



James Moga (C) scored two goals as Brothers Union handed a 5-2 thrashing to Sheikh Jamal DC in their Bangladesh Premier League fixture at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

# Relegation battle heats up

**SPORTS REPORTER**

The relegation battle of Bangladesh Premier League is getting intense as struggling giants Brothers Union and Mohammedan SC secured some valuable points in their respective 17th matches at separate venues yesterday.

Brothers stunned Sheikh Jamal 5-2 at the Bangabandhu National Stadium while Mohammedan came from behind to hold third-placed Saif SC to a 1-1 draw at the Rafique Uddin Bhuiyan Stadium in Mymensingh.

Despite their third win in 17 outings, Brothers are still in danger zone with 13 points alongside newcomers NoFeL SC, five points ahead of bottom-placed Team BJMC. Mohammedan, on the

other hand, remained in 10th position with 14 points.

With two teams to be demoted from the 13, the bottom five teams - Team BJMC, Brothers, NoFeL SC, Mohammedan and Rahmatganj MFS - are in intense contest in relegation zone as they breathe on the shoulders of each other.

At BNS, Brothers took a 2-0 lead within 20 minutes through goals from Ariful Islam and James Moga before Sheikh Jamal hit back to level the margin thanks to a goal each from Gambian duo - Emil Sambou and Ebou Kanteh - in the 27th and 38th minutes.

However, Ariful restored the lead in the 39th minute before Moga made it 4-2 in the 62nd minute and

Mannaf Rabbi completed the rout in the 77th minute.

In Mymensingh, Uzbek striker Otabek Zokirov gave Saif SC the lead in the 33rd minute which was cancelled by substitute Kawsar Ali Rabbi seven minutes from time.

In the third match of the day, Chittagong Abahani handed a 3-0 defeat to Sheikh Russel, the second successive defeat for the former champions. The fifth win in 18 matches pushed the port city side to fifth position with 22 points while Sheikh Russel slipped to fourth position with 36 points from 17 matches. Sohel Mia struck a brace in the second half after Gambian Mamadou Bah gave Chittagong Abahani a first-half lead.

# US women's jersey sets sales record

**REUTERS, New York**

The U.S. women's national soccer team added wattage to its World Cup star power on Monday as sports apparel-maker Nike said the team's home jersey is a record-breaking seller on its retail site.

"The USA Women's Home jersey is now the No. 1 soccer jersey, men's or women's, ever sold on Nike.com in one season," said Mark Parker, Nike's president and CEO, during the company's earnings call on Thursday.

The soccer jersey sells for \$90 on the Nike website. The Americans will play against England in a semifinal match on Tuesday in Lyon.

Parker said that two-thirds of the teams at the start of the tournament wore Nike kits.

Co-captain Megan Rapinoe faced public criticism from Republican U.S. President Donald Trump ahead of her team's quarterfinal clash with France for saying she would not attend a customary White House visit if her team won.

# Rabiot ready to forget PSG

**AFP, Turin**

French midfielder Adrien Rabiot said Tuesday he was ready to forget his "complicated" past at Paris Saint-Germain with Juventus, which he described as a "very prestigious" club.

"The last few months were complicated for me on a personal and sporting level. But today, I am ready to leave it all behind to begin this new adventure," Rabiot said in his first press conference as a Juve player, 24 hours after signing.

Rabiot had fallen out of favour with PSG and not played since December as he refused to renew his contract. It expired on Sunday.

Rabiot was also suspended by the French champions in March after partying in a nightclub hours after PSG's Champions League exit to Manchester United.

"Juventus had contacted me in the past, and today the right moment arrived to come here," Rabiot said.

"After seven years in Paris, I am ready to play in Serie A and I will do so with the same determination that I have always had.

"I haven't had the opportunity to talk to Sarri yet, but everyone from Juve has left a great impression on me."

Rabiot added: "Juventus is a great and very prestigious club with a great history. From what I have seen, they are a step away from being at the top in respect to PSG."



# Abahani drawn against April 25

**SPORTS REPORTER**

Bangladesh Premier League champions Abahani will play against North Korea's April 25 Sports Club in the inter-zone play-off semifinals of the AFC Cup as the draw was held at the headquarters of Asian Football Confederation in Malaysia yesterday.

Abahani will host April 25 SC on August 21 in Dhaka before travelling to Pyongyang to play the away match on August 28. The North Korean side played the inter-zone final in the last edition of the AFC Cup where they lost to Turkmenistan's Altyn Asyr on away goals despite having an aggregate 3-3 draw over two legs.

Altyn Asyr will play other inter-zone play-off semifinal against ASEAN zone champions - either Becamex Binh Duong or Hanoi FC, who are scheduled to lock horns on July 31 and August 7.

The winners of two inter-zone semifinals will play the inter-zone final on September 25 and October 2.

"We have chance but we take it game by game, prepare the team for a tough match and we must be tactically perfect against them," Abahani coach Mario Lemos said regarding the match against the North Korean outfit.

"I have some idea [about April 25 SC]; I watched them play last season in the AFC Cup. This season they won five out of six matches. They are a strong side with disciplined, aggressive and fast players up front," Mario opined.

Abahani could not use their four foreign recruits in last three matches with only two foreigners playing in the last match against Minerva Punjab, but they had the last laugh in all three matches. According to the tournament bylaws, Abahani have a chance of adding at least five players before the play-off semifinals to replace three injured players - Tapu Barman, Atiqur Rahman Fahad and Wellington Priori.

"At the moment I'm not sure if we can register new players, but I will meet the team manager and then we will decide," said Lemos.

# Ruman Sana struggles in windy Berlin

**SPORTS REPORTER**

Bangladesh's best archer Ruman Sana scored 631 out of 720 points in qualification round of men's recurve individual event in Hyundai Archery World Cup (Stage-4) in extremely windy conditions in Berlin yesterday.

Ruman, who scored 676 points in qualification round on way to winning a bronze medal in World Archery Championships in Netherlands last month, finished 27th among 89 archers while the first in qualification scored 654.

Ruman will face 86th-ranked Rajan Kalapurayil of Switzerland today.

In women's individual event, Beauty Roy finished 40th out of 71 participants by scoring 594 points and she will play against 73rd-ranked Mehak Sangani of Sri Lanka in the elimination round.

In mixed recurve team event, Bangladesh team, comprising Ruman and Beauty, finished 16th among 26 teams to set up the first-round clash against 17th-ranked Croatia.



# My goal is to win title, says Gauff

**AFP, London**

Cori Gauff, at 15 the youngest ever qualifier for Wimbledon, is not content with just beating five-time champion Venus Williams -- now she wants to win the title.

The teenage American, who was not even born when Williams won her first two Wimbledon singles titles, showed not an ounce of fear on Court One, making light of the 24 years age difference and her ranking of 313 as she eased to a 6-4, 6-4 victory.

Gauff made no bones about her ambitions at the tournament.

"My goal is to win it," she said. "I said this before: I want to be the greatest."

"My dad told me that I could do this when I was eight.

"I'm still, like, not 100% confident. But you never know what

happens."

Gauff said she was determined to make the most of her opportunities.

"I mean, like my motto is just like wing it," she said.

"I've said that before. This is kind of a sad thing, we're all going to die one day, I just want to make the most of it."

Gauff, who revealed Rihanna and Beyonce were her role models off the court, said she had not allowed her admiration of childhood idol Williams affect her play.

However, she did have a slight wobble at the end when she slip three match points.

Williams, whose exploits along with her younger sister Serena inspired Gauff to take up the sport, made no secret of how far Gauff could go.

"I think the sky's the limit, it really is," said Williams. "Just have fun. Enjoy life. That's all you can do."

Gauff, who said Roger Federer had

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VENUE: BANGABANDHU NATIONAL STADIUM, DHAKA

# Chile eager to make history: Vidal

**AFP, Porto Alegre**

Chile midfielder Arturo Vidal says the reigning Copa America champions are focused on making history ahead of their semifinal against Peru.

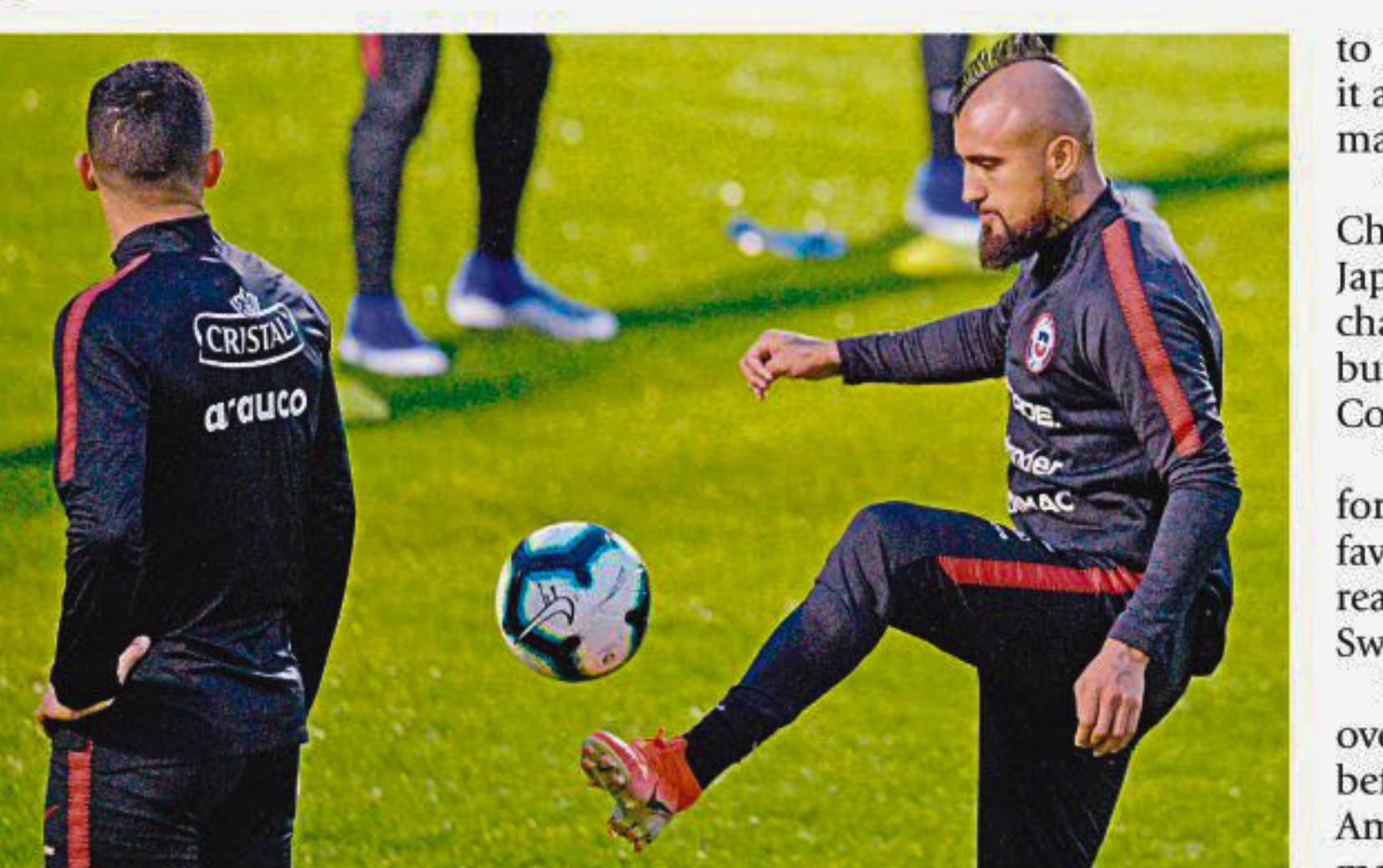
The 2015 and 2016 champions are aiming for a third continental title in a row, a feat only achieved once before by Argentina in successive years from 1945-47.

"We want to leave our legacy as triple champions, that's our dream," said the Barcelona midfielder, an integral part of Chile's only two previous Copa successes.

"That's why we want to play our best match of the Copa against Peru. It would be something historic for us to get to the final and that's our aim."

Chile faced Peru in the 2015 semifinals on home soil when they won 2-1 before beating Argentina on penalties in the final for their first ever continental success.

"We need to play the perfect



Chile midfielder Arturo Vidal believes his side can emulate Argentina in winning a third consecutive Copa America title. PHOTO: AFP

match, to win it with authority," added Vidal.

"Peru have great teamwork, they play well, very similar to Colombia" who Chile beat on penalties in the quarterfinal.

"That's why it will be a very difficult match and fantastic to play in it."

Vidal pointed to Peru captain and striker Paolo Guerrero as the biggest threat Chile will face on Wednesday.

Guerrero and Chile's Eduardo Vargas, with 12 goals each, are the top two still active scorers in Copa history.

"He's a player who knows how

to play against four defenders and it always takes a lot of us to mark him," said Vidal.

Vargas, who scored twice in Chile's opening 4-0 thrashing of Japan, may never have had the chance to add to his Copa ledger, but for a change of heart by Chile's Colombian coach Reinaldo Rueda.

Vargas, known as "Turboman" for his incredible engine, fell out of favor with Rueda for disciplinary reasons following a friendly with Sweden in 2018.

He spent almost 18 months overlooked by the Colombian before being recalled for the Copa America following 17 goals in 49 matches for his Mexican club side Tigres last season.

It was a good move as Vargas has been electric in the tournament alongside a rejuvenated Alexis Sanchez -- who's looked his old self after 18 months of misery at Manchester United -- and Jose Fuenzalida in a three-pronged attack.

Peru are clear underdogs having been surprise qualifiers for the semifinals.

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