

## Pep eyeing Thiago

AFP, Riva del Garda



Bayern Munich coach Pep Guardiola on Thursday confirmed the European champions' interest in Barcelona midfielder Thiago Alcantara.

Spanish media had already linked the 22-year-old Alcantara to the Champions League winners and ex-Barcelona coach Guardiola has admitted he has asked the Bavarian giants to sign the midfielder.

"Yes, I want Thiago Alcantara, I have asked (Bayern to get him)," said Guardiola at Bayern's pre-season training camp in north Italy.

"I know him very, very well. He's a great player and can cover three, four, five positions.

"I have talked to (chairman Karl-Heinz) Rummenigge and (director of sport Matthias) Sammer, we will have to wait and see.

"Thiago is the only player I want, it will be him or no one.

"We have many players, but we need the special qualities Thiago Alcantara brings."

Both Manchester United and Real Madrid have been linked to Alcantara, who has a market value of around 20 million euros (\$26 million) and captained Spain Under-21 to the European title and was voted player of the tournament.

Alcantara, who has a contract at Barcelona until June 2015, scored a first-half hat-trick as Spain beat Italy 4-2 in the European Under-21 Championships in Jerusalem last month.

"I don't think adding another midfielder will be a problem for us," said Guardiola.

"I spoke to club about my concept and told them why I want Thiago Alcantara."



Manchester United star Wayne Rooney (2nd from R) arrives with teammates at the Don Muang International Airport in Bangkok yesterday

PHOTO: AFP

## Pellegrini focuses on youth

AFP, Manchester



Manuel Pellegrini admits part of his remit as Manchester City manager will be to help nurture young talent and save the club spending heavily on transfer fees in the future.

City, who were bought by Sheikh Mansour's Abu Dhabi United Group in 2008, have been the Premier League's highest spenders in the transfer market in recent years.

But new financial fair-play rules have been introduced in a bid to curtail the spending of clubs like City and Pellegrini, who on Wednesday spoke to the media for the first time since he was appointed as Roberto Mancini's successor, seemed to suggest a slight departure from that policy in the long term.

"We have to have a different style here in the club," Pellegrini said. "I mean a different style in the way Man City must work in the next few years.

"It is impossible every year to buy

three, four, five expensive players. We need a mix with young players, who work exactly the same as the first team, and as the Under 21s.

"There are a lot of things we can improve. What Roberto Mancini and the other coaches have done we will continue working at and adding different things."

Manchester City chief executive Ferran Soriano was recently quoted as saying that he wanted Pellegrini to win five trophies in the next five years.

Former Malaga boss Pellegrini knows he will be under pressure to compete for all trophies on all fronts, but the 59-year-old Chilean believes that is only part of his mandate at Eastlands.

"As a coach of course we always want immediate success," he added.

"If that will bring us trophies, perfect, we have more chances to win that way. In the same way we are working with young players and we will continue to."

"I'm here not only to win trophies - the Premier League, the Champions League, the FA Cup - I am here to work

with young players.

"To win trophies is very important but I am not here just for that. I will do my job here completely with Ferran, with Txiki Begiristain (Manchester City sporting director), with Patrick Vieira (elite development squad manager) also working with young players."

Pellegrini has already boosted his squad with the signings of Brazil midfielder Fernandinho from Shakhtar Donetsk for £30 million and Spain winger Jesus Navas from Sevilla for £15 million.

And the City manager confirmed a player's nationality will not be an important issue when asked whether he would target any English players.

"We need good players, yes. Good English, Argentinian, South American players. We are trying to have a strong squad in all positions," Pellegrini said.

"I think that all the clubs have the same problem with English players. Arsenal or Chelsea do not have a lot of English players but we have here very important young players."

## India 111-3, chasing 202

AFP, Port of Spain



India were 111 for 3 after 28 overs in their chase of 202 to win the Tri-Nation Series final against Sri Lanka at Queen's Park Oval on Thursday.

Opener Rohit Sharma was still there on 49 and Suresh Raina was at the other end with 15. The batsmen out were Shikhar Dhawan, 16, Virat Kohli, 2, and Dinesh Karthik, 23.

Shaminda Eranga took 2 wickets while Rangana Herath accounted for the other for the Lankans.

Earlier, Sri Lanka lost their last eight wickets for 30 runs to be dismissed for 201 off 48.5 overs.

A 122-run second-wicket partnership between Kumar Sangakkara (71) and Lahiru Thirimanne (46) had placed the Sri Lankans in an excellent position at 171 for two in the 38th over to launch a concerted assault in the final stages of the innings.

However a succession of injudi-

cious shots, coupled with the failure to appreciate the requirements of the situation, saw batsman after batsman gifting his wicket away while the Indians kept their cool.

Mahendra Singh Dhoni, the calmest of them all, marshalled his forces superbly on returning to the side while effecting three stumpings and playing his part in strangling the opposition when they would have been expected to be flourishing and racing towards a formidable total.

Left-arm spinner Ravindra Jadeja benefited most, claiming four of the last five wickets at a cost of 23 runs. He, together with the other specialist spinner, Ravichandran Ashwin, were only brought on after the three frontline seamers and two part-timers -- Virat Kohli and Suresh Raina -- were given an opportunity to make the most of a pitch on which free scoring was challenging, although far from impossible.

It was typical of the confident unorthodoxy of Dhoni, back at the helm after recovering from a hamstring injury that

had appeared to rule him out of the rest of the tournament following the opening defeat to the West Indies in Jamaica.

Ashwin was the only one of the seven bowlers used who completed a full 10-over allotment, taking the key wicket of Sangakkara along with Kusal Perera at a personal cost of 42 runs.

Sangakkara's wicket was key to India wresting the initiative from their very familiar opponents for he played with assurance and excellent awareness until the urgency of the batting power-play triggered the risky stroke that brought about his demise to a good catch at mid-on by Vinay Kumar.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

**SRI LANKA:** 201 all out in 48.5 overs (Sangakkara 71, Thirimanne 46, Jayawardene 22; Jadeja 4-23, Bhuvneshwar 2-24, Ashwin 2-42, Ishant 2-45)

**INDIA:** Rohit, Dhawan, Kohli, Karthik, Raina, Dhoni, Jadeja, Ashwin, Bhuvneshwar, Ishant, Vinay. Toss: India.



Manchester City's new manager Manuel Pellegrini holds a club jersey at their Carrington training ground on Wednesday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Hall of Fame honour for Warne

AFP, Nottingham

Australia great Shane Warne is to be inducted into the International Cricket Council (ICC) Hall of Fame, the global governing body said in a statement issued from its Dubai headquarters on Thursday.

The leg-spin legend will be formally inducted into the Hall of Fame during the tea interval of the second day of the second Ashes Test between England and Australia at Lord's on July 19. Warne, credited with reviving interest in leg-spin outside Asia, was the first bowler to take 700 Test wickets and represented Australia in 145 Tests between 1992 and 2007. In all he took 708 Test wickets at an average of 25.41.

His tally of 3,154 Test runs is the most by any player without making a hundred.

Warne also took 293 wickets in 194 one-day internationals at an average of 25.73 and was a member of the Australia side that beat Pakistan in the 1999 World Cup final at Lord's where his teammates included fellow Hall of Famers Glenn McGrath and Steve Waugh.

His return in the final of four wickets for 33 runs in nine overs saw Warne named man-of-the-match.

"I'm very honoured and proud to be announced as an inductee into the ICC Hall of Fame later this month and I'd like to thank the voting academy very much for even considering me," said Warne, currently in England working as a television commentator during the ongoing Ashes series, which started Wednesday at Nottingham's Trent Bridge ground.

"I'm looking forward to celebrating my induction with my friends and family in front of the crowd at Lord's during the second Ashes Test."

## Punter-like finishing

INTERNET, London

Former Australia captain Ricky Ponting hit a century in his final first-class innings to give Surrey hope of saving their match against Nottinghamshire.

The 38-year-old, one of the all-time greats, moved from his overnight 41 to 108 not out at lunch on the final day of the County Championship Division One match at the Kia Oval.

That helped Surrey to 282 for five in their second innings but with a lead of just 70, they still had work to do.

Durham needed only 16 balls to wrap up a comfortable victory on the final day of their clash against Derbyshire.

The visitors' last three batsmen offered no resistance at the ICG Emirates Durham as they slipped to 192 all out to lose by 279 runs.

Tom Poynton was left stranded on 58 not out while Chris Rushworth finished with four for 39 for match figures of 10 for 103.

## Dortmund defiant

AFP, Berlin



With three new additions to their squad, Champions League finalists Borussia Dortmund have insisted European champions Bayern Munich will not have it all their own way this season.

Dortmund secured their latest new signing on Tuesday when midfielder Henrikh Mkhitaryan joined from Shakhtar Donetsk, having also recruited Saint-Etienne forward Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, 24, and defender Sokratis Papastathopoulos, 25, from Werder Bremen.

Mkhitaryan, 24, impressed on Wednesday when the trio made their debuts in a 3-1 friendly win at Swiss champions FC Basel with the Armenian setting up the first goal and scoring the second.

Borussia host Bayern in the pre-season German Super Cup on July 27 in a repeat of the Champions League, which the Bavarians won 2-1 at Wembley.

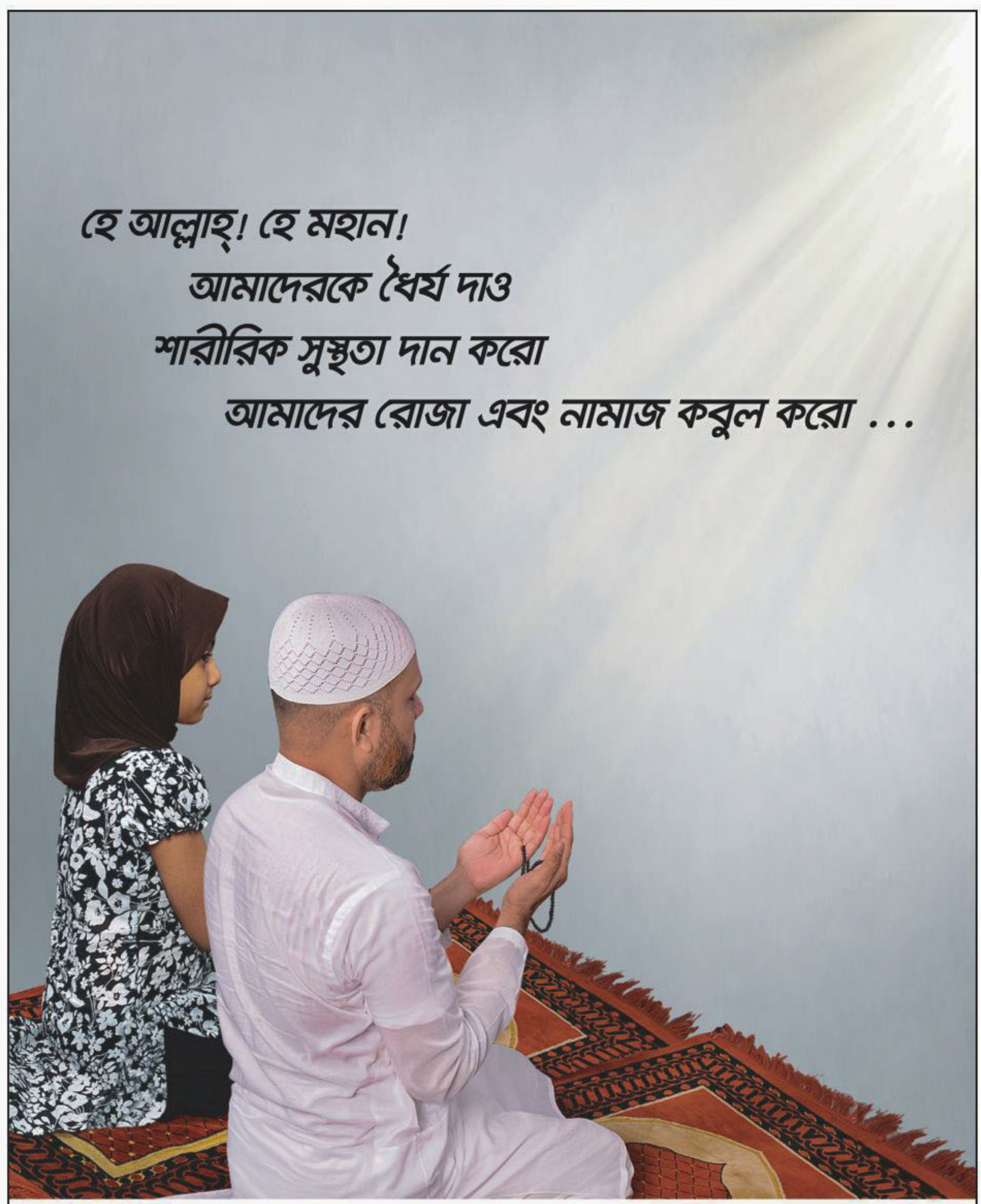
Having won the 2010-11 and 2011-12 German titles, Dortmund were left empty handed last season as Bayern became the first German team to win the treble of Champions League, league and cup, breaking or equalling 25 Bundesliga records in the process.

They finished the German league season 25 points clear of nearest rivals Dortmund but Borussia's midfield star Marco Reus has insisted they will not have things their own way when the new season starts on August 9.

"The 25-point difference won't happen again," Reus told German magazine Kicker.

"We've had a lot of time to reflect on the mistakes we made in the Bundesliga last year.

"The new season begins for us on August 10 and we're going on the attack again."



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