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| What to WATCH | STAR SPORTS 1 English Premiership Newcastle v Crystal Palace Live from 8:00pm | Arsenal v Norwich Live from 10:30pm STAR SPORTS 2 Bundesliga | Bayern v Monchengladbach Live from 7:30pm STAR SPORTS 4 Bundesliga | Dortmund v Wolfsburg Live from 7:30pm Leverkusen v Hertha Berlin Live from 10:30pm | SONY ESPN Indian Premier League Delhi v Kolkata Live from 4:30pm | Hyderabad v Bangalore Live from 8:30pm La Liga Real Betis v Barcelona |
| DAY'S EVENT | Marcel Club Cup Hockey Venue: Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium | Shadaran Bima v Ajax SC Time: 2:30pm Usha KC v Dhaka Mariner | Time: 4:15pm DPL | Time: 9:00am Prime Bank v Kalabagan KC Venue: SBNCs | | |

Ranieri to get £5m win bonus
REUTERS, London

Leicester City manager Claudio Ranieri will earn a five million pound (\$7.33 million) bonus if his team win the Premier League title, the Times reported on Friday. Italian Ranieri also has a separate clause in his contract that guarantees him 100,000 pounds for every place that his team finish above 18th, which will see him earn 1.7 million pounds if the Foxes come first. When Ranieri took charge of Leicester in the close season, he was tasked with keeping the team in the Premier League. Leicester's owners wrote a number of clauses into his contract to make a parting of ways easier if he failed. Ranieri asked for clauses of his own, granting him incentives if the club qualified for the Europa League, the Champions League or won the Premier League. He currently earns about 1.5 million pounds a year and is in discussions with the club over a new contract. Leicester need three points from their last three games to win their first top-flight title and will be crowned champions if they beat Manchester United at Old Trafford on Sunday. When asked earlier in the season if Leicester's players would also be entitled to a bonus if the team won the title, Ranieri said: "I don't know if there is a clause (for players) and I don't tell you. They made a mistake if they didn't arrange it."

Who will take control of football's downward spiral?

BFF elections to take place today

SPORTS REPORTER



With hopes of electing an executive committee that will bring real change to the country's football, the much-discussed elections of the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) will be held today at the Radisson Blu Water Garden Hotel in Dhaka. After the annual general meeting in the morning session, some 134 delegates will cast their votes to elect a 21-member executive committee from 2:00-5:00 pm with the AFC delegate monitoring the election procedure. Incumbent president Kazi Salahuddin will fight for his third and final term at the hot seat of the game's governing body and he will virtually be vying against unheralded candidate and fertiliser businessman Kamrul Ashraf Khan Poton following the retreat of the two other candidates, Golam Rabbani Helal and Nurul Islam Nuru, who have opted out of the polls in support of Salahuddin and Poton respectively. Former national striker Salahuddin came took the reins of the game's governing body after defeating Major General (Rtd) Amin Ahmed Chowdhury in 2008 and then retained the BFF president's post unopposed in 2012, but this time the legendary footballer is going to face the heat of elections again, especially after the opposition group -- led by his once close friend Manzur Kader and Poton -- alleged that Kazi Salahuddin failed to take the game's development to the grassroots in his eight years as well alleging some financial irregularities. The Salahuddin-led combined panel however alleged that he and his colleagues had been facing constant pressure from a certain group to quit the race, but they still stuck to the election procedure to retain their posts. It is however hard to anticipate who is going to sit at the



INCUMBENT PRESIDENT KAZI SALAHUDDIN



UNHERALDED CANDIDATE KAMRUL ASHRAF KHAN

helm of the country's football federation; the Kazi Salahuddin-led combined panel is seemingly in a good position following the expression of support from the District and Divisional Organisers' Council, who have 50 per cent or 67 votes out of 134. The combined panel is backed by the representatives of big Dhaka clubs like Abahani, Sheikh Russel KC, Brothers Union, Team BJMC, Victoria SC and others clubs at lower level. The Kamrul Ashraf-led Save Football Panel is also backed by big clubs like Sheikh Jamal DC, Mohammedan SC and Arambagh KS while there is also some support from the district level. Both panels have already declared their manifestos, which bear similarities in their promise for development of football at the grassroots level. There are however whispers in the football arena that, like in previous elections, money is likely to have more of a say in determining the selection of a few high-profile posts. The contest for the president and four vice-president posts will garner most of the spotlight after incumbent senior vice president Abdus Salam Murshedy was elected unopposed. Although the presidential contest is confined to two candidates, 10 candidates are strongly contesting the four vice-president posts, and there is very little chance that the four posts will be populated by candidates from a single panel. The election commission secretary yesterday informed that the commission will first declare the winner of the BFF president after counting the ballot papers and then they will again sit to count the ballot papers for the four vice-presidents and declare the winners. Lastly they will declare the winners of the 15 executive members. The Salahuddin-led panel will contest all 21 posts while Poton's panel will vie for 19. Meanwhile, the delegates outside the capital have started to check into the Radisson Blu from yesterday afternoon

It's heating up

AFP, Madrid



Barcelona hold the slightest of advantages in a thrilling three-way La Liga title race with just three games remaining ahead of their trip to Real Betis on Saturday.

The Catalans lead Atletico Madrid solely thanks to their better head-to-head record with Real Madrid just a point behind the leaders in third.

However, Barca's chances of retaining their title could be boosted by Atletico and Real's European commitments as their respective clashes with Rayo Vallecano and Real Sociedad are sandwiched between the two legs of their Champions League semi-finals.

Atletico and Real remained on course for a second Madrid derby final in three years in midweek as Atletico will travel to Germany with a 1-0 lead over Bayern Munich, while Real host Manchester City at the Santiago Bernabeu with the scores level at 0-0. By contrast, Barca have enjoyed just their second free midweek of 2016 and appear to have turned the corner with 14 goals without reply against Deportivo la Coruna and Sporting Gijon in their last two outings after a run of three straight league defeats.

"There are people who say it is better to play every three days to not lose the rhythm of competition, others say it is better to rest, but the most important thing is winning," Barca defender Gerard Pique said on Thursday.

"We need to win the three games that are left to win La Liga and then the Cup final. It is in our hands which is the most important thing. If we win the three games we will be champions."

Luis Suarez scored four times in each of Barca's last two games to streak three ahead of Cristiano Ronaldo in the race to be the league's top scorer.

The Uruguayan is well set to win at least that personal duel as Ronaldo is expected to miss a third straight game with a thigh injury as Real travel to San Sebastian.

Karim Benzema will join the three-time World Player of the Year on the sidelines after he picked up a hamstring injury in the first leg at City.

In their absence Gareth Bale will be charged with leading the Madrid attack as he did with a double when they came from 2-0 down to register a ninth straight La Liga win at Rayo Vallecano last weekend. And Real coach Zinedine Zidane refused to accept he will prioritise the upcoming second leg with City ahead of their trip to Anoeta.

"It is another final. From here until the end of the season we only have finals remaining," he told Madrid's website.

"We have not had much time to prepare, but we know that. We have to play every three days and it is both a difficult stadium and a difficult team to play against."

Atletico look to have the easiest task of the three title contenders on Saturday when they welcome struggling Rayo to the Vicente Calderon in a Madrid derby.

Coach Diego Simeone has resisted the temptation to rotate his squad in recent weeks, but may have one eye on the return in Munich on Tuesday with only six days separating the two legs.

Defender Diego Godin and winger Yannick Carrasco are both expected to miss out through injury with Atletico hopeful both will be fit in time to face Bayern.

| FIXTURES | |
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| (all times GMT) | |
| Saturday | Real Sociedad v Real Madrid (1400), Atletico Madrid v Rayo Vallecano (1615), Real Betis v Barcelona (1830), Granada v Las Palmas (2005) |
| Sunday | Athletic Bilbao v Celta Vigo (1000), Espanyol v Sevilla (1400), Deportivo la Coruna v Getafe (1615), Valencia v Villarreal (1830) |
| Monday | Malaga v Levante (1830) |

From scandal to glory

AFP, Bangkok



A sex-tape of a racially charged orgy in a Bangkok hotel was a public relations catastrophe for Thai-owned Leicester City -- but it proved an unlikely turning point in their journey to the top of the English Premier League. The offending video featured three young players including James Pearson, son of then manager Nigel Pearson, engaging in explicit acts with group of Thai women in a Bangkok hotel. Filmed by the players, the footage of the sniggering men was soon revealed by the British tabloid press, shocking the public with the players' crude remarks including calling one of the Thai women a "slit-eye". But while the sex-tape caused outrage, it also ushered in a new era for Leicester as it paved the way for the arrival of manager Claudio Ranieri, who has taken the club to the brink of the Premier League title. After the scandal last May, the players were promptly sacked and pressure mounted on Pearson -- a manager who already had a bruising

relationship with the British press. At the start of July, Pearson also exited due to what the club simply described as "fundamental differences in perspective". Critics lined up to condemn the owners, billionaire Vichai Srivaddhanaprabha and his son Aiyawatt or 'Top', for a decision that came after Pearson had steered the team from the bottom of the table to 14th. Pearson's sacking, said former star striker Gary Lineker at the time, showed that the Thai owners "clearly don't know what they're doing". But a fortnight later the experienced Italian Ranieri arrived, to little fanfare, and quietly set to work on what would become a stunning season. "The hotel incident brought the hero," Satit 'Bigjah' Krikul, Thailand's best known television football pundit, told AFP, referring to Ranieri's appointment. "Of course the incident damaged the reputation of the Leicester team and affected Thailand a bit... but it's Thai style that this kind of news blows over." The owners have stayed silent on the sex scandal and even Bangkok's police,

who had threatened to prosecute the women involved for indecency, now say they have no record of the incident. Despite Thailand's raunchy nightlife and reputation, sex is a taboo subject in what remains a largely conservative country. When asked by AFP recently in Bangkok if the club will return for a triumphant Thai tour this year, Top replied with a terse, "No". The genial Ranieri immediately presented a calmer, kinder face to the public and brought a wealth of top-level footballing experience. He inherited a team on a good run, bolstered the squad with some shrewd signings and embarked on the unlikely of title charges. At the start of this season the Foxes were widely tipped for relegation, with British bookmakers offering 5,000-1 odds against a league victory. One of Ranieri's first tasks was to issue a heavy fine to striker Jamie Vardy, who was caught on camera calling an Asian man a "Jap" three times at a casino. Vardy's "mistake" was forgiven by Ranieri, and he went on to power this year's title bid with 22 league goals.

Milan play down crisis

AFP, Milan



AC Milan chief executive Adriano Galliani has played down claims of an impending crisis following a shareholders meeting at which the struggling Serie A giants came under attack amid reports of nearly 90m euros in losses for 2015. Reports Thursday claimed Milan owner Silvio Berlusconi could finally go through with plans to sell a majority stake in the club to a Chinese consortium, having seen previous plans come to nothing. Corriere dello Sport newspaper said an agreement between the two parties -- that would see Berlusconi sell 70% of the club and the remaining 30% to be sold off within a year -- could be signed at a secret location on Monday. Galliani, meanwhile, has gone on the defensive after the chief of a minority shareholders' association, the Associazione Piccoli Azionisti (APA), hit out at the club's lack of leadership. A recent audit revealed more than 89m euros in losses for 2015, adding to fears Milan's slow decline in Europe and in Italy

will continue. In recent years a succession of barely-qualified coaches have failed to lift the seven-time European champions out the mire and Milan are currently struggling to even qualify for next season's Europa League. But Galliani said: "All companies go through negative and positive cycles, the board are doing what they can to overcome this negative trend." At a shareholders assembly, Galliani and Berlusconi came under attack from Giuseppe Gatti, the president of the APA. "The situation is getting worse, worse than we could imagine. I never imagined it would get this far," he said, underlining the club's failures to improve results despite appointing a series of coaches in recent seasons. "We can't say that it's the fault of (Clarence) Seedorf, (Filippo) Inzaghi or (Sinisa) Mihajlovic. The responsibility lies with management: Galliani and Berlusconi. "It's not an act of treason to say the president is also at fault. When Milan were saved from bankruptcy there were still great champions like Paolo Maldini, Franco Baresi and Filippo Galli. "Where are the champions today?"

'Don't compare Saul to Messi'

OMNISPORT

Bayern Munich coach Pep Guardiola has warned against comparing Saul Niguez to Lionel Messi after the Atletico Madrid midfielder's heroics in the Champions League. Saul's incredible solo effort helped Atletico to a 1-0 win over Bayern in the first leg of their semi-final on Wednesday. The run and finish led to comparisons to Barcelona superstar Messi, who has scored numerous goals by gliding past defenders. However, Guardiola said it was best not to compare the 21-year-old to the Argentina captain. "I don't know him personally but I have a lot of respect for the quality Saul has," he said. "But it would be good for him not to compare him with Messi."