

What to WATCH

SONY SIX

World Cup Qualifiers

Wales vs Belarus

Live from 1:45 (Sunday)

T SPORTS & TEN 2

World Cup Qualifiers

Bosnia and Herzegovina vs Finland

Live from 8:00 pm

Norway vs Latvia

Live from 11:00 pm

T SPORTS

World Cup Qualifiers

France vs Kazakhstan

Live from 1:45 am (Sunday)

TEN 2

World Cup Qualifiers

Belgium vs Estonia

Live from 1:45 am (Sunday)



Brazil's Lucas Paqueta (C) celebrates with Vinicius Junior and Neymar after scoring against Colombia during their 1-0 win, which sealed the South American country's qualification for Qatar 2022, in Sao Paulo on Thursday.

PHOTO: AFP

Brazil pursuing excellence, says Tite

AGENCIES



Brazil head coach Tite said the Selecao are pursuing excellence after booking their ticket to the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.

Lucas Paqueta's second-half strike secured a 1-0 win over Colombia on Thursday and Brazil's Qatar 2022 qualification with five games to spare.

Paqueta broke the deadlock 18 minutes from time in Sao Paulo, where he linked up with Neymar to guide Brazil to their 12th match without defeat in the CONMEBOL section of qualifying.

Brazil have now won their last 11 home games in World Cup qualifying – the longest winning streak of any team in CONMEBOL history.

Despite Brazil's World Cup

birth already certain, Tite and the five-time world champions are refusing to rest on their laurels ahead of Tuesday's showdown against bitter rivals Argentina.

"Solidity, having creation, having a goal and winning," Tite told reporters. "That is excellence. Creation and scoring, defensive solidity and triumphs. That is what moves us.

"We have to get as close to that. Tomorrow [Friday] we are going to fraternise a little to celebrate the moment."

Tite added: "My greatest joy is sharing the joy. It is priceless when I look at the technical commission, at the people who work in the selection day by day. It is the way, the dignity with which we do our work."

Since taking charge in 2016, former Corinthians boss Tite has overseen 50 wins from 67 matches,

with 12 draws and five defeats to go with 2019 Copa America glory.

"The only thing that moves me is doing a whole cycle, something that was not done at the last opportunity," Tite said, in reference to being appointed during Brazil's 2018 World Cup qualifying campaign before losing in the quarter-finals in Russia.

"That's what moved me.

"I didn't volunteer for the selection, my manager didn't go honking in anyone's ear, I worked to get there. I took it halfway through a process, we went all the way, you know the story, I was invited back later for a whole process. Just like I did at Gremio, Corinthians, Caxias.

"Then I thought, I thought, man, maybe my professional trajectory will allow me to do an entire period. That's what moves me."

Paqueta has proved to be an influential member of Tite's Brazil since leaving Serie A giants Milan for Ligue 1's Lyon, where he has rediscovered his best form since the 2020 transfer.

Half of Paqueta's goals for Brazil (three of six) have been assisted by star team-mate Neymar.

"The qualification is the result of work that we have been building back there," Paqueta said. "Our goal was to qualify Brazil for the World Cup, and thank God we managed to do that today."

"I have to adapt to my roles, and that gives me a little more confidence to be fighting for my space," said Paqueta.

"No matter where I play, I hope to do my best. I have to think one step at a time to conquer my space and fulfil my dream of playing the World Cup."

'Want to break the 18-year winless streak'

SPORTS REPORTER



On the back of a disappointing stalemate against Seychelles, Bangladesh are eager to bounce back in their second match of the Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa Trophy against Maldives at the Racecourse Stadium in Colombo today.

The match will get underway at 4:30 pm Bangladesh time before hosts Sri Lanka take on Seychelles at 9:30 pm in the same venue.

All four teams have played one game so far and gained one point apiece and now Bangladesh's upcoming tie against Maldives becomes vital if the Men in Red and Green want to stay in contention for a spot in the final.

However, Bangladesh are up against a stern test, having had lost all four matches they played against Maldives over the past 18 years, where the latest defeat came in the SAFF Championship last month.

Head coach Mario Lemos is confident before the Maldives encounter as he is more familiar with the Islanders than Seychelles, who held Bangladesh to a 1-1 draw with a late strike.

"We had less information about Seychelles but having played against Maldives in the SAFF Championship, it gives us a better idea of how we want to play against them.

"We definitely want to bounce back because we didn't achieve the result we wanted [against Seychelles]. It is football and we have to move on. We are completely focused on Maldives," the Portuguese coach said at the pre-match conference yesterday.

Captain Jamal Bhuiyan is well aware of Maldives' strength and emphasised on neutralising the Maldivian forwards.

"We know the strong side of Maldives, especially their forward lineup. So we have to stop the supply to their three forwards, who I think are stronger than their other players," said Jamal with the hope of leaving the field with maximum points.

"Tomorrow's match is vital for us. I believe in my team and the game plan. I hope tomorrow is our day and we can do something great to secure all three points.

"But we also have to remember that it's a vital game for Maldives as well. So I think both teams will play attacking football," Jamal added.

Lemos urged the players to be more clinical in the attacking third against Maldives. "We also want to win the match and we are not going to just defend. We want to be strong in transition and have the courage to penetrate their box, so that we don't waste chances like we did against Seychelles. We are motivated to beat Maldives and want to break the 18-year winless streak," Lemos concluded.



Club Cup champions Mariner Youngs Club exacted some measure of revenge with a 5-2 win over Mohammedan in their first meeting of this season's Green Delta Insurance Premier Division Hockey League yesterday. Mariners, who narrowly lost out to Mohammedan in the title race of the last league three years ago, have moved to 30 points from 10 matches, opening up a six-point gap over the Black and Whites, who have played nine matches.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

BHF to reveal Asian Champs Trophy squad by Nov 20

SPORTS REPORTER

With Asian Champions Trophy getting underway in Dhaka from December 14, Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) is planning to start the national team's camp right after the ongoing Premier Division Hockey League ends on November 27.

The eight-member selection committee, led by BHF vice-president Sajad AA Adel, is expected to reveal the final squad by November 20, just one day after the Super Five phase of the ongoing league begins.

"The committee has been observing games since the start of the season but three vital matches of the league are still left. So, we want to watch these three matches -- Mohammedan vs Mariner Youngs, Abahani vs Mariner Youngs and Abahani vs Mohammedan -- before picking the final squad of 18 members and five standby players," Adel told The Daily Star before Mohammedan

FIXTURES			
DATE	MATCH	DATE	MATCH
Dec 14	Korea v India	Dec 18	Malaysia v India
	Bangladesh v Malaysia		Japan v Bangladesh
Dec 15	Japan v Pakistan	Dec 19	Pakistan v Korea
	India v Bangladesh		India v Japan
Dec 16	Malaysia v Pakistan	Dec 21	Korea v Malaysia
	Korea v Japan		Pakistan v Bangladesh
	India v Pakistan	Dec 22	5th & 6th place matches and semifinals
	Malaysia v Japan		3rd & 4th place matches and final
	Bangladesh v Korea		

took on Mariner Youngs yesterday.

Replying to a query, Adel said, "We don't want to pick a preliminary squad because the national team will get only two weeks before playing their first match. So, we want all the players to concentrate on the tournament," said the former national player.

The game's local governing body is considering starting the camp either on November 29 or

30, even though they have not yet appointed a head coach following the resignation of Mahbub Harun due to health issues.

BHF acting general secretary Mohammad Yousuf said they have not considered anyone as of now, but Adel recommends appointing a local coach who has been involved with the domestic league, as the federation has little time to experiment with an appointment.

'Making MotoGP popular my biggest achievement'

REUTERS

Seven-time MotoGP world champion Valentino Rossi said he was pleased with his achievement in a glittering 25-year career of popularising the sport as he prepared for his final race at the Valencia Grand Prix.

The 41-year-old Italian will make his 432nd Grand Prix start this weekend having amassed a record 89 wins and 199 podium finishes in MotoGP.

"I think that the most positive thing in my career is that a lot of people started to follow MotoGP to follow my career from the beginning, and the sport became bigger, more famous in Italy but also all around the world," Rossi told reporters on Thursday.

"It's good to understand that during my career I became something different, something like an icon and this is a great, great pleasure also if for a rider it's more important what happens on track, the result, everything."

Rossi started his career in the 125cc category and won a world title in 1997, followed by the 250cc championship in 1999.



He moved to the premier class a year later and won seven titles between 2001 and 2009.

"I always imagined this presser... this is a strange feeling. I want to keep it normal but that's not possible. Great emotion right now," said Rossi, who took part in a special ceremony during which all his championship-winning bikes were presented before the media.

The Petronas Yamaha rider said he was disappointed at being unable to add a 10th world title.

"I fought a lot for the 10th championship... I was able to race at a good level. My last title in 2009 was a lifetime ago. I would have been happy to win another championship but I cannot complain. I had a great career," added Rossi.

Rossi has had a difficult final season, collecting only 38 points and achieving no podium finishes.

Yamaha's Fabio Quartararo sealed the title ahead of Ducati's Francesco Bagnaia at the Emilia Romagna Grand Prix last month to become the first Frenchman to win a MotoGP world championship.

Djokovic, Tsitsipas to meet in ATP Finals

AFP, Rome

Novak Djokovic will face Stefanos Tsitsipas for the first time since their epic French Open title duel in June at the ATP Finals which start on Sunday.

World number one Djokovic, who is looking to equal Roger Federer's record of six end-of-season titles, was drawn with Tsitsipas, Andrey Rublev and Casper Ruud in his group at the November 14-21 tournament in Turin.

Daniil Medvedev, the world number two and defending champion, is in the other pool alongside Alexander Zverev, Matteo Berrettini and Hubert Hurkacz.

Djokovic famously came back from two sets to love down to beat Greece's Tsitsipas at the French Open final to win his second Roland Garros.



(L) Pablo Sarabia's spot-kick sealed a 1-0 win for Spain against Greece as La Roja took a huge step towards next year's World Cup in Qatar. (R) Meanwhile, Germany, who have already qualified, showed no mercy to hammer the 10-men Liechtenstein 9-0 as Hansi Flick became the first coach to win his first six games in charge of the national side.

PHOTO: REUTERS/AFP