

What to WATCH

SONY ESPN

Indian Premier League

Pune v Bangalore

Live from 4:30pm

Gujarat v Mumbai

Live from 8:30pm

SONY SIX

La Liga

Espanyol v Barcelona

Live from 12:45am (Sunday)

TEN 1

La Liga

Las Palmas v Atletico Madrid

Live from 10:30pm

TEN 2

Serie A

Torino v Sampdoria

Live from 12:45am (Sunday)

TEN 3

La Liga

Real Madrid v Valencia

Live from 8:15pm

STAR SPORTS SELECT HD2

English Premiership

Sunderland v Bournemouth

Live from 8:00pm

Bundesliga

Wolfsburg v Bayern Munich

Live from 10:30pm

DAY'S EVENT

DHAKA PREMIER LEAGUE

Time: 9:00am

Prime Doleshwar v Kalabagan KC

Venue: KSOAS

Abahani v Gazi Group

Venue: BKSP-3

Legends of Rugpanj v Prime Bank

Venue: BKSP-4

QUICK SINGLES

The following are a few samples of stories that did not make the print edition. However, if they pique your interest, you can always read them online on The Daily Star website by simply scanning the QR codes listed below:

KP was 'completely right' on IPL
Former Test captain Michael Vaughan believes Indian Premier League exposure will give England an edge in their bid to win a first major 50-over tournament when the Champions Trophy begins in June.

Gambhir sponsoring education of children of 25 CRPF personnel
Former Indian cricket team captain Gautam Gambhir on Friday announced that his organisation will sponsor the education of the children of the 25 Central Reserve Police Force personnel killed in the Maoist attack in Chhattisgarh's Sukma.

Bayern sign Coman from Juve on permanent deal
Bayern Munich have activated a clause to make winger Kingsley Coman's transfer from Juventus permanent at the end of the season, the German club said in a statement.

French prosecutors investigating 2018, 2022 World Cup awards
French prosecutors are investigating the decision by global soccer body FIFA to award the 2018 World Cup to Russia and the 2022 tournament to Qatar, a source close to the investigation said.

Nadal, Murray advance to quarterfinals
Third seed Rafael Nadal remained on course for a 10th Barcelona Open title after reaching the quarter-finals with a 6-3 6-4 victory over Kevin Anderson.

Players reject Cricket Australia pay offer
Australia's professional cricketers rejected a pay offer from the sport's governing body on Friday, saying it was "a win for cricket administrators but a loss for cricket".



Real Madrid superstar Cristiano Ronaldo controls the ball during a training session at the Valdebebas Sport City in Madrid yesterday on the eve of their La Liga match against Valencia.

PHOTO: AFP

Jose sets sights on L'pool, Arsenal

AFP, Manchester



Jose Mourinho identified Liverpool and Arsenal as Manchester United's chief rivals for Champions League qualification following his side's 0-0 draw at fellow top-four contenders Manchester City.

Thursday's stalemate at the Etihad Stadium left United just a point below local foes City, who occupy the Premier League's fourth and final Champions League qualifying berth.

But Mourinho believes Liverpool, two points above United in third having played a game more, and Arsenal, four points below them having played a game less, are now their principal rivals.

"I think Man City is going to finish top four," the United manager said.

"The matches they have to play, I see them doing that. I think it's between us, Arsenal and Liverpool."

While United's run-in features successive trips to Arsenal and second-place Tottenham Hotspur, City's is more benign, a home game with eighth-place West Bromwich Albion their most arduous test.

United are also besieged by injuries and will now be without midfielder Marouane Fellaini for three games after he was shown an 84th-minute red card for headbutting Sergio Aguero.

Phil Jones, Chris Smalling, Marcos Rojo, Paul Pogba, Juan Mata and Zlatan Ibrahimovic are all sidelined and Timothy Fosu-Mensah picked up an injury after coming on in place of Henrikh Mkhitaryan.

With a two-legged Europa League semi-final against Celta Vigo also looming on United's horizon, Mourinho admitted his

squad is being stretched to its limits.

"We have played 18 more matches than Liverpool," said the Portuguese, who side equalled the club record of 24 successive top-flight games without defeat.

"Eighteen more matches is like half of a Premier League, almost. Eighteen matches are many miles in the players' legs. So if you can say that, it's an unfair fight."

"But we are going for that. We have the semi-final on Thursday. We have a match (at home to Swansea City) Sunday, 12 o'clock."

"We lost two more players today, Fellaini and Timo Mensah, because he has also an important injury in the last action of the game."

"I don't think we (will) recover any of the others. But we go for it, we fight."

"Twenty-four matches in the Premier League is a lot. The guys have an amazing spirit and here we go again, Sunday."

Mourinho suggested Aguero's exaggerated reaction to Fellaini's lowered forehead had influenced referee Martin Atkinson's decision to send him off.

"I saw Aguero in the tunnel and no broken nose, no broken head," Mourinho said.

"His face is nice as always. If Sergio doesn't go to the floor, for sure it's not a red card."

City manager Pep Guardiola refused to be drawn on the incident, saying: "Next question. I don't want to talk about the decisions of the referee."

City dominated the game, with Aguero volleying against the post in the ninth minute and fit-again substitute Gabriel Jesus seeing a stoppage-time header ruled out for offside.

Guardiola said City's ongoing struggles in front of goal meant their run-in would be far from straightforward.

Nastase issues apology

AFP, Bucharest



Romanian tennis great Ilie Nastase apologised Friday for racist comments about Serena Williams and for a foul-mouthed and abusive Fed Cup tirade that saw him suspended by the International Tennis Federation.

"My words during the Fed Cup have rightfully caused controversy and upset the audience, the press and, most painfully for me, the tennis world," the former world number one and two-time Grand Slam winner, 70, said on Facebook.

He said that his comments last Friday about the pregnant Williams -- he was overheard by a journalist talking about her baby being "chocolate with milk" -- was a "spontaneous" reaction to hearing she was expecting a child.

"I am fully aware that nothing can truly excuse my statements - not the tension of a high-stakes game, not my traditionally irreverent attitude, not the unfortunate escalation of the situation," he said.

"My life remains dedicated to tennis and its audiences, so please accept my apologies, for whatever they may be worth right now."

The day after the Williams comments, Nastase was kicked out of a Fed Cup tie between Romania and Britain after swearing at the umpire, at Britain's pregnant captain Anne Keothavong and at their number one player Johanna Konta.

Nastase, renowned during his golden era for his pranks, hot-headed unpredictability and being a playboy, ignored the ban on Sunday and turned up at the venue on the Black Sea coast. He was seen by reporters walking into the VIP lounge.

Madrid on 'high risk' alert

AFP, Madrid

More than 2,000 security officers will oversee Real Madrid's Champions League semifinal, first leg with Atletico Madrid on Tuesday, the Madrid local government confirmed on Friday.

"Given it is a Champions League match, it is considered high risk and security will be reinforced," the local government said in a statement.

Unlike league matches between the two where away allocations are restricted to a few hundred tickets, UEFA rules mean Atletico will have a large travelling support of around 4,000 at the 80,000 capacity Santiago Bernabeu.

The number of security personnel will be even higher than Madrid's last European home game against Bayern Munich when riot police clashed with visiting fans at half-time.

Kalle backs Ancelotti

AFP, Berlin



Bayern Munich chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge insists the German giants are backing head coach Carlo Ancelotti despite their Champions League and German Cup exits in a little over a week.

April has been little short of a disaster for Bayern and Ancelotti, who is in his first season as head coach.

On Wednesday, Bayern lost their German Cup semifinal 3-2 at home to rivals Borussia Dortmund, just eight days after being dumped out of the Champions League's quarter-finals by Real Madrid.

The cup defeat leaves them winless in their last five games - their worst streak without a win for 17 years.

Rummenigge has made it clear he and club president Uli Hoeness are backing Ancelotti -- for now.

"Carlo is a very good and experienced coach," Rummenigge told German daily Bild on Friday.

"His contract (until 2019) is well known and will not be discussed."

Bayern started April 13 points clear in the Bundesliga and in the running for the treble of Champions League, German league and cup titles.

Their league lead has now been cut to eight and Rummenigge says injury, plus unfavourable refereeing decisions, were behind the European and cup exits.

He means the shoulder injury which ruled star striker Robert Lewandowski out of the 2-1 first-leg defeat to Real and the red card shown to Arturo Vidal in the away defeat in Madrid, when Bayern lost 4-2 after extra-time.

"One shouldn't forget: two weeks ago we were right up there with a A1 mark next to our name!" said Rummenigge.

"Then things happened which one can't influence: injury, refereeing decisions, and sometimes the necessary luck is missing."

Bayern have the consolation of being able to sign off April with a fifth-straight Bundesliga title on Saturday.

They will be confirmed 2016/17 German league winners if they a win at Wolfsburg and second-placed RB Leipzig lose or draw at home to Ingolstadt.

However, ex-Bayern and Germany midfielder Mehmet Scholl predicts big changes at the Allianz Arena for next season.

"The bosses will now ask, do we have the right people at Bayern?," Scholl told broadcaster ARD.

"Do (Kingsley) Coman, (Douglas) Costa or (Renato) Sanches help?"



CARLO ANCELOTTI

Enrique tells Neymar to keep his cool

AFP, Barcelona

Barcelona boss Luis Enrique warned Neymar to keep his emotions in check when he returns from suspension in the heated atmosphere of a Catalan derby at Espanyol on Saturday.

The Brazilian has missed Barca's previous three league games, including a thrilling 3-2 win at Real Madrid last weekend, due to suspension after being sent-off and then sarcastically applauding the officials when Barca slumped to a 2-0 defeat at Malaga on April 8.

It was Neymar's first red card for the club, but Enrique is wary of the fact he will be a target as Espanyol try to derail their city rivals' title chances.

"He is a specialist in putting up with these type of situations because if there is a player used to being fouled and, above all, fouled with force, it is Neymar," said Enrique on Friday.

Basement battle heats up

AFP, London



While the race for the Premier League title has become a contest solely between leaders Chelsea and Tottenham Hotspur, the battle to beat the drop is a more complicated affair.

With a maximum of five rounds left, the identities of the bottom three who will be relegated into the second-tier Championship come the end of the season have still to be confirmed.

Sunderland have excelled at staying up in recent seasons, but even their reputation as the Harry Houdini of the Premier League may not be enough to save them this time.

Wednesday's 1-0 defeat by north-east rivals and fellow strugglers Middlesbrough left bottom of the table Sunderland 12 points adrift of safety with a maximum of 15 still available to them this season.

Defeat completed a wretched day for Sunderland manager David Moyes, who has been charged by England's Football Association for telling a female reporter she might "get a slap".

But the defiant Scot, whose side are

at home to Bournemouth on Saturday, insisted he had no intention of walking out on the Black Cats.

"No, I'm here, I'm the manager, you take it on the chin. I am used to winning, I'm not used to losing and I don't want to get used to it either."

Marten de Roon's ninth-minute strike gave Steve Agnew his first win since replacing Aitor Karanka as Middlesbrough boss and the club's first in the league since December 17, although they remain six points shy of safety.

"We hadn't won a game since December, so we needed to win the game," said Agnew, whose side now

face a daunting trip to Manchester City on Sunday.

Swansea too had the morale boost of a win, a 2-0 victory over Stoke, last time out but they remain in the bottom three, two points from safety, ahead of their Sunday match at Manchester United.

"I am very confident that we will stay up," said bullish Swansea coach Paul Clement.

"Maybe I would not have been if we had not got that good result and good performance against Stoke."

Hull, just above the relegation zone, have earned 19 points out of 21 at home since manager Marco Silva was hired but they now face a potentially awkward trip to Southampton.

Reigning champions Leicester City have stumbled lately under Craig Shakespeare but a win at West Bromwich Albion on Saturday would all but guarantee their Premier League future following a 1-0 loss to Arsenal in midweek.

Chelsea, four points clear of Spurs, who've also got five league games remaining, are away to Everton on Sunday when Tottenham face Arsenal in the north London derby.

Thiago extends Bayern stay

AFP, Berlin

Bayern Munich announced on Friday they have extended the contract of Spanish playmaker Thiago Alcantara until 2021.

A day after Bayern took out the buy option to sign France winger Kingsley Coman from Juventus after a loan spell, Thiago has also added two years to his Bayern contract.

The 26-year-old Thiago signed in 2013 when Bayern's ex-coach Pep Guardiola insisted he was the player he wanted brought from Barcelona.

The attacking midfielder has been outstanding this season as a key element of Bayern's star-studded attack and has made 20 appearances for Spain since 2011.

"Thiago is one of the best and most sought-after midfielders in Europe," said Bayern's chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge.

Xavi hungry for more

AFP, Doha



In 17 golden years at Barcelona, Xavi Hernandez won some 25 trophies playing for the Catalan giants, including eight La Liga and four Champions League titles.

But as the midfielder approaches the end of his second season with Al Sadd he has yet to win a single trophy in Qatar.

That however could all change on Saturday when Al Sadd take on El Jaish in the Qatar Cup, the first domestic final of the season.

And adding to his trophy haul is long overdue, Xavi said on Thursday.

"I am really angry about that," he told AFP.

"Because in Barcelona, not every year, but almost every year, we won something."

"And here, my first season we didn't take any trophy and now we have a good possibility Saturday to take my first trophy here."

And despite winning a World Cup, Xavi admitted he would be nervous before Saturday's final.

While the biggest draw in the Qatar Stars League and playing for one of the most

high-profile teams in the country, Xavi has endured some frustration in the Gulf.

The midfielder signed for Al Sadd in 2015 on a two-year contract.

In his first season the club finished in a disappointing third place -- 15 points behind runaway winners Al Rayyan.

And in the second season, which has just finished, Al Sadd finished runners-up to Lekhwiya, missing out on the championship by just two points.

El Jaish, managed by former French international Sabri Lamouchi, finished fourth.

Saturday's final will bring Xavi in direct competition with Seydou Keita, who spent four seasons at Barcelona between 2008 and 2012 but came to Qatar last year.

Next season will almost certainly be Xavi's last chance of winning a league title in Qatar.

He has signed an extension to his contract but is set to retire at the end of the 2017/18 campaign, when he will be 38, to concentrate on coaching, bringing the curtain down on of the greatest careers in modern football.

"Now I am still playing and still enjoying a lot on the pitch," he said.

