



Inter Milan defender Walter Samuel (R) goes airborne to head in the opening goal during their Serie A encounter against Chievo in Verona on Friday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Jose to sign new Real deal

MAIL ONLINE

Jose Mourinho has effectively ruled himself out of the race to manage either Chelsea or England by promising to sign a new deal at Real Madrid.

The 49-year-old revealed: 'I am going to sign a new contract with Real Madrid. I would like to have a place in the club's history.'

Mourinho, whose side are 10 points clear of Barcelona before Saturday night's match at Real Betis, is on the brink of becoming the first manager to win a league title in four major countries.

He had dropped hints recently that he wanted to return to the Barclays Premier League and, after patching up his differences with Chelsea owner Roman Abramovich, was among the favourites to take charge at Stamford Bridge following the sacking of Andre Villas-Boas.

But he said: 'Real Madrid and I share a project and we are going to carry on with it. Being part of this team is a fantastic and unforgettable experience for a manager like me.'

What to WATCH

BTV & NEO Cricket

Asia Cup Cricket
Bangladesh v Pakistan
Live from 2:00pm

ESPN

English Premiership
Man United v West Brom
Live from 7:55pm
Norwich City v Wigan
Live from 10:00pm

STAR Sports

English Premiership
Swansea v Man City
Live from 7:55pm

TEN Action

Serie A
Genoa v Juventus
Live from 7:55pm
Primera Liga
Racing Santander v Barcelona
Live from 10:55pm

DAY'S EVENT

Asia Cup Cricket
Bangladesh v Pakistan
Time: 2:00pm
Venue: Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium

Reprieve for Ranieri

AFP, Rome



Argentines Walter Samuel and Diego Milito struck inside the last three minutes to give Inter Milan their first win in 10 games in a 2-0 success at Chievo on Friday while Napoli thumped Cagliari 6-3.

Inter gave coach Claudio Ranieri a vital boost ahead of Tuesday's crucial Champions League second round, second leg clash with Marseille at the San Siro.

The Italians, who won the competition two years ago, trail 1-0 from the first leg in France and many in Italy believe Ranieri's job depends on progress to the quarterfinals.

Inter toiled for 87 minutes in Verona and looked to be heading for

their eighth blank in their last 10 games until the dramatic late finale.

The win moved them up to sixth in Serie A and boosted their hopes of securing a European finish.

The nerazzurri had lost seven of their previous nine matches, failing to score in any of those and it was easy to see why in the first half.

They had a great chance to take the lead when Francesco Acerbi needlessly handled in the box as Lucio tried to go around him.

But goalkeeper Stefano Sorrentino tipped Milito's penalty kick onto the post and Chievo survived.

Playmaker Wesley Sneijder then set his sights from distance but his dipping shot hit the bar.

Inter put together a sweeping move that ended with Dejan Stankovic hitting a volley just over.

It wasn't all one-way traffic, though, as Sergio Pellissier burst into the area but goalkeeper Julio Cesar saved his close range shot with Lucio putting the forward under pressure.

The best chance in the second half went Chievo's way as United States midfielder Michael Bradley fired a free-kick just over the bar.

That was until Inter's grandstand finish as Samuel headed home a Sneijder corner three minutes from time.

And in the very last minute Milito made amends for his earlier penalty miss as he headed in from captain

Javier Zanetti's cross.

Napoli won for the sixth time in a row to move up to fourth, within two points of the final Champions League qualifying position for next season.

This game looked to be over by the half hour mark as Napoli stormed into a three goal lead, but there was far more drama to come.

Marek Hamsik made the most of a slip by Daniele Conti to move into space and lash a low drive from 25 yards inside the post on 10 minutes.

Nine minutes later Paolo Cannavaro headed home a free-kick from Ezequiel Lavezzi, although there was a hint of offside.

And then Argentine forward Lavezzi burst down the right and his cross was turned home past his own keeper by Davide Astori.

RESULTS

Chievo 0 Inter Milan 2 (Samuel 87, Milito 90)
Napoli 6 (Hamsik 10, Cannavaro 19, Astori 30-og, Lavezzi 56-pen, Gargano 70, Maggio 84) Cagliari 3 (Larivey 37, 77, 90)

'Don't boo Tevez'

REUTERS, Manchester



Manchester City's Mario Balotelli has urged fans to hold back on their boos when fellow striker Carlos Tevez returns to action after his lengthy fall-out with the Premier League leaders.

Argentine Tevez, who scored his first goal in a City shirt on Tuesday playing for the reserves, is getting closer to a first-team return although manager Roberto Mancini has not said whether he will feature against Swansea City on Sunday.

What reception he would get is the subject of much speculation as fans who burned shirts with his name on during his unauthorised absence prepare to see him don the sky blue kit they thought their former captain would never wear again.

Balotelli, who along with forwards Sergio Aguero and Edin Dzeko has ensured City have barely missed Tevez who has not played for the club since September, sought to get fans to welcome back the Argentine as he has apologised for his actions.

"I think supporters have to be like they were before. If they make pressure on Carlos, they make pressure to all the team, so they should do nothing," Balotelli told the BBC.

"I think everyone can make a mistake. Carlos is part of the team. He's just a part of the team, so everybody loves him."

The Swansea game is probably too soon for Tevez to return, although there could be an opening if Mancini rests some players before next week's Europa League round-of-16 second leg at home to Sporting when they need to overturn a 1-0 deficit.

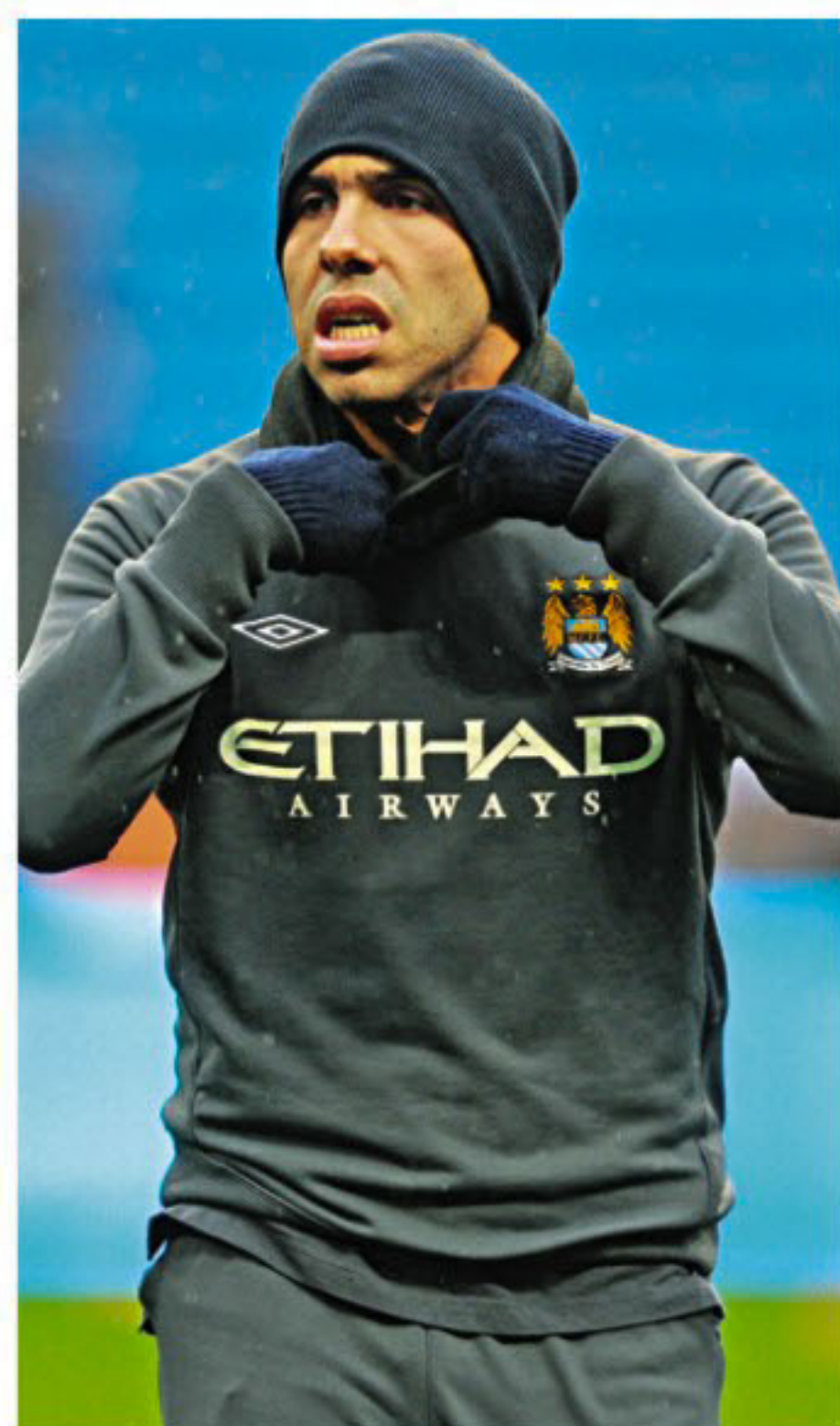
The Italian, whose side are two points clear of champions Manchester United at the top of the Premier League, cannot afford to take any chances at mid-table Swansea - a team he has praised for playing the most attractive football in the league.

"It will be a tricky game because Swansea play very well ... and I think we need to play very well if we want to beat them," Mancini

said on the club's website (www.mfc.co.uk).

"Swansea at home are fantastic, they are having a good season, but we must continue to win. It will be a good championship until the end."

City make the trip to Wales without captain Vincent Kompany, who faces at least 10 days on the sidelines with a calf injury sustained against Sporting on Thursday.



CARLOS TEVEZ

Mancini's team have 66 points from 27 matches, having also amassed a huge goal difference of 50, and with third-placed Tottenham Hotspur trailing by 13 points, the stage has been set for a title showdown against United on April 30.

Before that, City's main challenges on paper are a home match against Chelsea and a trip to Arsenal but Mancini pointed out there were plenty of other pitfalls.

India slowly waking up

REUTERS, New Delhi

FIFA president Sepp Blatter reckons "sleeping giants" India are slowly waking up to their potential and that bids to host two world championships are positive developments.

The head of world soccer's governing body was on a visit to India, which has a population of 1.2 billion people but is 158 in FIFA's rankings.

"To wake up a sleeping giant you need more than one alarm clock. We have put different alarm clocks here. And I have to say the giant is not any longer sleeping, it's already starting to wake up," Blatter told reporters on Friday.

"My aim as the FIFA president is to establish football in the continent of India. I have been closely following the development of football in India.

"The FIFA development office is presently based in Delhi and the setting up of the regional and the elite academies are a step in the right direction."

The All India Football Federation announced on Friday that the country were planning to bid to host the World Club Cup in 2015 and the Under-17 World Cup in 2017.

"Both are positive developments no doubt. But it's up to the FIFA executive committee to decide," Blatter said.

Bolton snatch dramatic win

AFP, London



Bolton Wanderers snatched a dramatic 2-1 late victory in their clash with fellow strugglers QPR on Saturday as the debate over goal-line technology was reignited after a blunder from match officials.

An 86th-minute winner from substitute Ivan Klasnic bagged a vital three points for Bolton after Djibril Cisse's equaliser looked to have earned a draw for Rangers following Darren Pratley's opener.

The win saw Bolton claw their way out of the relegation zone at the expense of Lancashire rivals Blackburn, although QPR are certain to be left in the bottom three by the end of the day after the late matches.

But the main talking point from an entertaining game was a disallowed goal from QPR centre-half Clint Hill after 20 minutes.

Replays showed Hill's powerful header had clearly crossed the goal-line yet despite QPR protests, neither the linesman or referee Martin Atkinson were inclined to give the goal and Bolton had escaped.

QPR had started slowly but began pressuring Bolton's goal after soaking up a bright opening from Wanderers.

Bobby Zamora had the best chance when he rattled the woodwork on 18 minutes, thumping a volley against the crossbar from a tight angle after collecting a delicate chipped pass from Cisse.

But two minutes later came the flashpoint of the match when QPR looked to have taken the lead through Hill's header.

The Rangers centre-half timed his run to perfection and powered Joey Barton's corner goalwards only for Adam Bogdan to clear.

Rangers celebrated but no goal was given, ensuring the debate over goal-line technology -- which FIFA chiefs have said could be in place by the end of the year -- will rage on.

It got worse for QPR on 37 minutes as Bolton hit back to take the lead through Pratley, the midfielder punishing non-existing Rangers defending to head past Paddy Kenny.

QPR however shrugged off the disappointment to get back on level terms within minutes of the second half getting underway.

But this time it was the visitors' turn to be the beneficiaries of a poor call from the referee's assistant, Cisse appearing to be marginally offside before Shaun Wright-Phillips released his through ball.

'Podolski not a done deal'

Football

AFP, London

Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger said Friday the club had not yet agreed a deal for Cologne striker Lukas Podolski but revealed there could be progress within "two or three weeks."

Podolski, 26, is reportedly poised to join the Gunners for 13 million euros later this year as the Premier League side aim to beef up their attack.

Wenger however was coy about the prospect of the German international striker playing at the Emirates next season.

"I have not a lot to say about that because if we sign a player we will inform you. At the moment we have not signed anybody. There is still no agreement," Wenger said.

"The distance to the agreement is not always linked with the signing. When you are very close you are quickly very far again, but Podolski is a good player, I wouldn't deny that."

Puyol back for Barca

AFP, Madrid

Barcelona captain Carles Puyol is back in the Catalans' squad for Sunday's trip to Racing Santander in La Liga, after missing Wednesday's Champions League encounter with Bayer Leverkusen.

An adductor injury kept Puyol out of the defending European champions' 7-1 last-16 second-leg victory against the Bundesliga outfit and, while he has not yet been given the green light by the club's doctors to play, he does form part of a 19-man squad announced on Saturday.

Puyol is therefore a contender to replace the suspended Gerard Pique in the heart of Pep Guardiola's defence.

Barcelona also confirmed that Thiago Alcantara, Alexis Sanchez, Eric Abidal, David Villa, Ibrahim Afellay and Andreu Fontas are all sidelined due to injury.

SPORTS POLL

Do you think BPL was a successful tournament?

Yes 71.5%

No 24.7%

TOTAL VOTES: 235

WEEKLY QUESTION

Will AC Milan keep the Serie A title this season?

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