

# What to WATCH

STAR SPORTS SELECT 1

Indian Premier League

Punjab v Delhi

Live from 8:30pm

STAR SPORTS SELECT 2

English Premier League

Arsenal v Newcastle

Live from 1:00am (Tuesday)

## SOLSKJAER A BREATH OF FRESH AIR, SAYS JONES

Phil Jones has saluted Ole Gunnar Solskjaer as a "breath of fresh air" after Manchester United made a winning start to the manager's permanent reign. Solskjaer was handed a three-year contract last week after a successful spell as interim boss since December and oversaw a 2-1 win over Watford on Saturday. "The lads are buzzing. He's come in, he's been a breath of fresh air for us. He's put arms around the shoulders of people who needed it," Jones said. "His man management skills are terrific and he's definitely what we need going forward. "Everyone can see that he has laid foundations. It's positive, we're looking forward and we're pleased with the result."

-- AFP



PHOTO: UEFA

Mohamed Salah fashioned a dramatic winning goal in the 91st minute of a crucial Premier League encounter against Tottenham Hotspur yesterday. The Egyptian failed to beat goalkeeper Hugo Lloris with his header, but the ricochet was bundled home by Spurs defender Toby Alderweireld.

## 'It was ugly, but who cares?'

### Klopp says after last-gasp Liverpool climb back to top

AFP, Liverpool

Jürgen Klopp admitted he couldn't care less that Liverpool's dramatic 2-1 win against Tottenham was an "ugly" way to return to the top of the Premier League.

Klopp's side took the lead through Roberto Firmino's first half opener, only to be pegged back by Lucas Moura's equaliser after the interval.

Tottenham dominated but wasted several chances before Liverpool stole the points in stoppage-time.

Mohamed Salah's header was spilled by Tottenham goalkeeper Hugo Lloris before rebounding off Toby Alderweireld for an own goal.

It was a lucky break that Liverpool arguably didn't deserve, but Reds boss Klopp wasn't complaining about a result that took them two points clear of second placed Manchester City.

"In the first half we had fantastic chances and scored a wonderful goal. In the second half we

looked heavy and couldn't really play," Klopp said.

"Tottenham changed a little bit. We didn't adapt well. I was not happy we conceded, but after Spurs' goal we started playing again more.

"We can play better football but in the first half we had a lot of good moments. In the second not that many but we scored -- 2-1, brilliant!

"I saw the header and nothing else. I had no clue how the ball went in.

"It is only positive. I said there are 500 ways to win a football game and today was slightly ugly. Who cares?"

Liverpool's crucial win keeps the pressure on City, but the champions can return to the top if they beat struggling Cardiff at home on Wednesday.

That would leave City one point clear of Liverpool, with both sides having six games remaining after the Cardiff match.

Klopp, trying to Liverpool to their first English title since 1990, acknowledged the race is likely to go down to the wire as City show no signs of surrendering the trophy easily

"We compete with the best team in the world

[Manchester City] and play against one of best in the world in Tottenham -- it is a tough task. It is all good," he said.

"City last year were champions and are still pretty good. We have to fight like crazy. The crowd was outstanding. They were really here to push us and at the end it helped.

"I am really happy we don't have any breaks now. We compete with the best team in world for one position and that is really hard."

Tottenham's defeat left their top four bid in peril after a fourth loss in five games.

"We were a little bit unlucky to concede the second goal when we should have been ahead because we dominated Liverpool, who are a very good team," Tottenham boss Mauricio Pochettino said. "No one wants to lose but it's a different defeat than the ones we suffered against Southampton or Burnley."

Tottenham could drop to fourth if Arsenal beat Newcastle on Monday, but Pochettino is still confident they will qualify for the Champions League.

## Federer cruises to 101st career title

AFP, Miami



Roger Federer lifted the 101st title of his remarkable career on Sunday, beating ATP Miami Open defending champion John Isner 6-1, 6-4 in just 63 minutes.

Federer has been the form player in South Florida and his performance against big-serving Isner proved it as the 33-year-old home-nation hero was overwhelmed by the Swiss star's incredible consistency.

An opening break sapped Isner's confidence and allowed 37-year-old Federer to gain control of a match which he never looked like losing, especially after Isner was injured near the end of the second set.

"Getting a break so early was like a dream start. It relaxes your nerves and you now you in the match, Federer said after lifting his fourth Miami Open title. "What a week it has been for me."

Isner appeared to tell the trainer during a medical timeout that he had "broken" his foot, but his spirit was crushed after dropping the first set in only 23 minutes.

"Somewhere during the first set I started feeling pain on top of my foot and it didn't go away and it just got worse," Isner said. "It's a terrible feeling. You're on an island against the best player ever and my foot was killing. I have never broken my foot before and I don't know if that's what it is but I can imagine if it is, this is how it would feel."

Federer had sympathy for Isner's struggles. "It was difficult for John at the end," Federer

said. "I have been there before and the way he was moving showed he wasn't well."

This was Federer's 154th tour final and his 50th ATP Masters showpiece appearance.

"Congrats to Roger. He has been too good this tournament," Isner said. "We are so lucky to have to you still playing the game."

Isner last met the Swiss in 2015 when the American won at the Paris Masters but the former world number one improved to 6-2 in their rivalry with the victory.

After just five games of the first set, Isner already had his work cut in trying to halt Federer's charge to the title, down two breaks with the Swiss on control.

When a typically brilliant forehand passing winner made it 4-1, a huge crowd at Hard Rock Stadium supporting the American were left shell shocked.

Federer was serving and returning superbly, barely giving the world number nine any opportunities to regain his composure.

Isner double faulted for the second time and when he hit hopelessly long once again, Federer had sealed the opening set without breaking sweat.

To give the Swiss eight break chances in the first set spoke volumes about the sudden ineffectiveness of the Isner service game, taking only 50% of points on his first serve.

With Isner hurting, Federer wasted no time in the second set wrapping up his 28th Masters title win.



Victory was swift and convincing for Roger Federer at the Miami Open yesterday as the Swiss produced a masterclass, dominating reigning champion John Isner 6-1, 6-4 to win a 101st title in a storied career.

PHOTO: AFP

## SHORT CORNER



**World No. 4 Angelique Kerber posted a picture of herself at the wheel of this unique three-wheeler as she gears up for the Monterrey Open in Nuevo Leon, Mexico. The caption read: "That's how you get around town here... So nice to be back! I've missed this place."**

PHOTO: TWITTER

### Ronaldo steps up rehabilitation

Cristiano Ronaldo has stepped up his recovery from a muscle injury by working out in a swimming pool with weights strapped to his ankle.

The 34-year-old uploaded a video of himself swimming as he looked to make a quick comeback from the injury he sustained during the international break.

Ronaldo picked up the injury during Portugal's 1-1 draw with Serbia and had to be taken off after 30 minutes. The Portuguese will not be risked for Juventus' first match of the Champions League quarterfinals against Ajax if he is not fully fit.

Juventus travels to Ajax for the first leg of the on April 10. -- AFP

### Cardiff 'shocked' by Sala pilot report

Cardiff claim they are shocked by a report that the pilot in the plane crash that killed Emiliano Sala was not qualified to fly at night.

The Premier League club said they remain "deeply concerned" that the pilot David Ibbotson and those who arranged the flight "seemingly completely disregarded the rules of flying and put Mr Sala's life in such danger".

The BBC on Saturday reported Ibbotson was thought to have been colour-blind and that his licence restricted him to flying in daytime hours only.

Cardiff said in a statement: "Cardiff City is shocked

to hear the pilot, David Ibbotson, may not have been permitted to fly at night.

"The club remains deeply concerned that the pilot, and those who arranged the flight, seemingly completely disregarded the rules of flying and put Mr Sala's life in such danger." -- AFP

**Australia bowlers rubbish boycott claims** Australia's top bowlers Sunday lashed out at "false" and "inflammatory" claims they were planning a Test boycott if David Warner had not been kicked off the team in the wake of the ball-tampering scandal.

The Sydney Morning Herald reported on Friday that Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood, Pat Cummins and Nathan Lyon all intended to pull out of the fourth Test if Warner was not removed.

But a statement from the quartet Sunday denied a boycott had been considered and, with Smith and Warner now free to play again after their one-year bans expired on Friday, the bowlers said they were focused on "moving forward".

"The article claims we intended to withdraw from the fourth Test during last year's tour of South Africa had David Warner been free to play," the statement said. "This claim is disappointing on a number of fronts but most importantly because it is false." It added that allegations "which question our relationship with David are inflammatory and misleading". -- AFP

### FOOTBALL FOR FRIENDSHIP

## Three young kids from BD this time

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Football Federation has called for an open trial for boys and girls aged under-12 for the seventh season of Gazprom's Football for Friendship, which will be held in Madrid in May-June this year.

The open trial will be held from 8:30am to 12:00pm on April 2 at the artificial turf of Bangladesh Football Federation House.

Bangladesh will be part of this global programme for the third time running, after young footballers from the country participated in its previous two editions in Saint Petersburg and Moscow in the last two years.

This year there will be three young footballers from Bangladesh -- a goalkeeper, a midfielder and a defender -- who will attend the event in Madrid from May 29 to June 2, held on the sidelines of the UEFA Champions League final.

Young footballers from 211 countries will have the opportunity to participate in a friendship camp and forum before taking part in a football championship. Their participation will end with witnessing the UEFA Champions League final at the Wanda Metropolitan in Madrid on June 1.

## Dynamic duo slam RCB

AGENCIES, Hyderabad



Opens Jonny Bairstow and David Warner slammed breathtaking centuries while Mohammed Nabi scalped four wickets as Sunrisers Hyderabad crushed Royal Challengers Bangalore by 118-runs in the ongoing edition of the Indian Premier League in Hyderabad on Sunday.

This was the first time in the history of the IPL that both openers managed to go past the 100-run mark in a single innings. Also, this was the second instance of two players scoring tons in same innings after Virat Kohli and AB de Villiers did the same against Gujarat Lions in 2016.

Chasing a mammoth target of 232, RCB got off to a disastrous start as Mohammad Nabi wrecked their top-order. He started off by getting rid of Parthiv Patel for 13. In this next over, he got rid of Shimron Hetmyer, who came charging down the track and was stumped by Bairstow.

Three balls later, AB de Villiers (3) missed the line of a delivery and the ball

crashed into his stumps, making the South African Nabi's third scalp of the day. Virat Kohli was the next batsman to fall as he was dismissed by Sandeep Sharma for 3.

In the day's later match, Mahendra Singh Dhoni's well-calculated half-century in challenging conditions turned out to be game-changer as Chennai Super Kings won their third match of the season with an eight-run defeat of Rajasthan Royals.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

**HYDERABAD V BANGALORE** HYDERABAD: 231 for 2 (Bairstow 114, Warner 100 not out; Chahal 1-44)

**BANGALORE:** 113 all out in 19.5 overs (De Grandhomme 37; Nabi 4-11, Sandeep 3-19) Result: Hyderabad won by 118 runs.

**Player-of-the-match:** Jonny Bairstow.

**CHENNAI V RAJASTHAN**

**CHENNAI:** 175 for 5 (Raina 36, Dhoni 75 not out; Archer 2-17)

**RAJASTHAN:** 167 for 8 in 20 overs (Tripathi 39, Stokes 46; Chahal 2-19) Result: Chennai won by 8 runs.

**Player-of-the-match:** MS Dhoni



**Both Jonny Bairstow (L) and David Warner struck tons for Sunrisers Hyderabad in a comfortable 118-run win against Royal Challengers Bangalore in an IPL fixture yesterday.**

PHOTO: AFP

## Napoli crush sorry Roma

REUTERS, Rome

Napoli ripped AS Roma's defence to shreds as they handed the hosts an embarrassing 4-1 defeat at the Stadio Olimpico in Serie A on Sunday and piled on the problems for coach Claudio Ranieri.

Arkadiusz Milik put Napoli ahead after two minutes, cleverly controlling Simone Verdi's chipped pass with his heel and then swiveling to fire past Robin Olsen.

Having dominated the first half, Napoli were pegged back in stoppage time when Patrik Schick was fouled by goalkeeper Alex Meret and Diego Perotti slotted home the penalty. Yet Roma were left reeling by two quick goals after the break.

Jose Callejon's low cross slipped under Olsen's hand to leave Dries Mertens with a tap-in at the far post in the 50th minute, then Fabian Ruiz burst down the left and set up Verdi for the third five minutes later.

Substitute Amin Younes added the fourth as second-placed Napoli stayed 15 points behind runaway leaders Juventus while Roma dropped to sixth with 47 points.

"We deserved the win and it's just a pity we didn't score more goals in the first half too," Mertens told Sky Sport Italia. "It was a step forward and we are continuing to develop as a team. I am certainly happy to have found the net and hope to carry on like this. The season isn't over yet and we'll see what happens."