

Champions League: Barca, Inter aim to reclaim long lost glory

Former European champions from Spain and Italian giants gear up for a tryst with football history

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, 29 APRIL

The road to Munich is at its final stop with the UEFA Champions League semi-finals with Inter Milan travelling to Estadi Olímpic Lluís Companys to take on FC Barcelona in their first leg fixture on Thursday (IST).

Barcelona, the newly-crowned Copa del Rey champions, have no time to celebrate and are getting ready for another monster game as they welcome Inter Milan to the Montjuïc Olympic Stadium for the first leg of their Champions League semi-final tie. Barça come into this one full of confidence after an epic comeback over Real Madrid in Saturday's Final, but the 120-minute marathon certainly took its toll and the Catalans must find a way to get physically and mentally ready for the first of two wars against a very good and experienced Inter side that is fully capable of upsetting the Blaugrana despite their poor recent run of results.

Even though Barça did have to play 120 minutes at the weekend, they still got an extra day's rest with the game taking place on Wednesday instead of Tuesday and still played before Inter, who lost to AS Roma on Sunday and have to travel to Spain. So neither team really has the rest advantage, and Flick will likely go with a very similar side to the one that started the final.

The big question at the back is about Gerard Martínez: the backup left-back struggled in El Clásico and hasn't played well for multiple games in a

row, and Flick was forced to move Iñigo Martínez into his place to stabilize his defense at the end of the match. We still think Hansi will trust Gerard more time hoping that his first experience in a big stage will help him in this one, with Pau Cubarsi and Saturday's hero Jules Koundé completing the back four.

Three Barça players who didn't have to play all 120 minutes against Real Madrid are the starting midfield trio of Frenkie de Jong, Pedri and Dani Olmo, and that might be the best news for the Blaugrana as they're set to face a fantastic Inter midfield.

Gavi looks fully back to his best version and will be ready to either replace one

of three starting midfielders is Flick decides to make a change to that group or provide much-needed energy in the second half, with Fermín López also available as a super sub who could provide some crucial attacking edge later on.

Barcelona are the top scorers in the competition. Flick's men have racked up a staggering 37 goals in 12 matches, a jaw-dropping average of 3.08 goals per game. That's six more than both Dortmund and Bayern, who are tied in second place with 31 goals and both German sides are already out of the tournament.

But that doesn't mean Hansi Flick's side should

expect a walkover. Inter boast the tightest defence in the Champions League. In their 12 matches, they've conceded just five goals - a number that highlights discipline, organisation and rock-solid back-line resilience.

The semi-final couldn't come at a better time for Barça. Fresh off lifting their second trophy of the season, with a 3-2 win over Madrid in the Copa del Rey final, confidence is sky-high in the Blaugrana camp. Over in Milan, the mood is more sombre. A bruising 0-3 defeat in the return leg of the Coppa Italia semi-final cast a shadow over their week.

FC Barcelona head coach Hansi Flick is hoping that the

Copa del Rey final win against Real Madrid will help his side to push and reach the UEFA Champions League final. The 3-2 win over Real Madrid was massive for Barça as it saw them lift their second trophy of the season. It also showed the resilience of the club to comeback after two quickfire goals by Los Blancos had them trailing 2-1 but Ferran Torres' equalizer and Jules Koundé's extra-time winner saw them grab victory.

"What I can say is that all the players are focused and that they want to reach the final. The win against Madrid is important for the emotions and can help us to keep pushing. I think we can reach the final. They will give everything

as well," said Flick in the pre-game conference.

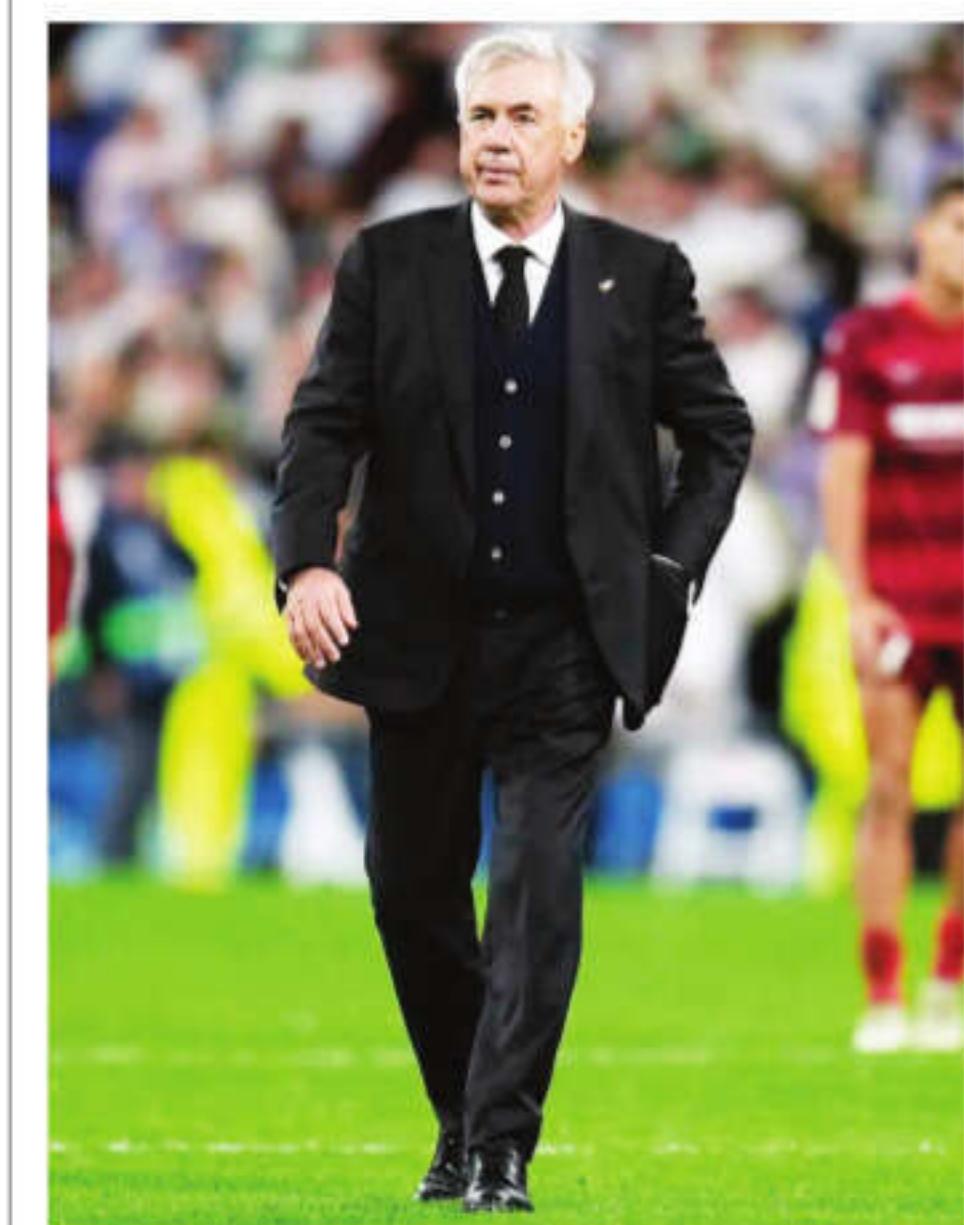
Despite the win, Barcelona players were not given any time to celebrate their trophy as they turned their attention to the Champions League semis with the aim of securing their first European trophy since 2014/15. It was also the last time the club reached the final's of the tournament.

Not only will the Catalans draw motivation from the win over Real but Flick has urged his side to learn from their mistakes in that matchup. "I have seen that the players are fine. The way the game went also has an influence, but we are already focused on Inter. We have the chance to reach the Champions League final. It's the most important competition. We are in a privileged position. The training session went well and we talked about what we can do better than against Madrid," added Flick.

The German coach was appointed ahead of the 2024-25 season, on a two-year contract which will end in June 2026, after a sour end to the relationship between Xavi and the club.

After finishing second in the 2023-24 La Liga season, being eliminated by Athletic Club in the Copa del Rey quarterfinal, and being embarrassingly defeated 1-4 at home against Paris Saint-Germain during the quarter finals, Flick has completely transformed the Catalonian side. They now possess one of the most dangerous attacking units in Europe, which was on full display in the 4-0 win over Borussia Dortmund in the first leg of the quarter finals this season.

Ancelotti to take over as Brazil coach



AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, 29 APRIL

potentially allowing Barcelona to secure the title.

According to the Spanish national daily Marca, in a meeting between Brazilian officials and the Real Madrid coach, the Italian accepted the offer and will join Brazil's national team in June. He will be in charge of the Seleção as they dream of winning their sixth World Cup title in North America, Mexico and Canada in 2026.

The report further said Ancelotti will leave Real Madrid after the final league match, where he will move to Brazil for the friendly matches against Ecuador and Paraguay in June.

This will leave Madrid's position vacant for the Club World Cup, which will be held in the USA this summer. The Italian is set to become one of the highest-paid national team coaches and his contract would be for a year after the 2026 World Cup. During his first spell at Real Madrid, Ancelotti led the club to its 10th Champions League triumph.

JALPAIGURI MUNICIPALITY

It is notified that due to certain omission in the audited statement of accounts of Jalpaiguri Municipality for the year 2022-23 we have decided vide resolution no 10 dated 5.03.2025 to rectify the error so noticed. The revised statement of accounts will be made available shortly. Anybody having any objection to the referred revision of accounts may contact the undersigned. The earlier audited statement is hereby cancelled.

SD/-
Chairman
Jalpaiguri Municipality

'Messi is the best but I don't compare myself with anyone'

ACENCIOS

BARCELONA, 29 APRIL

FC Barcelona forward Lamine Yamal, who has been compared to former right-winger Lionel Messi ever since his breakthrough to the first-team squad, acknowledged that the Argentinian is the best in the club's history, but does not compare himself to the all-time great.

Yamal made his Barcelona debut in 2023 and has been an integral part of their comeback to the top of European football this year.

Fresh off a European Championship-winning campaign, Yamal entered this season on red-hot form and has been key in the side's success this season which has seen them win the Supercopa de Espana and the Copa del Rey.

"I don't compare myself with anyone, same with Messi. I admire Leo, he's the best in history. I just focus on improving; comparing myself with other players doesn't make any sense," said Yamal

in a press conference on the eve of his side's UEFA Champions League semifinal clash against Inter Milan.

The Spaniard once again showed no signs of pressure when Barcelona defeated Real Madrid in the final of the domestic tournament on

Saturday.

After the game, Yamal grabbed headlines when he stated that Madrid can't beat Barcelona.

When asked about the comments, Yamal replied, "They can't say anything to me. When they beat me, then

yes!"

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Yamal acknowledged that Barcelona has not won the UCL since 2015 and the strong Italian defense that Milan possesses, but believes that if his side play like they have been, the Catalonians will progress to the finals in Munich. "As kids, we watched Barça win the Champions League in 2015. We play because we feel strongly about the shirt, because we want Barça to win and be on top. Signing from abroad isn't the same as playing in a derby or a Clásico while playing at La Masia," he said.

Big clubs beckon Espanyol's Joan García

ACENCIOS

BARCELONA, 29 APRIL

his boyhood club avoids relegation, while recognizing that the future is wide open.

There was lots of interest last summer, above all from Arsenal, but I stayed here and from then on I have been focused on this campaign," García said during a recent interview. "We all know the situation, not just mine, but of the club, and anything can happen. But the future will tell and we will worry about it when the time comes."

García has been on a stellar trajectory since he became Espanyol's starter last season in the second division due to the injury of a teammate.

He helped the club win a promotion playoff before tasting Olympic success in Paris. And since then he has emerged as the breakout player in La Liga.

García leads all goalkeepers in the Spanish league with 123 saves, making nearly four a game on average, and is a big reason why his modest

club is not mired in a relegation battle. Espanyol is in 13th place and has conceded 41 goals; 11 teams in the 20-team league have conceded more.

García's gloves have backstopped Espanyol's strong run since the winter break, with just two losses in 14 games this year. That stretch included a massively celebrated 1-0 win over Real Madrid in February, which García says is the highlight of the campaign so far.

García's strengths go beyond making saves. His ability to make long passes to launch counterattacks has been key to Espanyol bettering more talented opponents.

Even though he says he still needs to work on his ability to punch away high crosses, he believes that his mental poise gives him an edge.

"I think I am goalkeeper that transmits confidence when it comes to making decisions," he said. "And through the years I have learned to accept my mistakes

Amid those rumors, García tells The Associated Press that he is focused on ensuring



Swapnil, Palak back in Indian shooting squad

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Paris Olympic bronze medalist Swapnil Kusale and reigning Asian Games champion Palak are back in the Indian team, after the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI), announced a 23-member squad for the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup stage for Rifle/Pistol in Munich, Germany, scheduled in the first week of June.

Also making it back to the team will be Sandeep Singh in men's air rifle, who will be seen in Indian colours after the Paris Olympics, just like Swapnil, the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) informed in a release on Tuesday.

TENDER

Metro Railway, Kolkata

Corrigendum-1 Against open Tender Notice No. S&T/Works/26-2024

Name of Work : Telecom works in connection of heavy repairs and rehabilitation of Metro Railway tunnel from KNAP and KMUK and through renovation of service buildings and KKHG, KESP & KCWC. Items have been modified under "NIT Header (Filed Name : Name of Work, Earnest Money (INR))" and "NIT Schedule (Code: Schedule-A, Item Qty. : Item 1 and Item-3)". New items have been added under "NIT Schedule (Schedule-A, Sl. No. 14 and Sl. No. 15)" and "Item Breakup (Schedule-A, Sl. No. 14)". Items have been deleted under "NIT Schedule (Schedule-A, Sl. No. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13)". For details visit : www.reps.gov.in

Do. Chief Signal & Telecom Engineer/Telecom

E-Tender No. Approx Cost Earnest Money

JHS-ENGG-C-2025-64 ₹ 13027740.25 ₹ 215100.00

Date of completion / period from issue acceptance letter: 06 Months

Description of work: JHANSI-BINA section- Repair of drains & cleaning of sewer line, platform manholes, inspection chambers in the jurisdiction of SEE/Wks/LAR under ADEN/M/LAR for 02 Years period.

E-Tender No. Approx Cost Earnest Money

JHS-ENGG-C-2025-65 ₹ 6003102.96 ₹ 120100.00

Date of completion / period from issue acceptance letter: 24 Months

For both the tenders Date of closing Tender: 22.05.2025 at 15:00 hrs.

• Tenders on line can be submitted up to 15.00 hrs. on 22.05.2025 • For full details and submission of bid please see the Indian Railways website www.reps.gov.in.

719/25 FA

North central railways @CPNRNC www.nc.indianrailways.gov.in

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY

Tender Notice

Divisional Railway Manager (Works) NC. Railway, Jhansi for an behalf of President of India invites sealed "Open Tender" through on line (E-Tendering) for the following work.

Description of work: BINA - JHANSI section: TSR(P) of 4 kms in Lalitpur yard by manual means under ADEN LAR Sub-Division.

E-Tender No. Approx Cost Earnest Money

JHS-ENGG-C-2025-64 ₹ 13027740.25 ₹ 215100.00

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719/25 FA

North central railways @CPNRNC www.nc.indianrailways.gov.in

OFFICE OF THE NOTIFIED AREA COUNCIL, KHARI ROAD

C-194 Mail:- nackhrd@rediffmail.com Phone No: 06678-221239

INVITATION FOR BIDS

Bid Reference No -

Tender Call Notice No. 801/11.4.2025

Bid documents consisting of specification the schedule of quantities and the set of terms and condition of contract and other necessary document can be seen in the Govt. Website i.e. www.tendersodisha.gov.in

1 Nature of work : Civil works as mentioned in website

2 Estimated Cost : Rs.231.26 lakhs

3 Period of Completion : As per DTCN

4 Date and time of availability of the documents in the portal : 10.00 AM 25.04.2025 to