

What to WATCH

DAY'S EVENT

SONY ESPN

UEFA Champions League

Roma v CSKA Moscow

Live from 1:00am (Wednesday)

SONY SIX

UEFA Champions League

Real Madrid v Plzen

Live from 1:00am (Wednesday)

TEN 1

UEFA Champions League

Young Boys v Valencia

Live from 10:55pm

Shakhtar Donetsk v Man City

Live from 1:00am (Wednesday)

TEN 2

UEFA Champions League

AEK v Bayern Munich

Live from 10:55pm

Man United v Juventus

Live from 1:00am (Wednesday)

National Cricket League

Four-day match

Day Two

Khulna v Rajshahi

Time: 9:00am

Venue: SANS, Khulna

Rangpur v Barishal

Time: 9:00am

Venue: RCG, Rangpur

Dhaka v Chattogram

Time: 9:00am

Venue: SKICS, Cox's Bazar

Sylhet v Dhaka Metro

Time: 9:00am

Venue: SKS, Rajshahi

Ronaldo returns to Theatre of Dreams

AFP, Manchester



Cristiano Ronaldo will always be fondly remembered at Old Trafford, but as the five-time Ballon d'Or winner rolls back into town this week, this former hero may be the last sight Manchester United want to see.

Ronaldo made his name in Manchester, scoring 118 goals, winning three Premier League titles and the first of his five Champions Leagues before a then world record move to Real Madrid.

On Tuesday he returns in the colours of Juventus, eager to let his football do the talking with the cloud of a rape accusation in the United States dating back to just before he

OTHER KEY MATCHES

AEK Athens v Bayern Munich, PSV v Tottenham, Shakhtar Donetsk v Man City, Real Madrid v Viktoria Plzen, Roma v CSKA Moscow

made the move to Madrid in 2009 blighting his early days with the Italian giants.

Ronaldo strongly denies the allegation and has been backed by his club, but it remains to be seen if the hero worship afforded to the Portuguese on his last visit to Old Trafford in 2013 is dialled down a little by the United fans.

That night he broke United hearts, none more so than his old mentor Alex Ferguson in what proved to be his last European match in charge with the winning goal in a contentious tie.

"It was an unbelievable night, a very emotional night and what the supporters did for me was massive," he said of his reception.

Ronaldo, though, has little room for sentiment when it comes to furnishing his own legacy.

Five years ago his mission was to land Madrid's long-awaited 10th European Cup. It took an extra year, but he eventually did so, as well as an 11th, 12th, and 13th before departing this summer.



Juventus superstar Cristiano Ronaldo controls the ball during a training session at the Continassa training centre in Turin yesterday, the eve of their Champions League encounter against Manchester United.

PHOTO: AFP

U-17 FOOTBALL Final phase from today

SPORTS REPORTER

The final phase of the inaugural Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Gold Cup U-17 Football tournament gets underway today at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium, with Dhaka Division taking on Barisal Division in the opening match.

Eight Divisional teams, who came into this stage after playing from upazila, zila and divisional stages, are taking part in the knock-out final phase of the tournament, organised by the Youth and Sports Ministry.

State minister for youth and sports Biren Shikdar will inaugurate the finals as the chief guest while deputy minister Arif Khan Joy is also expected to be present there.

New Italian FA president named

AFP, Rome

Gabriele Gravina, the former head of Italy's third division Lega Pro, was elected president of the Italian football federation (FIGC) on Monday, almost a year after the resignation of his predecessor.

The 65-year-old Gravina was the only candidate in the running and earned 97.2 percent of votes in the first round to secure the position.

Carlo Tavecchio resigned from the job last November following the national side's failure to qualify for the World Cup in Russia.

Maradona sings Messi's praises



GOAL.COM



Diego Maradona has reiterated his belief that countryman Lionel Messi is the best player in the world.

The Argentine seemed to take aim at the Barcelona star last weekend, when he appeared to question the way that the 31-year-old is deified.

Maradona, in particular, took aim at Messi's mentality, claiming that he is not a leader.

"Messi's a great player, but he's not a leader," the 1986 World Cup winner was quoted as having said by La Ultima Palabra Mexico. "Let's stop making a God out of Messi. Messi is just another player for Argentina."

Furthermore he was cited as having accused the Barca ace of "going to the bathroom 20 times before a game".

The Dorados head coach, however, has said that his comments were taken out of context and accused the media of driving a wedge between himself and the player he once led as Argentina coach.

"I know who Leo is, I know he's the best player in the world," he said on Sunday. "If I said a player goes to the toilet 20 times

I know who Leo is, I know he's the best player in the world. If I said a player goes to the toilet 20 times before a game, I never named Lionel Messi.

DIEGO MARADONA

before a game, I never named Lionel Messi.

"They want to put me into confrontation with Messi but they cannot. The friendship I have with Lionel is bigger than anything they can write, and I'm saying that he's the greatest in the world."

Messi, however, will have to wait for several weeks to prove his qualities on the field, having sustained a fractured arm during Barcelona's 4-2 victory over Sevilla on Saturday.

It is expected that he will be sidelined for three weeks, and as a consequence he will certainly miss the forthcoming Clasico against Real Madrid. It will be the first time in over a decade that both he and Cristiano Ronaldo, now of Juventus, have both missed the showpiece event.

Messi will also be forced to sit out Barca's Champions League double header with Inter, the first match of which is on Wednesday, while he will also be sidelined for fixtures against Cultrual Leonesa in the Copa del Rey, Rayo Vallecano and potentially Real Betis on November 11.

Barca are top of La Liga by a single point, leading Espanyol and Alaves as the Primera Division has an unfamiliar make up to the podium after nine matches.

Evans to return for MSC?

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammedan's director-in-charge Lokman Hossain Bhuiyan yesterday brushed aside the uncertainty over the return of Christopher Evans, who was appointed as the head coach of the club last month.

There were whispers in the sports arena that Evans left the club over a rift with the senior players, who are allegedly not ready to work hard under his guidance.

The coach had left the club on October 8.

"The allegation is not right. Evans went to England for a surgery which was carried out successfully. He is scheduled to return to Dhaka on October 26. We have been in touch with him regularly," Bhuiyan said yesterday.

Mohammedan have been pitted in Group D alongside Sheikh Jamal, big-spending Bashundhara Kings and NoFeL Sporting Club in the Federation Cup, which begins on October 27.

Slovakia appoint Hapal

AFP, Bratislava

Former Czech international Pavel Hapal will take charge of Slovakia, replacing Jan Kozak who quit earlier this month, the Slovak Football Association said on Monday.

"After an extraordinary meeting of the executive committee, Pavel Hapal has been approved as the new coach of the Slovak national team," the FA said on its website.

SHORT CORNER

Lopetegui promises to fight

Julen Lopetegui has said he will fight to turn Real Madrid's stuttering season around but could not guarantee he will be in charge for the Clasico against Barcelona on Sunday.

His side face Viktoria Plzen in the Champions League on Tuesday, on the back of five games without a win and having lost all of their last three.

"What I've learned about this club is to fight, that is the DNA of this club," Lopetegui said at a press conference on Monday.

"That's what we're going to do, fight, both the players and the coaching staff. We know results haven't been great but we are going to turn this around. We are going to fight."

-- AFP

Bayern buoyed by 'liberating' victory

Bayern Munich travel to Greece to face AEK Athens in the Champions League on Tuesday boosted by a Bundesliga win that "felt like a liberation" after their miserable run of form and a stormy week behind the scenes.

The pressure was mounting on the German champions and new coach Niko Kovac during a four-match winless run to the extent that senior club figures including Karl-Heinz Rummenigge and Uli Hoeness launched a stunning attack on the media.

But Saturday's 3-1 win over Wolfsburg, in which Robert Lewandowski scored twice to end a five-game goal drought, is being hailed as a potential turning point for Bayern's season.

"That felt like a liberation," said centre-back Mats Hummels, while sporting director Hasan Salihamidzic was equally relieved, saying: "We have shown character in a difficult phase."

-- AFP

Rooney propels D.C. United into MLS Cup playoffs

Former Manchester United and England star Wayne Rooney scored twice to push D.C. United to a 3-1 victory over New York City FC and into the MLS Cup playoffs on Sunday.

Rooney opened the scoring in the eighth minute, tapping in his team-leading 11th goal of the season after Luciano Acosta eluded three New York defenders to reach the end line and cut the ball back to Rooney.

Acosta doubled D.C.'s lead in the 24th minute, curling in a strong shot from outside the area.

Rooney converted from the penalty spot in the 74th minute after Alex Ring handled the ball in the penalty box.

-- AFP

Ramos rages at Reguilon

Real Madrid youth player Sergio Reguilon probably did not expect such a hostile reaction when he accidentally knocked Sergio Ramos in training yesterday morning.

In a moment that has since been described as 'disgusting' and 'disappointing' the Spanish defender proceeded to take out his frustrations on Reguilon when he was caught on the nose. Footage shows Ramos booting the ball at the 21-year-old left-back not once but twice as teammate Luka Modric later approaches the Madrid captain.

The 32-year-old then wagged his finger toward the youngster as he holds his presumably sore nose -- a sign that frustrations are growing amongst the Los Blancos group after a poor start to the season?

-- SPORTBIBLE

Icardi grabs derby spoils

Captain Mauro Icardi struck a dramatic injury-time winner as Inter Milan stunned AC Milan 1-0 in the derby at the San Siro to retake third place in Serie A on Sunday.

The Argentinian pounced on a mistake by



goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma to nod home in the second minute of added time after an otherwise forgettable match, leaving Gennaro Gattuso's Milan without a win in the last five league derbies.

But Inter continued their recent resurgence under Luciano Spalletti after finishing fourth last term to qualify for the Champions League for the first time since 2011-12, moving to within six points of leaders Juventus.

"I came here to win, not to just sit on a bench for a season and try to bring home a salary," former Roma coach Spalletti told Sky Sport Italia.

"I came here to organise the future of Inter and the players must do the same.

"I liked that after the final whistle, Icardi said we must find consistency and keep pushing. Inter chose us to bring this side back to the level that the fans deserve."

-- AFP



Bangladesh players train at the BFF artificial turf yesterday ahead of today's departure for Nepal, where they will take part in the SAFF U-15 Championship beginning on Thursday. Bangladesh will play their first match against Maldives on Saturday.

PHOTO: BFF

SAFF U-15 CHAMPIONSHIP

Modest target for boys

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh under-15 football team will leave for Nepal today to take part in the SAFF U-15 Championship with a modest target of reaching the semifinals on the back of only 10 weeks of preparation.

Bangladesh, who emerged champions in the 2015 edition at home but finished third in the following edition in Nepal last year, have been pitted against the hosts and Maldives in Group A this time around. Group B features two-time champions India as well as Bhutan and Pakistan.

Bangladesh have qualified for the semifinals in all four previous editions, but managed to move into the final on only one occasion, which was at home in the third edition in Sylhet. This time they have set themselves a rather easy target of reaching the semifinals.

Though girls' teams at age-group can confidently say that their only target is winning the title when taking

part in regional tournaments, boys' teams cannot afford to do so simply because of their short-period training, unlike the round-the-year training provided to the girls.

"Having selected players from an open trial, we started the training camp in Nilphamari with 35 players from August 10. The boys have played a few practice matches among themselves.

FIXTURES	
Oct 27	Bangladesh v Maldives
Oct 29	Bangladesh v Nepal
Nov 1	Semifinals
Nov 3	Final

We have made them understand how important this tournament is for us and they are aware of their duty. We want to beat Maldives in our first match to ensure the semifinals and then we can think further," head coach Mostafa Anwar Parvez said at a press conference at the BFF House yesterday.

In the last edition, Bangladesh beat

Sri Lanka 4-0 and Bhutan 3-0 in group stages before losing 4-2 against Nepal in the semifinals.

Teams like India, Nepal and Bhutan feature academy players in their squads in age-group tournaments, but Bangladesh still bank on open trials to form squads as there are no national academies or age-group national tournaments here.

"We have done everything that we needed to do for this team. Our technical director Paul Smalley went there [Nilphamari] four times to observe training. The BFF is thinking about keeping this group of boys together even after the completion of the SAFF championship," informed BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag, who however believes there is no need to organise age-group tournaments to form national age-group teams.

Even though the 32-member squad features four officials and five coaches, there is no room for a physio. The head coach believes he can play the role of a physio with his knowledge of sports science.