

## PERU FANS PRAY FOR GUERRERO

Hundreds of Peruvian fans joined full-back Luis Advincula in prayer on Sunday, hoping divine intervention will deliver skipper Paolo Guerrero to the World Cup despite a doping ban. The 34-year old Peru captain already has the backing of Peru's President Martin Vizcarra and now Advincula wants God on his side too. The right-back gave a press conference in Lima when he led hundreds of fans in the 'Our Father.' "If there's a sliver of hope, we're all going to cling to it," Advincula said. Guerrero was slapped with a 14-month ban last Monday by the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Switzerland over a positive cocaine test and will miss the June 14-July 15 World Cup in Russia. Vizcarra said Wednesday that Guerrero would file an appeal with the Swiss Federal Court to fight the ban. —AFP



# BFF finally enforces FIFA ruling

SPORTS REPORTER



Following their failure to clear certain unpaid wages within the stipulated time set by FIFA several months ago, the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) deducted three points each from Mohammedan SC and Sheikh Russel KC yesterday.

As per the Dispute Resolution Chambers ruling, FIFA ordered the BFF to have the two teams clear their dues with the individuals in question --Mohammedan's previous coach Emeke Ezeugo and Sheikh Russel's Serbian Miroslav Savanovic-- in October last year. However as neither club did as instructed within the timeframe, FIFA instructed the game's local governing body to deduct three points each from the sides' last Bangladesh Premier League tallies.

Though both clubs eventually cleared their debts and then appealed for exemption from the penalty, the International football governing body stuck to its decision, forcing the BFF to follow through as well.

The decision to deduct the points was made yesterday, almost four-and-a-half months after the league concluded, by the Professional League Committee chaired by

BFF senior vice president Abdus Salam Murshed.

After the penalties were made, the finalised 12-team table basically remained the same as Mohammedan SC and Sheikh Russel kept their fifth and sixth position finishes on 29 and 24 points respectively.

In addition, though it was decided at the previous league committee meeting that each club can field three out of the four foreign players registered in their squads, the clubs yesterday demanded the right to field all four recruits, citing the AFC Cup as an example.

"We will discuss about the eligibility of four foreign players in a match at the next meeting of the BFF executive committee and take the decision as the clubs raised this logical issue," said Murshed.

On the other hand, there were previous demands made to actually reduce the number of foreign players in domestic competitions. Last season, the BFF gave in to those demands and reduced the quota for foreign players in a match to two per team but now it seems they are reversing those decisions.

Interestingly, the league committee is also mulling over whether to introduce 'the players by choice' system to give an edge to clubs in the 2019-20 season.



Barcelona legend Andres Iniesta is thrown in the air by teammates during a tribute at the end of their La Liga match against Real Sociedad at the Nou Camp on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

# Emotional send-off for Iniesta

REUTERS, Barcelona

Barcelona captain Andres Iniesta lifted a ninth Liga title after his side beat Real Sociedad 1-0 on Sunday in an emotional final game for the midfielder at the Nou Camp while Fernando Torres scored twice in his final game for Atletico Madrid.

Philippe Coutinho rattled in the only goal in the champions' final game of the season in the 57th minute as they finished the campaign with 93 points, while Torres struck both of Atletico's goals in their 2-2 draw at home to Eibar.

Coutinho drifted inside from the left and held off two defenders outside the area before rattling the ball in off the far post with a venomous shot.

The league's top scorer Lionel Messi started the game on the bench but replaced Coutinho in the 67th minute. Iniesta was substituted in the 82nd, hugging most of his team mates as well as some Real Sociedad players and the referee as he left the Nou Camp pitch for the last time as a Barca player.

Barca's fans held up a mosaic before the game reading "Infinite Iniesta".

They later revealed a banner saying "Thanks for so much" in tribute to a player who came through their academy 22 years ago and spent 16 seasons pulling the strings in midfield, winning nine Liga titles, four Champions Leagues and six domestic Cups.

They continued to sing Iniesta's name long after he had gone off the pitch. The captain returned with his team mates after the final whistle to lift the club's 25th Liga title and also show off the King's Cup trophy which they won in April, beating Sevilla 5-0 in the final.

"Today is a difficult day. I have spent 22 marvellous years here and I've been so proud to defend and represent this badge, which for me is the best in the world," Iniesta said, addressing Barca fans from the Nou Camp pitch.

"Thanks to all our fans, for the support you've shown and the respect you have given me. I came here as a boy and I leave aged 34 as a man. I'll always carry you in my heart."

Barca end the season on 93 points, 14 more than second-placed Atletico and 17 above last year's champions Real Madrid. Ernesto Valverde's side lost only one Liga match, last week's 5-4 defeat at Levante.

## Klopp seeks fitting finale

AFP, Liverpool

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp is quietly confident his side can upset the odds by preventing Real Madrid from claiming a third consecutive Champions League title on Saturday, to cap a stunning season.

Klopp's men started their Champions League campaign in a playoff against Hoffenheim just to make the group stages back in August. Now, after plundering 46 goals in 14 games, Liverpool have made it back to the Champions League final in Kiev for the first time in 11 years.

"I don't want to talk about confidence, but we feel good and think we deserve to be where we are because the boys really showed up in all the different games," said Klopp on Monday.

"It was a very exciting journey so far and now we want to bring it to the best possible end."

# FIFA WORLD CUP 2018

AGENCIES, Undated

## NAINGGOLAN QUILTS AFTER SNUB; MORATA, ALONSO OVERLOOKED

Radja Nainggolan ended his international career yesterday after Belgium coach Roberto Martinez left the AS Roma midfielder out of his squad for next month's World Cup in Russia.

Despite past clashes over discipline, Martinez insisted he took what he knew was an unpopular decision for the good of the team.

"Very reluctantly my international career comes to an end," Nainggolan wrote on Instagram.

Martinez said his offensive strategy since he took over following the team's Euro 2016 disappointment no longer offered a role to Nainggolan.

The player himself, who also announced plans to retire last year after Martinez left him out, made clear he saw a clash of personality as an issue.

"I've always done everything I could to represent my country. Being yourself can be bothering" he said. "Unfortunately, being REAL is not enough for SOME PEOPLE", adding

that the decision to quit international football gave him "much pain in my heart".

**RUSSIAN AGENCY OFFERS FAKE RESTAURANT REVIEWS**  
 A Russian marketing agency has offered to help restaurants in cities hosting the soccer World Cup use fake reviews to bump up ratings on review



site TripAdvisor, the agency's owner has confirmed.

Marketing company Bacon Agency says it can circumvent TripAdvisor's algorithm for detecting fraudulent posts and publish reviews in foreign languages ahead of an influx of fans from abroad.

"What can you do if no Serbs and

no Swedes have ever been to your venue and left a review?" Bacon Agency asks, in a brochure received by a restaurant in Yekaterinburg, which hosts Egypt and Uruguay in their first round matches.

"You write it yourself!" the agency says.

For 35,000 rubles (\$570), the agency promises a spot in TripAdvisor's top 10 list. "We are offering to help tourists find you, and to leave their money specifically with you," it writes.

"We oppose any attempt to manipulate a business' ranking," TripAdvisor said. "Our dedicated investigations team is proactive and extremely effective at catching those trying to solicit fake reviews for money."

Fake reviews are widespread, but it is unusual for a company involved in the practice to discuss it so openly, or to link it explicitly to a sports event.

The World Cup has created lucrative opportunities for businesses in the 12 host cities hoping to benefit from well-to-do foreign fans at a time when Russians are feeling the pinch from a fragile economy and Western sanctions.

## 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:

### Football-crazy Bangladesh fan to extend flag record

A football-crazy Bangladeshi man named Amzad Hossain, who created a world-record three-and-a-half-kilometer German flag to support Die Mannschaft at the FIFA World Cup in 2014, is set to extend his record as this time around as he will build a five-and-a-half-kilometer flag for 2018 Russia World Cup.

### Messi wins fifth European Golden shoe

Barcelona's Lionel Messi has overtaken Cristiano Ronaldo's tally of four European Golden Shoes after the Argentine finished as the top-scorer in the continent with 34 strikes. Messi came off the bench late in Barca's 1-0 victory at the Camp Nou.

### Sarri hints at Napoli exit amid Chelsea links

Napoli coach Maurizio Sarri hinted that he was set to exit the Serie A club after finishing runner-ups for the second time in his three seasons behind Juventus. The 59-year-old former banker has been linked with Chelsea to replace fellow Italian Antonio Conte.

# Inter snatch CL spot

AFP, Milan

Inter Milan snatched the final Champions League berth with a dramatic come-from-behind 3-2 win over direct European rivals Lazio on the final day of the season at the Stadio Olimpico on Sunday.

Inter had to win in order to take third place from Lazio who had a superior head-to-head record and needed just to draw.

Late goals from captain Mauro Icardi and Matias Vecino ensured Inter return to Europe for the first time since the 2011-2012 season, along with Juventus, Napoli and Roma.

Lazio had led 2-1 with a quarter of an hour to go in Rome after Ivan Perisic turned the ball into his own net and Brazilian Anderson got a second four minutes before the break.

But Danilo D'Ambrosio got one back after 29 minutes with Icardi slotting in a penalty after 78 minutes following a Stefan De Vrij foul to join Lazio's Ciro Immobile as the top Serie A scorer this season with 29 goals.

Lazio captain Senad Lulic was sent off late for a second yellow card with Vecino heading in the winner minutes later.

Both Inter and Lazio finished equal on 72 points but Inter are ahead on direct clashes leaving Lazio fourth, five points behind Roma who beat Sassuolo 1-0 on Sunday.

Lazio go into the Europa League along with AC Milan who sealed direct access to the group stage with a 5-1 rout of Fiorentina, who finish eighth.

Earlier second-placed Napoli ended their record-breaking season with a 2-1 win that condemned Crotona to second-tier football next season.

Lorenzo Insigne orchestrated both Napoli goals as the southerners achieved a club record 91 points for the season -- four behind champions Juventus.

Maurizio Sarri's Napoli also became the first Serie A side to reach 90 points and still

not win the league.

Crotona return to Serie B after two seasons in the top flight where they join already-relegated Verona and Benevento.

Although their dream of a first Serie A title since 1990 was over, Sarri's side were in attacking mood.

Napoli poured forward from the start with Insigne setting up Polish forward Arkadiusz Milik to head in after 23 minutes.

Forward Insigne, who has been called up by new Italy coach Roberto Mancini to the national side, then provided the assist for Jose Callejon's second after 32 minutes.

Marco Tumminello pulled one back for the side from Calabria in injury time.

Patrick Cutrone scored a double as Milan went on a goal spree in a come-from-behind win over Fiorentina at the San Siro that sealed sixth place and direct access to the Europa League group stage.

Fiorentina took the lead on their first chance after 20 minutes with Federico Chiesa's sliding pass picked up by Giovanni Simeone, who finished off over a helpless Gianluigi Donnarumma.

Three minutes later Milan were back on level terms with Turkish international Hakan Calhanoglu's equaliser.

Cutrone headed in the first of his double four minutes before the break, and almost added a second before half-time but shot wide.

Croatian forward Nikola Kalinic extended Milan's lead on 49 minutes off a rebound with Calhanoglu setting up Cutrone for his second 10 minutes later.

Cutrone thought he had completed a hat-trick with a header but was flagged offside.

Giacomo Bonaventura completed the rout after a run through midfield on 76 minutes.

Milan finished the season with 64 points while Fiorentina, whose season was devastated by the sudden death of captain Davide Astori in March, missed out on European action by finishing eighth.



Argentina striker Sergio Aguero (R) warms up prior to a training session in Buenos Aires yesterday, ahead of the Albiceleste's friendly against Haiti at the La Bombonera Stadium on 29th May.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Pogba evasive over United future

AFP, Paris

Paul Pogba has refused to rule out a move away from Manchester United, hinting at strains in his relationship with Jose Mourinho after a difficult season at Old Trafford.

The £89 million (\$119 million) France international has had a tricky second season back at United, being left out of the side or substituted early many times.

On other occasions manager Mourinho has publicly questioned his contributions, while transfer talk refuses to die down.

Asked by French television station Canal Plus if he would remain a United player, the 25-year-old declined to give a cast-iron commitment.

"You can never be sure of anything," he said. "But contractually, it's sure, yes."

"I can never look far into the future. It also depends how it goes with the club, how things work out."

Pogba has been linked with a move to hometown club Paris Saint-Germain but said such a move did not hold special appeal.

"I grew up with a father and a mother who were Marseille supporters," he said. "Paris (PSG) was never really part of my daily life. But later on, yes why not play at the Parc des Princes? It's a great pitch and a nice stadium."