

**Paintsil posts bail**

AFP, Accra

Former Fulham, West Ham and Leicester City defender John Paintsil was released on bail Saturday after his arrest over allegations that he stabbed his wife, Ghana's police told AFP.

Police spokesman Freeman Tetty said Paintsil had been arrested on Friday after reportedly assaulting both his wife and a neighbour in their upscale Accra neighbourhood. The footballer spent the night in prison.

"He had a confrontation with his wife and it ended with a blow," Tetty said. "The wife had a deep cut on the upper eyelid. She ran to a neighbour's house and Paintsil also rushed to the neighbour and gave the neighbour a few slaps and threatened to kill the neighbour."

**Palermo in Genoa stalemate**

AFP, Paris

Rock-bottom Palermo had a man sent-off in a 0-0 draw with Genoa on Saturday, a result which did little to help their Serie A survival chances.

Salvatore Aronica received his marching orders in the second half for a foul on Marco Borriello -- it was the Sicilians' eighth red card of the season.

Josip Ilicic had a chance to win it for Palermo but goalkeeper Sebastien Frey pulled off a fine save to earn Genoa a point.

Meanwhile, Sunday's game between Bologna and Fiorentina was postponed because of a snow-covered pitch.

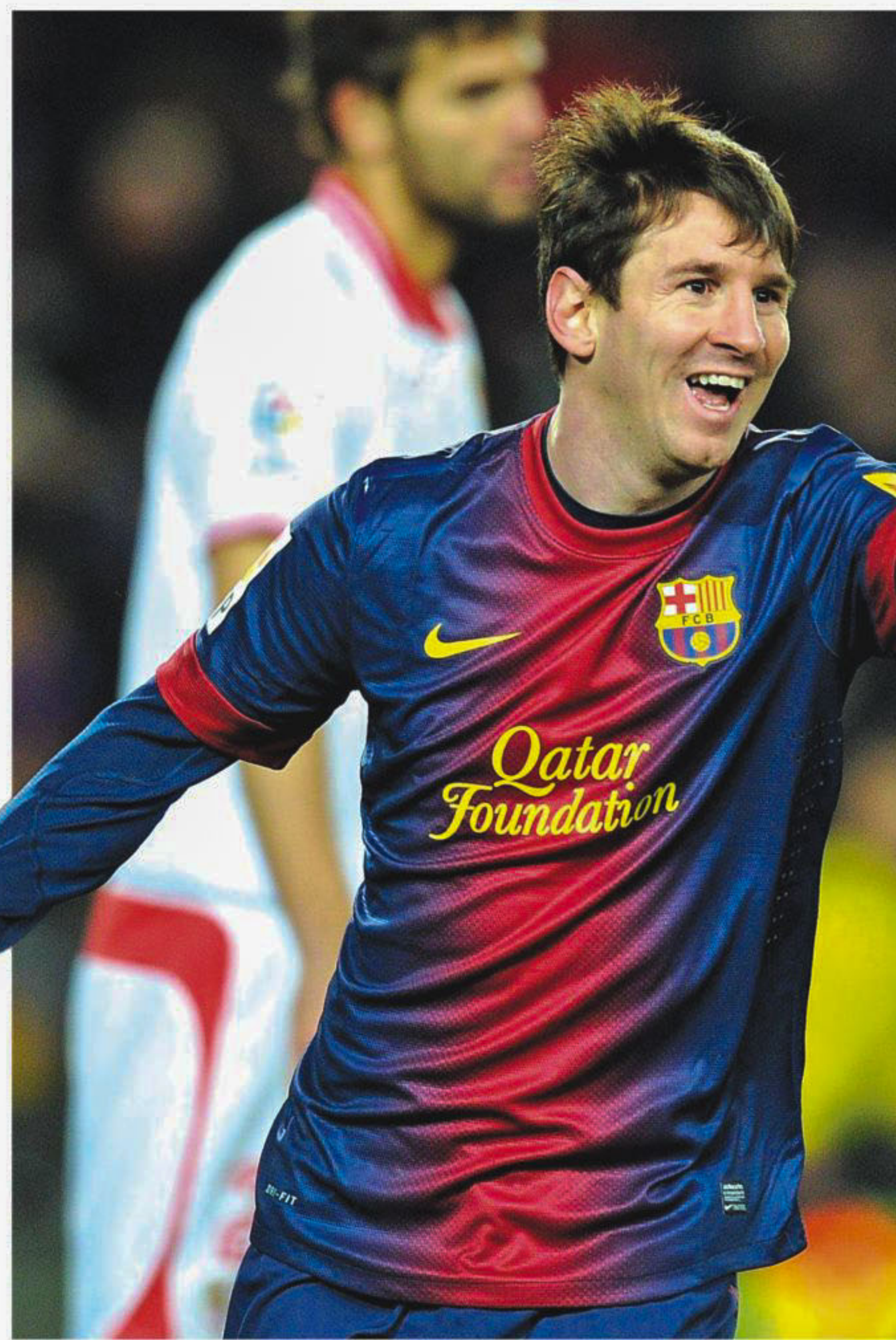


**Star Sports & Star Cricket**  
Australia v India  
First Test Day 4  
Live from 10:00am

**ESPN**  
ENGLISH PREMIERSHIP  
West Ham v Tottenham  
Live from 2:00am (Tuesday)

**Star Sports**  
Serie A  
Udinese v Napoli  
Live from 12:00am (Tuesday)

**LA LIGA**  
Levante v Osasuna



Barcelona superstar Lionel Messi celebrates his winning goal against Sevilla during their Primera Liga encounter at Nou Camp on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

**Messi fires Barca**

AFP, Madrid

Barcelona stretched their advantage at the top of La Liga to 15 points as two goals in eight minutes just before the hour



mark from David Villa and Lionel Messi handed them a 2-1 win over Sevilla on Saturday.

The Catalans, who slumped to a shock Champions League loss at AC Milan in midweek, had to come from behind after Alberto Botia headed the visitors into a 42nd minute lead.

Barca star Javier Mascherano said it was important to get the equaliser quickly after the break.

"I think we were aware that we didn't pay well in the first-half and we needed more," he told Canal Plus.

"In the second-half I think we started with more intensity and luckily managed to find the equaliser quickly."

Barca now face a huge Spanish Cup semifinal second-leg with Real Madrid on Tuesday with the tie finely balanced a 1-1 and Mascherano believes home advantage and an away goal gives them the upper hand.

"On Tuesday we have a big game but we have the advantage. We are playing a great rival but we need to finish the job."

Barca faced much the same chal-

lenge as in their 2-0 defeat to AC Milan as they struggled to find a way through a packed Sevilla defence early on.

Messi had a low drive well-saved by Beto and also saw a free-kick drift over but Barca were stunned when the visitors took the lead with their first serious attack on the stroke of half-time.

A free-kick was played out to Coke on the right and his cross was headed beyond Victor Valdes by former Barca defender Botia.

The half-time scoreline forced Jordi Roura to introduce Cristian Tello for Alexis Sanchez and the

**RESULTS**

Real Mallorca 1 (G. dos Santos 24) **Getafe 3** (Diego Castro 70-pen, Colunga 82, 86)  
Real Zaragoza 2 (Apono 5-pen, Postiga 32)  
Valencia 2 (Jonas 36, 69)  
Deportivo La Coruna 1 (Riki 34) **Real Madrid 2** (Kaka 73, Higuain 88)  
**Barcelona 2** (Villa 52, Messi 60)

Spanish Under-21 international was to have quite an impact as Barca turned the game around.

It was from the other side of the pitch though that they found the equaliser as Dani Alves' perfect cross was headed home by David Villa seven minutes into the second period.

And Messi completed the turnaround as he scored for the 15th consecutive league game as he turned in Tello's intelligent cut-back eight minutes later.

Sevilla still had their chances to take something from the game

though as Ivan Rakitic pulled a shot just wide before Alvaro Negredo should have scored when he fired over 15 minutes from time.

But Barca held on to record their 22nd win from 25 league games this season.

Real Madrid also had to come from behind to win 2-1 at relegation threatened Deportivo La Coruna thanks to second-half goals from Kaka and Gonzalo Higuain.

Riki had fired in at Diego Lopez's near post to give the hosts a deserved lead on 31 minutes.

However, Deportivo were left to rue missing a number of chances to extend their advantage when Kaka equalised with a fine curling effort 17 minutes from time and Higuain sealed the comeback 15 minutes later with an easy finish after brilliant build-up play from Kaka and Cristiano Ronaldo.

Madrid boss Jose Mourinho had made his intentions clear ahead of Tuesday's clash with Barcelona as he left Ronaldo, Mesut Ozil and Sami Khedira on the bench in a side that included seven changes from last weekend's 2-0 win over Rayo Vallecano.

"We have a big squad and the manager plays who he thinks is best for each game," Higuain told GoTV.

Valencia moved into fifth place as they came from 2-0 down to draw 2-2 at Real Zaragoza thanks to two goals from Jonas.

Mallorca meanwhile remain rooted in the bottom three as they conceded three times in the final 19 minutes to lose 3-1 at home to Getafe.

**MU cruise past QPR**

AFP, London



A thunderbolt from Rafael da Silva set Manchester United on the way to a 2-0 win at bottom club

Queens Park Rangers on Saturday that sent Alex Ferguson's side 15 points clear in the Premier League.

The Brazilian right-back struck in the 23rd minute, arrowing a crisp, first-time drive right into the top-left corner from outside the box after Julio Cesar had pushed away a shot from Robin van Persie.

The goal came at a cost for United, however, with top scorer van Persie tumbling into the photographers' pit behind Cesar's goal and sustaining a hip injury that forced him off four minutes before half-time.

The evergreen Ryan Giggs sealed victory in the 80th minute, ghosting onto Danny Welbeck's through ball and whipping a low shot past the exposed Cesar.

Victory gives United a massive lead at the league summit, ahead of nearest rivals Manchester City's home game with third-place Chelsea on Sunday.

Arsenal put their recent woes behind them as Santi Cazorla completed a brace with an 85th-minute goal that condemned relegation-threatened Aston Villa to a 2-1 defeat at the Emirates Stadium.

Knocked out of the FA Cup by second-tier Blackburn Rovers and

soundly beaten by Bayern Munich in the Champions League, Arsenal were desperate for a reaction and took a sixth-minute lead when Cazorla drilled home.

Arsene Wenger's men failed to build on their lead, however, and in the 68th minute, Andreas Weimann equalised with a 25-yard shot that squirmed beneath Arsenal goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny.

Yet more unpleasant headlines beckoned, but with five minutes to play, January signing Nacho Monreal

**RESULTS**

Arsenal 2 (Cazorla 6, 85) Aston Villa 1 (Weimann 68)  
Fulham 1 (Berbatov 45) Stoke 0  
Norwich 2 (Kamara 84, Holt 90+4) Everton 1 (Osman 39)  
QPR 0 Manchester Utd 2 (Rafael 23, Giggs 80)  
Reading 0 Wigan 3 (Kone 44, 45, Figueroa 48)  
West Brom 2 (Lukaku 35-pen, 75) Sunderland

scampered down the left wing and cut the ball back for his Spanish countryman Cazorla to guide a low shot past Brad Guzan.

The result took Arsenal to within a point of fourth-placed Tottenham Hotspur, who visit West Ham United on Monday.

Cazorla's winner also sent Villa into the relegation zone and allowed Wigan Athletic to haul themselves out of the bottom three after a potentially crucial 3-0 win at relegation rivals Reading.

A quick-fire brace from Ivorian striker Arouna Kone put Wigan 2-0 up shortly before half-time and Maynor Figueroa added a third early in the second period after a slick one-two with Franco Di Santo.

Reading's misery was complete in the 55th minute when striker Pavel Pogrebnyak was sent off for an ugly lunge on Figueroa.

Defeat saw Reading slip below Wigan to second-bottom, although Brian McDermott's side are just a point from safety.

Everton lost ground in the race for Champions League football after Norwich City came from behind to win 2-1 at Carrow Road.

Leon Osman headed the visitors in front from Leighton Baines' cross in the 39th minute, but Kai Kamara levelled six minutes from full-time before Grant Holt lashed in a 94th-minute winner.

On-loan Chelsea striker Romelu Lukaku scored in each half -- the first a penalty -- as West Bromwich Albion won 2-1 at home to Sunderland, who replied through Stephane Sessegnon.

Earlier, a marvellous goal from Dimitar Berbatov gave Fulham a 1-0 win at home to Stoke City that lifted Martin Jol's men to 11th place in the table.

Berbatov lashed a vicious volley into the top-right corner from 15 yards in first-half injury time, while Stoke's Jon Walters saw a penalty saved by Mark Schwarzer after 10 minutes of the second half.

**City trump Chelsea**

AFP, London



Manchester City galvanised their grip on second place in the Premier League and trimmed Manchester United's lead

back to 12 points with a 2-0 victory at home to nearest rivals Chelsea on Sunday.

After Chelsea's Frank Lampard had seen a penalty saved by England colleague Joe Hart, City prevailed through a pair of fine second-half goals from man-of-the-match Yaya Toure and substitute Carlos Tevez.

Although City's chances of retaining their league title remain decidedly slender, they now have a seven-point advantage over Chelsea, who could slip to fourth if Tottenham

Hotspur overcome West Ham United on Monday.

Both City manager Roberto Mancini and his Chelsea counterpart Rafael Benitez flooded their sides with midfielders at the Etihad Stadium, while Benitez opted to leave John Terry and Fernando Torres on the bench.

City deployed Sergio Aguero as a lone striker and although he had to plough a lone furrow, it was the hosts who dominated the first half.

Visiting goalkeeper Petr Cech had to tip a header from Matija Nastasic over the bar, while Gary Cahill did well to block a goal-bound volley from Pablo Zabaleta.

City handed a rare start to Jack Rodwell and the midfielder threatened twice shortly before half-time, extending Cech

with first a 25-yard drive and then a header from the resulting corner.

Chelsea were gifted an opportunity to open the scoring early in the second half when Hart was adjudged to have fouled Demba Ba, but the England goalkeeper redeemed himself with an excellent save from Lampard's spot-kick.

Aguero dinked a shot onto the roof of the net before City's enterprise finally told in the 63rd minute.

Toure collected a pass from David Silva and deftly evaded the attentions of four visiting defenders before shaping a shot around Cech that nestled in the bottom-right corner.

Tevez settled the encounter in style in the 85th minute, collecting the ball 22 yards from goal and arrowing a shot into the top-left corner.

In the day's other game, Newcastle edged relegation rivals Southampton 4-2 in a topsy-turvy game at St James' Park that took Alan Pardew's side six points clear of the bottom three.

However, it was a Frenchman in a red shirt who broke the deadlock, as midfielder Morgan Schneiderlin converted a Rickie Lambert knockdown to give Southampton a third-minute lead.

Newcastle's reaction was swift and in the 32nd minute they went ahead thanks to two French players of their own.

Yoan Gouffran forced a save from Artur Boruc after darting into the box from the left and when the ball ran across goal, Moussa Sissoko sped in to touch it over the line.

**RESULTS**

Manchester City 2 (Y.Toure 63, Tevez 85) Chelsea 0  
Newcastle 4 (Sissoko 33, Cisse 42, Cabaye 67-pen, Hooiveld 79-og)  
Southampton 2 (Schneiderlin 3,

**Bayern rout Bremen**

AFP, Berlin



Bayern Munich rested half a dozen stars but still romped to a 6-1 win at home against 10-man Werder Bremen

on Saturday to go 18 points clear at the top of the Bundesliga.

Bayern boss Jupp Heynckes celebrated his 1000th Bundesliga game as a player and coach by making six changes from the team which won 3-1 at Arsenal in the Champions League on Tuesday.

But they still extended their unbeaten run to 20 matches since their last defeat at home to Bayer Leverkusen at the end of October while resting their top players for Wednesday's German Cup quarterfinal at home to Dortmund.

**RESULTS**

Bayern Munich 6 (Robben 25, Martinez 29, Gebre Selassie 49-og, Gomez 51, 89, Ribery 86)  
Werder Bremen 1 (de Bruyne 58)  
VfB Stuttgart 1 (Traore 51)  
Nuremberg 1 (Feulner 77)  
Hanover 5 (Diouf 7, Huszti 39-pen, Ya Konan 45, 68, Abdellaoue 85) Hamburg 1 (van der Vaart 13-pen)  
Mainz 1 (Zimling 5) VfL Wolfsburg 1 (Naldo 15)  
Augsburg 2 (Ji 45, Moelders 79) Hoffenheim 1 (de Camargo 90+2)  
Schalke 2 (Matip 29, 81) Fortuna Duesseldorf 1

Werder approaching the hour mark, but Bremen's defence capitulated by leaking two goals in the final five minutes.

striker Mario Gomez, who scored twice, came in for Mario Mandzukic, Dutch wing Arjen Robben, who opened the scoring, started for Thomas Mueller while Swiss midfielder Xherdan Shaqiri took Toni Kroos' place.

The other goals came from France wing Franck Ribery and Spain defensive midfielder Javi Martinez, while Bremen's Theodor Gebre Selassie turned the ball into his own net early in the second half.

Bremen were reduced to 10 men when centre-back Sebastian Proedl was shown a straight red card for bringing down Gomez, who was through on goal, just before the break.

Belgium midfielder Kevin de Bruyne, on loan at Bremen from Chelsea, pulled a goal back for



Bayern Munich striker Mario Gomez (R) scores one of his two goals during their Bundesliga clash against Werder Bremen on Sunday. PHOTO: AFP