

### HAALAND'S FATHER BLASTS PSG TROLLS

Erling Haaland's father, Alf-Inge, has hit back at Paris Saint-Germain's players for mocking his son after their victory over Borussia Dortmund in the Champions League. After the match, PSG's players took aim at Haaland and mocked the 19-year-old by copying the same celebration he used after he scored in the first leg. And now Alf-Inge has sent a sarcastic message to PSG's players on Twitter which read: 'Goodbye beautiful Paris. Shame about the result, but well deserved on the day. All the best, showing class on and off the pitch.' It has emerged that PSG's players were acting in response to a Snapchat post from Haaland in which he claimed Paris is, 'my city, not yours'. Referencing Haaland's post on Instagram after the game, Neymar posted his own message to fans as he posted a picture of himself in the same pose as the Dortmund striker with the caption: 'Paris is our city, not yours.'

-- AGENCIES



Manchester United's Nigerian forward Odion Ighalo celebrates the team's first goal in their 5-0 thrashing of LASK in the Europa League Round of 16 fixture in Linz, Austria on Thursday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Man Utd thrash LASK

AFP, Paris

Manchester United put one foot in the Europa League quarter-finals on Thursday with a 5-0 win at LASK Linz in one of four last 16 first leg matches played behind closed doors due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Odion Ighalo slammed home the opener via the underside of the bar from 20 yards just before the half-hour, and Daniel James added a second with a sharp run and finish just before the hour mark.

Juan Mata bagged a third eight minutes from the end and Mason Greenwood and Andreas Pereira struck in injury time, as United extended their unbeaten run to 11 matches, with nine clean sheets in that time.

"I think the quality in our play was good. We were well prepared for them and they did fantastic," United boss Ole Gunnar Solskjaer told BT Sport.

"There was some high-class

finishing in the goals ... It should have been more goals before half-time, but we got the goals we needed."

The game was played without fans in line with the guidance of the Austrian government -- one of four matches held behind closed doors on Thursday.

UEFA on Wednesday confirmed that the first legs between Inter Milan and Getafe in Italy, and between Sevilla and Roma in Spain, would not go ahead as planned.

The announcement came after Spanish authorities suspended flights until March 25 to the country from Italy, which has been the worst hit European nation by the spread of the virus.

With the second legs due to be played next week, it is unclear how the ties will be resolved.

Ibrox was one of the two grounds where fans were allowed to attend, but the presence of Rangers' home support couldn't stop them losing 3-1 to Bayer Leverkusen.

Bundesliga outfit Bayer are now favourites to progress should the second leg matches take place thanks to Kai Havertz's penalty eight minutes before the break and two lovely second half strikes from Charles Aranguiz and Leon Bailey.

George Edmundson had briefly given Rangers hope in the 75th minute when he pulled the scores back to 2-1 with a well-placed header, but Steven Gerrard's side could not capitalise.

Istanbul Basaksehir won 1-0 at home to FC Copenhagen in Turkey courtesy of a late Edin Visca penalty, in the other game allowed to take place before a crowd.

Basel secured a surprise 3-0 victory over Eintracht Frankfurt with Samuele Campo, Kevin Bua and Fabian Frei all on target for the visitors. Germany's financial capital will also host next week's return leg, due to coronavirus-related restrictions imposed by Swiss authorities.

Wolverhampton Wanderers gave themselves a good chance of continuing their first European

run in nearly four decades with a 1-1 draw at Olympiakos' empty Georgios Karaiskakis Stadium.

Wolves had asked that the match be postponed after it had been announced on Tuesday that Olympiakos owner Vangelis Marinakis -- also the owner of English club Nottingham Forest -- had tested positive for coronavirus.

However the Premier League club said that UEFA had rejected that request. On Tuesday Marinakis said he was taking "all necessary measures" and "feeling well".

"You play a game of football and then you realise what's happening worldwide with all these people ill and dying and all these things and you have to play a game of football," said Wolves coach Nuno Espirito Santo to BT Sport.

"It's absurd."

Shaktar Donetsk saw off Wolfsburg 2-1 in an entertaining encounter in Germany, with goals from Junior Moraes and Marcos Antonio enough for the Ukrainians, who also missed a penalty through Victor Kovalenko.

## Clubs divided over BPL's single venue proposal

SPORTS REPORTER



Country's professional football clubs are apparently divided over the proposal of playing the ongoing Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) at a single venue following the outbreak of coronavirus ahead of a proposed meeting of the professional football league committee today.

Bangladesh Football Federation president Kazi Salahuddin on Wednesday informed media that they were planning to hold the BPL at a single venue due to coronavirus crisis. The health ministry advised people to avoid mass gathering after three persons were tested positive for the virus and hundreds put in quarantine.

Before discussing the matter at today's meeting, most of the clubs presented their stances, with some clubs in favour of hosting the BPL fixtures at a single venue while some others opposed to the idea.

"We won't accept the proposal to play at the Bangabandhu National Stadium, which is also home venue to seven other teams; rather we can accept the proposal of playing the league at a natural venue such as the Army Stadium. The BFF can also think of a break, according to current schedule, due to the postponed World Cup Qualifying fixtures," Bashundhara Kings president Imrul Hasan said, adding that playing in Dhaka is as much a risk as is playing at district venues.

Six-time champions Abahani's manager Satyajit Das Rupu said, "We want the continuation of the league and we don't have any problem of playing at a single venue. It is not possible to travel to districts to play the league if the situation gets worse. We can consider steps taken by other sports organisations such as postponing tournaments."

Mohammed director Sarwar Hossain said, "The government hasn't banned traveling so far and the situation has not deteriorated. Then why will we play at a single venue? What about our investment in preparing the home venue? However, we will first want to hear from BFF, then we will give our opinion."

"I'm really concerned about the health of the players and officials because I'm doubtful over the hygiene of the hotels at district level. No one can ensure that hotels will provide with fresh towels, bed sheets and other things. So I think it is better to hold the league at a single venue for the time being," said Saif SC managing director Nasiruddin Chowdhury, who proposed holding the Independence Cup in the meantime by postponing the league.

Sheikh Jamal manager Anwarul Karim Helal said: "You see the whole world has been affected with coronavirus and major sports events are being suspended or played behind closed doors. I'm personally in favour of playing at a single venue in Dhaka and BFF should do it."

Sheikh Russel's sports director Saleh Jaman Selim said, "If the fixtures of the league are rescheduled to Dhaka, the league has to be completed in Dhaka. Otherwise, we won't accept the proposal. We have another proposal of completing all the away matches of the clubs, who have home venues outside Dhaka and then those club will play their home matches when the situation improves."

Bangladesh Police FC manager Sheikh Maruf Hasan said, "In the greater interest of football, we will accept any decision that comes from the meeting."

The 12th edition of the league is being held in seven separate venues -- Dhaka, Nilphamari, Mymensingh, Sylhet, Chattogram, Cumilla and Gopalganj.



CCCL-RunBangla International 10k, the country's first AIMS-affiliated race, was held yesterday in Hatirjheel with 1300-plus participants. Md Sazzad Hossain became champion in the open category while Jane Crowder topped the female category.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## 'Guardiola didn't deserve my respect'

AGENCIES



Manchester United midfielder Bruno Fernandes says he shushed Pep Guardiola during Sunday's derby clash because the Manchester City coach did not deserve his respect.

United beat their rivals 2-0 in the Premier League clash at Old Trafford, with Portugal star Fernandes playing a pivotal role and setting up Anthony Martial for his side's first goal.

Fernandes put his finger to his mouth to tell City boss Guardiola to be quiet after a heated moment on the touchline late on in the clash -- a moment that thrilled the home support.

And while Fernandes insists he would not make the gesture again, he believes Guardiola disrespected him.

"I talked about this with some friends and some people think: 'Pep won everything, who is Bruno to diss him?', but I think it is about respect," Fernandes told Sky Sports.

"Now, I think outside of the pitch I don't do this again if I am on the pitch now. But, at that moment the words he told me made me mad, and on the pitch I am a little bit nervous, it is the kind of player I am."

"I have respect for Pep and what he won, and what he did for football because he changed some mentalities in football."

"But, at that moment he didn't respect me and so he didn't deserve my respect at that moment on the pitch."

"But for me it doesn't matter. What goes on in the pitch, out of it, for me, it's past."



## Dybala refutes coronavirus claims

AGENCIES



Paulo Dybala and Juventus have denied reports suggesting that the forward has tested positive for coronavirus.

The Serie A giants have been forced into a period of solitary isolation after it was revealed that Daniele Rugani has contracted Covid-19.

With the Turin-based club on lockdown, rumours had emerged regarding Dybala claiming that the Argentina international had become the latest high-profile figure to contract the illness.

Sources close to the club have, however, confirmed that is not the case.



The Bianconeri have also stated a denial to news agency Ansa regarding the speculation which has surfaced outside of their control.

Dybala later delivered a message to fans on social media providing an update on his health and confirming he has entered into quarantine as a precautionary measure.

The update read: "Hello everyone, I wanted to confirm that I am well and in voluntary isolation. Thank you all for the messages and I hope you are well."

For now, Juve are doing all they can to adhere to the containment procedures being put in place by governments and sporting authorities around the world.

Rahmatganj players surround Police forward Luka Rotkovic during their BPL fixture at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. Rahmatganj won the match 2-0.

PHOTO: BFF

## Rahmatganj beat Police

SPORTS REPORTER



Rahmatganj recorded consecutive victories in the Bangladesh Premier League with a 2-0 win over promoted Bangladesh Police at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

One goal each from Uzbek forward Turaev Akobir and former national midfielder Shahedul Alam helped the Old Dhaka outfit leapfrog to sixth position from 11th with seven points from six matches. The defeat, on the other hand, saw Bangladesh Police slip to eighth position with five points from five matches.

The first half of the match belonged to Rahmatganj, who created more chances to take the lead before Bangladesh Police came

back strongly in the second. However, the Police forwards were far from capitalising the chances they created. Rather Police conceded the second goal in the stoppage time of the second half.

Gambian forward Momodou Bah came close to giving Rahmatganj the lead in the 27th minute but Police goalkeeper Arifuzzaman Himel came out of his blocks in time to thwart the attempt.

Rahmatganj took the lead in the 44th minute when Sanwar put a defence-splitting diagonal ball to Akobir, who coolly placed to the left-hand side of Himel.

After Police wasted a number of chances, Sanwar wrapped up the game with a simple tap-in in the stoppage time after substitute Igwe Kasstan's shot was parried by Himel.

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