AFP, Rio de Janeiro

Brazilian footballing legend Pele has been ordered to pay 42,400 dollars for libelling his former business partner Helio Viana in a newspaper article.

The three time world champion had accused Viana of embezzling 700,000 dollars designed to be used for a United Nations' Childrens' Fund (UNICEF) fundraising event.

Judge Ione Pernes ruled that Pele had slandered Viana in an interview published in the Folha de Sao Paulo by claiming his former partner had "stolen money from the company they created without having real proof of this.'

Pele, a former sports minister, ordered an investigation into his business partners two years ago after the money designated for UNICEF was found in his company's accounts.

But the Brazilian, widely considered to be the world's greatest ever footballer, said he could not explain how the money found its way into the accounts of his company, Pele Sports Marketing.

Primera Liga

# To the script for Valencia

Football

AFP, Madrid

Valencia returned to the top of the Spanish first division thanks to a controversial 1-0 win at Albacete on Saturday as championship rivals Real Madrid went down 1-0 at Real Sociedad.

Jorge Lopez got Valencia's only goal, from the spot after nine min-utes, but the debate will rage over whether his team mate Pablo Aimar was fouled in the penalty

Aimar crashed to the ground after being gently pushed by Albacete defender Francisco Pena, although contact looked to have been made outside the area.

"As far as I was concerned, it was a penalty," said Valencia coach Rafa Benitez.

"Anyway, even though Albacete were always dangerous, we had the better chances.

Aimar later picked up his fifth

yellow card of the season, for a clear dive in the penalty area, meaning the Argentine international will miss next week's trip to

The three points gave the 2001-02 champions top spot with 43 points from 19 games while reigning champions Real Madrid are one point behind after they were outplayed at Real Sociedad.

The Basques had the best of the first half chances with both Darko Kovacevic and Nihat Kahveci going close, but Madrid still looked dangerous going forward despite Ronaldo looking off-form.

However, the hosts got the goal their hard work deserved just after the hour when Nihat sent over a long cross from the left. Real keeper Iker Casillas made a

rare mistake and dropped the high ball, which spilled out to the feet of Valery Karpin. The Russian winger didn't squander his opportunity and his right foot shot from the edge of the

Sociedad nearly got another goal 10 minutes from time when a Kovacevic header hit the foot of the upright but in the end the San ebastian side did not need the security of a second goal.

The victory could prove to be vital in Real Sociedad's bid to avoid relegation only a year after they finished second in the league.

Fellow strugglers Celta Vigo also gave themselves a lifeline and bounced back from their humiliating 5-0 home defeat to local rivals Deportivo La Coruna a week ago to win 4-2 at Real Mallorca. Mallorca got off to a good start when Dutch striker Arnold

Bruggink found the net after just 12 minutes, although his shot took a deflection from Celta's Magnolo However, the Galician visitors wasted no time in getting back on level terms, when Jose Ignacio

Saenz equalised three minutes

Bruggink then got his second area proved to be decisive despite some late pressure from Madrid. from the penalty spot a minute into first half injury time after Celta's Silvinho had brought down Raul

The turning point in the game came after 67 minutes when Mallorca's Brazilain midfielder Nene was shown the red card for a tackle from behind on Savo

Celta took just five minutes to exploit their advantage, Jesuli Mora heading home a cross from the left wing by Silvinho.

The visitors then claimed their first win in six games with late goals from Peter Luccin, the Frenchman scoring from the penalty spot, and

## TOP SIX

Spanish league table after Saturday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

ı	vaiencia	19	13	4	2	36	14	43
I	Real	19	13	3	3	37	19	42
I	Deportivo	18	11	3	4	31	14	36
I	Osasuna	18	7	7	4	19	14	28
I	Atletico	18	8	4	6	23	22	28
I	Villarreal	18	7	6	5	22	21	27
I								



Real Sociedad's Russian playmaker Valery Karpin (R) starts celebrating his goal while a distraught Real Madrid goalkeeper Iker Casillas (sitting L) and wing-back Roberto Carlos (2nd from R) look on at the Angeta stadium in San Sebastian on January 10.

### Premiership

# **Boro bombarded**

Football

AFP, London

Arsenal ripped Middlesbrough's normally watertight defence to shreds to move back alongside Manchester United at the top of the Premiership in emphatic style on

A 4-1 win at Highbury left manager Arsene Wenger purring with delight as the Gunners moved exactly level with the champions on points, goal difference and goals scored ahead of United's clash with Newcastle on Sunday.

Liverpool made it three wins in the space of seven days with a 1-0 home win over Aston Villa but Charlton continued to hold on to fourth place by disposing of bottom

At the bottom, Robbie Keane drove another nail into the coffin of his former club Leeds.

Keane's 56th minute strike secured a 1-0 win that lifts Spurs further clear of the relegation quagmire which Leeds appear doomed to occupy for the rest of the season.

Arsenal, who will play

Middlesbrough another three times in the League and FA Cups before the end of the month, dominated from the outset but it took a penalty for them to break through seven minutes before the break.

Ugo Ehiogu clipped Patrick Vieira as the Gunners captain ran on to Robert Pires's pass into the

Henry slotted the penalty past Mark Schwarzer with supreme confidence and it was the French striker's free-kick which led to Frank Queudrue slicing the ball into his own net for the second on the stroke

Pires and Freddie Ljungberg extended Arsenal's lead before an 86th-minute penalty from Massimo Maccarone earned Boro slender

Liverpool were always in control against Villa but the 36th minute goal that secured the points was a scrappy affair. A ball into the box rebounded off

Danny Murphy's backside before hitting Villa defender Mark Delaney on its way into the bottom corner of

But that was of little concern to Reds boss Gerard Houllier, who had further reason to cheer with

Michael Owen returning to the side after six weeks out injured.

The fourth-fastest goal in Premiership history set the scene for a seven-goal thriller in the Lancashire derby between Blackburn and Bolton.

Kevin Nolan put the vistors ahead after just 13 seconds and then scored the goal which finally separated the two sides 12 minutes from the end. Vlatislav Gresko, Dwight Yorke

and Andy Cole were Blackburn's scorers with Youri Djorkaeff and Stelios Giannakopoulos providing Bolton's other strikes. Jason Euell marked his 100th appearance for Charlton with a

brace of goals as the south-east London side disposed comfortably On the other side of the capital, Louis Saha demonstrated once more why he is a transfer target for

Manchester United with a coolly

executed penalty on the stroke of

half-time as Fulham returned to

form with a 2-1 home win over

It was Saha's 15th goal of the season and it was followed within a minute of the restart by a second from his compatriot Steed Malbrangue. Kevin Kilbane gave the visitors

hope with a spectacular 30-yard strike nine minutes from the end but Fulham held out for three Afterwards, Fulham boss Chris

professionalism but reiterated that his want-away striker was going

Coleman paid tribute to Saha's

"I am not hoping to keep Louis here because I am keeping him here," Coleman said. "I have got to think of the team and the club and he is too important

to us. We love Louis to pieces as a player and as a guy. He is a terrific guy and I can sympathise with him wanting to go on, but the time is not

Portsmouth hauled themselves out of the relegation zone and extended Manchester City's winless run to 14 games with a 4-2 win at Fratton Park Ayegeni Yakubu scored twice

and Teddy Sheringham grabbed his first goal for 15 matches as City's apparently inexorable slide down e table continued.

Jeff Kenna scored a 67th minute vinner against his former club as Birmingham beat ten-man Southampton 2-1 after Stephen Clemence had cancelled out Brett Ormerod's earlier opener for the

English Premiership table after Saturday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against,

Arsenal	21	14	7	0 40	14	49
Man Utd	20	16	1	3 40	14	49
Chelsea	20	13	3	4 36	17	42
Charlton	21	9	7	5 30	23	34
Liverpool	20	9	5	6 30	21	32
Fulham	21	9	4	8 33	29	31

## Figo weighing options ninth time. Football

After nearly four years with Real Madrid, Portugal's international midfielder Luis Figo has hinted he would like to move away from Spanish football.

"At the moment I am not considering leaving Real Madrid but I have been in Spain for a long time, he said in an interview with Portuguese television channel SIC.

"I can't deny I would like to try something else. The change would not be for economic motives but for the need to face new challenges as I have won everything you can win in Spain."

The 31-year-old has a contract with Real Madrid until 2006. He has made more than 100 league appearances for the reigning Spanish champions since his controversial signing from bitter rivals Barcelona in the summer of

Later that year he was named as the European Player of the Year and in 2001 he was named FIFA World Player of the year. In 2002 Figo was in the Madrid side that won the European Cup for a record

Juventus' Dutch midfielder Edgar

Davids is expected to join Spanish giants Barcelona in the near future,

but the Catalan club admitted on

Saturday that sealing the deal could

and his advisors thrashed out an

agreement with Juventus' general

director Luciano Moggi on Friday

and, having been given permission to talk to the player, they met Davids'

to happen immediately although we

have put various offers on the table,'

Barca's technical secretary and

former player Txiki Begiristain told

and different varients on these,'

added Begiristain after the two hour

meeting with Davids' agent Robert

"For six months, a year and a half,

Spanish reporters on Saturday.

"This (Davids' move) is not going

Barcelona president Joan Laporta

Football

AFP, Barcelona

take some time.

agent on Saturday.

Davids coming but...

Figo moved to Barcelona in 1995 from Sporting, the Lisbon-based club where he started his football career at the age of 13, in

Fulham ace Louis Saha (R) taking on the Everton defence at Loftus Road in London on January 10.

million euro) transfer to Real Manchester United, Chelsea and AC Milan have all reportedly made contact with Figo in the past

existence of any transfer talks. In the televsion interview, Figo once again held out the possibility that he would end his career by playing for a Portuguese team.

"It is something I would like to see happen but only if at that time am in good physical condition. would not want to do it just to do it," he said.

Figo added his preference would be to return to Sporting, where he made 124 league appear ances for the club and scored 14 times before moving to Barcelona.

Sporting currently lie second in the Portuguese premier league, five points behind reigning champions FC Porto.

Begiristain admitted that Barca's preferred option would be to have the

30-year-old defensive midfielder on

loan until the end of the season with

the option of signing him at another

However, struggling Barca are so

esperate to get someone of David's

Geerlinks said on Saturday that his

Juventus coach Marcello Lippi is

already resigned to seeing Davids leave in the coming weeks, after six

"Whoever signs Davids will be making a great buy," he said. "I dont

know about his future, but for three or

four years in Turin he really made a big

December 1997 when he joined the

Turin club from Serie A rivals AC

Davids has been at Iuventus since

calibre that they are prepared to let

him dictate most of the key terms of

principal priority was to get a long term deal for his client as his contract

date in the coming years.

any agreement.

at Juve ends in June.

years at the club.

impact in the team."

# More than just a victory

Football

AFP, Rome

Parma, whose future has been thrown into doubt following the collapse of disgraced parent com-He made 172 league games with Barcelona, and scored 30 goals, pany Parmalat, lifted some of the gloom hanging over them by defeating Inter Milan 1-0 in an emotional before his 37 million pound (53 Serie A clash in Emilian Romagna on Saturday.

Emanuele Filippini cashed in on

an horrendous goalkeeping blunder by Francesco Toldo to score the 41st minute winner which lifted Parma month about an end-of-season above Lazio into fifth place on 30 move. Figo however has denied the points, one point behind Inter. Parma were unlucky not to score further goals in the second half, but

were made to cling on during a nailbiting finale in which they were indebted to the heroics of their French goalkeeper Sebastien Frey. Inter's third defeat of the season

was a blow to their title hopes and left them five points behind league leaders Roma, who play their game in hand on Sunday away to winless Perugia. A tearful Stefano Tanzi, who will

officially step down as Parma president on Wednesday, watched a dramatic match from his usual seat in the directors box as he brought down the curtain on his eight-year

Parmalat, who own 98 per cent of Parma, are at the centre of a multibillion euro accounting scandal which seems set to become the biggest financial fraud case in European history. Parma, who won the UEFA Cup

put up for sale at the end of the sea-Midfielder Simone Barone, who scored both of Parma's goals in their 2-0 win at Ancona on Tuesday,

for the second time in 1999, are to be

dedicated the victory to Tanzi. "We feel a lot for president Tanzi and this win is for him," he said. "We are alive and kicking and if we continue to play like this we can overcome our problems and achieve great things. We battled until the very end - that's our mentality.

Inter coach Alberto Zaccheroni admitted his players were second best to a spirited Parma. "We were too slow and they were

"Then we made a massive error in situation which we should have dealt with comfortably and gave them a great advantage

always dangerous on the counter-

The home side took the game to Inter early on and carved out an excellent opportunity in the sixth

Alberto Gilardino's robust run took him clear of the last defender and around Toldo, only to be forced wide by the Inter goalkeeper. Rather than steady himself before shooting,

angle and his tame effort failed to trouble the Inter defence. Inter were unfortunate not to edge in front themselves just before the half hour when Christian Vieri headed Giovanni Pasquale's left-

Gilardino went for goal from an acute

wing cross against the crossbar. But having wrestled control of the match after a shaky start, Toldo undid all of Inter's good work by gifting Parma the lead.

The Italy international needlessly rushed to the edge of the 18-yard box to try and gather Marcello Castellini's driven cross, but missed the ball completely, allowing Filippini to slot the ball home into an unguarded net.

Parma thought they had doubled their lead in the 58th minute when Gilardino converted Filippini's cutback, only to see his effort ruled out for offside against the provider.

Vieri was also pulled up for offside after finding the net as play swung from end to end, before keeper Frey's Obafemi Martins and Emre Belozoglu in a frantic finish.

In Saturday's early match Udinese moved up one place to seventh despite being held to a 0-0 drawaway to Chievo.

Chievo remain three points behind Udinese in ninth place after taking a point.

In Sunday's other matches, second-placed AC Milan host Reggina and Sampdoria entertain reigning champions Juventus, currently lying in third place.

### TOP SIX

sItalian football league table after Saturday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against

- 1									
ı	Roma	15	11	3	1	32	6	36	
ı	Milan	14	10	3	1	24	7	33	
ı	Juventus	15	10	3	2	32	15	33	
ı	Inter	16	9	4	3	28	11	31	
ı	Parma	16	9	3	4	25	18	30	
1	Lazio	15	9	1	5	24	19	28	

HAVE-NOT'S DELIGHT! A Japanese fan of Parma is happy with his team's performance against Inter Milan in Parma on January 10. One of Italy's most prestigious football clubs Parma was barely afloat on Saturday after its director and entire board quit and the club was put up for sale as the scandal that has ravaged parent-company Parmalat began to hit home. Parma, who have won the UEFA Cup twice, became one of the first victims of the Parmalat fallout following the discovery of a multi-billion euro black hole in the food and dairy giant's finances.

