

Life ban awaits Indian culprits

MADRAS, May 17 (AP): Any Indian cricket player found guilty in a federal match fixing investigation will be banned for life and his name erased from record books, India's cricket board chief warned Wednesday.

A.C. Muthiah also said Board officials could be expelled if they made rash allegations against their colleagues or players in the match-fixing scandal that has shaken up world cricket. The Central Bureau of Investigation is probing charges of betting and match-fixing by Indian cricketers.

"Too many of our members are making all sorts of allegations. It is nothing but a slander campaign," Muthiah told a news conference. "They are trying to settle personal scores. As a result, they do not realise how it is hurting the Board."

He said he would back the players until the charges were proven.

"The Board pledges its full support to all past and present players until they are proven guilty," he told reporters.

Indrajit Bindra, who heads the cricket board in the northern Punjab state, has quoted retired Indian cricketer Manoj Prabhakar as saying that Kapil Dev, former Indian captain, offered him 25,000 dollars to underperform in a 1994 match against Sri Lanka.

Kapil has denied the charge, and Prabhakar has not commented on the statement. Bindra has also accused the cricket board of corruption.

On Tuesday, he submitted documents to the Central Bureau of Investigation that, he said, included evidence related to the case.

"Bindra is carrying on a tirade against the Board... It is becoming a joke," Muthiah said.

Indian police have accused former South African captain Hansie Cronje and four other team members of match-fixing. Cronje admitted receiving 8,200 dollars from a bookmaker in connection with a betting scam, and the confession led to reports that many matches, including some at last year's World Cup, were fixed.

Ctg cricket

From Our Correspondent CHITTAGONG, May 17: Chittagong Govt. High defeated Municipal Model High by 4 wickets in the second semifinal of the Siraj Memorial Mohanagari schools cricket league today.

Municipal elected to bat first and scored 150 runs losing all wickets with 5 balls remaining.

In reply, Chittagong Govt. High reached the target of 151 runs for the loss of 6 wickets in 31.3 overs.

Chittagong Govt High will take on Nasirabad Govt High in the final to be held on May 20.

BRIEF SCORES

Ctg. Govt School: 151 for 6 in 31.3 overs (Rabby *41, Arman 25, Rakib 21, Shabbir 19, Mohiuddin 13, Sunayman 2/23).

Municipal Model School: 150 for 10 in 34.1 overs (Apu 40, Prothom 26, Imon 19, Sumen 15, Kaiser 6/20, Rony 2/19).

'Fixing' inquiry asking for Cronje tapes

JOHANNESBURG, May 17 (AFP): The South African inquiry into corruption in cricket has asked the Indian police to hand over tapes apparently of conversations between former captain Hansie Cronje and a bookmaker, a sports ministry official said Tuesday.

The commission, headed by retired judge Edwin King, has made the request through the foreign ministry, sports ministry Graham Abrahams said.

The recordings apparently implicate Cronje in match-fixing for payment from a bookmaker.

Abrahams said that a response to a request by Indian Interpol officials for a sample of Cronje's voice would be formulated once the tapes are handed over.

"A decision on providing a voice sample will only be taken once the tapes are made available to us. We are expecting the Indians to respond to the request," he said.

The commission, appointed two weeks ago, has to present a preliminary report to the government by June 30. It is preparing to hold public hearings.

The commission was announced after Cronje admitted on April 11 that he had taken money from an Indian bookmaker to provide "information and forecasts" during a one-day series involving South Africa, England and Zimbabwe last year. He was immediately sacked.

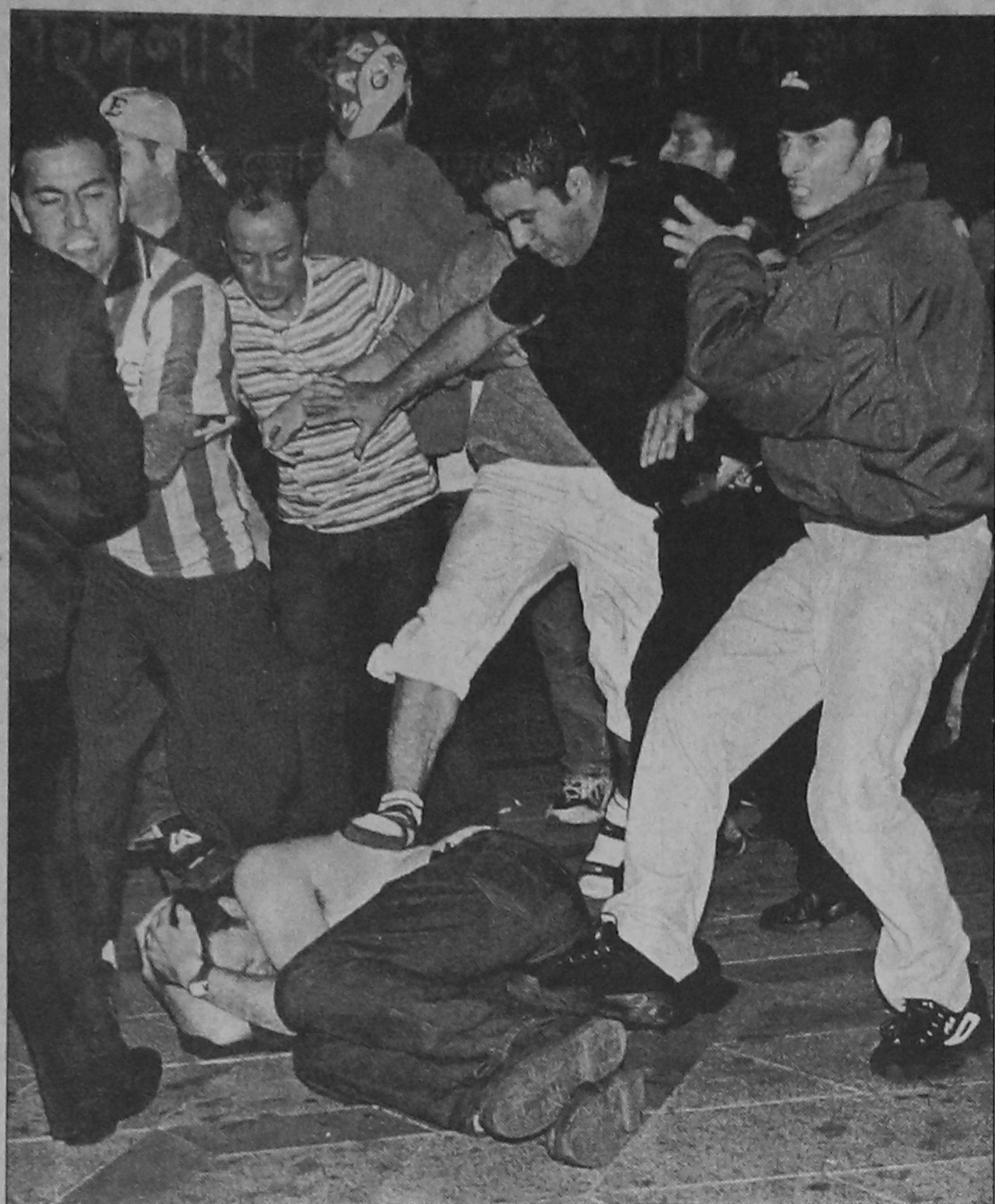
It will also look into the allegation that the South African team was offered 250,000 dollars to throw a match in Mumbai, India, in December 1996.

Thomas Cup badminton

Danes end Malaysia's chances

KUALA LUMPUR, May 17: Denmark ended Malaysia's hopes of a home Thomas Cup win when they beat the hosts 3-2 in the closing preliminary round Group A match on Tuesday, reports Reuters.

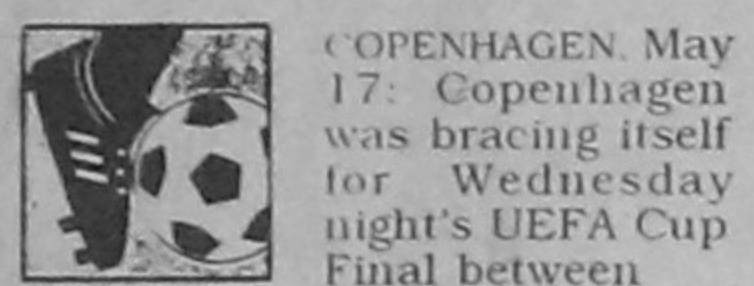
The victory took Denmark into the semifinals of the world men's team badminton championship where they will play holders and top seeds Indonesia on Thursday.



BRUTAL! An Arsenal fan (on the ground) feels the wrath of violent Galatasaray supporters during clashes at Copenhagen yesterday ahead of the UEFA Cup final. — AFP photo

English fan stabbed

Pandemonium ahead of UEFA final



COPENHAGEN, May 17: Copenhagen was bracing itself for Wednesday night's UEFA Cup final between Turkey's Galatasaray and English Premier League outfit Arsenal after serious incidents including a stabbing on the eve of the clash, reports AFP.

Police were out in force to prevent further violence between the two sets of supporters after running battles in the early hours of Tuesday morning.

An English fan was being treated for a punctured lung in a Copenhagen hospital and several other people were injured including a policeman.

The officer was apparently struck by a missile, during the early hours of the morning of a match that was always a high-risk encounter because of the murder of two fans of another English team Leeds United in Istanbul on the eve of the semi-final first leg with Galatasaray.

The Danish capital was on red alert with the possibility of more trouble before and after the match which kicks off at 20:45 local time.

Police in uniform and plain clothes were policing the high-risk areas notably the Radhuspladsen (Town Hall Square) where much of the trouble occurred and in areas leading to the stadium.

Police officer Finn Bach said that the life of the English fan, stabbed outside the Rosie McGee pub, was not in danger but tension was high Wednesday on the day of the final.

Seven other people, Turks and English, were taken to hospital suffering either from slight injuries or shock after the scene of the original incident.

Spurs strike deal with Rebrov



LONDON, May 17: Premiership club Tottenham on Tuesday agreed an 11-million-pound (£17.6-million-dollar) deal for Dynamo Kyiv striker Sergei Rebrov, reports AFP.

Spurs director of football David Pleat revealed that the north London club faced stiff competition from Italy to sign the 25-year-old Ukrainian international.

But it is the player's determination to succeed in a league he has admired from afar that will see him join a club that cannot even offer him the prospect of European football next season.

"I think the biggest competition was from a country where he didn't really want to go," said Pleat. "We persuaded him that England would be better for him at this moment in his career than Italy."

"It was due to one or two things, of not least his continual watching of the Premiership. He knows the players here and he knows which way he wants his career to go."

Rebrov has agreed a five-year contract, thought to be worth around 25,000-pound-per-week (40,000 dollars), after passing a medical at White Hart Lane and has returned to Ukraine until he is granted a work permit.

"He's a bright young man," added Pleat. "I've spent a little bit of time with him both here and in the Ukraine and I think he is ready to make this very important move."

running skirmishes between rival fans through the city centre while around ten British and Turkish fans were arrested.

"They have been charged with public order offences and will not be attending the final on Wednesday evening," Bach said.

A policeman was injured by a stone thrown during the incidents, the police spokesman added. The injured officer, who was hit above the eye, went home after being treated in hospital.

The attacker of the stabbed man was not among those arrested, police said.

That incident came after the first outbreak of fighting in the same area where shopping street Frederiksberggade runs into the Town Hall Square.

The trouble began here shortly after midnight (2300 GMT) in a pedestrian area of central Copenhagen after police had apparently tried to barricade a small group of around 20 English fans into a bar - the Absalom - as a far larger number of Galatasaray fans, many clad in their team's red and yellow colours, let off steam outside, driving up and down in cars sounding their horns and waving Turkish flags.

One of the British fans was seen leaving the bar and going towards a group of Turkish fans, who were running in the direction of the Town Hall, sparking violent skirmishes.

Several TV cameramen also added to the mayhem by filming the scenes and one was jostled to the ground by an English fan.

Riot police, with dogs, arrived on the scene and were met by bottles and stones thrown from both sets of fans.

Three ambulances attended the scene of the original incident.

The authorities, who had mobilised a record number of police for a football match here, feared further outbreaks of violence Wednesday by violent elements among the 25,000-odd English and Turkish supporters expected to attend the game.

This match had always been a high-risk affair since the fatal stabbing of two Leeds fans on the eve of the semi-final first leg match with Galatasaray in Istanbul.

Leeds supporters Kevin Speight, 40, and Christopher Loftus, 36, were stabbed to death on April 5 in a brawl. Several Turks have been arrested and charged in connection with the murders.

Six other Leeds fans were also injured in the clash in Istanbul's commercial Taksim district.

Turkish police maintained then that the fight broke out after British supporters broke car and shop windows and acted in a provocative manner against the Turkish flag and citizens.

It's the perfect time in his career for this type of move. He's intelligent on and off the field, and I think he will suit us.

"He thinks the English style will suit him, and I think he didn't really want to team up again with his old pal, (Andrei) Shevchenko, in Milan; he

wanted to come away from playing with him and maybe being in the shadow of him."

"We persuaded him there is some beautiful countryside near our training ground in Chigwell and we were fortunate that for the couple of days he was in England the weather was good and that people were smiling at Tottenham after we won on Sunday (against Sunderland).

"There was a marvellous atmosphere at Tottenham on Sunday, so we caught him at the right time and he caught us at the right time," he told SkySports.com TV.

The arrival of one of the hottest properties in Europe could spark a transfer merry-go-round at White Hart Lane, with Pleat admitting "maybe two, maybe three" new faces could follow Rebrov into the club.

But as to whether his arrival will spell the end of the Tottenham careers of strikers Les Ferdinand and Chris Armstrong, Pleat replied curtly: "I haven't got a crystal ball."

"Les is a super professional, and so is Chris - and they will continue to work and play and train to play for the first team."

Rebrov, who scored around 100 League goals for Dynamo, made his name playing alongside Shevchenko before his countryman's 18 million pound (£29 million dollars) move to AC Milan last summer.

He has scored a further 24 in UEFA competitions. But his move to Spurs, after another unspectacular season at White Hart Lane, is sure to raise eyebrows across Europe.

Chilean int'l fails drugs test

SANTIAGO, May 17: Chile's Clarence Acuna has been suspended by football's world governing body FIFA following a drugs test the day of their international against Peru last month, the Chile football federation (ANFP) said on Tuesday, reports AFP.

Acuna is not allowed to have any activity within football in or outside Chile from May 16 until after FIFA have finished an investigation.

Chile and Peru played in Santiago on April 26 and drew 1-1. According to the analysis of a routine urine sample, there were traces of isoproterenol, frequently used in the past but mainly discontinued because of side effects.

Hernandez signs for LA Galaxy

NEW YORK, May 17: Luis Hernandez, the leading goalscorer in the history of the Mexican National team, signed a Major League Soccer contract Tuesday and was assigned to the unbeaten Los Angeles Galaxy, reports AFP.

Financial terms of the multi-year deal were not disclosed.

Hernandez, who scored four goals in the 1998 World Cup, is expected to make his MLS debut here Saturday against D.C. United.

The 31-year-old forward spent the last three years with Monterrey Tigers of the Mexican First Division, where he was second in the league with 13 goals this past season.

A two-time Mexican First Division Player of the Year, he has 35 goals in 73 appearances with the national team.

"It's a personal challenge for me to be successful in Major League Soccer," Hernandez said. "I'm happy to be going to a city I am very familiar with. I love Los Angeles and look forward to scoring many goals for the great fans of Southern California."

Bates buys a piece of history

LONDON, May 17: Chelsea chairman Ken Bates on Wednesday splashed out 20,000 pounds (£32,000 dollars) to buy the most famous piece of turf at Wembley, reports AFP.

It was auctioned off to the stadium and the money will go to the Bobby Moore Fund for Imperial Cancer Research.

The turf is fondly remembered by all England fans as it is the spot where the ball landed for England's controversial third goal in the 1966 World Cup final.

That was one of three goals scored by Sir Geoff Hurst, who dug up the turf Wednesday morning.

It was then auctioned off and Bates, who came in with a late bid, said the turf will find a home at Chelsea's new soccer museum.

He said: "When I came here I didn't know it was to be auctioned off. But it's a little bit of heritage and I wanted it in the right hands. We are building a soccer museum next year and it will be deposited there."

Bates, who is also chairman of Wembley National Stadium Limited, was not at the ground when England defeated Germany 4-2 34 years ago.

He said: "I didn't think we would get to the final and was in the Bahamas with my family, sitting on a beach. Wembley has a great deal of history but, like me, it's a bit worn out."



FOES THEN FRIENDS NOW. Legendary English footballer Sir Geoff Hurst (R) and former West German custodian Hans Tilkowski holding a chunk of the Wembley stadium turf yesterday which was later sold in an on-line auction conducted by QXL.com. The turf-piece was dug up from the spot where the ball landed for the disputed third England goal scored by Hurst during the final of the 1966 World Cup against West Germany. — AFP photo

Stars up for the grabs



MADRID, May 17: Some 35 international or overseas stars were on the transfer list Tuesday following the relegation of a trio of former leading Spanish First Division clubs - Sevilla, Real Betis and Atletico Madrid, reports AFP.

Strikers, midfielders, de-

fenders and goalkeepers of differing nationalities - including big draw Dutchman Jimmy Hasselbaink and the world's most expensive player, the Brazilian Denilson - all found

themselves on the market.

Atletico Madrid's financial and sporting fall from grace has resulted in a total of 17 players having the 'for sale' sign hung around their necks - including their jewel Hasselbaink.

The centre-forward has scored 24 goals this season and the Spanish press have reported that up to 15 clubs want him, with rumours of offers exceeding the 23.5 million dollars which Atletico paid.

Real Betis are kissing goodbye to nine internationals, including Denilson, who set them back 34.8m dollars in 1997, while arch rivals Sevilla are trying to shift a few of their top players.

Those interested in the array of talent on offer include Valencia and Real Madrid of Spain, Liverpool, Tottenham and Middlesbrough of England and Lazio, Parma and Fiorentina of Italy, as well as French Champions Monaco and Turkish club Fenerbahce.

Atletico Madrid are crippled by debt and are counting on the money raised in the transfer market this summer to ease their troubles. However, they may also look to the players from Sevilla and Real Betis to boost their squad.

Argentinian Hernan Solari is expected to be sold for 10.8m dollars to AC Milan or an unnamed English club, while some other players including

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The share price, expected to

that he has been contacted by top Italian sides concerning a possible transfer, reports AFP.

According to Spanish media reports Italian Serie A side Roma have already offered 4,000 million pesetas (21 million dollars) for the Spanish international.

"I'm honoured and happy that there are offers for me in Italy," said Morientes, capped twelve times for the national side.

"At the same time I want to stay at Madrid," said Morientes, adding that he renegotiated his contract until 2003 at the beginning of the year.

The 24-year-old Morientes joined Real in 1997 from Real Zaragoza and scored 12 goals this season.

Roma have performed well this season and on Tuesday became only the second Serie A side to float a portion of their shares on the nation's stock.

Bitter city rivals Lazio, who have been on the stock market since May 1998, saw their shares go up by nearly 20 per-

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