

Mourinho gets four-match suspension

AFP, Istanbul

Fenerbahce coach Jose Mourinho was handed a four-match ban and fined more than 40,000 euros by the Turkish football federation on Thursday for comments he made after an explosive Istanbul derby against Galatasaray.

After Monday's game ended in a 0-0 stalemate, the 62-year-old Mourinho said the home bench had been "jumping like monkeys".

He also reportedly repeated his criticism of Turkish referees.

Fenerbahce said that Mourinho's comments were taken out of context.

On Thursday the Turkish football federation (TFF) disciplinary council handed down a two-match suspension for his comments against the fourth referee and two additional matches for his blast at the Galatasaray bench. They were judged "contrary to sporting ethics".

Mourinho, whose team trail leaders Galatasaray by six points in the table, was also fined just over 42,000 euros.



Bangladesh players celebrate their 45-27 points victory in the fifth and final match of the five-match kabaddi series against Nepal which helped them to a 4-1 overall victory at the Outer Stadium in Paltan yesterday. Nepal, who won only the second match of the series, saw their star player Ghanshyam Roka Magar (bottom) adjudged the best raider of the series.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Beating Bangladesh a big achievement: Ghanshyam

Bangladesh defeated by Nepal 45-27 points in the final match of the five-match Test series yesterday, securing a 4-1 triumph. However, Nepal's historic victory over Bangladesh in the second match grabbed much focus, with the visiting team's captain Ghanshyam Roka Magar eventually becoming the best raider of the series. Ghanshyam had earlier played a key role in taking their country to the final of 2024 Bangabandhu Gold Cup Kabaddi, using his experience from the Indian Pro Kabaddi League where he played for Haryana Steelers. The youngster spoke to **The Daily Star's Anisur Rahman** about the just-concluded series and Nepal's rapidly-improving kabaddi team after the fifth match. Following are excerpts from the interview.

The Daily Star (DS): How would you describe the experience you gained in the five-match Test series against Bangladesh?

Ghanshyam Roka Magar (GRM): It has been a really good experience for us because we defeated Bangladesh for the first time. We performed well throughout the series. Beating Bangladesh for the first time in 20-25 years is a big achievement. Bangladesh also provided us with excellent facilities here, and we appreciate their efforts. We hope to use the experience gained here to perform better in the South Asian Games and the Asian Games in the coming days. However, we still need to improve and learn from our mistakes so that we can compete at a higher level.

DS: What went wrong in the last two matches after Nepal's strong performances in the second and third matches, including a victory in the second one?

GRM: Nothing went wrong. It was more



of a technical issue and a lack of team coordination, which prevented us from performing as expected.

DS: What is your response to your officials' allegations about poor umpiring?

GRM: It was only a technical issue.

DS: What, according to you, is the difference between Bangladesh and Nepal?

GRM: I think Bangladesh have more experienced players, while Nepal have a

younger team. The only difference, in my opinion, is experience.

DS: Some say Nepal's kabaddi team now revolves around you. How do you feel about such a compliment?

GRM: No, no. Kabaddi is a team sport, and you can't achieve anything alone without the support of your teammates. There is no such thing as leading Nepal single-handedly. I am just the captain of the Nepal kabaddi team, and I am happy with that role.

DS: Nepal introduced a franchise-based kabaddi league like the Indian Pro Kabaddi League this year. What impact has it had?

GRM: It was held in Nepal for the first time, and I think it is the second-biggest kabaddi league after the Indian Pro Kabaddi League. It has been a great opportunity for Nepalese kabaddi players and will help us improve in the coming days. We have set our sights on winning medals in the upcoming South Asian Games and Asian Games.

Ancelotti pleased with forwards' defensive efforts

REUTERS

Real Madrid's forwards have worked hard and defended well in recent weeks to turn the side into a more solid outfit, manager Carlo Ancelotti said on Friday ahead of this weekend's LaLiga trip to Real Betis.

Real, who are in second place level on points with leaders Barcelona, have kept clean sheets in their last two matches.

"We have talked about it many times. Not just with Vinicius Jr, with everyone. And they agreed," the Italian told reporters.

"It has obviously changed in the last few games. Since the game against Atletico Madrid (on February 9), the defensive improvement has been evident..."

"Vinicius is helping a lot. It has changed the team a lot, because the strikers are working hard. The team is more solid."

Real face a tough test at Betis on Saturday, with the seventh-placed side coming into the match on the back of two consecutive wins.

The hosts will also have in-form winger Antony available after successfully appealing against the red card against Getafe. Ancelotti said he would not field a weakened team against Betis to keep the squad fresh for their Champions League tie against rivals Atletico on Tuesday.

'Spassky was an entire era for chess'

REUTERS

Russian chess grandmaster Boris Spassky has died at the age of 88, International chess federation (FIDE) general director Emil Sutovsky told Reuters on Thursday.

Spassky, who took French nationality in 1978, was the 10th World Chess Champion, holding the title from 1969-1972, when he lost it to American Bobby Fischer in Reykjavik in a contest later dubbed as the "Match of the Century".

During that match in the midst of the Cold War, which he lost 12.5-8.5 despite winning the first two games, Spassky showed great sportsmanship, applauding Fischer after losing the sixth game.

Former world champion Anatoly Karpov, who beat Spassky in the semi-finals of the Candidates tournament in 1974, paid a warm tribute.

"My idols in chess were Jose Capablanca and Boris Spassky. And when I managed to beat Spassky, it was the greatest of victories and, in a sense, defeating something inside me by beating my teacher," Karpov told state news agency RIA.

"For me, Boris Spassky was an entire era for chess. He became most famous, of course, for being the man who handed over the title to



Bobby Fischer.

"But he had chances to win that match. He may have lost by a wide margin, but when everything was in his favour, he let his chances slip away."

Spassky had been the oldest living world chess champion.

"A great personality has passed away, generations of chess players have studied and are studying his games and his work. This is a great loss for the country," Russian Chess Federation President Andrei Filatov told the TASS news agency.

Alexander Tkachev, executive director of the Russian Chess Federation, said Spassky's death was a huge loss for the world of chess.

"Boris Vasilevich lived in Moscow and was in contact with everyone close to him... I knew him in a different way than from books. It was always interesting to speak with him. He was a very interesting story-teller and it's hard for me to talk about him leaving us," Tkachev told RIA news agency.

Spassky represented France in three chess Olympiads in 1984, 1986 and 1988, and was seen playing in the Jardin du Luxembourg in Paris during the 1990s.

After his health deteriorated in the early 2000s, Spassky disappeared from Paris in August, 2012 before resurfacing in Moscow in October that year.

"It was my desire to return to Russia, because my time in France had run its course. It was time to start a new stage. I understood it was time to leave," he said at the time.

Inter and Napoli clash in high-stakes showdown

REUTERS

Neither league leaders Inter Milan or second-placed Napoli are in the best of form ahead of what could be a season-defining spectacle when the two sides meet in a high-stakes Serie A clash on Saturday.

Inter recently snatched top spot from Napoli and are a point ahead of their title rivals with both sides having 12 games left to play.

Neither side, however, can claim to be at their peak ahead of the game in Naples, as a gruelling season begins to take its toll with injury lists expanding at a worrying rate.

Inter have won two of their last five league games, while Napoli, who are still adjusting to life without Khvicha Kvaratskhelia who left for Paris St Germain in January, are winless in their last four.

Napoli earned just three points from four matches in February, with key midfielder Andre-Frank Zambo Anguissa sidelined due to a calf injury sustained in their recent loss to Como and winger David Neres recovering from a hamstring injury.

However, Inter are not without their own problems, particularly in defence, with Carlos Augusto, Matteo Darmian and midfielder Nicola Zalewski all sidelined due to recent injuries.

Veteran goalkeeper Yann Sommer is still recovering from a thumb operation and it remains

unclear if he will be fit to return.

Backup keeper Josep Martinez, touted as a future first choice, has already made his debut for the club and is likely to be called upon again.

Despite a turbulent period that saw Atalanta exit the Champions League and manager Gian Piero Gasperini announce he would not renew his contract, all while dealing with a spat with key striker Ademola Lookman, the Bergamo club have capitalised on Inter's and Napoli's inconsistent form to narrow the gap in the title race.

Atalanta have 54 points, three adrift of Inter, and with a home clash against second-from-bottom Venezia on Saturday, they have a prime opportunity to turn the Scudetto battle into a three-horse race.

Unlike their rivals, Atalanta have no new injury concerns and could field Serie A's top scorer, Mateo Retegui, with Lookman and Charles De Ketelaere providing support in attack.

At AC Milan, the momentum manager Sergio Conceicao built with his Italian Super Cup triumph in just his second match at the club appears to have waned.

Italian media report that he is under evaluation following a Champions League exit and back-to-back league defeats to Torino and Bologna. Sunday's home clash with Lazio could prove pivotal in shaping his future at the club.



Bangladesh coach Javier Cabrera and captain Jamal Bhuiyan pose for a photograph with the other players and the coaching staff during the team's official reporting at the InterContinental in the capital yesterday evening. Out of 30-member squad, 27 joined as defender Saad Uddin will join today and UK-based Hamza Choudhury and Italy-based Fahamedul Islam will join later. The team will hold their first training session at the Bashundhara Sports Complex football field this afternoon. The team will leave for Saudi Arabia for a two-week training camp on March 5 ahead of their Asian Cup Qualifiers fixture against India on March 25.

PHOTO: BFF