

# What to WATCH

## MAASRANGATV & STARS SPORTS 1

ICC World T20  
Afghanistan v Zimbabwe  
Live from 3:30pm  
Hong Kong v Scotland  
Live from 8:00pm

## SONY ESPN

Primera Liga  
Barcelona v Getafe  
Live from 9:00pm  
Celta Vigo v Real Sociedad  
Live from 11:30pm  
Atletico Madrid v Deportivo

## Live from 1:30am (Sunday)

STARS SPORTS 4  
English Premiership  
Arsenal v West Brom  
Live from 11:30pm

## SONY SIX

FA Cup  
Everton v Chelsea  
Live from 11:30pm  
Serie A  
Inter Milan v Bologna  
Live from 1:45am (Sunday)

## MCLAREN OUT, BENITEZ IN

Newcastle United appointed Spaniard Rafa Benitez as their new manager on Friday after dismissing Steve McClaren, who had been head coach for the last nine months. Former Liverpool and Real Madrid boss Benitez, 55, has only 10 matches to preserve Newcastle's Premier League status with the first of those games coming at league leaders Leicester City on Monday. In a statement the club said the Spaniard had joined on an initial three-year contract. "It will be a challenge not just for me and my staff but for the players, the club and the fans," Benitez said of the task facing him.



—REUTERS



**STAR ECONOMICAL BOWLER: Most of the Ireland bowlers took a beating by the Bangladesh batsmen, especially by Tamim Iqbal, during the eight overs that were bowled. However, right-arm pacer Tim Murtagh was the most economical among the lot as he conceded only 16 runs off his two overs.**

PHOTO: COLLECTED

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# Liverpool, Dortmund gain big advantage

AFP, Paris



A dominant Liverpool were worthy 2-0 winners over Manchester United as the old foes met in Europe for the first time on Thursday, while Borussia Dortmund outclassed Tottenham Hotspur in their Europa League last 16, first leg.

At a boisterous Anfield, Liverpool were on top from beginning to end as United lost to their great rivals for the first time under the stewardship of Louis van Gaal, a penalty from Daniel Sturridge and a Roberto Firmino effort separating the teams.

Jürgen Klopp's side will go to Old Trafford for the second leg next Thursday in a good position to advance to the quarter-finals, although that United retain any hope is largely down to David de Gea.

The Spanish goalkeeper could not keep out Sturridge's 20th-minute penalty that followed a tangle between Memphis Depay and Nathaniel Clyne just inside the box, but he kept the visitors in the game for long periods after that.

De Gea saved twice from Philippe Coutinho and once each from Sturridge and Clyne before Liverpool, attacking the Kop with gusto in the second half, got a deserved second goal in the 73rd minute.

When Michael Carrick, who had replaced the suffering Marcus Rashford at half-time, made a mess of dealing with a Jordan Henderson ball, the excellent Adam Lallana pounced to set up Firmino to score.

Earlier, a brilliant Dortmund brushed aside a Tottenham side not helped by coach Mauricio Pochettino's decision to rotate his squad.

For his 100th game in charge, Pochettino made seven changes to the team that drew 2-2 with Arsenal last weekend with Harry Kane among those left on the bench and Dele Alli suspended.

Teenager Joshua Onomah was among those handed a start against a Dortmund side near full strength,

ROUND OF 16 RESULTS		
Shakhtar (Taison 21, Kucher 24, Eduardo 79)	3 - 1	Anderlecht (Acheampong 68)
Basel	0 - 0	Sevilla
Dortmund (Aubameyang 30, Reus 61, 70)	3 - 0	Tottenham
Fenerbahce (Mehmet Topal 82)	1 - 0	Braga
Villarreal (Bakambu 4, 56)	2 - 0	Leverkusen
Athletic Bilbao (Raul Garcia 20)	1 - 0	Valencia
Liverpool (Sturridge 20-pen, Firmino 73)	2 - 0	Man United
Sparta Prague (Frydek 13) (Parolo 38)	1 - 1	Lazio

although Ilkay Gundogan was missing with a foot injury.

The prolific Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang had one effort ruled out for offside before getting the breakthrough on the half-hour mark, rising above Ben Davies to head home a Marcel Schmelzer cross.

Tottenham were never at the races, and Gonzalo Castro hit the post from a tight angle in the 51st minute after Aubameyang had lifted the ball over Hugo Lloris.

Dortmund struck again on the hour mark, Neven Subotic heading on a Castro cross for Germany star Marco Reus to lash home on the volley at the backpost.

And they appeared to have the tie sewn up as Reus scored his second of the evening with 20 minutes remaining, stroking past Lloris from close range after superb build-up play involving Aubameyang and Castro.

Elsewhere, holders Sevilla drew 0-0 away to Basel in Switzerland and ended the game with 10 men following the late sending-off of midfielder Steven N'Zonzi.

In an all-Spanish tie, Athletic Bilbao edged Gary Neville's Valencia 1-0 on a sodden San Mames pitch with Raul Garcia scoring the only goal of the game.

Villarreal are the best placed of all Spain's representatives, though, after a 2-0 win at home to Bayer Leverkusen at El Madrigal secured thanks to a goal in each half by Cedric Bakambu.

Leverkusen, who had Tin Jedvaj sent off late on, now have it all to do in the second leg in Germany.

Shakhtar Donetsk, UEFA Cup winners in 2009, are in a strong position after beating Anderlecht 3-1 in Ukraine.

Taison and Olexandr Kucher struck in the first period for Shakhtar and Eduardo added a third late on after Frank Acheampong pulled one back for the Belgians.

Lazio came from behind to draw 1-1 with Sparta Prague in the Czech Republic as a Martin Frydek opener was cancelled out by Marco Parolo.

And Fenerbahce have the edge against Portuguese side Braga following a 1-0 win in Istanbul given to them by a late Mehmet Topal goal.



Liverpool striker Daniel Sturridge (R) celebrates after scoring the first goal of their UEFA Europa League match against Manchester United at Anfield on Thursday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Siddikur misses cut again

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's ace golfer Siddikur Rahman missed the cut in the True Thailand Classic after finishing the second round tied for 106th.

Siddikur scored one-over-par (73) in the second round yesterday, with two birdies and three bogeys at the Black Mountain Golf Club, for an aggregate of one-over-par (145). That score saw the two-time Asian Tour winner miss the cut by three shots as a total of 72 golfers made it through to the weekend rounds.

This is the third time in six events this season that the 31-year-old golfer has failed to make the cut.

INDEPENDENCE CUP HOCKEY

## Army, Navy top groups

SPORTS REPORTER

The semifinal lineups of the Independence Cup hockey tournament were decided yesterday after Bangladesh Navy and Bangladesh Army emerged champions in their respective groups after beating their rivals at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Star-studded Bangladesh Navy beat Bangladesh Air Force (BAF) 5-2 to set their semifinal clash against Bangladesh Krira Shikha Protishan (BKSP), who suffered a nail-biting 6-7 defeat at the hands of Bangladesh Army.

Army will face BAF in the other semifinal, which will be held along with the first semifinal on Sunday.

## BSPA beat Indian High Commission

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Sports Press Association (BSPA) notched a nine-run win over the High Commission of India in Bangladesh in a friendly Twenty20 match at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

Batting first, BSPA put up a moderate total of 120 for nine, riding on two fine innings -- Sadman Sakib's 20-ball 33 and Shafiur Rahman's 28 off 25.

In reply, the High Commission of India in Bangladesh managed 111 for nine in their allotted 20 overs.

# Play-offs loom for booters

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh national football team had started their World Cup and Asian Cup Qualifiers campaign with hopes of finishing third in the five-team group but it is all but certain that Bangladesh will have to contest the play-off matches to qualify for the third round of the Asian Cup following a possible bottom-placed finish in Group B.

Although one match against Jordan is left, Bangladesh have so far collected only one point from seven outings to stay behind fourth-placed Tajikistan (five points from six matches), increasing the likelihood of Bangladesh having to play the play-off matches to qualify for the 24-team third round of the Asian Cup, which is scheduled to be held from March 28, 2017 to March 27, 2018.

According to the new format, a total of 16 to 18 teams on the basis of their standings in the ongoing World Cup Qualifiers will get direct entry to the third round of the Asian Cup and the rest of six to eight teams will be selected for the play-off round.

Bangladesh so far have no chance of finishing among those 16 to 18 teams and they must take part in the play-off round to qualify for the third round of the Asian Cup.

Bangladesh have a good prospect to finish 35th among the 39 teams of the World Cup Qualifier, so they may get a second opportunity to get the ticket for the Asian Cup third round if they fail in the first-round play-offs which will be held on June 2 and 7. The second-round play-offs will be held on September 6 and October 11.

Teams like Cambodia, Chinese Taipei, Bhutan, Laos, India, Yemen, Maldives, Timor Leste and Bangladesh are likely to vie for the play-off battle.

If Bangladesh fail to get the ticket for the third round of Asian Cup, they will have no FIFA and AFC fixture in the next three years, except the regional SAFF Championship and international friendlies, as the Asian Cup third round will be held from between March 2017 and March 2018 before the fourth and final round -- which will contain all 24 teams to have qualified -- takes place in 2019 in the United Arab Emirates.

Many related to football think the game's governing body should take the proper steps for the national football team ahead of the Asian Cup play-off round in a bid to avoid the possible blackout of international commitments of FIFA and AFC from 2017 to 2019.

# BFF holding congress today

SPORTS REPORTER



Taking on the task of approving the financial statements of three years -- 2012, 2013 and 2014 -- the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) is all set to hold an extraordinary congress at the World Trade Centre in Chittagong today.

The game's governing body is going to approve a surplus financial statement of Tk 2.20 crore after they had spent approximately Tk 50.35 crore against their income of Tk 52.55 crore over those three years.

However, holding the extraordinary congress in the port city at the cost of Tk 30 lakh has raised questions among the football fraternity, especially because the Sher-e-Bangla National Football Championship is being deferred time and again due to financial constraints.

Though article 26 of the BFF statute states that the ordinary congress (annual general meeting) be held every year, the BFF has not held any in the past four years since the Kazi Salahuddin-led committee took over on April 30, 2012.

"It was a failure on our part that we didn't hold the congress every year, but due to incomplete financial statements, we couldn't do that. Most of the time we conduct our activities by borrowing [money] from others and then clear those dues after receiving money from our sponsors and donations from FIFA and AFC," said BFF senior vice president Abdus Salam Murshed.

It can be assumed that the extraordinary congress will be held outside the BFF headquarters in a bid to pacify the councillors, who are upset as the congress has not been held for so long. Another reason might be that the BFF is attempting to please them before the next polls, which are scheduled to be held on April 30.

"Do FIFA and AFC not hold its congress outside their headquarters?" questioned a smiling Murshed.

Of the 143 councillors 129 have consented to attend the extraordinary congress. However, Sheikh Jamal DC, Mohammedan SC, Arambagh KS and a few others did not send

## Martin Crowe laid to rest

AFP, Auckland

Cricketing greats honoured Martin Crowe at an emotional funeral for New Zealand's greatest batsman Friday, with his cousin, Hollywood star Russell Crowe, acting as a pallbearer.

About 1,000 mourners packed Auckland's Holy Trinity Cathedral to remember Crowe, who died on March 4 aged 53 after a long battle with cancer.

The batsman's brother Jeff, himself a former Black Caps captain, said the family had been touched by the outpouring of grief from across the cricketing world.

He was in Bangladesh on umpiring duties when Martin died and said there were heartfelt tributes from many involved in the game.

"It had never really dawned on me... what a huge splash he made, what a true inspiration he was," Crowe senior told the service.

"Wasim Akram reminded me just the other day that Martin was the greatest batsman he ever bowled to -- no higher praise than that," he added.

Former teammates shared memories of a player who averaged 45.36 despite being plagued by injury in his 77 Test career, hitting 17 centuries -- still a New Zealand record.

# Murray supports Sharapova ban

REUTERS, California



World number two Andy Murray says Maria Sharapova should be banned after her positive test

for melatonin and questioned the Russian's use of the drug for medical purposes.

The Briton also chided his own racket manufacturer Head after the company said it would continue to support Sharapova in the wake of her admission that she had taken the banned substance.

"It's not up to me to decide the punishment, but if you're taking performance enhancing drugs and you fail a drugs test, you have to get suspended," Murray told reporters at the Indian Wells tournament in Palm Springs on Thursday.

"If you're taking a prescription drug and you're not using it for what that drug was meant for, then you don't need it, so you're just using it for the performance enhancing benefits that drug is giving you. And I don't think that that's right."

The drug, produced in Latvia but unavailable for purchase in the United States where Sharapova is based, was only added to the

World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) list of banned substances in January, shortly before her positive test at the Australian Open.

Manufactured for people suffering from heart problems, it can also increase blood flow and improve exercise capacity.

Sharapova, who will be provisionally suspended by the International Tennis Federation from this weekend and faces up to a four-year ban, told a news conference in Los Angeles on Monday that she had been taking the drug for 10 years.

She said she was first given it by a family doctor after she frequently became sick, had irregular electrocardiogram results, a magnesium deficiency and a family history of diabetes.

"I read that 55 athletes have failed tests for that substance since January 1," said Murray.

"You just don't expect high-level athletes at the top of many different sports to have heart conditions."

The highest-paid woman in sports, Sharapova has already lost support from some sponsors, with Swiss watchmaker TAG Heuer cutting ties this week, while Nike and Porsche have distanced themselves from her.

