



Abahani striker Nabib Newaz Jibon and Manang Marshyangdi captain Biraj Maharjan were in jovial mood during the pre-match conference at the BFF House yesterday on the eve of today's AFC Cup fixture.

Abahani look for win in 'biggest match for club'

SPORTS REPORTER

Boostered by a 3-2 home win over Chennaiyin FC, Bangladesh Premier League champions Abahani are looking forward to another victory in the AFC Cup when they host Nepal's Manang Marshyangdi Club in their crucial fifth match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium today. The match will get underway at 5:45pm. Chennaiyin FC and Abahani are jointly on top of Group E with seven points each, but the Indian outfit are ahead by virtue of a superior goal-difference.

Abahani need to topple the Indian Super League champions for points if they want to get out of the group stage and securing three points against Manang Marshyangdi Club is very important for the Dhanmondi-based outfit, who beat the Nepalese outfit 1-0 away from home.

Abahani coach Mario Lemos termed the tie the 'biggest one for Abahani in the ongoing AFC Cup' during the pre-match conference at the BFF House yesterday.

"[It is the] biggest game for our club. We cannot lose, we cannot draw, and we must win the game. I think this is our biggest game in the AFC Cup. We will take the game very importantly. If we win, we will be in very good position to qualify for the next round," Lemos said.

Abahani go into the match on the back of a 5-2 win over Rahmatganj MFS in the domestic league,

with Nigerian striker Sunday Chizoba scoring a hat-trick and local striker Nabib Newaz Jibon chipping in with a goal.

However, some sloppy defending saw the Sky Blues concede two goals in the second half of that match. The defence may be a cause for concern against speedy Nepalese players, and the injury to Brazilian forward Wellington Priori added to the team's worries.

"We worked on defence yesterday. We need to be little bit compact. We will defend differently in the AFC Cup; we defend more compact that's what I want tomorrow," Lemos said. "I don't think they [Manang Marshyangdi] can play the same way they played in Nepal. We went little bit cautious in Nepal as it was our first game; we didn't allow them to play. Now at home we can attack more, press more; we are going to force them to make mistakes."

Manang Marshyangdi are on the bottom of the table with two points, and they are dreaming of their maiden victory due to the domination they showed despite defeat at home against Abahani.

"We have prepared very seriously for tomorrow's game and we came here to take three points. We played better at home in terms of ball possession, shots on goal and shots off-target, but we couldn't utilise those. Abahani got only one chance and scored," said the club's coach Chhiring Lopsang.

Leaders Chennaiyin FC will, meanwhile, take on third-placed Minerva Punjab in the other match of the group today.

Ruman overwhelmed with reception

SPORTS REPORTER

Ruman Sana had twice previously returned home with gold medals, but was never recognised officially. But yesterday was a different home-coming for the country's best archer as he returned with a bronze he won in the World Archery Championships in Netherlands along with the honour of directly qualifying for 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

The lad from Khulna was really overwhelmed with the reception he got as state minister for youth and sports Jahid Ahsan Rasel and Bangladesh Olympic Association's secretary general Syed Shahed Reza, along with Bangladesh Archery Federation high-ups, received him with the flower bouquets at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport.

Afterwards, Ruman and other archers were brought to the Sheikh Russell Roller Skating Complex where he was given a warm reception by the archery federation and sponsors and other national federations such as athletics, basketball, judo, gymnastics, swimming, handball, squash and wushu.

"I really did not expect such a big arrangement. Being the second Bangladeshi to qualify for Olympics and winning a medal from World Archery Championships is a matter of big pride for me and a big achievement for my country," said an overwhelmed-but-tired Ruman, adding that this colourful



reception would inspire other archers to earn something big in future.

"I have already achieved my target of qualifying for Olympics and thanked Almighty Allah for helping me achieve it. Now my main goal is to do well in Olympics which is the ultimate target for any athlete. I know I have to work hard compared to what I have been doing now.

"If I want to win a medal in Olympics, I think I must prepare and take myself to

that level through hard work. Otherwise, it is not possible to win medals in Olympics. So I have to be prepared from now on in a bid to win medal in Olympics," said Ruman, who improved his performance under German coach Martin Frederick over the last one and a half years.

Ruman also made a request to the archery federation of sending him to all international tournaments before the Olympics as he needs to gather more experience to produce something good in Olympics.

Sponsors City Group cash-awarded Sana Tk two lakh for achieving the preliminary target of qualifying for the Olympics as the first archer from the country.

"As I am from a needy family, there is always a need for financial assistance. This cash reward will definitely help my family," Ruman said.

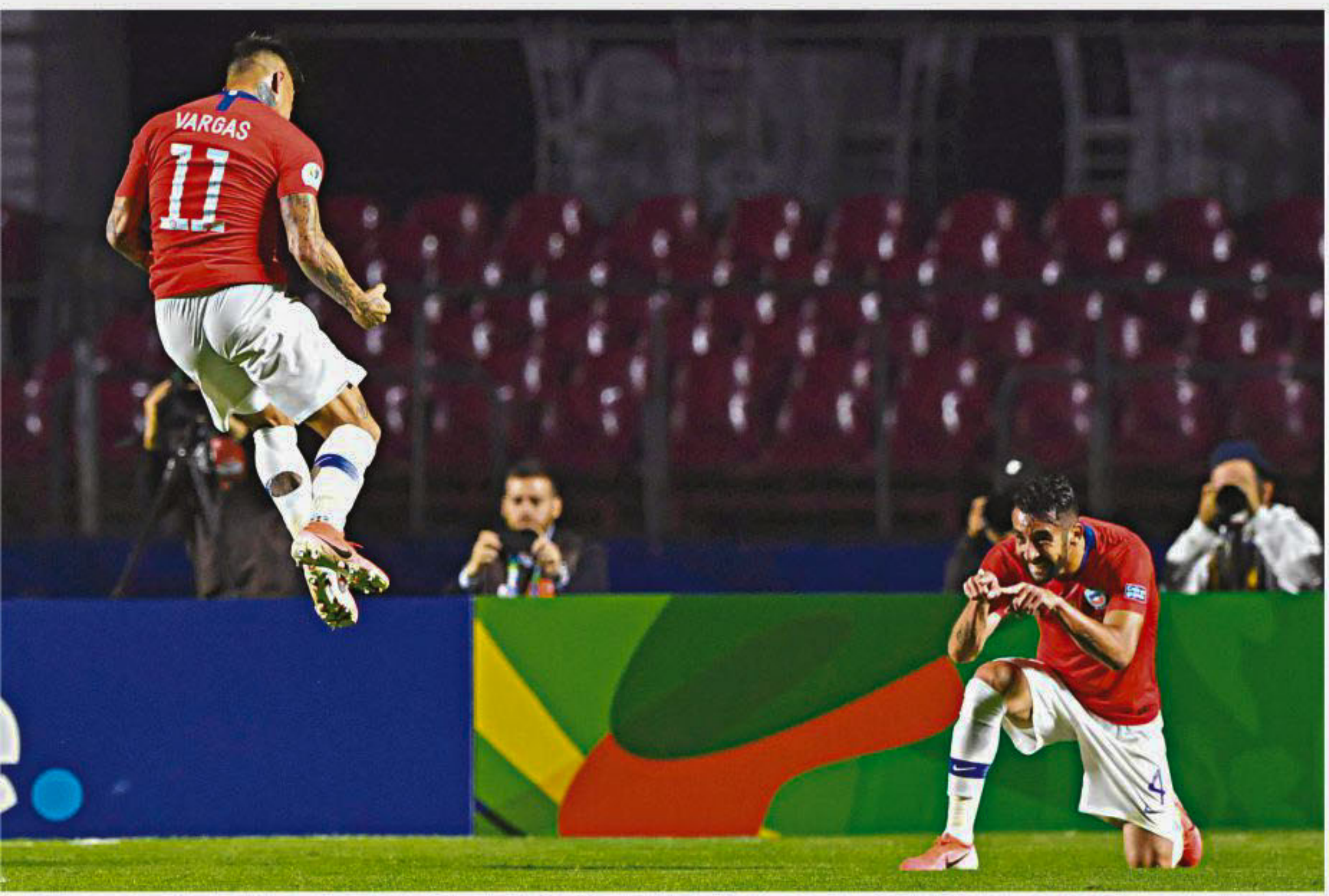
Unfortunately, there was no announcement of cash-incentive from the federation or the BOA or National Sports Council.

Ruman believes Bangladesh still have opportunities to earn more quota places for the Olympics.

"We still have chance to earn more Olympic quota from Asian Archery Championships in November and Berlin World Cup in June next year. I believe my teammates will be inspired by my success and do more hard work in training and try their best in upcoming tournaments," said Ruman.



Building technology and ideas limited (bti), the leading real estate company in Bangladesh, has extended its sponsorship of five national golfers for the next two years. An agreement in this regard was signed with Bangladesh Golf Federation on Monday at the Kurmitola Golf Club in presence of Mr Faizur Rahman Khan, Managing Director of bti, Brig Gen Mohd. Ayub Ansary (Retd), Brig Gen GSM Hamidur Rahman (Retd), Joint Secretary of BGF and other high-ups of both organisations.



Chile striker Eduardo Vargas (L) celebrates with teammate Mauricio Isla after scoring one of his two goals in a 4-0 rout of Japan in their Copa America match in Sao Paulo on Monday.

Chile thrash Japan

AFP, Sao Paulo

Eduardo Vargas scored twice as Chile launched the defense of their Copa America crown with an emphatic 4-0 defeat of Japan in Sao Paulo on Monday.

Vargas, who plays for Mexico club Tigres UANL, netted twice in the second half as Chile gradually overpowered a skillful but limited Japan, who are playing in the South American showpiece as one of two invited teams from Asia.

Erick Pulgar had opened the scoring for Chile in the first half before Vargas doubled the 2015 and 2016 champions' advantage with a

deflected second-half strike.

Manchester United's Alexis Sanchez then took his Chilean record goals tally to 42 after diving to head home in the 82nd minute before Vargas scored the pick of the goals moments later with a deft lob over Japan goalkeeper Keisuke Osako.

The win saw Chile join Uruguay at the top of Group C, level on points and goal difference.

"The important thing is that we move on now with humility," said Chile coach Reinaldo Rueda.

"This win doesn't suddenly make us a dream team, just as we weren't the disaster that our critics were saying we were before."

The scoreline was harsh on Japan, who had carved out several promising chances but were let down by poor finishing from young striker Ayase Ueda.

"We deserved to score a goal," said Japan coach Hajime Moriyasu. "The difference was that they were clinical and took their chances. We're sad to lose but proud that we really took it to them."

Japan had started confidently, dominating territory and possession albeit without threatening the Chile goal.

Their best chance came after nine minutes when Shoya Nakajima let fly after bursting forward only to see his shot saved by Chilez goalkeeper Gabriel Arias.

Platini questioned in 2022 WC probe

AFP, Paris

The banned ex-UEFA chief Michel Platini was held for questioning Tuesday in connection with a criminal investigation into the awarding of the 2022 World Cup to Qatar.

The French football legend who led European football's governing body from 2007 to 2015 was taken into custody by French anti-corruption police investigating alleged corruption in the 2010 vote to award the competition to the gas-rich Gulf state.

Platini, 63, was in custody and questioned in Nanterre in the western Paris suburbs.

He denied wrongdoing and a statement from his representatives said the facts of the case were "unknown to him."

The decision to name Qatar as 2022 World Cup hosts triggered allegations of corruption that ultimately sparked FIFA's worst ever scandal.

Platini's representatives said in a statement: "He has done absolutely



nothing wrong and affirms that he is totally unrelated to the facts (of the case) which are unknown to him."

Platini's lawyer, William Bourdon, denied that the three-time Ballon d'Or winner had been placed under arrest by the police, as first reported, saying that he had been questioned "as a witness".

Claude Gueant, Sarkozy's erstwhile chief of staff and former interior minister, was also called in for questioning Tuesday by France's Anti-Corruption Office of the Judicial Police.

Totti resigns as Roma director

AFP, Rome

Roma legend Francesco Totti, who played for the capital club for 24 years before retiring in 2017, announced Monday that he was resigning as director.

"At 12:41pm on June 17, 2019, I sent an email... which was for me unimagineable: I handed in my resignation," Totti said.

"I never thought that this moment would come."

The 42-year-old World Cup winner said his resignation was driven by his lack of inclusion in important decision-making within the club, something he blamed on Roma's American owner James Pallotta.

"I was a weight for the club. I was told I was too cumbersome, both as a player and a leader," said an emotional Totti.

"Now I'm leaving and it hurts."

Gary Woodland of the United States poses with the trophy after winning the 2019 US Open at Pebble Beach Golf Links in California on Monday. He fended off challenge from two-time defending champion Brooks Koepka.



WHAT TO WATCH

GTV, BTV & MAASRANGA
ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP
NEW ZEALAND V SOUTH AFRICA
LIVE FROM 3:30PM

DAY'S EVENT

AFC Cup
ABAHANI V MANANG MARSHYANGDI
LIVE FROM 5:45PM
VENUE: BANGABANDHU NATIONAL STADIUM