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Pizarro sinks Venezuela

AFP, Valparaiso



A second-half goal by Bayern Munich star Claudio Pizarro fired Peru to a 1-0 victory over 10-man Venezuela on Thursday as "The Incas" bounced back from their agonizing opening defeat to Brazil.

Pizarro shot high into the roof of the net on 72 minutes after midfielder Christian Cueva burst into the box to set up the Bundesliga-based striker and settle a hard-fought contest.

Venezuela, who shocked Colombia 1-0 in their opening game, were always struggling to keep the Peruvians in check following the first-half dismissal of Fernando Amorebieta for a wild stamp on Paolo Guerrero.

Victory was sweet for Peru, who conceded a goal in injury time in their cruel 2-1 defeat to Brazil on Sunday to lose their opening game in Group C. Thursday's victory leaves the race for quarterfinal places

from the group wide open, with all four teams locked on three points heading into the final round of first phase fixtures. Peru face Colombia in their final group game on Sunday

while Brazil, downed by the Colombians in their second game, play Venezuela. The flashpoint of a fractious first half came in the 30th minute when Amorebieta received his marching orders

after the red mist descended in a clash with Guerrero. Amorebieta, who finished last season on loan at English side Middlesbrough as they clinched promotion to the Premier League, stamped on Guerrero's thigh after a tangle

between the two players on the left flank.

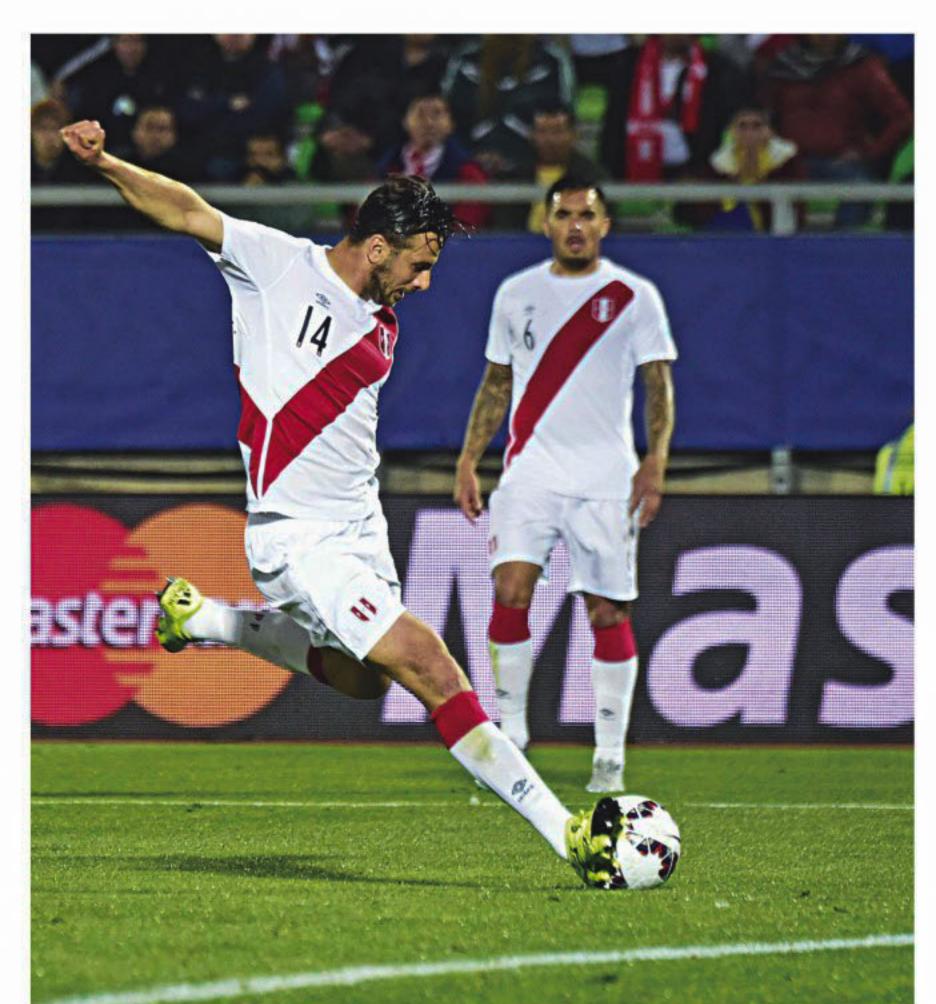


PHOTO: AFP

Peru striker Claudio Pizarro (L) is about to score the winning goal against Venezuela during their Copa America match in Valparaiso on Thursday.

Teams reinforce for second leg

SPORTS REPORTER



All the 11 premier league clubs except for Sheikh Jamal DC and Brothers Union strengthened their squad in the mid-season transfer window, which

closed yesterday.

The second phase of the Manyavar Bangladesh Premier League is scheduled to begin next Friday after the league was suspended since the end of the first leg on May 24 due to Bangladesh national team's engagement in the Joint Qualifiers of the World Cup and the Asian Cup.

Six of the 11 teams are very much in the title race with holders Sheikh Jamal leading the table on 23 points, three more than joint second-placed Mohammedan SC, Brothers Union and Sheikh Russel KC while Muktijoddha Sangsad and four-time champions Abahani have 19 and 17 points respec-

Sheikh Russel have signed up Bosnian striker Damir Ibric and Cameroonian midfielder Jean Jules Ikanga after struggling a lot in those areas during the first leg when they struck only 15 goals in 10 matches.

"Though I say positive before they play, I am hopeful with the new players as they have been doing well in training sessions,' Sheikh Russel's newly appointed coach Maruful Haque said yesterday.

While Sheikh Russel are expected to start the second leg strongly, falling giants Mohammedan have not reinforced their

side the way they might have wanted to. The Black and Whites roped in Cameroonian defender Yonta Michael instead of recruiting a creative player in midfield which is thought to be their weakest link.

"The team management could not meet my demands of providing a quality midfielder and a centre-back and I think it will be difficult for us keep up in the race,' said an upset Mohammedan coach Josimuddin Ahmed Joshy.

However, Mohammedan's archrivals Abahani sharpened their attack by signing up Nigerian Sunday Chizoba and Gambian Abdou Darboe.

"We have tried to increase the edge of the attackers and I think the inclusion of two foreigners will help us a lot in the remaining matches as both Sunday and Darboe have been doing fine in practice sessions," said Abahani manager Satyajit Das Rupu.

Muktijoddha Sangsad included Guinean midfielder Vasseba Toure, who joined the All Reds after playing in Philippines and his addition is expected to cover the weakness in midfield.

The five sides which are currently in the lower echelons of the league have also reinforced their sides. Chittagong Abahani recruited Nigerian Chuka Charles and Agbulu Inalegwu, Cameroonian Yoko Samnick and Sylla Mohamed Lamine while Team BJMC, Rahmatganj MFS signed up two foreign players. Bottom-placed Farashganj SC singed up one Nigerian recruit while Feni Soccer signed up local a player named Golam Mostafa.

Neymar gets 1-match ban

AFP, Santiago



Brazilian star Neymar has been provisionally suspended for one match and could face a harsher final punishment, officials said Thursday after the striker received a red card during a fracas in Brazil's Copa America loss to Colombia.

South American federation CONMEBOL's disciplinary committee "provisionally suspended Neymar for one game after his behaviour in the aftermath of Brazil's 1-0 defeat to Colombia, and will meet on Friday to decide the final pun-

ishment," said a statement on the Copa America website.

Colombia upset the five-time world champions in a combative game Wednesday that ended in a tumultuous melee, as Neymar appeared to aim a headbutt at Colombian goalscorer Jeison Murillo.

Colombian striker Carlos Bacca also received a red card for pushing Neymar from behind.

Neymar had previously received a second yellow card for a handball, meaning at least a onegame suspension was inevitable.

The Barcelona star had received a first yellow card during Brazil's opening win against Peru.

The Copa America website initially reported a two-game suspension, but later clarified that the 23-year-old striker was suspended for one game in a preliminary decision, to be reviewed when the disciplinary committee meets Friday.

A two-match suspension would rule him out of Brazil's final group game against Venezuela Sunday and any quarter-final clash.

There was already bad blood between Neymar and the Colombian team heading into the match.

Siddikur five shots off the lead

SPORTS REPORTER

Siddikur Rahman moved up to joint ninth position in the Queen's Cup with an aggregate of three-under (139) to stay five shots off the leader Prayad Marksaeng of Thailand halfway through the 300,000-dollar event yesterday. The twotime Asian Tour winner, who started the day at 10th with a first round score of two-under (69), carded six birdies against five bogeys at the Santiburi Samui Country Club.

The 30-year-old Bangladeshi golfer came into the event with a wretched run of form having missed four cuts in six events of the Asian Tour season so far. But the consistent form in the first two days of this event bodes well for him in his bid to return to form and get back into the top 60 of the golfers' list for the eligibility to participate in the 2016 Rio Olympics.

Marksaeng, meanwhile, hit a superb six-under (65) to seize the second round clubhouse lead by two shots while Canadian Richard T. Lee settled for second place two shots behind.

Mandzukic to Juve?

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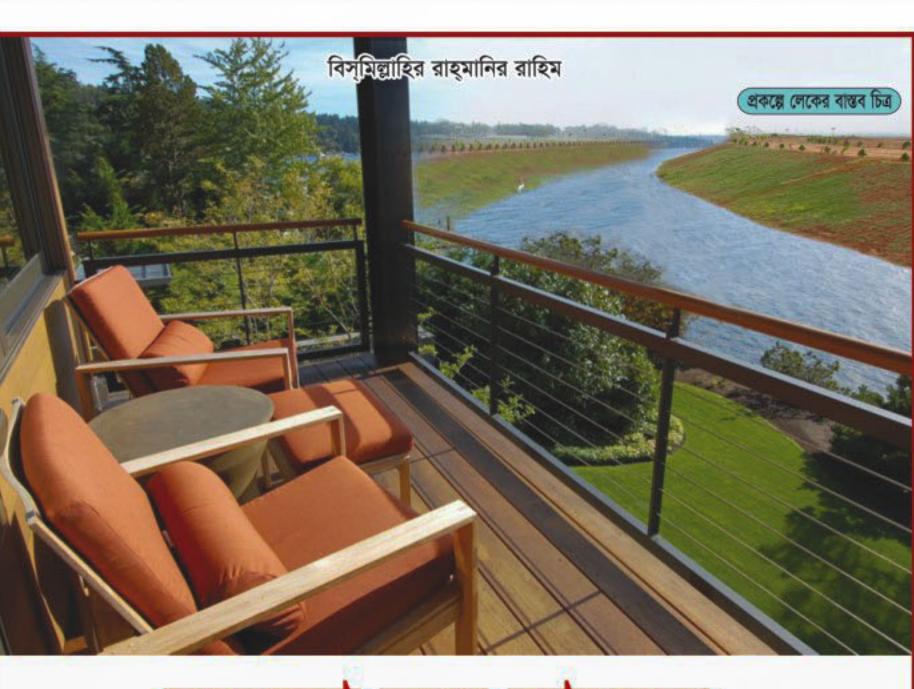
Atletico Madrid striker Mario Mandzukic is on the verge of joining Juventus for €18 million and will have a medical on Monday, Goal understands. Atletico boss Diego

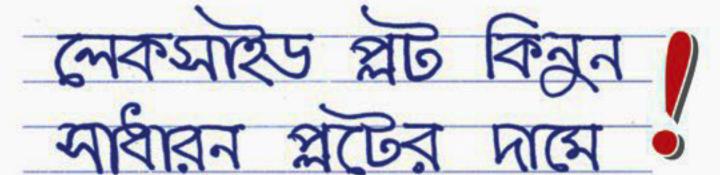
Simeone hinted on Tuesday that the Croatia international could leave after claiming the club would decide the player's future rather than him.

Juventus have since emerged as the frontrunners to sign Mandzukic after Carlos Tevez informed the club of his desire to return to Boca Juniors.

The Champions League runners-up have moved quickly to fill the expected void by agreeing a basic €15m fee, with a further €3m in add-ons.

Juve have also agreed personal terms with Mandzukic, who will earn €3.5m a year after tax with an option to extend the deal by an extra 12 months until June 2019.





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milestone

AFP, La Serena

Lionel Messi will play his 100th match for Argentina on Saturday against Jamaica in the Copa America but it will be a century marked by too many tears and no titles.

"I'm very happy to reach this record. Hopefully I can celebrate another victory and once and for all lift a cup," the Barcelona striker said in an interview published on Thursday by Argentinian daily La Nacion.

Messi, Sergio Aguero, Carlos Tevez and the rest of the Argentina squad have been sent across the Andes on a mission to end 22 years without a major title since the country won the Copa America in 1993.

Messi's 99 games for Argentina have produced 46 goals. It is an impressive return, but pales in comparison to his record of 412 goals in 482 games for Barcelona.

Nevertheless, Messi seems certain to eventually go on and beat Javer Zanetti's record of 145 caps for Argentina and Gabriel Batistuta's record of 56 goals.

Messi set for Pakistan shaken

AFP, Galle



Sri Lanka's bowlers ripped through Pakistan's top order in dramatic fashion to leave the tourists struggling on the scheduled third day of the first Test in Galle on Friday.

After opener Kaushal Silva hit 125 to lift Sri Lanka to 300 in the first innings, Pakistan collapsed to 35-3 in reply before a partial recovery saw them to 118-5 by stumps.

Asad Shafiq was unbeaten on 14 and Sarfraz Ahmed was on 15 when rain forced play to end early with the tourists trailing by 182 runs with five wickets in hand.

Seamer Dhammika Prasad removed both openers by the third over, paving the way for the bowlers to take control of the innings on what remained an easy-paced pitch at the Galle International stadium.

Prasad had Mohammad Hafeez caught at third slip off his sixth delivery and then trapped Ahmed Shehzad legbefore in his next over to reduce Pakistan to 11 for two. It became 35-3 when seasoned left-arm spinner Rangana

Herath, brought in to the attack in the sixth over, had Azhar Ali leg-before in his third over. Veterans Younis Khan (47) and skipper Misbah-ul Haq

(20) attempted to rebuild with a 51-run stand for the fourth wicket before both were dismissed in the space of 10 runs in the last session. Younis was bowled as he stepped out to drive off-spinner

Dilruwan Perera, and Misbah fell to a brilliant one-handed diving catch at first slip by 37-year-old Kumar Sangakkara off Nuwan Pradeep.

Sri Lanka's innings were built around Silva's painstaking effort that was marked by solid defence even as wickets tumbled regularly at the other end. SCORES IN BRIEF

SRI LANKA 1ST INNINGS: 300 all out (Silva 125, Sangakkara 50; Wahab 3-74, Babar 3-64) PAKISTAN 1ST INNINGS: 118 for 5 (Misbah 20, Shafiq 14 not out, Sarfraz 15 not out; Prasad 2-24, Pradeep 1-36

শর্ত প্রয়োজ্য

