

Fulham eyeing Petit

LONDON, Dec 22: Ambitious English League club Fulham are ready to make an 8million pounds (11.84million dollars) move for Barcelona's French international midfielder Emmanuel Petit according to the London club's official website, reports AFP.

Fulham, owned by millionaire Mohammad Al-Fayed, who also has famous department store Harrods in his portfolio, are currently top of the English First Division and seem certain to gain promotion to the Premiership.

But with competition from the likes of Real Madrid, Chelsea, Middlesbrough and Paris St Germain for the Frenchman's signature, Fulham could have their work cut out to lure the former-Arsenal man to Craven Cottage.

Petit recently complained of his lack of involvement in Barcelona's line-up, however after being put in at left back on Wednesday night's league win over Alaves, Petit told L'Equipe he would be happy to bide his time at Barcelona.

"I want to play and help my team win. But I know that I have little chance of featuring in midfield where Barca have a host of talent."

"But if I have to play at left back, then all I ask for is a bit of time to adapt. At my age (30), it's not always easy to change long-held habits, but I'm willing to give it a go."

Fulham do have an advantage however, with manager Jean Tigana having already worked with Petit when they were both at Monaco.

According to the website: "Insiders at Barca have revealed that Petit would be willing to move to West London once Fulham have reached the Premiership, although sources closer to Petit say that he may be prepared to make a move now."

One major obstacle to Petit joining the ambitious London side is his reported wages of 65,000 pounds (96,200 dollars) per week. However, Al-Fayed has shown that he is prepared to spend money on Fulham and Petit could yet be returning to London.

Players' rep slams intransigence

PARIS, Dec 22: The continued failure of FIFA and UEFA to agree on changes in European football could tear the game apart. International Professional Footballers' Federation (FIFPro) vice-president Philippe Piat claimed Thursday, reports AFP.

Piat's outburst comes after EU Competition Commissioner Mario Monti said that he was "reasonably optimistic" that agreement will be reached soon on European football transfers.

The FIFPro vice-president admitted that he fears the worst as a result of the failure to come to an agreement and accused world and European football governing bodies FIFA and UEFA of being uncompromising and self-interested.

"With all interested parties failing to come to agreement, we are going to be faced with the worst case scenario," said Piat.

For the past two years the EC has attempted to bring European football into line with EU employment laws, which has clear guidelines concerning the free movement of workers, goods and services.

St Etienne president admits being tricked

LYON, France, Dec 22: Saint Etienne president Alain Bompard has claimed that he did not knowingly play a part in the false passport affair which has seen two of his players suspended until January 9, reports AFP.

Bompard also says he himself has been tricked in the affair surrounding the club's Brazilian forward Alex and Ukrainian goalkeeper Maxym Levitsky.

"The club have acted in good faith in this affair," Bompard told Lyon Figaro.

"Anybody can fall victim to a trick like this. We are not customs officials or police officers. So yes, I admit that in this affair we've been tricked. But let's stop trying to discredit the club."

After playing for the club last season as a Brazilian, Alex obtained a Portuguese passport on May 30, meaning he could be discounted as one of the teams permitted three non-European Union players.

However during a league match against Toulouse in November Alex appeared to have renounced his Portuguese nationality and was down on the teamsheet as Brazilian again.

Levitsky, who formerly played as a Ukrainian, was noted on the same teamsheet as Greek.

Toulouse management demanded that an inquiry be held into the authenticity of Alex and Levitsky's documents, a perhaps natural step in the wake of revelations that Strasbourg's former Argentinian forward Diego Garay played for the Alsatian side last season with a false Italian passport.

A court hearing into the affair was held on December 14 in Saint Etienne, where the club also issued a legal complaint in a bid to rid themselves of any blame in the affair.

On December 19 the judicial commission of the French league (LNF) decided to suspend both players in question as further information is sought during the winter break.



Pauleta (R), the Bordeaux forward, trying to go past a host of Nantes defenders during their French First Division fixture at Bordeaux on December 21. - AFP photo

French First Division

Nantes break Bordeaux jinx



PARIS, Dec 22:

Nantes regained top spot in the French league going in to the winter break Thursday by beating Bordeaux for the first time in 18 years at Parc Lescure, reports AFP.

The win was revenge for Nantes following their 5-0 hammering at home to Bordeaux early in the season with goals in either half from Vioel Moldovan and Eric Carriere sealing victory.

It was a valuable three points for the Canaries, who now have 39 points after 22 games, giving them a two-point lead on Lille, who jumped to second from fourth after their 1-0 home win over Corsican side Bastia.

The only goal coming from Lille midfielder Jean-Louis Vfolios in the 70th minute.

Meanwhile Strasbourg's worries continued when their match against fellow relegation strugglers Metz was abandoned on the 68th minute after a lineswoman was stunned by a firecracker thrown from the stands.

The official was shocked but not seriously injured after the firecracker exploded near her ear after being thrown three minutes after Daniel Ljuboja opened the scoring for the home side.

With all interested parties failing to come to agreement, we are going to be faced with the worst case scenario," said Piat.

For the past two years the EC has attempted to bring European football into line with EU employment laws, which has clear guidelines concerning the free movement of workers, goods and services.

St Etienne created several opportunities with Lyon's Christophe Delonot almost blundering an own goal following a move by Alex in the 14th minute, but Lyon goalkeeper Gregory Coupet did well to keep

it out.

"Les Verts" dominated the second half with Alex scoring the equaliser in the 71st from a shot diverted by Lyon's David Linares which fooled keeper Gregory Coupet.

St Etienne keeper Jerome Janot did well to keep out two headers from Anderson on 73 and 86 but it was Delonot who sealed victory for Lyon with a header from Violeau.

Rennes keeper Bernard Lema, who was saved by the crossbar following a strike from Sedan striker Cedric Monnet in the 15th minute, didn't have much cause for worry for the remainder of the match.

Midfielder Jocelyn Gourvenec opened the scoring for the home side from a long shot by Makhtar N'Diaye in the 33rd, with the second coming in the 61st when Stephane Gregoire passed to Severino Lucas.

And Rennes could have made the score 3-0 had midfielder Christophe Le Roux not missed a penalty. The win lifts the Brittany side three spots to seventh position seven points behind the leaders.

Lyon moved into fifth position after a difficult and undeserved 2-1 win at home over Rennes.

The home side got off to a flying start when Sonny Anderson opened the scoring after just four minutes from a right corner from Vilas Dhorasoo headed by Steve Marlet.

The visitors lead the first half against a clumsy and lifeless Bordeaux and gained a foothold in the game with a goal in the 26th minute from Moldo-

van.

The strike seemed to wake up a sleepy Bordeaux, but a series of attacks by Elie Baup's side were disorganized and lacked inspiration with Portuguese striker Pauleta missing a header which rebounded off the crossbar in the 38th minute.

Carriere gained the decisive shot for the visitors in the 90th minute.

Meanwhile Sedan faded during their trip to Brittany after getting off to an attacking start in the opening fifteen minutes.

Rennes keeper Bernard Lema, who was saved by the crossbar following a strike from Sedan striker Cedric Monnet in the 15th minute, didn't have much cause for worry for the remainder of the match.

Midfielder Jocelyn Gourvenec opened the scoring for the home side from a long shot by Makhtar N'Diaye in the 33rd, with the second coming in the 61st when Stephane Gregoire passed to Severino Lucas.

And Rennes could have made the score 3-0 had midfielder Christophe Le Roux not missed a penalty. The win lifts the Brittany side three spots to seventh position seven points behind the leaders.

Lyon moved into fifth position after a difficult and undeserved 2-1 win at home over Rennes.

The home side got off to a flying start when Sonny Anderson opened the scoring after just four minutes from a right corner from Vilas Dhorasoo headed by Steve Marlet.

The visitors lead the first half against a clumsy and lifeless Bordeaux and gained a foothold in the game with a goal in the 26th minute from Moldo-

van.

The strike seemed to wake up a sleepy Bordeaux, but a series of attacks by Elie Baup's side were disorganized and lacked inspiration with Portuguese striker Pauleta missing a header which rebounded off the crossbar in the 38th minute.

Carriere gained the decisive shot for the visitors in the 90th minute.

Meanwhile Sedan faded during their trip to Brittany after getting off to an attacking start in the opening fifteen minutes.

Rennes keeper Bernard Lema, who was saved by the crossbar following a strike from Sedan striker Cedric Monnet in the 15th minute, didn't have much cause for worry for the remainder of the match.

Midfielder Jocelyn Gourvenec opened the scoring for the home side from a long shot by Makhtar N'Diaye in the 33rd, with the second coming in the 61st when Stephane Gregoire passed to Severino Lucas.

And Rennes could have made the score 3-0 had midfielder Christophe Le Roux not missed a penalty. The win lifts the Brittany side three spots to seventh position seven points behind the leaders.

Lyon moved into fifth position after a difficult and undeserved 2-1 win at home over Rennes.

The home side got off to a flying start when Sonny Anderson opened the scoring after just four minutes from a right corner from Vilas Dhorasoo headed by Steve Marlet.

The visitors lead the first half against a clumsy and lifeless Bordeaux and gained a foothold in the game with a goal in the 26th minute from Moldo-

van.

The strike seemed to wake up a sleepy Bordeaux, but a series of attacks by Elie Baup's side were disorganized and lacked inspiration with Portuguese striker Pauleta missing a header which rebounded off the crossbar in the 38th minute.

Carriere gained the decisive shot for the visitors in the 90th minute.

Meanwhile Sedan faded during their trip to Brittany after getting off to an attacking start in the opening fifteen minutes.

Rennes keeper Bernard Lema, who was saved by the crossbar following a strike from Sedan striker Cedric Monnet in the 15th minute, didn't have much cause for worry for the remainder of the match.

Midfielder Jocelyn Gourvenec opened the scoring for the home side from a long shot by Makhtar N'Diaye in the 33rd, with the second coming in the 61st when Stephane Gregoire passed to Severino Lucas.

And Rennes could have made the score 3-0 had midfielder Christophe Le Roux not missed a penalty. The win lifts the Brittany side three spots to seventh position seven points behind the leaders.

Lyon moved into fifth position after a difficult and undeserved 2-1 win at home over Rennes.

The home side got off to a flying start when Sonny Anderson opened the scoring after just four minutes from a right corner from Vilas Dhorasoo headed by Steve Marlet.

The visitors lead the first half against a clumsy and lifeless Bordeaux and gained a foothold in the game with a goal in the 26th minute from Moldo-

van.

The strike seemed to wake up a sleepy Bordeaux, but a series of attacks by Elie Baup's side were disorganized and lacked inspiration with Portuguese striker Pauleta missing a header which rebounded off the crossbar in the 38th minute.

Carriere gained the decisive shot for the visitors in the 90th minute.

Meanwhile Sedan faded during their trip to Brittany after getting off to an attacking start in the opening fifteen minutes.

Rennes keeper Bernard Lema, who was saved by the crossbar following a strike from Sedan striker Cedric Monnet in the 15th minute, didn't have much cause for worry for the remainder of the match.

Midfielder Jocelyn Gourvenec opened the scoring for the home side from a long shot by Makhtar N'Diaye in the 33rd, with the second coming in the 61st when Stephane Gregoire passed to Severino Lucas.

And Rennes could have made the score 3-0 had midfielder Christophe Le Roux not missed a penalty. The win lifts the Brittany side three spots to seventh position seven points behind the leaders.

Lyon moved into fifth position after a difficult and undeserved 2-1 win at home over Rennes.

The home side got off to a flying start when Sonny Anderson opened the scoring after just four minutes from a right corner from Vilas Dhorasoo headed by Steve Marlet.

The visitors lead the first half against a clumsy and lifeless Bordeaux and gained a foothold in the game with a goal in the 26th minute from Moldo-

van.

The strike seemed to wake up a sleepy Bordeaux, but a series of attacks by Elie Baup's side were disorganized and lacked inspiration with Portuguese striker Pauleta missing a header which rebounded off the crossbar in the 38th minute.

Carriere gained the decisive shot for the visitors in the 90th minute.

Meanwhile Sedan faded during their trip to Brittany after getting off to an attacking start in the opening fifteen minutes.

Rennes keeper Bernard Lema, who was saved by the crossbar following a strike from Sedan striker Cedric Monnet in the 15th minute, didn't have much cause for worry for the remainder of the match.

Midfielder Jocelyn Gourvenec opened the scoring for the home side from a long shot by Makhtar N'Diaye in the 33rd, with the second coming in the 61st when Stephane Gregoire passed to Severino Lucas.

And Rennes could have made the score 3-0 had midfielder Christophe Le Roux not missed a penalty. The win lifts the Brittany side three spots to seventh position seven points behind the leaders.

Lyon moved into fifth position after a difficult and undeserved 2-1 win at home over Rennes.

The home side got off to a flying start when Sonny Anderson opened the scoring after just four minutes from a right corner from Vilas Dhorasoo headed by Steve Marlet.

The visitors lead the first half against a clumsy and lifeless Bordeaux and gained a foothold in the game with a goal in the 26th minute from Moldo-

van.

The strike seemed to wake up a sleepy Bordeaux, but a series of attacks by Elie Baup's side were disorganized and lacked inspiration with Portuguese striker Pauleta missing a header which rebounded off the crossbar in the 38th minute.

Carriere gained the decisive shot for the visitors in the 90th minute.

Meanwhile Sedan faded during their trip to Brittany after getting off to an attacking start in the opening fifteen minutes.

Rennes keeper Bernard Lema, who was saved by the crossbar following a strike from Sedan striker Cedric Monnet in the 15th minute, didn't have much cause for worry for the remainder of the match.

Midfielder Jocelyn Gourvenec opened the scoring for the home side from a long shot by Makhtar N'Diaye in the 33rd, with the second coming in the 61st when Stephane Gregoire passed to Severino Lucas.

And Rennes could have made the score 3-0 had midfielder Christophe Le Roux not missed a penalty. The win lifts the Brittany side three spots to seventh position seven points behind the leaders.

Lyon moved into fifth position after a difficult and undeserved 2-1 win at home over Rennes.

The home side got off to a flying start when Sonny Anderson opened the scoring after just four minutes from a right corner from Vilas Dhorasoo headed by Steve Marlet.

The visitors lead the first half against a clumsy and lifeless Bordeaux and gained a foothold in the game with a goal in the 26th minute from Moldo-

van.

The strike seemed to wake up a sleepy Bordeaux, but a series of attacks by Elie Baup's side were disorganized and lacked inspiration with Portuguese striker Pauleta missing a header which rebounded off the crossbar in the 38th minute.

Carriere gained the decisive shot for the visitors in the 90th minute.

Meanwhile Sedan faded during their trip to Brittany after getting off to an attacking start in the opening fifteen minutes.</