

**Qualifier-2** Kolkata v Hyderabad Abahani v Sonali Bank

**Hockey Stadium** 

Live from 7:30pm

First Test, Day-2

Live from 4:00pm

**SONY SIX** 

## **DOUBLE-BLOW** FOR RONALDINHO **England v Pakistan**

Brazilian superstar Ronaldinho is reportedly planning to marry two women at the same time. The former Barcelona player, 38, will tie the knot with his pair of 'fiancees' Priscilla Coelho and Beatriz Souza, according to reports. The trio have been living 'harmoniously' with the Brazilian star since December at his five-millionpound Rio de Janeiro mansion. Ronaldinho started dating Beatriz in 2016 but continued his relationship with Priscilla, which began several years earlier. Bigamy is illegal in Brazil, and is punishable by up to six years in prison, however it is likely that a potential 'wedding' would simply be a ceremony with the two women and not registered as two official marriages. It is claimed he always gives the two the exact same presents, including recently buying them matching perfume during a trip abroad together.





Germany goalkeeper Manuel Neuer is back to his flying ways, diving far to his right as he showcases his fitness after over 200 days out due to injury on the first day of Germany's pre-World Cup training camp in Girlan, Italy yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

# Henderson hails 'visionary' Klopp

AFP, London



Liverpool captain Jordan Henderson says a rousing speech by manager Jurgen Klopp following defeat in the Europa League final laid the foundations for their exhilarating Champions League run.

The England midfielder said he has inspired by the manager's motivational words after the bitter disappointment of Liverpool's 2016 loss to Sevilla in the showpiece in Basel, where he was an unused substitute because he was not fully fit.

Klopp predicted there would be more finals, outlining his vision of where he wanted the club to go, and Henderson was hooked. "We were obviously down but when we got back to the

hotel the manager had something different to stay," he said. "He looked at the bigger picture and the future and he felt

as though it could be a big moment in our careers to learn from the experience. "He had this sort of vision that made me think, in the

future, we'd get to another final. He wanted to use the experience of that final to keep us together and use it as a positive. If we got to another final we'd be ready."

Liverpool have played some sensational football this season and are top scorers in the Champions League with 40 goals.

Their place in the final may have surprised many but Henderson believes it shows the positive mentality bred by Klopp.

"He is our leader and everyone looks up to him," he said. "I have spoken about the manager having a massive impact since he's come in, which he has. He has created a special dressing room with special players and I'm sure that will continue in the summer with new players coming in and helping this squad out to win trophies.

"I definitely feel we are going in the right direction. (I can) definitely see how hungry the team are to be successful."



# FIFA WORLD CUP 2018

AGENCIES, Undated

## NEYMAR'S RETURN 'BETTER THAN EXPECTED'

Brazil's star forward Neymar is returning to training "better than expected," after more than two months out with a broken foot bone, the Brazilian team physical trainer said Wednesday.

The Paris Saint-Germain striker, who was injured in February and underwent surgery in Brazil, is in training with the national team in Teresopolis, near Rio de Janeiro, ahead of the World Cup in Russia.

"He has evolved well. He trains every day. could even say that his development is better than expected," the trainer, Fabio Mahseredjian, told journalists.

the operation on Neymar in March, said

"he's regaining his usual movements bit by

bit. The next step is full group training and

then play games. Everything is being done

Ruled out of the World Cup with a ruptured

Achilles tendon, Arsenal defender Laurent

Koscielny has written a letter of encourage-

ment to the France squad, national coach

The 32-year-old, who has 50 France caps,

was stretchered out of Arsenal's Europa

League semifinal defeat to Atletico Madrid

"He's a man on whom you can count and

told him that if he wants to he's more than

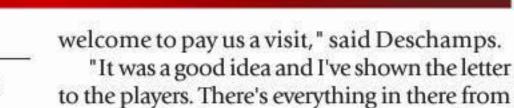
Didier Deschamps said on Wednesday.

for him to feel at ease."

BEST TO FRANCE

KOSCIELNY SENDS HIS

Team doctor Rodrigo Lasmar, who led



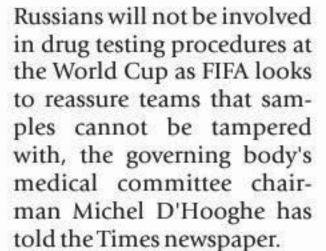
tournament calls for, " said Deschamps. The French Football Federation have made what Koscielny said in the letter public.

a man who knows what an international

"The main thing is to get along with each other, all together, players and staff, "he wrote. "Everyone has to fight and go the extra

yard for his teammates, team spirit is key." "The whole nation is behind you and will cheer you on. This support, energy, pride and passion will carry you just as it did in Euro 2016," said Koscielny, who was part of the France side that lost the final to Portugal.

### RUSSIANS TO TAKE NO PART IN DRUG TESTING



A 2016 report commissioned by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) and compiled by Canadian sports lawyer Richard McLaren found more than 1,000 Russian competitors were involved in a conspiracy to conceal positive tests over a five-year period.

Soccer was among the sports implicated in the probe and the sport's global governing body are taking no chances at the Russiahosted World Cup.

"My basic condition to lead the antidoping policy in Russia is that everything would be done from the very beginning to the last point by FIFA without Russian intervention," D'Hooghe told the Times.

"That means the chaperones, who take the players from the field, will be designated by FIFA and will not be Russian."

## **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:

Ireland's Ed Joyce retires from cricket Dual international Ed Joyce announced his retirement from all forms of cricket less than a fortnight after realising his dream of playing a Test for Ireland. The 39-year-old was one of the 11 men who made history against Pakistan in Malahide earlier this month. Quiet man Zidane bringing stability from the shadows Cristiano Ronaldo
was asked earlier
this season to sum
up Zinedine up Zinedine

Zidane in a word and the one he picked was "winner". At a Real Madrid media day, half a dozen players were rolled out to answer questions ahead of their Champions League final against Liverpool.

Lee injury adds to South **Korea World Cup woes** Veteran striker Lee 回来常想回 Keun-ho was Thursday ruled out of South Korea's World Cup squad after tearing a

knee ligament, the latest in a string of injuries to plague the Asian team ahead of Russia. "Lee Keun-ho has been ruled out of the World Cup," spokesman at the Korea Football Association told AFP.

# Ballon d'Or on the line?

AFP, Kiev



In an age when individual awards are given ever greater importance, Saturday's Champions League final between Real

Madrid and Liverpool -- and Cristiano Ronaldo and Mohamed Salah -- could determine the winner of the next Ballon d'Or. After all, Ronaldo has won the prestigious prize on the back of helping

Madrid to each of their recent European Cup triumphs, in 2014, 2016 and again last year. It is reductionist in the extreme to bring Saturday's final down to just two players, given the strength in depth

available -- especially in attack -- to Madrid and Liverpool. But this is the era of the individual, at a time when Ronaldo and Lionel Messi have dominated the Ballon d'Or for a decade. The status of each is such that the

annual prize for the world's best player generates ever fiercer debate. In a World Cup year, what happens in

Russia will play a big part too -- it is impossible to imagine Messi not winning a sixth Ballon d'Or should he lead Argentina to the title. But Ronaldo can certainly make his case in Kiev, while this is also a golden opportunity for Salah before he leads Egypt into the World Cup.

#### RONALDO'S INSATIABLE HUNGER

Ronaldo's decline in the first half of this season was as concerning as his reawakening in 2018 has been breathtaking.

The Portuguese has scored 41 goals in all competitions this season, but an incredible 28 of those have come since late January. Despite only scoring four times before the winter break, he ended with 26 goals in La Liga, behind only Messi. But it is the Champions League that

really brings out the best in him. Ronaldo



A two-time World Cup winner, the legendary Cafu installs the Champions League trophy at the fan-zone in Khreschatyk City Center in Kiev yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

has played a decisive role in each of the between them in all competitions. three finals won by Real since 2014. winning a sixth European Cup depend

This season, despite his poor domestic form, he had scored in every Champions League game prior to the semifinal win over Bayern Munich.

Karim Benzema's brace in the second leg against the Germans was crucial, but neither he nor Gareth Bale have been close to Ronaldo's standard this season.

### SALAH ALREADY BREAKING RECORDS

This has already been a record-breaking season for the Egyptian, whose 32-goal tally was a new best in the Premier League for a 38-game campaign.

Overall, he has scored a remarkable 44 in all competitions since his arrival at Anfield from Roma, including 11 in Liverpool's memorable run to the Champions League final.

He has been ably supported by Roberto Firmino and Sadio Mane, with that threesome netting 90 goals

d'Or as well is something that seems to split his teammates. "But what if Messi and Ronaldo win

to a large degree on Salah. Whether that

would be enough to land the Ballon

Nevertheless, Liverpool's hopes of

the World Cup? Do they deserve it? I don't know what do you have to look at to win the Ballon D'Or," said Georginio Wijnaldum this week. "If it's winning a prize, if it's scoring the more goals. We

Defender Dejan Lovren was a little

more optimistic. "He can be in the top three best players in the world. He has the quality, the world-class experience already," he said.

"He is so calm, a man down to earth and he deserves every credit for every goal he scored for now and definitely

we will help him achieve this dream."

# Iniesta joins Vissel Kobe

AFP, Tokyo

two weeks ago.



Barcelona legend Andres Iniesta joined Japan's Vissel Kobe on Thursday, calling his J-League move an "impor-

"This is a very special day for me," the 34-year-old World Cup winner said after signing his contract at a glitzy unveiling in Tokyo.

"I had a lot of offers, other clubs showed an interest in me," added Iniesta, who is reported to have agreed a threeyear deal with an annual salary of \$30 million, comfortably a J-League record.

"But I chose Vissel Kobe because it was an interesting project. There was also a lot of trust and confidence in me as a person and also as a player -- that was a big reason."

Iniesta, who lifted 32 major trophies and made 674 appearances for Catalan giants Barca, was handed his

trademark number eight shirt by Vissel Iniesta will inspire and empower us to owner Hiroshi Mikitani. reach new heights in football in Japan. "I am confident that Iniesta's lead-We are very proud to see this day come."



Kobe but Japanese football," said

profile of Japanese football globally.

"His arrival in Japan will raise the

Mikitani.

The Spain icon's decision to choose Kobe arguably represents Japanese football's biggest transfer coup, with many top players now moving to cashrich Chinese clubs in the twilight of their careers. It also comes as a timely boost to the

J-League, which used to attract luminaries such as Brazilian great Zico and former England star Gary Lineker when it began in 1993 but has struggled to attract marquee players in recent years. Iniesta will join former Arsenal

striker Lukas Podolski in the western port city of Kobe after he completed a move from Galatasaray last summer. Podolski was quick to send a "welcome" tweet to Iniesta on Thursday. "I'd like to help take this club forward

and help the J-League grow in Asia," said Iniesta, who is set to join his new team mates after the World Cup in Russia.

"I'm looking forward to getting to know the Kobe players as quickly as possible to be able to help with that process."

Vissel currently sit sixth in the J-League first division standings after 15 games played. Netherlands.

# Napoli eyeing Balo

Nice striker Mario Balotelli has been linked with a move to Napoli after Wednesday's appointment of new coach Carlo Ancelotti.

The 27-year-old's contract with his French Ligue 1 club expires next month and he has been targeting a move away.

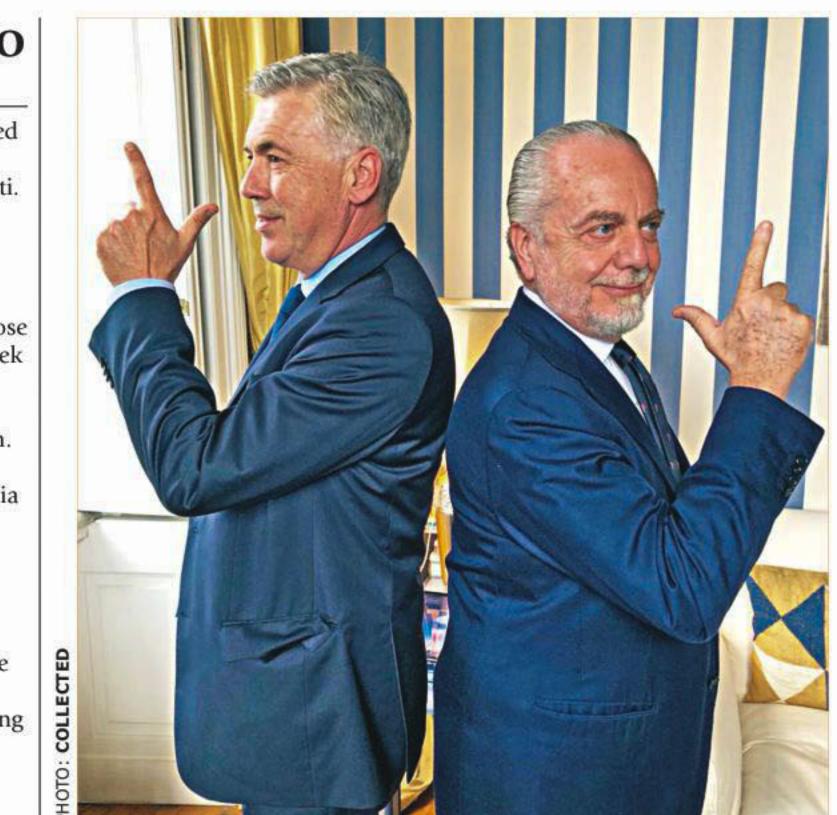
Italian Serie A runners-up Napoli are reported to be interested as they could lose forwards Dries Mertens and captain Marek Hamsik next season.

And the club fuelled speculation by starting to follow Balotelli on Instragram. Balotelli has often been linked with a

move to southern Italy as his daughter Pia lives in Naples with his ex-girlfriend. Bundesliga side Borussia Dortmund,

French club Marseille, and Serie A outfit Roma are also said to be interested, according to Italian press reports. Balotelli has resurrected his career since joining Nice in 2016 after less successful

spells with AC Milan and Liverpool, scoring 26 goals in all competitions this season. He received his first call up to the national side in four years by Italy coach Roberto Mancini for upcoming friendlies against Saudi Arabia, France and the



Napoli president Aurelio De Laurentiis and new coach Carlo Ancelotti (L) strike the famous James Bond pose after completing the formalities.