

# What to WATCH

**RTV & NAGORIK TV**  
Bangamata U-19 Women's Int'l Gold Cup  
Laos v Tajikistan  
Live from 8:30pm

**STAR SPORTS SELECT 1**  
Indian Premier League  
Rajasthan v Hyderabad  
Live from 8:30pm

**STAR SPORTS SELECT 2**  
English Premier League  
Fulham v Cardiff  
Live from 8:00pm  
Brighton v Newcastle  
Live from 10:30pm

**TEN 1**  
Serie A  
Inter Milan v Juventus  
Live from 12:30am (Sunday)

**TEN 2**  
La Liga  
Atletico Madrid v Real Valladolid  
Live from 8:15pm  
Barcelona v Levante  
12:45am (Sunday)

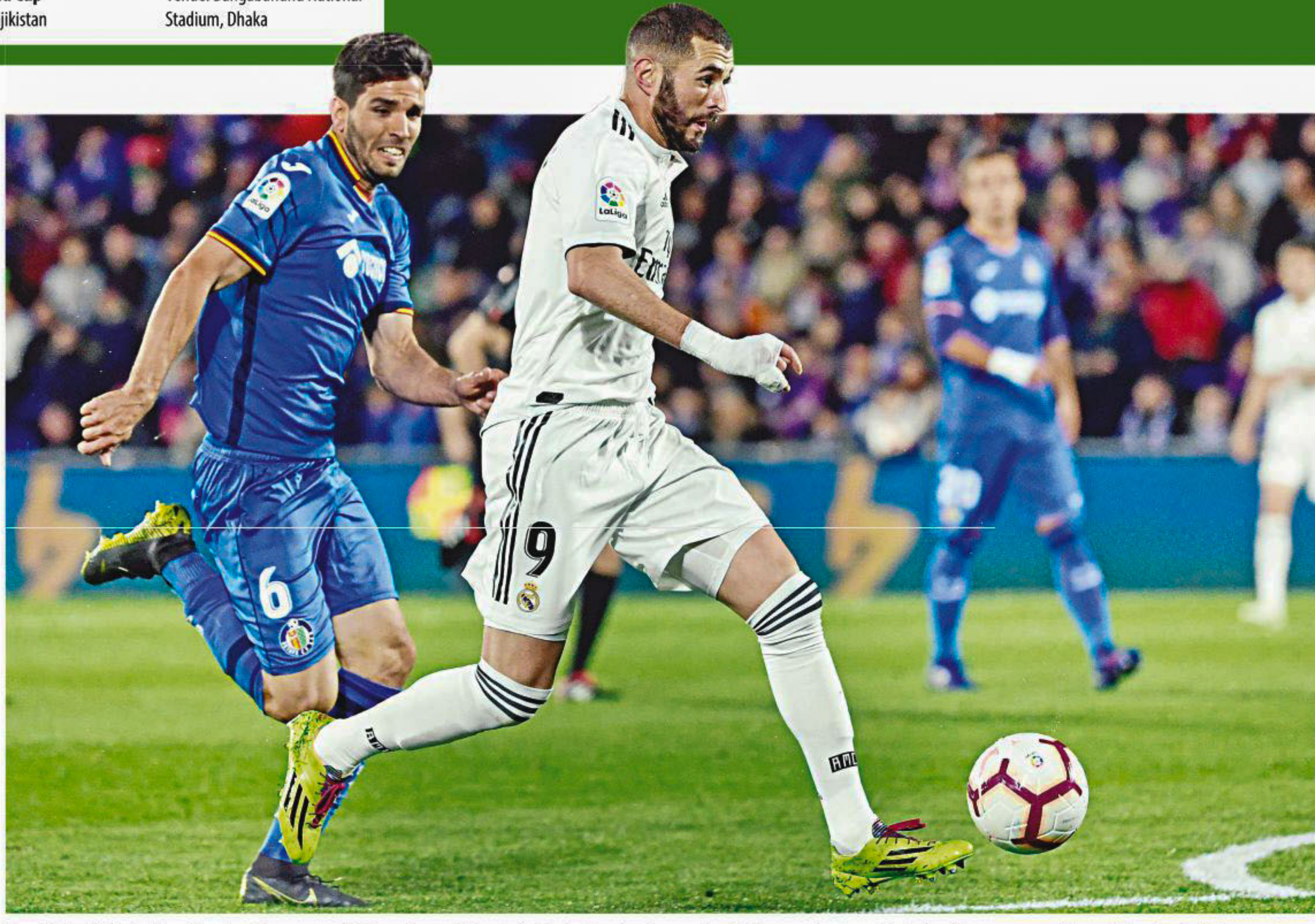
## DAY'S EVENT

**Bangamata U-19 Women's Int'l Gold Cup**  
Laos v Tajikistan  
Time: 8:30pm  
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium, Dhaka

## Poch says Ajax weekend off is 'not fair'

AFP, London

Tottenham boss Mauricio Pochettino says it is "not fair" that Ajax have the weekend off ahead of their Champions League semifinal while Spurs face a testing Premier League match against West Ham. Spurs host their London rivals on Saturday ahead of the first leg of their European last-four clash against Ajax at home on Tuesday. Dutch authorities postponed this weekend's Eredivisie fixtures to give Ajax more time to prepare. "It is difficult. I understand that in this type of situation everyone can have an opinion," Spurs boss Pochettino told reporters on Friday. "It's true that the Premier League is very different to the Dutch league, the fact or the reality is they are not going to play. I think it's not fair."



Real Madrid striker Karim Benzema (R) is chased by Getafe defender Leandro Cabrera during their La Liga encounter at the Col. Alfonso Perez Stadium on Thursday. PHOTO: AFP

## Abahani fly to India without Sunday

SPORTS REPORTER



Six-time professional league champions Abahani will fly to India this morning to play their away match of the AFC Cup against Chennaiyin FC without influential Nigerian striker Sunday Chizoba, who failed to obtain Indian visa despite travelling to the country with the Sky Blues in the last edition of the second-tier club competition of Asia.

Abahani and Indian Super League champions Chennaiyin FC have four points each from two matches but the Indian outfit are ahead on superior goal-difference. The two sides will lock horns on April 30 at the Arena Stadium in Ahmedabad and the tie is very important for both sides in their bid to qualifying for the next round from the four-team group.

Despite the loss of Sunday, Abahani are focused on keeping their unbeaten run in the tournament.

"We want to collect points in India. We haven't lost in last two matches and we want to continue this way," Abahani's Portuguese coach Mario Lemos said yesterday.

Sunday is the top scorer in the Bangladesh Premier League with eight goals and he also scored one of the two goals in their 2-2 draw against Minerva Punjab in Dhaka earlier this month.

"It is sad that Sunday will not play. He is an important player and top scorer of the team but we must find other solutions for his match," said Lemos.

Abahani are likely to employ local striker Nabib Newaj Jibon as the lone man upfront.

## Struggling Real fire blanks

AFP, Getafe

Real Madrid's dreary end to the season took another turn for the worse on Thursday as they were left holding on for a goalless draw away to Champions League chasers Getafe.

Just 48 hours before Barcelona are set to be celebrating a 26th La Liga title at Camp Nou, Madrid drifted to a stalemate that leaves them 15 points behind the soon-to-be champions and, on this evidence, with significant ground to make up.

It says something that Getafe were, in the end, disappointed not to win here, Sevilla's 5-0 thrashing of Rayo Vallecano before kick-off meaning they stay fourth, only by virtue of a superior head-to-head.

Real Madrid were mathematically ruled out of the

title race after Barcelona beat Alaves on Tuesday while Atletico Madrid look likely to finish above them too for a second consecutive year.

Zinedine Zidane has insisted La Liga will be the club's "bread and butter" next season, their priority ahead of the Champions League after seven years with only one league title to their name.

But they have work to do, with very few of his squad showing many reasons to keep them this summer and several more looking like they could well be replaced.

"The shame today is we deserved more," Zidane said. "We created chances, in the first half especially. I am not happy with the result, but with the way we played, our concentration, I am happy."

Getafe still have a lot to play for. If they snatch a Champions League spot, it would be one of the greatest

shocks La Liga has seen in years, perhaps even trumping Atletico Madrid winning the title in 2014.

Their average attendance here is just under 10,000 while the club's wage bill stands at a little less than 40 million euros. Madrid's is close to 570 million.

Karim Benzema skewed wide of the far post with 62 seconds on the clock and Madrid hardly created a better chance for the rest of the half.

Gareth Bale started and was greeted by silence rather than the whistles that have accompanied him at the Santiago Bernabeu in recent weeks. But he looked low on confidence, a shadow of the player he can be.

Bale pulled back for Benzema, who could only find the hands of David Soria on the slide while Casemiro had an instinctive effort blocked from six yards.

But Getafe were largely untroubled even if they lacked creativity, their best opening coming from a free-kick which Mauro Arambarri caught well but Keylor Navas was equal to.

For 10 minutes, Madrid peppered the Getafe goal after the break. Soria came out quickly to deny Bale, pushed a Casemiro shot around the post and then saved from Isco, who should have scored after Dani Carvajal picked him out.

Bale and Brahim Diaz departed, replaced by Marco Asensio and Lucas Vazquez, but it was Navas that was called upon next, making two quick-fire saves to keep out Jorge Molina and Jaime Mata.

Mata wanted a penalty for a Carvajal push as Getafe looked more likely to find a late winner. It was not to be. Getafe's Champions League dream hangs in the balance.

## Solskjaer confident Pogba will stay

AFP, Manchester



Ole Gunnar Solskjaer is confident that Paul Pogba will still be at Manchester United next season but admits he cannot guarantee the French World Cup winner will stay.

Pogba fuelled speculation linking him with a move to Real Madrid last month, suggesting Real were "a dream club for any player", although he declared at the time he was happy at Old Trafford.

Both manager Solskjaer and United's board want their £89 million (\$115 million) club-record signing to stay, although they have acknowledged that circumstances could change.

"You can't guarantee anything in football but yes I think Paul is going to be here," Solskjaer told reporters on Friday. "I can assure you that he is very determined to be successful at United."

Pogba scored eight goals and provided five assists in his first 10 games following Solskjaer's appointment but his performances have tailed off since, and it was a surprise to many observers that the French midfielder was named in the Professional Footballers' Association's team of the year on Thursday.

Former Manchester United midfielder Roy Keane this week described Pogba as a "big problem" for the club, suggesting that he was not committed enough to the team.

But Solskjaer said Pogba can cope with the scrutiny.

"That's just the standards he sets, because when he's creating chances, scoring goals, doing loads of work... that's just media, supporters, everyone looks to Paul. 'Could you have done better?'"

"He's done fantastic for us, he's a human being as well and we're all the same, we want him to do well."

### SHORT CORNER

#### Narayanganj champions of police football

Narayanganj district police became champions in the Dhaka Range Police Football Tournament, beating Gazipur District Police 3-0 in the final at the Manikganj Police Lines ground yesterday.

Sanjib scored two goals while Chanchal scored the other for the winning team. Sanjib was adjudged the player of the final as well as the player of the tournament for scoring a total of 13 goals.

DIG of Dhaka Range Police Chowdhury Abdullah Al Mamun watched the final and distributed prizes among the teams.

A total 14 district police football teams of the Dhaka Range took part in the tournament which began on April 7. --MANIKGANJ CORRESPONDENT

#### Rajshahi in final against Khulna

Rajshahi sealed a place in the final of the Shreikh Kamal U-20 National Football Tournament, beating Dhaka by a solitary goal in the second semifinal at the Natore Stadium yesterday.

Shajib scored the all-important goal in the 41th minute of the game to set up a final against Khulna, who had dispatched Chattogram in the first semifinal on Thursday, thanks to a brace from Khaled Biswas.

The final will be held at the Natore Stadium tomorrow. --SPORTS REPORTER

#### Ilicic, Gomez guide Atalanta to first Coppa final since 1996

Atalanta reached their first Coppa Italia final since 1996 as Jospil Ilicic and Alejandro Gomez scored in a 2-1 victory over six-time winners Fiorentina on Thursday.

Their three away goals in the first leg which finished 3-3 in Florence, as well as the two efforts at home, were enough to qualify for the May 15 final where they will face Lazio.

They defeated champions for the past four years Juventus 3-0 in the previous round.

"It's an enormous feeling. It was our idea, our objective, and when we eliminated Juve, the trophy was all we were thinking of. We want to bring all of Bergamo to Rome," captain Gomez told television channel Rai Sport. --AFP

#### Milan deplores 'unacceptable' racist abuse

AC Milan have issued a strongly worded statement deploring racist abuse directed at two of its players by Lazio fans in Wednesday's Italian Cup semifinal at the San Siro.

The club claimed "recurring chants and monkey noises" aimed at Franck Kessie and Tiemoue Bakayoko "could be heard coming from the away stand before, during and after the match".

Milan executive chairman Paolo Scaroni commented: "It was disheartening to watch such

an important sporting event in our stadium, whilst monkey noises and racist insults were coming from the stands.

Milan said they had reported the "unacceptable" behaviour of a section of Lazio's supporters to "the highest sports governing bodies".

Wednesday's racist abuse and separate neo-fascist incidents marred Lazio's 1-0 semifinal second leg win which put them through to the final. --AFP

#### Prison term sought for Diawara in extortion case

A French prosecutor on Thursday called for former Marseille defender Souleymane Diawara to receive a three year prison term for extortion.

Diawara was arrested in 2015 and spent two and a half months in custody on suspicion of complicity in attempting to recover 49,800 euros (\$58,950) from a car dealer who allegedly sold him a stolen Porsche.

The former Ligue 1 title-winner is charged with getting his brother Adama and four others to go to the seller's home in the middle of the night on March 19, 2015, in an attempt to retrieve the money.

In the presence of his wife and two daughters, they asked the seller for 50,000 euros before leaving with a BMW taken "as a pledge", with the promise to return it if 10,000 euros were paid. --AFP

## Burundi's Faty dies during league match

AFP, Nairobi

Experienced Burundi international Papy Faty died after collapsing during an eSwatini league match (formerly Swaziland) this week, the Burundi football federation said on Friday.

The 28-year-old who made 28 international appearances was playing for Malanti Chiefs on Thursday when he collapsed and was pronounced dead after being taken to a local hospital later in the day.



PAUL POGBA

## Pep urges City caution

### MU seek Chelsea redemption

AFP, London



Manchester City and Liverpool are showing no signs of letting up in their thrilling Premier League title race but their flawless form contrasts sharply with the struggles of the teams chasing a top-four finish.

Manchester United host Chelsea on Sunday hoping to arrest an alarming slide of seven defeats in nine games in all competitions.

But it is only thanks to the poor form of Maurizio Sarri's men and Arsenal, who have suffered back-to-back defeats against Crystal Palace and Wolves, that United remain in the hunt for Champions League football next season, just three points off the top four.

United's latest defeat to City on Wednesday lifted the defending champions one point ahead of Liverpool with three games left for both sides.

That stretched City's winning streak in the league to 11 games, with the last slip-up by either of the title contenders remarkably now nearly

two months ago, when Liverpool were held at Everton.

Liverpool have already surpassed their club-record points tally in the Premier League era, with 88, and

City are not in action until Sunday, when they travel to Burnley, and manager Pep Guardiola is wary of his side getting too over-excited at clearing what was expected to be the toughest hurdle left at Old Trafford on Wednesday.

"I know people are going to talk about how beautiful we are, how handsome we are," said Guardiola. "But now we have to go to Burnley -- and in my two previous seasons going to Burnley was incredibly tough."

City, who amassed a record haul of 100 points last season, still dropped two at Turf Moor in a 1-1 draw.

Behind the top two, Tottenham look well set to secure a fourth straight season of Champions League football, opening up a four-point gap on fifth-placed Arsenal thanks to a hard-fought 1-0 win over Brighton on Tuesday.

Spurs can widen that lead over their north London rivals even further when West Ham travel to the new Tottenham Hotspur Stadium on Saturday hoping to become the first visiting team to score at the fifth time of asking in the club's new home.



Juventus superstar Cristiano Ronaldo showed up to training showing off his new pair of boots, which feature the icon's name on the side. PHOTO: JUVENTUS