

What to WATCH

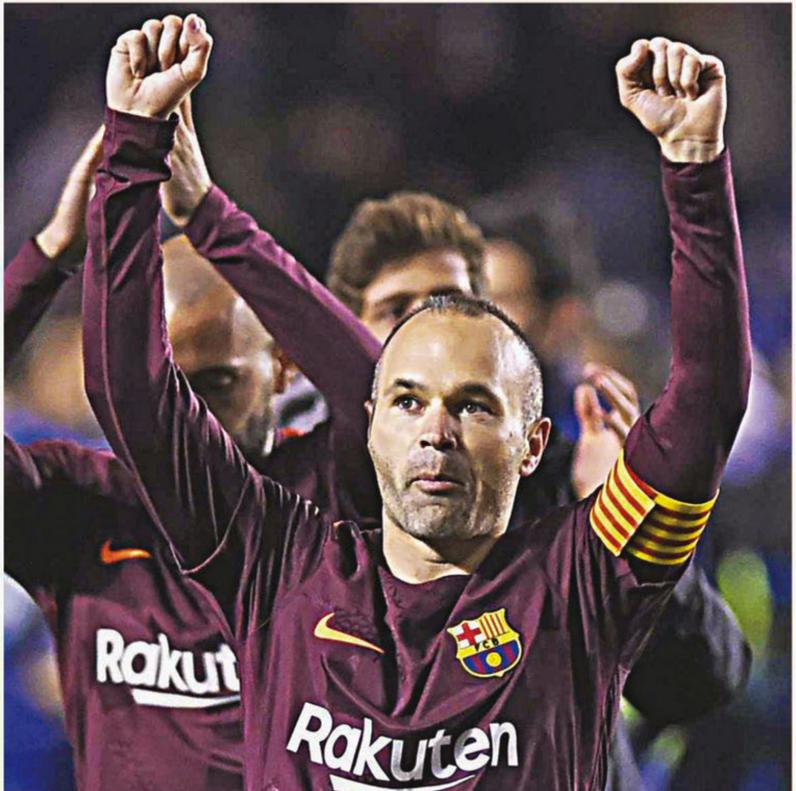
CHANNEL 9 & STAR SPORTS SELECT 1
Indian Premier League
 Bangalore v Mumbai
 Live from 8:30pm

TEN 2
UEFA Champions League Semifinal
 Real Madrid v Bayern Munich
 Live from 12:45am (Wednesday)

WEDNESDAY
CHANNEL 9 & STAR SPORTS SELECT 1
Indian Premier League
 Delhi v Rajasthan

Live from 8:30pm
TEN 2
UEFA Champions League semifinal
 Roma v Liverpool
 Live from 12:45am (Thursday)

DAY'S EVENT
U-18 Football Tournament
 Venue: BNS, Dhaka
 Arambagh v Ctg Abahani
 Time: 3:15pm
 Rahmatganj v Sheikh Jamal
 Time: 5:30pm



Superstar Lionel Messi (L) celebrates after scoring a hatrick against Deportivo La Coruna, leading Barcelona to their 25th La Liga title at the Riazor Stadium on Sunday. (R) Andres Iniesta was visibly emotional after the match as he will be leaving at the end of the season.

'I wish it was eternal'

AGENCIES, Barcelona

Barcelona legend Andres Iniesta said his team were worthy winners of a 25th La Liga title as the veteran skipper prepared to leave the Spanish giants.

The 33-year-old revealed on Friday that he will leave Barcelona at the end of the season, bringing the curtain down on a phenomenally successful career at the club he has served since he was 12.

On Sunday, he came off the bench for a brief cameo appearance as Barcelona defeated Deportivo La Coruna 4-2 at a Riazor stadium which stood to honour him.

"This feels good. The championship is a competition that lasts all year, it is about consistency and the team deserved this title," said Iniesta.

"It has been a great season with the Copa del Rey and now La Liga."

Iniesta has admitted that he wishes his stay at the club could be 'eternal' but it's finally time to move on after a highly successful season.

"I'm making the most honest decision for me and for my club," Iniesta told Movistar (via Goal). "I want to finish with good feelings, then go to the World Cup and now to another adventure."

"I wish this was eternal. I'm the first one who would like this not to end but all this has its beginning and its end."

On the ovation he received from Deportivo fans when he made his 87th-minute entry, he said was overwhelmed, especially as the home side had been relegated as a result of the defeat.

"These are indescribable emotions. On a personal level, as a sportsman, there are no words when you receive such affection in such a difficult situation for the fans."

Barca far superior: Messi

AGENCIES, Barcelona

Lionel Messi revelled in Barcelona's seventh La Liga title in 10 seasons on Sunday, saying his team were "far superior" to their domestic rivals during their double-winning campaign.

The Argentinian star scored a brilliant 30th La Liga hatrick as Barca survived a scare to beat Deportivo La Coruna 4-2, wrapping up the club's 25th league title with four matches to spare and keeping their hopes of an unbeaten season alive.

"We have been far superior to our rivals, we haven't lost a match during the whole season," Messi told Barcelona's in-house television channel.

"It's a very special Liga in that sense, because we haven't lost a single match. We've had some tough times and we've overcome everything without losing, which is unbelievable."

Regaining the top-flight crown from Real Madrid also secured Barcelona

KEY STATS

- Barca seal 25th La Liga title
- Messi scores 30th La Liga hatrick
- Biggest win of the season: 6-1 v Eibar, 6-1 v Girona
- Most goals: Messi (32)
- Most assists: Messi (12)

ROLL OF HONOUR

- 2018 : Barcelona
- 2017 : Real Madrid
- 2016 : Barcelona
- 2015 : Barcelona
- 2014 : Atletico Madrid
- 2013 : Barcelona

disappointingly another in the Champions League," added Messi, who leads the La Liga scoring charts with 32 goals this term.

"That was an unexpected result in view of our shape. But we take a lot of merit to win a title as difficult as this without losing a game."

The five-time Ballon d'Or winner also paid tribute to captain Andres Iniesta.

The 33-year-old midfielder came off the bench in the 87th minute at Deportivo to make his 670th Barcelona appearance just two days after announcing that he will leave the club at the end of the season.

"It's a shame for us and the club, but he deserved to go like that," said Messi.

"We deplore what happened in the Champions League, it prevented him from going out with a treble, but he's leaving in an impressive fashion."

"This double is more than deserved for Andres, for all he has given to this club. I am very happy for him and wish him all the best."

Salah dispute being settled

AFP, Cairo

An image rights storm that has seen star Mohamed Salah lash out at Egyptian football authorities is on the way to being settled, the Liverpool playmaker has signalled.

"We were promised a solution and God willing the issue is on its way to being resolved," the midfield maestro tweeted late Sunday, while thanking his fans for their "unreal" support.

The dispute has centred on an advertising campaign by the national team's main sponsor, Telecom Egypt's mobile arm WE, which has relied heavily on photos of Salah, who has his own contract with global telecom giant Vodafone.

Simeone buries Napoli

AFP, Milan

Napoli's title hopes looked in tatters on Sunday after a shock 3-0 defeat at Fiorentina, complete with an early sending-off for Kalidou Koulibaly and a hat-trick from Giovanni Simeone, edged Juventus closer to a seventh successive Serie A title.

With just three games left, Juventus have a four-point lead on closest challengers Napoli and could wrap up yet another 'Scudetto' next weekend.

Argentina forward Simeone -- the son of Atletico Madrid boss Diego Simeone -- scored all three goals in a spectacular display to keep Fiorentina's Europa League hopes alive.

Koulibaly, labelled a hero when he scored the last-gasp header that kept Napoli's ambitions alive with a 1-0 win over Juventus in Turin last week, turned villain in Florence when he was sent off after just eight minutes.

"We lost tactical certainties after the sending off, and faced with adversity we lost our way and our nerve too," said

Napoli coach Maurizio Sarri.

"The entire team had a bad performance. We won as a team at other times, today we lost as a team. I didn't see any positives."

Juventus battled past 10-man Inter Milan in a San Siro thriller on Saturday to prevail 3-2 thanks to two late goals in three minutes.

Massimiliano Allegri's champions host Bologna on Saturday and will be assured of the title if they win and Napoli lose at home against Torino on Sunday.

"I want the whole team to fight back straight away," said Sarri as Napoli chase a third title after 1987 and 1990. "If we always focus on the next game, we can have a good season."

Napoli never recovered from Koulibaly's dismissal, the towering Senegalese defender initially shown a yellow card for kicking out at Simeone as he charged towards goal.

But a video assistant referee (VAR) review at the Stadio Franchi upgraded the yellow to red, with a free-kick given instead of a penalty.

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:

India resist Australia's day-night Test overtures
 Australian cricket chiefs are still trying to convince reluctant India to play a day-night Test in Adelaide this year after releasing their international playing schedule. Cricket Australia have scheduled the opening Test of the four-Test India series in Adelaide from December 6-10.

The war isn't over - Ribery issues battle cry
 Franck Ribery has issued a battle cry before their Champions League semi-final second leg at Real Madrid where Bayern Munich know they must be ruthless in front of goal to stage an unlikely comeback. Bayern have it all to do at the Santiago Bernabeu after wasting several chances in last week's 2-1 first-leg loss in Munich.

Fan hires crane to overcome stadium ban
 Being prevented from watching your team play must be an excruciating experience for any football fan. While there is a lot of football on TV, there is nothing quite like watching your football team in the flesh and nothing can quite come close to the atmosphere that is available at a football stadium. One Turkish football went to great lengths to watch his favourite team play after he was banned from attending his club's matches.

Zidane eyes another final

AFP, Madrid

Zinedine Zidane may have won two consecutive Champions League titles but he refuses to admit a third would brand this his very own era at Real Madrid.

Real stand on the brink of a trio of finals ahead of their second leg against Bayern Munich in the last four on Tuesday, when they will carry a 2-1 lead, and two away goals, to the Santiago Bernabeu.

It makes them favourites to go through and, for many, heavy favourites to win the tournament after already beating Paris Saint-Germain and Juventus in the knock-out stages.

For Zidane, a third European crown as coach is now in sight, which would put him level with Carlo Ancelotti and Bob Paisley in the pantheon of successful managers.

Only the three triumphs of Paisley,

however, came at one club, Liverpool, and over a single era, in 1977, 1978 and 1981. Ancelotti's treble stretched across 11 years, with two clubs, Real and AC Milan.

"We cannot talk about this," Zidane said on Friday. "Coaches like this were given a lot of time, they did a lot of things."

"I am comfortable, we have done well, it is two and a half years that have been good but the rest, 'Zidane's Real Madrid', let's wait a bit."

Even Alex Ferguson, Jose Mourinho and Pep Guardiola have lifted Europe's biggest prize only twice, all with more years in management under their belts.

But Zidane's merits as a coach and tactician continue to be downplayed, at least in part because the Frenchman owns arguably the most talented squad in the world and, in Cristiano Ronaldo, the Champions League's greatest ever player.

Ronaldo's 15 goals in this year's competition have certainly been key, but it was Zidane who made the brave call to leave out Gareth Bale and Karim Benzema at the



Napoli players' heads droop as they watch their hopes of ending a 28-year Serie A title drought fade away during a 3-0 defeat away to Fiorentina on Monday. PHOTO: REUTERS



Real Madrid starlet Marco Asensio (R) jokes with teammate Lucas Vazquez during a training session at the Valdebebas training ground yesterday on the eve of their Champions League semifinal second-leg against Bayern Munich.

Allianz Arena against Bayern.

The preferred but less established duo of Lucas Vazquez and Marco Asensio combined brilliantly for the winning goal, with the former also switched to right-back late on, where he held off the threat of Franck Ribery.

Bale, harshly treated in recent weeks, may not agree but the majority of Real's first team are now regularly hailing Zidane's man-management, his preparation and his tactics.

"When Zizou has to gamble, he does, because he is the boss," captain Sergio Ramos said. "We are very happy that he is steering the boat."

There is certainly work still to be done to overcome Bayern, who dominated large parts of the first match and perhaps deserved to emerge with a more flattering result.

"We earned a lot of extra credit for winning the match," Zidane said. "But we cannot make the same mistakes again and I think on Tuesday we'll have to go into the match with more determination than we've ever had before."

Real are likely to be without Isco and Dani Carvajal, who sustained shoulder and hamstring injuries respectively during the first leg.

"We are always damaged losing two players but at the same time we cannot do anything about it," Zidane said.

While Ronaldo was among a number of first-team players rested for Saturday's win over Leganes, Bale started, a sign the Welshman is set for another snub in midweek.

Bale did not play a single minute against Bayern in Germany and, along with Benzema, has now lost his place in the side for Real's crunch games in Europe.

"We need everyone," Zidane said. "I will do everything possible to convince them they are important."

"The important thing is also the key message -- for Gareth and Karim, for everyone -- that we stay connected. We have a month and we have to give it all we've got."

'Bayern need cool heads'

AFP, Berlin

Bayern Munich need "cool heads and hot hearts" if they are to learn from Juventus and pull off an unlikely Champions League victory at Real Madrid, says chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge.

Bayern face an uphill task in Tuesday's semifinal, second leg, at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium after losing 2-1 in Munich last Wednesday when a defensive slip let Marco Asensio hit the winner.

To compound their problems, Bayern have lost both key defender Jerome Boateng and creative winger Arjen Robben with groin injuries.

Nevertheless, the Germans jetted to Madrid on Monday determined to pull off an unlikely win.

They can take solace from Juventus who went down fighting with a 3-1 win in Madrid in the quarterfinals after losing 3-0 in Turin, bowing out 4-3 on aggregate.

"Juve are a good example of putting pressure on Real in Madrid," said Rummenigge.

"We need cool heads and hot hearts."

Firmino signs new deal

REUTERS, London

Roberto Firmino has committed his future to Liverpool by signing a new long-term contract, the Premier League club said on Sunday.

The Brazilian forward, who joined from Hoffenheim in 2015, has made 140 appearances in all competitions and scored 50 goals, becoming a key player for the Merseyside club.

Liverpool did not provide details about the 26-year-old Firmino's new contract.

"The club have taken me in an incredible way and I've grown a lot here with my work with the support of the whole team. I am very happy here," Firmino told Liverpool's website.