

What to WATCH

GTV
ICC U-19 World Cup
 Bangladesh v Namibia
 Live from 9:00am
STAR SPORTS 1
ICC U-19 World Cup

West Indies v Zimbabwe
 Live from 9:00am
English Premiership
 Man United v Stoke City
 Live from 2:00am (Wednesday)
STAR SPORTS 2

English Premiership
 Leicester City v Liverpool
 Live from 1:45am (Wednesday)
STAR SPORTS 4
English Premiership
 Arsenal v Southampton

ICC U-19 World Cup
 Time: 9:00am
 Venue: SKICS, Cox's Bazar

Bangladesh v Namibia
 Venue: SKICS Academy Ground, Cox's Bazar
 South Africa v Scotland

DAY'S EVENT

NEYMAR SAYS HE'S INNOCENT

Barcelona football star Neymar insisted Sunday he is innocent of tax evasion allegations, days after losing an appeal against a \$112,000 fine for filing irregularities in 2007 and 2008. "I am happy within myself," he said in an interview with Brazil's Globo television. "Before saying nonsense -- that we hid this, or hid that -- they should prove it," he said. On Thursday Neymar lost his appeal against a fine imposed by tax authorities in 2012 for irregularities in his income tax declaration. The case involved the player's father, whom Neymar also defended in the Globo interview. "My father is doing everything to ensure that I can just focus on playing football. He handles the books. But in the moment when you see someone you love suffering, it starts to hurt," the star forward said. --AFP



Lewandowski drops exit hint

AFP, Berlin
 Bayern Munich striker Robert Lewandowski took his Bundesliga tally to 19 goals on Sunday and hinted that he might follow Pep Guardiola in leaving the Bavaria giants next season. The Poland star has a Bayern contract until 2019, but hinted to German daily Die Welt on Sunday that he might quit when Carlo Ancelotti replaces Guardiola as head coach next season.

Chelsea to tackle City

AFP, London
 Chelsea will tackle fellow Premier League heavyweights Manchester City in the stand-out tie of the FA Cup fifth round, the draw for which was made on Sunday. Chelsea booked their place in the last 16 with a 5-1 win at Milton Keynes Dons and were immediately dealt a home game against City, who won 4-0 at Aston Villa on Saturday. Meanwhile, Arsenal, seeking a third consecutive FA Cup success, were handed a home tie against second-tier Hull City.

FA CUP DRAW

(ties to be played on February 20-21):
 Chelsea v Man City, Reading v West Brom or Peterborough Utd, Watford v Leeds Utd, Shrewsbury Town v Man Utd, Blackburn v Liverpool or West Ham, Tottenham Hotspur v Crystal Palace, Arsenal v Hull City,

Messi keen to meet young fan

AFP, Kabul
 Barcelona star Lionel Messi is hoping to arrange a meeting with an Afghan boy who shot to fame after pictures of him dressed in a striped plastic bag jersey went viral, Kabul's football federation said Monday.

Five-year-old Murtaza Ahmadi idolises the Argentine soccer star but a jersey of his favourite player is beyond the means of his poor family in the volatile province of Ghazni near Kabul.

His elder brother Homayoun, 15, made him the blue-and-white-striped plastic shirt with Messi's name scrawled in marker pen and posted the photos of Murtaza wearing it on Facebook in mid-January.

Jorge Messi, Lionel's father, told AFP on Saturday that the footballer was aware of the photos that made waves on social media and "wants to do something" for his young fan. The Afghanistan Football Federation (AFF) on Monday said Messi was keen to meet Murtaza as soon as possible, though no date or venue has so far been finalised.

"Messi has been in communication with the federation to set up a meeting with the young boy," AFF spokesman Sayed Ali Kazemi told AFP. "We are working to see whether Messi will come to Afghanistan or the five-year-old will travel to Spain or they will meet in a third country."

There was no immediate comment from FC Barcelona. Setting up a meeting in Afghanistan, in the grip of a fierce Taliban insurgency, is fraught with security challenges.

The Spanish embassy in Kabul told AFP it would do whatever possible to facilitate a meeting in a European destination.

Murtaza's father, a poor farmer in Ghazni's Jaghori district, admitted he could not afford to buy him a replica jersey, adding that Murtaza only had a punctured ball to play with.



Pep pens 3-yr Man City deal

MAIL ONLINE

Pep Guardiola has signed a three-year contract with Manchester City after Manuel Pellegrini confirmed he is leaving at the end of the season.

Pellegrini broke the news at his press conference ahead of Tuesday night's clash at Sunderland, while City affirmed they had discussed the job with Guardiola in 2012.

City's desire to appoint Guardiola had been an open secret and they released a statement on Monday stating he will join the club.

Pellegrini said the club did not go behind his back and the statement read: "Manchester City can confirm that in recent weeks it has commenced and finalised contractual negotiations with Pep Guardiola to become MCFC Head Coach for the 2016/17 EPL season onwards."

The contract is for three years. These negotiations were a re-commencement of discussions that were curtailed in 2012.

"Out of respect for Manuel Pellegrini and the players, the Club wishes to make its decision public to remove the unnecessary burden of speculation."

Manuel, who is fully supportive of the decision to make this communication, is entirely focused on achieving his targets for the season ahead and retains the respect and commitment of all involved with the leadership of the Club.

C'Ron hails Zizou impact

AFP, Madrid



Three-time World Player of the Year Cristiano Ronaldo hailed Zinedine Zidane's impact in improving the Real Madrid squad's fitness after scoring a hat-trick in a 6-0 rout of Espanyol on Sunday.

Madrid have now taken 10 points and scored 17 goals in four games since Zidane replaced Rafael Benitez earlier this month.

And Ronaldo insisted the turnaround is due to the Frenchman's demands for the squad to get fitter.

"The team is working very hard. In the past three weeks you've seen that with the results on the pitch," Ronaldo told Canal Plus.

"We needed to work harder as a team. Now we have a positive mental-



ity. The pre-season wasn't good, there was a lot of travelling. Zizou has arrived with different ideas and we have to continue like this.

"The team is in good shape. Zizou has done a phenomenal job. I feel a lot fitter. We won comfortably and everything went as planned."

Zidane has consistently stressed the importance of improving Madrid's fitness since he was appointed three weeks ago.

And his task has been helped by

Real's early elimination from the Copa del Rey for fielding an ineligible player freeing up their midweeks through January.

"We have had time to work," said Zidane. "This was the third week and the team is getting better physically, which is the most important thing for me."

"Our play with the ball doesn't worry me. We need to maintain this level of intensity and concentration."

"When the Champions League starts again we will have games every three days and won't have this time to work."

"I am happy and the players are happy because they can see the difference."

Victory took Real back to within four points of La Liga leaders Barcelona and one of city rivals Atletico Madrid.

Barca also have a game in hand over both sides from the capital.

Milan thrash Inter

AFP, Milan



Carlos Bacca and M'Baye Niang hit second half goals as AC Milan ended their long wait to celebrate victory in the city derby with a crushing 3-0 win over Inter Milan on Sunday.

Title-chasing Inter had the chance to move up to third in Serie A to close the gap on leaders Napoli to six points.

But after a bright start, Roberto Mancini's visitors took their foot off the gas to go into the dressing room 1-0 down after Alex's 35th minute header.

Inter spurned the chance to pull level 20 minutes from the end when second-half substitute Mauro Icardi hit the post from the penalty spot.

It proved the turning point of the game and Milan, who suffered a 1-0 defeat to Inter earlier this season but last

won the 'Derby della Madonnina' by three clear goals in 2011, doubled their lead on 73 minutes when Bacca kneed Niang's delivery past Samir Handanovic from close range.

Four minutes later, the stadium erupted for a fourth time when Niang found the roof of the net at the second attempt to secure the points for Sinisa Mihajlovic's men.

Mihajlovic admitted Icardi's penalty miss had been "decisive", adding: "It's the greatest joy I've experienced since I've coached, because when you win a derby like this it enters the history books."

"I'm happy for the club president (Silvio Berlusconi), the players and the fans."

Seven-time European champions Milan are bidding to qualify for the Champions League next season after a two-year hiatus and although they remain 14 points behind leaders Napoli, they are only six points behind third-placed Fiorentina, who drew at Genoa earlier Sunday.

Terry set for Blues exit

AFP, Milton Keynes

Chelsea captain John Terry dropped a bombshell on Sunday by announcing he will leave at the end of the season after the club decided not to renew his contract.

"I was in (for talks) last week before the Arsenal game and it is not going to be extended," Terry, 35, told reporters after his side's 5-1 win at second-tier Milton Keynes Dons in the FA Cup fourth round.

"It's not going to be a fairytale ending. I'm not going to retire at Chelsea. It's going to be elsewhere, which it took me a couple of days to get over."



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