

What to WATCH

STAR SPORTS SELECT 1
Bundesliga
Bayern Munich v Leipzig
Live from 1:30am (Thursday)

STAR SPORTS SELECT 2
Bundesliga
Schalke v Leverkusen
Live from 11:30pm
Mainz v Eintracht
Live from 1:30am (Thursday)

DAY'S EVENT

Bangladesh Cricket League
Round Five
Day Two
Time: 9:00am

South Zone v East Zone
Venue: SCS, Bogura
North Zone v Central Zone
Venue: SKS, Rajshahi

Independence Cup
Semifinal
Sheikh Russel v Brothers Union

Time: 4:30pm
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium

TIMELINE OF THE LOW POINTS

19 May - United lose FA Cup final 1-0 to Chelsea, ending a season without a trophy for first time in three years.

19 August - Defeat in second game of new Premier League season 3-2 to Brighton & Hove Albion.

27 August - Mourinho sees his side lose 3-0 to Tottenham Hotspur at Old Trafford, the biggest home defeat of his career. Complains about 'respect' to media after the game.

22 September - Midfielder Paul Pogba says United should attack more at home after disappointing 1-1 draw with Wolves. Mourinho strips Frenchman of vice-captaincy in growing rift.

25 September - United dumped out of the League Cup at home by second-tier Derby County on penalties

29 September - 3-1 defeat in the league by West Ham United means United suffer their worst start to a new season in 29 years.

8 October - Investigated by FA after allegedly swearing in Portuguese to camera after 3-2 comeback win over Newcastle United.

11 November - Comprehensively outplayed and beaten 3-1 by champions Manchester City away.

16 December - Another 3-1 defeat, this time by fierce rivals Liverpool which leaves United 19 points behind their league leading opposition.

18 December - Mourinho sacked with the club sixth in the Premier League.

Third season meltdown again

AFP, Manchester



Manchester United have sacked manager Jose Mourinho after their worst start to a season in almost 30 years, the club announced on Tuesday.

The 55-year-old Portuguese's last match in charge was the 3-1 defeat by Premier League leaders Liverpool on Sunday which left them 19 points behind their opponents. Mourinho's sacking comes just two-and-a-half years into his tenure and three years and a day since Chelsea sacked him just months after he had guided them to the title.

Former player Michael Carrick, now a member of the coaching staff, is expected to take charge in an interim role but United said a caretaker manager will be appointed until the end of the season.

The club's worst start in the league since 1990 means even Mourinho's ambition of reaching the top four and a Champions League qualification spot is in danger.

Despite United reaching the Champions League knockout stages -- they face an intimidating last-16 tie with Paris Saint-Germain -- a mix of the results, dressing-room discord and criticism of the board's transfer policy proved potent factors in the decision to dismiss him.

A United source told AFP that Mourinho had been supported in his efforts to sign players and described reports of player power at the club as being key to the sacking as wide of the mark.

According to British media reports, United will have to pay Mourinho £22.5 million -- as the club are still in the Champions League -- to sever the ties.

"Manchester United announces that manager Jose Mourinho has left the club with immediate effect," a club statement said. "The club would like to thank Jose for his work during his time at Manchester United and to wish him success in the future. A new caretaker manager will be appointed until the end of the current season, while the club conducts a thor-



Jose Mourinho on the touchline was often a picture of gloom during his final few weeks as manager of Manchester United.

PHOTO: REUTERS

ough recruitment process for a new, full-time manager."

Carrick is favoured for the caretaker role having become part of the coaching staff this season.

In the longer term former Real Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane has been linked to the club and Tottenham Hotspur manager Mauricio Pochettino could also be a name in the frame.

One bookmaker makes Pochettino the early favourite and the 46-year-old Argentinian is also former Manchester United midfielder Gary Neville's favoured option.

"They need someone who meets the three key principles of that football club: the

COOK SET FOR KNIGHTHOOD

Alastair Cook is set to receive a knighthood in the new year's honours, according to reports. The former England batsman, 33, retired from international duty this year after a glittering career in which he became the country's all-time leading Test runscorer. And now The Times reports that the Essex opener will become the 10th cricketer to be knighted and the first since Ian Botham in 2007. Cook's stellar career ended with a century against India in the final Test of the summer at The Oval. He is the fifth highest runscorer in Test match history and still playing county cricket for Essex. Cook was adamant after that fifth Test against India that he will not return to the international scene, even with a home Ashes series on the horizon next summer.

-- AGENCIES



WHAT THEY SAID



With United 19 points behind Liverpool after 17 games, with the vast majority of players playing way below their best... and dour football to boot. Given Mourinho was allowed to spend hundreds of millions on those players, the split seemed inevitable.

-- Gary Lineker

I think he [Mourinho] would have known this was coming. I'm not surprised... with the money he has spent and how the players are playing at this present moment in time... I said on Sunday, I couldn't see any light at the end of the tunnel for them. I was at Bournemouth two weeks ago. I'm a season ticket holder there. My season ticket is 10 rows behind the dugout and I saw a man who didn't want to be there..

-- Graeme Souness

"Inevitable is the word I'd use. Mourinho had to go in the end. Simply not getting anywhere near enough out of his players."

Michael Owen

The thing that is annoying me the most right now is why are people so focused on Paul Pogba and Jose Mourinho. Let's focus on rebuilding something solid instead of being in a playground. Doing this is only disrespecting the badge, from now we only need positivity.

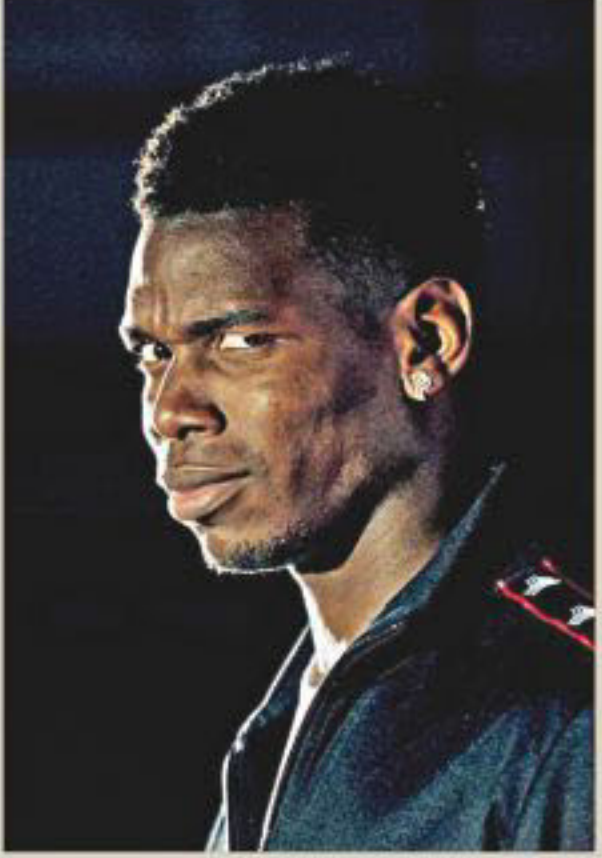
...Patrice Evra

I want to see my best wishes to [Mourinho]. I am so sorry, I know him well, and it's sad news. It's not my business what happens at another club, I just want to send my best wishes to Jose. In five years there have been a lot of rumours about my position as manager at Tottenham. I cannot answer this type of question. The business you know very well, a lot of rumours happen. I'm so focused in trying to deliver my best in this football club.

..Mauricio Pochettino

About an hour after Jose Mourinho's sacking, Paul Pogba posted this picture with the caption: "Caption this". Although it may have been an ad for Adidas, the picture was quickly deleted, perhaps due to the bad timing.

PHOTO: INSTAGRAM



SHORT CORNER

Rain halts BCL

None of the teams took to the field on the first day of the Bangladesh Cricket League's fifth round matches between North Zone and Central Zone at the Shaheed Kamruzzaman Stadium in Rajshahi and South Zone and East Zone at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogura due to inclement weather yesterday.

It was the same case at both venues with not a single ball being bowled on the day as even the toss did not take place.

The two four-day matches will resume today if the weather is favourable. -- SPORTS REPORTER

Fatigue not behind injuries, says De Bruyne

Manchester City star Kevin De Bruyne insisted misfortune and not exhaustion are behind his injury-ravaged season with the Premier League champions.

Knee problems have blighted De Bruyne's 2018-19 campaign, with the Belgium international midfielder only making his return in last week's win over Everton, having been sidelined since November.

"There's nothing I can do -- it was two accidents," said De Bruyne. "I wasn't exhausted. I think in general people need a good summer break, sometimes we play for 11.5 months at a time and there is not enough time to rest.

"I had a rest of about three weeks -- after 12 months of playing. Is that short? Probably, yes. But I felt OK to come back. There's not a lot to say, I came back and trained and was out after one week -- it's just the way it goes.

"I'm happy with my body because I know I have no problems with muscles. They were both just accidents, the second time also. I felt my knee and it pops, so you just work hard and try to be back as soon as possible. --

"I played the most of anyone last year -- in the whole world. And I played the World Cup without a problem." -- AGENCIES

Boca hire Burdisso as sports director

Former Inter Milan and Roma defender Nicolas Burdisso has been appointed sporting director at Boca Juniors, the Argentine giants announced in a press conference on Monday.

The move comes three days after the Buenos Aires club parted ways with coach Guillermo Barros Schelotto following the historic Copa Libertadores defeat to arch rivals River Plate.

Burdisso began his career at Boca before moving to Italy as a 23-year-old and playing out the rest of his career there, where he also donned the colours of Genoa and Torino.

"I've been waiting for a long time to return to the place that formed me," said Burdisso, 37, who retired earlier this year having won 49 Argentina caps. --AFP

Atalanta stall Lazio

Duvan Zapata scored within the first minute as Atalanta piled the pressure on Lazio to boost their European hopes with a 1-0 win in Bergamo on Monday.

Colombian striker Zapata pounced on a Lazio defensive error after just 57 seconds to fire in his fifth goal in three consecutive league games.

Atalanta, now sixth equal on points with Roma and Sassuolo, move one point behind Lazio, in fifth, but without a win in their last five league games.

Lazio defender Francesco Acerbi looked as if he had grabbed a point with his injury time header but the goal was ruled out after long consultation with VAR for the defender's foot being slightly in an offside position. --

AFP PSG bar L'Equipe from press conference

Paris Saint-Germain have refused press conference entry to journalists from popular sports daily L'Equipe ahead of a French League Cup match, the newspaper said on Monday.

L'Equipe claims the measure was taken as a reprisal after they published an article titled "Financial Fair Play: PSG under pressure to sell Kylian Mbappe or Neymar if they're punished". In a statement L'Equipe said it "regrets the decision from PSG but it will continue to inform its readers of the club's latest news".

L'Equipe staff were stopped from asking questions at a previous press conference before PSG's Champions League tie at Red Star Belgrade last week. --AFP

UEFA opens Chelsea racism probe

UEFA has launched an investigation into alleged racist chants during Chelsea's Europa League tie at Vidi, the governing body announced on Tuesday.

Minutes into the Europa League match in Budapest on December 13, which ended 2-2, a vocal minority of Chelsea fans were heard allegedly singing a derogatory chant about Tottenham Hotspur supporters, featuring anti-Semitic language.

Chelsea condemned the chanting and promised to take the strongest possible action against any supporters found to be guilty of singing racist songs.

The incident in Hungary came a matter of days after four fans were suspended for abusing Manchester City's Raheem Sterling.

The England forward later issued a statement accusing the British media of fuelling racism in the way it reports certain stories about black players. Chelsea banned four supporters pending an



Lionel Messi collected a record fifth Golden Shoe award yesterday for finishing last season as the top goalscorer in Europe. The striker scored 34 goals in 68 games for Barcelona, putting him ahead of Liverpool's Mohamed Salah and Tottenham's Harry Kane.

PHOTO: AFP

VICTORY DAY SPORTS

BGB, Ansar win handball titles

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) and Bangladesh Ansar won the titles in the Victory Day Handball Competition at the National Handball Stadium in Paltan yesterday.

BGB won the men's title, beating Bangladesh Police by 32-9 goals in the final after having led the first half by 14-3 goals. In the women's final, Bangladesh Ansar beat BJMC by 23-14 goals. The winners led the first half by 13-7 goals.

Army scoop taekwondo titles

Bangladesh Army won both the men's and women's titles of the Victory Day Taekwondo Competition, which concluded at the National Sports Council Gymnasium yesterday.

Army beat Border Guard Bangladesh in senior men's event final while Army beat BJMC in the senior women's final. The titles of men's and women's competitions in junior events went to Rajshahi District Sports Association and Cumilla District Sports Association respectively.

Army, Ansar best in kabaddi

Bangladesh Army won the men's title in Victory Day Kabaddi Competition, beating Bangladesh Police by 37-29 points at the National Kabaddi Stadium in Paltan yesterday.

The women's final proved to be a much closer affair as Ansar edged the women's team of Bangladesh Police by 24-23 points.

Quantum, Shafipur bag kho kho titles

Quantum Cosmos School & College of Bandarban and Shafipur Ideal Public School & College of Gazipur won titles in the Victory Day Kho Kho Competition at the Outer Stadium in Paltan yesterday. Quantum Cosmos School & College beat Ideal School of Jatrabari in boys' final while Shafipur Ideal Public School & College also beat the girls' team of Jatrabari Ideal School in girls' final.

Carrom event underway

The Victory Day Carrom Tournament got underway yesterday at the Carom Hall of Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium. A total of 50 players including 10 female players from several educational institutes and sports associations are taking part in the tournament.

-- SPORTS REPORTER



PHOTO: COLLECTED

Urmi Akter handed a 21-8, 21-1 points defeat to Bhutan's Thinley Wangmo in the women's singles of the Yonex-Sunrise Bangladesh International Junior Challenge at the Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Indoor Stadium yesterday.

Semis an all BD affair

SPORTS REPORTER



Following their exploits in the men's singles event, hosts Bangladesh secured medals in the men's and women's doubles events of the Yonex-Sunrise Bangladesh International Junior Challenge to set all Bangladeshi semifinals at the Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Indoor Stadium yesterday.

In the men's doubles quarterfinals, the junior shuttlers defeated their overseas rivals to ensure that the semifinals are an all Bangladeshi affair with the Hanif Mohammed and Abdul Hamid Lukman pair beating Bhutan's Tshewang Rinzin and Jamyang Tenzin pair by 21-7, 21-9 points.

Similarly, the Rajesh Chandra Dey and Rownak Nabi Priyo pair beat Sri Lanka's Dunshan Hettiarachchi and Nilanka Randilukshan pair by 19-21, 21-18, 21-9 points.

Gourab Singha and Mangal Singha outclassed the Maldivian pair of Mohamed Arsalaan Ali and Ahmed Nibal by 21-11, 21-13 points while the Syed Saker Mohammad and Sibghat Ullah pair defeated the Jimba Sangay Lhendup and Yeshi Rabten pair 21-12, 21-6.

Meanwhile, Phuntsho Dema and Kinley Wangmo, the only Bhutanese pair in women's doubles, lost to Bangladesh's Rahima Jarin and Kamelia Islam pair by 21-12, 21-11 points.

Rahima also moved into the women's singles semifinals alongside Urmi Akter with the latter handing an easy 21-8, 21-1 points defeat to Bhutan's Thinley Wangmo to set a semifinal clash against the tournament's top seed, Ruhi Rau, who beat Bangladesh's Rasma Akter by 21-11, 21-12 points.

On the other hand, Rahima faced a bit of a challenge from compatriot Farbin Binte Emdad before defeating her by 21-17, 11-21, 21-15 points to set up a semifinal encounter with the tournament's second seed, Treasa Jolley of India, who beat Bangladesh's Farjana Akter 21-4, 21-6 in another quarterfinal fixture.

In mixed doubled, three Bangladeshi pairs and one Indian pair moved into the semifinals after defeating their respective rivals.

Shakib fined for dissent

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh T20 captain Shakib Al Hasan was fined 15 per cent of his match fee and also received a demerit point for breaching Level 1 of the ICC Code of Conduct during the first T20I against West Indies in Sylhet on Monday.

Shakib was found guilty of showing dissent at an umpire's decision.

Shakib now has two demerit points as he was previously handed one demerit point for an offence during a T20I against Sri Lanka in March this year.

Monday's incident took place in the 14th over of Bangladesh's innings when the left-hander, at the striker's end, showed dissent at the umpire's decision to not call a wide ball as he shouted at the umpire before eventually getting involved in a prolonged discussion.

After the match, Shakib admitted the offence and accepted the sanction proposed by the match referee.

If a player reaches four or more demerit points within a 24-month period, the points are converted into suspension points and the player is subsequently banned.