

## Jose rules out Portugal job

AFP, Lisbon

Real Madrid boss Jose Mourinho ruled out the prospect of becoming a national team manager after being refused permission to take temporary charge of his native Portugal in the autumn.

Mourinho had been approached to replace Carlos Queiroz, but Real blocked the approach and Paulo Bento eventually took full-time charge of the national side.

It was a development which the former Inter Milan and Chelsea boss described as his "greatest frustration of 2010".

"I believe that I will never coach a national team because it's a question of mentality, of personality," Mourinho told Portuguese media.

"I am a coach who works every day, is ready to play three times a week if necessary. But at that moment, I was motivated to do it."

Mourinho also praised compatriot and Real star Cristiano Ronaldo, describing the former Manchester United star as "extraordinary".

"He is fantastic, an extraordinary man," said Mourinho. "He is physically stronger than he has ever been. I believe that he is in the right condition to have his best season."

Real went into the winter break trailing great rivals Barcelona by two points in the Spanish title race, and Mourinho knows he is under pressure to deliver silverware as soon as possible.

"In all great institutions, the pressure is always huge. Ideally, I will stay until the end of my contract. But I know, and we all know, that I can't stay one, two or three years without winning a trophy," said Mourinho, who has a four-year deal.

"I have always known the rules of the game."

## Celtic eyeing Ljungberg

AFP, Glasgow

Former Arsenal and West Ham star Freddie Ljungberg could sign for Celtic as the Glasgow giants seek to add experience and bite to their Scottish Premier League title push.

Swedish international Ljungberg, who has spent the last 18 months playing in the United States with Seattle Sounders and Chicago Fire, is due to arrive in Glasgow later Sunday.

"Ljungberg is coming in tonight. It is not a trial or anything like that," said Celtic boss Neil Lennon.

"It's so that we can have a look at him and he can look at us. We were contacted three or four weeks ago. I don't think he is over the hill. I think he is 34 but he has always kept himself in good condition."

"You don't lose the quality, he might be missing an edge but we will see how he is."

"He has been a quality player for a long time, he is vastly experienced and again, it's just an opportunity that might be there for us."



### What to Watch

#### STAR Cricket

Australia v England

Fourth Test, Day 3

Live from 5:30am

#### TEN Cricket

South Africa v India

Second Test, Day 3

Live from 2:00pm

#### NEO Cricket

New Zealand v Pakistan

Second T20 International

Live from 12:00pm

#### ESPN

English Premier League

Man City v Aston Villa

Live from 8:55pm

West Ham v Everton

Live from 11:25pm

Birmingham v Man United

Live from 1:45am (Wednesday)

#### STAR Sports

English Premier League

Tottenham v Newcastle



### DAY'S EVENT

#### Premier Division Cricket League

Victoria v Orient

Venue: Bogra

Surjo Torun v Doleshwar

Venue: Rajshahi

Kalabagan v Cricket Coaching

Venue: BKSP-2

#### Bangladesh League

Abahani v Sheikh Jamal

Time: 4:00pm

Venue: Bireshreshtha Mostafa Kamal



ANSWER TO HIS CRITICS: India off-spinner Harbhajan Singh (L) runs off to celebrate one of his four wickets in South Africa's first innings on the second day of the second Test at Kingsmead in Durban yesterday.

## MU strengthen lead

REUTERS, London



A Bulgarian, an Argentine and a Dutchman lit up the start of England's traditional festive fixture bonanza as unbeaten Manchester United tightened their grip at the top of the Premier League on Sunday.

Dimitar Berbatov struck both goals for United in a 2-0 victory over Sunderland as Alex Ferguson's team emerged from a two-week layoff caused by the icy winter weather that has played havoc with the sporting calendar.

United lead the table with 37 points from 17 games, with Manchester City up into second spot with 35 from 19 after Argentina striker Carlos Tevez netted twice in their 3-1 victory at Newcastle United.

Third-placed Arsenal can move back ahead of City when they host champions Chelsea, in fourth, on Monday.

Tottenham Hotspur stayed in touch with the leading quartet after Dutch playmaker Rafael van der Vaart scored both goals in a 2-1 victory at Aston Villa.

Spurs, who played for more than an hour with 10 men after Jermain Defoe was sent off, have 30 points from 18 games.

Bolton Wanderers are sixth on 29 points after beating West Bromwich Albion 2-0. Stoke City overcame Blackburn Rovers 2-0 while Carlton Cole struck twice to help West Ham

United off the bottom with a 3-1 victory at Fulham.

Wolverhampton Wanderers are now propping up the table after losing 2-1 at home to Wigan Athletic.

Bulgarian Berbatov returned to United's starting line-up after being left out against Arsenal two weeks ago and took just five minutes to make his mark, heading in a cross from Wayne Rooney at the end of a flowing move.

United should have sealed the points before halftime according to manager Ferguson, who described some of their play as "fantastic", but had to wait until the 57th minute for Berbatov to double the advantage with a deflected shot.

Often maligned as not hard-working enough, Berbatov's goals have kept United on track this season as Rooney has struggled to find his shooting boots.

With 13 league goals, Berbatov leads the top flight's scoring charts.

Just two weeks after handing in a transfer request that he later retracted, former United striker Tevez showed exactly why he is vital to City's ambitions.

Tevez doubled City's lead after Gareth Barry opened the scoring and later killed off a Newcastle revival after the break to take his league tally to 12 goals this season.

Andy Carroll enhanced his growing reputation with Newcastle's reply.

## Carlo wants a defender

SOCCERNET

Chelsea boss Carlo Ancelotti has revealed he will try to sign a new defender if Alex signs to recover from knee surgery before the end of next month.

Ancelotti says he is not planning to do any further business during the January transfer window, despite seeing his squad fail to cope with injuries to key players in the last two months.

Brazil international Alex was ruled out for up to eight weeks after going under the knife at the start of the month. His knee problems coincided with an injury to captain John Terry, forcing Ancelotti to play Paulo Ferreira as a makeshift centre-half.

The move backfired spectacularly when Chelsea slumped to their worst home defeat for eight years against Sunderland. Ancelotti last year vowed to run around the club's training ground if he signed a player in January but he was not willing to make the same promise 12 months on.

"If I have to bet, I can bet the opposite," he said.

"Until the 31st of January, if we are sure that Alex will have resolved his problem, we won't need another defender. We have to wait to see his condition."

## Cherry rules the day

Cricket

AFP, Durban

The bowlers of South Africa and India took it in turns to cause carnage as 18 wickets fell for 245 runs on the second day of the second Test at Kingsmead on Monday.

At the end of an extraordinary day, India, on 92 for four in their second innings, held an overall lead of 166 runs in the battle between the world's two top-ranked Test nations.

When India were all out for 205, losing their last four wickets for 22 runs at the start of the day, it seemed that the host nation were set to dominate the match, with conditions for batting expected to ease after an overcast first day.

But returning fast bowler Zaheer Khan and veteran off-spinner Harbhajan Singh sent South Africa crashing to 131 all out, giving India a first innings lead of 74.

Zaheer took three for 36 and Harbhajan four for 10.

India hurried to 42 without loss in their second innings and looked well on course to avenge their innings defeat in the first Test at Centurion last week.

But left-arm pace bowler Lonwabo Tsotsobe had Virender Sehwag caught behind for an aggressive 32 at the start of an Indian collapse in which the top four batsmen fell for the addition of 14 runs.

Veteran VVS Laxman and the inexperienced Cheteshwar Pujara restored a semblance of sanity to a frenetic day by batting together for 76 minutes until bad light ended play, adding 36 unbeaten runs.

It could prove a crucial contribution in the context of a match in which the best partnership had yielded 43 runs and the highest individual score remained Laxman's first innings 38.

Whereas conditions were obviously bowler-friendly on an overcast, rain-shortened first day, the sun shone brightly for most of Monday with a north-easterly breeze blowing across the ground, which normally heralds good weather and favourable batting conditions.

The main hazard for batsmen was steep

bounce, while there was some seam movement off a well-grassed pitch.

After Dale Steyn and Morne Morkel wrapped up the Indian first innings, Khan started the comeback by the number one ranked Test nation when he claimed the wickets of opening batsmen Graeme Smith and Alviro Petersen.

South Africa then suffered a double blow when in-form Jacques Kallis and AB de Villiers were out in quick succession shortly before lunch to leave the home side reeling at 74 for four.

Kallis, who made a maiden Test double century at Centurion, was run out for 10. He was backing up when bowler Ishant Sharma deflected a drive by Hashim Amla into the stumps.

Hashim Amla, playing in his 50th Test match on his home ground, and Ashwell Prince looked to be repairing the damage when they batted together for 40 minutes after the break, putting on 22 runs.

But Harbhajan regained control for India with a superb spell of bowling, making his first breakthrough when Amla missed a sweep and was leg before wicket for 33.

Prince chopped Khan into his stumps in the next over and Harbhajan snapped up the wickets of Dale Steyn and Paul Harris in quick succession.

Steyn fell to an excellent diving catch by Rahul Dravid at slip as Dravid became the first fielder in Test history to take 200 catches.

At one stage Harbhajan had figures of three for four in six overs.

Zaheer missed the first Test because of injury and watched from the sidelines as South Africa piled up 620 for four declared on the way to victory by an innings and 25 runs.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

INDIA: First innings 205 (Sehwag 25, Vijay 19, Dravid 25, Tendulkar 13, Laxman 38, Pujara 19, Dhoni 35, Harbhajan 21; Steyn 6-50, Tsotsobe 2-40, Morkel 2-68)

SOUTH AFRICA: First innings 131 (Petersen 24, Amla 33, Kallis 10, Prince 13, Boucher 16 not out; Zaheer 3-36, Harbhajan 4-10)

INDIA: Second innings 92 for 4 (Sehwag 32, Vijay 9, Tendulkar 6, Laxman 23 not out, Pujara 10 not out; Tsotsobe 2-16)

## Title push gathers pace

AFP, London



Manchester United and Manchester City will look to stay out in front at the top of the Premier League when they continue their push for the title on Tuesday.

Before then at least one, and possibly both, of the Manchester clubs' title rivals will have dropped points when third-placed Arsenal take on Chelsea in a London derby on Monday.

United, who top the table by two points from City, are away to Birmingham on Tuesday when Sir Alex Ferguson, having seen off a Sunderland side managed by one of his old boys in Steve Bruce 2-0 on Sunday, face another in a Blues team under the control of Alex McLeish.

Meanwhile City, who won 3-1 away to Newcastle on Sunday, are at home to Aston Villa.

Ferguson said Birmingham will have benefited from the postponement of their Boxing Day visit to Everton.

"Birmingham will be fresh. Going down there is always a difficult place, they've always had a strong home record, they're difficult to beat on their own ground," United manager

Ferguson said.

City manager Roberto Mancini is planning to ring the changes for the match against a struggling Villa side.

"We have an incredible four games in ten days and we will make changes against Villa because we must recover in the 38 hours and that is not an easy thing to do," Mancini said.

"All players must be ready to play that is why we have a strong squad," the Italian added of his expensively assembled side.

Tottenham will look to back up manager Harry Redknapp's claims they are title contenders when they face Newcastle at White Hart Lane fresh from a 3-1 win away to Villa where they played most of the match down to 10 men following the sending-off of England striker Jermain Defoe.

West Ham, who climbed off the bottom of the table on Boxing Day with a 3-1 win away to Fulham, will look to give their home fans something to cheer against a Blackburn side well beaten by Stoke last time out.

Wolves, now bottom of the table after a 2-1 loss at home to relegation rivals Wigan, are set to face a fresh Liverpool at Anfield on Wednesday after the Reds' Boxing Day match away to north-west rivals Blackpool was postponed because of a frozen pitch.

### FIXTURES

(1500GMT unless stated)

#### Tuesday

Birmingham v Manchester United (2000GMT), Manchester City v Aston

Villa, Stoke City v Fulham, Sunderland v

Blackpool, Tottenham v Newcastle,

West Brom v Blackburn,

West Ham v Everton (1730GMT)

#### Wednesday

Chelsea v Bolton (1945GMT), Liverpool

v Wolves (2000GMT), Wigan v

## VDV Villa's nemesis

AFP, Birmingham



Rafael Van der Vaart was the scourge of Aston Villa yet again as he marked his return from injury with two goals to hand 10-man Tottenham a deserved 2-1 victory on Sunday.

The Dutch international, who netted both of Tottenham's goals in the

October win over Villa, scored in each half as Harry Redknapp's side kicked off the busy Premier League Christmas period with a win to keep them in the hunt for a Champions League place.

Spurs's victory was especially impressive as they played for more than an hour with a man down after striker Jermain Defoe was sent-off for elbowing James Collins.

Marc Albrighton scored a late consolation for struggling

Villa, who are still stranded in 15th, with eight minutes left when his teasing cross evaded everyone including Spurs keeper Heurelo Gomes to ensure a tense finale.

Villa flew out of the starting blocks and could have been ahead within the opening minute when Albrighton latched onto a Collins flick-on only to see his effort blocked by Gareth Bale inside the six-yard area and the Welshman was up quickly to deny the Villa winger for a second time from a tight angle.

Spurs looked dangerous at the opposite end, however, and Villa had Brad Friedel to thank in the fourth minute when Luka Modric and Aaron Lennon combined smartly to send Defoe clean through only for the veteran American goalkeeper to dart quickly off his line to smother.

The home crowd's vociferous appeals for a penalty were ignored by referee Martin Atkinson when Gomes caught Emile Heskey as he dived to reach the ball ahead of the Villa striker and replays showed the referee made the correct decision.

Gerard Houllier's side had a golden chance to take the lead in the 18th minute when Gabriel Agbonlahor raced through from a Heskey flick-on only to fire straight at Gomes.

Villa soon paid the price for their profligacy in the 23rd minute when Modric exposed a gaping hole down the left side of their defence, releasing Alan Hutton with a probing crossfield ball before the Scot centred to leave van der Vaart with the simplest of tap-ins.

But Tottenham's joy turned to disappointment four minutes later when Defoe received his marching orders for use of the elbow when he rose for a high ball with Collins.



Tottenham Hotspur playmaker Rafael van der Vaart (L) scores the opening goal past Aston Villa defender Carlos Cuellar (2nd from R) during their Premier League encounter at Villa Park on Sunday.