

What to WATCH

STAR SPORTS SELECT 1
English Premier League
Liverpool v Leicester City
Live from 9:00pm
Man United v Southampton
Live from 11:30pm

STAR SPORTS SELECT 2
English Premier League
Chelsea v Stoke City
Live from 9:00pm
TEH 1
Serie A
Fiorentina v AC Milan

Live from 5:30pm
Roma v Sassuolo
Live from 8:00pm
Inter Milan v Lazio
Live from 11:00pm
Verona v Juventus
Live from 1:45am (Sunday)

KOMPANY COMPLETES MBA

Manchester City captain Vincent Kompany's plans for life after football are well underway as he graduated with a Master's in Business Administration. The 31-year-old has spent the last four years juggling playing for City and studying part time at Alliance Manchester Business School as he plans for life after he hangs up his boots. Despite picking up another injury in the 1-0 win against Newcastle the Blues skipper isn't planning on retiring any time soon. He said: "Although I want to continue playing football as long as possible, I may look to use this combination of academic learning and years of playing experience in the future." Not content with just winning titles with Manchester City, Kompany was determined to further his education. The son of a Congolese political activist and a Belgian trades unionist, Kompany had always been told by his parents of the importance of education, regardless of how promising he was as a footballer.

—AGENCIES



Arsenal striker Alexis Sanchez (R) celebrates his second goal with teammate Hector Bellerin during their Premier League 3-2 win over Crystal Palace at Selhurst Park on Thursday.

Sanchez fires Arsenal

AFP, London



Arsenal Wenger victory on the night he equalled Alex Ferguson's Premier League record of matches in charge with a 3-2 win over Crystal Palace.

Sanchez's brace -- the second a beauty from Jack Wilshere's superb pass -- added to Shkodran Mustafi's first ever away goal for the Gunners as just enough to get them past the Eagles in Wenger's 810th Premier League game as a manager.

James Tomkins's 89th minute header -- Andros Townsend had drawn them level at 1-1 early in the second-half before Sanchez's scoring burst -- ensured a nervy finish, but the Gunners deserved to run out winners and end Palace's eight-game unbeaten run.

Arsenal drew level with fourth-placed north London rivals Tottenham Hotspur but with a worse goal difference whilst Palace remain firmly embroiled in a battle against relegation just a point above the bottom three.

Palace were able to apply some pressure during the opening stages, the closest they came to testing Petr Cech came when Yohan Cabaye shot narrowly wide from 20 yards out.

Wenger's side gradually took charge and they forced the breakthrough in the 24th

minute when Palace's failure to clear Mesut Ozil's free-kick eventually led to Mustafi's opening goal.

The ball was played back towards the right side of the area where Alexandre Lacazette drew a good save from Julian Speroni only for the ball to fall to Mustafi who finished neatly with a first time shot.

Six minutes later, Arsenal would have been two up but for Speroni who produced an excellent, one-handed reaction save after Ozil had latched onto Sanchez's superbly weighted through ball.

Wilfried Zaha was Palace's most threatening player throughout the first half with the Ivorian maintaining the form that has seen him linked with a number of top clubs this season.

It also made the winger a target for some robust treatment with Callum Chambers booked for pulling him back.

Zaha made the point he believed he deserved more protection too vigorously to referee Michael Oliver as they left the pitch at half time and could have been sent off after sarcastically reacting to the match officials' decision to show him a yellow card.

Zaha though reacted in a more positive way after the restart as he eased his way past Chambers before pulling the ball back towards Townsend who struck a first time shot past Cech from near the penalty spot.

At that point Palace were in the ascendancy but Sanchez's quick double soon killed off the home side's hopes.

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:

'Room for more' as Ronaldo wins another Globe award
Real Madrid star Cristiano Ronaldo was Thursday named Globe Soccer's Best Player for the second year in a row and the fourth time overall although he wasn't present in person to receive his trophy.

Messi is the best but don't let Ronaldo: Totti
Cristiano Ronaldo's statement Ballon d'Or victory pulled him level with Barcelona playmaker Lionel Messi on five awards apiece but Francesco Totti believes that Messi is the best.

Jose takes a dig at Klopp

AFP, Manchester

Jose Mourinho has mischievously highlighted the changing view of Jurgen Klopp after he has Liverpool counterpoint spent £75 million to sign Southampton's Dutch defender Virgil van Dijk this week.

The Manchester United manager cheekily suggested on Friday that if he were a member of the media, he would ask Klopp about his comments, 18 months ago, when the German claimed he would not want to spend huge amounts of money even if it were available to him.

At that time, Klopp was responding to a summer in which United were on the verge of breaking the world record by paying £89 million for Paul Pogba - a figure "only" £14 million more than Liverpool spent this week to land Van Dijk. "You know I think the one that speaks about it in a specific way has to be Jurgen," said Mourinho.

"And if I was one of you I would ask him about his comments about his own team, but I'm not one year ago. But I'm not one year ago because in Liverpool they do what they want to do and I am nobody to comment on what they do. "The reality is that if they think that the player is the right player for them and they really want the player they pay this amount or they don't have the player because that is the way the market is at that time."

Football celebrates Weah's victory

AFP, Paris

Former Chelsea star Didier Drogba led plaudits on Friday from the world of football to George Weah after the only African to win the Ballon d'Or was elected President of Liberia.

"Congratulations Mr. George," Ivory Coast legend posted on Twitter.

"Thanks Didier for your support, we are both concerned and aware of the destiny of our peoples. Let's follow the same path," replied Weah.

Drogba's compatriot, Manchester City midfielder Yaya Toure wrote: "Congratulations president Weah!!"

Marseille's former Cameroon midfielder Stephane Mbia applauded Weah on his 'super career'.

"First African Ballon d'Or in 1995, first retired player to be elected president of the Republic. Respect!"

His election success was noted with pride by former clubs Monaco, Paris Saint-Germain and AC Milan.

Weah played at Monaco from 1988 to 1992 and the French Ligue 1 side noted in a statement: "The entire club congratulates George Weah on his election to the presidency of Liberia and presents him with all its best wishes for success as the head of his country!"

From Monaco Weah moved to PSG where he picked up two cup titles in 1993 and 1995, a league title in 1994 as well as sparkling in Europe.

"We knew George Weah well before he became elected president of Liberia. Congratulations to the legend of PSG and world football on this new chapter

in his brilliant career," PSG wrote in English on Twitter.

AC Milan offered their congratulations "to the Red and Black legend" who started for the club over four seasons, picking up two Serie A titles in 1996 and 1999.

Despite numerous examples of the game's former stars entering politics Weah is the first former player to succeed in being elected head of his country.

Others have launched political careers, most recently AC Milan's star Georgian defender Kakha Kaladze who was elected mayor of Georgia capital



Tbilisi after serving as the Georgian government's Energy Minister.

In Brazil ex star striker Romario has served as a senator since 2015. But until Weah being elected head of state was confined to powerful club directors like ex AC Milan boss Silvio Berlusconi in Italy, or the current Argentine President, Mauricio Macri, a former Boca Juniors president.

By winning this week's election Weah has created another precedent just as he did back in 1995 when he became the first African to win the Ballon d'Or.

AFP, London



Raheem Sterling says Manchester City are motivated by the pursuit of silverware rather than the promise of breaking more records as the Premier League leaders chase another landmark at Crystal Palace this weekend.

Pep Guardiola's side have already turned the title race into a lengthy coronation party after winning 18th successive league matches to open up a 15-point lead over second placed Manchester United.

A slew of statistical milestones have littered red-hot City's incredible run, and they can finish 2017 by claiming another notable feat.

Just hours before the New Year's Eve

UEFA 'don't care' about racism

AFP, London

Rhian Brewster, the leading scorer in England's Under-17 World Cup victory earlier this year, claimed Thursday that UEFA "don't really care" about racism.

The 17-year-old, who is yet to feature for Liverpool, says he has witnessed racial abuse seven times this year. "I don't think UEFA take this thing seriously. They don't really care. That is how it feels anyway, like it has been brushed under the carpet," the teenager told The Guardian.

FIXTURES

(1500 GMT unless stated)

Saturday
Bournemouth v Everton, Huddersfield v Burnley, Chelsea v Stoke, Liverpool v Leicester, Manchester United v Southampton (1730 GMT), Newcastle v Brighton, Watford v Swansea

Sunday
Crystal Palace v Manchester City (1200 GMT), West Brom v Arsenal (1630 GMT)

fireworks begin to light up the night sky on Sunday, unbeaten City will be at Selhurst Park looking for a record, equalling 19th consecutive league victory.

The only club in Europe's five biggest leagues to have had a winning run that long is Bayern Munich under Guardiola in 2013-14.



Keraningan Red team and Nawabgani Green team players tussle for possession during their quarterfinal match of the Women's Football Competition at the Sultanah Kamal Womans Sports Complex yesterday. Keraningan Red team won the match 7-2 and set up a semifinal clash against Keraningan Green team.

PHOTO: STAR

Victory Day sports

SPORTS REPORTER

Jerin Sultana and Mashfia Afrin clinched titles in their respective singles events of the Victory Day Open Tennis tournament at the National Tennis Complex in Ramna yesterday.

Jerin of BKSPP beat teammate Rini Akter 6-0, 6-1 to win girls' under-14 singles while Mashfia of Brahmanbaria defeated Sadia Afrin of BKSPP 6-1, 6-1 to win the girls' under-12 singles title.

In boys' under-16 singles, Jewel Ran of Elite Tennis Academy beat teammate Swadhin Hossain 6-1, 4-1 (ret'd) to set up a final clash against Mohammad Ishtak, who beat Naimul Islam of BKSPP 6-4, 6-2.

CYCLING

Kabita Roy of Bangladesh Army emerged champion in 10km road race of Victory Day Cycling Competition, which was held at the Bangabandhu National Stadium premises yesterday.

Kabita's teammate Shilpi Khatun and Subarna Ramia finished second and third in the same event while Keya Feroushi of City Cyclist Team won the 5km road race, finishing ahead of Eliza Ahmed of Team Ramblers and Nowrin Jahan of Team RBR.

In 20km road race, Shakil Ahmed of Army became champion while Sumon of BCB and Ali Amin of Army finished second and third while Bangladesh Army became champions in 10km time trial event where BCB and Bangladesh Jai finished second and third respectively.

Novak out of Abu Dhabi

AFP, Abu Dhabi



Former world number one and 12-time Grand Slam champion Novak Djokovic withdrew from the Mubadala World Tennis Championship on Friday with elbow pain to raise fresh doubts over his fitness.

The 30-year-old Serbian star had targeted Abu Dhabi for his first match since his knee-finishals loss at Wimbledon in July this year.

Djokovic was scheduled to play Spain's Roberto Bautista Agut in the semi-finals of the exhibition tournament at 1900 local time.

But four hours before that, Djokovic released a statement on his website announcing his intention. It was not clear still if he will play the Qatar Open where he is set to meet next week.

"I am terribly disappointed that I am forced to withdraw from the Mubadala World Tennis Championship," Djokovic said in the statement.

"Unfortunately, in the past few days I started to feel pain in the elbow and after several tests, my medical team has advised me not to risk anything, to withdraw from the tournament and to immediately continue with the therapy."



He added: "Now I need to accept this situation, and to wait for the results of the therapy, in order to start playing tennis again and getting back to full rhythm. This might affect the start of the season and the tournament

plan, but the decision will be made in the following days."

The organisers have now put together a match between another former world No 1, Britain's Andy Murray, and Bautista-Agut at the same time.

Murray also hasn't played a match since his loss at Wimbledon to Sam Querrey.

He had been suffering from a hip injury and was spotted in Abu Dhabi on Thursday practicing with his coaching team.

The second semifinal of the tournament is between world No 5 Dominic Thiem of Austria and world No 14 Kevin Anderson of South Africa.

On Saturday, prior to the men's final, former women's No 1 and 23-time Grand Slam champion Serena Williams will make her return to court with an exhibition match against the reigning French Open champion, Jelena Ostapenko.

Williams has not played since winning the Australian Open because of pregnancy and the birth of her first child in September.

Sevilla appoint Montella

AFP, Madrid

Sevilla on Thursday said they had reached an agreement in principle with experienced Italian coach Vincenzo Montella to replace Eduardo Berizzo who was sacked just a month after it was announced he was suffering from prostate cancer.

Montella was named by AC Milan in November after just 17 months in charge with the Italian giants marooned in mid-table.

"Sevilla and Italian coach Vincenzo Montella have reached an agreement in principle so that he will become coach of the Sevilla first team until June 2019," the La Liga club announced on its website.

"The deal will be completed once Montella's lawyers have reached an agreement with AC Milan for the terms of departure of the coach from the Rossoneri."