

What to WATCH	ATN BANGLA Hockey World League Rd-2 Malaysia v Bangladesh Live from 4:00pm STAR SPORTS 1 India v Australia Second Test, Day-1 Live from 10:00am	STAR SPORTS SELECT HD1 Bundesliga Koln v Bayern Munich Live from 8:30pm M'gladbach v Schalke Live from 11:30pm	STAR SPORTS SELECT HD2 English Premiership Man United v Bournemouth Live from 6:30pm Leicester v Hull City Live from 9:00pm Liverpool v Arsenal Live from 11:30pm	SONY ESPN Serie A Roma v Napoli Live from 8:00pm Sampdoria v Pescara Live from 11:00pm AC Milan v Chievo Verona Live from 1:45am (Sunday)	SONY SIX La Liga Leganes v Granada Live from 6:00pm Eibar v Real Madrid Live from 9:15pm Villarreal v Espanyol Live from 11:30pm	Barcelona v Celta Vigo Live from 1:45am (Sunday)
	DAY'S EVENT HOCKEY WORLD LEAGUE RD-2 Malaysia v Bangladesh Time: 4:00pm Venue: Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium					

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:

Clear CT scan allays fears over Torres
Spanish football breathes a sigh of relief after a CT scan on Fernando Torres reveals the striker suffered no traumatic brain injuries in a sickening on-field clash.

Agüero to hold talks with City
Manchester City striker Sergio Agüero is determined to produce his best form in the final three months of the campaign before he holds talks on his future at the Premier League club.

Mickelson among leaders
Five-time major-winner Phil Mickelson was enjoying the challenge of the high-altitude Chapultepec Golf Club as he seized a share of the first-round lead in the WGC-Mexico Championship.

Qatar population booms
Qatar's population has swollen by almost 40 per cent since the emirate was chosen to be the host of the 2022 World Cup, official government figures have revealed.

Raikkonen makes splash
Ferrari's Kimi Raikkonen posted the fastest time on a track artificially soaked to test wet conditions as Lewis Hamilton's first week of testing fizzled to a premature end.

WC fans will need special identity cards
Fans at next year's World Cup and this year's Confederations Cup in Russia will need special identity cards before they can watch matches, soccer's governing body.



The Bangladesh (L) and Malaysia teams take part in their final practice session ahead of the opening day of the Hockey World League (Round 2) at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday. The two teams will meet at 4:00pm as four matches will take place today in this eight-nation tournament.



PHOTOS: FIROZ AHMED

Ronaldo feels pain, trains alone

AFP, Madrid

Star striker Cristiano Ronaldo trained alone Friday after feeling pains and could be a doubt for Real Madrid's game against Eibar.

"He felt something, but nothing serious. He didn't train with us this morning," coach Zinedine Zidane told a press conference ahead of Saturday's La Liga game.

While the squad was put through its paces, Ronaldo did sprints on his own.

Zidane could be tempted to rest Ronaldo ahead of Real's Champions League last 16 return game at Napoli next Tuesday.

"As you know, all matches are important but the most important is that the player is OK. We will see how Cristiano feels," Zidane said.

Bangladesh take on Malaysia today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh will be facing arguably their toughest challenge when they take on Malaysia in their opening match of the Hockey World League (Round 2) at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium today. Even though the Malaysians, who were drafted into this competition after initial entrants Canada pulled out due to security fears, have not brought in their top-string players, the gulf of difference is expected to have a telling impact in this match.

That match will get underway at 4:00pm after three other fixtures – China v Ghana, Egypt v Sri Lanka and Oman v Fiji – which will take place at the same venue.

Bangladesh coach Oliver Kurtz, who has set his initial sights on finishing second in the pool behind Malaysia, thinks today's opposition are strong enough even with some of their best players left back home.

"Our initial target is to finish second behind Malaysia and then look for who we get in the quarterfinals and hopefully in the semifinals," the German coach said after the team's last practice session yesterday.

With the other two pool mates – Malaysia in 13th position, Oman sitting just one place above Bangladesh's 31 and Fiji down in 44 – Kurtz is hoping his side can beat Fiji and Oman in the following two matches to ensure the second position. Hence he said, "Even if Malaysia are under-strength, they are a tough opposition. So we will do well to concentrate on our team rather than thinking about them too much. Our main objective will be to beat Fiji and Oman."

With the other pool featuring China, Egypt and Ghana and only two qualifying places available from this eight-team competition for the third round, things could be very hard for Bangladesh, even if they are playing at home. To make matters worse, the preparation for this tournament has not been too positive as Bangladesh played a three-match warm up series against 38th ranked Ghana, sharing a win each and drawing the other.

Kurtz believes the preparation has not been ideal for a major tournament like this. "I've always said we needed at least seven or eight matches ahead of this tournament. I tried to use different strategies in the three matches and the results have been mixed. However, we played better in the third match. Our penalty corner conversion, which was disappointing in the first two matches, was much better in the third match. That performance makes us a bit optimistic."

Bangladesh will play their following two matches against Fiji and Oman on March 5 and 7 respectively.

French legend Kopa dies

AFP, Paris

French football legend Raymond Kopa, who won the European Cup three times with Real Madrid in the 1950s, died Friday aged 85 after a long illness.

Kopa was the first to blaze the football trail from the French league to Europe's glamour sides that has since been followed by Michel Platini, Zinedine Zidane and now Paul Pogba.

The French Football League announced that a minute's silence would be observed before all weekend games in honour of the man who rose from a poor mining family in northern France to become one of Europe's greatest players.

At the pinnacle of his career in the 1950s Kopa played in a Real Madrid team alongside Alfredo di Stefano and Ferenc Puskas.

On top of the European Cups, he took the Ballon d'Or player of the year award in 1958, the same year that he was a central part of the French side beaten by Pele's Brazil in a classic World Cup semifinal.

"He died at 8.15 am after his illness worsened. Raymond had been in hospital since Sunday," his son-in-law William Boucher said.

Real Madrid lamented the loss of a "great star" and offered commiserations to his family.

"He was a player of exquisite technical gifts," a club statement said.

"The Frenchman remains one of the great stars of his epoch."

French President Francois Hollande said in a statement that Kopa was "one of France's most admired sportsmen."

The attacking midfielder, whose real name was Kopaszewski, embarked on a career in football after he failed to qualify for a job down the pit.

The youth could not become a miner because of an accident which led to the amputation of part of two of his fingers. He was rejected by several northern clubs because at 1.68m (5ft 5in) he was considered too small for top flight football.

But he made a name for himself as a teenager playing for Angers and moved to Reims in 1951 aged 19. Reims lost to Real Madrid in the 1956 European Cup final, but Kopa made his mark. He moved to the Spanish capital weeks later, linking up with another legend, di Stefano, in one of the greatest Real teams of all time.

"I was the first French player to leave the country. A lot of people called me a traitor," he said later. "My only fault was to be the precursor."

With Real he won the European Cup in 1957. He went on to win two more European Cups in 1958 and 1959 with the Spanish giants. He scored 30 goals in 103 games over three seasons with Real.

"We got crowds of 120,000 in those days at the Bernabeu stadium. It was something unique to be the centre of attention of all those people and alongside such great players," he said.

The team was so good, he said, "we could have played on one leg and it would still have been enough."

In the 1958 World Cup semifinal, Kopa and France lost 5-2 to a Brazilian side featuring Pele in his debut tournament.

But he still became the first French player to win the Ballon d'Or as Europe's player of the year, after placing third in 1956 and 1957. He was second in 1959.

Kopa remains one of only three players, along with Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo, to have figured four times in the Ballon d'Or's top three.



Torres calls it a scare

AFP, Madrid

The clash of heads reverberated around the stadium, everyone watching feared the worse, but Fernando Torres insisted it was just "a scare."

The 32-year-old Spanish striker was rushed to hospital after being hit from behind by Deportivo La Coruna's Alex Bergantinos five minutes before the end of the game.

He hit the ground hard and appeared to have already lost consciousness.

Players from both sides immediately called for urgent medical attention. Distressed Atletico defender Jose Maria Gimenez was seen crying. Deportivo fans gave the former Spanish international a standing ovation of encouragement as he was stretchered off the field.

But a CT scan revealed Torres suffered no traumatic brain injuries.

And the striker sent out a message on Twitter from his hospital bed just after midnight.

"Thanks to all of you who were worried for me and for your messages of encouragement," Torres said. "It was just a scare. I hope to be back soon."

Atletico also confirmed that no serious damage had apparently been inflicted.

"A cranial and cervical CT scan carried out on Fernando Torres has ruled out that the Rojiblanco striker has suffered any alterations or traumatic injuries," Atletico said in a statement.

"Our player, who is stable, conscious and lucid, had to be removed by ambulance after being stabilised according to the usual protocol, before entering the Model Hospital of La Coruna."

The club said Torres left hospital on Friday. "He will have to observe a 48-hour rest."

Atletico coach Diego Simeone acknowledged the widespread worries

over the clash of heads but sought to play down the severity.

"The action was not pretty to watch but these are the events that unfortunately happen during a game. We wish Fernando all the best," Simeone told a press conference after the game ended in a 1-1 draw.

"We are all scared," Atletico left-back Filipe Luis told BeIN Sports.

"The news we have received until now is good. The most important thing is that Fernando is ok."

Atletico's Sime Vrsaljko and captain Gabi have also been praised for reacting quickly to ensure Torres didn't swallow his tongue whilst unconscious.

The visitors had to play out seven minutes of stoppage time with 10 men as they had already made all three substitutions.

Former West Bromwich Albion manager Pepe Mel was making his bow as Deportivo coach after only being hired on Wednesday.



Epyllion handed Interstoff Group a 3-1 defeat at the ITHS ground on the second day of the BGMEA Cup yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED



Atletico Madrid striker Fernando Torres is being evacuated in an ambulance after colliding with Deportivo La Coruna's midfielder Alex Bergantinos during their La Liga clash at the Municipal de Riazor Stadium on Thursday. The match ended in a 1-1 draw.

PHOTO: AFP

Kyrgios stuns Djokovic

AFP, Acapulco

Australian bad boy Nick Kyrgios steamrollered Novak Djokovic in straight sets at the Mexico Open, dealing a major blow to the world number two's hopes of regaining his mantle of invincibility.

The 21-year-old Kyrgios overpowered Djokovic with 25 aces in the 7-6 (11/9), 7-5 triumph as the Serb sought to rebuild confidence after his shattering second round defeat at the Australian Open in January.

The Australian, letting his tennis skill take centre stage instead of his tantrums, won 81 percent of his first-serve points as he dominated his first ever match with Djokovic.

Djokovic fell in the Australian Open to Uzbekistan's Denis Istomin, then did not play again until this week. He managed only one win, against Slovakia's Martin Klizan, before losing his quarterfinal to Kyrgios.

The world No. 17 Kyrgios delivered another giant killer performance as he also beat Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer in their first ATP tour level meetings.

He is the youngest player to record victories over the tennis Big Five – Djokovic, Federer, Nadal, Andy Murray and Stan Wawrinka.

Kyrgios will be seeking to reach his first final of the season when he faces big-serving American Sam Querrey in the semis.

Nadal bounced back from a break down in both sets to defeat Japan's Yoshihito Nishioka 7-6 (7/2), 6-3 and book his semifinal spot.

The second-seeded Spaniard, a two-time winner in Acapulco, hammered five aces in the battle between the two left-handers.

"He is so quick," Nadal said. "I felt I needed to choose the right shots to do the damage. I was trying to hit the winner too early sometimes and too late other times, so it was tough to get my rhythm."

Stuttgart, Grosskreutz part ways

AGENCIES, Berlin

Stuttgart have confirmed that they have mutually agreed to terminate Kevin Grosskreutz's contract just days after he was attacked while on a night out.

The former Germany international was taken to hospital after an altercation earlier in the week.

Grosskreutz himself has insisted he wants to take a break away from football and has urged fans and the media to leave him, and his family alone.

He said: "I want to calm down now and don't want to have to do anything with professional football for the moment. Please leave me and my family alone."

"I've made a mistake, I'm very sorry. I accept the consequences and regret my time at VfB so far. I would like to thank the team, the staff and especially the fans, who have supported me well in the past days."

Stuttgart's head coach Hannes Wolf, meanwhile, has supported the decision to release Grosskreutz, insisting the club had no choice.