

What to WATCH


TEN 2  
South Africa v New Zealand  
Second Test, Day 4  
Live from 2:00pm

STAR SPORTS 2  
England v Pakistan  
Third ODI  
Live from 7:00pm

TEN 1 HD  
US Open  
First Round  
Live from 9:00pm


I'VE GOT GOLD, HE'S GOT PLATINUM'

Remember when Michael Phelps made this face in the corner of the screen during the Olympics? Onstage at the VMAs Sunday night, the Olympic gold medalist finally explained what was going on in his headphones during that moment that immediately went viral. Phelps explained why he looked so intense: "I was in the zone with Future's track 'Stick Talk' blaring in my headphones." Then, Phelps introduced Future onstage to perform . . . "Stick Talk." So everything came full circle. "I might have a lot of golds, but this guy has got all the platinitums," Phelps gushed. Earlier in Rio, Phelps had clarified that he wasn't directing his angry look toward South African swimmer Chad le Clos, as many had assumed. "I just had music going on in my head. I had thoughts going on in my head, spitting water a little bit all over the place, so I was in my own zone," said Phelps. "I was not intentionally mean mugging him or giving him a dirty look." —THE WASHINGTON POST



# Saintfiet names 23 for Maldives friendly

**SPORTS REPORTER**

 Bangladesh national team's head coach Tom Saintfiet yesterday announced a 23-member final squad for the international friendly against Maldives, with the inclusion of four new faces.

The friendly is scheduled to take place in Male on September 1 as part of the team's preparation for the Asian Cup play-off qualifier against Bhutan on September 6.

Major exclusions from the 23-member preliminary squad are: Captain Mamunul Islam, defensive midfielder Jamal Bhuiyan, winger Jewel Rana and defender Atiqur Rahman Meshu.

Mamunul has been in rehabilitation following his left thigh muscle injury; Jamal is not available for the Bhutan fixture due to his one-match international suspension while Jewel and Meshu have been dropped due to poor form.

The exclusion of Mamunul and Jamal has seemingly prompted Saintfiet to pick four new midfielders -- Mohammad Abdullah and Jafar Iqbal of Arambagh KS, midfielders Didarul Alam of Rahmatganj MFS and Sentu Chandra Sen of Uttar Baridhara Club -- all for the first time.

Apart from the new faces, defensive midfielders Prantosh Kumar Das and Enamul Haque Sharif have staged a comeback after a long period. Prantosh had last played for the

national team in 2013 while Sharif represented the red and green for the last time in 2009. Inform winger Rubel Mia and striker Sohel Rana have also returned to the squad two and five years respectively after first making it through to the final squad, even though they did not feature in the playing eleven that time.

Though Saintfiet was not available for comments, manager Iqbal Hossain said that the coach has picked some players on the basis of their performance while he picked some others who match his playing style.

The Belgian coach, who went on a three-day vacation for the birth of his child, will join the team in Maldives. The 23-member squad will fly out of Dhaka at 12:05pm today.

SQUAD
<b>GOALKEEPERS</b> Shahidul Alam Sohel, Ashraf Islam Rana
<b>DEFENDERS</b> Raihan Hasan, Nasiruddin Chowdhury, Tapu Barman, Mamun Mia, Ariful Islam, Wali Faisal, Rezaul Karim, Yeamin Ahmed Munna
<b>MIDFIELDERS</b> Prantosh Das, Enamul Haque Sharif, Sohel Rana, Emon Mahmud, Hemanta Vincent Biswas, Jafar Iqbal, Mohammad Abdullah, Sentu Das, Didarul Alam
<b>STRIKERS</b> Shakhawat Hossain Rony, Nabib Newaj Jibon, Rubel Mia, Sohel Rana

**Marin Cilic, the 2014 US Open champion returns a shot to Rogerio Dutra Silva of Brazil during his first round game on Monday. He won the game in straight sets despite posting more unforced errors.**

PHOTO: AFP

## Manik roped in by Sheikh Russel

**SPORTS REPORTER**

Sheikh Russel KC yesterday appointed Shafiqul Islam Manik as their new coach after accepting the resignation of Maruful Haque, who tendered his resignation on Friday following failures in domestic competitions as well as the AFC Cup Play-Off Qualifiers.

"Today we have accepted the resignation of Maruful, who took 99 percent responsibility for the failure of the team in domestic and international level. We have also appointed Shafiqul Islam Manik which will be effective from today," Sheikh Russel's director of sports Saleh Jamal Selim said yesterday.

After five defeats in six matches, Sheikh Russel are currently on the bottom of the 12-team table of Bangladesh Premier League. Under the guidance of Maruful this season, the giants only won five matches out of 16 they played in Independence Cup, Federation Cup and Bangladesh Premier League. The team also played two international matches, one of which they drew while the other one ended in a defeat.

"My first job will be to boost the players' morale so that they can perform as a team and give their best on the pitch. To do so I would need a bit of luck as well," said new coach Manik.

## Mario set for Inter

**AFP, Milan**

Inter Milan are set to complete the signing of Euro 2016 winner Joao Mario from Sporting Lisbon after presenting the midfielder to fans at the San Siro on Sunday.


Reports claimed Joao Mario, 23, will join Frank De Boer's side for 40m euros plus 5m in bonuses to Sporting.

"It's great to be at Inter, I want to thank the fans who have given me such a fantastic welcome," Mario told Sky Sports in an interview pitchside minutes before kick-off.

"But I also want to thank Inter, one of the biggest clubs in the world. I want to show that I'm worth every penny of what they paid for me. Our ambition, our dream, is to play the Champions League."

## Rakitic sinks Bilbao

**REUTERS, Barcelona**

 Champions Barcelona came through a gruelling La Liga test at a rainswept San Mames on Sunday, beating Athletic Bilbao 1-0 thanks to Ivan Rakitic's first-half header.

Elsewhere, Las Palmas thrashed Granada 5-1 to top the table with six points from two matches ahead of Barca and Real Madrid on goal difference while Europa League holders Sevilla were held to a goalless draw at Villarreal.

Croatia midfielder Rakitic glanced in Arda Turan's cross to complete a sweeping move started by Luis Suarez and settle the visiting side's nerves after a few early scares, including goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen giving the ball away in his own area.

Barca grew in confidence after the break and stand-in captain Lionel Messi spurned two chances while Suarez also failed to capitalise on a couple of clear opportunities and had a shot cleared off the line in injury time.

Luis Enrique's men almost lived to regret their profligacy as Bilbao's Raul Garcia fired narrowly wide and Iker Muniain had a late penalty appeal turned down.

"I'm happy with the result against an opponent of such magnitude," Luis Enrique told a news conference.

"We could have wrapped the game up earlier but it was a good performance and the three points are well earned."

Luis Enrique had warned that the visit to San Mames was always one of the hardest away trips for Barca and although they looked comfortable at the start, they soon began to struggle with Bilbao's intense pressing and aggression.

Ter Stegen gave the visitors a fright when

he played the ball straight to Benat Etxebarria but the keeper got his body in the way of the midfielder's shot and later made saves from Aritz Aduriz and Benat again.

Jordi Alba defended the German's risky style, saying: "I wish all goalkeepers were like him, he's the best in the world with the ball at his feet, he's our goalkeeper for the present and will be for many years to come".

Barca jitters were calmed in the 21st minute when Rakitic was left unmarked in the area to nod Turan's centre into the corner.

Turkey international Turan spurned a chance to double the lead before the break, miskicking at the near post, the first of a series of opportunities that went begging for the champions.

Messi started to make an impact in the second half after a relatively quiet first period but twice missed the target.

The usually prolific Suarez also endured a frustrating evening in front of goal, inexplicably failing to convert the simplest of chances at the end, taking too long to shoot with the net gaping and seeing his shot scrambled off the line.

Las Palmas followed their 4-2 win at Valencia last week with a dominant display against Granada, Nabil El Zhar scoring twice in the 5-1 rout.

Midfielder Kevin-Prince Boateng netted for the second game running after joining Las Palmas from AC Milan and dedicated his goal to the victims of last week's earthquake in Italy that has killed at least 290 people.

"I leapt off my seat at the goal because of the quality of the counter attack, the shot and because...he hit it with his heart," said coach Quique Setien.

In Sunday's other game, Alaves drew 0-0 at home to Sporting Gijon.

**Inter Milan's latest signing Portuguese midfielder Joao Mario waves during his presentation at the San Siro on Sunday.**

PHOTO: AFP

## Maradona held up at airport

**AGENCIES, Buenos Aires**

Diego Maradona has been stopped from flying to Dubai because he presented a stolen passport, according to reports in Argentina.

The football legend was due to fly from Buenos Aires to Dubai but was not allowed to board the flight.

Maradona — who was travelling with his girlfriend Rocio Oliva — arrived at Ezeiza airport in the Argentinian capital city at 9:15pm and attempted to check in.

It is reported he was then was met with the message: "Sir, your passport has been reported stolen. You cannot travel."

Incredulous, the two-time most expensive player in the world called his agent in an attempt to find an explanation — and was assured there was no charge and he would be allowed to leave the country.

However, this turned out not to be the case and he was ordered to take his luggage and return home.

Maradona — who recently had a facelift — insists he is innocent and has been set up by a politician.

## Alcacer close to Barca move

**REUTERS, Barcelona**

Barcelona are on the verge of completing a reported 30 million euro move for Spain international Paco Alcacer from Valencia after the striker arrived for a medical with the La Liga champions on Monday.


The Spaniard was excluded from the Valencia squad that lost 1-0 at Eibar on Saturday, with coach Pako Ayestaran telling reporters, "Today he was not in the ideal situation to compete."

According to Barcelona-based newspaper Mundo Deportivo, Alcacer will sign a five-year contract later on Monday before reporting for international duty with Spain at their Las Rozas training camp in Madrid.

Alcacer will be unveiled by the club at a news conference when he returns to Barcelona after Spain open their 2018 World Cup qualifying campaign against Liechtenstein on September 5.

## Cilic thru, Gasquet out

**AFP, New York**

 Angelique Kerber needed just over 30 minutes to get her pursuit of a first US Open off to a winning start Monday as Novak Djokovic and Rafael Nadal prepared to make their bow.

Second seed and Australian Open champion Kerber was leading Polona Herczeg 6-0, 1-0 when the Slovenian called it quits, clearly wilting in the crushing 33-degree heat, having won just nine points.

Kerber, who next faces either Alize Cornet of France or Mirjana Lucic-Baroni of Croatia, insisted she will not be distracted by possibly dethroning Serena Williams as world number one by the end of the tournament.

Three seeded players lost early on the opening day with French 13th seed Richard Gasquet, a semi-finalist three years ago, the biggest casualty.

He went down to 6-2, 6-2, 6-3 to British world number 84 Kyle Edmund.

Croatian seventh seed Marin Cilic, the 2014 champion, eased past Brazil's Rogerio Dutra Silva 6-4, 7-5, 6-1.

Double Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitova beat Jelena Ostapenko 7-5, 6-3 while former world number one and two-time US Open runner-up Caroline Wozniacki downed US qualifier Taylor Townsend 4-6, 6-3, 6-4.

The Flushing Meadows complex was showcasing its gleaming \$600 million refit which includes a retractable roof over Ashe and a brand new Grandstand court.

However, the old Grandstand court, due to be demolished after the tournament, was pressed into action after Court 10 was deemed unplayable.

Later Monday, defending champion Djokovic and fellow two-time winner Nadal start their campaigns but with both men under injury clouds.

World number one Djokovic, the 2011 and 2015 champion, admits he is "not 100 percent" after suffering a wrist injury on the eve of the Olympic Games where he was a shock first-round loser.

Nadal is also battling the effects of a left wrist problem which forced a mid-tournament withdrawal from the French Open and sidelined him until the Olympics where he was a gold medal winner in the men's doubles.

The injury concerns, combined with the absence for the first time since 1999 of five-time winner Roger Federer, have put 2012 champion Andy Murray in the position of favourite.

Djokovic starts his bid for a third major of 2016, and 13th of his career, against Polish giant Jerzy Janowicz, who was a Wimbledon semi-finalist in 2013.

A serious knee injury has limited Janowicz to just six matches all year and seen his world ranking collapse to 228.

Nadal, the 2010 and 2013 champion in New York, tackles Denis Istomin of Uzbekistan.

The Spaniard has a 4-0 career record over world number 107 Istomin, including a win over the Russian-born player at the 2010 US Open.


It will be a difficult task for the injured Nadal to come back from here.

Nadal closes the daytime session on Ashe while Djokovic starts the evening entertainment.

In between, the tournament will stage its opening ceremony with British singer-songwriter Phil Collins making his first concert appearance in six years.

## Messi's int'l return may get delayed

**AFP, Buenos Aires**

 Lionel Messi's return to international duty with Argentina could be delayed by a groin injury his club side Barcelona stated on Monday.

Messi was set to return for the two-time world champions' World Cup qualifiers against Uruguay and Venezuela after reversing his shock decision to retire from international football in June.

"The player will travel to Argentina to join his national team and the development of the pain (he is suffering) will determine his availability for the scheduled matches," Barca said in a statement.

Argentina have already suffered a double injury blow as Sergio Aguero and Javier Pastore pulled out of the squad on Monday.

Aguero injured himself in Manchester City's 3-1 victory against West Ham at the weekend. He has pulled a muscle in his left calf, according to the Argentine federation's medical staff.

Paris Saint-Germain's attacking midfielder Pastore also misses out due to a torn right calf muscle.

Messi had announced his international retirement after Argentina lost in the Copa America Centenario final against Chile on penalties, Messi crucially missing his penalty in the shoot out.

The five-time World Player of the Year reversed his decision three weeks ago after new Argentina manager Edgardo Bauza paid him a visit in Spain to change his mind.

Argentina host Uruguay in Mendoza on Thursday before travelling to face Venezuela in a second World Cup qualifier on September 6.

## Plunkett undecided on BD tour

**CRICINFO**

Liam Plunkett has said he will speak to his family before making a decision over whether to tour Bangladesh following the ECB's approval for the trip to go ahead.

There has been a sense of uncertainty among the England players since the tour was given the green light last week. Jos Buttler said there was a lot of information to digest and though Andrew Strauss, the director of England cricket, said no one would be forced to tour, he hoped that the full squad selected would travel.

"People are just digesting what went on in the meeting and I will have a bit more of a think once the series is done," Plunkett said. "Maybe I will speak to a few more people but I trust Reg and what he says and I will have another look after the series."