

# What to WATCH

CHANNEL 9 & STAR SPORTS SELECT 1

Indian Premier League  
Delhi v Hyderabad  
Live from 8:30pm

DAY'S EVENT

Walton U-18 Football  
First semifinal  
Brothers Union v Farashganj

Time: 4:30pm  
Venue: BNS

Premier Hockey League  
Mariner Young's Club v  
Sadharan Bima

Time: 7:00pm  
Venue: Maulana Bhasani  
Hockey Stadium

STAR SPORTS SELECT 2

English Premier League  
West Ham v Man Utd  
Live from 12:45am (Friday)

## SIR ALEX STILL A MAN OF FOOTBALL

When Sir Alex Ferguson woke up from an induced coma following emergency surgery on Saturday night, only one thing was on his mind. And his first words at Salford Royal Hospital, Greater Manchester, were: "So, how did Doncaster get on?" Sir Alex's son Darren manages League One Doncaster and they played host to champions Wigan on Saturday. They lost 1-0... A source told The Sun: "Typical Sir Alex — he can't stop talking football. He's very chipper and his prognosis is good. He's already re-arranging his diary." He has stunned his family with his rapid progress and has even joked about making it to Kiev for the Champions League Final on May 26 but has given up all hope of making the Manchester United v Chelsea FA Cup Final a week earlier. Sir Alex apparently told his family: "Aye, the Cup Final is out — but what about Kiev?"

—INTERNET



# Rain and gloom on opening day

SPORTS REPORTER



There was a familiar faltering of local golfers in the opening day of the AB Bank Bangladesh Open, which started amid rain and thunder, at the Kurmitola Golf Club yesterday.

None of the Bangladeshi golfers have been able to threaten to take the title of the 300,000-dollar Asian Tour event in its first three editions except for Siddikur Rahman, who finished second in the third edition, ending four strokes behind the eventual winner.

That pattern is seemingly set to continue as the best effort of the local golfers came in the form of Mohammad Robin, Mohammad Razu and Delwar Hossain on one-under, with only the last one having completed his round while the other two stranded midway through.

Rattanon Wannasrichan of Thailand, who played in the morning batch, took the clubhouse lead with a healthy score of six-under-par (65).

The day's play was called off due to bad light at 6:30pm after lightning and rain sliced off four hours of play -- play remained suspended from 12:15pm to 4:15pm -- as only half of the 144 golfers could complete the day's play.

All 72 players in the afternoon session will return to complete their opening rounds at 6.20am today with the second

round slated to start at approximately 8.00am.

Baby-faced Rattanon rode on a hot putter to sign for a solid opening round, seizing the clubhouse lead by one shot.

The 22-year-old Thai, who enjoyed a top-five result in the last edition, got his campaign off to a great start after firing seven birdies against a bogey to take his place atop the leaderboard.

Indian stalwart M Dharma and Tour rookie Jack Harrison of England posted matching 66s to share second place while Asian Development Tour (ADT) graduate John Catlin of the United States settled two shots off the pace in fourth following a 67.

American Berry Henson, highest-ranked player in ninth place on the Habitat for Humanity Standings, grabbed a share of seventh place following a 69 while local hero Siddikur Rahman carded a 72 to tie in 58th position.

Rattanon was happy to have finished the day's play without having been disrupted by rain, and obviously for having taken the lead.

"My game was really good today. I made a great par save on the par-five 14th hole. That was the highlight of the day for me. I hit my driver out of bounds and missed the green with my fourth shot but I managed to chip it in from about 20 yards to save par. It was amazing," the Thai golfer told Asiantour.com.

While Rattanon Wannasrichan of Thailand cruised to a 65 early in the morning, most of the golfers had to laze around for four hours at the Kurmitola Golf Club lounge due to inclement weather on the opening day of the AB Bank Bangladesh Open yesterday.

PHOTOS: ASIANTOUR/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:

### Djokovic dumped out of Madrid by Edmund

Novak Djokovic crashed out of the Madrid Open on Wednesday as the 12-time Grand Slam champion lost in three sets to Britain's Kyle Edmund. Edmund had not taken a set off Djokovic in three previous meetings but the Serb is still feeling the affects of elbow surgery.

### Neymar in talks with Real Madrid, reports suggest

Real Madrid's pursuit of Neymar is gathering pace and on Monday, a former Marca editor Eduardo Inda claimed that a deal with Madrid was 'almost finalised'. The deal would allegedly see Neymar move to the Spanish capital for a reported fee of 260-300 million Euros. A similar fee was quoted by Spanish outlet AS."



# Neuer's WC in doubt

AFP, Berlin



Manuel Neuer has poured serious doubt on his World Cup chances while his Bayern Munich coach on Wednesday says Germany's goalkeeper will not play again for the club this season.

"I do not think it's imaginable that I go into such a tournament without match practice," Neuer said at an event on Tuesday night on his Russia 2018 chances.

Neuer, 32, has been sidelined by a fractured foot since September and is running out of time to be fit for Germany's opening World Cup match against Mexico in Moscow on June 17.

Heynckes said there was no chance Neuer would play in Bayern's last two games this season -- the final Bundesliga game at home to Stuttgart on Saturday and the German Cup final on May 19 against Eintracht Frankfurt in Berlin.

"Manuel won't play against Stuttgart -- and also not in the German Cup final," Heynckes told Kicker magazine.

That means Neuer can only get the necessary match practice in two games before the World Cup -- Germany's friendlies away to Austria in Klagenfurt on June 2 and at home against Saudi Arabia in Leverkusen on June 8.

"There are still a few games," Neuer said, but added that he cannot give a date for his

return.

"There is no prognosis, I have to make the right decision for me, the team and Germany."

"It does not help to get distracted."

Coach Joachim Loew is still expected to include Neuer in his provisional World Cup squad, which will be named next Tuesday and then trimmed down for the final 23-man list.

The goalkeeper will have to work on his fitness at Germany's two-week training camp in northern Italy from May 23 to June 8 if he is to have any chance of playing at Russia 2018.

Neuer only recently returned to Bayern training.

"I want to improve daily and try to get fit as quickly as possible, so far the steps have been very good and positive," he said,

"I'm trying to continue and then we'll see if it's enough."

Neuer is the main concern for Loew, who is also waiting on the fitness of Germany centre-back Jerome Boateng, who has a groin injury, and attacking midfielder Mesut Ozil, who is sidelined by a back complaint.

Boateng said he is on course to be fit for the World Cup finals after being injured in Bayern's Champions League semifinal, first-leg, defeat against Real Madrid.

"The national coach knows that my goal of travelling with the team (to Russia) is absolutely realistic," said Boateng.



# Chinese club offer \$1.5m cash per win

AFP, Shanghai



A struggling Chinese football club will dish out more than \$1.5 million in cash per game to inspire its demoralised players to victory -- but they'll be docked money if they lose.

The carrot-and-stick approach is being applied at Guizhou Hengfeng, who are bottom of the Chinese Super League (CSL) after losing eight of their first nine games, including five on the bounce.

Club boss Wen Wei treated the team and staff to a lavish dinner on Tuesday, two days after they were thrashed 5-1 at Tianjin Teda, and proposed an eye-watering victory bonus of 10 million yuan (\$1.5 million) for each of the next two games in a desperate effort to stop the rot, local media said.

In the event of a long-awaited win, the cash will be waiting in the dressing room after the games, the Guizhou Metropolitan Daily cited Wen as saying.

The team will earn two million yuan for a draw, but be fined a collective one million if they lose, or about 33,000 yuan apiece.

Guizhou's 30 players as well as staff at the dinner accepted Wen's proposal, the newspaper said, but they face a tough test at home to CSL leaders Shanghai SIPG on Saturday followed by a trip to fellow strugglers Dalian Yifang the following weekend.

Property magnate Wen said he was trying to "unite the team" coached by Spaniard Gregorio Manzano.

"I want my team to forget all the losses and think about hard-won victories," Wen told the newspaper.

Club officials could not be reached for comment.

Chinese football has in recent years made headlines with a series of expensive big-name foreign signings, with SIPG shelling out an Asian-record 60 million euros last year to buy Brazilian attacking midfielder Oscar from Chelsea.

## Roberto gets 4-game ban

REUTERS, Barcelona

Barcelona defender Sergi Roberto will miss the rest of the Liga season and the first match of the next campaign after being given a four-game ban for striking Real Madrid's Marcelo in last Sunday's tension-filled 2-2 draw at the Nou Camp.

The Spanish Football Federation (RFEF) announced the ban for "assaulting another player" in its weekly disciplinary statement on its official website.

Roberto was given a straight red card in first-half injury time for the incident with the Brazilian during an off-the-ball tussle on the edge of Barca's area.

Referee Alejandro Hernandez Hernandez wrote in his report on the game that the player had been sent off for "striking an opponent with his arm with excessive force while the ball was not near enough to be in dispute".

Roberto was already banned for Wednesday's game at home to Villarreal and will now miss the final games at Levante and at home to Real Sociedad.

## French Cup PSG's

REUTERS, Paris



Paris St Germain were made to sweat before beating brave third-tier side Les Herbiers 2-0 to win the French Cup and claim a domestic treble thanks to goals from Giovanni Lo Celso and Edinson Cavani in the final on Tuesday.

Lo Celso scored in the 26th minute but they had to wait until Cavani slotted home a penalty after 74 minutes to seal victory for their record-extending 12th French Cup title.

PSG, now unbeaten in their last 42 domestic cup games, also hit the woodwork three times in the opening 20 minutes.

Les Herbiers, who are fighting relegation in the third division, defended solidly throughout but failed to make the chances to dream of a major upset at the Stade de France.

The result, which gives PSG their fourth consecutive French Cup and the treble after they won the League Cup and Ligue 1, means Spanish coach Unai Emery will leave on a high note.

The Basque's contract is not being renewed at the end of the season and he now has just two league games left in charge.

PSG's Brazil fullback Dani Alves appeared to hurt his knee in the second half but stayed on the pitch before being replaced in the closing stages.

Les Herbiers, whose coach Stephane Masala is a fan of Italian tactics, started boldly and put some good moves together resulting in a couple of attempts in the first few minutes.

But PSG had the first clear chance in the fifth when Lo Celso's shot from just outside the area bounced off the post as the recovering Neymar, who has returned from Brazil after undergoing foot surgery, watched his side from the stands.

Three minutes later, Les Herbiers were saved by the post again after Kylian Mbappe stretched for a Thiago Motta cross.

In the 20th, PSG hit Matthieu Pichot's right post for the third time, Lo Celso once more denied a goal after curling a delightful shot from inside the area.

It was third time lucky for the Argentine, however, as he beat Pichot with a shot from 18 metres.

PSG had other chances before the break but Les Herbiers held firm, although they failed to once test PSG keeper Kevin Trapp.

# Australia keen on Iniesta

AFP, Sydney



Australian football chiefs plan to contact the agent of Barcelona captain Andres Iniesta to sound him out about a move to the A-League, reports said Wednesday, as the domestic competition looks to recruit a marquee star.

Spain's Sport website named the A-League as the World Cup-winner's "preferred destination" this week, although Japan's Vissel Kobe is also seen as one of his possible next moves.

China's Chongqing Lifan Tuesday denied reports that the 33-year-old legend will be joining them "as a player", but left the door open to future cooperation in some capacity.

Football Federation Australia's website indicated the governing body planned to contact Iniesta's agent after he announced he will leave Barcelona at the end of the season following two decades of phenomenal success.

A-League boss Greg O'Rourke said four Australian clubs have signalled their intent to make use of a recently announced Aus\$3 million (US\$2.2 million) 'marquee fund', which could be used to lure a player of Iniesta's calibre.

"We will determine with (the clubs) how this is going to work -- do we go out and use \$3 million to go and hook one big fish, or three small ones?" he told reporters.

"There's some history that would say that (Alessandro) Del Piero, when he was here with (Emile) Heskey and Shinji Ono was actually quite amplifying."

The A-League most recently had a centralised "guest marquee" fund in 2016, but it attracted only one player, Tim Cahill, whose stint at Melbourne City did not pull in the crowds and boost TV ratings as hoped.

O'Rourke said if a move for Iniesta was unsuccessful, other targets would be drawn up.

## Mumbai keep on climbing

STAR SPORT DESK

Mumbai Indians continued their phenomenal rise in the Indian Premier League table with a 102-run win against Kolkata Knight Riders at the Eden Gardens yesterday.

The Rohit Sharma-led side posted 210 for six, thanks to a whirlwind 62 off 21 balls from young Ishan Kishan and a nine-ball 24 from Australian Ben Cutting. Kishan's innings featured six sixes, four of which came in a single over.

Kolkata's chase was hamstrung by early blows, and they fell behind the eightball too soon before eventually being bowled out for 108.

The defending champions, who had won only one of their first six matches, have now won four of their last five matches, displacing Kolkata from fourth position.

**SCORES IN BRIEF**  
**Mumbai Indians:** 210 for 6 in 20 overs (Kishan 62, Yadav 36; Chawla 3-48)

**Kolkata Knight Riders:** 108 in 18.1 overs (Lynn 21, Rana 21; Krunal 2-12)

**Result:** Mumbai Indians won by 102



Paris Saint-Germain captain Thiago Silva (C) lifts the French Cup trophy as his teammates rejoice after defeating Les Herbiers in the final at the Stade de France on Tuesday.

PHOTO: AFP

## CORPORATE BOOKING

Fantasy Kingdom and Water Kingdom will be reserved on 10<sup>th</sup> May(Thursday), 2018 for Corporate Booking.

From 11<sup>th</sup> May(Friday), 2018 Fantasy Kingdom and Water Kingdom will remain open for all.



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