

**SONY SIX**  
Australia v India  
Fourth Test, Day Two  
Live from 5:30am

**SONY ESPN**  
South Africa v Pakistan  
Second Test, Day Two  
Live from 2:30pm

## RAMI'S AWKWARD MEET WITH KOLINDA

Adil Rami has revealed that he made a rather embarrassing faux-pas while attempting small talk with the president of Croatia in the aftermath of the 2018 World Cup final. Rami and France emerged victorious over Croatia but, perhaps intoxicated by a potent cocktail of sporting triumph and inhaled dry ice fumes, the centre-half ended up cramming his entire size 10 boot into his mouth while attempting light chit-chat with Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic. Here is Rami's first-hand account of the cringe-inducing conversation: "After the World Cup final, the president of Croatia looked at me and said 'nice moustache'. And I told her: 'I love Mykonos'. I don't know why but I've always confused Greece and Croatia. She said 'thank you' and she left. Then, Olivier looks at me and says: 'Are you stupid? Mykonos is Greece!' I told him: 'Oh god, I don't know anymore. It's okay, I'm world champion!'"

--AGENCIES



# Ole one win away from Busby's record

AFP, London



Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's Manchester United made it four wins out of four in the Premier League on Wednesday, beating Newcastle to close the gap on fourth-placed Chelsea, who were held at home by Southampton.

United have been transformed since their former striker replaced Jose Mourinho, scoring 12 goals in his first three games in charge but were forced to dig deep to emerge with a 2-0 win against Newcastle at St James's Park.

The victory leaves them in sixth spot in the table with 38 points, just three behind Arsenal and six adrift of Chelsea.

Substitute Romelu Lukaku broke the deadlock just 38 seconds after coming on midway through the second half, pouncing after Newcastle goalkeeper Martin Dubravka had spilled a fierce Marcus Rashford free kick and Rashford himself made sure of the points in the 80th minute.

Manchester United bossed possession but a resolute Newcastle defence kept clear-cut chances to a minimum, prompting Solskjaer to throw on Lukaku and Alexis Sanchez shortly after the hour mark.

The changes bore fruit immediately and

the interim boss will be equally pleased that United managed just their third clean sheet of the season in the Premier League.

"Finally we kept a clean sheet," Solskjaer told Sky Sports. "A very professional performance. We didn't hit the heights that we can do but we were in control, kept plugging away and got the goals."

"A good first touch from a sub. When you see big Romelu Lukaku running towards you, as a keeper you might take your hands away. We were sluggish in the first half, it was like a testimonial, too many square passes."

Solskjaer is only the second manager in Manchester United history to win his first four league games in charge of the club, after Matt Busby in 1946 and has a chance to equal the great manager's five straight wins next week.

It was a frustrating evening for Chelsea, who dominated possession but lacked any cutting edge, maintaining a worrying sequence for Maurizio Sarri's team.

His side failed to score for the third time in their past five league games at Stamford Bridge, raising questions about Chelsea's need for a top-class striker in the transfer window.

"If you can score the first goal, you can find spaces so it's easier," said Sarri. "We need to solve the problem of the last 20 metres. In the last matches, we were in full control but it's not easy in this moment to score the first goal."



It took Romelu Lukaku (L) just 38 seconds after coming on to break down Newcastle United's gritty defence in a Premier League encounter on Wednesday. The Red Devils ultimately prevailed 2-0, making it four wins in as many games for new manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer. PHOTO: COLLECTED



## COACHES MUST INCREASE ALONG WITH ATHLETES

Shamima Sattar Mim is a familiar face in Bangladesh's sports fraternity. The 59-year-old former high jumper was an eminent athlete, an international judge, coach and administrator during a 45-year career. The national award-winner retired from the Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan (BKSP) on November 1, 2018 after serving since 2002. The former BKSP deputy director (training) spoke to The Daily Star's Anisur Rahman about the BKSP's problems and prospects. The following are excerpts.

**TDS:** Do you have any dissatisfaction over unfulfilled dreams after your retirement?

**SSM:** I started my job at BKSP's lone branch in Dinajpur in 2002 before being transferred to the headquarters in Savar in 2011 as a deputy director. Although I don't have any dissatisfaction, what I have realised is that the facilities at the branches, which now number five, should be increased. Another thing is that some costly apparatus were bought for sports science but those are not being handled properly because BKSP doesn't have experts to who can handle the apparatus or those who can analyse the output after feeding the devices data, which is

to sit for a special examination.

**TDS:** There has been some criticism that BKSP students cannot shine in senior competitions even after showing promise at youth level.

**SSM:** There may have been criticism that our athletes could not do well at senior levels, but the fact is that our athletes leave BKSP after HSC examinations and don't have any connection with BKSP when they take part in senior meets. A gap is created after leaving BKSP and there may be a discontinuation of training, which is why they can't do well in senior meets. I think if those students stayed at BKSP up to the Degree Class, then they could have utilised facilities and



very important for the athletes' development. **TDS:** Do you think that BKSP places equal emphasis on sports and academics or prioritises sports?

**SSM:** I agree that sport should be given top priority at a sports institution. And we give priority to sporting talent instead of academic talent when admitting students through two tests – one sports-based and the other an academic one. BKSP usually gives more emphasis on training ahead of any youth national competition. Students who are supposed to sit for an exam but are also training are given a window

continued producing good results.

**TDS:** Once BKSP produced a lot of good footballers like Hasan Al Mamun, Masud Rana, Firoz Mahmud Tito, Zahid Hasan Emily but now there are hardly any in the national team.

**SSM:** There were only two games – football and hockey – at the start of the BKSP in 1986. Since then the number of disciplines and athletes have increased, but the number of coaches has not increased at a similar pace. When students were fewer in number, the care was at a higher level but that is lacking now. Besides, the

coaches of a few disciplines are also allowed to conduct training at club level for two to three months, so a gap is being created and the students of BKSP are falling behind.

**TDS:** There have also been allegations that coaches of poor standard are appointed at BKSP, which is why students cannot learn from them.

**SSM:** There are two types of coaches – a permanent coach and a talent-hunt coach. Permanent coaches must fulfil certain criteria such as being graduates or former national players, having international coaching certificates or five-year coaching experience at club level and a minimum age of 40. For talent-hunt coaches being a former national player with an HSC certificate is good enough. BKSP can't find educated permanent coaches despite advertising because quality coaches are not applying for BKSP as they get more money from clubs. BKSP should therefore adjust salaries.

**TDS:** Why doesn't BKSP, which has a budget for foreign coaches, appoint them to make up for the lack of good local coaches?

**SSM:** BKSP can't appoint foreign coaches by itself because they need to discuss with the youth and sports ministry. As far as I know, the authorities are searching for foreign coaches for cricket and football.

**TDS:** So do you think that the departures of good cricket coaches like Fahim Muntasir, Sarwar Imran and Mohammad Salahuddin were big losses?

**SSM:** Of course. But they were offered much higher salaries from other organisations. BKSP had once produced cricketers like Shakib Al Hasan, Musfiqur Rahim, Abdur Razzak and many others but BKSP has to face competition from private cricket academies now. It is the same in football.

**TDS:** Why can't BKSP produce international standard athletes in indoor disciplines?

**SSM:** Sprinter Bimal Chandra was once a BKSP student. He became the fastest man in South Asian Games. But the fact is that we can't find genius athletes in talent-hunt

programmes. BKSP graduates Mezbah Uddin and Shirin Sultana are still dominating in 100m sprint in national athletics championships, which means that their BKSP training was good. To be honest, we are now devoid of talented players in indoor games.

Another thing is that there are nearly 50 types of disciplines being played in Bangladesh, so the athletes are being split. But during our time, there were hardly 15 to 16 games being played with a lot of players available. Besides, there were opportunities to get jobs playing sports but there are no such opportunities at the moment except a few jobs in services teams.

BKSP students are still doing well in youth competitions at the international level, with the hockey team directly qualifying for the Youth Olympics twice. Former BKSP athletes like Abdullah Hel Baki, swimmer Mahfuzia Khatun Shila, Arnab Sharif Ladif, archer Tamimul Haque and the youth hockey team are winning medals at international level. I will say the quality of athletes has deteriorated as BKSP once produced gold-winning athletes like shooter Asif Iqbal and sprinter Bimal Chandra.

**TDS:** Do you have any suggestions to improve the standard of training?

**SSM:** It is time to focus on improving facilities at branches and sending beginners there. The central BKSP in Savar is made for high-performance training where students from branches will come after the JSC examinations. The authorities should increase the number of quality coaches and facilities.

The director general, the principle of school & college, director (admin) and director (training) are appointed at BKSP from government officers who come from outside BKSP, but I think the director (training) should be appointed from inside the BKSP. Outsiders are good at administrative posts but if a head coach of a discipline is appointed the director (training) then he or she, with basic knowledge of training, will know what to do for students.

## Emery bins Navas talk

AGENCIES, London

Unai Emery has denied reports that Arsenal are trying to sign Keylor Navas, who has been on the fringes at Real Madrid after Thibaut Courtois joined from Chelsea in the summer.

Speaking about Navas, Emery said that he believed Leno, Cech and Emiliano Martinez offer plenty of strength in depth.

"Not true," Emery told reporters of the Navas rumours ahead of an FA Cup third-round trip to Blackpool.

Pressed on if Arsenal were keen on Navas, he added: "I don't know. We never speak about one goalkeeper because I think – and it's true – we are very happy with the three goalkeepers we have now. We've never spoken about Keylor Navas."

## Duanne takes four as SA dominate Day 1

AFP, Cape Town



Duanne Olivier led another fast bowling assault on Pakistan's batsmen as South Africa took control on the first day of the second Test at Newlands on Thursday. Olivier took four for 48 as Pakistan were bowled out for 177 after being sent in on a hard, green-tinged pitch.

Aiden Markram struck an assured 78 as South Africa reached 123 for two at the close.

Olivier followed up a match-winning performance in the first Test in Centurion, while Dale Steyn took three for 48.

Captain Sarfraz Ahmed hit 56 and Shan Masood made 44 to lift an otherwise poor Pakistan batting performance.

South Africa's decision to pick an all-pace attack paid dividends with all four fast bowlers picking up wickets, with most of the Pakistan batsmen looking vulnerable against fast, short-pitched deliveries.

As at Centurion, where he had match fig-

ures of 11 for 96, Olivier lived up to the "enforcer" tag given him by captain Faf du Plessis, regularly landing the ball in his own half of the pitch and making it rear up towards the batsmen. Unlike Centurion, the pitch itself was not a major factor in Pakistan's collapse. It was hard and there was some green grass on the surface but the bounce was largely true and there was no exaggerated sideways movement.

Azhar Ali, Pakistan's most experienced batsman, fell to a short ball from Olivier for the third time in a row, fending tamely to first slip. Five of his teammates also were dismissed by short deliveries.

Pakistan's batting was put into perspective when Markram and Dean Elgar put on 56 for the first wicket at almost five runs an over.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

**PAKISTAN:** First innings 177 all out in 51.1 overs (Masood 44, Shafiq 20, Sarfraz 56, Amir 22; Steyn 3-48, Olivier 4-48, Rabada 2-35)

**SAFRICA:** First innings 123 for 2 in 30 overs (Markram 78, Elgar 20, Amla 24 not out; Amit 1-25, Masood 1-4)

### Nishikori downs Dimitrov

Kei Nishikori showed he was back to his best form as he downed Bulgaria's Grigor Dimitrov 7-5, 7-5 to reach the semi-finals of the Brisbane International on Thursday.

Nishikori proved too consistent for the Bulgarian in a high-quality match, securing crucial breaks at 5-5 in both sets.

Afterwards, the 29-year-old said his goal was to get back into the top five after seeing his ranking plummet to 39 in April last year due to persistent injuries.

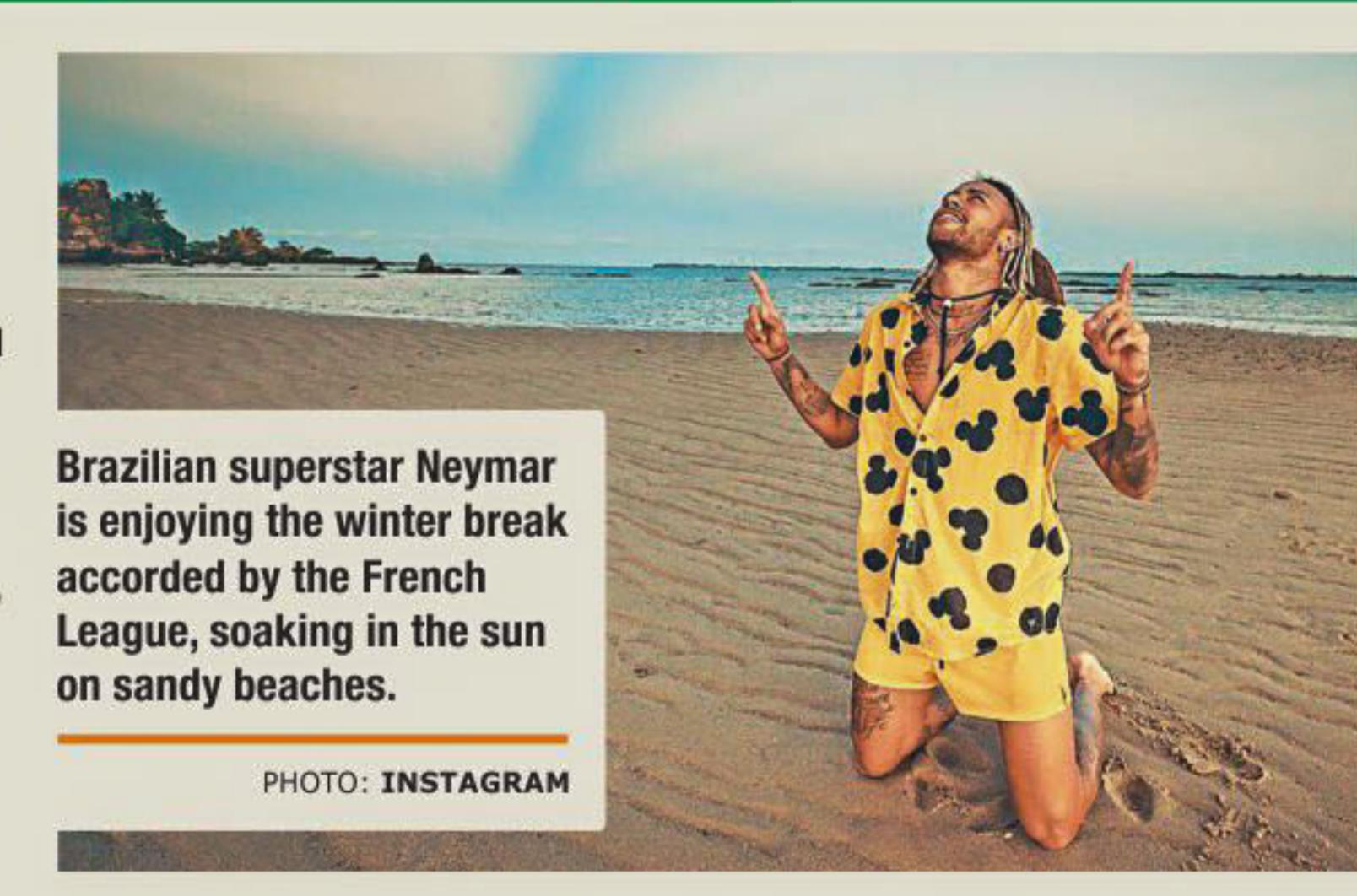
"I'm trying to go top five, that's my next goal," Nishikori said. "The last couple of months of last year I was playing great tennis and I think I'm doing that now, this week."

He will now play Frenchman Jeremy Chardy for a place in Sunday's final and will go into the match as a firm favourite following Chardy's three-set struggle over qualifier Yasutaka Uchiyama.

### Bellamy steps down over bullying allegations

Cardiff City under-18 coach Craig Bellamy has denied allegations that he bullied an academy player but stepped down from his role on Thursday pending an investigation from the Premier League side.

### SHORT CORNER



Brazilian superstar Neymar is enjoying the winter break accorded by the French League, soaking in the sun on sandy beaches.

PHOTO: INSTAGRAM

British media reports said Cardiff had received a complaint against former Wales captain Bellamy over his alleged treatment of a young English player who has since left the club.

Cardiff have begun an investigation Bellamy said that he was fully cooperating.

"I am aware of the allegations that have been made against me via the media," Bellamy said in a statement.

"I understand the need for Cardiff City to undertake a full investigation in response to these allegations -- and my own suggestion -- I have temporarily removed myself from my coaching position in order to co-operate fully with the club's inquiry."

"Obviously, I am saddened both by the allegations and the manner in which they were made and I categorically refute them." -- REUTERS