

# What to WATCH

DAY'S EVENT

PTV  
Pakistan v World XI  
1st T20I  
Live from 8:00pm

TEN 1  
UEFA Champions League  
Man United v Basel  
Live from 12:45am (Wednesday)

Bangladesh Premier League  
Farashganj v Arambagh  
Time: 5:00pm  
SaifSporting v Sk Jamal

TEN 2  
UEFA Champions League  
Barcelona v Juventus  
Live from 12:45am (Wednesday)

SONY ESPN  
UEFA Champions League  
Celtic v PSG  
Live from 12:45am (Wednesday)

TEN 3  
UEFA Champions League  
Chelsea v Qarabag  
Live from 12:45am (Wednesday)

SONY SIX  
UEFA Champions League  
Bayern Munich v Anderlecht  
Live from 12:45am (Wednesday)

## REF BACKTRACKS AFTER PLAYER OWNS UP

A player in Germany's second division admitted after winning a penalty on Sunday that he had not been fouled, prompting the referee to overturn his original decision. VfL Bochum captain Felix Bastians was praised by both sides for his conduct following the incident which happened when his team were trailing Darmstadt 1-0 with less than half an hour to go. Referee Benedikt Kempkes pointed to the spot when Bastians burst into the penalty area and went down in the 63rd minute. As he was surrounded by protesting Darmstadt players, the referee decided to ask Bastians what had really happened -- and the Bochum player said there had been no contact. "The ref asked me if he had touched me, which he hadn't," said Bastians. "He stuck his foot out and when I'm at full speed that's enough sometimes. But I told him there was no contact and that's why he correctly didn't award the penalty."

—REUTERS



Rafael Nadal of Spain bites the US Open trophy in celebration after winning the men's singles final against Kevin Anderson of South Africa at Flushing Meadows on Sunday.

# A chastening defeat

## Bangladesh begin campaign with a 9-0 drubbing

ANISUR RAHMAN from Thailand



The Bangladesh U-16 women's team saw the other side of the coin as they began their AFC U-16 Women's Championship with a 9-0 drubbing at the hands of defending champions North Korea at the Chonburi Stadium in Thailand yesterday.

The girls in red and green, who made it through to the final round with similar margin wins against teams like Iran and Uzbekistan, were made to taste their own medicine as the North Koreans, the defending champions and also the reigning FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup winners, effortlessly scored nine goals in a thoroughly one-sided affair.

The Bangladesh team was expected to show a bit more resolve, at the least for the effort they put in over the last one year, augmented by the number of tours they made to places like Japan, South Korea and Singapore.

However, on the pitch they looked too tired and nervous and were squarely beaten by the pace, skill and technique of their North Korean counterparts, who proved why they are the defending champions in both the AFC U-16 Championship and FIFA

U-17 World Cup.

The team management's decision to get the girls through an hour's training on the morning of the match could have played a role in the lacklustre performance as the Bangladesh players failed to resist their opponents and panicked right from the beginning. They could not even string five passes together in the first half, although they did look a bit better in the latter part of the second half.

Relentless instructions from head coach Golam Rabbani Choton and technical director Paul Smalley might have even got them confused as they looked bewildered and failed to put in anything close to their natural game.

The initial plan was to play within their own 30 yards and watch the opposition's moves, but those plans hardly took effect as Choton's charges made a lot of miss passes, while blunders from the defenders and mistakes from second-choice goalkeeper Roksana Begum forced them to concede two goals within the first eight minutes. Two more goals came in the first half while five more were netted in the second half.

Kim Kyong Yong struck five goals while Ri Su Gyong struck twice. Kim Kyong Yong and Yun Ji Hwa netted one goal each.



Bangladesh players were left chasing the North Koreans for the whole time during their opening fixture of the AFC U-16 Women's Championship at the Chonburi Stadium in Thailand yesterday.

PHOTO: BFF

# Nadal hails 'incredible era'

AFP, New York

**US OPEN** Rafael Nadal described the year 2017 as "one of the best of his career" on Sunday after winning a third US Open and 16th Grand Slam.

World number one Nadal defeated South Africa's world number 32 Kevin Anderson 6-3, 6-3, 6-4 in a brutally one-sided final during which he did not face a break point.

Nadal also claimed an unprecedented 10th French Open in June after finishing runner-up to Roger Federer at the Australian Open.

"In terms of results, this has been one of the best seasons of my career, of course," Nadal admitted of a year in which he won at least two Slams for the fourth time in his career.

Had he gotten the better of Gilles Muller at Wimbledon, where he lost the final set of his fourth-round clash 15-13, the year might have been even more memorable.

"I have been winning titles, playing three finals of Grand Slams, so that's a lot. That's so difficult. The other slam that I was not in the final, I lost the match 15-13 in the fifth to be in the quarterfinals.

"So was very competitive year for me. And on clay, I won almost every match. Of course is an emotional season because I have been through tough moments in terms of injuries."

Nadal's win on Sunday was the latest chapter in an epic story of domination by the sport's superstars.

From Wimbledon in 2003, an incredible 53 of 58 Slams have now been claimed by just five men -- Federer (19), Nadal (16), Novak Djokovic (12) and Andy Murray and Stan Wawrinka with three

GRAND SLAM LEADERS					
PLAYER	TITLES	AUS	FRENCH	WIMBLEDON	US
Roger Federer	19	5	1	8	5
<b>Rafael Nadal</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
Pete Sampras	14	2	0	7	5
Novak Djokovic	12	6	1	3	2
Roy Emerson	12	6	2	2	2

apiece.

Only Andy Roddick, Gaston Gaudio, Marat Safin, Juan Martin del Potro and Marin Cilic have broken the spell.

"We are in an era that is not nice to say, because I'm part of it, but we are in an era that some players make incredible things in this sport," said Nadal.

"It's difficult to win a lot of titles. We should be very happy. Probably even Roger and me and Novak, much more than we ever dreamed."

To hammer home their enduring appeal and dominance, Federer and Nadal shared the four Slams in 2017 -- Federer winning the Australian Open before capturing a record eighth Wimbledon.

Despite his success, catching the 19 majors of Federer is not particularly high on Nadal's list of priorities.

"I really never thought much about that. I just do my way. He does his way. Let's see when we finish," he said.

"I have 16. So three is big difference. I really don't think much about these kind of things."

"Well done for Roger that he is having an amazing season, too, and well done for me because I'm having a great season, too."

"Tennis is not all about the Grand Slams, so

## MATCH STATISTICS

RAFAEL NADAL v KEVIN ANDERSON		
1	Aces	10
1	Doubles Faults	4
16/16	Net Points Won	16/34
4/9	Break Points Won	0/0
30	Winners	32
11	Unforced Errors	40

there are tournaments to come and I'm excited about this last part of the season."

It's all a far cry from the end of last year when Nadal was ranked at nine in the world and Federer was 16.

It was also a 2016 season that saw the injury-hobbled Nadal lose in the first round at the Australian Open, withdraw after two rounds of the French with a wrist problem, skip Wimbledon and exit the US Open in the last 16.

However, in 2017, Federer and Nadal have won five titles apiece and on Monday they will be back at number one and two in the world for the first time since 2011.

"I was surprised in January. Now I am not that much surprised," said Nadal.

"There are things that probably Roger and me share -- that is passion for what we are doing, passion for tennis, passion for the competition and the spirit of improvement all the time."

## Frank de Boer booted out

REUTERS, London

Crystal Palace sacked new manager Frank de Boer four games into the Premier League season yesterday after suffering the worst start to an English top-flight campaign for nearly 100 years.

The 47-year-old former Ajax player and manager only took charge on June 26 with a three-year contract, but his first four Premier League games all ended in defeat.

The club confirmed de Boer's departure in a brief statement on the club's website.

"Crystal Palace Football Club have this morning parted company with Frank de Boer," it said.

De Boer's reign is the shortest in the Premier League era in terms of matches played.

Les Reed lasted seven games in 2006 before being sacked by Charlton Athletic while American Bob Bradley survived only 11 last season at Swansea City. Frenchman Jacques Santini was also sacked by Tottenham Hotspur after 11 games in 2004.

It is the second time the Dutchman has lasted fewer than 100 days in a job having suffered a similar fate at Inter Milan last year where he was sacked after 85 days in charge.

He is the second time the Dutchman has lasted fewer than 100 days in a job having suffered a similar fate at Inter Milan last year where he was sacked after 85 days in charge.

"So we made our approach and Wenger did show a little bit of interest, enough to want to meet Peter Kenyon and me at his house in London to listen to what we had to say."

Speaking after his side's 3-0 win over Bournemouth on Saturday, Wenger said he had turned United down because he felt wedded to Arsenal's values.

tired.

"They were not tired, rather the fear caught

them and they could not perform accordingly.

However, we have to admit the difference

between the two teams," said Choton.

When asked about the massive margin of defeat, Choton said that he would have been happier had margin been kept to 7-0 as he felt his side conceded the last two goals poorly.

When asked whether the morning training session left any impact on the team, Choton said, "We had a tactical and defending session in the morning and I think it had no impact on the match because many world-class teams do practice in the morning of match-day. We also did so during our practice matches elsewhere."

However, it has been learnt that the coaching staff and team management were against the decision, which was taken unilaterally by Smalley.

# Wenger 'not tempted' by MU

AFP, London



Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger says he was never tempted to join Manchester United, after it emerged the Old Trafford club approached him about succeeding Alex Ferguson in 2002.

Former United chairman Martin Edwards revealed in his new autobiography that the club sounded out Wenger after Ferguson announced he would retire at the end of the 2001-02 season.

But Ferguson changed his mind, eventually remaining in position until 2013, and Wenger says he has no regrets about staying put at Arsenal.

Asked if he had been tempted by United's offer, the Frenchman replied: "No, because I was always happy here. More than people were happy with me, I was always happy here."

"I am always very confidential. Maybe one day I will get all the contacts I had during my stay at Arsenal and it will make a few chapters, but you should ask Martin Edwards."

Writing in his autobiography, "Red Glory: Manchester United and Me", Edwards said Wenger had shown enough interest in the role to meet him and chief executive Peter Kenyon.

"Our first choice was Arsene," said Edwards, who was United's chairman between 1980 and 2002.

"We thought he was the best candidate to replace Alex. Certainly he was my number-one choice."

"So we made our approach and Wenger did show a little bit of interest, enough to want to meet Peter Kenyon and me at his house in London to listen to what we had to say."

Speaking after his side's 3-0 win over Bournemouth on Saturday, Wenger said he had turned United down because he felt wedded to Arsenal's values.

## El Clasico switched to Dec 23

AFP, Madrid

La Liga president Javier Tebas confirmed on Monday that the first El Clasico of the season between Real Madrid and Barcelona will be played on December 23 at 1:00 pm (1200GMT).

The clash was expected to take place on December 20 as part of a full midweek round of fixtures before Spain's winter break.

However, given Real could feature in the Club World Cup final in Japan on December 17, the European champions have been given extra recovery time.

"It will be played on Saturday 23rd at 1300. That is what we have told the television companies," Tebas told Onda Cero radio.

"That week, given it is Christmas time we will have a very special round of fixtures with games on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday."

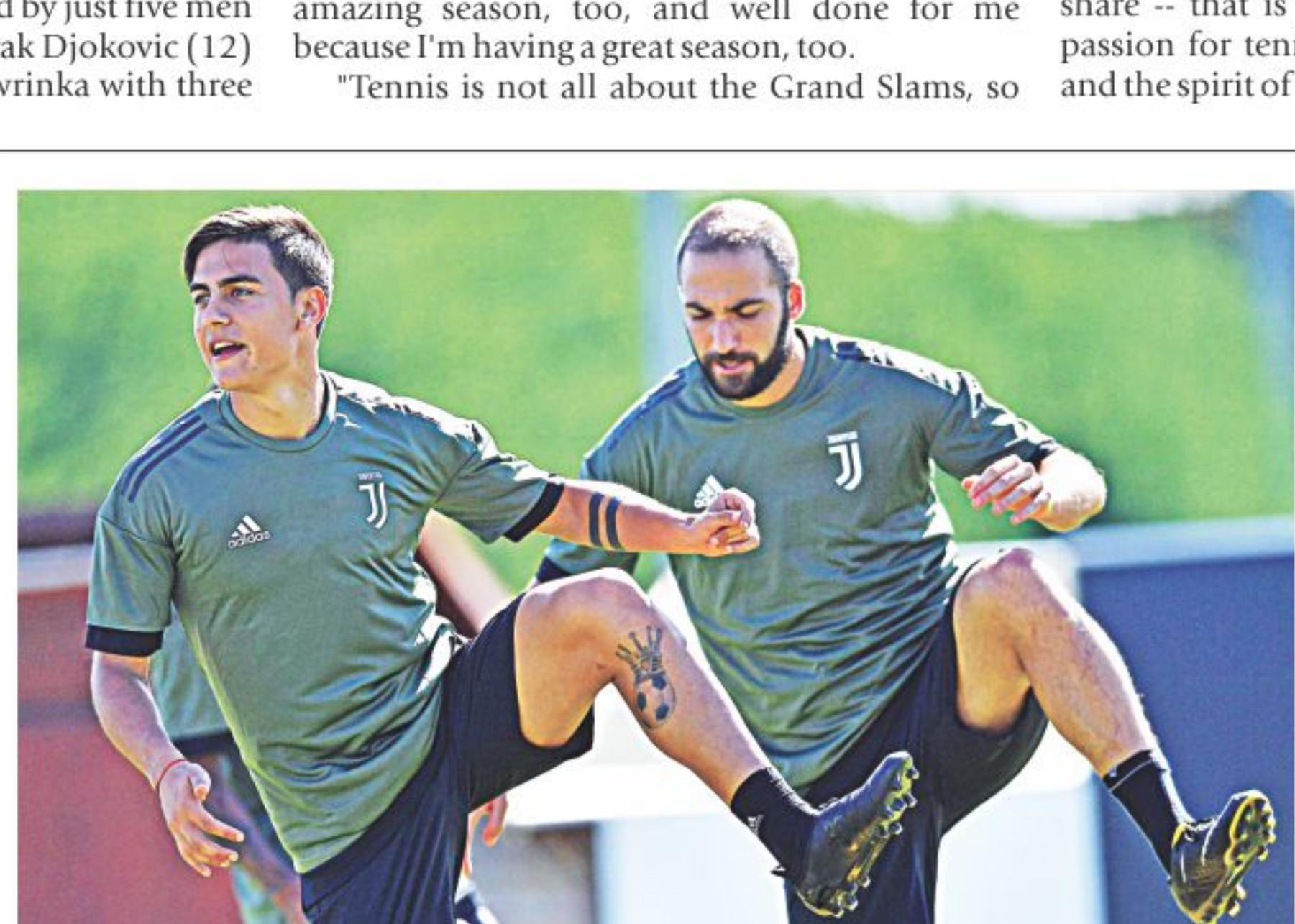


PHOTO: AFP

Juventus strike pair Paulo Dybala (L) and Gonzalo Higuain warm up during a training session in Turin yesterday on the eve of their Champions League match against Barcelona.

# Barca face Juve test

AFP, Barcelona



UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE