

JOSE LABELS HIMSELF 'THE MONSTER THAT KILLS KIDS'

Jose Mourinho reassured Marcus Rashford that he has a key role in one of the world's most exciting attacking line-ups. Despite playing a part in every one of Manchester United's 36 game this season, the England striker has started just one of their last six Premier League matches, leading to a buzz in the press about his diminished role. But Mourinho, who sarcastically mocked himself in a nod to his reputation as a coach who does not give youth a chance, said the 20-year-old remains an important player. "Marcus' story is quite interesting because he started playing with Mr Van Gaal, when the team was really in trouble, to have options," said Mourinho. "Then 'The monster that kills the little kids' arrived, but he plays every game since then. He plays every game, starting or coming from the bench, as a striker, as a left winger, as a right winger. Then he goes to the national team."

-- AGENCIES



Wantedway midfielder Emre Can (2nd from L) put in a man-of-the-match performance for Liverpool in their Premier League clash against Huddersfield on Tuesday, scoring the opening goal with a blazing half-volley in a 3-0 win at the John Smith's Stadium.

PHOTO: AFP

ASIAN CHAMPIONS TROPHY Oman to play, not Bangladesh

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh national hockey team will not be taking part in the Asian Champions Trophy following Bangladesh Hockey Federation's (BHF) denial to host the event, which will now be hosted by Oman from October 18 to 28 this year.

The top six finishers of the Asia Cup were supposed to take part in the fifth edition of the Asian Champions Trophy, and Bangladesh, as sixth-place finishers of the Asia Cup held last October in Dhaka, were expected to be part of this marquee event.

But the recently-formed ad-hoc committee of BHF decided not to host the event during the first meeting of its executive committee earlier this month owing to financial constraints, and Oman, who finished eighth in the Asia Cup, took this opportunity to host the event. Hosting the event also earned them the rights to be part of the tournament at Bangladesh's expense.

The Asian Hockey Federation (AHF), on January 29, officially awarded Oman the hosting rights of the event, which will fea-

ture India, Pakistan, Malaysia, South Korea, Japan and hosts Oman.

When contacted yesterday, AHF head of marketing and communications Faraz Khan explained why Bangladesh were not included. "In the event that the host country is not among the countries ranked first to sixth [in Asia Cup] or first to fifth [for women], and wishes to participate, the hosts shall be included instead of the lowest-ranked qualifiers," Faraz said. "Since the tournament is being hosted in Oman, the host country comes into the participating teams in place of the lowest-ranked team, Bangladesh."

"As far as we knew, the top six teams of Asia Cup were to take part in the Asian Champions Trophy, but now we see Bangladesh have been excluded from the event," BHF general secretary Abdus Sadeque said in regards to the issue.

"As the Asia Cup cost us Tk 2.2 crore, we don't have enough money to host another high-profile tournament like the Asian Champions Trophy this year. Besides, we need another Tk 50 lakh to participate in the qualifying tournament for Asian Games, so we refused to host event," Sadeque explained.

Men's football team instead of women's

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) is set to reverse its initial decision of sending the women's football team instead of the men's team in the upcoming Asian Games following a recent request from the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) in this regard.

The upcoming Asian Games are scheduled to be held in Indonesia from August 18 to September 2.

"We had a discussion about sending the women's team due to the good performance of the under-16 women's team at international level, but nothing was finalised. We will sit within a couple of days to take a final decision on it," BOA's secretary general Syed Shahed Reza said yesterday adding that the BFF has requested them to select the men's team instead of the women's team.

BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag also confirmed that they do not want to send the women's team at the expense of the men's team.

"We recently wrote a letter to the BOA saying that if it wants to select one team, it should choose the men's team. However, it can select both teams if it wants," Shohag said.

India aim for series win

First ODI against South Africa today

PTI, Durban

Galvanised by the consolatory win in the final Test, a resurgent India will be aiming for their first bilateral ODI series triumph on the South African soil when they take on the Proteas in a six-match rubber, starting on Thursday.

With only 14 months to go for the 2019 ODI World Cup, India will also look to kick off their preparations in earnest during the series.

India have a long limited-overs' schedule until their next big Test assignment this year. They play six ODIs and three Twenty20 Internationals here, a T20I tri-series in Sri Lanka and then three ODIs and three T20Is in England and Ireland, with the 2018 IPL season thrown in, before the five-Test series in England later in August.

Aubameyang joins Gunners

AFP, London



Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang joined Arsenal from Borussia Dortmund for a club record fee of £56 million on Wednesday, in the biggest deal so far on transfer deadline day.

Arsenal boss Arsene Wenger -- who last August kept the football world on tenterhooks as he held out selling Alexis Sanchez to Manchester City because he failed to secure Thomas Lemar from Monaco -- did not wait until the last minute to land the Gabon striker.

Wenger persuaded the board to pay more for the 28-year-old than the £46.5 million they shelled out for Frenchman Alexandre Lacazette last August.

There may be even more good news in store for fans as it was being widely reported that Mesut Ozil -- who was expected to leave either this window or Alexis Sanchez or on a free transfer in the summer -- had penned a new three-and-a-half-year deal, ensuring that he will be around to feed in those delectable balls to his new teammate Aubameyang.

However, Ozil comes at a premium to the tune of £350,000 per week

which means that Arsenal have shattered their rigidly-enforced wage structure and made the German the highest-paid player in the club's history.

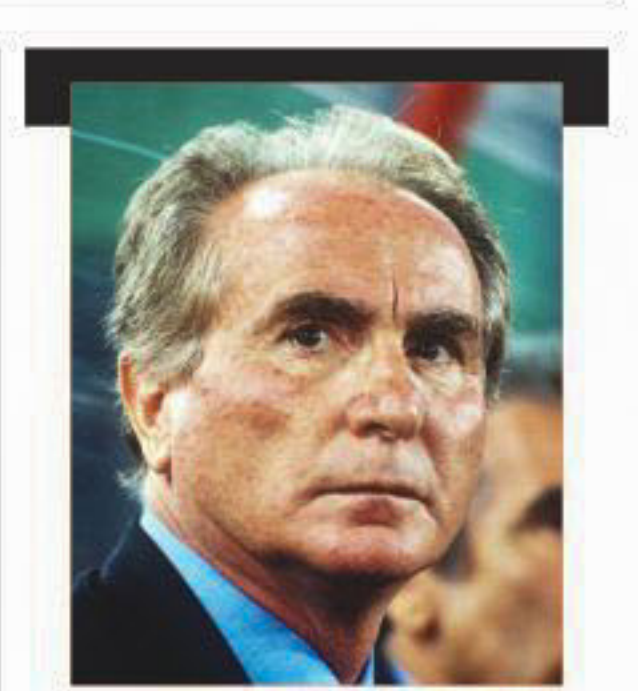
Dortmund have completed a six-month loan for Michy Batshuayi from Chelsea, who have stipulated there will be no option to buy.

Late into the window, Olivier Giroud left Arsenal after five-and-a-half years of service, moving across

London to join Chelsea.

The France striker netted 105 goals in 253 appearances during his time with us and won the FIFA Puskas Goal of the Year for his scorpion kick last season.

"Giroud gave great service; he never let us down on the commitment front and saved us many times," said Arsene Wenger. "I believe that his behaviour has been top, top class. He always had his heart 100 per cent in the team."



AZEGLIO VICINI (1933-2018)

No more 'magical nights'

APP, Milan

Former Italy national coach Azeglio Vicini, who led the Azzurri to third place at the 1990 World Cup on home soil, has died at the age of 84.

Vicini managed the national side from 1986 to 1991, leading them to the semi-finals of the 1988 European Championships and also the 1990 World Cup.

Fondly remembered as "the coach of the magical nights" for his role in Italia '90, Vicini passed away at his home in the northern city of Brescia, Italian press reported Wednesday.

During his 13-year senior playing career Vicini lined up for Vicenza, Sampdoria and Brescia. He will mainly be remembered for being at the helm of Italy when the country hosted the World Cup.

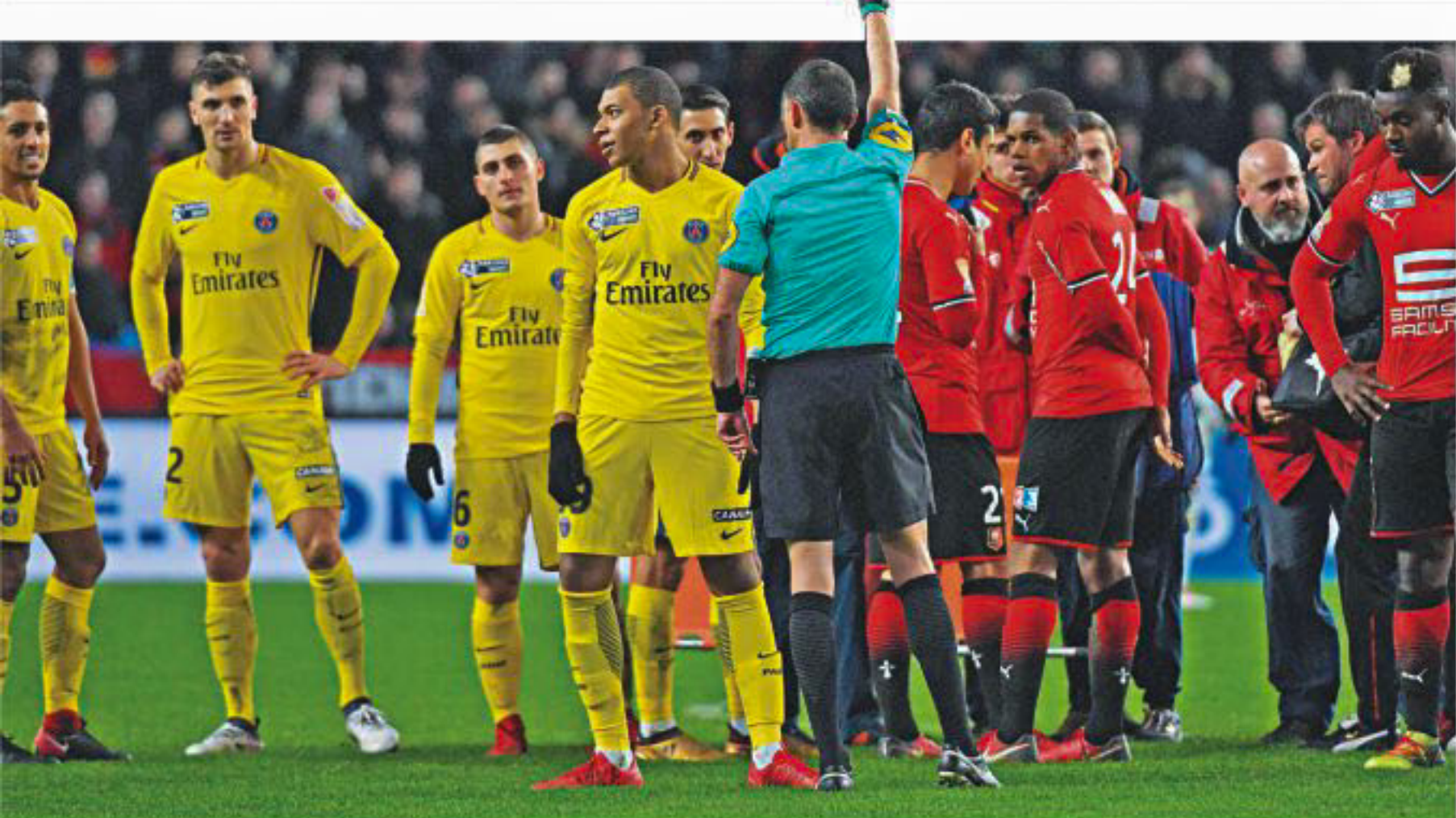
Ansar champs in national badminton

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Ansar emerged champions in the Ruchi FM Samsul Arefin Smriti 35th National Badminton Championships, which concluded in Pabna yesterday.

Ansar won titles in women's singles and doubles, men's doubles and mixed doubles to collect a total of 18 points. Bangladesh Army finished second with two runners-up trophies and nine points while Sylhet became third, courtesy of Salman Khan's triumph in men's singles.

National shuttler Shapla Akter of Bangladesh Ansar hogged the limelight by clinching titles in women's singles, doubles and mixed doubles.



After a short consultation with the video assistant referee (VAR), Kylan Mbappe (4th from L) was shown a straight red for an injudicious challenge.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Mbappe sees red, but PSG reach final

REUTERS, Paris

Holder Paris St Germain reached the League Cup final with a 3-2 victory at Stade Rennes on Tuesday although their France striker Kylan Mbappe was sent off just past the hour mark.

PSG, aiming for a fifth straight League Cup triumph, had taken a 3-0 lead through Thomas Meunier, Marquinhos and Giovanni Lo Celso when Mbappe was shown a straight red card.

Rennes reduced the arrears thanks to late goals by Diafra Sakho and Sanjin Prcic but it was too late to stop PSG.

They went ahead in the 24th minute when full back Meunier struck a spectacular volley before Rennes' Wahbi Khazri was denied an equaliser on the stroke of halftime for handball.

The visitors doubled their advantage nine minutes into the second half when Marquinhos scored from close range.

Four minutes later, Lo Celso scored PSG's third goal when his shot was poorly handled by keeper Abdoulaye Diallo.

Mbappe was sent off in the 63rd for a rough tackle on Ismaila Sarr and the 10 men allowed Sakho and Prcic to pull two goals back in the last five minutes but it was too late.

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:

Disgraced Ventura eager to return

Humiliated former Italy coach Gian Piero Ventura, sacked after the four-time World Cup winners failed to reach the 2018 tournament in Russia, has revealed he wants to return coaching.

Arsenal suffer 3-1 defeat at Swansea

Arsenal suffered another painful Premier League defeat as Swansea City capitalised on some glaring errors to win 3-1 on Tuesday, boosting their survival hopes and denting the visitors' top four chances.

Like father like Son

If Son Heung-min helps Tottenham Hotspur overcome Manchester United, Liverpool, Arsenal and Juventus in coming weeks, then fans of the North London club should save some praise for the South Korean's father.

Pep defends spending spree

City line up £55 million move for Mahrez

AGENCIES, London



Pep Guardiola has defended Manchester City's spending since he took charge in the wake of the club-record deal for Aymeric Laporte and with rumours of a £55 million bid for Riyad Mahrez in the air.

The center-back's arrival takes City's spending to almost £448m in the 19 months in which Guardiola has been manager. So deep are the Citizens' pockets that they are eyeing the 50-million-plus valued Mahrez as a back-up option for Leroy Sane, who picked up an injury and is out for six weeks.

However, while Guardiola said that he

could live with any criticism regarding spending, he said it was necessary in order to improve the quality of his entire squad.

"Some clubs spend £300 million on two players, we spent it on six players," he said Tuesday. "Last summer, we had six or seven out of contract and decided to sign six or seven more. "You need to spend to stay at the same high level. Maybe one day we'll spend £200 million on a player. It's up to the club how to spend their money; we decided to do it now. We might sign one or two in the summer."

Although Mahrez has ignored manager Claude Puel's pleas for him to stay by putting in a transfer request, Leicester are unlikely to let the 26-year-old leave for less than £90 million.



Square Group MD Anjan Chowdhury Pintu hands over the winner's cheque to men's singles champion Salman Khan in Pabna yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED