



Jafar Ahmed (L), senior vice-president of Sales and Marketing of the Kahinor Chemical Company (Bd) Ltd, speaks at a press briefing in connection with the Tibet Federation Cup Football tournament at the NSC yesterday. BFF president SA Sultan is seen on his left.

England, Turkey charged



AFP, Nyon

England and Turkey have been charged by European football's governing body UEFA with improper conduct for the Istanbul brawl in their Euro 2004 qualifier two weeks ago.

But they are expected to escape a ban on playing at next year's finals in Portugal.

UEFA said Monday that after reviewing video evidence and the referee's report no individual players would be charged.

The Turkish Football Association has already been charged with stadium security after flares were lit and missiles thrown at the Sukru Saracoglu stadium during the 0-0 draw.

The 55,000 crowd was made up

only of Turkish supporters with England fans barred from attending the game on safety grounds.

UEFA's Control and Disciplinary Body will consider the charges on Thursday when both football associations are expected to be fined.

A mass brawl erupted between players and officials at half time after Turkey's Aston Villa defender Alpay poked England captain David Beckham in the face as the two sides went into the tunnel.

Italian referee Pierluigi Collina averted further problems when he took Beckham and Alpay into his changing room and told them to calm down.

However, Collina is not believed to have identified any individual player as being guilty of violent behaviour in his report.

"On the basis of the evidence we have seen and the impartial reports,

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A file photo of England captain David Beckham (L) being held back security officials as he follows Alpay Ozalan into the tunnel at half time during their Euro 2004 qualifying match against Turkey.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Solskjaer recovering well

AFP, London

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer feels his recovery from a knee operation is making satisfactory progress but Manchester United's Norwegian striker is not setting any deadlines for his comeback.

The 30-year-old had been playing with the problem for some time, but was forced to go under the knife when aggravating the injury against Panathinaikos in the UEFA Champions League in September.

"It is five weeks since the operation, so it has been about patience, working in the gym and working hard," said Solskjaer who is still on crutches.

"It is hard to say what is going on inside a knee, but it looks good."

Solskjaer revealed he had no option but to have surgery when suffering the setback against Panathinaikos.

"It had to happen because I was playing on with it and it wasn't doing me any good," he told MUTV.

"I have been lucky with injuries in the past, so it is a learning experience. I have got to look at players who have had similar injuries, like Roy Keane, Ruud (van Nistelrooy), Wes (Brown) and Gary Neville."

The forward is hoping to dispense with his crutches in the near future, but is not setting any dates for a return to action.

"I will just start with walking I suppose," he added. "And then it will be a case of taking it one day at a time."

Kluivert warned off Arsenal



BBC ONLINE, undated

Unsettled striker Patrick Kluivert should not quit Barcelona for Arsenal, according to Giovanni van Bronckhorst.

Van Bronckhorst left Highbury to join Barcelona on a year's loan and believes Kluivert will regain his form if he stays with the Spanish side.

"Obviously I'm still an Arsenal player but while I'm at Barcelona I have to think what is best for this club," van Bronckhorst told his official website.

"I hope Patrick stays. We desperately need him in top form."

Arsenal, Chelsea and Newcastle have all made inquiries about reviving Kluivert's career in the

Premiership with the Gunners likely to be the Dutch international's preferred club.

And, although Kluivert has dis

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PATRICK KLUIVERT

Larsson set for Celtic bow



AFP, Glasgow

Henrik Larsson blasted Celtic into pole position in the Scottish Premier League title race over the weekend but refuses to be drawn into talk of staying on next season.

The former Sweden international is sticking to his decision to quit Parkhead at the end of his contract next summer and return home despite Celtic manager Martin O'Neill's attempts to get him to change his mind.

"I don't have any comment at all. I don't have any comments because I think I have said

enough," said Larsson after a hat-trick against Aberdeen handed Celtic a five-point advantage over Rangers at the top of the table.

This season's champions will be guaranteed a place in the lucrative group stages of the Champions League and O'Neill is keen to hang on to the Swede.

Rangers manager Alex McLeish believes his side will continue to limp behind their arch-rivals unless they re-discover the winning touch.

They again misfired at Livingston where the goalless draw signaled their third league game without a win.

Leeds losses soar



REUTERS, London

Leeds United chief executive John McKenzie is confident in the club's future despite annual losses soaring at Elland Road to 49.5 million pounds.

McKenzie, who took over from Peter Ridsdale earlier this year, said on Tuesday he had taken steps to restructure the business.

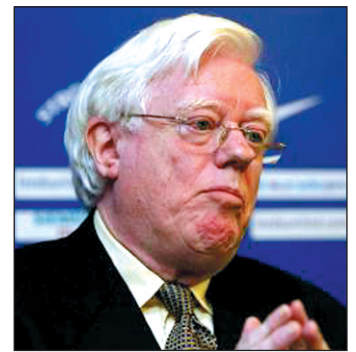
But he warned that any potential turnaround in the health of Leeds United depended "not only on a prudent, effective business operation, but also upon our football team performing satisfactorily within the premier league."

Currently second from bottom in the Premiership, the club that three years ago reached the semifinals of the lucrative Champions League announced pre-tax losses of 49.5 million pounds in the year to June

30, from 33.8 million the previous year.

"We have taken 20 million pounds of costs out of the business and rebuilt the management team. As such it is now possible to begin to look forward with some confidence," McKenzie said in a statement.

With turnover down by a fifth to 64 million pounds, player wages accounted for 88 percent of that.



JOHN MCKENZIE

Leeds' debt remained largely unchanged at 78 million pounds, from 77.9 million previously. McKenzie said the club was in discussions with creditors over restructuring its debt but there remained uncertainty about the outcome of negotiations.

McKenzie also said the club had appointed former Chelsea chief executive Trevor Birch to take over the day to day running of the business.

"His appointment will enable me to concentrate on the long-term strategic development and the restructuring and refinancing of the business," said McKenzie.

Leeds have suffered a humiliating fall from grace after investing heavily in a bid to achieve European glory and challenge Manchester United as the top team in the country.

But failure to qualify for Europe's

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'Best of Gunners yet to come'



AFP, London

Arsenal and England defender Sol Campbell warned his Premiership side's title rivals that the Gunners are top of the table without being at their best and insisted they would peak when it mattered most, in the Premiership run-in.

Arsenal are the only unbeaten

league team in all four divisions and, following their 1-1 draw at Charlton, they top the Premiership by a point from Chelsea, with Manchester United two points behind.

"It's a big plus for us," said Campbell.

"We've got a great team and the sign of a good side is when you're not playing at your best, you can still pick up wins and draws. We're still there and there's a long way to go."

"I quite like it like this at the moment. Rather than playing your

best football now and then running out of steam. I much prefer it the other way around where you build up and then, in the final 10 games, you start increasing it. It's a question of peaking at the right time."

Arsenal failed to achieve that last season, when United rallied to take the Premiership title, but Campbell believes they will be ready this time.

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Hertha coach banned from touchline

AFP, Berlin

Hertha Berlin's Dutch coach Huub Stevens has been banned from the touchline for two matches by the German football federation for "unsporting behaviour" during a Bundesliga game earlier this month.

Stevens was also fined 7,500 euros (8,800 dollars) for insulting the referee and members of the opposition team during Hertha's 4-1 home loss to Bayer Leverkusen on October 18.

The ban will come into effect next month for ties against VfL Wolfsburg and Borussia Monchengladbach, with Stevens allowed on the touchline for Tuesday's German Cup game against Bundesliga tailenders Hansa Rostock during which his future could be decided. Stevens, 49, arrived in Berlin in June 2002 from Schalke 04, but the club are currently fourth from the bottom of the Bundesliga.

FIFA to discuss Ferdinand case



REUTERS, Zurich

Potential punishments for England international defender Rio

Ferdinand, who missed a drugs test in September, will be one of the topics discussed by FIFA's sports medical committee on Tuesday.

The impact on football of the newly-revealed and formerly undetectable drug tetrahydrogestirone

(THG) will also be on the agenda along with another 25 cases and issues of doping-related cases from around the world.

Ferdinand has claimed he forgot to take the test at Manchester United's training ground at Carrington on September 23 but faces a possible two-year ban from football if the English FA finds him guilty of willfully missing a drugs test.

Dr Michel D'Hooghe, the Belgian chairman of the sports medical committee, confirmed on Monday that Ferdinand's case, and possible punishments and recommendations to the English FA, will be addressed.

"I cannot say what will be the final decision of the committee but the case of Rio Ferdinand is among a number of matters that will be discussed," D'Hooghe told Reuters.

But D'Hooghe indicated it would be unlikely that any action will be taken by FIFA until the English FA judges on Ferdinand's case.

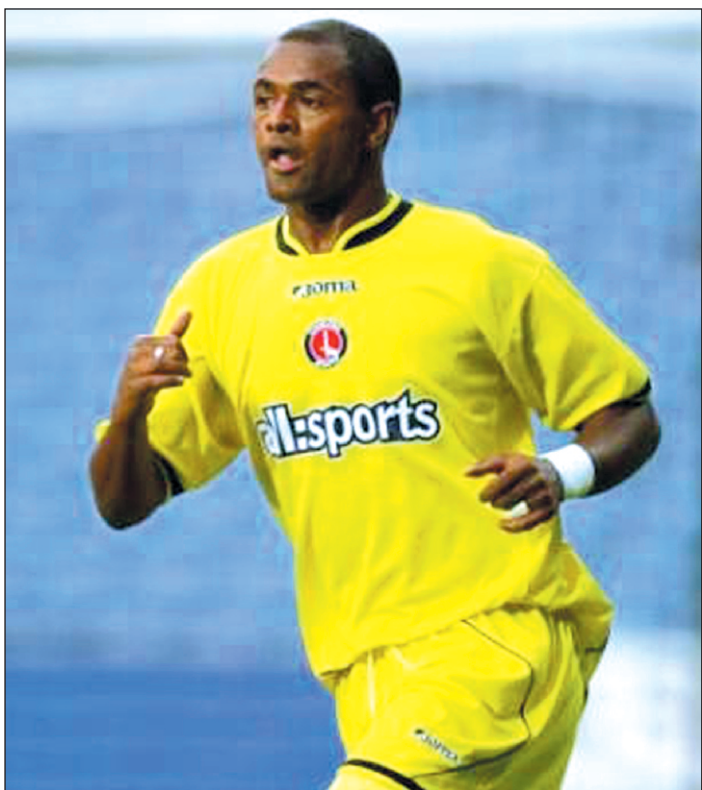
"We will look at the case and how it has been addressed already, but there will be no decisions announced or recommendations made until after the meeting," he added.

"There are a number of options available but I will not try to predict what is discussed. This meeting has been planned for a long time and there are another 25 issues to be looked at."

"We will not only be talking about the issue of Rio Ferdinand and the issue of THG is another important matter that will be on the agenda."

Ferdinand was dropped from England's final Euro 2004 qualifier against Turkey on October 11 after it emerged that the defender had missed the test but has continued playing club football for Manchester United.

The English FA have held talks with Ferdinand but have to make a verdict on their investigations.



SHAUN BARLETT

Bartlett retires



REUTERS, London

South Africa's record goalscorer Shaun Bartlett has retired from international football to concentrate on earning a new contract at Charlton Athletic, he has told the English premier league club's website.

Bartlett, who has won 66 caps in eight years, scoring 26 goals said: "The two major reasons for me (retiring from internationals) were that I'm now in the last year of my contract at Charlton and I'm playing for a new deal."

"I've spoken to the South African authorities and explained my decision. I told them it was time for me to concentrate on my club career and being with my family. They tried to talk me round but I had already made up my mind."

Charlton manager Alan Curbishley felt Bartlett was missing too many club matches because of his international commitments.

"We were in a ridiculous situation where he'd go missing for six weeks over Christmas," Curbishley was quoted as saying on the Sky Sports website.

"We said to Shaun it wasn't on. We pay his wages so asked what his priority was."

Bartlett featured in the 1998 World Cup in France but missed last year's finals in South Korea and Japan after picking up a calf injury in February 2002 in the African Nations Cup in Mali.

He travelled to Mali only after being threatened by world soccer's governing body FIFA with a suspension from club football for the duration of the tournament.

"I didn't really want to go last time but when I ended up making the trip it was a disaster because I got that injury in the first game," added the 30-year-old, who was sidelined for eight months with the calf and a subsequent Achilles injury.

The African Nations Cup begins in January in Tunisia and Bartlett,

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Gerrard ready for new deal

AFP, London

Liverpool and England midfielder Steven Gerrard said that he is close to signing a new deal at Anfield.

The 23-year-old Liverpool captain, who made his Reds debut in November 1998, wants to relive past glories with the struggling Merseysiders, who are currently tenth in the Premiership.

"I wouldn't be signing a long-term contract if I didn't feel we had the squad and the ability to be challenging for honours," Gerrard told Liverpool's website, www.liverpoolfc.tv.

"I want to be going for the title and the Champions League."

"I'm a Liverpool boy and I don't want to leave the club. I want to help this club become successful again and to be here, playing my part, when it is," added Gerrard who made his debut as captain ahead of the UEFA Cup clash with Olimpija Ljubljana earlier this month.



RIO FERDINAND