

U2 FUND HERTHA PITCH RENOVATIONS

Rock band U2 are paying 90,000 euros towards the cost of laying a new pitch for Hertha Berlin so next week's friendly against Jurgen Klopp's Liverpool can take place. Since Wednesday, a new pitch has been laid at Berlin's iconic Olympic Stadium to replace the damaged surface after the Irish rockers recently played a concert in the German capital. U2 will pay most of the total cost of 130,000 euros, according to German daily Bild, so that Hertha will host Liverpool on Saturday July 29 in a friendly to mark both clubs' 125th anniversaries. The match will be Klopp's third return to Germany following his 2015 departure from Borussia Dortmund, with whom he won the Bundesliga title in 2011 and 2012.

—AFP



Manchester United striker Romelu Lukaku (R) celebrates with Paul Pogba after opening the scoring during their friendly encounter against Manchester City in Houston on Friday.

Lukaku scores as MU win first derby

Jose wants transfer work done quickly

AFP, Houston

Jose Mourinho urged Manchester United bosses to wrap up the club's transfer business as quickly as possible after watching new signing Romelu Lukaku find the net once more in a 2-0 win over Manchester City on Thursday.

Lukaku, who joined United last week from Everton in a British record transfer, bagged his second goal in as many starts while teenager Marcus Rashford also scored in the win at Houston's NRG Stadium.

Afterwards a satisfied Mourinho expressed delight with the way Lukaku and fellow new recruit, defender Victor Lindelof, had settled in at the club.

But the Portuguese manager who wants to sign at least one more player before the window closes next month, said he hoped further transfer deals could be completed rapidly.

"When I look to the team and Lukaku, Lindelof, I would like my squad to be here, my whole squad," Mourinho said. "If you manage to get one more player -- I'm not even crying for two -- if we get one player, as soon as possible.

"Because we can see Lindelof is in a team,

Lukaku is in a team. The understanding between the players, the Paul [Pogba] pass, the way Lukaku holds the ball."

However, Mourinho warned that the transfer spending of other Premier League clubs had made it imperative that United strengthen their squad further.

"We need a bit more and when you see

the other teams in the Premier League, the way they get players and good players and the champions [Chelsea] buy three fantastic experienced players. City go to the market, Liverpool and West Ham gets Joe

Hart, Chicharito and Amorosino."

"West Ham, wow! They play to win the Premier League too. So the teams are fantastic in the market and I'm waiting for a bit more."

United face two more matches in the United States before heading back to Europe, with a game against Real Madrid in Santa Clara on Sunday followed by a game against Barcelona in Maryland next week.

"Ten days of work, two more matches here in USA and then we go to Europe," Mourinho said.

"But I am happy with everything, the social life of the team is really good, fantastic people in the group, the new guys arrive and are at home and settled in immediately."

Thinking, but about what?

STAR SPORT DESK

Brazilian superstar Neymar added more fuel to the fire surrounding his future with a cryptic post on Instagram yesterday. The Barcelona superstar -- who has been linked with a big-money move to Paris Saint Germain over the past few weeks -- posted a photo of himself in deep thought, accompanied by a single emoji.

The message behind it is unclear as there were no captions to help with deciphering it, but there could only be two possibilities. One is that the 25-year-old is wondering where the rumours have come from and the second is that he is in fact contemplating his future. The latter being more likely as PSG midfielder Marco Veratti 'liked' the post.

Whether or not it is directly linked to the ongoing transfer saga is also unclear, but if it is then it is the first time the attacker has brought up the subject. Neymar has reportedly urged Neymar to publicly address the rumours, but his silence has remained an unsettling issue for the club and its fans.

However you slice it, the fact

remains that there are real tensions brewing in the Nou Camp regarding the future of a player they considered the successor to Lionel Messi.

Three days ago, Barcelona vice-president Jordi Miseré declared that Neymar 'would 200 per cent' remain at the club. On Friday club president Josep Maria Bartomeu stated that it would be impossible for PSG to pay the 22.2 million euros it would see them fall foul of UEFA's Financial Fair Play boundaries, showing just how much the tone within the club has changed.

"These [buyout] clauses are impossible to activate if you want to comply with Financial Fair Play. If someone does not want to comply [with FFP], then yes, they can be activated," the president told reporters.

The statement, which was supposed to reassure fans, has instead done the opposite as it highlighted Barcelona's uncertainty regarding their own player's future.

Even still, it would not be considered unfathomable that PSG would go ahead with the move and risk the ramifications.

Manchester City are among many clubs who have fallen foul of the regulations and they were slapped



Neymar posted this cryptic picture on his Instagram account yesterday, sending social media into a frenzy.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

with only a 60-million-euro fine transfer restrictions and had to name a smaller Champions League squad after being found guilty of breaching the regulations in 2014.

The maximum punishment under the rules would be a one-year suspension from the UEFA Champions League, something which is extremely unlikely to be levied. It is also something any team might be willing to risk if it means guaranteeing their future for the next five years with a player of

Neymar's calibre.

Also on Friday, Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp revealed that the Merseyside club had rejected an 80-million-euro offer from Barcelona for attacking midfielder Philippe Coutinho. Whilst the Brazilian has been targeted by the Catalan club for a while, the timing of the bid has further fuelled speculation of Neymar's departure; speculation that will continue to gain ground until the attacker breaks his silence.

Morata hails Chelsea, Conte

AFP, London



Spanish striker Alvaro Morata has passed his Chelsea medical ahead of his move to the Premier League champions from Real Madrid, according to Sky Sports on Friday.

The 24-year-old is now expected to fly to Singapore to link up with his new team-mates, who are preparing to play Arsenal in a friendly in Beijing.

Morata, who is expected to join in a deal worth up to £70 million (£91 million, 78 million euros) with the Blues paying £58 million up front, could make his unofficial debut against Bayern Munich in Singapore next Tuesday.

Morata hailed the English champions as "the best club" and manager Antonio Conte as "one of the world's best coaches" as the striker arrived in London to complete his transfer Thursday.

"This is the best club,"

Morata told Sky Sports News at London airport as he arrived to undergo a medical.

"Antonio Conte is one of the best coaches in the world and I'm so happy to work with Antonio. The Premier League is one of the best leagues in the world and I'm so happy to be here."

Real Madrid exercised a buy-back clause to bring Morata back from Juventus a year ago, having joined the Italian club in 2014 just days after Conte's exit in Turin.

He scored 20 goals in 43 appearances last season as Real retained their Champions League crown while edging Barcelona to the Spanish title.

Morata had previously been linked with a move to Manchester United, but their interest ended after the signing of Romelu Lukaku from Everton.

Morata's arrival in London could signal the end of his international teammate Diego Costa's time at Chelsea, with the latter strongly tipped for a return to Atletico Madrid.

Costa was granted extra time off by the Blues and has missed the start of pre-season training after the 28-year-old revealed in June that he was not part of Conte's plans.

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:

Proteas should get an Australian coach: Gibbs

South Africa are expected to get a new head coach after the conclusion of the Test series against England. Former South Africa batsman Herschelle Gibbs says that the team should hire an Australian who won't tolerate a 'buddy-buddy' kind of attitude.

Clijsters, Roddick to be inducted to Hall of Fame

Former world number ones and Grand Slam singles champions Kim Clijsters and Andy Roddick are among five people who will be inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame.

It's Premier League title or nothing for United's Carrick

Manchester United will be content with a top-four finish and must target the Premier League title next season, captain Michael Carrick has said.

Nastase handed three-year ban

REUTERS, London

Romanian Fed Cup captain Ilie Nastase has been banned from acting in an official capacity at all International Tennis Federation (ITF) team competitions until Dec. 31, 2020, the governing body said yesterday.

The 71-year-old was sanctioned for multiple breaches of conduct rules during a 2018 ITF team competition in Britain, including making a "highly inappropriate and racially insensitive" comment about Serena Williams' unborn child.

The governing body's internal adjudication panel also found him guilty of making "advances of a sexual nature" towards British team captain Anna Keothavong, and "abusive and threatening comments" to members of the British team, match officials and a member of the press.

However you slice it, the fact

Coutinho not for sale L'pool rebuff Barca's \$93 million bid

AFP, Hong Kong

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp on Friday brushed off a reported 93 million dollar offer from

Barcelona for Brazilian playmaker Philippe Coutinho, insisting "We're not a selling club."

"We want to work together and we want to make the next step, and to do this we need to stay together," the German told reporters before his side face Leicester City in the final of the Premier League Asia Trophy in Hong Kong on Saturday.

"The very important message is that we are not a selling club," added Klopp.

Barcelona circle for Coutinho, Liverpool midfielder Adam Lallana backed the merciful Brazilian to help lead the Reds to success in the new season.

"He's a fantastic player so it's no surprise that there's teams interested in him," said Lallana.

"I feel like we're going to achieve big things here and I feel like Phil is going to be a big part of that."

"He's in that elite bracket and there is no reason he can't continue to be at that elite bracket and continue here at Liverpool," added Lallana.

"We're a massive club -- we're in the Champions League -- so we need to qualify -- but if we are going to win competitions like that, and the Premier League, we need to keep hold of players like Phil."

Even so, Coutinho signed a new five-year contract at Anfield in January that did not include a release clause.

"He can improve his consistency but there is no doubt about his quality," Klopp said of the 25-year-old.

"He's a really good player but the nice thing is he's still young and he can improve. Phil is a very, very important player."

Klopp, whose side beat Crystal Palace 2-0 in midweek in their first run-out in Hong Kong, was less keen to discuss Liverpool's pursuit of Leipzig midfielder Naby Keita.

The German club rejected an \$8.6 million bid for the Guinean star from Liverpool earlier this week.

"I have nothing to say about this," shrugged Klopp, looking to end Liverpool's 27-year title drought.

"Obviously these stories are without my saying, so why should I disturb this process? Do whatever you want with this news, I'm not interested. But keeping the group together would make sense."

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