

<div> <div>What to WATCH</div> <div>DAY'S EVENT</div> </div>	STAR SPORTS1 ICC World Cup Warm-up Match (D/N) England v Pakistan Live from 9:30am English Premiership	Stoke City v Man City Live from 1:45am (Thursday) STAR SPORTS2 English Premiership Man United v Burnley Live from 1:45am (Thursday)	STAR SPORTS 4 English Premiership Chelsea v Everton Live from 1:45am (Thursday) TEN ACTION Copa del Rey	SEMIFINALS Barcelona v Villarreal Live from 1:00am (Thursday) Bilbao v Espanyol Live from 3:00am (Thursday)
	National Cricket League (Four-Day Match, Day-4)	Dhaka v Chittagong Venue: BKSP 3	Rajshahi v Sylhet Venue: BKSP 2	Rangpur v Khulna Venue: SBNCs
				Dhaka Metro v Barisal Venue: KSOAS, Time: 10:00am

Genoa end winless run

AFP, Rome

Lazio's hopes of going fourth in Serie A were dashed on Monday as Diego Perotti's penalty was enough to secure Genoa a 1-0 victory in Rome.

Genoa's first win in eight games saw them move into seventh place, just two points off Lazio in sixth.

Lazio had made a bright start testing visiting goal-keeper Mattia Perin on a couple of occasions first deflecting a shot by Lucas Biglia onto a post and then got down well to deny midfielder Antonio Candreva.

However, the pivotal moment came in the 30th minute when Lazio goal-keeper Federico Marchetti was sent off for bringing down M'Baye Niang in the area -- replacement goal-keeper Etrit Berisha was unable to prevent Perotti converting the resulting penalty.

SAFF C'ship in June?

SPORTS REPORTER



The eleventh edition of the SAFF Championship is likely to be brought forward by five months to June, informed a high official of the South Asian Football Federation yesterday.

The championship involving South Asian nations is scheduled to be held in December in India, but the hosts are now thinking of holding the regional extravaganza in June due to the hosts' commitment to the Indian Super League in December, said SAFF's new general secretary Anwarul Haque Helal. He took over the charges on February 1 after FIFA imposed a ban on former general secretary Alberto Colaco of India. Helal however said that nothing had been finalised yet.

The SAFF official is also awaiting a decision on Afghanistan whether to include or exclude defending the champions, who recently left the South Asian region to join Central Asia. The decision may come after a meeting between SAFF and BFF president Kazi Salahuddin and AFC president Shaikh Salman Bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa.

If the SAFF Championship takes place in June, then the Bangladesh Premier League is set to suffer because the footballing season here has not started yet to accommodate the just-concluded Bangabandhu Gold Cup.

FA at fault: Mourinho

AFP, London



Jose Mourinho, the Chelsea manager, has accused the Football Association of double standards having not taken action against Robin van Persie for an

elbow on James Tomkins.

The Blues boss remains without main striker Diego Costa for the final game of his three-match suspension against Everton on Wednesday.

Costa was banned for stamping on Liverpool's Emre Can and has questioned why other players do not get the same treatment as his talisman.

Mourinho, who did not mention van Persie by name, raised the inconsistency of the governing body's decision on Tuesday after the Manchester United forward did not receive a violent conduct charge for what West Ham defender Tomkins described as a 'malicious' act.

Referee Mark Clattenburg awarded a free-kick at Upton Park but failed to dish out any further disciplinary action for the elbow to Tomkins' face in the 1-1 draw on Sunday.

Mourinho also highlighted other incidents including Manchester City's Yaya Toure against Norwich last season as well as his own player, Ramires, who was banned retrospectively for four games after an elbow on Sunderland's Sebastian Larsson.

Mourinho, who made an elbow gesture while he emphasised his point, said: "I need a little bit more time to forget why my player was suspended, to understand why some people are punished and others aren't.

"I need a little bit more time to process that. I was with lots of attention this weekend.

"The same people (the FA) who suspended my player didn't want to suspend a player this weekend, and a player could have been suspended this weekend and he wasn't.

"I'm still processing that information."

'Zahid needs guidance'

As Lodewijk de Kruif leaves for Netherlands today, The Daily Star's Atique Anam and Anisur Rahman caught up with him yesterday at the Pan Pacific Sonargoan hotel to speak elaborately about his football philosophy and the state of Bangladesh football. In Part-I, the coach analyses his players' performances and his own tactical choices in the just-concluded Bangabandhu Gold Cup.

DS: Since the Bangabandhu Gold tournament is over, I hope you will be more at ease answering queries about the team's performance.

LDK: To be honest, I was not happy with certain areas. I was not happy with lack of concentration at the last moment. I hoped that I banned that aspect from the team, but it came back. The small moments create the thin line between winning and losing and that is why experience of match-play is so important. We also have problems in the goal. That's why we are looking for a foreign goalkeeper coach and that is also the wish of Mr. (Kazi) Salahuddin.

DS: How do you defend your decision to keep (Rasel Mahmud) Liton on the pitch in the second half of the first match against Malaysia even after watching him being beaten three times?

LDK: My plan was to keep Liton for all the matches. My plan was to replace him with (Shahidul Alam) Sohel only when there was a penalty-kick situation because of Sohel's height and reach. Maybe, I'll have to think about that one again.

DS: There is a criticism that some of the players don't actually understand the tactical things very well, like positioning, and that they can't adapt to the modern system.

LDK: The ones we have in the national team now don't have those issues. There were a few older players who could not adapt. But then again, it's not about age only; it's also about the willingness to adapt. For example, old Nasir (Chowdhury) was quick to adapt and he is a very important player for the team, not only on the pitch, but also outside the pitch. He is like a guardian for young players. And his military background helps with his discipline.

DS: What about (Zahid Hasan) Emily? He played better with every match but never looked very threatening, did he?

LDK: Emily is a clever player. He is a slow starter but he waits for his



moments. If you look at what we have at number nine position, you see only Emily and Rony. We have a few others, but they are much younger. There is also a problem in wings. You have Zahid (Hossain), and you don't have anyone else of that quality in that position. Sohel (Rana) is also one who is more of an attacking midfielder player than winger.

DS: Exactly. Then why did you prefer to play Sohel in winger's role? Was it due to a lack of options?

LDK: It's because my midfield was full with three tremendous players – Hemanta (Vincent Biswas), Mamunul (Islam) and Jamal (Bhuiyan). So there was no space for Sohel but I wanted to play him because he is a very good player and he is fast and has a good cross. I played 4-3-3; but what we always do especially when the opposition is strong, I ask Sohel and Zahid to come on to the midfield too so that when opposition have the ball, it's 4-5-1 and there is little space allowed for the opposition.

DS: Tell us a bit about how you unearthed Hemanta?

LDK: I saw him in a talent hunt at the BNS (in 2013). There was an XI v XI match and I was just watching the match when I saw a very strong guy, who played defensive midfield position and scored a brilliant 30-yard free-kick. Hemanta was much stronger than the rest of his age-group boys. We (de Kruif and Rene Koster) picked him from there and when we took him to FC Twente for the trial, they told me he was an 'unpolished diamond'. But Hemanta's problem is, when he is running with the ball, he is always looking down and doesn't look where he is and where the opposition players are.

DS: People think Sohel wastes too much time on the ball. How are you trying to rectify that aspect?

LDK: I tried to get it out (of his system). He is running with the ball, and then turns, looks behind his back again and again and the chance is gone. He must dribble, look up and whoever comes into the box, and deliver the cross and get back to his position. But he is too much of a kid, both in body and mind. I think he loves the ball too much and sleeps with it too.

DS: Let's get back to Zahid. How do you manage such a moody player like Zahid who blows hot and cold and reacts whenever he is substituted?

LDK: I think I have a good understanding with Zahid at the moment. From things that I hear from people though, is that he needs guidance. He is simple in mind and people around him are not guiding him. I have to admit that sometimes even I have to do it like this (puts a hand over his eyes). But on top of all, he is an extraordinary player, who gives only 60 per cent of what he can for the team. He never played to his 100 per cent ability in his life.

(The interview concludes tomorrow when de Kruif shares his future plans with the national team and his suggestions for development of the game)

Sk Russel's 0-1 defeat

SPORTS REPORTER

A depleted Sheikh Russel KC expectedly failed to pull off any surprise against mighty Tajikistan side FC Khayr, but they did an excellent job to keep the margin to a respectable 0-1 in the preliminary round's play-off of the AFC Cup at the Republican Central Stadium in Tajikistan yesterday.

Sheikh Russel went to compete against Tajik Premier League runners-up FC Khayr without their five national booters -- Emily, Zahid, Hemanta, Meshu and goalkeeper Liton -- and they fought well against the home side but failed to produce a good result in freezing conditions. The result ended Sheikh Russel's campaign in the second tier club competition on the continent at the first hurdle.

According to the official website of Asian Football Confederation, defender Hasan Rustamove struck the all-important goal in the 22nd minute with a header after goalkeeper Mamun Khan denied the opponents twice.

Yelena set for return

INTERNET

Russian pole-vaulter, two-time Olympic champion and current world record-holder Yelena Isinbayeva is set to return to the sport after becoming a mother.

Isinbayeva will make the announcement at a press-conference in Moscow on Feb. 12, reports RIA Novosti.

After triumph at the World Athletics Championships in Moscow in 2013, Isinbayeva decided to take a break in her career and become a mother. In June 2014 she gave a birth to a daughter.

Siddikur looks to Thai Open

SPORTS REPORTER

Siddikur Rahman will be looking to put behind his poor performance of the Maybank Malaysian Open when the ace Bangladesh golfer begins his new campaign in the True Thailand Classic at the Black Mountain Golf Club from tomorrow.

The two-time Asian Tour winner failed to make the cut in the Malaysian Open last week after playing an overall three-over-par in first two rounds and the 31-year-old will definitely hoping to put his poor performance behind to justify his name in the 200,000-dollar tournament.

EPL TV deal to break bank again

AFP, London

England's Premier League is due to announce a record new domestic television rights deal worth over £4 billion (\$6.1 billion, 5.4 billion euros) after a ferocious bidding war for the 2016-2019 period.

BT ambitiously muscled in on what had been Sky's exclusive territory in 2013 and the satellite giant could see its dominance eroded further amid reports of bids from America's Discovery Network and Qatar's beIN Sports.

Their battle cries are music to the ears of the Premier League. After a 77 percent explosion in the value of the rights three years ago, a further 50 percent increase has been predicted by British analysts.

That has brought the symbolic £4 billion threshold into view.

Cesc boost for Chelsea

AFP, London



Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho has been handed a major fitness boost after revealing Cesc Fabregas will be back in his side for the visit of Everton on Wednesday.

Spain star Fabregas came off during the Blues' League Cup semifinal victory over Liverpool with a hamstring injury and missed the draw with Manchester City and Saturday's win at Aston Villa.

But Mourinho confirmed Fabregas will be back in midfield for the show-down at Stamford Bridge as the Blues aim to maintain their seven-point lead over City at the top of the table.

"I think he (Fabregas) plays Wednesday because on Saturday it was a decision to protect him," Mourinho said.

"We didn't want to risk two players at the same time. We risked with Willian and to start two players with a risk is a big gamble and we gambled with only one."

In the absence of Fabregas, Ramires had been selected in midfield, along-

side Nemanja Matic, following his own return to full fitness and Mourinho admitted it was a great help to have such quality back-up.

"The best Ramires is back and the best Ramires played against Liverpool, Man City and Aston Villa," Mourinho added.

"He is a different profile of player (compared with Fabregas) but he is a fantastic player for us."

Mourinho also hailed Branislav Ivanovic following his superb winning goal in the 2-1 success at Villa.

"Every striker in the world would be proud to score that magnificent goal," he added.

"For a right-back whose left foot is not his best one it is an amazing goal, especially when it is the winning goal. If you score that goal and it is 3-0 or 4-0 it is a different thing.

"I am very happy because he is a great guy and what he is doing for us is unbelievable with the foot injury he had against Liverpool when he played the rest of the game, and he played against Man City and Aston Villa.

"He is one of the best signings. He came immediately after I left Chelsea and after that he made a fantastic contribution for this club."

Everton have not won in the league at Stamford Bridge since November 1994, but defender Bryan Oviedo believes Roberto Martinez's side can defy recent history and end that barren run.

One win in eight league games doesn't suggest an upset is on the cards with Everton 12th in the table and only seven points above the relegation places.

But the Toffees' only defeat in their last six games was a penalty shoot-out FA Cup exit at West Ham and they head to London after drawing 0-0 with Merseyside rivals Liverpool last Saturday thanks to a third successive clean sheet in the league.

Oviedo played his part in recording that after filling in at left-back in place of Leighton Baines, who is again doubtful with a knee injury, and the Costa Rican international is looking to erase his disappointment at not beating Liverpool by slowing Chelsea's title charge.

Final place at stake

AFP, Madrid



Barcelona will be targeting a tenth consecutive victory and taking a big step towards the Copa del Rey final when they host Villarreal in the first leg of their semifinal clash on Wednesday.

The Catalans have clicked into form ever since the club seemed on the brink of an institutional crisis following a dressing room revolt after a shock 1-0 defeat to Real Sociedad to start the year.

Even more judicial activity against the club and its president Josep Maria Bartomeu for tax irregularities in the signing of Neymar hasn't disrupted Barca's rhythm.

The Brazilian forward has played a starring role in the run alongside Lionel Messi and Luis Suarez.

All three were on target in Sunday's 5-2 win at Athletic Bilbao as Barca closed to within a point of La Liga leaders Real Madrid, taking Luis Enrique's men's tally to 34 goals in their last nine games.

"We are getting better every day, but we need to continue working hard to improve,"

Zlatan proud as punch

AFP, Paris



Swedish football great Zlatan Ibrahimovic professed himself to be extremely proud to have his waxwork model unveiled at the Grevin Museum in central Paris on Monday.

The 33-year-old striker -- who was honoured for his goalscoring exploits for champions Paris Saint Germain since he joined in 2012 -- is portrayed in a PSG shirt with his arms raised to the sky.

"It is really incredible to be here," beamed Ibrahimovic.

"It is a huge honour. Don't forget to take plenty of photos of me!" added the charismatic Swede, who nevertheless appeared for once to be a little intimidated by the occasion and was far from the cheeky chappie he often is on and off the pitch.

The waxwork model of Ibrahimovic, who has played over 100 times for his national side, has been placed close to the player widely believed to be the greatest ever footballer Brazilian maestro Pele, France's multiple rally world champion Sebastian Loeb and another French sporting great Judoka Teddy Riner.

FIXTURES

Wednesday
(all times GMT)
Barcelona v Villarreal (1900), Athletic Bilbao v Espanyol (2100)

said Neymar, who has scored 23 times in 27 appearances this season.

"More than just the goals, the most important thing is to help my teammates. We can't stop now, we need to keep going."

Captain Xavi Hernandez returned to the side for Barca's first league victory in the Basque country since 2010 and the veteran is determined to keep their momentum going on all fronts, with a return to Champions League action against Manchester City also to come at the end of the month.

"We can't slip up. We already did that at Anoeta (against Sociedad) and now we feel great and depend on ourselves in the league. We are in great form and we need to make the most of it," said Xavi.

Villarreal have already suffered at the hands of Messi and Neymar in recent weeks, but they gave Barca a scare as the hosts had to twice come from behind to win 3-2 at the Camp Nou on February 1.