

What to WATCH

SONY SIX

Sri Lanka v India

Second Test, Day 2

Live from 10:30am

STAR SPORTS1

England v Australia

Fifth Test, Day 2

Live from 4:00pm

STAR SPORTS 2

Bundesliga

Hertha Berlin v Werder Bremen

Live from 12:30am (Saturday)

STAR SPORTS 4

IAAF World Athletics C'ships

Live from 5:30 am (Saturday)

'I WANT TO KISS HIM'

Memphis Depay, who was deployed in his favoured starting position on the left rather than as a traditional No. 10 against Brugges, showed the kind of form that led United to pay PSV Eindhoven a reported £25 million by scoring two goals. "When you score a goal then you are the hero," Van Gaal told reporters. "I want to kiss him tonight, because when you score two goals and give an assist also, then normally in the world you are the hero."

--INTERNET



U-16s inspire their seniors

SPORTS REPORTER

After the success in the SAFF U-16 Championship at home, the focus now shifted to the team in the inaugural SAFF U-19 Championship which got underway at the All Nepal Football Association Complex in Kathmandu yesterday.

Bangladesh national U-19 team left for Kathmandu on the day Bangladesh U-16s clinched the SAFF Championship title with a 4-2 win over India in the tie-breaker in Sylhet and the success of the junior team has apparently injected a confidence in the U-19 team that they can also produce good results.

"The approach of the U-19 team has changed after the U-16 team won the Championship and the success of the junior team is a great motivation for the U-19 team. The players have been whispering among themselves that why they won't succeed if the juniors could succeed on home ground," said coach Saiful Bari Titu over phone from Nepal.

Titu said that the players have been struggling a bit to cope up with the altitude in Nepal as the players got tired within a short period of time during practices in the last two days.

"We have a plan to overcome this problem. The players have been asked not to run extra and maintain the time management during the matches," said the former national footballer.

The Bangladesh coach watched the opening match between hosts Nepal and Bhutan, who are in the same group as Bangladesh to see the way Bhutan played in their 1-3 defeat.

"Nepal are a strong side on home soil as they are used to playing on the Astro-turf round the year but Bhutan showed their character in the match with two to three players performing well. The Bhutanese are physically strong but we are technically better than them and have the ability to beat them," said Titu, adding that he would now provide the information about Bhutan to his charges.

Bangladesh will start their campaign by playing against Bhutan tomorrow.

Bolt in Gatlin's crosshairs

AFP, Beijing

Usain Bolt comes to the world championships in Beijing caught in the crosshairs of controversial rival Justin Gatlin in what promises to be one of the closest fought sprint rivalries seen in a long time.

Bolt has dominated sprinting over the past seven years since he claimed a golden treble at the 2008 Olympics held at the same Bird's Nest stadium that will stage the worlds between August 22-30.

The towering Jamaican went on to claim an unprecedented second treble at the London Games in 2012 and has won every world sprint and relay title on offer, bar a hiccup in the 100m in the 2011 Daegu worlds when he was disqualified after a false start.

Bolt, who has held the 100m and 200m world records since 2009, last month roared back from an early season pelvic injury that saw him miss six weeks of competitive action with back-to-back 100m times of 9.87sec at the London Diamond League meeting.

"I am still number one," insisted the 28-year-old. "I will continue being number one. Until I retire, that's the plan.

"It does help the confidence," he said of his successful return to the track in London ahead of Beijing. "I

Jamaican sprint superstar Usain Bolt attends a press conference ahead of the IAAF World Championships in Beijing yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

have been putting in the work and I can see it is coming out on the track. It definitely looks good."

On 100m times recorded in 2015, Bolt is now ranked number six, Gatlin topping the list with a personal best of 9.74sec set in Doha in May, having also clocked 9.75 twice and 9.78.

Gatlin cuts a controversial figure on the track scene, readily admitting that a four-year doping ban served between 2006-10 after

a positive test for testosterone had been both "a gift and a curse".

The Florida-based sprinter has since hit the peak of his form at the age of 33 and has established himself as firm favourite in both the 100 and 200m on the back of an unbeaten streak of 27 races dating back to August 2013.

With Bolt's early-season injury concerns and the loaded schedule of races to be run in the Chinese capital, the American is confident

of adding to a medal haul that includes 2004 Olympic 100m gold, 2005 world sprint double golds, 2012 world 60m indoor gold, London Olympic 100m bronze and Moscow world silver.

"My body feels it's like a 27-year-old instead of a 33-year-old who's run those four years and feels tired," Gatlin told AFP in an interview last month of his longevity and current prowess.

"My being away from the sport

has been a gift and a curse in a way. For me it's saddening I had to be away, but I'm able to have had adequate rest and sit back and see my opponents and their growth and use that to my advantage."

There is never a shortage of people willing to shoot Gatlin down. He was shunned by organisers of this month's London Anniversary Games, when Bolt made his comeback.

And track and field's governing body, the IAAF, recently changed their rules for their prestigious Athlete of the Year awards, insisting that a convicted doping cheat was not eligible.

Gatlin is quick to deflect talk of that issue to his rival Bolt.

"One thing I can say about Usain is that he is a gamer, he's a showman, he'll rise to the occasion when it's time to do so. All that other stuff is not pressure for him," he told AFP.

"Usain woke up in the semi-finals in London in 2012 and went out there and did what he had to do and I predict (he'll be planning to do) the same thing for Beijing."

Bolt is in no doubt what he has in mind, with reports he has been stopping the clock at 9.7sec on the training track, an assertion he declined to dismiss.

"I have been running fast," he said. "I can't say I haven't been running fast in training.

"I'm ready to go (to Beijing) and I'm ready to win."

Valencia in driving seat

AFP, Paris

Celtic may come to regret not making Jo Inge Berget's loan a permanent move as his double for Swedish side Malmo saw them only lose 3-2 away in their Champions League play-off first leg match on Wednesday and leave the Scottish champions hopes of a place in the group stage in the balance.

Elsewhere Valencia's hopes of a return to the lucrative group stages after a three year hiatus look more assured after beating last season's quarter-finalists Monaco 3-1 in Spain, the impressive Algerian international Sofiane Feghouli creating one and scoring the crucial third goal.

Ukrainian giants Shakhtar Donetsk also look nicely-placed for the group stages -- they have reached it on every occasion since the 2009/10 campaign -- after coming away with a 1-0 win against Rapid Vienna, who were last in the group stages in 2005/06.

Skenderbeu's chances of becoming the first Albanian side to make the group stages of a European club competition look slender after losing 2-1 at home to Dinamo Zagreb, the Croatian side coming from behind with Algerian El Arabi Hilal Soudani getting the equaliser and then in the dying second Josip Pivarc scored the winner.

Berget made Celtic pay badly for failing to keep their concentration both times after they had a seemingly comfortable two goal advantage -- a bad habit that has been a feature of their recent play and the players had been warned about correcting by Celtic manager Ronny Deila.

The Norwegian -- who has lost just once in seven meetings with Malmo counterpart and compatriot Age Hareide -- could not have hoped for a better response as his side stormed

RESULTS
Basel (SUI) 2 (Delgado 39-pen, Embolo 88) Maccabi Tel Aviv (ISR) 2 (Zehavy 31, 90+6)
Rapid Vienna (AUT) 0 Shakhtar Donetsk (UKR) 1 (Marlos 44)
Valencia (ESP) 3 (Rodri 4, Parejo 59, Feghouli 86) Monaco (FRA) 1 (Pascal 49)
Skenderbeu (ALB) 1 (Shkembi 37) Dinamo Zagreb (CRO) 2 (Soudani 66, Pivarc 90+3)
Celtic (SCO) 3 (Griffiths 3, 61, Biton 10) Malmo (SWE) 2 (Jo Inge Berget 52, 90+5)

into a 2-0 lead within the opening 10 minutes.

However, as in previous matches this season Celtic took their foot off the pedal and spurned several chances which came back to hurt them seven minutes into the second-half as Berget, who was on loan at Celtic last season, reduced the deficit with a superb goal, curling the ball past Craig Gordon.

That, though, appeared to be the

kick in the pants Celtic needed for shortly afterwards they restored their two goal cushion as the alert Griffiths nipped in to lob the ball into the net after the visitors failed to clear their lines.

However, Berget struck again as Celtic failed to clear a corner and left the tie intriguingly balanced.

Valencia also took an early lead at home to Monaco as Rodrigo was on hand to tap home after Feghouli had stolen in ahead of a Monaco defender to set up the goal.

Monaco -- who had a goal in the first-half ruled out -- levelled early in the second-half as Croatian midfielder Mario Pasalic, on loan from Chelsea, scored but 10 minutes later Daniel Parejo gave their hosts the lead once again converting substitute Pablo Piatti's cross.

Pasalic looked to have restored parity only for Australian goalkeeper Matthew Ryan -- signed earlier in the close season purposefully because the club wanted a 'keeper equal to Champions League level football -- to produce a stunning save to keep the hosts noses in front.

Indeed they should have gone two clear but Feghouli's brilliant set up was not rewarded as Parejo missed the target -- the impressive Algerian decided it was better to try it on his own when he next had a chance and he made no mistake to give Valencia a 3-1 lead.

Tennis with Sharapova

AGENCIES, New York

Tennis fans will soon be able to go up against Maria Sharapova in a virtual match at the US Open.

Prior to the final Grand Slam of the year, which gets underway on August 31, Sharapova was put through her paces to create a CGI version of herself.

The world number two donned a special outfit designed to track her moves for the virtual reality game, which will be called 'You vs. Sharapova', according to the Daily Mail. The Russian professional took to Twitter at the weekend to write: "Virtual reality with @AmericanExpress is coming to the @usopen. The most technical and detailed shoot ever!"

Naismith hands out tickets

AGENCIES, Liverpool

Everton forward Steven Naismith has, for the second year running, spent his time giving out free match tickets to unemployed people in Liverpool.

Just as he did last August, the 28-year-old Scottish international visited the Jobcentreplus in Toxteth and gave away Everton tickets in a bid to help boost the morale of local people who are looking for work.

Speaking to the Liverpool Echo, Naismith said that the feedback he received last year was so positive that he felt compelled to give it another bash this year too.

The feedback from last season was very good and not just in terms of them having a great day out, it was about the weeks after and what it had done for them and helping get them back into work.

Naismith is well known for his charity work having given his backing to foundations supporting injured members of the armed services, the homeless and those struggling with Dyslexia in both Liverpool and Glasgow.

"It is more about what it does for the people in the community," said Naismith.

Man City seal Otamendi deal

AFP, London

Argentina defender Nicolas Otamendi has signed for Manchester City, the Premier League side announced on Thursday after a deal was agreed with his current side Valencia.

The 27-year-old has signed a five-year contract although no financial details of the transfer were released.

Otamendi will bolster central defensive ranks at City that includes two familiar faces in former Porto team-mate Eliaquim Mangala and international colleague Martin Demichelis, as well as captain Vincent Kompany.

Otamendi told the club's website, www.mfc.co.uk: "I am here to give my best, to fight game by game and push City to the highest peaks for as long as possible, and I wish we will be able to win several cups and titles.

"That's most important. To be here inside a club that looks so wonderful from the outside is a dream."

Valencia were believed to be hoping to use the sale of the player to write off part of the fee they still owe City for striker Alvaro Negredo.

Otamendi joined the Spanish club from Porto just a year ago. Initial reports at the weekend claimed Valencia wanted to offset his loss by signing Mangala on loan in exchange but City had no intention of allowing the Frenchman to leave Eastlands.

City manager Manuel Pellegrini said: "Nicolas Otamendi was arguably the best defender in La Liga last season and so naturally I'm delighted to have added a player of his quality."

La Liga break curtailed

AFP, Madrid

The traditional two-week winter break in Spain's top flight will be reduced this season in a bid to ease fixture congestion ahead of next year's European Championships it was announced on Wednesday.

Just last week the league passed significant changes to the calendar to accommodate Barcelona's participation in the Club World Cup, which included moving the final round of league fixtures back a week.

That decision was criticised by Spain boss Vicente del Bosque as it meant La Liga would finish on May 22 with his side's defence of the European title to start in France on June 10.

However, an agreement between the players' union (AFE), the league and the federation means a full round of fixtures will now take place on December 30 with the final weekend of the season reverting back to its original date of May 15.

Valencia striker Rodrigo Moreno (C) celebrates his opening goal against Monaco during their Champions League playoff at the Mestalla on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP



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O Level result (June 2015) of this batch at a glance

★ **A* & A: 53%, Pass: 100%**

★ **Daily Star Award Qualifier: 30%**

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