

What to WATCH

SONY ESPN

Indian Premier League
Gujarat v Hyderabad
Live from 4:30pm
Kolkata v Mumbai
Live from 8:30pm

TEN 1HD & TEN 3

West Indies v Pakistan
Third Test, Day-4
Live from 7:30pm

TEN 1

La Liga
Espanyol v Valencia
Live from 8:00pm

STAR SPORTS SELECT HD1

English Premiership
Man City v Leicester
Live from 5:30pm
Sunderland v Swansea
Live from 8:00pm

Stoke v Arsenal

Live from 10:30pm
STAR SPORTS SELECT HD2
Bundesliga
Leipzig v Bayern Munich
Live from 7:30pm

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:

New penalty system gets usual result

A new penalty shootout system based on the tennis tiebreak was used for the first time in a competitive game but ended in the usual fashion, with Germany winning.

Nervy Man Utd set Ajax final

Manchester United survived a sizeable scare to reach their first Europa League final after a nervy 1-1 draw with Celta Vigo completed a 2-1 aggregate victory.

Marcelino named Valencia coach

Valencia named former Villarreal manager Marcelino as coach for next season, as the fallen giants of La Liga plot a revival in fortunes after two disappointing seasons and a slew of managers.

Infantino channels inner Trump

Gianni Infantino slammed "fake news" and "alternative facts" surrounding FIFA and insisted football's scandal-ridden governing body had changed in an impassioned speech to its annual congress in Bahrain.

'Players need to lay off Maria'

Former world number one Martina Navratilova has urged players to stop focusing on Maria Sharapova after the Russian's recent return from a 15-month doping ban.

Real eye Brazilian teenager Vinicius

Vinicius Junior, the latest soccer sensation from Brazil, joined up with the Flamengo first team squad for the first time ahead of an expected big-money move to Real Madrid.

ISL set to expand

AFP, New Delhi

The Indian Super League (ISL) is seeking to expand its reach with organisers inviting new bids for the fourth edition of the popular football tournament.

The ISL has taken off since launching in 2013, attracting higher broadcast ratings and stadium numbers than India's top-tier I-League competition.

The franchise-based, eight-team competition, which has attracted former stars like Alessandro Del Piero and Nicolas Anelka, is seeking up to three new teams and is gauging interest from 10 Indian cities, including major centres like Bangalore, Hyderabad and Kolkata.

"One to three new winning bidders shall be enrolled and awarded the right to participate in the Indian Super League," ISL said in a statement.



Defending champions Abahani, with their players seen going through a drill at the club ground in Dhanmondi, will be looking to get their season off to a good start when they take on newcomers Saif Sporting Club in the first match of the Federation Cup today.

PHOTO: STAR

Silva key to City dream

AFP, Manchester



David Silva's comeback from injury helped inspire Manchester City's return to form last weekend, and his fitness is likely to prove crucial to their Champions League qualification prospects.

Silva, back from a fortnight out with a knee injury, was superb as City beat an inept Crystal Palace 5-0, for only their third win in nine Premier League matches.

That victory has left Pep Guardiola's side fourth going into Saturday's home match against Leicester City, with a three-point lead over fifth-placed Arsenal and only the top four at the end of the season qualifying for the Champions League.

Sergio Aguero is making progress in his recovery from a groin injury, although it may be too soon for him to make a comeback. In any case, City's front three of Raheem Sterling, Gabriel Jesus and Leroy Sane were in fine form without him last Saturday, aided by the creativity of Silva and Kevin De Bruyne.

Seven points from their final three matches will guarantee City's place in next season's Champions League, a target they would be more than hopeful of achieving given that the Leicester game is followed by matches against West Bromwich Albion and Watford, both out of form.

Then again, reigning English champions Leicester were struggling when City visited the King Power Stadium in December, yet Jamie Vardy was still able to score a hat-trick in a 4-2 home victory.

Hunt for fresh blood begins

Season starts with Federation Cup today

SPORTS REPORTER



The domestic football season kicks off today through the Walton Federation Cup with an expectation of the emergence of new players to fill the vacuum of the national team in the near future.

Defending champions Abahani will take on newcomers Saif Sporting Club at 5:00pm before Brothers Union play against Team BJMC at 7:15pm in the two matches of the opening day. Both matches will be played at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Except for the country's traditional powerhouses -- Abahani and Mohammedan -- the remaining 10 clubs eventually formed their respective squads with hopes pinned on a few experienced players alongside younger players who had hogged the limelight last season.

Teams like Sheikh Jamal DC, Sheikh Russel KC, Chittagong Abahani and big-spending Saif SC signed players from Rahmatganj MFS, Arambagh KS and Bangladesh Championship League outfits to complement their experienced players. These teams also started their

pre-season preparations long ago and even played practice matches to fine tune their final combination.

Although Abahani and Mohammedan kept their faith in experienced players, they also have a few young players who can come into the first-team fold. Abahani youngsters Rubel Miah and Saad Uddin have already made their presence felt in the AFC Cup with stunning goals against Bengaluru FC earlier this month.

"We will definitely see a lot of new players getting opportunities to play for different squads this time around, but at the moment we cannot say what standard footballers will come out," said Chittagong Abahani coach Saiful Bari Titu yesterday.

"We had quality players like Zahid [Hossain], Mamunul [Islam], [Zahid Hasan] Emily in the last national squad. We must find those types of quality players if we want a better national team. We have to have that expectation of quality players," said the former national team coach.

Arambagh's UEFA A licensed coach Maruful Haque also believes that this season is going to be one for emerging players, but he does not believe they can fill the vacuum of the national team in the near future.

"It is going to be a season where a lot of new footballers are expected to emerge, but I think those new players are not ready technically or tactically to compete at the international level, but they are all right for domestic competitions," opined Haque, who has not set any target in the Federation Cup for last edition's runners-up.

Another feature of this season will be the clubs depending more on local players after the quota of foreign players in each match was reduced, heightening the expectation on local players in this season.

"Playing with three foreign players had a huge impact on the matches in previous seasons, but this season I think two foreign players will not have that impact and local players will play vital roles," said Rahmatganj coach Kamal Babu, whose side did extremely well in the first leg of last season's professional football league.

While the Federation Cup will feature 12 teams, five teams are expected to vie for the title, with the teams who started their pre-season preparations before having a boost. Among them however, Abahani will have the biggest edge courtesy of their participation in the ongoing AFC Cup where they have already played four international matches.

Mourinho rues Baily red card

AFP, Manchester



Jose Mourinho admitted Manchester United defender Eric Baily had been naive to allow himself to be baited into the red card against Celta Vigo that rules him out of the Europa League final.

Baily was sent off along with Celta's Facundo Roncaglia after a bout of pushing and shoving involving players from both teams in the final minutes of the 1-1 semi-final second leg draw at Old Trafford.

The Ivory Coast centre-back will be suspended for the final against Ajax in Stockholm later this month, leaving United manager Mourinho to grumble about Roncaglia's provocation and his player's needless reaction.

"I didn't see the red card incident but Eric Baily was phenomenal. The game was emotional for everyone. Some kept control better than others," Mourinho said. "Facundo Roncaglia is not new in these

situations, Baily was probably naive. We now lose a very important player for the final, and we don't have many."

Holding a 1-0 lead from the first leg, United opted for a cautious approach that saw Celta dominate possession for long periods.

United snatched the lead through Marouane Fellaini's first half header, but Roncaglia equalised and, after Celta almost won it late on, Mourinho conceded his team once again lacked a cutting edge.

"We were the best team in the first leg but we never kill, we never score goals related to the chances we have," he said after the 2-1 aggregate victory.

"Celta were completely free of responsibility and gave us a very hard match. We suffered until the end and it was open until the last second.

"The boys gave everything they had. I'm really pleased for them."

United will qualify for the Champions League if they beat Ajax and Mourinho added: "After 14 matches we are in the final. If we win the Europa League I'm more than happy. It would be amazing."

Nadal sets up 50th Djokovic encounter

AFP, Madrid



Rafael Nadal will aim to keep his unbeaten start to the clay season going when he meets Novak Djokovic for a 50th time in the Madrid Masters semi-finals on Saturday.

Nadal is now 13-0 on clay this year as he swept aside Belgian ninth seed David Goffin 7-6 (7/3), 6-2 much to the delight of a boisterous home crowd under the roof of the Manolo Santana centre court.

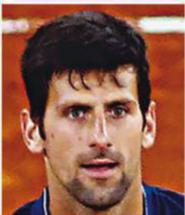
Djokovic had an even easier day as he moved into the last four on Friday without hitting a ball as Kei Nishikori withdrew with a wrist injury.

And the Serb has a marginal 26-23 head-to-head record against Nadal.

Nadal eased past Goffin in their only previous meeting on his way to winning the Monte Carlo Masters 6-3, 6-1 last month before also lifting a 10th Barcelona Open.

And only a poor return on his break point opportunities denied Nadal just as convincing a scoreline as the Spaniard took only two of his 13 chances.

The 14-time Grand Slam champion had break points in the fourth and sixth game of the first set, but had to settle for breaking Goffin's resolve in a tie-break.



Nadal finally broke in the third game of the second set before having to stave off four break points on his own serve to consolidate his lead at 3-1.

Halep also thrashed the world number 22 two weeks ago in Stuttgart and there was never any danger of an upset as the Romanian reeled off five straight games to close out the opening set.

Sevastova hinted at a fightback early in the second as she got out to a 3-0 lead.

But Halep, who is also into the semi-finals of the women's doubles with compatriot Irina-Camelia Begu, showed no signs of lacking in energy as she bounced back in emphatic fashion to win the last six games for the loss of just 14 points.

Channel I, Tribune into final

SPORTS REPORTER

Channel I and Dhaka Tribune moved into the final of Marcel-BSJC Media Cup football at the Shaheed Captain M Mansur Ali Handball Stadium yesterday.

Channel I handed RIV a 2-1 defeat while Dhaka Tribune defeated SA TV 2-0.

Batistuta offered Adelaide job

AFP, Adelaide

Argentine goalscoring great Gabriel Batistuta has been offered the chance to coach Australian A-League club Adelaide United, a report said Friday.

The 48-year-old, his nation's all-time leading goalscorer before Lionel Messi overtook him last year, is wanted as a replacement for departing Spaniard Guillermo Amor.

Adelaide chief executive Grant Mayer said capturing Batistuta was a priority given former Barcelona star Amor had decided to leave.

"We're chasing a suitable replacement after Guillermo Amor has all the respect and goes out on his own terms," Mayer told the Adelaide Advertiser newspaper.



Manchester United defender Eric Baily (C) is shown the red card by Romanian referee Ovidiu Hategan during their Europa League semifinal second-leg match against Celta Vigo at Old Trafford on Thursday.

PHOTO: AFP

Shila embarks on campaign today

SPORTS REPORTER



South Asian (SA) Games double gold-medallist swimmer Mahfuza Khatun Shila will take to the pool on the first day of the 4th Islamic Solidarity Games today after opting not to carry the national flag in the march-past during the inauguration in the Azerbaijani capital of Baku yesterday.

Shila was supposed to carry the national flag in the march-past but she passed the duties to another gold medallist, shooter Shakil Ahmed, after swimming coach Park Tae Gun recommended that Shila not carry the flag due to her event in the morning of

the opening day.

Shila had created a South Asian record on way to winning the gold medal in the 50m breaststroke in the SA Games with a time of 34.88 seconds, and she had a time of 33.15 in practice before departing for Baku, so it is expected that she will come up with a medal.

Swimmers Nazma Khatun, Naima Akter and Ariful Islam, shooters Syeda Atkia Hasan, Mahfuza Jannat Jui, Abdullah Hel Baki and Rabbi Hasan, weightlifter Fulpati Chakma, karatekas Mounjera Barna and Al Amin Islam, and gymnast Saddam Hossain will also compete on the opening day.

Around 3,000 athletes from 54 countries are taking part in the Games, which will conclude on May 22.