



## 'We showed our quality'

REUTERS, Bordeaux

Paris Saint Germain stretched their advantage at the top of Ligue 1 to 10 points after two goals by Brazil forward Neymar and another from Kylian Mbappe helped them to a 3-2 win at Girondins Bordeaux on Saturday.

PSG, who carved out a 3-0 lead before late goals by Bordeaux set up a tense finish, have 34 points from 13 games, ahead of second-placed Lens who beat Troyes 4-0 at home on Friday. Bordeaux stayed 16th on 12 points.

Neymar struck twice in the first half thanks to a pair of sublime assists by France World Cup winner Mbappe, having opened the scoring in the 26th minute with a neat shot past two defenders inside the near post.

Neymar muted his celebrations and took off his jersey to unveil a message on his shirt paying tribute to Brazilian country singer Marilia Mendonça, who was killed in a plane crash in the state of Minas Gerais on Friday.

Mbappe acknowledged that an expensively assembled PSG outfit, who were missing Lionel Messi due to a niggling knee injury, were still a work in progress but rebuffed criticism that they are failing to live up to expectations.

"Everyone has the right to an opinion, some people think we are playing badly but I think we are just not playing very well at the moment," he said.

"We need to improve and we will continue to work hard. Today we showed our quality as we had spells where we played at a very high level."



PHOTO: REUTERS

## Booters upbeat ahead of Seychelles opener

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh are all set to take on an unknown quantity in the form of Seychelles at the Colombo Racecourse Stadium today as the men in red and green begin their campaign in the four-nation Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa Trophy campaign in Sri Lanka.

The match will get underway at 4:30pm (Bangladesh Standard Time) before hosts Sri Lanka take on Maldives in the day's second match.

Seychelles are an unfamiliar opponent for Bangladesh, with no matches played between the sides so far. Bangladesh's only knowledge of the Islanders comes from when they were invited to the 2020 Bangabandhu Gold Cup in Dhaka in

January 2020, although Bangladesh and Seychelles were pitted in different groups.

Seychelles and Bangladesh both progressed to the semifinals of that tournament from their three-team groups but the African nation lost 1-0 to ultimate champions Palestine while Bangladesh lost 3-0 to Burundi.

Bangladesh are expected to have an edge over Seychelles in terms of match fitness as they have recently completed its top-tier football league as well as played some international tournaments, including the SAFF Championship and FIFA friendly matches.

On the other hand, Seychelles last staged their first division league in December, 2020 and in September this year their national team suffered huge defeats to Burundi [1-8] and Comoros [1-7] in international friendlies.

Bangladesh coach Mario Lemos and captain Jamal Bhuiyan are upbeat about their chances of a winning start despite missing some key players.

"We have some idea about the Seychelles because they were in Bangladesh two years ago to play in the Bangabandhu Gold Cup. They also played two matches this year against Burundi and Comoros and I think they made changes to the squad and it is now a different scenario in the new tournament," Bangladesh's interim Portuguese coach told the media at a pre-match conference.

"All the players are ready for the first game and we are looking forward to the match. It is very important to start the tournament with a good result."

Lemos also found inspiration from the SAFF Championship disappointment.

"I think the great thing about football

is that when you lose, you get another opportunity to win and bounce back. I think the players are not happy with the outcome of the SAFF Championship and this is another opportunity to do something and achieve something. That is the motivation," the 35-year-old said.

With his sights on the trophy, captain Jamal Bhuiyan said: "Of course the aim is to win the tournament but we have to take it one match at a time. We are all focused on tomorrow's match. If we can win tomorrow, it will be a good step for the next game. But the first step to the final is tomorrow, so we are all talking about tomorrow's match," Jamal said.

Seychelles coach Vivian Botha informed that they were out of action for nearly two years due to Covid-19 and had just one month of preparation for the four-nation tournament.

## Seven-wicket hauls for Nasum, Shohidul



SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh national team left-arm spinner Nasum Ahmed pulled off a seven-wicket haul for Sylhet Division right after returning from a devastating World Cup campaign while Dhaka Metro's Shohidul Islam stood out among the pacers as he also scalped seven wickets against Rajshahi Division on the first day of the fourth round of the 23rd National Cricket League yesterday.

Nasum, after returning from international duties on Friday, joined Sylhet Division immediately as his side faced Dhaka Division in their tier-1 encounter at Sylhet International Cricket Stadium. The left-arm demonstrated his class, plucking seven wickets off 43 as Dhaka got bundled out for 123 runs.

In reply, Sylhet placed 79 runs on the board while losing a couple of wickets as they trail by 44 runs ahead of Day Two.

Spinners have predictably established their authority throughout the current

edition of the National Cricket League. However, Shohidul Islam wreaked havoc for Dhaka Metro in their tier-2 encounter against Rajshahi Division in BKSP as he bagged seven wickets off 48 runs in his 15.3 overs spell, restricting Rajshahi's total to 232 runs.

Coming down to bat for their first innings, Dhaka Metro scored 53 for two as they ended the first day trailing by 179 runs.

In the other match at BKSP, Barishal Division scored 236 runs before getting bundled out by Chattogram Division. In-form Fazle Mahmud played a solid knock of 76 runs, featuring a couple of maximums and a dozen boundaries.

Chattogram, in reply, ended the day scoring 34 runs without losing any wicket as they trail by 202 runs.

In the tier-1 contest between Khulna and Rangpur at Sylhet International Cricket Stadium Academy, Khulna accumulated 257 runs on the board at the cost of nine wickets by the end of the day. Imrul Kayes scored 76 runs while Mehedi Hasan Miraz remained unbeaten on 72.



### Solskjaer under fresh pressure

AFP, London

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer is under renewed pressure after Manchester United were outclassed 2-0 by Manchester City on Saturday as Norwich sacked manager Daniel Farke despite their first Premier League win of the season.

Struggling Burnley struck late to draw 1-1 at Chelsea while Eddie Howe watched a 1-1 draw from the stands in Brighton as Newcastle edged closer to appointing a new boss. Two weeks after their embarrassing 5-0 humiliation at the hands of Liverpool, United were again palpably second best in a limp display at Old Trafford.

United have won just one of their past six Premier League games, giving Solskjaer -- and club bosses -- plenty to ponder during the international break.

Last week's 3-0 win at Tottenham gave Solskjaer hope his team had turned the corner and a late Cristiano Ronaldo goal earned them a valuable Champions League point against Atalanta in midweek.

The Norwegian admitted his men, who finished second behind City in the Premier League table last season, were well below par. But despite the string of poor results, he said he did not feel he was on borrowed time at the club, trophyless since 2017.

## Real Madrid move top of LaLiga

REUTERS, Madrid

Toni Kroos and Karim Benzema fired Real Madrid to a 2-1 win at home to Rayo Vallecano to go top of LaLiga on Saturday although Carlo Ancelotti's side had to face down a late onslaught from their neighbours following Radamel Falcao's second-half strike.

Real had drawn their last two league games at the Santiago Bernabeu 0-0 but got off to a strong start when Toni Kroos drilled a shot into the top corner in the 14th minute after Marco Asensio had cut into the area from the right wing.

Their top scorer Benzema doubled their lead in the 38th by knocking in a defence-splitting pass from defender David Alaba.

Real looked to be cruising their way to victory until Falcao came off the bench in the second half and soon scored a header, with the help of a deflection off Alaba, to put Rayo back in contention in the 76th minute.

The win took Real on to 27 points after 12 games, two above second-placed

Real Sociedad who have also played 12 but can return to the summit if they beat Osasuna on Sunday. Rayo are sixth on 20 points.

Ancelotti felt his side were worthy of the win despite their nervy ending to the game.

"It's not fair to say we almost drew the game, I saw a team that could have scored five or six goals. We fully deserved the three points," he said. "It's logical that you get a bit nervous when you concede a goal with 10 minutes to go but overall we played well and I'm happy. It's normal to suffer a bit in football."

Considering anyone associated with Rayo would still have vivid memories of their 10-2 mauling at the Bernabeu in 2015, coach Andoni Iraola took plenty of encouragement from his side's performance even though they left the stadium empty handed.

"The reality is they beat us but we had them on the ropes right until the end," he said.

"The game was very equal, the key factor is they took their chances, especially in the first half. But we fought right until the end."



PHOTO: TWITTER

'We are heading in the right direction'

AFP, Sharjah

South Africa bowed out of the Twenty20 World Cup on Saturday but coach Mark Boucher said the young team is headed in the "right direction" and will soon be rewarded with a trophy.

The Proteas won their final Super 12 league match in Sharjah to hand England their first loss in the tournament but the effort was not enough to earn a place in the semi-finals.

They finished level with group-toppers England and second-placed Australia on eight points but the Aussies went to the final four thanks to a better run-rate.

Rassie van der Dussen



hit an unbeaten 94 to guide South Africa to 189-2 but they needed to limit England to fewer than 131 runs to edge out Australia.

England finished on 179-9 after a last-over hat-trick by pace bowler Kagiso Rabada. "This team knows that we are on a journey, upward curve, that we are learning along the way. You know, we are by no means a finished product," said Boucher.

"These games will stand us in very good stead because as I said, every game we played was under pressure. It's a young side. We are still developing and hopefully we can go from strength-to-strength, take this confidence through, as well. "So we are heading in the right direction. We just need a bit of good luck and a bit of fortune to go our way and hopefully we can put something in the trophy cabinet soon."