

What to WATCH

STAR SPORTS 1
ICC U-19 World Cup
England v Namibia
Live from 3:30am (Monday)

SONY ESPN
Australia v England
1st ODI
Live from 9:20am
Ligue 1

Nantes v PSG
Live from 2:00am (Monday)

TEN 1
South Africa v India
2nd Test, Day-2
Live from 2:00pm

SONY SIX & TEN 2
Australian Open

1st Round
Live from 5:00am (Monday)

TEN 2
La Liga
Levante v Celta Vigo
Live from 5:00pm
Alaves v Sevilla
Live from 9:15pm
Espanyol v Athletic Bilbao

Live from 11:30pm
Real Sociedad v Barcelona
Live from 1:45am (Monday)

STAR SPORTS SELECT 1
English Premier League
Bournemouth v Arsenal
Live from 7:30pm
Liverpool v Man City
Live from 10:00pm

STAR SPORTS SELECT 2
Bundesliga
Köln v Monchengladbach
Live from 8:30pm
Dortmund v Wolfsburg
Live from 11:00pm

Real crisis deepens

AFP, Madrid

Struggling Real Madrid risk falling further behind in La Liga after a cheeky late chip from Pablo Fornals saw Villarreal escape with a 1-0 win on Saturday, their first ever victory at the Santiago Bernabeu.

Fornals struck with three minutes left to leave Zinedine Zidane's wasteful side fourth and a whopping 16 points behind runaway league leaders Barcelona, a deficit which will turn into 19 should Barca win at Real Sociedad on Sunday.

"We didn't deserve to lose. We had the better chances but the ball did not want to go in," said under-fire Zidane after Real's second straight home league defeat.

Villarreal meanwhile move up to fifth on 31 points thanks to midfielder Fornals' stunning goal, which puts Javier Calleja's side just a point behind off-form Madrid.

Real fired off nearly 30 shots but their accuracy was wayward, with Cristiano Ronaldo among the worst culprits in front of goal.

"We did everything we could and there is no explanation for why the ball didn't go in," added Zidane, who signed a new contract to keep him at Real until 2020 earlier this week.

"I can't criticise my players for anything. This is a bad spell, nothing more."

So often Real's saviour, Ronaldo had a bad day at the office, with his worst miss coming just before half-time, when the five-time Ballon d'Or winner managed to shoot straight at Sergio Asenjo after being laid on by Isco in front of a practically open goal just yards out.

The Portuguese was livid with the referee, as he thought that he was tripped by Daniele Bonera just before he shot.

Real carried on where they left off in the second period, but after failing to break down the resolute visitors, Fornals stepped up to make history and pile the pressure on Zidane.

Fornals clipped home his 87th-minute winner just after it looked like Enes Unal had fluffed his team's chance to snatch the three points after a blistering counter-attack following a Real Madrid corner.

Turk Unal shot straight at Keylor Navas when put through by Denis Cheryshev, but with Navas still recovering from making the save Fornals lifted the ball over the flailing Madrid stopper.

"You're always happy when you get three points at such a difficult ground," said Calleja afterwards.

"We knew we could make history today, we believed."



Superheroes such as (FROM L) Thor, Milos Raonic, Spiderman, Roger Federer, Caroline Wozniacki, Novak Djokovic, Ant Man and Black Widow graced the court in Melbourne ahead of the Australian Open during a Kid's Day event yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

Rahmatganj celebrate survival, Farashganj relegated

SPORTS REPORTER

After a visibly dubious win over runners-up Sheikh Jamal, bottom-of-the-table Farashganj would have thought that they had done their bit to avoid relegation. But as it would turn out, there was yet more drama on the last day of the league. The drama came in the form of another relegation battle, Rahmatganj, beating eventual fourth-place finishers Saif Sporting Club 2-0, a win that secured their safety while condemning their neighbours Farashganj to relegation.

After Farashganj had bagged all three points in their last match, moving up to 17 points and Muktijoddha had followed suit with a draw against Team BJMC the following day, the onus was on Kamal Babu's men to get all three points. Although they did it successfully, thanks to some early dominance which eked out both goals in the first half, the lacklustre approach from Saif, who had beaten title-aspirants Chittagong Abahani 3-0 in their previous match and had the opportunity to finish third with a win, is certain to raise a few questions.

Saif had turned up without any of their foreign players, supposedly in an attempt to give the local players gametime ahead of the Independence Cup, which will be played without foreign recruits. Rahmatganj, on the other hand, fielded two of their foreign forwards as they were desperate for a win.

SAIF SC	0	-	2	RAHMATGANJ (SHAHED 2, SOHEL 34)
SK RUSSEL	0	-	0	ARAMBAGH



Rahmatganj and Saif SC players are engaged in an aerial duel during their Bangladesh Premier League match yesterday. PHOTO: COLLECTED

The Old Dhaka outfit took the lead two minutes into the match when Saddam Hossain's free-kick was only half-cleared by a Saif defender, with skipper Naimur Rahman Shahed hitting the top of the net.

The lead was doubled in the 34th minute when Mohammad Sohel volleyed home with his left foot from inside the box after Saddam's throw-in was headed to his path by a fellow forward, with the Saif defence almost standing still.

The remainder of the match was a dogged affair, with both sides trying to impose their dominance but neither coming close to changing the scoreline. As the referee blew the final whistle, the win was wildly celebrated by Rahmatganj fans, with the club president Haji Selim MP and other high-officials joining the celebration.

Rahmatganj coach Kamal Babu

was in fact so very relieved at having guided his side to safety that he could not control his tears at the dug-out, and to some extent, his words too.

"Both goals were excellent as we created pressure right from the beginning and got success. We were helped by the absence of their foreign striker [Sheringham] due to suspension and we kept their two key players - Jewel Rana and Matin Mia - in heavy marking," said the Rahmatganj coach, who also looks after Saif's under-16 team.

When asked whether the win came a bit too easy for them, he said, "It is always tempting to ask for a favour after that game involving Sheikh Jamal and Farashganj which Sheikh Jamal had given up and has been widely reported (in the media). But Saif Sporting are always against match fixing and would never do such a thing even if the world fell apart."

The match was, meanwhile, not telecast on TV due to some 'technical issues' of Blue Line Communications, the production house of Saif PowerTec, which is also the parent company of Saif Sporting Club.

Meanwhile, Sheikh Russel and Arambagh played out a goalless draw in the last match of the league last night. The draw meant Sheikh Russel finished in sixth position with 27 points while Arambagh finished in eighth position with 21 points.

10-man Leicester hold Chelsea

AFP, London

Antonio Conte's problems mounted as spluttering Chelsea were held to a 0-0 draw by 10-man Leicester City at Stamford Bridge on Saturday.

Conte's side produced a limp display that could easily have seen them beaten by a Leicester team who missed a host of first-half chances.

Even when Leicester left-back Ben Chilwell was sent off midway through the second half for two bookings, the champions were unable to snatch a winner.

Chelsea remain third - 15 points behind Premier League leaders Manchester City - and have now drawn their last four matches in all competitions.

It capped a difficult week for Chelsea boss Conte, who could be in the final months of his turbulent reign despite last season's title triumph.

Conte has been linked with a move to Paris Saint-Germain as the Italian's relationship with the Chelsea board grows increasingly fractious following disagreements over transfers and his feud with Diego Costa, which led to the striker joining Atletico Madrid.

It took a superb save from Thibaut Courtois to prevent Leicester taking the lead as the Belgian plunged to his right to claw away a Wilfried Ndidi header.

Chelsea threatened when Eden Hazard teed up Cesc Fabregas for a powerful drive that Kasper Schmeichel palmed away. Vardy was a constant menace and Conte's defence again failed to corral the England international, who found space to shoot just wide.

An injury that forced Chelsea captain Gary Cahill off late in the first half added to Conte's problems.

Chelsea were still in disarray after the interval and Riyad Mahrez's deflected effort almost crept in, prompting Conte to send on Willian and Pedro for Hazard and Fabregas.

Conte's men were gifted an unexpected lift when Chilwell, booked moments earlier, lunged into a studs-up tackle on Victor Moses in the 68th minute, earning a red card from referee Michael Jones.

However, the best Chelsea could manage were harmless long-range strikes from N'Golo Kante and Marcos Alonso as Leicester held firm to leave Conte grumbling his way down the tunnel at full-time.

Zia falls to 3rd in Delhi

SPORTS REPORTER

GM Ziaur Rahman slipped to third position in the points table in the 16th Delhi Open International Rating Chess Tournament with 5.5 points after the conclusion of the seventh round yesterday.

Zia lost to number one seed GM Naiditsch Arkadij of Azerbaijan yesterday and will take on Russian GM Rozum Ivan today.

MU hijacking Sanchez transfer?

AGENCIES, London

Manchester City are prepared to risk missing out on Alexis Sanchez - possibly to Manchester United - rather than pay Arsenal's £35m asking price, reports BBC.

It was also reported that Sanchez's agent wants 5 million pounds for his part in the deal, taking the overall tally to 40 million - double what City are willing to pay.

The report adds that the 29-year-old would leave the Emirates in January if a suitable offer arrives and Arsenal could secure a replacement.

French side Paris Saint-Germain have also been linked with the Chile forward, but Sanchez's preference is to join City.

However, given Gabriel Jesus' knee injury is now not as bad as initially feared - Pep Guardiola said the Brazilian would only be out for two or three more weeks - City do not view such a huge outlay on a player who would be available for nothing in the summer as being worthwhile.

City also feel the player is determined to leave Arsenal come what may this month, so their stance could lead to him joining a rival club.

However, Arsenal are reluctant to sell without replacing him and their first choice is Bordeaux's 20-year-old Brazilian forward Malcom, with whom Wenger has reportedly already made contact.

If a deal cannot be agreed with any club, Sanchez will be able to leave when his contract expires in the summer - a situation Arsenal are keen to avoid as they would receive nothing.

Kurigram athletes reign supreme

SPORTS REPORTER

The sprinters of Kurigram scooped the top titles in athletics events of Rangpur division as the divisional phase of the Bangladesh Youth Games came to a close today.

Neha Akter of Kurigram won both 100m and 200m sprint titles in the girls' group while Sayeed Alam and Swapan Ali, also from Kurigram, bagged the boys' 100m and 200m titles respectively.

Neha beat Samura Akter of the same district to win the 100m title before beating another competitor on way to completing the double in sprint.

Sayeed beat Russel Mia of Gaibandha to win the 100m sprint title. Kurigram's Rekha Akter won the girls' 400m sprint while men's 400m sprint title went to Lalmonirhat's Khalid Mohibullah. The athletes from Kurigram scooped three other titles in track and field in a dominant show at the Rangpur District Stadium yesterday.

Similar dominance was shown by swimmers of Bogra in Rajshahi division and of Kushtia in Khulna division. The Bogra swimmers won nine gold and three silver.

Rokeya Akter and Rasheda Khatun won three gold medals each. Rokeya won 50m and 100m breaststroke events as well as 100m freestyle while Rasheda won 200m freestyle apart from 50m and 100m backstroke titles.

Elsewhere, the Kushtia swimmers won nine out of 14 gold medals in the Khulna divisional competition held at the Kushtia Stadium Swimming Pool, with Ashik Sheikh, Al-Amin and Rupa Khatun winning two gold medals each.

These events brought an end to six days of competition at the divisional level, which saw nearly 3,500 athletes who had qualified from the upazila level compete. The divisional qualifiers will compete at the final phase to be held in March in Dhaka.

Messi first to break 100 million barrier

STAR SPORT DESK

Lionel Messi last year became the first football player in history to have guaranteed earnings of over 100 million euros, a Football Leaks report revealed yesterday.

Messi, or rather his father, signed a four-year deal in June last year which featured two documents, a work contract and an image contract, both of which have been leaked.

However that contract was not the final copy and Messi later renegotiated the terms, penning a final deal on November 25 which would sensibly be even better.

The base figures of the contract signed in June were already staggering. On top of an enormous signing bonus of 63.5 million euros, Messi was to be paid 71,053,846 euros per season as wages.

For comparison, Cristiano Ronaldo's new five-year contract, also penned in November 2017, raised his base salary to 50.5 million euros, significantly behind his Argentine rival.

Although the Argentine has always been faithful to the Blaugrana, he also has a 70 million euro loyalty bonus in his deal, which would be paid to him if he stayed at the Nou Camp till the conclusion of his contract in 2021.

Those two bonuses mean that his deal comes out to 417.5 million euros over four years, or 104.4 million euros per season.

To break the numbers down even further and just provide a glimpse of what the best player in the world earns, consider that he is earning 286,140 euros per day, or 11,922 euros per hour.

BEST FOR THE BEST

- SALARY
- €71 million
- SIGNING BONUS
- €63 million
- LOYALTY BONUS
- €70 million
- PER YEAR
- €104.5 million
- PER DAY
- €286,140
- PER HOUR
- €11,922

His daily wages dwarf most of the wages that the vast majority of footballers over the world earn in a month and in fact a calculation carried out in June showed that Messi's wages accounted for 40 per cent of Barcelona's payroll.

Interestingly it was reported that the contract also featured an 'ultra-secret' clause, not listed in the documents. According to sources at the Nou Camp, 23 million euros were included in Messi's bonuses as a payment to 'regularise' his taxes.

If he plays 60 per cent of the games in the year, the five-time Ballon d'Or winner will get 1.9 million euros more. He will also get 2.7 million euros if Barcelona win La Liga and will receive a maximum of 12 million euros if they win the Champions League.

Taking all the bonuses into consideration, the superstar stands to make as much as 122.5 million euros per season, a sum that puts him over the budget of Olympique de Marseille, the fourth richest club in Ligue 1.

On Spot Admission-Scholarship @Australian University

DHAKA

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