

What to WATCH

DAY'S EVENT

GTV

PSL T20

Peshawar Zalmi v Multan Sultans

Live from 11:00pm

TEN 1

Europa League

Villarreal v Lyon

Live from 12:00am (Friday)

Atalanta v Dortmund

Live from 2:00am (Friday)

TEN 2

Europa League

Lokomotiv v Nice

Live from 10:00am

Liepzig v Napoli

Live from 12:00am (Friday)

Arsenal v Ostersund

Live from 2:00am (Friday)

TEN 3

Europa League

Lazio v Steaua Bucharest

Live from 12:00am (Friday)

Milan v Ludogorets

Live from 2:00am (Friday)

Live from 10:00am

Liepzig v Napoli

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District football gets fresh impetus

SPORTS REPORTER

The District Football Associations (DFA) are likely to start much-awaited district football leagues from March-April after the government recently came up with a healthy financial package in this regard for the first time.

Since the separation from government-affiliated District Sports Associations in 2008, the government stopped financing DFAs and as a result most DFAs failed to run football activities due to financial constraints since the DFAs do not get any financial assistance from either Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) or the government. The district leagues have largely been overlooked over the last 10 years, leading to an acute crisis of quality footballers.

Ahead of every BFF poll, the presidential candidates promise to assist the DFAs with healthy financial packages, but the district leagues have remained ignored, with exception of two seasons when Nitol Tata and Prime Bank came forward to sponsor the leagues.

Before the 2016 BFF election, Kazi Salahuddin promised to pay attention to district football but no initiative was seen taken in last 22 months. Finally the BFF boss has managed to ensure Tk 1.42 crore from the government to get the DFAs functional by running the district leagues.

Mueller believes treble bid is on

AFP, Munich

Thomas Mueller says Bayern Munich could repeat their 2013 treble after crushing 10-man Besiktas 5-0 in the first leg of their Champions League last 16 tie.

Bayern have one foot in the quarter-finals with Besiktas facing a near impossible task for the return leg in Istanbul on March 14.

Both Mueller and Poland striker Robert Lewandowski scored twice as Bayern ran riot in the second half in Germany.

"Everything is possible," Mueller said when asked whether Bayern can repeat their 2013 haul of Champions League, Bundesliga and German Cup titles.

However head coach Jupp Heynckes, 72, who oversaw the treble five years ago, insists Bayern must do better if they want all three titles again.

"Any talk like that is the job of journalists, the Champions League is a different competition and we must improve," said Heynckes.

"Everyone in the stadium saw that we found it hard in the first half.

"We didn't find our rhythm and we were nervous -- I don't know my team like that.

"In the first half there wasn't any tempo to our game, our passing was off and it allowed Besiktas to attack us more.

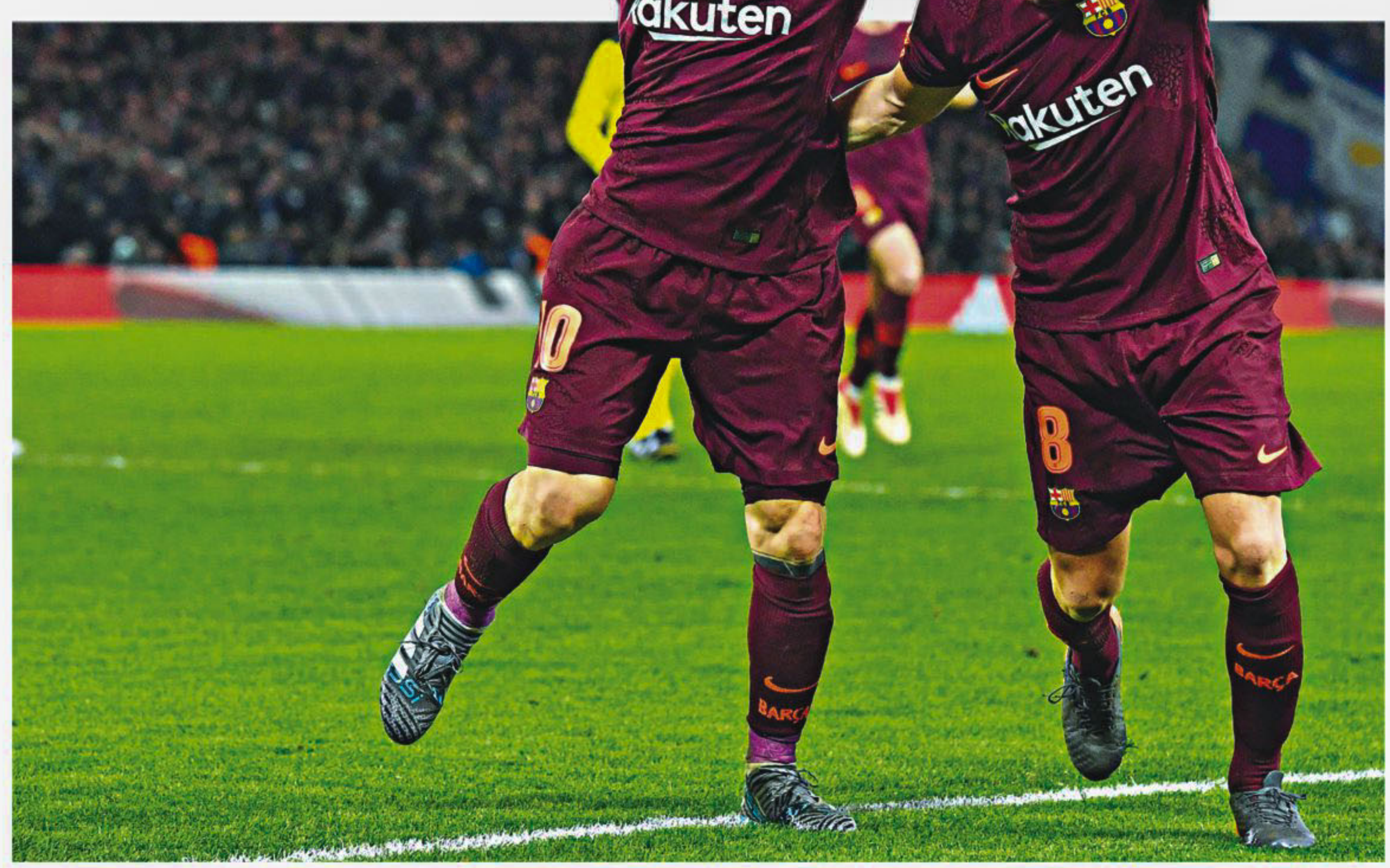
"The opener before the break gave us a psychological advantage and in the second half we saw a different Bayern. We scored some great goals and played some good football."

Disaster struck for Besiktas after just 16 minutes at the Allianz Arena when Croatian defender Domagoj Vida was sent off for hauling down Lewandowski as he was through on goal.

Mueller broke the deadlock just before half-time when he scored his first from close range.

The floodgates then opened after the break as Kingsley Coman struck before Mueller poached his second.

Lewandowski then scored two late goals to leave him with 29 goals in all competitions this season, as Bayern -- 19 points clear in the league and through to the German Cup semi-finals -- claimed their 14th straight victory.



After eight fruitless games and 29 unsuccessful shots, Barcelona superstar Lionel Messi (L) finally got his first goal against Chelsea on Tuesday to ensure a 1-1 draw at Stamford Bridge in the first leg of their Champions League round of 16 match, meaning Barcelona will take an away goal into the reverse leg at the Camp Nou.

Barca escape with advantage

AFP, London

Chelsea manager Antonio Conte rued one costly mistake as Lionel Messi gave Barcelona the upper hand from the first leg of their Champions League last-16 tie by salvaging a 1-1 draw at Stamford Bridge.

Messi struck for the first time in nine games against Chelsea 15 minutes from the end, as Andres Iniesta punished the English champions once more when he intercepted Andreas Christensen's slack pass across his own box to tee up the five-time World Player of the Year.

Willian's fine strike just after the hour mark had put Chelsea in command after he had hit both posts in the first half and the Blues must now score when they travel to the Camp Nou on March 14 to have any chance of making the last eight.

"Against this opponent, this type of player like Messi, [Luis] Suarez, Iniesta, if you make a mistake you pay," said Conte. "There is a bit of disappointment. But at the same time this game must give us a lot of confidence to trust that in the second leg the qualification is open."

"We must be realistic. We are talking about Barcelona. They show tonight to be a strong, fantastic team," added Conte. "We have showed that if we are ready to work very hard together defensively, but continue to have the right feeling when you win the ball when you have the chance to score, we can try to do something incredible at the Nou Camp."

Barcelona enjoyed nearly 70 per cent of the possession, but lacked the penetration to open up Chelsea's well-organised defence.

"At times it seemed like a handball match, because they sat back and waited," said Barca midfielder Ivan Rakitic. "It is difficult when they have eight players behind the ball."

However, Conte defended his tactics, saying it would be "crazy" to approach facing Barcelona any other way.

"When you play against Barcelona you know very well that if you want to face them box-to-box then you are crazy and you go to lose the game, not 1-0, [but] 4, 5, 6-0," said Conte. "You must play with intelligence, especially if you know that [Barca] level is up on us. You must play an intelligent game, we are not stupid."

However, despite the assortment of starts, it was Willian who shone brightest on the night. The Brazilian sent Barca two huge warnings before the break of his threat from range as he beat Marc-Andre ter Stegen to his right and then his left, only to see both efforts come back off the post.

He finally broke the deadlock in the 62nd minute, arrowing a low shot past the Barcelona goalkeeper following a short corner. And the Brazilian saw enough in Chelsea's performance at Stamford Bridge to suggest they can upset the odds in the second leg.

"In a difficult game we played very well," he told the club's website. "We could have won this game. But we did not and the result is still open, we have to go there and try to win. To play in the Nou Camp is totally different and we have to go there with the same mentality and try to win the game."



Willian had the game of his life against Barcelona on Tuesday, getting off three incredible shots. Unfortunately the Brazilian saw two of his efforts ricochet off the post before one finally curled in.

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:

Ranieri ready to quit Nantes for Italy
Claudio Ranieri, who led Leicester City to an unlikely English Premier League title, has revealed he is ready to quit French Ligue 1 club Nantes if he is asked to become Italy coach.

Street named after Matic!
Manchester United midfielder Nemanja Matic had a street named after him in Ub, a municipality in central Serbia where he was born, a local official said Wednesday.

Raonic has unfinished business in Delray Beach
Former world No.3 Milos Raonic got his 2016 season roaring start with a 6-1, 7-5 rout of Taro Daniel in the first round of the Delray Beach Open on Tuesday.

Aguero escapes sanctions
Manchester City striker Sergio Aguero will not face punishment from the Football Association following an altercation with a Wigan fan after the shock FA Cup defeat.

'I almost died after giving birth'

AFP, Los Angeles

Serena Williams says she lives in fear of blood clots, a condition that surfaced during a harrowing postnatal ordeal in September when she almost died giving birth to her first child.

In an op-ed piece she wrote for CNN on Tuesday, the tennis legend lifted the lid on her near-death experience while giving birth to daughter, Olympia, after getting blood clots in her lungs.

"I almost died after giving birth to my daughter," Williams said.

The 23-time Grand Slam champion said she had to have an emergency Cesarean section surgery after her heart rate plummeted dramatically during contractions. The surgery was successful and before she knew it she was holding the newborn.

"But what followed just 24 hours after giving birth were six days of uncertainty," she said.

In a Vogue magazine interview in January, Williams said that during her postnatal ordeal she suffered a pulmonary embolism -- when blood clots block one or more arteries in the lungs.

But this was not the first time the 36-year-old has had a scrape with death from blood clots. In 2011, she spent nearly 12 months incapacitated after a cut on her foot from a piece of broken glass at a Munich restaurant led to a pulmonary embolism.

"Because of my medical history with this problem I live in fear of this situation," the American said Tuesday.

Williams said that while recovering in the hospital, one day after the emergency Cesarean, she felt short of breath and after some convincing on Williams' part, the hospital staff finally sent for a CT scan and then put her on a life-saving drip.

But her ordeal wasn't over. She started coughing so much from the blood clots that her Cesarean wound popped open.



1971

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