

<div> <div>What to WATCH</div> <div>DAY'S EVENT</div> </div>	<div> <div>STAR SPORTS SELECT HD 1</div> <div>Bundesliga</div> <div>Bayern Munich v Leipzig</div> <div>Live from 1:00am (Thursday)</div> </div>	<div> <div>STAR SPORTS SELECT HD 2</div> <div>Bundesliga</div> <div>Hoffenheim v Werder</div> <div>Live from 1:00am (Thursday)</div> </div>	<div> <div>SONY ESPN</div> <div>Serie A</div> <div>Inter Milan v Lazio</div> <div>Live from 2:00am (Thursday)</div> </div>
<div> <div>NATIONAL CRICKET LEAGUE</div> <div>Four Day Match, Day 2</div> <div>Dhaka Metro v Dhaka</div> <div>Time: 9:30am</div> <div>Venue: Fatullah Stadium</div> </div>	<div> <div>Khulna v Barisal</div> <div>Time: 9:30am</div> <div>Venue: BKSP-3</div> <div>Rajshahi v Sylhet</div> <div>Time: 9:30am</div> </div>	<div> <div>Venue: Shaheed Chandu Stadium</div> <div>Rangpur v Chittagong</div> <div>Time: 9:30am</div> <div>Venue: Sylhet Int. Cricket Stadium</div> </div>	



Cyclists ride through the Bagerhat-Gopalganj highway as villagers throng to the roadside to watch the race during the opening day of the Fortune Tour de Bangladesh yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

The race is on

Tour de Bangladesh moves from Bagerhat to Gopalganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

Fortune Tour de Bangladesh, the first of its kind mass cycling event styled after Tour de France, got underway in Bagerhat yesterday morning amid huge fanfare. A total of 40 cyclists, competing for eight teams, started the race from in front of the archway of the Khan Jahan Ali shrine and finished in Gopalganj after having raced through 55 kilometres of road.

The cyclists went through Nowapara intersection and Mollahat via the Bagerhat-Gopalganj highway, before wrapping up the day at the Pachuria Bazar in Gopalganj.

BJMC's Mizan finished the day in pole position with Ripon of BGB

coming second and Siraj of BGB in third.

Former BJMC cyclist Sohrab Hossain was present in Bagerhat as an event judge. The nine-time national gold winner, who enjoyed a stellar career from 1976 to 1991, said he was glad to see such a grand event taking place.

"This is a great occasion. The facilities in cycling are much better than in our times. I hope the organisers will continue this event every year involving cyclists from home and abroad," Sohrab told this correspondent.

Jahangir Alam, one of the participants who is representing Jail Police, said he was happy to participate for the first time in such a competition and hoped the venture would continue so that new cyclists could be discovered.

Bangladesh Cycling Federation's (BCF) general secretary Imtiaz Khan Babul hoped that this event would show Bangladesh in a new light to the rest of the world and would highlight both cycling and tourism potential of the country.

Earlier, the event was inaugurated by the chairman of the parliamentary standing committee of social welfare ministry Dr. Mozammel Hossain MP. Sponsors Bangladesh Edible Oil Limited's General Manager Inam Ahmed and head of sales and marketing Shueb Mohammad Asaduzzaman, cycling federation officials, district sports association officials and high-ups of the government were also present at the inauguration.

The second day of the race will see the 40 cyclists take a ride through 84

Is BFF itself sincere about preventing fixed matches?

SPORTS REPORTER



Four years ago there was a major commotion in the country's football fraternity regarding fixed matches in the professional football league.

Since then three seasons have been completed without any complaints.

However, it seems that the cancer has returned with a vengeance, evidenced by the latter stages of the ongoing Bangladesh Premier League. This raises the question of whether the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF), together with the clubs, actually wants to root out or prevent fixed matches at all.

In 2012, there were allegations of two matches being fixed – one between Brothers Union and Rahmatganj and the other between Brothers Union and Sheikh Jamal DC. While the teams involved in the former fixture were cleared due to a lack of concrete evidence, the allegations surrounding the latter match were dismissed because the BFF did not launch any official investigation into the issue.

The Fixed Match Identification Committee then made significant recommendations urging the game's governing body to carry out formal investigations and to involve the Home Ministry, Anti-Corruption Commission and former national footballers. The committee also recommended that help be sought from the authorities and recorded telephone conversations between players and officials be acquired if needed.

However, truth be told, the game's governing body has failed to take even one of these recommendations into consideration during the past four years. The Fixed Match Identification Committee is still headed by Humayun Khalid and comprises of four former government officials whose football credentials are severely lacking. So, even if the alleged 'cooked' game between Abahani and Sheikh Jamal this season is referred to the current committee, one should expect a similar outcome to previous investigations.

"Since 2012, we have not come any further. The [BFF] hasn't taken any initiatives to implement our recommendations and we continue to work like we previously did," Khalid told The Daily Star over phone.

When asked if there was a possibility that the verdict this time would be similar to the one given in 2012 due to a lack of concrete evidence, Khalid replied: "It is not a given that the outcome will be the same as in 2012. We now have some experience in this regard."

Khalid went on to state that he believes the Fixed Match Identification Committee is a warrior without a sword and shield but, if instructed to find the truth, they would give more importance to media reports and even speak to journalists directly.

However, if there were any questions regarding the BFF's sincerity in preventing fixed matches, a statement made by BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag now provides a clear reflection of the intentions of the BFF high-ups.

"We could not implement those recommendations because we did not face such things in the last three to four years. If the committee wants the relevant documents, then we will definitely try to collect those from different sources," said Shohag.

On the other hand, former national footballer and coach Golam Sarwar Tipu believes there is no way to prevent fixed matches here.

"The BFF is being run mostly by club officials who oppose their own decisions at club meetings after having approved them at federation meetings. Playing a fixed match is a conventional incident because it has been happening for a long time and will continue until club and BFF officials realise where football stands now," Tipu said.

"Everyone knows the present condition of football and if fixed matches continue to be played, everyone will forget football," opined Tipu.

"The only solution to escaping this evil is to be honest about what needs to be done, whether it is by an official, player or coach. However, if there were visible initiatives to prevent fixed matches, there would have been some impact," said veteran coach Maruful Haque.

Seeking anonymity, a federation official said: "If the professional league committee hired any government detective agency by paying a minor portion of the [Tk 4.8 crore] money which is given to the clubs, then the clubs would not dare become involved in

Police, BJMC win handball crowns

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Police Handball Club and Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) were crowned champions in men's and women's section of the Victory Day Handball tournament at the Syed Nazrul Islam Handball Stadium yesterday.

Bangladesh Police defeated Boarder Guard Bangladesh by 35-27 goals in the men's final. Abdul Gafur of Police was named the best player of the tournament.

In the women's section, BJMC defeated Bangladesh Ansar by 24-14 goals, with Habiba Akter of the same team being adjudged the best player of the tournament.

Real transfer ban reduced

AFP, Lausanne

Real Madrid can buy new players in next summer's transfer window after sport's highest court on Tuesday halved their initial two-window ban imposed by FIFA.

The European champions had been sanctioned by world football's ruling body for irregularities in the signing of foreign under-18 players.

But after an appeal the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) partially overturned the FIFA sentence, with Real still banned from recruiting in the upcoming January window.

CAS also cut the fine imposed by FIFA on the club from 360,000 Swiss francs (\$350,000, 340,000 euros) to 240,000.

Leicester appeal Vardy red card

AFP, London



English champions Leicester City appealed on Monday against striker Jamie Vardy's red card in Saturday's ill-tempered 2-2 Premier League

draw with Stoke City.

Match referee Craig Pawson infuriated the Leicester players and manager Claudio Ranieri in also booking five players in the final seven minutes of the first half -- Vardy had been dismissed in the 28th minute.

As a result Vardy is due to miss three games for the struggling Foxes whilst key defenders Robert Huth and Christian Fuchs will also be suspended for the next match against Everton after picking up their fifth bookings of the campaign.

"Leicester City have today (Monday) lodged an appeal with the Football Association against the dismissal of Jamie Vardy during Saturday's Premier League fixture at Stoke City," read a statement from the club.

"Jamie was shown a straight red card by referee Craig Pawson in the 28th minute of Saturday's 2-2 draw for a challenge that was deemed to have constituted serious foul play.

"The club has subsequently made its case for an instance

Burglar attacks Kvitova

AFP, Prague



Two-time Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitova was injured after an attack by a knife-wielding burglar at her home in the eastern Czech town of Prostějov, her spokesman said on Tuesday.

"Petra Kvitova was attacked in her flat this morning, it was a random crime, nobody was going to attack or rob her as Petra Kvitova," spokesman Karel Tejkal told AFP.

"She was injured with a knife during the attempted burglary. Her life is not in danger," Tejkal added.

The Dnes daily said the 26-year-old world number 11 had cuts on her left hand, in which she holds the racket, after fighting the burglar.

"What happened to me was not pleasant at all but it's over now,"



Kvitova said on Facebook.

"I trust the doctors and I believe it will all end well. Don't worry about me," she added.

Radka Milosevska, spokeswoman for the Prostějov hospital, told AFP Kvitova had been treated with knife cuts and released.

Local police spokesman Frantisek Korinek said the attack had occurred before 0730 GMT on Tuesday near the town centre and that the burglar was still at large.

The police have the burglar's description, he told AFP but declined to confirm media reports that Kvitova had let the burglar in as he pretended to be a technician checking boilers.

The burglary adds a sombre ending to a rather lacklustre year for Kvitova, who slid from sixth in the world in January to 16th in August.

She sacked two coaches before winning the Wuhan Open in China in October after a 13-month title drought.

She added a victory at Zhuhai, China in November and was on the Czech Republic team that won the Fed Cup later that month, beating France for its fifth title in six years.

On December 1, Kvitova hired a new coach, Czech Jiri Vanek, who had led her Fed Cup teammate Karolina Pliskova to this year's US Open final.

Bronze medallist from the Rio Olympics and Wimbledon champion in 2011 and 2014, Kvitova is

Mane makes Klopp happy

AFP, Liverpool



Jürgen Klopp finally had a reason to celebrate Christmas after Sadio Mane's dramatic 94th-minute goal saw his side move second in the Premier League table with a 1-0 victory in the Merseyside derby at Everton on Monday.

The result hauled Klopp's team to within six points of leaders Chelsea heading into the holiday period, the perfect way for the club to prepare for their festivities.

"I'm really happy," said Klopp, who was experiencing his first trip to Goodison Park.

"We now have 37 points and that's good. "It could have been 40-something but that's okay (they dropped five points recently against Bournemouth and West Ham after leading in both).

"We won't stop. Tomorrow (Tuesday) is our Christmas party and this is the first party we have had after a win!

"It's unbelievably close and difficult each week but it is still like this. You need to be ready for each game, play your best and collect the points.

"The play of Everton was wild football. They were chasing us in the first half. We could have done better but it is really difficult to adapt to something like that.

"I am sure in two or three months we can react much better but today it was a little bit of a surprise and we couldn't handle it."

Until Sadio Mane struck home a rebound from Daniel Sturridge's 94th-minute shot, the game's main talking point had been Ross Barkley escaping a red card after a high stamp, above the ankle of Liverpool and England midfielder Jordan Henderson.

"I thought it was a harsh challenge," said Klopp.

"You all saw it, I don't have to say anything about it. I think Ross is lucky and Hendo is lucky too that nothing else happened."

Klopp's Everton counterpart Ronald Koeman agreed Barkley could have been dismissed by referee Mike Dean.

However, as Liverpool defender Dejan Lovren was involved in a shoving match that followed the incident, the Dutchman believed the opposition player might have been dismissed having already been booked.

"It was a tough tackle, maybe it's a red," he said.

"But what happened after this is not a fair decision from the referee.

"He already had a yellow and the referee gave a yellow to (Seamus) Coleman and nobody else. If you're straight, you give Lovren his second yellow, Coleman a yellow and maybe a red card."

Air Force, Army win big

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Air Force thrashed Chandaon Sporting Club of Chittagong 12-1 in the Marcel Victory Day Hockey Competition at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Bangladesh Air Force dominated the first half 6-0.

In the day's other match, Bangladesh Army handed a massive 14-1 defeat to Bangladesh Police after leading the first half 7-0.

Alex hangs up his boots

AFP, Sao Paulo

Former Brazil international defender Alex on Monday announced his retirement from football at the age of 34 due to a serious knee injury that requires surgery.

"After speaking with my family, I have decided to retire."

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