

## Lazio outwit Juventus

AFP, Rome

Lazio beat Juventus 2-1 after a dramatic finish to a pulsating Italian Cup semifinal second leg on Tuesday to seal their place in the final against either Inter Milan or city rivals AS Roma.

With the tie level at 1-1 after last week's first leg in Turin, Lazio took the lead on the night at the Stadio Olimpico when Alvaro Gonzalez headed in a measured Cristian Ledesma cross.

It looked as if that goal would be enough to take Vladimir Petkovic's side through to their first national Cup final since 2009, but then Juve hit back a minute into injury time when Arturo Vidal reacted quickest inside the penalty box to stab the ball home.

For a brief moment extra time loomed, but only until Sergio Floccari got his head to a corner inside a crowded box to put the hosts back in front.

That ensured that it would be Lazio going through to the final, and not Juve, the reigning Italian champions and current Serie A leaders.

## FA charges Fergie

REUTERS, London

Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson has been charged with misconduct by the Football Association after criticising a match official following his side's Premier League match at Tottenham Hotspur.

Ferguson was angered by linesman Simon Beck's decision not to award a penalty to his side after Wayne Rooney was brought down in the area while United led 1-0.

Tottenham equalised last weekend's game in stoppage time, leaving Ferguson to describe Beck's display as "shocking" and adding that the official had a history of failing to give United decisions.

In a statement on Tuesday the FA said Ferguson's comments had questioned the integrity of Beck.

"The FA has today charged Sir Alex Ferguson in relation to post-match media comments made following Manchester United's game at Tottenham Hotspur on Sunday 20 January 2013," it said.

Ferguson has until 1600 GMT on Friday to respond to the charge.

Should he be found guilty he could receive a touchline ban of up to four matches.



Channel 9

BPL

Sylhet Royals v Rangpur Riders

Live from 2:00pm

Barisal Burners v Chittagong Kings

Live from 6:00pm

STAR Cricket

ICC Women's World Cup

India v West Indies

Live from 3:00pm

TEN Action

Copa del Rey

Semifinals, First Leg

Atletico Madrid v Sevilla



BPL

Sylhet Royals v Rangpur Riders

Time: 2:00pm

Barisal Burners v Chittagong Kings

Time: 6:00pm



Newcastle United striker Papiss Cisse (L) scores the opening goal during their Premier League encounter against Aston Villa at Villa Park on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Balotelli set for Milan Lacklustre City

Football

AFP, London

Manchester City coach Roberto Mancini confirmed on Tuesday that Mario Balotelli is set to return to Italy to join AC Milan, who had announced his transfer earlier in the day.

Milan said the controversial striker would arrive in Italy on Wednesday and undergo a medical examination before signing a four-and-a-half-year contract.

Reports in the Italian media said Milan would pay 20 million euros (£17.1 million, \$27 million) to acquire the services of a player who previously played for their city rivals, Inter Milan.

Speaking after City's 0-0 draw at Queens Park Rangers in the Premier League on Tuesday, Mancini told Sky Sports: "Both clubs are talking about him. I think that maybe tomorrow they can close it. Mario will go in for a medical."

Balotelli has had a chequered time at City, making the headlines as much for his exploits off the pitch as for what he has achieved on it, but Mancini said he would be missed.

"We are very sorry (to lose him)," said the Italian.

"We love Mario like a guy, we love Mario like a player, but I think he had this big chance to go back to Italy and play for a big club like Milan."

"I hope Mario can continue to improve and can show he is ready because I think if he works hard, he can continue his growing and he can become one of the best players in Europe."

Earlier, the in-house

Milan Channel announced: "Mario Balotelli to Milan, the player will come tomorrow (Wednesday) for his medical and sign his contract."

Milan director Umberto Gandini confirmed the deal, saying on Twitter: "Transfer agreement for Balotelli signed with Manchester City. Medical is tomorrow in Milan, then personal terms until 2017 will be signed."

City paid Inter Milan £22 million for the Italy striker in August 2010, but his time at the club has been peppered with controversy.

Balotelli, 22, will reportedly earn an annual net salary of 4.5 million euros during a spell with Milan that is scheduled to run until 2017.

The striker, who scored three times for Italy on their run to the final of Euro 2012, returns to his home country in a bid to relaunch a career that has gradually lost momentum this season.

He has scored just once in 14 Premier League appearances, as well as once in the League Cup and once in the Champions League.

Balotelli's departure would leave City with only three senior strikers in Sergio Aguero, Carlos Tevez and Edin Dzeko, but Mancini says there is not enough time to sign a replacement before the transfer window closes on Thursday.

"I don't think so because we have two days and it's difficult to buy a good player," he said. "In this moment, I don't think we can."

Despite his contributions to the 2011 FA Cup success and last season's dramatic league title triumph, Balotelli's two-and-a-half-year spell at City looks destined to be remembered for a spate of controversial incidents.

AFP, London



The post-Mario Balotelli era at Manchester City began in lacklustre fashion as they were held to a 0-0 draw at Queens Park Rangers on Tuesday that prevented them from making up ground on Manchester United.

Victory for City would have cut United's lead to just two points but instead Alex Ferguson's side will tackle Southampton on Wednesday with an opportunity to re-open a seven-point lead at the Premier League summit.

An injury to Vincent Kompany obliged the champions to start with Spanish midfielder Javi Garcia at centre-back, but they began with both Carlos Tevez and Sergio Aguero in attack as they sought to exploit bottom club QPR's defensive frailties.

Joleon Lescott blazed an early chance over the crossbar from close range, while Pablo Zabaleta headed against the bar from a David Silva cross and Aguero had a goal ruled out for offside.

Adel Taarabt provided a reminder of QPR's threat with a low shot that Joe Hart had to keep out but the hosts were indebted to Julio Cesar for a superb save to deny Gareth Barry and keep the scores level at half-time.

City added a third striker to the mix in the second half in the shape of Edin Dzeko, but still the goal eluded them, with

Aguero shooting over from 12 yards before Julio Cesar produced another fine reflex save to repel Silva.

QPR remain bottom of the table, but they are now just four points from safety.

Newcastle United claimed their first away win of the season with a 2-1 victory at Aston Villa that further deepened the gloom hanging over Paul Lambert's side.

French debutant Moussa Sissoko teed up Papiss Cisse for Newcastle's 19th-minute opener and another Frenchman, Yohan Cabaye, made it 2-0 just after the half hour with a glorious, dipping half-volley.

Villa stirred in the second half, hitting back with an early penalty from Christian Benteke, but Newcastle held on despite late pressure from the home side.

Eliminated from both the League Cup and the FA Cup by lower-league opposition last week, Villa have now slipped into the Premier League relegation zone to boot, while Newcastle climb one place to 15th.

Wigan Athletic capitalised on Villa's slip-up by storming back from 2-0 down at Stoke City to earn a 2-2 draw that lifted them out of the bottom three.

Goals from Ryan Shawcross and Peter Crouch looked to have put the hosts in command, but James McArthur's fine goal immediately halved the deficit and Franco Di Santo equalised in the 61st minute with an emphatic volley.

### RESULTS

Aston Villa 1 (Benteke 49-pen)  
Newcastle United 2  
(Cisse 19, Cabaye 31)  
Queens Park Rangers 0 Manchester City 0  
Stoke City 2 (Shawcross 23, Crouch 48)  
Wigan Athletic 2 (McArthur 50, Di Santo 61)



## Shanghai outraged

AFP, Shanghai

Star striker Didier Drogba's Chinese club Shanghai Shenhua expressed outrage over his move to Turkish side Galatasaray Wednesday, saying it breached his current contract and he was still their player.

Galatasaray and Drogba himself announced earlier this week that the Ivory Coast star had signed for the Turkish league leaders, apparently ending a two-and-a-half-year deal with the Chinese Super League side.

"Currently, Drogba is still a player of the Shanghai Shenhua Football Club, and the contract between both parties is still within the term of validity," Shenhua said in a statement on its website.

"The club is deeply shocked by the Galatasaray Football Club's violation of rules by contacting a player still under contract."

Shenhua planned to appeal to football's international governing body FIFA over the matter, the statement said.

"The Shanghai Shenhua Football Club is collating all the evidence and materials and preparing to submit them to FIFA so as to protect the club's interests and prevent greater losses," it said.

In a posting on his website, Drogba, who arrived in China last July, gave no clue as to the circumstances surrounding his exit from Shenhua, where he was reportedly earning \$300,000 a week.

But Chinese media reported that Drogba had previously asked FIFA to nullify his contract after the club defaulted on payments following a shareholder dispute dating back to September.

## Sara spills the beans

AFP, Madrid

Real Madrid goalkeeper Iker Casillas' girlfriend, television sports journalist Sara Carbonero, said Tuesday there was a split between the team's players and coach Jose Mourinho. "It is the popular opinion that the players don't get on with their coach at all," 28-year-old Carbonero told Mexican television station Televisa.

"Right now, there is a split in the changing room and we will have to wait until the end of the season to see if Mourinho ends up going because he has many fronts open here at Real Madrid," she said.

Spain's biggest selling sports daily Marca last week said Casillas and fellow captain Sergio Ramos had urged club chairman Florentino Perez to fire Mourinho before next season.

According to Marca, they warned that several Real Madrid players would leave if the Portuguese stayed on next season.

Perez held a rare news conference angrily denying the report as an attempt to destabilise the club. Casillas and Ramos, too, issued a joint denial that there had been any ultimatum.

"We all think that there was no such blackmail," Carbonero told the Mexican station.

Casillas, 31, was controversially benched by Mourinho just before Christmas, further stoking rumours of division in the club.

In any case, the Spanish international has now been sidelined for eight to 12 weeks with a fractured left thumb.

## Champs Zambia out

Football

AFP, Nelspruit

Zambia became the first Africa Cup of Nations' defending champions to be knocked out in the first round for 21 years after a nerve-racking 0-0 draw with Group C table toppers Burkina Faso on Tuesday.

The titleholders' third straight stalemate left them emulating Algeria, who failed to reach the quarter finals as reigning champions in 1992.

Zambia missed out after Nigeria nabbed the runners-up spot in Group C courtesy of their 2-0 win over Ethiopia in the match being played simultaneously in Rustenburg.

That left the Nigerians level on five points with Burkina Faso, but in second on goal difference.

As surprise winners of the mini-league, the Burkinabe's reward is a quarterfinal clash with Group D runners-up, either Togo or Tunisia.

Collins Mbesuma joined Southampton's Emmanuel Mayuka in the Zambia attack, the Orlando Pirates forward replacing captain Christopher Katongo with talismanic goalkeeper Kennedy Mweene taking over the skipper's armband.

Coach Herve Renard made one more change, bringing in Hichani Himonde for veteran defender Joseph Musonda.

Burkina's captain Moumouni Dagano was on the bench for the second time, with Benjamin Balima taking the Qatari-

based striker's place.

Daouda Diakite was between the Burkinabe posts with first choice keeper Abdoulaye Soullama suspended for his red card in the Ethiopia rout, and Florent Rouamba came in for Aristide Bance.

Alain Traore's deadly left foot, already the author of three goals for Burkina Faso, tested Mweene with a well struck 30m freekick in the opening seconds.

That unhappily was to be his last impact on the game as in the eighth minute the Burkinabe star was stretched off with an untimely left thigh injury.

Bance stepped in to replace the stricken Lorient player.

Renard was forced into an unscripted change himself, with Musonda in for the injured Davies Nkausu.

Playing in their orange 'away' strip Zambia had a great chance to open the scoring in the 17th minute when a defensive blunder by Mady Panandetiguirri let in Mbesuma but his shot went straight into the grateful hands of Diakite.

After the restart on the heavily-criticised sandy pitch Renard made a tactical switch, bringing on attack-minded Mulenga Mukaka for Isaac Chansa.

Approaching the hour, Mbesuma's header off a corner went flying over the crossbar as Zambia began to put the Burkinabe backline under pressure.

Hard as they tried Zambia could not find the all important goal, leaving them with a humiliating early trip back home, and Burkina Faso three games away from the title.