

TEN Sports
South Africa v India
First Test, Day 1
Live from 2:30pm
Sony Six HD
Pakistan v Sri Lanka
First ODI
Live from 5:00pm

NEO Prime
New Zealand v
West Indies
Third Test, Day 1
Live from
3:30am
(Thursday)

Roma lose ground

AFP, Milan

Francesco Totti ended a two-month injury absence for Roma but had to settle for a share of the spoils in a 2-2 draw away to Milan, who had Sulley Muntari to thank for a late leveller at the San Siro on Monday.

Roma travelled to struggling Milan looking to close the gap on leaders Juventus to three points after they had opened up a six-point gap with an eighth consecutive win on Sunday.

But despite bossing Milan in almost every department, Roma had to settle for their fifth draw in six matches to remain second, five points behind.

Roma started brightly and opened the scoring before the quarter hour through Mattia Destro, only to be pegged back on the half hour when defender Cristian Zapata levelled for the hosts.

Roma took a 2-1 lead on 51 minutes when Kevin Strootman scored from the penalty spot but Milan were handed a lifeline when Muntari made the best of Mario Balotelli's pass to beat Morgan De Sanctis on 77 minutes.

Roma's Ivorian striker Gervinho looked particularly lively in the opening period and after being sent clear by Dodo forced Christian Abbiati to save down low at his near post.

But it was from Strootman's run down the left that Roma opened their account, Destro sliding in unchallenged to slot the ball home on 13 minutes as Milan's defence went missing.

It was Milan's 114th anniversary on Monday, but there was little to celebrate with Massimiliano Allegri's side struggling for rhythm against a well-oiled Roma side and Gervinho's lightning runs.

In the first 20 minutes only Kaka's shot, which sailed wide of De Sanctis' far post, gave any glimmer of hope.

However Milan found the breakthrough from a corner, Zapata meeting Muntari's header with a bouncing header of his own to beat De Sanctis on the half hour.

Roma thought they had restored their lead a minute later but Michael Bradley's effort from a tight angle bounced off the goalline.

Destro threatened again just before half time but Milan's blushes were saved by a timely tackle from Daniele Bonera.

Abbiati failed to appear for the second half and was replaced by Gabriel, who after seven minutes failed to stop Strootman's spot kick, awarded after the keeper had fouled Gervinho on the edge of the box.

Totti replaced Destro in the 64th minute and not long after the Roma veteran was involved in the build-up which saw Bradley head just wide from six metres out following Maicon's weighted cross into the area.



PHOTO: AFP

AS Roma striker Mattia Destro (R) celebrates his opening goal against Milan during their Serie A encounter at San Siro on Monday.

Messi's agents deny report

AFP, Madrid



Barcelona superstar Lionel Messi's agents denied Monday a Spanish newspaper allegation that his father was suspected of being involved in laundering Colombian drug money through charity football matches.

Leo Messi Management (LMM), whose president is the 26-year-old Argentine international's father, Jorge Messi, urged Spanish daily El Mundo to correct the story.

"Jorge Messi has never been connected to the case," LMM said in a statement.

"He has not been investigated or

called to testify, much less charged," it added.

"We hope that the newspaper El Mundo will correct the published story in line with the information released by the Interior Ministry," it said.

Spain's police and the Interior Ministry said a Colombian promoter was suspected of laundering drug money through concerts and sporting events in Spain, South America and the United States.

But they said there was no evidence of wrongdoing by Messi, his family or other players who featured in charity football matches organised by the Colombian promoter at the centre of the affair.

"He had nothing to do with this firm," the source said, playing down the report in El Mundo, which had described Messi senior as being "at

the centre" of the affair.

Police said they took witness statements from football players to gather information about the company, but they were "ruling out for the moment their involvement in the crime being investigated".

El Mundo named the players as Barcelona's Messi, Dani Alves, Javier Mascherano and goalkeeper Jose Manuel Pinto.

Barcelona coach Gerardo Martino said neither Lionel Messi nor his family were under any kind of investigation.

"Rumours cause damage when they are true but when they are not true they should not cause damage," Martino said.

Bastian allays World Cup fears

AFP, Berlin

Bayern Munich's Germany star Bastian Schweinsteiger has said he has no fear of missing the 2014 World Cup in Brazil, despite his on-going ankle problems.

"I have not had a moment's concern about missing the World Cup," Schweinsteiger told SID, an AFP subsidiary.

"It's annoying that I can't play, but I have to take care of my body. It's not the first time...(that I've been injured).

"Light jogging is now possible, but no ball work."

"It'll take a while yet, but I am working harder in training than when I am fit."

The 29-year-old has been out since mid-November after a second operation on his right ankle, having also gone under the knife in August.

Midfielder Schweinsteiger has made 100 appearances for his country and should have a key role to play for Germany when they take on Portugal, Ghana and the USA in Group G in Brazil next year.

Schweinsteiger will sit out Bayern's Club World Cup campaign, which starts on Tuesday when they face Asian champions Guangzhou Evergrande in the semi-final in Morocco, and is not expected to return until the European champions' winter training camp starts on January 5.

The Dinamo Zagreb captain has also been fined 30,000 Swiss francs (24,562 euros) by FIFA.

Croatian prosecutors have already fined Simunic 25,000 kunas (3,200 euros, \$4,400) for inciting racial hatred, adding that the player was aware that the chant symbolised the official salute of Croatia's totalitarian regime.

Simunic said at the time he was motivated solely by "love of my people (Croatian) and homeland".

"The thought that anyone could associate me with any form of hatred or violence terrifies me," he said.

"If anyone understood my cries differently, or negatively, I hereby want to deny they contained any political context."

"They were guided exclusively by my love for my people and homeland, not hatred

Faster than Bolt?

AFP, Berlin

Germany's 100m sprint champion Julian Reus has challenged Borussia Dortmund winger Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang to a sprint race to prove whether the football star is faster than Usain Bolt.

Aubameyang, who has scored nine Bundesliga goals this season, has clocked 3.7 seconds over 30 metres in training, suggesting that he is faster than Bolt, who clocked 3.78secs over the same distance en route to setting the 100m world record of 9.58secs in 2009.

Last Saturday, Gabon international Aubameyang told German television show Sportstudio that he is faster than Bolt, a claim German sprint champion Julian Reus is eager to challenge and wants to race him.

"It is a blatant myth that Aubameyang is faster than Usain Bolt," said the 25-year-old Reus, whose personal best is 10.08secs, while Aubameyang has yet to accept the challenge.

Montolivo to miss derby

AFP, Milan

AC Milan captain Riccardo Montolivo is set to miss the Milan derby with Inter on Sunday after picking up a yellow card in a 2-2 draw with Roma.

Montolivo, who was one booking away from a suspension, was cautioned for dissent in the 73rd minute of Monday's fixture at the San Siro.

Milan coach Massimiliano Allegri, meanwhile, could face disciplinary action ahead of Sunday's game after being sent from the touchline following Montolivo's caution after complaining to the fourth official.



Gattuso under investigation

AFP, Rome

Gennaro Gattuso, a member of Italy's 2006 World Cup-winning side, was placed under investigation while four people were arrested in connection with a match-fixing scandal on Tuesday, Italian police reported.

Gattuso, 35, sacked earlier this season as coach of second division Palermo, is suspected of "associating with criminals with intent to commit sporting fraud".

The long-running "Calciopromesse" saga took a further twist with the arrest of the four, all said to have provided the link between players and a clandestine betting ring.

Police declined to say where the arrests had taken place, but the nationwide operation was led by the Cremona prosecutor's office, which initially uncovered the scandal in 2010.

The four were named as Salvatore Spadaro, Francesco Bazzani, Cosimo Rinci and Fabio Quadri, the news agency Ansa reported.

Spadaro is said to be linked with the "Bolognese" gang which was involved with former player Giuseppe Signori, who was arrested in 2010 in the initial investigation into

Hoddle open to Spurs approach

AFP, London

Former Tottenham Hotspur manager Glenn Hoddle would be interested in returning to the club to succeed the sacked Andre Villas-Boas, a source close to him revealed on Tuesday.

Technical coordinator Tim Sherwood, a former Spurs midfielder, has been placed in interim charge of first-team affairs following Villas-Boas's dismissal as manager on Monday.

Hoddle, 56, has not worked as a manager since leaving Wolverhampton Wanderers in 2006, but he appears eager to return to Spurs, where he made his name as a player before becoming coach in 2001.

A story published on a website co-founded by Hoddle on Tuesday said: "Zapsportz.com understands that Hoddle will certainly help if the club makes an approach."

Hoddle has also received backing from his former Spurs team-mate Ossie Ardiles, who also managed the club between 1993 and 1994.

"For me, the man for the job is Glenn Hoddle," Ardiles told British radio station talkSPORT.

"I think he is a wonderful manager and he is a lot more mature, so I think he will be a wonderful choice. He knows everything about the Premier League and Spurs especially."

Thrashed 5-0 by Liverpool in the Premier League last weekend, Spurs host London rivals West Ham United in the League Cup quarter-finals on Wednesday before returning to league action at Southampton on Sunday.

Simunic punished

AFP, Lausanne



Australian-born Croatia defender Josip Simunic will miss the World Cup after being banned for 10 matches by FIFA for his pro-Nazi chants that marred his country's play-off victory over Iceland last month.

Football's world governing body confirmed on Monday that Simunic's ban will start at the World Cup in Brazil, and that he will also be banned from entering the stadium for any of his country's matches.

The incident came after Croatia's World Cup qualifying play-off against Iceland in Zagreb on November 19, which Croatia won 2-0 to secure their place in Brazil.

The 35-year-old shouted "za dom" -- Croatian for "for the homeland" -- four times. In response, fans chanted "spremni", meaning "ready". The chant was used by Croatia's World War II Ustase regime, allied to Nazi Germany, which killed hundreds of thousands of Serbs, Jews, anti-fascist Croatians, Roma and others in concentration camps.

A FIFA statement said: "The committee took note that the player, together with the crowd, shouted a Croatian salute that was used during World War II by the fascist

communist regime."

Simunic said at the time he was motivated solely by "love of my people (Croatian) and homeland".

"The thought that anyone could associate me with any form of hatred or violence terrifies me," he said.

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