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Australia and France lead 2-1 in semifinals

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Kuwait's football season kicks off

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INDIA, AUSTRALIA RENEW HEATED RIVALRY IN SHORTER FORMATS

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WATFORD: Manchester City's Argentinian striker Sergio Aguero (2R) scores the team's first goal during the English Premier League football match between Watford and Manchester City at Vicarage Road Stadium in Watford, north of London yesterday.—AFP

AGUERO GETS HAT-TRICK AS CITY GO TOP

	Watford	0
	Man City	6

LONDON: Sergio Aguero sent a reminder of his class with an "amazing" hat-trick as Manchester City climbed to the top of the Premier League

and sent an ominous warning to their title rivals with a 6-0 victory at Watford yesterday. Aguero's 10th hat-trick in City sky blue took his goal tally for the club to 175 - two fewer than all-time top scorer Eric Brook - but incredibly his future at the Etihad had been questioned following the emergence of 20-year-old Gabriel Jesus. The talented Brazilian, who joined the club in January leading many to doubt whether the two could both play in Pep Guardiola's fluid system. Jesus has scored 12 goals in 16 Premier League

games including one in the rout at Watford. However, the Argentine has six goals in as many games in all competitions this season, and has formed a lethal partnership with Jesus to catapult the red-hot blues to the Premier League summit. "Aguero's numbers speak for themselves - he is amazing," Guardiola told the BBC. "I am especially happy for his third goal because he was so clever and fast in the box and has the power to beat one or two players and score. I am so happy for him because we need him and his goals.

"It's important for us that both our strikers are scoring goals. When Gabriel came last season we cannot forget he had just seven or eight games because he was injured immediately. "We scored a lack of goals last season so we thought that maybe they should play together because Gabriel, when he came, was also striker. "He's a fighter and he helps us in many many ways. He has a goal scoring sense. Today, he fought for one goal and scored another one." City have 13 points from five games and this week beat title rivals Liverpool 5-0 and

Feyenoord 4-0 in the Champions League. Guardiola, however, was quick to call for calm after a similarly impressive start last season ended trophyless. "We started last season similarly winning 10 games in a row. We're still at the beginning of the season but we know exactly what we have to do. "This kind of performance, and the way we played, is completely down to the quality of the players. We can win at home, away - it doesn't matter where. We play football to attack and we did that today."—Reuters

LIVERPOOL FRUSTRATED BY BATTLING BURNLEY

	Liverpool	1
	Burnley	1

ANFIELD: The sight of Virgil van Dijk reappearing in Southampton colours on the same day that Liverpool suffered another defensive calamity hardly improved the mood of Anfield supporters starting to question manager Jurgen Klopp's methods.

The failure to buy the Dutch centre half or anyone else as an alternative remains a sore point on Merseyside where Liverpool's substandard defence was exposed for the third match running in a 1-1 Premier League draw with Burnley.

No one blamed Dejan Lovren yesterday because the Croatian, who was badly at fault in conceding Sevilla's Champions League equaliser on Wednesday, was injured, but his replacement fared little better.

Ragner Klavan, and partner Joel Matip, were criticised after failing to clear the ball and allowing Burnley to score. That left the home side facing an uphill struggle to secure the win demanded after last week's thrashing by Manchester City and the disappointing midweek draw.

Klopp did his best to put a positive spin on the result but it is again hard to look beyond the club's failure to solve their recurring problems in central defence. The manager said he was "angry with the result but pleased with the performance" after Liverpool failed to make their subsequent dominance pay.

"It's our fault. We were dominant, fantastic attitude. We played good, were fluent with seven

changes, but only one goal," added Klopp, who recalled that last season Burnley beat them 2-0 at Turf Moor.

"It's the best we have played against Burnley since I have been in. In the past we didn't feel good in the game. Today I saw fluid movements, passing between the lines, speed, crosses," added Klopp, whose side registered 35 efforts at goal to the Claret's five and enjoyed 70 percent of possession.

"We have to take the point and carry on." Klopp's midweek assertion that his scouts had been unconvinced after watching potential alternatives to their main target Van Dijk about "500 million times" attracted scorn on social media with some

fans complaining that the German was starting to sound like former manager Brendan Rodgers in his final days.

Even the sight of Philippe Coutinho starting his first game of the season hardly lifted the mood with Klopp's case probably not helped by a parade of former Liverpool greats before kickoff as the club marked their 125th anniversary, a celebration that only highlighted the current problems. Ultimately, Klopp will be measured against the achievements of the past, which is never far away from Anfield. With the club already five points behind leaders Manchester City, it is starting to look like a long, hard winter for the German. - Reuters



ANFIELD: Burnley's Scott Arfield, centre and Liverpool's James Milner battle for the ball during the English Premier League soccer match between Liverpool and Burnley, at Anfield, in Liverpool, England, yesterday.— AP

PAULINHO SAVES BARCA AGAINST PLUCKY GETAFE

MADRID: Barcelona snatched a late 2-1 win at Getafe with Paulinho's strike sending them seven points clear of arch-rivals Real Madrid at the top of La Liga yesterday.

The Brazilian midfielder's signing was widely criticised by supporters but he drove into the area and fired home to preserve Barcelona's 100 percent record in the league.

Gaku Shibasaki scored a magnificent volley to put Getafe ahead in the 39th minute but another substitute, Denis Suarez, equalised for Barcelona in the 62nd. Ernesto Valverde's side struggled to create many openings against a bold Getafe, who came close to opening the scoring when Gerard Pique nearly deflected Shibasaki's cross into his own net, with Jorge Molina reaching it but firing into the side netting.

Barcelona were dealt a blow when record signing Ousmane Dembele was forced off with a hamstring injury in the 29th minute, while his replacement Gerard Deulofeu had little impact. Samuel Umtiti's header straight at Vicente Guaita was as close as the Catalans came to netting in the first half, with the exception of a Lionel Messi free kick tipped over just before the break.

Suarez was introduced at half time, after captain Andres Iniesta had made little impact, and soon made his presence felt. Receiving the ball from Sergi Roberto in the area, Suarez curled a neat finish past Guaita to level, against the run of play.

Paulinho came on in the 77th minute and seven minutes later he slammed home to put Barcelona ahead and extend their lead at the top of the table. Getafe almost equalised with Marc-Andre ter Stegen tip-

ping Mauro Arambarri's effort wide at the near post, but they were left without reward after an impressive display. Champions Real Madrid, who are lying 10th, travel to second-placed Real Sociedad today.— Reuters



GETAFE: Barcelona's defender from Spain Jordi Alba (R) vies with Getafe's midfielder from Morocco Faycal Fajr (L) during the Spanish league football match Getafe CF vs FC Barcelona at the Col. Alfonso Perez stadium in Getafe yesterday.— AFP