

WHAT A RIDICULOUS DECISION! WARNE

The International Cricket Council's (ICC's) decision to hand West Indies skipper Jason Holder a one-match suspension for a slow over-rate during their 10-wicket humbling of England in the second Test in Antigua drew the ire of Australian spin legend Shane Warne. The match lasted less than three days. Given that 90 overs are supposed to be bowled in a day, and two overs subtracted each time there is a change of innings, the par mark after three days would have been 264 overs. With around half an hour left in the day by the time West Indies won the game, a rough estimate of the par number of overs would be 257. There were however 236.2 overs in the game and West Indies were on the field for 103.1 of those. "The Test didn't go 3 days - can you please appeal this @JaseHolder98! What a ridiculous decision - where's the common sense here?" tweeted Warne yesterday, before felicitating West Indies for their series win, and also giving a shout out to an old Caribbean foe. "Ps congrats on a wonderful series win too. International cricket needs a strong Windies team and hopefully this is just the start @BrianLara."

— STAR SPORT DESK



Sheikh Russel stay perfect

SPORTS REPORTER



Former champions Sheikh Russel KC maintained their hundred per cent record with a 3-0 win against falling giants Mohammedan SC at the Sylhet District Stadium last night.

The win equalled Sheikh Russel's feat of a 3-0 win against the same opposition in the 5th Bangladesh Premier League in 2012 while maintaining their unbeaten record against the Black and Whites since 2013.

On the other hand, it was the third straight defeat in the race for Mohammedan and their ninth defeat against Sheikh Russel in 22 meetings of the professional football league.

The win took Sheikh Russel to the top of the table with nine points alongside Bashundhara Kings, Abahani, Arambagh KS and Saif SC even though Sheikh Russel and Bashundhara Kings have played a match less than the others. Mohammedan, meanwhile, slipped to 10th position with three points from four matches.

Hosts Sheikh Russel took the lead in the seventh minute when Raphael Odoiyan chested down a cross from Bipul Ahmed before volleying it home from the six-yard box before defender Alison Udoka volleyed to double the lead after a header from Odoiyan came off the crossbar in the 42nd minute.

Uzbek striker Azizov Alisher wrapped up the victory in the 86th minute with a placed shot after playing a neat one-two with Odoiyan.

NOFEL 0-2 MUKTIJODDHA
FAMOUSSA 3', 61'
SK RUSSEL 3-0 MOHAMMEDAN
ODOIYAN 7', UDOKA 42',
AZIZOV 86'



Sheikh Russel striker Raphael Odoiyan (C) leads the celebration after opening the scoring against Mohammedan in their Bangladesh Premier League fixture at the Sylhet District Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Famoussa powers Muktijoddha

SPORTS REPORTER

A brace from Ivorian marksman Ballo Famoussa brought Muktijoddha Sangsad back to winning ways in the Bangladesh Premier League with a 2-0 win over newcomers NoFeL SC at the Shaheed Bulu Stadium in Noakhali yesterday.

The win was second in four matches for the All Reds, who had finished second from bottom last season. And their good start owes a lot to the form of Famoussa, who had scored the league's first hat-trick against Sheikh Jamal, to lead the scorers' chart on five goals, followed by Sunday Chizoba, Zahid Hossain and Nabib Newaj Jibon on three goals each.

"We prepared our game plan around Famoussa and we also give importance to him in practice sessions. He is really good in the attacking third and we are keeping our hopes on him. If Famoussa plays well, Muktijoddha Sangsad get results," said the

club's coach Abdul Kayum Sentu over phone.

Smarting from a 2-0 defeat against defending champions Abahani, Muktijoddha Sangsad did not waste much time to break the deadlock as Famoussa headed home a free-kick from Japanese midfielder Yousuke Kato in the very third minute.

On an uneven pitch, both sides struggled to control the ball resulting in the absence of build-up football, but NoFeL SC came close to levelling the margin in the eighth minute, only to be denied by Muktijoddha Sangsad goalkeeper Nahid Uddin.

Muktijoddha Sangsad doubled the lead in the 61st minute as Kato ran down the left flank to cut the ball back for Mohammad Sohel, who drove inside the box and Famoussa tapped in from close range.

NoFeL SC could have reduced the margin in the 90th minute had a header from Eleta Benjamin not come off the post. It was the third straight defeat for the club from the South Eastern part of the country.

Real close gap at the top

AFP, Madrid

Real Madrid gained ground on both Barcelona and Atletico Madrid in La Liga as Karim Benzema and Vinicius Junior each scored in a 3-0 win over Alaves on Sunday.

Benzema, Vinicius and Gareth Bale started together for the first time and two thirds of the newly-dubbed 'BBV' delivered as Madrid capitalised on Barca being held by Valencia and Atletico losing at Real Betis.

Mariano Diaz, on as a substitute, added a third late on.

After 22 rounds, this is the first in which Madrid have been the only winners from the established three clubs, which is as much an indication of their own inconsistency as the sturdiness of Atleti and, particularly, Barca.

Madrid could now overtake Atletico if they win the city derby next weekend but the difference behind Barcelona, whom they face in the Copa del Rey on Wednesday, is still a considerable eight points.

"We will fight for everything until

the end," Solari said. "Today there was a real hunger to cut the gap."

It may have been the 5-1 loss to Barca in October that proved the final straw for Julen Lopetegui but Alaves' 1-0 victory at Mendizorrotza, their first



Real Madrid striker Karim Benzema celebrates after scoring the opening goal against Alaves during their La Liga encounter at the Bernabeu on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

over Real in 87 years, was perhaps the team's rock bottom.

Benzema has been the revival's ringleader since and his latest goal was his sixth in four games, his best streak since January 2016. The only La Liga player to have scored more in all competitions this season is Lionel Messi.

He did it starting alongside Bale and Vinicius but it was the latter, not the former, that looks to be Benzema's most dangerous partner.

Bale endured one of his quieter nights and it was noticeable that while Benzema and Vinicius both departed to rousing ovations late on, there was a scattering of disgruntled whistles when the Welshman was replaced by Marco Asensio shortly after the hour.

"It was difficult," Solari said. "Alaves defended very well, they were determined and there weren't many spaces."

It was Vinicius' clever reverse pass through the legs of Carlos Vigaray that led to Benzema's opener as Sergio Reguilón was set free down the left, his cross ensuring the Frenchman could not miss.

Gomez to undergo leg surgery

AFP, London

Liverpool's Joe Gomez is to undergo an operation in the hope of aiding his recovery from a lower leg fracture, the Premier League leaders announced Monday.

Gomez suffered the injury in a 3-1 victory at Burnley early in December.

Liverpool's initial assessment was that Gomez might be sidelined for six weeks, but have now refused to set a specific timescale for the England international's recovery, although he is expected to play again this season.

Liverpool can confirm Joe Gomez is to undergo surgery to assist his recovery from a lower leg fracture sustained at Burnley on December 5, the club said in a statement.

SHORT CORNER



Perera the first in 81 years
Sri Lanka batsman Angelo Perera has become the second player in history to score two double-centuries in the same first-class game.

—

Zaniolo strikes again as Roma hold Milan

Teenaged midfielder Nicolo Zaniolo's second-half goal rescued a point for AS Roma as they secured a 1-1 draw with AC Milan in Serie A on Sunday.

Gennaro Gattuso's side maintained their place in the top four even though Krzysztof Piatek's 26th-minute strike was cancelled out by 19-year-old Zaniolo's effort after the interval. He became the youngest player to score three goals for Roma in Serie A since Francesco Totti in 1995.

Piatek scored his first league goal for Milan after joining from Genoa in the January transfer window.

The result leaves Milan fourth, and the final

joining the club," Shandong coach Li Xiaopeng told reporters. "But between his health and the game, we think that his health is the more important."

— AFP

Body found underwater in wreckage of Sala's plane

British investigators said Monday they had spotted a body in the wreckage of a plane that disappeared in the Channel two weeks ago carrying Argentine footballer Emiliano Sala and his pilot.

Sala, 28, was flying from France to join his new club, Premier League side Cardiff City, when the light aircraft disappeared on January 21 north of the island of Guernsey.

A wreck was found on the seabed on Sunday and closer inspection by a remotely operated vehicle (ROV) confirmed both that it was the missing plane, and that a body was inside.

"Tragically, in video footage from the ROV, one

— AFP

"We will fight for everything until



Roma midfielder Nicolo Zaniolo is ecstatic after scoring the equaliser against Milan during their Serie A match in Rome on Sunday. PHOTO: AFP

Champions League place, with 36 points from 22 games. Roma are one point behind in fifth.

— REUTERS

Injury delays Fellaini's Chinese club debut

Marouane Fellaini's debut at Chinese club Shandong Luneng has been delayed to allow the former Manchester United midfielder treatment for a calf injury, his new coach said Monday.

The 31-year-old arrived in Hong Kong on Sunday to meet with teammates and sign autographs for fans, but missed training and flew home to Belgium that night for treatment.

"Of course we are very happy that he is

occupant is visible amidst the wreckage," the British government's Air Accident Investigation Branch (AAIB) said in a statement.

The AAIB also released a grainy image showing a part of the fuselage with the aircraft registration. The depth indicated on the image was 67.7 metres (222 feet).

Sala's father Horacio earlier spoke of his shock that the plane had been found, after a private search organised by the family. "I can't believe it. It's a bad dream," he told Cronica TV from his home in Progreso, Argentina, before the news about the body was announced.

— AFP

"Of course we are very happy that he is

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