

What to WATCH

SONY ESPN
Indian Premier League
 Punjab v Mumbai
 Live from 8:30pm
Primera Liga
 Celta Vigo v Granada

DAY'S EVENT

Marcel Club Cup Hockey
 Venue: Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium

Mohammedan v Bangladesh SC
 Time: 2:30pm
 Abahani v Sonali Bank

Live from 12:30am (Tuesday)
STAR SPORTS 1
English Premiership
 Tottenham v West Brom
 Live from 1:00am (Tuesday)



NO VARDY, NO PROBLEM: Playing without suspended striker Jamie Vardy, Leicester City had no trouble routing Swansea City at the King Power Arena yesterday. Here, Riyad Mahrez celebrates the opener as the Foxes ran out comfortable winners.

PHOTO: REUTERS

BFF ELECTIONS 2016

Save Football panel declares manifesto

SPORTS REPORTER

The Save Football panel, led by Manzur Kader and Lokman Hossain Bhuiyan, yesterday revealed a 14-point manifesto for Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) elections, with pledges of ensuring transparent and accountable finance and administration of the game's governing body and taking football to grassroots level.

The pledges came two days after the Kazi Salahuddin-led combined panel disclosed a 25-point manifesto. Both manifestos are similar in content and have typical pledges such as building up football academies, taking football to grassroots level, arranging age-level tournaments and training, reviving national and club football championship, setting up gymnasium, beginning coaches' and referees' education etc.

However there is a lack of depth and vision in both manifestos regarding how to take football to a new height and both panels have failed to address the issue of football calendar, an important component towards developing the game.

It was obvious that the pledge of transparent accounting and administration of the game's governing body will be the major agenda for the Save Football panel, which has been alleging BFF of financial irregularities over last four month's movement. But the panel has failed to address anything regarding the national team, which has been struggling at international level.

Sheikh Jamal DC president Manzur Kader had earlier raised questions about the 'sub-standard teams' of the Bangabandhu Gold Cup as well as Sheikh Kamal International Club Cup, and the manifesto has promised to make sure standard of any tournament which would be named after Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman or Sheikh Kamal. The manifesto made other pledges such as making clubs financially solvent, re-opening footballers' quota at

college and universities, and arranging view-exchange meetings with football stakeholders to take right decisions for development.

"If I am elected, not a single penny will be spent without the approval of board meeting because each and every councillor has the right to know about expenditures," said president candidate Kamrul Ashraf Khan Poton, who believes football will not improve until businessmen are involved with the game.

"Many raise questions about whether I have any idea or experience about football. Can you [the journalists] tell me how many footballers are owners of football clubs in the world?"

"As far as I know, Mr [Nazmul Hassan] Papon never played cricket in his life, but he has taken cricket forward and it is well known to us all. Not only me, many businessmen want to see development of football, and if we -- businessmen, journalists, players and organizers -- are united, then football will go forward," said Poton, who also believes there has been a lack of coordination in football which is the main obstruction towards development.

"If needed, we will hold the board meeting, AGM and EMG every two months to hear from 134 councillors," said Poton. "I want you all to support me in future the way you are assisting me today. I even want you all to keep your support towards Salahuddin bhai if he is elected because we all want to see development of football."

Manzur Kader, Lokman Hossain, veteran organiser Mozaffar Hossain Paltu, Swadhin Bangla football team captain Jakaria Pintu, former national coach Golam Sarwar Tipu and Jubo League leader Ismail Hossain Chowdhury Samrat spoke on the introduction of the candidates and most of them referred to BCB president Papon as an example as to how to take the game forward.

Foxes five points from glory

Gunners held at Stadium of Light

AFP, Leicester

Leicester City need just five points to complete a fairytale Premier League title triumph after Leonardo Ulloa scored twice in a 4-0 home victory over Swansea City on Sunday.

With top scorer Jamie Vardy suspended, his stand-in Ulloa stepped up with a brace of goals at the King Power Stadium, either side of goals by Riyad Mahrez and substitute Marc Albrighton.

It lifted Claudio Ranieri's side eight points clear of second-place Tottenham Hotspur, who host West Bromwich Albion on Monday, and means that they can claim the title by winning at Manchester United next Sunday if Spurs fail to beat West Brom.

Leicester's victory had the added effect of ending the title bids of both third-place Manchester City and fourth-place Arsenal, who were held to a 0-0 draw at struggling Sunderland.

Vardy's dismissal, after he was shown a second yellow card for diving, had been the chief talking

point of Leicester's 2-2 draw with West Ham United last weekend, which had raised the possibility of nerves getting the better of Ranieri's miracle men.

But they made an ideal start against Francesco Guidolin's Swansea as Ashley Williams's careless clearance struck Mahrez, who calmly stroked his 17th goal of the season past visiting goalkeeper Lukas Fabianski.

Ulloa made it 2-0 on the half-hour by heading in Danny Drinkwater's free-kick and killed the game off in the 61st minute when he toed in a cross from Jeff Schlupp, who had sprinted into the box from halfway.

The fourth goal, in the 85th minute, was the work of Leicester's substitutes, with Demarai Gray sparking the move by sprinting to the byline on the right and sending a cross into the box.

From Andy King's back-post header, Gray saw a close-range volley parried by Fabianski, but Albrighton followed in to lift the rebound into the roof of the net.

Leicester's win definitely sounded the death knell on the title aspirations of Arsene Wenger's Arsenal, whose goalless stalemate at Sunderland

did little to help their push for a top-four finish.

Sunderland left-back Patrick van Aanholt came closest to breaking the deadlock at the Stadium of Light with a first-half free-kick that hit the post, while both teams had penalty appeals for handball turned down.

Arsenal, for whom Jack Wilshere made his first appearance of the season after recovering from a broken fibula, remain fourth, five points above Manchester United, but having played a game more.

"We created less, but could still have scored. We should have been in front in the first half," Arsenal manager Wenger told the BBC.

"It leaves us having to win the next game, as always. We fight against teams who fight not to go down, so we prepare to fight again next Saturday."

The point was of much greater use to Sam Allardyce's Sunderland, who climbed out of the relegation zone on goal difference at the expense of Norwich City.

"With four games to go it is in our hands now," said Allardyce, whose side had won 3-0 at Norwich in their previous game.

Suarez hails Messi, Iniesta

REUTERS, Barcelona

Luis Suarez paid tribute to team mates Lionel Messi and Andres Iniesta after the pair helped him notch four goals for the second La Liga game in a row as Barcelona thumped Sporting Gijon 6-0 on Saturday.

The Uruguay hitman became the first-ever La Liga player to score four goals for the second successive match, keeping Barca top of the table on goal difference ahead of Atletico Madrid, with Real Madrid one point adrift in third position.

"Leo is the one who manages everything, all the stages of the game, and we are eternally grateful to him," said Suarez.

"Andres' magic is always there, that's why he has the [big] name he has. He has been an important player for us this year."

Suarez netted four times, twice from the penalty spot, in the space of 25 second-half minutes as Barca followed up their midweek 8-0 rout of Deportivo La Coruna.

"I am a bit surprised to score eight goals in four days," said Suarez who was on target twice from open play following good passes from fellow striker Messi and midfielder Iniesta.

The former Liverpool forward now has 34 league goals this season, moving ahead of Real Madrid's Cristiano Ronaldo (31) as the top scorer with three games to go.

Suarez is also in line to claim the Golden Boot as Europe's

leading marksman, a prize he shared with Ronaldo in 2013-14. However, he is more focused on firing Barca to the league title.

"Being top scorer wasn't my objective and now we have three games left. If I can do it I'll welcome it but the priority is the league," said Suarez.

Barcelona forward Luis Suarez became the first player to score four goals in consecutive La Liga games, following up his quadruple against Deportivo La Coruna with four more against Sporting Gijon on Saturday.

PHOTO: REUTERS



Tampines in town

SPORTS REPORTER

Tampines Rovers of Singapore arrived here yesterday to play their AFC Cup away match against Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club. The match will kick off at the Bangabandhu National Stadium at 6:30pm tomorrow.

Tampines, comprising 18 players and nine officials, had their first training session at the Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club ground in the afternoon.

The Singapore side, who handed a 4-0 defeat to Sheikh Jamal in their home fixture, are in second position in the four-team group with seven points from four matches following their 1-2 defeat to leaders Ceres La Salle FA of Philippines in the last match. Sheikh Jamal sit on the bottom with four straight defeats.

Palace set final with Man Utd

AFP, London

The FA CUP

Crystal Palace will face Manchester United in their first FA Cup final for 26 years after Connor Wickham sealed a 2-1 win over Watford at Wembley on Sunday.

Alan Pardew's side swept into an early lead in the semi-final through Congo forward Yannick Bolasie before Watford's Troy Deeney equalised soon after the interval.

Palace were the better team for long periods and Wickham settled it midway through the second half to give his club a chance to avenge their 1990 FA Cup final loss against United, who are looking to win the competition for the first time since 2004 after beating Everton on Saturday.

It was an especially sweet moment for Palace boss Pardew, who was a member of the Eagles team beaten by Alex Ferguson's United in 1990 when Lee Martin scored the replay winner after the first match ended in a 3-3 draw.

Pardew has proved a good luck charm for Palace in the FA Cup and he celebrated taking the club to only their second final in the competition 26 years after scoring the winner against Liverpool the last time the south Londoners won a semi-final.

Watford's failure to reach their first FA Cup final for 32 years will increase speculation about the future of manager Quique Sanchez Flores after reports the Hornets' poor form in 2016 could lead to his sacking after one season in charge.

After a superb first half of the season, Palace had plunged dramatically, with only one win from their last 18 league games.

But despite their struggles, Pardew's men were enjoying their best Cup run for over two decades and they took just six minutes to seize the initiative.

Yohan Cabaye whipped a corner towards the near post where Damien Delaney flicked a header towards the far post for the unmarked Bolasie to head home from virtually on the line.

Bolasie's sixth goal of the season was an emotional moment for the forward, who hadn't forgotten the frustration he felt in 2013 when he was an unused substitute during Palace's Championship play-off final win over Watford at Wembley.

We support Leicester: Hazard

BBC ONLINE

Chelsea midfielder Eden Hazard says he and his team-mates do not want Tottenham to win the Premier League.

"The fans, the club, the players, we don't want Tottenham to win the Premier League," Hazard told BBC's Match of the Day programme.

"We hope for Leicester because they deserve to be champions this season."

"We have a good game next week against Tottenham and if we can beat them it will be good."

Chelsea midfielder Cesc Fabregas, who played for Tottenham's north London rivals Arsenal from 2003 to 2011, also wants Leicester to win the league and expects them to secure the title before the game against the Blues.

"I believe they'll have it wrapped up by then," the Spaniard told Sky Sports.

"Spurs are pushing hard to get as close to them as possible but I think Leicester will win it and deservedly."

"I don't want Spurs to win it and, for what they've done through the season, I would love Leicester to win the Premier League."

Fencers robbed in Rio

AGENCIES, Rio de Janeiro

Chinese women taking part in the Rio Fencing Grand Prix and the Team World Championship finals have been robbed here.

The fencers and their coaches were robbed as they made their way from a seaside supermarket to their hotel with a trolley after buying bottles of water, reports Xinhua.

Three to four Brazilian teenagers came up to them. One tried to snatch the necklace of Xu Anqi, the world No.1 woman epee fencer. As Xu held on to her necklace and her teammates came around, the robbers fled.

"I'm familiar with Rio but this time I feel a bit afraid after being robbed," said Xu after clinching the silver medal in Saturday's women's epee individual event.

Meanwhile, two shooters from the Chinese team also saw their credit cards charged by unauthorized payments.

With less than four months towards the Rio Olympics, security concerns are again drawing attention, Xinhua said.

Nadal equals Vilas

AFP, Barcelona

Rafael Nadal equalled Argentine legend Guillermo Vilas's record of 49 clay-court titles with his ninth Barcelona Open after overcoming defending champion Kei Nishikori 6-4, 7-5 on Sunday.

Fresh from winning the Monte Carlo Masters last week, Nadal has now won his opening 10 matches of the European clay-court season ahead of his quest to land a record 10th French Open in June.

"I think I served well which was very important. The fact I had a good percentage of first serves allowed me to play better," said Nadal.

"In the second set I let a lot of opportunities go, but I am very happy to have resisted mentally and happy to win."

Nishikori had made the most of shock Nadal defeats to claim the title in the past two years, but despite some stiff resistance in just over two hours on court he slipped to a ninth defeat in 10 matches against the Spaniard.

"It's been a great three years, even though I lost today," said Nishikori. "I feel very comfortable here, every year I feel very excited, so I hope I can come back next year."

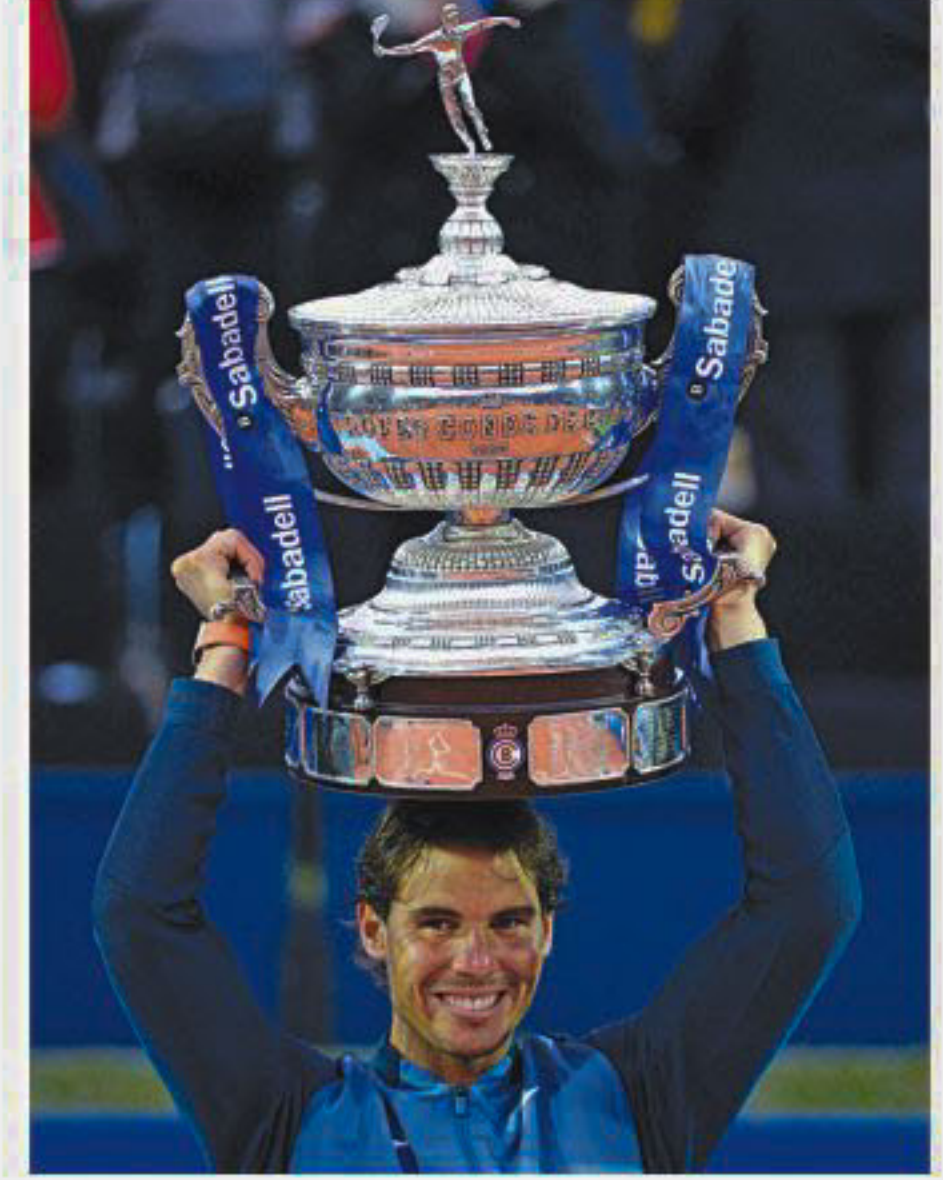
Neither of the top two seeds had even dropped a set on their route to the final.

Nishikori started brightly, but produced an error-strewn game to hand Nadal the early break for 3-1 in the first set.

The World number six battled back with a number of searing forehands to level at 3-3,

but Nadal crucially dug himself out a huge hole at 0-40 to move ahead 4-3 in his next service game. And another wayward game from Nishikori handed Nadal the break he needed to seal the set 6-4.

Nishikori did manage to break at the first opportunity in the second set, but this time Nadal responded with his best tennis of the match to surge to within two games of victory at 4-1.



After his second consecutive tournament win, an ecstatic Rafael Nadal poses with the Barcelona Open trophy.

PHOTO: AFP

PSG retain French Cup

AFP, Paris

Ten-man Paris Saint-Germain beat Lille 2-1 in the French League Cup final at the Stade de France on Saturday to remain on course for a domestic clean sweep of titles.

The Ligue 1 champions took the lead five minutes before half-time in contentious circumstances, with Javier Pastore's shot passing through the legs of an offside Layvin Kurzawa on its way into the net.

But Lille hit back shortly after the restart when Djibril Sidibe fired a free-kick into the net.

The capital city side were dealt a huge blow when Adrien Rabiot was shown a second yellow card with 20 minutes remaining.

But a moment of madness from Lille goalkeeper Vincent Enyeama allowed Angel Di Maria to roll in the winner with 16 minutes to play for his 15th goal of the season.

Laurent Blanc's men now have three trophies this term with a French Cup final against Marseille to come.



Players and officials of the Shamsul Hoque Khan School & College celebrate after winning the Dhaka Metro title of the Prime Bank Young Tigers National School Cricket Tournament at Dhaka University on Saturday.

PHOTO: COURTESY