



**LIVERPOOL:** Liverpool's Dutch defender Virgil van Dijk (second right) celebrates with teammates after scoring his team's fourth goal during the English Premier League football match between Liverpool and Southampton at Anfield in Liverpool, north west England yesterday. — AFP

## Liverpool rout Saints, Arsenal cruise

### Liverpool move second ahead of leader Chelsea's clash with Man United

**LONDON:** Liverpool crushed Southampton 4-0 yesterday to put pressure on Premier League leaders Chelsea, while Arsenal got back on track with a 2-0 win over Newcastle as Eddie Howe suffered his first defeat as Magpies manager. Diogo Jota scored twice for Jurgen Klopp's side to warm the Anfield faithful on a bitterly cold afternoon.

Liverpool's third consecutive victory in all competitions since losing at West Ham moved them into second place. The Reds sit one point behind Chelsea, who host Manchester United tonight. Third-placed Manchester City would go back above Liverpool if they beat West Ham tonight.

Liverpool needed just two minutes to take the lead when Sadio Mane played in Andrew Robertson and the Scot's cross was perfectly weighted for Jota to finish from close range. Jota netted again in the 32nd minute with a simple finish from Mohamed Salah's pass for his eighth club goal this term.

Having scored at least two goals in 17 successive matches in all competitions, Liverpool refused to take their foot off the gas. Thiago Alcantara had ended a lengthy goal drought in the midweek Champions League win over Porto and the Spain midfielder was back on the scoresheet in the 37th minute when his shot deflected in off Lyanco.

Virgil van Dijk bagged Liverpool's fourth in the 52nd minute, the Dutch defender volleying his first goal in 14 months from Trent Alexander-Arnold's corner. Arsenal saw their 10-match unbeaten run in all competitions come to a painful end in last weekend's 4-0 thrashing at Liverpool. But second-half goals from Bukayo Saka and Gabriel Martinelli at the Emirates Stadium made it four wins from their last five league games. Written off after their poor start to the season, Mikel Arteta's side are fifth, level on points with fourth-placed West Ham, as they chase a berth in next season's Champions League.

"I'm happy with the points after losing to Liverpool. You have to win straightaway," Arteta said.

#### Gerrard makes his mark

Howe was in charge in person for the first time after missing last weekend's 3-3 draw against Brentford due to a positive coronavirus test. While the Saudi-led consortium that recently bought Newcastle have spoken about emulating the success of Manchester City and Paris Saint-Germain under Middle Eastern ownership, Howe's only focus is saving the Magpies from relegation.

Former Bournemouth boss Howe will need to drag much-improved performances from his winless



#### First defeat for Howe at Newcastle

team if they are to avoid a catastrophic slide into the Championship. Already languishing five points from safety, bottom of the table Newcastle face crucial games against fellow strugglers Norwich and Burnley over the coming week.

"The game was decided in the incident with Callum Wilson and the penalty - a tough call against us - then they scored in the aftermath," Howe said. "Momentum in football is so important. We need to get that win as quickly as we can."

Steven Gerrard earned his second successive win since taking charge of Aston Villa as the former



**LONDON:** Arsenal's Norwegian midfielder Martin Odegaard (center) controls the ball during the English Premier League football match between Arsenal and Newcastle United at the Emirates Stadium in London yesterday. — AFP

Rangers boss masterminded a 2-1 victory at Crystal Palace. Exposing Palace's set-piece weakness, Villa went in front after 15 minutes when Matt Targett fired home for his first league goal since 2019 after the hosts failed to clear Ashley Young's corner.

Villa's Douglas Luiz escaped a red card in the 72nd minute for a late tackle on Cheikhou Kouyate, the midfielder initially being sent off before the

decision was overturned after a VAR check. John McGinn compounded Palace's frustration in the 86th minute as he grabbed Villa's killer second from Anwar El Ghazi's pass. Marc Guehi's 95th-minute goal was little consolation for Palace. Dean Smith, the man Gerrard replaced at Villa, remains unbeaten as Norwich boss after the second-bottom Canaries drew 0-0 with Wolves at Carrow Road. — AFP

### Polii, Rahayu grab spot in Indonesia Open finals

**JAKARTA:** Olympic badminton gold medalists Greysia Polii and Apriyani Rahayu secured a spot in the Indonesia Open finals after defeating Thailand's Jongkolphan Kititharakul and Rawinda Prajongjai in two straight sets yesterday. The Indonesian women's double beat the Thai pair 21-18, 21-14 in 58 minutes in the tournament held in the resort island Bali.

They will now face Japan's Nami Matsuyama and Chiharu Chida, who bagged the Indonesia Masters title last week. Natsuyama and Chida went through to the finals after scoring a victory against South Korean Baek Ha-na and Lee Yu-rim.

In men's doubles, the world number one Kevin Sanjaya

Sukamuljo and Marcus Gideon also netted a spot in the finals after defeating India's Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty 21-16, 21-18 in a 44-minute game.

"We played better today, we attacked since the beginning and we pushed for a fast game because we know this Indian duo are strong and powerful," Gideon said after the match. The Indonesian duo, affectionately known by their fans as "The Minions", will face Japan's Takuro Hoki and Yugo Kobayashi.

In men's singles, Danish badminton ace Viktor Axelsen is through to the finals after defeating Indonesia's Jonatan Christie. The world number two, who is favored to win the men's singles title, beat Christie



**NUSA DUA:** Indonesia's Greysia Polii (left) and Apriyani Rahayu (right) hit a return against Thailand's Jongkolphan Kititharakul and Rawinda Prajongjai during their women's doubles semi-final badminton match at the Indonesia Open. — AFP

21-19, 21-15. "It was a tough game for me, Jonatan is a tough competition and I respect him," the Olympic gold medalist said after the match.

The Indonesia Open takes place from November 23-28 and the season-ending BWF

Tour finals run December 1-5. Tour badminton has been badly hit by the pandemic, with recent games being the first tournaments in Asia in almost a year and taking place without fans in a COVID-secure bubble. — AFP

### Police search Juve offices over suspected transfers

**MILAN:** Italy's financial police have searched Juventus' offices in a probe into player transfers, with prosecutors looking into potentially false information on the Serie A club's balance sheets. In a statement released late on Friday, the Turin public prosecutors office said they were investigating deals that took place over the past three seasons, and the way annual financial results between 2019 and this year had been formulated.

Juve are being investigated for making false communications to investors and issuing invoices for non-existent transactions, prosecutors said. According to Italian media six Juve directors are under investigation, including chairman Andrea Agnelli, vice-chairman and former player Pavel Nedved, and

former sporting director Fabio Paratici, who is now at Tottenham Hotspur.

News Agency ANSA claimed yesterday morning that prosecutors were also looking into the club's dealings with Cristiano Ronaldo, who arrived to great fanfare in the summer of 2018 and fled to Manchester United in August.

Last month the Italian Football Federation (FIGC) launched an investigation of its own into a series of suspicious transfers, with the majority of the deals under the microscope involving Juve. The operations are suspected of being carried out with the aim of inflating the value of certain players for accounting purposes, or using player exchanges to help balance the books. — AFP