

Liverpool clinch last-16 berth; Barca score wild Benfica comeback win

AFP, PARIS: Liverpool beat Lille 2-1 on Tuesday to maintain their perfect record in this season's Champions League and clinch qualification for the last 16, while Barcelona produced a stunning comeback to beat Benfica 5-4 in a classic to secure their own place.

The Anfield side are the only team with a maximum 21 points from seven matches in this new, expanded Champions League and they now know they will skip next month's play-offs and head straight to the last 16 in March.

Mohamed Salah ran clear to give Liverpool the lead at home to a Lille team who have also impressed this season, and the visitors appeared in trouble when they had Aissa Mandi sent off just before the hour mark.

Jonathan David swept in an equaliser for Lille, but Harvey Elliott's shot took a wicked deflection on its way in to give Liverpool the points.

The biggest drama in the night, however, came in the rain in Lisbon, where Barcelona trailed 4-2 with 12 minutes of the 90 remaining, but somehow recovered to win 5-4.

Elsewhere, Atletico Madrid are third on 15 points and certain to at least be in the play-offs after a Julian Alvarez brace secured a 2-1 home victory over Bayer Leverkusen in a game

newed hope, and Eric Garcia headed in the equaliser on 86 minutes, before Raphinha ran away to settle an incredible game.

The Catalans are second with six wins out of seven, and will finish in the top eight to go straight to the last 16. Benfica, with 10 points, must still sweat to reach the play-off round.

Alvarez levelled seven minutes into the second half, and Hincapie was sent off for the Germans before another Alvarez goal won it for the home side in the last minute as they climbed above Leverkusen.



Both teams finished with 10 men. Atletico had Pablo Barrios sent off midway through the first half, and Piero Hincapie then put Leverkusen ahead just before the break.

Argentinian star Alvarez levelled seven minutes into the second half, and Hincapie was sent off for the Germans before another Alvarez goal won it for the home side in the last minute as they climbed above Leverkusen.

Last season's Europa League winners Atalanta are also guaranteed at least a play-off place after crushing Sturm Graz of Austria 5-0.

Mateo Retegui, Mario Pasalic, Charles De Ketelaere, Ademola Lookman and Marco Brescianini all scored for the Italians.

Monaco got back to winning ways after some disappointing results had seen their campaign stall, as Wilfried Singo's early goal proved enough for them to beat Aston Villa 1-0.

Both teams are set to progress to the knockout phase and both could still finish in the top eight.

Last season's runners-up Borussia Dortmund should also be fine despite a 2-1 defeat away to Bologna, as substitutes Thijs Dallinga and Samuel Iling-Junior scored a minute apart in the second half after Serhou Guirassy's early penalty had put the Germans in front.



RESULTS

Atalanta 5 (Retegui 12, Pasalic 58, De Ketelaere 63, Lookman 90, Brescianini 90+5) **Sturm Graz 0**; **Monaco 1** (Singo 8) **Aston Villa 0**; **Slovan Bratislava 1** (Met-soko 85) **Stuttgart 3** (Leweling 11, 36, Rieder 87); **Club Brugge 0** **Juventus 0**; **Atletico Madrid 2** (Alvarez 52, 90) **Bayer Leverkusen 1** (Hincapie 45+1); **Benfica 4** (Pavlidis 2, 22, 30-pen, Araujo 68-og) **Barcelona 5** (Lewandowski 13-pen, 78-pen, Raphinha 64, 90+6, Garcia 87); **Liverpool 2** (Salah 34, Elliott 67) **Lille 1** (David 62); **Bologna 2** (Dallinga 71, Iling-Junior 72) **Borussia Dortmund 1** (Guirassy 15-pen); **Red Star Belgrade 2** (Ndiaye 71, Djiga 77) **PSV Eindhoven 3** (de Jong 17, 24, Flamingo 43)

Big win for PVC Parra; Vagator PYSC hold Sangolda Lightning

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MAPUSA: PVC Parra registered a thumping 4-0 win over table toppers Goan Warriors FC, in the GFA's Second Division league, played at Guirim ground, on Wednesday.

GFA'S SECOND DIV LEAGUE

Parra colts came strongly into the second session and pumped in all the four goals through their striker Cyprian Rodrigues.

Today's defeat for Goan Warriors FC was a big setback as they were topping the league table with 12

points from six matches. After today's win PVC Parra tops the league table with 14 points from 7 matches.

At Vagator ground, Vagator PYSC managed to hold Sangolda Lightning to a 1-1 draw.

With today's drawn encounter Vagator PYSC now stands second of the league table with 13 points from seven matches.

Yatish Kutikar put Sangolda Lightning ahead in the 61st minute only to find Vagator PYSC unit Rutik Bandodkar level terms in the 89th minute of play.

At BITS Pilani football ground, United Youth Club of Bogmalo defeated Chicalim SC, 3-1. Aster Thenamthara,

P	Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pts
1	PVC Association	7	4	2	1	17	8	9	14
2	Vagator PYSC	7	3	4	0	14	7	7	13
3	Goan Warriors FC	7	3	3	1	15	12	3	12
4	Bidesh XI SC	7	3	1	3	10	14	-4	10
5	Valpoi FC	7	2	3	2	15	12	3	9
6	Sangolda Lightning	7	2	3	2	9	8	1	9
7	Dunes SC	7	2	2	3	15	13	2	8
8	Benny XI SC	7	1	4	2	8	10	-2	7
9	BAFF	7	2	0	5	11	16	-5	6
10	FC Tuem	7	2	0	5	10	24	-14	6

Ivan Fernandes and Amit Naik scored for UYC Bogmalo, while Sadik Ingalgundi reduced the margin for Chicalim SC.

At Tilak maidan, Vasco - Vasco City SCC defeated Mormugao United CSC, 4-0. Abhishek Kumar Singh scored a brilliant hat-trick while Keegan D'Souza scored the other goal for Vasco City.

Odisha FC rally to beat Bengaluru

PTI, BENGALURU: Odisha FC returned to winning ways after four matches with a come-from-behind 3-2 triumph over 10-man Bengaluru FC in the Indian Super League (ISL), on Wednesday.

Diego Mauricio (29th and 38th) struck a brace -- both from penalties -- while Jerry Mawihmingthanga (50th) scored the other goal for Odisha. Edgar Mendez (10th) and former India captain Sunil Chhetri (13th) scored for Bengaluru FC.

The hosts started the game strongly as they were 2-0 up within the first 13 minutes courtesy of goals from Mendez and Chhetri. However, Odisha FC came back into the game when Aleksandar Jovanovic was handed marching orders and Mauricio converted

two consecutive spot-kicks before Mawihmingthanga scored the decisive goal in the second half.

Bengaluru FC got off the blocks quickly with high pressing and pushed Odisha FC back in the initial exchanges. Their sustained pressure in the opening minutes was rewarded when the hosts found the net in the 10th minute courtesy of a goal from Mendez.

Suresh Wangjam picked out the Spaniard with a fantastic long ball, and the experienced forward calmly slotted it past Thoi-ba Moirangthem and Amrinder Singh in goal.

Things got more complicated for the Juggernauts when Bengaluru FC doubled the lead in the 13th minute when Alberto Noguera recycled possession and played

ute after Jovanovic brought down Mauricio in the penalty area. The Australian defender was subsequently sent off as the referee felt that he denied a clear goal-scoring opportunity.

Mauricio stepped up to take the spot-kick and slotted it home with aplomb, bringing the visitors back into the game.

Odisha FC clawed their way back into the game in the 38th minute when Bengaluru's Roshan Singh handled the ball in the penalty area and handed a penalty to the opposition.

Mauricio again stepped up and calmly slotted it home, completing his brace. The Juggernauts started the second half just like they finished the first. They eventually took the lead in the 50th minute through Mour-tada Fall.

The entire complexion of the game changed when the referee rewarded a penalty to Odisha in the 26th min-

TODAY'S FIXTURE

Hyderabad FC vs Jamshedpur FC, at GMC Balayogi Athletic Stadium, Hyderabad, at 7.30 pm

FC Goa pip Sesa FA

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MAPUSA: FC Goa defeated SESA Football Academy 1-0 in the Reliance Foundation Development League (RFDL) match, played at the Duler stadium, in Mapusa, on Wednesday.

Jovial Dias' 75th minute strike for the Young Gaurs was enough for the team to see off the game.

The win takes FC Goa three points clear off the top of the table with 10 points from four matches, followed by Mumbai City FC in the second

position, who share equal number of points (7) with third-placed Reliance Foundation Young Champs.

Jovial Dias received the man-of-the-match award.



Nevil scores winner for Ilhas

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PANJIM: Nevil Araujo scored the goal that mattered as Ilhas Veterans put it across Mitra Veterans, 1-0, to enter the semi-finals of the all-Goa veterans football tournament, organised by Mix Friends of Santa Cruz, at Santa Cruz ground on Wednesday.

In a closely-fought encounter, Ilhas Veterans started on the front foot and held on to the lead till the conclusion of the match.

Ilhas will now face Calangute Veterans in the semi-final clash.

Curtorim Gymkhana edge past Maina Sports Club to reach final

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RAIA: Curtorim Gymkhana secured their place in the final of the Simon Barreto Memorial inter-village football tournament, organised by Maina Sports Club, with a hard-fought 1-0 victory over the hosts, at the DYSA ground, in Curtorim.

Both teams displayed an attacking brand of football, creating several scoring opportunities. Maina's Jovial Martins delivered a precise through pass to Joy-win Carneiro, who skillfully beat the Curtorim defence and unleashed a powerful shot. However, Curtorim Gymkhana's goalkeeper,



Jhonson, made an acrobatic save, punching the ball away for a corner.

Curtorim capitalised on their opportunity from the resulting corner. Milagres took the kick, which was

initially cleared by Maina's goalkeeper, Prakash. However, the clearance fell to an unmarked Mario Mascarenhas, who controlled the ball and unleashed a stunning 30-yard strike.

Open archery competition at Pilar

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PANJIM: Battle of the Rings, an open archery competition, organised by Fr Agnel Central School, Pilar, in collaboration with Zito Archery club, will be held on January 26, at Pilar Central School. The categories include 9, 14, 17 and open category. For further details contact Zeto.

TODAY'S SPORTS

GFA Second Division League (Ilhas zone): Carambolim Sports Club vs Nauxim Sports Club, at Taleigao ground; Agassaim Youth Club vs Portais Sporting Club, at Agassaim ground. Both matches at 3.45 pm

Simon Barreto memorial football tournament (semi-final): Fr Agnelo YSC Paroda vs Mandopa Sports Club, at DYSA ground, Curtorim, at 4.30 pm

3rd all-Goa volleyball tournament (first semi-final): Sarwan Boys vs Kakoda Boys Church, at Manora ground, at 8.30 pm

Mix Friends veterans soccer (semi-final): Ilhas Veterans vs Calangute Veterans, Santa Cruz ground, 4.30 pm

Arlem Cricket Club defeat Al Fatah to clinch Nanda Lodayekar Trophy

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MASHEM: Arlem Cricket Club defeated Al Fatah by 66 runs in the final of the 43rd Nanda Lodayekar Trophy, organised by Mashem Cricket Club, at Nirakar Maidan, Dapot-Mashem, Canacona, on Sunday.

CRICKET

Put into bat, Arlem amassed 258/9 in their allotted 35 overs, thanks to a stellar all-round performance. Parth Sahani top-scored with 65 off 70 balls, including seven boundaries and two sixes, building crucial partnerships with Atharva Kale (30) and Shubham Dessai (23). A late blitz by Sanket Morajkar, who smashed an unbeaten



58 off 29 balls with five sixes and four boundaries, pushed Arlem to a formidable total. Sanket shared an unbeaten 47-run stand for the last wicket with Dheeraj Yadav.

For Al Fatah, Yeshwant Raikar (3/53) and Kutbudin Jamadar (2/26) stood out with the ball. Al Fatah began their chase strongly with a 71-run opening stand between Manthan Khutkar (50) and Aditya

Dalal (35). However, after reaching 100 in 16 overs, their innings collapsed, losing eight wickets for just 92 runs. Abdul Salam (28) and Malik Shirur (21) made brief contributions, but the team was bowled out for 192 in 30.5 overs.

Arlem's bowling unit delivered a disciplined performance, with Mehank Dharwadkar (2/24), Shubham Dessai (2/39), Dheeraj Yadav

(1/11), and Ruthvik Naik (1/36) among the wickets.

Dr Suraj Prabhudesai was the chief guest at the presentation ceremony. Other dignitaries included Nisha Chari (sarpanch), Chirag Naik (tournament sponsor) and Prashant Naik (chairman, Nirakar Education Society).

The event was compered by Anup Naik with Sudin Lodayekar delivering the vote of thanks.

BY PUBLIC DEMAND - 4th REPEAT SHOW

TOMORROW

24th JAN - 3:30 P.M.

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