**Green Delta Premier Div Hockey** Usha KC v Railway SC Time: 2:00pm

Ajax SC v Bangladesh SC Time: 4:00pm Venue: Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium

## **ALVES** OVERTAKES PELE

Dani Alves has overtaken Pele to become the most successful Brazilian footballer of all time. Alves won the sixth La Liga title of his career on Saturday as Luis Suarez's hat-trick sealed a 3-0 victory over Granada. The Spanish title is the 30th of Alves' career to date, and the 33-year-old moves one clear of three-time World Cup winner Pele, who won 29 trophies during his playing days. Alves also hit another landmark on Saturday as he registered his 100th assist in La Liga by setting up Suarez's second of the match. Only Lionel Messi and Luis Figo have registered more assists in La Liga than the Brazilian right-back.





# Same old story

ANISUR RAHMAN



Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) president Kazi Salahuddin promised a lot of reforms when he was elected for a third term last

month. But unfortunately he is confronted with the same old problem of keeping the domestic competitions rolling uninterrupted.

While the established football nations are about to wrap up their 2015-16 season, the BFF is still struggling to start its own -- the 9th Bangladesh Premier League. The top-tier competition was scheduled to start after the Federation Cup, which has now been stalled due to the Bangladesh team's preparation for next month's Asian Cup Qualifier play-offs against Tajikistan and Bhutan.

The BFF's decision to conduct a long camp raised questions with many arguing that playing in a tournament instead of having a training camp better prepares the players for an international match or tournament.

Anywhere in the established football world there is no instance of domestic football being suspended due to national commitments but the BFF is yet to convince their own clubs, who are hell bent on not featuring in the league/tournament without their players drafted in the national team.

In the last eight years, the BFF managed to prepare the calendar for only two seasons and even then were hardly able to maintain the schedule. Thus the season was deferred every year

until it ultimately disappeared.

The BFF had earlier started the domestic season either in October or November but in the last two seasons it was started in February and April respectively, raising the prospect of a season being completely lost.

Ever since the professional football league was introduced in India, the All Indian Football Federation (AIFF) started its season in January and not a single domestic competition was interrupted for the preparation of its national team. India are also taking part in the Asian Cup

Qualifiers next month but the I League - the professional football league of India - and the Federation Cup are currently taking place simultaneously. They are not running any special camp for the national team.

The BFF, however, is yet to establish its authority over the clubs, who often keep the game's governing body on its toes and force it to change the decision. Besides, the BFF's latest decision to allow the players in the national camp only for their respective clubs on the match day is something totally unacceptable for any professional club, who spend a lot of money to achieve success.

With the national team's training camp going on, the BFF wanted to start the Federation Cup from May 15 but had to shelf it due to the clubs' non-compliance.

Perhaps it is time the BFF stop trying to reinvent the wheel with their constant calendar tinkering, and follow a set calendar like their more successful fellow FIFA members. After all,

## Neymar eyes gold at Rio

AGENCIES, Barcelona

on Sunday.

Neymar says sitting out of the Copa America is worth it for the chance to lead Brazil to gold in front of a home crowd at the Rio Olympics in August.

The Barcelona star will sit out of next month's Copa America to captain the Selecao's quest for the one title for which they are eligible but yet to claim.

And the 24-year-old says nobody wants the gold medal more than he does.

"I am ready to take responsibly," said Neymar.

"Not only the Brazilians want this medal, but they know nobody wants it more than I do."

The senior team captain went on to admit he was not upset at having to choose between the Olympics and the Copa America Centenario, but that would he would love to have joined the squad in USA in June.

"I was not frustrated, because I will play a tournament my country has yet to win."

## Verratti's surgery successful

AFP, Paris

Paris Saint-Germain's Italy international midfielder Marco Verratti has undergone surgery on a persistent groin injury, his club confirmed yesterday.

"As previously announced by the Club, Marco Verratti underwent surgery on Monday 16 May, at the Aspetar Hospital in Doha," read a statement released by the French champions, who added "the operation was a success."

Verratti has been troubled by the injury for several months and PSG announced at the beginning of May that the 23-year-old required an operation.

AFP, Rome



Italy coach Antonio Conte has been cleared of accusations of sporting fraud following a hearing in Cremona on Monday at which prosecutors had requested a six-month prison sentence, Italian media reports said. Conte is now free to lead Italy at Euro 2016 before

becoming Chelsea coach following the tournament's conclusion on July 10, according to reports on the website of sports daily Gazzetta dello Sport. Conte, who has already served a four-month ban in relation to the affair, had been accused of not reporting an

episode of match-fixing relating to a Serie B match with AlbinoLeffe from May 2011 when he was coach of Siena. Although former players and other figures were impli-

cated, Conte was the most notable.

The 46-year-old former Juventus coach has always denied any wrongdoing in an affair in which players



allegedly colluded with underworld figures to fix matches and recoup the rewards of an illegal betting network.

A lawyer for Conte, Francesco Arata, said last month: "He's a total stranger to the betting world and that's why he will be cleared by the judge."

Prosecutor Roberto di Martino, who had requested a sixmonth sentence for Conte and a fine of 8,000 euros (\$9,063), had also sought a four-month prison term for Conte's former assistant at Siena, Angelo Alessio. He was also cleared.

Alessio, Conte's assistant during three title-winning seasons at Juventus and now with him at Italy, risked a fourmonth sentence but was also acquitted.

The affair, however, has yet to reach its conclusion and could see former players Beppe Signori, one of the top players in Serie A in his prime during a five-year spell with Lazio, among others, feel the full force of the law.

The report said "up to 90" people are involved although Signori, Cristiano Doni, Gigi Sartor and Mauro Bressan -- all former Serie A players -- as well as current Lazio captain Stefano Mauri, are all in the dock facing accusations of transnational sporting fraud.

Of those accused, Mauri is the only active player although he has already been sanctioned for his role in the affair.

Mauri served a six-month ban for failing to report matchfixing, meaning he missed most of the start of the 2014-2015 season, returning to the fray on February 2014.

# Conte acquitted England pick Rashford of fraud charges AFP, London Manchester United's deserves to be selected. It'll be interesting to see what he can do, even if he midfielder Fa

AFP



Manchester United's teenage sensation Marcus Rashford and Newcastle United winger Andros Townsend were named

in a provisional 26-man England squad for Euro 2016 on Monday.

The uncapped Rashford, 18, has burst onto the scene with United this season, scoring seven goals in 16 games, while Townsend, who won the last of his 10 England caps in October, has impressed since joining Newcastle from Tottenham Hotspur in January.

Arsenal's Jack Wilshere and Liverpool's Jordan Henderson were both included after recent spells on the sidelines, but there was no place for Wilshere's club-mate Theo Walcott.

Explaining Rashford's call-up, England manager Roy Hodgson told a press conference at Wembley: "He

deserves to be selected. It'll be interest- pected call-up for Manchester City ing to see what he can do, even if he midfielder Fabian Delph. only has one week (in training) before I name the final 23.

"There's no reason why he couldn't

earn a place in the final squad). But that will be harder than some people expect.' Hodgson must reduce his squad to 23 players for the tournament in France, which sees England drawn

knock someone off their perch (and

alongside Slovakia, Russia and neighbours Wales in Group B. Arsenal pair Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain and Danny Welbeck had already been ruled out of the tournament by injury, while Manchester United left-back Luke Shaw has not

returned to action since sustaining a

double leg break last September.

Everton centre-back Phil Jagielka was another high-profile absentee, having struggled with injury in recent months, while there was an unex-

### **SQUAD GOALKEEPERS**

Fraser Forster (Southampton), Joe Hart (Manches-

ter City), Tom Heaton (Burnley) DEFENDERS Ryan Bertrand (Southampton), Gary Cahill (Chelsea),

Nathaniel Clyne (Liverpool), Danny Rose (Tottenham Hotspur), Chris Smalling (Manchester United), John Stones (Everton), Kyle Walker (Tottenham Hotspur) MIDFIELDERS Dele Alli (Tottenham Hotspur), Ross Barkley

(Everton), Fabian Delph (Manchester City), Eric Dier (Tottenham Hotspur), Danny Drinkwater (Leicester City), Jordan Henderson (Liverpool), Adam Lallana (Liverpool), James Milner (Liverpool), Raheem Sterling (Manchester City), Andros Townsend (Newcastle United), Jack Wilshere (Arsenal) FORWARDS

Harry Kane (Tottenham Hotspur), Marcus Rashford (Manchester United), Wayne Rooney (Manchester United, capt), Daniel Sturridge (Liverpool), Jamie Vardy (Leicester City)

## Fake bomb fiasco costs MU millions

AFP, Manchester

A fake bomb inside Old Trafford that forced the abandonment of Manchester United's last Premier League game of the season triggered angry calls Monday for action as the club faced a multi-million pound bill for the "fiasco".

As inquiries started into the incident which led to bomb disposal experts blowing up a mobile phone attached to a gas pipe, United vowed to reimburse the tickets of 75,000 fans who were evacuated Sunday ahead of the game against Bournemouth.

They will also give them free entry to Tuesday's rearranged match against the south-coast side. That gesture alone could cost United more than three million pounds (3.8 million euros/\$4.3 million).

Tony Lloyd, Manchester's mayor and police and crime commissioner, said: "It is outrageous this situation

arose. "A full inquiry is required to urgently find out how this happened, why it happened

and who will be held accountable. leader Nico Rosberg and his Mercedes team-mate Lewis Hamilton had left

"This fiasco caused massive inconvenience to supporters who had come from far and wide to watch the match, wasted the time of huge numbers of police officers and the army's bomb squad, and unnecessarily put people in danger, as evacuating tens of thousands of people from a football stadium is not without risk."

## Verstappen makes F1 history

AFP, Barcelona



Teenager Max Verstappen became Formula One's youngest winner on Sunday when he took full advantage of

a spectacular first lap crash that eliminated both Mercedes cars to claim a memorable triumph in the Spanish Grand Prix.

In his maiden outing with Red Bull following his unexpected promotion from Toro Rosso, the 18-year-old Dutchman showed supreme composure under pressure as he resisted all attacks to claim a stunning victory in only his 24th F1 race.

He became the youngest race winner, at 18 years and 228 days, replacing four-time champion Sebastian Vettel who had also taken that record as a Red Bull driver.



"It feels amazing, I can't believe it," said Verstappen.

"It was a great race and it felt like an endurance race. To win straight away, in my first race, it's an amazing feeling. From a very young age, my dad has helped me a lot - it's just amazing."

Verstappen, heralded as the sport's hottest property, proved he has everything required to be a future world

champion, but owed some of his good fortune also to Red Bull's decision to put him on a two-stop strategy while his senior team-mate Daniel Ricciardo was on a three-stop plan. That prevented the Australian from turning his early control of the race into victory after the opening lap collision between championship

> Four and out of the race. Ricciardo eventually came home fourth, despite suffering a puncture on the penultimate 65th lap, behind the two Ferraris of Kimi Raikkonen who finished second ahead of Vettel.

them fuming in a gravel trap at Turn

Verstappen's maiden win on his Red Bull debut was the first in the sport by a Dutchman and the first by the team without Vettel involved in one of their cars.



