

# What to WATCH

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

**STAR SPORTS SELECT 2**  
English Premier League  
Chelsea v Huddersfield  
Live from 12:45am (Thursday)  
**TEN 1**  
La Liga

Sevilla v Real Madrid  
Live from 1:30am (Thursday)  
**TEN 2**  
La Liga  
Barcelona v Villarreal  
Live from 12:00am (Thursday)

**DAY'S EVENT**  
Premier Hockey League  
Abahani v Azad SC  
Time: 6:30pm

Venue: Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium, Dhaka

## 'I'LL NEVER FORGIVE MARADONA'

The linesman who failed to disallow Diego Maradona's infamous 'Hand of God' goal died haunted by the controversial incident, his widow says. Bulgarian official Bogdan Dochev later admitted he had seen the Argentine striker punch the ball into the net at 1986 World Cup against England. But he said referee Ali Bin Nasser had told him not to make any big decisions in the game. Dochev struggled to cope with the scrutiny he came under over the goal which knocked England out of the competition. He even apparently scrawled "Maradona is my gravedigger" on a picture of the star. Dochev's widow Emily said: "The referee said 'You don't have to do any work - it will be all my calls'. I'll never forgive that referee and I'll never forgive Diego Maradona. After the World Cup our life was ruined. Bogdan withdrew into himself and friends never said hello to me again. It wasn't a Hand of God for us, it was a kick in the teeth."

—AGENCIES



**Bangladesh's premier golfer Siddikur Rahman, seen here taking part in a pro-am event yesterday, will be hoping that he turns around a disappointing season when the AB Bank Bangladesh Open 2018 gets underway at the Kurmitola Golf Club today. The two-time Asian Tour winner will be among a 144-man field who will be vying for the top prize in the 300,000-dollar event.**

PHOTO: ASIANTOUR.COM

## Abahani complete semifinal line-up

SPORTS REPORTER



Abahani moved into the semifinals of the Walton U-18 Club Cup football tournament with a 5-4 victory in sudden death over Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The fourth and final quarterfinal rolled into the shootout after regulation and extra-time produced a 2-2 draw in a keenly contested encounter between the two heavyweights.

Abahani goalkeeper Ariful Islam was the hero as he stopped shots from Mehdi Hasan Hridoy and Abul Kader Mintu in the shootout to send the Sky Blues outfit into celebration. They will play the second semifinal against Arambagh on Friday while Farashganj will take on Brothers Union in the first semifinal on the previous day.

Apon Chandra Roy gave Abahani the lead in the 10th minute before Manuel Soren levelled the margin for Sheikh Jamal in the 37th minute. The same player struck again eight minutes later to give Sheikh Jamal the lead going into the second half.

Abahani applied heavy pressure, sending on three pairs of fresh legs and that pressure paid off, with Dipok Roy equalising from a free-kick just three minutes from time.

In extra-time, Sheikh Jamal were denied by the woodwork before they had to concede defeat in the shootout in their first appearance in the age-level tournament.

## Koscielny ruled out of WC

AFP, London

Veteran French defender Laurent Koscielny is "devaluated" at missing out on this year's World Cup finals after undergoing surgery on a ruptured Achilles tendon, said Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger.

The 32-year-old central defender is set to be sidelined for six months according to Wenger, bringing a sad end to his international career as he had planned to retire after the finals in Russia.

Koscielny, capped over 50 times and a member of the France side that lost to Portugal in the Euro 2016 final, was carried off 12 minutes into Arsenal's Europa League semi-final second-leg defeat by Atletico Madrid last Thursday.

## Jimmy treble propels MSC

SPORTS REPORTER

Inspirational skipper Rasel Mahmud Jimmy scored a hat-trick as Mohammedan Sporting Club notched their fourth consecutive victory in the Green Delta Insurance Premier Division Hockey League with an 8-0 win over Wari Club yesterday.

The veteran forward started the onslaught in the 13th minute and capped off the victory in the penultimate minute at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium as the Black and Whites moved to the top of the points table.

Jimmy opened the scoring with a field goal before Nasir Hossain doubled the lead four minutes later. Indian recruits Gurjinder Singh, Shamsher Singh and Arbinder Singh continued Mohammedan's scoring spree before Jimmy added his second from a penalty corner in the 40th minute. Nasir bagged his second eight minutes later before Jimmy's second PC conversion sealed the victory.

The Motijheel-based outfit, who had beaten Ajax 4-0, Shadharan Bima 7-2 and Victoria SC 3-1 in their three previous matches, now have 12 points from four matches and are level with defending champions Abahani.

## Mancini to coach Italy

AFP, Milan



Zenit Saint Petersburg manager Roberto Mancini has reached agreement to become the next Italy coach after accepting a pay cut to take the job, according to reports on Tuesday.

Gazzetta dello Sport reported that the 53-year-old Italian has agreed a two-year deal worth two million euros (\$2.3 million) a year which will be penned after the end of the Russian season which concludes next Sunday.

Zenit are fifth in the Russian Premier League, ten points behind already-crowned champions Lokomotiv Moscow with one match left.

The Russian club are reportedly reluctant to let Mancini leave and the Italian Football Federation FIGC do not want to pay any compensation to

release him from his contract.

The former Italian international joined the Russian club last year on a three-year deal thought to be worth 4.5 million euros (\$5.3 million) a year.

The annual budget for the future Italy coach and his backroom staff has been fixed at five million euros.

Italy have been without a permanent coach since Gian Piero Ventura was sacked after they failed to qualify for the World Cup for the first time in 60 years after losing to Sweden in November.

Italy's under-21 coach Luigi Di Biagio has been filling the position on an interim basis.

During his 17-year coaching career Mancini led Manchester City to their first English league title in 44 years in 2012, and won three Serie A titles with Inter Milan. He also won Italian Cups with Inter, Fiorentina and Lazio.

Meanwhile, Gazzetta also reported

that Mancini wants to bring back Mario Balotelli into the national fold, and will ask goalkeeping legend Gianluigi Buffon to play against the Netherlands for a farewell appearance in Turin on June 4.

In-form Nice striker Balotelli, 27, has scored 13 goals in 33 appearances for Italy but has not been picked since the 2014 World Cup.

Former Bayern Munich coach Carlo Ancelotti turned down the opportunity to coach the four-time world champions saying he preferred to stay in club coaching.

"Mine was a choice, I want to coach a club," Ancelotti told Milan TV. "It was a difficult decision, but I have to listen to what I feel."

"Roberto Mancini is an excellent coach, he is motivated and has international experience. If the next coach was him, I think the national team would be in good hands."

## N America WC bid vows record profit

AFP, Brussels



Leaders of North America's bid for the 2026 World Cup urged FIFA voters to ignore the "politics of the moment" on Tuesday as they promised to deliver a record-breaking multi-billion-dollar profit for the global football showpiece.

In an address to the International Sports Press Association (AIPS) in Brussels, United States Soccer Federation president Carlos Cordeiro said the 48-team tournament would hand world governing body FIFA a record \$11 billion (9.25 billion euros) profit.

"I can announce today that, working with FIFA, we expect that a 2026 World Cup in North America would generate a new record: more than \$14 billion in revenue for FIFA," said Cordeiro, one of the three co-chairs of the bid.

"This includes profits for FIFA of nearly \$11 billion. In other words, the most successful and profitable FIFA World Cup ever," Cordeiro added in prepared remarks to AIPS delegates.

The US-Canada-Mexico joint bid is battling against a rival bid from Morocco for the right to stage the 2026 tournament. FIFA members will decide the winner of the

bidding race at a vote in Moscow on June 13. Long seen as the clear front-runner for 2026, the North American bid is facing an increasingly stiff challenge from Morocco, which is bidding to become only the second African nation to host the World Cup.

Cordeiro's remarks on Tuesday sought to underscore the commercial appeal of staging a World Cup in North America at a time when FIFA President Gianni Infantino is keen to boost revenue for world football's ruling body.

A source told AFP earlier this month that FIFA has spent \$600 million of its financial reserves in the past three years.

Infantino, who is said to favour the North American bid, also hopes to oversee the creation of a money-spinning FIFA Club World Cup.

North American bid leaders meanwhile provided a detailed breakdown of forecast revenues, predicting record ticket sales of \$5.8 billion and record gate money of \$2.5 billion. Commercial hospitality would also generate another \$1-1.5 billion, Cordeiro said.

Cordeiro also projected a sponsorship bonanza, with Fortune 500 companies eager to sign on for the World Cup, leading to another \$3.6 billion.

## Sir Alex showing improvement

AFP, London



Former Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson was sitting up and talking to his family, reports said Tuesday, as he recovers from emergency surgery following a brain haemorrhage.

The 76-year-old, who suffered the haemorrhage on Saturday, remains in intensive care and there has been no official update on his condition from the Premier League club.

But Britain's Mail Online said the Scot, who retired in 2013, was out of a coma and showing promising early signs of recovery.

"Surgery went very well and the 76-year-old's response to treatment has given encouragement and cautious optimism to those close to him," the report said.

"However, they recognise it will still be a slow road to full recovery as he continues to be assessed."

"The prognosis is good and his closest friends in football are being kept abreast of any developments," a source told The Sun newspaper.

One of the greatest managers in football history, Ferguson won 38 trophies in more than 26 years in



charge of United, including 13 Premier League titles and the Champions League twice.

Support has flooded in from the football world and from those outside the game and United midfielder Michael Carrick said that the response shows the esteem in which his former boss is held.

"The whole football world is incredible but outside of that as well, from all corners of the globe and different walks of life, people have shown their support," he told MUTV.

"That's the effect he had on people. It was the effect he had on everyone. He means a lot to me, as he does to this club."

"We were all praying for him and thinking of him, Cathy and the family. It's a tough time for everyone but I'm thinking positive and hoping he will

pull through."

Wales manager Ryan Giggs, who was part of all of Ferguson's 13 Premier League title-winning teams after being given his debut as a 17-year-old in 1991, told the BBC: "I know the operation has been a success - but he is a fighter and that is what makes me think he will be able to make a recovery."

"Now is the time to pray and hope he can make a full recovery. He has been the biggest influence in my career, both on and off the pitch."

Defender Phil Jones, one of a handful of players signed by Ferguson who is still at the club, added: "I know his character. I know he has that fight in him. Hopefully he'll recover well."

"He has got all his family and friends around him, the support from all the players and staff at Man United and football around the world."

United have thanked the many well-wishers, including Premier League managers Arsene Wenger, Pep Guardiola and Jurgen Klopp, who have spoken of their admiration for Ferguson.

Wenger enjoyed a long, and at times fractious rivalry with Ferguson as they battled for Premier League supremacy in the first decade of the Frenchman's long reign in charge of Arsenal.

## 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:

### Iniesta's China move in doubt

Andres Iniesta's potential move to Chinese Super League side Chongqing Lifan has been cast into doubt after they said they will not pay the Barcelona playmaker a salary that would distort the market.

### Neymar 'can do what he wants'

Barcelona president suggests he has no qualms regarding Neymar joining arch rivals Real Madrid.

Neymar moved to Paris Saint Germain for a world-record fee of 222 million Euros.

### Villarreal offer guard of honour to Barca

After Real Madrid refusal Villareal confirmed that they will offer Barca a guard of honour in La Liga. Villarreal FC made a declaration that they will give Barcelona a guard of honour for becoming league champions.



Tourists walk past a large sign showcasing the logo for the Champions League in Kiev yesterday. The Ukrainian capital is preparing for the final which will be played at the NSC Olimpiyskiy Stadium on May 26.

PHOTO: AFP

## Rajasthan stay alive

AGENCIES, Jaipur

KL Rahul's unbeaten 95 went in vain as Rajasthan Royals edged Kings XI Punjab by 15 runs to stay alive in the ongoing edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL) at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium in Jaipur on Tuesday.

Batting first, RR scored 158 for eight in the stipulated 20 overs, and then restricted KXIP to 143 for seven.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

Rajasthan: 158/8 in 20 overs (Buttler 82; Tye 4/34)  
Punjab: 143/7 in 20 overs (Rahul 95 not out; Gotham 2-12)

## Ronaldo will recover for final: Zidane

AFP, Madrid



Zinedine Zidane believes Cristiano Ronaldo will be fit to play for Real Madrid in the Champions League final.

Zidane also said on Tuesday that Mohamed Salah deserves great credit for Liverpool's surprise run in Europe but insisted the match in Kiev will not be a contest of the Egyptian against Ronaldo.

Ronaldo was forced off at half-time of Sunday's Clasico between Real and Barcelona, which ended 2-2 at the Camp Nou, and Zidane has confirmed the Portuguese sprained his ankle.

There were fears the injury could affect Ronaldo's chances of facing Liverpool on May 26 but Zidane is confident his star

player will recover, along with fellow absentees Isco and Dani Carvajal.

"I think they will all be fine for the final - Cristiano, Isco, Carvajal," Zidane said.

"The one more injured is Cristiano because it has just happened but it is going well, he is walking normally and he will be fine."

Ronaldo was hurt during a collision with Gerard Pique just as he bundled in Real's equaliser against Barcelona.

He played on for 31 minutes until the interval but did not emerge for the second half.

"It is a sprain, but there is no particular damage on the fibula, it is a small sprain and his ankle is stable," Zidane said.

"Ronaldo, in terms of his injury, is incredible, that's what he has this guy, he is already on the ground, walking, and feeling positive 48 hours later."