

What to WATCH

STAR SPORTS 1&2
New Zealand v India
Fourth ODI
Live from 8:00am
TEN 1
West Indies v England
Second Test, Day One

Live from 8:00pm
SONY SIX
Australia v Sri Lanka
Second Test, Day One
Live from 5:30am (Friday)

Bangladesh U-19s v England U-19s
Second Youth ODI
Time: 9:00am
Venue: SKICS Main, Cox's Bazar

DAY'S EVENT

ARSHAVIN HAUNTING LOBNYA MAN!

Andrey Arshavin spent a fair amount of his career as little more than listless spectre, but it would appear he has now gone and made the full jump into the spirit world. According to a report in The Moscow Times, police in the Russian capital are investigating a reported sighting of the ghost of Arshavin. To be clear: Arshavin is not dead. Far from it. Aged 37, the former Russian Footballer of the Year made the headlines recently when he was filmed leaving a St Petersburg strip club on the back of a horse. However, one man from the Moscow suburb of Lobnya is claiming to have witnessed the ex-Gunner potting about in his living room. He's gone as far as contacting Russian police regarding the matter, claiming an apparition "closely resembling [Arshavin] passes through his walls". Worse still, the unnamed man alleges that the ghost has been attacking him and stealing his money. Quite what the police can do to combat a nefarious ghost thief is unclear. But if you can't rely on the cops over this sort of thing then who exactly are you gonna call?

--AGENCIES



Newcastle midfielder Matt Ritchie (C) celebrates with teammates after scoring the go-ahead goal against Manchester City in their Premier League encounter at St James' Park on Tuesday night, leaving (Inset) opposition manager Pep Guardiola in dismay.

PHOTO: AFP



'We have to win a lot of games now'

Pep says after Newcastle shock

AFP, London



Pep Guardiola insists it is far too early to write off Manchester City's chances of defending their Premier League title, but the champions' fourth defeat in nine league games has emboldened Liverpool's hopes of ending a 29-year wait to win the title.

Jürgen Klopp's men could have a seven-point lead over City with just 14 games left to negotiate with a win against Leicester. Moreover, there is every chance that lead could be extended in the coming week as City host Arsenal and Chelsea either side of a trip to the other side of Liverpool to face Everton in a testing eight-day stretch starting on Sunday.

"Seven points is a lot of points," Guardiola conceded after a shock 2-1 defeat at Newcastle on Tuesday. "Liverpool's advantage is not huge but it's there -- we have to win a lot of games now. But if we want to keep going up as a club we have to accept the challenge. We are in January and we are behind the leaders but there are a lot of trophies and points to play for."

"Next week will be tough with Arsenal, Everton and Chelsea," said Guardiola. "If we want to go up as a club we have to accept that challenge. There are a lot of titles and points to play for."

Unlike Liverpool, who bowed out at the first hurdle of both domestic cups,

Guardiola believes the way forward for City to establish themselves as a dominant power in the era of the club's Abu Dhabi funded wealth is silverware on all fronts.

"What are the best teams in the last decade? Juventus, Bayern Munich, Barcelona. These are the three best teams in Europe. Why? Because every season they win the league, every season they win the cups, every season they are there," Guardiola said this week.

"We can -- not get close to them, because it's difficult -- but imitate them. Being in the competition until the last stages. Sometimes you are lucky, sometimes not, but be there." OLE SALUTES 'NEVER-SAY-DIE' ATTITUDE Ole Gunnar Solskjær saluted Manchester United's fighting spirit as they rolled back the years with two goals in the final five minutes of a thrilling 2-2 draw against Burnley.

United trailed by two goals with just three minutes left against Burnley on Tuesday, but Paul Pogba got one back with a penalty. Then Ashley Young sent over a 92nd minute cross, Alexis Sanchez's header was saved by Tom Heaton and Victor Lindelof pounced to net the rebound.

"Coming up here, I was stopped so many times saying it was great spirit and great the way they came back," Solskjær said after the match. "The way they came back was fantastic. Now we have the answer: can they come back if they go one-down or two-down even? I'm very happy with the response."

Perfect Kings keep NoFeL at zero

SPORTS REPORTER

Newcomers Bashundhara Kings took a solo lead in the Bangladesh Premier League with a 2-0 win over promoted NoFeL Sporting Club at the Sheikh Kamal Stadium in Niphamari yesterday.

Striker Matin Mia gave the contenders the lead in the 23rd minute before Emon Babu wrapped up the win in the 85th minute, ensuring a third straight win for the Independence Cup champions and helping the side to a maximum nine points, three clear of Arambagh, Abahani, Saif SC and Sheikh Russel KC, with the last having a game in hand.

Fresh off a 3-0 win over defending champions Abahani, Bashundhara got off to a strong start against a side they drew 1-1 in this year's Federation Cup. However, they had beaten the same opposition twice on way to becoming champions of the Bangladesh

Championship League last season. Costa Rican World Cupper Daniel Colindres was the nucleus of Bashundhara's attacks and he set up

BASHUNDHARA 2-0 NOFEL SC
MATIN 23', EMON 85'
MOHAMMEDAN 0-1 BROTHERS
DANIELS 51'

	P	W	L	D	GD	Pts
Bashundhara	3	3	0	0	6	9
Arambagh	3	2	1	0	3	6
Sheikh Russel	2	2	0	0	2	6
Saif Sporting	3	2	1	0	1	6
Abahani	3	2	1	0	0	6
Ctg Abahani	3	1	0	2	1	5
Brothers Union	2	1	1	0	0	3
Muktijoddha	3	1	2	0	0	3
Mohammedan	3	1	2	0	-3	3
Rahmatganj	3	0	1	2	-1	2
Team BJMC	3	0	2	1	-2	1
Sheikh Jamal	3	0	2	1	-4	1
NoFeL SC	2	0	2	0	-3	0

Matin for the first goal. Availing a long ball, Colindres threaded a forward pass inside the danger zone and Matin brilliantly flicked the ball home over an advancing NoFeL SC goalkeeper. Colindres was denied by the woodwork from a free-kick in the 29th minute.

However the big spenders did get a second goal five minutes from time when Brazilian striker Marcos Vinicius saw his back-heel parried outside the box from where an unmarked Emon drove home.

MSC FALL TO BROTHERS

In the battle of two falling giants, Brothers Union had the last laugh, with Jack Daniels scoring an eye-catching goal six minutes into the second half to give the All Oranges their first win in two matches.

Having come into the match on the back of a humiliating 4-1 defeat to Arambagh, Mohammedan played much better and dominated proceedings, but luck was not with them as their striking pair of Eleta Kingsley and Landing Darboe

squandered a number of scoring chances in the second half.

After surviving a few scares in the first half, Brothers scored against the run of play when Brazilian duo Everton Santoz and Lima Leonardo played a one-two before squaring it up to Daniels, who shot past Mohammedan goalkeeper Sarwar Jahan from the top of the box.

Landing failed to equalise despite twice getting Brothers goalkeeper Sujjan Chowdhury alone while Kingsley squandered two easy chances, sealing a second defeat for the Black and Whites.

"I'm really happy with the goal as our team won even though we were on the back foot in the match," retorted 24-year-old Daniels, who earlier played in Canada and El Salvador.

"I had scored a goal from a similar position during the Federation Cup. To be honest, I have scored 10 to 12 similar goals in my playing career. Now I'm looking forward to scoring at least 12 goals in the league," added Daniels.

I expected a night like this. I said that I was ready and I got a brace, but this is just the start.

KRZYSZTOF PIATEK
AC MILAN STRIKER



Krzysztof Piatek, signed by AC Milan from Genoa last week to replace the outgoing Gonzalo Higuain, made a dream start to life at the San Siro, netting both goals in a 2-0 win against Napoli in a Coppa Italia quarterfinal on Tuesday night.

PHOTO: TWITTER

SHORT CORNER

Hazard can leave if he wants, says Sarri
Chelsea manager Maurizio Sarri has said Eden Hazard is free to leave the club if he wants to but the Italian hopes the forward stays at Stamford Bridge.

Hazard has been linked with a move to Spanish side Real Madrid in recent months and the Belgium international had said in October last year that it was his dream to play for the reigning European champions.

"Eden is 28. If he wants to go, I think he has to go," Sarri said of Hazard, whose contract expires next season. "Of course, I hope the opposite, I hope he wants to stay here. He has the potential to be the best player in Europe at the moment."

--REUTERS

Cardiff players scared to fly after Sala's disappearance

Some of the Cardiff City players are scared to fly after January signing Emiliano Sala's flight disappeared over the English Channel last week, defender Sol Bamba has said.

"We travel by plane and some of the lads have been thinking 'I don't want to go on it anymore,'" Bamba told BBC. "The gaffer...and the club have been good in terms of bringing someone in to talk to if we need to. And I think some of the lads do, they need to get it out."

Bamba, who knew Sala personally through his agent, said he discussed the move to Cardiff with the Argentine who was signed from French Ligue 1 club Nantes. "It is not just me finding it difficult, even though I had a personal connection to him," Bamba added. "I don't feel more sad than the other lads, everyone feels sad, the whole club."

--REUTERS

Xavi has last laugh

The 2010 World Cup had Paul the Octopus and this year's Asian Cup has Barcelona great, and now soothsayer, Xavi Hernandez.

The Spanish World Cup winner has proved remarkably skilled off the pitch as well as on it, with a series of stunning predictions about what would happen in the tournament.

He has an almost 100 percent record, including picking Qatar and Japan as surprise finalists. Before that he correctly predicted seven of the last eight quarterfinalists and three of the four



Formula 1 star Lewis Hamilton has been enjoying his time off from the sport over the past few weeks, posting pictures of himself doing various activities. However, while he had so far limited himself to golf and soaking up the sun on his tour around America, the Englishman joined up with two professional surfers and rode the waves.

PHOTO: TWITTER

semifinalists.

The only predictions he has got wrong so far is tipping Syria to get to the last eight -- Vietnam did instead -- and Australia to make the semifinals, but they lost to the United Arab Emirates.

He was ridiculed online after he went on Doha-based TV station Al Kass in December and publicly announced his predictions for the tournament. Many accused the Doha-based star of home town bias after picking Qatar to reach the final but Xavi is having the last laugh.

But as he is matching Paul the Octopus, who managed 85 per cent in 2010 including correctly selecting Xavi's Spain to lift the World Cup, there is a chance the Spaniard will be proved correct.

Dortmund turned down Weigl request to join PSG

Germany midfielder Julian Weigl has confirmed reports that Bundesliga leaders Borussia Dortmund turned down his request for a transfer to Paris Saint Germain in the current window.

"I have to accept that those responsible at the club didn't want to release me (from his contract)," the 23-year-old, who has made five appearances for Germany, told German magazine

Sport Bild. "Now my full concentration is on being successful with BVB (Dortmund)."

After winger Christian Pulisic signed for Chelsea in early January, sports director Michael Zorc stated the club would not sell any more players before the transfer window closes on Thursday (1700 GMT) with Dortmund on course for their first Bundesliga title since 2012.

With Weigl unavailable, PSG completed the signing of Argentina midfielder Leandro Paredes, 24, on Monday from Zenit Saint Petersburg on a four-and-a-half-year deal.

--AFP

Seat cushions found 'likely' from missing Sala plane

British investigators said on Wednesday it was "likely" that two seat cushions that washed up on the French shore this week were from the missing plane carrying footballer Emiliano Sala.

Britain's Air Accidents Investigation Branch (AAIB), which is probing the disappearance of the light aircraft over the Channel on January 21, said the cushions were discovered on the Normandy coastline on Monday.

"From a preliminary examination we have concluded that it is likely that the cushions are from the missing aircraft," a statement read.

--AFP

Neymar out for 10 weeks

To miss both CL ties against MU, confirm PSG

AFP, Paris



Neymar will miss both legs of Paris Saint-Germain's upcoming Champions League last-16 tie against Manchester United after the French club confirmed on Wednesday that the world's most expensive player would be out for 10 weeks with a metatarsal injury.

However, Neymar will not undergo an operation, with PSG saying the Brazilian had agreed on "a conservative treatment" that could see him return in April.

"After detailed analysis by specialists, a consensus was reached of a conservative treatment of Neymar's injury to the fifth right metatarsal," the French champions said.

"Informed of this recommendation, Neymar agreed with this protocol. As a result, Neymar is expected to return to the field within 10 weeks."

Neymar suffered the injury in PSG's 2-0 French Cup win against Strasbourg last week, and his coach Thomas Tuchel had all but ruled the 222 million-euro forward out of the first leg against United on February 12.

"Paris Saint-Germain sends its strongest support and encouragement to Neymar Jr. to overcome this injury, with the courage and determination that the player has always shown," the club added.

While Neymar will now sit out a crucial period in PSG's season, there has also been concern back in Brazil, which will host the Copa America in June and July.

South Africa take series

AFP, Cape Town

Opening batsman Quinton de Kock launched an assault on Pakistan's bowlers to set up a series-clinching win for South Africa in the fifth and final one-day international at Newlands on Wednesday.

De Kock slammed 83 off 58 balls as South Africa chased down a target of 241 with seven wickets and ten overs to spare to seal a 3-2 series win.

"Quinny made it easy for the rest of the batters," said South African captain Faf du Plessis, who said he was "extremely happy" with the way his team had played.

While man-of-the-match De Kock sealed the win with his dazzling strokeplay, South Africa's bowlers played a significant role by restricting Pakistan to 240 for eight despite an aggressive 70 by Fakhar Zaman.

SCORES IN BRIEF

PAKISTAN: 240 for 8 (Fakhar 70, Malik 31, Imad 47 not out; Phehlukwayo 2-42)

SOUTH AFRICA: (De Kock 83, Du Plessis 50 not out, Van der Dussen 50 not out; Shaheen 1-34)

Result: South Africa won the match by 7 wickets and won the series 3-2.

Player-of-the-match: Quinton de Kock

Player-of-the-series: Imamul Haq



After scalping five wickets in the first Test against England, which the West Indies won by a massive 381 runs, home side pacer Kumar Roach (L) will be hoping to continue his good work in the second Test starting today.

PHOTO: AFP