

What to WATCH

SONY SIX
Pakistan v Sri Lanka
Third T20I
Live from 7:30pm
TEN 2
International Friendly
Germany v Argentina
Live from 12:45am (Thursday)

DEMBELE 'CAN'T SPEAK' SPANISH

Lionel Messi did his best to save Ousmane Dembele from a red card in Barcelona's clash with Sevilla as he explained to the referee that his teammate doesn't speak Spanish very well. Dembele was dismissed during the latter stages of the Liga fixture on Sunday. There were just two minutes left on the clock when the France international winger was given his marching orders and it came just 60 seconds after debutant Ronald Araujo was also dismissed in Barca's 4-0 win. Messi had hoped to avoid seeing Dembele join Araujo in heading down the tunnel, with the World Cup winner accused of verbally abusing match referee Miguel Antonio Mateu Lahoz. The Argentinian allegedly told Lahoz 'he can't speak', suggesting that Dembele does not know how to express himself properly in Spanish and deserved to be let off the hook as a result. The 22-year-old is said to have told the match official "you're very bad", with a red card then flashed in his direction.

—AGENCIES



Bangladesh blitz Oman

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh Under-21 hockey team got off to a flying start in the five-match Test series against Oman, handing the visitors a massive 5-1 defeat in the first match at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Although the match started 45 minutes later than scheduled due to a lengthy inaugural ceremony, the hosts did not take much time to open their account. Captain Ashraf Islam converted a penalty corner after a combination between Fazle Rabbi and Naim Uddin in the third minute.

Four minutes later national forward Arshad Hossain doubled the lead, capitalising on a square-pass from Rabbi. Sohanur Rahman made it 3-0 in the 17th minute, converting another penalty corner with a combination between Saiful Alam and Naim Uddin.

After the break, Naim wrote his name on the scoresheet through a collective attack before Rashad Al-Fazari reduced the margin

in the 35th minute.

Mahbubur Rahman wrapped up the victory through a field goal in the 42nd minute to give the hosts the perfect start in the series, which is part of their preparations for next year's Bangabandhu Junior AHF Asian Cup.

Despite the big win, head coach Mamunur Rashid was not fully satisfied with the performance of his charges.

"I think the boys were a bit nervous because of the first match and they could not give their best. There are some shortcomings which helped Oman pull a goal back and win a penalty corner," Mamunur said, adding that he would now work on those areas.

About the opponents, Mamunur believes Oman also could not play their natural game due to fatigue.

"They were in Malaysia for one month and played a few matches against Pakistan before coming here. I think they will perform better in the next matches," said the former national player.

Bangladesh will play their second match against Oman today at 6:00pm.



The Bangladesh Under-21 hockey team players celebrate after scoring one of their five goals against a visiting Oman side at the Maulana Bhasani Stadium yesterday in the first of a five-match Test series.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

'Was right to swap Madrid for Arsenal'

REUTERS, London

Arsenal midfielder Dani Ceballos believes he was right to join the club on loan from Real Madrid, where he had not been enjoying his football.

Ceballos has played 11 times for the Gunners in all competitions, scoring one goal and assisting two others, earning himself a call-up to the Spanish national team.

Moreno has selected the midfielder in the squad to face Norway and Sweden in Euro 2020 qualifying fixtures on Sep. 12 and 15 respectively.

"I'm at Arsenal right now and I feel very good," Ceballos told reporters on Tuesday in Madrid, where the Spanish team are training. "I knew I definitely wanted to leave (and) I was right to leave Madrid."

"Right now I'm where I want to be, and I am very happy. My idea was to leave, play and enjoy football. Over the past two years I have not done that. I was right to go seeing as I'm in the Spain squad."

Ceballos joined Real Madrid from Real Betis in 2017, but he failed to establish himself as a key player under Zinedine Zidane in his first spell at the club.

When the French coach returned in March, Ceballos was again surplus to requirements and moved to Arsenal on loan in July.

Weakened Germany face Argentina today

AFP, Dortmund



Germany are set to hand out several debuts with Joachim Loew missing a host of first-choice names for today's friendly against an Argentina without Lionel Messi.

Like the Germans, Argentina must do without some big names in Dortmund, where only two thirds of tickets have been sold for the friendly.

The match is a repeat of the 2014 World Cup final, but Argentina's Manchester United defender Marcos Rojo is set to be the only survivor.

Angel Di Maria and Sergio Aguero have been left out of the Argentina squad while playmaker and captain Messi is suspended.

The 32-year-old superstar is serving a three-month ban after accusing governing body CONMEBOL of "corruption" at the Copa America, where his team finished third.



Both the German (L) and Argentine camps are seen heading towards practice yesterday with the two sides set to lock horns in a FIFA international friendly match at the Signal Iduna Park today.

The German camp has been forced into a reshuffle with 13 players dropping out for illness or injury.

Loew admitted wanting to use the Argentina match to test out combinations with an eye on Euro 2020.

Key midfielders Toni Kroos of Real Madrid and Manchester City's Ilkay Gundogan are both injured, while a knee knock means there is a question mark over Dortmund captain Marco Reus.

As a result, Loew has called up defender Robin Koch from Freiburg and midfielder Sebastian Rudy, who played a key role in Hoffenheim's shock win at Bayern Munich on Saturday.

With defenders Matthias Ginter, out with a shoulder injury, and Jonathan Tah, who has a cold, also missing, Loew will test new players.

Hertha Berlin defender Niklas Stark will start, as will Freiburg forward Luca Waldschmidt, in for



PHOTO: TWITTER

Schweinsteiger calls time

REUTERS, Berlin

Germany's 2014 World Cup winner Bastian Schweinsteiger yesterday announced his retirement at the age of 35, following the end of the American MLS season.

Schweinsteiger, who has played for Chicago Fire since 2017, is among the most decorated German footballers, having won many titles with Germany's Bayern Munich and the national team over a 17-year professional career.

A midfielder, Schweinsteiger played for Bayern Munich from 2002 to 2015, winning eight league titles, seven German Cups and the 2013 Champions League with the dominant Bundesliga team.

He then had a brief stint at Manchester United from 2015-17 before joining Chicago Fire in the United States.

"Dear Fans, the time has now come, and I will be finishing my active career at the end of this season," Schweinsteiger said in a statement posted on social media.

"I would like to thank both, you and my teams @fcbayern, @manchesterunited, @chicagofire and @dfb_team (German national team). You made this unbelievable time possible for me!

"Saying goodbye to an active player makes me feel a little nostalgic, but I am also looking forward to the exciting challenges that await me soon. I will remain faithful to football."

A slew of sackings

MARCO GIAMPAOLO

AC Milan are set to sack coach Marco Giampaolo after a dreadful start to the season, according to multiple reports in Italy yesterday.

The former European giants are 13th in Serie A. Giampaolo, 52, replaced Gennaro Gattuso during the summer, but the former Sampdoria boss has suffered four defeats in his first seven games, including a 2-0 loss to city rivals Inter.

SYLVINHO



Lyon have decided to sack Brazilian coach Sylvinho just 11 matches into the season after a dreadful run of form, the Ligue 1 club said on Monday.

Sylvinho only took over at the Groupama Stadium in May to replace Bruno Genesio. It was the 45-year-old's first role as a head coach, having previously been assistant to Tite for the Brazil national team.

DAVID GALLEGO

Espanyol, in the bottom two in La Liga with just one win eight matches, fired manager David Gallego on Monday and hired Pablo Machin.

Gallego joined Espanyol as a youth coach in 2013 and became head coach in June.

The club said that Machin had signed a two-year deal. Machin managed another club in Catalonia, Girona, from 2014-18, leading them to promotion and then a 10th-place finish in La Liga.

EUSEBIO DI FRANCESCO



Coach Eusebio Di Francesco has left Sampdoria by mutual consent after only eight games in charge, the struggling Serie A club announced on Monday.

The 50-year-old, who was sacked by Roma in March, had seen his Sampdoria outfit slump to the bottom of the Italian top flight after six defeats in their first seven matches this season.

The Genoa club sit three points from safety after Saturday's 2-0 loss at Verona.

Murray to return at Australian Open

AFP, Melbourne

Andy Murray will make his Grand Slam return at the Australian Open in January, a year after career-saving hip surgery, tournament organisers announced yesterday.

The British three-time major winner has been slowly working his way back to fitness and is now ranked 289th, up from 503rd just a week ago.

The 32-year-old won his opening match at the Shanghai Masters on Monday, beating Argentine qualifier Juan Ignacio Londero in three sets, following a quarterfinal appearance in Beijing last week.

With his confidence seemingly growing by the day, Australian Open organisers said the former world number one had committed to extending his comeback into the majors in January.

"Confirmed: Andy Murray will return to compete at the #AusOpen in 2020," they tweeted.

The official Australian Open website said Murray "will return to the main draw with a protected ranking of number two and restored physical powers".

World number one Novak Djokovic said it was "pleasantly surprising" to see Murray back following hip-resurfacing surgery.

"Regardless of his ranking currently, he is a great champion and one of the greats of this game," the reigning Australian Open champion said at the Shanghai Masters. "If he's healthy, you can definitely expect him to play at the highest level very soon. I wish him that, it's great to see him back."

Murray has made the final five times at Melbourne Park, losing four times to Djokovic and once to Roger Federer.



Wenger 'turned down offers'

AGENCIES, London

Arsene Wenger revealed that he has turned down a number of offers to coach in the Premier League because of his bond with Arsenal.

The 69-year-old has stayed away from management since leaving the Gunners at the end of the 2017-18 season after 22 years in charge of the London club.

Despite being without a coaching role for the past 17 months, Wenger says he has had a number of offers to take charge of English top-flight teams, but he turned them down because of the connection to his former club.

"I decided to move out of the Premier League because I am too linked with Arsenal. I had opportunities to work in England but I turned them down."

"I don't want to tell you [which clubs] because there are people in charge and it would be unfair to them."

Wenger, who is now working as a pundit for bEIN SPORTS, won three Premier League titles and seven FA Cups with the Gunners and also led the 'Invincibles' to an unbeaten season in 2003-04.

After getting Arsenal in to the top four for 20 consecutive seasons, Wenger struggled in his final two campaigns in charge - finishing fifth and sixth respectively.



LA Galaxy striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic (C) was honoured yesterday with a bronze statue of his likeness which now stands outside the Friends Arena in Malmo, Sweden. Malmo, his hometown, is where Ibra began playing professional football before going on to have a legendary career.

PHOTO: AFP