

**PLAYER PAYS FOR CEILING**

Ipswich fan Ross Morgan punched a hole in the ceiling of his flat while celebrating Paul Anderson's equaliser against rivals Norwich in May. The footballer who is now with Bradford City, paid the 80 pounds bill after Salesman Mr. Morgan posted a photograph on Twitter. Morgan, from Wetherby, near Leeds, said: "Ando offered to sort somebody to do it, but he obviously isn't with the club anymore. So I said I'd sort it myself and was let down by a few different people. It's now been repaired after a long time. He's a top bloke. I've tried to learn my lesson -- especially now



**BD Women return home happy**

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh women's cricket team returned from Bangkok yesterday afternoon after successfully fulfilling their target of qualifying for the ICC World Twenty20.

While they lost the final against Ireland in a thriller, the team was content with their performance.

"We were extremely happy when we beat Zimbabwe and confirmed a place in the World Cup. That's a feeling that I cannot explain in words. However, I kept telling the players that don't celebrate too much, we have to be the champions," said skipper Jahanara Alam upon the team's arrival in Dhaka yesterday.

It would have been great had we managed to win the final game; there's no doubt about that, however, we completed our target and qualified for the World Cup."

According to Jahanara, the Irish players had progressed quite a bit since the last time the two teams met.

"I think they were ahead of us in terms of fitness, strength and batting. They have improved a lot since the last time we faced. We have improved as well, but we still have a few weaknesses," admitted Jahanara.

Jahanara and co will have little over three months to work on those weaknesses because after that they will be featuring in the big league in India.

It's a challenge that they seem to have already accepted.

**Aarong TT from today**

SPORTS REPORTER

Aarong Dairy Federation Cup Table Tennis tournament gets underway today at the Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Indoor Stadium in Paltan.

Some 105 players including 14 paddlers preparing for February's SA Games will be vying in four events -- men's singles and men's team, women's singles and women's team -- in the four-day ranking tournament organized by Brac Enterprise, informed speakers at a press conference yesterday.



Bangladesh women's team did not get any ticker-tape reception upon their return from Thailand yesterday. But their qualification to the Women's World Cup T20 proper in India next years is an achievement in itself for a team, which is less glamorous and far less paid than their men's counterparts.

PHOTO: STAR

**BFF to rule on transfer today**

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) will sit in an emergency meeting today to give a ruling on the demand for the deferral of the transfer window, which is scheduled to open from December 26.

A few top clubs, defending professional league champions Sheikh Jamal, Mohammedan, Sheikh Russel, Brothers Union and Team BJMC on Saturday demanded that the players' transfer window for 2015-16 season to be postponed till August.

They also demanded the reconstruction of the professional league committee. Among the clubs, who have apparently waged a battle against the present set-up, top officials of Sheikh Russel and Brothers however confirmed yesterday that they would comply with the present transfer schedule.

"The meeting's only agenda is to discuss the current situation and take the necessary steps," said BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag, adding that the 'deferment' demand has drawn the attention of BFF president Kazi Salahuddin.

Although the BFF has already sought the opinion of the Bangladesh Premier League clubs regarding the transfer issue, it is however understood that a final decision would come after today's meeting.

It may be mentioned here that all clubs save Shiekh Jamal and Mohammedan had endorsed the December 26 opening of the transfer window before it was announced on November 24.

**Enrique let down by MSN**

AFP, Madrid



Barcelona coach Luis Enrique admitted his star attacking trio of Lionel Messi, Neymar and Luis Suarez had for once let his side down as Barca conceded a late equaliser to draw 1-1 at Valencia on Saturday.

The European champions should have been out of sight by half-time as all three of the South American triumvirate missed glorious chances to put the visitors in front.

Suarez did finally find the net just before the hour mark, but, with new coach Gary Neville watching on from the stands, Santi Mina snatched a point for Valencia five minutes from time.

Barca's first league draw of the season means they now lead Atletico Madrid by just two points at the top of the table with Real Madrid a further two points adrift.

"We lacked that ease that we normally have to finish our chances in the final third. I am happy with the performance of the team, for their ambition, their way of preparing for every match and we'll keep going," said Enrique.

LA LIGA						
Team	P	W	D	L	GF	GA Pts
Barcelona	14	11	1	2	34	13 34
Atletico Madrid	14	10	2	2	20	6 32
Real Madrid	14	9	3	2	32	12 30
Celta Vigo	14	7	4	3	25	22 25

"There is nothing to reproach the team for. We played a complete game at a very difficult place to come, we dominated the whole game and had by far the most chances.

"We weren't rewarded for all the effort we put in, but Valencia defensively played very well. They were solid, well supported by their fans and took advantage of one transition."

It could even have been worse for Barca as Valencia claimed Suarez should have been sent-off just before he opened the scoring for a stamp on Aymen Abdennour.

And the hosts were also unhappy that the Uruguayan appeared to start in an offside position before beating Jaume Domenech at his near post for the opening goal.

Enrique claimed not to have seen either incident and his captain Andres Iniesta insisted Barca had been

unlucky to come away with just a point from Mestalla.

"Anything can happen when you don't kill the game," said Iniesta.

"I think above all in the first-half we had clear chances to go in front, but I am left with how well the team played again at a place like Mestalla and it is shame to concede the equaliser at the end which leaves us with a point.

"We weren't clinical in front of goal. Valencia scored with the one or two chances they had. They tried to make it an uncomfortable game for us, but we still managed to get in behind and create chances.

"We lacked that extra goal to put the game at ease. We played very well in all aspects of the game, but we lacked the most difficult thing which

**FAN DIES CELEBRATING**

A Valencia fan in attendance at the Mestalla against Barcelona died of a heart attack on Saturday evening, the club announced in a statement.

Valencia drew 1-1 thanks to Santi Mina's 86th-minute equaliser, but a fan who became too excited by that equaliser suffered from the attack before passing away. Valencia passed on their condolences to the family of the supporter, who

**Payment memo may clear Platini**

REUTERS, Bern



European soccer chief Michel Platini's legal team believes a 23-page memo published by a French newspaper on Sunday could help clear him of wrongdoing and allow him back into the FIFA presidential race.

Platini, until recently seen as the man to lead soccer's governing body FIFA out of its worst ever graft crisis, has been suspended for 90 days by FIFA's ethics committee while it investigates his conduct.

The final verdict is expected by the end of the month and Platini's lawyers have already said that ethics investigators had recommended a lifelong ban for the Frenchman.

FIFA will hold an election to find a replacement for its president Sepp Blatter, also suspended, on Feb. 26, and Platini, who has registered as a candidate, cannot run while he is banned, although he might be allowed to take part if he is cleared.

The investigation centres on a 2 million Swiss franc payment from FIFA to Platini, a former France team captain and coach who has been UEFA president since 2002, in 2011 for work he completed between 1998 and 2002.

Blatter has said there was a verbal agreement between the two while Platini says the payment was delayed only because of financial problems at FIFA.

On Sunday, French newspaper Le Journal du Dimanche published a 23-page memo which it said was presented to UEFA executive committee members in November 1998 and mentioned that Platini was being paid 1 million Swiss francs a year for work he was doing for FIFA.

The newspaper said the memo was presented at a meeting in Stockholm, chaired by Lennart Johansson who was UEFA president at the time.

"From the moment that we have proof of an agreement between FIFA and Mr Platini, and of knowledge of this agreement by officials of UEFA, then this [ethics committee] inquiry falls down," Thomas Clay, one of Platini's lawyers, told Reuters by telephone.

"For us, it's very important evidence that Mr Platini has always been telling the truth."

Clay said he had seen the document although he did not know how the newspaper had obtained it and why it had taken so long to appear. The newspaper could not be immediately contacted for comment, while the ethics committee declined to comment.

**'Have to think about top 6'**

AFP, London



Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho said a top-six Premier League finish may be the best his side can hope for after their suffering their eighth consecutive defeat.

Chelsea went down to Bournemouth by a solitary goal on late Saturday.

Mourinho had previously insisted that Chelsea were still capable of breaking into the top four, but he admitted that he might have to revise his objectives after the latest defeat.

"Before this game it was realistic to think that our quality would take us out of this position, but maybe now we have to think about top six," he said.

"I am concerned, of course. There is no chance that Chelsea will be fighting relegation. That is not the problem. It is that our objective is to finish top four."

"If you analyse matches, and especially match after match, you can clearly identify a few players for whom it is difficult to be consistent," he said.

"To get results, you have to be consistent, and we have not been consistent because of some individualities."

Despite their suffering however, Jose Mourinho remains adamant that make good on his promise and will not ask Roman Abramovich for money for emergency signings in January. "Again I feel that we don't have the right to ask the club for players," said Mourinho.

"We started this season with this squad and the players have to do better. It is more about the players having to do better than the club going to the market.



**Siddikur finishes at 21st**

SPORTS REPORTER

Siddikur Rahman moved up the table a bit as the Ho Tram Open concluded in Vietnam yesterday. Starting the day at 25th, the golfer finished tied for the 21st position, although he was still well behind winner Sergio Garcia.

Four golfers finished with 14-under-par, but it was the Spaniard who claimed pole position after a winning in the second extra hole, followed by India's Himmat Rai, Thailand's Thaworn Wiratchant and Chinese Taipei's Lin Wen-tang.

The 31 year old Bangladeshi started off well once again, carding a birdie on the second hole. He went on to stroke four further birdies. However, all those birdies counted for nought three bogeys, littered throughout his fourth round's play, undid all his good work at the Bluffs Ho Tram Strip.

That saw the two-time Asian Tour winner finish with four-under-par, ten strokes behind the winner, in the US 15,00,000 dollar event.

**'Deschamps still supports me'**

AFP, Paris



Karim Benzema claims he retains the support of France coach Didier Deschamps despite being charged for his alleged participation in a blackmail case involving international teammate Mathieu Valbuena over a sex-tape.

"I have had a message from him. He supports me, of course," said Benzema of Deschamps in an interview broadcast by French television station TF1 on Sunday.

Real Madrid star Benzema was not called up for last month's friendly matches against Germany and England, officially due to injury.

However, the games came just after he was charged with complicity to blackmail and conspiring to commit a criminal act in relation to the sex tape and told that he was not allowed to contact Valbuena.

Lyon midfielder Valbuena was also left out of the most recent France squad, with Deschamps claiming that decision was made to "protect" the player.

Benzema risks up to five years in prison and his future as part of the France team looks to be in serious doubt ahead of Euro 2016, although he remains hopeful of being able to return to contention in time.

"There are also players in the national team who support me," said Benzema, who is France's leading current international with 27 goals from 81 caps.

The French Football Federation (FFF) has requested to become a civil party in the investigation in order to have access to the case files.

FFF president Noel Le Graet will give a press conference on Thursday, two days before the Euro 2016 draw, in which he is expected to discuss Benzema's international future.



Napoli's Gonzalo Higuain personified the frustration that his team must have felt yesterday against Bologna. A defeat saw Napoli fail to top the table.

PHOTO: AFP

**Napoli fail to go top**

REUTERS, Rome



Serie A title hopefuls Napoli suffered their first defeat since the opening day of the season when they were stunned 3-2 at Roberto Donadoni's resurgent Bologna on Sunday.

Mattia Destro, revitalised since the new coach was appointed, scored in each half for Bologna, either side of a Luca Rossetti header.

While Gonzalo Higuain scored two late goals to set up a dramatic finale, Bologna held on to secure one of the unlikely results of the season and raise doubt about Napoli's title credentials.

Napoli remain second on 31 points, missing the chance to retake top spot from Inter Milan, who beat Genoa 1-0 on Saturday,

while victory takes Bologna out of the relegation zone and up to 15th on 16 points. Maurizio Sarri's side headed into this match with Serie A's joint-best defensive record, having conceded only nine goals, and their superb backline had underpinned an 18-game undefeated streak in all competitions, stretching back to an opening-day loss at Sassuolo.

Bologna, though, had lost only once since Donadoni replaced Delio Rossi at the end of October and held their own.

SERIE A						
Team	P	W	D	L	GF	GA Pts
Inter Milan	15	10	3	2	18	9 33
Napoli	15	9	4	2	28	12 31
Florentina	14	9	2	3	27	12 29
AS Roma	15	8	4	3	30	18 28