

## German film scores at box office

AFP, Berlin

A documentary following host nation Germany's team at this year's World Cup is topping the German box office charts after almost one million people saw it in the first few days, figures showed on Monday.

"Deutschland: Ein Sommermärchen" (Germany: A Summer Fairytale) follows coach Jürgen Klinsmann's squad in hotels, on training grounds and in matches in their unexpected progress to the semi-finals where they were knocked out by eventual winners Italy.

Klinsmann is shown giving an inspirational team talk before the penalty shootout victory over Argentina in the quarter-finals while, in a lighter moment, Germany and Arsenal goalkeeper Jens Lehmann asks Chancellor Angela Merkel when she is going to cut taxes.

The film was made by German filmmaker Soenke Wortmann who edited down 100 hours of footage he shot on a handheld camera.

Its audience will be further swelled when it goes on release in Switzerland and Austria soon.

All receipts from the film will go to the SOS Children's Villages charity, which in collaboration with world governing body FIFA is seeking to build six villages in Brazil, Mexico, Nigeria, South Africa, Ukraine and Vietnam.

## Vote of confidence for Staunton

AFP, Dublin

Under-fire Ireland manager Steve Staunton's position is not under threat, his FAI employers said ahead of Wednesday's Euro 2008 qualifier against the Czech Republic.

Staunton faced heavy criticism following Saturday's 5-2 defeat to Cyprus in a Euro 2008 qualifier, with the suggestion the axe is to fall should a fifth successive loss follow against the Czechs.

But Football Association of Ireland president David Blood has insisted Staunton's job is not under threat - even if the team lose to the Czech Republic.

"There has been a lot of speculation in relation to our manager and our chief executive (John Delaney), and I want to ally fears their positions are under threat," said Blood.

"On the contrary, they are consolidating their positions."

In particular with regard to Staunton, Blood added: "Why would we look at it at this stage?"

"We've asked him in on a long-term basis to see if he would be prepared to take the team on and qualify us for a World Cup. It's a rebuild situation."

"We are certainly not considering any change of our tactics at this particular time."

"Stan (Staunton) has done a tremendous job for us over many years, and he has a back-up team that are highly supportive and skilled."

"It has been slightly unfortunate with the injuries and (Sir) Bobby Robson not being available to him, but I feel we have the stamina to last this particular test."

When asked whether a heavy defeat to the Czech Republic would alter the stance of the FAI, Blood replied: "No. Positively no."

"We have given Stephen an opportunity to come in and he has taken our situation forward to the degree we now have a highly professional backroom staff."

"They have to be given the time and the opportunity."

Staunton has performed a major u-turn and called Everton midfielder Lee Carsley into the squad for the qualifier with the Czech Republic.

Carsley has spent the last two and a half years in retirement after deciding to focus on club football and family at the time but recently contacted Staunton to say he wished to be considered for future international fixtures.

## Kuyt sidelined

AFP, Liverpool

Liverpool striker Dirk Kuyt will miss his club's next two games with an ankle injury sustained playing for the Netherlands at the weekend.

Although a scan has revealed the injury is not as serious as first thought, strained ankle ligaments will keep him out of the home game with Blackburn on Saturday and next Wednesday's Champions League trip to Bordeaux.

Liverpool hope Kuyt could recover in time to face Manchester United at Old Trafford on October 22.

Liverpool boss Rafael Benitez was quoted in The Sun tabloid Tuesday as expressing his anger that the Dutch striker had had to stay with his national squad ahead of their game against Albania on Wednesday rather than return to England.

"If Kuyt is a doubt, it means he is not fit," said Benitez.

"They are talking about seeing if he can play. But if he does he may miss our next three or four games."



Spain coach Luis Aragones speaks during a press conference on the eve of their friendly match against Argentina in Murcia on Wednesday. PHOTO: AFP

## Aragones vows to stay on

Football

Reuters, Madrid

Spain coach Luis Aragones has said he will not resign even if his side lose their third game in a row when they play Argentina in Wednesday's friendly.

"Win or lose against Argentina, I'm going to carry on," the 68-year-old said in an interview on the Spanish Football Federation (RFEF) Web site on Tuesday.

"I tend to react well in adverse situations and what has happened to me has also happened to other coaches."

Spain have suffered two consecutive defeats in qualification for Euro 2008, losing 3-2 away to Northern Ireland last month and then going down 2-0 in Sweden on Saturday. The defeats, which have left

Spain in fifth place in Group F with just three points from three games, have resulted in calls for Aragones to resign or for the federation to sack him.

But the former Atletico Madrid and Real Mallorca coach said he was the victim of media persecution and insisted there was time to rectify the situation.

"There is an orchestrated campaign against me by certain media, who are blaming me for things that are not my fault."

"There is no cause for alarm other than the fact that we have suffered two unexpected defeats, but there is time to sort things out."

"We have still got nine games to play and we all know perfectly well what is happening in football: France lost to Scotland, Cyprus thrashed Ireland and Italy drew with Lithuania."

RFEF president Angel Maria Villar gave his full backing to Aragones.

"Some people believe he should leave the job, but that is not the case with myself or the federation," Villar was quoted as saying by sports daily Marca on Tuesday.

"Whatever happens against Argentina, Luis Aragones will remain as Spain coach. The only reason that the criticism of Aragones and his players had helped bring the side together."

"It's a funny thing, but the worse things are in football the more unity there is within the team... a win against Argentina might help calm the situation down a bit."

"I suppose one day we will all wear the same Spain shirt - the players, the media and the fans - and that in the end everyone will become infected by enthusiasm (for the national side)."

## Albelda calls for unity

Reuters, Madrid

Spain midfielder David Albelda has appealed for calm on the eve of the friendly against Argentina, saying the national team needs to work in a less hostile environment to succeed.

Consecutive defeats to Northern Ireland and Sweden in Euro 2008 qualifiers have led to large sections of the Spanish media calling for the head of coach Luis Aragones.

The build-up to the Sweden game was dominated by fierce arguments over whether Aragones was right to leave Spain captain Raul out of the squad.

"Here there is always some sort of argument going on whether it be over the inclusion of Raul, whether (Fernando) Torres should play... or some other story like that," the Valencia midfielder told a news conference on Tuesday.

"The team needs to work in a calmer environment because even the most resilient person is likely to be affected by what has happened."

"I have the feeling that we don't have the sort of unified support (for the national team) that there is in say Argentina or Italy," he said.

But Albelda added that the criticism of Aragones and his players had helped bring the side together.

"It's a funny thing, but the worse things are in football the more unity there is within the team... a win against Argentina might help calm the situation down a bit."

"I suppose one day we will all wear the same Spain shirt - the players, the media and the fans - and that in the end everyone will become infected by enthusiasm (for the national side)."

## Kadhafi wants bigger stake

AFP, Rome

Al-Saadi Kadhafi, son of Libyan leader Moamer Kadhafi, wants to buy a bigger stake in scandal-hit Italian club Juventus.

Al-Saadi, who has had spells in Italy as a player with Perugia and Udinese, currently owns 7.5 percent of the Turin giants through his Libyan Arab Foreign Investment Company.

"It is our intention to make a big investment," Al-Saadi told the Corriere dello Sport.

"We would like to be the biggest shareholders after the Agnelli family. Naturally, they remain the historic pillar of Juventus. We are looking at being the Agnelli's' main partner."

"At the moment we haven't gone into detail, but it is our firm intention to raise our quota in the club. I still don't know when we will have something concrete."

Juventus were relegated to Italy's second division and made to start on minus 17 points for their part in the country's match-fixing scandal.

Al-Saadi revealed he is considering an offer to train with Serie A club Sampdoria.

"I will speak to my father about it before making a decision," he said.

"I have to see if it would get in the way of my work commitments. But I like the offer made by (Sampdoria president) Riccardo Garrone."

## Dunga sees tough opposition

AFP, Stockholm

Brazil coach Dunga on Monday praised Ecuador and said Tuesday's friendly against them in the Swedish capital would be a "very tough" match for his team.

"There's no doubt it'll be a very tough match for Brazil," Dunga said at a press conference held after Brazil's training session at Stockholm's Raasunda stadium.

"Ecuador's football has just got better and better in the last few years. They had a fantastic World Cup... It'll be a tough match," added Dunga, who captained Brazil to the 1994 World Cup title.

Asked why all-time World Cup record goalscorer Ronaldo was to miss Tuesday's match, the Brazil coach said the star still had a place on the team.

"He hasn't gone... we're just testing new players," Dunga said.

The coach, who replaced Carlos Alberto Parreira after their disappointing World Cup when they crashed out in the quarter-finals to eventual finalists France, said his team was unfazed by the change of climate from Saturday's match against Al-Kuwait in the desert kingdom.

The Brazilian team trained in a crisp 10 degree celsius Stockholm on Monday.

More than 4,000 fans turned out to watch Brazil's preparations for the friendly.

## Kaladze relishing facing friends

Reuters, Tbilisi



KAKHA KALADZE

AC Milan full back Kakha Kaladze is relishing a chance to face some of his club mates when Georgia host Italy in a Euro 2008 qualifier on Wednesday.

Kaladze said it would be a tall order for injury-hit Georgia to upset the world champions but he was looking forward to the challenge.

"It will be a very difficult match for us because we have so many injuries and when you face such a top team like Italy you need all your top players," the Georgia skipper told Reuters on the eve of the Group B clash.

"For many of my team mates it will also be a great chance to prove themselves at the top international level."

"As for myself, I know almost everyone on the Italy team, some of them are good friends of mine. But as the old saying goes 'there are no friends on the football pitch'."

"We'll have to leave friendship aside during the game," added Kaladze, who has spent the last six

seasons playing in Serie A. "Still, I expect a great match. We'll have a great atmosphere with a full stadium rooting for us," Kaladze said, referring to the newly-renovated 55,000-seat Boris Paichadze Stadium.

After a slow start with only a point

in their opening two matches, the Italians got their qualifying campaign back on track with a 2-0 victory over Ukraine last Saturday.

Georgia, on the other hand, have slumped to defeats to France and Ukraine after thrashing the Faroe

Islands 6-0 in their opener two months ago.

The last time Italy played in Tbilisi they beat Georgia 2-1 on June 2, 2001 in a 2002 World Cup qualifier.

Several of Italy's current side, including captain Fabio Cannavaro, fellow full backs Nesta and Marco Materazzi, goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon and striker Alessandro Del Piero, played in that game.

Kaladze also remembers the match, albeit for different reasons. Days before the match, Kaladze's younger brother Levan, then 21, was abducted in broad daylight near his Tbilisi home. The kidnappers demanded a \$600,000 ransom but killed him shortly after his disappearance.

His body was only found this year after police arrested four men and charged them with murder.

Witnesses said Kaladze played that match with tears in his eyes.

"It was a long time ago," the 28-year-old said when asked if he had any memory of that game.

"All I can say is that the city has changed a lot since."

## Fine threat for Berbatov

Football

Reuters, Sofia

Bulgaria's Dimitar Berbatov has been threatened with a fine after reacting angrily to comments made by Bulgarian Football Union (BFU) vice-president Iordan Lechkov.

Lechkov made a controversial remark after Bulgaria drew 1-1 with the Netherlands in their Euro 2008 Group G qualifier at home on Saturday.

"Some of the team leaders didn't give everything they can give," said Lechkov, who was part of Bulgaria's

impressive run to the 1994 World Cup semi-finals in the U.S.

Tottenham Hotspur marksman Berbatov, who played the full 90 minutes against the Dutch, replied in uncharacteristic manner when he said: "If he (Lechkov) thinks so, we should let him play."

"He will be fined for his remarks in accordance with the regulations," said Lechkov. "But don't expect me to tell you the amount of the fine."

Berbatov boasts a remarkable scoring ratio with 31 goals in 51 internationals but he is yet to find the net for Bulgaria this year.

The 25-year-old striker is known for his dedication and had

## Lamps up against old mate

Internet, undated



FRANK LAMPARD

and I could see him going on to become a coach because he has that personality.

"I don't know what he has done since he packed up playing but he was always willing to help youngsters, which is a good sign, but he also has a determined personality as well."

"Having played with some of us and against some of us, I am sure he will be even more determined to beat England on Wednesday."

Croatia will be looking to extend a proud 16-year unbeaten home record in competitive games, whereas Steve McClaren's side must improve on their performance in Saturday's goalless draw with Macedonia.

Lampard said: "There is a long way to go in the group. It is not quite the right attitude to say we have to win on Wednesday. We want to win but we don't want to get beaten as well."

"It will be slightly different to Saturday. Macedonia did come and attack us but Croatia will probably do it even more which might give us

a bit of extra space to attack. "But we have to be very careful because technically they are very good, so we will have to be on our toes defensively."

Lampard again insisted England can take nothing for granted in their bid to reach the Euro 2008 finals, which will be staged in Austria and Switzerland.

He said: "Someone said we were in an easy group. I can't see that. You are talking about a few very technically good teams. Macedonia gave us a very hard game and so will Russia, Croatia and Israel."

"We have already seen a few draws in the group so far. This is by no means a group we will win easily and just progress straight through to the European Championships."

Lampard scored the first of his 12 England goals in a friendly against Croatia just over three years ago and was also on target when the sides clashed during Euro 2004.

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## Players should share blame: Torres

Football

AFP, Madrid

Spanish international striker Fernando Torres claimed Monday that the players are as culpable as coach Luis Aragones for their country's dismal start to Euro 2008 qualifying.

Spain have lost two of their opening three Group F Euro qualifiers, including a humiliating 3-2 loss at tiny Northern Ireland last month.

All of which has put coach Aragones in the media firing line, with many calling for his head.

But Torres believes the blame should be shared.

"In a team we are all responsible, the coach and the players," said the Atletico Madrid star, rumoured to still be touted by English Premiership giants Manchester United.

Torres was speaking at a press conference in Pacheco in the south east of the country ahead of a friendly against Argentina on Wednesday.

"We're all in the same group and the mistakes have to be shared out equally," he added.

"Aragones knows he can come through this test and I am certain that the more he is criticised the more determined he will be to stay

on and fight. "He told us he has the desire and he feels strong."

Torres also revealed that the under-fire Aragones still has the backing of Spanish federation president Angel Maria Villar.

Aragones has been in charge of Spain since 2004 but has endured a turbulent reign.

He was roundly criticised last year for allegedly making racist remarks about Thierry Henry before a match against France and Spain were dumped out of the World Cup in Germany at the second round stage, also against France.

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## Munoz takes over Panathinaikos

AFP, Athens

Greek footballing giants Panathinaikos announced on Monday that Spanish coach Victor Munoz had signed an eight-month contract for a reputed 600,000 euros.

The 49-year-old could get an extra season if they win the title.

Munoz replaces Swede Hans Backe who was fired last month.

Munoz, a former Barcelona and Spain midfielder, began his coaching career with Mallorca (1995-1996) and also was in charge of Logrones (1996-1997), Leida (1997-2000), Villarreal (2000-2003) and Real Zaragoza (2004-2006).



Germany midfielder Bastian Schweinsteiger (R) signs autographs upon his arrival at Bratislava on Tuesday. PHOTO: AFP

## CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

**ACROSS**  
 1 "Lion King" meanie  
 5 Goes up and down  
 9 Swelled head  
 12 Luau entertainment  
 13 Ab follower  
 14 12-Across  
 15 The gamut  
 16 Ethereal  
 17 Part of UCSD  
 18 "Girl From Ipanema" saxophonist  
 19 Scale member  
 20 Twitch  
 21 Cambridge sch.  
 23 Altar constellation  
 25 Emits vapor  
 28 Ninja Turtles' meals

**DOWN**  
 8 Crafty  
 9 Differently  
 10 Paraphernalia  
 11 Sty cry  
 20 Jolson characterization  
 22 Mirror's offering  
 24 Castor bean poison  
 25 Away from NNW  
 26 Heavy weight  
 27 Mess up  
 29 Buddhist sect  
 30 Hole in one  
 31 With-drawn  
 35 Rickrack  
 36 Submerged  
 39 Worked at a loom  
 40 Greet  
 41 Particular  
 43 Erstwhile Peruvian  
 45 Modern-day coin  
 46 Therefore  
 47 Twilight  
 49 Larry's cohort

**Solution time: 27 mins.**

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## CRYPTOQUIP

U M O I E R K N I N T Z X S M

E L P S O C M L K T R L S M T F P U L T O .

L U N F P C M R W O S N K R X

L S U R K R Z O C O R O W O I S .

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: I KEPT ASKING MY SON TO SHINE LUSTROUSLY, BUT