

## SALA'S BODY TO BE RETURNED ON FRIDAY

Argentine footballer Emiliano Sala's body is to be returned to Argentina on Friday, the mayor of his hometown of Progreso, Julio Muller, told AFP Tuesday. Sala's body was recovered from plane wreckage in the English Channel last week. He was flying to his new team, English Premier League side Cardiff City, from his old French club Nantes when his plane went missing over the Channel on January 21. Muller said Sala's body would arrive in the late afternoon and be taken to the gymnasium next to his youth club's headquarters, where a vigil was scheduled. He said Sala's "mother, sister and brother have already arrived in Progreso." British authorities formally identified Sala's body last week, after which his family said they could "now begin to mourn our son and our brother." Sala, who was 28, died of "head and trunk injuries," an inquest in England heard on Monday. --AFP



## SHORT CORNER

### Proteas admit to being 'caught off guard' by rejuvenated Sri Lanka

Top-scorer Quinton de Kock admitted South Africa were "caught off guard" when Sri Lanka bowled them out for 235 on the first day of the first Test at Kingsmead on Wednesday.

Underdogs Sri Lanka, seemingly in disarray going into the match, reached 49 for one at the close to finish the day in a strong position.

Left-arm opening bowler Vishwa Fernando and right-arm seamer Kasun Rajitha, playing in their fourth and fifth Tests respectively, did the major damage. Fernando took four for 62 and Rajitha claimed three for 68.

"We were a bit unaware of the new guys. I think they caught us off guard," said De Kock who made 80. "We had good game plans against (opening bowler) Suranga Lakmal but the two new guys were unseen before. They bowled really well, they didn't miss their lengths often and they made us work hard for what we got."

Asked what specific problems Fernando and Rajitha caused, De Kock said: "The angle of their bowling, the skills they had, their actions, the skiddiness, the bounce. They are two solid bowlers and they will give us trouble throughout the series, so we will just have to keep our eyes open for them." --AFP

### Lalmoinirhat crowned after Musfiq's 7

Bowler Musfiq Hasan ran riot as his seven wickets for 16 runs saw his side Lalmoinirhat Government High School become district-level champions, defeating Church of God High School by 134 runs in the Prime Bank Young Tigers National School Cricket Tournament final in Lalmoinirhat yesterday.

Asked to bat first, Lalmoinirhat posted 162 runs in 45 overs before being bundled out. However, right-arm pacer Musfiq, who was a net bowler for current BPL champions Comilla Victorians, made sure of his side's ascendancy with a fiery spell that saw Church of God High bundled out for just 28 runs in 12.3 overs. --SPORTS REPORTER

### Gabriel suspended after Root exchange

West Indies fast bowler Shannon Gabriel was Wednesday suspended for four ODIs after breaching the ICC's code of conduct over comments to Joe Root.

Gabriel has been fined 75 per cent of his match fee for the incident during the third Test in St Lucia and handed three demerit points, taking his total to eight -- enough to be banned for four ODIs or one Test.

The nature of the paceman's words is not known but England captain Root was picked up on stump microphones telling Gabriel: "Don't use it as an insult. There's nothing wrong with being gay."

A statement from the ICC said: "During the third day of the St Lucia Test against England on Monday, Gabriel was found guilty of breaching article 2.13 of the ICC code of conduct... which relates to 'personal abuse of a player, player support personnel, umpire or match referee during an international match', following an incident with Root." --AFP

### Zaniolo urged not to lose his head

Roma coach Eusebio Di Francesco has urged teenage sensation Nicolo Zaniolo not to lose his head after his stunning brace grabbed the Italians a first-leg advantage over Porto in their Champions League last-16 tie.

The 19-year-old scored two quick-fire second-half goals, both off Edin Dzeko assists, in a 2-1 win at the Stadio Olimpico on Tuesday night to become the youngest Italian to score a Champions League double.

"After his first goal I told him to use his head," said Di Francesco. "He did that and scored the second by playing smart."

"We have to let him develop at his own pace and he needs to remain level-headed, as he is on the pitch. He played in a position he's not used to but he performed really well. We have a great player and we know that. We're happy to have him and he deserves the praise." --AFP

# Mohammedan's nadir

SPORTS REPORTER



Mohammedan hit a new low in the professional football league as they crashed to a record fourth straight defeat, suffering a 2-1 loss to Saif SC in a Bangladesh Premier League encounter at Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The Black and Whites, who have never lifted the prestigious trophy of the professional football league, had previously only had losing streaks extending to three games, in both the fourth and tenth editions of the professional football league.

Mohammedan suffered three straight defeats to title contenders Abahani, Sheikh Jamal and Sheikh Russel in 2011 and to Sheikh Jamal, Chittagong Abahani and Abahani in the last edition.

In the history of the professional football league, Mohammedan have suffered 51 defeats,

drawn 64 games and won 103.

This time the Motijheel-based outfit lost to lightweights Arambagh, Brothers Union, Sheikh Russel and Saif SC after starting the campaign with a 2-1 win over Team BJMC.

The fourth consecutive loss leaves them 11th in the 13-team table while Saif SC, with four wins

<b>MOHAMMEDAN</b> BAPPY 61'	<b>1 - 2</b>	<b>SAIF SC</b> BOLSHAKOV 11', CORDOBA 58'
<b>SK RUSSEL</b>	<b>0 - 0</b>	<b>CTG ABAHANI</b>

from six games, climb to second with 13 points, two behind leaders Abahani.

From the outset, the visitors pressed Mohammedan and came close to taking the lead in the fifth minute only for South Korean recruit Seung Park to be denied by goalkeeper Sarwar Jahan before Russian forward Denis Bolshakov broke the dead-

lock from a 25-yarder six minutes later.

Mohammedan looked better on the counter and Nkowcha Kingsley had a chance but he drove off target before Park squandered a penalty that would have seen Saif double their lead on the half-hour mark.

After resumption, Park ran down the left flank and cut the ball back for Colombian Deiner Andres Cordoba, who simply tapped in to double the lead in the 58th minute.

Substitute Amir Hakim Bappy reduced arrears by heading home a Pashbon Mollah corner in the 61st minute but it was not good enough to avert Mohammedan from hitting a new low.

Away at the Sylhet District Stadium, Chittagong Abahani held hosts Sheikh Russel to a goalless draw. With a second straight draw, Sheikh Russel remain fourth position with 11 points from five games while Chittagong Abahani are seventh with nine points from six matches.



Mohammedan players are dejected after suffering their fourth consecutive defeat, a record low for the failing giants, during their Bangladesh Premier League match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## Rape accused arrested

SPORTS REPORTER

Shohag Ali, accused of raping a teenage weightlifter, was finally arrested from Netrokona on Monday around two-and-half months after the victim's mother filed a case under section 9 (1) of the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act at the Paltan police station.

Ali, a former employee of the Bangladesh Weightlifting Federation (BWF), was on the run since the filing of the case and police formulated a trap, telling Ali that they would marry him off to the victim to draw him out.

"We arrested him on Monday night from Kendua in Netrokona. After producing him before the court on Tuesday, we requested a five-day remand for interrogation but the court granted one day," said Investigative officer Amena Khatun. "The accused did not admit to anything regarding the rape. We will interrogate him again for the rest of day [Wednesday] before sending him to court tomorrow [Thursday]."

Owing to trauma, the weightlifter was admitted to the National Institute of Mental Health and Hospital after the incident at the BWF office at the NSC building in September.

# PSG hand MU reality check

AFP, Manchester



Manchester United caretaker manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer admitted his side were shown how much they still have to improve after being swept aside by an injury-hit Paris Saint-Germain 2-0 in the first leg of their Champions League last 16 tie on Tuesday.

Presnel Kimpembe and Kylian Mbappe struck in a seven-minute spell just before the hour mark as PSG displayed their credentials to finally become champions of Europe for the first time, especially once they get the world's most expensive player Neymar and Edinson Cavani back from injury.

After a run of 10 wins and one draw in 11 games since Solskjaer replaced the sacked Jose Mourinho in December, a first defeat for the Norwegian is a reality check for United's revival and they have a mountain to climb when the sides meet again for the second leg on March 6.

The English giants will also have to cope without Paul Pogba in three weeks' time as he was sent off a minute from time to round off a terrible night for the hosts.

For all the positivity of United's return to form in the past two months, they remain 14 points behind Premier League leaders Manchester City and Liverpool and the big rebuilding job required to make the three-time European champions contenders again for this competition was laid bare.

Today we weren't at the level, this is a level up from what we have played against. We have had a great run, we came into this game in a great frame of mind, great form, but it's a big step up.

**OLE GUNNAR SOLSKJAER**

"We've been taking about top four (of the Premier League). Top four is one thing but we want to be at the top," added Solskjaer.

"Manchester United should be at the top and this is a top team we've played against. The players are disappointed but I also think they know we

need to step up our level to get to the level we want to get to."

PSG showed they still retain plenty of world class talent despite their big name absentees as United struggled to contain the slick passing of Thomas Tuchel's men in midfield and the pace of Mbappe in attack.

Angel di Maria was roundly booed by the home support on his return to Old Trafford after an unhappy one-season spell with United after signing for a then club record £60 million in 2014.

But the Argentine silenced his detractors by setting up both goals and also mocked the throwing of a beer bottle at him by pretending to drink from it.

"I think the guy is very competitive, like all South American guys. If you tease him it does not make him weaker," said Tuchel.

For all PSG's injury problems, a double blow also rocked United in the seconds before half-time and at the break as Jesse Lingard and Anthony Martial limped off to be replaced by Alexis Sanchez and Juan Mata.

The home side never recovered their composure as PSG produced a stunning second-half display to all but book their place in the last eight despite David de Gea's best efforts in the United goal.



Paris Saint-Germain wunderkind Kylian Mbappe celebrates after scoring the second goal against Manchester United during their Champions League round of 16 first leg encounter at Old Trafford on Tuesday.

PHOTO: AFP

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