



Japanese stars Shinji Ono (No 18) and Junichi Inamoto (R) celebrating Ono's goal against Jamaica in Tokyo yesterday.

## Japan held on Zico debut

**Football**

AFP, Tokyo

Brazilian football legend Zico made a debut as the head coach for the Japanese national team when his side were held to a 1-1 draw by 1998 World Cup nemesis Jamaica in a friendly match on Wednesday.

Zico fielded Europe-based players Italian Serie A's Hidetoshi Nakata and Shunsuke Nakamura, Dutch Feyenoord's Shinji Ono and English Fulham's Junichi Inamoto in the midfield with Belgian Genk's Takayuki Suzuki in the front. Jamaica sent three England-based players, led by forward Barry Hayles of Fulham, as well as Spartak Moscow's Robert Scarlett and two from the United States in Carl Brown's starting line-up.

Ono opened the scoring in the seventh minute after Nakata sent the ball to the edge of the area, where Jubilo Iwata striker Naohoro Takahara produced the last pass for Ono on the right. Jamaica fought back with some inspirational play by Hayles, who missed a header in the 23rd minute, and Hazard United defender Omar Daley, whose sizzling shot went wide in the 14th minute. But it was Japan who got the next golden chance with a free kick on the edge of the area when Suzuki was brought down by Ian Goodison in the 35th minute. Ono's shot went over the bar, while Hayles missed two close shots soon afterwards and then Suzuki's header was saved by keeper Aaron Lawrence to end the first half at 1-0. Japan got off to a terrific start by repeatedly threatening the Jamaican goal to excite a sell-out crowd at the National stadium with

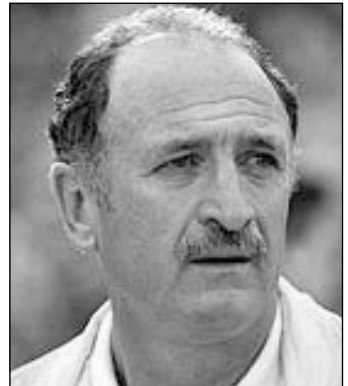
## Scolari's European ambition

**Football**

REUTERS, London

Brazil's World Cup-winning coach Luiz Felipe Scolari says he is keen to work in Europe one day as he considers an offer to take charge of Mexico's national team. "The idea is to work outside Brazil. Mexico have a very well organised project and we've agreed to leave a decision until November 30," Scolari said in an interview with Reuters in London on Tuesday. "I had other proposals and this invitation from Arsenal and the English federation (Football Association)," he said after arriving from Mexico City, where he was interviewed for the Mexico job. "But I would like to work in Europe if possible. It's a challenge that a Brazilian coach should begin to think of taking up so that he can then attract other coaches in this direction."

He continues the European leg of his trip in Italy, where he will observe training sessions given by fellow coaches Fabio Capello at AS Roma, Marcello Lippi at Juventus, Hector Cuper at Inter Milan and AC Milan's Carlo Ancelotti. Scolari believes Brazilian coaches, like their players, have a lot of qualities to bring to the European game. "A Brazilian coach can bring some of the technical training we do in South America with the ball," he said. "He can adapt to European organisation and then there will be a situation of total identification between the athletes and the coach and the fans. I'm sure all will benefit."



LUIZ FELIPE SCOLARI

Scolari, who decided against staying on as Brazil's coach after steering his country to their fifth world title in June, is making a private 48-hour visit to England. He will be meeting Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger at the club's training ground north of London on Wednesday, where he will see his World Cup midfielder Gilberto Silva, who has been a great success since joining the English champions this season. "Gilberto Silva is a very steady, calm person. There will never be any problems with Gilberto here in England," Scolari said. "He's an exemplary athlete on and off the pitch... He was one of the best players tactically in the Cup."

The people of Arsenal are very satisfied. Scolari then travels down to Southampton to watch England's European championship qualifier against Macedonia on Wednesday evening as a guest of the FA.

## Figo's ultimatum

**Football**

AFP, Lisbon

Real Madrid star Luis Figo on Tuesday threatened to turn his back on Portugal unless the side that flopped in the World Cup enjoyed a change of fortune. "I've got my reputation to think about and if I'm going to lose it by playing (for Portugal) then I'd rather not get selected," FIFA's World Player of the Year told Portuguese press in Gothenburg on the eve of Portugal's friendly against Sweden. "I'm there to try my hardest but if I see that there aren't any plans then I'd rather not play," continued the 29-year-old. "Once again people have to explain precisely what they want, what they intend for Portuguese football." They lost their opening match 3-2 to the United States, redeemed themselves by beating Poland 4-0 but then lost 1-0 to hosts South Korea, failing to qualify for the second stage.



LUIS FIGO

## Giggs, Capello's number one

REUTERS, Rome

Manchester United's Welsh international Ryan Giggs has been the best left winger in the world for the last five years, according to AS Roma coach Fabio Capello. Capello made his comments ahead of Italy's Euro 2004 qualifier against Wales, at the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff. "Ryan Giggs is the greatest outside left player there has been in world football during the past five years," Capello was quoted as saying in sports daily La Gazzetta dello Sport. "He's the kind of player who can switch the direction of attack at any moment and that's a quality that every coach values a lot." "On one hand he has the opportunity to play in one of the greatest clubs in the world, Manchester United," he added. "On the other -- unfortunately for him -- his national side is not so strong and it's probably this that stops him winning big prizes like the European player of the year award -- a trophy he amply deserves for all he's done in the last few seasons." After Saturday's disappointing 1-1 draw with Yugoslavia, Italy are kept out of the top of group nine. Giggs has been identified as Wales' main threat by the Italian media, who have debated various methods of stopping him.

## Panamanian club's world record!

**Football**

INTERNET

Panamanian club Deportivo Arabe Unido's 19-0 victory against FC Deportivo Jalapa not only was the largest-ever victory in the 41 years of the CONCACAF Champions Cup, but according to records of the International Federation of Football History and Statistics, it is the largest recorded in official international club competitions. The previous mark was an 18-0 victory by Suwon Bluewings FC of Korea Republic against Saunders SC of Sri Lanka in last year's Asian Cup Winners' Cup. In Oceania, Lotoha'pai FC of Tonga twice was beaten by 16-0 margins in the Champions' Cup, in 1999 by Central United FC (New Zealand) and 2001 by Wollongong City Wolves (Australia). The largest in

Europe was a 14-0 victory by AFC Ajax of Netherlands against Luxembourg's Red Boys Differdange in 1984, while in 1994, the African record was set with a 13-0 victory by Mbinga of Gabon against Renaissance of Chad in the Cup Winners' Cup. Arabe Unido's victory surpassed a record set just two nights earlier, when F.A.S defeated Jalapa 17-0. That scoreline surpassed the 13-0 victory scored by Caledonia AIA of Trinidad & Tobago against Chelsea FC (St. Vincent & Grenadines) in 1988. The previous mark in Central America was a 13-1 victory by CSD Municipal (Guatemala) against Diriangén FC of Nicaragua in 1977. The Panamanian club, located in the port city of Colón at the Atlantic entrance to the Panama Canal, was welcomed with wild celebrations when they returned to Panama following the tournament.



Danish World Cupper Stig Tofting (R) and his wife Bettina leaving the Copenhagen City Court on October 15.

## Moratti nuts about Ballack

**Football**

AFP, Rome

Inter Milan president Massimo Moratti said Wednesday he would love to sign Bayern Munich's German international Michael Ballack. "It's true I'm mad about him because he is such a formidable midfielder," said Moratti whose Inter Milan side are top of the Italian First Division after winning all four matches of the new Serie A season. "I would love to see him here at Inter but that is unlikely to happen in the immediate future. I know perfectly well that Bayern would not let go of such a talent. It's a dream for the future and not something that is likely to happen now," Moti told Gazzetta dello Sport. Last month German legend Franz Beckenbauer said Ballack is

worth more than the world's most expensive player Zinedine Zidane. The former German World Cup winning captain said that given the choice he would not exchange Ballack for Real Madrid's French playmaker. "Zidane is more elegant, more agile, but Ballack at 25 is not only five years younger, he is also more dangerous in front of goal and he gets more often into goal-scoring positions," Beckenbauer said. "Quite honestly, I think that Ballack will become the new king of European football." Ballack, the midfield inspiration behind Bayern Munich, burst onto the international scene at the World Cup finals this summer inspiring an unfancied Germany side into the final. But a yellow-card picked up in the semi-final win over South Korea kept him out of the showdown in Yokohama against Brazil which the South Americans won 2-0.

## Tofting shifts focus

**Football**

AFP, London

Bolton's Danish international midfielder Stig Tofting was Wednesday preparing for this weekend's Premiership clash against Tottenham despite being sentenced to jail in his homeland. The 33-year-old World Cup player faces a four-month prison term after being convicted of assault by the City Court in Copenhagen but will rejoin Sam Allardyce's squad while he considers an appeal. Tofting has two weeks in which to appeal and he may even be able to

complete the season with Bolton before his fate is determined. Karsten Aabrink, the player's agent, said: "I expect him to play on Sunday and he will be training again today. Bolton have supported Stig and they're standing by their man and we're pleased by that." Tofting was convicted of assaulting the manager of Copenhagen's Cafe Ketchup during a night out with fellow international players following the squad's return from the World Cup where they lost 3-0 to England in a second round match. The incident at Cafe Ketchup developed after Tofting's party drew a complaint from staff over singing. Aabrink admitted that his client was under no illusions of the gravity

of the offence. "He admitted what he did in court so he expected some sort of punishment, but this is tough of course," said Aabrink. "When he went to court we knew he could be sent to prison, and you can speak about two months or three months - we didn't know." Tofting avoided jail three years ago when he was given a 20-day suspended sentence following an incident at a restaurant in Aarhus. "If you are a celebrity, sometimes it counts against you in Denmark," said Aabrink. "That's my opinion and I think that is what happened to Stig." Tofting joined Bolton in February from German club Hamburg.

## Pires' encouraging return game

**Football**

AFP, London

Arsenal's inspirational French midfielder Robert Pires scored one goal and made another in his first game since incurring a serious knee injury in March. Pires, who was named player of the year in England despite missing the end of last season, played the full 90 minutes for an Arsenal reserves side against a QPR XI in a specially-arranged friendly on Tuesday morning. A tired but happy Pires admitted afterwards he was relieved to have come through the match unscathed after such a long time out of action. "I am delighted to have come

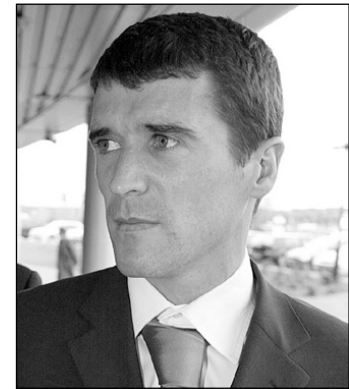
through the full 90 minutes," he told Arsenal.com. "Six months is a long time to be out so this is a very happy day for me." Pires added: "Physically I feel very good. I'm not tired, although obviously it will take a while for the technical side of my game to come back. But I'm very happy with how it went today." Pires had not played since being stretched off after damaging cruciate ligaments in an FA Cup quarter-final replay against Newcastle United on March 23. The injury meant he missed the climax of Arsenal's double-winning season and he was badly missed as France went out of the World Cup at the first hurdle in the summer.

## FA discipline Keane

**Football**

AFP, Bolton

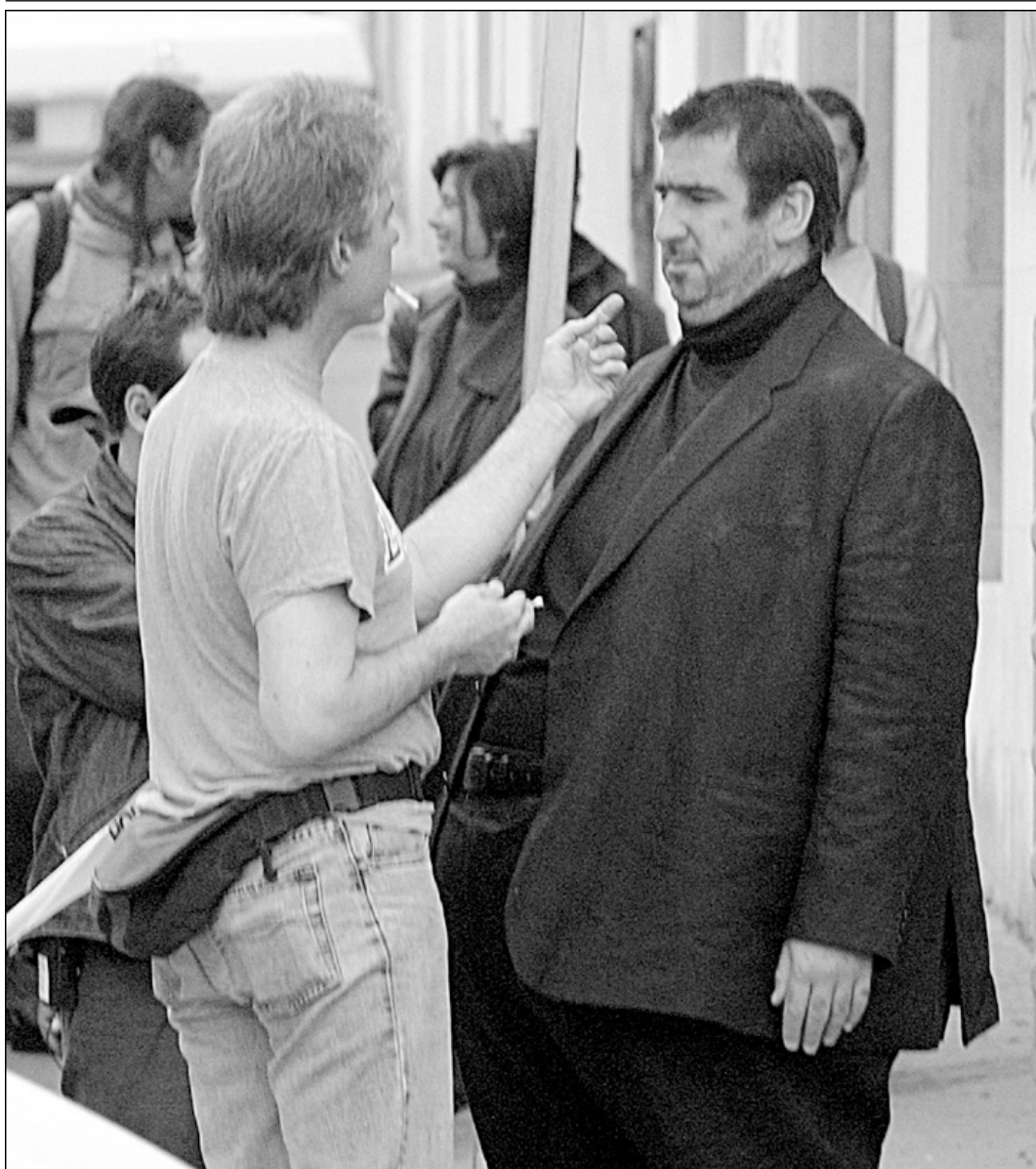
Manchester United midfielder Roy Keane was banned for five matches and fined a record 150,000 pounds (233,000 dollars) on Tuesday after being found guilty on two charges of bringing the game into disrepute. The ban, three matches less than the maximum suspension, takes effect from November 4, around the time Keane is due back from his recent hip surgery. After a Football Association disciplinary hearing lasting over six hours at Bolton's Reebok stadium, Keane was found guilty on two charges arising from the recent publication of his autobiography, in which he gave a graphic account of a horror tackle on Manchester City midfielder Alfie Haaland in a match at Old Trafford in April last year and appeared to indicate he was out for revenge. The three-man FA disciplinary committee concluded that the tackle had been "improperly motivated" and also found him guilty of profiting from his action by talking about it in



ROY KEANE

his book. Keane and United have two weeks to lodge an appeal, a move that seems unlikely given that the ban is shorter than most people expected. As it is he will be out for the League Cup match at home to Leicester on November 5, followed by Premiership matches with Manchester City, West Ham, Newcastle and Liverpool. But he will be back for United's first Premiership clash of the season with champions Arsenal at Old Trafford. United club director and solicitor Maurice Watkins, flanked by Keane and United boss Sir Alex Ferguson, said: "Clearly after the arguments that have been put forward in Roy's defence we are disappointed with the verdict." "After such a long day, now is not the time to make quick decisions so we will be reviewing the question of appeal over the next few days." Although the fine is the heaviest ever dished out by the FA, it represents only two weeks wages for Keane, whose importance to United is reflected in one of the highest salaries in football. Keane had contested the charges with his defence thought to have focused on suggestions that his ghost-writer Eamonn Dunphy had used poetic licence in describing the Irishman's emotions at the time of the Haaland clash. A feud between Keane and Haaland erupted three years earlier during a clash at Elland Road when Haaland was still at Leeds. Keane ruptured his cruciate ligaments after jarring his foot when he attempted to trip the Norwegian. An angry Haaland accused Keane of feigning injury as he clutched his leg in agony and the United skipper admitted the words were burned into his mind as he battled back to fitness. Keane was then sent off three years later for a wildly over-the-top tackle which caught Haaland just below the knee and sent him spinning into the air. The Norwegian has not played a full match since and is still considering whether to launch legal action against Keane for exacerbating a long-standing problem with his other leg. In the book, Keane states: "I'd waited almost 180 minutes for Alfie. I'd waited long enough. I hit him hard. The ball was there (I think). Take that."

The day after its release, Keane continued to defend himself, saying he had read it and enjoyed doing it: "There would have been no point if I was going to say 'he's a jolly good fellow' or 'this was an accident'." "I have read plenty of books and a lot of them were rubbish - I wanted to be up front." The FA did not call any witnesses, relying instead on the contents of Keane's book and video recordings of the tackle. Keane has been embroiled in controversy over the last three months. After dramatically walking out on Ireland's World Cup squad after a bust-up with manager Mick McCarthy, he was no sooner back in action for United than he was being sent off and banned for three matches for elbowing former Irish team-mate Jason McAteer in a Premiership match against Sunderland. United took advantage of that enforced absence to have Keane undergo much-needed surgery on his hip, an operation from which he is still recovering. But even when he could do no damage on the pitch, Keane remained at the centre of attention thanks to the inflammatory contents of his book. Aside from the FA charges the book also triggered a threat of legal action by Northern Irish team Linfield FC, who were accused of religious and racial bigotry in the book. The non-stop furore led to suggestions that Keane was possibly heading for some kind of breakdown, as well as speculation that he could be stripped of United's captaincy. That possibility was ruled out last week by David Beckham, who has stood in as skipper in Keane's absence, and the likes of Nicky Butt and Ryan Giggs have all given the club's talismanic captain their backing. "I've enjoyed being captain but as soon as Roy's fit he will be captain," Beckham said. "There's no doubts about that. I can't understand why people suggest any different because Roy Keane is Manchester United's captain and (for) me personally, it would feel difficult playing in the team and Roy Keane playing in the team and him not being captain."



SEEING IS BELIEVING: A make-up artist works on former French football star turned actor Eric Cantona (R) in the French southern port city of Marseille during the shooting of the film "L'Outremangeur" (The Overeater) directed by Frenchman Thierry Binisti. Cantona has transformed himself into a waddling man-mountain for his latest movie in which he plays an obese but love-lorn police chief.

## No Eng-France friendly

AFP, London

France have been ruled out as opponents for England's next international friendly, the Football Association confirmed on Tuesday. France were being lined up for a match in England in February, but the two countries have been unable to reach a deal on the proposed match. "We have got a number of options concerning our opponents but we will not be playing France," an FA spokesman told AFP.