# SPORT

#### Hamad named Iraqi coach

AFP, Baghdad

Iraq's Yugoslav coach Milan Zivadinovic has been sacked and replaced by Iraqi Adnan Hamad, sports newspaper al-Baath al-Riyadhi reported on Monday.

Iraqi FA assistant secretary Ahmed Abbas Ibrahim was quoted as saying that Zivadinovic had his contract terminated because he travelled to his own country from a squad training camp in Tunisia without informing the governing body.

Modest recent performances by the national team were also among the reasons for his dismissal, Ibrahim added.

Hamad, 46. hailed as the top coach in the Gulf state, takes over the national team for the third

He led club side Al Zawra to the Iraqi league title and the final of last year's Asian Cup Winners' Cup before guiding Iraq's under-19 team to the Asian youth title in November.

Hamad, in charge until Zivadinovic's arrival last August, took Iraq to the semifinals of the West Asian championships in

Jordan in June. But he was surprisingly replaced by Zivadinovic just eight weeks before the Asian Cup in Lebanon.

The move was unpopular with the Iraqi players and they were eliminated from the tournament in the quarter-finals, losing 4-1 to eventual winners Japan.

#### Roma to copy MU-Yankees linkup

AFP, Rome

Italian Serie A leaders AS Roma hope to emulate English giants Manchester United by forging a business partnership with a leading American sports outfit, Roma chirman Franco Sensi told Gazzetto dello Sport Tuesday.

Last week United signed ground-breaking partnership with baseball giants New York Yankees and Sensi is determined that Roma should flow suit by linking up with a leading Amrican sporting name.

"Our model is Manchester United," said Sens. "I am looking to protect at least some of the to follow this path: Los Angeles or Philadelphia, I am working to establish an association as soon as possible.

Baseball, basketball or American Football - which will be the choice for this marriage I do not yet know," said Sensi whose team I right to walk out on their contracts lead the Serie A standings by six points after 18 matches in the 34game season.

But Sensi believes Roma have an advantage over United in that the city of Manchester's global fame is almost entirely due to the football club.

In contrast Rome - the Eternal City - remains one of the most visited cities on the planet with tourist attractions like the Colosseum, the Circus Maximus and the Vatican City giving the city a huge world profile.

"They are famous, they have a name that is famous all over the world but their name Manchester is a name that you can not associate with other things.

"Imagine therefore what name like Roma could do. Especially with the Jubilee just finished." (The Roman Catholic Church's Jubilee Year to celebrate the Millennium attracted more than 25 million pilgrims to the Italian capital).

#### Italian govt gets involved

AFP, Rome

Italy's government vowed to investigate all applications for passports involving foreign footballers that have been made in the past three years here Friday.

In a new twist to the fake passport scandal that has hit European football, Italy's foreign ministry. said it would scrutinise all demands made for passports since

"Every case will be meticulously examined," foreign ministry under-secretary Franco Danieli said. He did not say how many passports had been asked for

during the three-year period. A meeting to hammer out how the probe will be carried out will

be held on Monday he said. Meanwhile, a report from Madrid on Friday said the Italian foreign ministry had provided Spanish authorities with a list of 24

players whose credentials need to be verified. The list included Argentina striker Martin Palermo, who moved to Villareal from Boca

Juniors last month, El Mundo daily reported on its website. Neither Palermo, who carries will call up the best players. an Italian passport, nor his club wanted to comment on the latest developments Friday, the paper

reported.

Champions' League preview

# Banking on Barthez

Football

AFP, Landon

Extrovert goalkeeper Fabien Barthez is expected return to Alex Ferguson's starting line-up for Manchester United's Champions League clash away to Spanish side Valencia Wednesday.

World Cup and Euro 2000 winner Barthez sat out Saturday's 1-1 English Premiership draw at Chelsea due to a hamstring scare but the Frenchman is now almost certain to feature in United's Group A clash.

Barthez's return would prove a huge boost to the reigning English champions who, according to United defender Wes Brown, can win the trophy and repeat their success of 1999.

"As long as we perform then on our day we're capable of beating anvone," sald Brown.

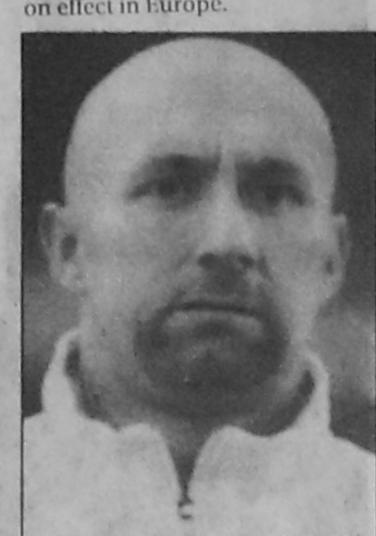
"We definitely feel we can win and we've been playing well in it (the Champions League) so far. "I don't see any reason why we can't go on and win it," he said

Monday. "Now we've just got to keep on going after our good start and different game when you play hopefully get a win out in Valen- against the foreign teams," he day.

United are well placed to reach the quarter-finals after winning their opening two Group A games. Ferguson's side will not be

fellow European heavyweights Bayern Munich and AC Milan also dig in their heels for a place in the

However Brown is hoping that, Mestalla stadium. with a 13-point lead at the top of domestic form can have a knockon effect in Europe.



**FABIEN BARTHEZ** 

"Obviously it's a completely

learn something that helps to- cause of recent results, but we wards next time."

After leaking eight goals in served to win.

alone as holders Real Madrid and their first seven Champions League games, United kept a clean sheet in their last match against Sturm Graz and that is a trend Brown aims to continue in the

"In every game we set out on the English Premiership, United's we always say clean sheet, clean sheet," he said.

"From my point of view that's as important as scoring goals. "And as long as we can keep

keeping clean sheets, and the for

wards score goals, then we will do well." United kept a clean sheet in the Mestalla last season when they earned a goalless draw, a result which Valencia defender Miguel

Angel Angulo has now claimed was fixed. Angulo's allegations have been dismissed by both clubs and

and after leading the Primera Liga | with clubs through an agent. for over two months, they have slipped to fourth - nine points | work illegally to make ends meet. behind leaders Real.

They gained a morale-boosting 3-0 win over Numancia on Satur-

Coach Hector Cuper said: "It "In any game in Europe you hasn't been an easy period beworked well and thoroughly de-

## Wenger weighing options

Football

AFP, London

Arsene Wenger could start mean ingful discussions to extend his Arsenal contract by the end of the week - if there is a favourable outcome to the ongoing talks on the reform of the European transfer

Frenchman Wenger repeated Monday his vow to walk out on club management if soccer's governing bodies fail to agree with European Union (EU) law-makers basic elements of the current transfer system.

Otherwise, Wenger could realistically submit his 14 months quitting notice.

"It would be pointless for me to continue if players are given the with just three months notice," said Wenger whose Arsenal side are away to French club Lyon in the Champions League on Tues-

"I could not do my job under those circumstances and I believe many managers will feel the same about their own jobs.

"How can you plan to build a team when you know suddenly somebody might just leave?" Wenger's fear is that, unless

FIFA, UEFA and the players' unions (FIFPro) can come up with a compromise formula, EU authorities will have no option but to declare the practice of clubs putting prices on contracted players

The European Union argues that the current transfer system contravenes European law on the free movement of workers, and is

urging all lootball parties to come become clear. up with a compromise solution.

place this week with an announcement expected on Friday, and Wenger said: "We will see what comes out, but if it is good news for football then that would of course encourage me to commit myself further to Arsenal.

"There have already been preliminary negotiations but the board knows I won't commit myself until the new transfer rules

"But I have never had a prob-Crucial meetings are taking lem before in agreeing my contract with the club. Talks have always been very simple and very short and I would expect that to be the case again - on my side at

Wenger has already promised to fulfil his current deal which lasts until June 2002, but the Arsenal board are desperate to tie down the Frenchman for at least two more years.



English side Arsenal's manager Arsene Wenger smiles while listening to query by a reporter during a press conference in Lyon on February 12. Arsenal meet French team Lyon in a UEFA Champions' League match

### Troussier wants only the best

Football

REUTERS, Hong Kong

Japan coach Philippe Troussier says he will select the country's best players for a prestige friendly against France next month even if it means invoking FIFA's ruling on the release of players.

Former J-League champions quarter-finals of the Asian Club Bluewings of Korea and Chinese Championship in Indonesia at the end of March which conflicts with Japan's March 24 friendly against the world champions in the Stade

Frenchman Troussier is reluctant to part with any of his squad and says he will force Jubilo to comply if necessary.

"We have a very important appointment in France," he was quoted as saying on the footballasia.com website.

"My mission is to show the best of Japanese football so I will be taking the best players. I am coach of the national team and my schedule was agreed with the JFA (Japan Football Association).

"I will call the best players for Japan. The problems of the clubs are not my problem. The JFA pay me to be the national coach, they tell me to do my job, to complete my mission and because of that I

"If we include some Jubilo Oliver Bierhoff. players then the same rules will apply. It's the same for everybody, ago and will train with Serse It will only be different if the JFA Cosmi's outfit from Tuesday.

cannot confirm the match against France. Everybody is in the same position. It's not a problem for me and it will be the same for every

Jubilo won the Asian Club Championship in 1999 before going on to lift the Asian Super Cup which has qualified them for this year's FIFA World Club

Championship. They are scheduled to face Inside Shandong Luneng and could do so without as many as six first-

Ota gets

AFP, Perugia

Italian Serie A club Perugia have taken 21-year-old Japanese striker Keisute Ota on trial, ANSA news agency reported Monday.

Ota, who plays for Fukuoka University, will train for two weeks for the side that propelled his illustrious compatriot Hidetoshi Nakata to stardom before selling him to AS Roma.

Ora recently played in the Toulon under-21 tournament in France and has said his role model is AC Milan's German forward

He arrived in Perugia two days

Almost certain to be in Trous-

sier's squad are Naohiro Takahara, Daisuke Oku, Toshihiro Hattori and Asian Cup MVP Hiroshi Nanami. Other possible squad members

shi Nakayama, the scorer of the fastest hattrick in international football. "If Shun-ichiro Okano (JFA

include Toshiya Fujita and Masa-

Jubilo Iwata are due to play in the donesia's PSM Makassar, Suwon president) says to me that the best idea is to let the players go then that's another situation," said Troussier, hinting at a possible compromise. "But everybody has problems.

Shimizu have games arranged at the time. So do Verdy (Kawasaki). But it's the same all over the world. The Brazilians and Argentineans don't always play in the (ULFA) Champions League. It's the same problem and that is the idea of harmonising the interna-

"The FIFA rules are clear regarding international games. The clubs have to release the players for the national team. If I call (AS Roma midfielder Hidetoshi) Nakata and he has a UEFA Cup game, I can still call him because the life also played in the last Roma FIFA rules say I can.

"The problem is not between Troussier and Jubilo. The problem | coached Reggiana and Parma, is between the IFA and the clubs. The calendar has been agreed Zehras, saying: "I want to stay with between me and the JFA and when Juve. If Juve want me, we will find the JFA agreed they agreed with everything in the national calen-

#### Rotten Brazilian football

AFP, Rio de Janeiro

Brazilian football is teeming with organised corruption with players and officials determined to make money at whatever cost, the country's parliament commission CPI has found in recent weeks.

The inquiry found a whole

range of misdemeanours from the

falsification of passports for young players exported to Europe to widespread tax evasion. CPI president Aldo Ribelo de scribed Brazilian football as filled with unscrupulous characters

determined to earn money at any Ribelo, who went with colleagues to Portugal in November, said they had already found more than a dozen Brazilian players in Europe with false papers and ex-

pected to find many more.

Several young footballers told European Tootball's governing the CPI they were taken to Europe, body UEFA and will probably only | mainly Belgium, with passports serve to spur United on even having a false date of birth. The players, who arrive in Europe Valencia have stumbled lately | without contracts, then negotiate

Many of the players have to

#### Beckham's father speaks

AFP, London

The father of Manchester United and England star David Beckhain has hit out at rumours his son is holding the club to a multi-million dollar ransom, it was reported Tuesday.

Ted Beckham said stories the England midfielder was demanding a massive new pay deal from the club were "ridiculous."

"David is going nowhere. He loves Manchester United very much," the player's father was quoted as saying by the Daily Mail

"Perhaps at a later stage of his career he might consider playing abroad. Most English players must wonder what it is like to play in Italy or Spain. "But David's attitude, when 1

last spoke to him about his future, was: 'Where do you go when you leave a club like United?' the best and in David's eyes

United are the best, I also know from talking to him that the other United players feel the same way. Stories stating Beckham would demand 30 million pounds (43.6 million dollars) to stay at United

were wide of the mark, the player' father told the paper. "Of course he will get round to discussing a new contract in due course because he wants to stay,

he said. "I have no doubt he will be looking for parity with the other top earners in the team. That is only right and proper. But these stories that he will be demanding a ridiculous wage are exactly that ridiculous."

#### Ancelotti deal stalls

AFP, Turin

Juventus coach Carlo Ancelotti demanding a better financial deal before signing an extension to his contract with the Turin giants, Corriere delo Sport reported Tuesday

In an interview Ancelotti said he wanted more cash to be put on the table before he agrees to stay for another season with the title challengers.

"I think I have made a reasonable and reasoned request," said Ancelotti who made it clear he did not ask to be put on the same level as AS Roma coach Fabio Capello. Capello was last week was

given a record-breaking pay deal by the league leaders. "Capello has won so many

nothing else. As far as transfer

policy is concerned there is a total

insisted he wanted to stay with the

things. He is operating in a different market compared to me who has so far won nothing." But Ancelotti, 42 in June, insisted money was still a problem. When asked what the sticking point was he said: "Money and

understanding." The latest whisper in the rumour-crazy world of Italian soccer is that AC Milan are targeting Ancelotti if - as seems increasingly likely - coach Alberto Zaccheroni 11 points clear in the title race and leaves the San Siro outfit in the to the final of the Scottish League

As a player Ancelotti was a over Rangers. member of the Milan team that became the top side on the planet in the late 1980s and early 1990s. side to win the Scudetto in 1982-3. But Ancelotti, who has also l

an understanding even if our positions are still a long way apart the former flying winger after

### Injury-hit Milan Gattuso, suffering from a groin drafted into the Milan defence.

Football

AFP, Paris

AC Milan coach Alberto Zaccheroni is up to his neck in injury problems as he plans ahead for the San Siro clash against Paris Saint Germain on Wednesday.

Champions League preview

Midfielders Massimo Ambrosini, Gennaro Gattuso, Fernando Redondo and possibly Demetrio Albertini will miss the game.

Argentinian Redondo is still six weeks away from recovery from his injured cruciate ligament in the right knee while Ambrosini will be out for six months with a similar injury to his left knee.

strain, is also out of contention although Albertini could still play despite inflammation to his right lifth in the league, some 15 points

with his defence.

Also ruled out is Argentinian defender Jose Antonio Chamot who has problems with his left leg while Zaccheroni will be waiting anxiously for news of skipper Paolo Maldini who is recovering

from muscle fatigue. out for two months and with Georgian Kakha Kaladze, recently signed from Ukraine's Dynamo Kiev, not eligible Luigi Sala will be

Milan were eliminated last week from the Italian Cup and are behind leaders AS Roma so the

Zaccheroni also has problems Champions League represents

Galatasaray, second in group B and also on four points with leaders Milan, need to pick themselves up after losing their Turkish Cup clash against Istanbul neighbours Fenerbahce on penalties last week They also have many injury

Alessandro Costacurta will be problems for their home match

portivo La Coruna. Midfielders Okan Buruk, Gheorghe Hagi, Gheorghe Popescu and Emre Belozoglu are doubtful as well as defender Hakan Unsal. Emre and Hakan picked up their problems in the Fenerbahce game.

against Spanish champions De-

their last real chance of silverware.

Thankfully for the UEFA Cup winners. Brazilian Jardel, top scorer in Turkey with 19 goals, has no such problems and is expected to start the match.

Deportivo coach Javier Irureta has a selection dilemma between back-to-form Dutch centre forward Roy Makaay and Diego Tristan, who scored three goals against Real Sociedad on Saturday.

Irureta meawhile added Milan were favourites for the group and that his side needed to beat Galatasaray twice to have a chance of going through. Austria's Sturm Graz host

Panathinaikos of Greece in a match containing the lesser lights of group A. Graz, one of the surprise qualifiers from the first round, have no points from their first two games. Graz coach lvic () in has an

administrative problem regarding goalkeeper selection. If Poland's Kazimierz Sidorczuk is granted PHOTO AFP Austrian nationality on Tuesday, he is expected to play. Josef Paris Saint Germain coach Luis Fernandez (L) talking to his star striker Shicklgruber stands by in case the civil servants fail to deliver.

#### **UEFA Cup**

Nicolas Anelka during a training session on February 12.

# as: 'Where do you go when you ave a club like United?' "You want to be playing with the best, I also know the best that the best is the best is the best that the best is the be

Football

AFP, London Liverpool manager Gerard Houl lier is resigned to facing UEFA Cup opponents Roma without the services of influential forward Steven Gerrard from among a growing list of injuries ahead of

Thursday night's tie in the Italian Gerrard, 20, is still struggling with the groin injury sustained in the 1-1 English Premiership draw at Sunderland on Saturday, and fellow midfielder Igor Biscan will

be unavailable too. "Steven is definitely out, and Igor Biscan is cup-tied after playing for Dinamo Zagreb in Europe

earlier this season," said Houllier. The loss of Gerrard is a big blow, but in-form Vladimir Smicer - ruled out of the Sunderland game with a twisted ankle - may be fit for the clash with the Serie A leaders. Smicer retains happy memo-

UEFA Cup quarter-final tie in 1995-96. However Smicer also warned of

the threat from a Roma side riding

ries from playing against Roma

when he was in the Sparta Prague

side that beat the Italians in a

on the crest of a wave of success Gabriel Batistuta

"We won 2-0 in Prague, and it was 3-1 after extra time over there. But I've seen Roma on television recently when they played Milan and Parma, and they are a better

side now," said Smicer. "They are top of Serie A, and everybody knows the Italian league is the strongest in the world. It's going to be a very hard game over there, against quality players like (Gabriel) Batistuta, but it's a nice challenge," he told the



**GERARD HOULLIER** 

Emile Heskey is also doubtful, thanks to in-form Argentine striker meanwhile, with an ankle problem - but Jamie Carragher could return after injury ruled him out at the

Stadium of Light.

Danny Murphy and Nick Barmby are also hoping to return, while Sami Hypia - who picked up a knee injury at Sunderland - is expected to have recovered in time for Thursday's first leg in the Olympic Stadium.

Houllier said: "We've had 13

players in the treatment room, but we hope some of them will be okay by Thursday." Whoever makes the line-up, Smicer is looking forward to the challenge. He said: "For players,

it's good to test yourself against the big teams. "When you play those games vou can become a bigger player. Against West Ham or Crystal Palace maybe you don't always need to raise your game, and your per-

"But against Roma you can go on to another level and improve. "We should be motivated by it, not worried. I'm not scared of it. "In the 18 months I've been at Liverpool, we have always played

us, it's a chance to show every-

body that we are a good side."

well against the biggest teams. For

formance can suffer.

## O'Neill's has Midas touch

Football

dary Jock Stein.

AFP, Glasgow Celtic manager Martin O'Neill may only have begun his spell at the Parkhead club but legend Jimmy Johnstone believes the canny Irishman is already the best Celtic manager since the legen-

to European Cup glory in 1967 and many well-respected managers since - including Kenny Dalglish have found the task of following in his footsteps too daunting. But since taking charge in the summer O'Neill has taken Celtic

Stein took the Glasgow giants

Cup with two wins in five days Johnstone, part of Stein's famous Lisbon Lions side which became the first British team to win the European Cup in 1967, feels O'Neill has the same midas touch which allowed Stein to lead 11 Glasgow-based players to vic-

dous job since taking over," said rivals by a distant 12 points. Celtic's 1-0 win over the arch city with Kilmarnock and a Scottish

got the passion back in the team.

"I love what he's doing at the

club and you can see just how got the championship now and I passionate he is and what a man-think everybody knows that now. ager he is when you watch the "He's done a fantastic job with percent.

will carry on doing so. "He's done the same as Dick Advocaat did when he went to Rangers, but now it's Celtic's turn and the passion is there.

"Dick Advocaat has done a great job at Rangers, but now people are seeing the same thing happening at Celtic. "Martin O'Neill's definitely got

the magic and that's a great thing for the football club." Johnstone not only feels that Celtic will win the title - he can see them ending the season with the

Treble for the first time since his own playing days in 1969. Alan Thompson's goal at Park tory over the mighty Inter Milan in head Sunday completed a quickfire double for Celtic over Rangers, "I think he's done a tremen- who now trail their bitter Glasgow

And, with a League Cup final

Cup fourth round clash with either "I genuinely believe he's the St Johnstone or Dunfermline still best since Jock Stein because he's to come. "Jinky" believes the domestic clean-sweep is on. Johnstone added: "Celtic have

> "Martin O'Neill won't admit it. but I think they've done it 100 "The squad is great and although the team still has a long

way to go they're on the right track and can live up to the side lock Stein had. "Martin's brought in some

bring the right people to the club. "It's now possible to go all the way to the Treble. The league looks over, the League Cup is well within their reach and if they keep going the way they are the Scottish Cup is also available.

### Khagrachhari

Khagrachhari

yan Sangsad moved into the final of the Senior Division Football League beating Bhailtonchhara 2-

#### the players he inherited and he's done great things for the club and

great players and he'll continue to

tootball OUR CORRESPONDENT,

Kangchairipara Marma Jubo kal-

0 at the local stadium yesterday.