

## City can't compare to Barca, Real yet: Pep

## 'Brave Tottenham must play free against Juve'

LONDON, March 6, (Agencies): Mauricio Pochettino says his brave Tottenham Hotspur team must play with freedom against Juventus on Wednesday as they seek to book their place in the Champions League quarter-finals.

Tottenham battled back from 2-0 down with goals from Harry Kane and Christian Eriksen to earn them a 2-2 draw in Turin last month - a result that means they are favourites to progress.

"We need to feel free. If we do that and enjoy the game we will perform nearly at our best or at our best and if we do then we will have the chance to win," the Argentine told a news conference on Tuesday.

Tottenham's progression since former Espanyol coach Pochettino arrived in 2014 has been impressive.

They finished third in the Premier League in 2015-16 and second last season, although they are yet to win any silverware and flopped in last season's Champions League.

Pochettino resents the suggestion that success can only be measured in trophies, saying he is part of a project to establish Tottenham as one of the strongest clubs in Europe.

They have beaten European champions Real Madrid and former winners Borussia Dortmund home and away this season and the clash with an experienced Juve side offers another chance to move the club a step closer to that goal.

Asked what he could ultimately achieve at the north London club, Pochettino refused to be drawn.

"We can't set a limit. I don't do that. I am a dreamer, I don't set minimums," the 46-year-old said.

"We improved a lot from two seasons ago. You can see that the team is more mature and more competitive every season."

Tottenham are on a 17-match unbeaten run in all competitions, sit fourth in the Premier League, have an FA Cup quarter-final ahead and are within touching distance of the business end of the Champions League.

There is a feeling that Pochettino is on the cusp of something special, but he urges caution, preferring to concentrate solely on the job in hand against a club who have reached two of the last three Champions League finals.

"I think we have a very good opportunity but in football you need to earn things," he said. "Tomorrow we are going to face one of the best teams in the world and in history."

"But we are a brave team, very positive people that love the challenge, and tomorrow is a massive challenge."

"We are going to compete, and at the same time try to enjoy, because it's a game to enjoy. We need to think we can win, then what happens will be a consequence of our performance."

Manchester City can't yet consider themselves the equal of Barcelona or

Real Madrid, City manager Pep Guardiola has insisted despite a stunning season that has seen his side installed as Champions League favourites.

The runaway Premier League leaders will secure their place in the last eight of the Champions League for just the second time in their history barring a remarkable last 16, second leg collapse when they host Basel on Wednesday, boasting a 4-0 first leg lead.

Guardiola sees City's status as favourites ahead of former clubs Barcelona and Bayern Munich, and holds Real Madrid as a testament to their form this season.

"When I am talking about we are favourites to win the Champions League, it's an honour," Guardiola said on Tuesday. "If you don't play good at Manchester City... the people are not going to say that because we don't have (a) legacy."

However, Guardiola, who won the Champions League twice in a glorious four-year spell at Barcelona, believes the experience of the two Spanish giants in Europe's premier club competition gives them an upper hand.

Madrid and Barca have combined

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Pochettino

to win the Champions League for the past four years, and Guardiola cited Madrid's 3-1 win over Paris Saint-Germain in the first leg of their blockbuster last 16 clash as evidence of why league form can count for little in European competition.

"Before the first game against PSG people said 'Madrid is not good, PSG is going to win, is a top team' and Madrid win 3-1 because Madrid has 12 Champions Leagues and it is a lot."

"It is a different competition, it is moments. Tomorrow we have the chance to be in quarter-finals for the second time in our history and that is so important."

City won their first trophy of Guardiola's reign in charge by beating Arsenal in the League Cup final nine days ago, and seem destined to add the Premier League title as they hold a 16-point lead at the top of the table.

However, the Catalan coach rejected suggestions he is building a dynasty like he did at Barcelona.

"It's not good for us comparing with that team because that team dominate the last decade with different managers and different players. They won a lot, a lot of things."

"We won just the first title so to be or think about joining this kind of team you have to be there a long, long time and a long time means many years."

Midfielder Ilkay Gundogan scored twice in City's stroll past Basel in the first leg in Switzerland three weeks ago.



Chelsea's Danish defender Andreas Christensen (left), vies with Manchester City's Brazilian striker Gabriel Jesus during the English Premier League football match between Manchester City and Chelsea at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester, north west England on March 4. (AFP)

## Soccer Roundup

CAS hears dispute between FIFA, Palestinian, Saudi offers to fund new Iraq stadium

## Astori teammates pay tribute as clubs retire No. 13 shirt

MILAN, March 6, (Agencies): Fiorentina players paid tribute on Tuesday to Davide Astori, their captain who died suddenly on Sunday at the age of 31, while the club announced that it would retire the defender's number 13 shirt.

Cagliari also said that they would stop using the number 13 shirt which was worn by Astori during six seasons at the Sardinian club earlier in his career.

Led by coach Stefano Pioli, the Fiorentina squad gathered at the gates of the Artemio Franchi stadium where the team play their home games and placed a picture of Astori alongside the banners, scarves and messages previously left by fans.

They then stood in a semi-circle and applauded.

The club said in a statement that they would take part in a training session in the afternoon.

Astori, who made 289 Serie A appearances in 10 seasons and played 14 times for the national team, was found dead in his room at the team hotel in Udine where Fiorentina had been due to play Udinese on Sunday.

The Palestinian soccer federation is challenging FIFA at the Court of Arbitration for Sport for shutting down debate on a dispute with the Israeli federation.

CAS says a scheduled two-day appeal hearing began Tuesday.

Palestinian officials have long urged FIFA to act against teams from settlements playing in the Israeli league. FIFA rules prohibit a federation from organizing games on another member's territory without permission.

At a May 2017 congress in Bah-

rain, FIFA delayed a decision on the dispute. FIFA President Gianni Infantino has since ended efforts to mediate between the two federations.

CAS says a verdict is expected within weeks. FIFA has an April 13 deadline for members to submit motions to its next congress, on June 13 in Moscow.

Saudi Arabia has offered to fund a new football stadium in Iraq, as FIFA prepares to decide whether to lift its ban on Iraq hosting competitive international matches.

The offer came in a telephone call between King Salman and Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi on Monday evening, the prime minister's office said.

The stadium will be built in a sports city in Baghdad and will fit up to 100,000 spectators, Abadi's office added.

Egypt coach Hector Cuper has given a first call-up to striker Hussein el-Shahat, the only surprise selection ahead of a pair of World Cup warm-ups against Portugal and Greece later this month.

El-Shahat, a 27-year-old forward who plays for Al Ain in the United Arab Emirates, has been on loan from Egyptian club el-Maqasah since January. He has scored seven

goals and provided nine assists, helping his team move closer to winning the Gulf nation's top league.

With good ball skills and a knack for finding the target, el-Sahaht could help reduce Egypt's near complete dependence on Liverpool winger Mohammed Salah, who scored five of the national team's seven goals in African qualifying.

Portuguese authorities have raided Benfica facilities as part of an operation to investigate corruption allegations involving club officials.

The club says it is fully cooperating with local officials.

The raid came as Portuguese media said Benfica legal adviser Paulo Goncalves was detained after being accused of obstruction of justice.

The club says it is confident that Goncalves will be allowed to prove his innocence during the judicial process. Prosecutors earlier this year named Benfica president Luis Filipe Vieira in an investigation into a corruption scheme that allegedly allowed officials illegal access to judicial documents.

Costakis Koutsokoumnis, the president of the Cyprus Football Association for the last 17 years, has died at 61.

The Cyprus FA said on its website that Koutsokoumnis died on Monday after a months-long battle with cancer.

From 2001, Koutsokoumnis won seven consecutive elections uncontested after first becoming involved with the association in 1994.

Some of his most significant achievements included bringing the association in line with UEFA's financial criteria, streamlining judicial bodies, and helping clubs with their bottom line through proceeds from television broadcast rights.

Major League Soccer and the owner of the Columbus Crew say they're reviewing a lawsuit that Ohio's attorney general and the city of Columbus filed to stop the proposed team move to Austin, Texas.

The league and Precourt Sports Ventures said they anticipated having more comment Tuesday about the litigation, which was announced Monday. The lawsuit cites a law that prohibits sports teams that have received public money from moving unless certain conditions are met. It was enacted after the original Cleveland Browns moved to Baltimore in 1996.

Sparta Prague said Tuesday they had sacked Italian coach Andrea Stramaccioni following a streak of poor showings by the 12-time Czech champions.

Hired last May, the 42-year-old former Inter Milan, Udine and Panathinaikos coach has led Sparta to the fifth spot in the Czech top flight with 11 of 30 rounds to go, trailing leaders Viktoria Pilsen by 14 points. Last weekend, Sparta were held to a 1-1 draw by top-flight strugglers Zbrojovka Brno.

Sparta, the 2016 Europa League quarter-finalists, also crashed out of this year's edition in the third play-off round in August, beaten by Serbian side Red Star Belgrade.

## Sanchez takes Paris-Nice lead

CHATEL-GUYON, France, March 6, (AP): Jonathan Hivert of France won the third stage of Paris-Nice on Tuesday after a breakaway, while former champion Luis Leon Sanchez of Spain claimed the race leader's yellow jersey.

Hivert moved to the front with 20 kilometers left and soon became part of a three-man breakaway with Sanchez and Remy Di Gregorio.

Di Gregorio tried to drop his rivals toward the end with three unsuccessful attacks and finished third, with Sanchez unable to respond to Hivert's

acceleration close to the finish line.

"I didn't make any plans. I knew that I should try to follow the riders who broke clear or I would be in trouble," Hivert said. "I played a little with the two others because in my head I knew I had it won before the line."

Sanchez, who won Paris-Nice in 2009, took the lead from Arnaud Demare of France, who won the peloton's sprint 38 seconds back.

Sanchez has a 28-second lead over Demare overall, with Gorka Izagirre of Spain in third place, 35 seconds off the pace.

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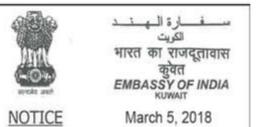
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NOTICE

March 5, 2018

Mr. Bijay Tamang son of late Mr. Nima Tamang, resident of Upper Milan Busty Singamari Singtam Road PO North point Darjeeling 734101 and Ms. Sulochana Rai daughter of Mr. Puraan Rai, resident of Bara puttabong PO- North point Darjeeling - 734101 both Indian nationals presently residing in Kuwait, have given notice of intended marriage between them under the Foreign Marriage Act, 1969. If anyone has any objection to the proposed marriage, he/she may file the same with the undersigned according to the procedure laid down under the Act/Rule within thirty days from the date of publication of this notice. Communications in this regard can be made by Email: (attachecons@indembkwf.org, welfaresection@indembkwf.org) / letters / telephonic calls (00965-22550171, 00965-22533125).



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