

What to WATCH

DAY'S EVENT

STAR SPORTS SELECT 1

Bundesliga

Wolfsburg v Bayern Munich

Live from 8:30pm

STAR SPORTS SELECT 2

Bundesliga

Hamburger v Leverkusen

Live from 8:30pm

Schalke v Hoffenheim

Live from 11:30pm

SONY ESPN

FA Cup

Sheffield v Swansea

Live from 6:30pm

West Brom v Southampton

Live from 9:00pm

Huddersfield v Man United

Live from 11:30pm

TEN 1

Ligue 1

PSG v Strasbourg

Live from 10:00pm

Serie A

Genoa v Inter Milan

Live from 1:45am (Sunday)

TEN 2

LA Liga

Las Palmas v Sevilla

Live from 6:00pm

Eibar v Barcelona

Live from 9:15pm

Alaves v Deportivo

Live from 11:30pm

Malaga v Valencia

Live from 1:45am (Sunday)

Dhaka Premier League

Time: 9:00am

Gazi Group v Kalabagan KC

Venue: KSOAS

Prime Doleshwar v Brothers Union

Venue: BKSP-4

Abahani v Legends of Rugganj

Venue: BKSP-3



New fitness trainer Mario Licinio Guerreiro Lemos (C) relays his instructions to the footballers during a practice session at the training camp in BKSP, Savar yesterday. The Bangladesh team will play a FIFA friendly match against Laos later this month after playing two practice matches against club sides in Thailand. PHOTO: BFF

South Asian TT C'hips in Chittagong

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Table Tennis Federation (BTTF) is going to organise the South Asian Table Tennis Club Championships in Chittagong next month with the participation of clubs from seven South Asian countries.

The championships are scheduled to take place from March 29 to 31.

"We are going to hold the championships with participation of league champions from all South Asian nations and we have already talked to all the participating nations," BTTF general secretary Khandokar Hasan Monir informed yesterday.

"India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan and Maldives have already confirmed their participation while we are waiting for Sri Lanka's consent," Monir said. "The championships will be held in the port city as per the sponsors' request."

'Never thought I'd get this chance'

AFP, Rotterdam



Roger Federer can become the oldest world number one on Friday, a remarkable achievement for the 20-time Grand Slam title winner who admitted he "never imagined" he'd get the opportunity.

The 36-year-old faces Dutchman Robin Haase in the quarter-finals of the Rotterdam Open where victory will allow him to replace old rival and close friend Rafael Nadal at the top of the rankings.

The Swiss would surpass Andre Agassi, who held the top spot in 2003 aged 33 years and 131 days.

It would be Federer's first time back at the summit since October 2012 having first claimed the top spot in February 2004.

"This is an exciting challenge. I've struggled to try and get there. I had to win a lot of matches last year," said Federer who was as low as 17 in the world in January last year before he returned to form with the Australian Open title.

"I never imagined this after my knee surgery. Number one is a tough place to get to.

"The most important thing is to be healthy, I would have had great regrets if I had not come here this week. I'm very excited for tomorrow's match, I can't wait for it to come around."

Federer moved into the quarter-finals on Thursday with a hard-fought 7-6 (10/8), 7-5 victory over Germany's Philipp Kohlschreiber.

"Tonight was complicated, I had to fight and struggle," said Federer who has won three of the last five majors.



ROGER FEDERER

Arsenal, Atletico cruise

Dortmund toil for 3-2 win against Atalanta

AFP, Paris



Mesut Ozil scored as Arsenal eased to a 3-0 victory at Swedish minnows Ostersunds in the first leg of their Europa League, last-32 tie on Thursday, while Michy Batshuayi

snatched Borussia Dortmund a dramatic win over Atalanta.

Left-back Nacho Monreal put Arsenal into an early lead, tapping in after goalkeeper Aly Keita inexplicably let the ball slip from his grasp.

The visitors were also gifted the second goal in the 24th minute as Ostersunds tried to play out of their own area, with Henrikh Mkhitaryan latching onto the loose ball and seeing a low cross diverted into his own net by defender Sotirios Papagiannopoulos.

And Arsenal all but ended the tie before the hour mark as Mkhitaryan

SELECTED RESULTS			
Dortmund	3	- 2	Atalanta
(Schurrle 30, Batshuayi 65, 90+1; Illicic 51, 56)			
Ludogorets	0	- 3	Milan
(Cutrone 45, Rodriguez 64-pen, Borini 90+2)			
FC Copenhagen	1	- 4	Atletico Madrid
(Fischer 15; Niguez 21, Gameiro 37, Griezmann 71, Vitolo 77)			
Napoli	1	- 3	RB Leipzig
(Ounas 52; Werner 61, 90+3, Bruma 74)			



Borussia Dortmund striker Michy Batshuayi kept his incredible goalscoring form alive by bagging two goals, including a 91st-minute winner, against Atalanta in their Europa League match on Thursday.

PHOTO: AFP

played in Ozil, who saw his shot burst through the hands of the hapless Keita and into the net.

Elsewhere, Atletico Madrid recovered from falling behind early on at FC Copenhagen to cruise to a 4-1 victory.

Saul, Kevin Gameiro and Antoine Griezmann all got on the scoresheet.

Batshuayi continued his good form with a late brace as Dortmund fought back to beat Atalanta 3-2 at Signal Iduna Park.

phases with the help of district and divisional sports associations.

"It was not possible for the federations to coordinate such vast activities at district level. We did it successfully at district and divisional level with the involvement of government administration, police and local organisers," Reza said. "It is now the national federations' turn to complete the final phase in their own way."

Some 23,500 athletes from nearly 500 upazilas of 64 districts took part at the district level competitions before the divisional phase was held with participation of approximately 3500 athletes. Now nearly 2500 athletes are expected to compete for 157 gold medals in 21 disciplines.

The 21 disciplines are: football, volleyball, basketball, hockey, kabaddi, handball, athletics, swimming, badminton, shooting, table tennis, squash, karate, taekwondo, wrestling, judo, wushu, weightlifting, boxing, archery and chess.

For the final phase, BOA has allocated Tk 500 for each athlete for food per day and Tk 400 for accommodation per day but the federation officials are a bit worried about the cost of

accommodation around the venues.

The federation officials, however, praised the initiative of introducing the youth games as they believe the games will create a sporting atmosphere across the country.

"Definitely it is a good initiative to introduce the games for the youth," said Bangladesh Table Tennis Federation's general secretary Khandokar Hasan Monir, who however believes the number athletes could have been bigger had the federations been involved from the beginning.

"The districts were advised to hold only five out of 21 disciplines, but I think the BOA should leave it to the respective districts from the next edition and involve the federations from the beginning so that the games become more effective," Monir said adding that BTTF is taking proper initiatives to make their event a success.

Meanwhile, The Bangladesh Football Federation wants to start the football discipline from March 4 with 16 teams in both boys' and girls' group due to shortage of grounds as well as to complete the games within stipulated time-frame.

Jose slams Pogba 'lies'

AFP, Manchester

Manchester United manager Jose Mourinho has angrily insisted that rumours his relationship with Paul Pogba has broken down are "lies".

According to French sports newspaper L'Equipe, midfielder Pogba is unhappy with the more defensive position in which he has been used by Mourinho.

But an irate Mourinho dismissed suggestions there was any issue.

"I think you are nice with your words, because when you say 'a lot of speculation' you should say 'a lot of lies'," Mourinho told reporters on Friday. "I accept and I can speak on Paul's behalf without any kind of problem. Paul accepts that he has not been playing well in the last few matches but that's all.

"And if you want to speak about it, then that is one thing and your word 'speculation' maybe makes a bit of sense.

"But the majority of things you can read and listen, don't be nice, be objective and say 'lies'.

"I don't have to speak to you about my conversations with my players. I don't have to tell you anything about it," the Portuguese boss added.



Lionel Messi will today be taking the field against Eibar, one of his favourite opponents. The Argentine has scored every time against the Basque side -- five times in three games at the Ipurua and 12 overall in six encounters.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Barca face tricky trip

AFP, Madrid



Before their Champions League clash with Chelsea in London, Lionel Messi and Barcelona put their unbeaten record in La Liga on the line against Eibar in the rather less glamorous surroundings of Ipurua on Saturday.

The modest 7,000-seat ground in the Basque Country welcomes a Barca side who have laboured to draw against Espanyol and Getafe in their last two outings.

Those results have allowed Atletico Madrid to cut Ernesto Valverde's side's lead at the top of the table to seven points, with the clubs due to meet at the Camp Nou early next month.

Barca's advantage is still significant, and they have no injury worries, but the danger is that the return of the Champions League is a distraction.

"We will need to proceed with caution because a bad result can mean that you suddenly go from having a very good year to not such a good one," Gerard Pique warned this week at a sponsor's event, where the talk was of Chelsea rather than Eibar.

The Basque side, though, have lost just once -- a narrow 1-0 defeat to Atletico -- since the start of December, and are in contention to qualify for Europe.

"We have been playing well for the last two months and getting good results, but we know what we have in front of us on Saturday," warned their coach Jose Luis

Mendilibar, once a colleague of Valverde's in their playing days.

Atletico host Athletic Bilbao on Sunday and will be hoping to have Diego Costa back after the striker sat out the Europa League trip to Copenhagen.

Real Madrid, meanwhile, travel to Seville to face Betis hoping to build on their fine Champions League win against Paris Saint-Germain.

Zinedine Zidane's side are still fourth in the table behind Valencia -- who go to Malaga -- but they have taken 10 points from the last 12 available in the league.

"We have gone through a difficult phase, but in the last few weeks we have raised our game," Toni Kroos said after the PSG clash. "I am confident that we have a lot of success ahead of us."

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:

'We all love our children': Ronaldo calls on the world to help Rohingya refugees

Cristiano Ronaldo is not only helping his team Real Madrid win titles, the star forward also took time off his day job to help raise awareness of the plight of the Rohingya refugees.

Sarri blasts Napoli's 'bad attitude' after defeat

Napoli coach Maurizio Sarri blasted his side's "bad attitude" in a 3-1 Europa League defeat to RB Leipzig but stressed that his team's focus this season was on the Serie A title.

This is how they thanks us: Dijon joke after PSG's defeat

Following the loss to Real Madrid, PSG midfielder Adrien Rabiot brought into focus the fact that playing and scoring against Dijon is fun but PSG players needed to raise their level in the Champions League.

Safwan battles into national final

SPORTS REPORTER



British-born boxer Al Safwan Uddin moved into the final of 60kg weight category in the 29th National Boxing Championships after beating Faisal Mollah in semifinal at the Muhammad Ali Boxing Stadium yesterday.

Safwan, who knocked out Kamruzzaman Jonny in the first round of their bout on Thursday, had to fight against Faisal of Bangladesh Army till the third and final round to ensure his victory.

Safwan will now play final against the winner of the other semifinal between Rakib Sheikh and Amit Mandal today.

"I was confident of winning the match

because I know boxing is a game of points and I know how to collect points and I played that way," Safwan told reporters after the match.

"You saw I knocked him down in the second round and it inspired me a lot and increased my confidence to finish on top," said Safwan. "The difference is that I play against those who are technically sound but the boxers in Bangladesh have good spirit because my opponent despite being knocked down stand up and continued to fight which is a spirit I really liked."

Safwan was also impressed with the performances of local boxers Robin Mia and Moshir Rahman Kajal, who according to Safwan are technically good.



Al Safwan (L) has his opponent Faisal Mollah crouching for cover during their semifinal bout of the 29th National Boxing Championships at the Muhammad Ali Boxing Stadium yesterday. PHOTO: COLLECTED