



**LEICESTER:** Chelsea's Italian midfielder Jorginho (left) vies with Leicester City's English midfielder James Maddison during the English Premier League football match between Leicester City and Chelsea at the King Power Stadium in Leicester yesterday. — AFP

## Chelsea extend lead, thrash Leicester

### Watford inflict more misery on Man United

**LONDON:** Manchester United slumped to another damaging defeat for manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer in losing 4-1 at Watford yesterday as Chelsea thrashed Leicester to extend their Premier League lead to six points. Solskjaer has clung onto his job despite a run of just one win in seven Premier League games to slip to seventh, 12 points adrift of the leaders. A managerial change made an instant impact for Aston Villa as late goals from Ollie Watkins and Tyrone Mings beat Brighton 2-0 to give Steven Gerrard a winning start to his coaching career in the Premier League.

However, Newcastle slipped to the bottom of the table in the absence of their new boss Eddie Howe, who tested positive for coronavirus on Friday, as the Magpies were held 3-3 at home by Brentford. United's hierarchy has remained loyal to Solskjaer despite intense pressure in recent weeks to make a change. But even their resolve will be tested after a fifth defeat in seven league games against the struggling Hornets. Watford could even afford to miss an early penalty

twice as David de Gea saved from Ismaila Sarr and Kiko Femenia's follow-up from the first spot-kick was ruled out for encroaching.

Joshua King worked under Solskjaer in the United youth ranks and did his old boss no favors by converting a low cross on 28 minutes to give the home side a deserved lead. Sarr made amends for his penalty misses just before the break by drilling home from a narrow angle. Solskjaer responded by introducing Donny Van de Beek at half-time and his refusal to give the Dutchman more opportunities will be questioned after he made an instant impact to turn home Cristiano Ronaldo's header across goal.

However, just as the visitors were building momentum, captain Harry Maguire's miserable season suffered another setback when he was sent off for a second bookable offence. Joao Pedro and Emmanuel Dennis rubbed more salt into United's wounds in stoppage time. After a tough Champions League trip to Villarreal on Tuesday, United travel to the league leaders Chelsea

next weekend with the question again whether Solskjaer will still be in charge.

#### Chelsea surge clear

The Blues were dominant as they toyed with Leicester in a 3-0 win despite still missing record signing Romelu Lukaku through injury. Antonio Rudiger's header opened the scoring before N'Golo Kante came back to haunt his old side with a brilliant run and strike from the edge of the box. Substitute Christian Pulisic put the seal on a brilliant all-round performance from the European champions, who also had two goals ruled out for offside. "It's a good away game, an excellent result," said Chelsea boss Thomas Tuchel. "We knew we needed to be strong from first to last minute. This is what we did." Gerrard got off to a dream start at Villa Park as his new side moved four points clear of the relegation zone.

England internationals Watkins and Mings produced stunning finishes in the final six minutes to edge

a nervy contest against Brighton. Howe had to watch a thriller at St. James' Park from a hotel in isolation. The Magpies twice had to come from behind after Ivan Toney cancelled out Jamaal Lascelles' opener for the home side. Rico Henry put Brentford in front before the much-maligned Joelinton leveled. Lascelles then netted at the wrong end, but Allan Saint-Maximin salvaged a point for Howe's men that does little for their bid to beat relegation as they are five points adrift of safety.

Norwich also got a bounce from a new manager as they moved off the foot of the table in Dean Smith's first match in charge thanks to a 2-1 win over Southampton. Che Adams put the Saints in front, but Teemu Pukki and Grant Hanley lifted the Canaries to within three points of safety. Burnley remain rooted in the bottom three after another six-goal thriller at Turf Moor ended 3-3 with Crystal Palace. West Ham missed the chance to move into second and cut Chelsea's lead to three points as Raul Jimenez scored the only goal in a 1-0 win for Wolves at Molineux. — AFP

### Reus hits late winner as Dortmund slash Bayern's lead

**BERLIN:** Second-placed Borussia Dortmund reduced Bayern Munich's lead at the top of the Bundesliga to a single point yesterday as Marco Reus' late winner sealed a 2-1 home victory against Stuttgart. Dortmund's Dutch striker Donyell Malen scored his first Bundesliga goal since his summer transfer from PSV Eindhoven, but Stuttgart forced a mistake in the hosts' defense which led to an equalizer by Roberto Massimo.

With time running out, Dortmund counter-attacked from their own box and Reus tapped into an empty net to snatch victory after Bayern suffered a shock 2-1 defeat at strugglers Augsburg on Friday. "We didn't really shine, but we fought," Dortmund defender Mats Hummels told Sky. "It was another step in the right direction." Dortmund host Bayern in a potential top-of-the-table clash in a fortnight's time.

Bayern's defeat at Augsburg was only their third loss in all competitions this season, but Julian Nagelsmann admitted being "really angry" for the first time as coach after a poor first-half performance. Yet less than 24 hours later, Dortmund labored in their bid to bridge the gap in the table. Home



**DORTMUND:** Dortmund's Belgian midfielder Axel Witsel (left) and Stuttgart's Danish midfielder Nikolas Narrey jump to head the ball during the German first division Bundesliga football match BVB Borussia Dortmund VFB Stuttgart yesterday. — AFP

goalkeeper Gregor Kobel showed why Dortmund paid Stuttgart 15 million euros (\$17 million) for him in the close season as he denied former team-mate Tanguy Coulibaly with a superb save just before the break.

The injured Erling Haaland celebrated in the stands when his stand-in Malen scored from the

edge of the area. However, Dortmund's defensive frailties this season were again exposed when Manuel Akanji cheaply yielded possession and Stuttgart quickly moved the ball to Massimo who fired past Kobel. However, Reus finished off a counter-attack to claim his 145th goal for Dortmund and secure a crucial three points. — AFP

### Atalanta thrash Spezia to hold onto top 4 spot

**MILAN:** Atalanta made sure that they would stay in the Serie A top four yesterday with a thumping 5-2 win over Spezia. Gian Piero Gasperini's side are level on 25 points with Inter Milan, who sit third and host league leaders Napoli today evening, after a dominating display in Bergamo. A Mario Pasalic brace and Duvan Zapata's penalty, which the Colombian forward scored at the second attempt after Spezia players encroached during the first saved spot-kick, ensured a comfortable first-half lead for Atalanta after M'Bala Nzola had opened the scoring for the away side.

Late goals from Luis Muriel and Ruslan Malinovskyi then wrapped up the points and consolidated Atalanta's place in the Champions League positions and warm-up nicely for Tuesday's trip to Young Boys. The win extends the gap between Atalanta and fifth-placed Lazio to four points before the Roman club hosted Juventus in evening match. Spezia sit in 16th, just two points above the relegation zone and regional rivals Genoa and Sampdoria, after their eighth defeat in 13 games so far this season. Later AC Milan will have the chance to move top of Serie A when they face Fiorentina in Florence. — AFP