

What to WATCH

GTV & MAASRANGA
Bangladesh Premier League
 Khulna Titans v Sylhet Sixers
 Live from 1:00pm
 Dhaka Dynamites v Ctg Vikings
 Live from 6:00pm

SONY ESPN
ATP Finals
 Busta v Thiem
 Live from 2:00am (Thursday)

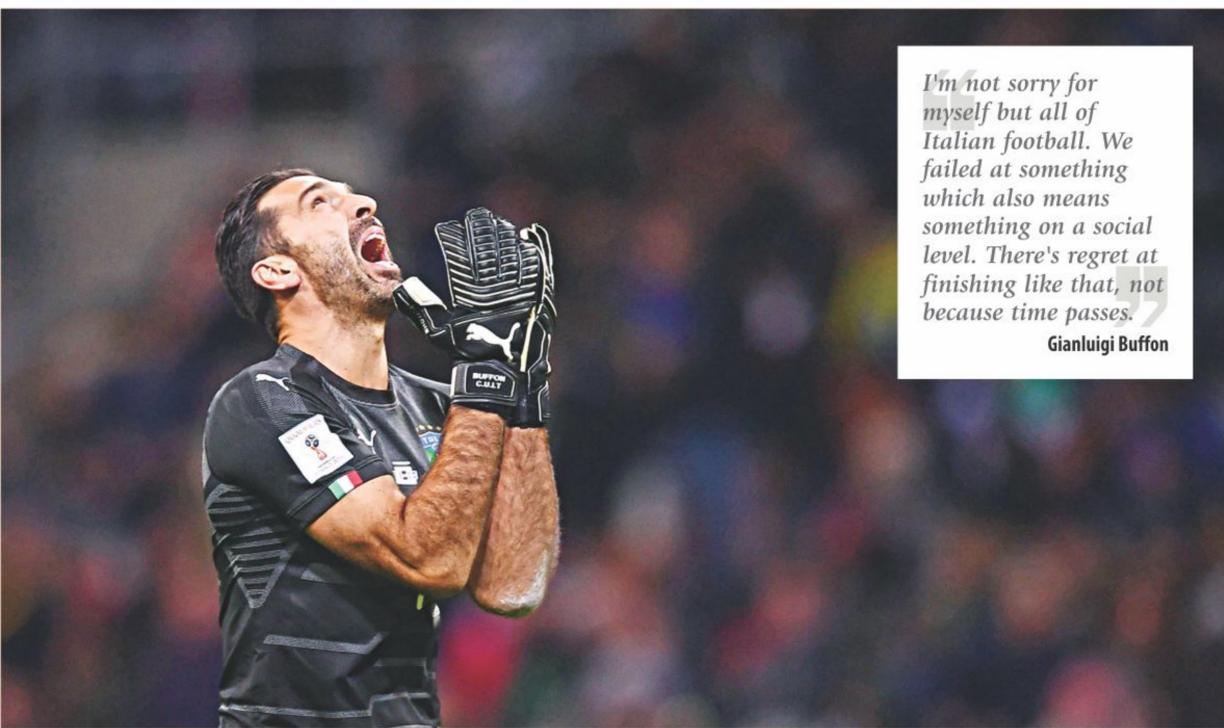
DAY'S EVENT

Bangladesh Premier League
 Khulna Titans v Sylhet Sixers
 Time: 1:00pm

Dhaka Dynamites v Ctg Vikings
 Time: 6:00pm
 Venue: SBNS, Dhaka

Bangladesh Premier League
 Sk Russel v Muktiyoddha
 Time: 4:30pm

Rahmatganj v Arambagh
 Time: 6:45pm
 Venue: BNS, Dhaka



I'm not sorry for myself but all of Italian football. We failed at something which also means something on a social level. There's regret at finishing like that, not because time passes.

Gianluigi Buffon

Gianluigi Buffon, one of the greatest shot-stoppers of all time, ended his international career in tears as Italy missed a spot in next year's World Cup following a 1-0 aggregate defeat against Sweden in their qualifying play-off in Milan on Monday night.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Buffon bows out in tears

De Rossi, Barzagli join him in retirement

AFP, Milan



It was a tearful farewell for Italy legend Gianluigi Buffon, who had dreamed of bowing out with another record in a stellar career -- a sixth World Cup finals appearance.

Instead, his career finished with a humiliating World Cup playoff exit against Sweden at Milan's San Siro stadium, as Italy missed out on the finals for the first time in 60 years.

The 39-year-old had solidly represented the Azzurri for the past 20 years, earning a record 175 caps, but this time not even he could lift a second-rate Italy side. The Azzurri drew 0-0 on Monday to lose 1-0 on aggregate, ending Buffon's international career.

He follows another legendary Italy goalkeeper, Dino Zoff, who also departed the international scene after a defeat to Sweden.

"I'm not sorry for myself but all of Italian football," Buffon told Italian broadcaster Rai. "We failed at something which also means something on a social level. There's regret at finishing like that, not because time passes."

The defeat represents the end of a generation with Andrea Barzagli, 36, and 34-year-old midfielder Daniele de Rossi, who also lifted the 2006 World Cup, also retiring from internationals, along with Buffon's Juventus team-mate Giorgio Chiellini.

"My Barzagli, my de Rossi, my Chiellini... they will leave as well, I think Bonucci will continue. I say thanks to everyone, I don't want to steal the spotlight," said Buffon.

De Rossi moved past Andrea Pirlo into fourth place on Italy's appearance list.

"It's a dark moment, very dark for those of us who were part of this two-year era," De Rossi told RAI. "I've been wandering around Coverciano [the training ground] and over the world with this shirt for over a decade, so to take it off for the last time is a strange feeling."

Barzagli, 36, said it was an "end of an era".

"In football terms, it's the biggest disappointment of my life," he said. "The Italy side gives you unique sensations. It gives you goosebumps, creates friendships between all the Italy fans, they are finally united. It's a real shame to end like this."



Italy veteran Danielle de Rossi, who also called time on his career yesterday, pleads with a member of the coaching staff to bring on more attacking options during their World Cup play-off second leg against Sweden at San Siro yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Apocalypse, Tragedy, Catastrophe

AGENCIES, Milan



"Italy, this is the apocalypse," was the headline in Italy's leading sports paper La Gazzetta dello Sport on Tuesday morning, perhaps an understandable reaction for a nation whose passion for football is so great that the same publication concluded that "a love so great must be reserved for other things [than the World Cup]".

Stunned Italians awoke Tuesday to the nightmarish realisation they will miss out on the World Cup finals for the first time in 60 years. Distraught fans of the one-time top dogs of the

global game reacted with shock and disbelief.

For many the defeat reflected a profound malaise in Italian football with the 2006 World Cup triumph having been followed by group stage exits from the last two World Cups.

La Gazzetta blamed "opportunities missed". The paper's editorial read: "We will not be with you and you will not be with us. Italy will not participate at the World Cup. There will be inevitable consequences."

Inevitably that will mean the departure of widely criticised head coach Gian Piero Ventura.

La Gazzetta were in no doubt: "Ventura, now it's over," identifying Carlo Ancelotti as one potential successor. The Italian is currently out of

work after leaving Bayern Munich. "Whoever comes in will have to rebuild from rubble and work towards Euro 2020," read the article. "The most fancied name is Ancelotti but there is the possibility [Chelsea manager Antonio] Conte will return, as he is a bit tired of England."

"Very welcome alternatives would be [Roberto] Mancini and [Massimiliano] Allegri, if they can leave their respective roles at Zenit St Petersburg and Juventus."

The front page of the other major sports daily, Corriere dello Sport, read simply: "Italy out of the World Cup", stating how painful it will be for the country to be on the sidelines when the finals are under way in Russia next June.

"In only a few months' time we will be watching the World Cup for everyone else: for the first time in 60 years we will be on the outside," the newspaper commented in an editorial piece. "It is an intolerable football shame, an indelible stain."

The online headline in the Italian broadsheet La Repubblica read simply: "Goodbye Russia", while Turin's La Stampa proclaimed: "Disaster for Italy, we won't be going to the World Cup."

Il Tempo went for a very grim front page, with pictures of Italian footballers and Ventura surrounding a man digging a grave for them, with the headline reading: "Get to work".



20 YEARS OF ITALY'S NO. 1

Buffon has the most appearances for Italy with 175, ahead of Fabio Cannavaro in second and Paulo Maldini in third. Daniele De Rossi, who also retired yesterday, is fourth with 117. Buffon is the most-capped European player of all time.

Buffon is tied for the fewest goals conceded in a World Cup tournament.

He was beaten just twice in 2006. Frenchman Fabien Barthez (1998) and Spain's Iker Casillas (2010) are the others who conceded only 2.

Buffon is one of three players to have played five World Cups. He played in every edition since 1998. The others are Mexico's Antonio Carbajal and Germany's Lothar Matthaeus.

TROPHY CABINET

- 2006 FIFA World Cup Winner
- Euros - 2x Runner-up (2000, 2012)

Sk Jamal end MSC's run

Sports Reporter

Having survived multiple scares from the opposition, Sheikh Jamal DC notched a 3-0 win over Mohammedan SC in their crucial Bangladesh Premier League encounter at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Solomon King, Raphael Odoyin and Zahed Parvez scored one goal apiece in the one-sided affair, which helped Sheikh Jamal maintain their position on the table at second with 27 points from 12 matches. The three-time champions are now just two points behind leaders Chittagong Abahani while Mohammedan remained at fifth position on 17.

Mohammedan came into the match on the back of a six-match unbeaten streak, including three consecutive wins, and the Black and Whites showed signs of extending that record especially with the way they dominated the first half-hour. Nevertheless they failed to find the target before eventually conceding the lead, against the run of play, six minutes from half-time.

During a counter-attack, the Mohammedan backline was exposed when goalkeeper Rasel Mahmud Liton and defender Asaduzzaman Bablo made the mistake of trying to control the ball mid-air but Sheikh Jamal's Raphael scrapped the opportunity in the 30th minute as he headed the ball wide of the open net.

Sheikh Jamal broke the deadlock in the 39th minute by exploiting the lacklustre Mohammedan defence. Javed Khan drove a low shot to the far post from inside the box which was parried by goalkeeper Liton but the unmarked Solomon followed through with a tap in to the near post.

After the break, Sheikh Jamal looked more confident as they dominated the midfield to add the other two goals within three minutes. In the 49th minute, Liton did well to tip a curling free-kick effort from Zahed Parvez but could not prevent the glancing header off Raphael from a Zahed corner that followed. Zahed closed out the scoring in the 52nd minute when he made the margin 3-0 with a diving header after

connecting to a low cutback from Solomon.

Mohammedan coach Rashed Pappu then brought on new-signing Augustin Walson in place of Kingsley and sent on another midfielder in Monir to reduce the damage. However, the pair were unable to pose any kind of threat save one move from Walson, where he rattled the crossbar in the 80th minute, and so the team's unbeaten run came to an end at the hands of Sheikh Jamal, who previously beat Mohammedan 2-0 in the first-leg as well.

Meanwhile in the day's second match,

Afusi leaves!

SPORTS REPORTER

Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club coach Joseph Afusi has allegedly left the club without informing the club authorities on Tuesday.

"He (Afusi) was supposed to brief the team at 11:30am [Tuesday], but he was absent despite the fact that he had been present during Monday's training session. We have learnt from his flat's caretaker that he left for London this morning," the club's football committee chairman Ashrafuddin Ahmed Chunnun said last night.

"We didn't have any issues with him because he had taken this inexperienced team to this stage [second in league table]. We even gave him advance salary," Chunnun said, adding that they may take legal action against the Nigerian.

Afusi, however, claimed through social media that he has resigned from his position and that he has already sent his resignation letter through an e-mail.

Brothers Union salvaged a 1-1 draw with Team BJMC. Brothers forward Siyo Zunapio cancelled out a 41st minute strike from Al Mamun in the 77th minute with a header. Both BJMC and Brothers remain in their previous positions at seventh and eleventh

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