

What to WATCH

DAY'S EVENT

SONY ESPN

Euro Qualifiers

Greece v Finland

Live from 1:45am (Tuesday)

SONY SIX

Euro Qualifiers

Ireland v Denmark

Live from 1:45am (Tuesday)

TEN 1

Euro Qualifiers

Italy v Armenia

Live from 1:45am (Tuesday)

TEN 2

International Friendly

Montenegro v Belarus

Live from 11:00pm

Euro Qualifiers

Spain v Romania

Live from 1:45am (Tuesday)

National Cricket League

Four-day match, Day Three

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

Croatia seal Euro 2020 spot

World Cup runners-up Croatia rounded off a rebuilding mission by booking their place at Euro 2020 with a 3-1 win over Slovakia on Saturday but they are unlikely to sneak under the radar again at next year's finals.

Croatia secured top spot in Group E, a section also including Hungary, Wales and Azerbaijan, with five wins and two draws from their eight qualifiers.

Coach Zlatko Dalic, who masterminded the run to last year's World Cup final, has gradually reconstructed a squad that lost Mario Mandzukic, Danijel Subasic and Vedran Corluka to retirement in the wake of the 4-2 loss to France in Russia.

The "Vatreni" -- Croatia for "Fiery Ones" -- needed only a point in Rijeka on Saturday to ensure a spot at the 24-team event, which kicks off in Rome on June 12.

After a shocking start for home fans when Robert Bozenik scored in the 32th minute, Croatia's qualification was never in doubt once Nikola Vlasic drilled home the leveller in the second half.

Bruno Petkovic headed the hosts in front and Ivan Perisic sealed the three points with a thumping finish with 16 minutes left.

But the path through qualifying, preceded by a poor showing in the Nations League, where Croatia finished last in their group behind Spain and England, was far from plain sailing.

Thumped 6-0 by Spain in their first competitive outing since the World Cup, Dalic spoke of the need for "fresh blood" to rejuvenate his side.

Incorporating the likes of Petkovic, Josip Brekalo and Vlasic, Croatia began their qualifying bid with a difficult 2-1 victory against Azerbaijan at home in March.



Croatia forward Bruno Petkovic (C) celebrates with teammates after scoring during a 3-1 win over Slovakia in a Euro 2020 Qualifier match in Rijeka on Saturday. PHOTO: AFP



Germany midfielder Leon Goretzka (2nd from L), Toni Kroos and Matthias Ginter (R) all got on the scoresheet during a 4-0 win against Belarus in a Euro 2020 Qualifier match in Monchengladbach on Saturday. PHOTO: AFP

Kroos hits brace as Germany qualify

Toni Kroos struck twice as Germany qualified for the Euro 2020 finals on Saturday by thumping Belarus 4-0 but the Real Madrid star insists there is still room for improvement.

A deft back-heeled goal from defender Matthias Ginter and impressive finishing by Leon Goretzka and Kroos gave the Germans a comfortable 3-0 lead early in the second half.

Germany captain Manuel Neuer produced a superb save to keep out Belarus striker Igor Stasevich's penalty before Kroos dribbled through the defence to claim his second goal seven minutes from time.

The result left Germany two points above the Netherlands and means victory Tuesday in Frankfurt over Northern Ireland, who drew 0-0 at home to the Dutch, will send them through as Group C winners.

Loew singled out Moenchengladbach defender Ginter after the centre-back showed a sublime touch to score his first goal for Germany at his home stadium.

In the pre-match build-up, Loew had agreed with Kroos that this fledgling Germany team cannot be considered favourites for the Euro 2020 title next July.

There seemed to be some truth to that as a poor first-half performance saw Germany struggle to break the visitors' dogged defence despite 80 percent possession.

Bayern Munich winger Serge Gnabry and RB Leipzig striker Timo Werner led the German attack.

Just after Belarus had tested Neuer when Stasevich managed a rare shot on the German goal it was Gnabry who helped put the hosts ahead.

His well-timed cross gave Ginter the chance to conjure up an innovative finish as he flicked the ball past Belarus goalkeeper Aleksandr Gutor on 42 minutes.

Germany doubled their lead four minutes after the restart when Goretzka drilled a Kroos corner into the top corner.

Kroos claimed Germany's third goal when Ginter passed across to him and the Madrid midfielder casually hit the back of the net from the edge of the area on 55 minutes.

Neuer proved he is still one of the world's best goalkeepers when he denied Stasevich from the spot 15 minutes from time following a foul by Robin Koch on Pavel Nekhaychik.

Kroos netted again as he beat two defenders and sent Gutor the wrong way as Germany moved five points clear of third-placed Northern Ireland with one game to play.

'I alone will call an end'

Real Madrid striker Karim Benzema has told French Football Federation president Noel Le Graet he and he alone will decide when the time to end his international retirement has come.

After Real coach Zinedine Zidane called for Benzema's four-year France exile, caused by his alleged part in an attempt to blackmail Mathieu Valbuena, to end this week, Le Graet told French radio Benzema's adventure with the French team was finished.

"Noel, I thought you didn't interfere with the decisions of the France coach," said Benzema on Twitter.

"Please understand that I and I alone will call an end to my international career."

Benzema, who is of Algerian origin, added that Le Graet should "let me play for one of the countries for which I'm eligible" if he thinks the 31-year-old is done.

Benzema has not played for France since 2015, when he was placed under formal investigation over the blackmail attempt.

Coach Didier Deschamps has maintained Benzema's omission is in the best interests of the French squad, who won last year's World Cup without him.

"He has always wanted to play for France," Zidane said this week.

"He is the best and I think he should definitely have a place in the national team. Football-wise, there is no debate."



KARIM BENZEMA

BKSP dominate youth archery

Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protishtan (BKSP) finished top of the table with eight gold, six silver and six bronze medals on the medal-deciding final day of the Teer 3rd National Youth Archery Championship at the Shaheed Ahsanullah Master Stadium in Tongi yesterday.

The sports institute won gold medals in recurve youngster boys', recurve cadet boys', recurve cadet girls', recurve junior boys', compound cadet boys', compound cadet girls', recurve junior boys' team and recurve cadet boys' team events.

Tirondaz Sangsad finished second on the medals table with two gold, three silver and four bronze medals. Dhaka Army Archery Club and Bangladesh Ansar won the other two gold medals.

Hopeful swimmers leave for Nepal

SPORTS REPORTER



In a bid to coping with high altitude and getting used to 25-metre pool in host country, national swimmers left for Nepal yesterday for final preparation for the upcoming South Asian (SA) Games, some 16 days before the start of swimming events of the 13th regional multi-sports extravaganza.

In the last edition of the games in 2016, Bangladesh bagged a total of four gold medals, and two of those came from swimming. Both were won by Mahfuza Khatun Shila, but she has not been included in the Bangladesh contingent. However, the Bangladesh Swimming Federation (BSF) is dreaming big of beating the last edition's medals tally -- 17 medals (two gold and 15 bronze) this time around.

"Though we had initial plan of sending the squad to China for training, we later decided to send the swimmers to Nepal in a bid to acclimatising with high altitude and getting used to with the 25-metre pool as our swimmers are used to swimming in 50-metres pool," BSF general secretary BM Saif said on the eve of the departure of the team, which comprises 13 male and eight female swimmers.



Swimmers and officials pose for a photograph with Bangladesh Swimming Federation President and Bangladesh Navy chief Admiral Aurangzeb Chowdhury prior to their departure for Nepal yesterday. PHOTO: BSF

British-born-Bangladeshi female swimmer Junayna Ahmed is supposed to join the squad on November 29 in Kathmandu straight from England.

Japanese coach Yorikazu Tamayama is accompanying the swimmers.

"We are hoping to produce better results compared to the previous edition as the swimmers have been training for the last ninth months. We can't assure gold medals

SHORT CORNER

Shakib drops off Test rankings too

Having disappeared from the International Cricket Council's (ICC's) ODI and T20I all-rounders' rankings last week, Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan's name was absent from the Test all-rounders' rankings published yesterday.

Shakib was banned for two years by the ICC on October 29 for not reporting corrupt approaches by a bookmaker in 2018.

The Test rankings are refreshed after every Test match, and after the end of the first Test between India and Bangladesh ended on Saturday, the former Bangladesh captain's name was not included in the fresh rankings.

Before his ban, Shakib occupied the first, second and third positions in the ODI, T20I and Test rankings respectively.

Bangladesh batsman Mushfiqur Rahim, meanwhile, moved up five places to number 30 in the Test batsmen's charts after his innings of 43 and 64 in the first Test.

Bangladesh pacer Abu Jayed picked up four wickets against India and advanced 18 places to move to 62nd place after just his sixth Test.

SPORTS REPORTER

Pattinson banned

Australia fast bowler James Pattinson was suspended yesterday for player abuse, ruling him out of the first Test against Pakistan this week with skipper Tim Paine saying he had let down the team.

The paceman was found guilty of breaching Cricket Australia's code of conduct during Victoria's Sheffield Shield game against Queensland last week.

Given it was his third breach in the past 18 months, the incident triggered a one-match suspension.

AFP

Sacked for 27-0 win

The coach of an Italian junior league team was sacked on Saturday for inflicting a humiliating 27-0 defeat on their opponents.

Paolo Brogelli, president of Invictasaurio slammed his team's win over rivals Marina Calcio as "disrespectful".

"We learned with amazement and regret the score of the match in which our junior team scored 27 goals," Brogelli said.

"Our board has decided, unanimously, to sack (coach) Mr. Riccini. Our coaches have a duty to train and, above all, to educate children. This has not happened today."

AFP

PANASONIC OPEN

Siddikur 8th, Zamal 30th

SPORTS REPORTER

Siddikur Rahman finished tied for eighth while his compatriot Zamil Hossain Mollah finished a distant 30th in the Panasonic Open India, which concluded at the Classic Golf and Country Club in Gurgaon yesterday.

Siddikur was in with a chance of claiming a rare Asian Tour title after finishing the second round of the three-round-event just two strokes behind the leaders.

However, as is often the case with the 34-year-old golfer, last-round blues hit Siddikur again as he started the round in the worst possible way. The two-time Asian Tour winner played three bogeys in the front nine to slip out of contention. However, three birdies at the back nine helped Siddikur finish at a respectable eighth position with a score of eight-under-par (208), earning himself a paycheque of 8667 US dollars.

17-year-old Kim Joohyung of Korea won his maiden title with a score of 13-under-par (203) after India's Shiv Kapur blew a one-stroke lead on the final hole with a double-bogey.

Zaman, meanwhile, finished joint 30th with a score of four-under-par (212) following a two-under in the final round. The two-time PGTI winner started the day brilliantly, firing four birdies in the first five holes but two bogeys in the back nine compromised his chances of a top-10 finish.