

What to WATCH

SONY ESPN
Indian Premier League
 Bangalore v Punjab
 Live from 8:30pm
STAR SPORTS 1
 England v Ireland
 First ODI

Live from 4:00pm
STAR SPORTS SELECT HD 1
English Premiership
 West Ham v Tottenham
 Live from 1:00am (Saturday)
STAR SPORTS SELECT HD 2
Bundesliga

Koln v Werder Bremen
 Live from 12:30am (Saturday)
TEN 1
La Liga
 Sevilla v Real Sociedad
 Live from 1:00am (Saturday)

DAY'S EVENT

DHAKA PREMIER LEAGUE
 Time: 9:00am
 Prime Doleshwar v Mohammedan

Venue: KSOAS
 Abahani v Prime Bank
 Venue: BKSP-3

Legends of Rugganj v Victoria SC
 Venue: BKSP-4

BOLT WITH A BELLY?

Usain Bolt's coaches have joked that he will develop "a belly" within two years of retirement, but he says he has no doubts about hanging up his running spikes. Bolt, 30, will retire after the World Championships in London in August after a sensational career in which he has amassed eight Olympic gold medals, 11 world titles and three world records. "Everybody wants me to continue, but it's not as simple as it is. I've done what I wanted to do. I've done great in the sport," Bolt told the BBC. "People just want to see more and more, but you as a person have to decide that this is it. I don't want to continue and then start losing, because I hate losing." Though famously fond of the high life, Bolt says he does not intend to lose control of his waistline once he stops competing. "I have a bet with my managers. They've given me two years before I get a belly," he said with a chuckle. —AFP



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:

Neymar ordered to stand trial for fraud in Spain

A Spanish court has ordered Barcelona's Brazilian star Neymar and his parents to stand trial over alleged fraud and corruption in the player's transfer from Santos in 2013.

Connebol discussing new Intercontinental cups

The winners of Europe's Champions League and South America's Copa Libertadores are set to face each other next year in an Intercontinental Cup competition, the head of South American soccer's governing body Connebol said on Wednesday.

Wayne Parnell undergoing heart tests

South Africa quick Wayne Parnell is undergoing tests on his heart after suffering a scare during a domestic one-day game in England.

Buffon celebrates 100th Juve CL game in style

Gianluigi Buffon celebrates his 100th Champions League game for Juventus in typical fashion on Wednesday, making a string of brilliant saves in a 2-0 win at Monaco in the first leg of their semi-final.

Basketball body lifts 'hijab ban'

Basketball chiefs reversed a controversial ban on professional players wearing headgear Thursday after fierce criticism that the rule undermined diversity by disallowing religious coverings like the Muslim hijab. 'India uncertainty unsettling advertisers' Star Sports have raised concerns with cricket's governing body that advertisers might steer clear of the Champions Trophy if India opted against competing at the tournament in England, an official from the broadcaster has told Reuters.



Juventus striker Gonzalo Higuain is ecstatic after scoring the opening goal against Monaco during their Champions League semifinal first leg tie at the Stade Louis II Stadium on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP

Juve outclass Monaco

AFP, Monaco



Two-goal hero Gonzalo Higuain urged his Juventus teammates to keep their feet on the ground after a brilliant 2-0 win in Monaco on Wednesday that left them on the brink of the Champions League final.

Argentine striker Higuain was set up by Dani Alves to open the scoring in the 29th minute and then converted an Alves cross just before the hour as Juve claimed a seemingly decisive victory in the semi-final first leg at the Stade Louis II.

The Italian champions have the final in Cardiff on June 3 in their sights, with a showdown against holders Real Madrid, Higuain's former side, looking probable.

"The dream we have been pursuing since August has been to get to Cardiff and we are just one step away," said Higuain, who was applauded off by the home support in Monaco.

He now has 31 goals this season following his 90 million-euro (\$98

million) transfer from Napoli, helping Juve close on a potential treble.

Higuain, who ended a seven-game run without scoring in the Champions League knockout stages, added: "We have not won anything yet, so we mustn't get carried away. I always kept calm. I knew everyone had faith in me and that hard work is always rewarded in the end."

Juventus were immense in all areas against a Monaco side who have lit up Europe this season with their brand of attacking football.

The hosts found the Juve defence to be impermeable, with Gianluigi Buffon majestic as ever in goal.

The 39-year-old, making his 149th European appearance, denied Kylian Mbappe and Radamel Falcao in the first half and produced a stunning fingertip stop from Valere Germain late on.

Juventus, who welcome Monaco to Turin for the second leg next Tuesday, have now gone over 10 hours without conceding in the Champions League and Buffon has kept clean sheets in all five matches in the knockout rounds.

"In every game I want to show that I deserve to play at this level despite my age. I work hard every day for this. The day I quit, I want people to be sad about it," remarked Buffon, twice a beaten finalist in the Champions

League.

"We had the right approach. They are a fearsome team and the only way to beat them was playing the way we did."

Buffon also praised coach Massimiliano Allegri for his decision to bring Andrea Barzagli into a three-man defence, thwarting Monaco's attack and allowing Dani Alves to wreak havoc down the right.

"Gigi showed that he is still a great goalkeeper. He always does it in big games, and Higuain scored two lovely goals. But to get results everyone needs to work hard. You need to make sacrifices and track back and he did that too," said Allegri.

Juventus could wrap up a record sixth consecutive Serie A title this weekend, when they face city rivals Torino, while Lazio await in the Italian Cup final.

To put their performance in the principality into context, Monaco had won their previous 13 home games and scored in 41 consecutive matches at the Stade Louis II since November 2015.

"They were more clinical than us -- with two or three chances they scored and we couldn't put any of ours away. Buffon made some incredible saves," said Monaco coach Leonardo Jardim.

He missed marauding Benjamin Mendy at left-back and now Monaco must attempt to become just the

BKSP clinch U-18 nat'l c'ship title

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan (BKSP) clinched the Walton U-18 National Football Championship title by defeating Dhaka 4-2 in a penalty shootout at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The final match rolled into tiebreakers after regulation and extra-time ended in a 1-1 draw.

From the outset, BKSP dominated 2007 edition's champion, Dhaka, with better ball possession and came close to breaking the deadlock during the 22nd minute but Meraj Hossain Api watched his powerful shot sail over the crossbar.

After resumption, Dhaka looked better and pressed for the lead. Eventually, they put their noses ahead eight minutes into the second half as Mohammad Raihan scored a header from a corner kick.

However, the country's lone sports institute did not take long to level the margin as Joyal Abedin Dipu beat Dhaka's goalkeeper with a powerful shot from outside the box in the 68th minute.

Afterwards, Dipu found another nice opportunity to put BKSP ahead but was denied by the goalkeeper while Rashedul failed to keep the follow-up on target. BKSP pressed on for a second goal but substitute goalkeeper Imon Hawlader kept his post clear even during extra time, forcing the match into the shootout.

Fahim Morshed, Merajul Islam Irfan, Dipu and Meraj Hossain Opi converted successfully for BKSP while Imon Mollah and Ismail squandered their shots for Dhaka, thereby handing BSKP the title of the U-18 Football tournament, which was held first time since 2007.

Ozil defends himself

AFP, London



Arsenal playmaker Mesut Ozil has defended himself against criticism of his attitude and says his nonchalant body language can be misleading.

Ozil, 28, has been a peripheral figure as Arsenal's season has hit the skids, with Arsene Wenger's side slipping from the top four and being thrashed 10-2 on aggregate by Bayern Munich in the Champions League.

He produced another poor display in Arsenal's 2-0 defeat at derby rivals Tottenham Hotspur last weekend, but says people who say he does not care are wrong.

"Some people like me, some people don't," the Germany playmaker told the Goal website.

"Some people look at my body language and think I don't care. But that's me. I won't change my body language or my style of

play drastically any more.

"Expectations on me were very high everywhere because I am a player who can make the difference. You have to deal with that.

"There will always be criticism and there will always be praise. But what matters is what the manager tells me. I have said that numerous times.

"But what I can't understand is when people say: 'Look, he does not push any more' or 'He does not run enough.' If you look at my numbers, you can see I run a lot and I show a good attitude."

Wenger defended Ozil on Thursday after it emerged the former Real Madrid star had kicked a door in anger after being selected for a drugs test following the defeat at Spurs.

"I am sorry that he kicked the door, but I can understand," the Arsenal manager told his weekly press conference.

Carvajal blow for Real

AFP, Madrid

Real Madrid defender Dani Carvajal sustained an injured hamstring in his team's 3-0 victory over city rivals Atletico in the first leg of the Champions League semi-final, the European champions announced Wednesday.

Real said Carvajal "has been diagnosed with a grade 2 hamstring injury in his right leg. His recovery will continue to be assessed."

Carvajal suffered the injury after falling awkwardly after going up for a contested header.

Totti looking ahead

AFP, Alghero



For a player who has singularly come to represent Serie A giants Roma for nearly a quarter century, Francesco Totti deserved to feel heartbroken on Wednesday upon hearing his playing career would soon be over.

"It's the day that he hoped would never arrive," a friend of 40-year-old Totti was quoted as saying by Gazzetta dello Sport on Thursday.

Yet, for the 'Re di Roma' (King of Rome) -- who led the Giallorossi to the 2001 'scudetto' and eight runner-up places -- the end of a storied career that has wowed fans, peers and rivals the world over for the best part of 25 years has been fast approaching.

Reduced to sporadic substitute appearances in these last two seasons, the announcement by Roma's new sporting

director Monchi on Wednesday that Totti will finally hang up his boots on May 28, when Roma host Genoa at the Stadio Olimpico, caused ripples.

Especially as Totti, after playing a largely forgettable final 19 minutes in a 3-1 derby defeat to Lazio last weekend, appeared to remain defiant.

Totti reacted like he was pushing painful thoughts of his fateful day to the back of his mind when he was asked if he had just played his final derby: "That's what everyone else says. I'm saying nothing."

With 15, largely cameo appearances so far this campaign, the ageing club icon had lost all hope of prolonging his career and trying to overtake Silvio Piola's all-time record of 274 Serie A goals.

Ahead of Roma's final four games of the season, Totti has scored 250 in 616 Serie A appearances.

ATN BANGLA NAT'L HOCKEY

Army, Dhaka advance

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Army and Dhaka moved into the quarterfinals of the ATN Bangla National Hockey Championship after emerging champions in their respective groups at Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Army inflicted a massive 33-0 defeat to Rangpur in their last group match to secure the maximum of nine points from three matches, courtesy of 13 goals from national striker Milon Hossain while Naem Uddin, Hasan Jubair Niloy and Abdul Malek struck seven, four and three goals respectively. Rokonuzzaman, Rezaul Karim, Ahsan Habib, Shafiqul Islam and Abu Salam also got their names on the scoresheet.

Dhaka also secured nine points from three matches as they defeated Dinajpur 7-2 in their last encounter with Mahub Hossain and Maksudul Alam Habul scoring three and two goals apiece while Irfan, Tanjim, Rabbi Salehin and Iqbal Hossain netted one goal each.

In the day's other matches, Rajshahi thrashed Barisal 21-0 while Sylhet routed Jhenaidah 9-1.

Pioneer Football kicks-off

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka City Corporation (North & South) Pioneer Football League gets underway today at five different venues with about 2270 footballers participating in the tournament which is known as a breeding ground of the country's future footballers.

Some 71 clubs including 24 teams from outside the metropolitan area, split into five zones of two groups, will be playing in the round-robin league matches after which the champions and runners-up from each of the 10 groups will advance to the 20-team Super League.

Four semifinalists from the Super League will be promoted to the 3rd Division Football League from next season while the bottom placed team from each group in the preliminary round will be relegated.

This information was disclosed at a press conference yesterday, where Pioneer League Committee chairman Shawkat Ali Khan Jahangir, deputy chairman Amit Khan Shuvro and representatives of both city corporations were among others present.



State Minister of Youth and Sports Biren Shikder (C) presents the NOVOAIR BPGA Cup golf trophy to Badal Hossain (2nd L) during the prize giving ceremony at the Kurmitola Golf Club yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED