

MOURINHO PRE-SIGNED BY MAN UTD!

Jose Mourinho has signed a pre-contract agreement with Manchester United with a view to replacing Louis van Gaal as manager of the English giants next season, Spanish newspaper El Pais reported on Sunday. Citing sources from Gestifute, the agency company owned by Mourinho's representative Jorge Mendes, El Pais suggest a deal has been struck that could see the former Chelsea boss make £15 million, even if he doesn't end up taking charge at Old Trafford. If United don't complete the deal by May 1, Mourinho will be entitled to £5 million compensation, should negotiations drag on beyond June 1 or break down, the 20-time English champions would owe the Portuguese a further £10 million.



Windies too hot for SL
Proteas survive Afghan scare

AFP, Bangalore

Andre Fletcher powered the West Indies to a comprehensive seven-wicket victory against Sri Lanka in their World Twenty20 match in Bangalore on Sunday, even without destructive opener Chris Gayle.

The 28-year-old smashed an unbeaten 84, including five sixes and six fours, as the Windies successfully chased down Sri Lanka's paltry score of 122 for nine.

Fletcher spearheaded the attack with his 64-ball knock in the absence of explosive opener suffered Gayle, who suffered a tweak in his left hamstring while fielding during Sunday's match and did not bat.

Johnson Charles made 10, before chopping the ball onto his stumps, while Marlon Samuels was gone for three and wicket keeper Danesh Ramdin was bowled for five. Andre Russell was

not out on 20.

Defending champions Sri Lanka have been struggling for form since winning the trophy two years ago, slumping to seventh in the world rankings.

On Sunday, they posted 122 for nine after West Indies captain Darren Sammy won the toss and elected to field.

All-rounder Thisara Perera top scored for Sri Lanka with 40, including five fours, off 29 balls at the M.Chinnaswamy Stadium, while skipper Angelo Mathews chipped in with 20.

Opener Tillakaratne Dilshan, the star for Sri Lanka in their win over Afghanistan last week, started in promising style, smacking a six off the second ball.

But the 39-year-old was sent packing in

SCORES IN BRIEF

SRI LANKA: 122 for 9 in 20 overs (Perera 40, Mathews 20; Badree 3-12)

WEST INDIES: 127 for 3 in 18.2 overs (Fletcher 84 not out; Siriwardana 2-33)

Result: West Indies won by 7 wickets

Player-of-the-match: Andre Fletcher

the third over, lbw to Carlos Braithwaite.

His opening partner Dinesh Chandimal made a quick 16 runs from 18 balls before he was sensationally run out, thanks to some quick fielding by Johnson Charles at cover.

Chandimal wanted a swift single and took off down the pitch, but was sent scampering back by Lahiru Thirimanne at the other end.

Thirimanne was gone just seven balls later for five, as the wickets tumbled thanks to solid West Indies bowling led by leg spinner Samuel Badree.

Perera and Mathews combined to steady the ship, adding 44 runs for the sixth wicket, before the captain was caught behind. Perera was caught at the boundary in the final over by Russell.

Earlier in the day, South Africa beat Afghanistan by 37 runs after star batsman AB de Villiers hit a blistering half century at Mumbai's Wankhede Stadium.

De Villiers hit 64 off just 29 balls as South Africa made 209 for five in their 20 overs and then bowled the Afghans out with the last ball innings for 169, with Chris Morris taking four for 27.



STAR ECONOMICAL BOWLER: Leg-spinner (L) Samuel Badree bowled a brilliant spell of three for 12 as West Indies restricted Sri Lanka to 122, turning the chase into a mere cakewalk, during their World T20 Super 10 match at the Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bangalore last night.

Buffon's record as Juventus extend run

AFP, Milan

Juventus goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon set a new Serie A record of 973 minutes without conceding a goal before finally being beaten in Sunday's city derby away to Torino.

Last week Buffon kept a clean sheet for the 10th successive league game to take his unbeaten tally to 926 minutes, surpassing Dino Zoff's club record of 903 minutes and closing in on the Serie A record of 929 minutes set by AC Milan keeper Sebastiano Rossi in 1994.

Buffon needed to stay unbeaten for just four minutes against Torino to take the record from Rossi, which he did before eventually being beaten in the third minute of the second half.

Juventus eventually won the match 4-1 to take their Serie A unbeaten run to 20 games.

Tigresses make tame exit

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh national women's cricket team lost their third consecutive match in the ICC Women's World Twenty20 yesterday when they were downed by their West Indian counterparts by 49 runs at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai.

The loss means that the Tigresses are officially knocked out of the tournament, although any chances of progression were put aside when they were defeated by England in the second match.

Batting first, the West Indians posted 148. The total was a bit too much for a Bangladesh side that struggles with its batting line-up. The women in green faced similar scenarios in the first two games, where they had to chase totals in excess of 150. And again, under pressure, they were bundled out for 99 in 18.3 overs.

Despite the poor result, yesterday's game witnessed arguably the best ever performance by the Tigresses. Had it not been for a late charge from the West Indian team --

they hammered 50 runs in the last five overs -- the scoreline would have been a lot more respectable.

The West Indians were driven by their skipper Stefanie Taylor and Hayley Matthews, both of who put in brilliant all-round performances. Matthews smacked 41 runs with the bat and then came back to finish with figures of 2 for 16. Her opening partner, Taylor, hit 40 with the bat and finished with figures of 3 for 13.

For Bangladesh, 16-year-old Nahida Akter was the pick of the bowlers, finishing with figures of 3 for 27. The young bowler has done well throughout the tournament and looks to have a very stable action for a slow left-arm bowler. With the bat, Nigar Sulatan -- a teenager who also keeps wickets -- top-scored for the Tigresses, smacking a run-a-ball 27.

SCORES IN BRIEF

WEST INDIES: 148 for 4 in 20 overs (Matthews 41, Taylor 40; Nahida 3-27)

BANGLADESH: 99 all out in 18.3 overs (Nigar 27, Fargana 17; Taylor 3-13, Matthews 2-16)

Result: West Indies won by 49 runs.

Rashford ends Man City bid

AFP, Manchester

Teenage sensation Marcus Rashford struck again as Manchester United won 1-0 at Manchester City on Sunday to rekindle their top-four challenge and fatally compromise their derby rivals' Premier League title hopes.

Rashford embarrassed hapless City defender Martin Demichelis to score the game's only goal in the 16th minute, taking his tally to five goals in eight first-team appearances and making him the youngest ever Manchester derby goalscorer at the age of 18 years and 141 days.

Victory took Louis van Gaal's side to within a point of fourth-place City, stemming a damaging run of four games without victory and creating hope that United may yet finish a testing season by claiming a Champions League berth.

City's grip on fourth place is also at threat from West Ham United and although they retain a game in hand on the teams above them, they now trail leaders Leicester City by a massive 15 points.

Compounding a miserable last derby for outgoing City manager Manuel Pellegrini, the hosts lost both goalkeeper Joe Hart and winger Raheem Sterling to injury.

It has been a week that Pellegrini may come to rue when his side cross paths with Paris Saint-Germain in the Champions League next month.

Earlier Sadio Mane inspired Southampton's dramatic, late comeback as Ronald Koeman's side recovered from a two-goal deficit to rock Liverpool with a 3-2 win.

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Barca held by Villarreal

AFP, Madrid

Barcelona extended their lead at the top of La Liga to nine points despite blowing a two-goal advantage to draw 2-2 at Villarreal on Sunday.

Ivan Rakitic and a controversial Neymar penalty had Barca on course for a 13th consecutive La Liga win before half-time.

Yet, Villarreal were more than worthy of a point and got their reward after the break through Cedric Bakambu and Jeremy Mathieu's own goal.

Villarreal hit the woodwork inside the first minute when a Manu Trigueros effort was turned towards his own goal by Arda Turan.

Claudio Bravo then blocked Bakambu's effort from a narrow angle as Barca struggled to contain Villarreal's pace on the break.

Yet the visitors still struck first with some fortune as Lionel Messi's free-kick ricocheted off Luis Suarez and fell perfectly into the path of Rakitic to rifle home.

The hosts were then furious when Gerard Pique was pardoned a second yellow card for clearly stopping a Villarreal attack by handling the ball on the ground after just 23 minutes.

Villarreal boss Marcelino was expelled from the touchline for taking his protests too far.

And worse was to come for the hosts when referee Jose Maria Sanchez Martinez pointed to the spot despite Sergio Asenjo clearly playing the ball as Neymar tried to round the goalkeeper.

Neymar put Barca's recent troubles from

TOP FIVE

Team	P	W	D	L	G/F	G/A	Pts
Barcelona	30	24	4	2	86	24	76
Atletico	30	21	4	5	46	14	67
Real Madrid	29	19	6	4	83	28	63
Villarreal	30	15	9	6	37	25	54
Sevilla	29	13	9	7	43	31	48



Southampton forward Sadio Mane (2nd from L) watches his effort sneak into the far corner of the net during his side's 3-2 victory against Liverpool in their English Premier League encounter at St Mary's yesterday.

Rummenigge demands respect

AGENCIES, Munich

Bayern Munich chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge has hit out at Manchester City sporting director Txiki Begiristain following his recent comments that they could sign players from the Bundesliga champions.

"I was quite surprised about my Manchester City colleague's comments," Rummenigge was quoted as saying by Bild.

"Contracts are contracts and they should be respected, also by Manchester City."

Djokovic bests Nadal again

REUTERS, California

Defending champion and top seed Novak Djokovic moved a step closer to a fifth title at Indian Wells with a 7-6(5), 6-2 victory over long-time rival Rafa Nadal in the semifinals of the BNP Paribas Open in California on Saturday.

Djokovic and Nadal treated the fans to several compelling rallies at the sun-baked Indian Wells Tennis Garden but the Serb, for the most part, held the upper hand and broke his opponent twice in the second set to secure victory.

After a protracted encounter that lasted nearly two hours, Australian Open champion Djokovic booked his place in Sunday's final where he will meet Canadian Milos Raonic, a 6-3, 3-6, 6-3 winner against Belgian David Goffin.



Breaks of serve were traded in the second and third games of an eagerly awaited showdown, before Nadal later squandered a set point in the 10th game when he netted a forehand.

Though the Spaniard came from 2-5 down in the tiebreak to level at 5-5, Djokovic edged ahead 6-5 after a strong first serve before clinching the set after a little more than an hour when his opponent netted a backhand.

Nadal came under increasing pressure to hold serve in the second set as Djokovic dominated their baseline exchanges and the Spanish left-hander finally cracked in the sixth game when he dumped another forehand into the net to trail 2-4.

Serving at 2-5, Nadal clawed his way back from 0-40 and saved five match points in all before another tired shot from the baseline sailed long to hand victory to Djokovic.

Ctg Abahani sign up big names

SPORTS REPORTER

Chittagong Abahani have formed one of strongest squads on paper for the upcoming season after signing up some big names in domestic circuit on the concluding day of the players' registration at the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) House yesterday.

Even though there were only five current national players -- Ashrafur Islam Rana, Monaem Khan Raju, Raihan Hasan, Rezaul Karim and Rubel Mia -- signed up by the port city outfit, there were some other big names such as former captain national team's Mamunul Islam, wingers Zahid Hossain and Sohel Rana, defenders Nasiruddin Chowdhury and Yeamin Ahmed Munna along with some proven campaigners who have switched to the Chittagong tent from Sheikh Jamal DC, Sheikh Russel KC, Abahani and Muktijoddha Sangsad.

The squad is currently training under player-cum-coach Hasan Al Mamun as Slovakian coach Joseph Pavlic is soon expected to over the charge of the side, whose best finish in the premier league was eighth, achieved twice in 2008 and in 2012-13.

"We have formed a champion-hopeful squad on the face of keen demand from residents of Chittagong and we hope that our squad will be fighting for championship in the competitive league," Chittagong Abahani manager Shakil Mahmud said, adding that they have an estimated budget of Tk 8-10 crore for the squad.

Four-time champions Abahani are not far behind as the Sky Blues signed up 10 current national players including goalkeeper Shahidul Alam, defenders Tapu Barman, Wali Faisal, Ariful Islam, winger Jewel Rana, striker Nabib Newaj Jibon and proven campaigners such as Hemanta Vincent Biswas, Pranotosh Kumar, Wahed Ahmed, Mamun Mia and Titumir Chowdhury.

Mohammedan SC, Brothers Union, Muktijoddha Sangsad, Feni Soccer Club, Team BJMC and promoted Uttar Baridhara Club also completed their players' registration formalities with a hope of improving their positions from the last edition.

Defending champions Sheikh Jamal DC, who had appealed to the game's governing body for not completing the formalities of eight players for reportedly taking money from the club but eventually signing up for other clubs, did turn up to complete their own formalities.