

A CONTROVERSIAL STUNT

Ruby Walsh appears to jump his horse over a moving car in the latest promotional advert for betting firm Paddy Power. The 22-second clip shows the two-time Grand National winner galloping towards the speeding silver car and apparently jumping it as the bookmaker gears up for Saturday's big race at Aintree. Irish jockey Walsh, who is riding Ballycasey in the race, starts the clip by saying: 'This is how I've been getting ready for this year's Grand National.' Paddy Power claims he jumped straight over the car, which was said to be travelling at 40mph. -- MAIL ONLINE



# Sk Jamal cruise to opening win

SPORTS REPORTER

Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club started their title-defence in style with a 4-1 win against Farashganj SC in the opening match of the Manyavar Bangladesh Premier League at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The defending champions conceded an early goal but showed character to bounce back, thanks to their build-up game from the deep which exposed the inexperienced Farashganj backline time and again.

The opening match of the eight edition of the top-tier professional league witnessed the introduction of magic spray and some bold decisions by the match officials, who were instructed to maintain international standard to get rid of unnecessary tackles around the danger zone.

Though the match got off to a slow start, Farashganj took a surprise lead in the 10th minute from a penalty. Referee Mizanur Rahman showed no hesitation in awarding the promoted side the spot-kick when Kesto Kumar brought down Peter Akinyele inside the box.

The Nigerian forward sent Sheikh Jamal 'keeper Mazharul Islam Himel the wrong way as the Old Dhaka outfit showed signs of replicating their 2-0 win over the Dhanmondi giants during the fifth edition

of the league. But Sheikh Jamal had other ideas this time around.

It took only five minutes for Sheikh Jamal to get the equaliser as left-back Yeamin Ahmed Munna's cross was poked in by Haitian striker Wedson Anselme. However, the new powerhouse of Bangladesh football had to wait for more than half an hour to take the lead as Farashganj goalkeeper Sujon Chowdhury kept them at bay with two brilliant saves.

Three minutes into the second though, amid heavy drizzle, Gambian forward Landing Darboe put Sheikh Jamal

ahead with a 30-yard free-kick. Farashganj, however, never looked like giving up as they kept on playing pressing football but their inexperience resulted in conceding two more goals.

National team's skipper Mamunul Islam made it 3-1 in the 75th minute with a powerful left-footed drive from 25 yards out before Darboe completed the rout in the first minute of stoppage time with a placing shot from inside the box.

"I am happy with full points from the opening match but not satisfied with the way the boys played," said Sheikh Jamal coach Maruful Haque, who praised Farashganj SC for playing attacking football.

"The foreigners made the difference," said Farashganj coach Rezaul Haque Jamal. "We have come here to play positive football and will continue to do so throughout the season."

**SHEIKH JAMAL 4 - 1 FARASHGANJ**  
(Wedson 15, Landing 48, 90+1, Mamunul 75) (Akinyele 10)



Bollywood actress Anushka Sharma performs during the opening ceremony of the eighth edition of Indian Premier League at Salt Lake Stadium in Kolkata yesterday.

PHOTO: INTERNET

## Dhaka to be Japan's neutral venue?

SPORTS REPORTER

Tashima Kohzo, a vice-president of Japan Football Association (JFA), yesterday assured Bangladesh Football Federation president Kazi Salahuddin that Dhaka will be considered as a neutral venue for Japan national team's international friendly fixtures from now on.

The JFA vice-president, who held a meeting with the BFF boss at a hotel in Dhaka yesterday, told reporters that Japan will also consider tour exchanges between the national and age-level teams of the two countries.

"We hope we will play international matches here in future. Our national teams and age-group teams will visit Bangladesh and Bangladesh teams will also visit Japan," Kohzo told reporters after the meeting.

The BFF president also asked for helping BFF with coaches for the football academy in Sylhet and lending technical support in regards to marketing of Bangladesh football.

Although being described as a regular visit for strengthening bilateral ties, Kohzo's visit here is widely believed to be part of the April 30 FIFA election campaign, where he will be contesting for one of the three executive-member slots designated for the Asia Football Confederation.

## Beto extends Sevilla stay

AFP, Madrid

Portuguese international goalkeeper Alberto Bastos Pimpapel, better known as Beto, has penned a two-year extension to his contract with Sevilla, the La Liga club said Monday.

Beto, 32, arrived at Sevilla in 2013, on a contract which initially ran until June 30 next.

"I'm very satisfied," said Beto, who won the Europa League last season with the club.

## Referee facing ban over right decision

AFP, Buenos Aires



A top Argentinian referee is facing a ban after scraping a penalty and a red card after consulting with a linesman alleged to have seen the incident in slow motion on a television screen.

Video replays are not allowed by world soccer's governing body FIFA and the Argentine Football Association (AFA) will examine the incident on Tuesday.

During an Argentine league clash at the weekend between Velez Sarsfield and Arsenal, match official German Delfino, considered one of South America's top referees, awarded Velez a penalty and sent off Arsenal defender Daniel Valencia for handling the ball in the box.

However a television replay showed the ball was actually touched by a Velez player and not Valencia.

Delfino, 36, tipped as a refereeing official for the Copa America which begins in June, apologized after the game for initially getting the decision wrong. It did not, however, prevent Velez from winning the match 2-1.

"This type of action is difficult to judge. The refereeing team worked well and justice was done," said Miguel Scime, head of referee training in the Argentine league.

"Delfino assured me that he didn't base his decision on the technology but what his assistants' saw," said Scime.

"You can't deliver justice as you want," said Guillermo Marconi, of the Argentine Referees Union.

"You have to act within the defined rules. I don't have proof that Delfino based his decision (on the images), but it seems logical."

Despite being cleared of the handball Colombian defender Valencia was sent off later in the match.



GERMAN DELFINO

## Andy shuns stars

NZ HERALD



"Not invited," was Novak Djokovic's reply on Sunday night, when asked if he would be attending the wedding of his old rival and near-exact contemporary Andy Murray. "But I wish him all the best."

Djokovic is in the same boat as the rest of the tour's leading stars, for Murray - in consultation with his bride-to-be Kim Sears - has opted against star wattage at the ceremony, which will be held at Dunblane Cathedral on Saturday.

Murray is not lacking for famous acquaintances, for his player's box has played host to some big names over the years. Billy Connolly and Sir Alex Ferguson are among the eminent Scots who have shown up at court-side, while Murray has acknowledged previously that he has been out for dinner "many times" with James Corden, the actor who is now presenting a chat show on the American channel CBS.

## Djokovic apologises to ball boy

DAILY MAIL

World No 1 Novak Djokovic has apologized to the startled ball boy caught in the crossfire of a tirade at his support team during his win over Andy Murray in Sunday's Miami Open final.

Djokovic lost his cool at the end of the second set as Murray came back to take the match to a decider but has since expressed his regret at the incident in a video posted on Facebook.

He said: 'It's probably been the best start to a season aside from 2011 that I had in my career, and I can't be more grateful for all the support I'm getting from you guys and I'm enjoying my time playing and competing and hopefully I brought a smile to your faces.'

'Also I want to reflect on a bad moment that happened in the final against Andy when I lost the second set. I yelled to my camp and my box in frustration.'

'I saw the replay. Unfortunately a ball boy was in the middle of it and I really, really feel sorry and regret that he was there. There was absolutely no intention whatsoever to hurt him or scare him in any kind of way. I sincerely hope he forgives me. I really apologise.'

## 'Gatlin won't worry Bolt'

REUTERS, Kingston

Usain Bolt is happy with his condition in the leadup to August's World Championships and will not be denied more sprint gold by American Justin Gatlin, according to his coach Glen Mills.

Jamaican Bolt will bid for a third 100 metres gold and a fourth 200m gold in succession at the Aug. 22-30 meeting in Beijing.

In Bolt's absence, Gatlin dominated the Diamond League last season, ending the year as world leader in the 100 and 200m with personal best times of 9.77 and 19.68 seconds respectively.

## City hopes in tatters

AFP, London



Manchester City's Premier League title defence is in tatters after a surprise 2-1 defeat at Crystal Palace left the champions nine points adrift of leaders Chelsea on Monday.

Manuel Pellegrini's side were rocked as Glenn Murray's first half goal and Jason Puncheon's excellent free kick immediately after the restart gave Palace the cushion they needed to withstand late pressure after Yaya Toure had given City hope with a 78th minute strike.

City's third successive away league defeat, their fifth loss in their last seven games in all competitions, leaves them languishing in fourth place with Chelsea also having a game in hand on them.

Their predicament was simply summed up by Pellegrini before this game when City's manager admitted his side needed a perfect end to the season and a Chelsea stumble to regain pole position.

Yet while Pellegrini has had his eyes set on tracking down the leaders, the weekend victories for Arsenal and Manchester United confirmed City are now in a testing battle to finish in the top three, which guarantees a place in next season's Champions League group stage.

In the circumstances, next weekend's Manchester derby has assumed even more significance than usual.

If City were to avoid becoming the latest side to fall victim to Alan Pardew's rejuvenated Palace team, they would have to maintain high standards at both ends of the pitch.

Sergio Aguero's first half display suggested he was more than capable of providing a cutting edge in front of goal but it was at the back where Pellegrini's side were found wanting.

City have made a habit of conceding costly goals this season with Pellegrini failing to settle on a convincing and consistent back-four.

There was an early sign Palace were capable of troubling the visitors when Martin Kelly's low cross should have been

met with a better finish than Wilfried Zaha's skied effort after just two minutes.

But much worse was to come 10 minutes before the end of the first half when Murray made the breakthrough while the visitors appealed for offside.

Prior to that moment, Pellegrini's team had looked in control, with Aguero striking the woodwork with a smart snapshot after creating space on the edge of the Palace area.

That came after the Argentina forward's pace had allowed him to collect Joe Hart's long clearance and set up David Silva, who was denied only by Julian Speroni's excellent save.

But those efforts counted for nothing in the 34th minute when City failed to deal with a clipped ball into the box from Joel Ward after a harmless looking corner had been cleared.

The visitors were convinced first that Scott Dann was offside as he moved onto Ward's ball in and fired a volley that deflected off Hart, and then questioned whether Murray had strayed beyond the defence as he followed in to score from close range.

Referee Michael Oliver and his assistants were unmoved by the protests that continued at the break, with City captain Vincent Kompany continuing to make his feelings known.

It did mean, however, that Palace had a foothold in the game and they have demonstrated impressive tenacity in recent weeks.

It was clear City faced a testing challenge to get back into the game but the task facing them grew even more daunting when Puncheon added the second goal three minutes after the restart.

Once again the visitors did themselves no favours with Fernandinho producing an unnecessary foul to halt Murray just outside his own area, handing Puncheon the opportunity to lift an excellent free-kick over the defensive wall and beyond Hart.

City were convinced they should have had a penalty when Murray appeared to handle and Toure's powerful shot provided them with a late lift but they were unable to find an equaliser.



Crystal Palace midfielder Jason Puncheon celebrates after scoring the second goal against Manchester City during their Premier League encounter at Selhurst Park on Monday.

PHOTO: AFP

## KKR face Mumbai in IPL opener

PTI, Kolkata

Keen to put the Sunil Narine controversy behind them, Kolkata Knight Riders will begin their title defence against a formidable Mumbai Indians side in the IPL cricket opener at the Eden Gardens on Wednesday.

The West Indies mystery spinner, who was reported for suspect action in CLT20 and went on to miss the recently-concluded World Cup, was kept waiting before getting a clean chit by the BCCI on Sunday.

A team which has gone on to win two titles (2012 and 2014) since the acquisition of the Trinidad off-spinner in 2011 faces the biggest challenge this year as Narine's effectiveness with a re-modelled action is yet to be seen.

With a slew of spinners in their armoury now including a 'Narine-like' KC Cariappa, a rookie from Karnataka who was bought for Rs 2.4 crore, and a couple of chinaman bowlers, KKR will look to thrive on the slow nature of Eden surface.

But with evening showers predicted in the city, the spinners may find it hard to grip the white ball and the fielders will also have to put forth their sliding act carefully.

## Turkey nabs suspected attackers

AFP, Ankara

Turkish police on Tuesday detained the suspected gunman and an alleged accomplice wanted for the attack on top flight football side Fenerbahce that sent shockwaves through the game in the country.

The bus carrying Fenerbahce's star-studded side was attacked as the team returned from an away victory in the Black Sea region on Saturday, leaving the driver badly hurt.

"Two suspects have been detained, they are being interrogated," Abdil Celil Oz, governor of the north-east region of Trabzon where the attack took place late on Saturday, said in televised comments.