

Sport

African Nations' Cup  
Loss doesn't prevent  
Ghana, Cameroon

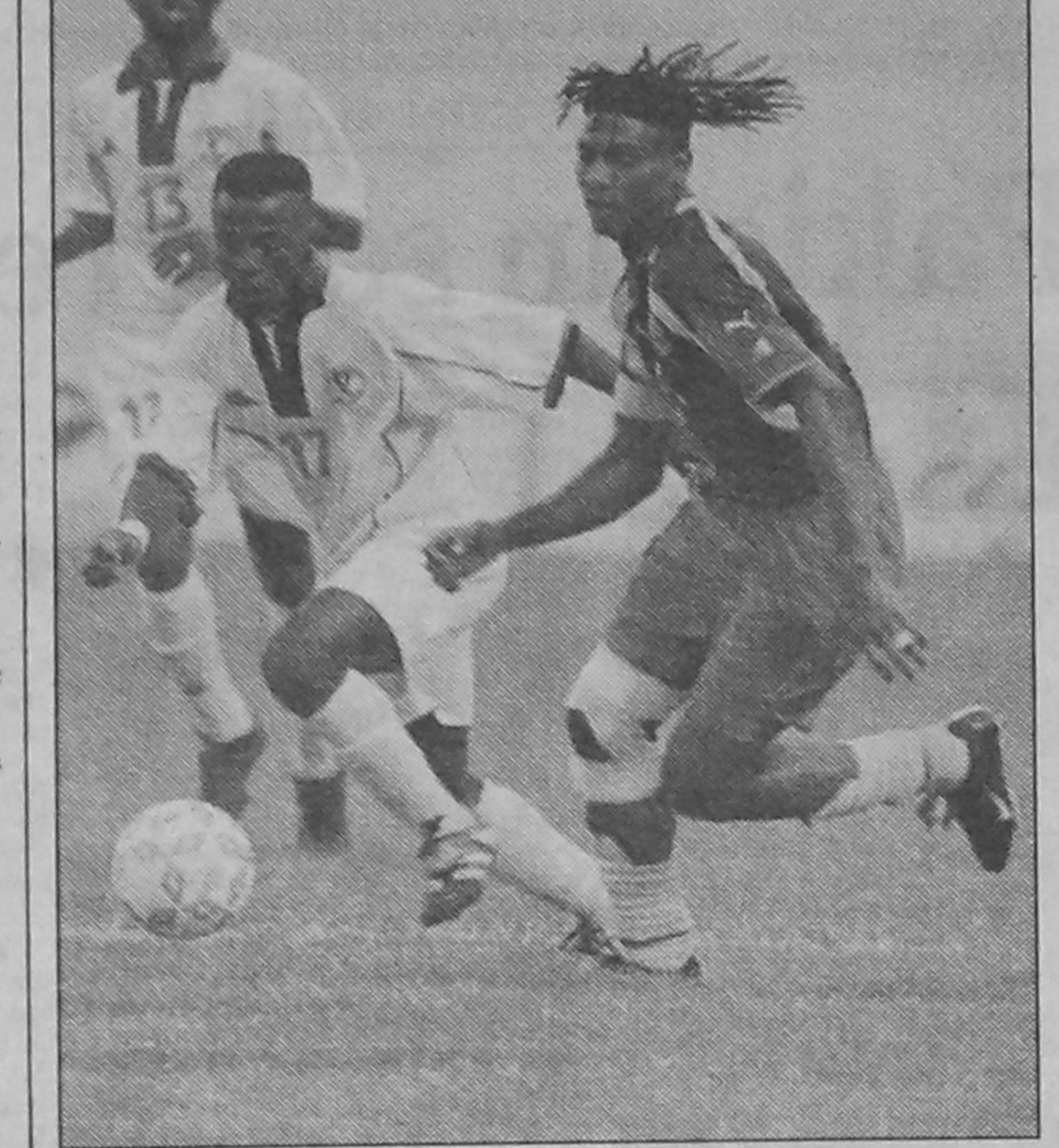
ACCRA, Feb 1: West African powers Ghana and Cameroon edged through to the quarterfinals of the African Nations' Cup on Monday despite shock defeats in their final Group A matches, reports AP.  
Ghana were outplayed by Ivory Coast in a 2-0 defeat, while there was a major shock in Kumasi, where Cameroon slipped to a 1-0 loss against Group A outsider Togo.

ture Kalou got behind the home defense and showed superb control before slotting the ball past Richard Kingston.  
The goal put the skids under Ghana, whose defense showed nerves on almost every Ivorian attack.  
Tchiressoua Guel saw a glancing header go just wide early in the second half, and substitute Ibrahim Bakayoko crashed a shot against the post.  
The Ivorians wrapped up their first ever win in Ghana seven minutes from time.  
Olivier Sie found himself in acres of space and easily side-footed past Kingston.  
Ivory Coast showed the determination that had been lacking in their disappointing draw against Togo and trouncing at the hands of Cameroon.  
"We aren't happy because our

players are as good as any here and we should not be out of the competition," Bakayoko said.  
The difference today was that we really showed the will to win.  
Amidst the jeers of their fans, Ghana — who won the last of their four African Nations Cup titles 18 years ago — struggled for inspiration and never troubled veteran Ivorian goalkeeper Alain Gouamene.  
**CAMEROON-TOGO**  
In Kumasi, Cameroon, impressive in their 3-0 win against Ivory Coast on Friday, had been expected to dominate tiny Togo, whose coach Gottlieb Goeller quit last week.  
But the Indomitable Lions fell to a 19th-minute goal by Massamesson Tchangan.  
Rigobert Song misjudged a lofted cross, and after Oyawole Djima's shot was blocked, Tchangan slammed the ball into the roof of the net.  
Like Ghana, Cameroon struggled for inspiration, and could have gone further behind when Abdel Coubadja's clever lob drifted just wide.  
Patrick Mboma came closest to equalising with a powerful left-footed drive that whistled over the crossbar.  
As Group A winner, Cameroon stays in Accra for a probable quarterfinal clash against Egypt or Congo.  
Ghana travels to Kumasi for a likely match against South Africa, the probable Group B winners and one of the pre-tournament favorites.  
In Tuesday's games, Group B winds up with defending champion Egypt against Burkina Faso and Senegal vs Zambia.  
Egypt is already assured of a place in the last eight, with Senegal, Burkina Faso and Zambia all in contention for second place.  
Senegal striker Kalliou Fadiga is confident that The Lions will advance.  
"Zambia is a young team without much experience," he said. "It will be a hard game but we are looking forward to the next round."  
Meanwhile in Lagos, Nigeria's soccer federation said that it had paid each player a 3,000 dollars bonus for the 4-2 win against Tunisia, and half that sum for the goalless draw against the Republic of Congo.  
Initially the federation had angered some players by saying that it would make the payment "at the appropriate time."

GHANA-IVORY COAST

In Accra, Ghana fell behind on the stroke of half-time when 21-year-old striker Bonaven-



Rigobert Song (R) of Cameroon fighting for possession with Togo's Abdel Coubadja during their African Nations' Cup clash at Kumasi, Ghana on January 31. —Internet photo

African Nations' Cup  
Algeria face the SA test

KUMASI, Ghana, Feb 1 (AFP/Internet): The top-of-the-table African Nations Cup Group B clash between South Africa and Algeria on Wednesday pits a team among the elite against one trying to return there.  
Bařana Bařana (The Boys) won the biennial tournament at the first attempt in 1996 when enjoying home advantage and were runners-up to Egypt in Burkina Faso two years ago.  
Algeria lifted the rocket-

They arrived at the 2000 edition lumped with co-hosts Ghana and Nigeria, Cameroon, Egypt and Morocco as favorites to win the first continental championship of the new millennium.  
Former champions Algeria were dismissed as outsiders due to poor recent results in the Nations Cup, constant coaching changes, and limited practice matches that included a seven-goal mauling from Brazilian club Vasco de Gama.  
Algeria lifted the rocket-

Moshoeu, who has come under fire after lacklustre displays in the tournament but snatched the late winner when the quarter-finals.  
Algeria could finish first by winning while a loss coupled with a Congolese triumph over Gabon in Accra at the same time would see second place settled by goal difference, goals scored or the toss of a coin.  
"Many of the squad that left the previous tournament in disgrace are here," noted Algerian midfielder and captain Moussa Saib.  
"The difference is experience. We have learnt from our mistakes."  
"While some Algerians believe we should play for the draw that would secure a place in the knockout stages, I disagree. It is too dangerous a gamble with one mistake capable of spoiling everything. We must play to win."



Mark Fish, the South African defender sprints during a training session at Kumasi on January 30 ahead of their African Nations' Cup meeting against Algeria. — Internet photo

Betis coach dismissed

SEVILLE, Spain, Feb 1: Carlos Griguol was sacked as Real Betis coach on Monday, Spanish media reported, reports Reuters.  
Betis, languishing 15th in the Spanish First Division, have gained just four points from their last six games.  
The Argentine became the fifth top flight coach to lose his job in Spain this season. He followed Mario Gomez at Real Mallorca, Bernd Krauss at Real Sociedad, Real Madrid's John Toshack and Miguel Angel Brindisi at Espanyol.  
Former Real Madrid coach Guus Hiddink is reportedly in the running to take over from Griguol, with club president Manuel Ruiz de Lopera expected to announce a successor this week.

shaped cup in 1990 before a gradual decline partly triggered by civil war culminated in the Desert Warriors losing all three first-round matches two years ago.  
While South Africa have justified their lofty status of being ranked third in Africa behind Morocco and Tunisia, Algeria held DR Congo and com- fortably disposed of Gabon to move within two points of the leaders.  
A victory or draw for Bařana Bařana would keep them in the central Ghanaian city of Kumasi for a quarter-final against Ghana on Sunday while a loss would force them into an Accra showdown with Cameroon.  
"I am not saying it will be better or worse in Accra," said playmaker John 'Shoes' Moshoeu.  
"But we would prefer to stay in Kumasi because the boys are settled here and do not want unnecessary travelling," added

Colombians  
digesting  
the disaster

BOGOTA, Jan 31 (Reuters/Internet): The headline splashed in bold type across the front page of Bogota's El Espectador newspaper summed it up in a word on Monday — "Humiliation!"  
"Shameful Goal Fest" added leading daily El Tiempo, referring to Colombia's historic 9-0 rout Sunday, when Brazil sent it crashing out the South American Olympic soccer qualifying tournament with a vengeance.  
The jury is still out on exactly what happened, apart from a sterling performance by Brazil's reshuffled under-23 team as it handed Colombia its worst defeat in at least four decades. But many Colombians were calling for the head Monday of coach Javier Alvarez, who had become something of a national hero just last week when Colombia trounced Chile 5-1 in the same qualifying tournament.  
That match revived memories of the national team's 5-0 win over Argentina in September 1993. But as in 1993 — when Colombia went on to suffer a string of humiliating losses after a short-lived moment of glory — the Chile match apparently injected Colombia's unlucky and erratic players with an overdose of overconfidence.  
"There was a very impressive mental factor at play here, Alvarez told local radio from Londrina, Brazil, early Monday, alluding to the way hype and hubris was soon followed by a humiliating mauling.  
Alvarez had himself bragged — after the win over Chile — that "Brazil must be very worried."  
The coach, who is supposed to help Colombia win a ticket to the 2002 World Cup if he keeps his job, said he has no intention of resigning in disgrace.  
But he may be forced to do so, since Sunday's defeat was taken in this soccer-mad nation like something far worse than its seemingly intolerable levels of violence and its worst recession this century.  
"Alvarez should resign right now. A 9-0 is inadmissible," said Ivan Mejia, a popular sportscaster with Colombia's Caracol radio network.  
"Alvarez isn't the main, it's been proven," added a commentator in the sports pages of El Tiempo.  
The coach should be dismissed immediately so the country isn't subjected to another disgrace in the World Cup qualifiers," said Humberto Perez, one of many irate fans who called Caracol to demand Alvarez's unceremonious ouster.



COOLING OFF: Brazilian sensation Ronaldinho (R) and Under-23 squad mate Athirson sharing a light-hearted moment in a swimming pool at Londrina on January 31. Hours earlier, Brazil had routed Colombia 9-0 in a Sydney 2000 Olympics football qualifying match. — Internet photo

African Nations' Cup  
Gabon, Congo keep fingers crossed

ACCRA, Feb 1 (AFP/Internet): The best and worst prepared teams for the African Nations Cup meet in a final-round Group B match on Wednesday with no guarantee that even victory will not spell defeat.  
A win for Algeria or a draw against mini-league pacesetters South Africa in Kumasi at the same time would ensure both of quarter-finals berths at the expense of the Congolese and point-less Gabonese, who cannot qualify.  
Gabon came to the biennial tournament with high hopes of reaching the last eight under burly Brazilian coach Antonio Dumas from a group generally considered the weakest of the four.  
They played 15 warm-up matches — eight at home, four in Libya and one in Cote d'Ivoire, Egypt and Burkina Faso — while a cash crisis induced by civil war restricted DR Congo to two friendlies against neighbours Congo.  
But the finals have brought

only disappointment with Gabon flustering to deceive when taking an early pad against South Africa through Shiva Nzigou, 16, whose appearance made him the youngest footballer to play at the 43-year finals.  
South Africa brutally exposed the frailties of veteran goalkeeper Jacques Deckoussou and replacement Germain Mendome fared no better against Algeria as the Azingo Nationale lost 3-1 again and had Eric Engo sent off.  
Dumas seeks comfort in the performances of Nzigou from French club Nantes, saying his football brain marks him out as a potential successor to African superstars like Roger Milla and George Weah.  
"Shiva can go far," Dumas told reporters.  
"He is a modest boy who has not been affected by the publicity surrounding his record. He does not know what nerves are and has the right approach to succeed."  
Congolese coach Basilia Lusadusu had a resigned look as he waited in the hotel lobby for

the key to his room, saying the lack of preparations and absence of some players from Europe had hit Simba (Lions) hard.  
"Because we finished third two years ago under similar circumstances, some thought our lack of practice would not count against us. Now they know lightning does not always strike twice."  
Congo hardly created a chance in a drab goalless stalemate with Algeria and were fortunate to lose only 1-0 to South Africa, who hit the woodwork and had two shots cleared off the line by Michael Dinzey.  
Dinzey from German Bundesliga club 1860 Munich finds the unprofessional approach of a country crowned African champions in 1968 and 1974 difficult to understand or accept.  
"The organisation is so bad," he warily told reporters.  
"We do not look or act like a team representing a once great football nation. Money is important, but some of the players are obsessed by it."

Aragones to  
take over  
Bolivia

LAPAZ, Bolivia, Feb 1: One of Bolivia's top players from the 1980s, Carlos Aragonese, has been appointed coach of the national soccer team to replace Argentine Hector Veira, the Bolivian Football Federation said on Monday, reports Reuters.  
"We want our friend Carlos Aragonese with great hope," said the president of the Bolivian Football Federation, Sergio Asbun.  
The Dutchman made a promising start, with a goal on his debut in a 5-0 win over Perugia, and has already established himself as the pivot of his team's attacking manoeuvre.  
Inter defenders and his fellow midfielders already in-

Mid-season signings coming good

MILAN, Feb 1 (AFP/Internet): Dutchman Clarence Seedorf and Japan's Hidetoshi Nakata have topped the biennial transfer season draws to a close, with several title hopefuls boosting their teams.  
Inter Milan have been the most active — paying Real Madrid 24 million dollars alone for midfielder Seedorf.  
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Inter defenders and his fellow midfielders already in-

Further deals have brought Colombian defender Ivan Cordoba on board from Argentina's San Lorenzo Almagro, while young Romanian striker Adrian Mutu has joined from previously at Dynamo Bucharest.  
Cordoba has instantly won himself a first-team place as a left-back while Mutu celebrated his arrival by scoring in a 3-2 Italian Cup quarter-final win over AC Milan.  
In the seven matches since they arrived, Inter have won five matches, drawn one and only lost one — a remarkable improvement which has hoisted them into third place in the Serie A and the Cup semi-finals.  
And hours before the transfer deadline expired on Monday night, Inter agreed to a player swap with title rivals Parma — loaning then Portuguese playmaker Paulo Sousa in return for wingback Michele Serena.  
Aside from Seedorf's arrival, Nakata's move to AS Roma from Perugia has been the other major splash on the transfer market — at a cost of 17 million dollars plus Roma's Russian midfielder Dimitri Alenichev.  
Nakata is now in a top club, but one that expects him to change his position — pulling him back in midfield and away from his usual playmaking role behind the strikers.  
That job at Roma remains the preserve of skipper, star and local hero Francesco Totti.  
Roma have also bolstered their attack with the addition of Paolo Poggi from Udinese, who made his debut as a late sub in their 2-1 defeat to Inter on Sunday night.  
Serie A champions AC Milan have also strengthened their squad signing Spanish striker

Joř Mari from Atletico Madrid for about 21 million dollars and Argentinian defender Jose Antonio Chamot for some five million.  
The Spanish striker is replacing Liberian George Weah — who has left acrimoniously for Chelsea in the English Premiership — and shown himself to be a gifted ball-player.  
Chamot has gone straight into the first-team, prompting French defender Bruno N'Gotty to leave the club and join Serie A rivals Venezia, where former Milan teammate Maurizio Ganz has wasted no time scoring goals in their bid to avoid relegation.  
League leaders Lazio have meanwhile drafted in former Middlesbrough and Juventus

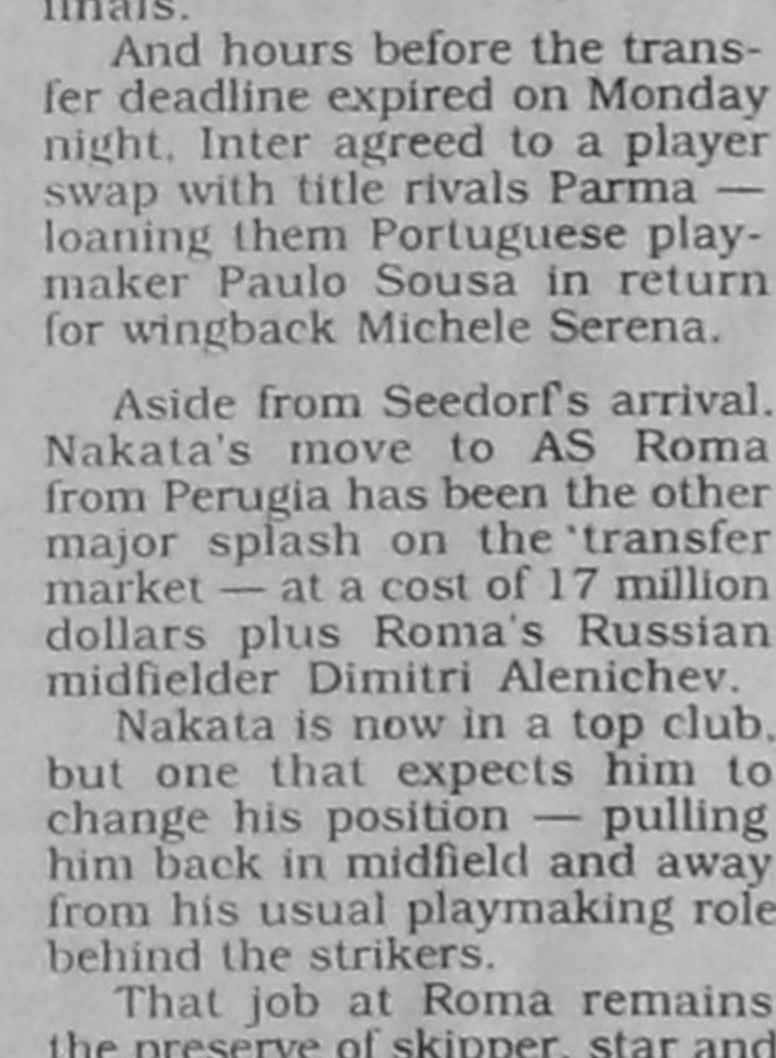
Boksic  
appalled

ROME, Feb 1: Lazio's Croat striker Alen Boksic said on Monday he was shocked by a banner paying tribute to assassinated Serb warlord Arkan that was held aloft by fans at Sunday's Serie A game against Bari, reports Reuters.  
"I'm feeling bad, really bad," Boksic said. "I am angry and disillusioned, especially since it was written by my fans."  
Lazio fans unfurled a banner declaring "honour to the tiger Arkan" during Lazio's 3-1 win in Rome's Olympic stadium. Fans also displayed a portrait of Benito Mussolini.  
Boksic did not play on Sunday because of an injury, but said he would have walked off the pitch if he had been part of the squad.  
"I would have taken my shirt off and left the Olympic stadium," Boksic said.  
Arkan was the "nom de guerre" of Zeljko Raznatij, the former Serbian paramilitary leader, indicted for war crimes committed during fighting in Bosnia and Croatia in the 1990s. He was shot dead in a Belgrade hotel earlier this month.  
Celtic crosses and swastikas have been regularly displayed at Lazio matches in recent months.  
Rome Mayor Francesco Rutelli, a former Green now a member of the centre-left Democrats party, said the behaviour of the fans had now become an issue for the police.  
But Alessandra Mussolini, a member of parliament and the dictator's granddaughter, said she stood right behind the Lazio fans.  
"I'm a Lazio fan too," she said. "Did they want to compare Arkan with my grandfather? I don't think so. Anyway, it doesn't bother me. On the contrary, I'm very pleased," Mussolini said.  
Inciting racism and displays of support for fascism are outlawed in Italy.  
On Friday AS Roma President Franco Sensi called for games at Rome's Olympic stadium to be halted whenever fascist symbols were displayed. But Rutelli said such a move would play into the hands of the extremists.  
"The interventions need to be before and after (the game) — suspending the match would draw attention to the issue and that is exactly what they want," Rutelli said.



HIDETOSHI NAKATA

stinctively look for the 23-year-old when they have possession and he also has a good understanding with Christian Vieri and Roberto Baggio.  
In a matter of weeks, the team are already dependent on him in the same way that Juventus rely on Zinedine Zidane.



CLARENCE SEEDORF

striker Fabrizio Ravanelli from Olympique Marseille.  
Though cup-tied in Europe, having already turned out for Marseille in the Champions League this season, Ravanelli has already started scoring and making goals for his new club.

Eng-Ukraine  
match on  
May 31

KIEV, Feb 1: Ukraine will play England for the first time on May 31, the country's soccer federation president said on Monday, reports Reuters.  
"In the next few days we will fax the official reply to the English federation that we have accepted their offer," said Valery Pustovoienko. "It's an honour for us to play England at such a famous football ground as Wembley."  
"This match should be a good test for us as we begin our preparations for the 2002 World Cup qualifiers," added Pustovoienko, who said that his first priority was to find a head coach for the national team.  
Earlier this month, long-serving Dynamo Kiev boss Valery Lobanovsky agreed to take the job if the federation accepts his training programme.  
Ukraine have been without a coach since Josef Sabo Resigned following the shock 3-2 aggregate defeat by Slovenia in the Euro 2000 play-offs last November.  
Federation spokesman Valery Nikonenko said Ukraine have agreed to play England without any strings. "We heard the English were also inviting other countries, like Russia, to play on that date," he said.  
"I don't know if those countries wanted something in return but we agreed to play them without any pre-condition."  
Russian soccer chief Vyacheslav Kolosov said last week that his country would only play at Wembley if the English agreed to a return match in Moscow in 2001.



RETURN OF FASCISM? A section of Lazio supporters displaying banners that read "Tribute to Arkan the tiger ... unshakable like us goes ahead, thus glorifying assassinated Serb warlord Arkan, during a Serie A match at Rome on January 30. The fans also put up a portrait of Italy's fascist dictator during World War Two, Benito Mussolini which has appalled players and neutral observers. — Internet photo

Sheringham,  
Beckham  
leaving MU?

LONDON, Feb 1 (AFP/Internet): Arsenal are reportedly planning an audacious summer swoop for Manchester United and England star David Beckham, according to the London-based soccer website Football 365 on Tuesday.  
Highbury sources are said to have admitted to Football 365 that they are confident of prising the England superstar away from Old Trafford because of the desire of Beckham's wife Victoria — whose stage name is Posh Spice — to move closer to her family in the southern county of Hertfordshire.  
The website went on to say that Beckham's relationship with United boss Alex Ferguson has become increasingly strained in recent months as the England wingers hectic and increasingly controversial private life has fallen foul of the Scotsman's disciplinary code.  
Ferguson is reportedly willing to cut his losses and part company with the player whose career he has nurtured since he signed him as a schoolboy nine years ago.  
The alleged breakdown of Beckham and Fergusons relationship, coupled with Victoria's own work demands, have made a move to London — where the midfielder had trials with Division Three side Leyton Orient and attended Tottenham's school of excellence before heading north — increasingly likely and alerted the Gunners.  
Meanwhile in another development, West Ham on Tuesday were reportedly showing interest in signing United striker Teddy Sheringham, who has failed to command a regular first team place at Old Trafford since signing for the club in 1997.  
The former Spurs striker, who came on as a substitute to score a late equaliser against Premiership rivals Arsenal in a 1-1 draw last Monday, is currently involved in contract talks at United, but is said to be unhappy at having to spend most of his time on the bench.  
West Ham manager Harry Redknapp told Britain's Daily Mail newspaper, "Teddy is a class act and I've got to be interested in someone of his calibre."  
The newspaper also claims that the 33-year-old Sheringham, scorer in last season's FA Cup final and European Cup final, is also attracting attention from clubs in Portugal and Spain.

Bonfrere  
writes off  
Morocco!

LAGOS, Feb 1 (AFP/Internet): Nigeria will beat Morocco Thursday to win their group and go into the quarter finals at the African Nations Cup, the Dutch coach of the Super Eagles said Tuesday.  
The star-studded Nigerian team only managed a draw against unfancied Congo in their last outing, but the result "will be different on Thursday" Bonfrere told reporters here.  
Congolese national coach Memy David appealed Moi Jay to Nigeria to beat Morocco Thursday to enable his own team to qualify for the quarter finals while the Tunisian coach, Francesco Scoglio, expressed fears that Nigeria and Morocco could settle for a draw to ensure both qualify for the quarter finals.  
Nigeria and Morocco top the Group D "Group of Death" and a draw would put them through and Tunisia and Congo out.  
Bonfrere said Nigeria would go for a win to finish at the top of the group and stay in Lagos.  
"Congo were difficult because they did not want to attack us. They had seven players defending and that didn't give us space. But Morocco may be different and we have been working hard to see what we can do."

Congolese  
coach's  
plea

KANO, Nigeria, Feb 1: Congolese national coach Memy David appealed Monday to Nigeria's Super Eagles to beat Morocco to enable his own team to qualify for the quarter-finals, reports AFP.  
Speaking soon after their first workout on arrival in Kano, David said his team will over run the Tunisians on Thursday and reach the next round if Nigeria beats Morocco.  
"Our prayer is for Nigeria to beat Morocco. If they do, we will join them as the second qualifier from Group D."  
"As for the Tunisians, we shall handle them properly. We will definitely beat the Tunisians even if it is by a lone goal. We are also calling on the Kano fans to support us to achieve our goal."  
"We have been able to find answers to our goalkeeping problem and my boys are now raring to score as many goals as possible to beat Tunisia."

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