AFP, Shanghai

Football star David Beckham visited young leukaemia patients at a Shanghai hospital Tuesday, the ensuing chaos forcing police to seal the institution's doors to control a frantic surging crowd.

Hundreds of fans, media, staff and curious bystanders prompted police to shut off access to a wing of Xinhua Hospital, an AFP reporter witnessed, barring anyone from entering or leaving for several

One woman screamed hysterically as angry police refused to allow her inside, and organisers were forced to cancel a donation ceremony scheduled to take place outside the hospital.

"I want to see a doctor," she said. as she tried to fight her way in.

Beckham is in the financial hub for an exhibition match with his US club LA Galaxy against a Shanghai-Hong Kong team on Wednesday.

Police struggled to clear people away from the ward's main entrance, holding up Beckham's car for at least 15 minutes.

The Galaxy, who begin their regular season in the US at the end of March, are in Shanghai as part or a three-city Asian tour.

The club lost in a penalty shootout to K-League side FC Seoul on Saturday. After their Shanghai match, Beckham and his team travel to Hong Kong for a game against a South China invitational side on March 9.

The former England captain i hugely popular in Asia, drawing huge crowds when he captained the national side during the 2002 World Cup in Japan and South Korea.

## Albelda loses legal battle

AFP, Valencia

Spanish international David Albelda has lost his legal action to try and overturn Valencia's decision to terminate his contract, media reported here.

A court here on Monday ruled in favour of Valencia in the dispute triggered when Dutch coach Ronald Koeman dropped Albelda and two other veteran members of the side.

Albelda, 30 and capped 50 times by Spain, was under contract with Valencia until 2011 and his contract has a 60 million euro release

Albelda has five days to appeal the Valencia court's ruling.

The former captain and fellow Spanish internationals striker Miguel Angel Angulo, 30, and goalkeeper Santiago Canizares, 37, were told by Koeman after his appointment as coach in November that they no longer figured in his plans.

Both Albelda and Angulo came through the club's youth system while Canizares has been with Valencia since 1998.

Albelda has said he is prepared to quit the game altogether over the

"I don't deserve what they are putting me through, and I don't know the reasons," he complained in January.

"I am considering giving up football."

Valencia were knocked out of the Champions League in the first round and are struggling in ninth in the Spanish league, 24 points behind leaders Real Madrid though they are tied at 1-1 with Barcelona after their Spanish Cup semi-final first leg match last week.

#### Mijatovic denies Benzema link

Real Madrid's sports director Pedja Mijatovic has poured cold water on recent reports that the Spanish giants will make a move for Lyon's young French international striker Karim Benzema this summer.

"Signing Benzema at the moment is almost impossible but in two or three years he could be on Marca on Tuesday.

Spanish media have been reporting almost daily, since the rumours started last October, that Real were going to make an immediate bid to bring the 20-year-old striker to the

Spanish capital. Real were thought to see of Old Trafford legend Eric Benzema, who is the French first division's leading scorer this season, as the long-term successor to their

Dutch striker Ruud Van Nistelrooy. The theory has gained greater credibility in recent weeks recently owing to the fact that Van Nistelrooy had not found the net for five games

many of Europe's leading clubs, not least Manchester United whose coach Sir Alex Ferguson has already

player Lyon play at Manchester United in a Champions League last 16 second leg match on Tuesday, with the score at 1-1 after the first leg at the

## Robinho could be key

AFP, Madrid



Champions League last 16 second leg clash could be their return of Brazilian international Robinho. Robinho came on as a second-half substitute in the Spanish league leaders 3-2 win at Recreativo Huelva on Saturday and he contributed two goals in just 17 min-

Having missed three weeks with a strained stomach muscle, including the first leg against Roma in the Italian capital, Robinho almost single-handedly brought to an end Real's three game losing streak.

Even Roma coach Luciano Spalletti admitted that Robinho is the one player he truly fears among all of Real's international super-

"Robinho is football. He has the quality and the senses. There are players that can invent but can't score, but he does both," praised Spalletti in an interview with Spanish sports daily As on Monday.

For his part, Robinho is champing at the bit to start on Wednesday. "The minutes I played against Recreativo have made me ready to face Roma. I'm crazy to play," commented Robinho.

With Real required to win in the

AFP, Porto

PORTO V SCHALKE

They may be on

the verge of a

Champions

Santiago Bernabeu, which they did in all three games during the group stage, an entertaining game seems assured and Spalletti said Roma will also not settle for doggedly

defending their lead. "We can't limit ourselves to defending and trying to stop them scoring. We have to score because we are expecting to have big problems if we try and hold the result at 2-1. They are a balanced side who know how to attack and defend," added the Roma coach.

However, Real players fancy their chances of getting their revenge for their first leg loss.

"I hope Roma's chances of eliminating us are very bad. Certainly Luciano Spalletti's side proved in the first leg they are a great team, attractive and a team who let Real play," said Real's Italian international defender Fabio Cannavaro.

"They (Roma) had their scoring opportunities and made the most of them but playing the second leg on home turf is always an advantage. As for a prediction, I would be more than happy with a 1-0 scoreline," added the 2006 World Player of the Year.

Real coach Bernd Schuster will be especially grateful for the return of Robinho considering his injury problems.

Arien Robben will be out of action for between three and six weeks with a severely sprained left ankle, the Spanish club's doctors said on Monday.

The injury-prone Dutch inter national winger suffered the injury against Recreativo.

His compatriot Ruud van Nistelrooy missed the trip to Huelva with a right ankle injury and Real doctors are doubtful that he will be fit in time to face Roma despite several days of training in a swimming pool.

Real's Spanish international defender Sergio Ramos is suspended although Pepe is fit again and could slot straight into the back four alongside Cannavaro after five weeks out of action.

Roma boosted their morale with a comfortable 4-0 victory over Parma on Saturday with one of their goals coming from club legend Francesco Totti.

"I have already scored one historic goal at the Bernabeu in the past and I am hungry to score another," declared Totti on Sunday. "We simply need a good game

from Roma. We want to win everything and we will never give up, added the prolific striker. One injury problem for Spalletti to resolve is who to

replace his right back Marco Cassetti. Cassetti dislocated his left

shoulder last week. Switching the rejuvenated former Real player Christian Panucci, who was part of the Spanish side's 1998 Champions League winning side, over to the right side could be one solution.

### 'We must score early'

AFP, Madrid

Real Madrid captain Raul Gonzalez revealed the worst kept secret in Spanish football when he told Spanish sports daily Marca here Tuesday that they had to score quickly against AS Roma.

The nine-time European champions have to overturn a 2-1 deficit against Roma in their Champions League last 16 second leg clash on Wednesday if they are to continue in this year's competition. "We've got to start intelligently

and try to make the most of the atmosphere that will be in the stadium at the kick off. We've got to try and score in the first 15 or 20 minutes," said "The first few minutes always

establish the rhythm of the game and how things go afterwards. The idea is to make an impact from the start," he "We are up against a complicated

rival and who have, among all their players, Totti. All the attacks seem to go through him. Rome are very quick and they can damage you." Raul will almost certainly have the

prime responsibility for finding the net as Real officials said on Tuesday that "only a miracle" would enable Dutch striker Ruud van Nistelrooy to

Van Nistelrooy has a right ankle injury sustained a week ago. "Ruud is very important. If he can

be there, it would be better. He's our goal scorer but when he's not able to play, the team can rise to the occasion. The squad has enough quality to move things on," added Raul.

Nevertheless, Raul is familiar with

getting the ball in the net if required. He's the leading scorer in Champions League history with 60

goals to his name, four of which have come this season including the vital away goal in Rome two weeks ago. In addition to Van Nistelrooy, his compatriot Arjen Robben is also out

#### of the Real squad against Roma. Van Marwijk to succeed

Van Basten

AFP, The Hague

Feyenoord coach Bert van Marwijk is to succeed Marco van Basten as boss backhand side, which surprised of the Dutch national side in July following Euro 2008, the Dutch Football Federation (KNVB) announced on Monday.

The 55-year-old van Marwijk signed a contract until after the 2010 World Cup finals, which are being hosted by South Africa - his club will receive compensation from the federation as his contract ran till

Van Marwijk, whose son-in-law, hardman midfielder Marc van Bommel has taken a 'sabbatical' from the international side because he is not happy with van Basten, previously coached Fortuna Sittard, Feyenoord with whom he landed the 2002 UEFA Cup and Borussia Dortmund before returning to the Feyenoord hotseat.

"I am extremely honoured," conceded van Marwijk, who is to represent his backroom team on March 31 with former internationals Phillip Cocu and Frank de Boer being touted as possibles.

"To be national coach is the peak for a coach and it comes at the best moment for me, as I have reached maturity in respect of the job."

Van Basten, who guided the Dutch to the second round of the 2006 World Cup, is set to take over at Ajaxin July on a four year contract. The 43-year-old will succeed

Adrie Koster who took charge of Ajax on a caretaker basis following the departure of Henk ten Cate to Chelsea at the start of the season. Van Basten, a triple European

Footballer of the Year award winner, played for Ajax from 1981 to 1987 before leaving for AC Milan where he remained until 1995. He returned to Ajax as youth team

coach between 2000-2004 before taking charge of the national team.

#### More trouble for Banega

AFP, Valencia

Valencia's 19-year-old midfielder Ever Banega was questioned by Spanish police in the early hours of Monday morning for failing an alcohol test while at the wheel of his

Banega, who did not have

enough alcohol in his system to be formally arrested, will doubtless now have to face a few questions from Valencia's disciplinarian coach Ronald Koeman. The 2002 and 2004 Spanish

champions signed highly regarded Banega for 18 million euros from Argentine side Boca Juniors in January but his first few weeks in Spain have already been surrounded by scandal. A video of Banega in a state of

had to deal with since he took over at

the helm at Valencia.

undress, as he displayed himself on a webcam, was circulated widely on the internet around the time of his arrival at Valencia. Banega's run in with the police is finish to the season. just the latest incident Koeman has

yet but hopefully soon I will find my level and I can play beautiful foot-

Most people expected Federer to take charge from then on, but it didn'thappen.

Instead Murray, still often playing patiently, also produced longer patches of aggression.

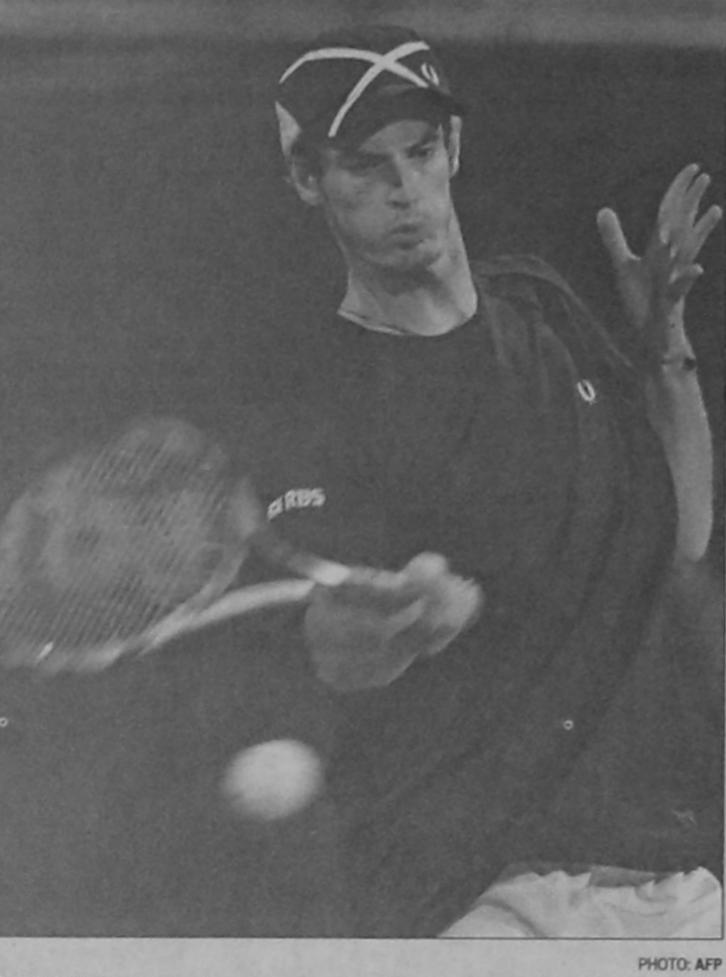
He broke Federer for 4-3 with two fine rallies, dominating the third point with forcing backhands, and converting his first break point of the match with a fierce forehand

had a different character.

Murray's court coverage had now changed from the good to the outstanding, and Federer became

He played an indifferent fifth game in the final set, delivering a double fault and missing with another forehand on break point,

and that effectively did for him. Murray was holding his service games solidly, with a mixture of



Great Britain's Andy Murray makes a forehand return against Swiss master Roger Federer during their Dubai Open first round encounter on Monday.

cross court pass which Federer

In between though, Federer missed surprisingly with a forehand and it was this unusual shortcoming When Federer gained his first set which gave him increasing cause for point, at 7-6 on Murray's serve he concern.

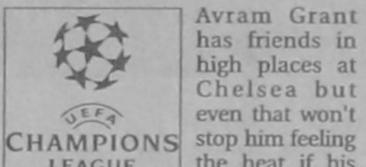
When Murray twice consolidated the break comfortably, and closed out the second set, the match serve.

tactics, most often being prepared to rally solidly and patiently, and sometimes launching fierce flat

It worked, and he conceded only one point on his next two service games as he closed out the match,

## CHELSEA V OLYMPIAKOS

## Greek exam for Grant



LEAGUE | the heat if his team are

knocked out of the Champions League by Olympiakos on

It seems Chelsea are never far from another crisis and the latest drama revolves around the future of Grant, who has looked an increasingly beleaguered figure in recent and Shaun Wright-Phillips is confi-

completely won over the players or fans at Stamford Bridge since replacing Jose Mourinho in September.

Grant's cause was hardly helped by his passive demeanour and confused tactics in the League Cup final meltdown against Tottenham.

with assistant coach Henk Ten Cate in the build up to the match only added to the belief that the dressing room is a far from harmonious environment.

A lack of respect for Grant among his players is a constant theme in stories that hint Barcelona boss Frank Rijkaard is being lined up to replace the Israeliat the end of the season.

approached by Chelsea and Grant does at least seem to have the support has friends in of owner and friend Roman Didier Drogba and Nicolas Anelka. high places at Abramovich, but whether that would even that won't to unfancied Olympiakos is another matter entirely. The last 16 second leg tie against

Rijkaard insists he hasn't been

the Greek champions is delicately poised after a goalless draw two weeks ago and represents a decisive moment in Grant's reign at Stamford

the plus side, a convincing win at West Ham on Saturday raised spirits dent Chelsea can still go all the way in The Blues manager has never the Champions League despite their sketchy form on the big occasions. "We will be disappointed in ourselves because with the players we have, we have the capabilities to win everything," he told BBC Radio Five. "We just try to take it game by game and the Champions League is the next game and is most important to us. "As long as we keep winning and the lads keep playing like they did at Upton Park I think we can go all the

> "We lost the cup final and we weren't happy with ourselves. We know as a team that we can do a lot better and we felt we let ourselves down and especially the fans."

The key to Grant's long-term future could rest on his ability to harness the prodigious talents of

They misfired at Wembley when Chelsea but withstand the seismic shock of losing Grant deployed Anelka as a winger, leaving Drogba isolated as the lone

> Grant's answer against West Ham was to drop Drogba and move Anelka up front. The France international gave a virtuoso performance and Chelsea thrived as a result. But Grant can't afford to leave

He cannot afford a defeat but on such an influential figure as Drogba on the sidelines for long. The mustwin nature of the Olympiakos match could see the duo play in tandem for the first time. They would surely be too formidable a force for the Greeks, who

> were knocked off top-spot in their domestic league at the weekend after being held to a 1-1 draw by Asteras Tripoli. There was even more bad news after the match, when it was revealed

that the club's former Newcastle and Portsmouth forward Lomana LuaLua had suffered a dislocated LuaLua will be sidelined on

Wednesday and the burden of leading their attack will fall on Darko Kovacevic. But even the talented Serb might find giving Grant another headache is a step too far.

## Babel wants fourth place

AFP, Liverpool



Benitez more try. "beautiful" dis-

to keep Liverpool in the hunt to

ceded the title race, are fifth in the table but will leapfrog arch-rivals and Merseyside neighbours Everton into fourth, albeit on goal difference, should they defeat West Ham here at Anfield on Wednesday.

Babel, who has often been used by Liverpool manager Benitez on the left wing, has endured a rollercoaster start to his Anfield career following his pre-season move from

huge lift ahead of Liverpool's busy "I'm not where I want to be just

ball for Liverpool," said Babel. "I still think I will improve some Ryan Babel has more though because I am still getting used to football in this coun-

"The game is a lot more physi-

wenton."

Babel celebrated his goal against dence sky high. Bolton with a somersault which was every bit as spectacular as his strike. But Babel insists he will not be following up every goal he scores with similar displays of gymnastic

"I'm very happy with the goal because it was important that we scored the second to kill the game, so I am grateful for that," added Babel.

"So when I scored my goal I was really happy and that was why I

the club's city rivals would crack in the final stages of the campaign.

"We have to maintain the pres-

before the end of the season. If we

sure on Everton.

keep winning, we will claim that fourth place." Benitez is looking for a moralecally demanding here than I was boosting victory ahead of the sec-

"I am sure they will drop points

The Reds lead 2-0 from the first and Newcastle to ensure Liverpool travel to Italy next week with confi-

"If we can win against West Ham, after that we will go into the next game and the Champions League with more confidence," said the

Spaniard. West Ham's Freddie Ljungberg knows his club face a tough test at Anfield where they have not recorded a victory since 1963.

The London team face Liverpool off the back of a 4-0 home defeat to Chelsea.

"It is another tough game at Liverpool," said Ljungberg, the

"We have been on the way Liverpool's very own flying upwards a bit and last Saturday was Dutchman said there was a chance a sucker punch. Hopefully, we can bounce back on Wednesday and

"That is what we are looking for."

# AFP, Madrid

the market," said Mijatovic in an interview with Spanish sports daily REUTERS, Manchester

prior to his recent ankle injury. Benzema has caught the eye of gone on record in admiration of the

Frenchleagueleaders two weeks ago. Ferguson in the match

quarterfinal

CHAMPIONS berth, but travel to FC Porto for Wednesday night's second leg with the side in turmoil.

they were beaten 1-0 at home by league leaders Bayern Munich at the weekend with fans waving a banner saying: "Mirko Slomka (the Schalke coach) - no idea, no concept, no confidence!". 'A frank 90-minute discussion red and yellow cards."

followed on Sunday between the

coach and club president Josef

Schnusenberg - Slomka's biggest

And Schalke captain Marcelo

straight Bundesliga defeat when

public critic - and failure in his reign at the Royal Blues.

Football

manager Alex Ferguson.

before retiring in 1997.

tie on Tuesday night.

Manchester United striker Carlos

Tevez is the present day equivalent

Cantona, according to United

United during a five-year spell in

which he helped the club to four

league titles and two FA Cups

goal-scoring characteristics of

former France international

Cantona with his latest goal giving

United the edge as they prepare to

meet Olympique Lyon in the sec-

ond leg of their Champions League

Cantona in the way that he has a

knack of rising to the occasion with

Tevez has shown some of the

Cantona took on iconic status at in the last-16 tie.

Bordon is also far from pleased with the situation going into such

Last chance for Slomka

a crucial European tie. "Our game last weekend was missing everything, we had no aggression - that is not the Schalke which I know," Bordon

The Brazilian went as far as to single out the below-par performances of his teammates, especially forwards Gerald Asamoah And with suspended Germany

"We need men at the moment, not people who pick up stupid

Schalke struggled, Bordon

slammed his colleague.

Rosenborg when Mladen Krstajic

told German agency SID.

Schalke suffered their third and Vicente Sanchez. midfielder Jermaine Jones missing against Bayern, an area where

> The squads' lack of unity was shown before their Champions League group stage game against

for going to a disco.

we have to get through this phase in the competition," said Schalke manager Andreas Mueller.

Porto coach Jesualdo Ferreira knows his side have to overturn a 1-0 deficit from the first leg if they want to reach the last eight. If they succeed in qualifying

> for the quarterfinals, it will be the first time the German club have been knocked out of UEFA club competition by Portuguese oppo-The first game at the Veltins Arena was a tight affair with a

> Kuranyi inside the first four minutes settling the contest on March Porto are 12-points clear at the top of Portugal's La Liga and were held to a 0-0 draw with mid-table

solitary goal by Schalke's Kevin

In contrast, Schalke are down to Portugal could mean the end of and Ivan Rakitic were suspended sixth in the table and defeat at the Estadio do Dragao could well be "We must stand together now, Slomka's last.

Boavista at the weekend.



Porto players Jorge Fucile (L), Lucho Gonzales (C) and Lisandro Lopez share a joke during their team's training

## session at the Dragao Stadium in Porto on Tuesday. 'Tevez is the new Cantona'

programme.

thing fazes him and he keeps his "Our intention is to score. We cool in the box." Argentina international Tevez football and hopefully that's has scored 15 times for United this season, including the late equaliser at Lyon which produced a 1-1 draw

goods away from home when you

really important goals - the ones that give you a win or a draw, especially away from home. "He did it at Tottenham (Hotspur) to salvage a point as he made the result 1-1. He scored for a 1-0 time. win at Liverpool and now he has

rescued us again by finding the net

proving a master at scoring the

late and nullifying Lyon's lead." Ferguson believes Tevez's goal "Carlos reminds me of Eric against the French champions and league leaders has put United in "a good position, not a decisive one," a goal just when it's needed," writes as they seek to reach the quarter-

He told a news conference on "He often comes up with the Monday: "Lyon will come knowing they have to get a goal, which they are up against it. I don't think any- are capable of.

enough for us to go through." A United victory at Old Trafford would be their 10th successive home win in the Champions Ferguson added: "Tevez is League, equalling a competition record set by Juventus in 1997. It would take United a step

closer to the opportunity to make

up for last season's semi-final exit

and keep alive their hopes of win-

ning the competition for a third

Ryan Giggs, who made his 100th European appearance in the first leg, is an injury doubt but Ferdinand's centre-back partner Nemanja Vidic, Wayne Rooney and Cristiano Ronaldo are all expected to return to the starting line-up following Saturday's 3-0 win at Fulham.

## Murray stuns Federer Tennis

AFP, Dubai

Roger Federer lost in the first round of a tournament for the first time in three-and-a-half years when he was beaten by Andy Murray, the 20-year old Briton who was a revelation with his cool attitude and his counter-

The unseeded player's 6-7 (6/8), 6-3, 6-5 win means that the world number one has not yet won a tournament this year, having lost in the semi-finals of the Australian

Open to Novak Djokovic of Serbia. He lost the last time he played Murray too, 19 months ago in Cincinnati, when he could claim he was tired from his previous week's efforts.

This time there was no such explanation, though Federer is short of match play, and when the match got tight was not able to unleash his customary ability to produce overwhelming tennis.

"It was nothing to do with his game," insisted Federer.

"It was a tricky game for both of us. One of the big guys had to go out. "It's difficult but it could have been worse. It wasn't a bad match but that's the only positive I can take from tonight.

awful. You have it lined up and suddenly it's out which comes as a shock." The first set saw both men hold solidly all through, Murray serving more aggressively but more often resorting to containment in the rallies, Federer serving more consis-

tently well. But by the tie-breaker

Murray was suddenly more asser-

one good, one slight-to break again.

return; the second he just got back

"I thought I was missing fore-

hands by two or three metres. That's

It hinged on three points. Murray had reached 5-2 with one minibreak and then had two chances -

The first he netted an attacking

but couldn't make pass. Federer broke back at once, and held serve, saving a set point at six points all with a fine first serve winner.

came up with a typical forehand

attack, taken athletically from the

could not reach.

meaning that he survived three sets against Federer without dropping

AFP, London

Wednesday.

weeks.

John Terry's training ground row

wayin all of them.

shoulder.



secure a Champions League berth next season. Liverpool, who have long con-

Ajax. But the 21-year-old insists his goal at the weekend has given him a

celebrated like I did. But I won't be doing it all the time. I will save it for the special moments."

Sweden captain.

play some good football.

#### used to in Holland. But I feel I am look to cement a top-four finish in ond leg of Liverpool's last 16 The club, confirming this latest the Premier League table. much stronger now compared to Champions League clash with Inter incident involving the Argentina the beginning of the season," he Milan. The Dutch international prounder-20 international, stated on its duced an inspirational goalscoring added. website: "He committed a driving "I think that Bolton was one of leg at Anfield but Benitez now wants performance as Benitez's outfit will certainly be playing attacking offence and subsequently gave a my better games for Liverpool and I two domestic wins over West Ham swept aside Bolton 3-1 last Sunday positive test for alcohol." felt more confident as the game