

## MAN UTD PAINT THE TOWN RED

Rashford earns United derby triumph over Manchester City



MANCHESTER: Manchester United's Brazilian midfielder Casemiro challenges Manchester City's Norwegian striker Erling Haaland during the English Premier League football match between Manchester United and Manchester City at Old Trafford in Manchester, north west England, on January 14, 2023. — AFP

MANCHESTER: Marcus Rashford scored the winner as Manchester United came from behind to beat Manchester City 2-1 and go third in the Premier League in a thrilling finale at Old Trafford on Saturday. Both United goals came in the final 12 minutes as Erik ten Hag's side moved to within one point of their local rivals in the table after inflicting a damaging blow to City's hopes of retaining the title.

Pep Guardiola's men looked to be heading to victory when Jack Grealish came off the bench to head the visitors into the lead. But Bruno Fernandes' controversial equalizer turned the game and four minutes later Rashford netted for the ninth consecutive match at Old Trafford. City could now fall eight points off the top of the table should Arsenal beat Tottenham in the north London derby on Sunday. The victory for United was sweet revenge after

being destroyed 6-3 when the sides met in October.

The scoreline even flattered United at the Etihad thanks to two late goals from Anthony Martial. However, Ten Hag's men have now lost just once in 19 games since in a stunning turnaround in the Dutch coach's first season in charge. The introduction of Casemiro has transformed United's midfield since the last Manchester derby and Ten Hag's decision to play Fred alongside his Brazilian international teammate cut City's supply line to Erling Haaland. United's turnaround is reflected in Rashford's revival. The England international has now scored 16 times this season.

### Rashford threatens

Rashford's pace in behind was the biggest threat posed by either side in the first half and he should

have done better after rounding Ederson than allowing Kyle Walker to comfortably clear off the line. Another Rashford burst then took him beyond Rodri, but again the finish was lacking as Ederson hurried off his line to smother.

United's new loan signing Wout Weghorst was watching on from the stands and Martial's lacklustre performance before being replaced at half-time by Antony underlined Ten Hag's need for more forward options. By contrast, City are blessed with an abundance of talent in the final third and Guardiola's ability to make game-changing substitutions looked to have swung the game in their favour.

Grealish had only been on the field three minutes before netting the biggest goal of his City career to date as he nodded in Kevin De Bruyne's cross on the hour mark. But City have struggled this season

to match the consistency that has won them four Premier League titles in the past five years and were undone by a hugely controversial equalizer.

Rashford was clearly offside as he raced towards Casemiro's pass, but crucially did not touch the ball and left it for Fernandes to sweep home. The assistant referee initially flagged for offside and City were livid at the decision to allow the goal to stand.

City were still rocking when they conceded again as Alejandro Garnacho sprinted down the left and crossed for Rashford to prod home from close range. There was still time for City to feel further aggrieved at referee Stuart Attwell as Haaland saw a penalty appeal waved away. But the champions now have a huge job on their hands if they are to maintain their dominance of English football in the Guardiola era. — AFP

## Brighton rock Liverpool as Everton lose

LONDON: Troubled Liverpool crashed to a shock 3-0 defeat at Brighton on Saturday on a dramatic day of Premier League action, while Everton boss Frank Lampard was pushed closer to the sack as his struggling side were beaten 2-1 by relegation rivals Southampton. Liverpool's hopes of salvaging a top four finish from a difficult campaign suffered a major hit as Brighton swept to victory on the south coast. After dominating the first half without making the breakthrough, Brighton deservedly took the lead in the 47th minute. Joel Matip carelessly surrendered possession to Alexis Mac Allister and he found Kaoru Mitoma, whose cross was perfectly weighted for the unmarked Solly March to tap in.

Liverpool were in disarray and six minutes later, March crashed a fine finish into the far corner from just inside the area. Danny Welbeck wrapped up the victory, flicking March's pass over Joe Gomez and volleying home. Beaten at Brentford in their previous league game, Liverpool are languishing in eighth place, seven points adrift of the top four, and look a shadow of the team that nearly won the quadruple last term.

Liverpool's Merseyside rivals Everton are in even more dire straits after Southampton's 2-1 win at Goodison Park. Everton's board of directors did not attend the game because of a "real and credible threat to their safety". Everton chief executive Denise Barrett-Baxendale was reportedly manhandled by a



BRIGHTON: Brighton's Dutch defender Joel Veltman (L) vies with Liverpool's French defender Ibrahima Konate (R) during the English Premier League football match between Brighton and Hove Albion and Liverpool on January 14, 2023. — AFP

fan and had her car attacked after last week's 4-1 home defeat by Brighton.

Everton have won only one of their last 13 matches in all competitions and banners and flags calling for the board to leave were unfurled before kick-off. Southampton fell behind in the 39th minute as Amadou Onana headed home from Demarai Gray's corner. But less than two minutes into the second half, James Ward-Prowse collected Che Adams' knock-down on the edge of the area and drilled Southampton's equaliser.

Ward-Prowse inflicted greater pain in the 78th minute when he whipped one of his trademark free-kicks past Jordan Pickford. Southampton remain bottom of the table but they are now behind second bottom Everton only on goal difference. West Ham fill the final place in the bottom three after a 1-0 defeat at Wolves that saw the hosts move above the hapless Hammers. Daniel Podence netted in the 48th minute to leave West Ham without a win in their last seven league games. Brennan Johnson struck twice as Nottingham Forest beat midlands rivals Leicester 2-0 at the City Ground. — AFP

## Dakar Rally to remain in Saudi Arabia

AL HOFUF: Saudi Arabia will continue to be the home of the Dakar Rally for the next few years with race director David Castera telling AFP "we still have so many deserts to explore".

Castera was speaking after Saturday's penultimate stage with Qatari Nasser Al-Attiyah poised for his fifth title. "I'm very happy we're staying here, with so many deserts still to explore and with this country's enormous potential," he said.

Motorsport's toughest endurance test moved to the conservative kingdom in 2020 after a spell in South America on an initial 10-year contract.

Dakar organisers ASO announced the switch in

2019 saying a new chapter of the gruelling race's history would be written in the "mysterious and vast deserts" of the land.

Castera confirmed a clause in the Saudi deal to pull out after five years would not be taken up. The race's move to the oil-rich state sparked controversy with accusations of 'sportswashing' as the Gulf monarchy, often criticised over its human rights record, attempts to burnish its image and attract foreign interest as it diversifies its economy away from oil. "Today there's been a big change, it's progressing at a fast rate," commented Castera. "I'm not here to play politics but to organise a sporting event which has the legitimacy to exist here because the terrain suits it."

Saudi Arabia has invested heavily in attracting high profile sporting events including tennis, golf and Formula One to its shores and is preparing a joint bid to host the 2030 World Cup. And last month five-time Ballon d'Or winner Cristiano Ronaldo signed for Saudi side Al Nassr in a deal worth 200 million euros. — AFP



HOFUF: French driver Mathieu Serradori and his French co-driver Loic Minaudier compete during the Stage 13 of the Dakar 2023 between Saybah and Al-Hofuf, in Saudi Arabia, on January 14, 2023. — AFP

