

Bonfrere forsees Nigerian doom

LAGOS, Oct 29: Nigerian football is on the downward slide and there is an urgent need to bring in new players to the national team, Dutch coach Jo Bonfrere said Saturday, reports AFP.

"Nigerian football is dying and we need to quickly get new players to replace some of the top stars who appear to be past their best," Bonfrere told reporters here.

"It is very worrying that many of the players we rely on are no longer playing regularly for their foreign clubs. We therefore have to look for suitable replacements for these players if not we will be in big trouble," the Dutchman added.

The chairman of the Nigeria Football Association (NFA) Dominic Onyea also deplored the dwindling fortunes of the national team at the recent Annual General Meeting of the football association. He challenged national team selectors to discover new talents to replace ageing stars.

Bonfrere himself has not been spared heavy criticisms by a section of the local press following Nigeria's quarter-final exit from the Olympics.

He has been asked to quit the job he regained late last year after he was accused of not giving players from the local league a chance to play for the national team. His critics charge that he has preferred to stick to foreign-based stars many of whom are not even committed to the national team.

Bonfrere has also come under fire for flouting orders from the NFA.

The coach has said he is owed four months pay by the NFA, which is often broke and depends on subsidies from the government.

The leadership of the NFA and the Dutch coach, however, met here this week to iron out their differences.

Dortmund shares fixed at 11 euros

FRANKFURT, Oct 29: Shares in Borussia Dortmund, which is to be the first German football club to float on the country's stock exchange, have been fixed at 11 euros, the bank managing the flotation, Deutsche Bank, said on Saturday, reports AFP.

The banks said the price, equivalent to about nine dollars, had been fixed at the low end of the price band.

The subscription opened on October 23 and closed on October 27. Trading is due to begin on October 31.

One quarter of the shares have been allocated to German private investors while 71.7 percent have gone to European institutions like banks and insurance companies.

Three percent of the stock has been allocated to club members, while their families and friends will hold 0.3 percent.

Demand for shares far exceeded the offer and an extra 1.5 million shares were issued over and above the 13.5 million originally planned.

Borussia Dortmund was founded in 1909. The club has won the German league five times, the last triumph being in 1996.

The team won the European Champions League in 1997, and currently lies in fourth place in the German First Division.

Cruyff for England?

London, Oct 29: Former Dutch World Cup star Johan Cruyff is under active consideration for the England manager's job, the Sunday Times reported, reports Reuters.

Quoting what it called a well-placed source, the newspaper said there was a shortlist of four with former Barcelona coach Cruyff and Celtic manager Martin O'Neill in the frame, with Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger and Lazio's Sven Goran Eriksson.

FC Copenhagen coach Roy Hodgson was only a peripheral figure despite heated media speculation, the newspaper said.

Unlike O'Neill, Wenger and Eriksson, Cruyff has no club commitments and could take over quickly. Kevin Keegan resigned as coach earlier this month after England's 1-0 defeat by Germany in a World Cup qualifier.

Leicester City manager Peter Taylor and Manchester United's number two Steve McLaren are in charge for a friendly against Italy on November 15.

Riedl pays the price

HANOI, Oct 29: Vietnam's Austrian coach Alfred Riedl will be let go at the end of this year despite his success in leading the national squad to unprecedented silver medals in both the 1998 Tiger Cup and the 1999 South East Asian Games, football chiefs said Friday, reports AFP.

The 51-year-old is to pay the price for his public criticism of the state football federation's unusual decision to field the under-23 Olympic team for the qualifiers for the 2002 World Cup rather than his national squad.

He unilaterally broke the terms of his contract when he took the decision to speak out," Vietnam Football Federation (VFF) president Mai Van Muon said on Friday.



Ryan Giggs (R) of Manchester United tries to go past a Southampton defender during their English Premiership match at Trafford on October 28.

-AFP photo

Premiership

MU, Gunners win big



LONDON, Oct 29: Premiership leaders Manchester United went goal-crazy Saturday thrashing struggling Southampton 5-0 at Old Trafford with England forward Teddy Sheringham scoring a hat-trick, reports AFP.

United held onto top spot with 24 points from 11 games, ahead of second-placed Arsenal on goal difference. The Gunners also had an easy afternoon at Highbury with a 5-0 victory over Manchester City.

United went in front against Southampton thanks to an horrendous mistake by Saints goalkeeper Paul Jones who allowed an Andy Cole shot to go through his legs for the striker's seventh of the season.

But Muzzy Izzet equalled the long-range effort to level and Ireland international Amara Gomis scored a Peter Taylor's men a 2-1 victory at Elliptical Street.

Paul Merson inspired Aston Villa to a 2-1 victory over Charlton at Villa Park.

Paul Merson capped a superb performance with a 42nd minute goal which gave John Gregor's side a timely boost just before the break.

In appalling wind and torrential rain, Villa had gone ahead just past the half-hour when Ian Taylor stooped to head home Steve Stone's right-wing cross.

Charlton got a lifeline six minutes from time when Dino Dubin screwed Mattias Svensson's cross past his own keeper but Villa held on.

Dutchman Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink netted his 10th

and 11th goal of the season in Chelsea's 3-0 victory over Tottenham at Stamford Bridge.

Hasselbaink, a former Spurs striker, scored with a penalty after 13 minutes when Ramon Vega handled a cross. Gianfranco Zola crept in at the far post to double the advantage after 39 minutes and Hasselbaink rounded off a comfortable win with the third three minutes from time.

Premiership newcomers Ipswich continued their excellent run with a 2-1 win against Middlesbrough at Portman Road.

Richard Naylor opened the scoring with a 35-yard lob after 25 minutes and Mark Venus added a second from a free kick three minutes later.

Boro defender Dean Gordon scored a consolation goal for the visitors 22 minutes from time.

West Ham won for the first time at Upton Park in the Premiership with a 1-0 win over Newcastle. Frenchman Frederic Kanoute grabbing the only goal after 73 minutes.

For Iranians, sports - and especially football - is just as important as the defence of their territory or their beliefs," parliamentary speaker Mehdi Karubi said in a speech opening Sunday's legislative session.

"The national pride was damaged," he said, calling on sports officials to "provide an explanation because the Iranian people do not understand this disorganisation." Other MPs also denounced the loss.

Coach Jalal Talebi resigned after Iran was dramatically dismissed by South Korea in last Monday's quarter-final in Lebanon with a golden goal from Lee Dong-Gook booking the Koreans a place in the semi-finals.

Sports papers have been calling for high-level resignations and the mainstream press got into the act Sunday, with the conservative Kayhan International even blasting reformist President Mohammad Khatami. "One of the slogans of the Khatami administration, the oft-repeated one, is paying attention to the needs of the country's youth," it said.

"The defeat of our national team in Lebanon may be cited as an instance that reflects that not much was done toward the realisation of the slogan."

It said the failure of officials other than Talebi to resign was evidence they were "procrastinating as usual."

South Korea went on to lose in the semi-finals to Saudi Arabia, who will play Japan later Sunday in the Cup final.

Barcelona had a couple of half chances but with Rivaldo a shadow of the player who had impressed so much in recent games they were never convincing. The game was up for them by the 52nd minute as the Catalans self-destructed again.

After a swift break from the Mallorca forwards, Luque tested Dutruel from long range and the Frenchman again failed to hold the ball.

Barcelona went into their game at Mallorca in excellent form after league victories over Real Sociedad and Real Madrid and hard-working Champions League draws in Milan and Leeds.

Deportivo's victory over Numancia came via first half goals from Donato and Fernando. The home side clawed one back after 60 minutes through Ruben Navarro but despite intense pressure in the closing

Mallorca were gifted the lead

on 11 minutes as struggling Barca goalkeeper Richard Dutruel failed to hold a long shot from Alberto Luque.

Xavi had plenty of time to clear but he allowed Eto'o to sneak in behind him to pounce in a shot.

Barcelona had a couple of half chances but with Rivaldo a shadow of the player who had impressed so much in recent games they were never convincing. The game was up for them by the 52nd minute as the Catalans self-destructed again.

After a swift break from the Mallorca forwards, Luque tested Dutruel from long range and the Frenchman again failed to hold the ball.

This time Sergi was on the spot to make a simple clearance. He dallied too long and Eto'o nipped in to slip a pass across goal for Ibagaza to side-foot into an empty net.

Mallorca were gifted the lead

Primera Liga

Barca slip takes champs atop



MADRID, Oct 29: Champions Deportivo Coruna returned to the top of the Spanish first division on Saturday thanks to a 2-1 win at Numancia and a surprise 2-0 Barcelona defeat at Real Mallorca, reports Reuters.

Barcelona, who went into the seventh round of matches in second place, had the chance to leapfrog Deportivo but they in a wretched display.

Goals from Samuel Eto'o and Ariel Ibagaza, both resulting from defensive errors, gave Mallorca a comfortable win against the Catalans who were clearly feeling the effects of four tough games in the two weeks.

Deportivo's victory over Numancia came via first half goals from Donato and Fernando. The home side clawed one back after 60 minutes through Ruben Navarro but despite intense pressure in the closing

minutes could not find the equaliser.

Deportivo lead the standings with 14 points, a point clear of Valencia who play at Osasuna today.

Barcelona slip to fourth on 12 points following their third away defeat of the season.

Rayo Vallecano, ahead of Barcelona on goal difference, and Real Madrid and Alaves, who both have 11 points, are in action today and are in with a chance of going to the top of the table.

Barcelona went into their game at Mallorca in excellent form after league victories over Real Sociedad and Real Madrid and hard-working Champions League draws in Milan and Leeds.

Deportivo's victory over Numancia came via first half goals from Donato and Fernando. The home side clawed one back after 60 minutes through Ruben Navarro but despite intense pressure in the closing

Mallorca were gifted the lead

on 11 minutes as struggling Barca goalkeeper Richard Dutruel failed to hold a long shot from Alberto Luque.

Xavi had plenty of time to clear but he allowed Eto'o to sneak in behind him to pounce in a shot.

Barcelona had a couple of half chances but with Rivaldo a shadow of the player who had impressed so much in recent games they were never convincing. The game was up for them by the 52nd minute as the Catalans self-destructed again.

After a swift break from the Mallorca forwards, Luque tested Dutruel from long range and the Frenchman again failed to hold the ball.

This time Sergi was on the spot to make a simple clearance. He dallied too long and Eto'o nipped in to slip a pass across goal for Ibagaza to side-foot into an empty net.

Mallorca were gifted the lead

on 11 minutes as struggling Barca goalkeeper Richard Dutruel failed to hold a long shot from Alberto Luque.

Xavi had plenty of time to clear but he allowed Eto'o to sneak in behind him to pounce in a shot.

Barcelona had a couple of half chances but with Rivaldo a shadow of the player who had impressed so much in recent games they were never convincing. The game was up for them by the 52nd minute as the Catalans self-destructed again.

After a swift break from the Mallorca forwards, Luque tested Dutruel from long range and the Frenchman again failed to hold the ball.

This time Sergi was on the spot to make a simple clearance. He dallied too long and Eto'o nipped in to slip a pass across goal for Ibagaza to side-foot into an empty net.

Mallorca were gifted the lead

on 11 minutes as struggling Barca goalkeeper Richard Dutruel failed to hold a long shot from Alberto Luque.

Xavi had plenty of time to clear but he allowed Eto'o to sneak in behind him to pounce in a shot.

Barcelona had a couple of half chances but with Rivaldo a shadow of the player who had impressed so much in recent games they were never convincing. The game was up for them by the 52nd minute as the Catalans self-destructed again.

After a swift break from the Mallorca forwards, Luque tested Dutruel from long range and the Frenchman again failed to hold the ball.

Xavi had plenty of time to clear but he allowed Eto'o to sneak in behind him to pounce in a shot.

Barcelona had a couple of half chances but with Rivaldo a shadow of the player who had impressed so much in recent games they were never convincing. The game was up for them by the 52nd minute as the Catalans self-destructed again.

After a swift break from the Mallorca forwards, Luque tested Dutruel from long range and the Frenchman again failed to hold the ball.

Xavi had plenty of time to clear but he allowed Eto'o to sneak in behind him to pounce in a shot.

Barcelona had a couple of half chances but with Rivaldo a shadow of the player who had impressed so much in recent games they were never convincing. The game was up for them by the 52nd minute as the Catalans self-destructed again.

After a swift break from the Mallorca forwards, Luque tested Dutruel from long range and the Frenchman again failed to hold the ball.

Xavi had plenty of time to clear but he allowed Eto'o to sneak in behind him to pounce in a shot.

Barcelona had a couple of half chances but with Rivaldo a shadow of the player who had impressed so much in recent games they were never convincing. The game was up for them by the 52nd minute as the Catalans self-destructed again.

After a swift break from the Mallorca forwards, Luque tested Dutruel from long range and the Frenchman again failed to hold the ball.

Xavi had plenty of time to clear but he allowed Eto'o to sneak in behind him to pounce in a shot.

Barcelona had a couple of half chances but with Rivaldo a shadow of the player who had impressed so much in recent games they were never convincing. The game was up for them by the 52nd minute as the Catalans self-destructed again.

After a swift break from the Mallorca forwards, Luque tested Dutruel from long range and the Frenchman again failed to hold the ball.

Xavi had plenty of time to clear but he allowed Eto'o to sneak in behind him to pounce in a shot.

Barcelona had a couple of half chances but with Rivaldo a shadow of the player who had impressed so much in recent games they were never convincing. The game was up for them by the 52nd minute as the Catalans self-destructed again.

After a swift break from the Mallorca forwards, Luque tested Dutruel from long range and the Frenchman again failed to hold the ball.

Xavi had plenty of time to clear but he allowed Eto'o to sneak in behind him to pounce in a shot.

Barcelona had a couple of half chances but with Rivaldo a shadow of the player who had impressed so much in recent games they were never convincing. The game was up for them by the 52nd minute as the Catalans self-destructed again.

After a swift break from the Mallorca forwards, Luque tested Dutruel from long range and the Frenchman again failed to hold the ball.

Xavi had plenty of time to clear but he allowed Eto'o to sneak in behind him to pounce in a shot.

Barcelona had a couple of half chances but with Rivaldo a shadow of the player who had impressed so much in recent games they were never convincing. The game was up for them by the 52nd minute as the Catalans self-destructed again.