

What to WATCH

CHANNEL 9 & STAR SPORTS SELECT 1

New Zealand v Bangladesh

Second Test, Day One

Live from 4:00am (Friday)

TEN1

Europa League

Sevilla v Slavia Prague

Live from 11:55pm

Napoli v Salzburg

Live from 2:00am (Friday)

TEN2

Europa League

Rennes v Arsenal

Live from 11:55pm

Chelsea v Dynamo Kyiv

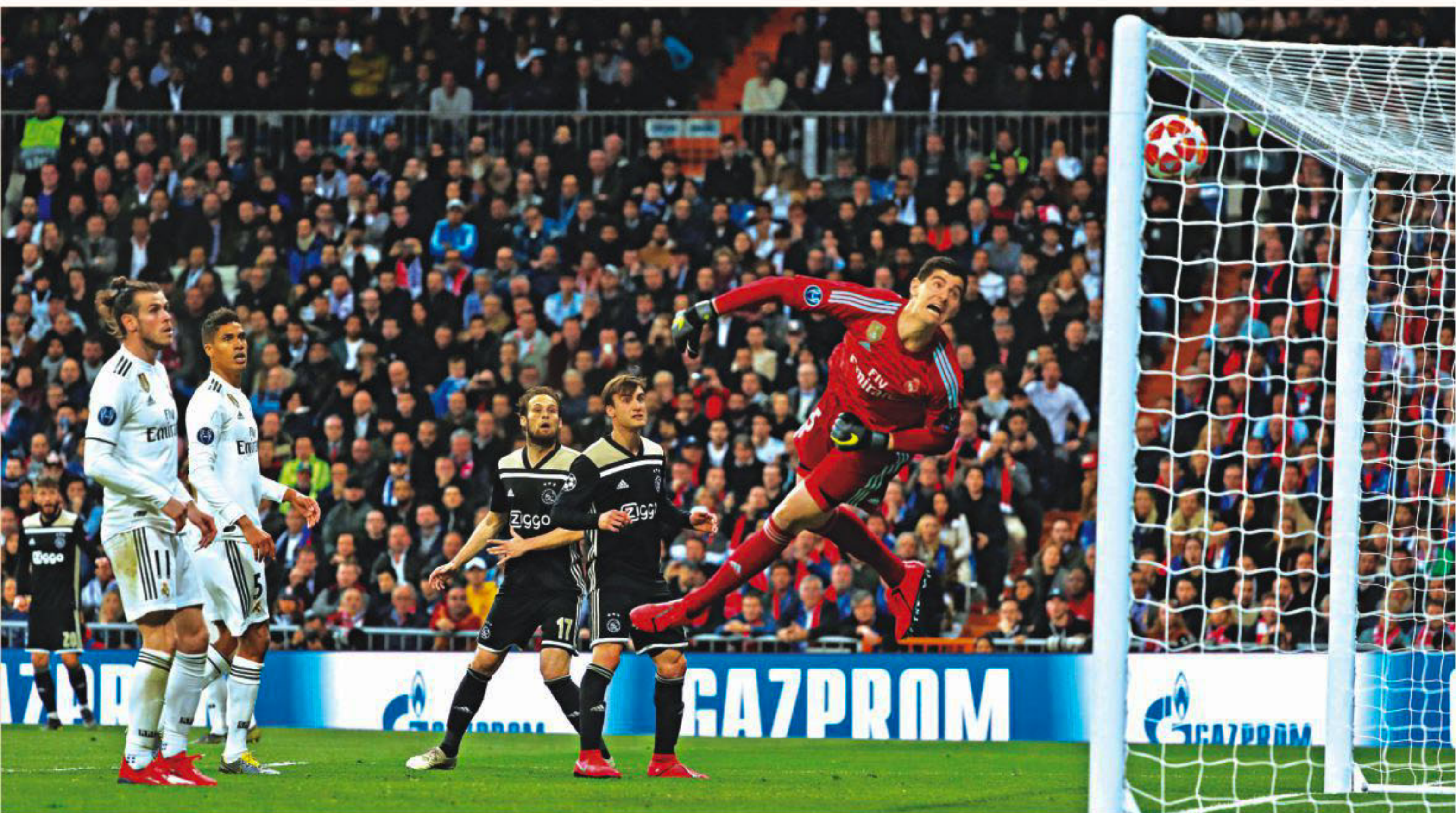
Live from 2:00am (Friday)

I WILL NOT GIVE UP: SOLARI

Santiago Solari insisted he would not resign as coach of Real Madrid despite his team being dumped out of the Champions League last 16 by Ajax on Tuesday. Madrid were thrashed 4-1 at home to lose the tie 5-3 on aggregate and fail to reach the competition's quarterfinals for the first time since 2010. It means they have been knocked out of the Copa del Rey, La Liga's title race and now Europe in the space of seven days. Solari was handed a contract until 2021 when he took over from Julen Lopetegui in November but the humiliating defeat means he may not last the season, let alone beyond the summer. "I did not come to the club in such a difficult moment to give up," Solari said after the game. "Clearly we have given it our all but we have not managed to go through."

--AFP





Ajax Amsterdam's Lasse Schone put the final nail in Real Madrid's coffin, striking an absolute gem from a free-kick, as the youthful Dutch side dumped the three-time defending champions out of the Champions League at the Santiago Bernabeu in Madrid on Tuesday night. PHOTO: REUTERS

IT'S REAL-LY OVER

AFP, Madrid



The reign of Real Madrid in Europe is over and their season could well be too after they were stunned by a 4-1 defeat at home to Ajax on Tuesday.

In seven days, Madrid have been knocked out of the Copa del Rey, La Liga's title race and now the last 16 of the Champions League, the competition they had come to believe was their own.

They had won it three times in a row, four times in the last five years, while the last time Madrid failed to reach the quarterfinals was 2010, in Cristiano Ronaldo's first year at the club.

Ronaldo rescued Madrid last season in the quarterfinals and then Gareth Bale won them the trophy, but the former is gone and the latter started on the bench here, dropped again by Santiago Solari.

Solari oversaw an improvement after Julen Lopetegui was sacked in November but his team, 12 points behind Barcelona in La Liga, have watched their season unravel in a week.

Madrid president Florentino Perez is now faced with deciding whether it is worth keeping Solari until the end of the season, let alone beyond the summer.

Solari could have few complaints. Ajax were hard-done-by in the 2-1 first-leg defeat and dominant at the Santiago Bernabeu, their scintillating victory confirming a 5-3 win on aggregate.

Hakim Ziyech and David Neres put them two up at half-time and Dusan Tadic made it three before Marco Asensio gave Madrid hope. It lasted



Ajax Amsterdam players celebrated their historic coup in style in front of their fans at the Santiago Bernabeu on Tuesday night. PHOTO: REUTERS

two minutes, as Lasse Schone sent a bending free-kick into the top corner before Nacho was sent off late on.

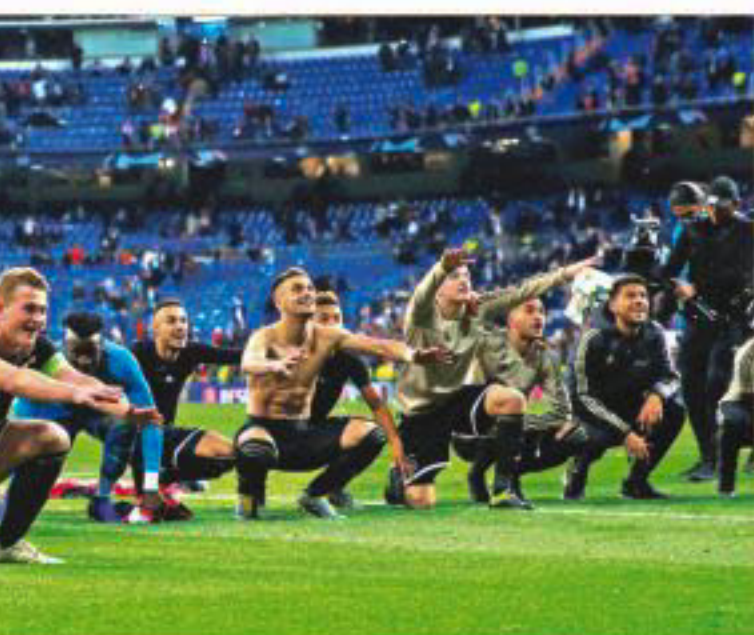
Bale was on after 29 minutes for the injured Lucas Vazquez but the Welshman hit the post and missed two good chances.

Sergio Ramos was in the stands, having earned a deliberate booking to clear his ban, believing the tie was

already won.

Raphael Varane might have finished it within five minutes but headed onto the crossbar from six yards and instead Ajax took control.

Toni Kroos, poor all night, was caught in possession from a throw-in and Dusan Tadic skipped free down the right. Tadic pulled back for Ziyech, who guided it with his



Ajax Amsterdam players celebrated their historic coup in style in front of their fans at the Santiago Bernabeu on Tuesday night. PHOTO: REUTERS

left foot into the far corner.

Ajax were bouncing as Neres baffled Dani Carvajal with a pirouette in the corner and then Tadic did the same, spinning around Casemiro in midfield before teeing up the second. Neres rounded Thibaut Courtois and chipped the ball home.

Vazquez and Vinicius Junior both left the field injured and in tears, the

latter after an electric run forward. Bale came on, with Asensio, and raced down the left but his finish from the angle clipped the post.

The fans whistled at half-time and Madrid were no better after, creating chances but lacking composure and control. Benzema shimmied past Ziyech but curled wide, only for Ajax to add a sumptuous, albeit controversial, third.

They worked it from right to left and then inside again, where Donny van de Beek shifted one last pass to Tadic, who whipped a sizzling shot into the top corner.

The cheers stopped as referee Felix Brych waited for VAR, with the ball appearing to have gone out for a throw before Noussair Mazraoui slid to keep it in. The camera angle was unclear and the goal stood.

Madrid needed three in 24 minutes and then two in 20, as Asensio swept in Sergio Reguilon's cross to give them hope. Erik ten Hag was seconds from bringing Schone off but his midfielder bended a free-kick into Courtois' top corner.

Frenkie de Jong put his first foot wrong in the 84th minute, gifting Luka Modric the ball in the area but Benzema slipped and the chance went begging. Nacho was sent off for a clash with van de Beek and Madrid were in tatters.

End of an era

AGENCIES



Real Madrid's stranglehold on the Champions League came to an unceremonious and humiliating end against Ajax on Tuesday.

A stunned and angry Santiago Bernabeu watched on in disbelief as the Eredivisie side thumped the three-time defending champions 4-1 to secure a remarkable 5-3 aggregate triumph.

The Spanish press have piled into Madrid following their meek exit and here we round up the best of the newspaper reaction.

HERE LIES A TEAM THAT MADE HISTORY: MARCA

A tagline that reads "[A] humiliating end of an unrepeatable cycle" pretty much summed up the mood for Madrid-favoured daily Marca, who had a poignant image of the scoreboard above an emptying Bernabeu.

TRAGIC WEEK: AS

It was straight to the point from AS with a two-word summary of one of the bleakest weeks in the illustrious history of Los Blancos. The daily added a tweet of Real Madrid's crest in broken pieces with the

caption: 'The best love story ever told ends.

END OF AN ERA: SPORT

There was little surprise that sympathy from Catalan paper SPORT for Madrid's pligh was in short supply, while there was also focus on soon-to-be Barcelona import Frenkie de Jong's performance for Ajax.

Nothing at all! Mundo Deportivo



Another Catalan paper similarly shone a glaring spotlight on Madrid's failure.

THE FALL OF THE GODS: LA GAZZETTA DELLO SPORT

Naturally, it was not just the Spanish press that focused heavily on Madrid's misfortune. The embarrassing setback has been heavily covered worldwide including this strong headline from Italian paper La Gazzetta.

Kane fires Spurs thru'

AFP, Dortmund

Harry Kane fired Tottenham Hotspur into the Champions League quarterfinals as his winning goal at Borussia Dortmund in Tuesday's return leg sealed a 1-0 victory to wrap up a 4-0 aggregate success.

On Monday, Spurs coach Mauricio Pochettino had demanded they "finish the job" after beating the Bundesliga leaders 3-0 in the first leg at Wembley.

His Spurs side delivered, soaking up everything Dortmund threw at them in a one-sided first half before Kane's goal just after the break killed off the hosts' spirited challenge.

"It's always difficult in these type of games, you don't know whether to defend or attack," said Kane, who singled out Spurs goalkeeper Hugo Lloris for praise after a string of key saves.

"They had a few moments. In that first half we needed everyone, defenders blocking it, Hugo saving it, that's what Champions League is about -- you need everybody."

This is the first time Tottenham are in the last eight of the Champions League since 2010/11 when they bowed out 5-0 on aggregate to Real Madrid.

"We have showed that we have the quality, we can build on the first-half performance, but we need to score goals," said Dortmund captain Marco Reus.

Jibon, Matin raring to go

SPORTS REPORTER



The national team's striking duo of Nabib Newaj Jibon and Matin Mia were eager to repay the faith placed on them by coach Jamie Day ahead of the FIFA friendly against Cambodia to be held in Phnom Penh on Saturday.

Goalscoring has long been a headache for the national team and their strikers getting less opportunities in domestic matches owing to the presence of quality foreign forwards has remained one of the main reasons behind the goal drought at the international level. However, this time around Jibon and Matin have been playing and scoring regularly for Abahani and Bashundhara Kings respectively in the Bangladesh Premier League.

Jibon has struck six goals so far for defending champions Abahani while Matin has netted four for league leaders Bashundhara Kings.

"I am really confident of scoring [against Cambodia] because I am getting goals regularly in the league. When I take to the ground, I have a thing that I have to score which today works inside me. You know confidence drives a player to get goals and I'm really confident to do better in friendly matches," said Jibon on the eve of the team's departure for Cambodia yesterday.

However, while foreign teammates like Nigeria's Sunday Chizoba, Haiti's Fils Belfort and South Korea's Min-hyuk Ko provide Jibon with top-notch service at club level, he definitely will not be getting that level of assistance in the national team. Yet, Jibon was optimistic of keeping his goalscoring form intact at the international level.

"I know I won't get the same sup-

port that teammates like Sunday, Belfort and Ko provide me with at the club level but I don't think it will be a problem for me to get goals because Cambodia are not that far ahead of us.

"Besides, we also have some good midfielders like Jamal Bhuiyan, Emon Babu and Fahad who can distribute good balls. There won't be any problem if we have good understanding among ourselves," said Jibon, who made his international debut against Kyrgyzstan during the World Cup Qualifiers in 2015.

Like Jibon, Matin was also upbeat about his chances of getting goals against Cambodia.

"The coach has faith on me because I am scoring goals in the league. I am confident of paying back it. The way I am scoring goals in the domestic

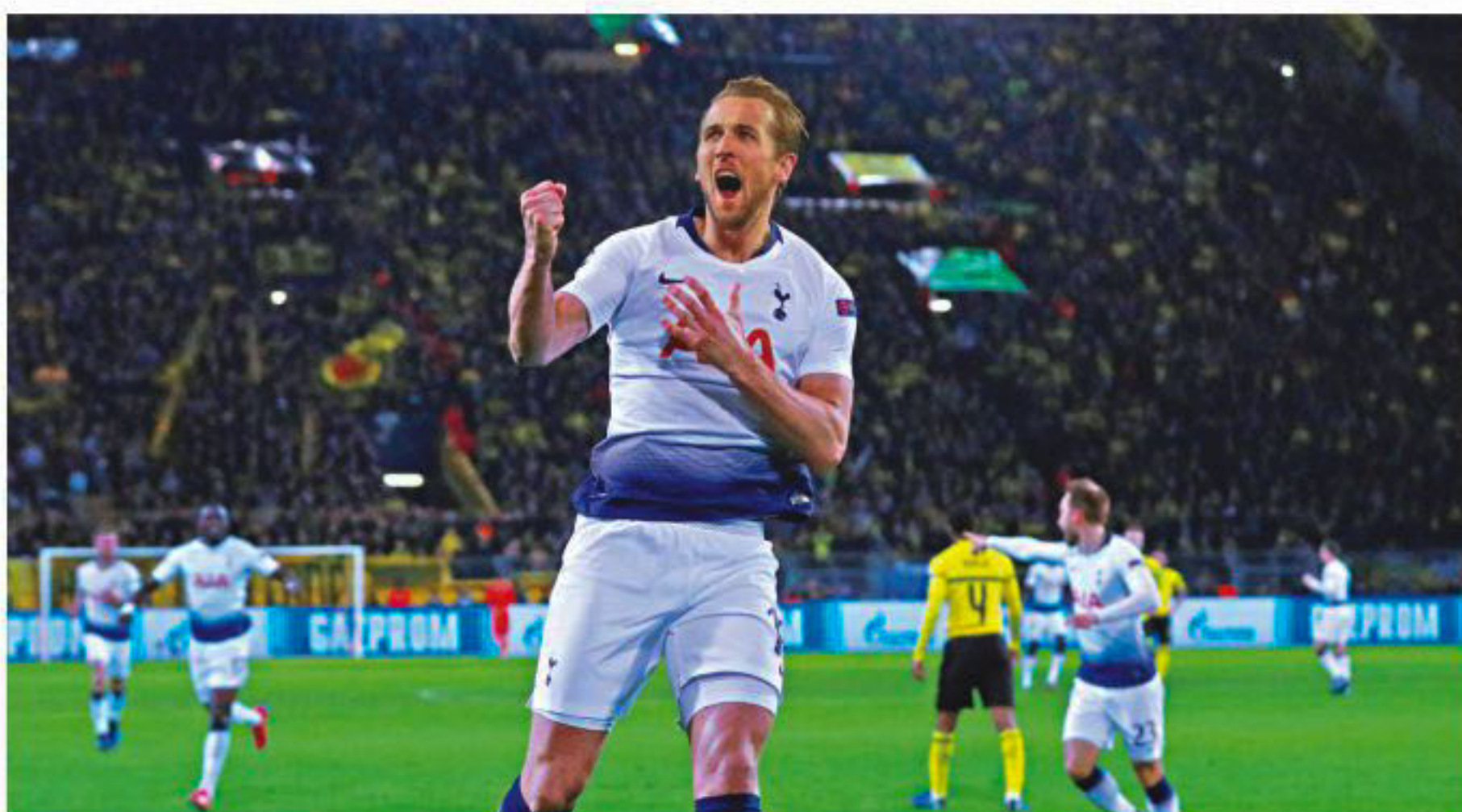
league makes me confident that I can score in international matches too," said Matin Mia.

"It is right I won't get the type of passes that I get from my foreign teammates but we have to create the opportunities because foreign players will not play for Bangladesh. However, it is an advantage for me that I am getting a couple of teammates who are operating the Bashundhara Kings midfield. So, they know what type of passes I like and when to release the ball for me," said Matin, who has played only once for the senior national team.

Meanwhile, the booters left for Cambodia yesterday with one change as Abahani midfielder Sohel Rana replaced Bashundhara Kings midfielder Emon Babu, who withdrew after sustaining an injury in Tuesday's match against Sheikh Russel.



Strikers Nabib Newaj Jibon (L) and Matin Mia were in great spirits at the Phnom Penh International Airport yesterday ahead of Bangladesh team's FIFA friendly against Cambodia scheduled for Saturday. PHOTO: COLLECTED



Tottenham Hotspur captain Harry Kane celebrates his stunning strike against Borussia Dortmund during their UEFA Champions League Last 16 tie at the Signal Iduna Park in Dortmund on Tuesday. PHOTO: REUTERS

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Mr. Hasan Mahmud Babu
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Director



Engr. Tanveerul Haque Probal
Director Finance



Mr. Mohd. Ataur Rahman Bhuiyan
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Engr. Shafiqul Alam Bhuiyan
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Mr. Md. Khairul Alam
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Engr. Aftabuddin Ahmed
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Engr. Nashid Islam
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Mr. Rizwan Mustafiz
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