two points lost," Valverde said.

"After Leo's goal, we tried everything but they defended well and we couldn't get the goal we wanted."

For Valencia, now unbeaten in six, this was another step in the right direction, even if they are finding it difficult to

turn draws into wins. They move up to 14th. Atletico and Sevilla's success also pushed struggling Real Madrid down to fourth.

Bowlers grab limelight



The first round of the WALTON 20th National Cricket NCL League may have been dominated by the bats-

men, but it was the bowlers who made headlines on the first day of the second round of the first-class completion being played across four venues yesterday.

The only batsman to score a century on the first day among all four matches was

Chattrogram's opener Sadikur Rahman in his side's Tier-2 encounter with Sylhet at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogura.

The left-hander struck his maiden first-class hundred before eventually being dismissed on 106 runs off 190 balls, which includes nine fours. But despite Sadikur's unable to utilise the momentum and ended the day on 282 for 9 after

taking the first guard. Yasir Ali was the second highest scorer for Chattogram with 84 as the port city outfit kept losing wickets at regular intervals with Sylhet's off-spinner Shahanur Rahman

picking up three wickets. In the other Tier-2 match at the Khan Shaheb Osman Ali stadium in Fatullah, Dhaka Metropolis's left-arm spinner Arafat Sunny bagged seven wickets to bundle out

Dhaka Division on just 206 runs. Apart from Taibur Rahman's 88-run knock, none of Dhaka Division's batsmen were able to score significantly after being sent to bat.

In reply, Dhaka Metropolis ended the day on 26 without loss and trailing by 180 runs.

In the Tier-1 fixture at the Sheikh Abu Naser stadium in Khulna, where the pitch remained on the slower side despite patches of grass, Khulna's spinners picked up six out of the eight Barishal wickets that fell as the latter ended the day on 266 for eight after

being sent to bat.

Left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak scalped three wickets while off spinner Mahedi Hasan and Al-Amin Hossain took two wickets for the bowling side.

Nuruzzaman was the highest scorer with a 48 not out while opener Shahriar Nafees added 41 for Barishal.

At the Shaheed Kamruzzaman

century, Chattogram were ARAFAT SUNNY... 7 for 57 stadium in Rajshahi, the hosts gained control of their Tier-1

match against Rangpur. Rajshahi bundled out Rangpur on just 151 runs and in reply, ended the day on 99 without loss. Mizanur Rahman (59 not out) and Nazmul Hossain Shanto (37 not out) will resume the second day trailing by just 52 runs.

After being sent to bat, Rangpur kept losing wickets at regular intervals. Naeem Islam's sixty was the highest score for the batting side while Farhad Reza and Mohor Sheikh took three wickets each for Rajshahi.

HIGHLIGHTS

After picking up just one wicket in the first round game against Rajshahi, veteran left arm spinner Abdur Razzak got his groove back again. The only Bangladeshi to pick five hundred first-class wickets was instrumental with the ball for Khulna as he bagged three wickets while

ended the first day on 266 for 8.

Barishal struggled with the bat and

Playing in just his fifth first-class game, left-handed batsman Sadikur Rahman smashed his maiden first class century for Chattogram on the first day of the second round game against Sylhet. It was also the only

hundred struck in all four of the matches on the first day.

Arafat Sunny was the wrecker in chief as he picked up seven wickets to bundle out Dhaka Division on just 206 runs in the first innings. It was his 18th five-wicket haul in first class cricket.

SCORES IN BRIEF

KHULNA v BARISHAL

BARISHAL: First innings 266 for 8 in 90 overs (Nuruzzaman 48 not out, Nafees 41; Razzak 3-103, Mehedi 2-46) RANGPUR v RAJSHAHI

DHAKA DIVISION v DHAKA METRO RANGPUR: First innings 151 all out in DHAKA DIVISION: First innings 206 59.4 overs (Naeem 60; Mohor 3-37, all out in 75 overs (Taibur 88, Rony 30;

Farhad 3-39)

RAJSHAHI: First innings 99 for no loss

in 27 overs (Mizanur 59 not out, Nazmul 37 not out)

Sunny 7-57, Ashraful 2-19) **DHAKA METROPOLIS:** First innings 26 for no loss in 13 overs (Shykat 21 not out) CHATTOGRAM v SYLHET CHATTOGRAM: 282 for 9 in 87 overs

(Sadikur 106, Nasir 84; Shahanur 3-58, Jayed 2-53)

French star Kylian Mbappe (L) scored four goals in 13 minutes as PSG broke an 82year-old record by winning their ninth consecutive match against Lyon on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP