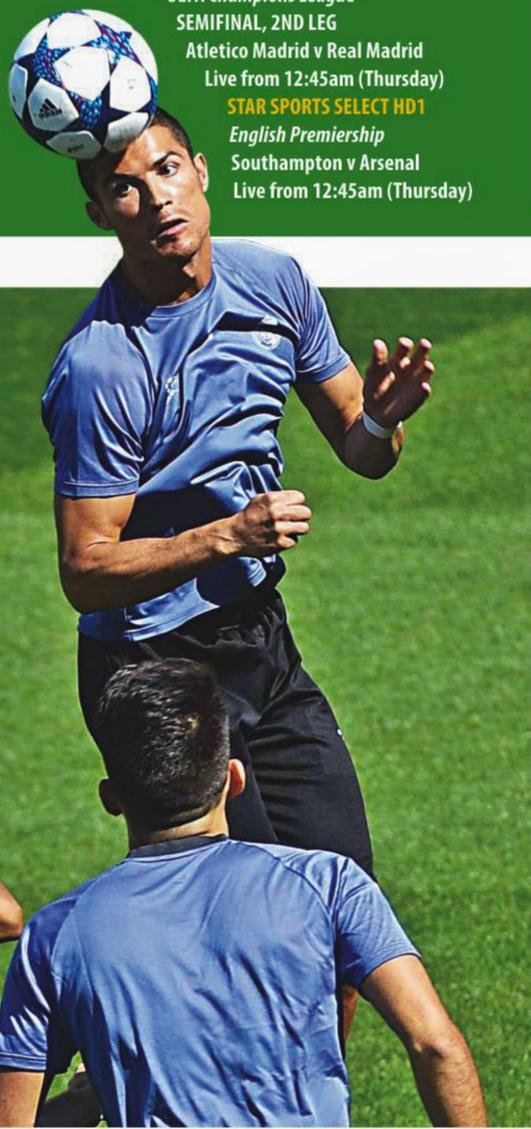


**SONY ESPN**  
**Indian Premier League**  
 Gurajat v Delhi  
 Live from 8:30pm  
**TEN 1HD**  
 West Indies v Pakistan  
 Third Test, Day-1  
 Live from 8:00pm

**TEN 2**  
**UEFA Champions League**  
**SEMIFINAL, 2ND LEG**  
 Atletico Madrid v Real Madrid  
 Live from 12:45am (Thursday)  
**STAR SPORTS SELECT HD1**  
**English Premiership**  
 Southampton v Arsenal  
 Live from 12:45am (Thursday)



Real Madrid superstar Cristiano Ronaldo heads the ball during a training session at the Valdebebas Sport City in Madrid yesterday, on the eve of their Champions League semifinal against Atletico Madrid.

PHOTO: AFP

## MESSI'S AMAZING MEMORABILIA

Barcelona and Argentina superstar Lionel Messi has shown off his incredible shirt collection. The 29-year-old, five-time Ballon d'Or winner posted on Instagram a picture of himself and his son, Thiago, with the astonishing assemblage at his home in Spain. Taking pride of place at the centre of it all is his World Cup Final shirt from 2014. A host of compatriots shirts are on display, including Manuel Lanzini, Sergio Agüero, Oscar Ustari, Alejandro Dominguez and Messi's idol, Pablo Aimar, as well as a who's who of European greats, such as Thierry Henry and Pavel Nedved. There's also space for two Real Madrid legends: Iker Casillas and Raul. Perhaps the most surprising shirt on show is Manuel Lanzini's West Ham number, right between a special Argentina number 10 jersey and one of Luis Suarez's. It will take quite something for a fellow pro to trump Messi's remarkable array of shirts.

—AGENCIES



## 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:

### Dhoni the 'best wicketkeeper in the world'

MS Dhoni's ability with the gloves trumps any concerns about his up-and-down batting form, according to India's selectors, who have declared the veteran the 'best wicketkeeper in the world'.



### Bouchard claims win over Sharapova

Eugenie Bouchard pulled off her first win over Maria Sharapova with a 7-5 2-6 6-4 triumph in the Madrid Open in a thrilling contest full of tension after the Canadian had called the Russian a cheater following her doping ban.



### Froome in 'hit and run' incident

Reigning Tour de France champion Chris Froome said he had been deliberately knocked off his bicycle by a hit-and-run driver while training in southern France.



### Leganes thrash Real Betis

Tiny Leganes moved to the brink of safety in their first season in La Liga by thrashing Real Betis 4-0 helped by a sensational goal from 50 metres by Brazilian Gabriel Pires.



### Infantino says will meet Muntari

FIFA president Gianni Infantino said he intends to talk with Pescara midfielder Sulley Muntari, the victim of racist abuse in Italian football, and vowed to fight racist "idiots".



## 'Players scared to criticise Sharapova'

AFP, Madrid

Eugenie Bouchard claimed plenty of other players on the WTA Tour share her outspoken views on Maria Sharapova's return from an 15-month doping ban, but are too "scared" to speak out.

Bouchard beat Sharapova for the first time in five meetings in the second round of the Madrid Open on Monday 7-5, 2-6, 6-4 a week after labelling the Russian "a cheater".

The Canadian also claimed Sharapova should have been banned for life after testing positive for Meldonium at the 2015 Australian Open rather than welcomed back with a series of wildcards for big events.

"I definitely had some extra motivation going into today," said Bouchard. "I was actually quite inspired before the match because I had a lot of players coming up to me privately wishing me good luck.

"Players I don't normally speak to, getting a lot of texts from people in the tennis world that were just rooting for me."

## WALTON FEDERATION CUP

# MSC, Abahani in tough groups

SPORTS REPORTER



Mohammedan Sporting Club have been drawn in the group of death of the Walton Federation Cup as they found last edition's runners-up Arambagh KS and Independence Cup champions Chittagong Abahani as the other group matches when the draw for the 12-team event was held at the Bangladesh Football Federation headquarters yesterday.

The Black and Whites, who have not featured in the Federation Cup final since 2009, have formed a better squad compared to the last few seasons with the inclusion of experienced players. However, it seems like it will be a tough challenge for them in the season's curtain raiser as two out of three teams from a group will advance to the quarterfinal stage.

Defending champions Abahani have also been handed a comparatively strong draw as they were placed alongside giant-killers Muktijoddha

Sangsad and newcomers Saif Sporting Club. Abahani, however, are expected to cross the group stage hurdle as they are in good rhythm, having been in action for the last two months and, especially after beating Bengaluru FC in the AFC Cup match a week ago.

Group B comprises Sheikh Jamal DC, Sheikh Russel KC and Farashgaj SC while Brothers Union, Rahmatganj MFS and Team BJMC have been drawn in Group D.

The tournament, which is a traditional curtain raiser for domestic football, is scheduled to kick off on Saturday even though there are concerns whether the tournament will get underway in time as seven clubs – Mohammedan, Sheikh Jamal, Sheikh Russel, Brothers, Arambagh, Muktijoddha Sangsad and Saif SC -- demanded the game's governing body clear their dues.

"I don't know about their demands but the transaction has always been between the federation and the clubs and it is a continuous process. I don't think it will hamper the tournament," Professional football league committee

chairman Abdus Salam Murshedy said yesterday. "However, we will sit with the clubs to discuss about the demands and we will try to clear their dues."

Defending champions Abahani are likely to play their first match on the opening day before heading to Maldives to play their away match of the AFC Cup against Mazzyia S&RC on May 17. Abahani will also host Muhan Bagan in their last match of the AFC Cup on May 31 in Dhaka.

"The tournament will not be halted due to Abahani's participation in the AFC Cup as we have designed the fixture in a way to avoid clash of international and local fixtures," said BFF's competition manager Jaber Bin Ansari adding that the final is likely to take place on June 4.

**GROUP A:** Abahani, Muktijoddha Sangsad KC and Saif Sporting Club  
**GROUP B:** Sheikh Jamal DC, Sheikh Russel KC and Farashganj SC  
**GROUP C:** Chittagong Abahani, Arambagh KS and Mohammedan SC  
**GROUP D:** Brothers Union, Rahmatganj MFS and Team BJMC

## One 'little step' from title

AFP, London



Chelsea manager Antonio Conte said his side were "another little step" from the Premier League title after they crushed Middlesbrough 3-0 to move to within touching distance of glory.

Tottenham Hotspur's surprise defeat at West Ham United last week handed Chelsea the initiative and they can now seal a second title triumph in three years if they win at West Bromwich Albion on Friday.

"We're very close. We must be honest. But we need to do another little step and win another game," Conte told reporters after Monday's match, which condemned Middlesbrough to relegation.

"For sure now I'm a bit relaxed. This step was big for us, a big win.

"Now we need to do another step. We have the possibility to do this on Friday against West Brom.

"For sure it won't be easy, because West Brom is a really good team, a physical team, and we must pay great attention.

"We are very close, but we need another step to become champions of the Premier League, which would be a fantastic achievement for us."

While victory at West Brom will deliver the title, Chelsea also have home games against Watford and Sunderland in which to snare the three points they need to make it across the finish line.

Cesc Fabregas was Chelsea's match-winner, inventively creating goals for Diego Costa and Nemanja Matic either side of half-time at a festive Stamford Bridge.

Marcos Alonso also found the net in the

first half.

Fabregas began the season on the bench after new signing N'Golo Kante took his place, but he has played an increasingly prominent role in recent weeks.

"Cesc is one of the best examples of our season," Conte said.

"Because in this season, Cesc at the start didn't play a lot. And then through hard work, he improved a lot. And then he's playing in every game.

"This development of Cesc is our development, because we started the season with a lot of problems. But through hard work, together we found the right way.

"Cesc is showing (himself) to be a fantastic player and I'm pleased for him. Because I saw in this season that he put himself in this team in every moment, if he played or didn't play. Now he's deserving this."

Needing victory to stand a realistic chance of preserving their top-flight status, Boro succumbed to a defeat that sent them into the Championship alongside northeast rivals Sunderland.

Conte made a point of saluting Boro's travelling fans after the game.

"It's great to see a team that got relegated and to see the fans clapping the players and the players staying there to receive the applause and to clap the fans," said the Italian.

"It's important to celebrate your win, but also to have great respect and clap this type of situation.

"Because I think this situation happens only in England. In Italy it's very, very difficult to see a team getting relegated and the players receive (applause)."

Boro manager Steve Agnew said his dressing room was "devastated".

# 'Real won't be intimidated'

AFP, Madrid



Real Madrid captain Sergio Ramos insists the European champions will not be covered by an intimidating atmosphere as they visit Atletico Madrid's Vicente Calderon for the final time on Wednesday.

Los Blancos are looking to seal their place in the Champions League final once more and enjoy a commanding 3-0 first leg lead.

And Ramos hit back at the simplification of the rivalry between the two Madrid giants as Real's riches against Atletico's hard work.

"It seems like here we have grown up in Beverly Hills," said Ramos on Tuesday.

"Here there are people from humble backgrounds too.

"The sacrifice is what fills you with desire to win."

An already intense rivalry has reached new levels in recent seasons as under Diego Simeone Atletico's status and ability to challenge Real has grown.

However, the red and white side of Madrid has consistently fallen short against Real in the Champions League.

Unless they pull off a remarkable comeback, Atletico will bow out of European competition against their fiercest rivals for the fourth consecutive season.

"We know playing at home is always a plus for us," said Atletico midfielder Saul Niguez.

"We have to give everything and make sure the fans go home proud of their players whether we go through or not."

However, the size of Atletico's task is illustrated by the fact that Real have scored in all of their last 60 games stretching back over a year.

"We can't go crazy," added Saul. "We know it is very difficult, but we need to go step-by-step, we need to keep a clean sheet.

"If they score the tie is even more difficult, but a goal in the first-half would give us a lot of strength and could make them nervous."

Even by their standards Real are on the verge of completing the most glorious season in the club's decorated history.

Zinedine Zidane's men are three games away from a first league title in five years and, should they complete a La Liga and Champions League double, it will be Real's first since 1957/58.

Moreover, they could become the first side in the Champions League era to retain the trophy.

And Ramos insisted he is relishing a challenging end to the campaign rather than wilting under the pressure.

"There is no feeling of vertigo. The contrary, it is in our own hands," added the Spanish international.

"The good part of the season is

coming, there are two weeks left and we'll see what happens in the end.

"I would settle to be in this position every year."

Despite his stellar record since taking charge of Real 17 months ago, Zidane has been evasive over his future in recent weeks.

However, the Frenchman believes even if Real ended up missing out on both La Liga and the Champions League, it would be unfair to categorise their season as a failure.

"After eight or nine months the players have worked with incredible professionalism, but we have to keep showing that every three days.

"Until now we have done well, but we have to show it again tomorrow and on Sunday.

"An injustice or a failure is not giving your all, and we are giving everything we have."

Zidane is expected to resort back to the side that started the first leg after making nine changes for Saturday's 4-0 win at Granada bar the introduction of Nacho for the injured Dani Carvajal at right-back.

Gareth Bale remains sidelined with a calf injury.

Atletico's injury crisis at right-back is expected to be resolved by the return of Juanfran after three weeks out.

Otherwise, Simeone is also expected to name the same side that started the first leg.

## Dutch appoint Advocaat

AFP, Zeist



Dick Advocaat has been named coach of The Netherlands for a third time aiming to kick them into shape fast and save their World Cup hopes, with Ruud Gullit as assistant.

Advocaat, 69, and Dutch legend Gullit have signed contracts until the end of the year, the football federation said on Tuesday, admitting it was "a short-term" rescue mission.

Disciplinarian Advocaat returns for a third stint in charge, taking over from Danny Blind, who was sacked in March after the Dutch were beaten 2-0 by Bulgaria.

The shock defeat left the once-proud Dutch clinging to only the slimmest of hopes of reaching the World Cup finals in Russia next year.

Advocaat, currently at Turkish club Fenerbahce, will also be joined on the coaching staff by Fred Grim, who temporarily took over following Blind's sacking.

Hans van Breukelen, the Dutch federation's (KNVB) technical director, told reporters at an at-times heated press conference that the KNVB had wrestled with "two scenarios".

"Either we decided to go with a long-term solution or we did everything we could to qualify for the 2018 World Cup.

"We decided to go for the second option and therefore we needed an experienced trainer, someone with authority."

Advocaat and Gullit will get extended contracts if the Dutch pull off a miracle and qualify for the World Cup.

## NATIONAL HOCKEY Goalfest continues

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Police, BKSP, Comilla and Joypurhat got off to fine starts in the ATN Bangla National Hockey Championship as they notched up massive wins at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Bangladesh Police inflicted a crushing 15-1 defeat on Shariatpur, courtesy of a four-goal strike from Mahfizur Rahman while BKSP handed an emphatic 12-0 defeat to Chittagong Division riding on Sohanur Rahman's five goals, which included a hat-trick.

In the day's other matches, Asibul Alam slammed four goals, including a hat-trick, to power Comilla to an easy 12-0 win over Feni while Joypurhat beat Natore 5-2.

MARCEL-BSJC MEDIA CUP

## Last eight decided

SPORTS REPORTER

SA TV, Boishakhi TV, BTV and Channel I moved into the quarterfinals of the Marcel-BSJC Media Cup football tournament after winning their respective matches at the Shaheed Captain M Mansur Ali Handball Stadium yesterday.

SA TV beat Jamuna TV 3-0, Boishakhi TV beat The Daily Star 4-1, Channel I beat bdnews24.com 1-0 and BTV beat Risingbd.com 2-0.

## Bolt wants Sanchez to join United

AGENCIES, London

Alexis Sanchez has been urged by Usain Bolt to turn his back on Arsenal and cross the Premier League divide to join Manchester United.

Manchester City have been credited with holding an interest, but eight-time Olympic gold medal winner Bolt believes Sanchez would be a perfect addition for Jose Mourinho at Old Trafford.

One of United's most famous supporters told Fox Sports: "I know Alexis. He plays for Arsenal. He should leave.

"He would be great [at United]. He's a player who I've always said [we need] over the years. We need someone who is capable of picking up the ball and creating chances for other people"



Chelsea manager Antonio Conte is ecstatic after his team scored the second goal against Middlesbrough during their Premier League encounter at Stamford Bridge on Monday.

PHOTO: AFP