



"We are buying and looking for energy equipment all over the world and we ask the international community to help Ukraine."

Ukrainian PM Denys Shmyhal on emergency aid for energy sector



DHAKA WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 14, 2022

REGD. No. DA 781

VOL. XXXII No. 323

AGRAHAYAN 29, 1429 BS

www.thedailystar.net

JAMADIUL AWAL 19, 1444 HURI

20 PAGES: Tk 15.00



Lionel Messi celebrates Julian Alvarez's stunning solo effort against Croatia in a 2022 World Cup semifinal yesterday. Messi also netted a goal while putting in a typically sublime performance as Argentina handily defeated Croatia 3-0 to book a spot in the final, where they will face France or Morocco.

PHOTO: REUTERS



Messi on the cusp of immortality

Argentina beat Croatia 3-0 in World Cup semifinal

AFP, Doha

An inspired Lionel Messi scored from the penalty spot and Julian Alvarez struck twice as Argentina beat Croatia 3-0 on Tuesday to reach their second World Cup final in eight years.

The two-times world champions, backed by a huge majority of the crowd at the Lusail Stadium, produced their best display of the tournament to ensure they will meet the winner's of Wednesday's semi-final clash between holders France and Morocco in Sunday's final.

Messi, 35, who suffered defeat to Germany in the 2014 final, is desperate to crown his extraordinary career by winning his first World Cup and bringing Argentina a third title to add to those won in 1978 and 1986.

And after getting his team on the way to victory with a perfectly struck first-half penalty he made sure of the win by brilliantly creating the third goal.

Croatia, runners-up in Russia four years ago, paid the price for some

untypically poor defending as they went out in the last four for the second time after their 1998 loss to France in their maiden tournament.

It was not until the 25th minute when the game showed signs of life with a low pot shot from outside the box by Enzo Fernandez but Croatia keeper Dominik Livakovic did well to get across and keep it out.

It was a tight affair but then a simple lofted ball over the top from Fernandez caught out the Croatian defence, Alvarez latched on to it, knocking the ball past the advancing Livakovic who collided with the striker and Italian referee Daniele Orsato pointed to the spot.

Livakovic guessed correctly that Messi would go to his left but his dive was in vain as the Argentine's sweetly struck drive flew high into the net to put his side 1-0 up in the 34th minute.

It was Messi's fifth goal of the tournament, making him joint top-scorer with France's Kylian Mbappe. His 11th career goal -- in a record-equalling

25th World Cup appearance -- also took him past Gabriel Batistuta as Argentina's all-time World Cup top scorer.

Five minutes later, Argentina doubled their lead when, after a break from a corner, Alvarez picked the ball up inside his own half and began a long dribble goalwards.

With the Croatian defence backing off, Alvarez rode weak challenges from Josip Juranovic and Borna Sosa and then slipped the ball past Livakovic to send the heavily Argentine crowd into delirium.

Alexis Mac Allister then went close with an angled header from a corner, forcing a fine save out of Livakovic to avoid a third.

All Croatia could muster in response, before the break, was a low Juranovic cross-shot that Emiliano Martinez reacted well to.

Croatia coach Zlatko Dalic responded with a double substitution at the break, introducing Nikola Vlasic and Mislav

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DESERT FEST Modernity the enemy of romance



SAMAMA RAHMAN

The World Cup has traditionally been a platform that offered players the unique chance of being flung from unknowns into the realms of Kings and Kaisers over the course of just one

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MARTYRED INTELLECTUALS DAY

Murderous scheme

A deliberate plan to eliminate the brightest minds

AHMAD ISTIAK

It was the morning of November 15, 1971.

After a two-day weekend, Dr Azharul Haque, a surgeon of Dhaka Medical College Hospital, was in a hurry to go to his hospital. As there was a curfew in place, he called up the hospital authorities to send an ambulance to take him to the office.

Moments after he came out of his house on Free School Street in Hatirpool area, a group of Bangalee collaborators -- members of the infamous Al-Badr Bahini -- surrounded him. Dr Humayun Kabir, an intern of the same hospital, was also with Azharul.

After a brief exchange, they hit Azhar with the gun and forced both the doctors to board a microbus.

Azharul and Humayun never returned home. Their bodies were found under the culvert near Notre Dame College the next day. Their hands had been tied behind their backs and there were marks of injury all over their bodies.

"I was eight months pregnant at that time. He did not live to see our baby," Azhar's wife Syeda Salma Haque told The Daily Star.

Even during the toughest times of their lives, both physicians did not walk away from their duties to their patients and to the nation, but tragically they did not live to see the much cherished dream of independence of their motherland come true.

Azhar and Humayun are thought to be the first victims

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Stay united

PM calls upon JP, asks the party to get ready to participate in the next polls independently



RASHIDUL HASAN

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday called upon the Jatiya Party to patch up differences, be united and prepare to take part in the next general election independently.

She said this when JP top leaders Raushan Ershad and GM Quader paid a courtesy call on her at the Gono Bhaban, meeting sources told The Daily Star.

Raushan's son Rahgir Al Mahi Ershad, a JP lawmaker popularly known as Saad Ershad, was also present.

The meeting was held against the backdrop of Opposition Leader Raushan and JP Chairman Quader feuding since late August over establishing supremacy in the party.

JP insiders said the meeting came to pass after the PM moved to resolve their longstanding conflict in a bid to unite and strengthen the main opposition party in parliament.

It was also held two days after the BNP at its December 10 rally announced the resignations of the party lawmakers from parliament.

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Passengers awaiting trains at the capital's Kamalapur Railway Station yesterday. A freight train derailed in Tangail on Monday night, suspending Dhaka's rail communications with north and northwestern regions for around 10 hours. Inset, a family that reached the station to catch their Dinajpur-bound train at 10:00am yesterday was still waiting for the train around 4:00pm.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Prepare to face any crisis

PM asks bureaucrats, gives 24-point directive

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has asked top bureaucrats to get ready to face any crisis in the coming days.

Accordingly, the Prime Minister's Office gave a 24-point directive to the senior secretaries and secretaries of the ministries and divisions so that they are better prepared to face the challenges brought on by the pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war.

The Daily Star has a copy of the directives, which was handed out on Monday.

The premier has asked the energy ministry to take preparation from now on to avoid load-shedding in the coming days, take austerity measures to conserve electricity, construct transmission lines, and bring electricity and diesel run irrigation pumps under solar power.

She has also discouraged the import of non-essential and luxury goods and encouraged the manufacturing of these items locally.

Yesterday, Cabinet Secretary Khandker Anwarul Islam met with the secretaries at the secretariat for a follow-up meeting to instruct them on how to implement the directives sincerely.

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