



Wrong door at 35,000 feet

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka Cricket said Tuesday it will investigate reports a drunk player tried to open a cabin door at 35,000 feet (10,600 metres) during a flight from St Lucia to London.

The batsman was seen by other passengers pushing and pulling the door on the plane while searching for the toilet, about two hours out from London's Gatwick airport on Monday, British media have reported.

British Airways (BA) crew members subdued the player, whose actions were causing panic among the plane's 229 passengers, according to the Daily Mail.

Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) said it was "disappointed" with the reported incident and vowed disciplinary action against the batsman if it was proved true.

"An inquiry will be conducted based on the manager's report and disciplinary action will be taken," SLC said in a statement, which did not give details of the incident.

The reports said the player was returning from the West Indies, where the team had been competing. The cricketer, who is a member of Sri Lanka's 'A' team, has not been named in media reports or by Sri Lanka Cricket.

"During the flight a man got up and tried to go to the toilet. But instead of going to the toilet he tried to open the aircraft door in mid flight," a BA spokesperson was quoted as saying.

Four journo honoured

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Sports Press Association (BSPA) felicitated four veteran sports journalists at the Bangladesh Olympic Association auditorium today to mark the World Sports Journalists' Day, which was also observed in 167 countries.

The Independent's sports editor Manjurul Haque, sports writers Biman Bhattacharjee, Mohammad Selim and Mostafa Kamal were honoured for their contribution in sports journalism by the BSPA, which has been honouring veteran sports journalists and writers since 1995.

State minister for youth and sports Ahad Ali Sarker handed over blazers and crests to the awardees and promised that he would try to fix a sports day in Bangladesh, after receiving such a proposal from Manjurul Haque.



Brazil star Kaka, wearing a traditional Chinese costume, kicks a ball during a game called Cuju after the opening ceremony of the China-Brazil soccer carnival in Beijing yesterday.

Arsenal snap up Sanogo

REUTERS, Undated

Arsenal have signed French youth international striker Yaya Sanogo on a long-term contract, the London club said on their website on Monday.

Sanogo, 20, a free agent after leaving Ligue 2 team Auxerre, has represented his country at Under-16, Under-17 and Under-19 level and is currently with the national side in Turkey for the Under-20 World Cup.

He has scored in two of their three matches in Turkey, helping France qualify for the knockout phase.

Sanogo had been with Auxerre since the age of 14. He made 24 first team appearances and scored 11 goals.

Hamburg take Djourou on loan

AFP, Berlin

Bundesliga side Hamburg have taken Swiss international defender Johan Djourou on a season-long loan from English Premier League outfit Arsenal, the German club announced Monday.

The 26-year-old Ivory Coast-born defender is Hamburg's second signing in the close season after Cameroon striker Jacques Zoua joined from Basel.

Djourou spent the last six months of last season on loan at another Bundesliga side, Hanover.

Hamburg's sporting director Oliver Kreuzer said Djourou was just the type of defender they had been looking for.

"He ticks all the boxes in terms of what we wanted," he said.

"I am satisfied with the way that our recruitment for next season is going."

Hamburg are also pursuing veteran Paraguayan striker Roque Santa Cruz as well as defender Lasse Sobiech of Bundesliga rivals Borussia Dortmund.

Brazil unrest raises questions

AFP, Rio de Janeiro

The Confederations Cup, held amid unprecedented social turmoil, shed light on a new face of Brazil and raised fresh questions about the country's pledge to stage the best ever World Cup next year.

Despite initial fears about delays in delivering stadia for the tournament, what was billed as a dry run for the first World Cup to be held in Brazil since 1950 proved to be a sporting success.

The Selecao captured a fourth Confederations Cup trophy by outclassing Spain, the current World Cup Champions, 3-0 in Sunday's final at Rio's iconic

Maracana arena.

The organization of the event generally went well.

But the country still faces an uphill battle in completing huge infrastructure projects at a time when a restive population is venting anger over the political class's failure to deliver adequate public services and to root out endemic corruption.

The government had planned tough security measures to deal with rowdy fans, organized crime and prevent a terror attack.

But it was taken by surprise by the explosion of anger led by urban youths railing against rampant corruption and the billions of dollars invested in major football events rather than in health, education and public

transport.

Brazilian authorities and world's football governing body FIFA had hoped to use the Confederations Cup to begin selling Brazil, the land of football and samba, as a joyful and successful emerging power.

Instead the world was treated to a much less idyllic image of this continent-sized country of 194 million people, with live television coverage of scenes of urban guerrilla warfare, including violent clashes between stone-throwing radicals and riot police responding with tear gas and rubber bullets.

Now there are fears, even within FIFA, that the unrest may flare anew during Pope Francis's visit to Rio late this month for a

major Catholic Youth fest or even during next year's World Cup which will be followed a few months later by presidential and legislative polls.

"Of course, this situation is a source of concern. Given what has just happened, some tourists who were planning to visit Brazil might change their minds," said Marco Polo del Nero, vice president of the Brazilian Football Confederation.

Some 600,000 foreign fans are expected for the World Cup, 30 times more than during the Confederations Cup.

And organizers, who have pledged to stage the best World Cup ever, expect 3.8 million Brazilians to travel between the 12 host cities.



'Messi is my role model'

INTERNET, Undated

New Bayern Munich signing Mario Gotze has revealed that Barcelona star Lionel Messi is a role model to him.

Many have speculated that head coach Pep Guardiola will deploy the Germany international as a Messi-esque 'false No.9' at Bayern and is keen to emulate the Argentine star.

"Lionel Messi is a role model for everyone, including me," Gotze said during his presentation on Tuesday afternoon. "I don't see the transfer amount as extra pressure. It's something to be proud of having just turned 21."

"Looking back, it wasn't easy when the news broke that I was leaving Dortmund, but that's behind me now. The important thing is to develop myself and I wanted to do that at Bayern."

The 21-year-old then went on to discuss his relationship with Guardiola and stated that his first meeting with the former Barcelona boss was rather special.

"The first contact with Guardiola was really special. We talked about when I would be fit again. I watched Guardiola's training sessions and I saw that he works a lot with the ball on technical things."

Gotze is currently recovering from injury and could miss the beginning of Bayern's season.

A decade under Roman

AFP, London



Chelsea officials predicted more success for the English giants Monday after a decade under the ownership of Roman Abramovich.

The Russian billionaire, still very much at the helm at Stamford Bridge, has spent an estimated £874 million (\$1.33 billion) on transfers and £1.5 billion (\$2.28 billion) on wages in the 10 years since he took charge of London club Chelsea on July 1, 2003.

In so doing, Abramovich set a template for a host of wealthy foreign owners who've since taken charge of

leading English football clubs and transformed the landscape of the game in its birthplace.

Abramovich's investment has so far yielded three Premier League titles -- prior to that the club were last crowned champions of England in 1955 --, four FA Cups, two League Cups and, significantly, a highly coveted European Champions League title and last season's Europa League.

"It has been a hugely successful decade for Chelsea Football Club since Roman Abramovich took control, with an unprecedented number of trophies in the last 10 years," said Chelsea chief executive Ron Gourlay in a statement Monday.

"The club has also taken great

strides off the field in that time, adapting to meet the challenges of football's changing landscape.

"Mr Abramovich's early investment in playing staff paid dividends in creating a team admired around the world, but to keep Chelsea among the elite we have always known we must produce our own world-class talent and we are beginning to see the benefits of our Academy, which will help us meet our long-term objectives for Financial Fair Play."

"As we prepare for the next 10 years, I feel we are well positioned to continue the success we have so far enjoyed under Mr Abramovich and everybody here is determined to build on that progress we have made."

Paulinho joining Spurs

AGENCIES, Sao Paulo



Tottenham have won the battle for Brazil midfielder Paulinho after Corinthians confirmed he will join them for £17.1 million.

The player had been widely expected to leave the Brazilian club for England after the Confederations Cup final, as revealed by Sportsmail.

Paulinho has played 167 times for the Brazilian club over the last three seasons and scored 34 goals.

And, during an emotional press conference, the 24-year-old broke down as he explained his exit.

"It's hard to say anything at a moment like this, but I am sure those were three wonderful years in my career, with many titles," he said.

"What I have to say to Corinthians fans, board and staff is see you soon - I will be back in no time, due to everything they have done for me."

"My individual titles are all thanks to the club, Corinthians will be in my heart for the rest of my life."

The midfielder told reporters that he would play in the South American Supercup against Sao Paulo on July 3 and 17 before heading to London.

There was no immediate comment from Tottenham.

Corinthians won the South American equivalent of the European Champions League, the Copa Libertadores, while Sao Paulo won the Copa Sudamericana.

Tottenham finished fifth in last year's English Premier League, just missing out on a Champions League spot. They will play in the Europa League instead.

Corinthians director of football Roberto de Andrade praised the player who starred as Brazil beat Spain 3-0 in Rio on Sunday.

"I want to thank Paulinho for everything he has done for Corinthians," he said.

"We will never forget him - the great person he is - and his national team title (the Confederations Cup with Brazil) is well-deserved."

"Corinthians are proud for having had a player like him. It's fair he continues his life at an English club, to know a new culture."



Bayern Munich's latest signing Germany winger Mario Goetze (L) holds his new jersey with sporting director Matthias Sammer after a press conference at the team's headquarter in Munich yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP