

What to WATCH

DAY'S EVENT

CHANNEL 9 & STAR SPORTS
SELECT 1

Indian Premier League
Kolkata v Rajasthan
Live from 8:30pm

SONY SIX

Ireland v Pakistan
One-off Test, Day-5
Live from 4:00pm

Premier Hockey League

Sonali Bank v Azad SC
Time: 3:00pm

Mohammedan v Dhaka Wanderers
Time: 5:00pm
Wari Club v Victoria SC

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

SAUDI ARABIA BAN WORLD CUP REFEREE

Saudi Arabian football authorities have banned referee Fahad Al Mirdasi for life, weeks before he was due to fly to Russia to officiate at this year's World Cup finals. Al Mirdasi confessed to offering to fix Saturday's King's Cup final on behalf of one of the participating clubs and the Saudi Arabian Football Federation (SAFF) has requested FIFA hand the 32-year-old a global ban as well as removing him from the World Cup list. "On the evening of 11 May 2018, Al Mirdasi contacted an official of one of the participating clubs by text message and solicited a corrupt payment in exchange for his assistance in that club winning the match," the SAFF said in a statement on Monday. "The club official immediately reported the matter to the SAFF, who reported the matter to the relevant government authorities. Al Mirdasi is currently in police custody, having confessed to soliciting the corrupt payment."





With The FIFA World Cup exactly a month away, people in Brazil, the spiritual home of football, have started to soak in the pre-tournament fever. In this picture taken on Saturday, residents of Alvorada in Manaus play music on a street decorated with a huge Brazilian flag.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Juve reign supreme again

AFP, Rome



Juventus were crowned Serie A champions for the seventh year in a row on Sunday maintaining their dominance in Italian football while European success continues to elude the Turin giants.

It was a double Roman celebration five days after Massimiliano Allegri's side won the Italian Cup title with a 4-0 win over AC Milan in the Stadio Olimpico.

"Maximo Masterpiece" headlined the Gazzetta dello Sport of Allegri who has won the league and Cup double in all four seasons since he arrived from AC Milan in 2014.

"Allegri is the prophet of a team that writes history, the Turin triumph was expected, but it is still impressive, what else can one say about the extraordinariness of this Juve epoch and its incredible protagonists? Adjectives are no longer enough, the numbers

speak for themselves."

Hundreds of fans gathered at the Piazza San Carlo in Turin waving flags with the number 7 after Sunday's goalless draw with AS Roma sealed another triumph with one game to go after a gripping battle with Napoli.

"We're looking forward to celebrating with our fans on Saturday," said Allegri of the final game against Verona followed by an open-top bus parade through the city.

The trophy will be awarded then and a farewell ceremony expected to honour retiring skipper Gianluigi Buffon.

"Four years like these don't come along often," said Allegri. "Credit goes to the lads for keeping their cool, taking things one step at a time towards our final objective."

But the Turin giants failed to reach their main goal of winning a third Champions League title and first since 1996.

Allegri had led them to two finals in three seasons but this time their challenge ended in the quarter-finals to Real Madrid.

And despite speculation linking Allegri with the vacant Arsenal manager's job, club CEO Giuseppe Marotta said he was confident he would remain to target the elusive European title.

"There is a lot of optimism. I believe that this relationship can continue," said Marotta.

"The Champions League is something imponderable that we always see close but never manage to grasp."

"In the Champions League the difficulties are higher than those in the championship, but we have this goal ahead of us and we will definitely go for it again next season."

Meanwhile, Maurizio Sarri's Napoli won 2-0 in Sampdoria to give them the meagre consolation of a new club record of 88 points.

PSG appoint Tuchel

AFP, Paris

Thomas Tuchel has been appointed as the new coach of Paris Saint-Germain on a two-year deal, the French champions confirmed on Monday.

The 44-year-old German has agreed to succeed Unai Emery, who will leave after the final game of the French season this weekend.

"It is with much joy, pride and ambition that I am joining this big club, Paris Saint-Germain," said Tuchel in an English-language statement released by PSG.

"I can't wait to start working with all these great players who are all amongst the best in the world."

FIFA WORLD CUP 2018

NEUER CONUNDRUM FOR LOEW

Sidelined by injury for most of the season, Manuel Neuer has given Germany boss Joachim Loew a selection headache ahead of Tuesday's World Cup squad announcement.

The Bayern Munich goalkeeper has not played since suffering a recurrence of a fractured foot in September, restricting him to just four appearances since the initial injury in April of last year.

Loew could well announce an expanded provisional list, like a number of other national team coaches, and wait until the June 4 deadline to reveal his final 23-man squad for the tournament.

Neuer returned to training with Bayern last month and is expected to be selected for a two-week long training camp in northern Italy before Loew makes a last-minute decision on his captain.

Barcelona's Marc-Andre ter Stegen has proved a reliable deputy since filling in for Neuer, but Germany's depth at other positions was called into question during a 1-0 loss to Brazil in March.

"We had some players on the pitch who had the opportunity to show themselves at this level - they did not take it," midfielder Toni Kroos said after the defeat in Berlin.

"We saw that we're not as good as we're always told we are -- and perhaps some of us think we are."

ERIKSEN HEADS DENMARK SQUAD

Tottenham Hotspur's influential midfielder Christian Eriksen was among the 35 players named in Denmark's preliminary World Cup squad announced on Monday.

The Danes are up against France, Australia and Peru in their first round next month in Russia.

World Cup squads must be reduced to 23 players by June 4.

ITALIANS TO WATCH FROM SIDELINES

For the first time since 1958, football-mad Italy will follow a World Cup finals from the sidelines without their national team.

Four-time winners Italy have been in chaos since their shock elimination in the play-offs last November to Sweden.

But on a club level Italy have had a good season, with Roma reaching the semi-finals of the Champions League and Juventus the quarter-finals, with Lazio going as far as the Europa League last eight.

In Serie A, there was a gripping battle until the end for the title with Juventus securing a seventh Scudetto in succession on Sunday.

But as the season draws to a close, Italy will be braced for a sad run up to a World Cup from June 14 to July 15 in which they will have no role.



Juventus players celebrate at the end of their Serie A encounter against Roma at the Stadio Olimpico on Sunday. Juventus won a seventh straight title after a goalless draw against ten-man Roma.

PHOTO: AFP

Double up Barca feeling the blues

REUTERS, Barcelona



Although Barcelona won the Spanish league and cup double, they will finish the season racked with regret after a shock 5-4 loss to Levante on Sunday ended their chance of an unbeaten La Liga campaign.

That followed their Champions League capitulation in Rome, leaving a bitter taste despite the satisfaction of wresting the Spanish title back from Real Madrid and trouncing Sevilla in the King's Cup final.

"I feel very angry but I have to look forwards, because what makes me angry isn't going to give me solutions," said Barcelona coach Ernesto Valverde, who rested his talisman Lionel Messi for the Levante game.

"We've played games without Messi before and come through them."

of this season to tarnish an otherwise flawless domestic campaign.

Before the 3-0 quarterfinal second-leg defeat by AS Roma there was a genuine belief Barca could win the treble, and after licking their wounds following that disappointment the focus was switched to finishing the season unbeaten.

"We're all annoyed to lose. It's come in the 37th game, so it hurts to lose it now, but it could have come in the first, third or 14th game," Valverde said.

Midfielder Sergio Busquets was trying to remain positive.

"It's a shame to lose (the unbeaten season), but don't forget that we've won the league," Busquets said.

"It's been an incredible season and, if you look beyond this one game, I think we can be proud."

Spanish media was not as kind. "The second fiasco of Barcelona's season," ran a headline in Marca.

Satkhira, Khulna win Sepaktakraw championships

SPORTS REPORTER

Satkhira and Khulna became champions of the men's and women's team events respectively in the 3rd National Men's and 1st Women's Sepaktakraw Championships by beating their opponents in the final at the Volleyball Stadium in Dhaka yesterday.

Satkhira won their Sepaktakraw match, a version of volleyball where feet are used rather than hands, against Khulna 21-12 and 21-19 in the men's final to emerge champions while Khulna lifted the trophy by handing a 21-14, 18-21 and 22-20 defeat to Rangamati in the women's final.

Neymar best in France

Annoyed by transfer rumours; focused on WC

AFP, Paris



Neymar was named as France's player of the year at an awards ceremony in Paris on Sunday, and later brushed away questions over his future.

The Paris Saint-Germain superstar took the prize despite missing the last three months of the season due to injury.

The world's most expensive player scored 19 goals in just 20 league games for PSG before suffering a foot injury in February that required surgery in his native Brazil.

He has not played since, and only returned to France from his homeland at the start of this month, fuelling speculation that he could seek to leave the club after just one season.

"I am very touched and very happy with our season. It is an honour. Without my teammates, I would never have received this award," said the 26-year-old, who collected the prize from his illustrious compatriot Ronaldo.

Neymar, who joined in PSG's Ligue 1 title celebrations on Saturday night, refused to discuss his future after collecting his award.

"We talk about these things every time the transfer window comes around. I don't want to talk about anything at the moment," he said.

"Everyone knows why I came here, what my objectives are. Right now, my objective is the World Cup, not talking about transfers."

"I spend my whole life, every transfer window, talking about it. It's a bit annoying."

Neymar beat two of his PSG teammates to the prize, voted for by his fellow players -- Edinson Cavani, Ligue 1's leading scorer this season with 28 goals, and Kylian Mbappe were also nominees, along with Marseille winger Florian Thauvin.

Neymar was signed from Barcelona for a world-record 222 million euros

(\$264 million) last August, and helped PSG on their way to a clean sweep of the domestic trophies.

However, his injury appeared to cost Unai Emery's team dear in their Champions League last-16 tie against Real Madrid -- he was unable to play in the second leg, and PSG lost 5-2 on aggregate.

He is hoping to be back to full fitness in time to lead Brazil at the World Cup in Russia, which starts in a month's time.

PSG's dominance of the French game this season was reflected in the awards.

Mbappe was named young player of the year, beating off competition from the Lyon duo of Houssem Aouar and Tanguy Ndombele, and Bordeaux's Brazilian winger Malcom.

"I have had a good season. I have changed universe. I had to adapt right away because at clubs like PSG you don't get given the time," said the 19-year-old Mbappe, who joined PSG from Monaco on a loan deal last August.

That move is set to become permanent this summer for a fee of up to 180 million euros.

Mbappe, who has scored 13 league goals, won the same award last year when he helped Monaco to the title, and so follows Eden Hazard in claiming the young player gong two seasons running.

Now with Chelsea, Hazard won it in 2009 and 2010 when with Lille.

Emery, who will leave PSG at the end of the season, won the coach of the year award.



Paris Saint-Germain superstar Neymar (R) receives the Best Ligue 1 Player award from Brazil legend Ronaldo during a TV show in Paris on Sunday.