

**ANOTHER MU RECORD BROKEN**  
 José Manuel "Pepe" Reina Páez was beaten by Adem Ljajic an attacking midfielder or winger for Italian club Internazionale, during their Serie A clash early yesterday morning. Despite this the Napoli goalkeeper has the longest clean sheet record in Europe. In the 2-1 win over Inter, Reina conceded a goal after 534 minutes of Serie A football. During the game he was able to beat the previous record for this season of 500 minutes by Manchester United goalkeeper David De Gea. Before which, Napoli had kept seven consecutive clean sheets between Serie




Ajay Kumar of India makes a return during his opening round game of the Yonex-Sunrise Bangladesh Open International Badminton Challenge at the Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Indoor Stadium in Paltan yesterday.

PHOTO: SHEIKH ENAMUL HAQUE

**French PM against Benzema**

REUTERS, Paris  
 Karim Benzema, who is under investigation for alleged blackmailing, should not be called up to the France squad, French Prime minister Manuel Valls said on Tuesday.  
 "If a minister was under formal investigation, they would not be in the government. In a way, it's the same for the France team," Valls told Europe 1 radio.  
 Real Madrid striker Benzema was put under formal judicial investigation last month in connection with an alleged attempt to blackmail Olympique Lyonnais forward Valbuena with the use of a sex video.  
 Both players were omitted by coach Didier Deschamps when he picked his squad for friendly matches against Germany and England last month.

**BANGLADESH OPEN INT'L BADMINTON Hosts turn spectators**

SPORTS REPORTER  
 Two Bangladeshi shuttlers got walkovers against their Indian counterparts in singles rubbers yesterday while all the other Bangladeshi male participants were knocked out on the opening day of the Yonex-Sunrise Bangladesh Open International Badminton Challenge at the Shaheed Tajuddin Indoor Stadium in Paltan.  
 Moajjem Hossain and Abdullah Al-Masrafi got through to the second round, thanks to the walkovers, while the more established names of local circuit, including defending Bangladesh Games champions Ayman Ibne Zaman, Enamul Haque and Rais Uddin bit the dust.  
 Ayman, who had shot into limelight after upending Enamul Haque in the last Bangladesh Games in 2013, lost against former Indian No. 1 Chetan Anand in straight sets (10-21, 16-21).  
 Ayman said lack of practice was the reason behind his meek surrender.  
 "We have hardly had any practice since the end of the first division six months ago. Even having a coach and training for three to four months is not enough for a tournament like this. We need long-term coaches and long-term training," said the young shuttler.  
 "I have fared better against better Indian opponents in the past. If I were amidst training,

I would have done much better," Ayman felt.  
 Ayman, however, felt confident about Bangladesh's chances of winning medals in the upcoming South Asian Games in India next year.  
 Anand, the man who knocked Ayman out in the first round, felt players like Ayman have talent, but they need to be patronised to do well at the international circuit.  
 "He is good, but he still needs to work a lot on his game. He needs to play in foreign tournaments and he needs to attack a lot instead of just rallying because nowadays the game has changed," said India's former No.1 shuttler, who has started an academy for grooming young shuttlers in Hyderabad recently since reducing his participation at international events.  
 "The scenario for badminton in India is changing fast. Thanks to the success of Saina (Nehwal) and a few others, badminton gets more media coverage as well as state and corporate patronisation these days. Now more and more shuttlers get the opportunity to play in events abroad," added Anand.  
 A total of 19 first-round rubber in men's singles took place on the opening day of the tournament. Among the Bangladeshis, Enamul lost against Malaysia's Satheshtharan (4-21, 16-21) and Rais lost against Sourabh Varma of India (9-21, 17-21).  
 The first round of women's singles will take place today.

**SOUTH ASIAN GAMES Football among U-23 teams**

SPORTS REPORTER  
 The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) has seemingly retracted from its decision of holding the men's football event of the upcoming South Asian Games among the under-19 teams of the region as it is now contemplating holding the event among Olympic teams (under-23) like the previous few editions.  
 The Bangladesh Football Federation on Tuesday received an e-mail from the IOA through the Bangladesh Olympic Association, asking for its consent to send the under-23 team.  
 "Today [Tuesday] we received an IOA e-mail asking us whether we would like to send our under-23 team for the SA Games, and we have replied in the affirmative," BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag said, adding that the senior women's team would be sent for the women's event.  
 The SA Games is scheduled to be held from February 6 to 16 next year in Guwahati and Shillong.

**Roma fans vent their anger**

AFP, Rome  
 Roma supporters infuriated by their team's faltering form let the players know how they feel Tuesday... by presenting them with carrots.  
 Around 50 supporters turned up at the Trigoria training ground with boxes of the vitamin-packed vegetable.  
 A banner helped to explain the coded meaning of the unusual gift: "Bon Appetit Rabbits," it read.  
 In Italian, the word for rabbit, "coniglio", is synonymous with coward.

**MESSI voted top striker**

AFP, Madrid  
 Barcelona star Lionel Messi, the favourite to win FIFA's prestigious Ballon d'Or title, was on Monday voted the top striker in the Spanish league last season ahead of Real Madrid rival Cristiano Ronaldo.  
 It is the sixth time that the Argentinian has won the title in seven editions of the trophy given by the Spanish football league, with the prize presented during a gala ceremony in Barcelona on Monday night.  
 Messi, who scored 43 goals and was the catalyst for Barcelona's run to three titles last season -- the Champions League, La Liga and the Spanish Cup -- was selected following a computer analysis of the players' statistics in the championship.  
 "I'm proud to receive this award ahead of so many important players in La Liga," said Messi.  
 "This award in particular I want to dedicate to my son Thiago (aged 3) even if he still doesn't understand very well. Every time I leave the house he gets angry and asks me: 'Papa, are you going again to score goals?' This award is for him."  
 Messi also won the vote for the best striker following a poll of the captains of each of Spain's top flight sides.  
 Barcelona's Claudio Bravo was voted the best goalkeeper and Luis Enrique top coach while Real Madrid's Sergio Ramos and James Rodriguez were named best defender and midfielder respectively.  
 Valencia's Algerian midfielder Sofiane Feghouli was voted the top African player and Barcelona's Brazilian striker Neymar, the best player from the American continent.  
 Real Madrid's Portuguese star Ronaldo, who scored the most La Liga goals last season with 48, won the public's choice award.  
 Ronaldo, Messi and Neymar were all named on Monday's shortlist for FIFA's Ballon d'Or which will be awarded on January 11.  
 While Ronaldo has triumphed over the last two seasons (in a total of three wins), Messi has previously claimed the coveted award four times while Neymar makes the shortlist for the first time.  
 Neymar, 23, said it was "a great honour" to be named for the first time alongside his illustrious La Liga rivals.



Barcelona superstar Lionel Messi poses before the Primera Liga's 2014-2015 season award ceremony in Barcelona on Monday.

PHOTO: AFP

**England sweep Pakistan clean**

AFP, Sharjah  
 Pacesman Chris Woakes starred for a second match in succession as he defended ten runs in the last over to help England win the third and final Twenty20 in a Super Over finish in Sharjah on Monday.  
 Woakes conceded seven off the first two deliveries thanks to a six but managed to tie the game off the last ball as Pakistan faltered in the chase of a 155-run target.  
 Pakistan then managed just three runs in the Super Over bowled by Chris Jordan, which England beat off just four balls for a 3-0 clean sweep of the series.  
 The victory lifted England to fourth in the Twenty20 rankings while Pakistan, second before the series, fell to sixth.  
 England won the first match by 14 runs and the second by three runs with Woakes defending 11 in the last over -- both matches in Dubai.  
 Pakistan were unlucky not to win the match after Shoaib Malik smashed a career best 54-ball 75 for his fourth Twenty20 half century and added a quickfire 63 off just 38 balls for the sixth wicket with Shahid Afridi, who made a 20-ball 29.  
 Malik and Afridi joined company with Pakistan struggling at 65-5 as both took the attack to the English bowlers, much to the joy of a packed 16,000 stadium.  
 Afridi smashed three sixes off his 20-ball innings before he was bowled by pacesman David Willey, who finished with 3-36.  
 Malik, whose previous best of 57 not out came against India at Bangalore in 2012, hit eight boundaries and two sixes but fell with just two needed for victory.  
 Pakistan were struggling at 11-3 after losing opener Ahmed Shehzad (four), Mohammad Hafeez to another run out for one and Raffatullah Mohmand (nought) by the third over.  
 Mohammad Rizwan hit four boundaries in his 24 but he and Umar Akmal (four) fell in quick succession before Malik held the innings well.  
 England skipper Eoin Morgan was pleased at series win.  
 "It's a fantastic job," said Morgan. "I don't think we deserved to win today but it was a wonderful Super Over and the series win is very important for our progress."  
 Pakistan skipper Afridi said his team needs huge improvement.  
 "Credit to England, they played well and we played well as well as bad and there are lots of areas we have to improve and improve very fast," said Afridi.  
 Earlier James Vince hit a career-best 46 and Woakes (37) lifted England -- who won the toss and batted -- from a precarious 86-6 during their fighting 60-run stand for the seventh wicket to take them to 154-8.

**Summit open**

SPORTS REPORTER  
 Oshin Group, Ananta Group, Gulshan Club and Bangladesh Navy moved into the semifinals of the Summit Open Squash Tournament, which is being jointly held at Gulshan Club and the Bangladesh Navy squash courts, said a press release from Bangladesh Squash Rackets Federation yesterday.

**India face ICC sanction**

REUTERS, India  
 Indian cricket authorities face a fine of up to \$15,000 after the pitch used for the spin-dominated third test between India and South Africa in Nagpur was rated as "poor" by match referee Jeff Crowe, the International Cricket Council (ICC) said on Tuesday.  
 Forty wickets tumbled in three days at the VCA Stadium as India beat South Africa by 124 runs with more than two days to spare in the low-scoring contest to take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the four-match series.  
 "Jeff Crowe submitted his report to the ICC, expressing the concerns of the match officials over the performance of the pitch," the ICC said in a statement.  
 The report has been forwarded to the Indian cricket board (BCCI), which now has 14 days to respond.  
 After that, ICC general manager of cricket Geoff Allardice and chief match referee Ranjan Madugalle will rule whether the pitch was poor and whether it warrants a penalty.

**MU reach out to Bangladesh**

THE GUARDIAN  
 Louis van Gaal and his Manchester United squad returned to Old Trafford to attend the 16th annual Unicef Gala Dinner, after their 1-1 draw with high-flying Leicester at the King Power Stadium on Saturday. The black tie evening is a standout fixture in United's social calendar with the players, manager and coaching staff all in attendance. The Red Devils have been partners with the global charity for 16 years - which is the longest of its kind between a sports organisation and a global children's charity.  
 The event proved the perfect distraction for the United squad after their disappointing display away to the Foxes on Saturday, and it helped raise £230,000 for the world's leading children's organisation.  
 While thoughts would surely have lingered back to the draw, Van Gaal and assistant Ryan Giggs - celebrating his 42nd birthday - led their squad on a night that produced an altogether better result.  
 The cash raised on the night will go towards helping Unicef to save the lives of children in Bangladesh where a child dies from drowning every 29 minutes. Young people will be trained as swimming teachers, in basic survival and first aid, while work will be done to raise awareness of the importance of safe swimming.  
 "Myself and the players are honoured to be a part of this fantastic partnership and I am delighted that so much money has been raised this evening for Unicef," Van Gaal said.  
 These funds will go a long way in helping to save children's lives in Bangladesh - that is a fantastic result and I'd like to thank everyone who came tonight for their support.  
 However, Victor Valdez, reserve goalkeeper, was not invited along side Van Gaal and members of his squad who attended the dinner for Unicef on Sunday night. The goalkeeper's wife, Yolanda Cardona, took to Instagram to criticise the club for their conduct.  
 Underneath a picture taken at the event of Juan Mata, Marcos Rojo, Sergio Romero, David de Gea, Ander Herrera and their partners, she wrote: "Do not invite to my husband vicValdes1 to be part of the united4unicef, it's the last thing you would expect from a club as big as Manchester United."  
 Manchester United said Valdés was not invited because he is not a member of the first-team squad. The goalkeeper signed for the club on an 18-month contract in January, but the former Barcelona player has only appeared in two games for the club.  
 Van Gaal told the three-time Champions League winner he was free to leave in the summer after the United manager accused him of refusing to play for the under-21 side.

**44<sup>th</sup> National Day**  
 United Arab Emirates

**2<sup>nd</sup> December**  
 Happy 44<sup>th</sup> UAE National Day  
 Our Best Wishes and Prayers...

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