

# What to WATCH

**GTV & STAR SPORTS SELECT 2**  
**STAR SPORTS SELECT 1**  
 Bangladesh v Sri Lanka  
 1st Test, Day 1  
 Live from 9:30am  
 English Premier League  
 Chelsea v Bournemouth

Live from 1:45am (Thursday)  
**STAR SPORTS SELECT 1**  
 English Premier League  
 Tottenham v Man Utd  
 Live from 2:00am (Thursday)

DAY'S EVENT

**Bangladesh v Sri Lanka**  
 1st Test, Day 1  
 Time: 9:30am  
 Venue: ZACS, Chittagong

## ALI TRADING THE RING FOR THE BOOTH

Five-time world kickboxing champion Ali Jacko has traded the boxing ring for the stage as he aims to launch his musical career with a rock album. The British-Bangladeshi, who was inspired to take up kickboxing after a chance meeting on an airplane with Muhammad Ali, said he was proud to be releasing a song in Bengali today, titled 'I Found Love'. Following that, one song will be released each month for the next ten months, in English, Bangla and Hindi. "My father was a very good tabla player and was musical and now I am singing and releasing music. This is like a fairytale story for me and I am the main character in it," says the 48-year-old. "I have always done something larger than life in my capacity," Ali told The Daily Star. "People didn't see me coming, but I am here now." Asked about his plans for the future, the man nicknamed Lion-Heart replied: "My future plan is to release more songs. And yeah, I want to win a Grammy for my English songwriting. That's a plan, right?" -- STAR SPORT DESK



Aymeric Laporte (L) puts pen to paper, becoming Manchester City's record signing at 65 million euros and the second most expensive defender ever. Incredibly, since the summer of 2016 City have spent more on their defence than the annual military expenditure of 16 nations.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## City break bank for Laporte

### Arsenal's Aubameyang chase hits a roadblock

AFP, London



Manchester City completed the signing of Aymeric Laporte on Tuesday but Arsenal's move for Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang hinges on other transfers being agreed as Premier League clubs scramble to beat Wednesday's deadline.

The Premier League leaders are reported to have paid Spanish club Athletic Bilbao £57 million for the defender, taking him past Kevin De Bruyne (£55 million) as their record signing.

The 23-year-old is also the second most expensive defender in history behind Virgil Van Dijk, who cost Liverpool £75 million from Southampton earlier this month.

"I am very happy to be here," Laporte said. "City are a club with a lot of ambition and they are one of the best teams in Europe."

"I am looking forward to working under Pep Guardiola and trying to help the club to achieve success."

City boss Guardiola said Laporte was ready to play straight away but may need

time to adapt to the Premier League.

"He's fit, he's been playing the last period," Guardiola told reporters. "Of course he has to adapt because the Premier League is special in many senses."

"He is intelligent, he will read what is the situation. Even for English players, when they come into the Premier League

continually being overlooked by senior team coach Didier Deschamps.

Meanwhile, Borussia Dortmund striker Aubameyang is poised to make a £60 million switch to Arsenal, who are looking to bolster their forward options after the departure to Manchester United of Alexis Sanchez.

The BBC said Arsenal had agreed a fee with the Bundesliga club and personal terms with Gabon international Aubameyang, 28, but the German club will only sanction the move if they get a replacement.

Arsenal striker Olivier Giroud is reportedly a key cog in the transfer -- either as a direct replacement for Aubameyang or as part of a three-way deal, with Giroud moving to Chelsea and Michy Batshuayi swapping Stamford Bridge for Dortmund.

Reports in Italy suggest a Chelsea bid for Roma's former Manchester City striker Edin Dzeko has been unsuccessful.

Elsewhere, Liverpool striker Daniel Sturridge, 28, left Anfield on a loan deal until the end of the season after slipping down the pecking order under Jurgen Klopp.

### MOST EXPENSIVE DEFENDERS

PRICE	PLAYER	TEAM
€84m	Virgil van Dijk	Liverpool
€65m	Aymeric Laporte	Man City
€57.5m	Benjamin Mendy	Man City
€57m	Kyle Walker	Man City
€55.6m	John Stones	Man City
€53.8m	Eliuquim Mangala	Man City

it's always a little bit tough. We will be patient because he doesn't come for three months, he comes for five years."

Guardiola has now spent more than £200 million simply on reinforcing his defence alongside the acquisitions of Benjamin Mendy (£52m), John Stones (£47.5m) and Kyle Walker (£45m).

A France international at all youth levels, Laporte has been frustrated at

## HOCKEY COMMITTEE MEETING

### Four clubs yet to send names

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) is still waiting for the names of representatives of four premier division clubs despite the fact that the deadline of submitting names to the league committee passed on January 21.

Usha, Dhaka Wanderers, Bangladesh SC and Victoria SC have not yet sent names of their representatives after all 13 premier league clubs were requested to do so on January 14, just two days after the formation of a 31-member ad-hoc committee.

The league committee is scheduled to have its first meeting on Thursday to discuss the inter-club players' transfers, which was last held in early 2016. However, due to the absence of those names, the start of the premier league, which was last held in 2016, may be in jeopardy.

League committee secretary Moinuzzaman Pila, though, is optimistic that all representatives would attend its first meeting after the game's governing body sent another letter to the clubs to attend.

"We have communicated with the clubs and they have promised to attend the meeting. Let's see what happens on Thursday," said Pila.

The executive committee meeting had earlier fixed a tentative players' transfer schedule from February 18 to 20 so that the national team players could take part in the qualifying tournament of Asian Games to be held in Oman in March.

## Vlasichev knocks Saif out of AFC Cup

SPORTS REPORTER



AFC CUP

Kyrgyz forward Anatoliy Vlasichev scored a hat-trick as Saif Sporting Club were knocked out of the pre-playoffs of the AFC Cup with a 3-1 defeat -- against TC Sports Club of Maldives last night.

Saif SC had lost the first leg 1-0 at home on January 23, thanks to Vlasichev's single goal, so the visitors needed a victory to progress to the next stage. However, the 29-year-old Kyrgyz forward scored the opener in the 23rd minute of yesterday's match as Saif SC faced an uphill task to turn the tie around.

The Bangladesh Premier League outfit, however, squared off 10 minutes later through a goal from on-loan striker Kingsley Chigozie and were looking for another goal to progress.

But Vlasichev scored two more goals -- on 84 and 89 minutes -- to extinguish the hopes of the Bangladeshi team.

Saif SC finished fourth in the Bangladesh Premier League earlier this month and were eliminated from the group stages of the ongoing Independence Cup.

## Italian FA fails to elect president

### Olympic Committee to take control?

AFP, Milan



The Italian football federation (FIGC) sank further into crisis on Monday after failing to elect a new president, two-and-a-half months after the national team crashed out of the World Cup.

After four rounds of voting amid chaotic scenes at a general meeting held in Fiumicino near Rome, none of the three candidates -- the president of the Amateur League (LND) Cosimo Sibilila, the president of the third-tier Lega Pro division Gabriele Gravina and the head of the professional players' union (AIC) Damiano Tommasi -- managed to obtain a majority.

Tommasi finished bottom in the second and third rounds so could no longer win, with a fourth ballot requiring a simple majority to win.

In the final round Gravina received 39.06 percent of the vote, Sibilila 1.85 percent, with 59.09 percent blank ballots.

The failure to elect a president will almost certainly mean that the Italian Olympic Committee (CONI) will take control of the FIGC.

CONI president Giovanni Malago had asked again on Saturday for the vote to be postponed, after previously saying that the vote should be held back for three months in order to allow Serie A to elect its president.

"The assembly failed to produce a result and we have to restart from zero," said Pasquale de Lise, who presided over the meeting. "We spent a beautiful day together."

### 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:

#### Sane out for six weeks: Pep

Manchester City midfielder Leroy Sane will be out of action for at least six weeks with an ankle injury, Pep Guardiola said.



#### Sanchez can spark us, says Herrera

Ander Herrera claims Alexis Sanchez's fighting spirit has already ignited Manchester United as the Chile forward prepares to make his Premier League debut for his new club at Tottenham.



## United are a 'happy camp'

Says Mourinho ahead of Tottenham encounter today

AFP, London



Jose Mourinho said Manchester United are a "happy camp" after returning to winning ways following a disappointing run of results in December, buoyed by the signing of Alexis Sanchez.

After ending 2017 with three successive draws, Mourinho's side, second in the Premier League, have won all five of their games since the turn of the year.

Sanchez is set to make his first Premier League appearance for United against Tottenham at Wembley on Wednesday after his debut for the club in the FA Cup on Friday.

"We have managed to win every match in January, I think three Premier League matches and two cup matches,



Manchester United winger Alexis Sanchez is pictured in training before the Red Devils' Premier League match against Tottenham Hotspur.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

so five victories makes a happy camp," Mourinho told MUTV, the club's in-

house TV station.

"We are playing with a good balance. It is not easy to not concede goals because of the high quality of football in this country but scoring goals and winning matches is very important because we need points. We are playing well and we deserved these results."

Spurs are eight points behind United and are facing a fight to get back into the top four but Mourinho has no doubts about the quality of Mauricio Pochettino's side, who were runners-up last season.

"Spurs are one of the top teams in the country -- not a title contender because they are too far away, but I say honestly they are a Champions League contender," said the Portuguese. "They can reach that level." "They have some of the best players in the country, a very good manager and are a very difficult opponent."

## Icardi says 'Bye Bye'

AFP, Milan

Inter captain Mauro Icardi added fuel to speculation that a 110 million euro move to Real Madrid could be close after posting "to say goodbye is to grow" on Instagram.

The 24-year-old has been linked with move to the reigning Spanish and European champions, attracting Real's interest after scoring 18 times in the league.

The forward quoted the Argentine song 'Adios' with the phrase "to say goodbye is to grow" on his official Instagram page, along with the caption "Bye Bye", and a waving emoji.

Inter insisted no negotiations were underway with either Real Madrid or any other club.

## Colourful opening ceremony planned

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) has decided to hold a colourful opening ceremony for the final phase of the inaugural Bangladesh Youth Games at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

The decision was made by the steering committee of the Games, chaired by BOA president and Army Chief general Abu Belal Muhammad Shafiqul Huq, on Monday.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is expected to witness the opening ceremony as chief guest on March 9.

The ceremony will include a march-past by the eight participating divisions, fireworks and a laser show alongside display-based dramas of the country's historic moments such as the 1952 language movement, 1969 mass revolution and the liberation war. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's 7

March speech will also be played.

Other than that there will also be a cultural show where Sabina Yasmin, James and Habib Wahid will perform.

"As the Youth Games are being held for the first time, we have to create some vibe among the athletes and we want to do it by holding a colourful opening ceremony. But we are not going to hold it on a large scale; rather we will do it with minimum requirements," said BOA secretary general Syed Shahed Reza.

It has been learnt that the BOA have already spent Tk 8.5 crore to complete the district and divisional level competitions and they will need a further Tk 3-4 crore for the final phase, barring the expenditure of the opening ceremony which is yet to be decided.

Nearly 2,500 athletes from 20 disciplines are expected to fight for 157 gold medals, which may increase due to the late addition of squash. The steering committee has also fixed all premier venues to host the events of 21 disciplines.



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