

**CHANNEL 9 & DSPORT**  
Nidahas Trophy  
Bangladesh v India  
Live from 7:30pm

**SONY ESPN**  
UEFA Europa League  
AC Milan v Arsenal  
Live from 12:00am (Friday)  
Marseille v Athletic Bilbao

Live from 2:00am (Friday)  
**TEN 1**  
UEFA Europa League  
Atletico Madrid v CSKA Moscow  
Live from 12:00AM (Friday)

**TEN 2**  
UEFA Europa League  
Dortmund v RB Salzburg  
Live from 12:00am (Friday)

**DAY'S EVENT**

**Dhaka Premier League**  
Time: 9:00am  
Sheikh Jamal v Shinepukur  
Venue: SBNS

Legends of Rupganj v Khelaghar SKS  
Venue: BKSP-3  
Brothers Union v Kalabagan KC  
Venue: KSOAS



Abahani goalkeeper Shahidul Alam (L) lays prostate on the ground while defender Alison Udoka pulls the ball out of his own net (R) as New Radiant players celebrate the only goal in their AFC Cup win at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## Titu laments missed chances

SPORTS REPORTER



Abahani coach Saiful Bari Titu lamented his forwards' failure to capitalise on the scoring opportunities following a narrow defeat against New Radiant SC of Maldives in their opening AFC Cup fixture yesterday.

Nigerian striker Sunday Chizoba, who scored nine goals to help Abahani retain the professional league title, squandered two good opportunities while his compatriot Emeka Darlington's effort was ruled out due to off-side.

"We had a strong willingness to do well in this match and to come out of the losing streak against Maldivian sides, but you know the desire will not come true unless you score. We could not score despite creating a few scoring chances," Titu said. "Sunday should have finished the chance that he created in the first half and his sec-

ond chance was also not capitalised even though our plan of midfield-pressing was working nicely.

"I am really disappointed with the outcome. We have to come out of the losing streak at international level because no one likes this situation," said Titu, who believed Abahani's chances of a comeback after conceding the lead ended when Sunday was sent off in the second half.

New Radiant SC coach Oscar Bruzon admitted that they had a tough game, but he is happy to return home with three points.

"We had a tough time in the first 20 minutes as the opponents were very physical but then we built up and controlled the game. The second half was the same picture again, but we established our control yet again. The last 30 minutes were very tough for Abahani after a red card was shown to one of their players. We are happy to take full three points because they are tough opponents," said Oscar.

## Abahani's losing start

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh Premier League champions Abahani's bid to get rid of the losing streak against Maldivian opponents was extended as they suffered a single-goal defeat in their AFC Cup Group E opener against New Radiant SC at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Striker Ali Fasir scored the all-important goal in the 58th minute with a classic angular shot from inside the box to decide the outcome, extending Bangladesh's winless streak against Maldivian opponents - both for national team and club sides, which dates back to 2011.

The six-time Bangladesh Premier League champions started the game brightly with some crisp passing and created the first scoring chance of the match. The hosts even found the back of the net three times, but two of those efforts were ruled out due to off-side while the other due to a foul on New

Radiant goalkeeper Imran.

The match could have been different had Sunday Chizoba cashed in on his solo effort in the 23rd minute. The Nigerian broke the off-side trap to race into the danger box from the midfield with the goalkeeper to beat, but the prolific striker blasted the ball over the goalkeeper to frustrate the Abahani supporters.

Abahani survived two scares within two minutes as left-back Saad Uddin made a goalline clearance before goalkeeper Shahidul Alam Sohel came out to deny Fasir.

Following a corner-kick, Sunday's miscued attempt fell on unmarked defender Alison Udoka, who tapped in but the off-side flag was raised.

Abahani controlled the match for the first 15 of the second half, with Sunday coming close to breaking the deadlock but his glancing header off a Rubel Mia cross went over the crossbar in the 49th minute.

All those missed chances came back to haunt the hosts as the visitors took the lead in the 58th minute when Mohamed Umair's long ball

from the midfield found Fasir, who brilliantly drove an angular left-footer from outside the six-yard box after shrugging off his marker Nasir Chowdhury.

Emeka Darlington had the ball in the back of the opposition net three minutes later, but once again the linesman's flag was raised. The hosts got a huge blow when Sunday was booked for the second time in the 65th minute.

Rubel worked hard on the right flank to expose the opposition defence, but his efforts went in vain while New Radiant, too, were denied twice. Once Udoka made a goalline save in the 70th minute while Sohel denied Ali Ashfaq from a one-on-one situation.

The Sky Blues earned three corners during the stoppage time and substitute striker Nabib Newaj Jibon found the net from a scramble inside the box, but the goal was ruled out due to a foul on the New Radiant goalkeeper.

Abahani will play their second match away to Bengaluru FC on March 14.

## Ideas can't be bought: Sacchi

AGENCIES, Paris

Iconic Italian coach Arrigo Sacchi was scathing in his assessment of Paris Saint-Germain following their Champions League exit at the hands of Real Madrid, labelling the Ligue 1 leaders a "very weak opponent".

"Real faced a very weak opponent," the winner of back-to-back European Cups said after the match.

"PSG are only a group of players. The word 'game' may be abstract, difficult to describe but it has made all the difference tonight. Ideas cannot be bought... PSG are missing a lot of things," the 71-year-old added.

"In Europe, you need the mentality but also the game. The game is like the score of a music and the scenario of a film."

However, Sacchi did not fault coach Unai Emery, saying PSG should back him.



Cristiano Ronaldo broke out of the mist and towered above two PSG defenders before dispatching his 102nd Champions League goal for Real Madrid in their round of 16 second leg against Paris Saint-Germain at the Parc des Princes on Tuesday night.

PHOTO: AFP

## Not a bad way to go out: Iker

AGENCIES, Liverpool

Porto goalkeeper Iker Casillas may have played his last Champions League game in Tuesday's goalless draw at Liverpool.

The 36-year-old made his 178th UEFA club competition appearance, a record 167th in the Champions League, at Anfield and came up with five saves. However, the Portuguese giants exited the competition as they had fallen 5-0 at home to Liverpool in the first leg of their round of 16 match-up.

"It's clear that if it was [my last Champions League game], it would not be a bad way to end as Anfield is a spectacular stadium and it's a beautiful team to face," Casillas told Onda Cero. "We gave a good performance and we got a draw. We leave with our heads held high."

"As for me, the reality is that my contract with Porto ends in June. What the future holds, I don't know. I just want to focus on the season and enjoy it."

A three-time Champions League winner with Real Madrid, Casillas' love affair with the competition began in November 1997 when, at the age of 16, he was taken out of school to be in Real Madrid's squad for a Champions League group game at Rosenborg.

However, he did not make his Champions League debut until almost two years later in a group game at Olympiakos.

"To have achieved three Champions League titles is amazing. I have a lot of fond memories in my 19 years in the competition, 21 if you consider when I was taken out of school. When I look back I'm very proud of my career."

## PREMIER DIVISION TABLE TENNIS

### Pallolic Group clinch title

SPORTS REPORTER



Pallolic Group clinched the title of Premier Division Table Tennis League with two matches in hand after beating Cicron Table Tennis Club 3-1 in their Super League match at the Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Indoor Stadium yesterday.

Pallolic started the 13th round with a defeat when Mahub Billah lost to India's Ronit Bhanja, but they came back strongly by winning next three rubbers.

Egyptian Saeed Lashin beat Rimon 3-0 and Manosh Chowdhury beat Tuhin 3-0 to take a 2-1 lead. Lashin then beat Ronit 3-2 in the fourth match to ensure Pallolic's title as they took an unassailable lead with 26 points from 13 matches.

Later Pallolic went on to beat Uttara Table Tennis Academy 3-2 to raise their tally to 28 points. Today they will play their last match against Orunima Sports, who have confirmed the runners-up title after beating Cicron 3-1.

In women's league, Biman Bangladesh Airlines have all but confirmed the title and Abahani finished runners-up even though both teams still have a match in hand. Biman are ahead of Abahani on head-to-head record.



Pallolic Group players pose for a group photo after confirming the title of the Premier Division Table Tennis League at the Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Indoor Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## 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:

### Autopsy finds cardiac arrest as cause of Astori's death

Italian footballer Davide Astori likely died from a cardiac arrest linked to the slowing of his heart rate, local media reported following the initial results of his autopsy.

### 'What's your name?'- Referee error sees player sent off over surname blunder

An ex Arsenal youngster was sent off after the official mistook his name for dissent, and has responded on social media.

## Europe's kings conquer Parc des Princes

AFP, Paris



Paris Saint-Germain's Qatari-bankrolled bid to put themselves among Europe's elite foundered again as Cristiano Ronaldo's Real Madrid comfortably beat the French club to move into the quarterfinals of the Champions League.

Ronaldo administered the killer blow with a 51st minute header at the Parc des Princes on Tuesday that saw PSG's chances of pulling back a two-goal defeat from the first leg vanishing into the smoke from supporters' flares.

A scrappy PSG goal from Edinson Cavani was followed by the cherry on the cake for the defending European champions with Brazilian Casemiro's deflected goal.

As the ball looped into the net to complete a comfortable 5-2 win over the two legs, the half a billion euros a year that PSG's Qatari owners have pumped into the club since 2012 had once again failed to land the one prize they crave.

The absence of Neymar, the Parisians' star and a player who offered the best chance of unlocking the Madrid defence, was significant. Having broken a toe in a league match against Marseille, the 222-million-euro signing watched the game in Brazil where he is recovering from surgery.

Neymar's future at PSG will be thrown into question by PSG's failure to progress to the quarterfinals of Europe's top club competition for the second successive year.

Marquinhos, PSG's Brazilian defender who is a close friend of Neymar, urged him not to turn his back on France

with rumours rife that Real Madrid are prepared to break the bank to attract the former Barcelona player back to Spain.

"I ask him to stay and let things settle down," Marquinhos said. "He is an important player for us. We really need him to have confidence in our project, our players and our coaches."

Club president Nasser Al-Khelaifi said PSG had bowed to Madrid's superior experience at the highest level -- it was the eighth successive season that Real had reached the last eight.

"We know that Real have a lot of experience. We didn't do what we needed to do to win," he said.

The same point was hammered home by Marquinhos: "We need to grow in maturity as a team and show more strength in this kind of match."

Khelaifi insisted it was too early to make major changes, but Unai Emery, the Spanish coach who was given another chance by his Qatari paymasters after PSG spectacularly collapsed against Barcelona in the same competition last season, will surely be shown the door at the end of the season. However Emery remained defiant, insisting there was no shame in losing to the European champions.

"To be eliminated in the last 16 is a disappointment, but to lose against Real Madrid is not. They deserved to go through. There is no other analysis," said the Spaniard.

Ronaldo meanwhile will be laughing at those who speculated earlier in the season that at 33 his powers were waning. The World Player of the Year scored twice to punish PSG's slack defending in the first leg in Madrid and his goal in Paris took him to a remarkable 117 in the Champions League, putting him 19 ahead of his eternal rival Lionel Messi of Barcelona.

## NUMBERS GAME

**8** With his strike against PSG, Cristiano Ronaldo has now scored in all eight Champions League matches this season, netting a total of 12 goals.

**9** The Portuguese has also become the second player,

after Dutchman Ruud van Nistelrooy, to score on 9 consecutive Champions League appearances.

**51** Tuesday's loss to Real Madrid was PSG's first home loss since a Ligue 1 defeat to Monaco in March 2016. They

had remained unbeaten for nearly two years across 51 matches at the Parc des Princes prior.

**8** Real Madrid have reached the Champions League quarterfinal for the eighth successive season. Only Barcelona (10)

have recorded a longer run in the competition's history.

**37** Sergio Ramos picked up the 37th card of his Champions League career, surpassing the record tally held by Manchester United legend Paul Scholes.