

## Sport

**Leao in the news already**

RIO DE JANEIRO, Oct 22: Newly appointed Brazilian national team manager Emerson Leao drew harsh media criticism and qualified support Saturday, only two days after being selected to his new post, reports AP.

Rio's influential O Globo newspaper published a front page article questioning Leao's credentials.

Leao has never coached a team to a major international title, the newspaper reminded readers, adding that the 51-year-old Leao, best known as Brazil's goalkeeper in four World Cups, has a reputation for feuding with players and courting controversy.

In Lance, Brazil's premier sports newspaper, soccer analyst Gerson called Leao "arrogant and authoritarian," but still a good choice. Many fans liked Leao's promise to return a flamboyant, free-flowing style to Brazilian soccer.

"I like our roots, our dancing soccer, Leao said.

The controversy started Friday, when Leao publicly disagreed with team coordinator and his immediate superior Antonio Lopes over forward Romario's so-called "permanent" spot on the national team.

Earlier in the week, Lopes guaranteed fan-favourite Romario would start regularly through the 2002 World Cup qualifying. Leao, however, said Romario had to continue playing well to keep his spot.

"I am the only person who draws up the roster," Leao told reporters.

With Wanderley Luxemburgo fired following Brazil's quarter-final loss to eventual champion Cameroon at the Sydney Olympics, Brazilian soccer officials said they wanted a "low-key" replacement to lead Brazil's national team to the 2002 World Cup in Japan and South Korea.

Leao began work Saturday on his roster for Brazil's next World Cup qualifying game against Colombia on Nov. 14 amid speculation on which familiar players would lose their legendary yellow jerseys.

The consensus is Leao will scratch Romerio, defenders Cafu and Antonio Carlos, both long-time veterans.

Brazil, the only nation to qualify for and participate in every World Cup, enters the Nov. 14 match in second place after nine rounds of South American qualifying, five points behind arch-rival Argentina.

**Lazio may exchange Salas for Seedorf**

ROME, Oct 22: Talks are underway for an exchange of Lazio's Chilean international striker Marcelo Salas and Inter Milan's Dutch player Clarence Seedorf, the Gazzetta dello Sport reported Saturday, reports AFP.

Bosses of both clubs have been discussing the financial side of the proposed deal over the past week and agreement is expected to be reached early next week following this weekend's matches between Inter and Udinese Saturday and Lazio and Verona on Sunday.

Meanwhile, Everton manager Walter Smith is reported to be sounding out AC Milan for the services of 26-year-old Nigerian defender Taribo West.

According to media reports Smith sent a representative to the San Siro a week ago to open talks.

West was a target by Liverpool and Newcastle two years ago and turned them down, but is now reported to be interested in moving to the Premiership.

West's agent Ian Anderson said: "Taribo is keen to prove himself in the Premiership. He knows he can do it."

**Scottish Premiership Celtic in top form**

GLASGOW, Oct 22: Celtic increased their lead at the top of the Scottish Premier League to eight points on Saturday with a 2-1 win over bottom club Dundee United at Parkhead, reports AFP.

Celtic have 34 points from 12 games, eight ahead of Hibernian, who have a game in hand.

Goals from Swedish international Henrik Larsson and Alan Thompson put the home side in the driving seat but a late own goal from Paul Lambert had Celtic hanging on nervously in the closing stages.

Kilmarnock came from behind to beat St Mirren 2-1 and move above title holders Rangers into third place, although the reigning champions do have two games in hand.

Mark Yardley had headed the visitors into a half-time lead but that advantage was rubbed out through goals from Kilmarnock's Andy McLaren and Alan Mahood.

Motherwell winger Stuart Elliott took just five minutes to bring the Claudio Caniggia bandwagon to a complete standstill at Dens Park.

The Northern Ireland international scored after just 28 seconds and added a second in the fifth minute to ruin the Argentinian's debut.

But the World Cup star treated the home supporters to a spectacular strike in the 22nd minute but it wasn't enough as the home side went down 2-1.

Elsewhere Aberdeen were held to a 0-0 draw at home to Dunfermline.

**Primera Liga****Figo, Real feel Barca wrath**

BARCELONA, Oct 22: Luis Figo survived a trial from a vengeful Nou Camp crowd on Saturday but could not stop his old club Barcelona claiming a 2-0 victory over his new employers Real Madrid, reports Reuters.

Goals from former Real player Luis Enrique and Simao Sabrosa, the Portuguese winger who has filled Figo's boots so admirably this season, saw the world's most expensive player upstaged on his return to the ground where he made his name.

But Figo at least emerged with his pride intact, never going missing from the match and always looking one of the most dangerous Real players on show on what was an off night in the European championships.

Barcelona coach Llorenç Serra Ferrer refused to comment on Figo's performance, turning instead to his own side's convincing display.

"This was a team victory above all," said the coach.

"We had great balance between our defence and attack. We were even better in the second half when Frank de Boer came on and Philip Cocu pushed up further forward. We could have settled the game a lot earlier."

Barcelona moved into second spot behind leaders Valencia who won 1-0 against Real Zaragoza. Valencia are a point ahead of Barca on 13 from six games.

**Real drop to third from first with 11 points. This was the Madrid giants' first defeat of the season.**

In the other fixture on Saturday, Real Mallorca drew 1-1 with champions Deportivo La Coruna.

Figo had been promised the roughest of rides on his return to Catalan soil return for breaking so many hearts with his world record, 56 million dollars deflection to Real over the summer.

Even so, the sustained abuse that rained down from the crowd, along with bottles, cans and 10 billion pesetas notes, was at times shocking.

As Figo won a corner close to the "boixos nois" or mad boys in the Barca crowd early in the second half, police moved in preemptively to form a protective wall around the player.

When he was booked a couple of minutes later for a foul on his marker Carles Puyol, Barcelona defender Abelardo asked the crowd for calm.

After an opening period that had seen crunching tackles coming from players on both sides of this age-old rivalry, Luis Enrique put the home side

ahead on 27 minutes, nodding in at the near post from a Xavi freekick.

The final touch appeared to come from Real defender Altair Karanka but nothing was going to stop Luis Enrique - for five years a Real Madrid player - claiming the goal against his former side.

Barca, dominating the match, came close to a second on several occasions before Simao settled the game with 10 minutes to go, scrambling the ball in after Rivaldo had forced a fine save from Iker Casillas and Alfonso had smacked the bar with his follow-up.

The abuse for Figo began even before the match kicked off.

Running out for the warm-

up, Figo made a point of looking up to see banners around the ground calling him a traitor and questioning his parentage.

"We have 10,000 million reasons to hate you, Judas," read one banner, in reference to the amount in pesetas it took Real to buy him out of his contract.

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THEY DONT COME BETTER THAN THEM: Superstars Rivaldo (L) and Luis Figo caught in the same picture during the Barcelona-Real Madrid clash at the Nou Camp on October 21. - AFP photo

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Then came Simao's second goal and the game was up for Real and their star attraction.

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