

**STAR SPORTS SELECT 1**  
English Premier League  
Burnley v Man City  
Live from 2:15am (Wednesday)

**STAR SPORTS SELECT 2**  
English Premier League  
Crystal Palace v Bournemouth  
Live from 1:30am (Wednesday)

## ENGLISH CLUB SET TO BAMBOO-ZLE FANS

High-flying English fourth tier side Forest Green Rovers are to wear bamboo shin pads, furthering their claims to be the world's greenest football club, they announced yesterday. Forest Green -- whose environmental credentials have been recognised by FIFA and the United Nations -- had already become the first team to switch to bamboo kit at the beginning of the season. The club, presently second in League Two, are working with a US manufacturer of eco-friendly products on the bamboo shin pads. "Forest Green Rovers are the first professional club to switch to bamboo shin pads -- moving away from current products made largely from plastic," the club said in a statement. "The low-profile shin pads are impact resistant and are anti-microbial." Forest Green chairman Dale Vince said bamboo was an ideal material for shin pads. "Bamboo is a natural wonder, a sustainable material that's ridiculously strong and ultra-lightweight, making it perfect for shin pads as well as better for the planet and for our players," he said.



Barcelona star Lionel Messi (C) charges off in celebration after scoring in the 86th minute of a La Liga encounter against Atletico Madrid on Sunday. His late strike ensured that the Blaugrana walked away 1-0 winners.

PHOTO: AFP

# Barcelona down Atletico Madrid

AFP, Madrid



Lionel Messi delivered a major boost to Barcelona's La Liga title hopes by scoring a late winner in a 1-0 victory against Atletico Madrid on Sunday.

Messi was the favourite to win a record-breaking sixth Ballon d'Or in Paris yesterday and he came up trumps again for Barca at the Wanda Metropolitano, where an even contest looked destined to finish goalless.

The Argentinian's 86th-minute strike, after a neat one-two with Luis Suarez, keeps Barcelona level on points with Real Madrid at the top of the table while leaving Atletico with a mountain to climb if they are to rejoin the race.

"It's important for the three points but also for the mental side," said Barca coach Ernesto Valverde. "It sends us into the Christmas period with confidence."

Atletico now sit six points adrift of both Real and Barca, with those two also having a game in hand which will be played out in the season's first Clasico at the Camp Nou on December 18.

It means Atleti could conceivably head into the Christmas break nine points off

the lead, a significant gap, particularly considering they will have to play away against both Barca and Real Madrid in the second half of the season.

"We need points," said Atletico coach Diego Simeone. "We are not far from them but we are worried. I am happy with the way we are playing but I will not smile at that because that does not bring us points."

Antoine Griezmann was whistled on his return to his former club, whom he left for 120 million euros (\$132.3 million) to join Barcelona in the close season, while toy rats were dropped on the plaque that still bears his name outside the stadium.

But Messi scored his 12th goal of the season and sixth in his last five games. He has now 25 in 27 in the league against Atletico although this was his first at the Wanda Metropolitano.

Barcelona were fortunate not to be reduced to 10 men in the second half when Gerard Pique escaped a second yellow card for a late challenge on Alvaro Morata.

They rode their luck in the opening 20 minutes too, marooned in their own half and able only to survive thanks in large part to their goalkeeper.

# Football season starts December 18

SPORTS REPORTER

The upcoming football season (2019-2020) is set to get underway on December 18 through the Federation Cup at the Bangabandhu National Stadium with 13 clubs expected to take part in the tournament.

Following the Federation Cup, the Bangabandhu Gold Cup international football tournament will take place midway through January while the Bangladesh Premier League is expected to roll onto the ground during the last week of the same month.

These decisions were made at a professional football league committee meeting, which was chaired by Bangladesh Football Federation senior vice president, Abdus Salam Murshedy, at the Bangladesh Football Federation House yesterday.

"The meeting has decided to start the upcoming season on December 18 through the Federation Cup which is likely to end on January 7 or 8. Then, there will be two weeks for the preparation of the national football team and the participation

of Bangabandhu Gold Cup as all club representatives agreed to release their respective national footballers for the camp as well as the international tournament," said Murshedy after the meeting.

"We want to start the professional football league in the last week of January and the mid-term transfers' window has preliminary been fixed for first two week of April [1-15]," he continued, adding that they are also considering the increase of venues for the premier league.

"In previous year, six venues were used but one of them was dropped due to the ground's poor condition. However, Chattogram Abahani decided to use its previous venue of MA Aziz Stadium in Chattogram as three more venues -- Narsingdi, Manikganj and Cumilla -- have been in consideration but all that depends on the fulfilment of the criteria and the interest of the clubs," said Murshedy. The senior vice president also informed that they want to increase the number of venues in order to shorten the time-frame of the league as the BFF have a tight schedules for next season.

## Carlo orders players into training camp

AFP, Rome

Napoli coach Carlo Ancelotti yesterday ordered his players into a training camp after their latest dismal 2-1 defeat to Bologna on Sunday, risking further unrest at the troubled Serie A club.

Following the defeat, Ancelotti's side are 17 points behind Inter Milan and the 60-year-old has decided to crack down on his players.

"Carlo Ancelotti has decided that the team will stay together as part of a training camp between Wednesday and Saturday's match away at Udinese," Napoli said in a statement.

# Roma move to fourth

AGENCIES, Verona



AS Roma moved up to the fourth spot on the Serie A table with a 3-1 win over Verona at the Stadio Marc'Antonio Bentegodi in Verona on Sunday.

It was a frustrating start to the match for Roma, as the weather and Verona's defense seemed to conspire against the Giallorossi, but Roma found a breakthrough in the 17th minute when Lorenzo Pellegrini delivered a sensational assist to Justin Kluivert. Kluivert's attempt on goal was equally impressive, as he delivered a tight-angled shot towards the far post, giving Roma an early lead.

Verona levelled the margin four minutes later as Marco Faraoni got on the end of a looping out-swinging cross to beat Pau Lopez.

However, a Diego Perotti penalty, either side of Verona captain Davide Faraoni's header, gave the visitors the lead at halftime, while the hosts had two goals disallowed for offside.

Roma's Henrikh Mkhitaryan made sure of the three points in stoppage time with a close-range finish to lift the capital club to 28 points, two behind rivals Lazio in third. Verona remain ninth on 18 points.



Roma players celebrate after securing a 3-1 win over Verona in a Serie A encounter at the Stadio Marc'Antonio Bentegodi on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

# Royal players, coach to face sanctions

MAZHAR UDDIN



The coach, captain and a player of Dhaka Royal Cricketers are likely to be punished for misbehaving with umpires in the just-concluded third division cricket league.

A video went viral on Facebook on November 18 which brought umpiring irregularities in lower-tier cricket back under the spotlight despite the Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB's) claims of eradicating corruption from the grassroots.

The video showed a number of players verbally abusing and accusing the two on-field umpires for making biased decisions to help their opposing team win.

A Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis (CCDM) official said that the coach, captain and

a player involved in the incident had accepted their guilt and the committee have sent their recommendation to BCB for further action.

"Team manager Sabbir Ahmed Rubel was absent from the hearing. He is currently out of the country and will come to the hearing once he returns. Two players, the captain and coach were present in the hearing on Sunday. They accepted their guilt and admitted that they committed injustice towards the umpires by abusing them. Our disciplinary committee forwarded their recommendation to the board. The disciplinary committee will implement whatever decision the board takes," said Amin Khan, the coordinator of CCDM's premier division unit.

According to the CCDM bylaws, if anyone is found guilty of misbehaving with the umpire, he can be banned from one to three years.

This incident took place after the conclusion of the match between Dhaka Royal Cricketers and Kamrangirchor SC in Fatullah.

The video was uploaded by a Royal official and showed players and officials chanting 'cheat, cheat' at the two umpires Jahirul Islam Jewel and Saidur Rahman, before they were escorted inside the stadium by police and the match referee.

However, the CCDM are yet to take any decision against the umpires for their alleged favouritism.

"The hearing was based on the match referees' report, where he mentioned the misbehaviour from Royal players and coach. There was no complaint against the umpires and even the Royal players and coach denied the captain's observation in his report, where it was written that the umpires are 'thieves'," Amin added.



Australia bowler Nathan Lyon reacts after appealing successfully for a leg-before decision against Pakistan's batsman Yasir Shah on the fourth day of the second Test in Adelaide yesterday. Lyon scalped a fifer to ensure an innings and 48-run win for his side.

PHOTO: AFP

# Australia seal series 2-0

AFP, Adelaide



Spin king Nathan Lyon snared five wickets, including dangerous half-century makers Shan Masood and Asad Shafiq, as Australia wore down a stubborn Pakistan to clinch the second Test and wrap up the series 2-0 yesterday.

Pakistan resumed day four of the day-night match on a precarious 39 for three with Masood not out on 14 and Shafiq on eight after being bowled out for 302 in their first innings and forced to follow on.

It followed Australia's mammoth 589 for three declared, built around David Warner's exceptional 335 not out.

Needing another 248 to force Australia to bat again and avoid a second successive innings defeat, they had a decent crack but were

eventually all out for 239 with the home team claiming victory by an innings and 48 runs.

It was Australia's sixth consecutive win in a pink ball Test -- four of them at Adelaide -- with every day-night Test played so far since the concept was introduced in 2015 producing a result.

Lyon was Australia's saviour, finishing with 5-69 on a lifeless pitch.

It was his 16th five-wicket haul and his first against Pakistan. Pakistan's Masood played some glorious strokes as he assumed a leadership role after Babar Azam and captain Azhar Ali fell cheaply on Sunday.

Shafiq, who has 12 Test hundreds to his name, proved to be Masood's equal and brought up his 25th half-century with a single off Josh Hazlewood.

But Lyon struck again, with Shafiq getting a thin edge to a flighted ball that carried to Warner

at slip and he was gone for 57.

Lyon then removed Iftikhar Ahmed, caught at short leg by Labuschagne for a battling 27, before trapping surprise first-innings century-maker Yasir Shah lbw for 13.

The new pink ball was taken when they returned and with the lights on it didn't take long to finish off the tail, with Hazlewood clean-bowling Mohammad Rizwan for 45 and Mohammad Abbas run out.

## SCORES IN BRIEF

**AUSTRALIA:** First innings 589 for 3 declared. **PAKISTAN:** First innings 302 and second innings 239 all out (Masood 68, Shafiq 57, Iftikhar 27, Rizwan 45; Hazlewood 3-63, Lyon 5-69) **Result:** Australia won by an innings and 48 runs and clinched two-match series 2-0.

**Player-of-the-match:** David Warner **Player-of-the-series:** David Warner