

Fans clash at Copenhagen Airport

COPENHAGEN, May 19: Turkish and English football fans scuffled Thursday at Copenhagen Airport but no one was hurt and no arrests were made, airport police said, reports AFP.

The fighting took place in a departure lounge as some 2,000 supporters from the two sides were waiting to leave Denmark a day after the UEFA Cup final here which was marred by bloody clashes between English and Turkish fans.

Airport police arrived quickly on the scene and separated the two sides, a spokesman said. The Danish news agency Ritzau reported however that the latest clashes included bottles being thrown in the international terminal.

Ritzau said there was a large fight in the main departure hall and several smaller brawls in a transit area of the airport.

Police downplayed the incidents.

"There was some shouting, some pushing but it's over now," airport police spokesman Udo Krogh said.

The latest incident came as Copenhagen remained stunned after the hooligan violence which swept the city in the build-up to the UEFA Cup final between Turkish club Galatasaray and England's Arsenal.

The violence between the Turkish and English supporters - which left five people seriously injured and dozens of others with minor injuries - left the people and politicians of the Danish capital shocked and afraid.

In Turkey Thursday, nationwide celebrations of Galatasaray's UEFA Cup victory, Turkey's first triumph in a European soccer tournament, were marred by brawls and gunfire which left two dead and 22 injured.

One of the victims there was stabbed while another death - that of a one-year-old girl - and most of the injuries resulted from people being hit by stray bullets as Turks practised their notorious tradition of celebration by firing gunshots into the air.

Danes have seen nothing like it

COPENHAGEN, May 19: Copenhagen awoke stunned on Thursday after the hooligan violence which swept the city in the build-up to the UEFA Cup final between Turkish club Galatasaray and England's Arsenal, reports AFP.

The violence between the Turkish and English supporters - which left five people seriously injured and dozens of others with minor injuries - left the people and politicians of the Danish capital shocked and afraid.

Local media headlines spoke of shock and revulsion, reflecting local sentiment. Few Danes have ever experienced violent scenes like those of the past two days.

Copenhagen's mayor, Jens Kramer Mikkelsen, said the violence outside the Town Hall - which turned into the main battleground for the hooligans - made him "too scared to go outside", adding that Copenhagen was unrecognisable during the worst parts of the violence.

The police were outnumbered, and were not able to control the groups of both Turkish and English hooligans who were running riot in the city. The lack of police co-ordination gave rise to fierce criticism from Danish officials and the English media.

President of the Danish Christian Party, Jann Sjursen, demanded the Minister for Justice, Frank Jensen - who is in charge of police affairs - give an explanation for the "shortage of police", adding, "perhaps the police were not used to dealing with this level of hooliganism".

"We couldn't have a police officer for every hooligan," said Copenhagen's Police spokesperson Flemming Steen Munch.

"When people decide to fight like that, it is practically impossible to stop them, unless we had turned the city into a fortress," he added.

Suffering at the hands of the hooligans, and scolded by their critics, the police drafted in a total of 2,500 police officers - a quarter of the country's forces - for the Wednesday evening fighting.

The Danes are now left wondering if it is worth staging such a high-profile match again.

"The Danes have to face the facts that if they want to host events like that, they have to be prepared, no matter how unpalatable it is, for scenes like they have experienced over the past two days," said the De Berlingke Tidende, a local right-wing paper, in an editorial.

UEFA champions receive Medal of Honour

ISTANBUL, May 19: Turkish President Ahmet Necdet Sezer on Friday bestowed the Medal of Honour on Galatasaray club chairman Faruk Suren in an official ceremony at the Ankara Youth Fair, reports AFP.

The Galatasaray team on Wednesday won the UEFA Cup final against English side Arsenal at the Parken Stadium in Copenhagen - the first European title victory for a Turkish side.



Inter Milan's Argentine international Javier Zanetti (L) intercepting countryman Diego Simeone of Lazio during their Italian Cup final second leg at Milan on May 18.

— AFP photo

Italian Cup

Another feather in Lazio's cap



MILAN, May 19: Serie A champions Lazio pulled off a historic double here on Thursday night, when they held Inter Milan to a tense 0-0 draw at San Siro to lift the Italian Cup, reports AFP.

Just four days after winning their second ever league title, Lazio collected their third Italian Cup after a 2-1 aggregate victory secured in the first leg in Rome last month.

They became only the fourth club in Italian soccer history to do the Double after Juventus, Torino and Napoli.

Lazio have finished the season just as they started it - by winning a trophy. They kicked off last summer by defeating European champions Manchester United 1-0 in the European Super Cup.

Thursday's triumph was also sweet revenge for the Rome club after Inter beat them 3-0 in the 1998 UEFA Cup final in Paris.

Inter had the best of the first-half but Lazio dominated the second, hitting the woodwork soon after the re-start and creating a series of chances which brought out the best of Inter goalkeeper Angelo Peruzzi.

The hosts' best opportunity came in injury-time when Uruguayan substitute Alvaro Recoba curled a shot past the Lazio 'keeper Marco Ballotta - only to see his effort hit the far post and bounce out.

Lazio's Sven Goran Eriksson said: "It's been a truly wonderful week. I have to say, winning two trophies in the space of a few days - you have to pay tribute to the team."

"I didn't think we could put on a performance like this, because on Sunday we were all celebrating and our training sessions were a bit relaxed, but they showed great character."

"Physically, the team are in good shape. But mentally they're even stronger. Another great display just three or four days after winning the league is something that makes me proud of them."

Lazio president Sergio Cragnotti said: "It was a great demonstration of maturity. Lazio are a mature team made of champions, who are always capable of great concentration."

"Few teams have won the league and the Italian Cup," he said. "Lazio have managed it."

Recoba's last-ditch effort was scant reward for his team after Inter made a bright start and created their first chance after eight minutes.

Dutch midfielder Clarence Seedorf squared the ball in the area for Roberto Baggio, who feinted before unleashing a close range shot which was deftly caught by Ballotta.

Several of the Lazio players had bleached their hair - while Ballotta had given his sparse thatch a blue rinse for the occasion.

Baggio conjured up a chance for Luigi Di Biagio minutes later, only for the midfielder to send his drive from outside the area wide of the post, while Seedorf

dorf also failed to find the target. However, it needed a reflex tip over the bar by Ballotta to stop a dipping effort from Di Biagio as Inter kept up the pressure.

Lazio's first chance fell in the 19th minute to former Inter midfielder Diego Simeone, who was welcomed by both sets of fans before the kick-off.

Defender Giuseppe Favalli broke down the left and Simeone met the cross with a potent downward header which Peruzzi blocked on the line.

he joined from Lazio. But the next chance fell to the visitors, when a screamer from Portuguese winger Sergio Conceicao was fisted out by Peruzzi on the hour.

Baggio made way for Recoba but the Italian champions had the match by the scruff of the neck, despite the threat from Vieri.

And it took a stunning save from Peruzzi in the 75th minute to keep the scores level when Veron swung over a corner from the right and fellow Argentinian Nestor Sensini, who



ON A ROLL: Jubilant Lazio booters celebrating with the Italian Cup at Milan on May 18.

— AFP photo

Inter replied with more shots from outside the area - Di Biagio, Baggio and Seedorf all trying their luck.

Ironically, the only one to keep a booming effort on target - forcing a two-sided save from Ballotta - was Lazio striker Simeone. Inzaghi as he made a hazardous interception on Inter's French star Laurent Blanc.

Lazio were unlucky not to take the lead just a minute after the re-start when Juan Sebastian Veron crashed a free-kick against the left-hand post with Peruzzi left helpless.

Inter coach Carlo Lucini soon replaced Chilean Iván Zamorano with Christian Vieri, who set a world record transfer fee of nearly 50 million dollars last summer when

played in the 1990 World Cup final defeat by Germany, rose for a glancing near-post header.

Ballotta matched the feat though at the other end in the 82nd minute, dropping like a stone to stop Recoba's low shot from inside the area.

And it was Recoba who nearly broke the deadlock in stoppage time, ghosting onto a through-ball on the right and planting his shot beyond the advancing Ballotta - but onto the post.

Lazio held on for a deserved draw - and their second Italian Cup in the space of three years - on a night which also saw their striker Roberto Mancini turn out for the last game of a 19-year playing career.

Homecoming for makers of history



ISTANBUL, May 19: Thousands of Turks thronged Istanbul airport on Thursday to greet Galatasaray on their victorious return home from Copenhagen after winning the UEFA Cup - the first-ever European football triumph by a Turkish team, reports AFP.

A multitude of fans, including children, cheered madly and chanted slogans on the tarmac as Galatasaray's star striker Hakan Sukur descended from the stairs of a Turkish Airlines plane - with a red-and-yellow Galatasaray ribbon painted on its fuselage - carrying the trophy.

Riot police formed a corridor for the players to safely pass through the teeming throng of supporters waving Galatasaray flags, applauding and beating drums as the team's arrival was broadcast live on many television stations.

"Turkey is proud of you," read one banner, while another seemed confident that the club had more victories in store for Turkey, saying: "We will do this again, just wait."

Those competing with you yesterday are crumbling down today," read one banner and another one congratulated "the last emperor and his troops," a reference to Galatasaray coach Fatih Terim, whose first name means conqueror.

An air of festivity has been prevailing in Turkey since late Wednesday when Galatasaray's 10-man team beat England's Arsenal 4-1 in a penalty shoot-out after the two sides had drawn 0-0 after extra-time.

The unprecedented victory earned the Istanbul club, which secured its fourth consecutive league title last week, the nickname "Conquerors of Europe".

Turkish state television. "It will probably take us a week to compose ourselves," a happy-looking Suat Kaya, another midfielder, told the all-news NTV channel.

Once through the airport building, Terim and the players boarded a bus, responding to their supporters' cheers and throwing them flowers as Galatasaray songs blasted from loudspeakers.

A smiling Claudio Taffarel, Galatasaray's Brazilian goalkeeper who was declared man-of-the-match after a series of crucial saves, was seen joking with his teammates and waving a huge banner, while others sprayed the cheering crowd with Champagne.

With hundreds running alongside their bus, the team set out for the city's downtown Taksim square, where the Istanbul mayor's office had organized a massive celebration.

Rome's second party in a week

ROME, May 19: Lazio fans who celebrated their first league title for 26 years last Sunday were back on the streets just four days later here on Thursday night after their team won the Italian Cup in Milan, reports AFP.

Within minutes of the final whistle in Lazio's 0-0 second leg draw with Inter, thousands of armchair supporters deserted their television sets to fill the streets and squares of the ancient city.

Car horns and klaxons blared, while fans waved blue and white scarves, banners and flags in honour of their third trophy of a memorable season which started with the European Super Cup.

Many headed for the city centre Piazza Venezia, which had been packed on Sunday night as fans whooped it up for the team's "Scudetto" success.

The parties went long into the early hours of Monday and culminated in 100,000 supporters gathering at the ancient Circo Massimo arena.

Shearer for patience

LONDON, May 19: England captain Alan Shearer on Friday condemned the violence which marred this week's UEFA Cup Final and pleaded with fans not to heap more disgrace on their country during this summer's European Championship Finals in Holland and Belgium, reports AFP.

Shearer admitted his disgust at the scenes in Copenhagen as Arsenal and Galatasaray supporters clashed before the match on Wednesday night and called for no repeat of the trouble that has surrounded the national side in recent major tournaments.

"They're not fans, the ones who go out there to look for trouble," he told the Press Association agency.

Bundesliga preview

All will be decided today



COLOGNE, Germany, May 19: Just one point is all Bayer Leverkusen need to celebrate their first Bundesliga crown but they face a tenacious opponent in Unterhaching on Saturday who have one of the best home records in the league, reports AFP.

Unterhaching, considered the weakest team ever to play in Germany's top flight before the season began, have worked miracles this season with their destructive pile-the-defence strategy.

The one problem is it only seems to work at home because Unterhaching are easy prey on their travels.

Their mini stadium on the outskirts of Munich though is a veritable bastion.

Only Bayern Munich and Kaiserslautern have taken full points there and the collective total of opposition goals scored in 17 games is a miserly 10 - the lowest total in the Bundesliga.

Coach Lorenz-Gunter Kostner knows he and his men have performed a near miracle in staying up this season but has no illusions about the team visiting on Saturday.

"We want to put on a good show against the team which is 99.9 percent sure of becoming German champions," Kostner said.

"Leverkusen and Bayern Munich, they're not our level. Not that I'm going to let that ruin the end of the season for me," he added.

Theoretically Bayern can still pip Leverkusen at the post. A win at home over Werder Bremen and an upset victory by Unterhaching would leave them level on 73 points apiece but with Bayern having the better goal difference.

It's a scenario which gives Leverkusen chills. Club manager Rainer Calmund told city officials a week ago not to arrange any victory celebrations and threatened to shoot anyone who dared even mention the word 'title'.

The real showdown will be between Frankfurt and Ulm. Both need to play for a win while fading Rostock will be in a similar situation at Schalke.

Kaiserslautern too must beat 1860 Munich if they are to guarantee themselves a ticket to Europe next season, a tall order as they are drifting.

"It's in our own hands. I wouldn't like to think what would happen if we didn't qualify for the UEFA Cup," captain Gernot Rohr said, who reputedly wants to move to Bayern.



The UEFA Cup champions Galatasaray team parading through the streets of Istanbul on an open-roof double decker after their arrival in Turkey on May 18.

FA Cup final

Chelsea's last shot at fame



LONDON, May 19: Chelsea have a last chance of glory on Saturday when they face Aston Villa in the 72nd FA Cup final at Wembley where victory will secure a place in next season's UEFA Cup, reports AFP.

Should Gianluca Vialli's team of multi-national stars lift the trophy this weekend they will end the season on a high note after a series of setbacks.

The disappointment of letting a 3-1 first leg lead against Barcelona slip in the Champions League quarter-final - resulting in a 6-4 aggregate defeat - was a bitter blow for the London club.

And their failure to land a top three Premiership place and with it a coveted berth in the Champions League next season prompted the usually affable Vialli to make disparaging remarks about some of his indolent employees.

"It's important for me to realise which of my players want to stay at the club, to give their best and make the club successful," said Vialli after Chelsea's 3-2 defeat at Old Trafford which killed off the club's chances of rubbing shoulders with Europe's elite.

"We need to realise who has the right ability and spirit to be part of the future, who wants to die on the pitch and who doesn't."

"I want to make the club successful and I only want to go on with players that have got the same aim."

The cup final is a must-win game for Chelsea if they are to avoid ending the season empty-handed and starting the next without European football.

"Of course we need to win," said Vialli. "But I think this has already been a successful season."

in two competitions. By getting to the quarter-finals in Europe, we've been much further than a lot of important clubs in England, and we've reached the final of the FA Cup."

But despite his upbeat tone, Vialli appears reticent. Vialli is his own harshest critic and despite many positive results in Europe and in the Premiership - most notably the home defeat of Barcelona and the 5-0 thrashing of Manchester United - those achievements do little to satisfy his insatiable appetite for success.

"I'm like anyone, I have to learn my trade," said the former Italian international in only his second full year in charge. "I have definitely made mistakes this season."

"But the only way to get better is through experience and the only way to get experience is by making mistakes."

"That is not to say we should be ashamed of our results this season."

"I still feel that although we are equipped for the Premiership, Chelsea are designed for the Premiership and Europe."

"Apart from one result (away to Barcelona), they excelled in Europe this season, whereas when we were in the UEFA Cup last year, we were out of our depth and outplayed by Spain's Celta Vigo."

"Like us Chelsea have a tight defence - we both give bigger all away - but draw too many games. The difference is that they can really produce when it matters, like when they beat Manchester United 5-0."

Gregory's comments smack of mind games and there can be no doubt that come kick-off on Saturday his Villa players will have had their egos similarly massaged.

Dutch defender Mario Melchiot is on standby for Chelsea with Spaniard Albert Ferrer struggling with an ankle injury while Gregory has some decisions to make about his midfield.

Ian Taylor returned for the final Premiership game against United last Sunday after six weeks out with a hamstring injury to stake a claim for a place.

And Steve Stone and defender Steve Watson resumed training last weekend following injuries and Gregory believes that even they could make Saturday's squad.

Fans' favourite Taylor appeared as a second-half substitute last weekend and Gregory said: "He's got another six days, which will mean a hell of a lot to him to get a little bit more fitness back and make sure that hamstring stays strong."

"Nobody seems to forgive us anything at Chelsea, but I don't think we've done much wrong."

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