

What to WATCH

BANGLA TV & BTV
Sheikh Kamal Int'l Club Cup
Ctg Abahani v TC Sports
Live from 7:00pm

STAR SPORTS 1
India v South Africa
Third Test, Day One
Live from 10:00am
STAR SPORTS SELECT 1
English Premier League

Everton v West Ham
Live from 5:30pm
Chelsea v Newcastle
Live from 8:00pm
Crystal Palace v Manchester City
Live from 10:30pm

STAR SPORTS SELECT 2
English Premier League
Tottenham v Watford
Live from 8:00pm
Dortmund v Monchengladbach
Live from 10:30pm

TEN 2
Serie A
Lazio v Atalanta
Live from 7:00pm
Napoli v Verona
Live from 10:00pm

Juventus v Bologna
Live from 12:45am (Sunday)

DAY'S EVENT

National Cricket League
Four-Day Match, Day Three
Time: 9:30am

Barishal v Chattogram
Venue: KSOAS
Rajshahi v Khulna

Venue: SANS
Rangpur v Dhaka
Venue: ZACS

Dhaka Metro v Sylhet
Venue: SCS

Sheikh Kamal International Club Cup
Ctg Abahani v TC Sports

Time: 7:00pm
Venue: Ma Aziz Stadium, Chattogram



Bangladesh players are over the moon after their 3-1 win over tournament favourites Faroe Islands at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday left them needing just one point from their final game to confirm the title of the UEFA Assist U-16 Football Tournament.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

UEFA ASSIST U-16 DEVELOPMENT TOURNAMENT U-16s one point away from being crowned

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh are just one point away from becoming champions in the UEFA-Assist U-16 Development Tournament after smashing favourites Faroe Islands 3-1 in their second match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

With two straight wins, the hosts are on top of the four-team table with six points, three ahead of Faroe Islands and five ahead of Maldives and Cambodia, who played out a 2-2 draw in yesterday's second match.

Moinul Islam, who scored a brace against Cambodia in the opener, once again showed his quality --- this time against a European side -- scoring twice on either side of substitute Piash Ahmed's strike. Faroe Islands defender Mourits Mhr Bisgaard had equalised earlier to bring some excitement into the match which the hosts dominated.

Faroe Islands came into the match on the back of a colossal 10-3 win against Maldives, but they faced unexpected challenges from the hosts, who distributed the ball quickly and pressed their physically-superior opponents.

The home side broke the deadlock in the 27th minute when Moinul headed home a cross from captain Jonny Shikdar. The forward from Barishal was then denied by goalkeeper Hans Jakup Amgrimsson, who

tipped a header over on half-hour mark.

After resumption, Faroe Islands sent out two pairs of fresh legs to add more bite to their attacks and it paid off as Mourits headed home a free-kick delivered by substitute Heini Fossdasa in the 72nd minute.

However, Bangladesh only took seven minutes to restore their lead. Piash ran onto a long ball from Sajed Hasan and nicely danced past a defender before driving into the near post in the 79th minute.

In stoppage time, Moinul brilliantly dribbled three defenders and the goalkeeper before driving home to wrap up a victory.

"I'm really feeling nice after two goals. We tried to play by the coach's instructions. We had confidence we could leave with a win and we did. Now, we will try to win our next match [against Maldives] to become champions," said the 11th-grade student.

Bangladesh's British coach Robart Martin Ryles said it was a 'drastic' improvement.

"They have improved drastically as a unit and today they played really well. They have great cohesive experience. I think the experience of the SAFF Championship and AFC Championship Qualifiers gave them the foundation for this tournament."

Opposing coach Aki Johnsen said: "The better side won. Bangladesh had a bit more possession and they deserved the win."

Enough to make the right noises?

SPORTS REPORTER

The month's break from international cricket that started after Bangladesh and Afghanistan shared the T20I tri-series trophy on a rain-marred September 24 evening shifted focus to the Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB's) operation of domestic cricket.

News over the past month had much to do with the BCB's plans for the ongoing National Cricket League (NCL) -- a first-class tournament -- and the seventh edition of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL), a T20 tournament that the board have decided to run without franchises for the first time.

The board took some initiatives that could be said to be positive for the country's cricket -- increasing fitness requirements for players wishing to play the NCL and placing emphasis on leg-spinners in both leagues -- but it is still in doubt if enough is being done.

Both are areas for urgent improvement as new Bangladesh coach Russell Domingo was

reportedly unhappy with fitness levels while a lack of quality leg-spinners has long been a thorn in the side of Bangladesh cricket.

Before the NCL started, the BCB raised the passing score on beep tests to 11 this season from nine in the last season. While the board initially said that it would be compulsory for players to pass in order to participate, they ended up showing leniency when a few of the more experienced domestic cricketers failed.

As for leg-spin, BCB director Mahbubul Anam said on October 10 that BPL teams -- each of which will be run by the BCB instead of franchises as in previous editions because of a disagreement about the terms ahead of a new four-year cycle of the league -- would have to have one leg-spinner in the playing eleven, who would have to bowl his full four-over quota in every match.

On October 17, BCB President Nazmul Hassan suspended the coaches of Dhaka Division and Rangpur Division for not fielding leg-spinners in their sides in the second round of the NCL, despite being asked by the BCB to do so.

Hassan's move is a commendable one as it shows that action is finally being taken to improve the lot of leg-spinners in the country with Jubair Hossain -- Bangladesh's only specialist leg-spinner -- falling by the wayside because of a dearth of first-class games after playing the last of his six Tests for Bangladesh in August 2015.

Meanwhile, the BPL's leg-spin action plan seems to be lacking in substance and practical workability. A scenario could easily arise that a captain would have to bowl a leg-spinner in the last over when he only has a few runs to save and the leg-spinner in question is not the right man for the job.

Anam's plan also ignores that there are not enough specialist local leg-spinners -- or those of a quality to rub shoulders with local and foreign elite cricketers -- to populate the seven franchises of the BPL.

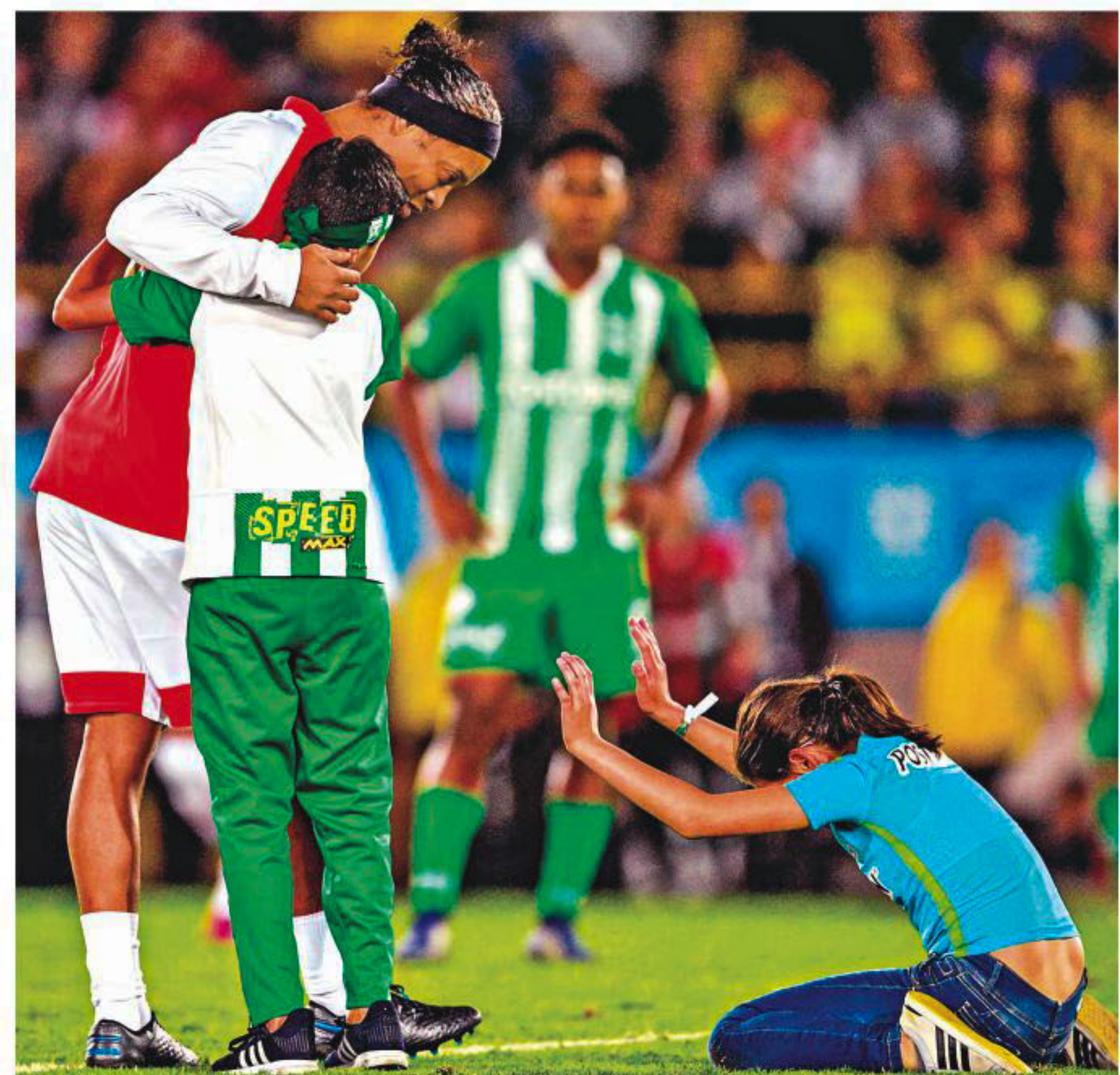
All of the initiatives -- the fitness tests, Hassan taking action against the coaches, and BPL's more whimsical plans -- vary in efficacy but all suffer from a tendency to focus on the immediate and not going in-depth to solve the issues.

The BCB announced the increase in passing beep test levels less than a month before the NCL and therefore many players were hard-pressed to raise their fitness to the required level in that time, leading to the BCB having to backtrack from an initially hard stance. To more realistically raise general fitness standards, the lower leagues will also have to be directed to raise standards and supplied with necessary tools to do so.

Hassan sent a clear message by suspending the two coaches, but once again, to grow new leg-spinners the board president will have to cast his eyes to lower than first-class cricket and encourage the style of bowling in age-level cricket.

The BPL's plans appear to be the most superficial, geared more at creating the impression that developmental aims are a priority.

With some welcome changes taking place in some spheres, Bangladesh cricket will benefit if the BCB sees the big picture to implement sustainable changes, and not just focus on tournaments when they pop up on the calendar.



Brazil legend Ronaldinho came out of retirement and turned out for Colombian team Sante Fe against Atletico Nacional in Bogota yesterday and set the stage on fire with a trademark no-look assist in his side's 2-0 win.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

SHORT CORNER

'If I didn't dive, I'd be injured now'

PSG forward Neymar told Brazil legend Ronaldo that if he did not dive during matches, he would end up injured due to a lack of protection.

Ronaldo told Neymar he understood from the player's father he goes down on the pitch "to defend yourself physically" and the PSG star offered his thoughts on the subject.

"If I didn't do it, I'd be injured now," Neymar said during the chat on Otro's Youtube channel. "You have to protect yourself because nobody is going to do it for you."

Neymar is currently out of action after picking up a hamstring injury while playing for Brazil in a friendly against Nigeria. He is expected to be out for four weeks.

-- AGENCIES



Brazilian legend Ronaldo Nazario met with the man currently leading his country, Neymar, and the pair sat down for a chat.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Kabaddi team leaving for India

An 18-member Bangladesh national kabaddi team will travel to India today to undergo enhanced training as part of their preparations for the South Asian Games, scheduled in Nepal from December 1.

Bangladesh will train at the Haryana Kabaddi Academy after coach Chhaju Ram, a former coach at the Haryana sports department, arranged the programme for the men's, women's and youth teams. The others will leave on October 24.

The men will also play a few practice matches against Indian provincial teams. They will then head to Nepal for the games. The men's team won a bronze medal while the women's team won a silver in the previous edition of the tournament.

-- SPORTS REPORTER

Clasico postponed; Real and Barcelona propose

Barcelona and Real Madrid appear set to agree December 18 as the date for a rearranged Clasico after Spain's biggest football match was postponed on Friday due to protests in Catalonia.

The Spanish Football Federation (RFEF) announced that Barca and Madrid have until 10:00am on Monday to find a new date.

According to the RFEF, Real Madrid have already approved December 18.

In a statement on Friday, Barcelona proposed the same date but also stressed their desire for the original fixture, scheduled for October 26 at Camp Nou, to go ahead.

-- AFP

Zizou, Ole downplay Pogba meeting

AGENCIES, Dubai



Manchester United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer played down talisman Paul Pogba's meeting with Real Madrid counterpart Zinedine Zidane in Dubai, saying he did not "have any problem" with it.

Pogba, who has been recovering from injury in the Middle East, was spotted chatting to Zidane -- fuelling speculation about his future at Old Trafford.

Asked about the image and with a reminder that Pogba said "it could be time for a new challenge" in the summer while his agent, Mino Raiola, confirmed that he wanted to leave United.

"Paul is part of our plan," added

Solskjaer. "He has been playing through the pain barrier. He has been criticised left, right and centre, but when he came back against Rochdale and Arsenal, he could've easily not played. He wanted to try to get back. Then there is a picture and being at Manchester United you do get pictures and speculation - but I don't have any problem with that at all."

Zidane also fielded questions about the picture and responded: "Pure coincidence. He was there and I was there and, since we know each other, we talked. That's all."

"And it was personal, I'm not going to tell you what we talked about, that's between him and I. But we've known each other for a long time, so if we meet, we say hi and we talk."



Pogba chat with Zidan in Dubai. a meeting that is sure to set tongues wagging again

PHOTO: DAVID MCDONNELL

The cover of the Daily Mirror shows Zinedine Zidane and Paul Pogba in Dubai.

Sarfraz axed as T20 & Test skipper

AFP, Lahore

Pakistan sacked Sarfraz Ahmed from his post as T20I and Test skipper on Friday, a week after he led the side to a 3-0 home defeat against an inexperienced Sri Lanka.

The showdown in Lahore gave the visitors their first T20I series win against Pakistan in seven attempts while missing 10 of their top players.

Senior batsman Azhar Ali will replace Sarfraz as Test skipper, while Babar Azam will lead the Twenty20 side.

"Sarfraz has been replaced... on poor performance," said a board press release.

Azam has been appointed skipper until next year's Twenty20 World Cup in Australia, while Azhar will remain in charge for the 2019-2020 season.

ERRATUM

In the report titled 'Onus on a new gifting generation' published on page 15 of the October 18, 2019 issue of The Daily Star, the company name 'Building Technology and Ideas Ltd (bti)' was misprinted as 'Business Technology and Ideas Ltd (bti)'. We regret the error.

-- SPORTS EDITOR