

STAR SPORTS 1

India v Australia
1st Test, Day-3
Live from 10:00am
STAR SPORTS SELECT HD1
English Premiership
Chelsea v Swansea

Live from 9:00pm

Watford v West Ham
Live from 11:30pm
STAR SPORTS SELECT HD2
Bundesliga
Hertha Berlin v Eintracht
Live from 11:30pm

SONY ESPN

Serie A
Napoli v Atalanta
Live from 11:00pm
Juventus v Empoli
Live from 1:45am
(Sunday)

SONY SIX

La Liga
Alaves v Valencia
Live from 6:00pm
Real Betis v Sevilla
Live from 9:15pm
Leganes v Deportivo

Live from 11:30pm

Eibar v Malaga
Live from 1:45am (Sunday)

QUICK SINGLES

The following are a few samples of stories that did not make the print edition. However, if they pique your interest, you can always read them online on The Daily Star website by simply scanning the QR codes listed below:

Varane out of Napoli trip

Real Madrid defender Raphael Varane is expected to miss the Champions League last 16 return leg at Napoli on March 7 because of a muscle injury.



Sachin phone incoming?

Technology company Smartron is rumoured to be launching an exclusive Sachin Tendulkar-branded mobile phone in April which will be the first-ever signature series of the master blaster for a mobile phone brand.



Samuels considering Kolpak deal

West Indies batsman Marlon Samuels could become the latest high-profile player to shun national colours in favour of a Kolpak deal in the United Kingdom.



Mancini at short odds to become next Leicester manager

Former Manchester City manager Roberto Mancini is the bookmakers' favourite to replace compatriot Claudio Ranieri as Leicester City manager after the Italian was sacked by the Premier League champions.



Third arrest made in Pakistan corruption probe

A third man has been arrested in an ongoing investigation into possible corruption in Pakistani cricket, Britain's National Crime Agency (NCA) has said.



Novak Djokovic back on court at Acapulco

World number two Novak Djokovic will make his return from a shoulder injury at next week's ATP tournament in Acapulco.



Barca to open academy in southern China

Barca will open a soccer academy in southern China this year in partnership with local developer Mission Hills.



ESPNCRICINFO AWARDS 2017 Mehedi, Fizz bag awards

STAR SPORT DESK



Bangladesh pacer Mustafizur Rahman has won the ESPNCricinfo award for the best bowling performance in T20Is, while rookie off-spinner Mehedi Hasan Miraz has been named the debutant of the year.

It marks the second year in a row that a Bangladeshi player has won the debutant award, with Mustafizur winning the honour in 2016 for his exploits in the home series against Pakistan, India and South Africa in 2015.

Mehedi took the world by storm in his debut Test series, taking a five-for in his debut match against England in Chittagong in October 2016, before going on to bag a 10-wicket haul in the following match in Dhaka, allowing Bangladesh to win their first Test against England. His 12 for 159 in the second game are the best match figures by a Bangladesh bowler and took his tally to 19 wickets in that two-Test series against England.

"I kept thinking of how Mustafizur had performed on his debut for Bangladesh and I was most inspired by that," Mehedi said in a video on the Cricinfo website after receiving his award. "Because he bowled really well against India and he had a crucial role in our win over India. Seeing that I felt more confident."

Mustafizur's performance against New Zealand in the ICC World Twenty20 last



MEHEDI HASAN MIRAZ PHOTO: CRICINFO

WINNERS	
AWARD	PLAYER
Captain of the Year	Virat Kohli (IND)
Test Batting Performance	Ben Stokes (ENG)
T20I Batting Performance	Carlos Brathwaite (WI)
ODI Batting Performance	Faf du Plessis (SA)
Test Bowling Performance	Stuart Broad (ENG)
T20I Bowling Performance	Mustafizur Rahman (BD)
ODI Bowling Performance	Sunil Narine (WI)
Debutant of the year	Mehedi Hasan Miraz (BD)
Associate Batting Performance	Mohammad Shahzad (AFG)
Associate Bowling Performance	Mohammad Nabi (AFG)
Women's Batting Performance	Hayley Matthews (WI)
Women's Bowling Performance	Leigh Kasperek (NZ)

year won him the category. His five for 22 were the best figures in the global tournament. Even though Mustafizur had phenomenal performances in 2015, it was his display in the World Twenty20 that made him a global name.

Ranieri sacking condemned

AFP, Leicester



The sacking of Claudio Ranieri as Leicester City manager nine months after guiding the unfashionable club to a sensational Premier League title stunned the football world Friday and brought widespread condemnation on the owners.

The Thai owners axed the Italian barely two weeks after giving Ranieri "unwavering support" despite disastrous results that have left the team just one point above the relegation zone.

Players, managers and commentators expressed dismay at the move and nearly all backed Ranieri, who only last month was named FIFA's coach of the year for scripting one of the most unbelievable stories in football.

British media aimed withering criticism at Leicester's Thai owners, King Power, who said they had no choice but to oust Ranieri.

"The owners were 'snakes', 'brutal', 'cruel', commentators said.

"I shed a tear last night - I shed a tear for Claudio, I shed a tear for football and I shed a tear for my club," former Leicester and England striker Gary Lineker said.

"It is inexplicable to me, it's inexplicable to a lot of fans who love the game and I suppose you can explain it in terms of a panic decision and for me a wrong decision and it is very sad," he added.

Bournemouth boss Eddie Howe spoke for other Premier League managers when he declared himself "shocked" at the sacking.

But Leicester insisted they had to act to save the club from the threat of an unprecedented relegation.

"Claudio, appointed City manager in July 2015, led the Foxes to the greatest triumph in the club's 133-year history last season, as we were crowned champions of England for the first time. His status as the most successful Leicester City manager of all time is without question," said a club statement.

"However, domestic results in the

current campaign have placed the club's Premier League status under threat and the board reluctantly feels that a change of leadership, while admittedly painful, is necessary in the club's greatest interest," it added.

Leicester chairman Vichai Srivaddhanaprabha went onto Instagram to defend his actions.

"We have done our best as a management," he said in a statement. "We do not have only one problem to solve but there are a millions thing to do to make our club survive."



Hazard warns Chelsea

AFP, London



Eden Hazard has warned Chelsea not to lose their focus as the runaway Premier League leaders approach the final furlong in the title race, while crisis-torn champions Leicester face up to life without sacked boss Claudio Ranieri.

Antonio Conte's side are eight points clear at the top with just 13 games remaining and they have a golden opportunity to extend that lead when they host lowly Swansea on Saturday.

Second placed Manchester City are

FIXTURES

(1500 GMT unless stated)

Saturday

Chelsea v Swansea, Crystal Palace v Middlesbrough, Everton v Sunderland, Hull v Burnley, Watford v West Ham (1730 GMT), West Brom v Bournemouth

Sunday

Tottenham v Stoke (1330 GMT)

Monday

Leicester v Liverpool (2000 GMT)

not in action this weekend because their derby against Manchester United was postponed due to their rivals' League Cup final showdown with Southampton on Sunday.

That gives the Blues a chance to pull clear against a Swansea side who will be heavy underdogs despite their impressive rise out of the relegation zone under the management of former Chelsea assistant coach Paul Clement.

However, Chelsea showed a rare sign of vulnerability in a 1-1 draw at Burnley in their previous league match and Belgium playmaker Hazard insists his team can take nothing for granted as they look to regain the title.

"We just need to keep the same concentration. It's more difficult to play away because of the fans, but we are ready, we are professional. We can deal with the pressure. Everything is going good," Hazard said.

Gent knock out Spurs

AFP, London

Tottenham slumped to a shock Europa League exit as Gent's 2-2 draw at Wembley gave the unfancied Belgians a stunning 3-2 aggregate success in the last 32 second leg on Thursday.

Mauricio Pochettino's side trailed 1-0 from the first leg and they were unable to overturn the deficit despite twice leading on the night.

Christen Eriksen put Tottenham ahead before Harry Kane's own goal on the stroke of half-time.

Dele Alli was sent off for a horror challenge after the interval.



Former Barcelona superstar Ronaldinho (R) meets children at the launch of a football academy for about 1,000 students on the southern Chinese island of Hainan yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

ISSF WORLD CUP

Bangladeshis fail to reach finals

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladeshi shooter Abdullah Hel Baki missed the final round of the men's 10 metre air rifle event in the ISSF World Cup in New Delhi yesterday by a whisker.

The 2014 Commonwealth Games silver medallist scored 623.7 points to finish ninth in the qualification round, just 0.1 point behind the eighth and last finalist Peter Sidi of Hungary, who later went on to win the silver medal. China's Buhun Song won the gold while Atsishi Shimada of Japan managed the bronze.

Baki put on a brilliant performance till the fourth series of shoots but he lost his rhythm in the penultimate series and eventually finished in ninth position.

Before the competition, Bangladesh's Danish coach Klavs Christensen pinned his hopes on Baki, who had supposedly returned to his best form in recent times.

While Baki did initially produce great fight against the world's best shooters, the two other Bangladeshi shooters failed to even match that feat in the same event.

Risalatul Islam finished in 15th position with 621.5 points while Rabbi Hasan Munna scored 620.7 points to finish 18th.

Bangladesh's female shooters also failed to make a mark in the 10 metre air rifle event.

Suraiya Akter finished 19th among 42 participants while Sayeda Hasan and Mahfuja Jannat Jui finished in 29th and 30th positions respectively.

Shi Mengyao of China grabbed the gold medal in this event beating compatriot Dong Lijie in the shoot-off while Pooja Ghatkar of India clinched the bronze.

Bangladesh team will take part in the 10 metre air rifle mixed team event today.

Arbab Azam no more

STAR SPORT DESK

Arbab Azam, a sports organiser who was connected with Mohammedan SC and Victoria SC, passed away aged 70 at his residence on Friday. He was suffering from respiratory complications. Arbab was a familiar personality in the sports arena and also the father of Atif Azam, sports reporter of English language daily New Age.

I'm staying at United, says Rooney

AFP, London

Wayne Rooney said Thursday he was staying with Manchester United following persistent speculation he could make a lucrative move to the Chinese Super League.

"Despite the interest which has been shown from other clubs, for which I'm grateful, I want to end recent speculation and say that I am staying at Manchester United," the 31-year-old said in a statement.

"I hope I will play a full part in helping the team in its fight for success on four fronts.

"It's an exciting time at the club and I want to remain a part of it," added Rooney, whose current United contract runs until mid-2018.

Italian press blast 'ungrateful' English

AFP, Rome



AS Roma coach Luciano Spalletti blasted Claudio Ranieri's sacking as a "scandal" as the Italian press lambasted Premier League champions Leicester and the "ungrateful English".

Ranieri's dismissal comes just nine months after guiding the unfashionable English club to a first Premier League title but follows a series of disastrous results which have seen the team slide towards the relegation zone.

"It's inexplicable, there is no recognition," Spalletti told a press conference after hearing of his compatriot's dismissal on Thursday night.

Spalletti later defended his compatriot on Roma TV. "He was the one who created this chemistry in the team and the locker room that made it possible to win the championship," he said.

"And when you win an English championship against City, United and

Chelsea, if you have a little dignity, you even accept to be relegated without touching anything.

"It should be such a joy to have won that the following year you can accept to be relegated."

"It's a beautiful career, coach, isn't it? It's always us who leave. Have you ever seen a president, an official or a player sacked before the end of the season?"

La Gazzetta dello Sport headlined "Ungrateful English".

"Leicester have sullied the fairytale which enchanted the world," wrote Gazzetta saying Leicester "has chased away the coach who have offered the club eternity".

Turin daily La Stampa's editorial lamented: "It's a fairytale without a happy ending".

"Leicester chase the dream man," wrote Corriere dello Sport.

"Claudio is 66. He will return home bringing history with him. And he will leave behind the ridicule with which (Leicester's owners) have covered themselves," wrote editorialist Alberto Polverosi.

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