

What to WATCH

TEN ACTION

UEFA Champions League Draw
Live from 5:00pm
UEFA Europa League Draw

STARSPORTS 1

English Premiership
Leicester City v Chelsea
Live from 2:00am (Tuesday)

SONYSIX

Serie A
Lazio v Sampdoria
Live from 1:30am (Tuesday)

'I'LL KICK VARDY'

Branislav Ivanovic says he will not shy away from kicking Jamie Vardy in order to help Chelsea beat Leicester City on Monday night. Ivanovic is wary of the threat Vardy poses, but will attempt to stop the England international by any means necessary. When asked if he would kick Vardy, Ivanovic replied: "If this helps, yes. Some of the strikers don't like [it] when you kick [them]. You kill their confidence. Vardy at the moment is running a lot and is making the space for other players as well. They are confident. I think it



Arsenal midfielder Aaron Ramsey celebrates (C) his goal as Aston Villa goalkeeper Brad Guzan expresses his dejection during their Premier League fixture at Villa Park yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

12TH SA GAMES Logo, mascot unveiled

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, Delhi

The logo and the mascot of the 12th South Asian Games, 2016 were unveiled yesterday at a ceremony in Guwahati, which will co-host the event along with Shillong from February 6 to 16 next year.

About 4500 sport persons and officials from eight countries -- Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan and Maldives -- are expected to participate in 23 events in the regional sporting extravaganza.

The logo has eight petals seen moving in a clockwise direction showing the positive spirit of the games. The traditional 'gamcha' has been introduced to promote the tradition of the region and to connect the games with the local people. The logo has been designed to capture the essence of games which is peace, prosperity and progress.

The mascot has been named as Tikhor, which is someone sharp, naughty, sporty and modern.

Arsenal go top

AFP, London



Arsene Wenger's Arsenal enjoyed a perfect week after they won 2-0 at Aston Villa on Sunday to supplant Manchester City at the Premier League summit.

Arsenal reached the Champions League last 16 on Wednesday by winning 3-0 at Olympiakos, Olivier Giroud scoring all three goals, and the Frenchman set the London side on their way at Villa Park with an early penalty.

Aaron Ramsey doubled Arsenal's lead before half-time, starting and finishing a swift counter-attack, as Wenger's men leapfrogged both City and former leaders Leicester City, who host champions Chelsea today.

Arsenal's fans' happiness at seeing their side go top was enhanced hours later when arch rivals Tottenham Hotspur's 14-game unbeaten run was ended by a 2-1 home defeat at the hands of Newcastle United.

Tottenham would have moved above United had they beaten Newcastle, but they remain fifth, three points below the Champions League berths, after late goals from substitutes Aleksandar Mitrovic and Ayoze Perez took Steve McClaren's side out of the relegation zone at Norwich City's expense.

Eric Dier's glancing header from Christian Eriksen's corner gave Spurs a 39th-minute lead, but Mitrovic poked home an equaliser two minutes after coming on as a substitute in the 72nd minute before Perez squeezed a winner beneath Hugo Lloris in the third minute of added time.

TOP FIVE

TEAM	P	W	D	L	G/F	G/A	Pts
Arsenal	16	10	3	3	29	13	33
Man City	16	10	2	4	32	17	32
Leicester	15	9	5	1	32	21	32
Man Utd	16	8	5	3	21	12	29

RESULTS

Aston Villa	0 - 2	Arsenal	(Giroud 8-pen, Ramsey 38)
Liverpool	2 - 2	West Brom	(Henderson 21, Origi 90+6) (Dawson 30, Olsson 73)
Tottenham	1 - 2	Newcastle	(Dier 39) (Mitrovic 74, Perez 90+3)

Newcastle had started to turn a corner by beating Liverpool last weekend and Klopp's men needed a last-gasp intervention from Origi to avoid a second consecutive defeat against West Brom.

Liverpool captain Jordan Henderson marked his first start since August with a 21st-minute opener, but Craig Dawson punished an error by goalkeeper Simon Mignolet to equalise on the half hour before Jonas Olsson headed the visitors in front in the 73rd minute from Chris Brunt's corner.

Liverpool centre-back Dejan Lovren had to be stretched off with a nasty knee injury, but the eight minutes of injury time that ensued enabled Origi to rescue the hosts with a deflected equaliser.

Liverpool rise one place to ninth, five points off the top four, with Tony Pulis's West Brom four points further back in 13th.

Nepal friendly on Thursday

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday confirmed that the national team will play a warm-up match against Nepal on Thursday as part of the team's preparation for the upcoming SAFF Championship.

"Today [Sunday] the All Nepal Football Association confirmed that Nepal team will arrive here on Tuesday night and play the friendly against Bangladesh on Thursday," said BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag, adding that both Bangladesh and Nepal teams would leave on December 20 for Kerala, where the SAFF Championship kicks off on December 23.

Bangladesh and Nepal have been drawn in separate groups in the regional football competition.

Bangladesh are in Group B along with holders Afghanistan, Maldives and Bhutan while Nepal are in Group B, which also comprises India and Sri Lanka. Bangladesh will begin their campaign against

Navy, Sheikh Russel still inseparable

SPORTS REPORTER

Defending champions Bangladesh Navy and newcomers Sheikh Russel Memorial Sporting Club maintained their lead at the end of the eighth round of the Walton Premier Division Chess League, which is being held at the National Sports Council Lounge.

Both Navy and Sheikh Russel have 13 points from seven matches and the title will be decided today in the final round. Navy beat Sultana Kamal Smrity Pathagar 4-0 while Sheikh Russel beat Bangladesh Navy junior team 3.5-0.5.

BFF to bid for 2017 SAFF

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) is likely to bid for the 2017 SAFF Championship when the executive committee of the South Asian Football Federation sit for a meeting in Kerala on January 2 at the sidelines of this year's championship.

"We are thinking positively about bidding for the next SAFF Championship, but the final decision about it will be taken after the BFF president returns home," said BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag yesterday.

Bangladesh had earlier hosted the regional football extravaganza in 2003 and 2009.

SAFF general secretary Anwarul Haque Helel informed that the agenda for the meeting of the executive committee will be to select the host nations for the 2017 SAFF Championship and the 2016 Women's SAFF Championship.

"We have not received any official bid from any countries to host either of the two events. However, Bhutan has verbally informed us about its interest in hosting the 2017 SAFF Championship. Sri Lanka are also interested to host the championship," said Helel yesterday at his office at the BFF House yesterday.

As per the contract between sponsors World Sports Group and the SAFF, India will host the men's championship in every alternative edition. Since the upcoming edition is being held in India, the next one will go to one of the seven other member countries.

It has been learnt that Bangladesh will be the main contender for hosting the 2017 edition if it doesn't bid for the 2016 Women's SAFF Championship. Bangladesh had hosted the inaugural edition of women's championship in 2010.

SUPERMOKH CUP Under-12s win plate

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh under-12 football team became champions in the plate championship of the Supermogh Cup after a 3-0 win over Malaysia's CIMB-YFA in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Tapu, Arafat and Mehedi scored the goals for the Bangladesh side, which finished ninth among 20 teams, according to a press release from the Bangladesh Football Federation.

In the U-13 category, however, Bangladesh had to be content with the runners-up trophy in plate championship after suffering a 1-3 defeat to Buriram United of Thailand. Bangladesh U-13s finished sixth among 20 teams, said the press release.

Meanwhile, Max Group, the sponsors of the two teams, have promised to maintain their association with the game's governing body. "We will now bring these two teams under a long-term training and we will request the BFF to make a plan for them," Max Group chairman Golam Mohammad Alamgir

Loew has score to settle with the Azzurri

AFP, Berlin



Germany coach Joachim Loew says he wishes the world champions had drawn Italy in their Euro 2016 group, because he has a score to settle with the Azzurri.

Germany have drawn Ukraine, Poland and Northern Ireland in Group C of next June's tournament in France, while Italy are in Group E along with Sweden, Ireland and Belgium.

But Loew says he hopes his side meets Italy during the knock-out stages, so he can finally taste victory after two defeats at the hands of the Azzurri.

Germany lost 2-0 to Italy in the 2006 World Cup semi-final after extra-time when Loew as assistant coach and then went down 2-1 six years later in the last four of Euro 2012, when he was head coach.

"I was twice involved when we lost important matches against Italy," said Loew.

"At some point, I want to play against them again and I want to beat them."

Italy are Germany's bogey team in international competition as they have never beaten the Azzurri in eight attempts either at the finals of a World Cup or a European championships.

Loew will have his chance to taste victory over Italy, albeit in a friendly, when Germany host England in Berlin, then Italy in Munich, next March in two key games as part of their Euro 2016 preparations.

Loew says Poland are Germany's biggest threat in the battle to win Group C having shocked the world champions with a 2-0 win in Warsaw in 2014 before losing 3-1 to the Germans in September during Euro 2016 qualifiers.

"They have made tremendous progress over the last five or six years and played two big qualifying matches against us," said Loew, who says Bayern Munich's Poland striker Robert Lewandowski is their biggest threat.

"We must improve 100 percent compared to our qualifying campaign, but if we are well prepared then we will be amongst the favourites."



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