

**STAR SPORTS SELECT 1**  
English Premier League  
Arsenal v Leicester  
Live from 1:00am (Tuesday)

**TEN 2**  
Serie A  
Sampdoria v Sassuolo  
Live from 12:30am (Tuesday)

**DAY'S EVENT**

**National Cricket League**  
Four-day match  
Day One  
Khulna v Rajshahi

Time: 9:00am  
Venue: SANS, Khulna  
Rangpur v Barishal  
Time: 9:00am

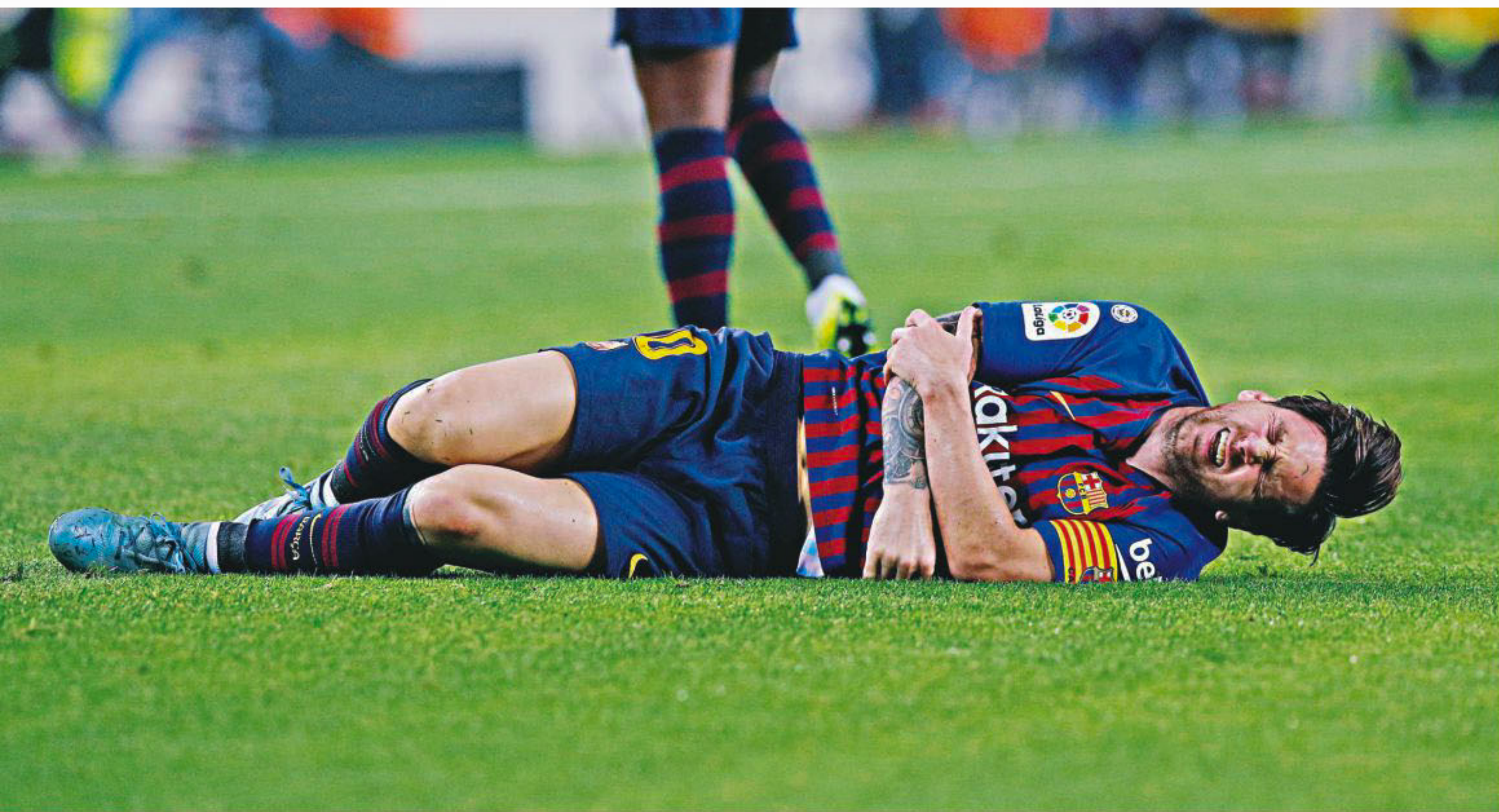
Venue: RCG, Rangpur  
Dhaka v Chattogram  
Time: 9:00am  
Venue: SKICS, Cox's Bazar

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

## NAPOLI CLOSE GAP TO FOUR

Napoli closed the gap on Serie A leaders Juventus to four points with a 3-0 win at Udinese on Saturday. Carlo Ancelotti's side took to the Dacia Arena pitch knowing that a slip-up from the Turin club, who drew 1-1 with Genoa earlier in the day, had handed them a rare chance to gain ground. The coach was impressed by his side's clinical performance as goals from Fabian Ruiz, Dries Mertens and Marko Rog completed a comfortable victory. "These are all tests of our maturity," Ancelotti told reporters. "We finished off well before the international break and wanted to come back just as strongly. It was a hard-fought game, a nice match and an important victory with good responses from everyone. We're finding solidity in defence, we're quite comfortable but the work of the forwards is also important. Our work collectively in the defensive phase was very good today."

—REUTERS



Lionel Messi injured his arm in a freak incident in a 4-2 La Liga win over Sevilla on Saturday night, meaning next weekend will be the first time since December 2007 that El Clasico will feature neither the Argentine nor Cristiano Ronaldo. Messi is also likely to miss both Champions League group matches against Inter Milan.

PHOTO: REUTERS

### THE KING OF EL CLASICO

Messi has played in 38 Clasicos, with Barcelona winning 17 and losing 12.

The Barca captain has scored 26 goals against Real Madrid, finding the net in four of his last five appearances in El Clasico.

Messi has twice scored a Clasico hat-trick, the first coming in March 2007 and the second coming seven years later at the Santiago Bernabeu.

Messi has featured in 35 consecutive Clasicos for Barca, last missing a meeting with Madrid in 2007 when he had a thigh injury.

Barca have played two Clasicos without Messi since his debut, with Frank Rijkaard's side drawing 1-1 at home in 2006 and losing 1-0 away the following year.

# Messi injury dampens win

## Argentine sidelined for three weeks

AFP, Barcelona



Lionel Messi is expected to be out for three weeks with a fractured right arm but his last contribution was to help send Barcelona back to the top of La Liga on Saturday.

Messi scored and then went off injured as Barca beat Sevilla 4-2 at Camp Nou, in a six-goal thriller that never looked like ending in anything other than a home win.

Any joy at jumping above in-form Sevilla, however, was tarnished by Messi's injury, which will now rule him out of next weekend's Clasico against Real Madrid.

A Barcelona club statement read: "Tests carried out on Leo Messi have confirmed that he has a fracture of the radial bone in his right arm. He will be out for approximately three weeks."

It means Messi will also miss the Champions League match at home to Inter Milan on Wednesday, and probably the return trip to Italy on November 6, as well as league games against Real Madrid and Rayo Vallecano in between.

"It is clear it is a blow," Barca coach Ernesto Valverde said. "We know what he gives us and we know what he does

to the opposition.

"We have to prepare ourselves, it is clear we are going to notice the loss of Messi but we have players that can cover."

Messi fell to the ground following a tussle with Sevilla's Franco Vazquez and, as his right hand tried to cushion the landing, his elbow appeared to buckle.

Messi was helped off the pitch by medical staff and, despite hav-

BARCA'S MESSI-LESS FIXTURE	
Inter Milan (H)	24 October
Real Madrid (H)	28 October
Cultural Leonesa (A)	31 October
Rayo Vallecano (A)	3 November
Inter Milan (A)	6 November
Real Betis (H)	11 November

ing his right arm heavily strapped, he was finally substituted in the 26th minute.

"Emotionally, we know when he is there, he gives us more confidence because he is the best in the world," Gerard Pique said. "But it does not have to affect us."

Philippe Coutinho had opened the scoring and Luis Suarez's penalty, which he also earned, made sure of victory before a three-goal flurry in the

final 11 minutes.

Pablo Sarabia and Luis Muriel twice reduced the deficit to two for Sevilla, either side of a sweeping volley from Ivan Rakitic.

Even without Messi, Barca might be confident of seeing off Madrid, whose slump had continued on Saturday with a 2-1 loss at home to Levante. Barcelona, meanwhile, seem to have sparked a rival.

Since drawing at home to Athletic Bilbao last month to make it three games without a win, they have blown Tottenham away at Wembley, taken a point away to Valencia and now eased past Sevilla, who came into the weekend top of the table.

Barca fans had chanted, "don't touch the badge" before kick-off after president Josep Maria Bartomeu had announced plans to change the club crest had been shelved.

They were soon celebrating a goal too as Coutinho bent a sumptuous right-footed shot into the far corner with only two minutes on the clock.

Messi doubled the advantage, racing clear on the counter-attack before jinking inside and curling into the bottom corner with his left foot. It was his last significant involvement.

"He did enough didn't he?" Sevilla coach Pablo Machin said afterwards.

# Stay of execution for Lopetegui?

STAR SPORT DESK



With his Real Madrid falling to a third consecutive defeat against Levante in their La Liga fixture on Saturday -- the first time they have had such a bad string of results since May 2009 -- speculation about the future of coach Julen Lopetegui reached a fever pitch.

Spanish media largely reported in the hours after the match that a sacking was imminent, while a photo of club president Florentino Perez fiddling with his phone during the La Liga encounter went viral on social media -- with some Real fans even hoping that he was communicating with a replacement.

The hard-to-please Madridistas voiced their displeasure at the Santiago Bernabeu once again, chanting for their players to 'play with balls'. Their discontent was understandable. Real Madrid put them through 481 minutes without a goal in a period that spanned 28 days and has stretched to five games without a win, with a Clasico against Barcelona next weekend.

However, Spain's Cadena SER reported after the match that Lopetegui reportedly had a short meeting with Perez which lasted around 15 minutes with no others present, where the pair reached an understanding that Lopetegui would remain coach at least



Marca's cover on Sunday read "This Madrid is in ruins".

until the Champions League fixture against Viktoria Plzen on Wednesday. There are no assurances beyond that and reports indicate that Antonio Conte is the favourite to take over while Michael Laudrup and Laurent Blanc are also in consideration.

It was also reported that Perez met with the technical staff and captain Sergio Ramos, but the latter refused to speak on the subject. However, Ramos did publicly back Lopetegui after the match.

# 'Pulling together' helped end run

AFP, Wolfsburg



Robert Lewandowski scored twice on Saturday as Bayern earned their first win in five matches, despite finishing with ten men after Arjen Robben was sent off for a second booking.

After consecutive league defeats, Bayern jumped from sixth to third in the table on Saturday, four points behind leaders Borussia Dortmund, who romped to a 4-0 victory at Stuttgart. Bayern's win came after chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge and president Uli Hoeness slammed the media on Friday for what they deemed "disrespectful and disgusting" reporting.

"It was a great sign that the club is behind the players and will protect them," said Kimmich. "We have the feeling that the club has pulled together. It is clear that people like to talk about Bayern Munich when things don't go so well."

"It's good for the feeling within the club, that we didn't let any of that criticism get to us and at the same time protected ourselves from it."

As Kovac put it, Lewandowski took his chances with "ice-cold" finishing to put Bayern 2-0 up just after the break.

"I want to congratulate the team for a top performance," said Kovac. "There was a lot of pressure on this game and it was a very concentrated display. It is the first step and showed that FC Bayern can fight back."

# Henry upbeat despite loss

AFP, Paris

A "positive" Thierry Henry suffered defeat in his first match as head coach when his 10-man Monaco side slumped to a 2-1 loss at Strasbourg on Saturday to drop into the Ligue 1 relegation zone.

The principality club have failed to win in 11 games in all competitions since the opening weekend of the French top-flight season, and are only above bottom team Guingamp on goal difference.

"It wasn't easy, we tried to put something in place which worked at the beginning, and then we conceded that goal that I don't need to describe... Human error, I don't want to wipe the floor with anyone," said the 41-year-old Henry.

"I want to keep positive despite the negatives... The game could have turned in our favour, but it didn't. In addition, we lost [Radamel] Falcao at the beginning. It wasn't the dream scenario."

## SHORT CORNER

### No tensions with Mourinho, says Martial

Anthony Martial insists he has never had a particularly tense relationship with Manchester United manager Jose Mourinho.

There have been long-standing rumours of discontent, with Martial's agent even claiming in June that he was looking to leave the club. But Martial, who has played in six of United's nine Premier League games in 2018-19, has dismissed talk that he does not get on with his manager.

"Things were not tense between us to begin with," the 22-year-old said to reporters following the 2-2 draw with Chelsea. "We have a player-coach relationship and I hope that we will continue like that and bring Manchester United as much as possible."

The former Monaco man also said he hopes their improving performances will stand them in good stead against Juventus in the Champions League on Tuesday.

"We were not doing well," he said. "However, this match enabled us to show that we are a good team. We want to continue against Juventus." -- AGENCIES

### Our heads were in Manchester, fumes Allegri

Massimiliano Allegri accused his players of being distracted by their looming Champions League clash with Manchester United as they lost their 100 per cent start in Serie A against Genoa on Saturday.

"We played with our heads in Manchester. We had to win. We went from frantic to sleeping."

However, Allegri hoped the lack of concentration would serve as a warning going forward.

"It [the goal] was coming; we could see it from the touchline. I think it'll be good for us. Everyone will now remember that nothing can be taken for granted." -- AGENCIES

**Valverde 'doesn't care' about future**  
Barcelona coach Ernesto Valverde said he does not care about an extension as he dismissed speculation over his future with the LaLiga champions.

"My future at Barca does not matter to me, I do not care," said Valverde. "I'm focused on the two matches that come and the noise that there is always around the team is the usual and you cannot do anything." -- AGENCIES

# Mariners go behind coach for Bolt deal

SMH

Usain Bolt has been tabled an official contract by the Central Coast Mariners but the man who would be his coach, Mike Mulvey, says he knows nothing about it, suggesting there is no room for the Jamaican sprint star in his A-League attack.

The offer was made to Bolt over the weekend, with the news breaking while the Mariners were playing their season opener against Brisbane Roar on Sunday.

Sources suggest the deal is worth 150,000 Australian dollars -- a long way short of the \$3 million that was previously discussed.

And while it would allow him to begin playing immediately, Mulvey's reaction suggests not everyone at the Mariners is on the same page.

Mulvey was pressed on Bolt's status and said it was all news to him.

"That's for a few pay grades above my level," Mulvey said. "I do appreciate how important this story is for the rest of the world. But you have a look at our frontline today and you wonder if he could get into any of those positions, wouldn't you? I don't know anything about what you're talking about and that's god's honest truth."

# Female boxers bound for World Championships

SPORTS REPORTER



Boxer Shamima Akter survived only four minutes against five-time world champion Indian boxer Mary Kom during the semifinals of the 2016 South Asian Games in India, and that bout is inspiring the now 19-year-old boxer ahead of next month's AIBA Women's World Boxing Championships in India.

Shamima is the only boxer in the three-member Bangladesh team with international experience while the two other boxers -- Anika Islam and Farzana -- will be participating at the international level for the first time when they take to the ring at the World Championships in Delhi from November 13-25.

"The match against Mary Kom is still vivid in my memory even though I was technically knocked out in the second round. What I learnt from that fight was how to improve my feet movement and how to throw punches quickly. I have been trying to improve myself over the last two years," Shamima said during an interval of training at the Muhammad Ali Boxing Stadium yesterday.

The three-time national champion will compete in 54kg weight category while Farzana and Anika will compete in 48kg and 57kg weight categories respectively.

Farzana has not yet made her debut in national women's championships, but the Grade-XII student of BKSP is



Shamima Akter (C), Farzana (R) and Anika Islam pose for a photograph at the Muhammad Ali Boxing Stadium in Paltan yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

excited and confident about taking part in the world championships after winning a silver medal in the inaugural Bangladesh Youth Games earlier this year.

"I am really excited because I am going to play an international match and a world championship match at that. However, I am a bit worried about how I would perform against the experienced boxers," said Farzana, who started boxing in December 2017.

"It is true that boxing is a tough sport where courage and strength is necessary. I have come to this stage with a lot of hard work. I don't feel good in the ring if I don't execute a punch. I know I will lose in the world

championships, but I want to fight as much as I can," said Anika, who has two gold medals under her belt.

Coach Kazi Shahadat Hossain said that Bangladesh, where women's boxing started in 2013, has been given the opportunity to take part in the world championships for the first time this year.

"The girls are going to take part in AIBA Women's World Boxing Championships with a quest to earn international experience. They have been training for the championships since September 19," Hossain informed, adding that the boxers are scheduled to fly for India on November 12.



Led by top seed Angelique Kerber (3rd from L) and defending champion Caroline Wozniacki (R), the Elite Eight of women's tennis met in Singapore on Friday ahead of the WTA Finals and posed for the official photoshoot.

PHOTO: WTA