

What to WATCH

DAY'S EVENT

SONY SIX

The Ashes

Australia v England

First Test, Day Three

Live from 4:00pm

TEN 1

West Indies v India

First T20I

Live from 8:30pm

Bangladesh Premier League

Ctg Abahani v Bashundhara Kings

Time: 5:30pm

Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium, Dhaka

STEPHANIE TO REFEREE UEFA SUPER CUP

Stephanie Frappart will take charge of the UEFA Super Cup between Liverpool and Chelsea in Istanbul on August 14, becoming the first woman to referee a major men's match in European competition. France's Frappart, 35, refereed the Women's World Cup final between the United States and the Netherlands in July, and last season became the first female to officiate a Ligue 1 match. She took charge of April's game between Amiens and Strasbourg and has since been promoted to the French top flight's pool of referees on a permanent basis for the upcoming campaign. Germany's Bibiana Steinhaus became the first female referee in one of the top European leagues when she took charge of a Bundesliga match between Hertha Berlin and Werder Bremen in September 2017.

AFP





Arambagh striker Chinedu Mathew (R) performs a somersault in celebration of his hatrick against Brothers Union during their Bangladesh Premier League fixture at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Russel, Arambagh end on a high

SPORTS REPORTER



Sheikh Russel and Arambagh KS ended their Bangladesh Premier League campaigns with a bang by securing commanding wins over their respective opponents at two separate venues yesterday. Sheikh Russel finished in third position while Arambagh became fifth on the league table.

Sheikh Russel defeated the recently relegated Team BJMC 3-1, courtesy of a treble from Nigerian forward Raphael Odoyin at the Sylhet District Stadium. Similarly, a hatrick from Arambagh's Nigerian marksman Chinedu Mathew powered the side to a massive 5-2 win over Brothers Union at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Sheikh Russel, who finished sixth last year, bettered their position on the 13-team table with 52 points from 24 matches. The former champions were well within the title race at the close of the first leg but eventually fell behind following two successive defeats at the hands of Saif SC and Chittagong Abahani.

With his second treble in the league, Sheikh Russel forward Raphael exceeded Abahani's striker Sunday Chizoba's 20 strikes to become the top-scorer in two successive seasons with 22 goals. He and Solomon King jointly became the top-scorer in previous edition with 15 goals.

BJMC, who finished dead last out of 13 teams with only 11 points from 24 matches, stunned Sheikh Russel in the 31st minute through Kinsley Oshiocha before Raphael struck in the 36th, 45th and 78th minutes respectively.

At the Bangabandhu National Stadium, Arambagh notched their biggest victory in the league this year, a feat made possible by strike pair Paul Emile (two goals) and Nigerian Chinedu Mathew (three goals), who shared five goals among them after Brothers opened the scoring with a third minute strike from Park Jae-Hyeong. Brothers completed the scoresheet with Mannaf Rabbi strike in the 72nd minute.

For Arambagh, securing fifth position with 33 points from 24 matches remained the best ever result for the side as they had secured a similar finish in the 2009 edition. The motijheel-based outfit finished eighth last season.

On the other hand, Brothers escaped from relegation to finish 11th with 21 points from 24 matches. This was the worst-ever result for fallen giants of Bangladesh football as they had finished fourth twice in the 2008 and 2015-16 seasons.

Bayern Munich renew Dortmund battle

AFP, Berlin



Bayern Munich resume their power struggle with Borussia Dortmund on Saturday for the German Super Cup with the Bavarians chasing Manchester City star Leroy Sane to reinforce their squad.

The blockbuster Bundesliga curtain-raiser in Dortmund once more pits Germany's top clubs together after Bayern held off a spirited Dortmund challenge to land a seventh straight league title on the final day of last season.

"This is the first title that is important to us," said Bayern star Thomas Mueller a fortnight before the new Bundesliga season starts.

"The game has a certain explosiveness. We want to show that we are ready -- we'll put our all into it."

As defender Niklas Sule put it, Bayern "want to give a sign" they remain the team to beat in Germany.

Dortmund have recruited hard, signing wingers Thorgan Hazard and Julian Brandt -- the latter currently sidelined by injury -- and luring Mats Hummels back from Bayern to beef up the defence.

And while Bayern added French world champions Lucas Hernandez and Benjamin

Pavard, City winger Sane is the marquee player they crave.

According to reports, Bayern have tabled a bid of around 90 million euros (\$85 million) -- which would be a club record.

They have even reportedly pushed taking the official team photo back to September in the hope the 23-year-old will have joined by then.

Head coach Niko Kovac insisted declared "I assume we'll get him" last weekend, but Bayern have dramatically dialled back.

Kovac phoned his City counterpart Pep Guardiola to apologise for recruiting Sane aggressively following criticism from Bayern's senior figures.

"We're all well advised to not talk about players still under contract," said sports director Hasan Salihamidzic while chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge also criticised Kovac's bold statement.

On Wednesday, Kovac insisted "what I said was true" as he still believes in the deal with the transfer window to close in a month's time.

Exactly who will line up for Bayern at Dortmund is unclear.

Bayern fielded mainly reserve team players in Wednesday's defeat to Tottenham

Hotspur in the final of their pre-season tournament.

Arsenal sign Pepe for club record fee

AFP, London



Arsenal announced the signing of winger Nicolas Pepe from French side Lille on Thursday for a club-record fee reported to be £72 million (\$87 million).

The deal for the 24-year-old Ivory Coast international eclipses the £56 million spent on Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang in January 2018 as the Gunners add another attacking option to their ranks.

Pepe becomes the most expensive African player ever and the fourth most expensive signing in Premier League history after Manchester United pair Paul Pogba (£89 million) and Romelu Lukaku (£75m) and Liverpool defender Virgil van Dijk (£75m).

The forward, who will wear the number 19 shirt, will add firepower to an Arsenal attack that saw Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang and Alexandre Lacazette score 50 goals between them in all competitions last season.

The length of Pepe's deal at the Emirates Stadium was not announced but is believed to be five years.

Arsenal manager Unai Emery said: "Nicolas is a highly rated and talented winger who was wanted by many of the top teams in Europe."

"Signing a top-class winger has been one of our key objectives in this transfer window and I'm delighted he's joining."

"He will add pace, power and creativity, with the aim of bringing more goals to our team."

Pepe scored 22 Ligue 1 goals last season and

was linked with a host of clubs over the summer including Manchester United and Napoli.

He was behind only PSG's Kylian Mbappe in the Ligue 1 scoring charts as Lille finished second to qualify for the Champions League.

"Being here is very emotional because it has not been easy for me," he said in an interview on Arsenal's website, describing himself as quick and a good finisher.

"I have come a long way and struggled a lot

and so signing for this great club is a big reward."

Pepe said he was looking forward to playing alongside Lacazette, Aubameyang and Mesut Ozil.

"Of course, these are the players who sprang to mind because I used to watch them when I was at Lille," he said.

"Also, Lacazette used to play for Lyon and so I have had the opportunity to play against him and it will be an honour to play alongside him."



Kohli a big fan of CR7

REUTERS, Mumbai



Cristiano Ronaldo may not be the most popular footballer in South Korea at the moment but he has an ardent fan in India cricket captain Virat Kohli, who changes his club allegiance every time the Portuguese forward is transferred.

Lionel Messi and Ronaldo have dominated the global football landscape for a decade, each winning the Ballon d'Or five times before Croatia international midfielder Luka Modric broke their stranglehold by claiming the coveted award last year.

Kohli is arguably the best batsman of his generation across formats and became the first to win the International Cricket Council's cricketer, test and one-day international player of the year awards together for a phenomenal 2018.

The 30-year-old rates former Real Madrid and Manchester United Ronaldo as the best he has seen.

"For me, Cristiano is above everyone else. His commitment and work ethic is unmatched. He wants it that bad -- you can see it every game," Kohli told the FIFA website.

"In my opinion he has taken on more challenges and succeeded at all of them. He's the most complete player I have seen and his work ethic, as I mentioned, is unmatched."

"He inspires people. I don't think many people do that. He's also a leader and I love that. Absolutely love it. He has amazing



CRISTIANO RONALDO

belief too."

Kohli, a co-owner of an Indian Super League soccer franchise, enjoys cult status in cricket-crazy India and boasts 107 million followers across Instagram, Facebook and Twitter.

"I like watching Portugal play now because they are maximising their resources along with having a legend in their team," Kohli added.

"They play with passion and belief, so I like watching them. Otherwise, in terms of pure ability and impact, France are very, very strong."

"I support Juventus now because of Cristiano. Simple. I support every club at which he plays. He inspires me."

French forward Kylian Mbappe, 20, is Kohli's choice to rule the football world after Ronaldo and Messi.

Asian Match-Fixing 4 footballers get life bans

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Four players have been banned for life for match-fixing at the AFC Cup, the Asian Football Confederation said Friday.

Kursanbek Sheratov from Kyrgyzstan was found guilty of fixing a match involving his club Dordoi FC in the 2017 AFC Cup.

He also supported betting activity related to the game, the AFC added.

Kyrgyz players Vladimir Verevkin and Iliaz Alimov were found guilty of fixing one or more matches involving their side FC Alay.

And Tajikistan's Abduraziz Mahkamov manipulated AFC Cup matches involving FC Alay in 2017 and 2018.

The AFC said the punishments, handed down by its disciplinary and ethics committee, showed its "zero-tolerance approach" to match-fixing.

Meanwhile, Turkmenistan international Muhadov Suleyman was banned for four years for a doping violation.

Mbappe urges Neymar to stay

AFP, Shenzhen



French World Cup-winner Kylian Mbappe urged troubled Brazilian Neymar to stay at Paris Saint-Germain on Friday as he apologised for sparking speculation about his own future at the club.

Mbappe, speaking before the Champions Trophy against Rennes in Shenzhen, China, said Neymar was a key player for the French league-winners who are desperate for success in Europe next season.

"Everyone loves him and I love him so much," Mbappe said of Neymar, who has been linked with a return to his former club Barcelona.

"I don't want him to leave the team, obviously. I want him to stay. When you think about his situation and then he plays very well and he co-operates with the team you can see what he means to us."

The 20-year-old Mbappe, who smashed 33 goals for PSG last season, also doused any lingering concerns over his own plans after he talked about playing "elsewhere" at the French league awards ceremony in May.

"I think it wasn't the right place (to say that)," he told reporters in southern Chinese city. "I'd like to say sorry to the players who were there, because I spoiled the party."

It has been a troubled few months for

Neymar, who earned a three-match ban after an altercation with a fan as Rennes stunned PSG on penalties to win the French Cup in April.

Neymar also missed Brazil's triumphant Copa America campaign on home soil after suffering an ankle injury in a warm-up friendly against Qatar.

And the 27-year-old has been embroiled in rape allegations, vehemently denied, which were dismissed by Brazilian police on Monday for lack of evidence.

"He is still the same Neymar," said Mbappe of his teammate, who trained with the rest of the squad on Friday.

"We all know he is in very special circumstances. However he is training with us and he is still performing his best which is not unusual and after all he is a very good player."

Mbappe said he hoped to improve on his 33-goal tally next season, adding that Qatar-owned PSG also want to take the elusive next step in the Champions League.

"We're going to try to win the two national trophies, to not leave matches to chance," he said. "After that there's the Champions League, which everyone's looking at... we have to take that step."

"We've found our way blocked the last few years. It's up to us to find a way to go as far as possible."

Alves heads home to Sao Paulo

AFP, Brasilia

After 17 years playing for the top clubs in Europe, Brazil captain Dani Alves has decided to return home, signing a three-year deal with Sao Paulo.

A free agent after his contract with French champions Paris Saint-Germain expired in June, Alves explained his decision on a Twitter video posted on the club website.

"I could have picked any team to play for but I chose to return to Brazil, to my country, my people, to the club that I love," said the 36-year-old who has been in Europe since he signed for Sevilla in 2002.

The right back went on to play for Barcelona, Juventus and PSG, collecting nine national league titles along the way -- six in Spain, one in Italy and two in France.

He has collected 40 trophies in all with club and country including three Champions League titles with Barcelona and two UEFA Cups with Sevilla.