



Peru's Yoshimar Yotun (R) celebrates after scoring the second goal with teammates Edison Flores (L) and Miguel Trauco during their Copa America semifinals against Chile at the Gremio Arena in Porto Alegre on Wednesday. PHOTO: AFP

Peru stun Chile to reach final

Peru stunned defending champions Chile 3-0 to reach the final of the Copa America for the first time in 44 years on Wednesday.

Goals from Edison Flores, Yoshimar Yotun and Paolo Guerrero handed Peru a deserved win which sends them into a final against Brazil at the Maracana Stadium on Sunday.

The stunning upset prevented Chile's golden generation from challenging for a third straight title, following their wins over Argentina in 2015 and 2016.

Instead the finalists from the previous two editions will meet in Saturday's third-place play-off in Sao Paulo.

Little was expected of Peru in the knock-out stages after they ended the group phase with a humbling 5-0 thrashing by Brazil.

But after riding their luck -- and being saved by VAR three times -- to beat Uruguay on penalties in the quarter-final, they were a completely rejuvenated outfit in Porto Alegre.

"The team has gone back to its essence, passing the ball and running hard," said goalscorer Yotun.

"The game against Brazil was tough but this will be a different match. It's a final that's there to be won. We have to work hard and lift this cup."

Goalkeeper Pedro Gallese, the villain of that 5-0 defeat, was again faultless, as he had been in the quarter-final when decisively saving Luis Suarez's shoot-out penalty.

He again saved a penalty and made a number of other vital stops.

"It's painful for all of us because we fought for another title," said Chile captain Gary Medel.

"Peru played a great match and we have to congratulate them. They played really well, worked really hard and deserve to be in the final."

From the start Peru dominated the reigning champions, with Christian Cueva wastefully shooting wide two minutes in after he was teed up in space by his captain Guerrero.

On seven minutes Chile's Charles Aranguiz started and finished a superb passing move involving Alexis Sanchez and Jean Beausejour, by placing a precise shot just past the post.

Flores took advantage of an Erick Pulgar slip in midfield to dart towards goal but he dragged his weak shot woefully wide.

But a minute later he was alone at the back post to lash home left footed from an Andre Carrillo flick on from Cueva's cross.

Striker Guerrero made a timely intervention in his own area to prevent a Sanchez corner from sneaking in at the near post.

Yotun doubled the lead on 38 minutes after punishing Chile goalkeeper Gabriel Arias's rush of blood to the head.

Carrillo chased a long ball down the right hand side and beat Arias, who ill-advisedly had charged from his area, to the ball before picking out Yotun on the edge of the 18-yard area.

Faced with four back-tracking defenders, Yotun calmly controlled the ball on his chest and sent a low volley straight down the middle of the empty goal.

Equally importantly was Gallese's one-handed save to tip over a Jose Fuenzalida volley a minute before the break.

A 2-0 half-time lead was the least Peru deserved after an enterprising performance against tentative opponents.

Chile were a lick of paint away from getting back into the match on 51 minutes when Eduardo Vargas's flicked header beat Gallese but agonisingly came back off the post.

Peru should have put the game to bed on a rapier counter-attack on the hour but Guerrero and Cueva passed rather than shooting and Yotun ballooned over from six yards with the goal gaping.

Peru started sitting deeper, inviting Chile to attack and Aranguiz sent a rasping shot whistling past the top corner with Gallese a mere spectator.

Gallese then tipped over a looping volley from Beausejour and 15 minutes from time he stayed big to block a shot from Vargas one-on-one.

He was unbeatable and dived low to his right to palm out a venomous Sanchez effort from 20 yards.

Guerrero put the icing on the cake in injury time after rounding Arias, but Gallese had the last word from the penalty spot.

Bangoura hattrick powers NoFeL SC

Guinean hitman Ismael Bangoura scored a second consecutive hattrick to help newcomers NoFeL SC post a 4-3 win over Team BJMC in their Bangladesh Premier League encounter at the Shaheed Bulu Stadium yesterday.

With their overall fourth win, NoFeL moved to ninth position on the 13-team table with 16 points from 17 matches while BJMC remained glued to bottom place with eight points from 18 outings.

The tie was crucial for both sides, who are in the race to avoid relegation, but it was NoFeL who had the last laugh, thanks to a treble from the professional football league's old guard Bangoura.

Fresh from a morale boosting 5-2 win over Rahmatganj MFS, NoFeL made a blistering start yesterday with 34-year-old Bangoura opening their account in the 18th minute. Bangoura headed in an Ashraful Islam before doubling the lead six minutes later with another header, this time off a Kamrul Islam corner.

The Guinean striker, who once played for Team BJMC, completed his hattrick by nodding home another corner from Kamrul Islam in the 36th minute, making it a one-way affair throughout the first half.

BJMC hit back with Uzbek forward Mukhamedov Otabek pulling one goal back following a corner from Mobarak Hossain nine minutes into the second half, however, BJMC conceded again with Ashraful Islam making it 4-1 in the 57th minute.

In the 73rd minute, Otabek reduced the margin by scoring from a free-kick from the edge of the box while Eleta Kingsley made the stoppage time an exciting affair by converting a penalty to make it 4-3. However, the last-ditch efforts were not enough earn BJMC at least one point from the match, just as they had in a goal-less draw in a first-leg meeting.

Lampard returns as Chelsea coach

Frank Lampard was appointed Chelsea head coach on Thursday, confirming a dramatic return for one of the club's greatest ever players.

Lampard has signed a three-year contract with the Premier League club, where he spent 13 years and became the team's all-time leading scorer with 211 goals.

The former England midfielder succeeds Maurizio Sarri after just one season in management, having led Derby County to the Championship play-off final in May, when they were beaten by Aston Villa.

"I am immensely proud to be returning to Chelsea as head coach," Lampard said in a club statement.

"Everyone knows my love for this club and the history we have shared, however, my sole focus is on the job in hand and preparing for the season ahead."

"I am here to work hard, bring further success to the club and I cannot wait to get started."

Lampard made 648 appearances for Chelsea, winning three Premier League titles, four FA Cups and two League Cups, as well as the Europa League and the Champions League.

Chelsea said Lampard had a "fantastic relationship" with the club's supporters and he will certainly lift the mood after a fractious season under Sarri.

"Frank possesses fantastic knowledge and understanding of the club and last season, he demonstrated he is one of the most talented young coaches in the game," said Chelsea director Marina Granovskaia.

Ruman shot out of WC

Ruman Sana made his exit from the Hyundai Archery World Cup (Stage-4) with a straight 0-6 defeat to Brady Ellison of the United States of America in the third round of the Men's Recurve Individual event in Berlin, Germany yesterday.

Ruman, who won a bronze medal in the World Archery Championships last month, was forced to return home empty handed but he definitely earned some valuable experience while going up against the gold medallist of the 2019 World Archery Championships and bronze medallist of the 2016 Rio Olympics.

A defeat for Ruman was expected but the 24-year-old archer could hardly challenge his superior opponent, who was a notch ahead of the Bangladeshi archer and won all three sets as Ruman displayed some poor shooting.

Series set for Bangladesh women's teams



Bangladesh's women cricketers have been toiling hard at the Shaheed Kamaruzzaman Divisional Stadium in Rajshahi ahead of their tour of South Africa. PHOTO: MOSTAFA SHABUJ

While the Bangladesh men's team are currently participating in cricket's biggest event -- the 2019 ICC Cricket World Cup -- in England, Bangladesh's women cricketers have been toiling hard at the Shaheed Kamaruzzaman Divisional Stadium in Rajshahi ahead of their tour of South Africa and other upcoming events such as the T20 world cup, to be held next year.

The training camp in Rajshahi began on June 23 and will end on July 15.

The Bangladesh national women's team became champions of Asia when they defeated India by three wickets in the final of the Women's T20 Asia Cup in June last year. After that, the buoyant Tigresses were expected to carry their form into the upcoming Women's T20 World Cup in November of the same year. However, Bangladesh failed miserably and had to return from West Indies without a single win under their belt.

It has been over seven months since that tournament in the Caribbean, and Bangladesh have not yet played a single international fixture during this period. And as is evident, many cricketers also mentioned that it is the long gaps in between international fixtures that prevents them from carrying their form into big events.

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) women's cricket wing development manager Nazmul Abedin Fahim explained the reason behind such long intervals.

"We had a series slated against Sri Lanka last April and May. Unfortunately it could not happen. We are not listed in the FTP (ICC-Future Tours Program) schedules. Therefore, the better teams don't want to play with us. But, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is trying to arrange bilateral series with other cricket playing nations," said Fahim.

However, Fahim also mentioned that the BCB has already looked into the matter and taken initiatives to help develop women's cricket.

"As we had only national team earlier and we were working for them only. Now we have already formed an A team for the first time and are also planning to form an under-19 team this year to get better players for the future," said an optimistic Fahim.

In contrast to last year, Bangladeshi women will be playing a lot more cricket this year, informed the BCB women's wing manager.

"We have a lot of away series this year. Bangladesh women's A team are going South Africa for the first time on 19 July to play three unofficial ODI and T20 matches against South African emerging players. The series will be held from 23 July to August 4.

One week later, the Bangladesh national women's team will fly for Netherlands. They will play four T20 practice matches against the hosts and Thailand between August 15 and 27.

"After the Netherlands tour, the Tigresses will fly for the ICC Women World T20 Qualifier-2019 in Scotland, scheduled to begin on August 31. And at the end of October, they will visit Pakistan to play their last series of the year. They will play two ODIs and three T20s against the Pakistan national women's team," said the BCB official.

Man City sign Rodri for club record fee

Premier League champions Manchester City on Thursday announced the signing of Spain midfielder Rodri on a five-year deal from Atletico Madrid for a club record fee.

Rodri, 23, officially became a City player a day after the La Liga club revealed the 70-million-euro (£63 million) release clause in his contract had been triggered.

"Manchester City are delighted to announce the signing of midfielder Rodri," said a statement on the club's website.

The value of the release clause eclipses the £60 million City paid Leicester for Algeria international Riyad Mahrez last year.

Rodri said: "What City have achieved in the last two years has been amazing and I'm looking forward to being part of such a talented squad."

"It's not just the titles they have won, but the way they have managed it, playing attacking football at all times."



Novak Djokovic returns against Denis Kudla during their men's singles second round match of the Wimbledon Championships at the All England Lawn Tennis Club on Wednesday. PHOTO: AFP

Djokovic cruises

Four-time champion Novak Djokovic reached the Wimbledon third round for the 11th successive year on Wednesday.

Top seed Djokovic hit 13 aces and 37 winners as he eased past Denis Kudla of the United States, 6-3, 6-2, 6-2.

"I'm pleased with my game overall. There were some moments in the match where maybe I could have done better," said the defending champion.

"But overall, a solid performance. I was returning well, I was serving mostly well. I'm really glad to overcome the challenge."

Djokovic goes on to face Hubert Hurkacz for a place in the last 16 having defeated the Pole in straight sets in the first round at Roland Garros in May.

Victory in that match could see him face 18-year-old Canadian Felix Auger-Aliassime, the youngest man in the draw.

The 19th seed saw off French qualifier Corentin Moutet 6-3, 4-6, 6-4, 6-2 to make the third round of a Slam for the first time.

Last year's beaten finalist Kevin Anderson, the South African fourth seed, also progressed with a 6-4, 6-7 (5/7), 6-1, 6-4 victory over Janko Tipsarevic of Serbia.

Spanish veteran Fernando Verdasco staged the comeback of the day when he recovered from two sets and 3-0 down to defeat British number one Kyle Edmund 4-6, 4-6, 7-6 (7/3), 6-3, 6-4.

Czech third seed Karolina Pliskova reached the last 32 with a 6-0, 6-4 win over Puerto Rico's Olympic champion Monica Puig.

Pliskova, one of four players who could end Wimbledon as world number one, will face Hsieh Su-wei of Taiwan for a spot in the fourth round.

In a match which opened proceedings on Centre Court, 52nd-ranked Puig was clearly over-awed, winning just nine points in a 20-minute first set.

Former world number one and double Australian Open winner Victoria Azarenka swept past Australia's Ajla Tomljanovic 6-2, 6-0.

Azarenka, now at 40 in the world, was a semifinalist at the All England Club in 2011 and 2012.

Next up is a last-32 clash with fellow ex-world number one Simona Halep who defeated fellow Romanian Mihaela Buzarnescu 6-3, 4-6, 6-2.

WHAT TO WATCH
GTV, BTV & MAASRANGA
ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP
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BANGLADESH PREMIER LEAGUE
ABAHANI V ARAMBAGH
TIME: 7:00PM
VENUE: BANGABANDHU NATIONAL STADIUM, DHAKA