Bangladesh v Sri Lanka Second Test, Day 2, Time:

9:30am Venue: Zohur Ahmed **Chowdhury Stadium Premier League** 

Muktijoddha v Feni SC Time: 3:30pm

Ctg Abahani v Team BJMC Time: 5:30pm

Venue: BNS **Premier Division Hockey** 

### Bale fit to play

REUTERS, Madrid

Gareth Bale has recovered from a calf problem and is back in Real Madrid's squad for the first leg of their King's Cup semifinal against holders Atletico Madrid on Wednesday.

The Wales winger's debut season in Spain has been disrupted by a series of minor injuries after joining from Tottenham Hotspur for a world record fee and he has missed Real's last two matches after picking up the injury in a La Liga game against Granada on Jan. 25.

"Gareth Bale is available," coach Carlo Ancelotti told a news conference on the eve of the game at the Bernabeu where Atletico beat Real 2-1 to win last season's final.

"He has recovered well and has trained well these last two days with the rest of the team," added the Italian, in his first season in charge after taking over from Jose Mourinho.

"He is in good shape." Bale's Real career has been something of a disappointment so far.



PHOTO: REUTERS

Chelsea fullback Branislav Ivanovic celebrates his all-important goal against Manchester City during their Premier League tie at the Etihad Stadium on Monday.

City had won all 11 of their

previous home league games

It was the first time City failed to

score at the Etihad in the league

AFP, Manchester



Chelsea defied Manchester City's scintillating home form with a superb 1-0 victory at the Etihad Stadium on Monday that injected fresh intrigue into the Premier

League title race. Imperious in recent weeks, City were looking to reclaim top spot from Arsenal and move six points above Chelsea, but it was the visitors who prevailed thanks to a

32nd-minute bullet by Branislav Ivanovic. The hosts had been seeking a ninth

successive league win, but instead Jose

Mourinho's Chelsea were left to celebrate a home-and-away double, having beaten City 2-1 at Stamford Bridge in October's reverse fixture.

Chelsea also hit the woodwork on three occasions, but Ivanovic's vicious strike proved enough as they moved level on points with City,

two points shy of leaders Arsenal.

City were without top scorer Sergio Aguero due to injury, while Martin Demichelis had to fill in for the injured Fernandinho in central midfield, but the hosts attacked with their usual abandon nonetheless.

Chelsea goalkeeper Petr Cech was obliged to race to the edge of his area to clear inside the first minute, before Alvaro Negredo rolled Gary Cahill and shot over.

Aleksandar Kolarov whipped a cross across goal that narrowly eluded Yaya Toure, who then clipped a shot just over from the edge of the box before striding to the byline and teeing up David Silva to sweep an effort narrowly wide.

Edin Dzeko curled off-target after giving David Luiz the slip, but City's gung-ho advances left them exposed at the back and Joe Hart had to save from Ramires in the 27th minute after a cut-throat Chelsea counter.

It was a reminder of the visitors' pace on the break and five minutes later another raid saw them go ahead.

Vincent Kompany did well to block from Ramires, who had been picked out by Eden Hazard, but as the ball rolled to the edge of the box Ivanovic met it with a devastating left-foot drive that flew into the bottom-left

irrepressible Hazard worked Hart with a low strike before skipping past Pablo Zabaleta and crossing for Samuel Eto'o, who could only slam against the crossbar from a narrow angle.

An exchange of chances saw both sides go close early in the second half, with Toure drilling a shot a whisker wide at one end before Nemanja Matic clipped the post with a 30-yard thunderbolt at the other.

City manager Manuel Pellegrini sent on Stevan Jovetic for Negredo in the 56th minute, but Chelsea continued to threaten, with Cahill heading against the post from an in-swinging Willian corner.

The hosts responded, Dzeko miscueing from a Zabaleta centre, while Silva drew a fine one-handed save from Cech with a dipping free-kick before clattering the ball wide from a Kolarov cross.

# Chelsea dent City Jose cools title talks

AFP, Manchester



Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho described his side as "the little horse" in the Premier League title race

despite their impressive success over Manchester City at the Etihad Stadium.

Chelsea travelled to Manchester on Monday knowing that defeat would leave them six points behind City, but they won 1-0 through Branislav Ivanovic's first-half strike to draw level on points with their rivals.

The two clubs now trail leaders With City rattled, the | Arsenal by two points with 14 matches of the season remaining, but Mourinho is insistent that his team remain a work in progress.

> Asked if the duel for the title was a three-horse race, he replied: "Two horses and a little horse, that still needs milk and to learn how to jump. A horse that next season can race."

When it was put to him that Chelsea at the very least stood a chance of winning the league, he replied: "I don't agree.

"We lost points at home against West Brom, against West Ham, we lost at Stoke, we lost at Newcastle.

"We are a team in evolution, but this is the kind of performance that helps the team to grow up a lot. Tactically, mentally, I think it was fantastic."

City had won all 11 of their previous home games in the league, scoring 42 goals, and had won 17 of their 18 matches at the Etihad in all competitions, losing only to European champions Bayern Munich in the Champions League.



They enjoyed the majority of possession against Chelsea, but it was the visitors who possessed the greater cutting edge.

Having weathered early pressure from the home side, Chelsea took the lead in the 32nd minute when Serbian defender Ivanovic bludgeoned home a low drive and the visitors went on to hit the woodwork on three occasions.

City's preparations were upset by the loss of Brazilian holding midfielder Fernandinho to injury, with Argentine centre-back Martin Demichelis proving an unsteady replacement.

midfielders Samir Nasri and Javi Garcia and top scorer Sergio Aguero due to injury, and manager Manuel

Pellegrini felt that their absences were telling. "Of course, (Fernandinho) is a very

important player for us," he said. "Not only Fernandinho; you must

add Samir Nasri, Aguero, Javi Garcia, because (if) Fernandinho can't play, Javi Garcia can play in his position.

"(James) Milner was not 100 per

cent, neither was Alvaro Negredo. And it's too much advantage for a team as important as Chelsea." On Fernandinho's injury, he added:

"Fernandinho has a muscle injury. We'll see tomorrow (Tuesday) how long is it, but maybe a pair of weeks, three or four weeks."

Mourinho, meanwhile, claimed that the inspiration for his side's victory came from team masseur Billy McCulloch, who gave the pre-match team talk.

"I didn't speak. It was Billy the masseur that spoke to the team," Mourinho said.

"He was screaming so much in Scottish I didn't understand really. I didn't understand, but the players were clapping."

Mourinho also paid tribute to 23year-old Belgian winger Eden Hazard, who tormented the home side throughout the game and played a telling role in the build-up to Ivanovic's decisive goal.

"I keep saying that he has to improve. He needs to have his feet on the ground," Mourinho said.

"(Cristiano) Ronaldo and (Lionel) The hosts were also without Messi are Ronaldo and Messi. And Eden Hazard is probably the best young player in the world, with legs to go there. Give him time."

### Tony, Linda impart football lesson

SPORTS REPORTER

Tony Sanneh and Linda Hamilton, two former US footballers who represented their country in the FIFA World Cup, spent a busy day imparting football skills to budding footballers at the Bangladesh Football Federation turf yesterday. The two footballers, who arrived on the previous day, will be conducting football clinics and workshops for the next three days as well, as part of a Cultural Exchange Program of the US State Department titled 'Sports United', hosted here by the American Centre of the US Embassy and assisted by the BFF.

Linda, who was a member of the 1991 Women's World Cup winning team of USA, will conduct coaching sessions on girls' of 16-21 age group while Tony, who played for USA in the 2002 World Cup, will conduct coaching amongst boys of 13-16 and 17-21 age-group.

Four coaches of the BFF will assist the two American footballers in their coaching sessions.

A press conference in this connection was organised at the BFF conference room which was presided over by the vice president of BFF Badal Roy, while Ms Viraj LeBailly, public affairs officer of the US Embassy, and Syed Mohsin, public affairs co-ordinator of the embassy, were present among others.

#### Gomez back for Fiorentina

AFP, Rome

on Monday.

Germany striker Mario Gomez is returning to first team training with Serie A side Fiorentina five months after injuring his right knee, the club announced

"Mario Gomez has completed his rehabilitation and can resume training on Wednesday with the rest of the team," Fiorentina announced on

their official website. Gomez suffered his injury in mid-September in only his third game for the club with initial predictions suggesting he would

only be out for a matter of

The 28-year-old arrived at Fiorentina last summer from Bayern Munich on a four-year deal for a fee estimated at 15.5 million euros (\$20.4 million).



## MSC held by Brothers

SPORTS REPORTER



A struggling Mohammedan SC returned to the loop of impasse in the Nitol Tata Bangladesh Premier League when they surrendered an early lead to play out a 1-1 draw against

Brothers Union at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Zahid Hasan Emily put Mohammedan ahead with a clever strike in the 43rd minute but Brothers' Ghanaian defender Issah Yousuf converted a penalty in the 75th minute to force Mohammedan to their fifth draw in eight matches. Despite the draw, Mohammedan overtook Muktijoddha Sangsad in the fourth position of the ten-team table with 11 points from eight matches, by virtue of superior goal difference.

Brothers, on the other hand, raised their tally to nine points from eight outings and are just behind fifthplaced Muktijoddha Sangsad.

Mohammedan came into the match on the back of a 2-0 win over Chittagong Abahani and they showed signs of another good performance as they came close to taking the lead in the ninth minute, but Egyptian forward Mostafa Seddik's header narrowly missed the target.

The Motijheel outfit kept on pressing and took the lead two minutes before the break when Zahid Hasan Emily put the ball at the back of the net for the third successive match.

The veteran striker chested down a lob from Towhidu Alam, took the ball on his feet and sent it over the advancing goalkeeper Mohammad Sujath from inside the box to notch his fourth goal of the league.

But the scenario changed after the lemon break as Brothers took control of the match with timely substitutions as youngsters Jewel Rana and Rubel Miah came in place of Faisal Mahmud and Mohammad Yousuf.

Before being substituted, Faisal came close to levelling the margin in the 51st minute but his shot went

straight to goalkeeper Titumir Chowdhury. The persistent pressure paid off as Brothers earned the penalty when Kester Akon was tackled from behind by Tapu Barman inside the danger zone. Issah converted the penalty for the second time in the league to equalise for The Oranges.

Afterwards, Jewel put a defencesplitting pass for Rubel, but the teenage winger failed to capitalise and Brothers had to be content with their third successive draw.

"We played a very good match for the second time but poor referring resulted in another draw for us. The outcome of the match was definitely not good for us as we had a plan to keep the 1-0 lead intact till the end," said Mohammedan coach Jose Rui Capela Batista, further claiming that the penalty given against them was not the right decision.

"We are coming from behind to snatch a single point but not being able to win. I think the players lack concentration at times. But I am hopeful we will get better in next matches," said Brothers scorer Issah.

Mohammedan striker Zahid Hasan Emily (L) is elated after scoring for the third successive game in the Bangladesh Premier League during yesterday's match against Brothers Union at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.