

Bale staying at Spurs

AFP, London

Tottenham manager Harry Redknapp insisted Gareth Bale was happy at the club on Friday amid reports the Welsh winger was being targeted for a summer move by Spanish giants Barcelona.

Barcelona are reported to have identified the 22-year-old as their top transfer target, with scouts from the club having watched the highly rated midfielder on several occasions this season.

Redknapp was adamant that any move for Bale would be met with resistance but joked he could be tempted into a deal if the Catalans were prepared to make Lionel Messi available in return.

"No one has been in touch with us," Redknapp said.

"He is happy here with us at the moment. He is a fantastic player. He will be linked with every club because he is such a great player."

"I would like Lionel Messi. I will have a chat with the chairman about Lionel. I will see if he fancies coming to Tottenham!"

Meanwhile Redknapp said he was rooting for Chelsea as they attempted to reach the Champions League final at Barcelona's expense following their 1-0 win over the holders at Stamford Bridge this week.

What to WATCH

| |
|----------------------------|
| SET Max |
| Indian Premier League |
| Chennai v Rajasthan |
| Live from 4:30pm |
| Delhi v Pune |
| Live from 8:30pm |
| ESPN |
| English Premiership |
| Arsenal v Chelsea |
| Live from 6:00pm |
| Newcastle v Stoke City |
| Live from 8:00pm |
| QPR v Tottenham |
| Live from 10:30pm |
| STAR Sports |
| English Premiership |
| Aston Villa v Sunderland |
| Live from 8:00pm |
| TEN Sports |
| Monte Carlo Masters |
| Semifinals |
| Live from 5:00pm |
| Serie A |
| Chievo v Udinese |
| Live from 10:00pm |
| TEN Action |
| La Liga |
| Barcelona v Real Madrid |
| Live from 12:00am (Sunday) |

DAY'S EVENT

National Cricket League
(Four-Day Match, Day Two)
Sylhet v Rajshahi
Venue: Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium, Mirpur
Khulna v Dhaka



Atletico Madrid striker Radamel Falcao (L) is ecstatic after scoring his second goal against Valencia during their Europa League semifinal at the Vicente Calderon Stadium on Thursday.

PHOTO: AFP

MU top rich list Falcao fires Atletico

Football

BBC, Online

Manchester United remain the world's most valuable football club, according to Forbes magazine.

The study estimates the Premier League champions are worth £1.4bn, which puts them top of the list for the eighth year in a row.

Real Madrid are ranked second, valued at £1.17bn, while Barcelona are third with an estimated value of £816m.

"Manchester United's global fan base of 330m helps make them the most valuable team in any sport," said Forbes.com.

Bayern Munich and Arsenal make up the top five in the rankings, with Chelsea and Liverpool ranked seventh and eighth respectively.

Tottenham Hotspur are just outside the top 10 in 11th place, with Manchester City up to 13th in the list.

The research added: "The top teams on the pitch are going to continue to get richer."

FORBES RICH LIST

1. Manchester United - \$2.235bn (£1.396bn)
2. Real Madrid - \$1.877bn (£1.17bn)
3. Barcelona - \$1.307bn (£816m)
4. Arsenal - \$1.292bn (£807m)
5. Bayern Munich - \$1.235bn (£770m)
6. AC Milan - \$989m (£615m)
7. Chelsea - \$761m (£473m)
8. Liverpool - \$619m (£385m)
9. Juventus - \$591m (£367m)
10. Schalke 04 - \$587m (£365m)
11. Tottenham Hotspur - \$564m (£351m)

AFP, Paris



Atletico Madrid and Sporting Lisbon held the balance of power after Thursday's Europa League semifinal first legs.

Atletico, inspired by a Falcao double, beat Valencia 4-2 in Madrid, while a stunning late comeback from Sporting saw them topple Athletic Bilbao 2-1 across the border in the Portuguese capital.

Poor defending by Valencia's Adil Rami was partly to blame for 2010 winners Atletico taking an 18th-minute lead.

Arda Turan cut the ball back off the goal line and after taking a deflection Falcao headed past Diego Alves for his 31st goal of the season and his 11th in the last dozen games.

Against the run of play Valencia went into the break all square after Rami headed the

ball down for Jonas to tap in from a corner deep into first half stoppage time.

Atletico were only back on the pitch four minutes before they had regained the advantage with the unmarked Miranda heading in low past Alves off Diego's long range freekick.

Atletico moved even closer to the final in Bucharest in the 54th minute after a charging run by Adrian Lopez who produced a clinical finish with a tight angled shot to foil Alves.

This was the 24-year-old's 10th goal in Europe this season, a fitting way to mark his 50th game for his club.

Falcao then appeared to have wrapped up a memorable night for Atletico, running rings round the Valencia defence to slam the ball into the roof of Alves's net for his 32nd goal of the campaign.

The in-form Colombian striker has fond memories of last year's Europa League final when he scored the winning goal for Porto in Dublin.

RESULTS

Atletico Madrid (ESP) 4 (Falcao 18, 78, Miranda 49, Adrian 54)
Valencia (ESP) 2 (Jonas 45+3, Ricardo Costa 90+4)
Sporting Lisbon (POR) 2 (Insua 76, Capel 80) Athletic Bilbao (ESP) 1

Clasico of destiny

AFP, Madrid



Bitter rivals Barcelona and Real Madrid meet on Saturday in the sixth 'Clasico' of the season to fight for three crucial points that will shape the destiny of this season's La Liga title.

With five games remaining, Real Madrid go to the Nou Camp four points clear of their great rivals knowing that a win or draw will almost certainly break Barca's dominance and hand Jose Mourinho's side their first title in four seasons.

Real were 10 points clear of the Catalans just over a month ago but have drawn three of the last seven games while Barca have won their last 11 league matches.

Real's run, that has opened the door for Barcelona, began with a 1-1 draw at home to Malaga followed by further

draws against Villarreal and Valencia.

The goals of Lionel Messi have been crucial in Barca's recent run -- the Argentine has scored an incredible 18 goals in those 11 wins.

Cristiano Ronaldo has also netted 41 league goals for Madrid making it a head-to-head shoot out between the two best players in the world for the 'Pichichi' prize awarded to the league's top scorer.

Both have earned countless man of the match awards, the tricky recent

away wins for both sides at Atletico Madrid standing out for great match-winning goals from the two stars.

Messi has 63 in all competitions to Ronaldo's 53, but if the Portuguese star wins his first La Liga title, against the reigning Spanish, European and World Club Champions, it would surely rank with the best feats in his career to date.

'El Clasico' matches have courted a fair amount of controversy in recent seasons with the appearance of Mourinho on the Madrid bench and his attempts to add a psychological dimension to the clash.

The rivalry boiled over at the beginning of the season when Mourinho poked Barca coach Pep Guardiola's assistant Tito Vilanova in the eye during a game.

Mourinho has only beaten Barca once in 10 attempts since he took over in the summer of 2010.

That victory came in last season's Spanish cup final with a Ronaldo winner in extra-time.

Brocchi out for season

AFP, Rome

Lazio will have to do without influential midfielder Cristian Brocchi for the final six games of the season after the player was ruled out for three months on Thursday.

Following tests in Germany he has been advised to rest completely for three months, the club said on their website.

SPORTS POLL

WEEKLY QUESTION

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Red-tinged Premier League

FARAZ IHTEHAM

The 2011-12 season's English Premier League saw a two-way battle for the title between the Manchester rivals United and City. Defending champions Manchester United arguably the best team in English football and the big pretenders, big spenders Manchester City.

Since 2006 the Red Devils have won four out of five Premier League titles with three consecutive victories. On the other hand City became the number one challengers to United's supremacy taking the number two spot with the decline of Chelsea and Arsenal as genuine contenders for this season.

The title race burst into life in October when Manchester City inflicted Manchester United's worst home defeat since 1955 as they thrashed the champions (6-1) in ruthless fashion to go five points clear at the top of the Premier League.

This huge City win was portrayed as a measure of their progress against the 19-time champions. And Roberto Mancini's men could not have delivered a more emphatic statement as Sir Alex Ferguson's side were humiliated.

But United's stature is such that one result doesn't mean a shift in the balance of power in Manchester. Ferguson must have been reflecting on the extent of the challenge now facing him from the club he once branded "noisy neighbours".

Fergie rose up to the challenge and masterminded United's comeback, despite losing some key players like Nemanja Vidic and Darren Fletcher

through injury. Paul Scholes came out of retirement in January to help the team on their way. At that time this was painted as a desperate move by Sir Alex, but in hindsight it is one that has paid rich dividends.

Staying in second place closely behind Manchester City, the Red Devils were able to close the gap and eventually overtake them. In March, City crumbled under the constant pressure and United overhauled the longtime leaders in the Premier League.

The holders are now the frontrunners for the title. With only four matches remaining, United currently enjoy a five-point lead over City whose manager Roberto Mancini has already written off his side's hopes of a first English title since 1968.

This has been an incredible turnaround for Fergie's men after their humiliating defeat at the hands of their City rivals. That defeat did not go down well with the faithful but United showed hunger and determination to be in the position that they are in.

All United need to do now is to win their next two games, the second of which is against City, and they retain their crown. And what a fitting end it would be for Manchester United to clinch their 20th Premiership title silencing their noisy neighbours at the Etihad.



Do you agree that United's superior class will tell at the end of this season. Do you think City have what it takes to overtake United as the leading team in English football. Write in with your views to sports@thedailystar.net

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ব্যবস্থাপক সম্মেলন ২০১২

(অংশ গ্রহণে সকল শাখা ব্যবস্থাপক)

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সঞ্চালক : সৈয়দ আবদুল হামিদ, পিএইচডি, এফসিএ, ব্যবস্থাপনা পরিচালক এবং সিইও, অগ্রণী ব্যাংক লিমিটেড

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