

## SALAH, EGYPTIAN FA AT LOGGERHEADS

Liverpool winger Mohamed Salah has hit out at the Egyptian Football Association as his image rights row rumbles on. The Reds' 43-goal top scorer and Ramy Abbas, his lawyer and agent, have been frustrated in their attempts to resolve the dispute ahead of June's World Cup in Russia. They are fuming that Salah's image features prominently on the outside of the national team's official plane which is being provided by official sponsor 'WE'. The player has his own individual sponsorship deal with rival telecommunications firm Vodafone but the Egyptian FA have refused to back down. Salah tweeted yesterday: "Unfortunately the way to deal with it is a very big insult... I was hoping the deal would be classier than this." It is unclear whether Salah means he could threaten to withdraw from the Egypt squad. Abbas has previously stated that "all options are on the table". Abbas said on Saturday that he had been waiting over a week for a response from the Egyptian FA to what he has described as "a very serious issue".



Manchester United midfielder Maroune Fellaini (L) condemned Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger to a defeat in his last match at Old Trafford with an incredible, if fortunate, header with the back of his head in stoppage time in a Premier League match yesterday night. PHOTO: REUTERS

## Wenger leaves Old Trafford in defeat

AFP, Manchester



Manchester United manager Jose Mourinho hopes he gets the chance to face Arsene Wenger again after the outgoing Arsenal manager's final visit to Old Trafford as Gunners' boss ended in a 2-1 defeat on Sunday.

Wenger was greeted by former United boss Alex Ferguson and Mourinho before kick-off and even presented with a glass momento.

However, Wenger was left empty-handed when it came to points as defeat left sixth-placed Arsenal mathematically out of the race for a top-four finish.

Marouane Fellaini rose highest to flick home the winner in stoppage time after Henrikh Mkhitaryan's second-half strike against his former club had cancelled out Paul Pogba's early opener.

"I hope I play against him again," said Mourinho, who has a history of spats with Wenger, most famously describing the Frenchman as a "specialist in failure" for his inability to win the Premier League since 2003/04.

"I hope that can happen again. If not in the Premier League, who knows (where) we can have a big match somewhere?"

United have now sealed their place in the Champions League next season and moved closer to their target of finishing at least second best to champions Manchester City by opening a five-point gap on Liverpool.

"Ok progress at many levels, but (it's) not enough to be first instead of second and not enough to win the Champions League instead of the Europa League," added Mourinho.

"It's enough to finish second, to be stable, to win some trophies, to reach some finals, but we need more."

Ferguson told the United website ahead of the game that his clashes for many years with Wenger's strongest Arsenal sides over a decade ago "made the Premier League."

But it was a sign of how far Arsenal have fallen that Wenger made eight changes from the side that drew 1-1 with Atletico Madrid in the first leg of their Europa League semi-final on Thursday as he had already given up hope of a top-four finish.

"It goes to show you, once you are not a danger any more, people love you," said Wenger on his fond farewell from the United fans. "I am thankful to Manchester United. They had a nice gesture before the game, it was the first time I got a trophy before the game. It was very classy from them."

"I want to have a glass of wine now with Sir Alex because he has always good wine."

## Simeone buries Napoli

AFP, Milan



Kalidou Koulibaly was sent off early as Napoli succumbed to a Giovanni Simeone hat-trick in a shock 3-0 defeat at Fiorentina that edged Juventus closer to a seventh successive Serie A title on Sunday.

With just three games left, Juventus have a four-point lead on closest challengers Napoli and could wrap up yet another 'Scudetto' next weekend.

Koulibaly, labelled a hero when he scored the last-gasp header that kept Napoli's ambitions alive with a 1-0 win over Juventus in Turin last week, turned villain in Florence after he was sent off after just eight minutes.

Argentina forward Simeone -- the son of Atletico Madrid boss Diego Simeone -- scored all three goals in a spectacular display to keep Fiorentina's Europa League hopes alive.

Juventus battled past 10-man Inter Milan in a San Siro thriller on Saturday to prevail 3-2 thanks to two late goals in three minutes. Massimiliano Allegri's champions host Bologna on Saturday and will be assured of a seventh straight title if Napoli fail to win at home against Torino on Sunday.

Napoli never recovered from Koulibaly's expulsion, the towering Senegalese defender initially shown a yellow card for kicking out at Simeone as he charged towards goal. But a video assistant referee (VAR) review at the Stadio Franchi in Florence upgraded the yellow to red, with a free-kick given instead of a penalty.

Napoli coach Maurizio Sarri replaced midfielder Jorginho with central defender Lorenzo Tonelli. But Napoli struggled to contain their rivals, Simeone breaking the deadlock by firing through the legs of goalkeeper Pepe Reina after 34 minutes.

Simeone pounced to fire in the second on 62 minutes after the ball initially bounced off Elseid Hysaj and Reina cleared with his leg. The 22-year-old completed his hat-trick three minutes into injury time to claim his 13th goal this season.

"My father will be very happy with the hat-trick!" said Simeone as Fiorentina moved to within four points of the Europa League places.

On Saturday's Serie A showpiece, Juventus bat-

led past 10-man Inter Milan with two late goals giving the champions a 3-2 win in the San Siro.

Inter looked as if they would pull off an unlikely victory as the hosts led until three minutes from the whistle despite playing more than 70 minutes a man down after Matias Vecino was sent off. But Milan Skriniar turned the ball into his own net after 87 minutes with Gonzalo Higuain heading in the winner two minutes later.

"I have to congratulate the lads, it was an important step towards the Scudetto," said Juventus coach Massimiliano Allegri. "It was a beautiful night of football between two teams who had to win. Winning at San Siro is very complicated, they did very well at 10. We know that to win the championship we have to win all of our games."

Juve's lead had been cut to one point after their



Fiorentina striker Giovanni Simeone (L) slotted home a hat-trick to deal a heavy, likely finishing, blow to Napoli's hopes of a first Scudetto since 1990 in their Serie A match last night. PHOTO: AFP

defeat by Napoli in Turin last week.

Maurizio Sarri's Napoli travel to Fiorentina on Sunday bidding to match the champions and keep their push for a third title after 1987 and 1990 alive.

Saturday's defeat damages Inter's hopes of Champions League football next season as they stay fifth behind with just three games to play.

"It will be hard to put this defeat behind us," said Inter coach Luciano Spalletti. "This match meant a huge amount to us and the team deserved a different result."

## Table Tennis team denied Swedish visa

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh women's team will not be able to take part in the World Team Table Tennis Championships due to 'negligence' of the Bangladesh Table Tennis Federation (BTTF), who failed to obtain visas for the players after allegedly starting the visa procedure late.

Bangladesh, comprised of Sonam Sultana Shoma, Mousmita Alam Rumi and Rahima Akter, were supposed to play their first two matches against Norway and Maldives yesterday after leaving the country for Sweden on Saturday.

Wales, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Bosnia and Herzegovina were Bangladesh's other group opponents. The championships got underway in Sweden on Saturday.

Though the BTTF confirmed their participation in the middle of February, the game's governing body started visa procedures just 10 days ahead of their scheduled departure (April 28). However, the Swedish embassy in Dhaka has allegedly refused to provide visas citing a shortage of time.

Though the players alleged that the federation intentionally delayed the procedure to not send the team, BTTF general secretary Khandokar Hasan Munir refuted the allegation.

"The table tennis team had earlier travelled for tournaments to different European nations by getting visas within a short period of time, so this time too we initiated visa processing 10 days before our scheduled departure," Munir said. "In line with the embassy's recommendation, we appeared before the embassy in Dhaka on April 25 with note verbal from foreign affairs ministry but they refused to provide visas saying we are already late."



World No. 1 Rafael Nadal celebrates with his Barcelona Open trophy at the Pista Rafa Nadal court after a straight sets win over Greece's Stefanos Tsitsipas yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

## Nadal hits 11 again

REUTERS, Barcelona



World number one Rafael Nadal made light work of Greek teenager Stefanos Tsitsipas to win the Barcelona Open final 6-2, 6-1 yesterday, lifting the trophy for a record-extending 11th time.

Tsitsipas, 19, is the second-youngest player in the ATP top 100. Like Nadal, he had reached the final without dropping a set, knocking out world number seven Dominic Thiem in the quarters and 11th-ranked Pablo Carreno Busta in the semis on his way to the final.

He had said that playing Nadal would be like "receiving a free tennis lesson" and although he held in the opening game, the gulf in class between the two players quickly shone through.

Nadal broke Tsitsipas to love in the third game and broke him again in the fifth.

Light rain had interrupted the match in the first and second games but the sun soon came out to shine over the packed Rafael Nadal Court as the home favourite put on a show.

Tsitsipas held his serve to make it 5-2 but Nadal comfortably served out for the set, shouting "Vamos!" when his opponent hit beyond the baseline to end it in under 40 minutes.

Nadal showed no mercy in the second set and Tsitsipas's inexperience showed when he missed a simple volley at the net in the opening game as the Spaniard grabbed the early break.

The Greek showed some of the fight which had led him to the final to hold in the fifth game and make it 4-1 but Nadal held and broke his opponent again to win the match after one hour and 18 minutes, clinching the title when Tsitsipas found the net.

## May Day



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 তাকে সশ্রদ্ধ সালাম।