

What to WATCH

STAR SPORTS SELECT 1
English Premier League
Huddersfield v Man City
Live from 7:30pm
Fulham v Tottenham
Live from 10:00pm

STAR SPORTS SELECT 2
Bundesliga
Nurnberg v Hertha
Live from 8:30pm
Schalke v Wolfsburg
Live from 11:00pm

SONY SIX & TEN 2
Australian Open
Round-4
Men's Singles
Live from 8:00am

Ten 2
Serie A
Sampdoria v Fiorentina
Live from 8:00pm
Cagliari v Empoli
Live from 11:00pm
Napoli v Lazio
Live from 1:30pm (Monday)

DAY'S EVENT

Bangladesh Premier League (Football)
Round-1
Mohammedan v Team BJMC
Time: 4:00pm

Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium
Arambagh v Sheikh Russel
Time: 3:00pm
Venue: Rafique Uddin Bhuiyan Stadium, Mymensingh

Sparse crowds sully contest

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Saif Sporting Club registered a 2-1 victory over Rahmatganj MFS in a Bangladesh Premier League match at the Rafique Uddin Bhuiyan Stadium in Mymensingh yesterday.

However, due to the tournament's lack of publicity, the tightly contested encounter was played in front of a sparse crowd at a venue which traditionally does not see much action.

Midfielder Mohammad Javed Khan opened the scoring for Saif Sporting in the 38th minute before Mehebab Hasan doubled the lead in the first minute of the second half. Midfielder Faysal Ahmed scored the solitary goal for Rahmatganj.

After the match, local Biplob Kumar told this correspondent that an onrush of spectators could not be expected as the tournament lacked proper advertising and that only a handful of local journalists were even aware of the event.

Meanwhile, another individual spoke of how local spectators are always enthusiastic for such competitions outside Dhaka.

"Such tournaments are very enjoyable outside Dhaka and we experienced a tough contest on the pitch", said Shamim Ahmed.

Afterwards, managing director of Saif Sporting Club Md Nasiruddin Chowdhury informed that they were unable to provide mass publicity due to time constraints.



Chittagong Abahani striker Awala Magalan (L) scored the all-important goal against his former club Muktiyoddha Sangsad at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. (Inset) Action from yesterday's Bangladesh Premier League match between Saif Sporting Club and Rahmatganj at the Rafique Uddin Bhuiyan Stadium in Mymensingh.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Magalan thwarts former club

SPORTS REPORTER



Nigerian hitman Awala Magalan ensured that Chittagong Abahani made a winning-start to their

Bangladesh Premier League campaign with a single-goal win over Muktiyoddha Sangsad at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Meanwhile, Saif Sporting Club also started the season well with a 2-1 win over Rahmatganj MFS at the Rafique Uddin Bhuiyan Stadium in Mymensingh.

In Dhaka, after helping Muktiyoddha derail Chittagong Abahani from last season's title race with two goals, Magalan turned villain for his former club as he sealed yesterday's victory through a freekick in the 49th minute. It is also worth mentioning that the well-built marksman took injections to heal a hamstring injury before entering the pitch.

The port-city outfit may have now avenged last season's defeat but they are still far behind Muktiyoddha in terms of overall results in the professional football league, where they beat the All Reds only four times while losing nine of their

18 outings.

"We could not field our full strength side following the absence of Kyrgyzstan's Daniel Nil Tagoe while Magalan is not fully fit following his hamstring injury. However, I had believed in Magalan, who could change the match and he did it just as he did last season for Muktiyoddha," said Chittagong Abahani coach Julfikar

This is the first time I made this type of freekick goal in my career. It's wonderful because I wanted to give something special to Chittagong Abahani for being able to do what I am doing today. I don't know how many goals I can score in the league but I want to see my team among the first three.

AWALA MAGALAN
CHITTAGONG ABAHANI STRIKER

CTG ABAHANI 1 - 0 MUKTIJODDHA
MAGALAN-49
SAIF SC 2 - 1 RAHMATGANJ
JAVED KHAN-37, MEHBUB HASAN NAYAN-46
FAISAL AHMED 90+1

Mahmud Mintu.

It should be mentioned though that Muktiyoddha defender Sean Anthony of Trinidad and Tobago made a big contribution to Magalan's goal as the tall defender inadvertently sent the goal-bound freekick home with a deflection. Had the situation been otherwise, Muktiyoddha Sangsad goalkeeper Arifuzzamal Himel could have easily grabbed the shot.

Chittagong Abahani threatened their opposition's backline early on when Faisal Mahmud saw his grounder come off the far post in the first half while Muktiyoddha's Japanese player Yousuke Kato drove wide off target.

After resumption, the All Reds dominated the match but could not avert Chittagong Abanahi's goal and had to leave the field without a single point. Muktiyoddha had more shots on target in the match with Ballo Famoussa of Ivory De

Cost grabbing his head in disbelief on more than a few occasions where he squandered goal-scoring opportunities.

Famoussa was unbelievably denied by goalkeeper Mohammad Nehal in the 66th minute before rattling the side-post in the 84th minute. The tall striker saw his final effort go inches wide of the post with the opponent goalkeeper beaten just two minutes from time.

In Mymensingh, Saif SC defeated Rahmatganj 2-1, courtesy of two fine finishes from Javed Khan and Mehbub Hasan Nayan.

After availing a forward-pass from Korean Seung Park, Yeasin Arafat ran deep from the right flank to place the ball to the centre, from where Javed brilliantly flicked it home at the near post in the 37th minute while Nayan drove a square-pass from Park into the net from inside the box to double the margin just a minute into the second half.

Saif SC held the upper hand till the 70th minute but then it was minnows Rahmatganj who pressed hard to reimburse one goal in stoppage time with Faisal converting a penalty after Yeasin Arafat handled the ball inside the box.

SHORT CORNER

Sara-Saba accorded reception

Sara Khan and Afia Mehraz Khan Saba, tenth and ninth grade students of the Afroza Ramjan Girls' High School respectively, were accorded a reception by the institution yesterday after becoming Dhaka Division's doubles badminton champions of the 48th Winter Sports and Athletics Competition.

Manikganj Deputy Commissioner SM Ferdous was present, among others, as chief guest during the occasion where he awarded the siblings Tk 10,000 for their achievement.

The Sara-Saba team won the Dhaka Division title by defeating the Sherpur district team in the final at the Motijheel Government Boys High School premises on Friday.

The pair had qualified for the divisional level by becoming champions of the Manikganj Sadar Upazila, Manikganj District, Sub-Region and Padma region.

The National level leg of the competition will be held from January 22 to 26 at the Chittagong Teachers' Training Institute ground.

—OUR CORRESPONDENT

Salah fires Liverpool, United extend winning run

Liverpool moved seven points clear at the top of the Premier League as Mohamed Salah's double inspired a dramatic 4-3 victory over Crystal Palace, while Manchester United stretched their winning streak to seven games as they beat Brighton 2-1 on Saturday.

Jürgen Klopp's side were pushed hard by Palace but

Salah's predatory instincts and a woeful mistake from Eagles keeper Julian Speroni ensured Liverpool improved their unbeaten home league run to 32 games.

At Old Trafford, Manchester United extended their superb form since interim manager Ole Gunnar Solskjær replaced the sacked Jose Mourinho.

After a minute's applause to mark the 25th anniversary of the death of United's legendary manager Matt Busby, Solskjær's side took the lead in the 27th minute.

Gaetan Bong conceded a penalty with a foul on Paul Pogba and the France midfielder stroked home the spot-kick for his 10th goal of the season.

United winger Marcus Rashford marked his 150th game for the club with his side's second goal in the 42nd minute.

—AFP

Casemiro wonder goal helps Real

Casemiro's stunning long-range strike and a late goal from Luka Modric earned Real Madrid a 2-0 win over Sevilla on Saturday and a much-needed boost to their flailing title challenge in La Liga.

Madrid began the day 10 points adrift of leaders Barcelona, a gap that will be restored if the Catalans defeat Leganes on Sunday, but this victory should inject a timely shot of confidence.

Casemiro's brilliant strike in the 78th minute and Modric's injury-time finish settled a cagey contest of third against fourth but Madrid were dominant in the second half and deserved more than a draw.

—AFP



Liverpool's Mohamed Salah (L) scored twice in their 4-3 win against Crystal Palace at Anfield yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

SLAIN JOURNALIST HAILED AS NATIONAL HERO

Ghanaian journalist Ahmed Hussein-Suale, who helped expose corruption in African football, was hailed a "national hero" on Friday, as his friends and family gathered for his funeral. The 34-year-old reporter was gunned down as he returned to his home in the Madina area of the capital, Accra, on Wednesday night, in a killing that sparked outrage. Hussein-Suale was part of an investigative team that lifted the lid on graft in the sport last year, which led to the sanction of a string of top officials, coaches and referees. His body, wrapped in a white shroud, was brought from a central Accra mortuary to a mosque in Madina before prayers, followed by calls for those responsible to face justice. Ghana Journalist Association president Affial Monney told AFP: "We have lost a national hero as far as investigative journalism is concerned."

—AFP



Halep sets up Serena showdown

AFP, Melbourne



World number one Simona Halep set up a headline last 16 showdown with Serena Williams by beating her sister Venus Saturday as Novak Djokovic's relentless drive towards more Australian Open glory cranked up

another gear.

On day six at Melbourne Park, the Romanian finally hit form to pull off her best win of the year and cruise past the veteran American 6-2, 6-3.

"I was super-motivated today," she said after being taken to three sets in both her opening two matches as she bounces back from a herniated disc that ended her 2018 season early.

"I have nothing to lose," she added, looking ahead to Monday's clash against 23-time Grand Slam winner Serena. "I am playing against a great champion. Its's going to be a bigger challenge but I'm ready to face it."

Williams crushed Ukrainian Dayana Yastremska 6-2, 6-1 before consoling her at the net as the teenager burst into tears.

The ominous 37-year-old, seeded 16, has dropped just nine games in her three matches so far on her first return to the tournament since winning it in 2017 while pregnant.

"I just play each match at a time, play as hard as I can and do the best I can. That really is all you can do," she said as she zeroes in on an eighth Australian title and a record-equalling 24th Slam crown.

Fourteen-time Grand Slam winner and top seed Djokovic is gunning for a record seventh Australian title.

He dropped a set for the first time this year against fast-rising Canadian Denis Shapovalov, before demolishing



Simona Halep pumps her fist after winning a point against Venus Williams during their Australian Open women's singles match in Melbourne yesterday. Halep won 6-2, 6-3.

PHOTO: AFP

him in the fourth stanza to win 6-3, 6-4, 4-6, 6-0.

"I just tried to be in the moment and weather the storm," said the Serb, who was unsettled when the lights were switched on in Rod Laver Arena for television reasons, despite it still being daylight.

"Completely unnecessary to turn on the lights," he said in roasting the organisers.

Djokovic's victory means he is guaranteed to stay world number one when the new rankings are released after the tournament.

He next plays another up-and-coming star, Russia's 15th seed Daniil Medvedev, who eased past David Goffin and has yet to drop a set.

Another young gun Alexander Zverev made the last 16 for the first time when he swatted aside Australian Alex Bolt in three sets and will play former world number three Milos Raonic for a place in the quarter-finals.

Fourth seed Naomi Osaka looked down and out against Taiwanese veteran Hsieh Su-wei before battling back to win 7-5, 4-6, 6-1 and set up meeting with Latvia's Anastasija Sevastova.

Osaka's win equals the 21-year-old's best performance at the Australian Open, where she reached the last 16 in 2018 but lost to Halep.

Sixth seed Elina Svitolina struggled with a painful shoulder complaint that required treatment at every changeover, and medical timeouts, before she somehow beat China's Zhang Shuai 4-6, 6-4, 7-5 as the temperature rose in the centre court sunshine.

She will next meet 17th-seeded American Madison Keys.



Paris Saint-Germain star Kylian Mbappe celebrates one of his three goals with teammate Edison Cavani who also scored a hatrick during their League One match against Guingamp at the Parc des Princes Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

PSG romp to record 9-0 home win

AFP, Paris



Kylian Mbappe and Edinson Cavani both scored hat-tricks as Paris Saint-Germain romped to their biggest-ever home win with a 9-0 Ligue 1 thrashing of Guingamp on Saturday.

The runaway league leaders gained sweet revenge on bottom club Guingamp, who had ended their bid for a sixth straight League Cup title earlier this month in Paris.

It was PSG's largest victory at the Parc des Princes, beating an 8-0 win over Dijon 12 months ago, but fell narrowly short of equalling their biggest win in total -- a 10-0 French Cup thumping of

Cote d'Ivoire in 1994.

The capital club, who lead second-placed Lille by 13 points with two games in hand, have dropped just four points in their opening 19 matches of the season as they bid for an unbeaten league campaign.

Neymar also scored twice as PSG's front three took their combined tally for the season to 58 goals, while Mbappe extended his advantage in the Ligue 1 scoring charts having netted 17 times in only 14 appearances.

Cavani won the three-man race to a hat-trick by miskicking a rebound in off the post, with the goal awarded by VAR, before the Uruguayan's square pass was diverted into an empty net by Mbappe to seal his own treble.

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