

STAR SPORTS1
Australia v West Indies
First Test, Day 2
Live from 5:30am

SONY KIX
Primera Liga
Getafe v Real Sociedad
Live from 1:30am (Saturday)

STAR SPORTS2
Bundesliga
Mainz v Stuttgart
Live from 1:30am (Saturday)

STERLING STUDIES THE BEST

Manchester City winger Raheem Sterling has said he studies Barcelona's Lionel Messi and Real Madrid's Cristiano Ronaldo in his bid to become one of the top players in the world. The winger said, "They've got massive self-belief and know they're the best players in the world. That's what makes them unique and so special. I look at the biggest players in the world and try to see what they've got. I don't like to compare myself with people. I try to learn as much as I can from everyone around me," Sterling told British media. "Messi and Ronaldo have basically set their up lives just to play



PIONEER FOOTBALL League from next month

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka City Corporation (North and South) Pioneer Football League is set to roll in from next month, in which 60 clubs including nine new clubs will be vying to secure two places for the 3rd Division Football League.

The teams will be split into groups of ten, from which only the top two teams from each respective group will qualify for the next round.

Around 1500 footballers are expected to join the U-16 tournament pending their medical tests, said Football league chairman Bijon Barua, during the press conference at the BFF house yesterday.

Of the nine new outfits, Bashundhara Kings who are making their debut are expected to field a strong squad in a bid to qualify for the third division league next season. The officials of the club also informed reporters that their squad will consist of players from the Bangladesh Krira Sports Protisthan (BKSP).

FEDERATION CUP TT

Rahima, Manosh claim titles

SPORTS REPORTER

Rahima Akter and Manosh Chowdhury clinched the titles of women's singles and men's singles respectively in the Aarong Dairy Federation Cup Table Tennis tournament at the Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Indoor Stadium in Paltan yesterday.

Rahima defeated Minara Akter Sharmin 4-1 in the final while Manosh also posted an identical 4-1 win over Khandokar Mahub Billal.

Benzema banned indefinitely

REUTERS, Paris

France have suspended Karim Benzema from the national team due to the ongoing investigation over allegations of his involvement in a plot to blackmail team-mate Mathieu Valbuena over a sex tape.

Real Madrid striker Benzema has been charged with two counts relating to the alleged blackmail and will not play for France until the police case has been resolved, according to the French Football Federation.

FFF president Noel Le Graet said he had taken a "personal decision" that Benzema would no longer be available for selection and that he had informed coach Didier Deschamps.

The news leaves France in some disarray just months before they are due to host the Euro 2016 finals.

Le Graet told a press conference: "Benzema will not be available for selection in March, nor for Euro 2016 if the situation has not evolved."



Arsenal striker Olivier Giroud celebrates one of his three goals against Olympiacos during their Champions League encounter at the Georgios Karaiskakis Stadium on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP

Arsenal, Chelsea thru'

AFP, Paris



Olivier Giroud was Arsenal's hero as the Gunners and Chelsea succeeded on Wednesday where Manchester United failed a day earlier to advance to the draw for the last 16 of the Champions League.

The London clubs celebrated on the final night of group stage action as Roma, Dynamo Kiev and the Belgian underdogs Gent also secured their places in the knockout phase.

Arsenal had needed to overturn a 3-2 defeat at home to Olympiakos earlier in the season when they faced the Greek champions away in a Group F showdown.

Arsene Wenger's side had lost in Piraeus on three separate occasions in recent seasons but France striker Giroud gave them a first-half lead and crucially doubled their advantage shortly after the restart following superb play by Joel Campbell.

Giroud then netted a penalty in the 69th minute to seal Arsenal's place in the last 16 for the 16th season in a row, although finishing second in their group exposes them to the possibility

RESULTS			
Bayer Leverkusen	1 - 1	Barcelona	(Messi 20)
Roma	0 - 0	BATE Borisov	
Dynamo Zagreb	0 - 2	Bayern Munich	(Lewandowski 61, 64)
Olympiakos	0 - 3	Arsenal	(Giroud 29, 49, 67-pen)
Dynamo Kiev	1 - 0	Maccabi Tel-Aviv	(Garmash 16)
Chelsea	2 - 0	Porto	(Marcano 12-o.g., Willian 52)
Valencia	0 - 2	Lyon	(Cornet 37, Lacazette 76)
Gent	2 - 1	Zenit	

of being drawn against Real Madrid or Barcelona in the next round.

Group winners Bayern Munich finished with a 2-0 victory at Dinamo Zagreb thanks to a second-half Robert

QUALIFIED TEAMS	
GROUP WINNERS	
Real Madrid, VfL Wolfsburg, Atl Madrid, Man City, Barcelona, Bayern Munich, Chelsea, Zenit St Petersburg	
RUNNERS-UP	
PSG, PSV, Benfica, Juventus, Roma, Arsenal,	

Lewandowski brace as Thomas Mueller missed a late penalty and coach Pep Guardiola claimed his 100th win in charge.

Enduring a difficult season domestically, Chelsea progressed to the last 16 as Group G winners with a 2-0 win at home to Jose Mourinho's old side Porto as Ivan Marciano's early own goal put them ahead and Willian scored in the second half.

"The players were really committed to get a result, as much for their pride. They didn't want to go to the Europa League," Mourinho said, as his team avoided the fate of United, forced to settle for the consolation of dropping into the secondary continental competition after defeat at Wolfsburg on Tuesday.

Porto started the day on top of the group but finished by tumbling into the Europa League themselves after being overtaken by Dynamo Kiev as the Ukrainian champions beat Maccabi Tel Aviv 1-0 through a Denys Garmash goal to reach the last 16 for the first time since 1999/2000.

Elsewhere, Roma advanced as runners-up in Group E despite a dreary 0-0 draw at home to BATE Borisov in the Italian capital.

Navy join leaders Sk Russel

SPORTS REPORTER

Defending Champions of the Walton Premier Division Chess League, the Bangladesh Navy chess team and the Navy Junior chess team joined leaders Sheikh Russel Memorial sporting club, at the top of the table at the National Sports Council auditorium lounge yesterday.

Bangladesh Navy beat Sonali Bank Sports and Recreation Club 3.5-0.5 during the fifth round and Navy junior chess team beat Leonine Chess Club 3-1. Hence, all three clubs have an equal seven points from four matches.

Sk Jamal to take part in AFC Cup

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh Premier League champion Sheikh Jamal DC have been drawn in Group F of the AFC Cup along with three clubs from Malaysia, Philippines and Singapore as the draw of participating 32 clubs was held at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia yesterday.

The home-and-away basis matches will be held between February 23 and May 11 before the top two teams from each of the eight groups will advance to the 16-team second round to be held in May.

Sheikh Jamal now the new giants in Bangladesh football with their three titles of Bangladesh Premier League, two trophies of Federation Cup, one international trophy of Bhutan's Kings' Cup and runners-up trophy of the IFA Shield but they will have to face some strong opponents in the group stage in their debut of the second-tier club tournament of Asia, a stage where clubs like Mohammedan SC, Brothers and Muktiyoddha Sangsad have earlier competed.

Sheikh Jamal's opponents are Malaysia's most successful club Selangor FC, who won Malaysia Cup 32 times, Super Cup seven times and Premier league two times, Singapore's 7-time national league, three-time Singapore Cup and one-time ASEAN Club Cup winner Tampines Rovers or Warriors FC and Ceres La Salle FC of Philippines, a new outfit in the Philippines league.

Though Sheikh Jamal have a differing opinion regarding the upcoming players' transfer window, their president Manzur Kader told the reporters that the club would take part in the AFC Cup and sought help from the Bangladesh Football Federation.

FIXTURES	
Feb 23	- Tampines Rovers/Warriors FC (Away)
Mar 8	- Ceres La Salle FC (Home)
Mar 15	- Selangor FA (Home)
Apr 12	- Selangor FA (Away)
Apr 26	- Tampines Rovers/Warriors FC (Home)

Messi injury a worry for Barca

GOAL.COM



Barcelona star Lionel Messi is coming off the back of a knee ligament injury, but appeared to be nursing his hamstring strain during the Catalan side's match in Germany last Wednesday.

Barcelona are again sweating on the fitness of their superstar forward after the draw against Bayer Leverkusen on Wednesday, left him with a pain in his left hamstring.

However, Luis Enrique, despite having one substitute left to use, did not deem it necessary to withdraw the 28-year-old from the action.

Kiwis in driving seat

AFP, Dunedin



Martin Gupthill smashed 156 on Thursday as he bounced back from a horror series in Australia to put New Zealand in the driving seat on day one of the first Test against Sri Lanka.

On a Dunedin pitch said to be ripe for seam bowlers, Sri Lanka were left to rue putting New Zealand in to bat as the Black Caps amassed 409 for eight by stumps.

Opener Gupthill fell just before the close, after hitting just his third Test century and his first in four years, coming 33 runs short of his highest score of 189 against Bangladesh in 2010.

Meanwhile the ever-reliable Kane Williamson made 88 and Brendon McCullum 75 as New Zealand exposed the raw Sri Lankan attack.

New Zealand were cruising 229 for two at tea before Sri Lanka fought back in the final session when they took six wickets, albeit for an expensive 180 runs.

There were only seven maiden overs bowled and New Zealand cracked 57 fours,

of which Gupthill contributed 21.

The opener's position in the side was precarious after he averaged just 13 in the recent tour of Australia, and said he "didn't have a lot to lose" as he took to the Sri Lankan attack.

His third Test century came 41 innings and four years after he last posted three figures against Zimbabwe.

"I was trying to go out and be as positive as I could be," Gupthill said, as he repaid the faith shown in him by the New Zealand selectors.

"I didn't have a lot to lose so I just tried to go out and be as positive as I could and have some fun."

"They (selectors) have been good to me and given me a good run in the Test side and I thank them very much for that and today capped off a lot of hard work over the last 18 months," Gupthill added.

Gupthill had a few chances -- two shaky edges and a near run-out early in the innings, and two lbw shouts on 78.

SCORES IN BRIEF

NEW ZEALAND: First innings 409 for 8 (Gupthill 156, Latham 22, Williamson 88, McCullum 75, Bracewell 32 not out; Lakmal 2-69, Pradeep 2-101, Chameera 2-101)

Costa unclear about future

GOAL.COM

Recent reports have suggested the Chelsea striker Diego Costa, could head back to his former club and he has done little to rule out a move back to Spain.

The Chelsea forward has hinted that he could follow Filipe Luis in making a return to Atletico Madrid in the future.

Both players joined Jose Mourinho's side in 2014, but Luis only lasted one season in London before returning to the Spanish capital earlier this year.

Costa, who has struggled for form in the current campaign, has been linked with a move back to his former employers and says he remains an Atletico fan.

"You never know, look where Filipe Luis is now," he told Onda Cero.

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