

## INSIGNE ROBBED AT GUNPOINT

Napoli star Lorenzo Insigne has become the latest in a long line of players from the Serie A club to be robbed at gunpoint, according to reports on Sunday. Insigne, who has hit 11 league goals for Maurizio Sarri's title-challengers this season, was returning from a dinner with friends in his BMW car on Saturday night when armed thieves struck. According to Gazzetta dello Sport, the thieves followed Insigne on two scooters before stopping his car, putting a gun to his face and robbing him and his companions of a luxury watch, cash and other valuables. Former Napoli players Valon Behrami, Juan Zuniga and current captain Marek Hamsik have all fallen victims to armed robbers in the southern city of Naples, where Napoli are based.

-AFP



# Ronaldo berates teammates, then backtracks

AFP, Madrid



Three-time World Player of the Year Cristiano Ronaldo has backtracked on critical comments of his Real Madrid teammates following their 1-0 defeat to Atletico

Madrid.

The derby defeat on Saturday realistically ended Real's title challenge as they now trail leaders Barcelona by nine points having also played a game more.

Ronaldo lambasted his teammates by suggesting Real would be top if everyone was as good as him.

"If everyone was at my level, we would be top," he said.

However, Ronaldo issued a subsequent statement to Madrid sports daily Marca claiming he was referring to his fitness levels having not missed a minute of La Liga action this season.

"When I said this I was referring to



my level of fitness, not play. I am not better than any of my teammates." Ronaldo had in particular

played the role of Madrid's squad players in the absence of the injured Gareth Bale, Marcelo and Pepe.

"I don't want to undervalue any of my teammates, but when the best aren't there it is difficult to win."

"I like to play with Pepe, Karim (Benzema), Bale, Marcelo. I don't want to say that Jese (Rodriguez), Lucas (Vazquez), (Mateo) Kovacic are not good players, they are very good, but to win a competition you need the best."

However, Real captain Sergio Ramos launched a staunch defence of the rest of the squad, pressuring Ronaldo into a climbdown.

"We are proud of everyone that is part of the squad and the work of all the players that get fewer minutes (on the field)," said the Spanish international.

"Players like Vazquez, Jese or Borja (Mayoral) are giving everything because they know how hard it is to get their chance here, but Cristiano is free to offer his opinion."



Bangladesh Super League (BSL), a proposed franchise-based football league, had its logo unveiled through a brief yet glitzy programme at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. Here the dignitaries pose together as the logo is unveiled amid fireworks.

PHOTO: STAR

## Lucky 13 for Villarreal

AFP, Madrid

Villarreal moved to within two points of Real Madrid in third in La Liga by stretching their unbeaten league run to 13 games with a comfortable 3-0 win over Levante on Sunday.

Marcelino's men saw off Napoli in one of the ties of the Europa League last 32 on Thursday, but showed no ill effects as goals from Leo Baptistao and Samu Castillejo put them 2-0 up inside half an hour.

Adrian Lopez added a third with his first goal for the club since joining on loan from Porto just after the break.

And Levante's miserable day was completed when captain David Navarro was sent off for a second bookable offence, meaning he will miss the visit of Real Madrid on Wednesday.

At the very least, Villarreal now look assured of a return to the Champions League next season after opening up an 11-point lead on fifth-placed Sevilla.

# Sepp warns Infantino of 'backstabbers'

AFP, Paris



For the Game. For the World.

Sepp Blatter warned Gianni Infantino on Sunday that miracles will be expected from him as the newly-elected FIFA president but there will be plenty of backstabbers if he fails to deliver.

Blatter, currently serving a six-year suspension from football, saw his 18-year reign as FIFA chief officially end Friday when 45-year-old UEFA secretary-general Infantino was voted in as football's most powerful man.

But in an open letter to the Swiss-Italian lawyer, Blatter warned his successor to be wary of the pitfalls that come with the job. He also said he was ready to offer his help if required.

"I congratulate you, but remember however that this position you wanted will not be easy. Miracles will be expected," Blatter wrote in an open letter published in French newspaper, Journal du dimanche.

"I had these expectations for the last 18

years at FIFA which I served for 41 years."

Blatter said that the package of reforms which will be implemented at the scandal-hit body will help Infantino as he embarks on his new era.

"The miracles will be helped by the vote overwhelmingly taken for the reforms which I had also started.

"If by chance, you want an opinion or advice, do not hesitate. For now, stay calm. You have two months to implement the decisions taken."

Blatter said Infantino will be allowed a period of grace but could face stormy waters if reforms are implemented too slowly for the patience of federations and sponsors.

"Prepare yourself well but be vigilant. While everyone supports you and tells you nice words, know that once you are the president, friends become rare."

The veteran official added that he was looking forward to other challenges in the future now that he is no longer the FIFA chief.

"At 18:01 on Friday, when you were elected, a weight lifted from my shoulders. I have now less responsibility and more time



# Rashford time for United

AFP, London



Teenage sensation Marcus Rashford took his tally to four goals in two games as Manchester United compromised Arsenal's Premier League title bid with a rousing 3-2 victory on Sunday.

The 18-year-old, who had scored twice on his debut against FC Midtjylland in the Europa League on Thursday, also set up a goal for Ander Herrera as Louis van Gaal's side closed to within three points of the Champions League places.

Arsenal, who scored through Danny Welbeck and Mesut Ozil, were left five points below leaders Leicester City, while Tottenham Hotspur moved three points above them by coming from behind to beat Swansea City 2-1.

At Old Trafford, it was the hosts who drew first blood in the 29th minute when Gabriel failed to make proper contact as he attempted to clear Guillermo Varela's inviting right-wing cross and Rashford nervously placed the loose ball past Petr Cech. The United faithful rose to acclaim their new hero and they were off their feet again less than three minutes later when Rashford met Jesse Lingard's cross with a well-directed downward header.

Ozil then chipped a free-kick into the box and Welbeck stooped to head home. It was the German's 18th assist of the campaign. Wenger sent on Olivier Giroud for the ineffective Theo Walcott in the 63rd minute, but two minutes later United extended their lead.

Rashford rolled the ball into the path of Herrera, whose first-time curler from outside the box was deflected past Cech by the flying Laurent Koscielny. Ozil

gave Arsenal hope with 21 minutes left, following in to volley home after De Gea had parried from Welbeck.

But the hosts held firm and Van Gaal had the home fans roaring in their seats as he mimicked a dive to fourth official Mike Dean on the touchline in protest at what he felt was a piece of simulation by an Arsenal player.

United are now three points below fourth-place Manchester City, who were due to face Liverpool in the League Cup final at Wembley later in the day.

Tottenham, who began the day level on points with Arsenal, fell behind in the 19th minute at home to Swansea when Alberto Paloschi seized on Angel Rangel's deflected shot to score.

But Nacer Chadli turned in Kyle Walker's cross to equalise in the 70th minute and Danny Rose completed the comeback seven minutes later when he drilled home from distance following a



Manchester United's teenage striker Marcus Rashford celebrates his second goal during the side's English Premier League match against Arsenal at Old Trafford on Sunday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Moshi Salam passes away

SPORTS REPORTER

Former national footballer Moshi Salam died of cardiac arrest at a Chittagong hospital on Saturday at the age of 51. The former footballer left behind his wife, two sons and a host of well-wishers.

Moshi fell sick during a six-a-side match organised by Chittagong Club and was immediately rushed to a city hospital, where he breathed his last. His namaz-e-janaza were held at his home Hali Shahor, Laldighi Maidan and MA Aziz Stadium yesterday and he will be laid to rest today after the arrival of his son from Australia.

## Kazi, Rezaul win Bridge C'ship

SPORTS REPORTER

The final round of the Khondkar Fazle Sobhan National Pairs Bridge Championship concluded at the Engineering Institute in the capital yesterday.

Kazi Habibul Haq and Rezaul Karim were crowned champions with a total of 278.9 match points. The pair that came in second with 271.20 match points was a combination of the president of Bangladesh Bridge Federation Mushfiqur Rahman Mohan and Mohammad Azaduzzaman.

Awards were distributed by Bangladesh Enterprise Institute President Farooq Sobhan and sponsors IDLC's head of marketing communications Sherifa Amrin.

## Rooney won't be ready

AFP, London

Wayne Rooney will miss England's friendlies against Germany and the Netherlands next month due to his knee injury, Manchester United manager Louis van Gaal told a British Sunday newspaper.

England captain and record goalscorer Rooney, 30, damaged knee ligaments during United's 2-1 defeat at Sunderland earlier this month.

"No, he won't be ready for England next month," Van Gaal told the Daily Star Sunday.

"Wayne has a brace fitted now and he has to wear it for two and a half weeks. After that we then have to look again. Now he's resting and isn't able to do any work yet. He has to be ready for us -- not the English team."

# Moreno unhappy with squad

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh national football team's new coach Ganzalo Sanchez Moreno is seemingly unhappy with his provisional squad for the World Cup and Asian Cup Qualifier against Jordan, and he wants a couple of suspended defenders in the squad.

"I need Mamunul [Islam], Hemanta [Vincent Biswas], Tapu [Barman], Yeasin [Khan], [Yeamin] Munna and [Shahidul Alam] Sohel but Mamunul and Hemanta are not available for one-match suspension due to two bookings while Yeasin, Munna and Sohel are suspended by the BFF," said Moreno yesterday.

The 43-year-old coach wants to include defenders who can hold the ball to build up the game, but the current defence looks vulnerable in absence of centre-back Yeasin and Nasir Chowdhury and left-back Munna. Moreno yesterday raised the issue with the team management and explained the

importance of those players in the squad.

Moreno also had to conduct the camp's first training session yesterday without four Sheikh Jamal players, who have been with the club for two AFC Cup matches next month.

"We need all the players together to train and work on the defensive organisation, but I don't know whether I will get all the players together. Jordan are a tough side and Bangladesh need to play close and together," said Moreno, who was given the responsibility following his guidance of the under-23 team in the South Asian Games.

Even though Moreno did not reveal any target for the match against Jordan, he expects his charges to play well against the side which defeated Bangladesh 4-0 in Dhaka.

"It is always possible to produce something good. Look at yesterday's match between Atletico Madrid and Real Madrid where Atletico won 1-0. It was possible because of Atletico's unbroken backline. We need the defenders to maintain the defence line. I want the players to play good and serious match, no friendly match," said Moreno.

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