TENHD **UEFA Champions League** Chelsea v Sporting Live from 1:45am (Thursday)

Doleshwar

Mohammedan v Partex Venue: BKSP-3

Sk Jamal v Old DOHS Venue: SBNCS

Time: 9:00am

# Van Persie fires MU

AFP, Southampton



Robin van Persie scored twice as Manchester United belied a slipshod performance to win 2-1 at Southampton on Monday and claim third place in the Premier League table.

The Dutchman exploited a blunder by Jose Fonte to put United ahead in the 12th minute at St Mary's and scored a 71stminute winner from a Wayne Rooney freekick after Graziano Pelle had equalised.

United climbed above Southampton and West Ham United into third place, but they were fortunate to emerge with victory after a lacklustre display that also saw them lose centre-back Chris Smalling to a leg injury.

Nevertheless, Louis van Gaal's side have now won five games in succession, which represents a timely burst of momentum ahead of Sunday's home game with arch enemies Liverpool.

Southampton forced United goalkeeper David de Gea into action on several occasions, but having lost to Manchester City and Arsenal on their previous outings, it was a third straight defeat for Ronald Koeman's men.

Southampton created the first chance, Shane Long heading onto the roof of the net from Ryan Bertrand's hanging cross, but it was United who went ahead thanks to Fonte's lapse in concentration.

The Portuguese defender, who was making his 200th Southampton appearance,

played a blind back-pass towards goalkeeper Fraser Forster and Van Persie nipped in to roll home his fifth goal of the season.

Southampton were quick to react, though, and were helped by the fact United lost Smalling -- the latest in a spate of defensive injuries -- which saw Jonny Evans come on for his first appearance since September.

By that stage, Pelle had headed wide from a Steven Davis corner, and Southampton continued to press, with De Gea obliged to field a deflected effort from Pelle.

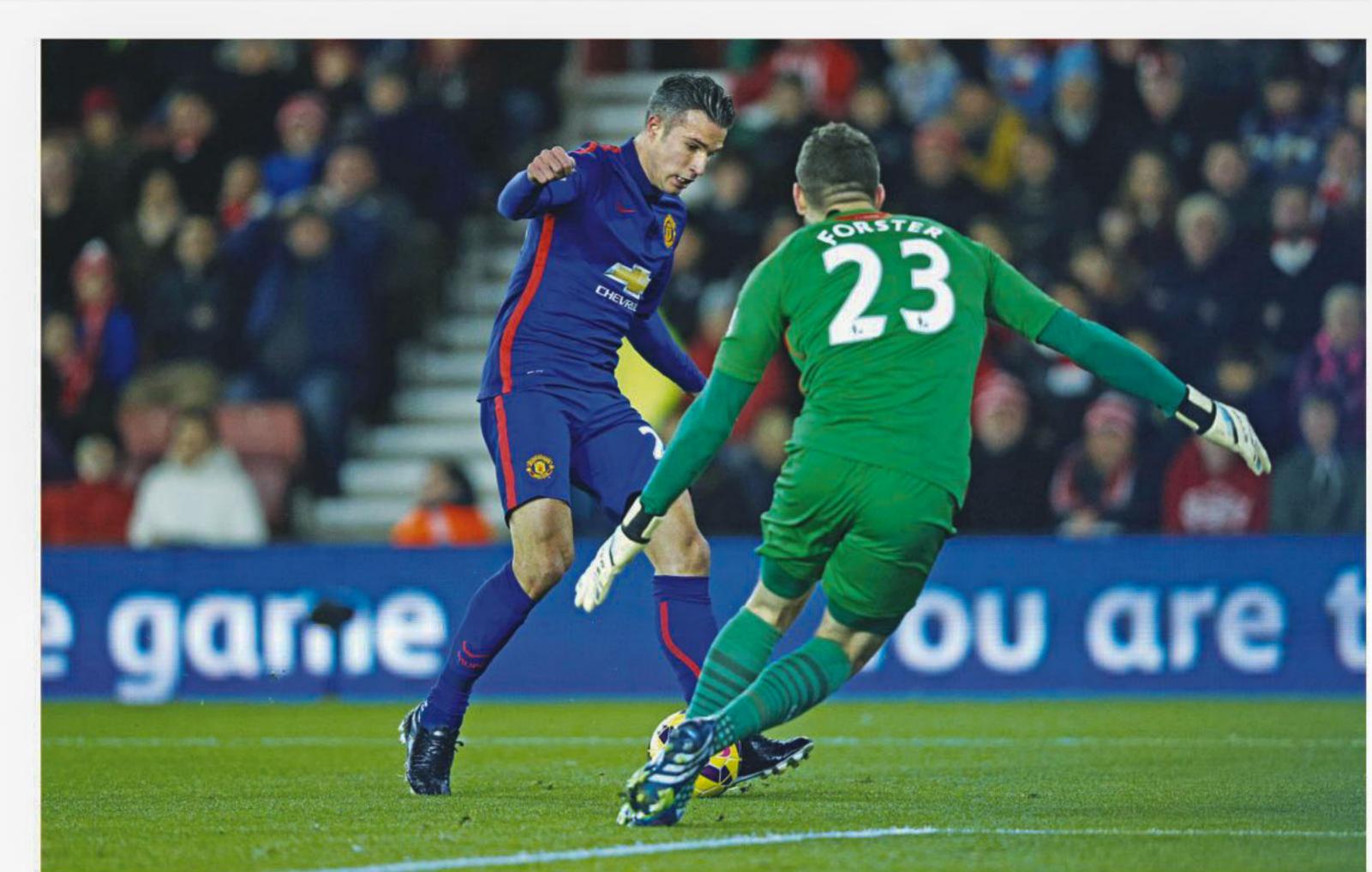
The equaliser duly arrived in the 31st minute, after a loose pass from Marouane Fellaini enabled Davis to run at the visitors' defence.

Paddy McNair took the sting out of a shot from Tadic, but Pelle ghosted in to sweep the ball into the roof of the net for his first goal since October.

Van Persie served a reminder of United's threat with a shot that curled into the sidenetting, but Southampton remained on top in the second half.

It was United, however, who struck next. Back in the team after a knee injury, Rooney swung a free-kick towards the back post from deep on the left and Van Persie ghosted in to stab an improvised volley past Forster.

De Gea excelled himself again in the 77th minute, plunging to his left to repel a low shot from Pelle, while full-backs Nathaniel Clyne and Bertrand each despatched efforts that narrowly missed the target.



Manchester United striker Robin van Persie (L) is about to score the opening goal against Southampton during their Premier League encounter at St Mary's Stadium on Monday.

РНОТО:

## Pele to leave hospital

AFP, Sao Paulo

Brazilian soccer legend Pele has recovered well from his kidney ailment and can leave the hospital on Tuesday, the Sao Paulo clinic that has been treating him for two weeks said Monday.

"He is doing well clinically and does not have any signs of infection. Considering his good recovery, his medical team has scheduled his leaving hospital tomorrow," a statement from the Albert

Einstein clinic read. The announcement comes three days after the 74-year-old Pele publicly thanked well-wishers for their support in a video posted to Facebook that also featured him strumming a few tunes on his guitar during a visit from members of his family and a girlfriend.

Pele was hospitalized on November 24 with a suspected urinary tract infection requiring antibiotics.

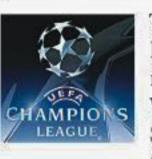
Three days later, the hospital placed the man nicknamed "O Rei" (the king) in intensive care after his condition became "clinically unstable," briefly alarming fans.

But the clinic stopped renal assistance three days later and then moved Pele to semi-intensive care after extensive tests as his health began steadily to improve.

# Make or break for Man City

# Barcelona, Paris Saint-Germain battle for top spot

AFP, Paris



Top spot in Champions League Group F will be the main talking point on Wednesday night as Paris Saint-Germain travel to the Camp Nou looking to avoid defeat and keep their noses in front of

Barcelona. Manchester City are on the brink of another early exit in Group E as they need to

get a result and receive a favour from Bayern Munich in order to progress.

### BAYERN MUNICH V CSKA MOSCOW

Despite going down to a last gasp 3-2 defeat at Manchester City two weeks ago, having played for more than an hour with 10 men following the sending off of Mehdi Benatia, Bayern have already won this group and have nothing to play for. Even so, coach Pep Guardiola is not one for want to keep their European adventure giving out presents.

CSKA are level on points with both Roma and City and still in with a chance of progressing. But to do so they must win in Munich. That might seem like a tall order but they have already won in Manchester in this competition and will feel that against a side lacking in motivation, they may have a chance. However, if Roma win, then all will be academic.

#### ROMA V MANCHESTER CITY

This is the most complicated clash of the final round of matches as the permutations are such that almost anything can happen. Roma do at least know that a victory will be enough for them to progress and both sides are aware that defeat will knock them out.

But should City win or it end in a draw, then CSKA's result in Munich will take on significance.

Should CSKA lose then a no-score draw would see Roma progressing while a score draw would be enough for City to reach the second round. However, should CSKA also draw, then Roma would go through with all three sides tied on the same number of points. If City win then they must hope CSKA do not. It's one for the mathematicians, perhaps, but essentially the crux is, they must both go for victory.

#### AJAX V APOEL NICOSIA

With both sides already eliminated, all that is up for grabs is a consolation place in the Europa League. Ajax have the advantage in that regard as they have a point more, having held PSG to a draw in Amsterdam.

The reverse fixture in Cyprus ended in a draw so APOEL simply have to win if they going this season. For Ajax, victory would see them avoid finishing a Champions League group stage without a win for the very first time. And their chances are good against a side that has never won away in the competition and has yet to score outside of Cyprus in this season's competition.

#### **BARCELONA V PSG**

This is the big clash of the night with top spot, and a potentially easier second round tie to come, up for grabs. Two years ago when these sides met at the quarter-final stage, PSG got a 1-1 draw at the Camp Nou -although they crashed out of the competition on away goals -- and such a result would see them win the group.

Luis Enrique's Barcelona have to win to overtake PSG, who are a point ahead. PSG will have plenty of motivation to hold out as coach Laurent Blanc, star striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic, full-back Maxwell and Brazilian-born Italy international midfielder Thiago Motta are all former Blaugrana players.

#### CHELSEA V SPORTING LISBON

With top spot already sealed, Chelsea coach Jose Mourinho will likely use rarelydeployed members of his squad for this fixture, in which Sporting need a draw to secure their first knock-out stage participation since 2008/09. However, Sporting will have painful memories of that achievement as they were then humiliated 12-1 on aggregate by Bayern Munich.

The Portuguese side, for whom on-loan Manchester United winger Nani is likely to miss the clash with an injury, could progress beat Maribor in Slovenia. Certainly they are likely to need to rely on the other result as Sporting have won only one of their last 17 European away games.

#### NK MARIBOR V SCHALKE 04

The hosts are already out of the knockout stage reckoning but can keep their European season going with victory. Schalke must win in order to have any chance of snatching second place from Sporting but also know that a defeat would see them lose out on the consolation Europa League spot.

In order to take the Europa League slot, Maribor will have to break new ground, though, as they have never before beaten a German side. Schalke, though, are still

missing talented attacking midfielder Julian Draxler and last time out needed a Klaas Jan Huntelaar equaliser to hold Maribor to a 1-1 draw in Gelsenkirchen.

#### ATHLETIC BILBAO V BATE BORISOV

A place in the Europa League may be on offer to the winners of this game but the match will also be about Borisov attempting to avoid taking sole possession of an unwanted record. Borisov have conceded 22 goals in their five matches so far, equalling the worst group stage defensive record set by Dinamo Zagreb in 2011/12 and equalled by Nordsjaelland a year later.

One more goal is all it will take for Borisov -- beaten 7-0 at home and 5-0 away by Shakhtar, and 3-0 at home and 6-0 away to Porto -- to take sole possession of that inglorious marker. The only anomaly was their 2-1 win over Athletic in their second group match. The Basques need only a draw even if they lose, as long as Schalke don't to ensure their European campaign continues but given the Belarus' previously porous defence, a morale-boosting goal-fest cannot be ruled out.

#### PORTO V SHAKHTAR DONETSK

This game has absolutely nothing riding on it with Porto already confirmed as group winners and Shakhtar second. Pride is perhaps all that is at stake with Porto keen to end the group stages unbeaten after four wins and a draw so far.

Shakhtar, however, will be eager to gain revenge on the Portuguese side having let slip a 2-0 lead in Ukraine as Jackson Martinez struck twice late on to snaffle a point. But Shakhtar will be missing suspended trio Olexandr Kucher, Luiz Adriano and Croatian icon Darijo Srna.

SERIE A

## Sampdoria leapfrog Napoli

AFP, Milan

High-flying Sampdoria moved above stuttering Napoli into fourth place in Serie A on Monday thanks to a 3-1 win over 10-man Verona.

Sinisa Mihajlovic's visitors took a 28th minute lead when Eder stepped up to convert the spot-kick after Rafael Marquez's foul on the Brazilian winger that earned the 35-year-old Mexican veteran a straight red card.

Nico Lopez spurned a chance to level on 33 minutes after being sent clear by Luca Toni, but could only hit a weak shot straight at Sergio Romero.

Four minutes later, Toni pulled the hosts level after pouncing when Romero spilled a mishit shot from

Panagiotis Tachtsidis. Despite their disadvantage, Verona continued to push forward but ultimately

paid for their efforts. When Manolo Gabbiadini took possession wide on the left he swung in an inviting cross for unmarked Stefano Okaka to head past a helpless Rafael from close

Sampdoria's sixth win of the campaign takes them on to 25 points, 10 shy of leaders Juventus.

# 'Academy shouldn't be used to gobble up funds'

Manjur Kader. A name that evokes praise and controversy in equal measure. Since taking over the Dhanmondi Club in 2009, this veteran sports organiser has turned the small club into one of the most successful ones of the country, helping revive the country's fledgling football scene. But he has also earned a fair share of detractors, both due to on-field and off-field activities. In the wake of Sheikh Jamal's King's Cup success, The Daily Star's Anisur Rahman and Atique Anam caught up with this organiser to talk about the club's history, present football activities and the current state of football in Bangladesh.

DS: Tell us briefly about the history of Dhanmondi Club and how it turned into Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club.

MK: Well, I have been associated with sports, especially football, for more than four decades, with clubs like Abahani and Muktijoddha Sangsad. I left football for a while, but when my friend Kazi Salahuddin was elected as the president of Bangladesh Football Federation in 2008, I thought I could return to football again. The Dhanmondi Club was a small club, playing in the second division, when a few officials of the club came to me to form a team. I told them if I take charge, I would form a big team and I would like to name it after Lieutenant Sheikh Jamal. The first AGM was held on April 28, 2009 where the name of Lieutenant Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club Limited was unanimously passed.

DS: There are whispers in sports arena that if Awami League goes out of power, Sheikh Jamal may get down to the relegation zone. MK: It's not right. Kamal bhai (Sheikh Kamal)

formed Abahani. But even after his death, Abahani has remained as a pioneer club in all sports. Awami League doesn't give us money. We have political people of all parties in the club, but they are all sports related people. DS: Does your club run with its own source of income?

MK: No sports clubs in our country has its own source of income. We all have to 'beg, borrow, and steal' and also use our own money to run day-to-day activities of the club.

DS: Other clubs accuse you of distorting the balance of the transfer market by buying players at a high price. MK: This is not a fair accusation. Everything has

its own market price. After I arrived, players are getting paid regularly. I am not crazy that I would splash the cash like that. I am giving the players what they deserve. DS: Despite forming a big-budgeted team in

professional league's debut season in 2010, success didn't come right away. It was only by one point that they secured the league title, which too, was later deemed to have involved 'compromised matches'. A host of stars left the club in the following year and Sheikh Jamal only finished sixth in the league. Did the controversy surrounding the previous league title make you feel less encouraged?

MK: Not at all. It didn't demoralise me. The players who left the club after the first season might have done so as they were not getting enough chances to play since there were better foreign players available. The problem was that our own players couldn't score.



Dhaka football scene, even in your club, are African, despite many of them being substandard?

MK: We prefer Africans because their physical fitness is good and they adapt easily with the weather and food culture here, which the Europeans don't.

DS: There are allegations that our players don't always give the same level of effort for the national team that they do when playing for clubs. Why do you think that happens?

MK: Maybe the football authority lacks enough people to motivate players of the national team. We should do everything to discipline the players as much as we should do to motivate them. They should be encouraged with DS: Why is it that most of the foreigners in the soft words; they feel good when they get incen-

DS: But do you think the infrastructure pro-

vided to them is good enough? MK: You see, we don't have a gym or a swimming pool for the national team. These things are very much required for the physical fitness of sportsmen and are prevalent in modern sports entities elsewhere. BFF should get support from the government, from the sports ministry. Those in the BFF and the sports ministry need to be serious. You have to spread the game to villages, to schools to find and groom talents. You have to have a good youth academy. Now we have a so-called academy. But academies need to be run by professionals. The academy shouldn't be used to gobble up funds.

DS: Talking of academies, you had taken an initiative to build a youth academy in your club. Why did you give up the idea?

MK: I built the infrastructure, but found that it has no value. The professionalism needed to run academies is not present here. My players were being poached away by other clubs, and the federation could do nothing. So I gave up. DS: But according to AFC guideline, all professional league clubs must have a youth team. Your club still does not have one and did not participate in two successive youth championships.

MK: You see it's not possible to run a youth team without the infrastructure and with a tiny amount of money provided (by the BFF). BFF should first provide the infrastructure and a standard amount of money to clubs for running youth teams. They have failed to do so. Still I will call for a youth team and we will have a youth team running by next season.

DS: Where do you want to see Sheikh Jamal in the future and which trophies do you want in your cabinet?

MK: IFA Shield is definitely a trophy I would like to have in my cabinet. Apart from that, considering the level we are operating in, it would be foolhardy to think anything beyond South Asian level.

### SHEIKH JAMAL DC'S TROPHY CABINET

DOMESTIC TITLES

Professional league – 2010, 2014 Federation Cup — 2011, 2013

**OVERSEAS PARTICIPATION** 

Pokhara Gold Cup, Nepal 2011 -- Champions IFA Shield, Kolkata 2014 -- Runners-up