

Indian player dies after collapsing

AFP, Bangalore

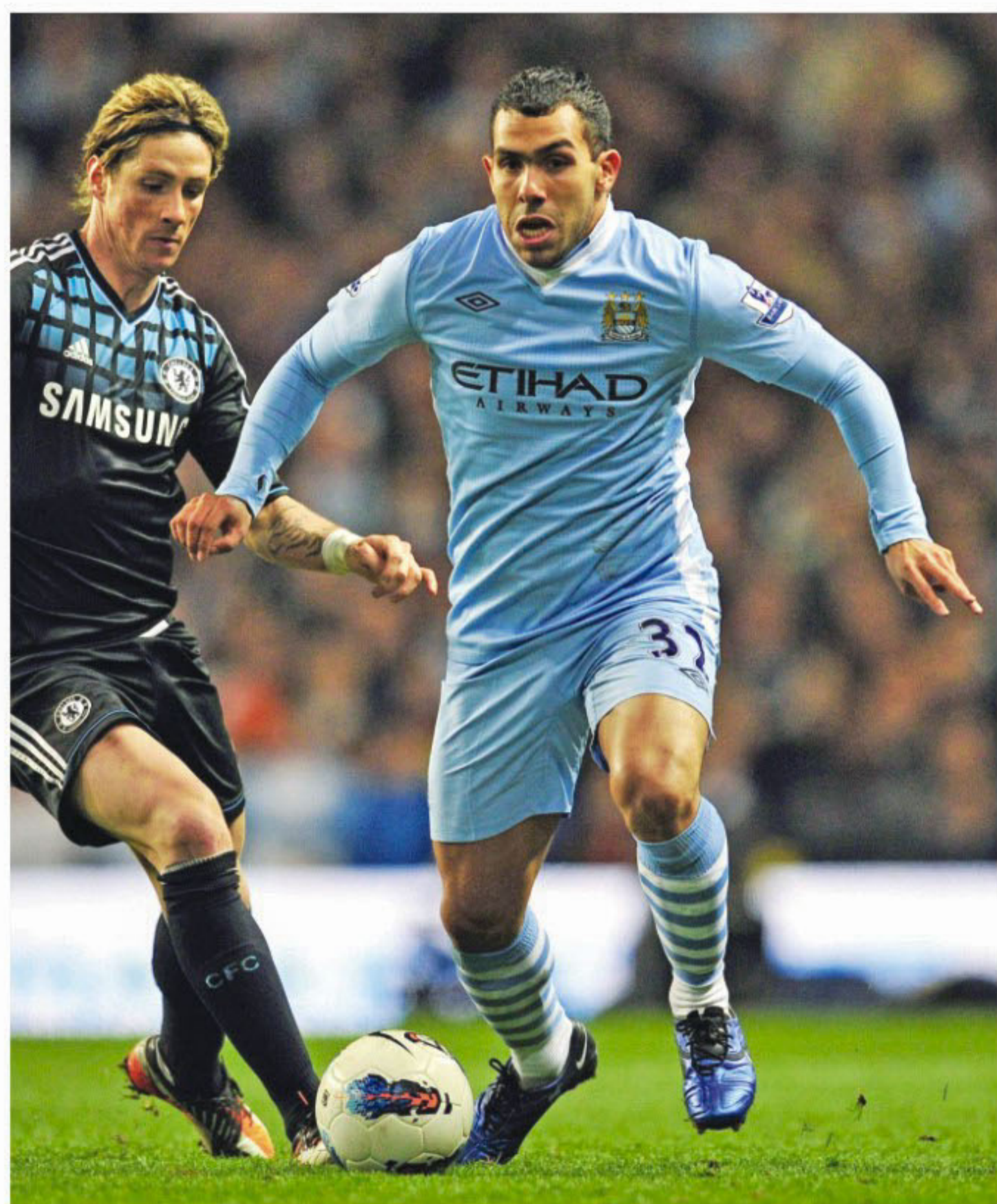
An Indian professional footballer died after collapsing during a game, with witnesses saying the 27-year-old had to be taken to hospital in a rickshaw.

The incident came as the English Premier League reviewed its own medical procedures following Bolton midfielder Fabrice Muamba's cardiac arrest while playing against Tottenham.

D. Venkatesh, a striker for Bangalore Mars, had come on as a late substitute in the home A-League match against South Western Railway on Wednesday, the All India Football Federation said as it launched an inquiry.

"We have asked the Karnataka state association to give us a detailed report on the incident. We need to understand why an ambulance was not available," federation secretary Kushal Das told AFP.

Indian media blamed poor medical facilities at the Bangalore Football Stadium for Venkatesh's death, saying the player could have been saved if timely treatment had been available.



Manchester City striker Carlos Tevez (R) vies with Chelsea counterpart Fernando Torres during their Premier League encounter at the Etihad Stadium on Wednesday.

Tevez inspires City

AFP, London



Carlos Tevez returned from exile to keep Manchester City's title challenge on course as the Argentine substitute played a crucial role in Wednesday's 2-1 win over Chelsea at Eastlands.

Inspired by Tevez, City scored twice in the final 12 minutes to move to within one point of Premier League leaders Manchester United, having played the same amount of games as their bitter rivals.

Elsewhere, Arsenal leapfrogged Tottenham into third place as Arsene Wenger's side won 1-0 at Everton, while their north London rivals were held to a 1-1 draw by Stoke.

QPR staged a sensational fightback to boost their survival hopes with three late goals in a 3-2 win against Liverpool.

At Eastlands, Tevez, who had fallen out with City boss Roberto Mancini over his refusal to warm-up during a Champions League tie at Bayern Munich in September, made his first appearance for nearly six months as a 66th minute replacement for Nigel de Jong. Mancini sent the striker on with

City trailing 1-0 to Gary Cahill's deflected 60th minute goal and it proved an inspired move as the hosts levelled in the 78th minute.

Tevez's compatriot Sergio Aguero stroked home a penalty after Michael Essien was penalised for handball.

It was Tevez who played the key role in Samir Nasri's 85th minute winner as the former Manchester United player slipped a perfectly-weighted pass through for the French midfielder to fire the winner that set a Premier League record for City's 20th successive home win.

That was Chelsea's first defeat under interim boss Roberto Di Matteo and it left the Blues five points behind Tottenham in the race for fourth place.

"I'm happy, because he (Tevez) did well," Mancini told Sky Sports. "Also he's not in good form, I don't think he's fit 100%, but that's football."

Meanwhile, Arsenal took full advantage of Tottenham's latest slip to move one point clear of Harry Redknapp's side.

Thomas Vermaelen got the only goal at Goodison Park in the eighth minute as he rose highest to head in Robin van Persie's corner.

RESULTS

Everton 0 Arsenal 1 (Vermaelen 8)
Manchester City 2 (Aguero 78-pen, Nasri 85) Chelsea 1 (Cahill 60)
QPR 3 (Derry 77, Cisse 86, Mackie 90)
Liverpool 2 (Coates 54, Kuyt 72)
Tottenham 1 (Van der Vaart 90)
Stoke 1 (Jerome 75)

Real struggle again

AFP, Madrid



Real Madrid saw their lead in La Liga cut to six points on Wednesday after they were held to a 1-1 draw by Villarreal and ended the match with two players sent off.

Cristiano Ronaldo scored his 33rd goal of the season in the 62nd minute, but Marcos Senna equalised with eight minutes remaining.

Things got worse for Real as Sergio Ramos and Mesut Ozil were both red-carded in the closing moments while coach Jose Mourinho and assistant Rui Faria were sent to the stands.

Barcelona had defeated Granada 5-3 on Tuesday to keep their title hopes alive with superstar Lionel Messi taking his career club goals tally to a record 234.

Afterwards neither Mourinho nor any of his backroom staff came out to face the press.

It was also reported that Ronaldo left the pitch repeatedly shouting 'we've been robbed'.

Villarreal, who are now four points from the relegation zone, had the better of the first period against Real.

They had a number of chances to take the lead, the most notable when Iker Casillas saved well on 20 minutes after a Sergio Ramos slip allowed Nilmar to bear down on goal.

Villarreal's dominance was so evident that Mourinho made a tactical change in midfield on 28 minutes replacing Lass Diarra, who had picked up a yellow card, with Jose Callejon.

The home team then had a strong claim for a penalty turned down on 37 minutes when Alvaro Arbolea appeared to pull the shirt of Neymar at a corner.

The game was becoming increasingly scrappy when on 61 minutes Ronaldo and Ozil exchanged passes, the latter

with a delightful back-flick, for the Portuguese star to round Diego Lopez in the Villarreal goal and put Madrid ahead.

Madrid were now in control and four minutes later Javier Camunas had to make a goal-line clearance with his head after Sami Khedira hooked the ball towards the net.

Villarreal did not look like equalising until Hamit Altintop fouled Joan Oriol on the edge of the area and Senna stepped up to convert the free-kick from 20 yards with eight minutes left.

In the aftermath of that decision, Mourinho was sent to the stands and then a minute later Sergio Ramos was dismissed for a second yellow card.

It was his 14th red card as a Real Madrid player.

Ozil was then given his marching orders with a direct red for protesting.

The game finished with nine-man Madrid desperately looking for the winner but it was not forthcoming and they had to be content with only a point for the second time in four days.

Earlier, third-placed Valencia slumped to a 2-1 home defeat to Zaragoza with the rock-bottom club taking the three points despite finishing, like Real Madrid, with only nine players.

Pablo Hernandez put Valencia ahead, but two goals from Antonio Galdeano 'Apono' gave Zaragoza some hope of escaping relegation.

The victory was deserved for a Zaragoza team who had Pablo Alvarez sent off on 20 minutes for a foul on Ariz Aduriz when he was the last defender.

Franco Zuculini received his marching orders with three minutes remaining for a second yellow card.

The result means Zaragoza are finally within touching distance of the rest of their struggling rivals after a number of weeks adrift, only two points behind Sporting Gijon and Racing Santander.

RESULTS

Atletico Madrid 2 (Falcao 49, 71)
Athletic Bilbao 1 (Javi Martinez 90+2)
Sporting Gijon 2 (Colunga 38, Botia 66)
Real Mallorca 3 (Nunes 30, Orfila 47-og, Alvaro 77)
Real Sociedad 1 (Vela 5) Levante 3 (Barkero 11, Kone 44, Torres 90+3)
Valencia 1 (Pablo Hernandez 9) Real Zaragoza 2 (Apono 30-pen, 76)
Villarreal 1 (Senna 83) Real Madrid 1

Napoli set Juve clash

AFP, Rome

Napoli defeated Siena 2-0 on Wednesday to reach the Italian Cup final on a 3-2 aggregate and will face Juventus in the May 20 final where they will look to end their 22-year wait for silverware.

Fired-up by their Champions League exit to Chelsea, Napoli went ahead after just 11 minutes through an own goal from Simone Vergassola.

Uruguayan striker Edinson Cavani added the second in the 31st minute after a swift counter-attack sparked by Ezequiel Lavezzi and Marek Hamsik.

Juventus reached the final on Tuesday after knocking out AC Milan.

The semifinal second leg ended 2-2 but Juve went through 4-3 on aggregate.

Bayern reach Cup final

AFP, Berlin

Bayern Munich reached the German Cup final after they beat Borussia Moenchengladbach 4-2 on penalties as Wednesday's semifinal finished goalless after extra-time.

Bayern will now face Borussia Dortmund on May 12 at Berlin's Olympic Stadium following the league leaders' 1-0 win over second-division Greuther Fuerth in Tuesday's other semi-final.

With nothing to separate Bayern and

Gladbach after 120 minutes of football at the 54,057 sold-out Borussia Park, the game was settled by spot-kicks.

After Bayern converted all four of their chances, misses by Gladbach's Brazil defender Dante and Norway midfielder Havard Nordtveit handed Bayern victory as Munich's Germany goalkeeper Manuel Neuer pulled off good saves.

"Penalties are always a certain amount of drama," said Bayern's relieved director of sport Christian Nerlinger.

"I am really pleased that Manuel Neuer saved the deciding penalties. We were able to convert all of our spot kicks, that speaks volumes for the team's determination."

SPORTS POLL

WEEKLY QUESTION

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