Life-ban for

FIFA president Sepp Blatter on

Friday called for lifetime bans and

criminal charges to be brought

against players found guilty of dan-

Blatter believes reckless chal-

lenges are one of the biggest scourges

of the modern game and he has

demanded a "zero tolerance" policy

ahead of the International Board's

most important issues in football at

the moment," Blatter told The Times.

intentionally should be banned from

is criminal, whether it happens on a

football pitch or elsewhere.

often as guilty as the players.

"Dangerous tackling is one of the

"Players who do this kind of thing

He added: "Attacking somebody

"It is a crime and should be

Blatter believes managers are

"The mechanism where this

"The pressure on the coach or

happens today is obvious," he said.

manager to win is such that he

encourages his players to go for

dressing-room, so he says, 'go, go,

go'. Until when? Until the point

tion to the Premier League's plan for

a 39th game, insisting he would not

persuade me of this," he said. "They

this, it is others, too. I represent the

family of football and I will bring this

120,000 tickets

Around 120,000 of the lowest-

priced tickets for the 2010 World

Cup in South Africa will be given

away to allow people from the

country's lower classes to watch,

Organising Committee (SALOC)

made the announcement at

Berlin's travel trade fair with the

cost of the free tickets set to be met

will be made available to South

Africans wanting to see the event in

their home country, said Makgabo.

how we sell them," she said.

half of 2009," said Makgabo.

go to the right people."

2010 will go on sale.

And as many tickets as possible

"It is a question of where and

"We must make sure the tickets

It is still unclear when ticket

"It should start in the second

sales for the June 11-July 11 event in

under three million tickets avail-

able across the event's 10 stadiums.

by the event's sponsors.

Tumi Makgabo, the spokesper-

organisers announced Friday.

for the poor

to the Congress of FIFA if necessary."

"It is impossible that they can

"It is not only me who is against

Blatter also reiterated his opposi-

where the referee intervenes."

weekend meeting at Gleneagles.

dangerous

tackles'

AFP, London

gerous tackles.

the game."

treated as such."

victory at any cost.

soften his stance.

cannot doit.

AFP, Berlin

Maldini might play on

AFP, Rome

AC Milan skipper Paolo Maldini said on Thursday that he may not retire at the end of this season and keep going into the next campaign instead even though he will have celebrated his 40th birthday.

"I have a lot of energy left. One must be consistent, but at the same time only an idiot doesn't change his mind," said Maldini.

"In these last few months my knees are no longer hurting very much. The club and fans are pushing me to play for another year.

"I have to admit; three months ago I was in a much worse condition and had to stay out for five months following surgery. Now I feel better and am even playing in a role I hadn't tried for quite a while."

The role Maldini is referring to is his left-back position.

"I love this sport and I love training," said Malidini two days after the European champions had been knocked out of the Champions League by Arsenal.

Maldini, who will be 40 on June 26, had announced in December that he would stop playing at the end of the year and leave Milan where he made his debut in January 1985.

He has won seven Italian titles, five Champions League crowns, one Italian Cup and three world club tournaments.

Berlusconi wants Shevchenko

AFP, Rome

AC Milan president Silvio Berlusconi believes Chelsea's unsettled striker Andrei Shevchenko will return to the Italian giants.

Quizzed over possible reinforcements in the summer, especially after the European champions were dumped out of the Champions League by Arsenal in midweek, Berlusconi was confronted with names such as Didier Drogba (Chelsea) and Emmanuel Adebayor (Arsenal).

"These are good players, but I'm | REUTERS, London thinking of Shevchenko. We talk regularly and he continues to say that he wants to return to Milan," said Berlusconi.

"I don't believe that (Chelsea owner) Roman Abramovich will have any problems in letting him go."

Ukrainian international Shevchenko, 31, left Milan for Chelsea for 45 million euros in the summer of 2006 but has never managed to hold down a regular starting place with Chelsea.

Hamburg shortlist three for post

AFP, Hamburg

Bundesliga title-contenders Hamburg are narrowing down their search for a successor to Dutch coach | Wasilewski just before halftime. Huub Stevens who will quit the German club to coach PSV Eindhoven in the summer.

Hamburg, third in the German league, have been linked with Slaven. Bilic, coach of the Croatian national side, Juergen Klopp (coach of second division German side Mainz) and Fred Rutten, coach of Dutch side FC Twente.

"It may take some time for us to decide the name of the new coach," said Hamburg's sports director Dietmar Beiersdorfer.

The German side hope to announce the name of the successor of Stevens, 54, at the end of March.

It was announced in November Stevens, in charge of Hamburg since February 2006, will join Dutch giants

I will be fit: Beckham

AFP, Hong Kong

LA Galaxy star David Beckham on Friday voiced confidence his bid for a 100th England cap was on track following encouraging signs from national coach Fabio Capello.

Beckham said his fitness would be "perfect" for this month's friendly against France despite picking up a minor knock in Shanghai, the previous stop on Galaxy's Asian tour.

"I've played three games so far now and I've got through them all. Slight injury but that's not a problem," he told media in Hong Kong.

it's about performing and hopefully I'll do that'

Beckham, 32, has struggled with injuries since his high-profile Galaxy move and the former England captain was overlooked by Capello for

his first game in charge last month. But Capello has said he may personally visit Beckham in the United States to check his fitness, adding the midfielder was "in contention" for the March 26 friendly in

"It doesn't change the way I go into the game. But that's what he said to me anyway. I know that from a conversation I had with him," Beckhamsaid.

"He said once I'm back playing and if I'm fit and if I'm playing well enough, he will pick me. What happened with the first game of him taking charge, I hadn't played any games and he explained that to me."



Bayern Munich midfielder Hamit Altintop (L) celebrates his stunning goal with teammate Bastian Schweinsteiger during their UEFA Cup match against Anderlecht in Brussels on Thursday.

BAYERN RUN RIOT

Bad day for English



Bayern Munich stamped their thetitlein 2006 and 2007. authority on the goals past 10-

Goals from Hamit Altintop and

home next week. It was Anderlecht's heaviest European defeat at home and followed a red card for Marcin

In a heavyweight last 16 boasting four other former European champions, PSV Eindhoven won 1-0 at Tottenham Hotspur when Peru striker Jefferson Farfan stole the ball from Gilberto in the 34th minute and fired into the corner.

The result puts coach Juande Ramos's hopes of a UEFA Cup hattrick in peril. Ramos took Sevilla to

Gavin McCann scored for fellow UEFA Cup on Premier League side Bolton Thursday, Wanderers in a 1-1 draw at home to hammering five Portugal's Sporting.

McCann hit home a rebound m a n after Matthew Taylor's 25th minute Anderlecht in shot was blocked, while Sporting Brussels in their replied in the 69th through Simon last 16 first leg Vukcevic to take a valuable away goal back to Lisbon.

The third English side in the Luca Toni in the first half and Lukas competition, Everton, were beaten Podolski and substitutes Miroslav 2-0 away to Fiorentina. Keeper Tim Klose and Franck Ribery in the Howard made a spectacular double second ensured four-times save midway through the second European champions Bayern a halfbut could not keep out Zdravko gentle workout in the second leg at Kuzmanovic who fired home in the

70th minute from 20 metres. Riccardo Montolivo added the second with a well-struck volley after a fine passing move nine minutes from time. Two goals from Djibril Cisse, either side of a strike from Senegal forward Mamadou Niang earned former Champions League winners Olympique Marseille a 3-1 home win over Zenit St Petersburg. Andrei Arshavin got one back for the Russians in the

82nd minute.

The German derby at Bayer Leverkusen ended in a 1-0 win for the home side against former European champions Hamburg SV, Theofanis Gekas's 77th-minute strike proving the difference between the teams.

The fourth German side still in the competition, Werder Bremen, tumbled to a 2-0 defeat at Rangers in Glasgow.

Goals either side of halftime from Daniel Cousin, whose shot goalkeeper Tim Wiese failed to hold, and Steven Davis, who poked home a rebound, gave the Scots a toe-hold in the quarterfinals.

Getafe crossed the border into Portugal and returned with a two away goals from a 2-1 victory at Jose Camacho's Benfica, twice European Cup winners in the early

minutes of the game with 10 men after forward Oscar Cardozo was sent off for a foul on Belenguer.

Midfielder Ruben de la Red took advantage in the 25th minute and Pablo Hernandez made it 2-0 in the 67th before substitute Mantorras got one back for the Portuguese.

Gunners seek title

MU after the treble

Football

AFP, London

With Manchester United otherwise engaged in pursuit of a trophy treble, Arsenal will relish the opportunity to steal a march over their rivals in the Premier League title race this weekend.

would restore Arsene Wenger's men's four-point lead at the top of the table on a weekend on which United will be attempting to overcome Portsmouth and secure a place in the semifinals of the FA

Having become the first English Saturday. club to beat AC Milan in the San Siro in midweek, Arsenal will have a Sylvain Distin begs to differ howsevere case of culture shock to ever. overcome if they are to get the better of Steve Bruce's relegation League Cup there's a result every-"Fitness-wise I'll be perfect but | battlers on a surface at the JJB one calls a miracle, but it's not," he Stadium which is viewed as the said bullishly. worst in the top flight.

> "To be champions in England you have to go from Milan to Wigan and win the game and I like that because it is a completely different type of game," the Frenchman said.

"You have to find a response to what you face." On that score, Wenger has faith

in his young charges. "This team has not an artificial hunger," he said. "They are really hungry for success. This season we are up for it and we will fight until

the end. I'm completely confi-

dent. Any team will say they really

want to win it but this team really

mean it. "It will be a big test on Sunday because they (Wigan) are playing not to go down. They are under pressure like we are at the top. They are under pressure not to go down

and I have heard that the pitch is not the Emirates."

In Saturday's Cup clashes, Portsmouth will be hoping Manchester United boss Sir Alex Ferguson decides to give Cristiano Ronaldo a rest as a reward for taking his goal haul for the season to 30 goals with a Champions League winner against Lyon on midweek.

Ferguson has the luxury of being Victory over Wigan on Sunday able to turn to the likes of Owen Hargreaves and Paul Scholes, both of whom spent most of Wednesday evening on the bench, and United's form and depth of resources mean it would be a major surprise if Portsmouth managed to spring a surprise at Old Trafford on

Pompey's French defender

"Every year in the FA Cup or

"It's just a case of a side consid-

(1500 GMT unless stated) Saturday FACup

Barnsley v Chelsea (1730 GMT) Manchester Utd v Portsmouth (1245 GMT) Premier League

Blackburn v Fulham, Liverpool v Newcastle, Reading v Manchester City Sunday FACup Bristol Rovers v West Brom (1800 GMT) Middlesbrough v Cardiff City (1400

GMT)

Premier League Sunderland v Everton, Tottenham v West Ham, Wigan Athletic v Arsenal (1600 GMT)

The home side played all but 10

ered the underdogs thinking,

fighting from the first second.

mentally you are not ready."

'we're going to win', and then

avoid defeat; I'm going there to

win. If you go there to avoid defeat,

Championship side Barnsley

are even bigger underdogs against

Chelsea but manager Simon Davey

is determined to tap into the well of

self-belief generated by his side's

victory over Liverpool at Anfield in

the last round, despite admitting to

having felt "unnerved" by what he

saw on a scouting mission to

to what we are used to," Davey

admitted. "They have world class

players in every position and it will

be a very, very tough game for us.

But no-one gave us a chance at

As a result of their FA Cup exit,

Liverpool will be entertaining

Newcastle in the league on

Saturday, seeking to bolster their

own bid to claim the fourth and

final Champions League spot for

next season, even if that means

piling a whole lot more pressure on

former Anfield favourite Kevin

winless in seven attempts since his

return to the manager's seat at St

James' Park and the form of

Fernando Torres, who has scored

two hat-tricks in his last two out-

ings at Anfield, suggests things will

get worse before they get better for

If Newcastle can defy the odds

by getting a result, nobody will be

more pleased than Everton boss

David Moyes, who takes his side to

the former England boss.

Sunderland on Sunday.

Anfield and look what happened."

"They are on a different planet

Stamford Bridge.

Keegan.

"I'm not going to United to

Italian referee into hiding REUTERS, Milan

Italian referee Mauro Bergonzi was sent into hiding by police after thugs tried to attack someone he looked like, the head of the country's referees' association has said.

Bergonzi awarded two contentious penalties in Napoli's 3-1 win over Juventus in October.

"A dangerous incident happened. A group of people encircled someone they thought was a referee, they tried to abduct him and continually punch him. The only thing was he just looked like the referee," Cesare Gussoni told Friday's La Repubblica newspaper.

"He was a bank manager, poor thing, and he managed to reveal this at the end to save himself from more blows. On the advice of the police, the referee was forced to live under protection and went to another province for two weeks."

Former leading referee Pierluigi Collina, who now appoints officials for Italian games, has been sent bullets in the post and has been given a police escort as supporter's anger grows following a number of controversial decisions this sea-

Italy still remembers the 2006 match-fixing scandal, where Juve were demoted and other clubs had points deducted after being found guilty of procuring favourable referees for some matches.

Meanwhile, Bulgarian referee Valeri Petrovski is recovering in hospital after being beaten up near his home in Sofia, police said on The Newcastle manager is Friday.

> "I was in the car, waiting for my wife, when two men attacked me with baseball bats and knuckledusters," Petrovski told reporters. The 43-year-old Petrovski,

considered one of the country's leading referees, began officiating matches in the Bulgarian top division in 1996. Police said the incident was under investigation but did not

confirm the attack was soccer

related.

Resilience test for giants

REUTERS, Madrid



Real Madrid and resume the race for the Primera Liga title this ing to demonstrate their ery after being

hit by body blows in the Champions League.

of Europe by AS Roma after a 2-1 reverse at home on Wednesday while Barcelona lost forward Lionel Messi for six weeks after he tore a muscle in his left thigh in Tuesday's 1-0 victory over Celtic.

Bernd Schuster's side host fifthplaced Espanyol on Saturday knowing that the Bernabeu is no longer the fortress it was. Their defeat there to Roma, their fifth in seven in all competitions home and away, came hot on the heels of a 1-0 loss to Getafe in Madrid on Feb. 24.

Ernesto Valverde's men are out of the running for the title but they are in the unaccustomed position of chasing a top-four finish, and "There is no microphone in the | have already proved they can mix it with the best having beaten Real 21 in October.

They overcame Valencia 2-0 last weekend to end a miserable run of three successive league defeats and need to make up lost ground.

"I don't like this idea that you go there to put on a good display and to put on a brave face when you lose. As the current champions and leaders Real are favourites, but that doesn't mean they will necessarily win," Valverde said.

Second-placed Barcelona lost 4-2 away Atletico Madrid last weekarch-rivals.

Although they cruised through to the Champions League quarterfinals with a 4-2 aggregate win over Celtic, the injury to Messi has dominated the headlines.

FIXTURES

Saturday Real Madrid v Espanyol (1900 GMT) Real Zaragoza v Atletico Madrid (2100 GMT)

Sevilla v Levante, Osasuna v Almeria. Athletic Bilbao v Valladolid, Racing Santander v Real Betis, Real Murcia v Getafe, Real Mallorca v Recreativo Huelva (all 1600 GMT), Valencia Deportivo La Coruna (1800 GMT) Barcelona v Villarreal (2000 GMT)

The absence of the Argentina international, who has lifted the side since returning from a similar injury in January, will deprive coach Frank Rijkaard of his most effective player at opening up

opposition defences. "Messi's absence leaves a big gap. He is unique and his abilities are above and beyond the rest," Barcelona's Iceland forward Eidur

Gudjohnsen said. Barca face high-flying Villarreal Leaders Real were dumped out end to slip five points behind their at the Nou Camp on Sunday, who are seven points behind them in third place. Like Espanyol, Manuel Pellegrini's side have already inflicted a defeat on their hosts, having thumped Barca 3-1 back in

October. Elsewhere, Real Zaragoza's fourth coach of the season, Manolo Villanova, will be looking for an immediate reaction from his relegation-threatened side when he takes charge for his first game at home to fourth-placed Atletico Madrid on Saturday.

Zaragoza were expected to be challenging for a Champions League place this season, but are only kept out of the relegation places by goal difference after a run of four successive defeats.

Inter celebrate centenary

REUTERS, Milan



Serie A leaders Inter Milan celebrate their cente-Saturday although Liverpool. the festivities will

be slightly more muted than they would have been given recent disappointments on the pitch.

Inter lost 1-0 at Napoli last Sunday, their first league defeat of the season, and are now just six Tuesday's Champions League

last 16 second leg knockout round

tie at home to Liverpool also looms

large with Roberto Mancini's men

2-0 down from the first leg at son of the South Africa 2010 Local | Anfield. Mancini will certainly have one eye on the Liverpool game when he selects his side to face Reggina at San Siro (1700 GMT), but he has few

options after an injury crisis

returned. Cristian Chivu hurt his shoulder against Napoli and is almost certainly out for Saturday as medical staff desperately try to get him fit for League on Wednesday, visit Napoli

If they fail, the champions will probably have to use inexperienced Colombian Nelson Rivas alongside nary against normal right back Nicolas Burdisso Reggina on in the centre of defence against

Marco Materazzi will probably partner one of the pair against Reggina but he is suspended for

Tuesday. There seems little chance injured left back Maxwell can recover for either game while centre backs points ahead of second-placed AS Walter Samuel and Ivan Cordoba are out for the season with knee ligament problems.

Madrid out of the Champions

FIXTURES

Saturday Inter Milan v Reggina, Palermo v Udinese Sunday

Catania v Cagliari, Empoli v AC Milan, Genoa v Juventus, Lazio v Livorno, Napoli v AS Roma, Parma v Sampdona, Siena v Fiorentina, Torino v Atalanta

on Sunday (1400) well aware of how difficult it is to play at the imposing San Paolo.

an inconsistent season but have

Promoted Napoli are 11th after

beaten Inter and Juventus among others at home while they drew 4-4 at Romain a great game in October. Third-placed Juventus are seven points behind Roma and one above

Fiorentina, who beat them 3-2 in Turin last weekend. Juve visit Genoa in Sunday's late game (1930) without the suspended Pavel Nedved while Fiorentina will

again be without injured striker Roma, buoyed by knocking Real Adrian Mutufor their trip to Siena. AC Milan in fifth must forget Tuesday's Champions League elimination by Arsenal when they travel to struggling Empoli, who

> won 1-0 at San Siro in October. Seventh-placed Sampdoria begin life without in-form forward Antonio Cassano with Sunday's visit_ to Parma. The on-loan Real Madrid player has been banned for five games for abusing the referee after being sent off last week against

Depth will be the key

AFP, Berlin



Bayern Munich coach Ottmar Hitzfeld insists the Bundesliga leaders must depth at home to Karslruhe on

is on the verge of his 150th league win -when asked about leaving Kahn and use their strength in Saturday if they

want to tighten their strangle hold on on the park, but the full squad and After seeing off the threat of Champions League quarterfinalists'

the top of the league and looking to extend their advantage. But Allianz Arena guests Karlsruhe have been the surprise of the season and are fifth in the league having picked up ten wins this term.

Schalke 04 last weekend, Hitzfeld's

Bayern side are four points clear at

But there will be no sentimentality from captain Oliver Kahn, who will retire from the Bundesliga at the end of the season, when he faces the club where he started his career in 1987 before joining Bayern in 1994.

Kahn, defender Marcell Jansen and striker Jan Schlaudraff were all rested for Thursday's 5-0 UEFA Cup mauling of Anderlecht, while Lucio is

midfielder Mark van Bommel is still suspended. "It's necessary to conserve some from his kneeinjury.

energy so that the team does not

blow up in April," said Hitzfeld - who

Jansen behind. "We always try and play our best team at all times so we have to use the resources we have. "It's not just about the 11 players the German Cup and coach Armin

the 15 or 16 who may be involved on match day." The clash of the round is on Saturday in Stuttgart where the

defending champions take on second-placed Bremen. Werder's coach Thomas Schaaf is

Saturday

Arminia Bielefeld v Schalke 04, VfB Stuttgart v Werder Bremen, Eintracht Frankfurt v VfL Bochum, VfL Wolfsburg v Energie Cottbus, Bayern Munich v Karlsruhe, Duisbourg v Hansa Rostock Sunday

Nuremberg v Hamburg, Bayer Leverkusen v Hanover

struggling with a groin strain and without suspended star Diego, while Germany midfielder Torsten Frings is still some way from a full recovery

Stuttgart are ninth in the table and

suffered the humiliation of a defeat by second-division strugglers Carl Zeiss Jena in the German Cup ten Having lost all bar one of their Champions League group stage games, Stuttgart were dumped out of

Veh admits he would be happy "just to finish fifth in the league". After Wednesday's Champions League heroics to reach the quarterfinals for the first time in their history by beating Porto 4-1 on penalties, Schalke 04 are desperate to

break their run of three straight league defeats. And under-fire coach Mirko Slomka will have some of the pressure taken off him if his side can win awayatstrugglers Bielefeld.

On Sunday, third-placed Hamburg will be looking to inflict more misery on relegationthreatened Nuremberg, while fourth-placed Bayer Leverkusen will have to beat Hanover at home to stay in the race for the Champions League

No sentiments from Kahn

Football

AFP, Berlin

Never one for sentimentality, Bayern expect nothing less than three points on Saturday when his side faces Karlsruhe, the club where he began his career.

The 38-year-old veteran will retire

from the Bundesliga at the end of the

season on May 17 after a colourful

career when he set a host of records in German football. But with Bayern four points clear at the top of the table, only winning the domestic league, cup and the UEFA Cup this season will satisfy

Kahn's insatiable appetite for success. "There are so many people who say to me 'Oh my God, it is so bad that you are retiring'. Me, I see things in another way," he told German magazine Sport Bild.

somepoint." But far from looking to make a quiet exit in his final season, Kahn has been his usual confrontational self.

Christmas party early and ignored 2002, plus runner-up as FIFA's Best his duty to make the traditional Footballer of the Year in 2002. captain's speech.

autumn were inconsistent. As a consequence, he was fined and suspended for the last game of

2007. But after nearly 14 years at Bayern, Kahn has done virtually all there is to do in German football - bar winning the World Cup.

The statistics speak for them-In 548 Bundesliga matches, a record in itself for a shot-stopper, he

landmark. He captained his side to the World typical Cup final of 2002, which they lost to Brazil, and won Euro 1996 with his country in England.

Seven times Kahn has won the "I am very happy that it has come Bundesliga with Bayern, the German to the end. I am delighted with it. It Cup five times, plus the Champions has been good, but had to finish at League title in 2001 and the UEFA Cup in 1996.

achievements match his big personality.

But after the humiliation of last And he had no qualms about season when his side missed a

criticising the team's stars - France's Champions League berth for the first Franck Ribery and Italy's Luca Toni - time in 11 years, only the triple objec-Munich captain Oliver Kahn will when he felt their performances last tive of Bundesliga, German Cup and UEFA Cup success will do. "Kahn always had this incredible force: he wants to win, he always wanted to win. His ambition even

> today still distinguishes him from the other players," said Winfried Schaefer, who coached Kahn as a teenager at Karlsruhe in 1987. And Kahn has no problems with

putting the next generation of Bayern's topperformers in their place. Teenage striker Toni Kroos is has kept 194 clean-sheets, another already a rising star at the Allianz

> Arena, but Kahn's response was "He hadn't even been born when Ibecame a pro, "scoffed Kahn.

He won the first of his 86 caps for his country in 1994 and only lost his place at the 2006 World Cup when Arsenal's Jens Lehmann was chosen by coach Jurgen Klinsmann.

As such a forceful character, Kahn And his extensive list of individual has often found himself the brunt of German comedians' jokes and was His honours including World's compared to an irate gorilla in one In December, he left the club's Best Goalkeeper in 1999, 2001 and memorable sketch.

Eindhoven in July 2008.