

Figo Portugal's best of 2000

LISBON, Jan 2: Portuguese Premier League soccer coaches elected Luis Figo as player of the year...



A shell-shocked West Ham defender Stuart Pearce (C) contemplates his own goal against Manchester United in the Premiership game on January 1.

Diego to help out Bilardo

BUENOS AIRES, Jan 2: Former Argentine World Cup winner Diego Maradona is to help out former national coach Carlos Bilardo...

Toshack ready to sign for Sociedad

MADRID, Jan 2: Saint Etienne's Welsh coach John Toshack is set to sign on the dotted line for a third spell in charge of Spanish First Division tailenders Real Sociedad...

Gambling probe into Hong Kong police

HONG KONG, Jan 2 (Reuters/Internet): Hong Kong's top policeman said an investigation had been ordered into an illegal soccer gambling ring...

Premiership United simply irresistible



LONDON, Jan 2: Manchester United beat West Ham 3-1 in the English Premiership on Monday to start the New Year 11 points ahead of the field...

level on points with second-placed Arsenal, who lost 1-0 at Charlton. Liverpool beat a battling Southampton 2-1 at Anfield to move into fifth...

not over but in football you have to be realistic. Liverpool beat a battling Southampton 2-1 at Anfield to move into fifth and in touch with the leading pack...

STANDINGS

Table with 5 columns: Team, P, W, D, L, GF, GA, Pts. Lists Premier League standings including Manchester United, Arsenal, Sunderland, Ipswich, Liverpool, Leicester, Newcastle, Charlton, Chelsea, West Ham, Aston Villa, Southampton, Leeds, Tottenham, Derby, Everton, Coventry, Middlesbrough, Manchester City, Bradford.

Wenger gives up hope



LONDON, Jan 2 (Reuters/Internet): Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger lamented his side's poor away form and hinted at a deeper malaise within the Highbury camp after watching his players sliether to their fifth away defeat of the season on Monday.

"I feel that away from home we don't perform well enough to say that we will finish second or third or even sixth," Wenger said. "If you don't take points away from home you are not able to play at the top level and we have to address the problem. We are not scoring enough goals away from home."

roomed at the bottom of the Third Division, in the FA Cup third round on Saturday. Arsenal were missing a host of top players on Monday, including forwards Thierry Henry, Dennis Bergkamp and Sylvain Wiltord...

Babangida relishing the prospect

LAGOS, Jan 2: Nigeria's Tijani Babangida has said he is thrilled to play alongside such stars like Zinedine Zidane and Luis Figo in a FIFA exhibition match billed for Tokyo, Wednesday, reports AFP.

"This is a very big honour for me and that's why I've insisted that my wife, Rabah, comes along to see how I'll fare against some of the finest players in the world."

Reid lobbies for Phillips

LONDON, Jan 2: Sunderland thrashed Ipswich 4-1 to move level on points with second-placed Arsenal in the Premiership on Monday, celebrating the New Year in style as the injury-plagued Gunners lost 1-0 at Charlton, reports AFP.

"I've always said we can get out of trouble and I have no reason to change my mind." "We showed a lot of good organisation today and after losing on Boxing Day (to Sunderland) a bit of character as well."

Nigeria keen on friendly France

LAGOS, Jan 2: Nigeria are interested in playing a friendly with world champions France in October, an official of the Nigeria Football Association (NFA) said here Tuesday, reports AFP.

"We have received a proposal from the French Football Federation for a friendly match in October in France. We would have loved to play against the world champions much earlier but we are now seriously working towards honouing their own proposal for a date in October," top NFA official Bolaji Ojo-Oba told AFP.



German legend Lothar Matthaeus (R) shakes hands with former Italian national team boss Arrigo Sacchi during a press conference in Tokyo yesterday.

Century of the 'Lions'



CAIRO, Jan 2: Cameroon have been named African national team of the century by the African Football Confederation (CAF), reports AFP.

Egypt 14 years ago. Their World Cup exploits, notably a quarter-finals place at the 1990 finals in Italy, earned another 24 points for a nation whose most famous footballer is Roger Milla.

Points were awarded for results in the African Nations Cup and World Cup, but not the Olympics due to constant changes in the rules governing player eligibility. Cameroon collected 21.5 points for Nations Cup achievements, including victories in 1984, 1988 and 2000 and second place behind hosts



Star Argentina playmaker Ariel Ortega waves to the media-men on arrival at a press conference in Tokyo yesterday.

Scots to recall 1971



GLASGOW, Jan 2: A special memorial service will Tuesday be held as a mark of respect for the 66 football fans killed in one of Britain's worst sporting tragedies on January 2, 1971 when the victims were crushed following a Rangers-G Celtic game at Ibrox Park, reports AFP.

The tragedy happened just minutes before the end of the game as Rangers supporters began to leave their home ground, many hoping to avoid the rush caused by the 80,000 capacity stadium emptying in just 20 minutes.

Experts cast doubt on the idea and said it was more likely to have been caused by someone tripping on the steep stairway. The victims ranged in age from eight to 43. In one small town, Markinch, five teenagers from the same street died.

Rio fiasco Victim's father threatened!



RIO DE JANEIRO, Jan 2: The father of five-year-old Nicole Chagas, one of around 100 people injured in Saturday's clash, said Monday he had been warned not to pin the blame on the Vasco da Gama club, reports AFP.

The disaster united both bitter Glasgow rivals in grief. Rangers captain of the time, John Greig, said recently, "Not a day goes past when I do not think of the Ibrox disaster." There will be a minute's silence in memory of the fans at

way and the results are expected within three weeks. Meanwhile, Vasco's veteran striker Romario said he was dedicating his election at the weekend as the best player on the American continent to the victims. "I am honoured by this prize, especially as it was awarded by a foreign (Uruguayan) paper and I would like to dedicate it to Vasco fans, above all to those involved in Saturday's accident." Romario, 34 and said to be in line for a move to Inter Milan, just held off Argentine Juan Roman Riquelme to win the vote. "Struggling with a leg strain, Romario is to miss this week's trip to Japan to play for a world selection against a joint Japanese-Korean eleven.



THE PICTURE SAYS IT ALL: A gloomy Arsene Wenger, the Arsenal coach, ponders what went wrong while watching his side lose against Charlton Athletic at Highbury in the English Premiership on January 1.