



PHOTO: AFP

Jubilant Argentine players hold aloft the trophy following their victory at the FIFA U-20 World Cup final in Toronto on Sunday. Argentina defeated the Czech Republic 2-1.

Ljungberg joins West Ham

AFP, Paris

Arsenal midfielder Freddie Ljungberg has completed his move to fellow London club West Ham.

The 30-year-old Swede, the Gunners' longest-serving player since joining in 1998, follows star French striker Thierry Henry, who moved to Barcelona, in leaving the Premiership club this summer.

The midfielder played 325 times for Arsenal, scoring 72 goals, but lost his grip on a starting spot last season. No transfer fee or length of contract was immediately given.

He now joins Julien Faubert, Scott Parker, Craig Bellamy and Richard Wright in moving to Upton Park since the Hammers' dramatic last-day survival last season.

Real leave Cassano behind

AFP, Madrid

Spanish champions Real Madrid headed to Austria on Sunday for a pre-season training camp without their unsettled Italian international striker Antonio Cassano.

The 25-year-old did not train with his teammates Sunday morning before the 23 Real players boarded their flight for the camp in Irldning in the Austrian mountains.

Cassano joined Real Madrid from AS Roma in January 2006 for five million euros (6.9 million US dollars) but has been unable to command a regular first-team place.

He was briefly suspended in October 2006 following a bust-up with then Real coach Fabio Capello and has had trouble keeping his

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

The power of bathing

AFP, Hanoi



When the going gets tough, the tough S h u n s u k e Nakamura gets going by diving into a bathtub to relieve his weary limbs at the Asian Cup here.

In his room at the plush Sheraton Hanoi Hotel, the Celtic and Japan playmaker soaks once or twice a day in a bath mixed with a variety of powders including the essence of hot spring water from the foot of Mount Fuji.

"Having lived in a hotel for so long, even the little things have become a pleasure," the 29-year-old said ahead of the defending Blue Samurais' semifinal clash with arch-rivals Saudi Arabia here on Wednesday.

"It may be a bit more fun to dip into tinted water than clear water," smiled Nakamura, who has orchestrated Japan's run to the last four.

The powders he uses were either shipped in by the Japan Football Association, or handed to him by fans at Tokyo's Narita airport.

One fan gave him a geranium package which is supposed to detoxicate the body, an increasingly popular product in Japan where more than 2,000 hot spring spas draw people for both comfort and healing.

For nearly three weeks since his arrival here, the baths have consoled the Scottish Player of the Year whose place kicks boosted Celtic and himself to a second straight Scottish Premier League title.

"There are many kinds like one from a spa. Another makes your skin slimy. It feels good, perhaps,

and relieves fatigue," he laughed.

Asked if used the germanium ingredient to massage his famous left foot, he replied: "No, No. I use just a normal one. That's from Hakone." Hakone is a traditional spa near Mount Fuji.

"Sleep well, eat well-balanced food and stretch ... with the bath in there," he added on what his tips were for health.

The 178-centimeter (5ft 10in) Nakamura, known to lead a quiet family life with his wife and two-year-old son in Glasgow, said he had found no food problem because a chef from Tokyo has been preparing meals for the squad.

"They serve pho (popular Vietnamese noodle soup) every other day and it's quite alright," he added.

Iran mocks 'the General'

AFP, Tehran



Iran's press Monday pilloried national coach Amir Ghalenoei after his star-studded squad disappointed again by losing on penalties to South Korea in the Asian Cup quarterfinals.

The football-mad country had hoped that Ghalenoei, nicknamed "the General" by Tehran fans, would end a three-decade wait for international honours by lifting the trophy.

The press responded to the 4-2 loss on penalties by mercilessly mocking the coach in a way that would be all too familiar to any under-fire football manager.

The front page of the broadsheet

Shargh carried a caricature of a war-weary looking Ghalenoei in the uniform of a general carrying a helmet pitted with bullet holes.

Underneath the cartoon, an editorial titled "the final day of general," wrote: "The issue is not Ghalenoei but in any case he was not the coach we were expecting."

"His personality in the training camps and his encounter with the reporters did not make him live up to the stature of a great coach."

The Etemad-e Mellil daily published a wickedly sarcastic column titled: "Thank you Mr. Ghalenoei!"

"Mr. Ghalenoei we are not criticising you because of the loss, we are thankful to you!"

"How can we thank you for the trouble you went through? How should we say it, in order, God

forbid, not to be insulting to you?"

"Just having you is like winning thousands of championships! Can't you see all of the nation is crying from being grateful to you?"

Veteran South Korean goalkeeper Lee Woon-jae saved twice in the shoot-out for Korea to win and progress to Wednesday's semifinal against Iraq after it was scoreless following extra-time.

Ghalenoei made a big call in the final minute of extra-time when he hauled off Hassan Rodbarian for reserve keeper Vahid Talebloo to take part in the penalties.

It was a bitter defeat for the three-time champions. Iran last won the Asian Cup in 1976 and will now have to wait for the next for the

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

Argentina win U-20 World Cup

AP, Toronto

Argentina won the FIFA Under-20 World Cup for the sixth time, rallying to beat the Czech Republic 2-1 Sunday on Mauro Zarate's goal in the 86th minute.

Martin Fenin put the Czechs ahead in the 60th minute but Sergio Agüero tied the score in the 62nd. Zarate's low shot through from the edge of the penalty area handcuffed goalkeeper Radek Petr.

Argentina also won the FIFA's Under-20 title in 1979, 1995, 1997, 2001 and 2005.

"This is for Argentina, this is for my country," Argentina coach Hugo Tocalli said after the match through an interpreter. "It was a hard game. We worked very hard. But we were confident. I knew although we were 1-0 down, we

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

Lawyers in Heinze's wake

AFP, Hong Kong

Liverpool coach Rafael Benítez on Monday said the club's lawyers were working on ways to prise defender Gabriel Heinze away from Manchester United.

Benítez said the legal team had been mobilised after United rejected a reported six-million-pound bid for the 29-year-old Argentine.

"Now the lawyers are working on it so we need to wait," Benítez said ahead of the Asia Trophy tournament here.

"He's a player we like, he's a very good player. Too bad they don't want him to leave and go with us."

Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson last week ruled out the possibility of letting Heinze join their Premier League rivals. Heinze has also been linked with Real Madrid and Inter Milan.

"I can assure you Liverpool will not be getting Gabriel Heinze," said Ferguson. "We have had a couple of offers for him and we have turned them down."

The deadline for Heinze to

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

Rafa's nocturnal ban

AFP, Hong Kong

Liverpool coach Rafael Benítez on Monday said he would impose a strict nightclub ban on his players during their visit to renowned party capital Hong Kong.

Benítez said his team were deadly serious about winning the pre-season Asia Trophy, also featuring Portsmouth, Fulham and South China, ruling out any visits to the city's pulsating bar districts.

"We are a serious team. We want to prepare for the games properly. We were training this morning and we want to be ready for the matches," said Benítez.

"We take every game seriously. After the final we will go and have a dinner and everything."

"This town is fantastic but really we are here to win."

The approach contrasts with visits from other teams, whose players including Real Madrid's David Beckham have been spotted in Hong Kong's more upmarket venues.

Liverpool's players were nicknamed the "Spice Boys" in the late 1990s for their love of the high life.

Benítez's team take on South China in their opening match on Tuesday.

Vinokourov bounces back

AFP, Loudenvielle

Kazakh rider Alexandre Vinokourov overcame the disappointment of losing any chance of winning the Tour de France by winning the 15th stage of the Tour de France, the second of three days in the Pyrenees, after a 196km ride from Foix to here on Monday.

Vinokourov had lost any chance of taking the yellow jersey in a disastrous ride in the 14th stage on Sunday, but he showed a great strength of character in taking his second stage success on Monday -- indeed his second in three days and fifth in his Tour de France career.

Dane Michael Rasmussen retained the overall leader's yellow jersey, 2minutes 23seconds ahead of Alberto Contador while Australian Cadel Evans is third 4min behind, having lost valuable ground on Monday.

The penultimate day of racing in the Pyrenees -- Wednesday's stage to the Col d'Aubisque will conclude the climbing on this

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

'San Siro is Kaka's home'



INTERNET, undated

Brazil legend Pele believes Kaka is better off at Milan than Real Madrid and invites Pippo Inzaghi to join Santos!

The Merengues have a new Coach, but continue to claim that Kaka will be wearing their jersey either this season or the next.

Now he has received advice from the ultimate hero for all Brazilian football players -- O Rey himself.

"I played for 20 years at Santos and was always faithful even if I received lucrative offers from Real Madrid and Juventus," he told the 'Gazzetta dello Sport'.

"I chose to stay where I had grown up, become a great, where the people loved me and I was happy. Money is not everything.

That is a cliché, but it's true.

"I don't want to tell Kaka how he should behave, but just to look inside himself. He seems happy at Milan, so why should he change?"

The Rossoneri have a Selecao feel to them with Kaka, Ronaldo, Nelson Dida, Marcos Cafu and Serginho in their ranks.

They begin pre-season training on Monday and both Kaka and Ronaldo flew into Malpensa Airport this morning.

"If Ronaldo is physically fit, I really think he can be Number One in the world again," continued Pele.

"He has to train consistently and it looks as if he has found the right atmosphere and motivation at Milan to be great once more. I think Ronaldo's presence is very useful for the club and for Kaka."

With President Silvio Berlusconi reportedly prepared to pay Ronaldinho's £84m buy-out clause and Under-20 sensation Alexandre

Pato close to a deal, there could be more Brazilians on their way.

"Pato is a good player, but not yet a champion. I think it is best to wait a little before bringing him to Europe. Look at Robinho and how long he took to show his quality for Real, because he was still a little green. It's too early to say what player Pato will become. He has potential, though."

Pele revealed he is a big fan of Milan's homegrown contingent, above all Champions League Final hero SuperPippo.

"I don't know if Milan really need a striker. They have Inzaghi, who is incredible! I thought it would be fantastic if I could bring Pippo to Santos. With him at the centre of the attack, we'd win five titles on the trot."

"There are no defenders able to mark him, not just in Brazil, as he always seems to score. Think about it and let me know!"



AFP, Hong Kong

Record Liverpool signing Fernando Torres on Monday said he hoped his big-money move would make him famous around the globe.

Torres said he was enjoying working with world-renowned players like Steven Gerrard after leaving Atletico Madrid in a 20-million-pound deal.

"I have a lot of respect for the players, they're very well known around the world," said Torres, who grabbed 91 goals in 243 appearances for Atletico.

"I was very famous in Spain but I want to be famous all around the

world."

Torres, who is here for the Asia Trophy tournament, signed for the Champions League finalists this month and made his debut in a friendly against Werder Bremen.

He is likely to face either Portsmouth or Fulham in the Asia Trophy final after Liverpool play local side South China on Tuesday.

"I've had a very warm welcome from Liverpool and I'm happy to join the team," he said.

"Some very well known players are here so I'm very happy to play alongside them."

England midfielder Gerrard said he would be happy for Torres to make a name for himself at Liverpool.

"He talks about being a big



PHOTO: AFP

Rafael Nadal of Spain poses in front of his new car he was given after defeating Stanislas Wawrinka of Switzerland in the final of the Mercedes Cup in Stuttgart on Sunday. Nadal won the match 6-4, 7-5.

Nadal's Stuttgart delight



AFP, Stuttgart

World number two Rafael Nadal said he was pleased to win his sixth title of the year on Sunday when he beat unseeded Swiss Stanislas Wawrinka in 6-4, 7-5 in the Stuttgart final.

Despite taking the first set with relative ease, Nadal had to dig deep against the plucky Wawrinka who led 4-1 early in the second set and broke his opponent twice.

But triple French Open winner Nadal showed his class on his beloved clay by breaking

Wawrinka's serve three times and needed just over two hours to seal the win -- his 93rd in 94 matches on clay.

In his 16th straight clay-court final, Nadal clinched an ATP-best sixth win from eight finals this year and his only defeat on clay this year came against world number one Roger Federer in Hamburg's ATP tournament in May.

"It has been a good week," said Nadal, who showed no signs of the persistent knee problem which had bothered him all week.

"I played well in this tournament and I wanted to get a win after my defeat at Wimbledon."

"It is a great tournament and I

am looking forward to coming back again next year."

But for 22-year-old Wawrinka, it has been "a crazy week" and he revealed he received a text message of support and tips from Swiss compatriot Federer before Sunday's final.

Having come into the tournament with just three match wins this year, due in part to a knee injury that had sidelined him for three months, it was only his third ATP final.

"I played pretty well, but he was simply too good. Nevertheless, I am very pleased with this crazy week," he said.

Barca to get tough



AFP, Barcelona

Spanish giants Barcelona will step up measures aimed at enforcing player discipline after a series of bust-ups that damaged the team's performance last season.

Sporting director Txiki Begiristain said a new body would be set-up to enforce club rules which will be made up of himself, coach Frank Rijkaard, president Joan Laporta and five players.

"Sometimes the three can't cover everything so we'll create a committee of five players who will be a group that hold sway over the dressing room," he told Catalan daily newspaper El Periodico.

"But that doesn't mean that we'll assign a policeman on each

player.

"The main idea is that everyone turns up in the morning in prime condition and to allow players to know exactly what is permitted and what isn't."

Late night partying by players like Brazil's Ronaldinho and Cameroon international Samuel Eto'o fuelled media storms last season and were blamed for distracting the team who finished second to bitter rivals Real Madrid in the league.

"We're expecting an immediate reaction," said Begiristain, who stressed players are expected to eat dinner at home the night before a match.

Barcelona goalkeeper Victor Valdes welcomed the move, telling reporters "this type of internal organ could be good for everyone, the players, the technical staff and everyone involved in

the dressing room."

Twenty-five Barcelona players head to Scotland on Monday for a six-day training camp at St Andrews.

The team will face Dundee United in a friendly at Tannadice on Thursday and Hearts at Murrayfield on Saturday and will then tour China and Japan at the beginning of August.

Argentina's Gaby Milito and Lionel Messi and Mexico's Rafa Marquez are being rested after taking part in their national teams in the Copa America and will not take part in the training camp and tour of Asia, the club said on its web site.

Barcelona captain Carles Puyol and Icelandic striker Eidur Gudjohnsen will also stay behind as both players have knee injuries.



PHOTO: AFP

A Pack of bikers rides through the picturesque mountain ranges between Foix and Loudenvielle during the 15th stage of the Tour de France yesterday.