

**SONY SIX**  
South Africa v Sri Lanka  
Second ODI  
Live from 5:00pm

**TEN 1**  
UEFA Champions League  
Porto v Roma  
Live from 2:00am (Thursday)

**TEN 2**  
UEFA Champions League  
PSG v Man United  
Live from 2:00am (Thursday)



Marcos Vinicius (L) is the toast of his teammates after his acrobatic bicycle kick gives Bashundhara Kings an ultimately decisive 1-0 lead over title rivals Sheikh Russel at the Sheikh Kamal Stadium in Nilphamari yesterday.

## Bashundhara Kings on top

SPORTS REPORTER

Bashundhara Kings moved back to the top as the 10th round of the Bangladesh Premier League came to an end, bringing a one-month break to the league's proceedings, yesterday.

With 14 rounds of play still remaining, the league will go to the break due to the national team's FIFA friendly against Cambodia next week and the under-23 team's participation in the AFC U-23 Championship Qualifiers in Bahrain later this month.

Bashundhara Kings, the Independence Cup champions, hosted title-rivals Sheikh Russel KC at the Sheikh Kamal Stadium in Nilphamari in one of the three matches on the last day of the

POINTS TABLE					
TEAM	MATCH	WIN	DRAW	LOSS	POINTS
Bashundhara	9	8	1	0	25
Abahani	10	8	0	2	24
Sk Russel	9	6	2	1	20
Saif SC	9	5	2	2	17
Arambagh	10	5	1	4	16
Muktijoddha	9	4	1	4	13
Sk Jamal	10	3	4	3	13
Ctg Abahani	9	2	5	2	11
Rahmatganj	9	1	5	3	8
NoFel SC	9	2	2	5	8
Mohammedan	9	1	2	6	5
Team BJMC	9	0	3	6	3
Brothers	9	1	0	8	3

<b>BASHUNDHARA</b> VINICIUS 57'	<b>1 - 0</b>	<b>SK RUSSEL</b>
<b>RAHMATGANJ</b> ZUNAPIO 36'	<b>1 - 1</b>	<b>ARAMBAGH</b> ZAHID 4'
<b>MUKTIJODDHA</b> KATO 41', 58', ROYAL 90+1'	<b>3 - 0</b>	<b>BROTHERS</b>

10th round.

After a barren first half in which both sides impressed without any reward, the newcomers started brightly again. Daniel Colindres' free-kick was almost put into his own net by Sheikh Russel midfielder Khalekurzaman in the 48th

minute. The hosts earned a number of corners in the first ten minutes of the second half, but failed to make those count before a moment of excellence from Brazilian forward Marcos Vinicius in the 57th minute decided the fate of the game.

Shushanto Tripura's long diagonal ball was superbly cut back by Mohammad Ibrahim inside the opposition's danger zone, where Vinicius unfurled a brilliant bicycle kick from an acute angle, looping the ball over the head of Sheikh Russel goalkeeper Ashraf Islam Rana to find the net.

Sheikh Russel applied heavy pressure on the

opposition's goal in the last 20 minutes of the game, with Raphael Odoyin going closest to scoring but Bashundhara Kings' defence held firm to eke out a crucial victory to consolidate their position.

The Independence Cup champions are the only team to have remained unbeaten so far and, with 25 points from nine matches, are a point ahead of defending champions Abahani, who have played 10 matches. Sheikh Russel, on the other hand, remained in third position with 20 points from nine matches.

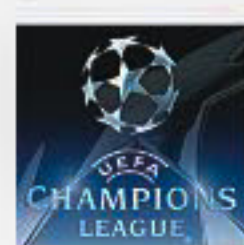
Meanwhile, Muktijoddha Sangsad bounced back from their defeat against Arambagh with a 3-0 win over Brothers Union at the Sheikh Fazlul Haque Moni Stadium in Gopalganj.

Japanese forward Yousuke Kato scored twice either side of the break before setting up Mehedi Hasan Royel for the third goal in injury time to heap more pressure on the struggling Brothers Union. Muktijoddha moved to sixth position with 13 points from nine matches while Brothers remained bottom of the table with only three points.

At the Bangabandhu National Stadium in Dhaka, Rahmatganj MFS held visitors Arambagh KS to a 1-1 draw. Zahid Hossain opened the scoring for Arambagh from a penalty in the fourth minute before Siyo Zunapio restored parity in the 36th minute. Arambagh are in sixth position with 16 points from 10 matches while Rahmatganj moved to ninth position with eight points from nine matches.

## PSG credible contenders

AFP, Paris



Dani Alves jokes that Paris Saint-Germain are still Champions League "virgins", but the presence of players like the decorated Brazilian only helps make them more credible contenders to win the coveted trophy.

In a glittering career, Alves has won the Champions League three times with Barcelona and reached another final with Juventus.

He is a veteran now, his 36th birthday falling several weeks before this season's final, and he is conscious of what players like him and goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon, now 41, can add to a PSG squad already featuring Neymar and Kylian Mbappe.

"We know how to win and how to lose. What we try to transmit to the others is that either we all go together in the same direction, or we leave the doors open to a defeat," Alves tells AFP in an exclusive interview.

He is speaking at the club's training ground in the upmarket Paris suburb of Saint-Germain-en-Laye, 48 hours before their last 16, second leg at home to Manchester United.

The mood is relaxed, with confi-

dence high in Paris that Thomas Tuchel's side will make good their 2-0 first-leg win last month, achieved without Neymar and Edinson Cavani, the two superstars both out injured.

"This is not a competition that depends only on one player having a spectacular day," he insists.

"When you have experienced players, you don't tremble when it comes to playing in a hostile atmosphere, or under pressure."

In his first campaign at PSG last season, they were knocked out at this stage by Real Madrid, the first time Alves had not been involved in the quarterfinals of the Champions League in a decade.

It was an enormous disappointment for Paris and their Qatari owners, who had just paid the two biggest transfer fees in history for Neymar and Mbappe.

Alves, a brilliant full-back with limitless energy, has recently been reinvented as a midfielder, fully recovered from the knee injury which saw him miss last year's World Cup.

He is happy in Paris, and the happiness is infectious.

"I like to get on with everyone. I ask myself how I can get on with this guy,

with that guy. Because what happens on the pitch sort of reflects how things are off it," he says as he discusses getting along with a squad full of big names.

"We spend more time here than we do with our families, so you need to get on with people, have fun, and that is reflected on the pitch."

"We try to put the egos to one side -- because like it or not people have egos."

"We need to not let that show through, because then you stop thinking about being happy, and life is not about being right, it's about being happy!"

It is certainly easy to see how he might be happier now in Paris under Tuchel, a warmer, more charismatic coach than his predecessor, Unai Emery.

PSG don't just want to get past United -- they want to go beyond the last eight, something they have not managed since the Qatari takeover in 2011.

"We are lucky this year to have a management team that is liked, respected by everyone, that there is an incredible atmosphere," he says.

"Everything has been put in place to make this a great year for us."



Chairman of Riz Events Rizwan Bin Farouq, Bangladeshi golfer Shakhawat Hossain Sohel, PGTI CEO Uttam Kumar Mundy, Indian golfer Aadil Bedi, vice president of BGCC Salman Ispahani and others pose with the trophy of the City Bank American Express Chittagong Open at a hotel in Chattogram yesterday.

## Ctg Open starts today

SPORTS REPORTER



The inaugural edition's champion and Bangladesh's premier golfer Siddikur Rahman may not be available, but there will be a healthy field of local golfers, including two-time PGTI winner Jamal Hossain Mollah and one-time Asian Development Tour winner Shakhawat Hossain Sohel, when the third edition of the City Bank American Express Chittagong Open kicks off at the Bhatiyari Golf and Country Club (BGCC) in Chattogram today.

Siddikur was the winner of the first edition of the event, sanctioned by PGTI and BPGA; so in his absence it is a chance for the other

local golfers to step up and take charge. However, the likes of Jamal and Sohel will have to contend with a 126-man field comprised of 50 professionals from the BPGA and 70 professionals from the PGTI as well as six amateur golfers from the BGCC. The PGTI field will feature some of the region's up-and-coming stars, including defending champion N. Thangaraja of Sri Lanka alongside India's Udayan Mane, M Dharma and Aman Raj.

Co-sanctioned by the PGTI and the BPGA, the 36-hole stroke-play event will offer a prize purse of 40 lakh rupees.

A press conference in this connection was arranged at a hotel in Chittagong yesterday where the sponsors and organisers as well as two golfers spoke. The trophy of the event was also unveiled during the programme.

### SHORT CORNER



Brazil star Neymar attends the second night of the Rio de Janeiro Carnival parade at the Sambadrome yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

**Noman Mohammad wins Musa award**  
Noman Mohammad, special correspondent of Kaler Kantho, won the sports award of the inaugural ABM Musa Award for his investigative journalism yesterday. The journalist was adjudged winner of the award, organised by the ABM Musa-Setara Musa Foundation, for a 27-part investigative report on the Swadhin Bangla Football Team.

The award giving ceremony was held at the National Press Club in Dhaka where ASM Arefin Siddique, former vice-chancellor of the University of Dhaka, Jakaria Pintu, captain of Swadhin Bangla Football Team and senior journalists and educationists were present.

**Loew drops German star trio**  
Germany head coach Joachim Loew dropped a bombshell on Tuesday by announcing that 2014 World Cup winners Jerome Boateng, Mats Hummels and Thomas Mueller are no longer in his plans.

Loew told the Bayern Munich trio before he names the squad for the friendly against Serbia in Wolfsburg in two weeks and the Euro 2020 qualifier against the Netherlands in Amsterdam on March 24.

Between them, Hummels, Boateng, both 30, and

Mueller, still only 29, boast 246 appearances for Germany and were at the heart of the team which won the 2014 World Cup in Brazil.

However, last year's debacle at the World Cup finals in Russia saw Germany crash out after the group stages due to below-par performances from Loew's trusted stars, including the trio.

"2019 is the year of a new start for the German national football team," said Loew.

**Sanchez out for two months**  
Manchester United forward Alexis Sanchez is facing up to an eight-week spell on the sidelines due to a knee ligament injury, according to the physiotherapist of the Chilean national team.

Sanchez, 30, injured the medial ligament in his right knee during United's 3-2 Premier League victory over Southampton on Saturday but is expected to be fit to represent Chile at the Copa American, which starts on June 14, physio Pedro Onate told Chilean newspaper El Mercurio.

Sanchez could return for United's last two league games against Huddersfield Town and Cardiff City, but any setback in his rehabilitation would mean he has played his last match this season.

## Balbirnie guides Ireland to level series

AFP, Dehradun

Andy Balbirnie gave Afghanistan a taste of their own medicine Tuesday, smashing a brilliant unbeaten 145 as Ireland claimed their first win of a punishing series.

The 28-year-old Dubliner anchored Ireland's innings as they passed Afghanistan's 256-8 with an over to spare to win by four wickets.

Najibullah Zadran hit an unbeaten 104 as Afghanistan recovered from losing five cheap wickets to set a score that they must have thought was enough to preserve their unbeaten record in the series.

But Balbirnie hit eight sixes and eight fours to set up the morale-boosting win that levelled the five-match series 1-1, with two matches to play.

Ireland were white-washed in the earlier T20 games in which a series of world records fell.

**SCORES IN BRIEF**  
**AFGHANISTAN:** 256 for 8 in 50 overs (Zazai 34, Afghan 75, Zadran 104 not out; Murtagh 2-60, Rankin 2-56)  
**IRELAND:** 260 for 6 in 49 overs (Stirling 20, Balbirnie 145 not out, O'Brien 21, Dockrell 54; Zadran 2-52)  
**Result:** Ireland won by four wickets and 5-match series level 1-1.  
**Player-of-the-match:** Andy Balbirnie.

## India win after Kohli's 40th

REUTERS, Nagpur



Virat Kohli smashed 116 runs and Vijay Shankar took two wickets in the final over to secure a nail-biting eight-run win for India against Australia in the second one day international on Tuesday.

Chasing India's 251 to level the five-match series, Australia got off to a strong start before the hosts roared back into the contest with some disciplined bowling.

It all came down to the final over, with the tourists needing 11 runs to win with two wickets in hand.

But Shankar struck twice in the first three balls of the over and Australia were all out for 242.

Marcus Stoinis was the top scorer for Australia with 52 but his dismissal in the first ball of the final over snuffed out Australia's hopes of a win in the see-saw contest.

India now take a 2-0 lead into Friday's

third ODI in Ranchi.

Earlier, Kohli's 40th ODI century helped India, who had won the first match by six wickets, post 250 before being all out with 10 balls to spare at Nagpur's Vidarbha Cricket Association Stadium.

Aaron Finch and Usman Khawaja led Australia's robust reply with an opening stand of 83 before the Indian spinners hauled the hosts back into the contest with a flurry of wickets.

Stoinis tried his best down the order but it was not enough in the end.

**SCORES IN BRIEF**

**INDIA:** 250 all out in 48.2 overs (Dhawan 21, Kohli 116, Shankar 46, Jadeja 21; Cummins 4-29, Zampa 2-62)

**AUSTRALIA:** 242 all out in 49.3 overs (Finch 37, Khawaja 38, Handscomb 48, Stoinis 52, Carey 22; Bumrah 2-29, Shankar 2-15, Kuldeep 3-54)

**Result:** India won by 8 runs and led the 5-match series 2-0.

**Player-of-the-match:** Virat Kohli.

**India captain Virat Kohli scored a fluent 116 against Australia during the second ODI in Nagpur yesterday.**

PHOTO: AFP



## Proteas look to extend lead

**Second ODI against Sri Lanka today**

AGENCIES, Centurion

Riding high on a clinical win in the first ODI in Johannesburg, South Africa will be keen on extending their lead when they clash against Sri Lanka in the second encounter on Wednesday.

Visibly hurting after a shock 2-0 loss in the Test series, the hosts put their best foot forward in the first game. The bowlers led by Imran Tahir and Lungi Ngidi's three-wicket burst bowled Sri Lanka out to 231. Faf du Plessis' 11th ODI ton and Quinton de Kock's belligerent 81 then headlined the chase as South Africa romped home with plenty to spare.

Du Plessis, who admitted their team had taken the loss to Sri Lanka in the Tests quite hard, will be expecting a similar show from his side at SuperSport Park, in Centurion.

Sri Lanka, on the other hand, after consistent performances through the Test series looked a bit ragged in Johannesburg.

There is a bit of rain in the radar in Centurion on Wednesday but the ODI is expected remain unaffected. Sri Lanka have won just one game in five attempts at the venue and will be keen on changing that record.