

What to WATCH

CHANNEL 9

Federation Cup

First Quarterfinal

Arambagh v Abahani

Live from 5:00pm

SONY ESPN

Europa League

Akhisarspor v Sevilla

Live from 11:55pm

Real Betis v AC Milan

Live from 1:00am (Friday)

TEN 1

Europa League

Lazio v Marseille

Live from 11:55pm

Leverkusen v FC Zurich

Live from 2:00am (Friday)

TEN 2

Sri Lanka v England

First Test, Day Three

Live from 10:30am

Europa League

BATE Borisov v Chelsea

Live from 11:55pm

Arsenal v Sporting Lisbon

Live from 1:00am (Friday)

DAY'S EVENT

National Cricket League

Round Six

Four-day match

Day Four

Khulna v Rangpur

Time: 9:00am

Venue: KSOAS, Fatullah

Barishal v Rajshahi

Time: 9:00am

Venue: SKS, Rajshahi

Dhaka Division v Sylhet

Time: 9:00am

Venue: SANS, Khulna

Dhaka Metro v Chattogram

Time: 9:00am

Venue: SKICS, Cox's Bazar

Federation Cup

First Quarterfinal

Arambagh v Abahani

Time: 5:00pm, Venue: BNS

Foreigners usurp locals

ANISUR RAHMAN

WALTON FEDERATION CUP
Premier Bank

As big-money foreign signings take their time to settle into the style and pace of play in Bangladesh, the opening stage of the football season's curtain-raising Federation Cup is traditionally the platform where local players can showcase their talents and make an impact.

However, that trend was bucked this season as foreigners accounted for 73 per cent of the goals scored over the 15 matches of an unusually high-scoring group stage that yielded 48 goals, double what had been scored at the same stage in the previous season.

WHERE GOALS IN THE FEDERATION CUP GROUP STAGE CAME FROM			
SEASON	LOCAL	FOREIGNER	TOTAL GOAL
2018	13	35	48
2017	13	11	24
2016	15	16	31
2014-15	18	16	34
2013	23	14	37

The goal-fest from the overseas recruits -- who scored 35 goals against the locals' return of 13 -- also led to an astounding average of 3.2 goals per match in the ongoing tournament.

In the previous season which had yielded 24 goals, locals had accounted for 13 strikes. In fact, apart from the 2016 Federation Cup when foreigners outscored the locals by one goal (16), local players regularly stole the show in the group stage of the Federation Cup from 2013 onwards.

The local footballers have never been able to translate their fast start onto the professional



OTABEK
3 goals



VINICIUS
3 goals



BOLSHAKOV
3 goals

football league, where they are quickly outpaced by foreigners, but the saving grace was their output in the Federation Cup.

This time around it was expected that the foreign players would play vital roles in scoring goals after the game's governing body reverted to allowing four foreigners in each playing XI after reducing that quota to two foreigners last season. However, the number of goals that they scored was not expected.

Many opined that the presence of a higher calibre of foreign players, including some promising Asian recruits, has changed the prevailing scenario at the start of the season. This time around 23 foreigners bagged the 35 goals while 13 local players accounted for the rest, scoring a goal each.

"The Federation Cup is more competitive in comparison with previous seasons and there is no guarantee of winning matches because some good foreign players have been signed this time around and they can change the fate of a match at any time," said Abahani coach Jakaria Babu. "I don't want to mention their names, but some footballers have already drawn my attention through their quality performances."

Current Sheikh Russel coach and former national coach Saiful Bari Titu believes that having good foreign players is one of the major reasons behind the glut of goals, but he was hesitant when it came to evaluating the performance of the local players.

"It is difficult to explain why the local players shone brighter in the Federation Cup. Maybe there were fewer quality foreign players in the previous seasons or perhaps the foreigners had to take some time [to settle] before flourishing in the professional football league," Titu said.

"It may also be that the local players gave more effort in the Federation Cup than they did in the league in order to prove themselves to the club management," he added.

23 foreign players have found the back of the net with six players scoring in more than one match. Three others -- Otabek Valiynov, Chinedu Mathew and Kingsley Chigozie -- have scored more than one goal but in a single match.

Meanwhile, the focus will remain firmly on the foreign players as the quarterfinal battle begins today with holders Abahani taking on Arambagh at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.



A despondent Rafael Nadal was pictured with his right foot heavily bandaged as he left a hospital in Barcelona on Wednesday, having undergone an ankle surgery that has ruled him out of the season ending ATP World Tour Finals. PHOTO: COLLECTED

Sloppy Liverpool rocked in Belgrade

Barca advance despite Inter draw; Henry's Monaco eliminated

AFP, Paris

Barcelona secured their place in the Champions League knockout stage on Tuesday with a 1-1 draw away to Inter Milan, as Harry Kane revived Tottenham Hotspur's hopes but Liverpool slumped to a shock defeat.

Last year's runners-up were beaten by Red Star Belgrade, although the biggest losers on the night were Thierry Henry's Monaco, who were eliminated following a resounding loss to Club Brugge.

Lionel Messi was still missing for Barcelona at the San Siro, and it was substitute Malcolm who came off the bench to give the Spanish champions a late lead. But Inter hit back to earn a point thanks to Mauro Icardi's 87th-minute leveller, keeping the three-time former winners on course to join Barcelona in qualifying for the last 16 from Group B. Tottenham remain in the hunt, however, after Kane's late brace secured a 2-1 win over PSV Eindhoven.

Liverpool were strong favourites away to Red Star in Serbia, but Jurgen Klopp's team were poor in a 2-0 defeat to the 1991 European Cup winners. Milan Pavkov scored twice in seven first-half minutes, heading in the opener and then beating Alisson with a powerful strike from range, to the delight of a huge home support.

"The boys are very disappointed, I'm very disappointed and we have to do better. We have to do better because we can do better, but tonight it is too late," said Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp.

"The atmosphere, noise-wise, was not a problem for us, but after the second goal they could smell it



Milan Pavkov (2nd from R) scored two goals in seven minutes in the first half as Red Star Belgrade roared to a 2-0 win over Liverpool in the Champions League on Tuesday, their first win in the competition in 26 years. PHOTO: REUTERS

"We made it too easy for them. They deserved it with the passion they showed. We lost our mojo in the game, not in general. We have to make sure it doesn't happen again."

The defeat exposes the Anfield club to the threat of an early elimination in Group C, with Napoli coming from behind to draw 1-1 at home to PSG in the night's other game.

Kylian Mbappe set up Juan Bernat to put Paris ahead just before the break, but Lorenzo Insigne beat Gianluigi Buffon from the penalty spot in the second half as these sides played out a draw for the second time in a fortnight.

"This is a difficult group but we saw with Liverpool losing that everything is possible," said PSG's Julian Draxler. "A draw in Naples is not bad and we still have our fate in our own hands."

Liverpool and Napoli are locked on six points from four games, with PSG one behind and Red Star another point adrift. Liverpool travel to the French capital in their next game.

Meanwhile, Atletico Madrid gained revenge for a 4-0 defeat away to Borussia Dortmund last month as Diego Simeone's side defeated the Germans 2-0 in Spain, Saul Niguez and Antoine Griezmann scoring.

The two favourites in Group A are not guaranteed a path to the last 16 yet, however, after Club Brugge claimed a stunning 4-0 win at Monaco.

Semi-finalists in 2017, Monaco are now eliminated. It was a dreadful display from a side who have not won in 15 games, including five matches under Henry. This result also came on the day the club's Russian billionaire owner Dmitry Rybolovlev was arrested in a corruption investigation.

"We started well, but once we fell behind we stopped playing and that's a little bit worrying," said Henry of his team's performance.

€55m, a jet and a €30k entourage

Mbappe's demands revealed

STAR SPORT DESK

Documents from the whistleblower platform Football Leaks released yesterday revealed French sensation Kylian Mbappe's ostentatious demands of Paris Saint-Germain ahead of his move in 2017, some of which were met while others were dismissed.

The documents have been reviewed independently by the European Investigations Collaboration (EIC), an international network of journalists, and they outline a then 18-year-old Mbappe's demands from his new employers.

Without an agent to assist with the deal -- Mbappe still remains one of the most high-profile players to not employ one -- his father acted as the middleman and ensured that his son would receive nothing but the best. The documents also show that Mbappe and Real Madrid had reached an agreement until his father, anticipating that his son would not get enough chances in a team that already had Cristiano Ronaldo and Gareth Bale, convinced him otherwise. Real were willing to increase their offer from 180 to 214 million euros, but by then Mbappe had made up his mind.

The starting demand from Mbappe was a net salary of 50 million euros, paid over five years, with a five-million-euro signing bonus. PSG agreed almost immediately. After all, it was only a third of what they were paying Neymar.

But there was a whole list of other demands that were rejected.

For example, Mbappe demanded a clause that would see him become the team's highest paid player as soon as he won the Ballon d'Or, which was rejected almost out of hand.

He also demanded the use of a private jet for 50 hours each year, another clause that did not find the back of the net.

However, one of the more unusual clauses to make it in was an allowance of 30,000 euros, which Mbappe demanded in order to pay his entourage of a driver, a caretaker and a bodyguard. Furthermore, permission was requested for Wilfrid Mbappe, his father, to be present during team practice and for him to conduct additional training sessions with his son at PSG's facilities.

Women take on Myanmar today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh will begin their campaign in the Women's Olympic Football tournament when they take on hosts Myanmar in a Group C encounter of the Asian Qualifiers Round-1 today.

The match will get underway at 5:30pm (BST) at the Thuwunna Stadium in Yangon after Nepal and India play the first match of the four-team group at the same venue.

Bangladesh have taken part in Women's Olympic Qualifiers only once in 2011 before skipping the next edition due to a shortage of players. However, Bangladesh have rebuilt their squad with some promising young girls who have been playing different age-group tournaments at the international level.

Those girls are now ready to embrace the challenge against Myanmar, who are ranked 44th in the Women's FIFA Rankings and are tipped as favourites to advance to the next stage.

Although the girls in red and green have set their sights on gathering experience from the more superior sides, they are also serious about improving their performance in the first match against Myanmar, a team Bangladesh have never faced at any level.

"Myanmar are a strong team but we will be trying to play our best by giving hundred per cent because we are going to play against Myanmar for the first time at any level," said captain Sabina Khatun.

"We have all young players while they have experience of playing international matches. It is a big platform for the girls from which we want to learn more by giving our best," said head coach Golam Rabbani Choton.

NZ duo shatter List A record

STAR SPORT DESK

Eight deliveries were bowled in one over courtesy of two no-balls and they resulted in 4, 6nb, 6nb, 6, 1, 6, 6 being conceded by Willem Ludick in the final over of the innings as New Zealand duo Joe Carter and Brett Hampton, two Northern District batsmen, entered the record books.

43 runs were taken off the final over during a Ford trophy match in New Zealand's domestic one-day tournament on Wednesday which smashed the record for most runs taken in a single over in List A cricket.

The previous record was held by Zimbabwe national Elton Chigumbura who had smoked Alauddin Babu, a Bangladesh first-class cricketer, for 39 runs in an over during a Dhaka Premier League match in 2013.


Carter and Hampton consolidated the innings after Northern District were 95 for 5. The duo went on their onslaught in the last over, taking bowler Ludick's figures went from a respectable 9-0-42-1 to a horrific 10-0-85-1.

SHORT CORNER

Boult's hattrick sinks Pakistan
New Zealand paceman Trent Boult claimed a hattrick to help lead his side to a 47-run win over Pakistan in the first one-day international in Abu Dhabi on Wednesday.

Neymar blasts disrespectful referee
Brazil forward Neymar has accused the referee of Paris Saint-Germain's 1-1 draw against Napoli of disrespecting him.

Tourney in Sinha's honour
In recognition of the late Bangladesh Cricket Board director and BPL governing council chairman Afzalur Rahman Sinha's contribution to Bangladesh cricket, a 6-a-side tournament titled 'Kaiser Sinha Memorial 6 a Side Cricket



A women's hockey team, under the Dhaka Ekadosh banner, beat Kolkata Warriors 2-0 in the first of a three-match series yesterday. PHOTO: BHF

cannot be as disrespectful as he was with me.

"On the pitch, we are asked to show respect towards the referees. We should get the same in return."

-- AGENCIES

Tournament' will take place at Fatullah Cricket Ground on Friday and Saturday.

The tournament is jointly organised by Dhaka Club, Gulshan Club, Uttara Club and Bangladesh Cricket Board. 12 teams from home and abroad -- CFC, Royal Selangor, Calcutta Club, Saturday Club, Uttara Club, Chittagong Club, Dhaka Club (RED), Dhaka Club (Green), Cadet College, Balisera Valley Club, Chittagong SR. Club and Gulshan Club -- will take part in the tourney.

-- SPORTS REPORTER