

Roma's Brazilian sensation arrives

ROME, Jan 14: Brazilian forward Fabio Junior arrived in Italy on Wednesday and sealed a five-year contract with AS Roma for a reported transfer fee of 15 million dollars, reports Reuters.

"Don't call me the new Ronaldo," he told reporters shortly after arriving at Fabio's Fiumicino airport. "I am Fabio Junior."

The 21-year-old player joined Roma from Cruzeiro, the club where Ronaldo, now with Inter Milan, established himself before moving to Europe.

Fabio Junior scored 18 goals in the Brazilian championship last year, prompting comparisons with Ronaldo who bagged 58 goals in 60 matches with Cruzeiro.

Fabio Junior, who has one cap for Brazil, joins an army of Brazilian players at Roma who already have Paulo Sergio, Zago, Cafu and Aldair on their books.

They also have three other non-European Union players in their squad — Cameroon's Pierre Wome, Yugoslav Ivanovic, and Russian Dmitry Alenichev.

Like all Serie A teams, Roma can field only three non-EU players at a time in competitive matches.

But Aldair has Italian citizenship after playing for Roma for the past eight seasons while Cafu was reportedly granted citizenship this week.

Quebec may seek compensation

QUEBEC, Jan 14: Quebec City will claim 12.5 million dollars in compensation if irregularities are proven in the choice of Salt Lake City for the 2002 Winter Olympics, reports AP.

That's the amount the city spent on its bid for the Games, Mayor Jean Paul L'Allier and Rene Paquet, head of the Quebec 2002 Committee, said Wednesday.

"They said the other cities who vied for the 2002 Games should also demand reimbursement from the International Olympic Committee, with the money going to amateur sports."

"We're not at the point of claims; we're far from judicial proceedings," Paquet said. "I've always said that if it's established that the (IOC) was aware and closed its eyes, candidates could demand compensation for their bid."

Paquet suggested it would be a good time for IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch to step down, but he stopped short of calling for cancellation of the Games in Salt Lake City.

"I'm not in a position to judge," Paquet said. "I think it's more important that (IOC) accept reforms."

Deportivo beat Sporting

MADRID, Jan 14: Brazilian striker Donato scored on a header in the 81st minute Wednesday as Deportivo La Coruna beat Sporting Gijon 1-0 and advanced to the fourth round of the Spanish King's Cup, reports AP.

Second-Division Sporting dominated the first half and until that goal had appeared on the verge of eliminating the Galician team in the return leg of the third round. The teams tied 1-1 a month ago in La Coruna.

Another First-Division side, Racing de Santander, advanced Wednesday despite a 1-0 loss to Osasuna. Second-Division team from the Basque city of Pamplona.

Osasuna won on a header from Roberto Martinez in the 48th minute but Racing advanced thanks to its 2-0 win at home in the first leg on December 16.

In other cup games, Villareal won 3-1 against Seville and advanced on an aggregate score of 5-3.



Steffi Graf playing against Venus Williams in the Sydney International yesterday. Graf triumphed 4-6, 6-2, 6-4. —AFP photo

Venus couldn't stop Steffi



SYDNEY, Jan 14 (Reuters/Internet): Steffi Graf produced a stirring comeback to beat Venus Williams in the Sydney International quarterfinals on Thursday.

Graf, suffering from stomach pains, fought back from a set down and a break in the third set to win 4-6, 6-2, 6-4 and earn a semifinal showdown against world number one Lindsay Davenport.

"It was a tight situation and I guess I probably had a better attitude towards it," said Graf. "I didn't feel nervous at all but I felt she was getting a little nervous."

The German, tuning up for next week's Australian Open, appeared to be heading out of the tournament after she fell 4-2 behind in the third set against one of the modern game's most determined figures.

But Graf called on her vast reserves of experience to win the next four games.

"I enjoy being in that kind of situation. I feel like I don't have anything to lose," Graf said.

"When I get in close situations I seem to know the right things. I don't feel under pressure."

Williams said the difference between the players was in the mental approach. "I think I learnt a good lesson today. She definitely wanted to win more than I did and I know I'll have to work harder in the future."

Graf also beat Williams' sister Serena in the second round. Davenport kept her grip on the top ranking with a 6-2, 6-3 win over Switzerland's Patty Schnyder.

The American was in danger of surrendering the number one slot to Martina Hingis if she failed to reach the last four and her Swiss rival took the Sydney title.

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Sweet victory for Korda

MELBOURNE, Jan 14: Australian Open champion Petr Korda turned to heaven to celebrate his first win in months today after beating Goran Ivanisevic 7-6, 6-2 at a warm-up event for the year's first Grand Slam tournament, reports Reuters.

Korda savoured his victory in the hot, windy conditions over a still Ivanisevic at the Colonial Classic exhibition tournament in the Melbourne suburb of Kooyong.

The wiry Czech is under a cloud over a positive drug test he returned at Wimbledon last year, but said he was letting his lawyers worry about the doping row.

"I'm very pleased I won my match. I didn't taste victory on the court for a long time," said Korda, ranked 21st in the world and unseeded going into the Australian Open next week.

It took four match points for Korda to seal the win, but he secured it with a stinging drive past the Croatian, who said he was suffering from a sore back.

A foot-fault call against Ivanisevic on an ace on his set point in the first tie-breaker helped turn the match for Korda. A frustrated Ivanisevic also praised his opponent on key points.

Korda said his legs felt stronger than on Wednesday, when American Andre Agassi crushed him 6-2, 6-1. Korda lost in the first round in last week's season-opening Doha tournament after a disappointing run at the end of last year that saw him lose eight of 10 matches.

Steven moves into semis

AUCKLAND, Jan 14: New Zealand's Brett Steven continued his strong play in the Auckland Open tennis tournament with a 6-0, 6-4 win Thursday over Argentinian Mariano Zabaleta to advance to Friday's semifinals, reports AP.

Steven, 29, a Dutchman Sjang Schalkke who beat Romania's Andrei Pavel 6-3, 6-2.

In the third quarterfinal Thursday, Dominik Hrbaty led Felix Mantilla, the second seed, 6-2, 5-5 when rain forced play to be suspended. That match will be concluded on Friday morning, along with the other quarterfinal between fifth seed Tommy Haas of Germany and Guillaume Raoux of France.

Steven, 29, exuded confidence, trusting his serve-and-volley game which saw him race away to take the first easily.

But it looked as though it would all go out the door for Steven when the first set began with the Argentinian 20-year-old earning three break points in Steven's first service game.

However, Steven shrugged off his rough start to take the game, broke the Argentinian in the second, fourth and sixth games to take control, eventually taking the set and match.

"He played a good first couple of points and I was thinking if he was going to start off like that," said Steven, who made the final here in 1996 when he lost to the Czech Jiří Novak.

"I took it to him, I played aggressively and broke him in his first service game by coming to the net and putting the pressure on."

The withdrawal of world number one Pete Sampras means only one seeded man — 1995 champion and fifth seed Andre Agassi — has won the tournament before.

Sampras announced on January 2 that he would miss

IOC official assures sponsors

ATLANTA, Jan 14: An International Olympic Committee official assured executives of Atlanta-based corporate sponsors about the investigation of the Salt Lake City corruption allegations, reports AP.

Michael Payne, the IOC's top marketing officer, made the rounds of three companies the last two days. He began with a dinner meeting Tuesday night with Coca-Cola Co officials.

"We're confident that they are going to do what they said they would do — take swift and decisive action," Coke spokesman Ben Deutsch said Wednesday after what he called a very productive meeting between company executives and IOC marketing director Michael Payne.

Payne answered questions and briefed Coke, a major Olympic sponsor since 1928, about the IOC's response to allegations of bribery in the awarding of the 2002 Winter Games.

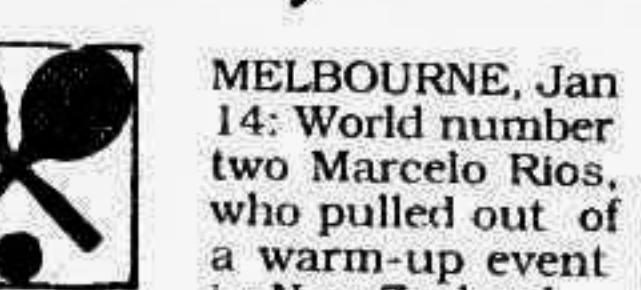
Payne also met Wednesday with officials of two other sponsors, United Parcel Service and The Home Depot, at their Atlanta corporate headquarters. He launched a series of meetings this week to reassure sponsors worried about the scandal's impact on the Olympics.

UPS spokeswoman Susan Rosenberg said the company felt "really comfortable" after the meeting about its sponsorship of the 2002 Summer Games in Sydney. UPS said it would later this year whether to extend Olympic sponsorship past then.

She said Payne described a tenacious and complex IOC investigation that will result in action against individuals involved and also recommendations for future safeguards in the awarding process.

Another Atlanta-based sponsor, Delta Air Lines, didn't have a session with Payne, but said it is following developments.

Aussie Open from Jan 18 Rios, Davenport top seeds



MELBOURNE, Jan 14: World number two Marcelo Rios, who pulled out of a warm-up event in New Zealand this week with a back injury, was named today as the top men's seed for the Australian Open, which starts on Monday, reports Reuters.

World number one Lindsay Davenport was named as top seed in the women's draw for the first Grand Slam tennis event of the season, to be played at Melbourne Park from January 18-31.

Australian Open organisers followed their custom by sticking with the world rankings in deciding their 16 seeds in the men's and women's draws.

They said they expected Chile's Rios, who was beaten by Petr Korda in last year's final, would take his place in the draw despite his injury.

"As far as we're aware he's still playing, we haven't received anything from him," a tournament spokeswoman told Reuters.

Korda, who returns to defend his title under a drugs cloud following his positive steroid test at Wimbledon, is unseeded.

The Czech ranking slipped to 21 after he suffered through poor form and injury through 1998.

The withdrawal of world number one Pete Sampras means only one seeded man — 1995 champion and fifth seed Andre Agassi — has won the tournament before.

Sampras announced on January 2 that he would miss

his first Grand Slam in five years, citing exhaustion after a hectic Australian schedule at the

MEN
1. Marcelo Rios (Chile)
2. Alex Corretja (Spain)
3. Patrick Rafter (Australia)
4. Carlos Moya (Spain)
5. Andre Agassi (US)
6. Tim Henman (Britain)
7. Karol Kucera (Slovakia)
8. Greg Rusedski (Britain)
9. Richard Krajicek (Netherlands)
10. Yevgeny Kafelnikov (Russia)
11. Goran Ivanisevic (Croatia)
12. Albert Costa (Spain)
13. Cedric Pioline (France)
14. Mark Philippoussis (Australia)
15. Todd Martin (US)
16. Thomas Johansson (Sweden)

WOMEN
1. Lindsay Davenport (US)
2. Martina Hingis (Switzerland)
3. Jana Novotna (Czech Republic)
4. Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario (Spain)
5. Venus Williams (US)
6. Monica Seles (US)
7. Mary Pierce (France)
8. Patty Schnyder (Switzerland)
9. Conchita Martinez (Spain)
10. Steffi Graf (Germany)
11. Dominique Van Roost (Belgium)
12. Anna Kournikova (Russia)
13. Irina Spirlea (Romania)
14. Sandrine Testud (France)
15. Natasha Zvereva (Belarus)
16. Amanda Coetzer (South Africa)

end of 1998.

The loss of the imposing American seeds Spain's world number three Alex Corretja named as second seed, followed by local hero and dual US Open champion Pat Rafter.

"This year's tournament is so incredibly open," tournament director Paul McNamee said in a statement. "Anything can happen."

Australian bookmakers were less inclined to follow the rankings, naming Agassi and big-serving Mark Philippoussis as the most likely to win the tournament. Australia's Philippoussis is seeded 14th.

Bookmakers noted Rafter's poor preparation with two early-round losses in warm-up events in Adelaide and Sydney, placing the Australian heart-throb on the second tier of betting.

Two Britons feature in the top 10 men's seeds — Tim Henman at Number six and Greg Rusedski at eight — for the first time since 1971.

The women's seedings appeared more settled, with defending champion Martina Hingis named second seed. The Swiss teenager surrendered her number one spot to Davenport after losing last year's US Open final to the American.

Jana Novotna of the Czech Republic, Spain's Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario and American prodigy Venus Williams round out the top five women's seedings.

Four-time Champion Monica Seles — who is unbeaten in 28 matches in Melbourne — was named sixth seed.

Milk Derby' the cream of Serie A



ROME, Jan 14 (Reuters/Internet): The fate of the Italian championship once depended on the so-called Italian derby between Juventus and AC Inter Milan but this year's title could be heavily influenced by Sunday's "Milk Derby" between Parma and Lazio.

Parma, bankrolled by the world's biggest dairy producer Parmalat, and Lazio, a subsidiary of food company Cirio SpA, also owner of Rome's main milk distribution centre, are currently first and third in the first division.

Soccer purists might not like their lips in anticipation of only the 17th Serie A meeting between the two but the top-of-the-table clash is threatening to change Italian soccer's status quo.

Until 1990, the year that Parma won promotion to the top flight for the first time, the Parma-Lazio rivalry was limited to Serie B.

When the two clubs shared a scored draw at the Tardini in 1986-87, the Rome side were struggling against relegation to Serie C while Parma were destined for their then best-ever finish in the second division — seventh.

The historic strength of Italian soccer lay further north in the industrial powerhouses of Milan and Turin with Juventus, bankrolled by car company Fiat, Inter, part of the Pirelli tyre manufacturing group and AC Milan owned by media mogul Silvio Berlusconi.

In the late 1990s, however, the balance of power has shifted south toward Parma, who nearly went bankrupt in the sixties, and Lazio, the 99-year-old Roman club which has rarely risen above its humble origins in a restaurant on the banks of the River Tiber.

Today, few Italian sides bet exploit the status of modern soccer clubs and their players as international brand names.

Cirio president Sergio Cragnotti's investment in Chilean

Marcelo Salas last summer and Parma's purchase of Colombia's Faustino Asprilla in 1993 were both made with an eye to the prospect of spreading the name Cirio and Parmalat around the South American market on billboards portraying their latest signings.

Last spring Lazio became the first Italian team to be quoted on the Milan stock exchange while Parmalat is a multinational soccer business with shares in teams in Brazil, Russia, Hungary and Portugal.

Parma and Lazio's food-rich empires now regularly outbid Juve, Inter and Milan in the international transfer market.

Last summer, Parma paid a fortune to reinforce perhaps the world's best defensive partnership of Fabio Cannavaro and France's Lilian Thuram with a water-tight midfield, signing Argentine Juan Veron, Frenchman Alain Boghossian and Italy's Diego Fuser.

And Italy's most promising young manager Alberto Malesani was brought in to mastermind the championship campaign.

Lazio's huge summer spending spree included Chile's Salas, Italy's Christian Vieri, Spaniard Horacio De La Peña and Yugoslav Dejan Stankovic, at a cost of more than \$60 million.

The two sides' strength in depth is finally yielding the kind of formidable mid-season form which has delivered nine of the last 11 championships to one of Inter, Juve or Milan.

After a slow start, Parma went top of the table last weekend with a 6-3 victory at Piacenza while Lazio's 2-0 victory over Fiorentina was their fifth in a row. It dropped the Florentine side to second place on goal difference and left Lazio just three-points behind the leading two.

Significantly, both clubs have now met and beaten their other main championship rivals.

The learning curve has been long and steep and started around the same time.

Financially, Cragnotti took over at Lazio in 1991 just as the

Tanzi family, which runs Parmalat, was buying a controlling stake in Parmalat.

The silverware is still a little thin, with Lazio's sole league title coming in 1974 and last season's Italian Cup triumph, followed-up by a domestic Supercup victory at Juventus, the first reward for the patience of Cirio shareholders.

Parma's success in Europe — the 1993 Cup Winners' Cup, 1995 UEFA Cup and 1996 European Supercup — has also failed to compensate for the club's failure to win the league championship.

The ambitious Tanzi family underlined this in 1995 by replacing Nevio Scala, a prolific winner in Europe, with Carlo Ancelotti, who was also fired last season after failing to win that elusive first league title.

Italian newspapers frequently describe Parma as "the happy island" of Serie A football. According to this school of thought, a rich, provincial town with 170,000 inhabitants, who lacks the tension to keep a team at the top of its game for an entire season.

Local fans have not forgotten what happened the last time Parma led Serie A in January 1995. As on Sunday, Parma hosted their chief title challengers Juventus, lost 3-1 to the eventual championship winners and fell badly away.

Parma will be hoping history does not repeat itself on Sunday by whatever happens the winner is likely to be swapping the milk for champagne at the end of the season.

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The Daily Star Entertainment Guide

Friday 15th January
(All programmes are in local time. The Daily Star will not be responsible for any change in the programme.)

BBC

6:00 BBC World News Followed By Weather 6:30 World Living 7:00 The World Today 7:30 Asia Today 7:45 World Business Report 8:00 BBC News Followed By Weather 8:30 Asia Today 8:45 World Business Report 9:00 BBC World News Followed By Weather 9:30 World Business Report 10:00 BBC World News Followed By Weather 10:30 World Business Report 11:00 BBC World News Followed By Weather 11:30 World Business Report 12:00 BBC World News Followed By Weather 12:30 World Business Report 13:00 BBC World News Followed By Weather 13:30 World Business Report 14:00 BBC World News Followed By Weather 14:30 World Business Report 15:00 BBC World News Followed By Weather 15:30 World Business Report 16:00 BBC World News Followed By Weather 16:30 World Business Report 17:00 BBC World News Followed By Weather 17:30 World Business Report 18:00 BBC World News Followed By Weather 18:30 World Business Report 19:00 BBC World News Followed By Weather 19:30 World Business Report 20:00 BBC World News Followed By Weather 20:30 World Business Report 21:00 BBC World News Followed By Weather 21:30 World Business Report 22:00 BBC World News Followed By Weather 22:30 World Business Report 23:00 BBC World News Followed By Weather 23:30 World Business Report 24:00 BBC World News Followed By Weather

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