

DAY'S EVENT

National Cricket League
(Four-Day Match, Day-1)
Rangpur v Barisal
Venue: BKSP 3
Chittagong v Dhaka Metro
Venue: BKSP 2
Rajshahi v Khulna
Venue: SBNCs
Dhaka v Sylhet

Venue: KSOAS
Time: 10:00am
Federation Cup
Mohammedan v Rahmatganj
Time: 4:00pm
Sk Jamal v Soccer Club, Feni
Time: 6:15pm
Venue: BNS

VALENTINE-LESS COLOMBIANS

Chelsea's Juan Cuadrado, Arsenal goalkeeper David Ospina and Real Madrid star James Rodriguez spent an evening out in London on Valentine's Day. While it was strange for three young and in James's case, a very attractive man, to be hanging out by themselves on the day of love, it seems that these three Colombians might just be tired of their regularly boring exploits on February 14. -- **INTERNET**



5-star Barca

AFP, Madrid



LFP

Lionel Messi marked his 300th La Liga appearance with his 31st Barcelona hat-trick as the Catalans moved within a point of Real Madrid at the top of the table with a 5-0 win over Levante.

Barca have now won 11 straight matches in all competitions and never looked in danger despite coach Luis Enrique making eight changes from the side that beat Villarreal in the Copa del Rey in midweek.

Messi teed up Neymar to open the scoring early on and then took over scoring duties himself to take his all-time La Liga tally to 269 goals.

However, even the Argentine was upstaged by a stunning overhead kick from substitute Luis Suarez to round off the scoring.

Messi, Neymar and Javier Mascherano were the only survivors from Wednesday's 3-1 Cup semi-final, first leg win over Villarreal as Enrique continued to use the vast resources of his squad.

Those changes did understandably provoke a subdued start, but Barca's luck was in on 17 minutes when Neymar mishit Messi's dinked pass over the Levante defence only for the ball to spin high into the air and drop into the far corner of the net.

Messi didn't have to wait long for his first goal, as Marc Bartra robbed the ball deep inside the Levante half and fed his teammate to slot home his 35th goal of the season.

FED CUP kicks off today

SPORTS REPORTER



Defending champion Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club take on Feni Soccer Club at the Bangabandhu National Stadium today as the new season finally kicks off with the Federation Cup. The holders of both

Federation Cup and the premier league will be eyeing a comfortable progress to the quarterfinals from Group I, which also features Team BJMC.

Sheikh Jamal skipper Nasiruddin Chowdhury expressed his confidence about retaining the title at the pre-tournament press conference at the Bangladesh Football Federation House yesterday. The King's Cup success in Bhutan at the end of last season gives Nasir's side the mental edge going into this season's curtain-raiser. 14 players of the current national squad also make them one of the favourites for the title.

Feni Soccer Club will be hoping to replicate their heroics of last season's Independence Cup, where they reached the final after victories over Sheikh Russel KC and Brothers Union, only to lose the title-deciding match in tie-breakers against Mohammedan SC.

The first match of the opening day will pit the Independence Cup winners against Rahmatganj MFS, who are back in the top-tier after spending a season in the Championship League. The Black and Whites hardly look like favourites, with a youth-based side which does not feature a single player from the national team, but they would hope their cup fate takes them all the way.

As far as title contention is concerned, Abahani and Sheikh Russel KC look to be the best bets, after Sheikh Jamal. The four-time professional league winners Abahani will begin their campaign tomorrow, taking on Farashganj SC while Sheikh Russel will play their first match on February 19 against Uttar Baridhara Club, the only Championship League team in this 12-team competition.

Two teams from each of the four groups will qualify for the quarterfinals which will be held from February 24 to 27 before the two semifinals on March 1 and 2, and the big final on March 5. All the matches will be held at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

No Bolt at Camperdown Classic

AFP, Kingston

Six-time Olympic champion Usain Bolt opted out of the Camperdown Classic athletics meeting on Saturday after toying with the idea of launching his 2015 season with a 400m there.

No reason was given, despite the fact that organizers had said they expected Bolt would run in the meet for the first time in years.

Bolt anchored Jamaica to gold in the 4x100m relay at the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow last year, but he missed much of the season, officially bringing his abbreviated 2014 campaign to a close in August after racing just four times.

The 28-year-old sprint sensation, who holds the world records in the 100m and 200m, will try this year to add to his collection of eight world titles, competing at the 2015 World Championships in Beijing August 22-30.



PHOTO: BCB

Sherwood inspires Villa

AFP, London



A half-time rallying cry from new manager Tim Sherwood inspired Aston Villa to beat Premier League rivals Leicester City 2-1 on Sunday and reach the FA Cup quarter-finals.

After Christian Benteke had twice gone close, Leandro Bacuna broke the deadlock in the 68th minute when he collected a pass from Ron Vlaar, cut inside Danny Simpson and curled a shot around Australian goalkeeper Mark Schwarzer from 18 yards.

A terrible blunder from the veteran Schwarzer, who allowed a tame shot from Villa substitute Scott Sinclair to squirm past him, saw the home side double their lead in the 89th minute.

Andrej Kramaric replied for Leicester with a magnificent header in the first min-

ute of stoppage time, but it was too little, too late.

Liverpool claimed a first victory at Selhurst Park in seven attempts to reach the FA Cup quarter-finals on Saturday, coming from behind to win 2-1 against Crystal Palace.

Fraizer Campbell netted a 15th-minute opener but the half-time introduction of Mario Balotelli tipped the tie in the visitors' favour and after Daniel Sturridge equalised, Adam Lallana scored in the 58th minute to give Liverpool a first win at Palace since 1997.

"After we scored, I thought we were very good. We had 15 efforts on goal in the first half, but we weren't aggressive enough," Liverpool manager Brendan Rodgers said.

"I wanted us to keep the width on the pitch. We changed it around at half-time and it worked well for us."



Captains of seven out of the 12 teams participating in the Federation Cup pose for a photograph at the corridor of the Bangladesh Football Federation House yesterday. The season's curtain-raising tournament kicks off at the Bangabandhu National Stadium today.

PHOTO: STAR

Fans turn on Milan

AFP, Milan



Nine-man AC Milan were whistled off the pitch at the San Siro after a 1-1 draw with struggling Empoli on Sunday further dented the Rossoneri's hopes for European football next season.

Italy international Mattia Destro provided some cheer to the struggling Serie A giants with his maiden goal for the club against the run of play five minutes before the half-time interval.

But Empoli, who dominated for long spells, piled on the pressure with a 68th minute leveller from former Milan youth team player Massimo Maccarone and Milan's woes deepened six minutes from time when goalkeeper Diego Lopez saw red.

Lopez mis-hit a clearance and in a bid to make amends pulled off a great stop to send Francesco Tavano's shot wide of the target, although the Spanish 'keeper was outside his area and was immediately ordered off.

Defender Gabriel Paletta, one of several players signed by the club in the January transfer window in a bid to revive flagging fortunes, then pulled up with a hamstring injury and could not play on, meaning Milan finished the game with nine men because they had used up all three substitutes.

Milan remain in 11th spot, at 23 points behind leaders and champions Juventus ahead of their game later Sunday away to Cesena.

Coach Filippo Inzaghi praised Empoli's enterprise but, having seen defender Alex forced off after just seven minutes with a suspected broken nose, could not believe his side's misfortune.

"We're in a difficult period, in every game something happens. It's incredible to lose all these players, especially at the start with Alex," Inzaghi told Sky Sport.

In the early game Palermo top the brakes on Napoli's quest for Champions League football next season with a crushing 3-1 defeat on Saturday.

'I'm loving the FA Cup'

AFP, Manchester



Louis van Gaal has loved every minute of Manchester United's FA Cup run this season even though he feels the "world has been against them".

Van Gaal's side travel to third tier Preston North End in the fifth round on Monday to make it a hat-trick of away ties against teams outside of English football's top two divisions.

United defeated third tier Yeovil Town in the third round before they required a replay at Old Trafford to beat fourth tier Cambridge United in the fourth round.

And even though he knows the wider football world will be once again be willing the lower league side to cause a huge upset, United manager van Gaal is still relishing the chance to be part of a classic underdogs against giants Cup story at Deepdale.

"It is a fantastic competition," Van Gaal said. "I have already described that we have to play for the third time a lower team, and you know the world is against you, the environment is against you because everyone is with the underdog."

"It is more difficult to accept but it's like that. However, the chance that you can survive is higher because you are playing against lower qualities."

"But you have to beat the team with better motivation in other circumstances and in the atmosphere where everyone is

against you."

Van Gaal, meanwhile, continues to defend his use of England striker in Wayne Rooney in midfield, despite acknowledging the United captain is possibly the best forward he has at Old Trafford.

"He is maybe the best striker," Van Gaal added. "But I have explained a lot of times that it is not because anyone is not a good player in my selection"

"You have to compare and I have to like what is the biggest contribution where a player can play, and other players also."

Preston manager Simon Grayson has urged his players to embrace the challenge of facing United's stellar names.

North End, who are fourth in League One, have won their last three matches in all competitions and Grayson wants his team to do themselves justice against the 11-times FA Cup winners.

"Our players, no disrespect to them, but they might never get another opportunity to play against the likes of Radamel Falcao, Wayne Rooney and Robin Van Persie," Grayson said.

"It's got to inspire them. You've got to go into a game like this and enjoy it."

"We know the task we've got in hand but we've got nothing to lose and they've got everything to lose."

"There's always one shock and always a hero - hopefully it's going to be a Preston North End player."



LOUIS VAN GAAL

Ibra's 50 tattoos

INTERNET



Zlatan Ibrahimovic has revealed why he stripped off his shirt after scoring just two minutes into Paris Saint-Germain's draw with Caen on Saturday afternoon.

The Sweden striker was showing his support for the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) by tattooing the names of 50 hungry people helped by the charity onto his body.

The WFP has helped 805 million hungry people all around the world and the 50 chosen by Ibrahimovic symbolically represented some of the worst humanitarian crises ongoing today.

"Wherever I go people recognize me, call my name, cheer for me," said the PSG striker, who found the net after just 72 seconds in the Ligue 1 encounter at the Parc des Princes.

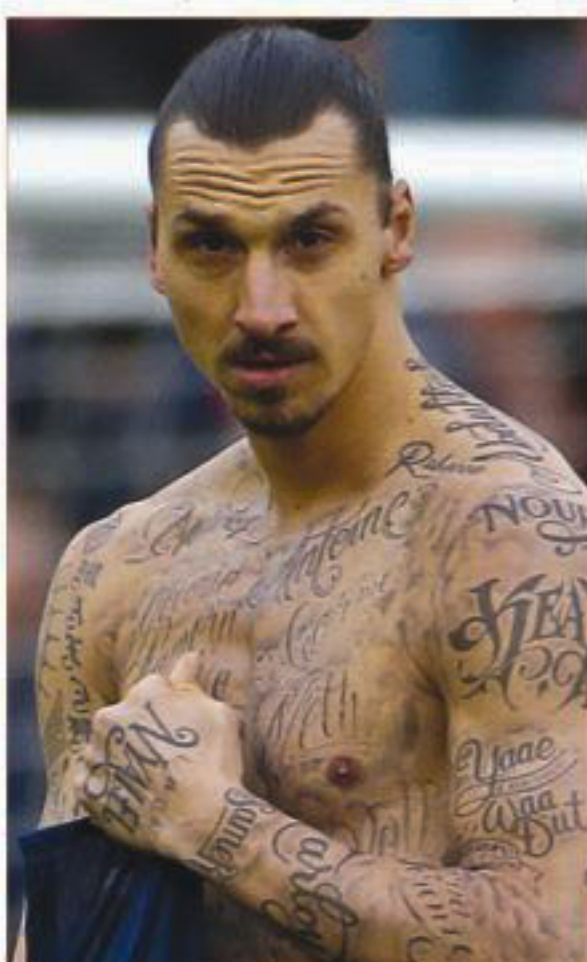
"But there are names no one cares to remember. That no one cheers for: the 805m people suffering from hunger in the world today."

"I have the supporters all over the world. From now on I want this support to go to the people who suffer from hunger, they are the real champions."

"So whenever you hear my name, you will think of their names."

Ibrahimovic had the temporary tattoos - of names such as Carmen, Mariko, Antoine, Lida, Rahma and Yaae - applied to his torso ahead of the Caen match.

When he scored in the second minute he removed his shirt in the middle of the field to show off the tapestry of tattoos.



India's complete

FROM PAGE S1

win the next game. That's the only way to stay in the tournament."

"I dont know what happened," Misbah added. "But it is important to forget this loss and look to the future. The game is gone now, so we have to just concentrate on the next one."

"Every game we lose is hard, especially in the World Cups. But one must praise India too because it was a thoroughly professional performance by them. They batted well and they really bowled well. Full credit to them."

TATA MOTORS

TATA

LPO 1512 MKII

এখন মাত্র

১,৯৯,০০০/-

জমায়

NITOL-NILOY

০৯৯২০৯৪৫৩৭৭

০৯৯৩৭৪০০৯৪৭

The Daily Star

ARE YOU A CRICKET GURU?

Play our cricket quiz and win a Nokia Lumia 535 every week

The highest scorer will get an iPhone 6

To play, type 'Q' and send to 4007

Charge: Tk. 2.30/SMS

Join: facebook.com/airtelbuzz

Visit: bd.airtel.com