

## 2003 Champions' League final in Moscow

MOSCOW, Nov 24: Moscow's five-star Luzhnik stadium is to host the 2003 Champions' League final, Russian Football Union president Vyacheslav Koloskov told the press here on Thursday, reports AFP.

Koloskov said that UEFA President Lennart Johansson had reached a verbal agreement on the issue with Moscow major Yuri Luzhkov during Wednesday's second group phase match between Spartak and English Premiership side Arsenal at the stadium.

Spartak won 4-1 before a capacity 84,000 crowd at the recently-renovated ground.

## Premiership preview Euro tumbler shift focus

LONDON, Nov 24: Arsenal and Leeds will both be looking to bounce back from Champions League defeats when they meet at Elland Road on Sunday, reports AFP.

Arsenal were comfortably beaten 4-1 away to Spartak Moscow and Leeds went down 2-0 at home to Real Madrid in the first round of the second phase earlier this week.

On Saturday by contrast the only English side to record a Champions League success this week Manchester United will look to follow their 3-1 success over Panathinaikos with a win away to struggling Derby County.

Struggling FA Cup holders Chelsea will see what life has to offer after the departure of Ture Andre Flo to Rangers when they travel to Everton, who will have been boosted by a much needed three points last weekend against Arsenal.

In the relegation zone Middlesbrough manager Bryan Robson will be under greater pressure if his team lose to bottom of the table Bradford in a classic 'six-pointer'.

The one-time 'Captain Marvel', who has spent millions constantly rebuilding the side, has seen his Middlesbrough team lose their last seven games and they have yet to win at home this season.

Arsene Wenger has told his shell-shocked Arsenal stars to get their act together quickly before their black November develops into a full-blown crisis.

The Spartak reverse was the London club's fourth defeat in six matches this month.

Their only win in that spell, which started with a home League Cup defeat by Ipswich, was via a Thierry Henry penalty at Middlesbrough.

Second-placed Arsenal have slipped five points behind Manchester United in the Premiership race since being held to a goalless home draw by then-bottom club Derby two weeks ago and Wenger was appalled at the team's lack of fire in a 2-0 defeat at Everton last Saturday - only the second league loss since the opening day of the season.

Arsenal played far better in Moscow only for their once famous mean defence to ship goals that Wenger described as 'stupid - not at all like the Arsenal we used to know'.

And, at the moment Gunners' 35million pounds (£25million dollars) strike quartet cannot seem to even buy goals. Hapless Nigerian ace Kanu, desperately out of touch in Moscow, is a prime example with just one all season.

Wenger admits: "We are going through a very difficult period and have got to find the mental strength to come back again."

"It is clear there are flaws in our game which have to be rectified quickly but I still believe we will show our true form against Leeds in the next match."

Centre back Martin Keown insists: "We've had setbacks like this before at the club and we've bounced back."

Leeds, who hope to have completed the signing of West Ham centre-back Rio Ferdinand for 18million pounds (£27million dollars) - a world record price for a defender - have Premiership problems of their own.

They are currently in 11th place, having won five out of 13 matches and like Chelsea last season their domestic form appears to be suffering at the expense of their Champions League campaign.

United will be without England international goalkeeper Nigel Martyn until at least Christmas after he aggravated a groin strain in training. Stand-in Paul Robinson has been performing so well, however, that Martyn's absence will not be the problem it could have been.

Leeds' Norwegian international midfielder Erik Bakke should be available after missing the Real game with a calf injury. Talented Australian striker Harry Kewell is set to stay on the sidelines after sustaining a thigh strain following an Achilles operation.

**FIXTURES (kick-off 1500GMT unless stated):**  
Saturday: Charlton v Sunderland, Coventry v Aston Villa, Derby v Manchester United, Everton v Chelsea, Manchester City v Ipswich, Middlesbrough v Bradford, Southampton v West Ham, Tottenham v Leicester.

Sunday: Leeds v Arsenal (1600GMT), Newcastle v Liverpool.



Real Madrid President Florentino Perez (C) is flanked by team captain Fernando Hierro (R) and coach Vicente del Bosque after a press conference in Tokyo yesterday. Real are in the Japanese capital to play in the Intercontinental Cup against Boca Juniors of Argentina. - AFP photo

## Intercontinental Cup

# Real up for the challenge

TOKYO, Nov 24: Jetlag, delays and a busy week have not dampened reigning European champions Real Madrid of Spain's hopes of beating Argentina's Boca Juniors to lift the Intercontinental Cup in Tokyo next Tuesday, reports AFP.

"We have a lot of information about Boca Juniors and their players. European clubs have won this Cup for five years running and we will do our best to make it a sixth in a row," said a tired-looking coach Vicente Del Bosque.

Real Madrid overpowered English Premiership club Leeds 2-0 in a Champions League Group D match at Elland Road on Wednesday and flew to Tokyo only to spend an hour snarled in Tokyo's notorious traffic congestion en route to their hotel.

Boca Juniors, determined to bring back the Cup to South

America, arrived on Wednesday and went through a rigorous practice session Friday in preparation for the game at the National Stadium.

European clubs have won the previous five straight Intercontinental Cups, held between Libertadores Cup champions and UEFA Champions League winners - effectively a world club championship final.

The three-time South American champions Boca Juniors won the Intercontinental Cup in 1978, and missed the chance to defend it the following year as the final was scrapped.

Real Madrid have won the title twice - in 1960 and 1998 - out of eight appearances.

"It is very important for us to take part in this match, because we have some 80 million fans all over the world. We have won the title twice and now we are seeking the third one," said Real Madrid president Florentino Perez.

The star-studded 24-member Real Madrid squad

consists of 13 Spanish internationals, three Brazilian internationals, and one each from Germany, England, Portugal, France, Argentina and Cameroon.

Boca Juniors have only six internationals from Argentina, one from Peru, and three from Colombia, including one of the best goalkeepers on the continent, Oscar Eduardo Cordoba.

"All our players came here having determined to win the Cup. I really want to win the match," said captain Fernando Ruiz Hierro.

"Boca Juniors have a lot of good players. We will have to play at a very high level to fight against them, and I'm very glad to play against such a good team."

"We will just play our 100 percent in 90 minutes to win our third title. Martin Palermo is the most dangerous striker and he always scores. We shall check him very strictly," added Hierro.

## Ferdinand the richest back

LONDON, Nov 24: England international Rio Ferdinand on Friday became the world's most expensive defender after finalising personal terms on an 18million pound (£25million dollar) transfer from West Ham to Leeds, reports AFP.

Ferdinand, 22, will undergo a medical in Leeds on Saturday before being presented to the Leeds United fans before Sunday's Premiership match at Elland Road with Arsenal.

Leeds chairman Peter Ridsdale has confirmed Ferdinand has a few contractual loose ends to tie up with West Ham, one of which is believed to be a goodbye payment from the London club.

"The deal is done with the one remaining aspect being tomorrow's medical," said Ridsdale.

"Personal terms have been agreed and pleasingly, from our perspective, we have landed a player of Rio's calibre without going outside our existing wage structure."

Ferdinand, who had been at the London club for a decade, is expected to be paid around 30,000 pounds (£42,000 dollars)



RIO FERDINAND

per week, for the five-year deal with Leeds, making him one of the highest-paid players at Elland Road.

Ferdinand's Israeli agent Pinhas Zahavi confirmed: "Talks have been completed with Leeds and everything is okay. There were no problems on either side."

The fee shatters the previous world best for a defender of 13million pounds (£18million dollars) paid by Roma for Argentinian Walter Samuel, and represents a British record after the 15million pound (£22.5million dollar) deals for Alan Shearer and Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink.

It had initially been hoped the deal would have been concluded in time to allow Ferdinand to make his debut against Arsenal, but he will take his bow for the Yorkshire club at Leicester on December 2.

Ferdinand will be eligible for United's current Champions League campaign from February, starting with the home game against Anderlecht on February 13.

Leeds were beaten 2-0 by Real Madrid in their first second-phase Champions League match on Wednesday.

The capture of Ferdinand takes David O'Leary's spending as manager of Leeds in just over two years to 64.3million pounds (£90million dollars).

## Indian gala uncertain

NEW DELHI, Nov 24: India's biggest international football tournament, scheduled to be held early next year, may be called off because of organisational and sponsorship problems, sources said on Friday, reports AFP.

The 16-nation Millennium Cup, featuring sides including Uruguay, Chile, Japan and South Africa, is due to be played in Goa, Cochin and Calcutta from January 10-25.

But a revolt within the All India Football Federation (AIFF), a lack of sponsors and failure to secure television rights, has made the tournament a virtual non-starter.

"The Millennium Cup is a millennium flop, it will not take place," a senior Indian football official, who requested anonymity, told AFP.

"The AIFF can't organise domestic tournaments, how does anyone expect it to put on an international event of this magnitude?"

Except for embattled AIFF president Priyaranjan Das Munshi, no one in the country's football fraternity is convinced the tournament will take place.

"Asia, leave alone India, would not have seen anything like this," said Munshi, a member of parliament from the Congress party.

But he conceded the event-management company, Studio 2100, hired to promote the tournament, had been unable to finalise sponsors or a television deal.

With less than seven weeks left until the scheduled kick-off, there is no media campaign. No match schedule has been announced.

There is also confusion over which 16 nations are supposed to be taking part. A total of 18 countries have been mentioned as participants: Chile, Uruguay, Colombia, Yugoslavia, Jamaica, South Africa, Cameroon, Uzbekistan, Iraq, Japan, Qatar, Trinidad, Bahrain, Jordan, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Indonesia and hosts India.



Patrick Kluivert (L), Barcelona's Dutch international striker, leaps above a Club Brugge defender to score during his side's UEFA Cup third round first leg game at Brugge on November 23. - AFP photo

## UEFA Cup 3rd round 1st leg

# Victory at last for Barca

PARIS, Nov 24: Ailing Spanish giants Barcelona cast a bit of sunlight on their weary fans way on Thursday as they beat previously unbeaten Belgian league leaders Club Brugge 2-0 away in their UEFA Cup third round first leg match, reports AFP.

While Barca, who had lost their last two league matches and been knocked out of the Champions League, could look forward optimistically to pursuing further the only European trophy to have eluded them the same could not be said for the Italian sides, who used to make this trophy their own.

Parma, the 1999 winners, drew 2-2 at home with unglamorous Bundesliga outfit TSV Munich 1860 after letting a two goal lead slip while Serie A leaders AS Roma may rue the decision to rest leading scorer Gabriel Batistuta as they scraped a 1-0 home win over another German team SV Hamburg.

With Inter Milan drawing 0-0 in Berlin on Tuesday against Hertha Berlin the Italians could be facing an unprecedented wipeout at such an early stage in the second legs in a fortnight's time.

By contrast the two French sides Bordeaux and Nantes both won their home matches against Werder Bremen and Swiss outfit Lausanne, though Bordeaux took the most likely path to progress having recorded a 4-1 win while Nantes won a seven goal thriller 4-3.

Former German national coach Berti Vogts' first European match in charge of Bayer Leverkusen probably reminded him of why he gave up coaching for a while as they drew 4-4 at home to Greek side AEK Athens. Carsten Ramelow saving his side's blushes with an injury-time equaliser.

Greece's other two representatives Olympiakos and PAOK Salonika will have their work cut out to qualify though Olympiakos secured a 2-2 home draw in injury-time with England's last survivors Liverpool thanks to another defensive error by German defender Markus Babbel.

First-half goals by Barcelona's Brazilian world footballer of the year Rivaldo and Dutch striker Patrick Kluivert saw the Catalan side safely home against the Belgians, who had won their first 13 matches in the domestic league this season.

Barcelona's under-pressure coach Lorenzo Serra Ferrer, who replaced the sacked Louis van Gaal, said he was delighted to have beaten such in-form opponents.

"This win is a great relief after some bad results," he said. "I am really happy because it was achieved against a side

who have made a great start to the season."

There is a lot of pressure on me but I am not worried for my future and I will continue to work hard and improve Barcelona's form," he added.

Parma, winners of the 1999 UEFA Cup trophy, looked well in control after Ghanaian Stephan Appiah and French international midfielder Johann Micoud put them 2-0 up in the first 11 minutes.

However, the Germans stubbornly refused to throw in the towel and stormed back with second-half goals by Roman Tyce and a superbly taken sidefooted volley by Markus Beierle handed them two invaluable away goals.

Munich, who lie 12th in the Bundesliga table, finally got on target in the 79th minute when Tyce seized on the ball on the edge of the area after Parma captain Antonio Benarrivo had failed to clear after dispossessing Beierle.

Tyce rounded Fabio Cannavaro and slotted it past keeper Gianluigi Buffon to give the Germans real hope for the second leg in a fortnight's time.

The contest had looked over when Micoud took advantage of a terrible error in defence by Australian international sweeper Ned Zelic to slot past Simon Jentzsch in the 11th minute to double Parma's advantage.

Ghanaian international Stephan Appiah had crashed home a fierce right-footed shot past Jentzsch in the second minute after the 1860 defence failed to clear the ball to give the 1999 UEFA Cup winners the lead.

Roma may well be left lamenting the chances missed by Vincenzo Montella, who was standing in for Batistuta.

Fortunately for the Italians, for whom Japanese playmaker Hidetoshi Nakata and Brazilian defender Cafu were outstanding Uruguayan Gianni Guigou did manage to hit the target in the first-half, though the goal owed much to a mistake by keeper Hans-Jorg Butt.

Montella, who refused to let Batistuta have the number nine shirt when the Argentine moved from Fiorentina in the summer, wasted chance after chance set up by Nakata in the second-half once completely fluffing the shot when he only had Butt to beat.

Liverpool grabbed two priceless away goals with Olympiakos but Babbel's injury-time defensive blunder dampened the celebrations.

Goals by England internationals Nick Barmby and Steven Gerrard looked to have given the four-time European Cup winners a superb away win only for Babbel to slip up and let in Alexios Alexandris for his second of the match.

The slip by Babbel, who was signed to great fanfare from

Bayern Munich in the summer, will have infuriated French coach Gerard Houllier, who only on Wednesday read the riot act to the German international about recent lapses in defence, which have cost the side dearly in the Premiership.

French league leaders Bordeaux pulled off a vintage display at home to earn a well-deserved win against last season's German Cup finalists Werder Bremen.

Peruvian striker Claudio Pizarro opened the scoring for the visitors before Christophe Dugarry, playing with a hernia problem, grabbed a lucky equaliser which took a large deflection off Werder captain Dieter Ellis.

Bordeaux midfielder Laurent Batlles did well to put the Girondins in front, with Belgian international Marc Wilmots, who came on for Dugarry at halftime - scoring a second-half double to deliver the coup de grace.

## FIFA's world player

# Rivaldo, Figo Zidane to fight it out

ZURICH, Switzerland, Nov 24: Real Madrid's Luis Figo, Barcelona's Rivaldo and Zinedine Zidane of Juventus will be in the running for the title of world player of the year, FIFA announced Friday, reports AP.

The trio topped a poll of more than 130 national team coaches, and the winner will be announced at FIFA's world player gala Dec 11 in Rome, world soccer's governing body said in a statement.

Brazilian star Rivaldo won the 1999 title, Zidane a key player in France's World Cup triumph in 1998 and their European Championship win this year, took the award the previous year.

Portugal's Figo, who this year set a world transfer record on signing for Madrid from arch-rival Barcelona for 56 million dollars, is nominated for the first time.

FIFA said their team of the year award, based on their monthly rankings, went to the Netherlands. Nigeria won the award for the national team that has made the most progress up the ranking table.

Lucas Radebe, of Leeds United and South Africa, won the world body's Fair Play Award, the governing body said.

"For his work with children in his home country and also for his commitment to the fight against racism in football."

## CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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15	Wings	Nap	48	Melt together	30	Grafton's
16	Nap	Family	50	Strombol spillage	31	for "Evidence"
17	One of	Rosie's inspirations	51	Weir	32	Larry's pal
18	One of	Rosie's inspirations	52	Zone	33	pal
19	Chum	Witticism	53	Mosque	34	pal
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## CRYPTOQUIP

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C Q G V H H M C H G B O H  
I B X U B W O M C S P I B D O V Q P A  
C - U T E E H C E P D H  
Yesterday's Cryptquip: WHEN I THOUGHT ABOUT A JOB AS A JESTER, I WAS MERELY FOOLING MYSELF.  
Today's Cryptquip Clue: B equals O  
The Cryptquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.