

# What to WATCH

**CHANNEL 9 & STAR SPORTS SELECT 1**  
**Indian Premier League**  
 Hyderabad v Rajasthan  
 Live from 8:30pm  
**STAR SPORTS SELECT 2**  
**Bundesliga**  
 Leipzig v Leverkusen  
 Live from 12:30am (Tuesday)

**SONY SIX & TEN 2**  
**Commonwealth Games**  
 Day Six  
 Live from 6:00am  
**TEN 2**  
**La Liga**  
 Villarreal v Athletic Bilbao  
 Live from 1:00am (Tuesday)



Lionel Messi scored another fantastic hat-trick, floating the ball over the Leganes keeper for his third, as Barcelona equalled the record for the longest unbeaten run in La Liga history with a 3-1 win on Saturday.

## Hernandez sinks Blues

AFP, London



Chelsea's faint hopes of a top-four finish in the Premier League suffered a potentially fatal blow as Javier Hernandez's late equaliser gave struggling West Ham a 1-1 draw on Sunday.

Antonio Conte's side went ahead through Cesar Azpilicueta's first-half strike at Stamford Bridge. But Chelsea missed a host of chances to increase their advantage and were made to pay when Hernandez came off the bench to snatch the leveller with 17 minutes left.

Conte had admitted losing at home to Tottenham for the first time in 28 years last weekend was a huge setback in Chelsea's bid to salvage a dismal campaign by qualifying for the Champions League. With fifth-placed Chelsea lagging 10 points behind fourth-placed Tottenham with only six games remaining, this result could end their top-four challenge.

West Ham, now six points clear of the relegation zone, were ecstatic to escape with a point despite a largely limp display.

Earlier, Danny Welbeck inspired Arsenal to a sixth straight victory with two goals and an assist in a hot-tempered 3-2 home win over Southampton, to leave the Saints still rooted to the relegation zone.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Griezmann matches CR7

Messi hits hat-trick as Barca equal record unbeaten run

AFP, Madrid

Cristiano Ronaldo's 24th goal in 15 games for Real Madrid this year was not enough to earn his side a derby victory on Sunday as an Antoine Griezmann equaliser secured Atletico a 1-1 draw.

Ronaldo followed up last week's brilliant bicycle kick against Juventus with a poacher's finish at the Santiago Bernabeu but Griezmann's strike keeps Atletico in pole position to finish second in La Liga.

They retain their four-point cushion over Real while this was perhaps the perfect result for leaders Barcelona, who are now 11 points clear at the top.

"We deserved more today clearly, it's a shame," Real coach Zinedine Zidane said afterwards. "We had many chances, but in the end we could have lost the game as well."

Griezmann's goal came on his 200th appearance for Atleti while Ronaldo's was the 500th in the 161 league matches played between these two city rivals.

On Griezmann, Atletico coach Diego Simeone said: "He is a great player, he did not have a good start to the season and he knows it and it is not easy to reinvent himself in the way he did in November, December."

"I think the presence of (Diego) Costa has helped him a lot, having strength around him which allows him to be free."

Gareth Bale was given 90 minutes, perhaps not the most positive indicator for his chances of a start in midweek. The Welshman supplied the cross for



Real Madrid's Cristiano Ronaldo opened the scoring in the Madrid derby, but it took Atletico Madrid's Antoine Griezmann (L) just four minutes to find the equaliser as their La Liga match ended 1-1 draw on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

Ronaldo's equaliser but, in truth, he was quiet for long periods here, a pale shadow of his confident, marauding best.

On Saturday, Barcelona equalled the record longest unbeaten run in La Liga history as a Lionel Messi hat-trick inspired the runaway leaders to a 3-1 win over Leganes on Saturday to make it 38 league games unbeaten.

The Catalan giants will look to break the record that Real Sociedad set in 1979-80 when they host Valencia next weekend, with Ernesto Valverde's side now just seven matches from becoming the first La Liga side to go through a

campaign without tasting defeat.

Messi was the star of the show at the Camp Nou with a magnificent treble, as Barca stretched their lead at the top to 12 points ahead of second-placed Atletico Madrid's derby against Real Madrid on Sunday.

"This unbeaten record has not only been achieved this season, but also last year under [former coach] Luis Enrique," said Barca coach Valverde. "It's a shared record, because it crossed over between seasons. It has been quite difficult, because of the fact it's an old record that hasn't been broken for a long time."

## Sabina fires blanks in tie

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh women's football team captain Sabina Khatun failed to fire for the first time in four games as Sethu FC played out a 1-1 draw against Eastern SU in their sixth and final group match of the Indian Women League in Shillong yesterday.

Sabina, who scored six in the five previous fixtures, threatened the Eastern backline numerous times but failed to find the target.

Eastern took the lead through Ranjibala Devi's fifth minute strike but Sethu captain Indumathi equalised in the 14th minute.

With the only draw, Sethu finished on 13 points, one behind Eastern. The top four will now face off in the semis.

## Warsia bags the gold

SPORTS REPORTER

Warsia Khusbu bagged a gold medal in the Blitz Chess event of the Asian Youth Chess Championships in Thailand yesterday.

Warsia earned a maximum seven points to clinch the Under-6 Group title while FM Fahad Rahman won bronze in the Under-18 Group by securing 6.5 points from nine matches.

## Nadal eases past Zverev

AFP, Valencia



Rafael Nadal kept Spain's Davis Cup hopes alive by beating Alexander Zverev on Sunday in the fourth rubber of their quarter-final against Germany.

Nadal's 6-1, 6-4, 6-4 win in Valencia draws the tie level at 2-2, with Spanish world number 33 David Ferrer up against Germany's Philipp Kohlschreiber in the fifth and decisive match.

Two breaks in each set were enough for Nadal to seal an impressively comfortable victory over Zverev in what was only the

31-year-old's second outing since returning from a hip injury.

Nadal was forced to retire at the Australian Open in January but, back on his favoured clay, the 16-time grand slam champion showed little sign of rust against Zverev, whom he has now beaten four times out of four.

It was also the 24th consecutive match Nadal has won in Davis Cup.

He beat Kohlschreiber in straight sets on Friday after Zverev had overcome Ferrer. Germany then took a 2-1 lead when Tim Puetz and Jan-Lennard Struff won the doubles rubber against Spain's Feliciano and Marc Lopez.



Spain's Rafael Nadal Continued his impressive return from an injury layoff with a straight-sets quarterfinal victory over Germany's high-flying Alexander Zverev that levelled their Davis Cup tie at 2-2 in Valencia yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

FIRST DIV CRICKET

## Arman stars on opening day

SPORTS REPORTER

Victoria Sporting Club, Uttara Sporting Club, Talent Hunt Cricket Academy, Rapid Foundation and Surjo Torun Club won their respective matches on the opening day of the Dhaka First Division Cricket League yesterday.

Surjo Torun Club sealed a 90-run win over Sheikh Jamal Cricketers after posting a huge 375 for nine in 50 overs. Sheikh Jamal were bundled out for 285 runs in 48.4 overs. Arman Haider was the star of the run fest, scoring 135 off just 83 balls and reaching his hundred off his 51st delivery.

At the Sher-e-Bangla National stadium in Mirpur, Victoria registered a five-wicket win over Axiom, overhauling their total of 215 for nine in 47.3 overs.

Rapid Foundation registered a four-wicket win over Ruggonj Tigers Cricket Club at BKSP-3 in Savar.

At the Khan Shaheb Osman Ali Stadium in Fatullah, Talent Hunt Cricket Academy beat Kalindi Krira Chakra by five runs.

Uttara Sporting Club beat Old DOHS Sports Club by two wickets in the fifth game of the day at BKSP-4.



There was a jovial atmosphere around the Abahani camp at their final training session in Dhanmondi ahead of the team's departure to India today, where they will face Indian outfit Aizawl FC in an AFC Cup match on Wednesday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## 'I couldn't let them win it'

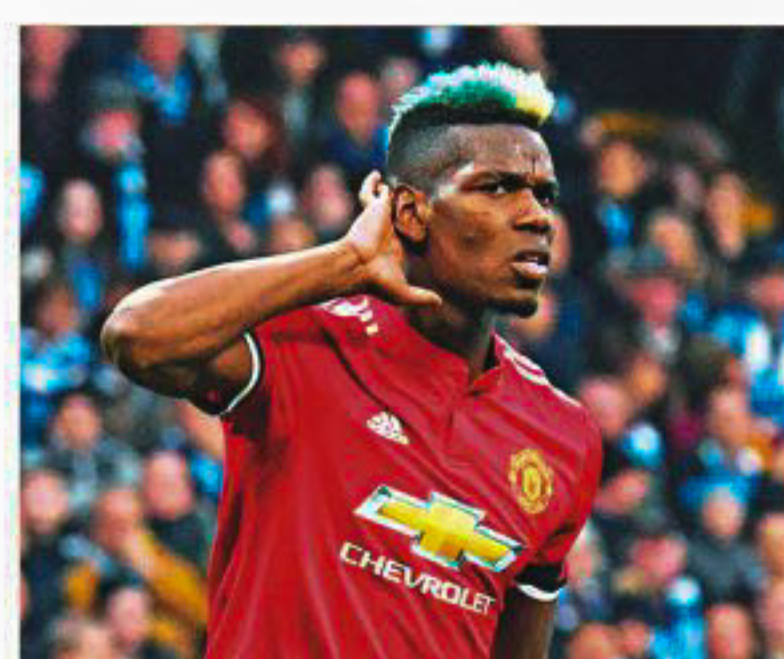
AGENCIES, Manchester



Paul Pogba said it would have felt "like death" had Manchester City sealed the Premier League title with a home derby win after spearheading Manchester United to a comeback win.

Even for a player used to being in the spotlight, the scrutiny must have felt intense in the lead up to Saturday evening's encounter at the Etihad.

City manager Pep Guardiola claimed on the eve of the game that Pogba was offered to the Premier League leaders by his agent in January - a claim denied by Mino Raiola. And before kick-off the midfielder was criticised by United great Gary Neville



PAUL POGBA

for his "ridiculous" blue hairstyle. The Frenchman's first-half performance did little to quieten critics, but his display after the break did as he hit a quickfire double to set United on course for a memorable 3-2 comeback

win that stopped City sealing the title.

"To be honest, I didn't want to lose against City," the midfielder told Sky Sports. "Playing at City, if they win they are champions against Manchester United. For all the fans it would be like death. To lose against Manchester City and to see them celebrate in their own stadium, I couldn't let this happen."

"At half-time in the dressing room we said, 'We have nothing to lose, let's go, please keep believing, let's make it.'"

Jose Mourinho made a tongue-in-cheek comment about his superstar as well, saying: "I wasn't asking Paul to improve because I was happy with what he was doing in the first half, then he scored two great goals. If his agent was offering him to some clubs, the price has now gone up a lot."

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