

What to WATCH

TEN1
Europa League
Salzburg v Napoli
Live from 11:55pm
Inter v Frankfurt
Live from 2:00am (Friday)

TEN2
Europa League
Dynamo Kyiv v Chelsea
Live from 11:55pm
Arsenal v Rennes
Live from 2:00am (Friday)

DAY'S EVENT

Dhaka Premier League
Time: 9:00am
Abahani v Brothers Union

Venue: SBNS, Dhaka
Sheikh Jamal v Shinepukur
Venue: KSOAS, Fatullah

Legends of Rugganj v Prime Bank
Venue: BKSP-3, Savar

UEFA TO PROBE NEYMAR'S VAR CRITICISM

Paris St Germain forward Neymar will be investigated by UEFA for lashing out at the video assistant referee (VAR) system after their Champions League exit to Manchester United last week, European soccer's governing body said on Wednesday. The Brazilian, sidelined by injury, was infuriated by a late penalty awarded to United in PSG's last-16 second-leg defeat in Paris which saw them go out on away goals and Neymar later called the VAR system a "disgrace". "A disciplinary investigation has been initiated based on Article 31(3) of the UEFA Disciplinary Regulations in connection with statements made by PSG player Neymar," UEFA said. United were awarded a stoppage-time penalty for handball against Presnel Kimpembe after the referee consulted VAR. Marcus Rashford held his nerve to score and seal a 3-1 victory for United which was enough for the visitors to progress on away goals after the tied end 3-3 on aggregate.

—REUTERS



Ronaldo treble takes Juve into quarters

AFP, Turin

Cristiano Ronaldo lifted Juventus into the Champions League quarterfinals on Tuesday with a spectacular hat-trick. The 34-year-old Portuguese superstar scored two headers and a late penalty to clinch a place in Friday's last-eight draw with a dominant display and 3-2 aggregate victory by the Italian champions in Turin.

Former Real Madrid player Ronaldo has now scored 25 goals against Atletico in 33 appearances, including four hat-tricks.

Two of his five Champions League titles, in 2014 and 2016, have also been won by beating Atletico in the finals.

He scored the title-winning penalty against Atletico in 2016 and a hat-trick against them in the last four a year later.

"In the history of Juve there was never a comeback like this," said Ronaldo.

"That's why Juventus bought me, to help them in games like this. I do my job and I'm very happy, it was a magical evening."

Juventus signed Ronaldo last summer from Real Madrid for 100 million euros (\$117 million) hoping he would make the difference on the continent. The Italian title-holders have not won the Champions League since 1996, and have finished runners-up twice in the past four seasons.

"It had to be a special night and it was, not just for the goals, but for the team and their incredible attitude," continued the five-time Ballon d'Or winner.

"This is the mentality you need in the Champions League and we are on the right track."

"It's too early to talk about the final, let's take it one step at a time."

"Atletico was a complicated team to face, but we are also strong and we deserved to go through."

Ronaldo have now joins Barcelona's Lionel Messi with the most Champions League hat-tricks, on eight.

The Portuguese has been directly involved in 77 goals in 77 Champions League knock-out appearances -- 63 goals and 14 assists.

He has scored 124 goals in the Champions League, more than Atletico in the competition (118).

In the history of Juve there was never a comeback like this. That's why Juventus bought me, to help them in games like this. I do my job and I'm very happy, it was a magical evening.

CRISTIANO RONALDO



Juventus superstar Cristiano Ronaldo heads in the second goal against Atletico Madrid during their Champions League Round of 16 second leg encounter at the Juventus Stadium in Turin on Tuesday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

ASIAN ZONAL CHESS CHAMPIONSHIPS

Bangladesh hoping for norms, titles

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh will hope its chess players will earn some norms and IM titles when the Asian Zonal Chess Championships (Zone 3.2) gets underway at the Engineers' Institute in Dhaka tomorrow.

The winners and top finishers in both open section and women's section have always come from Bangladesh since India split from this zone in 2011, with the six other countries of South Asia fighting it out for the top places. The winners in each section get automatic qualification spot in the men's world cup and the women's world championship.

This time 80 top Bangladeshi chess players including five grandmasters are expected to participate alongside at least seven chess players from the neighbouring countries. Last year, GM Abdullah Al Rakib and WIM Rani Hamid won the title and sealed spots for the world events.

Since the qualification for those world event is all but assured, the organisers are hoping that an unheralded chess player wins the event so that they can get a much-coveted IM title. If someone without a GM or IM norm wins the championship in



Organisers and sponsors speak at a press conference regarding the Asian Zonal Chess Championship at the National Sports Council Auditorium yesterday.

PHOTO: BCF

either section, he or she will earn the IM title. The second and third place finishers will earn IM norms.

"Hosting these events gives opportunity to chess players to earn norms and titles. When these qualifying events are held abroad, very few players go because of the expenses involved. So this event will give a chance to maximum number of local players to earn norms and also fight for the title," Bangladesh

Chess Federation's (BCF) general secretary Syed Shahab Uddin Shamim told reporters at a press conference held at the NSC auditorium in this regard yesterday.

"This time the champion in open section will qualify for the Men's World Cup in Russia in September this year while the champion in women's section will qualify for next year's World Women's Championship," Shamim added.

A total of 8000 US dollars have been earmarked as prize money for this championship, with the men's champion slated to receive 1500 US dollars and women's champion slated to receive 1000 US dollars.

The press conference was attended, among others, by sponsors KN-Harbour Consortium's director Ekhlashur Rahman, BCF vice-president KM Shahidullah, and BCF's chief arbiter Harunur Rashid.

Junayna, Ariful ensure Navy's domination

SPORTS REPORTER



Junayna Ahmed lived up to the hype by bagging nine gold medals and a silver medal with eight in record time as the 29th Max Group National Swimming, Diving and Water Polo Championship came to an end at the Syed Shaheed Nazrul Islam Swimming Complex in Mirpur yesterday.

The 17-year-old from England bagged four more gold medals with three individual records to confirm the domination of Bangladesh Navy over Bangladesh Army.

Junayna broke records in 800m freestyle, 200m individual medley and 100m freestyle by big margin, against defending champions, to confirm her status as the best Bangladeshi female swimmer in her debut appearance in the senior national meet. The other gold she won yesterday was in the 4X100m relay event.

While the race for the best female swimmer was a one-sided affair, it was a close duel in the men's section between Bangladesh Navy's Ariful Islam and Bangladesh Army's Jewel Ahmed.

Even though Jewel could not add to his previous tally of five records today, he



Jewel Ahmed and Junayna Ahmed proudly hold the best swimmer awards at the end of the 29th Max Group National Swimming, Diving and Water Polo Championship at the Syed Shaheed Nazrul Islam Swimming Complex in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

did win two silver medals to edge Ariful as the best male swimmer with five gold and three silver medals. Jewel finished second in 200m individual medley and 4X100m relay events. He was given a run for the money by Ariful, who won gold in 50m breaststroke, 200m individual medley and 4X100m medley relay, all in record time. The Navy swimmer finished the championships with five gold, one silver and two bronze medals.

The country's premier swimmer Mahfizur Rahman Sagor, who partici-

pates in selective events, managed to win the 100m freestyle gold along with a silver medal. South Asian Games's double gold medallist Mahfuza Khatun Shila won the 50m breaststroke gold as well as 4X100m medley relay gold.

All three gold medals in diving went to Army while Army became champions in water polo event. Navy emerged as overall champions with 32 gold, 20 silver and 15 bronze medals followed by Army, who won 10 gold, 19 silver and 17 bronze medals.

Proteas cruise despite Udana cameo

STAR SPORT DESK

UdanQuinton de Kock scored a fifth consecutive 50-plus score as South Africa handed a six-wicket defeat to Sri Lanka to take a 4-0 lead in the five-match one-day international series at St George's Park yesterday.

The wicketkeeper-batsman scored 51 off 57 deliveries as the hosts raced to the victory target of 190 after a late cameo by Sri Lankan tailender Tailender Iisuru Udana had given the visitors some hope following a disastrous start.

Batting at number nine, Udana hit 78 off 57 deliveries to salvage the innings which was reeling at 97 for seven after being sent in on what looked a good batting pitch.

SCORES IN BRIEF
SRI LANKA: 189 all out in 39.2 overs (Udana 78, Fernando 29; Nortje 3-57)
SOUTH AFRICA: 190 for 4 in 32.5 overs (De Kock 51, Du Plessis 43; De Silva 3-41)
Result: South Africa won by 6 wickets and lead the series 4-0

Spanish media laud CR7

REUTERS, Madrid



Cristiano Ronaldo was lauded in the Spanish press after his stunning hat-trick in Tuesday's 3-0 win over Atletico Madrid sent Juventus into the quarterfinals of the Champions League.

Ronaldo's record-equalling eighth treble in Europe's elite competition hauled Juventus back from a 2-0 defeat in the first leg in Madrid and sent the Serie A leaders through 3-2 on aggregate.

It was the fifth time the Portuguese forward had helped to knock Atletico out of the Champions League, having won the 2014 and 2016 finals against them and beating them in the quarterfinals in 2015 and semi-finals in 2017 with Real Madrid.

"Cristiano imposes his law," said the front cover of Spanish newspaper Marca, while daily AS hailed Ronaldo, who is the leading goalscorer in the competition, as "the king of the Champions League."

There was also a sense of regret that Real, who had a humiliating exit at the hands of Ajax Amsterdam last week, had allowed their all-time top scorer to leave for 103 million euros (\$116.3 million) last July.

"Madrid should never have let a player

like this escape, when he had a contract, was the all-time top scorer and one of the patrons of the four Champions League wins," added Marca.

"They gave away a legend for 100 million euros. We just saw that Ronaldo is priceless. Letting him go was a historic error. Cristiano wasn't worth 100 million euros, he was worth a billion."

There was also criticism for Atletico's negative tactics and their attempt to merely defend their lead. Diego Simeone's side did not manage to have one shot on target in the 90 minutes.

"With Cristiano in the mood for a demolition and on one of those nights which make him the most ravenous and lethal striker in history, Juventus walked all over Atletico," said El Pais.

"Simeone's team fell the Italian way. They only wanted to defend, and they received a momentous beating."

Atletico, who have lost three European Cup finals, had targeted reaching this year's showpiece in their Wanda Metropolitan stadium.

Now their only focus is chasing down La Liga leaders Barcelona, who have a seven-point advantage at the top of the Spanish top flight.



ICC and Coca-Cola entered into a global strategic partnership for the next five years to celebrate cricket and its premier events during a ceremony at the Intercontinental Hotel yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Arrest warrant against Kiron

SPORTS REPORTER

A Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Court (CMM) yesterday issued an arrest warrant against Bangladesh Football Federation's women's wing chairman and FIFA council member Mahfuza Akter Kiron in a defamation case lodged under 'CrPC 500' by a sports organiser on the previous day.

Abul Hasan Chowdhury Prince, a permanent member of Mohammedan Sporting Club and Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club as well as vice-president of Badda Jagoroni Club, lodged the case with the CMM Court against Kiron for making 'derogatory remarks against the Prime Minister.'

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Sarafuzzaman Ansari issued the warrant and sent it to the Motijheel Police station.

"I lodged the case as Mahfuza Akter Kiron made derogatory remarks against our sports loving Prime Minister which I heard in a news report of a private TV channel," Prince told The Daily Star last night.

An official of the Motijheel Police Station, on condition of anonymity, confirmed that they received the arrest warrant and were taking measures as per law.

The Daily Star tried to contact Kiron for comments, but her cell phone was switched off.

Man City's magnificent seven

REUTERS, Manchester

Rampant Manchester City demolished a woeful Schalke 7-0 to complete a 10-2 aggregate win and become the third English side into the quarterfinals of the Champions League on Tuesday.

City's record home win in Europe did not look likely after a quiet opening 35 minutes but once Sergio Agüero began the rout from the penalty spot it became embarrassingly easy as City reached the last eight for the third time in four years.

Agüero doubled City's lead three minutes later and the impressive Leroy Sané made it 3-0 before halftime.

Raheem Sterling and Bernardo Silva finished off flowing moves after the break and youngster Phil Foden bagged his first European goal before Gabriel Jesus made it seven, rounding off the biggest ever Champions League defeat for a German side.

City join local rivals Manchester United and Tottenham Hotspur in Friday's quarterfinal draw.

