



### 10 Killed in Fire at Rio Football Centre

A fire swept through the training centre of Rio de Janeiro soccer club Flamengo on Friday, killing 10 people, including members of the club's youth side, firefighters and news reporters said. At least three youths aged 14 and 15 were injured in the blaze. All three were taken to hospital, one of them reportedly in a serious condition. The fire broke out in the early hours of the morning at the Ninho do Urubu, a state-of-the-art training centre that was expanded and opened only two months ago. Like many clubs who sign youngsters from across the country, the facility has accommodation for teenagers, although it was unclear exactly how many players were among the dead.

### Three-Team IPL for Women?

From one exhibition match last year, the women's participation in the IPL is set to become a three-team affair spread over seven to 10 days with the Committee of Administrators (CoA) mulling an expansion this year. However, the full-fledged women's IPL is still a long shot as, according to an official, the BCCI is finding it extremely difficult to get good investors/team bidders. Last year, the BCCI organised one exhibition match with two teams -- IPL Trailblazers and IPL Supernovas led by Mithali Raj and Harmanpreet Kaur respectively. This year, the parent body wants to scale it up a bit in order to set the ball rolling for a women's IPL in a few years' time.

### Ole: Fulham Clash a Character Test

Manchester United must treat Saturday's Premier League trip to Fulham as a test of character before a run of season-defining fixtures across domestic and European competitions, caretaker boss Ole Gunnar Solskjaer said on Friday. Solskjaer has won nine out of his first 10 games at Old Trafford but he knows tougher challenges lie in wait as they face French champions Paris St Germain in a Champions League last-16 tie and Chelsea in the FA Cup fifth round this month. "You take one step at a time, and that's one of the goals we have set -- moving into the top four," Solskjaer told reporters. "Fulham is a character reveal". It reveals 'do we have the focus on what's important?' It's always the next game in football. Can we forget about PSG?"

### Fed Cup: India Lose 0-3 to Kazakhstan

India's aspirations of qualifying for the Fed Cup World Group were dashed after hosts Kazakhstan thrashed them 3-0 in a Pool A tie in Astana on Friday. Neither Anikita Raina nor Karman Kaur Thandi could win their singles rubbers losing to their respective opponents in straight sets and it will take some more time to realise their aspirations of making it among the elites. It was always an uphill task for the Indians to beat the higher-ranked home players but inspirational performance by Anikita against the same players last year had raised visions of an upset.

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**MADRID DERBY** While Atletico look to stay in touch with leaders Barcelona, in-form Real eye second spot

# For Bragging Rights & Points

Thibaut Courtois left Chelsea on bad terms last summer and he expects to feel the anger from Atletico Madrid too when he faces them in the white of Real Madrid on Saturday. Courtois developed into one of the world's finest goalkeepers during three years on loan at Atletico but he will be up against his former club, and Chelsea team-mate Alvaro Morata, in what could prove a pivotal city derby this weekend.

Real arrive on the back of four La Liga wins on the bounce and will jump above their opponents with a win at the Wanda Metropolitano. Atletico have fallen six points adrift of Barcelona and are attempting to stay in touch. For Courtois, a reunion with Diego Simeone's side is not new -- he faced them twice for Chelsea in the Champions League last season and again at the Santiago Bernabeu in September -- but this will be his first experience in front of the Atletico fans, in the colours of Real Madrid.

"It happens in football, it's a derby and a derby here in Madrid is always heated," Courtois said. "They'll whistle and shout, everything you would expect, it's part of football. I will always respect them. Now I'm playing for the other side." Courtois helped Atletico crack the duopoly of Barca and Real by winning La Liga in 2014, while also lifting the Europa League, Copa del Rey and Super Cup during his time at the club. "There are still a lot of players that I know there, the goalkeeping coach, coaches, they're all still the same," Courtois said.

"It's still a special match, I respect the fans and the club a lot, in the end they gave me the opportunity to play when I was just 19 years old. I only have good memories." Courtois' season has taken a similar trajectory to his team's. There was a shaky start, when Julen Lopetegui rotated him with Keylor Navas, before a clear improvement, with Courtois now established as Santiago Solari's first choice.

Madrid have steadily gained momentum under Solari too and, despite a dip at the start of the year, have found their rhythm in recent weeks. "I feel good now. It takes a little time to settle and to fully understand the team but it's going very well now," Courtois said. "If we want to narrow the gap and win trophies, this is the month when we have to

be at our best." **SPOTLIGHT ON 'MENTALLY FRAGILE' MORATA** Atletico Madrid striker Alvaro Morata will be the focal point of Saturday's Spanish capital derby as he makes his home debut against neighbours Real Madrid, where he began an eventful career which has never

truly taken off. Morata has made only 85 top-flight starts in eight years since his professional debut, scoring 56 league goals in a stop-start journey which has taken him from Real to Juventus, back to Real and then to Chelsea, joining Atletico on loan last month.

Morata has been tasked with sharing the goalscoring burden with Antoine Griezmann to strengthen Atletico's title battle with La Liga leaders Barcelona, but he got off to a miserable start with last week's 1-0 defeat at Real Betis. Spain international Morata struggled to combine with Griezmann and offered little threat as his side slumped to a first league defeat in five months, falling six points behind Barca who visit Athletic Bilbao on Sunday.

Atletico have also ceded ground to Real, who have won their last four league fixtures and will leapfrog their neighbours should they come out winners in the derby.

The game is not just a chance for Morata to prove a point to his former employers, who sold him to Juventus in 2014 for 18 million euros then brought him back to Chelsea for 80 million a year later. He also needs to win over Atletico fans who seem reluctant to embrace him due to his years with Real, with some chanting their disapproval about his signing in their last home fixture.

Morata also has work to do to convince the world of his talents after a difficult final months at Chelsea, where coach Maurizio Sarri claimed he was "mentally fragile" and assistant Gianfranco Zola said he had to remind the striker that he was representing Chelsea, not Brighton or Southampton. Questions about Morata's mentality also

### WATCH OUT! TONIGHT

- PREMIER LEAGUE**  
6pm Fulham v Man United  
8:30pm Huddersfield v Arsenal  
8:30pm Liverpool v Bournemouth
- LA LIGA**  
8:45pm Atletico Madrid v Real Madrid
- SERIE A**  
10:30pm Fiorentina v Napoli
- BUNDESLIGA**  
8pm Dortmund v Hoffenheim  
11pm Bayern v Schalke
- LIGUE 1**  
9:30pm PSG v Bordeaux
- INDIAN SUPER LEAGUE**  
7:30pm Chennaiyin v BFC
- I-LEAGUE**  
5pm Churchill v Mohun Bagan

### WATCH OUT! TOMORROW

- PREMIER LEAGUE**  
7pm Tottenham v Leicester  
9:30pm Man City v Chelsea
- LA LIGA**  
1:15am Athletic Bilbao v Barcelona
- SERIE A**  
10:30pm Sassuolo v Juventus  
1am AC Milan v Cagliari
- INDIAN SUPER LEAGUE**  
7:30pm Pune City v ATK
- I-LEAGUE**  
2pm Real Kashmir v East Bengal  
5pm Gokulam Kerala v Aizawl FC

### HEAD TO HEAD

ATLETICO		REAL	
<b>STANDINGS</b>			
44	Points	42	
2	Position	3	
<b>MATCHES</b>			
22	Played	22	
12	Won	13	
2	Lost	6	
8	Drawn	3	
<b>CARDS</b>			
61	Yellow	40	
0	Reds	1	
<b>GOALS</b>			
32	Scored	37	
14	Conceded	26	
<b>FOULS</b>			
281	Suffered	322	
278	Committed	244	
<b>OTHER STATS</b>			
199	Shots	274	
10,105	Passes	13,571	
<b>LAST 5 GAMES</b>			
Real	0-0	Atletico	La Liga
Real	2-4	Atletico	Super Cup
Real	1-1	Atletico	La Liga
Atletico	0-0	Real	La Liga
Atletico	1-2	Real	Champs League

**FORM: LAST 5 GAMES**

**Atletico Madrid**

L 0-1 Real Betis La Liga  
W 2-0 Getafe La Liga  
W 0-3 Huesca La Liga  
D 3-3 Girona Copa del Rey  
W 1-0 Levante La Liga

**Real Madrid**

D 1-1 Barcelona Copa del Rey  
W 3-0 Alaves La Liga  
W 3-1 Girona Copa del Rey  
W 4-2 Espanyol La Liga  
W 4-2 Girona Copa del Rey

### LA LIGA: POINTS TABLE

#	TEAM	GP	GD	P
1	Barcelona	22	+37	50
2	Atletico Madrid	22	+18	44
3	Real Madrid	22	+11	42
4	Sevilla FC	22	+13	36
5	Getafe	22	+7	32



Thibaut Courtois

Alvaro Morata

It's still a special match, I respect the fans and the club (Atletico) a lot, in the end they gave me the opportunity to play when I was just 19 years old. I only have good memories

THIBAUT COURTOIS, Real Madrid goalkeeper

## India Strike Back

Krunal's three-for followed by Rohit's fifty help India draw level with New Zealand

MS Dhoni watched from the 22 yards distance as his heir apparent Rishabh Pant showed spunk in a tricky situation, guiding India to their maiden T20 victory on New Zealand soil in Auckland on Friday.

The seven-wicket triumph was set up by skipper Rohit Sharma (50 off 29 balls) with a 79-run stand after Krunal Pandya got three wickets to restrict the hosts to 158/8. With his whirlwind fifty, Rohit also became the top run-getter in the format, surpassing Martin Guptill. "Very pleased to see how we bowled, and we were quite clinical with the bat as well," Rohit said in the post-match presentation. Dhoni, the original master finisher, couldn't have been happier as he saw Pant control what could've been a tricky 158-run chase with an unbeaten 40 off 28 balls. The series is now tied 1-1 with the decider in Hamilton on Sunday.

With the former India captain playing the role of a mentor at the other end, the 44-run stand was very significant as Indian cricket slowly moves towards a change of guard in coming days.

Pant's one-handed six off Tim Southee or the bowler's back drive off Scott Kuggeleijn to finish off the match were reminiscent of Dhoni's best days. Pant hit four boundaries and a six in all.

Earlier, Rohit's flicked six off Kuggeleijn over backward square leg was a treat for the eyes but his dismissal along with Vijay Shankar's did create a bit of unrest.

### RECORD TRACKER

Rohit Sharma becomes the leading run-scorer in T20 Internationals

### MOST T20I RUNS

INNS	RUNS	HS	SR	100	50
<b>Rohit Sharma (IND)</b>					
84	2288	118	138.41	4	16
<b>Martin Guptill (NZ)</b>					
74	2272	105	132.71	2	14
<b>Shoaib Malik (PAK)</b>					
104	2263	75	124.06	0	7
<b>Virat Kohli (IND)</b>					
60	2167	90	136.11	0	19
<b>Brendon McCullum (NZ)</b>					
70	2140	123	136.21	2	13

### SCORECARD

**NEW ZEALAND 158/8 (Grandhomme 50, Taylor 42, Krunal 3/28) lost to INDIA 162/3 (Rohit 50, Pant 40\*) by 7 wickets**

However, Pant ensured that they didn't press the panic button. The innings would certainly help him make a strong case for being included in the World Cup squad.

While bowling, Krunal enhanced his already growing reputation as a steady short-format bowler with three important breakthroughs as India restricted New Zealand to a below-par 158/8.

"We missed a trick or two with the bat. It was slightly more tricky to bat, but 20 more runs at the death would have been better," said New Zealand captain Kane Williamson.

The parsimonious Krunal (3/28 in 4 overs) dismissed Colin Munro (12) and skipper Kane Williamson (20) to peg the Black Caps back early in the innings. In between, Krunal also got the controver-



Krunal Pandya celebrates the wicket of New Zealand captain Kane Williamson

sial wicket of Daryl Mitchell (1), who fell prey to an umpiring howler, when 'Hotspot' showed a clear inside edge onto the pads.

However, Colin de Grandhomme, who has played for KKR in the IPL, then counter-attacked, scoring a blistering 50 off 28 balls, adding 77 runs with Ross Taylor (42 off 36 balls) for the fifth wicket.

Once de Grandhomme was sent back to the dug-out by Hardik Pandya (1/36 in 4 overs) and Taylor was run-out, New Zealand's chances of a big total went up in smoke.

It was a much-improved performance by the Indian bowlers with Bhuvneshwar Kumar (1/29 in 4 overs) removing Tim Seifer (12) in the very third over with a fuller delivery, inducing an inside edge to Dhoni behind the stumps.

**DRS BACK IN FOCUS** An inside edge was apparent even without the Hotspot technology but New Zealand batsman Daryl Mitchell fell to a contentious LBW call, which also triggered a debate on the spirit of the game.

Mitchell, who made his debut in the first T20 in Wellington, was given out LBW to Krunal in the seventh over of New

## Nail-Biting Loss

Jemimah's 72 in vain as Indian women lose to New Zealand on the last ball to hand series

A shoddy batting performance by the middle-order saw Indian women lose a nail-biting second T20 International against New Zealand by four wickets and concede the three-match series in Auckland on Friday.

The Indian women had earlier lost the first Twenty20 International by 23 runs in Wellington. Needing a win to keep the series alive, Indian women posted a modest 135 for 6 despite being 72 for 2 after the first 10 overs.

Chasing a modest target, New Zealand made heavy weather of the chase before scampering home off the last ball of the match losing only six wickets.

Jemimah Rodrigues slammed a 53-ball 72 that included six boundaries and one six but India scored only 63 runs in the back 10 to end up 20 runs short, which became their undoing.

"I think we should give credit to our bowlers, it wasn't a good total but still they fought for us. We were 20 runs short. They played better cricket than us. We just need to learn from our mistakes and play better," India skipper Harmanpreet Kaur said after the match.

New Zealand needed nine runs off the last over and Katey Martin smashed Mansi Joshi for a boundary off the first ball to bring down the equation to five off five balls.

Joshi, however, got her revenge by getting through the defence of Martin in the next ball. But it was not to be India's day as some sloppy fielding and sensible batting by Hannah Rowe and Leigh Kasper took New Zealand home.

### SCORECARD

**INDIA (W) 135/6 (Rodrigues 72, Mandhana 36, Mair 2/17) lost to NEW ZEALAND (W) 136/6 (Bates 62, Reddy 2/22, Radha 2/23) by 4 wickets**

## 'We Can Now Mourn' Sala's Family After Body Identified



Tributes left outside Nantes' stadium for Emiliano Sala

Footballer Emiliano Sala's family grieved on Friday after British authorities formally identified his body as the one recovered from the submerged wreckage of a plane that went down in the Channel more than two weeks ago.

"We can now begin to mourn our son and our brother," the Argentine Cardiff City striker's family said in a statement.

"We would like to thank you for all of your signs of affection and support in the most painful time of our life. "To see everyone doing everything possible to join in in the search has been a precious help to us," the family said.

Argentine footballing idols Diego

Maradona and Gabriel Batistuta also paid tribute to Sala, 28.

The Premier League player's former French club, Nantes, said it was withdrawing the jersey with Sala's number 9 on it and all Ligue 1 and 2 matches in France this weekend will be preceded by a minute of applause for him.

"Sala's former French club, Nantes, said it was withdrawing the jersey with Sala's number 9 on it

"I am very sorry about this sad news. Many of us kept a glimmer of hope for you, Emiliano," footballing superstar Maradona said on Instagram, after the identification of the body.

"What sadness, this is the worst news. Rest in peace warrior," tweeted retired Argentine football star Batistuta.

The country's President Mauricio Macri also offered his condolences to Sala's family following the "painful news".

The small Argentine town of Progresso, where the footballer lived for most of his childhood, was also in mourning.

Cardiff City on Twitter expressed their "heartfelt sympathies and condolences to the family of Emiliano". "He and David will forever remain in our thoughts," they said.

**CARDIFF COULD FACE POINTS DEDUCTION** Cardiff could face a Premier League points deduction if they do not honour their £15 million deal with Nantes over the transfer of Emiliano Sala, according to sports law expert Gianpaolo Monteneri.

Sala's flight from Nantes to Cardiff fell into the English Channel on January 21, just two days after the Argentinian striker's transfer to the Premier League club was announced.

Cardiff received a formal letter from Nantes on Tuesday asking for the first of three yearly instalments of the Sala transfer fee, understood to be £5.27m, to be paid within 10 days.

Bluebirds chairman Mehmet Dalman, in an interview with French newspaper L'Equipe, was reported as saying that he did not think Cardiff "said it was not going to pay".

But it is understood that Cardiff want to clarify "all the facts" surrounding the accident before honouring the contract.

AFP/The Independent

## TOP 10 BEST PAID FOOTBALLERS

The Premier League may be the richest, but the highest paid players tend to be found elsewhere

- LIONEL MESSI**, Barcelona, £7.3m/month
- CRISTIANO RONALDO**, Juventus, £4.1m/month
- ANTOINE GRIEZMANN**, Atletico Madrid, £2.9m/month
- NEYMAR**, PSG, £2.7m/month
- LUIS SUAREZ**, Barcelona, £2.5m/month
- GARETH BALE**, Real Madrid, £2.2m/month
- PHILIPPE COUTINHO**, Barcelona, £2m/month
- ALEXIS SANCHEZ**, Man United, £2m/month
- KYLIAN MBAPPE**, PSG, £1.5m/month
- MESUT OZIL**, Arsenal, £1.4m/month

**Jack Rathborn**  
The best players still go where the money is with wages spiralling in recent years. Clubs such as Paris Saint-Germain have been forced to spend above what the traditional elite of Europe were paying, raising the bar for players, and strengthening their negotiating power. Neymar's blockbuster move to PSG from Barcelona allowed him to jump up the food chain and showcase his brand to a scale that may never have been possible in the shadow of Lionel Messi. But there is some pushback from the clubs when players enter the twilight of their careers, such as Cristiano Ronaldo's inability to seek one final bumper contract at Real Madrid, though Juventus were all too happy to pay up for the 34-year-old in their bid to finally grab the Champions League. French newspaper L'Equipe have now released their annual salary report on the beautiful game, detailing the 10 best paid players in the world.

The Independent