



South Korea midfielder Lee Chun Soo (C) is shackled by Japan midfielder Kengo Nakamura (2nd R) during their third-place play-off match of the Asian Cup at the Jakabaring stadium in Palembang on Saturday.

'Totti is a closed book'

INTERNET, undated

Roberto Donadoni does not regret the fact he won't have Francesco Totti in his Italy side. "How can I miss someone who was never here?"

The Roma star had Donadoni on tenterhooks for a year after the World Cup triumph, but last week finally confirmed he would not be returning to international duty.

"Totti is a closed book now, there is nothing more to talk about," the Italy boss told the 'Gazzetta dello Sport.'

"After all, I can't even miss his presence seeing as since I took over the Nazionale he has never been here. So nothing changes as far as I am concerned."

The 2007-08 campaign kicks off on August 25 and Donadoni gave his view on the first post-Calciopoli Scudetto race.

"Inter are unbeatable. Even if they are without doubt the favourites for two reasons -- their squad and the conviction that they are a great side.

"I believe that Milan, Roma and Juventus can challenge them. The Bianconeri are in there too because they have extra motivation to be back among the elite. They remind me of those sides who, after a long time in Serie B, make an incredible impact on the top flight in their first season."

One of the revelations of the last campaign and Italy's Euro 2008 qualifiers has been Fabio Quagliarella, who has joined Udinese after a tug of war with Sampdoria, but he was expected to be picked up by one of the giants.

"It is surprising and a cause for

SEE PAGE 18 COL 6

Korea third

AFP, Palembang



South Korea battled a man short and embroiled in their third straight penalty shootout to beat Japan in a marathon play-off for third place at the Asian Cup here Saturday.

The hard-working Koreans were involved in their third consecutive scoreless game at the tournament but survived when goalkeeper Lee Woon-Jae saved Naotake Hanyu's spot-kick to take the game 6-5 on penalties.

The win guaranteed them qualification to the 2011 Asian Cup, expected to be held in Qatar.

It was a triumph for the gutsy Koreans, who battled with 10 men after defender Kang Ming-soo was sent off for a second yellow card on

the hour.

Their Dutch coach Pim Verbeek and two of his assistants also were ordered to the stands for disputing the red-card decision.

Eleven spot-kicks were converted in the shootout before Lee, who won his team their penalty shootout against Iran in the quarterfinal in Kuala Lumpur last Sunday, saved Hanyu's kick one-handed.

Japan will rue their missed chances to claim victory in extra-time with two great late opportunities to snatch the match.

Substitute Hanyu blasted into defender Kim Chi-gon on the line and Hisato Sato forced Lee into a smothering save.

It was brinkmanship yet again for the Koreans after beating Iran on penalties only to lose their semi-final to Iraq in a shootout.

Japan were backing up after their

shattering 3-2 semi-final loss to Saudi Arabia in Hanoi on Wednesday.

Both teams had their chances in their end-to-end opening half as the Koreans tried to break their run of firing blanks.

Goalkeeper Yoshikatsu Kawaguchi was angry with his defenders when Yeom Ki-hun was allowed to fire in a long-range attempt which whizzed past the post in the 15th minute.

Defender Kim Chi-woo got his boot to clear the danger from lurking striker Satoru Yamagishi moments later.

But the Koreans went to the other end and Yeom's free kick was punched clear by Yamaguchi and Lee Chun-soo had a short-range

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

Fergie out to keep Heinze

AFP, Guangzhou



Sir Alex Ferguson has warned Gabriel Heinze that Manchester United remain confident they will not be forced to sell him to Liverpool -- despite the Argentinian's decision to enlist Anfield solicitors in a bid to force the move.

Ferguson, speaking after United wrapped up their Far East tour with a 3-0 win against Chinese outfit Guangzhou Pharmaceutical on Friday, insists that United intend to stop Heinze moving to Liverpool.

The Argentinian full-back believes he has the right to negoti-

ate a 6.8 million pound move to Anfield, but having made plans to take action against United, Ferguson has urged the defender to ensure he has the correct advice.

Ferguson said: "We're aware that he (Heinze) is taking legal advice, but that's good. I just hope it's good advice because we are confident about our position."

"It's straightforward for us because he has been instructed to return for pre-season training on August 6. That will have given him three weeks rest following the Copa America, but we expect him back a week on Monday."

Goals from Wayne Rooney, Nani and Lee Martin completed the win against Guangzhou in sweltering conditions in Guangdong Province.

Nani's first-half chip was his second in two games since his 17.3-million-pound arrival from Sporting Lisbon.

But despite his impressive start at United, Ferguson expects the 20-year-old to make more improvement before the start of the season on August 12.

He said: "After his injury during the European U-21 Championships, the first thing we had to do with Nani was give him some football in order to get him up to our level."

"But he is nowhere near our level at the moment and he will need at least a couple of weeks' more work before he shows a real improvement. He has the skills,

SEE PAGE 18 COL 8

'Real need a Ballack'

AFP, Madrid

Real Madrid need a Michael Ballack type player in midfield to help them defend their Spanish title, coach Bernd Schuster believes.

"That's the sort we need, someone of that quality," said Schuster of his fellow German in comments that suggest Fabio Capello's replacement is not entirely satisfied with his existing attacking midfielder, Guti.

While Schuster acknowledges that stars like Chelsea's Ballack "are all under contract with big teams" he is hoping to finalise the move of Ballack's teammate Arjen Robben next week, according to Marca on Saturday.

The newspaper also identified Marseille's young midfielder star Samir Nasri as another target for Real ahead of the upcoming season.

Schuster, who was appointed manager to replace Capello after the Italian's sacking, got his reign at Real off to a good start with a 2-0 friendly win over English Championship side Stoke city on Friday.

Madrid start with a win

AFP, Madrid

Bernd Schuster's reign at Real Madrid began with a 2-0 friendly win over English Championship side Stoke City on Friday with Raul and Roberto Soldado on target.

Former Liverpool goalkeeper Jerzy Dudek made his debut and Brazilian defender Pepe, German international defender Christoph Metzelder and former Barcelona playmaker Javier Saviola also donned Real colours for the first time.

Schuster, a former Real star brought in to replace Fabio Capello, sacked despite a league title win, gave Spanish keeper Iker Casillas and Dutch forward Ruud Van Nistelrooy a break, allowing Dudek and Soldado, who spent last season on loan at Osasuna, a chance to stake a claim to a place.

Raul netted on 18 minutes following a corner and Soldado buried a penalty 15 minutes from time at the Spaniards' Austrian camp of Irdning before a 3,000 crowd.

Valencia see off Inter

INTERNET, undated

Valencia beat Serie A champions Inter Milan comfortably in the opening game of this weekend's Emirates Cup.

There was, thankfully, no repeat of the mass brawl which marred their Champions League encounter in March and saw several players handed lengthy bans as well as the clubs heavily fined.

The tournament which also awards bonus points per goal and will later see hosts Arsenal take on Paris St Germain kicked off in what was rare summer sunshine in north London.

Valencia beaten in the quarterfinals of the Champions League last season by Chelsea started brightly.

Impressive winger David Silva flashed an angled drive just over from the right side of the box, and it was no surprise when the Spaniards took the lead on 13 minutes.

Ruben Baraja sent over a deep cross from the right, which picked out Jamie Gavilan at the far post.

From a tight angle, the midfielder squeezed his first-time shot under Francesco Toldo and into the bottom corner.

Inter wearing a change kit of white with a St George-style red cross - struggled to get out of first gear.

Captain Marco Materazzi, the former Everton defender, was somewhat harshly jeered by the Emirates Stadium crowd, presumably for his part in the dismissal of France legend Zinedine Zidane in the World Cup final.

Veteran Portugal midfielder Luis Figo felt he should have been given a penalty when he appeared to be tripped by Ivan Helguera in the corner of the box. Referee Alan Kelly, though, was unimpressed.

On the half-hour mark, Valencia keeper Santiago Canizares saved well at the near post from Julio Cruz as Inter found some life.

Brazilian Maxwell saw his low angled drive come back off the inside of the post, with Canizares beaten.

Moments later, however, and it was 2-0.

Inter gave away a free-kick just to the left of centre, 20 yards out, in the 39th minute.

Villa's effort was well struck and took a slight deflection as the ball flew past Toldo into the right-hand corner.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

Terry pens new deal



AFP, London

Chelsea and England captain John Terry expressed his relief on Friday at signing a new five-year contract with the London club after talks had collapsed towards the end of last season.

"I'm really happy this has now been concluded. There has been a lot of speculation but these things take time and I never had doubts that I wanted to stay at Chelsea and that the club wanted me to stay," said the centre-half, who had two years left of his contract, which is now superseded by the new one.

"I hope the fans can see that we are all trying to build something special here, both for now and for the future, and I want to be a part of that. I have been at Chelsea all my career and have the privilege of being captain.

"Now it's time to look forward to

the new season which we are all very confident about."

Chelsea's chief executive Peter Kenyon echoed Terry's relief at the long-term commitment, which keeps the player at the club until 2012, and added: "This is an important day for Chelsea. This was the right deal for us and for John."

"As a club we are committed to try and keep our players together on long term deals and this was a natural progression from last season when other players also committed themselves for the long term."

"As captain, John is clearly a key player for Chelsea and also a great symbol of the club so naturally we are pleased this has been agreed."

Terry, who is now reported to be England's highest paid player on wages of around 130,000 pounds (194,200 euros) a week, has been at the club since joining the youth system at age 14.

He was voted the club's player of the year for the 2001-02 season and has led the club to two Premier

League titles, two League Cups and an FA Cup triumph.

With the Terry issue wrapped up there now remains the question mark over the futures of England international midfielder Frank Lampard and Dutch international Arjen Robben.

Lampard has two years left to run on his current contract and Robben's anticipated move to Real Madrid still hangs in the balance.

Negotiations with the Dutch international over a new contract at Chelsea are understood to be at an impasse with Madrid merely awaiting the green light from the Londoners before completing a transfer they have talked about for most of the summer.

Mourinho wants Lampard, who has been linked with Barcelona, to stay and will be hoping that Terry's decision can provide the midfielder with the initiative to follow suit before both players decide to move on.

Chivu saga ends finally

AFP, Rome



Romanian international defender Cristian Chivu finally completed his 13-million euro move from Rome to Inter Milan on Friday, bringing to an end the most protracted transfer saga in Serie A this summer.

In addition to the money, Roma also received half ownership of Inter's Italy under-21 international Marco Andreoli.

Chivu, 26, gave an emotional farewell at a press conference at Roma's Trigoria training ground.

"I've spent four wonderful years here, full of satisfaction," said the

versatile defender.

"But sometimes in football you have to make a choice and I felt this was the right move for me."

"My journey in this country and this league is not yet finished. I chose Inter to go towards what I have always dreamed of. These are trains that pass by only once in your life, and you have to catch them."

Serie A champions Inter have been chasing Chivu, who can play at centre-back, full-back or in midfield, since June.

Real Madrid made a formal 18-million-euro offer for Chivu at the beginning of July, but he didn't want to leave Italy.

When Real made their offer, Inter withdrew their interest only to revive it once Chivu had turned down the chance to join the

Spanish champions.

"It was flattering that Real wanted me, but I wanted to remain in Italy," Chivu said.

Chivu started his professional career with Romanian clubs CSM Resita and FC Universitatea Craiova before joining Dutch side Ajax in 1999.

He spent four years in Holland, during which time he helped Ajax reach the quarterfinals of the Champions league in the 2002-03 season.

A dead-ball specialist, Chivu joined Roma in the summer of 2003.

The versatile Romanian helped Roma finish second in Serie A last season, as well as reach the quarterfinals of the Champions League.



Saudi Arabia captain Yasser al Qahtani (L) shakes hands with his Iraqi counterpart Younis Mahmoud, with the Asian Cup on display, prior to their meeting in the final to take place on Sunday.

Clash of contrasting styles

AFP, Jakarta



Cup final here Sunday.

Iraq, who have captivated the football world with their inspirational progress to the Jakarta decider, have conceded just two goals in five games, while the dazzling Saudis have found the net 12 times.

The Iraqis, emotional favourites as they chase their first-ever Asian Cup title amid all the carnage back home, will have to find a way to restrict the scoring opportunities of the Saudis' star striker Yasser Al Qahtani.

Known as the 'Sniper', he is joint leading tournament sharpshooter with Japan's Naohiro Takahara on four goals and with teammate Malek Maaz forms a potent striking force for the Iraqi defence.

Iraq have showed great resolve throughout the tournament, crushing Australia 3-1 and negotiating South Korea on penalties in last Wednesday's gruelling two-hour semifinal in Kuala Lumpur.

The triple champion Saudis have played all but one of their five matches in Jakarta and their tournament hopes soared when they shocked favourites Japan 3-2 in their semifinal in Hanoi.

Although Jakarta's cavernous Gelora Bung Karno Stadium is unlikely to be anywhere near full, the two Gulf rivals have been the best two sides in the three-week tournament.

"The Saudis have the best attack with 12 goals and we have the best

defence with only two goals conceded," Iraq coach Jorvan Vieira said Saturday.

"That does not mean we haven't scored goals, it just means we have scored the necessary goals to win to be in the final, sometimes it's quality not quantity."

"My boys in my point of view deserve to be in the final, they have worked very hard and we have so many problems in all sectors but the prize is tomorrow, I hope."

"The most important thing is that we have reached the final for the first time in the history of Iraqi football and all Iraq people are very happy."

The final brings together two Brazilian coaches, Vieira and his Saudi counterpart Helios dos Anjos, who has taken the Saudis to their seventh final at the last eight Asian Cups.

"I have spoken to my players about keeping their feet on the ground, this game will not be easy, it will be very hard, it's the final and they are always different," dos Anjos said Saturday.

"There is no favourite in this game, both teams have the same chances. We have our dream to win and Iraq have the same dream."

Dos Anjos said his Saudi team had overcome tough challenges in the tournament -- they drew with eventual semi-finalists South Korea, needed an injury-time winner to douse co-hosts Indonesia, had luck against Uzbekistan and overcame three-time champions Japan -- but Iraq presented a huge challenge.

"Iraq will be very tough opponents," he said. "With the qualities they have, the emotion over the social problems in their country, they will be very motivated to win."

Dos Anjos, coaching outside

South America for the first time, said his team's ability to get quality ball to their two strikers, Al Qahtani and Maaz, will be decisive in the outcome.

Yet for both camps it is a win-win scenario for Arab football in the first All-Arab final since the Saudis beat United Arab Emirates on penalties in 1996.

"Of course, there will be pressure for us to do well and we want to win but we are also very pleased for the Iraqis, who are our brothers," Maaz said.

"If they win, we will be happy for them and if we win, I'm sure they will also be happy."

Iraqis good enough for Europe

AFP, Jakarta

Striker Younis Mahmoud believes many Iraqi players are good enough to play in Europe, with their run to the Asian Cup final proof that they have what it takes.

A handful of the Iraqi team play outside their war-torn home country, largely in Arabic leagues, but none have so far made the big switch to Europe.

Mahmoud, who plays for Al Gharafa in the competitive Qatari league, winning this season's Golden Boot award, said some players were ready.

"Some of us play in Arab football leagues and we receive many offers (from Arabic teams)," he said.

"But I think many of the Iraqi players also have the ability to play

SEE PAGE 18 COL 3



Inter Milan full-back Andrea de Cesaris (R) tries to ride a challenge from Valencia centre-half Ivan Helguera during their Emirates Cup match played at the Emirates Stadium in London on Saturday.