

# What to WATCH

**SONY ESPN**  
Indian Premier League  
Bangalore v Mumbai  
Live from 8:30pm  
**STAR SPORTS 1**  
English Premiership  
Liverpool v Chelsea  
Live from 1:00am (Thursday)

**STAR SPORTS 2**  
English Premiership  
Sunderland v Everton  
Live from 12:45am (Thursday)  
**STAR SPORTS 1**  
English Premiership  
Norwich City v Watford  
Live from 12:45am (Thursday)

## MAHREZ, MARTIAL LAND FB AWARDS

Leicester City winger Riyad Mahrez and Manchester United forward Anthony Martial landed the top prizes in the 2016 Facebook Football Awards, which were announced on Monday. Algerian star Mahrez won Player of the Year, while France international Martial, 20, was voted Young Player of the Year. The awards for the 2015-16 English Premier League season were voted on by almost a million Facebook users in 193 countries, according to a press release from the social networking giant. "It's something special and something big as well, because it's from all over the world," said 25-year-old Mahrez, who was also elected the Professional Footballers' Association (PFA) Player of the Year. Martial said: "Thanks to all Facebook fans for supporting me as the Young Player of the Year. I am happy to be playing in the Premier League and I hope that I will continue to score plenty more."



—AFP

## ASIAN CUP QUALIFYING PLAY-OFFS 34-man squad named

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday announced a 34-member preliminary squad for the training camp for next month's Asian Cup qualifying play-offs against Tajikistan with the inclusion of six new faces.

Bangladesh will play their away match against Tajikistan on June 2 before hosting the Tajiks in Dhaka on June 7. The 34 players have been asked to report to team manager Satyajit Das Rupu tomorrow at the BFF House while head coach Lodewijk de Kruijf is supposed to arrive here next Sunday.

"Having discussed with de Kruijf, I have initially picked 34 best available players at the moment as some of the players have been suffering from injuries," said interim coach Saiful Bari Titu.

The six new players are left-back Khairuzzaman Sabuj of Uttar Baridhara Club, right-winger Koushik Barua of Chittagong Abahani, strikers Mannaf Rabbi and Shaikat Mahmud of Team BJMC, forwards Nurul Absar and Syed Rasel Turzo of Rahmatganj MFS.

"Though de Kruijf suggested me to pick 30 players, I have selected more to give him an opportunity to see the new players, who have performed well in the Independence Cup," said Titu, who called all the players -- except for injured Atiqur Rahman Fahad and Fazole Rabbi -- from the squad which played the last World Cup qualifying match

against Jordan in March.

Players like defenders Nasiruddin Chowdhury, Atiqur Rahman Meshu and Mamun Mia have staged comebacks after recovering from injuries. Meshu and Mamun played all the Independence Cup matches for their respective clubs while Nasir was not eligible to play due to a court verdict.

Though Titu was asked by de Kruijf to call all four suspended players -- Mamunul Islam, Zahid Hossain, Sohel Rana and Yeasin Khan -- the game's governing body kept those four players out of the squad as their suspension have not been lifted yet. Only Mamunul and Sohel have so far appealed for lifting suspension.

### SQUAD:

**Goalkeepers:** Rasel Mahmud Liton, Shahidul Alam Sohel, Mazharul Islam Hemel and Ashraf Islam Rana.

**Defenders:** Raihan Hasan, Nasir Uddin Chowdhury, Tapu Barman, Nasirul Islam, Atiqur Rahman Meshu, Yeamin Ahmed Chowdhury Munna, Mamun Mia, Shakil Ahmed, Mohammad Linkon, Ariful Islam, Kesto Kumar Bosh, Rezaul Karim, Khalekuzzaman Sabuj and Wali Faisal.

**Midfielders:** Faisal Mahmud, Jamal Bhuiyan, Monaem Khan Raju, Shahedul Alam Shahed Sr, Shahedul Alam, Masuk Miah Jony, Koushik Barua and Emon Mahmud.

**Forwards:** Jewel Rana, Aminur Rahman Sazib, Rubel Miah, Mannaf Rabby, Nabib Newaz Jibon, Nurul Absar, Shaikat Mahmud and Syed Rashed Turzo.



Germany defender Mats Hummels joined Bayern Munich for a reported 38 million euro fee.

PHOTO: AFP FILE

## Multisport complex to gather steam

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Munshiganj

The government's proposed multisport complex in Louhanjang, Munshiganj is set to gather steam as a team of government high-ups are scheduled to visit the place for land acquisition. The idea of the proposed project, which was first floated after the Awami League-led government came to power in 2008, will cover an area of more than 1200 acres of khas land and will feature football and cricket stadiums as well as other sporting facilities, including a velodrome, it has been learnt.

The Brahmingaon, Taratia, Dhankunia and Signhati moujas of Louhajang, which are very close to the Padma Bridge, have been earmarked as the proposed venue. The Munshiganj District Commissioner (DC), Saiful Hasan Badal, who inspected the areas yesterday, informed that most of the area is khas land while there are around 250 families living in Brahmingaon and Signhati moujas on leased land from the government.

It has been learnt that the sports ministry had sent directives to the DC office in December last year for assessing land for acquisition. After today's inspection by the team, which will feature local member of parliament Shagufta Yasmin Emily, sports secretary Kazi Akhtar Uddin Ahmed and members of National Sports Council and Bangladesh Army, the DC will send a report to the ministry, which will then prepare a project proposal for approval of Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC).

## Liverpool reveal new home kit

AGENCIES, London

Liverpool have unveiled their new home strip for the 2016-17 season - a simplistic red and gold design.

The shirt, made by company New Balance and sponsored by Standard Chartered, is entirely the club's familiar shade of red with gold logos, and gold trim around a two-button collar.

The shorts and socks are also all-red with gold logos, while the home goalkeeper jersey is lime green with black shoulder pads and white trim.

## Ranieri would 'love Italy job'

AFP, Milan



Claudio Ranieri admits he would love to coach Italy one day but has committed his immediate future to a Leicester City side that, he believes, could spring a few surprises in next season's Champions League.

"I would never rule it out. I would love it. And Leicester's blue shirts are already quite similar to those of Italy," Ranieri said in a Gazzetta dello Sport interview Tuesday.

As Leicester's fans continue to soak up the club's incredibly title-winning feat, Ranieri's resounding achievement has made the 64-year-old the toast of his native Italy.

On Monday, he was awarded the 'Bearzot Prize' for sporting excellence, but, most notably, the 'Palma d'Oro' (Golden Palm) by the Italian Olympic Committee (CONI) in Rome, following in the footsteps of 2006 World Cup-winning coach Marcello Lippi.

It came amid the presence of Italian football federation (FIGC) president Carlo Tavecchio, who said he wants to see Ranieri steering Italy to a fifth World Cup crown.

After the bittersweet experience as coach of Greece, who sacked him after defeat to the Faroe Islands ended their hopes of qualifying for Euro 2016, Ranieri admitted: "I was curious to know what it would be like to coach a national team, but my experience with Greece was enough. Obviously, being

coach of Italy would be different."

But for the moment, Ranieri is staying put as he believes Leicester's "fairytale of beating the Premier League giants" could be extended to next season's Champions League.

"I know a lot of (European) clubs will be thinking, 'it's okay, it's only Leicester we've got'. But we'll be playing the Champions League with exactly the same attitude."

Ranieri admitted that while it had been a culture shock in the English Midlands he has already curbed the Leicester players' appetite for beer, but struggles to limit their intake of spicy food.

"The beer isn't a problem," said the Italian when asked if he had had to change his players' eating habits. "They always asked my permission. It was more the food. They love all that spicy stuff."

And while rejecting the need for players worth "30-40 million" who could "ruin the dressing room", the Italian has urged his in-demand stars to remain at the club.

"I know a lot of my players can now go where they want, but I told them that after another year they will have even more experience and they will be worth even more," said Ranieri.

He added: "I don't want players worth 30-40 million who ruin the atmosphere in the dressing room. I want players with the same kind of attitude as my guys."

"I always tell them, 'I don't expect you to win all the time, but I expect you to always give everything'. That's what they did, and that's what they will do in

the Champions League."

Leicester's triumph has drawn comparisons with some of the biggest success stories in world sport, with reports a Hollywood film is already in production.

Italian-American star Robert De Niro has been touted to play Ranieri, who said: "It doesn't matter who plays me. As long as the film is a success, just like we are."

Leicester feted their historic championship triumph in style last weekend when world famous Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli adding special emotion by singing 'Nessun Dorma' at the King Power stadium.

Ranieri admitted Bocelli, who was blinded permanently aged 12 due to a football accident, told him prior to the game: "I'm feeling very emotional."

Ranieri added: "His wife told me, 'It's the only time I've seen him (Bocelli) happy to take the plane.'"

Yet despite his success, Ranieri says Leicester's feats fade in comparison with those of Brian Clough's Nottingham Forest.

After steering Forest into England's top flight in 1977, Clough led his side to the title a year later (1978), and two successive European Cups in 1979 and 1980.

Ranieri said: "Nottingham Forest was a bigger success story than ours, because they came from the second division, won the league title then two European titles in succession."

"I hope we get to their level in a few years."

## Bayern break bank for Hummels

AFP, Berlin



German champions Bayern Munich on Tuesday splashed out a reported 73 million euros (\$83 million) to launch their Champions League campaign for next season by signing Germany defender Mats Hummels and Portugal teenager Renato Sanches.

Centre-back Hummels, 27, becomes the third Dortmund star to join German champions Bayern in three years after midfielder Mario Goetze in 2013, followed by striker Robert Lewandowski in 2014.

Sanches and Hummels have been given five-year contracts at Bayern, who were confirmed German champions for a record fourth season in a row last Saturday. The team are smarting though after being beaten by Atletico Madrid in the Champions League semi-final.

Neither Dortmund nor Bayern said how much the Hummels transfer cost, but German media put the fee at 38 million euros.

The Bavarian giants confirmed they paid 35 million, plus bonuses, for the 18-year-old Sanches. Benfica said the fee could rise to 45 million euros.

Hummels and Sanches will join the Bayern squad when Carlo Ancelotti replaces Manchester City-bound Pep Guardiola for the 2016/17 campaign.

Hummels' transfer will add extra spice to the German Cup final on May 21 in Berlin when Bayern meet Dortmund in the battle of Germany's top clubs.

"My decision has not been made easier by

the last eight-and-a-half years," said Hummels, who joined Dortmund on loan from Bayern in 2008 before the transfer was formalised a year later.

"Before I return to my hometown in the summer, we all have a great common goal: to bring the German Cup to Dortmund," he added in a statement.

Hummels was booed and jeered by Dortmund fans 10 days ago, after reports first emerged he was set to join Bayern.

He can expect a similar treatment at Signal Iduna Park on Saturday for Borussia's final home game against Cologne.

"We respect his decision. I want to emphasise that he has behaved openly and fairly towards us at all time," said Dortmund's CEO Hans-Joachim Watzke.

At Bayern, Hummels will pair up with his national team-mate Jerome Boateng and they were Germany's centre-backs in the 2014 World Cup campaign.

"We are delighted that Mats Hummels has opted for Bayern," said Bayern chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge.

"Mats is one of the best central defenders in the world and with him, we can further increase the quality of our team."

Hummels returns to the Bavarian giants having won the German league title twice with Dortmund (in 2011 and 2012) and the German Cup (2012), as well as the 2014 World Cup.

Bayern beat off competition from Manchester United for talented teenager Sanches.

The defensive midfielder has had a meteoric rise this season.

## Milan closer to takeover

AFP, Milan

AC Milan moved a step closer to a takeover after the struggling Serie A giants announced the start of "exclusive negotiating rights" with Chinese investors yesterday.

Club owner Silvio Berlusconi said last week he was open to selling a majority stake in the fallen seven-time European champions, with a preference to keep the club "in Italian hands".

But following the recent collapse of talks with Thai businessman Bee Taechaubol, a statement by Milan on their official website suggested Berlusconi's holding company Fininvest is now ready to begin serious negotiations with a Chinese consortium.

"Fininvest has reached an agreement with a group of Chinese investors in establishing exclusive negotiating rights for the sale of shares of AC Milan," said the statement.

## Vardy launches 'V9 Academy'

AFP, London



Leicester City's star striker Jamie Vardy launched his own academy on Monday and pledged to give non-league footballers a chance to follow in his rags-to-riches footsteps.

Vardy, 29, was playing in England's seventh tier and working part-time at a factory six years ago, but is now an England international whose 24 goals fired Leicester to glory in the Premier League.

He was released by Sheffield Wednesday as a teenager and hopes that his new venture, christened the V9 Academy, will give a helping hand to players who do not have access to professional coaching structures.

"I was told I was too small, that I was not ready for the physicality of scholarship," Vardy told a press conference at Leicester's King Power Stadium.

"I don't think anyone can be told if they're good enough at 15 or 16, when you still have so many years to grow and develop. That was my reason. Probably hundreds were told the same and had to drop down as well."

"Hopefully we can find them, get them to the academy and get them through. I have done it. That is there for people to see it can be done."

"With the players we get on and if they put the hard work in -- and it will be hard, it will not be easy -- we will give them Premier League-standard training and coaching. We can give them a chance to make the step up."

Applications for the academy, which will run free,



week-long courses at Manchester City's training centre during the close season, are being accepted from this month.

The first intake of 42 players, aged between 17 and 33, will join up with the academy next year.

Vardy is part-funding the project and plans for it to become self-sufficient.

"You never forget your non-league days," he said. "Turning up to away dressing rooms and getting changed in a Portakabin, one shower for the whole squad, which was freezing after 10 minutes so you had to make sure to be the first one in."

"Whether it's a low or high, the roots you come from keep you grounded."

## Jamie vows to stay

AFP, London

Jamie Vardy has given Leicester a huge boost by insisting he will stay with the Premier League champions next season.

Vardy fired Leicester's miraculous charge to the title with 24 goals and the England striker's blistering form prompted speculation he could be lured away from the King Power Stadium by one of the league's superpowers.

But with Leicester looking forward to competing in the Champions League and defending the title, the 29-year-old is adamant he will ignore any big money offers.

"We've just won the league and will be playing in the Champions League next year. I am happy here," Vardy said.

Vardy's remarkable rise this season recently saw him voted Football Writers' Player of the Year, but he knows Leicester owe their success to more than just his predatory instincts.

## Terry plans his own farewell

AGENCIES, London



Chelsea captain John Terry will play in a final farewell game at Stamford Bridge, despite missing the Blues' last two games of the season through suspension.

Following his sending-off at Sunderland, Terry was ruled out of Chelsea's two remaining English Premier League fixtures.

However, Terry will still play on the Stamford Bridge turf for one last time after hiring the stadium for a specially arranged match with his closest friends next Monday -- the day after Chelsea's final game of the season against Leicester City.

Hiring Stamford Bridge for a game usually costs 22,000 pounds, but as a gesture, Chelsea have agreed to give Terry the stadium for free.

The package also includes use of dressing rooms, match officials, dug-outs, access to stadium screens, the public address system and a barbecue.

Terry's team-mates are also planning to send the central defender off in style at an end-of-season bash at the Under the Bridge nightclub, which is on the site of Stamford Bridge, following the Leicester clash.

Chelsea are yet to confirm that Terry will be allowed to leave the club when his contract expires at the end of the season, but an announcement on his future could be made ahead of Sunday's game against Premier League champions Leicester. Despite the fact he will not be able to play in the game, Terry will take part in a post-match lap of appreciation and will be treated to a farewell tribute from the Blues fans.