

## Kilmarnock close on Rangers

GLASGOW, Dec 21: Kilmarnock closed to within three points of leaders Rangers in the Scottish Premier League on Sunday with a 2-0 victory over Dundee United, reports Reuters.

Paul Wright headed in an Ian Durrant cross to put them 1-0 up after half an hour and Durrant completed the win with a penalty three minutes from time.

Kilmarnock now have 34 points to the 37 of Rangers, who beat Hearts 3-2 on Saturday.

Celtic are third on 30 after thumping bottom club Dunfermline 5-0 on Saturday. Dundee United remain in trouble in second-last place.

## Lie out for a month

VALENCIA, Spain, Dec 21 (Reuters/Internet): Valencia's Roman Arias, an international striker, will be out of action for at least four weeks with an ankle injury, club officials said on Monday.

Lie, nicknamed 'The Cobra', limped off after 18 minutes of his team's 2-1 defeat at Espanyol on Sunday with a sprained ankle and a minor tibia fracture after a tackle by the Espanyol defender Mauricio Pochettino.

Club doctors said that although there was no serious ligament damage, the injury was bad enough for the ankle to be immobilised for the next 10 to 12 days.

## 2 West Ham booters charged

ROMFORD, England, Dec 21: West Ham stars Neil Ruddock and Trevor Sinclair will appear in court on Tuesday after being arrested for allegedly damaging a woman's car after the club's Christmas Party on Saturday night, reports AP.

"It would appear they have let themselves down," Hammers manager Harry Redknapp said on Monday. "They were out on their Christmas party. I just told them to enjoy themselves and to make sure they behave."

"It appears a couple of them have got themselves into a bit of trouble by getting arrested. If it is right that they have misbehaved then you can be sure we will read them the riot act."

Ruddock, a centre-back who has played once for England, has been charged with violent behaviour and is alleged to have thrown a bottle at a car belonging to 19-year-old beauty therapist Linda Knowles outside a night club at Romford, east of London.

# 'Zidane tops Reuters' personality poll

LONDON, Dec 21 (Reuters/Internet): Zinedine Zidane, scorer of two goals in France's World Cup final win over Brazil, is the winner of the Reuters' 1998 Sports Personality poll.

Zidane was one of the most important stars in the most important event of 1998, said Ori Lewis, sports editor of the Jerusalem Post in Israel.

**CLEAR WINNER**

Zidane, who came last in the 1997 poll, was the clear winner with 128 points out of a maximum of 305. Almost neck-and-neck, trailing some way behind Zidane, were Austrian Alpine skier Hermann Maier with 76 points and American sprinter Marion Jones who took third place with 74.

More than 60 sports editors and reporters from 35 countries ranked their leading five sportsmen and women from a 30-strong list compiled by Reuters sports journalists.

Each first place choice was awarded five points, second place four points and so on.

French-born Zidane, whose parents' homeland is the Berber region of Algeria, enjoyed an outstanding season with Juventus when they won the Italian championship and reached the European Cup final for a third successive year.

Sports journalists said Zidane's crucial goals in the World Cup final were a brilliant response to a red card and suspension which threatened to ruin his World Cup.

"There's no bigger sporting achievement than scoring the match-winning goals in the World Cup final," said Clive Ellard of the Daily Telegraph in London.

**TEENAGE SENSATION**

England's Michael Owen, who at only 18 was widely considered to have scored one of the best goals of the World Cup,

gained only six points in the poll.

Runner-up 'Hermator' Maier won Olympic gold medals in the super-G and giant slalom after an extraordinary comeback from a spectacular crash in the downhill at the Nagano Olympics in February.

"Nagano saw the most incredible comeback in skiing history since the days of Pirmin Zurbriggen," said Jaros Andreas of Sportmagazin in Vienna. Zurbriggen, one of the greatest Alpine skiers of all time, won two gold medals just weeks after surgery in 1985.

**WOMEN IN THE SPOTLIGHT**

Jones was undefeated in 38 events during the 1998 season until she was beaten in the long jump in September.

"Marion has made the greatest impact on athletics since Carl Lewis," said Godfrey Robert of the Straits Times in Singapore. "A drugs-free athlete, she was truly a sensation for 1998."

Jones was the fastest woman in the world over both 100 and 200 metres this season. She led the American women's team to victory in the World Cup with the third fastest time in history over 200 metres.

"Her amazing performances have put women on top again," said Gert Roets, sports editor of Supersport in South Africa.

Close behind Jones was Ethiopian distance runner Haile Gebrselassie who clinched fourth place in the poll with 72 points. Gebrselassie broke the 10,000 metres world record in June and beat the

5,000 record less than two weeks later.

"In the space of two weeks Gebrselassie's achievement was just remarkable," said one sports journalist.

US basketball player Michael Jordan took fifth spot for the second successive year with 66 points, ahead of Finnish Formula One world champion Mika Hakkinen and tennis world number one Pete Sampras who each scored 61 points.

Hakkinen staged a remarkable comeback from a crash at the 1995 Australian Grand Prix which almost killed him.

Jordan led the Chicago Bulls to their sixth NBA title in eight

years. His tally of 45 points in the final game against the Utah Jazz marked one of his best performances.

"He proved himself the best basketball one more season in the toughest league in the world," said Marco Keller of Sportinformation in Zurich.

Americans bagged more points in the poll's top 10 with baseball player Mark McGwire and golfer Mark O'Meara sharing sixth place with 51 points.

At the age of 41, O'Meara won the US Masters, British Open and World Matchplay titles. "O'Meara finally won after years of trying and coming close — and did it twice — a rare feat on the tour," said one sports journalist.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

years. His tally of 45 points in the final game against the Utah Jazz marked one of his best performances.

"He proved himself the best basketball one more season in the toughest league in the world," said Marco Keller of Sportinformation in Zurich.

Americans bagged more points in the poll's top 10 with baseball player Mark McGwire and golfer Mark O'Meara sharing sixth place with 51 points.

At the age of 41, O'Meara won the US Masters, British Open and World Matchplay titles. "O'Meara finally won after years of trying and coming close — and did it twice — a rare feat on the tour," said one sports journalist.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

## Gunners down Leeds

LONDON, Dec 21: Champions Arsenal beat Leeds United 3-1 at Highbury on Sunday to post their first win in six Premier League games, reports Reuters.

The victory kept Arsenal within four points of league leaders Chelsea who beat Tottenham Hotspur 2-0 on Saturday to go top for the first time in nine years.

Arsenal went ahead against the run of play when Dennis Bergkamp latched on to a precise 40-metre pass by Emmanuel Petit and chipped into the net in the 28th minute.

They made it 2-0 early in the second half with a powerful shot by Patrick Vieira following more good work by Petit, returning from injury for his first game since November 21.

Leeds reduced the deficit in the 66th minute when Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink drove in a 20-metre shot of stunning ferocity.

But Arsenal, who blew a 2-0 lead last week when they lost 3-2 to Aston Villa, finished the stronger, they missed several good chances before Petit finished off a sweeping move with a first time shot eight minutes from time.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.

The game ended on a sour note for Arsenal as French substitute Gilles Grimandi was sent off for head-butting Leeds youngster Alan Smith in the 86th minute.

The result lifted Arsenal one place to sixth, four points behind leaders Chelsea and Aston Villa, who play Charlton Athletic today. Leeds remain fifth.



Leeds goalkeeper Nigel Martyn makes an abortive attempt to stop the ball during their Premier League clash against Arsenal at Highbury on December 20. Emmanuel Petit (L) scored the third for the Gunners. —AFP photo

# Samaranch for new selection system

GENEVA, Dec 21: The president of the International Olympic Committee expects his organisation to find a new way of selecting Olympic cities as a result of the widening bribery scandal, reports AP.

"After this scandal, I believe that the IOC as a whole must accept that the system needs to change and that we can't continue like this," Juan Antonio Samaranch said Sunday in the Le Matin newspaper.

"We are not happy with the way of selecting organising cities for the games."

The IOC has been shaken by accusations of rampant corruption and vote-buying masterminded by agents. A top IOC member, Switzerland's Marc Hodler, has estimated that 5 to 7 per cent of the 115 members are open to bribery.

Samaranch said the Olympics should follow the example of other major sports bodies, which leave significant decisions to their executive committees rather than the full membership.

He told Le Matin he had proposed this several times.

"But it's not easy to ask members to agree to cut off their own heads," he said.

But given the circumstances, he said it was possible the IOC members would give the 11-member executive committee special powers.

Samaranch said the investigation into actions by Salt Lake City, the host for the 2002 Winter

Games, should be completed by Jan 23 and would be discussed at a meeting that day.

Salt Lake organizers admit having