

# What to WATCH

**GTV & MAASRANGA**  
**Bangladesh Premier League**  
 Phase Five  
 Comilla Victorians v Rangpur Riders  
 Live from 1:30pm  
 Dhaka Dynamites v Khulna Titans  
 Live from 6:30pm

**SONY SIX**  
 Australia v Sri Lanka  
 Second Test, Day Three  
 Live from 5:30am (Sunday)  
**TEN 1**  
 West Indies v England  
 Second Test, Day Three

Live from 8:00pm  
**TEN 2**  
 Serie A  
 Empoli v Chievo  
 Live from 8:00pm  
**La Liga**  
 Barcelona v Valencia

Live from 11:30pm  
 Serie A  
 Juventus v Parma  
 Live from 1:30am (Sunday)  
**STAR SPORTS SELECT 1**  
 English Premier League  
 Tottenham v Newcastle

Live from 6:30pm  
 Chelsea v Huddersfield  
 Live from 9:00pm  
 Cardiff v Bournemouth  
 Live from 11:30pm  
**STAR SPORTS SELECT 2**  
 Bundesliga

Leverkusen v Bayern Munich  
 Live from 8:30pm  
 Schalke v Monchengladbach  
 Live from 11:30pm  
**SONY ESPN**  
 Serie A  
 Napoli v Sampdoria

Live from 11:00pm  
**La Liga**  
 Celta Vigo v Sevilla  
 Live from 1:45am (Sunday)

DAY'S EVENT

**Bangladesh Premier League**  
 Phase Five  
 Venue: Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium  
 Comilla Victorians v Rangpur Riders

Time: 1:30pm  
 Dhaka Dynamites v Khulna Titans  
 Time: 6:30pm

**Bangladesh Premier League (Football)**  
 Rahmatganj MFS v Abahani  
 Time: 4:00pm  
 Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium, Dhaka

Team BJMC v Sheikh Jamal  
 Time: 3:00pm  
 Venue: Shaheed Bulu Stadium, Noakhali

**Bangladesh U-19s v England U-19s**  
 Third Youth ODI, Time: 9:00am  
 Venue: Sheikh Kamal International Cricket Stadium, Cox's Bazar

## Qatar claim Asian supremacy

AFP, Abu Dhabi

Qatar stunned Japan 3-1 to win their first Asian Cup on Friday sparked by a moment of magic from record-breaker Almoez Ali and after nail-biting late drama.

Sudan-born striker Ali scored with an acrobatic bicycle kick after just 12 minutes before Abdelaziz Hatim curled in a superb second and Akram Afif converted a VAR-assisted penalty to give the 2022 World Cup hosts a famous victory in Abu Dhabi.

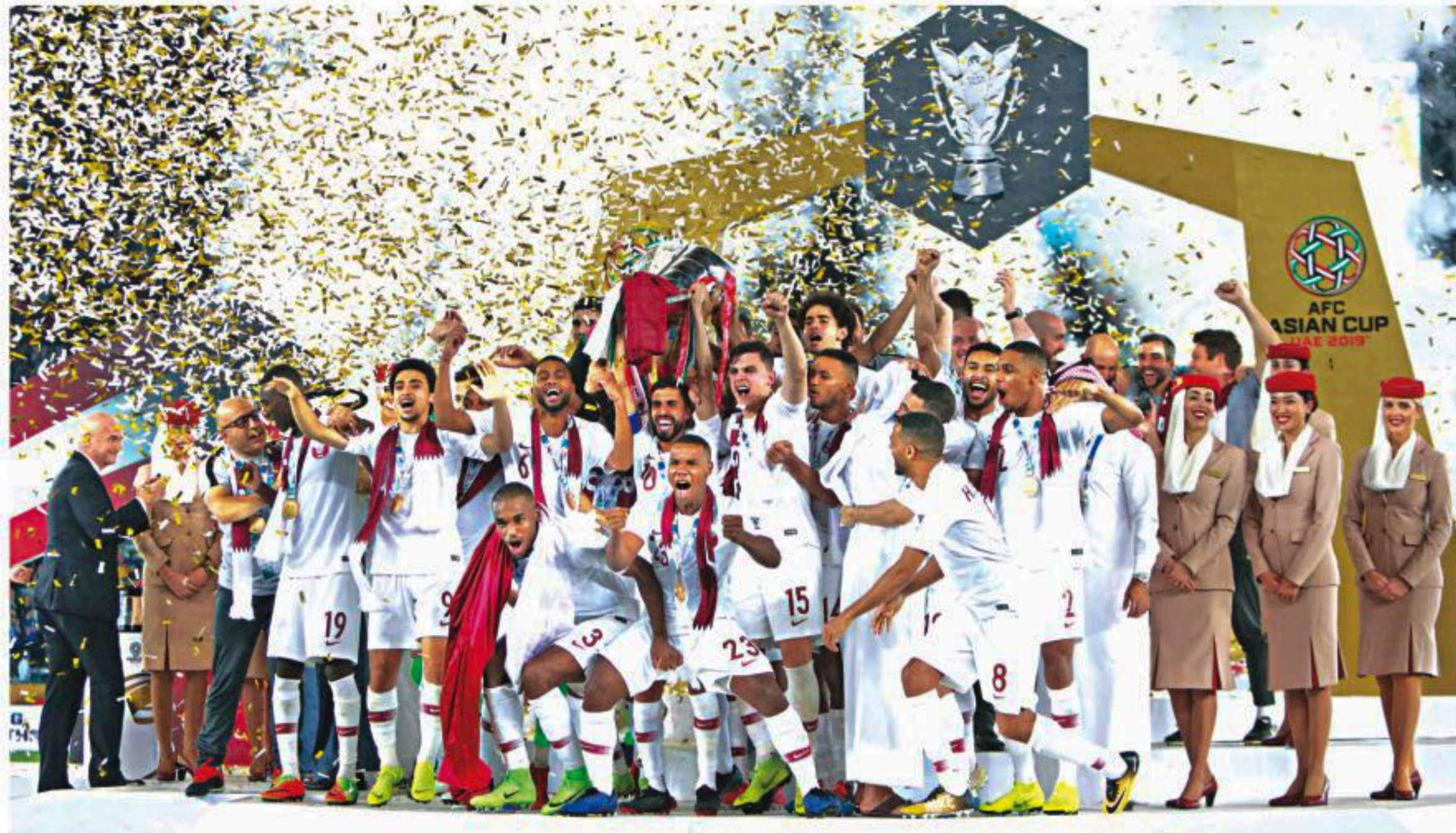
Qatar survived a scare at 2-0 when Takumi Minamoto pulled one back on 69 minutes, only for Uzbek referee Ravshan Irmatov to award the Maroons a penalty on review for a handball by Japan captain Maya Yoshida.

Ali became the first player to score nine goals at a single Asian Cup after only being cleared to play just hours before kickoff following a UAE protest over his eligibility.

The Qataris had been pelted with plastic bottles and shoes during the 4-0 semi-final thrashing of hosts United Arab Emirates over the Gulf blockade of the tiny, energy-rich state.

Emirati football officials subsequently lodged a formal protest over the eligibility of Ali and Iraqi-born defender Bassam Al-Rawi, which has been thrown out by the Asian Football Confederation.

Qatar had never before gone beyond the Asian Cup quarter-finals but they scored 16 unanswered



Qatar footballers lift their first ever Asian Cup trophy after stunning Japan 3-1 in the final at the Zayed Sports City Stadium in Abu Dhabi yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

goals coming into the final and kept a record six clean sheets.

Japan, meanwhile, had never lost an Asian Cup final, winning the last of their record four titles in 2011. But the Blue Samurai were soon chopped down to size by Ali's outrageous opener, taking him past Iran legend Ali Daei's record tally of eight goals at the 1996 tournament.

Cleverly found by Afif, Ali flicked the ball up to himself before launching into an overhead volley that left Japan goalkeeper Shuichi Gonda

helpless as it flew in off the post.

Ali almost scored again within a minute, only to be denied by a desperate block from Yoshida.

However, Qatar doubled their lead in the 27th minute after yet another Afif assist -- his 10th of the tournament -- as Hatim bent in a sumptuous left-foot shot from distance.

Japan, whose only previous Asian Cup defeat by Qatar came 31 years ago, mustered little of note, much to the chagrin of their colour-

ful fans among a crowd of 36,000 -- several sporting fancy dress, including one hardy soul in an inflatable sumo suit.

That all changed when Minamoto breached Qatar's defence for the first time this tournament with a delicate chip after Hatim had blazed over from close range.

But moments later Afif ended Japan's resistance from the spot to complete a fairytale triumph for Qatar.

## Benz steers Real to semi showdown with Barca

AFP, Madrid



Real Madrid will face defending champions Barcelona in the semifinals of the Copa del Rey while Real Betis will play Valencia in the other semifinal.

The draw made on Friday means there will be back-to-back Clasicos, with the second leg due to take place in the last week of February, before Madrid host Barca in La Liga on March 2.

The first leg will be played at the Camp Nou next week before a return at the Santiago Bernabeu.

Real Madrid's club director Emilio

Butragueno said after the draw: "Madrid against Barcelona is one of the best matches that can be seen all over the world today. It will be a great knock-out match."

Barca are chasing a record fifth Copa del Rey success in a row while Madrid are into the last four for the first time since they won the competition in 2014.

Two Clasico games in a week will crank up the pressure on both teams at the end of the month but Real also have a testing schedule around the first leg.

Real reached the Copa del Rey semis after completing a 7-3 aggregate victory over Girona on Thursday while Barcelona pulled off a brilliant comeback to beat Sevilla, overturning a 2-0 first-leg deficit by winning 6-1 at the Camp Nou.



Madrid-based sport daily AS headlined the win: "Benzema a Bengal Tiger".

I am sorry for those who only discovered Benzema last week. Karim has been doing this for many years, he has great talent and is a team player. Although it's true, he's in a great run of form.

SANTIAGO SOLARI  
 REAL MADRID COACH

## Crucial matches for Abahani, Sk Jamal

SPORTS REPORTER



With only the third round of the ongoing Bangladesh Premier League having been completed, the 11th edition of the top-tier professional football league has turned into a league of uncertainty for title aspirants as last season's champions Abahani and runners-up Sheikh Jamal have already dropped some valuable points in their first three matches.

Six-time champions Abahani are currently in fifth position on the 13-team table after losing to newcomers and title contenders Bashundhara Kings in the second round while Sheikh Jamal could secure only one point as they sit second from the bottom.

Both teams will look to avoid further slips to stay in the race as the fourth-round matches get underway at two venues today.

Despite a 2-0 win over Mukhtijoddha Sangsad in their last match, Abahani are expected to face a tough challenge from minnows Rahmatganj, who held Chittagong Abahani and Sheikh Jamal in their last two matches, at the Bangabandhu National Stadium today.

The defending champions, however, may take inspiration from the fact that they have not lost against the Old Dhaka outfit in seven years since a 0-1 reversal in the second leg of the fourth edition of the league. However, they were held to draws by Rahmatganj twice,

including once in the last edition.

Away at the Shaheed Bulu Stadium in Noakhali, Sheikh Jamal will square off against Team BJMC following consecutive defeats against Bashundhara Kings and Mukhtijoddha Sangsad. The three-time champions are in poor form and will be under pressure against a side which played out a goalless draw against Chittagong Abahani in their last match.

Sheikh Jamal, however, have not lost to Team BJMC in six years since suffering a shock 3-1 defeat during the latter's debut season in 2012. Team BJMC could not repeat the feat in their next 12 meetings with Sheikh Jamal notching eight wins and four draws.

In the fourth round, Sheikh Russel will be in action after getting rest in the third round and they will be looking forward to join leaders Bashundhara Kings by posting a third straight victory while Bashundhara Kings will have a week of rest.

In the 18 completed matches so far, foreign players have stolen the show in front of goal, scoring 27 goals while 11 local players have scored the other 14 goals.

Foreigners are pulling teams such as Sheikh Russel, Sheikh Jamal, Chittagong Abahani, Brothers Union, Team BJMC and Mukhtijoddha Sangsad single-handedly while others like Abahani, Bashundhara Kings, Mohammedan, Rahmatganj, Saif and Arambagh are getting good service from both local and foreign recruits.

AFP, Canberra



Joe Burns and Travis Head plundered Australia's first centuries of the home summer Friday in a stirring fightback as they ruthlessly exposed Sri Lanka's inexperienced attack in the second Test at Canberra.

Australian skipper Tim Paine won the toss at the Manuka Oval and put his side in on a flat track conducive to batting, a gambit that paid off after some early wobbles.

At stumps, they were a commanding 384 for four with Burns not out 172 and Kurtis Patterson, who was dropped first ball, on 25.

Head fell for 161 after a 308-run stand with Burns -- Australia's first stand over 200 since Steve Smith and Mitch Marsh achieved the feat in the third Test against England in December 2017.

Vishwa Fernando was the best of the bowlers with 3-99.

On a cool, overcast day, Burns and Head dug Australia out of a hole after they lost Marcus Harris, Usman Khawaja and Marnus Labuschagne cheaply to be in trouble at 28 for three.

After weathering the storm, the pair started cashing in on a Sri Lankan attack missing their top bowlers and fieldsmen who put down a host of chances.

"We knew the first hour was going to be tough, bit of grass on the wicket, so despite losing the three



Australia batsmen Travis Head (L) and Joe Burns shared a 308-run fourth wicket partnership during the first day of the second and final Test against Sri Lanka at the Manuka Oval in Canberra yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

wickets we just knew we had to absorb the pressure," said Burns.

"We also knew they were an inexperienced bowling attack that was going to present scoring opportunities if we got through those tough periods. Hopefully we can come out tomorrow and do much the same."

Back in the side after being overlooked for series against Pakistan and India, Burns survived a dropped catch on 34, but was otherwise invincible and brought up his fourth Test ton off 147 balls with a single.

Burns' knock was the first century for Australia since Khawaja's 141

against Pakistan in October and the second an Australian scored since the fifth Ashes Test almost 13 months ago.

**SCORES IN BRIEF:**  
**AUSTRALIA:** First innings 384 for 4 (Burns 172 not out, Head 161, Patterson 25 not out; Fernando 3-99, Karunaratne 1-87)

## 'SL would fall short at WC'

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka cricket legend Arjuna Ranatunga predicted Friday that the country would fall short at this year's World Cup because of corruption by officials and player indiscipline.

Ranatunga, who captained the side that won the 1996 World Cup, doubted that Sri Lanka would even get past the first round of the tournament that begins in England on May 30.

"There is corruption at the board. Players are demoralised. Players are fighting with each other," said the 55-year-old.

Ranatunga, who is currently Sri Lanka's transport minister, is preparing a new bid to take charge of Sri Lanka Cricket.

He told reporters in Colombo that the national cricket board and several unnamed players were responsible for the national team's recent poor performances.

## SHORT CORNER

**Big win for Govt Boys**  
 Thakurgaon Government Boys High School registered a 231-run win against Thakurgaon Sugar Mills High School in a Prime Bank Young Tigers National School Cricket Tournament match in Thakurgaon yesterday.

After electing to bat, Government Boys rode on a quickfire 89 from Nur Hossen to post a mammoth 324-run total. In reply, Sugar Mills were bundled out for just 93 runs with bowler Susanto Roy scalping seven wickets for just 16 runs.

Elsewhere, P.D.B High School won by 38 runs against Government M.C Academy, courtesy of a 70-run knock from opener Mostakim which helped the side post a challenging 236-run total.

The other five matches of the day were low-scoring affairs. Khulna News Print defeated Khulna Collegiate School, Idrishia Kamil Madrasha lost to Nabarun Public School, Govt. Jubilee High School beat Al-Haz Jomirun Nour High School and Habiganj Govt. High School defeated Nurpur High School and Baburhut High School won against Matlad J.B High School.

**Inter's late equaliser in vain as Lazio win Cup shootout**  
 Lazio reached the Coppa Italia semi-finals with a 4-3 shootout win over Inter Milan who had forced a 1-1 draw with a penalty



Lionel Messi and his wife Antonella Roccuzzo pose on the red carpet during a photocall for Cirque du Soleil's latest show "Messi 10" at the Nou Camp on Thursday.

from the last kick of extra-time on Thursday.

Ciro Immobile put Lazio ahead in the second period of extra time but Mauro Icardi levelled from the spot in the 125th minute of an extraordinary match featuring missed chances, outstanding goalkeeping, a red card and two key VAR decisions.

Icardi's goal was in vain, however, as Lazio goalkeeper Thomas Strakosha saved two penalties, from substitutes Lautaro Martinez and Radja Nainggolan, to give his side the

win in the shootout and a semi-final against AC Milan.

**EPL January transfer spending plummets**  
 Premier League spending in the January transfer window fell for the first time since 2012, with clubs paying a total of £180 million (\$235 million) for new players, according to football finance experts at Deloitte.

Nearly a third of the total expenditure was accounted for by Chelsea's outlay of around £55 million for Christian Pulisic from Borussia Dortmund, according to the figures.

The £180 million transfer bill means total gross spending by Premier League clubs in the 2018/19 season is an estimated £1.4 billion, the second-highest season ever following record spend of £1.9 billion in 2017/18.

**Kagawa joins Besiktas**  
 Borussia Dortmund's Japanese international midfielder Shinji Kagawa on Thursday joined Besiktas on loan for the rest of the season. The 29-year-old former Manchester United player had reportedly been a target of struggling French club Monaco.

Besiktas in a statement said Kagawa would be "a part of its team on loan until the end of the season".



## MINI-MARATHON 'DOUR'

More than 4,000 employees of BRAC Bank, its subsidiaries and other corporate organisations took part in the annual mini-marathon "BRAC Bank DOUR 2019 - the Marathon for Humanity" organised by BRAC Bank Limited in Hatirjheel yesterday. The employees raised Tk 20 lakh which was doubled to Tk 40 lakh by the organisation and was donated to four charitable organisations working for children's welfare. This is the only instance of such an initiative taken by a bank in Bangladesh.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS