

STAR SPORTS 1

Bundesliga  
Leverkusen v Mainz  
Live from 12:00am  
(Thursday)

STAR SPORTS 2

Bundesliga  
Gladbach v Augsburg  
Live from 12:00am  
(Thursday)

STAR SPORTS 4

Bundesliga  
Hoffenheim v Dortmund  
Live from 12:00am  
(Thursday)

SONY KIX

La Liga  
Celta Vigo v Barcelona  
Live from 12:00am (Thursday)  
Malaga v Villarreal  
Live from 2:00am (Thursday)

TEN ACTION

Capital One Cup  
Tottenham v Arsenal  
Live from 12:45am (Thursday)

Mohun Bagan not coming

SPORTS REPORTER

Indian I-League champions Mohun Bagan AC have pulled out of the Sheikh Kamal International Club Cup, scheduled to be held in Chittagong next month, citing unavailability of some of their key players.

The Kolkata giants were supposed to feature as one of the four foreign teams alongside four local teams, as claimed by the tournament organisers. But the Bangladesh Football Federation's general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag yesterday confirmed that the Kolkata club will not be taking part.

"Mohun Bagan initially agreed to take part, but today (Tuesday) the club sent a letter to us saying that they won't take part as some key players of the club have joined national team's camp for World Cup qualifiers while some other players are nursing injuries," said Shohag, adding that the BFF would request the All India Football Federation to send a another team.

Cantona vows to house and feed refugees

AFP, Paris

Former Manchester United star Eric Cantona evoked the memory of his own grandparents fleeing war when promising on French radio Tuesday to house and feed refugees for a period of "at least" two years.

"I'm organising that with authorities in Marseille," Cantona told France Inter radio, explaining he intended to provide a small house, garden and food for a period of at least two years.

"If you house someone who does not have the right to work, then they need to eat too," said the enigmatic former France captain. Cantona explained that his own family history had inspired his decision. "My maternal grandparents were Spanish Republicans who fled Franco (in the Spanish civil war) by crossing the Pyrenees on foot," he said. "That being our story, it certainly played a role."

The man credited with sparking Manchester United's period of dominance in English football has carved out a successful second career as an actor since hanging up his boots.

Ferguson reveals Rooney row

AFP, London

Former Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson has revealed that he refused to allow Wayne Rooney to be paid more than him during a contract stand-off with the striker in 2010.

Rooney vowed to leave United after accusing the club of a lack of ambition, only to perform a sudden U-turn and sign a new five-year deal reportedly worth £180,000 (\$279,000, 249,000 euros) a week.

But Ferguson reveals in his new book, 'Leading', which is released on Tuesday, that he engineered a deal of his own ensuring that no player could earn more than him, telling United's owners the Glazer family and then-chief executive David Gill he "did not think it fair that Rooney should earn twice what I made".

"It was simple. We just agreed that no player should be paid more than me," Ferguson said.

Rooney fell out with Ferguson prior to the Scot's retirement in 2013, but was appointed United captain by current manager Louis van Gaal last year.

Ferguson says that Everton pulled out all the stops to prevent Rooney joining United in 2004, including an emotional phone-call from the player's mother.

"After we gave them our final offer, (Everton manager Bill) Kenwright got Rooney's mother on the phone and she told me, 'You are not going to steal my boy,'" writes Ferguson, who is now a United director.

Other revelations in the book include the disclosure that Ferguson considered a move for wayward Italy striker Mario

Balotelli in 2010, only to be dissuaded by his contacts in Italy.

"In 2010, I briefly flirted with the idea of signing Mario Balotelli, the talented but controversial Italian striker," Ferguson says.

"I did my homework on him, speaking to a few Italian contacts, but the feedback I got confirmed it was too big a risk."

Balotelli subsequently joined Manchester City from Inter Milan, returning to Italy for a second spell at AC Milan this



ALEX FERGUSON

year following a disappointing season with Liverpool.

Ferguson hits out at Tottenham Hotspur chairman Daniel Levy's handling of Dimitar Berbatov's move to United in 2008, describing the experience as "more painful than my hip replacement".

He also has choice words for Mino Raiola, the agent of French midfielder Paul Pogba, who left United for Juventus in 2012 and has since become one of the world's most coveted players.

Niaz, Fahad slip further

SPORTS REPORTER

Grand Master Niaz Mursheed suffered defeat while FIDE Master Fahad Hossain was held to a draw in their respective third round boards of the 12th Dato Arthur Tan Malaysian Open in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Niaz lost against FM Mariano Nelson of Philippines while Fahad drew against Malaysian IM Mas Hafizulhelmi. Both Niaz and Fahad have 1.5 points from three rounds.

Meanwhile, Monir Hossain shared the second position along with 15 other players in the Malaysia Chess Challenge (a rating tournament) with 2.5 points while Hanif Mollah earned 2 points.

Gabriel red revoked

AFP, London

Arsenal have won an appeal against Brazilian defender Gabriel's sending-off in Saturday's Premier League defeat to Chelsea, the Football Association confirmed on Tuesday.

Gabriel was dismissed following an off-the-ball clash with Chelsea striker Diego Costa late in the first half of the Gunners' 2-0 defeat at Stamford Bridge and was facing a three-match ban for violent conduct.

"Arsenal's claim of wrongful dismissal in relation to Gabriel has been upheld following an Independent Regulatory Commission hearing," read a statement from the FA.

"The player's three-match suspension has, therefore, been withdrawn with immediate effect."

However, Gabriel still faces a separate charge of improper conduct for his reaction after being shown the red card by referee Mike Dean.

He and Arsenal have until 1700 GMT on Thursday to respond to the charge.

Costa has also been charged with violent conduct after apparently swinging his arm at Laurent Koscielny during Saturday's game and faces a three-match ban.

A violent conduct charge results in an automatic three-match suspension, unless it is overturned.

Inter looking to strengthen lead

AFP, Milan



Leaders Inter Milan host Verona on Wednesday looking to build on their positive start in Serie A as champions Juventus aim to continue their climb back up the table.

With four consecutive wins and only one goal conceded, Roberto Mancini's men are already being talked of as scudetto challengers to four-time consecutive champions Juventus.

But Mancini -- who won seven trophies including three consecutive league titles in his previous spell in charge (2004-2008) -- was quick to dampen any premature enthusiasm.

"Our league position doesn't count at the moment. What does count is being among the top sides over the course of the season," Mancini said after Sunday's 1-0 win at Chievo.

With a two-point lead over Torino, Roma four off the pace and Juventus eight points adrift in 13th, Mancini has some room to manoeuvre.

But with Inter missing out on the Champions League for the past two seasons, the Italian is in no mood for complacency.

"We always have the weight of expectation, because we're Inter Milan. We need to be protagonists this season," added Mancini, who made significant additions to his squad, notably in midfield and defence, in the off-season.

"Our defence is better, because the more you work, the more you improve. Our new players are helping us a lot."

Inter should welcome Brazilian defender Joao Miranda, signed from Atletico Madrid, back for the visit of Verona after a recent injury, although fellow defenders Juan Jesus

and Jeison Murillo are both expected to miss Wednesday's San Siro outing.

Verona are winless and are likely to be without injured pair Luca Toni and Rafa Marquez.

Torino have plenty to be proud of having only dropped points in a 2-2 draw at Verona a fortnight ago.

Giampiero Ventura's side boasts wins over Frosinone, Fiorentina and Sampdoria but their trip to a Chievo side still smarting from defeat to Inter looks anything but straightforward.

Prior to their defeat at the weekend, Chievo sat second in the table with an impressive tally

FIXTURES

(all 1945 GMT)  
**Wednesday**  
Lazio v Genoa, Palermo v Sassuolo, Sampdoria v Roma, Juventus v Frosinone, Inter Milan v Verona, Carpi v Napoli, Chievo v Torino, Fiorentina v Bologna  
**Thursday**  
Empoli v Atalanta

of eight goals to their account.

The Flying Donkeys will be missing DR Congo midfielder Paul-Jose Mpoku after he suffered a fractured cheekbone in an aerial challenge with Inter's midfield enforcer Felipe Melo.

Roma's 2-2 draw with Sassuolo last weekend came with Francesco Totti's 300th career goal for the club, for whom he made his league debut in 1994.

But dropping two points has put unwelcome pressure on Rudi Garcia's men ahead of a difficult outing at Sampdoria, who have hit nine goals thanks largely to Eder's five-goal haul.

Real lose Ramos for Bilbao tie

AFP, Madrid



Real Madrid will have to do without four first-team regulars for their challenging trip to Athletic Bilbao on Wednesday after coach Rafael Benitez confirmed Sergio Ramos won't be fit to travel.

Ramos hasn't featured since dislocating his shoulder in last week's 4-0 win over Shakhtar Donetsk and joins Gareth Bale, James Rodriguez and Danilo on the sidelines.

"I spoke with Ramos this morning and he is still not comfortable," Benitez said on Tuesday.

"It is practically 100 per cent that he won't be there tomorrow."

Madrid lost away at Athletic last season and already have little room for error as they trail Barcelona by two points at the top of the table.

"I wouldn't say it is an acid test, but they are difficult opponents. Real Madrid lost

there last year and it will be important to be concentrated and play with as much intensity as they do," added Benitez.

"It is a game that could allow us to grow in confidence."

The injuries have forced Benitez into using the big squad at his disposal earlier than planned this season, but he insisted the one man that won't be rotated is Cristiano Ronaldo as he closes in on becoming the club's all-time leading goalscorer.

Ronaldo needs just two more goals to equal Raul Gonzalez Blanco's record of 323 despite having played over 400 fewer games for Los Blancos.

"We have one player who is unquestionable and that is Cristiano," said Benitez.

"I speak with Bale in English and he understands what we have to do is be competitive and win. To manage a group with so many good players isn't easy, but in my conversations with them they know that Cristiano scores 40 or 50 goals a season and that makes the difference."

Spotlight on FIFA again

AFP, Zurich



Scandal-engulfed FIFA will be in the spotlight again this week during the first executive committee meeting since the suspension of secretary general Jerome Valcke.

FIFA's executive committee will be updated on the US and Swiss corruption investigations which involve some of its own members, football's governing body said.

President Sepp Blatter will also "very likely" take part in the press conference following the two-day meeting, a FIFA spokesman told AFP.

The session which will open on Thursday at 14:00 local time (12:00GMT) and close on Friday afternoon, will be overseen by deputy secretary general Markus Kattnr, who has stepped in to replace Valcke.

Valcke was put on indefinite leave last week over accusations that he agreed to let World Cup tickets be sold at a vastly inflated price. The Frenchman strongly denied the allegations.

His eviction has only served to heighten the suspicion which is swirling around Blatter's final months in office with the election of his successor set for February 26.

FIFA said in a statement that the executive committee agenda would include "an update on the Swiss and US investigations" as part of the corruption probe.

The 25 committee members, including vice-president Michel Platini, the UEFA president and favourite to succeed Blatter, will also receive a first update of the work of Swiss lawyer Francois Carrard, appointed by FIFA to carry out reforms in the wake of the corruption scandal that erupted last May, when seven football officials were arrested at a Zurich hotel on the eve of a FIFA Congress.

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