

What to WATCH

GTV & MAASRANGA
Bangladesh Premier League
 Eliminator
 Dhaka Dynamites v Chittagong Vikings
 Live from 1:30pm
 Qualifier One
 Rangpur Riders v Comilla Victorians
 Live from 6:30pm

SONY SIX
 Australia v Sri Lanka
 Second Test, Day Five
 Live from 5:30am (Tuesday)
STAR SPORTS SELECT 1
 English Premier League
 West Ham v Liverpool
 Live from 2:00am (Tuesday)

TEN 2
 Serie A
 Cagliari v Atalanta
 Live from 2:00am (Tuesday)

DAY'S EVENT

Bangladesh Premier League
 Venue: Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium, Dhaka
 Eliminator
 Dhaka Dynamites v Chittagong Vikings

Time: 1:30pm
 Qualifier One
 Rangpur Riders v Comilla Victorians
 Time: 6:30pm

Bangladesh Premier League (Football)
 Sheikh Russel v Mohammedan
 Time: 3:00pm
 Venue: Sylhet District Stadium, Sylhet

NoFEL SC v Muktijoddha
 Time: 3:00pm
 Venue: Shaheed Bulu Stadium, Noakhali

Messi pulls a point back for Barca

AFP, Barcelona

Lionel Messi scored in a ninth consecutive match but his latest double on Saturday was only enough to earn Barcelona a 2-2 draw against Valencia.

Messi instigated another Barca comeback at the Camp Nou before placing an injury doubt over his availability for Wednesday's Copa del Rey Clasico against Real Madrid.

Ernesto Valverde confirmed after the game his captain had felt a "small problem" but insisted it was nothing serious.

"[Messi] has a small problem," Valverde said. "I don't know exactly what he has. We will have to wait to see what medical staff say. If he's in good shape, he'll play on Wednesday [against Madrid]."

Valverde is still unlikely to take any risks given Barcelona's testing month ahead, even if Messi's absence, however brief, would be a blow, particularly while he is in such irresistible form.

Kevin Gameiro and Dani Parejo's penalty gave Valencia a surprise two-goal lead but Messi pulled one back with his own spot-kick before curling in a brilliant equaliser with 26 minutes left.

After their stunning turn-around against Sevilla in midweek, Barca looked destined again to finish the job, but at the end of a breathless

contest, Valencia had held on for a point. "When you don't win, you always feel you have missed something," Valverde said. "But the league is long and there are matches where you come up against a good team. This was one of those."

Messi's 20th and 21st league goals of the season leave his team six points clear of Atletico Madrid, who could cut the gap to three by beating Real Betis on Sunday, with Real Madrid, 11 points back, at home to Alaves.

After eight consecutive Barcelona wins in La Liga, this result perhaps offered the chasing pack a little encouragement at least.

Real could inflict further disruption themselves. The first leg of the Copa del Rey semifinals on Wednesday will be the first of three Clasicos in a month. The latter two will be back-to-back, within four days. But Messi fit and in this sort of form means any confidence Real feel comes with an asterisk.

His 12 goals in his last nine games is the same number the whole Valencia squad managed in their first 15 league matches.

Valencia were 15th in December, with only three wins, and their coach Marcelino was under pressure, just six months after propelling them back into the Champions League.



Lionel Messi was in sublime touch on Saturday night, scoring both goals as Barcelona fought back from two down to salvage a draw in a La Liga meeting against Valencia.

PHOTO: TWITTER



Manchester City's Argentinian striker Sergio Aguero (C) celebrates his hat-trick with Raheem Sterling during their 3-1 win over Premier League rivals Arsenal at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester on Sunday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Aguero treble fires Man City

REUTERS, Manchester



Sergio Aguero's hat-trick led Manchester City to a 3-1 win over Arsenal on Sunday and back into second place in the Premier League, two points behind leaders Liverpool.

The victory put the pressure on Liverpool ahead of their trip to West Ham United on Monday. Jurgen Klopp's side have 61 points with champions City on 59 and Tottenham Hotspur on 57.

Aguero gave City the lead after 48 seconds with a stooping header after Aymeric Laporte had robbed Alex Iwobi and whipped in a cross. City were dominant but the Gunners got back on level terms in the 11th minute when Nacho Monreal flicked on a Lucas Torreira corner and defender Laurent Koscielny headed in from two yards out.

Aguero struck again just before the break, tapping in a low cross from Raheem Sterling, who had combined well with Ilkay Gundogan in the build-up.

City's record scorer wrapped up the win with Sterling again the provider but as Aguero slid in to meet his low cross, the ball appeared to go in off his arm.

It was Aguero's 10th hat-trick in the Premier League, a record bettered only by Alan Shearer who scored 11. The Argentine striker has netted 20 goals in all competitions this season -- the sixth straight campaign he has reached that tally.

OLE'S ARMY HOLD OFF FOXES
 Manchester United striker Marcus Rashford scored on his 100th Premier League appearance on Sunday to secure a 1-0 win over Leicester City that kept interim manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's dream start going at his old club.

Having missed a simple header early on, Rashford made up for it in the eighth minute when he latched onto a lovely dink from Paul Pogba

over the Leicester defence to smash the ball past Kasper Schmeichel from close range.

The victory moved United onto 48 points, two adrift of Chelsea in fourth place, while Leicester stayed 11th on 32.

Twenty-one-year-old Rashford is the youngest player to reach a century of top-flight appearances for Manchester United since Ryan Giggs in December 1993.

He and Pogba have been in superb form since former Manchester United favourite Solskjaer took over at Old Trafford from the sacked Jose Mourinho in December, guiding the club to nine wins and a draw in all competitions.

After being second best in the first half, Leicester came roaring back in the second, and should have equalised.

Jamie Vardy's 61st minute overhead volley was clawed away by David de Gea, and Rachid Ghezzal's 77th minute free kick was flying in before the Spanish goalkeeper tipped it over.

SA end Pak's winning streak

AFP, Johannesburg

Babar Azam hit a majestic 90 but Pakistan's long streak of series wins came to an end in the second Twenty20 international against South Africa at the Wanderers Stadium on Sunday.

South Africa took a winning 2-0 lead in the three-match series with a dramatic seven-run win. Pakistan had not lost a T20 series since they were eliminated from the World T20 in India in March 2016.

SCORES IN BRIEF
SOUTH AFRICA: 188 for 3 (VD Dussen 45, Miller 65 not out; Wasim 1-9)

PAKISTAN: 181 for 7 (Azam 90, Talat 55; A. Phehlukwayo 3-36)
Result: South Africa won by seven runs to lead series 2-0

SHORT CORNER

Holder suspended for third Test

West Indies captain Jason Holder has been suspended by the ICC for the third and final Test against England for his team's slow over rate during their series-sealing win in Antigua. Holder has led Windies into an unassailable 2-0 lead in the series following 381-run and 10-wicket victories in the first two Tests respectively.

But the 27-year-old will now miss the final game in St Lucia on Saturday as his side go in search of a whitewash.

Opening batsman Kraigg Brathwaite is likely to deputise as captain.

-- AGENCIES

India clinch final ODI

Ambati Rayudu struck a sparkling 90 in tough conditions to help India overcome the loss of four early wickets and beat New Zealand by 35 runs in the final ODI in Wellington on Sunday, sealing a 4-1 series victory.

After losing the quick wickets, Rayudu was left to mount a salvage mission, which the right-hander duly did, staying at the crease for 113 deliveries and being abetted by Vijay Shankar (45).

SCORES IN BRIEF

INDIA: 252 all out in 49.5 overs (Rayudu 90, Shankar 45, Pandya 45; Henry 4-35, Boult 3-39)

NEW ZEALAND: 217 all out in 44.1 overs (Williamson 39, Neesham 44; Shami 2-35, Chahal 3-41)

Result: India won by 35 runs and clinched the five-match series 4-1.

Player-of-the-match: Ambati Rayudu.

Player-of-the-series: Mohammed Shami.

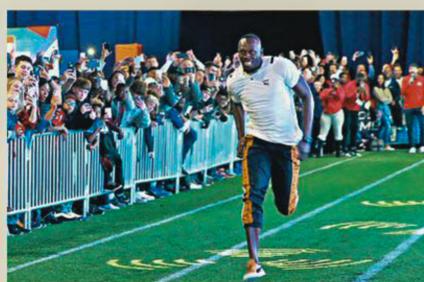
-- REUTERS

Bolt equals NFL dash record

Olympic sprint champion Usain Bolt might have caught the eye of a few NFL coaches when he stepped off the street and equalled the combine record for a 40-yard dash on Saturday, running in 4.22 seconds at a Super Bowl fan experience event.

Wearing sweatpants, the 100 and 200 metres world record holder showed he still has speed to burn when he matched the time set by Cincinnati Bengals wide receiver John Ross at the 2017 NFL combine, where potential draft picks are put through a number of drills.

-- REUTERS



Usain Bolt showed that he still has plenty of gas left in the tank, tying the 4.22-second NFL draft combine record for a 40-yard dash. PHOTO: TWITTER

Arambagh, Russel go top

SPORTS REPORTER



Giant-killers Arambagh KS chalked their third consecutive win in the Bangladesh Premier League when they handed a 2-0 defeat to former runners-up Chittagong Abahani at the Rafique Uddin Bhuiyan Stadium in Mymensingh yesterday while at the Bangabandhu National Stadium in Dhaka, Saif SC notched a 2-1 win over Brothers Union.

The wins took both Arambagh and Saif SC to the top of the table with nine points from four matches, equal to defending champions Abahani and newcomers Bashundhara Kings, with the latter having played three matches so far.

Arambagh, who had earlier stunned Mohammedan and Saif SC following defeat in their first match against Sheikh Russel, punished visiting Chittagong Abahani to continue their impressive run on home ground. Chinedu Mathew, who had scored two goals in previous two matches, played a key role in setting up both goals even though he could not get his name on the scoresheet in this match.

The charges of Maruful Haque took a deserved lead in the 61st minute when Mathew, availing a long ball from the right flank, shrugged off his marker and entered the box to deliver a fierce grounder for onrushing Arifur Rahman, who tapped in from close to send his team into wild celebration.

13 minutes later, Mathew entered



Saif Sporting's Colombian forward Denier Andreas Cordoba celebrates his opening goal against Brothers Union during their Bangladesh Premier League match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. PHOTO: BFF

into the box from the left flank availing a miss-pass from the opposition and released a well-judged cross for Paul Emile, headed in to give the first taste of defeat to Chittagong Abahani who are now on five points from four matches.

Meanwhile, Saif SC, who came into the match on the back of a 1-0 defeat against Arambagh, did not waste much time to take the lead as Colombian defender Deiner Andres Cordoba rose high to head home a Yeasin Arafat corner in the 11th minute.

Title contenders Saif SC, however, held the lead for only 16 minutes as defender Asaduzzaman Bablu headed the ball into his own net while attempting to clear a cross from Brothers forward Leonardo Lima.

Brothers came close to taking the lead in the 50th minute but Jack

Daniels Aguilar hit the ball straight to the opposition goalkeeper from a one-on-one situation before Saif saw their Korean midfielder Seungil Park denied twice by Brothers defender Sujon Chowdhury and a defender three minutes later.

However, Saif SC restored their lead on the hour-mark when Russian hitman Denis Bolshakov converted from the spot after defender Mohammad Sajal brought him down inside the danger zone.

"Though we had better ball possession, we need to improve our control over the ball. We still need three to four games to be at our best. I believe we showed only 50 to 60 percent of our potential performance and need 70 to 80 percent performance on the pitch to get results regularly," said Saif SC coach Johnny McKinstry.

District football development sans opinion of districts?

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday prepared a development proposal for district football to place before the State Minister for Youth and Sports, but surprisingly the game's local governing body did not discuss the matter with the division and district football associations before finalising the proposal.

The proposal, which has not been disclosed before media, was given approval at the emergency meeting of the BFF executive committee at the BFF House yesterday. The initiative seemingly came after the newly appointed state minister Zahid Ahsan Russel asked all federations to come up with new proposals during his first meeting with sports people of all disciplines on January 16.

"We have invited presidents of district and divisional football associations to participate in the discussion with the State Minister for Youth and Sports Zahid Ahsan Russel day after tomorrow (Tuesday) at the National Sports Council.

"We will place different proposals for development of football on behalf of the executive committee. We discussed those things and prepared the proposal at the emergency meeting. The proposal will be disclosed officially during the meeting with the minister," BFF's vice president Kazi Nabil Ahmed said after the meeting.

Asked whether they discussed the matter with the stakeholders of DFAs before preparing the proposal, Ahmed said, "We are also stakeholders. We know their opinion and the executive committee made the proposal. We were elected through votes of DFAs, so we are the voice of the DFAs. As we represent the whole country, we have prepared the proposal."

The DFAs have time and again been asking the BFF to hold annual general meeting (AGM) to let their problems known but the game's local governing body has not held any AGM in the last three years since the polls in April, 2016.

We were elected through votes of DFAs, so we are the voice of the DFAs. As we represent the country, we have prepared the proposal.

KAZI NABIL AHMED
 BFF VICE PRESIDENT