

What to WATCH

DAY'S EVENT

GTV & MAASRANGA

BBPL

Chattogram v Rajshahi

Live from 1:30pm

Khulna v Dhaka

Live from 6:30pm

STAR SPORTS SELECT 1

English Premier League

Crystal Palace v Arsenal

Live from 6:30pm

Man United v Norwich

Live from 9:00pm

Tottenham v Liverpool

Live from 11:30pm

STAR SPORTS SELECT 2

English Premier League

Chelsea v Burnley

Live from 9:00pm

TEN 2

Serie A

Cagliari v AC Milan

Live from 8:00pm

Lazio v Napoli

Live from 11:00pm

Bangabandhu Bangladesh Premier League

Venue: Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium, Dhaka

Chattogram v Rajshahi


Time: 1:30pm

Khulna v Dhaka

Time: 6:30pm

Onus on everyone to score

SPORTS REPORTER

 Teenage striker Faisal Ahmed Fahim has temporary been called up for training with the national team as regular striker Nabib Newaj Jibon is likely to miss the upcoming Bangabandhu Gold Cup due to stomach bug and fever.

The Abahani striker missed training of last three days, and since Bangladesh will play their opening match against Palestine four days later, Jibon might not be fit enough in time before that fixture. Bangladesh will play their second group stage match against Sri Lanka on January 19.

Jibon's likely absence will put the hosts in a difficult situation as scoring is a constant issue with the team. Coach Jamie Day is not sure whether Jibon will be available, but he thinks everyone has to come forward to score goals.

"Obviously Jibon was the highest

scorer among the locals last season. Who knows if he is going to miss or not. (But if he does) We have to give someone else a chance," Day said. "Everyone has to score goals. Things do not lie only with Jibon, Saad (Uddin) or Matin (Mia)."

About the inclusion of Fahim of Saif Sporting Club, Day said, "We must keep the young lad to help him adapt to the training of the national team. [Mahbubur Rahman] Sufil is young, Saad is young and they got chances. For him [Fahim], experience will come through training. He is not ready for the national team yet; he is now 19 but training against Yeasin and Tapu will make him better."

If Jibon does not make it to the final selection, responsibility might fall on Matin, who is ready to take the challenge.

"I think my confidence level is good after playing the Federation Cup. If Jibon bhai misses out and I am given the responsibility, I



MATIN MIA

will try to give hundred percent," Matin said after the training at the Sheikh Jamal DC ground yesterday morning.

"Today we again worked on scoring. The coach might field two strikers and the training was

conducted that way. The coach made us understand what should be our position against two defenders in the attacking third. We also tried to finish well. We believe the lacking in finishing will be overcome through this training," added Matin.

After joining the camp, captain Jamal Bhuiyan is also thinking of how to score and get out of the group stage in the upcoming tournament.

"Scoring goal has been a big concern for last 10 to 15 years because foreigners have been playing upfront in Bangladesh league, so the local players don't get a chance. However, the forwards have to create scoring chances," said the newly-married captain.

"We have to score more because we now create good chances. We also cannot concede any goals; That is the big target as we want to get out of the groups stage first," added Jamal.



World No.1 Rafael Nadal (L) suffered a shock 6-4, 7-6 (7/3) loss to David Goffin in the ATP Cup in Sydney yesterday. However, Nadal made amends by helping secure a 6-7 (7/9), 7-5, 10-7 win in doubles to keep Spain alive.

PHOTO: AFP

Look for wins to bring some smiles back: Finch

AFP, Mumbai



Australia captain Aaron Finch said Friday a good performance by his team in India would help bring smiles back to the faces of people suffering in bushfires that have wreaked havoc at home.

The catastrophic blazes have killed at least 26 people and scorched huge areas of land. Finch said the disaster has overshadowed their tour.

"Obviously it's very unfortunate what's happening in Australia and our thoughts are with everyone that's affected by the bushfires all around Australia," Finch said ahead of Australia's three one-day internationals starting in Mumbai on Tuesday.

"At the end of the day cricket is very insignificant to what is happening there and in terms of, like you said, the loss of life. Lot of wildlife has unfortunately perished as well.

"So I think all we can do as players is try and bring some good performances and bring some excitement and some smiles

on faces of some people who are having it very tough at the moment."

Finch's side have enjoyed a good home summer after their semifinal loss to eventual winners England in the 50-over World Cup in July last year.

Australia whitewashed Sri Lanka in a three-match Twenty20 series in October-November, outplayed Pakistan in T20 and Test matches and then swept aside New Zealand in three Tests.

Finch said the team would take inspiration from their last India tour in 2019 when they won a five-match ODI series 3-2 after losing the first two matches.

"Most teams around the world now are very, very comfortable playing at home, so for us to be able to go away and continually win and challenge the best teams in the world on a regular basis is really important to us," said Finch.

We are excited for the challenge. We obviously won here last time we came. So to be able to back that performance up and starting off well in Mumbai is really important to us."

The second international is in Rajkot on January 17 and the series ends in Bangalore on January 19.

Would have been the first out: Farah

AFP, London

British athletics great Mo Farah says he would have been the first athlete to leave disgraced coach Alberto Salazar's camp had he known he was involved in doping.

The 36-year-old Somalia-born distance runner -- who will bid for a third successive 10,000 metres Olympic title in Tokyo this year rather than continuing to conquer the marathon -- told the BBC he wished he had been aware sooner about Salazar's illegal activity at the Nike Oregon Project.

Farah was criticised for staying on with the 61-year-old Cuban-born naturalised American till 2017, two years after a BBC documentary first aired claims about doping within the camp.

When Salazar was banned for four years by the US Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) in October for doping violations, Farah was reluctant to talk about his former coach, who is now appealing the ruling at the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

"Had I had known the news, what Salazar did, it's taken four years, had I known that sooner I would have been the first one out," said Farah.

"That's the bit that's kind of annoying, I wish I'd known quicker. I haven't been part of Salazar for the last two years."



AFP, Sydney



Rafael Nadal suffered an upset singles loss but made amends in the doubles to keep Spain alive at the ATP Cup yesterday, with Novak Djokovic also surviving a scare before rallying to guide Serbia into a semi-final against Russia.

After Roberto Bautista Agut swept past Kimmer Coppejans 6-1, 6-4 in the first singles match, Nadal had the chance to wrap up a last four berth against David Goffin.

But the 19-time Grand Slam winner struggled in the heat and humidity of Sydney, crashing 6-4, 7-6 (7/3) to the 11th-ranked Belgium. It was a rare defeat while playing for his country, who he helped to victory in the Davis Cup in November.

It sent the tie to a decisive doubles match, with Nadal returning to partner Pablo Carreno Busta against Sander Gille and Joran Vliegen in a gritty 6-7 (7/9), 7-5, 10-7 win.

"It was tough, because for us it was a big change from Perth to here, not much time to adapt and the conditions were heavy, the humidity and playing against

big players," said Nadal.

"But as a team we are super happy to be in the semi-finals."

Spain's group games during the round-robin phase of the inaugural team event were played in Perth, where the air was much drier.

Nadal, who had not dropped a set this year before meeting Goffin, was dripping in sweat for much of his singles match and used ice towels at the changeovers.

He struggled to find his rhythm, giving away nine break points in the first set.

Goffin had two more break points to go 5-3 up in the second, but Nadal clung on and became more offensive to take the match to a tiebreak before the Belgian closed it out for one of the biggest wins in his career.

Spain will face Australia in the last four.

Like Nadal, world number two Djokovic was also tested, dropping his first set of the tournament in a titanic struggle with Canada's Denis Shapovalov.

The Serbian superstar was made to work by the 14th-ranked young gun before prevailing 4-6, 6-1, 7-6 (7/4) to help his team to a 3-0 win.



PHOTO: AFP

Atletico Madrid players celebrate while a dejected Lionel Messi (2nd from R) looks on after the Madrid side secured a thrilling come-from-behind 3-2 win over Barcelona in a Spanish Super Cup quarterfinal match in Jeddah on Thursday.

Atletico beat Barca in 5-goal thriller

AFP, Jeddah



Atletico Madrid sprung a surprise in the Spanish Super Cup by staging a thrilling comeback to beat Barcelona 3-2 on Thursday and set up a final against Real Madrid.

Barca looked on course for a Sunday showdown against Real when they led Atletico 2-1 with nine minutes left but instead it will be a Madrid derby in Saudi Arabia to decide who lifts the trophy.

All five goals were scored during a wild second half in Jeddah that began with Koke putting Atletico in

front, just 21 seconds after coming on as a substitute at the interval.

Goals from Lionel Messi and Antoine Griezmann turned the game on its head, only for Atletico to hit back with a late double, Alvaro Morata converting a penalty in the 81st minute before Angel Correa found a winner in the 86th.

In between, Barcelona also had two goals ruled out after VAR spotted tight offsides while Atleti were denied what looked a clear penalty at 2-2, after the ball clipped the hand of Gerard Pique.

"They had more legs than us and in the end it cost us," said Griezmann.

A pulsating contest will have delighted the Spanish Football

Federation, who have faced heavy criticism for taking the competition away from Spain to a different continent, and a country that has a long-condemned record on human rights.

Barcelona coach Ernesto Valverde said on Wednesday he preferred the old format but his strong team selection, that included Messi, Griezmann and Luis Suarez, suggested this was a tournament he was eager to win.

It remains to be seen how this defeat might affect the La Liga title race, with Real Madrid and Atletico now enjoying the opportunity not only to claim a trophy but score a psychological boost too.

Klopp wary ahead of Spurs tie

AFP, London



Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp believes Jose Mourinho remains a world class coach and a threat to his side's unbeaten Premier League record when the European champions travel to Tottenham today.

A massive 28-point gap separates the sides that contested the Champions League final just seven months ago with Liverpool running away with the title, while sixth-placed Spurs' ambition is just to make it back into the top four.

Mourinho's honeymoon period in north London is over after a run of just two wins in Tottenham's last seven games, but he has consistently been a thorn in Liverpool's

side with Chelsea and Manchester United in the past.

"Jose Mourinho is a world-class manager with a specific mindset. I would say he wants to win with all he has. I respect that a lot," said Klopp.

"That means each situation his team is in, he tries to use for his team."

Liverpool are 13 points clear with a game in hand over closest challengers Leicester and Manchester City as they seem destined to end a 30-year wait to win the league.

Klopp confirmed that James Milner and Naby Keita will miss the trip to Tottenham due to muscle injuries.

Fabinho and Dejan Lovren are also not ready to return, but could be fit for the visit of Manchester United next weekend.



Jasmin Kurtic leaves SPAL for Parma

AFP, Milan

Slovenia international Jasmin Kurtic has signed for Parma from Italian rivals SPAL, the Serie A club announced yesterday.

Midfielder Kurtic, who turned 31 on Friday, signed a loan deal with Parma until the end of the season which will then turn into a permanent transfer, with his contract running until June 30, 2023.

The deal is reported to be worth 3.5 million euros (\$3.8 million) plus performance-related bonuses.

Kurtic, who has played 58 times for Slovenia, moved to Italy in 2011 and has also previously played for Sassuolo, Torino, Fiorentina and Atalanta.

Kurtic joined SPAL in January 2018 after three seasons with Atalanta, helping the team stay in the top flight with a 13th-placed finish.

He scored two goals in 16 Serie A games this season.

Parma are seventh, four points off the Europa League places, with SPAL bottom and three points from safety.

Torino reach Italian Cup quarterfinals

AFP, Milan

Torino beat Genoa 5-3 on penalties to reach the Italian Cup quarter-finals on Thursday after both sides were tied 1-1 after extra-time.

Andrea Favilli put Genoa ahead after 14 minutes against their Serie A rivals in Turin but Lorenzo De Silvestri pulled the hosts level on 23 minutes.

Genoa keeper Andrei Radu denied an Andrea Belotti header in the second half with the Torino captain also missing a chance for the winner in injury time.

The game went to a shoot-out with Torino keeper Salvatore Sirigu saving Ivan Radovanovic's effort, with Alex Berenguer slotting in the winning penalty.

India thump SL to clinch series

AFP, Pune



Opens KL Rahul and Shikhar Dhawan smashed half-centuries as India thrashed Sri Lanka by 78 runs in the third T20I to clinch the series 2-0 in Pune yesterday.

Rahul, who top-scored with 54, and Dhawan, who hit 52, put on 97 runs for the opening wicket as India amassed 201 for six. Paceman Navdeep Saini claimed three wickets to help dismiss Sri Lanka for 123 in 15.5 overs despite a fighting 57 by Dhananjaya de Silva.

Earlier, Dhawan was dropped on one by Dasun Shanaka off Angelo Mathews and made the most of the spill as he recorded his 10th T20 fifty in just 34 balls.

Left-arm wrist spinner Lakshan Sandakan finally got Dhawan and struck twice in his next over to send back Rahul and Shreyas Iyer, for four, trudging back to the pavilion as India slipped to 122-4. Skipper Virat Kohli, who dropped himself to number six in the batting order, then took the attack to the opposition with a 17-ball 26 before being run out.

SCORES IN BRIEF
INDIA: 201 for 6 (Rahul 54, Dhawan 52, Pandey 31; Sandakan 3-35)
SRI LANKA: 123 all out in 15.5 overs (Dhananjaya 57, Mathews 31; Saini 3-28, Thakur 2-19, Sundar 2-37)
Result: India won by 78 runs
Player-of-the-match: Shardul Thakur