Bangladesh Premier League Saif Sporting v Ctg Abahani Time: 4:30pm

Muktijoddha v Mohammedan Time: 6:45pm Venue: BNS, Dhaka

Leganes v Real Sociedad

Live from 5:00pm

Live from 9:15pm

Live from 11:30pm

Barcelona v Levante

Villarreal v Deportivo

TEN 2

LaLiga

Celta Vigo v Real Madrid Live from 1:45am (Monday) SONYESPN

FA Cup Nottingham v Arsenal Live from 10:00pm

TEVEZ JOINS BOCA FOR THIRD TIME

Former Manchester United and Juventus striker Carlos Tevez agreed a move back to boyhood club Boca Juniors on Friday after 12 months in Chinese football with Shanghai Shenhua, the Argentine team announced. "Tevez is coming home! He joined the team today and is already training with his teammates," Boca said on its various social media accounts alongside a photo of the player working out in a gym. It will be the 33-year-old's third spell at Boca Juniors. He was pictured in the gym wearing a Boca team shirt although the club did not reveal the value of the transfer. Argentine news agency Telam had said earlier that Tevez had already negotiated what jersey he will wear at the Buenos Aires club -- number 32. Tevez joined Shenhua in January last year on an estimated 730,000 euros a week salary, making him one of the world's highest-paid players.





The Bangladesh Sports Press Association (BSPA) organised a colourful ceremony at a hotel in the capital yesterday to felicitate the best sportspeople of 2017. 13 personalities including athletes, organisers and a corporate house were honoured for their performances and contributions to their respective fields. Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed graced the occasion as chief guest. PHOTO: COLLECTED

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:

Federer recalls Hingis influence

Roger Federer paid tribute to the influence of countrywoman and former Hopman Cup teammate Martina Hingis on his career after guiding Switzerland to their third success in the mixed teams tournament in Perth.

Lingard, Lukaku carry United to 4th round

Late goals by inform Jesse Lingard and fit-again striker Romelu Lukaku helped Manchester United to

reach the FA Cup fourth round as they ground out a 2-0 home win over Championship side Derby

Immobile hits four in rout

REUTERS, Milan

SERIEA

Lazio forward Ciro Immobile hit four goals in a 5-2 rout of SPAL on Saturday while a routine 2-0 win at home to Verona kept Napoli top of Serie A.

Torino's new coach Walter Mazzarri enjoyed a winning start with a 3-0 win over Bologna, who missed a penalty when the score was 1-1, and AC Milan scraped past Crotone 1-0 with the help of a goalkeeping mistake. Meanwhile, bottom club

Benevento, who failed to win in their first 18 games, made it two in a row by beating Sampdoria 3-2. Napoli, aiming to stop Juventus'

run of six successive titles, lead with 51 points from 20 games while Juve are second with 47 ahead of their visit to Cagliari later on in the day.

Maurizio Sarri's side needed 65 minutes to break down stubborn Verona before Kalidou Koulibaly

Callejon volleyed home Lorenzo Insigne's cross.

league with his haul against SPAL, scoring a hat-trick between the 19th and 41st minutes and adding another five minutes into the second half.

Luis Alberto got Lazio off the mark in the fifth minute, wriggling through the defence to score a brilliant individual goal, before Mirko Antenucci levelled with a penalty three minutes

Antenucci also scored SPAL's other goal in the 31st minute.

Lorenzo De Silvestri headed Torino in front in the 38th minute, as Mazzarri took his place on the bench 48 hours after replacing the sacked Sinisa Mihajlovic, before a controversial start to the second half.

Bologna's Simone Verdi went down in the area and was booked for diving but the referee changed his mind and

headed in from a corner and Jose awarded a penalty after consulting with the video assistant referee (VAR).

However, Erick Pulgar's spot kick was Immobile took his tally to 20 in the saved by Salvatore Sirigu and Torino went on to score further goals through M'Baye Niang and Iago Falque.

The VAR was also used at AC Milan who had a goal chalked off for a foul by Franck Kessie. However, they were already in front

by then after Crotone goalkeeper Alex Cordaz punched an attempted clearance straight at Leonardo Bonucci and the ball rebounded in. Massimo Coda hit the woodwork

twice before scoring a brace for Benevento against Sampdoria.

Gianluca Caprari gave the visitors a halftime lead but Coda curled in the equaliser in the 59th minute and scored with a free kick six minutes from time.

Enrico Brignola added a third and Dawid Kownacki pulled one back for

Abahani's amazing transformation

SPORTS REPORTER



SAIFE Abahani will celebrate their sixth title with the trophy only after their

game against Chittagong Abahani, on January 11, which they are quite confident about winning too. The Sky Blues beat titlerivals Sheikh Jamal DC on Friday night to capture the title with a game in hand, extending their record-haul to six titles in the professional league era. That win also took their winning streak

to nine matches, seeing the Dhanmondi giants wipe off a five-point deficit and forge a four-point lead. The nine-game winning streak also coincided with the departure of Drago Mamic, the Croatian coach who left the club in late October after his contract had run out. The team's long-serving left-back Wali

Faisal, who had to watch the latest victory from the gallery due to suspension, attributed the change in fortunes to the responsibility shared by each and every member of the team and right decisions taken by team management. "The departure of the coach didn't really

discourage us, instead it made us more motivated to take each other's responsibilities," Wali said the day after winning the

"The difference with other teams was that we did not have too many people giving too many advices in our club. We had our manager and club president encouraging us, and the players knew their jobs individually and collectively," said Wali, who has won five of the six professional league titles with Abahani since his debut for the club in 2003.

Abahani's winning streak started on November 18, with a 2-1 win over Farashganj, a relegation-threatened team that they had lost to in their second match of the league five months ago. That defeat against the perennial relegation-battlers

had shaken the side to the core, and slowly but surely, the club reorganised itself. In fact, after that defeat the Sky Blues had gone on a nine-match unbeaten streak before losing the first match of the second leg against Saif SC. The team's manager Satyajit Das Rupu explained the transformation.

"We have always had a very balanced side. I wouldn't say we were better in any particular department because it would take the credit away from others. But we did have a problem with scoring in the first leg. So we had to take a crucial decision of letting go of a proven forward Landing Darboe to bring in Sunday Chizoba, who is a proven goalscorer. That decision paid off as he scored 10 goals in 10 matches, which made our work a lot easier," Rupu said.

So far, Abahani have won six out of ten professional league titles, hence the experience of winning big has also helped them while teams like Chittagong Abahani, the early pace-setters, fell by the wayside in the time of reckoning. But with the league title in the bag, and the Independence Cup coming up, the Sky Blues will be up for a much bigger challenge in the form of the AFC Cup, where they finished bottom of the group last year.

This time they will have Indian league champions Aizawl FC, Maldivian champions New Radiant SC and another South Asian team to be decided through a play-off as their group opponents. It will be a tall ask to progress through the group stages, but Rupu believes they are better prepared this year than the last.

"We have qualified for the AFC Cup as the champions of Bangladesh, not as the third or fourth team. So we are there by merit and we have our plans and ideas about how we can be competitive in that competition," said Rupu.

Abahani will play their first match of the AFC Cup on March 6 at home against New Radiant SC, and they will start training soon after the Independence Cup is completed.

Costa scores winner, gets sent off

AFP, Madrid

Atletico Madrid unleashed Diego Costa in La Liga on Saturday and the controversial centre-forward scored the winner before being sent off in a 2-0 home win over regional rivals Getafe.

Atletico's transfer ban ended last week and Costa was playing his first league game since rejoining the Spanish club from Chelsea.

The 2-0 win, in which

France star Antoine Griezmann set up the opener for Angel Correa on 18 minutes, lifts Atletico into second, six points behind Barcelona who play Levante on Sunday.

It also took Atletico five points clear of third placed Valencia.

Costa had been lively the whole match and received a yellow card for a foul in the 62nd minute. Five minutes later he met a low cross to put his side 2-0 up and immediately earned a second yellow for leaping into the stands to celebrate with fans.

The brooding striker looked totally perplexed by the decision but his borderline style of play may inject some much needed bite to the Atletico forward line.

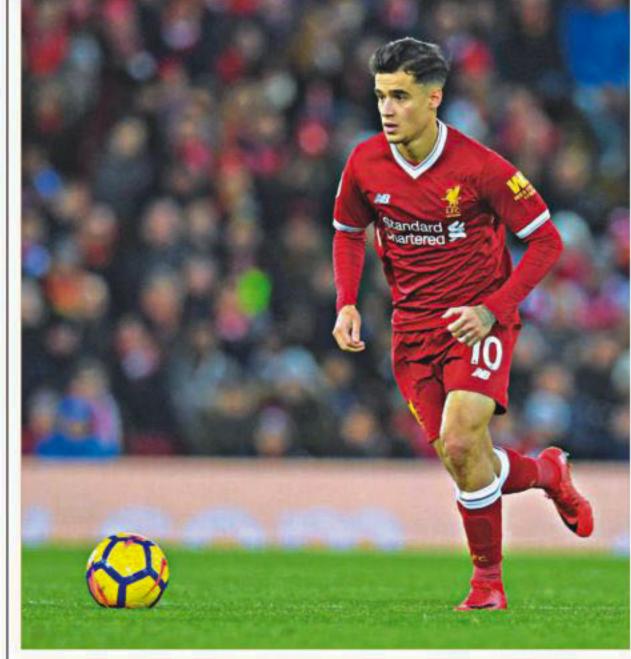
"His presence gives us speed and directness. And he frightens opponents too," said Atletico Coach Diego Simeone after the game.

"The referee was unable to consider the emotional aspect (of Costa's behaviour), the rules are the rules," he said.

Simeone's side looked as hard to beat as ever -- with just eight goals conceded and one defeat in 18 league games -- but they have scored only 27 with Griezmann struggling to find the net, hitting just five league goals so far.

Atletico haven't won La Liga since Costa left for London.

Coutinho set for Barcelona



AFP, Barcelona



Barcelona and Liverpool have agreed a deal in principle for Philippe Coutinho to move to the Spanish giants for 120 million euros (\$144 million) with add-ons worth another 40 million euros, a report said Saturday.

Barcelona-based Sport newspaper said Coutinho would join Barca this month on a deal for five seasons, although it said the details of the deal were still to be finalised.

"The club reached a deal in principle yesterday evening with Liverpool on the final amount of the deal," Sport reported.

Another newspaper, Mundo Deportivo, said Liverpool were demanding 160 million euros for 25-year-old Coutinho, but that the sum would be made up of the transfer fee and other "variables".

Coutinho's departure would be a blow to Liverpool as he is just rounding into top form, scoring six goals in the last seven games of 2017.

Crucially though, acquiring the playmaker would allow Barcelona to move on from the bitter experience of losing his Brazil teammate Neymar last summer to Qatar-backed Paris Saint-Germain for a world record 222 million euros.

Coutinho's age is also highly attractive to Barca, whose three main stars, Lionel Messi, Luis Suarez and Andres Iniesta are all in their thirties. Iniesta, at 33, has shown signs of fatigue this season.

Another report said Coutinho could arrive in Barcelona later Saturday and could be a spectator at Barcelona's game against Levante at the Camp Nou on Sunday. French sport daily L'Equipe reported on Saturday that

Liverpool were lining up Leicester's Riyad Mahrez to replace Coutinho, although other reports have indicated that the Merseyside club would prefer to sign Thomas Lemar from Monaco.

Coutinho played no role in Liverpool's 2-1 victory over city rivals Everton in the FA Cup on Friday. Liverpool's winner was scored by Virgil Van Dijk, the Dutch defender signed ward-thinking answer to last week from Southampton for £75 million (\$101.7 mil-Italy-Sweden... otherwise lion, 84.5 million euros). we'll have lost twice."

War of words intensifies



Premier intensified his Leggue war of words with Chelsea manager Antonio Conte in bizarre fashion after his team's FA Cup victory

Jose Mourinho

over Derby on Friday, apparently referencing a match-fixing scandal in Italy. The Manchester United manager was responding to comments made by

Conte earlier in the day in which he appeared to make disparaging statements about Mourinho. The Italian was even interpreted as suggesting that the United manager may be suffering from "dementia" after Mourinho had made a reference, 24

hours earlier, to his own behaviour and

the fact that he no longer acts "like a

clown". Initially, Mourinho appeared to be backing Conte following the furore caused by his words on Thursday -only then to make the reference to

match-fixing. "I was asked about my passion and, you know, I was speaking about myself and then the question to the Chelsea manager was that I said he behaved

like a clown," said Mourinho. "Probably the journalist wanted to say that but didn't have the courage so he said 'Mourinho said you behaved like a clown'.

"I don't blame the Chelsea manager at all and I understand his reaction. I was speaking about myself, saying I don't need to behave like a clown to show passion."

Mourinho referred to his managerial antics earlier in his career and said he had not lost his passion.

"I celebrated goals running 50 metres, I celebrated goals sliding on my knees, celebrations jumping in the crowd. I'm not free of that, especially if we score a winning goal in a specific



answer and I don't blame."

referenced match-fixing.

"What has never happened to me and

MOURINHO

moment I am not free to have an outof-control reaction.

"What I was trying to say that I behave bad a few times and this moment I control myself better. It doesn't mean my passion is not the same. So wrong question and obviously a strong

The United boss -- no stranger to controversy -- then changed tack and

will never happen is to be suspended for

match-fixing. That never happened to me and it will never happen."

The surprising reference to "matchfixing" drew a follow-up question as to whether it was directly aimed at Conte.

The Chelsea boss was acquitted of sporting fraud charges in 2016. Prosecutors had requested a six-month suspended sentence following accusations he failed to report episodes of match-fixing while in charge at Serie B side Siena in 2011.

The former Italy manager -- who has always denied any wrongdoing served a four-month ban in relation to the affair in 2012.

But when mention was made of the accusations against Conte, Mourinho said: "Did he? Not me."

Mourinho's reference to that controversy was just the latest twist in a verbal spat between the managers that seemed to have reached a climax earlier in the day when Conte was quizzed by reporters.

The most contentious of Conte's comments came when he used an Italian expression, "demenza senile" -senile dementia.

"I think he (Mourinho) has to see himself in the past, maybe he was speaking about himself in the past, yeah?" said Conte.

gets what they said or his behaviour

and sometimes I think there is, I don't

know the name, 'demenza senile',

if Bayern is to play well." "Maybe sometimes, someone for-

Heynckes bins Vidal's Chelsea move AFP, Doha

Jupp Heynckes said Saturday there had been no contact between Bayern Munich and Chelsea over Arturo Vidal and the Chilean international would not be sold during the January transfer window.

The veteran coach was responding to media reports over a possible transfer of the midfielder, which Heynckes dismissed as "pure speculation".

"Certainly, there's been no contact between the clubs," Heynckes said at a press conference at the Aspire Zone in Doha where the Bundesliga leaders are

on a winter training camp. "It's just speculation. Arturo Vidal is very motivated, he's a top player and we need him at his very best

Media reports in Britain and South America had linked the 30-year-old with a move to London in order to reunite with Chelsea coach Antonio Conte, who he played under at Juventus.

Tommasi eyes Italian FA presidency

AFP, Rome

Former Italy international Damiano Tommasi officially announced his candidacy Friday for the presidency of the Italian Football Federation (FIGC). The 43-year-old former

AS Roma midfielder, now head of the Italian Players' Union, had been touted among the possible successors to Carlo Tavecchio. "The will to be an active

part of the change comes from the path I've taken in recent years," Tommasi said in a statement. "Today the FIGC needs unity of purpose. The task of the institutions is to give a serious, solid, and for-



when you are a bit ... "

Hall ground of Dhaka University yesterday, after beating Team 006 by seven runs in an exciting final. PHOTO: STAR