

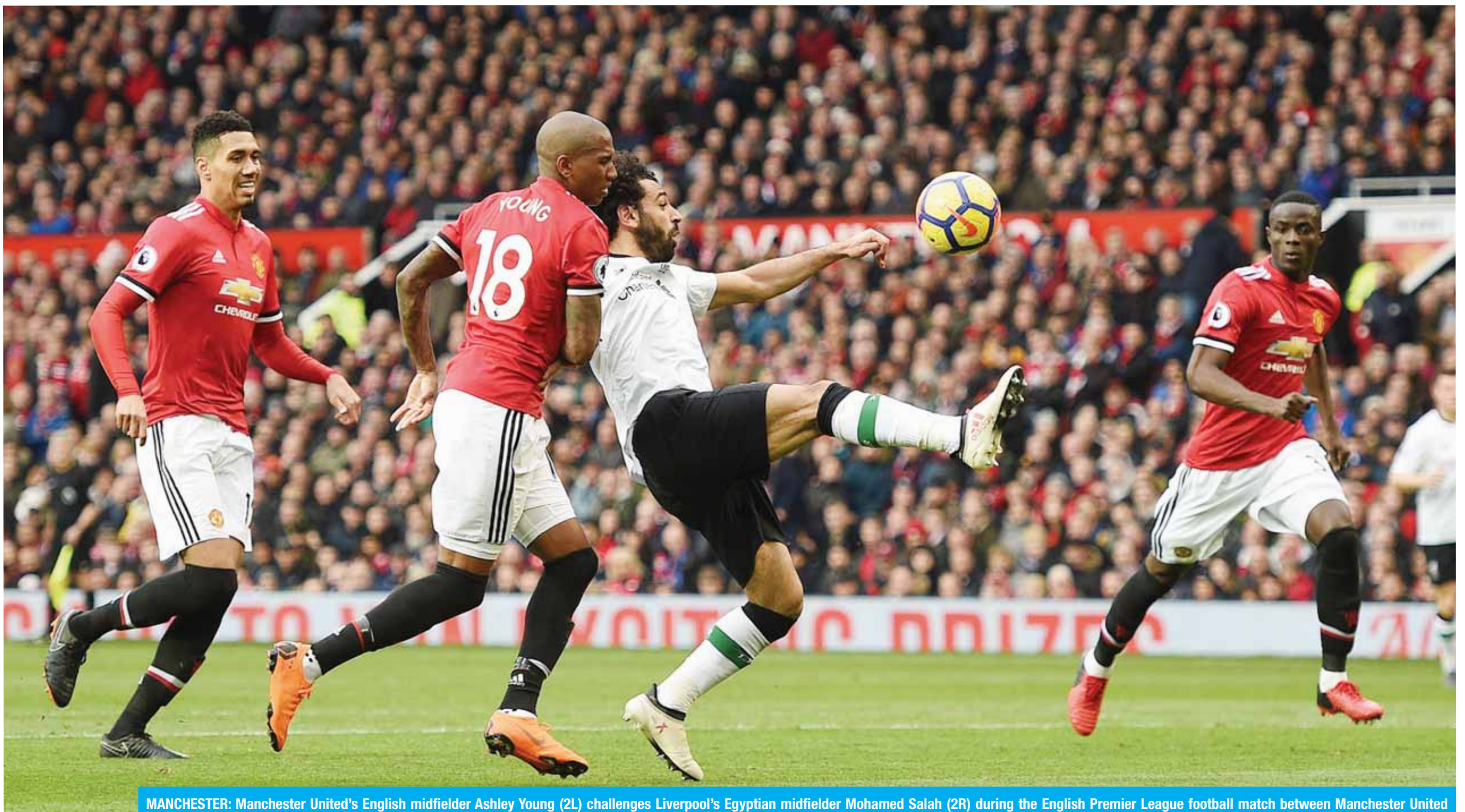
12 Halep, Pliskova advance, Muguruza suffers shock defeat



13 England romp home, claim ODI series on Bairstow ton



14 Ronaldo double gives Real narrow win over Eibar



MANCHESTER: Manchester United's English midfielder Ashley Young (2L) challenges Liverpool's Egyptian midfielder Mohamed Salah (2R) during the English Premier League football match between Manchester United and Liverpool at Old Trafford in Manchester, north west England, yesterday.— AFP

Man United sink Liverpool

Rashford hits double in the first 25 minutes

MANCHESTER: Marcus Rashford scored twice in the first 25 minutes as Manchester United held off a Liverpool fightback to move five points clear of their visitors in second place in the Premier League with a 2-1 win at Old Trafford.

United also close to within 13 points of Manchester City, but barring a late season collapse by the runaway league leaders that gap looks unbridgeable. More significantly Jose Mourinho's men moved another huge step closer to guaranteeing a top-four finish by opening up a 12-point lead on fifth-placed Chelsea.

Liverpool were left to rue a slow start as Rashford twice finished impressively after Romelu Lukaku had outmuscled Dejan Lovren. The visitors dominated after the break, but could only find a response via a United player when Eric Bailly turned into his own net 24 minutes from time.

Just a second defeat in 21 Premier League games leaves Liverpool still in third, but they could drop to

fourth if Tottenham win at Bournemouth today. Rashford may not have even started but for an injury to Paul Pogba suffered in training on Friday.

Without the £89 million (\$123 million) French international, Mourinho moved Alexis Sanchez inside behind Lukaku and handed Rashford his first league start of the year on the left. The Portuguese coach's plans worked to perfection when Rashford brought the game to life with a superb finish after 14 minutes.

Lukaku beat Lovren to a long ball and the England international skipped inside Trent Alexander-Arnold before smashing a shot past the helpless Loris Karius. Liverpool had chances for

an immediate response as Sadio Mane just failed to get on the end of Roberto Firmino's dangerous cross before Virgil Van Dijk skewed a header wide from close range when unmarked from a corner.

But soon Liverpool's task became doubly difficult as United's power and pace again proved too much. Lukaku shrugged off Lovren once more and when his ball through to Juan Mata was cut out by Van Dijk, Rashford swept home the rebound.

EVENTFUL AFTERNOON

An eventful afternoon for Rashford continued moments later when he escaped with just a yellow

card for a late lunge on James Milner. And he should also have had an assist to his name before half-time when a dinked cross picked out Mata perfectly only for the unmarked Spaniard to sent an acrobatic effort well wide.

Liverpool enjoyed almost complete control of the ball in the second-half but failed to find a way through the mass ranks of United defence. The visitors did have two strong appeals for penalties waived away as Ashley Young pulled at Mohamed Salah's shirt before an Andy Robertson cross rebounded off Antonio Valencia's arm. When Liverpool were handed a lifeline, it came via a United boot as Bailly who had excelled on his first start since November-flicked Mane's cross into his own net. Mourinho then drew the ire of his own fans as he replaced Rashford with Marouane Fellaini 20 minutes from time to see the game out. But once again Mourinho was justified as the hosts held out for six minutes of stoppage time.— AFP



Portuguese coach's plans worked to perfection

Chelsea edge Crystal Palace

CHELSEA: Chelsea survived a late scare to secure a 2-1 Premier League win over struggling Crystal Palace yesterday, with a Willian strike and an own goal earning them three points after successive defeats in Manchester.

Brazilian forward Willian picked up the ball on the left, cut inside and fired it along the ground, taking a deflection on the way past a diving Wayne Hennessey and in off the post in the 25th minute.

Six minutes later, a mix up between defender Martin Kelly and Hennessey earned the champions their second when a shot from Davide Zappacosta ricocheted off both Palace players into the goal, with Kelly getting the final touch. Chelsea, fifth in the standings, were in control. Palace, however, looked livelier in the second half after Wilfried Zaha replaced Christian Benteke and Alexander Sorloth hit the post. They halved the deficit late on through former Chelsea player Patrick van Aanholt to make it a nervy finish at Stamford Bridge.

Fifth-placed Chelsea moved to within four points of Liverpool, two behind Tottenham Hotspur - who play Bournemouth on Sunday - in fourth, after a nervy 2-1 win over Crystal Palace in the late kickoff.—Agencies



LONDON: Crystal Palace's English midfielder Aaron Wan-Bissaka (L) clears the ball under the eye of Chelsea's Belgian midfielder Eden Hazard (C) during the English Premier League football match between Chelsea and Crystal Palace at Stamford Bridge in London yesterday.— AFP

Lewandowski grabs hat-trick as Bayern rout Hamburg

BERLIN: Robert Lewandowski grabbed a hat-trick as Bayern Munich romped to a 6-0 victory over crisis-stricken Hamburg in the Bundesliga yesterday. The victory keeps Bayern on course to wrap up another Bundesliga title-their sixth in a row-before the end of March, and heaps misery on Hamburg, who are now without a win in 13 games.

Bayern have made a habit of recording big home wins over Hamburg at the Allianz Arena in recent years and it took them less than eight minutes to take the lead this time.

Franck Ribery broke away on the left before rounding goalkeeper Christian Mathenia to slot in the opener. Just four minutes later, Lewandowski headed in a Joshua Kimmich cross to double the lead for Bayern. The Polish international struck again in the 19th minute, after a pinpoint long ball from Jerome Boateng had opened up the Hamburg defence.

Arjen Robben fired in Bayern's fourth on 55 minutes, and Ribery made it five with a mazy solo run in the 80th minute. Lewandowski blasted one penalty over the bar on 85 minutes, before converting a second spot-kick minutes from time to complete his hat-trick.

His latest exploits in front of goal mean he is now Bayern's all-time leading foreign goalscorer with 141 from 182 games in all competitions, overtaking the Brazilian Giovane Elber, who played for the club from 1997 to 2003.

Bayern now hold a 20-point lead at the top of the table over Schalke, who won 1-0 at Mainz on Friday, while Hamburg remain seven points adrift of safety as they seek to avoid a first relegation in their history.—AFP