

Barthez intends to quit Monaco

FONTVIEILLE, Monaco, May 3: France's World Cup goalkeeper Fabien Barthez has demanded a transfer after a spat with Monaco coach Claude Puel, French daily L'Equipe reported on Wednesday, reports AP.

Barthez said that Puel questioned his motivation during a recent French League match against Marseille, which Monaco lost 4-2.

"Puel said 'I have no confidence in you... you had a debt on the day of the match at the Stade Velodrome. You were bought by Marseille,' Barthez said.

Dalmiya let

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'reputation has been injured and harmed by the conspiracy against him when he filed his lawsuit against Aggarwal.

And, with his three-year tenure as president due to end in June, Dalmiya will be grateful that the ICC has cleared his name.

Meanwhile, Richards challenged former Indian Cricket Board chairman Inderjit Singh Bindra to make a formal written submission to the ICC solicitors after making a series of match-fixing allegations.

Hard evidence has been lacking in much of the finger-pointing which has gone on since South African Hansie Cronje was sacked after admitting taking money from an Indian businessman for supplying information on matches involving his country.

It seems likely that the ICC will announce on Wednesday that an investigative panel will be set up to deal with issues of this kind in future and Bindra's evidence could provide a useful starting point.

He has written to the board indicating that he has a certain amount of information, so we have advised him to contact our solicitors," said Richards.

"One of the frustrations of this whole issue is the lack of hard evidence and I would urge anyone in our sport who has any information should bring it forward, whether it be to the ICC, the relevant governing body, the police or the media.

"We are totally determined to rid our sport of any corruption and malpractice."

Abahani

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sibul, for whom it was the second five-wicket haul in the League, also saw Brothers tumbling with more than nine of their share of 41overs remaining unused.

Abahani, in their chase, got a real scare when they were reduced to 83 for five in 16 overs. But an absorbing 63-run partnership for the undefeated sixth wicket between Anisur Rahman and Asadullah Khan dashed Brothers' hopes for a turnaround.

The two young players, who were the last recognised batsmen in the Abahani lineup, received a standing ovation from a few thousand loyal sky blue supporters for their association in the match-winning stand.

A matured head on a young shoulder Anisur scored 36 off 37 balls. The most interesting facet of Anisur's innings was a four over mid-off and an exquisite six over long off Samarasekara's successive deliveries in the 25th overs. His two-stroke brilliance under overcast condition also drove Abahani's fear of a rain-interrupted result at a break-even situation.

Brothers appeared to have enjoyed a mental edge over Abahani with a score of 135 at the end of 25 overs. But Anisur's exploits in that costly over by Samarasekara took Abahani to 137 in 25 overs.

Asadullah scored 27 off 36 balls it included a couple of fours and a six.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the Janakantha Premier Division Super League match between Abahani Krira Chakra and Brothers Union at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday:

BROTHERS UNION:
Shahriar lbw b Iqbal 11
Ehsanul run out 45
Samarasekara c Naimur b Hasibul 4
Farhan c b Hussain 35
Sanwar run out 4
Joshi c Mizanur b Hasibul 13
K Mahmud st. Mizanur b Rehman 19
Jahangir b Hasibul 1
Mokter c Rehman b Hasibul 1
Kamal not out 1
Imran c Anisur b Hasibul 0
Extras: (lb-5, nb-1, w-5) 11
Total: (All out in 31.5 overs) 145

Fall of wickets: 1-18; 2-37; 3-92; 4-96; 5-111; 6-127; 7-135; 8-140; 9-141.

ABAHANI KC:
Hussain c Farhan b Joshi 18
Zahid c Samarasekara c Sanwar 13
Azam c Sanwar b Joshi 37
Naimur run out 8
Akram run out 0
Anisur not out 26
Asadullah not out 37
Extras: (lb-3, w-4) 7
Total: (For 5 wickets in 27 overs) 146

Fall of wickets: 1-19; 2-49; 3-74; 4-74; 5-83.

Bowler O M R W
K Mahmud 8 5 0 32 0
Sumit Joshi 9 1 32 2
Sanwar 6 0 3 3 1
Imran Rahim 4 0 21 0
Samarasekara 4 0 26 0

Result: Abahani won by 5 wickets.



Valencia players celebrate their team's fourth goal against Barcelona during the Champions' League semifinal first leg at Valencia on May 2. — AFP photo

Valencia lesson for Barca

VALENCIA, Spain, May 3: Valencia served up a feast of attacking football to score a deserved 4-1 win over Spanish rivals Barcelona in their Champions League semi-final first leg at the Mestalla stadium here on Tuesday, reports AFP.

Had an audacious late backheel from Javier Farinos not flashed wide the damage might have been even worse for Barcelona, who now face an uphill struggle to claw back the deficit next week at the Nou Camp.

But two from Miguel Angel Angulo, a Gaizka Mendietta penalty and a sizzler from Claudio "Piojo" Lopez were enough for starters with only a Mauricio Pellegrino own goal to cheer the Catalans.

Barca, who have won the trophy just once - under Johan Cruyff's tutelage in 1992 - have been this season's goal kings and went into the match having netted 42 times in 14 matches for an average of exactly three per game with world player of the year Rivaldo bagging ten of them.

In contrast, Valencia, who have never won the competition, had made the net ripple a 'mere' 26 times having played two extra games in a preliminary round, though they had conceded just 12 goals to Barca's 18 prior to Tuesday.

History was on Valencia's side as they had won both previous European encounters with their local rivals - as well as two of this season's earlier meetings - and brimming with confidence they set about their visitors with gusto.

With meetings in recent seasons between the two averaging four goals apiece the 50,000 crowd knew they were in for a classic - and the vast majority went away well satisfied as that average was surpassed.

Rivaldo, twice on target for Brazil against Ecuador last week in a World Cup qualifier, had promised before the game that Barca would score at least once to set themselves up for next week's Nou Camp return.

Indeed the Catalan giants have scored in every European match they have played since a 1-0 defeat at Bayern Munich in September 1998.

But without suspended Portuguese playmaker Luis Figo, expected find themselves top of the table with only Reggina to beat at home.

The arithmetic is all too simple after Juventus' shock defeat to Verona last weekend, as star striker Alessandro Del Piero is the first to recognise.

"We can't afford to make any more mistakes," he told reporters.

"Sunday is going to be a special day, and it could go either way. We could be champions or we could be overtaken."

Veteran defender Ciro Ferrara was already whipping up his teammates, saying: "We're going to have to put on a great performance against Parma."

Ancelotti himself is stoical despite the team's latest setback, saying: "The championship didn't end in Verona - but then, we knew it wouldn't."

Ancelotti has frequently been putting on a brave face since March 25.

That morning, his team were nine points clear and strolling towards the club's 26th league title. Since then, they have lost three and won three, while Lazio have caught up by winning five and drawing one.

And Juventus can expect no favours on Sunday from a Parma side who have their own agenda for the last two matches of the millennium season.

Parma need points if they are not to be left behind by AC Milan and Inter, and coach Alberto Malesani is convinced his men can rise to the occasion.

"For us, it will be like a Champions League final and for them too - because they want to win the title," he said. "All Italy will have their eyes on us... but we're confident."

Parma's Brazilian striker Marcio Amoroso, the Serie A's top scorer last season with 21 goals, was on the bench.

Sweden's international forward Andreas Andersson has been ruled out of Euro 2000 because of an injury to the cruciate ligaments in his knee, Swedish press agency TT reported Tuesday, reports AFP.

Twenty-six-year-old Andersson, with six goals in 26 international appearances, told a press conference that he would be out of the game for six months.

It is the latest in a series of injury blows for Sweden who will also have to do without Andersson's AIF Stockholm team-mate Pontus Kaamark and Sunderland's Stefan Schwarz.

Andersson began his career with IFK Gothenburg before less than successful stints with Italian giants AC Milan and English Premiership side Newcastle United.

Sweden were drawn alongside co-hosts Belgium, Italy and Turkey in Euro 2000, to be staged in Holland and Belgium from June 10-July 2.

they were on the back foot from the early stages and went behind after ten minutes when Angulo swivelled to crash home a rising drive from inside the box.

Rivaldo tried to galvanise a tentative Barca with two efforts which flew just over before Farinos sent a piledriver whizzing above the Barca crossbar as Valencia quickly got back into the groove.

Barca keeper Ruud Hesp almost let a loose ball dribble over his line but gathered his wits to avert disaster before Farinos became the first name to go into Swiss referee Urs Meier's notebook on 20 minutes for bringing down the marauding Rivaldo.

A turning point looked to have arrived on 25 minutes with Valencia's Kily Gonzalez hitting the post with a shot on the turn before Lopez crashed home a drive only for the effort to be chalked off for an apparent shove on Zenden although the challenge looked a fair one.

Barely a minute later, Valencia fullback Pellegrino - a former Barca man - turned the ball into his own net to level the scores at 1-1 after a tantalising cross from the left by Dutch 1998 World Cup winger Boudewijn Zenden.

But two minutes before the break Angulo put Valencia back in front from close range after a searching low cross from Kily Gonzalez, who had robbed Gabri.

And a minute into first-half time added on Gaizka Mendietta made it 3-1 from the penalty spot after Pujol clattered into the rampaging Angulo, who along with strike partner Lopez, Kily Gonzalez and Mendietta, was proving far too hot for Barca's suspect defence to handle.

It was Mendietta's fourth goal of the tournament. Barca rallied after the interval and skipper Pep Guardiola fired wide on the hour before their disbelieving coach Louis Van Gaal reacted by sending on Jarri Lituena in place of Dani, a huge disappointment.

Another player not on song, Patrick Kluyvert, then sent a tame header into the arms of Valencia keeper Santiago Canizares on 67 minutes following a Zenden corner.

At the other end, Mendietta forced Hesp to make a fine stop before Carboni just got in a tackle to stop Zenden in his tracks as the action again switched to the other end.

Zenden then gave way to Portuguese forward Simao Sabrosa and Angulo also departed for Valencia, replaced by David Albelda.

The final goal was a masterpiece with Valencia breaking in numbers and Lopez rifling home a first time left-foot shot in off Ruud Hesp's far post.

Valencia's last European home defeat came eight seasons ago against Napoli in the UEFA Cup and they held both of last season's finalists - Manchester United and Bayern Munich - to draws earlier in the campaign.

As Van Gaal had himself forecast, their performance came as no surprise.

They have also shown their mettle away from home with a 1-1 group phase draw at Bayern and wins at Rangers and Bordeaux while they also boast two Fairs Cup successes and one UEFA Cup win.

Van Gaal had said before the game that he believes it is more difficult to win titles by playing attacking football than adopting a more cautious stance. But going forward from the first while is ingrained in the Catalan club's philosophy and on this occasion it let them down.

Prior to Tuesday they had won ten drawn three and lost just one of their Champions League matches - the defeat coming in the quarters at Chelsea, whom they blew away 5-1 in the return leg, whereas Valencia had suffered three reverses.

Yet Barca, who lost here 3-1 in the Primera Liga earlier in the season before a 3-0 success at the Nou Camp, have not had a good record in recent clashes between the two regional rivals and Valencia beat them at the start of the campaign to lift the Spanish Super Cup with Lopez a particular thorn in their side.

Lopez has now netted 12 times against Barca - including seven in four games last season alone.

The two clubs had met twice previously in European competition, with Valencia winning 7-3 over two legs in the old Fairs Cup - forerunner of the UEFA Cup - in the 1962 final and then emerging victorious again in the Cup Winners Cup quarter-finals 20 years ago before going on to lift the trophy at Arsenal's expense.

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Premier kabadi

Sports Reporter

Fire Service B beat Bangladesh Rifles A by 167-33 points in one of the two Premier Division kabadi league matches held at the court adjacent to the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

In the day's other match, Dilkusha Sporting Club recorded a 11-9 win over Bangladesh Army B.

Sonali Bank will take on Bangladesh Army A in today's first match while Bangladesh Police A will meet Bangladesh Rifles B in the second match.

English Premiership

Petit Gunners' hero

LONDON, May 3: Arsenal's French midfielder Emmanuel Petit came off the bench to strike a hotly-disputed injury-time winner in a 2-1 English Premiership win over London rivals West Ham on Tuesday, reports AFP.

Victory for the Gunners kept their Champions League hopes firmly on track amid bad-tempered scenes after the final whistle at Highbury.

After Marc Overmars' 70th-minute goal had equalised Paolo Di Canio's first-half opener, Petit was alleged to have handled the ball in the build-up to his deflected late strike but referee Paul Durkin failed to spot it.

The official then sent off Trevor Sinclair with just seconds left for his second bookable offence and he was surrounded by angry Hammers players - led by Paulo Wanchope and John Moncur - at the final whistle.

Arsenal are second in the table, three points ahead of Liverpool in third, and five ahead of fourth-placed Leeds. All three teams have three games left to play as the race for a place among Europe's elite next season heats up.

Former Inter Milan team-mates Gianluca Festa and Alessandro Pistone ensured a share of the points for Middlesbrough in a 2-2 draw with North East rivals Newcastle at the Riverside Stadium.

Festa snatched a late equaliser for Middlesbrough after Pistone had smashed Newcastle into a 2-1 lead in a pulsating game which will be remembered more for the passion running through it than the quality of the football.

Brazilian Juninho headed the hosts in front after five minutes, but Gary Speed levelled within five minutes.

Scottish Premiership Celtic see off Dundee

GLASGOW, May 3: Mark Burchill's ninth-minute strike was enough for Celtic to edge Dundee United 1-0 at Tannadice on Tuesday, reports AFP.

Scottish Players' Player of the Year Mark Viduka played in Burchill who struck a powerful first-time effort low beyond the reach of keeper Alan Combe to give the visitors the three points.

It was Celtic's first win since April 5. Rangers have since clinched the title and now have a 19-point lead over their Glasgow rivals.

In second-half injury time, United almost equalised when substitute Stephen McConlogue saw a header come back off the post, but Celtic hung on for the hollow victory.

St. Johnstone's midfielder Carl Kane hit a last-minute goal to give his side a dramatic 2-1 victory and keep Aberdeen seven points adrift of Kilmarnock at the foot of the Premiership table.

The Pittodrie club cannot be relegated to the First Division but manager Ebbe Skovdahl has urged his side to finish strongly and go above Kilmarnock before the season is over and boost their Scottish Cup final dreams.

Aberdeen would have taken a draw after Darren Dods had levelled Robbie Winters' opener but Kane dropped up in the dying seconds to give his side the points with just three games remaining.

Liverpool secure new sponsorship deal

LONDON, May 3: Premiership giants Liverpool announced a new sponsorship deal with Reebok on Tuesday that will earn the club 21 million pounds (33.6 million dollars) over the next three years, reports AFP.

The Anfield club, whose link-up with Granada last year netted around 20 million pounds (32 million dollars) for a 9.9 per cent stake in the club, claim their new shirt agreement is the biggest currently in the Premiership.

They have had sponsorship from Reebok since 1996, and the current deal - worth around 4m pounds (6.4m dollars) a year - has 12 months to run.

The new agreement includes updating the final year of the present deal plus a two-year extension at 7m pounds (11.2m dollars) a year.

Some of the cash will go to fund Anfield's youth academy, but there will also be a significant amount available for Gerard Houllier's transfer capital.

Liverpool's chief executive Rick Parry said: "This extension to the current deal will enable us to continue the development of the academy, plus stadium redevelopment and more funds to strengthen the squad."

Middlesbrough's Gianluca Festa (foreground) and Alan Shearer of Newcastle are in pursuit of the ball during their Premiership clash at the Riverside Stadium on May 2.

Paris, May 3: With two games to go in the French season the race is on to see who will join newly crowned Champions Monaco in Europe next season while a host of clubs scramble to avoid joining already relegated Montpellier in the Second Division, reports AFP.

At the top of the table Paris St. Germain have perhaps the easiest job of holding onto their second place and the vital automatic berth in the Champions League as they host a Montpellier side with nothing to play for but pride.

PSG picked up a fine 2-1 away win over Bastia in their last outing and leapfrogged Bordeaux and Lyon into second place and a win over Montpellier would set them up nicely going into the last day of the season when they visit Troyes.

Bordeaux should stay in touch as they host fallen UEFA Cup semi-finalists Lens who are neither in the running for European places or threatened with relegation.

Only a point separate PSG and high flying Bordeaux who have won six straight matches, but coach Elie Baup will probably be happy to finish the season in third and grab a qualifying spot in next season's Champions League.

Lyon in fourth have seen their season go a bit pear-shaped after hanging on to second spot for most of the season but although they face relatively easy matches against Bastia at home Thursday and



Scene from yesterday's Premier Division Kabadi League encounter between Fire Service and Bangladesh Army at the court near Bangabandhu National Stadium. — Star photo

French First Division preview

Battle for Euro places

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