

What to WATCH

GTV, CHANNEL 9
India v Bangladesh
First Test, Day Three
Live from 10:00am
STAR SPORTS SELECT 1
Afghanistan v West Indies

Second T201
Live from 7:30pm
SONY SIX
Euro Qualifiers
N Ireland v Netherlands
Live from 1:45am (Sunday)

TEN 1
Euro Qualifiers
Cyprus v Scotland
Live from 8:00pm
Croatia v Slovakia
Live from 1:45am (Sunday)

TEN 2
Euro Qualifiers
Russia v Belgium
Live from 11:00pm
Germany v Belarus
Live from 1:45am (Sunday)

DAY'S EVENT

National Cricket League
Four-day match, Day One
Rajshahi v Rangpur

Venue: SKS, Rajshahi
Khulna v Dhaka Division
Venue: SANS, Khulna

Barishal v Dhaka Metro
Venue: BDS, Barishal
Chattogram v Sylhet

Venue: SCS, Bogura



PHOTO: COLLECTED

Argentinian hearts sunk when Lionel Messi missed a penalty in the 13th minute against Brazil, but they found relief immediately as their talisman scored the only goal of yesterday's Superclasico on the rebound from Alisson Becker's save in a friendly in Riyadh yesterday.

Messi returns to sink Brazil

AFP, Riyadh

Lionel Messi struck on his return to international duty Friday following a three-month ban as Argentina defeated fierce rivals Brazil 1-0 in a friendly in Riyadh. The Barcelona forward was suspended by CONMEBOL for accusing South American football's ruling body of "corruption" after he was sent off in July's third-place play-off with Chile at the Copa America. Messi netted the only goal of the game at the King Saud University Stadium on 13 minutes, tapping home the rebound after his penalty was saved by Brazil goalkeeper Alisson. His effort came shortly after Manchester City striker Gabriel Jesus rolled a spot-kick wide for Neymar. Messi, who scored with a pair of free-kicks in

his last game with Barcelona, twice threatened from set pieces in the second half before Liverpool 'keeper Alisson beat away a powerful drive from Paredes. Rodrygo, the 18-year-old who scored a sensational Champions League hat-trick with Real Madrid this month, made his Brazil debut as he replaced Willian for the final 20 minutes. However, Brazil were unable to find an equaliser as their winless run since capturing the Copa America title extended to five matches. The last coach under whom Brazil went at least five games without winning was Paulo Roberto Falcao 28 years ago between 1990 and 1991. At that time, the winless streak extended to seven games. The meeting between the two South American giants was the second in Saudi Arabia in little over a year. Brazil beat Argentina 1-0 in Jeddah in October 2018. Brazil also defeated Argentina 2-0 at home

in the semi-finals of this year's Copa America, a controversial match that left Messi complaining the hosts had benefited from favouritism. Brazil forward Willian admitted that their winless run was stressful. "It's hard, really. The results are not coming, but it is certainly not due to a lack of commitment or work. We had a good start but we couldn't score the goal." Galvao Bueno, a famous on-air personality who attended the funeral of Garrincha, was scathing in his assessment, saying: "The national team is very predictable, very obvious football is repeated all the time. I'm not satisfied. Do you know what I think? I didn't want to say it but either Tite changes or they have to change Tite. I think he's a great coach." "I have been in this life for 45 years. I have been broadcasting the Brazilian team for 40. I think I have never seen Argentina choke Brazil like this," he added.

Day defends attacking play and his charges

SPORTS REPORTER



Despite his obvious disappointment at a 4-1 defeat against Oman in their World Cup qualifiers on Thursday, Bangladesh coach Jamie Day was not looking to blame his players. "Oman are a far better team than we are, far better players. I think they showed that quality. I am disappointed we conceded four goals and I don't think that was deserved but I cannot blame the players' effort because they did their best," the 40-year-old coach said at the post match conference. After two good performances against Qatar and India, the expectation was high going into the Oman match, but the men in red and green failed to keep that momentum against Oman despite keeping the hosts at bay in the first half. "We can't keep expecting them [Bangladesh players] to perform to the levels required every game against better teams. They're doing their best. They are playing above their maximum in every game. And we can't expect our players to keep playing at nines and tens every week. It's impossible. So, I'm proud of how they've done." "The boys defended well but if you give

good teams chance, they take it and that's what happened in the second half," opined Day. The English coach believes the same thing might happen when Bangladesh play away to Qatar on another good pitch. Asked whether Bangladesh should have kept playing defensive football after conceding the lead, Day said, "If you are losing, you have to chase the match in order to get back into the game. So, if you are chasing the game, and when you play against teams like that, they find the space. We could've sat back and lost 2-0, but we wanted to score. There are a lot of Bangladesh fans here. We wanted to give them a game for 90 minutes." The English coach is, however, looking forward to taking positives from the match and he is happy that his side scored a goal, which he believes Bangladesh deserved. "I have always said it's a great experience and learning curve for the players, who don't need motivating. They're disappointed, which is a good thing. They're all disappointed we lost. That shows how far we've come. It's not a negative. We got positives from the game: for a good period of the game, we were playing well against an exceptionally good team. We can always look at negatives and say this and that, but let's look at the positives," concluded Day.



Roger Federer had a tough assignment but he breezed past Novak Djokovic 6-4, 6-3 in the ATP Finals in London yesterday to advance to the semifinals. PHOTO: AFP

BFF AGM TODAY

High admin expense to dominate agenda?

SPORTS REPORTER

After a three-and-a-half-year gap, the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) is all set to hold its annual general meeting (AGM) in Gazipur today amid fear of heated discussions over alleged financial irregularities of the past three years. BFF president Kazi Salahuddin had promised to hold the AGM every year after being elected for a third term in 2016, but he failed to hold a single AGM since the one held on the last BFF election day on April 30, 2016. The BFF Boss may be held accountable by the delegates at the AGM as the next BFF election is knocking on the door. BFF vice-presidents Mohiuddin Ahmed and Badal Roy made the situation more complex after bringing allegation of financial irregularities in September, but

those allegations were allegedly overlooked by the BFF, with the pretence of FIFA president Gianni Infantino's visit to the country last month. The game's local governing body, according to audit reports from 2016 to 2018, spent Tk 87.18 crore against revenue of Tk 83.12 crore with an average annual expenditure of Tk 29.06 crore. FIFA, AFC and sponsors provided the football authority with majority of the revenue, worth Tk 57.50 crore, while the rest of the money came through ticket sale, fees from players' and clubs' registration, lottery, South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) fund and other sources. Of the total expenditure, the BFF spent more than 38 percent [Tk 33.39 crore] as part of its administrative costs including staff salary [Tk 9.36 crore], technical director's salary [Tk 3.10 crore], fuel, utility,

maintenance, stationary, printing, courier, entertainment, gifts, sports goods, FIFA/AFC meeting conveyance, air tickets and other account heads over the three years. The large amount raised the question whether BFF was using too much money on non-development sectors as the lower division leagues and district football leagues remained somewhat neglected. The game's local governing body provided only Tk 1.17 crore to hold district football leagues even though it was allocated Tk 1.44 crore for this purpose by the government. Salahuddin has kept rolling top-flight leagues such as Bangladesh Premier League, Bangladesh Championship League, but the lower leagues are still irregular as First and Second Division League were held twice in three years while Third Division and Pioneer League were held once in three years.

The BFF also kept sending age-group teams to international tournaments alongside regular assignments of the senior team, but it was reluctant to provide support to hold district leagues and country-wide national tournaments. "The finance committee explained the queries of the two vice-presidents and the financial governance unit of FIFA and AFC also went through the audit reports, which was approved by BFF executive committee. Besides, no delegates gave any observation on the audit reports, so I think everything is right and it would be approved by AGM," BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag said. One of the delegates, seeking anonymity, said that many delegates may enter the AGM venue with black cloths over their mouth as the BFF is trying to shut their voice from raising issues that the BFF president promised but failed to deliver on.

Federer breezes past Djokovic

AFP, London



Roger Federer produced a near-flawless performance as he avenged his Wimbledon defeat by Novak Djokovic and qualified for the last four of the ATP Finals with a 6-4, 6-3 victory on Thursday. The Swiss started the tournament with a chastening straight-sets defeat to Dominic Thiem but found his best form when it mattered. Defeat for the second seed spells the end of his bid to overtake Rafael Nadal and finish as year-end number one. Roared on by a raucous packed house at London's O2 Arena, six-time champion Federer looked in the groove from the start, cranking up the pressure on Djokovic's serve and dropping just three points on his own serve in the first set. "Great atmosphere, great opponent," said Federer, who hit 23 winners and made just five unforced errors. "It was definitely incredibly special. I enjoyed it from the beginning." "I played incredible and I knew I had to because that's what Novak does. It was definitely magical."

Stokes has no ambitions of captaincy

AFP, London

Ben Stokes admitted on Friday he is not interested in captaining England. Stokes has emerged as one of the most charismatic and exciting England stars, but isn't keen to shoulder the responsibility of captaincy. After playing a key role in England's historic first 50-over World Cup victory earlier this year, Stokes also shone in the Ashes series against Australia. He currently serves as deputy to Test skipper Joe Root. "That's not an aspiration of mine. It's just not one of those things I'm desperate to do," Stokes told the BBC's Today programme. "You never know how you handle the pressure of being England captain unless you do it."



Cristiano Ronaldo (R) reached 98 international goals as he slotted home a hat-trick against Lithuania in their Euro 2020 qualifier at the Algarve Stadium in Faro on Thursday. PHOTO: COLLECTED

France, England qualify

AFP, Paris



The Euro 2020 line-up began to take shape on Thursday after big-hitters France and England qualified for next year's finals alongside Turkey and the Czech Republic. World champions France reached the tournament without having to kick a ball thanks to Turkey sealing their own qualification after a goalless draw with Iceland in the day's early match. Chelsea outcast Olivier Giroud then moved to within two international goals of France great Michel Platini with a late penalty that ensured a comeback win over a Moldova side ranked 175th in the world. The scrappy victory at a chilly Stade de France put Didier Deschamps' side two points ahead of Turkey at the top of Group H ahead of their final match at Albania. The celebratory mood was initially dampened when Vadim Rata punished abject defending to give Moldova a shock ninth-minute lead. However Raphael Varane levelled for the hosts 10 minutes before break despite furious protests from the Moldovan players

and their coach, who were convinced Giroud had fouled goalkeeper Alexei Koselev in the build-up. Giroud then slotted home his 39th France goal from the spot. **KANE, RONALDO GET 3 EACH** Meanwhile, Harry Kane fired England into the Euros in style with a hat-trick that helped the 2018 World Cup semifinalists dismantle poor Montenegro 7-0 at Wembley. Kane struck his treble in the first half as Gareth Southgate's side racked up five before the break in England's 1000th match. England displayed the firepower that will make them one of the favourites for next year's European Championship as they sealed top spot in Group A. In another game, reigning European champions Portugal were made to wait for their place despite Cristiano Ronaldo hitting his ninth international hat-trick in a 6-0 thrashing of Lithuania in Faro. Ronaldo has now scored 98 international goals after a seventh-minute penalty, a superb curling effort midway through the first half and a simple finish in the 65th minute, and will be hoping to become the second-ever player to reach 100 this weekend.