

What to WATCH

SONY SIX
Australia v England
3rd Test, Day-4
Live from 8:30am
STAR SPORTS 1
India v Sri Lanka
3rd ODI
Live from 2:00pm

SONY ESPN
T10 League
First Semifinal
Live from 7:30pm
Second Semifinal
Live from 9:30pm
Final
Live from 11:30pm

STAR SPORTS SELECT 1
English Premier League
West Brom v Man United
Live from 8:15pm
Bournemouth v Liverpool
Live from 10:30pm
STAR SPORTS SELECT 2
Bundesliga

Hannover v Leverkusen
Live from 8:30pm
Leipzig v Hertha Berlin
Live from 11:00pm
TEN 1
Serie A
Hellas Verona v AC Milan
Live from 5:30pm

Bologna v Juventus
Live from 8:00pm
Benevento v SPAL
Live from 11:00pm
Atalanta v Lazio
Live from 1:45am (Monday)
TEN 2
La Liga

Girona v Getafe
Live from 5:00pm
Celta Vigo v Villarreal
Live from 9:15pm
Las Palmas v Espanyol
Live from 11:30pm
Barcelona v Deportivo
Live from 1:45am (Monday)

DAY'S EVENT

Bangladesh Premier League
Sheikh Russel v Farashganj
Time: 4:30pm

Team BJMC v Mohammedan
Time: 6:45pm
Venue: BNS, Dhaka

SAFF U-15 Women's Championship
India v Bhutan
Time: 11:30am

Bangladesh v Nepal
Time: 2:30pm
Venue: BSMMS, Dhaka



Real Madrid talisman Cristiano Ronaldo (C) lifts the Club World Cup trophy after defeating Gremio in the final at the Zayed Sports City Stadium in Abu Dhabi yesterday.

Ronaldo retains title for Real

AFP, Abu Dhabi

Cristiano Ronaldo's second-half free-kick ensured Real Madrid picked up a fifth trophy of 2017 by beating Gremio 1-0 in Abu Dhabi on Saturday to retain the Club World Cup.

A third Club World Cup in four years brings Madrid level with rivals Barcelona as the most successful side in the competition's history and adds to the La Liga, Champions League, UEFA Super Cup and Spanish Super Cup titles already won by Zinedine Zidane's men this year.

Ronaldo was once again Real's man for the big occasion as his strike went through the Gremio wall eight minutes after the break to ensure the European club champions were also crowned world champions for a fifth straight year.

Gareth Bale was left on the bench despite scoring with his first touch as a substitute against Al Jazira on Wednesday to book Madrid's place in the final, as Zinedine Zidane kept faith with the same side that started Real's Champions League final triumph over Juventus back in June.

Gremio booked their ticket to Abu Dhabi by winning the Copa Libertadores for the third time last month and Madrid knew they weren't in for a comfortable evening just two minutes in when Gremio captain

Pedro Geromel raked his studs down the back of Ronaldo's calf without any punishment from Mexican referee Cesar Ramos.

Madrid dominated possession but, unlike in their profligate semi-final performance, found clear-cut chances hard to come by against the well-organised Gremio defence.

Luka Modric came closest to breaking the deadlock in the first half with a left-footed shot from the edge of the box that flew inches wide of the far post.

Ronaldo also hammered a long-range free-kick that dipped onto the roof of the net, whilst Edilson gave Keylor Navas a similar scare at the other end with a free-kick from range.

Gremio pleaded for the referee to consult with the video assistant referee (VAR) when Sergio Ramos clipped Ramiro inside the area early in the second period.

However, those claims fell on deaf ears and Madrid instantly broke up the other end to open the scoring.

Ronaldo was tripped 25 yards from goal and the world player of the year's resulting free-kick sneaked through a gap in the Gremio wall to skip into the bottom corner.

The Brazilians failed to register a single shot on target as Madrid comfortably held out to seal their most successful ever year with a fifth trophy.

FIFA threatens Spain

AFP, Madrid

The governing body of world football (FIFA) confirmed on Friday that it has written to the Spanish federation (RFEF) warning they could be suspended from the 2018 World Cup because of political interference.

Earlier in the day Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy said Spain had received "no such letter from FIFA."

The issue centres on the RFEF presidency. Angel Maria Villar, who was also a senior FIFA and UEFA official, resigned after being arrested in July on suspicion of embezzling funds. Villar was replaced, on an interim basis, by Juan Luis Larrea, another long-time football administrator.

Even though he is only a stand-in, Larrea has made clear he wants to see out Villar's term, which was due to end in 2020. The Spanish National Sports Agency (CSD) has objected and that prompted FIFA's warning, reported on Friday by the daily El Pais.

"We can confirm that FIFA recently sent a letter to the Spanish FA (RFEF) expressing its concern at the current situation in the association and reiterating that, under the FIFA Statutes, all member associations must manage their affairs independently and ensure that there is no interference by third

parties in internal matters," said a FIFA statement.

"FIFA is in contact with the RFEF, and a joint FIFA-UEFA delegation will be sent to Madrid shortly to monitor and assess the situation in the association," the statement continued.

The RFEF and the Spanish government insisted on Friday that Spain would go to the World Cup in Russia.

"I just can't see that scenario," Rajoy said at a press conference in Brussels. "I am absolutely convinced Spain will go to the World Cup, and will win."

Rajoy said Spain's sports minister had told him the Spanish authorities had "received no official communication from FIFA but only a letter from a member of FIFA requesting a meeting." He said his government's attitude was "exemplary."

Villar was re-elected for an eighth term as president last May. He had run the RFEF for 29 years until his arrest on suspicion of creating a network of corruption in Spanish football.

Last month, Luis Rubiales, the former head of the players' union and an ally of Villar's put forward a motion of censure against Larrea with the objective of becoming president himself. That motion is scheduled for a vote on January 16.

UEFA set to punish Milan

AFP, Lausanne

AC Milan face penalties from UEFA after European football's governing body said on Friday it had failed to strike a deal with the Italian club over its spending.

Seven-time European champions Milan have run up losses of 255 million euros (\$300 million) in the last three seasons, way above the 30 million euros permitted by the rules that are designed to stop clubs from over-spending.

"After careful examination of all the documentation and explanations provided, the Chamber decided not to conclude a voluntary agreement with AC Milan," a UEFA statement said.

UEFA said: "There are still uncertainties in relation to the refinancing of the loans to be paid back in October 2018 and the financial guarantees provided by the main shareholder."

Consolation for Women's A team

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh women's A team ended their tour of India with a consolatory 39 run win against India women's A team at the KSCA stadium in Belgaum yesterday to conclude their three-match T20 series 2-1 in favour of the hosts.

Earlier, the visitors lost all three matches of the ODI series against the neighbouring nation before losing the first T20 fixture by eight wickets and the second by 40 runs.

India ended their chase on 73 for 8 in 20 overs after Bangladesh posted 112 for 7.

Bangladesh's Rumana Ahmed top scored for the side with 46 off 45 balls which included four boundaries and a six while captain Salma Khatun, the second highest scorer, provided a 17-ball 21 to help the post a fighting total after the visitors elected to bat.

India's skipper Anuja Patil and T P Kanwer were the pick of the bowlers for the home team as they bagged two wickets each.

In reply, the hosts faced some tight bowling from Bangladesh, with left-arm spinner Nahida Akter giving away just 14 runs for two wickets from her four overs while Rumana and Sheila Sharmin scalped one each to eventually register the comfortable win.

City make it sweet 16

AFP, London



Manchester City racked up a 16th consecutive Premier League win as the runaway leaders routed Tottenham 4-1, while Mesut Ozil's stunning strike fired Arsenal to a 1-0 success against Newcastle on Saturday.

Ilkay Gundogan opened the scoring at Eastlands before Kevin De Bruyne and Raheem Sterling netted after the interval to ensure City opened up a 14-point lead over second placed Manchester United, who face West Bromwich Albion on Sunday.

Having set the Premier League record for successive wins in their midweek triumph at Swansea, Pep Guardiola's side now have their manager's personal bests in their sights.

City's 16-match winning run in the league equals Guardiola's second longest streak as a boss -- with Barcelona in 2010-11 -- and moves them within three of his career-high 19 successive victories with Bayern Munich in 2013-14.

With the title race turning into a lengthy coronation for City, it would

be easy for the leaders to take their eye off the ball, but they were always in control against a Tottenham team who once again flopped in an away game against top-six opponents.

Germany midfielder Gundogan put City in front in the 14th minute with a stooping header from Leroy Sane's cross.

De Bruyne made it two with a blistering finish from Gundogan's pass in the 70th minute.

Gabriel Jesus squandered a chance to make it three when the City forward hit the post with a penalty awarded for Jan Vertonghen's foul on De Bruyne.

But Sterling scored with an 80th minute tap-in and then punished a mistake by Tottenham's Eric Dier to claim his 15th goal of the season.

Christian Eriksen's stoppage-time goal for Tottenham couldn't take the gloss off another City masterclass.

At Stamford Bridge, Chelsea beat Southampton 1-0 to stay 14 points behind City and draw level on points with United.

After a tame opening from the champions, Antonio Conte's side finally opened the scoring in first-half stoppage-time.

Marcos Alonso provided the break-

through, the Spanish wing-back curling a free-kick past flat-footed Southampton goalkeeper Fraser Forster from 35 yards.

Chelsea have won eight of their last 10 league matches, but City remain out of reach.

"When you do not score the second goal, you have to suffer. You are afraid of every corner and free-kick," Conte said.

"We dominated the game, shooting 24 times, but we needed to score the second to be relaxed."

At the Emirates Stadium, Arsenal won for the first time in four league games to boost their bid to qualify for the Champions League via a top-four finish.

Heavily linked with a move to United when his contract expires at the end of the season, Ozil showcased his talents for any interested clubs when he put Arsenal ahead in the 23rd minute.

After an Alexis Sanchez shot deflected into Ozil's path, the German midfielder smashed a superb volley past Newcastle goalkeeper Rob Elliot from the edge of the area for his third goal of the season.

Newcastle's eighth defeat in their last nine league games leaves Rafael Benitez's side mired in relegation trouble.



Paris Saint-Germain superstar Neymar (Top) celebrates one of his two goals with teammate Kylian Mbappe during their League One match against Rennes at the Roazhon Park yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Mesmerising Neymar

REUTERS, Paris

Neymar scored two goals and set up two more as Paris St Germain extended their Ligue 1 lead to nine points with a 4-1 away demolition of Stade Rennais on Saturday.

Neymar struck both sides of the interval and assisted Kylian Mbappe and Edinson Cavani to score, putting PSG on 47 points from 18 games after second-placed Monaco hammered St Etienne 4-0 on Friday at Geoffroy Guichard.

Rennes, who finished with 10 men after Benjamin Andre was sent off in the 63rd minute, replied through Firmin Mubele and stayed sixth on 25 points.

Brazil forward Neymar quickly found the

back of the net at Roazhon Park as he tapped in from Mbappe's cross after only four minutes.

He returned the favour in the 17th minute by setting up Mbappe in the box, the French international doubling the tally from close range.

Eight minutes into the second half, Rennes reduced the arrears when Mubele finished it off after Morgan Amalfitano's strike had struck the post.

But the home side were heavily penalised when Andre picked up a second yellow card. In the 75th minute, Uruguayan striker Cavani collected Neymar's through ball before beating Tomas Koubek to score his 18th league goal in as many games.

Neymar rounded it off one minute later by latching on to Mbappe's cross.



The Bangladesh Women's A team take a group photo at the KSCA Stadium in Belgaum after their tour of India came ended with a consolatory win in the final fixture of a three-match T20 series yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Fringe players can leave

AFP, Manchester



Manchester United in the January transfer window, which will spark speculation over the futures of the likes of Henrikh Mkhitaryan.

Mourinho adopted the same policy in the last winter transfer window when he agreed to requests from Morgan Schneiderlin and Memphis Depay to leave the club to pursue

regular first-team football elsewhere.

Now Mkhitaryan and teammates including former England full-back Luke Shaw and Matteo Darmian, who have been out of the first-team squad for long periods this season, would be allowed to leave should they wish -- and should satisfactory offers be made.

"I think for the right price," said Mourinho, when asked if he would listen to offers in such circumstances.

"That's my approach as a manager, in cases where the club advises me. I think every player has a price.

"If a player is not happy, if a player

brings with him the request with the number that we consider a good number for us -- like it happened for us last season with Memphis and Morgan -- I would never say no."

The case of Mkhitaryan has been curious after the Armenian midfielder put in a strong second half to last season and appeared a key player in Mourinho's side. But his form has progressively dipped this season and he has not started for Mourinho since United's defeat at Chelsea at the start of November, finding it increasingly difficult to land a place even on the bench.