

What to WATCH

SONY ESPN

UEFA Champions League
Zenit v Lyon
Live from 11:55pm
Lille v Ajax
Live from 2:00am (Thursday)

TEN 2

UEFA Champions League
Valencia v Chelsea
Live from 11:55pm
Barcelona v Dortmund
Live from 2:00am (Thursday)

SONY SIX

UEFA Champions League
Slavia Praha v Inter Milan
Live from 2:00am (Thursday)

TEN 1

UEFA Champions League
Liverpool v Napoli
Live from 2:00am (Thursday)

Jamal confident of SA Games success

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh national football team's captain Jamal Bhuiyan believes the team will acclimatise with the condition and weather in Nepal within the three days they will get ahead of the football event of the South Asian Games, which is scheduled for December 1 to 10.

Jamal is in the under-23 squad as one of the three senior players and is expected to lead the Bangladesh team, who were pitted alongside Nepal and Bhutan in Group A.

In the last edition of the SA Games in India three years ago, Bangladesh won the bronze medal.

"The current team is different from the previous ones because the boys are more capable than the previous players and have good speed and fitness. So I hope the boys will adjust to the weather and condition of

Nepal within three days," said Jamal.

"Our target is to win the final and this team is similar to the national team even though some three to four senior players are out of the squad. I think our squad is very good because we have been playing together for a long time. We beat Qatar to advance to the second round of Asian Games which will inspire us to do well in the SA Games," said Jamal, who returned from Denmark on Monday.

The football team is scheduled to leave for Nepal today where they will be joined by coach Jamie Day, who will fly from England today.

"We will aim for a medal so we will still try for that but it will be tough. If we finish inside top three, I will be pleased," Day said though e-mail correspondence. "The first match [against Nepal] is very important because if we win or draw, we will have the best chance of avoiding India in semifinals."



Chelsea striker Michy Batshuayi (R) runs during a training session at Cobham training facility in Stoke D'Abernon yesterday, the eve of their Champions League encounter against Valencia.

PHOTO: AFP

21ST ASIAN ARCHERY Archers fail in team events too

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladeshi archers are set to return from the 21st Asian Archery Championship in Bangkok empty handed after they were eliminated from all team events yesterday, the day after the archers were eliminated from the individual events.

Bangladesh men's recurve team, comprising of Ruman Sana, Tamimul Islam and Hakim Ahmed Rubel, reached quarterfinals beating Vietnam by 5-4 sets, but then suffered a 5-1 sets defeat to World Archery Federation team comprising of Indian archers in the quarterfinal.

In women's recurve team event, Bangladesh were beaten in 5-1 sets by Chinese Taipei in pre-quarterfinals while women's compound team suffered a narrow 218-217 points defeat to Philippines.

In men's compound team event, Bangladesh lost by 230-227 points to Thailand in pre-quarterfinals.

Bangladesh women's recurve team will take part in the continental qualification tournament, which will serve as qualification for Tokyo Olympics. One team from this qualification phase will get ticket to the Olympics.

Alcacer out of Barcelona tie

AFP, Berlin

Spain striker Paco Alcacer will sit out Borussia Dortmund's crunch Champions League clash at his former club Barcelona on Wednesday.

Dortmund, who are a point behind group leaders Barcelona, flew to Spain Tuesday without their striker, who has scored seven goals in 13 games this season, as the 26-year Alcacer has a gastrointestinal infection, according to his club.

A win at Barcelona's Nou Camp stadium will put either club in the last 16.

Alcacer also injured his knee in the first-half of last Friday's disappointing 3-3 draw at home to Bundesliga bottom club Paderborn, when the hosts were three goals down at half-time.

Germany forward Mario Goetze is most likely to start in place of Alcacer, who joined Dortmund on loan from Barcelona in August 2018, but was signed permanently for the start of this season in a deal reportedly worth 21 million euros (\$23m).

Dortmund head coach Lucien Favre is under huge pressure after recent poor results, including a 4-0 thrashing at Bayern Munich, then Friday's draw at home to Paderborn after a woeful first-half performance.

Man Utd delegates inspect BNS

SPORTS REPORTER



A four-member delegation from the Manchester United FC yesterday inspected Bangabandhu National Stadium and held talks with the sports minister and the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) president to study the feasibility of a proposed friendly match next year in Dhaka.

The Youth and Sports Ministry, with assistance from the BFF, is trying to hold a marquee friendly match involving popular clubs or country in Dhaka as part of birth centenary of the father of nation Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The team, comprising of Manchester United's director of football, director of tours and friendlies and two other officials, arrived at the capital in the morning before having a meeting with State Minister for Youth and Sports Zahid Ahsan Russel and BFF president Kazi Salahuddin. Later they visited the BNS to watch the ground and other facilities, but refused to talk to the media. They are scheduled to inspect the practice ground of Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club and Army Stadium as well as the Inter-Continental Hotel today before their departure.

India's Celebrity Management Group (CMG), who brought Argentina and Nigeria for a friendly match in Dhaka in 2011, and local agent Antor Showbiz are

working together to bring Manchester United to Bangladesh.

"We are trying to bring Manchester United in July next year. As part of this, the delegates have come here to inspect the venue, security, accommodation and other facilities. If we can meet all terms and conditions of the club, we will hold a match between Manchester United and Bangladesh Premier League's best eleven either on July 23 or 30 to celebrate the 100th birth anniversary of father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman," Antor Showbiz chairman Swapan Chowdhury told reporters at the BNS yesterday.

Chowdhury informed that they need 3m euros to bring the English giants which they will try to arrange from sponsors, government and through ticket-sale.

Former national footballer Gaffar Chowdhury, who accompanied the delegates, said, "It is a recce team, which is inspecting all things before submitting a budget for holding the match. Manchester United will tour Asia as part of pre-season preparation and are likely to play a match here if everything goes according to plan."

"What I have understood is that their impression about the ground is not that good as they told us that there are five types of grass on the field and the ground is not even. We assured them that everything will be fine when the ground committee starts nursing the ground," said Chowdhury.

Batsman wants to start against Valencia

AFP, London



Michy Batshuayi can boast an impressive goalscoring record. But the forward is finding it tough to convince Chelsea boss Frank Lampard that he deserves a place in his starting line-up.

The Belgium international has netted eight goals for club and country this season but has not been trusted to start a single game in the Premier League or the Champions League.

On Wednesday, Chelsea travel to play Valencia, where Batshuayi spent a few months on loan from August 2018 to January 2019, though he only found the net three times during his time in Spain.

Chelsea will be through to the Champions League knockout phase if they win but Batshuayi will be lucky to feature from the start.

Nicknamed 'Batsman' due to his name and love of the superhero Batman, he joined Chelsea for around £33 million (\$43 million) from French side Marseille in 2016 as then-manager Antonio Conte's first signing, with a reputation as a sharp finisher.

But from the start he has been forced to play second fiddle at

Stamford Bridge to forwards such as Diego Costa and Alvaro Morata.

The 26-year-old has been farmed out on loan to Borussia Dortmund, Valencia and Crystal Palace over the past couple of years after being deemed him surplus to requirements.

The departure of Eden Hazard in June depleted Chelsea's forward resources, seemingly opening the door to Batshuayi, but now he finds himself behind 22-year-old England striker Tammy Abraham in the pecking order.

Despite Batshuayi's eye for a goal, Lampard appears to see him as more of an impact substitute rather than a starter and his struggles have led to speculation that he might be in line for a move in the January transfer window.

But the Belgian recently declared his "love" for the Premier League club despite his frustrations.

"I don't know why, because I have never been a full-fledged starter, but Chelsea is my club, that's where I feel at home," he told Belgian broadcaster RTBF. "It's a club I love deeply."

The forward made 20 Premier League appearances for Chelsea during his first full season with them, scoring five league goals. But he started just once match.

His late winner against West

Brom towards the end of that season clinched the Premier League title but he was again on the periphery during the following campaign and was shipped out on loan to Dortmund in January 2018.

More loan spells followed, including a productive stint last year at Palace before he returned to Chelsea for the start of this season, hoping to catch the eye of the new manager.

Batshuayi has played 12 times for Chelsea this season and has scored five times, including a goal against Manchester United in the League Cup and the winner in the Champions League match away to Ajax.

He has also scored three times for Belgium, twice against San Marino in a 4-0 win and once against Kazakhstan.

After the Kazakhstan match Belgium manager Roberto Martinez hinted the forward should find a new club if he did not get more opportunities at Stamford Bridge.

"He doesn't play enough at Chelsea," the ex-Everton boss told Belgian newspaper Het Nieuwsblad. "I think that's a shame, even though he scores a lot with the national team."

"I hope he plays more, because we really need him.... But then he has to play. Otherwise a solution must be found."



Aston Villa midfielder Conor Hourihane (R) celebrates his opening goal against Newcastle United during their 2-0 win in the Premier League at Villa Park on Monday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Barca lacking creativity

AFP, Madrid



Barcelona fielded their fabulous four against Leganes on Saturday for the first time this season but it was only after Antoine Griezmann went off that his replacement scored the winner.

Lionel Messi, Luis Suarez, Ousmane Dembele and Griezmann all started but Giezmann departed in the 57th minute before Arturo Vidal poked home in the 79th, fortuitously placed as Messi's cross cannonned into his path.

When Barca signed Griezmann last summer for 120 million euros from Atletico Madrid, many wondered where the Frenchman would fit into their stacked front line.

Many expected Griezmann to

reinforce and eventually replace Suarez down the middle but Ernesto Valverde has been curiously reluctant to field him in the position closest to the one he thrived in for Atletico last season.

With Messi indispensable on the right, Griezmann has been used most often on the left, taking the place of Dembele when he has struggled for fitness or form.

But Griezmann has not looked comfortable, despite the occasional glimpses of excellence such as the two goals he scored against Real Betis in August, which looked set to give lift-off to his Barcelona career. Instead, too many matches that have passed him by.

"I am learning a different philosophy of playing and a different position," said Griezmann last month. "You have to learn, improve, and adjust

your movements. In two months, you cannot have it 100 percent."

Barcelona sit top of La Liga, ahead of Real Madrid on goal difference but dreary performances have not looked worthy of league champions and still less, winners of the Champions League.

They face Borussia Dortmund at Camp Nou on Wednesday, on the back of a goalless draw at home to Slavia Prague earlier this month that means qualification from Group E is far from guaranteed. Anything other than a win is likely to leave them needing at least a point against Inter Milan at the San Siro in a fortnight's time.

Valverde would appear unlikely to throw Messi, Suarez, Griezmann and Dembele together again for Dortmund, who will offer a sterner test than bottom-club Leganes.

Crunch clash for Ancelotti

AFP, Milan



Napoli head for Liverpool on Wednesday for a Champions League clash which could prove crucial to coach Carlo Ancelotti's future at the troubled Italian club.

The three-time Champions League winning coach's second season at the Stadio San Paolo has proved to be a complicated one, after leading them to second in Serie A in his first year.

His team's fortunes have waned after the high of opening their Champions League campaign with a 2-0 win over reigning European champions Liverpool, with dressing room unrest amid friction between the players and club management.

Napoli president Aurelio De Laurentiis ordered the team to be confined to a week-long training camp earlier this month after a 2-1 league defeat to rivals Roma saw them slip to seventh in Serie A.

But as Ancelotti voiced his disagreement with the lockdown, the players all returned home after a 1-1 draw against Salzburg three days later, which stalled their bid to reach the Champions League last 16.

"The relationship between the president and I is excellent and nothing changes," Ancelotti had insisted, after saying he disagreed with the 'ritiro' or training camp.

Film mogul De Laurentiis threatened to sell the entire squad and take legal action against the players after the dressing room revolt.

And the sanctions began to fall this week amid reports Monday the players would receive hefty fines for breaking the lockdown.

Gazzetta Dello Sport reported that players' salaries for the month of November -- apart from those out injured at the time -- will be cut by a quarter.

Brazilian Allan, who had an argument with Edoardo De Laurentiis, son of the Napoli president, will see his salary slashed by half, or 200,000 euros (\$220,000).

In total, players' salaries will be cut by

2.5 million euros (\$2.7 million).

The club have also imposed a media silence with Ancelotti and the players refusing to speak after Saturday's 1-1 draw against AC Milan extended their winless run to six games in all competitions.

However, under UEFA rules Ancelotti will be obliged to speak during a news conference at Anfield on the eve of the match, with Napoli confirming that he will be present.

"We are not satisfied with the performance and the ranking, but it is also true that we deserved more points and more luck in various games," Ancelotti said earlier this month.

"The situation must be considered with a cool head."

Ex-Juventus coach Massimiliano Allegri,

meanwhile, was seen in the stands at San Siro on Saturday, fuelling speculation he could be waiting in the wings.

Napoli are still on course to qualify for the Champions League knockout rounds as they are second in Group E behind Liverpool, four points ahead of third-placed Salzburg with two games to play.

They will reach the last 16 if they beat Liverpool or if Salzburg do not beat Genk, having failed to advance past the group stages last season.

But they come up against a Liverpool side who have an eight-point advantage on top of the Premier League table and whose only loss this season came at the San Paolo.

