

## Sport

## Chilavert in news again

Buenos Aires, Mar 28: Paraguay's captain and star goalkeeper Jose Luis Chilavert was back in the news Monday for all the wrong reasons after hitting a young man who had insulted him at an airport in Buenos Aires, reported the news agency Telam, says AFP.

The flamboyant custodian, who was arguably the best at the 1998 World Cup in France, was incensed by the man just before boarding a flight for Lima where Paraguay take on Peru in a 2002 World Cup qualifier on Wednesday.

"Get the Paraguayan out, stop the thief in Argentina," shouted the man before Chilavert took matters into his own hands.

The youngster continued to shout abuse at Chilavert and the keeper responded by punching him before being held back by teammates.

Despite the attack, the young man played down the incident and said he would not be pressuring charges.

Chilavert who has scored over 40 goals from free-kicks and penalties was also involved in two altercations last year when he struck out at journalists who were hounding him.

Chilavert had made himself available for the national team again after missing last year's Copa America on home soil for political reasons.

## Carew heads to Valencia

Oslo, Mar 28: Rosenborg striker John Carew has signed a contract with Spain's European Champions' League quarterfinalists Valencia for a record fee for a Norwegian player, Norway's press agency NTB reported Monday, reports AFP.

The precise details of the deal will not be revealed until Thursday.

"We have obtained the conditions we wanted," said Rosenborg spokesman Knut Skoglund after meeting a delegation from the *Primera Liga* side.

Several English Premiership teams and Germany's Borussia Dortmund were known to be in the race for Carew but Valencia now have got the exciting prospect to put pen to paper.

## S Arabia pulls out of Asian Cup Winners Cup

Riyadh, Mar 28 (Reuters): Saudi Arabia has withdrawn its team from next month's Asian Cup Winners Cup soccer tournament in Thailand, the official Saudi Press Agency reported today.

The Al-Ahli Club will not take part in the semifinals and final being held between April 13 and 15. The agency gave no further details.

Saudi Arabia withdrew from the Asian Games in Bangkok in 1998 due to the Moslem Ramadan fasting season and preparations for the kingdom's centenary celebrations.

Relations between Saudi Arabia and Thailand have been strained following the murders of several Saudi citizens in the last decade.

The links had also been put under pressure in 1989 when a Thai working at a Riyadh palace stole jewellery and escaped. The worker was arrested and convicted in Thailand but Riyadh complained only 20 per cent of the jewellery was returned and a large amount of that was fake.

In separate incidents, three Saudi diplomats were shot dead in Bangkok in 1990 and a Saudi businessman was abducted and later found murdered in 1991.

## Serena may skip South Carolina tourney

KEY BISCAYNE, Florida, Mar 28: Serena Williams, who had planned to play in next month's tournament at Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, said she may skip the event because of a controversy concerning the Confederate flag, reports AP.

The National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People has encouraged a boycott of the state until the flag is removed from the Statehouse dome in Columbia, South Carolina.

The Confederate flag was flown by Southern states during the US Civil War from 1861-65. Some today see the flag as a reminder of Southern heritage while others view it as a grim reminder of the era of slavery.

"Wow, I didn't know that," Williams said when informed of the NAACP position. "Maybe I won't play... I'm not going to support anything that's putting down my race."

Williams, who is black, said she'll discuss the issue with her father before deciding whether to play in the tournament, which begins April 17. The reigning US Open champion made her comments after losing to Jennifer Capriati at the Ericsson Open on Monday.

"I'm really not involved in politics," she said. "But you know, what's right is right, and what's wrong is wrong."

Bart McGuire, head of the WTA Tour, was travelling and unavailable to comment on Williams' remarks.

Williams' sister, Venus, has yet to play this year because of tendinitis in her wrist and will miss the tournament at Hilton Head Island.

## Ferguson the best ever



LONDON, Mar 28: Manchester United's Sir Alex Ferguson has been voted as the greatest manager of all time in a poll of Britain's football bosses, reports AFP.

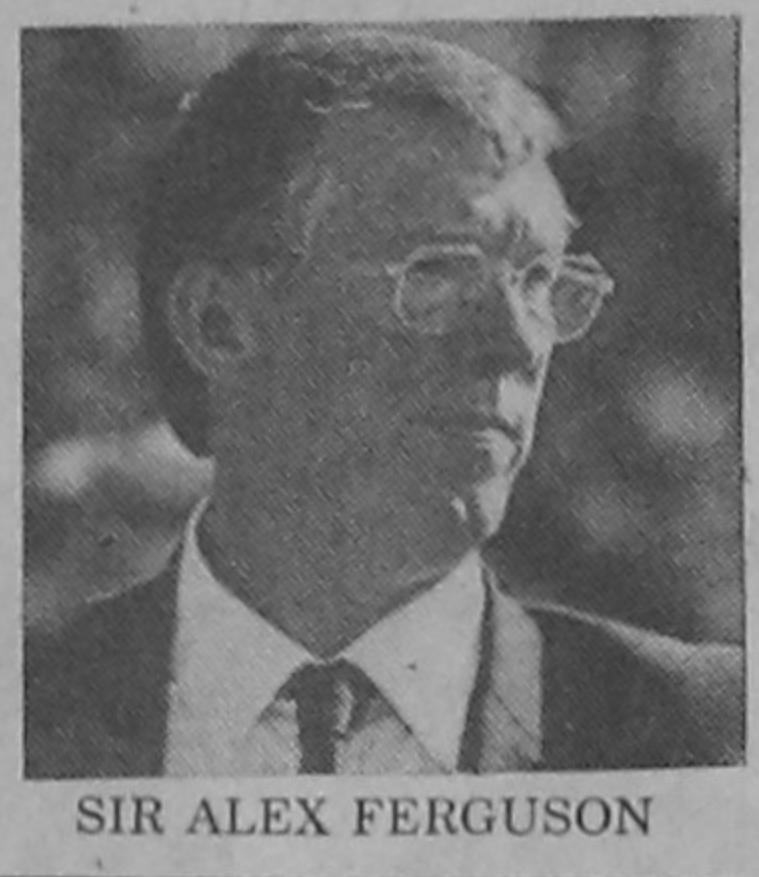
The survey, conducted by FourFourTwo magazine, asked 52 managers -- which included England coach Kevin Keegan, Scotland boss Craig Brown as well as Glenn Hoddle, George Graham, David O'Leary and Sir Alex himself -- to give their choices for the sport's top coaches.

The great names of the British game headed the list with Liverpool legend Bill Shankly in second spot and Brian Clough, who steered Nottingham Forest to successive European Cup triumphs in the 1980s, in third.

Matt Busby, who led Manchester United to their first European Cup win in 1968, was ranked fourth, with England

World Cup winning manager Sir Alf Ramsey in fifth.

The most successful manager in British football was Bob Paisley, who won three European Cups, the UEFA Cup once, six league championships and three consecutive League Cup finals with Liverpool in the 1970s, but he could only man-



SIR ALEX FERGUSON

age sixth place in the survey.

But there were also surprises with Watford's Graham Taylor ranked 18th and ex-Tranmere boss John King 20th.

Some of top names from abroad did win support including Inter's Marcello Lippi (10), Lazio boss Sven Goran Eriksson (15) and Rinus Michels (14) coach of the Dutch team that won the 1988 European Championships.

FourFourTwo's greatest managers of all time:

1. Alex Ferguson
2. Bill Shankly
3. Brian Clough
4. Matt Busby
5. Alf Ramsey
6. Bob Paisley
7. Jock Stein
8. Bill Nicholson
9. Don Revie
10. Marcello Lippi
11. Bobby Robson
12. Jim Smith
13. Terry Venables
14. Rinus Michels
15. Sven Goran Eriksson

## Serie A season could be put on hold if ..

BARCELONA, Mar 28: Serie A football in Italy could grind to a halt during the Sydney Olympics if the country's under-21 team qualifies for the tournament, Italian Football League President Franco Carraro said Tuesday, reports AFP.

Italy have qualified for the European Youth Championship in Europe and the first two teams in each pool of four in that competition -- to be held in Slovakia in June -- will qualify for Sydney.

"I've never done that," Capriati said later with a sheepish grin. "That was kind of cool, though."

She could smile because she regrouped for another impressive win in her career comeback. Despite the shanked serve and other shaky moments, Capriati outlasted the sixth-ranked Williams 7-6 (2), 1-6, 6-3 in the fourth round of the Ericsson Open.

It's "unbelievable," said Capriati, a former teen-age prodigy who turns 24 on Wednesday. "I'm just very

happy, because it shows I've really come a long way."

With the sloppy but dramatic victory, the 13th-seeded Capriati advances to the quarterfinals at key Biscayne for the first time since 1992. The last time she beat an opponent ranked so highly was in 1996, when she won at Chicago against Monica Seles, who then shared No 1 with Steffi Graf.

Capriati has climbed to 14th in the world, her best ranking in six years. She'll play 12th-seeded Sandrine Testud next and needs three more victories to claim the biggest title of her career.

"I definitely believe in myself that I can win," she said.

Potential obstacles include top-seeded Martina Hingis and No 2 Lindsay Davenport. Hingis advanced to the quarterfinals by beating Kim Clijsters 6-0, 6-4, while Davenport eliminated Elena Likhovtseva 6-4, 6-4. Seles, seeded seventh, beat No 9

Anna Kournikova 6-1, 3-6, 6-0.

In men's play, top-seeded Andre Agassi advanced to a fourth-round showdown against Patrick Rafter by sweeping Andre Pavel 6-4, 6-3.

With a noisy stadium-court crowd firmly behind Capriati, she overpowered Williams in a first-set tiebreaker, became annoyed by several line calls in the second set, then surged to a 5-1 lead in the final set.

At that point Capriati began to look nervous. She squandered a match point, sent here next serve into the stands and covered here face with both hands in embarrassment.

Capriati lost that game and another to make the score 5-3. When she serve two double-faults -- her 13th and 14th -- to give Williams another break point, Capriati appeared on the verge of collapse.

"I was just so excited and the crowd was so excited that I lost my concentration," she said. "I had to regroup a little bit. I had to really bear down in that last game."

After Williams hit two consecutive backhands wide, Capriati belted a 102-mph (162-kph) service winner on match point. She punched the air with her first and skipped happily to the net to shake Williams' hand.

"I played OK," Williams said. "She played some of her best tennis. She did good."

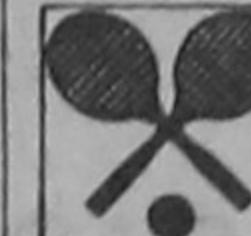
Williams, the reigning US Open champion, has lost before the semifinals in three of five tournaments this year, and the latest defeat will prevent her from disproving recent remarks by Hingis. According to Hingis, she and Davenport are in a class by themselves at the moment.

"I'm ready to play Martina again, because she makes a lot of comments," Williams said. "But she's right. Actually, I've been losing a lot."

Her slump is nothing compared with what Capriati went through when drug and personal problems forced her off the WTA Tour in 1993. She returned in 1996 and had sporadic success, then won two tournaments last year and reached the semifinals of the Australian Open in January.

She has been revitalized by veteran coach Harold Solomon and by her romance with Xavier Malisse, a touring pro from Belgium. Capriati, often emotional and testy with the media in the past, beamed as she sat before a roomful of reporters Monday.

## Capriati reaches last eight



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## Micoud's chance to prove



GLASGOW, Mar 28: Bordeaux mid-fielder Johan Micoud hopes Wednesday's friendly match with Scotland will give him the chance to show he can fill the boots of France's World Cup winning mid-fielder Zinedine Zidane at international level, reports AFP.

The European champions, currently the world's richest football club, announced that overall pre-tax profits thanks to an increase in television and merchandising revenue -- despite the high wages being paid to players and the cost of strengthening the squad, reports AFP.

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Transfer costs also increased by 28 per cent to 6.5 million pounds (10.5 million dollars) following the capture of goalkeepers Massimo Taibi and Mark Bosnich, defender Mikael Silvestre and winger Quinton Fortune.

But gate receipts at the newly-expanded Old Trafford fell by 1 million pounds (1.6 million dollars), mainly because the club was playing four fewer home games than last season after they controversially withdrew from the FA Cup.

However, income from all television sources, including the club's own share in the Premiership TV rights, rose by 6.6 million pounds (10.5 million pounds) to 15.6 million pounds (25 million dollars), partly down to United's success last season in the Champions League.

The first half saw all sectors of the business deliver strong growth, although we remain ever mindful of the continuing increase in operating costs," said United's Plc Chairman, Roland Smith.

United are also hoping that their TV channel MUTV - which currently runs at a loss - will be able to improve its rights to carry coverage of first-team matches.

"We are continuing to work at improving the content of the channel with our partners, BSkyB and Granada, whilst containing costs," added Sir Roland.

Both first choice goalkeepers -- Australia's Mark Bosnich and the Czech's Pavel Srnicek -- are also missing after injuries sustained with their English clubs Manchester United and Sheffield Wednesday respectively.

The Czechs will be without playmaker Petr Berger, who scored in the Euro 96 final, because he will be suspended for their first two Euro 2000 encounters with the Netherlands and France so Lazio's Pavel Nedved will take on their creative role.

Liverpool's other Czech Vladimir Smicer also had to pull out Monday and will be replaced by Rene Wagner of Rapid Vienna.

Lemerre, whose position is under some threat with senior players dictating selection policy and being lampooned on French television for his lack of personality, looks set to try in-form Arsenal striker Thierry Henry and Zidane's best friend Christophe Dugarry alongside each other although Dugarry also picked up a knock at the weekend.

The fact that he has still to rely on the ageing Lothar Matthaeus as sweeper says it all about the state of German football -- Zinedine Zidane and keeper Fabien Barthez -- but the main problem for coach Roger Lemerre is still to find the right partnership.

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