

'AGENT P' INSTRUMENTAL IN LUKAKU MOVE

Manchester United midfielder Paul Pogba played a "big role" in Romelu Lukaku's decision to join the Premier League giants from Everton, the Belgian striker has said. The 24-year-old completed his switch on Monday, his reported £75 million pound fee making him the club's second most expensive signing after last year's world-record deal for France midfielder Pogba. "He is one of my best friends, and he is my neighbour as well," Lukaku told the club website. "We are always together on a daily basis so he would explain to me how things were going." When he signed for United, to have witnessed that, it really triggered something in my brain and I knew that if one day I had the chance to sign then I would not say no," Pogba last week posted pictures with Lukaku on social media, calling himself 'Agent P'. Lukaku trained with United's squad on Monday ahead of their U.S. tour which begins with a match against LA Galaxy on July 16.



-REUTERS



Venus Williams became the oldest Wimbledon semifinalist in 23 years after beating Jelena Ostapenko in the women's singles quarterfinals yesterday.

Venus rolls back the years

AFF, London



Venus Williams became the oldest Wimbledon semifinalist for 23 years as the five-time champion brushed aside French Open winner Jelena Ostapenko, while Garbine Muguruzza powered past Svetlana Kuznetsova to make it back to the last four on Tuesday. Earlier, three-time champion Novak Djokovic overcame an injury scare to reach the Wimbledon quarterfinals for the ninth time and then lashed out at the Centre Court, claiming a hole has opened up on the famous surface. The second seed needed treatment on his long-standing right shoulder injury during his 6-2, 7-6 (7/5), 6-4 win over

France's Adrian Mannarino. Djokovic will face the Czech Republic's Tomas Berdych on Wednesday for a semifinal spot, beating a 25-2 career record over the 2010 Wimbledon runner-up. Williams' 73-minute masterclass on Centre Court clinched a 6-3, 7-3 victory that made her the most senior player to reach the semifinals since Martina Navratilova in 1994. The American star, who reached the last of her eight Wimbledon finals in 2009, faces Britain's Johanna Kontar or Romania's Simona Halep in the last four on Thursday. Williams' victory equalled her sister Serena's total of eight main draw match victories at Wimbledon, the most among any active player. She will climb back into the top 10

thanks to her Wimbledon run, but breaking Serena's record to become the tournament's oldest champion in the Open era is her sole focus. Muguruzza powered into her second Wimbledon semifinal in the last three years with an emphatic 6-3, 6-4 win over Russian seventh seed Kuznetsova. Since winning her maiden Grand Slam title at the French Open last year, Muguruzza has struggled to return to the top and this is her first major semi-final since that Roland Garros triumph. Johanna Kontar became the first British woman to reach the Wimbledon semifinals for 39 years as the world number seven fought back to beat Simona Halep 6-7 (2/7), 7-6 (7/5), 6-4.

PHOTO: AFP

Conte turns to Morata

AFP, London

Spanish striker Alvaro Morata is now the focus of frustrated Chelsea manager Antonio Conte's attentions after Romelu Lukaku slipped through his fingers and signed for Manchester United, according to media reports.

Chelsea have tabled a £62 million (70m euros, \$80m) bid for the 24-year-old Morata but Real Madrid are holding out for around £80m, the reports say. Chelsea have offered Morata wages of £150,000 a week on a five-year contract, according to London's Evening Standard.

Morata is keen to play for the manager and told The Guardian Conte had given him self belief. Morata came close to playing for Conte at Juventus in 2014 when the latter played a pivotal role in persuading him to join Juventus...only for the coach to jump ship and take him over the national side. "I feel indebted to him because he's the coach that most trusted in me, most wanted me, who made me feel I could perform at the highest level," Morata told the newspaper in April.

"Yet I've never had the fortune to actually work with him. I'm sure sooner or later I will." Morata would replace fellow Spanish international Diego Costa, whom Conte told at the end of last season he no longer figured in his plans despite his 20 Premier League goals spurring on Chelsea to the title.

Scanu promises good football

SPORTS REPORTER



Brothers Union's newly-appointed Italian coach Giovanni Scanu yesterday promised that his charges would play good football and use their minds and technique in the upcoming Bangladesh Premier League (BPL), which starts from July 28.

"I talked to all the players and officials and realised that we need to work hard and practice twice a day as there are only 15 days before the start of the league. "I am sure my team will try to play good football on the pitch and play with our minds, technique and physicality," the UEFA pro-licensed coach told reporters yesterday during his introduction in Gopibagh. Scanu obtained the UEFA pro-license last year after starting his coaching career with a school football team in 1998-99. He also coached different clubs in Italy, Nigeria and Lithuania, but guiding Brothers, a mid-table side in the BPL, will be his first job in Asia.

"I had offers from some other countries but for me, it is a new experience. I honestly never lie for money though of course it is a profession so I have to earn," said the 42-year-old coach.

Brothers Union's director-in-charge Mohiuddin Ahmed Mohi said that they had invited the Italian coach to contribute to the country's football.

"Actually our main thinking is to contribute to the development of the country's football. Our target is to train young players by using new techniques. Look at Rubel Mia and Jewel Rana, who are now playing for big clubs as well as in the national team, they are our products," said Mohi, who is also vice president of Bangladesh Football Federation.

GIOVANNI SCANU

QUICK SINGLES

The following are a few samples of stories that did not make the print edition. However, if they pique your interest, you can always read them online on The Daily Star website by simply scanning the QR codes listed below.

Shastri hot favourite to be new India coach
Former skipper Ravi Shastri has emerged as the front-runner to be the new coach of India, but a final decision remains on hold until captain Virat Kohli has been consulted. **Nadal vows return despite fresh Wimbledon headache**
Rafael Nadal must have realised it wasn't going to be his day at Wimbledon when he bashed his head against a door frame performing a warm-up leap in the bowels of Court One as he prepared to face Gilles Muller. **Arseanal striker Sanchez going nowhere, insists Wenger**
Arsenal manager Wenger insisted that unsettled striker Alexis Sanchez is going nowhere, saying he expected him to honour his contract and potentially sign an extension.



Ord tastes defeat in first international

SPORTS REPORTER



Andrew Ord started on the wrong foot in his first international match as the Bangladesh U-23 team suffered a single-goal defeat to their Nepalese counterparts in a friendly match in Kathmandu yesterday. Nepal senior side's striker Bimal Gharti Magar's 20th-minute strike was good enough to sink Ord's charges in the game, which was arranged as part of preparations for both sides for the upcoming AFC U-23 Championship Qualifiers. The Bangladesh team may however take heart from the fact that they controlled the game against a Nepal U-23 side which featured 10 players with the experience of representing the senior team. The Bangladesh side went to Kathmandu on a happy note following a 1-0 win over Federation Cup champions Abahani and a two-week training camp with the aim to fine-tune the combination and getting a morale-boosting victory ahead of the Qualifiers in Palestine. Ultimately the boys in red and green left the field with dejected faces despite having

the lion's share of possession throughout the game, although they had clearly lacked incisiveness in the final third. On some occasions, their three centre-backs also found themselves exposed on counter-attacks from the home side. It was in such a situation that Nepal broke the deadlock against the run of play. Having thwarted an innocent drive from Jafar Iqbal, Nepal goalkeeper Alan Neupane released a perfect ball to Anjan Bista on the right flank, before the winger dived into the box, danced past defender Monjur Rahman and cut back to Bimal, who made space and nutmegged defender Tundel Hossain Baskha to drive the ball past goalkeeper Anisur Rahman at his near post. The backline was exposed twice more in the dying moment but the visitors were relieved as Bishwas Shrestha and Hemant Thapa squandered the chances. While Bangladesh had a stranglehold over midfield, they needed to hold the ball in the attacking third and provide those killer passes to lone striker Sohel Mia - who was later replaced by Toklish Ahmed - to carve out goal-scoring opportunities. And the boys are expected to ensure an improved showing in the final third in the final practice match against a Qatar U-23 side tomorrow.

Bayern sign Rodriguez on loan

REUTERS, Munich

Bayern Munich have signed midfielder James Rodriguez from Real Madrid on a two-year loan deal, the German champions said yesterday. The 25-year-old Colombia international made 22 La Liga appearances for Real last season, scoring eight goals, and featured six times in the Champions League. "We are very happy to have completed this transfer," Bayern CEO Karl-Heinz Rummenigge said in a statement. Signing James Rodriguez was the big wish of their coach Carlo (Ancelotti) after they worked successfully together in Madrid.

Rodriguez moved to Real Madrid from Monaco for a reported 60 million euros (\$68.4 million) in 2014 after winning the Golden Boot as the leading scorer at the World Cup.

Tsotsoke banned for match-fixing

AFP, Johannesburg

Cricknet South Africa (CSA) banned former Proteas fast bowler Lonwabo Tsotsoke for eight years on Tuesday over match-fixing in a 2015 T20 Challenge Series. The body confirmed in a statement Tsotsoke, 33, had admitted to contravening the anti-corruption code and "has been banned for eight years". Tsotsoke initially denied involvement in the fixing and the ban prohibits him from involvement in any aspect of the sport locally and internationally.

CSA Chief Executive Haroon Logan said "it is clear that he was active in plans to participate in spot fixing and hence the sanction imposed on him."

U-16 girls thrashed

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh U-16 women's team suffered a disappointing 6-0 defeat to the mighty South Korea U-16 women's team in the first practice match at the Paju KFA National Training Center in South Korea yesterday.

The girls in red and green went to South Korea as part of their preparations for September's AFC U-16 Women's Championship to be held in Thailand, where both Bangladesh and South Korea take part.

The Bangladesh U-16 women's team will now play their second practice match against Oju Middle School Women's Football Team on July 14.

Jimmy's ban lifted

SPORTS REPORTER



Veteran striker Rasel Mahmud Jimmy's ban was lifted, paving the way for the former captain to take part in the hockey team's ongoing preparation camp ahead of the 19th Men's Asia Cup to be held in Bangladesh in October.

The Bangladesh Hockey Federation's (BHF's) working committee had banned Jimmy for three years from the national hockey team as well as from taking part in hockey leagues ahead of the BHF executive committee's final decision. Consequently, Jimmy was dropped from the Bangladesh hockey team's preliminary squad last month. However, newly-appointed coach Mahbub Harun demanded the inclusion of all players who represented Bangladesh in the Hockey World League Round-2 in March, and the selection committee's compliance means that Jimmy has returned.

"For the greater interest of the country we have included three more players, including Jimmy, in the preliminary squad which was approved by the BHF president yesterday [Monday] and thus Jimmy was exempted from his punishment," BHF chief selector Kamrul Islam Kinsnot said yesterday.

"Jimmy reported to me today [Tuesday] at the training and he is expected to join the training camp as soon as he gets permission from his service team [Bangladesh Navy]," said Harun.

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