

# What to WATCH

TEN3  
Sri Lanka v India  
First Test, Day 2  
Live from 10:30am

STAR SPORTS SELECT 1  
England v South Africa  
Third Test, Day 1  
Live from 4:00pm

TEN2  
Int'l Champions Cup  
Man City v Real Madrid  
Live from 9:30am  
Bayern Munich v Inter Milan  
Live from 5:30pm

## NEYMAR'S \$18,000 SNEAKER-SPREE

Pop culture enthusiasts all over the world are familiar with Complex's popular 'Sneaker Shopping' show, a YouTube vlog where celebrities talk about their favorite shoes before spending some cash to buy new ones. Popular celebrities who have appeared on the show include Sean 'Diddy' Combs, Chris Brown, Rick Ross and 50 Cent, but Neymar outspent them all -- setting the record -- by splashing out \$18,623 when it was his turn to choose. The Brazilian bought 15 pairs of shoes, including the \$2,000 Air Jordan Retro Kaws. However, the most expensive pairs he opted for Nike Air Lebron Watch The Throne editions and a pair of the Nike Air Yeezy 2 NRGs, each with a retail price of \$5,000.

-AGENCIES



Italy's Federica Pellegrini pulled off a shock win in the 200m freestyle, unseating favourite Katie Ledecky, who had to settle for silver in the World Aquatics Championships in Budapest yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

# Pellegrini upstages Ledecky

## US break mixed relay record

AFP, BUDAPEST

Katie Ledecky said defeat in the women's 200m freestyle final on Wednesday will motivate her "for a couple of years", after Italy's Federica Pellegrini snatched gold at the world championships.

Pellegrini touched the wall first at one minute, 54.73 seconds with American Ledecky, the reigning world and Olympic champion, and Australia's Emma McKeon sharing silver as they both clocked 1:55.18.

The 28-year-old Pellegrini, who also won the world title over 200m at home in Rome in 2009 and Shanghai in 2011, said this was the last 200m freestyle of her career as she eyes retirement.

"It is an amazing medal. I thought I would get on the podium, but not the gold medal -- I thought Ledecky would win it," said Pellegrini, who finished fourth in last year's Olympic final in Rio de Janeiro.

"Before the last 50 metres, I thought I was in the same position as Rio, I didn't know where I would get the energy. This is the last 200 freestyle of my career."

Having become the first female swimmer to win 12 world titles with victory in the 1500m freestyle final on Tuesday, Ledecky

had been the favourite in the 200m final, but lost on the wall.

This is the first time in 13 finals, spanning three world championships and four years, that Ledecky has not finished with a gold medal and she says the defeat will motivate her for years to come.

"I knew it was going to be a tough field, but I can't complain with the silver," said the 20-year-old Ledecky.

"I don't know what it was, I'll have to review the race video and see what I could have done better."

"That will light some fire under me for the next couple of years."

Meanwhile, the United States broke the mixed 4x100m medley world record at the world aquatic championships on Wednesday while Cameron McEvoy was the fastest from the men's 100m freestyle heats.

The US quartet of Ryan Murphy, Kevin Cordes, Kelsei Worrell and Mallory Comerford clocked 3mins 40.28secs in the heats to break the previous mixed medley relay record of 3:41.71 set by Great Britain two years ago in Kazan.

The relay record is in danger of falling again in Wednesday night's final with Australia, Great Britain and Canada all qualifying behind the USA.

## 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:

### Pay dispute bit of a shame, says McGrath

Reports emerged that Australia players were mulling a pull-out from the series against Bangladesh and Glenn McGrath termed it shameful.

**Roma withstand Tottenham fightback**

Roma withstood a late comeback to inflict defeat on Tottenham in a bad tempered affair which ended 3-2.

**Man City summer spending spree not over, says Guardiola**

Pep Guardiola has confirmed Manchester City are "still looking" to add to their £200 million summer spending spree, although he refused to comment on the possibility of hijacking Real Madrid's move for Kylian Mbappe.

**Shoaib Akhtar reveals rivalry with Hayden**

Pakistan's fiery paceman Shoaib Akhtar revealed on social media posts that he wanted to 'hit' Australia opener Matthew Hayden badly during their playing days.

# 'No alternative to focusing on grassroots'

Local coaches urge for grooming talents from tender age

SPORTS REPORTER

Agreeing to most of the points Australian coach Andrew Ord raised following the national U-23 team's disappointing campaign in the AFC U-23 Championship Qualifiers, country's two top football coaches -- Maruf Haque and Saiful Bari Titu -- said there is no short-cut to improving football without youth development.

"Bangladesh is not anywhere near competitive at the international level," this statement made by Ord is good enough to highlight the current status of football in Bangladesh, who are 190th in FIFA rankings at the moment. Having raised questions about footballers' poor technique, lack of fitness and professionalism, Ord urged the local game's governing body to focus on youth development immediately.

"I also pointed out these things one and a half years ago after the SAFF Championship in Kerala. To be honest, worse is yet to come because there will hardly be any skillful player left after the departure of players like Mununul Islam and Zahid Hossain. The ones knocking at the door of the national team have poor technique and skill compared to the current ones," opined former national coach Maruf.

"What he (Ord) meant about youth development is to start programmes at

the grassroots level, not the ones featuring 15- or 16-year-old boys. Youth development in Europe and America means grassroots programme," said another former national coach Saiful Bari Titu.

"No wonder our players have poor technical and tactical skills at the moment. Techniques such as passing, shooting, controlling, crossing, heading, turning with the ball and tactics such as taking position and closing



MARUF HAQUE SAIFUL BARI TITU

down opposition players, making quick decisions on the pitch are skills that can be developed from the grassroots level. You can't embed these skills in players at 15 or 16 years of age," the AFC A licensed coach explained.

Titu believes if football craze returns, there will be no need to take special initiatives for youth development because players would come out automatically.

"As there is no football craze in the country at the moment, there is no

alternative to focusing on football academies, and in that case, BKSPs can be the centre of youth development. Football Federation can come forward in collaboration with the government and its ministries to provide quality coaches," Titu said, adding that some of the top clubs, who have proper structure and financial solvency, can take long-term plans to build youth squads.

Maruf, who is an UEFA A licensed coach, however thinks differently as he feels the federation must set example for clubs to follow.

"The BFF should take some pilot projects at districts which are providing most footballers at the moment. This should set an example for others to follow as no clubs or individuals are coming out to take the responsibility," said Maruf, who however wants most emphasis on coaches' education.

"I know some eight to 10 footballers in the professional league who don't know how to cross the ball and how to cut the ball back even though all of them spent eight years at football academies. So you have to provide proper coaching at grassroots level to groom them up. Honestly we don't have such coaches," said Maruf.

However both Maruf and Titu disagreed with Ord's suggestion that physical fitness can be improved through training, rather they believe that the players should keep themselves fit round the year.

"There is no football craze in the country at the moment, there is no

# Pique backtracks on Neymar tweet

AFP, Madrid

Gerard Pique has sparked panic at Barcelona after appearing to backtrack on his 'stays' tweet on teammate Neymar, target of a blockbuster transfer by Paris Saint Germain.

"Doubts, doubts and more doubts," ran the headline Wednesday on the front page of Catalan daily Sport above a photo of the striker lost deep in thought.

PSG are trying to lure the 25-year-old Brazilian to France and are ready to pay off his 222 million euro release clause and make the player the best-paid footballer on the planet.

Last week Pique took to social media to say "he's staying" -- but when pressed on the matter Tuesday ahead of a pre-season friendly in the United States against Manchester United he was less sure of himself.

"It's a personal opinion from the conversation that I had with him and my intuition," Pique said.

"But it's not official," he added. "And it's not for me to say if he's going to stay or not."

The position sent a shudder down the spine at Barcelona.

"Pique retracts and feeds the uncertainty," the newspaper Sport said.

"The situation is eroding confidence at the club," columnist Tomas Andreu wrote in Sport.

"What really hurts here is the silence of the player himself, which in the end says a great deal."

Neymar departed the stadium without addressing reporters after starring in a 2-1 win over Juventus on Saturday.

"They (the club) did not expect the nego-

tiations with PSG and the player to go this far," he said.

At the same press conference, the Argentine defender Javier Mascherano said he had told Neymar to carefully weigh up the pros and cons.

Mascherano added all the players, including Lionel Messi, had spoken the player to ask him to stay.

New PSG full-back Dani Alves, who took his compatriot Neymar under his wing while at the Camp Nou, posted a message on Instagram seemingly with a message for his former teammate.

"What do you want to be? Where do you want to go? Where do you want it?" he wrote on Sunday.

"All matters depend on you never forgetting where you came from and who was by your side when you were someone, but the world did not know who you were."

However, despite the insistence of his teammates that Neymar will not leave, reports have emerged that Paris Saint Germain have asked the Brazilian to make his decision as quickly as possible. If Neymar does not accept the offer, then they will move on to other options.

It is being reported that Neymar will have to decide and make his response public in the coming week, with PSG player Dani Alves said to be playing a major part in his Brazilian countryman's decision.

Alves has been a big part of the Neymar transfer news ever since he suddenly opted to join PSG despite reaching an agreement with Premier League side Manchester City.

Le Parisiens have also got Arsenal man Alexis Sanchez in their sights, but that deal is not dependant on whether Neymar decides to come or not.

# New contract for Mbappe?

AFP, Monaco

Monaco said on Wednesday that no deal with Real Madrid has been reached for teenage French international striker Kylian Mbappe.

Monaco vice president Vadim Vasilyev also said in a press conference the principality club were in discussions with Mbappe over a new contract extension.

The 18-year-old has been the subject of intense transfer speculation linking him to a world-record 180-million-euro move.

"I have read a lot of things in the press," said Vasilyev. "So far we have not signed any agreements with Real or any other club. All big clubs want him, he's the great hope of European football."

"We are in discussions over a contract extension with Kylian and we hope to reach an agreement."

"There is too much media pressure around him," he added. "It's not easy for him, but he handles it well."

# Djokovic out for the season

AFP, Belgrade

Twelve-time Grand Slam champion Novak Djokovic will miss the rest of the season with an elbow injury, he announced on Wednesday.

The 30-year-old Serb was forced to retire from his Wimbledon quarterfinal against Tomas Berdych earlier this month because of the problem, and will now sit out of next month's US Open.

In a live Facebook video post from Belgrade, the former world number one said that after suffering from the injury for a year-and-a-half, he had "made a decision to not play any competition, any tournaments" for the rest of 2017.

"Unfortunately this is the decision that had to be made at this moment. Wimbledon was probably the toughest tournament for me in terms of feeling the pain that has escalated," he said.

Between mid-January 2015 and June 2016, Djokovic won 17 of his 22 finals played in 24 tournaments. It seemed nothing could interrupt his dominance of world tennis.

Djokovic said that, having spoken to various medical specialists, "they all agree that I need rest, that I need time".

"This is one of those injuries when nothing can really help instantly, you just have to allow natural rehabilitation to take its course," he went on.

"And professionally this is obviously not an easy decision for me, but I'm trying to look from the positive side of everything."

The decision means he will also miss the semi-final of the Davis Cup in France in mid-September.

# Tragedy that shaped Federer

AGENCIES, London

Fourteen years after winning his first Grand Slam title at Wimbledon, Federer made history with an eighth All England Club triumph and 19th major. Victory over Marin Cilic in the Wimbledon final made the 35-year-old the oldest man to triumph on the famed grass courts tucked away in the suburbs of London.

And many other things have changed for Federer since that Centre Court triumph over Mark Philippoussis in 2003. On court, his successes have brought him more than \$100 million in prize money and 92 career titles. Off it, he is the father of two sets of twins, Myla Rose and Charlene Riva and Leo and Lenny with wife Mirka.

But his career and life wasn't always so settled. As a talented young player, Federer's on-court tantrums and hair-trigger temper once threatened to stunt his progress.

It took a personal tragedy for Federer to press the reset button. Just when he turned 21, his Australian coach and close friend from his formative years Peter Carter was killed in a car crash in 2002, just a week before Federer turned 21.

South Africa. From that point on, Federer committed himself to winning in style, with grace and not dictated by his inner demons.

David Law, a former ATP communications manager, revealed on his The Tennis Podcast that Federer wasn't exactly the humble person he is today when he was growing up. Law would know, after he helped groom Federer for media appearances, co-ordinated press guides and watched soccer matches with him.

"The number of times we would go to tournaments and he would throw in a substandard performance where he'd mentally break down or he'd get emotional and throw his rackets -- he was a baby," Law said on the Tennis Podcast.

"Honestly, he was a crybaby on the court. He was just immature and it took him a while [to grow up]."

Federer, who rarely breaks from his mild-mannered attitude today, was just like any other teenager. He was silly, he liked obnoxious music and was big into video games, according to Law. But Federer's childish antics didn't last. He got a heartbreaking wakeup call when former Carter -- who coached him from age 9 to 18 -- died while on a trip in the safari in 2002, just a week before Federer turned 21.

Law said that moment straightened Federer out.

"Federer was devastated," Law said about Carter's death. "That made Federer grow up quickly because I don't think he'd ever had to think about mortality before. It stopped him in his tracks and it caused him problems for a long time in terms of dealing with the grief. This is someone he knew well, who he travelled everywhere with."

"It hit Federer incredibly hard and I think that -- and this is a feature of Federer as a boy becoming a man -- is that at every stage of his life, whatever has happened, he's digested and learned from it."

Federer went on to win at Wimbledon in 2003 before capturing three Grand Slams the following year. The rest, well, is history.

But Federer has not forgotten all that Carter did for him. The superstar paid tribute to Carter after winning the Australian Open in January, saying no one has had a bigger impact on his career.

"For me Peter Carter was a very important man just overall for my character," Federer said. "He taught me respect for each person. It doesn't matter if that person is famous or not famous. He just taught me the right values."

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