

SONY ESPN
Indian Premier League
QUALIFIER 2
Gujarat v Hyderabad
Live from 8:30pm
England v Australia

Int'l Friendly
Live from 12:30am (Saturday)
NEO PRIME
French Open
Day 6
Live from 3:00pm

STAR SPORTS1
England v Sri Lanka
Second Test, Day 1
Live from 4:00pm

Green Delta Premier Div Hockey
Usha KC v Dhaka Wanderers
Time: 2:00pm

Mariners v Bangladesh SC
Time: 4:00pm
Venue: Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium

SHARAPOVA IN RUSSIA'S OLYMPIC LINE-UP

Maria Sharapova is one of four Russian players named to compete in women's singles at the Olympics in Rio, even though she has been suspended from competition after testing positive for the banned substance meldonium. "We will include Sharapova in the team, which we need to announce by 6 June," Shamil Tarpiushev, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) member and president of the Russian Tennis Federation (RTF), told the R-Sport news agency. "Whether she competes or not should be decided by the end of the first week of Roland Garros." Five-times grand slam tennis champion Sharapova tested positive for meldonium at this year's Australian Open after it was added to WADA's list of banned substances in January. She was provisionally suspended on March 12. If Sharapova is not able to compete, her place in the team will be taken by Ekaterina Makarova, the fifth-ranked Russian woman. **—REUTERS**



Rafa, Novak cruise

REUTERS, Paris



A dominant Rafael Nadal arrived at one career milestone on Thursday but the speed of the Spaniard's rampage through the early rounds of the French Open suggests his eyes are fixed firmly on another more significant one.

The world number five, seeded four at the tournament he once owned, destroyed Argentina's Facundo Bagnis 6-3 6-0 6-3 to reach the third round for the loss of only nine games and chalked up a 200th match victory in grand slams.

"That's only another number, and that's it," Nadal, who would become the only man to win the same grand slam 10 times in the professional era if he triumphs this year, told reporters.

"The only thing I know is that I have reached round three and I know I have to play at a very high level in order to go deep. That's my sole objective, my only reality."

It was his first appearance on Court Philippe Chatrier, where nine times he has sunk his teeth into La Coupe des Mousquetaires, since being taken apart by Novak Djokovic in last year's quarter-finals.

Tougher tests will come and top seed Djokovic looked in the groove by beating tricky Belgium Steve Darcis 7-5 6-3 6-4 as his quest for the only grand slam title to elude him gathered pace.

Top seed and defending champion Serena Williams cruised into the French Open third round with a 6-2, 6-1, win over Teliana Pereira of Brazil.

The 34-year-old American will next go up against the winner of the tie between France's Kristina Mladenovic and Timea

Babos of Hungary with a place in the last 16 at stake.

With Maria Sharapova absent suspended pending the outcome of doping hearing, and several leading seeds knocked out in round one, American Williams looms as the overwhelming favourite to claim a fourth title in the French capital.

She might not have it all her own way though and the likes of former champion Ana Ivanovic and Spanish claycourt specialist Carla Suarez Navarro were impressive on Thursday.

Ivanovic, seeded 14, crunched 22 forehand winners past Japan's Kurumi Nara for a 7-5 6-1 victory while 12th seed Suarez Navarro dominated China's Wang Qiang 6-1 6-3.

Swiss eighth seed Timea Bacsinszky also prevailed in a tricky second round against 2014 runner-up Eugenie Bouchard, winning a topsy-turvy match 6-4 6-4.

In the men's draw seventh-seeded Czech Tomas Berdych, a former semi-finalist, moved through to the third round by beating Tunisian Malek Jaziri 6-1 2-6 6-2 6-4.

He was joined by Austrian dangerman Dominic Thiem, the youngest member of the top 15, who saw off experienced Spaniard Guillermo Garcia-Lopez in three sets.

One notable second-round faller was Australia's Bernard Tomic, the 23-year-old 20th seed, who was beaten by rising Croatian force, teenager Borna Coric.

Five Frenchmen were in action on Thursday hoping to join a trio already into the third round with sixth seed Jo-Wilfried Tsonga and mercurial Cypriot Marcos



Rising Croatian teenager Borna Coric gave ample evidence of his potential by beating Australian 20th seed Bernard Tomic in four sets in the less-than-glamorous environs of Court 14 in the French Open second round at Roland Garros yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

MSC keep winning

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammedan SC kept their winning spree intact in the Green Delta Insurance Premier Division Hockey League as they handed an emphatic 8-0 defeat to Shadharan Bima in one of two fixtures at the Manulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

With fourth straight wins, the Black and Whites joined leaders Usha KC at the top of the 12-team table on 12 points, while Shadharan Bima suffered a third defeat in four matches.

As expected, Mohammedan dominated the show from the outset over lowly Shadharan Bima and went into the break with a 3-0 lead thanks to strikes from Mohammad Imran, Rizwan and Rasel Mahmud Jimmy, before adding five more in the second half.

Pakistani Umer Bhutto was the chief destroyer, causing havoc in the opponents half as he scored three goals, while his compatriot Taswar Abbas and local Saimon Hossain hit the board once each.

In the day's other match, Wari Club tasted their first win in four matches with a 3-0 win over Azad SC with Mansur scoring once in between two strikes from Shihab.

Hawk-Eye in 2016 Copa America

REUTERS, Los Angeles

Hawk-Eye technology will be used to decide whether the ball has crossed the goal-line at next month's Copa America Centenario in the United States, the tournament's organising committee said on Wednesday.

The British company's camera-based system, utilised widely in tennis and cricket and at the 2014 World Cup final, will be installed in all 10 stadiums hosting soccer's oldest international championship.

Hawk-Eye was also used during the 2015 Women's World Cup, and in several of the world's leading soccer leagues and federations, including UEFA, the English Premier League and Germany's Bundesliga.

Football fever grips Madrid

AFP, Madrid



Cross-town rivals Real Madrid and Atletico Madrid -- who will meet in the Champions League final on Saturday for the second time in three years -- are omnipresent in the Spanish capital.

Bars decorated with football jerseys of the two squads can be found across the city, their football crests can be seen everywhere and the two team's imposing stadiums dominate their neighbourhoods.

Real Madrid's Santiago Bernabeu stadium, a monument of concrete pillars located in a well-off neighbourhood in northern Madrid close to the office towers of Spain's biggest companies, can seat 81,000 spectators, making in Europe's fourth-largest stadium.

The club's museum showcases the many trophies the team has won over the years and received 1.2 million visitors last year, making it the third most visited museum in the Spanish capital after the Reina Sofia modern art museum and the world-famous Prado Museum.

The Reina Sofia, home to Picasso's 20th century masterpiece "Guernica", received 2.6 million visitors while the Prado Museum, Spain's leading art museum, got 2.5 million visitors.

"Every time I go, I have the same fun as when I was a child. When I think

that so many great footballers played there," said Antonio Armero, 52, a member of Real supporters' club "La Gran Familia".

Atletico's Vicente Calderon stadium, with a capacity of 54,900 spectators, is located further south in Arguenzuela, a modest neighbourhood of red brick apartment buildings by the Manzanares river.

It is often regarded as one of the loudest and most boisterous grounds in European football thanks to the fans' songs and chants that rain down from the stands.

"Bernabeu is theatre. People applaud or whistle," said Leo Rodriguez, 50, an Argentine supporter of Atletico.

"The Calderon feels more like Argentina. We sing, we shout, we live."

But Atletico is becoming less and less the club of working class people. In 1995 it opened its new training ground and academy in Majadahonda, a wealthy Madrid suburb.

The club is building a new stadium on the site of La Peineta, once a proposed Olympic stadium, east of Madrid's city centre.

"It's a shame. If we had been consulted, we would not change," said Gerardo Aranda, 75, a member of the club since 1964.

Each team has its own supporters' clubs called "penas" that regularly organise events or travel to watch their team play at away matches.

"La Gran Familia" (The Great

Family), is one of Real's largest clubs with over a thousand members. They meet in a chic bar with several giant television screens located near the Bernabeu stadium.

Armero said the club used to meet "in a small typical Spanish bar" until its owner retired.

"We had our own room on the second floor, with jerseys, portraits of presidents of the club," he added.

If Real win their 11th Champions League title on Saturday, their supporters -- known as "merengues" -- will gather at Plaza de Cibeles in front of city hall to celebrate.

If Atletico win the title, their fans -- known as "colchoneros" or "mattress-makers" -- will celebrate about 300 metres (1,000 feet) further south on the broad tree-lined Paseo del Prado by the Neptune Fountain.

Madrid government officials remain carefully neutral.

The headquarters of the Madrid regional government in the central Puerta del Sol are decorated with the crests of both teams.

The San Anton church in the trendy and gay-friendly Chueca neighbourhood has done the same on its doors facing the busy Hortaleza street.

And, for those who refuse to support either team, the capital region hosts several other clubs with thousands of passionate supporters that navigate between the first and second divisions, such as Rayo Vallecano, Getafe CF and CD Leganes.

BHF earmarks Bonnet

SPORTS REPORTER



The Coaches' Hunt Committee of the Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) have earmarked Giles Bonnet, a FIH grade 1 coach, for the position of the Bangladesh national hockey team's head coach after the Dutchman impressed the committee with a written description of how he would develop hockey in the country.

Bonnet has 20 years of experience, coaching national teams of South Africa, Belgium and China as well as club sides in the Netherlands and China.

"We have got the resumes of some high-profile coaches including the World Cup winning coach of Australia, but we have chosen Giles Bonnet for his varied experiences, which include coaching youth, coaching national teams and coaching coaches," said committee member and BHF joint secretary Anvir Adil Khan yesterday.

Bonnet, who is working as head coach of the Liaoning province of China, worked with South Africa from 1996-2000 and

took them to the 2000 Sydney Olympics before joining Belgium in 2001. He worked there for six years and then took up the post of assistant coach of China from 2007 to 2008.

Bonnet had also been the manager of Amsterdam Hockey Academy from 2006 to 2008 and was the head coach of the South Africa women's team from 2010 to 2014.

Having gathered information available on the internet, Bonnet prepared a future programme for Bangladesh, depicting how he could take them to further heights and Bonnet's presentation and interest in Bangladesh has impressed the BHF committee enough to place their faith in him.

"We have offered him 5,000 dollars per month, apart from local expenditures such as accommodation, food and transportation and we are awaiting his reply," said Anvir, adding that if both parties reached a consensus, the BHF would sign a deal with Bonnet in either August or September for a one-year period and monitor his performance during Bangladesh's World Hockey League (Round-2) campaign scheduled to be held in Dhaka from March 2017.



Ibra praises Mourinho

AFP, Solna

Swedish striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic said Thursday he has chosen his next club but would not give away the name even though he praised Jose Mourinho who is on the verge of becoming Manchester United's coach.

"Yes I have made my choice," said Ibrahimovic told a press conference at a training camp near Stockholm for the Swedish national team ahead of Euro 2016.

He said he had decided "long ago." But the 34-year-old dodged all questions about whether that team was Manchester United.

Ibrahimovic, who has left Paris Saint-Germain, has been strongly linked to a move to the English Premier League.

"There are concrete offers from England, Italy ... all countries. There are even some from outside Europe," said the goalscorer.

Jose talks hinge on image rights

AFP, London



Jose Mourinho's contract negotiations to become the next manager of Manchester United appear to hinge on the rights to the use of his image on merchandise, British media reported on Thursday.

The rights are owned by his former club Chelsea and, while they are not expected to stop his hiring, they have drawn out the talks with Manchester United this week, the reports cited club sources as saying.

Mourinho was the manager at Chelsea before his sacking in December and the shop at the Blues' Stamford Bridge ground still sells mugs, posters and phone cases bearing his image.

The Guardian newspaper reported that the west London club bought the image rights in 2005 during his first stint as manager, and wants to sell them at a high price.

Chelsea registered the brand "Jose Mourinho" for five types of merchandise until 2025 and for the others until 2023 under European Union intellectual property laws, the report said.

Chelsea have not commented on the information but the rights issue was no impediment to Mourinho going on to work at Inter Milan and Real Madrid before coming back to Stamford Bridge.

Sports lawyer Carol Couse told the BBC it was "really unusual" for an individual not to own the trademark to their own name.

"If United had a brand of Mourinho clothing, it would be in breach of the trademark Chelsea currently own," said Couse, of law firm Mills and Reeve.

"If Chelsea didn't grant a licence, every time United used Jose Mourinho's name in a commercial capacity against those products, Chelsea could sue Manchester United," she said.

"I would suspect United would rather just pay a licence fee."

BSL hits a roadblock

SPORTS REPORTER

Saif Powertec Ltd, the rights-holders of the proposed Bangladesh Super League (BSL), yesterday declared that they would stop all activities regarding the franchise-based football league until they are provided with international standards venues.

"We have already spent three to four crore taka and we will not take further steps until the international standard venues are ready," said Saif Powertec managing director Ruhul Amin Tarafder, who is also the director of Chittagong Abahani.

"We need to do a lot of work at the venues before the start of the BSL but they are not yet ready. There are even stadiums without floodlights. Though the Bangladesh Football Federation had a meeting with the sports ministry, it seems to us that it will take a long time to prepare all eight venues. So, it will not be possible to start the inaugural BSL this year," added Tarafder.

Saif Powertec earned the right of the BSL last year after reaching an agreement worth Tk 35 crore for 15 years.

England eye series win

AFP, Chester-Le-Street

England may come into the second Test against Sri Lanka in Durham on the back of a crushing win in the series opener, but according to Stuart Broad the hosts have still to hit top form.

Propelled by a hundred from Jonny Bairstow and match figures of 10 for 45 from James Anderson, England thrashed Sri Lanka by an innings and 88 runs in the first Test at Headingley last week to go 1-0 up in the three-match series.

But Broad, still the world's number one ranked Test bowler, said there was no danger of England letting up when the second Test starts at north-east county Durham's Riverside headquarters on Friday.

"Obviously the series is still up for grabs and I think one thing we've probably been average at is in the last Test of the series when we've won, I'm thinking Centurion and the Oval," he added of a defeat by South Africa earlier this year and last year's Ashes-ending reverse against Australia.



Germany midfielder Marco Reus arrives by cycle to a training session, in preparation for the upcoming Euro 2016, in Ascona yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP