

BREAK THE WALL DOWN

An equaliser from winger Paul Anderson ensured Ipswich managed a 1-1 draw against Norwich in the first leg of the Championship play-off semifinals. Anderson's goal sparked wild celebrations, even causing one fan to accidentally punch a hole in his own ceiling. Ross Morgan posted a photo of the destruction, admitting that he "lost it" when Anderson scored. And later that day Anderson offered to pay for the damage himself. Morgan replied that he would fix the ceiling himself, adding that Anderson "deserved every penny of his goal bonus."



Sheikh Russel move to 2nd

SPORTS REPORTER



Title contenders Sheikh Russel Krira Chakra moved to second position in the Manyavar Bangladesh Premier league after coming out with a 2-1 victory against Feni Soccer Club at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Having shrugged off the disappointment of a 2-2 draw against Farashganj, the former champions played a planned game and managed to stave off the challenge from the mid-table side in the second half.

The win took the new powerhouse of Dhaka football to 16 points from eight matches, seven behind league leaders Sheikh Jamal, who have played one more match.

Sheikh Russel made a brisk start to the game and took a deserved lead in the 13th minute when Hemanta Vincent Biswas, the young midfielder of the national team, tapped in a rebound after Feni goalkeeper Salimullah had blocked a powerful shot from Akeem Sayeed into his path.

However, much against the run of play the former treble-winners conceded the equaliser only six minutes later when a quick counter-attack from Feni was rewarded with a penalty kick.

The penalty resulted when Abdullah Al Mamun's darting run inside the box was cut short by a lunging tackle from Sheikh Russel defender Wali Faisal.



Sheikh Russel striker Kinglsey Chigozie blesses teammate Hemanta Vincent Biswas (L) for scoring the opening goal against Feni Soccer Club during their Bangladesh Premier League match against Feni Soccer Club at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. The Nigerian later scored himself as Sheikh Russel won the match 2-1.

PHOTO: STAR

Afghanistan, S'pore dates confirmed

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) has confirmed the dates of two international friendly matches for the national team against Singapore and Afghanistan yesterday.

Head coach Lodewijk de Kruijff had wanted his team to play two preparation matches before facing Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in the Joint Qualifiers for the World Cup and Asian Cup on June 11 and 16 respectively. The game's governing body, after corresponding with a number of football federations, has finally decided to host Singapore on May 30 and Afghanistan on June 2.

Both the matches will be held at the Bangabandhu National Stadium at 4:00pm.

The Bangladesh national team were supposed to play against North Korea on May 14 and Afghanistan June 4 previously. But the match against North Korea was cancelled due to the visitors' unwillingness over 'logistical issues' while Afghanistan asked to bring ahead their match by two days in a bid to play another friendly before their qualifiers.

Araf's success in England

SPORTS REPORTER

Britain-based Bangladeshi Araf Shadd has finished tied for second place in the PGA Greenery Pro Classic, a feeder event under the PGA England Tour, earlier this week, according to a press release from the golfer's agent. The press release stated that Araf scored eight-under (208) to finish second behind Frenchman Absolon Lockety Fraser, who took the title, with an aggregate score of 11-under (205).

Araf, who hails from Dhaka, is scheduled to take part in the Bashundhara Bangladesh Open, the first-ever Asian Tour event to be held in Kurmitola Golf Club, later this month.

FARASHGANJ	0 - 0	ABAHANI
SK RUSSEL	2 - 1	FENI SOCCER

Gambian forward Jatta Mustapha stepped up and tucked in the spot-kick.

With wind back in their sails, Feni twice came close to taking the lead but Sheikh Russel's national goalkeeper Rasel Mahmud Liton made sure he wasn't going to be beaten from open play. The 20-year-old custodian valiantly staved off efforts Mamun and Dawda Ceasay minutes either side of the break. Liton's superb performance didn't go in vain as Sheikh Russel regained their lead on the hour-mark with a close-range header from Kingsley Chigozie on a cross from his strike partner Zahid Hasan Emily. The Nigerian almost found a third in the 78th minute, but his clever side-volley came off the crossbar.

ABAHANI LOSE MORE GROUND

Meanwhile, Abahani lost more ground after being held to a goalless draw by relegation battlers Farashganj SC. The disappointing effort from the Sky Blues, on the back of a 0-1 defeat against Muktiyoddha Sangsad, means four-time professional league champions will have to play catch-up for the rest of the campaign as they are already nine points off leaders Sheikh Jamal, having played a game less.

Without their influential midfielder Szabolcs Csorba, who has been ruled out for the entire league due to injury, Abahani looked lakcluster and managed to keep only one shot on target throughout the entire game. That shot, off Csorba's replacement Osei Morison, was too feeble to test Farashganj goalkeeper Sujjan Chowdhury.

Bayern seeking a miracle

SPORTS REPORTER



Bayern Munich will take on Barcelona tonight at the Allianz Arena, a venue where they just recently overturned a 3-1 deficit in the quarterfinals of the UEFA Champions League, and they are hoping to replicate what they did in that match and snatch a victory from the jaws of defeat. However, history will be against Pep Guardiola's troops as no side has ever overturned a 3-0 deficit in a European semifinal.

Although Bayern will come into the match on the back of four consecutive defeats, Barcelona are riding high with eight straight wins and the deadly trio of Lionel Messi, Neymar and Luis Suarez firing on all cylinders. Highly touted as favourites for the Champions League, Barcelona's biggest challenge will be not to concede, but one goal for the Blaugrana



PEP GUARDIOLA



LUIS ENRIQUE

BAYERN-BARCA FACTFILE	
LEADING SCORERS (ALL COMPETITIONS)	
Barcelona - Lionel Messi (53 goals)	Bayern Munich - Robert Lewandowski (23 goals)
PREVIOUS CHAMPIONS LEAGUE MEETINGS:	
Bayern Munich 1 Barcelona 0 1998/99 (Group stage)	2008/09 (Quarterfinal)
Barcelona 1 Bayern Munich 2 1998/99 (Group stage)	Bayern Munich 1 Barcelona 1 2008/09 (Quarterfinal)
Barcelona 4 Bayern Munich 0	Bayern Munich 4 Barcelona 0 2011/12 (Semifinal)

would all but seal their passage into the final, where they will meet either Real Madrid or Juventus.

Despite the seemingly insurmountable task in front of them,

Bayern Munich's manager and the man who made Barcelona invincible, Pep Guardiola believes his side are still in with a chance.

"Push forward, push forward? No!

We have to defend well and control the game," said the 44-year-old.

"There is no problem with this team's mentality. There are six or seven guys in the squad who have won the World Cup and they know what needs to be done.

"It's not enough to have the most possession and defend well, you also have to create chances against Barcelona. If we make a mistake, they will punish it.

Barcelona coach Luis Enrique however cautioned his side against being complacent, saying that Bayern will fight till the end and his side must be wary.

"I saw it (the defeat against Augsburg). They lost, but they played 70 minutes with 10 men. We will suffer a lot in Munich," said the Barca boss.

"They are a unique opponent, who know what it is like to turn around important matches already this season. We will never think that it is done, or even that it looks very good for us. We need to defend as far away from our goal as possible."

Hamilton's first loss

AFP, Barcelona

Nico Rosberg ended his Mercedes team-mate Lewis Hamilton's winning streak in this year's Formula One drivers' world championship when he drove to a near-flawless victory in Sunday's Spanish Grand Prix.

The 29-year-old German, who had been beaten by Hamilton in all four of this year's 'flyaway' season-opening races, led from the 16th pole position of his career all the way to the chequered flag, his supremacy interrupted only by his pit-stops.

It was his first win since last November's Brazilian Grand Prix and the ninth of his career, and trimmed defending champion Hamilton's lead to 20 points.

Schalke take stern measures

AFP, Berlin

Schalke released Ghana midfielder Kevin-Prince Boateng and Germany winger Sidney Sam on Monday with immediate effect, while suspending Marco Hoeger, as their latest defeat threatens next season's place in Europe.

With one win in their last eight games, the Royal Blues' 2-0 defeat at Cologne on Sunday left Roberto di Matteo's Schalke sixth in the league.

They are in danger of missing out on a Europa League berth next season having reached the last 16 of the Champions League this year.

Sevilla hand Atletico CL

AFP, Madrid



Atletico Madrid secured their place in the Champions League for next season despite only managing a 2-2 draw at Levante on Sunday as Sevilla were held 1-1 at Celta Vigo.

A point for both sides means that Atletico lead the Europa League champions by seven points with just two games remaining.

Atletico now need three points from their final two fixtures at home to Barcelona and away to Granada to guarantee third place ahead of Valencia.

The La Liga champions started brightly at the Ciutat de Valencia, but couldn't find a way past Diego Marino.

Levante went in front just after the half-hour mark when Miranda's poor defensive header presented the ball to Ivan Lopez as his low cross left Barral with the easiest of finishes for his 13th goal of the season.

Atletico responded immediately as left-

back Siqueira swept home his first goal for the club.

The visitors were again the dominant side for much of the second period, but were caught out when another simple cross from Lopez found Uche unmarked and the ball ricocheted into the net off the Nigerian after his initial effort had been saved by Jan Oblak.

Fernando Torres replaced Mandzukic for the final half hour and provided the finishing touch that the former Bayern striker has lacked recently 11 minutes from time as he rose highest to bullet home Koke's corner.

Sevilla could still qualify directly into the group stages of next season's Champions League themselves should they go onto retain the Europa League.

RESULTS
Levante 2 (Barral 31, Uche 62) Atletico Madrid 2 (Siqueira 34, Torres 79)
Villarreal 1 (Campbell 26) Elche 0
Almeria 1 (Thomas 30) Malaga 2 (Casado 22-og, Javi Guerra 68)



Atletico Madrid players Arda Turan (L) and Fernando Torres walk off the pitch after their drawn game against Levante with their Champions League spot in doubt. However, Sevilla's draw afterwards meant Atletico qualified. PHOTO: AFP

Inter down 9-man Lazio

AFP, Rome



A brace from former Lazio star Hernanes saw Inter Milan beat his old side 2-1 in Serie A in an incident-packed clash on Sunday which saw the hosts have two players sent off and Inter miss a penalty.

Brazilian Hernanes spent three-and-a-half years at Lazio and claimed that he cried when he was sold to Inter last January.

But he enraged the home fans in Rome when he celebrated his 26th-minute equaliser with a somersault only seconds after defender Mauricio had been sent off for pulling back Rodrigo Palacio when he was through on goal.

"This was a very important match for me, I'm a better player than I was at Lazio and I wanted to show it," said Hernanes.

RESULTS

Empoli 2 (Saponara 28, Mchedlidze 77) Fiorentina 3 (Ilicic 4, 68, Salah 58)
Parma 2 (Palladino 9, Jorquera 33) Napoli 2 (Gabbadini 28, Mertens 72)
Lazio 1 (Candreva 8) Inter Milan 2 (Hernanes 26, 84)

"(Lazio chairman Claudio) Lotito spoke too much, saying that he'd done a great bit of business by selling me. That was for him."

To rub salt into the wound the 29-year-old raced on to Palacio's delightful flick and slotted home the winner seven minutes before the end to move Inter up to 52 points, only three away from the Europa League places.

Stefano Pioli's side, who took the lead in the eighth minute through a classy Antonio Candreva strike after great work on the left from Felipe Anderson, stay third on 63 points, one behind local rivals Roma after a game

that saw them down to 10 men after only 25 minutes.

They were then down to nine on the hour when goalkeeper Federico Marchetti brought down Mauro Icardi just as he was about to put Inter into the lead.

Icardi's weak penalty was easily saved by substitute keeper Etrit Berisha, sparking hopes of a point, but Hernanes crushed them with his smooth finish.

"It is very difficult to keep calm after a situation like this," Lazio sporting director Iglu Tare told Sky Sport Italia.

"Reaching such an important match for our ambitions, a whole year of work and it is decided by a group of officials who are truly difficult to defend.

"This result and the way it came about could affect the team psychologically for the rest of the season. It's a whole year of work up in flames."

Pep dismisses City rumours

AFP, Berlin

Pep Guardiola on Monday dismissed out of hand rumours he will quit Bayern Munich to become Manchester City coach.

"Oh, boys. I have said 200 million times that I have a year left on my contract and will be here next season. That's it," said Guardiola ahead of their Champions League semifinal second-leg against Barcelona.

There were claims over the weekend that Premier League giants City are negotiating to bring the 44-year-old to the Etihad Stadium to replace Manuel Pellegrini as head coach.

LA LIGA STRIKE

Court decision due

REUTERS, Madrid

A Spanish court could decide by Wednesday on the legality of a strike protesting against a new TV rights law called by the players' union (AFE) which is threatening the final two La Liga match days and King's Cup final.

The AFE announced last week that players would go on strike indefinitely from May 16 and the professional league (LFP), which represents the 42 clubs in the top two divisions, filed a petition to have the action declared illegal.

The Spanish soccer federation (RFEF) had earlier decided to halt all competition from the same date, a move the LFP is also seeking to block.

The AFE and RFEF are unhappy with a new law mandating collective bargaining for domestic television rights and say their interests have not been sufficiently taken into account.

The AFE and LFP have been summoned

to make a court appearance on Wednesday, a league spokeswoman said on Monday, and Spanish media reported a decision could come the same day or on Thursday.

The penultimate round of La Liga matches is on Sunday and leaders Barcelona can make sure of a fifth title in seven years with a win at last season's champions Atletico Madrid.

Barca are also through to the Cup final at the end of the month against Athletic Bilbao.

The new TV rights law, which is strongly backed by the LFP, would replace the current system under which rights are marketed by individual clubs - unique among Europe's top leagues where collective bargaining is used.

The legislation was signed off in cabinet at the end of last month and aims to create a more level playing field by sharing out cash more equitably once it takes effect from the 2016-17 season.