## Rio showdown

Football

**INTERNET,** Leeds

Rio Ferdinand arrived for training with Leeds United on Thursday ahead of showdown talks with Flland Road chairman Peter Ridsdale.

He arrived at the club's Thorp Arch training facility for what could be the last time as Manchester United prepare to make an improved offer for the England

The Old Trafford club are understood to be awaiting the outcome of Ridsdale's meeting with Ferdinand. And if Leeds are forced to reluctantly accept Ferdinand's transfer request, they will open negotiations

with their Premiership rivals. Ridsdale blocked Ferdinand's attempt to leave the club by rejecting the player's transfer request on

And Leeds have made it clear to Manchester United that they will have to offer at least £30m to prise Ferdinand away from Elland Road. Ridsdale said: "Rio has asked for

a transfer, we have answered the question frankly and expect him to honour his contract." But Ridsdale admitted he may be forced to sell Ferdinand if

Manchester United are prepared to smash the British record transfer fee for the World Cup star. "We received an offer some weeks ago but that was rejected out

of hand as we felt it to be derisory," he revealed. "But we are a public company, I

**AFC Chief hints** 

president Mohamed Bin-Hammam

of Qatar strongly confirmed today

towards this specific target, and we

fully hope it will be reached in 2004

during FIFA's executive committee

congress, unless Mr. Blatter wants

handed a fifth ticket for Asia basing

on what the continent has achieved

in the recent World Cup finals,"

Korea have achieved at the techni-

cal and organizational levels are

speaking volumes in this regard. It is

big time Asia must be rewarded in

whelming reshuffling campaign

currently undergone within FIFA,

stating that "this is a massive international organization which was

able to make \$500 million in profits four years back in France, compared to \$4.4 billion in the latest edition of the World Cup. Only the

absence of some organizational

aspects prevented FIFA from

likely be failing to manage these

amounts of revenues, in addition to

his administration duties. Thus,

FIFA is to be divided into many

departments to better tackle the

financial issues in future time, this is

what exactly Mr. Blatter has pledged

Seaman for

another year

England's World Cup goalkeeper

David Seaman has signed a new

one-year contract with English

Arsenal manager Arsene

Wenger announced after a 6-1

friendly victory at minor league club

Stevenage Borough late on

Wednesday that Seaman had

signed the contract, but there was

never any doubt that he would sign,"

Arsenal at this stage of his career

and I am sure he will come back

stronger and more determined like

pointment for him, but he is deter-

mined to come back and keep going

and I hope he carries on with

premier league and FA Cup double.

million pounds in May 1990.

Seaman, who has won 73 inter-

The World Cup was a big disap-

he has always been.

England.

"I never imagined David leaving

Wenger told the Sun newspaper.

"Saying this, Mr. Blatter would

increasing its profits

all of us last month."

REUTERS, London

champions Arsenal.

Bin-Hammam tackled the

the most appropriate way."

added Bin-Hammam

"We are voicing the claim to be

"What both Japan and South

to table the issue in an earlier date.

at fifth

**INTERNET**, Doha

Leeds United star defender Rio Ferdinand arrives for training in his blue Ferrari yesterday.

am merely an employee and I have a duty to shareholders to maximise the value of our assets.

"If we receive any reasonable offers for any of our players, including Rio, we will consider it and debate it but that is not the position at the moment.

"He has asked to be put on the transfer list at a time when there has not been an acceptable offer and that has been rejected.

Leeds have also rejected claims that Ferdinand's current contract would allow him to leave Elland Road for a minimum £25m in 12 months

There is a clause in his contract which relates to a minimum fee of £25m, but Ferdinand would only be allowed to join an English club if he had specific permission from Elland Road.

Meanwhile, Manchester United boss Sir Alex Ferguson increased the pressure on Leeds when he claimed he would not wait much longer to conclude a deal.

"Leeds are saying a lot of things which we have to take on board

Ferguson told his club's television station, MUTV.

"We're running out of time so we have to do something quickly. Maybe we will have to move on

somewhere.' Ferdinand signed a six-year deal when he joined Leeds for £18m from West Ham in November 2000, a record fee for a transfer between

Since then, the 23-year-old he has made 73 appearances for Leeds, scoring three goals.

British clubs.

# Fergie losing patience

Football Asian Football Confederation

AFP, London

"Asia is heading towards claiming a Manchester United boss Alex fifth place for the World Cup finals in Ferguson admitted Wednesday he four-year time in Germany. would not wait much longer to Talking to local press here in conclude a transfer deal for Doha, the newly-elected AFC chief defender Rio Ferdinand. indicated "we are all working

England centre-back Ferdinand formally handed in a transfer request to United's English Premiership rivals Leeds earlier Wednesday which was rejected by the Elland Road club.

Leeds are reported to have already turned down a United bid of at least 20 million pounds (30 million dollars) for Ferdinand, 23, who still has four years remaining of a sixyear contract.

But Leeds chairman Peter Ridsdale admitted that, as the club is now a publicly limited company, the board would be duty bound to consider future higher bids for one of their greatest assets.

Meanwhile United boss Ferguson told his club's television station MUTV Wednesday: "It's ongoing. Nothing seems to be

"Leeds are saying a lot of things which we have to take on board. "We're running out of time so we

have to do something quickly. Maybe we will have to move on somewhere.' Other defenders on Ferguson's

**ALEX FERGUSON** target list are rumoured to include Alessandro Nesta. Roberto Avala

United have not been in contact with Leeds since Ridsdale rejected

Reds chief executive Peter Kenyon's offer some weeks ago.

Earlier Wednesday an anguished Ferdinand said: "I have been torn apart over the past three days while I tried to make up my

"Leeds took a huge risk on me when they bought me and I will always appreciate that," added Ferdinand, signed for 18 million pounds - a world record fee for a defender - from West Ham in November 2000.

"I love Leeds and I always wil do," he also told Sky Sports. However, Ridsdale flatly rejected

the World Cup star's request. "I can confirm we have received a transfer request from Rio

Ferdinand," said Ridsdale "We have rejected it and we expect Rio to honour the four years remaining on his contract.

"No bid worthy of consideration has been received by the club " However, Ferguson is believed

to have prepared a 35 million ounds transfer offer in a bid Ferdinand to Old Trafford.

# Serie A gets tough

Football

AFP, Rome

The Italian First Division has clamped down on Serie A clubs signing non-European stars like Brazil's Ronaldo or Hidetoshi Nakata of Japan, it emerged here on Italian Football Federation

(FIGC) president Franco Carraro announced that from August 31 clubs would no longer be able to call on the services of players from outside Europe's borders - for the upcoming season at least.

"We anticipated the new law on immigration," Carraro explained. "If we hadn't acted there would

have been 500 (overseas players) more. This is a good change for Italian football." The new measures also include

coaches from outside the EU and affects both Serie A and Serie B and it marks a radical change in policy as clubs had previously been allowed to recruit as many non-European Union players as they wished.

EU players on their books. This is the right measure for football. I don't pretend that it is



shared by everyone, but I have been

**FABIO CAPELLO** 

empowered to defend it tooth and nail. If we are to remain credible, then it is the way to go," added Carraro who admitted that the decision was a drastic measure.

The tough new stance was taken on the second day of the Italian football federation's council meeting

warm reception by leading figures inside the Italian game "I would have preferred a limited number." said Roma coach Fabio

Capello. "A foreign player arrives, another one comes in. If a well-known player from outside Europe wanted to play here, it would be beautiful to see him. But this new measure means that this would be impossible."

Carlo Ancelotti, the coach of Juventus, believed that it would make little difference.

"At first sight, I would say that it will change little. This could be a good thing to limit the entries, but I believe that at the end of the day, little will change."

Players' representatives in Italy backed the move and said it would be a great boost to the national

"It will be good for football here," said Sergio Campana, the president of the professional players associa-

"It will lead to greater opportunities for Italian players and create openings for them. We voted unanimously for it. A limit was needed," he

# Cuper signs fresh deal

**INTERNET**, Milan

Inter Milan coach Hector Cuper

The Argentine took over at The Neroazzuri last summer and almost guided them to Scudetto success in his first season in charge.

national caps, joined Arsenal from Queen's Park Rangers for 1.3 He has made 377 league steal the championship from under appearances for Arsenal and last season helped the Gunners win the

at Giuseppe Meazza until the summer of 2004 with an annual



lose out on signing Lazio defender Alessandro Nesta. Inter have been leading the

chase for the Italian international but it appears that the player will remain at The Stadio Olimpico.

"Nesta will start the pre season training with Lazio," said club president Sergio Cragnotti. "We are not going to accept Inter's offer. Nesta will continue to be a Lazio player, this affair is closed."

#### Season of loss

INTERNET

A survey published by leading Italiar financial newspaper II Sole 24 Ore showed Serie A clubs made a combined operating loss of 702 million

euros for the 2000-01 season.

The combined net loss for Italy's top flight clubs was reported as 133

Italy's four professional divisions racked up a total loss of 1.04 billion euros, the report said on Thursday. Spending on players wages in Serie A has doubled in the past four

years and that appeared to be at the heart of the financial crisis in what was among the wealthiest leagues in Parma spent 10.3 percent more than their overall turnover on players' wages alone in the 2000-01 season,

while clubs such as Inter Milan and

Lazio spent over 80 percent of turn-

over on salaries, the II Sole survey found. The situation was even more dramatic in the second division. Serie B, where Ternana spent 183.1 per-

cent of turnover on wages. The cash crisis has led to one of the quietest close season transfer markets of recent years with most clubs limiting themselves to swap deals and free transfers rather than the record-breaking deals of recent

But while that may help to reduce short-term costs, the reluctance of clubs to spend big money on top players could also reduce the value of key assets and limit the possibility for clubs to sell their way out of

Three of the best paid players in Italy -- the Inter Milan trio of Brazilian World Cup winner Ronaldo, Italy striker Christian Vieri and Uruguayan international Alvaro Recoba -- volunteered for a five to 10 percent pay cut

The move came after details of their salaries -- all reported to be in the 4-5 million euro per year range -

were reported in the media.

Three of Italy's leading teams Turin club Juventus and Rome pair Lazio and AS Roma, are quoted on the Milan bourse.

### Ruiz an All-Star

Football

**INTERNET,** New York

Major League Soccer Commissioner Don Garber unveiled the starting 11 Wednesday for the MLS All-Stars which will face the U.S. National Team in the 2002 Pepsi MLS All-Star Game.

The contest kicks off at RFK Stadium in Washington, D.C., on Saturday, August 3, at 3:30 p.m. ET and will be televised live on ABC

The MLS All-Star Team will feature five players making their first-ever All-Star appearance, including the league's top two scorers, Taylor Twellman and Carlos Ruiz. Twellman, the 22 year-old sensa-

tion from the New England Revolution, is joined up top by the Los Angeles Galaxy's Ruiz, a Guatemalan forward. Both players lead the league with 13 goals during their first MLS campaigns.

Also making their first All-Star appearances are defenders Carlos Bocanegra (Chicago Fire) and Ryan Suarez (Dallas Burn), along with midfielder Richard Mulrooney (San

Jose Earthquakes). By contrast, the Colorado Rapids' midfield duo of Carlos Valderrama (sixth selection) and Mark Chung (four appearances) have a total of 10 MLS All-Star Game appearances between them. New England Revolution midfielder Steve Ralston and MetroStars defender Mike Petke each appear for the third time in the

league's midseason celebration. In addition to Colorado and New England, two other teams - the Chicago Fire and MetroStars - also placed two players in the starting 11. as goalkeeper Tim Howard (MetroStars) and midfielder Dema Kovalenko (Chicago) earned start-

ing nods for 2002. Seven of the League's 10 teams

THE SELECTION FOR THE MLS ALL-STARS IS AS FOLLOWS (3-5-2 FORMATION): Goalkeeper: Tim Howard

Defenders: Ryan Suarez Dallas Burn), Mike Petke MetroStars), Carlos Bocanegra

Midfielders: Richard Mulrooney (San Jose Earthquakes), Steve Ralston (New England Revolution), Carlos Valderrama (Colorado Rapids), Mark Chung (Colorado Rapids),

Dema Kovalenko (Chicago Fire)

Forwards: Carlos Ruiz (Los Angeles Galaxy), Taylor Twellman

MLS roster will be named on Tuesday, July 23, by head coach Frank Yallop in conjunction with Major

League Soccer. In addition, MLS Commissioner Don Garber will select two players to round out the roster of 18 players that will face the U.S. National Team

on August 3. Yallop earned the honor of coaching the MLS squad by leading the defending champion San Jose Earthquakes to the best record in the League through the midway point of the 2002 season (8-4-2, 26 points). Named MLS Coach of the Year in 2001. Yallop will make his



are represented in the MLS starting selection, while D.C. United, Columbus and Kansas City saw several players named to Bruce Arena's

U.S. National Team yesterday. The starters were selected by (1) fans, (2) fellow players, (3) MLS coaches and general managers, and (4) a media panel, with each group's total votes representing

25% of the total. Fans had determined the starting 11 during the four previous MLS

seasons. All-Star reserves for the

The third man quizzed was

Santini declared himself "deter-

"I came here determined and

"I feel capable of taking over this

Jacques Santini, who led Lyon to

their first ever French championship

mined and serene" after his inter-

confident and I'm leaving in the

same frame of mind." he declared.

method of working."

last season.

**CARLOS RUIZ** masterminding San Jose's worst-to-

first turnaround last season RFK Stadium, the site of two MLS Cup Championship matches, will host its first MLS All-Star Game as the event returns to the East Coast for the first time since 1997. On August 2-3, Pepsi and MLS will host numerous family oriented events, activities and tournaments at RFK

and in the Washington, D.C. area.

manager. That's what I was for five

or six years, that gives me the

from 1998-2002) I was subjected to

intense media pressure. What's

more I'm 47 and that gives me a

certain maturity," added the youn-

me." he continued. "in the sense

that it's an extremely interesting

gest of the four interviewees

"For four years (as Japan coach

"It's not a question of money for

experience.

## The confident quartet

that he was "more than ever ready

lived four years at the heart of the

team, and working with Roger

Lemerre will enable me to start off

job of manager, we touched on

everything, even communication,"

added the 48-year-old former

Lemerre's assistant added: "I

"The president spoke about the

to take up the baton."

more quickly.

Football

AFP, Paris

All four candidates for the French coaching job appeared optimistic on Wednesday of being handed the task of rebuilding the ailing former World Cup champions.

The quartet - Raymond Domenech, Rene Girard, Jacques



RAYMOND DOMENECH

Santini and Philippe Troussier were all grilled by French football federation president Claude Simonet throughout Wednesday, with Simonet due to announce who will take over from Roger Lemerre on Friday afternoon.

First up for interview was Girard,



Next on the block was the French Under-21 coach Domenech who felt his strength was his background knowledge of the stars of the future. "It's true I know both the present

and the future generation," he said. "I was interviewed abouth everything, on the general policy that I



**JACQUES SANTINI** 

position. I'm very interested," he

"In one and a half hours you can't talk about everything, but we dealt with the essentials. Last up was the ex-Japan coach

Philippe Troussier, who played the international experience card. "They're looking for a national

"I reckon each candidate scored

**RENE GIRARD** 

points. But there's no revolution in the air - I don't have a magic wand."

Perhaps that's precisely what Simonet would have liked given France's abject failure in defending their 1998 World Cup title without even scoring a goal in Asia.

#### Rustu staying put

INTERNET

Turkey's World Cup goalkeepe Rustu Recber is staying at Fenerbahce - ruling out potential

moves to either Arsenal or Everton. The 29-year-old had been strongly linked with a move to the Premiership following a series of outstanding performances during the World Cup.

But his club and wife have per-

suaded him to remain in Istanbul

and complete the final year of his deal with Fenerbahce. Arsenal's rumoured interest certainly ended when David Seaman signed a new deal with the

Gunners. But Everton manager David Moyes is desperate to sign a new goalkeeper and may now have to reconsider an improved offer for Derby's Mart Poom.

himself has told BBC Sport Online that such a fee is unrealistic in the current market place. Recber's agent Ergan Sancakli said: "He has decided to stay where

Derby want £7m for their

Estonian goalkeeper, but Poom

"The president of Fenerbahce has told him that he really wants him to stay and his wife has also told him to stay put. "He has one year left on his

he is.

out at Fenerbahce. "He did have offers and we have heard of the interest, but nothing will be happening until next year."

#### **Happy Gunner Henry** Football

**INTERNET**, London With all the talk being of players being unsettled, whether provoked by their agents or otherwise, it's

perhaps refreshing to hear one

Premiership star who is content. Thierry Henry, the leading scorer in England's top flight last season, has announced that he will be an Arsenal player until at least 2006, two years after the expiry of his current contract, when the Gunners are set to move into their new sta-

"I am so happy at Arsenal," he told the French sport daily L'Equipe. "I cannot say it enough - I have found my club. I definitely want to play at the new stadium.

dium at Ashburton Grove.

"What we did last season was

League".

and we deserved it. Now the big

thing is to win the Champions



THIERRY HENRY

doesn't extend to the national set up, and he used the interview to voice his discontent after France's dismal performance in the World "The problem I had at the World

Cup was the position in which I was

asked to play", he said. "In three

vears with France and also for

Arsenal I have played as a central striker." Henry was asked to play on the left wing by coach Roger Lemerre in France's first two games. The 24year-old was sent off in the second match, against Uruguay, and played no further part in the campaign, but

was also critical of Lemerre's man-

management. "When Lemerre said that if I did not play [in a warm-up match] against [South] Korea he would question my presence in the World Cup, it was my family who called me from France to tell me," Henry said. "Nobody [in the France camp] spoke

#### Ex-Spain back attempts suicide

Football

REUTERS, Barcelona

Former Spanish international defender Julio Alberto was treated contract and he is going to see that overnight at a Barcelona hospital after trying to jump from a third floor hotel window, a police spokesman

hotel room "destroyed" when they were called to the scene by recep-"He had cuts to his skin when the

police arrived." the spokesman said. "The police called an ambulance and while he was being treated he tried to kill himself. He got up from his chair and tried to jump out of a

window. A spokeswoman for the hospital

Police found the former player's said he was treated in the accident and emergency department after arriving in a "state of excitement". He was allowed to leave hospital

> woman said, after declining to be admitted. Julio Alberto, now 43, played at left back for Atletico Madrid and

on Thursday morning, the spokes-

Barcelona in the 1980s and early 1990s and made a total of 34 international appearances.

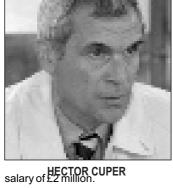
#### agreed to stay with the London club Last season, Roma had 12 nonuntil at least the end of the 2002-03 The new rules received a luke-The 38-year-old goalkeeper made the headlines after a costly mistake in England's 2-1 World Cup quarter-final defeat by Brazil last "I'm pleased that David has

Football

has signed a new deal at The Giuseppe Meazza Stadium.

Inter threw the title away on the very last day of the season, with a loss to Lazio allowing Juventus to

Cuper's new deal will keep him



The former Valencia coach is

regarded as one of the best man-

agers in Europe and Inter chief

Massimo Moratti is keen to tie him

down to a new long-term deal to

Meanwhile, Cuper seems set to

ward off any potential suitors.