

SONY ESPN
Indian Premier League
 Pune v Punjab
 Live from 4:30pm
 Gujarat v Mumbai
 Live from 8:30pm

STAR SPORTS1
 England v Sri Lanka
 First Test, Day 3
 Live from 4:00pm

TEN 1 HD
German Cup Final
 Bayern Munich v Borussia Dortmund
 Live from 12:00am (Sunday)

Green Delta Premier Div Hockey
 Azad SC v Railway SC
 Time: 2:00pm

Usha KC v Dhaka Mariners
 Time: 4:00pm
 Venue: Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium

RANIERI TO BE ITALIAN KNIGHT

Leicester City's surprise Premier League title win has earned the team a great deal of praise and accolades recently, but coach Claudio Ranieri has been given the highest honour of them all so far, as he is about to be knighted in Italy. Ranieri will be rewarded with the third highest ranking of Italian Knights by president Sergio Mattarella for "merits acquired by the nation" in sports. The honour Ranieri will receive is one level higher than that given to the players who won the World Cup with Italy in 1982 and 2006. The coach has some esteemed company in holding the title Grande Ufficiale dell'Ordine al Merito della Repubblica Italiana, with former USA president John F. Kennedy, opera singers Luciano Pavarotti and Andrea Bocelli, Argentine writer Jose Luis Borges, ex-New York mayor Rudolph Giuliani and film director and writer Federico Fellini all sharing the honour. --AGENCIES



Monfils out of French Open

World number 14 Gael Monfils has withdrawn from the French Open with a viral infection, the grand slam tournament's organisers said on Friday.

"@Gael_Monfils withdraws from #RG16 because of a bad virus. Get well soon and see you for #RG17 Gael," they said in the official French Open Twitter feed.

The 29-year-old Frenchman joins world number three Roger Federer on the sidelines.

Federer, champion in Paris in 2009 - the year he beat Monfils in the semi-finals - pulled out of the year's second grand slam on Thursday, citing a lack of fitness.

A quarter-finalist at the year's opening grand slam in Melbourne in January, Monfils has had a mixed claycourt season so far. He was knocked out in the second round of the Madrid Open earlier this month, then lost his first round match at the Italian Open, but had been runner-up at the Monte Carlo Masters in April.

Monfils, who's semi-final appearance in 2009 remains his best performance at Roland Garros, was knocked out in the fourth round by Federer last year.

DIU defeat IUB in opener

SPORTS REPORTER

Daffodil International University (DIU) defeated Independent University Bangladesh (IUB) by 74 runs on the opening day of the DIU T20 Cricket

Tournament 2016 at the DIU campus in Ashulia yesterday.

After winning the toss and electing to bat, DIU posted 181 before being bowled out. In reply, IUB managed just 109 runs for the loss of nine wickets in their allotted overs.

Prof. Dr. S M Mahbub-Ul-Haque Majumder, the acting vice-chancellor of DIU, inaugurated the tournament as chief guest, while former Bangladesh national cricket team captain Habibul Bashar and former national team player Hasibul Hossain attended as special guests.

The top ten private universities in the country are taking part in the tournament which has been organised with the aim of nurturing a sporting culture among the students.

The winners will receive Tk 50,000 while the runners-up will be awarded 30,000.

Novak, Rafa on collision course



NOVAK DJOKOVIC



RAFAEL NADAL

AFP, Paris

Novak Djokovic and Rafael Nadal could meet for the 50th time after they were placed on a French Open semi-final collision course on

Friday.

World number one and top seed Djokovic, who turns 29 on the opening day of the tournament on Sunday, needs a Roland Garros title to complete a career Grand Slam after losing three finals in four years, including last season to Stan Wawrinka.

Should Djokovic and nine-time French Open champion Nadal meet in the last-four it will be their 50th career clash in a rivalry which began in 2006 at Roland Garros.

Djokovic has the edge at 26-23, claiming the pair's last seven encounters.

Fourth seed Wawrinka is scheduled to take on second seed Andy Murray in the other semi-final.

Top seed Djokovic, bidding for a 12th career major, starts his campaign against Taiwan's Lu Yen-Hsun, the world number 100 who made the Wimbledon quarter-finals in 2010.

Djokovic is seeded to face Tomas Berdych in the last-eight while he could tackle volatile Australian Bernard Tomic in the fourth round.

Tomic was accused by the Serb of lacking commitment after a tame exit at the Madrid Masters last month.

Nadal, who lost to Djokovic in the quarter-finals in 2015, had originally been set to be

seeded at five until 2009 champion Roger Federer withdrew through injury on Thursday.

Nadal starts his French Open against big-serving Sam Groth of Australia with a potential quarter-final against home hope, and two-time semi-finalist, Jo-Wilfried Tsonga.

With his 30th birthday just around the corner, Nadal has arguably the toughest draw of the top men but will be buoyed by a recent return to form which saw him claim the Monte Carlo and Barcelona titles.

Italy's Fabio Fognini, who came back from two sets down to beat Nadal at the US Open last year, is a possible third round opponent.

Rising Austrian Dominic Thiem, the man who knocked Federer out in Rome, is lying in wait in the round of 16.

Murray, fresh from beating Djokovic in the Rome Masters final, will meet a qualifier in the first round with a potential quarter-final against Japan's Kei Nishikori.

Murray has been handed a relatively smooth path although a mouth-watering clash with Nick Kyrgios of Australia is a potential last-eight match-up should Nishikori stumble.

The Japanese fifth seed has never got past the quarter-finals in Paris but was runner-up to Nadal this year on clay in Barcelona and a semi-final loser to Djokovic in Madrid and Rome.

Nishikori starts against Italian veteran Simone Bolelli.

Wawrinka opens against Lukas Rosol, the Czech who shocked Nadal at Wimbledon in 2012, while his potential last-eight rival would

be Canada's Milos Raonic.

In the women's draw, defending champion and top seed Serena Williams, bidding for a fourth Paris title, starts against Slovakia's Magdalena Rybarikova, the world number 76.

The 27-year-old Slovak has never made it beyond the second round in Paris.

Williams, just one short of Steffi Graf's Open era record of 22 majors, could face 2010 champion Francesca Schiavone in the third round.

Former world number one and two-time Australian Open winner Victoria Azarenka is a potential quarter-final foe for the 34-year-old American.

Fifth seed Azarenka, a semi-finalist in 2013, opens against Italy's Karin Knapp.

Second seed Agnieszka Radwanska is scheduled to face 2014 runner-up Simona Halep in the last eight. Radwanska, yet to get past the quarter-finals, takes on Serbia's Bojana Jovanovski first up.

Australian Open champion Angelique Kerber, the third seed, is lined up for a last-eight duel with 2015 semi-finalist Timea Bacsinszky.

Kerber starts against Dutchwoman Kiki Bertens.

Wimbledon finalist Garbine Muguruza and US Open runner-up Roberta Vinci is the other potential quarter-final if seedings go to plan.

The women's tournament is missing two-time champion Maria Sharapova who is serving a doping suspension and the injured Caroline Wozniacki.

MU's chance to salvage season

AFP, London



Manchester United will attempt to salvage something from their tumultuous season - and potentially keep manager Louis van Gaal in a job -- in Saturday's FA Cup final against Crystal Palace.

After failing to qualify for the Champions League for the second time in three years, the Wembley showpiece represents United's last chance to make good on a campaign of stagnant football and simmering fan dissent.

Van Gaal was booed as he addressed supporters following Tuesday's 3-1 home win over Bournemouth and although victory against Palace would give United their first significant piece of silverware since Alex Ferguson left in 2013, reports suggest that his days at Old Trafford are numbered regardless.

"I think the interests of the club are much more important than the manager," Van Gaal said on Thursday when asked how the outcome of Saturday's game might impact on his future.

"Of course, you have put your own aims. [Winning the FA Cup] is one I have always had. But close is not enough. You have to win it.

"I have read that the last FA Cup [won by United] is 2004, so also for Manchester United it is a big title."

While United have not won the FA Cup since 2004, when they beat Millwall 3-0 in Cardiff, victory on Saturday would see them equal Arsenal's tally of 12 successes in the competition -- a record they once held outright.

As well as giving Van Gaal a first trophy in English football, it would also enable Wayne Rooney, the captain, and Michael Carrick to claim the only top-level medals that have eluded them during their spells at the club.

Van Gaal already has reason to thank the tournament, for it has provided several melodious moments this season amid the steady background hum of speculation about his future.

Early victories over lower-league sides Sheffield United, Derby County and Shrewsbury Town came during a dismal run of three wins in 13 league games, when criticism of the Dutchman was at its fiercest.

The quarter-final against West Ham United brought both the relief of Anthony Martial's 83rd-minute equaliser in the first game at Old Trafford and the morale boost of an assured 2-1 victory in the replay.

Martial provided another moment to savour in last month's semi-final against Everton, driving into the box from the left in stoppage time to net a deliciously celebrated winner.

If Van Gaal is looking for positive omens, it will not have escaped his attention that the last under-fire United manager to go into an FA Cup final against Palace with his neck on the line was Ferguson.

Van Niekerk to train with Bolt

REUTERS, Cape Town



South African 400 metres world champion Wayde van Niekerk will train with sprint king Usain Bolt in Jamaica next month in a bid to shave vital fractions of a second off his time in a chase for Olympic gold in Rio de Janeiro.

Van Niekerk, the only man in history to run under 10 seconds in the 100 metres, sub-20 in the 200 metres and below 44 in the 400 metres, is the second fastest sprinter over his specialist distance this year behind Kirani James from Grenada.

Van Niekerk hopes training with Bolt, world champion in the 100 and 200 metres, and another Jamaican sprint champion, Yohan Blake, will boost his gold medal prospects in Rio.

"I'm excited to go out there and train with them, it's the world best Usain Bolt, Yohan Blake and Warren Weir," Van Niekerk told Reuters. "I feel I can learn a lot from them and can improve myself as an athlete."

Van Niekerk received the invitation from sprint coach Glen Mills, who played a leading role in the development of Bolt into the fastest man alive.

"I have got quite close with coach Mills in the last few months after we spent a lot of time together at lunch and supper tables [at events] and he eventually threw the idea out there and said, 'wouldn't you like to come out and train in Jamaica'. Obviously I jumped at the chance."



Twenty girl footballers of Kalsindur, including eight members of the winning squad of AFC U-14 Girls' Regional Championship, were accorded a flamboyant reception by the Mymensingh Police administration at the Advocate Tareq Smriti auditorium yesterday evening. The girls were honoured with crests. A cultural programme followed the reception.

PHOTO: STAR

FIFA seeks 2-year ban for former DFB boss

AFP, Zurich



FIFA's ethics committee on Friday recommended a two-year ban from all football activities for Wolfgang Niersbach, former president of the German Football Association (DFB), over an alleged corruption scandal around the right to host the 2006 World Cup.

FIFA's adjudicatory chamber said they had received a final report from world football governing body's ethics committee investigatory chamber and decided to proceed with formal proceedings against Niersbach.

"The investigatory chamber recommends a sanction of a two-year ban from all football-related activity and a fine of CHF 30,000 [27,000 euro, \$30,000]," the judging body said.

Niersbach, vice-president of the 2006 World Cup organising committee, is still a member of the FIFA Council,

and attended last week's Congress in Mexico, as well as being on UEFA's executive committee. He said he would vigorously contest the sanction.

"It's a matter of honour and defence of my rights to oppose this request with all possible legal means," Niersbach said in an interview with German news agency SID, a subsidiary of AFP.

"The penalty is incomprehensible. Especially when compared to other cases where the Ethics Commission has not made such harsh judgements in cases of personal advantage and corruption."

"In my case, the charge is based solely on the fact that I did not speak soon enough about things related to the 2006 World Cup," Niersbach continued, adding his "resignation from the presidency of the DFB in November 2015" should suffice.

Niersbach, 65, had resigned from the German federation amid accusations

the DFB used a slush fund of 10 million Swiss francs (6.7 million euro, \$8 million, according to the exchange rate at that time) in 2000 to buy the right to host the 2006 World Cup finals.

FIFA opened a probe on March 22 targeting six people including Niersbach and Franz Beckenbauer, the German football legend and World Cup organising committee chief, over their roles in the bidding process, amid allegations of bribery.

Niersbach is accused of "not reporting the violation of the [FIFA] ethics code" by others.

The FIFA ethics committee inquiry follows the release of a report commissioned by the DFB into the 2006 World Cup bidding.

That report, released on March 4, said it could not rule out that Germany bought votes to secure the tournament, and linked Beckenbauer to a "mysterious" deal with disgraced FIFA official Jack Warner.

Change could be good for Goetze: Loew

REUTERS, Berlin



Bayern Munich's Mario Goetze could benefit from a potential move, with the talented attacking midfielder in need of a coach who trusts him, Germany coach Joachim Loew said on Friday.

Goetze, who moved to Bayern in 2013 from rivals Borussia Dortmund, has failed to establish himself in three seasons under coach Pep Guardiola, who moves after Saturday's German Cup final to join Manchester City.

The 23-year-old, who scored Germany's World Cup winning goal in 2014, however, enjoys the full trust of Loew, who never stopped selecting him, including for the upcoming Euro 2016.

He has scored 17 goals in 50 internationals but managed just three goals for Bayern in the league this season, two of them on the final matchday.

"Generally speaking a change -- a new environment, new stimuli, new challenges --

can sometimes release new powers," Loew told German newspaper Sueddeutsche Zeitung.

"You only have to look at the development of Toni Kroos. He was great at Bayern but he went to Real Madrid and took the next step."

Goetze's Germany teammate Kroos joined Real in 2014 and will face city rivals Atletico Madrid in the Champions League final later this month.

"What Mario needs is trust. He needs a coach who will desperately want him in the team. But that is no criticism to Bayern or Pep Guardiola of course."

Goetze has been linked with a possible move to Liverpool, coached by his former Dortmund mentor Juergen Klopp, after spending much of this season, where Bayern won a record fourth German league title, on the bench.

Guardiola's successor, Carlo Ancelotti has also reportedly failed to give any guarantees of more playing time next season.

"Obviously he [Ancelotti] cannot tell Mario 'you will always play under me, I guarantee you that'," Loew said.

Leverkusen snap up Volland

AFP, Berlin

Hoffenheim's Germany international Kevin Volland has signed a five-year deal with Bayer Leverkusen, the two clubs announced on Friday.

The 23-year-old striker's contract runs until June 30, 2021 and is estimated to be worth 15 million euros (\$16.8m).

Volland has scored 33 goals and had 38 decisive passes in 132 matches since his arrival in 2012. His contract with Hoffenheim had been due to expire in 2019.

With six caps for the German national team since 2014 he was not, however, selected by coach Joachim Loew for his initial 27-man squad for Euro 2016 starting on June 10.