Nesta ruled

SENLIS, France, June 24: Italy's young defender Alessandro Nesta was ruled out of the World Cup with tore right knee ligaments, team doctors announced Tuesday night, reports

The 22-year-old defender of Lazio of Rome, who was injured following a collision with an Austrian defender during a Group-B match at Saint-Denis, will return home Wednesday, leaving the Italian team with only 21 players.

Under FIFA rules injured players can't be replaced during the competition.

Yugoslavs

From page-16 round for years ago, when they

hosted the tournament. Coach Steve Sampson's tactics have been naive and the Americans must be rueing his decision to omit experienced midfielder Johan Harkees, the former skipper and a midfielder inspiration, from his 22-man

The American squad is a combination of players from the domestic MLS competition and of players from around the world, some with tenuous American links.

Defender David Regis, a Frenchman, plays in Germany and was only granted American citizenship last month as Sampson became aware of the flaws in his squad.

Regis barely speaks English, while several other American players speak with accents, including South African-born midfielder Roy Wegerle and German-born defender Thomas Booley. No fewer than seven of the American players were born

Football is very much a secondary sport in the United States and the level of play of this side has demonstrated why. Americans love winners and particularly hate losing to foreigners. Thus, the performances of team USA here could cause major harm to the image of the game back home.

Sampson, who is expected to be sacked when the squad returns home after Thursday's has nonetheless mounted a fierce defence of his

"We are out of the tournament but we have shown we know how to play football," he said. "We've been unlucky, but we've also missed a lot of chances in front of goal

"Our aim against Yugoslavia is to show we can compete against one of the best teams in Europe."

Both teams will train at the stadium today.

Lady luck's

From page-13

gentina in the 1990 World Cup was another debatable decision. Scotland can cite any number of hard-luck stories to explain their never having quali-

fied for the second round in eight attempts. Roberto Baggio's goals got Italy to the 1994 World Cup final but his luck ran out when it came down to a penalty shoot-

out and his skied shot over the bar propelled the golden trophy into the hands of Brazil captain Dunga. Had the World Cup always been won by the best team, Brazil would have easily won

the trophy in 1982. Socrates, Falcao, Zico and CO formed a side which was brimming with talent and were hot favourites. But largely and perhaps solely thanks to back-to-form

striker Paolo Rossi, Brazil were beaten and Italy went on to match Brazil's then-record of three titles. Of course Holland, who dur-

ing much of the 70s had the best international side in the world with the likes of Johan Cruvff in their ranks, lost in two consecutive finals in 1974 and Holland had the bad luck to

face the hosts on both occasions. Even a first-minute penalty for Holland against Germany in 1974 ultimately did not matter much, and then Argentina were triumphant in Buenos Aires.

Diego Maradona's hand of God goal against England in 1986 was another of the many little slices of fortune which make the difference between

success and failure. Flonaldo

From page-13 fourth in the world by FIFA go-

ing into the tournament. The game actually meant little for Brazil, who took the lead in the 78th minute on a header by Bebeto, one of their heroes in the 1994 Cup in the

United States. After victories over Scotland and Morocco, the team already was qualified in first place in Group A. Norway, with two points going in, needed a win to qualify after Morocco jumped to four points with a 3-0 victory over Scotland in their final

match. "We came in overconfident against a rival we didn't know how would play against us." Brazilian coach Mario Zagallo said. "But we developed our soccer and will continue to do so.

"But they scored and then came the penalty which I don't really know what happened there. We played well. We now have to keep going."

Brazil, winner of the World Cup four times, will play Chile next in Paris. Norway, which failed to make it to the second round in two previous World Cup finals, will face Italy next

in Marseille. Both games are set for Saturday. "If we play like tonight anything can happen (against Italy)," Rekdal said.



Bebeto (R) scoring the only goal for Brazil against Norway on June 23.

Chile chew over champions

NANTES, France, Jun 24 (AFP): Chile proved they are more than a two-man team when they toughed out a 1-1 draw with Cameroon to advance to the second round for the World Cup for the first time in 36 years.

Chile drew all three of their first round matches - and are still without a win in the finals since 1962 — but showed plenty of inner steel to hold out a depleted but inspired Cameroon side in their Group B match on Tuesday

It was the third time in the tournament the Chileans had squandered a lead, but each time they have held on for a share of the points. Their reward was the tough-

est possible match in the tournament — a meeting with defending champions Brazil in Paris on Saturday. The Chilean players have

warned, however, that Brazil

will be making a big mistake if

they regard them as simply

Marcelo Salas, Ivan Zamorano

Salas, who needs one goal to become Chile's all-time record goalscorer, and his strike partner Zamorano are the undoubted stars of the side, but they also rely on the hard work of their less-heralded team-

"We are united as a team,"

said defender Javier Margas.

"We play as a team and egos

and a supporting cast.

don't get in the way. The most important thing for all of us is for the team do well. "Salas and Zamorano are included in that. They are excellent strikers and their presence

lifts the rest of us psychologically, but they are part of the Fellow defender Pedro Reyes said the Chileans will have the

chance to prove their strength in depth with starters Nelksonl Parraguez, Francisco Rojas and Moises Villarroel all suspended for the Brazil match after receiving yellow cards against Cameroon.

"The suspensions will give other squad members the chance to show their worth," said Reyes, while midfielder Jose Sierra added: "I don't think it will disadvantage us too much. We have 22 great players in our squad." Captain Zamorano is par-

ticularly relishing a meeting with the Brazilians and their star striker Ronaldo - his teammate at Inter Milan. "Ronaldo told me before the

World Cup that Chile wouldn't make it past the first round,' Zamorano said before the match. "My dream would be to play Brazif, win the match and then exchange jerseys with Ronaldo."

Zamorano now has that opportunity after another of his dreams came true.

"I dreamed last night that we qualified and that we'd be playing Brazil," he said after the match. "This World Cup is turning into the greatest experience of my life as a footballer."

Asian stars: From zeroes to heroes

formance wiped out that stain.

symbolises his rebellious na-

ture, has been an overnight suc-

cess for Japan. He made his de-

but just a year ago, after an ap-

prenticeship in the youth and

Olympic sides, and his out-

standing ability was vital dur-

ing the team's qualifying cam-

midfielder outshines the na-

tion's galaxy of baseball and

sumo stars but he is often reti-

cent with the press and less

than obliging to his fawning

where I stand in the world," he

said before the finals and has

answered the question himself

passing have caught the eye of

many top European clubs and

the midfielder, who idolises

Dutch legend Johan Cruyff, is

reportedly ready to sign for Es-

panyol in Spain after the fi-

His dribbling and bold

with his play. On top.

"I want to see for myself

The Bellmare Hiratsuka

Nakata, whose dyed red hair

PARIS, June 24 (AFP): Influential Japanese midfielder Hidetoshi Nakata and Mehdi Mahdavikia of Iran, a total footballer in the Franz Beckenbauer mould, arrived at the World Cup as relative unknowns but will leave with superstar status and lucrative contracts.

The Asian footballer-of-theyear and Asian young footballer-of-the-year respectively. Nakata and Mahdavikia have proved to be among the best of the X-generation players in the World Cup.

Nakata, a rebel against his own fame, and the unassuming Mahdavikia have played crucial roles in their teams' World Cup displays and helped deflect criticism from the underachieving Asian sides in the tournament.

Iran's 2-1 victory over the United States in the "Mother of all football matches," with Mahdavikia grabbing the second goal, was the only triumph for Asia in eight games. South Korea, in their fourth consecutive finals, fell 3-1 to Mexico and 5-0 to Holland leading to the sacking of coach Cha Bum Kun.

Saudi Arabia, who reached the second round four years ago, axed coach Carlos Alberto Parreira after their 4-0 loss to France.

But the performances of Nakata and Mahdavikia have been a shining beacon to the 2002 finals which will be cohosted by Japan and South Ko-

The 20-year-old Nakata showed great vision and passing skills in Japan's opening 1-0 loss to Argentina and ran the midfield as his team went down by the same score to Croatia.

His big deficiency, a habit of being careless in the middle of the park, led indirectly to Croatia's goal but his overall per-

Blunders upset Sepp

PARIS, Jun 24: FIFA president Sepp Blatter has called the World Cup referees' chief to a meeting after watching Cameroon score a hattrick of disallowed goals and Norway beat Brazil with a contested penalty on Tuesday, reports

David Will of Scotland is president of FIFA's referees' commission.

Hungarian referee Laszlo Vagner refused Francois Omam-Biyick three goals against Chile any one of which would have qualified Cameroon for the second round. But the worst decision was

American referee Esfandiar Baharmast's penalty for Norway which qualified the Norwegians at the expense of Morocco who had beaten Scotland 3-0.

gone largely unnoticed but there was no way Asian football could ignore his two goals against China in Dalian.

He left three defenders in his wake before rilling a shot into the top corner of the net for his first goal and unleashed an unstoppable strike for his second. Both goals were later voted amongst the best in Asia last

Mahdavikia is equally at home in defence, midfield and attack which has drawn comparisons with Germany's Beckenbauer. He lived up to his billing with a tremendous display against the United States which was climaxed with a smartly-taken goal.

The people of Dalian have not forgotten Mahdavikia's two goals which derailed China's World Cup campaign last year and he is poised to sign for the Chinese champions.

The Iranian camp, though says the deal is not 100 per cent confirmed and if Mahdavikia turns on the style against Germany in Iran's final group game on Thursday he could yet join

Like Nakata, 20-year-old Mahdavikia found glory, and goals, during the World Cup qualifiers. His performances for Iran's top side Piruzi had

UNDATED, June 24 (Reuters): What they're saying at the World Cup:

"Just call me Flonald." Tore Andre Flo, Norway's opening scorer against Brazil. "I don't have a problem with the referees but FIFA does."

Brazil coach Mario Zagallo on Norway's controversial penalty award. "To beat Brazil in a World

Cup is an incredible achievement." Kjetil Rekdal, who scored the 89th minute penalty decider

against Brazil.

"I wasn't hired to run a holiday camp." South Africa coach Philippe Troussier, announcing he was to quit after the final group game against Saudi Arabia.

"I'm very disappointed particularly for the wonderful supporters and the people back

Scottish coach Craig Brown after his side went down 3-0 to Morocco. "I'm not just very pleased,

I'm also very very proud.' Norwegian coach Egil Olsen on his side's 2-1 win over world champions Brazil. "I don't know anything about

Japan striker Masayuki Okano denying he was on his way to Dutch club Ajax. "I think we fully deserved our qualification.

Italy coach Cesare Maldini said. "Football exists to bring people together."

Outgoing FIFA president

teammates Khodadad Azizi, Ali Daei and Karim Bagheri in the Bundesliga. Quips & Quotes

> of approval to a pre-match marriage between Brazilian Rose Angela de Souza and Norwegian Oyvind Ekeland before their teams met in Marseille. "It is a life or death match." Paraguay striker Miguel Benitez on his team's encounter

Joao Havelange, giving his seal

against Nigeria in Group D to-"The South African people have firm expectations and this does not include privileged players going to night clubs till

6 am in the morning. South Africa coach Philippe Troussier defending his decision to send Brendan Augustinea and fellow midfielder Naughty Mokoena home for nightclubbing.

"It is a dream for us to reach the second round and we are just so proud for all our countrymen.'

Chile captain Ivan Zamorano after his team advanced to the last 16 following a 1-1 draw with Cameroon. "We go out of the World Cup

because of a referee's decision." Claude le Roy, Cameroon's coach, complaining about the refereeing of Hungarian Laszlo Vagner, who disallowed a potential winning goal by Francois Oman Biyik against Chile. "It's the worst scenario we could think of. We had a great

match, scored great goals but

it's all over. "I'm very sad for the

players. They would have deserved to go through." A disappointed Moroccan coach Henri Michel.

Ince 50-50

SAINT-ANDRE DES EAUX, France, June 24 (AFP): England midfielder Paul Ince has only a 50-50 chance of being fit for Friday's crunch encounter with Colombia at Lens.

The Liverpool player limped out of action after 30 minutes of Monday's 2-1 defeat by Romania in Toulouse with a recurrence of an ankle ligament problem after falling victim to a heavy early challenge form Gheorghe Hagi.

A fight to the death

TOUR DU PIN, France, June 24 (AFP/ Internet): Colombia coach Hernan Dario Gomez is predicting a "fight to the death" in the final Group G game against England in Lens on Fri-

The English are a bit like the Germans," he said. "They just keep battling away and never give up.

"Our match against them will be a real fight to the death." The stakes are high for both sides -- the winners go through to the next round and the losers

pack their bags for home.

After losing their opening game to Romania 1-0, Colombia beat Tunisia 1-0 at Montpellier to stay in contention and Gomez and his squad immedi-ately turned their attention to England.

Their two previous encounters, both played in England, in 1990 and in 1995, ended in 0-0 and 1-1 draws.

"We have played them twice on their own soil and we have not lost to them," said Gomez.

Bilic to miss Argentina clash VITTEL, France, June 24

(AFP/ Internet): Croatia central defender Slaven Bilic is set to miss the Group H table-topping decider with Argentina, it was announced here on Wednesday.

Croatia coach Miroslav Blazevic, who has guided his side to wins over Jamaica and Japan, said that the 29-year-old Bilic, who plays for English Premiership side Everton, had not recovered from a groin in-

Boring Belgium

From page-16

"I know there has been a lot of criticism about our strikers but you must respect them. For such an important match I have to go for experience and their commitment will be total," said

"I am pretty confident we can win but the South Koreans are better than people think. It is not going to be easy." South Korea's crisis coach

Kim Pyong Sok will be aided by the Korean FA technical committee in team selection and they are still unsure of their line-up. There is pressure on them to hand teenage striker Lee Dong

Gook, known as the "Ronaldo of Korea", his second cap alongside the dangerous Choi Yong Soo in attack. Midfielder Seo Jung-Won,

who plays for French side Strasbourg, was menacing in patches against Holland and he will be used to feed the front Korea employed man-to-

man marking tactics against Holland and the players ended up chasing the shadows of Dennis Bergkamp, Marc Overmas and Philip Cocu. That approach has been consigned to the dustbin of history as coach Kim does not rate Oliveira and Nilis.

"Wilmots is their danger man but I do not think our defenders, will have any trouble with Belgium's strikers," he said. "They are not playing

South Korea are enduring their worst World Cup since 1954 when they lost 9-0 to Hungary and 7-0 to Turkey and Kim intends to limit the damage as well as save face.

"We will defend in the first half and see how the game is shaping up," he said. "The second half is the time to attack if we have the chance. The players want to win the game for the people of Korea and Cha Bum

Leighton costs Scots dear

opening the scoring in the 14th minute when Gordon Durie got

between Moroccan goalkeeper

Driss Benzekri and defender

Lahcen Abrami to head John

29th minute with a long range

drive after El Khalej had lost

opening for Craig Burley six

minutes before half-time. The

Celtic midfielder connected

sweetly but his drive was fired

A minute later, Gordon Durie burst free on the left and

curled in a cross with the out-side of his right foot. Kevin Gal-

lacher got in front of the lung-ing Benzekri but just failed to connect for what would have

The Scots were dominating territorially but with their moves frequently breaking down, Morocco always looked

the more likely to score and only Colin Hendry's superb late tackle on the edge of the box prevented Bassir bursting free

That left Scotland still in

Two minutes into the second

the Moroccan playmaker

with a chance but the Moroccan

fans did not have to wait long to

see their side apply the killer

period, Bassir found Hadji wide

on the left and just inside his

chipped the ball forward for

straight at Benzekri.

been a certain goal.

again.

own half.

Durie went close again in the

Collins carved another

Collins free-kick just wide.

possession.

ST ETIENNE, France, June 24: A nightmare performance by goalkeeper Jim Leighton sent Scotland crashing to a 3-0 defeat by Morocco in their final match of France '98 here on Tuesday, reports AFP.

In the end it was academic as Norway's surprise 2-1 win over Brazil meant that neither side could have qualified.

But the manner in which the Scots concluded their eighth unsuccessful attempt to get beyond the first round at a World Cup finals was nevertheless bit-

terly disappointing.

Morocco's superior technique and pace meant they al-ways looked like emerging victorious. Bu their task was made

much easier than it should have been by Leighton's positioning errors on the Moroccans first two goals. Morocco went ahead in the

22nd minute after Tahar El Khalej sprung the Scottish off-side trap with a perfectly weighted through ball that floated over the head of Colin Hendry and bounced invitingly on the left of the Scottish penalty area. Salaheddine Bassir timed

his run into the box perfectly and unleashed a fierce left-foot drive from just outside the edge of the six-yard box that whistled through the gap that Leighton had left at his near

It was a hammer blow for the Scots, who had gone close to

> fiercely pro-Sheringham. "Even before we got to the tournament, I felt that Colombia played very square at the back, with a flat four, and against that sort of system is where Michael's pace can be so useful for us."

Tottenham Hotspur player has shown a sentimental keenness in selecting either current or former Spurs players instead of more obvious in-form players, stubbornly refuses to accept

Owen should have been in England's so far lacklustre starting line-up from the start of the tournament.

the right thing for him.

Beckham blurred by 'posh' spice

LA BAULE, France, June 24: England coach Glenn Hoddle said Tuesday David Beckham was not focused on the World Cup finals, reports AFP.

think that's half of his problem is that he hasn't been focused and perhaps his club should have looked at that a little bit earlier," Hoddle said Tuesday of his Manchester United star. Beckham has seldom been

out of the spotlight since his engagement to spice girl Victoria Adams and just before the Tunisia game he was allowed to meet up with his fiancee. Hoddle also described Manchester Unites boss Alex

Ferguson as "unprofessional" in

his attack on the England man-

ager's handling of Beckham during the finals here in France. Beckham was a shock omission from the England team for their opening clash with Tunisia and was again on the bench for last night's defeat

against Romania before replacing Paul Ince after 33 minutes. Ferguson accused Hoddle of misleading Beckham over his status in the England squad and also claimed the England hierarchy had mistreated the player by placing him in front of the

Yugoslav captain Dragan Stojkovic (L) trains at Saint-Galmier on June 23.

media to talk over his disappointment last week.

But Hoddle said he had long chat with Beckham. "He certainly looks more focused now and came on a did very well for us against Romania." he added.

"He gives us a different option in midfield, he's a great passer of the ball," said Hoddle. "I love him to bits. Remember I brought him into the team for my first game in Moldova.

"What he's got to understand is that his football has to come first and it's got to remain first.

Stinga blow for Romania

PARIS, June 24 (AFP/ Internet): Romania midfielder Ovidiu Stinga is out of the World Cup and has returned to his Dutch club PSV Eindhoven for treatment to the knee ligaments injury he picked up in Monday's 2-1 win over England.

Romania coach Anghel Iordanescu said Wednesday he might ring the changes for Friday's match with Tunisia as he has seven players on one yellow card and several players are carrying injuries.

striker outpaced Hearts David Weir and as Leighton came out to narrow the angle he chipped the ball over him. The Aberdeen 'keeper managed to get his fin-gertips to it but the ball spun

Abdel Jalil Hadda to chase. The

into the back of the net. Any hope Scotland had of staging a comeback disappeared six minutes later when Burley was shown the red cards for a wild hack at Bassir from be-

hind. The Scots battled bravely with ten men but the inevitable gaps at the back meant a third

goal was always on the cards. Five minutes from time Bassir's shot from the edge of the box was deflected by Colin Hendry past the stranded Leighton.

AIX-LES-BAINS, France, June 24 (AFP/ Internet): Japanese striker Masashi Nakayama has found the World Cup a very different level to the J-League, where he scored four successive hat-tricks, and believes he needs to change his style of play for Friday's final Group H match against Jamaica

"Jamaica like us lost to Argentina and Croatia. But they proved that they could match them in the physical side of the

English onus on Owen

who has previously been

LA BAULE, France, June 24 (AFP/ Internet): Teenage striking sensation Michael Owen is poised to start for England in their crucial World Cup Group G match against Colombia in Lens on Friday. Owen, at 18 the youngest

member of the England squad, was in fine form when he came on as a substitute in England's 2-1 loss to Romania on Monday, scoring the team's only goal and looking a vast improvement on the pedestrian Teddy Sheringham. England coach Glenn Hoddle

Colombia in a game England must earn at least a point to avoid making an early exit from the tournament. "I've always felt that it would

be possible that Michael would

start against Colombia, what-

is now set to partner Owen with

Alan Shearer in attack against

Hoddle, who being a former

"I understand what a great talent he is and I've never said anything different," he said. "I believe and I know that it's been

the tournament, has sensed his place in the side is at risk after a series of below-par perfor-"I am obviously worried that I will be the one to make way if

the manager decides to start

with Michael on Friday," he "It does hurt me when I hear the fans chanting for Michael but I have to put my hands up and admit I didn't play well against Románia.

"I don't know now why. I guess it was just one of those things. But I am not stupid. Michael did very well when he "He's a great talent and I re-

alise there is going to be a huge demand for him to be in the starting line-up. "That's something for the manager to think about, but if

he thinks it's the right decision he'll do it.' Skipper Shearer has praised Owen's performance against Romania.

I've always said that Michael would play a part in this World Cup. How big that part is only time will tell," he

"He got us back into the game

against Romania with a great "The rest is up to the manager, but I can understand why people are clamouring for him. "It doesn't matter that he's still relatively young. He gives

defenders a lot of trouble.

by the lack of opportunities coming his way at France 98. "It's very frustrating. I've only had one chance in two games -and I scored from that," he said. Shearer is believed to want,

Shearer has been frustrated

unlike Hoddle, Manchester United star David Beckham to start the match with Colombia. However, a clearly frustrated Shearer added: "It's not up to me

if he starts against Colombia

Credit goes to Mijatovic

it's the boss's call."

PARIS. June 24: FIFA's technical committee has awarded the first goal in last Sunday's Yugoslavia-Germany match to Predrag Mijatovic, re-

ports AFP. Dejan Stankovic had claimed the goal but FIFA decided on Tuesday he did not get a contact when he jumped for the ball with German goal-

keeper Andreas Kopke. FIFA also confirmed that Sinisa Mihajlovic scored an own goal when Michael Tarant's free-kick struck him in the ball and was deflected into the Yugoslav net for Germany's

POINTSTABLE

bles after Tuesday's matches: **GROUP A**

Goals For, Against, Points) 0 1 6 3 6 Brazil 3 1 2 0 5 4 5 Norway 3 1 1 1 5 5 4 Morocco Scotland 3 0 1 2 2 6 1 *Brazil and Norway qualify

GROUP B 3 2 1 0 7 3 7 Chile 3 0 3 0 4 4 3 Austria 3 0 2 1 3 4 2

Cameroon 3 0 2 1 2 5 2 second round.

*Italy and Chile qualify for

Group A and B World Cup ta-(Played Won, Drawn, Lost, for second round.

-AFP photo

A different ball game

that he'd be nursed into the

hadn't scored people would've

nursed him before we've come

here. He got off the mark in Mo-

against Romania, so now if we

start him his confidence is go-

ing to be sky-high. That's a little

hint of what's been in my mind

severely censured by Hoddle for

dancing the night away in a

Portuguese nightclub prior to

Sheringham, who was

rocco, and that gave him a lift.

been saying he's not ready.

"If he'd played two games and

"It was right that we've

"He's come on and scored

"It was always earmarked ever happened," said Hoddle,

World Cup.

about him."