

STAR SPORTS 2

Pakistan v Australia
3rd Test, Day 1
Live from 5:30am (Tuesday)
STAR SPORTS SELECT HD 1
English Premiership
Middlesbrough v Leicester

Live from 6:30pm
Sunderland v Liverpool
Live from 9:00pm
West Ham v Man United
Live from 11:30pm
STAR SPORTS SELECT HD 2
English Premiership

Man City v Burnley
Live from 9:00pm
TEN 1 HD
South Africa v Sri Lanka
2nd Test, Day 1
Live from 2:30pm

Eyes on the final

Women take on Maldives in semifinal today

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh women's football team are looking to confirm their maiden final berth in the SAFF Women's Championship when they take on Maldives in the second semifinal at the Kanchenjunga Stadium in Siliguri today.

The match will get underway at 7:30pm (BST) after holders India and runners-up Nepal face off in the first semifinal at the same venue.

Advancing to the final of the regional women's championship had thus far proved to be an insurmountable hurdle for Bangladesh, who were eliminated from the semifinals twice after losing to Nepal both times. However this time the final seems like a realistic target, especially after impressive perfor-

mances in group-stages against Afghanistan and India.

Bangladesh made light work of foreign-player-studded Afghanistan with a 6-0 win before holding hosts India to a goalless draw, thereby emerging group champions and avoiding Nepal in the last four meeting.

Bangladesh are regarded as favourites against Maldives, whom they defeated twice in two previous meetings. The women in red and green handed the islanders a 3-1 defeat in the 2014 SAFF Women's Championship in Islamabad and beat them 2-0 in the South Asian Games in India in February last year.

Maldives confirmed the semifinal after beating Sri Lanka 5-2 and Bhutan 3-1 in their group matches even though they suffered a 0-9 defeat against Nepal in the other group match.

Definitely holding mighty India to a goalless draw in group stages will give

Bangladesh a psychological edge against Maldives and they will be trying to come out of their defensive strategy, which they employed against India, in an attacking display against Maldives.

Coach Golam Rabbani Choton will be banking on captain-cum-striker Sabina Khatun, who slotted five goals against Afghanistan, for the goods in front of goal. Sabina's experience of playing in Maldives league should come handy in that regard.

Another attacker who played a key role against Afghanistan was under-16 team's captain Krishna Rani Sarker, who set up three goals for Sabina. Goalkeeper Sabina Akter also put in a stellar performance against India and has kept a clean sheet in both matches so far. Another impressive performance from her would definitely go a long way in making Bangladesh's dream of qualifying for the final come true.



Bangladesh players go for a breather after a training session at a practice venue in Siliguri yesterday on the eve of today's semifinal against Maldives.

PHOTO: BFF

Nat'l handball gets underway

SPORTS REPORTER

Exim Bank 26th National Men's Handball Championship got underway yesterday at the Shaheed Mansur Ali National Stadium in Patna with 33 teams participating.

Defending champions Kushtia defeated Chapainawabganj 19-15 in the opening game after Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury declared the meet open.

In the day's other matches across three different venues, Comilla, Faridpur, Panchagarh, Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Sunamganj, Joypurhat, Gopalganj, Madaripur, Bagerhat, Jessore, Chuadanga, Meherpur and Bandarban notched victories.

IOC rejects Kuwait appeal

AFP, Lausanne

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has rejected a call by the Kuwaiti government to temporarily lift a 14-month sports ban while the Gulf State amends a controversial law.

World sports bodies suspended Kuwait in October 2015 over alleged government meddling in sports.

Kuwait launched an appeal on December 23, but the IOC said it would not reconsider the situation.



Lionel Messi (Top L) and Cristiano Ronaldo (Bottom R) both celebrated the New Year with their families, but they did so in their own style. While Messi stayed home with his family and brought in 2017 quietly, Ronaldo attended a party with his family. Meanwhile, Floyd 'Money' Mayweather (Top R) took to Las Vegas, while Chris Gayle lived up to his party animal persona and rejoiced with friends.

PHOTOS: COLLECTED



Klopp upbeat after City win

REUTERS, Liverpool



Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp said that his team could not afford to think about league leaders Chelsea despite Saturday's 1-0 win over Manchester City strengthening their position as the main challengers to the London club.

Chelsea beat Stoke City 4-2 earlier on Saturday to extend their winning streak to 13 games but an eighth minute header from Georginio Wijnaldum earned Liverpool a win that kept them within six points of Antonio Conte's team.

"We cannot look at Chelsea, they are unbelievably strong of course, on an outstanding run with 13 wins in a row. Not bad," Klopp told reporters. "Can you imagine how annoying it is when you win 13 games in a row and we are only six points behind?"

"But I am pretty sure they don't think about this, so why should we? The league is unbelievably difficult this year."

The win moved Liverpool four points ahead of third-placed City but despite the victory against their North-West rivals, the German coach still highlighted some areas for improvement.

"The problem we had tonight was that we were not as good as we could have been (in possession)," he said. "We created a few moments, we had a wonderful goal, we had our counter-attacks ... but we passed too late, or not in the right direction. We were not as confident as we could have been in possession, sometimes we lost the ball too easily."

একটি বিশেষ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

প্রিয় পাঠক/ এজেন্ট/ বিজ্ঞাপনদাতা
আমরা আন্তরিকভাবে দুঃখিত যে, প্রত্যাশামতো প্রস্তুতি নিতে না পারায় আসছে ২রা জানুয়ারি ২০১৭ 'সংবাদ প্রতিদিন' আপনাদের কাছে বর্ধিত কলেবরে পৌছাতে পারছি না। তবে আপনাদের প্রত্যাশা পূরণের সার্বিক প্রস্তুতি নিয়ে খুব শিগগিরই 'সংবাদ প্রতিদিন' পৌছে দিতে পারব বলে আশা রাখছি।

আবু জাফর সূর্য
ভারপ্রাপ্ত সম্পাদক

Spurs blitz Watford

Giroud scorpion kick shatters Crystal Palace

AFP, Watford



Tottenham Hotspur recorded an impressive 4-1 win at Watford on Sunday that sent them above Manchester City on goal difference and into the top four of the Premier League.

Watford put up little resistance as two goals by Harry Kane and another from Dele Alli gave Spurs a 3-0 half-time lead.

Alli scored again early in the second half before manager Mauricio Pochettino took off his scorers ahead of the match against leaders Chelsea at White Hart Lane on Wednesday.

Younes Kaboul smuggled home Watford's injury-time reply with their only shot on target.

Chelsea are 10 points ahead of Pochettino's men, but Spurs will remember all too well that it was at Stamford Bridge that their title hopes were finally ended last season.

Chelsea played above themselves to deny their North London rivals the win they needed to maintain their pursuit of Leicester City.

Now Tottenham will be keen to end Chelsea's bid for a record 14th successive victory.

If that promises to be one of the matches of the season, the New Year's Day game at Vicarage Road was more like a light training exercise in comparison.

Watford have now lost five of their past seven matches and never looked likely to get anything from this match.

Olivier Giroud scored with a superb, improvised backheeled volley as Arsenal eased past struggling Crystal Palace with a 2-0 win that moved them into third spot in the Premier League on Sunday.

The France international produced a flying scorpion-like flick with his left heel to convert Alexis Sanchez's cross while tumbling forward following an Arsenal counter-attack, which helped build with another neat flick, in the 17th minute.

It was uncannily similar to Henrikh Mkhitaryan's goal for Manchester United against Sunderland on Boxing Day.

While Arsenal's first goal was a stunning piece of improvisation their second after 55 minutes was a messy affair with Alex Iwobi's looping header dropping in via Palace defender Joel Ward who failed to make a goalline clearance.

Christian Benteke wasted the best of Palace's few chances when he headed wide shortly before Iwobi's effort and though Sam Allardyce's side did briefly rally, they never looked likely to get back into the game.

But Arsenal were dominant as they moved above Manchester City and Tottenham Hotspur into third, nine points behind leaders Chelsea.

| RESULTS | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------|----------------|--|
| Arsenal | 2 - 0 | Crystal Palace | |
| Giroud 17, Iwobi 56 | | | |
| Watford | 1 - 4 | Tottenham | |
| Kaboul 90+1 Kane 27, 33, Alli 41, 46 | | | |

Bolt calls Man Utd talk show

AFP, London

Usain Bolt showed his love for Manchester United when the sprint star made a surprise phone call to the Premier League club's in-house television channel on Saturday.

In the traditional post-match phone-in on MUTV following United's 2-1 win over Middlesbrough, presenter Mandy Henry introduced the next caller as being a "Usain from Jamaica" and added: "It's not Usain Bolt, is it?"

Olympic champion Bolt replied: "It is Usain Bolt."

Henry still looked disbelieving as Bolt gave his opinion on United's win, saying: "They came through like the old Manchester United."

"They came through and pushed on and persevered, the Manchester United way. It was a great match, I am very happy about this."

Bolt then tweeted to confirm it was indeed him, with Henry replying to the Jamaican apologising and telling him to call again soon.

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